



Sept. 18, 2026

HII's Weekly News Digest is compiled every Friday by the Corporate Communications team to summarize and highlight news stories of significance to the company.

HII To Develop Smarter Airdrop System Under 5-Year Task Order: Army Technology reported on Wednesday that HII's Mission Technologies division has secured a five-year task order to advance research on airdrop and combat feeding techniques for the U.S. Army. The initiative aims to improve the reliability and safety of airdrop equipment, as well as strengthen how systems work together. Interesting Engineering reported on Wednesday that the contract also calls for the integration of advanced sensing technologies, autonomous capabilities, and cybersecurity protections to address environmental and operational threats. These efforts are designed to ensure that supplies and rations can reach soldiers effectively, even in dangerous or hard-to-reach areas.

White House Formally Nominates Cao As Navy Secretary: USNI News reported on Tuesday that the White House formally sent nominations to the Senate for the top three civilian leadership roles in the Department of the Navy. Acting Navy Secretary Hung Cao was nominated to be permanent Navy secretary, and retired Navy Capt. Bill Toti, who is currently performing the duties of undersecretary of the Navy, was nominated to fill the position permanently. Additionally, retired Vice Adm. Richard Breckenridge was nominated to be the assistant secretary of the Navy for research, development and acquisition – the Navy's chief acquisition official. Cao, who was confirmed as the Navy Undersecretary last year, has served as the acting Navy secretary since April when then SECNAV John Phelan was removed from the position. President Donald Trump announced his intent to nominate Cao on Sept. 1. Breaking Defense reported on Tuesday that Cao will need a House and Senate waiver to serve as Secretary of the Navy, since US service secretaries are required to have been retired for at least seven years.

Norfolk Naval Commander Vows Six-Month Maintenance Period For USS *Gerald R. Ford* (CVN 78): Breaking Defense reported on Monday that the U.S. Navy plans to deliver USS *Gerald R. Ford* (CVN 78) back to the service just six months after the ship began undergoing maintenance and upgrades. Similar maintenance periods typically take six to eight months to complete. The quicker-than-expected turnaround comes after *Ford* completed a record-setting deployment that included a laundry room fire that will also need to be addressed. Those factors typically would require additional time to address. Norfolk Naval Shipyard Commander Rear Adm. Kavon Hakimzadah said there may still need to be some "follow-up" and "cleanup" to support the ship's company, but he believes the Navy will deliver the ship in six months. The National Interest reported on Wednesday that the maintenance period, known as a planned incremental availability, typically includes upgrades to the warship's combat systems, networks, and other equipment. Even after the ship is delivered, it will require several months of post-PIA sea trials, training and certifications before deploying again.

Joint Chiefs Chairman Outlines Autonomous Systems Role In Current, Future Battlefields: Defense News reported on Wednesday that Joint Chiefs of Staff Chairman Gen. Dan Caine used his keynote speech at this week's Air, Space and Cyber Conference to warn the ways and speed of modern warfare are changing. Artificial intelligence, cyber capabilities and autonomous systems are the top factors accelerating changes in warfare, he said. Caine noted that the modern battlefield operates from the

seabed to the space between the Earth and moon, and he believes the advantage will go to whoever can see, understand, decide and act first as a learning organization. DefenseScoop reported on Wednesday that Caine warned that U.S. military leaders should assume that autonomous systems will hunt troops on the battlefield, units may face electronic attacks and real-time tracking. “We have to transition the joint force to be prepared to fight and win our future wars by generating and delivering lethality at scale with an agile, optimized, high-low mix of combat capabilities,” he said.

Social Media Highlight Of The Week

Posted Sept. 15 to Ingalls Shipbuilding’s LinkedIn page:

“Some work can’t be learned from a manual—it’s mastered by rolling up your sleeves, learning from experienced hands, and tackling challenges one step at a time.

Our Maintenance Transportation team embodies that spirit every day. Their recent work refurbishing a 300-ton crane is just one example of the skill, dedication, and teamwork that keeps our operations moving forward.”



New Navy Housing Coming To Downtown Newport News: Virginia Business reported on Wednesday that the U.S. Navy plans to invest \$1.7 billion for new and renovated housing for thousands of sailors across Hampton Roads. A part of the five-year agreement between the Navy and Hunt Military Communities includes the construction of two 17-story residential towers with about 750 two-bedroom apartments, a 1,050-space parking garage and ground-floor commercial space in downtown Newport News, Virginia. USNI News reported on Wednesday that the Newport News portion of the project is expected to cost \$450 million and replace Huntington Hall, which is less than a 10-minute walk from the southernmost gate of HII’s Newport News Shipbuilding division. The housing projects are part of the Navy’s plans to improve housing and support for sailors for the Hampton Roads area.

HII’s Weekly News Digest is produced by HII’s Corporate Communications team and posted to MyHII every Friday.

Please note: Social media is blocked on HII computers for most employees. Employees are encouraged to visit HII’s Facebook page and other social media sites on personal time and from non-work devices.

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