

# News Digest

Week ending May 17, 2026

[Go to the archive](#)

## The Guardian: As Aukus spending and delays blow out, will Australia's nuclear submarines ever materialise?

*The deal will cost Australia \$368bn but the strongest signal yet has come that the US is not building enough subs for itself, let alone for Australia*

## USNI News: Virginia Subs Will Hit 2-A-Year Build Rate in 2030s, CNO Caudle Says

*Caudle's comments are in line with the goal the service has set as a justification of \$6.2 billion in submarine industrial base spending.*

## Providence Journal: Decision to close Quonset runway is a political choice

*Would Electric Boat jobs at Quonset really be lost if they don't take this critical runway?*

## The Day: More Groton City streets to become resident-only parking

*Mayor Jill Rusk said she has spoken many times to Electric Boat about parking concerns, and the submarine manufacturer is trying to address the issue*

## The Day: Navy awards \$2.3B contract for advance work on Virginia-class subs

*"This contract award is another emphatic, positive statement by the Navy of the priority of the Virginia-class program and the American submarine industrial base," Rep. Joe Courtney said.*

## Westerly Sun: Aquarium's new 'Pathways to the Deep' exhibit focuses on STEM

*"We're excited to introduce young minds to marine science and technologies in submarine manufacturing, empowering the next generation of skilled talent," EB's Courtney Murphy said.*

## New York Times: Anduril Raises \$5 Billion, as Push to Modernize the Military Accelerates

*The start-up, which makes A.I.-backed weapons, was valued at \$61 billion in the financing round, double what it was a year ago.*

## Wall Street Journal: The U.S. Military Needs Another Revolution

*New forms of war have developed since 1986, when Congress enacted the last major reform. Opinion column by Rahm Emanuel.*

## Business Insider: A rare Navy photo revealed the location of a nuclear-missile submarine amid Iran tensions

*The US military rarely discloses the locations of its deployed ballistic missile submarines, the naval arm of its nuclear might. When it does, it's often meant to send a message.*

## The Guardian: Russian ship that sank near Spain may have been carrying nuclear reactors for submarines to North Korea

*Western military may have targeted the Ursa Major, which went down after mysterious explosions, reports suggest.*

## Washington Post: Harvard has a defense-tech incubator. Pete Hegseth should visit it.

*QLab is everything the secretary of defense says the elite school is not.*

## Global Defense News: U.S. Navy Deploys AI System to Accelerate Columbia and Virginia Submarine Production.

*Revealed in the Navy's May 2026 Shipbuilding Plan, the initiative aims to cut chronic production delays and strengthen America's ability to sustain submarine output.*

## Australian Defence Magazine: Century Engineering secures US defence export contracts

*To date, 13 Australian companies have qualified for inclusion in the US submarine industrial base through AUSSQ*

## Newport This Week: Town Council Approves Proposed Trades Center at New High School

*The shift will allow Middletown to develop machinists and welders, and provide internships at Electric Boat.*

[Back to headlines](#)

### **The Guardian: As Aukus spending and delays blow out, will Australia's nuclear submarines ever materialise?**

[Ben Doherty](#), May 16, 2026

As Australia's [Aukus](#) spending blows out further, US submarine building falls years further behind: the strongest signal yet that America's promised Virginia-class submarines are increasingly unlikely to materialise under Australian command.

The US navy has admitted it would take until 2032 before it was building two Virginia-class boats a year – still below the rate needed to supply Australia.

Australia's budget, released Tuesday, put an extra \$400m towards the Aukus agreement over the next three years: the Australian Submarine Agency's total resourcing is now \$2.13bn to the middle of 2029.

In addition, Australia has sent A\$2.76bn (US\$2bn) to the US, and A\$863m (£469m) to the UK, to boost their flagging submarine-building industrial bases.

It remains a fraction of the total: to 2055, the Aukus deal is conservatively estimated to cost Australia \$368bn.

But the US Congress and navy, on which Australia will depend for its first nuclear-powered submarines – two second-hand Virginia-class attack submarines – continues to signal that it is not building enough submarines for its own fleet, let alone any to sell to Australia.

Submarine building in the US has slowed dramatically over decades. It now takes US boatbuilders [10 years to build an attack submarine](#). Twenty years ago, it was taking them six.

For the past 15 years, the US navy has ordered Virginia-class submarines at a rate of two a year but its shipyards have never met that build rate “and since 2022 has been limited to about 1.1 to 1.2 boats a year, resulting in a growing backlog of boats procured but not yet built”, the Congressional Research service says.

As a result, the US Navy has only 49 of the 66 submarines it needs.

Shipyards must build Virginia-class submarines at a rate of two a year to meet the US’s own needs, and lift that to 2.33 boats a year to be able to supply submarines to Australia.

The [navy initially forecast](#) that it would reach that build rate – two Virginia-class boats a year – by 2026.

Navy officials then forecast that date at 2028.

Now it has been pushed further again: to 2032.

Giving evidence before the House appropriations committee defense subcommittee, the chief of naval operations, Adm Daryl Caudle, said: “I would say we’re going to be up on step with that [production rate] around 2032 based on the things we’ve done ... we should be up to two-per-year in the early 2030s.”

Caudle gave evidence he believed Aukus was progressing apace.

“I just got back from Perth, [they’re making their milestones](#). There’s a couple things they’re behind on, I’m frustrated with, that are part of the support system there ... But all the production work there on the pier ... they’re making their marks.

“The integration of their sailors and officers and maintenance personnel at Pearl Harbor naval shipyard is fantastic. This is working and we want to support them and it is going to turn out really great when we get it delivered.”

But even if US boat-builders reached a production rate of two Virginia-class submarines a year, it would still be insufficient to contribute to Aukus – short of the 2.33 boats a year required to have sufficient submarines to sell even one to Australia.

The US legislation governing Aukus states that the president of the US can only transfer a submarine to Australia if losing that submarine from US service “[will not degrade](#) the United States undersea capabilities”.

There is further evidence of the structural challenges facing US shipbuilding, emerging from Washington, and from yards across the country.

The [US Navy's shipbuilding plan](#) – a detailed 30-year roadmap of all of the navy's planned vessels, released this month – does not account for building any additional submarines for Aukus. The entire document mentions Aukus only once, as a footnote, saying it has been excluded from the navy's projections.

A report issued last month – [Challenges Facing the Navy's and Coast Guard's Shipbuilding Programs and the Shipbuilding Industrial Base](#) – paints a dire picture of an industry that has consistently failed to meet targets.

“The Navy and the shipbuilding industrial base have had the resources, but have been unable to deliver the ships that the service has ordered in a timely manner.”

Workforce challenges were the greatest brake on production rates.

“Nearly all the major shipyards are having difficulty hiring and retaining workers, and a generation of longtime shipyard workers has retired or soon will. As a result, the workforces in many of those yards are, less experienced than they were in the past.”

As well, up to 70% of suppliers of parts have no competitors, so “a single supplier of a critical component could disrupt ship construction if it encountered difficulties in production”.

The [US Congressional Research Service](#) has openly countenanced “alternative divisions of labour” under which no Virginia-class submarines are ever transferred to Australian control.

The [research service's latest report on Aukus](#), issued in January, considered a revision under which the submarines earmarked for sale to Australia were instead retained under US command to be sailed out of Australian bases.

The report argued both for and against the US selling three Virginia-class submarines to Australia, beginning in 2032. But it makes the case that, in the event of a “conflict or crisis” with China over Taiwan, submarines under Australian command could not be ordered into operation, whereas US-commanded vessels, operated out of Australian bases, could be immediately deployed.

The acting secretary of the navy, Hung Cao, appearing before the same house subcommittee as Admiral Caudle, gave an insight into the US perspective. He said he felt the submarines – under US or Australian command – were, essentially, interchangeable.

“The enemy will not know if it’s an American submarine out there or an Australian submarine [because it’s going to all be the same](#) ... let them guess what’s out there.”

[Back to headlines](#)

## **USNI News: Virginia Subs Will Hit 2-A-Year Build Rate in 2030s, CNO Caudle Says**

[Mallory Shelbourne and Sam LaGrone](#), May 12, 2026

Shipbuilders are on track to deliver two Virginia-class attack submarines per year in the early 2030s, Chief of Naval Operations Adm. Daryl Caudle told defense appropriators on Tuesday.

Based on the current investment in the submarine industrial base and workforce and the expansion of distributed construction, Caudle estimated that builders General Dynamics Electric Boat and HII’s Newport News Shipbuilding will hit the two-a-year delivery rate for the attack boats by 2032.

“I would say we’re going to be up on step with that [rate] around 2032 based on the things we’ve [put] in place and the things we have now,” Caudle told the House Appropriations Committee’s defense subcommittee in response to a question from Rep. Robert Aderholt (R-Ala.).

Caudle’s comments are in line with the goal the service has set to achieve a rate of two Virginias and one Columbia-class nuclear ballistic missile submarine per year by Fiscal Year 2031 as a justification of \$6.2 billion in submarine industrial base spending, according to the Navy’s long-range shipbuilding plan released on Monday.

“The Navy’s requirement to increase the submarine production rate to at least one Columbia-class and two Virginia-class submarines per year remains the top industrial base priority, with a near-term focus on stabilizing the supply chain and growing the skilled workforce needed until full production rates are achieved,” reads the plan.

Currently, the delivery rate for Virginia-class submarines is about 1.3 a year, USNI News understands. [In 2023](#), then Secretary of the Navy Carlos Del Toro said the Navy was set to meet a 2028 two-a-year rate for the submarines.

A spokesperson from General Dynamics declined to comment when reached Tuesday by USNI News. An HII spokesman deferred to the Navy regarding the build rate for the Virginia-class.

“We continue to work with urgency to deliver the highest-quality submarines to the Navy,” reads a statement from HII. “We have seen positive trends with respect to the

Virginia-class submarine program as a result of initiatives we've implemented since the start of 2025."

Electric Boat and Newport News partner to build the Virginia and Columbia submarines with both shipbuilders building components for each submarine.

The build rate for the Virginia-class boats is key to the AUKUS security pact between the U.S., the United Kingdom and Australia. As part of AUKUS, the U.S. plans to sell several Virginia-class boats to the Australians starting in the 2030s while Canberra's industrial base develops the domestic workforce and infrastructure to build its own nuclear-powered submarines.

Navy officials have said for years that the U.S. industrial base must build 2.33 attack boats per year, in addition to one Columbia-class boomer, for the U.S. to sell the attack boats to the Australians.

During the hearing, Acting Navy Secretary Hung Cao addressed questions about the request for \$1.85 billion to study building to study foreign ship designs. The Pentagon's budget included the research and development to study prospective designs for destroyers and frigates, [USNI News reported last month](#).

The study "will be used to investigate a full spectrum of procurement options to attract more shipbuilding capacity into domestic shipyards and bring additional ships into the fleet – including studies of the ability of allied shipbuilding companies to build ships or components," reads the budget language.

In response to questions from Rep. Pete Aguilar (D-Calif.) during the hearing, Cao provided additional details on the study.

"We're studying the foreign ships so that we can eventually move the whole production line to the United States," Cao said. "The Korean shipyards and the Japanese shipyards – these foreign shipyards have been able to develop warships very quickly, in about two years, whereas our shipyards are taking six to eight years. So we're trying to bring American workers over there to learn their techniques and their procedures and see how we can expedite our building of [our] ships."

Rep. Betty McCollum (D-Minn.), the subcommittee's ranking member, voiced concern over the lack of a concept and schedule for the Trump-class battleship program, which the Navy wants to start buying in the Fiscal Year 2028 budget cycle. McCollum noted that the Navy is seeking \$1 billion in advance procurement funding despite not having finalized a design for the battleship.

In the Navy's Fiscal Year 2027 30-year shipbuilding blueprint, published Monday, the service revealed for the first time that the battleship will be nuclear-powered.

"I'm thrilled that we finally landed on the fact that it's going to be nuclear," Caudle told McCollum at the hearing.

"That was the initial idea and we batted around – to deliver it sooner – to make it conventional, and we came back around full circle to make it nuclear and that's the exact right answer," he continued. "As a command and control ship that I can forward posture and run surface action groups out of, this is exactly the high end of a capital ship in the high-low mix that my fighting instructions call out for."

Cao repeatedly referred to legacy requirements for the canceled CG(X) next-generation cruiser when justifying the requirements for the battleship to McCollum.

Caudle confirmed that the Navy would use the same reactor design for the battleship that the service uses for the Ford-class aircraft carriers.

"We're going to use the Ford reactor, the A1B reactor, and the components that support that from the vessel – the generator, pressurizer loop components, reactor cooling pump components," Caudle told lawmakers. "All of that technology that's going into the design of the battleship, the nuclear battleship, from the reactor plant perspective, is all pull-through technology from the Ford class, as are most of the combat systems, radar systems [and] missile systems."

Caudle said procuring those already established long-lead items is part of the Navy's planned \$1 billion advance procurement line-item for the battleship program in FY 2027.

[Back to headlines](#)

### **Providence Journal: Decision to close Quonset runway is a political choice**

Bill Weedon, Guest columnist. May 17, 2026

The decision by the [Rhode Island Airport Corp. \(RIAC\) to close the primary-wind runway 5-23 at Quonset State Airport](#) is the final straw exposing the incompetence at the quasi-public state agency.

The critical wind-aligned runway is literally located on Narragansett Bay where the wind blows constantly, especially in winter months. The closure decision was made with no local pilot input or open discussion. The board meeting where the vote was taken required questions to be submitted 24 hours in advance ... far from an open discussion. As a Quonset small business owner, I completely support business growth, especially

when it addresses a national security threat. But the rash decision to close this important general aviation runway seems to have been made for political reasons without considering alternatives.

So what are the alternatives? There is space at the north end of Quonset to move the runway and provide the same current runway capability to small general aviation aircraft. Secondly, there is space across from the North Kingstown Golf Course, across Roger Williams Way and adjacent to the current General Dynamics Electric Boat facility to build ample parking and submarine hangars.

Why didn't Rhode Island Airport Corporation and Electric Boat consider taking part of the golf course instead of the airport? Do golfers really need 18 holes? How many parking lots do we really need for the new cars coming off the boats in Davisville? I am not seriously proposing taking the golf course, but why is a critical airport runway deemed somehow less important (or an easier target) than one or two holes of golf?

Would Electric Boat jobs at Quonset really be lost if they don't take this critical runway? How permanent are these jobs ... are we in for massive layoffs in the future? Are there other businesses, such as the J. Goodison shipyard and the proposed incinerator, that want a piece of the runway and are using the cover of Electric Boat's expansion to fuel proposed land acquisitions?

RIAC's job is to protect our state airports (all six of them), and it seems they only care about airlines at T.F. Green International. Apparently, the CEO of RIAC, whose total compensation is near the highest of CEOs of similar-sized airports in the United States, receives bonuses only for bringing airlines into Warwick. So getting rid of runways at general aviation airports reduces expenses and provides more funding for over-inflated salaries of the fat cats at RIAC.

Incredibly, there are no pilots on the board of the airport corporation, as all board appointments are made by the governor, who relies on campaign contributions to fuel his reelection bid.

If the majority of the RIAC board members were elected rather than appointed, we would have a better chance of an airport corporation focused on protecting and managing our state airport system rather than one that responds to political pressures and members' personal interests.

*Bill Weedon is a commercial pilot and flight instructor and former president of the Rhode Island Pilots Association.*

[Back to headlines](#)

## **More Groton City streets to become resident-only parking**

[By Kimberly Drelich, The Day](#)

Published: May 16, 2026

Groton — The city plans to designate more streets for resident-only parking in response to multiple concerns from residents about parking.

The proposed streets are Virginia Avenue, Warner Street and West Street. In addition, the city plans to change Shore Avenue, which is currently all resident-only parking, to have resident-only parking near homes and then open parking near the park and coastal access area. The city recently reopened Shore Avenue following the completion of the Shore Avenue seawall project.

The City Council plans to take a vote on the proposed changes at its 7:30 p.m. Monday meeting in Council Chambers.

Last year, the city [increased resident-only parking](#) within a half mile of submarine manufacturer Electric Boat, which is increasing its hiring, as the city faced a parking shortage and resident complaints about the impact of workers parking in the area.

Residents on some streets not initially designated as resident-only have requested their streets be added as resident-only.

City Mayor Jill Rusk said during last week's Committee of the Whole meeting that residents are facing everyday situations where cars are parked up and down their street and they are not able to get out of their driveway.

She described how one West Street resident was running out of oil but couldn't get an oil delivery because there was no place for the oil delivery truck to park — and it happened multiple times.

Councilor Christine Piazza said it can be difficult at times even for small buses to go on those streets, and she thinks about how it must be for emergency vehicles getting down them. She said limiting parking in those areas would be beneficial.

Councilor Jean-Claude Ambroise said some paved roads appear to have been shrunk during a repaving program more than 12 years ago.

"Needless to say, we have a parking need in the City of Groton now," Ambroise said. "There are an influx of individuals that are coming here to work that need parking. We have residents in areas that now have not just one car, but multiple cars, and I believe

that it's important for us to be mindful of the individuals that are residing in our city limits that need available parking."

He said the city's enforcement mechanism needs to continue to be looked over, and he supports whatever the council can do to ensure residents have safe and available parking and public safety vehicles and school buses can easily get in and out of neighborhoods.

In response to a question about enforcement, Rusk said the city has a traffic enforcement officer who writes tickets every day, and there has been an influx of people paying parking tickets.

She said the hope is to stop the parking violations and not have to write tickets.

Rusk said that numerous residents who live on West, Warner and Virginia have expressed concerns about the number of vehicles that park along the roadways during the day. These vehicles in some instances have made it difficult for residents to have visitors and service calls.

[\*Back to headlines\*](#)

## **The Day: Navy awards \$2.3B contract for advance work on Virginia-class subs**

Published: May 12, 2026

Two members of the state's Congressional delegation announced Tuesday that the Navy's has awarded a \$2.3 billion contract for advanced construction of Block VI Virginia-class submarines.

Democratic Sen. Richard Blumenthal and Rep. Joe Courtney, D-2nd District, said the contract will support Electric Boat's acquisition of long lead time material and pre-construction efforts associated with the submarines.

Courtney, the ranking member of the House Armed Services Subcommittee on Seapower and Projection Forces, said he has been calling on the Navy to award the delayed construction contract for Block VI Virginia-class submarines, which Congress authorized in 2023.

"This contract award is another emphatic, positive statement by the Navy of the priority of the Virginia-class program and the American submarine industrial base. Putting down investments on long-lead items for Block VI submarines demonstrates that not only Congress but the Navy is investing in the Virginia-class supply chain," Courtney said.

Last month, during a Seapower subcommittee on shipbuilding, Courtney referred to the overdue Block VI construction contract, calling the multi-year procurement the “Da-Vinci Code” to stimulate growth in the shipbuilding industrial base.

The work will be performed by numerous subcontractors across the country, including one in Windsor Locks.

“This \$2.3 billion is fantastic news for Electric Boat and their supply chain. Submarines are at the core of our commitment to national defense and Electric Boat has shown time and again that they are capable of handling this incredibly important work. This funding is a boon for our state’s talented workforce and our economy, and I will keep fighting for more investments for our defense manufacturing industry,” Blumenthal said.

[Back to headlines](#)

## **Westerly Sun: Aquarium's new 'Pathways to the Deep' exhibit focuses on STEM**

[By Ryan Blessing Sun staff writer](#), May 11, 2026

STONINGTON — Seeing the undersea world in sound, like a whale, and trying to pilot a submarine are just two of the attractions at a new exhibit that opened Monday at Mystic Aquarium.

The aquarium's Pathways to the Deep was developed as part of its partnership with General Dynamics Electric Boat. The new exhibit lets visitors explore a variety of mechanical and electronic interactive features while learning about the future of the Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) workforce and global conservation efforts.

The exhibit, the aquarium noted, is powered by the Submarine Industrial Base Program Office. Leadership from the aquarium and state and local officials gathered Monday morning for a ribbon-cutting ceremony.

“Through our partnership with General Dynamics Electric Boat, we are continuing to provide educational opportunities at Mystic Aquarium with the opening of this new exhibit,” said MaryEllen Mateleska, the aquarium's vice president of education and conservation. “Visitors will be immersed in global conservation efforts and marine science, coming away inspired to learn more about STEM opportunities and vital marine ecosystems that benefit both our local Connecticut and global communities.”

Among the exhibit's interactive components developed through collaboration between the two Connecticut-based partners are:

Oceans of Opportunities — Featuring real Electric Boat employees, this interactive exhibit invites visitors to discover the many career paths behind submarine design, construction and operations.

Seeing with Sound — Inspired by nature and technology, the immersive simulation lets visitors explore the ocean using sound, comparing how a beluga whale uses echolocation with how a submarine relies on sonar.

Submarine Deep Dive — Visitors can "be a submarine pilot," and test their piloting skills as they navigate from the Submarine Base along the Thames River, then dive beneath the surface to enter Long Island Sound while learning fascinating facts about submarines and the ocean animals that share the deep sea environments.

Hiding in Plain Sight — Featuring cuttlefish, this new exhibit explores the science of camouflage and how biomimicry inspires submarine design and technology.

"We're excited to introduce young minds to marine science and technologies in submarine manufacturing, empowering the next generation of skilled talent," General Dynamics Electric Boat Director of Talent Management Courtney Murphy said. "This new exhibit offers a unique opportunity for visitors to learn about our region's shipbuilding heritage. Electric Boat and Mystic Aquarium collaborated on these unique interactive exhibits which explore the science behind submarines and career opportunities along Connecticut's coastline."

The partnership between the two Connecticut organizations is centered on a shared mission to protect the ocean through education and community engagement. In addition to the new exhibit, the collaboration will also include efforts supported through the Navy's Maritime Industrial Base Program:

Electric Boat Fellows and Scholars: Electric Boat sponsors three college and six high school interns who gain hands-on professional experience within the aquarium's Education and Conservation Department. The participants also contribute to the development of summer camps, outreach programs, and public events.

Career Expo: During Manufacturing Month each October, the aquarium hosts a career expo focused on the manufacturing of submarines in Connecticut and highlighting the synergies between shipbuilding and the aquarium in the areas of manufacturing.

Educational Event Speakers: Electric Boat speakers are featured at Mystic Aquarium education events including Women in Science, World Oceans Day, and the Career Expo.

A year ago, the aquarium entered a three-year partnership with General Dynamics Electric Boat. That venture, one of the most significant corporate alliances in the aquarium's history, will fund initiatives advancing STEM education, workforce development and recruitment and conservation throughout Connecticut.

Centered around education and community engagement, its aim is to inform and engage the public on Electric Boat's workforce opportunities and career paths. Funded by the Navy Maritime Industrial Base Program, the collaboration will expand educational access through aquarium visits and foster diverse learning experiences.

[Back to headlines](#)

## **New York Times: Anduril Raises \$5 Billion, as Push to Modernize the Military Accelerates**

By [Sheera Frenkel](#), May 13, 2026

Anduril, the defense tech company that makes artificial-intelligence-backed weapons, said on Wednesday that it had raised \$5 billion in new funding, as modernizing the U.S. military has become a priority for the Trump administration.

The financing values Anduril at \$61 billion, double the \$30.5 billion that it was valued at in June in its last funding round. The latest fund-raising was led by the longtime investors Thrive Capital and Andreessen Horowitz amid talk that Anduril could try to go public in the next year. In total, the company has raised \$6.82 billion through eight funding rounds from investors including Founders Fund and Lux Capital.

Anduril has established itself as a top player among U.S. defense companies. Founded by the tech entrepreneur Palmer Luckey and others in 2017, the company has developed autonomous submarines and jets, weaponized drones and [augmented reality helmets for the military](#). The firm, based south of Los Angeles, has said it wants to [remake American national defense](#).

In its early years, Anduril created border surveillance software for the U.S. government before expanding into other products. When Russia invaded Ukraine in 2022, the company began testing A.I.-backed drones on the battlefield and has since developed a range of pilotless aircraft.

In March, Anduril [signed](#) a 10-year, \$20 billion deal with the Army for some of its software products and A.I.-backed weapons. That same month, the company [announced](#) that it was part of a consortium of companies building a \$185

billion space-interceptor missile system for the U.S. government, which is known as Golden Dome.

In a letter on Wednesday, Brian Schimpf, Anduril's chief executive, said the company had more than doubled its revenue to \$2.2 billion in 2025.

Anduril “nearly doubled our work force, won and delivered on our first international program of record to the Royal Australian Navy and demonstrated autonomous flight on an Air Force unmanned combat aircraft program, among many other milestones,” Mr. Schimpf said.

The company also [opened a \\$1 billion factory](#) in Ohio to speed production of its weapons systems.

“The convergence of artificial intelligence, autonomy and advanced sensing is reshaping warfare,” Mr. Schimpf said.

[Back to headlines](#)

## **Wall Street Journal: The U.S. Military Needs Another Revolution**

By Rahm Emanuel, May 10, 2026

The American military’s global pre-eminence over the past quarter-century can be traced to two seminal failures—the broken morale and discipline revealed after Vietnam, and the lack of service-level integration evident during the invasion of Grenada.

The first required the Pentagon to acknowledge the military’s moribund state and rebuild. The second made clear that the Pentagon’s command structure needed an overhaul, as mandated by the Goldwater-Nichols Act of 1986. The wars in Ukraine and Iran show that again we need to revolutionize our approach to armed conflict. And there’s no time to waste.

The issue isn’t reawakening the “warrior spirit” in our soldiers, as President Trump likes to claim. Nor is it simply that the military needs more resources, though that may be true in many circumstances. Rather, it is whether we are comprehensively prepared for future battlefields. It has been the nation’s policy for decades to ensure the military is able to fight two wars simultaneously. But given how the world is evolving technologically and geopolitically, we must be able to fight two types of wars—conventional and unconventional—at the same time and in the same theater. To that end, we need a second Goldwater-Nichols revolution.

Airplanes, ships and tanks will remain important to deter adversaries and win conflicts. But amid the president's talk of a "[golden fleet](#)" of "Trump-class" battleships, we are losing our broader edge. Neither Ukraine nor Iran has a navy—we sank Iran's earlier this year—yet both control vital bodies of water. That tells us something important. The Trump administration still gauges success on the battlefield by conventional methods—for instance, how many Iranian warships are at the bottom of the sea. The Iranians, by contrast, judge progress by determining whether they control international shipping lanes. We went to war in large part to neutralize Iran's nuclear weapons program, and the country's leaders realized they had another nuclear option: the Strait of Hormuz. Their unconventional measure carries significant weight—that's where we need to win.

The Goldwater-Nichols watershed integrated the armed services so they could act in concert, as they did during the Gulf War. Such integration was on display recently in the mission that extracted Nicolás Maduro from Venezuela without a single U.S. fatality. That command structure has elevated some of America's most talented sons and daughters into positions of authority. When I worked with Army Chief of Staff Gen. Randy George and Adm. Lisa Franchetti as the ambassador to Japan, I saw why so many people around the world believe America's military is diplomatically sophisticated, strategically wise and operationally unmatched.

Unfortunately, the Trump administration is discarding that talent. The president pushed out [Gen. George](#) and [Adm. Franchetti](#), among other top officials, preferring to promote loyal officers he believes share his goal of making the military more "warrior" and less "woke." We need to restore merit-based norms—and to develop ways to draw the legions of young men playing videogames in their parents' basements to help guard America against our adversaries.

But this is about much more than personnel. Our procurement process has institutionalized failure as a business model. Pentagon suppliers operate on time frames few institutions would tolerate—almost no major system has been deployed on time or on budget. As ambassador, I was [outraged](#) that Raytheon and [Lockheed Martin](#) had put nearly \$19 billion into stock buybacks in 2023 as against little more than \$4 billion on capital expenditures. In January 2025, I proposed that the Big Five military contractors be precluded from further share repurchases until they began to deliver weapons on time and on budget. Further, I proposed that 30% to 40% of the federal dollars directed to emergent technologies and new asymmetrical weapons systems be set aside for bidders other than the Big Five contractors. That's how you stand up new companies and new technologies with speed.

The Pentagon shouldn't have needed to venture outside typical procedures to reverse-engineer an equivalent of Iran's low-cost Shahed drone. But because the incumbent system is so slow—what an unconventional team did in weeks would have taken the Big Five years—that's what [U.S. Central Command](#) was compelled to do. Our military is spending millions of dollars each time it is threatened by one of Iran's \$35,000 drones. That is asymmetric warfare—and we need systems that put us ahead of our adversaries in every realm: AI, cyber, space, underwater drones and more.

Unfortunately, the Red Bull-infused bravado that has become Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth's calling card is a distraction from this mission. When Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky came to the White House in February 2025, Mr. Trump admonished him: "You don't have the cards right now." Rather than ask Ukraine to share its drone technology, he demanded a mining deal—for minerals that may not even exist. The results are obvious. Ukraine's drones have been crucial to stymieing Moscow's advances, while helping Kyiv attack deep into Russian territory. We should have the best and cheapest drones, and instead we're racing to catch up.

Iran's strangling of the Strait of Hormuz and Ukraine's defense against four years of Russian aggression suggest that despite the president's bluster and Mr. Hegseth's politicization of the brass, the size of your battleship isn't the only thing that matters.

To remain the world's pre-eminent military power and project deterrence in several theaters at the same time, the Pentagon will need integrated command structures, different strategic plans, modernized procurement processes, and training programs for the battlefield of tomorrow. While more money is required to develop the ability to fight two different types of wars simultaneously, we also need leadership and vision. The challenge will require reforms unlike any we've undergone since the Reagan administration. Beyond needing a way out of the messes Mr. Trump has gotten us into, America today needs a second Goldwater-Nichols moment.

*Mr. Emanuel, a Democrat, served as a U.S. representative from Illinois (2003-09), White House chief of staff (2009-10), mayor of Chicago (2011-19) and ambassador to Japan (2022-25).*

## **Business Insider: A rare Navy photo revealed the location of a nuclear-missile submarine amid Iran tensions**

By [Talia Lakritz](#), May 12, 2026

The US military rarely discloses the locations of its deployed ballistic missile [submarines](#), the naval arm of its nuclear might. When it does, it's often meant to send a message.

On Monday, the [US Navy's Sixth Fleet](#) shared a photo of an Ohio-class ballistic-missile submarine docked in Gibraltar, writing that the unnamed sub's visit to the British territory off the coast of Spain "demonstrates US capability, flexibility, and continuing commitment to its NATO allies."

The Navy release didn't mention Iran or the ongoing conflict, but the appearance of a "boomer" submarine — that's designed to carry nuclear Trident II ballistic missiles — in the Mediterranean notably comes at a time of high [tension in the nearby Middle East](#).

The US Navy is blockading Iranian ports, and Iran's forces have launched attacks on US military and commercial vessels.

And on Monday, President Donald Trump said that the [US ceasefire agreement with Iran](#) is "on life support." He called Tehran's latest proposal "a piece of garbage," and, in early April, he vowed that "all Hell will reign down" if they didn't reopen the Strait of Hormuz, which remains effectively closed. Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth testified in a congressional hearing Tuesday that the US has plans to escalate or de-escalate as needed.

The US Navy has 14 Ohio-class ballistic-missile submarines, each of which can carry 20 Trident II D5 missiles. They are "specifically designed for extended deterrent patrols," according to the [Naval Sea Systems Command](#). Each Trident missile can carry up to eight nuclear warheads.

These powerful submarines form the undersea leg of the US nuclear triad, which also includes nuclear-capable bombers and siloed intercontinental ballistic missiles.

The Ohio-class ballistic missile submarine USS Maryland test-launched an unarmed Trident II D5 missile in 2019. John Kowalski/US Navy Photo

US Navy ballistic-missile submarines are tasked with staying hidden for months at a time while remaining ready to guarantee, if necessary, a retaliatory nuclear strike. The

survivability of these subs isn't guaranteed by armor or speed but rather by stealth and operational secrecy, which is why locations are usually kept secret.

That's why their current locations, especially while at sea on deterrence patrol, are among the most closely guarded operational secrets in the US government. A sub's location in port is far less sensitive than while on patrol.

The movements of attack submarines and cruise-missile subs are not as sensitive, due to the boomer's key role in nuclear strategy.

In July 2025, USS Newport News made a public stop in Iceland, marking the first time a [US Navy nuclear-powered attack submarine](#) visited the country. The visit came amid concerns over Russian military activity in the Arctic.

Adm. Stuart Munsch, the commander of US Naval Forces Europe-Africa, told Business Insider that the submarine's visit was "important for the strategic signal it sends to adversaries about our presence in the area."

In June 2024, a US Navy ballistic missile submarine surfaced off Norway amid [tensions with Russia](#). The Navy did not specify the intention.

And in November 2023, during Israel's war with Hamas and escalating conflicts in the wider Middle East, US Central Command shared a photo of an Ohio-class [guided-missile submarine](#) sailing surfaced while en route to the Red Sea. The move was perceived as a signal of support for America's closest security partner in the Middle East and a show of force aimed at Iran and the Lebanon-based Hezbollah militant group.

A Pentagon spokesperson referred Business Insider to the Navy, which did not immediately respond to requests for comment on the purpose of the display in Gibraltar.

[Back to headlines](#)

## **The Guardian: Russian ship that sank near Spain may have been carrying nuclear reactors to North Korea**

[Sam Jones](#) in Madrid, May12, 2026

A Russian cargo ship that suffered a series of mysterious explosions before eventually sinking off the south-east coast of Spain 17 months ago may have been carrying nuclear submarine reactors destined for [North Korea](#), according to reports.

The Ursa Major, a 142-metre-long, Russian-flagged ship owned by the state-linked Oboronlogistics company, was purportedly sailing from St Petersburg to Vladivostok in

the far east of [Russia](#) when it sank 62 nautical miles off the coast of Murcia a little before midnight on 23 December 2024.

Eleven hours earlier, Spain's maritime rescue and security service, Sasemar, had dispatched a helicopter, a fast rescue boat, and a tugboat to the Ursa Major, which put out a distress call at 12.53pm.

Other vessels in the area noted that the Russian vessel, which had slowed dramatically over the previous 24 hours, was listing badly and saw its crew abandoning ship. The crew members told rescuers that there had been three explosions in the ship's engine room.

Spanish attempts to assist the Ursa Major were curtailed at 8.07pm that evening when a Russian warship arrived, took over operations and ordered the two Sasemar boats to withdraw to a distance of two nautical miles.

According to a Spanish government document that was released three months ago in response to parliamentary questions over the incident, the Russian warship then launched flares over the Ursa Major. A [report in the Murcia newspaper La Verdad](#) said the flares could have been deployed to blind the infrared channels of the intelligence satellites that were monitoring the incident.

A [CNN investigation](#) into the sinking of the vessel noted that “four similar seismic signatures ... the pattern of which resembled underwater mines or overground quarry blasts” were heard just after the flares were fired. By 11.20pm, the Ursa Major had sunk and now lies at a depth of 2,500 metres. Two crew members are thought to have died in the initial explosions, while 14 were rescued.

Although the vessel was officially transporting “non-dangerous merchandise” – including 129 shipping containers, two cranes, and two large maintenance hole covers – its route and sinking raised the suspicions of the Spanish authorities.

Under questioning, the captain of the Ursa Major eventually told Spanish investigators that the “manhole covers” onboard his ship were “nuclear reactor components similar to those used by submarines”, but that no nuclear fuel was being transported.

The Ursa Major pictured listing before it sank 62 nautical miles off the coast of Murcia. Photograph: Social media/Reuters

Investigators had also noticed two huge blue containers – each estimated to weigh about 65 tonnes – on the stern of the ship in satellite photographs.

“These would therefore be two loads almost impossible to transport along the winding roads of Russia, Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, and Afghanistan between the two cities served by the Ursa Major,” said the report in La Verdad.

“That mysterious undeclared cargo would certainly justify a voyage of more than 15,000km by sea between St Petersburg and Vladivostok.”

A source familiar with the investigation told CNN that the Russian captain believed he would be diverted to the North Korean port of Rason to deliver the two reactors.

While the incident remains a mystery, CNN suggested the sinking of the Ursa Major “may mark a rare and high-stakes intervention by a western military to prevent Russia from sending an upgrade in nuclear technology to a key ally, North Korea”. The network noted that the Russian ship set sail just two months after the North Korean leader, Kim Jong-un, had sent troops to assist with Vladimir Putin’s invasion of Ukraine.

CNN and La Verdad reported that a 50cm by 50cm hole found in the vessel’s hull – with the damaged metal facing inwards – could have been made by a super-fast weapon known as a supercavitating torpedo.

“Only the United States, a few Nato allies, Russia and Iran are believed to have this kind of high-speed torpedo, which fires air ahead of the weapon to reduce the drag of the water,” said CNN.

“The source familiar with the [Spanish] investigation said it concluded the use of such a device would fit with the size of the hole in the Ursa Major’s hull, and that it could have made a noiseless impact resulting in the sudden slowing of the boat on 22 December.”

CNN said there had been a “flurry of recent military activity” around the ship’s remains, with US nuclear “sniffer” aircraft overflying the scene twice in the past year, and a Russian spy ship setting off four further explosions in the wreckage a week after it sank.

A [report by Oboronlogistics](#) claimed that the Ursa Major fell prey to what it termed “a targeted terrorist attack”.

Spain’s interior, foreign and defence ministries have been contacted for comment.

**Washington Post: Harvard has a defense-tech incubator. Pete Hegseth should visit it.**

*QLab is everything the secretary of defense says the elite school is not*

By **David Ignatius**, The Washington Post, May 14, 2026

*Second of two columns on transformation in defense technology and manufacturing.*

CAMBRIDGE, Mass. — A surprising thing has happened at Harvard University amid the Trump administration’s tirades about its supposedly “woke” culture: Defense technology has become popular on campus, with undergraduates and grad students racing to build start-ups through a defense-tech incubator called QLab.

A telling moment came Feb. 18, when QLab student entrepreneurs met with Thomas “Pat” Payne, a former U.S. Army sergeant major who received the Medal of Honor in 2020 for astonishing acts of bravery five years before in Iraq. He’s now a student at the Harvard Kennedy School, and he wants to help students understand the military “end users” like him, who will someday take their innovations into combat.

As Payne passed his Medal of Honor around the room so the students could see and touch it, “everyone got chills,” remembers Nick Maynes, a former Army captain who also served in Iraq and will graduate from the Kennedy School this month. He says Payne’s talk reminded the students why defense technology matters. “It’s not just cool. It saves lives — and it takes lives.”

And what was the Trump administration doing while these Harvard students were working on national security projects? Well, on Feb. 6, Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth — a Kennedy School graduate himself — [announced that the Pentagon](#) will stop sending military fellows there, lest they come back with “heads full of globalist and radical ideologies that do not improve our fighting ranks.” Hegseth [derided Harvard](#) as “one of the red-hot centers of hate-America activism.”

The “war on woke” that has assaulted Harvard and other elite schools ignores an intriguing transformation taking place in higher education. A campus that nurtured Bill Gates and Mark Zuckerberg, who went on from Harvard to found Microsoft and Facebook, respectively, is embracing the once-derided defense and intelligence sectors. Many Harvard students still support progressive causes, but a growing number want to start businesses that will make the country safer as well as more just.

Harvard is an example of a broader revolution in defense technology. This was once a sector dominated by big, bureaucratic monoliths such as Lockheed Martin, Northrop Grumman and Boeing. They built legacy weapons like aircraft carriers and fighter jets that were exquisitely designed but became wildly expensive and sometimes unreliable. The avatars of the defense-tech revolution are eccentric start-up CEOs like Alex Karp of Palantir and Palmer Luckey of Anduril. They've transformed a sleepy sector into a sizzling one.

QLab is a barometer: This academic year, 120 student teams from Harvard and MIT applied to join the group, which mentors students who want to create companies with national security applications. QLab chose just 20 teams, an admissions process nearly as selective as Harvard's itself.

The students are creating real companies, not just science projects. Since QLab began in February 2025, 20 of its 34 teams have raised seed capital, and 11 have won government contracts, according to Mark Pascale. He's a former CIA officer who heads the Kennedy School's Intelligence Project and has been a mentor for QLab. Pascale and other intelligence and military veterans have helped the student "founders" make connections with government agencies and venture-capital funders.

The QLab experiment began with two vets who wanted to create something innovative while they were at Harvard. Maynes and an Air Force veteran named Ryan Holte met on a rugby team at Harvard Business School. After their military service, "we felt we had lost the feeling of fire in our work," Maynes told me. They circulated a flier in the fall of 2024, asking: "Want to hack in the national security space?" Pascale offered them meeting space at the Kennedy School's Belfer Center, along with mentorship help, networking connections and grants for summer fellowships.

That initial pitch brought applications from 70 teams. The 16 winning teams began meeting every month at the center to share ideas and contacts. The first speaker was Brandon Tseng, a former Navy SEAL and Harvard Business School graduate who [founded Shield AI](#), a company now valued at more than \$12 billion.

In September, I visited QLab's first session of this academic year to meet with students and hear about their companies. I checked back with several of them in April and heard some amazing success stories.

Kushan Weerakoon, who graduated from Harvard College last year, told me about [ProDex Labs](#), the company he co-founded in 2025 with QLab's mentoring help. The start-up created an AI tool that helps companies simulate expanded production and

anticipate bottlenecks. L3Harris, a big aerospace and defense contractor, was one of his first customers. He's now working for several defense companies that are trying to rapidly increase weapons production at Hegseth's request. (Weerakoon declined to name the companies.)

Weerakoon, whose parents came to America as college students during Sri Lanka's civil war, is a classic American success story. A year out of college, he's the chief executive of a company that has raised \$7.5 million in venture funding. He's also part of a Harvard success story that has encouraged defense innovation on a campus that sometimes spurned such national security challenges.

Another QLab defense-tech entrepreneur is Stephen Buchanan, a former Army Green Beret who will graduate from the business school in May. He's the founder and chief executive of [Bandelier Technologies](#). The company has developed an exotic system that uses quantum technology for GPS-like tracking and monitoring. Buchanan says he combined his experience as a vet in Iraq with his Harvard training to develop a system that can work in real-world battlefield conditions.

Buchanan told me that his start-up has raised \$2.4 million from venture funding and an investment from Los Alamos National Laboratory. The company also has "prequalification" to bid on work for the Pentagon's Golden Dome missile defense shield. The Harvard program gave him a diverse community with a shared commitment to defense, he told me. "QLab gets everyone together in a room, and the focus is on national security."

The Trump administration has tried to make Harvard a caricature of anti-military liberal elitism. Some of that criticism is undoubtedly deserved. But Hegseth should get out of his anti-woke cocoon and pay a visit to the university. He might start with a session of QLab, respectfully listening to the innovative ideas that Harvard students are developing to help the nation's defense.

[Back to headlines](#)

## **Global Defense News: U.S. Navy Deploys Artificial Intelligence System to Accelerate Columbia and Virginia Submarine Production.**

By Alain Servaes, May 14, 2026 - 5:47

The U.S. Navy is moving to weaponize artificial intelligence within its submarine shipbuilding sector with the rollout of ShipOS (Shipbuilding Operating System), a new AI-driven production management system designed to speed the construction of Columbia-class ballistic missile submarines and Virginia-class attack submarines, as the

United States faces mounting naval pressure from China. Revealed in the Navy's May 2026 Shipbuilding Plan, the initiative aims to cut chronic production delays and strengthen America's ability to sustain submarine output during a potential high-intensity conflict in the Indo-Pacific.

ShipOS is intended to optimize shipyard operations by using AI to manage workflows, predict bottlenecks, and improve coordination across the submarine industrial base, directly targeting one of the U.S. military's most critical strategic vulnerabilities. The effort reflects a broader shift toward integrating artificial intelligence into defense manufacturing to accelerate force generation, preserve undersea deterrence, and maintain operational superiority against rapidly expanding Chinese naval capabilities.

According to the U.S. Navy's 2026 Shipbuilding Plan, released in May 2026, ShipOS was officially launched in December 2025 using federal funding from the "One Big Beautiful Bill Act" to modernize the maritime industrial base. The AI system is initially focused on Columbia-class and Virginia-class submarine production and maintenance, with the Navy identifying undersea warfare as its top shipbuilding priority as it seeks to achieve production rates of one Columbia-class SSBN and two Virginia-class SSNs annually by fiscal year 2031.

The most significant revelation in the document is the scale of efficiency gains already achieved during pilot deployments. The Navy states that ShipOS reduced submarine production schedule planning from 160 manual labor hours to under 10 minutes while compressing material review timelines from several weeks to less than one hour. Pentagon officials describe the system as a "production warfare tool," signaling a major doctrinal shift in how the Department of the Navy now views industrial capacity as an operational combat capability rather than simply a logistical support function.

Unlike traditional shipyard software, ShipOS aggregates enormous volumes of production data from shipbuilders, suppliers, logistics networks, enterprise resource planning systems, legacy databases, operational sources, emails, and spreadsheets into a unified, real-time industrial operating picture. The AI engine continuously tracks raw material pricing, vendor performance, labor utilization, machine capacity, inventory flows, production bottlenecks, and schedule risk across the submarine enterprise. This creates what Navy officials describe as end-to-end visibility from senior Pentagon leadership down to the shipyard floor.

The operational importance of this effort is directly linked to the mounting Pentagon concern over China's industrial expansion and the speed of its naval shipbuilding. The report repeatedly warns that decades of slow procurement cycles, fragmented

acquisition systems, workforce shortages, and aging infrastructure weakened America's ability to sustain maritime dominance. By contrast, Beijing has dramatically expanded the People's Liberation Army Navy using high-output state-supported shipyards capable of producing warships and submarines at rates the U.S. currently struggles to match.

The Navy's submarine modernization strategy centers on the Columbia-class ballistic missile submarine, which will replace the aging Ohio-class strategic deterrent fleet beginning this decade. The Columbia-class forms the future sea-based leg of the U.S. nuclear triad and is considered the Pentagon's highest acquisition priority. The submarines incorporate electric drive propulsion, advanced acoustic quieting technologies, and fly-by-wire control systems intended to preserve American undersea stealth superiority into the 2080s. Simultaneously, Virginia-class attack submarines remain central to U.S. undersea dominance missions, including anti-submarine warfare, covert intelligence collection, land attack strike operations, and maritime denial against Chinese naval forces operating in the Pacific.

The 2026 Shipbuilding Plan allocates nearly \$125 billion across the Future Years Defense Program for submarine construction alone, including approximately \$62 billion for Columbia-class procurement and nearly \$63 billion for Virginia-class production through FY31. In parallel, the Navy plans to invest more than \$6.2 billion specifically to expand and stabilize the submarine industrial base through workforce development, supplier expansion, distributed shipbuilding, advanced manufacturing technologies, and productivity modernization programs.

A major strategic concern identified in the report is the fragility of the current U.S. submarine industrial base. General Dynamics Electric Boat and Huntington Ingalls Newport News Shipbuilding remain the only two nuclear-capable submarine builders in the United States, while hundreds of suppliers across the country struggle with labor shortages, infrastructure limitations, and production bottlenecks. The Navy acknowledges that achieving the required production tempo will demand not only industrial expansion but also a complete transformation in how submarine manufacturing is managed and synchronized.

ShipOS is therefore intended to function as the digital backbone of a broader AI-enabled industrial modernization campaign. The Navy plans to expand the system across additional shipbuilders and suppliers by the end of 2026 while integrating automation, predictive maintenance tools, digital engineering, and AI-supported logistics management throughout the maritime industrial ecosystem. The report also highlights

growing use of “digital twins” to simulate vessel wear patterns, predict maintenance requirements, and accelerate repair planning for deployed naval assets.

The Pentagon’s emphasis on AI-driven shipbuilding reflects a larger strategic realization that industrial throughput has once again become a decisive factor in great power competition. The Navy openly states that future maritime conflict will be determined not only by combat systems and fleet size but also by the ability to generate, repair, and sustain naval combat power faster than peer adversaries. In that context, ShipOS represents more than a software modernization effort. It is part of a broader attempt to restore wartime industrial responsiveness as a core element of U.S. deterrence strategy against China and Russia.

The May 2026 U.S. Navy Shipbuilding Plan also reveals that the Navy intends to expand distributed shipbuilding across the United States, increasing the percentage of work performed at distributed industrial sites from roughly 10 percent today to 50 percent in the future. Combined with AI-enabled production oversight, the Navy believes this approach could significantly reduce bottlenecks concentrated in a small number of overloaded legacy shipyards while increasing resilience against supply chain disruptions or wartime industrial attacks.

The report ultimately frames industrial modernization as inseparable from combat readiness. Navy leadership repeatedly emphasizes that shipbuilding speed, workforce scale, AI-enabled production management, and industrial resilience are now viewed as direct contributors to operational deterrence. In practical terms, the Pentagon is signaling that the next naval arms race against China may be won as much inside shipyards and supply chains as at sea itself.

*Alain Servaes is a former infantry non-commissioned officer and the founder of Army Recognition. With over 20 years in defense journalism, he provides expert analysis on military equipment, NATO operations, and the global defense industry.*

[Back to headlines](#)

## **Australian Defence Magazine: Century Engineering secures US defence export contracts**

May 14, 2026

Century Engineering has become the first Australian business to secure export contracts into the United States naval nuclear supply chain — embedding Australian industry within the US industrial base.

“The Australian Submarine Supplier Qualification Program is delivering tangible outcomes for local Australian businesses to break into global AUKUS supply chains,” Minister for Defence, Richard Marles, said.

The South Australian manufacturer has been awarded contracts by HII’s Newport News Shipbuilding to produce precision-engineered parts for US aircraft carriers, which are among the world’s most complex and highly regulated defence platforms. Production of the crank components will begin within weeks.

“Not so long ago Century was making parts for Victa lawnmowers. Now, through the opportunity provided by AUKUS, it is making parts for nuclear powered aircraft carriers in the United States,” Premier of South Australia, Peter Malinauskas, stated.

It is the first time an Australian company has delivered parts into a live nuclear-powered naval program, signalling a step change in Australia’s role from prospector to participant within allied AUKUS supply chains.

“South Australia’s doubled its defence industry output over the last five years to \$2 billion and that number is set to significantly grow,” South Australian Defence Minister, Chris Picton, highlighted.

Century Engineering’s success follows its qualification to US naval nuclear standards through the Australian Submarine Supplier Qualification (AUSSQ) Program.

“This is more than a single contract; it shows Australian SMEs can meet the highest standards and take their place in trusted international defence supply chains, contributing at scale,” H&B Defence Managing Director, Tim Brown, affirmed.

Delivered by H&B Defence on behalf of the Australian Submarine Agency, AUSSQ is designed to identify, uplift and qualify Australian businesses to meet the exacting requirements of US and UK nuclear-powered submarine enterprises, creating a direct pathway into AUKUS-aligned programs.

“Century Engineering’s achievement is exactly what AUKUS was designed to unlock — deeper industrial integration between our nations and a stronger, more resilient supply chain. Through HII’s partnership in the AUSSQ program, we are seeing Australian industry qualify to the highest standards and contribute meaningfully to the U.S. naval nuclear supply chain. This milestone shows what is possible when allied industrial bases work together with focus and purpose,” HII’s President of the Global Security Group, Michael Lempke, explained.

This outcome demonstrates that Australian industry can meet the highest global standards for quality and assurance, and validates AUSSQ as a critical enabler of sovereign capability development. It also reinforces Australia's ability to contribute meaningfully to trilateral defence industrial capacity.

"AUSSQ is establishing a pipeline of Australian industry ready to participate in long term naval programs across the United States and United Kingdom," H&B Defence Board Member and Babcock Acting CEO, Leah Grantham, commented.

To date, 13 Australian companies have qualified for inclusion in the US submarine industrial base through AUSSQ, and are responding to Requests for Quotation across priority areas including precision machining, casting and forging, and fabricated components.

"This is a rewarding acknowledgement of our evolution from simple component manufacturer to supplying advanced manufacturing capability to US naval nuclear platforms," Century Engineering Managing Director, David Heaslip, provided.

At the same time, AUSSQ has expanded to support the United Kingdom's submarine enterprise. A growing cohort of Australian businesses are now being assessed across 20 capability areas to support Royal Navy Force Rotations at HMAS Stirling from 2027, including sustainment of visiting Astute-class submarines.

Century Engineering's entry into the AUKUS ecosystem began through a pilot initiative jointly funded by HII and the South Australian Government, with targeted state grants accelerating its progression to nuclear standards. This milestone highlights the impact of coordinated investment in industrial capability, workforce skills and quality systems to unlock global defence opportunities.

[Back to headlines](#)

## **Town Council Approves Proposed Trades Center at New High School**

*[By Newport This Week Staff, May 14, 2026](#)*

The Middletown Town Council unanimously approved a change order to redesign a section of a proposed shared-use Manufacturing & Industrial Trades Training Center within the new Middletown High School. The center will serve secondary students during the school day and adult learners at night.

School Supt. William Niemeyer told the council that converting the wood shop into a welding, ship-fitting and metal fabrication space will forge a partnership with companies looking to "hire thousands" soon.

“It’s an easy shift for us to do this, and it’s a great opportunity,” he said.

The shift will allow Middletown to develop machinists and welders, and provide internships at Electric Boat. “The kids do mock-ups, learn how to build and develop the skills to work there,” Niemeyer said.

A van Beuren Charitable Grant is funding the conversion.

“Now is the time to do it,” Council President Paul Rodrigues said. “Kids will be getting to learn another trade, hands on, but adults will be learning too.”

Rodrigues said he hoped the school would become more of a community/trade center.

“It opens the doors to a lot of individuals who desire to do that,” he said. “It could mean a big edge in enrollment in CTE, and at a minimum offset the other CTE costs. It could be a win all the way around.”

Added Niemeyer, “Enrollment could likely go beyond just the town. We’ve seen the program in action in other towns. It’s impressive. It’s incredible.”

*This document is intended for Electric Boat internal use only*