Aircraft Carrier John F. Kennedy Reaches 75 Percent Structural Completion

NEWPORT NEWS, Va. – The nuclear-powered aircraft carrier John F. Kennedy (CVN 79) is 75 percent structurally complete following the recent installation of the forward area of the ship's main deck, Huntington Ingalls Industries announced in an April 30 release.

Kennedy, the second ship in the Gerald R. Ford class of carriers, has been taking shape at the company's Newport News Shipbuilding division since the ship's keel was laid in August 2015. The ship is being built using modular construction, a process where smaller sections of the ship are welded together to form a structural unit, known as a superlift. The superlift is then outfitted with piping, electrical equipment, cable, ventilation and joiner work, and is lifted from the assembly area into the dry dock.

The 750-metric-ton forward section of the main deck includes the machinery spaces located over the ship's forward diesel generators. Also installed was the first piece of the aircraft carrier flight deck, which includes command and control, pilot ready rooms and additional support spaces, a jet blast deflector and components of the advanced arresting gear system.

With the recent superlifts, 341 of the total 447 sections are currently in place. Kennedy stands about 100 feet in height in the dry dock with only the island and main mast remaining to bring the ship to its full height of 252 feet.

A third key milestone also was achieved recently when the first two generators supporting the electromagnetic aircraft launch system were installed.

“We are very proud of the progress we are making on the Kennedy,” said Lucas Hicks, Newport News’ vice president, CVN 79 program. “The ship now is 75 percent structurally erected and more than 40 percent complete. Many of the improvements we have made over the construction of CVN 78, including increased pre-outfitting and performing more complex assemblies in our shops, will allow us to launch the ship three months earlier than planned.”

Kennedy is scheduled to be christened in the fourth quarter of 2019 and delivered to the U.S. Navy in 2022.