

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.

Arleigh Burke Program Pushes Ahead, With First Two Flight III Ships Under Contract

NATIONAL HARBOR, Md. – The DDG 51 program is moving ahead rapidly, with 12 ships under contract, including the first two of the substantially improved Flight III ships, the program manager said April 10.

The detail design on Flight III is “just about done and we’re on track to start construction,” with work on DDG 125 expected to start at Huntington Ingalls Industries (HII) in May, and DDG 126 at Bath Iron Works later this year, said Capt. Casey Moton. “We have a good, stable design” that was approved by both yards last year with fixed-price contracts.

The major change for Flight III is the AN/SPY-6 Air and Missile Defense Radar (AMDR) “which will bring a significant improvement in missile defense,” Moton told a Naval Sea Systems Command briefing at the Sea-Air-Space Exposition.

The Flight III design also required some “enabling changes” needed to accommodate the combat changes and to restore life expectancy margins to match the current Arleigh Burke destroyers, he said.

Those included expansion of the deck house, widening the hull above the water line to improve stability and thicker “inner-bottom scantling” to increase hull strength and to lower the center of gravity to offset the heavier SPY-6 radar antenna, he said. The design also included a major increase in air conditioning capacity and electrical energy, to support the more powerful radar.

Integrating the AMDR with the Aegis combat system “is going smoothly” with tests in Hawaii and elsewhere, he said.

The cost of the new class of ships is expected to be \$1.7 billion to \$1.75 billion for the first ships, which is expected to drop with later ships, as has happened throughout the DDG 51 program, Moton said.

The program office now is focusing on executing the latest multi-year production contract, which will buy 22 ships through fiscal 2023, he said. That contract calls for three ships a year for each year, except 2020.

A total of 65 Burkes have been delivered, with another about to transfer to the Navy, Moton said.

Navy Renames LCS Program Executive Office to Reflect

Broadened Portfolio

ARLINGTON, Va. – The Navy has renamed Program Executive Office Littoral Combat Ship (PEO LCS) as Program Executive Office, Unmanned and Small Combatants (PEO USC), in a move to encompass the PEO's broadening portfolio of responsibilities.

The name change was ordered in a March 13 memorandum by James F. Geurts, the assistant secretary of the Navy for Research, Development and Acquisition.

"Since the creation of PEO LCS in July of 2011, the organization's portfolio has grown beyond its original focus on the development, procurement and sustainment of LCS; its associated mission modules; and related systems," Geurts said in the memo. "Today, PEO LCS oversees the acquisition of the littoral combat ship (LCS) and its associated mission modules, as well as mine warfare systems, unmanned maritime systems, the future Frigate (FFG(X)) and the Multimission Surface Combatant (MMSC), an LCS variant for international customers. This represents four distinct shipbuilding product lines in development or under construction, 10 unmanned maritime systems, and 15 ACA T or pre-A CAT programs. The name PEO LCS no longer adequately reflects the breadth of its portfolio nor the full importance of its work.

"The Littoral Combat Ship and its mission capabilities remains a critically important shipbuilding program," he said. "With the introduction of FFG(X) and MMSC in the near future and our burgeoning fleet of unmanned surface and subsurface vehicles, this new name more accurately represents the work on platforms and systems that are key enablers for the future fleet through all phases of warfare. Their continued organization under a single PEO will allow improved program execution, alignment and agility today and into the future."

The PEO USC includes the following program offices: Unmanned

Maritime Systems (PMS 406), LCS Mission Modules (PMS 420), Mine Warfare Systems (PMS 495), Littoral Combat Ships (PMS 501), LCS Fleet Introduction and Sustainment (PMS 505), Frigate (PMS 515) and International LCS (PMS 525).