

Digital Technology on Display as HII Lands Island on Carrier JFK



A ceremony May 29 at Newport News Shipbuilding marked the landing of the aircraft carrier John F. Kennedy's command-and-control island on its flight deck. Huntington Ingalls Industries via Facebook

NEWPORT NEWS, Va. – Digital technology marked the exact location where Huntington Ingalls Industries landed the island onto the flight deck of the aircraft carrier John F. Kennedy (CVN-79) during a ceremony May 29 at the company's shipbuilding division, the company said in a release. The event coincided with the birthday of the carrier's namesake, President John F. Kennedy.

"Landing

the island is a key milestone in preparing the ship for launch in the fall,"

said Jennifer Boykin, president of Newport News Shipbuilding.

"Reaching this

milestone on schedule demonstrates the significant lessons learned we are

applying to this ship's construction as well as the strides we've made to use

new technologies to gain efficiencies."

A time-lapse video of the landing of Kennedy's command-and-control island on May 29. Huntington Ingalls Industries

The 588-ton island, which will serve as the command-and-control center for flight deck operations, is one of the last steel structures, known as a superlift, to be placed onto the ship, signifying that the Kennedy is a step closer to being launched.

The ship is being built in sections with more outfitted equipment – valves, pipe, electrical panels, mounting studs, lighting, ventilation and other components – than any other aircraft carrier built at Newport News. The use of new technologies, including digital work instructions that provide shipbuilders digital 3D data versus traditional paper drawings, has increased efficiency and productivity.

“Reaching this milestone on schedule demonstrates the significant lessons learned we are applying to this ship’s construction as well as the strides we’ve made to use new technologies to gain efficiencies.”

Jennifer Boykin, president of Newport News Shipbuilding

With the island, the Kennedy is more than 90% structurally complete. The island stands 72 feet above the flight deck and is 56 feet long and 33 feet wide.

In keeping with the Navy tradition, Capt. Todd Marzano, the ship’s commanding officer, placed his aviator wings underneath the island during the ceremony. This custom, known as mast-stepping, recognizes an ancient maritime custom of placing a coin at the base of a mast of a ship under construction to bring good fortune.

Newport News Shipbuilding celebrated the landing of the island onto the flight deck of aircraft carrier John F. Kennedy ([#CVN79](#)) during a ceremony today. The event coincided

with former President John F. Kennedy's birthday. Read more in the press release: <https://t.co/wwZ0x1MBXA>

– HII (@WeAreHII) [May 29, 2019](#)

"It's an absolute honor and privilege to be selected as the first commanding officer of the new aircraft carrier John F. Kennedy, and I'm truly humbled to be joining such an impressive team of highly talented shipbuilders who have worked so hard to make this historic event possible," Marzano said.

"Landing the island on the flight deck is a significant construction milestone, bringing John F. Kennedy one very important step closer to being commissioned into the fleet, where its value to our nation cannot be overstated."

"I know how proud my father would be of the ship that will bear his name and the patriotism and dedication of all who sail in her."

Caroline Kennedy

Caroline

Kennedy, President Kennedy's daughter, serves as the ship's sponsor. She could not participate in the May 29 event but shared a 1964 silver Kennedy half dollar that Marzano placed under the island house.

"The island landing is an important milestone in the life of this ship," Caroline Kennedy wrote in a letter. "I know how proud my father would be of the ship that will bear his name and the patriotism and dedication of all who sail in her."

Boykin

placed a Newport News Shipbuilding president's coin, which was designed to recognize dedication, service and leadership – three qualities that the ship and its crew will demonstrate when they set sail in our nation's defense, she explained.

The

other ceremony participants – James Geurts, assistant secretary of the Navy for research, development and acquisition; Rear Adm. Roy J. Kelley, commander, Naval Air Force Atlantic; and Rear Adm. Brian Antonio, program executive officer for aircraft carriers – also placed coins.

A

time capsule containing all the items placed under the island will be welded into the ship at a later time.

The Kennedy is scheduled to move from the dry dock to an outfitting berth in the fourth quarter of 2019, three months ahead of schedule. The ship's christening is planned for later this year.

More than 4,500 shipbuilders and 2,000 suppliers from across the country are supporting the construction of the new aircraft carrier.