HII Launches Aircraft Carrier John F. Kennedy

NEWPORT NEWS, Va. – Nine days after christening the U.S. Navy's newest nuclear-powered aircraft carrier, Huntington Ingalls Industries' Newport News Shipbuilding division launched John F. Kennedy (CVN 79) into the James River for the first time on Dec. 16, the company said in a release.

With the aid of six tugboats, Kennedy was guided down the river about a mile from Newport News Shipbuilding's Dry Dock 12, where it has been under construction, to the shipyard's Pier 3. There, the ship will undergo additional outfitting and begin its testing program three months ahead of its original schedule.

"This move is significant in that it represents a shift in focus from erecting the ship in dock to final completion and outfitting at the pier," said Mike Butler, program director for Kennedy.

"It is also a testament to the amazing teamwork I see every day between Newport News Shipbuilding and the Navy as we work together to build Kennedy with valuable first-of-class lessons from the Ford."

During this phase of construction, which is expected to take about two and a half years, habitability spaces, such as berthing and mess areas, will be completed, and distributive, mechanical and combat systems, such as catapults and radar arrays, will be tested.

Kennedy is scheduled for delivery to the Navy in 2022.