

Aircraft Carrier John F. Kennedy Christened



Caroline Kennedy, President John F. Kennedy's daughter, former ambassador to Japan and sponsor of the Ford-class aircraft carrier USS John F. Kennedy, christens the ship on Dec. 7. U.S. Navy/Mass Communication Specialist 3rd Class Samuel Lee Pederson

NEWPORT NEWS, Va. – In a ceremony celebrating the U.S. Navy's newest nuclear-powered aircraft carrier and the American hero for whom the ship is named, Huntington Ingalls Industries' christened John F. Kennedy on Dec. 7 at the company's Newport News Shipbuilding division, the company said in a release.

"We are here to celebrate America's military might and the brawn behind it," said Jennifer Boykin, president of Newport News Shipbuilding. "We are here to celebrate innovation, pride and perseverance that is the American way, and we are here to honor the patriot who inspired it. I speak for every Newport News shipbuilder – 25,000 strong – and the thousands of suppliers across the nation who support us when I say that we are proud to build John F. Kennedy."

Former U.S. Ambassador Caroline Kennedy, the ship's sponsor and daughter of President Kennedy, smashed a bottle of American sparkling wine across the bow to christen the ship. During her remarks, she reflected on christening the first aircraft carrier named in her father's honor.

"This ship will represent the ideals he lived by – courage, sacrifice and belief in freedom – and it will help make real his vision of a more just America and a more peaceful world," Kennedy said.

"I'm so proud to be sponsor of this ship and to join with all of you to bring her to life. I look forward to being part of

her odyssey and of her extended family. Most of all, I hope she will carry my father's spirit with her as she sails, his leadership in wartime, his courage in crisis and his commitment to the hard and steady work of building peace."



Acting Navy Secretary Thomas Modly delivers remarks at the christening of USS John F. Kennedy at Huntington Ingalls Industries' Newport News Shipbuilding division. U.S. Navy/Mass Communication Specialist Seaman Cory J. Daut

More than 20,000 guests attended the ceremony, including members of the Virginia congressional delegation U.S. Sen. Mark Warner and U.S. Rep. Robert C. Scott, who both offered remarks, and U.S. Rep. Elaine Luria. Other speakers included former U.S. Secretary of State John Kerry and Adm. Frank Caldwell, director of the Naval Nuclear Propulsion Program.

Ceremony participants included James Geurts, assistant secretary of the Navy for research, development and acquisition; Vice Adm. Thomas Moore, commander of Naval Sea Systems Command (NAVSEA); Adm. Christopher W. Grady, commander of U.S. Fleet Forces Command; and Capt. Todd Marzano, the ship's prospective commanding officer.

Retired Navy Adm. Tom Fargo, HII's chairman of the board, and Mike Petters, HII's president and CEO, attended – as did Newport News employees who are building Kennedy, Kennedy's crew, Navy personnel and other government officials. Former Sailors who served on the first USS John F. Kennedy, which was built and christened at Newport News in May 1967, also attended the ceremony.



The hull of the Kennedy, decorated before its Dec. 7 christening. U.S. Navy/Mass Communication Specialist Seaman Cory J. Daut

"As we observe 'a date which will live in infamy' on this 78th anniversary of the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor, this magnificent vessel we see before us today is a symbol of our

nation's strength, of our technical achievements and of the critical service our men and women in uniform provide for this nation and the entire world," said Charles Frank Bolden Jr., a retired U.S. Marine Corps major general and former NASA administrator and astronaut who served as the principal speaker.

"This carrier is also a tangible example of the legacy of a great man who risked his own life volunteering for hazardous duty in the Pacific during World War II in the wake of Pearl Harbor and later came to embody a time of optimism that he translated into a vision for taking humans beyond the sphere of our planet."

"As we observe 'a date which will live in infamy' on this 78th anniversary of the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor, this magnificent vessel we see before us today is a symbol of our nation's strength, of our technical achievements and of the critical service our men and women in uniform provide for this nation and the entire world."

Charles Frank Bolden Jr., retired Marine major general, former NASA administrator and astronaut and principal speaker at Kennedy's christening

Since the first cut of steel in February 2011, more than 5,000 shipbuilders have helped to construct Kennedy, and suppliers from 46 states across the country have contributed specialized parts, skilled services and support to carrier production. In the weeks following the christening, the carrier will be launched into the James River and moved to a pier where outfitting and testing of its systems will continue until the ship is delivered to the Navy in 2022.

"President John F. Kennedy taught us that deterrence will always cost less than war," said Thomas Modly, acting secretary of the Navy. "The purpose of our military, including this warship that bears his name, must be to ensure our

nation's commitment to peace and prosperity for all nations of the world."