

Secretary of the Navy John Phelan Visits PCU John F. Kennedy



Secretary of the Navy John Phelan recognizes Aviation Ordnanceman 2nd Class Ariadna Coyotzi for her hard work aboard Pre-Commissioning Unit John F. Kennedy (CVN 79), April 16, 2025. (U.S. Navy photo by MC2 Brittney Camacho-Pietri)

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NEWPORT NEWS, Va. (April 16, 2025) – The Secretary of the Navy John Phelan visited Pre-Commissioning Unit (PCU) John F. Kennedy (CVN 79) at Newport News Shipbuilding (NNS), a division of Huntington Ingalls Industries (HII), April 16, 2025.

Secretary of the Navy John Phelan recognizes Aviation Ordnanceman 2nd Class Ariadna Coyotzi for her hard work aboard Pre-Commissioning Unit John F. Kennedy (CVN 79), April 16, 2025. During the ship visit, Secretary Phelan saw firsthand

how important the maritime industrial base workforce is for the construction of the world's most technologically-advanced aircraft carrier. John F. Kennedy is the second Gerald R. Ford-class aircraft carrier and is under construction at HII's Newport News Shipbuilding (NNS) division in Newport News, Virginia. (U.S. Navy photo by Mass Communication Specialist 2nd Class Brittney Camacho-Pietri)

During the tour, the Secretary met with shipbuilders and Sailors assigned to PCU John F. Kennedy, observing first-hand the technological advancements and craftsmanship contributing to the construction of the second ship of the Gerald R. Ford-class aircraft carriers.

"PCU John F. Kennedy is more than an aircraft carrier; it's a symbol of American power," said Phelan. "I have seen today that this power isn't given but rather built by the sweat and skill of American workers."

The visit, coordinated by HII-NNS in partnership with the U.S. Navy, included an overview of the construction of the aircraft carrier and an engagement with the ship's crew.

"We are honored to welcome our Secretary of the Navy and showcase the tremendous efforts of our Sailors and our shipbuilding partners," said Captain Doug Langenberg, commanding officer of PCU John F. Kennedy. "We are working hard every day to deliver a combat-ready aircraft carrier with a trained and certified crew, ready to meet every challenge, ready to fight and win."

PCU John F. Kennedy (CVN 79) is the second aircraft carrier in the Ford Class, the first new class in more than 40 years.

At 1,092 feet in length and 100,000 tons, CVN 79 represents dramatic advances in propulsion, power generation, ordnance

handling, and aircraft launch systems. These innovations will support a higher sortie generation rate at significant cost savings when compared to Nimitz-class carriers. The Gerald R. Ford class also offers a considerable reduction—approximately \$4 billion per ship—in life cycle operations and support costs compared to the earlier Nimitz class.

The new technology and warfighting capabilities that John F. Kennedy brings to the fleet will transform naval warfare, supporting a more capable and lethal forward-deployed U.S. naval presence. In an emerging era of great power competition, CVN 79 will serve as the most agile and lethal combat platform globally, with improved systems that enhance interoperability among other platforms in the carrier strike group and with the naval forces of regional allies and partners.