

Ship's Sponsor Christens PCU John F. Kennedy

Story Number: NNS191207-01 Release Date: 12/7/2019 9:44:00 PM

From Commander, Naval Air Force Atlantic Public Affairs

NEWPORT NEWS, Va. (NNS) -- With more than 20,000 attendees, President John F. Kennedy's daughter, the Honorable Caroline Bouvier Kennedy, former U.S. Ambassador to Japan, officially christened Pre-Commissioning Unit (PCU) John F. Kennedy (CVN 79) during a Huntington-Ingalls Industries' Newport News Shipbuilding (HII-NNS) division ceremony in Newport News, Dec. 7.

Kennedy thanked the Navy, Newport News Shipbuilding, as well as the leadership and crew of PCU John F. Kennedy for their efforts to build the warship.

"I'm so proud to be the sponsor of this ship and bring her to life," said Kennedy. "The CVN 79 crew is fortunate to have such distinguished leaders, this is your day, and our chance to say thank you."

Kennedy reflected on the first ship to bear her father's name and how the second Ford-class aircraft carrier will continue to represent her father proudly.

"Having a chance to get to know the people who served on the USS John F. Kennedy (CV 67), really gave me insight into who he was, and what kind of leader he was in a way that I wouldn't have had any other way. And, I know that's going to be just as true now with a whole new generation," said Kennedy.

Former NASA Administrator and retired U.S. Marine Corps Maj. Gen. Charles F. Bolden Jr., delivered the keynote address emphasizing the important role of our 35th president to our nation and the continuation of his legacy through the second Ford-class aircraft carrier.

"This vessel is a symbol of our nation's strength, technical achievement and critical service our men and women provide for this nation and the entire world," said Bolden. "This carrier is a tangible example of the legacy of the great man who risked his own life during World War II and the wake of Pearl Harbor," said Bolden, who added that the future USS John F. Kennedy will join an elite group of aircraft carriers unmatched in strength around the world.

"This incredible ship before us today serves as the biggest instrument of deterrence and carries our nation's pride and hope for a better world," said Bolden who added that the future USS John F. Kennedy serves as "a hope for a better tomorrow."

Some of the additional guests who attended the christening included Edwin Arthur Schlossberg, husband of Ambassador Kennedy; Maid of

Honor, Rose Schlossberg, Daughter of Ambassador Kennedy; and Matron of Honor, Tatiana Schlossberg, Daughter of Ambassador Kennedy.

Additional attendees included Mike Petters, President of Huntington-Ingalls Industries; retired Adm. Thomas Fargo, Chairman of the Board of Directors, Huntington-Ingalls Industries; John F. Kerry, former Secretary of State; the Honorable James Geurts, Assistant Secretary of the Navy for Research, Development, and Acquisition; Adm. James Caldwell, Jr., Director, Naval Nuclear Propulsion Program; Adm. Christopher Grady, Commander, U.S. Fleet Forces Command; Vice Adm. Thomas Moore, Commander, Naval Sea Systems Command; Rear Adm. James Downey, Program Executive Officer for Aircraft Carriers; Rear Adm. Roy Kelley, Commander, Naval Air Force Atlantic; the Honorable Elaine Luria, U.S. House of Representatives, 2nd District, Virginia; the Honorable Mark R. Warner, U.S. Senate (D-VA), the Honorable Bobby C. Scott, U.S. House of Representatives (D-VA), 3rd District.

The Honorable Thomas B. Modly, Acting Secretary of the Navy discussed the significance of the day's event on a truly historical date in our nation's history.

"Today is the anniversary of the attack on Pearl Harbor, a day that forever changed the lives of brave American warriors like John F. Kennedy and transformed the way we fought as a Navy," said Acting Secretary of the Navy Thomas B. Modly. "Much has changed over the past 78 years, but our nation, and our world, still needs brave American

Sailors like the ones who will operate and serve on this ship. Kennedy knew what it meant to serve, to lead, and to sacrifice and his legacy will continue with you."

CVN 79 is the second aircraft carrier to honor John F. Kennedy for his service to the nation, both as a naval officer and as the 35th President of the United States.

Capt. Todd Marzano, Commanding Officer of PCU John F. Kennedy emphasized the importance of this moment during the life of the aircraft carrier, which is 67 percent complete.

"CVN 79 has come a long way since I first observed initial construction in the dry dock back in 2015, following the keel laying," said Marzano. "I'm incredibly honored, humbled, and excited to be given the opportunity to lead such an amazing team of high quality crew members."

CVN 79 incorporates more than 23 new technologies, comprising dramatic advances in propulsion, power generation, ordnance handling, and aircraft launch systems. These innovations will support a 33 percent higher sortie generation rate at a significant cost savings, when compared to Nimitz-class carriers. The Gerald R. Ford-class also offers a reduction of 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 the 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 era of great

power competition, CVN 79 will serve as the most agile and lethal combat platform in the world, with improved systems that enhance interoperability among other platforms in the carrier strike group as well as with the naval forces of regional allies and partners.

