



Photo by Matt Hildreth

Lessons from *Ford* Lead to Improvements for *Kennedy*



The shipbuilders involved in designing and installing *John F. Kennedy*'s (CVN 79) advanced weapons elevators – which will move ordnance from magazines to aircraft – were committed to learning from the challenges of USS *Gerald R. Ford* (CVN 78).

One major improvement – an adjustable bedplate design for the stator rails that guide the elevators up and down – was the result of a brainstorming session a few years ago with a variety of deckplate and engineering stakeholders, according to **Cliff Edwards**, CVN 79 advanced weapons elevator superintendent.

“This is more than just a design change. It represents a total rethinking of the entire stator installation process by a cross-functional team that really got out of the box with ideas,” said **Mike Butler**, CVN 79 program director.

The flexible design compares with *Ford*'s rigid mounted system with no adjustability.

“The adjustable bedplate system turned a 56-step process into a 16-step process, eliminating 95% of the welding and 50% of the rigging,” Edwards said. “Many times we do not initially realize how

difficult new designs are to install, so we really thought about how we could make this much easier to install.”

The new system makes installation safer by improving ergonomics for shipbuilders. The user friendliness saves time and money, Edwards said.

X43 Foreman **Decarlo Keys**' crew is working to install the elevators. Before, it could take days and involve multiple trades to install and align a few feet of rail. “What we used to do in a month, we can probably do in a week now,” he said.

“It takes team spirit to develop the plan, and then that team spirit has to follow through to the installing crew,” Edwards said. “The best plan in the world won't work if the people executing the plan aren't willing to make it work.”

One of the key features of the new design is that it bolts in from the back of the foundation. This allows shipbuilders or a repair team to loosen foundation fasteners and adjust the system's alignment without having to remove equipment from the front side of the foundation.

CONTINUED ON PG 2

NNS Parking Spaces to Remain Open

Open parking will remain in place at Newport News Shipbuilding after liberal leave ends on May 18. NNS employees, contractors and leased employees are able to park their vehicles in any parking space on company property. This does not include privately owned lots or expecting mother, handicap, government or HII Family Health Center parking spaces.

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CONTINUED FROM PG 1

Ricky Gilliam – now an Apprentice School craft instructor – played a key role in the bedplate design when he was an apprentice. Edwards credits the general design of the installation process to engineers **Chris Davis**, **Tom Swanson** and **Jeff Oliver**. The larger team worked together for specific design details. Swanson and Oliver have since passed away, but their ingenuity lives on.

“Tom and Jeff were hands-on engineers and had a really good understanding of the deckplate, and that’s what enabled them to take on this project,” Edwards said.



Some of the shipbuilders working to install *Kennedy*'s advanced weapons elevators pause for a photo. Note: This photo was taken before the implementation of social distancing guidelines. Photo by **Matt Hildreth**

No-Drive Times Updated

Effective Monday, May 18, no-drive times at Newport News Shipbuilding will be limited to the end of the two shifts. The two no-drive times will remain 20 minutes to allow for social distancing. As a reminder, there is not a no-drive time for lunch. No drive times are:

- 2:20 until 2:40 p.m.
- 2:20 until 2:40 a.m.

During these times, operating vehicles or bicycles inside the shipyard is prohibited. Employees are not required to remain in designated walkways during no-drive times. However, they must adhere to all posted signage and maintain situational awareness. For more information, see the Environmental Health and Safety notice.

HII Scholarship Fund Application Deadline is May 18

Huntington Ingalls Industries Scholarship Fund applications for the 2020-2021 school year must be submitted by 4 p.m. Monday, May 18. Scholarships are available for students who are enrolled in two- or four-year college programs. Scholarships are also available for use toward pre-K school readiness education costs. Children of HII employees are eligible to apply. To learn more about the HII Scholarship Fund, or to access the application links, visit www.huntingtoningalls.com/employees/hii-scholarship-fund.

WiSE Woman Recipients

Women in Shipbuilding Enterprise (WiSE) presented “WiSE Woman” awards to the following employees during the first quarter of 2020:

- **Diamond Harris** (K46) was recognized for employee engagement in January.
- **Preshus Boone** (E27) was recognized for commendable and sustained performance in February.
- **Ina Ray** (O28) was recognized for commendable and sustained performance in March.

This award is presented monthly, and winners are published in *Currents* on a quarterly basis. For more information about the program, visit the WiSE Woman website on MyNNS or contact **Tiffany Byers** (X70). Submit a nomination by completing a WiSE Woman nomination form.



Pamela Stevenson (X33) and **Rickey Jones** (X33) stand with donations from shipbuilders in the Blast and Coat Facility.

Shipbuilders Support Food Bank During Pandemic



Shipbuilders in the Blast and Coat Facility are joining together to help those in need amid the COVID-19 pandemic.

Employees are collecting canned goods and other non-perishables to be delivered to a local food bank. Superintendent **Tim Wilkerson** (X10), who is leading the efforts, is happy to see employees at all levels in his area jump on board.

“We are fortunate to still have a job as we are mission essential, while there are so many others who are without at this time,” he said. “We are all in this together and 100% committed to making a difference one step at a time.”