



ALEX VANCAMPEN

Welder **Alex VanCampen** began his career at Newport News Shipbuilding four years ago, and he is excited about participating in the keel authentication for *Oklahoma* (SSN 802). The 24-year-old has been receiving advice from his veteran crew mates about how to approach the keel laying since being selected to weld the initials of Ship's Sponsor Mary "Molly" Slavonic onto a steel plate that will become part of the submarine.

VanCampen was hired at NNS after completing a short training program at Tidewater Community College. His uncle, a retired NNS employee, helped prepare him for work in the yard. VanCampen has since enrolled in The Apprentice School and will graduate in three years. Now he finds himself in the spotlight just a few years into his career.

"When you hear about Newport News Shipbuilding from outside the yard, it's like this unattainable thing," he says. "But this is the place where you can make a future."