HII Celebrates 2025 Graduates of The Newport News Shipbuilding Apprentice School



From HII

NEWPORT NEWS, Va., March 21, 2026 (GLOBE NEWSWIRE) — HII (NYSE: HII) hosted commencement exercises today, celebrating 128 graduates of the company's Newport News Shipbuilding Apprentice School. The ceremony was held at Liberty Live Church in Hampton.

Linda McMahon, U.S. secretary of education, delivered the keynote commencement address.

"On the eve of America's 250th anniversary, I am reminded of how much we have relied on skilled workers to build and sustain our nation," McMahon told graduates. "Today, you join

that proud tradition. This path you have chosen is one of purpose, opportunity, and lasting impact, and it will help carry our country forward for generations to come."

HII hosted McMahon at NNS Friday for a tour of the shipyard and The Apprentice School. McMahon also participated in a roundtable discussion with shipbuilders focused on workforce development and national security.

At graduation Saturday, NNS President Kari Wilkinson addressed the graduates as the shipyard's newest leaders.

"What an incredible accomplishment this day represents, and it is one deserving of the highest praise and celebration," Wilkinson said. "Thank you for your commitment and your dedication and for being on this team of professionals doing the work of the nation."

Founded in 1919, The Newport News Shipbuilding Apprentice School has been accredited since 1982 by the Council on Occupational Education. Certification to grant associate degrees and confer degrees on its own came in July 2020, after the school was approved by the State Council of Higher Education for Virginia to operate as a postsecondary institution.

Alex Edwards received the Homer L. Ferguson Award, which recognizes the apprentice graduating with the highest average in combined required academic and craft grades.

Edwards began his career with HII in 2018 as an electrician at NNS. He entered The Apprentice School in 2022 to further his education and expand his career options. He currently works as a deck electrician on aircraft carrier USS *John C. Stennis* (CVN 74), which is undergoing refueling and complex overhaul at NNS.

During his address, Edwards acknowledged the support the class has received from family and friends and asked graduates to

reflect on their achievements, while focusing on accomplishing their next goals.

“Each of us now has a degree that is a reminder to us that we can accomplish a goal that we commit ourselves to,” Edwards said. “My question to each of you is: What is the next goal you are going to commit to? I believe that each of us can achieve the goals we set if we commit 100 percent of ourselves to them.”

Replay coverage of the ceremony is available at: https://hii.com/events/apprentice-school-graduation/.

The following is a profile of the graduating class:

- Thirteen graduates earned highest honors, a combination of academic and craft grades that determine overall performance. Thirty-two earned high honors and 13 earned honors.

- One hundred and five graduates earned an Associate of Applied Science in maritime technology degree.

- Sixty-nine graduates completed Frontline FAST, an accelerated skills training program for potential foremen.

- Thirty graduates were inducted into The National Society of Leadership Success.

- Six graduates are military veterans or are currently serving in the armed services as reservists and guardsmen.

- Twenty-four graduates earned Gold Athletic awards.

The Apprentice School accepts more than 200 apprentices per year. The school offers four- to eight-year, tuition-free apprenticeships in 19 trades and six optional programs. Apprentices work a 40-hour week and are paid for all work, including time spent in academic classes.