

# THE SALVO



**Arsenal, Legion sharing stories,  
community interests**

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U.S. Army Watervliet Arsenal  
January 2016





# Commander's Corner



Because my column last month had a sense of reflection, I thought that with the New Year that I would use this month's column to look forward.

As many of you know, our rate of production hit a bottom about two years ago and since then, our revenue has continued to grow. Not by large leaps and bounds, but by consistent, incremental improvements. And I am hopeful that Fiscal Year 2016's revenue will exceed last year's \$138 million.

But revenue alone does not paint the entire picture in regards to our effectiveness and efficiency as an Army-owned and operated manufacturing center. We also need to look at other variables that will help to define our success, such as our cost of work.

Our cost of work, in essence our expenses per employee, needs to come down. I understand that flippant guidance such as "do more with less" won't cut it. But the fact is that every worker here affects our cost of production and therefore, has a role in the management of those costs.

At the macro level, we have formal LEAN programs that seek to reduce waste and improve efficiency. We will continue to work those efforts hard this

year. But not all of the great work in LEAN cuts or defers expenses. And so, we must have other actions to reduce our cost of operations.

The most obvious area to reduce our costs is by improving our quality of work. Every machined part that has a quality issue requires a significant amount of time and resources to either correct the deficiency or to make a determination to scrap the part. But having said that, every employee should look at their work environment and scope of duty to determine if there are costs that they can reduce or eliminate. Everything from turning off the lights at the end of the day to reducing heat in our offices to ordering the minimal amount of supplies to support our mission has an effect on our costs.

As we move forward, deeper into this fiscal year, we also cannot lose sight on that everything we do, from box shop operations to machining, is done for one primary purpose ... to support our warfighters who after 15 years of combat in the Middle East still serve in harm's way. I am sure that this strong sense of mission and purpose has propelled you and will continue to motivate you to give the Arsenal your 100 percent effort every day.



**Colonel**  
**Lee H. Schiller Jr.**  
**Commanding**  
**Manufacturer 6**



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Photo by John B. Snyder

**Arsenal Deputy Commander Joe Turcotte, right, briefing James Yermas, the Department Commander for New York's American Legion. Yermas, as did his predecessor last year, took time out from his busy conference to visit the Watervliet Arsenal. Yermas said that he looks forward to bringing the American Legion's National Commander here for a visit in April.**

*By John B. Snyder*

A former General Electric machinist obtained a place at the table on January 21 with senior leaders at the oldest, continuously operating manufacturing center in New York's Capital District — the Army's Watervliet Arsenal.

James Yermas, the New York State American Legion commander and former machinist at the General Electric plant in Schenectady, was in town that week preparing for his organization's Mid-Winter Conference in Albany when Arsenal Commander, Col. Lee H. Schiller Jr., leveraged a rare opportunity by inviting Yermas to the Arsenal for a command briefing and tour. Yermas was elected the New York State's Department Commander last July.

Every year, the Arsenal hosts a variety of visitors to its manufacturing center, from four-star generals to elected officials. But what made this visit different from all others is Yermas' background as a machinist.

Machining is a profession that the Arsenal workforce knows well as its 202-year history is tied to those artisans

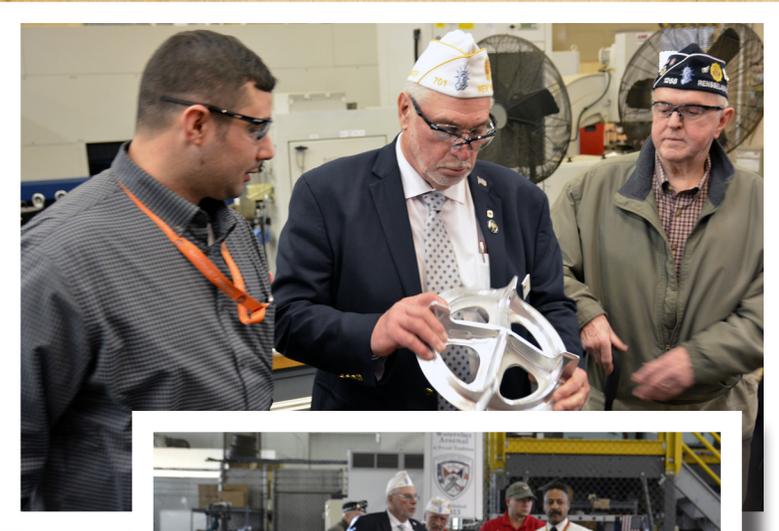
who through the years have turned raw stock material into some of the finest weapons systems known to the U.S. military.

Despite Yermas' extensive machining knowledge and having lived only a 45-minute drive away from the Arsenal, he admitted that he learned more about military manufacturing that day than he had ever known.

"This visit is truly great because I am able to see firsthand many of the weapon systems that I have seen on television or in the movies and they are more impressive close up," Yermas said. "I am amazed at not only the Arsenal's distinguished history, but also in the capability the Arsenal has in manufacturing the weapons for our troops."

Beyond sharing common technical experiences, the Arsenal's leadership and Yermas also shared a common,

*Story continues on page 4, "Visit"*



## Legion Cont.

historical bond to the nation's military.

New York's American Legion, some 113,000 members strong, has a nearly 100-year history of standing up for Veterans and their family members. There isn't a community event today, from supporting youth baseball to funding college scholarships to building homes for Veterans, where the Legion does not have an active involvement.

Nevertheless, by the time the American Legion had been established in 1919, the Arsenal had been in operation for more than 100 years. Ever since that warm summer's day in 1813 when the Arsenal's gates first opened, it has also supported the nation's military with its sweat and blood.

Similar to the American Legion, the Arsenal's workforce can often be found today in community events, from building baseball fields to marching in parades to working as volunteer firefighters.

And so, for a few hours today, skilled artisans shared common experiences, stories, and a profound

Photos by John B. Snyder

understanding of the challenges that America's industrial base and its military face today.

Additionally, both organizations have strong historical ties to all branches of the military; both strive to build strong communities; and both organizations never lose sight on the proper care of the Nation's Veterans and their family members.

This was Yermas' first official visit to the historic Arsenal that has since the War of 1812 manufactured the products that have helped hundreds of thousands of Soldiers, Sailors, Airmen, and Marines to safely come home from war. The Arsenal began last year hosting New York's Department Commander, as well as the American Legion's National Commander, at the Arsenal to build on a relationship that dates back to 1924.

The Army's Benét Laboratories, which is collocated on the Watervliet Arsenal, was part of the visit by Yermas.

# Arsenal commander challenges American Legion to tell its story



Photo by John B. Snyder

Arsenal Commander Col. Lee H. Schiller Jr. spoke to several hundred New York American Legion leaders this month during their Mid-Winter Conference in Albany, N.Y. This was the third year that Schiller had addressed this audience.

*By John B. Snyder*

In his nearly three years in command, the Watervliet Arsenal commander has always found audiences to loudly proclaim their support for the nation's military and its Veterans.

But saying it does not necessarily translates into action of actually doing it, as evidenced by the disappearance in recent years of yellow ribbons around local community trees and by the lack of signage at local businesses that once touted their support for the troops.

That wasn't the case on January 24, however, when Col. Lee H. Schiller Jr. addressed hundreds of American Legion leadership from throughout New York as they converged on the state's Capital District January 22-24 for their Mid-Winter Conference.

Schiller praised the Legion members for not quietly reentering their communities after military service, which is greatly evidenced by the Legion's community programs such as: Boys State that immerses high

school youth in citizenship and leadership; Legacy Scholarship for children whose parents are killed while serving their country; and Operation Comfort Warrior that is dedicated to meeting the needs of wounded, injured or ill military personnel.

Schiller explained that this consciousness of community service probably grew from their military experience where they developed a sense of camaraderie for each other and for their team. But whether this sense of camaraderie was established in the foxhole, in the well deck, or on the flight line, it grew and was transplanted into the communities where these Veterans now live.

The Legion's service to the community and to the nation is such a powerful story that needs to be told, Schiller said.

*Story continues on page 6, "Legion"*

# Legion Cont.

“That is the power of today’s event and the many other events that the American legion conducts every year,” Schiller said. “Every Legion event offers an opportunity to tell your story and the story of those of your fellow servicemen and women.”

Schiller charged the Legion leadership to not squander the moment and the wonderful opportunities the Legion provides to each member to tell their story, as well as the broader story of service to the nation.

For more than 28 years of military service, Schiller said that he has had the unmeasurable pleasure to serve an Army, an Army that has been greatly supported by the American Legion, and that he looks forward to being called a Veteran.

During the nearly three years in command, Schiller has participated in nearly 100 community events with the American Legion and so, the Arsenal and the American Legion have a great relationship of mutual support.

At the conference, New York American Legion Department Commander James Yermas praised Schiller and the Watervliet Arsenal for their support to the nation.

“I just visited the Watervliet Arsenal and I have to say that I was amazed at what I saw,” Yermas said. “I thank Colonel Schiller and his team for the great work they are doing to support our troops.”

Yermas, who leads 113,000 Legion members in New York, visited the Watervliet Arsenal on Jan. 21, 2016



Photo by John B. Snyder

New York American Legion Department Commander James Yermas, center, opening the general session on January 24. New York American Legion Adjutant James Casey, left, and National American Legion Commander candidate Charles Schmidt listen in during the opening remarks.



**Always something new at the Arsenal's AAFES PX.**

**Remember...a portion of the profits is returned back to the Arsenal to support MWR facilities and events**

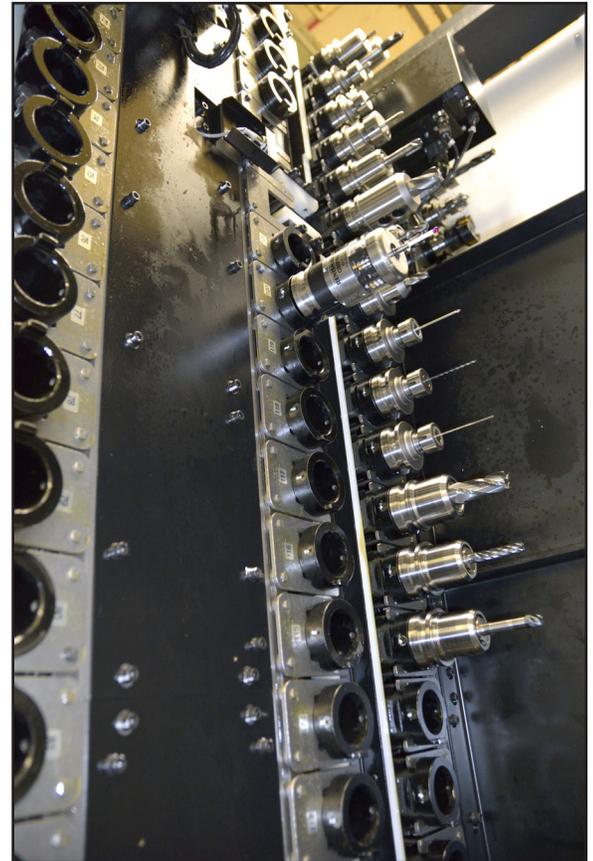
# Incremental improvements are not on the visitors' tours, but should they?



**From This**



**To This**



Photos by John B. Snyder

***In a sea of multimillion dollar machines, the tide is turning toward recognizing the tremendous return on investment by making smaller, incremental improvements***

*By John B. Snyder*

How is it that the person who typically gets noticed in a crowd is the one who quietly stands still, while others are shouting and jumping up and down trying to get the attention? The same analogy may be applied to machinery at the Army's manufacturing plant at Watervliet, N.Y., said an Arsenal general foreman.

"Some may think that it is the large machines, which may cost several million dollars each, that would get the most recognition here," said Scott Huber, an Arsenal general foreman. "But I have to say that what catches most of my attention recently are the smaller, computer-controlled machines that we have recently brought on line on one of the least visited production floors of the Arsenal."

The new, smaller machines are located in what is called the minors production building, which is an area rarely part of any senior Army leader's visit schedule, Huber said.

"For example, one horizontal milling machine that we recently brought on line can hold 120 sets of tools, whereas the machine it replaced could only handle 40 tools," Huber said. "This additional capability, when combined with a 1,000 percent increase in rpm, has reduced production time for 40 different product lines by up to 75 percent."

Additionally, new multi-task lathes that are primarily used for mortar production can machine mortar parts in about one-twentieth of the time that it once took. Not only does this significantly reduce the labor cost rate, it also increases the capacity, which is the volume of what the Arsenal may produce per product line.

Given the Arsenal's recent success in bringing on line smaller, very capable machines, why wouldn't the Arsenal simply focus on these low cost machines?

There are a lot of variables the Arsenal leadership con-

*Story continues on page 8, "Machines"*

## Machines Cont.

siders before they invest one dollar into new capability, said James Kardas, the Arsenal's program manager for the Capital Investment Program or CIP.

"We consider such decision criteria as the maintenance costs of mature machines, the availability of parts to repair older machines, the available budget, and do we have a mission for the new capability," Kardas said. "But the driving factor into which machines we purchase has to do with the budget that is available for CIP."

There may be times when Kardas wishes he could purchase a larger machine but cannot due to the size or lack of a budget. For example, even though the Arsenal is a \$1.6 billion manufacturing complex, it received no funding for its FY 2016 CIP program.

Imagine the challenges a defense contractor might have trying to remain competitive if it could not reinvest in its manufacturing plant. Such are the challenges the Watervliet Arsenal must work through as one of just three remaining Army-owned and operated arsenals. But a challenge the Arsenal's leadership and workforce have met head-on for more than 202 years.

In the meantime, Kardas agrees with Huber's assessment that even the minor-component machines have the potential to save tens of thousands of dollars every year due to reduced machine set-up time and for reduced cost of maintenance and repairs of the mature machinery.

The other value added by these new minor component machines is that they now create an environment for a robust conversation into whether or not the Arsenal makes or buys a part, Huber said.

"In the past, if we had a requirement for a low production part that didn't require a significant amount of machining, we often went to a vendor to produce that part for us," Huber said. "Now that several of the newer machines have the capability to machine faster and along more axes, the option to make or buy has become part of the discussion as we develop a quote for a customer."

And so, at this small Army post in upstate New York, the Watervliet Arsenal is taking prudent actions to provide stability to its workforce, efficiency to its manufacturing quality, and improved quality to the Soldier by looking at small, incremental changes that can have a significant return on investment.

CIP allows the Army's manufacturing center at Watervliet to upgrade and modernize its equipment and infrastructure. There are three categories of CIP funding: capital equipment; minor construction; and automated data processing equipment. Capital equipment includes such projects as purchasing new lathes or to rebuild an existing machine.



Photos by John B. Snyder

**Top:** Machinist Steven Betzwieser working with a new horizontal milling machine that holds 120 tools and performs at up to 12,000 rpm versus 1,000 rpm of the machine that it replaced.

**Center:** Foreman Scott Huber, right, discussing with Machinist Norman Telford some of the lathe and milling work that a multi-task machine had just produced.

**Bottom:** Machinist George Hathaway using a relatively new lathe to produce firing pins from bar stock.

# LEAN Corner...By Mark Ripley

*"Put a 'hot' sticker on that, will ya?"*

Too often we are forced to focus on the short-term – "get it to the next operation, get it through the process, fight that fire, expedite this, put a Band-Aid on that."

As a result, some of us have become reactive firefighters/expeditors, our attention and priority is focused on self-perpetuating, never-ending, short-term fixes. It seems like we are just barely keeping things under control.

But here comes MDI to save the day! MDI stands for Managing for Daily Improvement. You can evolve into a proactive Lean thinker who is managing and controlling their priorities and ultimately their destiny.

No one is saying it will be easy. The key is the "Daily" part. You improve something just a little - but you do it every day. Every day you get closer to your ideal state and every day you make your own job a little easier. You must be persistent and consistent.

You also must put the principals of Lean to work for you:

- Visual control – perhaps the most critical MDI tool, visual control makes the status of your process obvious so you act only if something is wrong
- Eliminate waste – steps and processes run on time with no rework
- Reduce non-value-added – again, steps and processes run on time, your "Customer" is happy
- A place for everything and everything is in its place – no time spent looking for stuff
- Root Cause Analysis (RCA) – fix issues once and for all, no recurrence
- Make it right the first time – don't you hate doing things over again?

Using the Lean training we already have, everyone can begin to improve their corner of Watervliet Arsenal, as most of the Lean improvements are common sense.

Lean events usually make big improvements. But, in a true Lean culture, at least half of the total improvement comes from Lean practitioners solving problems every day using Lean principals - MDI.

So...make a plan. Monday I will work on this, Tuesday, this, etc. You can't forget your current responsibilities but work in some MDI-time every day. Fix some small things and you might have more time to fix some bigger things. Get your Supervisor to help – problems you can't solve should be on their MDI list.

The Continuous Improvement Office can help you through this process and did you know that this service comes at "no cost" to you?

# Civilian Personnel Advisory Center's Corner

The numerous websites made for employees to gain access to their specific career information can be daunting to say the least. Listed below are the primary resources for Army employees for handling all of their professional needs.

## eOPF

The electronic Official Personnel Folder is online availability to all of your personnel records. You are able to view or print your individual Federal employment records such as previous performance appraisals, benefit election forms, military discharge forms (DD214), all SF-50 Personnel actions (going back to the date you started employment with the federal government), etc..

To access eOPF, you will need an eOPF ID and password, which may be retrieved using the eOPF Self Service Feature (<https://eopf1.nbc.gov/army/>).

To protect the integrity of employee personnel records and security of Personally Identifiable Information (PII), access to your eOPF records can ONLY be gained by using a Government computer through a recognized Internet Protocol (IP) address.

## ABC-C

The Army Benefit Center - Civilian (ABC-C) is located at Ft. Riley, Kansas. The ABC-C provides automated benefits support to Army-serviced appropriated fund employees through the Employee Benefits Information System (EBIS) and trained benefits Specialists. Benefits Specialists are knowledgeable on life and health insurance, Thrift Savings Plan, and retirement issues. They are available to assist you in completing your benefits transactions in EBIS.

## EBIS

The Employee Benefits Information System (EBIS) is an automated, secure, self-service web application that allows employees to review general and personal benefits information and allows you to calculate your own retirement estimates. EBIS also allows you to make benefits elections for Federal Employees Health Benefits (FEHB), Federal Employees Group Life Insurance (FGLI), and the Thrift Savings Plan (TSP). For example, if you want to change your percentage allocation within your TSP fund (i.e. 3 to 7%), log onto ABC Benefits and click on "EBIS" in the upper right corner. You will then have access to make all of the necessary changes. <https://www.abc.army.mil/>

## TSP

You can view your Thrift Savings Plan account balances, 12-month return data, or change your allocations of funds (i.e. 20 % in the C fund to 40% in the C fund), on the following TSP website: <https://www.tsp.gov/index.shtml>. You will need your TSP account number or User ID and password.

## MyPay

Do you want to change or view your banking information and/or direct deposit? Add a payroll allocation or change your state or federal withholding? You can do this on the MyPay website. Also, you can view your leave and earning statements (pay stubs), tax statements (W-2s), etc. The MyPay website is: <https://mypay.dfas.mil/mypay.aspx>

## MyBiz+

MyBiz+ offers employees improved navigation and HR information in an easy to understand display. Some of the key services MyBiz+ offers is access to your performance records, pay, leave and benefits records, your position information, access to your SF-50 Personnel Actions (processed on or after 23 September 2007), etc. ... This site is a snap shot of your specific career related information. You can update your contact information and request employment verification on this site as well. MyBiz+ can be accessed at the following link: <https://compo.dcpds.cpms.osd.mil/>.

If you have any questions, contact the Watervliet CPAC on 266-4058 or 266-4053.

# 16 Years and 7 commanders later ... logistics modernization for the production floor finally arrives

By John B. Snyder

Many years ago, when the Army began to implement a logistics modernization program the Arsenal workforce was told that “change would not happen overnight,” but to prepare themselves for a revolutionary change in how they would conduct future business.

Nearly 16 years and seven commanders later, that revolutionary change will finally hit the Arsenal’s production floors this spring.

This is not to say that an earlier version of the Army’s Logistics Modernization Program or LMP had not already graced the hallowed grounds of this historic Army arsenal, because it did. Nevertheless, the first increment of LMP, which was implemented here about five years ago, may not have been as transformational as was the Arsenal commander when he was rumored to have traded in a Ford Pinto wagon for a Dodge pickup truck.

Nevertheless, the first increment of LMP did help shape the environment at Watervliet for Increment II. This second installment of LMP will hit the manufacturing floors within the next few months.

Trying to replace a 40-year old system has not been easy, said Scott Shadle, the Arsenal’s chief of the Business Transformation team that has the responsibility for bringing LMP on line.

“Several generations of the workforce have spent their entire careers using a legacy logistics system that had



Photo by John B. Snyder

From left, Business Transformation Chief Scott Shadle, Manufacturing Supervisor Dale King, and Machinist Clint Brock look over a “Traveler” for the 155mm howitzer tube that is behind them. One of the goal’s of LMP II is to digitize the Traveler, which documents every machining operation for each product.

required 11 separate platforms to manage the Arsenal’s production operations,” Shadle said. “And so, we had to incrementally move the workforce ever so slowly forward with the rollout of LMP so that we did not overwhelm the Arsenal culture all at once.”

Nevertheless, a slow rollout allowed the Arsenal to incrementally make changes along the way, as well as to capture lessons learned through the process.

There were a significant amount of lessons learned when the Arsenal rolled out Increment I, said Joe Turcotte, the Arsenal’s deputy commander.

“It took us a good three years before we felt comfortable working with the first increment of LMP,” Turcotte said. “But we have leveraged those lessons learned and have invested a significant amount of effort to prepare the command for the second increment of LMP.”

Turcotte agrees with Shadle in that the Arsenal’s culture had something to do with the transformation into the new logistics system.

“At the end of the day, we can’t go back,” Turcotte said. “After all, this is the system of the future and LMP will only make our efforts to support the warfighter better.”

*Story continues on page 12, “LMP”*

## LMP Cont.

LMP is the Army's new business model that improves vertical and horizontal coordination, planning and execution of logistics. Everything from managing special tooling for production to tracking the maintenance status of machines to identifying shortfalls in raw material inventory will be tied into one logistics system versus 11 stovepipe processes.

What LMP Increment II will do is to integrate the manufacturing operations, in essence the production floor, with the rest of the logistic system.

For example, every product going through manufacturing must have what is called a "Traveler."

"This Traveler is a voluminous packet of paperwork that follows a product through the production cycle. Every machining operation, quality control check, revision, and cutting measurement are posted to this Traveler," said Dale King, a manufacturing supervisor who is currently detailed to the Business Transformation Office to assist with the launch of LMP II. "If the Traveler is ever lost or misplaced, the complete history of product has to be painfully recreated."

This pencil-to-paper process is as old as the Arsenal, which opened its gates in 1813. Because LMP Increment II is a computer-based logistics system, all the data that was once put on paper will now be tracked on a computer.

But beyond the advantage of improved documentation, the information on the Traveler may be viewed at any time by a supervisor. Thereby, providing real-time information on the status of production without having to walk the production floors looking for the Traveler. And, beyond the Arsenal, leaders at higher-level logistics operations, such as at the Army Materiel Command, will be able to drill-down to check the status of Watervliet's production, inventory, and maintenance status.

Because of the monumental effort required to implement LMP II, the Arsenal began conducting web-based training this month for those who work on the production floors. By the end of training, every end user of LMP will know how to make LMP function at their work station prior to the formal launch date.

"Once LMP II is in place, it will provide a tremendous amount of information to Arsenal and Army leadership about the current state of production at Watervliet," Shadle said.

# Arsenal History

## Winter of 1842

**New York government stops the flow of water in the Erie Canal without notice, leaving the Arsenal without power. Water was not to be restored until the Arsenal repaired a break in the Canal and paid the Canal's lock-keeper's salary for one year. After a year of bickering between the Arsenal commander and New York, the state finally agreed to pay the lock-keeper.**

