

# CRANE Quarterly



**In This Issue:**  
**Transformation and  
Modernization:  
The Ammo Depot for  
Tomorrow's Warfighter**

Today's Provision, Tomorrow's  
Success

Employee Spotlight

LOGISTICS

MANUFACTURING

RENOVATION

SURVEILLANCE

DEMILITARIZATION

# Q and A with the Commander

**What are some of the things you're hoping to focus on during your time at Crane Army?**

One thing I'd like to focus on is the Organic Industrial Base, specifically, understanding the importance of CAAA's role in the OIB and spreading the word of the great work that our team is doing on a day to day basis to support the warfighter. I'd also like to look into Crane Army's modernization efforts so that the legacy of the workforce and their safety can evolve and continue long after I'm gone.

**What, in your opinion, is the importance of how CAAA supports the warfighter?**

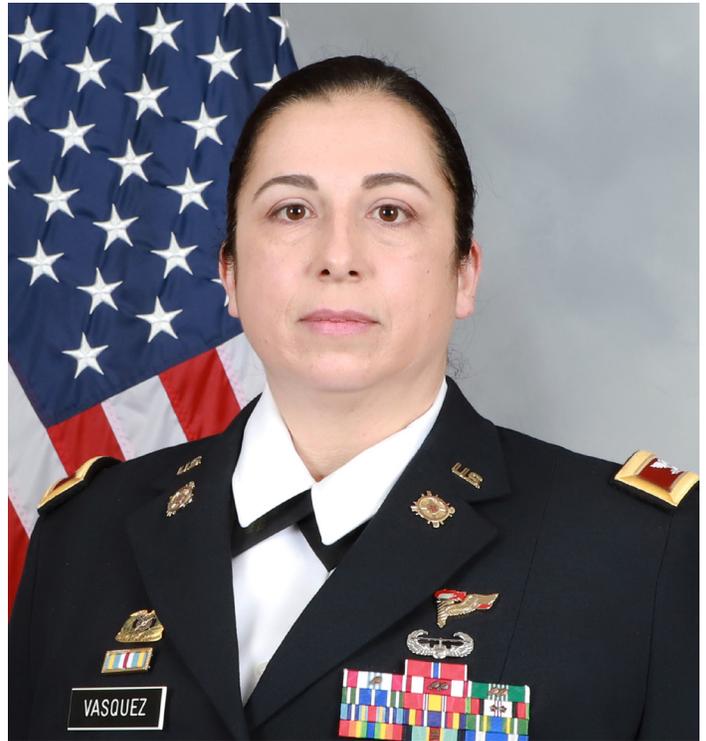
On a day-to-day basis, CAAA provides munitions readiness for the warfighter. Crane Army is able to ship, store and produce munitions so that warfighters across the Department of Defense can train and fight with the best tools available. We also demilitarize ammunition so that the DOD can focus its resources on usable munitions.

**What are you most excited about during your tenure here?**

I'm excited to join the team at CAAA, which is truly a family organization. Also hope to continue the great initiatives in progress here and learn from our skilled and professional workforce. It's an honor to be part of this team, and I look forward to meeting everyone.

**What part of Crane's legacy do you hope to continue?**

It's hard to pick just one effort. I'd like to capitalize on all of it and move initiatives forward. I think we should have a "mission first" mentality and remember that first and foremost we support not only the Army, but our Joint Warfighters with the production, storage, issue and demilitarization of ammo, and we can't do that without taking care of our people. I want to continue developing and supporting our stellar civilian work force and investing in the multi-generational and artisanal heart of our operations at CAAA. When equipped with the specialized knowledge that our people bring to the table, we can focus on initiatives like modernization. Whether it's improving our aging infrastructure or looking into research to provide



the next generation of munitions, energetics and base facilities, modernization is key. I want to develop existing projects to build up current workload and ensure CAAA continues its legacy for years to come.

**What does a successful command look like to you?**

Crane Army is already such a great installation, but I'd consider my time here successful if I leave CAAA better than when I first arrived. To do that, I want to work with our team to continue existing programs. Our success starts with a strong workforce and developmental programs to prepare us for the next 15 plus years of recruitment and engagement. A major component of a strong workforce is their safety. I want to make certain that everyone I began my command with is here when I leave. What we do and work with can be dangerous, so we have to look out for one another and emphasize a culture of safety. We also need to modernize and help to continue programs that secure the relevancy and workload for a fiscally strong CAAA for years to come.

I look forward to meeting, speaking with you all and working to support the warfighter with this incredible team.

Col. Santee B. Vasquez  
Commander

# CRANE Quarterly Magazine

## COMMAND TEAM

Col. Santee B. Vasquez  
Commander

Norman Thomas  
Deputy to the Commander

## EDITORIAL STAFF

Tom Peske  
Chief, Public & Congressional Affairs

Marshall Howell  
Public & Congressional Affairs

Mallory Haag  
Public Affairs Specialist

Lindsay Grant  
Public Affairs Specialist

### Editorial Office Information

The Crane Quarterly is an authorized publication for members of Crane Army Ammunition Activity and the Department of Defense. Contents of the magazine are unofficial and are not necessarily the views of, or endorsed by, Crane Army Ammunition Activity, the Department of the Army, the Department of Defense, or any other U.S. Government agency. The editorial content of the Crane Quarterly is the responsibility of the Public Affairs Office at CAAA.

## Features

**Transformation and Modernization: How CAAA Becomes the Ammo Depot for Tomorrow's Warfighter**

## In Every Issue

### COMMANDER'S COMMENTS

RAPID FIRE  
CAAA News and Notes

RECON  
Photos From the Field

INTEL  
Today's Provision;  
Tomorrow's Success



**Brig. Gen. Gavin J. Gardner, the commanding general of Joint Munitions Command, passes the command colors to Col. Santee Vasquez, the incoming commander of Crane Army Ammunition Activity.**

## Mailbag

**Q: What is the S-1 Help Desk and what does it do?**

**A:** The S-1 Help Desk is a tool designed to assist CAAA employees with Human Resources requests, queries and tasks. The button found under the S-1 tab on SharePoint allows individuals to submit requests and track their proposed due dates, statuses and alterations. To submit a request ticket, go to the CAAA SharePoint home page and select "CMD & Staff" on the top banner. From the drop down, select "S-1 (Human Resources)". After reading the FAQ section to ensure your query isn't answered there, select the "Submit a Ticket" button and fill out ALL required fields. After completely filling out your ticket, select the "Submit" button and your request will be sent to the appropriate personnel. After submission, you can check the "My Open Requests" button to view all open requests and their status.

CAAA welcomes feedback from readers. Please include sender's name, phone number and valid email address.

Email: [usarmy.crane.crane-army-ammo-act.mbx.pao@mail.mil](mailto:usarmy.crane.crane-army-ammo-act.mbx.pao@mail.mil)

Postal address: CAAA Newsletter, ATTN: JMCN-PA, 300 Highway 361, Crane, IN 47522-5099.



## NEWS & NOTES



Iowa Army Ammunition Plant commanders exchange the command colors during a change of command ceremony. (Photo by Brad Vidmar/The Hawk Eye)

1

## Welcome, Commanders!

This summer, CAAA welcomed two new commanders to our subordinate depots that will be joining our mission to produce, renovate, store, ship and demilitarize munitions. Lt. Col. Jason Christ joins Iowa Army Ammunition Plant from the Army Office of Business Administration and Lt. Col. Timothy Ballas joins Letterkenny Munitions Center from U.S. Transportation Command. As our leadership teams transition, our mission remains the same: providing the highest quality munitions readiness to the force.

## Quote of the Quarter

2

**“The Army must be manned, trained, equipped and modernized to be ready to fight today, but also to meet the demands of an uncertain and unpredictable future.”**

**– HON Christine E. Wormuth, Secretary of the Army**

3

## Operation Patriot Press

You may have noticed an increased amount of military convoys on the installation since the beginning of the summer. CAAA is a participant in Operation Patriot Press, an Army Material Command initiative that joins the help of the National Guard and Army Reserve to ensure Army readiness through real-world missions. Units from all over the nation have driven their convoys to Crane Army to transport munitions between JMC depots and ensure Soldier readiness for possible national and international crises and emergencies.



A soldier checks a convoy vehicle after delivering materials during an Operation Patriot Press exercise.

**Top:** A Crane Army employee moves munitions in the new shipping and receiving facility. The new facility will be primarily used for receiving shipments and has five surveillance bays in-house to conduct quality control before the munitions are transported to storage.

**Second row on left:** Crane Army employees prepare 105mm anti-personnel rounds for demilitarization after breaking down their packaging material and storage containers.

**Second row on right:** A Crane Army employee uses a forklift to transport munitions from the shipping facility to containers. The containers were transported to one of the ports that CAAA services to send munitions abroad.

**Bottom row on left:** A construction crew discs the grounds for a new Defense Logistics Agency Disposition Services building. This building will assist in disposing of extra material no longer needed at CAAA.

**Bottom row on right:** CAAA hosted a rail safety course for safety professionals across military services in June. Officials from the U.S. Transportation Command have conducted the training in 48 states for over 1,000 safety professionals, including three new CAAA employees who passed the course this summer.



## Today's Provision; Tomorrow's Success

The Army faces an inflection point that requires innovation, creativity and entrepreneurship in the application of combat power. In the next 15 years, the goal is to completely outfit the Army with doctrine, organizations, equipment and training environments to dominate adversaries in sustained Large Scale Combat Operations

"We are steadily working to enhance our force structure, build inclusive leadership and invest in quality of life initiatives."

- HON Christine E. Wormuth, Secretary of the Army



CAA's robotic tools ensure faster, more efficient processes while keeping the Crane Army workforce safer by reducing time spent around dangerous munitions.

A Crane Army Ammunition Activity employee uses a robotic arm in processing an M1122 round at the Crane Flexible Manufacturing Complex.



- Modernization of the Organic Industrial Base must keep pace with the modernization of the Army's equipment. The OIB must have modernized facilities and machinery necessary to manufacture, retool and maintain the next-generation of technology and equipment.
- The Army is reinvesting resources back into top modernization priorities and building towards the modern, multi-domain operations-capable Force of 2035.
- Modernization is more than weapon systems. We must modernize our infrastructure, training, processes and skill sets to support next-generation capabilities.
- Our people are our priority. The Army People Strategy establishes trained, disciplined and fit cohesive teams ready to fight and win; acquires the talent we need to modernize and compete today and in the future; and supports important programs in the next tier of priorities that are critical to the future readiness of the Army.

"In an era of rapidly increasing strategic threats driven in large part by global access to science and technology, talent and resources, the nation that can best operationalize science and do it quickly will have game-changing competitive advantages over their adversaries."

- Karl Kappa, director of Army Research Lab's Futures Division

# Transformation and Modernization: How CAAA becomes the ammo depot for tomorrow's warfighter.



Visitors from the Purdue Energetics Research Center tour Crane Army's facilities. Through industry relationships, Crane Army is able to prepare for the nation's munitions of the future and continue to provide only our best for the world's best.

In September 2021, Crane Army celebrates the ribbon cutting on two of its military construction projects – the new receiving facility for Depot Operations and the plating facility for Manufacturing and Engineering. Coupled with GPS systems on vehicles, improved digital x-ray capabilities for quality assurance and robotics in production lines, CAAA is celebrating the hard work it has taken to improve its infrastructure and equipment. But this celebration is not the end of the story, it is really the mark of things to come.

Crane, like most of the other ammo depots across the country, was built in World War II to meet the needs of the U.S. military at that time. While over the years it has grown and adjusted, it still largely operates within the infrastructure of how it was designed. You cannot provide true service to the military of the 21st century using the infrastructure and technology of the mid-20th century. It all has to grow together. Crane Army is looking at its structures, machinery, processes and even our workforce development to lay out a plan for the next 15-30 years on how we can transform to meet the military's future needs as it changes.

By increasing our capabilities through modernization and transformation, whether it is in logistics, storage, production, renovation or demilitarization, we are ensuring we meet the future needs. This isn't being done in a vacuum, but as part of a very intentional process across all the ammo depots and arsenals to strategically plan out future support. It is part of a planned effort across our headquarters, the Joint Munitions Command and higher headquarters, Army Materiel Command.

There are four key areas that CAAA is focused on:

## **Buildings and Infrastructure:**

This is perhaps the most visible form of modernization that will take place on Crane. While many of the structures Crane Army operates in are still viable, they need improvements to make them more energy efficient and improved for quality of workforce environment. In other cases, major work or construction may be needed. What was acceptable for production or storage in the 1940s might not meet the needs for munitions of tomorrow. Likewise, attention will be given to how

we heat, cool and communicate throughout our buildings. This will not be modernization for the sake of building, but rather a very-focused effort to provide structures that meet very specific missions that CAAA's workforce will provide.

### Equipment

Additionally, it does not make much sense to build the most state-of-the-art buildings but not look at the equipment we are using to accomplish the mission. From machinery, robotics, trucks and material handling equipment to digital x-rays, advancements in equipment will help CAAA deliver its products more efficiently and with a higher rate of quality. Improvements to our equipment will ensure greater safety for the workforce and reduced impacts to the environment.

### Processes

The "how" we accomplish the mission is absolutely critical. Transforming our processes will come about in two ways. First, Crane Army is always looking at industry and academia to improve the methods we use. Secondly, as a natural result of our modernization efforts to our infrastructure and equipment. As improvements are made and put into place, Crane Army will have many opportunities to evaluate how it can improve the way we do business. In some cases, there will be completely new processes to learn and in others it will be establishing new procedures and protocols. All of it will enable CAAA to be more efficient and effective in delivering lethality to the warfighter.

### Workforce Development/Talent Management

All of the new buildings, equipment and processes won't matter if Crane Army doesn't focus on this critical aspect. CAAA has an artisan workforce skilled at munitions logistics and production. If we want to provide the munitions of the future, we need to invest on the workforce of the future that is trained to deliver. This will focus on developing the right skills in house, both related to mission and leadership. It will also look at how we best can recruit and retain that workforce from the region. By looking at like-industries with similar needs in the Southern Indiana area and partnering with academia and regional development

institutions, Crane Army develops a stronger workforce for the 21st century.

While a plan has been developed by CAAA leaders to look at all four of those areas – this plan will involve everyone. Great ideas come most often from the shop floor. CAAA needs every employee to consider what they are doing and think about how it might be done in a better way. The same way the Army is working now to train and equip the fighting force that will take on threats in the decades to come, CAAA needs to work now to provide the munitions it will need for that fight.



Visitors from the Installation Management Command tour the new plating shop facility. Through buildings and equipment like these, Crane Army strives to set the bar for future munitions modernization.

If you have ideas of how we can improve our operations, please pass it up through your supervisor.

# DEPOT OPERATIONS

Depot Operations' All Things Storage project is leading Crane Army's storage procedures into the future. All Things Storage is a multi-step, long term approach to ensuring CAAA's facilities can accommodate munitions for today and tomorrow's warfighter. Plans for the program range up to 20 years and take a long term look at where our storage can be improved through reforming CAAA's storage process, improving storage facilities already available, building new facilities and providing employee development for those working with these structures.

"We're building justifications and developing ideas to provide new facilities for Crane Army in the future," Mark Smith, lead storage specialist, said. "We won't probably be around to see the completion of all the projects we're working on now because they're so far in the future, but that's what we need to do to keep up."

The storage planning component of All Things Storage addresses ways to improve the processes and technologies CAAA uses to get munitions from trucks to magazines and monitor munition location afterwards. With new facilities and munitions modernization on the horizon, ensuring CAAA has the tools to track them has become all the more important.

"If we don't start thinking about the future now and putting some of these projects in motion, we're going to be behind in a few years' time," Smith said.

Brand new, state-of-the-art storage facilities are included in the All Things Storage plan, starting with a new shipping and receiving building and going far beyond. There is also an initiative to repair and maintain the magazines Crane Army currently uses. Repairing the facilities already available to the command saves the activity money and makes way for more efficient and effective munitions storage.

"We are looking into the management of storage facilities to allow efficiencies in operations,"



Above: Many of Crane Army's storage facilities, like this earth covered magazine, are deteriorating and in need of repair.

Below: The same magazine pictured above is successfully repaired. Improving magazines supports proper munition storage and safer working conditions.



Paul Allswede, director of the Depot Operations directorate, said. "The goal is to have quick moving items near your transportation centers and deep stow items properly managed. That means those magazines surrounding transportation centers need to be updated and maintained."

At the end of the day, Crane Army's facilities are nothing without the incredible workforce that operates them. That's why All Things Storage

also intends to train workforce and leadership to ensure that the employees operating these facilities have what they need to succeed.

"We need a professional workforce," said Allswede. "As technology evolves, skill sets need to match the technology that's available. We want to make sure our workforce is capable of keeping up with new modern tools and that their leadership is able to support them as our systems continue to evolve."

Through improved processes and a well-equipped workforce, All Things Storage plans to revolutionize the way CAAA approaches munitions storage in order to provide the best munitions to the warfighter whenever and wherever they need them.

"The timing is right to take a look at what we can do to get to the future. Whether it's autonomous warehousing, climate control or accountability accuracy, the technology is now available and the support is there to really bring us into the 21st century of munitions storage."  
- Paul Allswede

# MANUFACTURING & ENGINEERING

CAAA's Manufacturing and Engineering directorate's modernization plans include a long-term project to build an entirely new pyrotechnic facility by fiscal year 2029. Crane Army's pyrotechnic operations were identified as one of the activity's core competencies in accordance with Army Materiel Command and Joint Munitions Command's transformation strategies. Investing in the successful operations that make CAAA an integral part of the JMC footprint has become an important part of the activity's modernization strategy.

The current building, a World War II-era facility constructed in 1942, is located in Naval Support Activity, Crane's "downtown" administrative area and is constrained in production and modernization initiatives due to being surrounded by buildings on all four sides. The new MILCON project will relocate the facility to a more ordnance-centric area on the installation, which unlocks a wide range of opportunities of expansion for Crane Army.

"Ammunition production has changed since the 1940s. There are a lot of inefficient workarounds in the current building," Lauren Shipman, civil engineer, said. "For the new facility, we've optimized a layout for more throughput that will subsequently increase Crane Army's munitions readiness."

Project leaders are working with workforce end users, explosives safety, environmental specialists, utilities, security and other Army and Navy stakeholders to identify the needs based upon the shortcomings of the old facility and the desired location of the new one.

The new facility will be designed to have a straight line process flow for mixing, pressing and curing operations in addition to being capable of running multiple production lines concurrently.

"We've pressed over two million illumination candles in our pyro facility since 2004," Leslie Thompson, commodity manager of the pyrotechnics facility, said. "We've been dreaming up ways that we can provide munitions like these to the warfighter even quicker when we have multiple streamlined production lines."

Since the building was constructed, the conditions of production and the expectations from the military have evolved. CAAA has spent \$12 million to upgrade the facility since 2004, with no



A Crane Army employee mixes binding components for a red flare in the pyrotechnics facility.

end to renovation in sight.

The new facility will account for modern safety requirements and have plenty of room for state-of-the-art equipment that the current World War II-era facility does not facilitate.

"I'm envisioning an automated robotic pressing process," Thompson said. She noted that robotization of work can sound worrisome to the Crane Army workforce, however, modern production provides modern opportunities for employment. "We're definitely going to need people operating the robots. They'll be working behind protective screens, which will reduce their exposure to explosives. We're all about improving safety in this new facility."

In due time, the construction of a new facility will save the activity and American taxpayers money. Upon completion, maintenance and renovation costs will decrease significantly for the years to follow, and the need for upgraded equipment to meet the needs of the military will be met.

Transportation costs will all but disappear after operations shift to the new facility with upwards of eight storage facilities on site, reducing the need for depot operations to deliver components to and from magazines across the installation. A decrease in the number of people handling components will decrease the cost of production to the taxpayers.

Though it's many years off from completion, and even being fully funded, the new pyrotechnic facility aims to set CAAA apart from other ammunition depots in its ability to produce advanced munitions for a modernizing force and improve readiness for the entire Department of Defense.



Crane Army employees attend a Project Inclusion listening session. These sessions encouraged open discussion on how to hire, train and retain a qualified and diverse workforce.

Amidst modernization efforts to open two new state-of-the-art facilities and upgrade the ways that Crane Army keeps their family safe on the installation, many supervisors are wondering: how does CAAA ensure that its workforce reflects and is prepared for the modernizing landscape of talent management?

Crane Army staff behind Project Inclusion have been holding a series of listening sessions with

supervisors across directorates to find out how they can improve recruiting, hiring, training and retention of employees.

“We will take this information forward and create a plan of action to ensure we are continuing to keep our goals in line with Project Inclusion,” Heather Byrd-Grubbs, CAAA management analyst, said. “This means not only ensuring we have a diverse team, but ensuring all members of the team are playing in the game.”

Byrd-Grubbs moderated the sessions by asking thought-provoking questions to prompt supervisors not only to share problems that they faced in talent management, but also to promote solution-driven conversations among Crane Army leadership.

The ultimate goal of these long term efforts is to refine the ways that we hire the right people into the right positions. Workforce planning requires effective communication, and staff hopes that these listening sessions can be a springboard to the future of starting a career at CAAA.

## ACTIVITY SUPPORT

At Crane Army, the safety of the workforce is the greatest way to ensure the success of CAAA’s mission. Safety continues to be a high priority, especially for those that work with our rail systems.

This past July, Crane Army’s rail safety team and other affected individuals partook in rail safety training aimed at teaching the dangers and precautions necessary to keep in mind when around locomotives. Through a combination of lecture and hands-on activities, CAAA employees and employees from other military services learned how to evaluate and maintain rail safety.

“It was a great opportunity for Crane Army and our base partners to get on the same page when it comes to rail safety,” Greg Tyree, safety supervisor, said. “Rail safety affects all of us on base and by taking this training together, we can make sure that if there should ever be an accident, we can use our shared knowledge to protect each other.”

This was the first time the training, offered



A training participant raises his hand to indicate that he can hear the train behind him. This exercise teaches how close and dangerous a train can be before individuals are alerted to its presence.

annually, has been hosted by CAAA. By having the training so close to home, Crane Army is able to save time and money for its employees, ensure that base partners remain in sync with CAAA safety procedures and use the very same rail facilities these employees will interact with in their training sessions for a more prepared rail safety system.

# EMPLOYEE SPOTLIGHT

## Doug Bridges

Heavy Mobile Equipment Mechanic

Crane Army's mission to provide high quality munitions to the warfighter requires the activity's workforce to be detail-oriented and ready to adapt at a moment's notice. CAAA's rail maintenance team plays an integral role in readiness and is continually led to success under the guidance of Doug Bridges, heavy mobile equipment mechanic.

Bridges has spent 14 years working for Crane Army, first in depot operations and now coordinating efficient but thorough maintenance on the activity's locomotives. He attributes much of his knowledge of mechanics to his career before CAAA, which was owning and operating a trucking company.

"I like working here," Bridges said. "It's a good job and I have a great team to support me."

Since the move of locomotive ownership at NSA Crane from the Navy to the Army, Bridges has remodeled procedures for scheduling rail maintenance, organizing his team to be ready for an influx of workload in the event that unscheduled maintenance were to occur.

"Multiple trains are rarely down, but life happens," Bridges said. "We're equipped to handle it now. My team and I will make sure the locomotives get back going so they can help us provide munitions to the military."

The rail maintenance team and management in Activity Support were quick to recognize Bridges' leadership skills. They find him to be a thoughtful and wise leader that encourages inclusivity and has helped his team adjust well to the move from the Navy.

"I am always in awe of him as a leader," James Dant, plant maintenance supervisor, said. "Doug never falters. He keeps his nose to the grindstone and keeps our rail operational for the Army."

Bridges' commitment to a management style that is not bureaucratic in nature has helped his team feel comfortable going to him when they experience setbacks or have questions.

"Doug takes good care of us and our needs," Jeff Rader, heavy mobile equipment mechanic, said.

The team agrees that Bridges is the epitome of quality activity support. Without his knack for leadership and extensive knowledge of rail maintenance, CAAA's fleet of Army Gold trains would not be able to shuttle loads across the installation as efficiently, and ultimately leave the warfighter waiting longer for munitions. Bridges represents a piece of the puzzle that enables Crane Army to provide world-class munitions readiness to the men and women in uniform working to protect the nation.



# Only Our Best For The World's Best

[www.crane.army.mil](http://www.crane.army.mil)