2021 Ammunition Hall of Fame Inductee

ROGER A. BIEHL

Mr. Roger Biehl enlisted in the U.S. Navy right after high school. He attended aviation technical schools at NAS Memphis, Tennessee and was assigned to Helicopter Training Squadron 8, NAAS Ellyson Field, Pensacola, Florida where he attained the rank of Aviation Ordnanceman Third Class (E-4). After attending Armament Systems Maintenance f/F-8 Crusader Aircraft, 20mm Gun and Sidewinder Missile Schools at NAS Miramar, California, he was assigned to NAS Guantanamo Bay, Cuba in the Ordnance Division. His responsibilities included the storage, surveillance, accountability, issuance, transportation, build-up, aircraft up-loading and down-loading of the full array of F-8 Crusader aircraft ammunition to include MK-80 Series Bombs, 20mm ammunition, Sidewinder Guided Missiles, Zuni Rockets, MK-24 Parachute Flares, 2.75 in. Rockets and Rocket Launchers, Fire Bombs and Snakeye Bomb Fins. He was also assigned to the NAS Pistol Range and as the Assistant Petty Officer in Charge of the Bombing and Strafing Range, which dealt with range safety, air control and range maintenance. He also served on the Magazine Crew, maintaining accountability of stored ordnance and assessed structural and regulatory compliance of the magazines. He qualified in the 10th Naval District Pistol Matches, which allowed him to participate in the Navy Atlantic Fleet Pistol Competition in Jun 1971. He received an Honorable Discharge in 1971 with the following awards: National Defense Service Medal, Meritorious Unit Commendation Ribbon and the Navy Unit Citation.

In 1979, Mr. Biehl completed the Rock Island Arsenal Machinist Apprenticeship and was assigned as a Journeyman Machinist at Rock Island Arsenal. By 1981, he was assigned to the Artillery and Fuze Branch, Artillery, Tank & Naval Munitions Production Management Division of the Armament Material Readiness Command. In this capacity, he was instrumental in the correction of an identified defect in the expelling charge of the M116A1 155mm SMK Projectile, which was discovered during a rework program. He participated in the design, testing, production and fielding of the projectiles with a new polyethylene expelling charge cup.

In1983, he was assigned to perform a Special Pre-Award Survey on the M250 Grenade Launcher based on his manufacturing background and experience. The survey was initiated by a congressional inquiry, based on the initial non-responsible finding of the contractor's ability to perform. His findings confirmed the original survey of the inability of the contractor to perform.

In 1986, the AMCCOM Quality Directorate suspended all assets of the M115A2 Projectile Ground Burst Simulator, including the old configuration and the alternate configuration. The test developed by Army Research and Development Command to address the suspension, entailed functioning 900 simulators but only focused overcoming the reported unsafe condition in the new alternative configuration rather than comparing the old configuration to the alternative configuration. Mr. Biehl, in collaboration with the AMCCOM Quality Manager formulated a test procedure to compare the old and alternative configurations with the goal of having Longhorn Army Ammunition Plant (AAP) resume production of a safe and reliable item as soon as possible. The test results enabled the stockpile to have the old configuration suspension lifted, and approved Longhorn AAP to resume production to the old configuration,

with only the addition of a warning label on the simulator for a greater distance that currently stated.

In 1987, Mr. Biehl identified the need to proactively expand the Infrared Aircraft Flare industrial base due to active producers going out of business and no new producers entering the base which jeopardized the ability of HQ, AMCCOM to support the field in peacetime and more importantly, in time of national emergency. The path he pursued was to expand the production capabilities of Longhorn AAP to ensure that the ability to produce these critical items would not be subject to market environments. Initial meetings with the Air Force and NAVAIR were conducted by him to explain the problem and how the proposed solution would address the problem. He provided additional briefings to the Joint Ordnance Commanders Group Executive Committee, the Joint Ordnance Commanders Group and individual NAVAIR Flag Officers. The plan was approved and implemented.

From 1989 to 2004, Roger Biehl provided instruction to CP33 interns in all aspects of production management, briefed ammunition production management topics at the Ammunition Capstone Courses, participated in the CP-33 mid-year screening panels that qualified ammunition managers for promotion and participated in the Senior Ammunition Manager Seminars. Additionally, between October 1997 and January 1998 he was assigned as the Chief of the CP-33 Office at Savanna AD, IL overseeing the CP-33 Program which included briefing the CP-33 budget to Department of Army.

Analyzing current ammunition budget levels and the resulting effect on the Ammunition Organic Industrial Base in 1998, Mr. Biehl's team identified the inability of projected budget levels to sustain the ammunition organic base at economical levels. He briefed this situation to the CG, AMCCOM and higher HQ. A decision was made by the Commanding General of AMC to develop a plan, independent of the 1998 BRAC effort, to close six Army Ammunition Plants. An implementation plan was formulated to phase out ammunition production and assign the remaining previously workloaded items to other army ammunition plants or to seek production from commercial industry. He gave briefings to the Congressional and Senate Staff of the closing facilities, to explain the need to close those ammunition plants. Beginning with Mississippi AAP in 1990 and concluding with Louisiana AAP in 1994, all facilities were closed with residual workloaded items successfully transferred to other production sources.

In 1992, Mr. Biehl met with a Senate Appropriations Committee Staffer on a concept to assist communities of the closed and closing government ammunition plants as an offset for the long and faithful community support they gave over the years while in operation. The concept would support commercial use of the former ammunition plants by providing eligible tenants long-term leases, low interest loans and funding to rehabilitate ammunition production and storage facilities to accomplish commercial activities resulting in increased employment opportunities. Working with Senate Appropriations Committee Staff, he in conjunction with two other colleagues, discussed and championed intent language, goals, objectives, implementation parameters, oversight, budget and timeframes to the Deputy Chief of Staff for Ammunition, Assistant Secretary of the Army (IL&E), and House Armed Services Committee Staffers. This culminated in the passing of the Armament Retooling and Manufacturing Support Act of 1993. He continued to actively support the effort through participation in the Public Private Task Force

and the ARMS National Marketing efforts. In subsequent years, the ARMS Program was adopted for use for the active army ammunition plants and the other Government Owned-Government Operated facilities.

Mr. Biehl was selected by the Assistant Secretary of the Army (RD&A) to participate on a team that would assess the Government of Romania's armament plants. The team toured four Romanian munitions plants in 1996, making an in-depth analysis of their current status, capabilities, configuration and equipment status and the ability to convert some military munitions capability to commercial capability. This was done in an effort to maintain viability of ammunition manufacturing and maintain overall economical operations. Additionally, the ARMS Program was presented as an example of how the U.S. Government encouraged and facilitated commercial use of underutilized or inactive ammunition production facilities. The information provided to the Romanian Minister of National Defense and his staff was appreciated and well received.

In 1998, the Roger Biehl initiated an AMCCOM effort by asserting the command in assuming the lead role in determining where the Chemical Defensive Equipment Go-To-War stockpile would be consolidated. With intimate knowledge of receipt, issue, store, maintain, outload and inventory functions, the Tooele-Blue Grass AD Team, led by Roger Biehl, performed the analysis for a site selection effort that would satisfy all requirements of the user, including rapid outloading should the need arise. The analysis and site selection were successfully briefed to the AMCCOM leadership, the Commander, Chemical Biological Command and the Department of the Army which approved the plan without change.

In 2002, while leading to the Country Program Management Division, Mr. Biehl received a request to support to the U.S. Train and Equip Program for the Republic of Georgia necessitated by the depletion of a vast majority of war fighting equipment after Soviet Union abandoned the Republic of Georgia bases following the breakup of the Soviet Union. He initiated a plan to fill all requirements for the Republic of Georgia, briefed the plan to the Defense Security Cooperation Agency and executed the plan to fill all requirements. The Government of Israel had requested a significantly large order of ammunition in 2003, which was during the period that the U.S. production sourcewas having difficulties producing and delivering the same ammunition type. Mr. Biehl devised a proposal to deliver the entire order, but in increments that would satisfy the perceived fielding plan of the Israel Defense Force. The plan was briefed to Defense Security Cooperation Agency and then several briefings at the Israeli Ministry of Defense Mission to the U.S. and ultimately to the Head of Mission. Approval of the plan was granted and was executed, meeting all training requirements of the customer.