

Short History of the Iowa Army Ammunition Plant

The Iowa Army Ammunition Plant (IAAAP) traces its roots back to World War II. Land for the plant was purchased in 1940 at a rather innocuous site near Middletown, IA, whose population was a whole 134 then. The site is located 12.5 miles west of Burlington, IA and the Mississippi River. The Iowa Ordnance Plant (IOP), as it was known then, fit the mold for all the ammo plants being built for WW II of being separated from large urban populations but available to railroads which could supply materials for building the plant, shipping in raw materials and transporting the completed ammunition to wherever it was needed.



As with most of the WW II ammunition plants production stopped at IOP at the end of the war but was begun again in 1947 when the Atomic Energy Commission (AEC) assumed responsibility for it. The AEC Plant did final assembly on nuclear weapons at IAAAP until 1975, when assembly was consolidated at a plant in Texas. The IOP was designated the Iowa Army Ammunition Plant (IAAAP) in 1963.

In addition, conventional ammunition production begun again in 1949 and has continued unbroken to today. In 1951 the plant was converted to a Government Owned, Contractor Operated facility and Mason & Hangar-Silas Mason Company was selected as the operating contractor. Contractor operations have gone through a few iterations and today the plant is operated by American Ordnance LLC, a wholly owned subsidiary of Day & Zimmermann.

IAAAP is a large industrial facility with over 19,000 acres, 5 production lines, significant ammunition igloo storage areas, 142 mile of roadway, 102 miles of railroad track, and 30 miles of steam distribution. At its peak in WW II IAAAP employed 13,000 employees and workload has varied over the years with employment today of approximately 700.

As with most ammunition plants operated during both WW II and the Korean War operations resulted in releases of hazardous substances to the environment, both ground and water. Due to contamination levels throughout the plant it was placed on the EPA National Priorities List in 1990 and a vigorous cleanup has been on-going since. In coordination with the EPA cleanup of many site is completed and is on-going in the more difficult sites.

Today IAAAP is considered a critical resource by the Army in the following areas:

- Medium/Large Caliber (40mm – 120mm rounds)
- Mortar/Artillery Rounds (60/81/120mm, 105/155mm)
- Warhead/HE loading (i.e. Hellfire, Javelin, Stinger, etc.)
- Propulsion Systems (Mortar and Artillery)
- Other High Explosive loading (IM/C4/MICLIC, etc.)

In fact, IAAAP is the only facility left in the United States for the Load, Assemble and Pack (LAP) of both medium caliber and larger caliber ammunition.

If you visit the IAAAP you will see them executing their mission of producing medium and large caliber ammunition items for the Department of Defense using modern production methods in support of worldwide operations