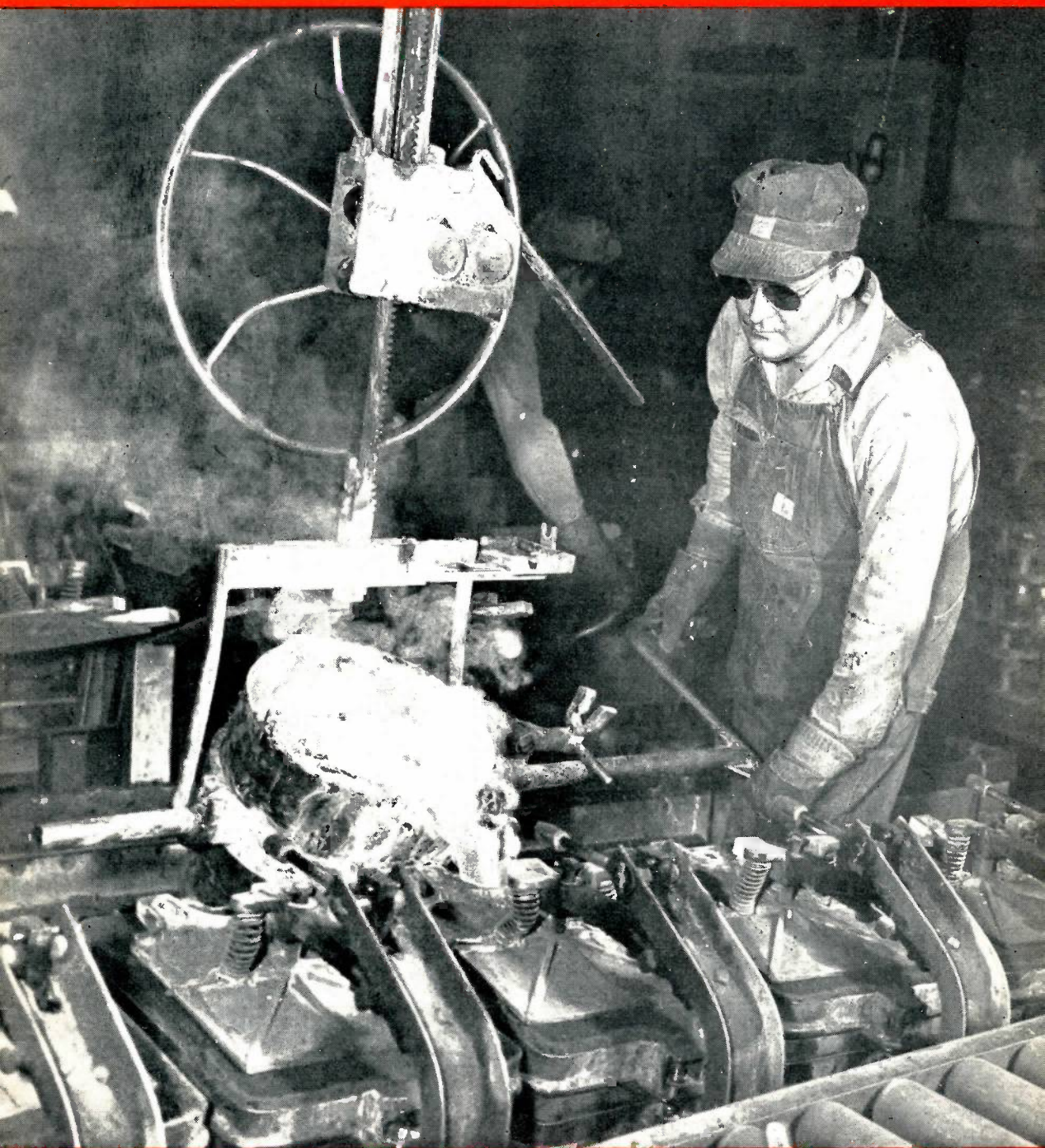


# MUELLER RECORD



## Management Notes

### I. Inventories

By Albert G. Webber, Jr.  
President, Mueller Co.

IN ANY enterprise, large or small, and whether selling or manufacturing, the primary purpose of carrying any inventory is to render prompt service to customers. A retail store has almost all of its inventory on the shelves ready for sale.

A factory's inventory includes not only finished stock ready to ship, but also raw materials, goods in various stages of manufacture in the plant, component parts such as bolts and nuts, as well as the many items of factory supplies which do not become part of the product in a physical sense. Examples are coal, foundry sand, shipping containers and like articles. All these items and others make up the inventory.

It is self-evident that the longer the cycle of production in a plant, the larger the inventory that must be carried if it serves its intended purpose.

If an inventory is not carefully planned and watched constantly, it can become detrimental and even ruinous to a business. In almost every business recession to date, a bad general inventory situation has been an important contributing factor. Moreover, any inventory is costly to maintain. Opinions and estimates on the cost of carrying an inventory vary from 5 per cent to 25 per cent per year of the sales value. Whatever basis is taken, the cost of keeping an inventory on hand is large. The principal causes of serious inventory trouble may be stated, as follows:

1. The inventory is too small to give good service to customer, or
2. The inventory may be large enough to absorb so much cash that the manufacturer is hard pressed to meet his pay rolls and other accounts, or



A. G. Webber, Jr.

3. The inventory may be out of balance; that is, overstocked on slow-moving items and understocked on volume items that sell rapidly.

A business such as ours, with many catalog items and more parts entering into the same has very difficult inventory problems. Each catalog item and each one of the five or more parts going to make each finished article must be considered in settling an inventory policy. Also it is necessary, out of current production, to fill orders and also replenish inventory—keeping in mind at all times the absolute necessity of getting economical runs in the manufacturing process.

What we try at all times to accomplish is to have a balanced inventory of sufficient size to serve our customers, but not so extensive as to tie up an unduly large part of the company's working capital. It is easier to state such a policy than to carry it into effect, because it takes more than a few words on paper to get the desired result.

In fact, it needs the intelligent understanding and unremitting effort of an entire organization if such a policy is to meet with success.

## MUELLER RECORD

March, 1950



No. 156

GENE J. KUHN, Editor

Published in the Interests of  
Employees of the

**MUELLER CO.**

PLUMBING, WATER AND GAS PRODUCTS

#### FACTORIES

DECATUR, ILL.    LOS ANGELES, CALIF.  
SARNIA, ONT.    CHATTANOOGA, TENN.

#### BRANCHES

NEW YORK CITY    SAN FRANCISCO

TRADE MARK

**MUELLER**

Reg. U. S. Pat. Off.

Cover: Frank Ridgeway pouring a mold in the brass foundry. He has been a Mueller Co. employee since 1935.

MUELLER RECORD



Castings are sorted for grinding at this slowly revolving table, which makes a complete revolution every four minutes. In that time it is capable of taking a full load of 3,600 pounds of castings from the Ransohoff "water rattler," a machine that washes and polishes the castings. Sorters at the table include, from left to right: Fayne Marohl, Floyd Durbin, George Shotten and George A. Hill.

## Modernize Grinding Room

**Improvements accomplish two-fold purpose: provide better working conditions and increase production.**

**M**ODERNIZATION of the grinding room, started three years ago as part of the foundry division's improvement program and now nearing completion, has resulted in better working conditions and increased efficiency for employees with a resultant increase in production.

Handling of the castings as they are prepared for machining operations in other departments has been reduced to a minimum. Powered conveyors have taken over, and castings are routed through the department quickly and easily. New machines have been purchased and installed according to a plan that eliminates lost motion. Better lighting has been provided, and a new and improved ventilating system installed, making for safer and more pleasant working conditions.

As Stanley Ashby, day shift foreman, recalling the old days in the grinding room put it: "They've really made a department out of this."

The grinding room, adjoining the brass foundry, has the responsibility of preparing rough castings for machin-

ing, including cleaning, sorting, tagging, inspection and removal of excess metal. The castings are then sent to other departments for machining and assembly.



First operation in the grinding room is to cut gates and sprues from the casting. Lawrence Grider operates one of the cut-off machines.



Castings are first cleaned in a wheelabrator, which removes cores and molding sand. Here Gerald Sarver empties castings from wheelabrator barrel to hopper for transfer to the "water rattler."

Mixed castings are loaded into the "water rattler" for washing and polishing operation.

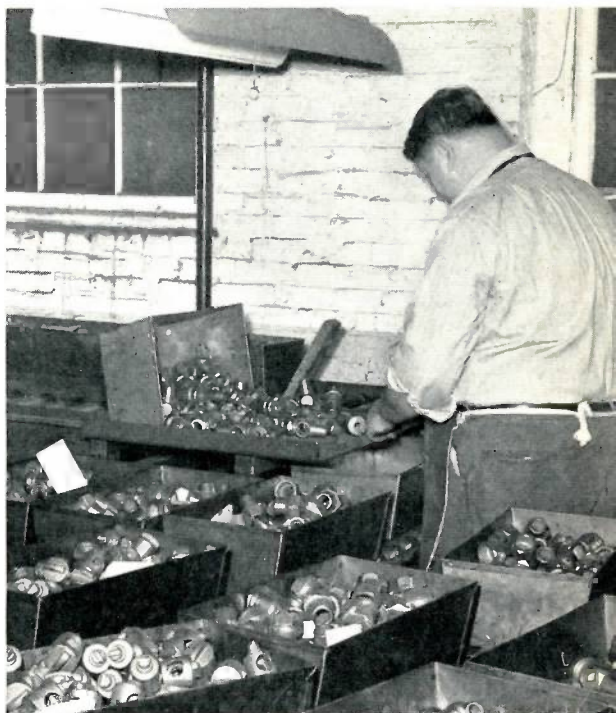


Washed and polished castings are shown as they emerge, cleaned and ready for sorting.



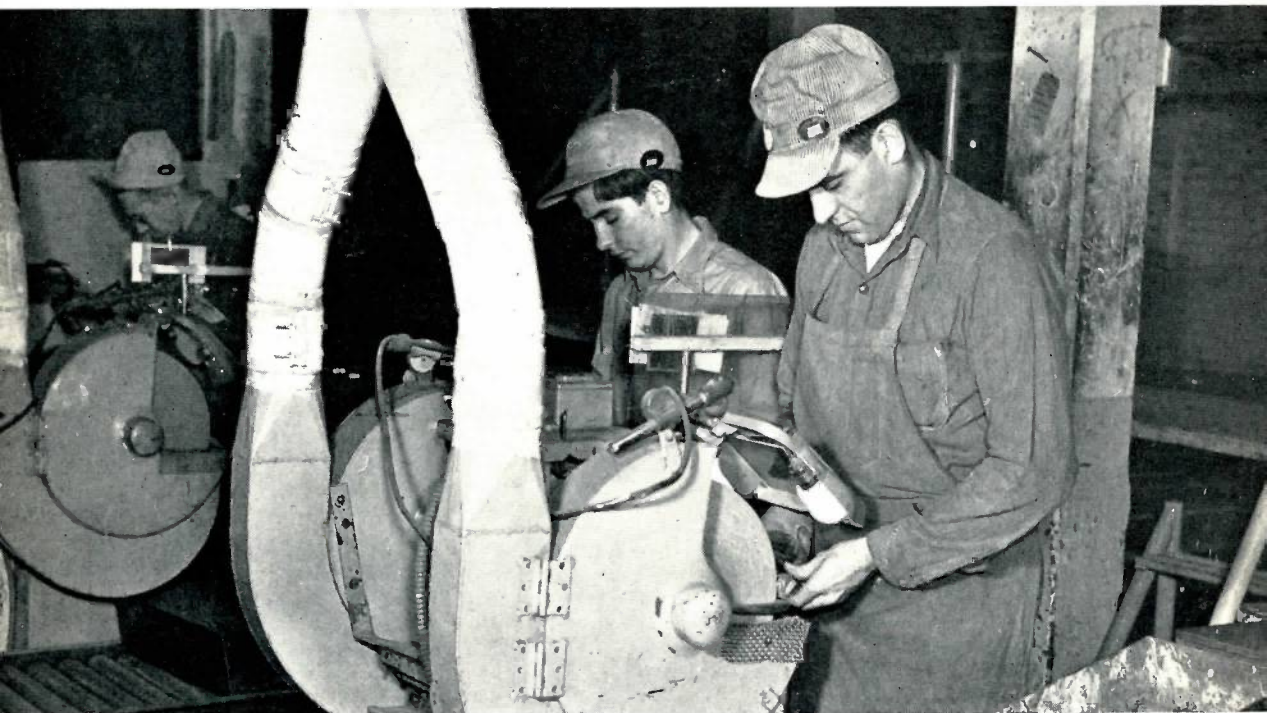


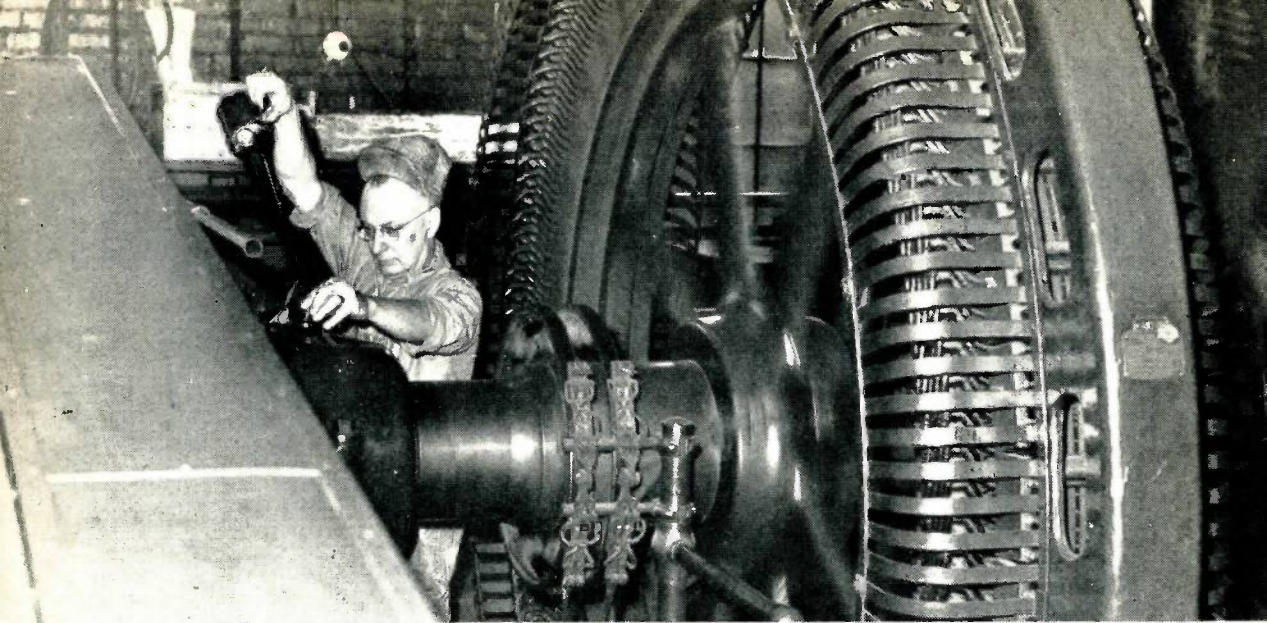
Andrew Heitman tags each tray of castings, identifying them according to part number.



Melvin Boggs, inspector, checks tray of stop bodies before they are routed to grinders.

Grinding operation readies the rough castings for machining. Exhaust ducts remove metal dust as castings are ground. Shown here are Lloyd Smith, far left, Kenneth Nolen and Levi Green.





Howard Baldis, power plant engineer, oiling the main shaft bearing of one of the factory's two 360 kilowatt generators, which were used to avoid a partial shutdown during recent coal strike.

## Company Averts Partial Shutdown

**Generates own power during the last six days of coal strike; fuel available for employees from stockpile.**

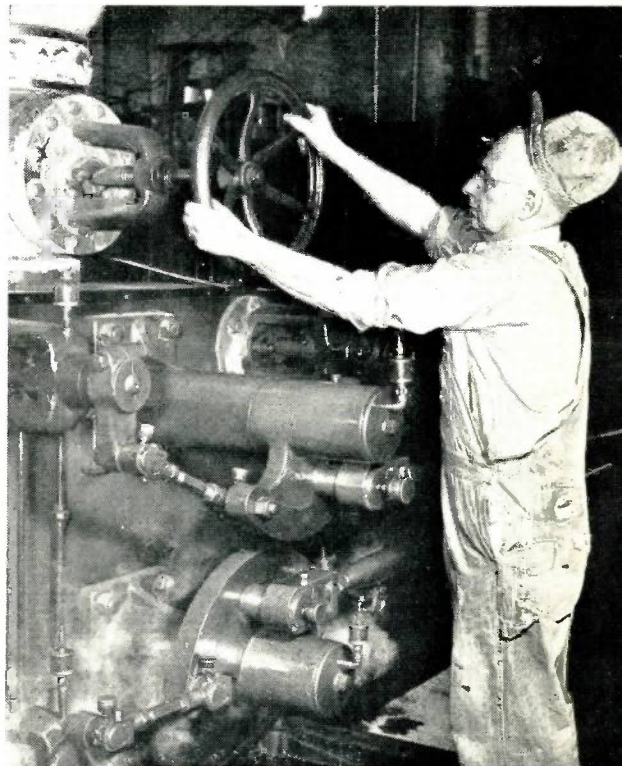
**D**URING THE recent coal strike and the resultant 25 per cent cut in available electricity, Mueller Co. averted a partial shutdown in its two Decatur factories by generating its own power during the day shift. At the same time the company made coal available to employees from its dwindling stockpile.

The two generators in the power plant at the main factory, each rated at 360 kilowatts, were placed in service February 25, and generated power for the factory for the last six days of the strike between 6 o'clock in the morning and the first shift's quitting time at 3:30 in the afternoon. This enabled plant No. 2 and the second shift at the main factory to continue full operations on purchased power at well within the curtailment figures, which were based on consumption for the previous month.

The plant is set up to run on either purchased or manufactured power, but not both at the same time. Boilers and generators in the company's power plant are sufficient to supply the demand for the factory, but it means operating at near capacity loads, and there is no stand-by equipment.

Right: Baldis opens throttle valve as factory began operating from its own power plant.

Howard Baldis, power plant engineer, said only about five additional tons of coal were used each day for supplying





Wilbur Tucker loads coal on pick-up truck used to make deliveries to employees from company's stockpile, as Bill Kaigley, center, and Web Workman look on. About 100 coal deliveries were made.

power. Steam from the exhaust of the engines is run into the heating mains, and comparatively little additional coal was required to generate electricity.

The personnel office reported that approximately 100 employees purchased

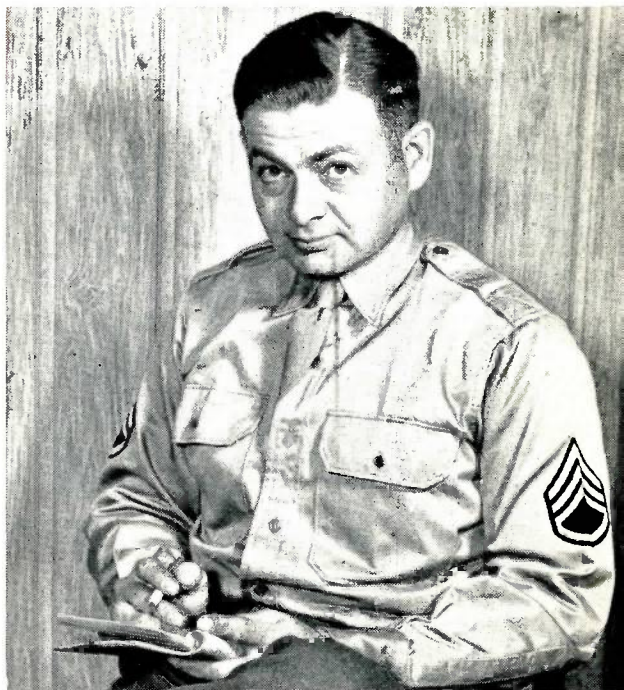
coal, offered at cost plus hauling, through the company. In many instances, in view of the cold weather, considerable hardship would have resulted if the coal had not been made available to employees.

Jcnette Allen, 4-year-old sister of Richard Allen, grinding room tag man, was an interested spectator as Kaigley and Fred Landgrebe, laborer, back to camera, unloaded a ton of coal at his home.





Dale Wilkins, second class boatswain's mate, is a lathe operator in civilian life. Here he's showing a recruit how to tie a knot.



Staff Sergeant Robert Schmitt is in the service battery of the 847th Field Artillery Battalion when he's not driving a Mueller Co. truck.

## Reservists Earn and Learn

Receive pay and credit toward retirement benefits for attending weekly drills and tours of active duty.

**M**UELLER CO. ORGANIZED reservists of both the Army and Navy are earning points toward retirement by attending weekly drills at the Signal Depot and the U. S. Naval Reserve Training Center here, plus an annual two-week cruise or camp, while maintaining their proficiency in military skills. The reservist receives a day's pay for each drill attended, computed at the base pay of his military rate.

Under Title III of Public Law 810, reservists are eligible at 60, after 20 years' satisfactory service, to receive retirement pay in an amount up to 75 per cent of the active duty pay of the highest rank or rate held during military service. Enactment of the law was primarily intended to insure strong and stable reserve components and to increase the attractiveness of the reserve training programs.

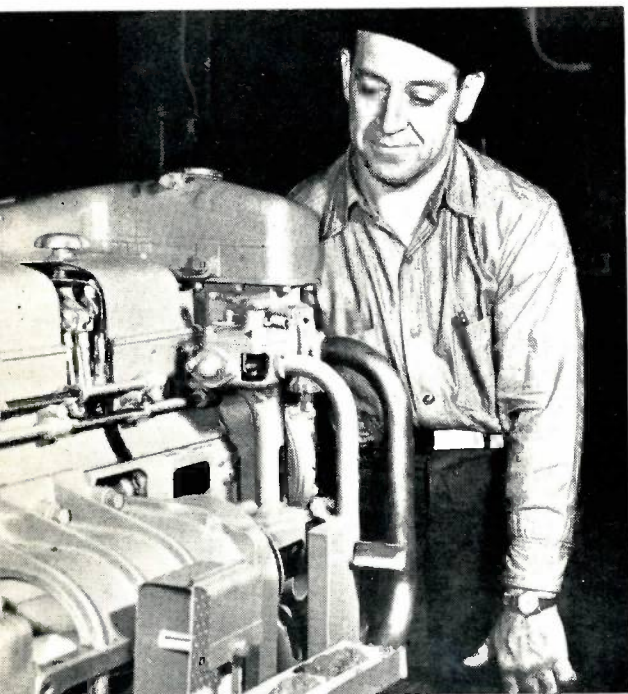
Credit toward retirement benefits is

given for active duty performed during the war, for attending authorized drill and instruction periods, for annual two-week training duty or other active duty, for completion of correspondence courses, and for membership in the Army or Naval Reserve.

All but one of the Mueller Co. reservists shown on these pages served in World War II, and will receive credit toward retirement for that period of active duty. The exception is Clifford Carter, Jr., a ground key tester, who was too young for military service during the war.

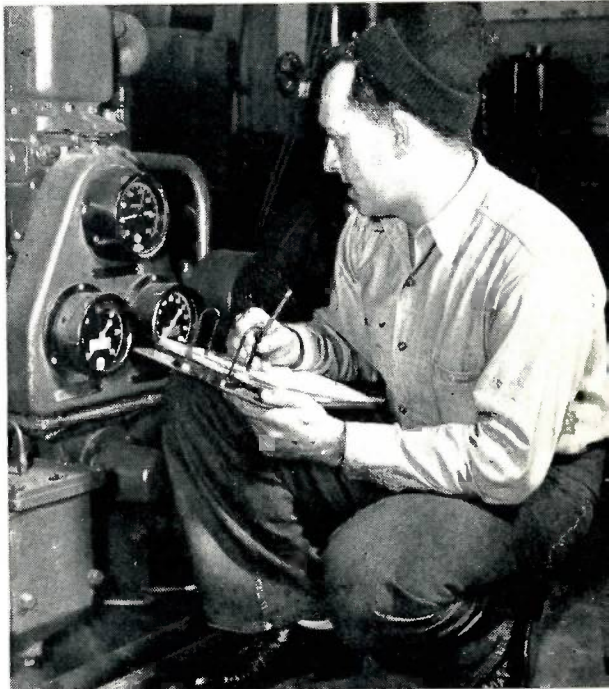
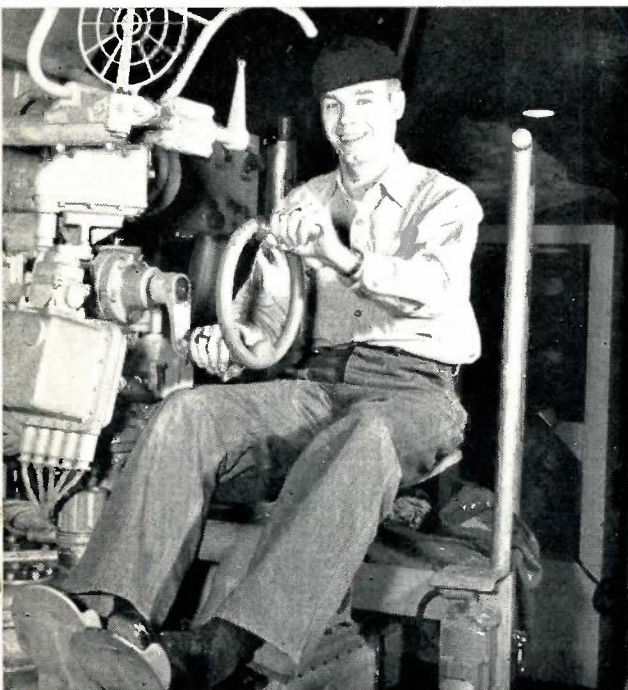
The 20-year period of satisfactory service is a minimum requirement. Additional points may be earned after the required 20-year period so long as the reservist has not been placed on the inactive status list and these points would serve to increase the amount of his retirement pay.





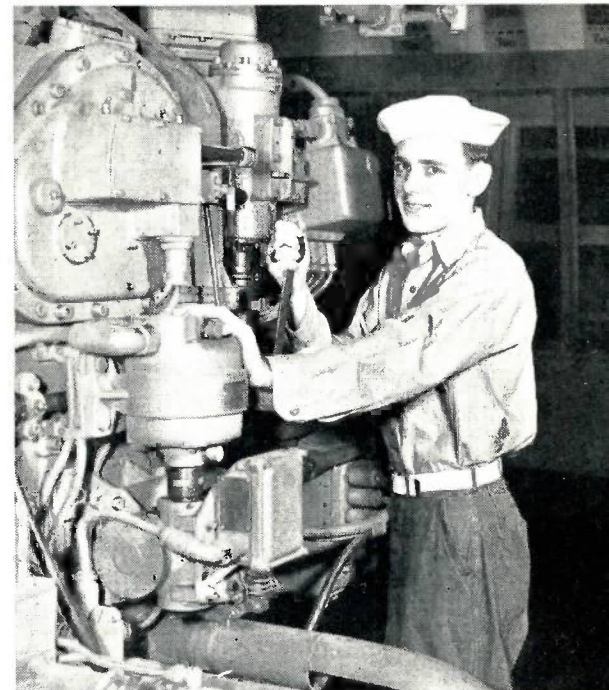
John Taylor, department 8 machine operator, turns over a cutaway model of diesel engine to observe firing cycle. Model is one of many training aids used to instruct reservists.

Charles W. Johnson, foundry progress clerk, is a gunner's mate, first class—his wartime rate. He's shown on the pointer's seat of a fast-firing twin 40 millimeter anti-aircraft gun.



Dean E. Grant, a tool designer and a Coast Guard motor machinist's mate during the war, logs performance of one of the diesels installed at U. S. Naval Reserve Training Center.

Clifford Carter, Jr., 19, ground key tester, is the only non-veteran among this group of Mueller Co. reservists. Too young for war service, he's now a gunner's mate striker.



# Accident Frequency Rate Still High

Number of occupational cases treated at Decatur plants declines during past year from 996 in 1948 to 704.

**S**AFETY STATISTICS for the two Decatur plants for 1949 indicate a fractional decrease in the accident frequency rate and a small gain in the severity rate as compared to 1948. Accident frequency remained substantially above national averages for comparable manufacturing plants, and the severity of accidents was well below the national rate.

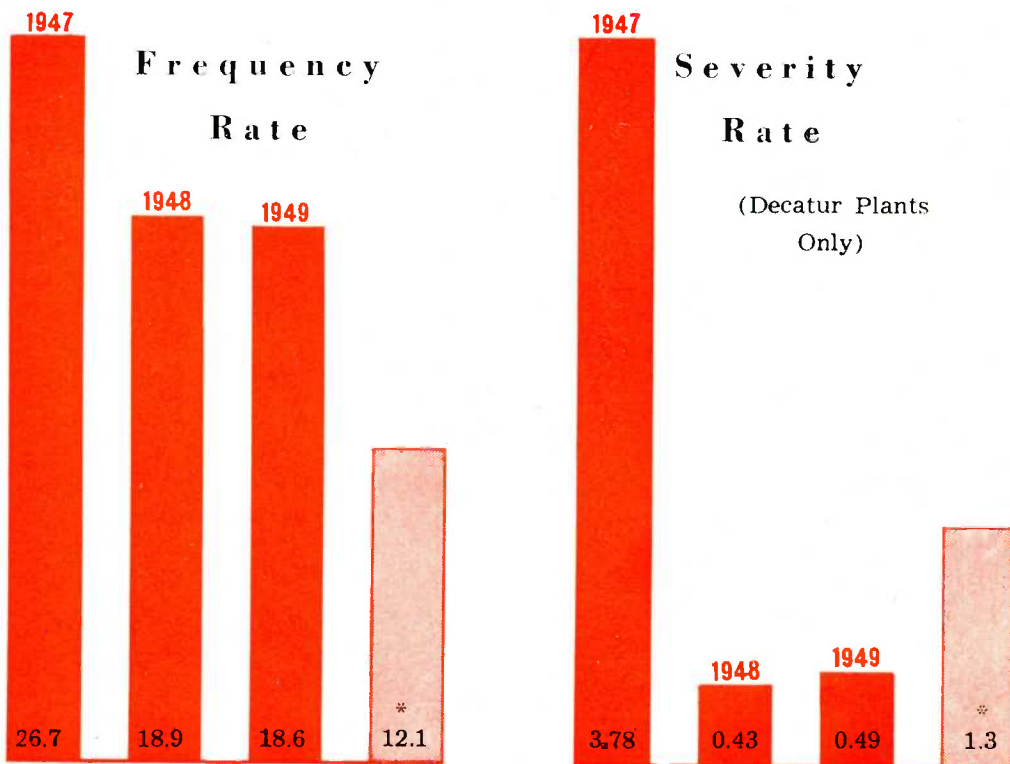
Frequency rates are determined by the number of lost time accidents per million man hours worked and severity is determined by the number of days lost per thousand man hours worked. The year 1947, as the graph shows, marked the plants' highest frequency and severity rates, since a fatal accident was charged against the figures.

Although the frequency rate of the plants is higher than for the industry,

the medical department reported that 704 occupational cases were treated in 1949 as compared to 996 in 1948, a decrease of 292 cases. There were five occupational injuries, all to fingers, which resulted in permanent partial disabilities.

As the graph indicates, severity of accidents at the plants for the past two years has been far below the national rate. In other words, the Decatur factories' employees have been involved in more accidents and sustained less serious injury than the industry as a whole.

The factory manager's office, however, feels that this is still a dangerous situation, for the number of accidents leaves room for a serious injury at almost any time. Accidents also cause an economic problem for both employees and the company.



\*Source: National Safety Council, comparable manufacturing, 1948, latest figures available.

# Decatur

Borg-Warner Corp., which leased the Mueller Co. plant No. 3 in May, 1948, recently announced that its Marvel-Schebler Carburetor division, now located in Flint, Michigan, would be transferred to Decatur in late summer or early fall.

About 400 persons will be employed at the plant, according to the announcement. Marvel-Schebler Carburetor division produces about 750,000 carburetors annually, S. W. Gray, president of the division, estimated. Employees at the Flint plant have been notified of the move, it was said.

Plant No. 3 has been idle, with the exception of its wartime use by Mueller Co. for the manufacture of munitions, since 1932. At that time the plant was shutdown when the company discontinued the manufacture of vitreous ware. The main building and power plant were erected in the middle 1920s, and was put into operation in 1926. It later was used by the Civilian Conservation Corps as a headquarters and warehouse.

Buildings leased by Borg-Warner include the main plant, which has a floor space of 105,000 square feet; warehouse building, 20,000 square feet; stock building, 7,000 square feet; power plant, 3,000 square feet; and a sewage disposal plant, designed for a small city of 2,500 population. The plant receives its water supply from the city of Decatur, and

has a 100,000-gallon elevated storage tank.

During the war, Mueller Co. employed approximately 1,200 persons at plant No. 3 at its production peak. The plant manufactured 37, 57 and 155 millimeter shells.

After the war, the plant had been used only for storage until it was leased by Borg-Warner.

Borg-Warner leased the plant for five years with an option to buy.

■ ■ ■

Play in the Mueller Bowling League entered its last round March 21 with the Specialty Division team out front by a margin that will be difficult to overcome. Ground Key Division was in second place, and the Product Engineers, which has the lowest average of the ten teams competing, was third. These were the standings as the league started its last round:

Team	G	W	L
Specialty Division	84	58	26
Ground Key Division	84	53	31
Product Engineers	84	48	36
Experimental Shop	84	44	40
Works Manager's Office	84	39	45
Tool Engineers	84	39	45
Main Office	84	37	47
Department 9	84	35	49
Pattern Shop	84	34	50
Brass Finishers	84	33	51

Play in the league will end May 16.



A view of the Mueller Co. plant No. 3, which will be used by Borg-Warner's Marvel-Schebler Carburetor division. The plant, built in the 1920s, was leased by Borg-Warner in May, 1948.



When Charles Gilmore, former brass foundry foreman, returned to the plant January 30 to make his final check-out before going on the retired list, a watch was presented by fellow foundrymen. Robert Workman, center, made the presentation. Gilmore had 29 years' service.

Sweepstakes event is scheduled for May 23.

The ten high bowlers were: George

Hartwig, Specialty Division; Henry Stratman, Specialty Division; Robert Leake, Pattern Shop; Al Hill, Main Office; Ben Taylor, Ground Key Division; Anthony Grossman, Tool Engineers; Jack Bain, Works Manager's Office; Eddie Nalefski, Ground Key Division; Martin Riewski, Ground Key Division; and Al Degand, Specialty Division.



Harvie Steele, shipping department, retired February 28. He had been a Mueller Co. employee for six years and eleven months.



Joan L. Shotton, daughter of George Shotten, grinding room, was a mid-year graduate of Decatur high school. Graduation exercises were held February 2 at the high school auditorium.

Announcement has been made of the engagement of Ruth Jeschawitz, stationery department, and Harold W. Greene. The wedding will be May 14 at the First English Lutheran Church.

March 15 marked the first anniversary of the re-opening of the Mueller cafe-



The annual men's night dinner of the Mueller Social Club was held March 22. Traditionally a chicken fry, the hosts saved themselves a lot of work by having it at the cafeteria this year. In the foreground are Mr. and Mrs. E. M. Garver and Mr. and Mrs. Everett Dickey.

teria under the management of Nationwide Food Service, Inc.



Herman A. (Jack) Chepan, experimental shop foreman, Wilbur (Bud) Edwards, department 37, and Ben Taylor, department 8, attended the Elks National Bowling tournament at Cleveland, Ohio, March 18 and 19. They bowled in the team, doubles and singles divisions. The tournament, which began this month, will end in May.



Funeral services for Mrs. Ida E. Doherty, mother of C. W. Doherty, engineering department, were held March 16. Mrs. Doherty died March 20. Requiem high mass was at St. Patrick's church, and interment was in Calvary cemetery.



Freda Combs of the city recreation department presented an illustrated talk, using color slides, on her trip to Cuba and Guatemala at a potluck supper of the Mueller Social Club March 15. The supper was held at Mueller Lodge.



Claude Stacey, maintenance department, is again available for wallpaper cleaning in your home. His home telephone number is 9115.

Ray Kileen, formerly of the engineering department, has been transferred to the purchasing department in the position of assistant purchasing agent. The appointment was effective February 23.



Frank Sill, shipping department, retired March 21. He had been employed almost six years.

# Chattanooga

Marcella Lykins, Correspondent

With Spring right here the weather has been much colder than our winter weather. Perhaps we should look forward to a White Easter.

■ ■ ■

It is good to be able to tell all the friends of Mrs. Homer VanVleet that she is at home after having undergone an operation at Erlanger hospital. Mr. Van tells me that she is doing nicely and we are very glad to hear this news.

■ ■ ■

Margaret and Coy Jones are the proud parents of a wonderful baby boy, Charles Emerson, born January 13. Coy told me that he had already been making arrangements with Mr. Churchill of the pattern shop for little "Hank" to start working. Coy is the assistant foreman of our foundry.

■ ■ ■

Bette and Odie Walker, Jr., are now living in their beautiful new home at

309 Haney Drive in Brainerd. Now, I don't know that this is official (from Bette, that is), but I have been hearing Odie say, "Come by anytime and bring your refreshments". Think we should go?

■ ■ ■

We were very happy to have as visitors from Decatur in February, Mr. and Mrs. J. W. Simpson, who were motoring to Florida and stopped by and paid us a visit enroute. Other recent visitors from Decatur were Frank Odell and Bob Whitehead.

■ ■ ■

Members of the Columbian Iron Works extend their deepest sympathy to Jack Moss of the assembly department in the recent death of his father; and also Lewis M. White of the maintenance department in the recent death of his mother. The late Mrs. White was also the mother-in-law of John Tate of the maintenance department.

# Sarnia, Ontario

Phyllis Pearce, Correspondent

We extend our congratulations to Murray Taylor, engineering department and Virginia Karn on their marriage, February 8 in St. George's Anglican church. Murray was presented with a lovely gift when the employees of the office, engineering, time study and production staffs gathered to extend their congratulations.

■ ■ ■

Our sympathy is extended to:

Malcolm Tigwell, department 6, in the death of his infant daughter, Robina, on January 20.

Leslie Crooks, foreman of department 6, in the passing of his mother in England.

Our sincere wishes for a speedy recovery go to Lois McPhee, sales department, and Almeda Reeve, accounting department, both having recently undergone operations.

It seems that the brass shop has had more than its share of injuries lately. At the present time Walter Stevens, William Foster and George Foslett are at home recovering from recent injuries.

■ ■ ■

Our congratulations to:

Mr. and Mrs. Garnet Denomy on the birth of a daughter, Carol Miriam. Garnet is employed in the production control department.

Mr. and Mrs. Thomas Andrews on the birth of a son, Darrell Thomas. Tom works in department 6.

Mr. and Mrs. Mervin McDougall on the birth of a daughter, Bonnie Lee. Mervin works in department 6.

Mr. and Mrs. Harold Hannam on the birth of a daughter, Wendy Sue. Harold works in department 3.

Les Crooks, foreman of department 6, who recently became a grandfather.

George Hayward, foreman of department 1, in the passing of his father, George A. Hayward.

■ ■ ■

We would like to congratulate John Burns, foreman of the maintenance and power house division, who was recently installed as vice-president of the Institute of Power Engineers, Sarnia Branch.

■ ■ ■

It seems another of the office girls has decided to take up the job of house-keeping. This, of course, refers to Gwen Gill of the calculator department who recently became engaged to Clayton A. Fisher. Congratulations, Gwen.

■ ■ ■

We wonder how long Harold Coates will remain a bachelor now that the girls have seen him sporting a new Chev.

■ ■ ■

Not all of them got away the day these three Mueller, Limited, employees went out on their regular Saturday rabbit drive, as this cut proves. Pictured are, left to right, Howard Taylor, department 3; Don Foreman, department 9; and Michael Higgins, department 7—and they claim they were holding only part of the bag of cotton tails and jack-rabbits shot during the drive. These

drives, organized by Garnet (Jack Rabbit) Denomy, usually include about 15 men from the plant. Higgins had some difficulty explaining to fellow employees



in the drive how he happened to mistake a farmer's tomcat for a rabbit. Word also is out that one of the reasons Cec (Eagle Eye) Spears of the personnel department takes advantage of these drives is to lose weight.

## Los Angeles

*William Baker, Correspondent*

A future fullback was born to Rudy and Alice Gordines February 1 at the Belvedere hospital. Johnny weighed 6 pounds 2 ounces. As is the custom for new fathers, Rudy just did pull through. By the way, Rudy, if he shows the slightest inclination to be a blocking back, put a tennis racket in his hand and point him in the direction of the nearest court.

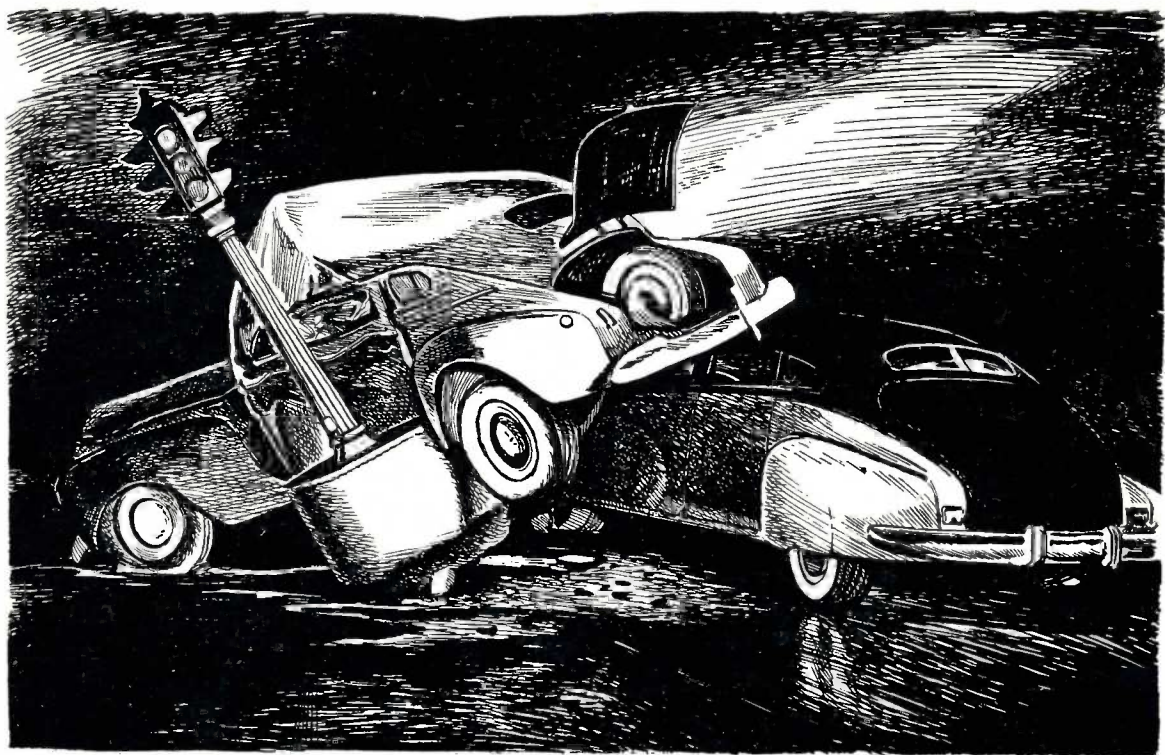
■ ■ ■

Johnny Marshall now has a future fishing partner since his wife, Barbara, presented him with John Shelby. Little John was born February 20 at the Huntington Memorial hospital and weighed 7 pounds, 9 ounces. The couple now has a girl and a boy, rounding out the family quite nicely.

Val Stach reports that his son, Bill, a former employee in our shipping room, is now stationed in San Diego. Seaman First Class Stach has been serving on submarine duty in the U. S. Navy since his separation from Mueller Co.

■ ■ ■

In spite of high prices, taxes and cold weather, new cars are profuse in our plant parking area. We have a Dodge, Buick, Pontiac, Jeep, and several Fords and Chevviess. The merits of each are a constant source of controversy between the plutocrats who own them. Those of us who still cling to our pre-war vintage conveyances can only soothe our envious souls by uttering such snappy rejoinders as "Yah, mine's paid for", "I'm waiting 'til next year", or "Get a horse."



## So you like to drive fast!

Next time you're tempted to step on the gas, remember this picture. Remember, too, that you're not just risking your own neck when you speed up, but the lives of other motorists, passengers, and pedestrians as well. Speed helped to kill about 10,000 motorists and pedestrians during 1948. Safe speed for you and others means driving slow enough for road and

traffic conditions, not just within the law. Take it easy—the life you save may be your own!

**Can you stop in time?** You need good brakes to be a safe driver! Have your brakes checked regularly by a reliable service station or garage. Your life may depend on how fast you can stop.

**BE CAREFUL . . . !**

**the life you save may be your own!**

