

Q&A /// INTERVIEW WITH AN INDUSTRY INSIDER



TOM BALDOCK /// GULL TOOL & ENGINEERING – AEROSPACE DIVISION

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What you do at Guill Tool?

My responsibilities here are for sales in the aerospace area. I've been in sales most of my adult life, in various capacities in different industries, most recently on the extrusion side of our business.

Guill Tool basically started out doing machinery for Electric Boat and other submarine manufacturers here in New England. And, of course, there's a lot of ship building here. This would've been after the original owner, Roger Guillemette, got out of the military and started this business. His background has been in precision machining, machining tooling and things like that his whole life. The opportunity was there when nuclear submarines were just beginning, and he got in on the ground floor and that was the basis of the company.

How has Guill helped support the aerospace industry?

It's an area we very recently got into. In the past, we occasionally would get an inquiry from an aerospace company, and be blessed with an order, but it was certainly nothing that we focused on. It was just something that happened occasionally. And our current owner, who's the son of Roger Guillemette, his name is Richard Guillemette, decided he wanted to put more focus and more resources toward the aerospace side of our business to build that up, so we could have another business line of machinery that we could rely on. He brought me along to try to do that, and that's what I've been working on since.

We have pretty impressive machining capability, which lends itself to aerospace manufacturing. There are a lot of parts that require very exotic materials, very precise machining, and that's where we fit in. There are not too many places that will focus on this.

You've recently announced the production of a new brass fitting. What makes it unique?

It was a fairly complicated part. It was something that we were asked to manufacture by one of our customers. This was nothing we invented; it was just manufacturing per our customer drawing. And it was turned on a Mazak CNC lathe, and then switched from there to a Mori Seiki 5-axis milling machine, and it was finished off there. It was just a two-step manufacturing process but with very fine finishes and very precise dimensions.

Does Guill work with any gear-manufacturing businesses?

We do have occasions where sometimes we make gears. We don't have Gleason gear cutters and stuff like that; that's not our thing really. But we have occasionally made a gear for some specific purpose; however, that's not our main manufacturing expertise.

Tell me about Guill's machine shop capabilities, and what that means for the industries that you work with.

It's a pretty impressive machine shop. We have numerous EDM

machines and milling machines. I think we've got about six or eight of them. We also have numerous CNC turning centers.

Downstairs in the manufacturing area we have two 5-axis machines. I think we have four or five 4-axis machines. We have precision grinding. And we have roomfuls of old manual machines. We have a whole roomful of Bridgeports and engine lathes and horizontal mills.

We have a good inspection department. We have a couple of CMMs. We have a Nikon measuring microscope. We have numerous Brown & Sharpe height gauges. We have a Taylor Hobson profilometer.

For a lot of our business, finishes are very important, especially on the extrusion side of our business. We have Rockwell hardness testers and granite surface plates, optical comparators, electronic height gauges, and more. Again, what we really offer is precision machining. We're used to doing exotic materials, various grades of stainless steel and titanium. And many, many, many kinds of materials others might be too anxious to get involved with.

Does Guill do anything that needs to be heat treated?

We do a lot of heat treating. A lot of stuff here goes out for heat treat. We don't do that internally as a company, just locally that we use.

Same with plating, especially on the aerospace side, there's a lot of exotic coatings and plating that needs to be done — dye penetrant inspection and X-ray. We don't do that in house. But because there's such a focus on aerospace in New England, there's plenty of places that do that. Actually, it's pretty easy for us to find those places.

What does Guill make that requires heat treatment?

Items that need to be hardened. Not so much on the government side, but things on the extrusion side. Dies and the parts of a die that would wear, like the actual tip in the die, not so much the die body polymer flow surface areas that are going to have polymer flowing through them, they need to be polished to a mirror finish, and they have to last a long time, so consequently they're hardened.

Anything else about Guill that you'd like to discuss?

Our efforts so far, specifically in aerospace, like I said, we're just getting started, we're just getting going. We've had some orders from some of the Tier 1 manufacturers. And I think as we continue on down that path, more and more often we'll be called upon to do some more.

The other challenge we have is, we're very busy, both on the extrusion side of our business, and on the defense side, particularly with work we're doing for the Department of Defense, the Department of Navy, Newport News shipyard, and General Dynamics Electric Boat.

But business has just been booming. 📈

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