

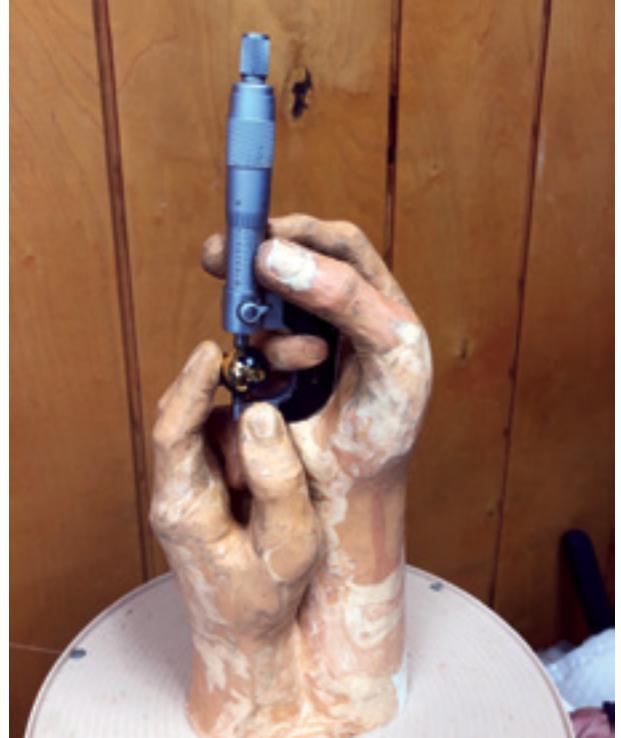
PMPA Member C. Thorrez Industries Celebrates 100 Years of Success

The name "Thorrez" comes from a Flemish word meaning "towers," but that is only one reason why C. Thorrez Industries chose to use medieval towers as the company logo. More importantly, the company chose a tower because it represents strength, patience, unity and the brick-by-brick mentality necessary to carry a family-owned business into its now fifth generation. With its dedication to the old-school mindset of hands-on craftsmanship, C. Thorrez Industries and its subsidiaries remain a leader in producing quality industrial parts for a number of different industries for more than 100 years. The company produces components from a range of barstock and has the capacity to produce long-run, large quantity production jobs, as well as short-run and prototype work.

"The only reason we are here today is that we have a tremendous amount of leaders in this family who have stepped up to make this thing happen," says Camiel Thorrez, president of C. Thorrez Industries. "All of us worked in the shop first, because you have to understand the work before you can engineer and manage it. That allows us to have an appreciation for the people working in the shop every day who keep the machines running."

The story of C. Thorrez Industries began in 1912, when Mr. Thorrez's grandfather (also named Camiel Thorrez) left his life as a farmer and a peasant in West Flanders, Belgium, and moved to Jackson, Michigan, where many Belgian immigrants had settled. After meeting his wife, Camiel spent his first couple years in the United States working as a farmer. He was soon introduced to the screw machining industry in 1915, and quickly became an expert machinist making spark plug shells and other parts for marine outboard motors. In 1919, Camiel, fellow machinist Elmer Thayer and a local real estate insurance salesman named J.J. Best raised enough money to establish Jackson Screw Products.

After some early struggles, Camiel Thorrez and his brother, Henry Thorrez, and brother-in-law, Victor Maes, started a new shop that was very successful in the 1930s and throughout World War II. During the war, the company manufactured 50-caliber machine gun bullets and other products to support the war efforts. Having one centralized facility proved troublesome for the company, but the family was able to find success in investing in smaller plants and separate corporations that now all loosely operate under the C. Thorrez Industries umbrella. Today, the company has eight third-generation family members and 16 fourth-generation family members who all help run the business of more than 250 employees across all of its operations. While



bearing the title of president, Mr. Thorrez insists that the decision making and many other executive duties are divided amongst the family members.

"Being born into a family business, I was afforded the opportunity to see the magic of manufacturing from the time I was a little kid," Mr. Thorrez says. "I was able to be there and look at it through kids' eyes and be marveled, and I still am."

Mr. Thorrez says much of the company's early success is owed to the accounting system developed by his father, Henry C. Thorrez. In the late 1940s, Henry Thorrez and his two brothers, Albert and Morris, would put in long hours in the plant for weeks, only to receive the monthly scorecard from an accountant saying that the company broke even. Henry Thorrez wanted to develop a simple system to tell whether the company made money or not without waiting two weeks after the month ended. So, by establishing the break-even point, dividing it by the number of days in the month, accounting for fixed costs and subtracting the break-even point from the monetary value of parts being made on a particular day, the company was able to figure out if it made money on a daily basis.

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"He always said, 'You're not a good businessman if you can't tell me whether or not you made money at the end of each day'," Mr. Thorrez says. "Our organization's main focus is producing a quality part on time and exactly to the customer's specifications, and it is ingrained in our culture. Doing it at a profit in order to protect the future of the company is the hard part, and that's why my father's system is so important and why we use it to this day."

After attending college and earning a degree in mechanical engineering, Mr. Thorrez says he was disappointed by the lack of hands-on experience students gained while in school and how the education system did little to change the outdated perceptions regarding the cleanliness and safety of manufacturing facilities. Therefore, Mr. Thorrez became heavily involved in creating a local charter school and served on the board for a local manufacturing academy and other foundations and non-profits dedicated to sparking interest in manufacturing careers, as well as teaching the value of hands-on experience. For example, Mr. Thorrez helps organize a two-day learning fair every summer in which 60 to 70 exhibitors, from whittlers to machinists, demonstrate their crafts for local kids.

"We like to honor these craftsmen because this stuff is important," Mr. Thorrez says. "Parents can see firsthand whether or not their kid is interested and if they'd like to pursue that craft. Since the 1970s, I've tried to recreate for the community what I was exposed to as a kid."

As a PMPA member, Mr. Thorrez says C. Thorrez Industries greatly benefits from the advice it receives from PMPA on a number of current issues, such as steel tariffs. Members from the company attended a two-day event at PMPA's headquarters that educated them on the ins and outs of steel tariffs and how to receive reimbursement on imported steel.

"The advice we received from PMPA was very helpful," Mr. Thorrez says. "As the company moved into the third generation, the support we got from the PMPA community was very important. We enjoy belonging to a community full of people that are connected and keep their ears to the ground."

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