

# US Army Ordnance Corps Hall of Fame Nomination

## NOMINATOR DATA

**NAME:** Major General Wade McManus, Jr.  
(Questions: contact George Eaton, OSC Historian)  
**ADDRESS:** CDR, Operations Support Command  
ATTN: AMSOS-PA (History)  
1 Rock Island Arsenal  
Rock Island, IL 61299  
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## NOMINEE DATA

**NOMINEE'S NAME:** Norman Francis Ramsey  
**RANK/GRADE:** Brigadier General, U.S. Army Retired  
**TITLE AT RETIREMENT:** CG, Springfield Armory  
**DATE AND PLACE OF BIRTH:** 9 July 1882, Oakdale, Illinois  
**DATE RETIRED:** July 1944 Retired but retained on  
Active Duty. Retired Nov 1945  
**DATE DECEASED:** 11 April 1963  
**ADDRESS (NOK):** Son, Dr. Norman F. Ramsey, Jr., Prof  
Emeritus, Harvard University  
Cambridge, MA 02138

## CONTRIBUTIONS TO

**PUBLICATIONS/PERIODICALS:** "Picatinny Arsenal," Army-Ordnance Magazine, Volume 7, JUL-AUG 1926.  
"Rock Island Arsenal, 1863-1938:  
Seventy-Five Years of Service to the  
United States Army," Army-Ordnance Magazine, Volume 19, JUL-AUG 1938.  
"Arsenal Craftsmen," Army-Ordnance Magazine, Volume 22, NOV-DEC 1941.

## SIGNIFICANT AWARDS, CITATIONS AND DECORATIONS:

Legion of Merit

Soldiers Medal  
 Army Commendation Medal  
 Purple Heart with Valor Device  
 Philippine Campaign Medal  
 Philippine congressional Medal  
 Spanish War Service Medal  
 World War I Victory Medal  
 Commander, Military Division of the  
 Most Excellent Order of the British Empire - JUN 1948  
 Officer of the Legion of Honor (France)  
 Officer of the Black Star (France)  
 Officer of the Order of the Crown (Rumania)

**OTHER HONORS:**

1905 - Elected class president of his West Point Class of 1905  
 1942 - Honorary degree, Doctor of Laws, St. Ambrose College,  
 Davenport, IA.  
 1964 - Dedication of the Norman Ramsey Quality Evaluation  
 Laboratory Building at Picatinny Arsenal, Dover, NJ  
 1967 - Dedication of the Ramsey Combat Vehicle Test Track at  
 Rock Island Arsenal, Rock Island, Illinois.

**SIGNIFICANT ASSIGNMENTS/POSITIONS:**

OCT 1944	NOV 1945	Commanding General, Springfield Armory, Springfield, MASS.
JUL 1944		Retired, but retained on active duty.
JUL 1937	OCT 1944	Commanding General, Rock Island Ordnance Center, Rock Island, IL.; Commanding General, Rock Island Arsenal, Rock Island, IL.; Commander, Rock Island Arsenal, Rock Island, IL.
JUN 1933	JUL 1937	Chief, Artillery Division, Manufacturing Service, Office, Chief of Ordnance, Washington, DC; Chief, Ammunition Division, Manufacturing Service, Office, Chief of Ordnance, Washington, DC.
JUN 1931	JUN 1933	Ordnance Officer, Second Corps Area, Governor's Island, New York
JUN 1927	JUN 1931	Major, Instructor, C&CS School
SEP 1922	AUG 1926	Major, Commander, Picatinny Arsenal, Dover, New Jersey

JUN 1921	SEP 1922	Major, Office, Assistant Secretary of War, Washington, DC
27 AUG 1920		Transferred to Ordnance Corps
OCT 1918	APR 1920	Liaison Officer with the Direction d'Artillerie and Assistant Military Attache, Paris, France. Chief Ordnance Officer, Service of Supply, US 3rd Army; Chief of Supply Division, Office of Chief Ordnance Officer, American Expeditionary Forces (AEF), France. Assistant to Chief Ordnance Officer, AEF.
JUL 1916	SEP 1918	Lieutenant Colonel, Chief Engineer, Rock Island Arsenal (RIA). Major, Ordnance, Department (Detail), Asst to Officer in Charge of Shops at RIA, Rock Island, IL.
JUN 1912	AUG 1916	Captain, detailed to Ordnance Department, Assistant to the Chief of Ordnance, Washington, DC
SEP 1911	JUN 1912	First Lieutenant, US 4th Infantry Fort Logan H. Roots, Arkansas; Participated in flood relief at Hickman, KY and New Madrid, MO.
AUG 1907	JUN 1909	First Lieutenant, Sandy Hook Proving Ground, New Jersey: Property Officer, Assistant to Officer in charge of Ordnance School of Application, in charge of machine shop and supervision of armament work in Sandy Hook District; Disbursing Officer and Assistant Proof Officer.
AUG 1909	SEP 1911	Detail to Ordnance Department as student officer at Watertown Arsenal, Mass., taking practical shop course. At times in charge of machine and blacksmith shops and quartermaster and commissary.
OCT 1905	JUN 1907	Second Lieutenant, Philippine Islands: 2nd Battalion, US 9th Infantry, officer for Battalion Quartermaster and Commissary.
1901	1905	United States Military Academy



Arsenal its workforce was well-known for its expertise in the field of technical explosives. Ramsey was Commander of Picatinny Arsenal just as the command was hitting its stride as the premier location of munitions development and proof testing. Ramsey oversaw all aspects of the munitions work there. During this time, he was commended twice for heroic acts. On May 28, 1925, he entered a burning building containing loaded bombs and explosives to assist in rescuing an injured civilian employee. On December 8, 1927 Major Ramsey was awarded the Soldier's Medal For Heroism for his actions of July 11, 1926 during the famous explosion at Lake Denmark Naval Base, which was adjacent to the Arsenal. The citation on the Soldier Medal certificate reads:

On 11 July 1926, during the explosions at the Lake Denmark Naval Ammunition Depot, near Dover, NJ, Major Ramsey in charge of a party of 8 [eight] men, in close proximity to burning magazines and exposed to frequent explosions, searched for and located the body of Lt. George W. Bott, Jr., USA, who had been killed by the explosions, and with great difficulty succeeded in removing it from the wreckage.

In the mid-1930s the Ordnance Department became serious about expansion of its ordnance facilities. In 1936 Chief of Army Ordnance Major General William H. Tschappat appointed Ramsey to chair of a board of five ordnance officers, who were to assess ordnance manufacturing, storage, and maintenance facilities and plan for their future expansion. From December 1936 to April 1937, he chaired the board that became known as the "Ramsey Board".

During his Army career, BG Ramsey commanded three of the six Army arsenals that in the pre-World War II years had formed the cornerstone of our nation's ordnance research and development and production. While he made many significant contributions to Army Ordnance, BG Ramsey's greatest accomplishments were while he commanded at Rock Island Arsenal (RIA). BG Ramsey is synonymous with the success of Rock Island Arsenal in WWII when Rock Island was the largest manufacturing plant and was critical top the US. Army as well as the British and other allied forces. Under his outstanding leadership, the Rock Island Arsenal not only produced great quantities of war materials, it also served as a research laboratory, a master Army depot, an instructional center for commercial firms converting to war production, and a key link in the supply of US materiel to Great Britain and the training of British forces to maintain that equipment. During his tenure the Rock Island Ordnance Center was established as an "umbrella" organization covering the Rock Island Arsenal (RIA), Rock Island Ordnance Depot, and Sub-Office of the Office of the Chief of Ordnance, Washington, DC.

During the early years of his Rock Island command and into WWII BG Ramsey was responsible for developmental prototype projects and production of artillery carriages; self-propelled carriages; recoilless gun carriages; halftrack vehicles; transport wagons; light, medium, flame throwing tanks; armored car turrets; hydropneumatic recoil mechanisms, gun mounts for airplane armaments, mortar mounts, and rocket launchers. He was commander when the M2 tank was developed, when the Arsenal did prototype work on the M3 Grant, and when RIA did similar work on the T7. BG Ramsey was also significant in small arms production as the Arsenal produced 84,945 machine guns and 715,000 machine gun barrels in World War II. RIA also overhauled 109,073 machine guns and 133,435 .30 caliber rifles of various types during the war. This development and manufacture expertise was significant as the Ordnance Department mobilized for WWII.

Besides this key development and production work BG Ramsey was instrumental in supplying parts to the Army at war. He was also in command of the Rock Island Ordnance Depot, one of only four Army master depots during WWII. Master depots stocked every item required for the maintenance of certain classes of materiel. Rock Island Ordnance Depot was responsible for artillery, tank, tractor, small arms parts and supplies. The size and scope of being a master depot required other changes. Ramsey oversaw the construction of Rock Island's Building 299, which remains the world's largest ordnance storehouse. Building 299 covers approximately 17.7 acres under one roof with space enough for 17 football fields inside. This structure was equipped with rail tracks and could load and unload a complete train at its interior docks.

BG Ramsey was also critical to Ordnance in his appreciation for developing manufacturing expertise. In 1937 he reestablished the Rock Island Arsenal Machinist Apprentice School, which provided critically needed skilled craftsmen for ordnance production during the war. In the early part of WWII BG Ramsey seized the initiative and personally pledged greater assistance to commercial firms interested in converting their plants to defense production. As such he was an important player in the Ordnance Department's efforts to develop a partnership with private industry. The forming of such an Industrial-Ordnance Team was key to Allied victory in World War II.

BG Ramsey was especially important in partnering with the British in WWII. As commanding general of RIA, and later the Rock Island Ordnance Center, BG Ramsey was of great assistance to the British Army Staff during the emergency created by the Battle of Britain in 1940. He was responsible for the preparation and dispatch of artillery equipment and other war materiel from Rock Island to the United Kingdom during the crisis. The war material was so critically needed by Great Britain that British liaison officers were assigned to Rock Island Arsenal to coordinate the

shipments of ordnance from the Arsenal.

BG Ramsey knew that it would not be enough to ship materiel. He personally directed preparation for a British detachment to spend two months at Rock Island Arsenal studying recoil mechanisms produced at the arsenal to familiarize them with the weapons that the British were receiving from the United States. The British Army Staff and War Office was so impressed by BG Ramsey's leadership that the British Government awarded him a citation as Honorary Commander, Military Division of the most Excellent Order of the British Empire for service rendered during World War II. This special ceremony took place off shore in New York City on board the RMS Britannic during the summer of 1948.

Since his death the Army has honored BG Norman F. Ramsey with two dedications. On September 25, 1964, Picatinny Arsenal dedicated the Arsenal's Quality Evaluation Laboratory, as the Norman F. Ramsey Building. More than 200 key civilian and military leaders attended the dedication. On June 17, 1967 the Rock Island Arsenal dedicated a newly constructed combat vehicle test track in his honor. The 54,487 foot, figure-eight track, was constructed to test the quality and reliability of combat vehicles rebuilt at the Arsenal.

Brigadier General Norman F. Ramsey's contributions to Ordnance are extensive and were, in his career, critical to the Ordnance manufacturing system and led to critical contributions to the WWII victory effort.

**PHOTOGRAPH OF NOMINEE:**

Attached