

Detroit Arsenal (Warren, Michigan)

Detroit Arsenal (DTA), formerly **Detroit Arsenal Tank Plant (DATP)** was the first manufacturing plant ever built for the mass production of tanks in the United States. Established in 1940 under Chrysler, the plant was owned by the U.S. government until 1996. It was designed by architect Albert Kahn. The building was designed originally as a "dual production facility", so that it could make armaments and be turned into peaceful production at war's end.^[1] Notwithstanding its name, the 113-acre (0.46 km²) site was located in Warren, Michigan, Detroit's most populous suburb.^[2]

History

Chrysler's construction effort at the plant in 1941 was one of the fastest on record.^[3] The first tanks rumbled out of the plant before its complete construction.^[4]

During World War II, the Detroit Arsenal Tank Plant built a quarter of the 89,568 tanks produced in the U.S. overall. The plant made M3 Lee tanks while the buildings were still being raised and switched to M4 Sherman tanks in 1942. The Korean War boosted production for the first time since World War II had ended; the government would suspend tank production after each war. In May 1952, Chrysler resumed control from the army, which had been unable to ramp up production.^[1]

As a government-owned, contractor operated (GOCO) facility, Chrysler retained operational control of the production facility until March 1982, when Chrysler sold its Chrysler Defense division to General Dynamics Land Systems. General Dynamics produced the M1 Abrams tank at the facility (and at another plant in Lima, Ohio) until 1996, when the plant was closed and tank assembly and maintenance operations were consolidated^[6] at the Lima plant.^[7] The plant and some of the adjoining property were transferred to the City of Warren^[8] in 2001. The site of the original tank plant has been parcelled up and is now dedicated to civilian uses.^[9]

This important production site of the Arsenal of Democracy is memorialized by a Michigan Historical Marker.^[10]

Detroit Army Arsenal

Part of U.S. Army Tank-automotive and Armaments Command

Warren, Michigan



The plant floor in 1942

Type

TACOM

- Research, Development and Engineering Center
- Life Cycle Management Command

Site information

Controlled by

US Army Installation Management Command

Garrison information

Garrison

US Army Garrison - Detroit Army Arsenal



US Army Detroit Arsenal, 2013.

External image

Aerial view of the site, 2006 (<https://clui.org/sites/default/files/ludb/mi/>

The structure of the plant was designed to survive bombardment by the weapons of the day. It included 3-foot-thick (0.91 m) concrete walls in some areas and a reinforced roof with slats to direct bombs away from vulnerable windows and exhaust fans.

The portion of the property not sold to the city remains an active Army facility with many agencies present. The installation is managed by Installation Management Command (IMCOM) and hosts the headquarters of the United States Army CCDC Ground Vehicle Systems Center (GVSC), formerly United States Army Tank Automotive Research, Development and Engineering Center (TARDEC),^[11] and it hosts the United States Army TACOM Life Cycle Management Command. TACOM continues to function at the location, and experienced a major building boom in the 2010s.^[12]

Tenant units

- United States Army CCDC Ground Vehicle Systems Center
- United States Army TACOM Life Cycle Management Command TACOM LCMC

Tanks produced

- M3 Lee, 1941–1942
- M4 Sherman, 1941–1945
- M26 Pershing, 1945
- M46 Patton, 1949
- M47 Patton, 1951–1953
- M67 "Zippo", 1955–1956
- M60, 1960–1987
- M1 Abrams, 1980–1996

References

1. "Upheaval at the Arsenal" (<https://web.archive.org/web/20081024134211/http://www.time.com/time/magazine/article/0,9171,859667,00.html>). *Time*. May 26, 1952. Archived from the original (<http://www.time.com/time/magazine/article/0,9171,859667,00.html>) on October 24, 2008. Retrieved May 21, 2011.
2. "Pure Michigan, Arsenal of Democracy" (<https://web.archive.org/web/20090601145117/http://ref.michigan.org/mbr/news/combo.asp?ContentId=7ED4ABC1-7C41-4039-985B-BCECC0EC8820>). Ref.michigan.org. July 28, 2010. Archived from the original (<http://ref.michigan.org/mbr/news/combo.asp?ContentId=7ED4ABC1-7C41-4039-985B-BCECC0EC8820>) on June 1, 2009. Retrieved May 21, 2011.
3. Dennis Adler (2000). *Chrysler* (<https://books.google.com/books?id=DALX2AsrZTcC&pg=PA68>). MotorBooks International. p. 68. ISBN 978-1-61060-871-8.
4. Ogbac, Stefan (December 29, 2015). "Chrysler Revisits Its Involvement in World War II: Tanks, turrets, airplanes, and Power Wagons" (<https://www.motortrend.com/news/chrysler-re-visits-its-involvement-in-world-war-ii-wvideo/>) (Photos, Video). *Motor Trend*. Retrieved December 29, 2015.
5. *Detroit Arsenal, Michigan* (<https://clui.org/ludb/site/detroit-arsenal>), Center for Land Use Interpretation

6. "Closing of Detroit Arsenal Tank Plant" (https://web.archive.org/web/20060505121930/http://www.gdls.com/releases/releases_96/pr960812.html) (Press release). August 12, 1996. Archived from the original (http://www.gdls.com/releases/releases_96/pr960812.html) on May 5, 2006.
7. "Land Use Distribution" (<https://web.archive.org/web/20110606114855/http://ludb.clui.org/ex/i/MI3141/>). Ludb.clui.org. Archived from the original (<http://ludb.clui.org/ex/i/MI3141/>) on June 6, 2011. Retrieved May 21, 2011.
8. "U.S. Army TACOM Life Cycle Management Command History" (<https://web.archive.org/web/20110722182447/http://www.tacom.army.mil/main/history.html>). Tacom.army.mil. Archived from the original (<http://www.tacom.army.mil/main/history.html>) on July 22, 2011. Retrieved May 21, 2011.
9. "City of Warren Community, Economic and Downtown Development" (<https://web.archive.org/web/20110520110129/http://cityofwarren.org/index.php/economic-development>). Cityofwarren.org. August 23, 2005. Archived from the original (<http://www.cityofwarren.org/index.php/economic-development>) on May 20, 2011. Retrieved May 21, 2011.
10. "Michigan Historical Marker" (<https://web.archive.org/web/20100315141338/http://www.michmarkers.com/Frameset.htm>). Michmarkers.com. Archived from the original (<http://www.michmarkers.com/Frameset.htm>) on March 15, 2010. Retrieved May 21, 2011.
11. Dasch, Jean M.; Gorsich, D.J. (2012). *The TARDEC Story. Sixty-five Years of Innovation 1946-2010*. US Army Tank Automotive Research, Development and Engineering Center.
12. "TACOM public website" (<http://www.tacom.army.mil/main/index.html>). Tacom.army.mil. Retrieved May 21, 2011.

Further reading

- Stout, Wesley W. (1946). *"Tanks are Mighty Fine Things"* (<https://archive.org/details/tanmightyfi00stou>). Chrysler Corporation. Retrieved July 11, 2019.
- Dasch, Jean M.; Gorsich, D.J. (2012). *The TARDEC Story. Sixty-five Years of Innovation 1946-2010*. US Army Tank Automotive Research, Development and Engineering Center..
- Detroit Arsenal Tank Plant, Local Legacies. (<http://lcweb2.loc.gov/diglib/legacies/MI/200003172.html>) Library of Congress
- Bos, Ann M. and Talbot, Randy (June 2001). "Enough and On Time. The Story of the Detroit Arsenal Tank Plant" (<https://web.archive.org/web/20080304200241/http://www.michiganhistorymagazine.com/extra/tanks/tanks.pdf>), *Michigan History*.
- Meredith, Robyn (December 21, 1996). "Vast Plant for Tanks Has Closed" (<https://www.nytimes.com/1996/12/21/us/vast-plant-for-tanks-has-closed.html?exprod=permalink&partner=permalink>). *The New York Times*.

External links

- Detroit Arsenal of Democracy Museum (<http://www.DetroitArsenalOfDemocracy.org>), Veterans' Memorial Park, 27400 Campbell Road, Warren, Michigan 48093
- Historic American Engineering Record (HAER) No. MI-12, "Detroit Arsenal, 6501 East Eleven Mile Road, Warren, Macomb County, MI" (<https://loc.gov/pictures/item/mi0170/>), 26 photos, 61 data pages, 3 photo caption pages
- "Tanks Are Mighty Fine Things", a booklet about the WW2 History of the Detroit Tank Arsenal (<https://web.archive.org/web/20210131190427/http://imperialclub.com/Yr/1945/46Tanks/Cover.htm>)
- "Tanks are mighty fine things" (1946) (<https://archive.org/details/tanmightyfi00stou>) at the Internet Archive

- <https://web.archive.org/web/20040225081944/http://levin.senate.gov/newsroom/release.cfm?id=211125>) U.S. Senator Carl Levin
- <http://www.globalsecurity.org/military/facility/detroit.htm>) Globalsecurity.org
- http://centerline.grobbel.org/misc_photos.htm#arsenal)
- <https://web.archive.org/web/20110722182447/http://www.tacom.army.mil/main/history.html>)
- <http://wikimapia.org/2282977/Detroit-Arsenal-Tank-Plant>)
- A film clip "[Assembly Lines of Defense](https://archive.org/details/Assembly_Lines_of_Defense)" (https://archive.org/details/Assembly_Lines_of_Defense) is available for viewing at the [Internet Archive](https://archive.org/details/Assembly_Lines_of_Defense)

Retrieved from "[https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Detroit_Arsenal_\(Warren,_Michigan\)&oldid=1197146452](https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Detroit_Arsenal_(Warren,_Michigan)&oldid=1197146452)"

■