

John Little Schramm Inc.

Since the July issue of Water Well Journal focuses on drilling rigs, we decided to chat with John Little, national sales manager for Schramm Inc., a century-old Chester County, Pennsylvania, manufacturer and global supplier to the hydraulic drill industry, focusing on land-based applications. Little joined Schramm in the mid-1970s after serving in the U.S. Navy from 1969 to 1972.

In November 2010, Schramm was awarded a multimillion-dollar contract

with the Defense Logistics Agency Troop Support, America's combat logistics support agency. Schramm has designed and built 12 T450MIIA top head drive, truck-mounted hydraulic drilling rigs for use by the U.S.



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Navy in the drilling of water wells. The deal is the first for Schramm with the U.S. Navy.

The contract was awarded based on technical specifications and a competitive bid. Schramm competed against multiple suppliers to receive the contract. The rigs will be designed from Schramm's T450MIIA base model, which is used by water well contractors worldwide.

Schramm's T450MIIA is a truck-mounted drill rig engineered primarily for applications using a combination of air rotary, mud rotary, and down-the-

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hole hammer drilling methods. The truck engine provides power for all the hydraulic, mud, and air systems.

Project criteria included drilling a 12-inch-diameter hole to depths of 1200 feet using mud rotary and a 6-inch-diameter hole to a depth of 1500 feet through rock formations. In addition, the rigs had to fit into a C-17 aircraft for worldwide transportation. As part of the agreement, Schramm will provide 12 of the following: water well drilling packages, Schramm Model T450MIIA drilling rigs, water well drilling rig support vehicles, and water well drilling rig accessory packages for the Naval Facilities Expeditionary Logistics Center in Port Hueneme, California.

"This is a significant contract for Schramm because it establishes an important new relationship with another branch of the U.S. military," says Fred P. Slack, vice president of business development for Schramm. "We have long-standing relationships with other branches of the military, delivering drilling rigs to their demanding specifications. This contract to supply the

U.S. Navy allows us to demonstrate our capabilities in producing high-quality, rugged truck-mounted drill rigs for water well applications in demanding conditions worldwide."

Water Well Journal: As someone who once served in the U.S. Navy, what are your thoughts on Schramm being awarded this multimillion-dollar contract?

John Little: Obviously, we're delighted we won the contract, and as a U.S. Navy veteran, I'm especially pleased. In addition to supporting our troops in the field, the rigs will also be used for humanitarian work around the world. We are honored to be given the opportunity to do our part.

WWJ: In designing water well drilling rigs for the U.S. Navy to be used throughout the world in diverse conditions and terrain, what type of modifications did your engineers take?

John: The Navy provided very detailed equipment specifications and performance requirements. Our challenge was to meet and exceed their demands.



Mike Price is the associate editor of Water Well Journal. In addition to his WWJ responsibilities, Price produces NGWA's newsletters and contributes to the Association's quarterly scientific publication. He can be reached at mprice@ngwa.org.

WWJ: What were the biggest challenges for not only the engineers but all involved at Schramm in completing this contract?

John: Meeting specific performance, dimensional, and transportability requirements with standard rig configurations at a competitive price.

WWJ: Schramm has a history working with other branches of the military, delivering drilling rigs for their specific needs. Can you tell us how this came about and how it feels to work for a company that contributes to the goals of the U.S. military?

John: As you may know, Schramm was founded in 1900. The company won its first U.S. military contracts during and shortly after World War I. Schramm manufactured and supplied captive balloon hoists for the U.S. Signal Corps, as well as low-pressure compressors for diving and salvage work for the U.S. Navy. It's gratifying to continue that tradition.

WWJ: This slow economy has affected everyone in the groundwater industry. What kind of advice would you give someone to survive these tough times?

John: A significant number of our customers have successfully transitioned to geothermal applications including residential, commercial, government buildings, and schools. Projects like these can keep the equipment productive while traditional well drilling applications for residential construction remain soft.

WWJ: Do you think the second quarter of 2011 has shown any signs of a recovery?

John: Housing starts have a direct impact on domestic rig sales and the outlook remains pessimistic. However, geothermal, energy, and mineral-related drilling applications are still quite active.

WWJ: Did the publicity from Schramm's T130XD drill used in the rescue of 33 Chilean miners last fall yield any new business inquiries?

John: To borrow a phrase from Andy Warhol, the rescue afforded us our "15 minutes of fame." Since the rescue, we've been approached by numerous agencies, associations, and educational institutions, foreign and domestic, to give presentations about the rescue,

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equipment used, and our involvement. In several cases, these were decision-makers who have direct responsibility for planning rescue operations.

WWJ: What are the big advancements you've seen in the water well drilling industry over the last few years and what do you see for the future?

John: Most advances have been small, but cumulative. Over the years rigs have become much more productive and reliable. Schramm specifically, and the industry in general, will continue to integrate reliable technologies.

WWJ: Are potential diesel regulations impacting any changes on new drill equipment?

John: Generally speaking, diesel emission regulations are impacting trucks more than the deck engines we use for most of our applications. However, several rig models require changes to meet current U.S. Environmental Protection Agency mandates. Moving forward, additional models will also be subject to these regulations and will be incorporated into our design process.

WWJ: Lastly, what do you think are the critical issues facing the water well drilling industry today?

John: It almost goes without saying: adequate supplies of clean potable water are a basic necessity. The challenge will be to continue providing access while, at the same time, remaining vigilant for anything that could impact it in a negative way. [WWJ](#)

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