



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

May 3, 2017

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LIFT Launches “Operation Next” To Prepare Future Veterans for Civilian Careers

New model will provide separating military personnel with skills and credentials for the most in-demand jobs in advanced manufacturing

FT. CAMPBELL, Kent. – LIFT - Lightweight Innovations for Tomorrow, a Manufacturing USA national innovation institute — in partnership with the National Institute for Metalworking Skills (NIMS), Amatrol, and Gene Haas Foundation — today announced the launch of “**Operation Next**” - a new model for equipping separating military personnel with the skills and credentials needed for the most in-demand advanced manufacturing civilian careers in the country.

This new national model provides high level technical training to separating soldiers while they are still on active duty, moving them from deployment to career in the shortest time possible and connecting them to some of the more than half-million open jobs in precision machining and industrial technology.

Operation Next brings market leaders in manufacturing training together in a full-service online learning platform that soldiers can access before leaving the service, accelerating their transition into civilian manufacturing careers. The hybrid training program combines self-directed virtual learning with hands-on lab work and gives soldiers foundational knowledge, practical real-world skills, and national industry credentials with immediate value in the labor market.

“As a public-private partnership with the Department of Defense, Office of Naval Research and many outstanding American companies, our Institute members recognize the importance of U.S. leadership in advanced manufacturing critical to ensuring the strength of our defense industrial base,” said Larry Brown, executive director, LIFT.



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“We recognize the strength and the aptitude of the men and women who serve our country and believe there is no better way to honor them than to provide them with a fast-track path to great careers in advanced manufacturing,” said Emily DeRocco, education and workforce development director, LIFT. “It is our intention to push out resumes of credentialed soldiers to manufacturers across the country engaged in Manufacturing USA.”

Operation Next will launch as a pilot program at Fort Campbell—home of the 101st Airborne Division—and transition 101 soldiers to open jobs in machining and industrial technology. Local partners include Workforce Essentials that will manage operations, and Tennessee College of Applied Technology— where soldiers will complete lab work.

“These separating soldiers are exactly the right candidates to benefit from this type of 21st century learning model,” said Paul Perkins, CEO, Amatrol, the virtual learning provider for Operation Next. “The competency-based structure of the learning enables soldiers to get credit for what they already know, focuses on the hands-on technical skills they need, and expedites their transition into careers.”

Upon completion of the program, participants earn national industry credentials from the National Institute for Metalworking Skills for critical functions in CNC (Computer Numerical Control) Machining and Industrial Technology. “With these civilian credentials, soldiers will have a clear path to a long-term career in any sector of manufacturing,” said Montez King, Interim Executive Director, NIMS. Employment in Machining and Industrial Technology Maintenance have grown by over 811,000 workers – or 19 percent – since 2010.

“Participants will not be completing this training in a bubble,” said Marla Rye, President, Workforce Essentials, the regional program manager for Operation Next. “The program connects these separating soldiers to the real-world of work through plant tours, job-shadows offered by partnering employers and other experiences.”

LIFT is announcing Operation Next in conjunction with the Hiring Our Heroes Transition Summit at Fort Campbell, designed to connect employers and industry with talented veterans, service members, and military spouses.

Enrollment for the Operation Next pilot at Fort Campbell will begin in Summer, 2017.

For more information, visit www.opnextjobs.com

ABOUT LIFT

LIFT is a Detroit-based, public-private partnership committed to the development and deployment of advanced lightweight metal manufacturing technologies, and implementing education and training initiatives to better prepare the workforce today and in the future. LIFT is one of the founding institutes of Manufacturing USA, and is funded in part by the Department of Defense with management through the Office of Naval Research. Visit www.lift.technology or follow on Twitter [@NewsFromLIFT](https://twitter.com/NewsFromLIFT) to learn more.