



VMAC'S STORY

In 1986, Jim Hogan had the opportunity to build jet engines for the Canadian Department of National Defense, but he didn't have the project off the ground. So, he reached out to his university friend, Tony Menard, who had the natural enthusiasm and instincts of an entrepreneur.

Tony had just been laid off, and the company he was working for closed its door. Soon after Jim's invitation to work together, Tony and his family packed their bags and moved across the country to Kitchener, Ontario, ready to pursue Jim's exciting new opportunity. Just as they began to make significant progress, the same recession that claimed Tony's former employer affected their military contract.

Jim and Tony had a tenacious work ethic and a complete machine shop in the heartland of Canadian manufacturing, so they didn't give up. Instead, they began to machine tooling and other small parts for local businesses, quickly earning a reputation for their high-quality craftsmanship.

In 1988, Parker Sturdy Manufacturing—a service truck builder and loyal customer—needed new air compressor mounting brackets. The brackets PSM was using kept breaking, and air compressors were falling off their trucks on the highway. Tony was instantly excited by the opportunity, but Jim wasn't convinced. Tony met with PSM and came back with a contract and was ready to design brackets.

Tony and Jim renamed their company VMAC, an acronym for Vehicle Mounted Air Compressors, and business was good to them for a while.

In 1990, Tony bought Jim out and moved the company to his hometown, Nanaimo, BC. But Nanaimo didn't have the same manufacturing spirit as Kitchener, and VMAC faced some hardships.

The business was failing, Tony was struggling, and he had to provide for his two sons and daughter. Tony decided to shut VMAC down, but Mike Gauthier, a friend of Tony's, brow-beat him into not giving up. He was later nicknamed the "VMAC Angel" because IMT, an American manufacturer of service trucks, called and asked Tony to design and manufacture engine-mounted air compressors for their company a few days later. This single deal gave VMAC the consistent revenue needed to pay the bills and ignite the company's growth.

Tony made it his mission to find hard-working people with good character for the new VMAC. Jim also returned, helping VMAC with engineering research and development—his true passion.

VMAC invented the first vehicle-mounted rotary screw air compressor, developed several new product lines, endured the global recession, and gained a reputation for world-class mobile air compressors.



JIM HOGAN AND TONY MENARD



TONY MENARD

On July 4, 2010, the company endured a tragic loss, Tony died in an accident.

The loss of a founder was difficult for VMAC. But Tony built a strong company with employees who shared his family values, innovative spirit, and unrelenting perseverance. Standing together, VMAC's employees found the way forward.

Tony had built a strong foundation for the company and the employees. In 2009, VMAC was one of 12 British Columbia businesses in the Best Workplaces in Canada list. This list showcases businesses that scored highest according to employee surveys and human resources practices and are awarded by Great Places to Work Institute Canada. This hard-to-earn recognition demonstrates Tony's legacy and vision for VMAC.

Today, VMAC continues to live by the same values; they work hard, support one another, and stand up after failure. Their team of over 150 employees collaborates across departments sharing ideas and working together to provide high-quality products. VMAC has maintained its standards and received the awards and recognition that Tony started.



CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT

VMAC recently celebrated 35 years of product innovation, lean manufacturing, and continuous improvement culture. They focus on people and sustain a learning culture where failure is seen as an opportunity to learn and blaming others does not exist. Their journey through this process hasn't been easy or predictable, but focusing on the right things, they have been able to get spectacular outcomes and success.

Their accomplishments have been possible by implementing lean and continuous improvements as a growth strategy. When they see a downturn coming, they focus on putting all available resources into improving operations and setting teams up for success.

"When we focus on our people and continue to learn and grow as an organization, improvements to our bottom line follow."

Arleigh MacNeill - Continuous Improvement Facilitator and HS&E Liaison

RAINHOUSE & VMAC

Rainhouse assisted VMAC in launching the 2020 Ford 6.7L F-250 to F-550 DTM system by providing prototype gearcases early in the development process and transitioning to production quantities after the release. The gearcase assembly is a key component in the system as it connects the VMAC compressor to the PTO output on the truck transmission. It also houses the gears that allow the compressor to turn fast enough to achieve the desired CFM output.

VMAC sells these systems through a dealer network of hundreds of dealers in Canada, Australia, New Zealand, the US, and the UK. VMAC takes enormous pride in having all the design, engineering, manufacture, and assembly processes done locally in British Columbia at their Nanaimo factory.

VMAC's direct customers are truck body builders and truck equipment dealers whom either have standard trucks upfitted with an air compressor, and customers can buy the entire truck package, or a customer can go into a dealer and ask for a VMAC air compressor for their vehicle.

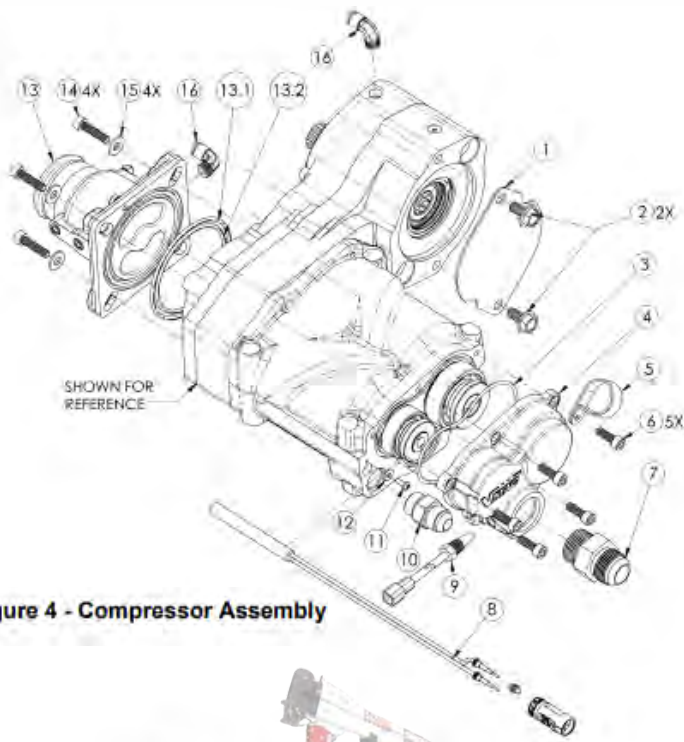


Figure 4 - Compressor Assembly



VMAC'S VISIT TO RAINHOUSE.

"I was impressed by the togetherness of the operation as well as the engagement of the leaders. The shop space was not overly large, but it was well organized and the space was effectively used.

Growth was visible in the form of a new Fanuc Robodrill, which was in the process of being configured to use a robotic arm for automated loading and unloading. It was clear this company is not standing still -they intend to grow with new technologies and into new markets.

An observable focus on quality and on-time delivery has resulted in an ongoing partnership between Rainhouse and VMAC. As time to market is a critical measurable for any new release at VMAC, having a trusted partner to assist us through the capacity challenges of heavy development cycles is a valuable asset."

Mike Kleywegt- Custom Shop Supervisor



RAY BROUGHAM, CHRIS LITCHY, INGO SMEETS, MIKE KLEYWEGT, DAN FITZPATRICK, CHRIS MOYSE