

# ROCK ISLAND ARSENAL

If you're into Military and/or History, you'll want to visit Rock Island Arsenal, part of the Quad Cities area, while at the convention in August. Points of interest include: a replica of the original Fort Armstrong blockhouse built in 1816, the Clock Tower building (finished in 1867), monument to the first bridge (1856) to span the Mississippi, Confederate Prison Site (1863-1865), Rock Island Arsenal Museum, Confederate Cemetery, Indian mounds, and much more.

Rock Island, a 946-acre island in the upper Mississippi River, in Illinois, was ceded by the Sauk and Fox Indians to the Federal Government in 1804. After the War of 1812, the U.S. Army built Fort Armstrong on the western end of the island. In 1836, however, a few years after the Black Hawk War, which was the last Indian uprising in Illinois, the garrison abandoned Fort Armstrong. From 1840-1845, the Army maintained a small depot there, and then the site was abandoned again.

With the outbreak of the Civil War, Congress established Rock Island Arsenal in 1862. The arsenal, itself, was built on the western end of the island, and a Confederate POW camp was built at the northern end of the island. Collectively, the arsenal buildings formed one of the largest military construction projects of the late 19th century.

After reaching a WW I peak work force of 13,263 in 1918, Rock Island employment plunged to its lowest ebb of 618 in 1924. But with WW II opening in 1939, production orders quickly mushroomed, and things were booming [*no pun intended!*] at RIA...109,073 machine guns, 133,435 .30 caliber rifles, 9,281 .30 caliber carbines, 29,210 .45 pistols, 32,741 bayonets, 5,441 recoil mechanisms, 1,146 tanks and other vehicles, 5,297 tank engines, 170,000 sighting and fire control mechanisms, and thousands of other items had all rolled off the assembly lines at Rock Island Arsenal by the end of the war.

By July, 1943, RIA employment had reached an all-time high of 18,675.

Through Korea, Vietnam, and on into the present, Rock Island Arsenal has continued to supply America's Armed Forces with the equipment it needs to get the job done.

Cover-wise, I know of one reverse-strike 20-strike from the Rock Island Arsenal Golf Club and three front-strike 40-strikes, one of which is also from the golf club. There may be a couple of others in existence, but certainly not many.

