

# **GEO HEAT EXCHANGERS, L.L.C.**

**FABRICATING SUCCESS THROUGH CORE VALUES & CUSTOMER COMMITMENT**

Since 1997, GEO Heat Exchangers, L.L.C. has been in the business of fabricating and repairing shell and tube heat exchangers for the oil, gas, chemical and power industries. With over 150 years of combined experience in the business, GEO knows a thing or two about making heat exchangers. With an ever-present commitment to their customers and core value system, GEO has enjoyed continuous growth at its St. Gabriel, Louisiana location since first opening its doors 18 years ago. Fast turnaround time and open lines of communication with their customers are part of why GEO enjoys a loyal customer base. When Gene E. "Buddy" Ohmstede Jr., President of GEO, and his team were looking to upgrade their drilling performance, they turned to Quickmill to purchase an Intimidator 120-120-24 machining center. The new Intimidator combined with GEO's passion and enthusiasm for learning and growing has not only broken a bottleneck in the production of tube sheets and baffles but also opened the door to produce some pretty unique parts.



Being able to respond quickly to their customers is what sets GEO apart from the competition. In order to live this goal every day, the right people and machinery need to be in place. GEO has always had the right people in place; a family business through and through, there has always been the right combination of know-



how and passion to make the company tick. In early 2013, GEO took a major step forward in their drilling and milling capabilities by purchasing the Intimidator 120-120-24 machining center from Quickmill to overcome a bottleneck in their tube sheet and baffle production. Since their customer base was growing and orders continued to come in fast and furious, GEO needed to

take the next step in machinery to continue providing their quick heat exchanger turnarounds. The Intimidator was added to GEO's machine shop that already consisted of 30 machines. When the Intimidator arrived on site, it made quite the impression. As August Ohmstede, Vice President of Plant Operations, puts it, the Intimidator was way beyond what GEO had seen or had in the shop before. What was even more impressive than the quality of labor and the thought that went into the design was the level of



knowledge that the installation technicians had on the machine. The Quickmill technicians gave the impression that “they knew every nut and bolt on the machine”; no surprise, as the technicians that

a way to mill this 4-1/2” thick part on the Intimidator using 12 different operations. All told, between the milling, drilling and rigid tapping, the total time was 16 hours to produce this custom, complex part. When other fabricators scratch their heads and shrug their shoulders, GEO does not back down from the challenge. Talking to Andrew Pickett, Drafter and CNC Programmer, and Bryce Ohmstede, CNC Manager at GEO, you get the impression that this kind of stuff is why they get out of bed in the morning; there is a pure feeling of excitement when Andrew and Bryce describe the process of figuring out parts like this one.

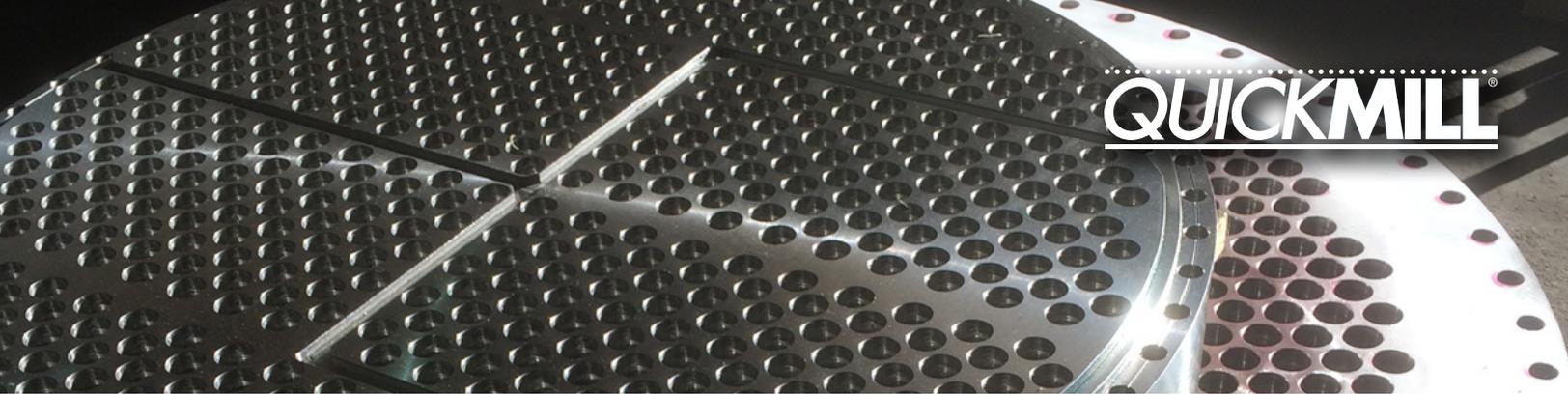
install Quickmill machines are also the ones that build them in the factory.

GEO did not waste any time after taking delivery on the Intimidator, parts were being processed on the machine the shortly after it was installed. A combination of GEO’s can-do attitude and Quickmill’s operator training program made the startup process a major success. Over the first four months of ownership, GEO had an active dialogue with Quickmill’s Tooling and Applications Department, receiving training and advice on how to get the best out of their new machine. Now, two years later, GEO is constantly pushing the envelope to find faster ways to produce regular parts on the Intimidator and even taking on some challenging jobs that require some major creativity to pull off.

One such job was a custom integrated channel flange that needed several triangular pieces to be taken out. Made out of carbon steel with a diameter of 103”, GEO devised



The standard list of parts being produced on the Intimidator at GEO includes tube sheets and various types of baffles. Currently the tube sheets being produced on the Intimidator vary in size up to 96”. Due to the recent expansion of GEO’s facility, the fourth expansion in the company’s 18 years of business, and the addition of a 50 tonne crane, larger tube sheets are now able to

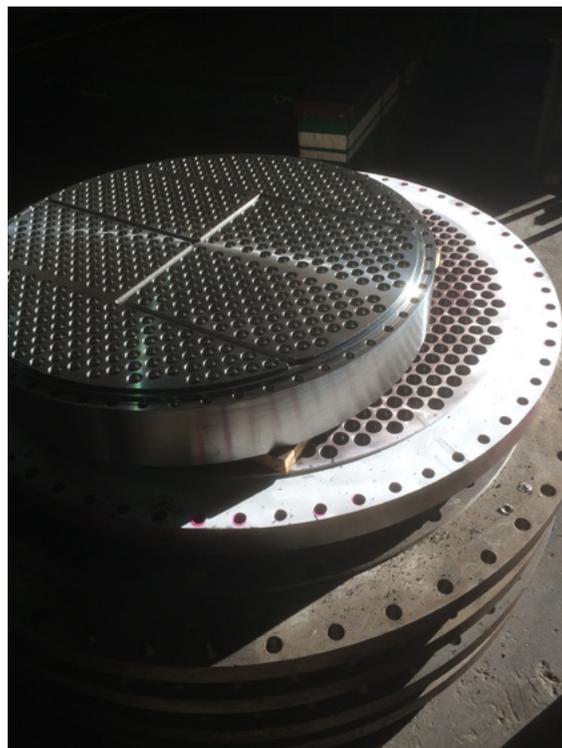


be produced. Going forward this means that the Intimidator's working surface will be fully utilized, taking advantage of all 120 inches of table space.

Looking back, pre-Intimidator, tube sheets and baffles used to take days, sometimes weeks, to produce. An example of the kind of improvement that was seen by bringing in the Intimidator is the production of rectangular baffle plates used in the fabrication of heat exchangers. These duplex alloy baffles used to take two weeks to a month to produce because of the long time it took to drill on other machines. The drill bits would have to be pulled out and sharpened after every row of holes. Now produced on the Intimidator, these baffle plates can be drilled in two to three days. Another type of baffle plate with ¼" holes on a 2" pitch used to be custom ordered by GEO, now these plates are drilled on the Intimidator in house, without



any of the hassles of outsourcing. Even the milling of pass plate grooves have seen a drastic decrease in time, what used to take four to five hours on a manual machine now takes two minutes on the Quickmill.



Much like their experience with Quickmill so far, GEO is not in the business of taking your money and running, they are in the business of forming long lasting relationships. It is this mentality that has allowed GEO to grow and expand operations over the past 18 years. With business not slowing down and customers always impressed with how they are treated at GEO, the Intimidator 120-120-24 will continue to get a healthy dose of tube sheets, baffles and whatever else the GEO team throws at it. For now, the big, yellow, 120" x 120" Intimidator machining center sits alone as the only Quickmill on GEO's shop floor, but as Mr. Buddy Ohmstede alludes to, one day will have company.