



Award winning Oxford Alloys opens an Asia Pacific Center in Singapore

There's a saying "third time lucky" in the English language. Just by coincidence this happens to be the third time that we have interviewed Mark Ashworth, CEO of Oxford Alloys, in depth about his dynamically growing company since first visiting him in October 2009. However, there is certainly nothing "lucky" or "coincidental" about this hard-working supplier company of critical, corrosion-resistant consumables to the oil & gas, power generation, petrochemical, food processing, and broader industrial markets. With a motto of "helping customers to achieve success by making their job easier through Oxford Alloys' efforts", the success of Oxford Alloys is based on their strength in developing knowledge, resources and skills to satisfy the ever-increasing demands of a worldwide customer base. In this third interview we find that even in economically uncertain times the future of Oxford Alloys seems bright. May saw them winning the prestigious 'E Star' Presidential Award in the U.S. for significant contributions to exports. June brought the opening of their Asia Pacific Offices in Singapore. We talk about these significant milestones and the continuing ambitions of the company.

By John Butterfield



Oxford
er of Welding Alloys



New hermetically sealed electrode packaging using electromagnetic induction technology

growth, and we are honored to receive the award. Moreover, with 95% of the world's consumers living outside the USA we believe the arduous task of penetrating foreign markets is paramount to the future success of U.S. companies."

Adding to this, U.S. Department of Commerce Secretary John Bryson said: "It is a pleasure to recognize Oxford Alloys' contributions to U.S. exports in this way since they have excelled in their efforts, demonstrating four years of successive export growth. They have, additionally, continued to demonstrate remarkable export growth in numerous foreign markets since previously receiving the President's E Star award in 2005."

Presidential U.S. 'E Star' Award

At the time of writing this article it has been, and still is, an exceedingly busy time for Mark Ashworth. It is also an exciting one. May 2012 saw him heading off to the White House in Washington D.C. where, on May 17th, he received the prestigious 'E Star' Award from U.S. Department of Commerce Secretary John Bryson for Oxford Alloys' significant contribution to the expansion of U.S. exports. It was no mean achievement for the 'E Star' Award is the highest recognition that can be given to a U.S. entity in the field of expanding the U.S. export base.

Mark tells us: "International sales and brand development in foreign markets continues to be a major driver of our sales

Oxford Alloys have just fully opened up their latest location. Mark takes up the story: "After years of working with customers throughout Asia it became clear that to fully accomplish our goal of helping customers achieve success by making their jobs easier through Oxford Alloys efforts, we needed to bring our business model closer to them."

Customers around the world have come to rely on Oxford Alloys for immediate shipping of quality assured welding products. However, when shipping from the USA, customers in the eastern hemisphere still had to deal with longer shipping transit times and higher freight costs. Therefore, after careful planning the decision was made to open the location in Singapore to focus on the specific requirements of this important region."

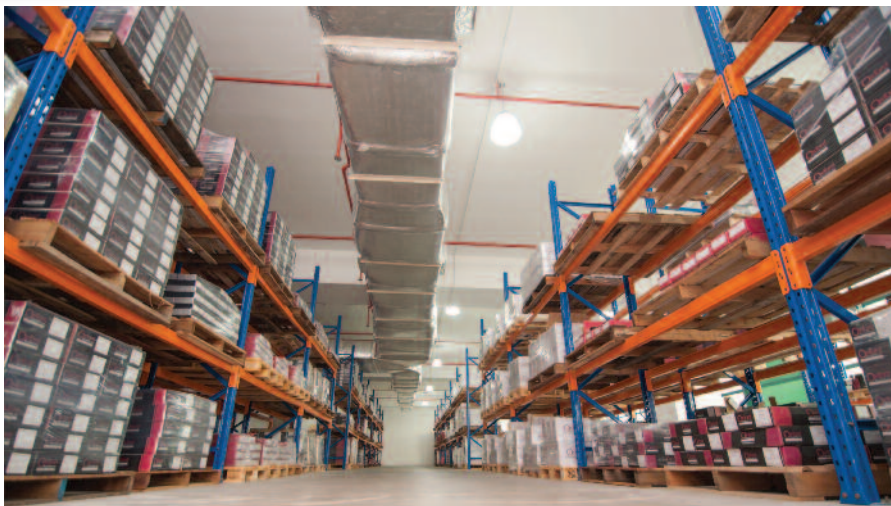
Nevertheless, maintaining stock of Oxford Alloys brand products in Singapore was

New location in Singapore

Taking the above into our mindset, it is therefore not surprising to find Mark heading off to Singapore in June where



New sales offices in Singapore.



Largest stock of nickel alloy welding consumables in Asia.

just one component of a comprehensive strategy aimed at supporting their Asian customer's efforts. Other notable steps included amassing a sales and customer service team based in Singapore that was able to communicate in numerous languages and dialects. Further, the USA Company, with a long history of doing business based on the imperial system has migrated to the metric system and kilograms for packaging and billing from Oxford Alloys Asia Pacific this fulfilling Oxford Alloys goal to accommodate their customers preferences, regardless of the additional effort or learning curve required within their organization.

Oxford Alloys' Asia Pacific headquarters was fully opened as of June 1st. "The reason why we chose to locate our newly built offices in Singapore, Mark tells us "is that Asia has been the home of our fastest growing customer segment for several years now. In fact, all over the Eastern Hemisphere there are tremendous growth opportunities. We opted for Singapore not only because of its central position in Asia but also because it is known as a center of global trade, investment, and industry. It has an outstanding infrastructure coupled with the availability of a highly educated, English-language-speaking talent pool, which makes it an ideal location. Over the last eighteen months Oxford Alloys has made significant progress in key areas including facility construction, IT systems, employee training, and process implementation but June 1st signified the date when full operations started. Right now they have a small nucleus of high-caliber personnel working for them and Mark tells us that they are in the

process of adding key staff to support the entities anticipated growth. Staff in Singapore is undergoing continuous training with some members, like Mrs. Lyn Ong, their Commercial Manager, also been sent to Oxford Alloys' U.S. locations to gain extra knowledge and experience. Mark: "It is paramount to the success of our organization that our new Asia Pacific personnel are totally integrated into Oxford Alloys' culture and customer-centric ways of doing business. This process will not be completed overnight, naturally. It is a perpetual, yet essential process that is being made easy due to the very experienced and talented group in Singapore lead by Lyn Ong".

New market opportunities in Asia

Markets that will be reached from Singapore are not new to Oxford Alloys since countries like Thailand, Malaysia, Vietnam, Mainland China, South Korea, Taiwan, Australia, and Singapore have

been serviced from its U.S. locations for some time. John A Robinson, Director of Export Sales, has been instrumental in facilitating Oxford Alloys global sales presence. After many years with the Techalloy Company, Robinson joined Oxford Alloys some time ago and he travels extensively on a global basis. Robinson says: "my role is to be the face of Oxford Alloys in front of existing customers and to seek out new markets and distributors."

Oxford Alloys already has sales penetration in more than fifty countries but John still sees plenty of scope for new markets and states that "the market intelligence we obtain allows us to keep abreast of developing trends and subsequently work closely with our supply chain partners, which ensures we have a cutting edge product portfolio designed to meet to needs of the most demanding customers". Nevertheless, the new location will mean that Oxford Alloys will not only be in a position to sell more to their existing customers but that they can also expand their customer base by virtue of having stock closer to these sales regions. They will further be able to provide real-time customer services out of Singapore for the entire region. The Singapore base will also give them leverage to develop new distributor and customer relationships throughout the region – something which is already beginning to happen.

Oxford Alloys Asia Pacific 'jewelry' store

Although the new entity will offer customers the complete line of Oxford Alloys' brand welding consumables, the intention is that the stock will comprise a



Warehouse manager Chia Eng Choon picking orders for same day shipping.



Fully integrated 10,000 square feet facility dedicated to corrosion resistant welding wire and electrodes.

more selective product range than the one that they have in the USA locations, including nickel base alloys, duplex, super duplex, and titanium alloys. Mark says: “we will be focusing on what I call our jewelry product concept, which has a primary focus towards high end products, since customers can obtain their common, less critical consumables from many sources”. These higher end products find applications in many of the most demanding market sectors such as oil & natural gas, power generation, seawater desalination, and nuclear energy where the superior corrosion resistance and temperature performance characteristics are of paramount importance. The Oxford Alloy 625 still remains one of the most extensively used nickel alloys in many applications, and its extreme versatile properties associated with its availability in many product forms such as

GMAW (mig), GTAW (tig), SAW, and an SMAW electrode have maintained its high level of utilization. More recently, a flux cored 625 wire product has made steady gains in the market, and Oxford Alloys stocks all of these product forms in Singapore.

The production platform for nickel alloys has shown little growth and some consolidation over the past years and John’s experience in this area saw the need for a new brand of nickel alloy in the marketplace. Oxford Alloys took a position with the 625 to gain industry wide approvals with regulatory agencies, which in turn has attracted the attention of a number of important end-users in the oil & gas sector.

Recognizing the continued ongoing changes in market demand allied to engineering design criteria, Oxford Alloys maintains a blend of nickel alloy products

that reflect well established but older alloys such as Oxford Alloys’ W and X as well as alloys that are finding renewed interest such as Oxford 825.

John adds “scope and breadth of our nickel alloy products stocks gives consumers a fresh new option that is independent of the players that have dominated this sector in the past.”

What stands out at the end of the interview is the dedication, passion, and enthusiasm with which Mark and his team approach their work. It is a dynamic organization with a true desire to make its customers’ lives easier. They not only take time to listen and absorb ideas but are quick to adapt these to market needs, which in turn makes them and their customers more successful. It is a unique quality. With this in mind, we are sure that the star of Oxford Alloys will continue to shine very brightly around the world into the future.



Oxford Alloys Asia Pacific CEO Mark Ashworth & Commercial Manager Lyn Ong.

About Oxford Alloys

Oxford Alloys has developed into a much respected international brand of welding wire and electrodes. Since its inception the company has experienced almost continual growth through its products offered, markets served, distribution network, geographic growth and facility expansion. The corporate facility and service center operates under the globally recognized ISO 9001:2008 quality program.

The company has a 60,000 square foot corporate service center in Baton Rouge, Louisiana, USA as well as full stocking centers located in Houston, Texas and Chicago, Illinois, USA. For more information visit www.Oxfordalloys.com