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Contact:

Joe Steele

LIFT

313-309-9132

jsteele@lift.technology

**LIFT Announces First Graduating Students
from its “Operation Next” Program,
Welcomes First Graduate Home to Michigan**

*Program provides education and training opportunities in high-demand advanced
manufacturing jobs for separating military*

DETROIT – LIFT – Lightweight Innovations For Tomorrow, a Manufacturing USA institute, today announced the first group of soldiers to graduate from its “Operation Next” Advanced Manufacturing Certification Program, including its very first graduate Tim Short - a soldier who has returned home to Michigan after serving 8 years in the U.S. Army.

“Many transitioning soldiers feel they have no marketable skills from their time in the military which will translate into careers in the civilian world,” Short said.

“‘Operation Next’ not only gives them the opportunity to learn in-demand skills and certifications but also can assist them in landing the much needed job to make their transition smooth and painless.”

“[Operation Next](#)” is designed to provide military service members the opportunity to pursue industry-driven education and skills development during their transition period prior to separation, earning nationally recognized industry credentials in some of the most in-demand advanced manufacturing jobs in the country. This includes precision machining and industrial technology in which more than a half million jobs are currently available.

Upon completion of the program, participants earn national credentials based on industry standards from the National Institute for Metalworking Skills for critical

functions in Computer Numerical Control (CNC) Machining or Industrial Technology Maintenance (ITM).

The program, which kicked off in the fourth quarter of-2017, is being piloted at Ft. Campbell, KY – home of the 101st Airborne Division – and currently has 27 soldiers enrolled. The pilot has an initial goal of enrolling, graduating and finding employment for 101 soldiers.

Additional graduates, of which half have already accepted full-time positions, include:

- Adrian Guajardo (ITM)
- Duriel Hannah (CNC)
- Zachary Hill (ITM)
- Timothy McKinney (CNC)
- Danny Scaggs (ITM)
- Josh Waterhouse (ITM)

“It is often a difficult transition into the civilian workforce for the courageous men and women who serve in our Armed Forces,” said Emily DeRocco, education and workforce director, LIFT. “At LIFT, we believe we have a dual responsibility: to help these Service members prepare as effectively as possible for the job market and to connect them directly to the nation’s manufacturers who have jobs going unfilled because of a serious skills gap in the workforce. Operation Next is a win-win for separating military personnel and for the nation’s manufacturers.”

The Operation Next program was developed in partnership with the National Institute for Metalworking Skills (NIMS), Amatrol – a leading provider of on-line and simulation-based Advanced Manufacturing training, the Tennessee Department of Workforce, Tennessee College of Applied Technology, Workforce Essentials and Gene Haas Foundation.

LIFT, operated by the American Lightweight Materials Manufacturing Innovation Institute (ALMMII) and one of the founding [Manufacturing USA](#) institutes, is a public-private partnership dedicated to developing and deploying advanced lightweight metal manufacturing technologies, and implementing education and training programs to better prepare the workforce today and in the future.

ABOUT LIFT

LIFT, operated by the American Lightweight Materials Manufacturing Innovation Institute (ALMMII), 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.