

2003 TOP POST

NYC
Post's

SAME story



THE SOCIETY OF AMERICAN MILITARY ENGINEERS

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NEW YORK DISTRICT WELCOMES NEW COMMANDER

Colonel Richard J. Polo, Jr. assumed command of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers New York District during a June 3 ceremony at the U.S. Customs House at One Bowling Green, New York City. Colonel Polo succeeds Colonel John B. O'Dowd, a New Jersey native, who led the District since July 2001. Colonel O'Dowd's next assignment will be to command the Corps district in Afghanistan, helping to build and repair infrastructure in that war-torn nation.

During his nearly three years as District Engineer, Colonel O'Dowd guided a \$210 million-a-year civil works program, including the \$3.3 billion New York and New Jersey Harbor Deepening Project. As District



Colonel John O'Dowd



Colonel Richard Polo

Engineer, he also supervised the military design and construction program for Army, Air Force and Defense Department facilities in New York and New Jersey. This included building facilities for the C-17 aircraft at McGuire Air Force Base; training facilities for the 10th Infantry Division at Fort Drum; extensive rehabilitation and construction at the U.S. Military Academy at West Point; and numerous navigation, flood control, and environmental restoration projects.

However, the most significant event of Colonel O'Dowd's tenure came just two months after assuming command of the District. After the terrorist attacks of September 11, he coordinated Corps resources and support for emergency evacuation, search and rescue; fuel re-supply for Fire Department vehicles and boats at the disaster site; emergency dredging to ensure barge access for debris removal; and oversight of the World Trade Center debris terminal and processing facility on Staten Island. Managing the daunting WTC debris



Colonel O'Dowd transfers command as Colonel Polo looks on.

and evidence mission involved coordinating efforts with more than 30 agencies to ensure timely, efficient and respectful handling of evidence and debris. "Colonel O'Dowd has a unique, almost uncanny ability to bring all sides to the table to achieve consensus," remarked Corps spokesman Peter Shugert.

Colonel Richard Polo comes to New York after serving as District Engineer of the Corps' Detroit District and as Executive Officer to the Assistant Secretary of the Army for Civil Works. He is a graduate of the National War College at Fort Lesley J. McNair in Washington, D.C. and the U.S. Military Academy at West Point. He earned a master's degree in civil engineering from MIT, and a master's in national security strategy from the National Defense University at Fort McNair. He is also a graduate of the U.S. Army Command and General Staff College.

Colonel Polo's military service includes duty as a Project Officer in the Kuwait Emergency Recovery Office during Operation Desert Storm and Engineer Brigade Operations Officer in Bosnia as part of Task Force Eagle during Operation Joint Endeavor. The son of a career military officer, Colonel Polo is excited to be returning to an area where he lived earlier in his life while his father was serving in Vietnam. "I came with my mother and lived with my aunts and cousins. I went through the third and fourth grades at P.S. 17 in Astoria."

In comparing his current assignment with his earlier experience in Detroit, Colonel Polo remarked,

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NYC POST CITED AS "TOP POST"

We are extremely pleased to announce that the NYC Post was recently honored as Top Post among SAME's large chapters. This distinction was bestowed at the Post Awards and Leadership Transition Breakfast Meeting held in May as part of the National Conference. In total, three Top Posts were named (one in each size category: large, medium and small). Factors that are considered in this honor include a post's membership growth and quality of achievements in support of the Society's Strategic Plan.

Crucial to our success was the leadership of the post's officers and directors, especially Post President, Colonel John B. O'Dowd. Working closely with Secretary Michael Scarano, Colonel O'Dowd always placed an emphasis on identifying and documenting all relevant areas where the NYC Post met or exceeded performance criteria identified by SAME headquarters.

Did you know that you can visit us on-line? Go to <http://same-nyc.org> for additional events and information, or for a direct link to the National site.

To contribute news about your firm or events, please contact Judy Cooper at cooperj@pbworld.com.

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NYC POST COORDINATES WEST POINT VISIT TO GROUND ZERO

On May 7, Captain Matt Morris, Instructor of Construction Management in West Point's Department of Civil and Mechanical Engineering, escorted his class of 24 cadets to Ground Zero where Jerry Dinkels, PE, Engineering Program Manager with the Port Authority of New York & New Jersey, briefed them on the progress of World Trade Center site redevelopment. Afterwards, Tom Grassi, AIA, Project Manager of the Temporary & Permanent World Trade Center PATH Station, escorted the cadets on a site tour.

Albert Bast, PE, Vice President of URS Corporation, responded to Captain Morris' original request to SAME by coordinating the site visit with the Port Authority and accompanying the cadets and three faculty members on the tour—all part of a new SAME initiative to reinforce the relationship between NYC Post professionals and West Point Post faculty and cadets.

After welcoming the cadets, Mr. Dinkels emotionally recounted his own experiences on September 11. He then provided a comprehensive briefing on the restoration work that has been completed by the Port Authority as well as work now being planned for the site by his agency and others. He explained that the City of New York was responsible for recovering victims and removing debris from the site, including PATH rail cars trapped under the debris for eight months. While that work was under way, the Port Authority worked with consultants to maintain the integrity of the "bathtub" slurry walls that were originally constructed as part of the World Trade Center Towers.

Extensive flood damage to the PATH tunnels also had to be repaired. While the Port Authority was working on PATH, New York City Transit was busy restoring the destroyed 1/9 subway tunnel serving lower Manhattan. Subway service was restored in September 2002 and PATH service was restored following completion of a temporary PATH terminal in November 2003.

The redevelopment plans for the site were also introduced, including the planned memorial, the private development of the Freedom Tower and other buildings, and the new PATH terminal. Throughout the presentation, Mr. Dinkels emphasized the need on projects of this magnitude to integrate the skills of design professionals with a multitude of



Cadets pose outside temporary PATH Terminal at Ground Zero.

political, financial, commercial and security interests. Regarding the PATH terminal, he emphasized the importance of constructibility by illustrating the complexity of building the new permanent terminal on the exact site of the temporary terminal without interrupting service to PATH riders.

Tom Grassi then escorted the visitors to the project site. The cadets and faculty members were able to enter the excavation, observe the slurry walls and the 1/9 subway line, and enter the temporary PATH station. As is common at the site, the sidewalks were full of tourists who took the opportunity to talk to the cadets and take pictures (including the one accompanying this article). One nearby restaurant owner also generously offered free soft drinks.

Thanks to this tour, the cadets had a new appreciation for the complexities and challenges that accompany construction in a dense urban environment. As you read this

story, it's noteworthy to remember that the cadets have recently graduated from the Academy, received their initial branch assignments, and embarked on their military careers. Their visit to Ground Zero undoubtedly provided further validation of their career choice.

SAME is extremely grateful to the Port Authority for sponsoring this event and to those professionals who gave so generously of their time. ■

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www.same-balt.org

THE NEW YORK CITY SUBWAY: 100 YEARS OLD AND STILL EXPANDING

New York City has certainly been host to many celebrations, from VE Day to visits from the Pope to ticker-tape parades for hometown heroes. But for sheer novelty and excitement, few civic events in New York can compare with the opening of the New York City subway 100 years ago.

The city pulled out all the stops to put on a celebration on October 27, 1904, the first day of subway service. City Hall was festooned with flags and bunting, and the Mayor and members of the Board of Rapid Transit Commissioners presided over solemn ceremonies that were punctuated with cheering by New Yorkers who could barely contain their enthusiasm.

New York didn't have the first subway; that honor belonged to London, which opened its Underground in 1863. Nor was New York's the first underground rapid transit system in the U.S., Boston having opened its underground railway in 1897. But from its inception, New York rivaled all other systems in size and scope.

Following speeches at City Hall, at 2:35 p.m. Mayor George McClellan took the helm of the first train and drove it to 103rd Street before relinquishing the controls to a motorman. When the new system opened to the public later that day, an estimated 150,000 New Yorkers paid a nickel to ride the new line, which stretched 9.1 miles from City Hall Station in downtown Manhattan to 145th Street in Harlem, in northern Manhattan.

The initial segment of the New York City subway (which despite its name included some stretches of viaduct) totaled 21 miles and was designed by William Barclay Parsons, Chief Engineer of the Board of Rapid Transit Commissioners, and built by the Interborough Rapid Transit (IRT) Company, which was owned and financed by August Belmont. John B. McDonald was the contractor. The IRT line of New York's subway was an early and outstanding example of a public-private partnership producing public infrastructure through a design-build-operate-maintain arrangement. In the words of Mayor McClellan: "The subway is a beauty. It is greater than any of us dared dream."

The 9.1-mile segment was completed in just four and one-half years and extended from City Hall north

to 42nd Street on the city's East Side (near where Grand Central Terminal stands today), then proceeded west across 42nd Street to Times Square, where it turned north, traveling along Broadway to 145th Street. Most of the route was underground, in shallow tunnels created through the use of cut-and-cover construction. About three miles of the line were in deep tunnels, mostly created by conventional drill-and-blast methods, and some of the route was above ground, most notably a section from 122nd to 135th Streets, and including a renowned trussed arch bridge over 125th Street that is still standing today. The initial segment employed a four-track system, with both express and local service, an innovation then and still unusual today.

Within a very short time of the October 27th opening, the system would be extended north into Upper Manhattan and the Bronx. At 103rd Street, a segment veered east across the northwest corner of Central Park, under the Harlem River and to the Bronx, near where the New York Botanical Garden and Bronx Zoo are today. From 145th Street, the line continued north to the Riverdale section of the Bronx.

Newspaper accounts of the day varied, with some reporting reasonably well-behaved crowds ("There was lots of noise of the hilarious, buoyant sort, a great deal of celebrating of the inoffensive kind, no end of joking and holiday spirit.") and others reporting "indescribable scenes of crowding and confusion, never before paralleled in this city." Certainly, there was considerable jostling to be among the first to ride what must have seemed a miraculous invention, racing underground at speeds of 25 miles per hour and whisking passengers "from City Hall to Harlem in 15 minutes." The mobility and convenience made possible by the subway spurred furious development along the route of the system as the city grew along with its rapid transit system. A real estate broker quoted by the *New York Herald* in 1904 said the subway "means the beginning of an era in real estate in Greater New York unprecedented in the history of the city."



General William Barclay Parsons breaks ground for subway construction.

New York City and its subway continued to grow during the early 20th Century as rival concerns, including the Brooklyn-Manhattan Transit Corporation (BMT) and the city-owned Independent Subway System (IND), built lines that competed with one another for passengers. In 1940, New York City consolidated and took control of the three systems—the IRT, BMT and IND. Today, the system, which includes 722 miles of rapid transit, with 26 lines and 468 stations in four boroughs, is owned and operated by New York City Transit, an agency of the Metropolitan Transportation Authority.

The subway centennial will be celebrated with a number of events, including ceremonies marking the 100th anniversary of opening day and exhibits at the New York Public Library (through December 31), the New York City Transit Museum (through January 2005), and Grand Central Terminal (through July 18).

Although decades passed without a major expansion of the New York City subway, today the system is undergoing something of a renaissance, with two major additions to the system in design. The No. 7 line, which now terminates at Times Square, will be extended west and south along 11th Avenue to 24th Street, serving an expanded Jacob K. Javits Convention Center and a proposed new stadium being planned for the New York Jets and in connection with New York City's bid to host the 2012 Olympics. A new line, the Second Avenue Subway, is planned to extend 8.5 miles from 125th Street to the financial district of lower Manhattan. Construction on both the No. 7 extension and Second Avenue Subway is expected to begin in late 2004 or 2005—100 years after the opening of New York City's first subway. ■

UPCOMING events

NYC POST EVENTS

NOVEMBER 6, 2004

Our Annual Scholarship Fund Dinner Dance will be held on Saturday evening, November 6, at the Waldorf-Astoria Hotel. The gala event, which honors over 165 students in engineering and related fields, will be chaired by Judy Cooper; Vinny Mangiere serves as Vice Chair. Information concerning the black-tie event will be mailed to all members shortly.

In the meantime, please contact Judy at PB at (212) 465-5332 with any questions.

MEMBER news

INSPIRATIONAL LEADERSHIP AWARD

LT Colonel Edward B. Weners, U.S. Army (Ret), was recently awarded the Silver Order of the de Fleury Medal by the Army Engineer Association in a ceremony at the State of Connecticut Adjutant General's office. The award recognizes his inspirational leadership to the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers over a 40-year period in both active and retired status. Specific mention is made of Colonel Weners' accomplishing essential combat engineering tasks with valor during the Vietnam War; critical construction engineering projects during the Cold War; superbly commanding and training officers and enlisted personnel; and providing extraordinary voluntary service while successfully managing a professional engineering firm after retirement from the U.S. Army.

Colonel Weners, a Fellow and Life Member of SAME, is the Secretary/Treasurer of the NYC Post Scholarship Fund, Inc. He owns Weners Engineering Group in Hartford, Connecticut, and is a licensed professional engineer in Massachusetts, Connecticut and Virginia. ■

NEW COMMANDER

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"Detroit is in many ways like the New York District. The Great Lakes waterways and ports are much like New York. I'm familiar with port operations." This expertise will be invaluable as he oversees the first phase of a \$1.6 billion dredging project to deepen local shipping channels to 50 feet.

SAME's New York City Post would like to wish both men well as they tackle their new assignments. Although separated by several continents and thousands of miles, they will both unquestionably continue to serve their nation with honor and distinction in the best traditions of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. ■

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