



*Remarks by Colonel Rick Clapp, Jr., Deputy
Commander, Mississippi Valley Division,
at the S.A.M.E. Lower Mississippi Region Training
Conference, New Orleans, Louisiana, 20 Sep 00*

Brig. Gen. Ed Arnold, our new SAME Regional Vice President, sends his regrets at not being able to attend. As many of you know, just last week Gen. Arnold assumed command of the Corps of Engineers' Mississippi Valley Division, and he is back in Vicksburg moving into his quarters this week. Believe me, he would rather be here!

I am delighted to have the opportunity to meet with you here in the beautiful crescent city.

It is gratifying to see such a large turnout for our Lower Mississippi Regional Conference. As many of you know, this is my first opportunity to take part in this forum, having recently assumed the duties as Deputy Commander of the Mississippi Valley Division.

Thus far, I have been impressed with the enthusiasm and commitment displayed by the leadership of our seven posts. I'm pleased to report that 6 of our 7 posts are represented at the conference: Alexandria, Arkansas, Louisiana, Memphis, Mississippi Gulf Coast, and Vicksburg.

At this time, I'd like to take the opportunity to thank the New Orleans Post for hosting this conference. A look at the agenda tells me it should be a memorable experience for all of us.

Next, I would like to thank the following individuals for their hard work and special efforts in putting this conference together:

- **Colonel Tom Julich** (*New Orleans Post president and Commander, New Orleans District*) and **Vic Landry** (*retired New Orleans District employee*), for their efforts as chairpersons for the conference;

- **Frank Walk** (*URS-Walk Haydel*) for coordinating the program; and
- **Charlie Settoon** for his labors as conference and exhibit coordinator.

Other vital contributors include:

Mark Roberts	treasurer
LTC Dale Knieriemen	protocol
Michele Daigle	event coordinator
Judy Frilot	spouse's tour
Karen Dempsey	publicity
Ken Broussard	on-site operations center
Don Clement	technical support
Frank Nicoladis	sustaining member
Steve Cali	golf tournament
Tony Brocato	registration
Ashlyn Graves	registration

I also want to recognize the sustaining members, particularly those who have sponsored booths and who are participating in the conference. Please take time during your breaks to visit the exhibits.

These are exciting times for all SAME members and the program for this conference offers each of us a close look at cutting-edge technologies, programs, and issues.

I see that our theme, "Engineering Challenges for the 21st Century," will resonate throughout all the sessions on our agenda for the next two days.

We must remember to look at the engineering challenges of the future as opportunities, and prepare for them.

One way to do this is to expand our programs to nourish the careers of tomorrow's engineers and scientists through scholarships, mentoring, adopting schools, and providing non-traditional training assistance.

Expanding and strengthening partnerships is essential to becoming more effective in arenas such as environmental stewardship, emergency management, infrastructure integrity, and work force diversity.

The reciprocal networking inherent in the SAME "family" is essential to helping our members to meet the challenges of changing missions and rapidly evolving technology as well as demands to work faster, less expensively, and to higher standards.

Now more than ever, the partnership between the public and private sectors, in such areas as outsourcing and privatization, will be essential as we carry our profession and our Nation into this new millennium.

I trust we will continue to advance relationships between academia, industry, and governmental agencies in order to spawn fresh ideas, encourage innovation, and develop new technologies.

Let me close by saying that SAME and the organizations served by its members have built a solid record of exceptional service, devotion to duty, and integrity. I trust that we can look to our proud past, and together, position ourselves for success in the 21st Century and beyond. Thank you and enjoy the conference.