



*Suggested Remarks for Brigadier General Edwin J. Arnold, Jr., Commander, Mississippi Valley Division, at the Meeting of the Mississippi Gulf Coast Post of the Society of American Military Engineers, 15 May 2002*

**Delighted to be here . . . thanks for the invitation . . .**

**I am proud to serve as the Regional Vice President for the Lower Mississippi Region and I look forward to meeting as many members as I can during my tenure at the Mississippi Valley Division.**

**The Society of American Military Engineers is now over 81 years old, depending on when you say we started. I say June 1920, when the first board met for the first time.**

**The world has turned over many times in all those years.**

**When we were founded, Americans were just returning from the battlefields of the first World War. Woodrow Wilson was the 28<sup>th</sup> president.**

**Now we are debating the future relevance of a global missile security shield, and we are serving our 43<sup>rd</sup> president.**

**In the meanwhile, our nation has sent Americans to stand in harms way in Europe again, in Korea, in Vietnam, in Panama, Iraq, Somalia, Rwanda, Bosnia, Kosovo, Macedonia and on and on . . .**

**What does this mean to us? To S.A.M.E.?**

**Are we headed in the right direction?**

**What are we in S.A.M.E.? What do we stand for? How far afield of our traditional membership base -- uniformed members of the armed services, active and retired, and the supporting civilian engineering base -- should we go for new members? How much, if any, should we change our focus? To answer those questions, let's turn to our current president, Mr. Roger J. Wozny.**

**He says on our web page that:**

**". . . I am confident that you will conclude that there are only four choices concerning The Society of American Military Engineers:**

- Choose to Join.***
- Choose to Stay.***
- Choose to Grow.***
- Choose to Participate.***

**"Regardless of the color of your uniform . . . there is much to gain from your active association with the Society. It is a unique, dynamic, synergistic, relevant and viable professional forum for the advancement of public and private partnerships for defense preparedness. Your involvement will enhance and assure our Proud Heritage and Promising Future."**

**As a society dedicated to national security, we claim a special right to a special pride. We have to make that felt. We need to talk about it. We need to make our members understand how very special they are by maintaining and building on our traditions and heritage. We have a proud heritage of finding solutions and solving problems.**

**So how do these thoughts match where we started in 1920 with our founding documents, our charter and our constitution, and our certificate of incorporation in the District of Columbia in 1924?**

**There are 3 themes that come through in these founding documents both explicitly and implicitly. They are:**

- Professionalism**
- Partnership**
- Preparedness**

**On Professionalism:**

**The charter speaks of "the engineering profession," ". . . professional interaction," and in the certificate of incorporation we find: "for the purpose of professional intercourse. . ."**

**On Partnership:**

**"The society encourages, fosters, and develops a spirit of cooperation and helpful interest among the engineering profession in civil life, engineers in the military services, and the other arms of the military services." (Charter)**

**On Preparedness: S.A.M.E. . . .**

**"...exists in the interest of national defense ..." (Charter)**

**". . . for the advancement of the knowledge of the science of military engineering . . ." (Charter)**

**"for the rapid mobilization of engineering capabilities . . . "**  
**(Charter)**

**It seems to me it means that we are:**

- **An outfit of *professionals***
- **Practicing *partnership***
- **And dedicated to *preparedness***

**But what about the WHO? Who is the military engineer?**

**If we are the Society of American Military Engineers, who are we?**

**Civilians, yes!**

**Uniformed engineers, yes!**

**Public health service engineers? Yes!**

**Who are we?**

- **It seems to me we are the group most interested in *engineering for the national defense, seeking solutions without boundaries.***

**OK. Then who is that? Well --**

**It's forward deployed engineers in Bosnia or Kosovo or Korea -  
- land, sea, and air power engineers!!**

**It's uniformed engineers at home,**

**It's our civilians in government service in the Department of  
Defense,**

**It's certainly and clearly the engineering and construction industry!**

**And it's transportation and infrastructure and environmental engineers, biologists, and economists!**

**I submit that it's anyone with an interest in what we are uniquely about!**

**Let's look at current members:**

**Our demographics tell us that we are engineers, architects, planners, contractors, contract administrators, biologists, surveyors and mappers, heavy equipment makers, and many others, from both the military and civilian worlds -- from both government and commerce.**

**We are certainly NOT JUST ENGINEERS!**

**A very bright, long-time S.A.M.E. member -- his father was also a member -- put it this way:**

**People who join S.A.M.E. find . . . relationships with those who work in and think about construction/engineering and its ultimate relationship to national defense.**

**S.A.M.E. . . is the one group that brings together the broad spectrum of people who work in this arena. For many . . . it is an opportunity to 'associate' with the military, a group they respect. S.A.M.E. is also a great place to network.**

**Thus the key to who we are --**

**". . . lies in ties to national defense -- S.A.M.E. can bring in anyone doing almost anything, as long as S.A.M.E. keeps its eye on . . . national defense . . ."**

**If you are interested in national defense and engineering, then S.A.M.E. is for you.**

**People in infrastructure -- such as transportation, communications, energy, the environment -- are all part of the great web of national power -- of national security.**

**That web includes the public health service, the Department of Transportation, NASA, state highway bureaus, city and county engineers -- all those who care about a strong America.**

**All are appropriate members for S.A.M.E.**

**At the end of the first World War, Brig. Gen. William Barclay Parsons, an early leader in the new S.A.M.E., wrote that in the wake of the European battlefield,**

**"... Military engineering became 'advanced civil engineering,' embracing 'electricity, bacteriology, chemistry, metallurgy, geology and physics.'" He noted that the military engineer needed to know something of all that, "and in much of it he must be expert."**

**That is no less true today!**

**Our society brings together people committed to a strong America, at home and abroad, in peace and in war.**

**Professionalism -- partnership -- preparedness**

**A Proud heritage -- a promising future**

**Now let me talk a little less globally:**

**What do I see as our challenges? In this year 2002?**

**Well, membership has been gradually declining.**

**Currently -- that decline is slowing, but still worrisome. I think there are probably two key reasons:**

**(1) Shrinking military forces, closing bases, and shifting unit locations have caused disruptions to our posts, and**

**(2) The commercial bottom line. It looms larger than ever.**

**Productivity is key. Mergers cut overhead and reduce association memberships.**

**Of these two, the first -- the military downsizing, reposting, and reflagging -- has reached a steady state.**

**The second -- mergers and buyouts in the industry -- will continue, some say even accelerate -- with different tiers of industry being affected.**

**Our corporate membership -- for those in the heart and core of S.A.M.E. -- will be under downward pressure.**

**So we in S.A.M.E. must offer value. Add value . . . offer client-corporate interface, a chance to meet and talk. Get the whole team there.**

**We must first retain, then recruit. Aim at youth in recruiting; then keep them busy at the post.**

**Focus on public agency sustaining members -- you know we have them now? Why not the Corps districts? City public works departments? Levee district boards? Watershed management councils? Navy engineer districts and divisions?**

**Membership goes as programs and partnering go at the post level!**

**Focus on getting the full spectrum of members there -- we need uniformed service people and industry together.**

**Offer sustaining members the chance to talk with and meet your government procurement and engineering teams.**

**Think "Solutions without Boundaries" when addressing these membership challenges.**

**Today's S.A.M.E. -- 25,000 members, 2,800 corporate and public agency members.**

**Unique -- and still focused as we have been for more than 80  
years on "THE INTEREST OF NATIONAL DEFENSE!"**