2020 SAME Strategic Plan
Towards Our Centennial

Featuring:
- The 2020 SAME Strategic Plan—including our Mission, Vision, Value, and Goals & Objectives.
- Articles by several National Board of Direction members reflecting on how the plan was developed and how it will be implemented.
- “How to Reach 100: Lessons From a Life in Engineering,” a profile of 102-year-old SAME member Alexander Tarics.
Supporting the Heart of SAME: Volunteers

The 2020 SAME Strategic Plan is complete! We are now on a path to our Centennial and our second century of service to our nation and our profession. The review of the 2020 SAME Strategic Plan began with the Post Leaders Workshop in February 2015. Participants were organized into three groups according to Post size to conduct an initial assessment of SAME’s focus areas as a means of gaining Post perspectives. A Task Force was then formed from the leaders of each group. The Task Force synthesized their work and presented it to the Executive Committee in March. The Task Force effort was a defining contribution; it articulated our environment from a Post perspective—the foundation of SAME—and launched the remainder of the review as the National Board of Direction then carried the baton through two board meetings and much work in between, including several surveys of Post leaders and a robust schedule of engagements with Sustaining Members. The board also has been instrumental in providing real “direction” to developing the plan. No rubber stamps here!

We owe a debt of thanks to that initial group of Post leaders and to the Task Force who kickstarted the review:

- **Small Posts**: Christine Pascus (Memphis) and Steve Williamson (South Florida);
- **Medium Posts**: Ed Mears (Phoenix) and Michelle Goodare (St. Louis); and
- **Large Posts**: Italia Gray (Los Angeles) and Melissa Smith (Baltimore).

A BOTTOM-UP APPROACH

The biggest initiative we undertook in 2015 to enable volunteers was the retooling of the Post Leaders Workshop. The workshop is now a training ground for Post leaders to learn how to recruit, manage and retain active volunteers. We will continue to invest in experts to conduct that training. We also will continue to find ways to resource Post leaders’ participation in the workshop because we believe this training is fundamental to national and Post success. Many Posts are carried by a small handful of very dedicated volunteers. The 2020 SAME Strategic Plan seeks to increase the participation of members in order to help spread the load.

A key to enabling greater member participation is to provide opportunities that satisfy individual desires to contribute and help us fulfill our vision. There are two important sources of opportunities that both Posts and members can utilize. One that we need Posts to help with is the new Best Practices System. The intent of the Best Practices System is to create a database of successful Post programs, with full planning details, including templates, so other Posts can implement them without needing to reinvent the wheel. The more effort we put into execution, the bigger the return on the investment of volunteer time, the greater our impact and the more we attract other volunteers to become part of our team! The other source of opportunity is our Committees & Councils, each of which has a robust plan of action for 2016 that Posts can tap into to help provide speakers and other content for meetings and events.

We are and will remain a Society of vibrant Posts. The focus of the national office will remain enabling Posts in every way we can. And in the process, we will keep the heart of SAME—our volunteers—beating strong! To every volunteer, thank you for your continued commitment to our nation, our profession and this organization.

SAME is vital and enduring. Our leadership is needed now more than ever. Before we know it, 2020 will be here and SAME will be 100 years young. It will be a great celebration.

ENABLING VOLUNTEERS TO SUCCEED
Towards Our Centennial

During the most recent Post Leaders Workshop in September, I was fortunate to be able to share with the audience a powerful passage from the first issue of *The Military Engineer*, dated January-February 1920. Not only are the words a fitting reminder of our past 95 years of service, they signal the vital and enduring nature of SAME as we near the start of our second century.

“As an important means to this worthy end, we are establishing at this time a Society of American Military Engineers. This society will serve no selfish ends. It is dedicated to patriotism and national security. Its objects are, in brief, to promote solidarity and co-operation between engineers in civil and military life, to disseminate technical knowledge bearing upon progress in the art of war and the application of engineering science thereto, and to preserve and maintain the best standards and traditions of the profession, all in the interests of patriotism and national security.

Eligibility qualifications for membership in this Society are drawn on the broadest possible lines consistent with the achievements of its aims.”

Thank you to all our individual and Sustaining Members and our partners who make SAME a fun place to support STEM activities, provide support to veterans, make a difference in our national security, and deliver real solutions to help our military engineers and our profession. 2016 will be an exciting year as we begin our path to our Centennial!

**Top 10 Ways to be an Active SAME Member**

Want more from your SAME membership? You can make that happen! Here are 10 ways you can make the most of your SAME membership, to boost your career and give back to your profession.

Be involved locally...
1. Volunteer for a Post service project
2. Serve on a Post committee
3. Be a Post officer
4. Be a speaker at a Post event
5. Mentor a Young Member

Get engaged nationally...
6. Attend a national conference or event
7. Serve on a Committee or Council
8. Be a speaker at a national event
9. Author an article for *TME* magazine
10. Be a Mentor at an Engineering & Construction Camp

**Be a Leader.**

**Make a Difference.**

**Get Engaged in SAME!**
What Makes Membership Valuable?

Many of us grapple with the question of “What is our value proposition?” as we develop strategies to differentiate our organization from others in today’s highly competitive environments. SAME is no different.

SAME spent 2015 redefining our Strategic Plan. In order to do that, we first had to take a hard look at our mission and vision statements as we near the end of SAME’s first 100 years and examine how we will thrive into the future. This required us to define the value proposition for SAME members.

A true value proposition has three key elements: It has to be (1) quantifiable; (2) relevant to the customer; and (3) uniquely differentiating. It is a promise of value to be delivered and acknowledged, and just as important, a belief from the customer that value will be delivered and experienced. We asked for input from members to learn what makes being an SAME member beneficial. The survey revealed several key themes (access to education and leadership opportunities, volunteering, networking, and involvement in national defense) from which we were able to craft our value proposition.

The Society of American Military Engineers offers professional and personal development, networking and community involvement to individuals of all ages committed to contributing to our national security, by leading a collaborative and focused coalition of organizations that creates opportunities to address and resolve issues that enhance our national security posture.

We have developed this value proposition to be both inclusive (individuals of all ages and backgrounds) yet unique (specifically within the A/E/C industry and focused on national security). The programs and activities SAME offers locally, regionally and nationally provide measurable value—whether it is scholarships provided, STEM careers inspired, continuing education offered, interagency relationships built, solutions developed, or business development engagements fostered that lead to new revenue streams to ensure a strong and diverse industrial base.

Issues we are tackling—such as STEM programs, support to veterans, or industry-government workshops—all support our nation’s growth and security. We do this in a collaborative environment that allows members to participate at the level that best meets their personal and professional development goals. Our value proposition will serve as our cornerstone as SAME emerges as the lead facilitator bringing stakeholders together to resolve issues that enhance our national security posture.

Solutions for National Security

To accomplish our mission to “lead collaborative efforts to identify and resolve national security infrastructure-related challenges,” SAME has embraced engagement as a core principle at all levels.

We will accomplish a renewed engagement program through three objectives. The first is to raise the added value of industry-government collaboration by creating a stronger focus on developing mutually beneficial project delivery and acquisition solutions for government and industry. The second objective is to enhance SAME’s delivery of professional development programs for members. The third objective is to identify major areas of importance to government and industry (such as STEM, wounded warrior support, hiring veterans and growing the construction trades workforce) that can be supported by SAME and to incorporate those areas into appropriate programs at all levels of the Society.

The inaugural CEO/Presidents Roundtable, to be held in March in conjunction with the DOD & Federal Agency Program Briefings, best exemplifies SAME’s renewed engagement plan. The roundtable, which will be conducted annually, will be the culmination of a series of focused engagements throughout the year that will seek to identify key topics facing government and industry.

Building towards the CEO/Presidents Roundtable each year will begin with SAME Industry-Government Workshops. These are intended to take advantage of Sustaining Member Post memberships and local government relationships. The intent is to collaborate and implement solutions locally and report on their impact. Topics requiring further action will be forwarded to SAME National for consideration. In turn, a Solutions Summit, consisting of a small working group of industry and government experts, will review the input from local, regional and national efforts and prepare the agenda for the next CEO/Presidents Roundtable.

The outcomes of the roundtable are four-fold: (1) develop and endorse a draft set of issues that will form the National Topics Brief, which will be presented to members, stakeholders and other interested parties to align local, regional and national activities and agendas; (2) offer a set of Major Interest Areas, which in time may become key issues; (3) develop an assessment of the value of undertaking these topics and interest areas for our membership; and (4) provide direction for the following year for local, regional and national collaboration, which will ultimately feed into the next year’s roundtable.

There will be more to come as we develop this in more detail. I urge every member to support these refreshed engagement programs and keep our core purpose in the forefront of your thinking as SAME moves towards its Centennial.
Empowering Local Posts for Success

An important part of SAME’s infrastructure is the 17 Regions led by Regional Vice Presidents (RVPs). Bringing regional operations to the Posts allows for consistent communication and “boots on the ground” to work directly with members and Posts in integrating industry and government to grow our profession. While each level of SAME (National, Regional, Post) has an important role to play in achieving One Society, the collective focus is to ensure that Posts have access to a dedicated resource for their own, unique needs.

During my four years serving in a regional capacity (Deputy RVP and RVP), I have learned that as RVPs, our roles are not prescriptive. We share a common commitment and dedication to support Posts as they move forward in leading collaboration with A/E/C industry members, government and their local communities. Our roles include, but are not limited to: advocating Post initiatives; facilitating dialogue between all levels of the Society; assisting in adapting to changing fiscal challenges; interpreting national goals, policies and strategies; presenting best practices, initiatives and resource plans to train and educate members; and recognizing the dedicated volunteers who make a difference every day.

Setting SAME apart is that while we are One Society with a common vision, SAME empowers Post leaders to identify an individual path to bring value to their local membership. Often the RVP is a conduit for SAME National to assist Posts in overcoming challenges and growing new initiatives. This past year, two Posts in the Rocky Mountain Region have shown how Posts can leverage their local identity to blaze their own trail. Specifically, SAME recognized military and industry members’ interest in re-establishing an SAME presence in the Alamogordo, N.M., area. In a joint effort with local leadership, the Tularosa Basin Post with Holloman AFB as the backbone is now reinvigorated and offering professional and personal development and community involvement that will enhance our national security posture. In Montana, with the 50th Anniversary of Air Force RED HORSE and understanding the influence of RED HORSE around Malmstrom AFB, SAME collaborated with the Big Sky Post in establishing a RED HORSE membership category, which has spurred increased participation in the Post. Both of these Posts are building momentum—and they are but two examples of the 100-plus Posts around the world that have unique opportunities to deliver value to members as we move toward our Centennial.

I encourage you to connect with your RVP; they are your advocates for leveraging national resources in a local way!

Resilience: From the Ground Up

The fourth goal of the 2020 SAME Strategic Plan is Resilience, which rightly reflects where we—as engineering professionals and as a nation—need to be in this time in our history. Our nation relies on the infrastructure that engineers plan, design and enable every day. This country and our built environment must be resilient in the face of natural and man-made hazards. We all have a stake and a voice in achieving that objective.

Resilience at its most intuitive is the ability to “take a punch” and keep performing to some level. In the built environment of today’s America, infrastructure systems are tied together and interdependent. We have seen the loss or failure of infrastructure systems in one geographic location dramatically affect the economy many states away. To be resilient, we must understand our vulnerabilities, know how these vulnerabilities affect others, then develop solutions to mitigate the impacts when vulnerabilities become failures.

Achieving resilience is a national goal but achievement must begin locally. A disaster event, whether national or man-made, is fundamentally local. It is in the crucible of the disaster that we measure our resilience. How did the infrastructure perform? What failed? How soon can it be back online? To what extent can local residents get back to “normal” and how much help do they need? But the work of building resilience into our infrastructure and ourselves must take place beforehand.

Achieving resilience also must recognize that the overwhelming proportion of our built environment is privately held, which means that solutions are not purely governmental in nature.

In the aftermath of the September 11, 2001 attacks, SAME helped found The Infrastructure Security Partnership (TISP). Since then, TISP has facilitated dialogue that has led to resilience as a national goal. Specifically, TISP has provided thought leadership that defines our threat in an all-hazards context; pioneered resilience concepts; published two editions of its Regional Disaster Resilience Guide; and provided key inputs to the National Infrastructure Protection Plan. TISP also annually hosts a Critical Infrastructure Symposium (the next being held in April in Charleston, S.C.) that brings together government, industry and academia to advance resilience.

In 2015, TISP was integrated into SAME as a Council. Now SAME, through its Posts, is ideally suited to foster resilience locally and provide real-world feedback to policymakers at the national level to develop proactive solutions for the built environment.
2020 SAME Strategic Plan

**VALUE:** The Society of American Military Engineers offers professional and personal development, networking and community involvement to individuals of all ages committed to contributing to our national security, by leading a collaborative and focused coalition of organizations that creates opportunities to address and resolve issues that enhance our national security posture.

**MISSION:** SAME leads collaborative efforts to identify and resolve national security infrastructure-related challenges.

**2020 VISION:** SAME is recognized as the multi-disciplined integrator of military, public, private, and academic national infrastructure-related capabilities to produce viable solutions for America’s national security.

**GOAL 1: Relationships**
Lead efforts to foster trust and understanding through communications and collaboration among military, public, private, academic, and professional A/E/C organizations.

**OBJECTIVES:**

1. **By 2020:** Firmly establish one key multi-member partnership per goal with other professional organizations (for example, IFMA, AFE, APPA, and APWA to support the Facilities Management Workshop), delivering outcomes by identifying the issue, presenting the problem and the solution that partnering will achieve. Establish bilateral partnerships that provide value to members (such as the American Bar Association and Defense Related Associations).

2. **By 2020:** Develop a portfolio of SAME professional publications of high quality content that informs, educates, enlightens, and reinforces our culture.

3. **By 2020:** SAME leads efforts to promote inclusion of SAME membership, professional disciplines, small, medium and large companies, and federal, state and local public agencies at the Post and National levels while engaging other professional organizations through joint meetings, workshops and conferences to promote SAME goals and objectives. At the National level:
   - **By 2020:** The Joint Engineer Training Conference is recognized as the premier national training event for all federal, military, civilian and private sector engineers across the A/E/C industry and related professional societies, and by veteran support non-federal entities as the nation’s annual celebration of support to veteran engineers. Fully integrate the JECO program and integrate the efforts of all other engineering societies.
   - **By 2020:** The Small Business Conference is recognized by industry and the federal government as the primary Federal Small Business Conference serving the A/E/C industry.
   - **By 2020:** The Facilities Management Workshop is recognized as the premier training event for the professional development of federal installation managers.
   - **SAME National assists Posts and Regions in the development of workshops, technical sessions and meetings.

4. **By 2020:** The SAME Industry-Government Engagement Plan is effectively producing viable solutions that enhance industry/government collaboration and add value to joint efforts to improve America’s infrastructure. Establish local recognition of the role of SAME among all levels of government, industry, academic and business interests.

**GOAL 2: Leadership and Mentoring**
Leverage SAME’s culture of service to develop sustainable growth of leaders for our profession.

**OBJECTIVES:**

1. Develop a succession plan at Post and National levels linking engagement to leadership growth opportunities to meet members’ needs.

2. SAME Posts use national and local training initiatives to effectively engage volunteers to achieve greater results and maximize volunteers’ time.

3. Posts grow active participation by 5 percent per year. Posts foster active participation by leveraging opportunities presented in the SAME Post Best Practices System, SAME programs, and the offerings of SAME Committees & Councils. Active participation is defined as moving more members to an active role by expanding opportunities that meet members’ interests while contributing to the SAME Strategic Plan (goal is 25 percent or better participation).

4. Posts grow government/military segment of Post membership by 5 percent per year (SAME is the professional society of choice for all federal engineers: Active Duty, National Guard, Reserves, and civilians).

5. Utilize SAME Fellows and senior leaders to mentor Young Members and students.
GOAL 3: Professional Development and Personal Growth

Develop tailored opportunities and supporting resource plans to train, educate and promote credentialing of members in order to help them grow personally while they pay it forward through direct contributions to the development of future professionals.

OBJECTIVES:

1. **By 2020:** The SAME Foundation principal is over $5 million and is funding member professional development initiatives, including establishing SAME as the portal for SAME members to access professional development offerings of other professional societies.
2. **By 2020:** SAME provides members with robust programs for training, continuing education, credentialing and advanced degrees.
3. Develop our nation’s future engineers and grow prospective members of the Society through STEM outreach efforts, scholarships, and engagement of College Student Chapters.
   - **By 2020:** SAME will be recognized nationally as a leader in STEM initiatives at the primary and secondary school levels. Partnerships with diverse organizations (such as Boy and Girl Scouts of America, Department of Defense Schools and others) contributes to enhancing the positive image of the profession among youth and leads to producing engineers and allied professionals.
     - Fully implement a STEM Corner section in *The Military Engineer*.
     - Develop tools to track effectiveness of STEM outreach at the Post and National levels.
   - **By 2020:** Expand Post- and National-sponsored STEM-based camps or programs.
   - **By 2020:** SAME enhances its scholarship program through increasing visibility in the secondary and collegiate STEM community, increasing applications received, assigning mentors to scholarship recipients, and tracking awardees’ progress. A well-defined and measurable program is developed, demonstrating our long-term commitment to develop future engineers and future SAME members.
   - **By 2020:** SAME Posts establish and expand connections to College Student Chapters in order to produce a more rewarding and productive experience for developing professionals, retaining student interest in SAME, and producing new members for SAME.

GOAL 4: Resilience

Contribute to government and private sector collaboration to minimize the impacts of and enhance effective response to natural or man-made threats.

OBJECTIVES:

1. **Leverage The Infrastructure Security Partnership Council (TISP) and local and regional stakeholders to provide resiliency/recovery training and awareness to both members and stakeholders with regards to local infrastructure risks and mitigation strategies.**
2. **Provide joint training and awareness to members, and local and regional stakeholders with regards to the efficient development, implementation and use of new and existing technologies that improve infrastructure resilience.**
3. **Provide joint training and awareness to members, and local and regional stakeholders with regards to cybersecurity challenges and solutions.**
4. **Provide joint training and awareness to members, and local and regional stakeholders with regards to water and energy challenges and solutions.**
Building our Future Engineers

America graduates approximately 75,000 engineers annually—yet this is not enough to keep up with demand. In our increasingly complex world, engineering is critical for meeting the many challenges we face. Engineers advance technologies, create jobs, produce energy and protect the environment. Engineers make this country stronger. Our STEM program is focused on building engineers.

Imagine participating in a classroom career day, and inspiring a young student as you discuss your work as an engineer? Then, one of those students applies through your Post to an SAME summer camp. That student then earns a scholarship from SAME to an engineering school or service academy. And finally, you see that young professional join SAME as an engineer.

This is our vision: To captivate the curiosity of our kids and inspire them to a creative, stimulating and dynamic career as an engineer. To accomplish this, SAME has initiated a new national STEM Committee to support the activities of our Posts and to provide guidance, best practices and national leadership. Our mission: to build a world-class STEM program throughout SAME to produce our nation’s future engineers and leaders.

The 2020 SAME Strategic Plan places strong focus on STEM in Goal 3—Professional Development and Personal Growth. On a national level, we want SAME to be recognized as a leader in STEM initiatives for K-12. The SAME Engineering & Construction Camps support our STEM mission and we are looking for Posts to step up and lead their own STEM camps or programs. We have started partnerships with other national organizations, including the National Science Teachers Association. And, the STEM Committee is expanding an online resource library on the SAME website that will provide Posts with information, ideas and activities to capture the imagination of students at all levels. Current STEM programs across SAME have touched thousands of kids, and inspired many to become engineers and officers in the uniformed services. But in many ways, we are just getting started. Won’t you join us?

Supporting Credentialing Opportunities

SAME is evolving to meet the challenges of a new, more complex national security environment. We are committed to providing programs and opportunities that are relevant to our members and add real, demonstrated value. A primary focus of the 2020 SAME Strategic Plan is credentialing, as defined in one of the objectives of Goal 3—Professional Development and Personal Growth: “By 2020, SAME provides members with robust programs for training, continuing education, credentialing and advanced degrees.”

Since its establishment in 2012, the SAME Warrior Transition Task Force worked with many organizations that sponsor credentialing programs relevant to the training and experience of serving and transitioning military engineers. Through our efforts, we found credentials appropriate to all levels of our military engineering community: skilled trades, engineering technicians and professional managers. We identified 38 credentials of interest, and built a portal on the SAME website to provide information on each.

Our goal was to identify the credential, develop a relationship with the granting organization, and map the process for obtaining each certification, at a reduced cost to the uniformed service-member. This program supports the transitioning service-member, while also increasing the skills and professionalism of our serving military engineering community.

As the task force progressed, it was obvious that much work remained and that continued SAME leadership was critical to make it happen. This past year, the Board of Direction created the SAME Credentials Committee. Some of the efforts planned for 2016 include:

- Maintain and update the SAME Credentials Portal.
- Complete a training curriculum review of the three service engineer schools.
- Conduct a pilot program for PMP certification with the Project Management Institute.
- Connect certifying bodies for the skilled trades with the services’ engineer schools.
- Identify funding resources to support certification programs.
- Develop guidelines and best practices for SAME Posts to support credentialing.

We welcome active participation of all interested SAME members as we continue to create credentialing opportunities for our military engineering community.
A Great Time to be Young!

The 2020 SAME Strategic Plan focuses on growing the next generation of leaders. While other organizations may be content with young professionals being a member, SAME places significant emphasis on our personal and professional development. I encourage Young Members to truly read the 2020 SAME Strategic Plan and recognize all the aspects aimed at providing opportunities for our meaningful growth.

It is hard to think of another organization that builds and cultivates relationships better than SAME. This Society will be the unparalleled integrator of the Joint Engineer Force with the entire public and private A/E/C community. As we approach SAME’s Centennial in 2020, we are going to be even more focused on expanding relationships with other professional organizations and academia. This visibility will increase the value of your membership and give you many more meaningful opportunities.

The 2020 SAME Strategic Plan and revised Streamers will encourage Posts to put more Young Members in leadership positions and find ways to leverage the vast experience of SAME Fellows. Even more exciting is the strong focus on growing membership, particularly in the government civilian/uniformed servicemember category. Growth in this sector must be driven by Young Members. The responsibility is on Posts and National Leadership to expand the value proposition to allow us to grow interest in the public sector. This growth starts with the understanding that our true value comes from a breadth of diversity and experience across the entire A/E/C spectrum, and in the public sector that squarely means non-commissioned officers and government civilians.

But we need your help. We need you to digest the 2020 SAME Strategic Plan and act on what speaks to you. I challenge Young Members to not only get involved, but to lead. And most importantly, much like someone did for you at some point in your career, grab a co-worker or subordinate and bring them along to an SAME event. Membership growth starts with those individual relationships—and it is never too early to be a mentor.

It feels good to be wanted, and it is clear SAME wants Young Members. This is a defining moment for our nation as we face the challenges of aging infrastructure and an increasingly uncertain international environment. The A/E/C community will be called upon to find solutions to significant problems. SAME is going to lead the discussion as a true enabler of cross-functional and multi-disciplinary problem solving…and it will be Young Members leading the way in SAME’s second 100 years.

The Invaluable Role of Fellows

The SAME Academy of Fellows, with more than 700 members, is a vibrant and active group of professionals across the Society. But we can do more—and that should be our goal for 2016 and the years ahead. The leadership, support and mentoring of SAME Fellows will be instrumental in ensuring that the goals and objectives of the 2020 SAME Strategic Plan are achieved.

It is important for all Fellows to take to heart what we can do to better SAME as noted in our annual call to action. As members of the Academy, we should:

- Support our National President’s initiatives;
- Continue to be active at all levels of SAME (especially at the Post level);
- Help build our bench strength through mentoring Young Members and all members;
- Support our Golden Eagle Awards Dinner activities and Fellows activities that occur in March;
- Become an SAME recruiter to help grow our Society; and
- Proudly wear the Fellows Pin.

If we do all of these items, the Academy of Fellows will continue to lead the Society and make SAME the professional society of choice for all in the A/E/C community who support our national security, whether servicemembers, government civilians, academics or private sector members. Goal 2 of the 2020 SAME Strategic Plan is Leadership and Mentoring; this is squarely in the bailiwick of SAME Fellows. In fact, one of the objectives reads: “Utilize SAME Fellows and senior leaders to mentor Young Members and students.” As SAME Posts are charged with growing not just membership but growing active membership, Fellows will be integral to demonstrating to new and existing members the personal and professional benefits of being engaged members.

To help bridge the gap between the Academy of Fellows on a national level and Posts locally, Regional Fellows Point of Contacts were established over the last couple years. Initiatives like this will continue to be implemented going forward to enable support where needed and provide best practices and lessons learned to leverage the great value of SAME Fellows across the Society.

For more information on the Academy of Fellows Vice Chairs—Mary Anderson, FSAME (Mentoring); Jennifer Fogg, CPF, FSAME (Investiture); John Osborne, FSAME (Golden Eagle Awards Dinner); Linda M. McKnight, FSAME (Luncheons); Harold Rosen, Esq., FSAME (Nominations); and Capt. D. Karin Lynn, PE., FSAME, USN (Ret.) (Administration)—and the Regional Point of Contacts, visit www.same.org/aof.
How to Reach 100: Lessons From a Life in Engineering

At 102 years of age, Alexander “Sandor” Tarics knows a bit about reaching a centennial, and accomplishments. Born in Budapest on Sept. 23, 1913, Tarics is the oldest living Olympic champion in the world. He also is a member of SAME.

Tarics competed for Hungary in the 1936 Olympics as a member of the gold-medal winning men’s water polo team. He first journeyed to the United States in 1941 on a fellowship through his studies at what is now Budapest University of Technology & Economics, sent along with several other young engineers to be trained and then to return to Hungary to share what they learned. The plan for Hungary, as Tarics explains it, “kind of backfired in a sense.”

Each of the engineers selected for fellowship would end up returning to the United States. For Tarics, his return came in 1948. In the years before and after World War II political unrest overtook Hungary. Tarics accepted a teaching position in Fort Wayne, Ind., then made his way to the San Francisco Bay Area in California, where one of the great careers in civil and structural engineering would take off.

Among his professional achievements, Tarics was a foremost expert on engineering to increase earthquake resistance of buildings. He helped develop the “base isolation” shock absorption system, which is used on many structures to protect against earthquake forces, including San Francisco City Hall. Tarics’ involvement with SAME coincided with his firm’s (Reid & Tarics Associates) burgeoning work with the U.S. military. He would go on to contribute to many projects over the years, bringing cutting-edge earthquake resistance engineering to military bases in California, Utah and other parts of the United States.

Tarics was bestowed the SAME Goethals Medal in 1984 for eminent and notable contributions to engineering. In 1987, he received the Toulmin Medal for the most outstanding article published in The Military Engineer.

San Francisco Past Past President Tony Petroccitto sat down with Tarics for an interview on his career, his involvement with SAME, and what advice he would share from his long, successful life. To hear the interview in its entirety, visit wwwSAME.org/membersspotlight. For more on Tarics’ expertise on earthquake preparedness and resilience through engineering, see the Historical Perspective in this issue of TME (page 90) to read his Toulmin Medal-winning article “Earthquake! Are We Ready?” which was published in the September-October 1987 issue of The Military Engineer.

On your aptitude for STEM studies…
“For some reason or another I had a good natural ability for mathematics, which is the most difficult subject and also one that people like to avoid. To me it was just the opposite.”

On your early years as an engineer…
“Very soon I found out that American business is based on management and not just doing the technical part of it. I concentrated on it and then I bought the shares of my company over the years and I became the owner.”

On your involvement in SAME...
“The Society of American Military Engineers was a wonderful place where I was able to meet other engineers and other people who were working in a particular field.”

On engineering for the military…
“We had to design buildings and solve engineering problems like how to resist earthquakes other than putting in shear walls and obstacles, which are in the way of operating inside of the building. And it was necessary to come up with solutions, which I did, which eliminated shear walls and physical obstacles inside of the building.”

On advice for a young professional…
“They have to take care of themselves. Otherwise, they cannot perform. They have to have a very healthy life. If they are lucky, they have a good family… children are a part of it… [Be] moderately active in athletic activities. That will keep you healthy—and then you can perform.”

On business and athletics…
“You have to learn you cannot always win. That’s what athletics teaches me. That sometimes you lose. But losing is part of the process; it is not a permanent defeat. If you lose one day, the next day you are going to win and that winning–losing cycle is the same in the professional life as it is in athletics. You have to accept that.”

On still working later in life…
“Take care of yourself because if you become incapable for some reason or another, then you cannot perform. You have to take care of yourself. That is very important.”