

The Jacksonville Post was one of the original Society of American Military (SAME) Posts that were chartered in 1920. The first president was a civilian, Jacquelin Marshall Braxton. Mr. Braxton was a District Engineer with the Jacksonville District, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers from July 1918 to February 1919. The Jacksonville Post was apparently inactive from 1920 to 1942. The Jacksonville Post became active in 1942 and its Constitution and By-Laws were approved October 22, 1942. The Jacksonville Post remained a relatively low key Post from 1942 until 1976 when Colonel Donald A. Wisdom, a District Engineer with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, became President. Colonel Wisdom rejuvenated the Post by encouraging more participation from the civilian employees of the Jacksonville District, U. S. Army Corps of Engineers. This, along with an increased participation of the civilian engineering community, led to a substantial rise in Post membership. Additionally, with the arrival of Captain Alan C. Valenti, Public Works Officer, Naval Station, Jacksonville, in 1985, the naval officers and government civilians from the Navy became more active. Individual membership has increased from 65 in 1979, 308 in 1996 and 486 in December 2003. Sustaining members have increased from none in 1979, 39 in 1997 and 67 in December 2003.

Throughout this period of rejuvenation and sustained activity, five (5) significant actions occurred. These were joint luncheon and dinner meetings with the other engineering societies (Florida Engineering Society and American Society of Civil Engineers), hosting the South Atlantic Regional Meeting in 1981, hosting the 1986 SAME Annual Meeting, and hosting the South Atlantic Regional Meeting in 1992 and 1998.

The joint meeting concept offered all engineering society members improved programs and meetings. Since all members could participate, the speakers became more varied and interesting. Overall attendance was improved and the quality of programs increased. Each society hosts at least two (2) luncheon meetings a year in January, March, April, May, September, October, November and December.

Secondly, the Regional Meeting in 1981 was another milestone. The South Atlantic Region had not had a regional meeting in many years. The Jacksonville Post Officers and Directors in 1980-1981 realized this and with encouragement from the South Atlantic Region Vice President, offered to host a Regional Conference. With the excellent work of the membership and corporate sponsors, the meeting was held in April 1981 at the Ponce de Leon Lodge and Country Club, St. Augustine, Florida. The theme for the meeting was Defense Readiness and was highlighted by the plans for construction of the U.S. Navy's Submarine Base at Kings Bay, Georgia. Many notable speakers were present, to include the future Chief of Naval Operations, Rear Admiral Frank B. Kelso. Approximately 130 members and their spouses attended the highly successful regional conference.

The third and most significant achievement of the Jacksonville Post was hosting the 66th Annual National Meeting of The Society. Hosting this meeting was a major undertaking for a Post of our size. Instrumental in the success of this annual meeting were Robert J. Waterston (General Committee Chairman), Colonel Charles Myers (Post President), Ronald

E. Hilton and Captain Alan Valenti. These volunteers accomplished a major task in hosting this highly successful conference attended by 855 members, the highest attended conference as of this date. Not only was this a most satisfying experience for the members of the Post, especially the members of the General Committee, but enabled the Jacksonville Post to establish a significant endowment for future scholarships and other awards. Prior to this, the Post had only contributed to funds to joint scholarship awards. The success of this National Annual Meeting enabled the Jacksonville Post to award scholarships beginning in 1987. The present favorable status of the Post's financial condition is directly related to the success of this Annual Meeting and the commitment and hard work of numerous post individual and sustaining members.

The fourth significant achievement was when the Jacksonville Post hosted another Regional Meeting in November 1992. This was also the Fall Board Meeting site of the Society. Instrumental in the success of this Regional Meeting were John Adams (Chairman) and Ron Hilton (Deputy Chairman). The meeting was held at the Marriott at Sawgrass in Ponte Vedra, Florida (about 15 miles east of Jacksonville). This meeting was attended by 379 members and 35 spouses representing 46 Post's of the Society. There were also 48 exhibitors.

The fifth significant achievement was when the Jacksonville Post hosted another Regional Meeting in October 1998. Instrumental in the success of this Regional Meeting were RADM John (Jack) Moriarty, USN (Ret) (Chairman) and Ron Hilton (Deputy Chairman). The meeting was held at the Radisson Riverwalk Hotel in Jacksonville. This meeting was attended by over 200 members and 60 exhibitors.

The Jacksonville Post continues to excel in all facets of its programs and is a consistent recipient of national awards and banners.