



HOLING THROUGH

NEWS BULLETIN OF **THE MOLES** • 11 W. 42ND STREET, NEW YORK 18, N. Y.

An Organization of Tunnel and Heavy Construction Men

JANUARY, 1948

Gen. R. A. Wheeler and W. A. Durkin Will Receive Moles Awards for 1948

Army's Chief of Engineers and President of Walsh Construction Co. to be Honored at Award Dinner Feb. 4 for Outstanding Construction Achievement

Winners of The Moles two 1948 Awards "for outstanding contributions to construction progress" will be Lt. General Raymond A. Wheeler, (non-member Award) Chief of Engineers, U. S. Army, and William A. Durkin (member Award) president of Walsh Construction Co., builder of New York's Queens-Midtown Tunnel and other notable engineering structures. Formal presentation of bronze plaques and citations to General Wheeler and Mr. Durkin will be made at the next annual Award dinner in the Roosevelt Hotel, New York, Feb. 4, 1948, according to a recent announcement by President Charles B.

*The Moles Annual Award
Dinner will be held
in the Roosevelt Hotel
New York City, Feb. 4, 1948*

Spencer, issued shortly after the result of final balloting by members of the Award Committee had been disclosed by its chairman, Carl L. Swenson. Each of the two Award winners has had a long and varied construction career marked by brilliant achievement. General Wheeler saw active duty overseas in both World Wars I and II, won numerous decorations for distinguished service and is currently directing for the Army's Corps of Engineers multi-million dollar civil works programs of flood control construction, river and harbor improvement and veterans hospital construction. Mr. Durkin is a veteran in the fields of railroad construction, tunnels and other types of heavy work. He was elected to membership in the Moles March 7, 1945.

Before casting their final ballots, members of the Award Committee had under consideration the names of 16 candidates who had been suggested for the member and the non-member Awards which the final vote gave to Mr. Durkin and General Wheeler. Detailed plans for the Award Dinner on Feb. 4 are now in an advanced stage of completion and Award Committee Chairman Swenson has compiled a list of men distinguished in the fields of construction and public service who will be invited as honor guests to witness the formal presentation of the bronze plaques and framed citations that constitute The Moles Awards.



WILLIAM A. DURKIN, winner of Moles member Award, is president of Walsh Construction Co.



LIEUT.-GENERAL RAYMOND A. WHEELER, winner of Moles non-member Award, is Chief of Engineers, U. S. Army.

**Lt.-General Raymond A. Wheeler,
Non-Member Award Winner**

In addition to his strictly military duties General Wheeler, in his capacity of Chief of Engineers, Department of the Army, is responsible for directing a multi-million dollar program of civil works construction including river and harbor and flood control work, in addition to the construction of scores of hospitals for war veterans. For flood control work by the Corps of Engineers during the 1947 fiscal year the 80th Congress appropriated \$298,322,825. At the same time \$116,718,000 was appropriated for maintenance and improvement of the nation's rivers and harbors and \$500,000 for alterations to bridges and \$12,000 for water mains.

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Out of a total appropriation of \$502,123,912 for the War Department's civil functions the Corps of Engineers, under General Wheeler's direction, was allocated \$415,553,525, largest sum in the history of flood control and river and harbor work.

Civil Works Programs

The current flood control construction program comprises 156 projects in 35 states in addition to construction provided for in separate funds of \$50,000,000 voted for the lower Mississippi River and \$1,750,000 voted separately for the Sacramento River in California.

Of the 156 flood control projects there are 15 each involving allocations of \$5,000,000 or more. In the river and harbor program there are, among others, eleven projects each involving \$1,000,000 or more.

But General Wheeler's construction responsibilities do not end with the foregoing vast program of flood control and river and harbor work. In addition, there is now under way a program of veterans' hospital construction for which Congress has provided \$770,000,000. By the end of 1947 a total of 84 contracts for this work will have been awarded.

Assigned to Panama Canal

Born in Peoria, Ill., July 31, 1885, Raymond A. Wheeler was appointed to the U. S. Military Academy from Illinois and was commissioned a second lieutenant, Corps of Engineers, June 13, 1911. After service in Mexico and Hawaii he was assigned to the Isthmian Canal Commission and later, in 1940, he became Engineer of Maintenance of the Panama Canal. With the 4th Engineers Wheeler went to France in April 1918 to begin his service in World War I, participating in the Aisne-Marne, St. Mihiel and Meuse-Argonne Offensives, and the march into Germany with the Army of Occupation. His decorations include the Silver Star and Distinguished Service Medal. In Italy in 1919 he was with the American Commission to Negotiate Peace. Returning to the United States in 1919 he became District Engineer at Newport, R. I., Wilmington, N. C., and Rock Island, Ill. and assistant Engineer Commissioner of the District of Columbia.

Varied Overseas Service

He served in 1941 as acting assistant Chief of Staff, Supply Division (G-4) in Washington and again went overseas, with the Military Supply Mission

to Iran. Among other assignments were command of headquarters, Services of Supply, China-Burma-India theater of operations in 1942 and Commander of India-Burma theater.

World War II sent Gen. Wheeler literally to opposite ends of the global fighting. Among his assignments were: military mission in Bagdad, en route to Basra, Iraq; India-Burma theater commander; U. S. representative at Japanese surrender ceremonies in Singapore; Southeast Asia Command. At one time or another he was the "man on the job" in getting American supplies to Russia, to the British and to fighting China.

One of General Wheeler's numerous citations emphasizes "his superior knowledge of logistics and his ability to act quickly in the face of many rapidly changing situations."

William Austin Durkin

Member Award Winner

Railroad construction, involving a gamut of responsibilities that included chainman, rodman, instrument-man and chief of party, foreman, superintendent, resident engineer and contractor's estimator and district manager, provided the lower rungs in the career ladder which William Austin Durkin, a native of Indiana, climbed to reach the top executive post in one of the nation's leading contracting organizations—the presidency of the Walsh Construction Co. of New York City, Davenport, Ia., Chicago and San Francisco.

Among the scores of outstanding projects (other than railroad construction) built by the Walsh organization within the past 15 years are the \$23,500,000 Queens-Midtown vehicular tunnel under the East River, New York City, four 33-ft. diameter diversion tunnels for the \$125,000,000 Fort Peck Dam, world's largest earth fill, in Montana, the first section of Grand Coulee Dam, on the Columbia River, Washington, (jointly with other contractors), tunnels and shafts for New York's Delaware River Aqueduct, three tunnels for Southern California's Colorado River Aqueduct, the Cresta hydro-electric tunnel for the Pacific Gas & Electric Co. Recent wartime projects included: Camp Edwards on Cape Cod, Mass., for the Army, the U. S. Army base at Trinidad, N. Y., Navy Yard, and scores of cargo and escort vessels for the Navy built at a shipyard established at Providence, R. I., several hundred invasion barges at Jersey City and a Navy ammunition storage depot at Red Bank, N. J.

Starts as Waterboy

Near the small town of Minshall in Park County, Indiana, Durkin was born

March 6, 1885, the son of parents, Patrick and Anna (Fitzpatrick), who had come to the United States from Ireland. After attending the local village school until he was 13 years old, Bill helped his widowed mother by getting a job as waterboy with his road-building contractor uncles, Fitzpatrick Bros., of Brazil, Ind. This job marked his entry into the construction business and after serving as laborer, teamster and timekeeper he became a foreman at the age of 16. The work involved grading, earth moving and operation of gravel pits and rock crushing plants. Road-building kept him busy during the summer months but when winter came he left it to work temporarily in nearby coal mines. During this time he took a correspondence course in civil engineering.

When he was 21, he started railroad construction on the New York Central Railroad, St. Louis Division, working between Indianapolis and Terre Haute, Ind. After being promoted through the grades of chainman, rodman and instrument-man he went in 1909 with the Pennsylvania Railroad's St. Louis Division and became chief of party on construction between Terre Haute and St. Louis. The year 1910 saw young Durkin with the Frisco RR at Springfield, Mo. whence, after shifting his activities from surveys to bridge construction, he went back again with the New York Central's Big Four Division as resident engineer at Pendleton, Indiana and Sharonville, Ohio.

Joins Walsh Company in 1912

In 1912, he started with the Walsh Construction Co., one of the outstanding contractors of the country, beginning as foreman and advancing to superintendent and general superintendent. In 1924 he was made vice president, serving in that capacity with headquarters in Indianapolis, Ind. until 1938 when he went East, for at that time the Walsh company, in addition to smaller contracts, had contracts for the Queens-Midtown East River tunnels (a large New York compressed air job), and large contracts for construction of two sections of the Delaware Aqueduct for New York City's water supply.

Most of Durkin's early railroad construction was earth-moving, bridges, engine terminals and stations for about every railroad in the Central States.

Recent Big Projects

Among the Walsh company's more recent and current projects are the building of Electronics Park for the General Electric Co., at Syracuse, N. Y., and an Atomic Power Laboratory for General Electric at Schenectady, N. Y.,

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Among Those Present at Moles Frolic, Nov. 5, 1947



ADMIRAL KIRBY SMITH, Raymond Concrete Pile Co.; W. A. BACK, G. A. FLETCHER.



WILLIAM DENNY, CAPT. T. A. SCOTT of Merritt-Chapman & Scott Corp.; and COL. WILLIAM HEAVEY, New York District Engineer, Corps of Engineers, U.S. Army.



H. T. IMMERMAN, CHARLES B. SPENCER and J. C. WEAVER, all of Spencer, White & Prentis, Inc.; B. LEFKOWITZ, New York Board of Transportation.



JOSEPH MURPHY, Consolidated Edison Co.; EDWARD P. ALBRIGHT, Underpinning and Foundation Co.; and ERIC BARRON, Port of New York Authority.



MISTRESS OF CEREMONY (right) for floor show at Moles Frolic, Nov. 5, 1947, pretty BARBARA BLAINE welcomes a guest to stage in ballroom of Roosevelt Hotel, New York.

← JOHN R. MCGINLEY, (left) vice-pres., Marine Midland Trust Co.; JULES R. BREUCHAND, Underpinning & Foundation Co.; ROBERT PARKER, Carnegie-Illinois Steel Co.; GEORGE MILLER, Underpinning & Foundation Co.



Moles' New Assistant Secretary



COMPETENT AND COMELY is alert, amiable, auburn-haired Charlotte M. Andrews who was employed Sept. 22, 1947 on a full-time basis as assistant secretary of The Moles to relieve Secretary Bill Hanly of the heavy load of duties he has been carrying since the resignation of his brother John. Miss Andrews is located at The Moles' office, 11 West 42nd St. A wartime "Spar," who served in Washington with the U. S. Coast Guard, Miss Andrews, a native of Brooklyn, is a graduate of the Washington School for Secretaries, New York, and served with the Metropolitan Life Insurance Co.

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also a sheet and plate mill for Aluminum Company of America, Davenport, Iowa. Another big recent job was the cellulose acetate plant at Parlin, N. J. for the Hercules Powder Co. A coal and ore-unloading plant for the New York Central and Baltimore & Ohio Railroads was constructed at Toledo, Ohio. Very recently the Walsh Company, in association with B. Perini & Sons, was awarded a contract for construction of the diversion tunnel and cofferdam for the Downsview Dam on the East Branch of the Delaware River for New York City's water supply, also a contract for the Boston Water Tunnel for the City of Boston.

That Durkin merits the designation of construction veteran, with experience in both minor and major roles on all manner of "heavy" work is attested by the fact that he recalls the days when as a young man he directed earth-moving operations with mule-drawn slip and wheel scrapers, elevating graders and fresnos.

764 Attend Moles' Frolic

Most everybody of any consequence in New York construction circles turned out for The Moles Frolic at the Roosevelt Hotel, Nov. 5. Attendance was the biggest ever, with 764 Moles and their guests jamming the refreshment room and banquet hall.

Chairman Frank Loughman and his Program Committee went overboard with a grand show that pleased everyone. Some of the acts were called back again and again.

Several cases of cheer handed out as door prizes livened up an already lively occasion.

(Photos of attendants at the Frolic appear on p. 3)

Clamless Clambake Big Success — 675 Attend

Broiled lobster and baked ham replaced clams at the Moles' Clambake Aug. 20, but nary a complaint was made by 675 members and guests who enjoyed the day and evening thoroughly. A change in scene found the clan gathering at the Travers Island grounds of the New York Athletic Club, in Pelham, N. Y., an ideal spot for the occasion.

A buffet luncheon, well stocked with whole baked hams, started the proceedings. Refreshment stands at two levels in the clubhouse enabled the crowd to get into a good mood for the afternoon activities. Light rain kept some members and guests trapped at the stands all day. Others participated in the events despite the damp weather.

Sweet revenge was wreaked by The Moles softball team against the Department of Public Works team for a long series of humiliations in this annual contest, for The Moles triumphed 11 to 7. A keg of beer opposite first base kept the contestants going through a drizzle during the last three innings.

Other activities included golf at Split Rock Country Club, swimming (mostly drowned out), horseshoes, golf, pitching, spike driving, barrel tossing, and egg tossing.

The lobster dinner was a grand climax to the afternoon program, and set the crowd up to enjoy the splendid show arranged by Frank Loughman and presented in a big tent.

Fitzgerald Loses Son

The heartfelt sympathy of all Moles members is offered to founder-member James H. Fitzgerald, of Fitzgerald & Hudson, Inc., upon the recent death of his son, James, Jr.

Moles Elect 16 New Members

At meetings of the Executive Committee Sept. 16 and Oct. 8, the following 16 candidates were elected members of The Moles:

Sept. 16, 1947

DWIGHT W. WINKELMAN
D. W. Winkelman Co., Inc.
Syracuse, N. Y.

ALLAN B. LINCOLN
Mason & Hanger Co., Inc.
New York 4, N. Y.

A. HOLMES CRIMMINS
Thomas Crimmins Contracting Co.
New York, N. Y.

WILLIAM ROBERT ELLIS
Hercules Powder Co.
Wilmington, Del.

CLANCY O'DELL
Air Compressor & Pump Corp.
New York, N. Y.

CARL E. BEAM
American Society of Civil Engineers
New York, N. Y.

JAMES MATTHEW SLATTERY
Slattery Contracting Co.
Woodside, N. Y.

FRED J. DRISCOLL
George F. Driscoll Co.
New York, N. Y.

Oct. 8, 1947

JOSEPH PATRICK NEWMAN
Ebasco Services Inc.
2 Rector St. New York 6, N. Y.

JOHN F. FEENEY
The Hallen Co., Inc.
45-24 37th St.
Long Island City 1, N. Y.

JAMES T. NORTON
"Civil Engineering"
33 West 39th St. New York 18, N. Y.

IRVING TROEMEL
Cayuga Construction Corp.
30 Vesey St. New York 7, N. Y.

JAMES H. MARKLEY
James H. Markley, Co.
1211 Wyatt St. New York 66, N. Y.

GEORGE SCHUSTER
Cayuga Construction Corp.
New York, N. Y.

FRANCIS THOMAS
S. J. Groves & Sons Co.
19 Rector St. New York 6, N. Y.

EDWARD JAMES HAGERTY
Gull & DeFelice Contracting Co.
152-19 130th Place
South Ozone Park 20, N. Y.