

# THE LONG JOURNEY

By Frank Williams

## Editor's Note:

In this article, Frank Williams recounts the beginning and near end to establish a Civil Defense Emergency/Management Memorial Monument. Colonel John E. Bex was the prime mover in a well-aided effort to memorialize the achievements of thousands of careerists and volunteers in the field of civil defense and emergency management.

"Almost unbelievable this is an actual happening," declared Alex Atzert, Chairman of the Civil Defense Monument Commission. Mr. Atzert was addressing an undertaking of two decades.

Six months shy of 20 years from an idea to a reality, ground was broken in a formal ceremony establishing the site for the construction of the Civil Defense Emergency/Management Memorial Monument.

These ceremonies were conducted in late March of this year on the campus of the National Emergency/Management Training Center, Emmitsburg, Maryland.

The Monument honors professional and volunteer personnel; those who have participated in the planning, training and operations designed to mitigate the effects of catastrophe, threatening life and property.

Endorsement of the idea by the leadership of the Federal Emergency/Management Agency was followed by a design by Maryland artist, Donald Begg, the production of a bronze eagle by an Oregon sculpture, Lorenzo Ghiglieri, and the selection of a 15-ton block of polished granite from Vermont. The latter forms the centerpiece of the monument.

Located on the grounds of the National Emergency Training Center, although approved by the Federal Emergency Management Agency, was determined to require legislation from the U.S. Congress.

Maryland Congressman Roscoe J. Bartlett, approached in 1998, enthusiastically introduced a bill co-sponsored by Congressman Bill Goodling 19<sup>th</sup> District of Pennsylvania to enable the required legislation. Languishing in subcommittee for eight months, the Congressman solicited co-sponsorship by nine colleagues to assist in moving the bill to a floor vote. Passing both houses in November 1999 with only token opposition, President Clinton signed PL 106-103. The law, in effect, cleared the way for construction at the National Emergency Training Center and named the Civil Defense Monument Commission as manager.

Funding of the entire project has been made totally through donations and without Federal appropriations. The costs, to include the architectural specifications, the purchase of materials, the construction itself had been estimated at \$100,000.

The non-profit National Civil Defense Commission and an Executive Committee had been organized with Alex Atzert, Olney, Maryland. The purpose was to conduct fund raising and to manage progress toward the overall goal.

## DAUGHTERS OF CHARITY, EMMITSBURG PROVINCE PARTICIPATE IN THE GROUNDBREAKING CEREMONY



Reading left to right: Sister Naomi Libiak, Sister Anna Adele Kelly, Sister Mary Berdette Forney, Sister Gabriel Mule, Sister Denise Simms and Sister Lauretta Posey.



Over the years \$80,000 was raised. The effort was assisted by members of the International Association of Emergency Managers, the National Emergency Management Association, their counterparts among state level Emergency Management Directors, the American Civil Defense Association and the American Strategic Defense Association.

Thirty-five of the fifty states have made contributions qualifying for placement of State flags that will encircle the Monument plaza.

The ground breaking ceremony, attended by those primarily involved in the work of the Monument Commission, and invited guests, were present to celebrate the results of a very long journey, to reaffirm the purpose of the memorial, and to pledge continued support in the final move. There is yet more funding needed. Completion of monument construction is anticipated for spring 2002.

Robert Straw, an active Commission member, acting as master of ceremonies, introduced speakers with appropriate remarks complementing each one's contribution. Those making further remarks were Congressman Roscoe J. Bartlett; David McMillon, Maryland Director of Emergency Management Agency; Patrick Boyle, Council President, Emmitsburg, Maryland; Stephen Sharro, Superintendent of the Emergency Management Institute; Billy Zwerschke, President, International Association of Emergency Managers and Ken Burris, acting administrator, U.S. Fire Administration.

The completed Monument will stand twelve feet in height. The pinnacle of the obelisk is the sculpted bronze eagle. The Vermont granite pyramid, the centerpiece is three-sided, each side representing the team effort of the federal, state and local governments in accomplishing the joint mission. The flags of the States, a polished granite wall and benches encircle a plaza for visitors.



Two Monument Commission members seeking new members to the Commission. Reading from left to right: Linda Hurley, Thurmont, Maryland; Karen Setz, Gettysburg.

## INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF EMERGENCY MANAGERS AND BETH ARMSTRONG BREAK GROUND FOR A NEW NATIONAL CIVIL DEFENSE MONUMENT



These pictured reading from left to right: Elizabeth B. Armstrong, Exec. Director; Bob Andrews, President Elect; W. R. Zwerschke, President; Past Presidents- Richard W. Kendall, Delaware; Phyllis A. Mann, Washington; Randall C. Duncan, Kansas; M. Jerry VeHaun, North Carolina.

## ALEX ATZERT, CHAIRMAN OF THE MONUMENT EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE ADDRESSES THE CROWD.



## SPEAKERS WAITING THEIR TURN AT THE SPEAKERS ROSTRUM.



Reading left to right: David McMillon, Maryland, Director Maryland Emergency Management Agency; Billy Zwerschke, Texas, President of the International Assoc. of Emergency Managers; Steven Sharro, Gettysburg, Superintendent Emergency Management Institute; Patrick Boyle, Emmitsburg, Council President, Emmitsburg, MD; Kenneth Burris Jr., Gettysburg, Acting Administrator US Fire Administration; Alex Atzert, Gaithersburg, MD, Chairman of the Monument Executive Committee; Jim Greene, Montana, Director Montana Emergency Agency and President of NEMA.



Billy Zwerschke introduces the new IAEM flag.



Hugh Warner stands for donation..... Ken Rohrbaugh is quick to oblige.



Left to right: Congressman Roscoe Bartlett, Monsignor Hugh Phillips, past president of Mt. Saint Mary's College, delivers the opening prayer. Robert Straw, Chairman of the Ambassadorial Group serves as Master of Ceremony.



GROUND BREAKING IS A LOT OF FUN JUST ASK THE SISTERS.



Sister Vincentia Administrator Provincial House, Daughters of Charity and Sister Mary Clare Hughes



Rick James & Perry Joy enjoy a private moment.



The Civil Defense Monument's staunchest supporter, Frank Williams, Rancho Cucamonga, California, corporate executive presents his third check to Hugh Warner, Finance Chairman, at the Groundbreaking Ceremony.



Ron Face, Director of the National Emergency Management Training Center and Alex check soil to see if it is suitable for a ground breaking. "It was."