



## Press Release

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### **WSP USA's Todd Semonite Honored for National Security Leadership**

*Retired USACE commanding general recognized by the Society of American Military Engineers with Golden Eagle Award in recognition of his significant contributions to national security.*

**SAN ANTONIO, May 9, 2023** — Retired Lt. Gen. Todd Semonite, former Chief of Engineers and Commanding General of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE), is the recipient of the Society of American Military Engineers (SAME) 2023 Golden Eagle Award for National Security.

SAME presented the prestigious award on May 4 to Semonite, president of Federal Programs at WSP USA, a leading engineering, environment and professional services consultancy, during the organization's annual Joint Engineer Training Conference in San Antonio. The award cites his leadership role in ensuring Americans had reliable access to healthcare facilities during the COVID pandemic in 2020.

In addition, Semonite was announced as one of 26 members newly invested into SAME's Fellows Academy, which formally acknowledges distinguished individuals for their dedication to SAME and the architecture/engineering/construction profession.

“I am very honored to receive this Golden Eagle award, but it's not just about me. It's also about all of the men and women whom I've had the pleasure to work with in my career,” Semonite said. “I was in the Army for 41 years and the mission was always about ‘How are we going to

take care of America?’ So, whether you’re building barracks or an airfield, supporting soldiers overseas, or directing emergency response operations following a major disaster mission accomplishment is what we do best. The military ethic enabled us to pull people together to find solutions and get things done.”

As USACE Commanding General, Semonite advised the Secretary of the Army on general, combat and geospatial engineering; construction, real property, public infrastructure; and natural resources science and management. He also oversaw 36,000 civilian employees, 800 military personnel, and managed a \$68 billion project portfolio.

Semonite was leading USACE in February 2020 when the U.S. was on the brink of the COVID pandemic. USACE stepped up to build temporary “alternative care” facilities (field hospitals) in locations around the country, where needed.

Working along with the Federal Emergency Management Agency, the goal was to support local capacity for inpatient and outpatient healthcare services, at a time when many regions were overwhelmed with demand from COVID. After talking with hundreds of governors and mayors, USACE completed 1,100 assessments nationwide and, of those, they designed and built about 70 needed facilities in record time. The first was New York City’s Javits Center. Other converted facilities included sports arenas, hotels, dormitories and vacant hospitals. The result was the creation of over 30,000 additional bed spaces nationwide.

“We, as engineers, filled a void when our nation needed someone to step up,” Semonite said. “While it was never in my mandate, as the head of the USACE, to think about how to solve COVID, there was a problem and somebody had to figure out how to address it. So, we worked together with healthcare professionals, the engineering staff, as well as the industry side, to put these massive facilities together in record time.”

As Chief of Engineers in 2017, Semonite managed USACE’s emergency response operations for three major storms: Hurricane Harvey in Texas; Hurricane Irma, which struck the U.S. Virgin Islands and Florida; and Hurricane Maria in Puerto Rico, where he directed rebuilding efforts for

three grids, as part of over \$1 billion in infrastructure repairs that included installing more than 66,000 power poles. In 2012, as Division Commander of the USACE South Atlantic Division, he coordinated the response to Hurricane Sandy in the Southeast after the devastating storm struck the U.S. East Coast and caused nearly \$70 billion in damage.

“I’ve been unbelievably blessed to have a lot of people in my life who have made me successful,” Semonite said. “This is my opportunity to thank the thousands of mentors, peers, soldiers and civilians who have supported me throughout my career and pay that back, by thanking them for that success. I also want to thank my wife Connie, my kids, and my 10 grandchildren for their support.”

A licensed professional engineer in New York, Virginia and Vermont, he has a bachelor’s degree in civil engineering from the U.S. Military Academy at West Point, New York. He also holds a master’s in civil engineering from the University of Vermont, as well as a master’s in military arts from Fort Leavenworth.

His military awards include the three Distinguished Service Medals, the Defense Superior Service Award, five Legion of Merit awards, the Bronze star, the Ranger tab and the Parachutist badge.

### **About WSP USA**

WSP USA is the U.S. operating company of WSP, one of the world’s leading engineering, environment and professional services firms. Recognized on [Fast Company’s Brands that Matter List for 2022](#) as a top Community-Minded Business, WSP USA brings together engineers, planners, technical experts, strategic advisors and construction management professionals who are dedicated to collaborate in the best interests of serving local communities. WSP USA designs lasting solutions in the buildings, transportation, energy, water and environment markets. With more than 15,500 employees in 300 offices across the U.S., WSP partners with its clients to help communities prosper. [wsp.com](http://wsp.com)

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