

## Obituary: Jack Lemley, 1935 - 2021

Jan 2022

A management professional who rose to the highest echelons of the international construction industry is the legacy of Jack Lemley of Idaho, USA who died on 29 November 2021 at age 86.

A career in underground construction management reached a pinnacle in 1989 when he accepted the top position in the construction consortium TML - Transmanche Link - building the undersea Channel Tunnel rail connection between the UK and France between 1988 and 1994.



Jack Lemley 1935-2021

Prior to the Channel Tunnel posting, Lemley was elected in 1983 as the fourth President of the ITA, International Tunnelling and Underground Space Association, for the three year period to 1986, presiding over the early expansion of the Association and the Annual General Assemblies of Member Nation representatives.

Born in Idaho, USA, Lemley graduated from the University of Idaho in 1960 and began his career in underground construction with the construction contracting firm Guy F. Atkinson, working the 1960s on the Interstate I-5 highway route that passes in a trench that has become

covered in parts through downtown Seattle, Washington State, and supervising excavation of an extensive water supply network under New York City in the 1970s.

In 1978, he joined construction company Morrison Knudsen and was appointed as construction manager of works to build the King Khalid Military City in Saudi Arabia among others, leaving the firm to join the Channel Tunnel enterprise.



As the head of TML for the Channel Tunnel, Lemley mastered the often complex interrelations between the top five British and leading five French construction companies of

the consortium, and controlled the often more thorny relationship between the design-build consortium and the created client Eurotunnel, Co-Chaired by Alastair Morton and Andre Bernard. The episodes that strained relations between the parties, including the Intergovernmental Commission, were legendary with

*The Anglo-French TML consortium that won the concession to design, build, own, operate and finance construction of the Channel Tunnel, creating Eurotunnel as a necessary client organisation*

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2016 - 2019	Tarcisio Celestino, Brazil
2013 - 2016	Søren Degn Eskensen, Denmark
2010 - 2013	In-Mo Lee, Korea
2007 - 2010	Martin Knights, UK
2004 - 2007	Harvey Parker, USA (†)
2001 - 2004	Andre Assis, Brazil
1998 - 2001	Alfred Haack, Germany
1995 - 1998	Sebastiano Pelizza, Italy
1992 - 1995	Dan Zdenek Eisenstein, Canada (†)
1989 - 1992	Colin Kirkland, UK (†)
1986 - 1989	Einar Broch, Norway
<b>1983 - 1986</b>	<b>Jack Lemley, USA (†)</b>
1980 - 1983	Günter Girnau, Germany
1977 - 1980	H. C. Fischer, Sweden (†)
1974 - 1977	Sir Alan Muir Wood, UK (†)

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delays, rising construction costs and the demand for design and operating changes imposed by the client or the governments bringing the project to the brink of collapse on more than one occasion. Much of the success of the project is owed to Lemley for keeping his TML team together, and to him, Morton and Bernard, and his TML lieutenants, working together to put the completion of the project above the day-to-day tensions and setbacks. For his service to the project, Lemley was recognised with an OBE, Order of the British Empire, in the Queen Elizabeth honours list of 1996, as was Morton and Bernard with a Knighthood and Honorary Knighthood respectively in 1991.

Following the Channel Tunnel project, Lemley returned to Idaho and established his own construction management and consulting firm and worked on several USA and international projects including buildout of underground infrastructure for the FERMI nuclear physics National Laboratory in Chicago in the 1990s, renovation of the Holland Tunnel highway link under the Hudson between New Jersey and Manhattan built between 1922 and 1927, extension of the Athens Metro in Greece, and construction of the new Chek Lap Kok airport off Lantau Island in Hong Kong in the 1990s.

In 2005, Lemley accepted the post to lead the authority appointed to deliver the new infrastructure required to host the London Summer Olympic Games of 2012, but resigned the position a few months later in 2006 due to concerns over scheduling issues and interference by government and other bodies. The post was ably and successfully assumed by Sir John Armit, and Lemley returned to continue management of his own company until retiring in 2012.

True to his native home-state Idaho, Lemley was drawn to the outdoors, to the mountains, and enjoyed white water rafting, sailing, skiing, and long distance bike riding. In all the countries, on all the projects with which he was associated, and in leading the teams and associations he managed, Lemley will be remembered for his calm presence and leadership and controlled assurance that no matter what the challenges, the job under his oversight will get done. ■

## References

- [A new era begins for ITA at WTC2019](#) - *TunnelTalk*, May 2019
- [Channel Tunnel handshake of history](#) - *TunnelTalk*, December 2010
- [Channel Tunnel in hindsight](#) - *TunnelTalk*, February 1993
- [UK rail from the Channel Tunnel and beyond](#) - *TunnelTalk*, December 2010
- [Video: Holland Tunnel construction, New York, USA](#) - *TunnelCast*, November 2011