

Maine Drilling & Blasting celebrates 50 years of excellence

by Jon M. Casey



Maine Drilling and Blasting's most recent addition is their new facility near Bethel, PA.

The year 2016 is an anniversary year for a number of remarkable entities. The 50th Super Bowl will have been played by the time this article reaches print. The science fiction television show Star Trek, marks its 50th year, as well. More importantly, in March 2016, Maine Drilling & Blasting (MD&B) of Gardiner, ME, will mark 50 years of service excellence as an industry leader serving quarries and construction since 1966.

Bill Purington, president and CEO of MD&B, recalled how his father Ted, Sr. and his mother Judy, began the company with a loan, co-signed by three others, so Ted could purchase a jackhammer and a compressor to start his business. That was in 1966. Together they embarked on a journey that has grown to become one of the largest drilling and blasting companies on the east coast.

Bill said he remembers growing up with his three brothers and one sister, and recalls the desk in one corner of the family kitchen that served as his Dad's

company "office." "He kept the drilling supplies in a shed behind the house. Beyond that at a distance of about 100-feet, there was a metal magazine building housing the high explosives, ANFO and detonators. How things have changed!"

Today, Bill and his brother Ted, Jr., along with an extremely capable staff, head up this third generation company. For a period from the early 80's through the turn of the century all four of the brothers were a part of the business. Bill was the last to join the business. He had gone off to college to pursue a different career, but when Bill graduated from college, his family asked him to return to the business, to help them with some challenges at the time. He returned to help the company "temporarily." "That was 34 years ago. I'm still on temporary assignment," he said with a chuckle. Today, Bill and Ted, Jr. are on staff full time and Bill's son, William II, works as part of the management team.

Bill said the fledgling company got traction very quickly because of the principles that his father held dear, principles that the company continues to uphold faithfully to this day. The culture at MD&B fosters a devotion to hard work, honesty and quality of service. Employee's business cards are printed with the four main MD&B principles: Respect, Fairness, Honesty and Responsibility.

The company works diligently to recruit new employees that adhere to these principles as well. Currently, they employ approximately 400 people, all who are eager to continue with this work ethic. "We operate as one large family," he said.

"When our Dad bought his first drill rig, he made the commitment on a handshake," he said. "He grew the business, getting the children involved, all while a Maine business. The business began to grow outside Maine when the interstate system began to expand in New Hampshire to provide service to contractors working on those projects."

Over time, growth of MD&B has come from both acquisitions of other blasting companies as well as opening new areas. Through the years, MD&B acquired nine other companies as part of their growth and success. Today, the company's growth continues and their services extend throughout New England, New York, Pennsylvania and the Mid-

Atlantic. There are six regional offices and 13 distribution centers that service MD&B's market area.

As part of their growth process, MD&B strives to create a local image for local markets comprised of experienced relocated current employees and local people to work in the new locations. This establishes the company culture of excellence that has made MD&B successful over time.

In the realm of construction blasting, Bill said people occasionally misunderstand the company's interest in smaller work. "Because of our company's size, people think that work blasting for cellars and swimming pools are too small for us to be interested in doing." This cannot be further from the truth.



Todd Barrett, regional vice president for the Mid-Atlantic Division, has worked his way up from laborer to driller to blaster over the past 20 years with the company.



Mitch Green, senior vice president, has been a part of Maine Drilling and Blasting since 2003.

Bill went on to say with their focus on developing a local market presence the company believes in its tag line, “no job is too big or too small.” “We place an emphasis on tracking the smaller work in every operating division in the company resulting in 20 percent of our construction revenue stream coming from this type work,” he said.

Ted Purington, Jr., serves as the company’s executive vice president, working with the regional executives and division managers to assure that the company operating culture is maintained. He acknowledged that the company’s growth has been in part because of the foresight and structure that his brother Bill has had in planning. “He has been able to see what was needed to take the company where it is today and into the future as well. He has had the determination to stay the course despite downturns and other challenges.”

Ted, who works out of the Auburn, NH office, said that at the end of the day, the company strives to maintain an attention to detail, a sense of urgency and a respect for customers and employees alike. He said the newer employees are fortunate to have the mentors at MD&B in place who are there to help them learn the drilling and blasting industry and the core values that the company upholds. “Our sense of drive to find more effective ways has helped us find better ways to drill and blast,” he said.

He noted that the regional executives are generally responsible for a 2-4 state region, overseeing the quarry and construction work within that region. Ted works with them on larger projects and helps with keeping an eye on the details to help make the product we deliver better than the competition. He looks to make sure that safety is always first priority while maintaining the company culture of hard work, honesty and quality of service.

Mitch Green currently serves as sr. vice president business development. He has been associated with MD&B for over 26 years, formally coming on board in 2003. “MD&B has been a company that has stood the test of time and been able to evolve and thrive in an ever increasing regulatory and safety environment that is demanding.”

Mitch has worked in most areas of the company

during his tenure helping to organize and bring various divisions and departments to the standards that MD&B expects. Echoing the Puringtons, he says the company has high expectations of its operations to perform in the areas of safety, productivity and reliability to the customers, while developing a local market presence steeped in the MD&B culture.

Safety and Regulatory compliance are key areas on which the company focuses. “The expectations of the general public, as well as the regulatory agencies, will only increase in the future. At MD&B, we see this as an opportunity to improve our operations and services.” Further he states, “Embracing this opportunity is important to our future success.”

Dan Werner, sr. vice president, is currently responsible for overseeing divisions that serve quarries and construction in the states of Maine, New Hampshire and Vermont. He provides executive leadership for the distribution group, which stores, transports and warehouses the company’s explosives, and the equipment mobilization team.

Dan started with the company in May 2003, joining the company after a tour of duty in the military where he specialized in explosives engineering. He worked his way up to his current position through the MD&B Leadership Development Program, earning his bachelor’s degree and MBA.

He is especially impressed with the professionalism of MD&B. To be a large company and yet maintain its founding principles means a lot to Dan. The family oriented nature of the company remains grounded in its values in spite of its growth. The (Employee Stock Ownership Plan (ESOP) is also an aspect that he finds beneficial in many ways. “The employees of the company recognize value annually and for the long haul as we all work together as owners of the company, how fair is that?”

“When it comes to people, we have the best in the business,” he said. “We invest in the best equipment and resources to get the job done. From drills, excavators, to explosives, whatever we need, it is first in class.

Todd Barrett, is a regional vice president for the Mid-Atlantic and the Western Regions of the company consisting of Vermont and New York quarry and



Ted Purington, Jr. MD&B executive vice president.

Photo provided by Maine Drilling & Blasting

construction, while the Mid-Atlantic is made up of Pennsylvania, New Jersey and Maryland. Todd started with MD&B twenty years ago as a driller, then blaster, much in the same way as everyone in management.

“This company is all about the people,” he said. “Customers appreciate our company’s values and principles. And when we make a mistake, we take responsibility for it and work through it with our customers.”

Most recently, MD&B opened a new facility in Bethel, PA, in keeping with their desire to maintain a local presence in all its regions of operation. The new facility opened in November 2015, right off I-78.

“We have our own engineering staff that allows us to make lump-sum bids on jobs. The Tech Services Group helps us improve operations through new explosives and blasting applications, as well as training our current and future blasters.”

Bill further states, “Some of the greatest challenges that every business faces in the future include the succession of leadership in a successful way. At MD&B, with the commitment to our Leadership Development Program and future talent, the future leaders of our company are going to come from within.” He also stated that this is a tough business with many risks. “Safety needs to be a priority and MD&B is working to make safety a way of life within the company. With a strong foundation and key elements in place, the future of MD&B is bright and looking to another 50 years of excellence in the industry.”

For more information about Maine Drilling & Blasting, visit their website at www.mdandb.com.



Bill Purington, president and CEO of Maine Drilling and Blasting, enjoys carrying on his father’s business throughout New York, New England and the Mid-Atlantic States.

Photo provided by Maine Drilling & Blasting



Dan Werner, MD&B sr. vice president.

Photo provided by Maine Drilling & Blasting

Liberty Excavators, Inc. uses MD&B as their go-to drilling and blasting sub

by Jon M. Casey



Drillers are busy boring blast holes for an upcoming detonation.



In the distance, a crew fills boreholes with blasting material.



The Independent Explosives crew fills boreholes with blasting material in preparation of the upcoming blast.

For Liberty Excavators, Inc., a Camp Hill, PA based site development contractor, Maine Drilling & Blasting is their go-to subcontractor when it comes to challenging drilling and blasting projects. According to Lester L. Gouffer, Jr., vice president of Liberty Excavators, MD&B has been one of their regular subs for the past three years or so. During that time, they have developed a relationship of trust and reliability that major contractors are seeking when it comes to working with subcontractors on a regular basis. The results have been impressive.

Gouffer credits MD&B for their diligence and professionalism in how they pursued Liberty Excavators in an effort to secure Liberty as a new customer. "Travis (Martzall) and Todd (Barrett), but mostly Travis, kept calling on us to try MD&B for one of their blasting projects, and eventually, we agreed to give them an opportunity to do one of our smaller jobs. But over time, we gave them an opportunity to work on one of our largest and most difficult jobs, Reading Hospital, and they came through with flying colors."

He said that it is very important to Liberty, to deal with companies that live up to what they have promised. This was and is the case with MD&B. "They are men of their word," Gouffer said, referring to Travis and Todd from the Bethel, PA office. "We have a number of similar corporate values that we both believe in, (and that makes working together a pleasure.)"

"We are in a competitive and dangerous business, so we try to partner with people that bring the same values to the table that we do," he added. "We choose very carefully with whom we work because we are often subcontractors ourselves in some of these larger projects. So, when we have subcontractors working for us as well, they represent us on the jobsite. We have found that MD&B is an excellent partner in this kind of work."

Gouffer said that Liberty is primarily a heavy site contractor, preparing construction projects like the distribution warehouses at Tremont, PA and another at Carlisle, PA. "The warehouse construction market in Pennsylvania is still very active and we have considerable experience in preparing those building sites. We have two of those in process." At both projects, MD&B did the drilling and blasting. For more information on Liberty Excavators, Inc., visit their website at www.libertyinc.net or give them a call at 717-761-8461.

"We are in a competitive and dangerous business, so we try to partner with people that bring the same values to the table that we do."

***Lester L. Gouffer, Jr.,
VP of Liberty Excavators***



A stockpile of graded material is stored for future use in front of the steel framework of one of the three proposed Lickdale Logistics warehouses.



As part of the Lickdale site prep work, MDB blasted 17,000-yards of material. This trench was part of that blasting.