

Excellence in Masonry: September 2002



Project: Gillette Stadium

Licensee: Quikrete Boston

Mason Contractor: Grande East Construction

Architect: HOK Architects

General Contractor: Beacon Barton Marlow

There is an athletic shoe and apparel company that established a simple slogan to identify their company. The slogan states: JUST DO IT! Our friends at Grande East Construction share a similar philosophy and take the initiative to get it done... Failure is not an option.

SPEC MIX visited with Alex Grande Jr., Vice President of Grande East Construction at the new Gillette Stadium in Foxboro, MA, home of the Super Bowl Champion New England Patriots. During our discussion, it was clear that Grande East Construction had a vision and a mission statement emphasizing reliability and excellence and "Failure is not an option"!

Alexander Grande Sr., who came to America in 1942, built Grande East Construction. He learned and apprenticed the masonry business in East Boston. He became an astute businessman and an admired masonry contractor in New England. Alex Jr., Steve and Mark continue in their father's footsteps by conducting the day-to-day operation of Grande East personifying the American work ethic.

It is not uncommon for the project site to experience delays, therefore disrupting the time frame allowed for the completion of the project. This was the scenario and challenge that Paul Thiebeault faced. Originally bid as 5 separate packages, the Grande East team found it necessary to convince the CM to acknowledge one package in order to meet the unflexible deadline. In spite of the March start date pushed out till May, Grande East was able to exceed expectations and finish the 1-year package in 10 months.

During the height of construction Paul Thiebeault, project superintendent had up to 50 bricklayers on the job, installing over 600,000 CMU's, plus an additional 200,000 Architectural "Patriot Red" units. Our licensee, Quikrete of Boston, delivered over 2000 bulk bags of gray and "Patriot red" mortar, plus another 850 bulk bags of grout. Paul set up 3 separate mixing stations with 4 silos at each, manned with a single mortar tender for all 4 stations. The mortar tender produced all of the mortar and grout plus fed the cranes and forklifts! According to Paul efficient manpower provided the solution. "We would not be able to do it with a traditional set up. We put SPEC MIX silo's at the corners and fed the job as we bounced all over the stadium." Typically, Grande East would get a shipment of 3-4 loads at the beginning and middle of the week, then simply pound the job with another 4 or more loads on Friday for the weekend. Alex stated that Grande East was "going to finish on time no matter what it takes! Since we were working over the winter, SPEC MIX even more vital. This isn't to say that Grande didn't get some good fortune along the way, only losing 2 days to rain and 1-2 days due to the cold, Alex stated "we skipped winter in Boston last year, we had perfect weather and success in this job".

SPEC MIX would like to thank our team in Boston, the production crew and Paul Ferraguto of Quikrete Boston, for all of their hard work. We kept the job supplied with that sweet SPEC MIX mud, delivered in our bulk bags and 80 lb paper bags.

Now when I hear, Just Do It, it seems synonymous with "Failure is not an option" and Grande East Construction comes to mind.