



**NAVY LEAGUE**  
of the United States  
"Citizens in Support of the Sea Services."

**New Mexico**  
Council



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[www.nmnavyleague.com](http://www.nmnavyleague.com)

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## Dedication of the USS New Mexico Bell

University of New Mexico Campus Sept 13, 2018

By Mark Schaefer, editor

What exactly is going on behind that beautiful Lobo red canvas covering on Smith Plaza on the University of New Mexico campus? It is, of course, the highly-anticipated relocation and commemoration of the BB-40 Battleship New Mexico bell in its new, more visible and more appreciated location. Ship's crew and the Commanding Officer of submarine USS New Mexico (SSN-779) were on hand to help dedicate the bell in its new location, along with the President of the University of New Mexico,



Garnett Stokes, who

gave a fine speech commemorating the long history of the Navy on the University campus. Also attending were the Navy contingent from Navy Week Albuquerque, including Rear Admiral Mark Bipes, the Navy Band Northwest Brass Quartet, Midshipmen from the UNM ROTC, television news stations, and many members and family members of the Navy League New Mexico Council. Page 3 has more photos of this ceremony along with the Dedication Speech as delivered by Navy League New Mexico Council's own Greg Trapp, chair of the council's BB-40 Bell Memorial Committee.



USS Constitution crew, by Mark Schaefer, editor

**Thank You!** When you keep your dues up to date with the Navy League national office, our New Mexico council receives a stipend for each active member. This makes a big difference in our ability to support our namesake ships, our youth, our Sea Cadets, and the local active and reserve. Joint or renew at

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## NM Nautical Quiz!

Q1: What type of bus is capable of crossing the ocean?

Q2: Why does the mermaid wear seashells?

(see page 5 for answers)

To contact the editor, write to Mark Schaefer at [usnanm@comcast.net](mailto:usnanm@comcast.net).



## President's Message



Chuck Vaughan  
President, New Mexico Council  
(Photo courtesy of Rick Carver)

### Greetings everyone!

I'm writing to you on Thanksgiving Day. On this Thanksgiving Day I realize I have a lot to be thankful for; a great wife, two wonderful children, a good job and good health. I'm also thankful for living in the U. S. and all the freedoms we enjoy living here. And for these freedoms I'm thankful for those who serve or have served in the U. S. Navy, Marine Corps, Coast Guard, Merchant Marine and those serving or having served in the U. S. Air Force and Army. One of my heroes who previously served was Captain Rod Stewart, U. S. Navy, who recently passed away. Rod was a former board member of this Council and commanded ships out of San Diego during his career. My wife and I spent a couple of days with Rod in San Diego in October 2015 where we attended the inactivation ceremony of the USS Albuquerque, SSN 706. In San Diego we had a great time with Rod during our two or three day visit; he especially enjoyed going to Naval Base San Diego (the 32<sup>nd</sup> Street Naval Station) with us. Be sure to read Dick Brown's article on Captain Rod Stewart. Some of my other heroes include members of the greatest generation who defended this country during World War II.

The New Mexico Council participated in a rededication ceremony of the BB-40 ship's bell this fall to recognize members of the greatest generation who served on the battleship USS New Mexico, BB-40. Greg Trapp, a Council member and an expert on the USS New Mexico, BB-40, spoke at the rededication ceremony; we've included some photos of the ceremony in this newsletter. I'm also thankful for Cash Smithwick, a member of this Council, who provided a generous donation for the 243<sup>rd</sup> Navy Birthday Ball, celebrated this past October in Albuquerque.

In other news, this fall we provided one of our two 2018 scholarships to Staff Sergeant Richard Tseng, USMC. Staff Sergeant Tseng received a \$750.00 scholarship from the Council to support his studies at the University of New Mexico in his quest to earn a commission as a U. S. Marine Corps officer. Good luck with your studies, Staff Sergeant Tseng!

I also want to thank all of the New Mexico Council members for their membership in this Council and their support of the Council's activities this year. I'm looking for a Council member living in the El Paso, Texas area who would help me plan and coordinate a Navy League dinner somewhere in the El Paso area next year.

If you are willing to assist me, please email me or write to me at our P. O. Box number address listed on this newsletter.

With Christmas just around the corner, have a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year everyone!

**Contact me any time at**

[chuck.vaughan@comcast.net](mailto:chuck.vaughan@comcast.net)

or by mail at the Council's P.O. box.

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# Namesake Ships



## USS New Mexico (BB-40) Bell Dedication Speech

*delivered by Greg Trapp, J.D., on September 13, 2018 at the University of New Mexico (photos courtesy of Mark Schaefer)*

It is an honor to be here today for the unveiling of the bell from USS New Mexico. The history of this bell began over a century ago. The bell is inscribed USS New Mexico 1918. The date reflects the May 20, 1918 commissioning of USS New Mexico. If New Mexico was placed on the plaza before us, it would tower 150 feet above us, and its 624 foot length would stretch nearly the distance from the bell to Mitchell Hall. Armed with a main battery of twelve 14-inch guns, New Mexico was the first battleship to be powered by a revolutionary turbo-electric drive system of propulsion. The ship was a marvel of technology; so much so that New Mexico was often called the "Wonder Ship."



Ship's bells served both practical and ceremonial functions. If there was a fire, the bell would sound an alarm. A ship's bell would also be rung in fog or low visibility to warn other ships. When New Mexico was commissioned, ship's bells were designed to ring in different keys, with the lower the key the larger the ship. As an 800 pound bell, this bell was likely tuned to the key of b flat. If you were at sea on a dark and foggy night and heard a bell in the key of b flat, it might well mean that the 32,000 ton USS New Mexico was heading your way.

New Mexico was on neutrality patrol in the Atlantic on December 7, 1941. Because of that, New Mexico avoided the fate of the battleships of the Pacific Fleet. After Pearl Harbor, the aircraft carrier became the dominant naval ship. However, New Mexico and the other aging battleships played a vital role using their big guns to support the island invasions that were the hallmark of the Pacific War. New Mexico earned six battle stars for her World War II service, and suffered two devastating kamikaze attacks in which 86 men were killed.

New Mexico was decommissioned on July 19, 1946. While sources disagree to the exact date, according to the March 16, 1948 issue of the New Mexico Lobo, this bell came to the state in 1945, and was placed in the basement of the old Capital Building, what is now the Bataan Memorial Building. Governor Mabry was faced with a dilemma because he had



two requests for that bell, one from the American Legion Post in Santa Fe, and the other from Alpha Phi Omega at UNM. Fortunately, there had been two bells on the battleship, and when the Navy agreed to give the state the second bell in November of 1947, the path was opened for this bell to come to UNM, opening a new chapter in the history of the bell. Alpha Phi Omega used a truck to bring the 800 pound bell to UNM on Saturday, March 13, 1948. The bell was placed in the west tower of the Administration building as a memorial to the men and women who served during World War II. The bell was dedicated on April 17, 1948, and it was to be rung during the Fiesta and on holidays.



*UNM President, Garnett Stokes, talks to television cameras in front of the bell*

The second chapter of the bell's history at UNM began in 1964. In that year, construction forced the removal of the bell from the Administration Building. Alpha Phi Omega raised money for a new tower, which was designed by Albuquerque architect Max Flatow. The new bell tower was dedicated on November 11, 1964. However, the project was controversial, and even opposed by some on campus. What was the reason for the opposition? What could possibly have been so important that the Lobo would editorialize against the bell tower? The answer is parking spaces. Smith Plaza used to be a parking lot, and the bell tower caused the loss of several parking spaces. Thankfully, we do not have to worry about that issue here today.



We are now opening the third chapter of this bell's history at UNM. This new chapter has this bell placed in a prominent location, a location that is much more befitting of this historic bell. From now forward, the bell from the USS New Mexico will serve to inspire future generations of students, and will be a compelling reminder of the courage and commitment of those who have defended our nation. Let us never forget their sacrifice.

## **USS Santa Fe Q3 1943 Keep up with the Carriers!** by Ron Olexsak

Dateline September 1, 1943. Pearl harbor, HI. The only American territory in North America occupied by the Japanese during World War II was part of the Aleutian Island chain in Alaska. And USS Santa Fe got in the action taking them back, hitting shore positions off Kiska on July 6<sup>th</sup> and 22<sup>nd</sup> of 1943. When the US Marines stormed ashore on August 15<sup>th</sup>, Santa Fe was there hitting shore targets with her 8" guns and looking for aviation targets to repel. The Lucky Lady departed Alaskan waters on August 25<sup>th</sup> and arrived in Pearl Harbor on September 1<sup>st</sup>. The Crew was pushing those new Babcock and Wilcox boilers on the race down to Hawaii.



Santa Fe's speed and suite of anti-aircraft guns earned her a spot in Rear Admiral L. T. Dubose's Cruiser Division Thirteen, the fast Cruiser squadron in the Pacific. She and her fellow gunships would support Carrier Task Forces for the rest of the war. In a foreshadowing of an invasion that would come later in the year, the fleet would sortie to Makin and Tarawa Island to harass Japanese shipping and aircraft in mid-September.

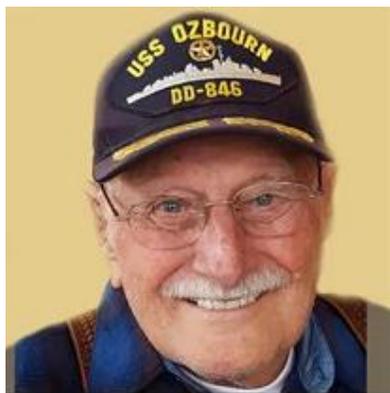
As plans for the invasion of Tarawa firmed up, Santa Fe was recommended for the newly created Task Force Fourteen (TF14) and was the lone cruiser in the Northern Section of the 6 carrier, 2 cruiser, and 5 destroyer divisions fleet of fast-moving strikers. She departed Pearl Harbor yet again on September 29<sup>th</sup>, with eyes on the shores of a tropic island over a thousand miles to the west. Santa Fe and her sister cruisers would become very familiar with those waters throughout the rest of 1943.

*Light Cruising is a historical retrospective on the Cleveland-class light cruiser USS Santa Fe, CL-60. These articles are meant to commemorate the quarterly events of seventy-five years ago when the "Lucky Lady" fought in World War II. Next Quarter: USS Santa Fe reigns shells throughout the Pacific.*



## A Tribute to Rod Stewart

by Dick Brown. *“Rod was my Navy League mentor, and I miss him very much”.*



Our beloved sea captain and devoted Navy Leaguer Rod Stewart passed away at his Kearney, Nebraska home on October 11, 2018.

In early August, Gale Stewart reported that Rod had been suffering from congestive heart failure, kidney disease, spinal stenosis and dementia. She thanked us for being Rod’s friend all through the years. Rod turned 90 on August 8<sup>th</sup>.

Rod was born and raised in Albuquerque. He was an ROTC Midshipman at UNM (class of 1951), and earned a BA degree. He served during the Korean War and the Vietnam War. After 30 years of naval service, Rod retired and joined the Navy League’s New Mexico Council where he was a mainstay for over three decades. He served as Council President and National Director, and was honored as National Director Emeritus.

Rod founded the USS Albuquerque Committee for the Greater Albuquerque Chamber of Commerce and served as its chairman for five years. The New Mexico Council’s USS New Mexico Committee is an offshoot of this committee. Rod served on the USS New Mexico Committee for 15 years. Among the litany of naval and community service award plaques is his most treasured keepsake – a memorial with a piece of Albuquerque’s hull and a link from its anchor chain – that stands proudly on his fireplace mantle. On the lighter side, Rod was an Admiral in both the Rio Grande Navy and the Nebraska Navy, with no increase in retirement pay. Recently, he wrote the foreword for John Taylor’s *New Mexico’s Navy*.

The Navy was both Rod’s life and passion. He served on two cruisers and six destroyers, twice as Commanding Officer, plus four tours as Executive Officer. He served with honor and distinction in NATO staff positions in Norway and Belgium, Joint Chiefs of Staff in Washington, and Military Assistance in Japan. His first wife, Beverly, was a role model Navy wife. They raised son David and daughter Gayle who still live in Albuquerque. Rod lost “Bevie” to cancer.

Rod is survived by his second wife, Rev. Dr. Raythea Gale, her children Kimberly in Eaton, Colorado; Julia and Sami in Kearney; and a host of grandchildren and great grandchildren. Rod and Gale moved to Kearney in May 2015 to be near family. They celebrated their 24<sup>th</sup> anniversary this past June. In civilian life, Rod turned his passion for the Navy to his family, his church, and numerous Albuquerque civic organizations. He was past president of the Kiwanis Club, the Tips Club, and the Sister Cities Foundation, plus a member of the New MexiChords Barbershop Chorus and chaplain for the Albuquerque Police Department. He had a decades-long second career as a motivational speaker and workshop facilitator where he coached companies on team building, especially for the construction industry. He conducted seminars on motivation, managing the course of change, and commitment to creativity.



*Captain Rod Stewart, USN (ret) with Dick Brown, left, and Brooks Ambos, right*

seminars on motivation, managing the course of change, and commitment to creativity.

Rod Stewart touched the lives of countless Navy Leaguers, all of whom will forever cherish great memories of the Captain’s patriotism, volunteerism, and love of life, church and Navy.

### Answers to NM Nautical Quiz (from page 2)

A1: A Columbus.

A2: She grew out of her B-shells.

Past issues of the NM Nautical News can be found at  
[www.nmnavyleague.com/newsletters.html](http://www.nmnavyleague.com/newsletters.html)



## Submarine Symposium Highlights Navy League New Mexico Council Support

The Naval Submarine League invited Dick Brown to a panel discussion about civilian submarine support groups (aka Sub Clubs) at its 36<sup>th</sup> Annual Symposium in Arlington, VA on November 7-8, 2018. Joining Dick on the panel were the Sub Club leaders for the USS North Carolina (SSN-777) and the USS Illinois (SSN-786). The 2-day symposium drew over 700 attendees, including active duty and retired flag officers, captains and industry executives, plus submarine officers from the Spanish Navy, the Royal Navy and the Royal Australian Navy.

Because NSL is solely devoted to the submarine community, it is significantly smaller than NLUS with only 3,170 individual members and 102 corporate members. It provides a forum (symposia) and a quarterly journal (*The Submarine Review*) for Sub Force leaders to interact with the American people, to share their visions and challenges, thus assuring that the undersea arm of our Navy is strong.

The purpose of the Sub Club panel discussion was to launch a new NSL outreach program to encourage support for city and state-named subs that do not currently have a connection to their namesake. Dick explained that the USS New Mexico Committee is the boat's namesake support group, born as the commissioning committee, and now operating as a standing committee of the Navy League New Mexico Council. He highly recommended this approach since strong pre-commissioning relationships had already been built as opposed to starting from scratch. He then proceeded to outline the types of support the committee provides to SSN-779. Afterwards, many in the audience expressed appreciation for sharing support ideas for our undersea warriors. The first of many to approach him was the Submarine Force Public Affairs Officer offering financial assistance for crew visits and support programs!

Dick spent 10 minutes expounding on what we do for SSN-779 and then answered questions. He reported that we endeavor to attend every homecoming and change of command ceremony; that we sponsor crew visits to educate our submariners about our tri-culture, history and geography; and that we arrange for meetings with the Governor, radio talk show hosts and public school students. Regarding the latter, the audience laughed when he added that the skipper is sometimes faced with answering the question: "What happens when a shark bites the submarine?"

Of great interest was our work in instilling a New Mexico décor in the crew's living quarters, including Southwest design bunk and passageway curtains, photo panels on crews mess locker doors showing scenes throughout the Land of Enchantment, and table tops in the design of the state flag. Dick made special note of the table serving as a tribute to BB-40, listing the 86 sailors killed in two kamikaze attacks during WWII. He mentioned La Posta de Mesilla's adoption of the galley as La Posta Abajo del Mar (La Posta Beneath the Sea) and the training of culinary specialists in New Mexico cuisine at the popular restaurant. Our efforts to re-upholster the control room's pilot/copilot chairs in Southwest fabric after each deployment reinforced how dedicated New Mexico is to supporting its boat.

Dick also talked about CO and XO participation in baseball games (first pitch) and state rivalry football games (coin toss); in keeping the crew supplied with red and green chile, New Mexico pinon coffee and SOQ/SOY plaques; and riding in hot air balloons at the Albuquerque Balloon Fiesta. It was clear that we take great pride in doing things for our sailors that the Navy cannot do. The same is true for Club 777 and Club 786 as their representatives also outlined their support programs. The symposium provided visibility of our continuous post-commissioning support at the highest levels, including ADM James Caldwell, Naval Reactors Director; VADM John Wolfe, Strategic Systems Director; and VADM Charles Richard, Commander, Submarine Force, who rode USS New Mexico with Damon and Dick in January 2016.



This is the combined poster in our Sub Club booth in the symposium exhibit hall which we manned during six networking sessions. New Mexico's portion featured images of our crew quarters enhancements; the christening, sea trials and Arctic mission; and CO appearances at North Star Elementary School, Balloon Fiesta and Bonanza Creek Movie Ranch saloon.

Retired Admiral Kirk Donald, NSL Chairman of the Board; retired VADM Jay Donnelly, NSL President and USS New Mexico's commissioning officer; and retired VADM Will Hilarides, (who commented that our Commissioning Week events were the best he had ever experienced), remembered us well from our construction milestone ceremonies. Dick also reconnected with retired ADM Hank Chiles, former CINCSTRATCOM, who was the first flag officer we contacted about a VA-class named after our state (yes, we started at the top when the admiral championed our Submarine Centennial celebrations in 2000). ADM Chiles was honored by NSL at the Awards Banquet as the 2018 Distinguished Submariner. Dick, as a frequent contributor to *The Submarine Review* finally met the two retired Navy captains with whom he has been working over the years: Executive Director Tim Oliver and Editor Mike Hewitt.

Of all the technical presentations, most exciting was VADM Wolfe's discussion of the Chinese and Russian threat (hence the symposium theme: *Return to Major Power Competition*) and our Virginia-class and Columbia-class construction programs. Initially, 30 VA-class were planned, then 48 and now 60, including a stretch version with an 84-foot extension to carry an additional payload of 40 Tomahawk cruise missiles. The first of 12 Columbia SSBNs is in final design and some portions are already under construction. It will be 2.5 times larger than the Virginias, carry 16 life-extended Trident D5 missiles, and fueled for life (40 years).



Side-by-side models of our sister ship USS Colorado (SSN-788) and USS Columbia (SSBN-826). The new SSBN will have a very different rear-end, with the functions of the rudder, stern planes and dihedrals combined into one

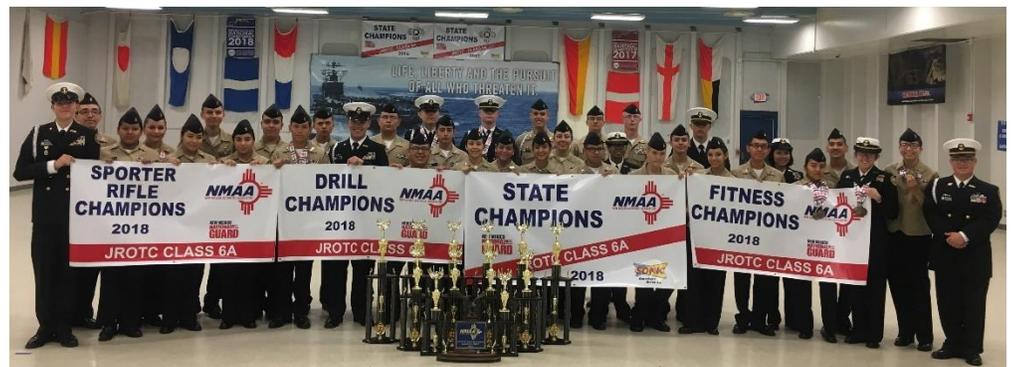
Dick learned that former 779 skipper CAPT George Perez is the Chief of Staff at Subron 10 at Kings Bay, GA and USS Santa Fe's pre-deployment repairs at Vallejo, CA were a game-changer in how we can quickly get subs back at sea. He also learned that the ship's sponsor for PCU Vermont (SSN-792) is Ms. Gloria Valdez (Deputy Assistant SECNAV) who graduated from UNM in 1985.

After the Sub Club panel discussion, many congratulated us on our support of 779. It seems we've raised the bar a bit. RADM Ron Morgan, USN(Ret) of the USS Tucson Committee (Club 770) said his team is doing many of the same things as 779. CAPT Peter Welch, USN(Ret), chairman of the USS Iowa (SSN-797) Committee said he learned a lot from the Sub Club panel discussion. During the receptions, luncheons, exhibits and banquet there were kudos from other retired 4-strippers.

Our USS New Mexico Committee, under Damon's steadfast guidance and leadership, has long been known by the Navy League but now we are in the spotlight of the Naval Submarine League and the top leaders of the US Naval Submarine Force. Bravo Zulu to all of our Navy Leaguers, past and present, who have had a hand in making 779's home support team one of the best in the Navy.

## Santa Fe High School NJROTC Wins NM JROTC State Championship – Third Straight Year

Congratulations to the State Champion Santa Fe High School NJROTC unit for taking first in State for the third straight year. Competitive events included Armed and Unarmed Inspection, Regulation and Exhibition Drill, Male & Female Physical Fitness, and Sporter & Air Precision Rifle. In order to come out on top, a school needed to place in every



event and Santa Fe managed to do just that, outscoring their nearest competition by over fifty sweepstakes points! The trophies and banners day it all. The Navy League, New Mexico Council, congratulates each and every one of the members of the fine Santa Fe High School JROTC program! Very nice job!

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#### 2018 Upcoming Events for Navy League, New Mexico Council

Dec 1	New Mexico Council annual meeting – Nick & Jimmy's restaurant, Albuquerque, 11:30 am
Dec 2	Hanukkah begins
Dec 7	77 <sup>th</sup> anniversary of Pearl Harbor attack – Fly your U.S. flag!
Dec 8	Army - Navy football, Philadelphia, PA, 1 pm Mountain time, CBS
Dec 25	Christmas Day