



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

New Mexico
Council



October, 2020

www.nmnavyleague.com

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Did you know that you can get the latest issues of Sea Power magazine in an App? Go to your mobile device App Store and search on "Navy League".



USS New Mexico (SSN-779) visits Kings Bay Naval Base

By Damon Runyan, Photo by Chief of the Boat, Senior Chief Ross McClellan

Over the Labor Day weekend, and after some good Atlantic Ocean at-sea time for a "shakedown cruise" earlier in the year and a homeport change to Norfolk, VA, the crew of the USS New Mexico paid a quick visit to Kings Bay Naval Base in Georgia. No families this time, just submarine sailors enjoying some sunshine and fresh air with a pier-side cookout.



USS New Mexico at Kings Bay Naval Base, September 2020



New Commanding Officer, CDR Jared Smith, indicated that the crew has been very busy since completing their two-year boat overhaul at Portsmouth Naval Shipyard.

See more on about CDR Jared Smith, his wife Anna, and the change of command for USS New Mexico in the Namesake Ships section of this issue of the NM Nautical News.

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

<https://www.navyleague.org/membership>

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President's Message



John Jones
President, New Mexico Council

AHOY! A YEAR like no other ... as we strive to learn to live with COVID in these uncertain times of social distancing and economic distress, we hope you are well. Help a shipmate if possible.

The Council Board is meeting via Zoom on the 2nd Monday of each month. Should you wish to sit in on a meeting, let me know!

You may recall that Senator RADM Bill Payne sponsored SM20, calling for a study of the two BB40 bells. Greg Trapp and I participated in the study, Greg made a significant contribution providing the history of the ship and bells. A written report has been approved by the study committee and is headed toward the legislature for their use.

Our 763 (SANTA FE) and 779 (NEW MEXICO) committees remain active with each of our namesake boats, in the yards and at sea.

Navy Week is coming to New Mexico – and Santa Fe, specifically, the first week of November! The Navy Office of Community Outreach (NAVCO) hosts a dozen of these around the Nation every year, and November 2nd is the start of our week in New Mexico. Always innovative, the Navy has changed the format from a physical presence to a virtual presence, with a week-long

series of interviews, onsite webcasts, educational events and highlighting the history of the relationship between the US Navy and The Land of Enchantment. In late October, check <https://www.outreach.navy.mil/Navy-Weeks-2020/Santa-Fe/>

Our membership is up slightly this year (a goal of the Council). The Navy League depends on passionate individuals, like you, and corporations to support those currently serving, to advocate for the sea services, and educate our neighbors about the importance of our national connection to the oceans. The NM Council has adopted ships, honored and rewarded local enlisted personnel, and supported families of deployed sea service personnel. At the national level, membership allows you to help our legislative affairs team fight on behalf of our sea services. No prior military service is required to be a member. Spouses of those currently serving can join at no cost for a year.

Due to COVID, there will NOT be a Navy Birthday Ball this year – making next year's event a VERY special occasion; there will NOT be an annual meeting in December due to a bylaw change making our elections biennial. Please consider a tax deductible donation to the New Mexico Council in support our educational efforts with the Sea Services, our scholarship program for men and women on active duty and in the reserves, our work with crews on our namesake New Mexico ships, and our recognition programs with JROTC programs around NM and El Paso.

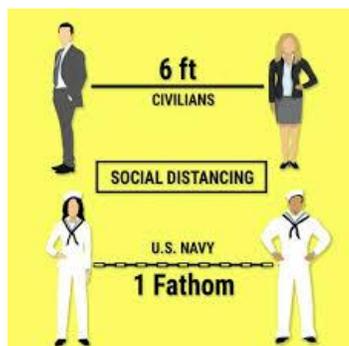
Stay in touch, tell us what you think.

Contact me any time at
JohnLJonesNM@gmail.com
or by mail at the Council's P.O. box.

Not for Self, but Country.
Semper Fortis.

John L Jones
CDR SC USN (ret)

NM Nautical Notice!



To contact the editor, write to Mark Schaefer at usnanm@comcast.net.

Namesake Ships



USS New Mexico (SSN-779) Change of Command

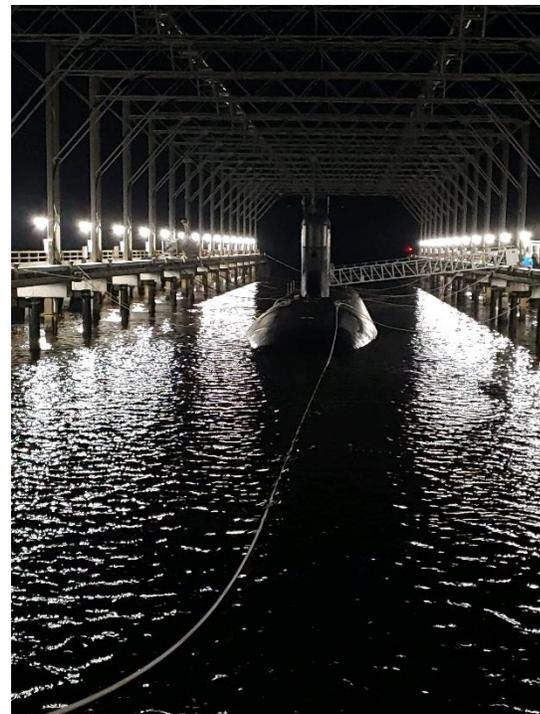
Extracts from a news release by Naval Surface Force, Atlantic, July 31, 2020

The Virginia-class fast-attack submarine USS New Mexico (SSN 779) conducted a change of command at Naval Station Norfolk on July 31, 2020. CDR Jared Smith relieved CDR Jim Morrow as Commanding Officer of New Mexico.

CAPT Jeffrey Juergens, Commander Submarine Squadron 6, said Morrow demonstrated exceptional leadership in guiding his shipyard crew into a combat-ready team of submarine warriors. "After 27 months in the shipyard, CDR Morrow returned New Mexico to the operational fleet fully fit and ready to fight," Juergens said. "Jim led New Mexico through one of the most successful change of homeports and preparations for deployment I have ever seen. He set New Mexico up for years of future success."

CDR Morrow expressed pride for the crew and excitement for New Mexico's future after an extensive modernization and overhaul period. "I am extremely proud of the way the New Mexico team worked to bring the submarine back to life coming out of an arduous shipyard period," Morrow said. His next assignment is at Commander, Submarine Force Atlantic, in Norfolk, Virginia, where he will serve as the combat readiness evaluation team senior member.

CDR Smith said he is proud of the crew and looks forward to leading them in future operations. "I look forward to the opportunity of working with such fine Sailors," Smith said. "I appreciate all the hard work the crew has put in transitioning from shipyard to at-sea operations in preparation for future deployments." Smith graduated from the U.S. Naval Academy in 2002, and later earned a Master of Science in Engineering Management from Catholic University of America and an Executive Master of Business Administration from the University of Memphis. At sea, he served aboard three attack and nuclear-armed submarines. His most recent shore assignment was as the Submarine Enlisted Community Manager. CDR Smith's wife, Anna, will assume duties as part of the Family Readiness Group.



USS New Mexico at Kings Bay at night, Labor Day 2020



USS New Mexico cook out on the pier at Kings Bay.

The Navy League New Mexico Council thanks

New Mexico Piñon Coffee

for continuous unwavering support of our submarine crews.

10 Years of donations and cases of coffee have made each day a better day!

Specials thanks goes to Randall Teller, President Matt Bregar, and Donation Coordinator Aleta Hallemeier.



Randall Teller

Customer Service Manager, [New Mexico Piñon Coffee](#)

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Namesake Ships



USS Santa Fe (SSN-763) Committee Shares Care Packages with the Crew

by Ron Olexsak, USS Santa Fe Committee Chair



I was recently asked what it means to be a Sea Service Adoption Award winner. And as I thought more and more about the question, it dawned on me that the relationship with a US Navy Crew is in many ways a living thing, and developing a relationship with them is like welcoming a new family member or close friend into your life. You build bonds of friendship that last far beyond a crewman's service on the Boat and you get to learn things about hometowns, what they love about the Navy and this Country, and most especially what kinds of foods they love. For the Navy runs on its collective stomachs, and anything we namesake cities can do to enhance the culinary aspect of the relationship is always welcome.



One of the projects that a good namesake committee should excel at is bringing some of the culture (and cuisine) to the crew. And since Santa Fe, NM is world famous for its food, why not send them a taste of our home for when they are away from their homes? The USS Santa Fe Committee tries to send at least one good

batch of home town ingredients each year: spices, coffee, delicious recipes, and of course our universally famous Hatch Chile.

This year with donations from [Albukirky Seasonings](#), [Halbert Custom Cabinets](#), and many members of the USS Santa Fe Committee, we are able to send the Culinary team two coolers of frozen green and red chile, a recipe booklet of all sorts of amazing New Mexico favorites, and 12 additional boxes of coffee, salsas, and spices of every shape, size, and temperature (some of that stuff is HOT!).

I cannot wait to hear what the team thinks of our signature red or green (or BOTH!) and what fun ways they think up making navy food into Santa Fe Navy experiences.

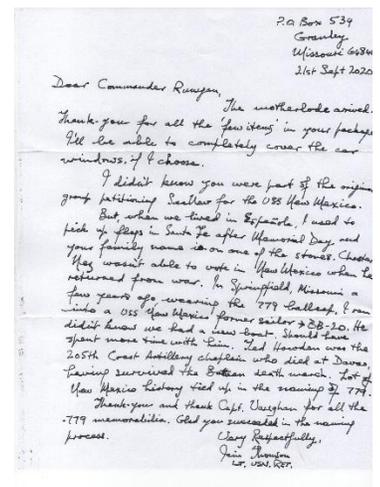


A Letter from LT Iain Thomson, a USS New Mexico Donor from Missouri September 21, 2020

Dear Commander Runyan, The motherlode arrived. Thank you for the "few things" in your package. I'll be able to completely cover the car windows, if I choose.

I didn't know you were part of the original group petitioning the SecNav for the USS New Mexico. But when I lived in Espanola, I used to pick up the flags in Santa Fe after Memorial Day. And your family name is on one of the stones. Chester Nez wasn't allowed in New Mexico when he returned from war. In Springfield, Missouri a few years ago, wearing the 779 ballcap, I ran into a USS New Mexico former sailor – BB-20. (I think he meant BB-40). He didn't know we had a new boat. I should have spent more time with him. Ted Howden was the 205th Coast Artillery chaplain who died at Davao (part of the huge Battle for Mindinao), having survived the Bataan death march. Lot of New Mexico history tied up in the naming of 779.

Thank you and Capt. Vaughan for all the -779 memorabilia. Glad you succeeded in the naming process. Very Respectfully, Iain Thomson LT, USN, RET.





New Member Spotlight – Don Johnson *Bio submitted by Mr. Johnson*

The New Mexico Council welcomes Mr. Don Johnson to our membership! Mr. Johnson was born in Louisiana, but grew up in Albuquerque, New Mexico, and attended college at UNM. In college, Mr. Johnson was a cartoonist for the University of New Mexico Daily Lobo. After graduation, he joined the United States Navy and became a helicopter pilot, serving on Marine Corps Base Kaneohe in beautiful Hawaii for HSL-37. After Hawaii, Mr. Johnson attended law school at Golden Gate Law School in San Francisco, passed the California Bar Exam, and opened his own Law Office in Oakland, California. With the help of his friends and mentors, his practice grew and moved to San Francisco, California. Mr. Johnson moved back to New Mexico in 2009 and passed the New Mexico State Bar Exam.



Shortly after starting his first year at Johnson Family Law P.C. in Albuquerque, New Mexico Mr. Johnson was called to serve in Baghdad, Iraq for the United States Army. He was in charge of mitigating the economic damage due to the loss of the military in Iraq and was credited with saving thousands of Iraqi jobs. He used some of his spare time in Baghdad creating art for his fellow service members. Mr. Johnson created an art gallery inside the T-Walls that prevented bombs from destroying the Containerized Housing Units (CHUs). The art he created inspired others to create art alongside his, and the area was transformed into an uplifting display of beauty inside the war zone.

Donny Johnson Jr. retired from the United States Navy in 2017 as a Lieutenant Commander. He has published two books titled, “Who Gets The Piano Tonight” and “Drawing Inspirations” displaying his art and the work of over 30 other artists. In 2019 he published a calendar of oil paintings of the animals at the Rio Grande Zoo in Albuquerque, New Mexico. You can find Don Johnson Jr.’s art online at www.djartstudio.com or www.human4m.com. Today, Donny helps veterans with their DVA disability claims and appeals as well as practicing family law in Albuquerque New Mexico.

Remembering Mary and Retired Chief Charlie Brown *By Mark Schaefer, Dick Brown, and Damon Runyan*



The New Mexico Council remembers Mary and Charlie Brown in this issue for their dedicated service to the submarine force, the Submarine Veterans of WWII, the United States Submarine Veterans, Inc and for years of assistance to our council.



Sono Sakimura “Mary” Brown passed away on June 9, 2020 and was laid to rest in Santa Fe National Cemetery next to her husband, Charlie. Mary was born in 1929 in Japan, married Charlie in the 1960’s and moved to New Mexico in 1977, living in Albuquerque until her passing. She was a champion swimmer and hunter, and she loved being around family and friends. In more recent years, she enjoyed dining out, shopping, cooking, and Bingo.

Retired Navy chief and World War II submariner Charlie Brown served 20 years as a cook, including six war patrols in the Pacific Theater where he was responsible for the galley and feeding the men onboard his diesel submarines. Interestingly, both of Charlie’s boats survive today as museum boats. USS Bowfin (SS-287) is moored near the USS Arizona Memorial in Pearl Harbor and USS Razorback (SS-394) is moored at the Arkansas Inland Maritime Museum in the Arkansas River in North Little Rock. Charlie was among many submariners who served with honor and distinction on the front-line under extreme war conditions.

The Council recognizes Damon and Michele Runyan for their “above and beyond” service in assisting Mary upon Charlie’s passing in 2014. Helping Mary through the myriad of Navy and military paperwork showed great compassion!



Balloons Over New Mexico *By Greg Trapp, JD, Historian; U.S. Navy official photo*



The appearance of a balloon gently drifting in the skies over New Mexico is a common sight in October of each year. However, in this case, New Mexico is the battleship USS New Mexico (BB-40), and the date is in October of 1922. The balloon is an aerial observation blimp, and it is tethered to a 32,000 ton super-dreadnought battleship.

The photo accompanying this article reveals a transition in both aviation and naval technology. Advances in naval gunnery and the lessons learned from the 1916 Battle of Jutland meant that the battleships of the United States Navy needed to be prepared to engage targets at very long ranges., USS New Mexico, which was designed prior to the Battle of Jutland, had 14-inch 50 caliber guns which could originally

only be elevated to a maximum of 15 degrees. The original guns on USS New Mexico were capable of firing a 1,400 pound shell 14 miles. All subsequent battleships had guns that could be elevated to 30 degrees, allowing them to fire at ranges over 20 miles. These very long ranges meant that the spotters located in the tall cage masts could not see the splashes of the falling shot. The solution was to launch gas-filled blimps that could float high above the ship and record the fall of shot. Unfortunately, the blimps had a “great habit of breaking their towing cables,” so the stately balloons were soon replaced by float planes that could be used to take pictures of the splashes from the falling shells. Improvements in radio technology would eventually allow for real-time communications between the float planes and gunners. However, for a brief period, it was the blimp that ruled supreme in the air over USS New Mexico.

Taken on October 12, 1922, this photo shows a gas observation balloon about to be launched from the quarterdeck of USS New Mexico (BB-40). The original photo story was captioned “No More Balloons to Ride on Battleships.”

Navy Week Santa Fe Starts November 2, 2020



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<https://www.outreach.navy.mil/Navy-Weeks-2020/Santa-Fe/>





Navy Releases Documents from Cold War Loss of Submarine

By David Sharp, Associated Press, September 23, 2020

PORTLAND, Maine (AP) - The Navy began releasing documents from the investigation into the deadliest submarine disaster in U.S. history on Wednesday, but the Navy said the documents released under a court order don't shed any new light on the cause of the sinking. The first of the documents released were 300 pages from the official inquiry into the sinking of the USS Thresher on April 10, 1963. The loss of the nuclear-powered submarine and all 129 men aboard during a test dive in the Atlantic Ocean delivered a blow to national pride during the Cold War and became the impetus for safety improvements.



"The loss of Thresher was a defining event for the submarine service," said Rear Adm. William Houston, director of the undersea warfare division in the office of the chief of naval operations at the Pentagon. The Thresher story was already well known. It had undergone sea trials and was back in the ocean for deep-dive testing about 220 miles off Massachusetts' Cape

Cod. The first sign of trouble was a garbled message about a "minor difficulty" after the 279-foot (85-meter) submarine descended to more than 800 feet.

The crew indicated it was attempting to empty ballast tanks in an effort to surface. The crew of an accompanying rescue ship heard something about the "test depth." Then the sailors listened as the sub disintegrated under the crushing pressure of the sea. The Navy inquiry found weaknesses in the design and construction of the first-in-class nuclear-powered submarine, which had been built at Portsmouth Naval Shipyard in Kittery, Maine, and based in Groton, Connecticut. In the documents, the Navy said it believes an interior pipe burst and caused electrical problems that

caused an emergency shutdown of the nuclear reactor. The documents noted that the commanding officer's evaluation of the first year of operations -- before additional work was conducted at Portsmouth Naval Shipyard -- included praise for the submarine. But he also said the submarine was overly complex in many areas and he noted a vulnerability of the auxiliary saltwater system.

Nick & Jimmy's



A Safer Place for Great Dining!

One of Albuquerque's favorite restaurants is now perhaps its safest. To ensure optimal safety for its guests and employees, **Nick & Jimmy's Restaurant** recently installed the CASPR Virus Control System.

"This is an important factor in making sure Nick & Jimmy's is New Mexico's safest restaurant" said Nick Kapnison, proprietor along with his daughters, Annamaria Kapnison & Nicole Kapnison.

Though the new high-tech system won't be noticed by diners, it will be actively ridding all surfaces of 99.9% of all pathogens. "CASPR was originally developed for use in the International Space Station and is now utilized in hospital & medical facilities throughout the US, including UCLA Medical Center," said Bill Baker, president of Virus Solutions

& Eradication, the statewide CASPR distributor.

The Kapnison family invites you to join them for a great dining experience inside the restaurant or in our beautiful new tent. Nick & Jimmy's menu features:

- "Steakhouse" Prime steaks & seafood
- New Mexican favorites using recipes from Coney Island, started by Nick's father at 5th & Central in 1944
- Greek family recipes
- American Classics that everyone loves.

Outdoor entertainment in our fabulous tent every Wednesday, Friday & Saturday.

6300 Jefferson NE. For reservations, call 505-344-9169.



Nick Kapnison,
Nick & Jimmy's
Restaurant

Bill Baker,
Virus Solutions
& Eradication



The Navy League New Mexico Council thanks

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Bill Baker, Owner

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2020 Upcoming Events for Navy League, New Mexico Council

Oct 3	Navy-Air Force football; Colorado Springs, CO
Navy Birthday Ball	cancelled
Nov 2-6	"Virtual" Navy Week Santa Fe https://www.outreach.navy.mil/Navy-Weeks-2020/Santa-Fe/
New Mexico Chapter Annual Meeting	cancelled
Dec 12	Army-Navy football; Philadelphia, PA