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## New Mexico – Shaped Recognition for Key Sailors on USS Santa Fe (SSN-763) *by Ron Olexsak, USS Santa Fe Committee Chair*



The Crew of the USS Santa Fe continues to train and perform maintenance with the Boat in its homeport of San Diego, CA.

With the successful completion of their most recent Western Pacific tour of duty, some awards and promotions are in order, and the Skipper was very excited to announce recognitions including ITS3 Leonel Rodriguez as Blue Jacket of the Quarter and MMN1 Elliot Fisher as Submarine Squadron Eleven Junior Sailor of the Year. Several crew members earned their submarine warfare insignia “dolphins” as well.



The Santa Fe, NM-based USS Santa Fe Committee of the Navy League provides plaques recognizing these awards. See page 5 for a complete list of awards.  
**We are proud to say... we support USS Santa Fe!**

**Save the Date!! Navy Birthday Ball Albuquerque is October 19<sup>th</sup>.**  
*Details to be sent by email, web page, and Facebook page.*

**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 help support our namesake ships, our youth, our Sea Cadets, and the local active and reserve.  
Join or renew at [members.navyleague.org](http://members.navyleague.org)

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NAVY LEAGUE  
NEW MEXICO COUNCIL

*P.O. Box 91554*

*Albuquerque, NM 87199*

**Mark Schaefer**

*Newsletter Editor*

*usnanm@comcast.net*



## President's Message



David F Williams

*President, New Mexico Council*

### ALL HANDS, NOW HEAR THIS –

Our new Zoom meeting time is the 2<sup>nd</sup> Monday of each month at 1800 hours. I want to welcome new member Paul Lyon, we hope you will continue to join us for on line and in-person events.

We have a variety of exciting activities on the horizon. Our Program Chairman, John Glynn, has coordinated the July 4<sup>th</sup> Liberty Bell ringing at the State Fair Grounds with other patriotic organizations. Our State & Local Government Affairs Rep, Rebecca Vigil-Gutierrez, will read the *Declaration of Independence* following the noon bell ringing. Also on the horizon is the September Network Navy Event. Standby for forthcoming details from John Glynn.

Kristelle Siarza Moon, Navy subcontractor and our key liaison with NAVCO, is planning Navy Week activities during the State Fair September 9-15 along with other key Council members. We hope to be able to host several members of at least one of our namesake submarines at the same time. The Navy headliner will be Admiral Stuart Munsch, Commander Naval Forces Europe & Africa. He is a former CO of the now decommissioned USS Albuquerque (SSN 706).

It is likely that the City of Albuquerque's progress in establishing the USS Albuquerque Memorial will be highlighted also during Navy Week.

The sail, now located on Kirkland Air Force Base, awaits its new home in an Albuquerque park. All that is needed is a few million dollars more from donors and legislators.

Navy Birthday Ball this year will be on October 19<sup>th</sup>. Kristelle is also working with our Vice President John Jones on the plans for what undoubtedly will be a very special evening. I would be remiss if I did not acknowledge our USS New Mexico Committee Chairman Damon Runyon and those who work with him. CDR Carlos Otero, the recently relieved CO of the USS New Mexico (SSN-779), sent an email which starts with "I'd like to give my unending thanks to the New Mexico Navy League and our extraordinary group of supporters from our namesake state". Damon and New Mexico Pinon Coffee Company continue that support - in June they rushed a shipment to the submarine just before its rescheduled early deployment.

Late breaking news- according to the Navy League HQ website Preliminary Awards Announcement, we have won the Gold Mackie Award for our newsletter and website, and a Bronze Mackie Award for the Facebook page. Congrats to our editor Mark Schaefer, webmaster Ed Nava, and Facebook editor Kristelle Siarza Moon.

Dave Williams  
Commander, U.S. Navy (ret)



### NM Nautical Quiz:

How many tickles does it take to make an octopus laugh?

What did the Captain say when his son learned to float?

*(see answer on page 3)*

# Local New Mexico News

## Navy League New Mexico Council Presents 2024 Teddy Roosevelt Youth Awards

Here are your 2024 NJROTC and MCJROTC Teddy Roosevelt Youth Award winners from around the State of New Mexico and nearby Texas. The Navy League New Mexico Council presents these awards each year. The national Navy League of the United States established this Youth Medal that is awarded to **outstanding Junior Reserve Officers Training Corps (JROTC) cadets and Naval Sea Cadets**. The award consists of a medal, ribbon bar, certificate, and pamphlet on President Theodore Roosevelt.



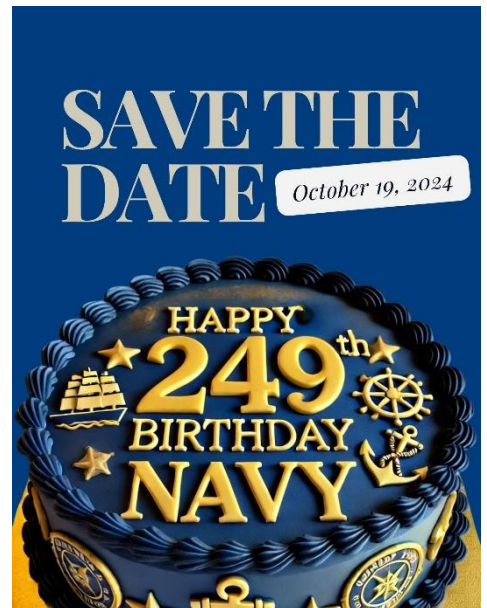
*New Mexico Council President Dave Williams presented the Navy League's Theodore Roosevelt Award to C/LTJG Yuridia Perez, NJROTC, Los Alamos High School on Friday, April 19, 2024.*

Unit	Albuquerque/ North NM	City	Cadet Recipient
MC	La Cueva High School	Albuquerque, NM	C/SSG Benjamin Tracy
MC	Atrisco Heritage High School	Albuquerque, NM	C/CPL Chris Chavez
MC	Eldorado High School	Albuquerque, NM	C/SGT Alexis Arellano
Navy	West Mesa High School	Albuquerque, NM	C/CDR Faith Fiaseu
Navy	Los Alamos High School	Los Alamos, NM	C/LTJG Yuridia Perez
Navy	Manzano High School	Albuquerque, NM	C/Alex Martinez
Navy	Santa Fe High School	Santa Fe, NM	C/PO2 Bianca Gonzalez
Navy	Belen High School	Belen, NM	C/Seaman Emma Waggoner
MC	Highland High School	Albuquerque, NM	C/Nevaeh Lujan
MC	Rio Grande High School	Albuquerque, NM	Cadet Estrella Griego Hernandez
Unit	Las Cruces/ South NM/Texas	City	Cadet Recipient
Navy	Gadsden H.S.	Anthony, NM	C/CPO Noah Marquez
Navy	Santa Teresa High School	Santa Teresa, NM	C/LTJG Dayanara Rivera
Navy	Organ Mountain High School	Las Cruces, NM	C/Mario Soto-Diaz
Navy	San Elizario HS	San Elizario, TX	C/CDR Donovan Lopez

## 2024 United States Naval Academy Appointees - New Mexico



Appointee	School	City	Status
Sebastian Bills	Goddard High School	Roswell	USNA
Natalya Sabal	Rehoboth Christian School / NMMI	Albuquerque	USNA
Robert Scott	Organ Mountain High School	Las Cruces	USNA
Pepper Cayme	Hobbs High School	Hobbs	NAPS
Jason Shelton	Home School	Edgewood	NAPS
Emily Crossman	Organ Mountain High School	Las Cruces	wait list



Answers to NM Nautical Quiz (from p.2):  
 1. Ten tickles (i.e. tentacles)  
 2. That's my buoy!

# Local New Mexico News

## Walking the Plank *by Ron Oleksak, USS Santa Fe Committee Chair*

A Memorial Day weekend visit to the City Different brought a USS Santa Fe plankowner to the submarine's namesake city. Brett Rodrick and his wife Rhonda visited New Mexico from their home next door in Texas, and had wonderful things to say about the food, the scenery, and the USS Santa Fe display down in city hall. I picked Brett's brain about his visit and his memories from 763's "birth" in the shipyard.

**Ron** - You are a double plankowner correct?

**Brett** - Yes I was a back to back plankowner – USS Annapolis (SSN 760) followed by USS Santa Fe (SSN 763).

**Ron** – What stands out in your mind about that time?

**Brett** – They both were built at Electric Boat/General Dynamics shipyard in Groton, CT. I was amazed by the sheer size of the shipyard and the number of civilian and military personnel working together.

**Ron** – Have you stayed friends with any of your old shipmates?

**Brett** – I have reconnected with a few shipmates via Facebook and the Boat Facebook group. I am still closely connected to the IBM technician that installed the weapon systems on those Boats.

**Ron** – Favorite thing you saw in Santa Fe?

**Brett** – My favorite thing in Santa Fe was the National Cemetery. We had an opportunity to place some flags at the tombstones of our fallen veterans for Memorial Day and the setting was quite beautiful.

Meeting up with these folks was great fun, and we were able to swap stories and enjoy some wonderful New Mexican cuisine (and drinks!) at Tomasita's right here in the heart of Santa Fe. If you are thinking of paying a visit to Santa Fe, please reach out for ideas on sights to see and places to eat – the City Different offers so very much to see and do year round.



*Brett and Rhonda Rodrick  
(photo by Ron Oleksak)*

## U.S. Naval Academy Alumni Association – New Mexico *by Joe McGuire, Secretary USNA AA NM Chapter*

Another successful and enjoyable New Mexico Chapter Family Picnic is in the books as of Sunday June 2, 2024. The weather cooperated again providing temps in the mid-eighties with a cooling breeze from the Northwest. The gathering location is the City of Albuquerque's Elena Gallegos Open Space Kiwanis Shelter in the Eastern foothills. A very popular location, we must reserve its use 7 months in advance. We enjoyed the event with a total of 25 in attendance and everyone bringing their delicious side dishes and desserts to accompany the main course of fried and barbecued chicken. No calories were counted as we met new friends and reminisced with old shipmates. A special guest was Midshipman Appointee Natalya Sabal who became a member of the Class of 2028 at the Induction Day Ceremony in Annapolis on June 27, 2024. Her family (Dad Jovi Sabal, Mom DeAnn and sister Caitlin) drove her from their home in Gallup, NM, some 150 miles to the Elena Gallegos Open Space to visit with alumni and get a flavor of what Natalya's next four years in Bancroft Hall will be like.



*Many U.S. Naval Academy classes were represented, and all greeted new incoming Midshipman Natalya Sabal. To join USNA AA NM Chapter, contact Joe McGuire at [sunnymack@msn.com](mailto:sunnymack@msn.com)*

# Namesake Ships



## 763 Promotions – Up, Up, and Away! *by Ron Oleksak, USS Santa Fe Committee Chair*

USS Santa Fe (SSN-763) is happy to announce recognitions and awards as follows:

### Submarine Squadron 11 Awards

- Squadron Junior Sailor of the Year – MMN1 Elliot Fisher
- Squadron Junior Officer of the Year – LT Quinn Anderson

### Enlisted promotions

- Our Maintenance, Material, and Management Chief (3MC) - Chief Sonar Technician Submarines (STSC) Jerry Verant was promoted to Senior Chief Sonar Technician Submarines (STSCS) Verant
- Our Sonar Chief - STSC Kyle Liggett was promoted to STSCS Liggett
- Our Leading Yeoman - Chief Yeoman Submarines Jared McDermott (YNSC) was promoted to Senior Chief Yeoman Submarines (YNSCS) McDermott
- Master Chief Promotion - Our friend, the Chief of the Boat (COB) - Senior Chief Fire Control Technician (FTCS) Mike Lee was promoted to Master Chief Fire Control Technician (FTCM) Lee



### Ensign to LTJG

- Jess Kirk, Annie Bladow, Ryan Teuschl (USS Key West Rider but we basically adopted him and are actually trying to keep him)

### LTJG to LT

- Dan Moriarty, Michael Bacot, Ryan Minnigerode, Tom Hawkins, Victor Sands, Austin White

In addition, We have picked our Blue Jacket of the Quarter (ITS3 Leonel Rodriguez), Junior Sailor of the Quarter (STS2 Kevin Scannell), and Sailor of the Quarter (MMN1 Elliot Fisher). We pinned fish on EMN3 Ivan Villarrealrobles, ETVSN Joseph Green, and CSSSA Chance Barker.

The Santa Fe, NM-based USS Santa Fe Committee of the Navy League provides plaques recognizing these awards and recognition. Congratulations to everyone who was recognized or promoted!

## Updates from USS New Mexico (SSN-779) *a recent email from CDR Marin to Damon Runyan*

Sir, NMX is preparing to return to sea tomorrow for our final certifications prior to deployment. We are scheduled to depart in approximately a month for a 6-month European AOR deployment. I am excited to watch the team perform for the forward operational commander! We have grown and continue to mature at all levels. The future is bright!!

Thank you for reaching out and everything you do for us!

Very Respectfully,

CDR Hector Marin  
Commanding Officer  
USS NEW MEXICO (SSN 779)

*Editor's comment: We do not know the details or dates of the deployment, as it is supposed to be, but Damon Runyan replied with the following:*

From the New Mexico Council of the Navy League and the citizens of the Land of Enchantment, we once again wish you and the dedicated crew of "our" submarine a successful and safe deployment. We send our sincere gratitude for the service of our nation's undersea warriors.

Very Respectfully, Damon and the members of the New Mexico Navy League

NAVY LEAGUE OF THE UNITED STATES  
 NEW MEXICO COUNCIL  
 P.O. BOX 91554  
 ALBUQUERQUE, NM 87199  
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The Navy League New Mexico Council thanks  
**ABQ Grafix**  
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*send 'em your business!*



Navy League of the United States New Mexico Council, P.O. Box 91554, Albuquerque, New Mexico 87199-1554. The Navy League is classified by the IRS as a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization and your donation is tax-deductible.

**2024 Upcoming Events for Navy League, New Mexico Council**

July 4	Independence Day
July 8	1800 Navy League, New Mexico Council board meeting via Zoom
August 12	1800 Navy League, New Mexico Council board meeting via Zoom
September 9-15	Navy Week 2024 – Albuquerque
October 19	Navy Birthday Ball – Albuquerque

**Save the Date!! Navy Birthday Ball Albuquerque is October 19<sup>th</sup>.**  
*Details to be sent by email, web page, and Facebook page.*