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## Winter 2025 Issue

### Page 1

**Namesake COs Western Style**

### Page 2

**- President's Message:  
NM Council Updates**

### Pages 3

**- Namesake Ships  
Fabled Keys for SSN-706  
Sail Restoration Progress**

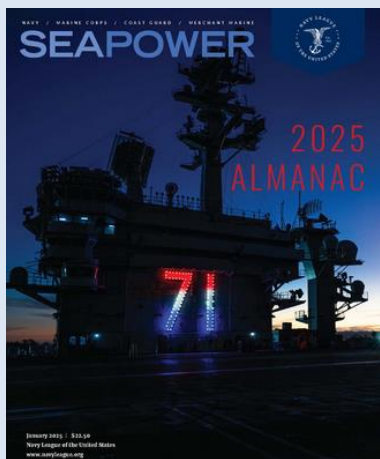
### Page 4-7

**- Local New Mexico News  
Feature Member Ray Bonda  
WWII Pearl Harbor Remains  
Sea Cadets Return to ABQ?  
Dave Williams Remembers**

### Page 8-11

**- From the Sea Chest  
The Queen's Men – Fletcher**

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## Three Namesake Submarine Skippers – Western Style

*by Dick Brown, Navy League of the United States, New Mexico Council*

You probably have heard of the Bonanza Creek Movie Ranch which has been in the news lately regarding Alec Baldwin and his 'Rust' movie. Many films and TV series have been shot there. Western fans will recall 'Butch Cassidy & the Sundance Kid', 'Silverado', 'Lonesome Dove', and 'Buffalo Girls' - all shot at the Bonanza Creek Ranch.



*Commanding Officers of all three New Mexico Namesake Boats at the Bonanza Creek Movie Ranch near Santa Fe.*

There was a time in 2014 when our New Mexico Council had all three Commanding Officers of our namesake boats visit Santa Fe at the same time. The attached photo by Rick Carver shows (L to R) CDR Tim Poe of USS Santa Fe, CDR Todd Moore of USS New Mexico, and CDR Trent Hesslink of USS Albuquerque hoisting their glasses at the Bonanza Creek Saloon. After their submarine commands, all three made O-6. During this same visit, our COs and their wives were guests of Gov. Susana Martinez for a Navy League dinner at the Governor's Mansion!

When you think about it, our submarine support committees have hosted many memorable events for our undersea warriors, and this one was very special.

We don't have much water, but Pride Runs Deep here in New Mexico.

**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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**Donations to the USS Albuquerque Monument are now being accepted at this City of Albuquerque web site:**

<https://one-albuquerque-fund.snwbll.com/uss-albuquerque-memorial>



## President's Message



David F Williams

*President, New Mexico Council*

**Wishing all a healthy, happy, prosperous New Year 2025 with fair winds and following seas.**

We had a very eventful fall as reflected in the articles you will find in this and our prior issue - Navy Ball, Navy Week, USS Albuquerque Press Conference, Annual Luncheon Meeting, and a fitting funeral service for a sailor lost in WW2 Pearl Harbor attack, to mention just a few of the more significant ones. As I told press representatives at the grave side memorial, what other country than the USA still would be working to identify remains and provide a fitting service with military honors led by a Navy Admiral eighty-three years after the attack.

On the very near horizon is another Network Navy Event arranged by our Program Chairman, John Glynn. I hope to see you with family and friends at 5:30 pm on Friday, January 17 at Black Angus Restaurant for an interesting presentation on Desert Storm. Details are on the flyer sent earlier and on our website.

In other future business our Council will be considering several opportunities to expand our support of sea services to the U.S. Coast Guard. Also, planning is already underway for Navy Week in Santa Fe to be held November 10-16, 2025.

We have two vacant board positions - Secretary and Scholarship Chair. If you want to volunteer, please contact either John Jones (entranosa@aol.com, 505-604-3456) or me ([dfwskw@gmail.com](mailto:dfwskw@gmail.com), 505-264-9187).

For the fifth year I was honored to serve on Senator Heinrich's Service Academy Nomination Selection Panel. It is a privilege to help select our future military leaders. New Mexico continues to provide highly qualified applicants to the academies. However, I have observed a disturbing trend which is likely a reflection of the decreasing interest in military careers from our youth. For the past 2-3 years, the pool of highly qualified applicants has been shrinking. For the first time in my service on a panel, we did not have to struggle to choose among "best of the best" for each service academy. We had enough highly qualified and motivated applicants to fill all openings. But the trend does not bode well for the future.

I urge all our members to encourage young people in our communities, including within their and their friends' families, to pursue military careers, both officer and enlisted. To this end, our Council again this spring will be making Teddy Roosevelt Awards to sea service JROTC units and will award college scholarships via the Naval Reserve Center and the UNM NROTC unit. Some of our members are Blue & Gold Officers supporting Naval Academy recruiting in our state. I ask all members to do their best to support our sea services pipeline of quality enlisted and officer applicants. It is vital to our future maritime security.

**Dave Williams**

Commander, U.S. Navy (ret)



# Namesake Ships



## Fabled USS Albuquerque Keys – The Rest of the Story *by Dick Brown, Navy League of the United States, NM Council*

You all know the story of Mayor Harry Kinney at USS Albuquerque's Commissioning Ceremony promising a Phantom-series Rolls Royce to the first skipper who brings USS ABQ up the Rio Grande for a port call. The fabled keys were passed from the old CO to the new CO at each change of command ceremony, although they were lost and replaced at least twice along the 33-year chain of custody.

Just for the record, here's the final chapter of this long-standing fable.

The attached photo shows the boat's last skipper, then-CDR Don Tenney, returning the keys to Mayor Richard Berry in April 2016. Pictured also is the COB, Senior Chief Neal Bederson, STSCS(SS), with two honored crewmen holding the battle flag of our combat veteran submarine. Mayor Kinney is also present in spirit (through the famous portrait that permanently resides in the Mayor's Office).



Adios, Sure Shooter, for now, but we look forward to your Memorial on the eastern edge of the Rio Grande.  
Dick Brown, former ETR2(SS)

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*Navy League members and the citizens of New Mexico are encouraged to support the USS Albuquerque Monument at*

<https://one-albuquerque-fund.snbll.com/uss-albuquerque-memorial>

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## Ship Shape at Piscetti Steel – Renovation of the Sail *by Damon Runyan, USS New Mexico Committee Chair*



*Upper half of the Sail with a powder coat and much of the rust removed. Workers were in progress in the lower parts of the sail as well.*



## New Mexico Council's Featured Member – Raymond Bonda

by David Williams, President, New Mexico Council

At the Mayor's press conference on Monday, September 9th to announce the USS Albuquerque memorial project, I met Raymond Bonda who was wearing a USS Princeton (CV-37) cap. I knew the carrier to be an Essex Class of late WW2, so I struck up a conversation with him. Turns out he is 100 years old (DOB 7/31/24) and served as a PO in both WW2 and the Korean War. I subsequently called him to find out more about him.

I was astonished in my initial conversation to discover Raymond's age and that he had served as a Navy Petty Officer in the "Big One". As my grandchildren would say- he is amazingly well preserved- mentally and physically.



*Raymond Bonda pauses for a photo at the Albuquerque train station on his way to report for duty in San Diego in 1943*

Always being on the lookout for new members, I offered him a complimentary one-year membership in our Council, which he accepted. To follow up on my offer, I had to get some basic information for his membership account for National. As we chatted on the phone several days later, I became intrigued by his Navy career. He is a living witness to Naval history from 1943 when he enlisted to when he was discharged late in the Korean War. Raymond offered to get into his records to confirm dates and locations precisely, but instead I just asked him to share some of his recollections.

Ray enlisted as soon as he graduated from high school in 1943, went to boot camp at Bainbridge MD, then "A" school in Norman OK, after which he reported to Naval Air Station San Diego (North Island) as an Aviation Metalsmith 3<sup>rd</sup> Class.



*Raymond and Carole Bonda at the 249<sup>th</sup> Navy Birthday Ball in Albuquerque*

The trip from Norman OK to San Diego by train took him through Albuquerque. He got off the train long enough to get a photo of himself in front of the train station. After a year of repairing battle damaged aircraft from the Pacific, he returned to Norman for "B" School and got his PO2 rating. With new orders in 1945 to the USS Gardiners Bay (AVP-39), a seaplane tender, he was off to sea throughout the Pacific including Philippines, Okinawa, Marianas and Marshal Islands, China, the Aleutians and eventually Japan. After the war, he and his ship participated in Atomic Bomb tests in the Pacific. With his enlistment up, he went to college at NYU in 1949 using the GI Bill. He stayed in the Naval Reserves to make money on the weekend to supplement his GI Bill. However, we all know what happened in 1950, so PO1 Bonda found himself back on active duty and assigned to the Air Wing deployed aboard the USS Princeton (CV-37). He repaired battle damage on various aircraft including the Navy's early jet fighter, the F9F Panther.

After his Korean War service, he returned to NYU for his bachelor's and master's degrees in social services. His profession eventually led him to Albuquerque to work for BIA and subsequently the Indian Health Service component of the Public Health Service, where he met his wife, Carole. He retired from PHS/IHS in 1984. Since then, he has pursued hobbies including painting, creative writing, and travel.



## Pearl Harbor Remains of John Cuthbert Auld Laid to Rest in Albuquerque

by Mark Schaefer, newsletter editor

On December 7, 1941, USS Oklahoma (BB-37) was moored in Pearl Harbor on Ford Island outboard of and alongside the USS Maryland (BB-46). Targeted by warplanes from the Japanese aircraft carriers Akagi and Kaga, and one of the first ships hit in the attack, she was struck by three torpedoes amidships. The third torpedo penetrated the hull, and the ship began to capsize to port. Two more torpedoes struck and the escaping men were strafed as they tried to egress. The ship rolled over until the masts hit the bottom and only the starboard side was above the water. In all, 429 men were killed that fateful day.



USS Oklahoma at Ford Island, Pearl Harbor, HI on December 7, 1941 – U.S. Navy Photo



**John Cuthbert Auld**  
6/15/1918 to 12/7/1941  
Photo from his Memorial  
Service pamphlet



**John Cuthbert Auld**  
Shown in Hawaii



Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency –  
Photo courtesy of Department of Defense

A recent effort to identify the remains of unaccounted-for sailors found that Seaman 2<sup>nd</sup> class John Auld was one of those sets of remains. Before DNA processing, only 35 of the 429 crew members had been identified. The remains of all of the unidentified sailors were buried together in 61 caskets in 45 graves at the Punchbowl National Memorial Cemetery of the Pacific on Oahu. At present, the Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency (DPAA) has identified 396 remains (a 92.3% success rate for the program), with John Cuthbert Auld being one of them.



RADM Michael Van Poots presents flag to Richard Auld, nephew of John Auld; Photo courtesy of KRQE-TV Albuquerque

Eighty-three years after that fateful day, sailor John Cuthbert Auld's remains were laid to rest in Albuquerque's Fairview Memorial Park on December 6, 2024. Full military honors were rendered with RADM Michael Van Poots presiding and the Navy League's New Mexico Council represented by Council President David Williams. Auld, a sailor from Detroit, Michigan, was born in England in 1918. His nephew, Richard Auld of Albuquerque, had never met his uncle, but he was honored to bring him back to the family in Albuquerque.



*Remembering*  
**PEARL HARBOR**

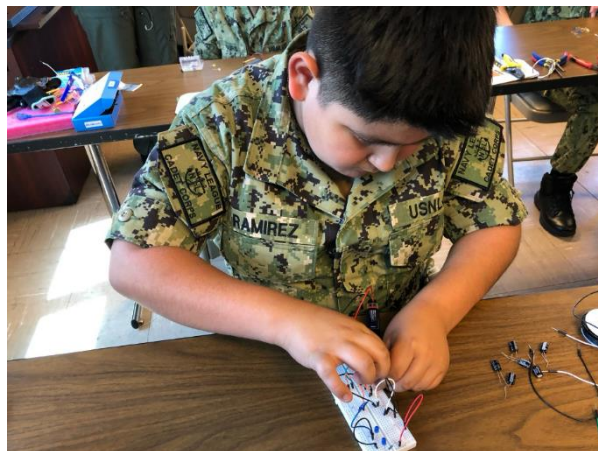


## Could Sea Cadets be returning to Albuquerque in 2025? *Story written by Sea Cadets Public Affairs*

When people ask how Sea Cadets has changed lives, former Sea Cadet Madeline Perez responds, “How has it not changed my life?” As a young girl, Florida native Perez was unsure of herself. Seven years of training in a disciplined environment surrounded by supportive people enabled Perez to become a leader, “leading with the goal of assisting people to the best of my ability.”

Cadet Yuvanny Fuentes says his eight years as a Sea Cadet “have given me the opportunity to experience thrilling adventures. These experiences allowed me to better navigate a plethora of situations in my life.”

By engaging in challenging opportunities and stepping outside of their comfort zones, Sea Cadets develop well-earned confidence. By interacting face to face with volunteers and fellow cadets, these young men and women also improve their social skills and are better prepared to become contributing members of society.



*Sea Cadet Daniel Ramirez builds a circuit board during STEM training in Milwaukee.*

Like many of the 5,700 middle and high-school aged students in the U.S. Naval Sea Cadet Corps, Cadet Fuentes pushed himself to achieve goals he never knew possible. When Fuentes joined Sea Cadets, he was “timid and soft spoken” and “didn’t like having to talk to my shipmates, much less give them orders.” Through opportunities to serve as a leader during summer training sessions, Fuentes was “eased into this role of a leader, starting small” and eventually “leading around 100 to 200 cadets when I go to training.”

According to Cadet Nicolas Perez, “Being a Sea Cadet is super cool because we get to do a lot of amazing stuff and wear uniforms.” Perez enjoys physical training including running, push-ups, and planks. Exercise also helps cadets develop confidence. Sea Cadets holds high standards for fitness and aims to increase the number of young people eligible for military service.

Rear Adm. Andrew Lennon, U.S. Navy (retired), Executive Director of the U.S. Naval Sea Cadet Corps, says volunteers are the key to success. “I am amazed that people give so much of their personal time to bring up the next generation. These generous souls really make a difference.” Volunteers model core values of honor, respect, commitment, and service. According to Cadet Nicholas Perez, Sea Cadets “made me more disciplined, more confident, stronger mentally and physically.”

Now a Midshipman at the United States Naval Academy, Cadet Fuentes reflects fondly on his Sea Cadets experience. “I carry with me the lessons learned and the values instilled by Sea Cadets. As I pursue a career in the military, I am confident that the skills, experiences, and friendships cultivated through this program will guide me on my journey.”

Sea Cadets is looking to start a unit in the Albuquerque area. To find out how you can volunteer and support young people like Cadets Fuentes and Perez, contact CAPT Thurraya S Kent, USN, ret, Sea Cadets strategic growth director at [tkent@seacadets.org](mailto:tkent@seacadets.org).







## New Mexico Council President Remembers *by David Williams, President, New Mexico Council*

*Editor's Note → These photos are but a glimpse into Dave Williams' early Navy Aviation career. We will have to get the rest of the story. Here's a brief synopsis from Dave...*

I got 1/2 of my Vietnam flight hours in this model aircraft as a back seat forward air controller for air strikes, artillery and Naval gunfire missions, and visual reconnaissance missions for SEAL ops. I was the 1970 version of a recon drone.

Four 2.75 inch rockets were mix of white phosphorus marking rounds and high explosives. I supplemented the HE rounds by leaning out the side and firing my M79 grenade launcher or M16.



*Photos courtesy of Dave Williams*





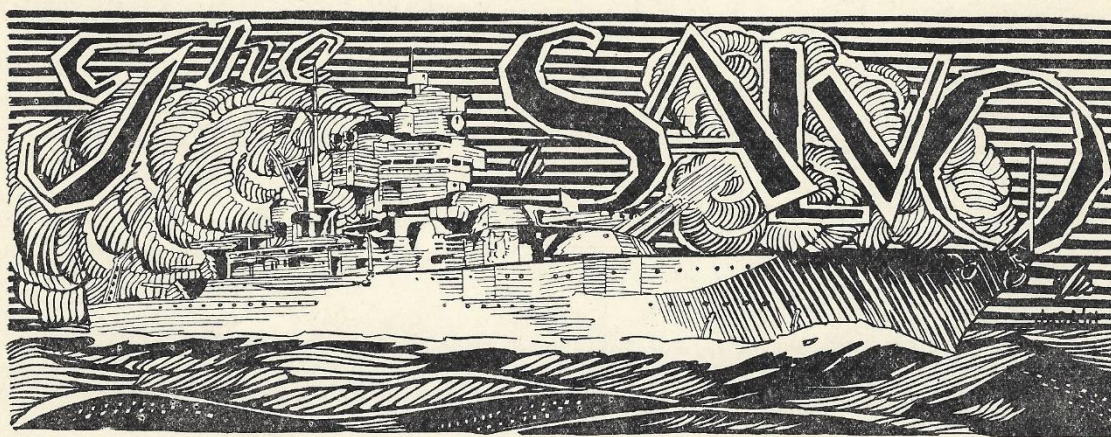
## From the Sea Chest — by Greg Trapp, JD, Chapter Historian

### The Queen's Men by Greg Trapp, JD

**Author's Note:** This is one in a series of articles about the men who served on USS New Mexico (BB-40). The battleship was known as The Queen, and during World War II her ship's paper was called "The Queen's Daily." The paper ran a regular column in the last year of the war called the Queen's Men that highlighted the work of an individual sailor. The sailors who served on the Queen included John S. McCain Sr., Hyman G. Rickover, Frank J. Fletcher, Edward "Butch" O'Hare, John Piña Craven, and *Ellis M. Zacharias*. This article will examine the accomplishments of **Frank J. Fletcher**.

### The Queen's Men: The Story of Frank Jack Fletcher

The battleship USS New Mexico was on route to Honolulu on the night of Thursday, April 29, 1937. In the ship's wardroom on that night a "very pleasant evening was had by all." That was the description of the event that was published in The Salvo on May 1, 1937. The Salvo was the battleship's newspaper between the years 1924 to 1941.



MARK III

U. S. S. NEW MEXICO, enroute to Honolulu, T. H., 1 May, 1937.

MOD. 15

#### CAPTAIN'S BIRTHDAY HONORED

A very attractive birthday dinner in honor of Captain F. J. Fletcher was given Thursday evening by the Wardroom Mess. Special menus were printed for the occasion, and each cook and steward did his best to serve a dish slightly better than its predecessors.

The band, under the leadership of Blankenship, rendered an hour and a half of music, and it was agreed by all hands that they had never played better on any other occasion. Just after the salad course, a large birthday cake was brought in by a cook in full regalia, and as the band struck up "Happy Birthday to You," every officer joined spontaneously in the song.

All in all, a very pleasant evening was had by all, and the Salvo, wishes to take this opportunity on behalf of all hands to wish Captain Fletcher many happy returns of the day.

#### THE VOYAGER'S LAMENT

There are fifty-million places  
Where the sun forever shines  
There are flower-scented breezes  
There are palms in graceful lines,

But of all these warmer climates  
Where some tropic maiden smiles  
The U. S. Navy had to choose  
The darned Aleutian Isles.

Where the rainstorms change to  
snowstorms  
And the fog to driving sleet  
And the gray and frigid water  
Turns to ice beneath your feet.

Take me back to California  
Take me South or West or East  
But 'twixt me and Unalaska  
I want ninety leagues at least.

For I've heard of April Showers  
Someone else conceived that rime  
But I want no part of snowstorms  
In the Good Old Summertime!

#### SHE BLEW AND BLEW!

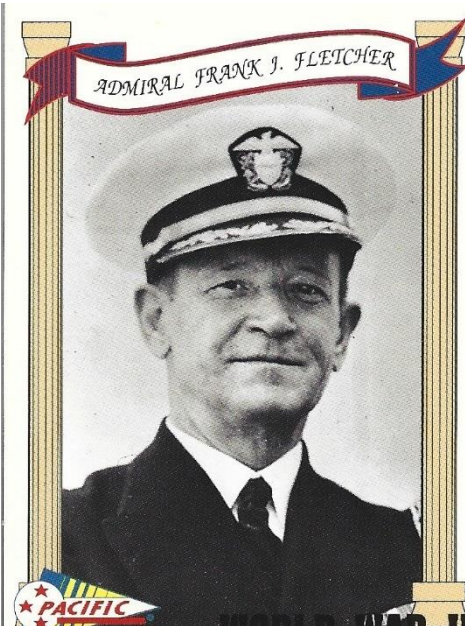
The elements must have considered, that the "Queen of the Seas" had been playing land-lubber in the navy yard too long, for they waited for her to just get clear of Puget Sound before pouncing on her and making her do nothing short of a trapeze act.

Called by some a Willewaw, a veritable gale blew out of the North reaching fifty-knot proportions at times, chasing everyone below, and keeping them there for three days. Loaded down as we were with excess fuel oil, the *New Mexico* rode sluggishly and green water swept continuously from stem to stern. The destroyers were out of sight much of the time, and it was learned later that they had rolled as much as 47 degrees on each side.

But the *New Mexico* had her own troubles. In addition to upset stomachs, some actual material damage was done. Water leakage and broken



The Salvo was reporting on a gathering that took place to celebrate the 52<sup>nd</sup> birthday of Captain Frank J. Fletcher. In the words of the Newspaper, The Salvo “wishes to take this opportunity on behalf of all hands to wish Captain Fletcher many happy returns of the day.” Five years later, the day would return with the world at war, and Rear Admiral Frank Fletcher in command of a carrier task force that was on route to engage the Japanese fleet in what became known as the Battle of the Coral Sea.



*Shown here is a photo of Frank J. Fletcher as an admiral during World War II.*

Frank Jack Fletcher was born in Iowa on April 29, 1885. He entered the Naval Academy in 1902 and graduated in 1906. His uncle was Frank Friday Fletcher, the namesake of the World War II Fletcher class of destroyers. Both men would rise to the rank of admiral, and both men earned the Congressional Medal of Honor for their conduct during the Battle of Veracruz in 1914. Frank J. Fletcher earned his Medal of Honor for helping to rescue over 350 refugees while under enemy fire. A total of 56 Medals of Honor were awarded for service during the Veracruz occupation, which lasted from April to November of 1914. The Navy Cross was the more prestigious award at the time, and Frank J. Fletcher earned the Navy Cross for his conduct as commanding officer of the destroyer USS Benham during World War I.

Fletcher assumed command of USS New Mexico in June of 1936. The Queen had undergone an extensive modernization just three years before, emerging from the drydocks as one of the Navy's most powerful battleships. USS New Mexico was the flagship of Battleship Division Three when Fletcher took command. Fletcher left New Mexico in December of 1937 to serve as Assistant Chief at the Bureau of Navigation under Rear Admiral Chester W. Nimitz. Fletcher would go on to command carrier groups in the aborted effort to relieve Wake Island, during the crucial battle of the Coral Sea, at the decisive Battle of Midway, and during the invasion of Guadalcanal.

The Battle of the Coral Sea took place between May 4 and May 8, 1942, with Rear Admiral Fletcher in overall command. It was the first naval clash in history in which the opposing ships neither sighted nor fired upon the other. Fletcher was in command of Task Force 17, which included the carrier USS Yorktown (CV-5). Fletcher's forces also included Task Force 11, which included the carrier USS Lexington (CV-2), and Task Force 44, which was comprised of American and Australian cruisers and destroyers. USS Hornet (CV-8) and USS Enterprise (CV-6) were returning to Pearl Harbor after the Doolittle Raid and were unable to participate in the battle.

The Battle of the Coral Sea began on 4 May when Fletcher ordered Task Force 17 to strike Japanese forces off Tulagi, sinking one destroyer and three minesweepers. The three Allied task forces subsequently combined on May 6, joining up south of Guadalcanal. The American carriers were spotted by Japanese scout planes on that same day, but Fletcher was unaware of his detection and did not know the location of the main Japanese carrier force. Both sides sent up additional scout planes on the morning of May 7, and at 07:22 Japanese planes mistakenly identified the oiler USS Neosho and the destroyer USS Sims as the main American carrier force. The Japanese responded by launching an all-out aerial attack against what they thought were the American carriers. After discovering their error, the Japanese sank Sims and damaged Neosho so severely that Neosho later had to be skuttled. Fletcher received a scout report at 08:15 that misidentified the Tulagi invasion force as including two carriers. The scout had actually spotted the light carrier Shoho, which was part of the Tulagi invasion force. Thinking the main Japanese carrier force had been found, Fletcher launched all of his available aircraft from Lexington and Yorktown. The result was the sinking of Shoho, which was reported by the Lexington squadron commander with the radio message, “scratch one flat top.”

The first day of the Battle of the Coral Sea had seen the American carriers hidden by cloud cover, but the second day found the fortunes reversed with the cloud cover protecting the Japanese carriers. At 08:20, a scout from Lexington spotted a Japanese carrier through a break in the clouds. Just two minutes later, the American Carriers were spotted by a Japanese scout plane. The carriers were about 240 miles apart, and both fleets responded by launching their attack planes. The planes from Lexington and Yorktown drew first blood when their dive bombers severely damaged the carrier Shokaku. The carrier was hit by three bombs, forcing Shokaku to retire from the battle. The American torpedoes and torpedo planes were woefully ineffective at this point in the war, and none of the American torpedoes hit Shokaku. (story continues on next page)



## From the Sea Chest — by Greg Trapp, JD, Chapter Historian

### The Queen's Men: The Story of Frank Jack Fletcher (continued from previous page)

Zuikaku was concealed by the cloud cover, helping it to evade detection. The Japanese began their attack on Yorktown and Lexington at 11:13, hitting Lexington with two torpedoes and two bombs. Leaking aviation fuel on the carrier triggered catastrophic fires, and Lexington was skuttled at 19:15 by torpedoes fired from an American destroyer. The Japanese hit Yorktown with an armor piercing bomb, but the more maneuverable Yorktown was able to evade additional hits from Japanese bombs and torpedoes.

The Battle of the Coral Sea was a strategic victory for the Allies. Japan's invasion of Port Moresby in New Guinea was stopped, marking the first time a major Japanese invasion was halted. That strategic victory came at the cost of the sinking of Lexington, the damage to Yorktown, the loss of Sims, and the loss of Neosho. In turn, the Japanese lost the light carrier Shoho and suffered severe damage to the carrier Shokaku. Most crucially, the sinking of Shoho and the damage to Shokaku, and the loss of pilots from Shokaku and Zuikaku, meant that those carriers and their pilots were not available to participate in the decisive Battle of Midway.

The Battle of Midway took place from June 3 to 7, 1942. Fletcher was in overall command aboard the hastily repaired USS Yorktown, which was a part of Task Force 17, and Rear Admiral Raymond Spruance was in command of Task Force 16 consisting of the carriers USS Enterprise and USS Hornet. The carrier battle began on June 4, which was when Fletcher ordered Spruance to attack after a PBY Catalina spotted the Japanese carriers. Rather than taking the time needed for his aircraft to assemble for a coordinated attack, Spruance ordered his planes to immediately Strike. Spruance's reasoning was that the Japanese carriers presented an imminent threat to his own carriers, and that by immediately attacking he might catch the Japanese carriers with their decks loaded with planes and bombs. By contrast, Fletcher drew from the lessons of the Battle of the Coral Sea, and the Yorktown planes took the time to assemble so as to unleash a coordinated attack on the Japanese carriers. However, Yorktown was itself hit by planes from Hiryu and seriously damaged, forcing Fletcher to transfer operational command to Spruance. A second and ultimately fatal torpedo attack from Hiryu forced Yorktown to be abandoned. Yorktown was eventually torpedoed and sunk by a Japanese submarine. However, planes from Enterprise and Yorktown were already in the air, and they attacked and sank Hiryu.

The Battle of Midway was a decisive Allied victory, with the loss of just Yorktown compared to the loss of the Japanese carriers Soryu, Kaga, Akagi, and Hiryu. As Spruance had hoped, the Americans had caught the Japanese carriers with their hanger decks full of planes that were being refueled and rearmed. The battle was the turning point in the Pacific War, and the Japanese never recovered from the loss of four of their prized carriers along with a large portion of their veteran pilots.

Fletcher's next major action was as a Vice Admiral in command of Task Force 61 during the Allied invasion of Guadalcanal in August of 1942. The invasion force included the carriers USS Saratoga, USS Enterprise, and USS Wasp. Saratoga (CV-3) had been stateside for repairs during the Battle of the Coral Sea and the Battle of Midway. Wasp (CV-7) had been in the Atlantic and was ordered to the Pacific after the battles. The invasion of Guadalcanal began on August 7. The Japanese were caught by surprise, and



Shown here is a postal cover canceled onboard USS New Mexico on August 28, 1936. This rare cover was signed by Captain Frank Fletcher two months after he took command of USS New Mexico. (Collection of G. Trapp).



the Marines on Guadalcanal met little initial resistance. However, resistance soon stiffened and the Japanese responded with attacks from Rabaul that targeted the Marines transport and cargo ships. On the night of August 8, the Japanese sent a force of cruisers and destroyers to attack the Marines and the Allied fleet. The Japanese caught the cruisers and destroyers by surprise early in the morning of 9 August in what became known as the Battle of Savo Island. The Japanese sank one Australian cruiser and three American cruisers. Unaware of the Japanese attack at Savo Island, and with his carriers running low on fuel and facing threats from land-based bombers, at 03:30 on 9 August Fletcher decided to withdraw his carriers. This left the Marines on Guadalcanal without air support and forced the transports and cargo ships to withdraw before they could unload all of their supplies. Despite the Allied losses, The Marines were able to hold on to the newly opened Henderson Field, which allowed air operations that threatened Japanese forces in the Eastern Solomons. The Guadalcanal campaign next led to the Battle of the Eastern Solomons, which took place on August 24 and 25. The Battle of the Eastern Solomons was the third carrier clash of the war and resulted in Enterprise being heavily damaged by three Japanese bombs. Japan in turn lost the light carrier Ryujo, and more crucially, lost further numbers of irreplaceable veteran pilots.

Admiral Ernest J. King, Commander-in-Chief U.S. Fleet, saw to it that Fletcher was not given command of another carrier task force after the actions at Guadalcanal. Fletcher had been faulted for abandoning the Marines at Guadalcanal, and for not more aggressively pursuing Japanese carriers. The histories written shortly after the war were largely unsympathetic towards Fletcher and in particular those written by Rear Admiral Samuel E. Morison's. Writing in the June and September, 1992 issues of Naval History, historian John Lundstrom, with the benefit of hindsight and access to Japanese communications and declassified Allied intelligence, wrote that Fletcher had been given a "bum rap," and that Fletcher was an "officer who deserves far more acclaim than he has so far received." Fletcher had several things going against him in 1942. For one, he was not a naval aviator, which subjected him to criticism from King and other naval aviators. Fletcher also was in command at a time when the Japanese navy was ascendant, and when the United States Navy could ill afford to lose any of the carriers that were holding the line until the Essex-class carriers could enter service. For Fletcher, the reality in 1942 was that his intelligence was often incomplete or inaccurate, American radar was unreliable, Japan still had large numbers of skilled veteran pilots, The Mitsubishi Zero significantly outperformed the American F4F Wildcat, The Douglas Devastator TBD was antiquated, The Americans had abysmal torpedoes, and the Japanese had excellent torpedoes. In the opinion of this writer, Fletcher does indeed deserve far more acclaim than he has received.

Note: The destroyer USS Sims that was sunk during the battle of the Coral Sea was one of the three destroyers that screened USS New Mexico on the morning of December 10, 1941, when the battleship struck the freighter SS Oregon.

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## NM Naval Academy Alums Oversee a 31-13 Win over Army at the Craft Republic on 12/14



*Twenty-four Naval Academy graduates from New Mexico cheer on NAVY at the Craft Republic for the 125<sup>th</sup> Army-Navy game on 12/14/2024 (photo by Deborah Schaefer)*

CBS enjoyed its best audience ever for the Army-Navy game on 12/14/2024 for the 125<sup>th</sup> Army-Navy competition. The Mishipmen went on to a 31-13 win to clinch the Commander-In-Chief's Trophy.

Going into the game, Navy was 8-3 on the season and Army had just come off a win of the American Athletic Conference and an 11-1 record.

Through 2024, Navy leads the series 63-55-7. **GO NAVY!!**

NAVY LEAGUE OF THE UNITED STATES  
NEW MEXICO COUNCIL  
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**2025 Upcoming Events for Navy League, New Mexico Council**

January 13	Navy League, New Mexico Council board meeting via Zoom
January 17	<b>Network Navy!</b> 5:30 to 7:30 pm Black Angus restaurant, 2290 Wyoming Blvd NE; ABQ Dining from menu; drinks from the bar. <b>RSVP to John Glynn <a href="mailto:glynstewart@yahoo.com">glynstewart@yahoo.com</a> by 1/14.</b> <b>Program: The Gulf War and USMC Rapid Deployment by Katherine Glynn</b>
February 10	Navy League, New Mexico Council board meeting via Zoom
March 10	Navy League, New Mexico Council board meeting via Zoom
April 14	Navy League, New Mexico Council board meeting via Zoom
May 12	Navy League, New Mexico Council board meeting via Zoom