

# NM NAUTICAL NEWS

OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF THE  
NEW MEXICO COUNCIL  
NAVY LEAGUE OF THE UNITED STATES



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

July 2026

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## U.S. Navy in Hormuz -- Navy News Reels *by Mark Schaefer, newsletter editor*

As the military operation against Iran winds down, there has been a lot of news about the Navy's role. Some of these stories are widely publicized. Others have come from distinctly Navy-oriented news sources. All are true news. I hope you learn something new from these "news reel" snippets of U.S. Navy contributions.

- A 14-point peace plan was outlined in a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) that spelled out provisions for reopening the Strait of Hormuz and addressed Iran's nuclear program.
- A U.S. Naval blockade of Iran put pressure on commercial ships trying to enter ports in Iran. Nine ships were disabled, many due to strikes on the engine rooms of those ships.
- The U.S. Naval blockade was lifted on June 18<sup>th</sup>, ending an operation that began on April 12<sup>th</sup> and led to the redirection of 142 commercial vessels going to or from Iranian ports. CENTCOM said the blockade ships will remain in the area to make sure all aspects of the MOU are adhered to.
- A U.S. Navy unmanned surface vessel rescued the crew of an Army AH-64 Apache helicopter near Oman. This was a first for an unmanned vehicle search and rescue. The speedboat drone offered a glimpse of how future rescues might be carried out. The Corsairs can carry up to 1000 pounds and travel 1000 miles.
- Hundreds of Tomahawk cruise missiles were launched against Iran, mainly by Navy destroyers and submarines. Estimates are that up to 850 Tomahawks have been fired.
- The Navy League's June 2026 issue of SEAPOWER, shown at left, addressed the most complex logistical challenges of the chokepoint of the Hormuz Strait, both from a commercial and military point of view. Worth a read!



*A Saronic Corsair 24-foot autonomous speed boat. Photo from Saronic Technologies, Austin, TX*

***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.  
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## President's Message



John Jones  
*President, New Mexico Council*

### AHOY!

The Council Board continues to meet via Zoom on the 2<sup>nd</sup> Monday of each month at 6:00 PM. If you'd like to participate, let us know via the contact information in this newsletter.

Hope you enjoy the wide variety of articles in the newsletter, which covers everything from Navy News in the Persian Gulf to Women's Veterans Day, JROTC Awards, Naval Academy midshipman appointments from New Mexico, USS Santa Fe (SSN-763) ice operations and change of command, and a continuing series on the battleship NEW MEXICO.

The Naval Reserve Center Albuquerque held a Change of Command ceremony on Sunday, June 7<sup>th</sup>, with Commander Nicholas Bularsik turning over the helm to Lieutenant Commander Lazaro Cardenas. Commander Bularsik is headed to the Pentagon, and the new commanding officer (a native of Taos NM) has come from a year at the Naval War College – so welcome home, Commander!

In May, Captain Gary Cave, CO of the UNM NROTC Unit, retired from active duty with 30 years of dedicated and successful service. He'll remain in a retired active-duty status until he is relieved of command in August.

Several board members recently helped the Rio Grande Valley Blue Star Mothers to pack 'care packages' for active-duty New Mexicans and crewmembers on New Mexico namesake submarines. You can find out more about them at [www.rgvnmbism.org](http://www.rgvnmbism.org).

The Navy Ball celebrating the 251<sup>st</sup> birthday of the Navy and the 250<sup>th</sup> birthday of the United States will be held at Isleta Resort and Casino on Saturday, October 17<sup>th</sup>. A link to sign up for tickets will be on our website ([www.nmnavyleague.com](http://www.nmnavyleague.com)) will be active after the 7<sup>th</sup> of July.

The Navy League recently announced awards for Councils based on their 2025 activities – and New Mexico... read the article!

At the UNM NROTC ceremony honoring graduation midship (a week prior to commissioning), we presented a \$500 check to a Midshipman 1<sup>st</sup> Class returning to UNM in the Fall. At the commissioning ceremony, we presented a Leadership Sword.

A goal of the Council this year is to increase our membership – if you have a friend interested in the maritime support mission of the League, or is a former sea service member, please refer them to the Council or the National web site ... there is PLENTY to do! There are NEW membership brackets, and a one-year E-membership is now free of charge.

That said, if you support what we're doing, consider a tax-deductible donation to the New Mexico Council. Our supported units, JROTC Units, the Sea Cadets and scholarship recipients will benefit.

**John L Jones, CDR SC USN (ret)**

Stay in touch, tell us what you think ...

Contact me any time at [JohnLJonesNM@gmail.com](mailto:JohnLJonesNM@gmail.com), or by mail through the Council's Post Office Box.

**Not for Self, but Country.**  
**Semper Fortis.**

# Local Awards and Appointees



## 2026 United States Naval Academy Appointees - New Mexico

Name	Action	Educational Institution	City
Margaret Collins	USNA - Offer Accepted	Las Cruces High School	Las Cruces
Alexis Arellano	USNA - Offer Accepted	Eldorado High School	Albuquerque
Nathan Duffield	USNA - Offer Accepted	Los Alamos High School	Los Alamos
Soo Lee	USNA - Offer Accepted	La Cueva High School	Albuquerque

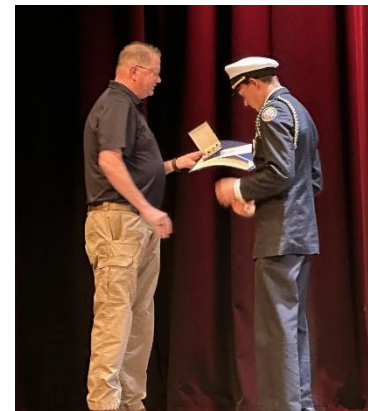


## 2026 Teddy Roosevelt Youth Awards Presented by Navy League New Mexico Council

Here are your 2026 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.



Unit	School	Recipient	City
USN	Los Alamos HS	C/LTJG Marcus Aurelius Oviedo	Los Alamos
USN	San Elizario HS	C/CDR Priscilla Gardea	San Elizario, TX
USN	Belen HS	C/LTJG Haydee Martinez	Belen
USMC	Rio Grande HS	Cadet Navaeh Tesillo	Albuquerque
USMC	La Cueva HS	C/SSGT David Small	Albuquerque
USMC	Eldorado HS	C/LCpl Saer Mall	Albuquerque
USMC	Atrisco Heritage HS	Cadet Daniel Moya	Albuquerque
USN	Santa Teresa HS	Cadet Anabel Telles	Santa Teresa
USN	Highland HS	Cadet Hope Wiggins	Albuquerque
USN	Santa Fe HS	Cadet Luke Jones	Santa Fe
USN	Gadsden HS	Cadet Chief Jesus Hernandez	Anthony
USN	West Mesa HS	C/CDR Jesse Pittman	Albuquerque
USN	Organ Mountain HS	Cadet Autumn Montoya	Las Cruces
USMC	Cibola HS	Cadet Leroy Vigil	Albuquerque

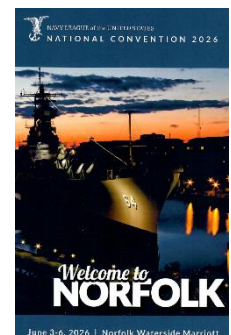


NM Council USS Santa Fe Committee Chair, Ron Oleksak, presented the Navy League's 2026 Theodore Roosevelt Award to Cadet LTJG Marcus Aurelius Oviedo, Los Alamos School.

## New Mexico Council Sweeps National Convention Awards *by Dave Williams, Past President, NM Council*

New Mexico Council, classified by the Navy League as a "Small Council", captured more awards at the Navy League National Convention than any other council in its class. The annual event was held in Norfolk, VA June 3-6, 2026. Our Council was one of three councils to receive a "Sea Service Unit Adoption Excellence Award", thanks to the supporters of USS Santa Fe (SSN 763), led by Ron Oleksak, and USS New Mexico (SSN-779), led by Damon Runyan. Our quarterly newsletter, "New Mexico Nautical News" garnered another Mackie Award (Silver), the 6th time on the podium since the Mackie awards were presented as medal-winners.

We were also recognized with a "Council Leadership Scholars Program" award of \$1000 reimbursing the Council for the previously approved stipend for Council Vice President Dave Williams to represent New Mexico and the Rocky Mountain Region at the Convention. Dave also was selected to serve on the National Nominating Committee which interviewed candidates for National Offices. The Committee selected a slate which included the former CNO, ADM John Richardson, to be the new national president. All nominees were subsequently elected by the national delegates.



# Namesake Ships



## USS Santa Fe and Operation Ice Camp 2026 *from the Commanding Officer, CDR Eric Knepper*

Greetings to our New Mexico and Santa Fe family. As USS SANTA FE is wrapping up our surge deployment, I wanted to share some of the highlights with you. For once we can actually talk about these operations. About a year and a half ago, SANTA FE was selected to participate in Operation Ice Camp 2026, a series of submarine exercises and operations in the Arctic region for regional assured access, scientific research, and some fun liberty on an ice floe. Although we could not talk about it then, the mission became unclassified when we broke through the ice in March to kick off the operation. This year's Ice Camp was named after USS BOARFISH, the first submarine to conduct operations under an ice floe in the Chukchi Sea as part of Operation Bluenose.

The most challenging part of our adventure was navigating the Bering Strait during the winter to and from ice camp operations. For a little over a week from St. Lawrence Island to Wrangle Island, my team was focused on shallow water operations requiring a level deck while standing off from the bottom with thick ice canopies above. Three days of this week was spent transiting the actual strait where we were on average, 20 feet off the bottom in a total water depth of 150 feet, with ice keels clearing our sail from ranges of 20 to 60 feet. Our sensors provided us early indication of the deeper ones that were allision threats, allowing us to conn the ship around them at slow speeds.



*USS Santa Fe (SSN-763) peeking through the ice*



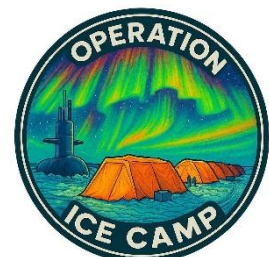
*USS Santa Fe (SSN-763) cutting the ice for topside access*

Throughout Ice Camp we primarily operated in the Beaufort Sea and participated in various exercises, hosted distinguished visitors, and interacted with media. More importantly, we had the opportunity to spend some liberty on the ice which very few Sailors get to do during their career. In fact, we only had 6 crew members on board who made this journey before and could consider themselves "Blue Noses." The rest of us "Warm Bodies" earned the right to join this prestigious club once we held our Blue Nose Ceremony. We were able to break through the ice several times and had a Starlink satellite wifi puck available, which Sailors used to call friends and loved ones. After Operation Ice Camp, we made our way to the North Pole and spent overnight liberty there while enjoying some Santa Fe Brewing Company beers. After

we departed the North Pole, we did circumnavigate the globe in 25 minutes. Although this was at the pole, it still counts.

Other notable achievements up under the ice:

- Length of deployment/days under the ice: 73 days/42 days
- Nautical miles steamed/nautical miles steamed under the ice: 10545/7139
- Surfacing through the ice and liberty: 6
- Overnight ice liberty: 3
- Number of new Bluenoses: 136



- Total number of qualifications/number of dolphins earned: 297/9
- Number of re-enlistments: 15
- Polar bears sightings: 2
- Certificates earned: Order of Magellan, Order of the Dragon, and Blue Nose
- Medals earned: Navy Arctic Service Medal
- DVs hosted: ADM Koehler (PACFLT), ADM Cavanaugh (SUBPAC), and Admiral Stafford (UWDC)
- Partner Nations along for the ride: 5 UK riders and 1 Canadian rider
- Deepest ice keel observed: 90 feet

Although the ice camp has ended, the hard work will continue as the crew will start preparations for their next deployment. This will be yet again another challenging year but one that the team is ready for. As always, we appreciate the support the Navy League has given us over the years and we look forward to the next chapter with you by our side. Thank you.



*The North Pole!!*

## **USS Santa Fe (SSN-763) Change of Command May 15, 2026**

*by Ron Oleksak, USS Santa Fe Committee Chair*

On the beautiful morning of May 15th, 2026, Commander Migs Recalde assumed command of the USS Santa Fe submarine from Commander Eric Knepper in the traditional Change of Command ceremony. Naval Base Point Loma was filled with SUBRON 11 brass, friends and families of both officers, the always cheerful Navy Band, and a steady stream of sea birds and helicopters overhead who wanted to get in on the action.

The New Mexico Navy League’s USS Santa Fe Committee Chair, Ron Oleksak, was on hand to welcome in the new skipper, give a proper send off to the outgoing CO, and reinforce friendships formed over the years of supporting SSN-763, the “Iron Saint”.

Commander Knepper (Captain-select) is heading to EUCOM in Germany with his family for the next tour of duty, and Commander Recalde and family join the Santa Fe family, having previously served at sea as XO of the USS Hawaii along with tours on the USS Maryland, USS Michigan, and USS Ohio.



*CDR Eric Knepper and CDR Migs Recalde (seated) at the Change of Command ceremony in San Diego, CA at Naval Base Point Loma*



*CDR Recalde, CDR Knepper, and the Navy League New Mexico Council’s USS Santa Fe Committee Chair, Ron Oleksak*



## Blue Star Mothers Prepare Summer Care Packages to go to Deployed Ships and Units *by Damon Runyan*

On Saturday, June 13th, about 100 volunteers showed up to help the Rio Grande Valley Blue Star Mothers (RGVBSM) with a semi-annual packing event. The RGVBSM's sent about 400 packages full of goodies and personal hygiene items to units around the world.

Among the volunteers were Albuquerque residents and Navy Reserve SEABEEs EA1 (SCW/EXW) Monique Osegueda and BU1 (SCW/EXW) Eric Butcher. Petty Officer Osegueda recently returned from deployment in Jordan and Petty Officer Butcher returned from a deployment to Kuwait. They perform their drill duties at the Navy Reserve Center (NRC) Albuquerque on Kirtland AFB, New Mexico. Monique told Damon that she has been volunteering for the Blue Star Mothers for nine years in support of our deployed troops. What a great role model!



*Navy Reserve Center Albuquerque volunteers and NM Council's Damon Runyan*

## U.S. Naval Academy Alumni, Midshipmen, and Parents Share Learnings at Annual Picnic *by Mark Schaefer*

71 years of Naval Academy midshipmen and officers were represented at the U.S. Naval Academy annual picnic on June 7<sup>th</sup> at the Kiwanis Shelter in Elena Gallegos open space in Albuquerque. Graduates, spouses of graduates, and parents of Midshipmen were all there.

The most senior graduate was Class of 1957 Brink Trammell and the most senior spouse was Associate member Phyllis Rohr, whose husband Don Rohr was Class of 1955.

Recent graduate Tom Fotter from the Class of 2026 was the "Bull Ensign" of the group. Several parents from the Naval Academy Parents Club of New Mexico were there to talk about what is happening now at the academy. This is always a fantastic sharing event.



*Naval Academy Alumni, spouses, and Naval Academy Parents Club*

## City of Albuquerque and NM Council Honor Women Veterans *by Dave Williams, Vice President, New Mexico Council*

Retired Brigadier General Michele LaMontagne, President of the New Mexico Veteran Memorial, and retired Commander Dave Williams, Navy League's New Mexico Council Vice President, were invited to speak at the City of Albuquerque's inaugural Women Veterans Day Ceremony at the New Mexico Veterans Memorial Park on Saturday, June 13, 2026. The ceremony honored the service of all women veterans, including one who had been a special member of the local Navy community who served in World War II. Six years ago, at the age of 97, former Chief Petty Officer Dorothy Blanchard spoke from her home in Albuquerque to the New Mexico Council via Zoom about her



experience during and after World War II in the Navy's Women Accepted for Volunteer Emergency Service (WAVES). She provided personal insights from her assignments as executive assistant to some of the famous Naval leaders of that period including Admiral Arleigh Burke and Assistant Secretary of Navy Air, John Floberg. She described the battles within and outside the Pentagon over drafting the National Security Act of 1947 which provided the basic organizational structures for our modern intelligence and military services, including the creation a new branch, the United States Air Force.



*Dave Williams speaks at the Veterans Memorial Park in Albuquerque.*

A year later, our Council President, John Jones, presented her with a challenge coin and commissioning photos from the USS Arleigh Burke, DDG-51. Members of the New Mexico Council have continued contact with her family to the present. Dorothy passed on June 20, 2024 at the age of 101. Her legacy lives on, and has grown as both local and national organizations have recognized her contributions, and those of her fellow WAVES, to opening the military services to careers and opportunities for women.

Dave used Chief Petty Officer Blanchard's stories from her military service to illustrate the challenges faced by those early Navy female pioneers, and the contributions she and her fellow WAVES made with their quiet courage, dedication, and performance. He said his own niece, LTJG Victoria Pendleton, serving on guided missile destroyers during deployments in the South China Sea, Persian Gulf, and Caribbean, was one of those beneficiaries of CPO Blanchard's trailblazing. As Chief Blanchard had proven she was up to the challenges of military service, so too had LTJG Pendleton, who was decorated for successfully leading her boat crew in rescuing two Naval aviators in the South China Sea after their F-18 had crashed at sea.

The ceremony was supported by the Albuquerque Concert Band which played patriotic music including each Service's Anthem, the "Waves March", and the Navy Hymn. The Women Veteran Warriors Color Guard professionally presented the Colors.

## **SubVets of the USSVI Bullhead Base** *by Mark Schaefer*

Always available to support the community, two notable submarine models decorated the Albuquerque Isotopes AAA Salute to Veterans Day on May 17<sup>th</sup>. Under a fantastic Albuquerque blue sky and a great crowd of veterans, our historical submarines were well presented. Thank you, Bullhead Base, for highlighting Navy submarine veterans!





## USS Albuquerque (SSN-706) History Preserved!

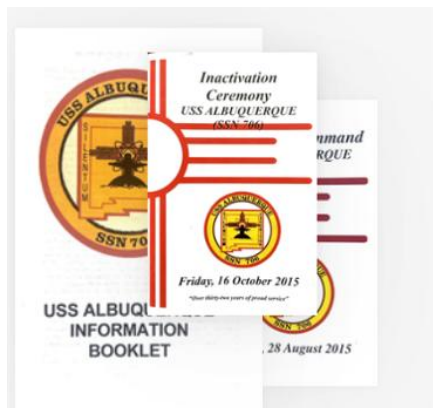
story by Mark Schaefer

In the Spring 2026 issue, we had a story about a treasure trove of digital photos and documents that Dick Brown uncovered in his archive of USS Albuquerque (SSN-706) materials. Our council historian, Greg Trapp, expressed concern that digital-only history is being lost over time since there is no physical record of that history.

Local veteran submariners Terry Owen and Mark Schaefer met with the Albuquerque Museum of Art and History. The Museum has a dedicated digital photo preservationist, Jill Hartke, who has now placed 176 digital photos into the library's collection. Approval of the Museum's "Acquisitions Committee" was obtained, and those photos will soon be categorized and labeled.



Dick Brown captures photos on board USS Albuquerque on its final voyage before decommissioning in October 2015

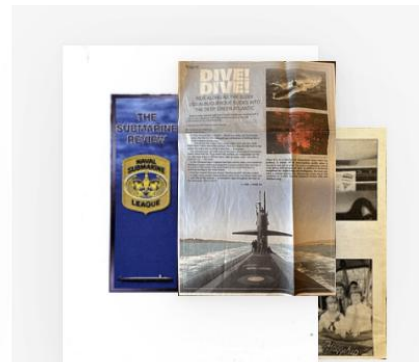
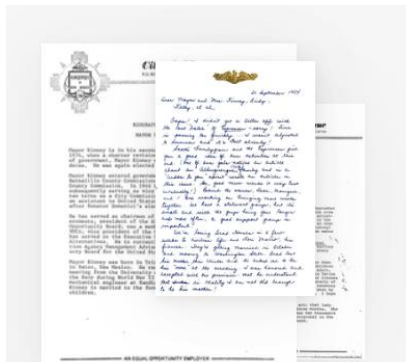


Additionally, some of the hard copy items that have been collected can get lost over time. Some time ago, Dick was given a box by Lindy Gold who was a staffer for then Mayor of Albuquerque Harry Kinney. The box contained Change of Command brochures, Information booklets, and the Inactivation Ceremony brochure that Lindy attended. It also contained Family Grams (official communications from the Commanding Officer to crew member families) and a stack of Albuquerque Express newsletter written by the Ombudsman for the stay-at-home families while the ship was away from homeport.

Pamphlets, Family Grams, and Ombudsman newsletters are available to view at the Drop Box link called "Documents Repository Link" on [nmnavyleague.com](http://nmnavyleague.com)

There was also a good deal of correspondence between the ship and Mayor and Chief Administrative Officer of the City of Albuquerque.

A handful of commissioning photos of the Albuquerque were in the box, including a great one of U.S. Senator Pete Domenici and his wife, Nancy, descending through the weapons shipping hatch.



Correspondence between USS Albuquerque and the City of Albuquerque and pertinent newspaper articles are available to view at the Drop Box link on [nmnavyleague.com](http://nmnavyleague.com)

Also, at the commissioning, Mayor Kinney and his staff, and well-known Albuquerque businessman and balloonist, Maxie Anderson, were captured in photos.

These documents are available now for anyone to peruse in a New Mexico Council-funded Drop Box site that is linked to our web page at [nmnavyleague.com](http://nmnavyleague.com) in the “Documents Repository Link”.

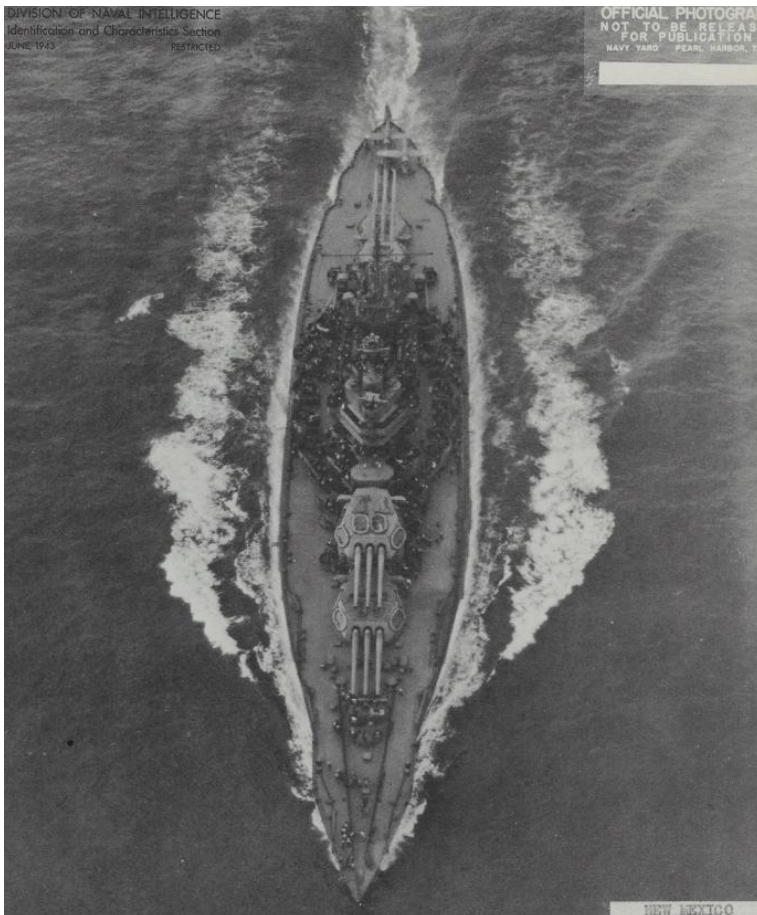
Additional items, including presentations about USS Albuquerque and more photos, will be added to the Drop Box over the next few months.

*At right, U.S. Senator Domenici and his wife are assisted on board by the crew of the USS Albuquerque at the commissioning in 1983*



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

### The Big Guns of USS New Mexico: What Makes a Battleship a Battleship *by Greg Trapp, JD*



*This aerial photo was taken in 1942, and it shows USS New Mexico and her twelve 14-inch guns. The Mark 11 guns could be elevated to 30 degrees and fire nearly 21 miles.*

The “all big gun” battleship reigned supreme as the capital ship of the world’s navies for the first four decades of the 20th century. During those decades, the major powers engaged in a costly naval arms race to build larger and more powerful battleships. These battleships were defined by their combination of both heavy armor and a main battery of uniformly large guns. The reign of the battleship came to a dramatic close when Japanese aircraft carriers launched the Pearl Harbor attack on December 7, 1941. Any lingering doubt about the vulnerability of battleships to aerial attack was eliminated three days later when land-based Japanese bombers sank the battleships HMS Prince of Wales and HMS Repulse. Although dethroned by the aircraft carrier, the battleship’s ability to provide vital shore bombardment enabled the battleship to remain relevant during World War II, the Korean War, and even the Vietnam War. The battleship had one last moment in the spotlight when President Reagan recommissioned the four Iowa-class battleships as a part of his 600-ship Navy. The age of the battleship finally came to a close when the Iowa-class battleships were decommissioned after the collapse of the Soviet Union. However, President Trump brought the concept of a battleship back into the popular lexicon when he announced a “Trump-class battleship” on December 22, 2025. In doing so, he recalled the battleships that played decisive roles during World War II. *(continued next page)*



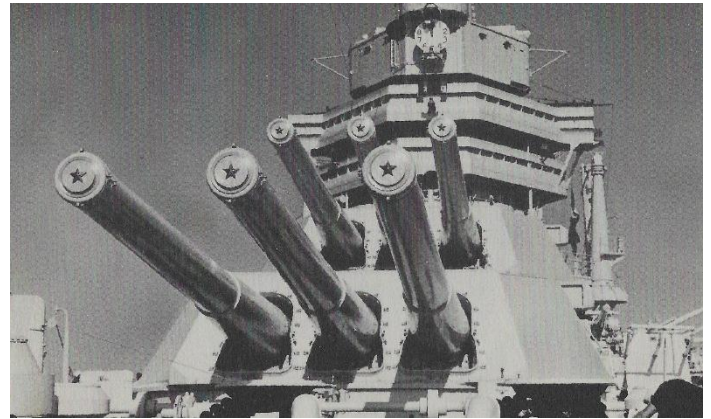
## From the Sea Chest — by Greg Trapp, JD, Chapter Historian

*(continued from previous page)*

USS New Mexico was commissioned on May 20, 1918, and was the lead ship in a new class of three super-dreadnought battleships. Known as “The Queen,” the new warship had newly designed Mark 4 14-inch/50 caliber guns. The barrel of a “50 caliber” naval gun had a length that was approximately fifty times the diameter of the bore. Each Mark 4 gun was 59.5 feet long and weighed 179,614 pounds. The 14-inch/50 caliber guns were nearly six feet longer than the 14-inch/45 caliber guns that were on the New York, Nevada, and Pennsylvania class battleships. The longer barrels translated into greater velocity, flatter trajectory, better armor penetration, and greater range.

The Mark 4 guns of the New Mexico-class utilized a “three-gun” turret that allowed each gun to be elevated independently. By contrast, the New York, Nevada, and Pennsylvania class battleships had “triple-turrets.”

The triple-turret design placed all three guns in a common cradle which locked all three guns to the same elevation. Because the guns were independent of each other, damage to one gun did not mean the automatic loss of the other two guns. The three-gun design also allowed for greater accuracy at long ranges. As with prior battleship classes, the guns could be



*This photo is from the 1920s and shows the forward three-gun turrets of USS New Mexico with the guns “dressed up” with starred muzzle covers. The Queen’s original Mark 4 guns could only be elevated to a maximum of 15 degrees, giving the guns a range of about 14 miles. A “range clock” is visible above the turrets. The ten numbers on the dial transmitted target ranges along a line of battleships. The advent of radar made range clocks unnecessary, and they were removed early in World War II. (Official U.S. Navy Photo.)*

guns could be

elevated to 15 degrees. This gave USS New Mexico a maximum range of 14 miles. This meant that USS New Mexico (BB-40), USS Mississippi (BB-41), and USS Idaho (BB-42), were the last U.S. Navy battleships that were designed to target enemy ships only at visual ranges. However, aviation and radio technologies were rapidly advancing, and they would soon bring about the ability to engage targets over the horizon. As a result, all subsequent U.S. Navy battleship classes had guns that could be elevated to between 30 to 45 degrees.



*This 1934 publicity photo is of Paramount actress Francis Drake with three of the guns of USS New Mexico visible in the background. Note that the guns are set at different elevations. The 22-year old actress was escorted by Ensign Barry Atkins. They were viewing the ships of the Pacific Fleet that were anchored in Los Angeles harbor. (Paramount Productions Inc.)*

USS New Mexico was modernized at the Philadelphia Navy Yard between March 1931 and January 1933. The battleship that emerged had a dramatically different appearance. The two tall cage masts had been removed, and a more modern superstructure was added. The Queen was also given new Mark 11 guns that could be elevated to 30 degrees. The increased elevation extended the maximum range of the guns to nearly 21 miles. During World War II, USS New Mexico was equipped with Mark 3 fire control radar and analog computers that allowed the veteran battleship to accurately fire at targets far beyond the horizon. USS New Mexico had been on Neutrality Patrol in the Atlantic on December 7, 1941. The battleship quickly joined the Pacific War where she used her 14-inch guns to shell Japanese positions during island campaigns that included Kiska, Makin, Kwajalein, Tinian, Saipan, Guam, Luzon, and Okinawa. The guns of USS New Mexico, along with those on the other aging World War I battleships, were used in crucial campaigns from the Normandy

Landings to the island battles of the Pacific War. These veteran battleships and their big guns were decisive factors in the ultimate success of these campaigns.



*In this rare color photo, USS New Mexico is shown being replenished with 14-inch shells at Eniwetok in June of 1944. There are nearly 150 shells visible on the deck. In the lower left, sailors can be seen casually sunbathing while the deadly cargo is being loaded. (Official U.S. Navy Photo.)*



*Shown here are sailors from USS New Mexico at Eniwetok in June of 1944. The sailors are preparing to lower 14-inch shells into the ammunition magazines of The Queen. These are likely 1,275 pound Mark 19 high explosive shells that were being loaded in preparation for the Battle of Guam. (Official U.S. Navy Photo.)*

The last time the big guns of a battleship were fired in combat was on February 28, 1991. That was when USS Wisconsin (BB-64) fired her World War II era 16-inch guns at Iraqi positions during the Gulf War.

By contrast, the Trump-class battleship would be armed with the very latest in hypersonic missiles, cruise missiles, directed-energy weapons, Mk45 5-inch guns, and potentially even railguns. However, one of the lessons that has emerged from the Russo-Ukraine War and Operation Epic Fury is how low-cost drones can be used to defeat modern and expensive weapon systems. The U.S. Navy has also worked to Distribute firepower over a greater number of platforms to enhance Survivability. Congress and naval planners will need to consider these and many other factors as they work on designs for the Trump-class battleship.



*Shown here are the 14-inch 50 caliber guns of USS New Mexico being used to shell Guam on July 12, 1944. The heavy smoke is likely due to the effects of high humidity, worn barrels that caused incomplete powder combustion, and older barrel designs that burned powder less efficiently. (Official U.S. Navy Photo.)*

NAVY LEAGUE OF THE UNITED STATES  
 NEW MEXICO COUNCIL  
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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.

**2026 Upcoming Events for Navy League, New Mexico Council**

<b>July 13</b>	Navy League, New Mexico Council board meeting via Zoom 6 pm
<b>August 10</b>	Navy League, New Mexico Council board meeting via Zoom 6 pm
<b>September 5</b>	Navy football home opener – vs Towson University – Annapolis, MD
<b>September 14</b>	Navy League, New Mexico Council board meeting via Zoom 6 pm
<b>October 17</b>	<b>Navy Birthday Ball 2026 – Isleta Resort &amp; Casino</b>
<b>December 12</b>	Army-Navy football – East Rutherford, NJ