

NM NAUTICAL NEWS

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



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Summer 2025 Issue

Page 1

**Ship Sponsor Re-visits
Albuquerque Sail**

Page 2

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

Pages 3-4

**- Local New Mexico News
Teddy Roosevelt Awards
USNA Appointments
Chapter program events**

Pages 5

**- Namesake Ships
Albuquerque Sail Updates**

Page 6-7

**- From the Sea Chest
The Queen's Men: John S.
"Slew" McCain**

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After 43 Years, USS Albuquerque Ship Sponsor Re-visits the Sail

by Damon Runyan, Navy League New Mexico Council

On Wednesday, March 26, 2025, an extraordinary event occurred that had its roots from 43 years ago. Mrs. Nancy Domenici, wife of longtime New Mexico Senator Pete Domenici and original ship's sponsor of the Los Angeles-Class USS Albuquerque (SSN-706), visited the recently refurbished sail of that submarine in Albuquerque, New Mexico.

On 13 March 1982, Mrs. Domenici proudly christened the Albuquerque with the smash of a metal-encased bottle of champagne at Electric Boat Division, General Dynamics, Groton, CT.

At Pascetti Steel in Albuquerque, Mrs. Domenici visited the reassembled sail of the Albuquerque. She also presented the original metal casing with the christening date engraved and shards from the champagne bottle still inside!



Mrs. Nancy Domenici shows the original Champagne casing to Dick Brown (left) and Damon Runyan (right) in front of the recently re-painted Albuquerque sail.

In 2010, knowing the submarine was nearing the end of its service life, the New Mexico Council of the United States Navy League sent a request to NAVSEA to have the sail sent to Albuquerque once the submarine completed full decommissioning and dismantlement. *(Story continued on page 5)*

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

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NAVY LEAGUE
NEW MEXICO COUNCIL

P.O. Box 91554

Albuquerque, NM 87199

Mark Schaefer

Newsletter Editor

usnam@comcast.net



President's Message



David F Williams

President, New Mexico Council

"Hear ye, hear ye"

I am a very proud stepfather to CAPT Michael Kahle, USCG. He relinquished command of Sector St. Petersburg's for the 400 nautical miles west coast of Florida on Friday, June 13, 2025.

His retirement ceremony immediately followed during which RADM Douglas Schofield, Commander Seventh Coast Guard District, presented Mike with the Legion of Merit Medal. The Sarasota-Manatee Council also presented Mike with a Certificate of Appreciation for his steadfast support of the Navy League's mission.

As I write this column, another close family member, LTJG Victoria Pendleton, USN, is steaming across the Indian Ocean aboard the USS Gridley, DDG-101, as part of the USS Nimitz Carrier Strike Group

in route to the Middle East. Our prayers go with her and all sailors, Marines, airmen, and soldiers potentially in harm's way in their service to our Country. The Blue Star Mothers have another shipment headed out to Victoria, her ship's division members, and other military members with local connections. I am sure they especially will appreciate the "care packages" during a time of extra stressful op tempo.

Our thanks go out to John Glynn, our Program Chairman, for arranging another Fourth of July Bell Ringing Ceremony. On the horizon, we have a full agenda for the fall including Navy Ball celebrating our Navy's 250 Birthday on October 18, 2025, at the Isleta Resort. John Jones, assisted by Kristelle Sizarza-Moon, is working up an event worthy of the occasion. We also will be supporting Navy Week, November 10-16, 2025, in Santa Fe, with a possible visit by a crew contingent from the USS New Mexico. In the meantime, I wish all of you "fair winds and following seas".

Dave Williams

Commander, U.S. Navy (ret)



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

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



Navy League presentation to CAPT Michael Kahle, USCG



LCDR Scott Williams, CDR Dave Williams, Sherrie Williams, and CAPT Michael Kahle, USCG

Local New Mexico News



Navy League New Mexico Council Presents 2025 Teddy Roosevelt Youth Awards

Here are your 2025 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	Albuquerque/ North NM	City	Cadet Recipient
MC	La Cueva High School	Albuquerque, NM	C/Sgt Molly Indahl
MC	Atrisco Heritage High School	Albuquerque, NM	Cadet Evan Otero
MC	Eldorado High School	Albuquerque, NM	C/CPL Preston Pass
Navy	West Mesa High School	Albuquerque, NM	C/CDR Codi Pittman
MC	Cibola High School	Albuquerque, NM	Cadet Joaquin Cortez
Navy	Los Alamos High School	Los Alamos, NM	C/PO1 Lacey Potillos
Navy	Manzano High School	Albuquerque, NM	C/LCDR Olivia McCall
Navy	Santa Fe High School	Santa Fe, NM	Cadet Jaiden Carrillo
Navy	Belen High School	Belen, NM	C/PO3 Elora Steingasser
MC	Highland High School	Albuquerque, NM	Cadet Jahaziel Alcaraz
MC	Rio Grande High School	Albuquerque, NM	Cadet 2nd LT Alexis Moya
Unit	Las Cruces/ South NM/Texas	City	Cadet Recipient
Navy	Gadsden H.S.	Anthony, NM	C/PO1 Karina Lozano
Navy	Santa Teresa High School	Santa Teresa, NM	C/ENS Idanaly Arrieta
Navy	Organ Mountain High School	Las Cruces, NM	Cadet Maeley Jones
Navy	San Elizario HS	San Elizario, TX	C/CDR Fred Marin



New Mexico Council USS Santa Fe Committee Chair, Ron Olexsak, presented the Navy League's Theodore Roosevelt Award to Cadet Petty Officer 1st Class Lacey Potillos, NJROTC, Los Alamos High School on Friday, April 25, 2025.

2025 United States Naval Academy Appointees - New Mexico



Appointee	School	City	Action
Chloe Shaw	Eldorado High School	Albuquerque	USNA - Offer Accepted
Elizabeth Titus	Cottonwood Classical Prep Sch	Albuquerque	USNA - Offer Accepted
Hyunoo Kim	Los Alamos High School	Los Alamos	USNA - Offer Accepted
Jason Shelton*	Home School	Albuquerque	USNA - Offer Accepted
Joziah Otero	Tucumcari High School	Tucumcari	NAPS - Offer Accepted
Makayla Lovato	Highland High School	Albuquerque	USNA - Offer Accepted
Nicholas Angelley	Saint Michaels High School	Santa Fe	USNA - Offer Accepted
Pepper Cayme*	Hobbs High School	Hobbs	USNA - Offer Accepted

* Appointed through Naval Academy Prep School



Ron Olexsak presented the Navy League's Theodore Roosevelt Award to Cadet Jaiden Carrillo, NJROTC, Santa Fe High School on Thursday, May 8, 2025.



5th Annual 'Let Freedom Ring' Reading of the Declaration of Independence *by John Glynn, Director of Programs for Navy League New Mexico Council*

All are invited to hear the speakers and the reading of the Declaration of Independence at the New Mexico State Fairgrounds on the 4th of July.

Music will be provided by the Rio Grande Symphonic Band and by the Young at Heart Choir.



5th ANNUAL NATIONAL 'LET FREEDOM RING' CELEBRATION

NEW MEXICO STATE FAIRGROUNDS

JULY 4, 2025
11:15 AM – 1:15 PM

SCHEDULE OF EVENTS

11:15 AM – 11:50 AM: MUSIC BY THE RIO GRANDE SYMPHONIC BAND

11:50 AM: WELCOME BY PAST PRESIDENT GENERAL, DESCENDANTS OF THE SIGNERS OF THE DECLARATION OF INDEPENDENCE: LCDR. JOHN GLYNN, USN (Ret.)

NOON: BELL TAPPERS LINE UP. TAP THE LIBERTY BELL (TO COINCIDE WITH THE TAPPING AT 2 PM (EST) OF THE ORIGINAL LIBERTY BELL IN PHILADELPHIA).

AFTER BELL TAPPING.

INTRODUCTION AND REMARKS: PATRICIA PINZON, CONSUL OF MEXICO

READING OF THE DECLARATION OF INDEPENDENCE: STATE REPRESENTATIVE ALAN MARTINEZ

ROLL CALL OF THE SIGNERS

INTRODUCTION OF SPEAKER AND REMARKS: CYNTHIA GARCIA, HONORARY COUNSEL OF SPAIN, ALBUQUERQUE

SPEAKER: PAST NEW MEXICO DAR REGENT, ELEANOR ORTIZ

CHOR: YOUNG AT HEART

REFRESHMENTS: SOUTHWEST ICE CREAM (ICE CREAM) & NAVY LEAGUE (WATER)

SPONSORS:

EXPO NM (HOSTS); DESCENDENTS OF THE SIGNERS OF THE DECLARATION OF INDEPENDENCE; LOCAL DAUGHTERS OF THE AMERICAN REVOLUTION CHAPTERS; NEW MEXICO CHAPTERS SONS OF THE AMERICAN REVOLUTION; NAVY LEAGUE OF THE UNITED STATES, NEW MEXICO COUNCIL; VFW ROAD RUNNER POST; AND SOUTHWEST ICE CREAM.

DIRECTIONS: ENTER THROUGH NM STATE FAIR GATE 3, (SAN PEDRO AND COPPER). TURN LEFT AFTER THE TICKET BOOTHS. PARKING ON THE LEFT APPROXIMATELY ½ BLOCK. ENTER THROUGH THE GATE UNDER THE PURPLE AWNING. LIBERTY BELL WILL BE ON THE RIGHT.

Network Navy – Our Undersea Cable Program *by Robert Hull*

In our April 2025 Network Navy program, Mr. Robert Hull, a Vice President of the local chapter of the Association of Former Intelligence Officers, explained that today there are 750,000+ miles of undersea fiber-optic cables. Between \$10-20 trillion USD in commerce pass through these cables every day, carrying about 99% of the intercontinental voice and data traffic flow - far exceeding that of satellites. He showed graphics of what a typical subsea cable system, explaining there are over 700 cable systems, and more than 1,600 land stations where the cables connect with our land-based telecommunications systems. He provided some historical background on trans-Atlantic telegraph cables and how they became today's fiber-optic cable systems.

Cables became important during the two World Wars and the Cold War, including how critical they were to passing military commands between far-reaching parts of the globe. This resulted in "cutting the cables" as a key tactic used by all sides to inhibit the ability of adversary countries to exert command and control over dispersed forces around the

world. Mr. Hull also discussed the legal actions that the *United Nation Convention of the Law of the Sea* would give signatory nations for “willful cutting” of undersea cables, and a “war exclusion” that would legally untie their hands during times of armed conflict. Initially the cutting of these undersea cables was an overt act, while today it has become a covert act falling into the category of “hybrid warfare” in which these cutting attacks are deniable.

Mr. Hull explained that the first instance of hybrid warfare came in 1951 when a Soviet fishing trawler, the *MV Novorossiysk*, was spotted by US surveillance aircraft in the area of 12 man-made cable breaks in the North Atlantic. The US boarding of this ship was the first enforcement action taken under the *1884 Convention for the Protection of Submarine Telegraph Cables*. Mr. Hull also discussed the vulnerability of undersea cables and the critical need for backup systems. One example mentioned was the 2008 cutting of two cables transiting the Red Sea and Mediterranean Sea connecting Europe and southern Asia. Referred to as a “critical cable fault,” it created near total isolation of Europe from southern Asia for several days. Mr. Hull also discussed a number of cable cuts that have been in the news recently in the Baltic Sea by suspected Russian “shadow fleet” ships, and cable cuts by China of Taiwanese cables connecting the main island to the Matsu Islands.

Finally, Mr. Hull explained there are more than 100 breaks or faults in undersea cables every year. Most are due to ships fishing or anchoring, a few percent to equipment failure, and a few percent due to unknown causes that are likely due to hybrid warfare acts. He mentioned that about 98 percent of these cables are owned by private sector companies but built mainly by Japan’s Nippon Electric and China’s former Huawei Marine.

Namesake Ships



USS Albuquerque Ship Sponsor Re-visits the Sail

continued from front page

The sail of SSN-706 was removed from the decommissioned hull of the submarine in Bremerton, WA, and was trucked to Kirtland Air Force Base in Albuquerque for temporary storage in 2023. Once contracts were let, the sail was moved to its current location at Pascetti Steel Design, Inc. and refurbished and reassembled. The sail is currently awaiting the City of Albuquerque to finish the planning and construction of the memorial display. The eventual goal is for the City of Albuquerque to put the sail on display in a local park for all to honor those who manned this great boat for 33 years.

The New Mexico Council believes that this cycle of events for the ship’s sponsor to visit the original ship 43 years later might be a rare, if not unique, event in U.S. Naval history.



Top: Dick Brown, Mrs. Nancy Domenici, Damon Runyan, Lisa Domenici, and Lawrence Edwards in front of the Albuquerque sail as Lawrence presents a metal piece of the submarine to Mrs. Domenici.

Left: Lawrence Edwards presents an Albuquerque ballcap to Damien Pascetti of Pascetti Steel Design, Inc.



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

Author's Note: This is the next in a series of articles about the sailors who served on USS New Mexico (BB-40). The battleship was known as The Queen, and during World War II her ship's newspaper was named "The Queen's Daily." The paper published a regular article called the Queen's Men. Each article highlighted the life and service of one of the ship's sailors. Among the many notable sailors who served on the Queen was John S. McCain Sr.

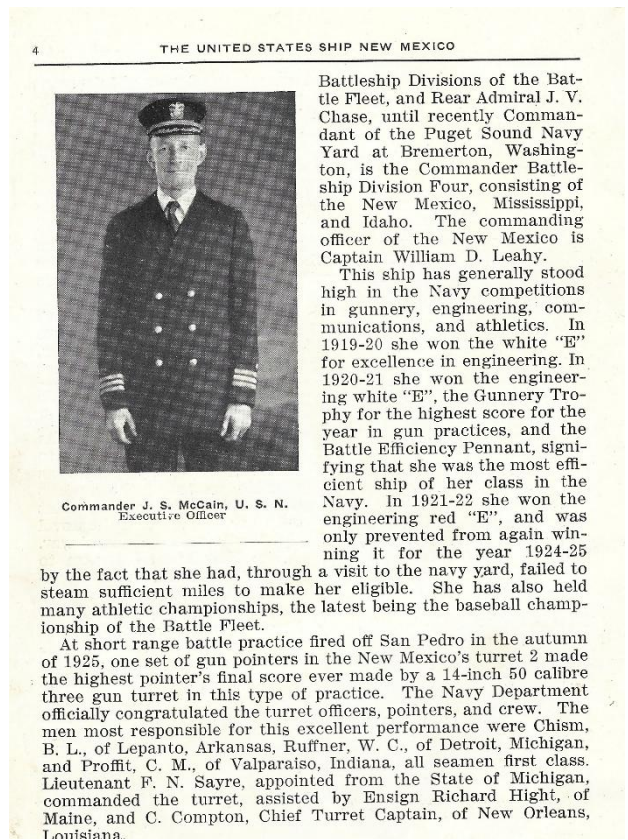
The Queen's Men: John S. "Slew" McCain by Greg Trapp, JD

The US Navy currently has two Arleigh Burke-class destroyers that are named in honor of more than one person. The names of both destroyers honor the heroic service and tremendous family sacrifice of their namesakes. One of those destroyers is USS The Sullivans (DDG-68). The warship is named in recognition of the five Sullivan brothers who served together on USS Juneau, but who perished after their cruiser was sunk by a Japanese submarine on November 13, 1942. The other destroyer is USS John S. McCain (DDG-56). USS John S. McCain is named after Senator John S. McCain III, Admiral John S. McCain Jr., and Admiral John S. McCain Sr.

John Sidney "Slew" McCain was born in Mississippi on August 9, 1884. McCain had originally planned to attend West Point where his older brother William was a cadet, but he changed his mind after receiving an appointment to the Naval Academy. He entered the Naval Academy in 1902, along with classmates that included Frank J. Fletcher and Audrey W. Fitch. Hearing loss was a frequent occupational hazard for sailors, and Slew was nearly disenrolled in 1905 after he failed his annual physical due to poor hearing. Fortunately for McCain, naval officers were badly needed due to the rapid expansion of the Navy that was taking place under President Theodore Roosevelt. As a result, McCain was given a waiver of his physical, and he graduated from the Academy as a warrant officer in 1906. Academy graduates at the time had to spend two years at sea as warrant officers before they were commissioned as ensigns.

McCain's early naval career introduced him to many officers who he would serve with during World War II. This included being assigned to serve as the executive officer under Ensign Chester W. Nimitz in January of 1907. The future fleet admiral was commanding the gunboat USS Panay, which was assigned to patrol waters around the Philippines. Slew received his promotion to Ensign in March of 1908. In November, he was assigned to the pre-dreadnought battleship USS Connecticut, which was serving as the flagship of President Roosevelt's Great White Fleet. The fleet reached Hampton Roads on 22 February 1909, completing its historic circumnavigation of the globe. McCain was aboard the flagship when President Theodore Roosevelt came aboard the battleship to welcome home the fleet. Six months later, McCain was married to Katherine Davey Vaulx. The couple had three children including John S. McCain Jr, the father of John S. McCain III. Slew continued to receive promotions and new assignments in the coming years. This included serving as the engineering officer of the armored cruiser USS San Diego during World War I. After the war, McCain was assigned to the Bureau of Navigation, which gave him valuable experience with Navy personnel issues. This included the burgeoning field of naval aviation.

Now holding the rank of Commander, Slew was assigned as the executive officer of USS New Mexico in August of 1926. The battleship was under the command of Captain William D. Leahy, an officer McCain had served with at the Bureau of Navigation. Captain Leahy would later become a trusted confidant of



Shown here is a page from the USS New Mexico Navy Day program from October 27, 1926. The program describes the USS New Mexico and includes a photo of the executive officer of USS New Mexico, Commander John S. McCain Sr. (G. Trapp Collection).

President Franklin Roosevelt and rise to the rank of five-star admiral. President Roosevelt would also name Leahy as the first head of the Joint Chiefs of Staff in July of 1942. Now under the command of future four-star and five-star admirals, The Queen achieved the distinction of winning the 1927-1928 "White E" for battle efficiency, gunnery, and engineering. USS New Mexico would also begin an unprecedented four-year streak of consecutive wins of the "meatball," which was what the sailors called the battle efficiency award.

McCain applied for flight training in January of 1928, but was turned down because he exceeded the age limit for aviators. He instead went to the Naval War College, where his classmates included Jesse D. Oldendorf, who as an admiral during World War II would be in command during the Battle of Surigao Strait where battleships would face off for the last time. McCain was offered another chance at flight training in 1935 when William Leahy, who was then Chief of the Bureau of Navigation, waived the age requirement and allowed McCain to enter flight training. That decision opened the door for McCain to command aircraft carriers during World War II.

McCain was promoted to Rear Admiral in January of 1941. His first major command in World War II came in May of 1942 when McCain was in charge of land-based aircraft during the Guadalcanal Campaign and battles in the Solomon Islands. McCain had very limited access to aircraft carriers, and he was hampered by shortages of land-based planes and logistical challenges. He was also fighting a Japanese enemy which had advantages in torpedoes and airplanes, possessed large numbers of skilled pilots, and was trained in night-fighting. The Japanese took full advantage of their strengths during the Battle of Savo Island in August when Japanese cruisers sank three American cruisers and one Australian cruiser while sustaining only minimal damage. Although McCain had acted commendably and was awarded the Navy Distinguished Service Medal, he was replaced by Audrey W. Fitch in September of 1942.

McCain's next command was as the Chief of the Bureau of Aeronautics, which he tackled with the difficult lessons learned from the Guadalcanal Campaign. McCain worked to increase airplane production and improve aviation technology, including night-fighting ability. In May of 1943, McCain was named as the Deputy Chief of Naval Operations for Air with the rank of Vice Admiral. McCain transferred his command as Deputy Chief of Naval Operations for Air to Audrey W. Fitch in August of 1944.



This photo shows Admiral John S. McCain (R) as he transfers command as Deputy Chief of Naval Operations for Air to Admiral Audrey W. Fitch (L) on August 1, 1944 (Official U.S. Navy Photo).

McCain was next given command of the Second Carrier Task Force Pacific, and he raised his flag on USS Wasp on August 8, 1944. Recognizing the shifting dynamics of the war and the increasing aerial threat, McCain recommended that the number of fighters be increased on the Essex-class carriers. In charge of Task Group 38.1, McCain came under heavy air attack during the operations in support of the landings at Leyte Gulf. McCain was awarded the Navy Cross for his actions during the campaign and for protecting the cruisers USS Houston and USS Canberra. McCain received praise for his aviation tactics, and in doing so, he dispelled earlier criticism that he was a "battleship admiral." McCain continued to improve carrier defense against Japanese air attacks, including recommending in November that there be further increases in the numbers of fighters on carriers. In March of 1945, McCain was awarded a Gold Star to his Distinguished Service Medal for his "brilliant tactical control" of his carrier forces during operations between September 1944 and January 1945.

McCain was present at Tokyo Bay for the surrender ceremonies on September 2, 1945. The ravages of war had taken a toll on McCain's health, and he headed home immediately after the surrender ceremonies to recuperate. He arrived at his California home on September 5. The next day a welcome-home party was thrown in his honor, but the ailing vice admiral was not feeling well. McCain died later that afternoon from a heart attack. Today, USS John S. McCain honors that service and sacrifice.

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2025 Upcoming Events for Navy League, New Mexico Council

July 4 11:15 am	Let Freedom Ring – Reading of the Declaration of Independence, NM Fairgrounds
July 14	Navy League, New Mexico Council board meeting via Zoom
August 11	Navy League, New Mexico Council board meeting via Zoom
September 8	Navy League, New Mexico Council board meeting via Zoom
October 18	Navy Ball at Isleta Resort
November 10	Navy Week Santa Fe