

NAVY NUCLEAR WEAPONS ASSOCIATION

“KEEPERS of the DRAGON”©™

NNWA Bulletin



January 2023



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NNWA Board Members 2022-2023

President	Kris Hobbs	619-733-6896	president@navynucweeps.com
Vice President	Bethany Gray	360-620-0098	vicepresident@navynucweeps.com
Secretary	John Gray	360-265-6292	secretary@navynucweeps.com
Treasurer	Donald Schultz	352-259-1403	treasurer@navynucweeps.com
Chaplain	Ed Deitzler	619-275-2733	chaplain@navynucweeps.com
Master-at-Arms	Charlie Behymer	520-360-9989	maa@navynucweeps.com
Historian	Julien (Lindy) Lindstrom	505-999-0519	historian@navynucweeps.com
Webmaster	Ray C. Margeson	607-732-0579	boardmember2@navynucweeps.com
Storekeeper	John Hawkins	252-368-1045	boardmember7@navynucweeps.com
Director	Tyrus George	724-516-7284	boardmember1@navynucweeps.com
Director	Richard Gurule	575-781-0031	boardmember5@navynucweeps.com
Director	Tracy McDaniels	254-251-5808	boardmember4@navynucweeps.com
Director	Steven Urban	757-449-1836	Boardmember3@navynucweeps.com

Gray Dragon: Frederick Wacha

President's Message

To our best Dragon Keepers,

WOW, and Happy New Year!! We had a great reunion in Norfolk, VA this past year highlighted with the induction of the third Grey Dragon and the first to attend a reunion. Frederick Wacha and his lovely bride Eleanor were great to meet, talk to and she could out-dance anyone on the dance floor. Thank you to John and Maggie Hawkins for hosting the reunion, the BOD, and membership for attending and I hope to see you in Tucson, AZ.

Writing about Tucson AZ, this is where the 38th annual reunion of the Navy Nuclear Weapons Association will be held. The contract has been signed and will be hosted by Tyrus and Diann George with the assistance of the BOD for Sunday November 5, 2023, to check out Friday November 10, 2023. Start planning to attend and more information will be in the NNWA Spring Bulletin.

The BOD would like to welcome two new members, Tracy McDaniels and Steven Urban. They stepped up to join the board, and I thank them for their volunteering.

Your volunteer board members are doing a super job for the association throughout the year, and I would personally like to thank them for their dedication to the NNWA. I get a lot of thanks for the job I am doing but it all goes to the board membership. I cannot express enough thanks for what they are doing for me and the NNWA. You have a great board!

The results of members input from the last reunion for future reunion locations are as follows:

2024 Central U.S.: Branson, MO, Kansas City, New Orleans, LA, Baton Rouge, LA, and the Twin Cities of Minneapolis/St Paul, MN.

2025 Eastern U.S.: Charleston, VA Huntsville, AL, Destin or Panama City, FL.

2026 Western U.S.: Bremerton, WA and Alameda, CA.

The board will be checking these out and other places and will send out more information in a survey for the membership to vote on soon.

Thank you for your membership and may you have a great beginning for the new year 2023. Will have more at the Spring bulletin on the reunion, tours, and cost.

Kris A Hobbs
NNWA President

Vice-President's Message

Fellow Members,

I am honored to be your Vice President and would like to welcome our new board members Tracy McDaniels and Steven Urban.

As a reminder it is the Vice President's responsibility to maintain the SOP/PDL document, keeping it accurate and current. If you have any recommended changes to this document then forward them to a board member for consideration. If approved I will update the SOP/PDL with the change.

The president with the concurrence of the BOD has proposed three changes to the NNWA By-Laws this term. Because of space considerations I am publishing one in this bulletin, the other two will be in the June issue. The one below addresses how the association holds/meets the Annual Business Meeting requirements in the event of a Force Majeure as described in Article VI Section 1 paragraph 2 and 3. It is proposed that Article VI, Section 1 paragraph 2 and 3 be changed to read:

“SECTION 2 FORCE MAJEURE
CONDITIONS

In the event a Force Majeure condition (primarily as a result of Acts of Nature) requires the cancelling of a scheduled annual reunion, an

Annual Business Meeting (ABM) must still be held in order to;

- Elect BOD members.
- Vote on any amendments to the association bylaws.
- Conduct Unfinished or New Business, particularly in regards to upcoming reunions.

As a result of a Force Majeure condition, ABMs or associated business may be conducted by one of the following alternate methods:

A. A technology-based solution such as Microsoft Teams or Zoom which enables association members to attend the ABM virtually, providing that the technology allows for member real time interaction with the BOD and/or other members.

Meeting order of business will generally follow the normal in person ABM format.

B. Required business actions, e.g., BOD elections, bylaws amendments, etc. can be drafted in the form of a Survey Monkey questionnaire/ballot and a URL link emailed to the membership. The survey will clearly indicate a “must be completed by” date 30 days from when the survey link is emailed.

Members without an email capability will be sent a letter by the Secretary with the questionnaire/ballot. The letter shall include:

- An elections ballot with the slate of BOD candidates.
- A list of any proposed bylaws amendments with an associated accept or reject selection indicator.
- A printed list of any other business items for consideration with an associated accept or reject indicator.
- Instructions to the member which include the requirement that the member’s ballot and other results must be received by the

Secretary within 30 days of the date on the letter in order to be counted.

- A Self-Addressed-Stamped -Envelope to the NNWA Secretary for the return of the member’s votes.

The President will designate two BOD members to count, verify, and report received results to the BOD.

The Webmaster will provide the Survey Monkey generated supporting documentation of the questionnaire/ballots to the BOD members designated by the President. The Secretary will pdf all returned hard copy results and provide them to the same designated BOD members.

Once all results are finalized and presented to the President, he will authorize their release to the association membership via email and USPS methods.

The NNWA Secretary will retain the Survey Monkey data file and pdf file of hard copy returns for a period of two years.

The Board of Directors will ensure that as much advance notice as possible is provided to the membership as to when the alternate meeting method will be scheduled.”

As this is a new section, all following sections will be renumbered.

See you all in Tucson at our next NNWA Reunion this November!

Happy New Year!
Bethany
NNWA Vice President

Secretary’s Message

Fellow Weaponeers,

Our next reunion will be in Tucson, AZ. In the desert around Tucson - just beneath the earth, a

silent army of nuclear warheads waited for the outbreak of Armageddon during the Cold War. The missiles were stored in massive underground silos, which were constructed in the early 1960s and closed in the early 1980s. Today the area is home to one of the most interesting destinations in the state - the Titan Missile Museum. It actually has a more formal name: Air Force Facility Missile Site 8 and was one of 17 Titan II launch points in the area.

The museum is located inside a decommissioned missile silo. The site is no longer run by the government but managed by the nonprofit Arizona Aerospace Foundation. This museum features an exhibit unlike any other in the world: an inert Titan II intercontinental ballistic missile, still in its original silo. The silo extends 140 feet into the earth, and is composed of eight levels: two levels are the control center, and the other six are dedicated to housing the missile and other equipment.

We are hoping to arrange a tour to the site during our 2023 reunion. I encourage you to attend one of our reunions so we can share sea stories over a beer!

Information regarding the Titan Missile Museum was derived from: Nuclear Missile Silos Hidden Across Arizona Desert (onlyinyourstate.com). I encourage you to visit the website for more information.

All the Best,
John

Treasurer's Message

As treasurer and keeper of the roster, let me welcome our new and reinstated members since the last newsletter. They are:

Richard Bennett	Brent Black
Tedd Barnett	Mel Jarmon
Craig Shaffer	Richard Jones
Alan Marshall	Patrick Murray

Michael Bowen	Sonja Lawson
Norman Van Houten	Joel Lowery
Michael Smithberger	Royce Radeline
Leonard Zajd Jr.	Mike McGlynn
Donald Strong	Scott Reuman
Gregory Schneck	David Dinger
Russell Smith (new member in OCT 2018)	

We now have 877 members on the membership roster; 315 members in good standing; 76 life members (spouses of deceased members); 365 past members (members with unpaid dues for three years); 107 members with dues in arrears; and one reciprocal member (NAAV).

Past members can be reinstated by sending the \$10.00 reinstatement fee plus \$15.00 for a total of \$25.00. They will then be reinstated as a new member.

If you are unsure whether yours dues are up to date and you receive your newsletter by mail, look at the date in the upper right corner of the mailing which shows the month and year to which your dues are paid. If you receive your newsletter electronically, log onto our website and check your membership status there in the Membership Roster. The dues date will be listed in the date column to the right of your name.

The current membership roster is posted on our website. Members not on-line can request a hard copy of the roster by calling or writing:

Donald Schultz
573 Beaulieu Loop
The Villages, FL 32163
Phone: 352-259-1403

Please review the roster and notify the Treasurer or any board member of any changes in your status.

Currently, we have \$21,377.39 on deposit with Wells Fargo Bank.

When making a payment to the NNWA, please make checks payable to NNWA Treasurer or Donald Schultz NNWA Treasurer or Donald Schultz. The bank will not accept made out any other way. Please ensure that when sending money to the NNWA that it is the correct amount.

Donald K. Schultz
Treasurer and Keeper of the Roster

Historian's Message

All

I hope all members had a wonderful holiday season, weather permitting. The 2022 reunion was a great success. Plenty to do, and great tours, especially on the USS Wisconsin, and even the MacArthur Museum, whatever your own opinion of that over-rated martinet. I can't wait for the 2023 get-together in Tucson.

To continue my columns on the smaller GMT stations: The Naval Weapons Evaluation Facility (NWEF) on Kirkland Air Force Base in Albuquerque, NM worked on many different assignments, and not all of them involving our own weapons. I learned that there were many different activities that did the same kind of work and they actually competed through bidding for many of the jobs. Fortunately, all them involving Sandia Laboratories were ours. While I was there from 78 – 81 we assisted Sandia in the development of the B83. They came to us for the bomb's aerodynamic testing. Their scientists would give all of us involved a very thorough, fascinating briefing before the tests and then we would load their shapes on one of our A7s. The pilots would drop them at the instrumented range at Tonopah, Nevada, and we saw the film of the mission! This work continued up through the B90 testing near NWEF's closure.

Another fun job was the certification of all Navy nuclear capable aircraft anytime there was a change to the weapon, or the flight characteristics or control or release system of the plane. We did

this for the A6s, A7s, P3s and S3s. This gave us GMTs plenty to do. We prepared a number of BDU20s, 24s or 36s with our special Hi-Vis paint jobs and mission ID, went down to the Stallion Range at the Army's White Sands Missile range to observe the drops and recover the shapes. Several times a large number of tests required us to work long into the night to refurb the limited number of BDUs we had and get them ready again to be dropped and recovered again next morning.

The most unforgettable certification job we had involved the Italian Air Force. They had just bought a number of new French Atlantique ASW planes and wanted them certified to carry NATO (meaning our) B57s. All crews were a mix of Italian Navy and Air Force. They flew two of them from Italy to Kirtland with all their 40 personnel and belongings, and equipment. The planes were bigger than our P3s with only 2 engines. The bomb bay stretched 2/3 the length of the fuselage. My counterpart was their Loading Officer, IAF Capt. Capone (I kid you not), and he invited me for a tour of the plane. It was huge inside, and every spare inch of space was full of wine! Again, no BS. One ground rule was that one of our own (native English speaker) pilots would ride along on every flight. Their first mission was for familiarization with the Tonopah range. They fired it up and taxied to the end of the runway, then asked our pilot if he'd like to take it up and fly it! Who would say no? Then, as our pilot swore to us later, as soon as the wheels were up they broke out the wine! Then, on the way back, our pilot asked them if they would like to see the Grand Canyon. Of course! Even before they got back NWEF got a very irate phone call from the National Park Service wanting to know whose strange looking airplane it was flying down INTO the canyon!

The most fun I ever had at NWEF was building FLOATING BOMBS! The attack pilots got to drop many BDUs on ground targets (so the bombs could be recovered and refurbished). But the ASW types did not get to drop them in the water. We were tasked with building two prototype BDU20s

that could survive water drops, be recovered and refurbished. First problem – the BDU20 is hollow and would be too heavy to be recovered. Solution – we took them to Sandia Labs Foam Shop. First, we found out by filling one with 26 gallons of water, one at a time, to find what the volume to fill was. The Sandia Techs then poured an exact amount of a clear liquid into a beaker, then a smaller amount of another one, stirred it in and told us to stand back. They poured about one pint of the mix into the upright bomb and said “Watch this!” In seconds the liquid turned into foam and expanded right up to the line we had made. Within an hour it hardened and was impervious to salt water.

But that solved only half the problem. The bomb was still too heavy to float. So we went to the Sandia Parachute Shop and explained the problem. Solution – they cut off the thick nylon suspension lines from two WR B57 parachutes, and replaced them with much thinner lines of a brand-new material called Kevlar! This left so much extra room in the tail that they could install two ram-air balloons. When the bomb was dropped and the chute opened the balloons would inflate, and a flapper valve would keep all the air in. The electronic simulator (which replicated the bombs circuitry) was modified for drops from an S3. I got to make a replacement pre-flight panel (for the loading crew AOs to play with), and we were ready to go. One of our A7s flew the bombs to North Island where an S3 Squadron loaded them. Our NWEF BDU engineer Lee Hysom and I also flew out and caught a hop on a Navy plane to San Clemente Island where the ocean bombing range was. We met the Navy Divers who would recover the bombs and explained what they would see. We rode out on the recovery barge (with a crane) to watch. The first plane came in at about 500' and dropped. My fingers were crossed. At the right interval the chute popped out. Even from ½ mile away it made a real loud BANG. OK, my part was done, and then it was up to Sandia to keep the bomb afloat. It worked. The second one went just like the first, but I had my fingers crossed again anyway. Even with all the work we

had put into it, the Navy just said “Thanks, but no thanks.”

That is but a small sample of the work we did. To fill our time we GMTs also did lots of work with conventional ordnance, much of it even more fun than our own.

With all the base closures NWEFs time came to an end. The first George Bush had taken the Navy out of the tactical nuclear weapon business, and most of the remaining work went to NWC China Lake. The doors finally closed for good in 1993. Every veteran of the “Albuquerque Turkey” can be proud of the role we played in the Rio Grande Navy.

For my next column I would like to cover our bases in England, St. Mawgan and all the others. I would love to hear from any and all of our members who were ever stationed there and their stories.

See you in Tucson.
Jay Lindstrom

Future Reunions

The 38nd reunion of the NNWA in 2023 will be held in:

Region:	Western US
Location:	Tucson, AZ; 5 - 10 NOV 23
Host:	Ty George

The 39th reunion of the NNWA in 2024 will be held in:

Region:	Midwestern US
Location:	TBD
Host:	TBD

The 40th reunion of the NNWA in 2025 will be held in:

Region:	Eastern US
Location and Host:	TBD