

New Mexico (SSN 779) Keel Authentication Ceremony

Date: April 12, 2008

Time: 10 AM

Location of Event: Inside the Submarine Module Outfitting Facility at Northrop Grumman Shipbuilding's Newport News Operations

Ship's Sponsor: Mrs. Cindy Giambastiani

Participants: Invited guests include the ship's sponsor and her family and friends; Navy and government officials, Northrop Grumman employees and family members and the crew and families of the pre-commissioning unit New Mexico. The event is not open to the public.

Dress: Business



Ceremonies in the Life of a Ship

Navy tradition dictates that each ship constructed for the service be honored on four historic ceremonial occasions: keel-laying, christening (or launching), commissioning, and decommissioning.

The Keel Laying Tradition

The Keel Laying Ceremony celebrates the laying of the first timber and can be traced back to the first ship built for the Navy. The current ceremony maintains the tradition but has been modified to take into consideration updates in materials, technology and techniques. With modern modular ship construction techniques, there is often no actual laying of the keel to begin the building process.



The ceremony is conducted by the shipyard building the ship and normally involves a principal address by a dignitary, such as a member of Congress or government official. Following the address, the speaker or another special guest authenticates the keel by affixing a name plate or inscribing his/her initials on the keel (or whatever part of the ship is being used in lieu of a keel). This typically takes the form of writing his or her initials in chalk, after which workmen of the shipyard use a welding torch to cut the chalked inscription into the metal. The workmen then move the keel into position on the building way and an announcement is made by the authenticator that "the keel has been truly and fairly laid."

The tradition of keel authentication started at Northrop Grumman Newport News in 1973 with the nuclear-powered attack submarine *Memphis* by Mrs. Howard H. Baker, Jr., wife of the United States Senator from Tennessee.

Mrs. Cindy Giambastiani
Ship's Sponsor and Keel Authenticator
New Mexico (SSN 779)



Mrs. Cindy Giambastiani was raised in a military home. Her father began his career as an Air Force officer during World War II, and her two older brothers served as pilots in the Navy and Air Force during the Vietnam War. As a child, she lived all over the United States, as well as in Japan, Hawaii and England. She graduated from Cornell University with a bachelor's degree in nutrition before marrying and raising two children. Her husband is retired Navy Admiral Edmund P. Giambastiani. Between 2005 and 2007, Admiral Giambastiani was the second highest ranking military officer in the United States, serving as the seventh Vice Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff.

As a Navy family, the Giambastianis have been stationed at various submarine and naval bases along the East and West coasts of the United States, as well as in Hawaii. For over 31 years, she has been serving in support groups and organizations in the local military communities, to include numerous volunteer jobs supporting submariners and their families, as well as her children's extracurricular activities.

Some of her recent achievements in the military community include serving for two years as chairman of the Spouses Program for newly selected Navy flag officers, and as president of Dolphin Scholarship, a scholarship for children of submariners. She co-authored the cookbook "Diving with the Dolphins" to commemorate the 100th anniversary of the Submarine Force. Proceeds from the sale of the cookbooks benefited the Dolphin Scholarship. In July 2000, she was awarded the Meritorious Public Service Award by the Navy for her selfless support of the submarine and Navy communities. In July 2005, she was awarded the Distinguished Public Service Award for her continued dedication to military spouses and families. Mrs. Giambastiani has been an "Honorary Submariner" since 1991 when she submerged while aboard the USS San Juan (SSN 751).

In her last position, Mrs. Giambastiani was the advisor for the Tidewater Officers Spouses Association, advisor for the Tidewater Collection, and president of the NATO Officers Wives Club. She also traveled with her husband, representing the United States at numerous NATO activities. As the wife of the vice chairman, she served on various national boards and committees in the National Capitol Region; including serving as the co-chair of the Red Cross Gala in Washington, D.C. Mrs. Giambastiani is also an active supporter of the Fischer House Foundation. She hosts visiting dignitaries and foreign government officials in her home, and continues to represent the military while traveling with her husband.

Admiral and Mrs. Giambastiani have two children: Peter, a Lieutenant in the Navy Reserve and Congressional Military Legislative Assistant, and Cathie, a lawyer for a government agency in Washington, DC. The Giambastianis also have a two-year-old granddaughter, Hannah.

New Mexico (SSN 779) Crest

The Crew of the PCU NEW MEXICO selected a design submitted by Emilee Sena of Albuquerque as the winner of its crest design contest. Emilee was a senior at St. Pius X High School, when she submitted her design as an oil painting. She describes the design as:



The top has a picture of a sunset in New Mexico, representing the beauty that makes New Mexico the “Land of Enchantment.” The Sandia Mountains are shown in the picture at the time of the day when they demonstrate why they are the Sandias – they are a pink shade, like a watermelon. The red in the upper right corner represents the red in our nation’s flag. The red symbolizes valor and the blood that has been shed to protect our country.

The blue in the lower left corner represents the blue of the American flag. Blue symbolizes justice, vigilance, and perseverance.

The Zia symbol represents the state flag, as well as the prominence of the sun in New Mexico.

The naval dolphins on the sides are a symbol for Navy submarines and ships. They shine with a white color because they represent the white on the American flag. This color symbolizes purity and innocence.

The submarine in the center is representative of what the USS NEW MEXICO is – a Virginia class submarine. It has a bow wave in front of it because it is in motion. The people on top are naval officers, holding a flag proudly for the world to see. This represents pride in the U.S.

There is a nuclear symbol in the bottom left corner for two purposes:

- The Virginia class submarines are nuclear submarines.
- A lot of nuclear development has taken place in New Mexico, and so this honors the people that have, and will contribute to the growth of nuclear advancements. Two primary development centers in New Mexico are at Sandia Labs and Los Alamos.

The shape of the emblem is unique because it reflects the influence of the Native American people in New Mexico. It is the shape of a design that can be commonly found in Native American art, such as blankets and pots.

The gold in the border symbolizes courage, prosperity, wisdom, and confidence. These are all essential qualities for members of the Navy.