



USS Colorado (SSN 788)
Commissioning Committee
Newsletter #4 — May 2015

Ship's Crew Members Visit Colorado

April was a busy month for the Committee as we prepared for the visit of the CO and four crewmembers.

CDR Ken Franklin, Commanding Officer Pre-Commissioning Unit (PCU) Colorado (SSN 788), and four of his crew, ET1 Joseph Gaines, MM1 Andrew Stuhr, EM2 Kyle Peterson, and YN2 Joshua Craven have completed a 2 ½ day visit to Colorado. Arriving on April 28 from Groton, CT., they visited the Rocky Mountain Navy organization and talked about their pre-commissioning preparations to a group of about 20 retired Navy persons.

The Colorado legislature paid tribute to the crew of USS Colorado on the morning of April 29. In separate ceremonies in the House and the Senate, tributes were read and the crew members got a chance to meet and chat legislators.



Two receptions were held for them later that day. A luncheon was hosted at the historic Malo Mansion by Shawna King and the Vollmar family. Approximately 100 guests were present to enjoy lunch in the beautiful garden and learn about the history of previous USS Colorado's, the goals of the commissioning committee and their campaign kickoff. CDR Franklin gave a brief of his leadership philosophy and the crew members introduced themselves. Also the Colorado Counties Inc., an association of County Commissioners, read a proclamation in tribute to the crew.

In the evening a similar reception was held for 150 persons

at the Governor's mansion next door. The Lieutenant Governor, Joseph Garcia, provided welcoming remarks. Similar presentations were made as was done at the earlier event. Also the ships crest design contest winner was announced. Michael Nielson was the winner and his proud parents, Chris and Bruce Nielsen were present to give a few remarks about their son.



The sailors had a busy day on Thursday. They toured the Broncos training facility in Dove Valley and were able to meet the players and Coach Kubiak. After that they visited Cherry Creek High School and Middle School as well as Gardner Academy in Northglenn. They spent an hour with the students telling them a little bit about their life on submarines. From there it was a trip up to University of Colorado at Boulder to visit the University Memorial Center which houses artifacts from the battleship Colorado. There they met with the museum director, Carlos Garcia, and the commanding officer and executive officer of the Naval ROTC unit, Col. John Walsh, USMC and CDR Walt Morgan, USN. Afterwards they made a quick trip to Red Rocks before meeting some committee members for dinner at the Buckhorn Exchange.

All in all it was a great trip. The sailors got a chance to learn a little bit about their namesake state. It was great to see the warm welcome provided by Coloradans and their interaction between with the crew. The Commissioning Committee presented the crew with four picture books of



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Colorado to take back to Groton so that other crew members who were not able to attend will be able to learn about the Centennial state.



Ship's Crest Contest Winner Selected

The Commissioning Committee conducted the contest and after three and a half months collected over 140 Senior Division entries. After reviewing the entries, the Commanding Officer and crew selected Michael Nielson as the winner of the Senior Division Ship's Crest Design Contest. Michael was born and raised in Colorado and graduated from Ralston Valley High School in Arvada, CO, in 2008. He enlisted in the Navy immediately after graduation and was selected for the Navy Nuclear Power Program. While undergoing training he was selected for the Seaman-to-Admiral program and attended Oregon State University. After graduating in 2013 he was commissioned an Ensign in the Navy and began officer nuclear power training.



Shortly after completion of the contest Ensign Nielson was issued orders to report to USS Colorado after training, a request that he had made prior to entering the contest.

Ensign Nielson's design will be adopted as the official ship's crest.

Fundraising Campaign Kicks Off

The receptions held on April 29th marked the official kick off of the Committee's Fundraising Campaign. The goal of the Commissioning Committee is \$400,000. This money will go to establish a scholarship fund for the crew and their families, provide for improved shipboard habitability upgrades for the crew, help fund crew member visits and pay for Commissioning Week activities. A variety of sponsorship levels are available starting at \$50. Our web site has recently been updated to accept online donations. Check out the details at: usscoloradocommittee.org/wp/support-our-submarine-3/

Merchandise ordering online

We have recently added lapel pins and challenge coins as additional merchandise that can be ordered online in addition to ball caps. Although both the pins and coins are part of sponsorship packages, this allows ordering of additional items.

About the Committee

USS Colorado (SSN 788) Commissioning Committee is a 501(C) (3) organization.

To learn more about USS Colorado, the Committee's activities and how you can contribute to Commissioning, [visit our website usscoloradocommittee.org](http://usscoloradocommittee.org) and like [USS Colorado \(SSN 788\)](https://www.facebook.com/usscolorado) on Facebook!



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