

# New Mexico Champions – Captain Edmund Czapski

The list of New Mexico State Chess Champions I am working from for this series is on the web site for the New Mexico Chess Organization (NMCO). The list was put together by Ronald Kensek, Stephen Sandager, Max Burkett (all three former New Mexico Champions) and Carl Freeman. Unfortunately the list only goes back to 1948. Were there New Mexico Chess Champions before that? If there were, apparently nobody knows.

When I started this series, my idea was to only include players for whom I had at least one game to annotate. But I already broke that rule by including an article about Spencer Lucas, even though most of my article consisted of a copy of an article taken from Chess Life. So I decided to do an article on Captain Edmund Czapski, even though all I have is an article and a couple of photographs taken from the NMCO web site.

Captain Czapski won the championship in both 1949 and 1950. The first on the list is John S. Candelario, who won in 1948. Captain Czapski also won the Nebraska Chess Championship in 1960.

The article and photographs below are all from the NMCO web site. Go to <http://www.nmchess.org/> then click on "State Champions" on the left to see the full list and another photo of New Mexico Champions from 2002.

Matt Grinberg, 4/12/2016



CAPTAIN EDMUND CZAPSKI  
*He returned in time.*

### **Czapski Wins in New Mexico**

Returning from Air Force duty in England just in time to participate in the New Mexico State Championship, Captain Edmund Czapski of Roswell tallied  $5\frac{1}{2}$ - $1\frac{1}{2}$  in a 12-man Swiss system tourney to capture the title at Albuquerque. Donald Hallman of Albuquerque took second place with  $4\frac{1}{2}$ - $1\frac{1}{2}$ .

The two players won their first three games, drew with each other in the fourth round, then racked up points in the fifth. As no one else was close to them, they played again in the final round and Czapski scored to annex the state title.

Sixteen-year-old Jimmy Phillips and 15-year-old Larry Ross tied with 4-2. Victory in their play-off game gave Phillips third prize. J. R. Cole, Jack Shaw and William Chaffee had equal totals of 3-3. All of these players are from Albuquerque.

The event was sponsored by the Albuquerque Chess Club and directed by Jimmy Phillips, who seems to be one of the spark plugs of chess in New Mexico.

Czapski is a navigator in the Strategic Air Command. During the war, he saw plenty of action, collecting four medals with three oak leaf clusters as well as

12 battle stars. He flew the last mission of the war, acting as navigator on the plane which escorted the Japanese generals on the way to sign the surrender.

Czapski is 32 and his chess career dates back to 1937 when he won the Detroit Championship. He retained the title in 1938 and 1939. In intercollegiate play as first board for Wayne University, he won 35, lost 2 and drew 2.

He has played little in recent years, but in 1947 he was ninth in the Southwestern Open and runner-up in the Panhandle Open at Amarillo, Tex. The New Mexico event was his first tournament since 1947.



Colonel Edmund Czapski, USAF, was New Mexico State Chess Champion in 1949 and 1950. Photo courtesy of Dawn Czapski; top photo and text from the August 1949 issue of Chess Review from Ron Kensek.