

## **Hawaii Change of Command**

*The Day, August 25, 2007*

Groton -- MOST OUTGOING commanding officers exchange a salute with their replacement. Capt. David A. Solms exchanged a salute and a spear.

In keeping with the Hawaiian traditions that are featured in every ceremony for the USS Hawaii (SSN 776), Solms read his orders and then presented the incoming commanding officer, Cmdr. Edward L. Herrington, with an Ihe Koa, a Hawaiian warrior spear.

Solms received the spear at the reception the night before the submarine's commissioning in May. He officially turned over command of the Hawaii to Herrington in a change-of-command ceremony at the Naval Submarine Base on Friday.

View a slideshow of the change of command. <<http://www.theday.com/re.aspx?re=801d6f4b-ffbb-415a-baec-8a4f98102668>>

“When I found out I was going to command the Hawaii, I knew I would have at my disposal a highly capable weapons system and sensor platform,” Herrington said Friday. “But until recently, I did not know that the Hawaii had the original weapons system, the spear.

“That spear is important to me because it represents the fighting spirit of the Hawaiian people and the warrior spirit of this crew.”

During Solms' tour, the Hawaii was built, christened and commissioned as the third ship of the Virginia class. Solms will transfer to the staff of Commander Submarine Force in Norfolk, Va., where he will serve as the director of strategic operations.

“It has been an amazing journey to go from a couple of hull sections to a complete warship,” he said after the ceremony. “Words cannot describe how much pride I feel.”

During the ceremony, Solms listed his top 10 favorite things about being the submarine's commanding officer, in the style of David Letterman. He praised the submarine's chiefs; the “toys” on the Hawaii, like the revolutionary photonics system and reconfigurable torpedo room; the ship construction team at Electric Boat and the base; and the ship's ombudsman.

The Hawaii, he said, gave him a chance to build a legacy — a warship that would go into harm's way and come back victorious, and a lasting bond between the submarine and the state of Hawaii.

Some items from the list drew laughs from the crowd: beating the executive officer in cribbage, watching the HBO show “Deadwood” in the wardroom, and the soup aboard the Hawaii.

“You may think that's trivial, but you haven't had the soup,” said Solms, who was awarded the Legion of Merit for his tour.

The bragging rights that come with being a commanding officer and the chance to lead a great team ranked the highest.

To the crew, who lined the pier, Solms said, “I can truly say the proudest day of my naval career was out on alpha sea trials and seeing you operate the ship for the first time.”

The ship will eventually be homeported in Pearl Harbor in 2009.

“Everyone in the state of Hawaii is extremely proud of the accomplishments of the Hawaii,” said Maj. Gen. Robert G. F. Lee, adjutant general for the state of Hawaii, who was the guest speaker.

Lee said Virginia-class submarines are needed in the Pacific to work with allies and to “serve notice to countries or entities that mean to do America harm.”

“This new class will defend the land from the sea,” he said. The ship's motto is a poetic phrase in Hawaiian meaning “Defending the Land.”

Lee had acted as a liaison between the state of Hawaii and the submarine throughout the construction process. His civilian career includes 27 years of service overhauling nuclear submarines at Pearl Harbor Naval Shipyard, where his final assignment was as superintendent of nuclear regional maintenance for the Pacific nuclear submarine fleet. Rear Adm. Cecil D. Haney, commander of Submarine Group Two, and Capt. Richard P. Breckenridge, commander of Submarine Squadron Four, also spoke at the ceremony.

Herrington previously served as officer in charge of Pre-commissioning Unit North Carolina (SSN 777). He also served as executive officer on the USS Seawolf (SSN 21) from December 2001 to December 2003.

“Having command of a submarine is an honor,” Herrington said. “Commanding the newest submarine is awesome.” Solms told him: “As you will soon find out, your dreams will come true. It doesn't get any better than this. “The Hawaii made an indelible mark on my soul. I will forever remain a Hawaii shipmate.”

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## **Hawaii Holds Change of Command**

*By Lt. James Stockman, Submarine Group 2 Public Affairs, August 25, 2007*

GROTON, Conn. (NNS) -- The commanding officer of USS Hawaii (SSN 776) was relieved in a change of command ceremony at Naval Station Submarine Base New London, Aug. 21.

Cmdr. Edward L. Herrington relieved Capt. David A. Solms as the commanding officer of Hawaii.

Prior to turning over command to Herrington, Solms told the crew that it was an honor and privilege to have been their commanding officer.

“The proudest day of my Navy career was when we got underway for Sea Trials and I saw my crew in action,” said Solms. “All of Hawaii’s accolades have been earned by the crew and their unparalleled hard work.”

Solms assumed command of Hawaii in June 2005. Under his leadership, Hawaii achieved unprecedented success in ship construction and crew training, transforming her from a cold-hull section to a fully functioning warship in the shortest time span ever accomplished.

Solms’ next assignment will be as Director for Strategic Forces, Nuclear Weapons and Force Protection at Submarine Forces Command in Norfolk, Va.

Herrington’s previous assignment was as officer in charge of Pre-commissioning Unit North Carolina (SSN 777) from April 2006 to November 2006. This is his first tour as a commanding officer of a naval vessel.

“I’m convinced that there are no better Sailors than on board this ship and I have great expectations for the future,” said Herrington after assuming command.

A native of Chesapeake, Va., Herrington graduated from the Virginia Military Institute with a Bachelor of Science Degree in civil engineering and was commissioned in 1989.

Herrington’s tours have included numerous ballistic and fast-attack submarines, including USS Stonewall Jackson (SSBN 634), USS Toledo (SSN 769), USS Narwhal (SSN 671), USS Seawolf (SSN 21) and PCU North Carolina (SSN 777).

Herrington's decorations include the Meritorious Service Medal (two awards), Navy and Marine Corps Commendation Medal (five awards) and the Navy and Marine Corps Achievement Medal (three awards).

Hawaii is the newest of the Virginia class submarines, which includes USS Virginia (SSN 774) and USS Texas (SSN 775).

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## **SUB'S SPEAR IS PASSED ON**

*By Jennifer Grogan, The Day (Conn.), August 25, 2007*

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