

USS Missouri (SSN 780) Holds Change of Command Ceremony

Naval Submarine Support Center, New London

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Date: 11.17.2017

Posted: 11.17.2017 23:58

News ID: 255813

GROTON, Conn. – The Virginia-class, fast-attack submarine, USS Missouri (SSN-780) held a change ceremony at the Dealey Theater onboard Naval Submarine Base New London on Friday, Nov. 17.

Cmdr. George Howell relieved Cmdr. Fraser Hudson as Missouri's commanding officer.

The ceremony's guest speaker, Capt. (Ret.) John O'Neill, a friend who knew and served with Hudson for more than 19 years spoke of Hudson's foundation for leadership, "Fraser's father taught him that the ship is merely a hunk of steel and command is really all about the people." Hudson followed in his father's footsteps of leading a crew at sea. The elder Hudson, Capt. (Ret.) Warren Hudson, was the commanding officer of a frigate.

Hudson praised his crew, "The Sailors of the Mighty Mo are everything that is right with our Navy. You never missed an underway. Not one. For the past three years you were at sea, away from home 56 percent (of the time), dominating every challenge. We sailed over 100,000 nautical miles, that's enough to circumnavigate the world four times."

Hudson continued, "Thank you for your time, your hard work and your fellowship. I'm going to miss you guys. So, one more time before I say goodbye, God bless America, God bless Missouri and Hooyah Mighty Mo."

Hudson concluded his speech by passing his father's advice onto Missouri's incoming commanding officer. "George—command is not about the ship, the ship is just a piece of steel. Command is about them, and before you is the best damned crew in the fleet, they will rise to any challenge and will follow you anywhere. Lead them well."

Howell thanked Commander, Submarine Squadron 12, Capt. Ollie Lewis for his trust and confidence shown by putting him in charge of, "...the finest warship in the United States Navy."

Like Hudson, Howell was generous with his praise, "...having had the opportunity to see you lead this crew over the past month, it is obvious to anyone who sets foot on this ship that you, the XO and the COB have developed a mighty fine crew."

Howell praised the crew's recent accomplishments as incredible. "You operate a highly advanced machine with world-class technology and conduct the most cutting edge, complex operations in dangerous waters around the globe...the fine men that operate this warship and their families that



unconditionally support our way of life are here with us today.”

Howell concluded his remarks by saying, “It’s truly an honor to be your captain and I am humbled to serve alongside you.”

Western Connecticut Navy League President, Jason Wathen presented two proclamations, one from the Missouri Senate and one from the Missouri House of Representatives, on behalf of the USS Missouri Commissioning Committee. The proclamations recognized Hudson’s service and accomplishments as Missouri’s commanding officer. The proclamations were also a sign of the close relationship between the state of Missouri, the USS Missouri and the Sailors that make up its crew.

Sailors from the first Basic Enlisted Submarine School class named for USS Missouri were on-hand for the change of command ceremony. Hudson said he looked forward to seeing the young Sailors in the fleet soon.

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