

New Submarine Squadron Commodore in Groton

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GROTON, Conn. (NNS) -- The submarine squadron that oversees about half of the Navy's 15 attack submarines based in Groton, Conn., welcomed a new commander Aug. 30 during a change of command ceremony at Naval Submarine Base New London.

Capt. Michael Holland transferred command of Submarine Squadron 4 to Capt. Jim Waters during a pierside ceremony on the Thames River aboard USS New Mexico (SSN 779) - one of the squadron's assigned ships that completed her maiden deployment two weeks ago.

"After deploying nine different ships to two different theaters, I am grateful to all the organizations involved - from maintenance, to training, to base and family support services," said Holland. "It takes an incredible team effort and we are blessed with a great team here to keep our ships ready."

Holland took over Submarine Squadron 4 in January 2012 after leading Submarine Squadron 2, which the Navy disestablished. Squadron 2 submarines were consolidated under Submarine Development Squadron 12 and Submarine Squadron 4 last year.

Guest speaker Rear Adm. Rick Breckenridge, director of the Navy's Undersea Warfare Division, lauded Holland's efforts.

"What stands out to me is the squadron consolidation, which allowed him to spend eight months at Squadron 2 and then 20 months at Squadron 4," said Breckenridge about Holland. "Of those two squadrons, he had the privilege of commanding 12 ships and he prepared nine of those for deployment. That's a big responsibility, yet each of those ships excelled under his tutelage and command."

Holland received the Legion of Merit award for his tour.

Among his notable accomplishments was USS Hartford's (SSN 768) selection as Atlantic Fleet's most improved Navy vessel in 2012. Hartford is a Los Angeles-class attack submarine assigned to Submarine Squadron 4.

"To be able to take a ship and bring it to that lofty level of performance I think is a great reflection of the squadron from which that ship is assigned," said Breckenridge. "This is a centerpiece of [Holland's] tour."

Holland now heads to Washington, D.C., where he will serve in the Operations Division of the Navy Budget Office. He graduated from Montana State University in 1987 and received his officer commission through Officer Candidate School in Newport, R.I.

As Holland's relief, Waters has assumed responsibility for ensuring the mission readiness of Sailors assigned to two Los Angeles-class submarines, six of the Navy's nine commissioned Virginia-class submarines, and Pre-Commissioning Unit North Dakota (SSN 786) currently under construction.

Waters graduated from the U.S. Naval Academy in 1989 and completed his graduate studies at England's Oxford University in 1991. He previously served at U.S. Strategic Command as a battle watch commander in the Global Operations Center and as chief of staff for the Global Operations directorate.

"I am deeply honored and humbled to stand here today having been given the privilege to serve in command once again," said Waters. "I can think of no better job than to serve the men and women of our great force."

Submarine Squadron 4's mission is to equip, man and train Sailors serving aboard its submarines.

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