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News Release #62-14

May 21, 2014

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## **Surface Warfare Officers School Holds Change of Command**

NEWPORT, R.I. - On May 16 in the Adm. Michael Mullen Auditorium, friends, family, and staff looked on as Capt. David A. Welch relieved Capt. Richard. A. Brown as commanding officer of the Navy's Surface Warfare Officers School Command (SWOS) in Newport, R.I.

Rear Adm. Thomas Rowden, director of Surface Warfare on the staff of the Chief of Naval Operations, was the guest speaker for the event. In his remarks, Rowden emphasized the importance of SWOS for the Navy and the country as a whole. He explained how access to the world's waterways makes it possible for the Navy to project power around the globe. That power, noted Rowden, will be challenged in the future by various nations using newer, technologically advanced weapons. These rising threats make a strong training foundation more important than ever for the surface fleet.

"We must return to our roots—to antisubmarine warfare....to offensive anti-surface warfare....to control of the skies above the ocean through integrated air and missile defense—if we are to retain our ability to project power thousands of miles from our shores," said Rowden. "Surface warfare—our officers, our enlisted Sailors, our ships, our systems—are at the heart of this effort. We are bringing about a warfighting renaissance and SWOS will be at its core. Sound fundamentals—the blocking and tackling, as it were—are what will enable this renaissance, and the surface flag leadership has looked to SWOS to provide it. Under Captain Rich Brown—it has done so magnificently."

Rowden stated that Brown had done a brilliant job leading SWOS to meet these challenges, and that he has every confidence that as new commanding officer, Welch would continue that tradition of excellence.

Brown followed Rowden on the podium, where he issued a heart-felt thanks to all of the staff, declaring this to be the “best commanding officer tour outside of command of a ship.” Brown then delivered an “official biography” for his wife, Erin, which cataloged their travels together over a career, and everything she had accomplished during their tours.

Brown was commissioned through the United States Naval Academy in 1985. His previous command tours include USS The Sullivans (DDG 68) and USS Gettysburg (CG 64). The change-of-command ceremony marks the end of Brown’s two-year tour at SWOS, the culmination of which included being selected for promotion to the rank of Rear Admiral. He is waiting for Senate confirmation of his flag selection and announcement of his follow-on assignment.

During the course of his tour as commanding officer, Brown guided the development of SWOS’s training to support the ever-changing requirements of the fleet. He managed the 2012 merger with the Center for Naval Engineering and assumed responsibility for all non-nuclear enlisted engineering training for the surface fleet. That same year, the command unveiled the Basic Division Officer Course (BDOC) at its sites in Norfolk, Va. and San Diego, a course designed to prepare newly-commissioned ensigns for their initial division officer assignment onboard a ship.

2014 marked SWOS’ introduction of the revised Senior Enlisted Propulsion Engineering Course (SEPEC) for future “Top Snipes” in the fleet, as well as the Surface Commanders Course (SCC) to prepare future shipboard commanding officers. Most recently, SWOS began a transition to the new Advanced Division Officer Course (ADOC), which complements instruction provided at BDOC, replaces the Advanced Shiphandling and Tactics (ASAT) course, and seeks to build “fleet lieutenants” as second-tour division officers.

The new commanding officer, Welch also graduated from the United States Naval Academy. At sea he commanded USS Chung Hoon (DDG 93) and Destroyer Squadron THREE ONE. During his most recent tour, Welch served as deputy for Littoral Combat Ships on the staff of the Chief of Naval Operations (OPNAV N96E).

As he assumed command of SWOS, Welch thanked family and personal guests in his remarks and made a promise to the staff. "I pledge to continue the standard of excellence that is so clearly evident here," he said. Welch described SWOS as "a place full of vision, purpose, and focused energy." He thanked Brown for his contributions to the surface warfare community and wished him well in his follow-on tour.

For more information about Surface Warfare Officers School, visit <https://www.netc.navy.mil/centers/swos/>

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