

ATG MIDPAC holds change of command aboard 'Mo'

JO3 Sunday Williams

Staff Writer

Capt. David M. Armitage relieved Capt. Martin James Leghart Sr. as Commander, Afloat Training Group Middle Pacific (ATG MIDPAC) during a change of command ceremony held March 22 aboard the Battleship Missouri Memorial.

ATG MIDPAC is a unit of the operating forces based ashore and reports to Commander Afloat Training Group Pacific. Their mission is dedicated to providing safe, effective, efficient, motivating training ashore and afloat to the Pacific Fleet and the Coast Guard.

Vice Adm. Alfred G. Harms Jr., Chief of Naval Education and Training, was the guest speaker for the ceremony. Capt. P. T. Serfass Jr., Commander, Afloat Training Group Pacific, awarded Leghart the Legion of Merit award.

Leghart thanked Serfass for his support and thanked Harms for his leadership.

"The award you hung on my chest a minute ago is a result of the hard work and dedication of the entire team here at ATG MIDPAC and it is a tribute to their professionalism," said Leghart.

Leghart enlisted in the Navy in 1967 after graduating from Canton Lincoln High School in Canton, Ohio. Following basic and specialty training, he was assigned as a radioman at the U.S. Naval Communications Station, Honolulu.

He was selected for the Navy Enlisted Scientific Education Program (NESEP) in 1971



PH3 Josh Pritekel
Capt. Martin Leghart Sr. (left) was relieved by Capt. David Armitage (right) as Commander, Afloat Training Group Middle Pacific during a change of command ceremony held aboard the Battleship Missouri Memorial Friday.

and was assigned at Miami University in Oxford, Ohio. Leghart graduated with a bachelor of science degree in systems analysis and was commissioned an ensign in 1974.

His first commissioned assignment was on USS Harold E. Holt (FF 1074) as communications officer and first lieutenant. Other sea duty assignments included operations

officer aboard USS Benjamin Stoddert (DDG 22), combat systems officer assigned to Commander Surface Squadron One, executive officer for USS Crommelin (FFG 37), chief staff officer for Commander Destroyer Squadron Nine and commanding officer of USS Duncan (FFG 10). During his tour with COMDESRON Nine, he served with the Kuwait Defense Review Group in January

to February 1992 as the senior U.S. Navy advisor and as a member of the command, control, communications and computers (C4) working group.

Ashore, Leghart attended the Naval Postgraduate School at Monterey, Calif., graduating with a master of science degree in engineering science in 1980. He also completed the National Defense Course at the Pakistan National Defense College in 1997, earning a master of science degree in defense and strategic studies from Qaid-i-Azam University in Islamabad, Pakistan.

Other shore assignments included senior lecturer at the U.S. Naval Academy, deputy commander of the Defense Information Systems Agency Pacific and team chief for one of five joint staff integrated vulnerability assessment teams at the Defense Threat Reduction Agency.

Leghart is married to the former Elsie Magdaloyo of Pearl City, Hawaii. They have three grown sons: Martin Jr., Alan and Jonathan who live in California. His parents, three brothers and two sisters reside in Canton, Ohio, but were able to attend the ceremony along with his parents. Leghart will report to Naval Postgraduate School, Monterey.

Capt. David M. Armitage's previously served as operations officer on the NATO staff of Commander-in-Chief, South Atlantic.

Originally a native of Seattle, Wash., Armitage is married to the former Linda Peters of Gallitzin, Pa., and has a daughter, Emily.

Surface: New program will save time, enhance forward naval presence

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United States where she will also be decommissioned. The plan will also eliminate the deployment of USS Paul F. Foster (DD because the additional on-station time generated by swapping out the crews means a ship will already be in theater meeting that requirement.

The leader of the Surface Navy says that's exactly what makes the initiative worth doing.

"Basically, we're getting three additional months of forward presence when compared to what we'd get out of a standard three ship deployment," said Vice Adm. Tim LaFleur, Commander, Naval Surface Forces. "When you look at

three standard six-month deployments from the West Coast to Fifth Fleet, the transit time there and back results in ships being on-station for about 100 days. With Sea Swap, because we're flying two crews out, we can take the time we save from eliminating some of those lengthy transits and apply it to on-station time. What we get is a ship in a specific AOR for approximately 90 days longer than we would have had if we did standard deployments."

LaFleur said a Navy force structure stretched thin by global requirements puts additional emphasis on the importance of the Sea Swap initiative.

"Everyone agrees we need more

ships than the 300 plus we have right now. But the reality is that it's going to take awhile for our force structure to grow to where we need it to be," said LaFleur. "Until then, we need to explore other options that will help us to meet the forward presence requirements Americans have come to expect from their Navy."

While this will be an entirely new way to deploy, LaFleur believes there will be quality of service benefits for the surface Sailors involved in the initiative.

"We frequently hear from Sailors that they don't like the transits that come with a deployment. They say doing the real-world missions once they're on-station are very re-

warding, but the transits can be long and tedious. With Sea Swap, that's gone. Sailors will get on-station a lot quicker."

And like standard deployments, Sea Swap Sailors will still get quality port visits going into and coming out of the theater of operations. They just might fly there instead.

LaFleur says he also expects the Sea Swap experiment will produce efficiencies in fuel costs.

"We won't use the transit fuel we normally would, and will apply those savings toward some of the unique costs associated with the initiative such as flying the crews to the turnover port and putting them up in berthing facilities."

Because the ships are similar,

LaFleur doesn't anticipate the incoming crews having any great difficulties adjusting to their "new" ship.

"I know every ship has its own little quirks, and that's exactly why we're going to have the outgoing and incoming crews spend a few weeks together turning over. But when it comes to these DDs and DDGs, they're very similar."

Because the Fletcher and Higgins hulls will not be going through the standard maintenance availabilities that would typically follow a six-month deployment, other options are being planned to ensure the material readiness of the two ship's remains high throughout the 18-month periods.