

Commander, Submarine Group 9
Public Affairs Office
(360) 396-5482

News Release

For Immediate Release

September 18, 2017

Alabama Blue Holds Change of Command Ceremony

By Mass Communication Specialist 1st Class Amanda R. Gray, Commander, Submarine Group 9 Public Affairs

BANGOR, Wash (NNS) – The Blue crew of the Ohio-class ballistic missile submarine USS Alabama (SSBN 731) welcomed a new commanding officer during a change of command ceremony, Sept. 18.

Cmdr. Jeff Yackeren, from Darien, New York, relieved Cmdr. Paul Reinhardt, from Middletown, Virginia, during the ceremony held at the Bangor Chapel.

“It has truly been a distinct honor and privilege to be your commanding officer,” said Reinhardt. “I thank you for giving me 100 percent every day. I have had the extreme fortune of serving on four Battle “E” boats. What makes Alabama Blue so different and special is the camaraderie and sense of teamwork that I have experienced nowhere else in my career.”

Reinhardt assumed command of Alabama’s Blue crew Dec. 18, 2014. During his leadership, the crew completed four strategic deterrent patrols, with three consecutive patrol extensions, and four refit periods. The crew received the 2016 Retention Excellence Award, 2017 Battle Efficiency “E” Award, 2015 and 2016 Red & Green Navigation “N” Awards, 2016 Trident Submarine Outstanding Performance Award, and the 2016 and 2015 Supply Blue “E” Awards.

Reinhardt’s next duty station will be Washington D.C., where he will serve at the Office of the Chief of Naval Operations on the Nuclear Weapons Policy Branch.

“Cmdr. Yackeren, I am confident that you are the right person to lead Alabama Blue through a very critical time in her history,” said Reinhardt. “The extended refit patrol (ERP), scheduled for next year, will be challenging. But I believe that your experience as executive officer on USS West Virginia (SSBN 736) will help the crew navigate through the qualifications and certifications needed such that the transition coming out of the ERP will be smooth. Congratulations on getting here, the crew is lucky to have you.”

Yackeren comes to Alabama Blue from Pearl Harbor, Hawaii, where he served as the submarine operations officer at commander, Submarine Force, U.S. Pacific Fleet.

“It is a great honor and privilege to have been selected to relieve Cmdr. Reinhardt,” said Yackeren. “I am well aware of the awesome responsibility I have to lead these men; I appreciate the trust instilled in me by the submarine force and the commodore, and am humbled to be in the company of so many dedicated Sailors and the people that support us all.”

Alabama is one of eight Ohio-class ballistic missile submarines homeported at Naval Base Kitsap-Bangor, providing the most survivable leg of the nation's strategic deterrent forces.