

USS GRAVELY (DDG 107) Change of Command



On 31 Jan 2018 Richmond Council Board Members braved subfreezing temperatures on the deck of the USS GRAVELY. Ship Liaison Alan Palmer led the group to congratulate CO Ted Carlson being relieved by XO Justin Hodges who became the new CO. Navy tradition was everywhere: bunting on the ship, dress uniforms, Navy band, bosun's whistles, ringing of bells, and changing of the captain's pennant.

There were several memorable emotional moments. The first came when Guest Speaker Rear Admiral Eugene Black reminded Captain Carlson that he had the best job in the world, and now he was leaving it! The second came in the middle of Captain Carlson's comments while he was reflecting on his experiences and responsibilities. He was proud of his ship and crew, but his momentary pause let us know how much it had really meant to him. A third moment returned us to laughter. The crew presented Captain Carlson with a framed memento full of removable blue painter's tape with handwritten notes. It seems that when he first took command, he roamed the ship placing blue tape as markers for things that needed attention. The tapes kept disappearing until the whole crew got the message that the Captain had put them there for a reason.

The program bulletin included lines from the writings of Joseph Conrad who said about the Captain, "*He is the Commanding Officer. He is the ship.*" Ted Carlson had been piped on as "GRAVELY." He was piped off as "Commander Carlson." *Fair winds and following seas.*