

USS Connecticut Leadership Relieved by Fleet Commander



The Seawolf-class fast-attack submarine USS Connecticut (SSN 22) departs Naval Base Kitsap-Bremerton for deployment, May 27. *U.S. NAVY / Lt. Mack Jamieson*

ARLINGTON, Va. – The leadership of the Seawolf-class attack submarine USS Connecticut (SSN 22) has been relieved and replaced by an interim leadership team, the Navy said Nov. 4.

The USS Connecticut grounded an uncharted seamount on the afternoon of Oct. 2 while submerged in the South China Sea, while operating in international waters in the Indo-Pacific region. There were no life-threatening injuries. The submarine made a transit to the naval base in Apra Harbor, Guam, for an assessment of the damage.

“Vice Adm. Karl Thomas, commander, U.S. 7th Fleet, relieved Cmdr. Cameron Aljilani as commanding officer, Lt. Cmdr.

Patrick Cashin as executive officer, and Master Chief Sonar Technician Cory Rodgers as chief of the boat," the release said.

Loss of confidence in the leadership team was the reason the Navy cited in the release.

"Thomas determined sound judgement, prudent decision-making and adherence to required procedures in navigation planning, watch team execution and risk management could have prevented the incident," the Navy said.

Capt. John Witte will assume duties as interim commanding officer, Cmdr. Joe Sammur will assume duties as interim executive officer and Command Master Chief Paul Walters will assume duties as interim chief of the boat, the Navy said.

The Navy said the Connecticut is undergoing damage assessment in Guam and will be repaired at Bremerton, Washington.

In January 2005, the Los Angeles-class attack submarine USS San Francisco (SSN 711) struck a sea mount while submerged southeast of Guam. The submarine's bow sonar dome was crushed, but the pressure hull was not compromised. Dozens of crewmen were injured, and one later died of injuries. The submarine was repaired and returned to fleet service in 2009 with the bow from the ex-USS Honolulu installed.

The Connecticut, commissioned in 2005, is the second of the three-boat Seawolf class.