

PUBLIC CEREMONIES #3

# THE CHANGE OF WATCH

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## Change of Watch Performed by a Visitor

The following Change of Watch ceremony may be used when the new officers are installed by a visiting dignitary. It requires three people: an Installing Officer, an Adjutant, and a Bo's'n, and can be adapted as necessary. Throughout the ceremony, the Adjutant stands to the left of the Installing

Officer and holds the flags of office in reverse order—that is, with the flag of the lowest ranking officer on top and the commodore's flag at the bottom. The Bo's'n takes a place near the bell and strikes it when appropriate during the ceremony. In this version, the Installing Officer could be a visiting dignitary such as public official or an officer of a state or national boating association. As with any change of command ceremony, it should be modified by the club's protocol officer to conform it to the titles and duties spelled out in the club's constitution and bylaws. The ceremony can also be modified so that can be performed by the outgoing and incoming commodores.

### Sample Script for a Change of Watch Performed by a Visitor

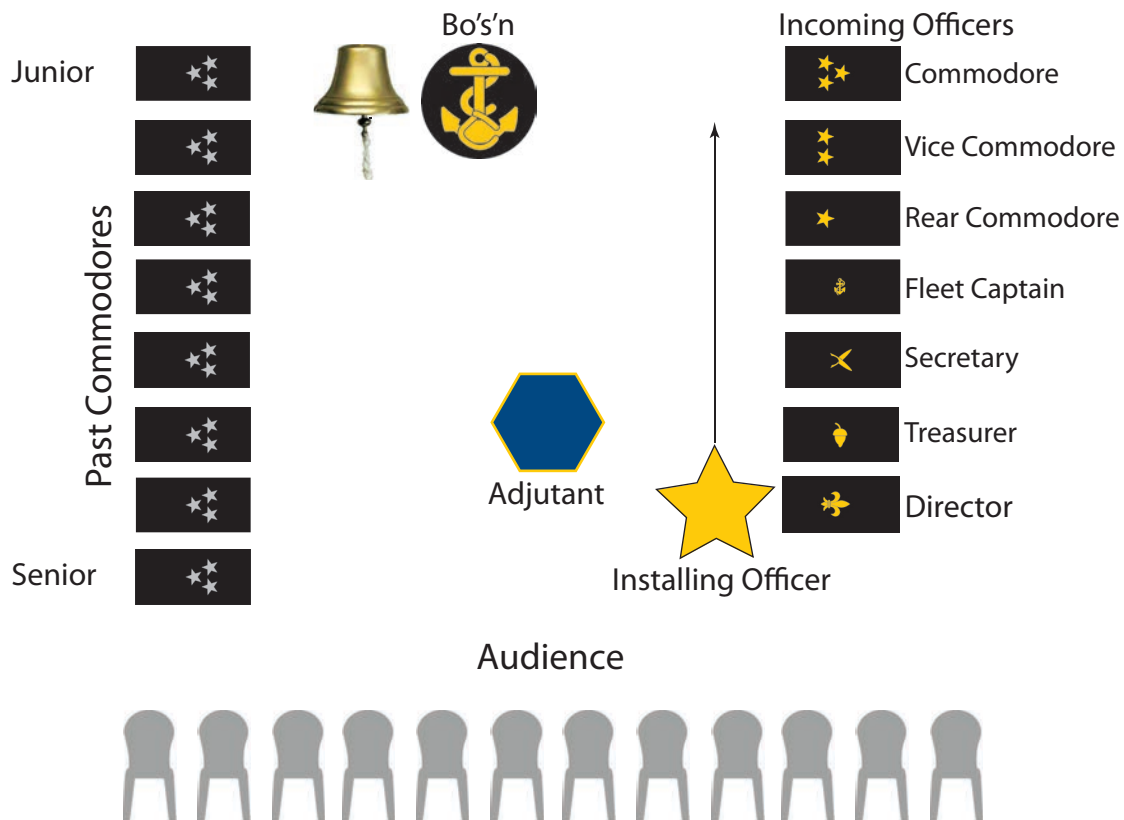
INSTALLING OFFICER (To the Audience): Welcome to the Change of Watch ceremony of \_\_\_\_\_ Club. This is a time-honored tradition marking the transfer of responsibility and authority of the Club's officers from one year to the next. It is a legacy that honors the history of the Club and the continuity of command. Now please give your attention to the installation of officers of \_\_\_\_\_ Club for the year \_\_\_\_\_.

\_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_,  
\_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_

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\_\_\_\_\_, and \_\_\_\_\_,  
please stand front and center.

The newly-elected officers line up facing the Installing Officer, with the highest ranking officer on the left of line, and the other officers aligned on his/her left in ascending order of rank. The Installing Officer and Adjutant face the line, and the Bo's'n stands by the ship's bell. The Installing Officer and Adjutant begin with the lowest ranking position at the far right of the line and move up the line as the installation of each officer is completed.



Change of Watch Performed by Visiting Dignitary

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The Installing Officer stands in front of the lowest-ranking new officer who salutes, and the Installing Officer returns the salute.

INSTALLING OFFICER: \_\_\_\_\_, you have been elected Director of \_\_\_\_\_ Yacht Club. Unlike all other elected officers of this Club, you and your fellow directors serve three-year terms. This is so because you and they are meant to provide continuity and wise counsel to the other officers. The symbol of your office is the \_\_\_\_\_. It is to remind you that you must keep your Club on a steady course in the storms that may buffet it in the future. Do you accept this responsibility for the coming years?

DIRECTOR \_\_\_\_\_: I will.

INSTALLING OFFICER: "With your acceptance of responsibility comes your (insignia/flag) of office, which the Club now presents you.

The Bo's'n strikes the ship's bell twice.

DIRECTOR \_\_\_\_\_ salutes the Installing Officer, who returns the salute and moves to his/her left to face the next person in line. The next person in line salutes the Installing Officer, who returns the salute.

INSTALLING OFFICER: \_\_\_\_\_, you have been elected Treasurer of \_\_\_\_\_ Club. This is a position of great responsibility. As Treasurer, you will care for all of the finances and the financial records of the Club. The financial health of this Club is in your hands more than anyone else. Do you accept this responsibility for the year \_\_\_\_\_?

TREASURER \_\_\_\_\_: I will.

INSTALLING OFFICER: With your acceptance of responsibility comes your (insignia/flag) of office, which the Club now presents you.

The Bo's'n strikes the ship's bell twice.

TREASURER \_\_\_\_\_ salutes the Installing Officer who returns the salute and moves to his/her left to face the next person in line. The next person in line salutes the Installing Officer, who returns the salute.

INSTALLING OFFICER: \_\_\_\_\_, you have been elected Secretary of \_\_\_\_\_ Club. The position of secretary is vital to the continued existence of any club. As the repository of the Club's minutes and records, you will provide the link to the past, without which it is impossible to have a future. Do you ac-

## YACHTING CUSTOMS AND COURTESIES

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cept this responsibility for the year \_\_\_\_?

SECRETARY \_\_\_\_\_: I will.

INSTALLING OFFICER: With your acceptance of responsibility comes your (insignia/flag) of office, which the Club now presents you.

The Bo's'n strikes the ship's bell twice.

SECRETARY \_\_\_\_\_ salutes the Installing Officer who returns the salute and moves to his/her left to face the next person in line. The next person in line salutes the Installing Officer, who returns the salute.

INSTALLING OFFICER: \_\_\_\_\_, you have been elected Fleet Captain of \_\_\_\_\_ Club. The fleet captain is responsible for the cruises and boating activities of the Club. Without such activities, this Club would not be a \_\_\_\_\_ club. It could not carry on the unique traditions of such clubs, nor could it preserve the customs and courtesies of yachting. Do you accept this responsibility for the year \_\_\_\_?

FLEET CAPTAIN \_\_\_\_\_: I will.

INSTALLING OFFICER: With your acceptance of responsibility

comes your (insignia/flag) of office, which the Club now presents you.

The Bo's'n strikes the ship's bell twice.

Fleet Captain \_\_\_\_\_ salutes the Installing Officer who returns the salute and moves to his/her left to face the next person in line. The next person in line salutes the Installing Officer, who returns the salute.

INSTALLING OFFICER: \_\_\_\_\_, you have been elected Rear Commodore of \_\_\_\_\_ Club. You are accepting a great burden, and entering a busy year. As Rear Commodore, you will be responsible for planning and executing this Club's social events. While those things are not the primary mission of this club, they provide the glue that holds its members together. Do you accept this responsibility for the year \_\_\_\_\_?

REAR COMMODORE \_\_\_\_\_: I will.

INSTALLING OFFICER: With your acceptance of responsibility comes your (insignia/flag) of office, which the Club now presents you.

The Bo's'n strikes the ship's bell twice.

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Rear Commodore \_\_\_\_\_ salutes the Installing Officer, who returns the salute and moves to his/her left to face the next person in line. The next person in line salutes the Installing Officer, who returns the salute.

INSTALLING OFFICER: \_\_\_\_\_, you have been elected Vice Commodore of \_\_\_\_\_ Club. You will be responsible for the external matters of the Club. This is a position of great importance because it is the link between your Club and your community. In addition, you will be required to act as Commodore if the Commodore is unavailable. Do you accept this responsibility for the year \_\_\_\_\_?

VICE COMMODORE \_\_\_\_\_: I will.

INSTALLING OFFICER: With your acceptance of responsibility comes your (insignia/flag) of office, which the Club now presents you.

The Bo's'n strikes the ship's bell twice.

Vice Commodore \_\_\_\_\_ salutes the Installing Officer who returns the salute and moves to his/her left to face the next person in line. The next person in line salutes the Installing Officer, who returns the salute.

INSTALLING OFFICER: \_\_\_\_\_, you have been elected Commodore of \_\_\_\_\_ Club. As Commodore, you will be responsible for the overall management of the Club and the leadership of your officers and members. Your actions set the tone and spirit of the Club. You will have the advice and assistance of your fellow officers and past commodores, but in the end, the responsibility for this Club is yours. In a very real sense, you will be \_\_\_\_\_ Club during the coming year. Do you accept this responsibility for the year \_\_\_\_\_?

COMMODORE: \_\_\_\_\_: I will.

INSTALLING OFFICER: With your acceptance of responsibility comes your (insignia/flag) of office, which the Club now presents you.

The Bo's'n strikes the ship's bell twice.

INSTALLING OFFICER: The Installing Officer salutes the new Commodore: Commodore \_\_\_\_\_, may this be the first of many salutes to you."

COMMODORE: Returns the salute.

INSTALLING OFFICER: The Installing Officer then turns to the

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Bo's'n: Bo's'n, please sound eight bells.

The BO'S'N strikes the ship's bell eight times in sets of two: one-two; three-four; five-six; seven-eight.

INSTALLING OFFICER (Faces the audience): Members of \_\_\_\_\_ Club, your officers have accepted election and agreed to faithfully perform the duties you have entrusted to them. They have received their insignia of office, and the ship's bell has sounded eight times, signaling the Change of Watch. Now please stand and recognize your officers for the year \_\_\_\_\_.

The new Commodore then walks to the podium and calls on the Immediate Past Commodore, presents him or her with a flag of office or gift, and makes any appropriate remarks.

Like any other ceremony, this Change of Watch should be rehearsed before it is performed. There are a few "danger spots" that the participants must be aware of in advance. One of them is the ship's bell. Note that the Bo's'n strikes it after the new officer's flag and/or insignia are presented. The Bo's'n strikes the bell without any command by the Installing Officer, who calls on the Bo's'n only once: for "eight bells" at the end of the ceremony.

The other "danger spot" is the salute. The newly-elected officer always salutes the Installing Officer as soon as the Installing Officer moves into

place in front of him or her. The Installing Officer *returns* the salute. They do it twice: once when the Installing Officer steps into place, and again after the Bo's'n sounds two bells. However, it is different for the Commodore. After he or she is installed and the two bells sound, the Commodore is the senior officer on the grounds. To highlight the change to the audience (and serve as a cue to the participants), an additional line was added to the script: the Installing Officer says, "Commodore \_\_\_\_\_, may this be the first of many salutes to you." At that point the Installing Officer salutes the Commodore who returns the salute.

Although the ceremony takes only fifteen minutes, some clubs have decided it is "too long" and attempt to modify it so that officers are sworn *en masse*. While it can be done, it makes for a very poor ceremony and detracts from the dignity of the individual offices and the people who have agreed to fill them. It says, in effect, the club can't be bothered with them and sets a bad example for the incoming year.

### Change of Watch Performed by the Commodore

In this version of the Change of Watch ceremony, the outgoing commodore swears in the incoming commodore who in turn swears in the junior officers. The outgoing commodore and the incoming commodore stand facing each other. Behind the outgoing commodore are the past commodores of the club who are in a line with the senior past commodore at the far left (his/her own right). Behind the incoming commodore are the newly elected officers in a line with the Vice Commodore-Elect at the far left (his/her own right).

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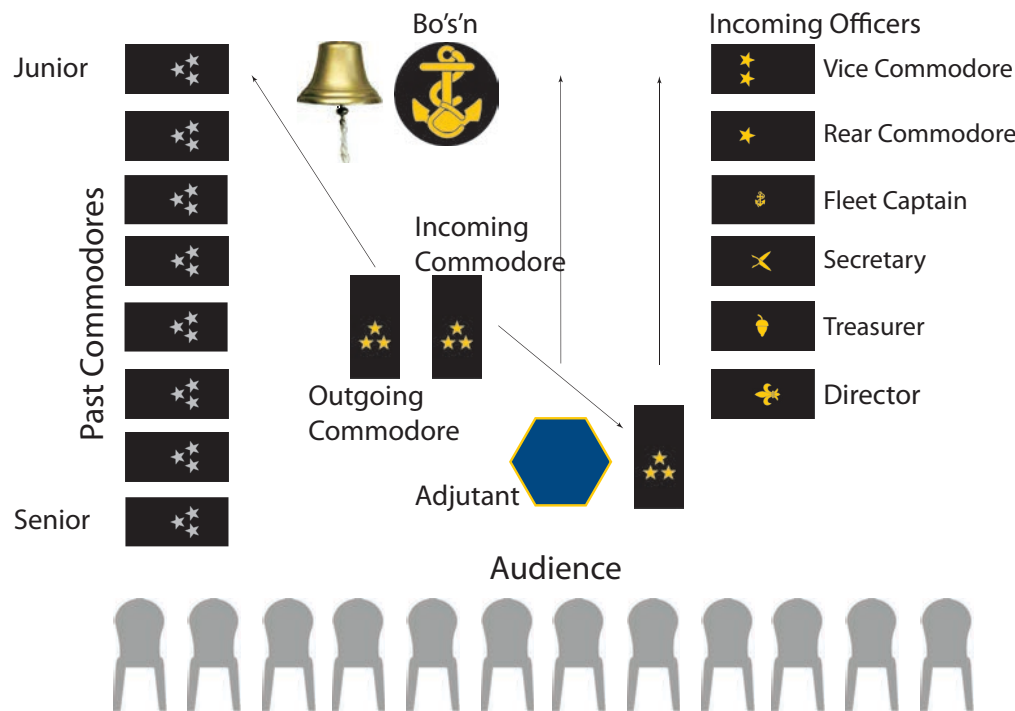
The ceremony can be performed in two ways: either with the outgoing commodore retiring to the junior position of the past commodores, and the new Commodore walking down the line with the Adjutant (Diagram #1); or the outgoing commodore retiring to the junior position of the past commodores and the new Commodore calling each of the officers front and center (Diagram #2).

### Sample Script for Change of Watch Performed by the Commodore

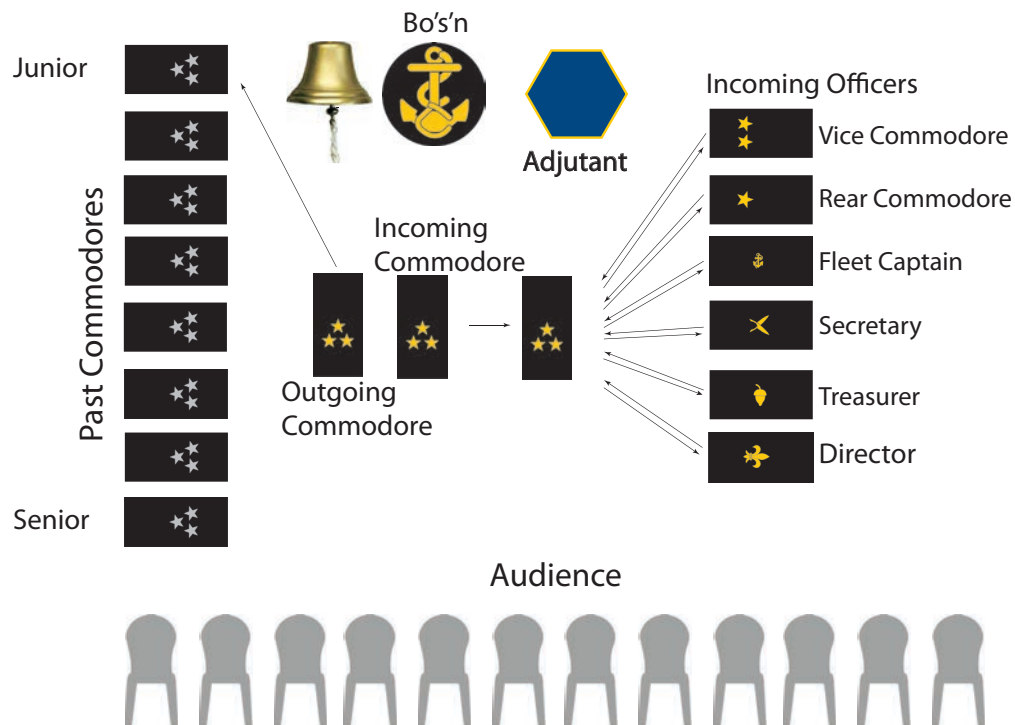
OUTGOING COMMODORE (Faces the audience): Welcome to the Change of Watch ceremony of \_\_\_\_\_ Club. This is a time-honored tradition marking the transfer of responsibility and authority of the Club's officers from one year to the next. It is a legacy that honors the history of the Club and the continuity of command. Now please give your attention to the installation of officers of \_\_\_\_\_ Club for the year \_\_\_\_\_.

OUTGOING COMMODORE (Faces the incoming Commodore): \_\_\_\_\_, you have been elected Commodore of \_\_\_\_\_ Club. As Commodore, you will be responsible for the overall management of the Club and the leadership of your officers and members. Your actions set the tone and spirit

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Change of Watch Performed By Commodore, Diagram #1



Change of Watch Performed By Commodore, Diagram #2

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of the Club. You will have the advice and assistance of your fellow officers and past commodores, but in the end, the responsibility for this Club is yours. In a very real sense, you will be \_\_\_\_\_ Club during the coming year. Do you accept this responsibility for the year \_\_\_\_\_?

INCOMING COMMODORE: I will.

OUTGOING COMMODORE: With your acceptance of responsibility comes your (insignia/flag) of office, which the Club now presents you.

ADJUTANT presents the flag and the BO'S'N strikes the ship's bell twice. The Outgoing Commodore, who has just been relieved, salutes the new Commodore, who returns the salute. The Outgoing Commodore then takes his place in the most junior position (that is, the extreme right, his own left) of the past commodores. The new Commodore takes the place of the outgoing Commodore and hands his flag to the Adjutant, who turns it over to the Bo's'n or COLOR GUARD.

ADJUTANT: (Bo's'n/Color Guard) hoist the Commodore's flag.

The Commodore's flag is raised on the starboard yardarm. When it reaches the yardarm, the Adjutant addresses the GUNNER.

ADJUTANT: Gunner, fire one.

The person in charge of the cannon fires a salute. The new Commodore proceeds with the installation of the junior officers. (NOTE: This script follows Diagram #2.)

COMMODORE: \_\_\_\_\_, please stand front and center.

The newly-elected Treasurer comes front and center and salutes, and the Commodore returns the salute.

COMMODORE: \_\_\_\_\_, you have been elected Treasurer of \_\_\_\_\_ Club. This is a position of great responsibility. As Treasurer, you will take care of all of the finances and the financial records of the Club. The financial health of this Club is in your hands more than anyone else. Do you accept this responsibility for year \_\_\_\_\_?

TREASURER \_\_\_\_\_: I will.

COMMODORE: With your acceptance of responsibility comes your (insignia/flag) of office, which the Club now presents you.

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The Bo's'n strikes the ship's bell twice.

Treasurer \_\_\_\_\_ salutes the Commodore, who returns the salute. Treasurer \_\_\_\_\_ then steps back into line.

COMMODORE: \_\_\_\_\_, please stand front and center.

The newly-elected Secretary comes front and center and salutes, and the Commodore returns the salute.

COMMODORE: \_\_\_\_\_, you have been elected Secretary of \_\_\_\_\_ Club. The position of secretary is vital to the continued existence of any club. As the repository of the Club's minutes and records, you will provide the link to the past without which it is impossible to have a future. Do you accept this responsibility for the year \_\_\_\_\_?

SECRETARY \_\_\_\_\_: I will.

COMMODORE: With your acceptance of responsibility comes your (insignia/flag) of office, which the Club now presents you.

The Bo's'n strikes the ship's bell twice.

Secretary \_\_\_\_\_ salutes the Commodore, who returns the salute. Secretary \_\_\_\_\_ then steps back into line.)

COMMODORE: \_\_\_\_\_, please stand front and center.

The newly-elected Fleet Captain comes front and center and salutes, and the Commodore returns the salute.

COMMODORE: \_\_\_\_\_, you have been elected Fleet Captain of \_\_\_\_\_ Club. The fleet captain is responsible for the cruises and boating activities of the Club. Without such activities, this Club would not be a \_\_\_\_\_ club. It could not carry on the unique traditions of such clubs, nor could it preserve the customs and courtesies of yachting. Do you accept this responsibility for the year \_\_\_\_\_?

FLEET CAPTAIN \_\_\_\_\_: I will.

COMMODORE: With your acceptance of responsibility comes your (insignia/flag) of office, which the Club now presents you.

The Bo's'n strikes the ship's bell twice.

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Fleet Captain \_\_\_\_\_ salutes the Commodore, who returns the salute. Fleet Captain \_\_\_\_\_ steps back into line.

COMMODORE: \_\_\_\_\_, please stand front and center.

The newly-elected Rear Commodore comes front and center and salutes, and the Commodore returns the salute.

COMMODORE: \_\_\_\_\_, you have been elected Rear Commodore of \_\_\_\_\_ Club. You will be responsible for the buildings and grounds of the Club. You will see to it that the property is kept in good order and is well maintained so that it will always be a worthy home for \_\_\_\_\_ Club. Will you accept this responsibility for the year \_\_\_\_\_?

REAR COMMODORE \_\_\_\_\_: I will.

COMMODORE: With your acceptance of responsibility comes your (insignia/flag) of office, which the Club now presents you.

The Bo's'n strikes the ship's bell twice.

Rear Commodore \_\_\_\_\_salutes the Commodore, who returns the salute. Rear Commodore \_\_\_\_\_then steps back into line.

COMMODORE: \_\_\_\_\_, please stand front and center.

The newly-elected Vice Commodore comes front and center and salutes, and the Commodore returns the salute.

COMMODORE: \_\_\_\_\_, you have been elected Vice Commodore of \_\_\_\_\_Club. You will be responsible for the external matters of the Club. This is a position of great importance because it is the link between our Club and our community. In addition, you will be required to act as Commodore if I am unavailable. Do you accept this responsibility for the year \_\_\_\_\_?

VICE COMMODORE \_\_\_\_\_: I will.

COMMODORE: With your acceptance of responsibility comes your (insignia/flag)of office, which the Club now presents to you.

The Bo's'n strikes the ship's bell twice.

Vice Commodore \_\_\_\_\_salutes the Commodore,

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who returns the salute. Vice Commodore \_\_\_\_\_ then steps back into line.

COMMODORE: Bo's'n, please sound eight bells.

The Bo's'n strikes the ship's bell eight times in sets of two: one-two; three-four; five-six; seven-eight.

COMMODORE (Faces the audience): Members of \_\_\_\_\_ Club, your officers have accepted election and agreed to faithfully perform the duties you have entrusted to them. They have received their (insignia/flags) of office, and the ship's bell has sounded eight times, signaling the Change of Watch. Now please stand and recognize your officers for the year \_\_\_\_\_.

