Capt. Kenneth Sterbenz relieved Capt. Stephen Tedford as program manager of the Aircraft Launch and Recovery Equipment (ALRE) Program Office (PMA-251) July 12 during a change of command ceremony in the Rear Adm. William A. Moffett Building at Naval Air Station Patuxent River.

“Today, Captain Sterbenz inherits an ALRE team with a proud and proven track record,” said Rear Adm. Michael Moran, Program Executive Officer for Tactical Aircraft Programs (PEO(T)), and guest speaker at Thursday’s ceremony.

“To say we’re putting the command in good hands is quite simply an understatement and I have no doubt they will continue to excel under his leadership.”

In taking over the reigns as PMA-251’s new leader, Sterbenz will manage a portfolio of more than 47 ALRE systems and lead a team of more than 700 people, jointly located at Patuxent River and Joint Base McGuire-Dix-Lakehurst in New Jersey.
“As a young lieutenant and pilot, I don’t think I fully appreciated the key enabling capabilities that Team ALRE provides, rather I took it for granted because it was always there, always ready and it always worked. The fleet has the utmost trust and confidence in the provided ALRE capabilities and that is a true credit to the men and women of the ALRE team, so I am truly humbled and honored to have the opportunity to be a part of this great organization,” said Sterbenz.

Prior to reporting to PMA-251, Sterbenz served as deputy program manager at the Airborne Electronic Attack Systems and EA-6B Program Office (PMA-234), where he managed the Next Generation Jammer and Advanced Electronic Attack Systems, and spent the lion’s share of his 23-year career working in the carrier aviation sector. During his operational tours and as a naval aviator, he also accumulated more than 2,000 flight hours and successfully completed more than 500 carrier arrestments in the F-14D  Tomcat and the F/A-18A-F  Hornet/Super Hornet.

Sterbenz congratulated Tedford on a job well done, expressing appreciation for the command culture of dedication and professionalism that he fostered during his tenure in command.

Tedford was with the ALRE program for more than six years; first as Deputy Program Manager for the Electromagnetic Aircraft Launch Systems (EMALS) and Advanced Arresting Gear (AAG), then serving as program manager since September 2014.

“Over the last four years, Team ALRE’s verse has been a continuous pursuit of excellence. It’s been my greatest honor to be part of this amazing team,” said Tedford during his parting remarks.

During his tenure, he managed an approximately $3 billion Total Obligation Authority budget and the delivery of 175 ALRE systems to the fleet, including EMALS and AAG, the Navy’s newest launch and recovery technologies in more than 60 years, which are installed aboard USS Gerald R. Ford (CVN 78).

Innovation was a cornerstone of Tedford’s leadership at PMA-251, as demonstrated by numerous fleet-supporting programs that were developed and implemented to enhance aviation readiness and efficiency in aviation maintenance and supply planning.

Moran congratulated Tedford on his “exemplary tour,” and stated, “The naval officers transferring command today have demonstrated both outstanding leadership and the ability to command at multiple levels, and we are extremely fortunate to have two such qualified and gifted leaders in the position to guide this organization.”

Read more about PMA-251 here.
Aircraft launch and recovery equipment program leadership changes hands

Capt. Kenneth Sterbenz read his orders and made remarks following Capt. Stephen Tedford's award presentation. (U.S. Navy photo)