

And Just Where Did the Builderâ€™s Plaques Go?

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The USS CARR (FFG-53) has been decommissioned 3/13/2013. This story can now be told.

In a time far gone (October 1988 to be more precise), two XOs, at turnover, bought into the idea of the outgoing one: There were but a few of the 50 contract required brass plaques from the builder of the ship left. Wouldnâ€™t it a great idea if two were set aside, passed down the years, in a ritual only known to the Shipâ€™s XOs, to be presented to the final CO and XO?

I thought Tom Brownâ€™s idea was excellent. We picked two of the about 5 left from Todd Shipyard, and we typed up a turnover sheet. The outgoing XO signed and noted the next duty station, and the incoming XO signed to accept the responsibility for the safekeeping of these two mementos for the future.

Over the years, I often thought about emailing the seated XO and asking if they were still â€œstanding the watchâ€• so to speak, but I refrained.

I was unable to attend the final moment of the CARRâ€™s service to the Nation, but I contacted the closet one to what should have been the end game, the decommissioning CO, CDR Patrick Kulakowski. In the first email, I didnâ€™t disclose the exact details, just asked to get ahold of his XO, to check on something that had been put in place years ago.

Here was his response:

> We found a Manila folder and note about pass down of two plaques from Todd; however, they are long goneâ€¦log ended in 2001â€¦

While the entire plan didnâ€™t survive, the evidence of it did. Not bad to make it hang on for 12-13 years, butâ€¦who were the two XOs in question in 2001, or possibly the next turn over?

It may have been an oversight if the ship had a major maintenance period about then, or it might have been someone wanted to have a piece of the Shipâ€™s history for themselvesâ€¦

Any input appreciated, just for the sake of a good, honest â€œSea Storyâ€• that really didnâ€™t begin like â€œOnce upon a timeâ€¦â€•

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