

Commander Ben Keith Royal Navy Commanding Officer

With his early years spent in Swansea, South Wales, Keith studied in Bishop Gore Comprehensive School, then the United World College of the Atlantic.

Post a degree in Geophysics at Southampton University and time in the University Royal Naval Unit, he joined the RN in 1998 as Direct Entry Aircrew, gaining his Pilots Wings as a Lynx Mark 3 Pilot in 2002.

He served in all classes of Frigates/Destroyers as an aviator on both Lynx Mk3 and 8, culminating as Flight Commander in HMS Kent in the Gulf in 2006.

Transferring to mainstream warfare, he served as a Principal Warfare Officer and Operations Officer in the frigate HMS St Albans and in the RN's helicopter carrier HMS Ocean before being selected XO/Second in Command of HMS Iron Duke in refit, then moving to HMS Defender for her maiden deployment.

His operational experience has been in the Middle East and Mediterranean, serving on Operations Iraqi Freedom, Veritas, Telic (including whilst as a Lynx Pilot, the Second Gulf War of 2003), Kipion and whilst as Operations Officer of HMS Ocean, on Op Ellamy in Libya.

A short spell in Navy Command HQ supporting the reinvigoration of warfighting standards preceded the Advanced Command and Staff Course, and he took Command of HMS Diamond in November 2016.