COMMANDER
Al Nekrews QGM RN
Commanding Officer
FLEET DIVING SQUADRON

Commander Al Nekrews joined the Royal Navy as a rating in 1989. In 2002, he completed Senior Upper Yardman and Warfare Officer training at BRNC Dartmouth and was awarded the Queen's Sword. He served as the Navigating Officer of HMS SANDOWN; and as Officer of the Watch One and Diving Officer in HMS CUMBERLAND, conducting counter-narcotic operations in the West Indies.

In 2006 he completed the Mine Warfare and Clearance Diving Officer (MCDO) course, winning the Superintendent of Diving Prize. His first MCDO appointment was as the Operations Officer in HMS CHIDDINGFOLD deployed in the Middle East for Operation TECATE; a UK led Coalition operation that cleared the final 12 mine danger areas in the Northern Arabian Gulf. This was followed by a tour as XO of MCM2 Crew 5, returning to the Arabian Gulf for further UK/US bilateral Mine Countermeasures operations.

In 2010, his XO tour was followed by an appointment as Officer in Charge of Southern Diving Unit 2 (SDU2) in Portsmouth. Here he qualified as a Joint Service Improvised Explosive Device Disposal Operator. Whilst at SDU2 he led the tactical planning and delivery of a complex inter-agency exercise programme, in preparation for SDU2's Maritime EOD (Force Protection) role in Op OLYMPICS.

In 2011, Al became the first Royal Navy Operator to complete the High Threat IED Disposal Operator course. He subsequently deployed to Afghanistan for Operation HERRICK 15, as part of the EOD and Search Task Force. An exceptionally demanding tour, he operated in every Area of Operations in Helmand Province and was awarded the Queen's Gallantry Medal.

In 2012 he was appointed as the EOD Technical Intelligence lead in Defence Intelligence (Land). His responsibilities included leading foreign munitions exploitation projects and management of the UK Defence Exploitation Facility. He also led a study to define the threat from IEDs in the maritime environment. He assumed Command of Southern Diving Group in 2014 and enjoyed two years in Command; delivering Diving and EOD capability at high readiness, in support of UK Military Aid to the Civil Authority. He also led a capability development programme to provide UK Defence with a Royal Navy Maritime IED Disposal capability for both expeditionary and homeland operations.

In December 2016, Al deployed to Baghdad, Iraq, as SO1 Chief C-IED to the US led 2* Headquarters: Combined Joint Force Land Component Command – Operation Inherent Resolve. An incredibly rewarding tour, he was the Coalition lead for all counter-IED activity in Iraq; in support of Iraq Security Forces counter-ISIL efforts. His tour was dominated by the counterattack on Mosul and the unprecedented evolution of the IED threat posed by ISIL.

Al completed Advanced Command and Staff Course at the Joint Services Command and Staff College in July 2018; gaining a Kings College London Masters Degree in Defence Studies. He assumed Command of the Fleet Diving Squadron in October 2018.

Al is the President of the Royal Navy Clearance Divers Association and the Vice Chairman of The Royal Navy & Royal Marines Boxing Association.