

Lieutenant Commander Richard Skelton Royal Navy

Rich Skelton joined the Royal Navy in 2005 after reading Mechanical Engineering at the University of Newcastle. Fleet training was conducted in HM Ships BULWARK, ARK ROYAL and TYNE before taking up his first complement appointment as the Navigating Officer of MCM1 Crew 7 in May 2007. Initially deployed to the Middle East in HMS RAMSEY on Op AINTREE conducting mine disposal and route survey operations. A short return to the UK to navigate HMS SHOREHAM was followed by a further MCM deployment to the Middle East this time in HMS PEMBROKE on Op TELIC MCM.

On successful completion of Fleet Navigating Officers Course in July 2010, he was appointed to HMS RICHMOND as Navigating Officer to Captain ASW. He deployed once again to the Middle East under both Op KIPION and Op ATALANTA conducting counter piracy around the horn of Africa. This 9 month deployment also included 2 months in the Far East acting as the Task Group Navigator for Ex BERSAMA SHIELD. On return to the UK RICHMOND entered an extensive refit period and he moved to HMS LANCASTER to bring her out of maintenance and back into the Fleet through an extensive work up program.

Selected for sea command in May 2012 saw Skelton return to HMS TYNE in August 2012 as Executive Officer for a rewarding 2 1/2 years working in the Fishery Protection Squadron operating throughout the UK and Northern Europe on a variety of tasks and culminating in a deployment to the South Atlantic in HMS CLYDE.

He qualified as a Principal Warfare Officer in February 2016 and joined HMS ST ALBANS as the PWO(U) and Operations Officer; this busy assignment included a return to the Middle East under Op KIPION working with both US and French Carrier Strike Groups and conducting Anti-Submarine Warfare (ASW) operations in the Gulf of Aden. On her return ST ALBANS became the Duty Towed Array Patrol Ship and a highly successful and rewarding 12 months of ASW operations in the North Atlantic followed; culminating in the award of the ASW Trophy and Frigate Efficiency Pennant. Moving ashore for the first time Skelton took his ASW experience to Fleet Operations as one of two Operations Officers tasked to direct North Atlantic ASW activity at the Operational Level in what was to be the busiest period seen since the 90s. Selected for Sea Command in May 18 Skelton assumed Command of HMS CLYDE in July 19 for her final months as the Falkland Island Patrol Vessel.

Born and raised in the North East, he still lives in Newcastle with his wife and son, making the most of family time when he is back from sea.