

## **Commander Brendan Spoons**

Commander Spoons grew up in County Durham and attended English Martyrs Comprehensive and Sixth Form College in Hartlepool, before gaining his Honours Degree at Manchester University in Aeronautical Engineering.

Joining the Royal Navy at BRNC Dartmouth in 1996 on the direct entry aviator scheme, he successfully completed flying training as a Sea King Anti Submarine Warfare Pilot in 2000 and went onto the frontline with 819 Naval Air Squadron based out of Prestwick in Scotland.

Since then he has enjoyed a wide range of flying assignments with Sea King and Merlin helicopters including duties as an Instrument Rating Instructor (IRI) and Qualified Helicopter Instructor (QHI).

He has served aboard Aircraft Carriers, Royal Fleet/Dutch Auxiliaries as well as a variety of the Royal Navy's Destroyers and Frigates, across the globe - from Home waters around the UK to the Middle East, the Caribbean and the Mediterranean.

Having been part of the British Task Force in the Gulf on Operation Telic in 2003 he returned there for a second time for a successful tour as the Merlin Flight Commander onboard HMS Richmond, responsible for the protection of the oil platforms in the Gulf.

As the lead Senior Warfare Officer Aviation at FOST between 2009 and 2012 he was responsible for much of the Aviation Training for the Fleet and Foreign ships both here and abroad.

More recently, between 2012 and 2013 he was the Senior Pilot and Executive Officer of 829 NAS, receiving the Bambara Flight Safety Shield during his tenure and responsible for the operation of its five embarked Flights around the world.

He was then assigned as Senior Pilot of Culdrose's Merlin training squadron - 824 Squadron and has been part of Merlin's successful transition to the Mk2 and increases to the gains in the trained strength.