**Commander James Taylor**

James grew up in Truro, Cornwall before reading Politics and Modern History at Cardiff University. In 2002 he joined the Royal Navy as an Observer and trained on the Sea King Airborne Surveillance and Control (SKASaC). Awarded his Wings in 2005, his first appointment was to 849 NAS A Flight during which he embarked in all three INVINCIBLE class aircraft carriers, RFA ARGUS and HMS OCEAN. Operational deployments ranged from counter narcotics in the Caribbean to counter piracy in the Indian Ocean.

In 2008 he qualified as an Observer instructor and joined 849 NAS, however his appointment was cut short as he returned to the frontline for operations in Afghanistan. Having been part of the first SKASaC crew to deploy to Operation HERRICK, he was appointed back to 849 NAS where he qualified as an advanced instructor while serving as the Training Officer.

He completed Intermediate Staff Course in 2011 before an appointment to Britannia Royal Naval College as Divisional Officer and, subsequently, Staff Officer Training. Selected for promotion to Lieutenant Commander in 2013, he conducted French Language Training at the Defence School of Languages in Beaconsfield in preparation for an appointment with the French Navy in Toulon. During his 2 years with the French Carrier Strike Group, he embarked in the CHARLES DE GAULLE aircraft carrier for several operations in the Middle East.

He returned to the UK in 2015 as the Senior Observer and Executive Officer of 849 NAS which was conducting the final SKASaC training in the UK while maintaining a permanent deployed presence in the Middle East. On completion, he was appointed to Navy Command as Executive Assistant to Rear Admiral Fleet Air Arm before returning to the Defence Academy for Advanced Staff Course. Selected for Squadron Command in 2019, he made a welcome return to Cornwall to convert to the Merlin before assuming command of 824 NAS and the training of both ASW and Crowsnest aircrew and engineers.

A keen surfer, he attempts to balance family life with time in the water. He still has aspirations to get back into triathlon although dusting off his rugby boots while on Staff Course proved that he is firmly retired from contact sports.