

Captain Rob Vitali Royal Navy
Captain Maritime Warfare School and Commanding Officer HMS COLLINGWOOD



Captain Rob Vitali assumed command of HMS Collingwood, the Royal Navy's largest training establishment, in October 2017 and is charged with the delivery of Warfare and Weapon Engineer Officers and Ratings Phase 2 and 3 training output.

Joining the Royal Navy as a Warfare specialist, he qualified as a Fighter Controller, Principal Warfare Officer and an Anti-Air Warfare Officer and served on exchange with the Royal Australian Navy in 1996-98. He has commanded 2 ships: the fishery protection vessel HMS Shetland at sub-unit level in 2000-01 and the air defence Destroyer HMS Southampton as an independent unit command from 2004-06.

Completing initial staff training at the Royal Naval College in Greenwich (1994), he is a graduate of the Joint Services Advanced Command and Staff Course (2002), the Royal College of Defence Studies (2016) and holds an MA in Defence and Strategic Studies.

He has served in the Ministry of Defence in three ranks: as a Military Assistant to the Deputy Chief of Defence Staff (Commitments); as the Navy Plans Officer in the Strategy Area (Navy Resources and Plans), and; as an Assistant Head on the Naval Staff (Royal Navy International Engagement activity and relationship with the merchant marine sector).

In post-command, operational staff appointments, he spent 2 years in the Plans Division of the UK's Permanent Joint Headquarters (PJHQ) at Northwood (2006-08) with responsibility for European military issues, Middle East maritime affairs and broader regional contingency planning; he served in the French EU Operations Headquarters in Paris as the Deputy Assistant J5 Plans for the EU Force mission to Chad (2007) and also on the Nordic EU Battlegroup Staff during its contingent readiness period in 2008. In 2011, he reported as the Staff Operations Officer to the UK Maritime Component Commander in Bahrain, responsible for UK maritime operational output in the Middle East. He returned to Bahrain in 2015, as the Chief of Staff to a Japanese Task Force Commander of Combined Task Force 151 (counter-piracy) operating in the Gulf of Aden and Somali Basin. Prior to taking up his current command, he was a Deputy Assistant Chief of Staff in PJHQ J5 Plans, charged with the development of UK joint military planning activity in Africa, including the UK contribution to the United Nations and other multi-national missions.

Rob is married to Julie and has two sons at university; their home is in rural North Dorset. Apart from the immediate priorities of family life, he owns 5 guitars, 3 classic vehicles, a bag of cricket gear and in any remaining time, he enjoys a variety of other challenging domestic projects.