

## COMMODORE ROBERT JAMES ASTLEY BELLFIELD CBE (K81-83)

He was at the College for 6<sup>th</sup> form and has spent a career of over 30 years in the Royal Navy.

His career has largely been at sea and supporting operations, much of it based in the West Country. His early career included time in minehunters, fishery protection vessels and frigates; operating in every sphere of RN maritime operations in UK waters, the Far East, the Gulf, South Atlantic and the West Indies. He went on to command of the Type 23 frigates Grafton, Portland and Argyll, and second-in-command of Sutherland.

His last sea appointment was as the Executive Officer of Ark Royal for her final commission, which involved the regeneration of the UK's maritime fixed wing flying capability with the Harrier, until her retirement in late 2010.

He spent a fascinating year at the Royal College of Defence Studies in London, where he studied global security, stability and prosperity at the National Strategic level, along with students from 57 different nations. This course built upon other staff training on the Advanced Staff Course at the Joint Services Command Staff College and an MA with King's College London.

Shore appointments have been demanding and varied; including the planning and execution of covert anti-submarine, counter-narcotics and counter-terrorism operations from the Fleet Operations Centre at Northwood; training young officers at BRNC Dartmouth, with specific responsibilities for leadership, seamanship and navigation; on the strategic planning staff in the Ministry of Defence in London (with particular responsibility for Africa) and the Capability Manager for all surface ships, weapons and sensors in Navy Command HQ in Portsmouth. He also commanded HMS Raleigh in Torpoint, leading a first class multi-school training establishment that produces the fine young sailors to operate and maintain our ships, submarines and aircraft.

In 2013 and 2014 he spent 9 months in Bahrain as the Deputy Commander for all RN maritime operations in the Gulf and Middle East, working closely with the United States Fifth Fleet staff to integrate RN and USN warfighting capability in a highly intense operational theatre.

In August 2017 he took command of the Devonport Flotilla in August 2017.

He is Chairman of the GBR 420 class youth dinghy association, dedicated to producing future Olympic medallists, and a qualified RYA Yachtmaster Offshore and Dinghy Race Coach. He is also a Liveryman of the Honourable Company of Leathersellers, an ancient trade guild in London, a Freeman of the Honourable Company of Shipwrights and a Freeman of the City of London.

On 30 April 2020, he was appointed commander of CTF Sentinel. This is the operational arm of IMSC, which was established 7 November 2019, with a mission to deter state sponsored malign activity throughout the area of operation in order to reassure the merchant shipping industry.

He transitioned the task force from an emergent effort to an established regional presence and employed over 58 ships during his tenure. He expanded the original scope of CTF Sentinel operations by leading continual efforts to improve the credibility of task force deterrence measures, and by directing the execution of several operations in the Arabian Gulf that improved industry partners' perceptions of maritime security. He oversaw more than 16,000 collective hours of coverage by major warships and partner nation patrol vessels and over 13,000 hours of aircraft reconnaissance flights, ensuring the incident-free transit of over 1200 IMSC-flagged merchant vessels, totalling over 500,000,000 tons through the highly contested maritime choke points of the Strait of Hormuz and the Bab el-Mandeb Strait during a period of significant international political unrest.



On 19 November 2020 he (pictured left) handed over command to Royal Navy Commodore Craig Wood (pictured right) during a change of command ceremony onboard Naval Support Activity Bahrain, Nov. 19



In December 2020 he was made a Life Rear Commodore of the Royal Naval Association. His citation is included below.

In Queen's birthday honours in 2021 he was made a CBE for his work as Commander of the Devonport Flotilla and then as Commander of the Coalition Task Force Sentinel in the Gulf.



## CITATION FOR ROYAL NAVAL ASSOCIATION LIFE REAR COMMODORE

### COMMODORE ROBERT BELLFIELD

Commodore Rob Bellfield joined the Royal Naval Sailing Association in October 1983 and has been an integral part of it throughout his Naval career. A keen offshore and dinghy sailor, who enjoys both racing and cruising, he stepped up to take on the challenging role of the Service Sailing Association Chairman and Vice Commodore for the period February 2018 to December 2020. Throughout this time, he has led from the front, supporting the many sailing events, either by competing, encouraging from ashore or driving the organisation behind them. He has also supported the Rear Commodores and other volunteers strongly, believing in their initiatives and quietly enabling their efforts where necessary, always with a view to maximising opportunities on the water for everyone. A genuine believer in grass roots sailing and development pathways, Rob has looked to help mentor and guide those with less experience to have fun, gain in confidence and ultimately become a better sailor.

During his tenure Rob has overseen the transition of RNSA from its historic unincorporated mode to that of a Charitable Incorporated Organisation. He has worked closely with the Chief Executive and Trustees to help shape this work and find the right balance in terms of delivery and governance. He has skilfully chaired the various management committees, navigating sensitive issues with empathy and purpose. With a strategic eye, Rob has cleverly blended innovation and change with pragmatism and tradition, thereby maintaining RNSA's heritage whilst generating momentum for the Association to succeed as a charity. He has been instrumental in the development of the relationship between RNSA and the RN Sports Board that is at the heart of the future model.

There have, of course, been many notable successes on his watch, including the RNSA being recognised as the RN Team of the Year in 2019, the winning of all the Inter Services trophies, establishing a new partnership with the Andrew Simpson Foundation to support overseas development training camps, the purchase of a new SB20 and the continued roll out of the dinghy replacement programme. This has all been achieved whilst holding down busy roles in the Royal Navy, including a 6-month operational tour in Bahrain. A valued deputy to RNSA's Commodore, Rob's experience, strength of character, ability to engage with and motivate sailors of all abilities and above all else, sheer love of sailing, underpin what has been an exemplary period leading the Association.

In recognition of these achievements and indeed of the expectation of more to come, it is an absolute pleasure to award Commodore Robert Bellfield the honour of becoming one of our very select band of Life Rear Commodores.

Vice Admiral CR Gardner CBE

16 December 2020