



# **SURFACE WARSHIPS &**

OFFSHORE PATROL VESSELS



# Auxiliary Sea Power

**Commodore David Eagles**  
**Royal Fleet Auxiliary**

Defence **iQ**



## Commodore David Eagles Royal Fleet Auxiliary

David Eagles was born in Guildford, Surrey in 1962 and educated at the Town's Royal Grammar School before joining BP Shipping in 1979. Initial training was conducted on BP's fleet comprising 300,000 DWT tankers, large LNG carriers and smaller oil product carriers.

Seeking more excitement and variety, Eagles joined the Royal Fleet Auxiliary in 1988 and has since served in a variety of seagoing and staff appointments. These have included sea service in Op Granby in 1991, Op Sharp Guard 1994 and Op Telic 2003. Staff appointments included SWO(RFA) to COMUKTG (Op Bolton aboard INVINCIBLE and ILLUSTRIOUS) 1997-98 and SWO(RFA) to COMATG (FEARLESS) 1998-2000. Eagles was appointed to NCHQ as the RFA SO1 Commitments 2009-11 and subsequently to the Naval Staff in MOD as the RFA Staff Officer (2012-14) being part of the International Engagement team with responsibility for the African continent and wider UK Maritime Sector.

Prior to promotion to Captain (2013) and between staff appointments, Eagles enjoyed challenging periods as XO of RFAs BRAMBLELEAF, FORT GEORGE, WAVE RULER, DILIGENCE and WAVE KNIGHT. Time as XO was a mixture of operational deployments, refits and UK tasking that included the International Fleet Review 2005, deployments to the Gulf and Far East, APT(N) and (S) and CTF 150/152 Tasking.

Following periods in command of RFA ARGUS (deployed to Sierra Leone on Op GRITROCK as the lead element of the UK response to the Ebola outbreak in West Africa Nov 2014) and RFA FORT ROSALIE, Eagles was appointed to Navy Command HQ in Jun 2016 to assume the duty of Head of RFA Personnel. Prior to taking up his promotion and appointment as COMRFA, his last sea going Command was RFA FORT VICTORIA.

Commodore Eagles lives in West Devon with his wife Jacqueline and three Basset Hounds and walks on Dartmoor and the Cornish coastal footpath at every available opportunity.

## With new vessels entering the fleet and evolving challenges brought on by greater peer-on-peer competition, how has the RFA evolved in the last 10 years?

The RFA has become increasingly tasked with contributing across a broader range of operations, still very much tasked in support of the Carrier Strike Group but also often operating as a singleton unit with military enablers embarked and also often comprising a significant part of amphibious operations. To ensure the RFA is equipped for these roles, the Service is in the process of modernising and evolving looking to introduce improved medical standards for the workforce, more flexible appointment patterns and to grow the workforce to meet the opportunities ahead.

## How will the delivery of three new Fleet Solid Support Ships (FSSS) expand the capacity of the RFA to operate in support of the Royal Navy?

The three ships will enable continuous and seamless front-line Replenishment at Sea provision of Solid Support (ammunition, food, engineering spares etc) to the Carrier Strike Groups and Amphibious Groups. The ships will have significantly enhanced capacity to carry munitions and stores, will be greener, will operate with a smaller crew and are designed for swifter and more efficient transfer of stores at sea. They will be game changers in keeping a UK sovereign Carrier Strike Group forward deployed on operations. Currently the singleton unit, FORT VICTORIA, in excess of 30 years old, has occasions when she is unavailable to support operations due to the need for docking and maintenance and being a singleton, is unable to support concurrent activity.





## With uncrewed technology becoming more accessible, how will the RFA utilise these areas in the future?

We are already working in partnership with industry and our RN/RM colleagues to investigate uncrewed logistic supply options for the future. We are also linked in with our partners in US Military Sealift Command as they evaluate uncrewed at-sea logistic resupply systems.

## Both the new Multi-Role Ocean Surveillance (MROS) Ship and Mine Countermeasures Command/Support Vessel are converted commercial platforms. What are the challenges and advantages when bringing these vessels into service?

Both ships are very impressive examples of platforms available in commercial service and have been procured in a short period of time at a value-for-money cost to meet an emerging requirement. Advantages include the assurance brought by Flag and Class surveys and certification to assure the basic ship, overlaid with Defence certification for the specific mission tasks and capabilities. The ships are well suited to an RFA crewing solution with crew numbers very broadly aligned to the previous commercial operator driving a value for money operating model supporting embarked military and civilian specialists.



## How does being at the Surface Warships and OPV conference align with your overall mission?

I am delighted to have been invited to attend alongside Service and Industry colleagues as we look to build capability and capacity across the enterprise.

## If you could give one message to industry, what would it be?

The need to continue to work together in partnership through a challenging period in which all elements of the enterprise are under strain as we all look to build an experienced workforce and work our way through the global supply chain challenges.





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**18 – 20 July 2023**

Millennium Conference Centre, London, UK



**Admiral Sir James  
Burnell-Nugent KCB CBE**  
Former Commander-in-Chief Fleet  
**Royal Navy**



**Laurence Lee CMG**  
Second Permanent Secretary  
**UK Ministry of Defence**



**Vice Admiral Nuno Chaves Ferreira**  
Fleet Commander  
**Portuguese Navy**



**Vice Admiral Manuel  
Antonio Martinez Ruiz**  
Director for Engineering and Naval  
Shipbuilding  
**Spanish Armada**



**Commodore David Eagles**  
Commodore  
**Royal Fleet Auxiliary**



**Commodore Steve Bolton**  
Deputy Director Aviation Programmes  
and Futures  
**Royal Navy**



**Aija Kalnaja**  
Deputy Executive Director for Standing  
Corps Management  
**FRONTEX**



**Matt Harrison OBE**  
Director Maritime Capability  
Replacement Programme,  
Transformation Directorate  
**UK Border Force**



**Captain John Driscoll**  
Chief, Office of Cutter Forces  
**United States Coast Guard**



**Commander Robert Scotland**  
Commandant  
**Cayman Islands Coast Guard**



**Christopher Trelawny**  
Deputy Secretary General  
**INTERPORTPOLICE**  
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**Rear Admiral (Ret.) Nils Wang**  
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Naval Team Denmark,  
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