

## **Commander Andy Swain MBE**

### **CSci CMarSci FIMarEST ACMI MA Royal Navy (Retired)**

Commander Andy Swain has just completed his final assignment, almost 5 years as the Royal Navy as Chief of Staff and Deputy to the Regional Commander (London & Eastern England) based at HMS PRISIDENT. He joined the Royal Navy as a Junior Seaman (Survey Recorder) in March 1979. He spent eight years in HM Surveying Ships HYDRA, HERALD and HECLA, assisting in Hydrographic, Oceanographic and Geophysical surveys, as well as 2 years as Navigator's Yeoman in the destroyer HMS GLAMORGAN.

He was advanced to Petty Officer (Surveyor) in 1986 and joined Dartmouth the following year. After a year of training at Britannia Royal Naval College he re-joined the Survey Squadron as a specialist Hydrographic Officer and served in Naval Party 1008 surveying the English Channel. He personally researched and found the final resting place of the German WW1 Battleship 'Barden'. She lay 30 miles away from where she was charted in a depth of 180m. He also served as Officer Of the Watch (OOW) in HM Ships BEAGLE and HECLA, the latter as Helicopter Controller for the Mine Countermeasures Task Group during Gulf War 1.

After serving 2 years as the Operations Officer in HMS ROEBUCK he completed the Long Hydrographic Course in 1995 and was awarded a Postgraduate Diploma in Hydrographic Surveying from the University of Plymouth. Two further tours of duty as Operations Officer followed, firstly in HMS HECLA conducting Military Surveys in support of the UK strategic deterrent; and finally, in HMS SCOTT, bringing in to service the Royal Navy's first and largest multi-beam surveying ship.

In 1998 he joined the Mine Warfare Staff where he was responsible for updating the Route Survey concept and Mine Warfare data handling requirements. In 2001 he joined Naval Party 1016 as Commanding Officer and spent 14 months conducting hydrographic surveys of the Thames Estuary and Dover Strait.

He assumed command of HMS ROEBUCK in July 2002 and deployed to the Northern Arabian Gulf where his surveys were instrumental in enabling the successful landings of the Royal Marines on the Al Faw Peninsular (Iraq) in March 2003. He then surveyed the port of Umm Qasr, which allowed humanitarian aid to be shipped into war-torn Iraq.

He was then the first Hydrographic Officer to join the Amphibious Task Group Battle Staff before attending the Advanced Command and Staff Course at the UK Defence Academy, he was awarded an MA in Defence Studies from King's College London the following year.

After a short tour on the Naval Staff he went back to HMS SCOTT this time as the Captain and surveyed across the North Atlantic and Indian Oceans.

In 2009 he initiated the post of Officer Commanding FLEET HM Unit deploying Hydrographic and Meteorology specialists across the fleet to provide tactical advantage to the battle space before being assigned as Officer Commanding the survey school at FOST (Flag Officer Sea Training) where he was responsible for individual and collective training in the subjects of Hydrography, Oceanography and Meteorology shore or afloat across the Royal Navy.

In 2012 he took up a dual hatted appointment as the Head of Intelligence for both the Combined Maritime Force and the UKMCC both based alongside the US Fifth Fleet in Bahrain and continued his tour in the Middle East as Deputy Director of Hydrography Royal Navy of Oman until 2017.

On return to the UK he was assigned to the National Centre for Geospatial Intelligence and was responsible to all Hydrographic and Meteorology data and services across Defence for 3 years. He has now completed almost 5 years as Deputy to the Naval Regional Commander based at HMS PRESIDENT and retired from the Royal Navy in July after 46 years' service.