



### **Vice Admiral Hervé Bléjean**

Born in 1963, he entered the French Naval Academy in 1984. His initial career revolved around operational experience aboard different warships, particularly during the Iraq-Iran War 1987-88 (Operation PROMETHEE), in the field of mine warfare, in the operational management of a destroyer and in training. This included the first sea trials of the aircraft carrier CHARLES DE GAULLE.

This period was also characterised by three noteworthy assignments. The position of Assistant Operations Officer on board USS NICHOLSON enabled him to develop a strong interest for operations within the framework of international cooperation and to refine his English. The command of the training ship LEOPARD and of the Navigation Training Flotilla confirmed his ability to take up executive positions.

Finally, his appointment as Aide-de-Camp to the Chief of Naval Staff during the transition from a conscripted to a professionalised service, enabled him to gain broad insight into the function of all the decision-making levels from the military, the Ministry and the Government.

The second phase of Vice Admiral Bléjean's Career began in 2000 with the completion of the Staff Course at the Defence College in Paris. This period confirmed his operational skills and laid foundations in Human Resources Management. In that field, he was successively assigned as the official representative of the Human Resources Director at the Ministry of Defence and then as an executive assistant to the Head of Human Resources Policy of the Navy Headquarters working on the future status of the military personnel.

Promoted to the rank of Captain in 2005, he was appointed as the Head of the Naval Operations Department at the Joint Headquarters Operations Centre.

He planned and conducted the non-combatant evacuation Operation BALISTE in Lebanon during the summer 2006 and prepared the ground for interdepartmental lessons learned on counter-piracy around the Horn of Africa.

Two major commands marked that period. In 2002, he assumed command of the surveillance frigate FS VENDÉMIAIRE, deployed for 6 months in Northern Indian Ocean to participate in Operation ENDURING FREEDOM against Al Qaeda.

In 2007, he took the Command of the helicopter carrier JEANNE D'ARC and the associated naval training group, which he led through Operation THALATINE that resulted in the successful liberation of 30 hostages from Somali pirates.

As a general officer, the next steps of Vice Admiral Bléjean's career enabled him to acquire outstanding skills in European Union operations and within the NATO command structure.

In 2010, after completing his Advanced Military Studies at the National Defence Institute, Vice Admiral Bléjean was appointed Deputy Chief of the Military Office of the Prime Minister. He served, amongst other duties, as special advisor of the Prime Minister for State Responsibilities at Sea, advising on the nuclear deterrent.

Promoted to Rear Admiral (LH) in September 2013, he assumed duties as Deputy Commander of the French Maritime Force (FRMARFOR). In parallel, he took command of Combined Task Force 150 (CTF 150), engaged in anti-terrorist operations in the Indian Ocean, then as the Force Commander of EU Naval Force ATALANTA, the European Union counter-piracy operation around the coast of Somalia.

During this command, he successfully conducted an operation for the liberation of an Indian crew captured by pirates and was able to bring them into the justice system of the Seychelles. As well as this, he organised two key operations of support for the European Union with the presidents of Somaliland and Puntland.

In 2014, Vice Admiral Bléjean was assigned as Deputy Chief of International Engagement for the French Navy. He was committed to improve partner and allied relationships and engaged particularly in the discussions on the contract for the Australian submarines fleet renewal.

During this tour and between June 2015 and March 2016, he also assumed the role of First Deputy Commander EUNAVFOR MED for Operation SOPHIA located in Rome.

In 2016, Vice Admiral Bléjean became the Deputy Chief of Staff for Operations at Joint Force Headquarters Naples. In that role, he became particularly involved in the certification process of JFC Naples in order to become the Head of the NATO Response Force (NRF) in January 2017. He conducted the operations of the NATO force in Kosovo (KFOR) and the NATO Headquarters in Sarajevo that works in partnership with the European Union operation ALTHEA.

Since 2017, Vice Admiral Bléjean has been the Deputy Commander at the Allied Maritime Command (MARCOM), Northwood, UK. As deputy he regularly assumes delegated command authority and took command of the Maritime Component South during Exercise TRIDENT JUNCTURE 2018, the most important NATO exercise of deployment of capacities ever organized since the end of the Cold War.

Vice admiral Bléjean is married to Isabelle with two daughters and a son. Besides enjoying his family life, he practices mountain hiking and is fond of tribal art.