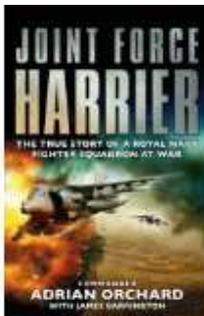




Captain Adrian 'Ade' Orchard OBE Royal Navy

“Harriers over Afghanistan - 10 years on. From the death of the Harrier to the birth of the new British super carriers, musings on life and leadership from Captain Ade Orchard, Commanding Officer Royal Naval Air Station Culdrose”.



Captain Orchard joined the Royal Navy in 1986 and graduated training as a Sea Harrier FRS1 pilot. Initial spells on 800 and 801 Naval Air Squadrons, including the 1991 Gulf War, saw him join the newly formed Operational Evaluation Unit (OEU) Boscombe Down where the newly upgraded Sea Harrier FRS2 was assessed prior to operational use. As an Air Warfare Instructor he completed 2 deployments supporting operations over the Former Republic of Yugoslavia with 801 squadron.

Three years instructing on 899 squadron led to an exchange with the US Navy and Marine Corps test and evaluation squadron, VX-9, at China Lake in California. During this period as an operational test director, he flew the Harrier AV-8B and also logged hours in the FA-18 and the AH-1W Huey Cobra attack helicopter and became deeply involved in what will be the UK's newest aircraft, the F-35B Lightning. Alongside his daily work, he flew the Swordfish and Sea Fury vintage aircraft of the Royal Navy Historic Flight.

Returning to the UK he converted to the Harrier GR7 and immediately deployed to Kuwait and took part in the second Gulf War. Taking command of 800 Naval Air Squadron in April 2006 and his squadron completed a successful 4 month operational tour to Kandahar Airfield in southern Afghanistan in January 2007. He completed 2 further Afghanistan deployments and was awarded the OBE in the 2008 Queen's Honors List for his leadership of 800 squadron. Finally hanging up his operational flying boots after 3000 Harrier hours, he worked in the Ministry of Defence and on promotion to captain, was appointed to the Pentagon working with the US Navy before taking over as the Captain of Culdrose in January 2015.