



Allied Command Transformation

Office of the Assistant Chief of Staff Strategic Plans & Policy

Norfolk, Virginia | USA



Commodore Ruud Schoonen Assistant Chief of Staff Strategic Plans & Policy



Commodore (RNLN) Ruud Schoonen (1970) joined the Royal Netherlands Navy at the Naval Academy in Den Helder in 1989. As a sub lieutenant he had his first watchkeeping experience on board HNLMS Kortenaer during Operation Sharp Guard. During the final year at the Academy, he had the opportunity to study Management Science at Eindhoven University of Technology in which he achieved a Bachelor Degree.

After graduating from the Academy, he went to sea as a mine hunting officer on HNLMS Middelburg, followed by a job as watchkeeper on the S-frigate HNLMS Philips van Almonde. After qualifying as a Principal Warfare Officer/Navigator in 1998, CAPT Schoonen served on board HNLMS Pieter Florisz during a STANAVFORMED deployment, followed by a two-year tour on M-frigate HNLMS Van Speijk.

After his first job ashore as Flag Lieutenant to Commander Netherlands Fleet, he returned to sea serving on the first Dutch Air Defense and Command Frigate HNLMS De Zeven Provinciën, initially as a PWO/navigator, later as Operations Officer. As Ops Officer he also spent a short period on board

HNLMS Van Speijk in NATO-operation Active Endeavour. In 2004 he started his first tour in the UK at the Royal Navy's Maritime Battle Staff (UKMARFOR) in Portsmouth, during which he deployed with the staff for many operational exercises in both a maritime and joint environment. After returning to the Netherlands in 2007, he joined the RNLN Sea Training Command Staff as Staff Officer Operations. During two intensive years, he became involved in the national work-up of nearly all Dutch (and Belgian) frigate and above sized ships. He then attended the Advanced Command and Staff Course in The Hague.

Promoted Commander in the summer of 2010, he started his second tour in the UK at Flag Officer Sea Training (FOST) in Plymouth as the Netherlands Liaison Officer. Here he worked closely together with the COs and crews of Dutch and Belgian ships conducting the last part of the work-up before deploying on operations. Upon return to the Netherlands in the spring of 2013, he took command of HNLMS De Zeven Provinciën. This operational tour included a full work up cycle, several missile firings and a deployment to the Indian Ocean for OP ATALANTA. Followed by a 3-year post at the Directorate of Plans at the Defense Staff in The Hague, he was promoted captain in June 2018 and assumed command as Commander Sea Training Command. In December 2020 he returned to the Netherlands MOD as Branch Head Navy Plans.

He was appointed to Assistant Chief of Staff Strategic Plans & Policy at NATO HQ Allied Command Transformation and promoted Commodore as of August 2022.

Commodore Schoonen is married, has a daughter (2006) and has his home base in The Netherlands in The Hague.