



Born in 1965 in the Staffordshire Moorlands, Simon Hardern began his distinguished career in the Royal Navy in September 1984, joining directly from school. His early years were spent at sea aboard Her Majesty's Ships CATTISTOCK, NOTTINGHAM, LINDISFARNE, and ALACRITY. While serving on ALACRITY during a deployment to the West Indies., the ship provided humanitarian support to the island of Montserrat when devastated by the catastrophic Hurricane Hugo.

After completing a ten-month tour as the Executive Officer of the Northern Ireland patrol vessel HMS CUXTON, Simon joined the staff of the Flag Officer Scotland and Northern Ireland as Flag Lieutenant in May 1991. He returned briefly to sea as the Navigating Officer of the Type 23 frigate HMS LANCASTER before qualifying as a Warfare Officer in December 1995.

Simon then assumed command of the Sandown-class mine-hunter HMS WALNEY, and following his promotion to Lieutenant Commander in November 1996, he deployed with NATO's Standing Naval Force Channel during his final year in command. A short appointment as Operations Officer on the Type 22 frigate HMS BEAVER followed before he attended the Joint Services Command and Staff College in September 1998. Graduating from the Advanced Command and Staff Course with a Master's in Defence Studies, Simon was posted to the Headquarters of the Supreme Allied Commander Atlantic in Norfolk, Virginia, as Military Assistant to the US 4-star Commander.

Returning to the UK in October 2001, Simon led the Royal Naval Presentation Team briefly before taking command of the frigate HMS KENT in April 2002. His tenure included a nine-month deployment to the North Indian Ocean and Arabian Gulf, contributing to the UK's efforts in the Global War on Terrorism.

In early 2004, Simon transitioned to the Ministry of Defence, where he managed major logistics equipment procurement programmes and, later, served as Military Assistant to the Chief of Defence Staff for Personnel. Promoted to Captain in September 2008, he became Secretary to the Chief/Vice Chief of Defence, the Single-Service Chiefs of Staff and Ministerial Team.

The final eight years of Simon's naval career were spent at NATO in progressively senior roles. These included Chief Staff Officer to the Deputy Supreme Allied Commander Europe, Secretary to the Military Committee, and Chief of Staff for the International Military Staff. As a Rear Admiral, Simon served as the NATO Deputy Chief of Staff for Plans, Exercises, and Partnerships before retiring from active service in August 2018.

Simon joined Kenyon International Emergency Services in September 2018, where, as the CEO, he successfully led the world's largest privately-owned crisis and disaster management company through a transition to new ownership under a venture capital firm. During his tenure, Simon oversaw incident response operations, including major aviation disasters in the USA and the Southern Pacific Ocean.

In the spring of 2020, Simon joined the UK Hydrographic Office. Based, in Washington DC, his role involved managing strategic relationships with key partners across a vast geographic span, from the Arctic and Canada in the north to Argentina and Antarctica in the south!

Simon is divorced but maintains an excellent relationship with his ex-wife, with whom he shares a 27-year-old son, Charlie. A true global citizen, he has lived in six countries and travelled to over 140 others (all seven continents). For over 13 years, he has served as a Governor at the British School of and has also enjoyed three years as a cruise enrichment speaker. In his spare time, Simon loves spending time with dogs - boarding, sitting and walking them. He has also developed a fondness for Korean dramas and K-Pop, inspired by his girlfriend, Kaye, an American citizen who hails from Seoul.