

Captain Thom Burke

Director, Fleet Readiness (OPNAV N43)



CAPT Burke, a native of Royal Oak, Michigan, received a B.A. in Political Science from the University of Michigan in 1984, and a Master's in Public Administration from Harvard University in 1996.

Commissioned through Aviation Officer Candidate School in 1985, he began his fleet career as a pilot flying SH-3H Sea Kings in Helicopter Anti-Submarine Squadron FOUR (HS-4) aboard USS CARL VINSON. HS-4 completed two deployments to the Western Pacific and Indian Oceans during his tour, which was highlighted by his participation in two open ocean rescues. In 1993 CAPT Burke transitioned to the SH-60F and HH-60H model aircraft while assigned to HS-6 aboard USS ABRAHAM LINCOLN. HS-6 completed two deployments including operations in Somalia and the

Arabian Gulf. In 1997 he was assigned to HS-8 aboard USS NIMITZ in Carrier Air Wing NINE as Operations Officer and Squadron Weapons and Tactics Instructor. During their Arabian Gulf deployment, HS-8 provided helicopter support to Joint Special Operations Forces in theater as part of Operation SOUTHERN WATCH. In September 2002 CAPT Burke reported to HS-8 as Executive Officer and assumed command on June 15th 2003. During this tour HS-8 completed an eight month deployment to the Western Pacific in support of the Global War on Terrorism.

Shore tours include assignment as an intern at the Joint Staff serving in the Persian Gulf Branch of J-5 during Operations DESERT SHIELD and DESERT STORM, and Aide to Commander Naval Base San Francisco and Commander Logistics Group ONE. Additionally, he served on the Joint Staff as the J-5 desk officer for Central Asia and Afghanistan prior to and during Operation ENDURING FREEDOM.

He completed Nuclear Power training in June 2006 and then served as the first Executive Officer of USS *GEORGE H. W. BUSH* from August 2006 to April 2008. In July 2008, he took command of USS BLUE RIDGE moored in Yokosuka, Japan, and served as CO until Nov 2009, earning the Battle "E" during his tour. CAPT Burke took command of USS RONALD REAGAN in August of 2010, and completed an extended deployment in 2011, which included Operation TOMODACHI, the relief effort associated with the tsunami, earthquake, and subsequent nuclear disaster off the coast of Honshu, Japan.

CAPT Burke's personal awards include the Legion of Merit, Defense Meritorious Service Medal, Meritorious Service Medal, Joint Commendation Medals, Navy Commendation Medals, Joint Achievement Medal, and Navy Achievement Medals. Additionally, he was selected as the Naval Helicopter Association "Aircrew of the Year".