



Prime Minister

MO 5/21

PRIME MINISTER

You will recall that you have agreed to the publication of Admiral Fieldhouse's despatch, subject to a number of amendments. These have been agreed but the revised version of the despatch has not yet been circulated.

OFFICIAL DESPATCH ON THE FALKLANDS OPERATION

A.F.C. 6/12

In accordance with past precedents, the most recent of which was the Suez campaign of 1956, the Commander of the Falkland Islands Task Force, Admiral Fieldhouse has prepared a despatch which describes the conduct of the military operation. A copy is attached.

2. I intend that this should be published as a supplement to the London Gazette simultaneously with the publication of the Falklands White Paper on the lessons to be drawn from the conflict.

3. I am copying this minute and the attached despatch to the other members of OD and to Sir Robert Armstrong.

SW

Ministry of Defence
19th November 1982

DESPATCH BY ADMIRAL SIR JOHN FIELDHOUSE, GCB, GBE, COMMANDER OF THE TASK FORCE OPERATIONS IN THE SOUTH ATLANTIC: APRIL TO JUNE 1982

'Operation CORPORATE' was the name given to the operation I describe in my Despatch. With hindsight, it was well chosen, for like a body, the harmony of the various limbs and supporting organs was vital to its soundness and efficiency. I ask the reader constantly to bear this in mind. The very nature of the events I describe focuses attention first on one limb, then on another; the temporary dominance in the narrative of one does not detract from the performance and achievements of another. I list at the end of my Despatch the Royal Navy, Royal Marines, Royal Fleet Auxiliary, Army and Royal Air Force units which took part in the Operation. I also attach a list of those vessels taken up from trade.

The Despatch describes briefly the very short period of preparation for sending Task Force 317 to the South Atlantic and, more fully, the operations from 1 April 1982 when units of the Fleet sailed south until 20 June 1982 when the last Argentine forces remaining on British territory surrendered.

BACKGROUND

On 19 March 1982 it was reported that a party of Argentinians ^{metal workers} ~~purporting to be scrap merchants~~ had landed illegally at Leith in South Georgia, and on 21 March HMS ENDURANCE was sailed towards the island with a detachment of Royal Marines embarked to investigate.

Intense diplomatic activity followed, Her Majesty's Government insisting that the Argentinians had landed illegally and that they should leave either in one of their own ships or in HMS ENDURANCE. On 26 March it was reported to me that although the Argentinian ship BAHIA PARAISO had left Leith, a shore party of 12 men remained behind. Diplomatic activity continued.

On 25 March when it had appeared that a diplomatic solution to the incident was still likely I had left for Gibraltar to visit ships taking part in Exercise SPRINGTRAIN. By 29 March the situation had worsened to an extent where it was considered sufficiently serious for me to return to my Headquarters at Northwood, Middlesex. Before leaving Gibraltar I ordered Flag Officer First Flotilla, Rear Admiral Sir John WOODWARD, KCB, to prepare to detach a suitable group of ships, to store and ammunition and to be ready to proceed to the South Atlantic when instructed.

Also on 29 March the submarine HMS SPARTAN was detached from Exercise SPRINGTRAIN to embark stores and weapons at Gibraltar, for deployment to the South Atlantic. Similarly, HMS SPLENDID ^{was ordered to} ~~deployed~~ from Faslane. A third nuclear powered submarine, HMS CONQUEROR was ~~subsequently~~ sailed a few days later. All were stored for war within 48 hours of order.

³¹ On 30 March I was instructed to nominate suitable surface ships, ^{in case} ~~to form~~ a Task Force ^{was ordered to conduct} for operations in the South Atlantic. At this time my instructions were that any preparations were to be covert. However, on 2 April, after the Argentinian invasion, the preparations were allowed to be conducted openly.

Argentinian forces landed in strength on 2 April at Port Stanley and the very heavily outnumbered Royal Marines of the Garrison resisted, sustaining no casualties but inflicting an unknown number on the invaders.

After some four hours fighting His Excellency the Governor and Commander-in-Chief of the Falkland Islands and the Dependencies, Sir Rex HUNT, KCMG, ordered the Marines and the survey party from HMS ENDURANCE, who had been working on the Islands and who assisted with the defence, to surrender.

The following day Argentinian forces landed at Grytviken in South Georgia. The small Royal Marines detachment on the Island put up a stout resistance in the face of a considerably stronger invading force, damaging the corvette GUERRICO and shooting down a Puma helicopter, before they too surrendered.

Meanwhile, on 2 April the aircraft carriers HMS HERMES, HMS INVINCIBLE with the assault ship HMS FEARLESS, two frigates, two Logistic Landing Ships, 3 Commando Brigade Royal Marines and the necessary logistic support were ordered to be brought to immediate readiness in United Kingdom ports. HMS HERMES with 826, part of 846 and 800 Naval Air Squadrons and HMS INVINCIBLE with 820 and 801 Naval Air Squadrons sailed from Portsmouth on Monday 5 April. Admiral WOODWARD, flying his flag in HMS ANTRIM, was ordered to sail from the Gibraltar area for Ascension Island with six other destroyers and frigates, and with RFA support. The flag was transferred to HMS GLAMORGAN on 4 April.

THE AIM

I was informed that in the current situation the overall aim of Her Majesty's Government was to bring about the withdrawal of Argentinian forces from the Falkland Islands and their Dependencies and to re-establish the British Administration there as quickly as possible. My mission was to conduct military deployments and order operations in support of this aim.

COMMAND AND CONTROL

In my capacity as Commander-in-Chief Fleet I assumed overall command of the operation as Commander Task Force 317 (all surface ships, land and air forces) and Task Force 324 (submarine forces). This tri-service command was exercised from my Headquarters at Northwood and I was responsible direct to the Chief of Defence Staff, Admiral of the Fleet Sir Terence LEWIN, GCB, MVO, DSC. The Air Officer Commanding 18 Group RAF, Air Marshal Sir John CURTISS, KCB, KBE, CBIM, RAF was appointed as my Air Commander, and the Major General Royal Marines Commando Forces, Major General Sir Jeremy MOORE, KCB, OBE, MC and Bar, was initially my Land Forces Deputy. When later General MOORE flew south to become the Commander Land Forces, Falkland Islands, he was replaced by the Commander South East District, Lieutenant General Sir Richard TRANT, KCB. Submarines were operated under the control of Flag Officer Submarines Vice Admiral P G M BERBERT, OBE. The command team at Northwood was completed by my Chief of Staff, Vice Admiral Sir David HALLIFAX, KBE, who was responsible for the detailed naval planning and the co-ordination of all staff work. Admiral WOODWARD was appointed Commander of the Task Groups in the South Atlantic and he transferred his flag to HMS HERMES on 15 April.

MILITARY AND LOGISTIC CONSIDERATIONS

My foremost considerations when planning this operation, were the Argentinian military capabilities and the proximity of their bases and the comparison with our own situation: especially, the difficulties of transporting troops, aircraft and equipment some 8,000 miles from the United Kingdom to a theatre of operations within range of aircraft based in mainland Argentina and more than 3,000 miles from my nearest forward mounting base.

It is always difficult to quantify enemy capabilities. Intelligence and other sources gave the total number of warships at Argentina's disposal as 73. These included one aircraft carrier, one cruiser, 4 submarines, 2 modern 'Type 42' destroyers, and other older but well equipped frigates and destroyers. Its aircraft included 65 A-4 Variants, 39 Mirage III/V, 5 Canberra, 60 Pucara, 8 Puma and 2 Lynx helicopters, and 5 Super Etendard equipped with Exocet sea skimming missiles, together with a small but significant air transport force which included 2 C130s (Hercules) with air to air refuelling tanker capability. The number of troops on the Islands was more problematic. Estimates varied from 7,000 to 10,000 well equipped troops. These were supported by more than 30 light attack aircraft (mainly Pucarás) and about 20 helicopters. It was difficult to assess the intended role of Argentina's military and civilian manpower reserve, its Merchant Marine and its civilian air transport. A further factor was the possibility of material assistance from other countries.

I did not have within my normal resources the ships necessary for the 7,000 mile transit of the troops, equipment and logistic support for the size of forces which I considered were required to counter the threat and achieve my mission. It was necessary at an early stage to consider taking up ships from trade. An Order in Council under the Royal Prerogative to requisition ships was given on the evening of 4 April and announced in Parliament the following day.

It must be recorded that this operation could not have been mounted without the wholehearted co-operation of the Department of Trade, the ship owners, the masters and their crews who gave their unstinting support and worked with enormous energy and enthusiasm. The capabilities of these vessels were enhanced by installing additional equipment which included the provision of helicopter flight decks, a refuelling at sea capability, freshwater making plants and communications. These conversions were defined and completed with speed and efficiency that brings great credit to all the agencies involved.

In expectation of a requirement for additional naval air assets, 4 new Naval Air Squadrons were formed. These comprised one squadron of Sea Harriers, 2 squadrons of Wessex 5 helicopters and one squadron of Anti Submarine Sea Kings specially adapted for helicopter support operations. In addition, several new small flights, consisting mainly of Wasp helicopters, were prepared for the ships taken up from trade and other warships brought out of the Standby Squadron. These are noteworthy achievements and reflect well on the Naval Air Command.

The Royal Air Force supported by the British aerospace industry, the Chief Scientist's Department and the Ministry of Defence Procurement Executive was also quickly modifying Vulcan, Nimrod and Hercules aircraft. Air to air refuelling capabilities were developed and installed; anti corrosion measures were adopted for normally land based Chinook helicopters and RAF Harriers. Additional equipment and weaponry were fitted to a number of assigned aircraft.

Early on, we established in my Headquarters a Logistic Support Cell. This was a tri-service organisation headed by the Force Logistic Co-ordinator whose task was to co-ordinate replenishment planning and all logistic requirements for the Task Force. I considered it essential that this organisation should be at Northwood to ensure optimum and economical use of sometimes scarce resources and the priority for supply of the most urgent stores. It was a vital asset and a most successful management tool.

The speed with which the operation was mounted did not allow ships and troops to prepare themselves before departure from the United Kingdom as adequately as I would have wished. All ships proceeding south therefore adopted a vigorous training programme at sea. Weapon systems were thoroughly overhauled, tested and fired: in some cases civilian weapons engineering experts sailed with the ships. Tactical and communications procedures were intensively rehearsed. Damage control exercises were constantly practised. Embarked troops carried out fitness and weapon training often in cramped, difficult and, for many, quite unfamiliar conditions. Ships had to prepare themselves for rapid and sometimes unscheduled replenishment from other ships, tankers and helicopters. Equipments were modified at sea without the usual dockyard support and ships and aircraft were painted to obliterate pennant numbers and identification markings. Later, it proved possible to give ships subsequently sailed in support of the operation, a limited period of specialised sea training directed at South Atlantic operations under the auspices of Flag Officer Sea Training at Portland.

The modifications to Royal Air Force aircraft to fit them for South Atlantic operations produced a need for an intensive training programme for both aircrews and support personnel. Additional air to air refuelling instructors had to be trained so that they, in turn, could train the Vulcan, Nimrod and Hercules pilots as these aircraft acquired airborne refuelling capability. Each new weapons system had to be tested and the crews trained in its use. Barrier GR3 pilots were also practised in the use of the ski-jump for carrier operations.

ASCENSION ISLAND

A key factor in this operation was Ascension Island, situated over 3,700 nautical miles from the United Kingdom and 3,300 miles from the Falkland Islands. Ascension Island was essential as a forward mounting base to replenish the ships of the Task Force and to provide them with stores, equipment and men that could not be embarked before their hurried departure from the United Kingdom. Air transport routes to the Island were activated on 2 April.

The Island airfield, Wideawake, was also vital as an airhead for all land based aircraft operating in support of the Fleet and land forces. However, with only limited facilities and totally inadequate technical and domestic back up, previously manned for and accustomed to dealing with only 3 movements each week, it was developed into a fully operational military establishment capable of supporting the permanent detachments of up to 17 Victors, 3 Vulcans, 4 Hercules, 4 Nimrods, 2 air defence aircraft and 2 support helicopters. Additionally, intensive daily air transport movements were accepted. The necessary engineering, freight handling, weapon loading and administrative support brought the establishment from nothing to over 800 officers and men of all three services within 3 weeks.

The fundamental importance of Ascension Island to the timely success of the operation meant that its vulnerability to a clandestine amphibious or audacious air attack, such as the Argentinians later demonstrated with their bomb carrying Hercules transport aircraft, could not be ignored. Air defence radar was installed to support the fighter aircraft, which were initially missile armed GR3 Harriers and later Phantoms. A detachment of the Royal Air Force Regiment provided ground defence. Seaward defences were provided by an RN guardship and daily Nimrod patrols of the sea areas out to 400 miles; a number of Argentinian merchantmen were detected close to the Island and these were shadowed by air and surface units until clear of the area.

By the fall of Stanley, a total of 535 air movements into the Island from the United Kingdom had taken place. These included RAF Hercules and VC10s and some chartered Belfast and Boeing 707 aircraft. They had brought in 23 helicopters, 5,907 tons of freight and 5,242 passengers. In addition to these freight and passenger aircraft, ground support personnel also handled all aircraft operating to the south in support of the Task Force. Nimrods mounted 111 sorties from the Island; the Hercules made 44 airdrops of essential equipment, weapons, personnel and mail to the Fleet and the Victor Tankers flew 375 sorties in support of 67 missions involving long range operations by probe fitted aircraft.

I would wish to record the unstinting support of the residents of Ascension, particularly that of the Island Administrator Mr B E PAUNCEFORT, the United States Air Force Officer-in-Charge at Wideawake, Lieutenant Colonel W BRYDEN, and the employees of the operating contractor, Pan American Airways. In the last category, Mr Donald COFFEY is worthy of special mention.

MEDICAL SUPPORT

The SS UGANDA was taken up from trade and designated a Hospital Ship in accordance with Article 22 of the Geneva Convention, having been fitted out in Gibraltar Dockyard. Accommodation to allow for the treatment and holding of up to 300 casualties was provided, together with sufficient medical personnel, to cover all major specialities. A number of QARNNS officers and ratings were embarked in the ship as part of the medical complement. In order to comply fully with the Convention, the ship was declared to the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) before sailing from Gibraltar, marked as required by the Convention.

Additionally, three survey ships HM Ships HECLA, HERALD and HYDRA, were designated as casualty ferries, fitted out and declared as Hospital Ships under the Geneva Convention.

THE MARITIME EXCLUSION ZONE

On 4 April I recommended that a maritime exclusion zone be established around the Falkland Islands in order to inhibit the Argentine ability to reinforce their garrison. [After further discussion] Her Majesty's Government announced on 7 April the establishment of an exclusion zone, 200 nautical miles in radius from the centre of the Falkland Islands, to be effective for ^{Argentine} submarines, surface warships, military aircraft and certain naval auxiliary ships, from 0400 GMT on 12 April. Initially the exclusion zone was enforced by submarines which were deployed to cover the approaches to Port Stanley and the entrances to Falkland Sound.

THE REPOSSESSION OF SOUTH GEORGIA

On 7 April the Chief of Defence Staff ordered me to plan to implement the repossession of South Georgia.

Captain B G YOUNG, DSO, Royal Navy, the Commanding Officer of HMS ANTRIM was nominated as the Commander of the Task Group allocated to the task. Other units involved in this phase of the operation included HMS ENDURANCE, HMS PLYMOUTH, later, HMS BRILLIANT, RFA TIDESPRING, M Company Group of 42 Commando Royal Marines, elements of the Special Air Service Regiment (SAS) and the Special Boat Squadron (SBS). In addition HMS CONQUEROR was ordered

to patrol off the island to prevent any Argentinian reinforcement. RAF
or Maritime Reconnaissance aircraft supported by Victor Tankers and
N~~l~~ds swept the sea areas from South Georgia to the Argentinian coast
between 20 and 25 April to give early warning of hostile naval movements.

The first phase of the operation was to insert SAS and SBS
reconnaissance parties by both helicopter and small boats. This was started
and achieved on 21 April despite appalling weather conditions of intense
cold and winds gusting to 70 knots. Unfortunately after 24 hours of
unrelenting blizzard the SAS detachment had to be withdrawn from Fortuna
Glacier. Two Wessex helicopters dispatched to effect the withdrawal
crashed in 'white out' conditions, the pilots having lost all points of
reference and orientation. A third radar fitted Wessex by a remarkable feat
of airmanship succeeded in recovering the entire detachment and the crews
of the crashed helicopters. The SAS were re-inserted on 23 April during a
temporary lull in the blizzard.

By 25 April the weather had improved sufficiently for more reconnaissance
parties to be landed and helicopter sorties to be flown. A helicopter search
located the Argentinian submarine SANTA FE on the surface five miles from
Grytviken. She was attacked by helicopters armed with AS 12 missiles and
depth charges which caused her to limp back to Grytviken where she was later
beached. This attack not only eliminated a potent threat to the Task Group
but also revealed our presence in the area and it was therefore decided to
press home the advantage without further delay.

Events then moved quickly. Under cover of naval gunfire support
directed from ashore by a Royal Artillery forward observation officer, the
assault troops landed at Grytviken by helicopter. Later that afternoon the
Argentinian forces surrendered and 170 prisoners were taken. British forces
sustained no casualties. Following the fall of Grytviken, HM Ships PLYMOUTH
and ENDURANCE were detached to recapture Leith where there was a detachment
of Argentinian marines. After some initial vacillation, the Argentinian
force hoisted the white flag on 26 April.

The surrender document was signed onboard HMS ANTRIM on 26 April and
the Union Flag again flew over South Georgia.

EXTENSION OF EXCLUSION ZONE

On 23 April the Argentine Government was warned that any approach
on the part of Argentine warships, including submarines, naval
auxiliaries, or military aircraft which could amount to a threat to
interfere with British forces would encounter the appropriate response.
Moreover all Argentine aircraft engaging in surveillance of these
forces would be regarded as hostile.

/ The threat posed by the three nuclear submarines had effectively
stopped Argentinian reinforcement of the Islands by sea since 12 April but,
with the added aim of stopping resupply by air, a Total Exclusion Zone was
declared by the Government on 30 April on the arrival of the carrier force.
This Zone applied not only to Argentinian warships and naval auxiliaries
but also to all other ships and aircraft attempting to support the illegal
occupation of the Islands.

The difficulties of maintaining a total blockade are considerable. It
is now known that one Argentinian resupply ship arrived in the Islands and
the Argentinian Air Force managed to maintain a limited air bridge until
shortly before the final surrender. Nevertheless, politically the
establishment of the Total Exclusion Zone was consistent with the Government's
efforts to ensure the peaceful withdrawal of the Argentinian forces, while
militarily it inhibited the Argentinian ability to reinforce and resupply
their forces and limited their movement.

Additional measures were also considered appropriate. Accordingly, on 7 May the Government informed the Argentinian Government that any of their warships or military aircraft found more than 12 miles from their own coast would be treated as hostile and the appropriate action taken. This move was necessary because of the threat posed by their carrier-borne aircraft and the ease with which hostile forces could approach the Task Force under the cover of bad weather, from mainland bases within 450 miles of the Falkland Islands, a significant factor for a force without the benefit of Airborne Early Warning.

Although not an exclusion zone, on 10 May a 100 nautical mile radius Terminal Control Area around Ascension Island was instituted and formally notified to the appropriate international authorities: this measure called for prior notification of flights to and from the island and of overflights, thus aiding the air defence organisation as well as the control of air traffic.

THE INTENSIFICATION OF OPERATIONS

Early on 1 May an RAF Vulcan flying from Ascension Island opened the action against the Argentinian forces on the Falklands with a night bombing attack of Port Stanley airfield which cratered the runway. The 16 hour sortie was supported by Victor Tankers and Nimrod aircraft and was the first of five Vulcan missions directed against the airfield and adjacent radar installations.

Later the same morning Sea Harriers attacked the runway at Port Stanley and also the airstrip at Goose Green. That night Port Stanley airfield was subjected to Naval Gunfire bombardment by HM Ships GLAMORGAN, ARROW and ALACRITY. This was to be the pattern for the next few weeks, with raids on the airfields at Port Stanley and elsewhere by Harriers and night bombardments by units of the Fleet. These attacks were designed to deny the use of the airfields to the Argentinian forces and to erode their readiness, morale and state of alertness. At the beginning of May, the first of many SAS and SBS reconnaissance patrols landed by helicopter and small boats on the Falklands. During the next 3 weeks, these patrols were able to gather vital intelligence in preparation for the main landing. Throughout the period, in extremely harsh conditions, they remained undetected.

On 2 May the Argentinian cruiser, the GENERAL BELGRANO, with two destroyers, was detected south of the Falklands by HMS CONQUEROR. The enemy force was in a position where it posed a serious threat to a number of our ships engaged in operations off the Falklands while other Argentinian surface units were poised to the north. It was a threat that could not be ignored and therefore HMS CONQUEROR was ordered to attack the GENERAL BELGRANO with torpedoes. Two struck the cruiser which sank some hours later. The Argentinian destroyers carried out several unsuccessful depth charge attacks against HMS CONQUEROR and then retired. Later they returned to rescue survivors. Throughout the campaign, the cost in human lives was my constant concern and in consequence, I ordered HMS CONQUEROR not to attack ships involved in rescue operations. The sinking of GENERAL BELGRANO was a clear demonstration of the capability of a nuclear powered submarine and proved to have a major salutary effect on the conduct of future Argentinian operations. After this attack, Argentinian naval surface forces remained within 12 nautical miles of their coast for the remainder of the campaign.

The nuclear powered submarine's effectiveness was not confined to the removal of this threat; for additionally they patrolled off the coast of mainland Argentina and provided invaluable intelligence to our forces in the TEZ.

Later on 2 May, a Sea King helicopter was fired on by an Argentinian patrol craft. Lynx helicopters armed with Sea Skua missiles subsequently attacked the craft which was hit, blew up and sank. A second patrol craft was also attacked and damaged by helicopter fired missiles.

These successes were marred on 4 May by the loss of HMS SHEFFIELD. While stationed about 60 miles from the south east coast of the Falkland Islands on Anti Air Picket Duty, she was attacked by 2 Exocet missiles released by 2 Super Etendard aircraft. One missile struck her on the starboard side and entered amidships. After 4½ hours during which her Ship's Company fought fierce fires whilst engulfed in thick black acrid smoke, the Commanding Officer reluctantly gave the order to abandon ship. Twenty of her Ship's Company were killed in the attack but 236 were safely recovered by other ships and helicopters of the Task Force; the efforts of HMS ARROW in the rescue operation were particularly praiseworthy. HMS SHEFFIELD finally sank in heavy seas while under tow on 10 May.

In the weeks which preceded the main landing, there was constant activity by ships and aircraft of the Task Force and on 4 May a second Vulcan raid was carried out against Port Stanley airfield. 3 Sea Harriers attacked the airstrip at Goose Green, inflicting damage but suffering the loss of one aircraft, the first such loss attributable to enemy action. On 6 May, very regrettably, 2 Sea Harriers from HMS INVINCIBLE were lost and both pilots were killed. Enemy action was not responsible.

Admiral WOODWARD energetically continued to enforce the blockade by attacking enemy surface units: on 9 May the fishing vessel NARWAL, indisputably acting as an intelligence gathering vessel in the vicinity of the main part of the Task Force was strafed by Sea Harriers. She was subsequently abandoned and sank despite the efforts of a boarding party from HMS INVINCIBLE to save her. Survivors were recovered and subsequently repatriated.

On the night 11 May HMS ALACRITY, whilst transitting Falkland Sound discovered the ISLA DE LOS ESTADOS off Port Howard. She was illuminated by star shell and, having refused to heave to, was engaged by 4.5 inch gunfire, blew up and sank. She had been carrying fuel to resupply Argentinian garrisons. Five days later on 16 May, 2 transport ships BAHIA BUEN SUCESO and RIO CARCARANA were attacked by Sea Harriers, damaged and immobilised. The Argentinian patrol craft ISLAS MALVINAS, and the coaster MONSUNEN which belonged to the Falkland Islands Company, were similarly attacked, the latter vessel being subsequently salvaged and put to use by British forces.

In the air, a Puma helicopter was shot down by a Sea Dart missile from HMS COVENTRY on 9 May. On 12 May, the first Argentinian air attack on the ships of the Task Force since the sinking of HMS SHEFFIELD, took place. Two waves of A4 (Skyhawk) aircraft attacked HM Ships BRILLIANT and GLASGOW. Three of the 4 aircraft in the first wave were destroyed, 2 by HMS BRILLIANT's Sea Wolf missiles and the third crashing in an attempt to evade. In the second wave, HMS GLASGOW was hit by a bomb which inflicted damage to her engines but did not explode. One of the aircraft in the second wave was destroyed.

At Pebble Island on the night of 14/15 May an SAS raiding party supported by diversionary gunfire support from HMS GLAMORGAN accurately directed by a Forward Observation Officer of the Royal Artillery, destroyed an ammunition dump, stores and 11 aircraft including 6 Pucara Ground Attack aircraft. The raiding party was recovered, having suffered only minor casualties.

Throughout the period I have just described, diplomatic activity in London, Buenos Aires, Washington and New York continued in an effort to find a solution satisfactory to both the parties. The fundamental issue; that the people of the Falkland Islands had the right to choose under which government they wished to live, proved increasingly intractable. Hopes of a compromise solution flickered briefly only to be extinguished by Argentina's refusal to accept this principle of self determination. It was only as a last resort when it was clear that a peaceful solution could not be found that the decision to retake British sovereign territory by force of arms was made and I received my instructions to repossess the Falkland Islands.

LAND FORCES

On 2 April, 3 Commando Brigade Royal Marines commanded by Brigadier J E A THOMPSON, CB, OBE, ADC, was assigned to me for the operation. On 3 April, 3rd Battalion The Parachute Regiment was added as were 8 light armoured reconnaissance vehicles of the Blues and Royals and T Air Defence Battery Royal Artillery equipped with Rapier missiles.

This force of some 5,500 men sailed from the United Kingdom on 6 April in the assault ship HMS FEARLESS, 4 Logistic Landing Ships, SS CANBERRA and MV ELK. These ships were later joined at Ascension Island by the assault ship HMS INTREPID, MV NORLAND and MV EUROPIC FERRY with 2nd Battalion The Parachute Regiment and 29 Field Battery Royal Artillery embarked. The initial landing forces were complete, and all units exercised together for the first time at Ascension Island.

Due to the steady build up of Argentinian occupation troops, after the main force had sailed, it was decided that additional land forces should be deployed from the United Kingdom. The force chosen, 5th Infantry Brigade, commanded by Brigadier M J A WILSON, OBE, MC, which had already deployed two of its organic battalions with 3 Commando Brigade Royal Marines but had retained the 1st Battalion 7th Gurkha Rifles, was augmented by 2nd Battalion The Scots Guards, 1st Battalion The Welsh Guards and numerous supporting arms and services. After a 2 week period of intensive training in South Wales, substantial re-equipping and re-organisation, 3,200 men sailed from Southampton on 12 May in RMS QUEEN ELIZABETH II, the major equipments having sailed on 8 and 9 May in MV NORDIC FERRY and MV BALTIC FERRY.

Thus, the grand total of land forces assigned to me for the recapture of the Falkland Islands became 10,500 men.

Four Chinook helicopters to provide vital mobility for troops and equipment in the land battle, were prepared for sea transit and embarked in SS ATLANTIC CONVEYOR. 6 RAF Harriers of No.1 Squadron for close support of group troops also joined SS ATLANTIC CONVEYOR on 6 May. These Harriers transferred to HMS HERMES on 18 May. 8 Sea Harriers of 809 Naval Air Squadron were also embarked and transferred to HM Ships INVINCIBLE and HERMES between 18-20 May. No.63 Squadron RAF Regiment (Rapier) accompanied 5th Infantry Brigade.

SELECTION OF BEACHHEAD

It was always accepted that because of its vital role as the seat of government and the only centre of communication, Port Stanley held the key to victory; he who held Port Stanley, held the Falklands. The aim, therefore, was to secure the capital as quickly as possible, around which the Argentinians had concentrated most of their forces.

It was important to select a suitable area for an amphibious assault as near to Port Stanley as possible, because cross-country movement is very difficult and weather conditions do not favour helicopter operations. However, the main danger of selecting an assault area too close to the capital was that it might make it too easy for the Argentinians to launch a counter attack against the beachhead before it could be firmly established. I had not the necessary forces to conduct an opposed landing.

Although it was not possible to select a site which would be completely immune from air attack, the troop carriers and their escorts had to be afforded protection at least from Exocet missiles. The missile's effectiveness is greatly reduced if its intended targets are protected by land. The amphibious force also required deep water. After assessing all the factors, including the anti submarine advantage, San Carlos Water was chosen for the amphibious assault. It is surrounded by hills, with a deep, comparatively sheltered anchorage and with the nearest sizeable enemy force being at Darwin/Goose Green more than 15 miles away.

I was very much aware of the risks which a landing in strength involved. Despite the care with which the landing area had been chosen, the loss of a prestigious target such as SS CANBERRA and her embarked troops would have jeopardised the entire amphibious assault plan. My commanders therefore had to plan the assault to reduce the element of risk to the minimum acceptable. This was achieved by a variety of means. The most careful consideration was given to the disposition of embarked troops and equipment. Cross decking, the movement of men and material from one ship to another, had already been an essential feature of preparations at sea during the passage south. This procedure was intensified during the week before the landing to ensure that assets were deployed effectively with as little risk as possible. Despite the intensity of these operations which were often carried out in very poor weather conditions, there was only one major loss. Tragically, on 19 May, a Sea King helicopter, while engaged in cross decking, struck a large sea bird and immediately crashed into the sea. 21 SAS officers and men were killed.

Further factors essential to the success of the landing were the weather and the stealth of the ships on passage through the Total Exclusion Zone. Radio silence was imposed throughout this period, while as forecast, the seas remained calm allowing cross decking to continue but visibility was restricted to 2 to 3 miles, protecting the force from Argentinian air attack. Finally, it was important to attempt to deceive the enemy of our true intentions by concentrating activity in areas away from San Carlos Water.

THE LANDING

Thus, in the early hours of 21 May, HM Ships FEARLESS and INTREPID, RFAs STROMNESS, SIR GALAHAD, SIR GERaint, SIR TRISTRAM, SIR LANCELOT and SIR PERCIVAL together with SS CANBERRA and MV EUROPIC FERRY in whom were embarked 3 Commando Brigade Royal Marines, steamed stealthily into Falkland

ound. At 0340 local time, the landings began, the troops being ferried ashore in the 16 landing craft from the two assault ships HMS FEARLESS and HMS INTREPID.

Commodore Amphibious Warfare, Commodore M C CLAPP, CB, embarked in HMS FEARLESS controlled the amphibious operation. Also embarked was Headquarters 3 Commando Brigade Royal Marines.

First ashore were 2nd Battalion The Parachute Regiment and 40 Commando Royal Marines on two beaches in the San Carlos Settlement area. 2nd Battalion The Parachute Regiment then turned south and established a defensive position on the Sussex Mountains effectively blocking the route which any counter attack from the Darwin area would have to take. Meanwhile, 40 Commando Royal Marines moved east, up onto the Verde Mountains. Next ashore was 45 Commando Royal Marines, in Ajax Bay, which was to become the main force logistic area throughout the rest of the campaign. The last assault unit 3rd Battalion The Parachute Regiment went ashore at Port San Carlos, to protect the northern flank, leaving 42 Commando Royal Marines afloat as a reserve. The artillery, 4 light gun batteries and one Rapier missile battery then established themselves ashore.

At the same time as the main landing took place, a subsidiary operation was launched by SBS supported by naval gunfire bombardment on Fanning Head and a raid by SAS at Darwin. The aim of these operations was to convince the enemy that we were following the pattern established by the raid on Pebble Island six days earlier and to mask the scale of the landings at San Carlos Water.

At dawn, helicopters from the Naval Task Group joined the shuttle, as a constant flow of men and equipment went ashore. By the end of the day more than 3,000 men and almost 1,000 tons of stores and equipments had been successfully landed. The Medical Squadron of the Commando Logistic Regiment, supported by Naval surgical teams and elements of 16 Field Ambulance RAMC, set up a main Dressing Station in a disused refrigeration plant at Ajax Bay.

The aim of achieving surprise had been achieved and, although still in its infancy the beachhead had been established virtually unopposed by land or air. During the afternoon of 21 May, the anticipated Argentinian air raids began. The warships in the Falkland Sound fought gallantly and took the brunt of the attack in protecting the landing ships. At least 14 aircraft were shot down by Barriers and ships' weapons, but 2 Gazelle helicopters were shot down by enemy ground fire and an RAF Barrier was lost. Three of the supporting warships were hit. HMS ANTRIM was struck aft by a bomb which failed to explode; HMS ARGONAUT was hit by 2 bombs which again did not explode but killed 2 of her Ship's Company and inflicted sufficient damage to deprive her of steaming capability. HMS ARDENT was less fortunate; she was repeatedly hit aft by bombs which exploded. The damage sustained subsequently led to her sinking, 22 of her Ship's Company losing their lives; 177 were saved. The ships in San Carlos Water were largely unscathed and after a hectic day unloading, SS CANBERRA was sailed after dark.

CONSOLIDATION

The following day, the build up and reinforcement of the beachhead continued. The Argentinian air raids did not. However, on 23 May, the Argentinians again launched heavy air attacks and more ships were hit,

including HMS ANTELOPE. One of the bombs entered her forward, killing one of her Ship's Company instantly, although it did not explode. Subsequent efforts to defuse it failed and the resulting explosion killed one of the disposal team and seriously injured the other. The fires generated by the explosion raged out of control and the ship was abandoned. She later sank but the rest of the Ship's Company survived. A Sea Harrier was also lost when it exploded shortly after take off from HMS HERMES, killing the pilot. But, on this day the Argentinians lost a further seven of their attacking aircraft.

The build up of men and material continued. The Royal Engineers had worked tirelessly to improve the access over the beaches and by the end of the third day, 24 May, 5,500 men had been put ashore together with 5,000 tons of ammunition and stores. The supporting role of MV ELK deserves particular mention. Throughout this period she ferried large amounts of ammunition to the landing areas sometimes at considerable but necessary risk from air attacks. She was quite literally a floating bomb, sometimes carrying as much as 2,500 tons of ammunition onboard.

The 25 May was Argentina's National Day and a major effort by her Air Force was anticipated. At first, fears appeared to be groundless; only one raid penetrated to the Falkland Sound area where it inflicted no damage but one of the aircraft was shot down by a Sea Dart missile. Three more aircraft were also shot down by a Sea Dart missiles of HMS COVENTRY, a Seacat missile fired by HMS YARMOUTH and Rapier missile fired from ashore. In mid afternoon, however, the advanced air defence elements of the Task Group were targets for a very determined low level air attack. HMS BROADSWORD suffered superficial damage from an exploding bomb and HMS COVENTRY was hit by several bombs which exploded in or near the machinery spaces. She capsized shortly after the attack with the loss of 19 of her Ship's Company. On this day, too, SS ATLANTIC CONVEYOR with a cargo of helicopters, support equipment and stores which included material needed to establish a forward airstrip for helicopters and Harriers, was in company with the main force to the east of the Falklands en route for San Carlos. One hour before sunset the force received a brief warning of an attack by Argentinian aircraft armed with Exocet missiles. Ships took appropriate counter measures, but SS ATLANTIC CONVEYOR was hit and set on fire. The fires spread rapidly and one hour after the attack she was abandoned. 3 Naval ratings and 9 Merchant Navy officers and men, including her Master, Captain I NORTE, DSO, were killed.

The Argentinian Air Force, despite their losses, persisted with their attacks in the San Carlos area but, by now, the presence of Rapier and Blowpipe missile systems ashore and effective small arms fire brought to bear from ships and shore were a potent counter. Similarly, attacks continued against units at sea. On 30 May, the carrier group having moved closer to the Falkland Islands to cover the approach of 5th Infantry Brigade troop ships, was attacked by Super Etendards and Skyhawks. A number of Exocet missiles were launched but were evaded and exploded harmlessly. Three of the Skyhawks were shot down, 2 by Sea Dart missiles, the third by 4.5 inch gunfire.

THE BREAKOUT

On 26/27 May, 3 Commando Brigade Royal Marines began to break out from the beachhead. The overall plan was to close up to the Port Stanley area as quickly as possible. There was however a significant Argentinian presence at Darwin and Goose Green. Although not on the direct route to Port Stanley,

These troops posed a threat to the flank and to the beachhead. It was therefore decided that it was essential to neutralise the Argentinian presence there before the advance on Stanley could be fully developed.

Late on 26 May, 2nd Battalion The Parachute Regiment started its move south. At dawn on 27 May, 45 Commando Royal Marines and 3rd Battalion The Parachute Regiment started to advance along the northern route from the beachhead, east towards Douglas Settlement and Teal Inlet respectively. Throughout 27 May, while the other two battalions continued their advances, 2nd Battalion The Parachute Regiment laid up at Camilla Creek House 5 miles north of the Argentinian position, while an artillery troop of 3 light guns was flown forward to support the attack which began at 0200 on 28 May.

One of the RAF Harriers flying close air support missions assisting the move forward was shot down on 27 May whilst attacking Argentinian positions at Goose Green. The pilot ejected and was later recovered unharmed by advancing land forces.

By mid afternoon, Darwin had been captured and the battalion pressed on south down the narrow isthmus towards Goose Green, some two miles on. They had to cross open ground in broad daylight, and were opposed by strong defensive positions which were well dug in and sited in depth. Low cloud, strong winds and driving rain ^{delayed} air operations in support of the advance.

The battle for Goose Green lasted many hours, frequently at very close quarters, and amongst the casualties was the Commanding Officer, Lieutenant Colonel E JONES, VC, OBE, who was killed when charging an enemy post which was holding up the advance on the left flank. Throughout the course of the battle 16 officers and men of 2nd Battalion The Parachute Regiment were killed, and one Royal Marines officer was also killed when his Scout helicopter was shot down by enemy aircraft.

By last light the battalion supported by 2 further RAF Harrier raids had surrounded the remaining garrison in the Goose Green Settlement where 112 civilians were also held, having been confined to the Community Hall for 3 weeks.

During the night the Acting Commanding Officer conducted negotiations with the Argentinians and, by mid morning on 29 May, the surrender was accepted. As a result of their gallant action, 2nd Battalion The Parachute Regiment took over 1,000 prisoners and [50] Argentinians had been killed. Subsequently, it was discovered that the original garrison of some 650 had been reinforced on 28 May by an additional regiment. A large quantity of artillery, air defence weapons and ammunition was captured. In addition, all the civilians were released unharmed.

ADVANCE ON PORT STANLEY

After a remarkable cross country march of 50 miles over very difficult terrain in appalling weather conditions 45 Commando Royal Marines had reached Teal Inlet, and 3rd Battalion The Parachute Regiment had reached Estancia House via Teal Inlet. Meanwhile, D Squadron 22 Special Air Service Regiment had established an operations base in the area of Mount Kent and were carrying out an aggressive patrolling and intelligence gathering programme. After 3 days and several attempts at reinforcement which were prevented by the atrocious weather at night, they were joined by the first half of 42 Commando

Royal Marines and a troop of light guns of 29 Commando Regiment Royal Artillery, who were flown forward by helicopter on 1 June, the remainder joining on 2 June.

On 30 May, General MOORE assumed command of operations ashore and on 1 June was joined by his Headquarters which was immediately established in HMS FEARLESS at San Carlos Water. Also on 1 June, 5th Infantry Brigade began to disembark at the beachhead. The movements of RMS QUEEN ELIZABETH II in which they had set sail from Southampton were kept strictly secret. I could not risk such a prestigious target and her embarked force to the hazards of the Total Exclusion Zone. She had therefore made her way south well outside the range of Argentinian aircraft to rendezvous with SS CANBERRA and MV NORLAND in Cumberland Bay, South Georgia. Here 5th Infantry Brigade and accompanying weapons and equipment were disembarked by the small ships of 11 Mine Countermeasures Squadron, HM Ships CORDELLA, PICT, NORTHELLA, JUNELLA and FARNELLA. Their transfer to SS CANBERRA and MV NORLAND was completed with noteworthy speed on 29 May.

After arrival at San Carlos Water on 31 May, MV NORLAND disembarked 1st Battalion 7th ^{Duke of Edinburgh's Own} Gurkha Rifles during the morning of 1 June. Later that day, 2nd Battalion The Scots Guards and 1st Battalion The Welsh Guards disembarked from SS CANBERRA. The 2nd Battalion The Parachute Regiment was put under the command of 5th Infantry Brigade and moved forward to the Fitzroy and Bluff Cove areas and was replaced at Darwin and Goose Green by 1st Battalion 7th Gurkha Rifles.

Whilst 5th Infantry Brigade moved forward in the south, other elements of the Task Force were fully employed. On land a build up of stores and ammunition in preparation for the final battles took place. This included the construction of a Barrier Forward Operating Base at Port San Carlos by 11 and 59 Squadrons of the Royal Engineers. This task was completed in difficult conditions and despite the loss of much of their equipment in SS ATLANTIC CONVEYOR. Helicopters operating in very poor weather conditions ferried vast amounts of stores and ammunition to forward positions; this included 18,000 rounds of artillery ammunition. Other stores were moved by Logistic Landing Ships to Teal Inlet after the clearance of San Salvador Sound by Mine Countermeasures Forces. At sea, ships moved close inshore nightly to conduct bombardments of selected targets on the approaches to and around Port Stanley. 1,300 4.5 inch rounds were fired by HM Ships CARDIFF, ARROW, YARMOUTH, ACTIVE and AMBUSCADE during the period 5 to 10 June. Argentinian aircraft were also successfully engaged by units of the Fleet. One Canberra was shot down by a Sea Dart missile fired by HMS EXETER. HMS PLYMOUTH shot down 2 Mirage aircraft with Sea Cat missiles. Sea Barriers from HMS INVINCIBLE attacked and brought down an Argentinian Hercules.

Vulcan attacks against enemy radar installations in the vicinity of Port Stanley were carried out on 31 May and 3 June. The final Vulcan bombing raid of the airfield took place on 12 June. These, and the intensified bombing raids by Barriers, complemented the heavy night bombardment by Task Force ships. A forward air base was established at Port San Carlos on 5 June, from which combat air patrols and offensive air support missions, as well as helicopter operations were mounted.

By this time too, the air to air refuelled Hercules were conducting regular air drops of important supplies to ships in the Total Exclusion Zone.

There were losses. A Gazelle helicopter in transit from Darwin to

Fitzroy was lost on 6 June with the 2 passengers and the 2 crew. An RAF Harrier crashed into the sea on 31 May after being struck by enemy ground fire over Port Stanley. A Sea Harrier crashed into the sea on 6 May whilst returning from a combat air patrol; both pilots were rescued unhurt by Task Force search and rescue units. An accident at Port San Carlos severely damaged an RAF Harrier on 8 June, bringing the total losses of ground support Harriers to 4. The direct transit of 2 pairs of replacement RAF Harriers from Ascension Island to EMS HERMES using in flight refuelling on 2 and 8 June was a noteworthy achievement and a most welcome reinforcement.

Further reinforcement and resupply forward was severely hampered by bad weather which precluded the use of helicopters for troop movement. It was therefore decided to move 2nd Battalion The Scots Guards, 1st Battalion The Welsh Guards and some supporting units and equipment by ship to Fitzroy. This move was conducted as follows: on 6 June 2nd Battalion The Scots Guards disembarked from landing craft having transferred from HMS INTREPID off Lively Island by night. Due to very bad weather only half the 1st Battalion The Welsh Guards landed on a similar operation on 7 June. They had sailed to Lively Island in HMS FEARLESS. During the night 7/8 June the remainder of the Battalion and some other units were embarked in SIR GALAHAD and sailed directly to Fitzroy. The weather on 8 June unexpectedly and unfortunately cleared and whilst SIR GALAHAD and SIR TRISTRAM, the latter having arrived on 7 June, were unloading they were attacked by Argentinian aircraft before the Rapier battery which had been landed as soon as possible after arrival was fully operational. Both were hit, caught fire and abandoned. This attack led to the heaviest casualties on the campaign. Forty two Welsh Guardsmen, 3 members of 16 Field Ambulance RAMC and 5 Royal Fleet Auxiliary crewmen were killed. In a further air raid, a landing craft was bombed and sank in Choiseul Sound. 6 Royal Marines and 1 Naval Rating were killed.

Weather conditions again deteriorated. It was almost mid-winter, with frequent rain and snow storms driven horizontal by high winds, and sub-zero temperatures. The battalions who occupied the most exposed positions were suffering with cases of exposure and trench-foot. General MOORE was thus determined to launch his bid for Port Stanley with the minimum of delay.

THE FINAL BATTLE

The Argentinians had about 7 battalions together with supporting troops in the Port Stanley area. Approximately 3 of these battalions were forward on the important features of Mount Longdon, Two Sisters and Mount Harriet. In addition, there were about 1,000 troops on West Falkland.

General MOORE planned that the attack on Port Stanley should be conducted in 3 phases. The first phase was scheduled for the night of 11/12 June when 3 Commando Brigade Royal Marines was to capture the three features of Mount Longdon, Two Sisters and Mount Harriet. The second phase, planned to take place 24 hours later, required both brigades to capture the next features to the east; these were Wireless Ridge, Tumbledown Mountain and Mount William. Finally, the 1st Battalion The Welsh Guards, with 2 companies of 40 Commando Royal Marines under command, were to capture Sapper Hill.

As scheduled, on 11 June a silent night attack was launched. The enemy was outfought and soon after dawn all the brigade objectives were firmly held. In the centre, after a hard fight in very difficult mountain terrain, 45 Commando Royal Marines captured Two Sisters. Further south 42 Commando Royal Marines made an indirect approach, exploiting a gap in the enemy mine-

fields which had been established as a result of extremely detailed, skilled and aggressive patrolling and captured Mount Harriet from behind, taking over 200 prisoners. Meanwhile in the north 3rd Battalion The Parachute Regiment had an extremely tough fight against one of the enemy's best battalions to capture Mount Longdon, during the course of which Sgt McKay VC was killed while ^{CINCFLEET TO} DESCRIBE SGT McKay's ACTION. During the day of 12 June all these positions came under heavy artillery fire, and further casualties were sustained.

For this and subsequent attacks, troop movements and assaults ashore were covered by Harrier attacks, naval gunfire and the support of five field batteries who fired 15,000 rounds. 29 Commando Regiment Royal Artillery were in continuous action for 12 hours during the first phase, at one point giving supporting fire only 50 metres in front of the advancing infantry. In the second phase 57 missions were fired. The Royal Engineers who had completed the hazardous task for clearing routes through the minefields provided men with each of the assaulting units. In addition they carried out many tasks to improve the mobility of the land forces including reconstruction of the bridge at Fitzroy.

On 12 June, HMS GLAMORGAN while leaving her gun support position at dawn, was struck aft by a land launched Exocet missile. Despite the resulting fires, she remained able to steam with gun armament intact. The fires were eventually brought under control, but 13 of her Ship's Company had been killed in this attack.

Also on 12 June the final Vulcan raid was made on Port Stanley airfield, supported by further Harrier attacks, in an attempt to prevent any further use of the airfield by the Argentinians prior to the final assault.

To allow further time for preparation, Phase 2 was delayed by 24 hours and eventually launched on the night of 13/14 June. 2nd Battalion The Parachute Regiment, once more under command of 3 Commando Brigade Royal Marines, in a beautifully managed and very skilful attack took Wireless Ridge, whilst on Tumbledown Mountain, 2nd Battalion The Scots Guards had a particularly difficult battle before they overcame the regular Argentinian marine battalion. Thereafter 1st Battalion 7th Duke of Edinburgh's Own Gurkha Rifles passed through 2nd Battalion The Scots Guards to secure Mount William.

At this stage it became clear that enemy resistance was collapsing. They could be seen retreating towards Port Stanley from many directions, including Moody Brook and Sapper Hill, neither of which had yet been attacked. Some, ejected from Tumbledown by 2nd Battalion The Scots Guards, realised that they must pass Mount William, now firmly in Gurkha hands. They chose instead to retrace their steps and surrender to the Guardsmen.

Phase 3 was never launched. Realising that the Argentinian forces were beaten, General MOORE launched two battalions in pursuit, to close up to the outskirts of Port Stanley as quickly as possible. This was in line with General MOORE's policy throughout the land battle of moving forward energetically and as expeditiously as possible.

During the afternoon of 14 June with large numbers of enemy standing about, abandoning their arms and surrendering, British troops were ordered to fire only in self-defence, and white flags began to appear over Port Stanley.

That night, after some hours of negotiations, General MOORE flew by helicopter into Port Stanley and took the formal surrender of all Argentinian forces on the Falkland Islands from General MENENDEZ.

RECAPTURE OF SOUTH THULE

The final step in the eviction of the illegal presence from the South Atlantic Dependencies was the removal of a small party which the Argentinian Navy had maintained on South Thule in the South Sandwich Islands since 1976.

HMS ENDURANCE, commanded by Captain N J BARKER, CBE, Royal Navy, which had played a vital supporting role in the South Georgia area throughout, led a Task Group which included the frigate HMS YARMOUTH, RFA OLWEN, and the tug SALVAGEMAN. M Company 42 Commando Royal Marines formed the bulk of the landing force. The Argentinian party surrendered without resistance on 20 June. Although it had been claimed that this was a scientific station, ample proof was obtained that it was part of an Argentinian military meteorological network.

GENERAL COMMENTS

The preceding paragraphs have recorded the major actions and significant phases of operations in the South Atlantic. The chronological record has not allowed proper emphasis of those activities whose importance is characterised by their continuous nature.

Attacks on the Task Force by enemy submarines were a significant and ever present threat, which was recognised by the inclusion of anti-submarine Sea King helicopters in the air order of battle. A number of torpedo attacks were carried out by these aircraft against underwater contacts classified as possible submarines. Results of the actions are not known, but the high intensity flying rates of this helicopter force throughout the operations were an essential part of Fleet anti-submarine warfare defences.

Some of the Harrier operations involving enemy action have already been recorded. However, defence of the Fleet and, later, close air support of the land forces, required these aircraft to spend many hours at high alert states or flying defensive combat air patrols. These protective measures were continuously necessary from the moment the ships entered the Total Exclusion Zone. A total of [27] enemy aircraft were destroyed in air to air combat, with the Sidewinder missile success rate being particularly noteworthy. It became apparent in the last few days of the open action that Admiral WOODWARD's courageously aggressive stance to wreak attrition on the Argentinian Air Force had accomplished the aim and to all intents and purposes they were beaten.

Nimrod aircraft were the first to be based on Ascension Island, on 6 April. They were immediately involved as communications links for the transitting nuclear submarines and thereafter they continuously provided direct support and area surveillance to every major element of the Task Force to the limit of the aircrafts' range. All deployments of small aircraft were provided with airborne search and rescue cover and, after the fitting of refuelling probes, Nimrods converted for air to air refuelling provided long range surveillance of the sea areas between the Falkland Islands and the Argentinian mainland prior to and during the main amphibious landing.

Air support of the Task Force from Ascension Island was completely

dependent on air to air refuelling. In performing all refuelling tasks between the United Kingdom and the Total Exclusion Zone, the Victor Tankers provided continuous and timely support.

With the ships of the Task Force operating so far from Dockyard assistance, much major maintenance and repair work had to be carried out afloat in very rough seas. The achievements of the maintenance and repair ships MV STENA SEASPREAD and MV STENA INSPECTOR were outstanding.

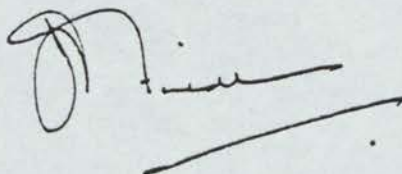
Over the distances involved and in areas so notoriously bad for radio propagation the value of satellite communications cannot be overstated. The Command and Control of Operation CORPORATE would have been immeasurably more difficult without this facility.

Logistics were always to the forefront of my mind. Throughout the events I have described, no ship ran out of fuel, no weapon system of ammunition despite a supply line of over 7,000 miles and the extreme weather conditions encountered. This is ample testimony to the excellent work of all members of the logistic support ships and units of the Task Force.

Major contributory factors to the survival of the wounded were the supreme physical fitness of our troops and the exemplary medical attention given to casualties of both sides often under fire and in the most squalid conditions. First aid matched the professional expertise of the field and afloat medical teams. Equally vital was the skill of the helicopter pilots in speedily evacuating casualties. Casualties were transferred to the Hospital Ship SS UGANDA. Once fit for further travel, they were transferred to the 3 casualty ferries HM Ships HYDRA, HECLA and HECATE and conveyed to Montevideo for onward aeromedical evacuation to the United Kingdom by RAF VC10. These operations were all conducted with great efficiency and great concern for the comfort of the wounded.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

Operation CORPORATE became necessary because deterrence failed but in its execution it represented a triumph of military capability backed by resolute political will. The difficulties of short notice, extreme range and appalling weather under which this operation was mounted were all overcome by a single factor, the quality of our people. The fighting men were magnificent when put to the test and the support they received at every level, at sea from the Merchant Navy, at Ascension Island and in the United Kingdom was superb. I could not have been better served.



J D E FIELDHOUSE
Admiral
Commander Task Force 317

COMMANDER TASK FORCE 317 AND 324

Admiral Sir John FIELDHOUSE, GCB, GBE

AIR COMMANDER

Air Marshal Sir John CURTISS, KCB, KBE, CBIM, RAF

LAND FORCES DEPUTY

Major General Sir Jeremy MOORE, KCB, OBE, MC and Bar

From 21 May: Lieutenant General Sir Richard TRANT, KCE

FLAG OFFICER SUBMARINES

Vice Admiral P G M HERBERT, OBE

COMMANDER TASK GROUP 317.8

Rear Admiral Sir John WOODWARD, KCB

3 COMMANDO BRIGADE ROYAL MARINES

Brigadier J H A THOMPSON, CB, OBE, ADC

5TH INFANTRY BRIGADE

Brigadier M J A WILSON, OBE, MC

COMMODORE AMPHIBIOUS WARFARE

Commodore M C CLAPP, CB

SHIPS WHICH SAILED FOR OPERATION CORPORATE BEFORE 20 JUNE 1982

<u>SHIP</u>	<u>COMMANDING OFFICER</u>	<u>DATE PASSED 35°S</u> (see note)
HMS ACTIVE	Commander P C B CANTER, RN	23 May
HMS ALACRITY	Commander C J S CRAIG, DSC, RN	25 April
HMS AMBUSCADE	Commander P J MOSSE, RN	18 May
HMS ANDROMEDA	Captain J L WEATHERALL, RN	23 May
HMS ANTELOPE	Commander N J TOBIN, DSC, RN	18 May
HMS ANTRIM	Captain B G YOUNG, DSO, RN	18 April
HMS ARDENT	Commander A W J WEST, DSC, RN	13 May
HMS ARGONAUT	Captain C H LAYMAN, DSO, MVO, RN	13 May
HMS ARROW	Commander P J BOOTHERSTONE, DSC, RN	20 April
HMS AVENGER	Captain E M WHITE, RN	23 May
HMS BRILLIANT	Captain J F COWARD, DSO, RN	20 April
HMS BRISTOL	Captain A GROSE, RN	23 May
HMS BROADSWORD	Captain W R CANNING, DSO, ADC, RN	25 April

SHIP

COMMANDING OFFICER

DATE PASSED 35°S
(see note)

HMS CARDIFF

Captain
M G T HARRIS, RN

23 May

HMS COVENTRY

Captain
D HART-DYKE, MVO, RN

20 April

HMS DUMBARTON CASTLE

Lieutenant Commander
N D WOOD, RN

13 June

HMS ENDURANCE

Captain
N J BARKER, CBE, RN

Not applicable

HMS EXETER

Captain
H M BALFOUR, MVO, RN

19 May

HMS FEARLESS

Captain
E J S LARKEN, DSO, RN

13 May

HMS GLAMORGAN

Captain
M E BARROW, DSO, ADC, RN

25 April

HMS GLASGOW

Captain
A P HODDINOTT, OBE, RN

20 April

HMS HECLA

Captain
G L HOPE, RN

10 May

HMS HERALD

Captain
R I C HALLIDAY, RN

15 May

HMS HERMES

Captain
L E MIDDLETON, DSO, RN

25 April

- 800 Naval Air Squadron

Lieutenant Commander
A D AULD, DSC, RN

-

- 826 Naval Air Squadron

Lieutenant Commander
D J S SQUIER, AFC, RN

-

HMS HYDRA

Commander
R J CAMPBELL, RN

15 May

HMS INTREPID

Captain
P G V DINGEMANS, DSO, RN

13 May

HMS INVINCIBLE

Captain
J J BLACK, DSO, MBE, RN

25 April

SHIP

COMMANDING OFFICER

DATE PASSED 35°S
(see note)

- 801 Naval Air Squadron	Lieutenant Commander N D WARD, DSC, AFC, RN	-
- 820 Naval Air Squadron	Lieutenant Commander R J S WYKES-SNEYD, AFC, RN	-
HMS LEEDS CASTLE	Lieutenant Commander C F B HAMILTON, RN	17 May
HMS MINERVA	Commander S H G JOHNSON, RN	23 May
HMS PENELOPE	Commander P V RICKARD, RN	23 May
HMS PLYMOUTH	Captain D PENTREATH, DSO, RN	18 April
HMS SHEFFIELD	Captain J F T G SALT, RN	25 April
HMS YARMOUTH	Commander A MORTON, DSC, RN	25 April
<u>HM SUBMARINES</u>		
HMS CONQUEROR	Commander C L WREFORD-BROWN, DSO, RN	
HMS COURAGEOUS	Commander R T N BEST, RN	
HMS ONYX	Lieutenant Commander A P JOHNSON, RN	
HMS SPARTAN	Commander J B TAYLOR, RN	
HMS SPLENDID	Commander R C LANE-NOTT, RN	
HMS VALIANT	Commander T M le MARCHAND, RN	

SHIP

COMMANDING OFFICER

DATE PASSED 35° S
(see note)

EDATS TRAWLERS (taken up from Trade and Commissioned)

HMS CORDELLA	Lieutenant Commander M C G HOLLOWAY, RN	18 May
HMS FARNELLA	Lieutenant R J BISHOP, RN	18 May
HMS JUNELLA	Lieutenant M ROWLEDGE, RN	18 May
HMS NORTHELLA	Lieutenant J P S GREENOP, RN	18 May
HMS PICT	Lieutenant Commander D G GARWOOD, RN	18 May

ROYAL MARITIME AUXILIARY SERVICE

<u>SHIP</u>	<u>MASTER</u>
RMAS GOOSANDER	Captain A MacGREGOR
RMAS TYPHOON	Captain J N MORRIS

COMMANDER BRITISH FORCES SUPPORT UNIT, ASCENSION ISLAND

Captain R McQUEEN, CBE, RN

NOTE: Latitude 35° South delineates the start of the Argentinian coastline.

ROYAL MARINE UNITS

40 Commando Royal Marines
42 Commando Royal Marines
45 Commando Royal Marines
Commando Logistic Regiment Royal Marines
Headquarters and Signal Squadron 3 Commando Brigade Royal Marines
3 Commando Brigade Air Squadron Royal Marines
Air Defence Troop Royal Marines
1st Haiding Squadron Royal Marines
Special Boat Squadron
The Band of Her Majesty's Royal Marines Commando Forces
Y Troop Royal Marines

OFFICERS COMMANDING

Lieutenant Colonel M P J HUNT RM
Lieutenant Colonel N F VAUX DSO RM
Lieutenant Colonel A P WHITEHEAD DSO RM
Lieutenant Colonel I J HELLBERG OBE RCT
Major R C DIXON RM
Major C P CAMERON MC RM
Lieutenant I L DUNN RM
Captain F I J BAXTER RM
Major J J THOMSON OBE RM
Captain J M WARE LRAM RM
Captain G D CORBETT R SICS

ARMY UNITS

Two troops The Blues and Royals	Captain R A K FIELD RMC/D
1st Field Regiment Royal Artillery (Less one battery)	Lieutenant Colonel G A HOLT RA
12th Air Defence Regiment Royal Artillery (Less one battery)	Lieutenant Colonel M C BOWDEN RA
29th Commando Regiment Royal Artillery	Lieutenant Colonel M J HOLROYD-SMITH OBE R
Elements 43 Air Defence Battery, 32nd Guided Weapons Regiment Royal Artillery	Captain R C DICKEY RA
Elements 49th Field Regiment Royal Artillery	Major R T GWYN RA
Elements Royal School of Artillery Support Regiment	Major M H FALLON RA
Elements 33 Engineer Regiment	Captain B LLOYD RE
36 Engineer Regiment (Less one squadron)	Lieutenant Colonel G W FIELD MDE RE
Elements of 38 Engineer Regiment	Major R B HAWKEN RE
59 Independent Commando Squadron Royal Engineers	Major R MACDONALD RE
Elements Military Works Force	Lieutenant Colonel L J KENNEDY MBE RE
Elements 2 Postal and Courier Regiment Royal Engineers	Major I WINFIELD RE
Elements 14th Signal Regiment	Captain G D CORBET R SIGNALS
Elements 30th Signal Regiment	Major W K BUTLER R SIGNALS
5th Infantry Brigade Headquarters and Signals Squadron	Major M L FORGE R SIGNALS
Elements 602 Signal Troop	Warrant Officer II (Yeoman of Signals) J F CALVERT R SIGNALS
2nd Battalion Scots Guards	Lieutenant Colonel M I E SCOTT DSO SG
1st Battalion Welsh Guards	Lieutenant Colonel J F RICKETT CBE WG
1st Battalion 7th Duke of Edinburgh's Own Gurkha Rifles	Lieutenant Colonel D P de C MORGAN OBE 7GI

2nd Battalion The Parachute Regiment. Commanded in turn by

3rd Battalion The Parachute Regiment

Elements 22nd Special Air Service Regiment

656 Squadron Army Air Corps

Elements 17 Port Regiment Royal Corps of Transport

Elements 29 Transport and Movements Regiment Royal Corps of Transport

Elements 47 Air Despatch Squadron Royal Corps of Transport

407 Troop Royal Corps of Transport

Elements of The Joint Helicopter Support Unit

16 Field Ambulance Royal Medical Corps

Elements 19 Field Ambulance Royal Army Medical Corps

Elements 9 Ordnance Battalion Royal Army Ordnance Corps

81 Ordnance Company Royal Army Ordnance Corps

10 Field Workshop Royal Electrical and Mechanical Engineers

Elements 70 Aircraft Workshops Royal Electrical and Mechanical Engineers

Elements 160 Provost Company Royal Military Police

6 Field Cash Office Royal Army Pay Corps

a. Lieutenant Colonel H JONES VC OBE PA

b. Major C P B KEEBLE DSO PARA

c. Lieutenant Colonel D R CHAUNDLER PA

Lieutenant Colonel H W R PIKE DSO MBE PA

Lieutenant Colonel H M ROSE OBE COLDM GDS

Major C S SIDUN AAC

Lieutenant J G D LOWE RCT

Lieutenant D R BYRNE RCT

Major R C GARDNER RCT

Lieutenant J P ASH RCT

Corporal J ELLIOT RCT

Lieutenant Colonel J D A ROBERTS RAMC

Captain J T GRAHAM RAMC

Major R B P SMITH RAOC

Major G M A THOMAS RAOC

Major A D BALL REME

Staff Sergeant M J EMERY REME

Captain A K BARLEY RMP

Major R F CLARK RAPC

38 601 Tactical Air Control Party (Forward Air Controller)
39 602 Tactical Air Control Party (Forward Air Controller)
40 603 Tactical Air Control Party (Forward Air Controller)

Major M M HOWES RRW

Major A S HUGHES RWF

Flight Lieutenant G HAWKINS RAF

ROYAL AIR FORCE

UNIT

DETACHMENT COMMANDER/COMMANDING OFFICER

Senior Royal Air Force Officer
Ascension Island

Group Captain J S B Price CBE ADC RAF

FLYING SQUADRONS

1(F) Squadron Harrier GR3

Wing Commander F T Squire DFC AFC RAF

Detachments of:

10 Squadron VC 10

Wing Commander O G Bunn MBE RAF

18 Squadron Chinook HC1

Squadron Leader R U Langworthy DFC AFC RAF -

24 Squadron Hercules C1)

Squadron Leader M J Kempster RAF (4-17 Apr 82)

30 Squadron Hercules C1)

Squadron Leader J R D Morley RAF (18 Apr-11 May 82)

47 Squadron Hercules C1)

Squadron Leader N C L Hudson BA RAF (12 May -

70 Squadron Hercules C1)

23 Jul 82)

29 Squadron Phantom FGR2

Squadron Leader R W D Trotter RAF

42 Squadron Nimrod Mk 1

Wing Commander D L Baugh OBE RAF

44 Squadron Vulcan B2)

50 Squadron Vulcan B2)

Squadron Leader A C Montgomery RAF

101 Squadron Vulcan B2)

55 Squadron Victor K2)

Wing Commander D W Maurice-Jones RAF (18-21 Apr 82)

57 Squadron Victor K2)

Wing Commander A W Bowman MBE RAF (22 Apr 82)

120 Squadron Nimrod Mk 2)

201 Squadron Nimrod Mk 2)

Wing Commander D Emmerson AFC RAF

206 Squadron Nimrod Mk 2)

202 Squadron SAR Sea King

Flight Lieutenant M J Caryle RAF

ROYAL AIR FORCE REGIMENT

3 (Regiment) Wing Headquarters Unit)

15 (Regiment) Squadron Detachment)

Field Squadron)

Wing Commander T T Wallis RAF

63 (Regiment) Squadron (Rapier)

Squadron Leader I P G Loughborough RAF

ROYAL FLEET AUXILIARIES

RFA APPLELEAF
RFA BAYLEAF
RFA BLUE ROVER
RFA BRAMBLELEAF
RFA ENGADINE
RFA FORT AUSTIN
RFA FORT GRANGE
RFA RESOURCE
RFA OLMEDA
RFA OLNA
RFA PEARLEAF
RFA PLUMLEAF
RFA REGENT
RFA STROMNESS
RFA TIDEPPOOL
RFA TIDESPRING
SIR BEDIVERE
SIR GALAHAD
SIR GERAIN
SIR LANCELOT
SIR PERCIVALE
SIR TRISTRAM

MASTERS

Captain G P A MacDOUGALL, RFA
Captain A E T HUNTER, RFA
Captain J D RODDIS, RFA
Captain M S J FARLEY, RFA
Captain D F FREEMAN, RFA
Commodore S C DUNLOP, CBE, DSO, RFA
Captain D G M AVERILL, CBE, RFA
Captain B A SEYMOUR, RFA
Captain A P OVERBURY, OBE, RFA
Captain J A BAILEY, RFA
Captain J McCULLOCH, RFA
Captain R W M WALLACE, RFA
Captain J LOGAN, RFA
Captain J B DICKINSON, OBE, RFA
Captain J W GAFFREY, RFA
Captain S REDMOND, OBE, RFA
Captain P J McCARTHY, OBE, RFA
Captain P J G ROBERTS, DSO, RFA
Captain D E LAWRENCE, DSC, RFA
Captain C A PURTCHER-WYDENBRUCK, OBE, RFA
Captain A F PITT, DSC, RFA
Captain G R GREEN, DSC, RFA

SHIPS TAKEN UP FROM TRADEMASTERSSENIOR NAVAL OFFICERS

MV ALVEGA	Captain A LAZENBY	
MV ANCO CHARGER	Captain B HATTON	
MV ASTRONOMER	Captain H S BRADEN	Lieutenant Commander R GAINSFORD, RN
SS ATLANTIC CAUSEWAY	Captain M H C TWOMEY	Commander F P SEYMOUR, RN
SS ATLANTIC CONVEYOR	Captain I NORTH, DSC	Captain M G LAYARD, CBE, RN
MV AVELONA STAR	Captain H DYER	
MV BALDER LONDON	Captain K J WALLACE	
MV BALTIC FERRY	Captain E HARRISON	Lieutenant Commander G B WEBB, RN
MV BRITISH ENTERPRISE III	Captain D GRANT	Lieutenant Commander B E M REYNELL, RN
MV BRITISH AVON	Captain J W M GUY	
MV BRITISH DART	Captain J A N TAYLOR	
MV BRITISH ESK	Captain G BARBER	
MV BRITISH TAMAR	Captain W H HARE	
MV BRITISH TAY	Captain P T MORRIS	
MV BRITISH TEST	Captain T A OLIPHANT	
MV BRITISH TRENT	Captain P R WALKER	
MV BRITISH WYE	Captain D M RUNDELL, OBE	
SS CANBERRA	Captain W SCOTT-MASSON, CBE	Captain C P O BURNE, CBE, RN

IPS TAKEN UP FROM TRADEMASTERSSENIOR NAVAL OFFICERS

MV CEDARBANK	Captain R F WHITEHEAD	
MV CONTENDER BEZANT	Captain A MACKINNON	Lieutenant Commander D H N YATES, RN
MV ELK	Captain J P MORTON, CBE	Commander A S RITCHIE, OBE, RN
MV EUROPIC FERRY	Captain C J C CLARK, OBE	Commander A B GOUGH, RN
MV FORT TORONTO	Captain R I KINNIER	
MV G A WALKER	Captain E C METHAM	
MV GEESTPORT	Captain G F FOSTER	
CS IRIS	Captain G FULTON	Lieutenant Commander J BITHELL, RN
MT IRISHMAN	Captain W ALLEN	
MV LAERTES	Captain H T REID	
MV LYCAON	Captain H R LAWTON	Lieutenant Commander D J STILES, RN
MV MYRMIDON	Captain D MACLACHLAN	Lieutenant R SWAINE, RN
MV NORLAND	Captain M ELLERBY, CBE	Commander C J ESPLIN-JONES, OBE, RN
MV NORDIC FERRY	Captain R JENKINS	Lieutenant Commander M St J D A THORBURN, RN
RMS QUEEN ELIZABETH II	Captain P JACKSON	Captain N C H JAMES, RN
TEV RANGATIRA	Captain P LIDDELL	Commander D H LINES, RN
MV SAINT BRANDAN	Captain J McINTOSH	
MV SAINT EDMUND	Captain M J STOCKMAN	Lieutenant Commander A M SCOTT, RN

SHIPS TAKEN UP FROM TRADEMASTERSSENIOR NAVAL OFFICERS

RMS SAINT HELENA

Captain
M L M SMITH

MT SALVAGEMAN

Captain
A J STOCKWELL

MV SAPELE

Captain
A J MILMINE

MV SANDSHORE

Captain
A BAKE

MV SAXONIA

Captain
H EVANS

MV SCOTTISH EAGLE

Captain
A TERRAS

MV SHELL EBURNA

Captain
J C BEAUMONT

MV STENA INSPECTOR

Captain
D EDECaptain
P J STICKLAND, RN

MV STENA SEASPREAD

Captain
N WILLIAMSCaptain
P BADCOCK, CBE, RN

MV STRATHEWE

Captain
S T S HOUSEHOLDLieutenant Commander
R F HEWLAND, RN

MV TOR CALEDONIA

Captain
A SCOTTLieutenant Commander
J G DEVINE, RN

SS UGANDA

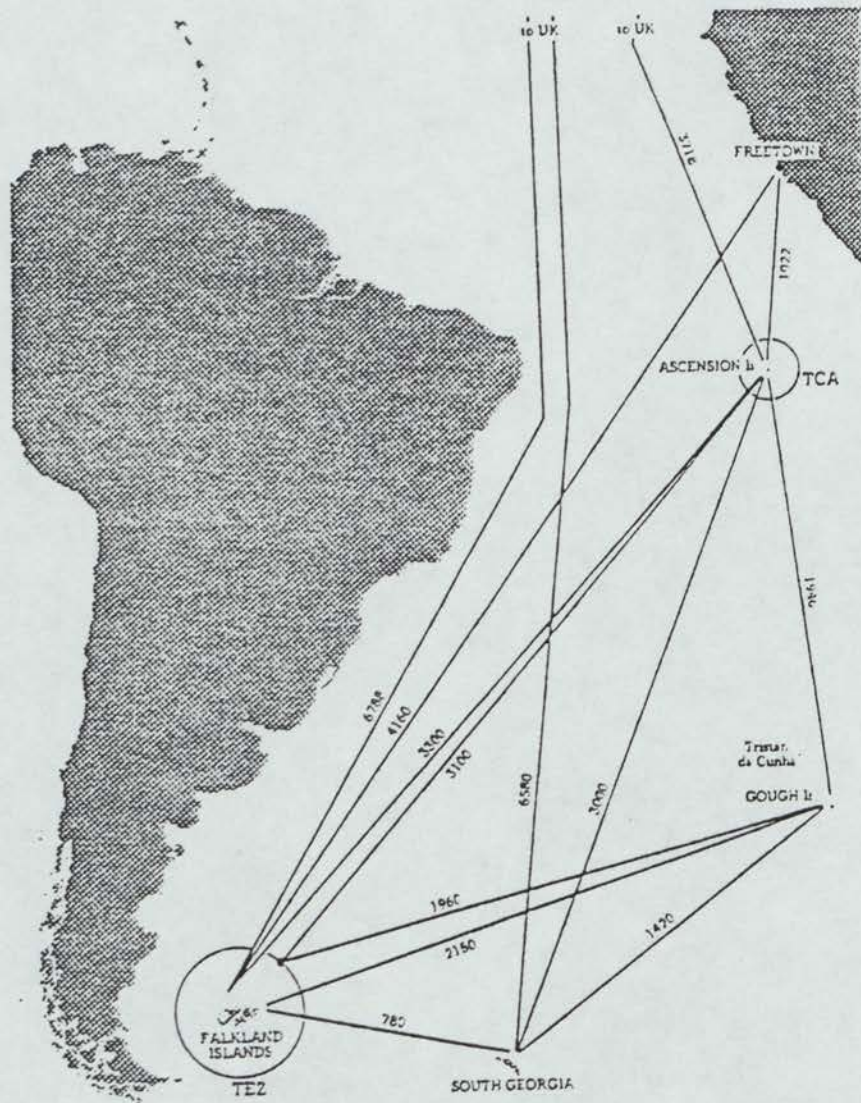
Captain
J G CLARKCommander
A B GOUGE, RNSenior Medical Officer:
Surgeon Captain
A J RINTOUL, RN

MV WIMPEY SEAHORSE

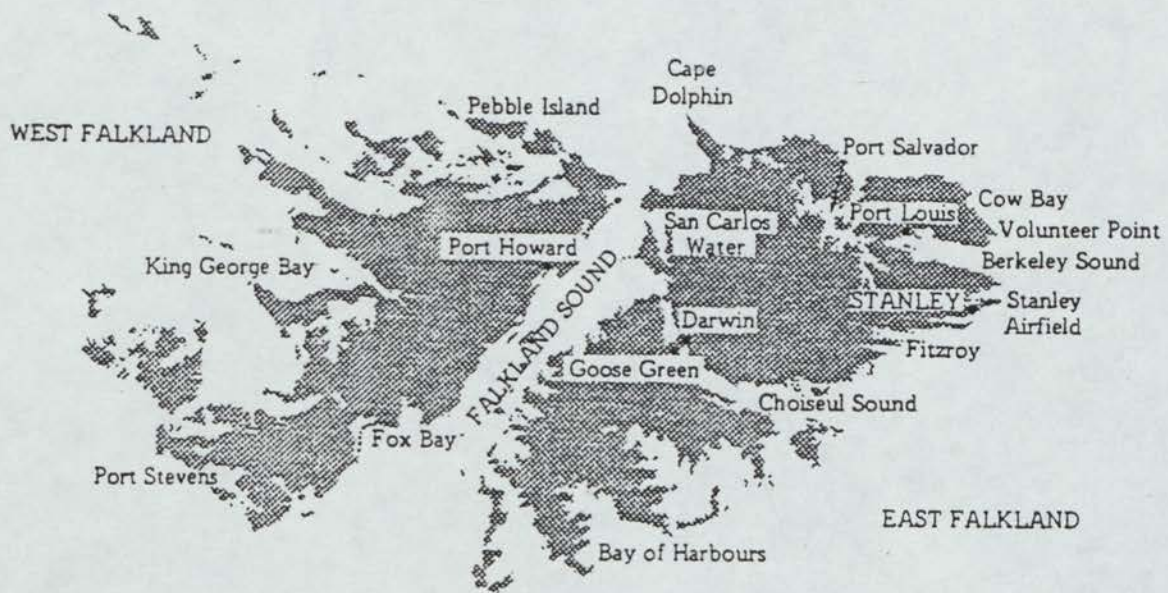
Captain
M SLACK, OBE

MT YORKSHIREMAN

Captain
P RIMMER



DISTANCES IN NAUTICAL MILES



27 JULY 1982

