

STATEMENT AT 0940 3 MAY

At about 4am London time today two armed Argentine patrol craft type naval auxiliaries fired on a Royal Navy Sea King from HMS Hermes. Two Royal Navy Lynx helicopters from ships of the Task Force then engaged the ships with missiles. One of the ships was sunk and the other was certainly damaged.

The engagement took place north of East Falkland and some 90 miles inside the TEZ. ~~Further~~ No damage to British helicopters has been reported. Further details will be given as soon as they become available.

FOR DEPRESSIVE USE

ADDITIONAL STATEMENT ON ENGAGEMENT WITH PATROL CRAFT

I am now able to give some additional information about the engagement (early this morning) (yesterday) in which British helicopters responded to attacks by 2 Argentine patrol craft on another helicopter. We described these vessels as "Argentine patrol type naval auxiliaries". We are now able to confirm that the vessels were armed ocean going tugs used by the Argentine Navy as patrol craft. One of these has provisionally been identified as the Alferes Sobral (listed in James Fighting Ships as being armed with 40mm and 20mm guns). I am not able to say whether it was the Alferes Sobral or the other vessel which was sunk.

Source:
DS11

Cleared By:

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3 MAY 1982

SB(A)

Jonathan

In the course of its duties within the Total Exclusion Zone around the Falkland Islands, HMS SHEFFIELD, a Type 42 destroyer, was attacked and hit late this afternoon by an Argentine missile. The ship caught fire, which spread out of control. When there was no longer any hope of saving the ship, the ship's company abandoned ship. All who abandoned her were picked up.

It is feared that there have been a number of casualties but we have no details of them yet. Next of kin will be informed first, as soon as details are received.

Further air operations were also conducted over the Falkland Islands today. The VULCAN attack on Port Stanley airfield carried out this morning was successful and the aircraft involved returned safely. In the course of Sea Harrier attacks, one of our aircraft was shot down. The pilot has been killed. His name will be announced after we have confirmation that his next of kin have been informed. All the other Sea Harriers returned safely.

The Task Force is continuing with its operations as planned.

A statement will be made in the House of Commons tomorrow when further details are known.

The organisation for informing next of kin as soon as the information is to hand is already set up and manned. Next of kin who are worried should contact their Royal Naval Information Centres whose number will already be known to next of kin of members of the Task Force.

Press enquiries should be directed to the casualty cell in this building whose numbers are: 01 218 3253 218 3254

The numbers of RN information centres are as follows:

Rosyth : Inverkeithing (0383) 412191

Faslane : Helensburgh (0436) 71125

Plymouth : Plymouth (0752) 666666

Portland : Portland (0305) 821547

Portsmouth : Portsmouth (0705) 827671

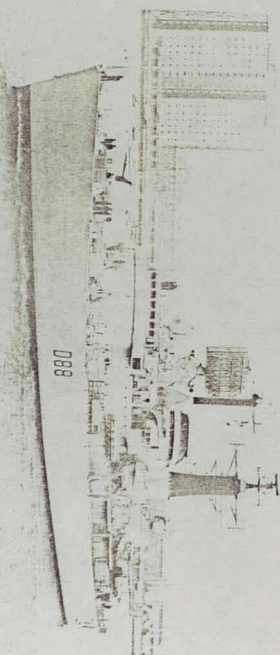
Chatham : Medway (0634) 812771

SHEFFIELD CLASS DESTROYERS (TYPE 42)

The primary role of this new class of guided missile destroyer is to provide air defence for task group operations. They are equipped with the Sea Dart air defence missile system, which also has a good anti-ship capability, and the new automatic rapid fire 114 mm (4.5 in) gun and anti-submarine torpedo tubes. They are equipped with the high speed multi-purpose Lynx helicopter which, in addition to carrying anti-submarine weapons, will also use the Sea Skua anti-surface ship missile when it comes into service. This missile will be controlled by the Sea Spray search radar now being fitted in the Lynx. The latest communication and sensor equipment is fitted in all ships of this class.

Powered by Rolls-Royce Olympus and Tyne gas turbine engines, the ships have controllable pitch propellers and are fitted with stabilisers. HMS *Sheffield*, *Birmingham*, *Cardiff*, *Coveントリー*, *Newcastle*, *Glasgow*, *Exeter* and *Southampton* are now in service. Six more are in various stages of construction and the last four of these have been increased in length and beam in order to provide additional space for future weapon fits.

Ships and pennant Nos.	When completed	Approximate standard displacement (tons)	Overall dimensions (feet) (metres)	Complement	Principal armament
Sheffield Class					
SHEFFIELD (080)	1974				
BIRMINGHAM (086)	1976				
CARDIFF (0108)	1979				
COVENTRY (0118)	1978	3,500	410	48	790
NEWCASTLE (087)	1978	3,560	410	48	
GLASGOW (088)	1979		125	14.6	
EXETER (089)	1980				
SOUTHAMPTON (090)	1980				
NOTTINGHAM (091)	1981				
LIVERPOOL (092)					
MANCHESTER (095)		3,800	450	50	280
GLoucester (096)			139	15.2	
EDINBURGH (097)		3,880			
YORK (098)					



HMS Glasgow

3 Move of the 5th Infantry Brigade

5 Infantry Brigade is being brought to short notice to move to the South Atlantic. The Brigade is stationed in the United Kingdom and is already earmarked for out of area (ie non-NATO) duties. We are requisitioning shipping (including QE2) to transport the Brigade and work to prepare the ships for this role is being put in hand.

Why extra troops?

- Only prudent when contemplating operations - of whatever kind - to have reserves available nearer the theatre.

Why QE2? X

- Speed, size, facilities make her uniquely suited to carry substantial number of troops who must be kept fit and ready for operations, should they be required.

Other ships?

- Two roll-on-roll-off ferries and a container ship to transport equipment and helicopters.

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STATEMENT TO BE MADE ON MONDAY 3 MAY

I do not normally comment on other people's statements and releases. But the degree and frequency of the fabrications coming from the Argentine directly or indirectly impell me to make some comment. The best comment is by illustration:

- (1) Some day's ago HMS Exeter according to the Argentines had been bombed, mined and sunk. The Ministry of Defence has confirmed that the ship in fact had not been involved in any military operation.
- (2) Long after the formal surrender of the Argentines on South Georgia, Buenos Aires persisted in describing the resistance there as still continuing. The Ministry of Defence authoritatively described that resistance as over.
- (3) Yesterday the Argentines claimed up to eleven Harriers had been shot down. The Ministry of Defence both authoritatively denied that any Task Force aircraft had been shot down. It was in fact hardly necessary for us to issue such a denial since correspondents aboard Hermes counted the planes flying off and coming back and reported immediately that there had been no losses.
- (4) The Argentines claimed that the Port Stanley airfield suffered only minimal damage during the raid yesterday. I understand their joint Chiefs of Staff described the position as 'a small fire caused by an exploding oil barrel'. This was distinctly different from the authoritative version that the Ministry of Defence had given. Although at present we are not able to provide you with a photograph of the runway (because these photographs are still on Hermes) a correspondent aboard that ship has seen the photographs and has confirmed that they show a badly damaged runway.

I could go on. My only point is that families and relatives of men aboard the Task Force may become worried by such reports from the Argentines. Particularly since on occasions in order to provide fully authenticated statements we have to check and re-check and that takes time. You can be sure that our reports are true and as complete as far as we can make them.



SJOTM

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