

STATEMENT BY SECRETARY OF STATE FOR DEFENCE, 13 JUNE 1982

Since my statement last night our forces have been consolidating their successful attack on the high ground to the West of Port Stanley. We now firmly hold Mount Longdon, Two Sisters and Mount Harriet all of which dominate the ground to the west of Stanley. Some 400 prisoners were captured together with considerable quantities of equipment, including mortars and anti-tank weapons.

The land operations were supported by Harrier attacks and Naval gun fire from ships of the Task Force. There was also a successful Vulcan attack on Port Stanley airport. These attacks made a major contribution to the success of our troops. However in the course of the bombardment, the destroyer HMS GLAMORGAN, was hit by enemy fire and nine members of the ships company were killed and seventeen injured. Next of kin have been informed. HMS GLAMORGAN sustained some damage but she remains operational and is continuing her activities in the Task Force. In further operations today an Argentine Patrol craft was detected, attacked and disabled by Sea Harriers from HMS INVINCIBLE.

It was important for the success of the land operation that the Argentinians were not able to assess exactly when, how, or in what strength we would attack. It is clear that the Argentinians greatly overestimated the extent of the casualties and damage resulting from their air attack on SIR TRISTRAM and SIR GALAHAD on Tuesday. We wished them to remain uncertain about our strength on the ground and our capability to mount an early attack. None of this of course delayed the notification of next of kin, all of whom have been informed.

Surprise was achieved in our operations and the progress made by British forces in their advance towards Port Stanley means that I can now give the official details of casualties from last Tuesday's attack. The Landing Ships were carrying large numbers of troops from the Welsh Guards and supporting units. Forty-three men died in the attack or are missing, presumed dead, forty-six men were wounded, and a number sustained minor injuries. There were also casualties among the crews of the Landing Ships. On SIR GALAHAD three officers and two members of the crew were killed and two officers and nine crew were injured. On the Landing Ship SIR TRISTRAM two members of the crew were killed. All the remainder of the crews are safe. The wounded are receiving treatment on board British hospital ships.

Our successes on the ground over the weekend mark another significant step to securing the complete and final withdrawal of Argentine forces from the Falkland Islands. There is some way still to go, but the outcome is not in doubt.