

FC 220A.



PSO
MA

Some interesting
stuff for quieter
reading.

26 Apr.

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See Distribution:

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OP CORPORATE - FALKLAND ISLANDS OPERATION

1. Attached is a SITREP on the major events concerning the Amphibious Force which have occurred since the Falkland Islands Operation was ordered on 2 April 1982. It covers events up until midnight on 15 April 1982.
2. It may be disseminated at all levels to those who need to know, but the security classification should be rightly observed and security aspects of all details of this operation should be stressed to all ranks. Security breaches could cause loss of life.
3. A future SITREP will be forwarded in due course.
4. Headquarters are requested to pass copies of this SITREP and this covering letter to Units (not committed to the operation) and Unit rear parties.

J M C Garrod
to J M C GARROD
Colonel
for CGRM

Enclosure:

1. SITREP - OPERATION CORPORATE - FALKLAND ISLANDS OPERATION

Distribution:

HQ Cdo Forces RM (15)
MGRM Cdo Forces (Tac) (3)
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CHIEF OF DEFENCE STAFF
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SITREPOPERATION CORPORATE - FALKLAND ISLANDS OPERATIONIntroduction

1. The dramatic events of the last two weeks have been momentous ones for the Corps. The operation may have only just started and much can happen between now and the return of the Amphibious Force to the United Kingdom. Inevitably events up to now will have been viewed by most Headquarters, Unit and individuals from their own personal stand point, and this Headquarters is no exception. It is felt however that you should be aware in broad outline of what has been achieved, and the following is therefore a summary of some of the main events that have taken place since 2 April 1982.

The Mounting

2. Following the landing of the Scrap Metal Merchants in Leith in South Georgia on 19th March the indications of an Argentinian invasion of the Falkland Islands gathered momentum. In the few days prior to 1 April 1982 a number of options for re-inforcing the Falkland Islands were considered in MCDUK. In general the force levels were low and the measures were covert. On 1 April the dispatch of a Commando Group was actively considered but it was not until the early hours of 2 April, when it was realised that an invasion was imminent, that the decisions to send 3 Commando Brigade RM was made. A signal was sent at 0223Z on 2 April which directed that 'A Task Force of two CVS, one LPD escorted by at least four destroyers/frigates and appropriate support is to be brought to immediate notice for operations. The Force is to be tasked to transport three Commando Groups and the Commando Brigade with Combat and Logistic back up to the South Atlantic.'

3. From this moment the hot planning encompassed every aspect of amphibious operations, and these diverse and closely related activities included the following:

a. Amphibious Lift. Apart from HMS FEARLESS and a limited lift available in HMS HERMES, every other troop lift capability in RN and RFA shipping in the Task Force was utilised. As luck would have it, four of the six LSLs were available within two days of UK, and SIR TRISTRAM was available in Belize. (The sixth, SIR BEDIVERE, is at present returning to UK from Central America). In view of the likelihood of a prolonged deployment and the weather in the South Atlantic, an early decision was made not to embark any ships at overload. As the composition of the Brigade grew with the addition of extra vital combat and logistic support, and the decision made on 3 April that 3 Para Bn Gp should join the Brigade, so the requirement

for Commercial Shipping became clearer. RMS CANBERRA was selected to provide the extra troop lift requirement, and a number of RO-RO ships were examined to meet the extra freight and vehicle bill. SS ELK was selected as the latter, as she was the only readily available ship that met the necessary criteria in terms of capacity, compatibility of ramp with mexeflot, RAS capability, range and convertability for helicopters. You will by now know of the remarkable work that was carried out to convert these ships in the time available. HQ Commando Forces Mounting Meeting was held on 4 April and the Loading Table was distributed on 5 April.

b. Forces Available. On 2 April, the majority of 3 Commando Brigade units were in UK. 42 Commando RM were on Easter Leave and Y Company, 45 Commando RM were in Brunei on Exercise CURRY TRAIL. 42 Commando's recall plan worked well and Y Company were recovered from Brunei on 6 April, and with Z Company flew to Ascension on 13 April to join SIR TRISTRAM which had been diverted there from Belize. Apart from the addition of 3 Para Bn Gp, a number of other UKLF units were added to the Force to supplement the Brigade's Combat and Logistic Support. The more significant additions were an AD Bty (Rapier) and two Recce Tps, RHG/D (SCORPION and SCIMITAR). A breakdown of units to ships is at Annex A. Only major units have been shown, other smaller but no less important units and sub-units have been spread amongst the amphibious and RFA shipping. What is immediately obvious is the wide dispersal of the Landing Force, and the way in which all available space has been utilised. Special Forces units, including SBS have not been shown, under this classification.

c. Logistics.

(1) WMR

(a) The signal directing that the War Maintenance Reserve assault packs were to be outloaded was sent at 0715 hours on 2 April. The MOD directed the Army and RN depots, where the WMR was located ashore, and the dockyards at Plymouth and Rosyth, to work around the clock in order to load the Packs as quickly as possible. (The significance of this was that these depots and dockyards are manned by Civilians. Marchwood, on the other hand, and which was also used, is manned by Servicemen). The loading was completed by the evening of Mon 5 Apr 82.

(b) The following facts are interesting:

(1) Six WMR packs were loaded (those of 3 Cdo Bde HQ & Sig Sqn RM/ Cdo Log Regt RM, 40, 42 and 45 Cdos RM, a spare Cdo Pack and 3 Para's) plus first line scales of the armoured recce troop (RHD/G) and the Rapier AD Bty (T Bty 12 AD Regt).

(ii) The contents (ammunition, weapons, rations, vehicles, clothing, radios, spare parts, POL) of the RM packs were spread between: CROMBIE (near Rosyth); KINETON (Warwickshire); BICESTER (Oxfordshire); LONGTOWN (Cumbria); ERNESETTLE and WRANGATON (near Plymouth); DONNINGTON (Shropshire) and LLANGENACH (South Wales). The packing, moving and loading of the WMR packs from these locations on to the ships in only three days was therefore a considerable achievement by all the civilians and servicemen involved. It should also be remembered that in "normal" circumstances, it is planned to take seven days to load the WMR into ships.

(iii) The total weight of the WMR packs loaded was in excess of 5000 tonnes.

(iv) The packs were loaded into the following ships:

RESOURCE (approximately one whole pack)

STROMNESS (approximately one whole pack)

LSLs GALAHAD, PERCIVALE, GERAINT and LANCELOT (four packs were spread amongst these ships).

ELK (3 Para's WMR and the first line scales of RHG/D and T Bty 12 AD Regt).

(v) The WMRs were embarked at the following ports:

Devonport

Marchwood

Rosyth

(vi) Unfortunately the final ship to be loaded, ELK, bulked out, leaving 290 tonnes of ammunition in Marchwood. However, this is to be loaded with REGENT, to join the Task Force later. Its late arrival should not be of any detriment to the Landing Force should it have to land without it. This is because, effectively, there is a spare Cdo WMR pack.

(2) Rations. The WMR pack contain 30 days worth of rations to sustain the Landing Force ashore. However, a further 26 days (10 man compo and 24 hour ration packs) are also available afloat.

(3) Vehicles and Fuel. As there are at most, 50 km worth of road or motorable tracks in the Falkland Islands, 3 Cdo Bde RM has only taken about one fifth of its vehicles. These have been supplemented by 77 BV 202s from the UK stockpile, and it is hoped they will provide some cross-country mobility. In HMS FEARLESS, HMS HERMES and RFA BLUE ROVER, there is approximately 70,000 gallons of petrol for use by the vehicles of the Landing Force. In view of the dearth of roads and small number of vehicles this fuel should last almost indefinitely! (Though it is hoped that this will not be necessary).

Deployment of the Force

4. The deployment of the force was, inevitably, spread over a number of days. HMS HERMES and the LSLs SIR LANCELOT and SIR PERCIVALE sailed on 5 April, HMS FEARLESS and LSLs SIR GALAHAD and SIR GERAIN on 6 April and the CANBERRA and ELK on 9 April. The remainder of the ships and RFAs containing elements of the embarked force also sailed over this period. It is worth noting that the majority of the embarkation was completed in 3½ days from a no-notice standing start, when the planning figure for NATO operations is 7 days with a period of warning time.

Events in the Falkland Islands and South Georgia

5. The defence of the Falkland Islands and South Georgia against the Argentinian invasion by members of the old and new NPs 8901 and HMS ENDURANCE has been widely reported in the Press with varying degrees of inaccuracy. To set the record straight an account of the action in and around Port Stanley, prepared from the debriefs of the two NP 8901 OCs is at Annex B. Details of the action in South Georgia are harder to ascertain. It has however been confirmed that the anti-tank fire by the defenders inflicted considerable damage to an Argentinian Corvette, a PUMA helicopter was damaged, possibly destroyed, and some seven Argentinians were killed. The whereabouts of the South Georgia defenders and the stay behind party in the Falkland Island, all of whom were captured by the Argentinians, is the cause of much concern. Strenuous efforts have been made by the FCO and the International Red Cross to confirm their well being and location, and to secure their early release. All to no avail. These efforts will continue, but their early release will inevitably hinge on any future military action.

HMS INTREPID

6. At the start of the operation, most of the manpower of HMS INTREPID had been dispersed, the Landing Craft moved to RM Poole, and much de-storing had taken place. CINCFLEET ordered INTREPID to be brought forward on 6 April and by 8 April the Amphibious Detachment, Assault Squadron and the ABU were ready to re-join the

ship. INTREPID was re-commissioned on 15 April and will be worked up by 24 April, a remarkable achievement considering she was at 30 days notice.

Hospital Ships

7. CANBERRA. Once her troops have disembarked (those from 40 and 42 Cdos RM and 3 Para), CANBERRA will become a hospital ship. She has two RN Surgical Support Teams embarked, consisting of surgeons, ward staff and 30 nurses, and the Band of HQ Cdo Forces, RM, which will act as stretcher bearers.

8. UGANDA. Having completed her conversion in Gibraltar on 19 April (which will include the fitting of a RAS capability, a helicopter flight deck and the addition of Red Cross Livery), UGANDA will join the Task Force as the second hospital ship. She too, will have a Surgical Team embarked, and the Band of FOF 3, which will act as stretcher bearers.

Command

9. As the operation gathered momentum, it was clear that RM and amphibious advice was required at various levels of RN operational command. To this end, Col R F Preston (COS HQ Cdo Forces RM) flew to Ascension on 13 April to act as Military Advisor to FOF 1 (Rear Adm Woodward), CTG 317.0 who is flying his flag in HMS GLAMORGAN, and MGRM Cdo Forces moved with a small staff to Northwood to act as Military Deputy to CINCFLEET. His staff are now known as MGRM Cdo Forces (TAC) Northwood.

User Trials

10. The crisis has, perhaps fortunately, precipitated the following possible 'user trials':

a. LLAD GPMG. 36 GPMGs will be fitted in the LLAD role on the LSLs and RFAs.

b. APDS Round. RHD/G have been issued with 400 new 30 mm APDS rounds which are still on trial. These can, reputedly, defeat \surd all known armour.

c. SNEBS. 3 Cdo Bde Air Sqn RM has been issued with 14 SNEB Launchers which fire 2" rockets. 350 rockets have been issued to the Sqn by the RAF. The launchers will be fitted to the Gazelle helicopters.

d. I Band Transponders

(1) The RN Helicopters use I Band Transponders which enable their parent ship to locate them in bad weather and fog, and then guide them back to the ship. The Bde Air Sqn has borrowed 15 of these to

fit to its Gazelle and Scout helicopters. As the transponders are currently fitted to Wasps only a few modifications are necessary to fit them to Scouts. However, fitting them to Gazelles was a new venture. Modifications were carried out at RNAS CULDROSE (HMS OSPREY) with the loan of an Army Gazelle. The equipment, complete with fitting instructions were then flown out to Ascension Island, to join the Task Force there.

(2) This episode exemplifies the enormous and generous assistance the RN and Army have given the RM in mounting this operation.

e. GPMG Mounts for Gazelles. A total of six cabin mountings for GPMGs in Gazelles, still on trial, were flown to Ascension for use by 3 Cdo Bde Air Sqn.

f. Electronic Warfare. A number of highly sophisticated EW radio sets were purchased for use by 3 Cdo Bde RM, and are fitted in vehicles. The vehicles and crews have also been flown to Ascension to join the Force.

The Future

11. The Amphibious Task Group arrives off Ascension on 19 April, where stores and men flown from UK will embark. Some juggling of the Force Loading will take place and training and live firings of most weapons are planned. Meanwhile the Strike Group will proceed South. The future is hard to predict. Whatever the outcome, a difficult, challenging, and dangerous task could lie ahead for the Amphibious Force. Meanwhile this Headquarters and other Formation Headquarters and Units will continue with operational and support planning for the Operation which will cover such diverse subjects as the provision of replacement WMR and policy on Battle Casualty Replacements and Prisoners of War.

OUTLINE FORCE LOADING

1. The Outline Force Loading is shown below. This may be altered as the Force proceeds South. Not all minor combat and logistic support units have been shown.

a. HMS HERMES

Rifle Coy 40 Cdo RM

845/846 NAS

SST

b. HMS FEARLESS

HQ & Sigs Sqn RM

Elms 846 NAS

3 Cdo Bde Air Sqn RM (-)

Y Tp

c. SIR LANCELOT

Cdo Log Regt RM (-)

Flt 3 Cdo Bde Air Sqn RM

Air Def Tp

AOD/AWD

d. SIR GALAHAD

59 Cdo Sqn RE

HQ & Sigs Sqn RM (-)

1 RSRM

3 Cdo Bde Air Sqn RM (-)

e. SIR PERCIVALE

29 Cdo Regt (-)

HQ Coy 45 Cdo RM

Tp 59 Cdo Sqn RE

Flt 3 Cdo Bde Air Sqn RM

f. SIR TRISTRAM

45 Cdo RM (-)

148 FO Bty (-)

g. SIR GERAINTE

29 Cdo Regt RA (-)

Flt 3 Cdo Bde Air Sqn RM

Bty 12 AD Regt

/h. STROMNESS.....

ANNEX B
IN SUPPORT OF CONVOY
DATED 5 April 1982

STROMNESS

45 Cdo RM (-)
Logistic Elms

j. RESOURCE

Coy 45 Cdo RM
M & AW Cadre
Elms 845/846 NAS

k. TIDESPRING

Elms 845 NAS

l. CANBERRA

40 Cdo RM (-)
42 Cdo RM (-)
3 Para
Cdo Forces Band
Med Sqn
2 x SST

m. ELK

2 Tps RHD/G

ANNEX B
to SITREP OP CORPORATE
DATED 15 April 1982

MILITARY ACTION - FALKLAND ISLANDS - 2 APRIL 1982

INTRODUCTION

1. The following is a summary of a debrief carried out on the return of the two NPs 8901 to UK.

PREAMBLE

2. Majors Norman and Noott were given a warning order of the likelihood of an imminent Argentine invasion by HE the Governor of the Falkland Islands at 1530 (local) on Thursday 1 April. At this stage the Naval Parties were half way through their administrative handover.

3. Ranks were recalled and briefed and Major Noott sent a Sitrep to CINCFLEET.

4. The Naval Parties then proceeded to prepare defence positions, on the basis that the invasion was likely to start with an amphibious assault onto a particular beach north of the airfield suitable for landing craft and this would be accompanied by a helicopter assault onto the airfield, and ships entering the harbour through the narrows. The Governor was keen to avoid house to house fighting in Port Stanley and so sections prepared positions on the narrow approach route from the beach/ airfield area into Port Stanley. Sections had orders to open fire on advancing troop, causing them to deploy; when they were pressed to leap-frog back to Port Stanley. (Rapid extraction from a defence position is difficult due to the terrain, which does not take a landrover. One route required a motor cycle and the prepositioning of a canoe). Other sections prepared positions across other axes to Port Stanley, and one section was placed at the point of the Isthmus overlooking the narrows into the harbour.

5. Overnight preparations continued and MFV FOREST made two sorties in order to carry out radar sweeps. The likely beach which was suitable for landing craft was wired and the airfield blocked by oil drums and airfield vehicles. The lighthouse light was extinguished. Defence positions were occupied from 0200, 2 April. Major Norman made himself responsible for the conduct of the defence out on the ground, Major Noott with his knowledge of the whole area was responsible for controlling re-deployment from the Ops Room, and advising HE The Governor, who he knew well after one year in post.

THE ASSAULT

6. In the event the first indication of assault was 020605 (first light being 0630) when explosions and firings were reported at Moody Brook Camp (which was empty of men who had all deployed). Ten minutes later at 0615 a direct assault

was launched onto Government House from the South. These attacks were launched by a company plus of SAS Style commandos who may have been landed to the South by landing craft or helicopter, with the intention of neutralising the garrison at Moody Brook, and at the same time seizing the seat of Government. At the latter a determined attack was pressed using stun grenades and heavy firing, and repulsed, leaving three wounded between 10 and 20 yards from the residence (two of whom died later). During the attack there was a lot of shouting "bring out Mr Hunt".

7. As soon as the initial attack on Moody Brook had occurred Major Norman, alive to the possibility of rapid capture of Government House, decided to order back numbers 1 and 5 Sections from the area of the airfield and approach road, to thicken up the defence at the residence, believing this to be the vital requirement.

8. At 0635 Amtracks were reported moving over the beach adjacent to the one wired, and 10 minutes later helicopters were reported to be landing at the airport.

9. Around Government House the enemy continued their sniping tactics, shooting when they could observe movement, while Major Norman re-organised the defence. The impression was that as the initial assault had failed, the company around the residence were now prepared to "sit it out" and await the arrival of the Amtracks from the beach. The Governor has remarked at this stage that there were no RM casualties, because field craft was good and Argentinian marksmanship obviously inaccurate.

10. The number of APCs moving towards Port Stanley built up to 12, armed with 13mm cannon. The leading APC was engaged by the section at Look Out Rocks on the edge of the tow, who fired an 84mm round at the front of the APC and a 66mm round at the rear. The APC halted, no-one emerged and the remainder of the APCs withdrew and debouched their troops, whom the Section then engaged with GPMG. This Section then moved back to consolidate at the residency, having to fight their way back through some commandos in the town.

11. At 0830 the Governor decided to institute negotiations with the Argentinian VC Commandarie (the controller of Argentine air transport in the Falkland Islands) whom he knew and this lead eventually to the final negotiations with Admiral Bussor who was brought to the residency. The Governor's attitude had been robust from the start, however the factor that weighed most heavily on his mind was the arrival of the armed vehicles with cannon, and the prospect of unnecessary loss of life amongst local civilian and amongst service personnel.

12. Throughout this half hour of negotiations firing continued, as the surrounded troops were tending to creep forward. Major Noott at this stage forced an entry into a room, disarmed and took prisoner three commandos of the assault, who had got into the servants' quarters.

13. Major Norman advised the Governor at this time that he had three courses of action: he could with the Marines break out of the residency and move to another area personifying the continuation of the British Government; the Garrison could continue to fight from the residency which the Garrison were most prepared to do; or they could arrange a truce. The Governor's decision which he has expressed on television was that because of the threat of cannon to civilians and the Garrison he should carry out a truce. The attitude of the Garrison and the Marines to this order has been described as generally "fed up", however, they respected the Governor, and believed his decision in retrospect was a sound one. At 0925 HE The Governor of the Falkland Islands ordered Major Norman, the OCRM NP 8901 to order his Marines to lay down their arms. They did so.

14. During the action the detachment had fired 6,00 rounds. They believe they killed five and wounded 17 with a possibility of a further ten dead or wounded in the hit APC.

THE GET AWAY PARTY

15. Before the action Major Noott had prepared two sections including himself, with a rucksack to make a get away in the event of an invasion to act as a stay behind surveillance party in accordance with a section in CINCFLEET's Op order. However because of the threat to the residency, these two sections had become involved in the defence of the residency, and had been surrounded.

16. Ten minutes before ceasefire Major Norman made the decision to order Cpl York and 5 Section on the point of the Isthmus (the only section to be detached at this stage from the residency) to carry out this role. They acknowledged an order to "go to ground" on the radio. On a subsequent radio check they were out of communication. Unfortunately this section started off with several disadvantages, having been at the Island for only 2 days, they did not know the country, nor were they in possession of the prepared survival rucksacks.

TREATMENT OF PRISONERS

17. Major Norman has said that the Garrison was treated with respect and cordiality by the commandos. The treatment by the hands of the 2nd Marine Battalion was less pleasant, and it was at this stage that they were forced to lie on the ground with their arms above their heads.