



Defence Staff

39

MINISTRY OF DEFENCE

Main Building, Whitehall, London SW1A 2HB

Telephone (Direct Dialling) 01-218 3353

(Switchboard) 01-218 9000

2038/1

Contre Amiral M J L Mosneron-Dupin
Armed Forces and Naval Attache
French Embassy
58 Knightsbridge
London SW1

25 May 1932

Dear Michel

Although by now a little out of date
I enclose, again for you personally, a copy
of the second letter which CDS has sent to
General Lacaze.

It was written just before the current
phase of operations began and I have no doubt
that if General Lacaze would find a further
letter useful at some later date, CDS would
be happy to send one.

Best Wishes

*Yours ever
Kend.*

Enc

Initial:

W/CDS
SCD303
F. C. C.



MINISTRY OF DEFENCE

MAIN BUILDING WHITEHALL LONDON SW1A 2HD

Telephone 01-216 4411 (Direct Dialling)

01-216 9000 (Switchboard)



CHIEF OF THE DEFENCE STAFF

PERSONAL

2058/1

Monsieur le General d'Armee J Lacaze
Chief of the Defence Staff
14 Rue St. Dominique
Paris 7ème
France

21st May 1982

My dear General:

I thought it timely to write again and follow up my letter dated 4th May 1982.

On the diplomatic front, you will appreciate that both the Haig initiative, and its successor sponsored by the Peruvians, foundered on the rocks of Argentinian intransigence and prevarication. The UK Government has been clear in its preference to solve this dispute peacefully, and equally clear that it will not meekly accept the fact of Argentine aggression. The Argentines must withdraw their forces completely from the Falklands and the former administration of the Islands must be restored, before we are prepared to negotiate any new status for the Falkland Islands - a status which would of course have to take account of the interests of the local population. It now seems that the UN Secretary-General's latest initiative has met a similar fate to its predecessors and for precisely the same reasons.

For our part, the Ministry of Defence has sought to present the Government with a clear range of military options for increasing pressure on the Argentines in support of the diplomatic efforts. Our Task Force has steadily tightened its control of the Total Exclusion Zone around the Falkland Islands, and the pressure on the beleaguered garrison is now taking effect. We are in a position to mount harassing raids whenever and wherever we like; we could extend these to a full-scale landing; and we can continue for some time to enforce the isolation of the

Task Force in the Falklands.

ORIGINAL:

1/2058
2-216 1

by the Argentinian Air Force, which we by no means understate and which I believe is holding itself back for a major attack if to attempt a landing. Their Navy has proved unenterprising so far and they must be worried about the safety of their CVA against our SSN threat. But I remain concerned about their two German-built submarines.

In my last letter I briefly mentioned the sinking of the GENERAL BELGRANO on 2 May, about which there has been criticism in the international Press. Although the cruiser was outside the Total Exclusion Zone at the time of our attack, our ships had been attacked by aircraft on the previous day and we had unmistakable evidence that the BELGRANO had orders to attack our Task Force as part of a co-ordinated operation. You will know that the capability of modern weapons dictates no delay in getting in the first shot, and so HMS CONQUEROR took an opportunity to hit the cruiser with two torpedoes, one forward and one aft. The subsequent loss of so many Argentine sailors could have been avoided if her two escorts had given assistance instead of leaving the stricken ship. By the time they returned the cruiser had sunk.

You will have gathered that the ASMs launched from the LYNX helos against the armed and hostile Argentine patrol craft were SEA SKUA's and not your AS12s. This was the first operational firing of the UK missiles and you may have seen the damage caused to the bridge area in recent Argentine TV film. Details of the vessel sunk have not been released by the Argentinian Authorities.

The 4th of May was not a good day for us. One of the EXOCET missiles launched from Super Etendard aircraft, flying at low-level and not detected in time, hit HMS SHEFFIELD amidships six feet above the water line. The ensuing fire, enhanced by the unspent rocket fuel, spread out of control. The ship's firemain had been fractured, and after four hours the ship was abandoned due to the dangers of explosion. The final death toll was 29. After 6 days afloat and 2 days under tow towards South Georgia for detailed examination of damage caused by EXOCET, HMS SHEFFIELD sank in bad weather.

We also lost a Sea Harrier during an attack on Goose Green airfield. It is possible that the pilot ran into the debris from his leader's weapons (3x105 cluster bombs). He or she saw no gun or missile fire. Two days later we lost a further two Sea Harriers whilst they were investigating a contact at low level in poor visibility. This was without doubt an accident.

On 8/9 May we began night bombardment of Argentine troop positions using 4.5 inch guns and on the 9th we shot down a PUEBLO helicopter with a Sea Hawk from one of our escorts. You will be aware of the KILKIL incident when we warned and then boarded an Argentine vessel which was engaged in intelligence gathering. The operation orders which were captured and the presence of a naval officer confirmed our own certain knowledge of the vessel's intelligence mission. Argentina has also been using Air Force Boeing 707s for long-range maritime reconnaissance to good effect and I believe we are right to declare those aircraft as hostile. So far however we have not managed to catch one as they carry out their surveillance at too great a stand-off distance.

On 11 May one of our frigates caught an Argentine supply ship running fuel between East and West Falklands. The frigate engaged with guns and the supply ship blew up; we believe it was carrying a large quantity of aviation fuel. It was two days before the Argentines admitted the loss of this vessel.

The next day a Type 22 frigate and a destroyer closed Port Stanley to conduct Naval Gunfire Support and to interdict air reconnaissance. They were attacked by a wave of Skyhawks. The aircraft were engaged by SEA WOLF; two were destroyed and one flew into the sea whilst evading. A second wave of aircraft launched a bomb which passed straight through the destroyer's hull horizontally without exploding: a lucky escape! A further Skyhawk was downed by Argentine fire from the shore; we think this may be evidence of the deployment of a ROLAND missile system.

We have lost two SEA KING helos due to mechanical failure. Considering the high intensity flying in very severe weather this is not a bad record, but it emphasises that time is not on our side. The night raid on Pebble Bay was conducted using helicopters with supporting naval gunfire. Six PUCARAS, 1 SEPRAY, 4 light aircraft and a quantity of ammunition were destroyed. There were only two minor British casualties. The past three days have been relatively quiet.

A mention of prisoners. Those from South Georgia have been repatriated except for Captain Astiz and we are still making up our minds what to do with him. We considered him as a prisoner of war until the end of hostilities, but I am afraid the Geneva Convention prohibits his release to a third party.

The Soviets have used 2 BEAR D aircraft and one AN-124P to and various Satellites for gathering information on our activities. So far they have not interfered.

I will try to keep you up-to-date as much as I can, and look forward to our next meeting in July. I would like to think the immediate crisis will have subsided by then, but we shall have much work to do to assess its inevitable far-reaching implications for the Alliance and for our own defence policy.

With all good wishes

Yours sincerely
Lawrence Harvey