

# British destroyer crippled in new air attack

By David Cross and Henry Stanhope

A Type 42 destroyer was badly damaged and in difficulty after another attack by Argentine aircraft yesterday afternoon, Mr John Nott, the Secretary of State for Defence, announced last night. The stricken ship was of the same type as the Sheffield — the first British vessel to be sunk in the Falklands crisis. She was expected to sink within hours.

Rescue operations were under way last night alongside the stricken vessel, while in London, although no figures were being given for the number of casualties

suffered by the destroyer, next of kin were already being informed.

At least three of Britain's remaining 10 type 42 destroyers are known to be with the task force: HMS Glasgow, HMS Coventry and HMS Cardiff.

The type 42s are all based in Portsmouth. The Sheffield was the first to be launched in 1971 and the last three launched were HMS Nottingham, Liverpool and Manchester in 1980. Three more, laid down in 1979 to 80, are still being built.

Speaking on Independent Television News, Mr Nott said that information about the attack was still coming in

and he would not disclose details of the ship or any casualties.

But, he said, the attack on ships of the task force had been major and the news was bad. The British forces had been expecting a major raid to mark Argentina's National Day.

Asked whether he had expected the damage sustained by the task force to date, Mr Nott said that he had known the whole operation would be hazardous since the fleet set sail. With 100 ships and 25,000 troops involved there were bound to be casualties. But Britain was fighting for freedom and democracy against unpro-

voled aggression and must "stick to it".

Mr Nott conceded that the Argentine pilots whose aircraft had attacked the British forces had shown great bravery. More than 50 fixed-wing aircraft had been shot down and this represented a tremendous loss to the Argentine Navy and Air Force.

Asked about British losses, Mr Nott said that the arrival of more ships during the past 48 hours had more than compensated for these. He expected that now that the bridgehead had been established on the Falklands, the level of military activity would build up "fairly quick-

ly and fairly soon". But before the Union Jack flew once again over Port Stanley, as he was confident it would, there were likely to be further losses.

The news of damage to a fourth British ship — there was speculation last night that the attack took place in Falkland Sound — followed the announcement by the British Defence Ministry of the shooting down of another three Argentine aircraft by the British forces in two other incidents.

The ministry said the aircraft were Skyhawk bombers, but reporters who witnessed one of the attacks

described at least one of the aircraft as a Mirage.

In an interview with Michael Nicholson of ITN, a British serviceman described how he used a machine gun to shoot down the Mirage. "As the aircraft came straight over the ship we aimed all the guns straight over the side so that the aircraft would have to go through a blaze of bullets," the serviceman said. "We saw the bullets strike the underneath of the Mirage, which then later poured smoke and crashed into the hillside".

Describing the same attack, Nicholson said that the pilot was picked up within minutes and given hospital

treatment. "He was a young pilot. He was badly injured and obviously in a great deal of pain", he said. "He was badly cut and had a broken leg".

Meanwhile Royal Navy and RAF Harriers carried out yet another attack on the runway and military installations at Port Stanley and returned unscathed — despite a report by the official news agency in Buenos Aires that two had been brought down by gunfire.

The light cruiser Bristol is said to have arrived along with other frigates and destroyers to reinforce the task force. At least one frigate with Sea Wolf anti-missile missiles is understood to be among them.

● With a compliment of 280 men, the Type 42 has a displacement of between 3,500 to 3,560 tons and a speed of 29 knots.

The Glasgow has already suffered damage during the Falklands operation: in the early air attacks it was hit by a bomb, believed to be 1,000 lb, which failed to explode.

The Type 42 destroyer has been criticized in the past for being under-armed. Designed mainly to accommodate the Sea Dart area defence missile which can be used against aircraft and ships, its other weapons are a 4.5in Vickers gun, two 20mm Oerlikon guns and a Lynx mark 2 helicopter.

Because they are all equipped with high-altitude long-range weapons and radar systems, Type 42s are often used as pickets, standing away from the main ships in which role they are especially vulnerable from low-flying aircraft.

● A reporter with the task force in San Carlos Water writes in a pooled dispatch: The supply ships continued today to bring in supplies vital to the British forces on the beachhead; but one formation of Skyhawks broke through the screen provided by Harriers based on the carriers Hermes and Invincible.

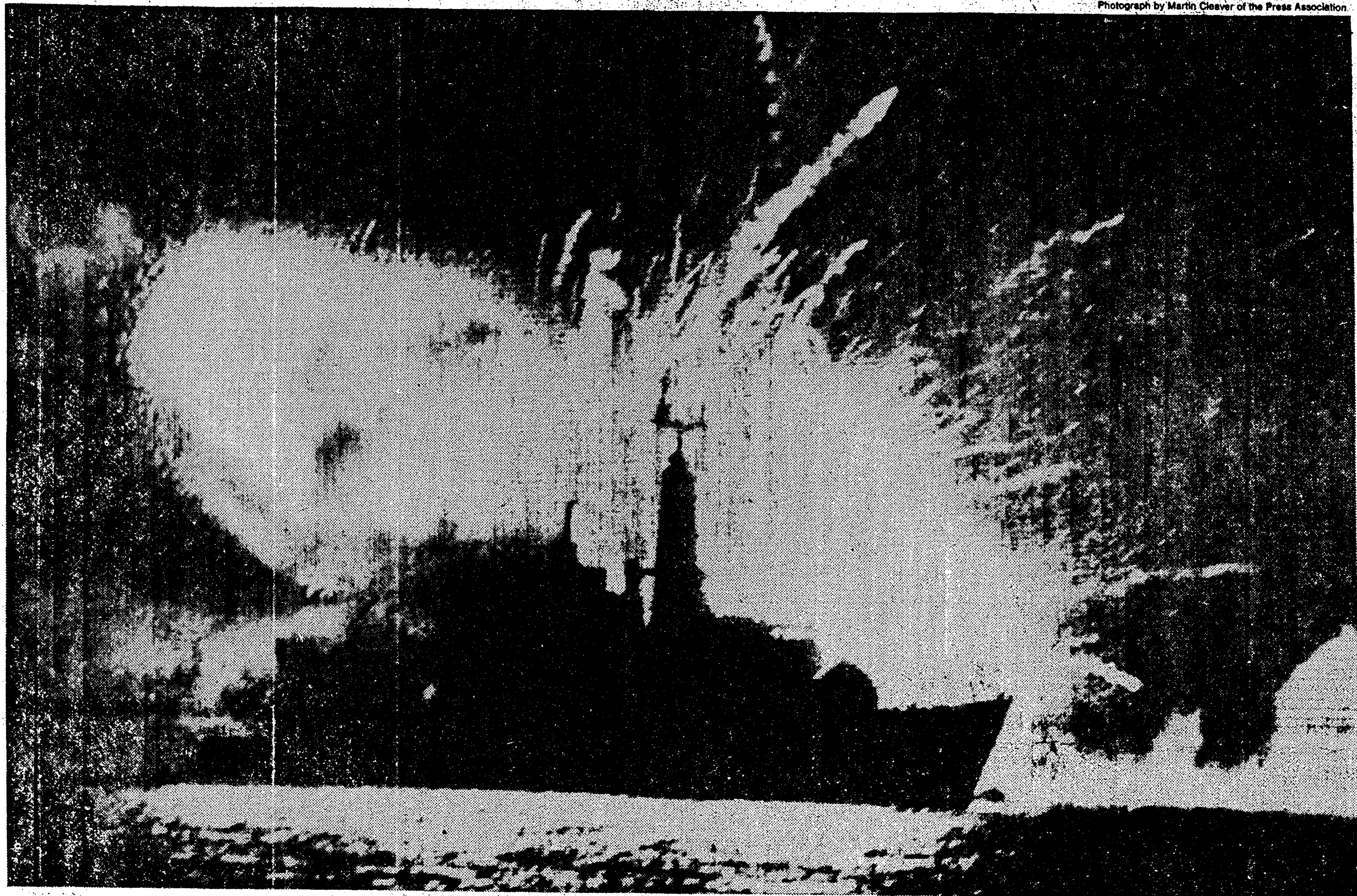
Four Skyhawks screamed out of the cloud-flecked skies over San Carlos Water. There the missile ships took over the shooting from the Harriers. One Skyhawk was hit and the pilot ejected. A second was damaged. The other two fled.

The orange chute showed the pilot's position and he was picked up by a landing craft. There were cheers for the frigate which claimed the "kill".

● Santiago: Three crewmen from a British Sea King helicopter, in hiding for a week after their craft made a forced landing in southern Chile, were found yesterday in good condition, the Chilean Foreign Ministry announced (AP reports. Earlier report, page 7). Señor René Rojas, the Foreign Minister, said the men, who said they thought until today they were in Argentina, would be turned over to representatives of the British Embassy in Santiago. The men were identified as Lieutenant Alan Reginald Bennett, Lieutenant Richard Dutchings and Sergeant Peter Blain Imrie.

## The last moments of HMS Antelope

Photograph by Martin Cleaver of the Press Association.



The huge explosion which blew HMS Antelope to pieces in the Falkland Sound.

## Thatcher adopts harder line on negotiations

By Julian Haviland, Political Editor

The hardening of the Government's attitude towards Argentina since the successful landing by British troops in the Falklands was made manifest yesterday when the Prime Minister endorsed only with great reluctance and under strong Opposition pressure a promise made by Mr Francis Pym, the Foreign Secretary, last week that they were still ready to pursue a negotiated settlement.

Asked in the Commons by Mr Michael Foot, the Labour leader, to clarify the Government's attitude to negotiations, Mrs Thatcher at first ignored the question and then, as Conservative MPs cheered her dismissiveness, insisted several times on Argentine withdrawal, saying that without that she did not think negotiations would get any further.

Finally she told a Labour backbencher that circumstances had changed.

Mr Pym in the Commons last Thursday gave the Opposition, whose support he was seeking, an assurance which they considered vital, that the Government had not turned their back on a

negotiated settlement, would give constructive support to the United Nations Secretary-General and would follow up any ideas for a settlement "with imagination and energy".

Later Mr Foot said on BBC radio that Mrs Thatcher was committed to Mr Pym's words "and that's what we are going to hold her to." He

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thought that readiness to negotiate could bring the business more speedily to an end than if anybody insisted on an unconditional surrender.

The Prime Minister also confirmed Britain's known position by saying that the Government "would have to use the veto" in the United Nations Security Council if there was an attempt to have a ceasefire without the Argentine withdrawal

required under Resolution 502.

She was answering a Conservative backbencher, Mr John Townend, who said the reported action of the Irish Government in tabling such a proposal was most unhelpful.

An unusually strong motion was tabled last night by Conservative officers of several senior backbench committees. It deplored the Irish Government's persistent failure to recognize the principles at issue in the Falkland Islands dispute, to support Britain's efforts to restore the human rights of the inhabitants of the Falklands and to uphold mandatory Resolution 502 for which it voted in the Security Council.

An extra draft clause proposing the removal of Irish citizens' right to vote in British elections—a recurrent grievance of the Conservative right-wing—was struck out in recognition of the fact that many Irish citizens are in practice giving the British cause their fullest support as serving members of the armed forces in the South Atlantic.

## Peace call by Costa Méndez

From Zoriana Pysariwsky New York, May 25

Señor Nicanor Costa Méndez, the Argentine Foreign Minister, today urged the United Nations Security Council to bring about an end to hostilities in the South Atlantic, but at the same time vowed that Argentine forces would do everything in their power to resist the British.

He told the council that it must live up to its responsibility as the keeper of international peace, but that the Argentine Government would not accept any terms or conditions Britain might attempt to impose that impaired Argentina's unquestionable rights.

"My country is at this moment resisting an invasion. It is doing so with all the means at its disposal and by the determination and the courage and patriotism of its people", he said.

Señor Costa Méndez ended this morning's debate with a statement that was clearly designed to play on the sympathies of the Third World. He attempted to drag up Britain's colonial past, and he reiterated Argentina's claim that it was British intransigence that led to the

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## Haig predicts early British victory

From Nicholas Ashford, Washington, May 25

The Reagan Administration today appeared confident that British forces in the Falklands would achieve an early victory over the Argentines. If this prediction is confirmed a new American-inspired initiative is expected to get under way shortly to bring about a ceasefire and an Argentine withdrawal from the islands.

The Administration's forecast of an early British victory was given this morning by Mr Alexander Haig, the Secretary of State, during a meeting at the White House with President Reagan and congressional leaders.

United States sources said later that Mr Haig's prediction of an early British victory was based on information reaching the United States from a variety of sources. "You must remember that we still have an embassy in Buenos Aires," an official said. "The Secretary would not pass on to the congressional leadership information which had just been gleaned from the British."

According to Mr Robert Michel, the Republican Leader in the House of Representatives, Mr Haig indicated that "the British would appear to be in a position militarily to bring it to an early conclusion."

Senator Howard Baker, the Republican Leader in the Senate, added that Mr Haig had said military activity had been very great during the last few hours.

Senator Baker said he expected a British victory would open the way to resumed negotiations to settle the dispute.

Mr Haig had expressed the hope that the British, having been vigorous in battle, would be magnanimous in victory.

Since Britain began its offensive to reoccupy the islands last Friday, the Reagan Administration had adopted a wait-and-see attitude, maintaining that there had to be a decisive outcome on the military front before negotiations were resumed.

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## BAOR sending missiles to bridgehead troops