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OPERATION CORPORATE - REPATRIATION OF BODIES

1. At the 10/82 Meeting of the DOE, ACDS(P&L) was tasked with reporting on the policy for the burial of those killed in OP CORPORATE and further, to consider how best to present this policy to the public.

2. Attached is a draft note. Your comments, preferably in the form of proposed amendments, would be appreciated by 1600 hours Wednesday 27 June 1982.

Mizalotti
 for ACDS(P&L) ASD

1 June 1982

Attachment:

Draft Note.

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REPATRIATION OF BODIES
(Note by ACDS(P&L))

BACKGROUND

1. The 2 PARA operations in the GOOSE GREEN/DARWIN area resulted in 17 British killed/died of wounds and about 250 Argentines killed.
2. A pool despatch by Robert Fox of BBC referred somewhat emotively to a Mass Grave burial on a hill above San Carlos (1) and in the despatch there was a reported comment from the RSM as follows:

"The lads want the dead to go home. It's tradition. People will want to visit the graves for the Marines as well as the Paras. The nation was quick enough getting us out here, it has a duty to get the dead home".

It is not known whether or not the RSM actually said these words.

3. Possibly as a result of the ensuing media interest in the subject, CTG 317.1 asked MOD (2) for the long-term planned intentions on burial procedures. A holding reply (3) has been signalled.

CURRENT POLICY

4. The policy agreed for OPERATION CORPORATE and promulgated to the Task Force Commander (4) is:

a. Death South of Gibraltar: no repatriation of body, burial at sea or on land at Task Force Commanders discretion.

b. Death North of Gibraltar: repatriation of body at Commanding Officers discretion.

This policy was notified to S of S (5).

5. The policy has so far been implemented and a number of burials have taken place at sea, in addition to those on land at Goose Green.

Notes: (Attached).

1. PR3 CDOBERM 302245Z May 1982.
2. CTG 317.1 19F/WBL/WCL 310020Z May 1982.
3. MODUK 19F/WBL/WCL 311345Z May 1982.
4. MOUK AAA/19F/W5C/W5B 301145Z April 1982.
5. D/US of S(AF) JW/55/5/7 dated 30 April 1982.

ACTION TO BE TAKEN WITH REGARD TO TEMPORARY BURIALS

6. While military operations are taking place, it is evident that emergency war burials must continue. It would, however, ease the task of those detailed to carry out any future reburials, or the repatriation of bodies, if the long-term policy on land burial for OPERATION CORPORATE were determined now and suitable short-term measures enacted where necessary. It would appear that there are three options for long-term land burial procedures.

- a. Permanent burial in the civil cemetery in Stanley.
- b. Provision of a specific Service cemetery at Stanley or elsewhere in the Falklands.
- c. Repatriation of all bodies, or of those requested by the NOK.

7. OPTION A. The present method of temporary burials was planned with the ultimate view of permanent burial taking place in the civil cemetery in Port Stanley, where there are already some Service graves. Such a measure is commensurate with the past practice of burying the dead from military engagements in the nearest formal Christian graveyard. The graves would become the responsibility of the PSA. (NB the War Grave Commission only care for the graves of those killed in WWI and WWII, although they will agree to be responsible for others subject to satisfactory payment arrangements).

8. OPTION B. While the creation of a special Services cemetery in Stanley or elsewhere is unlikely to cause any practical difficulties, it is felt that it could only be justified if the number of dead exceeded the number of plots available in the civil cemetery. Such a decision must await future events, although the Argentine deaths alone would probably justify a military cemetery.

9. OPTION C. The repatriation of all or some British bodies from the FI would be an emotive subject which could well raise further problems if adopted. When considering this option the following points should be born in mind.

- a. Bodies which are buried in temporary graves will not have been embalmed. Repatriation over the distances involved may not be practicable.
- b. Aircraft are not a suitable means of transport for this purpose as they cannot be refrigerated and the bodies would therefore have to be transported in lead-lined coffins.
- c. Specialty refrigerated ships will not be available for such a task until after hostilities have ceased.

d. Repatriation could cause distress and even intense ill-feeling in those families whose NOK was buried at sea or declared missing.

e. Repatriation could cause an unwanted precedent for future military operations, or, a demand for the repatriation of Argentine dead buried on the Falklands.

CONCLUSION

10. The subject of repatriation of the dead has caused emotive outbursts in the media which will only get worse if left unanswered. While the natural reaction of NOK is likely to be in favour of repatriation, the practical difficulties of this task are large and distress could be caused to those for whom repatriation is not possible. It is therefore concluded that reburial of land casualties in the civil cemetery in Stanley remains the best option, with the creation of a special Services cemetery being kept in reserve. The media and those NOK who enquire should be informed at the earliest opportunity that repatriation of the dead will not take place. NLC's guidance to public relations (6) should be drawn on as necessary.

RECOMMENDATION

11. It is recommended that the current policy of burial at sea or on land with no repatriation of bodies be upheld.

Note: (Attached).

6. D/NLC/19/1/2 dated 5 May 1982.

310455R May 82

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UNCLAS
REF ID: A64663 SENT AT 0112Z BY 611

Allowed for release into the following accounts:

UNCLAS 302245 MAY 82 EJA
PRIORITY

① *Disclosure of the names of the company commander and the PSOs should be possible*
② *The words "almost foolish" are better but it would be insensitive to use these words in describing the action of a very brave man and could cause distress to his family.*

302245Z MAY 82
FM HQ 3 CDORDEP
TO HQ PRESS OFFICE TELEX 22611

UNCLAS
SIG EJA
THIS IS A POOL DESPATCH BY ROBERT FOX OF BBC. 6AN CARLOS
SUN 30TH MAY 82

ON A WINTRY SUNNY EVENING THE MEN WHO DIED FREEING PT DARWIN AND GOOSE GREEN WERE BURIED TOGETHER IN A MASS GRAVE ON A BARE HILLSIDE ABOVE THE ANCHORAGE AT SAN CARLOS WATER. THE FUNERAL LASTED A FEW MINUTES. AS THE DEAD WERE CARRIED TO THE GRAVE BY COMPANY COMMANDERS AND SOLDIERS OF THE 2ND BN PARACHUTE REGIMENT. THERE WAS NO ORATION OR FLOWERY PARTY OVER THE GRAVE. THE BATTALION PADRE, THE REV DAVID COOPER, READ THE ROLL OF THE DEAD FROM 2 PARA THE ARMY AIR CORPS AND 59 FIELD SQUADRON ROYAL ENGINEERS. FIRST WAS THE NAME OF THE CO. LT COL H. JONES WHO DIED ASSAULTING A MACHINE GUN POST WHICH WAS PINKING DOWN A COMPANY OF PARAS OUTSIDE PORT DARWIN, THEN THERE WAS THE ADJUTANT CAPT DAVID WOOD WHO DIED WITH THE COLONEL, THEN THEIR FELLOW OFFICERS AND MEN A HELICOPTER PILOT AND A SAPPER.

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AT THE END THE RSM THREW A HANDFUL OF EARTH INTO THE GRAVE AND MARINES AND PARAS SALUTED IN SILENCE. INT THE BAY A FIGATE QUIETLY TRAINED HER GUNS SKY WARD AGAINST A POSSIBLE AIR RAID. THE PARAS ARE ANXIOUS THAT THEIR DEAD COMRADES SHOULD NOT REMAIN IN THE ANONYMOUS MASS GRAVE HERE AT AJAX BAY. "THEY MUST BE TAKEN BACK TO ENGLAND!" ONE COMPANY COMMANDER, DAIR FARRAR-HOCKLEY SAID. RSM STEESON TOLD ME "THE LADS WANT THE DEAD TO GO HOME. IT'S TRADITION. PEOPLE WILL WANT TO VISIT THE GRAVES. THIS GOES FOR THE MARINES AS WELL AS THE PARAS. THE NATION WAS QUICK ENOUGH GETTING US OUT HERE IT HAS A DUTY TO GET THE DEAD HOME. THE BURIAL TOOK PLACE BEHIND A MUTTON PACKING SHED NOW SERVING AS A FIELD HOSPITAL. THE AREA HAS BEEN HIT TWICE BY 400 KG BOMBS SO FAR THE HOSPITAL MANNED BY PARAS MARINES AND A NAVAL MEDICAL SQN HAS BEEN RESPONSIBLE FOR 70 MAJOR OPERATIONS. "EVERY CASUALTY BROUGHT HERE IS STILL ALIVE!" SAID THE COMMANDER RICK JOLLY RN, WHO RUNS THE HOSPITAL. 23 ARGENTINIANS HAVE BEEN OPERATED ON AND THEY WILL GO TO THE HOSPITAL SHIP UGANDA, THE ARGENTINIANS HAVE SAID THIS SHIP IS BEING USED FOR MILITARY SUPPLIES. "I THINK THEY OUGHT TO REALISE THAT THERE ARE ABOUT 25 ARGENTINIANS ABOARD BEING TREATED EXACTLY THE SAME AS THE BRITISH WOUNDED

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5015 UNCLAS
THE HOSPITAL HAS WORKED DAY AND NIGHT SINCE
IN WHICH PARA TROOPS WERE HELD IN GOOSE GREEN. ONE OF
OPERATIONS TO AN AMBUSH WITH A BULLET WOUND
IN HIS CHEST. IN GOOSE GREEN ITSELF LIFE IS RETURNING TO NORMAL
FOR NEARLY 30 DAY 116 MEN AND WOMEN WERE SHUT UP IN THE COMMUNITY
WHILE THE ARGENTINIANS WATCHED THE HOUSES AND LOOTED THE
IN ONE HOUSE THEY LEFT EXPLOSION OVER THE FLOOR, IN THE
BATH AND IN THE BATH THEY BROKE RADIOS AND LOCKED UP ANYONE
SUSPECTED OF LISTENING TO THE BBC. BRIAN HEWITT WAS GIVEN PERMISSION
TO ROUND UP HIS SHEEP BY ONE MILITARY COMMANDER. AS HE WENT
TO THE PASTURE WITH HIS DOGS HE WAS SHOT AT BY A HELICOPTER.
THE PILOT THEN MADE HIM CLIMB ABOARD AT SUNPOINT "THEY WANTED
TO PUT ME IN SOLITARY CONFINEMENT FOR THAT" BRIAN TOLD ME,
"FORTUNATELY THE AIR FORCE SAID THEY HAD GIVEN ME PERMISSION"
THE SETTLEMENT FARM MANAGER, ERIC GOSS DESCRIBED THEM AS USING
"NAZI TACTICS". "THEY TIGHTENED THE SCREW LITTLE BY LITTLE.
THINGS GOT VERY BAD AFTER THE HARRIER ATTACKS. THEY USED TO KEEP
US FROM GETTING FOOD THEN. THEY THOUGHT WE WERE ALWAYS SIGNALLING
TO THE FLEET" ERIC GOSS SAYS THE YOUNG SOLDIERS GOT REALLY
DRAMICKY IN THE NIGHT OF SHELLING BEFORE THE PARAS ATTACK "THEY

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KICKED DOORS DOWN, AND SHOT OFF LEGS JUST TO FIND PLACES TO SHELTER"
DISCIPLINE FREQUENTLY SEEMED TO BREAK DOWN THERE WAS A HEAVY
POLICE ELEMENT AMONG THE OFFICERS TIGHTLY CONTROLLED, SAY THE
SETTLERS, FROM PT STANLEY, AND BY THE WARD MAN OF THE OCCUPYING
FORCE THERE, GOVERNOR MENENDEZ HIMSELF. DOWN IN PORT DARWIN THERE
ARE NOW ONLY THREE SETTLERS "WHEN THE ARTILLERY BARRAGE STARTED
IT WAS ONE OF THE MOST FRIGHTENING MOMENTS OF MY LIFE "SAID
ERIC HARDCASTLE. HIS HOUSE STANDS CLOSE TO THE SPOT WHERE COL
JONES AND HIS ADJUDANT LED THE ATTACK AGAINST THE MACHINE GUN
POSITIONS TO LET THE BATTALION THROUGH IT WAS AN ACT OF EXTRA-
ORDINARY IN MOST PEOPLE'S OPINION "SAID MAJOR TONY RICE THE GUN
BATTERY COMMANDER WHO WAS WITH THE COLONEL AT THE TIME "HE WENT
FORWARD TO GET THE ENEMY POSITIONS, BUT WAS HIT BY MACHINE GUN
FIRE" COLONEL "H" AS HE WAS KNOWN LED HIS BATTALION IN WAS
AS IN PEACE IN A WARM FRIENDLY AND IMPETUOUS STYLE BEFORE THE
BATTLE HE CONFIDED TO ME THAT HE WOUNDERED WHETHER HIS PLAN WOULD
WORK "IT IS A FULL BATTALION ATTACK BY NIGHT AND DAY AGAINST
WELL DUG ENEMY POSITIONS I GUESS IVE GOT ABOUT 75% CHANCE OF
SUCCESS BUT I TRUST MY BOYS COMPLETELY "HE SAID HIS SUCCESS
NOW SEEMS ASTONISHING IT WAS THE FIRST TIME A BRITISH BATTALION

M