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Es el diario escrito por el entonces Wing Commander Peter Squire, quien se desempeñó como Jefe del Escuadrón de Harrier GR.3 de la Royal Air Force que operó desde el Hermes.

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The Harrier Goes to War

The No 1 (Fighter) Squadron Operation Corporate Diary

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Pilots of No 1(F) Squadron pictured whilst transiting to the war zone on board the Atlantic Conveyor. L-R : Sqn Ldr Peter Harris, Flt Lt Jeff Glover, Flt Lt Mark Hare, Flt Lt John Rochfort, Sqn Ldr Bob Iveson, Wg Cdr Peter Squire (Officer Commanding), Flt Lt Tony Harper with Sqn Ldr Jerry Pook sitting.

Published for the very first time, this is the story of No 1 (Fighter) Squadron during Operation Corporate. The operation was also the Harrier's first war, and the fact that the squadron and its aircraft flew from a Royal Navy aircraft carrier alongside Sea Harriers of the Fleet Air Arm was testament to the versatility of the Harrier and the flexibility of it's pilots. The diary will use photographs, maps and documents never before seen to give the most complete picture possible of the Harrier's first war.

Our thanks go to Air Chief Marshal Sir Peter Squire, Chief of the Air Staff, and commanding officer of No 1(F) Squadron during the Falklands conflict for allowing us to use his personal diary for this feature, and indeed for his painstaking work in producing what is a unique and valuable historic document.

Friday 2 April

The Squadron is programmed for an AOC's Parade Rehearsal, it's Inspection being due on Thursday 29 April. The Squadron is also committed to play in a 5-a-side football competition that afternoon at 1415. Needless to say, however, the crew room conversation is dominated by the news of the Argentinean invasion of the Falkland Islands. The GLO, Major John Moseley, is asked to look out a map in order to confirm the exact whereabouts of the Islands. The flexibility of the Harrier makes it an obvious choice for any retaliation but the deployment options look sparse indeed. A popular choice would be to be held in reserve in Rio de Janeiro.

Thursday 8 April

The Squadron has enjoyed a quiet week preparing for the forthcoming ferry flight of eight aircraft to Canada for Exercise Maple Flag. We have also had aircraft at Lyneham and Hullavington to film sequences for the TV Series "Squadron".

In the Mess that afternoon as everyone relaxes for the Easter Grant, the Station Commander - Group Captain Pat King - receives a signal from MoD asking for details of operational requirements to cater for possible involvement in the South Atlantic. In particular, ACAS(Ops) - AVM Ken Hayr - proposes [DACT](#) with the French Air Force.

I discuss with Pat King in the Ladies Room and our response to MoD includes the [DACT](#), operational weapon deliveries and Ultra Low Flying. We also urge that consideration be given to the fitting of Sidewinder.

Saturday 10 April

A further signal is received from MoD warning a possible deployment. Discussions with Pat King, dressed in pyjamas and dressing gowns are becoming a habit. As a result of this second signal, there is a need to recce the container ship Atlantic Conveyor, which is currently in Liverpool Docks. The aim will be to see if the deck offers sufficient space for Harrier embarkment. Squadron Leader Bob Iveson (Flight Commander) and Bruce Sobey ([SENGO](#)) will do this.

In the meantime, we query the wisdom of continuing with deployment to Canada, planned for 13 April. Strike Command confirms that the Exercise should continue.

The Atlantic Conveyor undergoing modifications in Liverpool Docks



Tuesday 13 April

We deploy as planned with 8 aircraft to Goose Bay. It is my first long ferry flight using [AAR](#) and, as such, will prove to be a very useful dress rehearsal for what is to come. After the 6hr 40mins flight, the [INAS](#) on my aircraft is less than 1.5nm out without any updates en-route. At Goose we hand the aircraft onto [RAFG](#) pilots and the following day we fly home in a Nimrod, arriving at Wittering at about 10pm.

The recce of Atlantic Conveyor confirms that with some modifications, the deck can be used as a platform for both Harriers and helicopters. Furthermore, it's 5 car decks can also be loaded with enormous quantities of stores.

Wednesday 14 April

MoD is very keen to obtain publicity photographs of Harrier GR3s using the ski-jump. We have aircraft ready to fly to Yeovilton but as yet there is no [CofA](#) clearance.

At the same time, it is decided that a number of modifications are essential if the GR3 is to be operated from the deck. These include shackles on the outriggers, modification of the nose wheel steering and a means of aligning the [INAS](#) platform on a moving deck.

All postings on the Squadron are frozen and pilot reinforcements are chosen from those with recent experience on the Squadron - Squadron Leader "Bomber" Harris ([CTTO](#)), Squadron Leader Tim Smith (3(F) Sqn) and Flt Lt Ross Boyens (Chivenor).

Thursday 15 April

All postings from the Squadrons are frozen and I request pilot reinforcements to cater for a full deployment. The first four to be earmarked all have recent experience on 1(F). They are Sqn Ldr Peter Harris ([CTTO](#)), Flt Lt Ross Boyens ([TWU](#)), Flt Lt Jim Arkell (OCU) and Squadron Leader Tim Smith (3(F) Sqn). In the meantime Lt Cdr Al Craig has been recalled by the RN and Capt Skip Beasley (USAF) ordered to take no part.

In the afternoon [CofA](#) release for the GR3 to use the ski-jump is received and the first 3 pilots deploy to Yeovilton to carry out training.

Friday 16 April

Ski-jump training continues at Yeovilton while the planned deployment to Cyprus (filming for "Squadron") is cancelled.

Wittering is tasked to deploy up to 12 aircraft on or about 26 April. Modification programme for the aircraft starts in earnest to provide deck capability. Modifications include I-Band transponder (for [IMC](#) recoveries), shackles, active nose wheel steering, hardened limiters for the JPTL system and anti-corrosion treatment. The possibility of an [AAM](#) fit is still being considered.

Gütersloh asked to provide additional aircraft so operational training can continue. Additional pilots will include Flt Lt Clive Loader as of 19 April.

Ski-jump trials at Yeovilton



Saturday 17 April

In response to requests from higher authority for detailed [UASTs](#), the Squadron seeks more information on its likely employment. The questions we need answer to include:- what role (air defence or attack), split between [CVs](#), rates of effort, possible basing ashore? As answers are not forthcoming we end up in trying to provide support packages to meet all eventualities. This is particularly time consuming for FS George Mullings.

At the same time, we continue to press for an AIM-9 capability; even a cardboard mock up, if photographed and publicly displayed, could be to our advantage.

Sunday 18 April

We receive a signal confirming the deployment of 1(F), first to Ascension Island and subsequently to Falkland Islands.

Monday 19 April

Initial deployment plan received. Nine aircraft to deploy to Ascension Island between 26 and 28 April. Six will join the Task Force and these will remain at Ascension Island for air defence duties. Eighteen NCOs will provide GR3 expertise split between both [CVs](#), and remainder of the Squadron will follow for subsequent operations from ashore.

Reinforcement pilots begin to arrive and we carry out training programme of [DACT](#) with Hunters from Brawdy.

The 7 pilots who will go south are; Jerry Pook, Bob Iveson, Tony Harper, John Rochfort, Mark Hare, Ross Boyens and Geoff Glover. Bomber Harris and Tim Smith will remain at Ascension Island while Gavin Mackay commands the remainder of the Squadron.

Tuesday 20 April

The Squadron carries out live [CBU](#) drops against a splash target off the east coast. I fly with Nick Gilchrist in a T4; Nick will go to do the [QWI](#) course while we go south - he is understandably disappointed.

Gavin, too, receives with mixed feelings the news that he is to remain in command of the "war" party which in effect is well over 50% of the Squadron. In this capacity he is destined to do a magnificent job.

Wednesday 21 April

I attend a meeting at HQ 18 Gp chaired by the Chief of Staff. We are briefed on the concept of an amphibious assault followed by the building of a Harrier site ashore.

The concept for GR3 employment is still uncertain but we are given the following assumptions:-

- sustained period of operations in cold climate from bare base
- fuel/comms/[ATC](#)/catering provided
- re-supply within 22 days
- 12 aircraft in [AD](#) role armed with guns and AIM-9
- initial weapons provision 48 [AAMs](#) plus 5,760 rounds 30mm
- sortie length 45mins
- 8 sorties per day.

We are tasked to provide detailed [UASTs](#) and estimate of peak sortie rate.

Notwithstanding the [AD](#) employment, I ask for the provisions of [LGBs](#).

Thursday 22 April

I fly with Bob Iveson to Yeovilton for a meeting with Captain Mike Layand, who will be the Senior Naval Officer embarked in Atlantic Conveyor ([ACO](#)). Also there was Lt Cdr Tim George, CO 809 NAS, whose Sea Harriers will also be loaded onto [ACO](#).

Friday 23 April

Squadrons involved in [DACT](#) with Mirage and Etendard aircraft of the French Armed Forces. The Mirages operate from Coningsby to retain some anonymity while the Etendard merely fly to rendezvous' off the south east coast. Nevertheless, it is good experience and some crews got the chance to fly in the back seat of a Mirage.

Following the successful design of an AIM-9 fit, missiles are allocated for practice firings at Aberporth.

**Sidewinders cleared for
use**



Saturday 24 April

Deployment date delayed until at least 1 May. This thankfully will give more time before to complete the modification programme which is enormously manpower intensive. The whole of Engineering Wing is working round the clock to modify an initial batch of 12 aircraft in order to get 9 to Ascension Island. In addition, of course, the engineers have to support a daily flying programme, which, while not intensive, is very varied.

ABBREVIATIONS

- ACO - Atlantic Conveyor.
 - AAM : Air-to-Air Missile.
 - AAR : Air-to-air refuelling.
 - AD : Air Defence.
 - ATC : Air Traffic Control.
 - CBU : Cluster Bomb Unit.
 - CofA : Certificate of Airworthiness. Required for aircraft modifications to be cleared for operational use.
 - CTTO : Central Trials and Tactics Organisation.
 - CVs : Aircraft carriers.
 - DACT : Dissimilar Air Combat Training. 'Dog-fighting' against different types of aircraft.
 - IMC : Instrument Meteorological Conditions. Flying by referring to cockpit instruments only.
 - INAS : Inertial Navigation and Attack System.
 - LGBs : Laser-Guided Bombs.
 - QWI : Qualified Weapons Instructor.
 - RAFG : Royal Air Force Germany. Latterly No 2 Group before the closure of RAF bases in Germany.
 - SENGO : Senior Engineering Officer. Usually a Squadron Leader. His deputy is the JENGO (Junior Engineering Officer), most commonly a Flight Lieutenant, but can be a Flying Officer. In the latter case, RAF parlance describes them as 'BENGOS' (Baby Engineering Officers).
 - TWU : Tactical Weapons Unit. Weapon training course carried out between completion of flying training and posting to squadron.
 - UASTs : Urgent Air Staff Targets. Better described by their current title - Urgent Operational Requirements.
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Monday 26 April

Approval is given after a long and involved "battle" to obtain clearance from Command to carry out operational low flying. Considering that the Squadron had only recently worked up in preparation for Maple Flag, this seemed to be a particularly petty problem requiring in the end the AOC's personal intervention to overrule [SASO](#) at Strike Command.

Squadron flying programme also includes firing rockets from very shallow angle with level breakouts to avoid debris hemisphere. We also receive clearance to carry and fire the Naval 2-inch rocket (36 per pod) and Tony Harper goes off to Yeovilton to carry out a trial sortie. We will not be cleared to use [SNEB](#) while embarked.

The prospect of firing AIM-9Gs at Aberporth prompts an intensive ground school programme on the weapon and its capability. Squadron Leader Russ Peart comes up from Boscombe Down to brief on the installation, particular to the Harrier, while Skip Beasley comes into his own in

tutoring on the system as a whole. Skip is to use his detailed knowledge and experience to brief and train the whole of the Harrier Force.

Tuesday 27 April

We carry out a Fire Power Demonstration for 5 Brigade which is training at Senneybridge. 5 Bde are to be the follow on forces for the land battle in Falkland Islands.

More aircraft are required from Germany to sustain the flying programme while more aircraft commence modifications. The latter now includes a jettison facility for the AAMs and for [FINRAE](#), which Ferranti hope to have working prior to our deployment. (FINRAE is the internal equipment which will allow the GR3 INAS to align on a moving platform).

Friday 30 April

Six aircraft deploy to Valley in order to carry out live AIM-9G firings on Aberporth range. It takes me 3 sorties to obtain "growl" on the flare but at the third attempt we achieve a successful firing. Of the 6 firings only one missile fails and, as a result, we create something of a record on [STCAAME](#) where the pace of life is normally somewhat slower.

We receive the 1 Group tanker plan for the deployment to Ascension Island. I am concerned that the tankers intend to leave us 1,000nm north of Ascension Island with no SAR cover for the final leg. Our request is considered again and Nimrod cover out of Ascension Island is provided.

It has been a busy 4 weeks.

Sunday 2 May

The first five aircraft deploy to St Mawgan. This will allow four to launch on Monday in order to get three to Ascension Island. The same pattern will be repeated on Tuesday and Wednesday.

The departure from Wittering is somewhat emotional for the future is uncertain. David Newbury (OC Admin) is particularly moved as we say farewell on the ladder. Carolyn and Edward are invited to the tower to watch the formation fly-past - Box 4 - by self, Harper, Hare and Rochfort (Pook does an air test en-route).

Ground crew have been despatched to St Mawgan to cater for last minute unserviceabilities. The cross-wind on landing is outside limits for the 330 gallon tanks and the Station Commander (on Pat King's advice) - Tony Woodford - tries to divert us; however we all land safely.

John Knott, the Secretary of State, passes through that evening and asks to see us in the bar. He has returned from discussions with the Prime Minister at Chequers. He suggests that there will be an escalation shortly and wishes us luck.

Monday 3 May

The launch of the first wave is preceded by lengthy briefings which cover all the Rules of Engagement for maritime forces. I for one found them quite confusing. Four aircraft launch at 0930 (Rochfort is the airborne spare) to [RV](#) with 3 Victor tankers in the overhead at about 25,000ft.

One of the tankers has difficulty taking on fuel and in the end the Victors renumber. However, the end result is that they have insufficient fuel to get all 3 GR3s to Ascension Island; one must return to Banjul with the last tanker. The tanker is then ordered to proceed on to Ascension Island that night. I therefore decide to send Harper and Hare on while I divert. This sortie lasts 9 hours 15 mins which must be the longest Harrier sortie ever.

At Banjul we are met by many eager and interested people. After refuelling the aircraft, there is a chance to have a welcome drink. I know the captain of the Victor (Dave Foulger) and we plan the leg to Ascension Island, much of which will be in darkness. In the event, there is also lots of medium/high level cloud to contend with and frequent electrical storms to add to the disorientation. However, the 3 refuelling brackets are successful and with just under 100nm to go I depart the tanker for a straight in approach and the humped runway at Wideawake. I eventually land at 2215 after eleven hours flying; the first beer tastes very good. Once again there are ground crew already in position including Squadron Leader Bruce Sobey (SENGO) and Chief Tech Frank Ridge (later Flt Sgt).

Ascension Island is a mass of activity with accommodation at a premium. In fact, I am given a very adequate room in a bungalow complex but the other pilots are sharing an open dormitory with Vulcan, Victor and Nimrod crews.

Transit to Ascension Island



Tuesday 4 May

The day is spent looking around the airfield and to an extent the Island. While the officers are accommodated at "Two Boats", the ground crew are living at "English Bay" quite some distance from the airfield.

At the airhead there is activity everywhere with helicopters rushing in all directions. Everything has a very makeshift appearance and the operations room run by Group Captain Jeremy Price (Tankers) and Wg Cdr David Baugh (Nimrods) is located in the top of the fire section, a two storey wooden building.

Iveson and Pook arrive that evening - Rochfort has diverted to Porto Santo!! - and we are invited to the Exiles club for a party. The news that Sheffield has been sunk and Nick Taylor killed dampen the atmosphere but not out of all proportion.

Wednesday 5 May

The day starts with an enormous thunderstorm, which lasts for 3 hours. Following this I visit the ACO where I meet its master Captain North (later killed when ACO sunk). There will only be accommodation for myself and Iveson; the remaining pilots will be housed in Norland, although this has yet to be confirmed. Brian Mason (JENGO) and the 18 NCOs have travelled down in ACO. They are sleeping in portakabins bolted to the deck.

Harris, Smith and Glover arrive - Russ Boyens diverts to Banjul (Gambia). We brief with 809Sqn regarding the landing on procedures for the following day. Tim Gredge really makes the briefing very long winded. We are only likely to have 7 aircraft serviceable in the morning and we need 6.

Thursday 6 May

We plan to embark the aircraft early when the temperature is low and, starting with the worst engines, Iveson and I launch as the first pair and land-on after some formation aerobatics over the Island. Iveson has landed on ships before with [USMC](#) (also Harris and Smith) but I found the shortage of space somewhat alarming, especially as the ship is rolling in the swell. Mark Hare has a particularly tricky time.

Ross Boyens arrives from Banjul with his aircraft and John Rochfort making it from Porto Santo in a Hercules. Jerry Pook tells me that Peter Harris has told him that Boyens is not too keen to come and persuades me that Harris should come instead. I mistakenly agree to the exchange.

Captain Woodard (ex CO Arragon) comes on board with [COMAW](#) (Commodore Clapp) for discussions with Captain Layand. Loading of stores continues through the day. The troops have to manhandle everything below deck.

I am sharing one of the ship's engineering officers day cabin with Bob Iveson and Squadron Leader Kevin Smith (Chinook Pilot). We are comfortable but I now feel very split from the remainder of my Squadron.

Embarking on Atlantic Conveyor



Friday 7 May

Loading of squadron stores continues. I visit Fearless in the morning for intelligence update where I meet Captain Jeremy Larkin. The briefing is followed by a very pleasant lunch hosted by COMAW.

That afternoon I am sent ashore to obtain Sidewinder missiles, in order to give a [SHAR](#) an air defence capability against the Boeing 707 shadower. After a great deal of negotiation with Captain McQueen I manage to get 6 missiles and again after much rushing about, a helicopter lift out to Atlantic Conveyor. In all the confusion, however, the missile fins go astray and these are eventually found on Intrepid.

In the process I bump into Ross Boyens who is furious about the exchange with Peter Harris. Regrettably, I cannot change it now. Also hear that 6 more GR3s may come south in Atlantic Causeway and that SENG0 is returning to the UK the following day.

In the darkness that night the amphibious group leave [ASI](#) in radio silence and without lights.

Saturday 8 May

Bagging of the aircraft to give extra protection from the salt water begins today. The bags have not been made to allow for external fuel tanks and so all of these must be removed. Chief Tech Fred Welsh is in his element using his weight to good effect. Brian Mason, the JENGO (later awarded the MBE) starts to show the outstanding leadership which will pay such dividends later on. FS Ray Cockburn is very quiet at this stage but in due course will establish himself as an excellent NCO. Other troops include Sgts Frost, Jordan, Roberts, Conlon, Swanson and Mawson.

The FINRAE equipment is not working properly as Colin West and his 2 SNCOs attempt to resolve the problem which is notified to MOD. Colin and his team move across from Norland so that they can spend more time with their kit and also closer to good comms with the UK. The FINRAE will not transfer alignment data to the aircraft.

Emergency liferaft stations are practised, as from tomorrow it is assessed that there will be a potential submarine threat.

Jerry Pook and the other pilots come across from Norland to join with 809 Squadron for operational briefings. Sqn Ldr Sid Morris, who is earmarked to be GR3 advisor to Adm Woodward/[FOB](#) Site Cdr, also on Norland, arranges to buy me a camera - available on sale in Norland (a North Sea Ferry).

The RAF put on a Happy Hour in the evening.

Heading South



ABBREVIATIONS

- ASI : Ascension Island.
- COMAW : Commander Amphibious Warfare.
- FOB : Forward Operating Base.
- RV : Rendezvous.
- SASO : Senior Air Staff Officer.
- SHAR : Sea Harrier.
- SNEB : 68mm unguided pod-launched rockets. SNEB is actually the initials of the weapon's manufacturer.
- STCAAME : Strike Command Air-to-Air Missile Establishment (based at RAF Valley).
- FINRAE : Ferranti Inertial Navigation Reference and Attitude Equipment.
- USMC : United States Marine Corps.

Sunday 9 May

Bagging of aircraft continues and Colin Drew has limited success with the FINRAE. His team find a wiring fault in one of the looms. This information is relayed to MOD so that future aircraft can be checked.

I fly in a Wessex of 848NAS to look at deck operations with various wind conditions and to assess the best direction to the vertical take-off which we will have to carry out in the transfer to the CVS. It concerns me that no-one will have flown for 2 weeks prior to this important and possibly tricky sortie.

There is a church parade at 1600 hours conducted by Capt Leyand who uses my book of RAF prayers and passages from the Bible. This small book is to be of considerable comfort during the weeks ahead. George Bradshaw gave it to me at Wittering and I have retained it.

Monday 10 May

More ground training on a joint basis with 809 Squadron. We discuss deck operations, standard operating procedures, conduct after capture etc.

An 809 Sqn SHAR is brought to [RS5](#) for possible interception of the shadowing Boeing 707. If launched the aircraft will perform a vertical take-off, join a tanker which is close by and attempt to close with the 707. Fuel and performance margins are very slim and, if launched, it will be a very "bold" sortie.

It is Chf Tech Welsh's birthday and the ship's crew have made a birthday cake 18"x14"x7" covered with icing. It turns out to be a highly decorated case of Carlsberg - a speciality of the galley.

We are only $\frac{1}{4}$ of the way there and there is a strong feeling that the Haig shuttle diplomacy will succeed and that it will all be over before we arrive in the [TEZ](#).

Tuesday 11 May

The day starts with a call to liferaft stations at 0600. This is only a practice but later in the day a real alert is sounded in response to a possible 'scout' sighting.

So far the weather since we left ASI has been perfect but the forecast is that this will quickly change in the next few days; at least it has given everyone a chance to find their sea legs.

I visit Fearless for a further intelligence update plus assessments of the Argentine capability. It is very obvious that we are getting very timely information. While on board I meet Mark Gosling (Royal Marines) - ex Tengah - and Ed Featherstone who was the Lynx pilot from Cleopatra/Amazon.

That afternoon the SHAR at RS5 is scrambled but the launch is subsequently cancelled. It is possible that either the accompanying tanker or Soviet Bear is mistaken for the 707.

We also hear the very sad news of John Eyton-Jones and Curtis' deaths in some sort of flying accident. John had been extremely popular on the squadron.

Wednesday 12 May

Another morning of ground briefings whilst the ship carries out a [RAS](#) with Tidepool.

The continual cross-decking of stores between ships produces bottle of port promised to me by the captain of Intrepid (Capt Bryan Telfer). I asked for it in order to celebrate the Squadron's 70th birthday on the 13th.

Thursday 13 May

All the pilots from Norland come across, mainly for a change of scenery; also the Navy are putting on an [RPC](#) at lunchtime, after which the 1(F) Sqn team assemble on deck for photographs.

That evening we give a RPC to celebrate the 70th birthday of both No 1(F) and 3(F) - represented by John Leeming and Steve Brown who are on loan to 809[NAS](#). We present the ship with a sqn plaque and receive in return a Cunard flag. This is now on display in the sqn hangar at Wittering.

Team Photograph



Friday 14 May

Software modification details arrive by [SATCOM](#) and Colin Drew and his team set to work immediately to fix the "Tardis". All the aircraft are bagged and we will not be able to prove the system until we are ready to cross-deck to the CVs.

In this respect it is possible that 2 aircraft may fly off on Sunday or Monday. In the meantime the ship's routine is retarded by 2 hours to match the hours of daylight. It also saves overtime payments to the merchant seamen.

The weather is becoming appreciably worse.

Saturday 15 May

A quiet day is spent doing more ground training. It is now planned that all 6 GR3s should cross-deck to Hermes on 18th/19th. This will be much better than the possible spilt between Hermes and Invincible. Of the Sea Harriers, however, 4 will go to each.

The weather today is atrocious and the Wessex returning the pilots to Norland that afternoon is unable to land on, even on the forward spot. The pilots are winched up in what looks to be a decidedly risky operation. Understandably there is some reluctance to leave in this manner and

in the end Peter Harris and Sid Morris are left behind. That evening we have an excellent game of dice and the "Chain" wins me at it.

In the UK, the trial on the active [I-Band](#) jammer (to counter Fledermaus radar) starts and the [ALE-40](#) modification programme begins. The equipment has been provided by our European allies with the parts from USA.

Diplomatic solution of the problem now looks unlikely, while back on board the ship is riding out the most tremendous storm. With half the stabilisation system out of order the ship rolls and bangs in an alarming fashion.

Problems Moving Pilots



Sunday 16 May

Again a quiet day with a short church service and the afternoon is spent writing letters home.

We join the [LSL](#) Group which had left ASI some days before us. Including the grey warships, which include the two [LPDs](#), 2 Type 42s and 2 Type 21s, we are now a force of 21 ships. This looks an impressive sight. Our passage is still silent and the following morning Norland will be well out of position. North Sea ferries are not used to this sort of evolution.

We watch a dreadful film - all blood and guts - not the best choice just 24 before possibly going in to action.

With the LSL Group



Monday 17 May

The weather has improved again and the aircraft are unbagged in preparation for the cross-decking. Initial FINRAE trials look hopeful.

Tuesday 18 May

We are awoken to a practice emergency at 0800 (still very dark) with a call to life raft stations. There are further false alarms - including a 'blue-on-blue' - at 0900 and 1100. So far, that is

three changes into immersion suits which is quite tiring but thankfully the weather is near perfect for the fly-off that afternoon.

Hermes and Invincible close with the amphibious group in order to effect the transfer well out of range the enemy. In the end only four GR3s make it as two are unserviceable; Self, Pook, Harris and Rochfort. The [VTO](#) is straight forward - although Steve Brown in a SHAR does a 40-degree VTO and almost crashes - as is the landing on. Harper remains on Atlantic Conveyor and Rochfort returns to bring the remaining 2 aircraft when serviceable. The long process of cross-decking of troops, remaining pilots and sqn stores will take hours.

On arrival on Hermes, I am introduced to [Cdr Air](#) (Robin Shercliffe) and the Captain (Lin Middleton). This is followed by briefings on deck procedures after which the captain orders three aircraft to get airborne. It is now 1800 and it will be dark in 2 hours and I am the only one to have received all the briefings - Bob Iveson and Jerry Pook have joined in halfway through. I persuade Cdr Air that it would be unwise but he is subsequently overruled and at about 1900 we are told to man up. We brief to do a 2v1 combat but although ready to start by 1915 we are held from doing so. The FINRAE is not available and so our only reliable instruments will be head down. At 1945 I change the brief to singleton [CCAs](#) to land and at 2015 we are stood down. It has not been a pointless exercise for I have been able to mentally adjust from a peacetime to operational environment.

That evening the ship's commander (John Locke) invites me to his cabin for a drink. There he tells me in confidence of the captain's aversion to the RAF. He warns me of the difficulties which may lie ahead.

I have been allocated a small cabin well aft but my pilots are sharing cabins (i.e. using the floor) or pitching camp on the wardroom floor. The troops are in the passageways. The ship seems very overcrowded because the captain has banned the use of any cabins below deck 4 (the waterline).

Departing Atlantic Conveyor for Hermes



Wednesday 19 May

Combat Report for this day, [click here](#).

Date:	Mission No:	Pilots:
19 May 82	Green Ldr/2	Wg Cdr PT Squire AFC Flt Lt JW Glover
Base:	Launch:	Land:
HMS Hermes	1145	1255
Weather:	Weapons:	
Medium level cloud and cirrus only.	Nil	

Mission:

Squire and Glover launched on routine ACT sortie. Once airborne the formation was re-tasked to intercept possible enemy intelligence collecting aircraft at 180nm NE of the Force.

Formation climbed to 30,000ft and vectored in threat direction. ROE established to shadow and deter only. Radio contact with ship lost at approximately 150nm range. Aircraft being flown in pre-align and therefore without navigation aids.

Interception unsuccessful and formation recovered to Hermes.

The day is set aside for operational training and we achieve 15 sorties of [ACT](#). Although we practice combat, it is decided that the GR3s will be used for attack missions. Following the Sea Harrier sorties on 1/2 May, [CTG 317.8](#) (Adm Woodward) told by CTF 317 (Adm Fieldhouse) to conserve SHARs.

Jeff Glover and I fly the first ACT mission and, shortly after getting airborne, are vectored to the NE in an attempt to intercept the Boeing 707. We are armed with AIM-9s but the [ROE](#) are only to intercept and shadow. At 180nm from the carrier we are outside radar and RT contact. We find nothing and return to the ship.

The FINRAE along with many other sqn stores have yet to arrive. The aircraft are therefore being flown in pre-align and without nav aids. The position of the sun - both southern hemisphere and time zone - is also confusing.

Tony Harper arrives with the 5th aircraft from Atlantic Conveyor having refuelled on Invincible en-route. He, Harris and Glover carry out night landings at the end of the day.

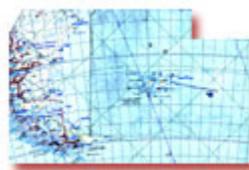
We share the Ready Room with 800 Sqn. The air is very stale and we have no planning facilities. We therefore take over a cabin next door where we can store maps and put up limited wall displays. The lack of a GLO is going to be a severe limitation.

The other great advantage of our "planning room" is that it allows us to hold "shareholders" meetings in private where we can speak freely. Much of the first "O" Group is spent talking of the wartime approach to the job - the acceptance of unserviceable aircraft, the parameters to which we fly. I brief everyone that I will authorise all sorties, if necessary, at the end of the day and that authorisation will not specify any minimum height. I do direct, however, that someone keeps an eye on the ops desk in order that people go off well briefed. Above all we must be professional.

The main pre-occupation in the Ready Room is the Rubic Cube. There are a number of schools with different methods, one of which is available on an [OHP](#) slide.

The captain calls me to his cabin/ops room to brief me on the squadron's first op mission - an attack on the [POL](#) storage area at Fox Bay - the next day.

The first day ACT



ABBREVIATIONS

- ACT : Air Combat Training.
 - ALE-40 : Chaff and flare dispenser. Defensive aids to counter missile and radar threats.
 - CCA : Carrier Controlled Approach (for landing on).
 - Cdr Air : Commander Air. Royal Navy commander of air forces.
 - CTF 317 : Commander Task Force 317.
 - CTG 317.8 : Commander Task Group 317.8. The Royal Navy commander of Task Group 8 within Task Force 317.
 - I-Band : Radio transmitter/receiver frequency.
 - LPD : Landing Platform, Dock.
 - LSL : Landing Ship, Logistic.
 - NAS : Naval Air Squadron.
 - OHP : Overhead Projector. (Pre-Microsoft Powerpoint days!!)
 - POL : Petrol, Oil, Lubricants
 - RAS : Replenishment at Sea. Ship-to-ship transfer of supplies. Can be wet (fuel) or dry (food etc)
 - ROE : Rules of Engagement.
 - RPC : Request the pleasure of your company. (i.e. The Captain requests the pleasure of your company for supper at 2000hrs)
 - RS5 : Readiness State 5.
 - SATCOM : Satellite Communications.
 - TEZ : Total Exclusion Zone. A 200-mile area around the Falkland Islands imposed by the UK.
 - VTO : Vertical Take-Off.
-

Thursday 20 May

Combat Report for this day, ~~click~~ [here](#).

Date:	Mission No:	Pilots:
20 May 82	Green Ldr/2/3	Wg Cdr PT Squire AFC SqN Ldr RD Iveson SqN Ldr JJ Pook
Base:	Launch:	Land:
HMS Hermes	1430	1540
Weather:	Weapons:	
In the target area good visibility below full cloud cover at 1,200ft.	9 CBU's	
Mission:		
Mission tasked as pre-planned attack against POL storage area at Fox Bay (East) settlement.		
Attack carried out in escort formation following run-in at low-level from the North. Target area easily identified on the run-in and attacked as briefed. Squire's weapons seen to fall and cause several secondary explosions. Fall of weapons from Iveson's and Pook's aircraft not seen.		

No groundfire from the target area seen. Search radar heard on RWR audio from Pebble Island and Stanley.

After a quiet night the weather today is pretty grim. However, Rochfort makes it in the 6th aircraft and by the evening the remaining troops have also arrived.

The bad weather and the ship's working time zone (Zulu) give us hours in which to plan the attack at Fox Bay. Iveson, Sqn Ldr JJ Pook and I pour over maps in the dining room. We plan to fly in Escort and have three different routes to take account of bad weather.

We launch at 1400 armed with 3 CBU's and the run into the target (Hi-Lo-Hi) works as advertised. Sharky Ward hears us transiting in as "GREENx" and asks after me by name!! He gets a gruff response. The target is easily acquired and Iveson reports that my weapons cause extensive secondary explosions. There is no obvious groundfire and the recovery goes fine.

The invasion (Operation SUTTON) looks certain for tomorrow and thus it is likely to be a busy day.

The first mission - the fuel storage at Fox Bay



Friday 21 May

Combat Report for this day, [click here](#).

Date:	Mission No:	Pilots:
21 May 82	3M001 C/D	Wg Cdr PT Squire AFC Flt Lt JW Glover
Base:	Launch:	Land:
HMS Hermes	1155	1215
Weather:	Weapons:	
Good	Nil	
Mission:		
Mission tasked as CAS CAP for possible tasking in support of assault in AOA.		
Squire's aircraft unserviceable after launch and forced to recover. Glover decided to on as a singleton.		
Glover was seen by LAAWC ship to enter AOA and is believed to have been shot down in the area of Port Howard.		

Date:	Mission No:	Pilots:
21 May 82	3M009 A/B	Sqn Ldr JJ Pook Flt Lt M Hare
Base:	Launch:	Land:
HMS Hermes	1100 (sunrise -20 mins)	1150
Weather:		Weapons:
Clear		4 CBU's Strafe
Mission:		
<p>Mission was tasked against a possible helicopter FOB on slopes of Mt Kent.</p> <p>On his first run through the target area, Sqn Ldr JJ Pook identified 1 Chinook and 1 Puma on the ground and 1 Huey with rotors turning. He was unable to carry out a FRA as the light was poor.</p> <p>Using terrain screening Sqn Ldr JJ Pook ran back in for a re-attack but missed the Chinook by dropping his CBU's beyond the target and Hare's CBU's hung-up. On a second pass Hare strafed the Chinook which caught fire and on a third pass both Pook and Hare strafed and set fire to individual Puma helicopters.</p> <p>Pook carried out two further passes in an effort to locate the Huey, which had been seen to land 1/2km to the West. This was unsuccessful owing to the poor light.</p> <p>During the attacks, Pook's aircraft had been illuminated by Super Fledermaus radar but had considered himself to be out of range of the only known AAA position in that area. Hare had seen, but not reported, troops on the ground firing at the aircraft. In the process of the attacks, his aircraft was hit in the intake and port wing.</p> <p>On the recovery to Hermes, Hare jettisoned the hung-up CBU's and experienced a port fuel transfer failure. He landed with approximately 400lbs of usable fuel.</p>		

Date:	Mission No:	Pilots:
21 May 82	3M009 A/B	Sqn Ldr PV Harris Flt Lt J Rochfort
Base:	Launch:	Land:
HMS Hermes	1340	1445
Weather:		Weapons:
CAVOK		Nil
Mission:		
<p>Mission was tasked as a pair for CAS/CAP. Due to enemy air activity in the AOA, the aircraft were held to the NE at FL250 for about 10 minutes. Aircraft then tasked to carry out armed recce from Cape Dolphin to Bombilla Hill to</p>		

Bodie Peak, keeping clear of the AOA.

No activity was seen and aircraft returned to base.

Date:	Mission No:	Pilots:
21 May 82	3M005 A/B	Flt Lt A Harper Sqn Ldr JJ Pook
Base:	Launch:	Land:
HMS Hermes	1845	1945
Weather:	Weapons:	
CAVOK	Nil	
Mission:		
Mission tasked as a pair to carry out armed recce of Dunnose Head airstrip.		
No military activity seen on the airstrip nor evidence of recent use. However, the strips appeared to be serviceable. F95 photographs were taken.		

Operation SUTTON begins at dawn and the squadron is tasked to carry out a combination of Air and Ground Alerts for use in the AOA. The first mission of, however, is Jerry Pook and Mark Hare carrying out armed recce for helicopters - a most successful sortie.

I have split the 8 pilots into 4 pairs of Leaders and No 2s. I am paired with Jeff Glover and we launch at first light for the AOA. My undercarriage stays down and I send Jeff on alone. We have often done this as an expedient during peacetime exercises but this was a mistake. He is shot down and no-one seems to know where. The LLAWC ship (Brilliant) did not task Jeff in the AOA and it turned out that Fearless tasked him to carry out armed recce in the Port Howard area.

The loss hits everyone extremely badly but that evening a signal intercept refers to a Flt Lt William Glover and there is a chance that he may be OK.

The attack on the helicopters



Saturday 22 May

Combat Report for this day, ~~click~~ [here](#).

Date:	Mission No:	Pilots:
22 May 82	3M02 A/B	Wg Cdr PT Squire AFC

		Flt Lt A Harper
Base:	Launch:	Land:
HMS Hermes	1915	2035
Weather:		Weapons:
Layered medium cloud and low stratus in the target area		Nil
Mission:		
<p>Mission tasked to carry out armed recce of airstrip at Weddell Island.</p> <p>During transit strong Pulse India lock from astern forced early descent (in retrospect probably Sea Harrier) and resulted in minimum fuel available in target area. En-route at low-level commercial freighter (later identified as the Monsoonan) seen at 5218S 5933W on a heading of 140 degrees. Leader was unsure of ROE and continued to the West.</p> <p>Armed recce carried out but nothing seen.</p>		

Date:	Mission No:	Pilots:
22 May 82	3M011 A/B/C/D	Sqn Ldr JJ Pook Sqn Ldr RD Iveson Sqn Ldr PV Harris Flt Lt J Rochfort
Base:	Launch:	Land:
HMS Hermes	1700	1750
Weather:		Weapons:
Hills covered in low stratus but visibility below good		8 CBU's
Mission:		
<p>Mission tasked as 4 aircraft attack on tented positions and possible dispersed Pucaras at Goose Green.</p> <p>Photographs of the airfield were available and heavy AAA was known to be in the area. The attack was therefore planned as a simultaneous attack from the East on 4 briefed UTM's.</p> <p>Low cloud in transit necessitated an ingress at ULL. A poor alignment and subsequent heading error on Pook's aircraft resulted in him missing the IP making it necessary to carry out an orbit.</p> <p>At 2km from the target area Pook eased up to 200ft and dropped chaff as briefed. He saw nothing at his pre-briefed UTM and attacked a camouflaged box-bodied vehicle on the rear edge of the airstrip. Iveson attacked a line of fox-holes on the Northern edge of the field and saw Pook's weapons cause some secondary explosions. Both pilots saw considerable AAA, which appeared to aimed at them.</p> <p>On his run-in Harris was locked-up by Super Fledermaus radar but this was broken by a hard junk and chaff. Despite considerable barrage AAA he</p>		

continued his attack but his CBU's hung-up. Rochfort dropped his weapons on his briefed UTM.

All 4 aircraft ran-out to the West at ULL and reformed for the recovery to Hermes.

Operation SUTTON continues but there is no requirement for [CAS](#). We carry out pre-planned 4-ship attack on Goose Green which is heavily defended and one armed recce sortie.

Mid-afternoon; and while preparing to launch on the armed recce mission we receive the confirmation that Glover is a [POW](#), albeit injured. We cannot communicate this to UK owing to compromise of sources and we shall have to hope that the Red Cross get in on the act as soon as possible. In my letter home that night I try to reassure Carolyn and Dee in guarded terms It will in fact be some days before official information is received.

Generally, it has been a quiet day. The Argentineans appear to be attempting to re-supply their forces. We shall need some luck in finding them.

Weddell Island recce



Sunday 23 May

Combat Report for this day, [click here](#).

Date:	Mission No:	Pilots:
23 May 82	3M015 A/B/C	Wg Cdr PT Squire AFC Sqn Ldr JJ Pook Flt Lt J Rochfort
Base:	Launch:	Land:
HMS Hermes	1855	2000
Weather:	Weapons:	
Fine	6 CBU's	
Mission:		
Mission tasked to attack Pebble Island airfield and carry out armed recce of Chartres airstrip.		
The attack was carried out against Pebble Island with no new activity seen and recce of Chartres revealed no enemy targets.		

Date:	Mission No:	Pilots:
23 May 82	3M013 A/B/C/D	Sqn Ldr PV Harris Flt Lt M Hare Wg Cdr PT Squire AFC Flt Lt A Harper
Base:	Launch:	Land:
HMS Hermes	1200	1320
Weather:		Weapons:
CAVOK		4 CBU _s 6 1,000lb retard bombs
Mission:		
<p>Mission tasked as an attack against Dunnose Head airstrip with Nos 1 and 3 dropping CBU_s and Nos 2 and 4 dropping retard bombs.</p> <p>Ingress was at low-level via Elephant Point, Roy Cove Settlement and the 'Narrows' in order to approach the target out of the sun from the East. At the 'Narrows', the formation split into 2 elements in order to achieve the required 30 sec spacing between no 2 and No 3.</p> <p>All aircraft dropped weapons as briefed although it was thought that No 2s third bomb fell close to the settlement. During his attack No 2 picked up some debris from the leader's CBU furniture or bomblet explosions.</p>		

Date:	Mission No:	Pilots:
23 May 82	3M011 A/B	Sqn Ldr JJ Pook Flt Lt J Rochfort
Base:	Launch:	Land:
HMS Hermes	1645	1745
Weather:		Weapons:
Good		Nil
Mission:		
<p>Mission was tasked as armed recce of the Port Howard area.</p> <p>Ingress was from the South screened by a long ridge, which lead all the way into the target. Abeam the target both pilots popped up to take long-range oblique F95 photos of the area. No targets or AAA were seen.</p> <p>A second pass was flown from the North directly over the settlement. Many defensive positions were seen but there was no evidence of vehicles and troops. Sqn Ldr JJ Pook saw a line of tents on roadside but too late to carry out an attack. He decided against a re-attack s any surprise would now be impossible.</p> <p>Examination of the film revealed many defensive positions and tents plus some activity in the settlement itself.</p>		

The min sortie of the day is the 4 aircraft attack on Dunnose Head airstrip which might be a FOB for Pucara aircraft or possible even Hercules. The weapons used are a mixture of CBU's and 1,000lb bombs to reduce the time over target. No 2 (Mark Hare) is hit by the CBU furniture of his leader and drops his bombs late. Sadly this causes some damage to the local settlement and injury to Tim Miller (loss of one eye). The Navy hold a Unit Enquiry, the motive for which is not clear. In any event, the conclusion is not critical of anyone. Subsequently, Mark and Tim become firm friends; after the ceasefire Mark went ashore with some groundcrew to help repair the damage.

News received that Glover is to be transferred by helo from Goose Green to Stanley. All helicopters are removed from the ROE until the following day.

800 Sqn launch 4 aircraft after dark to loft bombs on Stanley airfield. Gordy Batt, on his first night launch in the Sea Harrier, flies into the sea shortly after take-off. I watch from FLYCO and observe the white flash on impact. We are likely to be tasked against the runway tomorrow.

Pebble Island and Dunnose Head



Monday 24 May

Combat Report for this day, ~~click~~ [here](#).

Date:	Mission No:	Pilots:
24 May 82	Green 1/2/3/4	Sqn Ldr RD Iveson Flt Lt A Harper Wg Cdr PT Squire AFC Flt Lt M Hare
Base:	Launch:	Land:
HMS Hermes	1200	1245
Weather:		Weapons:
Good with patchy cloud on hill-tops		12 1,000lb retard bombs
Mission:		
Mission tasked as co-ordinated attack on the runway at PSA with 2 Sea Harriers providing defence suppression by tossing VT 1,000lb bombs 45 secs before GR3 TOT.		
Ingress by all 6 aircraft was to McBride Head whereupon the Sea Harriers routed to the SE and the GR3s to the West. The GR3 formation split further into		

2 elements with individual routes to achieve spacing of 30 secs between pairs.

Plan flown as briefed although turning between leader and No 3 was slightly tight. In all ¾ bombs hit the runway causing some surface damage, one Pucara and one helicopter also damaged. No 4's aircraft received some debris damage.

Sea Harriers locked up by Fledermaus and Roland when, after their attack they acted as decoys (albeit out of range) and GR3s only locked up on egress. Some small arms and AAA seen by Nos 2 and 4.

As expected we are tasked to attack the runway at Stanley with 1,000lb retard bombs. The Sea Harriers will loft bombs at the airfield for defence suppression during our run-in. Some RN pilots over emphasize the dangers of attacking the airfield at low level and as a result I have to alter the composition of the formation to include myself.

All four aircraft return safely despite the ground-fire. We hit the runway ¾ times but the bombs have been fuzed with 40m/sec delayed action and so they have stripped and the damage is not significant.

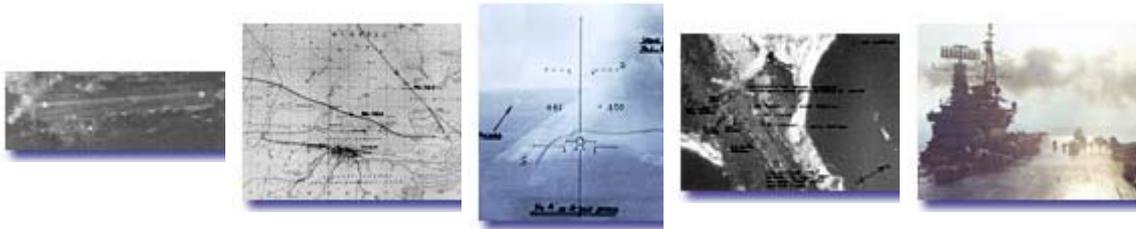
It is my first sortie with Mark Hare and we work well together as a team, which will be useful later.

The mission was delayed by weather and not flown until 1200Z (0800 local). There were no further tasks during the day.

As a result of debris damage to one aircraft and relative lack of effective penetration of the runway, Command decide that future bombing efforts should be high-angle.

[LGBs](#) are air-dropped to Hermes.

Stanley Airfield



Tuesday 25 May

Combat Report for this day, [click here](#).

Date:	Mission No:	Pilots:
25 May 82	Green 1/2/3/4	Sqn Ldr JJ Pook Sqn Ldr PV Harris Wg Cdr PT Squire AFC Flt Lt J Rochfort
Base:	Launch:	Land:

HMS Hermes	1415	1500
Weather:		Weapons:
Half cover of stratus at 1,000ft		12 1,000lb freefall bombs with variety of time-delay fuzes
Mission:		
<p>Mission was tasked as 6 aircraft attack on runway at PSA. Each pair of GR3s was lead by a Sea Harrier.</p> <p>The attack was carried out as planned with GR3s formatting on Sea Harriers in loose vic formation for simultaneous release of bombs.</p> <p>Following the release of his weapons Pook climbed into airfield overhead to observe fall of shot. Bombs from the first 3 aircraft were seen to impact on the West end of the airfield whilst those from the second wave fell approximately 100 yards north of the Eastern threshold.</p> <p>Whilst in the overhead, Pook was locked up by Roland and saw the missile in flight. It peaked at about 15,000ft - some distance below him. He also saw a Tiger Cat launched against the second wave; this too fell short.</p>		

Date:	Mission No:	Pilots:
25 May 82	Green 1/2	Sqn Ldr PV Harris Flt Lt M Hare
Base:	Launch:	Land:
HMS Hermes	1730	1830
Weather:		Weapons:
Full cloud cover at 1,500ft over the ship and patchy Cu/St Cu over Port Stanley airfield.		6 1,000lb free-fall bombs
Mission:		
<p>Mission tasked to drop free-fall bombs against PSA runway from a level delivery at 20,000ft.</p> <p>The bombs were dropped singly. The fall of only 3 bombs was seen and these fell in Yorke Bay.</p> <p>AAA and Roland fired during the attacks but aircraft remained out of range.</p>		

Date:	Mission No:	Pilots:
25 May 82	Green 1	Sqn Ldr PV Harris
Base:	Launch:	Land:
HMS Hermes	1925	2005

Weather:	Weapons:
Full cloud cover at 1,500ft over the ship. Islands covered in low stratus.	3 1,000lb free-fall bombs
Mission:	
Mission tasked to carry out medium-level bombing of PSA runway but owing to weather, this was changed to 30-degree loft.	
All 3 bombs were short of target.	

The day is spent attempting high angle deliveries onto Stanley airfield, where the local commander has made provision for CHAG (arrester gear) in order to support Etendard operations. To this end, we fly in formation with SHARs for loft delivery and on our own we either do manual loft or high angle from medium level. With no weapon aiming computer, it is not surprising that we do not succeed in hitting the runway.

It has always been thought that the Argentineans will plan to use the 25th for a major coup. Etendards attack the fleet before dusk and, as a result, both Coventry and Atlantic Conveyor are sunk. The latter has much of our stores, including 200 CBUs, but fortunately all the groundcrew were already safely embarked. Some of the survivors are brought on board and we sadly learn of the loss of Captain North.

The Chinook which has been reassembled and disembarked spends the night on Hermes before proceeding to San Carlos the following day. Three Chinooks and 6 Wessex are lost.

Wednesday 26 May

Combat Report for this day, ~~click~~ [here](#).

Date:	Mission No:	Pilots:
26 May 82	Green Ldr	Wg Cdr PT Squire AFC
Base:	Launch:	Land:
HMS Hermes	1700	1740
Weather:	Weapons:	
Patchy low stratus but generally no cloud below 9,000ft	3 1,000lb free-fall bombs	
Mission:		
Mission tasked to deliver free-fall bombs against the runway at PSA.		
Aircraft flown up to the pull-up point at low-level. Weapons delivered from 30-degree loft profile (centreline bomb hung-up and had to be subsequently jettisoned) but fall of weapons not seen.		
Aircraft locked up on RWR on pull-up and escape manoeuvre flown to break lock.		

Date:	Mission No:	Pilots:
26 May 82	3M020 A/B	Sqn Ldr RD Iveson Flt Lt A Harper
Base:	Launch:	Land:
HMS Hermes	1240	1350
Weather:		Weapons:
Low stratus over coastal areas but clear in target area		4 CBU's
Mission:		
Mission tasked to attack enemy positions at Port Howard, which had been identified from film taken on earlier sortie.		
On ingress route mission had to be modified because of weather. Both aircraft attacked lines of tents plus CP/HQ box-bodied vehicle. Sea Harrier overhead confirmed effectiveness of attack. No sign of anticipated AAA/small arms fire but re-attack not possible owing to lack of fuel.		

Date:	Mission No:	Pilots:
26 May 82	3M021 A/B	Sqn Ldr JJ Pook Flt Lt J Rochfort
Base:	Launch:	Land:
HMS Hermes	1500	1600
Weather:		Weapons:
High ground covered by low stratus		Nil
Mission:		
Mission tasked as armed recce for artillery in 10km-square area.		
The area was searched several times in different direction but nothing seen.		

Date:	Mission No:	Pilots:
26 May 82	3M022 A/B	Sqn Ldr JJ Pook Flt Lt M Hare
Base:	Launch:	Land:
HMS Hermes	1740	1850
Weather:		Weapons:
Stratus on hill-tops, otherwise fine		2 CBU's
Mission:		
Mission was tasked as a pair for armed recce from Teal Inlet settlement to Port Stanley. This was a large area in which there were known to be many enemy defensive positions and a number of our own OPs manned by Special Forces.		

Positive identification of enemy targets would be required before any attack could be carried out.

Nothing was seen on the first run through the area from West to East although both aircraft were locked up by Super Fledermaus radar in the Two Sisters area. Some 5km from Port Stanley the aircraft turned about and started to run back through the area. On the Northern slopes of Mt Kent Pook saw what appeared to be a damaged helicopter and, supposing it to be one of those attacked on 1 May, he flew past to get a photograph. Hare reported small arms fire and also that the helicopter appeared to be undamaged.

Pook elected to carry out a further recce which confirmed that the Puma was undamaged but during this run a Blowpipe SAM was fired and exploded above his aircraft.

Hare was unable to attack the Puma and so both aircraft departed from the immediate area and, using terrain screening, Pook manoeuvred for a further re-attack, which he carried out with CBU. The Puma was bracketed in mid-pattern and several secondary explosions were seen. In the meantime Hare saw further evidence of AAA and SA fire and both aircraft departed from the target area to the North. On recovery a hole was found in Pook's starboard drop tank.

A day of little air activity. We fly just 5 missions ranging from pre-planned attacks on targets in the Port Howard area, to loft-bombing of Port Stanley runway, to armed recce.

The final sortie of the day results in the successful destruction of another enemy Puma helicopter. However, this requires repeated passes and considerably increased risk to the aircraft, one of which has battle damage.

We are being tasked on a number of armed recce sorties which against a static enemy are not proving effective. We have the F95 and recce pod and tasking on photo recce of given areas might produce better results, albeit that the film processing is a slow process.

The army is coming under pressure to make progress. The RN feel that they are taking too long to consolidate in the San Carlos area and fear their ships will run out of time on station.

The Atlantic Conveyor remains afloat but no more stores have been recovered.

Ops on board HMS Hermes



Thursday 27 May

Combat Report for this day, ~~click~~ [here](#).

Date:	Mission No:	Pilots:
27 May 82	3M502A/B	Wg Cdr PT Squire AFC

		Flt Lt J Rochfort
Base:	Launch:	Land:
HMS Hermes	1545	1645
Weather:		Weapons:
Low cloud on all hill tops		Nil
Mission:		
Mission tasked as CAS for assault on Goose Green.		
Contact was established with ASOC whilst North of IP but contact not possible with FAC at the IP. Details taken from ASOC but this involved flying at 6-8,000ft above cloud at the IP where both aircraft were illuminated and locked up by AAA radar.		
Cloud prevented leaving the IP precisely and the leader passed down the left-hand side of the UTM. No weapons were dropped and there was insufficient fuel for a re-attack.		

Date:	Mission No:	Pilots:
27 May 82	Green 1/2	Sqn Ldr PV Harris Flt Lt A Harper
Base:	Launch:	Land:
HMS Hermes	1345	1440
Weather:		Weapons:
Scattered upper cloud above 20,000ft		6 x 1,000lb freefall bombs
Mission:		
Mission tasked as a pair to carry out loft bombing of Port Stanley Airfield.		
Low-level ingress was carried out from the North for 30-degree loft bombing.		
Harris' bomb impacts not seen but smoke was subsequently seen just to the West of the runway. Harper's bombs landed in the water to the South. AAA seen during the attack but aircraft well out of range. No missiles seen.		
Subsequent recce of airfield revealed no evidence of damage to the runway.		

Date:	Mission No:	Pilots:
27 May 82	3M501A/B	Sqn Ldr RD Iveson Flt Lt M Hare
Base:	Launch:	Land:
HMS Hermes	1400	1500
Weather:		Weapons:

Medium level cloud but fine at low-level	4 CBU's
Mission:	
<p>Mission tasked in support of ground force assault on Goose Green.</p> <p>Poor communications with FAC required formation to hold at 8,000ft over IP. Difficult to obtain information on own troops and FAC tasked formation with attacking 6 different UTM's. Target eventually established at 105mm gun.</p> <p>On first run neither pilot saw target but Hare dropped CBU's on group of approximately 15 troops at another location. Iveson positioned for re-attack, while Hare remained clear. Target still not seen on second or third pass but CBU's dropped on line of fox holes.</p> <p>There was heavy small arms and AAA fire throughout the attack.</p>	

Date:	Mission No:	Pilots:
27 May 82	3M503A/B	Sqn Ldr RD Iveson Flt Lt M Hare
Base:	Launch:	Land:
HMS Hermes	1600	1700
Weather:		Weapons:
Full cover of medium cloud but fine in the target area		4 CBU's Strafe
Mission:		
<p>Mission tasked in support of ground forces assault on Goose Green.</p> <p>Contact with FAC reasonable but still necessitated orbiting the same IP as for previous missions at 8,000ft thus giving away all element of surprise. Target established as 105mm field gun with 4 alternative targets.</p> <p>Target not seen by either pilot on first run so re-attack made on alternative target of company position.</p> <p>Formation given same target as 3M501 for re-attack with strafe. The attack was flown from the same IP but first attack unsuccessful for navigation reasons (aircraft being flown in pre-align). Having established correct IP further attack was made with strafe by both aircraft.</p> <p>Throughout the attack there was a considerable barrage of small arms fire and AAA. On final pass, Iveson's aircraft was hit and caught fire. He continued to fly West by the target area before ejecting.</p>		

Date:	Mission No:	Pilots:
27 May 82	Green 1	Sqn Ldr JJ Pook

Base:	Launch:	Land:
HMS Hermes	1900	2000
Weather:		Weapons:
Good		Nil
Mission:		
Mission was tasked by OC 1(F) Squadron to carry out medium level recce of Goose Green to locate Sqn Ldr Iveson who had been shot down earlier that day.		
Pook carried out a film run of Port Stanley and Goose Green at 18,000ft followed by a second run over Goose Green at 15,000ft. His aircraft was locked up by Super Fledermaus radar and Pook observed heavy AAA being fired from Goose Green peninsular, some of which went past his aircraft.		

2 Para commence their attack on Darwin and Goose Green. At sea there is fog and no flying is possible before 1400Z (1000 local). We are tasked to support the Paras but suffer all the known problems of [FAC](#):-

- Poor comms; we have to orbit at 7,000ft+ to make contact
- Poor choice of [IP](#); it is in cloud
- Small targets; poor/late acquisition and no laser target-marking

We are locked up at the IP and all chance of surprise is lost. Target identification is very difficult and first run attacks are rarely possible. Bob Iveson shot down on 4th pass by heavy AAA. Mark Hare believes that he ejected but we will have to wait. In the meantime I launch Jerry Pook on a recce mission. Apart from being shot at he is unable to see or hear anything of Iveson.

Naturally everyone is a bit wound up. The tasking appears to be gash and the debate as to the wisdom of re-attacks is debated fiercely. Although not ideal, there are occasions when one has to bite the bullet in order to support land forces. Mark has been No 2 on a number of busy sorties and he will fly with me from now on.

The second Harrier GR3 is lost



Friday 28 May

Combat Report for this day, [click here](#).

Date:	Mission No:	Pilots:
28 May 82	3M023 A/B/C	Wg Cdr PT Squire AFC Flt Lt A Harper Sqn Ldr PV Harris

Base:	Launch:	Land:
HMS Hermes	1330	1435
Weather:		Weapons:
Extensive low cloud and rain everywhere. Cloud base in the target area 50-100ft with a visibility of 1nm		4 - 2 in RP pods
Mission:		
<p>Attack carried out in Escort with ingress from the South. Target area located but foul weather prohibited acquisition of pin-point UTMs. Squire and Harris released weapons but Harper unable to do so owing to the weather; secondary explosion seen from leader's weapons.</p> <p>All aircraft broke out in climbing turn IMC and recovered to the ship. All aircraft locked up by AAA/EW radar on the climb-out. Chaff used to break lock until above maximum height for AAA.</p>		

Date:	Mission No:	Pilots:
28 May 82	3M025 A/B/C	Sqn Ldr PV Harris Flt Lt A Harper Sqn Ldr JJ Pook
Base:	Launch:	Land:
HMS Hermes	1905	2010
Weather:		Weapons:
Gusty wind but otherwise CAVOK at low level		4 CBU's 2 Pods (RP) (2in)
Mission:		
<p>Mission was tasked to provide ASAP CAS for 2 Para assault on Goose Green.</p> <p>Attack flown in Escort with No 3 on the left. Harris and Harper each dropped CBU's while Pook fired the rockets. All weapons were seen to impact on the target.</p> <p>After the attack a recce run was flown over the position where Sqn Ldr Iveson was seen to eject. Transmissions on various frequencies were made but nothing seen or heard.</p>		

The day starts with sea fog and even when this clears the weather is pretty foul with a strong sea. On the first mission of the day, we fly in atrocious weather at low-level and it takes some time to positively identify our position on the coast of Fonia. However, I am pleased that we succeed in putting weapons into the target area - it was quite a challenge. On the way in, at high-level, I hear a transmission on Guard using Iveson's callsign of the previous day (3M503A). Back on board I try to persuade the captain to support a helo recce but he is not interested and suggests that it might be a spoof.

That evening Peter Harris leads a most successful attack on Goose Green. For once the targets are easily acquired and the Paras are left in no doubt that the results were instrumental in

achieving the ceasefire. While this is being deliberated upon we are put on standby to mount a "firepower demonstration".

Saturday 29 May

Combat Report for this day, ~~click~~ [here](#).

Date:	Mission No:	Pilots:
29 May 82	3M027 A/B	Wg Cdr PT Squire AFC Flt Lt M Hare
Base:	Launch:	Land:
HMS Hermes	1545	1645
Weather:	Weapons:	
Showers	4 pods 2 in RP Strafe	
Mission:		
Mission tasked to attack enemy OP on West face and dug-in defence positions on the Northern slopes of Mt Kent.		
A rocket attack was carried out against the OP and strafe attacks against the defensive positions but nothing was seen at either UTM.		
No AA or small-arms fire observed although both aircraft received RWR indications of search radar.		

The surrender of Goose Green is formally completed with the taking of 1,000 prisoners. 2 Para also pick up Bob Iveson who has had to rough it for a couple of nights.

Otherwise it is a very quiet day with only one successful mission. Some hours are spent on deck alert for CAS tasking. This is the only time I feel any apprehensions - not quite knowing where or when one might be tasked. We normally limit the time spent in the cockpit on deck to 2-3 hours and in that time I tend to write a few letters home (strictly against the R to I guidance), but it certainly helps to pass the time.

The inadequacies of the tasking system grow all the more apparent. Poor comms exacerbate the problems but the main cause is the lack of any effective tasking organisation on the ship. The carrier-borne GLO has been transferred to the Admiral's staff and the ship's ops officer cannot cope with air defence, attack, helms and RAS as a digital post. Furthermore we have no ground situation maps. Scrutiny of the tasking signals later on will show that on occasions we responded to air requests rather than air tasks. (The ship did not understand the system).

Deck alert and launches



ABBREVIATIONS

- CAS : Close Air Support.
 - CBU : Cluster Bomb Unit.
 - FAC : Forward Air Controller.
 - LGB : Laser Guided Bomb.
 - IP : Initial Point (on the run in to a target).
 - POW : Prisoner of War.
-

Sunday 30 May

Combat Report for this day, ~~click~~ [here](#).

Date:	Mission No:	Pilots:
30 May 82	3B100A/B	Wg Cdr PT Squire AFC Flt Lt M Hare
Base:	Launch:	Land:
HMS Hermes	1150	1305
Weather:	Weapons:	
Showers	4 pods 2 in RP	
Mission:		
Mission tasked against enemy positions on Northern slopes of Mt Kent with FAC from Special Forces in the area.		
Contact established with FAC and attack carried out although nothing was seen.		

Date:	Mission No:	Pilots:
30 May 82	3B102A/B	Wg Cdr PT Squire AFC Flt Lt M Hare
Base:	Launch:	Land:
HMS Hermes	1750	1855
Weather:	Weapons:	
Showers	4 pods 2 in RP	

Mission:
Mission tasked to attack troops reported by previous mission on coastal road South of Mt Challenger.
Ingress to target area from the North but troops no longer there. Attack carried out on known enemy dug-in defence positions on Northern slope of Mt Kent.

Date:	Mission No:	Pilots:
30 May 82	Green 1/2	Sqn Ldr JJ Pook Flt Lt A Harper
Base:	Launch:	Land:
HMS Hermes	1130	1230
Weather:		Weapons:
CAVOK		6 1,000lb retard bombs
Mission:		
Mission was tasked as pair against possible radars on Mt Round and Mt Low.		
No target was seen on the first pass on Mt Round. Pook strafed UTM on Mt Low and re-attacked Mt Round UTM with retard bombs. He re-attacked Mt Low with strafe and Flt Lt A Harper bombed the Mt Low UTM. At no time was any military target or activity seen at either UTM.		
On breaking off from attacks against Mt Low both aircraft were illuminated by Super Fledermaus radar from the direction of Stanley, but no AAA was seen.		

Date:	Mission No:	Pilots:
30 May 82	Green 1/2	Sqn Ldr PV Harris Flt Lt A Harper
Base:	Launch:	Land:
HMS Hermes	1430	1550
Weather:		Weapons:
CAVOK		2 LGBs 2 1,000lb freefall bombs
Mission:		
Mission was tasked to see if GR3 could use LRMTS to designate for LGBs.		
The weapons were dropped from 60-degree dive initiated from 35,000ft. The designating aircraft, flying chase, attempted to illuminate the aiming point using the rev sight set at 100mm.		
Each LGB released was matched with one 1,000lb freefall bomb to prevent asymmetry on recovery. No bomb impacts were seen.		

Date:	Mission No:	Pilots:
30 May 82	3M101 A/B	Sqn Ldr JJ Pook Flt Lt J Rochfort
Base:	Launch:	Land:
HMS Hermes	1435	1520
Weather:		Weapons:
CAVOK		4 2 in RP pods Strafe
Mission:		
<p>Mission tasked as pair against artillery on Mt Wall but subsequently changed to helicopters on the ground some 14km to the East.</p> <p>Ingress was from the South crossing the main road which runs into Stanley. As Pook's aircraft crossed the road it was hit by small arms fire from troops and SSVs parked on the road. Pook felt the impact of the small arms and was told that he appeared to have a fuel leak.</p> <p>Pook saw no sign of helicopters at the revised UTM but Rochfort clearly saw the heavy artillery originally tasked. This he attacked with rockets. Pook, who had pulled wide from his search for helicopters and seen Rochfort's fall of shot, which had landed in the middle of the guns/SSVs, now attacked the same position with rockets. Pook's rockets also hit the target.</p> <p>By now, Pook's aircraft was streaming fuel and both aircraft ran out to the South East with Rochfort attempting to strafe the road to keep the enemy's heads down. Once clear of the target area the formation climbed for its recovery to Hermes. On pulling up Pook's fuel gauges indicated 4,000lbs remaining which was well in excess of the fuel required to recover safely. However, at this stage he suffered a total radio failure and noticed that the fuel was decreasing rapidly. Pook jettisoned the empty fuel tanks and rocket pods and climbed to 25,000ft. Whilst in the climb he also experienced a partial hydraulic failure.</p> <p>At height Pook was joined by his No 2 and they flew as fast as possible towards Hermes with Rochfort alerting the SAR facilities for an imminent ejection. When Pook's engine flamed out he continued to glide towards the ship and, at 10,000ft and 250kts, he ejected; thus was 30nm from the ship. Rochfort's timely call for assistance meant that a SAR helicopter was on the spot straight away and Pook was rescued from the water in very quick time.</p>		

The weather is showery and we spend most of the day attacking targets in the hills to the West of Stanley. Jerry Pook's aircraft is hit and he runs out of fuel some 40 miles from the ship, but he is quickly recovered and returned to the ship along with Bob Iveson. We also get the news that Geoff Glover is in Stanley hospital with a broken jaw and arm.

In a continuing effort to get high-angle bombs onto Stanley runway, we attempt a LGB delivery from high-level using a chase aircraft to actively range the runway. In fact the logic systems between the bomb seeker head and the aircraft laser-ranger are incompatible - thus no guidance. Nor are the bombs seen to explode; is there a fuzing problem - if so it won't be the first or last such error.



Monday 31 May

Combat Report for this day, [click here](#).

Date:	Mission No:	Pilots:
31 May 82	Green Ldr/2 (3B105 A/B)	Wg Cdr PT Squire AFC Flt Lt M Hare
Base:	Launch:	Land:
HMS Hermes	1440	1550
Weather:		Weapons:
CAVOK		2 LGB 2 1,000lb freefall bombs
Mission:		
<p>Mission tasked as further attempt to designate for LGBs using GR3 LRMTS. Weapons released at 25,000ft.</p> <p>No weapon impact seen.</p> <p>RWR lock of PI throughout the time overhead Port Stanley.</p> <p>Low level photo recce of high ground from Mt Low to Long Island carried out. Nothing seen visually but film showed on 30mm AAA position.</p> <p>Forced to land facing aft again!!</p>		

Date:	Mission No:	Pilots:
31 May 82	Not recorded	Flt Lt A Harper Sqn Ldr PV Harris Flt Lt J Rochfort
Base:	Launch:	Land:
HMS Hermes	1130	1240
Weather:		Weapons:
Nil		4 pods 2 in RP Strafe
Mission:		
<p>Mission was originally tasked for ground alert in support of ground forces. Task changed at no notice to attack on airfield at Port Stanley, co-ordinated with Sea Harriers who were diverted from their briefed task to toss VT 1,000lb bombs as</p>		

defence suppression. Task arose as panic reaction to report of swept wing aircraft (possibly Etendard) being parked adjacent to the eastern threshold.

Ingress was at low-level with Sea Harriers leading. However, Sea Harriers allowed themselves to be illuminated by climbing in order to check radar position; this removed any hope of surprise. Formation split into two elements at McBride Head and the attack carried out as per previous co-ordinated mission on 24 May.

Weapons were fired from level delivery at briefed targets, which appeared to be straight-winged aircraft. (Earlier photos indicated that they might be A-4 decoys but post-war recce showed them to have been Aermacchis).

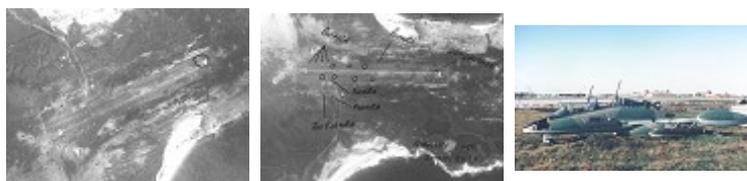
Considerable small-arms seen during the attack. Both aircraft suffered cracked front canopy screens, both Squire's drop tanks were holed and Hare suffered a bird-strike.

Once again the weather is showery. We carry a further and unsuccessful attempt with the LGBs on Stanley runway. Then as a result of a Sea Harrier visual sighting of "swept-wing aircraft, possibly Etendards". Mark and I are launched from cockpit readiness to attack with rockets. Fortunately we flew together on the previous low-level attack on the airfield and plan to take the same route.

The no-notice launching of 2 aircraft by the RN, which had been allocated to the land forces for ground alert for CAS again reveals a lack of understanding of the tasking system. Of course the system must be flexible but I am certain that the principle was not considered. Furthermore, our being launched was an over-reaction. A Sea Harrier CAP could have contained the Etendards (if they had been there) while the photos were processed. These would reveal no such aircraft.

Following our losses, we badly need replacement aircraft but Captain Middleton opposes the direct transit on the grounds that he considers it a "publicity stunt by the RAF". Naturally, he dresses his reservation in flight safety terms (and there is a measure of risk) and I and the SAVO (Cdr Chris Honeyball) have to work hard and persuade the Admiral that Operation BOWSPLIT should proceed.

The RP attack on Stanley Airport



Tuesday 1 June

Combat Report for this day, click [here](#).

Date:	Mission No:	Pilots:
06 June 82	Green 1	Wg Cdr PT Squire AFC Flt Lt E Ball (No 800 NAS)
Base:	Launch:	Land:
HMS Hermes	1705	1810

Weather:	Weapons:
Full cloud cover at 3,000ft	Strafe
Mission:	
Mission tasked for GR3 to carry out line search from Bluff Cove to Goose Green for military activity followed by an attack on possible enemy radar on Mt Usborne with Sea Harrier for mutual support.	
Line search carried out with photographs taken of four specific UTM's. No activity was seen although film showed enemy defensive positions by Fitzroy Bridge.	
Attack carried out by Squire against enemy radar at briefed UTM by noting seen.	

The weather is fine but we only have one aircraft available for tasking. I am not happy for singleton tasking at low level, following Jeff Glover's experience, and ask for SHAR escort for the armed recce from Bluff Cove to Goose Green. After a great deal of consideration this is approved with the proviso that the SHAR does not go below 10,000ft!! (some escort!) In the event the SHAR pilot is Ted Ball (Flt LT) who flew s any good No 2 should.

Mike Beech and Murdo McLeod arrive from ASI. Four Victor aircraft are required for each Harrier and Engadine is positioned is positioned approximately halfway as an en-route diversion!!

801 Sqn (Sharkey Ward) sends across a bottle of malt by way of apology for the poor visual report on the Etendards yesterday. At the same time they lose Ian Mortimer, shot down over Stanley by a Roland SAM, but after some hours in a dinghy he is recovered by helo.

Reinforcements and Reconnaissance



Wednesday 2 June

Sea fog and bad weather generally limits all flying and the next reinforcement package from Ascension is postponed.

Weather



Thursday 3 June

Still foul weather and no flying. We have needed more groundcrew for some time and after a number of attempts to get them cross-decked, we learn that they have arrived at San Carlos!!

Friday 4 June

Sea fog again prevents all fixed-wing flying. I therefore grab a Sea King and visit Invincible to see Sharkey Ward (CO 801 NAS). What an enormous difference in both atmosphere and environment.

We receive confirmation from the Red Cross that Jeff Glover is OK. I can now write home formally with details that we have had to protect for so long.

We badly need some work tomorrow.

Saturday 5 June

Combat Report for this day, ~~click~~ [here](#).

Date:	Mission No:	Pilots:
05 June 82	2F501 A/B	Wg Cdr PT Squire AFC Flt Lt M Beech (No 3(F) Sqn)
Base:	Launch:	Land:
HMS Hermes	1850	2010
Weather:	Weapons:	
Good	4 Pods 2 in RP Strafe	
Mission:		
Mission tasked as armed recce of Pebble Island, Keppel Island, Rat Castle Shanty, Dunnose Head and Spring Point Hill for enemy activity.		
Recce of Pebble Island revealed what was thought to be 2 new Pucara aircraft and these were attacked with rockets and strafe. (Later reports indicated that aircraft were already damaged.)		
Recce of Keppel Island revealed no enemy activity. Sortie terminated for fuel.		

Date:	Mission No:	Pilots:
05 June 82	2F500 A/B	Sqn Ldr JJ Pook Flt Lt M Hare
Base:	Launch:	Land:
HMS Hermes	1650	1740
Weather:		Weapons:
Full cover of stratus at 1,500ft		Nil
Mission:		
Mission tasked as low level photo-recce from Bluff Cove to Hooker Point for land-launched Exocet.		
As No 2, Hare was sent ahead of his leader out of range of AAA to act as a "spoof" using chaff whilst Pook ran in at low level.		
Nothing significant was seen during the run and no SAM/AAA in evidence. The film revealed some defensive positions to the South of Stanley. Regrettably, full photo coverage was not achieved at the heights flown during the run-in.		

Sea fog until the afternoon leaving only a limited time for tasking. Bob Iveson and Tony Flt Lt A Harper fly to the San Carlos FOB and Harris and Rochfort flying the aircraft back having spent a couple of nights with Sid Morris.

The Port San Carlos Forward Operating Base



Sunday 6 June

Combat Report for this day, ~~click~~ [here](#).

Date:	Mission No:	Pilots:
06 June 82	Not recorded	Wg Cdr PT Squire AFC Flt Lt M Beech (No 3(F) Sqn)
Base:	Launch:	Land:
HMS Hermes	1310	1420
Weather:		Weapons:
Rain and low stratus over the Islands		2 CBU's
Mission:		

Mission tasked as a photo/visual recce for land-launched Exocet in the area of Hooker Point. Both aircraft planned to drop weapons on known enemy positions South of Stanley.

The recce run revealed nothing visually nor on film in the area of Hooker Point. Squire dropped CBUs on briefed enemy defensive positions but Beech did not see his target (Battlefield Radar) and did not fire.

Another poor weather day, this time over the Blands and only one operational sortie flown, another sortie looking for the land-launched Exocet which hit Glamorgan as she left the gun line a couple of days earlier. In fact the launcher is mobile but we attack known positions on Stanley Common at the same time as doing a photo-recce. I get very close to some aerals behind Stanley town.

Stanley positions



Monday 7 June

Combat Report for this day, ~~click~~ [here](#).

Date:	Mission No:	Pilots:
07 June 82	3B303 A/B	Sqn Ldr JJ Pook Flt Lt J Rochfort
Base:	Launch:	Land:
HMS Hermes	1200	1300
Weather:		Weapons:
Good		4 2 in RP Pods
Mission:		
<p>Mission had been tasked as a pairs attack on 155mm artillery positions near Sapper Hill. Pook originally tasked to lead another pair to San Carlos FOB. In the event, Pook's No 2 went unserviceable, as did Rochfort's leader, and so Pook and Rochfort were joined up in the air by Hermes. It was fortunate that Pook as aware of the target area and able to assume the lead with the minimum of briefing.</p> <p>Ingress to the target was from the South West giving minimum exposure to SAM/AAA in the Stanley area. Unfortunately this imposed an attack heading into a low early morning sun which made target acquisition impossible. Both aircraft fired at the briefed UTMs and ran out from the target area to the South.</p> <p>No SAM/AAA was seen in the target area by either pilot but on landing, Pook's aircraft was found to have been hit by small arms on the nose cone. A Sea Harrier pilot observed the attack from high level and reported what appeared to</p>		

be a SAM fired at the 2 aircraft as they departed to the South. The SAM was seen to explode before reaching the aircraft.

An excellent weather day but very little tasking.

The strip at San Carlos is causing considerable damage to tyres and again the lack of tasking makes it pointless to keep pilots there overnight. From now on we will merely deploy aircraft as required to sit on ground alert. In the event the SHARs will make far greater use of the FOB - for them it more than doubles their available time on CAP. Our effectiveness once again hampered by poor tasking comms.

Bob Iveson has now flown twice since his ejection and clearly he is in pain. I end him to the doctor and discuss the question of his return to the UK. Naturally he is not keen but the end is in sight with the attacks due to start on the hills West of Stanley tomorrow.

We may even see some or all of the 20 additional groundcrew from Atlantic Causeway.

Groundcrew



Tuesday 8 June

Mark Hare and I are programmed to mount Ground Alert at the FOB. I have aircraft XZ989 which is carrying a number of known defects. On take-off I have to go through the limiter to avoid sinking off the ramp.

At the FOB I misjudge the height going across the side of the pad and lift some of the metal. I overshoot in order to see what damage has been done and at about 90kts there is a marked drop in thrust which is not corrected by pushing through the limiter. As a result of the rate of descent and the fact that I am pointing directly at a Rapier FU, I elect not to eject and the aircraft hits the ground very hard - the undercarriage is broken off and canopy broken. The aircraft, still under power, comes to a rest at the end of the strip, whereupon I shut the engine down and vacate. Sid Morris is quite surprised to see me.

Mark Hare orbits until the pad is clear of metal and then lands, refuels and returns to Hermes. Flt Sgt Cowburn who has spent some time at the FOB starts robbing the aircraft of valuable spares while I catch a chopper down to Fearless in San Carlos Water. There I have a good chat with Wg Cdr Fred Travers who has been manning the ASOC. We discuss the tasking net with regard to communications and priorities.

I spend some time with Captain Jeremy Larkins on the bridge. Clearly he is a superb leader and whenever the ship comes under attack he dons a flack jacket and gives a running commentary over the PA. Plymouth is hit at the entrance to the Sound and limps in for damage control. I spend a couple of hours on the Wardroom floor with Lt Cdr (Surgeon) Rick Jolly. However, he is called away once news is heard of the attack on Galahad and Tristram at Bluff Cove. The plan is for me to transfer to Intrepid after dark and return by sea to Hermes. However, while transferring to Intrepid the plan is cancelled as Intrepid is to go to Bluff Cove to help rescue operations. I therefore return to Fearless where I spend the night.

Ross Boyens and Nick Gilchrist arrive on Hermes with 2 more aircraft. We now have 4 with ALE 40 and the active I-Band jammer and one aircraft capable of firing Shrike ARMs.

Crash landing at Port San Carlos



Wednesday 9 June

Combat Report for this day, ~~click~~ [here](#).

Date:	Mission No:	Pilots:
09 June 82	3B307 A/B	Wg Cdr PT Squire AFC Flt Lt AR Boyens
Base:	Launch:	Land:
HMS Hermes	1200	1245
Weather:		Weapons:
Excellent		4 Pods 2 in RP
Mission:		
Mission tasked from FOB at San Carlos against enemy artillery positions on Northern slopes of Mt Longdon.		
Ingress was a low-level from NW. Both aircraft fired at the UTM although nothing was seen. Small arms fire was seen from the area of Wireless Ridge on the run-out to the NE.		

Date:	Mission No:	Pilots:
09 June 82	3B308 A/B	Sqn Ldr PV Harris Flt Lt MM MacLeod (No 3 (F) Sqn)
Base:	Launch:	Land:
HMS Hermes	1340	1450
Weather:		Weapons:
CAVOK		4 Pods 2 in RP
Mission:		
Mission tasked as a pair against 155mm gun position adjacent to Sapper Hill.		
Ingress to the target was at low level from the North. Although the target was not seen, the UTM was attacked from a level delivery.		

Moderate AAA was seen in the target area and the No 2 aircraft was hit by shrapnel on the egress causing a hydraulic failure on lowering the undercarriage for landing.

First thing in the morning I get a helo lift up to the FOB to fly one of the Ground Alert GR3s. Tony, Flt Lt A Harper, is the unfortunate one who loses his seat and I lead Ross Boyens on his first operational mission.

Back on Hermes that evening, I share a bottle of Glenmorangie with Bob Iveson in sick quarters. He is setting out for UK the following day.

Typical deck scenes



Thursday 10 June

Combat Report for this day, ~~click~~ [here](#).

Date:	Mission No:	Pilots:
10 June 82	2F504 A/B	Wg Cdr PT Squire AFC Flt Lt M Hare
Base:	Launch:	Land:
HMS Hermes	1300	1410
Weather:		Weapons:
CAVOK		4 CBU's
Mission:		
Mission tasked to carry out recce of:		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A - Mt Harriet to Mt Tumbledown to Wireless Ridge • B - Mt Two Sisters to Mt Longdon 		
Task A was carried out by Squire who dropped CBU's on likely enemy positions on Eastern slopes of Tumbledown. Film taken revealed 6 heavy artillery positions in this area and large number of enemy concentrations in Moody Brook area.		
Task B was carried out by Hare who dropped CBU's on likely enemy positions on Mt Longdon. Film taken revealed presence of enemy troops armed with Blowpipe and SAM7.		

Date:	Mission No:	Pilots:
10 June 82	Green Ldr/2	Wg Cdr PT Squire AFC Flt Lt MM MacLeod (No 3(F) Sqn)
Base:	Launch:	Land:
HMS Hermes	1855	1955
Weather:		Weapons:
High and medium level cloud only		4 CBU's
Mission:		
<p>Mission tasked, as a result of analysis of previous recce sortie, against enemy positions 400 yards South of Moody Brook Road.</p> <p>Ingress was at ULL from Estancia House. Search radar heard on RWR audio during run-in. Target area was easily identified but individual targets hard to see in failing light. Briefed UTM struck and several secondary explosions seen from Squire's weapons.</p> <p>Egress was at ULL to the North. Considerable AAA was seen by both pilots during the run-out. In carrying out the attack MacLeod's front canopy screen was hit and badly cracked by small arms fire.</p>		

Date:	Mission No:	Pilots:
10 June 82	Tartan 3/4	Sqn Ldr PV Harris Flt Lt MM MacLeod (No 3 (F) Sqn)
Base:	Launch:	Land:
HMS Hermes	1340	1450
Weather:		Weapons:
Good		Nil
Mission:		
<p>Mission initially tasked for scramble from FOB. No aircraft available at FOB and so mission re-tasked to Hermes for attack in support of Special Forces in Port Howard area.</p> <p>No contact was achieved with FAC owing to change in tasked TOT.</p> <p>Armed recce carried out but nothing seen.</p>		

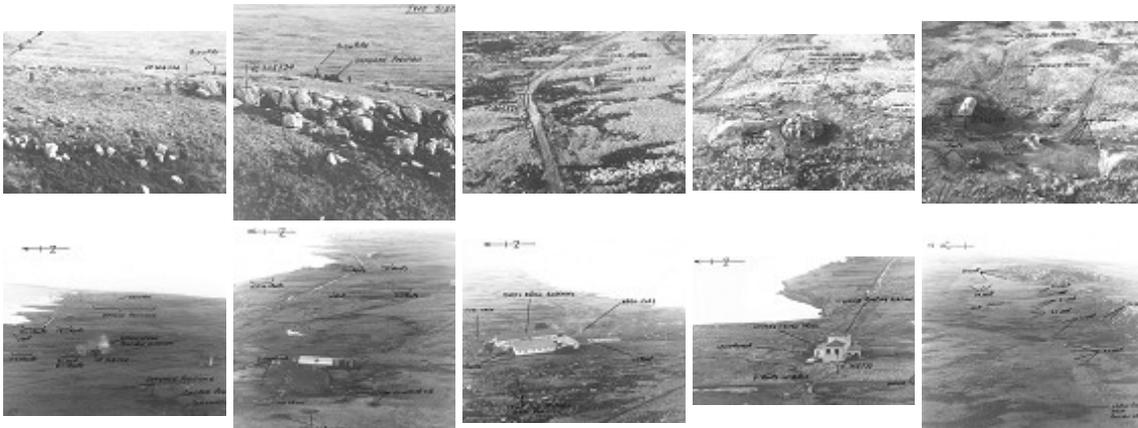
Date:	Mission No:	Pilots:
10 June 82	Green Ldr/2	Flt Lt A Harper

		Flt Lt J Rochfort
Base:	Launch:	Land:
HMS Hermes	1630	1745
Weather:		Weapons:
CAVOK		2 LGBs
Mission:		
Mission tasked as 2 aircraft for LGB trial with LTM.		
Only Harper's aircraft armed with LGB, No 2 for cross-cover support only.		
FAC was not in position owing to communications failure over change in TOT. Weapons were jettisoned during recovery to ship.		

The weather is excellent and we are tasked to carry out a number of BAI sorties in the Harriet/Two Sisters and Moody Brook areas. Tony Flt Lt A Harper lofts 2 LGBs into the sea following an unsuccessful trial as the FAC is not in position.

Very sadly the mission to help at Port Howard was very late in arriving and we were late on the TOT. As a result [unknown name] may have lost his life; yet another poor example of poor comms and tasking organisation.

Battlefield reconnaissance



Friday 11 June

Combat Report for this day, click [here](#).

Date:	Mission No:	Pilots:
11 June 82	3F511	Wg Cdr PT Squire AFC Flt Lt M Hare
Base:	Launch:	Land:
HMS Hermes	1820	1920
Weather:		Weapons:

Showers	4 1,000lb Retard Bombs with variety of delay fuzes
Mission:	
<p>Mission tasked against artillery and HQ positions on Eastern slope of Tumbledown Mt. The selection of weapons was aimed at negating the use of prepared positions if only occupied at night. This is questionable as retard bombs if not instantaneous will bounce and roll beyond the target. In the event the bombs were dropped as freefall as the retard tails had not been properly set. Fortunately they did not have time to arm and fell as UXBs.</p> <p>Ingress to the target was from the South with minimum exposure. However on approaching area, Squire's aircraft was hit by small arms fire and the cockpit holed; his bombs dropped in the enemy barracks area. Hare's bombs also long owing to tail and fuzing problems.</p> <p>On egress, SAM fired at both aircraft. That aimed at the leader fell short but Hare had to take evasive towards his and it exploded some distance above his canopy.</p>	

Date:	Mission No:	Pilots:
11 June 82	Tartan Ldr/2	Flt Lt A Harper Flt Lt N Gilchrist
Base:	Launch:	Land:
HMS Hermes	1120	1235
Weather:		Weapons:
Cloudbase at 4,000ft. Visibility 30 km		2 LGBs
Mission:		
<p>Mission tasked to deliver LGBs using LTM.</p> <p>FACs LTM was unserviceable and so LGBs were delivered using manual 30-degree loft profile into the area of Tumbledown Mt. Results of weapon impact not known.</p> <p>Considerable AAA seen from Stanley but aircraft remained out of range.</p>		

Date:	Mission No:	Pilots:
11 June 82	3B315	Flt Lt AR Boyens (No 2 TWU) Flt Lt J Rochfort
Base:	Launch:	Land:
HMS Hermes	1425	1535
Weather:		Weapons:
CAVOK		2 CBU _s

	Strafe
Mission:	
Mission tasked as a pair against enemy position on Two Sisters Mt.	
Target UTM was attacked with CBU and strafe (Rochfort had to jettison weapons and fuel tanks on take-off). Camp fires and troop movements seen amongst fall of shot.	
No AAA seen. This was the first use of ALE40 chaff and flares dispenser. Boyens was locked up by TWS/I but on release of chaff the radar immediately released.	

Date:	Mission No:	Pilots:
11 June 82	Tartan 3/4	Sqn Ldr JJ Pook Flt Lt M Beech (No 3 (F) Sqn)
Base:	Launch:	Land:
HMS Hermes	1450	1600
Weather:		Weapons:
Good		4 CBU's
Mission:		
Mission tasked against artillery and mortar position on Mt Harriet.		
Ingress was from the South. No AAA or SAMs seen. UTM's were attacked and Beech saw SSV (possible Land Rover) at his target position.		
No radar lock-up but I-Band search radar heard on RWR during run-in.		

Date:	Mission No:	Pilots:
11 June 82	3B316 A/B	Sqn Ldr PV Harris Flt Lt N Gilchrist
Base:	Launch:	Land:
HMS Hermes	1810	1915
Weather:		Weapons:
CAVOK		4 CBU's
Mission:		
Mission tasked as a pair with CBU's against enemy troop and gun positions on Mt Longdon.		
Ingress to the target area was from the North with the aircraft in arrow formation. On unmasking, the leader turned right to attack the Western UTM		

with the No 2 fanning out to attack the Eastern UTM.

After the attack a low level egress was made to the North West. Small arms fire and AAA were observed South of the target.

A day of good weather is spent softening up the defensive positions prior to the assault on Stanley. Despite the use of air defence callsigns our purpose is compromised and we note a significant increase in groundfire, including small arms, AAA and SAM. The next few days could be full of excitement.

During the run-in to a target, my aircraft is holed through the cockpit but fortunately the damage is minimal. Tony Harper and Nick Gilchrist attempt to co-ordinate LGB delivery with LTM but the latter is unserviceable.

Peter Moiles calls on DSSS regarding the rotation of personnel. I very much hope that we all go back together.

Saturday 12 June

Combat Report for this day, ~~click~~ [here](#).

Date:	Mission No:	Pilots:
12 June 82	3B317	Flt Lt AR Boyens (No 2 TWU) Flt Lt M Beech (No 3(F) Sqn)
Base:	Launch:	Land:
HMS Hermes	1145	1250
Weather:	Weapons:	
CAVOK with patches of low stratus	4 CBU's	
Mission:		
Mission tasked as a pair against enemy gun position on rear of Sapper Hill. UTM attacked although nothing seen. AAA seen from Moody Brook area and enemy troops seen during ingress on road South of Mt William. On egress, full use of chaff and flares was made and this seemed to confuse AAA coming from Moody Brook area.		

Date:	Mission No:	Pilots:
12 June 82	3B319	Flt Lt A Harper Flt Lt N Gilchrist
Base:	Launch:	Land:

HMS Hermes	1405	1510
Weather:		Weapons:
CAVOK		4 CBU's Strafe
Mission:		
Mission scrambled for Air Alert and tasked by ASOC for armed recce of road East of Mt Harriet.		
Ingress was at low level from the South West. Troops in the open were attacked with CBU and guns during a single pass. Egress was to the South using chaff and flares.		
Harper's aircraft was hit by 2 small arms rounds and AAA splinters causing superficial damage to the port wing leading edge and airbrake.		

Date:	Mission No:	Pilots:
12 June 82	3B318 A/B	Sqn Ldr PV Harris Flt Lt MM MacLeod (No 3 (F) Sqn)
Base:	Launch:	Land:
HMS Hermes	1405	1515
Weather:		Weapons:
CAVOK with low stratus covering some hill tops to the South		4 CBU's
Mission:		
Mission tasked as a pair against a 155mm gun position on Sapper Hill.		
Ingress to the target was at low level through the hills to the West, approaching Sapper Hill from close abeam Mt Harriet and Mt William. Smoke as seen coming from just South East of the target UTM and an attack was made on this position.		
During the attack, Macleod's aircraft was hit by shrapnel which penetrated the rear equipment bay area of the aircraft and fractured the aft reaction control air pipe. On decelerating to the hover during the recovery, this caused a fire to start in the rear equipment bay and smoke as seen coming from the aircraft. Fuel indications suggested a considerable fuel leak at the same time. MacLeod executed a very quick and professional landing in worrying circumstances. Having landed-on, the fire was extinguished by the groundcrew.		

The push towards Stanley begins. The first day's objectives of Mts Longdon, Two Sisters and Harriet are achieved. Our aircraft are used for CAS. Again, a number of aircraft are hit by small arms, notably Murdo MacLeod whose aircraft is hit in the main equipment bay, severing a reaction control duct. A fire on landing requires swift reactions.

The Captain calls for citations for awards. It is very difficult to differentiate between the commitment shown by all the pilots.

Sunday 13 June

Combat Report for this day, ~~click~~ [here](#).

Date:	Mission No:	Pilots:
13 June 82	3F512 A/B	Wg Cdr PT Squire AFC Flt Lt M Hare
Base:	Launch:	Land:
HMS Hermes	1430	1540
Weather:	Weapons:	
CAVOK	2 LGBs	
Mission:		
Mission tasked in support of final assault on Stanley using FAC with LTM for guidance of LGBs (the first operational mission using this profile). Hare's aircraft was armed with CBU for mutual support.		
Attack profile was 30-degree loft using an IP behind the FLOT. The first bomb fell short by 400 yards because the FAC illuminated the target immediately on weapon release. The second bomb was a direct hit on enemy position.		

Date:	Mission No:	Pilots:
13 June 82	3B513 A/B	Sqn Ldr JJ Pook Flt Lt M Beech (No 3 (F) Sqn)
Base:	Launch:	Land:
HMS Hermes	1850	2000
Weather:	Weapons:	
Half cover of Strato-Cumulus at 2,000ft	2 LGBs	
Mission:		
Mission tasked for LGB delivery using LTM against enemy positions in the area of Tumbledown Mt.		
The run-in was made from Bluff Cove and the first bomb was a direct hit on enemy gun position. The second bomb fell short by 400 yds. Both bombs were delivered from 30-degree loft profile.		
During the attacks. Beech gave cross-cover to his leader. No AAA or SAMs seen, although Super Fledermaus audio was heard.		

Ground forces consolidate before the final push. At last we mount two successful LGB sorties with LTMs achieving DHs against pin-point enemy positions.

The ship's crew present me with a plaque commemorating the battle damage to my aircraft.

Monday 14 June

Combat Report for this day, ~~click~~ [here](#).

Date:	Mission No:	Pilots:
14 June 82	3B514 A/B	Sqn Ldr PV Harris Flt Lt N Gilchrist
Base:	Launch:	Land:
HMS Hermes	1500	1615
Weather:	Weapons:	
Showery with 6/8 Cumulus at 1,500ft	Nil	
Mission:		
Mission tasked as a pair with the leader armed with 2 LGBs and No 2 armed with CBU's. The profile was due to be a low level run-in for 30-degreee loft with the No 2 giving cross-cover support.		
Aircraft were held overhead for 30 minutes as the enemy in the target area of Sapper Hill had surrendered and ceasefire negotiations were underway in Port Stanley.		
Eventually, the mission was aborted and the aircraft recovered to base.		

There is no tasked flying but one pair of aircraft is scrambled for a LGB sortie; they arrive in the target area after a cease-fire is called. We will now have to await the outcome of negotiations.

In the meantime, I have managed to complete a Rubik Cube - once.

Tuesday 15 June

Argentinean forces in the Falkland Islands have surrendered unconditionally but we await the mainland reaction. There would appear to be some 15,000 POWs, which will be a massive task. Gale force winds and tempestuous seas mean no flying for anyone.

The rotation plot indicates that 1(F) will remain until mid-August with the first down going back in mid-July.

Wednesday 16 June

No activity over the islands and still no reaction from the mainland. In any case the weather is poor and there is no flying. When we do start again, we will convert to the air defence role and support the Sea Harriers until they depart.

I do not look forward to the 6-week period ashore; it is going to be particularly cold.

Thursday 17 June

I fly into the Blands in a Sea King to inspect the racecourse as a possible Harrier operating strip. It is far too wet and there are no facilities. There are a number of Argentinean helicopters there(UH-1s and Agusta 109s); the latter look very good. In any event the decision is made that we have to build a strip a strip on the airfield proper. Conditions in the town are filthy.

I visit MV St Edmund, the home for the second half of the squadron. It is tremendous to see the rest of the troops who seem to be in excellent form - if somewhat bored. After their long passage, they are eager to get to work. I sense that General David Thorne has already made his mark on them.

Friday 18 June

A quiet day with only limited flying but it does provide me with my 1,000th hour on Harriers. The new regime in Argentina has still to indicate its position.

In the meantime, the Task Force is marshalled into "Close Line Ahead" (senior ship at the back) to provide a photo opportunity.

Deployment of the GR3s to the airfield now unlikely before 1 July, but Captain is keen to get rid of us so that Hermes can head north.

Sunday 20 June

The weather is fair and we continue flying PIs which are very boring but at least flying. I decide that I must rotate 4 seasoned pilots for 4 on MV St Edmund. As a result, Harris, Flt Lt A Harper, Hare and Rochfort will be replaced. In some ways it will be a sad occasion but necessary and I have spoken to everyone.

We receive a report from Dunnose Head there were minor casualties as a result of Tony, Flt Lt A Harper's bombs dropping long. It was undoubtedly an accident but the Captain will make much out of it in the coming days. His first action is to send back to Northwood a biased signal.

Wednesday 23 June

The Captain has instigated a Unit Inquiry into the Dunnose incident, to be presided over by Cdr Air. Last night the issue was included as an item on the ship's CCTV broadcast. I am highly suspicious of the motivation and I am uncertain as to whether I will be able to see a copy of the final report. I intend to send a working party to Dunnose Head to help clear up if necessary.

The clocks are put 4 hours to save overtime payments for the RFA crews!!

Thursday 24 June

We start the process of compiling the combat reports. At the same time I attempt to get agreement to reduce the number of pilots to 12 total.

Friday 25 June

The next week will be particularly dull. The Command is very cautious over flying in poor weather and all the flexibility in deck operations has gone. Procedures are suddenly rigid and "Charlie Times" are mandatory. It all seems trivial and unnecessarily dogmatic.

Fleet reject any proposal to reduce crews and I attempt to get support from Fred Trowern. At the same time, I commence the writing of the Record of Proceedings.

The Argentinean Government will accept the UN Resolution 502 on 28 June and all the (F) personnel from MV St Edmund go ashore to set up a base at Stanley.

Captain Middleton is increasing the pressure on us to disembark. He has indicated that he will take Hermes close to the Islands to ease the process.

Wednesday 30 June

I hear from Tim Cockerill on DSSS of Keith Holland's accident. It seems so tragic that after our unique experience that he should perish. It is terrible news and being so far away, and mail taking days if not weeks to get a letter to Angela, it is hard to know what one can do.

Thursday 1 July

I go ashore by Sea King to visit Stanley airfield. The conditions are very primitive and fuel and communications are inadequate to support an operational capability. It is a battle to get resources ashore.

Ship's Commander, John Locke, offers me a case of NZ whisky if we will go in the next three days at cost price. I squeeze him into letting me have 3 cases - free - if we go by the 4th.

Hermes and Invincible put on a flypast of 16 Harriers to mark the departure of Admiral Woodward. Jerry Pook leads the GR3s while I watch in Stanley.

Sunday 4 July

The day of disembarkation has arrived. The morning's briefing is preceded by an exchange of plaques and farewells with Captain and Cdr Air. We flypast in "Flying One" before landing at Stanley where conditions are better but still pretty meagre. There are heavy snow showers but the snow covering is a considerable blessing for it covers the mess left behind by the Argentineans.

We will spend the next few weeks steadily improving the facilities. For the moment power generation for lighting etc, is the major problem. The godsend are the arctic heaters for the tents without which conditions would, indeed, be miserable.

Monday 5 July

Snow showers prevent any routine flying but we hold 2 aircraft at RS10.

In the evening, we all go down to Sir Bedivere, where most of the aircrew are accommodated, to have a drink with those who are departing tomorrow. The teamwork has been marvellous and I would much like to be going back with them, but I have the other half of the Squadron to lead and that is a privilege. It has been a remarkable experience and we shall have a very special Guest Night when we all get home. We must ensure that all those we have borrowed are not forgotten.

Tuesday 6 July

The first Sea Harriers from Invincible arrive to assist us in holding Q. They also issue an invitation to visit and dine with 80 on Saturday night.

Forty two personnel of 3(F) Sqn arrive to start the handover. Of the aircrew remaining, only two are from 1(F). Gavin Mackay flies for the first time in weeks and he will leave on 8 July.

Extensive visit programme in the offing starting on 7 July. Stn Cdr for Stanley - Bill Wratten - due to arrive 10 July. At that stage, I will relinquish the post of senior RAF officer and the true process of building a properly structured station will commence.

On the Saturday (10 July) we visit Invincible for a splendid evening and stay the night. I meet Prince Andrew (twice!!).

Monday, 12th to Sunday, 18th July

Gp Captain Bill Wratten holds his first O Group on the Monday morning. He has no specific news from the UK. There are doubts, however, that the rest of the roulement will go according to plan.

The weather remains cold with frequent snow showers. On 13 July, members of the Welsh Guards are clearing snow from the runway when we scramble a GR3. The Sidewinder AAMs jettison on take-off causing serious injuries to 11 soldiers. I watch it from the hill beside the ops wagon and race down to be of assistance. A SAS NCO, waiting for the C-130, sets up communications with HQ BFFI in Stanley to summons additional medical assistance.

There will be a Board of Inquiry in due course but I secure permission for the pilot to remain flying. I also secure continued authority to fly t 100ft over the islands and start to produce documented concept of operations for the Harrier Detachment.

Monday, 19th to Sunday, 25th July

A Press Party visit on the 19th and we mount a flypast for the inhabitants of Goose Green.

On Tuesday 20th, General David Thorne visits the detachment. He is a most charismatic man. The troops view him in awe.

The weather is superb - extremely cold with snow still on the ground but beautiful clear air. BBC/ITV visit us on the 21st including a dawn sequence of reveille, which is not so much to the liking of some of the troops.

On Friday we pen the squadron beer tent just in time for the following morning sees the weather change. The wind lifts the taxi way and engine test-pan. Peter Dodworth completes the Bofl into the Sidewinder incident and Mr Jeremy Lett arrives from AIB re. my accident at San Carlos!!

To the cathedral on Sunday evening which marks 2 weeks away from home.

Monday, 26th to Sunday, 31st July

The week starts well with fair weather and the news that Gerry Honey will relieve me for a few weeks in early August. Harry Benson from Time Magazine arrives in Stanley and we agree to set up a photograph of a GR3 hovering over Stanley Harbour. This is arranged for the Tuesday but, in the event, poor weather and poor positioning of the Lynx helicopter results in a disappointing photograph.

Wednesday was a disaster. Strong winds blow down three of the hangarettes and damage aircraft in the process. We are fortunate that no one is injured.

Strong winds throughout the rest of the week prevent a planned visit to Invincible and so MCSU put on special supper. The standard of their cooking has been excellent and they provide a great morale boost.

Sunday, 1st to Friday, 6th August

I spend Monday night on Invincible and return in foul weather the following day to greet AOC 1 Group - Air Vice Marshal Don Hall - who has arrived for a brief visit. On the Wednesday, I accompany him in a Gazelle to visit landmarks around the Islands, including San Carlos, Goose Green and Bluff Cove. We lunch on Sir Bedivere.

Gerry Honey arrives on 5 August. The weather is pretty kind and after drinks on Sir Bedivere he sleeps not a wink in the tent which threatens to collapse at any moment. Another aircraft is damaged overnight.

The handover is completed on the Friday morning and I depart on time in the C-130 bound for Ascension. However, about halfway there is a fuel transfer problem and we have to divert to Montevideo. There is a possibility that all the documents will be seized and we are instructed that all classified papers are to be jettisoned into the sea. I am carrying the original Combat Reports, which I cannot give up. Fortunately we are not searched and spend a quiet couple of hours in the warm night air while the Hercules is refuelled.

At Ascension the VC10 has waited for us and we set off, albeit a few hours late, for Brize Norton. There, the AOC 18 Group - Air Marshal Sir John Curtis - and the Station Commander - Pat King - are there to meet me as are Dad and Betty who have travelled down from Devon.

After an hour or so we set off on the last leg to Wittering in an Andover of No 115 Sqn. There are just the 3 of us on board - Pat King, myself and Bill Mahon. At Wittering, Carolyn, Christopher and Richard are still up along with most of 1(F) for an impromptu party.

November 1982

I return to Stanley on 15 October for a further 2 months before being relieved by OC 4 Sqn - Tony MacKeon.

During that time, the F4s of 23 Sqn arrive and take over responsibility for the defence of the Islands.

On my final sortie (6 Nov), I have to eject following engine failure. I am picked out from Stanley harbour by the SAR Sea King. Medical examination reveals no back damage and once the Bofl is complete, I return to UK.

Postscript Spring 1985

I go back to the islands again in the Spring of 1985, shortly after the opening of Mount Pleasant Airfield, as PSO to AOCinC Strike Command - ACM Sir David Craig. It is fascinating to see how things have changed, and yet the Falklands themselves remain quite unaltered.

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