

23 May 0630 – 21 May 1982. British troops land at Port San Carlos and Pebble Island. Amphibious group supported by warships using NGS attack Port San Carlos and Pebble Island. Firm Bridge head achieved. Argentine garrison surrender after little resistance.

So far a quiet night though we have been on the look out for prowling submarines, "Willie" was airborne providing a screen for the force. So far our casualties have been light some wounded and 20 missing, believed killed on the ARDENT, they have been transferred to the CANBERRA. She is now operating as a hospital ship and POW camp for the Argies, I hope it remains that way. The Argies can never win.

1730 "HANDS TO ACTION STATIONS" air raid warning red, super entendant closing the ship, we move quickly into top gear, don anti-flash, with action man kit at the short trail. I make my way to actions stations, in minutes we are closed down to 1Z. The 4.5" fires chaff delta, 3 rockets fire to provide a chaff Charlie screen, we manoeuvre into position protecting the support ship, seacat and seaslug range onto the incoming bearing, we are ready.

1800 No sign of the enemy, we revert back to 2Y, meanwhile ashore things are hotting up, the Argie air force is making a strike at our positions, harriers are engaged in heavy combat and shooting down mirage fighters. Our ground forces are hitting back now. Rapier is downing aircraft as well as the infantry using blowpipe. We have heard that ANTELOPE has received some damage but only slight. BROADSWORD has also brought down an Argie plane with seawolf.

2300 "HANDS TO ACTION STATIONS". Here we go again, the officer of the watch saw a large explosion on the horizon. It is believed that a harrier met with an accident while taking off, her 1000lb bombs exploded, but we have not received any further news.

24 May All has quietened down now, support ships have gone in under the support of ARROW and ALACRITY to off load heavy equipment, tanks and armoured personnel carriers and other weapons.

RAS(L) OLMEDA – 173 tons

It has been very quiet for us out here but there has been some air activity ashore. The Argies have mounted 2 air raids about, 12 aircraft in all, of which 8 have been shot down. It is understood that harriers intercepted the first raid of which 3 Mirages were shot down, the other shed its load and headed home. The other wave mounted an attack on the San Carlos area and were destroyed by Rapier and seacat missiles, one was seen limping back home trailing smoke. Not such a good note, the ANTELOPE caught fire after the attempt to defuse a bomb onboard failed, we have no casualty figures as yet. She finally sank and her crew have been transferred to CANBERRA and other ships.

Meanwhile SAS have gone in on Weddle Island and other areas to blow up ammunition and fuel dumps. Ground attack harriers have bombed some small airfields and the army have taken Darwin and surrounded Goose Green. ALACRITY and ARROW engaged targets with 4.5" guns.

VINCENTO DE MAYO
25th OF MAY

We have had what can only be classed as a horrific encounter today. It seems that one minute we are doing so well, then we receive a bloody nose. Air raids have been building up all day. COVENTRY and BROADSWORD have come under constant attack. They have shot down 3 more aircraft, but in a later attack COVENTRY was hit and sank almost immediately. We have received no news, only that survivors are being picked up by BROADSWORD who has also received some damage. This seems to be the normal routine over the last few days, no news of what is happening ashore, just the fact we are losing ships at an alarming rate and we shoot down their aircraft.

1940 "HANDS TO ACTION STATIONS", air raid warning red.

Within two minutes ATLANTIC CONVEYOR has been hit by exocet and another splashed into the sea astern of us. No warning what so ever, we have been caught napping again, no harriers there to help us. AMBUSCADE detected the super entandard, but by the time we all closed up they had fired their deadly cargo, we fired chaff, both 3 inch rocket and 4.5 inch. We now firmly believe that this saved our bacon, but not the poor ATLANTIC CONVEYOR. She had no protection.

2010 We stand down, in the mess afterwards there are so many saddened faces, human life is so cheap in war, what's it worth no one gives a damn. Several minutes later we are told that we are to proceed inshore at high speed and engage Port Stanley air field. Sweet Revenge.

26 May We close the enemy shore line in darkness.

0220 "HANDS TO ACTION STATIONS". I was already at action stations as I was on watch.

0350 We have closed the coastline. Whoosh, the sea slug fires in its surface to surface role, seconds later the 4.5" guns bark their wrath, thump, thump, thump a good rate of fire this. Our intention is to flatten the godamn place, reduce it to ashes, that's why we have been sent in.

We have completed our NGS, approx 145 rounds fired, scattered over the target areas. It looks as if we stirred up quite a hornets nest, they have engaged us with shore battery, but we increase speed and are now leaving the coastline.

0435 Revert to 2Y

It has been a relatively quiet day for us out here in the task force. ATLANTIC CONVEYOR is still burning but she remains afloat. We cannot afford to lose that ship, she was carrying vital spares and spare aircraft, how could we have left so vital a ship with in aircraft range?

27 May We are still waiting for our RAS(A) and RAS(L), but still no sign of these events taking place. Much work is going on inshore, stores being landed,

landing pads for harriers, fuel and ammunition is being ferried in. COVENTRY is still afloat, but in an upside down position, her keel is visible there is talk of sinking her with gunfire as she is blocking the entrance to San Carlos.

0300 At last the ship takes on fuel.

1000 RAS(A) and RAS(S) with REGENT including 148 shells.

During the afternoon air raids build up over the islands, another 3 Argie planes shot down and a couple more splashed. We lost 1 harrier, shot down by ground fire, but the pilot ejected safely, 1 more plane was slightly damaged. We have been detached to carry out another NGS and we are this time accompanied by two other ships. Some news on the ATLANTIC CONVEYOR, she had an explosion onboard as a result of the fire spreading to ammunition and she broke in half, the bow section has sunk but we believe the stern section is still afloat. Ashore the Commandoes and Paras are now beginning to advance on the Argie positions and much work is still going on as quickly as possible, the weather is still holding. BRILLIANT has gone to get repairs done to her Seawolf and exocet.

28 May We are now closing the coast.

0200 "HANDS TO ACTION STATIONS"

This morning we shall be firing two Seaslug and 50 rounds of HE. AVENGER and ALACRITY will be firing about 100 salvos each, we will be engaging several targets, radar installations and gun emplacements.

We have closed the coast line, Whoosh! Seaslug leaves the launcher and heads inland towards the Argie positions. The 4.5 gun now engages salvos of 10 tonight. Whoosh! A second Seaslug leaves the launcher, we are remaining just off the shore line whilst AVENGER and ALACRITY fire their salvos on to the Stanley areas. Each fire 100 rounds of HE and Starshell. ALACRITY's Lynx is doing the spotting and several targets have been hit. Meanwhile our troops inshore are advancing over the difficult terrain and taking Argie positions. Its looking good but there is heavy fighting yet to come. Having completed our NGS, we are leaving the coast line to rejoin the task force.

0520 Fall out from actions stations revert to 2Y

Our troops are fanning out and are now re-possessing more ground, but heavy fighting is going on. The weather hampered the Argie air force today, but we believe that some of their aircraft that did attack were splashed by Rapier,

29 May A quiet night for the task force, apart from AVENGER and ALACRITY who went in for NGS. We have had a reasonably quiet day today, this enabled us to complete some minor repairs and sort ourselves out. A signal has come onboard, we are to proceed inshore early tomorrow for NGS.

RAS(L) TIDESPING - 202 tons diesel

20 tons avcat

Some information on inshore activities. The 2nd Paras have done very well, they have taken Port Darwin and surrounded Gose Green, they have taken

nearly 1000 prisoners of war and these are becoming a problem. The Paras were heavily outnumbered to start with and they accomplished a considerable feat. The casualties have been very light on our side, 15 dead and 34 wounded. Unfortunately the Colonel and other officers were killed when the helicopter they travelled in was brought down by blowpipe. Amongst the POW taken were some high ranking officers, that's even a better blow against the Argies. The offensive is now pushing further East to take Stanley, but there is much hard work still to be done. The marines to the North have also taken and secured the North of the island. More enemy aircraft splashed today by Rapier missile.

- 30 May Stop Press! The ARGONAUT has finally dealt with her unexploded bomb and she is now leaving the objective area to rejoin the task force. I believe she will be going home as she only has one boiler operational. We have now closed the coast line. AMBUSCADE is about one hour behind us due to bad weather.
- 0130 "HANDS TO ACTION STATIONS". We close up in a matter of minutes and have assumed the ready position. Anti-flash on and hoods pulled up over our faces.
- 0205 The guns open fire and start to bombard Stanley airfield, we have woken the Argies up, they are engaging us with artillery fire from shore, the shots are landing in the water.
- 0229 Whoosh! Off goes Seaslug, if it doesn't land on target, it will provide a comedy show for the Argies ashore, it's a heap of old junk anyway. We now move down the coast to engage some more enemy positions, the SAS are ashore in this particular area with an NGS spotter. They have requested our help so as they can give accurate fire on top of the Argie positions, who have been giving a little bother.
- 0420 Fall out from actions stations.
RAS(L) – OLNA – 108 tons
We have been told to proceed to the holding area to complete essential repairs. Boiler work, Port shaft, cooper roller bearing and other niggly jobs.
- 1730 "HANDS TO ACTION STATIONS". Air raid warning red. P[ossible super entendant bearing 180. We put up chaff. Two minutes later AM39 exocet heading for the ship. Brace! Brace! Brace!
"OH MY GOD! We are done for, we are all lying spread eagled on the deck waiting for the worst. Several anxious minutes pass, it is apparent that CHAFF saved us, quick reaction from the operations room and from the bridge by putting the missile on the ships head, the missile splashed into the sea. We are lucky once again. These close shaves are making us all feel years older.
- 1800 Fall out from actions stations, air threat is now yellow. I zoom off up to the mess and put 3 tots into a glass and knock them back, "ah that feels much better".
Meanwhile ashore some ships have been coming and going out of the objective area. We now know that 1400 POW were taken at Goose Green by

600 paras. More Argie aircraft shot down by EXETER and Rapier missiles.

- 31 May We have now shut down one boiler and commenced defect work in the STR. Also work on the port cooper roller bearing is well under way as are countless other jobs.
We have had some reports from ashore now, some of them conflicting with the BBC World service. We claim 1200 POW amongst them some high ranking officers. There have also been some reports of ill treatment to the locals, locked up in a hall for thirty days without care, they were in a bad way when they were found by the 2nd paras. Their homes had been looted and ransacked, furniture and the settlements have been badly damaged. Another Argie trick is to show the white flag as soon as they come under fire, when the troops come to accept the surrender the Argies shoot at them. It makes us feel as though we should not take any more prisoners if that is the way they want to play it.
The RAF Vulcans went in again early today, backed up by harriers. ALACRITY went in last night for another NGS.
- 1 June Work has continued throughout the night to complete defect rectification. Meanwhile ashore our troops have advanced to within 12 miles of Port Stanley, fierce fighting is going on around Mount Kent. CARDIFF, AMBUSCADE and ALACRITY have gone close inshore to provide gunfire support. Further harrier strikes are continuing with news the construction of Goose Green airfield is nearly complete also San Carlos; more troops and supplies have been taken into the bridgehead area. Hercules C130 splashed by harrier and brought down plus one A4 skyhawk, one harrier returning from patrol got into mechanical difficulties, pilot ejected safely.
- 2 June We are still out in the holding area and repairs have now been made to the 4.5 turret and the hoist, it was found that the breech was badly corroded in places due to salt water entering the barrels in heavy seas. Starboard boiler work is continuing and is nearing completion, this should be back on line later.
RAS(L) – TIDESPING – 168 tons
Gurkhas and Welsh guards have been landed to the North and are making their way towards Stanley. We have pushed the Argies into the Stanley area now, they hold only an area of 12 miles around Stanley, Mount Kent and other high grounds have been taken and our artillery is now engaging the enemy.
Goose Green is still being cleaned up and booby traps were triggered off killing Argies and some of our men. The Argies have become more co-operative about this and are telling us where the rest are in that area. One evaporator has broken down but effective repairs are being carried out on this.
We are expecting a RAS(S) With FORT GRANGE during the night, food and other essential items we require.

3 June The delayed RAS(S) has gone ahead overnight. During the day we have organised the logistic ships, got them into some reliable order and distributed mail to them. Meanwhile ashore the troops have been pushing forward very hard and it seems only a matter of days now before the final push into Stanley but the Argies will need softening a little first. Radar installations have been hit by the RAF with Vulcan bombers.

Argentine losses to date

<u>Helicopters</u>	<u>Aircraft</u>	<u>Ships</u>
12 Puma 1 Bell 1 Chinook	29 Mirage 25 Skyhawks 13 Pucara 2 Canberra 2 Skyvan	Belgrano Santa Fe Narwhal Tug/PC Supply Ship Monson 2 F.P.B 1 Corvette

4 June This is our fourth day here in the holding area, where we have at last got the merchantmen into some kind of order. The Admiral is very pleased with what we have done, so we have been told to stay put and continue the good work. We have been loaned a couple of Wessex 5 helicopters which we have put to good use deploying stores around the fleet. Meanwhile ashore, the advance is continuing with the capture of three Argie patrols, 5 Brigade infantry are pressing their advance forward to the front with 8 Battalion Commando moving into position. INTREPID and SIR TRISTRAM are moving into Bluff Cove to unload supplies, more troops and equipment. Another LCT will be coming in from the North, into Elephant Bay to support the thrust from the North. Air activity has been sparse on both sides due to bad weather and visibility being poor. A Vulcan over on a raid got short of fuel on the way home and landed in Brazil. It was released and allowed to return home.

5 June A quiet night so far, most people are being stood down from their defence

station, but not us, we keep plodding along.

INTREPID and SIR TRISTRAM have disembarked our friendly and affiliated comrades the Welsh Guards.

EXETER is going in for NGS in the Stanley area with a type 21 as support, who will later link up with INTREPID to cover as air support.

We as logistics control ship have done such a good job, praise has been heaped onto us for the way we have got the merchant ships into a good order, given them a better turn over and the supplies have reached shore much quicker than before. We have been pushing supplies about all day and we look more like a fleet auxiliary than a Destroyer.

Batteries of Rapier missiles have been moved forward to the front line position to protect the advance this will give them better cover when bad weather prevails. The Argies launched another on Mount Kent this morning but their bombing left a lot to be desired, they were off target, lets hope it stays that way.

- 6 June** GLAMORGAN out in the logistics area, continuing to supply the Task Force and control the merchant ships and keep them in order.
RAS(L) – TIDEPOOL – 280 tons
1136 gallons lub oil
Ashore the big push did not come last night but the pressure was kept up with CARDIFF and EXETER providing another NGS with the army pushing patrols.
The Gurkhas and Welsh Guards land and push forward, Port Stanley is virtually surrounded now.
The ship has now reverted back to 1 in 4 watch system with a minimum defence capability.
- 7 June** Very low key, we are still directing supplies to other members of the task force.
Ashore Welsh and Scots Guards have gone in to relieve some of the paras, this enables us to keep our troops fresh and bring them in from the cold, one thing the Argies cannot do. We still keep the pressure on and waiting for the big push.
ARROW and ACTIVE NGS all last night, so have CARDIFF and EXETER, they claim to have shot down an Argie Canberra with Seadart.
- 8 June** GLAMORGAN still patrolling the logistics area with the merchant men, Canberra and RFA's giving them protection.
Ashore the Gurkhas are moving South on East Falkland and taking ground each day now. Stanley has been completely surrounded, the Argies are virtually cut off. NORLAND has come out of the objective area loaded with Argie prisoners, they will be shipped off to Uruguay very shortly. The Argie air force attacked again today, PLYMOUTH shot down a Skyhawk with Seadart.
During another attack PLYMOUTH was hit but sustained only light damage.

Combat air patrol on a routine flight spotted 4 Mirage and engaged them, all 4 were splashed, some of the force have been detached to engage the shoreline tonight with 4.5 guns.

- 9 June We are now back in defence watches as a result of the bombing of an American tanker some 500 miles North of the Falkland islands. They tried this ploy last week against one of our own tankers, they were not very successful. However, this time they achieved a hit, the trouble is the tanker was American and crewed by Italians. They used a Hercules rolling the bombs out of the hold doors at the rear of the plane. Then they came back to attack with rockets, one of our survey boats has gone to assist. Meanwhile we have recovered an airdrop and are proceeding inshore to deliver the supplies to the ships. On land, the Gurkhas are advancing South, 5 Brigade have captured Fitzroy Settlement, air raids have continued all day, two of the SIR boats have been hit and one is on fire with an LCT damaged also. PLYMOUTH's damage was more severe than first thought, she has lost the use of her 4.5 gun and mortar HE10 with some fires aft, but these are understood to have been brought under control. PLYMOUTH will now leave the objective area and come into the logistics area for repairs. More Skyhawks and Mirage fighter aircraft have been brought down today. Rapier batteries and artillery are now positioned ashore for better defence.
- 10 June Another day of moving stores around the fleet and delivering mail which arrived onboard. Another stores drop expected this evening, including 2 members of the SAS. Rather them than me landing in this water. TIDESPING is completing her pump over from one of the large tankers and will be supplying us later. Ashore the army have been probing the Argie defences and gathering information. The stores drop arrived on time, with 2 SAS, who are now inshore, they don't seem to waste any time these blokes, in the water one minute, on our deck and off again all within 10 minutes.
- 11 June 0600 – RAS(L) – TIDESPING – 316 tons
20 tons avcat
The Commander made his normal speech at 0750 this morning, to tell us what had happened ashore plus any other news that he has received. We received a signal overnight telling us that we are required to close the coastline to do NGS tonight and tomorrow night, the reason for this is that for the last 3 or 4 days the troops have been building up around Mount Kent and Mount Challenger. This is our front line on the Eastern side of the East Falkland island and now they are ready to advance further towards Port Stanley. We have been told that we are going in to bombard Stanley and surrounding area with 300 rounds of HE between 0030 and 0630 tomorrow

morning.

The early part of the day has been our helicopter in the air delivering all the stores that we received in the air drop last night, this task being completed we detach at speed, joining up with the main task force at about 1300.

During the afternoon we had a slight amount of trouble with one of the gas turbines, this being sorted out we detach again and start to close the coast for our NGS role.

The amount of fuel taken onboard since the second of April is 5647 tons, this means that we have spent approx £1,129,400 on fuel and that is just for one ship in the task force.

2330 "HANDS TO ACTION STATIONS" assume State 1 condition Z. Here we go again, but we cant grumble, it is the first time since the 30th May. We are closing the coast line around Port Stanley with YARMOUTH and AVENGER for NGS.

12 June 0005 We are now in position waiting for orders from ashore, we do not know what our targets will be at the moment.

0045 The 4.5 guns bark their wrath over Port Stanley, Thump! Thump! Thump! As the HE whistles its way land wards.

It is going to be a long night as we are expecting to carry out NGS until about 0600.

0630 Fall out from actions stations. I rush up to the mess, strip off and go and start a bath and dhoby.

0636 BANG! We have been hit by a missile port side aft. "HANDS TO ACTION STATIONS" everyone runs like hell and closes up. The missile hit the hanger doors and exploded inward and downwards, the hanger and the helicopter are a write-off, the main galley is destroyed.

The stokers did very well, there was no panic and the fire fighting was carried out quickly and efficiently.

But "OH MY GOD", now there are so many tired and long faces onboard, because of the loss of 13 lives, it is unbelievable.

All fires were under control and out within four hours, I hope to Christ they send us home now as we have no Seacat, no Seaslug and no 4.5 gun.

The co-operation of all departments this morning was fantastic, I think just about everyone took some part in the emergency and their help was very much appreciated by the main emergency people, the Stokers.

1800 We are now steaming back to the logistics area, hopefully for a few repairs by FMG who are on Stena Seaspread and on our way home.

I don't want another day like this as long as I live and I would not wish it on my worst enemy.

At 2000 we are reverting back to 1 in 4 watches, at last some time in bed, I have had 3 hours sleep in the last 48 hours, but I am not the only one, most of the stokers are the same.

Included in the people who were killed was my new found friend from Bridport L/Ck SAMBLES.

After we had secured the ship and made it safe, we had a signal from the

admiral, which said:

"WHILE I AM VERY SAD AT THE CASUALTY LIST, I AM GLAD TO NOTE THAT YOU ARE THE FIRST SHIP IN THE WORLD TO SURVIVE AN EXOCET HIT",

- 13 June** After the turmoil of yesterday, we have a reasonably quiet day today, out in the logistic area i/c again.
We have been busy clearing up the mess in the hanger, galley and other places that were struck by shrapnel or the blast from the missile. We are expecting an air drop of stores and 54 SAS at 1700 today, we are spending most of the day alongside STENA SEASPREAD the FMG ship.
- 1530** We slip from STENA SEASPREAD and make our way to the airdrop area in company with ANDROMEDA and the tug IRISHMAN, we have to make our way 10 miles north before we are in the area.
- 1700** A C130 Hercules arrives and we learn that the second aircraft had to turn back for some reason, this aircraft circles and drops stores on one side and personnel on the other. The SAS start falling out of the plane, they look just like action men jumping out in waves of 10. Only 28 of the personnel are on this plane.
As we were alongside STENA SEASPREAD we were all invited onboard for lunch, the lunch was fantastic we had steak, chips and peas followed by black forest gateaux and coffee.
We made our way back to the logistic area after the airdrop, but found that the weather has got worse and we are unable to go alongside STENA SEASPREAD, ashore we have been told that the ground forces have taken more hills and are now in a position to look down over Port Stanley.
- 14 June** We are still clearing up the mess in the ship and overnight it started to pour down in rain which hampered the welding. FMG are doing a fantastic job of patching us up, but we have still got two of our missile systems out of working order. Not a great deal else happening. The troops ashore are still pushing forward towards Port Stanley.
- 1730** White flag hoisted over Stanley, the Argies have surrendered. The problem we are going to have now is the transportation of POW back to a neutral country Uruguay.
- 15 June** Again we are still clearing up the mess and trying to find some calm weather so as FMG can complete the welding of the patch on our flight deck. I was called out at about 4 o'clock this morning to pump out water from where it had been pouring down in rain and the sea has been coming over the flight deck and straight down the hole.
We have been told that 15000 prisoners have been taken on the Falkland Islands, now we have the mammoth task of clearing the troops from the islands, the CANBERRA has gone in to remove the first 5000. At 0100 the surrender agreement was signed by the two commanders on the island.

- 16 June** All the rubble has now been removed from the ship now and it just remains to scrub, scrub, scrub bulkheads, deckheads and decks, the chefs have cleaned the steam coppers and steam oven and are now using them to make soup and things The chefs have done a fantastic job, coking for 450 in a galley which was built to cook for 40.
At 1700 we tried to do a stern RAS(L) but this was scrubbed round after 2 attempts we ended up doing a QRC. RAS(L) Port side with TIDEPOOL, we had got down that low that we had to take on 433 tons.
The weather has been so rough over the last few days that the FMG personnel have had to stay onboard; they finally managed to get back to their parent ship tonight.
We have started to raise a fund for the dependants of the people killed, this is beside the Atlantic fund, so far we have raised £9700 and are still thinking of more ways to help.
- 17 June** We have spent all day looking for a calm and sheltered area where we can go, so as FMG can finish off the welding and make us watertight.
It seems from the news that the Argentine does not want us to deliver their troops back to Argentina but take them to Uruguay. The first batch of prisoners have now been taken onboard the CANBERRA ready for transportation to the mainland.
We also heard that the president has resigned over the whole performance.
Late last night we received 42 bags of mail from our loved ones at home. Oh God, I wish we were alongside the wall in Pompey and going home every night.
We received onboard with the mail a film of the cup final which we have been watching tonight, we also have film of the replay which we will see on Saturday.
- 18 June** We wake up this morning to some good news, we have been told that after we complete all our repairs we shall be heading for home at long last.
The ship is steaming to Port San Carlos with STENA SEASPREAD and ACTIVE, so as we can complete our repairs in the lee of the land. The G6 and the port seacat are now back in working order.
- 1520** We have now anchored at Port San Carlos and STENA SEASPREAD has come alongside us.
On the brow of the hills all around us can be seen observation posts and Rapier missile sights that the army set up on landing.
By far the best news of today is the fact that we are to return home in company with PLYMOUTH, we expect to be away from the area sometime on Monday. As we have now received this signal I have decided to terminate my diary as from tonight.

Acknowledgement - Source RN Communications Branch Museum.