



ORDEAL BY EXOCET

**HMS GLAMORGAN
AND THE
FALKLANDS WAR 1982**

IAN INSKIP

IAN INSKIP served in HMS *Glamorgan* as Navigating Officer during the Falklands War in 1982 and in that position, had, perhaps, better insight into the conduct of the naval operations of the conflict than most. He left the ship at the end of the War to become Staff Navigating Officer to the Flag Officer Sea Training before being promoted Commander. His postings as Commander included appointments as Fleet Navigating Officer at Northwood. He completed his active service in Naval Security.

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HMS *Glamorgan* and the
Falklands War 1982

Commander Ian Inskip RN



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Foreword

By Captain M E Barrow, DSO, Royal Navy

Ian Inskip and I joined *Glamorgan* at about the same time in 1980. In the intervening years we became, and have remained, firm friends; it is a great pleasure to be invited to contribute a foreword to his book.

I soon learned that Ian's somewhat piratical appearance, his wry smile and buccaneering 'press on' attitude concealed a most likeable, professional, painstaking and efficient personality whom I came to respect and trust. His considerable navigational expertise and experience, together with his sense of fun and physical stamina, proved invaluable to us all, especially during the stresses of war.

Ordeal by Exocet is Ian's – and others' – tale of *Glamorgan* during the time he was her Navigating Officer; a detailed account of the comings and goings of our 500 company and, unusually also, snapshots of what our families were doing 'back home'.

I warmly commend this story about the people in just one of the many ships and units deployed in 1982 to regain the sovereignty of the Falkland Islands.

Michael Barrow
Captain, Royal Navy
President, *Glamorgan* 1982 Association.
June 2001

Author's Note

The Task Force used GMT for both operational and domestic reasons and those times are used in the book. This gave sunrise at about 1100 GMT (11 am) and sunset at 1900 GMT (7 pm). It allowed breakfast and domestic routines to be completed before the air threat went up at dawn, and allowed the evening meal to take place once the air threat had lessened and before we went inshore for the night's dirty work. Operationally, the RAF worked in GMT as their aircraft crossed several time zones and it avoided confusion if everyone was in the same time zone.

It is worth making the point that we were operating in 16 hours of darkness and only 8 hours of daylight and that weather conditions in winter in the South Atlantic are considerably worse than those in the North Atlantic at similar latitudes. Colder temperatures and higher wind speeds are due to the absence of the warming effects of the Gulf Stream and the relative lack of land masses.

Leading Weapons Electrical Mechanic on HMS *Glamorgan*, James Spence, wrote in his copy of *Up the Line to Death - The War Poets 1914-1918* the following poignant lines shortly after the ship was hit by Exocet missile, 12 June 1982.

Blinding light, searing heat,
We step forward, our Maker greets
Us with a smile says, 'Welcome boys,
You'll play no more with lethal toys!'

Friend and foe, enemy, ally,
The politicians watch you die
Then speak words with frozen tongue
'What's gone is gone, what's done is done.'

Gone now husband, sons and brothers,
Leaving widows, sisters, mothers.
Where lies the blame for all their sorrow?
Read it in the news tomorrow!

Soldier, sailor, airman dying
Ever after mothers trying
To understand decisions made
That sent their sons to early graves.

Introduction

At 0636 on 12 June 1982, the faintest of ‘blips’ appeared on *Glamorgan*’s bridge radar display. A little over 30 seconds later, an Exocet missile clipped the side of the upper deck, exploded and blasted holes down through two decks. The missile body penetrated the hangar door and hit the fully fuelled and armed Wessex helicopter inside. A second later the helicopter blew up and a massive explosion, with accompanying fireball, erupted from the hangar. No ship had ever survived a hit by Exocet and those watching from nearby consorts believed that *Glamorgan* had blown up and gone the way of *Hood*. Our bows then emerged from the smoke, ‘going like a bat out of hell’, and the battle to save the ship began.

In 1982, the Cold War with Russia was at its height and the Royal Navy had for decades prepared to counter the Soviet threat. To many it came as something of a surprise to find ourselves heading south to fight Argentina, a country with whom we traditionally had maintained good relations. Despite the fact that the Royal Navy had fought and won famous naval battles off the Falklands in both the First and Second World Wars, few people knew much about the Falklands and even fewer understood the controversial claims made by both Britain and Argentina to the islands. These claims were to become a ticking bomb when General Galtieri sought to divert attention away from his unpopular government in an attempt to realise an Argentine dream – sovereignty of the ‘Malvinas’. The excuse for war was the incident surrounding Davidoff and his scrap merchants who had been given conditional permission to dismantle a whaling station in South Georgia. When those conditions were broken, *Endurance* was sent to evict the scrap merchants and Argentina responded.

In April 1982, Argentina invaded the Falklands. With less than fifty Royal Marines defending the Islands, resistance was token. The

First Sea Lord, Admiral Sir Henry Leach, persuaded Margaret Thatcher that a naval task force could be deployed and could recapture the islands. Historically, such long-range deployments have generally failed. It would take weeks for the force to sail the 8,000 miles to the South Atlantic, by which time the Argentinians would be well dug in and supported by a large air force. Doctrine stated that for a successful amphibious landing you needed air superiority and an advantage of three to one on the ground. At best, air superiority would be disputed and the defenders would out-number the attackers. Once again, the Royal Navy would be called upon to face overwhelming odds in the ensuing air battle and high losses could be anticipated. Despite all these odds, for the third time in seventy years, the Royal Navy won a famous victory off the Falklands.

Glamorgan, a 'County' class destroyer, was not a new ship. She had been designed to protect fixed-wing aircraft carriers against the Soviet threat before the defence review of 1966 did away with fleet carriers. (*Ark Royal*, the last fleet carrier, was paid off in December 1978.) Her main armament was the Seaslug missile system which was ideal for downing high flying aircraft in the open ocean but was not designed for use against low flying aircraft and sea skimming missiles. Nor was *Glamorgan* suited for inshore operations. However, with good command facilities, a twin turret and four Exocet launchers she was ideal as leader of the surface attack unit tasked with taking the fight to the enemy. On the close screen by day, *Glamorgan's* high speed dashes inshore by night made her a veritable thorn in the side of the enemy and a true friend to our own troops fighting ashore. Yet, in the greater scheme of things, like pawns on a chessboard, escorts were expendable for the common good even though they were capable of inflicting severe damage upon the enemy. And so it was, faced once more with conflicting orders, that *Glamorgan* again put the common good before her own safety. Some say that it was luck which saved *Glamorgan* from complete destruction. Yes, it was a very close run thing but it was courage, dedication and skill which actually saved the ship.

When the crisis arose, Exercise Springtrain was taking place off Gibraltar and *Glamorgan* was one of the first group of ships to be deployed south on 2 April. With mixed feelings of elation and fear, I checked *Jane's All the World's Aircraft* to assess the opposition. They had 400 military aircraft, 200 of which were front line aircraft. I thought, 'If all six of us have a good day and shoot down ten apiece,

that only leaves another 140 to attack us!’ My fears were justified because of that initial group of six ships, every one was to either be seriously damaged or sunk by air attack. Some on board did not consider the Argentine armed forces to be particularly capable and I had no doubt that the Royal Navy was the best in the world. However, I realised that, fighting 8,000 miles from home in the most inhospitable waters in the world against an enemy who had modern ships and aircraft, this war was to be deadly serious and that we would need to prepare and keep our wits about us if we were to survive.

As a Sub-Lieutenant, I had read that records in war were even more important than records in peacetime. I also knew that I would be required to draft our Reports of Proceedings and for these reasons I started a daily journal, recording everything I possibly could. Two years after the Falklands War, I allowed Lieutenant Commander Berry Reeves, who was relieving me at Portland, to read the journal. It was he who first said, ‘You have got to put this in a book.’ With over 200 sides of foolscap in my journal I had the basis for one, one which would be a view from the bridge, portraying daily life aboard an ‘expendable’ escort under wartime conditions. At *Glamorgan’s* Falklands 15th Anniversary reunion, I asked my fellow shipmates for any input they might have. I received a number of letters and four complete diaries which I was able to match with my own journal. I now had a wider perspective of first-hand accounts upon which this book could be based.

The book takes the reader, day by day, through the build-up of the crisis as Flagship, down into the South Atlantic and to war as one of the escorts tasked to take the fight to the enemy. It concludes with the aftermath and our return to Portsmouth. I have tried to explain what we did, why we did it, and how we went about it, including the impact of the war upon our families. No-one on board had the full picture and we did our best based upon the information we had at the time. I have not tried to hide the mistakes which, with the benefit of hindsight, were made. Everyone was working incredibly long hours under, sometimes, extreme stress. Upon reflection, we may wish that we had acted differently. We cannot change the past, but everyone should heed the lessons of history.

I hope that this book, which is dedicated to those who lost their lives in the South Atlantic, will both help ease the suffering of those who have been searching for answers as to ‘why?’ and allow others to

understand what the war at sea was really like. For us, the war did not end on 14 June 1982 – the images of war remain to this day, vivid in our minds. The day will come when the ship is broken up for scrap. However, the bonds of comradeship and support cannot be broken. They remain very evident in the *Glamorgan* website which I would encourage the reader to visit.

IAN INSKIP
Goonhavern
November 2001

Update to the 2012 Edition

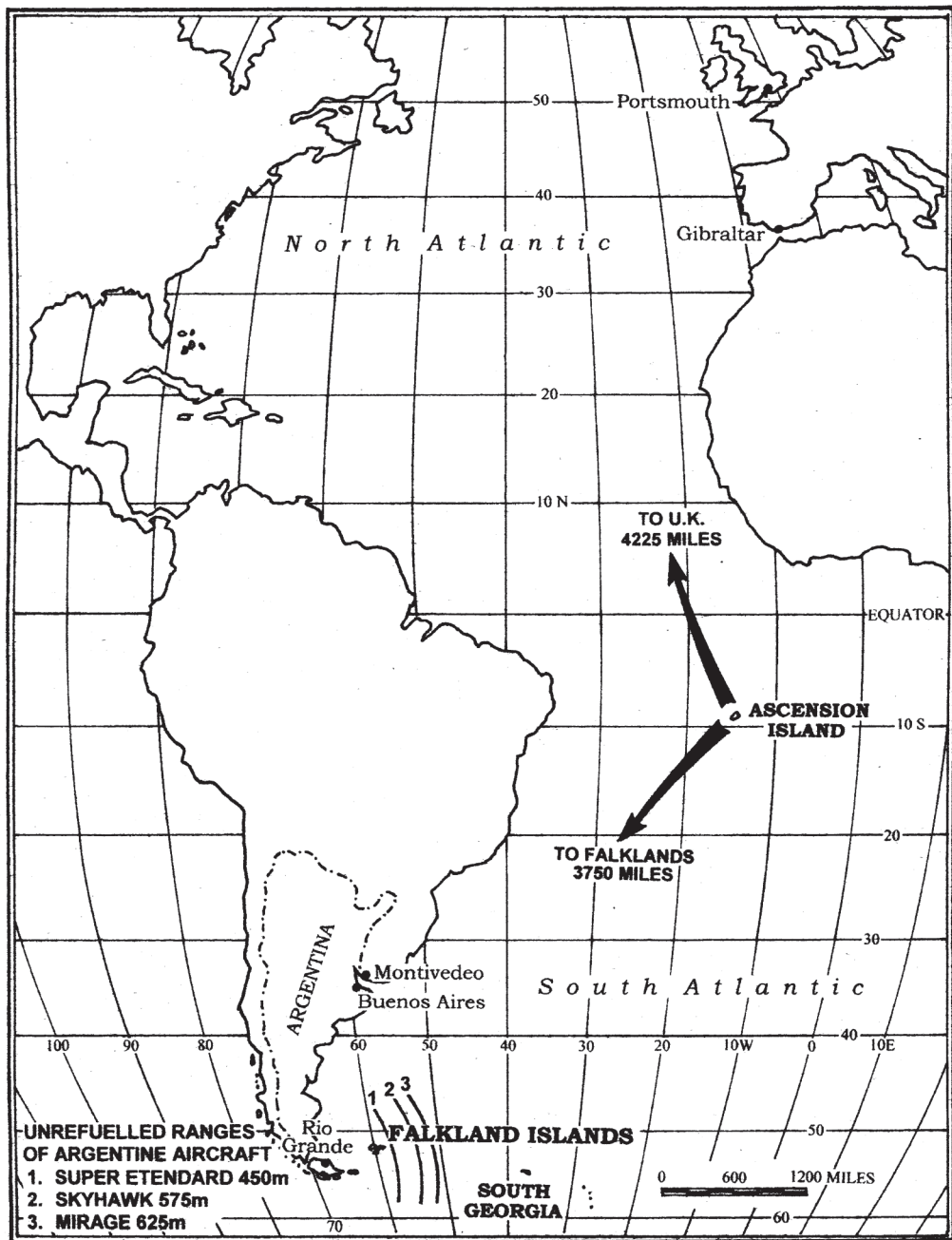
Ten years have passed since writing *Ordeal by Exocet* in 2001, but the story of *Glamorgan* and her crew continues. The ship was sold to the Chilean Navy in 1986 and became the *Almirante Latorre*. She was withdrawn from service in 1998 and sold for scrap in 2005, but whilst being towed to a breaker's yard she sank off Arica. However, the memory of *Glamorgan* lives on. There is a *Glamorgan* memorial window in Portsmouth Cathedral and her final battle ensign is on display in the Falklands Memorial Chapel at Pangbourne.

New information about the firing of the Exocet has also come to light. In 2006, I visited Argentina and met Captain Norberto Dimeglio, the leader of the Torno Squadron, which bombed *Glamorgan* on 1 May 1982. I also met José Scaglia, who both drove the Exocet launcher trailer and pushed the missile fire button on 12 June 1982. He informed me that the Exocet missile had not been fired from Eliza Cove but from a position just off the Stanley Airport road. It later emerged that the firing location, which is now in the middle of an industrial estate, was near Hookers Point. José Scaglia also informed me that on the very frosty morning of 11 June 1982, when he was driving the launcher back into Stanley, the entire rig started slipping on ice down the steep hill and nearly ended up in the harbour!

The Falkland Islands remain a place of pilgrimage for many. My wife, Marianne, and I visited in 2003, and whilst there we noted that there were memorials in the Islands for all units which had suffered significant losses, except for *Glamorgan*. On my return I put forward a case, to the Glamorgan Falklands Association, for a memorial to be erected in the Falkland Islands. Other crew members, who subsequently visited the Islands, came to the same conclusion and also contacted the Association. In 2009, the Association started raising the necessary funds, and a total of over £15,000 was raised mainly by former crew members. A memorial made from polished Welsh granite was dedicated on 15 February 2011 at Hookers Point and overlooks the spot 19 miles away where *Glamorgan* was hit.

As a tribute to the surviving crew, who saved their ship, an oil painting has been commissioned from the military artist Mark Littlejohn to record *Glamorgan's* fight for survival.

The HMS *Glamorgan* Falklands Association website <http://www.hmsglamorgan.co.uk> contains a huge amount of information, including photographs of the ship and her memorials. The Association also holds reunions for the crew and their families every five years.



Chapter 1

The Road to *Glamorgan*

I fyfny bo'r nod – To aim high

On 17 March 1982, *Glamorgan* sailed from Portsmouth for Exercise Springtrain off Gibraltar. Every member of the crew had a different story to tell as to how they found themselves in *Glamorgan* that day. For me, a navigation specialisation led me to the ship. I had honed my navigational skills initially under Captain George Vallings 'in accordance with Queen's Regulations for the Royal Navy'. His successor, Captain 'Jas' Briggs, was probably the most notable maverick in the Royal Navy and he taught me everything about navigation, including a lot which was not in the book. His idea of navigation was to go as close and as fast as physically possible to everything, which required precision and meticulous planning.

On qualifying as an advanced specialist navigator I was appointed to *Glamorgan* in August 1980 and Captain Mike Barrow, a very experienced captain, joined shortly afterwards. He delegated authority whilst always retaining responsibility, and gave us tremendous job satisfaction and the drive to do that little bit better. He made a point of getting to know every member of the crew and one felt that the Captain took a personal interest: in short, he was a born leader and the most caring Captain under whom I have served. The entire crew was behind Mike Barrow and if anyone was to ask me what was meant by leadership, I could do no better than advise them to observe Mike at work. Thus *Glamorgan* soon enhanced her existing reputation both as a happy ship and an efficient one.

In October 1981, *Glamorgan* had sailed for the Persian Gulf. On completion of an exercise with the Omani Navy, we had planned to anchor off a small bay called Bandar Jissah. The bay had been surveyed in 1849 but the Sailing Directions had recently been amended, indicating that the Royal Navy had been inside the Bay during the previous year. We also knew that the Sultan of Oman's yacht regularly visited the Bay. There were advantages of going inside the bay which outweighed the cons of limited space and the

survey date and so, with the Admiral's approval, we carefully entered the bay and safely came to anchor. I sent the Gemini boat away to take soundings around the ship, the only time I had ever gone to this degree of trouble, and the bottom appeared completely flat. Unfortunately, there was a large uncharted rock right under the ship and when we came to leave our propellers grounded. Whilst considering our position, Chief Yeoman Richardson said to the Captain, 'Do you realise, sir, not only are you the Senior Captain Afloat, you are also the Senior Captain Aground!' Mike Barrow was not amused. *Ambuscade*, demonstrating superb seamanship, made a sternboard into the bay and towed us to Muscat where clearance divers, assisted by our ship's divers, did their best to balance the port screw. This was the first time such a solution had been attempted and it was not a complete success, reducing our best speed on the voyage back to Portsmouth to 13 knots.

We docked down after Christmas and whilst the engineers changed the propellers Mike Barrow and I were explaining our grounding to the Board of Inquiry. With new propellers, we resumed operations. As we passed Outer Spit buoy we received a signal from the Commander-in-Chief, Fleet, saying that the Captain and I were to be court martialled immediately on return to Portsmouth. Due to our programme, we would have no time to speak to our defence team before the trial and we protested that this was unfair, so the Court Martial was postponed until after our programmed return in April. We sailed for exercises off Scotland. February off Scotland is renowned for rough weather and inhospitable seas. Shiphandling becomes difficult and when ships attempt to re-fuel, for instance, crew were liable to be injured. Admiral Woodward remarked, however, that 'This is our battlefield, we have to learn to live with it,' and within a few months, our battlefield was to be 8,000 miles away in the South Atlantic where the weather was, if anything, worse.

Not everyone had been on board since the end of refit. Sub-Lieutenant John Holden, our Damage Control Engineering Officer, joined before sailing from Portsmouth. He had just finished a course at the Royal Naval Engineering College on which, during the damage control phase, he had been lectured by the college's resident Pakistani Shipwright Officer who gave the course the benefits of his personal experience in the Indo-Pakistan war when his ship had been hit by three missiles and sunk in a matter of minutes.

On joining, John quickly discovered his place in the engineering hierarchy. He concluded that Lieutenant Commander Keith Smith, the Senior Engineer, was a highly competent engineer who ran a tight but happy department for Commander Jim Butterfield, the Commander 'E' (head of the engineering department). After the war, Keith Smith was to move to the Damage Control School *Phoenix* and to lecture on how to survive a missile attack.

We arrived in Gibraltar on 24 March to an impressive gathering of ships and someone remarked that this would be the last time we would see so many British warships gathered together. In little over a month, however, there would be a mightier gathering in the South Atlantic. Whilst we were enjoying ourselves in Gibraltar, events were unfolding in the South Atlantic. Five years earlier an Argentine businessman, Constantino Davidoff, had approached the firm of Christian Salvesen regarding the scrap metal at the old whaling stations in South Georgia and an agreement had been signed in September 1979 whereby Davidoff was authorized to dismantle and take away buildings and equipment at Leith, Husvik and Stromness by March 1982. Grytviken was not included in the agreement. Due to delays, Davidoff was allowed to extend his work until the end of the season provided that he complied with British regulations in South Georgia, took all necessary provisions with him and did not make any use of the facilities at Grytviken.

Davidoff's party sailed to South Georgia on 11 March in the Argentine Navy Transport *Bahia Buen Suceso*, the Captain and crew of which were all members of the Argentine Merchant Navy. Davidoff had reported the sailing of his expedition to the British Embassy in Buenos Aires but had lacked time to obtain a landing permit, so, in lieu of one he had agreed with the British Embassy that a representative from his party would report to the British Antarctic Survey (BAS) base at Grytviken. On 16 March Davidoff's expedition arrived in Stromness Bay, without reporting at Grytviken and on 19 March a British scientist noted the Argentinians in Stromness Bay. The Argentine Flag was flying and shots were being fired contrary to British regulations. The British magistrate in Grytviken reported this to Sir Rex Hunt, governor of the Falklands, in Stanley, and he replied on 20 March that the Argentine party were to lower the flag and come to Grytviken for a landing permit. The flag was lowered but no-one visited Grytviken. The next day, with all stores ashore for the winter, the *Bahia Buen Suceso* sailed. Believing (incorrectly) that Argentine

naval personnel were ashore, the British government protested to the Argentine government and insisted the *Bahia Buen Suceso* returned to Leith to collect the entire party. The Royal Navy's Antarctic survey vessel, *Endurance*, with marines embarked, sailed from Stanley to be poised to enforce the removal of Davidoff's expedition if necessary but the next day, the Argentine government informed the British government of its assumption that the entire expedition had sailed in the *Bahia Buen Suceso*. *Endurance* returned to the Falklands and the situation eased.

On 22 March, the British government learned from the British Antarctic Survey that the Argentinians were still there and that no-one had reported to Grytviken. Lord Carrington informed the Argentinians that if Davidoff's expedition was not immediately removed, they would be forcibly removed and *Endurance* once again sailed for South Georgia, arriving at Grytviken on 24 March, landing her twenty-two Royal Marines. The same day, the Argentine Navy sailed a corvette to station between the Falklands and South Georgia, ready to intercept *Endurance* and the following day, the Argentine Navy's ship *Bahia Paraíso* arrived at Leith and landed fourteen armed naval personnel and marines. It was Lord Carrington's ultimatum which prompted the Argentine junta to try to exploit the situation and seize the Falklands and their dependencies. *Endurance* monitored events in Leith, hoping for an Argentine withdrawal. The *Bahia Paraíso* departed Leith on 26 March and patrolled off South Georgia while the Junta took the final decision that day to invade the Falklands; by the evening of 28 March, the invasion troops had sailed.

Meanwhile, *Fort Austin* and *Brilliant* deployed from Gibraltar to support *Endurance*. Diplomatic and media activity increased and on 29 March the British government decided to deploy a nuclear submarine in support of *Endurance*. However, the press had noted the unexpected departure of *Superb* from Gibraltar and assumed she was heading south and the government did nothing to correct this supposition. In fact, *Superb* had been tasked to monitor a Soviet naval deployment emerging around North Cape but except for very few people with a need to know, the rest of us on board also made the assumption that *Superb* was dashing south. It was some considerable time before we appreciated the truth.

Back in Gibraltar, we were well aware of the growing crisis. On 26 March I wrote home to Marianne, 'We are expecting a big change to the exercise programme because the nuclear submarine

has been withdrawn “to do something else”. When the signal [the signal listing all the changes to programme due to the withdrawal of *Superb*] comes in I shall have to insert a huge change into the serialized programme.’

* * *

The Falklands sovereignty issue stretched back a long way. Argentina based its claim on the papal grants of 1493 and 1494 which gave Spain dominion over all South America except for the parts occupied by Portugal. It was not until a century later that the Falkland Islands were discovered by Captain John Davies in 1592 while Captain John Strong made the first recorded landing in 1690. The channel dividing the two islands was named Falkland Sound after Viscount Falkland, First Lord of the Admiralty at the time.

In 1764 the French established a settlement on East Falkland at Port Louis. Unaware of this activity, in 1765 the British government dispatched Captain John Byron to take formal possession of the islands at Port Egmont on West Falkland ‘for the Crown of Great Britain, his heirs and successors’. Fourteen years later, the Spanish governor in Buenos Aires bought out the French and then sent a force to oust the British from Port Egmont. There then followed a flurry of diplomatic activity during which Spain claimed that the governor had acted upon his own initiative and handed Port Egmont back to the British. This suggested that the papal decrees no longer had any credence or significance. By 1811, both the Spanish and the British had withdrawn on the grounds of economy, leaving the islands to passing whalers and sealers. When Spain withdrew her settlement, she left for all time and never assumed any ongoing rights to the islands. The Argentinians claim to have asserted those rights when the Spaniards departed despite the fact that there was never any direct hand-over or any legal transfer of title.

In 1824, a German, Louis Vernet, attempted to re-establish a settlement at Port Louis with the approval of the government in Buenos Aires. Four years later, the government of the United Provinces of La Plata granted him full sovereignty over East Falkland and one year later gave him the title of governor. Britain immediately protested and Lord Palmerston stated that Britain was not prepared to permit ‘any state to exercise a right as derived from Spain which Britain had denied to Spain itself’. The issue was

further complicated in 1831 when the United States intervened. They sent the *Lexington* to Port Louis, declared Louis Vernet a pirate and destroyed the settlement. The islands remained unpopulated for the next two years until Britain occupied and asserted her full rights in the Falklands with a naval garrison at Port Louis. The British administration in the islands remained unbroken until the Argentine invasion in 1982.

Argentina's other argument was based upon the geographical location but their argument would only be valid if the islands were uninhabited and even 'proximity' would embarrass many countries since the islands are 300 miles from Argentina while South Georgia is a further 800 miles away. The Argentinians also claimed that the islands were a symbol of British colonialism. If colonialism infers that control of the land has been taken from its native people, this was never the case since there was never an indigenous population.

As far as the Islanders were concerned, they believed that they had an absolute historical, legal and moral title to the islands, and they resented the Argentine assertion that the islands were 'disputed territory'. Happy in the knowledge that if there was a fight, I was on the side of democracy, I had no misgivings about being sent south.

Chapter 2

South to Ascension

Monday, 29 March

The Springtrain forces sailed from Gibraltar for the high seas firing areas and the tactical phase of the exercise. Commander-in-Chief, Fleet, Admiral Sir John Fieldhouse, was embarked in *Glamorgan* observing the exercise while Rear Admiral Woodward, embarked in *Antrim*, was running the tactical phase.

Tuesday, 30 March

As the crisis developed, *Glamorgan* closed Gibraltar to disembark the Commander-in-Chief by helicopter but not before Admiral Woodward had flown from *Antrim* for an urgent meeting. Together, with Captain Mike Barrow and Commander Jeremy Sanders (Staff Officer Operations to Admiral Woodward), they decided which ships should go south. The rest of us were aware that something was afoot and intelligence reports were indicating that a number of Soviet vessels were emerging from the north. We were not sure whether the two events, north and south, were linked.

Having disembarked Admiral Fieldhouse, we rejoined the exercise to rendezvous with *Euryalus*, *Coventry*, *Glasgow*, *Antrim* and *Sheffield*. Little did we realise that, except for *Euryalus* which returned to the UK, all of the rest of our group would either be sunk or severely damaged within the next ten weeks. Since *Glamorgan* was a fully operational air defence ship, we stood a good chance of being selected to deploy south and this, for me as navigator, presented a specific problem; we only carried the standard UK based chart outfit which did not even reach Ascension, let alone the South Atlantic. Mindful that the Captain and I were to be court martialled for using an 1849 chart, the Commander-in-Chief would take even less kindly to me navigating from a school atlas. The tanker RFA *Tidespring* was still in Gibraltar where there was a chart depot and I suggested to Captain Barrow that we signal Flag Officer Gibraltar for the appropriate folios and associated publications to be embarked in *Tidespring* for us. Mike readily agreed and a priority special handling signal was sent to

Gibraltar requesting hydrographic material and copied to Admiral Woodward who immediately accused us of breaching security. This seemed most unjust since I had based my chart demand on information received via the BBC World Service; I was not party to the flurry of highly classified signal traffic or meetings concerning events in the South Atlantic. However, we received a signal from *Antrim*, referring to our chart demand, 'cancel demand forthwith', but by the time our cancellation signal was received by Gibraltar, *Tidespring* had sailed with our charts embarked.

Wednesday, 31 March

Our helicopter collected the charts and by nightfall, as events escalated, we were the only ship in the group with South Atlantic charts. The other notable event was our Seaslug missile firings. The Seaslug missiles, weighing two tons apiece, leapt skywards. Once the four wrap-round boosters dropped off two miles down range, the sustainer motors took the missiles towards the Chukka targets, riding the radar beam, and both firings were successful.

Thursday, 1 April

Early on, the Navigating Officer of *Antrim* requested on secure voice, 'Where are my charts?' I informed him that the charts ordered by *Glamorgan*, for *Glamorgan*, were on board and I knew nothing about any charts ordered for *Antrim*. A few minutes later came the directive to transfer our charts as soon as possible and despite eight hours of sundry delays, they were eventually stolen for *Antrim*. Before surrendering them I photocopied the relevant ones for South Georgia and Ascension and then placed inside the bag of charts a rude note for *Antrim* referring to Matthew 25, the parable of the wise and foolish virgins. Operational readiness reports were requested from all ships and since all our kit worked and the ship was recently refitted with good command facilities I assessed that we would be selected to deploy south.

Friday, 2 April

At 0400 *Glamorgan* was ordered south. My immediate feeling was one of elation, quickly followed by fear. Fighting far from home on someone else's doorstep was fraught with problems, as the Russians found out to their cost at Tsushima in 1905, and in a few days I would be outside my chart coverage. There was one benefit of disappearing

south, however; the war would take precedence over the courts martial. I informed the Captain that we would be without proper charts to reach Ascension, exposing us to further charges of negligence, but assured him that, having previously visited Ascension, and having photocopied the charts, I could bring the ship safely to anchor. I need not have worried. The Admiral had already detached *Plymouth* to return to Gibraltar to collect the entire stock of South Atlantic folios held in the chart depot there.

Our diversion south also impacted upon domestic plans. For example, Leading Seaman Eon Matthews and some messmates had planned a boating holiday on the Thames for mid April. Eon managed to contact his wife, who fortunately was able to organise families and friends to take up the now vacant places.

At 1115 we met up with the *Antrim* group. All ships were carrying out vertical replenishments by helicopter (Vertreps), with stores and personnel travelling in all directions. Vertreps continued until sunset to get all the war essentials onto the 'south goers' and all the peacetime impedimenta off-loaded onto the 'north goers'. We collected Seacat missiles and torpedoes from *Euryalus*, and food from anyone who had some to spare.

Over lunch there were reports that Argentine soldiers had landed on the Falklands. War loomed ominously closer. If *Superb* had been routed south at 24 knots she could have been within forty-eight hours of the Falklands by now and assuming that the Argentinians would be working along similar presumptions it is safe to say that the media were inadvertently helping the deception. After lunch, we began rigging the light jackstay to receive shells from *Ariadne*. Suddenly our machinery control room (MCR) rang up 'Emergency Slow' after lub oil had been lost to the port main circulator. Fifteen minutes later first aid action had been completed and we resumed station but we were left with the nasty thought that it might have been sabotage. The sump drain cock to the main circulator was found open, having been checked shut earlier in the afternoon. It happening so soon after news of the invasion of the Falklands left little doubt in my mind. To survive in war we needed maximum teamwork. *Ariadne* was soon ready for the jackstay transfer during which we received two hundred shells and fifty cartridges. We then closed *Engadine* for a jackstay transfer whilst helicopters delivered further stores. I took the opportunity to write to Marianne, 'At 0400 this morning we heard that we were going south. Where we are, where we are going and what

we are going to do, I cannot tell you. You know where the trouble is brewing and *Glamorgan* is a powerful ship and likely to be in the front line. I hope to be home soon but we really have no idea at all how long this will go on for or what will be the outcome. If it does turn into a shooting war, we are well equipped to deal with the situation, but at the same time we must never underestimate the other side. They have some very similar ships to us. If anything should happen to me, please remember I was thinking of the family all the time. Remember *Glamorgan* with pride.'

Having posted the letter I visited the ops room to look at *Jane's All the World's Aircraft*. Argentina had about four hundred aircraft of which two hundred were front line. Just six ships had been diverted south. If we all shot down ten apiece that would leave another 140 to attack us. Morale on board was high, perhaps even overconfident, and I felt it important to maintain a cheerful exterior and keep my inner fears to myself.

After replenishing from *Blue Rover*, we were fully fuelled, stored and ammunitioned. Our Flight Commander, Lieutenant Commander Gerry Hunt, had flown eight hours that day and our Second Pilot, Sub-Lieutenant Mike De Winton, for half as long – far exceeding peacetime procedural rules.

The passage intentions were to follow a covert passage through the Canary Islands to a waiting position off Ascension where we would await reinforcement. As I read the intentions signal the BBC reported that the Falklands had fallen and a cabinet meeting was scheduled for the following morning with an emergency meeting of the House of Commons. I believed that we would see an ultimatum issued before the outbreak of official war but I could not envisage the Argentinians backing down.

Admiral Woodward's directive was received on how to prepare ourselves for war. The nuclear submarine (SSN) would be tasked against their aircraft carrier, *Veinticinco De Mayo*. Our biggest problem would be in dealing with their Exocet-armed surface ships and aircraft and it did not escape my mind that we had a massive Seaslug missile magazine at vulnerable Exocet height above the waterline. To survive and win, we would have to get our drills right.

Overnight we learned that Admiral Woodward and his staff would be transferring to *Glamorgan*. The 'north goers' departed at midnight and the 'south goers' adopted a dispersed formation under radar silence. Only three sweeps of navigational radar were permitted every