conflict, but it did not exist either strategically or doctrinally. In virtually every case it was the product of initiatives by mid-level officers who put aside service parochialism to confront a common enemy. There are a number of specific illustrations which stand out.

The Argentine air force operated the only tankers in the inventory. The two KC-130s were essential to air strikes against the British fleet whether carried out by air force or naval planes. For example, Skyhawks (flown by both services) had at most a few minutes over their targets if not refueled in the air. The Malvinas were barely within range of the attack aircraft of either service. In addition, every mission flown by the navy’s Exocet-armed Super Etendards required at least one air-to-air refueling. These planes carried out five attacks, the second of which sank HMS Sheffield and the fourth Atlantic Conveyor. The last Super Etendard attack on May 30, 1982, needed a triple refueling to strike over

Identity is as basic to an institution as it is to those who comprise it, and once established identity can assume greater importance than survival itself. This is particularly true of the military. The Argentine experience in the Malvinas (Falklands) reveals that military institutions must evolve in order to succeed and that adherence to institutional identity can be fatal if maintained at all costs. Jointness existed at the operational and tactical levels within the Argentine armed forces during the Malvinas

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Summer 1994 / JFQ 95
# Argentine Jointness and the Malvinas

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Washington, DC 20319-5066

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ARGENTINE JOINTNESS

500 miles from base and to circle and approach from the east. Without the air force, Argentine naval aviation could not have sunk HMS Sheffield, Atlantic Conveyor, and HMS Ardent nor have damaged other ships.\footnote{The defense of the airfield at Puerto Argentina (Port Stanley) was also joint. The air force contributed search radar; the navy communication, plotters, and direction personnel; and the army twin barrel, radar-controlled Oerlikon Contraves 35mm guns. Following an initial attack on May 1 by British}

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**Chronology**

| April 2 | Task Force 40 puts Argentine forces ashore near Port Stanley; Moody Brooks Barracks and Government House seized |
| April 5 | British carrier group sails from Portsmouth |
| April 12 | Maritime exclusion zone comes into effect around Falklands |
| April 14 | Argentine fleet leaves Puerto Belgrano |
| April 21 | South Georgia operation begins |
| April 25 | South Georgia recaptured by British forces |
| April 29 | British task force arrives at exclusion zone |
| April 30 | Total exclusion zone comes into force |
| May 1 | Initial SAS and SBSD landings; first raid on Port Stanley by Sea Harriers and naval bombardment |
| May 2 | General Belgrano sunk on orders of War Cabinet with loss of 321 Argentine sailors |
| May 4 | HMS Sheffield sunk; first Sea Harrier shot down |
| May 7 | Total exclusion zone extended to 12 miles off Argentine coast |
| May 9 | Trawler Narwhal attacked |
Vulcans and Harriers, the latter had to change tactics from close-in bombing to less accurate lob bombing. This was due largely to the effective Argentine anti-aircraft defenses which were credited with shooting down five Harriers, plus a few Argentine aircraft which strayed too close. Important, the defenders kept the airfield partially operational throughout the entire conflict. The fact that in spite of British activity an Electra carrying supplies was able to land on June 14 (the day Port Stanley fell) testifies to the success of this joint effort.

Another success that can be attributed to jointness was the Exocet missile which hit the destroyer HMS Glamorgan. In April, while tensions were building over the Argentine occupation of the Malvinas, the Argentine navy removed two Exocet missiles and launchers from the destroyer Santísima Trinidad. It married these to a jury-rigged fire control system and then mounted them on old trailers and christened them Instalación de Tiro Berreta (a do-it-yourself firing system). It took an air force C–130 three attempts to get the system to the Malvinas. Once on the island, the system was mated to a Rast radar operated by a marine officer. The first attempt to fire a missile failed, perhaps due to damage sustained in transit. A second missile veered sharply to the right because of a bad connection. On June 12, two days before the fall of Port Stanley, a third missile slammed into HMS Glamorgan.

Other cases of Argentine jointness arose when air force attack aircraft trained against navy type 42 destroyers (the same class of ship found in the British fleet); the air force and navy shared meager reconnaissance assets; and the air force carried navy Exocets between Rio Grande and Espora for maintenance. Unfortunately for the Argentine cause such ad hoc efforts on the operational and tactical levels were too few and too late, and could not make up for a lack of joint strategic planning and doctrine that was necessary to overcome the inertia fostered by each service’s institutional identity.

Today, the Argentines are fully aware of the price that they paid for this lack of jointness. In 1982 the last military junta tasked a retired army general, Benjamin Rattenbach, to conduct an investigation of the war effort. Rattenbach, renowned for his professionalism, headed a joint team which produced a secret report. Eventually, many of the report’s findings were leaked to the press and, in 1988, a group of veterans published the full report under the title of Informe Rattenbach: el drama de Malvinas. The report concluded that there was a lack of joint training and planning, and what did exist was purely theoretical and unable to be (translated) into action.

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**Scheina Super Etendard Attack on HMS Sheffield (May 4, 1982)**


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**May 12** GE2 leaves Southampton with 5th Brigade on board

**May 14** SAS attack on Pebble Island

**May 21** San Carlos landing begins; HMS Ardent sunk; 16 Argentine aircraft lost

**May 23** Antelope sunk; 7 Argentine aircraft lost

**May 25** HMS Coventry and Avertor Conveyorsink

**May 26** Battle of Goose Green; 3rd Brigade trans-ships from GE2 at South Georgia

**May 29** 42nd Commando lands on Mount Kent

**June 1** 3rd Brigade disembarks at San Carlos

**June 2** 2 Para leapfrogs to Bluff Cove

**June 6** Scots Guards land on Fitzroy; Welsh Guards embark for same

**June 8** Disaster at Fitzroy; HMS Galahad and HMS Tristram bombed with loss of 51 crewmen

**June 11** Battle of Port Stanley begins; Mount Longdon, Harriet, and Two Sisters

**June 12** Battle of Tumbledown and Wireless Ridge

**June 14** Argentine forces surrender at Port Stanley

The architects of the Malvinas campaign conferring at Puerto Argentina: (from left) Rear Admiral Carlos Busser of the marines, landing force commander; General Osvaldo Garcia of the army, commander of V Corps in Patagonia and theater of operations; and Rear Admiral Gualter Allara of the navy, amphibious force commander.

Malvinas Islands
Source: Public Information Secretariat of the Presidency of the Nation, Islas Malvinas Argentinas (Buenos Aires, 1982).
Juan Carlos Murguizur, a lecturer at the Argentine army staff college, laid bare the failure of jointness on the strategic level:

The armed forces were divided into watertight compartments, each service jealously guarding its rights and privileges, and their compulsory participation in the to and fro of national politics merely aggravated the situation.

The so-called Estado Mayor de Coordinacion, or coordination staff, was responsible in theory for drawing up plans for joint-service operations, but in practice did very little. In military circles, this organization was referred to as “the pantheon” since it served as an elegant burial-place for senior officers too old for command posting but not yet old enough to be retired. Plans for joint service operations needed the approval of all three services; and the troops and equipment necessary had to be requested from the respective commanders, making it desperately hard to get around the time-consuming bureaucracy and interservice jealousy.5

These findings should not surprise those who have studied Central and South America, for the history of that region shaped the identity of its military institutions, one that can be surrendered only with great difficulty. As elsewhere, the principal role of the soldier in Latin America is to defend the nation. But that role was pursued in ways which differed significantly from those of the military in the United States. The armed forces of Latin America found an identity in defining nationality as well as defending it.

As Latin American nations gained their independence (most by 1824), many lacked a sense of identity. The monarchs of Spain, Portugal, France, Britain, and Holland had owned the region, and two of them, the kings of Spain and Portugal, ruled over the largest parts. Latin America was a huge area with isolated pockets of inhabitants. Almost impassable natural barriers—mountains, deserts, jungles, and rivers—reinforced this isolation and contributed to a lack of national identity. For example, Argentina was not united as a nation until 1853 even though it was among the first Spanish colonies to win independence in the 1800s. Also, colonial powers frequently fought each other and had little incentive in defining the boundaries of their empires. The King of Spain, who owned perhaps three-fifths of Latin America, was unconcerned over

### Malvinas (Falklands) War: April 2–June 14, 1982

**Argentine Armed Forces**
- Army
  - 10th Infantry Brigade (8,500)
  - 2d Infantry Brigade (1,300)
  - 3rd Infantry Brigade (1,675)
- Navy
  - 1 aircraft carrier, 1 cruiser (sunk), 6 destroyers, 3 frigates, 2 submarines (1 captured), 9 merchant vessels (1 lost), naval attack air (1 Super Etendard, 8 Skyhawks)
- Air Force
  - 8 air brigades with A-4P Skyhawks, 11 Dassiers, Mirage III-E fighters

**Losses**
- 655 killed, 12,700 taken prisoner

**British Armed Forces**
- Army
  - 3rd Commando Brigade, 5th Infantry Brigade (28,000 combat or combat support troops)
- Royal Navy
  - 2 aircraft carriers, 8 destroyers (2 sunk), 15 frigates (2 sunk), 1 ice patrol ship, 8 amphibious ships (2 sunk), 12 troop transports (1 sunk), naval air: 15 squadrons with 171 aircraft and helicopters
- Royal Air Force
  - 15 squadrons with Harriers, Vulcans, Hercules C-130 transports, Chinooks

**Losses**
- 255 killed

boundaries which subdivided his many possessions. As a consequence the military of the region emerged not only as guarantors of sovereignty but also as creators and guardians of national identity.

In preserving national identity, many Latin American military establishments evolved into closely knit institutions whose cohesion served to bond a larger but weaker national identity. But that cohesion within the military was achieved in part by creating loyalty to a service and its unique territorially-defined mission, and participating in an extensive and isolationist social infrastructure. The distinctive duties of the services traditionally found in Latin America—army, navy, air force, and federal police—reinforce this separateness and territoriality. These duties, traditionally implicit or at times explicit in Latin American constitutions, give the services separate, inviolable identities. While defending the nation, a service must act to define nationality. Consequently, one finds many examples in
Latin America's past of a service acting to define the nation's political course. Given this tradition it should not be surprising that the Argentine army, navy, and air force fought three wars against the British in the Malvinas. But one must understand that the Argentine view of service identity, as established and reinforced by tradition, is the greatest obstacle to joint activity, no matter how desperately circumstances press for such an innovation. For truly effective jointness, new institutional perspectives must evolve. That unnatural process takes time, vision, and commitment, for it must work against the forces of history and tradition.

NOTES

1 Interview with Capitán de Fragata Jorge Colombo, who commanded the Super Etendard squadron (September 15, 1983).

2 Interview with the Argentine navy's Malvinas analysis group on September 30, 1983; interview with Contra Almirante Eduardo Otero, who commanded Naval Forces Malvinas (September 8, 1982).

3 Interview with Capitán de Fragata Julio Pérez, who was in charge of the special detachment responsible for the installation of the Exocet in the Malvinas (September 9, 1982).
