Mission Command During the Falklands War: Opportunities and Limitations

A Monograph

by

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In 1982, the British Armed Forces initiated a joint operation to retake possession of the Falkland Islands following their seizure by Argentina. This study examines the six principles of mission command, as defined by ADP 6-0, as a lens to evaluate operations conducted by the Landing Force Task Group during Operation Corporate. It identifies that the application of the principles of mission command varied greatly within the Landing Forces Task Group as a result of key differences in unit readiness, unit culture, and task organization. This study concludes that these critical factors affected all six principles of mission command, with unit readiness having the greatest impact. In the case of 3 Commando Brigade, the combination of readiness, unit culture, and task organization created tactical opportunities. However, in the case of 5 Infantry Brigade, these same factors severely limited operations. This disparity in mission command disrupted the lines of operation and resulted in significant casualties.

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Abstract

Mission Command during the Falklands War: Opportunities and Limitations, by Major Brice Roberts, 46 pages.

In 1982, the British Armed Forces initiated a joint operation to retake possession of the Falkland Islands following their seizure by Argentina. This study examines the six principles of mission command, as defined by ADP 6-0, as a lens to evaluate operations conducted by the Landing Force Task Group during Operation Corporate. It identifies that the application of the principles of mission command varied greatly within the Landing Force Task Group as a result of key differences in unit readiness, unit culture, and task organization.

This study concludes that these differences affected all six principles of mission command, with unit readiness having the greatest impact. In the case of 3 Commando Brigade, the combination of readiness, unit culture, and task organization created tactical opportunities. However, in the case of 5 Infantry Brigade, these same factors severely limited flexibility. This disparity in mission command disrupted the lines of operation and resulted in significant casualties.

Contents

Acronyms

ATG	Amphibious Task Group
BDE TAC	Brigade Tactical Headquarters
CDO BDE	Royal Marine Commando Brigade
CDO BN	Royal Marine Commando Battalion
CTF	Combined Task Force
CTG	Carrier Task Group
EZ	Exclusion Zone
INF BDE	Infantry Brigade
LNO	Liaison Officer
LFTG	Landing Force Task Group
MOD	Ministry of Defense
PARA	Parachute Regiment
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
TRADOC	Training and Doctrine Command
SAS	Special Air Service

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Introduction

> Warfare requires dash and initiative but what combined operations cannot accept are unknown, uncoordinated, unplanned moves along an open or sea flank - principles not understood by those whose concept of battle relies, conventionally, on strong, reliable, secure lines of communication.
>
> — Commodore Michael Clapp, Amphibious Commander, Operation Corporate

Mission command is one of the four foundations of US Army doctrine along with combined arms operations, adherence to laws of war, and joint operations.[1] US Army Doctrinal Publication (ADP) 6-0 defines mission command as "the exercise of authority and direction by the commander using mission orders to enable disciplined initiative within the commander's intent to empower agile and adaptive leaders in the conduct of unified land operations."[2] At the heart of the concept of mission command is the ability to balance the advantages of bold action with the risks of uncoordinated action. The US Army views this concept as the keystone of modern battlefield superiority.[3] Achieving the appropriate balance of initiative and risk is an enormous challenge during warfare. Studies of modern military history are replete with examples of both the successes and failures of mission command. The initial articulation of a related concept, *Auftragstaktik,* by German Field Marshall Helmuth von Moltke in the 1860s, laid the foundation for the concept of decentralized operations based on disciplined initiative.[4] The US Army later codified mission command in *Field Service Regulation* 1905, and it remains a core concept in every capstone publication.[5]

Practitioners of war increasingly conceptualize mission command as a panacea for today's volatile, unknown, complex, and ambiguous operational environments. This begs the question: are there limitations to the application of mission command? If so, what forms do they

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[1] Army Doctrine Publication (ADP) 1-01, *Doctrine Primer* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 2014), 1.

[2] ADP 6-0, *Mission Command* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 2012), 23.

[3] ADP 1-01, 26.

[4] ADP 6-0, 11.

[5] ADP 1-01, 26.

encompass? For example, at the operational level of war, these limitations may involve aspects of unit readiness, unit culture, and task organization. This study examines the effects of differences in the level of unit readiness, disparities in unit culture, and various task organizations in reference to the application of mission command.

British military operations during the Falklands War provide a timely case study of the operational constraints on the application of mission command. In 1982, the United Kingdom fought the Falklands War against a relatively unknown threat with no existing contingency plans. Enormous political pressure in the United Kingdom and significant popular support drove a rapid projection of military power to retake a series of sovereign British Islands from Argentinian control and to re-establish British administration (codenamed Operation Corporate).[6] The application of the ADP 6-0 principles of mission command varied greatly within the Landing Force Task Group (LFTG) in Operation Corporate as a result of key differences in unit readiness, unit culture, and task organization.

The Falklands War offers a unique study for US Army operational planners because the doctrine of both the British and the US militaries was remarkably similar at the time of the conflict.[7] Both militaries also share a common doctrinal lineage based on the Western style of warfare and a modern historical lineage based on similar experiences in both world wars.[8] Furthermore, during the early 1980s, both countries shared a common Cold War military experience under the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) banner and, perhaps more importantly, they operated under a common NATO doctrine.[9]

The purpose of this study is to examine the war between the United Kingdom and Argentina and to identify how differences between units within the British land component

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[6] Lawrence Freedman and Virginia Gamba-Stonehouse, *Signals of War* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1992), 122, 152-162.

[7] Michael Clapp and Ewen Southby-Tailyour, *Amphibious Assault Falklands: The Battle of San Carlos Water* (Barnsley, UK: Pen & Sword Military, 2007), 26.

[8] Ibid., 39.

[9] Ibid.

impacted the application of mission command. It will examine joint components in detail as they provide depth to the understanding of certain operations, namely the amphibious landings on East Falklands Island. By analyzing the Falklands War in the manner above, this monograph clarifies the relationship between mission command and the organizational aspects that may inhibit its application. In doing so, it seeks to provide future commanders and their staffs with a better understanding of the dynamics surrounding the application of mission command, particularly in an austere environment such as the South Atlantic, and against an enemy with certain near peer capabilities such as advanced missile systems.[10]

This study is also significant for contemporary US Army operational planners because it clarifies the impact campaign design has on the commander's ability to execute mission command. Specifically, the Falklands War illustrates certain juxtapositions. It provides the opportunity to contrast two very different brigades within the land forces, namely 3 Commando Brigade (3 CDO BDE) and 5 Infantry Brigade (5 INF BDE). The task organization of these units varied greatly, as did their level of readiness. Beyond the concrete differences, significant cultural differences existed between the marine commandos, the airborne infantry, and the conventional forces. By examining the effects of these elements on the application of mission command, operational planners will have an increased understanding of how to best incorporate the principles of mission command into campaign design.

Literature Review

This section examines the doctrinal underpinnings concerning the US Army concept of mission command and reviews the current body of historical work regarding the Falklands War. The purpose of this literature review is to provide a synopsis of the theoretical framework for the examination of the British Army's execution of mission command during the Falklands War. This

[10] Sandy Woodward and Patrick Robinson, *One Hundred Days: The Memoirs of the Falklands Battle Group Commander* (Annapolis: US Naval Institute Press, 1992), 2-3.

literature review will first detail the contemporary US Army doctrinal basis of mission command and its associated six principles. It will then briefly survey the current body of work focused on the application of mission command principles during modern conflicts. Lastly, it will identify any limitations regarding historical research into the Falklands War.

The doctrinal basis for the concept of mission command evolved slowly from its meager beginnings in US Army *Field Service Regulation* 1905. It stated, "An order should not trespass on the province of a subordinate. … It should lay stress upon the object to be attained, and leave open the means to be employed."[11] Although the theories of decentralized decision-making and disciplined initiative were always present to some extent in doctrine, the 1986 publication of Field Manual 100-5, *AirLand Battle,* emphasized key elements of mission command.[12] In 2009, the US Army Training and Doctrine Command (TRADOC) commander, General Martin Dempsey, elevated mission command to its current status. General Dempsey directed that the "command and control warfighting function" be re-designated as the "mission command warfighting function."[13] This was not mere semantics but represented an attempt by the senior commanding officer responsible for US Army doctrinal development and force generation to solidify the principles of mission command into the forefront of doctrine. Furthermore, it challenged the prevailing sentiment that the US Army was more concerned with the technical aspects of controlling operations than with the human dimension of commanding soldiers in battle. This attempt to structure and elevate the six principles of mission command by the US Army senior leadership was largely successful. In 2012, mission command was designated as one of the foundations of the US Army's new operating concept, Unified Land Operations, and the principles of mission command were further elaborated in ADP 6-0, *Mission Command*.[14]

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[11] Field Service Regulation (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1905), 29-30.

[12] Army Field Manual (FM) 100-5, *AirLand Battle* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1982), 21-22.

[13] Clinton Ancker, "The Evolution of Mission Command in the US Army 1905 to Present," *Military Review* 93, no. 2 (March-April 2013): 42.

[14] Ibid., 42, 51.

This case study will use the six principles of mission command as a lens to evaluate the Falklands War. These principles are clearly defined in ADP 6-0. The first principle, "building cohesive teams through mutual trust" is described as shared confidence among commanders, subordinates, and partners. Effective commanders build cohesive teams in an environment of mutual trust. The second principle is "create shared understanding" which requires an understanding of the operation's purpose, its problems, and approaches to solving them. Shared understanding and purpose form the basis for unity of effort and trust. The third principle is "provide a clear commander's intent." This is defined as a clear and concise expression of the purpose of the operation and the desired military end state. It provides focus to the staff, and helps commanders achieve the higher commander's desired results even without further orders. The fourth principle is "exercise disciplined initiative" and is best described as action in the absence of orders, when existing orders no longer fit the situation, or when unforeseen opportunities or threats arise. Leaders and subordinates exercise disciplined initiative to create opportunities. The limits of disciplined initiative are bounded by the guidance given within the higher commander's intent. The fifth principle is "use mission orders." This involves directives that emphasize to subordinates the results to be attained, not how they are to achieve them. They provide subordinates the maximum freedom of action in determining how to best accomplish missions. The final principle of mission command is "accept prudent risk" and is specified as a deliberate exposure to potential injury or loss when the commander judges the outcome as worth the cost.[15]

A number of case studies have examined modern conflict through the framework of these principles. The most comprehensive survey is the US Army Combat Studies Institute's anthology, *Sixteen Cases of Mission Command*, which evaluates historical operations from the Battle of the

[15] ADP 6-0, 2-5.

Nile in 1798 to more recent conflicts in Afghanistan and Iraq.[16] This work examines how the principles of mission command vary in effectiveness across sixteen different combat actions. At present, the Army Press is preparing a second anthology entitled *Mission Command in the 21st Century: Empowering to Win in a Complex World.*[17] This anthology focuses on the effectiveness of the six mission command principles during recent combat actions. Regarding the study of mission command in the Falklands War, the book entitled *A Case Study in Cohesion: The South Atlantic Conflict 1982* analyzes concepts indirectly associated with the six principles. For example, it examines the effects of unit cohesion on the performances of both British Army and Argentine ground forces.[18] It provides an excellent investigation into the human dimension of the British Army during the conflict. This case study is complimented by other works such as *British Command and Control During The Falklands Campaign*. This work evaluates the organizational and technical aspects of the United Kingdom's command relationships during the war.[19] These works constitute a significant body of scholarship, but do not fully address the questions posited by this monograph.

The Falklands War itself is thoroughly documented, replete with primary and secondary sources. Central to this monograph's analysis of mission command during the Falklands War is the ground commander's thought processes. This is well represented in a number of personal accounts written by the primary commanders including the Commander Carrier Task Group (CTG), Rear Admiral Sandy Woodward, with *One Hundred Days*, the Commander Amphibious Task Group (ATG), Commodore Michael Clapp with *Amphibious Assault Falklands*, and the

[16] Donald P. Wright, ed. *Sixteen Cases of Mission Command* (Fort Leavenworth, KS: Combat Studies Institute Press, 2013).

[17] Jon Klug and Nathaniel Finney, ed. *Mission Command in the 21st Century: Empowering to Win in a Complex World* (Fort Leavenworth, KS: Army Press, forthcoming).

[18] Nora Stewart, "A Case Study in Cohesion: South Atlantic Conflict 1982," *Military Review* 69, no. 4 (April 1989): 31-40.

[19] Stephen Prince, "British Command and Control during the Falklands Campaign," *Defense & Security Analysis* 18, no. 4 (2002): 333-349.

commander of the LFTG and 3 CDO BDE, Brigadier Julian Thompson with *No Picnic*.[20] These accounts provide excellent primary sources by which to analyze the principals of mission command. Further primary sources from subordinate battalion commanders, such as Colonel Nick Vaux's *March to the South Atlantic,* contribute supporting documentation regarding the command climate within the ground forces.[21] Finally, secondary sources, such as *The Official History of the Falklands Campaign* by Sir Lawrence Freedman, will augment these primary sources by illustrating key technical aspects of mission command during the Falklands War.[22]

Falklands War Case Study Analysis

The Falkland Islands are a British overseas territory consisting of two major islands in the South Atlantic. They lie three hundred miles east of Argentina and are sparsely inhabited with only eighteen hundred permanent settlers. Together they are roughly the size of the state of Connecticut.[23] The inhabitants are fiercely British and have repeatedly voted in favor of British rule. According to British historian Martin Middlebrook, walking down the streets of the main settlement, Port Stanley, is akin to walking down the streets of a typical English village. Beyond the cultural traditions of British life, these islands hold large political implications for Britain. Britain was continuously concerned over Argentinian calls for "repossession" of the islands. Any attempt to seize the islands by Argentina would challenge the internationally accepted right of self-determination and threaten domestic public support for Britain's elected leaders.[24]

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[20] Woodward; Clapp; Julian Thompson, *3 Commando Brigade in the Falklands: No Picnic* (Barnsley, UK: Pen and Sword Books, 2008).

[21] Nick Vaux, *March to the South Atlantic: 42 Commando, Royal Marines in the Falklands War* (London: Buchan & Enright, 1986).

[22] Lawrence Freedman, *The Official History of the Falklands, Vol 2: The 1982 Falklands War and Its Aftermath* (New York, NY: Routledge, Taylor & Francis Group, 2005).

[23] Thompson, 2.

[24] Martin Middlebrook, *Operation Corporate: The Falklands War* (London: Viking Adult, 1985), 21, 29-33.

The Falkland Islands have a storied history. From 1540 to 1764, the islands were repeatedly visited by the world's leading sea powers: the Spanish, British, Dutch, and French. However, the French and British did not establish their settlements until 1764 and 1765 respectively. Regardless of the competing claims to the islands, by 1774 both France and Britain sold their claims to Spain. Both countries withdrew all settlers and any military presence from the islands.[25] Spanish de facto rule continued until yet another naval competitor intervened in 1831. This time it was the United States Navy that ejected all Argentinian forces from the islands in retaliation for interfering with US rights to hunt seals in the area. Capitalizing on this power vacuum, Britain once again claimed the islands in 1833 and evicted the remaining Argentinian elements. This action spawned the current British community on the Falkland Islands.[26]

One interpretation of the proximate cause of the Falklands War points to the Argentinian misinterpretation of Britain's commitment to the defense of the Falkland Islands. An ongoing reduction in defense spending, and a lack of emphasis on military capability, sent signals to the Argentinian leadership that British resolve was eroding.[27] Another theory points to the civil unrest and economic crisis facing the regime in Argentina. The urgent need to change the domestic political situation manifested in a nationalistic desire to reclaim the Falkland Islands and distract public attention from the dire domestic situation. As the Argentinian newspaper, *La Presna*, pointed out at the time, "the only thing that can save this government is a war."[28]

Regardless of the war's underlying political causes, tensions became increasingly acute as Argentinian scrap metal workers landed on the nearby island of South Georgia on 19 March 1982, and promptly planted an Argentine flag. Britain responded militarily to the provocation by dispatching the HMS *Endurance*, an ice patrol ship, to confront the breach of sovereignty. On the

[25] Middlebrook, 21-23.
[26] Ibid., 23-24.
[27] Prince, 335.
[28] Max Hastings and Simon Jenkins, *The Battle for the Falklands* (New York, NY: W. W. Norton & Company, 1984), 65.

same day, the Argentinian defense forces launched a full scale amphibious invasion rehearsal on the Argentinian mainland.[29] Senior British civilian and military leaders began a round of urgent debate regarding the level of political commitment to the islands, and the range of appropriate military options.[30] Unbeknownst to British political leaders, Argentina had already committed to a full invasion on 26 March. By 02 April, the Argentinian task force defeated the vastly outnumbered British defense force on East Falkland Island that consisted of just sixty-nine marines. This inadequate defense reflected strategic misconceptions regarding Argentinian ambitions rather than Britain's political will to protect its sovereign territory.[31] In less than twenty-four hours of fighting, Argentina challenged Britain's legitimacy as a world power.

Many senior British military leaders thought this dilemma could not have come at a worse time. In the spring of 1982, the Ministry of Defense (MOD) was coping with yet another round of cuts. These cuts reflected the dire domestic situation in Britain. The recession of the early 1980s was in full swing. Social unrest and calls for change demanded shifts in priorities for defense. Although Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher still saw the Central Front in Europe as a national priority, other aspects of the defense force were ripe for cutbacks. Three aspects are of particular importance. Like most western militaries, amphibious capabilities within the British military underwent a steady decline following World War II.[32] The budgetary crisis in Britain meant that the readiness of Britain's already modest amphibious capability was significantly reduced just prior to the Falklands War. The phenomenon also applied to another costly military capability: the airborne infantry. Similar to the amphibious capability, the airborne infantry dwindled from two divisions after World War II to a single brigade by the 1970s. By the time of the Falklands War, this single brigade retained only a small portion of its infantry on an active

[29] Clapp, 10-12.
[30] Freedman and Gamba-Stonehouse, 121-125.
[31] Freedman, 4-9.
[32] Clapp, 2-5.

airborne status.[33] Therefore, as Britain mulled over options for a response to the Falklands crisis, airborne operations were off the table, and any opposed amphibious landing would involve significantly more risk than would otherwise be the case. Perhaps more important than the direct effects of these budgetary cuts, austerity and the perception that the defense force was not top priority in the early 1980s undercut military morale.[34]

The United Kingdom's contribution to NATO also influenced the defense force. Military commitments to the NATO alliance provided opportunities within a shrinking fiscal environment that may not have otherwise existed. For instance, units such as 3 CDO BDE were assigned to duties in support of NATO's amphibious task force. This maximized opportunities for joint amphibious training in an otherwise austere training environment.[35] Besides amphibious warfare, NATO commitments to the defense of Northern Europe meant that select units sustained certain levels of arctic training and equipping that would not have otherwise survived the budgetary chopping block.[36] Both of these aspects played fortunate and noteworthy roles in Britain's expeditionary capabilities.

Despite these advantages, most land component commanders portrayed the ongoing NATO commitment as a disadvantage in regard to operations outside the sphere of NATO. Formations were spread across large geographic areas and were in a constant state of rotation between NATO defense and garrison commitments. This left little time and resources for large scale maneuvers outside the NATO framework. Thus, when the various land forces assembled in support of Operation Corporate, the effects of the Cold War security situation heavily influenced aspects of unit readiness, none more so than mission command.[37]

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[33] Nick van der Bijl and David Aldea, *5th Infantry Brigade in the Falklands War* (Barnsley, United Kingdom: Pen & Sword Military, 2014), 1-2.

[34] Stewart, 37.

[35] Thompson 3-9.

[36] Hastings, 90.

[37] Thompson 3-9.

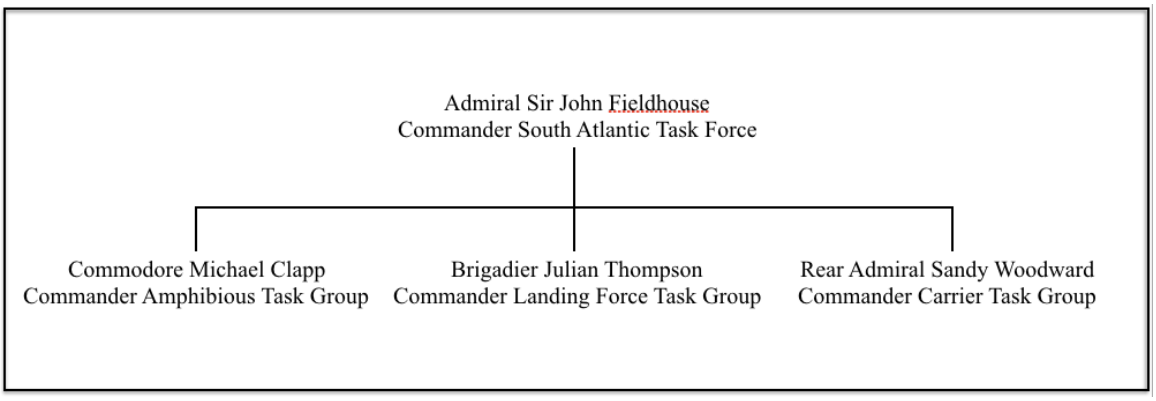
This contingency was exactly the sort of conflict that Britain assumed it would never have to fight, given the assumption that major conflict would occur under the auspices of NATO. If not, then they assumed it would occur under the conditions of an ad hoc alliance akin to the one that development during the Suez Crisis in which unique geopolitical requirements drove the formation of a coalition.[38] Thus, no standing operational plan existed, and the closest conceptualization of an operation to repossess the Falkland Islands was a MOD white paper published in 1977.[39] This served as the framework by which the MOD developed rapid expeditionary plans for what was, at the time, the most complex British military operation since World War II.[40] The political objective of Operation Corporation was quite clear, "the overall aim of Her Majesty's Government is to bring about the withdrawal of Argentine forces from the Falkland Islands and the dependencies, and the re-establishment of British administration there, as quickly as possible."[41] The military guidance was far less clear. In short, the Combined Task Force (CTF) was ordered to take the maximum feasible load and set sail immediately for the Falkland Islands. The MOD would issue further guidance as it developed.[42]

The MOD appointed Commander-in-Chief Fleet, Admiral Sir John Fieldhouse, as the CTF Commander for Operation Corporate (see figure 1). Relying on existing doctrinal command relationships, and a good bit of personal judgement, Fieldhouse established three subordinate task groups designed around the requirements of amphibious warfare. Rear Admiral Sandy Woodward commanded all naval forces under the CTG. Commodore Michael Clapp commanded the ATG and Brigadier Julian Thompson commanded the LFTG.[43] Brigadier Julian Thompson was an experienced commando, having just commanded 40 Marine Commando Battalion prior to his

[38] Freedman, 722-723.
[39] Prince, 337.
[40] Clapp, 20, 35.
[41] Freedman, 193.
[42] Ibid., 193-194.
[43] Prince, 339.

appointment to command 3 CDO BDE. He was well known for his deep appreciation of military history, a quick intellect, and a penchant for smoking a pipe. Max Hastings, one of the few journalists that occupied the task force throughout the invasion, jokingly stated that Thompson could be confused for a university professor.[44]

The ATG Commander, Commodore Clapp, was an ex-Naval pilot and an experienced staff officer. His fellow commanders described him as a practical man and a team player. These attributes were critical in tackling the complex problem of executing amphibious operations. Both Commodore Clapp and Brigadier Thompson quickly identified their interpersonal relationship as



a critical force multiplier in regards to mission command.[45]

Figure 1. Initial Command Relationship within the South Atlantic Task Force

Source: Adapted from Michael Clapp and Ewen Southby-Tailyour, *Amphibious Assault Falklands:The Battle of San Carlos Water* (Barnsley, UK: Pen & Sword Military, 2007), 31-32.

The CTG Commander, Rear Admiral Woodward, had a reputation as a brilliant but demanding naval officer. He was at sea in the Mediterranean commanding First Flotilla when the planning for Operation Corporate began.[46] The small disparity in rank between the three task

[44] Hastings, 89.
[45] Thompson, 11-13.
[46] Hastings, 114-115.

group commanders played a significant role in the practice of mission command. Although all three reported separately to the overall task force commander, the MOD appointed Rear Admiral Woodward the senior commander. This non-doctrinal concoction played havoc during the execution of the operation.[47] Only upon the arrival of a more senior LFTG commander, Major General Jeremy Moore, was this tension alleviated. However, this monograph will illustrate that command relationships never truly recovered from initial setbacks.[48] According to Clapp, "trust was broken and it would take a time to repair."[49]

The bulk of the land component initially consisted of 3 CDO BDE. The brigade's task organization included its three organic commando battalions: 40, 42, and 45 Commando Battalions (CDO BN), artillery, and supporting arms. In order to meet the growing threat, Thompson's formation was augmented with two additional infantry battalions, 2nd and 3rd Battalion from the Parachute Regiment (2 Para and 3 Para, respectively). To provide protected firepower and mobility, 3 CDO BDE was also augmented with two troops of armored reconnaissance vehicles (Scorpions and Scimitars) from the Blues and Royals Regiment. Last, a group of senior cadre from the Mountain and Arctic Warfare School were included in the formation. They would provide excellent strategic intelligence throughout the Falklands campaign.[50]

This sort of volunteerism was common during the few weeks prior to execution of Operation Corporate and reflects the high level of *espirit de corps* present within the subculture of 3 CDO BDE. For instance, Lieutenant Colonel Nick Vaux, commander of 42 CDO BN, turned away many officers and senior non-commissioned officers seeking to curtail their pending retirements and join the deployment.[51] In other cases, soldiers with disciplinary infractions were

[47] Freedman, 29-30.
[48] Clapp, 38, 56, 221.
[49] Freedman 197.
[50] Ibid., 7-8, 187-189.
[51] Vaux, 19-20.

threatened with being left behind. These examples indicate the level of unit cohesion common in the culture of elite units and payed dividends during the pending campaign.[52]

Despite these positive indicators, Thompson foresaw a number of mission command considerations that he would need to address prior to combat. First, he sought to incorporate 2 Para and 3 Para into the brigade and foster teamwork between two ultra-competitive organizations, the marine commandos, and the airborne infantry. Second, he recognized the need to communicate a clear vision for the upcoming operation in order to create mutual understanding between the disparate units.[53]

From 01-09 April, the land component under Thompson began to take shape and initiate movement towards the Falkland Islands (see figure 2). The composition of the land component evolved in size in direct relation to the increasing appreciation of the Argentinian threat. Intelligence estimates indicated that approximately twelve thousand Argentinian soldiers garrisoned the Falkland Island defense under the command of General Mario Menendez. The bulk of the defense consisted of nine infantry battalions reinforced with significant artillery, a small reserve of armored personnel vehicles, and a potent special operations component.[54] These forces were organized around two brigades with the bulk of the combat power oriented around the major settlement at Port Stanley on East Falkland Island. Port Stanley was the seat of local government and thus the political center of gravity. It was also the military center of gravity due to its proximity to the island's major airfield.[55]

The capability of the Argentine ground forces is best understood in terms of their contrasts. Argentine officers benefited from a high level of training and an elevated position within society. However, the bulk of the enlisted soldiers were conscripts, many with less than

[52] Stewart, 36.
[53] Thompson, 12-13, 39-40.
[54] Clapp, 129-130.
[55] Thompson, 35-37.

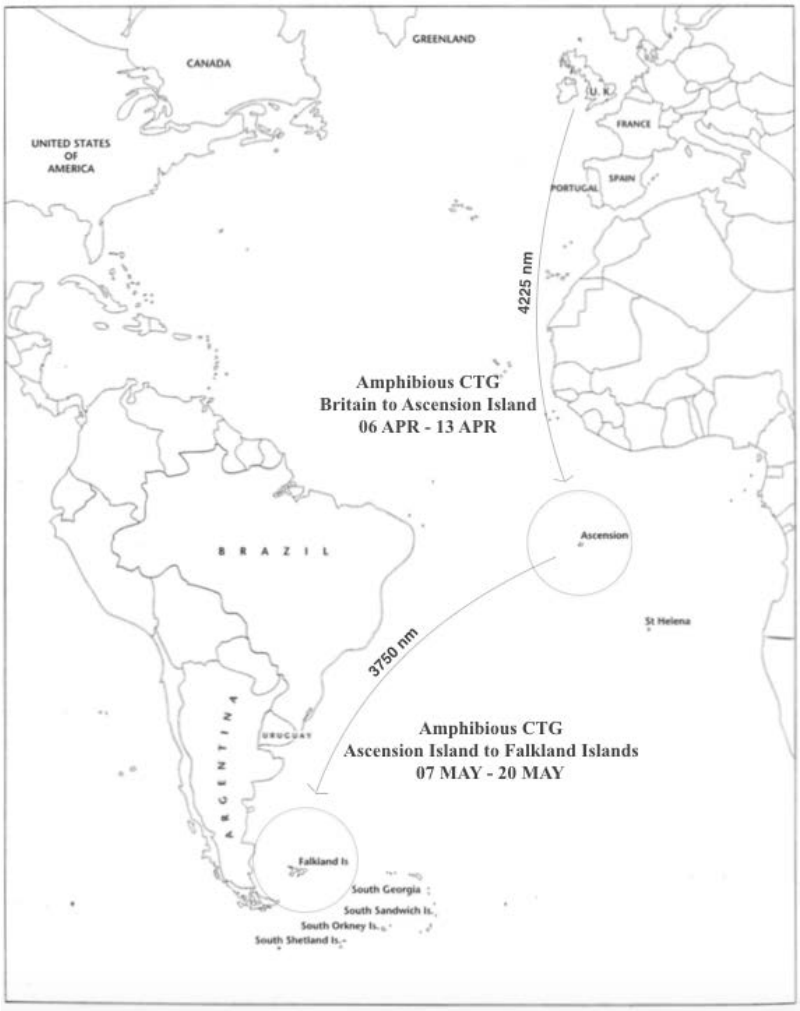
one month of training.[56] Although well-equipped in terms of supplies and ammunition, captured Argentine soldiers would later admit they did not understand how to use their newly-acquired night vision googles.[57] The most potent capability existed in their advanced air force. The Argentine Air Force benefitted from years of foreign military sales and training, including significant amounts of United States, British, and French weaponry. The Argentines quickly positioned much of this forward on the islands as a deterrent against a British counterattack. Most notably, the Argentinian Air Force possessed near-peer fighter aircraft, radar, and advanced anti-ship missiles. These components would tally sixteen kills against British naval vessels over the course of the war, and contributed greatly to the 1,033 British casualties.[58]

In light of this threat, the senior British land component commanders, including Major General Moore and Brigadier Thompson, identified the requirement to bolster British ground forces significantly. As it was, the forces under the command of Thompson were outnumbered two to one.[59] In the minds of many commanders, underestimating an adversary is problematic. Managing the confidence of the unit is a primary task of commanders, and this aspect was a constant challenge to the execution of mission command. At the lowest levels, *esprit de corps* demanded a superior attitude.[60] Unfortunately, a more balanced view of the enemy's capabilities did not exist at the MOD.

Regardless of how the commanders viewed the enemy's capabilities, they did at least agree on the requirement for an additional infantry brigade to compliment 3 CDO BDE.[61] However, the British Army's options for additional combat power were extremely limited. Thompson and the bulk of the land component had already sailed south by the time the MOD

[56] Stewart, 36.
[57] Vaux, 189.
[58] Stewart, 31.
[59] Thompson, 37-38.
[60] John Frost, *Two Para - Falklands: The Battalion at War* (London, UK: Buchan & Enright, 1983), 27, 39.
[61] Clapp, 83-84.

committed to the additional forces. Thus, whatever form this additional combat power would



take, it was destined in many ways to be a follow-on force.

Figure 2. Amphibious Line of Operation for Operation Corporate

Source: Map adapted from Linda Washington, *Ten Years on: The British Army in the Falklands War* (London, UK: National Army Museum, 1998), 4.

The MOD identified 5 INF BDE as the only appropriate formation capable of augmenting Thompson, both in terms of combat power and readiness. However, two of the premier airborne battalions within 5 INF BDE were already task organized to Thompson and already sailing south. The MOD identified a number of other infantry battalions that could

support the mission, none of which were at a state of readiness comparable to the battalions already at sea. Thus, 5 INF BDE was destined to be a compilation of battalions from very different organizational cultures and varying levels of readiness. The one exception was the 1/7 Gurkhas Rifles Battalion, who were in fact organic to 5 INF BDE, but very distinct from the rest of the British forces. Britain raised the battalion in Eastern Nepal in 1902 and it has a long history of valiant fighting in both world wars. British officers command the battalion but their ranks are filled by Nepalese soldiers. Their reputation for fierce fighting was renowned.[62] The MOD allowed the 1st Welsh Guards Battalion to join the 1/7 Gurkhas Rifles Battalion after repeated lobbying by their commander. The Welsh Guards had recently handed off their primary responsibilities and entered into a recovery phase. The MOD selected the 2nd Scots Guards Battalion as the third and final battalion under 5 INF BDE. This was the most problematic of all the battalions due to readiness concerns. The 2nd Scots Guards Battalion transitioned from ceremonial guard requirements directly to preparations for combat. This was far from the ideal situation, and was in complete juxtaposition to the marine commando and airborne battalions in 3 CDO BDE (see Figure 3). In addition, even the 2nd Scots Guard Battalion band was re-tasked to serve as an ad hoc reconnaissance platoon.[63]

Unfortunately, the ad hoc nature of the brigade was not isolated to the infantry units. 5 INF BDE lacked artillery and organic logistics elements because its role was primarily homeland defense and ceremonial duties. Even though the MOD attached these supporting elements to the brigade, problems persisted.[64] For instance, a lack of prioritization for 5 INF BDE meant that their primary line of sight radios, were a generation behind those of 3 CDO BDE. Thus, the two maneuver brigades within the land component could not talk directly. The MOD solved this problem prior to sailing, but only by pooling radios from across the force, including the cadet

[62] Van Der Bijl, 11-13.
[63] Ibid., 12-16.
[64] Ibid., 16-18.

command, at Sandhurst.[65] The ad hoc nature of 5 INF BDE plagued the land component throughout the conflict.

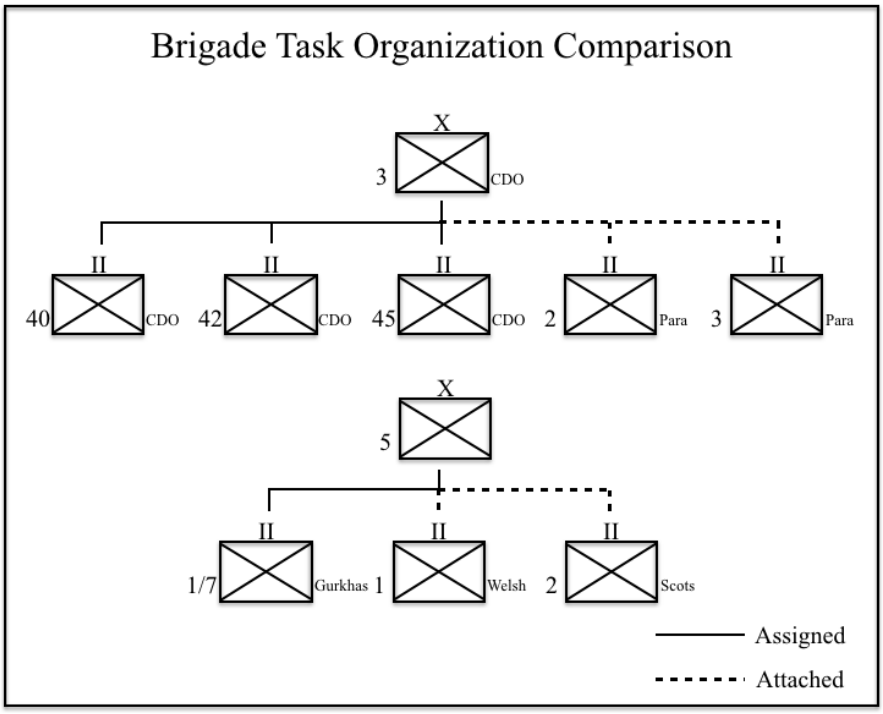


Figure 3. Brigade Task Organization Comparison

Source: Martin Middlebrook, *Operation Corporate: The Falklands War, 1982* (London, UK: Viking, 1985), 74-75, 179-180.

The commander of 5 INF BDE, Brigadier Tony Wilson, shared these concerns and sought to tackle them through extensive training. Exercise Welsh Falcon was designed to simulate conditions in the Falkland Islands and to provide the one and only combined arms training opportunity for the newly-formed brigade. Unfortunately, conditions were far from ideal. Amphibious landings were conducted from barracks serving as mock ships. A massive heat wave undermined the preparations for a conflict in the frigid South Atlantic. Despite these drawbacks, the biggest concern throughout the training was mission command. A lack of robust

[65] Van der Bijl, 14.

communication systems, poor staff training, and a command team that had only just met combined to undermine mission command. As one commander put it, "who the F*** is running this shambles anyways?"[66] The results of the exercise were noticed at the highest levels of MOD and added to the existing concerns of sending battalions into combat fresh off ceremonial guard duties.[67] However, Wilson was no stranger to difficult military dilemmas. Four generations of his family had served with distinction within 5 INF BDE. He had a reputation for thinking outside the box, and led many initiatives to bolster his under equipped forces with arctic equipment and additional combat power.[68]

Feeding the tension regarding readiness was a lack of clear purpose behind the commitment of 5 INF BDE to the land forces. The fundamental question on the minds of the two brigade commanders was whether the MOD envisioned it as a reinforcing element or as an additional offensive capability.[69] In other words, was 5 INF BDE only expected to assist with the mopping up of the Argentine garrison or was it expected to assault on equal terms with 3 CDO BDE? The ad hoc nature of their task organization suggested the former, while common sense demanded they be prepared for the latter. This primary question reflected a larger issue: the two brigade commanders were physically separated by miles of ocean and had no standing command relationship with their superior, Major General Moore. Only Moore, whose responsibility it was to plan and execute the land operation, could answer the question of 5 INF BDE's employment and, as planning continued over the following weeks, problems persisted in generating common understanding of this issue.

As planning continued, the LFTG staff wrestled with the realities of expeditionary warfare in the Falkland Islands. The weather on the islands combined three aspects at odds with

[66] Van der Bijl, 22-25.
[67] Clapp, 68.
[68] Van Der Bijl, 6-7, 20-24.
[69] Hastings, 68-69.

most military operations: freezing temperatures, large amounts of precipitation, and high winds. At one point during the battle of East Falkland Island, temperatures dropped to ten degrees Fahrenheit.[70] The effects of weather severely slowed military operations due to the increased risks to flying and also increased rates of non-battle related injuries such as frost bite and trench foot. For instance, some of the hardest hit infantry battalions, such as 42 CDO BN, experienced long-term foot injuries in ninety-eight percent of the unit.[71]

The terrain itself posed additional problems. Little tree cover existed. Instead, broken crags of rock consistently dominated most terrain features. The ground itself provided additional difficulties for mobility. The soil was composed of a thick layer of peat with frozen earth just below the surface. The impact on military operations was twofold. First, the soil restricted the movement of large military vehicles. Second, when building fighting positions the infantry faced a constant battle against a rising water line just beneath the soil.[72] As Lieutenant Colonel Andrew Whitehead, the commander of 45 CDO BN, succinctly put it, "we have to fight and win three victories, against the enemy, against the terrain and weather and against our own logistics inadequacies."[73]

The impact of the political situation in London was also becoming clear. In the minds of the senior commanders, a negotiated settlement seemed less and less likely. All indicators from the MOD were that the Prime Minister favored offensive action to retake the islands. Therefore, serious amphibious planning intensified between Clapp and Thompson. On 06 April, the leading elements of the LFTG, consisting mainly of 3 CDO BDE, arrived at Ascension Island in order to build combat power, continue training, and standby until the CTG had established the conditions for the amphibious assault.

[70] Thompson XVI, 121.
[71] Vaux, 237.
[72] Hastings, 262-263.
[73] Ibid., 232.

Ascension Island is a British dependency roughly halfway between Europe and the Falkland Islands in the Mid-Atlantic Ocean. It has no indigenous population and is only thirty-four square miles. The island's only enduring function was to serve as a refueling location for air transport and as a communications hub for long range radios. That being said, the LFTG leveraged all of its resources for the LFTG.[74] The LFTG also expanded the existing runway, housing, and life support infrastructure for the purposes of logistics and training. Although training for 3 CDO BDE was limited to small arms live fire and maneuver, it proved to be invaluable. 5 INF BDE did not benefit from this unique opportunity. For 5 INF BDE the value of additional training may have addressed its mission command deficiencies that the leadership had identified during their hasty training in England. However, due to the realities of time, distance, and political expediency, 5 INF BDE bypassed Ascension Island altogether. Thus, the brigade coming directly from ceremonial duty received the least amount of training prior to combat, while the brigade comprised of elite marine commandos and airborne battalions received the most. [75] The disparity between the two brigades continued to grow.

Meanwhile, the political situation in London increasingly called for action. The CTF identified the repossession of a small island south of the Falkland Islands, called South Georgia, as a military objective.[76] The isolated attack on South Georgia, codenamed Operation Paraquet, marked the beginning of a series of impressive actions that demonstrated a mastery of mission command within 3 CDO BDE. M Company, 42 CDO BN, and D Squadron, of the Special Air Service (SAS) were tasked to recapture South Georgia to gain a quick political victory. On 21 April, the SAS attempted a risky helicopter insertion onto the face of a South Georgian glacier to begin reconnaissance of the objective, ignoring the advice of Major Mike Sheridan, the senior arctic advisor from the marine commandos. Sheridan had conducted training on these very same

[74] Clapp, 59-60.
[75] Van der Bijl, 40, 45.
[76] Hastings, 126-128.

glaciers and advised that the special forces component reconsider its plan due to the constant high winds and low visibility. Sadly, his warnings were prophetic. Within hours, the emergency calls from the SAS for extraction required immediate attention. In the ensuring chaos, two helicopters were destroyed while attempting the rescue. A third helicopter finally managed the rescue of the seventeen stranded servicemen.[77]

As the attack on South Georgia seemed in immediate peril, a bit of luck and initiative changed the fortunes of M Company and the SAS. The CTG attacked an Argentinian submarine patrolling just off South Georgia. After a successful British engagement, the enemy submarine limped back into the South Georgian defense and evacuated its crew. Major Sheridan, the ground force commander for the conventional component, realized that the enemy had just lost a critical component of its defense and suffered a heavy blow to their morale. He argued fervently to the CTF command in London that the time was right for bold action. The CTF Commander agreed to support MAJ Sheridan's initiative and a small composite force was quickly inserted via helicopters on top of the Argentinian defense.[78] This was preceded by a massive naval bombardment of the garrison. The combination of surprise and firepower resulted in the immediate surrender of the Argentine defense.[79] Despite the loss of two helicopters, the composite force of marine commandos and SAS had avoided any loss of life, seized the objective, and injected the campaign with the initial victory it desperately needed.

While Operation Paraquet unfolded, the remainder of the ATG continued preparations, and the CTG established a two hundred nautical mile maritime exclusion zone (EZ) around the Falkland Islands. The CTF intended for the EZ to deter Argentinian resupply to the islands while avoiding the politically murky waters of establishing a naval blockade, which required a declaration of war. The EZ proved to be marginally effective throughout Operation Corporate.

[77] Thompson, 29.
[78] Hastings, 129-130.
[79] Freedman, 244-249.

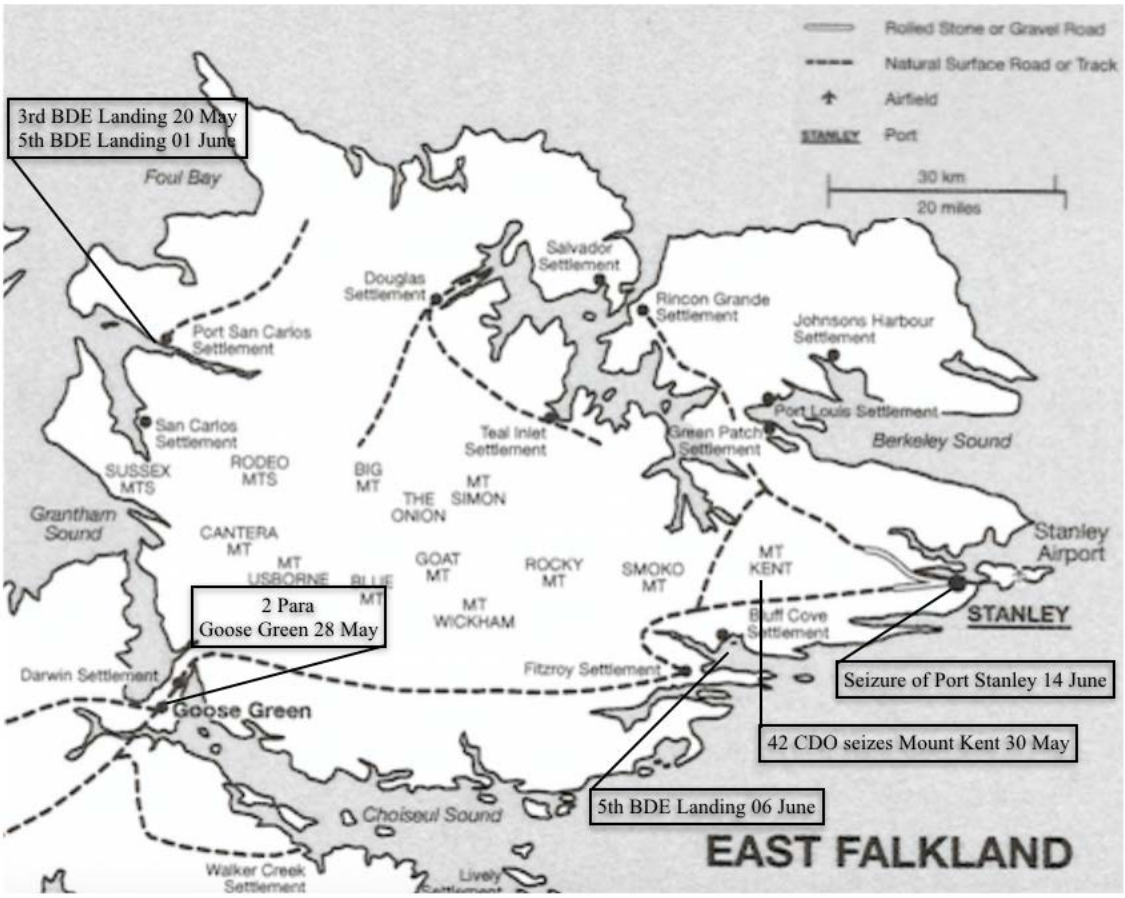
Most notably, the CTG sunk the Argentine cruiser, the *Belgrano,* just outside the EZ.[80] Despite this success, the CTG failed to isolate the Falkland Islands from aerial resupply. Argentinian C-130 Hercules cargo planes routinely penetrated the EZ to augment combat power for the Argentine ground forces throughout the campaign.[81]

With these developments in mind, planners finalized the site selection and timing of the amphibious landings. The planning process was a cooperative effort between the staffs of the marine commandos within 3 CDO BDE and the naval staff of the ATG. After dissuading the MOD from a direct attack on the capital, the site selection was a matter of balancing risks to the ground forces, the amphibious landing craft, and the naval destroyers.[82] Each element demanded different approaches and each argued for different landing sites. The deciding factor was mutual trust between Thompson, representing the landing force, and Clapp, representing the amphibious landing craft. Together they were able to compromise on the risks. For instance, they agreed to spread the risks of air attacks to the ships during daytime with the risks of ground attacks to the soldiers during nighttime. Their staffs accomplished this by spreading the timings of the landings between late evening and early morning. The CTF approved a landing site on the far western side of East Falkland Island in San Carlos Bay (see figure 4). This met Thompson's intent of avoiding the enemy's primary defenses by approaching from the west.[83]

The planning staffs identified two operational issues that would have enormous impacts on the execution of the land campaign for both 3 and 5 INF BDEs. First, the staff identified British air superiority over the islands as a prerequisite for the landings and the subsequent overland attack on the capital, Port Stanley. Second, the staffs foresaw that significant helicopter lift support would be required for the arduous 150 kilometer trek from the landing site on the

[80] Ibid., 86-87, 284, 290.
[81] Thompson, 33.
[82] Freedman, 194-195.
[83] Hastings, 191.

western side to the capital on the eastern side.[84] These planning assumptions were highly important in the days that followed as they stretched the mission command capacity of both



brigades.

Figure 4. East Falkland Island Major Battles

Source: Map adapted from Lawrence Freedman, *The Official History of the Falklands, Vol 2: The 1982 Falklands War and It's Aftermath* (New York, NY: Routledge, Taylor & Francis Group, 2005), xxxi.

As the ATG sailed from Ascension towards their objective on East Falkland Island, Thompson prepared the final operations order brief for the soldiers and marines of 3 CDO BDE. In his orders brief, he sought to convey his intent face-to-face for the landings and subsequent

[84] Ibid., 94, 228.

overland drive on the capital.[85] His orders highlighted the British tradition of directive control, communicating intent and direction without specifying the unnecessary details. For the marine commandos and the attached airborne infantry, this approach to command was expected to be second nature.[86] Thompson envisioned a four battalion amphibious landing to secure the beachhead and establish a perimeter. While logistics continued to build capacity on the beach, the battalions would prepare for an overland march on an easterly axis towards Port Stanley, seizing key terrain along the high ground surrounding the capital (see figure 4). In essence, the landings were purely a means to an end.[87]

Another aspect that concerned Thompson was the prudent acceptance of risk. 2 Para and 3 Para lacked the organic amphibious equipment and training that existed within 3 CDO BDE proper. He saw this as a serious concern during the orders process. Unavoidable logistics arrangements compounded this problem. 2 Para sailed separately from the bulk of the marine commandos on board the HMS *Canberra*. Due to this separation, 3 CDO BDE and 2 Para became desynchronized over the timings of the landings. Due to radio blackout conditions, the 3 CDO BDE staff had to shoot the written orders that de-conflicted the timings across the bow of 2 Para's ship.[88] Furthermore, during the loading of the landing craft, the soldiers of 2 Para caused serious delays in the overall timeline causing the commander to question the competency of the battalion. Despite these concerns, Thompson resisted the urge to change the order of battle.[89] Ultimately, the soldiers of 2 Para hit the beach and secured their objectives just as well as their marine counterparts. This highlighted the ability of the marine commandos of 3 CDO BDE to leverage the commonalities of their elite culture with the airborne infantry. 3 CDO BDE built mutual trust

[85] Thompson, 39-40.
[86] Van der Bijl, 70-71.
[87] Vaux, 69-71.
[88] Frost, 27-28.
[89] Thompson, 58.

based on this shared culture. This aspect validated the acceptance of prudent risk during the landings.

On 21 May the ATG launched the largest British amphibious operation since the Suez Canal in 1956. SAS strategic reconnaissance shaped conditions for the amphibious landings by collecting intelligence since early May.[90] Deception operations focused on conveying the impression that the landings would occur close to the capital on the opposite side of the island. This combination of strategic intelligence and deception set the conditions for a relatively unopposed landing into San Carlos Bay. It was clear that the main enemy threat was from the air not the ground. A small contingent of Argentine defenders, estimated to be a light infantry platoon, quickly fled the area above the landing site and were pursued beyond the perimeter by 42 CDO BN.[91] By contrast, throughout the landings and the subsequent build-up of logistics, the Argentine air threat was persistent and caused a significant disruption of logistics. The bulk of the logistics ships, including 3 CDO BDE's stores in HMS *Canberra* were hastily evacuated ahead of schedule to reduce the risk from the Argentine air threat.[92]

This logistics disruption created mobility issues for the overland drive on Port Stanley. More importantly, the persistent air threat attrited the morale of the soldiers and marines of 3 CDO BDE.[93] Throughout the campaign, the air defense capabilities of the outer ring of the CTG were inadequate. This was compounded by the limitations of the internal air defense assets within 3 CDO BDE itself.[94] Ultimately, the constant threat of air attack wore down the morale and *esprit de corps* of the soldiers and commandos within the brigade.

As 3 CDO BDE continued to build combat power, Thompson established his brigade tactical headquarters (BDE TAC) on the beachhead and allowed time for his BN commanders to

[90] Freedman, 450.
[91] Vaux, 65-66.
[92] Clapp, 146-147.
[93] Vaux, 89-90.
[94] Hastings, 205, 211.

solidify the perimeter.[95] 42 CDO BN and 3 Para recommended refinements to the newly established BDE TAC regarding the existing LFTG defensive plans. While the requirements of mission command demanded their attention, the brigade was already being bombarded with requests from MOD in England to push out and find the enemy.[96] Despite this enormous pressure, the BDE TAC entertained bottom up refinement to the defensive perimeter from its subordinate battalions. The BDE TAC even integrated recommendations from the SAS, who by now had integrated their strategic reconnaissance assets with the brigade.

Looking beyond the beachhead, Thompson worried about the presence of an enemy garrison at the nearby settlements of Darwin and Goose Green. Together these settlements encompassed a series of houses for approximately 150 inhabitants, but their location twenty-one kilometers from the beachhead created a security dilemma (see figure 4). Tactically, clearing the enemy from these settlements effectively secured the flank of the main effort towards Port Stanley.[97] Strategically, they were important in the same manner as the island of South Georgia in that they would engender a continuing source of positive momentum in the press.[98] In military terms, Major General Moore's guidance to Thompson was to "establish moral and physical domination over the enemy."[99] Therefore, Thompson ordered Lieutenant Colonel Jones, the commander of 2 Para, to disrupt the enemy at Goose Green by conducting a battalion level raid. Unfortunately, severe weather prevented the required ammunition from being positioned forward in support of the operation. Thus, Thompson reluctantly cancelled it after days of waiting for clear weather. He reasoned that the costs of the raid without artillery support outweighed the benefits of securing the flank. However, due to the above strategic considerations, Fieldhouse

[95] Thompson, 66.
[96] Vaux, 91-93.
[97] Thompson, 73-75.
[98] Bruce Watson and Peter Dunn, *Military Lessons of the Falkland Islands War: Views from the United States* (Boulder, CO: Arms and Armour Press, 1984), 72.
[99] Watson, 74.

ordered Thompson directly by satellite radio to destroy the enemy position at Goose Green as soon as possible. Unfortunately, not only were the ratios of combat power not adequate without artillery, but now Fieldhouse's intent escalated from disrupting the enemy to destroying the garrison.[100]

Despite these concerns, Thompson intended to give 2 Para the latitude and resources they needed. Unfortunately, helicopters remained in short supply due to heavy losses from enemy fire both on land and sea. At the time of the Goose Green raid on 28 May, enemy fire and weather-related crashes had destroyed a total of twenty-six helicopters, including three CH-47 Chinooks that went down with the sinking of the HMS *Atlantic Conveyor*.[101] In terms of ground mobility and firepower, the LFTG concluded that the poor soil conditions could not support any further movement of the armored vehicles of the Blues and Royals.[102] Due to these constraints, Jones developed a plan to approach Goose Green on foot and his staff allocated all available artillery, naval gunfire, and close air support to 2 Para accordingly.

The strategic reconnaissance elements of the SAS observed the settlement for some time and probed it initially during the landings. Their assessment of the enemy placed the troop strength at a company of light infantry. They also reported that the enemy could be easily defeated by two companies of light infantry from 3 CDO BDE. The actual enemy troop strength was closer to 1,050 soldiers and airmen.[103] Certainly, the overall underestimation of the Argentinian military played a part in this assessment, but other factors compounded the difficulty in appreciating the true strength of the enemy. Due to leaks within the British government, BBC News broadcasted the intent for 3 CDO BDE to seize Goose Green Settlement hours before the operation began. Upon hearing this report, Argentinian reinforcements were sent to the

[100] Freedman, 556.
[101] Ibid., 538.
[102] Thompson, 86.
[103] Frost, 39-40.

settlement, raising the total enemy strength by three light infantry companies.[104] The effects of the broadcast was troublesome for the soldiers of 2 Para. First, they now faced an alert and potentially reinforced enemy position. Second, the incompetence back home indicated that their best interests were second to the desire to appease the domestic audience by feeding the media details that compromised operational security. These leaks persisted throughout Operation Corporate and they imposed additional burdens on the morale of the troops.

Disheartened and under resourced, 2 Para attacked towards Goose Green lacking surprise and some enablers, but with the benefits of operating as a cohesive team with a common purpose. Extensive rehearsals added to the understanding and level of trust within 2 Para. In order to increase coordination and lessen the burden on the 2 Para staff, the brigade established a liaison officer (LNO) within the ranks of the battalion. Both Thompson and Major Keeble, the battalion operations officer, highlighted the importance of this BDE LNO in terms of increasing shared understanding during the ensuing battle for Goose Green.[105]

The four companies of 2 Para attacked during the pre-dawn hours of 28 May. The initial phases were intended to infiltrate the enemy's outer defense under the cover of darkness. Later phases included the deliberate attack on the settlements of Darwin and Goose Green, respectively.[106] As the sun rose, 2 Para lost the element of surprise and was heavily attrited by extensive enemy artillery, mines, and close air support. As the battle unfolded, the progress of 2 Para ground to a halt in the vicinity of their first objective at the Darwin Settlement. Lieutenant Colonel Jones' attempted to rally the troops and lead a charge against a particularly well entrenched enemy machine gun only to fall mortally wounded in the endeavor.

Major Keeble, the battalion operations officer, quickly assumed command and attempted to gather an understanding of the situation. Friendly losses were mounting. Along with the

[104] Ibid., 49, 82.
[105] Frost, 94.
[106] Thompson, 85-86.

Battalion Commander, the Adjutant, A Company Executive Officer, and nine non-commissioned officers were dead with an additional thirty wounded.[107] After reaffirming Thompson's intent, Keeble quickly issued new orders to attack the right flank of the enemy at Darwin. With the addition of close air support, the settlement of Darwin was cleared and Goose Green was isolated. After sustaining these heavy losses, the soldiers of 2 Para gained a better appreciation of the enemy's true capabilities. The hubris of earlier planning was effectively gone from their minds.[108]

Major Keeble sought to avoid a direct attack against the fortifications of Goose Green. Lead elements had reported sighting additional reinforcements being lifted onto the objective via enemy CH-47 Chinooks. Additionally, the forces at Goose Green still possessed heavy anti-aircraft which would inflict heavy losses in any direct attack. They also held up to 112 civilians captive in the town hall.[109] However, the soldiers of 2 Para held the high ground around Goose Green and, with it, the initiative. In this spirit, Keeble recommended the 3 CDO BDE reserve be committed to reinforce 2 Para. He also offered a creative alternative to direct assault. He recommended close air support make an overwhelming demonstration of firepower. Then under a white flag, he recommended an ultimatum be delivered to the enemy garrison; surrender or face the consequences. Demonstrating an enormous amount of trust, Thompson approved Keeble's concept. By 0940 on the following morning, the Argentinian garrison surrendered.[110] Keeble's ingenuity won the day.

In hindsight, the soldiers of 2 Para were outnumbered in every conceivable way. The decision not to commit the brigade's light armor and not to position a forward element from the brigade staff certainly did not help. As Bruce Watson wrote in his analysis of the lessons learned from the Falklands War, "By any mathematical model, the British should have had no chance of

[107] Ibid., 89-91.
[108] Frost, 74.
[109] Thompson, 93-94.
[110] Hastings, 247-249.

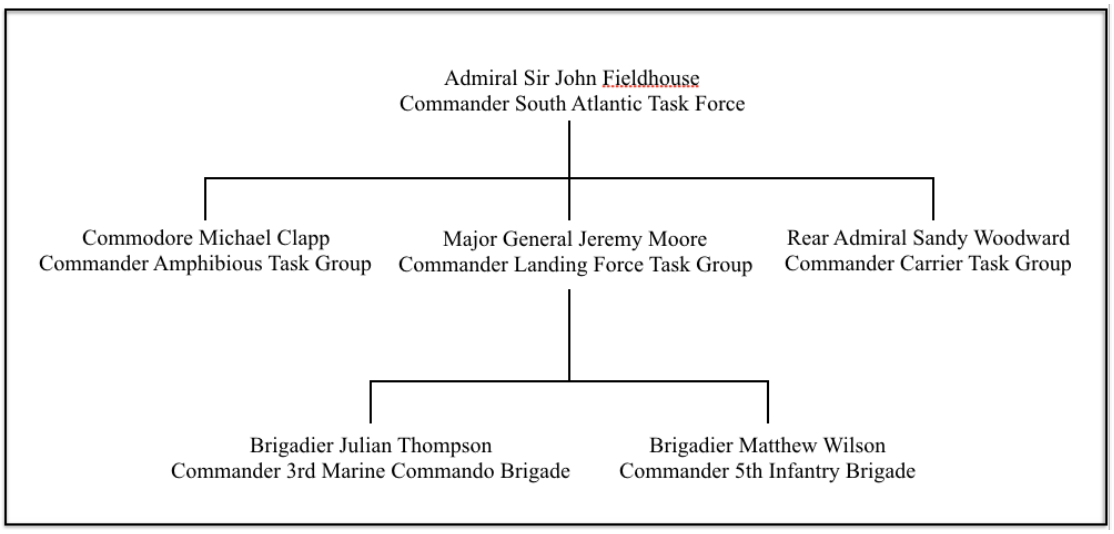
success against an Argentine land force, superior in both numbers and weaponry, fighting from prepared defensive positions. The critical difference was not material but moral."[111] The eventual success of the battalion was largely due to their superior use of disciplined initiative and shared understanding. Keeble's mission command style is a testament to the extensive training and unit culture within 3 CDO BDE. Thompson's ability to resist the instinct to personally take charge of the stalled operation indicates the level of trust he felt for 2 Para.[112] The battle of Goose Green demonstrated the level to which the principles of mission command, as articulated in ADP 6-0, were successfully applied.

As the battle of Goose Green culminated, 5 INF BDE completed its final preparations for its disembarkation into San Carlos Bay. Its commander, Brigadier Wilson, sought to persuade Moore to end the debate regarding the brigade's participation in the upcoming drive on the capital, Port Stanley. As previously mentioned, the intended role of the 5 INF BDE was ambiguous. Many envisioned it would secure the rear areas for the more capable 3 CDO BDE. However, Wilson argued that 5 INF BDE would be most effective by opening its own second line of operation to the south of 3 CDO BDE. This "southern option" eventually won out, despite the misgiving of the commanders of 3 CDO BDE and the ATG. These commanders cringed at the strain a second front would impose on mission command and logistics.[113] The decision was as much about subcultures within the British Army as it was about tactics. Wilson was anxious to avoid being left behind as the elite paratroopers and marine commandos seized Port Stanley.

Major General Moore arrived in San Carlos Bay on 30 May and officially took command of the LFTG from Brigadier Thompson (see figure 5). He immediately received an update on the situation. Due to the intermittent communications aboard the *Queen Elizabeth II,* Moore was not fully aware of the situation on the ground. Upon hearing of the success at Goose Green, he

[111] Watson, 79.
[112] Thompson, 97-98.
[113] Hastings, 270-272.

attached 2 Para to the understrength 5 INF BDE to increase their combat power with an experienced BN.[114] Despite this increase, the brigade struggled over the next few days to break out of the beachhead and begin the movement towards Port Stanley. Much like the other commanders predicted, the harsh terrain of the islands and the lack of mobility assets surprised the newly-arrived brigade. Logistics failings became the primary concern for 5 INF BDE. Tensions increased between them and 3 CDO BDE as the delays continued.[115] As 3 CDO BDE stood by in their forward positions waiting for 5 INF BDE's movement, the MOD demanded



action to satisfy the increasing political clamor over the perceived inactivity of the LFTG.

Figure 5. Subsequent Command Relationship within the South Atlantic Task Force

Source: Adapted from Michael Clapp and Ewen Southby-Tailyour, *Amphibious Assault Falklands: The Battle of San Carlos Water* (Barnsley, UK: Pen & Sword Military, 2007), 31-32.

In the meantime, 2 Para was transferred back under the command of its parent brigade, 5 INF BDE, and continued to defend the Goose Green Settlement. Major Keeble still served as acting commander and he offered a radical solution for the brigade's delays. Taking a cue from a

[114] Ibid., 106.
[115] Freedman, 595.

local villager, Keeble recommended the brigade simply call the next series of settlements over the existing land lines and attempt to acquire local intelligence regarding the presence of enemy forces. Rather than clearing the southern portion of the island linearly, the paratroopers could simply air assault to the next expected enemy-free position.[116] Wilson initially rejected the idea, but eventually accepted the logic of the suggestion. By 02 June, 5 INF BDE confirmed there was no enemy in the Fitzroy and Teal Inlet Settlements and prepared to move forward via helicopter. Despite this initiative, the limitations of helicopter support were still constraining movement. Not to be deterred, 2 Para re-tasked a routine CH-47 resupply mission and convinced the pilot to take a portion of the battalion forward to Fitzroy Settlement (see figure 4). 5 INF BDE objectives were secured over the next few hours instead of the originally anticipated five days.[117] Unfortunately, their overwhelming success quickly created enormous problems for the division. It quickly became evident that the brigade had exceeded the acceptable level of risk through this speed enhancing initiative.

As 2 Para conducted this bold air assault on 02 June, the newly arrived 5 INF BDE failed to inform either the LFTG or their sister brigade of their changes to the plan. This failure caused a cascade of problems that disrupted the entire LFTG line of operations. The initial threat was from fratricide. Within minutes of the 2 Para helicopters touching down on the Fitzroy Settlement, the adjacent 3 CDO BDE units called for artillery support on what they interpreted to be an enemy formation. This artillery strike and a subsequent close air support mission was called off only at the last second by a cautious division staff officer.[118] An even bigger concern was the impact of logistics. By establishing a forward presence five days ahead of schedule, 5 INF BDE threw the LFTG's logistics plan into disarray. Instead of stockpiling ammunition in support of 3 CDO

[116] Frost, 103-104.
[117] Van der Bijl, 76-77.
[118] Ibid., 79-82.

BDE's upcoming attacks on the northern approach, all the helicopter support would now be committed to completing the move of 5 INF BDE's forward positions.[119]

Due to these issues, both Wilson and Moore pushed for any further movement towards Port Stanley to be made by sea instead of overland. Although they attempted to frame this as a simple movement of troops, Clapp foresaw the risk from the Argentine Air Force during any landing. He was not convinced that a hasty amphibious landing onto the next objective at Teal Inlet was tactically wise.[120] These amphibious operations required deliberate planning due to their complex nature. More importantly, Clapp had already lost confidence in the leadership of Wilson based on the breakdown in mission command principles during the capture of Fitzroy. He also had little confidence in the ability of 5 INF BDE to conduct amphibious operations given their lack of previous amphibious training.[121] However, the demand for action by both the MOD and Wilson himself continued to grow.

Clapp reluctantly agreed to a limited sea movement of one battalion towards the next objective at Bluff Cove (refer back to figure 4). Despite this compromise, a growing debate ensued between all three CTF component commanders regarding the associated risk of enemy fire to the landing craft versus the time requirements of crossing overland. Between 06 and 08 June, communications problems within the 5 INF BDE's headquarters caused situational awareness to plummet as they moved via land and sea towards Bluff Cove. Simple tracking of unit movements became increasingly confused due to a lack of shared understanding regarding the new line of operation.[122] At one point, an entire company of 5 INF BDE soldiers was temporary lost at sea somewhere off the coast, as was a cargo ship carrying the brigade's redundant communications system. In another fratricide incident, an army scout helicopter was

[119] Ibid., 81-82.
[120] Clapp, 213-214.
[121] Ibid., 267.
[122] Ibid., 240-241.

shot down by the air defense systems aboard the HMS *Cardiff.*[123] Unfortunately, the enemy also contributed to the losses as Clapp had predicted. Argentine bombers destroyed two landing ships, *Sir Galahad* and *Sir Tristram,* killing thirty-two soldiers from the 1st Welsh Guards and wounding 170.

5 INF BDE lacked amphibious training, cohesive unit culture, and an appropriate task organization to balance the level of initiative and risk-taking they attempted during the Fitzroy Settlement seizure and Bluff Cove amphibious landings. Some argue that Wilson's persistence in opening a southern flank for the newly arrived 5 INF BDE was the proximate cause for the subsequent failings. However, Max Hastings, the British historian who accompanied both brigades during Operation Corporate, disagrees. He stated: "They possessed an inexperienced brigade staff with inadequate command and communications equipment, no specialized vehicles, and a formation whose units scarcely knew each other."[124] 5 INF BDE's mission command shortcomings were too great. They were present at their initial training in England and they persisted through the disaster at Bluff Cove.[125]

Prior to these unfortunate losses, the marine commandos of 3 CDO BDE continued their breakout from the beachhead at San Carlos Bay. They faced a long march east across the island to attack the outer ring of the Argentinian defense surrounding Port Stanley. Luckily, on 25 May, the local SAS commander proposed a bold move to the commander of 42 CDO BN, Lieutenant Colonel Vaux. Similar to the initiative taken during 5 INF BDE's air assault over the undefended settlements at Fitzroy, the SAS proposed that a combined SAS and marine commando element seize the lightly defended key terrain atop Mount Kent. For forty-eight hours the marine commandos rehearsed, the brigade staff flushed out the details, and Thompson weighed the risks.[126]

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[123] Van der Bijl, 106, 114, 144-146.
[124] Hastings, 284.
[125] Ibid., 283-284.
[126] Vaux, 96-100.

On 31 May, after numerous weather delays, the initial wave of SAS and marine commandos seized Mount Kent. The SAS intelligence was correct and the *coup de main* was a complete success. The enemy light infantry company defending Mount Kent had reinforced the Battle of Goose Green days earlier. Additional waves of 42 CDO BN brought forward the remainder of the battalion, reinforcing artillery, and the brigade headquarters.[127] The seizure of this key terrain was so advantageous that Thompson decided to co-locate his command post atop the mountain to command the next phase of the brigade's attack.[128] Although 42 CDO BN met some enemy resistance as they established defensive positions on the forward slope of the mountain, the largest threat was from the harsh weather conditions. High winds and black-out conditions served to degrade morale, increase cases of frost bite, and prevented fresh water from reaching the troops. Although Thompson recommended that Vaux rotate his companies off the mountain to prevent additional weather related causalities, all four companies refused to be evacuated.[129] This spoke volumes to the level of training and unit cohesion of the elite marine commandos. Furthermore, it highlighted the great disparity between the success of 3 CDO BDE and the attempted *coup de main* of 5 INF BDE at Fitzroy. Despite the two plans' conceptual similarities, 5 INF BDE lacked the training and unit cohesion necessary to execute the principles of mission command effectively. The disparity between the two brigades highlighted the risk of ill-disciplined initiative, in which ambition, however noteworthy, strays outside the bounds of the commander's intent.

Moore's operational concept for the seizure of Port Stanley called for two lines of operation. With 3 CDO BDE now postured along the northern axis, it could continue the attack east by seizing the key terrain along the outer ring of the Argentinian defense. These defenses were manned by the Argentine 7th Infantry Regiment with strongpoints along Mount Longdon

[127] Vaux, 120-123.
[128] Thompson, 133.
[129] Vaux, 137-139.

and Harriet. The fighting for 3 CDO BDE proved formidable. Casualties from the three battalions totaled twenty-eight killed and sixty-eight wounded. 5 INF BDE would approach along the southern axis and pass through 3 CDO BDE to continue the attack to seize Mount Tumbledown (refer back to figure 4). In a final push, 3 CDO BDE would come abreast of 5 INF BDE to seize Wireless Ridge.[130] Consequently, two very different brigades were going to converge as they moved towards the final objectives surrounding Port Stanley.

While 5 INF BDE prepared for their advance on Mount Tumbledown, tensions between the commanders intensified. Wilson's repeated assurances that 5 INF BDE was ready for major combat fell on deaf ears as Thompson continued to wait for their sister brigade to secure the southern axis.[131] Moore fielded concerns from the MOD regarding the delays and Wilson's overall competency. Beyond moving 2 Para back under 3 CDO BDE, Moore also contemplated transferring the Welsh Guards to them.[132] Whether this reflected an overall lack of confidence in Wilson was debatable. What was certain was that the leadership in 2 Para welcomed a return to 3 CDO BDE after the debacle at Bluff Cove. This included the new battalion commander, Lieutenant Colonel David Chaundler. He parachuted from a C-130 cargo aircraft just days earlier and made his way forward to the battalion at Bluff Cove. He was shocked by the disarrayed 5 INF BDE staff. Once the battalion re-joined 3 CDO BDE, he was equally surprised by what he found there, for it displayed a collective confidence that 5 INF BDE lacked. He assessed that the level of staff training and the experience of early battle had solidified the level of mutual trust and unit cohesion within it.[133]

On the morning of 13 June, 5 INF BDE attacked to seize Mount Tumbledown. It continued to highlight the poor execution of mission command principles within Wilson's command. In recognition of 5 INF BDE's shortcomings, the LFTG augmented it with two

[130] Watson, 76-77.
[131] Van der Bijl, 125, 170.
[132] Freedman, 633-634.
[133] Frost, 106, 125.

armored reconnaissance platoons from the Blues and Royals Regiment. The 2nd Scots Guards Battalion were tasked with seizing Mount Tumbledown from the entrenched Argentinian 5th Marine Battalion. Although 5 INF BDE attempted to support the effort with diversionary attacks and heavy artillery bombardments, micromanagement and poor staff training took center stage. Just prior to execution, the brigade staff realized that insufficient artillery ammunition was on hand to support a deliberate attack. Therefore, Wilson delayed the attack, which fueled tension with 3 CDO BDE.[134] Despite the additional time for staff planning, the enemy forced the initial movements of the 2nd Scots Guard Battalion to a halt. Wilson's incessant demands of the Scots Guards were ineffective at producing forward movement. As an officer from the adjacent 1/7 Gurkhas Battalion recalled from the brigade radio chatter, "The Guards' CO kept his cool and his superior's aggressive questions and hopeful suggestions slowly petered out."[135] Unfortunately, by the time the 2nd Scots Guards Battalion finally gained firepower superiority and an advantageous position on Mount Tumbledown, the battalion had simply turned off their radios rather than deal with the Brigade Commander.[136] After ten hours of fighting, the 2nd Scots Guard Battalion secured Mount Tumbledown, albeit with heavy losses, including nine dead and forty-three wounded. In fairness to the Scots Guards, they fought well against a numerically-superior and entrenched enemy. The battalion was conducting ceremonial duties just eight weeks prior.[137] Regrettably, the lack of staff training in the 5 INF BDE headquarters and the poor mutual trust between Wilson and his subordinate commanders undermined the battle from the start.

Meanwhile, 3 CDO BDE prepared to advance on their final objective on Wireless Ridge. The initial movement required 42 CDO BN to pass through the lines of the 1st Welsh Guards Battalion. Forward passages of lines are a notoriously dangerous operation due to the risk of fratricide concurrent with exposure to enemy fire. Thompson recognized that the potential risks

[134] Van der Bijl, 180-185.
[135] Freedman, 638.
[136] Ibid.
[137] Van der Bijl, 202-203.

involved were potentially even higher due to the mission command shortcomings within 5 INF BDE. Therefore, he requested that the Welsh Guards leadership attend his orders and rehearsals. When this did not occur, he embedded an LNO within the Welsh Guards to increase coordination.[138] Unfortunately, as 42 CDO BN approached the start line for 3 CDO BDE's attack, the 1st Welsh Guards Battalion were not at the line of departure nor were they answering on the 5 INF BDE radio net. Fearing the Welsh Guards were in the wrong location, Vaux wrestled with his next move. Fortunately, the lead elements of 42 CDO BN spotted a group of soldiers several hundred meters away through their night vision sights. They turned out to be the Reconnaissance Troop of the 1st Welsh Guards Battalion. Despite the delays, 3 CDO BDE completed the forward passage of lines with the Welsh Guards without further incident.[139] 3 CDO BDE's main effort, 2 Para, was now in a position to begin the attack on Wireless Ridge.

Lieutenant Colonel Chaundler, the new commander of 2 Para, intended to adhere to the mission command philosophies, as defined by ADP 6-0, that brought success at the Battle of Goose Green. He intended to leverage simple mission type orders to maximize the trust he shared with his company commanders. Major Gillan served once again as the 3 CDO BDE LNO. He would continue to prove invaluable in bridging the culture gap between the marine command headquarters and the soldiers in 2 Para. In addition, 3 CDO BDE attached an armored reconnaissance platoon to 2 Para to further increase its combat power.[140]

On 13 June, 2 Para initiated their approach following a large artillery barrage. Applying overwhelming firepower was a lesson the battalion learned the hard way at Goose Green. 3 CDO BDE would fire 6,000 artillery and mortar rounds by the end of the battle.[141] Thompson never felt the need to join the radio net during the battle except to confirm additional artillery requests for

[138] Vaux, 161-162.
[139] Ibid., 174-175.
[140] Frost, 136-140.
[141] Watson, 78.

Chaundler.[142] 2 Para seized their first three objectives with minimal losses. The combination of firepower from the armored reconnaissance vehicles and the artillery barrages broke the spirit of the Argentinian 7th Infantry Regiment and 1st Parachute Regiment defending Wireless Ridge. Unfortunately, as 2 Para attacked past the initial enemy positions along Wireless Ridge, they entered the enemy's main engagement area which included an elaborate minefield and registered artillery targets. Similar to their sister battalion's fight on Mount Tumbledown, the enemy's defense forced the attack to a halt. However, 2 Para had several advantages over the battalions in 5 INF BDE. Much like the previous 2 Para Commanding Officer, Chaundler personally rallied the soldiers forward.[143] He was able to leverage the advantages of a unit that was extensively trained, enjoyed a high degree of unit cohesion, and benefited from a task organization that remained constant throughout the campaign.

The combination of 3 CDO BDE's pressure on Wireless Ridge and 5 INF BDE's success on Mount Tumbledown forced the Argentinian command to order the withdrawal of the last defensive ring around Port Stanley. Moore recognized the opportunity to press the attack and ordered both brigades to converge on Port Stanley. Paratroopers from 2 Para were the first soldiers to enter the capital at 1330 on 14 June, advancing under the cover of the armored reconnaissance vehicles of the Blues and Royals. As D Company, 2 Para approached Government House, a very surprised Lieutenant Shaun Webster was saluted by General Menendez, the commander-in-chief of the Argentinian forces in the Falklands.[144] The Falklands War was over. Argentina achieved marginal political success in bringing worldwide attention to the Falkland Islands but failed to garner international support for its claim over them. If anything, Argentina's aggression unified Britain's view regarding the Falklanders' enduring right to self-determination.[145] It is a sentiment that prevails to this day.

[142] Thompson, 178.
[143] Frost, 142-147.
[144] Ibid., 152-153.
[145] Freedman and Gamba-Stonehouse, 413-414.

Conclusion

The principles of mission command developed from varying levels of training and readiness between the brigades. They also developed distinct qualities due to different cultural norms between the commandos, the airborne infantry, and the light infantry that comprised both brigades. The "DNA" of these units was also fundamentally different. The MOD designed 3 CDO BDE's task organization for rapid global deployment while it designed 5 INF BDE to support NATO's defense of the European continent. According to the 2012 Joint Chiefs of Staff White Paper on Mission Command: "mission command is fundamentally a learned behavior to be imprinted on the DNA of the profession of arms."[146] The idea that mission command is a learned behavior speaks volumes to the predicament faced by the LFTG and the three critical factors of unit readiness, unit culture, and task organization.

This monograph posed the question: Are there limitations on the application of mission command, and, if so, what forms do they take? The limitations on 5 INF BDE's ability to employ ADP 6-0's six principles of mission command were severe. It's degraded unit readiness affected their ability to accept prudent levels of risk. Differences in unit culture significantly reduced the level of mutual trust between senior commanders: Moore, Thompson, and Wilson. Its task organization significantly challenged their ability to exercise disciplined initiative on multiple occasions. The severity of these limitations disrupted the southern line of operation for the LFTG. 3 CDO BDE's initiative during the overland attack was stifled by the numerous delays caused by 5 INF BDE's unsuccessful attempts to break out of its lodgment. Due to uncoordinated initiative, the brigade overstretched its operational reach by seizing Fitzroy five days ahead of schedule; derailing the LFTG's fragile sustainment situation.[147] Its mission command difficulties also

[146] General Martin E. Dempsey, *Mission Command White Paper* (Washington, DC: U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff, 2012), 6.

[147] Vaux, 89-90.

hindered 3 CDO BDE's ability to project combat power effectively during the final phases of the land campaign.

Unit readiness and culture played the most significance role in defining the outcomes of mission command. The task organization also played a role, but its impacts were less clearly defined. A close examination of 2 Para highlights the impact of task organization on mission command. The philosophy of mission command thrived for 2 Para during the Battle of Goose Green under 3 CDO BDE. Unfortunately during the transition to 5 INF BDE, the balance of disciplined initiative and prudent risk broke down during the attempted *coup de main* at Fitzroy Settlement and the disaster in Bluff Cove. 2 Para's failure in staff coordination with its higher headquarters was a direct result of a lack of unit readiness and an inadequate task organization. Recognizing this dynamic, Moore assigned 2 Para back to 3 CDO BDE for the final assault on Wireless Ridge with significant changes to the level of shared trust.[148] Thus, 2 Para's odyssey demonstrates that task organization played a notable role in limiting the execution of mission command. More importantly, it illustrates the level of caution required for operational planners when removing units from their habitual higher headquarters and attaching them to unfamiliar organizations.

Beyond task organization, culture played an even larger role in affecting mission command principles. In 2012, Lieutenant General David Perkins, the commander of the Combined Arms Center at Fort Leavenworth, Kansas, wrote that the successful execution of mission command requires a philosophical shift in the mindset of the commanders and their subordinates. He stated that: "It's a mindset that allows commanders to push capabilities and responsibilities to the edge, thereby ensuring that our Army can operate at a pace equal to or faster than our enemy."[149] He argued that this mindset must be grown in the culture of the unit.[150]

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[148] Clapp, 251.

[149] Lieutenant General David G. Perkins, "Mission Command: Reflections from the Combined Arms Center Commander," *ARMY Magazine* 62, no. 6 (June 2012): 32.

[150] Ibid.

Both Thompson and Clapp emphasized the cultural differences in their personal accounts of the conflict. Thompson identified the integration of the airborne infantry culture into his marine commando formation as a paramount consideration. Even small things like the color of airborne versus commando berets held symbolic meaning when attempting to integrate disparate units. Clapp, as the ATG Commander, focused more on the appearances of bias regarding his support priorities. His concern was to not appear preferential towards the more elite 3 CDO BDE over the traditional 5 INF BDE formation, although he concludes this was largely a losing battle.[151] 5 INF BDE was greatly challenged by the cultural divides within its formation. Numerous personal accounts document the cultural strain between Wilson and his subordinate battalions. Instances of simply turning radios off to avoid the aggressive demands from Wilson were frequent.[152] Operational planners must be cognizant of the various cultural traditions within formations. This is especially critical when accounting for the joint and multinational cultural considerations prevalent in the operational environment.

More so than task organization or culture, this study demonstrated that unit readiness affected the application of mission command. The readiness failures for 5 INF BDE during training such as Exercise Welsh Falcon were noteworthy due to the failures of staff work and the breakdown of trust and cohesion between commanders. The impact of recent ceremonial duties for certain battalions was a primary factor in the resulting lack of cohesion. Ancillary aspects such as equipment and physical fitness also added to the growing concern over the readiness disparity between 3 and 5 INF BDE. These factors bore fruit for 3 CDO BDE during the Battle of Goose Green in which disciplined initiative survived the loss of the 2 Para battalion commander. Conversely, the failures of 5 INF BDE in the waters of Bluff Cove arguably originated from a lack of shared understand among the staff and an overabundance of risk-taking by the commanders. Operational planners must remain keenly aware of the varying levels of unit

[151] Clapp, 250-251.
[152] Freedman, 638.

readiness within a formation, and account for both the opportunities and limitations that such a variance presents.

A close analysis of the execution of mission command by the LFTG also validates the doctrinal underpinnings of the six principles of mission command found in ADP 6-0, *Mission Command.* At any given time during the land campaign, the six principles described the execution of mission command by Brigadiers Thompson and Wilson with exceptional clarity. Specifically, the principles that best described the limitations in mission command between 3 and 5 INF BDE were building cohesive teams through mutual trust, exercising disciplined initiative, and accepting prudent risk.

This case study also provides value to the evolution of mission command as a philosophy within US Army doctrine. As Clinton Ancker, the director of the Combined Arms Doctrine Directorate at Fort Leavenworth, Kansas, described the 2012 publication of ADP 6-0, *Mission Command*, as a milestone in US Army doctrine because warfare requires an overarching philosophy of mission command. He wrote, "this provides the Army with a foundation for education, training, and materiel development that is grounded in a view of warfare that has been proven effective by Western armies over decades, if not centuries, of conflict."[153] By analyzing the critical factors affecting mission command during conflicts such as at the Falklands War, the doctrinal foundation will continue to evolve towards greater fidelity.

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