

THE BRITISH INFANTRY IN THE FALKLANDS CONFLICT:
LESSONS OF THE LIGHT INFANTRY IN 1982 AND
THEIR RELEVANCE TO THE BRITISH ARMY
AT THE TURN OF THE CENTURY

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degree

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by

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13. ABSTRACT <i>(Maximum 200 words)</i> This study investigates the Falklands Conflict from the perspective of the light infantry to determine the key lessons that they learned during the ground campaign. These lessons are then applied to the British Army, specifically the infantry, at the turn of the century to determine if they are still relevant. The Falklands Conflict represents the last experience that the British infantry has of fighting in the light role in conventional warfighting. This thesis postulates that there were some critical failings in the infantry performance in the Falklands, mainly due to a lack of training because of a lack of time spent in the light infantry role. This study analyzes the ground campaign from the landings at San Carlos to the final battles around Port Stanley. From this study six broad lessons were identified, three of which are unique to this thesis and concern the use of ad hoc formations, the light infantry load, and the impact of the Regimental System on infantry performance in the Falklands Conflict. The study then concludes by discussing the relevance of all the identified lessons to the infantry at the turn of the century. The conclusion of this study finds that many of the factors that led to the problems experienced by the infantry in 1982 and hence to their lessons from the ground campaign are as relevant today as they were in the Falklands Conflict.			
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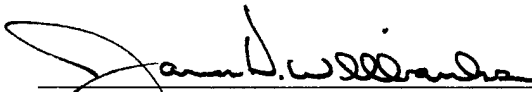
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The opinions and conclusions expressed herein are those of the student author and do not necessarily represent the views of the U.S. Army Command and General Staff College or any other governmental agency. (References to this study should include the foregoing statement.)

ABSTRACT

THE BRITISH INFANTRY IN THE FALKLANDS CONFLICT: LESSONS OF THE LIGHT INFANTRY IN 1982 AND THEIR RELEVANCE TO THE BRITISH ARMY AT THE TURN OF THE CENTURY by MAJ Andrew M. Pullan, UK, 111 Pages.

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I am also eternally grateful to my Father. A true academic, he gave hope and guidance in my moment of deepest despair. Without his guiding hand this thesis was doomed to founder upon the rocks of academic ignorance. I still dwell in his shadow but slowly I am beginning to cast my own.

However, it is to Dr. James Willbanks, Dr. Christopher Gabel and Major Elizabeth Agather that the greatest debt of gratitude is owed. It is they that with great forbearance, endless charm, and constant enthusiasm waded through numerous ill-conceived drafts and provided deft control of the evolution of this thesis. That said, any errors or faults of logic in this thesis are mine and mine alone.

Above all, my deepest respect and final thoughts go to the fallen of the Falklands Conflict. My studies have reinforced my understanding of how awful war is and how necessary it is that we, who call ourselves professionals, prepare for its greatest trials. Only in this way can we hope to win at least cost, saving as many hearts as possible the dark burden of grief and eternal loss. Only in this way can we face the bereaved and honestly say that the lives of their loved ones were not squandered at the hands of the unprepared. I can only hope that my endeavors are worthy of their sacrifice.

Nec Aspera Terrent.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
APPROVAL PAGE	ii
ABSTRACT	iii
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS	iv
LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS	vi
CHAPTER	
1. THESIS OVERVIEW	1
2. THE FALKLANDS ISLANDS: THEIR HISTORY AND AN OVERVIEW OF THE 1982 CONFLICT	9
3. TRAINING, EQUIPMENT, AND MEN	37
4. AD HOC FORMATIONS, LIGHT INFANTRY LOADS, AND THE REGIMENTAL SYSTEM	55
5. CONCLUSIONS AND RELEVANCE	76
APPENDIX	
A. PARTICIPANTS AND CASUALTIES IN THE MAJOR LAND BATTLES.....	96
B. BRITISH ARMY: GROUND FORCES ORDER OF BATTLE.....	99
C. BRITISH ARMY TRIAL FITNESS TEST AS AT MARCH 1999	102
BIBLIOGRAPHY.....	104
INITIAL DISTRIBUTION LIST	111

ILLUSTRATIONS

Figure

1. The Falklands, South Georgia and South Sandwich Islands	9
2. East and West Falkland	10
3. South Georgia	13
4. History of the Falklands	18
5. Operation Sutton and the Breakout from the Beachhead	28
6. Battle for Stanley -- Phase 1	31
7. Battle for Stanley -- Phase 2 & 3	32
8. Marching: A Strategic Issue	45
9. The Relationship Between Identified Key Factors in the Falklands	78
10. The Influence of Key Factors and Modifying Factors on Unit Capability	80
11. The Organization of the Infantry in the British Army, March 1999	84

Table

1. Summary of Main Lessons and Sub Lessons	77
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CHAPTER 1

THESIS OVERVIEW

On 2 April 1982 Argentinean forces invaded the Falkland Islands. Three days after the invasion, *HMS Hermes* and *HMS Invincible* left the United Kingdom to head what was to be the largest task force in recent history. On 25 April the task force repossessed South Georgia. On the night of 20/21 May the first major landing on the Falkland Islands was made at San Carlos Water. In the actions that followed there were inevitable set backs and casualties. Nevertheless, just over three weeks after the landing the Argentinean forces surrendered. It was by any standards a brilliant campaign, marked by exceptional logistics planning and improvisation, and carried through with outstanding skill and fortitude.¹

Ministry of Defense, *The Falklands War: The Lessons*

Keep your hands off the Regiments, you iconoclastic civilians who meddle and muddle in Army matters; you are not soldiers and you do not understand them.²

Field Marshal Viscount Wolseley, *The Story of a Soldier's Life*

Problem

The 1982 Falklands Conflict descended upon Britain out of a seemingly “clear blue diplomatic sky,” catching the Armed Forces of the United Kingdom off guard. Despite this, within three days a Royal Navy task force was steaming south prepared to dispute the Argentinean invasion, by force if necessary. Mobilized in direct support of this operation were thirty thousand servicemen and women and 108 ships. Included in this package were two light infantry brigades: 5 Infantry Brigade (5 Inf Bde) and 3 Commando Brigade (3 Cdo Bde). In total, these two brigades comprised of five Army infantry battalions and three Royal Marine commandos (defined later). Of concern to this thesis are the lessons learned by the Army’s five infantry battalions, and the continued relevance of these lessons to the British Army at the turn of the century.

A brief survey of history tells us that, for the British Army, being caught unprepared is nothing new, nor has such a pattern of events changed in the intervening years since the Falklands Conflict. The most recent example of this being Kosovo in 1999, with the imminent deployment of eight thousand soldiers to the borders of Serbia increasing the proportion of soldiers on operations to 27 percent of the recruited strength of the Army.³ This figure takes no account of those preparing to deploy or those who have just returned from operations. It is fair to conclude from this that the British Army is over committed. Furthermore, all the operations are, currently, peace support tasks, all of which are a distraction to the preparation of the Army for its perceived primary role -- high intensity warfighting.

However, the root cause of the Army's plight is not the commitment level to operations, which is the Army's *raison d'être*, but the heavy-handed cut backs in the size of the Army following the end of the Cold War. The rush to cash in on an apparent peace dividend has left the Army under resourced and under strength. This, despite all the warning signs that the demise of the Soviet Union would leave a power vacuum into which chaos would, and did, step.

Symptomatic of the changes in the British Army is the infantry. By the end of 1998 the British Army had reduced by one third, with infantry battalions being cut in number from fifty-eight to forty. The key planning assumption driving restructuring was that a major war or operation requiring a substantial national commitment would be recognized with months if not years in which to react. Consequently, not only has the Army reduced in size but readiness times and training levels have also been cut. The infantry, as all regular units, now operate on a method of graduated readiness. That is, a

small proportion of infantry battalions are at a high state of readiness (between two and five days notice to move), a higher proportion are at a medium state of readiness (ten to twenty days) and the majority are at the lower state of readiness (thirty days). Those infantry units at thirty days notice to move are resourced to conduct little (if any) collective training with the other arms and services. The infantry, therefore, cannot afford to squander its limited training opportunities. However, with such a high proportion of the Army deployed on peace support operations one wonders if the policy of graduated readiness remains a viable method of preparing an army for warfighting or whether it simply serves as an impediment to unit preparation. Unfortunately, answering this specific question lies outside of the scope of this thesis.

Purpose and Scope of the Study

The Falklands Conflict represents the last time that the British infantry, specifically the light infantry, fought in pitched battle. The purpose of this study is to re-evaluate the lessons of the Falklands Conflict and consider their continued relevance to the British Infantry. The scope of this study is the three week ground campaign in which six battles were fought. It is from the approach to and conduct of these battles that the main lessons for the British Infantry will be sought. As such, the primary question for this thesis is: Are the lessons of the infantry from the Falklands Conflict relevant to the British Infantry at the turn of the twentieth century? There are two subordinate questions that support this primary question: (1) "What lessons did the British infantry learn from the Falklands Conflict?" and (2) "Are these lessons still relevant?" A study of the Falklands Conflict, a limited-war conducted by light infantry, may help determine, *in part*, those factors that are essential to infantry success on the battlefield.

This thesis will not comment upon the immediate political events surrounding the conflict nor make judgments as to the moral rights and wrongs of the British and Argentinean position in the Falklands. When determining the lessons of the conflict, that is answering the first subordinate question, the focus will be on the lessons as regards the light infantry. However, on a broader scale all these lessons are applicable to all the infantry of the British Army. For the purposes of this thesis the following aspects of the ground campaign are not considered in any detail: the initial defense of the islands, Special Boat Service (SBS) operations, Special Air Service (SAS) operations, or the recapturing of South Georgia.

The Infantry

The first brigade to deploy to the Falklands was 3 Cdo Brigade, which comprised of 40, 42 and 45 Commando (Cdo), 2nd Battalion the Parachute Regiment (2 PARA), and 3rd Battalion Parachute Regiment (3 PARA), under the command of Brigadier Julian Thompson. Five Inf Bde arrived in the Falklands some nine days after 3 Cdo Bde. This Brigade comprised of the 2nd Battalion Scots Guards (Scots Guards), 1st Battalion Welsh Guards (Welsh Guards), and 1st Battalion 7th Duke of Edinburgh's Own Gurkha Rifles (7 GR), under the command of Brigadier Tony Wilson. With the arrival of 5 Inf Bde in the area of operations, a divisional headquarters was established under the command of Major General Jeremy Moore.

The three Royal Marine commandos committed to the Falklands Conflict were similar in size, organization, and basic equipment to their infantry counterpart in the Army. However, being part of the Royal Navy, they were, and are, outside of the everyday running of the British infantry and are resourced to select and train their

soldiers for missions that are outside of the standard infantry requirement. Because of this they are not a major consideration in this thesis. In the author's opinion, the battalions of the Parachute Regiment and the commando units of the Royal Marine's represent the elite light infantry of the Armed Forces. Without the commitment of these units at the early stages of the Falklands Conflict it is doubtful if the ground campaign would have been such a remarkable success.

The infantry from the Army that deployed to the Falklands operated in the light role, although of the infantry that deployed only the parachute battalions and Gurkhas were dedicated light infantry. The two Guards battalions, akin with the rest of the infantry, arms plot between various roles, including armored infantry, mechanized infantry and light infantry. The role of light infantry has many guises, including airmobile infantry, public duties (which includes ceremonial guard duty at Buckingham Palace and Windsor Castle, and providing the guard for state occasions), overseas garrisons, resident infantry in Northern Ireland, and so on. The process of arms plotting is the moving of units from bases and between roles every two to six years. As an example, over a period of twenty years a battalion can expect to be based in about eight different locations (overseas and in the United Kingdom) and have been in eight different roles. During this time a battalion will be called upon to do several six month operational tours to Bosnia, Northern Ireland, or wherever there is a requirement. The exception to the arms plotting process is the parachute role, which is only conducted by the three battalions of the Parachute Regiment (there are currently two in role parachute battalions). The out of role parachute battalion is normally serving two years in Northern Ireland.

Despite their different roles, the organization of the five Army battalions was broadly similar. Each battalion had five companies, three in the rifle role (although both parachute battalions had one of these companies double tasked as a patrol company), one headquarters company (responsible for administration and logistics) and one support weapons company. All support weapons companies had an 81 millimeter mortar (81mm mortar) platoon and a Milan anti-tank platoon, the carriage of whose ammunition proved a major test of improvisation and toughness during the conflict.

Each of the rifle companies had three platoons, each platoon having three sections of eight men (as a general rule). Sections were themselves divided into two four-man fire teams. In command of each section, ideally, was a corporal with a lance-corporal as the second in command. In command of each platoon, ideally, was an officer (lieutenant or second lieutenant) with a sergeant as the platoon second in command. Majors commanded the rifle companies and were served by a small headquarters, usually consisting of a captain (second in command), a sergeant major, a color sergeant (responsible for administration), a couple of signalers and a couple of storemen. More men could be added to the company headquarters as required, although at the expense of the rifle platoons or another company in the battalion.

Platoons were armed with (approximately) twelve 66 millimeter light antitank weapons (66mm LAW), one 84 millimeter medium antitank weapon (Carl Gustav), and a 2-inch mortar to provide local illumination and smoke. Each section had one general-purpose machine gun (GPMG), with the remainder of the section armed with the 7.62 mm self-loading rifle (SLR). The GPMG was also used in the sustained fire role, which resulted in a major logistics and portability burden for the infantry. Most soldiers carried

one or two high explosive (HE) or phosphorous grenades. Radio communications went down to fire team level using a new radio system that had been distributed to the battalions just before deployment.

The other arms and services supported the infantry that fought in the Falklands, to some degree or other, in what is termed combined arms operations. This term is defined as “the synchronized or simultaneous application of several arms, such as infantry, armor, artillery, engineers, air defense, and aviation, to achieve an effect on the enemy that is greater than if each arm was used against the enemy in sequence.”⁴ As the Falklands proved, combined arms operations are important to the success of the infantry battle. However, its successful application requires intensive training, preferably on a frequent basis, in order to avoid skill fade.

Thesis Outline

This thesis will be divided into five chapters. Chapter 2 provides an overview of the Falklands Conflict to help place the lessons later described in some form of context. Included in this chapter is a brief description of the islands’ terrain and climate, an annotated chronology and a short description of the ground campaign.

The infantry lessons of the conflict are identified in chapters 3 and 4, thereby answering the first subordinate question. Chapter 3 focuses upon those lessons that can be identified from official sources and the writings of those who participated in the conflict. Chapter 4 will describe those lessons identified by an analysis of all the available information on the conflict. As such, the lessons described in chapter 3 reflect the perceived wisdom of the lessons learned from the conflict, and the lessons in chapter 4 are lessons unique to this thesis.

Chapter 5, the concluding chapter, considers the lessons from the preceding chapters and describes the root causes of the identified infantry lessons. The relevance of these lessons to the British Army at the turn of the twentieth century is then discussed, thereby answering the second subordinate question and the primary question.

¹Ministry of Defense, *The Falklands War: The Lessons* (London: Her Majesty's Stationery Office, December 1982), 5 - 6.

²Peter G. Tsouras, *Warriors Words: A Dictionary of Military Quotations* (London: Arms and Armour Press, 1992), 358.

³Ministry of Defense, *Soldier to Soldier: Overstretch and the Unplannable* in *Soldier: Magazine of the British Army* (Andover: St Ives Ltd., March 1999), 3.

⁴U.S. Department of the Army, FM 101-5-1, *Operational Terms and Graphics* (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 15 September 1997), 1-32.

CHAPTER 2

THE FALKLAND ISLANDS: THEIR HISTORY AND AN OVERVIEW OF THE 1982 CONFLICT

The most detestable place I was ever at in my lifeone wild heath wherever you turn your eye.¹

Lieutenant Thomas Coleman, *War in the Falklands*

The 1982 Falklands Conflict was fought over the issue of the sovereignty of the Falklands Islands, South Georgia, and the South Sandwich Islands. Together, these three island groups form the Falkland Islands Dependencies (fig. 1). What follows is a description of the islands, an overview of the history of the Falklands, an annotated chronology of events, and a brief description of the land campaign.

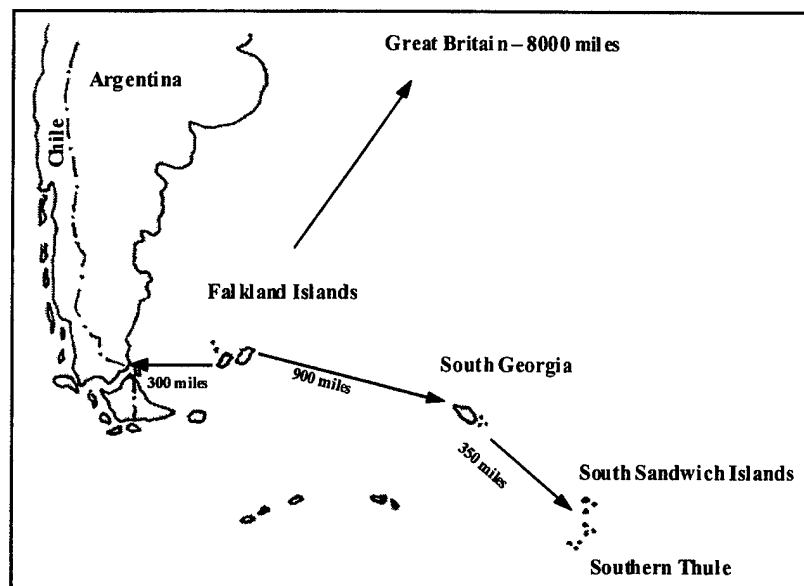


Figure 1. The Falklands, South Georgia, and South Sandwich Islands

The Islands

The Falkland Islands lie some eight thousand miles from Britain and three hundred miles from the east coast of Argentina and are the only major island group in the South Atlantic. They consist (as shown in fig. 2) of two main islands, East and West Falkland, and more than one hundred smaller ones, which in total cover 4,700 square miles in area (approximately two-thirds the size of Wales). Falkland Sound, a narrow strip of water, separates East and West Falkland. All the Islands are mainly moorland and treeless.

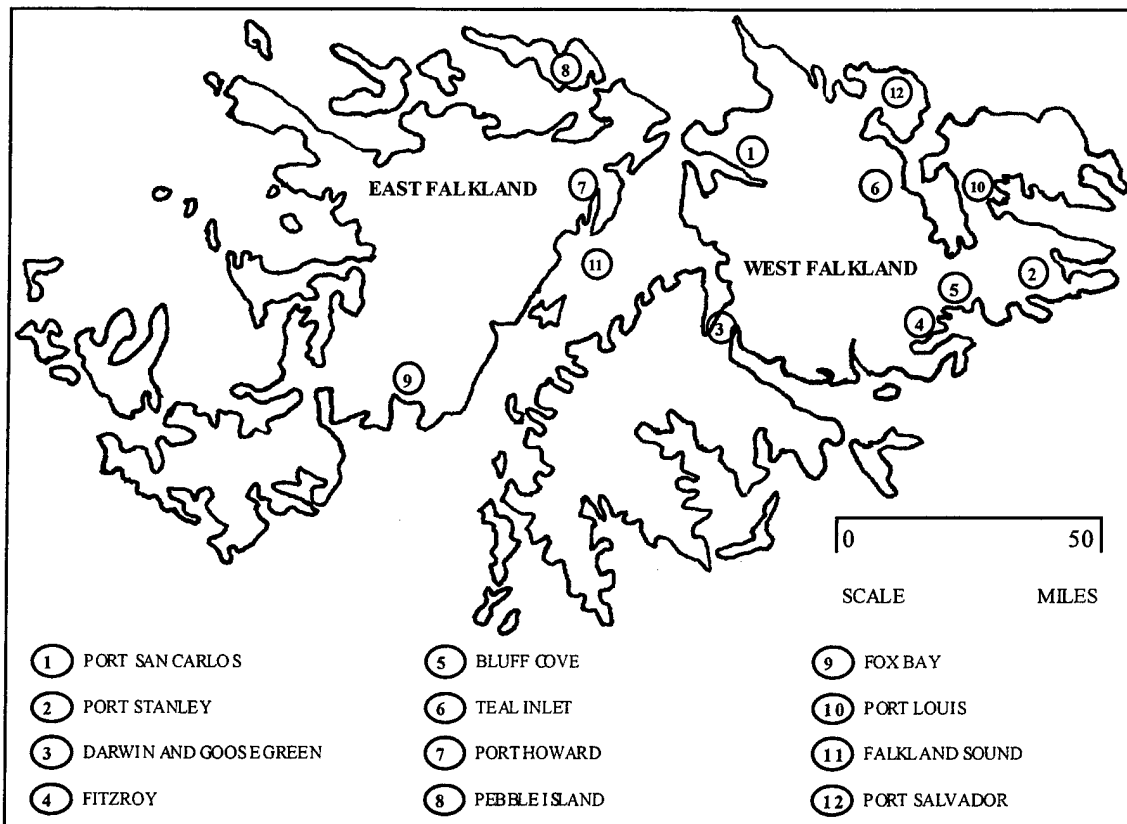


Figure 2. East and West Falkland

On East and West Falkland there are several low mountains, the highest being Mount Osborne which stands at 2,312 feet. Although more akin to moorland hills than mountains, their stone runs, craggy tops, and ubiquitous peat bogs make them formidable terrain for heavily laden infantry to move and fight over. Easy to defend, most of the infantry fighting was to take place on these features.

The climate of the islands is cool and damp. It is frequently cloudy, although there is little rainfall (annual average is twenty-five inches). The winds blow strong and often, with a mean annual speed of seventeen knots. Mean monthly temperatures vary from forty-nine degrees Fahrenheit in January (summer) to thirty-six degrees Fahrenheit in July (winter). During the period of the land campaign the temperatures hovered around or fell below freezing. In sum, the Falklands climate is temperate. The late autumn and winter months are rarely severe but are unpleasant: the constant wind, damp, cold, and lack of shelter will slowly debilitate a well-equipped and motivated professional soldier. The ill-equipped or inadequately trained and poorly motivated soldier will struggle to survive in such conditions, let alone remain combat effective. As a rule, during the campaign, once a man was wet he stayed wet; the best that could be achieved was a state of dampness. Most men's feet never dried and many men suffered from trench foot.

The total population of the Falklands at the 1980 census was 1,813.² In 1982, just over one thousand people lived in the capital, Stanley, the only town on the Falklands. The remainder of the population was dispersed throughout the islands in small settlements, collectively referred to as the "camp" (coming from the Spanish word *campana*, meaning an open grassland prairie). The largest settlement and the scene of the first land battle, was Goose Green, with a population of approximately one hundred.

Outside of Stanley there was no road network; tracks did exist but were little more than sheep runs or wheel ruts in the peat. The absence of a road network meant that, once ashore, all supplies and casualties were carried on the backs of men or flown by the overtaxed and small helicopter force.³ Significant logistics drag was inevitable given these conditions. The rate of advance was determined by the speed at which the infantry marched and the time required to drag up more supplies.

Some of the settlements had an airstrip, the majority of which were nothing more than cleared fields. These would be used by the Argentines for their close support aircraft but were of little value to the British, except as a target. An airport was located at Stanley and at the time of the conflict was capable of taking civilian medium-haul jets, but not military jets unless the runway was lengthened. The Argentines used Stanley airport until the day of surrender.

Most of the Islanders were of British extraction and regarded themselves as British. The main industry was sheep farming, although due to poor pasture the sheep population was calculated in acres per sheep rather than sheep per acre. In 1980, exports to Britain of wool and hides totaled 2.8 million pounds⁴ and imports of food, manufactured goods, timber and machinery (from South America and Britain) were valued at two million pounds.⁵ In local waters there was abundant sea life, but there was no significant fishing industry based from the islands. Prior to the conflict the second largest source of income was the philatelic industry, which received a major boost after hostilities due to increased demand from an awakened international community to the existence of the islands.

Over all this ruled the Governor, appointed by the British Foreign Office who headed a local government based upon an Executive Council and a Legislative Council. In 1981-82 this local government balanced public revenue and expenditure at around 2.4 million pounds.⁶ The government also administered the two dependencies of South Georgia and the South Sandwich Islands.

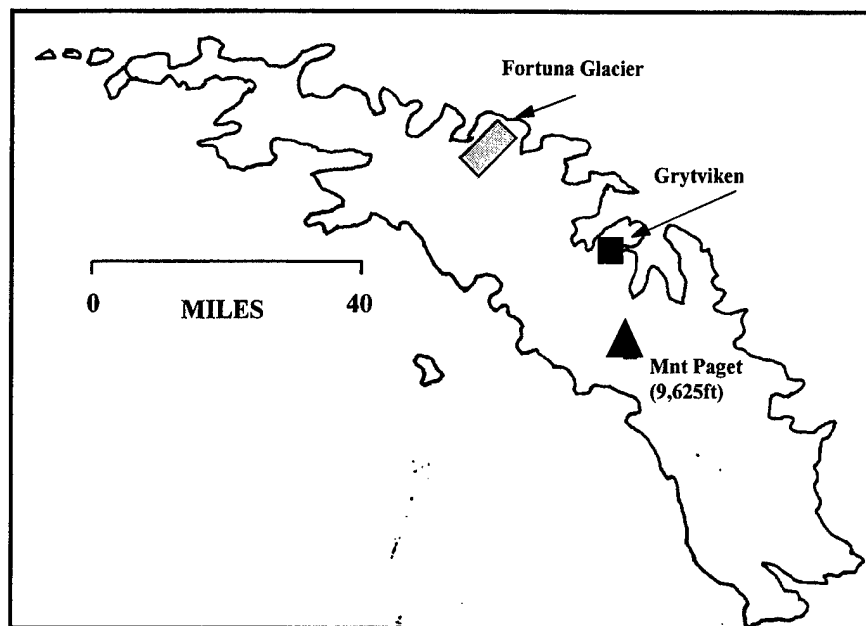


Figure 3. South Georgia

South Georgia is a long thin island measuring one hundred miles by an average of twenty miles, and lies nine hundred miles east-southeast of the Falklands (fig. 3). It is completely mountainous, covered with glaciers and is gripped by fierce cold. The highest mountain is Mount Paget standing at 9,625 feet. Conditions throughout the year are near Antarctic, with soldiering being more a battle against the elements than against any

enemy. The only regular population of the island was the twenty or so staff of the British Antarctic Survey based at King Edward Point near the old whaling station at Grytviken. The manning of the scientific research station from 1909 has provided a continuous British presence on the island, allowing Britain to exercise *de facto* sovereignty. However, it was an Argentinean whaling company that established the first settlement in 1904, although this closed down after a few years.

The South Sandwich Islands start 350 miles to the southeast of South Georgia and extend for a further 150 miles down to South Thule. The Antarctic climate of the islands renders them, by all reasonable standards, uninhabitable. Although claimed by Britain in 1775 no permanent British presence was ever established. The Argentineans claimed sovereignty of the islands in 1948, and in 1976 established a small base on Cook Island, in the Thule Group. For the next six years the Argentineans claimed *de facto* sovereignty over an area claimed by Britain. The British did not reclaim Cook Island until five days after the surrender of the Argentineans on the Falklands Islands.

History of the Falklands Islands

To understand the Falklands dispute and why a conflict should be fought over the islands requires a lengthy trek through history. The accepted starting point is the 1494 Treaty of Tordesillas between Spain and Portugal. The treaty divided the world, known or otherwise, between Spain and Portugal by drawing a demarcation line from pole to pole through a point 1,200 miles west of the Cape Verde Islands. Spain held the territory to the west of the line, including the undiscovered Falklands Islands, and Portugal the territory to the east.

The Dutch Captain Sebald De Weert was the first to plot some of the islands of the Falklands group when he recorded them on the Dutch maps of the early seventeenth century. The first man to set foot on the Falklands was the English Captain John Strong in 1690. Staying only briefly, he named Falkland Sound after Lord Falkland of the Admiralty. The first to make use of the resources of the islands were French seal hunters from Brittany who made regular trips to the islands from 1698. They named these hunting grounds les Iles Malouines after their homeport of St. Malo.

Under the 1713 Treaty of Utrecht (signatories included Britain and France), Spain's control of its territories in South America, including the Falklands, was confirmed. This, however, did little to curb the British and French ambitions for the area.

It was the French nobleman Antoine de Bougainville who acted first. By mid-1764 he had established Port Louis, north of the present day site of Port Stanley and claimed the islands for France. In 1765 Commodore John Byron briefly stopped on West Falkland and hoisted the Union Jack, counter-claiming the Islands for Britain. He named the spot Port Egmont, planted a small vegetable patch, and promptly sailed away. A year later Captain John McBride was sent out to consolidate Byron's claim by building a fort and ejecting any other settlers who may be on the islands.

The Spanish were furious at the blatant breach of the Treaty of Utrecht by both Britain and France. Under significant diplomatic pressure the French ceded the Port Louis colony to the Spanish in return for financial compensation to de Bougainville. The transfer was completed in 1767 when Don Felipe Ruiz Puente was installed as the first Spanish Governor of the islands and the colony was renamed Puerto Soledad. Two years later, a Spanish force of five ships and 1,400 troops evicted the British colony in Port

Egmont. War was averted only when Spain agreed to Britain returning to the colony, although Spain reserved the right to sovereignty. Ironically, the British colony was abandoned some three years later (1774).

In 1790, Spain and Britain signed the Nootka Sound Convention, by which Britain formally renounced any colonial ambitions in South America and the islands adjacent. For the next thirty years the Falklands went uncontested as the Spanish colony of *Islas Malvinas*.

Following independence from Spain in 1816, the United Provinces of Rio de la Plata, the future state of Argentina (and henceforth referred to as Argentina), claimed the previous colonies of Spain in South America, including the Falklands. In 1820 they dispatched a frigate to take possession of *Islas Malvinas*, and in 1823 Buenos Aires appointed the first governor of the islands. The new Governor, Louis Vernet, arrived in 1828 and began the development of fishing, farming, and the control of sealing.

In 1831 Vernet arrested the American crew of the schooner *Harriet* for seal poaching and confiscated the ship's cargo. Vernet then sailed with the *Harriet* and her crew to Buenos Aires to place her captain on trial. In reprisal the American consul in Buenos Aires, encouraged by the British Consul, dispatched the USS *Lexington* (fortuitously in harbor), under the command of Captain Silas Duncan, to Puerto Soledad in order to reclaim the confiscated property. Taking matters into his own hands, and in an act of blatant piracy, Duncan reclaimed the property then proceeded to spike the Argentinean guns, to blow up the garrison's powder, to sack the settlement buildings, and to arrest most of the inhabitants. He then declared the islands free of all government and sailed away.

Argentina protested furiously to the Americans, to no avail, and a year of chaos ensued. Argentina dispatched a new governor charged with setting up a penal colony. On landing, however, his prisoners abruptly murdered him and established their own colony. On hearing of this latest disaster the Argentinians dispatched a force to the islands to restore order. Advised by the British consul in Buenos Aires of the confusion, the British Admiralty dispatched the warships *Clio* and *Tyne*, under the command of Captain Onslow, to claim the Falklands for Britain (despite the Nootka Sound Convention).

Onslow weighed anchor on 2 January, 1833, and going ashore the next day struck the Argentinean flag and raised the Union Jack. The Falklands Islands were now the property of the United Kingdom as a result of an action that, as John Troutbeck of the British Foreign Office in 1936 observed, “is not easy to explain . . . without showing ourselves up as international bandits.”⁷

The Argentinians were understandably outraged by the action. The news of the capture cut deep into the psyche of the new nation. As the Falklands historian W.F. Boyson records “The young Republic was ablaze with indignation at the insult to her dignity and the resentment lasted for long.”⁸ The seeds for the 1982 Falklands Conflict were sown.

Britain started to settle the islands and formally declared a colonial administration in 1842 (see fig. 4). In 1908, Britain declared sovereignty over the uninhabited territory south of the Falklands, thus creating the Falkland Islands Dependencies, which included South Georgia and the South Sandwich Islands.

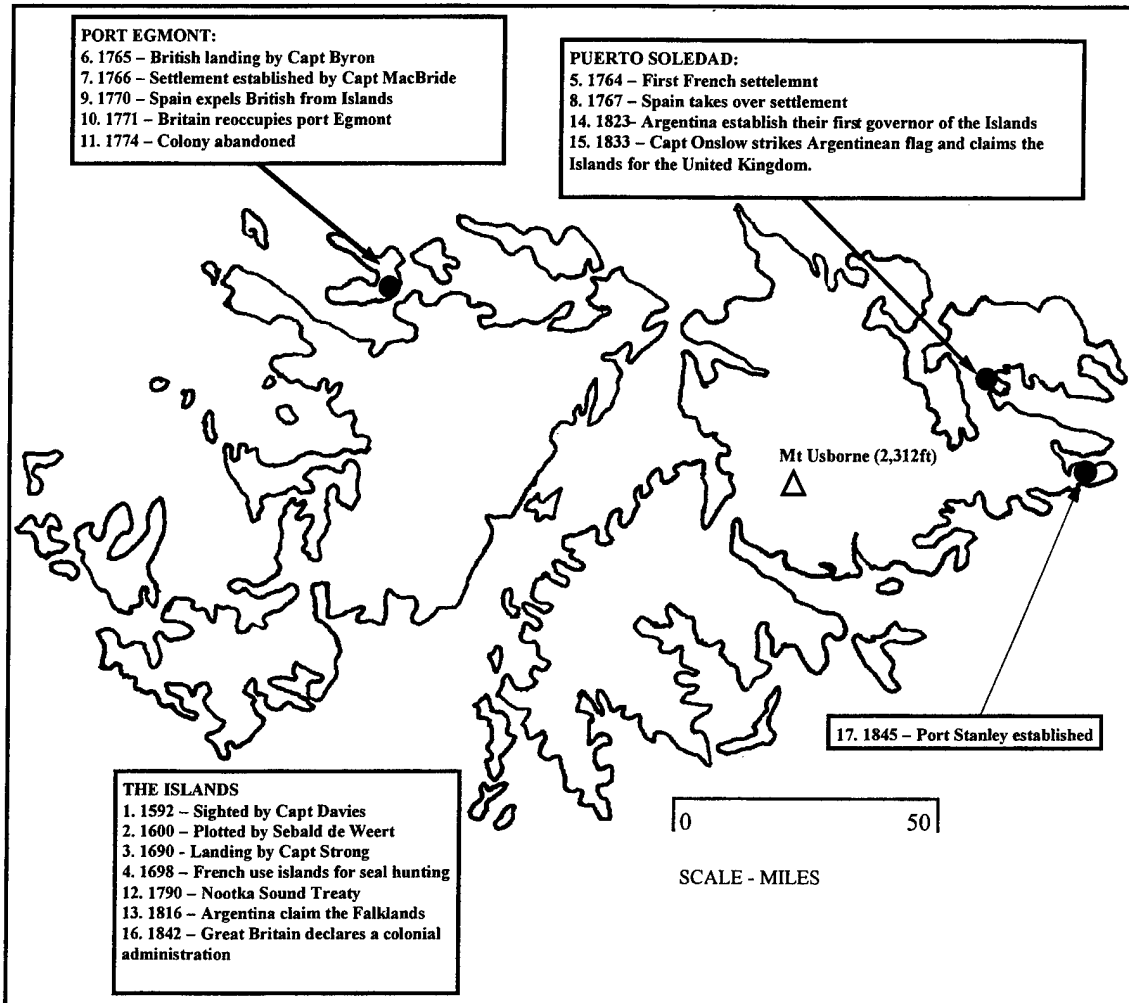


Figure 4: History of the Falkland Islands

Argentina continued to pursue her claim to the islands. In 1965, after a period of intense Argentinean lobbying, the United Nations passed Resolution 2065 specifying that the Falklands/Malvinas was a colonial problem and thus it fell to Britain and Argentina to find a peaceful solution. Talks continued off and on for the next seventeen years without satisfactory resolution. Britain argued that its right to ownership rested on her peaceful and continuous possession of the islands over a long period of time and upon the

Islanders' right of self-determination. In 1980 the Islanders and Argentina rejected the one remaining solution of lease-back and shared responsibility.

The Argentinean decision to invade the Falklands was made in 1982 by a military junta that faced growing political and internal unrest and a call for a return to democracy. Capturing the *Malvinas* proved an irresistible way of stifling, in part, internal dissent and a means of uniting the country. Additionally, If the Falklands Islands were brought under Argentinean control by force of arms then it would also serve as a vindication of military rule.

Annotated Chronology of the 1982 Conflict

The following is an annotated chronology of the key events of the Falklands Campaign. Limited space precludes a more detailed description. The dates and events recorded are taken from a British perspective.

2 April. Argentina launched Operation *Azul* (Blue), the invasion of the Falklands Islands.⁹ At 9:25 A.M. Governor Hunt ordered the sixty-nine Royal Marines based on East Falklands to surrender to the invading force of approximately one thousand Argentinean marines and special forces supported by the Argentinean fleet.¹⁰ Three Cdo Bde and 5 Inf Bde were warned for operations.

3 April. Argentina invaded South Georgia. After a brief firefight the Royal Marines on the island surrendered.¹¹ The UN passed Security Council Resolution 502, which condemned the invasion and demanded the immediate withdrawal of Argentinean forces.

5 April. A task force carrier group, spear-headed by the carriers HMS *Hermes* and HMS *Invincible*, set sail from the United Kingdom for the South Atlantic.

9 April. Over the proceeding week units of 3 Cdo Bde, under the Command of Brigadier Julian Thompson, sailed for the South Atlantic. The Brigade arrived at the Ascension Islands, a midway point, throughout the middle of April and remained there conducting training and essential administration until departing on the 6 May.

12 April. The United Kingdom declared a two hundred-mile maritime exclusion zone around the Falklands Islands.¹² Task Force 319.9. departed the Ascension Islands to conduct Operation *Paraquet*, the planned repossession of South Georgia.¹³

18 April. A naval battle group comprising of thirteen warships and four supply ships, commanded by Rear Admiral Sandy Woodward, sailed for the South Atlantic to commence operations against the Argentinean Navy and Air Force.

21 April. The SAS and SBS made an abortive landing on South Georgia.¹⁴

22 April. Five Inf Bde started exercise, *Welsh Falcon*, in preparation for deployment.

25 April. The Argentinean submarine *Santa Fe* was attacked and disabled when it was caught on the surface by two helicopters near South Georgia. The crippled submarine was later abandoned in Grytviken Harbor, South Georgia. Operation *Paraquet* was swiftly launched to take maximum advantage of any disorder caused to the Argentineans by this incident. South Georgia was recaptured without a shot being fired.

26 April. Two PARA and a troop of the Blues and Royals with four Scimitar and two Scorpion light tanks departed Portsmouth.

30 April. The United Kingdom declared a total exclusion zone around the Falklands. The Argentineans had, by this date, garrisoned the islands with thirteen thousand servicemen, three quarters of whom were located around the Stanley area.

1 May. The carrier battle group entered the total exclusion zone and commenced sea and air operations against the Falklands. RAF Vulcan bombers from Ascension Island conducted their first of a series of bombing raids against the Falklands, codenamed *Black Buck*.

2 May. The Argentinean cruiser *General Belgrano* (previously the American *Phoenix* which had been at Pearl Harbor in December 1941) was sunk by the British nuclear submarine HMS *Conqueror*.¹⁵ One Argentinean patrol vessel was sunk and another badly damaged while operating in Falklands waters.

4 May. HMS *Sheffield*, a Type 42 destroyer, was hit and badly damaged by an Exocet missile. She was the first British ship to be hit and was to sink five days later when under tow. The first Sea Harrier was shot down during a raid on Goose Green.

6 May. Three Cdo Brigade departed Ascension Island for the South Atlantic, less 2 PARA, which arrived at Ascension Island on the same day.

7 May. The British Government declared that any Argentinean warship and military aircraft over 12 miles from the Argentinean coast would be regarded as hostile. Two PARA departed Ascension Islands.

9 May. The Argentine intelligence trawler, *Narwal*, was sunk.

10 May. The Argentine submarine *San Luis* made her last reported, and unsuccessful, attack on the ships of the Task Force.

11 May. HMS *Alacrity* sank the store ship *Cabo de los Estados* in Falkland Sound.

12 May. *QEII* left Southampton with 5 Inf Bde. HMS *Glasgow* was badly damaged in an air raid and was the first ship to return to home waters because of battle damage.

Brigadier Thompson received the following directive from Major General Moore:

You are to secure a bridgehead on East Falkland, into which reinforcements can be landed, in which an airstrip can be established and from which operations to repossess the Falklands Islands can be achieved. You are to push forward from the bridgehead area as far as the maintenance of security allows, to gain information, to establish moral and physical domination over the enemy, and to forward the ultimate objective of repossession. You will retain operational control of all forces landed in the Falklands...it is then my intention to land 5 Infantry Brigade into the beachhead and to develop operations for the complete repossession of the Falkland Islands.¹⁶

14/15 May. Special forces conducted a night raid against the Argentinean air base at Pebble Island destroying eleven Argentinean aircraft.¹⁷

18 May. The British Cabinet approved the San Carlos landing plan. Chilean authorities found a burnt-out Sea King on sovereign territory and apprehended the three man crew.¹⁸

19 May. Twenty-one men were killed when a Sea King helicopter crashed while transferring troops between HMS *Hermes* and HMS *Intrepid*.¹⁹

20 May. Five Inf Bde arrived at Ascension Island. Major General Moore joined the Brigade and assumed command of the Landing Force, although operational control remained with Brigadier Thompson.

21 May. Operation *Sutton*, the amphibious landing on East Falkland, was launched. In the early morning the first Argentinean aircraft attacked the ships supporting the landing in Falkland Sound and those in the San Carlos anchorage. The attacks continued throughout most of the day, hampering the landing operation. So started the crucial battle for control of the air and sea, lasting for the next six days.

Five Inf Bde departed Ascension Island with Major General Moore. On departing Ascension, Moore lost contact with the land forces in the Falklands due to communications failure. He would not regain contact until 28 May.²⁰

23 May. An Argentinean bomb crippled HMS *Antelope*, the ship sinking the next day.

25 May. HMS *Coventry* was sunk and an Exocet missile hit the *Atlantic Conveyor*, the ship sinking three days later. The loss of the *Atlantic Conveyor* and its cargo of twelve helicopters, including three Chinooks, was a serious blow to the land campaign.²¹ As noted by Brigadier Thompson after hearing the news of the sinking:

I ordered a full staff conference....They were tasked with investigating what, if anything, could be done to salvage the wreck of the plan using existing helicopter and landing craft assets. As the R Group dispersed somebody said, "We'll have to bloody well walk."²²

This was the high watermark of the Argentinean air effort. Two PARA was ordered to attack the Argentinean position at Darwin and Goose Green.

26 May. Two PARA conducted an eight-mile march to Camilla Creek House in preparation for its attack on Goose Green.

27 May. British shore positions were bombed around San Carlos for the first time, causing seven deaths and numerous injuries. This was the last day of concentrated Argentinean air attacks. The air and sea war of attrition was effectively over; the Argentinean Air Force had been whittled down to the extent that it no longer posed a major threat to land and sea operations.²³ Three PARA and 45 Cdo departed the beachhead and started their march towards Stanley.

28 May. At 6:30 A.M. the battle for Goose Green started. Major General Moore arrived in the Falklands area of operations.

29 May. At 2:30 P.M. the Argentinean garrison at Goose Green surrendered to 2 PARA. A helicopter night assault on Mount Kent by 42 Cdo was thwarted by bad weather.

30 May. Four-Two Cdo, in a night helicopter assault, seized Mount Kent.²⁴ Major General Moore landed at San Carlos and assumed operational command of all land forces.

31 May. Two PARA were transferred from 3 Cdo Bde to 5 Inf Bde.

1 June. Five Inf Bde commenced landing at San Carlos. An additional eight Sea Kings and twenty Wessex helicopters arrived in the Falklands to support the ground operation.²⁵ The last Sea Harrier was lost to enemy action.

2 June. The Scots Guards and Welsh Guards landed at San Carlos. The Welsh Guards attempted to march out of the bridgehead to Goose Green but made little progress before the march was cancelled. Deteriorating weather conditions and heavy equipment loads were blamed.

4 June. Deteriorating weather conditions increasingly hampered flying operations and made life for the infantry increasingly unpleasant. Three Cdo Bde closed on Stanley and commenced patrolling in preparation for the coming attacks.

5 June. The Scots Guards conducted a night move by ship and landing craft to Bluff Cove, arriving early on 6 June.²⁶ Three companies of 2 PARA were shipped from Bluff Cove to Fitzroy by landing craft to marry up with the remainder of their Battalion, which had been flown forward on the 3 June.²⁷

6 June. The Welsh Guards moved by ship to Bluff Cove, but lack of time, poor weather and limited numbers of landing craft meant that only Battalion Headquarters and a rifle company were landed. The remainder of the Battalion returned to San Carlos Water aboard HMS *Fearless*.

7 June. Three companies of the Welsh Guards were shipped from San Carlos Water to Fitzroy aboard *Sir Galahad*, arriving at dawn on the 8 June.

8 June. At 2:00 P.M. the Royal Fleet Auxiliary (RFA) ships *Sir Galahad* and *Sir Tristram* were attacked by five Skyhawks, which had just bombed HMS *Plymouth*. The *Sir Galahad* was seriously damaged and forty-three men were killed and 150 were injured, many suffering serious burns. The Welsh Guards alone had thirty-eight killed and seventy-nine injured.²⁸ *Sir Galahad* was scuttled at sea on 25 June as a war grave. Later that afternoon Argentinean aircraft sank a landing craft bringing Headquarters 5 Inf Bde's signal vehicles around to Fitzroy.²⁹

11/12 June. Mount Harriet, Two Sisters and Mount Longdon were secured after successful night battles. HMS *Glamorgan* was hit by a shore based Exocet missile and was badly damaged but remained sea-worthy. This was the last British ship damaged by enemy action during the conflict. Three civilians were killed in Port Stanley by naval gunfire: these were the only fatal civilian casualties of the conflict.

12 June. Stanley airfield was bombed for the final time by Vulcan bombers from Ascension Island in Operation *Black Buck 7*.

13/14 June. Tumbledown Mountain and Wireless Ridge were secured after successful night battles. Mount William was secured without a fight, although casualties were taken on the approach march.³⁰

14 June. General Menendez surrendered all Argentine forces in the Falklands.³¹

The British Land Campaign

In the early hours of 21 May 1982, HMS *Fearless* led the amphibious landing group, in whom were embarked 3 Cdo Bde, stealthily into Falkland Sound. At 3:40 A.M. the landings began, the troops being ferried ashore in the sixteen landing craft from the two assault ships HMS *Fearless* and HMS *Intrepid*. First ashore were 2 PARA and 40 Cdo on two beaches in the San Carlos Settlement Area. Two PARA then turned south and established a defensive position on the Sussex Mountains, effectively blocking the route that any counter attack from the Darwin area would have to take.

Meanwhile, 40 Cdo moved east, up onto the Verde Mountains. Next ashore was 45 Cdo, in Ajax Bay, which was to become the main force logistic area throughout the rest of the campaign. The last assault unit, 3 PARA, went ashore at Port San Carlos to protect the northern flank, leaving 42 Cdo afloat as the reserve. The artillery, consisting of four light gun batteries and one Rapier missile battery, then established themselves ashore. By the end of the day more than three thousand men and almost one thousand tons of stores and equipment had been successfully landed. Argentinean ground or naval forces made no attempt to interfere with the landing, nor subsequent build up. All attempts to defeat the invasion were left to the Argentinean Air Force, which was operating at the limit of its tactical reach.

The buildup of the bridgehead continued for the next five days under constant threat of air attack during daylight. It was only following the loss of the *Atlantic Conveyor* and the apparent stalling of the land campaign, that Brigadier Thompson was ordered by Northwood to mount an operation against Goose Green and start moving towards Stanley.³² Although of no tactical or operational significance the operation

against Goose Green was ordered following intense political, public and even Naval and Service pressure for the land campaign to "get going." A quick victory was needed in order to maintain public and political support. As stated by Admiral Sandy Woodward, it was time for the Army to go "high risk."³³ Against his better judgement Brigadier Thompson was forced to go against Major General Moore's directive of 12 May.³⁴

On 26 and 27 May, 3 Cdo Bde began to break out from the beachhead (see fig.5). The overall plan was to close up to the Port Stanley area as quickly as possible. Late on 26 May, 2 PARA started its move south for the mission against Goose Green. At dawn on 27 May, 45 Cdo and 3 PARA started to advance east towards Douglas Settlement and Teal Inlet respectively. All moves had to be conducted on foot due to an almost total lack of helicopter and vehicle support. The ability of the infantry to reach Stanley on foot, due to the lack of infantry logistics support, had become a strategic issue. Throughout 27 May, while the other two battalions continued their advances, 2 PARA waited at Camilla Creek House, five miles north of the Argentinean position. An artillery troop of three light guns was flown forward to support the attack on Darwin and Goose Green, which began on 28 May.

By mid-afternoon of the 28 May, Darwin had been captured and 2 PARA was fighting its way south down the narrow isthmus towards Goose Green, some two miles on. The Battalion had to cross open ground in broad daylight, and was opposed by strong defensive positions that were well dug in and sited in depth. Low cloud, strong winds and driving rain made early air operations in support of the advance impossible.

The battle for Goose Green lasted many hours, frequently at very close quarters. During the fighting the Commanding Officer of 2 PARA, Lieutenant Colonel H. Jones,

was killed. By last light the battalion had surrounded the remaining garrison in the Goose Green Settlement where over one hundred civilians were held.

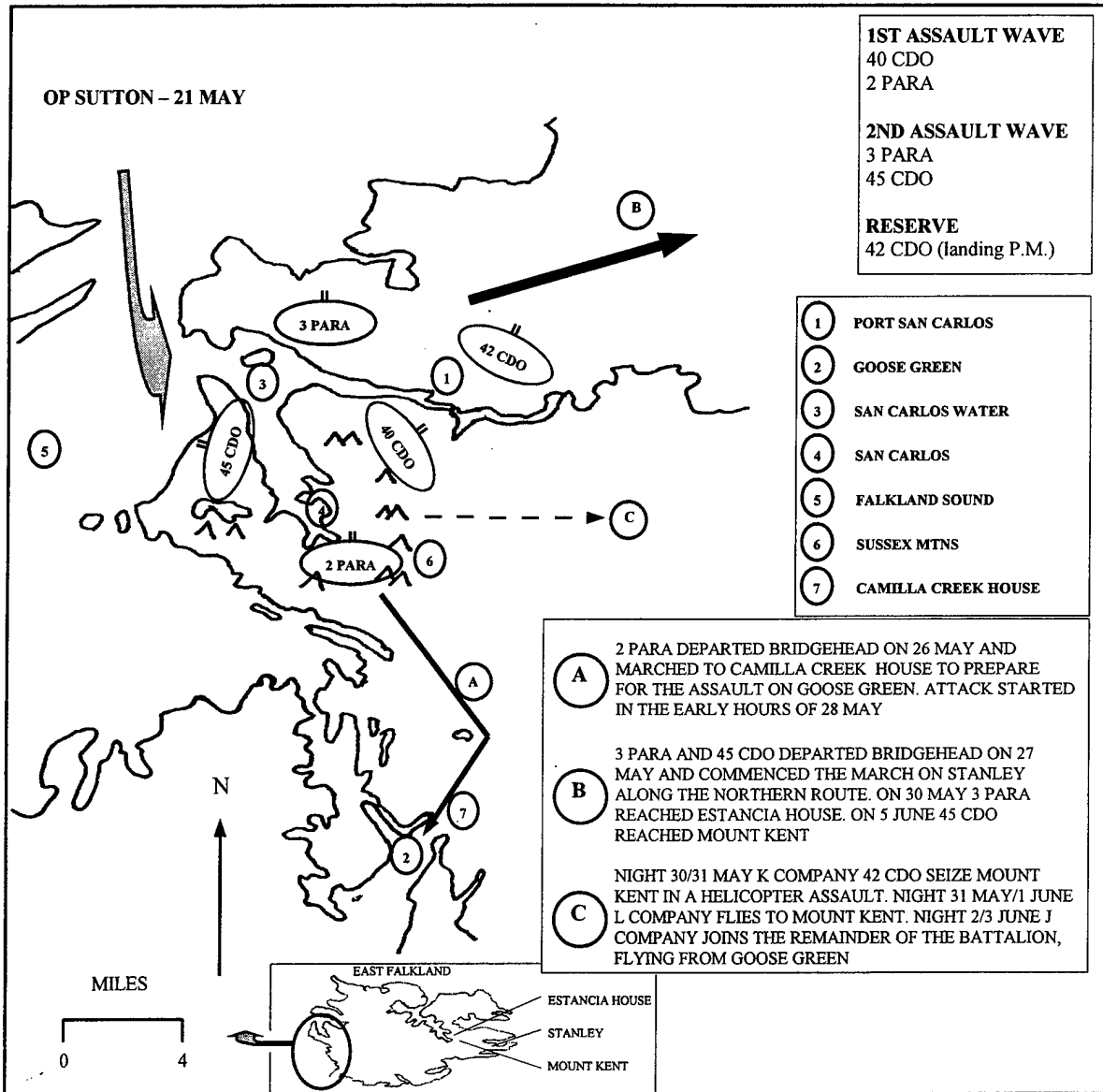


Figure 5. Operation Sutton and the Breakout from the Beachhead

During the night the Acting Commanding Officer conducted negotiations with the Argentineans and, by early afternoon on 29 May, their surrender was accepted. As a result of their action, 2 PARA took over one thousand prisoners and had neutralized the nearest enemy force on East Falkland to the bridgehead

Meanwhile, after a cross country march of some fifty miles over very difficult terrain in adverse weather, 45 Cdo had reached Teal Inlet, and 3 PARA had reached Estancia House. Meanwhile, D Squadron 22 SAS had established an operations base in the area of Mount Kent and were carrying out aggressive patrolling and intelligence gathering operations. After several attempts at reinforcement, which were prevented by the atrocious weather, the first half of 42 Cdo joined them on 1 June, the remainder joining on 2 June. Mount Kent was cleared of enemy after a brief firefight.

On 30 May, General Moore assumed command of operations ashore. His Headquarters was established in HMS *Fearless* in San Carlos Water. After arriving in San Carlos Water on 31 May, MV *Norland* disembarked 7 GR during the morning of 1 June, and immediately moved down to Darwin and Goose Green to relieve 2 PARA. Later that day, the Scots Guards and the Welsh Guards disembarked from SS *Canberra*. Two PARA was put under the command of 5 Inf Bde and, on 2 June, moved forward to the Fitzroy and Bluff Cove areas. Further reinforcement and resupply forward was severely hampered by bad weather. In order to close up 5 Inf Bde it was decided to move the Scots Guards and Welsh Guards and supporting units and equipment by ship to Fitzroy. During this operation, on 8 June, the Argentineans intercepted the troop movements and bombed the *Sir Galahad*, which was carrying elements of the Welsh Guards.

Despite the disaster at Fitzroy, 3 Cdo Bde and 5 Inf Bde continued preparing for operations against the seven Argentinean infantry and marine battalions, together with supporting troops, in the Port Stanley area. Approximately three of these battalions were forward on the important features of Mount Longdon, Two Sisters and Mount Harriet. General Moore planned that the attack on Port Stanley should be conducted in three phases. The first phase was scheduled for the night of 11/12 June when 3 Cdo Bde was to capture the three features of Mount Longdon, Two Sisters and Mount Harriet. The second phase, planned to take place twenty-four hours later, required both brigades to capture the next features to the east; these were Wireless Ridge, Tumbledown Mountain and Mount William. Finally, in phase three, the Welsh Guards, with two companies of 40 Cdo under command, were to capture Sapper Hill.

As scheduled, on 11 June phase one of the battle for Stanley was launched (fig. 6). The enemy was outfought and soon after dawn all the Brigade's objectives were firmly held. In the center, after a hard fight in very difficult mountain terrain, 45 Cdo captured Two Sisters. Further south 42 Cdo made an indirect approach, exploiting a gap in the enemy minefields which had been established as a result of skilled and aggressive patrolling, and captured Mount Harriet from behind, taking over two hundred prisoners. Meanwhile in the north 3 PARA had an extremely tough fight against one of the enemy's best battalions to capture Mount Longdon. This was the costliest battle of the Campaign, with nineteen soldiers from 3 PARA being killed. During the day of 12 June all these positions came under heavy artillery fire, and further casualties were sustained.

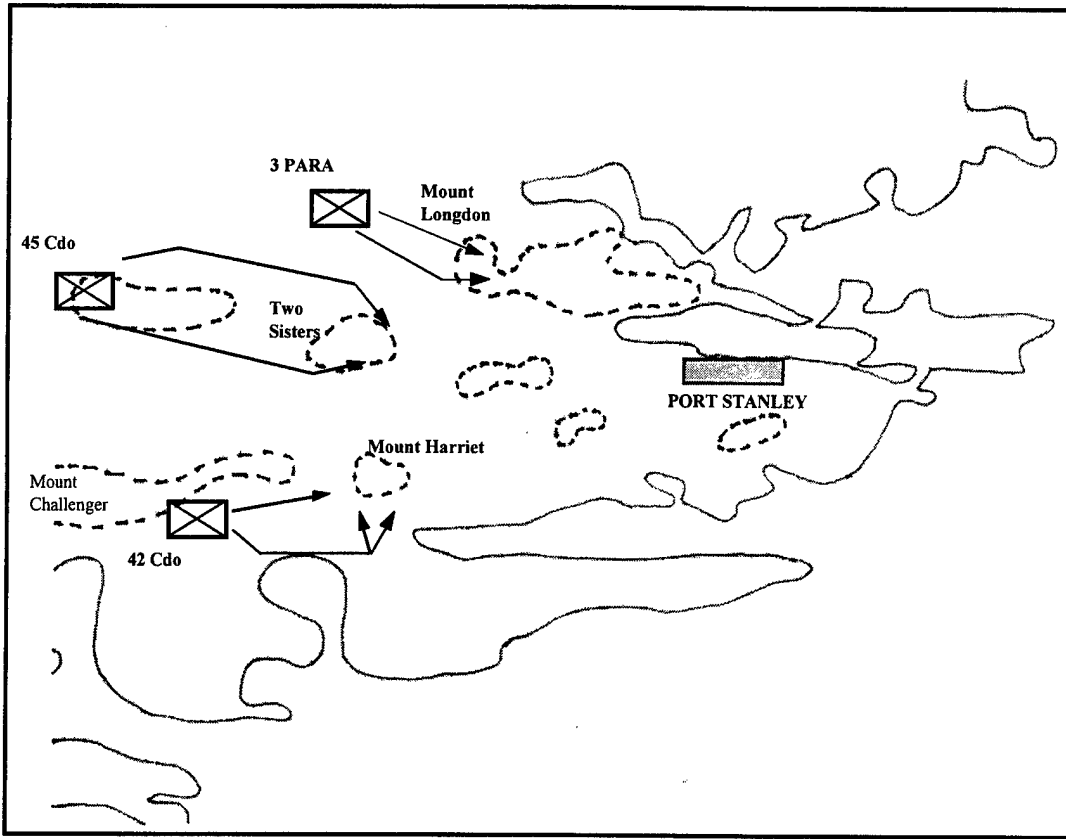


Figure 6. Battle for Stanley – Phase 1

For this and subsequent attacks, troop movements and infantry assaults were covered by Harrier attacks, naval gunfire and the support of five field batteries, which fired fifteen-thousand rounds. The Royal Engineers, who had completed the hazardous task of clearing routes through the minefields, provided men with each of the assaulting units.

To allow further time for preparation, Phase two (fig. 7) was delayed by twenty-four hours and eventually launched on the night of 13/14 June. Two PARA, once more under command of 3 Cdo Bde, in a well-executed and very skillful attack took Wireless

Ridge. While on Tumbledown Mountain, the Scots Guards had a particularly difficult battle before they overcame the regular Argentinean marine battalion defending the position. Thereafter 7 GR passed through the Scots Guards to secure Mount William.

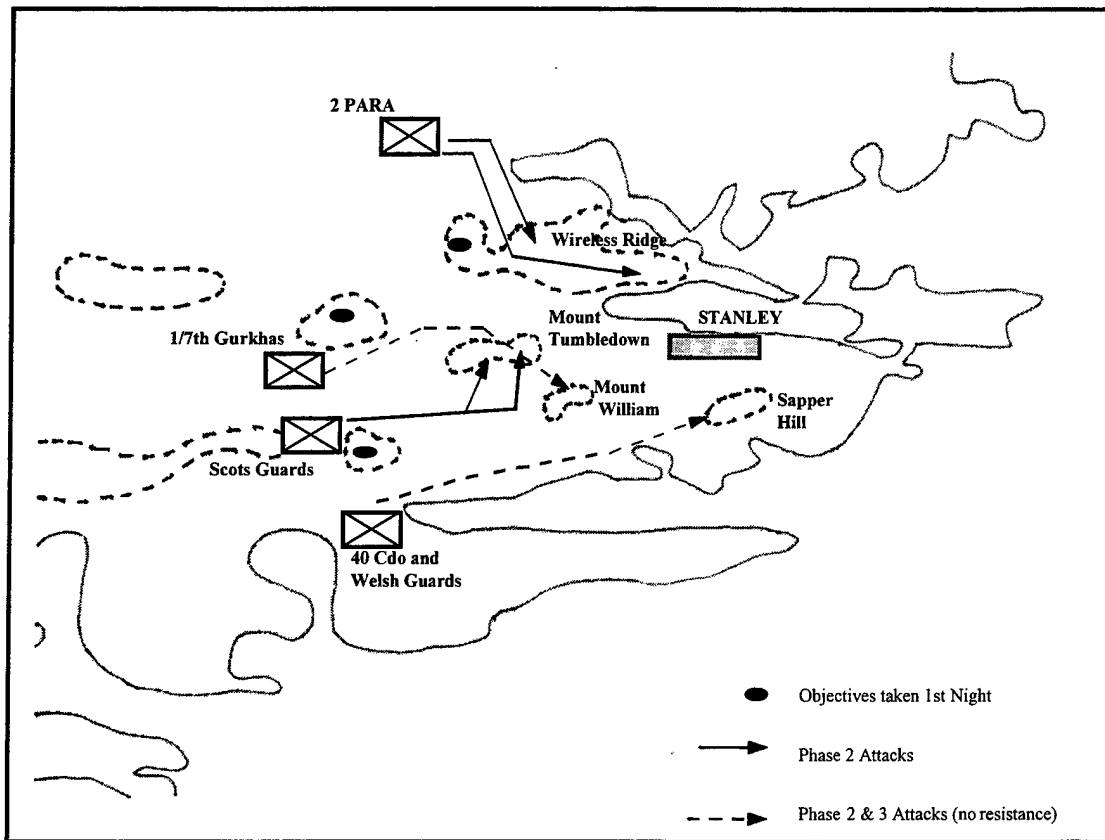


Figure 7. Battle for Stanley--Phases 2 & 3

At this stage it became clear that enemy resistance was collapsing. Argentines could be seen retreating towards Port Stanley from many directions, including Moody Brook and Sapper Hill, neither of which had yet been attacked.

Phase three of Major General Moore's plan was never launched. Realizing that the Argentinean forces were beaten, Major General Moore launched two battalions in pursuit, to close up to the outskirts of Port Stanley as quickly as possible. During the afternoon of 14 June, with large numbers of enemy abandoning their arms and surrendering, the British troops were ordered to fire only in self-defense. That night (14 June), after some hours of negotiations, Major General Moore flew by helicopter into Port Stanley and took the formal surrender of all Argentinean forces on the Falkland Islands.

¹The Sunday Times of London Insight Team, *War in the Falklands* (New York: Harper and Row, 1982), 35-36.

²Gordon Smith, *Battles of the Falklands War* (Surrey: Ian Allan Ltd., 1989), 11.

³Julian Thompson, *No Picnic: 3 Commando Brigade in the South Atlantic, 1982* (Glasgow: William Collins Sons & Co. Ltd., 1985), xvi.

⁴Smith, 11.

⁵Smith, 11.

⁶Smith, 11.

⁷Sunday Times of London Insight Team, 40.

⁸Sunday Times of London Insight Team, 39.

⁹The Operation's was initially called *Rosario* but the name was changed to *Azul*, after the color of the robe of the Virgin Mary, so that the invasion should be seen as a semireligious crusade.

¹⁰There were no British casualties in the invasion; Argentine casualties were estimated at between five and twenty dead and seventeen wounded.

¹¹One Royal Marine was injured. The Argentineans lost three killed and seven injured; small arms fire and hand held missiles also damaged a frigate and destroyed a Puma helicopter.

¹²The British submarine *Spartan* arrived off the Falklands to enforce the exclusion zone.

¹³The Task Force consisted of HMS *Antrim*, *Plymouth*, and the tanker *Tidespring*. Embarked on the ships were M Company 42 Cdo and D Squadron SAS, both units having flown to Ascension Island.

¹⁴Severe weather conditions prevented any meaningful military action and a rescue mission was launched to save the deployed SAS troops on the *Fortuna Glacier*. Two Wessex helicopters crashed in the attempt due to the appalling weather. A third Wessex was able to extract all personnel; there were no casualties.

¹⁵The *General Belgrano* had a crew of approximately 1,042 of whom 368 lost their lives. Although the action is surrounded in controversy the operational benefits were undoubted. As a result of the action the main Argentinean surface fleet never dared to venture from the continental shelf where the water was too shallow for the British submarines to operate.

¹⁶Thompson, 74.

¹⁷A force of forty-eight SAS raiders was inserted by helicopter from HMS *Hermes*, and was supported by naval gunfire from HMS *Glamorgan* and *Broadsword*. The raid was a complete success and the Argentineans were denied the use of the airstrip at a crucial time.

¹⁸It is probable that the helicopter deployed a special-forces patrol in Argentina on 17 May, prior to being deliberately destroyed in a neutral country. The British submarine HMS *Onyx* was reported to have lifted off special forces from near the Rio Grande at the end of May.

¹⁹The killed included eighteen men from the SAS, many of whom had conducted the Pebble Island raid. This was the largest single loss of life for the SAS since the Second World War.

²⁰Both Thompson and Moore received operational tasking signals from Northwood, but Thompson received no confirmation or instructions from Moore due to the lack of communications. With no further guidance, Thompson continued as directed by his operational commander on the 12 May. Political and military tension was exacerbated by this state of affairs and led directly to the order to attack Goose Green from Northwood.

²¹The tentage and living equipment for ten-thousand men was also lost, which meant that the conflict had to be terminated before winter set in and the weather worked

to the advantage of the Argentines, who had Port Stanley as an operating base. Critically, nine helicopters were lost, including the three Chinooks, upon which so many plans hinged. Only eleven Sea Kings, five Wessex and one Chinook helicopter were available to support the operation for the next six days. Of the remaining eleven Sea Kings; one was permanently attached to the Rapier batteries (anti-aircraft system) to keep them fueled and serviced, and four were equipped for night operations and were only available during the day for emergencies. Of note, it takes eight Sea Kings eleven lifts each to move a single light artillery battery and five-hundred rounds, which is barely sufficient to support one battle. Much more also went down with the ship: one mile of portable steel runway, many vehicles, essential helicopter and aircraft spares, and ammunition.

²²Thompson, 78.

²³One-hundred and twenty sorties had been launched from the mainland, of which ninety reached the operational area. Of these ninety aircraft, twenty-one had been shot down. Six other Argentinean aircraft based on the islands were shot down attacking the shipping. In the six days of ferocious attacks, three warships and the *Atlantic Conveyor* were sunk; three warships and three amphibious ships were struck by bombs which failed to explode; numerous other ships were damaged by cannon fire. Two Sea Harriers and three helicopters were shot down. The British lost seventy-seven men killed during this period, mostly sailors.

²⁴There was a brief skirmish on the Mountain between the SAS and an Argentinean special-forces patrol. Later that day 42 Cdo advanced on Mount Challenger from Mount Kent.

²⁵A shortage of pilots resulted in twelve of the Wessex being "laid up" in various small valleys until more pilots arrived. Many of the crews for the helicopters were taken straight from anti submarine duties and therefore lacked experience in supporting land operations. Map reading errors were frequent and there was an almost total lack of tactical awareness amongst the pilots. Thompson, 116.

²⁶The final sea approach of the Scots Guards was made in four open landing craft and took seven hours in violent seas.

²⁷In one of the most controversial acts of the war HQ 5 Inf Bde commandeered the one available Chinook helicopter, and without reference to divisional headquarters, flew one company of 2 PARA forward to the area of Bluff Cove and Fitzroy, thereby opening up the southern flank. Five Inf Bde were now strung out between San Carlos, Goose Green and Bluff Cove. The move of 2 PARA, the Scots Guards and Welsh Guards by sea to the area of Fitzroy and Bluff Cove was conducted in order to close up the Brigade. It was this moment of ill-planned opportunism that gave little regard to the subsequent implications that led to the tragedy at Fitzroy.

²⁸Martin Middlebrook, *Task Force: The Falklands War, 1982* (London: Penguin Books, 1987), 308.

²⁹The landing craft was at sea when the 2 RFA ships were hit. Six men were killed and much valuable equipment was lost. Three of the four attacking aircraft were shot down by Sea Harriers in what was the last Harrier air to air success of the conflict. The final tragedy played out on this black day for British forces occurred when a SAS observation post near Port Howard was surrounded, and Captain Hamilton was killed as he tried to fight his way out. Captain Hamilton had led the raid on Pebble Island.

³⁰Simultaneously to the two battles a party of G Squadron 22 SAS in rigid-riders had taken casualties in an abortive raid on a fuel depot north of Stanley Harbor. The need for urgent casualty evacuation was met at 3 Cdo Bde's Command Post with the retort, "bloody special forces; the whole world has to stop for them I suppose." Thompson, p. 179.

³¹By the end of Operation *Corporate* the Royal Navy had only sufficient ammunition for two more nights of bombardment with the next re-supply three or so weeks away.

British casualties for the campaign were: 255 killed (217 from enemy fire, 10 from own fire, and 28 in aircraft crashes) and 777 wounded. Equipment losses were: 7 ships sunk (4 of which were warships), 10 warships damaged, and 3 RFA ships damaged; 10 Harriers, and 24 helicopters were destroyed. Eight of the 34 aircraft lost were to enemy fire, 13 were lost in accidents, and 13 lost when their parent ship sank. Of the killed, 148 were from the Army and Royal Marines and of these 66 were killed in set piece battles.

Argentinean losses were 746 killed (393 Navy, 55 Airforce, and 298 Army and Marines), 1,105 wounded, and 12,978 taken prisoner. Argentinean equipment losses were staggering. One cruiser, 1 submarine, 1 intelligence trawler, 2 patrol craft, and 3 transport ships were sunk. Numerous other ships were damaged; 3 small ships were captured following the surrender. Seventy-five fixed wing aircraft and 25 helicopters were destroyed or captured, 44 while flying in action. The Argentinean Army lost the equivalent of 3 Brigades worth of vehicles, weapons and stores.

³²Middlebrook, 251.

³³Admiral Sandy Woodward, *One Hundred Days: The Memoirs of the Falklands Battle Group Commander* (Annapolis, Maryland: Naval Institute Press, 1992), 257.

³⁴Little regard was given to the slow logistics buildup. Ironically, the loss of tactical mobility caused by the sinking of the *Atlantic Conveyor* added to the pressure of 3 Cdo Bde to produce results.

CHAPTER 3

TRAINING, EQUIPMENT AND MEN

We have learned a great deal from the Falklands Campaign. Many of the lessons are not new but they are no less important for that.¹

Ministry of Defense, *The Falklands War: The Lessons*

A study of the official documents of the Falklands Conflict enabled the identification of three broad lessons that were accepted by the establishment, although were not necessarily acted upon. These lessons cover the areas of training, equipment, and the relative importance of man over technology. Each of these lessons will be discussed in this chapter.

At the heart of all the problems experienced by the infantry in the Falklands was their standard of training. This was a point that the Ministry of Defence (MOD) appeared reluctant to admit, an initial comment in their official analysis of lessons learned stating that the conflict highlighted the value of the realistic training that all three Services had.² However, later in the same analysis, and in apparent recognition of the failings of pre-conflict training, the MOD stated that all restrictions on training and activity levels that had been imposed to save money were to be lifted.³

The result of these training restrictions was that the light infantry deployed to the Falklands without the benefit of realistic training that had presented them with dress rehearsal conditions.⁴ As noted by Clausewitz, "A soldier high or low should not have to encounter in war things which seen for the first time set him in terror or perplexity."⁵ The Director of Infantry echoed Clausewitz's point when he commented after the conflict

that, "Every effort should be made to make training as realistic as possible . . . some peacetime restrictions may be overgenerous towards safety thereby diluting training lessons."⁶ This observation was based, in part, on comments made by 2 PARA in their post operational report: "Peacetime training with its safety regulations, its restricted quantities of training ammunition, and problems with simulating re-supply, casualties and prisoners have led to a situation where our understanding of certain facets of war is incomplete."⁷ It was a point of view shared by 3 PARA, "The period at sea underlined just how much lip service we often pay to the basics when the imminence of an operation is lacking."⁸

This lack of realistic and relevant light infantry training directly impacted upon the standard that could be attained on Exercise *Welsh Falcon*; the two-week pre-deployment exercise conducted by 5 Inf Bde in Sennybridge. This hastily conceived training package made use of resources that would not be available in the Falklands and was forced to focus on rudimentary training at battalion level and below in order to cover the gaps in infantry training. The exercise was given to Headquarters 5 Inf Bde to run but was subject to constant interference by senior officers and higher headquarters. As such, the Headquarters of the Brigade were themselves not exercised. Even so, the single largest criticism leveled against the Brigade was that "command and control were not their strong points."⁹ However, it seems inconceivable that a hastily pulled together two-week exercise could hope to overcome years of neglect in light infantry training; 5 Inf Bde was condemned to deploy on operations without the necessary preparation.

Two points that operations in the Falklands demonstrated are important to light infantry training are the development of patrolling skills and realistic simulation of

ammunition carriage and resupply. There is no doubt that patrolling played a critical role in determining the outcome of the ground campaign. Without effective aerial reconnaissance,¹⁰ and with no flow of information down to the battalions from SAS and SBS patrols, the battalions were compelled to gather all their own intelligence.¹¹ This could only be achieved by conducting small team reconnaissance patrols and establishing observation posts.

More importantly, by patrolling the British infantry dominated the battlefield and retained the initiative.¹² During periods of slow build up, patrolling gave the soldiers the feeling of progress, dominance and aggression--all key to maintaining offensive spirit.¹³ This is nothing new, as General Slim observed when in command of the 14th Army during World War II, patrol skills provided a measure of just how good a battalion was, and was an important part in the battle for domination and moral supremacy.¹⁴ New equipment harnessing the latest technology might replace some of the requirement for infantry to gather their own intelligence. However, the requirement for the infantry to dominate mentally and physically the battlefield by means of patrolling should always remain an essential infantry task. It is worth noting that the Argentineans relied upon technology to dominate the battle space and consequently did not patrol. This was a major factor in their loss of the tactical initiative and their loss of the will to fight. The Falklands demonstrated that patrolling maintains and develops an infantryman's aggressive spirit; it is a skill that places great demands upon junior leaders and soldiers and is a skill that must be practiced thoroughly.

As regards to ammunition supply, the main problem this posed was one of scale. Infantry battalions were not trained for, nor expecting, the problems with ammunition

supply that they faced in the campaign. For example, British troops routinely fired four or five times their estimated daily ammunition consumption rates per weapon, reflecting a long standing British failure to update ammunition expenditure plans because of fiscal constraints. Consequently, units did not have standing arrangements in place to cope with the demand for ammunition from the front; this problem was only overcome through improvisation.

The insatiable appetite of modern warfare for ammunition is nothing new but was a lesson that the British Army had to learn again the hard way. As Major General Hew Pike (the commanding officer of 3 PARA in the Falklands) commented, “the Falklands impressed upon us all just how long battles can take, and hence how important is the sustained rate of all forms of direct and indirect fire to breaking the enemy’s will.”¹⁵ This indicates that preconflict training glossed over the problems posed by fighting a protracted battle, a scenario hard to simulate when training is under-resourced. Failure to train as you might have to fight will lead to false lessons being learned, including in matters regarding infantry logistics, individual equipment loads and individual ammunition scales.¹⁶ Consequently the perceived wisdom of how to conduct operations is all too often founded on unrealistic training, the infantry experience as regards ammunition usage in the Falklands being a case in point. In order to avoid a repeat of this situation the light infantry must plan for and train with realistic ammunition scales.

However, the ability to conduct combined arms operations was identified as the critical capability gap in preconflict training, a capability so critical to the winning of battles at minimum cost. As the Director of Infantry stated, “The importance of the All Arms Battle was perhaps the most important lesson to emerge from OP [Operation]

*Corporate.*¹⁷ An observation fully supported by Pike, “[the] significant weakness, not only in battalions, but throughout both brigades, lay in combined arms integration.”¹⁸

Many of the problems experienced because of this weakness would not have occurred if the infantry had conducted realistic training during peacetime. Instead the training gaps in combined arms operations had to be overcome through operational experience, which undoubtedly resulted in the unnecessary loss of life. Such practice cannot be regarded as good business.

It is telling that the only infantry battalion in the Falklands to conduct an effective combined arms battle was 2 PARA, the only battalion to fight two battles. The lesson that 2 PARA drew from their first battle, the bruising clash at Goose Green, was that the correct coordination and application of firepower is a major element of winning battles at minimum cost.¹⁹ This was a view shared by 3 PARA, who had no doubt that armored support would have eased progress onto the strongly held objective of Mount Longdon and would have reduced their own casualties.²⁰ The poor use of the available armor in support of the infantry leads one to wonder if all the hard won lessons about infantry tank cooperation learned in World War II had been forgotten.²¹

The importance of combined arms operations is a lesson that each battalion had to learn the hard way in their own first battles. As a consequence of a lack of relevant and realistic training the British infantry that deployed to the Falklands in 1982 were not intuitive combined arms operators. Consequently, the light infantry tactical paradigm was not a full reflection of operational reality. It can be argued that the infantry “got away” with their inadequate combined arms training as a consequence of the static and almost

passive enemy it faced and the limited nature of the conflict. The conflict served to falsely flatter the combined arms capability of the light infantry in 1982.

The infantry were not alone in this failure; there is little doubt that the passage of time between World War II and the Falklands had also dulled the collective memory of how to fight combined arms battles. Not only was there a general failure to create an effective fusion of intelligence, logistics, air ground support, and armor but there was also a crippling failure to dispatch an effective all arms force to the Falklands.²² The force package sent to the Falklands demonstrated a disdain for Rommel's age-old adage of plastering the enemy with fire in order to start the process of breaking his will to fight and reducing the casualties in the infantry.²³ As described by Pike, the supporting arms deployed to the Falklands were a "mistakenly small force."²⁴ Major General Brian Pennicott, Commander Royal Artillery at the time of the Falklands, supported this view, stating, "There was inadequate artillery to support a two-brigade division properly."²⁵ As an example, the normal allocation of artillery for a brigade going into battle is three batteries, 5 Inf Bde had one battery.

The Falklands Conflict reinforced the lesson of past wars that the infantry, although a critical element of combined arms operations, requires support in order to be truly effective. Yet, it is not enough to have an understanding of the importance of combined arms operations, it must also be thoroughly practiced. Combined arms operations must be institutionalized across an army on a professional basis.

If an army fails to train as it will fight then the faults of equipment and weaponry will often be overlooked or dismissed as insignificant. To suggest that the Falklands presented conditions that the infantry were not used to ignores the remarkable similarity

between the weather and terrain in the Falklands and three of the key infantry training areas in Great Britain--Sennybridge, Dartmoor, and Otterburn. It also ignores the years of Arctic training in Norway and training in the harsh mid-winter conditions found on the central plain of Germany. Prior to the conflict, ample opportunity was presented to the infantry to get its equipment and weaponry in order; it was an opportunity that could not be, or was not, taken.

It is in this context that the following comment from the MOD must be viewed: "in [the] exceptionally demanding conditions of the Falkland Islands winter a number of short comings were identified in clothing and equipment."²⁶ Items of personal equipment that were deemed to have failed were the waterproof jacket, sleeping bag and fifty eight-pattern webbing. As regards the webbing, 3 PARA commented that, "Once the webbing became wet and old it became difficult to wear and has a tendency to fall apart . . . it is difficult to fight and move in, especially when digging tools [are] attached."²⁷

To all concerned, however, the critical item of personal equipment that failed was the standard issue boot. It was noted by 3 PARA that, "Once wet the boot remained wet."²⁸ The failure of the boot to keep the foot warm or dry was also lamented by 2 PARA, who wrote "That the Battalion lost nearly as many men from frostbite and trench foot than from enemy action indicates that more attention should be paid to footwear."²⁹ This is a rate of disease and nonbattle related injury that is both unsustainable by an infantry battalion and unacceptable by modern standards of warfare. The failure of the boot should not have come as a surprise; as stated by Major Thomas E Broyles in his analysis of the medical support of the Falklands Conflict, "Some of the soldiers who

participated in the Campaign had also recently been involved in exercises in Germany and had already sustained minor degrees of non-freezing cold injury to the feet.”³⁰

Joining the majority in their condemnation of the military boot was Major General John Frost, who stated, “The appropriate foot gear is appropriate to all who would do things properly,” and that “this inadequacy [the boot] was responsible for more casualties than enemy action.” The lesson that Frost draws from this, and one which is axiomatic but all too often neglected, is that, “it is pointless to spend several thousand pounds in arming a man if he becomes ineffective through failure to spend twenty or thirty pounds in covering his feet.”³¹ This is the lesson of false economy: combat power, a priceless commodity, is eroded by a parsimonious procurement policy towards basic equipment.

In sum: the apparent failure of the service boot dangerously hampered the infantry’s mobility and imperiled the outcome of the campaign. Following the loss of the *Atlantic Conveyor* with all but one of the heavy lift helicopters, the ability to move overland by foot became a strategic issue (fig 8.).³² Despite this, in the final analysis it was the men who slogged up to Port Stanley with rifle and pack that ultimately carried the day. Furthermore, poor equipment can lower the morale and damage the fitness of a soldier, and, consequently, degrades the combat power of a unit. For a unit to lose as many men from enemy action as from non-battle related casualties because of inadequate equipment is to unnecessarily squander the combat power of a unit. This further imperils those who have to conduct combat operations in under-strength units.³³ It is telling that many soldiers deployed with items of privately purchased equipment, in part, to overcome the failings of that which was issued.³⁴

The first three land battles of the Falklands Conflict required the infantry to march from the beach-head to their objective, in each case the battalion's first battle. Given the loss of the *Atlantic Conveyor*, the ability of the infantry to complete these marches had strategic significance. If the infantry had failed to complete these marches then the land campaign would also have failed. Could 5 Inf Bde have risen to the challenge if they had been the first brigade in theater?

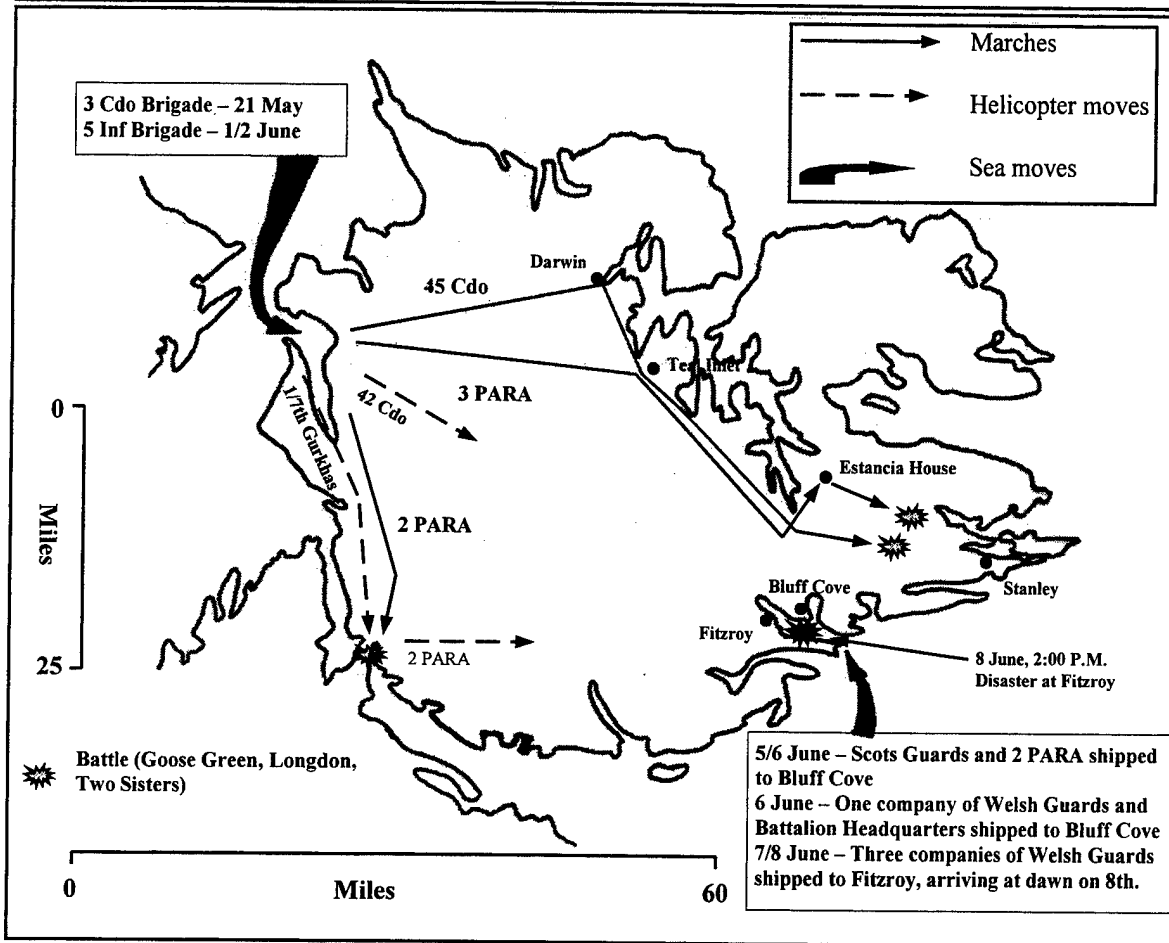


Figure 8. Marching: A Strategic Issue

Private purchases cannot, however, overcome any inadequacies of issued weaponry. The GPMG, 66mm LAW, Milan and number 80 white phosphorous grenade (No 80 WP grenade) were found to be versatile and highly effective. However all sources commented upon the inability of the infantry at section and platoon level to bring to bear high explosive by

indirect fire.

As stated by the MOD, "Milan and 66mm anti-tank weapons proved highly successful against prepared enemy positions, but there is also a requirement for an area attack weapon such as a grenade launcher."³⁵ However, the improvised use of the 66mm LAW to cover this capability gap was a source of unnecessary risk. As stated by 2

PARA:

The ability to deliver high explosive onto the objective right down to section level is essential. The Battalion was scaled with 3 M79s per company and this was inadequate. Consequently the 66mm LAW was the main weapon used, but the firing position of the 66mm unnecessarily exposes the firer.³⁶

This point was reinforced by 3 PARA, "The firer [of the 66mm LAW] is forced to expose himself in order to form a good sight picture."³⁷ If this capability gap had been filled it "would probably have reduced casualties among very brave grenadiers."³⁸

At some stage during each of the battles, the advance bogged down due to losing the local firefight. In part, and dependent upon each circumstance, the ability of the infantry to bring to bear indirect high explosive organic to the platoon or section may well have reduced the number of casualties and reduced the amount of time pinned down.³⁹ The British infantry in the Falklands had to resort to improvisation and personal gallantry in order to overcome an apparent weapons capability gap. A grenade launcher at section level would have solved many of the infantry's tactical problems. This capability gap was recognized by 5 Inf Bde prior to their deployment, unfortunately their request for grenade launchers was rejected with the rationale that it was a weapon for special forces.

However, the provision of a grenade launcher does not replace the continued need for anti-tank guided and unguided weapons to fulfill a broader tactical role as a hard point

killer, as exemplified by the 66mm LAW and Milan system. Such weapons, by their direct fire nature, have the advantage of being surgical weapons that can supplement mortar and or artillery fire with greater accuracy and faster time on target.⁴⁰

However, it was the rifle and machine gun that dominated the infantry battles.⁴¹ If, as suggested by Anthony H. Cordesman and Abraham R. Wagner, a successful rifle or machine gun must “combine portability, range, and volume of fire and hitting power and reliability,” then the issue rifle and GPMG fell short.⁴² The rifle lacked volume of fire, having no automatic capability; and the GPMG lacked portability, weighing in excess of thirty pounds when carried with a belt of fifty rounds. While the rifle and the GPMG were not failures, both surviving the test of battle, both systems had limitations that impaired unit tactics. Indeed, some soldiers ditched their personal weapon in favor of the Argentinean rifle, which was lighter and capable of automatic fire. Weapons will always have their limitations and there will always be capability gaps in the arsenal of the infantry; however, a modern army must have modern equipment whose limitations do not adversely impede the conduct of tactics.

The limitations of the weapons were exacerbated by the quality of the infantry night viewing equipment. Goose Green served as a timely reminder that operations conducted at night saves lives. Consequently, all subsequent attacks were to be conducted under the cover of darkness, despite the scarcity of night viewing equipment possessed by the infantry.⁴³ The equipment that was available was of first-generation technology, which was rendered ineffective by white light. By contrast, the Argentineans were generously equipped with second-generation night goggles and other night viewing devices, which were not adversely affected by white light.

Despite having the technological advantage in infantry equipment, the Argentineans lost all the battles and skirmishes of the campaign subsequent to their initial invasion. By any mathematical model the British Army should have had no chance of success against an Argentinean land force superior in both numbers and weaponry, and fighting from prepared defensive positions.⁴⁴ It can be concluded from this that the critical difference between the Argentinean and British infantry was not material but moral. It is noteworthy that some analysts laid part of the blame for the Argentinean defeat on their American training which, “had taught them to rely too heavily on resources rather than human endeavor.”⁴⁵ The quality of the man and the infantry skill of operating at night proved more critical than any technological advantage.

As such, the Falklands Conflict demonstrated that, without doubt, physical robustness and endurance were fundamental to a soldier’s ability to do his job properly.⁴⁶ As noted by the Defense Committee, “Although there is no one factor that can be singled out as having contributed more than any other to British victory, high on the list is the endurance and stamina of the land forces.”⁴⁷ The MOD was more direct stating: “The most important factor in the success of the task force was the skill, stamina and resolution displayed by individual servicemen.”⁴⁸ Furthermore, the MOD stated “The Campaign highlighted the importance of both physical and mental toughness,” which it believed can only be achieved by “maintaining readiness and training at the highest level.”⁴⁹ A point easily made, but in the intervening years rarely followed through.

Peacetime fitness, however, is no guarantee of operational robustness and endurance. Numerous cases were reported where the “super-athlete” encountered severe

difficulties with the conditions due to a general lack of mental and physical stamina.⁵⁰

Nor is rank a guarantee that the individual will cope, as 3 PARA noted of some of their junior leaders:

[They] found the conditions so demanding that they had little or no energy left to either think, or to lead others. Robustness must be a significant pointer to future officer and NCO selection. Perhaps we do not give it enough priority these days.⁵¹

This is a stark admission from one of the elite battalions in the British Army and it is probably a fair reflection of the experiences of the other infantry battalions during the campaign.

For Pike, it was these junior leaders who were the key players in the infantry battles. Regardless of how much firepower was delivered onto the objective, and the degree of surprise achieved in the attack, each battle involved a long and difficult break-in and fight-through. For the infantry this proved to be the greatest testing ground of leadership.⁵² Although responsibility for the tactical conduct of the battle often rested with the company commander there is little doubt that the burden of leadership, and its supreme test during these most difficult phases, fell upon the junior leader at platoon, section and fire team level. Here, example was everything, as the proportion of officers and noncommissioned officers to private soldier killed in the infantry battles testifies (1:1) (see appendix A).

The Falklands Conflict demonstrated that key to the success of the individual leader was his resourcefulness, initiative and courage.⁵³ It is apparent that good training for independent action will often be far more important than any conceivable improvement in technology. One of the major lessons from the ground campaign is that

professionalism, innovation and the ability of infantry to adapt to conditions for which they had limited training will often be the decisive force multiplier.⁵⁴ The battles of the ground campaign, that, as Clausewitz put it, “led directly to peace” were won with rifle and bayonet and with the age-old infantry tactic of “closing with the enemy and destroying him by fire and maneuver.”⁵⁵

To sum up chapter 3, the three broad infantry lessons of the conflict that can be identified in all the official documents are: the importance of realistic training, especially in combined arms operations (a lack of being the root cause of so many problems in the Falklands), the importance of correctly equipping the infantry (and training with this equipment), and the continued importance of man over technology.

Furthermore, there is little doubt that the Falklands proved that the infantry battle still hinges on the ability of the soldier to close with and destroy the enemy. Always a difficult task, the British infantry’s experience in the Falklands demonstrated that it is junior infantry leadership and the will to win that are the essential ingredients in determining the outcome of such encounters. Technology, in such a contest, is unlikely to replace the relative importance of the man. Therefore, it is intensive and realistic training (focused on combined arms operations) that will emphasize the dominance of the man over technology and give the soldier confidence to make maximum and innovative use of tried and tested equipment. Finally, the nature of infantry combat is bound to reveal soldiers that lack the mental or physical robustness to cope; training must, therefore, be geared to weed out those who will fail. In the next chapter three more lessons will be identified that have a direct impact upon these observations.

¹MOD, 31, paragraph 301.

²MOD, 16, paragraph 207.

³MOD, 33, paragraph, 307.

⁴3 PARA, *Operation Corporate: Post Operational Report of the Third Battalion the Parachute Regiment in Lessons of the Falklands Campaign: Post Operational Report of the Third Battalion The Parachute Regiment* (Ottawa, Ontario: National Defence Headquarters, 11 January 1983), Annex C, paragraph 2.

⁵Tsouras, 440.

⁶The Director of Infantry's (DINF), *Operation Corporate Debrief in Lessons of the Falklands War* (Ottawa, Ontario: National Defense Headquarters, 2 February 1983) Annex A, paragraph 5d.

⁷2 PARA, *Operation Corporate: Post Operational Report of the Second Battalion the Parachute Regiment in Operation Corporate – Post Operational Report of the Second Battalion The Parachute Regiment* (St-Hubert, Quebec: Mobile Command Headquarters, 16 July 1984), p. 6, paragraph 33.

⁸3 PARA, Annex C, paragraph 6.

⁹Michael Clapp and Ewen Southby-Tailyour, *Amphibious Assault Falklands: The Battle of San Carlos Water* (Annapolis, Maryland: Naval Institute Press, 1996), 68.

¹⁰For the preparation of the assault on Mount Longdon, 3 PARA had only one aerial photograph that was taken from 10,000 feet some years prior to the events in question. Brigadier Hew Pike, *The Army's Infantry and Armored reconnaissance Forces in Ten Years On: The British Army in the Falklands War*, ed. Linda Washington (Great Britain: Jolly & Barber Limited), 44.

¹¹2 PARA, p. 2, paragraph 8; 3 PARA, Annex C, paragraph 23.

¹²Pike, 46.

¹³3 PARA, Annex C, paragraph 24.

¹⁴Pike, 44.

¹⁵Pike, 46.

¹⁶2 PARA, p. 7. 3 PARA, Annex C, paragraph 7.

¹⁷DINF, Annex B, paragraph 8.

¹⁸Pike, 42.

¹⁹2 PARA, p. 7, paragraph 33a.

²⁰3 PARA, Annex C, paragraphs 9, 10, 11, 12 and 13.

²¹Major General John Frost, *2 PARA Falklands: The Battalion at War* (London: Buchan & Enright Publishers, 1983), 159.

²²Anthony H. Cordesman and Abraham R. Wagner, *The Lessons of Modern Warfare Volume III: The Afghan and Falklands Conflict* (San Francisco: Westview Press, 1990), 328.

²³Pike, 46.

²⁴Pike, 40.

²⁵Major General Brian Pennicott, *The Gunners in Ten Years On: The British Army in the Falklands War*, ed. Linda Washington (Great Britain: Jolly & Barber Limited), 49.

²⁶MOD, p. 23, paragraph 235 e.

²⁷3 PARA, Annex G, paragraph 1.

²⁸3 PARA, Annex F, paragraph 7.

²⁹2 PARA, p. 5, paragraph 26.

³⁰Thomas E Broyles, Maj, USA, *A Comparative Analysis of the Medical Support in the Combat Operations in the Falklands Campaign and the Grenada Expedition*, MMAS, (Kansas: Fort Leavenworth, 1987), 62.

³¹Frost, 158.

³²Harry G. Summers Jr., *Ground Warfare lessons in Military Lessons of the Falklands War: Views from the United States*, ed. Bruce W. Watson and Peter M. Dunn (Boulder, Colorado: West View Press, 1990), 75.

³³It is worth noting that an infantry battalion at peace establishment is caderised by some ten percent. Infantry battalions are only brought to war establishment in times of general conflict, operations such as the Falklands are fought at peace establishment. Battalions are therefore already at a minimum strength at the start of the operation without the combined effect of battle and non-battle casualties further reducing their

effectiveness. Manpower is a critical resource in a battalion, which requires careful husbanding.

³⁴Pike, 45.

³⁵MOD, p. 17, paragraph 212.

³⁶2 PARA, p. 5, paragraph 22.

³⁷3 PARA, Annex D, paragraph 5.

³⁸3 PARA, Annex D, paragraph 6.

³⁹During the battle for Goose Green, A Company, 2 PARA were pinned down in the area called Gorse Gully for two and half-hours. In an attempt to break the deadlock the Commanding Officer of 2 PARA, Lieutenant Colonel H Jones, made a frontal assault against the enemy trenches, which resulted in his own death. The deadlock was only broken when Corporal Abols, at great personal risk, destroyed an enemy trench with a 66mm LAW, enabling A Company to penetrate the Argentinean position and roll it up. In the fight for the Gorse Gully 20 percent of A Company became casualties. Main source was Mark Adkin, *Goose Green: A Battle is Fought to be Won* (London: Leo Cooper, 1992), 183-188.

⁴⁰Cordesman and Wagner, 289.

⁴¹Cordesman and Wagner, 284.

⁴²Cordesman and Wagner, 283.

⁴³DINF, Annex B, paragraph 4a.

⁴⁴Summers, 79.

⁴⁵Summers, 79.

⁴⁶3 PARA, paragraph 3.

⁴⁷Defense Committee, *Fourth Report from the Defence Committee Session, 1986-87: Implementing the Lessons of the Falklands Campaign* (London: Her Majesty's Stationery Office, 1987), p. 1, paragraph 182.

⁴⁸MOD, p. 16, paragraph 207.

⁴⁹MOD, p. 16, paragraph 208.

⁵⁰3 PARA, paragraph 3.

⁵¹3 PARA, paragraph 5.

⁵²Pike, 47.

⁵³Pike, 40- 48.

⁵⁴Cordesman and Wagner, 351.

⁵⁵Summers, 67.

CHAPTER 4

AD HOC FORMATIONS, LIGHT INFANTRY LOADS, AND THE REGIMENTAL SYSTEM

We didn't know how soon war would come, but we knew it was coming. We didn't know when we'd have to fight, but we knew it was coming at any time, and we had to get together *something* of an Army pretty darn fast. We didn't stop for the progressive and logical building of a war machine. As a result, the machine was a bit wobbly when it first got going. The men knew it. The officers knew it. Everyone knew it.¹

Lt. Gen. Lesley J. McNair, *The U.S. Army GHQ Maneuvers of 1941*

A study of all the literature available to the author concerning the Falklands Conflict enabled the identification of three further broad lessons that are not stated in these sources. These three broad lessons cover the performance of ad hoc formations, the load carrying capability of infantry, and the impact of the Regimental System on unit performance.

What are ad hoc formations? The word ad hoc is defined in the 1995 version of the *Collins English Dictionary and Thesaurus* as an adjective or adverb meaning, "for a particular purpose only: an ad hoc committee."² There is no American or British military definition for the term ad hoc, but the term is used commonly to describe how units are grouped together to create temporary formations for operations. The use of ad hoc formations in the Falklands exacerbated the problems caused by inadequate training of the infantry, identified in chapter 3 as one of the root causes of the infantry's problems during the campaign.

The use of ad hoc formations is the essence of the western military way of conducting business and is encapsulated by such terms as combined arms,³ joint operations,⁴ and maneuver.⁵ The creation of ad hoc formations is a cornerstone of

military organization for operations and is provided for in paragraph one of an operations order (attachments and detachments), and is reflected in the creation of task forces⁶ and battlegroups.⁷ In the British Army, peacetime garrison relationships bear only a passing resemblance to operational organization when deployed.

The ability of an army to operate with ad hoc formations is, perhaps, a mark of how adept that army is at practicing its profession. Ad hoc formations are an institutionalized reality in the standing formations of the British Army, reflecting both the negative and positive connotation of the term. What impact did the creation of ad hoc formations have on the infantry in the Falklands?

There were two light infantry brigades deployed to the Falklands. Three Cdo Bde was the first brigade to be deployed. Attached to 3 Cdo Bde were 2 and 3 PARA (infantry battalions taken from 5 Inf Bde) and elements of sixteen other units. In total, this represented a need to integrate an additional two thousand soldiers in eighteen units from troop to battalion level (see Appendix B).

Although, as discussed in the previous chapter, the ability of the infantry to conduct combined arms operations is subject to criticism, taken as whole, 3 Cdo Bde performed magnificently in very trying circumstances. The record and achievements of the Brigade speaks for itself: an amphibious assault landing; breakout from the beachhead; the investment of Port Stanley; the conduct of extensive patrolling operations; the conduct of five battles without defeat; and the capture of Port Stanley.

Why was 3 Cdo Bde successful? It can be argued that success hinged on three factors. First, headquarters 3 Cdo Bde was a tried and tested unit, whose officers had

previously served in many of the units they were now controlling. This brought them an understanding of the capabilities of the units under their command.

Second, many of the units under command had a detailed working knowledge of their superior headquarters: a knowledge based upon trust and confidence, which is essential to reducing much of the friction ever present between headquarters and units when on operations. This confidence undoubtedly rubbed off on those eighteen other units attached to the Brigade.

Third, the high professional standards of the units that formed 3 Cdo Bde, all of which were operating in their primary role for which they were trained and organized. In sum, 3 Cdo Bde was a successful ad hoc formation; however its ad hoc nature was a significant contribution to its greatest failing – the conduct of combined arms operations.

In marked contrast was the performance of 5 Inf Bde, the second brigade to deploy to the Falklands. This Brigade had been created for operations outside NATO countries, and existed more on paper than in reality. Of its three infantry battalions only 7 GR remained, 2 and 3 PARA having been attached to 3 Cdo Bde. In peacetime there were no logistics units or supporting arms assigned to the Brigade. To overcome this shortfall the Brigade was provided an additional twelve units, giving it an artillery, air defense, engineer, signal, logistic, medical, repair and provost infrastructure. However, the Brigade lacked a self-contained logistics regiment, an air squadron and a full compliment of vehicles or guns. To replace the two parachute battalions the Welsh Guards and Scots Guards were attached. Both Guards battalions had been relieved from their duties and placed on stand-by to join 5 Inf Bde by 5 April.

In essence, the ad hoc reconstruction of 5 Inf Bde following the departure of 2 and 3 PARA was based on an organization that had always been a paper tiger. Commodore Mike Clapp, Falklands Amphibious Task Group Commander, provided the following assessment:

We had expected the second brigade to be well trained, fully formed and coordinated with battalions and headquarters that had worked together for a considerable time on near operational duties in BAOR. As it was to be, the team that joined us had not worked together apart from a hastily conceived exercise in the Welsh Mountains where command and control had not been the strong points; an added deficiency being the lack of its own logistic regiment. None of this was the fault of 5 Infantry Brigade as the Ministry of Defence was responsible for the relocation of force multipliers.⁸

What effect did this ad hoc makeup have on 5 Inf Bde? It is hard not to draw the conclusion that 5 Inf Bde was largely ineffective. Sadly, the Brigade's performance speaks for itself: from the failed attempt to march out of the beachhead, to the ill conceived helicopter thrust along the southern flank--dangerously over-extending the Brigade--to the calamity at Fitzroy. Its poor performance was masked by the Scots Guards magnificent action on Tumbledown Mountain, the resilience of the Welsh Guards following the tragedy at Fitzroy, and the overall British victory. A senior officer is quoted as saying after the war, "The things we did on the basis of well-trying and proven formations worked, and the ad hoc arrangements turned out less happily; from beginning to end 5 Brigade were the victims of ad hockery."⁹ The story of 5 Inf Bde is one of operational and logistics inefficiency, hardly surprising given that they had only trained together for two weeks prior to deployment.

Subordinate units were also able to draw a comparison between the performance of the two brigades, specifically 2 PARA, which switched brigades a total of three times.

It is telling that Lieutenant Colonel Chandler, the replacement for the fallen Jones, is reported as being “delighted” that 2 PARA were switching from 5 Inf Bde to 3 Cdo Bde where there was a feeling of confidence and capability.¹⁰

Why was 5 Inf Bde’s performance markedly different to that of 3 Cdo Bde?

Given the history of 5 Inf Bde the answers are self-evident, of which two are critical.

First, a hastily assembled headquarters attempting to control units it had not worked with for any length of time. As noted by Frost, “5 Infantry Brigade had literally been thrown together in the UK when 2 PARA [and 3 PARA] left for the Falklands, and it can take just as long for a brigade headquarters to find its feet as it can a much larger unit.”¹¹

Second, the inclusion in the Brigade of units not ready for operations; this is specifically true of the two Guards battalions hastily brought into the formation.

When called up to join 5 Inf Bde both battalions were in the public duties role.

Consequently, they were not physically or mentally ready for operations, nor did they have any reason to be given their every day role of ceremonial duties. Such duties are not the honing ground for fitness, low level tactical skills, combined arms warfare nor leadership in battle. Map reading and marksmanship take a poor second to shiny boots and steadiness on parade, and correctly so. The two Guards battalions were very different to the Marines and the Paras. They were not so obsessed with physical fitness and had none of the undercurrent of violence associated with the Parachute Regiment. As noted by Patrick Bishop of the Observer, “On shore they never looked quite as neat as the Marines, or indeed, quite as tough. Having seen both the Marines [3 Cdo Bde] and 5 Brigade come ashore the difference was quite marked.”¹² As observed by Pike, “The two Guards battalions inevitably felt the effects of their public duties role.”¹³

Undoubtedly the Guards battalions strove to be professional. A professional approach cannot, however, mask a lack of experience of working together at battalion or brigade level, a lack of operational fitness or a lack of combined arms capability. Whereas the battalions from the Parachute Regiment had physical fitness and in role training to smooth the bumps caused by a lack of combined arms training and being thrust into a new brigade, the Guards had to fall back upon regimental spirit and the generally high quality of the individual British soldier to see them through the good and bad times.

The units themselves cannot be blamed for being unprepared for the rigors of operations. It was not their specific mission nor were they resourced to be ready at short notice. Indeed, it is to the credit of both Guards battalions that they performed as well as they did given their almost total lack of preparation. The axiom that units on ceremonial duties are not fit for operations without first receiving meaningful and lengthy training is so obvious that it can hardly be stated as a lesson.

From the Falklands Conflict it can be determined that the ability of a unit, or even a headquarters, to perform on an ad hoc basis is dependent upon its ability to operate in its given role. Ideally, units should train with the actual people with which they will fight. Such relationships, formed in peace, are, however, unlikely to last the course of a protracted war, for any number of reasons. The lesson of the Falklands Campaign regarding ad hoc formations is that there are three essential inter-working elements at play, which determine how successful an ad hoc formation will be. In priority order, but each having a direct influence upon the others, these three elements are: the ability of the unifying headquarters to function in role; the experience of the unit in role; and the level

of experience of the headquarters and units working with the other arms and services. The latter is critically important in order to overcome regimental parochialism in the infantry.

One of the consequences of forming ad hoc formations is a lack of understanding by all concerned of what the units and troops can achieve. This was evident in the load carrying demands placed upon the infantry and their attached arms, and the mixed results that this produced. In the Falklands, where the ability to move on foot was a strategic issue, it appears that, of the two infantry brigades, only 3 Cdo Bde were prepared for the load carrying challenge facing them. However, this Brigade did have its problems.

In 3 PARA's and 45 Cdo's long march from San Carlos to Port Stanley, upwards of twenty soldiers were not capable of completing the march. The attached arms from the Army (as opposed to the Marines) also struggled to cope. In their march to Goose Green, 2 PARA elected to advance without local air protection because the attached air defense soldiers were unable to keep up with the rifle companies. Additionally, as stated in chapter 3, some junior leaders were unable to cope with the combined effects of extreme loads, terrain, environment and fear. The exhaustion resulting from this combination left the individual with only enough energy to see his own survival--let alone operate as a leader.

In 5 Inf Bde, of the infantry, only 7GR proved capable of carrying their loads any distance. Indeed, the Welsh Guards canceled the planned march out of the beachhead, a distance of some thirty-five miles, following a failed night move. In part, this failure led to the decision to conduct a sea move to Bluff Cove and the subsequent tragedy at Fitzroy.

The root cause of the plight of the Guards, and the source of much misery to all the infantry in the Falklands were the excessive loads that they were forced to carry. As stated by Thompson "Each man was carrying about 120 pounds . . . even without his rucksack the average load . . . was about 76 pounds."¹⁴ According to Adkins, the average weight carried in 2 PARA was 110 pounds, a weight that not even the PARAs were used to carrying.¹⁵ As stated by Captain Farrar of 2 PARA: "The equipment was distributed as evenly as possible; nevertheless the weight was incredible. I would not like to put a figure on it, but it was certainly the heaviest weight I have ever carried."¹⁶

Not only were the loads excessive, and greater than that carried in peacetime training, the load carrying systems also served to compound the problem and add to the frustrations. As noted by Lieutenant Colonel Nick Vaux, Commanding Officer 42 Cdo, "The design [of the webbing] was such that loads were unbalanced, the load capacity inadequate, the webbing itself inflexible . . . we deserved better from twenty years of peacetime research and development."¹⁷

Why were the infantry loads so heavy in the Falklands? Two reasons stand out as obvious--the issue equipment was heavy and bulky and the problem of personal survival given the hostile climate. Personal survival was as much a battle against the elements as against the enemy. For the infantry the majority of the campaign was spent in static positions. In all but the most exposed locations life was tolerable, although needless casualties were taken due to inadequate equipment (see previous chapter). However, the adverse weather conditions and the nature of the terrain demanded that the individual had sufficient personal equipment to survive.

The problem arose when units had to move from one position to another with no guarantee of logistics support to bring up the bulk of personal equipment. Consequently, units usually elected to move everywhere with everything, and the only means of transport usually available was the boot. It was a constant problem of balancing tactical mobility with logistics drag.

The self-reliance of the units was forced upon them due to a lack of logistic support to the whole Task Force.¹⁸ Critical to this was a drastic shortage of heavy lift helicopters from the start of the campaign and an almost total lack of vehicles integral to the infantry units that could operate on the terrain. In a logistics system that could barely cope with the movement of artillery ammunition and sundry stores, the logistics requirements of the infantry plummeted to the lowest priority. Those who created the Task Force had paid little regard to the limitations of the human carrier. Circumstances conspired to place the movement of personal equipment to one of the lowest priorities. It is telling that 2 PARA's Quartermaster, who was responsible for getting the Battalion's supplies forward to the area of operations and whom 2 PARA depended upon in order to continue functioning, had to rely upon his individual skill and initiative in begging and bargaining for helicopters.

Another less obvious although critical factor resulting in an overburdened infantry was the propensity of the staff to overload "just in case."¹⁹ Five Inf Bde were a case in point. Brigadier Tony Wilson, 5 Inf Bde's Commander, had been particularly scathing about 2 PARA's lack of personal equipment on Sussex Mountain until two days after the landings (a fault he laid at Headquarters 3 Cdo Bde's door), an attitude he transmitted to his subordinates.²⁰ Lieutenant Colonel Johnny Rickett, the Welsh Guards Commanding

Officer, in the spirit of the guidance of his commander, ordered that the Welsh Guards would carry as much equipment as possible on what turned out to be their failed march out of the San Carlos beachhead.²¹ The Scots Guards and troops from the other arms and services in 5 Inf Bde coped no better.

It would be too simplistic to state that the cause of this failure was a lack of operational fitness in the two Guards units, more telling were the unrealistic demands placed upon the soldiers. There can be no doubt that the Brigade could have completed the planned thirty-five mile march from the bridgehead to Fitzroy carrying only light loads with the logistics system geared to bring forward the rest of the battalion's equipment.²² It was not poor fitness that defeated the Guards, but an unrealistic expectation made of them by their own headquarters--they were overburdened.

Headquarters 3 Cdo Bde were also guilty of such "just in case" planning. Soldiers storming ashore at Port San Carlos carried twice the normal ammunition scale, spare batteries, mortar bombs and up to four days rations. Men were carrying an average of one hundred pounds and more. The impact upon the rate of exploitation was immediate, reducing the pace of advance to a crawl. The occupation of Sussex Mountain, by 2 PARA, some four miles from the beachhead, took much longer than the planned four hours, which had included time to clear light resistance.

However, Headquarters 3 Cdo Bde did learn from these initial experiences. Planning figures for movement at night were reduced to a rate of one kilometer per hour for heavily laden men out of contact with the enemy.²³ This was a figure that did not surprise those that knew the Falklands, but was a figure greeted with ill-disguised

disbelief by the planners back in England.²⁴ It was also a lesson that 5 Inf Bde chose to learn for themselves the hard way.

The problem of overestimation of capability was also evident within the units. The average infantryman is inculcated with the belief that he should never be separated from his equipment. Indeed, when load carriage is considered, much individual and unit pride is at stake clouding common sense and judgment. Victims of faulty logistics, over optimistic planning and their own bravado, the infantry were condemned to be beasts of burden throughout the conflict. It is ironic that the military mule is never called upon to carry more than one third of its body weight, but the infantry in the Falklands were called upon to carry the equivalent of a teenage boy wherever they went. For many this meant a load in excess of half their body weight.

The results of overburdening the infantryman in the Falklands was the unnecessary expenditure of human resources, the very antithesis of good leadership. Couple this overburdening with periods of acute stress and fear and the morale of a unit starts to be sabotaged. This points to an understandable failure of training to effectively simulate the friction caused on operations by stress and fear. It is a friction that can have a very debilitating effect upon physical capability. Psychologically, one hundred pounds carried on operations "weighs more" than one hundred pounds carried in training. In essence, the morale of a unit can be pinned down by the burden it carries.

The Falklands campaign served to demonstrate the British Army's failure to solve the problem of tactical mobility of light infantry. This failure is two part: that of a mindset which fails to recognize the importance of light infantry logistics; and, stemming from this, the purchase of bulky, heavy and in some cases inadequate equipment. The

reasons for these failings can be fairly placed upon a fixation with armored and mechanized operations. Light infantry, consequently, get the thin slice of a tight budget and are considered the poor man's infantry.

The Parachute Regiment only rises above the problem of load carriage due to the their self-generated ethos of physical excellence and barely suppressed aggression and violence based upon the mystique associated with the airborne role. In training they take pride in carrying extreme loads while remaining operational. For the basic light infantry battalion they claim not to have the time and resources but, probably and most significantly, the inclination to attain a collective standard of fitness which enables them to operate efficiently while carrying extreme loads.

Sadly, it would appear that the wrong lesson of the Falklands campaign has been learned from the problem of the light infantry load. Idolized by the press and public the feats of endurance of the PARAs and Marines have been taken as a standard for all. Such standards are way beyond the capability of the average infantry battalion who, unlike the PARAs (and even the Gurkhas), do not run a rigorous selection process bolted onto the standard infantry training package. As a consequence, the PARAs, through a process of physical selection, choose the strongest men--all of whom are willing volunteers and are keen to achieve the high physical standards demanded of them. A "gung ho" attitude to weight carrying as a mark of professionalism has therefore entered the psyche of the infantry. The real lesson from the Falklands is that the load of the infantry has not improved since the days of the Roman Legion: indeed the situation is probably worse. The very term light infantry is a misnomer, referring more to lack of armor than fleet of foot.

The carriage of heavy loads, as witnessed in the Falklands, serves to demonstrate how quickly peacetime armies forget their true penalty. Short duration training exercises, in which everyone is able to cope, serve to falsely flatter. When soldiers are called upon to operate carrying extreme loads in situations of stress and fear and with no known end to the operation, their physical and mental capability begins to erode rapidly.

In sum, the loads that the light infantry are called upon to carry should be based upon the capabilities of the average unit and soldier. To draw standards for all from the performance of the elite is at best misguided and at worst disastrous. The Guards were not unfit for duty; it was the lack of logistics support, poor staff appreciation, and their own bravado that were to blame. In part, this bravado is a result of intense regimental pride, a byproduct of the Regimental System. It is impossible to discuss the performance of the infantry in the Falklands without commenting upon the impact of the Regimental System, a system that permeates every facet of infantry life.

What is the Regimental System? In its current form, and as a rough definition, it is an organizational structure based on infantry regiments which have normally one--but sometimes two or three--battalions. Regiments recruit from a territorial area, and each has its own peculiar traditions, customs, uniforms and lineage. Some regiments claim to trace this lineage back to the late seventeenth century. Soldiers and officers enlist into these regiments for life, the regimental affiliation continuing into retirement. As such, regional identity, custom, history and a life time affiliation are the basic tenets of the Regimental System. History, tradition and logic have now become so intertwined that any suggestion that these tenets are invalid, or should be altered, is regarded as heresy.

In order to understand the Regimental System it is important to first understand its basic history. The Regimental System is just over a century old, a creation of the Cardwell Reforms, completed by Hugh Childers, the Secretary of State for War in 1881.²⁵ The essence of these reforms, as they impacted the infantry, was to reorganize it into regiments of two battalions; one battalion remaining in the United Kingdom as the home service battalion, with the other battalion deploying overseas. The home service battalion was responsible for recruiting soldiers from allotted territorial areas, training recruits, and reinforcing their sister overseas battalion, as required. It was a system designed for imperial policing, and stressed self-sufficiency and independent infantry action. The process of arms plotting (defined in chapter one) replaced the system of home service battalions and overseas battalions when the majority of infantry regiments were reduced to one active service battalion post World War II.

To the guardians of the Regimental System, the process of arms plotting has become synonymous with the System's very survival. The logic runs that if arms plotting ceases units will remain in one location and in one role and will result in soldiers and officers moving between units as individuals on a trickle posting system. This is the very antithesis of the Regimental System--infantry soldiers remaining together for their full service tenure and developing a family spirit founded on regimental tradition and years of teamwork. The obvious weakness of arms plotting is the immediate loss of in role experience as units move from role to role. This creates units that are expected to be "jacks of all trades but masters of none," and is seen as a lesser evil than the loss of the Regimental System.

It is argued that regimental tradition provides strong cultural and historical ties that bond a British soldier or officer to his unit. Thus the cohesion of the unit and its combat effectiveness are correspondingly strengthened; the quintessential meaning of life is the regiment and one could never let the honor of the regiment down. Major Chris Keeble, Second in Command of 2 PARA in the Falklands, lends weight to this view when explaining the motivation behind 2 PARA's remarkable achievements in the Falklands:

We are a body of people welded together by our traditions, by our regiment, by a feeling of togetherness. We're a family of people and you have to remember that. We all know each other, we know each others families. This is a body of people who would die for each other We have to win, the mission is paramount. It is more important than anything else.²⁶

The Regimental System is the emotional substance and the visible structure of the infantry. It is a system that fosters loyalty and provides a social system that cares for many details of its members' lives. As demonstrated in the Falklands, it is a system which fosters strong horizontal and vertical bonding and works best when harnessed to an open organizational climate, based on an officer's and noncommissioned officer's credo of caring for the men, leadership through example, and the sharing of discomforts regardless of rank.²⁷

If the creation of the family spirit, founded on trust, is the true strength of the Regimental System, then it is also its Achille's heel. It is a system that, in difficult times, elevates mediocre battalions into good fighting organizations. It is also an impediment to efficient external cooperation, liaison and recognition of what the other arms and services can bring to the fight. It is a system that encourages its members to regard all outsiders with suspicion and, even, contempt. As an example, in the language of the barracks room,

the soldiers of the Parachute Regiment refer to all outsiders as “crap hats”; this is not a form of inverse compliment but is a true reflection of their regard for outsiders – low.

Such spirit works wonders when faced with the extraordinary mission given to 2 PARA for the capture of Darwin and Goose Green, a mission which called for the Battalion to make an assault from the only land direction possible, with virtually no support. Victory was a triumph for the regimental spirit of the Battalion, an ethos which does not permit the consideration of failure, and for the unit’s remarkably high standard of leadership at all levels. It was also a bruising experience, and one that convinced 2 PARA that independent infantry action was not the best way to wage war. Consequently, their later attack of Wireless Ridge is described as model combined arms battle, and one in which casualties taken were significantly less than those experienced in their first battle.

The parochialism of the Regimental System can be drummed out of a unit through effective combined arms training--a shortcoming of the infantry in the Falklands as described in the previous chapter. However, the negative effects of arms plotting on unit capability cannot be dealt with so easily. Of the British infantry in the Falklands the worst affected by the arms plotting process were both Guards battalions and 2 PARA.

The Welsh Guards and the Scots Guards had both last been involved in meaningful training for combined arms operations when based in Germany, in the armored infantry role, some two years previously. In the intervening years they had been on public duties, although the Welsh Guards had recently returned from a tour of Northern Ireland (by all accounts a highly successful one). At the time of being called up, the Welsh Guards were based at Pirbright, being responsible for ceremonial duties at

Windsor Castle and being on standby for terrorism and hijack duty at Heathrow Airport. The Scots Guards were based at Chelsea Barracks and were responsible for providing the guard at Buckingham Palace. Two Para had just returned from a two-year tour in Northern Ireland. All three battalions, due to the arms plotting process, were out of practice in combined arms operations.

Why were the Guards and 2 PARA sent to the Falklands? It can be argued that 2 PARA was sent because of its excellent reputation and high standard of fitness and individual training. As proved by events, this was the correct selection. The reason for the selection of the Guards can only be speculated especially given that other infantry units in the British Army were at a higher state of readiness and training.²⁸

What is apparent is that there was extreme uncertainty as to the role of 5 Inf Bde in the Falklands. Was it going to be pitched immediately into battle or was it to act as a garrison force? It seems logical that a brigade should have been selected for the worse case scenario. This leads one to suspect that lobbying amongst the old boy network, endemic throughout the Army and based on regimental loyalties, clouded clear military thinking. The Falklands Conflict provided a rare opportunity for units to get involved in operations that could bring credibility and glory to a unit's name. It is plausible that the Guards, the social elite of the infantry, were dispatched for regimental kudos coupled with an ignorance of the enormity of the task faced by the units and blind to unit shortfalls.

Ironically, it was the Regimental System that was the key to the performance of the two Guards battalions in the Falklands. The impact of the Fitzroy tragedy upon the Welsh Guards was the more keenly felt for their strong family spirit, but this strength,

created by the Regimental System, also enabled the Battalion to get on with the task at hand and prepare for their forthcoming battle (never executed due to conflict termination). Nothing else was conceivable--regimental pride was at stake.

Lieutenant Colonel M.I.E. Scott, Commanding Officer of the Scots Guards in the Falklands, also attributes his battalion's success in the battle for Tumbledown to the Regimental System:

Why did the Battalion win? Tumbledown epitomized the regimental spirit. Men went forward under fire because they were part of the family (section, platoon, company and battalion) and because they were with their friends. This spirit, coupled with leadership from the front, overcame heavy odds and gave men a depth of confidence and togetherness that the enemy could never beat.²⁹

In sum, three new broad lessons have been identified in chapter 4. First, the three requirements essential for ad hoc formations to work, being a unit's time in role, a unit's standard of training, and the unit's experience of working with the other arms and services. Second, the importance of not over loading the light infantry. Third, the Regimental System and its effect upon infantry performance, a critical element of this is the negative effect on unit capability caused by arms plotting.

As lack of training was identified as the root cause of many of the lessons described in chapter 3 then lack of time in role can be identified as the root cause of the lessons identified in this chapter. In the next and final chapter, these two root causes will be described in more detail and the relevance of all these lessons to the British Army at the turn of the Twentieth Century will then be discussed.

¹Christopher R. Gabel, *The U.S. Army GHQ Maneuvers of 1941* (Washington: U.S. Army Center of Military History, 1991), 8.

²*Collins English Dictionary and Thesaurus* (1995), s.v. "ad hoc."

³Combined Arms is defined as the synchronized or simultaneous application of several arms, such as infantry, armor, artillery, engineers, air defense, and aviation to achieve an effect on the enemy that is greater than if each arm was used against the enemy in sequence. FM 101-5-1, p. 1-32.

⁴Joint Operations is a general term to describe military actions conducted by joint forces, or by Service forces in relationships . . . which in themselves, do not create joint forces. FM 101-5-1, p. 1-87.

⁵Maneuver is defined as the employment of forces on the battlefield through movement of combat forces in relation to the enemy supported by fire or fire potential from all sources. FM 101-5-1, p. 1-96.

⁶Task forces are defined as: 1. A temporary grouping of units, under one commander, formed for the purpose of carrying out a specific operation or mission. 2. Semi-permanent organization of units, under one commander, formed for the purpose of carrying out a continuing specific task. 3. (Army) – A battalion sized unit of combined arms consisting of a battalion headquarters, with at least one of its major organic subordinate elements (a company), and the attachment of at least one company sized element of another combat or combat support arm. FM 101-5-1, p. 1-153.

⁷A battlegroup is a tactical grouping, usually with armor and infantry under command, based on the HQ of an armored regiment or infantry battalion, normally armored or mechanized, or possibly an armored reconnaissance regiment. British Army, *Staff Officers Handbook* (England: Tactical Doctrine and Arms Directorate, 1992), p. 809.

⁸Clapp and Southby-Tailyour, 68.

⁹Max Hastings and Simon Jenkins, *The Battle for the Falklands* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1983), 320.

¹⁰Frost, 125.

¹¹Frost, 112.

¹²Patrick Bishop and John Witherow, *The Winter War: The Falklands* (London: Quartet Books Ltd., 1982), 110.

¹³Pike, 42.

¹⁴Thompson, 101.

¹⁵Adkins, 56.

¹⁶Adkins, 56.

¹⁷Nick Vaux, *March to the South Atlantic: 42 Commando Royal Marines in the Falklands War* (London: Buchan & Enright Publishers, 1986), 136.

¹⁸3 Cdo Bde deployed with its formed tried and tested Logistics Regiment, which proved capable, at a stretch, of supporting the additional two thousand men attached for the operation. Five Inf Bde, by way of contrast, deployed with a hastily created ad hoc unit that was not big enough for the task in hand. The problems of infantry logistics were complicated by the loss of all but one of the heavy lift helicopters when the *Atlantic Conveyor* was sunk.

¹⁹Colonel S. L. A. Marshall, *The Soldiers Load and the Mobility of a Nation* (Quantico, Virginia: The Marine Corps Association, 1950), 30-34 and 57-60.

²⁰It is hard to imagine what could have been added to the burden of a soldier in 2 PARA. The men of 2 PARA came ashore on the day of the invasion dangerously overloaded. Some men were not up to the strain and fell out of the initial march from the landing craft to Sussex Mountain--a distance of four miles. Frost, 32.

²¹Ewen Southby-Tailyour, *Reasons in Writing: A Commando's View of the Falklands* (London: Leo Cooper, 1993), 256.

²²Southby-Tailyour, 256.

²³Thompson, 59.

²⁴Thompson, 60.

²⁵Until 1881, infantry regiments were numbered sequentially according to seniority. The regiment with the highest numbers were the most junior. Wartime expansion or peacetime reduction was achieved by adding or subtracting the higher numbers. Although a newly raised battalion might bear the same number as a previous battalion, it had no more in common with its predecessors than that. There are some regiments with a genuine tie to an unbroken history of over 300 years or more (1st Battalion The Royal Scots). But for many the notion of continuity and of deep local roots has been assumed – an invented tradition. Hew Strachan, *The British Way of War*, in *The Oxford Illustrated History of the British Army*, ed., David Chandler and Ian Beckett (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994), 432.

²⁶Adkin, 16.

²⁷Horizontal or peer bonding involves building a sense of trust among officers, among NCOs and among soldiers. Vertical Bonding involves the relationship between

subordinate and superior and vice versa, it is the chain of command. Successful vertical bonding is a paternal and benevolent hierarchy whose vertical relationships are based upon trust, respect and loyalty (some use the term love). Organizational bonding is the relationship of the soldier or officer to the military as an organization or unit. An open organizational environment is one where superior and subordinate can freely discuss the aims, goals, values, and structure and organization of the work place – there is no fear of retribution. Nora Kinzer Stewart, *Mates and Muchachos: Unit Cohesion in the Falklands/Malvinas War* (Washington: Brasse's Inc., 1991), 26-27. & 112-119.

²⁸The 1st Infantry Brigade, based at Salisbury Plain, was part of the Army's Ace Mobile Force. Of its three infantry battalions one was from the Territorial Army, and so could not deploy, the other two battalions were from the regular Army. Of these two, the Queen's Own Highlanders in particular were at a peak of training and fitness and were equipped for operations in cold climates. Middlebrook, 17-180.

²⁹M. I. E. Scott, *Essay--The Battle of Tumbledown Mountain--14 June 1982* in *British Liaison Officer 716* (Fort Benning: British Liaison Officer, December 1982), 3.

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSIONS AND RELEVANCE

The Infantry are the least spectacular arm of the Army, yet without them you cannot win a battle. Indeed, without them, you can do nothing. Nothing at all, nothing.¹

Field Marshal Viscount Montgomery, *Warriors Words*

Although the circumstance and nature of the Falklands Conflict are unlikely to be repeated, the general experiences of the light infantry in the Falklands are. Sometime in the future the light infantry will undoubtedly be called upon to conduct offensive operations against defended positions, in a combined arms operation, resulting in the requirement to close with and destroy the enemy. It is because of this that a study of the Falklands remains relevant. The time, place, terrain, weather, and political influences might change but the infantry task will not--victory at least cost.

A study of the Falklands Conflict from the infantry's perspective has led to the identification of six broad lessons that might help the light infantry attain this goal. In this, the final chapter, these lessons will be reviewed briefly, links between the lessons will be identified, and their relevance to the British Army discussed. The identification of three of the six broad lessons learned, or reinforced, are the product of an analysis of the official documents and source material from those that served in, or with, the infantry during the conflict. In the author's opinion, these lessons represent the *accepted* critical lessons of the conflict appertaining to the light infantry. The remaining lessons are the subjective product identified by an analysis of all the Falklands literature available to the author. This second set of lessons are unique to thesis. For ease of reference the six lessons, with their sub lessons, are shown in table 1.

Main Lesson	Sub lessons
The critical importance of realistic and relevant training	<p>The importance of training for combined arms operations</p> <p>The importance of patrolling</p> <p>The need to train with operational ammunition scales</p> <p>The importance of training for night operations</p>
The critical importance of correctly equipping the infantry in order to maximize and preserve combat capability	<p>The critical importance of a good infantry boot</p> <p>The requirement for an infantry section to be able to bring indirect high explosives to bear by means of resources from within the section</p> <p>The importance of a machine gun or rifle combining portability, range, volume of fire, hitting power and reliability</p>
The importance of man over technology	<p>The need for the man to make innovative and resourceful use of available technology <i>and</i> not to become dependent upon technology for success</p> <p>The critical importance of the junior leader, who must be robust, resourceful, have initiative and be courageous</p>
The essential components for successful ad-hoc formations (of which there are three →)	<p>The ability of the unifying headquarters to function in role</p> <p>The experience of units in role</p> <p>The experience of units and headquarters working with the other arms and services</p>
The critical importance of minimizing the infantry load	<p>The requirement for load carrying doctrine</p> <p>The requirement to train with operational weights</p> <p>The requirement for suitable load carriage equipment</p>
The positive and negative effects of the Regimental System upon infantry efficiency	<p>The negative effects of arms plotting</p> <p>The negative effects of regimental parochialism upon combined arms operations</p> <p>The positive effects of the regimental spirit upon fighting capability</p>

Table 1. Summary of Main Lessons and Sub lessons

Table 1 does not, however, show the root causes of the six main lessons. As noted in chapter 3, one of the root causes of the infantry's problems was the lack of realistic and relevant training prior to the conflict. This root cause can be coupled with the source of significant problems identified in chapter 4--a lack of time in role.

A combination of these two factors can have either beneficial or negative effects. For example, more time in role coupled with realistic and relevant training has a positive effect upon infantry capability and readiness; and vice-versa. Time in role and the level of realistic training are inseparable *key factors* in determining unit capability. This relationship, as it applied to the Falklands Conflict, is shown in Figure 9.

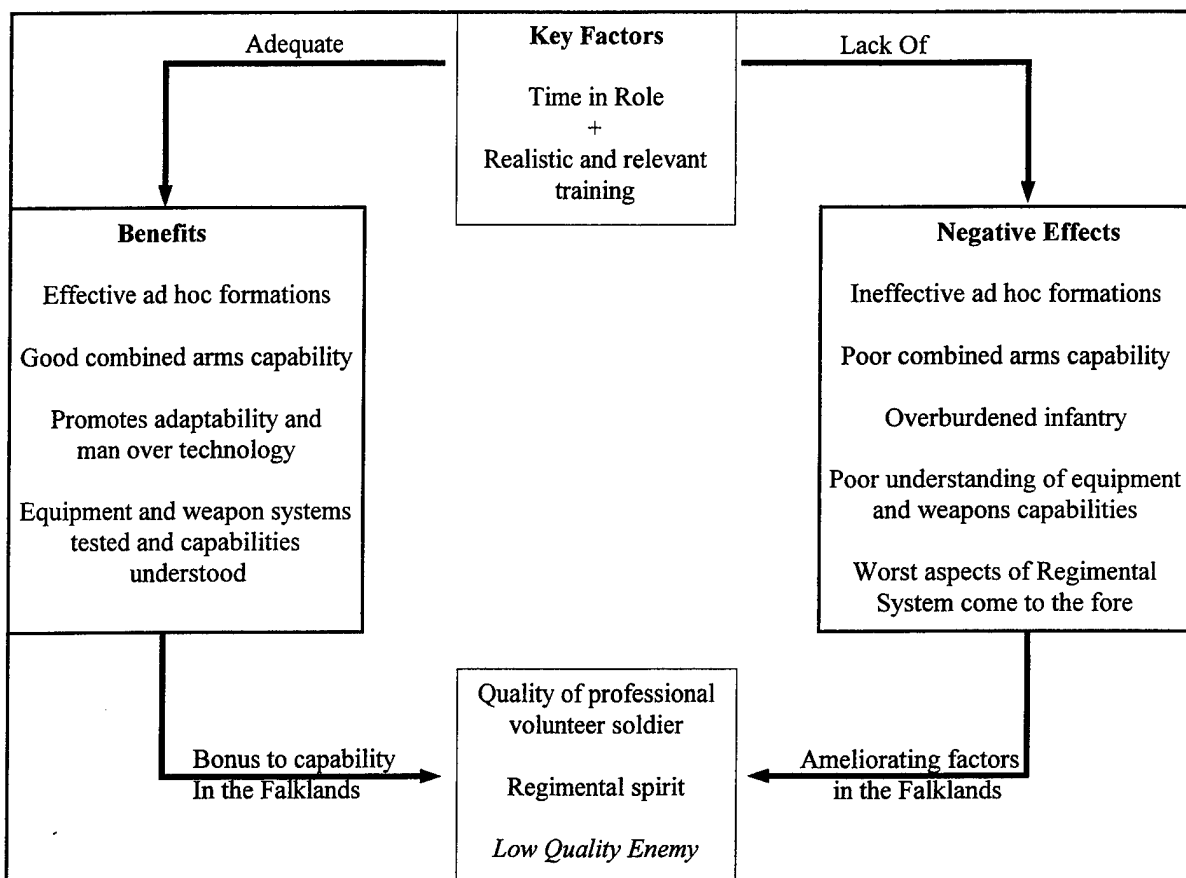


Figure 9. The Relationship Between Identified Key Factors in the Falklands.

If the level of realistic and relevant training and the time in role are described as the key factors in determining unit capability and readiness, then the other main lessons can be identified as *modifying factors*. These modifying factors are: the Regimental System; the quality of the man; the quality of equipment and weapons; ad hoc formations; and arms plotting (the key but not the only determinant of time in role). As demonstrated in the Falklands, the first three of these modifying factors can have a positive or negative effect upon a unit's capability and readiness; the last two can only have negative influences.

It is the author's observation that units which have spent long periods at low readiness levels and with little combined arms training, do not work well as part of ad hoc formations. Furthermore, leaders are not developed, the weak are protected, soldiers become dependent upon technology and cannot make innovative use of it; and units and headquarters are neither cognizant of their own capabilities and weakness nor that of available equipment.

Conversely, units that have benefited from substantial realistic and relevant training and have enjoyed a long period in role can cope with most of the negative effects of operating in ad hoc formations. All other factors tend to add to capability rather than serving to simply ameliorate the problems caused by poor training and lack of time in role. High capability and readiness are, however, adversely affected as soon as time in role is reduced to zero. Such is the impact of arms plotting a unit from one role, such as armored infantry, to another role, usually diametrically opposed to previous experience, such as light infantry.

It can be no coincidence that of the infantry battalions in the Falklands, the battalions of the Parachute Regiment performed the best given that they were less exposed to the negative effects of arms plotting, usually staying in one of two light infantry roles: the parachute

role or resident infantry in Northern Ireland. Figure 10 demonstrates the positive and negative effects of the key and modifying factors on unit capability and readiness, and is as relevant to unit performance in the Falklands as it is to the infantry of the British Army at the turn of the century.

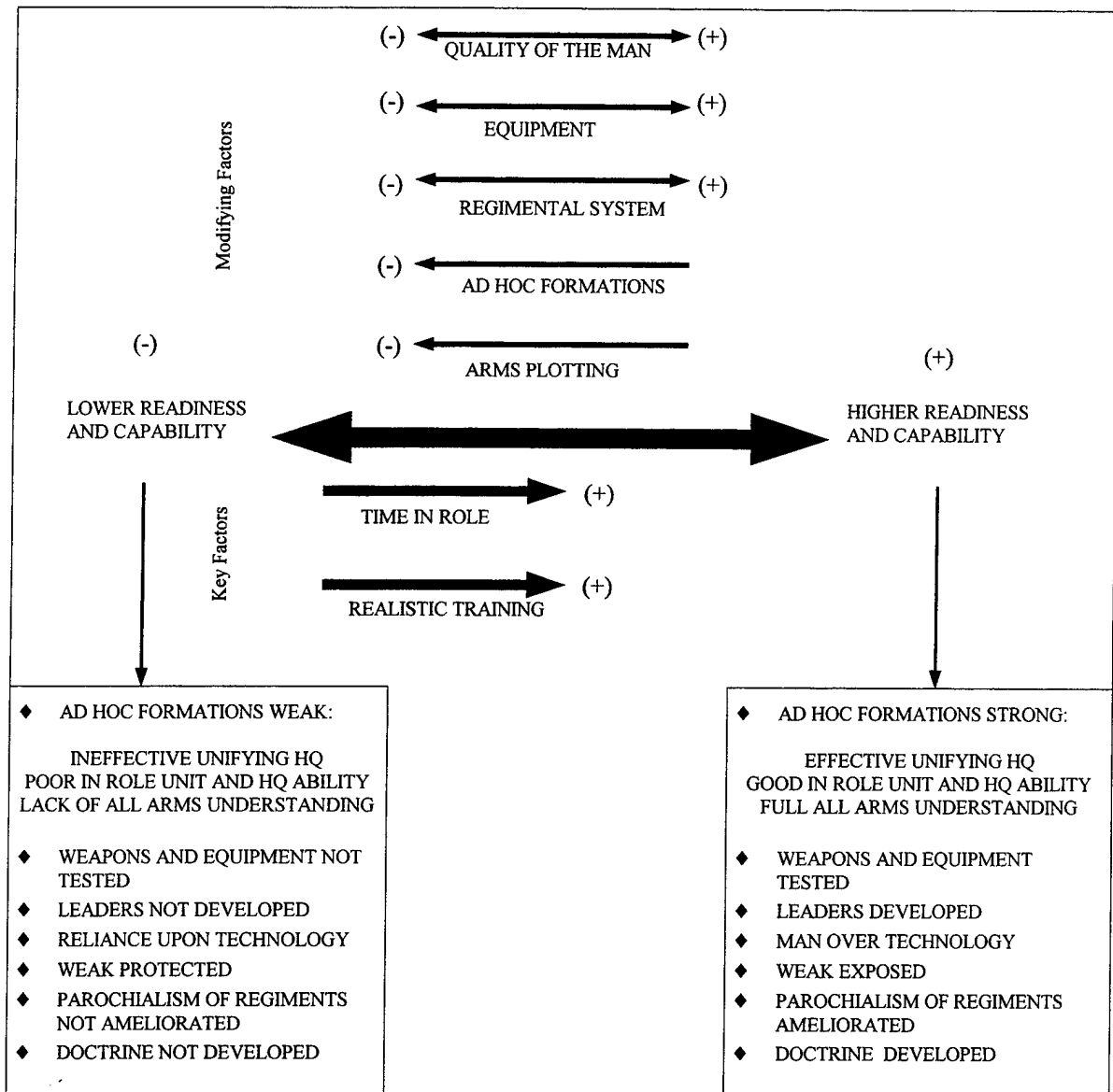


Figure 10. The Influence of Key Factors and Modifying Factors on Unit Capability

Specifically, how are these lessons, or factors, relevant to the British Army's light infantry of today? When answering this question it is appropriate to first consider the two factors identified as critical to unit capability and readiness--time in role and realistic and relevant training, the critical component of the latter being preparation for combined arms operations. Arms plotting and the general organization of the British infantry influence both factors.

Of the Army's forty regular infantry battalions, nineteen have a combined arms affiliation with the other arms and services of the regular Army. Of these nineteen battalions, eight are in the armored infantry role, four are in the mechanized infantry role, one is the combined arms training battalion, and six are in, what can be termed, a specialist light infantry role. These specialist light infantry roles are the parachute role, air-land role, air-mobile role. All of these battalions, less the combined arms training battalion, are part of the three main field organizations of the British Army: 1 (United Kingdom) Armored Division, 3 (United Kingdom) Division, and 24 Air Mobile Brigade.

The remaining twenty-one infantry battalions can be referred to as nonspecialist light infantry, including the six resident infantry battalions in Northern Ireland. Three of the remaining fifteen battalions provide the overseas garrisons, leaving twelve in what was traditionally called the National Defence Role but was recently changed to the light infantry role.² In an Army dominated by maneuverist thinking these fifteen nonspecialist light infantry battalions (counting the three overseas battalions) are seen as the least effective commodity in the infantry arsenal--as such they are regarded as the "illegitimate child" of the infantry. It should be noted that none of these twenty-one nonspecialist light

infantry battalions have any affiliation with any regular artillery, signals, engineer, armored, or aviation units.³

The stark reality is that unless one is a soldier in 1 (United Kingdom) Armored Division, 3 (United Kingdom) Division or 24 Air Mobile Brigade one is rarely resourced to train for, and collectively mentally prepare for, combined arms operations. All too often the quality of the nonspecialist light infantry training is overly dependent upon what training they can improvise and what resources they can borrow. Furthermore, nearly all of the light infantry battalions, specialist or otherwise, are increasingly under resourced, are subject to cuts in the numbers of support weapons held, and are often afforded the lowest priority for wheeled vehicles and equipment. This directly impacts upon the light infantry's capability and readiness.

The quality of the nonspecialist light infantry is further adversely affected when an infantry battalion remains in one, of several variants, of the nonspecialist light role for ten to fifteen years, arms plotting between Northern Ireland, ceremonial duties, Cyprus, and the old National Defense role, for example. During this time the battalion will receive *little, if any*, meaningful combined arms training.⁴

The plight of the light infantry as a whole is going to get worse given the planned changes to Army organization. In the early years of the next century 5 Airborne Brigade will be replaced by a mechanized infantry brigade that will have up to three battalions in the armored infantry role or mechanized infantry role. The two air-land battalions in 5 Airborne Brigade will convert to this *higher* role and the two parachute battalions will move to 16 Air Assault Brigade, which is going to replace 24 Air Mobile Brigade. Of the two air-mobile infantry battalions in 24 Air Mobile Brigade, one will convert to the

mechanized or armored role and one will revert to a non-specialized infantry role. As a result of these changes the Army will reduce its number of specialist light infantry battalions organized along side the other arms and services to two, from six, and increase the number of non-specialist light infantry battalions by one (fig.11). The light infantry, specialist or otherwise, are being increasingly sidelined.

So what? There are three critically detrimental factors to the British Army as a whole caused by this state of affairs. Firstly, and perhaps most significantly, has been the creation of an infantry officer corps whose majority membership are instructed the importance of combined arms operations but are not practiced in its complex application. This is fervent breeding ground for the worst aspect of the Regimental System--the very bedrock of the British infantry--parochialism. What combined arms operations experience do these officers bring to staff jobs and the training organization?

Secondly, there is a negative impact upon the performance of the armored infantry, the most potent infantry force fielded by the British Army. The maximum time spent in the armored infantry role is six years. Of this six years, one year in every three is spent on training support and operational commitments, which might involve a six-month tour of the Balkans or Northern Ireland (the latter in the light infantry role). One year in every three is spent on stand-by status as part of the Army's Rapid Reaction Force, and one year in every three is spent in intensive combined arms training up to brigade level. As a general example, an infantry battalion spending fifteen years in various nonspecialist light infantry roles and six years as armored infantry will only spend two of these twenty-one years engaged in dedicated combined arms training, and about four years in a combined arms environment. This is not

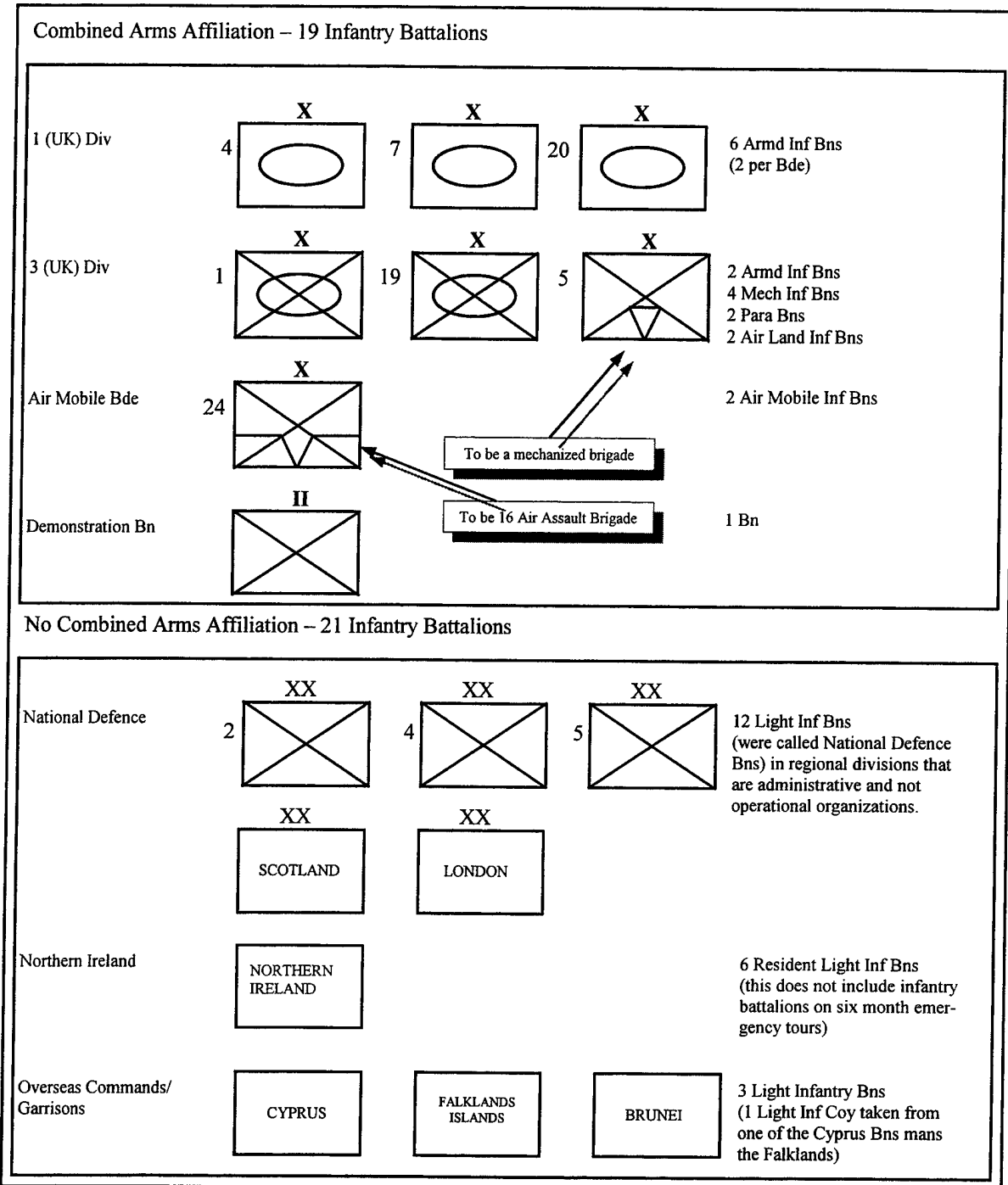


Figure 11. The Organization of the Infantry in the British Army, March 1999.

an efficient way to create a body of infantry versed and practiced in combined arms operations and has a direct impact upon the infantry's ability to reinforce itself in moments of crisis or over-stretch caused by undermanning and operational overcommitment.

Thirdly, in a time of national crisis that calls for the deployment of ground forces into a combat environment there is, on the evidence of the past fifty-four years, a three to one chance that the British infantry will be called upon to fight in the light role in a combined arms environment. Examples include Korea, 1950-53; Suez, 1956; and the Falklands 1982.⁵ The one exception to this trend is the Gulf War of 1990-91. The combat experience of other nations post-1945 also supports this pattern; for example, France in Vietnam; Russia in Afghanistan; and America in Vietnam, Somalia, Grenada, and Panama.

The Middle East Wars might seem the exception to this pattern. However, the Egyptians enjoyed their greatest period of success when the spearhead of their forces was provided by light infantry armed with antitank weapons (6-9 October 1973). In the same conflict the Israelis learned the hard way the importance of all infantry types in combined arms operations. A lesson they paid scant regard to post conflict, and were again to learn during the 1982 invasion of Lebanon. In this latter case the Israelis learned the critical importance of armored operations being preceded by light infantry in close terrain (as opposed to dismounted armored infantry--which can never cut the umbilical cord between man and machine).

In sum, as regards the two critical factors that will determine infantry capability (time in role and training), they are still subject to negative forces in the present day

British Army: critically, arms plotting (an every day reality of the British infantry), and the organization of the Army. Although infantry units can remain in any number of variants of light infantry role for many years, time in role, as previously described, is only of value if coupled with realistic and relevant training. Over 50 percent of the infantry, including all the nonspecialist light infantry, are as unprepared for combined arms operations as were the infantry that deployed to the Falklands in 1982. A critical component of combined arms operations is the ability to operate as part of an ad hoc formation. Having no organizational nor training relationship with the other arms and services, the nonspecialist light infantry may well be very effective in their own role, but they will struggle to operate in ad hoc formations without additional training, or more probably, the harsh reality of operational experience.

What of the other modifying factors? Without doubt the equipment of the light infantry has been vastly improved. For example, a new and effective load carrying system has been brought into service; the new infantry boot is very good; field clothing is now based on a layered system, designed for practicality rather than aesthetic pleasure; and the wet weather gear makes effective use of modern materials while keeping the wearer dry.

By way of contrast, the development of light infantry weapons since 1982 has, in the author's opinion, a mixed record. On the positive side is the replacement of the 2-inch mortar with the 51mm mortar; the replacement of the Carl Gustav with the light antitank weapon 80 (LAW 80); the replacement of the SLR with the 5.56mm individual weapon (IW); and the introduction into service in 1998 of the rifle launched grenade (some sixteen years and one war too late!). Each of these systems adds to infantry capability.

On the downside are two factors. First, the withdrawal from infantry service of the 66mm LAW without its replacement with a comparable weapon. As an antitank system the 66mm LAW is undoubtedly obsolescent. However, this weapon was used to good effect in the Falklands; weighing only five pounds, measuring only one-half a meter in length when closed, and being accurate up to 165 yards, it proved its worth in attacking enemy strong points. It is a highly portable and cheap system that can be carried by a soldier without adverse detriment to his fighting capabilities and was, and can be, available in large numbers. It is an ideal complement to the rifle launched grenade. In its stead is the LAW 80, a system also designed to replace the 84mm MAW. An outstanding anti tank weapon, cost and lack of portability (weighing twenty-two pounds and measuring one meter in length when closed) unfortunately preclude it from replacing the 66mm LAW in comparable numbers. The LAW 80 is a resource that must be carefully husbanded for its primary role: this represents a loss of light infantry capability.

The second negative step in weaponry, in the author's opinion, is the replacement of the GPMG at rifle section and rifle platoon level with the 5.56mm Light Support Weapon (LSW). There is little doubt that the GPMG is a heavy burden for a soldier to carry, weighing over thirty pounds with a belt of fifty rounds. Despite this the system is exceptionally popular with the soldiers, being robust, reliable, and capable of laying down an effective, audible and, for the recipient, terrifying weight of suppressive fire. Its popularity also stems, in part, from a general dislike for its replacement--the LSW. The weight of the GPMG might slow movement outside of combat, but in combat its rate of fire and effectiveness in the hands of a trained gun crew helps the light infantry maintain the tempo of operations and win the battle for moral domination.

The reverse could be true of the LSW, as yet untested in light infantry combat. Although half the weight of the GPMG and capable of six times the rate of fire, the LSW is a system which emphasizes accuracy rather than suppressive fire given its times four telescopic sight and its thirty round magazine.⁶ It is a one-man weapon that is more a lengthened rifle than light infantry machine gun. It is telling that the Parachute Regiment has been allowed to retain the GPMG at section level, with many of their LSWs gathering dust in their armories.⁷ Many in the infantry share the doubts of the Parachute Regiment about the capability of the LSW to provide a sustained rate of suppressive fire.

The LSW represents but one part of the cyclical debate between the need for suppressive fire verses pinpoint accuracy. Both the LSW and the IW are systems belonging to the Small Arms 80 program, commenced in the late seventies. Their inception and design owe nothing to the Falklands experience. As the GPMG, a belt-fed weapon, was brought in to replace the Bren Gun (a thirty-round, magazine-fed, light machine gun), the LSW has been brought in to replace the GPMG.⁸ The experience of the Falklands indicates that an infantry machine gun is as much about providing moral support for the home team, and suppressing and eroding the enemy's will to fight as it is about killing the enemy.

Also, proven accuracy and ability on the range does not, necessarily, translate to proven accuracy and ability on the battlefield by winded soldiers fighting for their lives. This point is well supported by S. L. A. Marshall in his book *Men Against Fire: The Problem of Battle Command in Future War*, a detailed study of the combat record of the American soldier in World War II. Although a controversial piece of research because of Marshall's chosen research methods, his findings highlight a pattern that is vindicated

during arduous infantry training. The replacement of the GPMG (which is by no means a perfect weapons system and probably did require replacing) with the LSW represents a loss of light infantry capability. The provision of belted or boxed ammunition for the LSW would go a long way towards overcoming this problem.

One good point produced by a shift from the GPMG to the LSW is a reduction in the infantry load. However, such a reduction in load is not representative of the light infantry plight; for example, since the Falklands, the infantry have taken to wearing combat body armor, adding in excess of ten pounds to a man's load. It is very probable that the light infantryman's load of today remains as heavy as his predecessor's in the Falklands Conflict.

The Falklands did not cause the establishment to review the load of the light infantry and consequently there remains no guiding principles for light infantry logistics nor any attempt to lighten the burden carried by the light infantryman. This problem of load carriage is caught in a mind-set that believes there is nothing that can be done to lighten the soldier's load and, regardless of what the infantry is asked to carry, the majority will cope. The latter mind-set runs against the lesson from the Falklands Conflict. It is also a mindset which is not reflected in training, where "realistic" loads are still not carried--that is they do not represent the true weight of the infantry burden on operations. This apparent contradiction is also reflected in the Army's proposed fitness tests, which are currently under trial (see appendix C).

The maximum load that the infantry will carry on the proposed training test is sixty-six pounds, designed to represent march loads, but is some forty pounds short of the average march load carried in the Falklands. Other tests call for forty-four pounds to be

carried, representing assault order, but being some thirty pounds short of the average assault order carried in the Falklands.

Detailed research is required into what an infantryman can be expected to carry while remaining operational when the mental burdens of fear and stress are added to the physical burden. Colonel S. L. A. Marshall commenced such a study in his book *The Soldier's Load and the Mobility of a Nation*, a study of the effects of overburdening the infantry in World War II. One of his many conclusions is that the infantry should not be called upon to carry more than fifty-one pounds on the march and he should carry no more than forty pounds into combat.⁹

Ironically, it would appear that the British Army has got its proposed test weights about right--operational reality must now be brought into line. If not the light infantry will continue to test capability against one criteria while being faced with carrying loads on operations that are well in excess of test weights.

It appears that we have forgotten the scorn heaped upon the British generals of World War I for making the infantry attack on the first day of the Battle of the Somme carrying an average of sixty-six pounds.¹⁰ The plight of the light infantry has worsened since the soldiers' forefathers struggled across "no mans" land in 1916, despite all the leaps made in technology since then. Unless the light infantry's operational load is reduced the capabilities of the individual will continue to be undermined. Not even the strongest elements of the Regimental System can hope to salvage the capabilities of the *average* soldier when overburdened on operations.

As for the Regimental System, this is as alive and well in the British infantry today as it was at the time of the Falklands. It is a system that engenders a strong

regimental spirit, which is a form of teamwork based upon a family spirit that, on the battlefield, can translate into battle winning resolve. The strength of the regimental spirit in the infantry must be retained; what must be changed, if not stopped, is the self-defeating process of arms plotting.

It should be noted that arms plotting has many other benefits above and beyond the preservation of the Regimental System, as described in chapter 4. It creates a body of infantry that possess a broad base of experience that is unique when compared to their like throughout the world (at the expense of capability); it helps prevent boredom from setting in; and units are not condemned to fester away their time in unpopular locations or roles. However, it can be argued that the penalty of arms plotting (loss of capability) far out weighs any benefits accrued by a Regimental System that is dependent upon arms plotting for its very existence.

There is also one further negative factor that will surely cause arms plotting to be stopped by the Army's political masters – cost. In stringently constrained financial times all things deemed wasteful are cut. The infantry will find it increasingly difficult to defend the process of arms plotting based upon the intangible that is the link between the Regimental System and regimental spirit. The first fosters the second, of that there is no doubt – but what are the essential elements? It is these that must be identified and protected instead of blind faith based upon tradition.

In sum, the light infantry of the British Army in the waning years of the Twentieth Century are struggling to find an accepted role that will bring meaningful levels of resources and realistic and relevant training. It would appear that, for the light infantry,

too much attention was paid to the opening remarks of the MOD in their 1982 publication, *The Falklands Campaign: The Lessons*.

The Falklands Campaign was in many ways unique. We must be cautious, therefore, in deciding what lessons of the Campaign are relevant to the United Kingdom's main defense priority--our role within NATO against the threat from the Soviet Union and her allies.¹¹

Military thought is trapped in conventional wisdom, a conventional wisdom that is now outdated. To dismiss the Falklands Conflict as mainly irrelevant is to ignore the unique nature of all conflicts that the British Army has been involved in during the Twentieth Century: World War I; World War II; Korea; the Malayan Insurgency; Suez; Northern Ireland; the Cold War; the Gulf War; etc... A study of each of these conflicts can only hope to give clues as to the nature of future conflict, but none provide prescriptive descriptions of how future events will unfold.

As such, a critical benefit accrued from studying history is the identification of patterns. The Falklands Conflict served to reinforce and remind the British Army, and specifically the light infantry, that many of the ingredients of success on operations depend upon, as stated by the MOD, "A firm resolve; flexibility of forces; equipment and tactics; human ingenuity; and well trained officers and men." Unique or not, the Falklands Conflict provided an opportunity for these essential ingredients of success, which span the experience of conflict in the Twentieth Century, to be held under the close scrutiny of an operational environment which exposed man and his equipment to fear, uncertainty, and the potential for failure.

As described in this thesis the development of resolve, flexibility, equipment, tactics and resourcefulness are achieved through credible and realistic training, focused

on combined arms operations, and units spending adequate time in role. Some seventeen years have now passed since the British light infantry were last tested in unfettered combat. In the absence of combat the time has now come for the British infantry to again check itself against the essential ingredients for success. For this to be worthwhile further studies are required to address a host of infantry related issues. What is light infantry – what must it be capable of in the next century? What, if any, is the role of the light infantry in armored warfare? How can the infantry retain the Regimental System while ridding itself of the burden of arms plotting? How should the light infantry be organized and equipped for war? What should the light infantry load be on operations and what should constitute light infantry logistics procedures? Do the light infantry require an all terrain, low maintenance, logistics vehicle at platoon level? Does infantry selection and training foster soldiers who are robust, resourceful and courageous? These are only a few of the questions that must be addressed in the future.

In closing, it is worth stating one final lesson identified by the author during his research in to the infantry's performance in the Falklands Conflict. In apparent tautology, this is the lesson of learning from one's lessons and applying the results of the lessons learned. Two of the finest armies to take to the field this century have both been masters of adaptation and rapid implementation of lessons learned: the German Army of 1940 and 1941, as exemplified by its period of change following its Campaign in Poland in 1940; and secondly, the Israeli Defence Force; as exemplified by its rapid adaptation to changing battlefield tactics following its disastrous start to the 1973 October War.

There is little doubt that the British Army is an organization with proven adaptability during times of crisis. Indeed, it is this proven adaptability that has enabled

the British Army to fight back from predictable setbacks caused by failure to invest in the Army during periods of peace and the collective scrubbing clean from the memory of any lessons learned in the last crisis. The British Army, and specifically the infantry, are victims of their own success--the infantry's proven adaptability on the battlefield is its own undoing when it comes to implementing the hard lessons learned. It leads to a mindset that we have always coped and we always will; an admirable quality that encourages initiative and resourcefulness but also results in the "wheel being reinvented," usually through the unnecessary loss of life. It is a mindset that thrives in the tradition based British infantry. Hence, in part, one of the MOD's opening remarks in their analysis of the lessons of the Falklands Conflict, "Many of the lessons are not new but they are no less important for that."¹²

Adaptability in crisis is an essential infantry skill that must be retained, encouraged and trained for. Essential also is the ability to make the necessary changes in peace based upon lessons, old or new, learned in conflict or training. Indeed, the identification of lessons is often the easy part, it is the ability to accept lessons and implement them in a timely manner that is the mark of a truly capable armed force. Is the British infantry capable of learning from past experiences and applying the lessons learned based upon a clear vision of the future, thereby making any necessary changes--no matter how radical? Only time will tell. Based upon the lessons identified in this thesis, the record of change is at best patchy, as it appears that many of the infantry lessons of the Falklands Conflict are as relevant now as they were in 1982.

¹Tsouras, 216.

²DINF, 3.

³This total of twenty-one battalions includes one Gurkha battalion, which provides the resident infantry battalion in Brunei (in the light role). The second Gurkha infantry battalion is part of 5 Airborne Brigade and is in the air-land role.

⁴Light infantry battalions can bid for training exercises in Belize, Kenya and Canada; however, although these are battalion deployments, they only focus on company training. Any supporting arms provided to support the training add little to the infantry training experience other than pyrotechnic value.

⁵If the scope of this list was expanded to cover the entire spectrum of operational activity then the odds of light infantry deploying increase to eight to one (against – The Former Republic of Yugoslavia, 1992 onwards; for – division of India and Pakistan, 1947; Palestine, 1947; Malayan Insurgency from 1948; Middle east crisis of 1952; anti-terrorist operations in Cyprus from 1955; deployment to Jordan, 1958; Mau Mau rebellion in Kenya, 1960; Kuwait, 1961; Brunei coup, 1962; Borneo confrontation, 1963; Northern Ireland, 1969 onwards; Belize, 1960s – 1980s; Zimbabwe, 1980; Rwanda, 1994). Chandler and Beckett, 463-465.

⁶This would require a magazine change every 3 seconds – without allowing time to change the magazine and reacquire the target!

⁷Major Ian Hope, Canadian Armed Forces, interview by author, Leavenworth, KS., 12 March 1999. Major Hope served with 2 PARA for two years as a platoon commander.

⁸The GPMG came into service in the 1960s and was the British response to the German MG 42, used with devastating effect in World War II. The GPMG was brought into service as it was felt that the in service light machine gun, the Bren Gun, could not provide an adequate weight of fire, being magazine fed. Sydney Jary MC with Carbuncle, *Firepower at the Platoon and Company Level*, in *British Army Review: Number 114, December 1996* (Hertford: Stephen Austin, 1996), 90-98.

⁹Brigadier General S. L. A. Marshall, *Men Against Fire: The Problems of Battle Command in Future War* (Virginia: Byrrd Enterprises, Inc., 1947), 70 and 71.

¹⁰John Terraine, *The Smoke and the Fire: Myths and Anti Myths of War 1861-1945* (London: Leo Cooper, 1980), 143-147. It should be noted that Terraine draws the conclusion that the infantry were *not* overburdened in the attack on the first day of the Somme; however he makes no reference to the effects of fear and stress on the physical performance of a soldier.

¹¹MOD, 15.

¹²MOD, p. 31, paragraph 301.

APPENDIX A

PARTICIPANTS AND CASUALTIES IN THE MAJOR LAND BATTLES

Table 2 gives the details of the participants and casualties involved in the six major land battles. The figures for the British killed and wounded are accurate. The figures for the Argentinean forces and casualties are, in some cases, approximate. The main, but not only, reference used for the Argentinean casualty figures and unit participation was Martin Middlebrook's *The Fight For The Malvinas: The Argentine Forces in the Falklands War* (London: Penguin Books, 1990).

Table 2. Participants and Casualties in the Major Land Battles

Battle	Date	British Infantry	British Casualties	Major Argentinean Unit(s)	Argentinean Casualties
Goose Green and Darwin	28/29 May 1982 280630 – 291450	2 PARA (approximately 450 men in the assault)	a. 18 killed (includes 4 officers, 6 NCOs, 1 pilot and 1 sapper) b. 37 wounded	a. 12 th Regt (less one coy) b. Air Force c. C Coy, 25 th Regt d. Platoon, 8 th Regt e. Navy f. 4 x 105mm g. Elements of 601 st AA Bn with 20mm and 35mm guns	a. 55 killed (32 from 12 th Regt, 4 Air Force, 13 C Coy, 5 8 th Regt, 1 pilot) b. 86 wounded c. 800 prisoners (Note: Approximately 3 ½ infantry companys fought in the battle: about 400 soldiers. Additional 600 service personnel at Goose Green did not fight)

Table 2 - Continued

Battle	Date	British Infantry	British Casualties	Major Argentinean Unit(s)	Argentinean Casualties
Mount Harriet	11/12 June 1982	42 Cdo	a. 1 killed (NCO)	a. HQ and B Coy, 4 th Regt	a. 10 killed
	112130 - 12Dawn	(the assault onto the position was conducted by two companies)	b. 10 wounded	b. III Bde HQ Def Pl c. Pl from B Coy, 12 th Regt (total strength approximately 300)	b. 250 prisoners c. One platoon escaped
Two Sisters	11/12 June 1982	45 Cdo	a. 4 killed (including 1 NCO and 1 sapper)	a. C Coy, 4 th Regt (170 men)	a. 9 killed
	112300 - 12Dawn		b. 10 wounded	b. B Coy, 6 th Regt (120 men)	b. 54 prisoners c. B Coy, 6 th Regt withdrew to Tumbledown
Mount Longdon	11/12 June 1982	3 PARA	a. 19 killed (includes 8 NCOs and 1 sapper)	a. B Coy, 7 th Regt	a. 29 killed, possibly 30
	112100 - 12Dawn		b. 35 wounded	b. Engineer Pl c. Between 5 and 8 12.7 mm machine guns manned by marines	b. 50 prisoners c. Survivors fled to Wireless Ridge

Table 2 - Continued

Battle	Date	British Infantry	British Casualties	Major Argentinean Unit(s)	Argentinean Casualties
Wireless Ridge	13/14 June 1982 140015 - 140500 (The Battalion began its approach from 132030)	2 PARA	a. 3 killed (includes 1 NCO) b. 11 wounded	a. Two Pls A Coy, 7 th Regt b. One Pl C Coy, 7 th Regt c. Remnants from the Longdon fight d. Counter attack 1: 70 x dismounted armored crewmen e. Counter attack 2: A Coy, 3 rd Regt	a. 15 killed and many wounded. Seventeen prisoners. Remainder retreated towards Stanley. b. Counter attack 1: 6 killed c. Counter attack 2: 3 killed many wounded
Tumble-Down	13/14 June 1982 132100 - 140900 (The diversionary attack commenced at 2030)	Scots Guards	a. 8 killed (includes 3 NCOs) b. 40 wounded note: Of 30 men involved in a diversionary attack 2 were killed and 7 wounded	a. N Coy, 5 th Marines b. B Coy, 6 th Regt Marine Engineers	a. At least 20 killed in the main fight b. One killed and few wounded repelling the diversionary attack c. Few prisoners d. Survivors retreated towards Stanley

APPENDIX B

BRITISH ARMY: GROUND FORCES ORDER OF BATTLE

Table 3 is based upon information from Linda Washington's *Ten Years On: The British Army in the Falklands War* (London: National Army Museum Publication, 1992), pp. 105 & 106; and the MOD's, *The Falklands Campaign: The Lessons* (London: Her Majesty's Stationary Office, 1982), pp. 42 & 43.

This table represents the order of battle of the two brigades on departure from the United Kingdom for the South Atlantic. The units in bold were part of the brigade under which they are listed prior to the Falklands Conflict.

Table 3. British Army: Ground Forces Order of Battle

	3 Cdo Bde	5 Inf Bde
Headquarters	Headquarters 3 Cdo Bde Royal Marines (RM)	Headquarters 5 Inf Bde
Armor	Two Troops of B Squadron The Blues and Royals	
Artillery	29 Battery, 4 Field Regiment Royal Artillery (RA) Forward Observation Officers of 4 Field Regiment RA T Battery, 12 Air Defence Regiment RA 29 Cdo Regiment RA Troop from 43 Air Defence Battery, 32 Guided Weapons Regiment RA	Headquarters and 97 Battery, 4 Field Regiment RA One troop of 43 Air Defence battery, 32 Guided Weapons Regiment RA

Table 3 - Continued

	3 Cdo Bde	5 Inf Bde
Engineers	<p>Elements 2 Postal and Courier Regiment Royal Engineers (RE)</p> <p>Troop from 9 Parachute Engineer Squadron RE</p> <p>Detachment of 49 Explosive Ordnance Disposal Squadron, 33 Engineer Regiment RE</p> <p>59 Independent Cdo Squadron RE</p>	<p>9 Parachute Engineer Squadron RE</p> <p>36 Engineer Regiment RE (less one squadron)</p>
Infantry/Marines	<p>40 Cdo RM</p> <p>42 Cdo RM</p> <p>45 Cdo RM</p> <p>2 PARA</p> <p>3 PARA</p>	<p>Scots Guards</p> <p>Welsh Guards</p> <p>7 G/R</p>
Special Forces	<p>D and G Squadron 22nd SAS Regiment</p> <p>2,3 and 6 Sections SBS</p> <p>Mountain and Arctic Warfare Cadre RM</p>	
Signals	<p>3 Cdo Bde Headquarters and Signals Squadron RM</p> <p>Y Signals Troop RM</p> <p>Rear Link detachment 30 Signal Squadron Royal Signals (RS)</p>	<p>Brigade Headquarters and Signal Squadron</p> <p>Rear Link Detachment RS</p>

Table 3 - Continued

	3 Cdo Bde	5 Inf Bde
Aviation	<p>One Flight 656 Squadron Army Air Corps (AAC)</p> <p>3 Cdo Bde Air Squadron RM</p> <p>605 Tactical Air Squadron RM</p> <p>611 Tactical Air Squadron RM</p> <p>612 Tactical Air Squadron RM</p> <p>613 Tactical Air Control Party</p> <p>Detachment 47 Air Despatch Squadron Royal Corps of Transport (RCT)</p>	<p>Number 656 Squadron AAC</p>
Support	<p>Cdo Logistics Regiment RM</p> <p>Elements of 17 Port Regiment RCT</p> <p>Detachment 81 Ordnance Company Royal Army Ordnance Corps (RAOC)</p>	<p>407 Road Transport Troop RCT</p> <p>81 and 91 Ordnance Companies RAOC</p> <p>421 Explosive Ordnance Disposal Company RAOC</p> <p>8 Field Cash Office Royal Army Pay Corps (RAPC)</p> <p>10 Field Workshop Royal Electrical and Mechanical Engineers (REME)</p>
Medical	<p>Troop from 16 Field Ambulance Royal Army Medical Corps (RAMC)</p> <p>Cdo Forces Band RM (plus Surgical Support Teams)</p>	<p>16 Field Ambulance RAMC</p>
Provost		<p>Elements 160 Provost Company Royal Military Police (RMP)</p>

APPENDIX C

BRITISH ARMY'S TRIAL FITNESS TESTS
AS AT MARCH 1999

Table 4 is an extract of the British Army's proposed fitness tests. The information in this table is accurate as at March 1999.

Table 4. British Army's Trial Fitness Tests

Test Name	Test Details	Remarks
Basic Combat Fitness Test	12.8 kilometer march, carrying 25 kilograms, completed in 2 hours	Gender and age non-specific
Basic Personal Fitness Assessment	Press-ups, sit-ups and the multi stage fitness test (often referred to as the 'bleep test')	Gender and age <i>specific</i>
Advanced Combat Fitness Test 1	<p>Part 1:</p> <p>a. 3.2 kilometer speed march, carrying 20 kilograms, completed in 22 minutes</p> <p>Part 2 (conducted immediately following Part 1):</p> <p>b. Conduct a minimum of 3 of the following 10 Representative Military Tests (RMTs) (a commander can elect to do all 10):</p> <p>i. Climb onto and off a truck</p> <p>ii. Jump 1.7m ditch</p> <p>iii. 50m meter casualty drag</p> <p>iv. 100m fireman's carry</p> <p>v. Scale 2 meter wall</p> <p>vi. Lift a 35 kilogram ammunition box a height of 1.45 meters</p> <p>vii. Carry 2 x 20 kilogram water jerry cans 150 meters</p> <p>viii. Perform a re-gain on a single rope bridge</p> <p>ix. Shuttle sprint 5 x 20 meters every 15 seconds</p> <p>x. Climb and descend a 4 meter rope</p>	<p>1. Gender and age non-specific</p> <p>2. Up to unit commander's discretion to decide if the test should be conducted</p>

Table 4 – Continued

Test Name	Test Details	Remarks
<p>Advanced Combat Fitness Test 2 (conducted over two days)</p>	<p>Day 1: 20 kilometer endurance march over varied terrain, to be completed in 3 hours 30 minutes, carrying 30 kilograms</p> <p>Day 2: Part 1: 20 kilometer endurance march over varied terrain, to be completed in 3 hours, carrying 20 kilograms. Part 2: Complete a minimum of 3 RMTs (see above)</p>	<p>1. Gender and age non specific 2. Up to unit commander's discretion to decide if the test should be conducted</p>

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