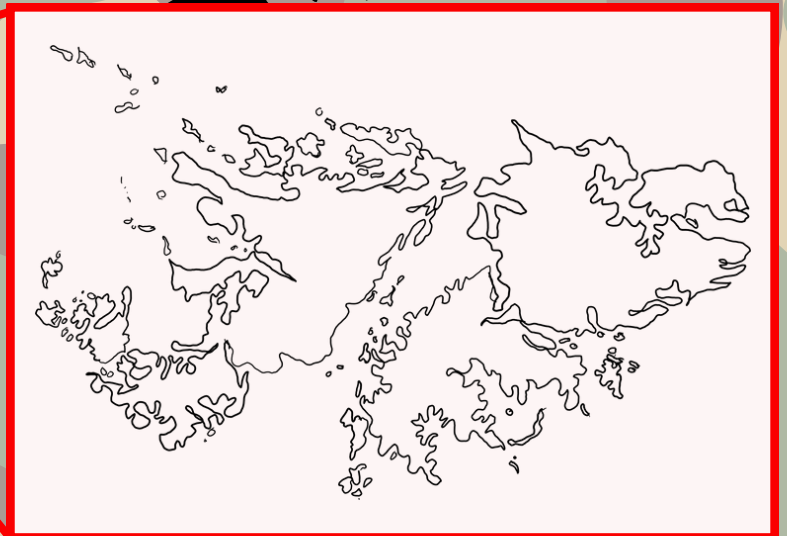


# Falklands War

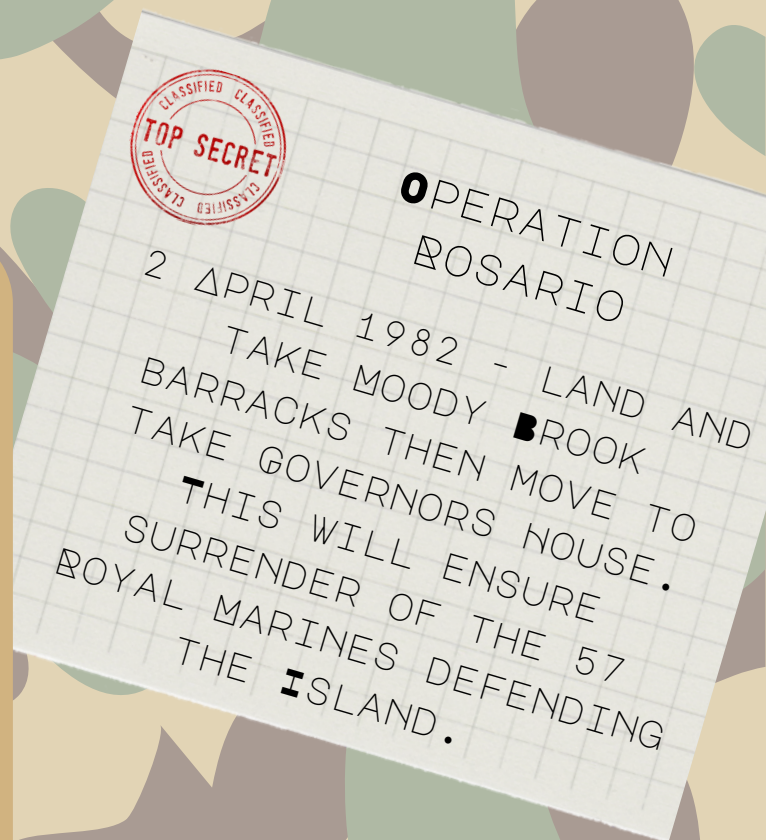


The Falkland Islands are British Overseas Territories, over 8,000 miles away in the South Atlantic Ocean. Their closest neighbour, Argentina, has contested British rule for over 150 years, but most of the Islanders are descended from British settlers and wish to remain part of Britain.

# How it began

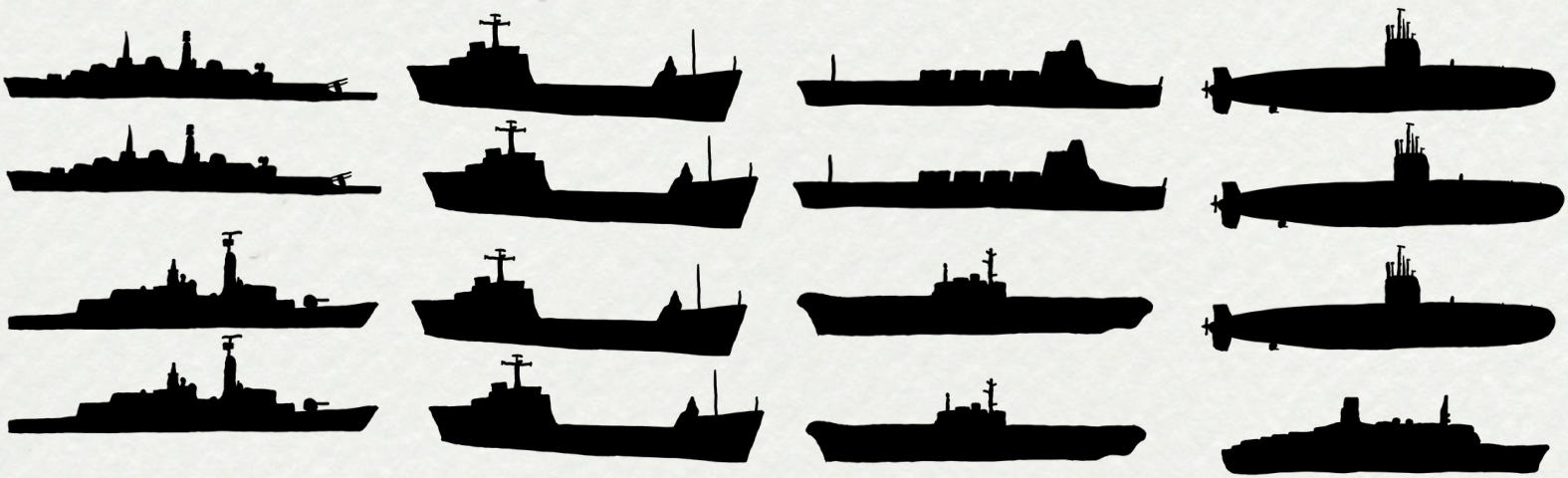
By early 1982, Argentine leaders were hugely unpopular, there was unrest and protests against the worsening economic turmoil. To win over the dissatisfied public, the military dictators of Argentina decided to invade the Falkland's for an 'easy win'. They didn't think that Britain would respond.

There was an outcry in Great Britain, especially over the 57 Royal Marines who had been captured. Within a few days, the Prime Minister, Margaret Thatcher, set up a war council and ships were sent to the Falklands. At the time, huge cuts were being made to the military services, including the dockyards. Despite this, ships were made ready to leave in a matter of days.



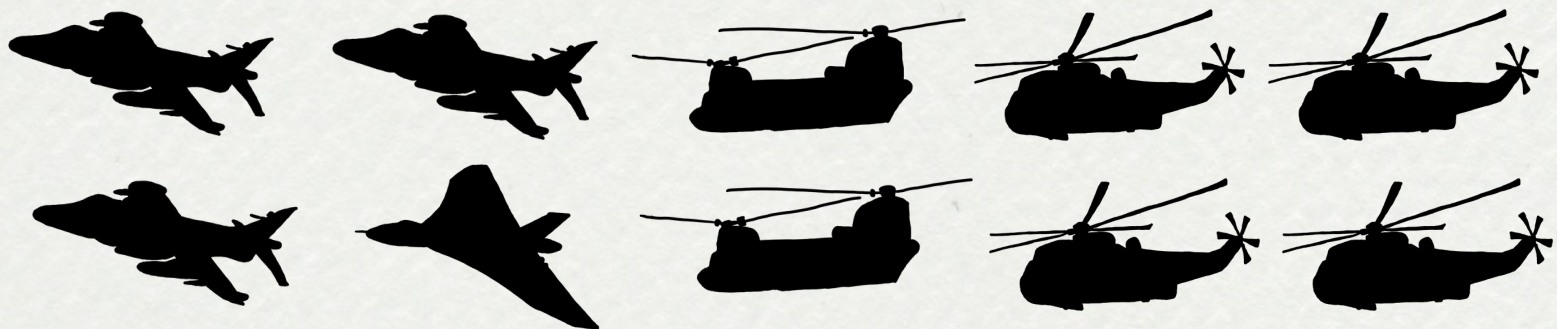
# The Task Force

127 Ships



Including the QE2  
cruise liner

About 230 Aircraft



Almost 30,000 men





# How it began

**Name:** Andy Gatherer

**Rank:** Marine Engineer,  
Mechanic on HMS  
Glamorgan

**Age:** 19

"My time in the Falklands was an interesting time for me. As I said, no-one had heard of the Falkland Islands, we all had to dig maps out. We thought they were off the top of Scotland, Auckland's, Falkland's, they all sort of match.

It wasn't until we got south of Ascension [Island] that things sort of got serious, people's mind set changed. And then of course, when the actual shooting started, it really sort of came home that we were actually in a conflict, in a war."



**Name:** Alan Sharkey Ward

**Ship:** HMS Herald

**Age:** 20 (celebrated 21st birthday there)

"Now the dockies, previous to 82, had just been given their notice of redundancy. You've been sacked, basically. And they had to rally all the dockies together to get the ships put to sea in a weekend.

And they did that, they did a fantastic job... They were important to the whole situation. They had just had their redundancy tickets and they all still came into work, and they were sleeping at work, not going home because they wanted to get the ships ready for us to sail to the Falkland islands. So, they're the brave lads that did that. They're really quality, the dockies."





# Royal Navy

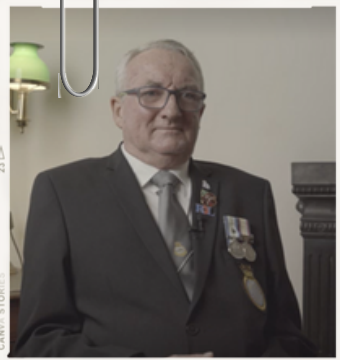
The Royal Navy was exceptionally important in the Falklands Conflict. Not only from a fighting point of view, but in the logistics of moving almost 26,000 armed forces personnel, ammunition, weapons and aircraft to the other side of the world.

Once in the Falklands, many of the ships had to stay to support the forces on land. Remember they were 8,000 miles away from home so the ships were everything from command HQ to hospitals. But they were also easy targets.

The Argentine forces had a substantial air presence which could fly close to the rocky island and under the radar. The ARA General Belgrano (Argentine ship) was sunk by British Forces on 2nd May; two days later the Argentine forces retaliated, hitting HMS Sheffield with a Exocet missile.



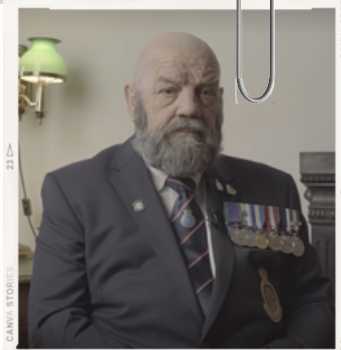
# Royal Navy - HMS Sheffield



**Name:** Chris Purcell      **Rank:** Able Seaman on  
HMS Sheffield

**Age:** 23

"We both looked to see this fireball coming towards us. And he shouted straight away 'Exocet'.... we actually watched this missile come in and hit us. And at the time, and up to present day, you look back on it and it looks like it's in slow motion .... We tried fighting the fire, we put hoses into the fire main, and turned on: no water. The missile had come in and taken out our main fire main. So, we were getting buckets, lads were lowering buckets from the sea on pieces of string, pulling them up, throwing them onto the ships side, trying to cool everything down, but it was just evaporating straight away"



**Name:** John Galway      **Rank:** Naval Seaman radar on  
HMS Sheffield

**Age:** 22

"It was a case of 'something's happening here' and then we got hit... I thought I went flying through the air, like you see in films when they fly through the air. Apparently I went straight up and straight down, sliced my head open. But I actually thought I'd lost my leg, because the ops suite door got blown in, it hit me on the back and I couldn't feel my leg at all and just looked down and a great big pool of blood was appearing. And that's when people came over and started bandaging me up. And I was going 'leave me head! Me leg! Me leg!' sort of thing. And they're going 'you're leg's still there, what you going on about?'"

# Royal Marines

The Royal Marines are highly trained, especially in raiding, amphibious warfare (attacking from the sea), and invading enemy territory away from safe bases. Thus, the Falklands War was the perfect arena for all their training.

The Royal Marines took part in reconnaissance missions to gain information before attacking. These were dangerous missions behind enemy lines, often being dropped off in the dead of night.

As the war moved on and British forces landed at San Carlos, the Royal Marines, along with Army, Paratroopers, and Gurkha forces; walked in different directions, reclaiming land, until they reached the capital, Stanley. Marines call long walks over difficult terrain carrying all their kit, a 'yomp'.

45 Commando yomped 56 miles (equivalent of London to Portsmouth) in just three days. 'The Yomper' has become a famous image of the Falklands War.





# Royal Marines

**Name:** Syd Nye

**Rank:** Corporal

**Age:** 28



"On the rigid raiders, you were dropping and picking men up who were scouting behind enemy lines. At pick up, you only have a 4 hour window to wait. We had to stand in the water holding the boat to make a quick getaway if needed. Walruses and seals used the beach and would make big craters in the sand. When they moved, the craters would fill with water and a film of sand covered the top; if you step into one you got pulled under."

"One night, we were sleeping in a foxhole; a dug out with camo and some tussock grass. Next morning we were woken up by a Chinook landing not too far away. A couple of Argentine men jumped out, had a cup of tea and a break before heading away a couple of hours later. At the time I was suffering badly from piles, most of us were, and needed to go to the loo, so when they left I ran out to relieve myself. Suddenly I heard lots of shouting - what I hadn't realised is that during the day they had laid Claymore mines in the area. It was a close call."



Because the Falkland's are islands, stealth via sea was vital for success. The Royal Marines and Special Boat Service used small boats called Rigid Raiders. Because of their light weight hull and powerful engine, they could move very fast as well as being very manoeuvrable.

# Army

Various sections of the British Army sailed down to the Falkland Islands, including members of the SAS, Royal Artillery, Scots Guards, Welsh guards, Gurkhas and Paratroopers. All of these provided much needed land support in the actual retaking of the Islands, with the SAS also providing essential reconnaissance before the arrival of the Royal Navy.

One of the most famous assaults was the battle of Goose Green, led by the paratroopers. The attack was plagued with many setbacks which eventually stalled the advance, but thanks to the bravery of Lieutenant Colonel Herbert Jones, who led the attack himself, up Darwin Hill; the paratroopers won the battle the next day. Sadly, Colonel Herbert Jones died in fierce trench to trench fighting. He was posthumously awarded a Victoria Cross.

Have a go at watching this dramatisation of the Battle of Goose Green told from the perspective of a paratrooper.



It was written from accounts of paratroopers who were part of the battle.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dgeIz4vG8FE>



# Army

**Name:** Tony McNally

**Rank:** British Royal

**Age:** 19

Artillery soldier



In 1982, he was sent to the Falkland Islands to man the Rapier missile units defending the troops and the landings. After early initial success, and euphoria of shooting down two enemy aircraft, he was to witness the carnage of the destruction of the Sir Galahad. His Rapier missile unit, 32 Alpha, on the hillside was useless, disabled with a minor electrical fault, Tony sat there as though at the cinema watching the tragedy unfold in front of him, helpless to do anything. This sight was to come back to haunt him again and again images of the dead and the badly burned bodies of the guardsmen lying around the shore and in the water.

An extract from the poem,  
Why do they look at me that way?,  
by Tony McNally

"I killed because I was scared to die,  
By blowing those Sky hawks from the sky,  
Those retard bombs they drove us mad,  
They sent us on the Galahad,  
The screams of the dying,  
twisted metal shards,  
A floating burning hell of dead Welsh Guards,  
I did not cry for them that day,  
Why do they look at me that way?  
My brain recorded events for me,  
I seem to torture myself with glee."





# Airmen



Credit: Royal Air Force  
Museum

The Royal Air Force, Army Air Corps, Royal Marine Air Squadron and Fleet Air Arm, all supplied essential air support during the Falkland's War. They were not just necessary for fighting, but were also essential for moving and rescuing troops.

Arguably the most famous aircraft action of the war was the Black Buck raids which utilised Vulcan bombers. There were 7 raids in total, leaving from Ascension Island and bombing Port Stanley Airport - over 7,500 miles and 16 hours for a round trip. This couldn't be accomplished on one tank of fuel, so for each raid by 2 Vulcan bombers, 11 tanker planes would periodically intercept the Vulcans and refuel them in mid-air. Although the raids did minimal damage, they have gone down in history.



# Burns

Another tragedy of the war was the bombing of the Sir Galahad; the fires and explosions left 48 dead and 150 with severe burns. 8,000 miles from home, the doctors on the hospital ships had to come up with a new way of treating these horrific burns. This method is still used today.

**Name:** Alan Sharkey Ward **Rank:** ... on HMS Herald

**Age:** 20 (celebrated 21st Birthday there)



"9 O'clock in the morning was the worst time for us, we used to call them the 9'oclock screams because that's when you took the bandages off. And we used to have Flamazine to put on the burns which was great stuff at the time and then would wrap it up with a bandage and then you had to peel the bandage off the next day and where it was drying out, that's when they used to scream. ... And then one of the students said to the Doc, 'hey Doc, ... when you put that Flamazine stuff on, put clingfilm on it and then put a bandage round it'. And the Doctor turned on him and said 'don't be so stupid' he says, 'that Flamazine stuff is the best thing on the market'. 'Yeah but put the clingfilm on and it will protect it till the morning, it keeps your sandwiches fresh!.' Just as he said it, the doc was like a lightbulb went off, and he thought, 'wow'. So he did it to a couple of patients, put the cling film round after the Flamazine, and then wrapped up with the other stuff, and in the morning, they didn't scream. So that is used now in every burns case.





# Newspaper

YOUR VOTE MATTERS — Use it tomorrow

# SANDWELL

# Evening Mail

SANDWELL'S OWN EVENING NEWSPAPER — FIRST AND BEST

WEDNESDAY, MAY 5, 1982 12p

## 'I could see thick smoke'

# TRAGEDY OF THE SHEFFIELD



Marcus Griffiths

### Couple told son is safe

A Streeley couple have heard that their son escaped with his life when H.M.S. Sheffield was hit, the day after the youth's 19th birthday.

Marine Engineer Mechanic Marcus Griffiths, of Lowlands Avenue, Streeley, Sutton Coldfield, was in the Sheffield when it was hit by an Argentinian missile.

His parents, Mr. Jim Griffiths and Mrs. Ruby Griffiths, heard of the attack on the Sheffield at 3 p.m. yesterday and spent a sleepless night before being informed that their son was a survivor at 5.10 this morning.

"We don't know if he is injured, but he is a survivor and that is what matters," said Mrs. Griffiths today.

Mr. Griffiths, assistant night overseer with The Birmingham Post, said they had heard news of their son from H.M.S. Drake, a shore station at Plymouth.

The Navy could not give them any further details.

"I was stunned when I heard of the attack. We thought the ship was close to unsinkable," Mr. Griffiths added.

by PETER ARCHER, Press Association Correspondent on HMS Hermes

### I watched from the bridge of HMS Hermes as sailors abandoned the blazing destroyer HMS Sheffield.

The destroyer was abandoned after being hit by a missile in an Argentine air raid on the Falklands naval Task Force.

It is thought that nearly all Sheffield's crewmen were rescued, and survivors were aboard other ships in the Task Force.

The destroyer was hit by a missile fired from a low-flying enemy aircraft in an attack at 14.20 GMT (3.20 p.m. London time) yesterday, inside the Total Exclusion Zone.

### Closing

During the raid I was on the bridge of the aircraft carrier HMS Hermes.

The Task Force was at action stations. A low-flying aircraft had been spotted on radar. It was closing. Then came the message that HMS Sheffield had been hit.

Officers on Hermes reacted instantly to counter the enemy threat and go to Sheffield's aid.

On the horizon I

could see thick smoke billowing from the stricken vessel.

The Sheffield's crew battled for several hours against the fires which broke out when the missile struck.

But when the flames became too dangerous the order to abandon ship was given.

Another ship went alongside and men were transferred. All those who abandoned ship were rescued.

The more seriously injured were brought to HMS Hermes by helicopter for medical treatment.

Some men were carried on stretchers and some men had suffered burns and severe shock.

At 2200 GMT (11 p.m. London time) last night, HMS Sheffield was still afloat.

A Sea Harrier jet fighter from HMS Hermes did not return from a bombing raid in the afternoon on Goose Green airstrip at Darwin, on the occupied Falklands.

Other pilots on the mission reported seeing the jet shot down by anti-aircraft



An Argentine Super Étendard fighter-bomber guns while approaching the target.

Earlier today a long-range RAF Vulcan bomber made a successful raid on Stanley Airport, near the Falklands capital, Port Stanley.

The Vulcan dropped its bombs and returned to its base safely.

### Corrected

Earlier reports that HMS Sheffield had been sunk have been denied.

The destroyer is said to be still afloat and was boarded during the night by British naval personnel.

The Ministry of Defence today announced that it had contacted the next-of-kin of 87 crew members who were killed, feared dead or injured.

News of the attack of the Sheffield — the very latest type of destroyer in the Royal Navy's fleet — has stunned Britain.

The latest grim statistics of the tragedy were being revealed to the House of Commons this afternoon by Defence Secretary Mr. John Nott.

HMS Sheffield ... 30 of her crew are feared dead after a missile attack by an Argentinian fighter. The order to abandon ship was given after a blaze on board could not be controlled.



## PEACE TALKS DEADLINE RUNS OUT AT 9 P.M.

BY STANLEY SPARKS  
Britain has until 9 p.m. tonight to respond to peace plans submitted by UN Secretary General Mr. Perez de Cuellar to both sides in the Falklands war.

United Nations call for a 48-hour Falklands ceasefire unless there is a firm Argentine commitment to withdraw her invasion forces.

Thatcher met her war Cabinet to discuss the next moves following the shock destruction of the British destroyer HMS Sheffield.

U.S. Secretary of State Mr. Alexander Haig is also close to peace initiative based on proposals from Peru.

The deaths of British sailors aboard Sheffield and the loss of the pilot in the shot down Sea Harrier sent a wave of anger and dismay through the Commons and Mrs. Thatcher came under growing pressure to find a way.

The Prime Minister • Turn to Page 2

### What's new for summer?



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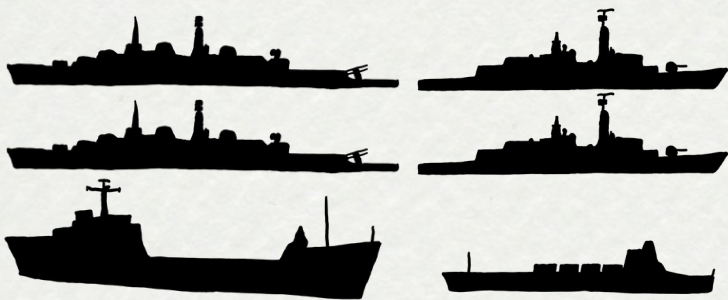
HIGH STREET, CITY.

Credit: British Newspaper Archives

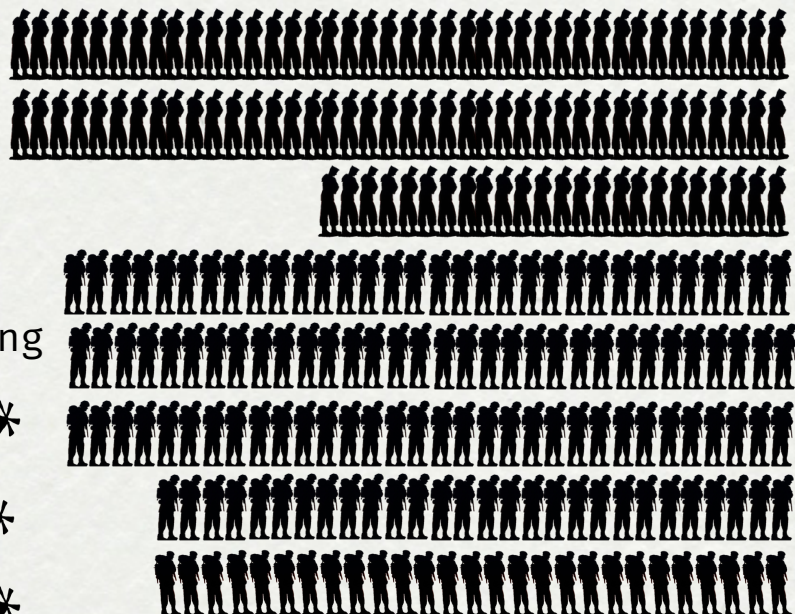
# The End

By mid-June, British forces finally were able to launch an assault to retake Stanley the capital of the Falkland Islands. Argentine regiments had taken up position on a ring of natural defences (mounts) which surrounded the city. Throughout the nights of 11th and 13th June, these were taken out in simultaneous attacks. By 14th June, the enemy had surrendered. The war had lasted for 10 weeks. Argentine forces had lost 649 men, the British had lost 255. Three civilians from the islands were also killed.

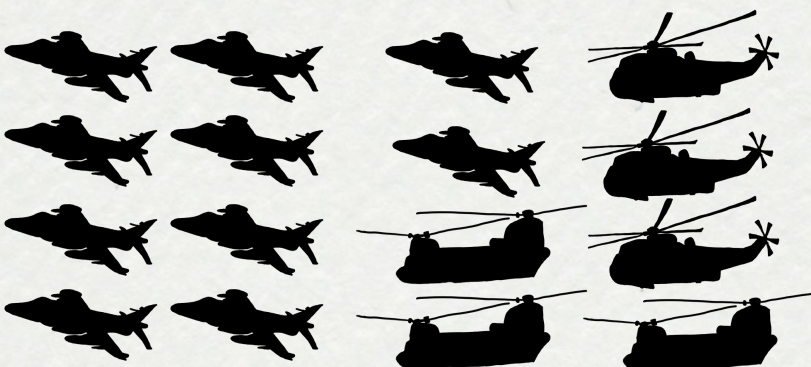
6 Ships lost



255 men lost

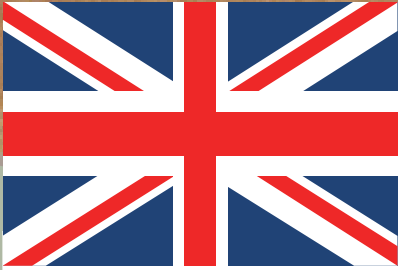


35 Aircraft Lost including





# Consequences



The victory changed Margaret Thatcher's popularity overnight, leading her to win the next general election.

The proposed cuts to the Royal Navy were also scrapped.



The Islanders were granted full British citizenship, and many investments were made by Britain to improve their quality of life. A new constitution was also drawn up which devolved power to the Islanders to decide their own future. They still vote to remain British.



The defeat signalled the end of the military dictatorship in Argentina, with a democratic government returning the following year.



**Name:** Barry Jones

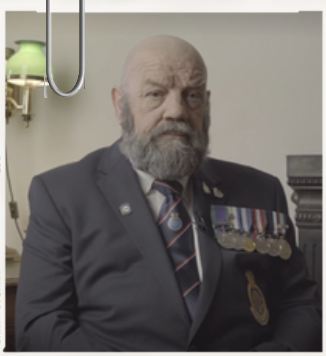
**Rank:** Lead Radio Operator on HMS Intrepid

**Age:** 21

"Back in '82 it was a completely different scenario then. Loading it ashore, and see the devastation that was done, and we were aware of it, and to know that those Islands had been treated in that way, it was devastating to be honest. Not just for us, but for the people who live there. There was no need for that. They didn't need to do what they did."



# PTSD



**Name:** John Galway    **Rank:** Naval Seaman radar on HMS Sheffield  
**Age:** 22

"I remember going to HMS Sultan open day show, that they have every year, and they had some police dogs, but there was this box they had which exploded. The box exploded and I just immediately went down on the

deck, and then everybody's just looking at me strangely... They didn't know who I was, they didn't know what I'd been through... At the end of the conflict: what a waste of life, and should that have happened? ... I don't know but it was a waste of life."

**Name:** Chris Purcell    **Rank:** Able Seaman on HMS Sheffield

**Age:** 23

"So I left at 10 to 2 and at 2 o'clock the missile came in and killed everyone I was just talking to.

And that has haunted me for years. Survivors guilt... I suffer from PTSD, have done since about 1988 and I've had hospital treatment in Haslar,

shedloads of medication, but it still doesn't take it away. I've tried going down the drink route, although it numbs you at the time, you wake up and the problem is still there... People need to hear the story, I mean now, Bosnia, Afghanistan, the lads are coming back and they're saying 'oh I'm not feeling good' and they're getting some help. But when we were coming back, I was frightened to open up and say, because I thought I'd be kicked out [of the navy]"



# PTSD

**Name:** Tony McNally

**Age:** 19

## PTSD

I'm happy and sad  
Compassionate and bad  
Can't sleep at night  
Can't do anything right  
I wanna be alone  
But not on my own  
I'm in love but I hate  
I'm a burden on the state  
I'm possessed by the war  
I killed what for?  
I see shrinks  
I see docs  
Remember my arctic socks  
I'm disloyal cause I'm ill  
Is it right to kill?  
I can hide in a crowd  
My face a grey shroud  
I cry for no reason  
My country shouts treason  
All the pills and the booze  
Make bad memories ooze  
I was 19 in June  
Under a bright crystal moon  
I died that day  
But I'm still here to say  
For the brave and the free.  
My award - PTSD.

