

# **OLD CONWAYS & THE FALKLANDS' WAR 1982**



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## LIST OF OCs INVOLVED IN THE FALKLANDS WAR

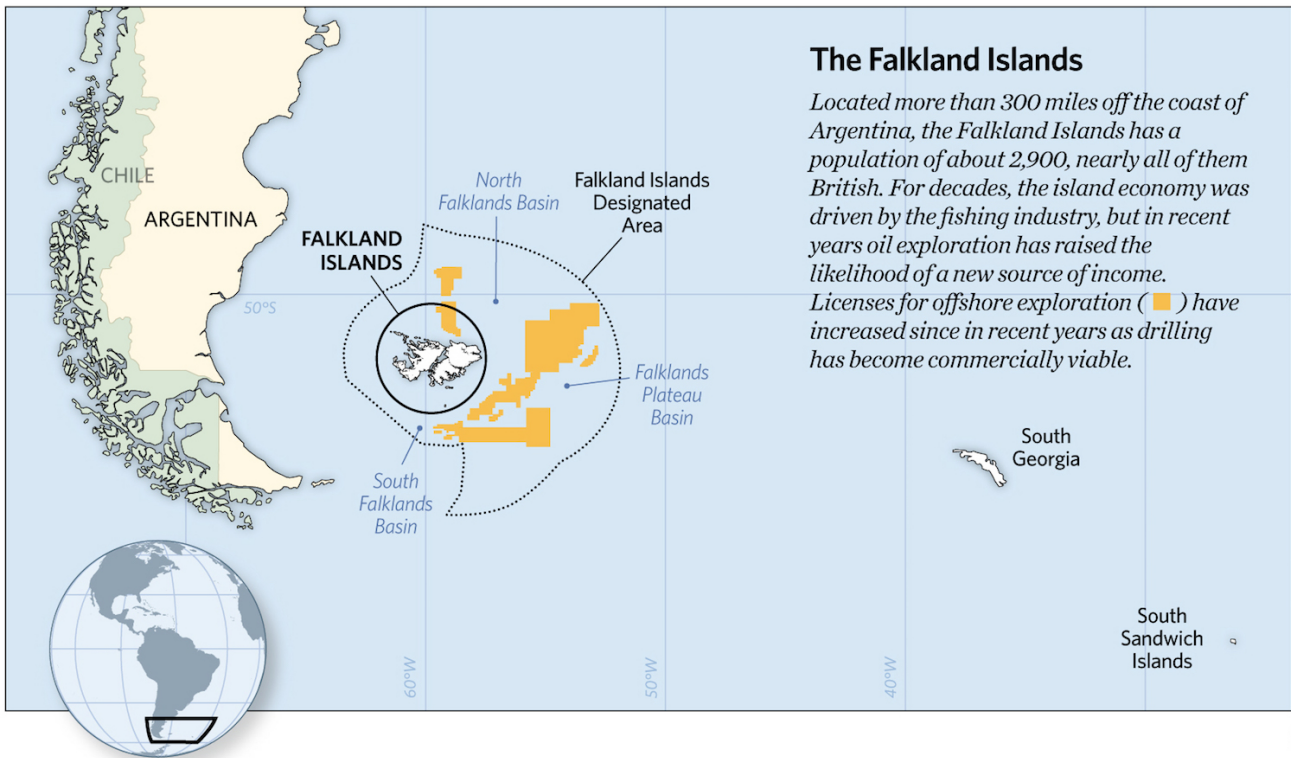
Captain Donald Gordon Macleod **Averill** CBE RFA (41-43): Master, RFA *Fort Grange*  
Norman Brian **Bamford** (61-63): Chief Officer, *Europic Ferry*  
Vice Admiral Sir David **Brown** KCB RN (41- 45): Assistant Chief of Defence Staff (Operations),  
Alan George **Burns** (48-50): Second Officer, *Europic Ferry*  
Captain Cyril Gordon **Butterworth** CBE RFA (41-43): Marine Superintendent, RFA.  
Colin Edward **Elms** (54-56): Chief Officer *Avalona Star*  
Captain William James **Clarke** OBE (59-62): Master, *Europic Ferry*  
Captain G de Ferry **Foster** (1954-56): Master *Geestport*  
Captain G **Green** RFA (49-51): Master, RFA *Sir Tristram*,  
Captain E **Harrison** (1954-56): Master, *Baltic Ferry*  
P **Hughes** (62-64)  
Captain Alexander William **Kinghorn** (49-51); Master, *Avalonia Star*  
Bill **Langton** (1967-69): Second Officer, *Baltic Ferry*  
Captain Stuart **Lawrence** (58-60): Master RSS *Bransfield*  
Captain Herbert Rogeron **Lawton** (51-52): Master, *Lycaon*  
Brian **Lockwood** (72-74): British Antarctic Survey  
Robert Bartholomew **Lough** (61-63): Chief Officer, *Norland*  
Lt Cdr M **Manning** RN (62-64): HMS *Arrow* (Type 21 frigate F173)  
Steve **Martin** (70-73): British Antarctic Survey  
Staff Sergeant Richard Leopold **Peacocke** (69-71) RAOC soldier on board *Europic Ferry*  
Captain S **Redmond** RFA OBE (53-55): Master, RFA *Tidespring* (A75)  
Captain Christopher **Smith** RFA QGM (51-53): RFA *Engadine*  
Captain John Albert Martin **Taylor** (47-49): Master, *British Dart*  
Alec **Tweedie** (1962-64): Chief Officer, *Atlantic Causeway*  
Ronald Wilfrid **Warwick** OBE RNR LLD FNI (56-57): Chief Officer, *QE2*  
Matthew **Winter** (71-73) Second Officer in *Laertes*.  
Vice Admiral Sir Anthony Peter **Woodhead** KCB RN (54-57): Chief of Staff to the Joint Service Commander of the task force

## INTRODUCTION

In 1982, after the Argentinian surrender, the BBC assembled a collection of service chiefs and politicians to comment on the Falklands' War. *"They paid tribute to the fighting services, the dockyard maties, those getting the stores together, indeed everyone concerned save one - the Merchant Navy (MN)."*

The MN actually played a critical role in the Falklands War, indeed the British task force could never have made it to the Falklands, or sustained the invasion without the merchant fleet and her civilian crews. A merchant ship, the *Norland*, with an OC as her Chief Officer, was the first vessel to enter San Carlos Bay for the forced landings on the islands; a sacrificial lamb to save Royal Navy (RN) warships.

The task force comprised 114 ships of which 37 were from the RN and 77 were civilian vessels, 25 from the civilian Royal Fleet Auxiliary (RFA) and 52 from the MN. Many Old *Conways* were involved including the Masters of 10 of the task force's vessels.



## DISCOVERY OF THE INVASION (ARGENTINIAN OPERATION ALPHA)

### **Brian Lockwood (72-74) & Steve Martin (70-73): British Antarctic Survey**

The first report of the invasion was made on 19<sup>th</sup> March 1982 when four scientists of the British Antarctic Survey (BAS) including **Brian Lockwood (72-74)**, visited South Georgia, an uninhabited British island 800 miles from the Falklands, and were surprised to find the Argentinian Government tug *Irizar* and transport ship *ARA Bahía Buen Suceso* at anchor in Leith Harbour and around 50 men ashore who had raised the Argentinian flag. An Argentinian company had a contract to remove the harbour's abandoned whale factories and facilities (see right) for scrap but the Argentinian Navy conceived a plan, Operation Alpha, to hijack the civilian's business and establish an undercover base on the disputed territory.



Brian notified **Steve Martin (70-73)**, the BAS's base commander in the Falklands and Steve informed the Governor. At the Governor's request Steve travelled to South Georgia to investigate.

**Stuart Lawrence (58-60)**, Master of RSS *Bransfield* then in Port Stanley was using his ship's powerful radio to monitor Argentinian activity and generally help communications between the Governor, RMs and BAS personnel around the islands. He held a reception onboard for the Governor, and local dignitaries including several Argentinians. He recalls "*it was a bit stilted. Fortunately my bit of Spanish helped with the Argentinians and a bit of liquor helped ... it wasn't too bad an evening*".



The Argentinians on South Georgia refused to co-operate with **Steve Martin (70-73)** so on 24<sup>th</sup> March 24 Royal Marine (RM) commandoes landed to back him up. On 25<sup>th</sup> March significant numbers of Argentinian troops were landed on South Georgia and an unofficial incursion escalated into a military invasion. The British troops on South Georgia along with Steve Martin and Brian Lockwood were arrested, questioned and transferred to Tierra Del Fuego where they were imprisoned. Their report kick started the British response in the UK.

Stuart meanwhile had left Stanley in *Bransfield* for Puenta Arenas, Chile to pick up packages for the Argentine Islands further south. On 1<sup>st</sup> April he passed through the Magellan Strait but decided not to report his position and destination to the Argentine authorities there as was usual "*knew about this fracas that was going on between these damn scrap merchants and our base and the marines ... I thought No I'm not going to tell the Argentinians where we're going*". Only later did he realise that he was just 40 miles away from the approaching Argentinian invasion force. On 2<sup>nd</sup> April the Governor announced over Falkland's Radio that the Argentinians had invaded the Falklands and when the radio ceased broadcasting it was quickly apparent that the Governor and troops had all be arrested. Stuart attempted to contact BAS HQ in the UK to advise them. "*We eventually raised a station on the west coast of the United States who patched us through to the UK. We got Portishead Radio. God Bless Portishead Radio. The number of times I had contact with Portishead Radio after this was just legion.*" They put him through to the BAS's Director who at first thought Stuart was joking but they were soon in contact with Whitehall. Stuart was ordered to continue south.

## FROM INCURSION TO WAR (OPERATION CORPORATE)

With Argentinian troops in full possession of South Georgia the British Government immediately launched diplomatic initiatives to seek the Argentinians' withdrawal. Throughout the 70s the UK had adopted a conciliatory approach to Argentina's sovereignty claims so it was not at all clear how Britain might react. There was much wringing of hands until Admiral Sir Henry Leach, the Chief of Naval Staff, marched into Parliament in full dress uniform and told Mrs Thatcher that the navy should dispatch a task force to take back the Falklands. Thus focussed, military preparations were put firmly in hand to eject the Argentinians from South Georgia. Three nuclear submarines were despatched southwards and a number of RN vessels exercising off Gibraltar returned there to prepare for a strike south. The First Sea Lord Admiral Sir John Fieldhouse GCB GBE recalls, "On 31<sup>st</sup> March I was instructed to make covert preparations for a Task Force for operations in the South Atlantic. On 2<sup>nd</sup> April, after the Argentinian invasion, the preparations were allowed to be conducted openly." With the Falklands also under Argentinian control the First Sea Lord was informed "that in the current situation the overall aim of Her Majesty's Government was to bring about the withdrawal of Argentinian forces from the Falkland Islands and the Dependencies and to re-establish the British Administration there as quickly as possible". His mission was "to conduct military deployments and order operations in support of this aim". It was code named Operation Corporate. In outline, the intention was that a large naval task force of RN warships including two aircraft carriers to provide air cover, Royal Fleet Auxiliary (RFA) first line support ships and a fleet of MN Ships Taken Up From Trade (STUFT) would be assembled, refitted and equipped in the UK and Gibraltar. Some of the merchant vessels would be troopships, others would carry the back up reserves of materiel and fuels need to sustain an invasion. The task force would assemble at Ascension Island before striking out with separate landings at South Georgia and the Falklands. Further waves of vessels would bring troop reinforcements and supplies from the UK.

This simple sounding strategy had to be turned into a set of highly detailed tactical and operational plans covering every eventuality. Not least of the challenges was that the campaign had to be fought 8,000 miles away from the UK and more than 3,000 miles from its nearest feasible forward mounting base at Ascension Island. The Government formed a war cabinet and Admiral Sir John Fieldhouse was given overall command of forces. He began planning the campaign on behalf of the Chief of the Defence Staff (CDS), Admiral Sir Terrance Lewin. A group of staff officers from all three services was appointed and that is where we next encounter OCs.



## PLANNING STAFF

**Vice Admiral Sir David Brown KCB RN (41- 45): Assistant Chief of Defence Staff (Operations), MoD HQ London.**

As the Assistant CDS (Operations), David's role was to liaise between the CDS and Admiral Fieldhouse. He digested Admiral Fieldhouse's plans and information into a form that could be presented by the CDS to the war cabinet, and then translated war cabinet decisions into operational directives that he relayed back to Admiral Fieldhouse. *"The job was really one of politico/military interface, presentation of the military view, speed/ time/ distance constraints, information flow, operational directives for special forces, trouble shooting, and perhaps most complex of all was the Rules of Engagement. The latter was an interpretation of whether HM Government was escalating, retaining the status quo, or de-escalating, and in case specific rules had to be signalled to Commanding Officers of HM ships and aircraft, giving clear and positive guidance as to what could or could not be done."* In short, he ensured that politicians and the military communicated with each other efficiently and effectively and that both parties were fully conversant with the other's expectations and capabilities. It fell to him to brief the daily meetings of the war cabinet in London on events in the South Atlantic. His briefings impressed Mrs Thatcher and all who heard them. However, such obvious capabilities also went with a reputation for ruthlessness, and during his career he sacked several of his subordinates: during the conflict, this included an Army officer. His vital role continued throughout the campaign, based in the RN's hardened bunker at Northwood (and using command and control software partly designed by your editor).



As a *Conway* cadet, he was at or near the top of his intake in several subjects, won prizes and was a cadet captain. Poor eyesight meant that it took him five attempts to get into the RN but his determination won him a place in the last week of the second world war, at the age of 17. As a midshipman at Dartmouth, he came top in seamanship and second in navigation. He was awarded the King's telescope and the Goodenough Prize for gunnery, a remarkable achievement in a small term which produced four admirals, a commodore and nine captains.

He became a specialist in anti-submarine warfare and commanded eight vessels, from a gunboat to frigates, a frigate squadron, and finally took charge of one of Britain's latest guided missile destroyers. He saw active service as an operations officer in the confrontation with Indonesia in the 1960s, and held several staff posts, including with NATO. Deep defence cuts in the late 1960s, had effectively confined the RN to the north Atlantic and the Mediterranean. In the early 1970s, as Director of Naval Operations and Trade, he successfully argued the case for annual naval forays to the Far East and the South Atlantic. This revival of the old custom of "showing the flag" would remind the world of Britain's abiding foreign interests and once again attract recruits to "Join the navy and see the world". A series of deployments east and south of Suez ensued. He ran a tight ship and drove his juniors hard. His inability to suffer fools gladly extended to the top of the service, and probably explained why such a gifted officer never made full admiral. His last position was as Flag Officer, Plymouth, before he retired in 1985 with a KCB.

**Rear Admiral John Philip Edwards MVO RN (41-44): Deputy Chief of Fleet Support (CFS).**

The CFS's organisation was responsible for ensuring that everything needed was provided to get the troops and their equipment to the Falklands, to land and then support them ashore until the islands were liberated. It all had had to be carried in the 114 vessels of the task force. Each ship required its individual, complex mix of materiel: equipment, uniforms, spares, victuals, oils, fuels, weapons and ammunition. Much of it had to be purchased quickly on the open market, delivered to stores depots across the UK and then moved to the dockyard where each ship was being fitted out. The task force had three levels of "floating warehouse"; those on board a fighting vessel or carried by an army unit for its immediate daily consumption, those carried in RFA vessels to replenish that daily consumption, and the bulk stores carried in the MN vessels some of which had very specific carrying roles, e.g. *Lycaon* was an ammunition ship. As Deputy CFS Edward played a key role in this vital and huge logistical task.



Edwards 1943  
2<sup>nd</sup> XV

**Captain Cyril Gordon Butterworth CBE RFA (41-43): Marine Superintendent, The Royal Fleet Auxiliary.**

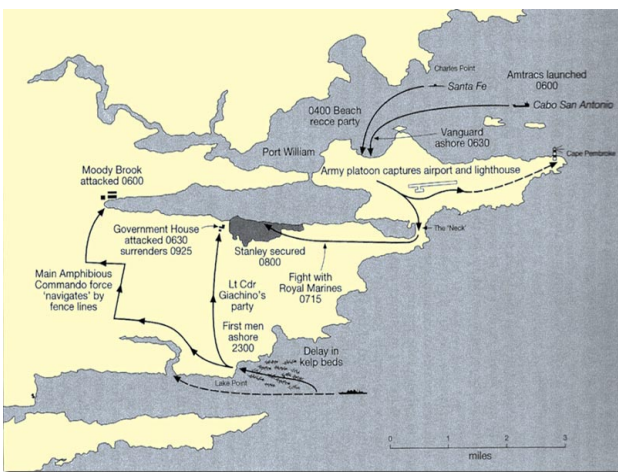
The RFA was to provide the core of the task force's support ships so at very short notice it was pitchforked into a pivotal role of providing, maintaining and managing a huge logistical shipping effort which involved every man and boy in the Service. As the RFA's Marine Superintendent (Navigation and Warfare), the task fell to Cyril. He surrounded himself with a small, highly professional team and led the Service brilliantly in dealing with all the preparation, support and advice to the seagoers. It was calculated that 22 RFAs were required and as they were deployed around the world his first task was to get them back to the UK, and then provisioned and fitted out in time to sail with the task force. Without Replenishment at Sea (RAS) the task force would not have the fuel, oils and lubricants or supplies needed to even make it to the Falklands, let alone operate there for a prolonged period. While the RN and RFA routinely RASed, many of the commercial STUFT were only now being fitted with the necessary equipment and their crews had never practised the complex manoeuvres required. Cyril's plan had to ensure RAS was possible. Against seemingly impossible deadlines he assembled and despatched all 22 RFA ships.



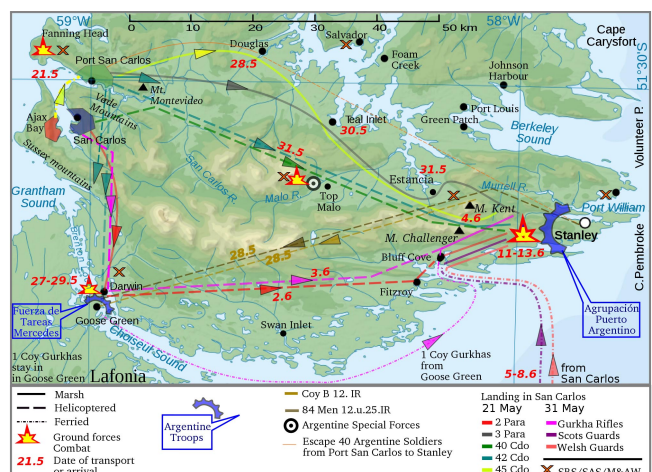
Cyril joined Blue Funnel from *Conway* but eventually found his home in the RFA in 1961. He was promoted to Captain in 1964, having seen service in Korea, Suez and the First Cod War. As a Captain he was respected and genuinely popular, a feat achieved by few of his peers! Over the years Cyril inspired and interacted with both serving and retired colleagues, becoming President of the RFA Association when it was formed in 2001. He earned the position of "father of the fleet" and he certainly made an outstanding contribution to the life and development of the RFA Service.

**Vice Admiral Sir Anthony Peter Woodhead KCB RN (54-57): Chief of Staff to the Joint Service Commander of the task force**

Sir Peter was recalled from leave and appointed to support the force commander, Rear Admiral Woodward as his Chief of Staff. The speed with which the operation was mounted did not allow them to prepare and rehearse ships and troops before departure from the UK so detailed planning and testing/rehearsals had to be completed at sea. Plans covered troop and crew training, weapon systems overhaul, testing and firing, tactical and communications procedures and damage control exercises.



Above Left: Argentinian Invasion Plan



Above Right: British Invasion Plan

## PREPARING THE TASK FORCE

An early task for the planners was to decide the size and mix of forces needed to retake all the islands, how much materiel they would need and the carrying capacity necessary to get the forces and materiel from the UK to the islands, support them until the islands were retaken and then bring them safely home. We have already seen that the naval task force would need 114 ships. 37 were RN, vessels primarily in a fighting role, and 77 were civilian vessels acting as troop transports and supply vessels, 25 from the civilian Royal Fleet Auxiliary (RFA), 52 from the MN. Every one of these vessels had to be modified in some way to prepare them for the war and that work had to be completed to very tight timescales to allow the fleet to assemble at Ascension Island ready for the attack on the islands. This section explores how OCs were involved in this task.

### ***Captain Donald Gordon Macleod Averill CBE RFA (41-43): Master, RFA Fort Grange***

*Fort Grange* was being refitted on the River Tyne when the conflict started. Donald successfully got this completed one month early and moved her to No 1 Berth, Devonport on 2<sup>nd</sup> May. On 9<sup>th</sup> May she relocated to Glen Douglas and berthed on Glen Mallen Jetty to load cargo. After loading maximum cargo (ammunition, aircraft spares and food) in record time and taking on-board C flight of 824 Squadron and their three Sea Kings, Donald sailed for the South Atlantic on Friday 14<sup>th</sup> May.



### ***Captain William James Clarke OBE (59-62): Master, Europic Ferry***

***Norman Brian Bamford (61-63): Chief Officer, Europic Ferry***

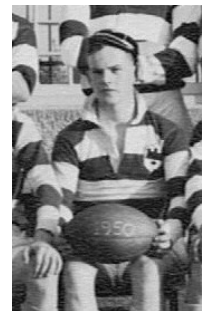
***Alan George Burns (48-50): Second Officer, Europic Ferry***

***Staff Sergeant Richard Leopold Peacocke (69-71) RAOC soldier on board Europic Ferry***

This must have been the largest collection of OCs in one vessel. *Europic Ferry* was a Ro-Ro STUFT from Atlantic Steam Navigation Co., and sister to *Baltic Ferry*. She must have seemed like a mini *Conway* reunion with no less than four old boys onboard. She embarked equipment and personnel from 2 Parachute Regt, the Royal Army Medical Corps and 656 Squadron Army Air Corps, including several vehicles and three helicopters, plus a large reserve of ammunition.



*Left: Bamford QB  
Summer 1963*



*Right: Burns Capt 1<sup>st</sup>  
XV Xmas 1950*

### ***Colin Edward Elms (54-56), Chief Officer Avalona Star***

*Avalona Star* was unloading Cape apples at Sheerness on 28<sup>th</sup> May 1982 when she was requisitioned. On 30<sup>th</sup> she was moved to Portsmouth and transformed into a Garrison Rations Supply Ship. A small helipad was erected aft, just visible in the photo below and she was fitted with RAS gear. Portakabins on the bridge deck provided accommodation for the dozen or so MOD civilian staff who would see to her cargo. This now included not only the residue





of the Cape apples and other refrigerated foodstuffs, but a ship-full of everything a modern army needs to survive in the field, from Mars Bars to toilet rolls. Her striking Blue Star funnel was dramatically toned down as a form of camouflage. Grey paint was intended but a sudden shortage in Portsmouth at the time led to white paint being substituted which, beneath the black funnel top and over the white superstructure and grey hull melted uncannily well into the Falklands landscape. She loaded her stores at Portsmouth up to 30th May before leaving for the Falklands.

**Captain G de Ferry Foster (1954-56): Master Geestport**

*Geestport* was a Geest Line refrigerated cargo ship requisitioned on the 7<sup>th</sup> May 1982 at Avonmouth to transport food to the Falklands as a "Forward Support Ship". and sailed for Portsmouth the same day, arriving on the 9<sup>th</sup> May for conversion, which included fitting of a helicopter landing platform and RAS gear. She sailed for the South Atlantic on the 21<sup>st</sup> May.

**Captain E Harrison (1954-56): Master, Baltic Ferry**

**Bill Langton (1967-69): Second Officer, Baltic Ferry**

*Baltic Ferry* was requisitioned on 2<sup>nd</sup> May and ordered to Portsmouth for modifications including two helipads, satnav and sitcom equipment, RAS Gear, a freshwater generating plant and additional living spaces. When Captain Harrison was asked to take *Baltic Ferry* to the South Atlantic he readily agreed "surmising that we would probably get no nearer than South Georgia". They departed UK on 9<sup>th</sup> May having loaded 105 troops of the 5<sup>th</sup> Infantry Brigade, three Army helicopters and 1,874 tons of hazardous materials like kerosene, petrol, ammunition and phosphorous and other missiles.

**Captain Alexander William Kinghorn (49-51); Master, Avalonia Star**

She was a Blue Star Line refrigerated cargo ship that was chartered on the 2<sup>nd</sup> May 1982 as a food transport. She sailed from Sheerness for Portsmouth on the 3<sup>rd</sup> May 1982, arriving the following day when she was fitted with a helicopter landing platform and RAS gear.

**Captain Herbert Rogeron Lawton (51-52): Master, Lycaon**

This China Mutual Steamship cargo vessel was chartered on the 26<sup>th</sup> April 1982 as an ammunition ship. She arrived at Falmouth on the 14<sup>th</sup> April 1982 for laying up, but was immediately sent to Southampton where she arrived on the 26<sup>th</sup> to load cargo and be fitted with SATCOM and RAS gear.

**Robert Barthomolew Lough (61-63): Chief Officer, Norland**

*Norland* was a large North Sea ferry fitted out as a troopship at Hull and Portsmouth but basically unsuited to the seas around the Falklands. Dock workers had to increase her capacity to carry fuel, fresh water and food for 60 days at sea. She loaded 900 men of 2 Para at Portsmouth.



Above Left: Lough QB, Summer 1963



Chief Officer Bob Lough

Above Centre: Chief Officer Norland 1982



Above Right: Norland

**Captain John Albert Martin Taylor (47-49): Master, British Dart**

*British Dart* 15,650 tons was a BP River Class tanker that was chartered when the ship arrived at Portsmouth on the 9<sup>th</sup> April 1982. She was fitted with RAS gear, before sailing for Loch Striven on the 11<sup>th</sup> April to load.

**Alec Tweedie (1962-64): Chief Officer, Atlantic Causeway**

*Atlantic Causeway* arrived into RNB Devonport on 6<sup>th</sup> May and was converted to carry and operate naval helicopters including a hanger on her upper deck forward. Some sources claim she was fitted with a harrier take off ramp but there is no record of harriers using her, they were on *Atlantic Conveyor*. The photo right confirms this. She was also fitted with RAS equipment.



**Ronald Wilfrid Warwick OBE RNR LLD FNI (56-57): Chief Officer, Queen Elizabeth 2 (QE2)**

Ron kept a diary of events from the moment *QE2* was requisitioned on 3<sup>rd</sup> May. In just 18 days at Southampton she was stripped of everything relating to her civilian cruising role, converted into a troopship and fitted with two helicopter landing pads. Fuel pipes were run through the ship to allow for RAS, and 12 miles of carpets were covered with sheets of hardboard. A quarter of the ship's length was reinforced with steel plating, and an anti-magnetic coil was fitted to combat naval mines. Helicopter flight decks were fitted over the swimming pool and on the foc's'le.



She was loaded with ammunition, military equipment and vehicles covered every spare deck space. Her transition to troopship was complete. Finally, on 12th May, she embarked 3,000 soldiers and airmen, the most passengers she had ever carried. Officers were assigned to eat in the luxury Queens Grill restaurant while senior NCOs had to make do with the slightly less sumptuous Princess Grill. Soldiers used the ship's two large dining rooms. Off Portsmouth two Sea King helicopters landed on board and were secured for the journey south.

After *Conway* Ron first joined the Port Line and having obtained his Second Mate's Certificate in 1961, he spent the next several years sailing with various companies to gain experience of different types of ships. In 1967, he became Chief Officer of a cargo ship and by 1968 he had obtained his master's ticket. He joined Cunard as a Third Officer in 1970. For one brief day in 1970 he served in *QE2* with his father (her Master) as she was moved in Southampton harbour. He was Chief Officer when *QE2* was requisitioned by the government for service in the Falklands campaign. Ron first sailed as Captain in 1986 in *Cunard Princess*, then in *Cunard Countess* and *Cunard Crown Dynasty* before his appointment as master of *QE2* in July 1990. He was the first Captain of the new *Queen Mary 2* and the fifth *Conway* Commodore of Cunard from 2003 to 2006 when he retired with 36 years of company service.

**Matthew (Matt) Winter (71-73): Second Mate, Laertes**

*“I was a Second Officer (age 25) employed by Ocean Fleets Ltd of Liverpool. I was enjoying a well earned leave when I received a call from a member of the personnel team asking if I would join the 'Laertes' as soon as possible as she had been requisitioned by HM Government for service in the Falklands. The company were phoning around seeking volunteers and were quite understandably getting a number of refusals from various parties.*

*I had been monitoring the campaign from home via TV and newspapers, with interest. I immediately phoned a family friend who was a Lt Cmdr. He listened and advised me to do what I felt was right, I had a choice. Within a few hours I was off to join the ‘Ship Taken Up From Trade’ (STUFT) - MV Laertes registered in Liverpool. A peek in my discharge book shows her GRT as 11803.65 tones and her official number 364439. The ‘Laertes’ and her sister ship ‘Lycaon’ were apparently chosen for task as they had armoured cable ducts – making them suitable for the carriage of ammunition.*

*I joined her in Devonport Dockyard on 30<sup>th</sup> May 1982 and we spent a period fitting various aerals, gun mountings and other equipment before loading ammunition, tents and various stores including much needed military clothing.”*



## MEANWHILE IN THE SOUTH....

### **Stuart Lawrence (58-60), Master of RSS Bransfield**

was still steaming south awaiting further instruction but was facing dissent from many members of his crew who were Falkland Islanders. They wanted to take *Bransfield* back to Stanley, by force if necessary, and scuttle her to block the entrance to the port. He described events as below:

Well, that night . . . it was – we had quite a lot of Falkland Island crew members, and we had . . . everybody was wound up. I mean, it's not surprising that they were, and once again I was wakened at about midnight to be told that the whole ship was being taken over, and the Falkland Islanders and those people that felt very strongly about this were going to take the whole of the *Bransfield* back and sink her in the narrows in the entrance to Stanley Harbour. And they'd got the keys – God knows where they'd got the keys from, but we didn't just have one master key, and they'd taken over various places and they'd got somebody in the Engine Room who was on their side and it was all set up. It was all definitely going to happen. So, I said, I said – well, how many, you know – what is this? I said 'How many of you are there?' . . . 'Well, I dunno' he said. ??? [*that last sentence not clearly audible.*] 'Nearly all of us.' So I said 'Right. Go. Leave me at the moment. I just want to get dressed. Go and get everybody together and come back to my room immediately.' So they did. I can't remember how many – it wasn't as many as twenty, but it was above ten, so it was, sort of, quite largish numbers. So I sat 'em all down, and I said 'Righty' I said 'OK – now look, you'd better start – think – talk – let's talk this through – let's think about it' I said. 'Look, before we do that though, anybody want a drink?' (Back to your subject again – is alcohol important?) So I . . . they said 'Oh, yes!' I grabbed a case of beer out and everybody had a beer, another case of beer out and everybody had another beer, and in the meantime we were discussing the pros and cons of taking a completely defenceless vessel, sinking it in the narrows, which would have really only been to the benefit of the Argentine Republic. And eventually I think I was beginning to win the debate. But it wasn't just I was beginning to win the debate, of course. Alcohol won the debate. Because by the time six o'clock rolled round there were probably more slurred sort of statements of intent than there was anything else. So I had sat there, probably for six hours, with my brandy and my cigars, just listening to them and letting them have their say, and we continued on our way rejoicing. What I hadn't appreciated was – when we got back to Southampton somebody would tell the Press all about it, and so once again Lawrence was back in the not-really-to-be-appreciated headlines. But never mind. So yes, I think that gives

## THE TASK FORCE SAILS SOUTH

The task force did not travel South as one large convoy. They were dispersed in various South Coast ports and in Gibraltar, some were taking part in the first wave of landings, others were required for later phases of the campaign and so could leave a little later. All though had to make the same basic journey; sail South from the UK/Gibraltar, assemble at Ascension Island and then deploy in a timely manner to their designated theatre of operations around the islands. Some, like the nuclear submarines were to enforce the Total Exclusion Zone (TEZ) and so were unlikely to approach the islands, while others were the front line strike force that had to penetrate the Argentinian defences and land troops and supplies. A few, like QE2, were too large for Falklands coastal waters, and possibly too high a profile to put directly into harm's way and so were deployed to more secure locations at South Georgia where they were far less likely to come under Argentinian attack. This section examines how OCs took their vessels South and their experiences en route.

### ***Vice Admiral Sir Anthony Peter Woodhead KCB RN (54-57): In Hermes as Chief of Staff to the Joint Service Commander of the task force***

Sir Peter was recalled from leave and appointed to support the force commander, Rear Admiral Woodward. The force had already departed so he had to fly to Ascension and rendezvous with Hermes there. Such was the enormous amount of work of planning the landing and all that goes with it, that Sir Peter and another officer stood watch and watch as Group Warfare Officer concentrating on running the task force, which at any one time numbered up to 80 vessels, and overseeing almost constant use of the flight deck.

Peter had a successful time in *Conway* becoming Captain of the rugby 1st XV and of the cricket 1st XI, and Chief cadet Captain in his last term. He served in the Royal Navy from 1962 to 1994 including 15 years as a Fleet Air Arm pilot. After the Falklands he served as a Squadron Commander, Director of Naval Operations and Captain of an Aircraft Carrier. As an Admiral, he commanded both the 1st and 2nd Flotillas. His final appointment in the Navy was as the Deputy Supreme Allied Commander Atlantic. On leaving the Navy he was appointed as the first Prisons Ombudsman from 1994 to 2000. He later served as Deputy Chairman of a Technology Company, a member of the Security Vetting Appeals Panel at the Cabinet Office, a Lay Preacher and was involved in eight charities primarily in the field of Crime Reduction and Homelessness. He was appointed to the Armed Forces' Pay Review Body in 2002.



Above: Capt 1st XV Easter 1957  
Below Left Capt 1st XI Right CCC  
Summer 1957



### ***Captain John Albert Martin Taylor (47-49): Master, British Dart***

*British Dart* sailed for Ascension Island on the 22<sup>nd</sup> April, arriving on the 4<sup>th</sup> May. She left the following day to take up a holding position mid way between Ascension and the Falklands to refuel RFAs on their way down to and back from the islands.



### ***Captain William James Clarke OBE (59-62): Master, Europic Ferry***

***Norman Brian Bamford (61-63): Chief Officer, Europic Ferry***

***Alan George Burns (48-50): Second Officer, Europic Ferry***

***Staff Sergeant Richard Leopold Peacocke (69-71) Soldier onboard Europic Ferry***

On the journey south *Europic Ferry's* master exercised the crew regularly to determine the best conditions for helicopter deck landings and to "gave serious thought on how to prepare the ship for war". They travelled south with the ill fated *Atlantic Conveyor* but they separated at Ascension and *Europic Ferry* left on 7<sup>th</sup> May as part of a much larger group. "When Defence Watches were instituted, the ship's company were divided into two watches so that half the crew were up and alert at any time. Personnel remained in their clothing at all times. Glass fittings were taped up to prevent shattering and furniture was securely lashed down. Extra lookouts were posted and the engine room manning

increased.” On 18<sup>th</sup> May they joined the main task force in the British Total Exclusion Zone (TEZ) and experienced their first ‘Action Stations’ - warnings of submarine attacks.

**Captain Donald Gordon Macleod Averill CBE RFA (41-43): Master, RFA Fort Grange**

*Fort Grange* paused at Ascension Island on 22<sup>nd</sup> May. She suffered two major engine breakdowns on 25<sup>th</sup> and 26<sup>th</sup> May when she entered the TEZ.

**Robert Barthomolew Lough (61-63): Chief Officer, Norland**

She left Portsmouth on 16<sup>th</sup> April and travelled independently to Ascension where she joined the rest of the Task Force. The whole crew of 96 men and three women volunteered to remain in the ship although they were told that they would be going nowhere near the fighting, taking 2 Para only as far as Ascension Island. From there, the troops would fly the remaining 4,000 miles to the Falklands and the *Norland* would return home. As we shall see plans changed and they ended up at the very sharp end of the invasion along with the warships *Fearless* and *Intrepid*

**Ronald Wilfrid Warwick OBE RNR LLD FNI (56-57): Chief Officer, QE2**

With RAS equipment fitted but not tested QE2 rendezvoused with the tanker RFA *Grey Rover* to practice RASsing (shown right). With soldiers and crew members hauling on lines and hoses, several tons of fuel were successfully taken on board. On her way south Ron recalled they had “live firing exercises ... every part of the ship is in use for some form of training ... every unit on board has a time slot for jogging (in army boots) - the noise is incredible, it is playing havoc with the decks - the caulking is lifting out all over the place”. A *Conway’s* commitment to deck work never fails!



She called at Freetown, Sierra Leone, to take on fuel and water. As they moved south towards Ascension Island all vessels were completely blacked out. In QE2 all windows and portholes were covered, even navigating lights were extinguished so she could advance undetected. At Ascension, on 22<sup>nd</sup> May, Major General J Moore CB OBE MC, Commander Land Forces and his staff boarded QE2 and set up their headquarters. From then on radio silence was imposed. The loss of the *Atlantic Conveyor* suddenly brought home “the reality of the situation that we find ourselves in”.



**Captain S Redmond RFA OBE (53-55): Master, RFA Tidespring (A75)**

*Tidespring* was a fleet oiler and having loaded 27,000 tons of fuel set off for Ascension Island on 7<sup>th</sup> April with *Antrim* and *Plymouth* where she was to load troops. Her main role was to refuel other vessels en route to the Falklands and during operations once there.



Above: *Tidespring* Preparing to RAS *Plymouth* Off South Georgia

**Captain E Harrison (1954-56): Master, Baltic Ferry**  
**Bill Langton (1967-69): Second Officer, Baltic Ferry**

She left UK in company with *Nordic Ferry* and they arrived at Ascension Island on 20<sup>th</sup> May for bunkering. Some reports say they travelled with *QE2* but the dates of departure from the UK and arrival at Ascension do not tally.



**Captain Herbert Rogeron Lawton (51-52): Master, Lycaon**

She sailed for the South Atlantic on the 4<sup>th</sup> May pausing to refuel at Ascension Island.



*Lycaon @ Ascencion*

**Alec Tweedie (1962-64): Chief Officer, Atlantic Causeway**

*Atlantic Causeway* left Devonport at 0730 on 12<sup>th</sup> May carrying eight Sea Kings of 825 NAS and 20 Wessexes of 847 NAS. She called at Ascension Island.

**Matthew (Matt) Winter (71-73): Second Mate, Laertes**

*"We sailed from Devonport on 8<sup>th</sup> June for the island of Ascension. The war ended as we travelled South but at the time no one really knew if it was over for good so there was always a sense of apprehension aboard. I recall loading ammunition by Chinook helicopter in Ascension before continuing toward the 'holding area'. In retrospect we were towards the rear of the wartime supply chain and consequently never saw any active service. We did however experience some pretty horrendous weather both on the way South and in Port William where I vividly remember an afternoon spent on the fo'csle as we and others repeatedly dragged anchor during a blizzard."*

## IN THE TOTAL EXCLUSION ZONE

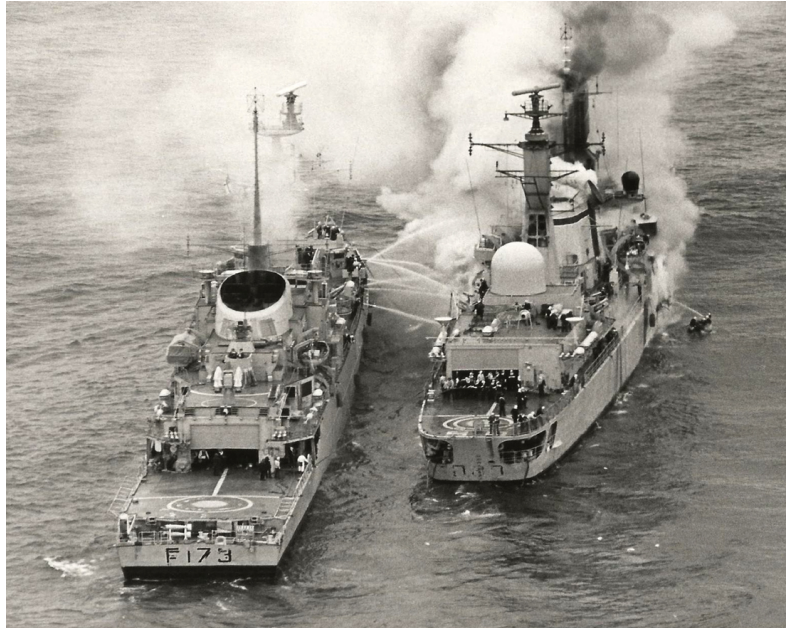
By 1<sup>st</sup> May the fleet started assembling in the TEZ and was coming under sporadic attacks by Argentinian aircraft and was being threatened by submarines and the cruiser *General Belgrano*. The latter was sunk by torpedo on 2<sup>nd</sup> May and the fleet was warned to expect retaliatory attacks. *Sheffield* was ordered forward with two other destroyers to provide a long-range radar and medium-high altitude missile picket for the two carriers.

### ***Lt Cdr M Manning RN (62-64): HMS Arrow (Type 21 frigate F173)***

On 1<sup>st</sup> May *Arrow* had the dual distinction of being both the first British warship to fire on the enemy (whilst firing on land forces at Port Stanley), and the first British warship to be hit by enemy fire, after being strafed by an Argentinian Air Force fighter. On 2<sup>nd</sup> May she bombarded the area around Stanley again, partly giving cover to SAS landings.

On 4<sup>th</sup> May *Sheffield* was struck by an Exocet missile and *Arrow* immediately closed on her. She assisted in extinguishing *Sheffield's* fires, her crew showed conspicuous bravery in this rescue effort, saving 225 of *Sheffield's* crew.

The UK was at this time still negotiating with Argentina through the UN. On 18<sup>th</sup> May Britain abandoned its "red-line" that British administration of the islands should be restored on the withdrawal of Argentine forces and proposed a UN administrator should supervise the mutual withdrawal of both Argentine and British forces, then govern the islands in consultation with the representative institutions of the islands, including Argentinians, although no Argentinians lived there. Reference to "self determination" of the islanders was dropped and the British proposed that future negotiations over the sovereignty of the islands should be conducted by the UN. Fortunately, the Argentinians refused even this overture so the UK then took a much stronger line.



*Arrow (Left) Closes On Sheffield*

### ***Ronald Wilfrid Warwick OBE RNR LLD FNI (56-57): Chief Officer, QE2***

On 27<sup>th</sup> May *QE2* arrived in Cumberland Bay, South Georgia, she was considered too big a prize to be risked close to the Falklands. The 5<sup>th</sup> Infantry Brigade transferred to RFA *Stromness*, P&O's *Canberra* and MV *Norland* for transfer to the landings.

### ***Alec Tweedie (1962-64): Chief Officer, Atlantic Causeway***

*Atlantic Causeway* arrived in the Exclusion Zone on 27<sup>th</sup> May two days after the loss of her sister ship *Atlantic Conveyor*.

### ***Captain Donald Gordon Macleod Averill CBE RFA (41-43): Master, RFA Fort Grange***

On 31<sup>st</sup> May 1982 she was attacked by an Argentinian C-130 on its way to join the carrier battle group. She entered the TEZ on the 3<sup>rd</sup> June and rendezvoused with the carrier battle group to relieve RFA *Fort Austin*. She spent the next eight days replenishing 25 vessels.



***Captain G de Ferry Foster (1954-56): Master Geestport***

When *Geestport* entered the TEZ there was a heavy concentration of icebergs “never less than 57 within a 12 mile radius of the ship ... at times it was hard to find a way through them”. Icebergs, atrocious weather and the threat of Argentinian attack meant little sleep for the Old Man.

***Captain E Harrison (1954-56): Master, Baltic Ferry***

***Bill Langton (1967-69): Second Officer, Baltic Ferry***

*Baltic Ferry* entered the TEZ on 25<sup>th</sup> May and proceeded to the Falklands arriving there on the night of 30<sup>th</sup> May.

## THE SOUTH GEORGIA LANDINGS (Operation Paraquet)

### **Captain S Redmond RFA OBE (53-55): Master, RFA *Tidespring* (A75)**

On arriving at Ascension Island on 10<sup>th</sup> April she embarked M Co., 42 Commando RM and Special Air Service (SAS) and Special Boat Service (SBS) troops. They had flown to the island from the UK. Her role was obviously going to be a special one. On the 11<sup>th</sup> April she sailed from Ascension Island. While the majority of the Task Force headed for the Falkland Islands, she was sent to relieve the South Georgia Islands as part of Task Force 317.



The first landings by SAS troops took place on 21<sup>st</sup> April and, once all troops were ashore *Tidespring* came under threat from submarine attacks and withdrew to deeper water to avoid interception. However her two Wessex helicopters continued to fly missions in support of the SAS and other troops.

Onshore, under bombardment from RN vessels and with the threat of imminent attack from the marines, the Argentines surrendered South Georgia on 25<sup>th</sup> April. The message sent from the naval force at South Georgia to London was, "Be pleased to inform Her Majesty that the White Ensign flies alongside the Union Jack in South Georgia. God Save the Queen." A Blue Ensign there as well but perhaps not worthy of mention. The Argentinian prisoners, numbering 156 Marines and Navy personnel and 38 civilians, were transported to Montevideo in Uruguay on 30<sup>th</sup> April on board *Tidespring*.

### **Captain G de Ferry Foster (1954-56): Master *Geestport***

*Geestport* arrived at South Georgia on the 11<sup>th</sup> June 1982 to transfer stores to RFA ships. She then sailed to join the Carrier Battle Group, arriving on the 21<sup>st</sup> June,

### **Captain Herbert Rogeron Lawton (51-52): Master, *Lycaon***

*Lycaon* arrived at South Georgia on the 28<sup>th</sup> May to transfer her cargo of ammunition to RFA *Stromness*.

## THE FALKLANDS' LANDINGS – San Carlos Bay (Operation Sutton)

Landings started on 21<sup>st</sup> May at San Carlos Bay, the troops called it Bomb Alley which gives an idea of the conditions.

### **Robert Bartholomew Lough (61-63): Chief Officer, *Norland***

*Norland* was carrying 2 Para and so, inevitably, was going to be in the thick of the action. On 21<sup>st</sup> May *Norland*, with Chief Officer Robert Bartholomew Lough (1961-63) as pilot, lead the warships *Plymouth*, *Intrepid* and *Fearless*, and the *Canberra*, *Stromness*, *Europic Ferry* and *Fort Austen* into San Carlos Bay for the first forced landing on the Falklands. “*Norland* led in case the channels were mined, as she was considered to be the most expendable of the ships.” The Paras disembarked into landing



craft and went ashore to begin the land campaign to expel the Argentinians. After disembarkation *Norland* led the whole fleet back into San Carlos Water where they anchored and safely unloaded the rest of their troops despite repeated air attacks, a member of the crew recalled “You had the jets roaring above you and the anchor chains would rattle with the vibration of the bombs hitting the water, it sent the most eerie sounds through the lower decks.”

### **Captain William James Clarke OBE (59-62): Master, *Europic Ferry***

### **Norman Brian Bamford (61-63): Chief Officer, *Europic Ferry***

### **Alan George Burns (48-50): Second Officer, *Europic Ferry***

### **Staff Sergeant Richard Leopold Peacocke (69-71) Soldier onboard *Europic Ferry***

They were part of the main amphibious landing force including *Norland*, *Canberra* and the assault ships *Fearless* and *Intrepid*. They entered San Carlos Bay and immediately offloaded a battery of artillery. Suddenly the air was full of Argentinian Mirages, Skyhawks and Pucaros first attacking the beachhead, *Norland* and *Canberra* but soon turning their attention to *Europic Ferry*. There were a number of near misses and *Europic Ferry* fired back with her small compliment of machine guns. The rest of the day was spent offloading equipment and acting as a helicopter operating deck. “As we waited for the setting sun to bring an end to the air attacks, all on board had now realised the meaning of the ‘longest day’.”



It is assumed that during these landings Richard Peacocke went ashore.

### **Captain E Harrison (1954-56): Master, *Baltic Ferry***

### **Bill Langton (1967-69): Second Officer, *Baltic Ferry***

Her job was to land the second wave of troops and supplies at Ajax Bay (Red Beach) early on 1<sup>st</sup> June. They entered San Carlos Bay in darkness, anchored and offloaded without incident. Two or three further visits were made, delivering more ammunition and fuel the second under heavy air attacks during which *Plymouth* was damaged and moored nearby. When the engineers reported noises outside the hull sabotage was feared but it turned out to be a false alarm.



*Baltic Ferry in San Carlos Water*

**Alec Tweedie (1962-64): Chief Officer, Atlantic Causeway**

*Atlantic Causeway* arrived in San Carlos Water on 28<sup>th</sup> May and started to land her helicopters and stores.



**THE BATTLE OF GOOSE GREEN / DARWIN**

These landings took place about 13 miles South of San Carlos Bay on 28<sup>th</sup> and 29<sup>th</sup> May. The aim was to "carry out a raid on Goose Green isthmus and capture the settlements before withdrawing in a reserve for the main thrust to the north." Close air support was available from three RAF Harriers and naval gunfire support was to be provided by Arrow in the hours of darkness.

**Lt Cdr M Manning RN (62-64): HMS Arrow (Type 21 frigate F173)**

*Arrow* bombarded Argentine positions while troops of 2 Para attacked Goose Green and Darwin on land.



Goose Green battle map.

## THE FALKLANDS' LANDINGS – BLUFF COVE / FITZROY

These final landings early in June were to launch the attack to recover Stanley using the 5,000 reinforcements (5th Infantry Brigade) that had recently arrived at the Falklands. Army squabbling over how the landing was to be performed caused an enormous delay in unloading with disastrous consequences. RFA *Sir Galahad* (L3505) was hit by two or three bombs and set alight. A total of 48 soldiers and crewman were killed in the explosions and subsequent fire. RFA *Sir Tristram's* (L3005) decks were strafed and two crew were killed. A 500 lb bomb penetrated the deck, but failed to explode immediately, allowing the remaining crew to be evacuated. When it later exploded, she was abandoned.

### **Captain G Green RFA (49-51): Master, RFA *Sir Tristram*,**

*"I was Master of Sir Tristram at Fitzroy Creek (or as the press has it - Bluff Cove) where she was bombed and set on fire, along with her sister ship Sir Galahad. It was a whole new experience, and have the need to replace my Conway tie plus of course everything else."* He says no more.

They were attacked by Sky Hawks, 51 people were killed and 46 injured. Captain Green was decorated for his service. His citation reads: *"She was the first ship to make the run to Fitzroy. The task had to be unescorted and meant lying at*

*anchor by day off Fitzroy in an exposed position without benefit of adequate air defence or warning. It was while there that the ship, still well loaded with ammunition, came under fierce surprise air attack and suffered the damage that caused her to be damaged on fire. It is greatly to Captain Green's credit that he was successful in getting all his people off the ship with the exception of two seamen killed. Captain Green by his personal example and courage throughout the period inspired his crew to do all that was asked of them, far beyond the normal call of duty."*



### **Lt Cdr M Manning RN (62-64): HMS *Arrow* (Type 21 frigate F173)**

*Arrow*, below right, also helped extinguish the fires on the *Rothsay* class frigate *Plymouth*, on 8<sup>th</sup> June.



## SUSTAINING THE LANDINGS

### ***Alec Tweedie (1962-64): Chief Officer, Atlantic Causeway***

*Atlantic Causeway* remained in San Carlos Water after unloading and on 6th 8th June she embarked casualties from *Sir Galahad* and *Sir Tristram*. Later 170 of them were transferred to *British Trent* and *British Test* for repatriation to the UK. On 17<sup>th</sup> June she entered Port William to unload further supplies. During her sojourn she received about 4,000 helicopter landings and refuelled approximately 500 aircraft.

### ***Captain Donald Gordon Macleod Averill CBE RFA (41-43): Master, RFA Fort Grange***

*Fort Grange* moved into Bomb Alley on 9<sup>th</sup> June to supply the beach head and other vessels. As a specialist resupply ship, the next few weeks saw non-stop activity supplying the troops and resupplying them herself from later waves of STUFT vessels arriving from the UK. She was used as a 24 hour Vertical Replenishment (VERTREP) platform for helicopters. During one VERTREP to HMS *Leeds Castle* she lost one of her sea king helicopters. She spent 105 days in the TEZ completing 389 transfers including 700,000 pounds of potatoes, half a million eggs, 10,500 gallons of draught beer and 504,000 cans of beer. Helicopters made 933 day deck landings and 165 night landings. She was at Port Stanley on the 17<sup>th</sup> June and remained on station until she sailed from the TEZ to return home on the 17<sup>th</sup> September. On 2<sup>th</sup> July Don was replaced by Captain Barry H Rutterford RFA.



### ***Captain William James Clarke OBE (59-62): Master, Europic Ferry***

### ***Norman Brian Bamford (61-63): Chief Officer, Europic Ferry***

### ***Alan George Burns (48-50): Second Officer, Europic Ferry***

Over the days following the initial landings they embarked more materiel from other vessels for San Carlos Bay and then transferred it ashore. At one point they suffered 36 hours of continuous force 10 and 11 storms. Finally they landed stores and troops to re-establish communications at Port Stanley before returning to the UK.

### ***Captain E Harrison (1954-56): Master, Baltic Ferry***

### ***Bill Langton (1967-69): Second Officer, Baltic Ferry***

They completed over 1,000 helicopter deck landings over the next four months. At the end of the campaign she transferred to Port Stanley where she remained as a store ship, see right.

Right: *Baltic Ferry*



**Captain Alexander William Kinghorn (49-51); Master, Avalonia Star**

The *Avalonia Star* was a refrigerated ship carrying provisions and fitted with a helicopter pad. She was part of the final wave of vessels bring supplies from the UK and so did not arrive until after the cease fire.



Above: *Avalonia Star*

**Captain G de Ferry Foster (1954-56): Master Geestport,**

Geestport entered San Carlos Water on 22<sup>nd</sup> June and remained in the Zone for almost three months visiting most scenes of action and completing 58 stores transfers to HM ships and others. At one stage she was alongside *Avalonia Star* whose master was **Captain Alexander William Kinghorn (49-51)**.

**Captain Christopher Smith RFA QGM (51-53): RFA Engadine**

Christopher was one of the small group of cadets in the Ship when she grounded and he was one of the first ashore in the doomed attempts to refloat her. After *Conway* he served with a Dutch shipping line and then British companies before joining the RFA in 1961. He obtained his master's ticket in 1965.



As Chief Officer of the helicopter support ship *Engadine*, he was awarded the Queen's Gallantry Medal for the decisive role he played in the salvage of a stricken merchantman in the Channel during a gale in December 1981. The 4,000-tonne motor vessel *Melpol* was ablaze and drifting in gale-force winds and heavy seas 35 miles southeast of the Isle of Wight. With the fire raging unchecked, Smith and PO Olley were winched onboard from a helicopter to assess whether she could be saved. Deciding she could Smith led a team of volunteers back onboard. They had been able to bring only limited fire fighting equipment with them. Below decks *Melpol* had been reduced to a tangle of twisted metal, with ladders and bulkheads melted in the intense heat. All electrical wiring had been burnt through, so the team had to rely on their own portable light sources. It took them almost eight hours to bring the blaze under control, during which time they extinguished fires in the engine room and accommodation areas. who after eight hours managed to extinguish the blaze. They then connected tows to two salvage tugs enabling the ship to be taken in tow and brought to safety. The official citation read "*Chief Officer Smith displayed courage, leadership and professional skills of the highest order during this most difficult operation and by his resourcefulness enabled the ship to be saved.*"

**847 NAS "A" Flight**

**RFA ENGADINE**

Snr PURSER  
Harry Biggs

3.R.O.  
Jim McKie

1.L.O.  
Barry Thompson

CHIEF OFFICER  
CHRIS SMITH

4.E.O.  
Cyril Davies

C.P.O.(Ck)  
David Bolton

CAPTAIN  
DAVID FREEMAN

CEO Bertram Smith  
2EO Willie MacDermot  
3.E.O. Keith Moore  
3.E.O. Dave Simpson  
4.E.O. Steve Mundell

2.R.O.  
Nick Machin

2nd Officer  
Pete Webb

S.R.O. Tony Johnstone  
3.R.O. Paul Herbert

A.P. Malcolm Woods  
Plumber Bob Burt

Only four months later *Engadine* joined the Falklands task force as a support ship for helicopters during the campaign to liberate the islands from their Argentinian occupiers. *Engadine* provided helicopter maintenance and accommodation for ground crew in San Carlos Water throughout the period of the intense Argentinian air attacks. In a 36-year career with the RFA Smith also saw service in many other theatres of international conflict, including the Gulf, Malaysia and Lebanon. He retired

in 1997, eventually living in a 70 foot canal narrow boat with his wife and a very raucous parrot. He died in 2007.

**Ronald Wilfrid Warwick OBE RNR LLD FNI (56-57): Chief Officer, QE2**

With troops disembarked she transitioned into a hospital ship and took on board around 600 survivors of HMS *Ardent*, *Antelope* and *Coventry*. Some had serious injuries.

Under threat from air attack, and still carrying 60 tons of ammunition she was ordered back to sea and steamed off towards Ascension Island. Despite very rough conditions, she refuelled from RFA *Bayleaf*.

**Robert Bartholomew Lough (61-63): Chief Officer, Norland**

*Norland* ran a shuttle service carrying new waves of troops from the *QE2* at South Georgia to San Carlos Water and repatriating prisoners to Montevideo. She entered San Carlos water five separate times, always under threat of air attack. The next four days saw frequent bombing attacks by Argentinian planes and she was narrowly missed by two 500lb bombs. *Ardent* and *Antelope* were sunk close to *Norland* and she had “one near miss on 24<sup>th</sup> when two 500 pound bombs landed close alongside”. With all British forces ashore she evacuated thousands of prisoners from Port Stanley to the mainland at one time disembarking 2,000 of them at Puerto Madryn in Argentina! Eventually, on 24<sup>th</sup> June, survivors of 2 and 3 Para were embarked and taken to Ascension from where they were flown home. She returned to Port Stanley with relief troops and remained there as a South Atlantic ferry between Port Stanley and Ascension. In August RB Lough was appointed master of *Norland*. “*Norland* was very lucky to have survived as the Argentinian Air Force was very good and gave us quite a hard time ... I must say looking back it was 95% hard work, 5% sheer terror, but I wouldn't have missed it for the world.” In October Admiral Fieldhouse awarded him a citation “...for his willingness, initiative and fortitude in ensuring the successful achievement of *Norland's* task”.



**Captain Herbert Rogeron Lawton (51-52): Master, Lycaon**

*Lycaon* South Georgia on 11<sup>th</sup> June and anchored in San Carlos Water on the 15<sup>th</sup>, before moving to Port William on the 20<sup>th</sup>.

**Colin Edward Elms (54-56): Chief Officer in Avelona Star**

*Avelona Star* left the UK on 10<sup>th</sup> June arrived in the Falklands after the ceasefire. and after calling at Ascension, she joined the Carrier Battle Group on the 1<sup>st</sup> July. She entered San Carlos Water on the 4<sup>th</sup> July, later moving round to Port Stanley where she was used as a floating supermarket.

**Matthew (Matt) Winter (71-73): Second Mate, Laertes**

“We anchored in Port William on 03/07/82, and remained there for the rest of July discharging much of our hazardous cargo to Mexefloats. Every night we were required to darken ship and one day guns were mounted on the bridge wings in response to orders based on intelligence reports. We eventually tied up to our sister vessel, *MV Lycaon*, and discharged the remainder of our cargo into her holds.”



## RETURN HOME

### **Alec Tweedie (1962-64): Chief Officer, Atlantic Causeway**

*Atlantic Causeway* departed the Falklands on 13<sup>th</sup> June.

### **Captain John Albert Martin Taylor (47-49): Master, British Dart**

*British Dart* joined the Carrier Battle Group on the 31<sup>st</sup> May to collect homeward bound mail, before returning to Ascension Island on the 16<sup>th</sup> June. Arrived back in the UK, at Plymouth on the 16<sup>th</sup> July before sailing for Grangemouth and return to her owners.

### **Captain S Redmond RFA OBE (53-55): Master, RFA Tidespring (A75)**

*Tidespring* loaded the Argentine prisoners from South Georgia, numbering 156 Marines and Navy personnel and 38 civilians, and transported them to Montevideo in Uruguay on 30<sup>th</sup> April. She then moved back to Ascension Island and from there returned to the UK.

### **Captain William James Clarke OBE (59-62): Master, Europic Ferry**

### **Norman Brian Bamford (61-63): Chief Officer, Europic Ferry**

### **Alan George Burns (48-50): Second Officer, Europic Ferry**

Returned from Port Stanley to Southampton and was back in port there by 24<sup>th</sup> July 1982 looking a little battle worn. It is interesting that her bright red hull was not over painted for the campaign.



### **Captain G de Ferry Foster (1954-56): Master, Geestport,**

She sailed from Port Stanley on the 3<sup>rd</sup> August and her return home was flat out at an average speed of 20.02 knots. She arrived back at Portsmouth on the 19<sup>th</sup> August 1982, the 43<sup>rd</sup> ship to return to Portsmouth but still received a tremendous welcome home from the RN, "The decks of all HM Ships and shore establishments were manned and gave us three cheers as we passed, the sight of Hermes flight deck manned for us is something I will never forget." She then went on to Avonmouth for a refit prior to return to her owners.

### **Captain E Harrison (1954-56): Master, Baltic Ferry**

### **Bill Langton (1967-69): Second Officer, Baltic Ferry**

Once hostilities were over the crew were relieved and flown home. She eventually returned to the UK in April 1983.

### **Ronald Wilfrid Warwick OBE RNR LLD FNI (56-57): Chief Officer, QE2**

She arrived back in Ascension to offload the injured and then return for more casualties but as the war was producing casualties at a much faster rate than expected it was decided she should return to Southampton, undertaking RAS under extremely difficult sea conditions to load fuel and offload ammunition. She departed on 29<sup>th</sup> June and entered home waters on 11<sup>th</sup> June. On 12<sup>th</sup> June she arrived in the Solent and was welcomed by the Queen Mother in the Royal Yacht, 6,000 spectators lined the shore and ships and small craft sounded their whistles as the great liner arrived home.. Military personnel and the injured were disembarked, the ship was released from military



service having steamed 14,000 miles. The crew quietly went about their business of preparing for a refit which took nine weeks and then she was back in civilian service as a passenger liner.

**Captain Herbert Rogeron Lawton (51-52): Master, Lycaon**

*Lycaon* returned to the UK on the 21<sup>st</sup> April 1983 and remained under charter until she arrived at Falmouth for layup on 20<sup>th</sup> July 1983.

**Colin Edward Elms (54-56): Chief Officer in Avelona Star**

*Avelona Star* left Port Stanley on the 11<sup>th</sup> November and returned to the UK to restore, before returning to the Falklands. She made a number of trips between the UK and the Falklands before being returned to her owners during May 1984.

**Matthew (Matt) Winter (71-73): Second Mate, Laertes**

After a three week voyage home “I left the ship in Devonport on the 22/08/82, returned home for some leave, and continued my seagoing life. I visited the Falklands twice shortly afterwards (in 85 and 86) as Chief Officer of MV Merchant Principal, supplying Mount Pleasant Airport with building materials via East Cove.”

**OTHER OCs POSSIBLY INVOLVED**

Please email [alfie@hmsconway.org](mailto:alfie@hmsconway.org) if you can clarify any of these entries.

**Rear Admiral Neil E. Rankin CB JP CBE (1955-58)**

Several OCs believe he was involved in the war but I cannot confirm this from any online sources. Almost all sources say “held tri-Service command in the Falkland Islands as a Rear Admiral” but do not say *when* that was. He is not mentioned in any Falklands War sources and only one of the vessels he commanded (*Andromeda*) was at the Falklands but he was in her much later and being a ship’s captain in the war does not sit well with the post he is thought to have held.

**P Hughes (Years not know)**

One source claims that he was involved in the Falklands and mentions St Helena. This could be the island or the vessel RMS *St Helena*. I can find no trace of the island being directly involved in the war whereas RMS *St Helena* was requisitioned for service as support ship to the mine sweepers *Brecon* and *Ledbury* on 20<sup>th</sup> May 1982. Several MN officers and 19 St Helenians volunteered to stay with her for her charter but I cannot find crew lists for 1982-83. To further complicate matters there is no P Hughes with the years 68-70 but there are three P Hughes listed as OCs. Peter M Hughes (62-64) has never been to the Falklands leaving two candidates:

- Phillip Hughes (56-58)
- Peter Hughes (54-56)

**Captain John Albert Martin Taylor (47- 49)**

One source says that the John was Master of *British Pilot* during the campaign but I can find no trace of him or this vessel being involved on any website or book about the campaign. Eight BP River Class tankers (all with names prefixed with *British...*) were requisitioned but there is no record of *any* vessel named *British Pride* or similar.

**FINALE**

**Brian Lockwood (72-74) & Steve Martin (70-73): British Antarctic Survey**

Let’s end where we started.... Before the campaign had even begun these two, the youngest OCs involved in the war had been arrested, questioned and transferred to Tierra Del Fuego where they were imprisoned. Well treated, they were eventually flown back to the UK via Montevideo.

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