

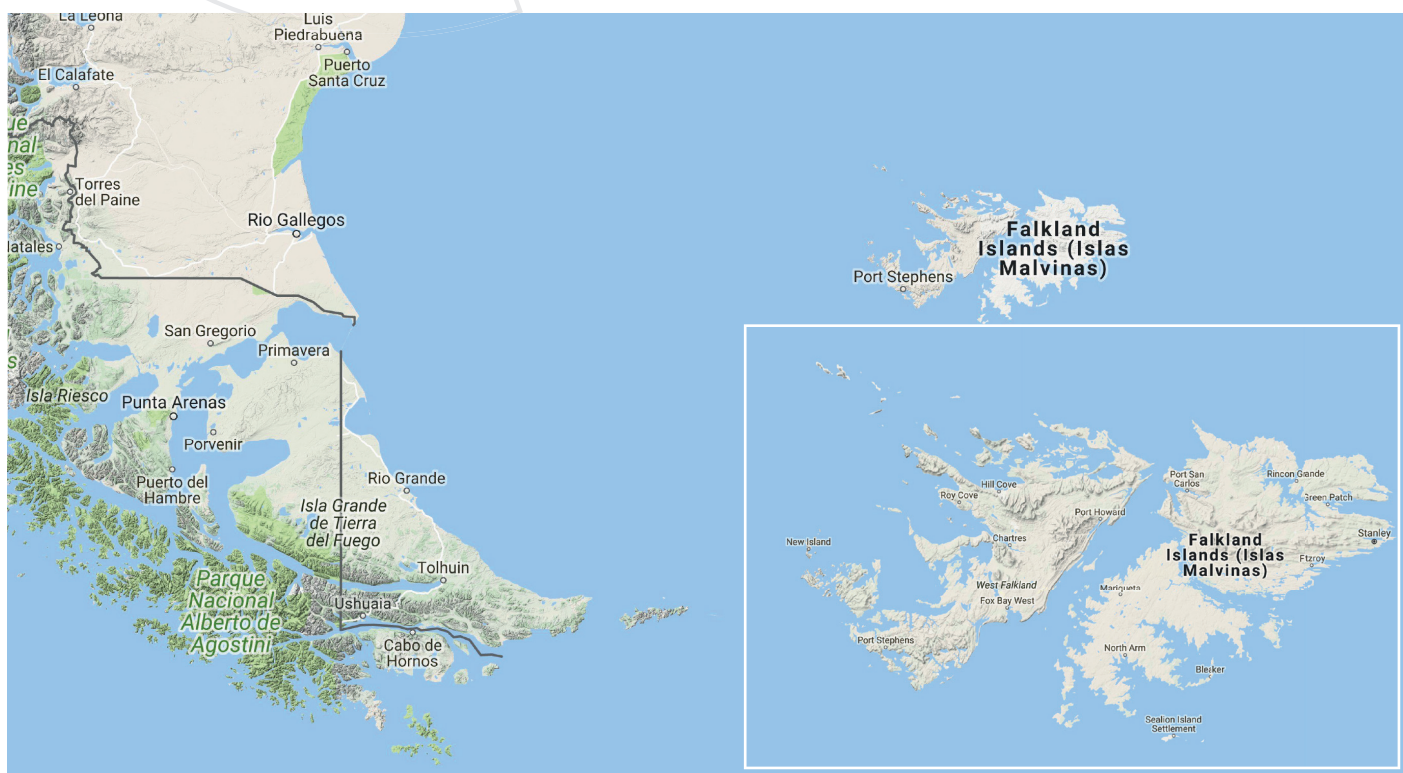
# LONG RANGE MISSIONS

## THE FALKLANDS WAR

### LONG RANGE MISSIONS – THE FALKLANDS WAR

The 1982 Falklands War is often taught and discussed from the position of its political rights and wrongs and the wider ramifications it had for the British and Argentinian leaderships at the time. In this material, the main focus is on the basic narrative of the military war and, in particular, the RAF Operation Black Buck.

### BACKGROUND TO THE FALKLANDS CONFLICT



**The Falkland Islands are a group of islands in the Atlantic Ocean, 300 miles off the South American coast and 8,000 miles from the UK. There are two larger islands – East and West Falklands – and lots of smaller ones.**

The Islands were uninhabited when European explorers and adventurers first started landing there in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Spain was first to claim ownership of the Islands, under laws issued by the Pope that asserted Spanish rights to govern South America. However, according to English and French sources from the time, it was an English sailor, Captain John Strong, who in 1690 was the first European to land on

the Islands, before the French then landed there in 1701.

The French established the first settlement on the Islands in 1764, but within two years had left. The British separately established a settlement, Port Egmont, on West Falkland in 1765. They abandoned this in 1774, but left behind a plaque claiming the Islands as the property of the British king. The uninhabited Falklands then became an occasional stopping place for ships

crossing the Atlantic, but with no formal port.

In 1820, the new South American country of Argentina (which was created from the Spanish colony in the region) claimed the Islands for itself. However, as Argentina was a new state, still locked in a war with Spain, its claims were largely ignored. Argentina did establish a settlement on the Islands, but the US Navy destroyed it in 1831 over a dispute about seal hunting.

In 1833, British sailors created a permanent settlement on the Falklands, forming the basis of the current settlements on the Islands,

# LONG RANGE MISSIONS

## THE FALKLANDS WAR



and the Falklands are now classified as a British Overseas Territory.

The Falkland Islanders are mainly of British descent, and most consider themselves British.

The Argentinian claims to the Islands are partly historical, based on inheriting the areas previously under Spanish control in the nineteenth century, and partly geographical, as Argentina is the closest country to the Falklands. The Argentinians call the Falklands 'Las Malvinas', from the eighteenth-century French name Îles Malouines.

During the First World War, the Islands became important to Britain for supporting naval activities. The Battle of the Falkland Islands in December 1914

saw German naval vessels destroyed by the Royal Navy and deterred from further activities in the South Atlantic. Argentina was neutral during the First World War. During the Second World War, Britain, the US and Argentina had a more complex relationship, due to Argentinian sympathies towards the Axis countries. Overall, however, Argentina remained outside the conflict.

In the post-1945 era, there were talks in British government circles of returning or potentially leasing (similar to renting) the Islands to the Argentinians. However, official visits to the Falklands and discussions with the Islanders always resulted in a statement saying that the Islanders wished to remain British.

The Argentinians started to make serious claims on the Islands from the 1940s. The timing of the claims usually coincided with the Argentinian government having domestic problems – the demands for the Falklands acted as a way of distracting the Argentinian population from other issues. After all, the Islands have little strategic value, and their main business is sheep farming.

However, in recent decades, there have been suggestions of oil or other resources to be found off the Falklands coast, so ownership of the Islands now has a potential economic element as well.

### FACT BOX

Human population of the Falklands Islands: **2,932** (2012 census)

Number of sheep on the Islands: approximately **700,000**

Number of penguins: approximately **1 million**

Number of landmines on the beaches: **20,000** to stop further invasion. However, they have resulted in keeping the beaches free from intruders, therefore making great penguin breeding grounds (the penguins are too light to trigger the mines).

There are **778** islands in the Falklands group

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## APRIL 1982 – INVASION

**In 1982, the population of the Islands was under 2,000. In the previous year, the British had withdrawn a Royal Navy ice patrol vessel from the Falklands, which some believe indicated a slow withdrawal from the region. There had been a number of attempted negotiations between the Argentinian and British governments about ownership of the Islands over the decades, but this became more pressing under the new Argentinian president General Galtieri.**

On 2 April 1982, Argentina invaded the Falklands. The attack was part of a show of political strength in Argentina in response to unrest in the country – General Galtieri believed that it would help secure his

military junta (the military council in charge of the country). As there was no reason for the Islanders to expect an attack, they were completely unprepared. The 80 Royal Marines stationed there were vastly outnumbered by the Argentinian force of 3,000, and the Islands were quickly captured.

The next day, the United Nations (UN) demanded the immediate withdrawal of Argentinian forces, but instead they sent more troops. Britain's ally, the United States, wanted to stay out of the conflict due to its own politics with South America, but appointed their ambassador, Alexander Haig, as a negotiator to try to resolve the conflict.

At the same time as negotiations began, the British government, under the leadership of Margaret Thatcher, sent a naval task force of over 100 ships and 28,000 servicemen to liberate the Islands. The naval force and British military response was approved by UK Parliament, including the opposition parties. The naval force included two aircraft carriers; fleet flagship HMS *Hermes* and HMS *Invincible*, along with accompanying frigates; three nuclear submarines; amphibious ships; specialist vessels; and 50 ships requisitioned from the commercial fleet (non-military), including the QE2 (the passenger liner *Queen Elizabeth II*), Canberra and a converted hospital ship, *Uganda*.

## THE PROBLEMS OF A WAR IN THE SOUTH ATLANTIC

**By the 1980s, Britain had become used to seeing itself as a member of NATO and was focused on the Cold War. The Falklands was the first time for many years that Britain had been engaged in a conflict on its own, many miles from home. Cuts to the UK military over the years meant that fighting a war without a military ally was a huge risk. The naval task force had to include non-military vessels; otherwise, there would not have been enough ships to send to the South Atlantic.**

The UK had once been the world's leading naval power, but political priorities such as the Cold War – along with Britain no longer being an imperial power, governing a global empire – had meant that a massive navy was no longer a necessity. By 1982, Britain's military focus was on fighting land wars and short- to medium-range air attacks and defence.

The distance of 8,000 miles between the UK and the Falklands is a huge distance to travel – to get to the Falklands would usually mean a long flight to South America and then a further flight to the Islands. By ship it takes weeks – it would have taken

the naval task force nearly a month to reach the Falkland Islands. This posed a further problem – would a military response get to the Islands in time to do anything to stop a full Argentinian occupation?

Support was shown from Britain's allies through political means. The EEC (forerunner of the EU) introduced sanctions against Argentina for its act of aggression, and the EEC also declared their support for Britain in the conflict. While the US didn't want to get involved, it would eventually share pieces of military intelligence with the UK to support British actions.

Nonetheless, this war was very much seen as a British affair. No one was prepared to send troops to help Britain. South American politics meant that most of the countries of South America initially supported Argentinian actions, although once again vocally rather than through military support. For some, this was a battle between a former colonial power versus the new independent world. However, what it really proved to be was a test for the British military and a gamble for its politicians.

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## THE LAST STEPS TO WAR

**With the Naval Task Force was on its way but still with some weeks to arrival, the British government declared a 200-mile exclusion zone around the Islands (12 April 1982). This was to try and deter further Argentinian attacks on the Islands while the peace negotiators worked to bring an end to the hostilities.**

British forces started the invasion to retake the islands on 25 April and succeeded in taking South Georgia, an island that then came under the Falklands group, though it's over

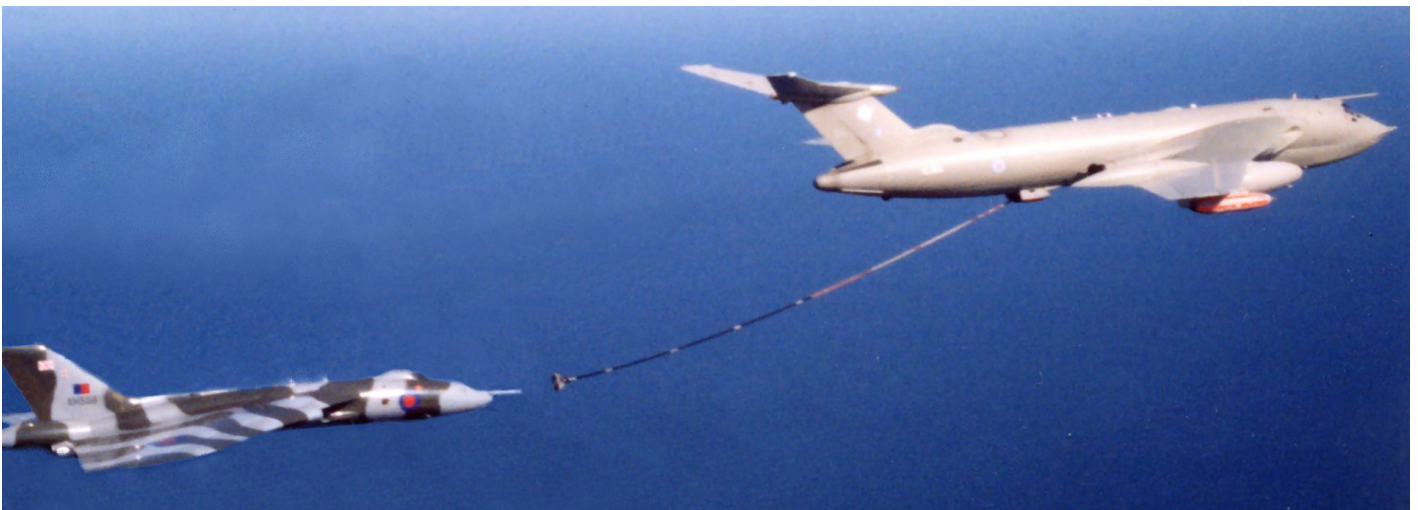
900 miles from the main Falklands grouping.

On 29 April the Argentinian government refused US Ambassador Haig's peace proposals.

The US also then announced its political support for Britain.

Then on 1 May the conflict became a full-scale war.

## FLYING LONG RANGE – FEATS OF ENGINEERING



*Caption*

**Just as the Naval Task Force had been dispatched while the negotiations were happening, an assessment of what else would be needed if talks failed was also taking place with the RAF.**

Due to the politics of the time none of the South American countries or the United States would allow the British to use their air bases at the start of the conflict, so the RAF had to make plans to fly only from British bases. However, the closest British airbase to the Falklands was in the Ascension Islands, also in the Atlantic but still 3,900 miles from the Falklands – that was the closest the British could get for an air attack. The existing aircraft and equipment just had not been designed for such a long-range

mission – on paper an air attack seemed impossible. The engineers and scientists had to make it possible in case the peace negotiations failed.

The plan itself was simple. In order to stop the Argentinians from being able to bring large amounts of troops and supplies into the Falklands, the British had to make the main airport and runway on the Islands at Stanley (the capital) unusable – this meant the mission would be to attack the runway from the air.

The challenge was how to fly over 7,800 miles (3,900 miles there and 3,900 miles back again). None of the bombers could fly that distance without being refuelled, but because the RAF had been focused on short and medium targets in Europe it had stopped using mid-air refuelling equipment. Refuelling mid-air required a second large aircraft carrying huge amounts of fuel to refill the bomber's fuel tank by means of the two aircraft lining up and connecting while still flying. Refuelling in the air had been done in the early 1960s but it was abandoned because it was no longer needed – now it was.



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Engineers had to search airbases for the old technology (in particular a refuelling probe). In the end the engineers did recover some of this equipment, but the majority they had to invent from new or adapt from existing equipment – and they had a timeframe of about 4 weeks!

The Victor and the Nimrod large transporter aircraft had to be adapted to be the refuelling aircraft, along with some Hercules aircraft, while the Vulcan bomber aircraft had to be adapted to be refuelled in mid-air. Furthermore, all of the aircraft's pilots and crew needed to learn very quickly how to use the equipment and how to link up mid-air and as well as how to ensure they reached the mission target.

In addition, someone had to work out the mathematics for how much fuel each aircraft could carry, use to refuel the bomber and still leave enough to be able to return to the Ascension Islands.

All the bomber aircraft were themselves 20 years old and their navigation systems were not as sophisticated as those used today, so concentrating on reaching the correct destination was also extremely important for any crew. Once airborne the crew would have to rely on their instruments entirely for direction and for meeting up for refuelling. Most of the flying was over the ocean so they could not use landmarks on the ground to judge distance or recognise where they were.



On 24 April five Vulcans left the UK for the Ascension Islands where they were to wait to see what would happen.

Once the peace proposals were rejected the RAF set in motion its part of the action for the Falklands conflict.

*“Just before midnight on 30 April, two crews from 101 Squadron climbed into two 22 year-old bombers to set out on what was then the longest bombing mission ever attempted.”*

The RAF [www.raf.mod.uk/history/OperationBlackBuck.cfm](http://www.raf.mod.uk/history/OperationBlackBuck.cfm)

The mission was codenamed ‘Operation Black Buck’. For each attack on the Falklands airfield (there would be seven altogether), two Vulcans would take off, but only one would be used to carry out the mission; the second was a spare in case of any failure in the main bomber. To fly this distance, and to return, each mission required the support of twelve Victor tankers on the outbound journey, and a further two Victors and a Nimrod for the return (the bombers were lighter on the way back and so needed less fuel).

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## OPERATION BLACK BUCK

**On the first mission, 13 aircraft left Ascension Island.**

**The main bomber detected a fault while flying and turned back – the spare now became the main bomber.**

One of the Victors (refuelling aircraft) developed a mechanical problem and had to turn back, but it also had a spare aircraft, which now took over; 11 aircraft continued with the mission. The mid-air refuelling worked for most of the outward journey, with each supporting aircraft returning to the Ascension Islands once it had supplied the bomber. However, on the last-but-one slot, one of the probes receiving fuel was damaged; to overcome this, the two Victor aircraft swapped roles and one refuelled the other and then left. In order to test whether any damage had been done to the Vulcan bomber, the last Victor, commanded by Squadron Leader Bob Tuxford, decided to refuel the Vulcan earlier than planned.

Due to the early refuel, Tuxford needed to make sure that the Vulcan would still have enough fuel to complete the mission and then make the return journey as planned. To do this, he ate into his own fuel reserve, giving the Vulcan fuel that he knew his own aircraft needed if it was to get back to the Ascension Islands. By doing so, Tuxford had made sure that the Vulcan's mission would succeed.

Tuxford's Victor now needed another aircraft to leave the Ascension Islands and meet it mid-air over the Atlantic to refuel. This would take incredible navigation skills by both aircraft.



There was one additional problem – when the last refuelling took place, both aircraft had entered into a radio-silence zone. This was a rule set down by the RAF so that the Argentinians wouldn't hear any messages and realise that an air attack was on its way. This meant that Tuxford could not send a radio message for the extra tanker to take off and meet him until he had heard the code word 'Polo' from the Vulcan – meaning that it had completed its mission and bombed the airfield. Fortunately, he heard the code word and an aircraft tanker reached him in time. If that tanker had not reached Tuxford, he, his crew and the Victor aircraft would have had to crash into the Atlantic Ocean.

The Vulcan was flown by Flight Lieutenant Withers, who successfully

completed the mission, dropping 21 bombs on the airfield in five seconds. The Argentinians were taken by surprise and put up no resistance.

The bomber's whole mission, from take-off to landing, had taken 15 hours and 50 minutes and had needed 18 refuellings. That is a long time to be totally focused on flying a complex aircraft.

Flight Lieutenant Withers was recognised for his role in the mission and awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross. Squadron Leader Bob Tuxford was recognised for his bravery and willingness to put the mission before his own safety, and was awarded the Air Force Cross.

The other six Black Buck operations were carried out across May and into June 1982; the last was on

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12 June. In addition to completing the mission aims, Operation Black Buck had demonstrated that the RAF was capable of inventiveness in the face of extreme problems and that it could fly difficult and dangerous long-range missions. Many around the world had thought that Operation Black Buck was

impossible – the RAF had proved that it was possible.

The Argentinians could now not use the airport at Stanley to launch large bombers to targeted British forces or bring in lots of supplies. However, this achievement was overshadowed by the terrible ground fighting in the

Falklands, the loss of life at sea and the political arguments, meaning that many people still do not know of the RAF's incredible technological success during the conflict.

## AT SEA AND ON THE GROUND

**The only way to get large numbers of British troops to the Islands was by ship. This meant that any of the troops landing on the Islands had to do so after weeks at sea. For the Royal Navy, it was their first key engagement since the Second World War.**

On 2 May, the Argentinian ship *General Belgrano* was sunk by torpedoes from the British submarine *HMS Conqueror*; 368 of the Argentinian crew were killed and approximately 650 were rescued. The sinking of the *Belgrano* became a contentious aspect of the war, with the two sides disagreeing about whether the ship was in the exclusion zone or sailing away from the Islands when it was hit.

Two days later, on 4 May, the British *HMS Sheffield* was struck by the Argentinians. The ten-year-old destroyer was hit in the control room, which quickly caught fire; 20 British seamen were killed and many more suffered from serious burns. The whole thing was filmed by television crews and shown on British TV, making the war very real to the British public, as sailors were



*HMS Sheffield Nathalmad* [CC BY 3.0 (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/3.0/>)], via Wikimedia Commons

filmed leaping out of the flames into the sea. *HMS Sheffield* was the first major British RN vessel to be destroyed in 37 years – the first since the Second World War.

On 14/15 May, the SAS (British Special Forces) carried out raids against Argentinian forces and destroyed aircraft. At the same time, the British government created proposals for an end to the conflict, which the Argentinian government rejected on 18 May. The UN announced on 20 May that talks had failed. That same night,

British troops landed on East Falkland to start the battle to reclaim the Island.

In one of the fiercest battles of the war, on 28 May, the British 2nd Parachute Regiment retook the settlements of Goose Green and Darwin. They then started across the Island to liberate the capital Stanley, enduring harsh winter conditions. Their journey was known as the 'yomp' and it was across difficult ground.



# LONG RANGE MISSIONS THE FALKLANDS WAR



## THE END OF THE CONFLICT

**On 4 June, Britain and the United States used their veto in the UN Security Council to prevent the United Nations' call for an immediate ceasefire.**

The fighting continued into June, despite UN attempts to force a ceasefire. More British troops were getting ready to join the fighting. On 8 June, the landing craft RFA (Royal Fleet Auxiliary) *Sir Galahad* and RFA *Sir Tristram* were preparing to land troops, including units of Welsh and Scots Guards, when they were attacked by Argentinian aircraft. *Sir Galahad* was set ablaze and 56 men lost their lives, the biggest single loss suffered by the British during the conflict. A further 150 were injured, many with horrific burns.

Bob Darby was a Captain in the parachute regiment that was sent to

the Falklands, and he was in a number of the major encounters – battles with the Argentinians. He recalls seeing his friends and comrades killed as he crossed the Island, and understanding the reality that 'there was nothing glorious about war'. He had written his letter home just in case of death, but believes that his training and the discipline of the British Army helped them to succeed despite the terrible conditions. He described the enemy as being 'just men like him – sent to do a job', but he also noted that they did not have such good support or kit.

Indeed, as the fighting progressed, it was noticeable that the Argentinian military morale was low. Many of the Argentinian prisoners of war were teenage conscripts with little training – they were also receiving little in the way of supplies.

Over the 13–14 June, the fighting continued around the capital, but the Argentinian forces were by now only able to offer limited resistance. British forces marched into the town of Stanley itself almost unopposed. The Argentinians surrendered on 14 June and the war was declared formally over on 20 June.

A total of 252 British service personnel and three civilians were killed in the war. An estimated 300 servicemen were wounded. No official figures are available for Argentinian casualties, but it is estimated that at least 655 were killed. The dead from both sides are buried on the Islands or were lost at sea. There are memorials to the British servicemen, in both the Falklands and the UK.

## THE POLITICAL FALLOUT

**The Falklands War resulted in the Argentinian president General Galtieri being overthrown, and the Argentinian people once again turned their focus to their domestic problems. In the UK, the Falklands War had a huge effect on the British prime minister Margaret Thatcher, making her far more popular than she had been before. Some have argued that the success of the Falklands War helped her to win the 1984 UK General Election.**

The political wranglings over the sinking of the *Belgrano* continued for many years, often showing the UK in a very negative light internationally.

In the years following the Falklands War, relatively good relations have existed between the UK and Argentina, although the Argentinian government still believes that the Islands should be theirs and raises claims every few years over the sovereignty of the Islands. However, the people living on the Islands have

never wavered in their wish to be considered part of the UK, voting overwhelmingly time and time again to remain British. They argue that they can uphold that right under the UN rules on 'self-determination', while the Argentinians continue to argue that the Islands are within their geographical sphere.

Since 1982, the UK government has maintained a British force on the Islands, and very often an RAF one. In the spring of 2012, Prince William,

the Duke of Cambridge, was stationed on the Islands as part of his military service. To get to the Falklands Islands today, people usually travel to a South American country and then fly from there. Ships still visit the Islands, which have their own tourist industry and play a role in conservation

Attached are the two UN resolutions demanding an end to the war and the surrender agreement of June 1982.



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## TIMELINE

**2 April:** Argentinian forces invade the Falklands Islands and capture the capital Port Stanley, the Governor Rex Hunt is forced to surrender.

**3 April:** The UN Security Council issues Resolution 502 which calls for an immediate Argentinian withdrawal from the Falklands.

The RAF begins to explore methods for supporting the retaking of the Falkland Islands

**5 April:** Over 100 ships are despatched to the Islands as a British military task force. Lord Carrington, the Foreign Secretary, resigns over the invasion and is replaced by Francis Pym.

**24 April:** Five Vulcan aircraft leave the UK for the Ascension Islands.

**25 April:** South Georgia (then part of the Falklands Islands group) is retaken by Royal Marines.

**29 April:** The Argentinian government refused US Ambassador Haig's peace proposals. The US also then announced its political support for Britain.

**30 April:** The naval task force arrives in 200-mile exclusion zone surrounding Falklands.

**1 May:** The conflict became a full-scale war.

The RAF makes its first attack as part of Operation Black Buck.

**2 May:** The *General Belgrano*, an Argentinian battle cruiser is hit by a torpedo from the British submarine HMS *Conqueror*, it sinks and 320 Argentine sailors are killed.

**4 May:** Destroyer HMS *Sheffield* is hit by an Argentinian missile, 20 are killed, the ship has to be abandoned.

**19 May:** A British helicopter carrying SAS soldiers comes down over the sea – 22 are killed.

**21 May:** The British land at San Carlos to begin the land battle for the main islands. The Argentinians sink the British frigate HMS *Ardent* and 22 killing 22 sailors. 15 Argentine aircraft shot down.

**24 May:** British Frigate HMS *Antelope* has to be abandoned when a bomb goes off that was being defused by disposal officer.

**25 May:** HMS *Coventry* sunk is by Argentine aircraft, 19 men are killed. 12 are killed in an attack on a British Merchant Navy vessel the *Atlantic Conveyor*.

**26 May:** UN Security Council adopts Resolution 505

**27 – 28 May:** The Battle of Goose Green on the East Falkland Island is the scene of some of the heaviest fighting in the war - 17 British soldiers are killed and the Argentinian forces there surrendering – over 1000 are taken as Prisoners of War.

**4 June** UN Security Council Resolution calling for an immediate ceasefire is vetoed by Britain and the US

**8 June:** RFA (Royal Fleet Auxiliary) *Sir Galahad* and RFA *Sir Tristram* off Fitzroy are attacked and over 50 British soldiers are killed.

**12 June:** The last of the Operation Black Buck missions is flown

**11 – 12 June:** The areas of Mount Longdon, Two Sisters and Mount Harriet on the East Falkland Islands are captured by British Forces. The British destroyer HMS *Glamorgan* is hit in a missile attack and badly damaged and three Falkland civilians are killed in a British naval bombardment.

**14 June:** Argentine General Mario Menendez surrenders to British Major General Jeremy Moore at Port Stanley.

**17 June:** Argentine President Leopoldo Galtieri resigns as leader of the country's military junta.

# LONG RANGE MISSIONS THE FALKLANDS WAR

## USING THIS INFORMATION

This historical information can be combined with the introductory film and resources from the resource section for exploring some creative ideas in a school club or informal club, or for a more curriculum-based lesson.

Below are some ideas and enquiry questions that these materials could support.

In addition to the historical information above, case studies and extra information are available in the resource section of this website. These include biographies and aircraft technology case studies.

## KEY QUESTIONS FOR EXPLORATION IN ANY SETTING:

- Why did the RAF stop refuelling in the air before 1982?
- Identify the different aircraft that were used for Operation Black Buck and what each of their main roles was before 1982.
- Find out which of the UK airbases were important for developing the technology to support Operation Black Buck.
- Find out whether other military branches received awards during the Falklands War.

## HOW TO USE THIS MATERIAL IN A HISTORY CLUB OR LUNCHTIME/ AFTER-SCHOOL/INFORMAL CLUB

These ideas are suitable for a mixture of age groups and abilities. They can also be used with the interactive map on this website to begin a local history investigation concerning the RAF.

### SHOW THE FILM: *LONG RANGE MISSIONS - OPERATION BLACK BUCK*

### PROVIDE THE HISTORICAL INFORMATION OR READ IT TO STUDENTS.

**Ask the students to explain the importance of Operation Black Buck by creating one of the following:**

(you might want to use some of the questions from the box to get them thinking)

- An information poster about the steps needed for Operation Black Buck to be completed.
- A newspaper story for their school/group newsletter on the role of the RAF during the Falklands War.
- A display for the school/class/group noticeboard of the key steps of Operation Black Buck.
- A diagram on how refuelling is carried out in the air.

**Extension:** Find out about navigation techniques.

Now use this information to start investigating the local history of an airbase near you – this can be done starting with the interactive map. All of the equipment used was fitted onto the aircraft in the UK before flying out to the Ascension Islands – tell this story in relation to a UK airbase. Over the course of the last century, over 1,500 airbases or places have been used by the RAF, so even if you don't live near to one now, there will have been one nearby at some point.

Find out about the base. Identify what other information or understanding of an historical period is needed to tell the story of that base.

# LONG RANGE MISSIONS THE FALKLANDS WAR

## LESSONS IN SUPPORT OF THE CURRICULUM AND/OR EXAMINATIONS



### GUIDANCE ON HOW THIS MATERIAL COULD BE USED IN A LESSON ABOUT:

1. Britain in the World since 1945
2. The Technology of Warfare/War and British Society

To support these lessons, there is additional information in the resources section, including information on the United Nations, NATO and the UN Security Council Resolutions on the Falklands War of 1982, as well as testimony from British veterans of the conflict.

## 1. BRITAIN IN THE WORLD SINCE 1945

### Ages 11 years and above

The information gathered here could be used with existing lessons on Britain since 1945 or as a single lesson or half lesson based on the model outline below. It can be used with other material on the political impact of the Falklands War or can be used to explore the nature of that war for the people fighting it from the British side.

Key example enquiry question:

### ***How did the RAF use technology to overcome some of the issues of fighting 8,000 miles from home?***

Watch the film *Long Range Missions - Operation Black Buck* and use the historical information. There is an information sheet on NATO and one on the United Nations in the resources section.

Using the information, ask the pupils what they think the key difficulties were for the UK after the Argentinian invasion.

Using the film and the historical information, ask the pupils to provide answers to the following questions (provide a reason for each answer):

- What is NATO?
- What was the main focus of NATO in 1982?
- How did Britain's membership of NATO affect its thinking about how its military might be used?
- Did Britain and Argentina have a history of fighting each other in the twentieth century?
- Were the Falklands militarily strategic for Britain between 1945 and 1982?
- Were the Falklands geographically important for Britain in 1982?

(If you want to know a bit more about Britain during the Cold War, you can show the students the film on this website – The Cold War and Intelligence Gathering.)

Use the information on Operation Black Buck – ask students to identify the three things that they think were key to the mission's success.

Ask the students to work in groups to identify ten facts from the information and the timeline that they believe tell the story of the Falklands War, and explain why have they chosen those ten facts.

**Extension:** Research the aircraft that the RAF used for Operation Black Buck.



# LONG RANGE MISSIONS THE FALKLANDS WAR



## 2. TECHNOLOGY OF WARFARE/WAR AND BRITISH SOCIETY

### Ages 14 and above

The resources here can be used to explore Operation Black Buck and why it demonstrated a technological achievement for the RAF in 1982 and/or the resources can be used to explore the Falklands War of 1982 as an historical event. Combined with other resources, the film and the historical information can help to explore the political motivations and legacy of the Falklands conflict.

Use the film, the historical information, the excerpts from Falklands veterans, the information about refuelling and the biographies of Flight Lieutenant Withers and Squadron Leader Bob Tuxford from the resource section.

Key question:

### **What can the Falklands War tell us about the British military (RAF) in 1982?**

Using the information on NATO, ask the students to identify what the British military priorities of 1981 were.

Show the film *Long Range Missions - Operation Black Buck*.

Share the information on Operation Black Buck (including the biographies of Flight Lieutenant Withers and Squadron Leader Bob Tuxford from the resources

For example:

Key problems faced	How they overcame the problem	Could this have been done before April 1982?

Ask students to create their own chronology for Operation Black Buck up until the end of the first mission, and add this along with the timeline information onto a map of the South Atlantic and the Falkland Islands. Select any observations from the biographies and veterans' accounts that help to tell the story of the conflict.

Ask students to identify what they think are the key points that they have learnt about people and

section) with the students, and ask them to identify the key problems that the RAF faced in order to support the conflict in the Falklands. Then ask students to identify what the RAF did (if they did anything) to overcome the problems they faced.

Ask the students to discuss whether any of the problems could have been prevented before the war started.

technology in 1982 from studying the Falklands War.

**Extension:** Read the two UN Resolutions 502 and 505 on the Falklands. Using the information on the UN, discuss or find out whether the UN could have done more to stop the Falklands War.

Find out what the UN has decided about the Falklands and its sovereignty since 1982.