

The Falkland's campaign of 1982.



Breakout

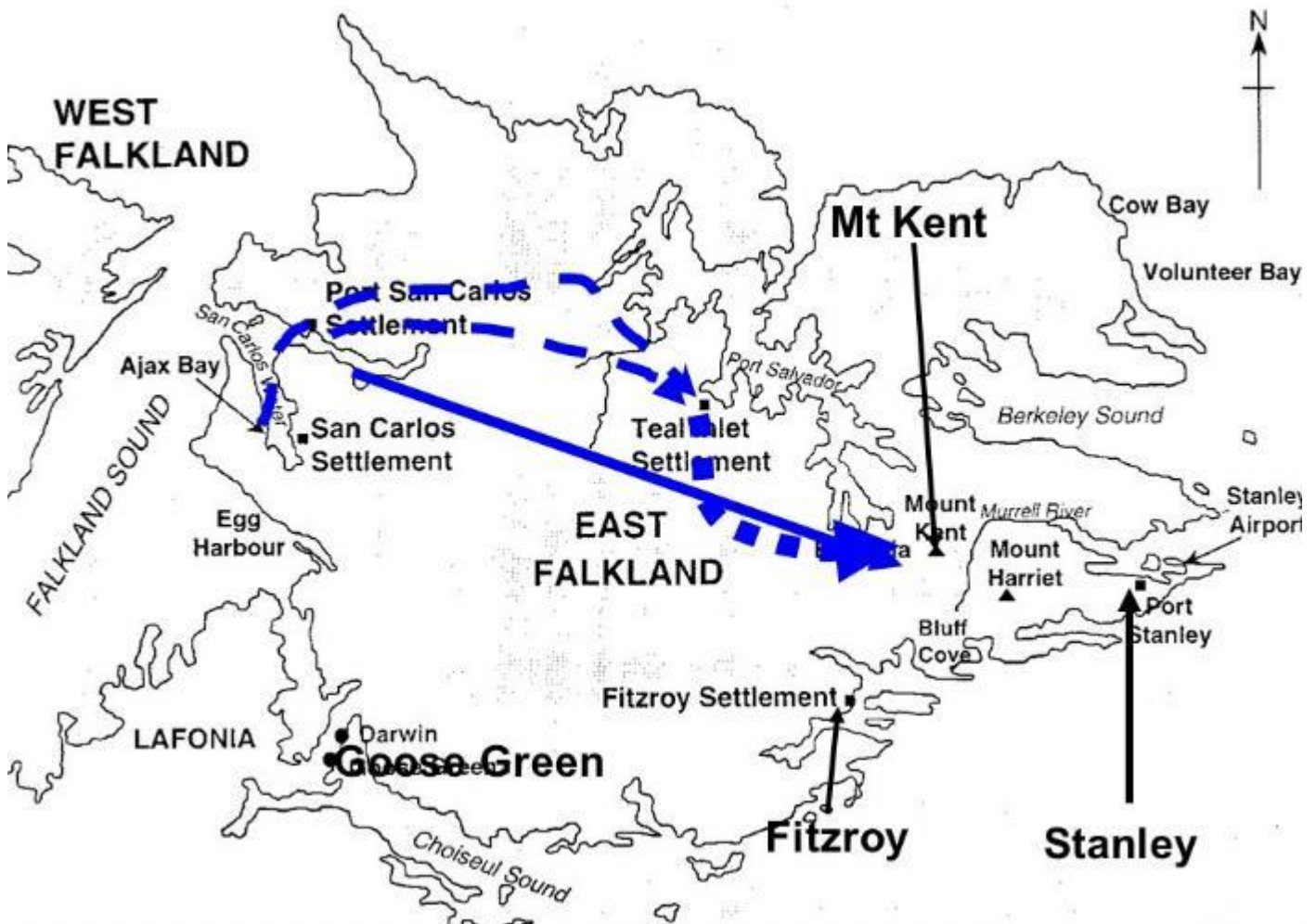
**Commodore Michael Clapp CB Royal Navy.
Commander Amphibious Task Group.
CTG 317.0**

And

**Major General Julian Thompson CB OBE
Commander Landing Force Task Group
CTG 317.1**

JULIAN

In our last talk I mentioned that General Jeremy Moore arrived a couple of days after the Goose Green battle. And by this time most of the rest of my brigade was on the move

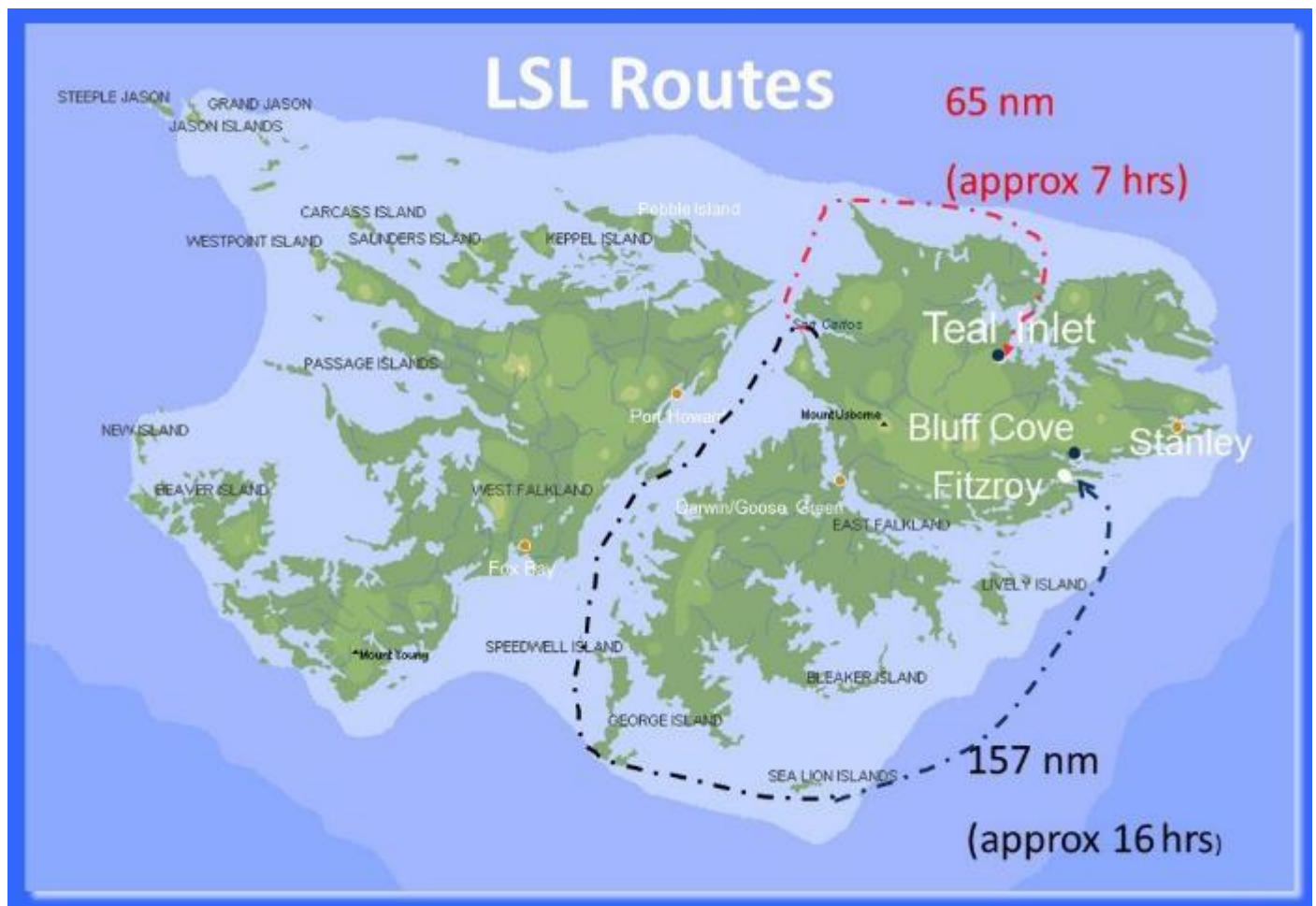


Just to remind you it involved 3 Para , 45 Cdo and 42 Cdo.

The other brigade consisting of 2 SG, 1 WG, and 1/7 GR had arrived, as had General Moore. I was very glad to see him. I briefed him on what we had been doing, he seemed happy, and I went off to move my HQ forward to catch up with my brigade.

General Moore had decided to let us go ahead with our approach on the northern route, a move that was already underway, while the other brigade used the southern route.

Just to remind you our sea supply routes were like this:



You will remember that Mike and I had discussed 5 Brigade and, for lack of any information, assumed that they would follow my logistic ‘trail’ and the northern route. Instead, they were allowed to use the southern route with all its disadvantages. Remember, this was without any proper consultation with Mike Clapp who was ‘dumped’ with the problem of supplying them; not a good example of how to run a joint operation.

However, General Moore’s agreement to my plan suited me well, as Mike and I had intended to use the northern route well before we arrived, and on the day we landed I had pushed out my recce on to the high ground overlooking our route, to give us warning of unfriendly eyes watching us.

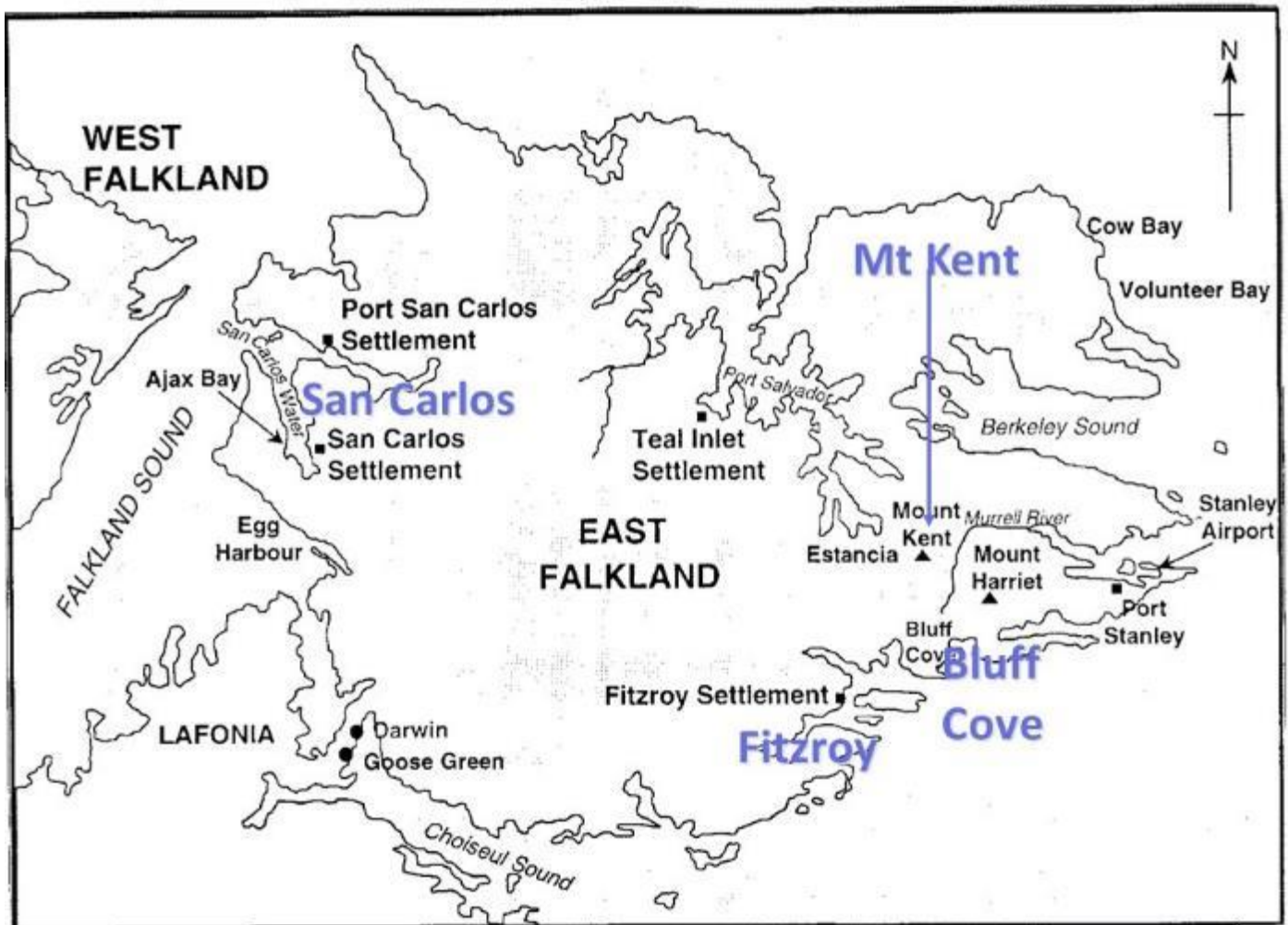


They did a grand job; one of their patrols saw an Argentine Special Forces patrol moving into position in **Top Malo House**. Soon after first light on 31 May, a fighting patrol of the Bde Reconnaissance troop was dropped by helicopter out of sight of Top Malo House. They approached unseen and, after a fierce little battle, killed five of the enemy patrol, and captured the remaining twelve. At a stroke the unfriendly eyes that could have monitored our route forward, and perhaps called down air strikes, had been eliminated.

Meanwhile the marines and paras slogged on.



The weather became fouler with driving rain and fog for much of the time, which slowed down the helicopter moves of guns and ammunition forward.



By 4 June most of my Brigade had deployed forward on the high ground in the Mount Kent area. By 3 June the leading elements of 2 Para were at Fitzroy and Bluff Cove. The remainder of 5 Inf Bde moved to the

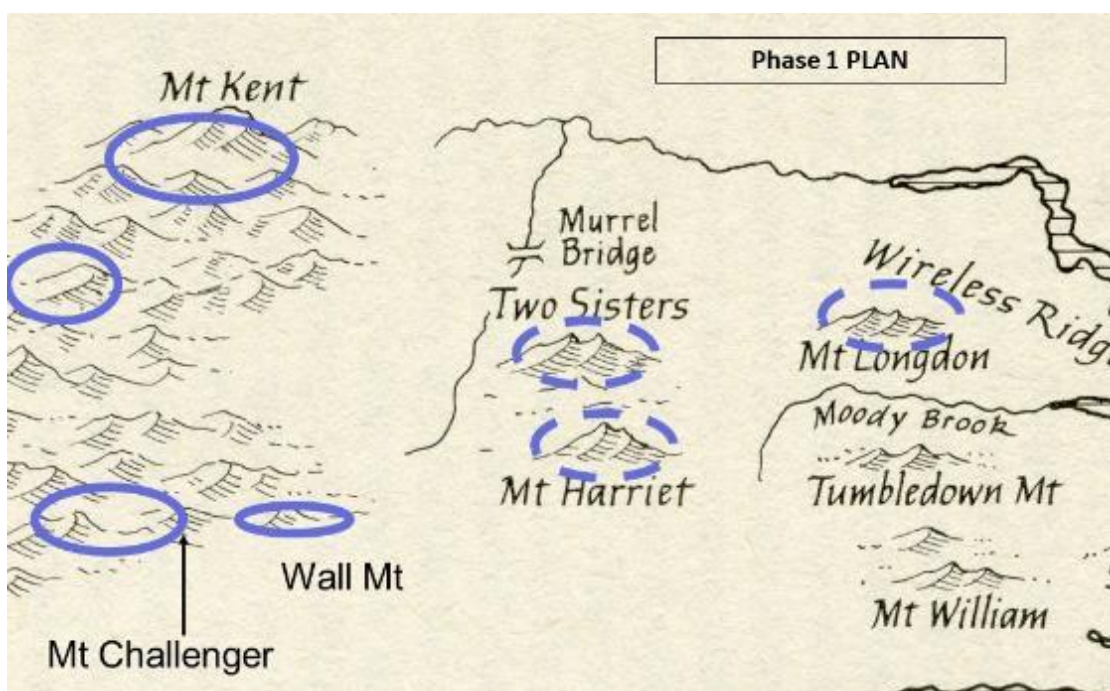
Fitzroy-Bluff Cove area over a series of days and nights. Thanks to the shortage of helicopters, most of the moves were by sea

Preparations of course included moving forward supplies, the biggest item being gun and mortar ammunition, all by sea and helicopter, there were no roads. Logistic build-up and patrolling occupied much of the next ten days before the main attack kicked off. My brigade was ready earlier than this, but Jeremy Moore wanted to wait until 5 Brigade were established on the southern axis before starting the push for Stanley. We were at the divisional conference when the news came in about the attack on the two LSLs at Port Pleasant, wrongly called Bluff Cove, by the media.



I remember leaving the conference wondering when we would get under way. My concern at the delay was the effect that weather was having on my brigade who had now been exposed to severe conditions for three weeks without any cover except ponchos, and there were several cases of cold injury, mainly trench foot caused by lack of any facilities to dry out. We were occupying high ground away from settlements.

For the forthcoming operation I had five manoeuvre units, 42 and 45 Commandos, 2 and 3 PARA, and 1WG. I gave orders orally, and my COS issued confirmatory notes. The divisional plan was a three phase operation.

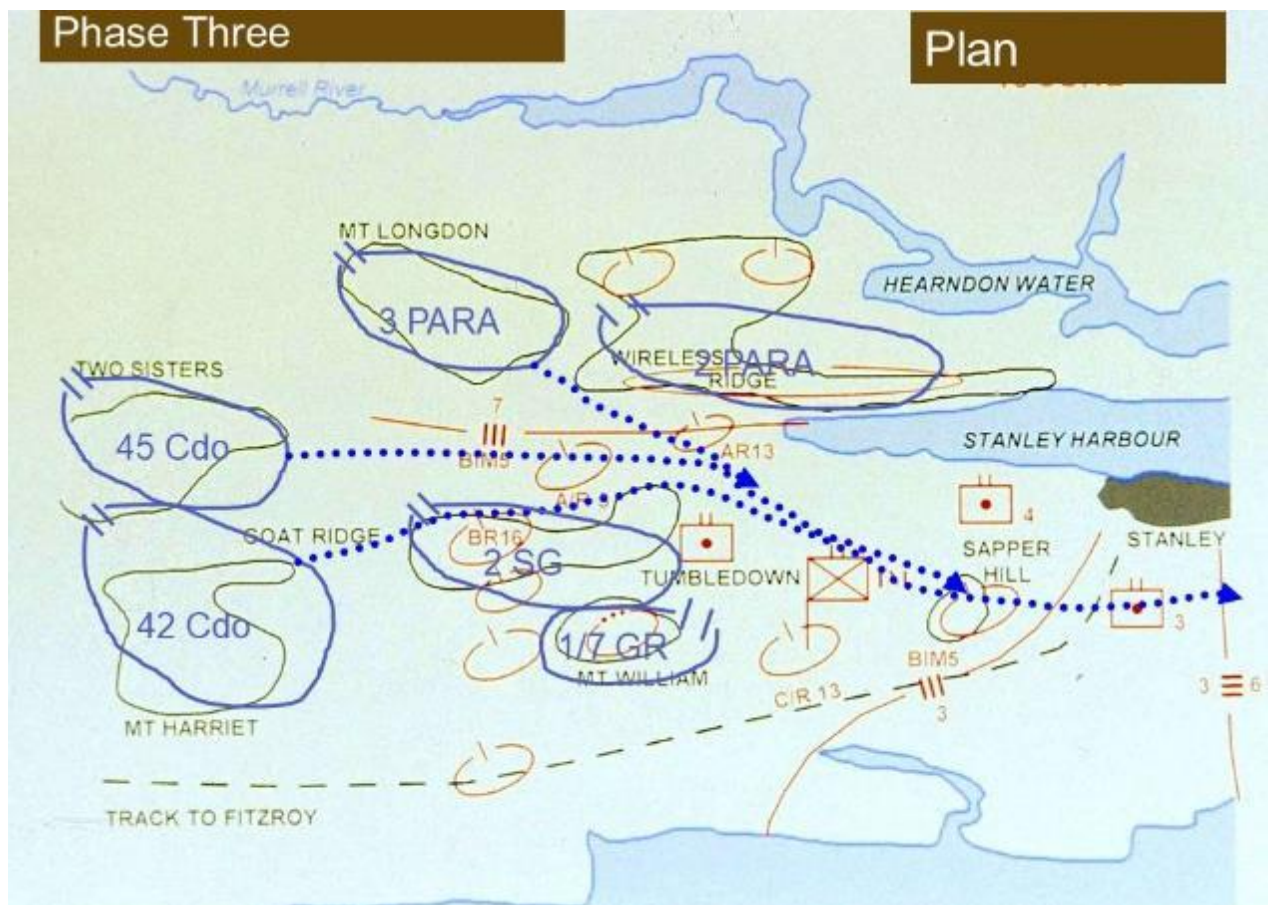


In phase 1 my brigade would take the outer ring of defences, and clear enough elbow room to move guns forward.

This would be followed by Phase 2 and both brigades attacking.



Phase 3 would be my brigade's task to seize up to the airport isthmus, cutting off the remnants of the enemy garrison.



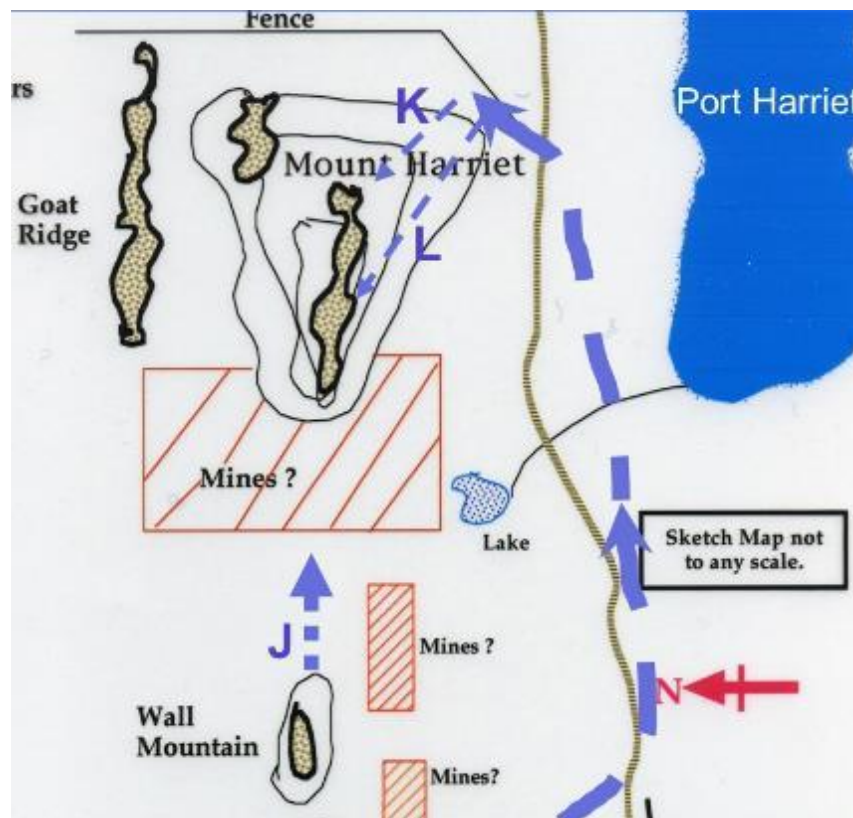
I did not tell my COs what to do, merely gave them objectives, and also told them that if they could exploit forward of their objectives in any particular phase, they were to do so.

I had to decide where I would go myself with my Tac, in the end I decided to stay where my Main HQ was sited behind and in the centre. I had contemplated following up with one of the manoeuvre units on foot, but felt that I might end up out of touch and unable to communicate with anyone. Had it been daylight it would have been different, then I would have found an OP from which I could take control if necessary.

When COs were on their feet and only had man-pack radios, communications were insecure. We used a system of nicknames for key terrain and events such as success, report lines, and boundaries. The enemy who had a good intercept service, and many more English speakers than we had Spanish ones, would eventually work out what many of the nicknames meant, but we hoped that by then it would be too late.

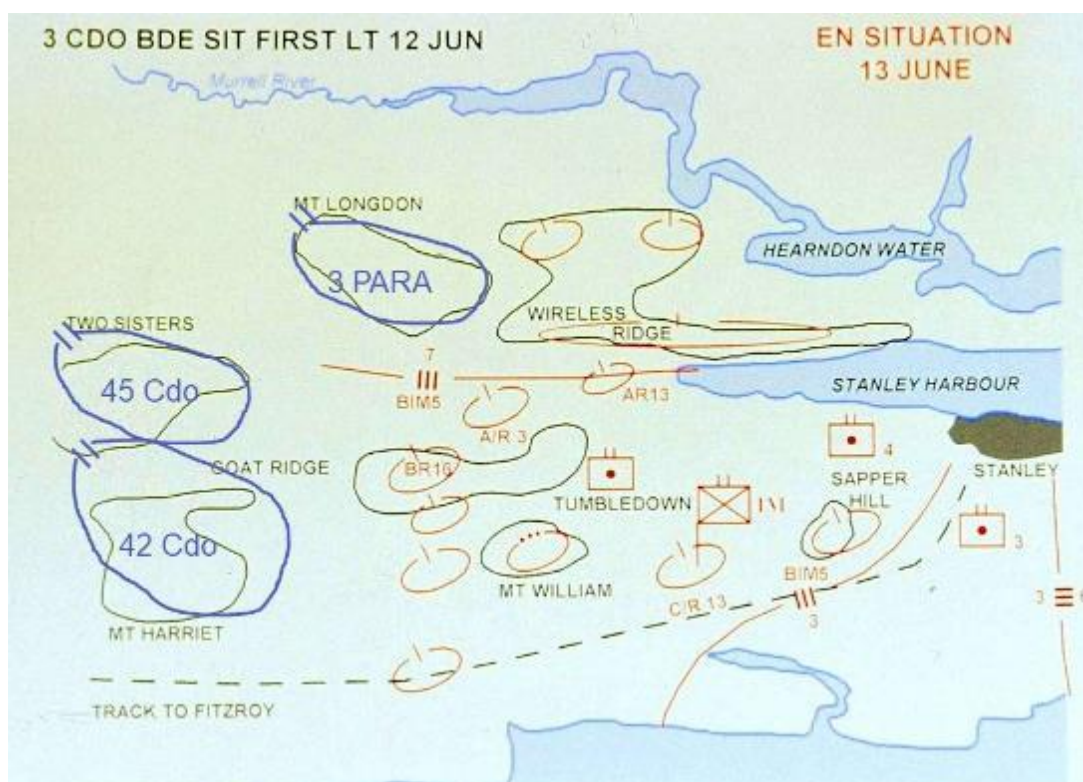
It is perhaps worth mentioning how my battalion/commando COs commanded in a night battle fought entirely on foot, at least this is how my COs did it then, I can't speak for now. He is not in a well-lit ops room, nor an armoured command vehicle, warm, protected from the weather. He is crouching, running, walking, lying, sometimes in pouring rain, or driving snow, or maybe he is lucky and the weather is fine. It is dark. Flashing a torch to look at a map can be unhealthy. He has to keep all the nicknames in his head, plus the call-signs of his companies. Terse radio messages, the occasional face-to-face contact is all he can count on. Face-to-face may mean going up to a subordinate and grabbing him, and shouting in his ear. He must keep a picture of the battle in his head and apply it to what knowledge he has acquired of the ground, some of which, but by no means all he may have got glimpses of in daylight, and which he may not have had time to study at length. His study of the map, and his training is vital, plus that ability to 'read a battle', which comes after long training, experience, and soldierly instinct which some have, and others do not. It was important for me to understand that when I spoke to COs on the radio, at intervals during the long night battle.

Not time to go into any detail. But just want to quickly run through 42 Cdo brilliant attack,



Quickly run through rationale and plan, plus patrolling

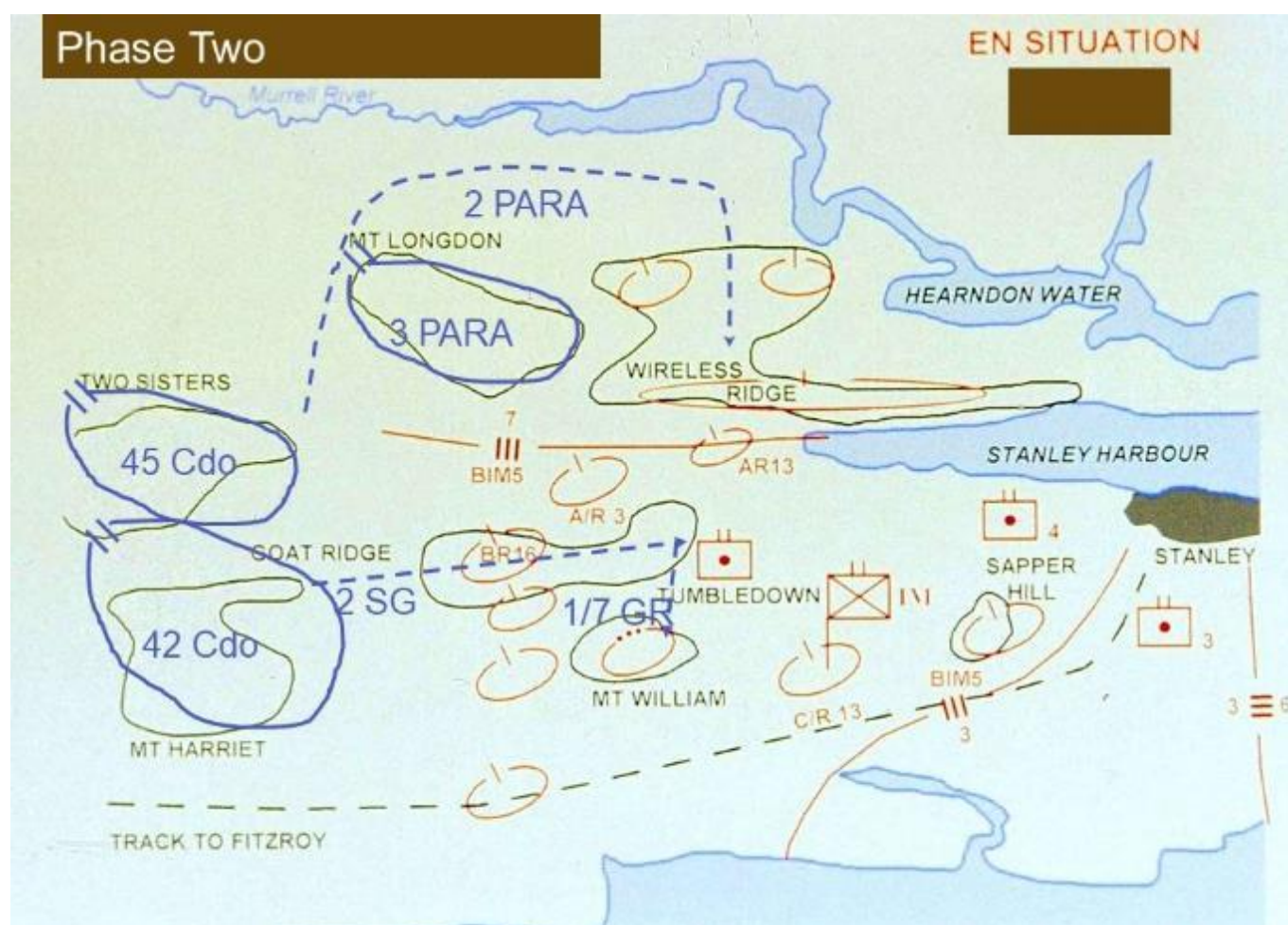
The three battalion/commando attacks went well, and I did not have to commit my reserve, 3 PARA and 1 WG. There were some close moments especially on Mt Longdon, but by first light all objectives were secure.



Although the CO of 45 Commando on Two Sisters reported that he was ready to exploit forward on to Tumbledown, I stopped him. Dawn was only a few hours off, and guns were running low on ammunition. I did not want him attacking in daylight with minimal artillery support. I think the hard fight 2 SG had on the mountain vindicates my decision.

The next attacks should have been the following night, but were postponed for a further 24 hours to allow gun positions to be restocked up to 480 rounds per gun, and 5 Bde to have a look at the ground. The attack in my Brigade boundaries was by 2 PARA, seizing Wireless Ridge.

Preparations for the next series of attacks were interrupted by four Argentine Skyhawks who attacked my HQ, and some of the gun positions, fortunately missing the lot. This had the effect of grounding all helicopters for a couple of hours. I gave the orders for Phase 3 just after we had been attacked. All the COs were in high spirits, there is nothing so good for morale as hearing that your superior HQ has been bombed.

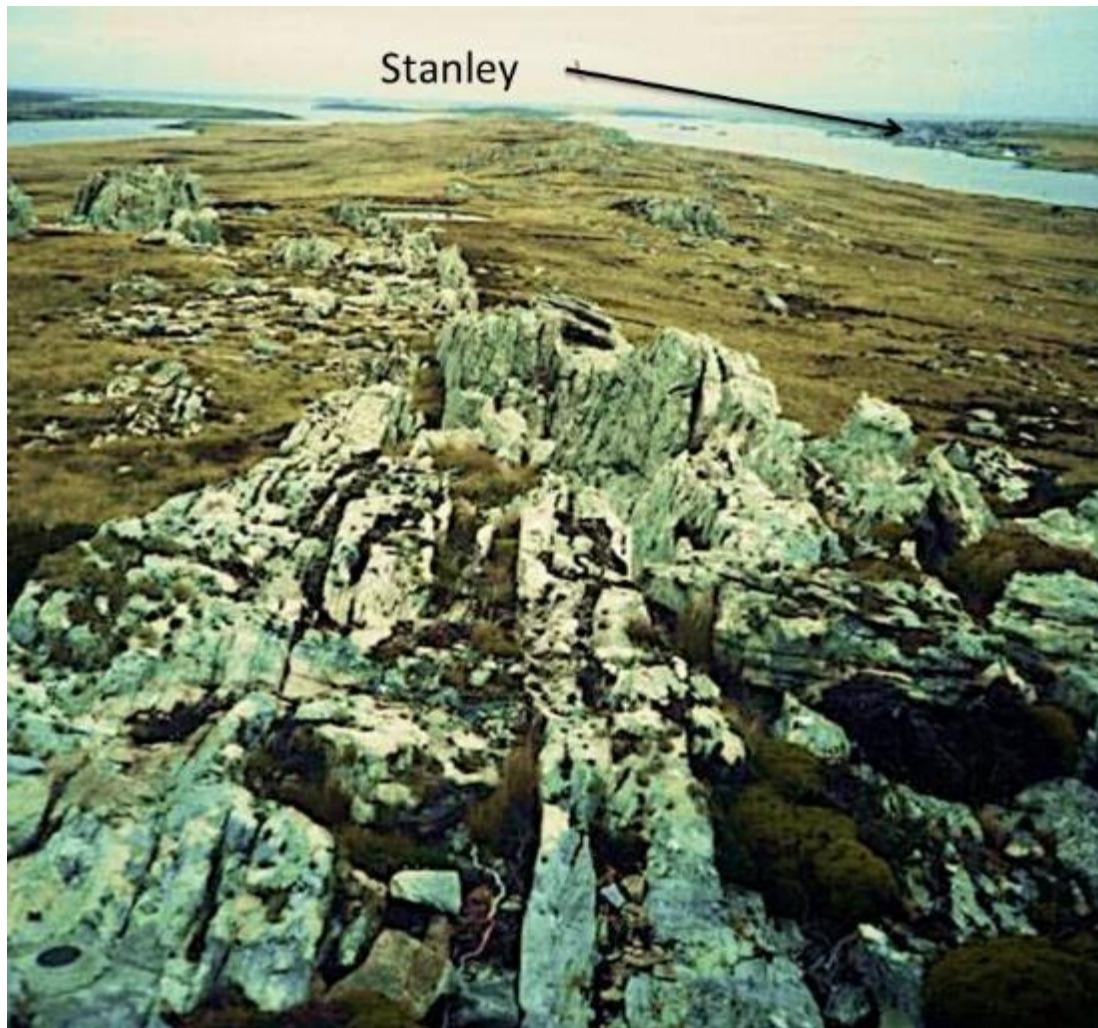


The Scots Guards had a hard fight on Mt Tumbledown, not helped by the fact that their supporting battery commander, (NOT from 29 Commando Regiment) lost contact with his FOOs forward with the companies, and then overruled the NGSFO on loan from my gunner regiment, who offered naval gunfire support, on the grounds that it was unsafe. The NGSFO was very experienced with several battles under his belt, and knew a great deal more about the business than the BC from 5 Bde. The lesson: that this brigade cobbled together did not work well. At one stage the leading company commander was separated from his FOO for two hours; and the battle ground to a halt.

Mention value of NGS.

In my area of responsibility, 2 PARA's attack went well in intermittent snow storms. The only potential hitch was caused by an SF operation on the flanks of 2 PARA, which they had persuaded the divisional commander to sanction; I had neither asked for it, nor wanted it. It ran into serious trouble, and I came back into the CP to find the SAS LO talking to my COS, asking that we divert 2 PARA to assist. My COS was quicker off the mark than I, but said exactly what I would have, although perhaps being the chap he was, he was more acid, 'Bloody SF you think the whole world has to stop to get you out of trouble'. We will sort you out when we are ready. I had no intention of diverting part of a battalion in the main swing of a night attack to go swanning off several thousand yards in the dark to its flank; it had all the ingredients of disaster. In the end the SF party extracted itself.

Soon after first light I joined 2 Para on Wireless Ridge. Walking forward I stood with one of my staff officers on the ridge looking at our objectives for that night through my binoculars.



At that stage we were all set to attack again that night. We watched the enemy artillery rounds crashing down on Mount Tumbledown just across the valley from us. At that moment I heard what was clearly a Sgt Maj addressing recalcitrant soldiers shouting, 'get off the expletive deleted skyline, you expletive deleted, the expletive deleted war isn't over yet'.

Conscious that we were committing the military sin of standing about on skylines on other people's real estate thus putting them at risk of enemy shelling, we hurled ourselves guiltily to the ground and went on looking through our binos. I heard a voice behind me saying, 'the war may be over brigadier'. There was the CO of 2 Para, he was standing, I was lying, not good.

I sprang to my feet and congratulated him on his battalion's magnificent efforts the previous night.

He told me that he had seen the enemy streaming back into Stanley. We picked up a report on one of the radio nets that 'white flags were flying in Port Stanley'. We gazed through our binoculars, and saw none. These flags were a figment of someone's imagination. But I started 2 Para off to follow up, and began giving orders over the radio to get the rest of the brigade on the move. I was told by General Moore over the radio, that the enemy were going to surrender, as I followed my leading battalion in to Port Stanley, I had no problem deciding where to position myself, in a daylight advance, the right place to be was immediately behind the leading battalion.



I received another message not to advance beyond a certain point in the town – the racecourse.



As we swung off past captured guns and armoured cars I had difficulty persuading 2 Para to stop. They had switched their radios off, determined that no one would stop them. But using my artillery radios I got through to them — which spoilt their cunning plan. Seeing one of our helicopters fly overhead, I thought this might be General Moore flying forward to negotiate the surrender, so feeling I must meet him and put him in the picture on what my brigade was up to, I walked on ahead of everyone, passing some Argentine soldiers, who looked at me curiously. Outside the government offices, (this picture was taken later)



A smart Argentine officer who spoke excellent English accosted me. I asked him if my General was here yet. He said no, but his was, and was with two British officers. I guessed, rightly as it turned out, that they were Lt Col Michael Rose of the SAS and the Spanish interpreter Captain Rod Bell conducting preliminary talks, and did not want to intrude. So I turned on my heel and walked off.

Our packs, rations and sleeping bags were miles away on the other side of a minefield. We gladly accepted one of 2 Para's company commanders kind offer of some floor space in a house he had requisitioned.



The surrender of the Argentines, which was signed that night, and about which I learned while standing in that house I showed you at the beginning. It took place 800 metres from there, and I heard about it from the BBC 8,000 miles away when one of my radio operators switched his HF set to the World Service.

The days that followed posed new challenges, not least that of maintaining discipline. Accommodation in a town built for 800 people with one pub, was short for the 3,000 or so I had in and around the place. There were abundant Argentine stores in containers about the place, and a certain amount of pilfering was beginning. Abandoned vehicles were being commandeered and driven about.

After two days, I summoned all COs and read the riot act, and imposed a curfew on all troops including myself. A duty battalion was responsible for patrolling the streets; I didn't want the RMP doing it. There were thousands of enemy prisoners confined to the airfield, out of town. The duty battalion was also responsible for providing security on the access road, and keeping them penned in.

The laurels for the land campaign belong to the junior officers, sergeants, corporals, marines and soldiers, who did all that was asked of them and more – courageous, motivated and disciplined.



Many a battle has been won by a junior leader, all that generals and brigadiers can do is give him the chance to win it.



MIKE

After that exciting talk, you may well have forgotten that this campaign was essentially a naval one. So, I will have the last word!

Despite the surrender of the Argentine land forces on 14 June, my eldest daughter's sixth birthday, the war was not over at sea. Moore's face dropped when I pointed this out to him after the surrender ceremony but Menendez could not give assurance that Argentina had called a halt to the conflict. Cabinet papers recently made public suggest that the probability of Argentine air strikes remained a concern until the middle of October 1982. A surprisingly long time later.

While all the muddy, wet and freezing face-to-face fighting was going on ashore, my staff's tasks were far from being simply logistic. Yes, we were living comfortably onboard and had regular meals, clean clothes and showers but we knew we were very much their easiest target. We actually heard one strike saying they were attacking Fearless. That they missed us does not help a lot. The strain was becoming visible on some of my staff's faces, especially those who had no assistance and were short of sleep.

Throughout the campaign, we were involved in:-

1. Negotiating with Sandy's staff for the right ship to come in with the land forces ammo and food.
2. Organising the safety and air defence of ships entering and leaving San Carlos Water.
3. Controlling and organising the maintenance and fuel etc. of the Support Helicopters, Landing Craft and mexeflotes and their crews.
4. Tasking LSLs in logistic support of 3 Cdo and later 5 Bde.
5. Providing Naval Gunfire Support (NGFS) to land forces on both flanks.
6. Inserting and withdrawing SF patrols.
7. Bombarding Argentine positions such as Fox Bay, Port Howard and their OP on Mount Rosalie, if only to make them nervous.
8. Mine hunting to ensure ships offering gunfire or logistic support were, hopefully, safe from that threat. We knew they had laid a minefield off the entrance to Port Stanley so had to be cautious elsewhere.
9. Removing UXBs.
10. Patrolling the western parts of the islands to make sure there were no sneaky attempt to attack us from behind.
11. Arranging mine and bomb disposal, while keeping a close eye on any hints of a submarine or surface menace.

That's eleven for a start. They had a lot on their plate. Remember the LSLs and many of the ships coming into San Carlos were manned by merchant navy seamen. Their huge support and courage certainly helped the land forces win their battle.

The Royal Marines, the navy's private army, had played the key role in planning and executing the landings. They created the conditions ashore needed for the subsequent Army landing and the land campaign. Without their heritage and knowledge of the Navy the landings would have been much harder to plan and execute. My role would have certainly been far more difficult in the short time we were given. Jointery needs constant practice but personalities also matter. Julian and I worked well together.

The contrast between 3 Cdo Bde and both Div HQ and 5 Bde was marked. Div HQ fortunately chose to remain onboard fearless and could meet my staff. 5 Bde went ashore.

At the time I was not aware of 5 Bde's chaotic send-off. While their battalions seemed excellent to me, I never met their HQ staff. To me, their staff displayed an almost total disregard for another Commander's tasks and assets. I hope it was simply lack of training.

The story of 5 Bde is best left to question time. You may think we have been harsh to criticise them. In fairness, Div. HQ and 5 Bde were rushing ahead with very little time in theatre to plan. They had not been able to think things through as 3 Cdo Bde did with those in the Navy who would have to support them. Low cloud inhibited helicopter flying across the island and the southern flank needed a small force to prevent a counter-attack. They wanted a bigger slice of the action.

5 Bde then high-jacked helicopters and landing craft without telling Div HQ or me. They must have understood we had plans for them that my staff had made with Div HQ's days ahead. To my mind there was no need for this selfishness but they had no Naval liaison officer attached to them. Their Royal Marine had damaged his back and was, unknown to me, for much of the campaign lying in Fearless' sickbay.

They had not been given a logistic team and had had no joint training. It was not, therefore, entirely their fault that they created such a problem that resulted in an unnecessary loss of lives, helicopters, landing craft and shipping.

One of these moves resulted in the bombing of two LSLs, *Sir Galahad* and *Sir Tristram* in **Fitzroy**, with 43 dead and over 200 wounded.

The up side of this affair was that the Argentines confirmed their belief that the landings at Fitzroy were the main effort, as a precursor to the attack on Port Stanley. In fact the main attack would be by Julian's brigade on the northern route, and that by 5th Brigade was a subsidiary. The bombing of the two LSLs was to reinforce this mistaken perception that the main thrust was to come from the south-west, possibly accompanied by an amphibious assault near Stanley. By the time the Argentines discerned the direction from which the attack would come, they reacted so lethargically that no re-orientation of their defences took place.

If we had a better National Strategy and were not suffering such huge financial problems it all might have been quite different. But Politicians who are actually bean counters cannot always see the wood for the trees. This comes from the John Nott's handover notes to his successor.

"I wish you all the best for your reforms but of course all my plans were mucked up by the damn Falklands War"

John Nott on hand over to Heseltine on Defence expenditure.

Churchill College, Cambridge archives.

The rest, as they say, is history. Here is some good advice.

Lessons Learned

‘That’s the reason they’re called lessons the Gryphon remarked; because they lessen from day to day’.

Lewis Carroll

Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland

We are happy to take any questions.

Spare Slides



Slide 25 Falklands Sat Pic

Distances US Central Pacific campaign 1942-45 & Falklands campaign 1982

| Origin | Destination | Nautical Miles approx |
|--|------------------|-----------------------|
| San Diego | Honolulu | 2,280 |
| Honolulu | Marshall Islands | 2,100 |
| Marshall Islands | Marianas | 1,500 |
| Marianas | Tokyo | 2,772 |
| Southampton | Ascension Island | 3,701 |
| Ascension Island | Falklands | 3,402 |
| (total UK-Falklands 8,175 statute miles) | | |

Slide 26. Distances US Central Pacific Campaign and Falklands.



Slide 27. UXB in corn flakes

| Outline Argentine Forces in Falklands | | |
|--|----------------------|--|
| Formation | Strength | Location |
| HQ troops | 551 ⁽¹⁾ | |
| 3 Inf Bde | 2,789 ⁽¹⁾ | Stanley area, Port Howard, Goose Green |
| 9 Inf Bde | 1,772 ⁽¹⁾ | Stanley area, Fox Bay, Goose Green |
| 10 Mech Inf Bde | 3,337 ⁽¹⁾ | Stanley area |
| Marines | 1,346 ⁽¹⁾ | Stanley area, Pebble Island |
| Special Forces | 204 | |
| Armd Recce | 303 | |
| Artillery | 711 ⁽²⁾ | Stanley area, Goose Green |
| Anti-Aircraft | 1,082 | |
| Air/Sea Ops | 1,623 ⁽³⁾ | Stanley, Goose Green, Pebble Island |
| TOTAL | 13,718 | |
| Note ⁽¹⁾ includes engineers, comms, logistics etc | | |
| Note ⁽²⁾ 42 X 105 mm (6 Marine), 4 X 155 mm | | |
| Note ⁽³⁾ Ground personnel Air Force and Navy | | |

Slide 28. Outline of Argentine Forces in Falklands

He had forty-two boxes, all carefully packed,
 With his name clearly painted on each,
 But, since he omitted to mention the fact,
 They were all left behind on the beach.

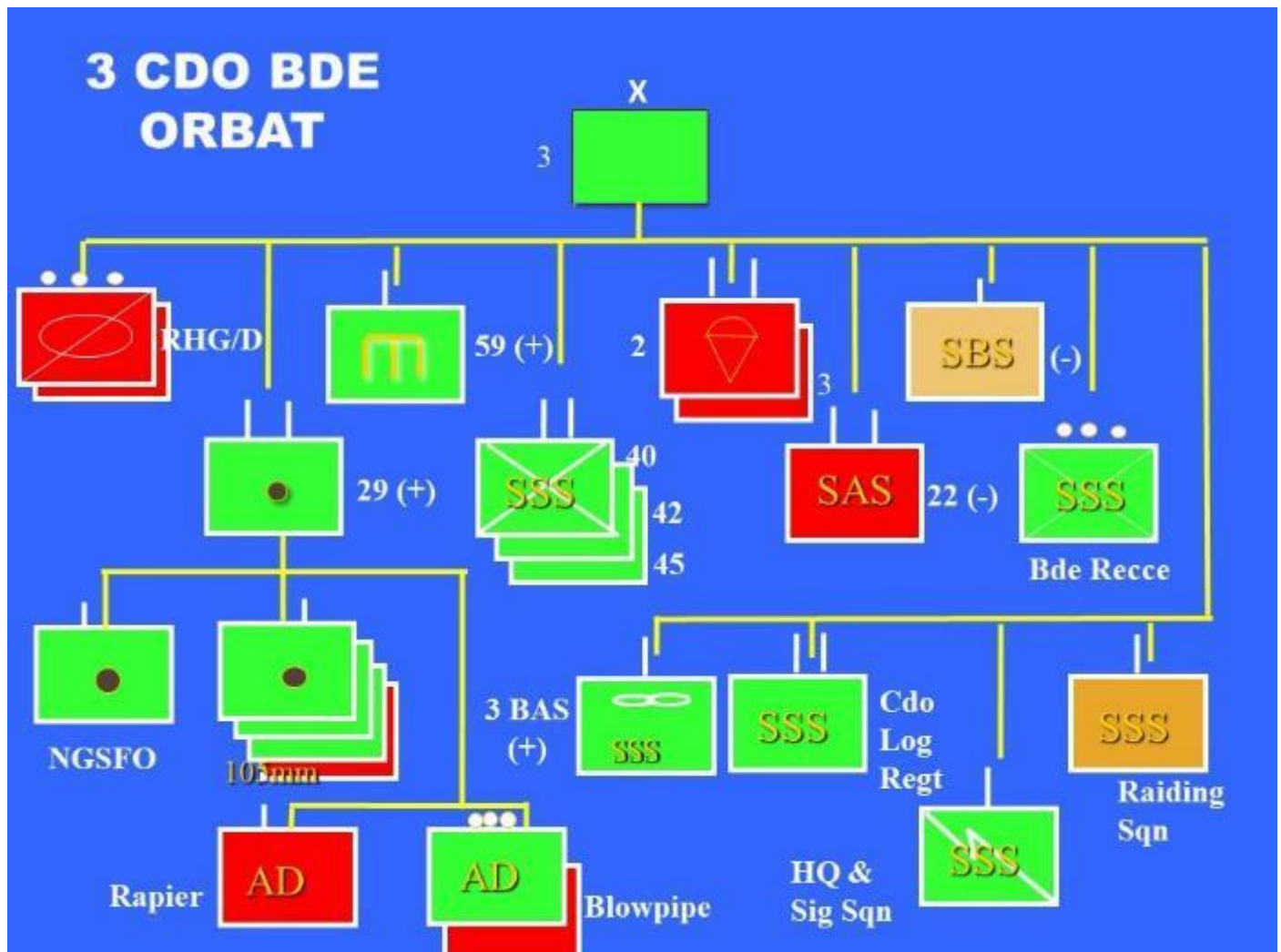
Lewis Carroll, 'The landing' from the Hunting of
 the Snark.

Slide 29: 42 Boxes

“The dominant feeling of the battlefield is loneliness.”

(Field Marshall Viscount Slim)

Slide 30: Loneliness - Slim



Slide 31: 3 Cdo Bde Orbat



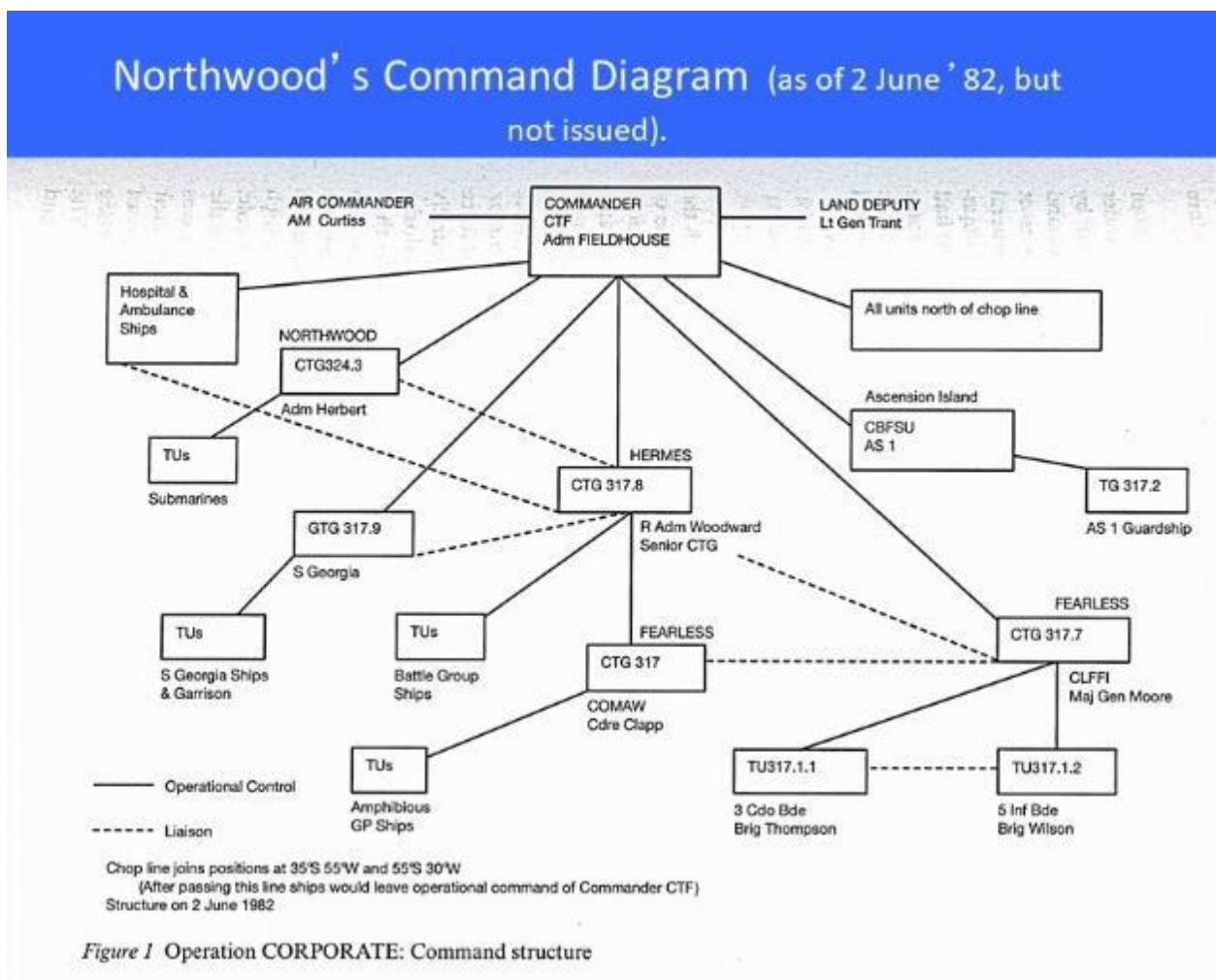
Slide 32. San Carlos from the air



Slide 33 UX in SeaCat mag

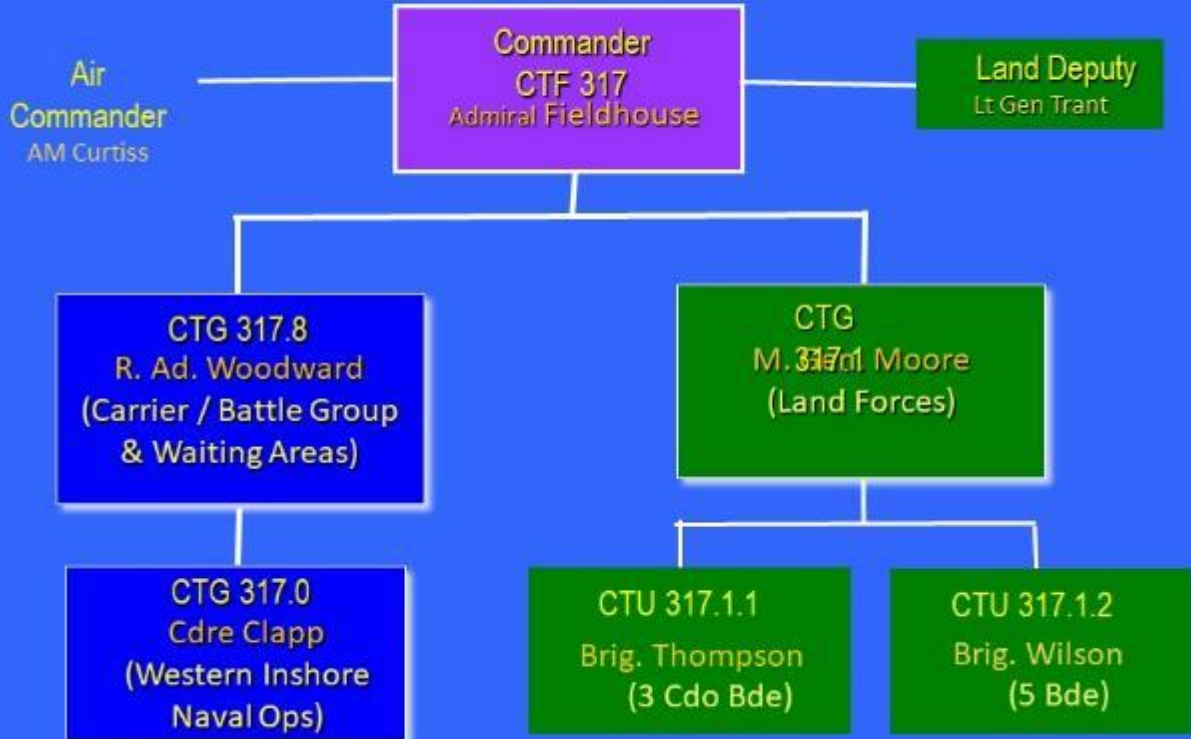


Slide 34. Baltic Ferry in fog

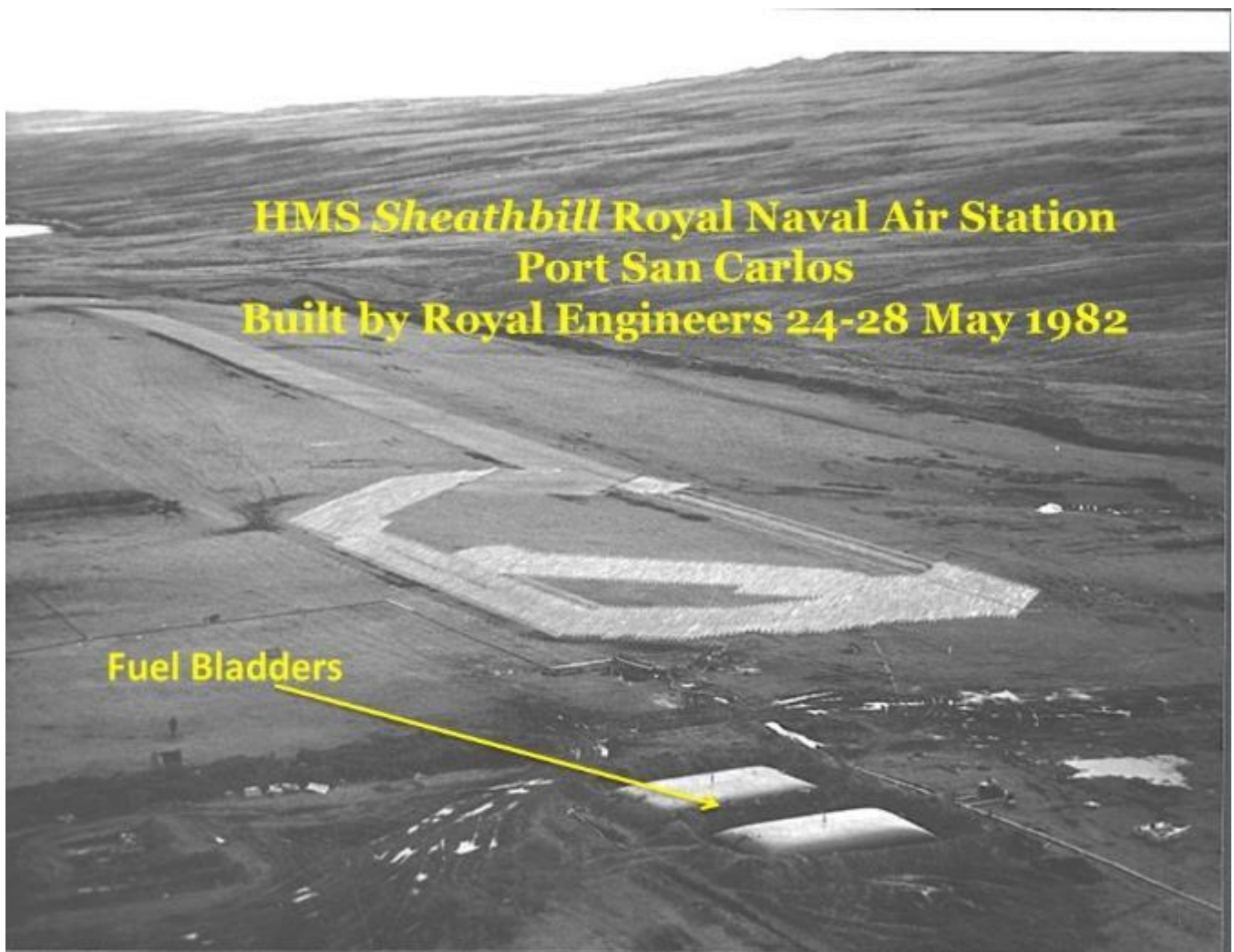


Slide 35. Northwood solution to the command problem

Northwood's Command Diagram of 2 June simplified.



Slide 36. Northwood's solution simplified



The Times' definition.

“Amphibious: an out of date concept of operations requiring no particular expertise, which is temporarily undertaken by the Royal Marines.”

The Times, 16th July 1981

Slide 38. The Times on Amphibious Operations



Slide 39 Cross decking

Task Group 317.0

Commodore Clapp

D-Day 21 May 1982

2 X LPD
9 X Destroyers/Frigates
5 X RFA
5 X LSL
4 X STUFT
1 x Wessex Naval Air Sqn
1 X Sea King Naval Air Sqn
2 X Fleet Clearance Diver Teams

Later Additions

3 X Naval Air Sqns
1 X Chinook Sqn
Minesweeper Support Ship
4 X Minesweeping Trawlers
RFA Engadine
2 X Offshore Patrol Vessels

Temporary Attachment

5 X Destroyers/Frigates
4 X RFA
1 X LSL
4 X STUFT

Slide 40 TG 317.0

KIT CARRIED ON NIGHT ATTACK BY COY COMD

| | LBS | OZ |
|------------------------------------|-----|----|
| FIGHTING ORDER/WEBBING PLUS PONCHO | 7 | 5 |
| FULL WATER BOTTLES x 2 | 5 | 5 |
| PICK HEAD | 2 | 8 |
| PICK HELVE | 1 | 12 |
| RATION PACK 24 HOURS | 3 | 8 |
| MESS TINS | 1 | |
| HEXAMINE | | 13 |
| TORCH | | 12 |
| BINOCULARS | 2 | 12 |
| SCHERMULLY FLARES x 2 | 1 | 12 |
| PACKET OF MINI FLARES | | 8 |
| RIFLE AND BAYONET | 11 | |
| IMAGE INTENSIFIER NIGHT SIGHT | 6 | 8 |
| FULL MAGAZINES FOR SLR x 5 | 8 | 2 |
| L2 HAND GRENADES x 2 | 2 | 4 |
| PHOSPHOROUS SMOKE GRENADE | 1 | |
| 50 ROUNDS 7.62mm BANDOLIER | 2 | 14 |
| HELMET | 2 | 8 |
| PRC 351 CLANSMAN RADIO AND BATTERY | 13 | |
| RADIO CARRIER FRAME | 3 | |

TOTAL 78 lbs 3 oz
(35 Kilo)

Slide 41 Gardiner Load

‘When are you going to drive those bastards [The occupying Argentines] into the sea? For God’s sake hurry up . . . ’

Another Soviet diplomat remarked to me: ‘We would no longer have considered you a serious country if you hadn’t defeated the Argentines’

**Two Soviet Diplomats to British Ambassador
Moscow – quoted in Sir Christopher Meyer’s
Memoirs**

Slide 42 British Ambassador to Moscow Quote



Slide 43 R Gp in Stanley on 14 June 1982