

One of the R.A.F. Harriers flying close air support missions assisting the move forward was shot down on 27 May whilst attacking Argentinian positions at Goose Green. The pilot ejected and was later recovered unharmed by advancing land forces.

By mid-afternoon, Darwin had been captured and the battalion pressed on south down the narrow isthmus towards Goose Green, some two miles on. They had to cross open ground in broad daylight, and were opposed by strong defensive positions which were well dug in and sited in depth. Low cloud, strong winds and driving rain made early air operations in support of the advance impossible.

The battle for Goose Green lasted many hours, frequently at very close quarters, and amongst the casualties was the Commanding Officer, Lieutenant Colonel H. JONES, V.C., O.B.E., who was killed when charging an enemy post which was holding up the advance on the left flank. Throughout the course of the battle 16 officers and men of 2nd Battalion The Parachute Regiment were killed, and one Royal Marines officer was also killed when his Scout helicopter was shot down by enemy aircraft.

By last light the battalion, supported by 2 further R.A.F. Harrier raids, had surrounded the remaining garrison in the Goose Green Settlement where 112 civilians were held, having been confined to the Community Hall for 3 weeks.

During the night the Acting Commanding Officer conducted negotiations with the Argentinians and, by mid morning on 29 May, the surrender was accepted. As a result of their gallant action, 2nd Battalion The Parachute Regiment took over 1,000 prisoners. Subsequently, it was discovered that the original garrison of some 650 had been reinforced on 28 May by an additional regiment. A large quantity of artillery, air defence weapons and ammunition was captured. In addition, all the civilians were released unharmed.

Advance on Port Stanley

After a remarkable cross country march of 50 miles over very difficult terrain in appalling weather conditions 45 Commando Royal Marines had reached Teal Inlet, and 3rd Battalion The Parachute Regiment had reached Estancia House via Teal Inlet. Meanwhile, D Squadron 22 Special Air Service Regiment had established an operations base in the area of Mount Kent and were carrying out an aggressive patrolling and intelligence gathering programme. After 3 days, and several attempts at reinforcement which were prevented by the atrocious weather at night, they were joined by the first half of 42 Commando Royal Marines and a troop of light guns of 29 Commando Regiment Royal Artillery, who were flown forward by helicopter on 1 June, the remainder joining on 2 June.

On 30 May, General MOORE assumed command of operations ashore and on 1 June was joined by his Headquarters which was immediately established in H.M.S. FEARLESS at San Carlos Water. Also on 1 June, 5th Infantry Brigade began to disembark at the beachhead. The movements of R.M.S. QUEEN ELIZABETH II in which they had set sail from Southampton were kept strictly secret. I could not risk such a prestigious target and her embarked force to the hazards of the Total Exclusion Zone. She had therefore made her way south well outside the range of Argentinian aircraft to rendezvous with S.S. CANBERRA and M.V. NORLAND in Cumberland Bay, South Georgia. Here 5th Infantry Brigade and accompanying weapons and equipment were disembarked by the small ships of 11 Mine Countermeasures Squadron, H.M. Ships CORDELLA, PICT, NORTHELLA, JUNELLA and FARNELLA. Their transfer to S.S. CANBERRA and M.V. NORLAND was completed with noteworthy speed on 29 May.

After arrival at San Carlos Water on 31 May, M.V. NORLAND disembarked 1st Battalion 7th Duke of Edinburgh's Own Gurkha Rifles during the morning of 1 June. Later that day, 2nd Battalion Scots Guards and 1st Battalion Welsh Guards disembarked from S.S. CANBERRA. The 2nd Battalion The Parachute Regiment was put under the command of 5th Infantry Brigade and moved forward to the Fitzroy and Bluff Cove areas, and was replaced at Darwin and Goose Green by 1st Battalion 7th Gurkha Rifles.

Whilst 5th Infantry Brigade moved forward in the south, other elements of the Task Force were fully employed. On land a build up of stores and ammunition in preparation for the final battles took place. This included the construction of a Harrier Forward Operating Base at Port San Carlos by 11 and 59 Squadrons of the Royal Engineers. This task was completed in difficult conditions and despite the loss of much of their equipment in S.S. ATLANTIC CONVEYOR. Helicopters operating in very poor weather conditions ferried vast amounts of stores and ammunition to forward positions; this included 18,000 rounds of artillery ammunition. Other stores were moved by Logistic Landing Ships to Teal Inlet. At sea, ships moved close inshore nightly to conduct bombardments of selected targets on the approaches to and around Port Stanley. 1,300 4.5 inch rounds were fired by H.M. Ships CARDIFF, ARROW, YARMOUTH, ACTIVE and AMBUSCADE during the period 5 to 10 June. Argentinian aircraft were also successfully engaged by units of the Fleet. One Canberra was shot down by a Sea Dart missile fired by H.M.S. EXETER. H.M.S. PLYMOUTH shot down 2 attack aircraft with Sea Cat missiles. Sea Harriers from H.M.S. INVINCIBLE attacked and brought down an Argentinian Hercules.

Vulcan attacks against enemy radar installations in the vicinity of Port Stanley were carried out on 31 May and 3 June. These, and the intensified bombing raids by Harriers, complemented the heavy night bombardment by Task Force ships. A forward air base was established at Port San Carlos on 5 June, from which combat air patrols and offensive air support missions, as well as helicopter operations were mounted.