

SAMA

82

NEWSLETTER

SPRING 2006



The Vulcan Bomber



The Role of The Hospital Ship UGANDA



D-Day dawn



The National Monument in Wales



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THE MAGAZINE OF THE SOUTH ATLANTIC MEDAL ASSOCIATION

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Welcome from the Chairman

Hello, our dog and companion, Snookie, is sadly very unwell; she is over 13 years old, making her in her late seventies in comparable human years. Last week I was representing SAMA at the Veterans' Plenary run by the Veterans' Agency, and looking round at the other 130 delegates I could see that many of them were of a similar human age as Snookie, although luckily mainly fit and well. What struck me then was that we, as a relatively young Association, are coming more to the forefront of the Veterans' community and will need to continue to be a voice to be heard on their behalf.

Next year we have the ideal opportunity to raise the Falklands Veterans' profile with the various 25th Anniversary commemorations. The MoD as you know are running the show in London, but there will also be many other focal points around the country and, of course, in the Islands. There will also be a 25th Website, a special logo and lapel pin (currently in the design stage) and, with the assistance of the Defence Public Relations, much media interest. Within this interest we can also bring to the fore our concerns regarding, among other things, homelessness, PTSD, pensions and compensation, and general recognition. Also we must not forget that conflicts still go on and more 'new' Veterans will continue to need support and assistance.

The Veterans' Agency, led by the present Minister, Don Touhig, (Denzil's MP), are doing much work in the problem areas, which we of course applaud; however we can still help in many ways - as Jacko can tell you, there is a long way to go. However, at this year's AGM, if all goes as planned, we will have a display stand from the Agency, manned by their staff, who can help with any questions or queries we may have, and can indeed show how we can assist them. Don Touhig, at the Plenary, said that he had a good organisation and good resources, but very much needs the input of Veterans to help show where improvements are necessary.

One area in which we can all assist is public awareness. The Falklands conflict actually involved about 150,000 people, counting not just the veterans but their families and many others covering the supply lines and the media: they will always remember that time. However many younger members of the 60-odd millions of the public at large will be largely unaware of that campaign, and indeed of our needs and those of other Veterans. The more we can talk to the public through our clubs, pubs, societies and schools about our experiences, the more we can bring Veterans in general to their notice. Veterans' Day, this year on the 27th June, will be an ideal time to reinforce this awareness.

I have added some more detail about 2007 elsewhere in this Newsletter, along with other bits about various subjects; however I look forward to seeing you and expanding more on the future at the AGM.

If you cannot be at the AGM, please take time to look at the Briefing Note and Form of Proxy that comes with this Newsletter, and let us know your views.

You will find letters of concern elsewhere in this newsletter. The points mentioned have been carefully considered, and as you may see in my Notes addressed where possible

May I also take this opportunity to wish you and yours all health and happiness.

Martin Reed
 Chairman SAMA 82

Mike Seear, With the Gurkhas in the Falklands – A War Journal

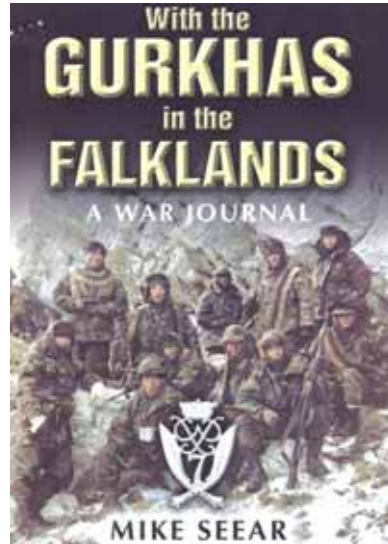
A Review by Anthony Conway

Mike Seear has written a terrific book. While it is an extraordinary trip down memory lane for anyone who was with the battalion in 1982 and took part in the Falklands War, it has a much wider appeal that takes it beyond even the casual reader of military history.

I found myself marvelling at the detail Seear has managed to glean, all of which goes to show that waiting for twenty years has paid rich dividends. The book is immeasurably better for the maturation process, painful and frustrating though this must have been for the author.

The book eschews the cold objectivity of a regimental history in favour of an engagingly personal angle which, from this writer's point of view, greatly strengthens it. In effect, it pushes the book into a different league. On the one hand, the reader has almost a pocket history of the whole war, while on the other, Seear has also managed to craft an incredibly engaging story. It is personal and brutally honest. What is more, the author succeeds in conveying all of this to the layman, assisted by a useful glossary and exhaustive index. The inclusion of substantial material gained through contact with Argentine participants adds a certain feel that "we were all in it together".

The book is a gem and I strongly recommend it. Clearly the experience had a profound effect on Seear's subsequent life. To an extent, like the ancient mariner, he emerged a sadder but a wiser man the following morn. He has achieved a remarkable



degree of self-awareness, and his honesty in this regard may not sit comfortably with all readers. That said, I believe there will be many others who identify with his experiences and with the lessons he has – over the years – drawn from them. The book is from the heart, devoid of pomposity and illusion. No other factual book that I have ever read about the Gurkhas has ever achieved this.

(Anthony Conway is the author of *The General's Envoy* and other novels published by Hodder & Stoughton. Once upon a time, he pretended to be Nigel Price, Mortar Platoon Commander of 1st Bn 7th DEO Gurkha Rifles during the Falklands War. He served with 7GR for a total of twelve years until he was found out.)

With the Gurkhas in the Falklands – A War Journal was published on 17 July 2003 by Pen & Sword Books, UK's largest military history publisher. By June 2005 2,055 copies of the book had been sold, raising nearly £2,000 for the Gurkha Welfare Trust. Its 416 pages contain nineteen line drawings, nineteen photographs and two maps. At a price of £19.95p, copies of the book signed by the author can be ordered from Brigadier D.P. de C. Morgan OBE, Oak House, Oxenford, Dowlish Wake, Ilminster, Somerset, TA1 0PP. Free postage and packing in the UK. An extra £6.50p must be added for overseas orders. Cheques and postal orders to be made payable to M.H. Seear. ISBN: 0850529166.

Island Base: Ascension in the Falklands War

By Captain Bob McQueen

The previously untold story of how Ascension Island was crucial to the success of British operations during the Falklands War, with a foreword by First Sea Lord, Admiral Sir Alan West. The book spans the length of the Falklands War and tells how a facility consisting of next to nothing was turned into the advanced logistic base for one of the most daring and successful displays of military force at long range in the reclamation of British interests. From an island which was largely devoid of all resources, the story of how Ascension Island became the Forward Operating Base, doubled its population in a few weeks and briefly became the busiest airfield in the world, makes fascinating reading. The author was Senior Officer, Ascension Island during the Falklands War. The stunning photographs provide a fascinating pictorial record of all aspects of the Falklands War in relation to the Island.

ISBN: 1-904445-18-7, 144 pp, softback, £15.95.

'After the Battle'

After the Battle publications, famous for using 'then and now' comparison photography to illustrate World War II battlefields, are looking for personal accounts to tell the story of the 1982 Falklands War from individual perspectives. Photos of relevant relics to put in the book would also be welcome (as would relics themselves for their museum at their offices in Essex). They need photos taken during the war or immediately after, suitable for comparison with a modern day shot of the same views.

They have many official pictures to match up, but are keen to use new, previously unseen material, such as photos showing veterans taken on the 2002 pilgrimage, revisiting scenes pertinent to their experiences. Contact After the Battle at The Mews, Hobbs Cross House, Hobbs Cross, Old Harlow, Essex CM17 0NN. Telephone: 01279 41 8833 or e-mail: hq@afterthebattle.com.

Gordon Ramsey

COMMITTEE

We plan to expand the Committee and change the times spent in post. The following positions are proposed:-

<i>Chairman</i>	<i>Vice-Chairman</i>
<i>Treasurer</i>	<i>Corporate Secretary</i>
<i>Membership Secretary</i>	<i>Welfare Officer</i>
<i>Commercial/Media Officer</i>	<i>Pilgrimage Liaison Officer</i>
<i>Special Projects Officer/Newsletter Editor</i>	

It is proposed that each elected member shall be elected for a period of one year, and may serve a maximum of two terms. This to be discussed.

At all events, we shall need a good body of volunteers to fill the places and be available for future appointments. Those of you who would like to put up for election to any of these positions please let the Secretary know your names and the position you feel that you could fill, in particular that of the Chairman whose tenure of Office is complete in 2007.

SUPPORT FROM THE FALKLAND ISLANDERS

In 2002 some of us were lucky enough to be able to thank our friends in the Falkland Islands personally for their help and support over the years. Some of this has been as high profile grants from the Falkland Islands Government, other help has been less visible but of equal assistance, and we would like to give all this assistance some overdue publicity.

SAMA received a start-up grant over its first three years, 1997 - 2000, of £15,000 from the Falkland Islands Government. Following the 2002 Pilgrimage, the Governor asked us to send a small group to the Islands to represent SAMA each Remembrance Sunday, and for this FIG supplied £5740 in '03, £9260 in '04 and £5000 in '05. The £5740 was paid through FIGO for the flights in '03, the rest was paid into the Branch account and used to pay for the flights to and from the Islands in '04 and '05.

Apart from this official help, the Islanders have personally been quite extraordinarily generous. As at September 2005, they have donated the grand sum of £57,282.70 to the FI Branch

account for their charitable aims. We would also like to acknowledge that between 1998 and 2001, a total of £14,090.61 has also been sent to SAMA UK by the FI Branch.

As you may know, the FI Branch is a registered charity within the Islands and all their records are fully audited, as are our own here in the UK. There was a worry at the last AGM that a quantity of money was unaccountable, however this is certainly not the case and all is well.

I would like therefore to put on record our continuing thanks to the Falkland Islanders, the Falkland Island Government, and our fellow members in SAMA FI, for all their positive encouragement and practical help, both financial and in kind, over the years. Thank you, on behalf of all members of SAMA, from the bottom of our hearts.

Last Year's Pilgrims

Thanks again to a generous grant from the Falkland Islands Government, four Pilgrims went South last year. Please see elsewhere in the Newsletter for their story.

Anniversary Book of Photographs

Dave MacCreedy has begun work on a book of photographs taken by veterans during the events of 1982, to be published next year. Each photo will have a few words accompanying it written by the person who took it. Dave says,

"I have received some photos but would like a lot more! If any of you have any photographs taken during the 'events' of 1982 that you think might well suit the book I would love to include them. Plus if anyone has any poetry they would like to share, then please let me know. Discretion will be guaranteed.

"The easiest way to do this would be via e-mail (jpegs for the pics) but if anyone has slides or pics that cannot be sent electronically the please drop me a line and we can sort out getting the images. Please send any pics, poems correspondence to pics82@ntlworld.com. I look forward to all your replies."

The book will be published with the support of SAMA82 with a percentage of any money made donated to SAMA82.

FAQ's

Q. "Why were the minutes of the last AGM not sent out to members sooner?"

A. Please accept the Chairman's apologies. They should have been with you all some time before, however just before compilation we were offered a new and much cheaper system of distribution. Implementation of this however took much longer than anticipated. This will not happen in the future and we expect the minutes for the 2006 AGM to be released much more quickly.

Q. "Why only one newsletter per year?"

A. Basically down to cost, although we are looking at costing a small A4 update sheet in the Autumn for those without internet access. We hope that the newly reorganised website will fulfil this job for those able to access it.

Q. "Why were we not reminded about last year's Remembrance Day parade?"

A. We put a reminder that no further reminders would be given on page 4 of the last newsletter! However if you do need reminding then if the Autumn update goes ahead we can put in another reminder and it will also be in the Calendar on the website.

(Just a quick note that this year Remembrance Sunday is on the 12th November. Apply as usual for tickets from the Secretary, food and bar available in the Union Jack Club after the service.)

Q. "Why has the surplus of the 2002 Pilgrimage Fund been transferred to the main SAMA Account?"

A. Firstly, because of the complexity of the sources for that fund it could not be returned in penny pieces to the thousands of people who donated. Secondly, it was in an external fund which was not shown in our accounting system, and for the sake of clarity and simplicity it is now shown in our main account. Thirdly the amount certainly did come in handy when our normal finances hit a low point, but will continue to show in the annual accounts as Pilgrimage money.

Q. "What has happened to the Travel Agent idea for the annual Pilgrimage?"

A. Because he already had a paperwork plan for potential Pilgrims, I asked Curly to mastermind a future plan. This he did and liaised with SAMA FI and the FVF for 2005. If we get funding for a Pilgrimage this year we will again set up this link, and include Combat Stress, to fill the available slots.

A successful “SAMA November Pilgrimage”, supported by the Pilgrimage Support Team

Four more SAMA members and veterans returned to The Falkland Islands over the 2005 November Remembrance Day Commemoration Day Services. They were (in no particular order) Karl Harper and Mark O'Neill from 2 Para, and Chris Hamill and Mark Blain from 3 Para. (See account based on Mark O'Neill's experiences by SAMA North). They were accompanied by Nicci Pugh, who worked as a QARNNS Theatre Sister on the hospital ship Uganda in '82, and now works as a voluntary carer for SAMA's newly formed Pilgrimage Support Team.

Speaking on behalf of all the group, Nicci tells the magazine:

“All four in this group have benefited enormously from this unique and very special experience.

“We all spent a great deal of time together and have all learned from comparing our various experiences in 1982. Three of this group returned to UK from the Hospital Ship Uganda in '82, and I remember Karl and Mark B very well indeed, although

happily we established they don't remember me!

“There is no doubt in any of our minds about the benefits of return pilgrimage, and this is what motivates The Pilgrimage Support Team to keep improving things over the years. Our special thanks go to SAMA F.I. Chairman Gary Clement, who helped us so much throughout the whole process.

“This is the third smaller group that SAMA have enabled to return in November since 2002. With the new group up and running we hope to continue for the foreseeable future. Funding is very limited, however, so we do have to ask for patience and goodwill until we win the lottery!

“If you feel you and others would benefit from this experience please contact, in the first instance, either Curly (Secretary SAMA Wales) on samawales@btinternet.com or myself on mavp@ukonline.”

We will do our best to help if we can.

News from the South Atlantic

Last year, Ex-Royal Marine Gary Clement took over the Chairmanship from Terry Peck MBE CPM of SAMA 82 Falklands branch. He attended the AGM last year in the UK and being new to public speaking and possibly wasn't clear enough in his delivery of some of the facts pertaining to the Falkland Islands and the constant kindness of the people of the islands and their generosity.

Gary has told us since, that to put things in perspective on that score here are a few of the facts that he was unsure of at the time. Since 1998 a total of £110,293.65 has been raised for SAMA by one means or another on the Islands. A lot of this money was sent back to the UK branch but since SAMA Falklands Branch gained charitable Status back in 2002 so we now hold on to funds where our own board of Trustees meet regularly to discuss cases put to them and we have paid for in full flights, accommodation, food etc for a lot of returning veterans over the years. For instance, during 2005 we fully funded 12 returning vets plus paid hotel or transport etc for 5 others that had managed to get here one way or another.

To give you some idea of the kind of thing that can be arranged for your trip, here is the itinerary for the last group that was here in November.

Itinerary for Visiting Veterans 9th to 15th November

- 9th Arrive Mount Pleasant Falkland Islands Transfer directly to Darwin Lodge.
- 10th Spend a day at Darwin and Goose Green including a battlefield Tour with Ken Greenland. This will include the memorial at San Carlos all the way in to Goose Green



Darwin Lodge

- 11th Transfer To Stanley and into Accommodation Karl and Nicci to Malvina. Rest to L O Lodge Afternoon visit Mt Longdon. (Guide Gus Reid)
- 12th North Camp tour Teal Inlet Estancia etc with Tony and Ailsa Heathman
- 13th Day in Stanley Remembrance Service Christ Church Cathedral and at the Cross of Sacrifice.
- 14th Visit one of our Wildlife Stations. For most of the above you will want a camera but especially today.
- 15th Bus to MPA for return flight to Brize Norton

I would suggest that you make sure that you have a good coat, water and wind proof. A good supply of at least factor 30 sun lotion (this is very expensive here). You will probably need sunglasses, if you are like me thin on top a hat is also a good idea. There will be a chance to get out of the vehicles and walk so a decent pair of boots. If walking is a problem then your guide for the day will get you as close to where you want to go as he can. If at any time things are getting to much for you then please remember the guides that we use have a great deal of experience in doing this now and will give you the time and space that you need. You only have to ask.

This is an example of what we organise here in the Islands; all you have to do is turn up.

We would like to thank Curly in Wales, Dave SAMA North and of course Nicci Pugh for their help and input on this last pilgrimage but if you are interested in coming back then contact either Curly in Wales or Gary in the Falklands on samafi.chair@horizon.co.fk

SAMA 82- Annual Financial Report

- 1 From the start of the financial period on the 5 April 2005 until the 10 July the administrative account was under the control of Dr R T Jolly. From that time until the end of the financial period, on the 31 December 2005, the administrative account was controlled by Andrew Lockett. This account deals with the cost of administering the association, running the office, and providing some welfare support of an administrative kind.
- 2 There are other accounts not under the control of the elected treasurer.
 - 2.1 SAMA Wales
 - 2.1.1 This account is run for the purpose of supporting SAMA Wales. For the year 2004-2005 it had a turnover of about £12000. Its financial year runs from the beginning of June to the end of May. The SAMA Wales treasurer voluntarily sends information to the elected treasurer but otherwise no controls are exercised over the account from the elected treasurer.
 - 2.2 Pilgrims Award Scheme
 - 2.2.1 This account at Standard Chartered Bank, Stanley holds money for the purpose of the annual pilgrims award to the outstanding pupil at the Stanley Senior School. The account has about £500 in it and is likely to be closed early in 2006. The money will be transferred to the administrative account. Throughout the period this account has been under the control of Dr R T Jolly.
 - 2.3 SAMA Falkland Island
 - 2.3.1 Little is known about this fund and the elected treasurer has received no documentation relating to this fund.
 - 2.4 Pilgrimage Fund
 - 2.4.1 This is a fund raised by Dr R T Jolly for the purpose of the original pilgrimage. This fund has been run down and closed. This year £8500 has been transferred to the administrative fund.
 - 2.5 The elected treasurer is not aware of the details of any other significant funds at the time of writing the report.
- 3 The committee decided to change the financial year from the government's fiscal year to the calendar year. This financial period has been shortened to enable the new financial year to be brought in. The figures in the account refer to a period from week 19 to week 52, a period of 34 weeks. This proportion needs to be factored into any budget extrapolations.
- 4 Records
 - 4.1 The accounts were kept using the Simplex D ledger and this has been the system used over the last five years. On change of treasurer the accounts were transferred to a spreadsheet for the purpose of:
 - 4.1.1 Increasing the ease of recording.
 - 4.1.2 Speeding up the preparation.
 - 4.1.3 Reducing errors and improving error detection.
 - 4.1.4 Ensuring the automatic production of a monthly balance sheet.
 - 4.1.5 Improving transmission to the office and answering other enquiries.
 - 4.1.6 Enabling the office to retain the latest set of accounts.
 - 4.1.7 Establishing ability to attribute multiple donations to source.
 - 4.1.8 Determining budget trends.
- 5 System used
 - 5.1 The fund is run almost entirely as a bank transaction fund only. There are very few cash transactions and throughout the period these were always receipts. The account entries therefore mirror the bank statements in all respects. Any cash received is banked at Blackwood and an explanation of the source of the money is supplied as a summary sheet to the elected treasurer by the office at Blackwood.
- 6 The fund entered a crisis point when the banked balance fell below zero (see graph). Since then the fund has increased to a healthy state but only by some good fortune that is not necessarily going to continue. The fund received transfers from the Pilgrimage fund which is now closed. This boosted the balance by £8500.
- 7 Diagram showing Bank Balance through the financial period 5 April 2005 to 31 December 2005
- 8 Income
- 9 Apart from the money transferred from the Pilgrimage Fund, the main source of income has come from the generous donations of members and others who have dipped into their personal income to give one-off or regular payments to the association. The association should indicate its considerable gratitude to those who have made such donations over the last year. A treasurer is never satisfied of course, and to those who have not given before may I call upon your generosity in supporting the organisation in this way.
- 10 It is not my intention to list the donors, or give information about the yearly donations by individuals unless it is specifically requested by the donor. I have received no such requests. It is my intention to keep the information on individual donations confidential but I do include a summary of the levels of individual donations in the table below.

Number of donations	280
Most popular donation	£10
Average donation per donor	£19.04
Number of donations £50 or more	32
- 11 Any member who wishes to check how much he or she has given over the period should write to the treasurer.
- 12 Our main income is
 - 12.1 Membership joining fees £ 840
 - 12.2 Membership donations £ 5332
 - 12.3 Other donations and transfers (Recycler) £ 450
- 13 On the expenses side our money mainly goes out in wages, stationery, rent, communication and sales stock. An exceptional item this period was the cost of the delayed payment for the 2004 AGM at Twickenham. I have asked the secretary to examine ways of reducing the £2609 we spend on communication (postage, telephone, printing and internet etc).
- 14 The sales stock is really capital in hand and we can expect to recover the money here and derive some profit.
- 15 The fund is planned to pick up the costs of the web site and the garden of remembrance. This is likely to lead to an additional expense of £1500 per calendar year. The additional costs are shown in the budget for year 2006.
- 16 Wages have increased rapidly because of the need to comply with the national minimum wage which rose again in October 2005. We had some catching up to do and this will show in the accounts as a greatly increased burden on the association. Nevertheless the work has to be done and the expense is minimised in concert with the association being a reasonable and caring employer. A further rise in the national minimum wage will occur in October 2006 and add to our outgoings once again.
- 17 The association does not keep a record of its wealth in terms of a balance sheet. I have asked the secretary to assess what the association owns and place estimated values on the significant items. It is quite likely that we shall find that most of what we own is of little value.
- 18 The association is in the process of asking two major funds to support the SAMA administration with grant funding. The Royal Naval Benevolent Trust and the Army Benevolent Fund have been asked to cover some £5000 of administrative costs on a per capita basis. If successful this funding would plug the gap and keep our funds in surplus but only just.
- 19 The treasurer supports the rapid transition to a suitable constitution and an enlarged and regularly elected committee membership. We have been slow to push this forward but most of the documentation is in place in draft form and the new constitution with an enlarged committee should be introduced as soon as possible.
- 20 Budget Predictions against costs and receipts for period 2005. This includes the capitation request which is by no means guaranteed.

As a final boost to the morale of the Vulcan captains, it was decided that a Victor refuelling instructor (AARI) would fly with each of us on the mission. Dick Russell, who had never even flown as a co-pilot in his entire flying career, had been 'volunteered' to come with me, taking off on the evening of his 50th birthday. His 'birthday present' was to go to war for the first time, sitting on his parachute in the dark, down the back of a Vulcan...

How did it work out?

Ascension Island is some 3,700 miles from the Falklands, with no 'diversion' airfields in between. While Rio de Janeiro (Brazil) was available to the Vulcan, it was only to be used in an emergency. The mission plan involved providing enough fuel for all eleven Victors to take the Vulcan down, and a further recovery mission to send tankers to meet it on its way back. In total, on Black Buck 1, this required 18 tanker sorties, 23 air-to-air refuellings (7 to the Vulcan) and a total of 635,000 lbs of fuel transferred.

Only one of the refuellings did not go as planned. When we hit a storm around the ITCZ, we had to close in from our relaxed loose formation position to maintain visual contact with the last two remaining Victors, only to observe them trying to transfer fuel while bouncing up and down in turbulence with the hose whipping around, making a join-up virtually impossible. During this phase, one tanker broke the end off his probe. This should have meant aborting the mission, but with quick thinking, the Victors switched roles and the 'receiver' became the 'tanker' and transferred as much fuel as he dared - he now had no probe if he got the sums wrong!

The one that had now become the 'receiver', captained by Bob Tuxford, then took us to the descent point. There, at considerable personal risk, since it was not part of the refuelling plan, they left themselves without fuel to get back to Ascension. Even so, they were still unable to give us all the fuel we wanted.

Unknown to us, the Vulcan was burning far more fuel than had been planned; the Vulcan was cruising at levels and speeds to suit the heavy Victors; we were constantly topping up; fuel consumption was up by 50%.

Up until that moment when Bob Tuxford turned North leaving us about 5,000 lbs below the planned amount, our fuel gauges always looked very healthy. This was not the case for the Victors, who were religiously sticking to the plan and giving us all we asked for, as we stayed plugged in until the specific geographical points denoting the end of each 'bracket', when they would recover to Ascension 'on fumes'.

The attack phase of the mission was tense, but went like clockwork. We let down to low level about 250 miles from the target to stay below the cover of the Skyguard Early Warning (EW) Radar, and then flew at low level over the sea, aware of the moon glinting on the water, but little else. Pete Taylor (Co-pilot) was flying, Hugh Prior (AEO) was paying attention to his Passive Warning Receiver (PWR) with plenty of noise coming from the radars of our own fleet, including fire-control radars 'locked on' - we hoped they had received the signal informing them of our attack! Gordon Graham (Plotter) was watching his

Carousel, in which he still did not have complete faith; Bob Wright (Radar) had nothing to look at because his radar had to remain switched off until just before starting the attack for fear of announcing our arrival to the EW radar operators. As for poor Dick Russell, he was simply regretting the day he ever set eyes on a Vulcan...

When we thought we had 40 miles to run, I took control and 'popped-up' to 10,000 feet to start the run in. Bob found his main aiming point on the headland, and stuck with it, as other 'offsets' he looked for did not show up clearly. Approaching the release point, all was calm and steady. We could see lights on the airfield through broken cloud, a couple of miles away. We shed around 10 tons of bombs, turned and climbed for home. The attack seemed successful but we would have to wait a couple of days for the 'score'.

We were very short of fuel when we met up with the Victor off the coast of Brazil. I clearly remember that beautiful sight of a Victor turning in front of us with its hose trailing. No-one has calculated whether we really could have made Rio if we had been unable to refuel... We did have a few fraught moments as the probe leaked when in contact, and fuel flooded over the windscreen making it like flying in formation in a carwash, but we were able to take on enough fuel to get us home.

The total flight time was 15 hours 45 minutes, and until the Gulf War was the longest bombing mission in the history of aerial warfare.

Was it worth it?

Little credit is given to the effect of the Black Buck Missions (3 bombing attacks and 2 Shrike (anti radar missile) attacks). Most military historians fail to mention that Black Buck 1 opened the UK's action against the Argentineans. The damage caused by all the attacks was small, but their effect was considerable.

Port Stanley airfield was denied permanently to fighter aircraft, but, more importantly, Britain demonstrated an ability to attack the Argentinean mainland; squadrons of Mirages were redeployed from the South to defend airfields and HQs in the North of Argentina, reducing

the number of fighter aircraft capable of operating over the Falklands.

After the Shrike attacks, all radars were turned off whenever an aircraft was seen approaching within about 40 miles, making life much easier for the Harriers.

The final Black Buck on 12 June, two days before the final surrender, demonstrated that while our ground forces ran low on supplies and munitions, we could still mount attacks from Ascension ad infinitum.

XM607

On all 3 bombing missions, the aircraft used was XM607, making it the only Vulcan to have dropped a bomb in anger. So, when you see this aircraft as the gate guardian at RAF Waddington or on display there at the air show, please don't forget its unique place in history.



Editorial

Welcome to Issue Two of the SAMA magazine, and what a hectic year it's been for us in the office, as well as for SAMA as an organisation. First of all you will notice that there is no advertising in this issue. It's not that we didn't want any, but our volunteer sales person got a paying job in February and we have just filled the vacancy. So I have twisted the arm of my friend Bob Milford at Reclaim IT (please use the enclosed envelopes to return your used inkjet cartridges and old mobile phones) to co-sponsor this issue with me. Hopefully next year we will be business as usual.

Next year is the 25th Anniversary of the war and that is an important milestone, so whatever commemoration event you participate in make sure you enjoy it! I know some of you have felt frustrated at the apparent lack of progress, and we have received a couple of letters on the subject which are reproduced in the magazine. I do know that an awful lot of work is being done and plans are developing regarding next year's celebrations. But the big player is the government in the form of the MoD. Now some of you have been retired a long time and your memory might be a little fuzzy around the edges. But the MoD has one way of working – their way - and it has not changed since Nelson went looking for skyhooks. So you have to be patient – which is frustrating at times.

It would be good if we could produce a simple newsletter in the autumn as well, but the cost is around £2500 to print and

mail a 4-page newsletter, and the funds are just not there to cover the cost. The most cost-effective way of informing the members on a more frequent basis is via the website, and a lot of libraries now provide internet access. But one day we aspire to being a two- or three-times yearly publication.

Most of us still have our faculties and are doing ok. Sadly, some of us are not doing so well and some are no longer with us. The reality is that in the next 25 years we will be a lot older and many more of us will need help and support. In today's world of partnership working help and support is often (and I really hate this description) a multi-agency approach. SAMA members have a wealth of experience both individually and collectively. Each member in their own unique way understands the issues that others face and can empower SAMA to become an access point for members to seek comradeship, help and support. SAMA can only work with your help and support.

Film Stars wanted! – No seriously, David MacCreedy and I would like to make a follow up documentary for broadcast on TV next year. We would like to hear from any veteran that feels they can share their experiences with us on camera. Please contact David or myself for more information: my email address is SAMA@therecycler.com.

See you in Blackpool.

SAMA 82 THE SOUTH ATLANTIC MEDAL ASSOCIATION 1982 SAMA 82 ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING 2006

The Annual General Meeting will be held at 1100 on Saturday 3rd June 2006 at the Norbeck Castle Hotel, Queen's Promenade, Blackpool, Lancashire, FY2 9AA

AGM and Reunion - June 2005

The SAMA 82 AGM and Reunion in June 2005 was held at the Britannia Hotel Coventry. It was the first time the event had taken the form of a social weekend and all who attended agreed that the new format had proved very successful. Well done to Joe and Paddy Erskine and their helpers!

It was great to see old buddies again, this time attending the AGM/Reunion with their partners and wives. What made the weekend extra special for me though, was meeting Nicci Pugh again for the first time since 1982. Nicci was the Queen Alexandra Royal Nursing Corps (QARNC) Theatre Sister aboard the 1982 hospital ship UGANDA, where I spent 3 weeks. Even after 23 years this lovely lady remembered me, but, I must admit, I only remembered her eyes as this was all I saw of her behind her theatre gown and mask. Nicci is now taking a keen interest in our association and I hope to meet up with her again at the 2006 AGM in Blackpool.

John Phillips DSC

Former Royal Engineers Bomb Disposal



The picture above shows Denzil, Nicci and me. "A rose between two limbless thorns."

The Royal Marine Band marine band stretcher-bearers were exemplary. Many of you blokes weigh in at well over ten stone and few of you arrived walking; we couldn't have managed without them. Our trained R.N. Medical Assistants helped us keep all the equipment and technical side going. P&O civilian staff also helped enthusiastically wherever they could. Over 500 operations were performed on board Uganda. 730 patients were admitted, about 20% of whom were Argentinean personnel.

On June 14th we heard from Rick Jolly that the Argentineans had surrendered. However, this became one of our busiest times, as casualties continued to arrive in large numbers for several more days. We remained active as a hospital ship until mid-July, slightly extended after the tragic accident at Stanley airfield; the then small cottage hospital in Stanley could not support the large number of troops left on the islands. We also treated several civilian patients in those weeks.

Much of the Task Force was heading home by the end of June; Canberra left on June 25th and H.M.S. Hecla on the 29th. Herald had already returned from Montevideo on June 25th. Hydra was retained longer than Uganda, finally leaving on August 27th.

Finally, on July 14th Uganda was converted to a troopship for her return journey north and home. The red crosses were painted out, and her funnel painted a dusky yellow. We were to carry 1st Battalion 7th Gurkha Rifles and 16th Field Ambulance R.A.M.C. We de-rigged our wards and operating theatres 300 miles north of the Falklands on July 18th.

We entered the Solent on August 9th 1982 to a tremendous reception from QE2 and Canberra as we entered berth 105, just astern of Canberra. A lone Ghurkha piper could be seen at Uganda's highest mast platform.

For most of us, like so many, it was then a couple of weeks' leave, and "back to normal duties". Quietly, we were proud of the efficient and successful conversion, and the overall lifesaving success of the ship. Our motto was "Heal Navy", a signal received as we left Gibraltar, and we hoped we lived up to it.

Now, so many years later, it is a tremendous honour and privilege for me to meet with so many of our former patients, through the comradeship and unity of SAMA 82, both in the U.K and F.I.

I hope this article helps many of you to understand how we happened to be there for you! Long may our aims of maintaining our links and strengths within the Falkland Islands continue. A new generation is now reaching adulthood since those dark days, and we owe it to each other to maintain and strengthen the unique bond of friendship and comradeship that has evolved between us all over the years



Nicci (then Senior Nursing Officer Queen Alexandra's Royal Naval Nursing Service, or SNO QARNNS) at work somewhere in the South Atlantic.

POSTSCRIPT:

S.S.UGANDA 1982 -1986.

On her return to U.K. in August 1982 Uganda was re-fitted in the Tyne, & returned to P&O educational cruising, but for only 3 months.

In January 1983 she was chartered to the Government as a troopship sailing between Ascension & Port Stanley until the new airport

could be completed on the Falklands. Many British troops were still based there & a sea link was essential for re-supply & troop movements. Nothing larger than Hercules aircraft could land at Stanley airport at that period, & their essential mid air re-fuelling was proving prohibitively expensive. Many F.I. residents sailed on her at this time, & remember this vital link to U.K. with great affection.

In April 1985 she was laid up on the River Fal in Cornwall for a year, where our current Chairman Martin Reed took command from Captain Scott-Masson for a few months in Spring 1995. By coincidence, I was working in Cornwall at the time, & unbeknown to him, often used to sail past in my little boat showing friends my cabin on the port side!

In May 1986 Uganda was sold for demolition & was to sail to Taiwan. After an eventful voyage through the Suez Canal she reached her destination in the South China Sea, but while at anchor awaiting demolition was struck by a typhoon. She was driven ashore just south of the entrance to Kaohsiung Harbour where she eventually broke up. It seemed she wanted to die by the elements that she had so nobly served for her 34 years..

Nicci Pugh

SAMA member No: 02234 FMI UGND

The Hospital Ship Uganda at anchor off Ascension Island April 30th 1982



Letters

Written on 16 January 2005

Dear Sir,

We are now well in to the New Year and despite many requests from me, and other members, to our Chairman to act on the agreements made over the past three years and form a Full Committee to run the Association without delay, it has not happened. At present IMO the Association is not constitutional, as the Advisory Committee does not exist and therefore the one Paragraph of the Constitution that governs the whole Association is completely ineffective. This is allowing the current EC to act completely alone, despite the members' wishes, and we the members have no recourse to any sort of Complaints procedure if we are not happy with the EC's decisions. There is no official means of calling for a Vote of No Confidence or an Extraordinary General Meeting for the purpose, in what's left of the Constitution.

I am totally unhappy with the running of the Finances of the Association. I have asked several questions on the finances from the Treasurer that have personally implicated me and my wife and despite many requests for an answer I have not been given one. One aspect in particular is the transfer of the Ring -Fenced money from the Pilgrimage fund to the main fund which is totally unacceptable as far as I am concerned. I donated my £200 rebate from the 2002 Pilgrimage to that fund to benefit future Pilgrims and not prop up the main Association fund which is spending money beyond its means. I find it incredible that between the last AGM and the end of September 2005 there was expenditure in less than 4 months of £7K, yet there is no money to put stamps on letters to inform the Membership what is going on and to post out the Minutes of the AGM. The Membership have not been informed of anything that is going on, they have not had the minutes of the last AGM. These could quite easily have been posted on the website, as could things that are happening on a week to week basis. I am not prepared to donate any more money to the Association under the current EC that refuses to answer my questions on the Funds that I am perfectly entitled to ask and receive an answer to, so I have stopped my Voluntary Contributions until such time as a Full Committee is voted in.

I am no longer prepared to help or be involved with this current EC and have resigned as Reunion Organiser and Pilgrimage Assistant. I have tried my utmost to get the best for the Members as an ordinary concerned member, but it has been making me ill and I will not let it affect my health any more. I am NOT resigning as a member of SAMA (82) as I still have a passion for the Association and agree with its main aims etc. I hope that it is not too long before something is done to bring the required reorganisation about, through pressure by the Membership, to get it back on the right track and more importantly get some well need funds injected in the form of an annual subscription. I hope this happens before the AGM as to carry on as we are is suicidal and the Association is losing credibility by the day and can't survive much longer as it is.

I do not believe that the current EC should be pursuing Charitable Status at this stage as without prior reorganisation there is not a chance in achieving it. It is my opinion that the Association do not need charitable status as the FVF as a charity could be the fundraising body for the Association allowing the Committee to get on with running the Association. As an Association that does not intend to Fund raise or indeed make Grants, it is my belief that it will not be eligible for grants purely for administration purposes, apart from perhaps the payment of wages.

I am also unhappy that the SAMA EC has refused to sit down with other bodies as part of a Work Group to discuss and formulate a Single Process for Pilgrims, selection, funding and all travel to the Falklands Islands - despite the fact that it was agreed and voted for at the AGM in June 2005.

At present the current EC are rejecting all offers of help and advice to form this Full Committee and move the Association forward as has been agreed over the last three years' AGMS. I know that many of you are unhappy about it. The last thing the Association needs is a Vote of No Confidence as the mud will stick to all Falkland Veterans for evermore. The current EC needs to agree to change or else the only alternative will be a Vote of No Confidence.

Of course all the above are my opinion of how things are at present. If you agree with me and feel the same, then perhaps you would consider writing a personal letter to the Chairman expressing your concern, as he is of the opinion, and has stated, that he is doing a good job and sees no reason to change anything - despite agreements made and voted for. Most of all can I please ask those that do have any concern whatsoever for the Association to stand up and be counted and make it your top priority to attend the AGM in the Norcross Hotel, Blackpool on Saturday 3rd June 2006 and exercise your right to vote.

John (Joe) Erskine

Ex RN HMS Hydra - 1982

Dear Sir

I am writing to express my concern about the amount of adverse comments about the Executive Council. It appears, I hope I am wrong, that the members of the association are being kept in the dark about what is happening in 2007 and in how the association itself is progressing.

I am also concerned about the lack of co-operation between SAMA and the FVF. It seems that there appears to be a lot of animosity towards the FVF for some reason, perhaps an explanation will be forthcoming at the AGM.

I also have noticed that there have been no audited figures published in the last two annual reports to members. There must be accountability in all these matters and I'm afraid that if this is not forthcoming then votes of no confidence in the current incumbents are a possibility.

I apologise for the doom and gloom but that's how it seems the state of play is at this moment

Yours Aye

Doug Page

Membership Number00993 FM1 Herm

Photos, Poems and TV info wanted!

Dave MacCreedy is working on a book of photographs taken by veterans during the events of 1982, to be published in 2007. Publication of the book is being supported by SAMA82, with a percentage of any money made donated to SAMA82.

Send photos to Dave with a few words explaining when and how they were taken and perhaps your feelings or a description of the situation at the time. Poetry written either during the war or since will also be included. (Discretion, if required, will be guaranteed.)

Dave is also putting together TV footage from 82. He has access to a lot of material, so if you have seen yourself or any mates then please let him know the gist of the footage. Any input is greatly appreciated.

Send poetry, words or pictures via e-mail (jpegs for pics) or contact Dave MacCreedy to arrange sending other images (eg slides) at pics82@ntlworld.com.

Account of a return to the Islands by SAMA North

Dave (Charlie) Brown SAMA 82 North

(Mark O'Neill served as a young 19 year old Private Soldier with B Company 2 Para in 1982. After letting Mark have time to recover from his emotional return back to the Islands in November 2005 he very kindly agreed to give a short interview about his experiences of the Journey. I have based this interview on Mark's own words and also with the help of the official Pilgrimage programme.)



out at a very slow speed - well as slow as they could without causing any great alarm - it was greatly appreciated that throughout the whole week of our visit the RAF cancelled all low level, high speed training.

In the afternoon we went up to Mount Longdon where 3 Para had fought for their lives in 1982. Chris and Mark are both 3 Para veterans, and Mark was seriously wounded in the arm during the battle. What was amazing about

Prior to flying out it was felt that it would help if Mark was to meet up with Chris Hamell and Mark Baines, the 3 Para veterans who would also be making the trip. It was also arranged that they would come through and pick Marco (as I will call Mark O'Neill) up for the drive down to Brize Norton. The petrol costs were paid by SAMA 82 North. This was made possible by a very generous donation from 2 ladies from Blackpool, Lottie and Edith.

On Monday 07th November Chris and Mark came over to stay at my house for the night. Tuesday they drove down to Brize Norton to meet up with the others travelling. After an exhausting 18-hour flight with a stop off to refuel at Ascension Islands they touched down to a daylight, and dry landing this time at Mount Pleasant. They were met by Gary Clement and other local drivers who took them straight to Darwin Lodge. Darwin was the scene of bitter fighting during the battle of Goose Green.

Wednesday 09th November, we stayed the evening at Darwin Lodge with Ken and Bonnie Greenland. They were excellent hosts; the food throughout our stay was incredible; different story to the last time I had been at Goose Green 23 years earlier. It was hard to believe that I was sleeping in a warm house so close to Goose Green.

We awoke on Thursday 10th November to a fine breakfast, including Penguin Eggs. After an excellent tour around the Battlefield at Goose Green, we laid wreaths at the 2 Para memorial Cross, and also polished the Plaque on the stone cairn. It was then on to San Carlos and Blue Beach Cemetery where some of my friends were buried. It was emotional but at last I was able to say a proper farewell to them. It was then back to Darwin Lodge for more excellent hospitality.

Friday 11th November we were driven back to Stanley, and to our accommodation; I was in Lookout Lodge with Chris and Mark. Again we were well looked after and made to feel very welcome, and at ease. At 1100 hrs we attended a short service at the 1982 memorial where the 2 minutes silence was observed, and we laid more wreaths. The highlight of this short service was a fly past low level by the RAF. We would like to thank the RAF for their awareness of our feelings and emotions and our dislike of low flying jet fighters, which bring back bad, and sad memories. Apart from this fly past which was carried

the trip up to Mount Longdon was the skill of the 4 wheel drivers who took us all up there. It was very windy when we got to the top, but what will always stand out in our minds was that when Chris and Mark were polishing the 3 Para memorial Plaque, the wind just stopped and it went totally silent, just long enough for them to complete their task. After leaving Longdon we drove down to Wireless Ridge, scene of the last major battle in 1982. 2 Para secured Wireless Ridge and then went on to be the first into Stanley the next day.

Saturday 12th, this was a day of relaxation after the first couple of days on the go. Gary took me to Fitzroy to see the sheepsheds we had all slept in back in 1982, and Mark and Chris went over to Teal Inlet where 3 Para had been camped up back in 1982 before the assault on Mount Longdon. On top of

this it was also the England v Argentina Football Match so we all crammed into a pub in Stanley at night to watch the game. Could not think of a better place to have been than to see England beat the Argies 3-2.

Sunday 13th November was the official Remembrance Sunday Parade at the main War memorial in Stanley, where we laid the official SAMA 82 Wreath, then visited the memorial wood and placed wooden crosses (kindly supplied by the Royal British Legion back in Leeds and Bradford) at all of the trees. Then we went to the Falkland Islands Defence Force HQ for a buffet meal. Whilst there a local artist presented a picture of the Cross on Mount Longdon to Chris and Mark. It was donated to the Parachute Regiment and will be on Display at

the Regiment's Headquarters. At night we had a reception at Government house kindly organised by the Governor of the Falkland Islands.

Monday 14th November we were taken out to see a Penguin Sanctuary, and spent time in Stanley shopping, at night it was a farewell drink with the many people who had made us so welcome during our short, but memorable trip, then up bright and early for transport to Mount Pleasant Airfield for the journey back home. We were all sad to be going back home so soon, but it was all worthwhile at the end of a long week.

Too many people to thank, but special thanks to Gary Clement, Ken and Bonnie, all the drivers, and also the staff at Lookout Lodge.



News from SAMA Wales

The last year has been a very busy one indeed. In May this branch was awarded Charity Status! (Charity No. 1109747). Curly had been working since January 2005 for recognition and his efforts were rewarded when after a new branch constitution was accepted by the commission. This now means that our work in Wales will come under close scrutiny and the branch committee look forward to rising to that challenge. We are very proud to be on the same footing as our friends in SAMA FI.

In **June** SAMA Wales were in Coventry for the National AGM and we would like to thank Joe Erskine for organising this and for all the words of encouragement given to us by those present.

August started with a visit to the RFA Sir Galahad on Saturday 13th. She was paying a farewell visit to Cardiff and we took the opportunity for a look round and presented a framed poem to the Captain and Crew in appreciation for their welcome. The Commodore of the Royal Fleet Auxiliary has backed our branch's request for a special return to Cardiff just for SAMA Wales members before she is decommissioned and that infamous name is mothballed. On Friday 26th August Brian Leigh organised a special fundraising night for SAMA Wales at Ashton near Chester, which saw ex Manchester Utd and Northern Ireland footballer Norman Whiteside give a very funny and entertaining after dinner speech. The evening raised a staggering £4,500 for SAMA Wales and our thanks go to Brian and his team for the exceptional efforts they put in to making it such a success.

Unfortunately on **September** 1st SAMA member George Smith (ex IWG) from Newport was laid to rest after a short illness. Aged 45 George was without doubt another victim to the Falklands Conflict, and for those who knew him, he will be remembered for his laughing grin and unusual sense of humour. "All the best George" and say "hi" to the lads from us..... September also saw the 3rd Annual Reunion of some 150

SAMA Wales members at the hall at the TA Centre in Cardiff. The raffle, superbly organised by Chris, Jill and Maureen, was vast and varied and our thanks go to those who helped. The entertainment again came from the Mynyddislwyn Male Voice Choir with a disco from Shaun Hopkins. This event keeps growing through the years and the branch committee are very encouraged by the stream of dedicated SAMA (82) members who make the trip over the bridge.

On **November** 13th SAMA Wales again paraded in Cardiff for the Remembrance Parade. This is done solely to afford SAMA members an opportunity to parade closer to home if they are unable to attend London. We intend to ask the RBL to lead the parade in 2007 in Cardiff.

Due to unforeseen circumstances, our website address has changed to www.samawales.co.uk. Do add us to your favourites list as we do announce updates on all regions of SAMA (82), and there is a forum and guest book.

Our biggest challenge to come is to build a National Monument in Wales to the Falklands Conflict. (see separate article). Running alongside this project is 'Jet-a-Vet' run by Chris Duggan, the original idea being to get businesses in Wales to sponsor a Veteran to return to the Islands. Chris has now expanded this and for more information call him on 01792 416794.

SAMA Wales produces 2 newsletters a year and if you want to join our mailing list regardless of location then please ring. We are a branch of SAMA (82) and work hard in recruiting new members to join our National Association. For more information about us or if you have any questions please don't hesitate to ring!

Andy (Curly) Jones

Tel 0044(0) 1874 625125/Mob 07737 382301



The captain of the RFA Sir Galahad receives a framed poem.

An unusual souvenir of HMS Antelope

John Phillips DSC RE

The purpose of this piece is to highlight the comradeship and generosity that exists between Falkland War Vets. On 24 August 2005 I paraded at Gosport, and whilst waiting in the Falklands Garden for things to begin I got chatting to a former crewmember of HMS Antelope. John Dadd RN, a former Fleet Chief Clearance Diver, overheard our conversation and said that he had something he had retrieved from the wreck of Antelope (during a clearance



dive after hostilities had ceased), which he would like to give it to me.

The picture shows his souvenir; the butt of one of HMS Antelope's LMGs which he had made into a cribbage board. Note the brass plate engraved with "HMS ANTELOPE SUNK - SAN CARLOS FALKLANDS 1982", and the cartridge fitted to hold score markers. This memento now has pride of place with my other career memorabilia. *Thanks again, John.*

Progress on the National Monument in Wales

Andy 'Curly' Jones

As mentioned in the SAMA Wales main update, the branch's biggest challenge to come is to build a National Monument in Wales to the Falklands Conflict. The aim is to erect and dedicate the monument in 2007, on the 25th anniversary of the War.

A 5-tonne rock, a gift from the Falklands people, which will eventually form the focus of the 12-foot monument, arrived in Brecon on 12th February at the end of its five-month journey from Mt Harriet in the Falklands, with the help of 157 Logistic Support Regiment, Royal Logistics Corps (Volunteers) based in Maindy Barracks, Cardiff.

The cost of the construction of the monument will be mainly met by public donations and fundraising events.

Sponsored Walk to Pen y Fan

The next major fundraising event is a two-mile walk to the summit of Pen y Fan, the highest mountain in South Wales. The organisers stress that the walk is for all, not just veterans, and will be 'a slow genteel stroll and not arduous in any way'. The SAMA (82) Standard will be raised at the summit once all have arrived safely. Walkers will receive a t-shirt and certificate on completion of the event.

The aim is to raise at least £2,000.00, around one seventh of the total needed. The date is likely to be late September 2006 - contact the organisers for details, or check the SAMA Wales website at www.samawales.co.uk

If you cannot take part in the sponsored walk itself, do support the event; the walkers will depart the Storey Arms (not a pub!) car park on the A470 at 10.00hrs and return to base camp, (where there will be refreshments, stands of Falklands Conflict memorabilia, SAMA Wales merchandise, and a party atmosphere), at around 13.30hrs, followed by a post event party in Brecon for awards and a raffle.

Andy 'Curly' Jones

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Artist's impression of final monument



The rock being taken from near Mt Harriet



View from the North

Dave (Charlie) Brown SAMA 82 North

Greetings from myself and fellow members of SAMA 82 up in the North. The year 2005 started slowly as normal post Christmas, but within a couple of months I was up to the usual levels of phone calls and paperwork all relevant to SAMA 82, especially with welfare calls.

The first big event in the Calendar was early May when some of us still able enough, (or should that be stupid enough) went down to the Brecon Beacons to do the annual Fan Dance, Pen y Fan. This is run every year by the Ex Para Club, better known as the FOC Club, (will not bother explaining what the F.O. stands for) but it is a well known British word. They raise money for deserving cases, and many of the members are Veterans of 1982 and SAMA 82 Members. We turned up at the car park to be greeted by the SAMA 82 Wales Mascot, and Curly and Chris Duggan, and other SAMA 82 Wales members who had kindly set up a refreshment stall. It was a very kind gesture from SAMA 82 Wales and was appreciated by all taking part. Most of the walkers taking part had their own Off Licence in their Bergens for the traditional toast on top of the Fan. One person missing, or so we thought, was our residential standard bearer Kenny Dawkins. However, Kenny was not AWOL, but had simply got the timings wrong, and instead of starting at 1000 hrs thought we had to be at the top for 1000 hrs. So he had set off carrying the SAMA 82 Standard along with another former Welsh Guards lad (I think it was Wayne Edwards) at 0800 hrs. Thankfully it was a really clear and sunny day and the rain held off, so they did not get soaked whilst waiting for us to arrive. Again it was a great gesture from SAMA 82 Wales to have the Standard on parade on top of the Fan. At the end of a long, tiring, (and drunken) day a great time was had by all, once again kindly supported by SAMA 82 Wales.

The next main event was the SAMA 82 Social weekend, and AGM in Coventry. For those who did not attend you missed a great weekend, and some fine food. A big thank you to Joe who organised this event. It was great to see Gary Clement, our new SAMA 82 Falkland Islands Representative in attendance. Gary had taken over at short notice due to Terry Peck MBE falling ill. We do hope that Terry is recovering well now, and would like to thank Terry for everything that he has done for SAMA 82 over the years and also for his major part in the 1982 Conflict. Highlight of the Saturday evening was having Sir Malcolm Hunt, and Sir Julian Thompson, along with Sukey Cameron leading the fighting patrol round the Dance floor to 'show me the way to Amarillo'. The finest compliment was to follow when we thanked Malcolm for leading us on the night, and he replied, it was a pleasure, and an honour, just as it was in 1982.

The next gathering was up at the Guide Inn for the Annual SAMA 82 North Social weekend. This one is very easy to organise, apart from getting a decent date for the weather, and ensuring as many members can attend. As usual most of the Regulars showed up from Friday afternoon to pitch tents, or in some cases set up their caravans. It was yet another great

weekend which was only ruined by the Landlady of the Pub shutting the bar early both on Friday and Saturday. Not that it made any difference; as usual everyone had more than enough supplies to keep them going throughout the nights. We would like to thank George Martin our Piper for the weekend, along with his drummer. An important part of the weekend is being led down to the Bonfire by a piper for a short but poignant few minutes of remembrance to our fallen comrades, including the toast to absent friends, 2 Minutes silence, and then the pipers lament Flowers of the Forest. It is a very emotional, but special part of the whole weekend. We will be moving the Weekend down to Doncaster Aerodrome this year, this is a private Air Museum, and they have a small Falklands Museum; watch the website for further details when we have confirmed a date, probably either the first or last weekend in July.

We then had the annual Pilgrimage back to the Falkland Islands in November. This year three SAMA 82 Members from the North returned to the Islands. But as usual it was not as easy as planned. Acting on a request from Combat Stress it was agreed that 2 members of 3 Para who had never been back to the Falkland Islands were on the list. It was important for them both to go back together to face their demons. However, just a couple of weeks before we found out that due to a mix up, one of the allotted seats on the plane had already been filled without the knowledge of Curly, the Co-ordinator, or myself. We faced the situation of finding the additional funding for the extra seat. Straight away I was in contact both by letter and phone to the Army Benevolent Office to explain the mix up, and request the extra funding be granted. A very big thank you from all at SAMA 82 to both Mrs Anne Lloyd, and to Lt Col Simon Brewis for their very kind and understanding of the problem, and for solving it immediately. A full diary of events of this pilgrimage from the words of Mark O'Neill can be found in the next chapter. Once again we would like to thank Curly, and Nicci Pugh for all their hard work and efforts, along with Gary Clement in the Falkland Islands for yet another successful Pilgrimage. Teamwork will get results as long as we all work together, as we all proved back in the dark days of 1982.

Whilst the November Pilgrimage was going on in the Falklands I was laying the official SAMA 82 wreath on remembrance Sunday in Bradford. That was the last major event in the 2005 SAMA 82 North Calendar. In closing just to add my thanks to Martin Reed, Chairman SAMA 82, Curly and all at SAMA 82 Wales, and for everyone who is working so hard in the background for the good of the Association, and our veterans.

Hopefully we will see you all in June up at Blackpool; for the record we hope to have a new deputy Chaplain voted in at the AGM. In addition we are organising a proper Memorial Service on the Sunday morning, details will be on the website when they are confirmed.

*Dave (Charlie) Brown
SAMA 82 North*

The Tales of Corporal C or Casualty 252 or when God offered me ice cream!

Our squadron warrant officer was nicknamed "Cato" and he disliked, in the nicest possible way, anything that was not RAF Regiment. So someone like me, a Rapier Techie in regiment clothing, could always appear on his radar.

Having landed in San Carlos on that cold misty morning in May and a couple of days before the rest of the squadron my life was confined to getting the equipment ashore, avoiding air raids and getting our fire units ready to deploy. Then Cato arrives with the main party and as he moves up from the beach in the best steely-eyed fashion he spots me digging (another task alien to me) and life, as they say changes for ever. "Ah, corporal C, I have your ammunition and rations sorted. Each man will give you five rounds and a tin of bacon (gopping) grill and you can distribute it around the advance party", says he. As I put down my shovel I opened the back of his Aladdin's cave (the HQ 4 tonner) and showed him some of the spoils of war we had "acquired" on the journey south, which included a couple of pallets of compo rations complete with pallets and tie down straps (when "acquiring" it is best to remove all the evidence). As a bonus none of the menus were chicken curry or chicken in brown sauce and there was enough ammunition to invade Argentina, not that I was volunteering you understand. I am sure he was grateful, but he just huffed and suggested, in that warrant officer way, that I make my trench a little bigger.

I didn't see him for the next few days as I wandered around the countryside, avoiding trouble and keeping fire units working. But sadly I did manage to get myself into a little bit of bother (I cut myself shaving?) and I ended up at Rick's place (Ajax or Vim bay) where I bumped into a bloke (sorry RM Colour Sergeant & Wessex aircrew) that I had been on an outward bound course with in Norway a few years before (the Army & Royal Marines call them outward bound – but for an RAF chap like me it was really arctic (weather) survival (2 beers at £3 each).

As the medic treated my injury, I remember falling asleep as the anaesthetic took effect and waking up some hours



Dawn breaks on "Bomb Alley"

later with the padre (grey suit, dog collar and all) leaning over me. My first thought was "Oh S**t I am dying", but as my head cleared he said "Do you want some food?" The cook has a nice pie and there is ice cream for dessert! I ask you, ice cream. So while the padre is off sorting out my first hot meal in a while I take stock of my location. I am on a stretcher outside the Red & Green life machine and too close to the UXB and surrounded by other patients of Rick. On the stretcher next to me is a Para (red beret, aggressive hard looking stare – even in his sleep) looking at me as though I was a Martian; he thought my plane had crashed and I had to explain that while I was in the RAF we (other ranks) avoided flying where possible and that we left that to the officers and that I actually specialised in making the missiles that shoot down the planes go whoosh and bang (occasionally they go bang and no whoosh, but we won't go there). Credentials established he offered me a Mars bar from a huge box sent by readers of the Sun. Having filled my ammo pouch (sorry Cato) with enough Mars bars for half the squadron the padre returns with the silver service (tin tray) and I ate my meal of pie, veggies & ice cream dessert in short order, resolving to legit ASAP and before someone decides to tackle the UXB. At first light the next morning I found a Wessex bound for Port San Carlos and bunked a lift. No sooner had the Wessex helicopter dropped me off than Cato spots me and come running over looking for volunteers for his chain gang, sorry defence party. "Ah corporal C I am glad you're back, I have you down for duty 2 hours ago".

The Southern Ocean

*Hogging, sagging, shipping it green
The southern ocean is a terrible dream.
Waves so high, with a force of twelve
This is the grave where many ships dwell.*

*Whales so gentle, feeding on krill
Roaming the seas to eat their fill
No one to fear except for man
The giants of the deep, truly awesome.*

*Icebergs of blue hiding their depth
Breaking, crashing, sailing to their death.
Shifting north to warmer seas
Melting down to vanish with ease.*

*Few men live in this desert of ice
Only ones of special vice
The whalers of old have all long gone
Leaving their mark, and the bones of some.*

The Scarlet Flower

*Scarlet flowers growing in rough ground
Displaying their crimson heads
Remind us of days when guns did sound
And the madness of killing and dead*

*The now bloom in peace and solitude
A carpet of beauty and grace
No one to disturb their passing
A sea of crimson embrace*

*They stand in a row with a secret
Of days when mayhem did reign
When men in their madness and anguish
Brought forth a carnage insane*

*Now birds fly over the shrines
Where brave men lay underground
Their plots are marked by a headstone
And flowers so scarlet they shine.*

Patrick Brown

End of 'Calling the Falklands'

After broadcasting to the Falkland Islands' 2,300-strong population for 62 years, the BBC radio programme 'Calling the Falklands' has been aired for the last time. The twice-weekly show provided a round-up of news and personal messages, and broke numerous stories during the Falklands War when presenter Peter King ended every show with "Keep Your Heads Down and Your Hearts High". Under a new agreement between the BBC and the Falklands, the BBC will continue to supply BBC World Service programming, free of charge, for rebroadcast by the Falkland Islands Radio Service (FIRS).

The Role of The Hospital Ship UGANDA in 1982

Nicci Pugh

The P&O Educational Cruise Ship “Uganda” was requisitioned by the Government in early April 1982 immediately following the Argentine invasion of the Falkland Islands. The ship had just left Venice, and was diverted to Naples on April 13th, where 900 excited schoolchildren were disembarked. An advance party of R.N. medical, P&O, and marine structural experts were flown out, and she left for Gibraltar for conversion to “Her Majesty’s Hospital Ship Uganda”, the first Hospital Ship for 29 years.

The tasks ahead were formidable, including the construction of a 40-ton helicopter platform and linking ramp to the Casualty Reception Area at the stern, installation of satellite communication systems, and re-painting the ship to the now familiar Geneva Convention red cross configuration.

Internally, the aim was to provide modern service hospital facilities, i.e. the provision of operating theatres, sterilising equipment, Intensive Care, low and high dependency beds, burns unit, laboratory, blood bank, dentistry and X ray facilities, as well as the Casualty Reception area at the base of the helicopter ramp. Facilities for re-fuelling at sea, desalination of sea water, and a host of other essential modifications all took place. There were up to 500 men at any one time involved in the conversion; unbelievably, all was completed in just three days and nights, and we were ready to leave by April 19th.

Forty Queen Alexandra’s Royal Naval Nursing Service (QARNNS) Nursing Officers and Naval nurses, and R.N. Medical staff with various specialities and skill mixes had been flown out from Royal Naval Hospitals Haslar (Gosport) and Stonehouse (Plymouth) in a Hercules from R.A.F. Lyneham on April 16th. This was to be the first time Royal Navy female junior ratings had served at sea.

Finally, slowly and proudly, H.M.H.S. Uganda left Gibraltar’s No 2 dry dock at 0912 on Monday 19th April 1982 for her long voyage south to the Falklands. Our task was only just beginning; as we headed south we had to “build” our hospital, train our staff, and try to prepare ourselves for the task ahead. We arrived off Ascension on April 28th, where the Task Force was assembling, then continued to steam further south, and by early May had heard of the sinking of both the Belgrano and H.M.S. Sheffield. Our presence was now urgently required in the TEZ (Total Exclusion Zone) around the Falklands.

The agreed plan of action on leaving Ascension had been for Uganda to remain outside the TEZ, with the converted survey ships H.M.S. Hecla, Hydra and Herald (now converted to R.N. ambulance ships and in similar red cross livery) ferrying casualties out to us. However, this was abandoned because of the difficulty of transferring seriously ill patients between ships in heavy seas, so Uganda moved closer in to the hostilities.



The newly converted Hospital Ship Uganda leaving Gibraltar for the Falklands April 19th 1982.

On May 14th Uganda was given Authority for all 3 R.N. ambulance survey ships, and the 3 Argentinean Hospital ships, Bahia Paraíso, Almirante Irizar, and the Puerto Deseado.

It was a complex and exacting task for us all. When our on board patient numbers approached about 100, arrangements were made for those improving to return to U.K. in Hydra, Hecla or Herald. This transfer was done in R.A.F. aircraft at Montevideo. So a pattern evolved over the next 2 months of embarking wounded patients by helicopter, and sending off those in better health by sea as their condition improved.

By day Uganda was anchored in Grantham Sound, a sheltered bay to the south west of San Carlos Water. Casualties could be transferred to us with great speed. At night we steamed north to what was called our “Red Cross Box”, a sea area approximately 12 nautical miles north of Cape Dolphin, the northerly tip of East Falkland. As we remained illuminated at night, we were not allowed to remain in such close proximity to San Carlos, acting as an excellent “night fix” for hostile navigators.

The majority of our patients arrived from the Ajax Bay Casualty Evacuation Station; other casualties arrived at all times of day or night by helicopter. We had three teams in our operating theatres, mostly working with “2 on, 1 off”, but on several occasions all 3 teams were working simultaneously, which was interesting!

Nursing staff on the wards and in all the specialist units worked with notable calm, cheerfulness and efficiency throughout the campaign. We supported each other at the bad times, and were, in turn, helped by the resilience and bravery of our patients. Each one was precious to us. Sadly, we did lose three patients and we all felt their loss keenly.

The Travels of the Standard Bearer

Kenny Dawkins

During the last twelve months or so the SAMA82 Standard was seen on parade no fewer than thirteen times in different parts of the country, at different functions and memorials. For the most part both Graham Hurley and I do the parades together, but there are times when because of work we have to go solo.

The season started with Graham parading the stand at Southsea on a very hot day, followed by me on parade at Gosport organised by the FVF where there were a good couple of hundred veterans on parade.

We have also been to chapel at Pangbourne, on four different parades in Cardiff, and both Graham and I went to the top of Pen-y-Fan, the tallest mountain in South Wales, to support Charlie Brown's Fan Dance charity. The Standard was also on parade in Pontypridd, Ystrad Rhondda, the SAMA Wales annual bash, and last but not least Tower Hill, London, firstly at the Merchant Navy memorial, and then on to the new memorial dedicated to the merchant seamen that died in the Falkland Islands in 1982.

Bookings are now being taken for 2006 season and beyond; we already have a booking in Chorley, Lancashire for April 23. Both Graham and I will travel anywhere that might benefit by having the Standard parade; this service is free, all we ask is as much notice as possible. We can be contacted via the SAMA office or mail me atkennydawkins@hotmail.com.

Best wishes One and All - Kenny Dawkins



FVF Freedom of the Borough Parade at Gosport, pictures by Peter Pepper

Merchant Navy Day

Martin Reed reports, "As your Chairman and as Patron of the MNA I attended the Merchant Navy Day Parade at Tower Hill last November when Admiral Sir Alan West unveiled the new memorial to the members of the Merchant Navy who died in the Falklands conflict.

"SAMA's standard flew proudly alongside the other MN and RFA standards on parade."



Dates for your diaries

Falklands Memorial Service

The FFA holds a short Memorial Service in the crypt of St Paul's Cathedral which we are welcome to join, this year at 100 on 11th June. Contact Cynthia Middlewick if you are interested on 01273 845182. The Service is followed by lunch at a local hostelry.

Pangbourne

The Falkland Island Memorial Chapel Trust is holding its annual Thanksgiving Service in the Chapel at Pangbourne School at 1200 on the 11th June. The Chapel as you may know contains the SAMA virtual Garden of Remembrance cared for by Mark Griffin. Please contact the Secretary Angela Perry on 01295 738123, so that the Trustees can have some ideas of numbers, including the buffet lunch after the service.

Merchant Navy Day Memorial Service

The Service at Trinity Gardens, Tower Hill, will be held this year on Sunday 3rd September. Photo left of the unveiling of the new Falklands Memorial last year.

The Vulcan Bomber in action

Martin Withers

As a modern airline pilot, I could jump into an Airbus A330 on Ascension Island, fill the tanks, programme the Flight Management Computer, align the Inertial Reference System (updated by GPS), fire up the economical Rolls Royce Trent engines and cruise to the Falklands and back in comfort.

So why was it such a feat for a single Vulcan to cover that route in 1982 and put just one bomb on the runway at Port Stanley? The idea of using the Vulcan to mount an attack requiring the support of the whole Victor tanker force was the brainchild of the then Chief of Air Staff (CAS) Sir Michael Beetham, himself both a bomber and tanker pilot. However, his plan was met with scepticism.

Why did it not seem feasible?

Range

The Vulcan was designed for operations against the USSR, with a range of about 2,500 miles. The round trip over the South Atlantic from Ascension to the Falklands and back was over 7,000 miles. Although the Vulcan was equipped with an air-to-air refuelling (AAR) system, these had all been deactivated in 1967; no crews had experience of 'tanking'.

Bombing Accuracy

All the V-bombers (Vulcan, Victor, Valiant) were designed to carry a nuclear weapon and a large number of conventional bombs. The Vulcan's bomb bay would hold 21 x 1,000 lb HE bombs. However, by the mid 1970s it was decided that the Vulcan should no longer have a secondary, 'conventional' role, and all such bombing would be left to Jaguars, Buccaneers, Harriers and later Tornados.

Quite simply, the Vulcan's bombing system was not accurate enough. Using the H2S radar, very little different from the one in the Lancaster, with an ancient analogue computer to work out the bomb release point, a gyro-compass system to align the radar to True North, and little more than guesswork to determine the wind effect on the bomb as it fell, hitting the airfield, let alone the runway, would be quite an achievement!

Vulnerability

We could recognise and react to threats from Russian fire control radars associated with SAMs and fighter aircraft. The rear end of the aircraft was full of jammers tuned to Russian radar frequencies, but we had little to counter the Argentinean equipment. A low-level attack, even at around 400kts and 300 feet at night, would make the Vulcan a meaty target for their radar controlled Oerlikon anti aircraft guns.

So what made it possible?

My most lasting memory of the three weeks building up to the Falklands Conflict (Operation Corporate) and of the war itself was the 'can do' attitude which pervaded everywhere.



Our engineers found parts to reactivate the AAR systems on the aircraft, and overcame problems of leaking probes and jammed fuel valves. The bomb-racks and control systems, including the bomb selection mechanism (90-way), were miraculously found - they could have been thrown away years previously!

The nav teams were given a quick refresher course on the conventional bombing system, or in the case of my crew, Bob Wright (Radar) and Gordon Graham (Plotter), a slightly longer introductory course! We trained hard, flying 11 times in 14 days - equivalent to four months' work for a Vulcan crew in 1982!

The captains were taught the art of AAR. The Vulcan is a joy to fly in formation, but "why did they put that probe there?" Unlike just about any other aircraft, the probe is not in view in the pilot's line of sight during the final stages of making contact with the basket.

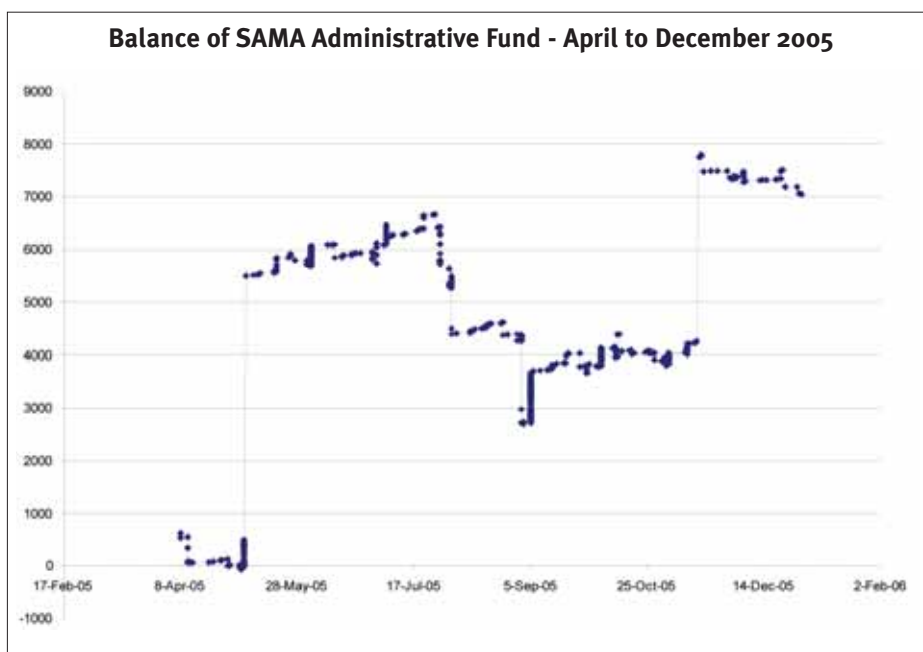
We dropped live bombs at low level at night on Garvie Island (very dark and bumpy with big cliffs around), practised pop-up attacks for ballistic releases from around 8,000 feet, and had plenty of 'realistic' night low level flying around the Scottish Isles. We put the old Vulcan through her paces, flying beyond the original flight test parameters of speed and bank with maximum payload.

The Nav Radar's position was up-rated to 'bombing competition' spec, with triple offset boxes enabling him to aim on a selection of radar returns during the attack, both to refine the aiming and, hopefully, to find an aiming point close to the actual target to minimise error.

The AEOs also got a new toy. A Westinghouse ECM pod, 'borrowed' from the USA, was slung under the starboard wing using an RSJ from the local builders merchants, itself attached to the Skybolt mounts. The Argentinean frequencies had been discovered and these were programmed into the jammer.

The type of attack, not low-level 'laydown' using retarded bombs, but a pop-up attack, dropping from above 8,000 feet, was finally approved by the CAS. This would ensure a much larger crater from a freefall bomb, give more time for aiming and at this altitude we would, theoretically, be outside the range of the Oerlikons, and would be turning away from the airfield by the time the bombs exploded.

Income	2005	2006 Estimate
Membership Fees	840	1118
Membership Donations	5332	8700
Other Donation	450	720
Transfers	8500	500
Bank interest	3	20
Sales	404	600
Event Receipts	160	200
Capitation	0	5000
Totals	15689	16858
Expenditure		
Premises Costs	1548	2600
Administrative Costs	3895	7000
Employee Costs	2420	4200
Travel and subsistence	169	300
Management Costs	0	2000
Web Site	0	1700
Purchase of stock	1284	400
Totals	9316	18200



Area Representatives

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The South West area is currently without a Representative. Anyone who wishes to volunteer for the position, please let Denzil know

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National Secretary

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Annual Subscriptions

For those of you who have as yet not signed up for an annual sub., please think hard about doing so and contact Denzil for the forms. As you will see from the Accounts, we do need more income to continue funding the Office and correspondence, let alone extra newsletters.

AGMs

It is apparent that numbers attending the AGM have fallen off and continue to do so having changed from the Army/Navy match venue. Is this because:-

You are not interested?

You preferred the Army/Navy match venue?

The present system is too expensive?

You do not wish to mix business with pleasure?

You would rather have an AGM at one time of the year and a reunion at another?

You feel that AGMs are a waste of time?

Please let us know your views, as the AGM is a very important part of any Association. We can arrange ballots on the more important decisions, but the AGM is very much the sounding board for meeting discussing the way that Association is going.

Proposed Drum Head Service and Parade, RAF Waddington

Peter Cobbold

On April 30th 1982 Vulcan XM597, the reserve Vulcan XM607 of 44 Sqn. plus 15 Victor K Mk2 Tankers took off from Ascension Islands and headed due south for a rendezvous with history. The Captain of Vulcan XM607 was Flight Lieutenant Martin Withers, carrying out the longest and most technically difficult bombing mission ever at that time. For this he was awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross (DFC).

Vulcan XM607 is now grounded at RAF Waddington, a shadow of her former glory.

Aim of the Parade

We all know of the heroic actions carried out in the nine battles for Stanley; less recognised is the equally heroic actions carried out by the aircrews of all three services and the vital tasks they flew.

I propose that we the veterans, our families and friends, and the relatives of the 255 comrades that fell, gather at RAF Waddington to pay homage to our fallen comrades, especially those in the Air Arms. The surviving Ships, Regiments or Squadrons from 1982 to should be invited to parade their colours with ours.

Proposed Features

Vulcan XM607 would be the centre point for the parade; we would ask to have the South Atlantic Medal plus Rosette painted on her nose, plus the DFC as won by her Captain Martin Withers.

All three services could be approached to provide a static parade of aircraft that took part in 1982: Phantom Fgr2 with the



Falkland Island crest on her nose, at Waddington with No. 23 Sqn, representing No. 29 Sqn as served on Ascension Islands in the air defence role; we could ask for the presence of the Chinook BN, based at RAF Odiham. The Aeroventure museum in Doncaster (which has a Falklands war section) is willing to bring Gazelle AH1 XX411 from B" Flt 3 Commando Brigade to the parade. She was shot down over San Carlos, her pilot Sgt. Evens was killed, and Sgt. Candish the observer survived.

Vulcan Fly Past

The parade's highlight could be a fly past of Vulcan XH558 from Brunthorpe, breaking the 2 minute silence; this grand old lady belongs to the VTS (Vulcan to the Sky). As we march past any poppies or flowers could be placed on the helicopter as a mark of respect to all 255 fallen comrades.

The three services could provide the drums for the altar; SAMA would provide the book of Remembrance and Padre to lead the service. Of the VIPs to take the salute, one should be a senior figure from the Falklands Islands Government. We would need a band and piper for the parade, perhaps with ties to 1982.

Reunion

As tradition goes the night before I suggest we gather for a reunion, in the form of a hangar party to be held at RAF Waddington.

I would love to hear any other ideas, suggestions, or support for this event. Please contact me at: petercobbs@fsmail.net.

SAMA 82 members commission Vulcan painting

It was at the RAF Waddington air show that artist Jon Westwood was approached by Peter and Dave from SAMA 82, in their search for an artist to depict XM607 (an Avro Vulcan based at RAF Waddington) being over flown by XH558.

Jon has been interested in aircraft since childhood, partly owing to his father's passion for military planes stemming from his RAF national service, and frequent visits to air shows as a young child, and started painting military planes - Lightnings, Buccaneers and Vulcans - he remembered from such visits. As his talent developed Jon painted other subjects including classic racing cars, steam trains, landscapes and historic buildings. His recent work has all been executed in oil paint, and includes commissions for members of The Rolls Royce Owners Club, Delta Jets at Kemble, 317 squadron, as well as Concorde on her final flight.

Jon is excited and honoured to have been commissioned to paint the Vulcan. Jon can be contacted by email at westy.art@ntlworld.com or by phone 0121 706 7616.

It is intended that the finished painting will be unveiled at the AGM this summer.



Jon Westwood working on a painting of the vulcan bomber now based at RAF Waddington

The Secretary's Points

Denzil Connick

Greetings to you all! At the time of writing, we, (your committee and Debs), have been busy putting the final touches to the AGM and Reunion Plans being held at the Norbeck Hotel in Blackpool. You should all by now have received your AGM and Reunion calling notices and booking forms. I hope that as many of you that can, will attend the AGM and Reunion this year.

The AGM (2005) and Reunion at Coventry was the first meeting that we have held outside our familiar surroundings of Twickenham Stadium. All those that went along to Coventry, I am confident, had a great time and appreciated the friendly, happy atmosphere, excellent food and accommodation that all came at very good value for money. Special thanks must be mentioned for John (Joe) Erskine, who did a great job, negotiating the Coventry venue that is being repeated with the same hotel group this year in Blackpool.

You should all have received the minutes of the last AGM, if not and you would like a copy, please let me know.

The last year has been a mixture of highs and lows for me personally and indeed, for SAMA 82. Like all of us, we have our personal burdens to carry and sometimes the load slips. It could be an age thing, but accepting inevitable change is a struggle for me as my battered and abused body begins to show its mortal fragility.

I have seen my son go to, and return, thank God, from Iraq with his regiment 1RWF and then go off to Northern Ireland, where it's safer now than most British High Streets on a Saturday night! My eldest son has just enlisted into the Royal Navy and very proud I am too that he has joined the 'senior service'. So, the Connick family is a true mix of service just like SAMA 82.

Our Association is changing and adapting as it grows. Just like in our personal lives, these changes are not always welcome, but occasionally necessary. I now think that it is high time that SAMA 82 took on the new challenges facing it as we approach the 25th (Jubilee) anniversary of the Falklands War and the restoration of the islands and its people to the Government of their choice.

Our membership continues to grow at a steady pace and now stands at over 2600 in all categories. I would hope to see at least 3000 members on our books by June 2007.

With such membership strength there comes an increase in welfare support and this is an area close to my heart as a caseworker for SSAFA Forces Help. I believe that we can, by being a charity, do so much more to support those of our number less able and fortunate as the years roll on by. I would urge you all to study the proposals being put forward in relation to Charity Status or Company Limited by Guarantee and weigh up the good and bad for each and then make your vote with confidence.

The Blackwood office is keeping busy and I must say that without Debbie Davis to help me I would have sunk long ago. We have had some 'computer' problems, sorry to have to use that old excuse and it's meant not at all like 'the cheque is in the post' or that other, 'less acceptable' explicit about a sexual

act. I am not the most computer literate person in the world and have learned most of my little known skills by trial and error! I am an 'improver' as I was once told by a school teacher. I have received complaints that some of you have not heard from SAMA 82 for some time. Sorry about that if its any fault of the office; however, often this is simply because we do not receive changes of address. Please remember to 'keep us in the loop' if you move. Thank you.

The regions of SAMA 82 are doing fine, with SAMA 82 Wales leading the way at a furious pace. I was present at the great 'stone delivery' at Curly Jones's farm near Brecon. Curly will explain more about this project in his piece of the newsletter; however, I would like to say that Curly and his team of Welsh wizards are true stalwarts of SAMA 82 as a whole and not just for the Welsh Region. Thanks SAMA 82 Wales.

It is with regret that I report that Martin ('Spike') Dunkin has stood down as SAMA 82 Rep for Devon and Somerset. Spike has needed to take a back seat for health reasons, and I know I will speak for many when I say that his cheerful and caring nature in dealing with all matters relating to members will be missed. Take care of yourself, Spike, and remember that we want to see you firing on all cylinders soon!

Many of you have sent me e-mail contact addresses that we can use instead of terrestrial post. Thank you. Please, if you have access to e-mail, and you would like us to contact you in this medium, please send me your e-mail address on e-mail, with the reference: 'Sign Up' and I will add you to the SAMA 82 e-mail address list. Please remember to add your name and membership number. Once we have sorted out the address list with e-mail and others, we can greatly reduce the cost of postage and stationery.

With next year being an important landmark anniversary year, the Association has a lot of dates to consider for a variety of events. The chief consideration is trying not to clash dates and communicating with other groups such as the Falkland Islands Chapel at Pangbourne, the Falklands Families Association, and the FVF is essential.

The Chairman is working closely with the MoD and others to finalise plans and you will be notified as soon as possible with details about events.

Thanks once again to David Connett and his company for assisting us with this news magazine, and the recent post of the AGM and Reunion notices. David has pointed out that he could do an even better job if he were to receive more material from members such as photos, short stories and the like, including any events and fundraising projects in your area. This is your news magazine and can only be interesting and informative as you would like it to be with the help of you, the members. Please contact David now with anything you wish to have included in the next issue. His contact details are printed within this magazine.

*Well, that's my lot for now...with best wishes,
Denzil Connick, Secretary SAMA 82
densama@aol.com*

Return to the Falklands

Spike Dunkin

Following the pilgrimage in 2002, Ray Colborne and I decided to return with our wives. Unfortunately this was not to be as Ray sadly passed away. However my wife had listened to the word "Falkland Islands" since we met and wished to share that part of my life with me. Elizabeth, Ray's wife was also determined to make the trip with us to learn more about Ray's service during 1982. I think it was important for each of us in our own way.



cliffs 40 miles from the position where she was lost.

In 1982 Ray was a Helicopter pilot in the fleet air arm and after the hostilities had finished his squadron, 847 was based across the water from Stanley in Camber house, just behind the jetty and fuel tanks. Our driver managed to get us there in one piece, and it was a wonderful experience for Elizabeth to visit "Ray's bedroom" and we all felt very sad that he was not with us to share the day

We left Brize Norton on Boxing Day and arrived the following afternoon to be met by my old friend from 2002 Ian Stewart who along with Gerald Cheek was to be our "taxi driver" for the next two and a half weeks.

We rested and made ourselves known in the pubs the next day. Over the next 2 weeks we were lucky enough to visit most of the memorials and mountains that the 2 "girls" wanted to see. For those of you who have not had the chance to return yet, at every memorial a box of some sort has been left with brasso and cloths so I was busy polishing brass plates for much of the time.

We managed to go overland to Ajax Bay where the farmer and his family laid on tea and cakes for us. Where would you find that in this country! The field hospital is decaying but you can still see artwork on the walls from 82. We visited Sea Lion Island for a few days; the wildlife was stunning as was the position of the HMS Sheffield monument looking out from the

Apart from the mountains we paid our respects at Fitzroy, Goose Green and San Carlos. At Goose Green we were invited to the sheep shearing contest and I must admit one or two of the sheep looked very attractive. It was so nice for us to be able to join in with everyone. That's the nice thing about the Islands, everyone seems to have time for each other and outsiders always feel welcome.

So we had a busy and fulfilling time. My wife was so overwhelmed by the whole experience that she is determined to visit again. So am I.

Footnote.

I have recently stepped down as Devon rep following medical advice. I would like to say that it has been an honour for me to have pointed people in the right direction and to have helped with membership matters. SAMA will always have my full support and I look forward to attending future events.

Thanks, Spike



Members of 3 Para and one brave Royal Marine (David Devenney 4th from right) relax in Alice Springs Bar, D Deck Aft, onboard the Canberra. Denzil Connick is sat second from the right. Notice there are less than two cans of beer per man... where is the rest stashed? Answers to the Secretary, no prizes for guessing correctly!

SAMA (82) Merchandise

A wide variety of clothing and other merchandise is available from SAMA Wales, with most items and sizes in stock. Items include Polo shirts, Winter Fleece, Rally Jackets, Baseball Caps, Rugby Shirts, Collectable Die Cast Falkland Trucks, tie pins and much more.

New in!

- Superior Premium Polo Shirts in Burgundy, Navy and Forest Green. (Sizes from Medium to 3XL)
- SAMA Wales Coffee Mugs
- Car Stickers
- Choice of Embroidered Motifs on clothing



We also bring out new stock from time to time and encourage ideas from members.

Don't delay, to receive your colour brochure please contact Curly on 01874 625125/07737382301 alternatively send your postal address to samawales@btinternet.com

Chairman's Notes

The 25th Anniversary Commemorations, 2007

RAF Waddington will be the venue for a drumhead service in July 2007, coinciding with the Station's open day. Volunteers are needed now to help plan this tri-service event, please contact Peter Cobbold at petercobbbs@fsmail.net. A painting of XM607 which is now parked at Waddington and which participated in the Black Buck raids has been commissioned and will be unveiled at the 2006 AGM in Blackpool. There will be 255 prints available.



XM607 at Waddington showing flashes for three bombing missions

The **Annual Pangbourne Chapel Service** will be somewhat grander with Royal attendance, and more military involvement. The Service will be held on Thursday 14 June 2007 at 1200 followed by a buffet lunch. Anyone wishing to attend will have to apply for a ticket from Mrs Angela Perry, the Secretary of the Falkland Islands Memorial Chapel Trust. Details of how to do this will appear on the Chapel website www.falklands-chapel.org.uk and in the Newsletter in February 2007. Anyone who would like a copy of the Newsletter should write to Mrs Angela Perry at the following address:

Mrs Angela Perry MInstF, Wroxton Mill, Shutford Road, Wroxton, Banbury, Oxfordshire, OX15 6EZ
Tel: 01295 738 123 Fax: 01295 738 296

The maximum capacity in the Chapel is 600 and approximately 50 of these seats will be taken up by the Pangbourne Choir, ushers etc. The normal congregation for the annual Service of Remembrance in June is always over 400 and, as these are almost exclusively the bereaved families and friends, it is intended that they should be given priority and allowed to attend the Service as normal. Once the Royal Party and the senior representatives of the three Services and the Merchant Navy have been taken into account, we anticipate that there will only be approximately 100 other seats/tickets available. It is recommended, therefore, that should anyone wish to attend they apply for tickets as soon as possible.

SAMA Wales plan to have a Welsh National Monument built in time to commemorate the 25th Anniversary of the Falklands Conflict. If all goes well the timing would be end of August or early September 2007. Keep up to date on: www.samawales.co.uk.

Gosport Commemoration Concert and Parade June 2007. Exact date, timing and details of this weekend long event is still to be decided. This planning will be coordinated between the FVF, SAMA 82 Special Projects Officer, and Gosport Borough Council

The **main MoD sponsored event** will be held in London on the 17th June 2007. The stands and big screens will be left up on Horseguards Parade following the Queen's birthday parade on the 16th, and Veterans and their families will muster there in the afternoon. A drumhead service will be held, with Royal attendees, and this will be followed by a march past of the Veterans, accompanied by a military escort and massed bands, down the Mall to Buckingham Palace for a Royal salute. There

will also be a fly past of aircraft past and present. Following the march past, the Veterans Awareness marquee will be available with refreshments for all veterans and families, sponsored by SAMA 82.

A ticketing system will be in place for the event, application details to be agreed. Other possible events are also in the pipeline. MoD PR will be spreading the word out to serving Veterans and to the Veteran Associations. It is proposed that there will be a Falklands 25 website set up with a specific logo and lapel pin.

The Steering Group for the year's events has been formed and meets in the MoD. It consists of the following people, augmented as required:-

John Sinfield	<i>Head of Honours and Commemorations MoD</i>
Chris Pickthall, Wing Cdr	<i>Team Leader, Ceremonial MoD</i>
Andrew Poe	<i>Deputy Team Leader MoD</i>
Sukey Cameron MBE	<i>FIGO London</i>
Sir Ian Mackay-Dick Maj.Gen.	<i>Pangbourne Memorial Chapel</i>
Martin Reed, Capt.	<i>SAMA 82</i>
Mike Bowles, Col.	<i>SAMA 82 and FVF</i>
Sara Jones CB	<i>Falklands Families Association</i>
Norman Marchant	<i>Veterans Policy Unit MoD</i>
Brian Warren, Capt.	<i>Asst Director Defence Public Relations MoD</i>
Paul Martinez	<i>Foreign and Commonwealth Office</i>

In addition a small Planning Group will be set up under the Chairmanship of Chris Pickthall with representatives of MoD branches, SAMA 82, Buckingham Palace, the Metropolitan Police, and the BBC.

If you know of any other commemoration taking place, please let the Secretary or Chairman know so that we can feed the information into the MoD. Free advertising!

The **2007 Pilgrimage** is in the planning stage with much work to be done for fundraising and sponsorship. We are liaising with Combat Stress, SAMA FI, the FVF, and other interested parties, as our usual Pilgrimage will be swelled by other veterans, not necessarily SAMA Members.

One of our main problems with keeping members informed as to the arrangements is cost. A mailing to all members has a cost of around £900 just in postage. In an effort to reduce this we would like to communicate wherever possible via email. It would be very helpful if you could confirm your email details to the Secretary as soon as possible.

CHARITABLE STATUS

You will find a briefing note and a ballot form with this newsletter. This will explain the way ahead as proposed by the Committee. I do commend this proposal to you and I trust that if agreed this will give a solid future to the Association's business. The paperwork for Charitable Articles and Memorandum cover 24 pages, and is to be found on the website, together with an alternative draft Constitution if the ballot decision is to maintain the status quo. Copies will also be available at the AGM.

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SAMA 82

The DVD, price £19.99 including post & packing and VAT, is available on line at www.thepilgrimage.co.uk or by completing the order form opposite. A percentage of the price is being donated to SAMA 82



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