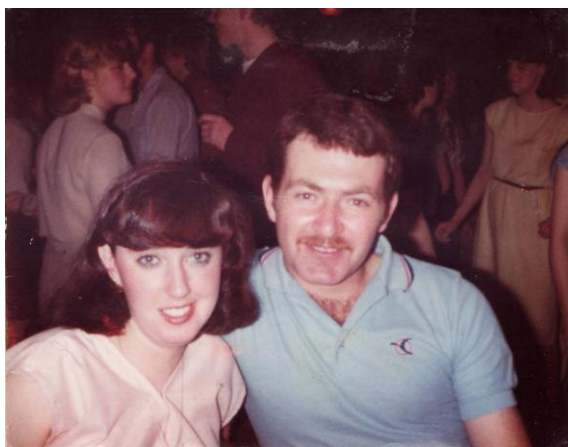


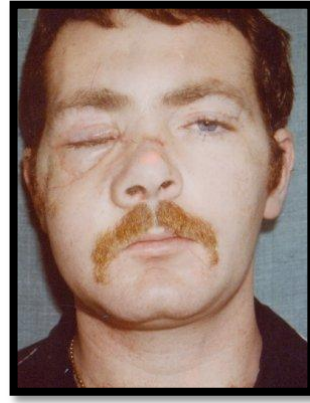
James O'Connell
155 Kingfield Road
Orrell Park
Liverpool
Merseyside L9 3AN

Mobile 0794 6657 399
Home 0151 364 1816
Email: phelmets@aol.co.uk
Service Number 24496561

I was engaged to be married in 1982, however the Falklands War occurred and my marriage was put on hold till I returned. During the war I was wounded on 12th June 1982, eventually after my return to England and 20 operations later, in 1985, I married my long-term girlfriend Maureen. In 1993, after I'd donated blood I was told to see my doctor, I was told I had Hepatitis B, I was asked if I was gay or a drug user, I am neither, then I was asked if I had been to any foreign countries, I told him the only place I've been in recent years is the Falklands where I was wounded and had two operation aboard the Hospital Ship SS Uganda, where I was told I'd been transfused with Argentine blood. My wife and children had to get anti hepatitis injections, and we moved on with our lives, and never gave it a second thought, then in 2012, I was diagnosed with kidney cancer, (I have since found out that Hepatitis B makes you more susceptible to various cancers) they removed my left kidney, and told me I would be fine living with one kidney, however, almost immediately my right kidney died, leaving me without any, I went on various forms of dialysis for five years, firstly Peritoneal Dialysis (through the stomach) then Haemodialysis with what they call 'neck lines' fitted in my chest, and finally they moved on to my arm with a fistula, coincidentally on 12th June 2017, the date that I had been wounded in 1982, I received a call from the Royal Hospital Liverpool say a young man was dying and his family had given permission for a transplant. Thankfully it has been working fine since.

The Infected Blood Scandal has recently arose, concerning infected blood, the regulations for acceptance for compensation for hepatitis B, is that you are not eligible if you were infected after 1972, however I was infected in 1982 by Argentine blood. I need my infection recognised so I can get redress from either the Infected Blood Compensation Authority IBCA or the MOD.





Pte James O'Connell, (Me) aboard SS Uganda, and later in RAF Wroughton Hospital.

James O'Connell, 3rd Battalion, The Parachute Regiment, wounded 12th June 1982.

*I was wounded in the early hours of Saturday 12th June 1982, I had lengthy delay, (10 hours), I arrived aboard SS Uganda at roughly midday, and was quickly triaged, to this day, and I can remember the doctor shouting get him to theatre. When I woke, a nurse was at my bedside, she said hello sleepy head, we've been waiting for you to wake up, she updated me on my injuries, and mentioned I'd been **filled up with Argentine blood**, which at the time I thought nothing of, as I was alive and many of my colleagues in 3 Para were dead or more seriously injured than I.*

How the Argentine blood exchange came about.

During the Falklands War we had one main Hospital Ship, SS Uganda, this was a P&O, Students Educational Cruise Ship that was requisitioned by the MOD on 10th April 1982, it docked in Gibraltar discharged its passengers, and over a period of 60 hours was converted into a Hospital Ship and began sailing south.

On 28th April 1982, Uganda reached Ascension Island, and took aboard 360 units of blood from the Army Blood Supply Depot; this blood had been taken in the UK and flown to Ascension Island. This blood had an expiry date of 11th June 1982.

On 30th April 1982, Uganda sails south.

Blood products have a limited shelf life of 35 days, the potential for degradation of blood components due to the marine environment, i.e. the rolling sea's of the South Atlantic Ocean.

Transporting and storing blood at sea requires significant logistical planning, including specialized containers, temperature monitoring equipment, and trained personnel (a Haematologist).

Temperature Control: Maintaining the correct temperature for stored blood is critical, and this was a challenge for SS Uganda, especially in hot or fluctuating climates, i.e., transporting it from the UK to Ascension Island (a volcanic Island), to the cold and windy Falkland Islands.

Sterility: Ensuring sterility of blood products at sea was also a major challenge, as contamination could lead to serious complications.

Lt Commander (Rtd) Mark Trasler MBE RN, who was in charge of the blood room aboard SS Uganda, kindly sent me his, Laboratory Work Load, from 23rd April to 7th July 1982.

This is all the numbers for blood ins and outs, and it revealed Uganda's total blood stock was 775 blood units, they then either gave away, used, or units of blood went out of date totalling 527 units of blood, leaving a

total of 248 units of blood for the entire campaign, Uganda performed 504 operations, which works out at 0.49 units of blood per operation, which is clearly not feasible.

LABORATORY WORKLOAD 23 APRIL TO 7 JULY 1982

Haematology

Test	Number	Percent
Haemoglobin	411	39
Packed Cell Volume	531	50
White Cell Count	69	6
Differential Count	16	1
Sedimentation Rate	12	
Film of Malarial Parasites	6	
Bleeding Time	1	
TOTAL	1046	

Blood Transfusion

Blood Groups	204
Cross Matches	121 (412 units)
Blood Donors	98

Blood Supplies and Disposal

	From	To
Army Blood Supply Depot	360	
HMS HYDRA	175	
HMS HECLA	57	
SS CANBERRA	85	
SS UGANDA	98	
HMS HERMES		36
Field Hospital Ajax Bay		283
Transfused in UGANDA		298
TOTAL	775	619
NOT USED OUTDATED		158

Blood Units			
Army Blood Supply unit provided	Incoming	360	Received at Ascension 30th April and has a maximum storage life of 28 days.
Hydra	Incoming	175	
Hecla	Incoming	57	
SS Canberra	Incoming	85	
SS Uganda	Incoming	98	
HMS Hermes		-36	Outgoing
Ajax Bay		-283	Outgoing
One man receives 50 units of blood.		-50	Outgoing
Blood spoiled		-158	Spoiled
Leaves SS Uganda with...	Blood Units.	248	
SS Uganda performs 503 Operations	Using	0.49	Blood Units per man.
Apparently 300 blood units from SS Canberra were received and disposed of because it was out of date.			

The first bloodletting for the UK began on 4th May 1982:

On 4th May 1982, HMS Sheffield is sunk, casualties.

On 21st May 1982, HMS Ardent is sunk, casualties.

On 23rd May 1982, HMS Antelope is sunk, casualties.

On 25th May 1982, HMS Coventry is sunk, casualties

On 25th May 1982, Atlantic Conveyor is sunk, casualties.

On 28th May 1982, the Battle for Goose Green, begins resulting in casualties both British and Argentine.

How much of the **248 units of blood** has been used during this period is anyone guess, but it is bound to be substantial, how the SS Uganda was expected to carry on treating the forthcoming casualty's, as we must remember, there was no end date to the conflict, and further battles and casualties would ensue.

04th June 1982, Hospital Ship SS Uganda rendezvous with Hospital Ship ARA Bahia Paraíso (B-1), British MOIC (Medical Officer In Charge) Andrew Rintoul and two senior surgeons are taken by the Argentine Puma AE-506, (this was a dedicated marked medical helicopter, Uganda had no dedicated medical helicopter), to the Bahia Paraíso, during this meeting with the Argentine Captain Ismael Jorge García, Andrew Rintoul is told that **the Argentine medical team are happy to supply blood and other medical supplies if his ship needs them**, Andrew Rintoul agrees but says, only if **urgently needed**, SS Uganda transfers 47 Argentine casualties to the Bahia Paraíso, using their designated medical Puma helicopter.

On 8th June 1982, RFA Sir Galahad was bombed, resulting in 160 wounded.

On 8th June 1982, SS Uganda sent **283 blood units to Ajax Bay**.

On 9th June 1982, SS Uganda receives 160 wounded mainly from the Sir Galahad bombing.

On 10th June 1982, the Hospital Ship ARA Bahia Paraíso meets Hospital Ship SS Uganda in the Red Box (Safety Zone) here **the ARA Bahia Paraíso transferred the blood and medical supplies to SS Uganda**.

<http://www.theheskins.eclipse.co.uk/files/FOF3UGANDA1982.pdf>

[La larga travesía del ARA Bahía Paraíso -Bravo 1- en el año 198.. \(1\).pdf](#)

[The long voyage of the ARA Bahía Paraíso -Bravo 1- in the year 198...](#)

<https://www.infobae.com/sociedad/2019/08/23/los-medicos-del-coloso-bravo-uno-el-buque-hospital-que-en-malvinas-intercambio-heridos-y-dono-sangre-argentina-al-enemigo/>

On 11th June 1982, both ships would meet again, and three Argentine casualties are exchanged.

On 11th / 12th June 1982, the night battles for Mount Longdon, Mount Harriet and Two Sisters.

On 12th June 1982, I was wounded (James O'Connell)

On 13th/14th June 1982, the night battles for Wireless Ridge and Mount Tumbledown.

Orders briefly for 14/15th June:

On 14th/15th June 1982, night battle planned.

H Hour 04.00hrs (zt) C Company 3 Para will capture Moody Brook including water pumping station, A Company will pass through C Company and capture ESRO building complex, D Company will combine with B Company, and will exploit to the western edge of the racecourse:

Orders subject to change:

Where did the blood coming from? The SS Uganda only had 248 units of to accommodate the whole campaign?

As you probably know by this stage in the campaign we were running out of everything, we are 8000 miles from home, the Argentines are 300 miles.



Hospital Ship SS Uganda



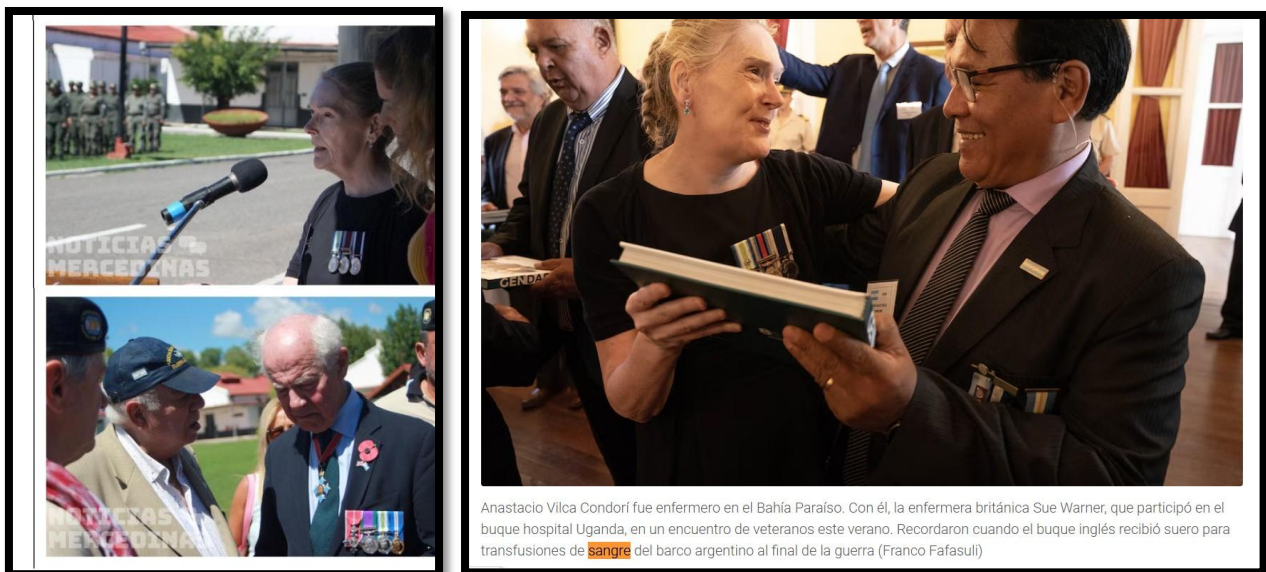
Hospital Ship SS Uganda

Senior Nursing Officer, Number 4; QARNNS SS Uganda 1982.

Email contact, 21 June 2025; been contacted by Elizabeth (Liz Law) Ormerod, Senior Nursing Officer QARNNS SS Uganda 1982.

I worked on Intensive Care, which, as you might imagine, was quite busy. When we required blood for transfusions, the request was sent through to our laboratory facilities, and the supply was then passed to us. At that stage, we would have no knowledge of the source of that blood, but I was generally aware that some supplies came from the Argentine Hospital ships.

Ex Uganda nurse Sue Warner (maiden name Chandler) has in recent years attended in Argentina a 40th commemoration of the Falklands War with the crew of the ARA Bahia Paraiso, where she is quoted as saying; *Among them, that of Sue Warner, a nurse who served on the hospital ship SS Uganda, stood out. She recalled the people assisted on that warship (SS Uganda) who had a unique encounter with their Argentine counterparts (ARA Bahia Paraiso) when, in 1982, they needed blood for their patients, and this was obtained thanks to contact with the Argentine ship, which led to the return of wounded from Argentina.*



Sue (Chandler) Warner Nurse aboard SS Uganda in Argentina with Col (Rtd) Geoffrey Cardozo CBE meeting the crew of ARA Bahia Paraiso.

If you do a Google search, it will reveal nothing on English sites, however, if you do a search using Spanish, “Sangre”, Malvinas, Bahia Paraiso, and it appears on all the Spanish speaking websites, in fact the Argentines are very proud of this exchange of blood, saying how they saved British lives, which indeed they did, this story is all over Argentina, on the 40th anniversary of the war, they had national blood donation day to celebrate the gift of life to the English.

During my research I have been contacted by several doctors aboard ARA Bahia Paraiso.

CFBQ VGM (RE)

Dr Carlos Alberto Espinosa.

Dear James, During the Falkland Islands conflict, I was a member of the crew of the ARA "Bahía Paraíso" Hospital Ship as a Biochemical Lieutenant.

My duties on the ship included setting up and organising a pharmacy, a clinical analysis laboratory, and a hemotherapy section, among other activities.

Regarding the hemotherapy section, which is what interests you, I inform you that we had a large quantity of blood sachets obtained from donations from people on the mainland, which we were able to preserve throughout the conflict; thanks to the refrigerated anti-vibration system we implemented to prevent hemolysis. We also have a living blood bank. That is, a blood sample was taken from each crew member, grouped according to blood type and RH factor, and stored in a database in case supplies were insufficient. Regarding your question, I inform you that we did provide a considerable number of sachets of blood, duly labelled and tested, to the hospital ship UGANDA. Not only that, but they also requested several medications such as diazepam, coagulants, disposable syringes, and X-ray films, among other things. I can assure you of this because I was in charge of providing these supplies. Therefore, it is likely that you received an Argentine blood transfusion.

I would like to know, if possible, under what circumstances you were wounded and which army unit you belonged to.

I hope you have fully recovered, both physically and psychologically.

Best regards

Dr Carlos Alberto Espinosa.

A follow-up email:

Hello Jimmy:

Wars claim the victims of combatants, and collateral damage includes civilians who shouldn't suffer hardship. However, political leaders don't suffer the atrocities themselves. Both you and I swore an oath, in your case to your Queen, in mine to my flag. But also, because of my profession, I swore to help preserve life, and doctors, I swore the traditional and ancient Hippocratic Oath. For that reason, both you and we treat the wounded regardless of which side they belong to. Furthermore, in wars, facts are hidden or distorted for various reasons. Perhaps that's why the nurse informed you when you woke up that you had received Argentine blood, and later some crew members on the ship informed you that you hadn't.

You don't have to thank me for anything. I was just doing my duty.

Best regards

Dr Carlos Alberto Espinosa.

Another doctor from ARA Bahia Paraiso

Dr Fernando Bernabe Santos

I was onboard the SS Uganda, because as I tell you, the Combat Chief Captain Pericar who was my Chief of Service chose me and Ricardo Cete who was our anaesthesiologist from the team, and I say Okay we're going to go the three of us, we went in the middle of the Atlantic from via Bahia Paraíso to Uganda in our Puma helicopter to organize the evacuation of the wounded and of the pilots who had ejected that they had rescued and had on the Uganda, well so on that mission, I was also there and I had the opportunity to chat with the English, when we landed there on the SS Uganda helipad they placed a doctor next to each of us and they made us walk around, they showed us the whole ship because it is a matter of courtesy and naval tradition, and the tradition between the health professionals, there is no war it is to be helpful, in fact on that trip they had asked us, because they had a supply problem with the issue of blood, some medicines and coagulants, that they did not have, and on that trip. We are always asked did the English receive Argentine blood? Yes sir they received Argentine blood, we brought it to them, and the work that they did was good as a hospital ship, but good war surgery.

04th June 1982, Medical Officer In Charge (MOIC) Andrew Rintoul and two senior surgeons are taken by the Argentine Puma AE-506, (this was a dedicated marked medical helicopter, Uganda had no dedicated medical helicopter), to the Bahia Paraiso, during a meeting with the Argentine Captain Ismael Jorge García, Dr Pascual Pellicari and Dr Juan López, Andrew Rintoul is told that the Argentine medical team are happy to supply blood and other medical supplies if his ship needs them, Andrew Rintoul agrees but says, only if **urgently needed**, SS Uganda transfers 40 Argentine casualties to the Bahia Paraiso, using their designated medical Puma helicopter.

Andrew Rintoul wrote about his time aboard SS Uganda, called 'The unacceptable Face of War' (Andrew is still with us aged 92).

Written by Surgeon Captain Andrew Rintoul, Hospital Ship SS Uganda.

The rendezvous with the Argentinean hospital ship Bahia Paraiso was made at 07.00 on Friday, 4 June, in our Red Cross Box, we were away from battle stations. Bahia Paraiso was a 900-ton exploration ship, which had a dedicated hospital deck and carried two white painted red-crossed helicopters, a Puma and an Alouette. In accordance with Geneva rules, she sent her Puma over to Uganda to pick one or two senior surgeons and me to inspect her hospital facilities before casualty transfer.

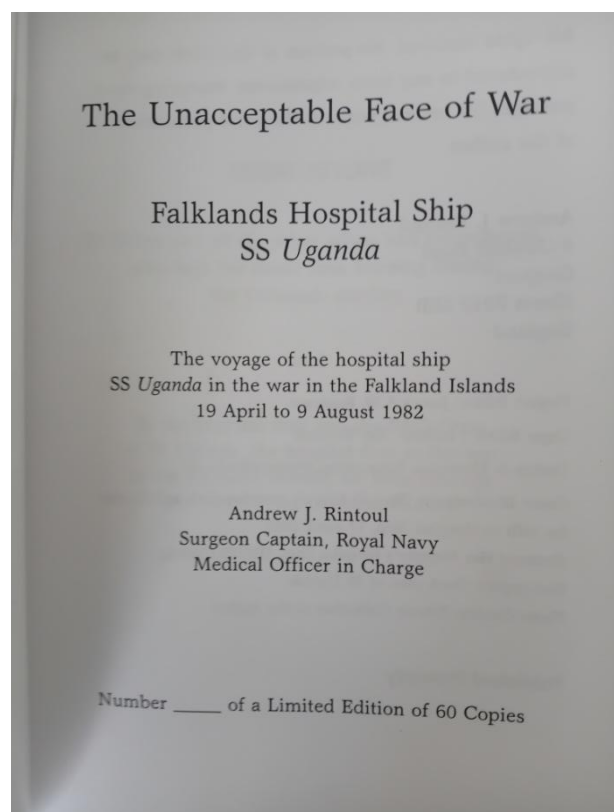
I climbed into a bright red immersion suit and boarded the helicopter for the brief flight. I was pleased to see that the sea was fairly calm, as many of the wounded Argentinians were non-ambulant, and it would make their journey much less stressful. After touching down lightly on the flight deck, I was taken to the captain's cabin to discuss details of the forthcoming transfers while my staff went off to tour the hospital deck. The captain was a naval seaman commander who spoke excellent English. He made me very welcome, and sitting on his desk was a bottle of Black Label Scotch and two glasses. We wished each other good fortune in the traditional manner, and he told me that he had learned his English while doing a year's navigation course at HMS Dryad in Hampshire. He was delighted when I was able to tell him that I had spent two happy years at Dryad many years previously as the medical officer, in the rank of Surgeon Lieutenant. It was a strange

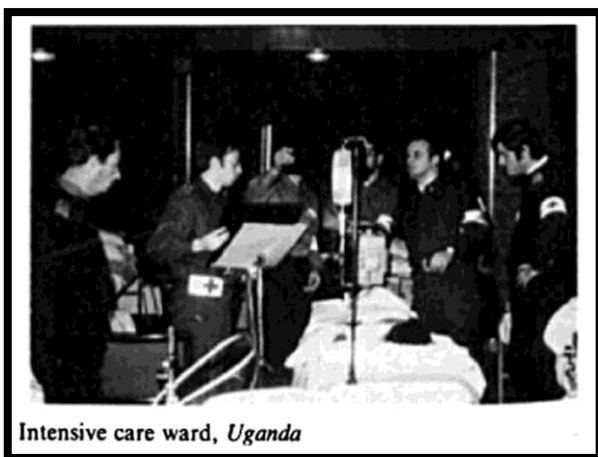
meeting of two representatives of opposing forces in an enemy ship with a full-scale battle in progress just a few miles south of our position.

Both of us were fairly guarded in our conversation outside immediate arrangements for casualty reception and the on move, and no mention of the progress of the conflict was made. We then walked down to the hospital deck to meet the medical officers. It was immediately obvious that, in typical medical fashion, all differences of race and politics had been overcome in the technical discussion of current clinical problems and the welfare of casualties. Fortunately, most of the Argentine doctors spoke fluent English. One young medical officer had been recalled from a training post in Great Ormond Street Children's Hospital in London and hoped to return there to complete his training. I noticed that Andy Gough (escort) was unusually reserved, understandably, as he was a seaman officer on an enemy ship under a medical flag of truce.

Bahia Paraiso had 125 tiered bunk beds and ten intensive care beds. There was also a small, well-equipped burns unit with an electrically heated stainless steel bath, which made our alfresco, wooden-framed canvas bath look a little old-fashioned. They had adequate supplies of drugs and transfusion fluids, including blood, and generously offered to supply Uganda if **urgently needed**.

After arrangements were made for the Argentine medical officers to come over to Uganda to make a medical round of their casualties, we boarded the helicopter for the return journey. Just before takeoff, a case of Argentine wine was placed between my feet. I invited the captain to visit Uganda in company with the doctors, but he politely refused and I thought it better not to press him further.





Intensive care ward, *Uganda*



L/R Senior Naval Officer Andrew Gough (Later Rear Admiral), MOIC Andrew Rintoul and Argentine Dr Pascual Pellicari aboard SS *Uganda*.

That **urgently needed day** would come four days later with bombing of the Sir Galahad, 56 dead and 150 casualties, most were treated in Fitzroy, Teal Inlet or Ajax Bay, SS *Uganda* would 283 units of its meagre blood supply to Ajax Bay.

After that initial contact between Hospital Ship SS Uganda and ARA Bahia Paraiso on 4th June, Bahia Paraiso eventually, after picking wounded from Porto Argentina (Port Stanley), Fox Bay and Port Howard, she returns to the port of Punta Quilla (Santa Cruz, Argentina) discharges her Argentine casualties and replenishes supplies (blood, medicines, medical, food and fuel).

08th June 1982, ARA Bahia Paraiso returns to the port of Punta Quilla (Santa Cruz, Argentina) to disembark casualties and replenish supplies.

After the disembarkation of the wounded from ARA Bahia Paraiso at Punta Quilla was completed, the teams were immediately assembled to receive the scheduled and ordered resupply orders detailed below:

Fresh provisions (scheduled).

Fuel, diesel, and JP1 (scheduled).

Equipment, ambulance, and field kitchen (ordered for the FAA).

Sealed container with a donation from the Patriotic Fund (correspondence and warm clothing).

Requirements for the British hospital ship Uganda (blood and medicines).

08th June 1982, late evening, ARA Bahia Paraiso leaves the port of Punta Quilla (Santa Cruz, Argentina) and sails for the Red Box (Safety zone).

On 8th June 1982, RFA Sir Galahad was bombed, resulting in 56 dead and 150 wounded.

On 8th June 1982, SS Uganda sends 283 blood units to Ajax Bay.

On 9th June 1982, SS Uganda received 160 wounded, mainly from the Sir Galahad bombing.

On 10th June 1982, the Hospital Ship ARA Bahia Paraiso meets Hospital Ship SS Uganda in the Red Box (Safety Zone) where the ARA Bahia Paraiso transferred the blood and medical supplies to SS Uganda by the Argentine helicopter PUMA AE-506 .



The crew of the PUMA AE-506 were: Captain Luzuriaga, 1st Lt. Leguizamon, and Sgt Carlos Andres Verón, the photo is taken aboard SS Uganda, with members of the SS Uganda deck crew in the front row and end left and right. Sgt Verón is in the back row 2nd (tallest) from right, and is pictured above in a recent photo.

Sgt Carlos Andres Verón;

On June 10th 1982, we transported 250 litres of blood from Hospital Ship ARA Bahia Paraiso to Hospital Ship SS Uganda, we met several times to exchange wounded and medicines, a great example of military medical care in combat.

PUMA AE-506, belonged to the Army Aviation Corps and is now displayed on a pedestal in the town of Malvinas Argentinas, Buenos Aires, Argentina.



PUMA AE-506 landing on SS Uganda.

This blood exchange was a good thing, we nearly lost the Falklands war because of lack of blood, and that the Argentines unwittingly lost the war by donating blood, as this enabled the British attacks to go ahead.

Any help would really be appreciated.
Bye for now James O'Connell

James O'Connell
Mobile 0794 6657 399
Home 0151 364 1816
Email: phelmets@aol.co.uk

More photos below.



ARA Bahia Paraiso rescuing survivors of ARA Belgrano.



Hospital Ship ARA Bahia Paraiso



Argentine PUMA helicopter and Royal Navy Wasp helicopter traveling between both ships.



Argentine PUMA helicopter landing on SS Uganda.



ARA Bahia Paraiso as seen from SS Uganda.



SS Uganda plaque gifted to ARA Bahia Paraiso.



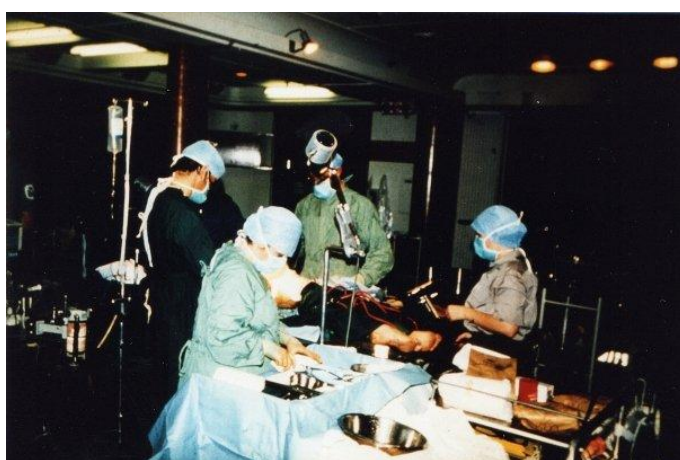
Hospital Ship SS Uganda.



Hospital Ship SS Uganda.



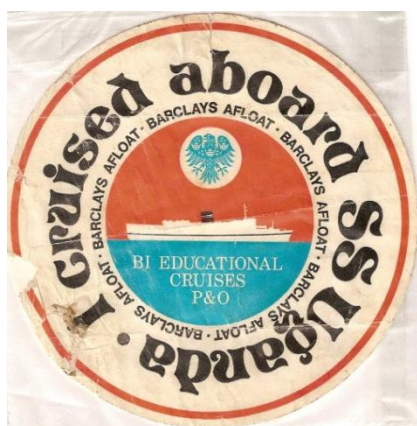
Hospital Ship SS Uganda.



Hospital Ship SS Uganda, operating room.



Dr Pasqual Pellicari 2nd from left, Dr Carlos Espinosa far right, aboard SS Uganda.



Each casualty, British and Argentine was given a plastic SS Uganda gift bag, containing stickers, book-markers, pens and a badge, we also wore SS Uganda t-shirts, as the SS Uganda had no pyjamas for casualties, so they used the clothing stock from the ships souvenir shop, and we all had a luggage label with our details on.