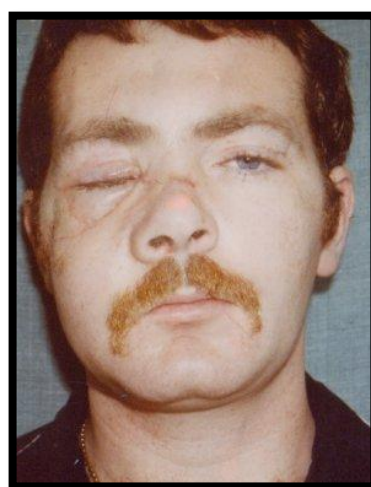


In 1982 I was engaged to be married, however the Falklands War occurred and my marriage was put on hold till I returned. During the war I was wounded on 12<sup>th</sup> June 1982.



(Me) prior to the Falklands, then aboard SS Uganda, and later in RAF Wroughton Hospital.

3<sup>rd</sup> Battalion, The Parachute Regiment, wounded 12<sup>th</sup> June 1982.

*I was wounded in the early hours of Saturday, 12<sup>th</sup> June 1982, after wounding I had lengthy delay, (10 hours), I eventually arrived aboard SS Uganda at roughly midday, where I was quickly triaged, and to this day, I can remember the doctor after his assessment shouting, "Get him to theatre now". When I woke, a nurse was at my bedside, and she said, "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, many of whom I could see in beds around me in the large open ward.*

#### 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 10<sup>th</sup> 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 28<sup>th</sup> 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 11<sup>th</sup> June 1982.

On 30<sup>th</sup> April 1982, Uganda sails south.

Blood products have a limited shelf life of up to 35 days; however, with 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 to manage donated blood. (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 (he was not a haematologist but a Royal Navy Medical Technician), kindly sent me his, Laboratory Work Load, from 23rd April to 7<sup>th</sup> 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.

<u>LABORATORY WORKLOAD 23 APRIL TO 7 JULY 1982</u>		
<u>Haematology</u>		
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	
<u>Blood Transfusion</u>		
Blood Groups	204	
Cross Matches	121 (412 units)	
Blood Donors	98	
<u>Blood Supplies and Disposal</u>		
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 Depot provided	Incoming	360	Blood received at Ascension 30th April, this blood will expire 30th May 1982
HMS Hydra	Incoming	175	
HMS Hecla	Incoming	57	
SS Canberra	Incoming	85	
SS Uganda	Incoming	98	
Total blood incoming.	Incoming	775	
Army Blood Supply Depot		-360	Outgoing either used or out of date by 30th May 1982.
HMS Hermes		-36	Outgoing
Ajax Bay		-283	Outgoing
One man receives 50 units of blood.		-50	Outgoing
Blood spoiled		0	Spoiled
Total blood outgoing.		-729	
Leaves SS Uganda with, on 10th June 1982.		46	Blood Units.
SS Uganda performs 503 Operations	Using	0.8	Blood Units per man.
SS Uganda would receive 170 casualties after 10th June 1982, with only 46 units of blood.			
It is clear not every man would not receive blood, but other more severly wounded would require several units of blood.			

But how would a ship with 46 units of blood on 10<sup>th</sup> June 1982, treat 170 battle casualties without taking Argentine blood.

The first bloodletting of the Falklands Campaign for the UK began on 4<sup>th</sup> May 1982:

On 4<sup>th</sup> May 1982, HMS Sheffield is sunk, deaths and casualties.

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

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

On 25<sup>th</sup> May 1982, HMS Coventry is sunk, deaths and casualties

On 25<sup>th</sup> May 1982, Atlantic Conveyor is sunk, deaths and casualties.

On 25 May 1982, SS Uganda.

10:00 received 9 casualties',

10:30 received 11 casualties, more casualties continue to arrive – too many to count.

Night flying to receive more casualties busiest day so far.

On 26 May 1982, SS Uganda.

74 casualties aboard.

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

On 29 May 1982, SS Uganda.

Received 3 Sea Kings with about 30 casualties from 2 Para, injured at Goose Green.

On 30<sup>th</sup> May 1982, the 360 units of blood taken aboard at Ascension Island on 28<sup>th</sup> April have now expired leaving SS Uganda with +379 units of blood.

On 3rd June 1982, SS Uganda.

Received 12 casualties.

04th June 1982, Hospital Ship SS Uganda rendezvous with Hospital Ship ARA Bahia Paraiso (B-1), British MOIC (Medical Officer In Charge) Andrew Rintoul and two senior surgeons are taken by the Argentine Puma AE-

506, to the ARA Bahia Paraiso, 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**.

**On 6th June 1982**, SS Uganda.

4 Wessex helicopter landings, very precarious! SS Uganda receives **20** British casualties.

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

**On 8<sup>th</sup> June 1982**, SS Uganda sends **+283 units of blood** to Ajax Bay, leaving SS Uganda with **+96 units of blood**.

**Of the total 775** blood units; by now, the **360** blood units of the Army Blood Supply Unit have expired, **36** sent to HMS Hermes, **283** sent to Ajax Bay, one Royal Marine received **50** blood units, this is a total of **729** units of blood, this leaves only **+46 units of blood**.

How was the SS Uganda expected to carry on treating the casualty's from the forthcoming battles, and as we must remember, there was no end date to the conflict, and further casualties would ensue.

**On 9<sup>th</sup> June 1982**, SS Uganda.

Received **160** wounded mainly from the Sir Galahad bombing.

**On 10<sup>th</sup> June 1982**, the Hospital Ship ARA Bahia Paraiso meets Hospital Ship SS Uganda in the Red Box (Safety Zone) here the **ARA Bahia Paraiso transferred 250 litres of blood and medical supplies to SS Uganda**, in return **47 Argentine casualties would be repatriated from SS Uganda to ARA Bahia Paraiso**.

<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 11<sup>th</sup> June 1982**, both ships would meet again, and three Argentine casualties are exchanged.

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

**On 12<sup>th</sup> June 1982**, I was wounded (James O'Connell)

**On 12th June 1982**, SS Uganda.

Received over **80** casualties, many seriously injured.

**On 13th June 1982**, SS Uganda.

Received **30** casualties.

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



On 14th June 1982, SS Uganda.

Received 60 more casualties.

Orders briefly for the night of 14/15th June:

On 14th/15<sup>th</sup> 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;

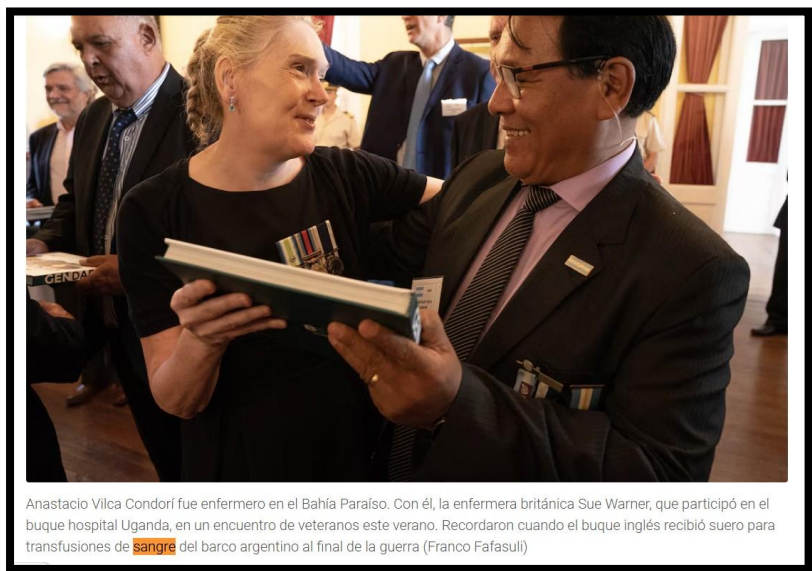
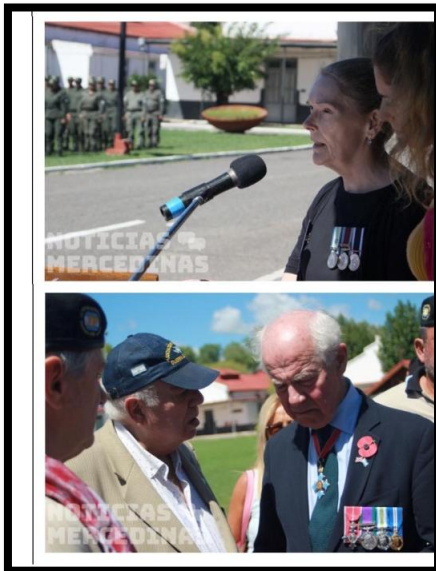
**Elizabeth (Liz Law) Ormerod, Senior Nursing Officer QARNNS SS Uganda 1982.**

*.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)

In recent years has attended in Argentina a 40<sup>th</sup> commemoration of the Falklands War with the crew of the ARA Bahia Paraíso, 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 Paraíso) 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 Paraíso.

If you do a Google search, it will reveal nothing on English sites, however, if you do a search using Spanish, “Sangre”, Malvinas, Bahia Paraíso, 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 40<sup>th</sup> 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 Paraíso.

**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:**

***Dr Carlos Alberto Espinosa.***

*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.*

04<sup>th</sup> 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**.

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.*

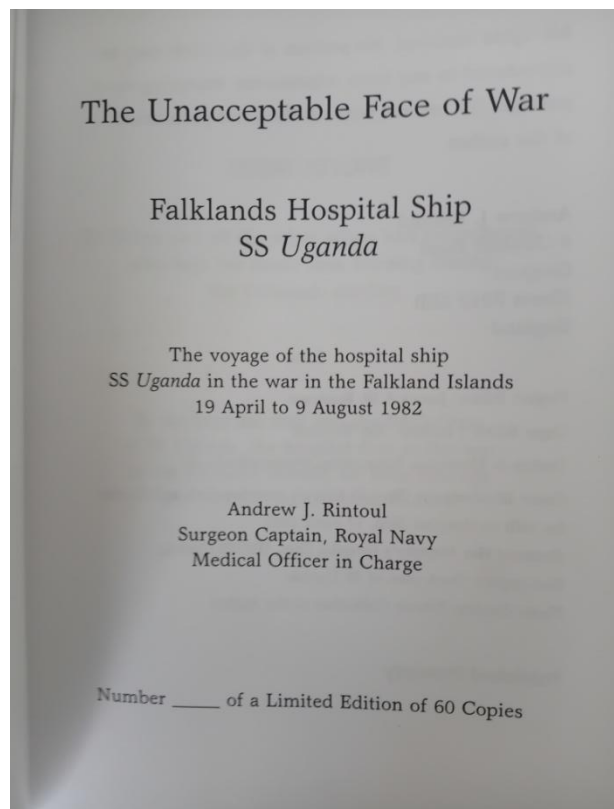
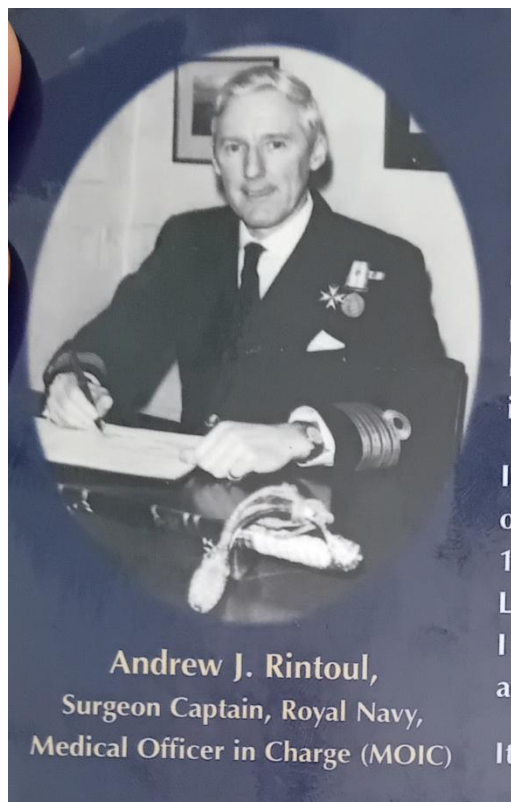
*I climbed into a bright red immersion suit and boarded the helicopter for the brief flight. I was pleased to see that the sea was fairly calm, as many of the wounded Argentinians were non-ambulant, and it would make their journey much less stressful. After touching down lightly on the flight deck, I 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.*

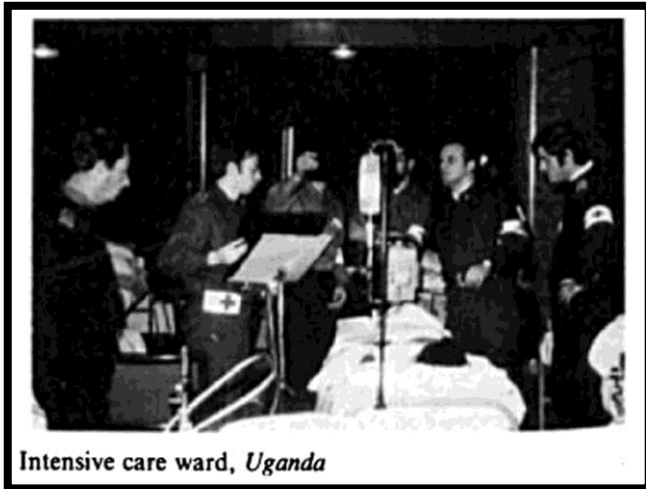
*Both of us were fairly guarded in our conversation outside immediate arrangements for casualty reception and the on move, and no mention of the progress of the conflict was made. We then walked down to the hospital deck to meet the medical officers. It was immediately obvious that, in typical medical 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*



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



Dr Pasqual Pellicari 2<sup>nd</sup> from left, Dr Carlos Espinosa far right, 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 send 283 units of its meagre blood supply to Ajax Bay.

After that initial contact between Hospital Ship SS Uganda and ARA Bahia Paraíso on 4<sup>th</sup> June, Bahia Paraíso 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 Paraíso 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 Paraíso 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 Paraíso 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 8<sup>th</sup> June 1982**, SS Uganda sends 283 blood units to Ajax Bay.

**On 9<sup>th</sup> June 1982**, SS Uganda received 160 wounded, mainly from the Sir Galahad bombing.

**On 10<sup>th</sup> June 1982**, the Hospital Ship ARA Bahia Paraíso meets Hospital Ship SS Uganda in the Red Box (Safety Zone) where the ARA Bahia Paraíso 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 2<sup>nd</sup> (tallest) from right, and is pictured above in a recent photo.

*Sgt Carlos Andres Verón; email contact.*

*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.

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.



Strangely, we all given a plastic gift bag with an SS Uganda T-Shirt, stickers, pen, ship book marker, and a badge, from SS Uganda's souvenir shop.