

In 1982 I was engaged to be married, however the Falklands War occurred and my marriage was put on hold until I returned.



My girlfriend (Future wife) Maureen Maher and me in 1981. The others are taken on the Falkland Islands.

After the landings on 21<sup>st</sup> May 1982, and the sinkings of several ships, including the Atlantic Conveyor on 25th May 1982, with the loss of six Westland Wessex helicopters, and three heavy lift Boeing Chinook helicopters, it was decided 3 Para and 45 Commando should walk the 60 miles to reach the outer ring of mountains surrounding Port Stanley.

On 11<sup>th</sup> June 1982, 3 Para would take part in a three phase attack to capture the high ground surrounding Port Stanley.

Phase one, 3 Para capture Mount Longdon.

Phase two, 45 Commando capture Two Sisters Mountains.

Phase three, 42 Commando capture Mount Harriet.

During the battle for Mount Longdon I received a gunshot wound to my face, however, in the medical report my injury is reported as a mortar / shrapnel wound, this is incorrect, as there was that much happening during the battle I wasn't sure what had hit me, I later found out I'd been shot, the bullet first passed through the bridge of my nose, then damaged my right eye, and also caused extensive damage to my orbital floor, cheekbone and teeth, after a 10 hours wait due to the ongoing battle, I was evacuated to the Hospital Ship SS Uganda, where I was operated on twice, firstly on the 12<sup>th</sup> and then 17<sup>th</sup> June 1982. When I woke after the first operation I was told about my injuries, and that I'd been 'filled up' with **Argentine blood**, which at the time I did not think too much about, as I was alive, around me lay many of my friends badly wounded, so I was just happy to be alive.

MEDICAL-IN-CONFIDENCE

F/MED/11  
(Revised 1/79)

CLINICAL CONTINUATION SHEET

To be used to continue the clinical notes from forms in the F/MED series (ie Fs MED 1, 6, 10 and 19). This form is to be securely attached to the original.

Continued from F/MED/.....dated.....		Name including forenames <i>O. J. Connel</i>	
Clinical Notes (To be signed by Medical Officers giving Rank and Appointment)		Service No. <i>24496565</i>	Rank/Rating <i>Pte</i>
Date		Ship/Unit/Station	Hospital No.
<i>12/6/82</i>	<p><i>Mortar bomb</i></p> <p><i>injury to @ side of face at 2am today.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>o operation</i></li> <li><i>o other injuries</i></li> </ul> <p><i>Well until this.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>only operations</i></li> <li><i>o serious illnesses.</i></li> </ul> <p><i>Allergies Nil.</i></p> <p><i>Non smoker.</i></p>		
	<p><i>SK AS</i></p> <p><i>CVS</i></p> <p><i>AS</i></p> <p><i>CNS</i></p> <p><i>operations.</i></p>		
	<p><i>o/k Not shocked.</i></p> <p><i>alt time loss Entry to nasal cavity</i></p> <p><i>lower eye lid.</i></p> <p><i>laceration deep</i></p> <p><i>general swelling</i></p> <p><i>mouth drop</i></p> <p><i>laceration</i></p>		

# OPERATION NOTES

Surgeon

Surgeon Captain Pintail / Syldir Chapman

Scrub nurse

Assistants

S/C Keene

Operation performed

① Investigation penetrating wound ② eye.

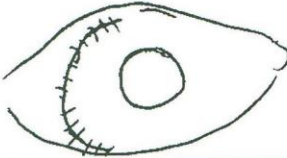
Acision findings

② Investigation of # maxilla and repair of facial lacerations.

Scal wound R eye 2cm in length

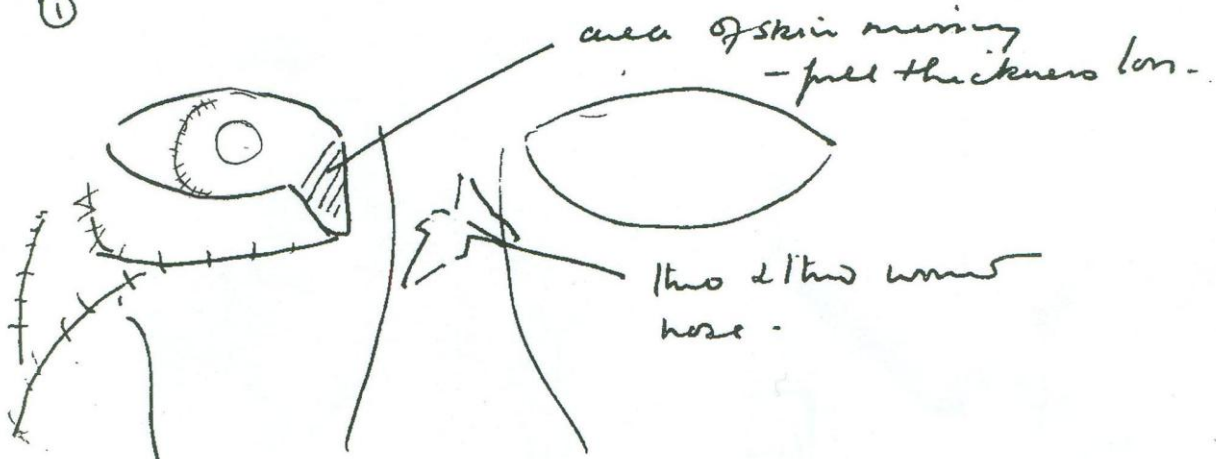
6mm behind limbus

Total 12mm. R/L



Procedure

①



Closure

full T. lacerations. Anterior wall of ant. in small bay fragments.

Drainage

Tourniquet on at:

off:

Sutures 4/0 e.g. 2 5/0 silk knots.

Laboratory specimen

Seen in OT on 6th day - SA.

Post-operative instructions

② Total bony defect of infra-orbital rim noted as drawn overhead.

Minor palpable separation at ② frontozygomatic suture.

Destruction of lacrimal duct & angular vein.

Primary repair of facial lacerations and corner of

② ear. ① F/Z suture line not wired.

lacerat - bridge of nose debrided and loosely sutured.

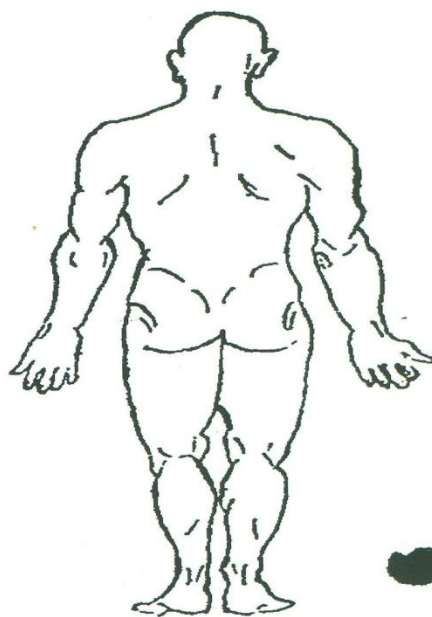
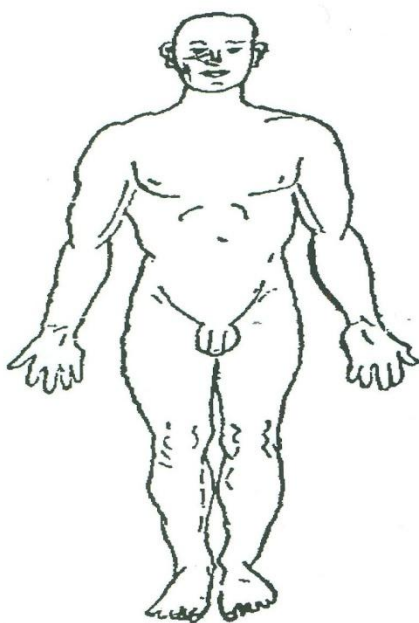
Crown of 21 missing - pulp exposed.

*[Signature]*



Date

CLINICAL NOTES (To be signed by M.O. giving rank and appointment)



12.6.82

1220

TIDS

Pulse 88

Hit by shrapnel in R side of face  
 Can see out of R eye but blurred  
 ? due to blood.

Knocked tooth out

2/E Deep penetrating wound of R maxilla —  
 complete destruction of floor of R orbit —  
 maxillary ridge, also of nose.

R Triptopan 1 val IM stat  
 Tet 1000.

Saline-soaked dressing under FFD  
 to protect eye.

100mg penicillin PRN QID.  
 For surgeon please — ? back to head band.  
 for maxillo-facial

Handwritten signature/initials.

12/6/82

1015 LOCAL

UGRAMODA

→ Seaview Ward.

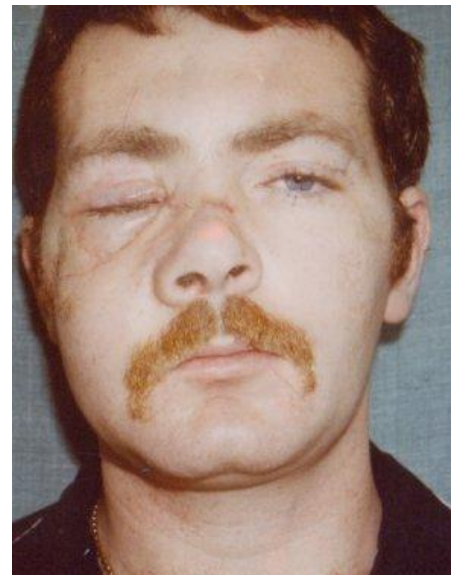
→ Max fac / Ophthalmic.

Handwritten signature/initials.



The photo above the was taken by a nurse while I was unconcious in intensive care aboard Hospital Ship SS Uganda.

I was eventually transferred from SS Uganda to the HMS Hydra, and was taken to Montevideo, Uruquay, from here I was flown home via Ascension Island eventually reaching Brize Norton on 3<sup>rd</sup> July 1982.



Maureen Maher (Future wife) and me on my first home leave from the Falklands.

2<sup>nd</sup> photo, taken at RAF Wroughton Hospital.

### 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, and it docked in Gibraltar and discharged its passengers, and over a period of 60 hours it was converted into a Hospital Ship and began sailing south.

On 28<sup>th</sup> April 1982, SS Uganda reached Ascension Island, and took aboard +360 units of blood supplied by the **Army Blood Supply Depot**; this blood had been collected in **Aldershot on 26<sup>th</sup> April 1982**, the blood was then transported to RAF Brize Norton, and flown to the Ascension Island, where;

*'Blood was delivered to hospital ships as they passed Ascension Island or was air dropped into the sea alongside the ships.'*

Volume 6, Supplement 1, 1996, Page 77, Transfusion Medicine, Fifty Years of Blood Transfusion.

**This blood had an expiry date of 31<sup>st</sup> May 1982.**

On 30<sup>th</sup> April 1982, Hospital Ship SS Uganda begins sailing south.

### **Important considerations when transporting and storing blood at sea.**

#### **Vibration and turbulence:**

Excessive vibration, such as that caused by a ship's engines, can damage blood cells and lead to hemolysis, or the destruction of red blood cells. The frequency and intensity of vibration can damage cell membranes, reducing the blood product's quality and effectiveness.

#### **Impact and shock:**

Special care must be taken to protect blood products from physical damage caused by rough seas, impacts, and drops. Transport containers should be sturdy enough to withstand these forces.

#### **Packaging:**

Packaging must provide adequate cushioning to absorb shock and prevent bags from moving and colliding with each other. Any cooling elements used, such as ice packs, should not come into direct contact with the blood bags to prevent freezing and subsequent hemolysis.

#### **Temperature & Cold Chain Management:**

Temperature for stored blood is critical, storing blood at sea requires maintaining specific cold-chain temperatures (typically 2-6°C for red cells) to preserve quality.

#### **Proper storage equipment:**

Use of specialised refrigerators with fans to ensure even temperature distribution, or design storage systems that maintain the required temperatures without compromising cell quality.

#### **Sterility:**

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

As we know 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, plus trained personnel to manage donated blood, i.e. a Haematologist.

As you can imagine, the transporting of the blood from Aldershot, to Brize Norton, and then flying 12 hours to Ascension Island, loading it aboard the SS Uganda, must have been extremely stressful to the delicate red blood cells, as improper handling can cause blood to degrade, rendering it unsafe for transfusion.

Once the blood was aboard SS Uganda, maintaining the correct temperature for stored blood would also be critical, and this would be a challenging for the newly converted Hospital Ship SS Uganda, especially in the



hot climate of the Ascension Island (a volcanic Island), then sailing into the freezing waters of the South Atlantic.

Below is written by **Robert McGrann; Medical Technician 1(L)** Royal Navy.

He worked in the Pathology Laboratory aboard the SS Uganda during Operation Corporate.

*The area on the Hospital Ship SS Uganda designated as the Pathology Laboratory, was the cocktail bar. The blood units were stored in three locations;*

*For ready to use stock, was stored in the drinks cabinet's beer fridges in the cocktail bar.*

*For back up stock, the eqq store and a refrigerated unit located on the bow of the ship was utilised.*

*The temperature in these facilities was monitored twice daily to ensure safe storage of the units.*

Prior to the British landings on 21<sup>st</sup> May 1982, a further **+415** units of blood would be collected from the crew of several ships, including sailors, soldiers, merchant seamen and civilian crew members who would all willingly donate their blood.

Lt Commander (Rtd) **Mark Trasler** MBE Royal Navy, who at the time was in charge of the blood room aboard SS Uganda (he was not a haematologist but a **Royal Navy Medical Technician**), he kindly sent me his, Laboratory work load, from 23rd April to 7<sup>th</sup> July 1982.

The document supplied has all the numbers for blood ins and outs aboard Hospital Ship SS Uganda for the entire Falklands Campaign, and it revealed SS Uganda's total blood stock was **+775** blood units.

They then gave away **-36** to HMS HERMES & **-283** to Ajax Bay, a total of **-319** units of blood given away.

By 30<sup>th</sup> May 1982 the **+360** units of blood donated by the Army Blood Supply Depot was now out of date or had been used **-360**.

One man (RM Paul Callan) received **-50** units of blood.

By 9<sup>th</sup> June 1982, a total of **-729** units of blood from their total blood supply of **+775** units of blood had been used or given away.

Leaving on the 10<sup>th</sup> June 1982, a total of **+46 units of blood, or less**, to treat all future battlefield casualties from both sides, from a war that at that time, had **no end date**, and could possibly rumble on for the next two weeks, producing endless traumatic battlefield casualties.

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 31st May 1982.
HMS Hermes		-36	Outgoing
Ajax Bay		-283	Outgoing
One man recieves 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 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 serverly wounded would require many units of blood.			

A blood transfusion requirement of up to 1500 blood units had been anticipated prior to deployment and, only a limited number of donors were available from the ship's crew and Naval Party 1830, a supply of **+360** CPD (Citrate-Phosphate-Dextrose) Adenine long life blood units was obtained from the Army Blood Supply Depot at Aldershot. (CPDA-1 allowed for a 35-day storage period at 1-6°C, an increase from the 21-day limit of the older CPD (Citrate-Phosphate-Dextrose) solution. The **+360** blood units were delivered to Ascension Island 28<sup>th</sup> April 1982.

Supplied by Lt Commander (Rtd) **Mark Trasler** MBE Royal Navy

**Official Blood Numbers 1982, SS Uganda.**

ANNEX A TO PATHOLOGY REPORT

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

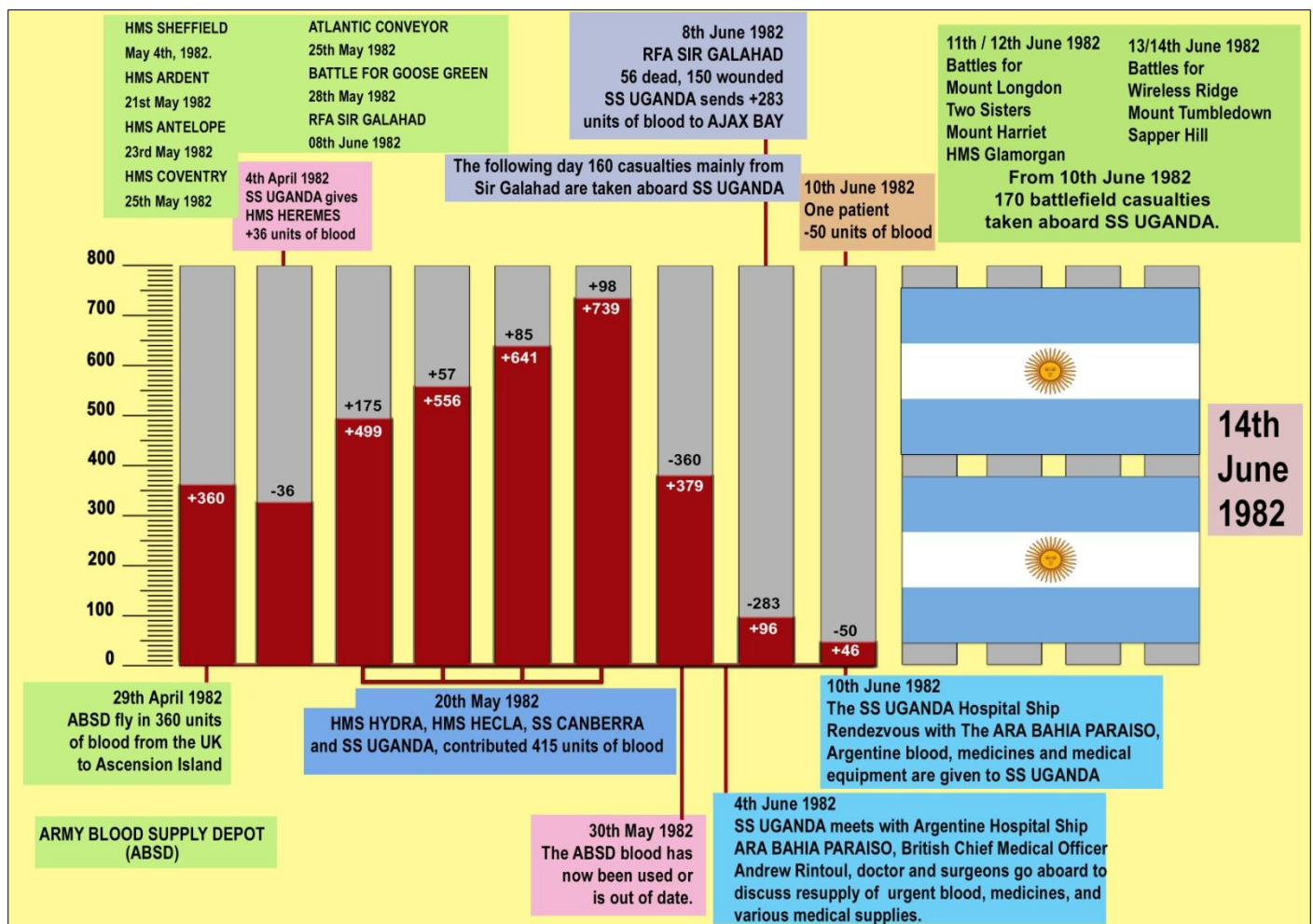
Blood Groups	204
Cross Matches	121 (412 units)
Blood Donors	98

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

- 72% of blood cross matched in UGANDA was used.
- 38% of total supplies were used in UGANDA.
- 41% of total supplies sent to other units (utilization not known).
- 20% of blood supply not used.
- 300 units of outdated blood were received from SS CANBERRA and were disposed of.





### 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. (Casualties from HMS Sheffield taken to HMS Hermes, hence **-36 units of blood** sent from SS Uganda to HMS Hermes.

On 21<sup>st</sup> May 1982, HMS Ardent is sunk, deaths and casualties.

On 23<sup>rd</sup> 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.

Many of the casualty figures for SS Uganda and dates were documented by Bandmaster: Warrant Officer 2 Trevor J Attwood LRAM ARCM Royal Marines

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

#### 25<sup>th</sup> 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.

#### 26<sup>th</sup> May 1982, SS Uganda.

74 casualties aboard.

**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**, of the **+360 units of blood** taken aboard at Ascension Island on **28<sup>th</sup> April 1982**, this blood has now expired leaving SS Uganda with approximately **+379** units of blood or less.

**3rd June 1982, SS Uganda.**

Received **12** casualties.

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

**That day would come in 4 days time 8<sup>th</sup> June 1982, the bombing of Sir Galahad.**

Below is a shopping list of medicines requested by Hospital Ship SS Uganda from Hospital Ship ARA Bahia Paraiso, who in turn sent the request to the Argentine mainland Naval Base requesting urgent supplies for SS Uganda, the medication tells you of the position SS Uganda finds itself in.

DE RAPUER PNR - 1262  
T COATLAHSUR  
W PYEEEE  
D 061510  
FM PARAISO  
TO COPERVÁLES  
TO DIHOSPUER  
BT

REQUERIMIENTO BUQUE HOSPITAL "UGANDA" CLN IPSILON AMPOLLAS 500  
CMM TRANEXAMIC ACIDO 150 DOSIS CMM ETANSYLATE (DICYNONE 150 DOSIS)  
POR UNO GS INTRAMUSCULAR Y ORAL PD CONSIDERO MUY CONVENIENTE  
SATISFACER ESTE REQUERIMIENTO PD ENVIAR URGENTE ((SCZ))  
BT

AGCI PACI MARTIN 06 17 04  
CODA

Sr. VL LOMBARDO:  
Sr. CL PADILLA:  
Sr. CN GRONDONS:

Sr. VL LOMBARDO ordenó que se diara  
curso favorable y que se lo embarcara en  
el SEA Grizar para que vaya directamente a la Zona a  
entregar esos medicamentos.

**Ipsilon Ampules 500 Cmm.**

To be used in life-threatening situations, **whole blood transfusions**, and **fibrinogen infusions**, and where other emergency measures may be necessary.

### **Tranexamic Acid 150 Doses, Cmm.**

This medication is a drug that reduces menstrual bleeding. It contains tranexamic acid, which prevents the enzyme that **dissolves blood clots** from acting. This results in less blood loss and faster symptom relief.

### **Etansylate (sometimes spelt ethamsylate) or Dicynone 150 Doses .**

This medicine is for heavy periods in women and **gastrointestinal bleeding**.

### **ARA Bahia Paraiso ends above message.**

I consider it very convenient to satisfy this requirement, please send urgently.

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

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

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

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

**SS Uganda can only send this blood to Ajax Bay because they know a resupply is coming from ARA Bahia Paraiso.**

**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 approximately **+46 units of blood or less**.

### **FALKLANDS WAR 25<sup>th</sup> ANNIVERSARY**

#### **OPERATION CORPORATE-THE SIR GALAHAD BOMBING**

Woolwich Burns Unit Experience. P Chapman

Medical facilities at Fitzroy were limited, as all the Field Ambulance equipment had been lost on board the Sir Galahad during the bombing. First aid was given and the wounded evacuated as soon as possible by helicopter to Ajax Bay where the main shore-based medical facilities were stationed in a disused refrigeration plant. Some of the injured were transferred directly to ships in San Carlos Water. **All were ultimately evacuated to the hospital ship SS UGANDA which itself was under pressure to evacuate as many wounded as possible, to make room for the large numbers of casualties expected from the planned attack on Port Stanley.** Those fit enough were therefore transferred from UGANDA to smaller hospital transport ships. HECLA, HERALD and HYDRA for passage to Montevideo and onward flight in RAF VC10 aircraft to the UK.

<https://doi.org/10.1136/jramc-153-03s-12>

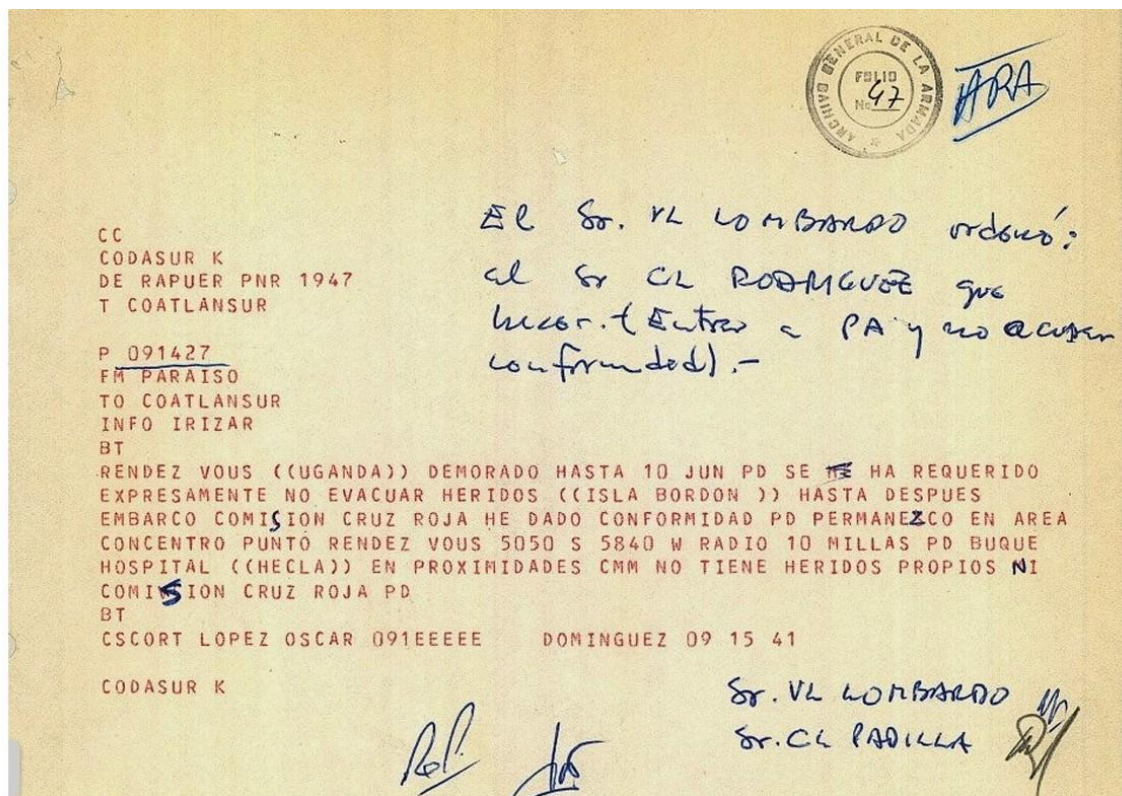
### **9<sup>th</sup> June 1982, SS Uganda.**

Received **160** wounded mainly from the Sir Galahad bombing, of these 78 were burned severely ranging from 1-45% of total Body Surface Area.

How was the Hospital Ship SS Uganda expected to carry on treating the casualty's from the battles planned to take place on 11<sup>th</sup> June 1982? And as we must remember, there was no end date to the conflict, and further casualties would ensue. Over the next four days SS Uganda received 170 casualties!

**ARA Bahia Paraiso** informs the Argentine mainland naval base that their rendezvous with (Uganda) will be delayed until 10<sup>th</sup> June 1982.





On 10<sup>th</sup> June 1982, the Hospital Ship ARA Bahia Paraiso finally meets Hospital Ship SS Uganda in the Red Box (Safety Zone) here the **ARA Bahia Paraiso transferred by helicopter, +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.

<https://deyse.com/malvinas/640>

<https://www.laprensa.com.ar/La-larga-travesia-del-transporte-Polar-ARA-Bahia-Paraiso-Ultima-entrega-511281.note.aspx>

<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/>

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

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

As the units began final preparations, Commander of British Land Forces Major General Jeremy Moore sent the following message.

As you prepare for battle I send you all my best wishes. I know that none of us expects a walkover. There will be hard fighting, but the reputations of all units in this formation are that they fight hard and they win. I know that all of you are keen to uphold those reputations and I am confident that you will do so. The Navy has got us here and will, as you all know, continue to give all the support it can. May God go with you.

12<sup>th</sup> June 1982, I was wounded (James O'Connell) it would take 10 hours from wounding to reach SS Uganda.

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

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

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

Received **30** casualties.

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

**14th June 1982, SS Uganda.**

Received **60** more casualties.

***Orders briefly for the night of 14/15th June 1982:***

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: Fortunately the war ended at approximately 15.30hrs (zt) Monday, 14<sup>th</sup> June 1982.

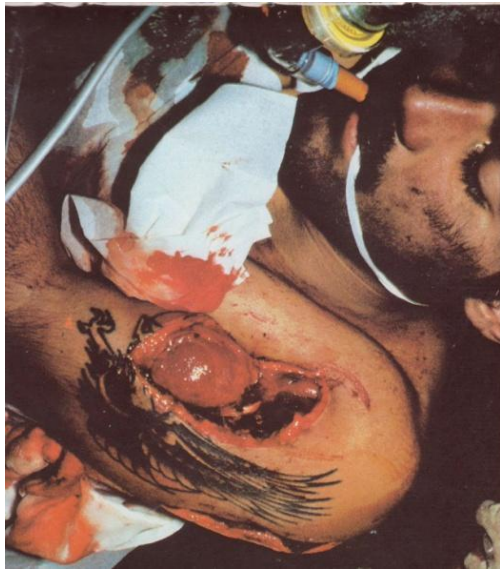
**From 10<sup>th</sup> June 1982, till 14<sup>th</sup> June 1982, the SS Uganda took aboard 170 battlefield casualties, where did the blood for these men come from?**

As you probably know this was a war run by the British on a shoestring, we were 8000 miles from home, the Argentines were 300 miles, we have lost vital supplies caused by the sinking of the merchant ship Atlantic Conveyor, including ammunition and vital heavy lift helicopters, as we neared the end we are running out of bullets, artillery rounds and now we can reveal **blood**, the winning of the Falklands War was indeed a very close call, and the receiving of **Argentine blood** enabled us to fight on and win, had we not received the **blood**, could the night battles have taken place, could we have captured Port Stanley, if we had lost the war, the story of British Falklands War would be a completely different one, it would probably be about the shame of losing the war with Argentina, losing the Falkland Islands, Mrs Thatcher losing the election or being thrown out of office, lives lost for nothing, the last death rattle of a once great nation, but we won.



Hospital Ship SS Uganda

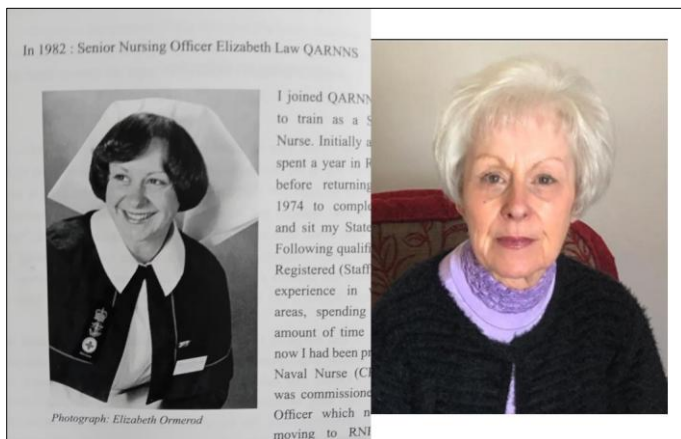




Hospital Ship SS Uganda

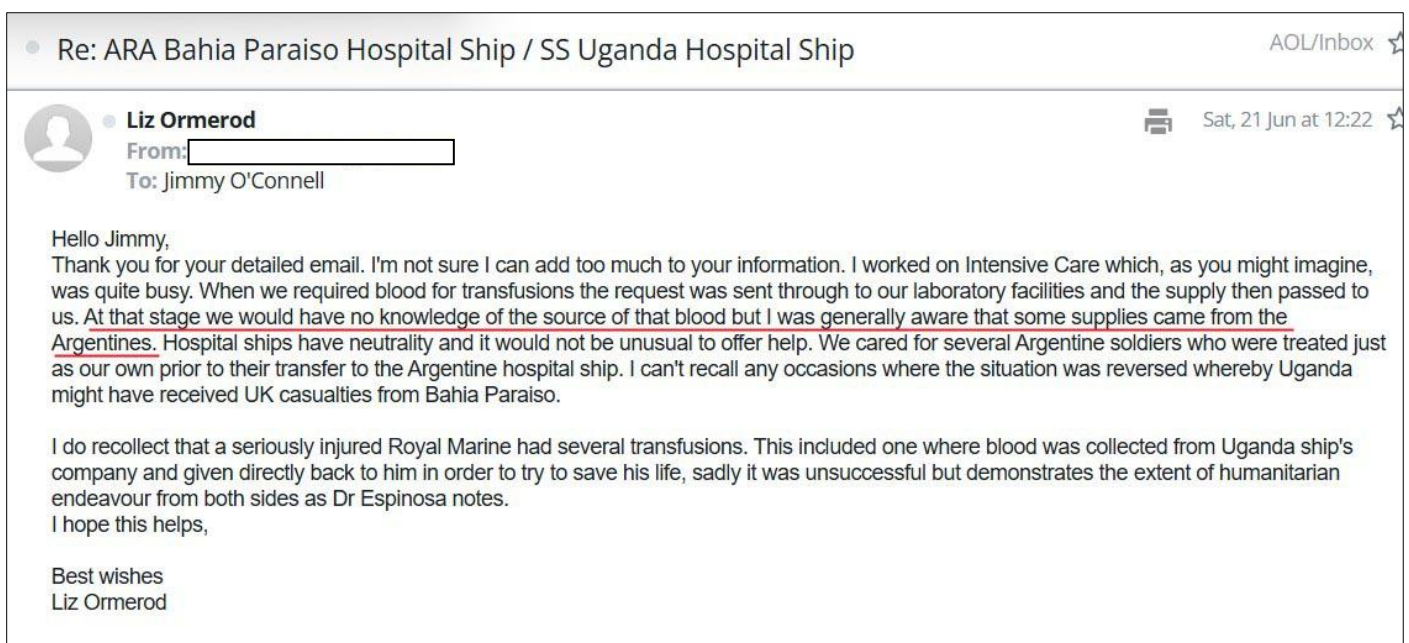


## Nursing Staff, Hospital Ship SS Uganda



Email contact, 21 June 2025.

In 1982, Elizabeth (Liz Law) Ormerod, was the Senior Nursing Officer QARNNS Hospital Ship SS Uganda.



Ex Uganda nurse Sue Warner (maiden name Chandler).



Anastasio Vilca Condori fue enfermero en el Bahía Paraiso. Con él, la enfermera británica Sue Warner, que participó en el buque hospital Uganda, en un encuentro de veteranos este verano. Recordaron cuando el buque inglés recibió suero para transfusiones de **sangre** del barco argentino al final de la guerra (Franco Fafasuli)



In 2022, Sue (Chandler) Warner Nurse aboard SS Uganda travelled to Argentina to meet the crew of ARA Bahia Paraiso, where she thanked them for donating blood to save the British wounded.

## Testimonies of Humanity.

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 who had a unique encounter with their Argentine counterparts when, in 1982, they needed blood for their patients and this was obtained thanks to contact with the Argentine ship. [links](#).

<https://noticiasmercedinas.com/site/2022/03/07/emotivo-encuentro-entre-veteranos-de-guerra-de-malvinas-argentinos-y-britanicos/>

<https://www.infobae.com/sociedad/2022/05/02/los-unicos-tres-hermanos-en-la-guerra-de-malvinas-y-el-recuerdo-del-menor-muerto-a-los-16-anos-en-el-general-belgrano/>

*If you do a Google search, it will reveal nothing on English websites, however, if you do a search using Spanish, “Sangre”, Malvinas, Bahia Paraíso, 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 Hospital Ship 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 Hospital Ship 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, the SS 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 alive aged 92).

***Written by Surgeon Captain Andrew Rintoul, Medical Officer in Charge, 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*



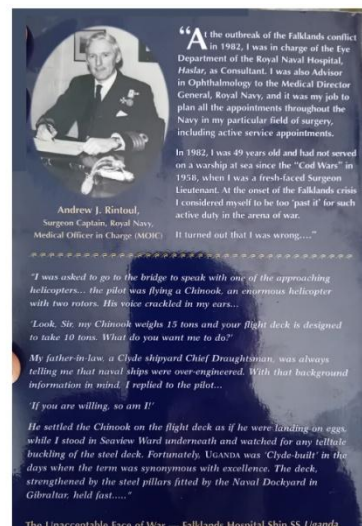
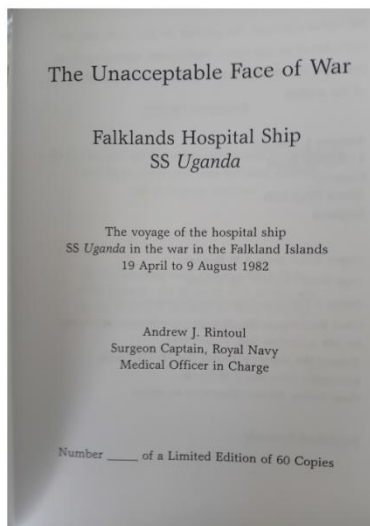
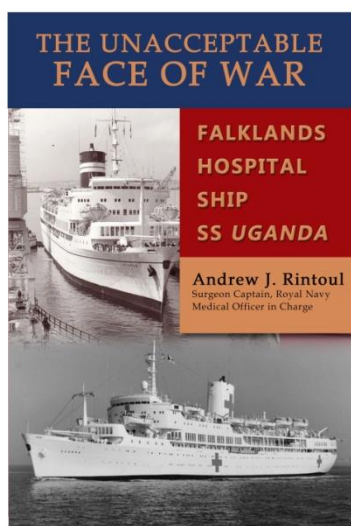
had a dedicated hospital deck and carried two white painted red-crossed helicopters, a Puma and an Alouette. In accordance with Geneva rules, she sent her Puma over to Uganda to pick one or two senior surgeons and me to inspect her hospital facilities before casualty transfer.

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 Paraíso 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.



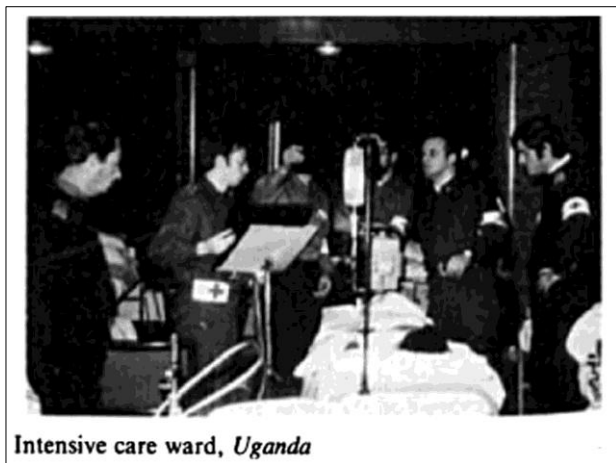


Surgeon Captain Andrew J Rintoul and Deputy Matron Edith Meiklejohn and others suiting up in orange survival suits for their journey back and forth from Hospital Ship SS Uganda to Argentine Hospital Ship ARA Bahia Paraíso.



Left photo, RN Deputy Matron Edith Meiklejohn, RN MOIC Andrew Rintoul and Argentine MOIC Dr Pascual Pellicari, unknown Argentine Surgeon, aboard ARA Bahia Paraíso.

Right photo, on left, Dr Pascual Pellicari, RN Anaesthetist Peter Bull, RN Deputy Matron Edith Meiklejohn, RN MOIC Andrew Rintoul.



Intensive care ward, *Uganda*



Left photo British and Argentine doctors aboard SS Uganda in the Intensive Care Unit.

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





Dr Pasqual Pellicari 2<sup>nd</sup> from left, Dr Carlos Alberto Bertini back far right, aboard SS Uganda.

That **urgently needed day** would come four days after the meeting, with bombing of the Sir Galahad, 48 dead and 150 casualties, most of the casualties were treated in Fitzroy, Teal Inlet or Ajax Bay, SS Uganda would immediately send **+283** units of its meagre blood supply to Ajax Bay.

After that initial contact between Hospital Ship SS Uganda and Hospital Ship ARA Bahia Paraíso on 4<sup>th</sup> June 1982, Bahia Paraíso picked up Argentine wounded from Porto Argentina (Port Stanley), Fox Bay and Port Howard, then returns to the port of Punta Quilla (Santa Cruz, Argentina) discharges her Argentine casualties and replenishes supplies of blood, medicines, medical equipment, food and fuel.

**08th June 1982**, ARA Bahia Paraíso returns to the naval base at Punta Quilla (Santa Cruz, Argentina) to disembark casualties and replenish supplies.

After the disembarkation of the Argentine 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 48 dead and 150 wounded.

**On 8<sup>th</sup> June 1982**, SS Uganda sends **-283** blood units to **Ajax Bay** to aid the operating teams.

**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) 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** composed of, Captain Luzuriaga, 1st Lt. Leguizamon, and Sgt Carlos Andres Verón, have their photo taken aboard SS Uganda, with members of the SS Uganda deck crew who are in the front row and standing on the end left and right.

Sgt Carlos Andres Verón is in the back row 2<sup>nd</sup> (tallest) from right; he 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.*

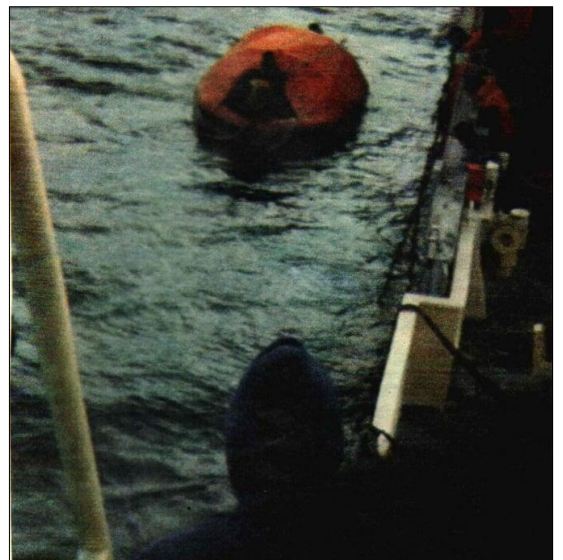
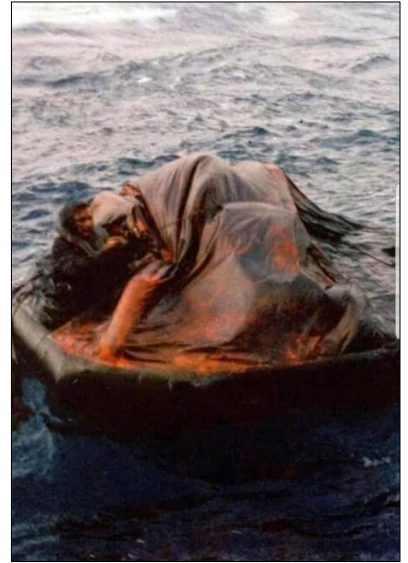
PUMA AE-506 belonged to the Army Aviation Corps and is now displayed on a pedestal in the town of Malvinas Argentina's, Buenos Aires, Argentina.





2<sup>nd</sup> May 1982, ARA General Belgrano, sunk.

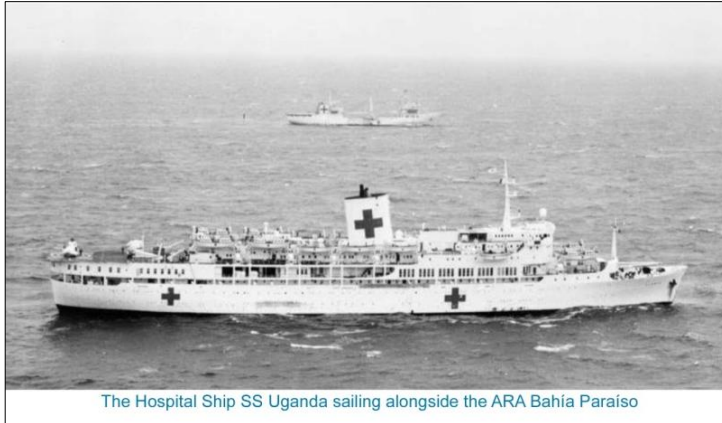
3<sup>rd</sup> / 4<sup>th</sup> May 1982, ARA Bahia Paraiso recovers 71 survivors and 17 deceased.



After dealing with the recovery of the dead and the survivors of the sinking of the ARA General Belgrano over the 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> May 1982, it is even more remarkable that the crew of the ARA Bahia Paraiso only a month later would provide blood and medicines to the British, I believe the Argentine Medical Officer in charge Pasqual Pellicari, should receive a posthumous award from the British Government, similar to what [Surgeon Captain Dr Rick Jolly OBE](#) received from the Argentine Government, and I would like recognition for the crew of ARA Bahia Paraiso, sadly this will probably never happen.



Hospital Ship SS UGANDA and Hospital Ship ARA BAHIA PARAISO in the Red Box safety zone.



The Hospital Ship SS Uganda sailing alongside the ARA Bahia Paraiso



As you can see, when both ships met in the Red Box safety zone, they were only a short distance apart.



The Argentine PUMA 506 and HMS Herald's Royal Navy Wasp helicopter travelled between both ships.



PUMA 506 aboard SS Uganda.



HMS Hecla's Wasp Helicopter.





Argentine PUMA 506 landing on Hospital Ship SS Uganda.



Hospital Ship SS Uganda.



LCpl Denzil Connick and Cpl Roy Bassey, both members of 3 Para, Denzil lost a leg, and Roy his foot.

I am not sure if the **MOD** is aware of the exchange of **Argentine blood**, as it seems to be unrecorded officially, or whether it is a dirty little secret, which is why the Hospital Ship SS Uganda's records are still secret at Kew Archives and will not be made public till 2064. Or is it that Andrew Rintoul the Medical Officer In Charge of SS Uganda did this humanitarian act completely of his own accord, to save lives of both British and Argentines.

The few members of the medical team aboard SS Uganda that I have managed to make contact with (many will not reply to my correspondence once I ask questions, but those that do all seem to have no memory of this incident, and say it was a long time ago. The semi-official account of Hospital Ship SS Uganda during the Falklands written by Operating Theatre Sister Nicci Pugh called '**War White Ship - Red Crosses**' A nursing memoir of the Falklands War, which is supposed to be a comprehensive and historically useful account, however, she forgot all about Andrew Rintoul and several of Uganda's medical team visiting the ARA Bahia Paraíso including Deputy Matron Edith Meiklejohn RN (her boss), or the Doctors and Surgeons from ARA Bahia Paraíso coming aboard the SS Uganda, an viewing the operating theatre and intensive care unit, her response to me was 'the years advance for us all, & the memories start to fade' **but she was 50 wrote her book in 2010.**

Fortunately, two of them, one a senior nursing sister, who says, it was **general knowledge that they used Argentine blood**, and one nurse who **travelled to Argentina to thank the crew of ARA Bahia Paraíso for donating blood** to save the British, and me who clearly remembers being told I had been transfused with Argentine blood. Then we have the doctors, surgeons and helicopter crew who were responsible for getting the blood and medical supplies to SS Uganda.

Closed extracts: 9 pages

Ministry of Defence (Navy): Registered Files and Branch Folders. Operation Corporate, Falklands Conflict: medical support and associated facilities; UK hospital ships, repatriation of bodies,... Closed extracts: 9 pages.

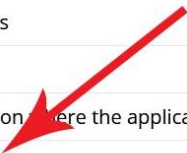
**Held by:** The National Archives, Kew - Ministry of Defence  
**Date:** 01 May 1982 - 31 March 1983  
**Reference:** DEFE 69/873/2  
**Subjects:** Armed Forces (General Administration) | Navy

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**Catalogue description**

**Closed extracts: 9 pages**

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I understand that the MOD may have never sanctioned the using of Argentine blood, it was done by the senior British nursing staff commanded by Andrew Rintoul, and done as an act of humanitarianism to save the lives of the British and Argentine wounded, this episode undoubtedly happened, it is a fact, the British blood ran out on 10<sup>th</sup> June 1982, and 170 wounded men were given Argentine blood.

If this episode had not been hidden, I have no doubt that the two men involved Andrew Rintoul and Pascual Pellicari would have received a humanitarian award for saving lives in the most demanding of circumstances.

All I ask that this episode be thoroughly investigated, but they will not look into it, they need to be asked how did the doctors and nursing staff treat 730 patients and perform 503 operations, when by the 10<sup>th</sup> June 1982 **they had ran out of blood**, there was still no end in sight to the war, it could have gone on for another two weeks with the inevitable casualties.

However, it ended four days after the 10<sup>th</sup> June 1982, on the 14<sup>th</sup> June 1982, and in those four days, 170 battlefield casualties were brought aboard Hospital Ship SS Uganda, where did the blood come from to treat these wounded men? The truth of the matter is they accepted Argentine blood from ARA Bahia Paraiso, and my Hepatitis B infection be recognised as coming from contaminated blood, that was given without malice.