

# RAF COLLEGE CRANWELL

## “Falklands Cranwellians”



## Cranwellians in the Falklands War April-June 1982

[Statistics believed correct at the time of issue]

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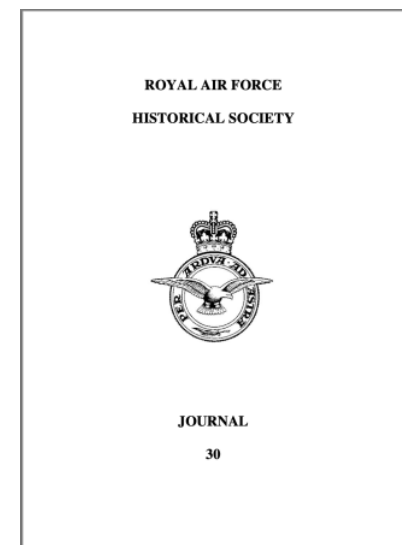
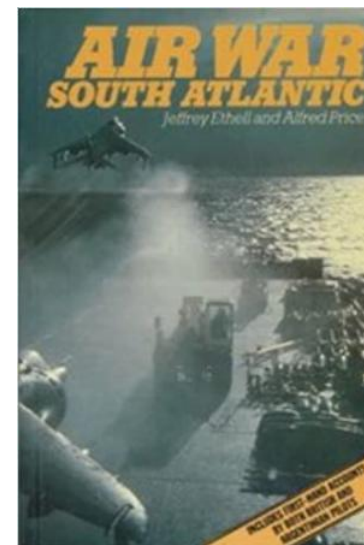
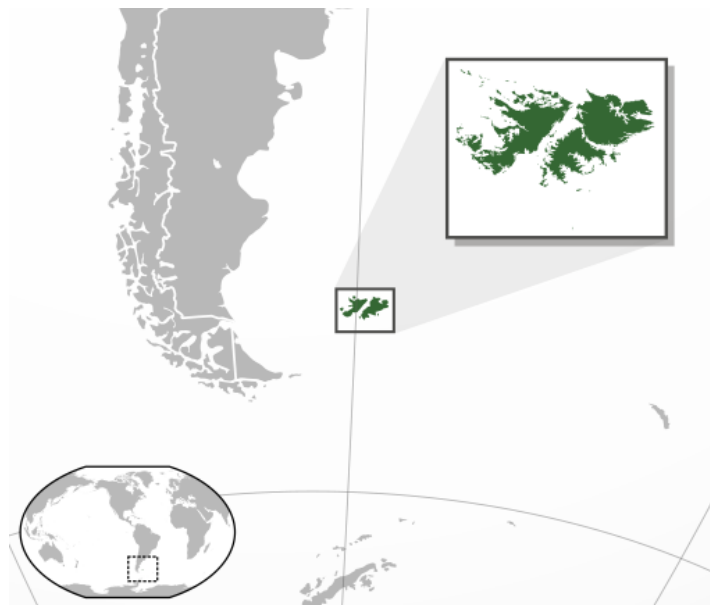
# Context

This booklet has been prepared for the CHS *Feature of the Month - April*, recording the Cranwellian contribution, as far as it is known, during the Falklands War that ran from 2 April to 14 June 1982. If unwittingly we have omitted facts that you feel should be included, please do not hesitate to contact Ian at [ibms520@gmail.com](mailto:ibms520@gmail.com).

At the beginning of the 1970s, the post-WWII Flight Cadet Officer Training system was gradually replaced by the Graduate Entry system which ran for the next 10 years. By the beginning of the 1980s, the OACTU at Henlow had been merged with Officer Training at Cranwell to form the Single Gate Initial Officer Training (SGIOT) system at the RAF College, training officers of all RAF branches until 2006. Accordingly, the Falklands conflict drew on the expertise of Cranwellians from all three training regimes.

It has not been possible to identify all the individuals, by name, who contributed to the air campaign in the Falklands Island, not least because many were still serving in their normal 'peace-time' appointments in the Ascension Islands, RAF Germany and the UK. Indeed the Air War in the South Atlantic was not just about air operations in the Falklands, but the strategic importance of Wideawake Airfield in Ascension Island as a 'forward operating base' and the decisive air-to-air refuelling operations that supported the long-range Black Buck and MPA missions. Accordingly, in this booklet we summarise the events that unfolded during the war and the squadrons, aircraft and key RAF personalities that contributed to the recapture of the British sovereign territory from the Argentinian Junta.

Click on the graphics of the Falklands below to see a CBS report on the events leading up to the Falklands War, and on the graphics of reading material we recommend as definitive accounts of the war:



Recommended Reading



# The Harrier Contribution

The Falklands War was never actually declared, but started when the Argentinians invaded and occupied the Falkland Islands on 2 April 1982, fully expecting that the UK Government would not contest its sovereign rights over the islands that the Argentinians called the Malvinas, believing them to be theirs. This was a gross miscalculation by the Argentinian Junta led by General Leopoldo Galtieri and, by 5 April, HMG under Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher had despatched a naval task force to engage the Argentinian Navy and Air Force, before making an amphibious assault on the islands to restore sovereignty - a task that would take just 74 days.

The naval task force was led by the two aircraft carriers *HMS Hermes* and *HMS Invincible* under the command of John Fieldhouse (later Admiral of the Fleet, Baron Fieldhouse). Equipped with the Royal Navy's 28 Sea Harriers FRS1, the force was augmented by 10 Harriers GR3, commanded by Peter Squire (later CAS ACM Sir Peter Squire) who believed that the RAF supplement was to be held as a reserve in the event of heavy Sea Harrier losses (forecast to be up to one a day). As it transpired only 10 aircraft were lost, five (two Sea Harriers and three GR3) shot down by AAA and four Sea Harriers (of 800 and 801 NAS) and one Harrier GR3 in accidents on CAP and during deck operations in bad weather.

Sea Harriers flew 1,435 sorties, recording 20 'kills' and three 'possibles'; the Harriers GR3 flew 126 sorties exclusively in the Ground Attack role. The Sea Harrier graphic below links to a footage of the air battle, the photo of Sir Peter Squire to his biography and the Harrier GR3 graphic to a BBC report by Brian Hanrahan after the first airborne mission.



# The ‘Black Buck’ Contribution

**Operations Black Buck 1 to Black Buck 7** were a series of seven extremely long-range missions by Vulcan bombers of the RAF Waddington Wing, comprising aircraft from Nos. 44, 50 and 101 Squadrons against Argentine positions in the Falkland Islands, of which five missions completed attacks. The objective of the missions was to attack Port Stanley Airport and its associated defences. The raids, at some 8,000 nautical miles round trip and 16 hours flying time, were the longest-ranged bombing raids in history at that time and quite apart from the damage they inflicted, were a strategically significant reminder to the Junta that Argentina was within military reach.

The Black Buck raids were staged from Wideawake airfield on Ascension Island, close to the Equator. The Vulcan was designed for medium-range missions in Europe and lacked the range to fly to and from the Falklands without multiple refuels. The RAF's tanker aircraft were mostly converted Victor bombers with similar range, so they too had to be refuelled in the air. A total of eleven tankers were required for two Vulcans (one primary and one reserve), a daunting operational and logistical effort complicated by the availability of only a single runway at Wide-awake airfield. The Vulcans carried either twenty-one 1,000-pound (450 kg) bombs internally or two or four Shrike anti-radar missiles externally. Of the five Black Buck raids flown to completion, three were against Stanley Airfield's runway and operational facilities, while the other two were anti-radar missions using Shrike missiles against a Westinghouse AN/TPS-43 long-range 3D radar in the Port Stanley area. Shrikes hit two of the less valuable and rapidly replaced secondary fire control radars, causing some casualties among the Argentine crews. One Vulcan was nearly lost when a fuel shortage forced it to land in Brazil.

Mission	Target	Date	Primary Vulcan	Reserve Vulcan	Notes
Black Buck 1	Port Stanley Airport runway	30 April–1 May	XM598 (Reeve)	XM607 (Withers)	Performed; primary aircraft cabin failed to pressurise shortly after takeoff, replaced by reserve
Black Buck 2	Port Stanley Airport runway	3–4 May	XM607 (Reeve)	XM598 (Montgomery)	Performed
Black Buck 3	Port Stanley Airport runway	13 May	XM607	XM612	Cancelled before takeoff due to weather conditions
Black Buck 4	Anti-aircraft radar	28 May	XM597 (McDougall)	XM598	Cancelled 5 hours into flight, due to a fault in the Victor fleet
Black Buck 5	Anti-aircraft radar	31 May	XM597 (McDougall)	XM598 (Montgomery)	Performed
Black Buck 6	Anti-aircraft radar	3 June	XM597 (McDougall)	XM598 (Montgomery)	Performed; primary aircraft forced to divert to Brazil due to a broken refuelling probe
Black Buck 7	Port Stanley Airport stores and aircraft	12 June	XM607 (Withers)	XM598 (Montgomery)	Performed



Vulcan XM607 carried out the first Black Buck raid



44, 50 and 101 Squadron Badges



Victor XM717

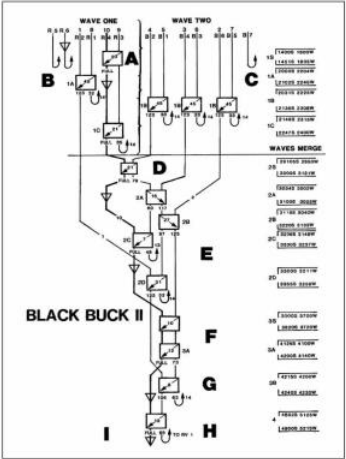


Fig 1. BLACK BUCK II refuelling plan.



Shrike ARM

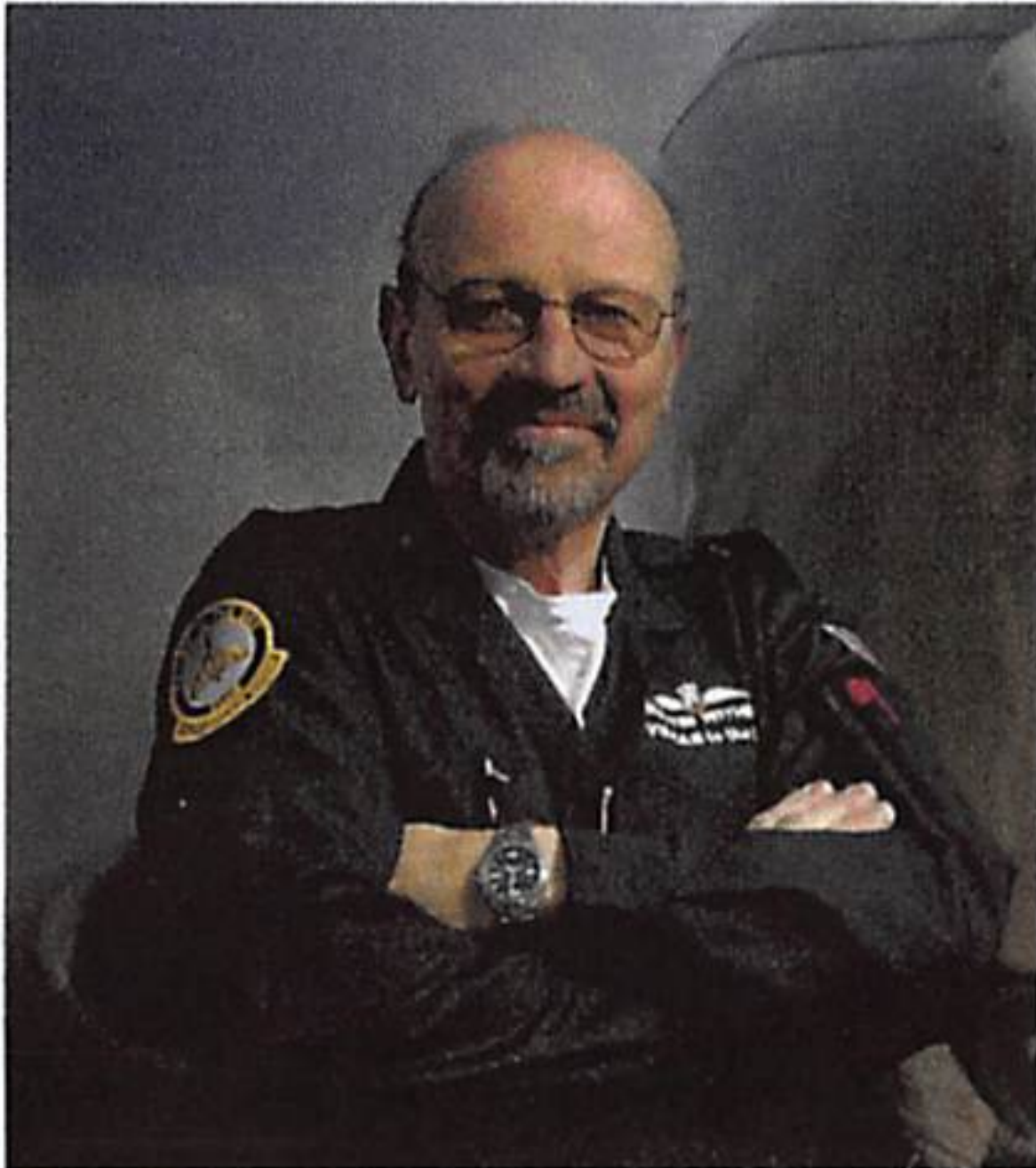


AN/TPS-43 radar



# Flt Lt Martin Withers DFC

## Flt Lt Martin Withers DFC



Born in Easingwold, near York in 1946, Flt Lt Withers joined the RAF in 1968 and initially instructed in the Jet Provost aircraft before commencing service in Lincolnshire flying Vulcan aircraft. During 1982, Flt Lt Withers was part of the 'Black Buck' raids to bomb Port Stanley airfield during the Falklands War. He was the captain of the reserve aircraft, but within minutes became responsible for the execution of the mission. Departing from Ascension Island, Withers flew a 3,400 mile outward leg encountering severe weather conditions, an unserviceable tanker aircraft and hazardous nighttime air-to-air refuelling. Withers had refuelled his aircraft six times on the outbound leg, but on the last refuelling the Victor tanker could not deliver the planned load. Despite short on fuel, Withers decided not to turn back as he was only 290 miles from his target and so began his descent and bombing run. Withers realised the strategic affect that his decision would have on the outcome of the Falklands War. Having completed a successful attack, Withers returned to Ascension Island. His decision making, bravery and leadership were an inspiration to his crew and his actions ensured that not only was Port Stanley airfield temporarily denied to the enemy, but the affect on the morale of the local Argentine forces was devastating. Withers had proven, after covering a distance of 6,800 miles to and from the Falkland Islands, that the Argentine mainland was within easy reach of RAF bombers. The runway at Port Stanley was repaired, but the occupying forces were never able to use it again for fast jets. For his efforts, Flt Lt Withers was awarded the DFC.

# Summary of Air Operations

[Excluding forces at Wideawake, Ascension Island]

Aircraft	Operations
Harrier GR3	126 sorties, 4 lost.
Vulcan B2	5 sorties: 1, 3 May and 12 June; 21x1,000 lbs bombs – 31 May and 3 June; 4 x AGM-45 Shrike.
Victor K2	375 sorties; 14 sorties per Vulcan raid, 12 sorties per extended Nimrod patrol, 6 sorties per Hercules long-range drop, 6 sorties per Harrier GR3 staging (4), 3 radar reconnaissance sorties to South Georgia.
Nimrod MR2	111 sorties: maritime patrols, coordinate air refueling, SAR links.
Nimrod R1	Clandestine operations
Hercules C1	50+ airdrop sorties at Falklands Island, 600+ airbridge sorties UK-Ascension Island
Canberra PR9	Clandestine operations from Chile
Chinook HC1	Troops and transport movements
VC10 C1	Troop movements





# Cranwellian Awards

[With grateful thanks to ACM Sir Richard Johns for his feedback and advice]

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Name/ <u>Bio &amp; History</u>	Award	Unit	Notes
<b>Langworthy RU      <u>AFC</u></b>	DFC	18 Sqn, Chinook HC1	Read ' <u>Bravo November</u> '
<b>McDougall CN</b>	DFC	50 Sqn Vulcan B2	See ' <u>Signed Cover</u> '
<b><u>Pook JJ</u></b>	DFC	1 Sqn, Harrier GR3	<u>89 Entry - see mp4 bio</u>
<b><u>Squire PT</u>      <u>AFC</u></b>	DFC	OC 1 Sqn, Harrier GR3	89 Entry; CAS 2000-2003
<b>Withers WFM</b>	DFC	101 Sqn, Vulcan B2	See - next page
<b>Burgoyne HC</b>	AFC	47 Sqn, Hercules C1	100 Entry
<b>Roberts AM</b>	AFC	47 Sqn, Hercules C1	92 Entry
<b><u>Tuxford R</u></b>	AFC	55 Sqn, Victor K2	97 Entry - read bio
<b>Jopling BW</b>	QGM	18 Sqn	Flt Sgt; not Cranwellian
<b>Swan JA</b>	QGM	<u>OC No 1 EOD RAF</u>	36 GE



# Cranwellian Honours

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Name/ <u>Bio</u> & History	Honour	Notes
<b>Group Captain JSB Price</b>	CBE	76 Entry Prize Winner; SRAFO Ascension Island
<b><u>Wing Commander AJC Bagnall</u></b>	OBE	91 Entry; later VCDS - read bio
<b>Wing Commander DL Baugh</b>	OBE	85 Entry; OC departing Nimrod MR1s of 42(TB) Sqn
<b>Wing Commander JK Sim</b>	OBE	79 Entry (Withdrew)
<b><u>Wing Commander CJ Sturt</u></b>	OBE	75 Entry; OC 120 Sqn Nimrod MR2 - see 'Signed Cover'
<b>Flight Lieutenant PA Room</b>	MBE	27 GE



Nimrod MR.2 XV243 of No. 120 Sqn



Wideawake Airfield, Ascension



# RAF Historical Society Journal 30

An unrivalled account from those who were personally involved in the war - a 'MUST READ'

Speaker	Topic	Biography
<b>Air Cdre Henry Probert</b>	THE VIEW FROM THE MOD	A Cambridge history graduate, Henry Probert joined the RAF Education Branch in 1948. During the 1960s, he served in Singapore and on the Staff College Directing Staff before becoming, in 1976, Director of RAF Education. After retirement in 1978, he spent the next 11 years as Head of the Air Historical Branch. He is the author of three notable books, his most recent being his acclaimed biography of Sir Arthur Harris.
<b>AVM John Price</b>	THE ALERT MEASURES COMMITTEE	Graduating from Cranwell in 1950, John Price flew FGA aircraft in Germany, Korea and Australia, later converting to helicopters and commanding squadrons in the Far East and the UK, and latterly the Buccaneer Wing at Laarbruch. Ground tours included stints at the Ministry in every rank from squadron leader to air vice-marshal. His final appointment prior to retirement in 1985 was as ACAS(Ops).
<b>Air Mshl Sir John Curtiss</b>	A VIEW FROM THE HQ AT NORTHWOOD 1  VULCAN OPERATIONS	Sir John joined the RAF in 1942 and, following wartime operations with Bomber Command, he flew 263 round trips to Berlin during the Airlift. His operational horizons were widened further by experience on night fighters before he commanded Bruggen's strike/attack Phantom Wing. His more senior appointments included those of DOrg, Commandant of the RAF Staff College and AOC 18 Gp, which gave him a NATO 'hat' as COMMAIREASTLANT. He left the Service in 1983.
<b>AVM George Chesworth</b>	A VIEW FROM THE HQ AT NORTHWOOD 2	George Chesworth joined the RAF as a National Serviceman in 1948, his first tour being on Sunderlands in the Far East after which he became a QFI and flew Shackletons before ushering in the Nimrod era as OC No 201 Sqn in 1970. He subsequently commanded Kinloss and CTTO; his last appointment was as Chief of Staff at HQ 18 Gp. He was appointed Lord Lieutenant of Moray in 1994.
<b>AVM Ron Dick</b>	THE VIEW FROM BDLS WASHINGTON	Ron Dick graduated from Cranwell in 1952 to fly Meteor F.8s; he subsequently became a QFI and won two aerobatic trophies as such. His subsequent flying career took him, via Vulcans, to command of the Buccaneer Wing at Honington. He retired in 1988 and settled in the USA.
<b>Gp Capt Jeremy Price</b>	ASCENSION ISLAND – GATEWAY TO THE FALKLANDS	Jeremy Price graduated from Cranwell in 1959. Initial experience on PR Canberras in Germany was followed by a lengthy involvement in the AAR role, as practitioner, planner and staff officer. Further flying tours on Valiants and Victor Mk 1s and 2s, included command of No 232 OCU, No 57 Sqn and RAF Marham. His final appointment, before taking early retirement in 1987, was as Director of Defence Commitments (UK).
<b>AVM Clive Evans</b>	RAF LYNEHAM AND THE AIR BRIDGE	Clive Evans joined the RAF in 1955. His very varied flying career embraced Hunters, Chipmunks, Vampires, Canberras, Lightnings, F-111s and the Hercules, the latter as OC No 24 Sqn and later as Station Commander at Lyneham. Along the way he became a QFI, QWI and IRE, served as the first MRCA Project Officer at Munich, was the first Head of the RAF Presentation Team and spent most of 1985 as Deputy Commander of British Forces Falkland Islands. Before retiring in 1992, he was Deputy Air Secretary and then Deputy Commandant of the RCDS.
<b>Gp Capt David Pierce</b>	NIMROD OPERATIONS AT ASCENSION ISLAND	David Pierce joined the RAF in 1957. Trained as an AEO, he flew Shackletons with Nos 120, 206 and 201 Sqns before helping to introduce the Nimrod era by setting up the Maritime Acoustic Analysis Unit at Kinloss in 1969. Subsequent tours included two Nimrod flying appointments, a stint with the RCAF on the Argus and on the Air Attaché's staff in Washington. He left the Service, as SRAFO Plymouth, in 1992.
<b>AVM Sandy Hunter</b>	CHINOOK OPERATIONS – RAF ODIHAM	Sandy Hunter joined the RAF in 1962, his initial experience being as a recce pilot in FEF and as a QFI. He later switched to helicopters, serving as a Flight, Squadron and Station Commander in that role. Ground tours included a stint in Moscow as Assistant Air Attaché and staff appointments concerned with policy and plans. Following two years as DPR(RAF), he was Commandant of the Staff College and then Commander British Forces in Cyprus. Since 1993, he maintained his Service connections through his involvement with reserve and cadet organisations, including the TA and RAuxAF.
<b>AVM Tony Stables</b>	CHINOOK OPERATIONS – No 18 Sqn	Tony Stables graduated from Cranwell in 1967; he flew helicopters in Oman and Germany before he was selected to introduce the Chinook into service as OC 18 Sqn in 1981. Subsequent tours included time spent at Goose Bay and in Northern Ireland, on the staff of CDS and as COS at HQ 1 Gp. His senior appointments included Commandant of the RAF College, Chief Executive of the Training Group Defence Agency and, finally, Commander KFOR (Rear) at Skopje in Macedonia. He became Secretary to the Council of Reserve Forces and flew the Grob Tutor with No 5 AEF.
<b>Wg Cdr Derek Straw</b>	MARITIME OPERATIONS FROM ASCENSION	Derek Straw joined the RAF in 1961 and spent practically the whole of the next 34 years as a navigator in the maritime world. This involved flying tours on Shackletons and Nimrods and staff appointments with the RN and with major NATO maritime commands.
<b>Gp Capt Kingsley Oliver</b>	RAF REGIMENT PARTICIPATION IN OPERATION CORPORATE	Kingsley Oliver served in the RAF Regiment from 1947 until 1978. Command, staff and instructional appointments at home included RAFC Cranwell, the RAF Regiment Depot, HQs Fighter and Air Support Commands and MOD, and overseas in RAF Germany, NEAF, the Arabian Peninsula and FEF.
<b>Air Cdre Peter Dye</b>	LOGISTICS AND THE FALKLANDS CAMPAIGN	Peter Dye was commissioned into the Engineering Branch in 1972. His subsequent career has concentrated on aircraft-related appointments, his 'hands on' experience embracing the Victor, Canberra, Vulcan, Tornado and Jaguar. In the latter case, he was directly responsible for the deployment and support of the Coltishall Jaguars sent to the Gulf in 1990-91. He was appointed Deputy Chief Executive, Defence Aviation Repair Agency and Air Officer Wales; later he was Air Commodore Ground Training with the Training Group Defence Agency.
<b>ACM Sir Richard Johns</b>	HARRIER OPERATIONS – RAF GÜTERSLOH	Commissioned from Cranwell in 1959, Sir Richard spent the next nine years flying Hunters and as a QFI on the Jet Provost and Gnat. In the 1970s and '80s he flew Harriers in Germany, first as OC 3 Sqn and then as Station Commander at Gütersloh, which also involved qualification on the Chinook and Puma. His senior appointments have included SASO at both HQ RAFG and HQ STC, AOC 1 Gp, COS and AOC-in-C STC and, within NATO, C-in-C Allied Force Northwestern Europe. In April 1997 Sir Richard became CAS.
<b>ACM Sir Peter Squire</b>	HARRIER OPERATIONS – No 1 Sqn	Sir Peter was commissioned from Cranwell in 1966 and spent the early years of his career flying Hunters, both as a DFGA pilot and as a QFI. Converting to the Harrier in 1975, he commanded No 1 Sqn during Operation CORPORATE. Following command of the TTTE at Cottesmore, his senior appointments have included SASO HQ STC, AOC 38 and 1 Gps, ACAS, DCDS (Programmes and Personnel), AOC-in-C STC and C-in-C Allied Forces Northwestern Europe. He took up his current appointment as CAS in April 2000.
<b>MRAF Sir Michael Beetham</b>	CLOSING REMARKS	Sir Michael joined the RAFVR in 1941 and flew Lancasters on operations with No 50 Sqn. His post-war flying included further experience on Lancasters with 57, 35 and 82 Sqns. He later commanded 214 (Valiant) Sqn and RAF Khormaksar. His senior appointments included Directorships at the MOD, Commandant RAF Staff College, ACOS (Policy and Plans) at SHAPE, DC-in-C Strike Command, C-in-C RAFG Germany and COMTWOATAF. He became CAS in 1977 and remained in post for five years, which included supervision of the RAF's participation in Operation CORPORATE.