

MKAS are proud to present a special evening commemorating the 40th anniversary of the Falklands conflict.

Joining us to share their unique experiences of air operations are:

Rear Admiral Chris Parry
Squadron Leader Bob Tuxford
Commodore Neill Thomas

Chris Parry will recount his experience as the observer (helicopter warfare officer) of the Wessex III helicopter ('Humphrey') embarked in HMS ANTRIM during the Falklands War, initially the lead ship of the task group that was sent to recover the island of South Georgia.

'On 21 April 1982, Humphrey led two Wessex V helicopters from RFA TIDESPRING through challenging weather conditions amid the mountains onto Fortuna Glacier to deploy 16 Special Air Service (SAS) troopers who would observe Argentinian positions at Leith in West Cumberland Bay. Overnight, British forces witnessed hurricane force winds and towering seas and ashore the SAS found their position untenable and requested urgent evacuation. Despite massive clouds masking the surrounding mountains, severe gale force winds and raking snowstorms, Humphrey, using its radar, led the Wessex Vs back to collect the troops. The extreme conditions caused both Wessex Vs to crash. Humphrey later rescued all the troops and aircrew, lifting a ton overweight and carrying 16 personnel. On 23 April, Humphrey was back in action, locating and retrieving more SAS from a boat that had drifted offshore.

The Argentinian submarine, Santa Fe, was then reported in the area. On 25 April, Humphrey located the submarine and attacked and crippled it with 2 depth charges.

By 21 May, ANTRIM was taking part in the landings at San Carlos. She was strafed by Argentinian Dagger jets. Humphrey's airframe, cabling and fuel tanks were damaged by splinters, but after five days repair, the helicopter carried on flying.'

Bob Tuxford was a Victor K2 Captain in support of the South Atlantic operations during the Falklands war and participated in the iconic first Black Buck mission.

'Involved in the AAR Operations with the Tanker Task Force on Ascension Island from the outset, I will give an overview of the Victor's involvement in all the tasks generated by the Cdr Naval Task Force, starting with the Maritime Radar Reconnaissance sorties prior to Op Paraquet, Black Buck missions with the Vulcan, Air Drop support to the Fleet with the C130 Hercules, and continuous Maritime Surveillance alongside the Nimrod MR2 (once probe-equipped).'

Neill Thomas was a Sea Harrier pilot based on HMS Hermes during the Falklands war.

'I will present the following timeline of Harrier operations:

Formation of the SHAR force

Transit to Ascension Island

Ascension to Total Exclusion Zone (TEZ)

First attack – 1 May

Tasks until arrival of Atlantic Conveyor (arrival of GR3s)

Protection of the Amphibious Landings.

Availability of San Carlos landing strip

During the talk I will cover all aspects of the aircraft's capability – handling, weapons, weapon systems, availability, pilots adaptation to combat, weather and recount a few incidents which stand out in my memory.'