



Ministry
of Defence

Army Secretariat
Army Headquarters
IDL 24 Blenheim Building
Marlborough Lines
Andover
Hampshire, SP11 8HJ
United Kingdom

Ref: FOI2017/02183/78441

E-mail: ArmySec-group@mod.uk

Website: www.army.mod.uk

7 March 2017

E-mail address: [REDACTED]

Dear [REDACTED],

Thank you for your email of 13 February in which you requested the following information:

I would like the following document to be located, declassified, preserved and released:

A 3 page personal letter (hand-written/typed) from Brigadier Tony Wilson to the Chief of the General Staff/Chief of the Defence Staff, General Sir Edwin Bramall, dated sometime between 1 June 1982 and 31 December 1982.

The letter concerns Brigadier Wilson's participation and that of 5 Infantry Brigade in Operation 'Corporate', the British Task Force's campaign to liberate the Falkland Islands in 1982. Questions, grievances and self-exculpations are included in the letter.

The letter should be located in the personal papers of the then CGS, General Bramall, or in the Army Department's records for 1982/1983, which have still not been released to the public under the old 30 year rule, and are being kept in storage at Portsmouth. Alternatively, it could reside in one of the Army files for Operation 'Corporate'.

I am treating your correspondence as a request for information under the Freedom of Information Act 2000.

I am writing to advise you that following a search of our recorded information, I have found what appears to be an interim report written by Brigadier Wilson to General Bramall. I have been unable to locate a final report – if indeed one was written – or any personal letters that may fit in the timescales you requested. I have attached the interim report, which has a few minor redactions under section 40 of the Freedom of Information Act – personal information. The redactions are the name and signature of the author of the covering note and some signatures. Section 40 is an absolute exemption and does not require a public interest test in order to decide on the balance of the public interest of releasing the information concerned.

Under Section 16 of the Act (Advice and Assistance) you may find it helpful to search The National Archive (TNA) who may hold more information as the Ministry of Defence has forwarded most Falklands related files to TNA. I believe the remaining files are due to be released to TNA within the next few months. The following links refer to Operation Corporate at the TNA as well as its home page:

<http://discovery.nationalarchives.gov.uk/>

<http://discovery.nationalarchives.gov.uk/results/r/1? q=Op%20Corporate& p=0%7C1950& hb=tna>

<http://discovery.nationalarchives.gov.uk/results/r? q=Operation+Corporate& p=0%7C1950& hb=tna& d=WO& d=DEFE&Refine+departments=Refine>

<http://discovery.nationalarchives.gov.uk/results/r? q=Falklands+Conflict& d=WO%7CDEFE& p=0%7C1950 & hb=tna& tsj=C10092&Refine+subjects=Refine>

If you are not satisfied with this response or you wish to complain about any aspect of the handling of your request, then you should contact me in the first instance. If informal resolution is not possible and you are still dissatisfied then you may apply for an independent internal review by contacting the Information Rights Compliance team, Ground Floor, MOD Main Building, Whitehall, SW1A 2HB (e-mail CIO-FOI-IR@mod.uk). Please note that any request for an internal review must be made within 40 working days of the date on which the attempt to reach informal resolution has come to an end.

If you remain dissatisfied following an internal review, you may take your complaint to the Information Commissioner under the provisions of Section 50 of the Freedom of Information Act. Please note that the Information Commissioner will not investigate your case until the MOD internal review process has been completed. Further details of the role and powers of the Information Commissioner can be found on the Commissioner's website, <https://ico.org.uk>.

Yours sincerely,


Disclosure and Litigation Leader

File

1 (RM) Corps Mail Box
Grid NO 397601

24

3415/17 G3 (O & D)

EX SUMMER SALVO 602

See Distribution

23 Jun 82

OPERATION CORPORATE

1. The Commander has asked me to pass you a copy of the attached signal from Commander 5 Infantry Brigade to CCS.
2. The signal may be further distributed down to unit level, but only on the understanding that the contents are not to be discussed outside working hours or in public places because of the reference to the roles played by certain units.



Col
for Comd.

Distribution:

External:

Personal for:

- Commander 1st Armoured Division
- Commander 2nd Armoured Division
- Commander 3rd Armoured Division
- Commander 4th Armoured Division
- Commander Artillery Division

Internal:

Personal for:

- BR.C
- Commander Engineers
- Brigadier Infantry
- Commander Communications
- Commander Army Aviation
- ACCS G1, G4, G5
- Commander Transport
- Commander Medical
- Commander Supply
- Commander Maintenance
- ACCS G3 (Ops & TD)
- Chief G2
- Chief G3 (Trg & EPS)

S03

S03a

S03b

NA

INFO

14
1006

~~RESTRICTED~~

T D R C INDEX
NO 5812

1. The reports you will have received over the last three weeks will have given you some idea of the day to day situation and the way events have developed in the Falkland Islands. Now the war is over I believe it is right that I should report to you.
2. My first heading is to take that one word WAR and underline it. This has been nothing less than full scale war and in no sense has it been any kind of limited operation or half way state. Most of the information we were given about the enemy and his capability proved to be wrong. The enemy was not inept and frightened nor was he badly equipped and starving. His use of air was highly skilled and audacious. His defensive positions were well sited and well constructed. He fought with skill and bravery. Some units resisted almost to the last man as 2SG found during their battle for Tumbledown mountain.
3. Sadly but inevitably we have taken a considerable number of casualties. The Brigade has had some 100 killed and 224 wounded. In this last connection I would particularly mention the skill of 16 Field Ambulance and the Field Surgical Teams of the Parachute Clearing Troop, who treated 58 casualties in 20 hours during the course of our last battle. Every soldier wounded and evacuated into their hands lived.
4. You will be proud to know that our young soldiers faced this terrible and frightening experience with a courage and a resolve that is simply remarkable. It is also worth noting that as is so often true the leaders pay dearly for the privilege of rank. A high proportion of our casualties have been commanders from section level upwards.
5. Perhaps the odds we faced may make it appear that the enemy had little resolve. I would note the odds which dictated that we attacked at a disadvantage of 1 to 3 on more than one occasion and simply say that a drive and a determination to win carried the day. I believe this relentless pressure was a major factor leading to the sudden collapse of the enemy as was individual bravery and skill in the use of the fire power used may be clear when I report that the two btys of 4 Fd Regt fired over 3000 rds in support of the Tumbledown attack made by 2 SG and additional to this we superimposed the fire of 29 Cdo Regt and two NGS ships.
6. It seems incredible that we launched and sustained this operation without gaining local sea control and without local air superiority. The loss of Sir Tristan and Sir Galahad are one of the awful consequences of this situation. The Fitzroy air raids were a grievous blow to 1WG who pulled together nobly after such heavy losses under such horrifying circumstances. It is perhaps a matter of regret that they did not have a chance to fight a major battle thereafter. Again 16 Fd Amb distinguished themselves at this time. Caught on Sir Galahad they lost 3 killed and a number wounded in the attack. All their G1098 was lost. The survivors treated 135 wounded, most with severe burns within two hours with minimal kit and saw them evacuated. Only then were the medics themselves treated.
7. You will wish to know that 1/7 GR have done well. Their one major attack on Mount William met no resistance for the enemy had fled to their great disappointment. However they had some minor engagements and have taken prisoners and they have borne shelling and suffered casualties with great fortitude.
8. One of the most extraordinary aspects of this war is that we have fought it on less than light scales. San Carlos water was a log jam by the time we arrived and it was impossible to off load our shipping in any desired order or even complete. To this date a high proportion of all our stores including all the bde op tentage and all unit G1098 incl cooking eqpt and 500 vital water jerricans are still waiting to be unloaded. Somehow with a miracle of improvisation 31 Ord Coy kept enough urgent supplies coming forward each day so that we could fight and we could live.

But some days there were no rations. The SH force was over tasked throughout and under great strain. The one chinook was regarded like the angel of mercy. Short of vital eqpt as we were at the start we lost even more in the Fitzroy raids in the LCU which was sunk in Choiseul Sound.

9. My mention of eqpt needs to be seen against this dreadful and hostile climate. We have had bitter cold with winds blowing at up to 60 knots. Snow pettlets driven by such wind takes the skin off exposed flesh. The ground is permanently wet. Trench-foot and frostbite are common ailments and accepted as natural afflictions. There is no cover away from the settlements and we have had no vehicles to provide any logistic back-up.

10. We have learnt lessons that I daresay may not be new but which should be brought into prominence yet once again. I shall make a full report in due course.

