

FALKLANDS

The **AIR**
WAR

'**FALKLANDS – THE AIR WAR**' provides a study in depth of the aviation aspects of the 1982 conflict in the South Atlantic. Step by step, with the closest scrutiny of every available piece of evidence, large or small, the authors have reconstructed each phase of an air war which caused the world's major air arms to review their equipment and tactics. The authors have compiled a thoroughly researched reference work which will be welcomed by Armed Forces, historians and enthusiasts alike. The narrative and appendices relating to the movements, deployments, and actions of British and Argentine aircraft and shipping during the war are rich in hitherto unpublished factual information.

THE AUTHORS



RODNEY A BURDEN MMS is well known as compiler of the Fleet Air Arm section of the B.A.R.G. monthly journal, 'British Aviation Review'. His extensive knowledge of this subject enabled him to compile the rotary-wing aspects of the British naval section and also the United Kingdom shipping movements. Rodney was born in Bournemouth in 1952 and is employed as a Management Services Officer with Poole Borough Council. He lives within the borough with his wife and two sons.

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DOUGLAS A ROUGH was Project Co-ordinator and author of the Fleet Air Arm Individual Aircraft Details, Sea Harrier, and Falkland Islands sections of this book. Knowledge acquired by him over many years in the research, writing, layout and production of specialist aviation books and monographs was especially useful in the compilation of 'Falklands – The Air War'. Born in Glasgow in 1941, he became an Air Traffic Control Officer in 1966 and is currently employed as a Chief Sector Controller at London Air Traffic Control Centre. He is married with two sons and lives in Berkshire. His

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COLIN R SMITH A life-long interest in military aviation has seen him spend several years editing enthusiast journals devoted to publishing current and historical data about the world's air arms. This activity, involving considerable research into Latin American aviation, provided the foundation upon which he constructed the Argentine section of this book. Born in London in 1946, he lives in Reading, Berkshire and is employed by British Airways at London's Heathrow Airport. His non-aviation involvements include an interest in local archaeology, a passion for travel and a fanatical enthusiasm for road running.



DAVID WILTON has held several key posts within the British Aviation Research Group and which included a ten-year period as Editor of the Group journal, 'British Aviation Review'. In 'Falklands – The Air War' he researched and compiled the Royal Air Force section as well as having an overall responsibility for all data transfer and storage. He was born in Buckinghamshire in 1952 and works as an Air Traffic Controller at Eastern Radar. Dave holds a PPL and is an active campanologist. He lives at Mildenhall, Suffolk.



THE PRODUCTION TEAM



DAVID J ALLEN was born at Plymouth in 1953 and works as an aircraft design engineer. His professionally-acquired skills in technical drawing and design complemented a profound understanding for layout and style, enabling him to head up a small team tasked with producing 'Falklands – The Air War'. He shares a passionate enthusiasm for all aspects of military aviation and was part of the team responsible for producing 'British Military Aircraft Serials & Markings', in 1980. He lives in Hampshire with his wife and two children. His other interests are sea-sailing and photography.

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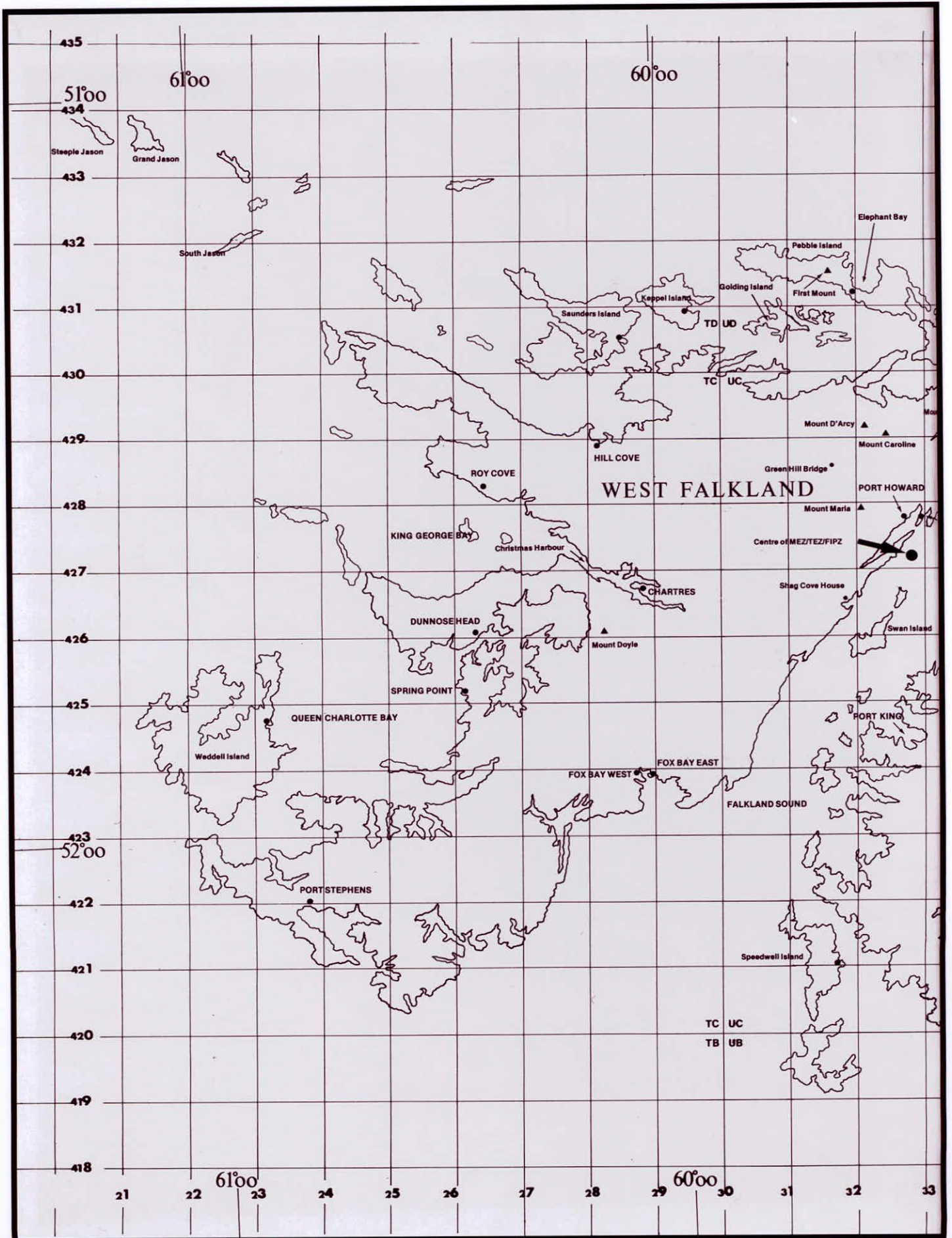
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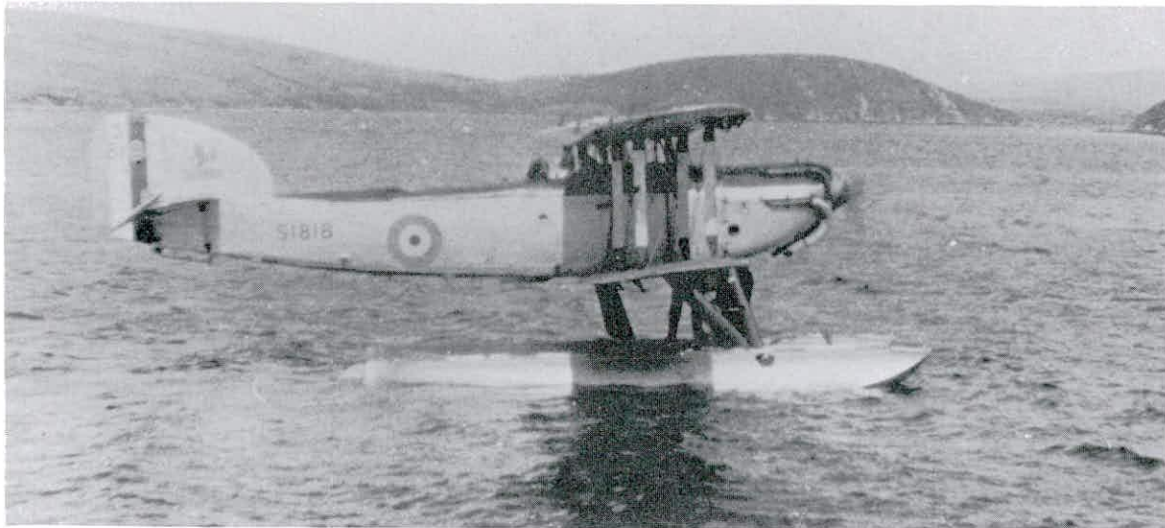
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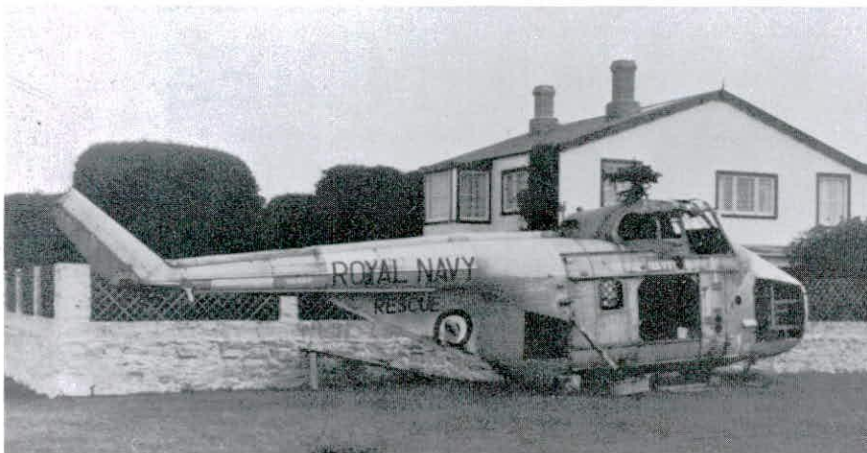


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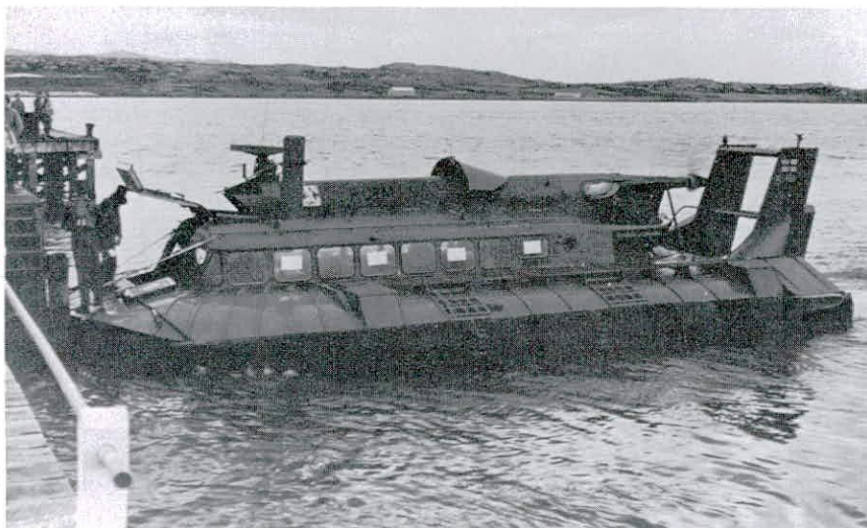
**FALKLAND ISLANDS,
THE DEPENDENCIES
and
BRITISH ANTARCTIC
TERRITORY**



Floating sedately in calm waters near Port San Carlos settlement (reportedly in 9.36) is S1818, a Fairey III F of 718 (Catapult) Flight. Based on 'Exeter', aircraft and ship were visiting Port Stanley at the time. Forty-six years later, and in far less peaceful circumstances, 'Exeter' Flight's Lynx HAS.2, XZ723, regularly overflew the same stretch of water. (A. and S. Cameron)



Sixteen years after being ditched in shallow water, towed clear and then abandoned at nearby Salvador settlement, East Falkland, the former 'Endurance' Flight Whirlwind HAR.9 XM666 'ED1448' was still resident in 8.85 albeit in dilapidated condition. During the conflict it is reported to have disconcerted a number of Argentine pilots! (via R. and J. McLeod)



Seen here, floating in Stanley Harbour, is XV859 an SR.N6 Winchester 6 hovercraft of Naval Party 8902. The Unit was based at Moody Brook from 10.67 to 5.72 and their "Hoovercraft" was popular with the Islanders because of its ability to carry freight or passengers over the worst of terrain. (J. S. Wright)

AVIATION IN THE FALKLAND ISLANDS, DEPENDENCIES & BRITISH ANTARCTIC TERRITORY

With few exceptions, the only aeroplanes seen in the Falkland Islands before, during or immediately after World War II were floatplanes or amphibians such as Fairey IIIF's, Seafoxes, Walruses and Sea Otters from visiting Royal Navy warships. One exception, reportedly seen over the Islands in the early 1930's, was an unknown type of seaplane from the French vessel 'Jeanne d'Arc' which had anchored at Port Stanley while cruising in Falklands' waters.

During World War II only one military aircraft is known to have been based in the Islands and its presence is interesting. In January 1942 the British feared that the Falkland Islands, because of their strategic position between the Pacific and Atlantic Oceans, might be invaded, not by Argentina but by Japan. That month a small "Task Force" was prepared in the Caribbean and dispatched to the South Atlantic. The "Force" consisted of a tanker and a Walrus amphibian (W2738) of 710 Sqdn 'Y' Flight, at that time based in the seaplane-carrier 'Albatross' which remained in the Caribbean. 'Y' Flight's "Task" was to patrol to the south and south-west of the Falkland Islands and give warning of any approaching Japanese ships.

Tied down to the deck of the tanker, the Walrus was shipped to Port Stanley from where it eventually commenced daily patrols. However, no invasion fleet was seen before W2738 (christened "Audrey III") was lost on 1 March 1942 when, shortly after take-off from Stanley Harbour, the engine stopped. An attempted landing in an inlet near the town resulted in the Walrus bouncing twice on the water before turning over onto its back. The pilot (S/Lt Trevor David) and his crew were unhurt, but "Audrey III" was a total wreck. It is not known if the aircraft was replaced and the patrols resumed, but available evidence suggests not.

Few British military aircraft appear to have visited the Islands between the end of World War II and the mid-1950's. From then until the Argentine invasion the most usual types seen were helicopters, notably the Whirlwinds of the ice patrol vessel 'Protector' and the Whirlwinds or Wasps of her successor, 'Endurance'.

On 17 October 1969, while 'Endurance' was engaged in a hydrographic survey of the Port Salvador area of East Falkland, one of her Whirlwind HAR.9's (XM666 'ED/(4)48') ran out of fuel while ferrying, of all items, drums of AVTUR from Rincon Grande to Salvador settlement. It was ditched in shallow water close to the settlement and, with the aid of a vehicle, was eventually hauled clear and sleighed to the settlement where it was surveyed, stripped of all useful parts and then abandoned.

The substantially complete hulk was still at Gibraltar Station, Salvador settlement, in August 1985.

An unusual, useful and reasonably long-term military resident of the Falkland Islands was an SR.N6 Winchester 6 hovercraft (XV859). It arrived at Port Stanley as deck cargo on 'Aes' in October 1967 and belonged to Naval Party 8902, a unit formed to assess the suitability of the type in a surface communications and support role. NP8902 and its hovercraft were sent to the Falklands because the Islands were considered to be the ideal environment for such an assessment. Based and hangared at Moody Brook near Port Stanley, the "Hoovercraft" (as it was referred to by the Islanders) circumnavigated the Islands on more than one occasion during the years it was there and visited nearly every "Camp" settlement at least once during its stay. The SR.N6 was very popular with the Islanders, who appreciated its flexibility and passenger and freight carrying capacity. For them it was an ideal vehicle to supplement the FIGAS Beaver floatplanes. However, following an accident in which it was severely damaged, XV859 and NP8902 were returned to the United Kingdom in May 1972 and not replaced, much to the disappointment of the Islanders.

As recounted elsewhere, civil aviation arrived in the Falkland Islands in 1948 in the form of two Austers, followed by other types in later years as the internal air services developed. An attempt made in 1952 to start a flying-boat service between the Islands and the United Kingdom came to nothing and it was not until 1971 that an external air service was established with Argentina using FAA Albatross amphibians. In 1972 the first FAA/LADE services linking Port Stanley with Comodoro Rivadavia by F-27 Friendship landplanes became possible with the opening of the Hookers Point airstrip. Situated near the town, the Argentine-operated facility had been paid for, and constructed by, Argentina and its presence was viewed with great suspicion by many Islanders. Stanley Airport, on the Cape Pembroke peninsular, replacing Hookers Point, became operational in December 1977 (but was not officially opened until May 1979), and for the first time jet airliners (FAA/LADE F-28 Fellowships) linked the Islands with the South American mainland. The service was suspended shortly after the Argentine invasion. Naturally, after the conflict, the LADE flights were not resumed and Islanders had to wait until May 1985 before it was possible to leave the Falklands on a commercial flight. However, it was not now to Argentina

but to the United Kingdom (via Ascension Island) on a British Airways Boeing 747.

The first privately-owned Falkland Islands' aircraft, a Cessna 172M, was delivered in 1974 and it was followed two years later by a second. A third example, a Cessna 172P owned by the then Governor, Rex Hunt, arrived in January 1982 but did little flying before the Argentine invasion. All three were damaged during the conflict and then vandalised. The two Cessna 172M's were replaced in 1983 by Cessna F172's.

Prior to the invasion a few foreign-registered aircraft visited the Islands. Some, like the Argentine Cessna 172 in 1964, the DC-4 in 1966 and the Aero Commander in 1968

were unwelcome, but others, like the two Canadian Canosos which landed in Stanley Harbour in the mid-1950's en route to Antarctica and Chilean and American "light twins", helped to show that although the Falkland Islands were remote, they were not totally isolated.

Since the 1982 conflict, aviation in the Falkland islands has changed fundamentally. Jet fighters, jet transports and helicopters of all sizes are common sights. It would be pleasant to think that their crews might still be "treated to goose pie" when visiting remote settlements (as were their floatplane-flying predecessors, according to one settlement diary). Perhaps they are?

FALKLAND ISLANDS INTERNAL AIR SERVICES

Those acquainted with the needs of small and isolated settlements such as those which exist on the Falkland Islands will know that the aeroplane or helicopter can, and does, provide one of the essential lifelines which enable such communities to survive. Within the United Kingdom, the air-ambulance services that were established in the Highlands and Islands of Scotland during the 1920's and 1930's are now considered to be a part of everyday life. Similar opinion prevails in the Falkland Islands, although domestic flying did not start until 1948 and owed its inception more to the concept of the Flying Doctor Service in Australia rather than to any British influence (the latter influence was to come much later).

The origin of internal air services in the Falkland Islands can be traced back to November 1946 when Miles Clifford (later Sir Miles) was appointed Governor. He soon concluded that all forms of communication within the Islands were in urgent need of review as none of them fully met the requirements or aspirations of the population. Inter-island shipping was reliable but infrequent, while the existing telephone and radio-telephone links required expansion and replacement by more modern equipment. Paved road surfaces were restricted to Port Stanley, whilst elsewhere in the "Camp" (*from the Spanish word "Campo" meaning "Countryside"; used by the Islanders to describe anywhere outside the confines of Port Stanley*) the "roads" were merely tracks, their condition varying from reasonable to bad. (Paradoxically, there were many motor vehicles on the Islands including, at that time, Bren Gun Carriers left behind by the departing British Forces at the end of World War II.) Feelings of isolation were most keenly felt by the Islanders in times of serious illness or injury, because there was no quick method of transporting patients to hospital in Port Stanley. Instead, they were subjected to the rigours of long and uncomfortable sea or overland journeys.

Although the Islands were self-supporting with good prospects for profitable sheep farming, Clifford was of the opinion that a population of about 2,000 people could not create sufficient revenue (in spite of a recently-applied Export Tax on the Islands' products) to build and maintain a reasonable network of roads which would provide the basis for good overland communication on East and

West Falkland. Shipping services could be improved but would do little to speed up communication. More positively, he was sure that modern radio and telephone links could be provided at reasonable cost and substantially reduce the feelings of isolation in the more remote settlements, especially those on the west coast of West Falkland. The problem of moving sick and injured people as quickly as possible to hospital in Port Stanley had yet to be resolved.

March 1947 saw Miles Clifford make his first trip to the Antarctic Dependencies, aboard the Falkland Islands' vessel 'Fitzroy'. During the journey he read an article about the Australian Flying Doctor Service in an issue of "Reader's Digest" and the seed for a similar scheme in the Falkland Islands was sown. In the course of his visits to various Antarctic bases, he was impressed with the wind-driven generators used to charge the survey teams' radio batteries. He realised that such generators could be used on the Falkland Islands where strong winds were a normal feature of the weather.

The concepts of an air-ambulance or flying doctor service and modern transceivers located in the Camp settlements and Port Stanley were discussed with others on his return to the Islands. Naturally, there were sceptics and dissenters as well as supporters of his ideas. Miles Clifford, however, was by then convinced of the need to introduce aviation into the Islands and during a visit to London in the summer of 1948 he initiated, on behalf of the Falkland Islands Government (but under the auspices of FIDS, the Falkland Islands Dependencies Survey), the purchase of two Austers and the employment of a pilot, V.H.Spencer, to fly them from Port Stanley Racecourse. The Racecourse was the only reasonably long and moderately flat area in Port Stanley from which a light aircraft could take-off and land.

Two ex-military Austers were bought for £700 each and were British-registered as G-AJCH and G-AJCI on 18 August. Accompanied by a supply of spare parts, the two aircraft were shipped to Port Stanley in November aboard the Antarctic survey ship 'John Biscoe'. Upon arrival, G-AJCH was assembled as quickly as possible by P.Bruce-Hill (a FIDS employee formerly with Auster Aircraft Limited) in a partially-built, roofless hangar and

prepared for a historic flight.

Dawn on 19 December 1948 heralded a beautiful sunny day. That morning, Vic Spencer started the Auster's Lycoming engine, taxied the aircraft onto the Racecourse and took-off into the clear blue sky. It was soon apparent that he was relishing every moment of the flight as he put the aeroplane through its paces — much to the consternation of some of the as-yet-unconvinced onlookers. Satisfied with his, and the Auster's, performance, Vic flew back overhead the Racecourse, made an approach, gently touched down, taxied in and switched off the engine. Miles Clifford's vision of aviation in the Falkland Islands had become reality.

Another significant milestone was passed on 24 December that year. Stewart Slessor, then Senior Medical Officer in Port Stanley, requested the services of the Auster and its pilot. A little girl, Sandra Short, living at North Arm settlement in southern East Falkland, had fallen seriously ill with Peritonitis and needed immediate hospital treatment. A telephone call to the settlement Farm Manager established that there was a suitable local landing site, that sheep skins mounted and pegged on sticks would identify the runway and that smoke from a small fire lit nearby would indicate the wind direction. The flight was successful and within three hours of the request for aid the youngster was in Port Stanley being operated on and her life saved. At long last — and on Christmas Eve of all days — the concept of an air-ambulance service had been vindicated and most sceptics silenced.

On 3 March 1949 the second Auster, duly assembled, made its initial flight from the Racecourse, while a few days later G-AJCH and G-AJCI were reregistered as VP-FAA and VP-FAB to become the first two aircraft on the Falkland Islands Civil Aircraft Register. Official paperwork recording the fact was not issued until 26 September that year and VP-FAB is believed to have flown for some time beyond that date still marked as G-AJCI. In the case of VP-FAA, an even longer period was to pass before its Falkland Islands registration was applied. That was because on 7 April 1949 G-AJCH suffered a landing accident at the San Carlos settlement airstrip, overturning when the mainwheels sank into the soft surface, and had to be shipped back to Port Stanley and from there to the United Kingdom for repairs. However, by then it had been realised that floatplanes were potentially more useful in the Islands due to the lack of suitable airstrips and the proximity of water to all the farming communities and their woolsheds. Most, if not all, of the settlements had landing stages for the inter-island ships to which floatplanes could be moored to load or unload mail, passengers and a limited amount of freight. Thus, the Falkland Islands Government decided that whilst VP-FAA was away for repair the opportunity would be taken to convert it to a floatplane. Meanwhile, VP-FAB would be retained as a landplane for the foreseeable future.

By the year's end a total of 28 passengers had been carried, of whom eight were private individuals and the remainder Government officers on official business. It was a small but significant start to an enterprise which began as an air-ambulance service but which would gradually evolve into FIGAS, the Falkland Islands Government Air Service.

In May 1950, VP-FAB was joined by another Auster

(VP-FAC) and a Noorduyn Norseman (VP-FAD), both of which were configured as floatplanes and had previously been operated by FIDS in Antarctica. The Norseman was a particularly useful acquisition as it could carry up to ten persons. It was the last of its type to be built and, with the Auster, had been purchased for FIDS in 1949 for a specific rescue mission in Marguerite Bay, Graham Land in the Antarctic [see *British Antarctic Territory notes*]. The Auster and the Norseman were at first loaned to, but later purchased by, the Falkland Islands Government.

Not surprisingly, the exact date on which the air service became known as FIGAS has proved impossible to determine, for the acronym started as an idea of Vic Spencer's and was gradually adopted more by useage than by any official pronouncement. The first confirmed reference to it is on 23 June 1951 when VP-FAA, recently returned from its rebuild and floatplane conversion in the United Kingdom, was test-flown from Stanley Harbour. Shortly before that flight Vic had had a "winged penguin" motif with the letters "FIGAS" below it painted on to the Auster's freshly-doped blue fuselage.

With the arrival of VP-FAA, FIGAS then had four aircraft on its inventory. This increased capacity enabled the fledgling air service to develop and passengers began to be carried on a slightly more regular basis rather than ad hoc. However, it was not until after the introduction of the Islander aircraft in 1979 that anything remotely resembling a scheduled passenger service was contemplated. The FIGAS order of priorities has always been clearly defined, namely: medical or air-ambulance requirements; postal duties; conveyance of Falkland Islands Government officers on official business and the carriage of passengers and freight.

The postal delivery service, often referred to as the "mail drop", involved (and still involves) an aircraft making low, slow passes over a settlement while the pilot or a passenger literally dropped the weighted hessian bags of letter-mail to the ground through an open door or window. The collection of mail bound for the United Kingdom or elsewhere abroad was more complicated than the delivery service. That was because outbound mail from the Falkland Islands in the years prior to 1971 (when the external air service was first established) was taken eleven times a year by 'Fitzroy' (and latterly 'Darwin') to Montevideo in Uruguay for onward distribution. In the case of East Falkland, FIGAS made no special arrangements for collecting outgoing mail because letters and packages could be sent overland to Port Stanley or collected by the relatively frequent flights calling at such places as Darwin and North Arm settlements. Remote West Falkland had far fewer flights to its settlements, so FIGAS undertook a special mail collection trip eleven times a year to Fox Bay and either Hill or Roy Coves. Those flights were planned to take place three days prior to 'Fitzroy' (or 'Darwin') sailing from Port Stanley, thus allowing a margin for bad weather or aircraft unserviceability. Islanders in outlying settlements on West Falkland, knowing when a FIGAS mail aircraft was due, were able to send their letters or packages overland, or by small boat, to reach Fox Bay or Hill or Roy Coves in time for the collection.

The involvement of aircraft in the postal service was a great boon to the Islanders, but the medical and air-am-

balance flights were infinitely more important to the widely dispersed population living, for the most part, in very isolated communities. As in the case of Sandra Short, availability of an aircraft often meant the difference between life or death to a person who was critically ill or injured, and that could sometimes involve FIGAS committing all of its resources to one request for aid.

The following case, which happened whilst Capt J.Kerr was a FIGAS pilot, illustrates just such a situation. At 4 o'clock one morning he received a telephone call from the SMO in Port Stanley. A shepherd at Goose Green, East Falkland had a knife wound in the stomach and immediate assistance was required. An aircraft was quickly prepared for ambulance duty and a medical officer flown to the scene of the accident. After an examination he decided that the patient could not be moved and that an emergency operation was essential. The aircraft was dispatched to Port Stanley to collect an operating team and equipment. That accomplished, the aircraft was sent back to Port Stanley with a sample of the injured man's blood for grouping and cross-matching. The aeroplane returned with a supply of suitable blood, but by the time it arrived the patient needed oxygen and more blood than had been anticipated. A second FIGAS aircraft had to be used to deliver the oxygen and an additional quantity of plasma, and then remain available to provide any further assistance. Following the successful emergency operation, the patient and medical team were flown to Port Stanley in the late afternoon, but it was 7 o'clock that evening before both aircraft had been washed down and hangared.

Hardly a week passed without a medical or air-ambulance flight being requested, and often it would occur two or three times in one week. For many years, especially during the predominantly Beaver era from 1953 to 1979, there were only two aircraft on the FIGAS inventory at any one time. The impracticability of establishing a conventional scheduled passenger service as well as providing the air ambulances with a fleet of only two aeroplanes can readily be appreciated.

The efficiency of the medical flights, and FIGAS operations as a whole, improved immeasurably with the installation of modern radio communications equipment at the settlements and in the aircraft. As mentioned previously, Miles Clifford's views on the radios, batteries and generators he had seen during his visits to the Antarctic bases had been discussed with others upon his return to Port Stanley. Eventually, a requirement for the necessary equipment (modified to local needs) was submitted to the Crown Agents in London for sanction and purchase. Approval was given and, in due course, the first of the newly-manufactured transceivers, batteries and associated wind-driven generators arrived in the Islands and soon every farm settlement was equipped. The transceivers had two frequencies, one of which (4.5 Megacycles) could be used to contact Port Stanley hospital (via the town's Wireless/Telegraph station) for advice, help or an air ambulance. The other frequency (2 Megacycles), often referred to in the Islands as the "Farmyard", was used for inter-settlement chat, substantially reducing any feelings of isolation in the Camp communities. FIGAS aircraft were fitted with compatible 4.5 Megacycle radios so that the pilots could contact settlements to advise them of such matters as arrival times for mail-drops. Conversely,

Islanders were not encouraged to talk directly to FIGAS aircraft except in emergencies or to pass essential information. To request seats, potential passengers radioed Port Stanley and their requirements were passed on to the FIGAS office. Even in 1985 this is still done and each evening the local Falkland Islands domestic radio station broadcasts the passenger lists for the following day and the settlements to be visited.

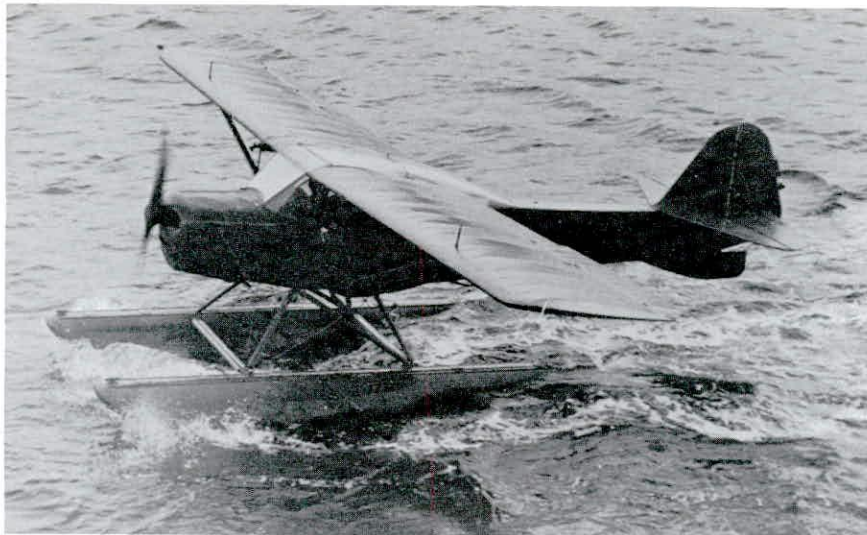
In the early years the only hangarage available was a small building for the landplanes (located a few yards north of the Racecourse at its western end), but it was totally inadequate for the later Auster and Norseman floatplanes. Initially, they remained in the open, protected from the worst of the weather by being parked in a revetment at the head of the slipway. Eventually, a Robin-type hangar was procured in the United Kingdom and erected on the southern shore of Stanley Harbour about 150 yards north of the landplane hangar. Latterly, the landplane hangar was used for the storage of aircraft spares and sundry other equipment.

Miles Clifford had been involved in the 1949 purchase of the Norseman for FIDS and, whilst in Canada, he was able to witness a demonstration of the new DHC-2 Beaver floatplane. Suitably impressed, he realised that here, at last, was an aircraft ideally suited to the Falkland Islands' environment. He resolved to buy one for FIGAS as soon as possible.

The first FIGAS Beaver, dismantled and packed in two crates, was shipped to Port Stanley from Canada in June/July 1953 aboard 'Fitzroy'. It was reassembled under the supervision of two de Havilland (Canada) engineers and test-flown by one of that company's pilots before being handed over to FIGAS in August. On the 20th of that month the Beaver was officially, but incorrectly, registered as VP-FAE instead of VP-FAF [see *British Antarctic Territory notes and the Individual Aircraft Details of Hornet Moth VP-FAE*].

Soon after the Beaver arrived, the Norseman was withdrawn from service with irreparable advanced corrosion in the main undercarriage legs, engine bearers and other metal components. The airframe was eventually scuttled in Stanley Harbour, but the floats were retained for many years as the basis of a raft used in the Harbour. Of the three Austers, VP-FAB had been airworthy until at least 30 October 1951 but was withdrawn from use before the end of the year and stored (dismantled as a spares' source) in the landplane hangar; VP-FAC was retired at the same time as the Norseman (and for the same reason) and joined VP-FAB; the original Auster, VP-FAA, soldiered on until 1956.

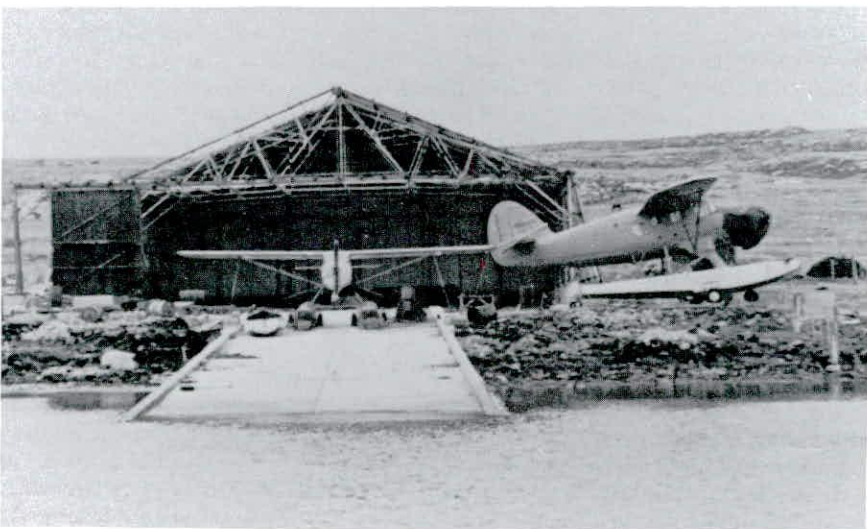
A second Beaver from Canada arrived crated at Port Stanley aboard 'Fitzroy' in late August 1955. Supervised by de Havilland (Canada) personnel, it was unpacked and assembled in the floatplane hangar prior to its acceptance test flight from Stanley Harbour on 29 September by Jim Kerr. Because of the incorrect registration letters applied to the first Beaver (which had yet to be realised and rectified), the second one had been allotted the markings VP-FAF instead of VP-FAG. Both errors were corrected (on paper at least) on 21 August 1956 when H.Bennett, the Falkland Islands Registrar General, officially altered the allocations to VP-FAF and VP-FAG. However, photo-



Creating wake in Ajax Bay, San Carlos Water in 5.50 is Auster 5 floatplane VP-FAC. It had been loaned that month to FIGAS by FIDS and was later purchased by the FI Government for the Air Service. (V. H. Spencer)



Photographed from 'Fitzroy' (date unknown) is the FIGAS Norseman 5 VP-FAD, taxiing at Goose Green, East Falkland. It remained in service with FIGAS until c8.53 when advanced metal corrosion caused it to be withdrawn from use. (V. H. Spencer)



Viewed from Stanley Harbour in 1951, the Robin-type floatplane hangar is seen under construction. The Norseman 5 VP-FAD is parked in front of it and the Auster 5 VP-FAC is on the slipway. Thirty-one years later the same hangar served as an Argentine mortuary. (V. H. Spencer)

graphic and verbal evidence shows that both Beavers retained their original markings (VP-FAE and VP-FAF) throughout their service with FIGAS. (As late as October 1984 a wing marked VP-FAE was lying dumped in the grass at Moody Brook.)

The last commercial flight by the Auster VP-FAA took place on 24 April 1956, but it was retained as a training aircraft until June when, because of extensive corrosion in the fuselage and tail framework, it was withdrawn from use. VP-FAA was reportedly burnt on a pyre near the slipway in 1957 along with the fuselage remains of VP-FAB and VP-FAC.

From 1956 until 1979, FIGAS gradually developed and improved its Beaver floatplane operations. That included the carriage of passengers arriving at, or departing from, Port Stanley on the external air service provided by Argentine military aircraft from 1971 [see *Falkland Islands External Air Services notes*]. No more than two Beavers were on charge at any one time, but losses, disposals and their subsequent replacements accounted for a further five of these sturdy floatplanes (VP-FAH, VP-FAK, VP-FAL, VP-FAT and VP-FAV) being delivered between 1958 and 1979.

There was no fixed route structure for the Beaver operations which, by at least 1976, covered some 36 different settlements. Instead, an "on demand" service was established so that passengers and freight could be collected and deposited according to a particular day's bookings. All flights were, of course, subject to weather and sea states, but generally most aircraft reached their destinations on the desired days. Fares for resident Islanders were subsidised by the Falkland Islands Government, but non-residents paid the full rate. In 1958 560 passengers were carried, a substantial increase over the 1949 figure of 28.

In addition to the normal, but repairable, damage and corrosion that floatplanes operating from the sea are susceptible to, there were three incidents between August 1953 and April 1982 in which Beavers were damaged beyond repair. VP-FAF (actually VP-FAG), flown by Capt G. Toye, was involved in a take-off accident at the Moro, Douglas Station, East Falkland on an unknown date sometime between October 1957 and May 1958. Although it capsized and sank (fortunately without casualties), the aircraft was recovered and returned to Port Stanley aboard 'Shackleton'. However, it had been so badly handled during the salvage operation that it was deemed to be beyond economical repair and was broken up for scrap and spares.

VP-FAL, which was delivered to the Falkland Islands in March 1967, also capsized and sank after a taxiing accident on 10 August 1976 at New Island, one of the most westerly islands of West Falkland. Relief pilot J. Levine and his passengers were not injured but, because of damage incurred during the recovery and extensive engine and airframe corrosion, VP-FAL was scrapped. Two months later, on 14 October, sister aircraft VP-FAK tipped over and sank following a landing accident at Mare Harbour, East Falkland, in which the pilot (Capt I.T. Campbell MBE) was killed and the passenger slightly injured. The Beaver, carried by the tide, eventually beached itself inverted on Johnsons Island at the entrance to Mare Harbour. VP-FAK was salvaged and brought back aboard 'Monsunen' to Port Stanley, where it was

hanged pending the accident investigation. By the time this had been completed the aircraft was so badly corroded that it had to be scrapped. Surprisingly, a wing from the aircraft was noted lying in the grass at Moody Brook in October 1984, while the fuselage was reported to be outside the AAC facility on Murray Heights, Port Stanley, at about the same time.

In 1977 a review committee, consisting mainly of FIGAS personnel, was formed to consider suitable types of aircraft for future operations in the Islands. A number of options were considered, including the Australian-built GAF Nomad, the Canadian DHC-6 Twin Otter and the British BN-2 Islander — all of them twin-engined. The possibility of adding a third Beaver floatplane to the FIGAS inventory was not discounted, although there was a general (but by no means unanimous) feeling that the air service should gradually evolve into a landplane operation. Landplanes were considered to be more economical than floatplanes and easier to maintain as they were less prone to salt water corrosion. Another important consideration was that the Beaver was by then out of production and any subsequent acquisition would have to be via the second-hand market. Nobody was very keen on being dependant upon that source for the long-term future of FIGAS.

On paper the Nomad looked reasonable, as did the Islander, but the preferred type was the Twin Otter which had gained a good reputation with the British Antarctic Survey Flight who had successfully operated several examples since 1968 in the most extreme of weather conditions. However, the review committee accepted that it, and the Nomad, with their turboprop engines, were too expensive and too sophisticated for the FIGAS maintenance facilities. Either type would also require a substantial increase on the forecasted passenger and freight traffic if the projected financial operating losses were to be kept to a minimum.

Enquiries concerning the 10-seat piston engined Islander revealed that it was proving rugged and economical on the Scottish Highlands and Islands routes where it operated into airstrips of a type proposed for the Falkland Islands settlements. The passenger and freight capacity appeared to be suitable for the Islands and its maintenance requirements were well within the capabilities of the then current FIGAS facilities.

Accordingly, one Islander was ordered, to be paid for by the United Kingdom Overseas Development Administration. Registered VP-FAY, it departed Bembridge, Isle of Wight, on 12 September 1979 and arrived at the new Stanley Airport via North and South America on 4 October. It was based and hangared at the new Airport which had been officially opened on 1 May that year, replacing the temporary aerodrome at nearby Hookers Point.

If Islander operations proved viable, FIGAS intended to gradually phase out floatplane services over a number of years. However, before that could happen, all the farm settlements in the Camp needed suitable airstrips. In some cases the sites of the old Auster strips could be restored, but the vast majority needed to be created from uncultivated land. Settlements were provided with new radio equipment, generators, windsocks, money and advice on how to drain, prepare and construct grass runways. By the time the Islander had been delivered, a small number of

new and restored airstrips were available for use.

During the three months prior to December 1979, Capt A.D. Alsop of Loganair Ltd (a successful and experienced Islander operator in the Scottish Highlands and Islands) visited the Falkland Islands to make an assessment of available strips and those being, or about to be, prepared. Their quality ranged from "Excellent" to "Very Good" and "Good" with only a few in the "Acceptable-to-Poor" classification. The settlement farm managers and their staff had listened carefully to the advice they had been given on drainage and surface preparation and over the next few years a network of 41 grass and hard-beach landing sites became available.

Capt Alsop recommended a properly scheduled, but flexible, route structure for the Islander in order to provide the best possible service for the Islands' inhabitants, increase aircraft utilisation and create additional income for FIGAS. The proposed structure was based on three radial routes between Port Stanley and pre-notified destinations, to be operated on specific days (subject to bookings) with optional stops en route on the outbound and inbound legs. Additionally, an "inner circle" route starting and finishing at Port Stanley was also suggested which would operate subject to aircraft availability. These and other proposals concerning the administration of the air service were considered by FIGAS and a number were implemented, albeit some of them in modified form. The Beavers continued to operate on an "on demand" basis to settlements which did not yet have airstrips. They also provided a back-up service to the Islander when it was unserviceable or undergoing scheduled maintenance.

3,870 passengers were carried by FIGAS in the year ending December 1979 and load factors continued to improve between January 1980 and the end of March 1982. Many passengers used these FIGAS passenger flights in conjunction with the LADE Fokker F-27 and F-28 services between Stanley Airport and Comodoro Rivadavia in Argentina [see *Falkland Islands External Air Services notes*]. All of that came to an abrupt halt with the Argentine invasion in the early hours of 2 April 1982.

Before progressing to the Argentine occupation of the Falkland Islands and its repercussions on FIGAS operations, mention must be made of long-serving aircraft engineers such as Maurice Smith, Dave Jones and Vernon Steen and those pilots employed by the Air Service during the pioneering years before April 1982.

Vic Spencer's last flight for FIGAS (in the Norseman) was on 18 January 1952 and nine days later he departed the Falkland Islands for the United Kingdom. His successor, Capt S. Halls, only stayed a short while before being replaced by Capt F. Deverell. In 1953 J.S.R. Huckle, who had been Harbour Master at Port Stanley, was sent to Hamble in the United Kingdom for pilot training and whilst there he met Jim Kerr, but it was not until 16 September 1954 that they met again. On that occasion it was in Port Stanley, by which time John Huckle was head of the Harbour and Aviation Departments (and a FIGAS pilot) and Capt Kerr had just arrived to replace Frank Deverell. Huckle resigned as FIGAS pilot and administrator in June 1956 and the following month saw Kerr appointed as Head of the Aviation Department (later re-titled Director of Civil Aviation), a post that he held until September 1980.

Capt G. Toye replaced John Huckle as a FIGAS pilot and for a period during 1957-58 there were three pilots: Kerr, Toye and a Falkland Islander, Capt I.T. Campbell. Ian Campbell had been taught to fly by Jim Kerr before gaining his CPL at Hamble and returning to the Islands to fly the Beavers. Capt Toye had departed by early 1958 and FIGAS operations continued with only two pilots, Jim Kerr and Ian Campbell, until the latter was killed in October 1976.

Following the death of Ian Campbell and the subsequent AID enquiry, FIGAS was recommended to employ three, and not two, pilots for its operations. Capts R. Hooper and D. Emsley were recruited but Hooper later left and was replaced by Capt J. Ayers on 24 June 1978. In time, Emsley departed and his place was taken by Capt I. White in February 1980. During the period of these comings and goings, Eddie Anderson, a young Islander, was selected for pilot training and joined FIGAS after obtaining his CPL. At the time of writing he was still with FIGAS flying twin-engined Islanders.

After nearly 26 years with FIGAS, Jim Kerr left the Falkland Islands on 26 May 1980 for terminal leave and retirement in the United Kingdom. Having resigned in May, John Ayers departed just over five weeks later, on 2 July. By April 1982 the FIGAS pilots were Anderson, White and Selwood (who had joined FIGAS just over a year before). Capts Ian White and Mike Selwood later left FIGAS and by mid-1985 the Air Service had four resident pilots: Eddie Anderson, Andy Alsop, Ian McPhee and Mike Goodwin (another Falkland Islander).

During the evening of 1 April 1982 a FIGAS pilot flew VP-FAY from the Airport to the Racecourse ready for a dawn reconnaissance flight in response to reports that Argentine ships were approaching the Islands. That proposed flight was pre-empted by the invasion. Following the Argentine landings, the Islander was flown back to the Airport by a reluctant FIGAS pilot where it was immediately impressed into Argentine service.

A number of sorties were made to outlying settlements for various propaganda and military reasons. For example, mail was flown to Goose Green shortly after the invasion and when the Islander arrived there the Argentine flight crew made great play of pointing out that the mail delivery demonstrated their non-hostile intentions and that normality had returned! VP-FAY was noted on 11 April overflying Darwin and Goose Green and landing at Fox Bay East, West Falkland, after two aborted approaches.

A military mission took place on 23 April when it was flown to Pebble Island (reportedly by a LADE pilot). Upon arrival, one of the passengers proceeded to carefully inspect the grass runways before departing again in the Islander. The inspection was obviously satisfactory because, the next day, a Prefectura Skyvan landed to off-load men and materials prior to the deployment of four Mentors from 4 Escuadrilla on 29 April and, subsequently, Grupo 3 Pucarás.

The FIGAS Islander was resident at the Airport on 1 May when the 800 Sqdn Sea Harriers attacked at 1110Z. It was badly damaged by bomb-blast or cannon fire (probably both), to the extent that the fuselage was severed. Subsequent shelling and attacks by Vulcans, Sea Harriers and Harriers merely added to the damage and by

the time of the surrender of the Argentine forces late on 14 June, it was in a dilapidated state. Subsequent pilfering and vandalism did not improve matters. The propellers and engines were eventually removed and returned to the United Kingdom for assessment and overhaul, but the airframe, being beyond redemption, was dumped on the edge of the airfield (it was still there, near the FIGAS hangar, in June 1985).

At the outset of the conflict the two FIGAS Beavers were resident at the floatplane hangar. VP-FAT was demolished whilst parked outside the hangar on 11/12 June during British bombardments. VP-FAV, which had been sitting on the slipway, was also damaged, but not as extensively as VP-FAT. However, any hopes of making it airworthy again were dashed on 28 July 1982 when it was blown over onto its back and completely wrecked during a 70 knot gale.

The War and its immediate aftermath had left FIGAS without aeroplanes, so Vernon Steen, Eddie Anderson and Gerald Cheek (the Islands' Director of Civil Aviation) suggested to anyone who would listen that it might be a sensible and prudent idea to make airworthy one of the captured CAB601 UH-1H helicopters for FIGAS use. If achieved, it would reduce the number of civilian missions being demanded of the British Forces' helicopters.

A suitable example (AE-424), minus many parts which had been filched by souvenir hunters or vandals, was taken to the floatplane hangar from the Racecourse where it had been left after the Argentine surrender. FIGAS staff then started work to make it serviceable, recovering instruments and radios which had been removed from AE-424 and other UH-1H's by unauthorised persons — ostensibly for "safe keeping"! Quite naturally, FIGAS' efforts attracted the attention of "desirables" (those who offered to help) and "undesirables" (those who wanted to take the helicopter away!).

Shortly after FIGAS commenced work on AE-424, they were visited by Lt Cdr R.C. Caesley, the AEO of 820 Sqn based in 'Invincible' with Sea King HAS.5 helicopters. After looking over the rudimentary facilities available to FIGAS (including a severely shell and shrapnel-holed, sieve-like hangar), an offer of practical help was made. Volunteers from the Squadron (notably CPO A.R. Downham and PO G.A. Pilch) would help restore the UH-1H to a flyable condition so that it could be ferried to 'Invincible'. Aboard the carrier it would be stripped down, inspected, missing parts replaced where possible and, finally, repainted in FIGAS colours (LAEM I.R. Nicholl would be responsible for the respray). On 18 August 1982 AE-424, by then known as "Hernandez", was ready and Lt Cdr Keith Dudley (820 Sqn's Senior Pilot who had been trained to fly UH-1D's during an exchange posting in West Germany) flew it that day to 'Invincible' which was then in San Carlos Water. What happened next is best described by "Hernandez" himself (courtesy of 820 Sqn and the Editor of "FLIGHT DECK" magazine):

"Allo Amigos, I been told that I can tella you my life story (de English she gets better every day no?). I was born in America, but I dont remember very much about that as I was very young. I went to work in Argentina (my mother I dont thinka she likes me very much — funny I dont

remember her) where I have lots of nice friends, many Hueys and Chinooks. Anyway, I digesting, back to my story, so de next thing I know I am flying over mucha water which looksa very cold. Things happen very quickly after that, de next thing I know I am sitting in a bog, and people are pulling me apart. But I very lucky as funny man with glasses — I think he called Deps (Deputy AEO) — he comes over to me and after much poking around my private parts, sucking of the teeth and shaking of the head, he bring along his boys — they nice boys — who go all over me putting me to rights and things. My radios, they got back from the local radio hams, my dials and things they got from poor wrecked friends.

Then this very strange man he come — I no understand him, he says things like Gott und Himmel and Dumpkoff, I think he called de Senile Parrot (Senior Pilot). Anyway he start me up and fly me away to his mother. He very strange man his mother she very big and painted grey and made of steel (I suppose it no wonder he goes around saying dumpkoff all the time). Well dis Senile Parrot his mother she got a warm heart with lots of room and friendly faces. Here they have another man who take a great interest in me, he called Aeoh. Well he knows of many people he say who do nothing but siesta all de time and he going to get them to do something useful for a change, he say they called Peelots. Well anyway these peelots come and rub me all over with bits of black paper and splash water everywhere, this makes the Aeoh man very happy. Well after the peelots are finished rubbing me all over, the nice men come and repaint me in the latest fashion, I now red all over with FIGAS painted on in white. One of the peelots he ask the Aeoh man what this FIGAS mean and he say many things about peelots but he also say it means Falkland Islands Government Air Service, but my name Hernandez, oh well at least I got a nice warm place to sleep in so I not complaining. Then one day I go back on top of the Senile Parrots mother and he and some man with a light blue beret start me up and fly me ashore. Some of my nice new friends I make on mother fly with me to say goodbye. I feel very sad to leave my new friends but I sure to make plenty new ones with the people with light blue berets."

Gracias, "Hernandez"! 26 August was the date that the UH-1H, by then registered and painted as VP-FBD, was flown from the carrier back to the FIGAS floatplane hangar. For that flight there were two pilots, Lt Cdr Dudley and Maj R.E. Connel CF, a Canadian exchange pilot with 657 Sqn AAC who had many flying hours on the type. Because 820 Sqn and 'Invincible' were about to depart for the United Kingdom, and because FIGAS did not have any helicopter pilots, 657 Sqn (and Maj Connel in particular) had volunteered to fly mail and a limited amount of freight in VP-FBD to the Camp settlements. Unfortunately, only two such flights were made before it was grounded. The MoD was unhappy about military pilots flying a "civil" helicopter — and an uncertificated one at that! 657 Sqn continued to undertake mail flights but used its own helicopters. Although the MoD decision appeared to be bureaucratic, it really was not — at least not completely. In the immediate aftermath of the War a blind eye was turned to various activities, but eventually a return to normality and regulations was essential and that

inevitably applied to 657 Sqdn and its involvement with the UH-1H (even though the Huey really belonged to the MoD and not FIGAS).

After much deliberation it was decided by FIGAS (and others) that the helicopter's airframe, mechanics and electrics should be thoroughly surveyed. An inspection by Ian McLeod (an Islander) on behalf of Bristow Helicopters (a United Kingdom-based company which had offered to help renovate the machine) revealed damage to the port rear skid support frames which was consistent with the UH-1H having suffered a heavy landing at some stage. More deliberation by FIGAS and the Falkland Islands Government resulted in a decision being made to send the helicopter to Bristow's Redhill (near London, United Kingdom) maintenance base where the main gearbox, rotor-head and airframe would be overhauled. There was even talk of replacing VP-FBD with one of the airworthy examples which had been shipped back to the United Kingdom by the British Forces, but that came to nothing.

VP-FBD was prepared for the sea journey and carried by an 18 Sqdn Chinook to an awaiting ship, but that was as far as it went. The decision to take it to the United Kingdom was rescinded and "Hernandez" was airlifted back to the floatplane hangar. Sir Rex Hunt, the Civil Commissioner, decided after further deliberation and advice that it would remain in the Falkland Islands, not as a commercial helicopter but as a future museum piece. In retrospect, it was the correct decision. Although initially there were ample spare parts on the Islands, the cost to FIGAS of operating such an uneconomical military helicopter and certifying it to carry fare-paying passengers would have made the whole venture a financial impracticability. Following a long period of outside storage close to the floatplane hangar and later at Moody Brook, VP-FBD was moved into the old hovercraft hangar there in August 1984 and was still resident in June 1985.

During August 1982, FIGAS purchased a second-hand Beaver in Canada to replace one of those lost as a result of the conflict. The original intention had been to obtain the turboprop version because AVGAS was becoming increasingly difficult to obtain. However, it was not to be and by the end of 1982 a landplane, piston-engined Beaver (VP-FBE) had been shipped to the Islands. It was converted to a floatplane and flight-tested on 20 January 1983 prior to entering service with FIGAS.

Two new piston-engined Islanders (VP-FBF and VP-FBG), replacements for the ill-fated VP-FAY and the

other lost Beaver, were purchased for FIGAS using Rehabilitation Funds provided by the United Kingdom and on 4 January 1983 the crated aircraft departed Ridham Docks, Gravesend, aboard the 'Kirsten Smits' bound for Port Stanley. The ship arrived in Stanley Harbour on 16 February and by late March the Islanders had been off-loaded, assembled and test-flown from RAF Stanley (the renamed Stanley Airport).

With the FIGAS inventory thus restored to three aircraft, the next problem was to repair war-damaged airstrips and provide new ones at those settlements in the Camp still without them. By late October 1984 that had been achieved and floatplane operations finally ceased. It was fortunate that the airstrips were ready by then because the Beaver's floats had become corroded and needed replacing. VP-FBE was then converted to a landplane which meant that the 1977 objective of a landplane-only fleet had finally been achieved, in spite of an unscheduled interruption to the master plan in 1982!

In March 1985 the Beaver was advertised for sale and the following month it departed Port Stanley aboard 'Bransfield' for Grimsby in the United Kingdom, where it was off-loaded and stored awaiting a buyer. A third Islander ordered to replace it was being worked on in October 1985 at the Pilatus Britten-Norman factory at Bembridge for delivery to the Falkland Islands at the end of the year. By way of a reminder of the 1982 War, and the short-lived existence of the FIGAS UH-1H, the third Islander was allocated that helicopter's registration — VP-FBD.

The future of FIGAS seems assured, with a fleet of three modern and economical Islanders, a network of good airstrips throughout the Islands, and a steady annual increase in passenger, mail and freight traffic. Although the new Royal Air Force-operated aerodrome at Mount Pleasant (about 23 miles south-west of Port Stanley) with its 8,497ft main runway was officially opened on 12 May 1985, FIGAS remain based at RAF Stanley where the hangarage has been increased to cater for the new Islander.

For the immediate future FIGAS, other than on special occasions, does not plan to operate out of RAF Mount Pleasant but, should the need arise, it could provide feeder flights for Falkland Islanders, tourists and others travelling to and from the United Kingdom in such types as Boeing 747's and Lockheed Tristars — a far cry from the initial flight by an Auster on 19 December 1948.



The first aircraft purchased by FIGAS after the conflict was the Beaver VP-FBE. Delivered in 1982, it remained in service (initially as a floatplane and latterly as a landplane) until 1985 when it was withdrawn from use at RAF Stanley and flown to the Racecourse for disposal. Following this engine-run on the slipway outside the floatplane hangar in 1985, the engine was inhibited and the aircraft dismantled and crated for shipping to the United Kingdom. The tundra tyres are for soft surface operations. (V. Steen)

FALKLAND ISLANDS EXTERNAL AIR SERVICES

Although the concept of a Catalina or Canso service to Montevideo in Uruguay had been proposed by Miles Clifford and others, it was not until 1951 that a real attempt was made to establish an external air service. Aquila Airways Limited, a flying-boat operator based at Southampton, was contacted by L.W.H.Young (the then Managing Director of the Falkland Islands Company) and asked about the possibility of using Sunderlands to operate a service between the United Kingdom and the Falkland Islands. A feasibility study revealed that a Sunderland could complete the journey between Southampton Water and Stanley Harbour in six stages, taking eight or nine days.

A survey flight was arranged for April 1952 (FIC's centenary year), allowing time for the necessary planning to be completed. In the late evening of 20 April, with Capt Douglas Pearson in command, Sunderland III G-AGJN took-off from Southampton Water carrying nine passengers and crew on the first leg to Funchal (Madeira). During the morning of 22 April it departed there for Sal (Cape Verde Islands), continuing to Natal and Rio de Janeiro (Brazil) on 25 April before reaching Montevideo in

the evening of 26 April. After a stopover of forty hours, G-AGJN was airborne again on 28 April for the final eight-hour journey to Stanley Harbour where it alighted later that day.

The aircraft's arrival was cause for much celebration but, after four days of socialising and discussing the flight with what seemed to be the entire population of the Islands, Capt Pearson, his crew and 16 passengers departed in the Sunderland on 2 May for the reciprocal flight to the United Kingdom. The flying-boat eventually landed on Southampton Water in the mid-afternoon of 8 May after a very successful round trip of 18,000 miles. The survey had proved that an air service to the Falkland Islands was a practical proposition. Moreover, with careful planning and reduced stopover times en route, the flight-time in each direction could be shortened to three or four days. Unfortunately, for reasons that have never been fully explained, the service was not implemented and it was to be 19 years before an external air service became a reality.

Following a "Joint Statement", initialled by the United Kingdom and Argentina on 1 July 1971 and formally



Moored in the choppy waters of Stanley Harbour sometime between 28.4 and 2.5.52 is Aquila Airways' Sunderland III, G-AGJN. In spite of the flying boat's successful route-proving flight from Southampton, no air service was established between the Falklands and the United Kingdom until 1985 when British Airways commenced Boeing 747 flights from RAF Mount Pleasant to RAF Brize Norton.

(via Orlean Bonner)



The Argentine-British "Joint Declaration of Buenos Aires 1 July 1971" allowed Argentina to operate an air service between Port Stanley and, normally, Comodoro Rivadavia using the HU-16B Albatross amphibians of I Escuadron de Busqueda y Salvamento. This photograph of BS-03 in Stanley Harbour was taken in 11.72, about the time that the Argentine-constructed temporary airstrip at Hookers Point (near Port Stanley) came into operation and the Albatross service ceased. (J. S. Wright)

signed by both nations on 8 August that year, a temporary air service was initiated between Port Stanley and Comodoro Rivadavia in Argentina using HU-16B Albatross amphibians of the FAA's Search and Rescue unit, 1 Escuadron de Busqueda y Salvamento. The possibility of such a service had arisen after a successful Albatross flight was made to Port Stanley in February 1971 to evacuate a seriously ill lighthouse keeper to Argentina for an emergency operation. Albatross BS-02 operated the first official passenger flight on 3 July 1971.

The implementation of the air service was welcomed by many Islanders, but the involvement of Argentina was treated with suspicion by some of them, especially when they learned that Argentina had been given permission to build a temporary airstrip at Hookers Point (near Port Stanley) so that FAA/LADE Friendship airliners could replace the amphibians. The aluminium matting airstrip, initially 2,625ft long but later extended to 3,281ft, was to remain in use until an airport constructed by the United Kingdom on the Cape Pembroke peninsula came into operation in 1977. The Hookers Point airstrip was opened

on 15 November 1972 and LADE flights operated from there until December 1977, when they were transferred to Stanley Airport with its 4,100ft runway (although the Airport was not officially opened until 1 May 1979). The temporary airstrip remained available for use by light aircraft, diversions or emergency landings until the night of 1/2 November 1978, when a high wind uprooted the matting runway and many large sections received irreparable damage. The Friendships eventually gave way to Fellowships and the once or twice-weekly service continued until the Argentine invasion on 2 April 1982, after which the LADE services continued on a once-weekly basis until 27 April when all Argentine flights from the mainland to Port Stanley were suspended. When FAA flights resumed in early May, they were undertaken by C-130's; the LADE services were not resumed.

After the War a new aerodrome was constructed at Mount Pleasant (south-west of Port Stanley) and from May 1985 the Islanders had, at last, an air service to the United Kingdom.

<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) El presente certificado provisorio deberá ser exhibido a las autoridades cada vez que se le requiera. 2) El status del titular de este certificado está contemplado en la Declaración Conjunta de Buenos Aires de 1º de Julio de 1971. 3) Para más información y averiguaciones recurra al Ministerio de Relaciones Exteriores y Culto 	 REPUBLICA ARGENTINA	<i>The Argentine "White Card" travel document was reluctantly accepted by the Islanders because they had no option but to do so if they wished to use the LADE flights. It guaranteed freedom of movement for Islanders within Argentina and was the only documentation required for Argentines visiting the Islands.</i>
ARENALES 761-3º PISO T. E. 32-4252 Y 31-0071 BUENOS AIRES	CERTIFICADO PROVISORIO EMITIDO DE ACUERDO A LA DECLARACION CONJUNTA DE BUENOS AIRES DE 1971	
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) The present temporary card must be produced to the authorities whenever requested. 2) The bearer is covered by the Joint Statement of Buenos Aires of 1st July 1971. 3) For further information or inquiries apply to: Ministerio de Relaciones Exteriores y Culto 	TEMPORARY CARD ISSUED IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE JOINT STATEMENT OF BUENOS AIRES OF 1971	
ARENALES 761-3º PISO T. E. 32-4252 Y 31-0071 BUENOS AIRES		

FALKLAND ISLANDS ARGENTINE INCURSIONS

Prior to April 1982 an Argentine invasion of the Falkland Islands had always been a possibility although, to many distant observers, the threat seemed improbable. The Islanders, however, realised how vulnerable their Islands were and that only token resistance would be possible should Argentina decide to seek sovereignty by force. Moreover, many Islanders held serious reservations

concerning the British Government's reaction to such an invasion. Would military force be used to oust the Argentines, or would London treat it as "fait accompli" and come to an accommodation with Buenos Aires?

During 1963 and 1964 there was a resurgence of Argentine interest in the Islands and dormant passions were aroused in the Argentine population by their government

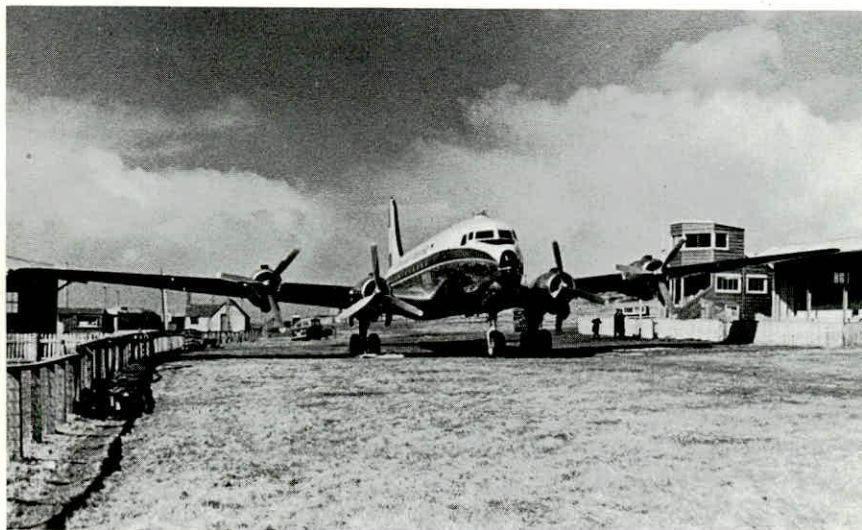
when a "Malvinas Day" and other measures were announced. Although such measures were probably intended to do little more than propagate emotive discussion about liberating "Las Islas Malvinas" from British colonial rule, they may have led directly to three bizarre aviation-related incidents on the Falkland Islands. Each demonstrated the hot-headedness of some Argentines and the vulnerability of the Islands.

In September 1964 an Argentine-registered Cessna 172 (identity unknown) flown by one Miguel Fitzgerald landed on Port Stanley Racecourse. An Argentine flag was planted and a written proclamation of Argentine sovereignty handed to a bemused Islander before the Cessna took-off to return to Argentina. The Argentine Government publicly dissociated itself from the event.

Two years later a far less amusing incident occurred. At 1245Z on 28 September an unfamiliar sound was heard in Port Stanley as a DC-4 (LV-AGG) of Aerolineas Argentinas, trying to remain below cloud, made several low

passes over the town. Eventually the pilot commenced a westerly approach to, and a landing on, the Racecourse. The DC-4 narrowly missed a grandstand before touching down about 100 yards beyond and skidding to a halt 400 yards later (having hit two telephone poles on the way). No sooner did it come to rest than the starboard undercarriage started to sink into soft ground. LV-AGG had been on a domestic flight between Buenos Aires and Rio Gallegos when it was hijacked by an armed Argentine nationalist group known as "El Condor" and the pilot forced to fly the aircraft to Port Stanley. The number of people on board varies according to different accounts, but it appears that there was a crew of six and probably 45 passengers of whom either 18 or 26 (including one woman and a photographer) belonged to, or sympathised with, "El Condor".

On the Racecourse, a detachment of Royal Marines arrived in a Land Rover as some of the occupants emerged from the aircraft wearing anoraks and hoods and brandishing Mauser sub-machine guns. The Marines had



The largest aircraft ever likely to land on Port Stanley Racecourse was a hijacked Aerolineas Argentinas DC-4 (LV-AGG) which unexpectedly arrived on 28.9.66. On board were members of the "El Condor" group who had come to liberate "Las Malvinas". The aircraft sank into the soft ground to its starboard wing-tip but when photographed here it had been raised ready for take-off. It managed to get airborne safely although the clearance between wing-tips and grandstands was in the order of only two feet!
(J. Leonard)



In 11.68 the Aero Commander LV-JGE, owned by the Argentine newspaper "Cronica", landed in rough ground alongside the Eliza Cove road to the south-east of Port Stanley, damaging its undercarriage. The three occupants, fanatical Argentine nationalists, had arrived to confront Lord Chalfont (who was visiting the Falklands) about Argentine sovereignty of "Las Islas Malvinas". The three were taken to 'Endurance' in 'Endurance' Flight's Whirlwind HAR.9, XL898 'ED/(4)49', where they were held in custody. Eventually they, and their aircraft, were shipped back to Argentina.
(J. Leonard and J. S. Wright)

little option but to surrender. No sooner had they done so than the "El Condor" leader (a slim-hipped, blonde-haired and blue-eyed woman in her middle twenties) came forward to address the officer-in-charge of the Marines. Unfortunately her English was poor and a male hijacker was ushered to the front to inform the officer that the "El Condor" group had come to liberate the "Malvinas" and its population from British rule. He was politely informed by the officer, and locals present, that the Islanders had no desire to be liberated from British rule. When translated, this statement caused consternation among the hijackers and for a few minutes they seemed undecided on their next action.

Events became more unpleasant when the Marines were taken on board as hostages while the hijackers argued. Eventually, the passengers were allowed off and, after further heated discussions, the pilot was ordered to fly the hijackers back to Argentina. However, when the engines were started and full power was applied, the aircraft became bogged down to its axles. This was perhaps fortunate because there was later said to be only 20 minutes worth of fuel left in its tanks.

The drama ended later in the day when a local priest, acting as a mediator, negotiated the surrender of the hijackers and the release of the Marines on the promise that the hijackers would be allowed to return unhindered to Argentina. The following day an Argentine merchant vessel (with marines on board) came into Falklands' waters and took the "El Condor" group back to Argentina where they were each sentenced to 15 years imprisonment. The somewhat shaken passengers were also repatriated by sea. It took three days to raise LV-AGG clear of the mud and, with 1,600 gallons of fuel on board, the DC-4 managed to take-off on 8 October and return safely to Argentina.

A third uninvited aircraft arrived in November 1968 while Lord Chalfont (then Minister of State at the Foreign and Commonwealth Office) was in the Falkland Islands to explain to the Islanders the policy that the British Government had been pursuing in recent discussions with Argentina concerning the Islands. Knowing that Lord Chalfont and press reporters following his visit were in Port Stanley, Hector Garcia, editor of the Argentine newspaper "Cronica", decided to fly to the Islands to confront the Minister in the presence of reporters with questions pertaining to Argentine sovereignty of "Las

Malvinas". Garcia was a consistently fanatical nationalist who, a few years later, would announce that he had recruited 20,000 volunteers to invade the Falkland Islands. (The response of the Argentine military government of the day was to shut down the newspaper for a year.) Garcia was also the photographer who had accompanied the "El Condor" hijackers to Port Stanley in the DC-4.

Piloted by none other than Miguel Fitzgerald, Garcia and an unknown passenger were flown to Port Stanley in the newspaper's Aero Commander, LV-JGE. On arriving overhead Port Stanley, Fitzgerald circled the town at least twice before deciding not to land on the Racecourse where the aircraft might become bogged down. Instead, he elected to land on a straight section of the Eliza Cove gravel road stretching south-east from Port Stanley to the Cove. The road was very narrow and although one mainwheel briefly touched it, the Aero Commander actually landed in rough ground alongside and stopped with one wheel in a ditch and a badly damaged undercarriage.

Within a few minutes of the aircraft grinding to a halt a Whirlwind HAR.9 (XL898) from 'Endurance' landed nearby bringing armed Royal Marines. Coincident with the helicopter, a Land Rover containing Lord Chalfont and other officials arrived. As no-one quite knew what to expect, there was considerable relief when the aircraft's occupants proved to be three unarmed, if voluble, civilians. Despite protestations, the Argentines were flown to 'Endurance' in the Whirlwind and detained there. Garcia never achieved his public confrontation with Lord Chalfont, but was eventually interviewed by incredulous press reporters who could scarcely believe that the editor of a newspaper could be directly involved in such a fiasco. Shortly afterwards, the three Argentines and their damaged and dismantled Aero Commander were shipped back to Argentina.

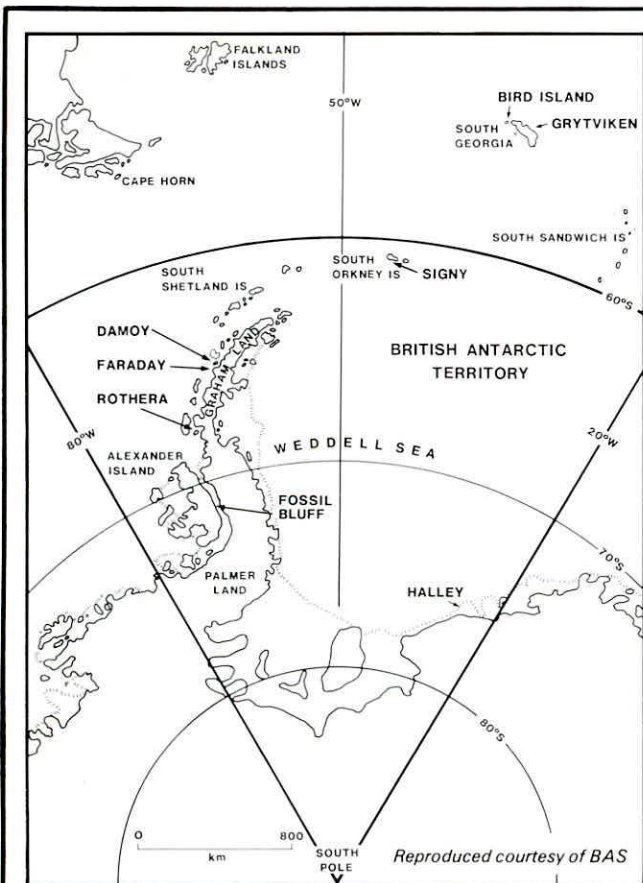
Thus ended the third of three unpleasant, unnecessary and, as it transpired, related incidents which did nothing to improve the already strained relationship between Argentina, the Falkland Islands and the United Kingdom. Strident editorials stressing Argentine sovereignty claims (and in some cases advocating invasion) continued to appear in "Cronica" and other Argentine newspapers and journals. Perhaps, in retrospect, it was inevitable that there would eventually be another incursion. It occurred, on 2 April 1982.

THE DEPENDENCIES & BRITISH ANTARCTIC TERRITORY

Space limitations prevent anything more than a brief description of aviation activity in the Falkland Islands Dependencies and British Antarctic Territory. Indeed, the past 43 years have provided enough information to devote a book to the subject, ranging from South Georgia-based whaling companies using Walrus amphibians and S-55 helicopters for spotting whales to accounts of ski-equipped aircraft operations from snow and ice airstrips in Antarctica. However, for the purposes of this book,

aviation details must be restricted to the activities of the Falkland Island Dependencies Survey and its successor, the British Antarctic Survey, both of which used aircraft registered in the Falkland Islands. Detailed histories of their aeroplanes can be read elsewhere in this book *but*, in order to appreciate them, some background explanation of the origins of FIDS and BAS is necessary.

In response to the Argentine annexation on 8 February 1942 of a segment of British territory in Antarctica (an



BRITISH ANTARCTIC SURVEY STATIONS

Permanent stations

FARADAY
Argentine Islands
(geophysical observatory)

Lat	65°15'S
Long	64°16'W

GRYTVIKEN*
Cumberland East Bay
South Georgia
(biological and geophysical station)

Lat	54°17'S
Long	36°30'W

BIRD ISLAND
South Georgia
(biological station)

Lat	54°00'S
Long	38°03'W

HALLEY †
Coats Land
(geophysical observatory)

Lat	75°35'S
Long	26°46'W

ROTHERA
Adelaide Island
(earth sciences air base)

Lat	67°34'S
Long	68°08'W

SIGNY
Signy Island
South Orkney Islands
(biological laboratory)

Lat	60°43'S
Long	45°36'W

Field stations (summer only)

DAMOY
Dorian Bay
Wiencke Island
(air facility)

Lat	64°49'S
Long	63°31'W

FOSSIL BLUFF
Alexander Island
(earth sciences air facility)

Lat	71°20'S
Long	68°17'W

* Closed temporarily
† Situated on a floating ice shelf moving westward at about 0.8km per year.



When the Antarctic area of what had been administered as the Falkland Islands Dependencies was retitled British Antarctic Territory in 1962, FIDS became BAS. BAS aircraft then adopted their construction numbers as identities rather than using Falkland Islands civil registrations. Otter "294" was formerly VP-FAK (although actually VP-FA!!). Of interest is the "Bass Ales" style of lettering on the engine cowling and the roundel. The c/n is on the fin and beneath the port wing. (British Antarctic Survey)

area of land and sea between 25°W and 68°34'W which included Deception Island in the South Shetland Islands), the warship 'Carnarvon Castle' was sent to Deception Island. The Union Flag was raised in January 1943 and all signs of Argentine occupancy were removed, but the event caused the British Government to review its rights in the area and how it would preserve them. Moreover, the strategic importance of the area had to be considered, especially as the political situation in Argentina at the time — the middle of World War II — made it undesirable for that nation to have control of the southern half of Drake Passage (between South America and Antarctica), perhaps allowing German merchant "raider" ships access to sheltered Antarctic harbours. Despite more pressing priorities elsewhere, the Royal Navy was tasked with sending a small, military-orientated scientific force under the code name Operation "Tabarin" to establish British bases. By February 1944 two were in being, one on Deception Island and the other at Port Lockroy on Wiencke Island, close to the Graham Land Peninsula (later renamed the Antarctic Peninsula). During the next two years more bases, or Stations as they came to be known, were created and, aside from any military requirements, the scientific potential of Antarctica began to be realised. Control of "Tabarin" passed to the Colonial Office at the end of World War II and the organisation was renamed as the Falkland Islands Dependencies Survey (British-administered areas of Antarctica were part of the Falkland Islands Dependencies at that time).

The vagaries of the Antarctic environment and its effect on all forms of surface transport inevitably led to the use of aircraft. FIDS obtained its first aeroplane, a ski-equipped Auster J/1 Autocrat (G-AIBI), in 1946. A small hangar was built at the FIDS Station on Stonington Island

(Marguerite Bay, Graham Land) in preparation for its arrival on 'Trepassey' in late February or early March 1947. The crated aircraft was rafted ashore and hauled onto the beach where it was unpacked, assembled, christened "Ice Cold Katy" and put to work. Unfortunately, "Katy" was destroyed on 15 September that year when a ski hit a projecting lump of ice, causing her to turn over onto her back. The replacement, a second-hand Hornet Moth biplane (G-ADMO), arrived at Deception Island on 21 February 1948 and, like its predecessor, was rafted ashore. However, because no skis had come with the aeroplane, G-ADMO was a useless asset and remained crated on the beach. A packing case which reportedly contained the skis was eventually traced, but upon opening was found to contain stove pipes!

The Hornet Moth was later registered in the Falkland Islands as VP-FAE and shipped to Port Stanley in March 1950, remaining in storage in a hangar (crated and still marked as G-ADMO) until burned in 1957. *[Details of VP-FAE and subsequent Falklands-registered aircraft that served with FIDS (and later BAS) are included in the Individual Aircraft Details which follow this section].*

Aircraft did not constitute a regular, or integral, part of FIDS/BAS activities until the purchase of a Beaver and an Otter in 1959/60. An airstrip and hangar were constructed on Deception Island, which was to become the centre of aircraft operations for the next eight years, and facilities at the Station were made adequate for aircraft to be serviced and wintered there. Regrettably, the airstrip and base had to be vacated in December 1967 due to a volcanic eruption on the Island. The air facility was moved south to Adelaide Station (on Adelaide Island), but it was not practical to maintain the newly-acquired Twin Otter aircraft there. They were flown to the Northern Hemisphere



In formation over the English countryside near their Fair Oaks "winter quarters" in early 10.83 or late 9.84 are the three BAS Twin Otters VP-FAZ, VP-FBB and VP-FBC. Soon after the photograph was taken they departed on their annual "migration" to Rothera Station on Adelaide Island in British Antarctic Territory.

(British Antarctic Survey)

for maintenance and wintering (initially to Canada, but latterly to the United Kingdom) at the end of each summer's operations. The snow and ice airstrip at Adelaide Station deteriorated with time and the air facility was moved to Rothera Station (also on Adelaide Island), about 40 miles to the north-east. That Station was still the hub of BAS operations in 1985.

The most radical political event to take place in Antarctica occurred in 1959 when the Antarctic Treaty was signed by the United Kingdom and 11 other nations. The Treaty led to much more friendly co-operation, and considerably less squabbling about territorial claims, between countries possessing Antarctic bases. The Antarctic portion of what had previously been administered as the Falkland Islands Dependencies was designated British Antarctic Territory in 1962 and FIDS was redesignated as the British Antarctic Survey. Because the Territory was no longer part of the Falkland Islands Dependencies,

Falklands' registration letters ceased to appear on BAS aircraft and construction numbers were used for identification instead (the aeroplanes on charge between 1962 and early 1968 never leaving the Territory). However, with the demise of Deception Island Station and the procurement of aeroplanes which required servicing outside the Territory, BAS aircraft had to be registered somewhere in order to permit ferry flights to and from Antarctica via South America. They could have been registered in the United Kingdom but, as the Governor of the Falkland Islands was also High Commissioner of the Territory, it was decided to resume the tradition of registering aircraft in the Falkland Islands (where BAS had an office). By 1985 the Survey had three Twin Otters in its inventory (VP-FAZ, VP-FBB and VP-FBC) and, as this book was being finalised, they were being prepared at their United Kingdom winter quarters at Fair Oaks for the annual pilgrimage south to Antarctica and another season supporting BAS field and scientific parties.

FALKLAND ISLANDS CIVIL AIRCRAFT REGISTER & INDIVIDUAL AIRCRAFT DETAILS

Abbreviations & acronyms used and their meanings

AAL	<i>Auster Aircraft Limited, Rearsby, UK.</i>
AOP	<i>Air Observation Post.</i>
BAS	<i>British Antarctic Survey.</i>
CAC	<i>Cessna Aircraft Company, Wichita, Kansas, USA.</i>
CCF	<i>Canadian Car and Foundry Company Limited, Montreal, Quebec, Canada.</i>
Cert	<i>Certificate.</i>
c/n	<i>construction number.</i>
Dept	<i>Department.</i>
DHC	<i>de Havilland Aircraft Company (Canada) Limited and de Havilland Aircraft of Canada Limited, Downsview, Ontario, Canada.</i>
FIDS	<i>Falkland Islands Dependencies Survey.</i>
FIGAS	<i>Falkland Islands Government Air Service.</i>
FI Govt	<i>Falkland Islands Government.</i>
IAVB	<i>Intreprinderea de Avioane Bucuresti.</i>

IRMA	<i>Intreprinderea de Reparat Material Aeronautic.</i>
JEA	<i>Jersey European Airways Limited.</i>
MAL	<i>Mann Aviation Limited.</i>
MU	<i>Maintenance Unit.</i>
NERC	<i>Natural Environment Research Council.</i>
PBN	<i>Pilatus Britten-Norman Limited, Bembridge, Isle of Wight, UK.</i>
P FAG	<i>Pilatus Flugzeugwerke Aktiengesellschaft, Stans, Switzerland.</i>
RCAF	<i>Royal Canadian Air Force.</i>
Regd	<i>Registered.</i>
Regn	<i>Registration.</i>
RNoAF	<i>Royal Norwegian Air Force.</i>
SBAC	<i>Society of British Aerospace Companies Limited.</i>
SPRI	<i>Scott Polar Research Institute, Cambridge, UK.</i>
WFU	<i>Withdrawn From Use.</i>
WOC	<i>Written Off Charge.</i>

VP-FAA Auster 5

c/n 2054

Civilianised (believed by AAL) RAF AOP.5 TW510, bought on behalf of the FI Govt by FIDS (purchase details completed 10.9.48) and regd as G-AJCH on 18.4.48. Crated and shipped on 'John Biscoe' from Southampton to Port Stanley during 11.48. Reassembled at its Port Stanley Racecourse base and test-flown from there by V.H.Spencer on 19.12.48 prior to the initial air ambulance flight 24.12.48. Although allotted the regn VP-FAA c6.3.49, the FI Regn Cert to that effect (cancelling G-AJCH on the British Civil Aircraft Register) was not issued until 26.9.49. The aircraft was still marked as G-AJCH (but using VP-FAA as a call-sign) on 7.4.49 when, on landing at San Carlos settlement airstrip,

the mainwheels sank into soft ground causing the aeroplane to overturn and sustain damage to the fin and fuselage. V.H.Spencer, the pilot, was uninjured but the aircraft had to be shipped to Port Stanley and from there to AAL in the UK (date unknown) for repair and conversion to a floatplane. Repaired and converted, VP-FAA was returned by ship to FIGAS at Port Stanley and, after reassembly, test-flown from Stanley Harbour by V.H.Spencer on 23.6.51. Following its last commercial flight (by J.Kerr) on 24.4.56 the aircraft was retained as a trainer until WFU in 6.56 due to extensive corrosion in the tail and fuselage framework. Subsequently broken up and burned in early 1957 with VP-FAB, VP-FAC and VP-FAE (G-ADMO). Regn cancelled on 4.2.57.

VP-FAB Auster 4

c/n 1917

Civilianised (believed by AAL) RAF AOP.4 MS951, bought on behalf of the FI Govt by FIDS (purchase details completed 7.9.48) and regd as G-AJCI on 18.8.48. Crated and shipped on 'John Biscoe' from Southampton to Port Stanley during 11.48. Reassembled at its Port Stanley Racecourse base and test-flown from there on 3.3.49 by V.H.Spencer. Although the regn VP-FAB was allotted c6.3.49 and was subsequently used as a call-sign, the aircraft reportedly remained marked as G-AJCI until an unknown date after 26.9.49 when the FI Regn Cert confirming the VP-FAB allocation was issued, thereby cancelling G-AJCI on the British Civil Aircraft Register. Retained as a landplane and,



After conversion to a floatplane in the United Kingdom, Auster 5 VP-FAA was returned to the Falkland Islands where it was reassembled and its fuselage doped blue and silver. It was eventually test-flown on 23.6.51. This photograph, taken at Port Stanley about then, shows the winged penguin motif on the rear fuselage and the letters F.I.G.A.S. (the earliest confirmed reference to the acronym) beneath. At that time the Auster is believed to have been devoid of registration letters.

(V. H. Spencer)

following its last known flight on 30.10.51, was WFU by FIGAS. Dismantled and stored in a hangar as a spares source until burned in early 1957 with VP-FAA, VP-FAC and VP-FAE (G-ADMO). Regn cancelled on 4.2.57.

VP-FAC Auster 5

c/n 1813

RAF AOP.5 TW476, bought ex-storage at 20MU Aston Down by AAL on 30.5.49 against a FIDS order for a civilianised floatplane conversion to be used on an Antarctic rescue mission. Regd VP-FAC and painted as such by 25.8.49 when ready for its initial test-flight as a landplane. Flown to Beaumaris, Anglesey on 30.8.49 for 6.45hrs of floatplane trials by Auster test pilot L. Leatham before returning to Rearsby as a landplane on 16.9.49. Departed (crated) on 'John Biscoe' from Southampton 12.10.49 for Deception Island, South Shetlands, where it was unloaded, assembled and then air-tested on 18.12.49. Flown as a floatplane from there to the Argentine Islands to rendezvous with (and be based on) 'John Biscoe'. Piloted by Flt Lt J. Lewis, it reconnoitred open sea routes around ice floes and clear water areas close to Stonington Island in Marguerite Bay, Graham Land before the 11 persons marooned on the Island were rescued in three groups by Norseman VP-FAD and 'John Biscoe' between 30.1.50 and 11.2.50. VP-FAC returned to Deception Island on 19.2.50 where it was dismantled and crated prior to being shipped to Port Stanley on 'John Biscoe', arriving there 3.3.50. Off-loaded, reassembled by FIDS and then loaned to the FI Govt after their pilot (V.H.Spencer) had been checked-out by Flt Lt Lewis on 7.5.50. Sold to FIGAS in 11.51 and remained in service until c8.53 when WFU because of airframe corrosion. Dismantled and stored in a hangar as a spares source until burned in early 1957 with VP-FAA, VP-FAB and VP-FAE (G-ADMO). Regn cancelled on 4.2.57.

VP-FAD Norseman 5

c/n N29-45

Last production aircraft, purchased by FIDS from CCF in 1949 for an Antarctic rescue mission. Regd VP-FAD and painted as such before

being crated and shipped to the UK. Departed on 'John Biscoe' from Southampton 12.10.49 for Deception Island, South Shetlands, where it was unloaded, assembled as a floatplane and then air-tested on 28.12.49. Flown to the Argentine Islands and operating from there on 30.1.50 and 6.2.50 its pilot (Pt Off P.St Louis RCAF) flew the aircraft to Stonington Island in Marguerite Bay, Graham Land, to rescue (in two groups) five of the 11 men marooned on the Island. Returned to Deception Island to be dismantled and crated prior to being shipped to Port Stanley on 'John Biscoe', arriving there 3.3.50. Off-loaded and assembled by FIDS and then loaned to the FI Govt after their pilot (V.H.Spencer) had been type-checked by Pt Off St Louis on 2.6.50. Sold to FIGAS later that year and remained in service until c8.53 when WFU due to advanced corrosion in the main undercarriage legs, engine bearers and other metal components. Dismantled and stored in the floatplane hangar until early 1957 when the airframe was scuttled in Stanley Harbour. The floats, however, were retained for many years as part of a raft. Regn cancelled on 4.2.57.

VP-FAE DH.87B Hornet Moth

c/n 8086

Purchased by FIDS from a Danish owner (to replace J/1 Autocrat G-AIBI — see text) and regd as G-ADMO 26.11.47 (previous identity OY-DTI). Overhauled at Hatfield and, following a test-flight from there, was crated and shipped from Southampton on 'John Biscoe' to Deception Island, Antarctica, arriving there on 21.2.48. Although unloaded onto the beach there was no point in unpacking it because, due to a loading oversight, no skis had been sent with the aircraft. On 26.9.49, while still located at Deception Island, a FI Regn Cert was issued allocating the regn VP-FAE to the aeroplane, thereby cancelling G-ADMO on the British Civil Aircraft Register. Remained snowbound in packing cases until shipped on 'John Biscoe' to Port Stanley (arriving 3.3.50) where the crated machine was off-loaded and stored in the landplane hangar. When eventually partially unpacked, an inspection revealed that dampness had affected the plywood construction and some

glued joints. Although no longer airworthy, VP-FAE (still marked as G-ADMO) languished in storage until early 1957 when it was burned with VP-FAA, VP-FAB and VP-FAC. Regn cancelled on 4.2.57.

The aircraft's log books were still in existence as late as 1979 in the Aviation Dept office on Govt Jetty, Port Stanley.

VP-FAF DHC-2 Beaver

c/n 500

Purchased new from DHC by the FI Govt for FIGAS and shipped (crated) on 'Fitzroy' to Port Stanley 6/7.53. Under DHC supervision, it was unloaded, assembled and then test-flown (by a DHC pilot) from Stanley Harbour prior to handover to FIGAS in 8.53. Due to a regn allocation error, the aircraft had been delivered painted as VP-FAE instead of VP-FAF. By 21.8.56 the mistake had been realised but the aeroplane remained marked as VP-FAE until at least 6.6.67, the date of its last known flight for FIGAS. About then it was sold to L.J.Dorney of Mexico City, Mexico and regd N17597. Departed (crated) on 'Darwin' in late 1967 or early 1968 (reportedly still marked as VP-FAE) for Montevideo, Uruguay, and onward trans-shipment. Regn (VP-FAF) was cancelled on 15.3.68. As late as 11.84 a spare (or replaced) wing marked VP-FAE was lying in the grass at Moody Brook near Port Stanley.

VP-FAG DHC-2 Beaver

c/n 828

Purchased new from DHC by the FI Govt for FIGAS and shipped (crated) on 'Fitzroy' to Port Stanley, arriving there in late 8.55. Under DHC supervision, it was unpacked and assembled as a floatplane prior to its acceptance test-flight from Stanley Harbour by J.Kerr on 29.9.55. Due to a regn allocation error, the aircraft had been delivered painted as VP-FAF instead of VP-FAG. Although the mistake was realised, and amended regn paperwork issued on 21.8.56, the aircraft remained marked as VP-FAF. While being piloted by G.Toye sometime between 11.57 and 3.58, it capsized and sank in a take-off at the Moro, Douglas Station, East Falkland (there were no casualties). Salvaged and shipped on 'Shackleton' to

Port Stanley but, having been badly damaged during recovery, was deemed to be "beyond economical repair" and reduced to spares and scrap. Regn not cancelled until 15.3.68.

VP-FAH DHC-2 Beaver *c/n 1129*

Purchased new from DHC by the FI Govt for FIGAS as a replacement for VP-FAG. Crated and shipped on 'Fitzroy' to Port Stanley, arriving there in 7.58. Unpacked and assembled as a floatplane prior to being flight-tested from Stanley Harbour by J.Kerr on 19.8.58. Remained in service until at least 5.1.67, the date of its last known flight for FIGAS. Sold c6.67 to L.J.Downey of Mexico City, Mexico and regd N17598. Departed (crated) on 'Darwin' in late 1967 or early 1968 (reportedly still marked as VP-FAH) for Montevideo, Uruguay, and onward trans-shipment. FI regn cancelled on 15.3.68.

VP-FAI DHC-3 Otter *c/n 294*

Bought new from DHC by FIDS and painted in error as VP-FAK (VP-FAK had been reserved for future FIGAS use). Departed (crated) on 'Kista Dan' from Southampton 18.12.59 for Deception Island, South Shetlands, arriving there on 26.1.60. Unpacked, assembled, fitted with wheels/skis and test-flown by 3.2.60. Flown south to the Argentine Islands 18.3.60 and then to Horseshoe Island in Marguerite Bay on 19.3.60 for relief operations before returning to Deception Island on 27.3.60 to be hangared and serviced during the winter. (From then until 3.67 the aircraft was normally based at Adelaide Station on Adelaide Island for FIDS/BAS support flights during the summer months, returning to Deception Island each winter for maintenance and storage.) Damaged in a series of gales at Deception Island from 2-10.10.61 but repaired 11/12.10.61. On 30.10.61 a FI Regn Cert was issued confirming the aircraft to be VP-FAI but the airframe markings were not altered. Following an ownership change from FIDS to BAS on 1.1.62, the aeroplane was painted in BAS livery (to comply with the creation of British Antarctic Territory on 1.3.62). The new colour-scheme included removal of the regn and application of its c/n as an identity (in black to the fin and underside of the port wing at least). Remained marked like that until grounded and WOC at its Deception Island base in 3.67 due to extensive corrosion in the fuselage.

VP-FAJ DHC-2 Beaver *c/n 1342*

Purchased new from DHC by FIDS and departed Southampton (crated) 18.12.59 on 'Kista Dan' for Deception Island, South Shetlands, arriving there on 26.1.60. After assembly on the ship (and a test-flight as a floatplane on 7.2.60), it sailed with her for the Argentine Islands on 8.2.60 to be based aboard for ice-reconnaissance flights. While anchored in high winds off the Argentine Islands on 12.3.60, 'Kista Dan' (with the Beaver on her foredeck) and 'John Biscoe' drifted so close to each other that the aircraft's protruding port wing was torn off when 'John Biscoe' hit it. The aeroplane was off-loaded at Deception Island c1.4.60 and by 8.60 (following receipt of a new wing brought from Port Stanley by 'John Biscoe') it had been repaired and the floats replaced by wheels/skis. On 16.9.60, having landed on sea-ice off the Argentine Is-

lands, Flt Lt R.Lord was taxiing the aircraft clear of the marked runway when the ski-underscarriage broke through thin ice. Recovery proved impossible, but the wings, fin and most internal fittings were removed before the fuselage sank. The salvaged parts and the redundant floats were later sold to the FI Govt as spares for the FIGAS Beavers.

VP-FAJ DHC-3 Otter *c/n 377*

Bought new from DHC in 11.60 by FIDS (to replace Beaver VP-FAJ) and painted in error as VP-FAL (no regn had been allocated to it and VP-FAL had been reserved for future FIGAS use). Crated and shipped on 'Kista Dan' from Southampton to Deception Island, South Shetlands, arriving there on 11.1.61. Unloaded, assembled, fitted with wheels/skis and then test-flown on 21.1.61. (From then until 12.67 the aircraft was normally based at Adelaide Station on Adelaide Island for FIDS/BAS support flights during the summer months, returning to Deception Island each winter for maintenance and storage.) Ownership of the aircraft changed from FIDS to BAS on 1.1.62 and on 1.3.62 a FI Regn Cert was issued declaring it to be VP-FAJ (a reissue of the Beaver regn). The aeroplane remained marked as VP-FAL until it was painted in BAS livery (to comply with the creation of British Antarctic Territory on 1.3.62). The new colour-scheme included removal of the regn and application of its c/n as an identity (in black to the fin and underside of the port wing at least). Remained marked like that until 28.12.64 when the tail ski was ripped off, the undercarriage struts driven up through the airframe and the rear fuselage twisted in a landing accident at Adelaide Station. The pilot (Flt Lt E.J.Skinner) was unhurt but the aircraft, which had fallen some 30ft into a dip in the snow and ice not seen from the air, was deemed to be "beyond economical repair" and WOC. The unused FI regn (VP-FAJ) was cancelled on 13.6.65.

VP-FAK DHC-2 Beaver *c/n 1664*

Purchased new from DHC by the FI Govt for FIGAS and, accompanied by Beaver VP-FAL, was flown as a landplane to Port Stanley Racecourse (via South America) in 3.67. Converted to a floatplane and flight-tested from Stanley Harbour by I.T.Campbell in early 6.67 (pre 13.6). Remained in service with FIGAS until 14.10.76 when it capsized and sank while landing at Mare Harbour, East Falkland. The pilot, I.T.Campbell, was drowned and the passenger slightly injured. Carried by the tide, the superficially-damaged aircraft beached itself inverted on Johnsons Island at the entrance to Mare Harbour. Recovered and taken to Port Stanley aboard 'Monsunen' on 17.10.76. A combination of damage sustained during the salvage operation, and corrosion which developed while hangared awaiting the outcome of the accident investigation, led to the aircraft being declared "beyond economical repair" and it was reduced to spares and scrap. In 10.84 a wing from the aircraft was seen lying in the grass at Moody Brook and the fuselage was reported to be outside the AAC hangar on Murray Heights, Port Stanley.

VP-FAL DHC-2 Beaver *c/n 1666*

Purchased new from DHC by the FI Govt for

FIGAS and, accompanied by Beaver VP-FAK, was flown as a landplane to Port Stanley Racecourse (via South America) in 3.67. Converted to a floatplane and flight-tested from Stanley Harbour by J.Kerr on 13.6.67. Remained in FIGAS service until 10.8.76 when it capsized and sank (without casualties) in a taxiing accident at New Island, West Falkland, while being flown by a relief pilot (J.Levine). Recovered and shipped to Port Stanley where, as a result of damage sustained during the salvage operation, it was declared "beyond economical repair" and reduced to spares and scrap. All (or part) of the fuselage was reported to be dumped outside the floatplane hangar on 16.8.82, while on 18.5.83 a wing marked VP-FAL was noted in the grass at Moody Brook near Port Stanley.

VP-FAM DHC-3 Otter *c/n 395*

A former RNoAF aircraft (60-395) purchased by Halle & Peterson, Oslo c30.8.67 which, on being sold to NERC for BAS, was erroneously painted as VP-FAM (no regn had been allocated to it by the FI Registrar of Aircraft). The RNoAF serial was retained on the fin. Departed (crated) on 'Perla Dan' from Southampton on 29.11.67 for Deception Island, South Shetlands, where it arrived late 12.67. Not unpacked there as the base had been evacuated after a volcanic eruption on 4.12.67. Instead, it was transported aboard 'Perla Dan' to Grytviken, South Georgia (arriving 2.1.68) and was stored there until collected by 'Endurance' and returned to Deception Island in 12.68. Unloaded, assembled, fitted with wheels/skis and flight-tested prior to being flown south to Adelaide Station, Adelaide Island, on 6.2.69 for BAS support duties. On 3.3.69, following engine failure about 30 miles north-east of Stonington Island (Graham Land), it force-landed in a badly crevassed area and was sufficiently damaged to be WOC.

VP-FAM DHC-2 Turbo-Beaver *c/n 1670-TB40*

Purchased from DHC by NERC for BAS (previously CF-WSC) and departed Downsview on 22.11.69 in company with Twin Otter VP-FAO, routing via South America to Adelaide Station on Adelaide Island where it landed on 7.12.69. Supported BAS field parties until 25.3.70 when it departed Adelaide Station for servicing and storage at DHC Downsview, arriving there on 4.4.70. Returned to Adelaide Station (via Punta Arenas in Chile) in mid-12.70 for BAS summer operations before flying back to Downsview in early 4.71. On 10.2.71 a FI Regn Cert was issued confirming the aircraft's regn. At the end of 11.71 it arrived at Adelaide Station from Downsview and, following a season of BAS support flights (mostly to/from Fossil Bluff on Alexander Island), it departed Adelaide Station on 20.3.72 and arrived at Downsview on 28.3.72. Its regn was cancelled 14.4.72 upon being sold to DHC as CF-BLX.

VP-FAN Not allocated.

Unregistered PC6/B1-H2 Turbo-Porter *c/n 619*

Purchased new from PFAF by NERC for BAS and delivered (crated) to Southampton

for shipment on 'Perla Dan' to Deception Island, South Shetlands, arriving there on 8.1.67. Unloaded, assembled and fitted with wheels/skis before being test-flown on 13.1.67. No regn allotted to it by the FI Registrar of Aircraft and all references to it having been allocated or painted as VP-FAN are erroneous. As an identity, the c/n was worn in large digits on both sides of the fin. Flown south to Adelaide Station, Adelaide Island, on 26.1.67 for BAS support flights, returning to Deception Island 6.3.67 for servicing and storage. Flight-tested on 15.8.67 and flown to Adelaide Station 18.8.67. From there it was used to resupply or establish a chain of five BAS depots between Fossil Bluff on Alexander Island and Stonington Island in Graham Land. As it was about to get airborne on 26.2.68 from a patch of ice at the junction of the Miller and Meiklejohn Glaciers in Palmer Land, a weld in the port undercarriage leg fractured and the ski turned outwards, causing the aircraft to slew violently. The pilot (Flt Lt J. Ayers) and his two passengers were unhurt but the tail ski was torn off. An attempted wheeled take-off from the same ice patch on 1.3.68 nearly ended in disaster when the starboard wheel broke through the ice crust and the aircraft briefly tipped onto its nose before crashing back onto the ice, twisting the rear fuselage. The aircraft was WOC and the uninjured pilot and passengers were not rescued until 21.12.68!

The place where the Turbo-Porter crashed was named "Porter Nunatak" by Flt Lt Ayers and is still referred to by that title.

VP-FAO DHC-6 Twin Otter Series 200
c/n 152

Ordered new from DHC by NERC for BAS on 1.9.67 and first flew at Downsview 20.9.68 prior to handover to BAS on 11.10.68 (regn worn only on the upper and lower wing surfaces). Flown via South America and Deception Island, South Shetlands (3.12.68) to Adelaide Station, Adelaide Island, where it arrived on 4.12.68. After a summer season supporting BAS field operations, it departed Adelaide Station at the end of 3.69 en route to Downsview for maintenance and storage (the first FIDS/BAS/NERC aircraft not to be wintered and serviced in Antarctica). Left Downsview on 22.11.69 for Adelaide Station and landed there 7.12.69. Following a series of glaciological radio echo-sounding flights, it took-off from Adelaide Station on 25.3.70 en route to Downsview, arriving there 4.4.70. Flown to Adelaide Station in mid-12.70 for BAS duties, returning to Downsview in 4.71 for servicing and disposal. On 10.2.71 a FI Regn Cert was issued confirming it to be VP-FAO, but the regn was cancelled 15.6.71 upon sale of the aircraft as F-BRPC to Air Paris, Orly, France.

VP-FAP DHC-6 Twin Otter Series 300
c/n 333

Ordered new from DHC by NERC for BAS on 3.7.71 and noted on the Downsview production line 1.9.71. A FI Regn Cert confirming it to be VP-FAP was issued on 23.9.71. Handed over to BAS on 10.11.71 and departed for Adelaide Station, Adelaide Island, arriving there at the end of 11.71. After

a series of glaciological radio echo-sounding equipment trials and BAS support flights, it left Adelaide Station on 20.3.72 for Downsview, arriving 28.3.72. Following servicing and storage there, it left on 3.10.72 for Adelaide Station and, after a delay at Punta Arenas in Chile (8-12.10.72) due to bad weather over the Antarctic Peninsula, it arrived at its destination (via Palmer Station, Anvers Island 12.10.72) on 13.10.72. Flown later that day by Flt Lt B.J. Conchie to Stonington Island off Graham Land to collect a sick geologist and take him back to Adelaide Station before flying him to Rio Gallegos, Argentina (via Punta Arenas) on 14.10.72; from there the geologist was flown in an Argentine military aircraft to hospital in Buenos Aires. On returning to Adelaide Station, VP-FAP supported BAS operations until 26.2.73 when it left for Downsview, arriving there for its annual overhaul on 4.3.73. Departed for Adelaide Station 6.10.73 and, after its arrival there on 16.10.73, was engaged in BAS support flights until it left for Downsview again on 28.2.74. Returned to Adelaide Station on 18.10.74 and, after the summer, arrived back at Downsview 15.3.75. Left Downsview on 8.10.75, arriving at Adelaide Station c17.10.75 from where, in addition to normal BAS flights, it was used to transport men and materials to a new air facility being constructed at Rothera Station (also on Adelaide Island) to replace the one at Adelaide Station. Departed Adelaide Station in 3.76 for Downsview and, after its annual servicing and storage period, was flown to Rothera Station where it landed on 7.11.76. On 21.1.77, in poor visibility at Gomez Nunatak (south of King George VI Sound), the aircraft was flown into a snow slope when the pilot (P. Prattis) mistook it for a flat landing site. The engines and avionics were salvaged but the aircraft was WOC and not recovered.

VP-FAQ DHC-6 Twin Otter Series 300
c/n 347

Ordered new from DHC by NERC for BAS on 25.4.72 (to replace Turbo-Beaver VP-FAM) and issued with a FI Regn Cert on 22.8.72. Handed over to BAS on 2.10.72 and reached Adelaide Station, Adelaide Island on 29.10.72. Used mainly in support of Fossil Bluff Station, Alexander Island before leaving Adelaide Station on 26.2.73 for Downsview, arriving there 4.3.73 for servicing and storage. Departed Downsview on 6.10.73, landing at Adelaide Station 16.10.73, and flown in support of BAS operations until it left Adelaide Station 28.2.74 for Punta Arenas in Chile en route to Downsview for wintering. Returned to Adelaide Station on 18.10.74 and departed there 5.3.75 for Downsview, where it landed on 15.3.75. About 5.75 it was leased to the University of Nebraska for a five-week ice-sheet survey in Greenland on behalf of the US National Science Foundation. Arrived at Adelaide Station from Downsview on 4.11.75 and during that season, in addition to normal BAS support flights, it was used to transport men and materials to a new air facility being constructed at Rothera Station (also on Adelaide Island) to replace the airstrip at Adelaide Station. Departed Adelaide Station in 3.76 for Downsview and, after servicing, was chartered for work in Oman by Taylor Woodrow (International) Limited for three months (including 5.76). After returning to Downsview for maintenance it left for

Rothera Station, arriving there on 7.11.76. Upon arrival it was leased out for ten weeks to the US Ross Ice Shelf Project but, following the loss of VP-FAP on 21.1.77, was recalled to rescue the pilot and crew of the crashed aircraft and fly them to Rothera. Left Rothera for Downsview at the end of 2.77 and returned at the end of 10.77. In late 3.78 the nosewheel leg and the airframe were damaged beyond local repair when the pilot tried to take-off with a full load from a very rough surface at Rothera. Nobody on board was injured, but the aeroplane had to be dismantled and loaded onto 'Bransfield' which departed for the UK (via the Falklands) on 24.3.78, arriving at Southampton 23.5.78. Off-loaded and transported to MAL at Fairoaks for repairs. Airtested there 25.9.78 and flown to Biggin Hill on 4.10.78, from where it departed 5.10.78 to route via North and South America to Rothera Station, landing there on 14.11.78. Left Rothera Station on 2.3.79 for the UK and leased to Loganair (a Glasgow-based airline) from c29.3.79. Returned off lease to MAL at Fairoaks on 6.9.79 for maintenance before leaving for Biggin Hill on 11.9.79 en route to Rothera Station (via Toronto where it was noted on 18.9.79), arriving there in late 11.79. Departed Rothera Station on 26.2.80 for Downsview and Calgary, Canada. At the latter location its BAS titles were removed prior to it leaving on 27.3.80 for the UK and a further period of lease to Loganair until 5.9.80. On that date it took-off from Biggin Hill for Rothera Station, where it landed on 23.11.80. Departed Rothera Station on 3.3.81 for the UK and leased to JEA (a Jersey-based airline) from 15.4.81. Remained on lease to JEA until sold to the Company on 27.4.82 as G-BKBC.

VP-FAR Cessna 172M c/n 63016

Purchased new from CAC in 1974 (ex temporary regn N13827) by R.A.M. Pitaluga of Gibraltar Station, Salvador, East Falkland and seen at Wichita 3.74 awaiting delivery to Port Stanley in 4.74. After arrival, it was test-flown from Hookers Point airstrip (near Port Stanley) on 14.5.74 before moving to Salvador. Following the Argentine invasion on 2.4.82, the owner was interned in Port Stanley (shortly before 1.5.82) and his aircraft grounded at Stanley Airport. On 1.5.82 it was badly damaged during the 800 Sqn Sea Harrier raid and further damaged in subsequent British shelling and bombing attacks. When inspected post-14.6.82, the starboard wing had been severed but the aircraft was considered to be repairable. Still unrepaired at RAF Stanley in 6.85.

VP-FAS Cessna 172M c/n 66573

Purchased new from CAC in 1976 (ex temporary regn N80403) by the Chartres Sheep Farming Company Limited and based at Chartres, West Falkland. On 1.4.82 the pilot, W.H. Luxton (Director of the Company), flew the aircraft from Chartres to Stanley Airport, where it remained following the Argentine invasion on 2.4.82. Suffered bomb-blast and shrapnel damage from the many British bombing and shelling attacks. Derelict at the Airport post-14.6.82 and the hulk was still resident at RAF Stanley in 6.85.

VP-FAT DHC-2 Beaver c/n 1098

Purchased second-hand in Canada (ex



Rob Pitaluga's Cessna 172M, shown here at RAF Stanley in late 7.82, was one of three (the others were VP-FAS and VP-FBA) damaged during the conflict and subsequently vandalised. Various plans to restore VP-FAR and VP-FBA had failed to materialise by mid-1985.
(815 Sqn 'Exeter' Flight)



Islander VP-FAY was impressed into Argentine service after the invasion on 2.4.82. Its military career came to an abrupt end at Stanley Airport on 1.5.82 when the fuselage was severed by a CBU dropped, almost certainly, from 800 Squadron Sea Harrier FRS.1 ZA192 '92' of Flt Lt Dave Morgan. Much of the damage visible in this post-war photograph was caused by vandals and not weapons.

(Lt D. Balchin, RN)



Parked alongside the slipway at the FIGAS Beaver hangar in early 7.82 is the "battle-damaged" VP-FAV. Although assessed as repairable, any thoughts of restoration were dashed on 28.7.82 when it was wrecked in a gale.
(S. Van Tromp)

C-GUIH) by the FI Govt for FIGAS and, configured as a landplane, was flown via South America to Hookers Point airstrip (near Port Stanley), arriving there on 7.11.76. Flown from there to the Racecourse on 9.11.76 and stored in the nearby floatplane hangar pending delivery of floats from Canada. Once converted, it remained in FIGAS service until permanently grounded after the Argentine invasion on 2.4.82. Demolished by British bombardments on 11/12.6.82 while parked outside the floatplane hangar. Its remains were gradually disposed of during 1982/83.

VP-FAU *Not allocated.*

VP-FAV DHC-2 Beaver *c/n 1233*

Purchased second-hand in Canada (ex C-GUHH) by the FI Govt for FIGAS and flown as a floatplane to Port Stanley (via South America), landing in Stanley Harbour on 6.12.76. Remained in FIGAS service until permanently grounded after the Argentine invasion on 2.4.82. Extensively shrapnel-damaged while parked on the slipway by the floatplane hangar during British bombardments on 11/12.6.82. Assessed as repairable, it was blown over onto its back in a gale on 28.7.82 and completely wrecked. The crumpled fuselage, devoid of fin and regn, was noted dumped outside the floatplane hangar on 18.5.83 and again on 18.9.84.

VP-FAW DHC-6 Twin Otter Series 300 *c/n 546*

Ordered new from DHC by NERC for BAS on 26.4.77 (to replace VP-FAP) and first flew at Downsview 27.6.77 prior to handover to BAS on 11.7.77. Arrived at Rothera Station, Adelaide Island, at the end of 10.77 and undertook BAS support flights until it departed in 3.78 for Biggin Hill in the UK (via South and North America). Noted there on 27.3.78 prior to being leased to Loganair (a Glasgow-based airline) until 13.9.78 when it arrived at Fairoaks from Aberdeen off lease for maintenance by MAL. Departed for Biggin Hill 12.10.78 and left there on 18.10.78 for Rothera Station, where it landed on 14.11.78. On 2.3.79 it took-off from Rothera Station en route to the UK, arriving at Glasgow 29.3.79 on lease to Loganair. Arrived at Biggin Hill off lease 7.9.79 and was flown to MAL at Fairoaks on 10.9.79 for final preparations prior to flying out to Biggin Hill 11.9.79 en route to Rothera Station (via Toronto where it was seen on 18.9.79), which it reached in late 11.79. Left Rothera Station on 26.2.80 for Downsview and Calgary, Canada. At the latter location its BAS titles were removed before it took-off on 27.3.80 for the UK and a period of lease to Loganair until 5.9.80. On that date it departed Biggin Hill for Rothera Station, where it should have arrived on 23.11.80. However, it was delayed at Punta Arenas in Chile, initially with wheel/ski hydraulic problems and then by bad weather over the Antarctic Peninsula, and did not arrive at its destination until late 12.80. In late 2.81, the nose and nosewheel ski were badly damaged when the aircraft hit a hard sastrugi on take-off from the Mount Charity (Eternity Range) area. Local repair was not possible and it was dismantled, crated and (c7.3.81) put aboard 'Bransfield' which then sailed for Southampton, arriving there on 13.5.81. Off-loaded and

taken by road to MAL at Fairoaks for repairs. Upon completion it was leased to JEA (a Jersey-based airline) in 7.81, returning to Fairoaks on 7.9.81 for maintenance. Flown to Biggin Hill 4.10.81 en route to Rothera Station, where it arrived in mid-10.81. At Rothera Station on 18.11.81 both it and VP-FAZ were torn from their tie-down ropes in gales and overturned. The two badly-damaged aircraft were dismantled, crated and put on board 'Bransfield' to be returned to the UK. At the time of the Argentine invasion of the Falklands on 2.4.82 the ship was in Argentine coastal waters, but she proceeded to Faraday in the Argentine Islands and then, keeping south of 60°S (within the Treaty area), sailed east to the South Sandwich Islands before turning north for Southampton, where she berthed on 11.5.82. VP-FAW (and VP-FAZ) were taken to MAL at Fairoaks for damage assessment (noted there 29.5.82). VP-FAW was eventually WOC and its hulk was seen in a jig at Fairoaks on 17.12.84 awaiting scrapping (parts from it having been used to rebuild VP-FAZ). Still present on 6.8.85.

VP-FAX *Not allocated.*

VP-FAY BN-2A-27 Islander *c/n 872*

Built in Bucharest, Romania, by IRMA and test-flown there on 29.9.78 before being ferried as G-BFNN to Bembridge 10.12.78 for selling, painting and fitting out. Bought by the UK Overseas Development Administration for FIGAS and departed Bembridge on 12.9.79 for Port Stanley (via North and South America), landing at Stanley Airport 4.10.79. Flown during the evening of 1.4.82 from the Airport to the Racecourse so that a reconnaissance flight could be made from there at dawn on 2.4.82. That dawn flight was preempted by the Argentine invasion. Instead, the aircraft was flown back to Stanley Airport and impressed into Argentine service. Known Argentine-operated flights included one to Fox Bay East, West Falkland on 11.4.82 and another to Pebble Island airstrip, West Falkland on 23.4.82 (reportedly flown by a LADE pilot to assess the airstrip's suitability for use by such combat types as Mentors and Pucaras). The fuselage was severed by bomb-blast or cannon-fire (or both) during the 800 Sqn Sea Harrier attack on 1.5.82 and it was further damaged by shrapnel in subsequent British shelling and bombing. Noted derelict (minus salvageable parts) at RAF Stanley in 5.83 and 6.85.

Total airframe hours 917.45, including 30.30 flown by Argentine pilots.

VP-FAZ DHC-6 Twin Otter Series 310 *c/n 748*

Ordered new from DHC by NERC for BAS on 2.3.81. Accepted by BAS on 29.5.81 and later that year was flown to Rothera Station, Adelaide Island, arriving in early 11.81. While lashed down at Rothera Station airstrip on 18.11.81, both it and VP-FAW were torn from their tie-down ropes in gales and overturned. The badly damaged aircraft were dismantled, crated and loaded on 'Bransfield' in 3.82 before she sailed for Punta Arenas, Chile and the Falklands en route to the UK. At the time of the Argentine invasion of the Falklands on 2.4.82 the ship was in Argentine coastal waters, but she proceeded to Faraday

in the Argentine Islands and then, keeping south of 60°S (within the Antarctic Treaty area), sailed east to the South Sandwich Islands before turning north for Southampton, where she berthed on 11.5.82. VP-FAZ (and VP-FAW) were taken to MAL at Fairoaks for damage assessment (noted there on 29.5.82). After substantial repairs (using parts from VP-FAW) which involved rejigging and installation of a new empennage, it was restored to flying condition and flight-tested on 15.8.83. Flown out to Biggin Hill on 7.10.83 and departed there on 10.10.83 for Rothera Station (accompanied by VP-FBB and VP-FBC, the first time that three BAS aircraft had been deployed together to Antarctica) but was delayed at Punta Arenas by bad weather at its destination and did not reach there until the beginning of 11.83. It left for the UK in mid-3.84 and arrived at Fairoaks on 29.3.84. After servicing by MAL, the aircraft was stored until flown to Farnborough on 29.8.84 for the SBAC exhibition and display, returning to Fairoaks 11.9.84. On 29.9.84 it took-off for Biggin Hill and departed there 1.10.84 for Rothera Station, where it arrived on 25.10.84. Left Rothera Station on 16.3.85 and arrived at Fairoaks (via Cambridge) on 27.3.85. After its annual service, and the fitting of new equipment, the aircraft was stored prior to leaving for Biggin Hill on 20.9.85 en route to Rothera Station, where it landed on 7.10.85.

VP-FBA Cessna 172P *c/n 75309*

Purchased from CAC (ex temporary regn N62603) by the Governor of the Falkland Islands, R.M.Hunt, and ferried to Port Stanley in 1.82 to be based at Stanley Airport. Impressed by the Argentines following the invasion on 2.4.82. The aircraft was parked at the Airport during the 800 Sqn Sea Harrier raid on 1.5.82 and suffered bomb-blast and shrapnel-damage during that and later British shelling and bombing attacks. Inspection post-14.6.82 showed that it might be repairable, but seen almost derelict at RAF Stanley in 6.85.

Total airframe hours 96.00, but it is not known how many of those were flown by Argentine pilots.

VP-FBB DHC-6 Twin Otter Series 310 *c/n 783*

Ordered new from DHC by NERC for BAS on 22.1.82. Test-flown at Downsview as C-GDKL before handover to BAS on 19.3.82. Noted at Toronto on 28.4.82 still marked as C-GDKL but with VP-FBB taped over. Flown to the UK, arriving at Fairoaks on 1.6.82 prior to being leased to JEA (a Jersey-based airline) c6.7.82. Returned to Fairoaks off lease on 2.8.82 for servicing before flying out to Biggin Hill 6.10.82 and setting off from there on 7.10.82 for Rothera Station, Adelaide Island, where it landed on 20.10.82. Left Rothera Station in mid-3.83 and arrived back at Fairoaks 29.3.83 for maintenance. Leased to the SPR1, it was flown to Biggin Hill on 8.4.83 and from there to Spitzbergen for survey work. Returned to Fairoaks off lease on 10.5.83, from where it made a number of flights prior to leaving for Biggin Hill on 7.10.83. On 10.10.83 it departed there for Rothera Station (accompanied by VP-FAZ and VP-FBB, the first time that three BAS aircraft had been deployed together to Antarctica) but was delayed

at Punta Arenas in Chile by bad weather at its destination and did not reach there until the beginning of 11.83. It left for the UK in mid-3.84 to be overhauled by MAL at Fair Oaks (arriving 29.3.84) prior to storage there. Flown to Biggin Hill on 25.9.84 and departed there 1.10.84 for Rothera Station, where it landed on 25.10.84. After the summer BAS support flights it took-off from Rothera Station on 16.3.85 and arrived back at Fair Oaks on 28.3.85 for maintenance and the fitting of new equipment. After a period of storage, the aircraft was flown to Cambridge on 28.5.85 and from there to Le Bourget, Paris for the "Air Salon". Returned to Fair Oaks (via Cambridge) on 10.6.85 and remained there until 20.9.85 when it left for Biggin Hill en route to Rothera Station, where it arrived on 7.10.85.

VP-FBC DHC-6 Twin Otter Series 310
c/n 787

Ordered new from DHC by NERC for BAS on 22.1.82 and first flew from Downsview 12.3.82 marked as C-GDIU (a temporary test regn) before handover on 19.3.82. Seen at Toronto 28.4.82 still marked as C-GDIU but with VP-FBC taped over. Arrived at Cambridge on 6.5.82 and by 30.5.82 was on lease to JEA (a Jersey-based airline). The lease having ended, it was flown from Leavesden to Fair Oaks on 25.9.82 for servicing by MAL. Departed 6.10.82 for Kidlington (via Wycombe Air Park) and set off from there on 7.10.82 en route to Rothera Station, Adelaide Island, arriving on 20.10.82. Left there in mid-3.83 for MAL at Fair Oaks, where it landed on 29.3.83. On 7.10.83 it was flown out to Biggin Hill and departed there 10.10.83 for Rothera Station, Adelaide Island (accompanied by VP-FAZ and VP-FBB, the first time that three BAS aircraft had deployed together to Antarctica) but was delayed at Punta Arenas in Chile because of bad weather at its destination and did not reach there until the beginning of 11.83. It left for the UK in mid-3.84 to be overhauled at Fair Oaks (arriving 29.3.84) prior to storage there. Flown to Biggin Hill on 29.9.84 and departed there 1.10.84 for Rothera Station, where it landed on 25.10.84. After the summer BAS support flights it took-off from Rothera Station on 16.3.85 and arrived back at Fair Oaks on 28.3.85 for maintenance and the fitting of new

equipment. After a period of storage, the aircraft left for Biggin Hill on 20.9.85 en route to Rothera Station, where it arrived on 7.10.85.

VP-FBD UH-1H Iroquois c/n 13934

A former CAB601 helicopter (AE-424) captured in good condition on Port Stanley Racecourse by British forces on 14.6.82 and later renovated for FIGAS use [see CAB601 notes and Iroquois Individual Aircraft Details].

VP-FBD BN-2B-26 Islander c/n 2160

Built in Bucharest, Romania by IAVB and test-flown there on 29.3.83 before being ferried as G-BKJK to PBN, Bembridge on 20.7.84 for selling, painting and fitting out. Bought by the FI Govt for FIGAS (replacing VP-FBE) and allotted the regn VP-FBD previously allocated to (and worn by) the FIGAS UH-1H. During 10/11.85 the aircraft was being prepared at Bembridge and Hurn (painting) for shipment to Port Stanley during 12.85.

VP-FBE DHC-2 Beaver c/n 1568

Purchased second-hand in Canada (ex C-GNGN) by the FI Govt for FIGAS. On 18.10.82 the Canadian regn was cancelled and the aircraft crated and shipped to Port Stanley on 'Aes' in 12.82. Unpacked, assembled as a floatplane and then flight-tested from Stanley Harbour 20.1.83. Noted at RAF Stanley on 18.10.84 (having recently been converted to a landplane) and continued to fly from there until WFU in 1.85 and advertised for sale. Dismantled and crated before departing on 2.4.85 aboard 'Bransfield' for Grimsby in the UK, arriving there 4.5.85. Unloaded and stored in Grimsby pending sale (probably to Canada). Still stored (crated) in mid-9.85 awaiting a buyer.

VP-FBF BN-2B-27 Islander c/n 2125

Built in Bucharest, Romania by IAVB and test-flown there on 24.1.82 before being ferried as G-BJEK to PBN, Bembridge 23.2.82 for selling, painting and fitting out. Purchased for FIGAS using Falkland Islands Rehabilitation Funds provided by the UK. Both it and VP-FBG were dismantled and crated before

being transported from Bembridge to Ridham Dock, Gravesend and loaded on 'Kirsten Smits' which sailed on 4.1.83 and arrived in Stanley Harbour 16.2.83. Between 28.2 and 4.3.83, the crates were airlifted by 18 Sqn Chinook to RAF Stanley where VP-FBF was unpacked, assembled and then flight-tested on 28.3.83 before entering service. Still operated by FIGAS in 9.85 and based at RAF Stanley.

VP-FBG BN-2B-26 Islander c/n 2126

Built in Bucharest, Romania by IAVB and test-flown there on 30.1.82 before being ferried as G-BJOJ to PBN, Bembridge 9.3.82 for selling, painting and fitting out. Purchased for FIGAS using Falkland Islands Rehabilitation Funds provided by the UK. Both it and VP-FBF were dismantled and crated before being transported from Bembridge to Ridham Dock, Gravesend and loaded on 'Kirsten Smits' which sailed on 4.1.83 and arrived in Stanley Harbour 16.2.83. Between 28.2 and 4.3.83, the crates were airlifted by 18 Sqn Chinook to RAF Stanley where VP-FBG was unpacked, assembled and then flight-tested on 25.3.83 before entering service. Still operated by FIGAS in 9.85 and based at RAF Stanley.

VP-FBH Cessna F172N c/n F.2024

Purchased by the Chartres Sheep Farming Company Limited, Chartres, West Falkland from Rogers Aviation, Cranfield, UK (ex G-BIRJ) to replace VP-FAS. Seen crated at Cranfield on 17.1.83 shortly before shipment to Port Stanley. Assembled by FIGAS at RAF Stanley in 4.83 to be based at Chartres and still in use there in 9.85.

VP-FBI Not allocated.

VP-FBJ Cessna F172P c/n F.2083

Purchased by R.M.Pitaluga of Gibraltar Station, Salvador, East Falkland from Westair, Cranfield, UK (ex G-BHKG) to replace VP-FAR. Seen crated at Cranfield on 17.1.83 shortly before shipment to Port Stanley. Assembled by FIGAS at RAF Stanley in 4.83 to be based at Salvador. Seriously damaged (propeller, mainplane and fin) in a taxing accident in a high wind at Salvador on 23.9.85. To be repaired by FIGAS at RAF Stanley.

FALKLAND ISLANDS — WAR LOSSES

To be read in conjunction with the Falkland Islands Civil Aircraft Register & Individual Aircraft Details. Where relevant, reference should also be made to the history of FIGAS [see Falkland Islands Internal Air Ser-

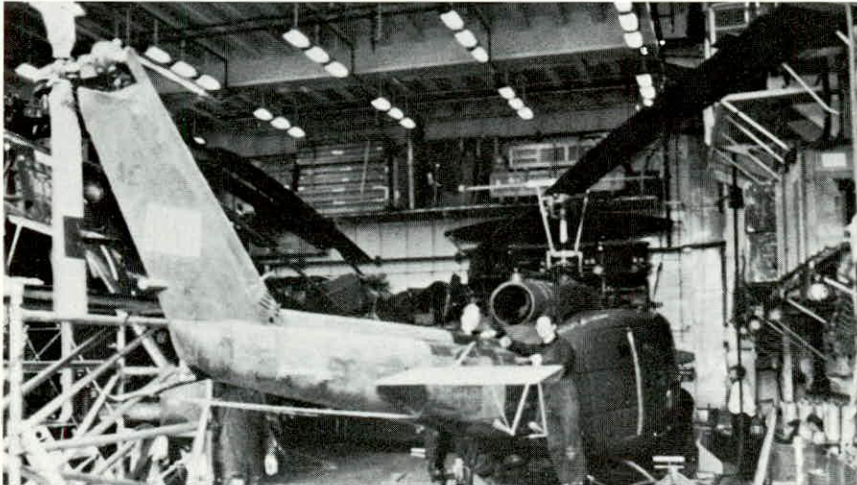
vices]. Losses are listed by type in date and time order. The number in the left-hand column is cumulative, leading to the final total of Falkland Islands aircraft losses.

BN-2A ISLANDER				CESSNA 172M/172P				Losses 3	
Loss 1									
1	VP-FAY	FIGAS	1.5.82	c1110Z	3	VP-FAR	R.M.Pitaluga	1.5.82	et seq
DHC-2 BEAVER				Loss 1					
2	VP-FAT	FIGAS	11/12.6.82	unknown	4	VP-FAS	Chartres Sheep Farming Co Ltd	1.5.82	et seq
					5	VP-FBA	FI Governor, R.Hunt	1.5.82	et seq



The transformation of "Hernandez" from AE-424 to VP-FBD.

..... untouched on Port Stanley Racecourse.



..... during rub-down in 'Invincible'.



..... the finished product.

*(Top) S. Van Tramp;
(Others) Lt S. A. George, RN)*

THE PENGUIN NEWS

THE FALKLAND ISLANDS NEWS MAGAZINE

VICTORY

The date : MONDAY, 14th JUNE 1982

The place : NOT "Puerto Rivero", "Puerto de las Islas Malvinas" OR "Puerto Argentino" BUT PORT STANLEY, FALKLAND ISLANDS

The event : Surrender of all Argentine forces in the Islands

FREEDOM AND A FUTURE

The following message reached Prime Minister Thatcher in the early hours of Tuesday, 15th June 1982 -

" H.Q. Land Forces Falkland Islands, Port Stanley.

In Port Stanley at 9 o'clock pm Falkland Islands time tonight 14th June 1982, Major General Menendez surrendered to me all the Argentine Armed Forces in East and West Falkland, together with their impediments.

Arrangements are in hand to assemble the men for return to Argentina, to gather their arms and equipment, and to make safe their munitions.

The Falkland Islands are once again under the government desired by their inhabitants. God save the Queen."

(Signed) J. J. Moore.

