

~~SECRET~~

UNCLASS/NPM

ANNEX A TO HMS VALIANT'S  
226 DATED 26 JULY 1982

NARRATIVE

Period 151800Z to 172359Z MAY - Operations off MAR DEL PLAT

1. HMS VALIANT entered the hostilities zone, defined by Latitude 35 S, at 1800Z on 15 May. The submarine was in excellent material shape, after a transit of 7,000 miles at over 500 miles per day. The only defect of note during the passage had been the failure of the Port Main Extraction pump which was replaced during the transit and had resulted in the total delay of some 24 hours in reaching the hostilities area. The largest problem on passage was the inability to guarantee successful reception of the SSIXs broadcast, but the combination of the allocation of Channel 5 and the increase in distance from the null experienced in equatorial latitudes, caused this problem soon to become a thing of the past.
2. The high SOA required on passage had precluded any operational training which involved the actual manoeuvring of the submarine. Nonetheless much attack team training on and off the watch was achieved, simulating own ship movements by hand inputs to log and compass retransmission units, and making full use of the TGTA II. Torpedo countermeasures were also repeatedly practised until whole-ship reaction was instantaneous and instinctive.
3. The submarine was therefore in a high state of operational preparedness when, at 170030Z May, transit to initial patrol areas was interrupted on receipt of COR 304 allocating the high priority task of intercepting and attacking the ARG submarine SAN LUIS, believed to be transiting to PUERTO BELGRANO. The intercept area was some 200 miles distant, in waters of 40-50 fathoms depth, and course was shaped accordingly, at an initial speed of 24 knots, with interception calculated to occur at 171500Z.

EVENTS 01 & 02 OPERATIONS AGAINST ARG SUBMARINE SAN LUIS

4. Weather conditions were flat calm, and sonar conditions excellent although heavily degraded by BIO, giving a predicted range against an S209 class on main motors of less than 2Kyd; 10Kyd snorting. It was considered highly unlikely that SAN LUIS would be snorting so close to her predicted surfacing position; more likely she would be deep, at economical speed and in all probability ahead of assigned PIM. There was considerable danger of counterdetection, and in order to minimise this it was decided to get as far up-track as possible as early as possible, and then patrol at periscope depth where the towed array had the greatest chance of being off the sea bed, and where the periscope could be used in assisting classification.
5. The submarine was in position by 171030Z. A contact, initially promising, was identified visually as a trawler (S23), and this contact remained within the general area during the rest of the day, often confusing the towed array picture with bursts of cavitation, flutter, diesel signature and tonals. Sonar was beset by a plethora of contacts, some fast moving and some suddenly

starting as though they were "lighting off" on diesels, and aware that any opportunity would be fleeting, the submarine remained with bow-caps open ready to fire throughout the day. At 1220 a fast moving passive contact (S36) was detected bearing 250. Although some 3 hours earlier than expected, it was our best contact to date and the submarine went to Action Stations to attack it. The contact moved rapidly South (SAN LUIS would be going North), and in manoeuvring to keep it within sonar arcs another possible contact was gained (S38) bearing 250 moving fast right. Active Sonar was used in an attempt to obtain a FCS but a large number of bottom/spurious contacts was presented and contact S38 faded. This type of event was to be a feature of the next six hours, during which 190 different contacts were plotted on the CEP. A hard copy of the 2001 palliative (PANDORA) is attached at Fig. 1 to show a typical 20 minute period.

6. At 1452 another promising contact was gained (S92) to the East moving left. A rapid ranging manoeuvre gave 1936 range of 1600 yds, and VALIANT was on the point of cutting the firing bearing when the "contact" split, passing down either side at 200 yds. Further attempts at relocation produced intermittent detections, but none with sufficient confidence or collateral to justify firing, and subsequent careful re-examination of the LOP confirms that no meaningful solution was obtainable. Nevertheless much disappointment was felt, and it will never be known for sure whether S92 was a missed opportunity, although on-board analysis points yet again to a BIO contact. Most pundits would agree that a great deal of luck would be necessary for an SSN to hold an S209 class on main motors long enough to attack it, even without the unpredictable distractions caused by fish, fishermen and amorous sea mammals.

