

recorded passage south and at the low spot of the war on the day that HMS Coventry and the Atlantic Conveyor were sunk. Admiral Sandy Woodward ordered the ship in to support the land battle by providing urgently needed naval bombardment. The frigates had to operate on a narrow gun line between the known mine fields and the Kelp. The Argentine batteries opened return fire and suddenly all on board heard a whoosh and an exocet missile flew five feet over the ship's flight deck. Fortunately for Captain Hugo White the exocet had been incorrectly set and its radar head not activated. Had it been so then it would have been HMS Avenger's first and last night in action.

Luck stayed with HMS Avenger as some weeks later when the Argentines were running out of exocets but were nevertheless making a do or die attempt to hit HMS Invincible. The Argentine intelligence was incorrect and so the six aircraft sent to take out the aircraft carrier came across HMS Avenger and HMS Exeter firing carrying Special Boat Service to a planning landing on the North side of the islands. A short, sharp engagement took place with HMS Avenger and HMS Exeter firing chaff to deflect missiles and the ship's gunners hitting two planes of which cartwheeled into the sea beside Avenger. Two bombs narrowly missed the ship and then the remaining Argentine planes gave up and flew back to base.

Captain Hugo White then took the Argentine surrender at Fox Bay, this was a unique experience. His next job was that of Principal

Admiral White was also given this first direct immersion into NATO within the American dominated Atlantic Striking Fleet.

In 1988 he was appointed Assistant Chief of Naval Staff which in effect is Chief Executive to the First Sea Lord. Once again this was a crucial period for the Royal Navy as the post cold war 'Options for Change' were under hot debate. The Gulf War also broke out and so the Admiral experienced the responsibility of directing a war from outside the battlefield. The Command centre was at High Wycombe in Middlesex. So within a decade he experienced war from both ends of the spectrum.

In 1991 he was made a Knight Commander of the Bath, appointed Flag Officer Scotland and Northern Ireland and also given the NATO appointments of Commander Northern Sub-Area Eastern Atlantic and Commander Nore Sub-Area Channel Command. In layman's language this meant the Northern Atlantic and the shallow seas around the United Kingdom and Northern Europe. Ironically it became his task to implement many of the difficult decisions taken during his time at the Ministry of Defence. Sir Hugo White was appointed Admiral in 1992 with command of the United Kingdom's only fleet and a headquarters at Northwood. He was also the NATO commander of Channel Command and as such was one of the three major NATO commanders; the others being Americans. This involved many

(Continued on page 11)