

Between Ascension and San Carlos

Introduction: This is a hypothetical encounter between Argentine and British surface forces during the Falklands War in 1982. An Argentine Surface Action Group (SAG) will intercept one of the British convoys bound to the Falklands with reinforcements.

It was first played on 4 July 1986 at Origins '86. While some designations have been updated, the scenario is otherwise unchanged.

Environment: It is 1000 local time, with the wind from 090°T at 20 knots. Sea State is 4. Visibility is 80°. Sonar performance is 90% of normal, with a convergence zone from 29 to 32 nmi.

UK Operational Situation: The British forces are building up for their planned assault of the island. This convoy includes troops and supplies that will be vital for the invasion. The convoy is being escorted, but there is only a minimal chance of Argentine interference.

UK Tactical Situation: The British convoy is proceeding south at a high transit speed, escorted by a group of destroyers and frigates. The submarine threat is white, with all Argentine subs positively located. The air threat is yellow, with snoopers occasionally reconnoitering the convoy's position and progress. The surface threat is also yellow, with several major units of the Argentine Navy unaccounted for.

The merchant ships are considered more valuable than the warships, since the loss of one or two combatants would not delay or prevent the invasion as much as the loss of the supplies.

UK Orders: Ensure that the supplies and troops carried by the convoy arrive off the Falklands unmolested.

UK Forces:

Escort Group:

Glamorgan (County Batch 2 DDG) with one Lynx HAS.2 embarked

Cardiff (Type 42 Batch 1 DDG)

Broadsword (Type 22 Batch 1 FF) with two Lynx HAS.2 embarked

Minerva (*Leander* Batch 2 (Exocet) FF)

Active (Type 21 FF) with one Lynx HAS.2 embarked

Olwen ("Ol" class AO)

Convoy:

Tanker *Anco Charger*

Trawler *Cordelia*

Ro-Ro freighter *Elk*

Troop transport *Europic Ferry*

UK Victory Conditions:

Decisive: The convoy leaves the southern map edge with no merchant ship damaged 25%.

Tactical: The convoy leaves the southern map edge with no merchant ship damaged 50%.

Argentine Operational Situation: Strong British surface forces have established a blockade around the Malvinas. With Vienticinco de Mayo out of action because of an engineering casualty, General Belgrano represents the strongest unit in the Fleet. The naval staff believes that sending even a strong surface group against the British forces would probably result in a costly defeat. However, the reinforcement convoys from Ascension are not as well-protected, and a victory against one of them would have profound military and political effects.

Argentine Tactical Situation: Patrol aircraft have been tracking the location and progress of a reinforcement convoy. A Surface Action Group led by *General Belgrano* will intercept the convoy. Because of the patrol aircraft, they know the location, course and speed, and composition of the British force.

Argentine Orders: Intercept and inflict as much damage on the convoy as possible. Vessels that are sunk are better than damaged ship. Inflicting damage on merchant vessels and their cargoes is better than attacking warships, but it may be necessary to disable one or more combatants to facilitate the attack on the merchants.

Argentine Forces:

General Belgrano (Ex-US *Brooklyn* Second Group CL) with one Alouette III embarked
Santísima Trinidad (UK Type 42 DDG) with one Lynx Mk23 embarked
Segui, Hipolito Bouchard (both ex-US *Allen M. Sumner* DD)
with one Alouette III each embarked
Drummond, Guerrico (both French A69 FF)

Argentine Victory Conditions:

Decisive: Two merchants crippled (50% damage).

Tactical: One merchant vessel crippled.