.

OFFICE OF COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF, FLEET

NORTHWOOD

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See Distribution

28 May 82

#### LOSS OF HMS SHEFFIELD - BOARD OF INQUIRY

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- 2. Specifically you should ascertain and identify by questioning those involved and other available witnesses the matters listed in Annex A. Although the matters in Annex A are significant, they are not intended to be exhaustive and all other areas of inquiry deemed pertinent should be scrutinized.
- 3. The Commanding Officer, HMS SHEFFTELD's preliminary report is at Annex B.
- 4. Should any information come to light which the President considers should be communicated urgently to me or to any member of my staff, such information is to be sent by any appropriate manner in anticipation of completion of the inquiry.
- 5. A list of those on board HMS SHEFFIELD on 4 May 1982 is at Annex C.
- 6. The inquiry is to be conducted in accordance with the directions contained in QRRN Chapter 23, Appendix 38, and FLAGO 1619.
- 7. The report of the board is to be accompanied by minutes of evidence, or statements taken, and is to contain an expression of opinion on the degrees of adequacy of personnel, material and procedures.
- 8. The report is to be signed by each member of the board and is to be forwarded in original and unstapled form. The President is to deliver his report personally and brief me on the principle findings.
- 9. Shorthand writers will be detailed from the offices of the Commander-in-Chief Fleet, Flag Officer Plymouth and Flag Officer Portsmouth.

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#### Annexes:

- A. Specimen Matters for Investigation.
- B. The Commanding Officer HMS SHEFFIELD's Report dated 26 May 82.
- C. List of personnel on board HMS SHEFFIELD on 4 May 82.

#### Distribution:

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Royal Navy

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#### SPECIMEN MATTERS FOR INVESTIGATION

#### Operational

- 1. The Task Group Commander's assessment of the threat before the attack.
- 2. The Task Group Commander's intentions and policies in force at the time of the attack.
- 3. The Task Group communications plan before the attack.
- 4. The disposition of the Task Group.
- 5. The degree of readiness of the Task Group, and the ship, before, during, and after the attack.
- 6. The ships OPDEF state immediately before the attack.
- 7. The manning states of operations teams, weapons, propulsion and generation systems, and the locations of personnel.
- 8. The damage control state and condition immediately before, and at the time of, the attack.
- 9. The nature and sequence of events before, during and after the attack.
- 10. The use of countermeasures, including chaff, against the attack.
- 11. Whether, and how, the ship's weapon systems and sensors were used.

#### Design/Maintenance

- 12. The adequacy of the Type 42's weapon and sensor fit and its ability to react to the threat.
- 13. The adequacy of the damage control and fire fighting organisation, procedures, equipment and training.
- 14. Any problems arising from the design and layout of Type 42 destroyers and their machinery and equipment, with particular regard to any hazardous materials.
- 15. The degree of readiness of, and confidence in, all weapons, sensors and communication equipments, including the degree to which standard operator checks and performance servicing logs were used.
- 16. Any shortcomings in machinery operating procedures.
- 17. The influence, if any, of the material state of the ship on events.

#### Environmental

- 18. The environmental conditions and observed effect on air picture compilation.
- 19. Any evidence of stress affecting the ship's company before the attack.

20. Any evidence of efficiency being reduced because of seasickness, shortage of sleep, or length of time closed up at action and defence stations, or any other cause.

#### Training

- 21. The adequacy or otherwise of individual training and preparation of personnel.
- 22. The adequacy or otherwise of whole-ship training and preparation of personnel.

### Administrative/Medical

- 23. Whether those trained in First Aid were adequate in numbers and in expertise.
- 24. Whether First Aid parties were closed up.
- 25. Whether access to the Sick Bay and First Aid stations was affected by damage.
- 26. Whether any casualties were treated.
- 27. Whether any clinical diagnoses of causes of death were established.
- 28. Whether man-made fibres rather than cotton were worn by personnel, and whether these fibres contributed to burns.
- 29. Any evidence of toxic fumes arising from electrical cable insulation, plastics, cushions, etc.
- 30. Any evidence to assist towards the registration of deaths, and towards giving further information to next-of-kin, such as where each fatal casualty was last seen, his apparent physical condition at that time, and known or conjectured cause and circumstances of death.

#### Rescue and Salvage

- 31. Brief narrative of immediate rescue assistance by other ships to HMS SHEFFIELD and her personnel.
- 32. Brief narrative of taking in tow, and eventual sinking.
- 33. Summary of equipment, materials, etc salvaged from the ship before she sank.

HMS NELSON Portsmouth

Commander-in-Chief Fleet Eastbury Park Northwood Middlesex HA6 3HP

22 July 1982

#### Sir

- 1. We have the honour to report that, in accordance with your instructions dated 28 May 82, we have conducted an investigation into the circumstances leading to and attending the disablement, and later sinking, of HMS SHEFFIELD under the command of Captain J F T G SALT, Royal Navy. Our report is attached. Our conclusions and recommendations are at Annexes A and B respectively. Summarised main conclusions and recommendations fall at the end of this covering letter. Our report is generally chronological but is also divided thematically, the principal sections covering Operations, Damage Control and Fire Fighting, Medical and Salvage.
- 2. A preliminary investigation was carried out by Ship's Officers. Although the Board does not agree with all the conclusions or the analysis leading to them, we found it most helpful.
- 3. The Board sat in HMS NELSON and was provided with all necessary facilities. Witnesses were called from HM Ships SHEFFIELD, GLASGOW and COVENTRY, together with expert witnesses on ship stability, ventilation, materials, GWS 30 drill and the EXOCET missile. CTG's views were signalled to us. Evidence was taken at Fleet Headquarters and RNH HASLAR.

#### Situation

- 4. On Saturday 1 May, the Task Group (TG) commenced operations in the Total Exclusion Zone (TEZ). On that first day SHEFFIELD went to Action Stations and State 1, Condition ZULU on numerous occasions at Air Warning YELLOW. However, because radar detection ranges on Argentinian aircraft of some 160 miles were being achieved, and because attacks were made only on the NGS Group inshore, the routine was subsequently modified and Action Stations were delayed until Air Warning RED. SHEFFIELD and others were dogged by what they considered to be ESM induced false alarms, believing that Mirage III radar was being wrongly identified as the AGAVE radar (nicknamed CONDOR) of the Argentinian SUPER ETENDARD (SUPER E). The 2 and 3 May were quiet and the ship settled into a Defence Watch routine. The Air Warning remained YELLOW throughout.
- 5. CTG and TG ships had been provided with a large amount of intelligence data. On the crucial question of whether Argentinian SUPER Es had Air-to-Air Refuelling and EXOCET (AM 39) capabilities, and hence whether ships were liable to AM 39 attack on 4 May, CTG and SHEFFIELD had much the same information, showing that such an attack was quite possible. However, SHEFFIELD rated the AM 39 danger lower, and the submarine threat higher, than did CTG.

#### The Attack

At the time of the attack, on the afternoon of 4 May, SHEFFIELD was the southerly of three Type 42 destroyers disposed on an Air Defence Screen about 18 miles to the West, up threat, from the main body. AAWC was in INVINCIBLE and Flag in HERMES. The weather was fair and cool with a calm sea and 2m swell. The ship was in Defence Watches and Damage Control State 2, Condition YANKEE. An overt policy was in force and SHEFFIELD was transmitting on radar, sonar, HF. UHF and SHF. 

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- subsequently gained two 965 contacts at about 40 miles. GLASGOW reported the raid on AAWC HF and AAWC UHF, released it to LINK 10, reporting "ONEX", and called the racket as "CONDOR 245". GLASGOW went to Action Stations and fired Chaff D. Paints had been seen in INVINCIBLE at 50 and 30 miles which correlated with GLASGOW's CONDOR report. CAP were told to investigate but found nothing. The AAWC did not accept GLASGOW's classification of the raid and declared the contacts to be spurious. ZIPPO 4 was not called by the AAWC and Air Warning remained YELLOW.
- 8. At about 15 miles the two attacking SUPER Es swung to starboard away from GLASGOW and towards SHEFFIELD. In SHEFFIELD, UAA1 XXXXXXXXXXX The raid was not engaged. The ship remained at Defence Stations and in
  - One missile struck the ship at 2 Deck starboard between the Galley and the Forward Auxiliary Machinery Room, (FAMR) and Forward Engine Room, (FER). A possible second missile missed and ditched close by. Argentinian launch aircraft flew down ship's head, perhaps to observe XXXXXXXXXXXXXXX the results of the attack.

# Damage Control and Fire Fighting

10. The missile's impact left a 15 feet by 4 feet hole in the ship's side and caused widespread minor shock damage, typically the buckling of doors and collapse of ladders. Evidence indicates that the Warhead did not detonate. There are few reports of shrapnel. Large fires broke out immediately in the FAMR/FER area. The overwhelming initial impression is of the very rapid spread of acrid black smoke through the centre section of the ship and upwards, as far as the Bridge. This smoke very quickly forced evacuation of the Machinery Control Room, Main Communications Office, HQ1 and the Bridge, followed after a few minutes by the Ops Room and later the complete Forward Section of the ship and the forward superstructure. Missile propellant and burning Dieso from the FAMR Service and Ready Use Tanks were the main sources of this smoke, which was responsible for the early and almost complete loss of the ship's fighting capability. Smoke clearance was unsuccessful forward and only partially successful aft.

- 11. The Firemain was breached at impact. Pressure was lost immediately and was never restored. Of the four fire pumps, C was probably damaged by shock, it would not start. K had been running, but stopped at impact and would not restart. L similarly stopped at impact, but was restarted. However, attempted isolations were unsuccessful and Firemain continued to discharge overboard through the hole until L Fire Pump subsequently failed. N was defective. The lack of Firemain pressure was crucial, as it removed any real chance of tackling the fires. Fire fighting was largely restricted to external boundary cooling, using portable pumps and buckets, and this had little or no effect on the fires raging within the ship.
- 13. The control of fire fighting and other activity after impact lacked cohesion. No emergency HQ1 was established, it was not clear where Command of the Ship was located, the control of personnel was unco-ordinated and, in particular, inadequate checks were made on which Quarters had been abandoned and which were still closed up.
- 14. Much external assistance was provided. To port, ARROW did an excellent job of boundary cooling, supplying hoses and general support. Conditions for YARMOUTH, to starboard, were less easy. Both ships' efforts were bedevilled by frequent spurious submarine and torpedo alarms.
- 15. Twenty Officers and Ratings died. Some personnel, in the Galley area, were killed on impact. Others were asphyxiated, later, either attempting to escape, re-entering the ship or staying at their quarters to try and restore the ship's fighting capability. Twenty-six were injured, all of whom are making a satisfactory recovery.

## Abandon Ship and Salvage Attempts

- 16. At O41750Z there was still no Firemain, the fires were spreading, the Sea Dart Magazine was thought to be at risk and the ship's fighting capability had been largely destroyed. With the tactical situation in mind, the Captain ordered hands to abandon ship. Most climbed over to ARROW, a few went to YARMOUTH by Gemini, some were flown to HERMES.
- 17. The fires burned fiercely for a further two days. However, SHEFFIELD remained afloat, upright and with an even trim and normal draught. Salvage was attempted, and SHEFFIELD was towed to the edge of the TEZ. Here, in deteriorating weather, she began to ship water through the missile entry hole, developed an increasing list to starboard and eventually, at about 100700Z May, rolled over and sank in position 52011'S 53050'W in 1000 fathoms. There was no Towing Crew onboard.

#### Conclusions

18. HMS SHEFFIELD was lost, together with 20 of her Company, as the result of a single AM 39 hit, starboard side, 2 Deck in J Section. A further 26 of the Ship's Company were injured, mostly suffering burns, shock or smoke inhalation.

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- 20. A significant portion of the ship filled, very soon after impact, with thick acrid smoke. This smoke critically hampered fire fighting attempts and control of ship propulsion. It was responsible for the early and virtually complete loss of the ship's fighting capability. Smoke clearance was unsuccessful forward and only partially successful aft.
- 21. Firemain pressure was lost immediately and was never restored. As a result, fire fighting was largely restricted to external boundary cooling, using portable electrically driven pumps (and buckets), and had little effect on the internal fires which rapidly gained hold of much of H, J and K Sections from 4 Deck up to 02 Deck and subsequently spread forward and aft. Several determined re-entry attempts were made but all were beaten back by heat and smoke.

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- 23. Despite the danger of further attack, protracted fire fighting assistance was provided by YARMOUTH and ARROW. The latter's efforts were particularly determined. Spurious submarine and torpedo alarms prejudiced this assistance.
- 24. After fighting the fire for nearly four hours, and with the situation deteriorating, and he being convinced that the ship's fighting capability was irremediably destroyed, the Captain ordered hands to abandon ship at about 041750Z. No further lives were lost or injuries incurred. We consider this decision necessary, brave and right.
- 25. Subsequent salvage attempts were unsuccessful. SHEFFIELD was taken in tow by YARMOUTH and reached the edge of the TEZ. However, at about 100700Z SHEFFIELD rolled over to starboard and sank in position 52°11'S 53°50'W in about 1000 fathoms. There is no serious possibility of compromise of classified material.

29: There were many fine examples of individual bravery in the efforts to save SHEFFIELD. The Board have drawn those of which they are aware to the attention of the Captain. We consider the conduct of the WEO, Lieutenant Commander J S WOODHEAD, Royal Navy and the Computer Room Crew, and of POMEM BRIGGS (all deceased), are particularly praiseworthy.

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#### Recommendations.

30. General. Training and doctrine for defence against sea skimming missiles must highlight the supreme importance of vigilance, and of instant, full reactions on first indication of possible attack.

# 31. In relation to Type 42 Destroyers

- a. Improvements in self defensive capability against the sea skimmer are urgently required.
- b. Arrangements for maintenance or restoration of firemain pressure following extensive damage are essential.
- c. Methods of preserving the ability to control and fight the ship in dense smoke should be investigated.

e. Smoke clearance arrangements require review.

We have the honour to be, Sir, Your obedient Servants Sac

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#### ANNEXES:

- A. Conclusions
- B. Recommendations
- C. Ship's History and Equipment Fit
- D. CORPORATE Deployment to TEZ
- E. NBCD and Air Defence Training Achieved
- F. OPDEFs and Defects
- G. Intelligence Assessments
- H. Narrative of Attack
- J. Analysis of Attack and Response
- K. Post Attack Narrative
- L. Post Attack Analysis
- M. Fire and Materials
- N. Salvage Phase Narrative
- P. Salvage Phase Analysis
- Q. Casualties
- R. Analysis of Casualties, First Aid and Medical Factors
- S. CTG Lessons Learnt
- T. List of Witnesses
- U. Minutes of Evidence (Separate from Report, in three boxes)
- V. CINCFLEET's Directive
- W. HMS SHEFFIELD Report (Separate from Report, in 13 volumes)

ANNEX

The principal conclusions of the Board are:-		٠.
 1. HMS SHEFFIELD was lost, together with 20 members of her Ship's Company, following a single AM 39 EXOCET hit, on the starboard side, 2 Deck in J Section. Impact was at about 1403Z on 4 May.	H, J, N, P,	
2. Photographs and verbal evidence indicate that the AM 39 Warhead did not detonate as designed.	L	
3. Only one body was recovered. Careful enquiry indicates that the other 19 died on impact or, later, by asphyxiation. There is no possibility that any of these men survived.	Q, R	
4. A further 26 of the Ship's Company were injured, mostly suffering burns, shock or smoke inhalation. Only one is still in hospital. He is making a good recovery. The remainder have returned to duty. First aid was very well handled.	4	
 5. SHEFFIELD's assessment of the threat on 4 May acknowledged the possibility of SUPER E/EXOCET attack, and that such an attack could be at low level. However other types of attack, particularly from submarines, were considered more likely.	G	
 6. The Commanding Officer was satisfied with the state of the Ship's Training. With the exception of some aspects of Ops Room Training and the GDP Crew, the Board consider the ship's efforts in this respect were commendable.	D, E	
 7. Although the attitude on board was tense, and no evidence has suggested complacency, some were beginning to get bored and a little frustrated by inactivity. Stress, sea sickness and tiredness were not important factors.	J, R	<i>0</i> 38
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CONCLUSIONS

- 14. If all the right reactions had been taken, very quickly indeed, and in particular if Chaff D had been fired on receipt of the CONDOR racket from GLASGOW, it might just have been possible to frustrate this determined and very professional SUPER E/EXOCET attack.
- 15. In any such circumstances the provision of longer warning, as from AEW, must enhance the chances of successful defence.
- 16. Some shortcomings in the Type 42's self defence capabilities against such an attack were borne out by the evidence heard. The most important of these are:
  - a. Lack of a Jammer.
  - b. The very high reliance demanded of a number of operators if a Sea Dart of 4.5 inch versus sea skimmer engagement is to have any chance of success.
  - c. Lack of a Point Defence System.
  - d. Inadequate simulator provision, particularly for realistic 909 low target acquisition practice.
- 17. A significant portion of the ship filled, extremely quickly, with thick acrid black smoke. Initially, this was caused by unused propellant (RDX/nitrocellulose/nitroglycerine), the combustion products of which include nitric oxide and carbon monoxide, and by Dieso; to which were later added noxious and toxic fire products from furnishings and other combustible materials.
- 18. The smoke critically affected the ensuing struggle to control and save the ship. The Bridge, MCR and HQ1 had to be abandoned soon after impact, followed by the Ops Room, Forward Section Base and Sea Dart Quarters. Forward, smoke clearance measures were not effective. Aft, they were partially successful.
- 19. In a very few minutes, the ship's fighting capability was reduced to a negligible level, largely due to smoke.
- 20. The WEO and Computer Room Crew lost their lives, almost certainly by asphyxiation, following their very brave efforts to bring the ship's weapon systems back into service.
- 21. Prior to the attack the firemain was de-isolated. On impact it was breached at J Section, 2 Deck Starboard. Firemain pressure was lost immediately and was never restored. None of the ship's four fixed firefighting pumps (C, K, L, N) were effective after the attack.
- 22. In the absence of firemain pressure, firefighting was largely restricted to boundary cooling, using portable electrically driven pumps (and buckets). This had little effect on the internal fires which rapidly spread through H, J and K Sections, and subsequently intensified, later spreading forward, probably to G Section, and aft, at least to the Hangar, P Section.

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K, L, M

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Q, R

F, K, L

K, L

. N, P

- 23. Using hoses supplied by portable pumps, and later from ARROW, re-entry attempts were made at 2 Deck Passage Starboard (M and L sections from aft), at 1H Starboard (Officers Cabin Flat) and at 1J (Starboard) Access Hatch. These were well planned, well briefed and determined attempts which were all beaten back by heat and smoke.
- K, L
- 24. Other noteworthy firefighting attempts were made at the FAMR Escape Hatch (O2 Deck J Section), and through the missile entry hole with hoses passed to the Gemini.
- K, L
- 25. Following the early evacuation of HQ1, there was a lack of control and co-ordination both forward and in the ship as a whole. No emergency DC Headquarters was set up.
- L
- 26. There were a number of critical deficiencies in Damage Control and firefighting arrangements and equipment. In particular:
  - a. Forward escape manholes are too small for passage by men wearing BA.
  - b. Lack of Upper Deck firefighting equipment dump.
  - c. No Upper Deck control arrangements or position for fire fighting or Damage Control.
  - d. Insufficient BA.
  - e. Lack of alternative CO, drench operating positions.
  - f. Failure of single action doors.
  - g. Lack of through bulkhead hose connections.
  - h. Non-availability of smoke for training.
  - j. No escape hatch from Naval Stores, 3/2H.

Other shortcomings are at Annex L para 49.

- E, K, L
- 27. Although wearing an AGR in a smoke filled compartment can give life saving seconds, re-entry to a smoke filled area using AGR is very risky indeed.
- L, R, S
- 28. The performance of a number of Rover gas turbine pumps, collected from several ships, was abysmal. Of the five pumps eventually tried onboard SHEFFIELD only one, ex-ARROW, operated successfully.
- K, L
- K, L 526
- 30. The ferocity of the subsequent fire in the Mess and Cabin areas on 1 and O1 Deck, indicates that desirable improvements in habitability have been made at the expense of essential Fire Fighting and Damage Control characteristics.

- 31. The assistance of YARMOUTH, and particularly of ARROW, in boundary cooling and, in the latter's case, supplying hoses to SHEFFIELD, was determined and demanded a high degree of shiphandling skill. These attempts were seriously prejudiced by a lot of reported sonar contacts and torpedo alarms, all of which are thought to have been spurious.
- K, L

- 32. At about 041750Z the Captain considered that:
  - a. After some 4 hours firefighting the situation was deteriorating. Internally the ship was burning fiercely in most of H, J and K Sections, and the fire was spreading aft.
  - b. There was still no firemain pressure.
  - c. The danger of the Sea Dart Magazine exploding was increasing.
  - d. ARROW and YARMOUTH were particularly vulnerable to S/M or Air attack while alongside SHEFFIELD.
  - e. SHEFFIELD's fighting capability was totally and probably irremediably destroyed.

He ordered his Ship's Company to abandon ship. Most climbed over to ARROW, a few went to YARMOUTH by gemini, some were flown to HERMES.

- 33. The ship continued to burn, fiercely, for two days and some areas were probably still burning for up to five days after the attack. However she remained upright, and at normal trim and draft, until the weather deteriorated on 10 May.
- N, P

K, L

- 34. On five occasions over the next 41 days small parties visited SHEFFIELD by helicopter to assess the state of the ship, to salvage particularly important equipment, and to prepare for possible salvage.
- N, P
- 35. CTG ordered YARMOUTH to tow SHEFFIELD out of the TEZ, with a view to temporary repairs at South Georgia. The tow was started early on 9 May and did reach the edge of the TEZ.
- N, P
- 36. At about 100700Z May, in poor visibility and deteriorating weather, SHEFFIELD took on a distinct list to starboard. This rapdily increased. The tow was slipped and SHEFFIELD sank shortly afterwards, probably with a 90° list to starboard but even trim. The estimated position of sinking is 52°11'S, 53°50'W and depth approximately 1000 fathoms. At the time of sinking there was no towing crew onboard.
- N. P
- 37. We consider there is no serious possibility of compromise of documentary or other classified material. We have separately reported on this (Annex N Appendix 2).
- N, P

39. There were some shortcomings in the performance XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX	J, L
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46. There were many fine examples of individual bravery in the	
attempts to save SHEFFIELD, and the Board have separately drawn the attention of the Commanding Officer to those of which they are aware. Among the most praiseworthy are those who continued to man their quarters, in deteriorating conditions, long after the	

338 840 BHH attack. In this respect we would like particularly to call attention to the conduct of the WEO, the late Lieutenant Commander J S WOODHEAD Royal Navy and the Computer Room Crew (Sub Lieutenant EMLY, ACWEMN TILL, WEA1 EGGINGTON, and WEMN2 WALLIS (all deceased)). conduct of the late POMEM BRIGGS of special note. K, L

47. Other brave acts which particularly impressed us were the re-entries to the smoke filled areas of the ship, often without BA, to save lives or gear. In this category we consider the

RECOMMENDATIONS	ANNEX A PARA
The principal recommendations of the Board are:-	
1. In defence against the sea skimming missile, training and doctrine must stress heavily the importance of:-	
a. Constant vigilance by all on watch.	7, 8, 11, 12
b. Not degrading own sensors, eg, XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX	8 326
c. Instant, full reaction, in accordance with standard tactical doctrine and teaching, on first indication of possible attack.	9, 10, 11
d. The supreme importance of timely firing of Chaff, particularly Chaff D.	9, 14
e. Speedy 909 acquisition, even for the very difficult fast low flyer.	10
2. Improvement of the Type 42's self defensive capability against the sea skimming missile is required urgently. Areas for consideration include provision of a Jammer and a Point Defence System.	16
3. Efforts to simplify, shorten and improve 909 acquisition procedures, particularly for low targets, should be given high priority.	16
4. The provision of a realistic 909 acquisition simulator be investigated.	16
5. Smoke clearance arrangements in Type 42 Destroyers be reviewed.	18, 19
6. Methods of preserving the ability to control and fight the ship, even in heavy smoke, be investigated.	18, 19, 20
7. Facilities to permit escape through smoke filled areas be provided.	3, 17, 27
8. The revised advice to isolate Firemain at Action Stations be confirmed.	21
9. Early consideration be given to the arrangements for maintenance or restoration of <b>Firemain</b> pressure following extensive damage.	21
10. XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX	<sup>26</sup> 526
11. Urgent steps be taken to improve the performance and reliability of Rover Gas Turbine Pumps, or a replacement be provided.	28

- 12. The susceptibility of all Type 42 equipment to shock damage be tested and remedial action taken where necessary.
- 17, 30, 33

21, 29

13. Efforts to reduce the flammability and toxicity of furnishings and other materials should be continued.

- 14. All classified material held on board SHEFFIELD, except that known to have been removed, be written off.





#### MINISTRY OF DEFENCE

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Ref: D/NLC/1/9/78/1 --

Commander in Chief Fleet Northwood Middlesex HA6 3HP

8 December 1982

Sir

# BOARD OF INQUIRY - REPORT INTO THE LOSS OF HMS SHEFFIELD

Reference: 520/237L dated 13 September 1982

- 1. I am commanded by the Admiralty Board of the Defence Council to inform you that they have taken note of your report and the Board of Inquiry proceedings forwarded under the reference.
- 2. The Admiralty Board made the following observations:
  - a. The up-dating and enhancement of the Type 42 weapon fit including the fitting of a close-in weapon system, is being urgently studied. Progress will depend in part on the availability of dockyard capacity, the requirements for which are being reassessed in the light of changes in the Surface Fleet since Cmnd 8288 was published.
  - b. Action is also in hand to remedy other equipment deficiencies reported.
  - c. The factors that contributed to the rapid spread of black toxic smoke have been examined, taking account of the report of a special team from the Marine Technology Board. It has been concluded that in this particular incident the contribution from inflammable cabling, linings and furnishings was not critical having regard to the major effects of the missile break-up and the rupturing of the Dieso fuel tank. Nevertheless it is agreed

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that the questions of habitability and damage control need closer investigation. These and other important lessons are now being incorporated in the latest design work on the Type 23 frigate. So far as possible remedial action will also be taken in existing ships and ships building. When assessing the priorities for expenditure, however, a balance may have to be struck between measures designed to improve survivability in the event of a hit and measures designed to prevent a hit in the first place.

- d. Following trials of AEW-fitted helicopters in HMS ILLUSTRIOUS, plans are being developed to provide a capability with converted Sea Kings for each operational CVS.
- e. The importance of matching Commanding Officers and Executive Officers to appointments relevant to their experience is fully agreed, and measures to achieve this are being examined.
- 3. Your Report and the Proceedings have been taken into account in the "Lessons Learned" studies in the Navy Department. The detailed lessons in your Report and the Proceedings are being followed up by the staffs responsible. The Admiralty Board may wish to make further observations when all the lessons from Operation CORPORATE and in the Reports and Boards of Inquiry into the other ship losses have been fully examined.

I am, Sir, Your obedient Servant



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Deputy Under Secretary of State (Navy)

13 Sep 82

### BOARD OF INQUIRY - REPORT INTO LOSS OF HMS SHEFFIELD IN MAY 1982

#### References:

- A. MOD (NLC)'s D/NLC/1/16/20 dated 29 July 82.
- B. CINCFLEET's 520/235.L dated 31 July 82.
- C. CINCFLEET's 210/1/38.W (Revised) dated 15 July 82 (to MOD(DCDS)).
- 1. The official copy of the report of the Board of Inquiry into the loss of HMS SHEFFIELD in May 1982 is forwarded in accordance with References A and B.
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- 3. Air Defence This incident highlights the requirement to supplement medium-range SAM with an appropriate point-defence system in the same ship. It is not sufficient to have the two systems in separate ships when providing defence against sea-skimming missiles.
- 4. Habitability and Damage Control I am concerned at the general conclusion, arising from most ship damage reports, that in recent years we have improved habitability at the expense of necessary Damage Control characteristics. This aspect must receive further investigation by design authorities as a result of this experience. Annex B to this letter is relevant.

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in all the circumstances I have decided that this is not a case for Court Martial, or other disciplinary or formal 

The conduct of Lieutenant Commander J S WOODHEAD, the Weapons Engineer Officer, and his Computer Room crew, was particularly praiseworthy and appropriate recommendations for recognition have been made separately.

#### THE REPORT

My comments on some of the further action required are in Annex A to this letter. Copies of Annexes K and L of the report have already been passed to the Captain NBCD, HMS EXCELLENT. It is recommended that only extracts from the report dealing solely with Marine Engineering equipment matters should be forwarded, to the group drawn from the Defence Scientific Advisory Council who are looking at lessons learned in the area of ship design.

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#### Annexes:

- Comments on Detailed Recommendations
- B. Toxicity of Materials

#### Enclosures:

Board of Inquiry Report (original copy)

Summaries of Witnesses' Statements (to MOD (NLC) only)

Tape Recordings of Witnesses' Interviews (to MOD (NLC) only) 3.

#### Information:

Ministry of Defence (for Sec VCNS) The Flag Officer First Flotilla

ANNEX A TO
CINCFLEET'S 520/237.L
DATED 13 SEP 82

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Board of Inquiry Report
mendations are as follows.

COMMENTS ON ACTION REQUIRED OR TAKEN IN RESPECT OF HMS SHEETELD BOARD OF INQUIRY REPORT

- 1. Each of the recommendations in Annex B of the Board of Inquiry Report requires action. Comments on some of these recommendations are as follows.
- 2. The need for 'layered' air defence is emphasised. Medium-range SAM must be supplemented by close-range systems; a Point Defence Missile System and close-range gun armament, both independent from any of the Sea Dart control arrangements, would be complementary to each other in this task. (MOD action required).
- 3. The need for defensive capability, in all types of ship, against the sea-skimming missile has already been stated in CTF 317's "Equipment Lessons Learned" report. (CINCFLEET's 210/1/38.W (Revised) dated 15 July 82 to MOD(DCDS)).
- 4. The provision of adequate simulation for 909 Low Target acquisition practice is urgently required. (MOD action required).
- 5. An investigation is required into the effectiveness of resilient mounts on WE equipment, (MOD action).
- 6. Although the unused missile propellant was a major producer of smoke ther is evidence that significant quantities of noxious and toxic fumes were generated from furnishings and other combustible materials. The conclusion as a result of this experience that desirable improvements in habitability have been made at the expense of essential fire prevention and damage control characteristics is strongly supported. Annex B to this letter also refers. (MOD action required).
- 7. Only backed or bonded Formica panelling should be left in situ. HMS GLAMORGAN's experience when hit by an Exocet missile on 12 June was that unbacked Formica panelling shattered into razor-sharp fragments from blast and impact, causing several injuries, some serious. This matter is being studied by my staff, but investigation by MOD also is indicated. (Page D-2 para 5 refers).
- 8. The need for training to operate in conditions of smoke underlines the problem of the current shortage of smoke generators for this purpose. (MOD action required).
- 9. Although some action has already taken place on the critical Damage Control and firefighting equipment deficiencies listed in the recommendations (Annex B) and in Annex L, investigation and remedial action should continue to be pursued with vigour. (MOD action needed).
- 10. Action should be taken to enforce a mandatory firefighting PJT for all ranks/rates at present an average of 40% achieve it. This requires action by Naval Secretary in the case of officers, and by the previous establishments in the case of ratings (in most cases this will be within the purview of CINCNAVHOME).
- 11. MOD(DNSY) and the Cabinet Office have been requested (CINCFLEET's 190/0/29.X(a) dated 4 Aug 82) to take the necessary action to write off the classified material held on board. (Page B-2 para 14 refers).

# ACTION WITHIN CINCFLEET'S RESPONSIBILITY

- 12. Completed Action. The following actions have already been completed:

- b. Degradation of UAA 1 by SCOT transmissions has been reduced significantly by the fitting of filters in UAA1.
- c. The practice of operating the firemain de-isolated at action stations arose from a view that this provided maximum back-up for magazine sprays. The SHEFFIELD experience showed that this policy, while providing security against a threat in peacetime which was likely to be internally generated (eg a fire), is inappropriate in action with an external threat. The relevant instruction was changed immediately after the attack on SHEFFIELD. (Page B-1 para 8 refers).
- 13. Current and Future Action. Current and future action by my staff includes:
  - a. Trials of an immediate Sea Dart engagement sequence for close-range targets, requiring only a single action by the Missile Gun Director, are currently in progress in HMS NEWCASTLE, as part of a new ADAWS 4 issue.
  - b. The Marine Engineering recommendations arising from the report are directly within CINCFLEET's area of responsibility, although many are the subject of liaison and follow-up actions with departments concerned.
  - **c.** General lessons from this and other boards of inquiry will be included in a compendium report circulated to Flag and Commanding Officers and appropriate training establishments.
  - d. The specific subject of training and doctrine for defence against sea-skimming missiles will be accentuated in the revision of FOTI 0702, currently being undertaken by my Staff and the Maritime Tactical School.
  - e. Morphine should be distributed to members of the ship's company in accordance with BR 2170 Volume 2 Chapter 36. Medical Officers in Fleet are being reminded of this requirement. (Page R-1 para 3 refers).