

Squadron  
Leader Jeffrey  
William Glover,  
QCVSA



# HERO *of the* MONTH

By Lord Ashcroft

ABOVE: Flight Lieutenant Jeffrey Glover RAF  
ABOVE LEFT: Glover's South Atlantic Medal with rosette  
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More than four decades on, Jeff Glover has mixed thoughts about the Falklands Conflict. He is glad to have played a part in a winning campaign, but for a very long time he felt he had “let the side down.” This was because he was shot down on his very first ground attack mission, thereby losing one of the six aircraft from his squadron and becoming the only British pilot to be taken as a POW during the short war.

Glover eventually got over this feeling of failure – hardly a logical one given others saw him as a hero of the war – and he went on to have a distinguished RAF career, including being awarded the Queen’s Commendation for Valuable Service in the Air (QCVSA) and a tenure flying with the world-famous Royal Air Force Aerobatic Team, the Red Arrows.

The son of a school headmaster, Jeffrey William Glover was born in St Helens, Lancashire, on April 2, 1954. An only child, he was educated at Cowley School in St Helens, before gaining a BA Hons degree in engineering sciences at St Catherine’s College, Oxford, where he was also a member of the University Air Squadron.

From 1976-1977, Glover attended the RAF College, Cranwell, in Lincolnshire, where he won the Battle of Britain Trophy for

best aerobatics pilot. The following year, at RAF Valley on the island of Anglesey in north Wales, he came top of his course in advanced flying training on Folland Gnats. Next, he trained at RAF Leeming in Yorkshire, before returning to RAF Valley to become a qualified flying instructor on the Hawk jet trainer, while also winning the aerobatics trophy.

### Flying solo

While based at Leeming, Jeffrey met his first wife, Dee, the couple marrying in February 1981, just 14 months before the start of the Falklands Conflict. In fact, Argentina invaded the islands on Glover’s 28th birthday. By then, he was serving as a Harrier pilot with No.1 (Fighter) Squadron at RAF Wittering, near Peterborough, Cambridgeshire.

In an interview for my book *Falklands War Heroes*, Glover recalled that he had been on an intended one-month training course at the Luftwaffe’s Jever Air Base in Lower Saxony on the day the Falklands were invaded. Two weeks into his course, he was recalled to Wittering. At this point, Glover was serving in the rank of flight lieutenant. Eventually, 1 Squadron deployed nine pilots and six Harriers to the South Atlantic on the aircraft carrier HMS *Hermes*.

Having participated in an air intercept sortie on May 19, on the morning of May 21, 1982, Glover took part in his first war-time ground attack mission. However, things did not go to plan, as he later recounted: “It was the squadron’s second mission of the day. The wing commander [Peter Squire, later knighted and an Air Chief Marshal] and I were to get airborne, liaise with the frigate HMS *Antrim*, which was controlling the missions, and await targeting information. We took off at around 0800hrs local time. It was a beautiful day, not a cloud in the sky. I just wanted to perform to the best of my ability, and not let the side down.

“*Hermes* was less than 200 miles to the northeast of the Falklands. I lined up behind the Boss on the carrier. We each had two cluster bomb units and guns loaded. He selected full power and four seconds later I too went to full power, chased him down the flight deck and left the end of the ski jump at 120kts. I then took 35° of nozzle to be partially wing-borne and jet-borne. We started to climb to around 25,000ft, but the Boss couldn’t retract his undercarriage. He had to abort his mission because of the problem, leaving yours truly on his own to complete the mission.”

***“I lined up behind the Boss on the carrier. He selected full power and four seconds later I too went to full power, chased him down the flight deck and left the end of the ski jump”***



Glover (second left) with fellow 1 Squadron pilots, possibly on the requisitioned container ship *Atlantic Conveyor*, which ferried aircraft to the Falklands

# HERO OF THE MONTH

Year 1982		AIRCRAFT		Captain or 1st Pilot	Co-pilot 2nd Pilot Pupil or Crew	DUTY (including number of day or night landings as 1st Pilot or Dual)	Totals brought forward
Month	Date	Type and Mark	No				
APR	30	HARRIER GR3	XZ 130	SELF	SOLO	VY → WITTINGB	1
		SQUADR		SUMMARY APRIL 1982		T MONTHLY TOTAL GR3	
		OC BFLT		UNIT: 1(F) SQN		Y MONTHLY TOTAL TH	
		WG CDR		DATE: 30 APRIL 1982		P	
		OC (F) SQN		SIGNED: <i>[Signature]</i>		E TOTAL HARRIER	
MAY	1	HARRIER GR3	XZ 997	SELF	SOLO	FLOW Cx	1
MAY	3	HARRIER GR3	XZ 988	SELF	SOLO	WJ → ST MANGAN	1
MAY	5	HARRIER GR3	XZ 988	SELF	SOLO	ST MANGAN → ASCENSION ISLAND	1
MAY	19	HARRIER GR3	XZ 972	SELF	SOLO	ACM INTERCEPT ARG 707	1
MAY	19	HARRIER GR3	XZ 972	SELF	SOLO	ACM 201	1
MAY	19	HARRIER GR3	XZ 988	SELF	SOLO	ACM 201 BOUNCE	1
MAY	21	HARRIER GR3	XZ 972	SELF	SOLO	OP SUTTON FAC/CAS/ATT	0
		SQUADR		SUMMARY MAY 1982		T MONTHLY TOTAL GR3	
		OC BFLT		UNIT: 1(F) SQN		Y	
		WG CDR		DATE: 12 NOV 82		P	
		OC (F) SQN		SIGNED: <i>[Signature]</i>		E TOTAL HARRIER	
NOV	10	HARRIER TH	XW 925	SELF	SOLO	BOUNCE 4 SHIP	1
NOV	12	HARRIER TH	XU 271	SELF	SOLO	LL NAV	4

Day Flying			Night Flying			Flight Time	
1st Pilot (1)	2nd Pilot (2)	Dual (3)	1st Pilot (4)	2nd Pilot (5)	Dual (6)	Total Cols. 1-6 (7)	C
123:05	1:40	336:40	75:30		11:05	1659:00	16
:30						:30	
17:35			1:40			18:15	18
3:45						3:45	
200:00	29:55	2:55			1:25	233:15	17
:35						:35	
:45						:45	
8:50						8:50	8
1:10						1:10	1
:30						:30	
:35			:10			:45	
1:40						1:40	
13:05			:10			13:15	13
213:05	29:55					246:30	19
:55						:55	
1:00						1:00	

Glover's logbook, showing his two operational sorties (in green ink)

## 'Bang, bang, bang'

Glover was still searching for an enemy target on which to drop his bombs when, flying over West Falkland at more than 500kts, he was suddenly hit: "I felt and heard 'bang, bang, bang'. The aircraft then entered a maximum-rate roll to the right – the roll taking no more than a second, but it was as if it was happening in slow motion.

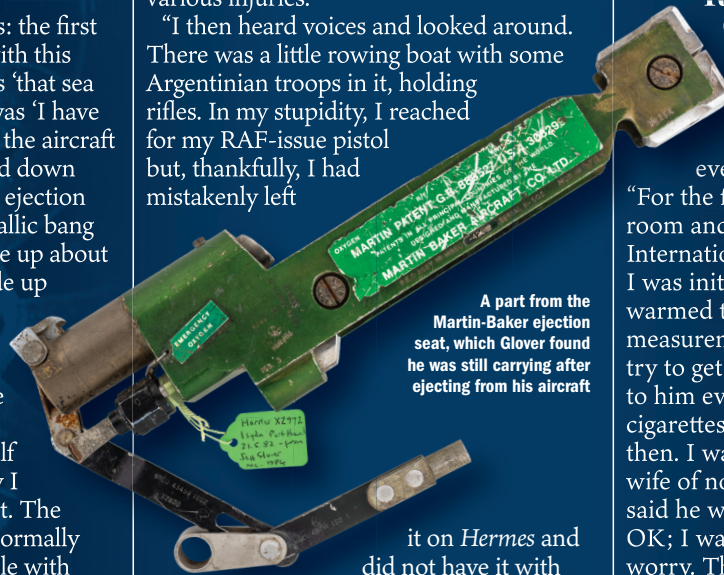
"I had three separate thoughts: the first was 'I cannot control the roll with this control column', the second was 'that sea is awfully close' and the third was 'I have to time my ejection right'. After the aircraft had gone through 320°, I looked down and saw my right hand pull the ejection seat handle. I then heard a metallic bang and I lost consciousness. I woke up about four feet underwater, sunny-side up and flapped to the surface and saw the sun again.

"I had been hit by a Blowpipe missile fired from the ground by an Argentinian. The missile had hit and taken off half off my right wing, which is why I had done a hard roll to the right. The reason I blacked out was that normally you try to pull the ejector handle with both hands but, because it happened so fast, my left hand was still on the throttle so, as I ejected, my left arm went into a whiplash movement at around 600mph and I lost consciousness. After I ejected, my parachute opened and I dropped into the freezing sea.

"I was in the water in my protective immersion suit and, after what seemed like five minutes of being in shock, I started to think about getting into my self-inflating dinghy which was attached

to me by two quick-release clips. At some point, I realised that I couldn't see out of my left eye – my flying helmet had flown off during the ejection, which shouldn't have happened. The end of the oxygen hose, which got separated from my oxygen mask as the helmet flew off, had bashed into my mouth causing some damage. My left side was also completely incapacitated from various injuries.

"I then heard voices and looked around. There was a little rowing boat with some Argentinian troops in it, holding rifles. In my stupidity, I reached for my RAF-issue pistol but, thankfully, I had mistakenly left



A part from the Martin-Baker ejection seat, which Glover found he was still carrying after ejecting from his aircraft

it on *Hermes* and did not have it with me. The soldiers pulled me out of the water and for the next 50 days I was a POW."

Glover's injuries amounted to a deep cut to his mouth and top lip, severe bruising to the left side of his face and a broken left arm, left shoulder-blade and a left collar bone. "I was a bit of a mess. I was feeling a bit sorry for myself, but I was glad to be alive," Glover said with understatement. After his immersion suit was cut off him, he was asked his name, rank and serial

number, all of which he provided.

After receiving medical treatment on the Falklands, Glover was taken in a Hercules on May 25 to the Argentinian mainland. For a week, his wife did not know whether he was alive or dead, but eventually word reached her from the Ministry of Defence that he was alive but being held captive.

## Red Cross visitor

Glover told me that he was never aggressively interrogated or mistreated, but it was a tough seven weeks, with his future uncertain for the whole time, even after Argentina surrendered: "For the first week, I was locked in a room and not allowed out, but then an International Red Cross man pitched up. I was initially suspicious of him, but I warmed to him when he started taking measurements of the size of my room [to try to get Glover a larger room]. I warmed to him even more when he left me 200 cigarettes because I was a smoker back then. I was also able to write a letter to my wife of no more than 25 words which he said he would deliver. I just wrote I was OK; I was missing her and for her not to worry. There was not a lot you can write in 25 words."

After Glover eventually returned home, it was feared he might not fly again. However, he made a good recovery from his physical and mental challenges and successfully returned to flying duties early the next year: "It took me seven months before I could fly solo again. It was eventually discovered that I had had a paranoid reaction to isolation and captivity. My problems were more mental than physical."

Glover was awarded the QCVSA on December 31, 1985. In February 1988, then aged 33 and a father of two young children, he became a member of the Red Arrows. By then a squadron leader, he said it had been a life-long ambition to fly with the aerobatics team.

Glover retired from the RAF in December 1996, when he received a warm letter of appreciation from Air Vice-Marshal David Hurrell. In his letter, Hurrell said: "You have clearly given varied and rewarding service as an aviator in the strike attack role, as



By the *QUEEN'S* Order the name of  
**Flight Lieutenant JWGlover**  
**Royal Air Force**

was published in the London Gazette on  
**31 December 1985**  
as commended for valuable service in the air.  
I am charged to record  
Her Majesty's high appreciation.

Secretary of State for Defence.

Glover received the  
Queen's Commendation  
for Valuable Service in  
the Air in 1985

***"It took me seven months before I could fly solo again. It was eventually discovered that I had had a paranoid reaction to isolation and captivity"***

a flight instructor, a display pilot and finally, adding variety to your logbook, by flying in the air transport and air-to-air refuelling roles. I hope this wide-ranging experience in operational, display and instructional flying proves valuable in your future endeavours. Your record shows that you have maintained the highest professional standards and contributed significantly during tours... Your brilliance in the air, amiable nature and, latterly, golfing prowess, will be sorely missed by all who have worked with you."

### **"I got over it"**

Next, Glover became a commercial pilot, finally retiring in 2019, aged 65. However, while still flying and working for the Qatari royal family, he found himself in Buenos Aires for 12 days and decided to look up the man who had shot him down more than 30 years earlier, Major General (retired) Sergio Fernandez.

In 1982, Fernandez was a lieutenant in



The moment that Glover was pulled from the sea by his Argentinian captors

the Compañía de Comandos 601, and Glover told me: "He had tracked me down about ten years after the war and we had swapped emails. But this time we went out for dinner, and it was only then that he told me that I had been in the sea, after being shot down, for 40 minutes, when I had always thought it was for about five minutes. We had a great evening. He speaks good English and he

was – and is – a smashing chap."

Glover now lives with his second wife, Angela, in Stamford, Lincolnshire. Reflecting on his role in the war more than four decades ago, he does not see himself as a hero: "At the time, as a POW in 1982, I thought I had let the side down and lost one of our six aeroplanes [from his squadron]. But 40 years on, I have got over it." **BW**

## FALKLANDS WAR HEROES



Lord Ashcroft KCMG PC is a businessman, philanthropist, author and pollster. His book *Falklands War Heroes* was published in hardback in 2021. For more information, visit [falklandswarheroes.com](http://falklandswarheroes.com). Lord Ashcroft's VC and GC collection is on public display at the Imperial War Museum, London. For more information, visit [iwm.org.uk/heroes](http://iwm.org.uk/heroes) and details about his VC collection may be found at [lordashcroftmedals.com](http://lordashcroftmedals.com). For more information on Lord Ashcroft's work, visit [lordashcroft.com](http://lordashcroft.com). Follow him on X and Facebook: @LordAshcroft

