

# FIGHTINGHAWK STAND-DOWN

THE FINAL VARIANT OF ONE OF AMERICA'S MOST FAMOUS  
COMBAT AIRCRAFT HAS MADE ITS LAST FLIGHT

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A-4AR flight jacket patch.



**D**uring the Falklands/Malvinas War of 1982, Douglas A-4B, A-4C, A-4Q (the Q was a B with slight modifications) Skyhawks flew what many thought would be the type's last major combat missions. These were aging aircraft that did not have any of the modern (for the time) defensive/offensive systems compared to the types flown by the Royal Air Force and Royal Navy. The Argentine Air Force was operating B and C variants and these were mainly flown by the 5th Air Brigade while the Navy flew the A-4Q with the 3rd Fighter/Attack Squadron. Because of the lack of modern systems the pilots of the Skyhawks during the war had to resort to flying "on the deck" — just a few feet above the hazardous South Atlantic. For weapons, the pilots relied on their twin 20mm cannon and a variety of "iron" bombs — stenciling on some of the 500-lb/1000-lb bombs showed they were of WWII vintage. For Argentina, it was a desperate time. Military dictators ruled the nation and when the illogical decision was made to invade the Falklands, the A-4 pilots that would fly the majority of the attack missions had little in the way of self-defense. In fact, a pasta machine was brought into action to convert rolls of aluminum foil into chaff that could be dropped to give the pilots a chance to deflect British missile attacks.

The pilots were mainly quite young



Pair of *Fuerza Aerea Argentina* A-4AR Fightinghawks do a fly-by with everything down, including their tailhooks. The aircraft are C-911 and C-927.



Fightinghawk in a pass that displays the additional aeriels and refueling boom.