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## The Empire Strikes Back: Memory, Meaning, and the Falklands War

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A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Master of Arts degree in History

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### Abstract

This thesis examines the spectacularization and commodification of the Falklands War. With the dispatching of a Royal Navy task force to the South Atlantic, following the Argentine invasion of the Falkland Islands on 2 April 1982, came an orgy of patriotism that was expressed by Britons through public spectacles and the production of related commodities. Britishness, which became synonymous with the existence of the British Empire, was in crisis during the decades of decolonization after the Second World War and saw the reaction of an imperial nostalgia. The celebrations and commemorations that took place after the British victory on 14 June 1982, ultimately echoed the popular imperialism of the late Victorian Era. Through the use of imperial sights, sounds, and sentiments, the British seamlessly returned to the imperial shorthand they used to celebrate and commemorate British military victories in the past.

### Keywords

Falklands War, April-June 1982 – Falkland Islands – United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland – British Empire – Britishness – Imperial nostalgia – Popular imperialism – Public opinion.

### Summary for Lay Audience

This thesis examines the public spectacles and souvenirs produced during and after the Falklands War. The Falkland Islands were British sovereign territory for almost 500 years before Argentine forces invaded the Islands on 2 April 1982. The British responded by sending a Royal Navy task force to the South Atlantic to liberate the Falklands. With the sending of this task force came a rush of extreme patriotic feelings that were not expressed by Britons in years. British national identity had become synonymous with the existence of the British Empire. After the Second World War, British colonies across the globe gained independence, seeing the breakdown of the Empire, and of British identity. The war to liberate the Falklands, concluding with a British victory on 14 June, saw the return of these old patriotic feelings, expressed through public spectacles and the production and sale of commodities. The celebrations and commemorations that took place after the war echoed the popular imperialism of the late Victorian Era. Through the imperial sights, sounds, and sentiments expressed and displayed at these spectacles and on these souvenirs, the British seamlessly returned to the imperial shorthand they used to celebrate and commemorate military victories of the past.

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I must also thank my friends and colleagues in the Department of History, my office mates, as well as my family. For without the friendly conversations, the needed distractions and breaks, along with putting up with me talking about the Falkland Islands, this thesis would never have been completed, and I would not have enjoyed grad school as much as I have.

Finally, to answer the dreaded question that all graduate students get asked—what next?—I can answer simply: Now this is not the end. It is not even the beginning of the end. But it is, perhaps, the end of the beginning.

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Introduction<sup>1</sup>

In 1905, *The Empire and the Century*, a large volume of fifty essays, was published. Written by various authors, from journalists and academics to military officers and imperial administrators, it was produced “in light of a national sacrament,” the centenary of Admiral Lord Nelson’s victory at Trafalgar, to showcase various imperial problems and possibilities that the British Empire faced.<sup>2</sup> While great pride was taken in the fact that never before had humanity witnessed a greater empire than the British, it was clear that maintaining the glories of the past, and exceeding them, would involve a great deal of work. Such an Empire required a heavy weight of responsibility, reflection, and progress, so that “the lessons of the past are weighed, [and] vows for the future renewed.”<sup>3</sup> In hindsight, the century that was intended to see the British Empire continue to grow, would actually see Britain’s beloved Empire shrink, with colonies across the globe moving towards independence. But for the majority of jingoistic, patriotic Britons in 1905, such concerns were unfounded. As far as they were concerned, Britannia ruled the waves and the sun still shone brightly over the Empire, with 1905 just another year in the long life of the imperial organism.

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<sup>1</sup> The term “The Empire Strikes Back” has had different uses throughout British history. It has often been used to refer to the mass immigration of non-whites to the United Kingdom after the Second World War (i.e., the Windrush generation). Its usage in that context is often to describe how these immigrants, after generations of apparently getting little out of the imperial relationship, opted to seek opportunity in Britain and create “colonies” there. Its use as the title of this thesis, and in relation to the Falklands War as a whole, is rooted in the conflict itself. The widespread popularity of the term came in 1980 with the release of the second Star Wars film by the same name. Its first usage in conjunction with the Falklands was by the American magazine *Newsweek*, which used it as a headline on the cover of the April 19th edition, accompanied by an image of HMS *Hermes* sailing towards the Falklands. In the United Kingdom the term and variants of it, “Our Empire Strikes Back” for instance, were used on various commodities, both mass-produced and homemade, during and after the conflict. It is the term’s relationship to the Falklands, and particularly its usage by Britons at the time, that has made it a most appropriate title for this thesis.

<sup>2</sup> C.S. Goldman. “Introduction” in *The Empire and the Century*. (London: John Murray, 1905), xiii.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*

The British Empire would reach its peak in 1921, with a quarter of the world's landmass and population under British control. But following the Second World War with colonies across the globe gaining independence, Britain, through the long processes of decolonization, lost its Empire as well as its status as a world power. Along with various international and domestic issues, Britain became a broken nation. The war fought over the Falkland Islands against Argentina between April and June 1982 unintentionally, yet inevitably, became another in a long line of imperial conflicts pitting the British, their pride pricked and bleeding, against an outside aggressor seeking revenge for the wrongs that had befallen them. The Falklands campaign would see the culmination of years of built-up imperial nostalgia and the reaction to the aggression by Argentina, in addition to the hope that it would return Britain to its former place on the world stage. This resulted in Britons, despite trepidation at the start of the war, celebrating the victory like those of past imperial wars. This was all done with the same practices and paraphernalia associated with the popular imperialism of the late Victorian Era. As Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher stated in the opening of her speech to the Conservative Party Conference in Brighton on 8 October 1982, "The spirit of the South Atlantic was the spirit of Britain at her best. It has been said that we surprised the world, that British patriotism was rediscovered in those spring days. It was never really lost."<sup>4</sup> The spirit of 1982 was the spirit of 1905, which in turn was the spirit of 1805. Linking Britain's willingness to fight for one of the last bastions of their Empire in the post-imperial world of the 1980s with imperial wars of the past, the Falklands War became an anachronism both in the conducting and celebrating of the conflict, and saw Britons reach into their past looking for vows for their future, resulting in, for a short time, the seamless return of Britain's imperial pomp and circumstance.

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<sup>4</sup> Margaret Thatcher. *The Collected Speeches of Margaret Thatcher*. Robin Harris Eds. (New York: Harper Collins, 1997), 198.



By 1982, the Falkland Islands had been sovereign British territory for almost 500 years. The Falklands, comprised of the larger islands of East and West Falkland, are part of an archipelago of some 780 islands located in the South Atlantic, 800 miles from the nearest point on the South American mainland, and 8000 miles from the United Kingdom.<sup>5</sup> In 1592, Captain John Davis is reported to have discovered the Falklands; however, no settlement was made, and the islands were left uninhabited.<sup>6</sup> Almost 100 years passed until in 1690, Captain John Strong made the first landings on the Islands, naming them in honour of the then First Lord of the Admiralty—Viscount Falkland. Again, no settlement was made, and the Falklands remained uninhabited.<sup>7</sup> The French, who had learned of the islands because of their seal hunting endeavours, established the small colony of Port Louis on East Falkland in 1764. The following year, a British expedition reached the Falklands and established the colony of Port Egmont, on West Falkland, in addition to declaring the Falklands and “all neighbouring islands” for King George III.<sup>8</sup> Two years later in 1767, France sold its settlement to Spain, and the two settlements, British and Spanish, coexisted peacefully until 1770, when the two empires prepared to go to war over the South Atlantic islands.

The Falkland Islands Crisis of 1770 saw an end to the peaceful cohabitation of the Falklands by the British and Spanish as the British were forcibly removed. The Spanish governor from Buenos Aires attacked Port Egmont and, with superior numbers, forced the British to surrender.<sup>9</sup> In Britain, this was seen as an insult that could not go unpunished. The British began to mobilise for a potential war, as did the Spanish, backed by the French. But tensions were

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<sup>5</sup> Sir Lawrence Freedman. *The Official History of the Falklands War Vol. I: The Origins of the Falklands War*. London: Routledge, 1.

<sup>6</sup> The Foreign & Commonwealth Office. *Background Brief: The Falkland Islands, South Georgia, and the South Sandwich Islands*. (London: The Foreign & Commonwealth Office, 1998), 1.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid.

relaxed when French support wavered, and Spain found itself preparing to take on the Royal Navy alone. A compromise was made in which both empires would maintain their settlements. The British would later withdraw from Port Egmont in 1774 citing economic reasons, but never relinquished or abandoned their sovereignty.<sup>10</sup> The Spanish settlement was withdrawn years later in 1811, and in 1816, the government of Buenos Aires declared independence from Spain, establishing the Argentine Republic. The young Argentine government declared sovereignty over the Falklands in 1829, claiming the right to Spain's former colonies, and placed them in the control of a political and military governor, who would withdraw in 1831 but return the following year.<sup>11</sup> Britain protested the Argentine occupation, just as it had fifty-nine years earlier, and was determined to bring the Falklands into the British Empire once and for all.

In 1833, HMS *Clio* sailed for the Falklands with instructions to exercise British rights of sovereignty. Upon arrival, all Argentines were removed from the Islands and the British established a permanent settlement under a naval, replaced later by a civil, governor.<sup>12</sup> In the same year, the Falklands were officially declared a Crown Colony, and for the next 148 years the Falklands were a small but proud part of the British Empire.<sup>13</sup> As years passed and colonies became independent from Britain, the Falklands remained loyal. The Falklands, as one of the last remnants of the Empire, were viewed as a final frontier, one filled with adventure, pushing men to their physical limits, and to the furthest limits of the Empire. As stated by Kenneth Bradley in his incredibly short chapter on the Falklands in *The British Empire*, "here... on the far rim of the world, lies a miniature of England... here English boys can still find high adventure in the lonely hills and on the wild seas and Englishmen can still 'go south' led by the spirits of Scott and

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<sup>10</sup> Ibid, 1-2.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid, 2.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid.

Shackleton.”<sup>14</sup> In 1982, the Falklands would see thousands of Britons go south; instead of high adventure, they would find war, but also their nation’s spirit.

In the early hours of 2 April, Argentine forces invaded, and began to occupy, the Falklands. The British responded swiftly. After a weekend of round-the-clock preparations, the first of Royal Navy Task Force 317, known publicly as the task force, departed Portsmouth en route to the South Atlantic. This show of force was a signal to the Argentine government that Britain’s diplomacy would be backed by force. Along with the sending of the task force, the British went before the United Nations, which passed Resolution 502, demanding Argentine forces withdraw, and they set out to work with the United States to find a peaceful settlement.<sup>15</sup> Under the lead of Secretary of State Alexander Haig, who travelled between London, Washington, and Buenos Aires, the Peruvian Peace Proposals looked to find a settlement that both Britain and Argentina would accept. But, as the Haig peace initiatives began to falter and the task force arrived in the South Atlantic, the game was afoot, and the British were not only willing to play, but determined to win.

The 1<sup>st</sup> of May marked the start of the British military campaign to regain the Falklands with initial Special Air Service and Special Boat Service landings on the Islands along with a Royal Air Force bombing raid on Port Stanley Airfield.<sup>16</sup> The naval war began the following day with HMS *Conqueror* sinking the Argentine cruiser, ARA *General Belgrano*, following a failed Argentine pincer movement against the British task force. The naval and air war would continue to the beginning of the end coming on 21 May, with the initial landings at San Carlos.<sup>17</sup> The land

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<sup>14</sup> Kenneth Bradley. “The Falkland Islands and their Dependencies.” In Hector Bolitho Eds. *The British Empire*. (London: B.T. Batsford, 1947), 237.

<sup>15</sup> Max Hastings and Simon Jenkins. *The Battle for the Falklands*. (London: Pan, 2010), 429.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid*, 430.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid*, 432.

war would see British forces yomp their way across East Falkland engaging with the enemy reaching the outskirts of Stanley on 13 June. The following day, Argentine forces would surrender, with the Falklands “once more under the government desired by their inhabitants.”<sup>18</sup> The war was over—the British were victorious. And over the course of the short but decisive war, the blasted Falklands weather woke a fever in Briton’s bones, apparently reinvigorating the nation, at least for a while.

The existence of the Empire effected every man, woman, and child, both directly and indirectly. In George Orwell’s *The Lion and the Unicorn*, he stated that “national characteristics are not easy to pin down, and when pinned down they often turn out to be trivialities or seem to have no connection with one another... Nevertheless, nothing is causeless, and even the fact that Englishmen have bad teeth can tell one something about the realities of English life.”<sup>19</sup> Indeed, the Empire was omnipresent and effected not only British identity, but every waking moment of British life. The imperial administrator, clerk, farmer, missionary, engineer, sailor, and soldier, along with the countless Britons who could travel the world over via British ports, all interacted with and experienced the Empire, as did everyone in Britain. Take the national tradition of afternoon tea for instance. The Empire was well represented with a fine bone china tea set from Hong Kong used to serve a tea blend from India, Kenya, and Ceylon, with milk from Jersey, and sugar from the West Indies, giving Englishmen bad teeth. The triviality of afternoon tea, and its acceptance as a British tradition, seemingly has no connection to the Empire. But afternoon tea, just like every other activity performed and enjoyed by Britons, was engrained with imperial

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<sup>18</sup> National Army Museum: Original telex message from Major-General Sir Jeremy Moore to London announcing the recapture of the Falkland Islands, 14 June 1982 (NAM. 2013-11-17-1).

<sup>19</sup> George Orwell. *The Lion and the Unicorn: Socialism and the English Genius*. (London: Secker and Warburg, 1962), 12

products, images, ideas, or origins. British activities and therefore British identity became synonymous with the existence of the Empire.

The earliest origins of this British identity were in the wars fought against France, which lasted on and off for over five centuries. These wars, argued Linda Colley, allowed the British people to look away from their internal differences, and see similarities among themselves, and the differences they had with a common enemy. “Time and time again, war with France brought Britons, whether they hailed from Wales or Scotland or England, into confrontation with an obviously hostile Other and encouraged them to define themselves collectively against it.”<sup>20</sup> The English bringing the Welsh, Scottish, and later Irish under their control through three Acts of Union in 1536, 1707, and 1800 respectively, was part of what has often been dubbed the ‘internal colonialism’ of the British Isles, and certainly not the British peoples collectively deciding to unite.<sup>21</sup> But as Colley wrote, “war with an obviously hostile and alien foreign power had forged a semblance of unity and distracted attention from the considerable division and tensions within.”<sup>22</sup> This relates to Peter Sahllins’ definition of national identity as “a socially constructed and continuous process of defining ‘friend’ and ‘enemy,’ a logical extension of the process of maintaining boundaries between ‘us’ and ‘them’” which is “defined by the social or territorial boundaries drawn to distinguish the collective self and its implicit negation, the other.”<sup>23</sup> In its earliest stages, British nationalism compared Britons to the French, or at least who they thought the French were. As they ventured outside the confines of Europe to build an

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<sup>20</sup> Linda Colley. *Britons: Forging the Nation 1707-1837*. (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1992), 5.

<sup>21</sup> For more on the ‘internal colonialism’ of the British Isles see: Michael Hechter. *Internal Colonialism: The Celtic Fringe in British National Development, 1536-1966*. (London: Routledge, 1975), and R. R. Davies. *Domination and Conquest: The Existence of Ireland, Scotland and Wales 1100-1300*. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990).

<sup>22</sup> Colley, 322.

<sup>23</sup> Peter Sahllins. *Boundaries: The Making of France and Spain in the Pyrenees*. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1989), 270-271.

empire, Britons began to compare themselves to the colonial populations under their control. But as the British continued to bring more territory and people into the Empire, Britons were able to define themselves as the head of an imperial family.

The wars with France initiated Britain's overseas empire. By the conclusion of the Hundred Years' War, all English continental possessions, apart from the Channel Islands, had been ceded to the French. With Europe no longer an option, Britain turned its gaze towards the distant lands beyond the seas. The national identity characteristics described by Sahlins, this friend and enemy principle, saw a now seemingly united Britain venture to far-flung locations allowing Britons, who saw themselves as the bringers of white, Christian, civilization, to identify themselves in contrast to native populations they encountered, which they perceived as non-white, non-Christian, and uncivilized. This imperial organism, which was born out of Britain's conquests, began to grow, allowing colonists to see themselves as part of a larger imperial family. Any distinction between one Dominion or colony and the next becoming hardly relevant, for all persons within the Empire were ostensibly British. But Britain was central amongst any British territory, and its inhabitants central to all British peoples. When the influence and power of Britain grew along with their Empire, Britain's national identity changed to reflect this imperial reality. Britishness could no longer be based simply upon Britons and a distinct other, and changed to Britons seeing themselves as the founders and caretakers of the world's greatest Empire. This British identity, as described by Ezequiel Mercau, saw a single "shared identity, worldview, and set of values that united Britons in all corners of the globe" which was forged in the eighteenth century, reaching its culmination in the late Victorian Era.<sup>24</sup> As argued by David Cannadine, "Britain's twentieth-century history [was] still haunted by its nineteenth-century

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<sup>24</sup> Ezequiel Mercau. *The Falklands War: An Imperial History*. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2019), 2.

past.”<sup>25</sup> Some espoused this past, seeing the Victorian Era as a period when “Britain was truly at its zenith”, while others were repelled by it, seeing it as “something to be embarrassed about, to apologise for... and never to repeat.”<sup>26</sup> The mood of Britain towards its past had fluctuated over time, and in 1982, when faced with an imperial problem and solution, the majority of Britons looked favourably upon their Victorian past, which fit the current situation, an “outstanding success and splendid achievement, by comparison with ... Britain’s twentieth-century record [which was] at best unimpressive, and often distinctly lack-lustre.”<sup>27</sup>

In 1939, Britain and her Empire found themselves engaged in a world war for a second time in a generation. In his maiden speech as Prime Minister, Winston Churchill remarked upon what would occur if the British were not successful in war against Nazi Germany: “without victory, there is no survival. Let that be realised; no survival for the British Empire, [and] no survival for all that the British Empire has stood for.”<sup>28</sup> Success, however, could not assure the survival of the Empire and following the war, sentiments of independence were kindled in the colonies, and the cracks, that had existed for years, were beginning to show and worsen. The symbolic beginning of the end came in 1947 with the loss of the British Raj and the creation of independent India and Pakistan. This was followed by Burma and Ceylon (1948), the British Military Administration of Libya (Kingdom of Libya) (1951), Anglo-Egyptian Sudan (Republic of Sudan) (1956), British Malaya, the Gold Coast (Ghana), British Togoland, and Ashanti (merged with Ghana) (1957), British Somaliland, Cyprus, and Nigeria (1960), the British Cameroons (the northern part merging with Nigeria, while the southern part formed the Republic

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<sup>25</sup> David Cannadine, *History in our Time*. (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1998), 129.

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid*, 129-130.

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid*.

<sup>28</sup> Winston S Churchill. *His Complete Speeches: 1897-1963, Volume VI: 1935-1942*. Robert Rhodes James Eds. (New York: Chelsea House, 1974), 6220.

of Cameroon), Sierra Leone, and Tanganyika (1961), Jamaica, Trinidad and Tobago, Uganda, and Western Samoa (1962), Kenya, Singapore, and Zanzibar (1963), Malta, Northern Rhodesia (Zambia), and Nyasaland (Malawi) (1964), Gambia and the Maldives (1965), Barbados, Basutoland (Lesotho), Bechuanaland Protectorate (Botswana), and British Guiana (Guyana) (1966), Federation of South Arabia and Protectorate of South Arabia (South Yemen) (1967), Mauritius, Nauru, and Swaziland (1968), Fiji and Tonga (1970), Bahrain and Qatar (1971), the Bahamas (1973), Grenada (1974), British New Guinea (Papua New Guinea) (1975), Seychelles (1976), Dominica, Solomon Islands, and Tuvalu (1978), Gilbert Islands (Kiribati), St. Lucia, and St. Vincent and the Grenadines (1979), New Hebrides (Vanuatu) and Rhodesia-Zimbabwe (1980), with Antigua and Barbuda, along with British Honduras (Belize) gaining independence in 1981.<sup>29</sup> Britons who watched as their Empire fell apart looked towards the British Commonwealth of Nations as a sort of “heir to the Empire,” which had its origins closely linked to the preservation and easier maintenance of the Empire.<sup>30</sup> But with India becoming a republic in 1950, the departure of South Africa in 1962, a year after it too had become a republic, and the countless other now independent nations that followed, the Commonwealth failed in the expectation of imperial maintenance and the preservation of Britain’s status. The loss of the Empire was truly the gaining of liberty by populations, many of whom had never known life in an independent nation. Many Britons, however, still looked favourably towards the Empire, and hoped that their nation could remain the world’s premier imperial power. They were ultimately left hoping in vain.

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<sup>29</sup> Both the British and independent names are provided for each territory. For those territories that had the same or similar names under both British control and after gaining independence, the common name has been used (i.e., the Colony and Protectorate of Kenya, commonly known as British Kenya, gained independence as the Dominion of Kenya, which was changed shortly afterwards to the Republic of Kenya, therefore, being simply referred to as Kenya).

<sup>30</sup> Nicholas Mansergh. *The Commonwealth Experience*. (New York: Praeger, 1969), xv.



Britain, under both Conservative and Labour governments, did little to slow or stop this imperial and international decline, and actually made it clear that Britain was no longer the power it once was. In 1956, Eden's Conservative government, under economic pressures from the United States, withdrew from Suez.<sup>31</sup> In January of 1968, Wilson's Labour government decided to withdraw all forces from east of Suez, besides Hong Kong, in a show that, by Roy Jenkins', then Chancellor of the Exchequer, own admission, Britain was "no longer, and [had] not been for some time, a super power."<sup>32</sup> For many Britons the symbolic end of the Empire came with the death of Sir Winston Churchill and his state funeral in 1965. Churchill, whose youth was passed in the Victorian Era and who had a love for the Empire and all its "glitter, pomp", "high sounding titles", "tradition, form, and ceremony", came to represent all that the Empire stood for.<sup>33</sup> Churchill's state funeral would be seen by many as Britain's "last, defining, valedictory imperial pageant."<sup>34</sup> On the imperial footsteps in which Churchill followed, both in life as well as when his coffin made its way down the central aisle of St Paul's Cathedral, *The Times* commented:

On every side the nation's past heroes and glories—Nelson and Wellington, Abercromby and Cornwallis, Gordon and Howe, Roberts and Melbourne, Jellicoe and Beatty. Inkerman, Waterloo, Quatre-Bras and Salamanca, Crimea and Khartum, Corunna and Trafalgar.<sup>35</sup>

But in the pomp and ceremony of the event, there was an ominous feeling that with Churchill gone, the spirit of Britain would go with him, and all that would remain would be the

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<sup>31</sup> Lawrence James. *Warrior Race: A History of the British at War*. (London: Abacus, 2001), 733.

<sup>32</sup> David Reynolds. *Britannia Overruled: British Policy & World Power in the 20th Century*. (London: Longman, 1991), 230. *The Daily Telegraph*, 18 January 1968.

<sup>33</sup> Winston S. Churchill. *My Early Life* (London: Odhams Press, 1930), 118 and Winston S. Churchill. *His Complete Speeches: 1897-1963, Volume VI: 1935-1942*, 6295.

<sup>34</sup> Cannadine. *Ornamentalism: How the British Saw Their Empire*. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), 134.

<sup>35</sup> *The Times*, 1 February 1965.

continuation of Britain's downward spiral.<sup>36</sup> In the *Observer*, Patrick O'Donovan remarked that "this was the last time such a thing could happen... This was the last time that London would be the capital of the world. This was an act of mourning for the Imperial past. This marked the final act in Britain's greatness."<sup>37</sup> But even if the spirit of Britain and the Empire's flame were severely dampened by Churchill's death and funeral, the decline of Britain's military prowess, or the loss of old and famous colonies, it was not fully extinguished. And while other nations, including allies, wrote Britain off, the Empire continued to hang on, losing grip day by day, making the loss of the British Empire as long and as excruciating as possible.

With the dissolution of the British Empire following the Second World War, Britishness, with its intrinsic imperialism, was in crisis. The Empire had become central to their identity as much as their way of life. And as the Empire faded away, so too did their identity. What was developed out of this imperial people becoming empire-less, and therefore self-image-less, was a nostalgia for what was perceived as the glory days of the Empire. Nostalgia is as much a reflection of the present, as a reflection of the past.<sup>38</sup> Part of the charm or allure of the past is how different it is from the present. The past, perceived as simpler or more innocent, a time when everything made sense, is juxtaposed with the present with its challenges and problems making life chaotic, messy, and oftentimes overbearing.<sup>39</sup> Indeed, the worse the present is, the more favourable becomes the past. The nostalgia that came about through years of decolonization, and loss of international standing, was an imperial nostalgia. Imperial nostalgia, as defined by Patricia Lorcin, "is related to a decline of international stature associated with the

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<sup>36</sup> Dominic Sandbrook. *White Heat: A History of Britain in the Swinging Sixties*. (London: Little, Brown, 2006), xv.

<sup>37</sup> *The Observer*, 31 January 1965.

<sup>38</sup> David Lowenthal. *The Past is a Foreign Country*. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985), 12-13.

<sup>39</sup> *Ibid*, xvi.

power politics of economic and political hegemony.”<sup>40</sup> It is important to note that the imperial nostalgia felt by some Britons had nothing to do with the activities of the Empire, but the existence of it, and Britons place in it. The making and maintenance of the British Empire were often characterized by complicated and violent processes, but these held no bearing on the idea of the Empire, and the nostalgia for it. There were Britons who recoiled at the existence of the Empire, in part for the often-horrible realities of imperial rule, and actually took pleasure in its demise, holding no nostalgia for their nation’s imperial endeavours and achievements. But for those who felt a nostalgia for their imperial past, they turned a blind eye, sometimes purposely, towards both personal and public issues that had existed, focusing on what they perceived to be superior days to the present.<sup>41</sup> Britain was no longer the nation it once was which saw both its international standing and national identity in the context of their Empire disappear, and as Britain progressed through the second half of the twentieth century, it seemingly became less and less like the nation it had been. This loss of Empire was not the only ailment that affected Britain. As Dominic Sandbrook argues, “inflation, strikes, unemployment, riots, bombings, scandals, failure, shabbiness, disappointment, this had been Britain’s narrative since the mid-1960s.”<sup>42</sup> The reality of post-Second World War Britain was quite different from the opinion of some, most notably Harold Macmillan, who had stated in 1957: “Let’s be frank about it; most of our people have never had it so good.”<sup>43</sup> This was at best, a rose-tinted view of post-war Britain, at worst, an insult, because for a great many Britons, they had never had it so bad.

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<sup>40</sup> Patricia M. E. Lorcin. “The Nostalgia for Empire.” *History and Theory* 57, no. 2 (June 2018), 269.

<sup>41</sup> For more on the negative aspects of the British Empire see John Newsinger. *The Blood Never Dried: A People’s History of the British Empire*. (London: Bookmarks, 2013), and Caroline Elkins. *Legacy of Violence: A History of the British Empire*. (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2022).

<sup>42</sup> Quoted in: Melian Solly, “A Brief History of the Falklands War,” *Smithsonian Magazine*, accessed June 20, 2022, <https://www.smithsonianmag.com/history/brief-history-falklands-war-180976349/>

<sup>43</sup> Dominic Sandbrook. *Never Had it so Good: A History of Britain from Suez to the Beatles*. (London: Little, Brown, 2005), viii.

The nostalgia that was formed after the Second World War was ultimately fueled by memory. By 1982, only a few people had first-hand memory of the popular imperialism of the late Victorian Era, but every Briton, at every age, had been born into a world where the United Kingdom held imperial possessions. This nostalgia, fueled by memory and personal connections, also presented the perfect scapegoat for why Britain found itself in its present state. All problems were either rooted in the loss of the Empire or blame could be placed upon it, no matter how peculiar this connection was. For instance, in 1978 when the government announced that Britain would begin a stricter programme of metrification, some saw it as a blight on the British people and a direct insult of who they were. In a group of BBC interviews regarding the specific change of miles to kilometres, individuals stopped on the street were asked how they felt about the change. The answers provided quickly moved from metrification to the resentment of life in post-imperial Britain. One young man was quick to bring up the Empire in his frustration, stating, “we’re losing all our national heritage... we’re an island on our own... and let’s face it, we once ruled the world... and now we’re just being part of a community, and I don’t agree with it at all.”<sup>44</sup> A second, older man, with tears welling in his eyes indicated the level of his frustration recalling his personal sacrifices:

We had a little bloke with a mustache... his name was Chamberlain, he was the Prime Minister, and he said ‘we are going to fight a war to make it a better land to live in,’ that was for me. I was nineteen years of age. [I] did ten years in the war. Come back here, and everybody wants to change the way that I went to fight for. It ain’t right, I want it as it is now, for what I nearly sacrificed my life for.<sup>45</sup>

During the decades of decline, Britain slowly crumbled. Whether it was the gaining of independence by British colonial possessions, the withdrawal of military forces around the

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<sup>44</sup> “1978: Do the British Public want kilometres? Nationwide, Voice of the People, BBC Archive,” YouTube video, 2:38, from BBC Nationwide programme televised on 3 February 1978, posted by “BBC Archive,” 31 May 2022, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ykthWUdkhu0>

<sup>45</sup> Ibid.

world, or the various domestic issues—Britain ceased to be a nation that made things happen, and had become a nation that things only happened to.

The Falklands War presented the perfect opportunity for this imperial nostalgia. With its hankering for a Victorian-style British nationalism, it resulted in many Britons no longer looking upon the past favourably because of a disdain for the present, but rejoicing and celebrating the present as if it were the past. In 1979, Sir Nicholas Henderson, the British Ambassador to Paris, wrote a final “valedictory dispatch” before retiring.<sup>46</sup> The dispatch set out to show how and why Britain had been on a decline since the end of the Second World War, and in his opinion, how that could be reversed. Sir Nicholas concluded that “nothing in a country’s future is inevitable and that everything depends upon the national purpose... we are surely capable... of resuming mastery of our fate. But a considerable jolt is going to be needed if a lasting attenuation of civic purpose and courage is to be averted.”<sup>47</sup> Margaret Thatcher, who had recently been elected Prime Minister, agreed with the points made, which were in line with her politics and vision for Britain. By 1982, Thatcher had already cultivated a public image of herself, as described by Charles Moore, as “a wholly feminine but strong woman, a figure respected by her enemies, a patriotic leader in the tradition of the Duke of Wellington (the Iron Duke), a defender of the nation and its values.”<sup>48</sup> With the preferred soubriquet the ‘Iron Lady’ and attributed quotes such as “the lady’s not for turning,” Thatcher was unsurprisingly determined to see the Falklands returned to Britain, and in victory, used it as the national purpose demanded. This is evident, both in Thatcher’s proclamation that “we rejoice that Britain has rekindled that spirit which has fired her for generations past, and which today has begun to burn as brightly as before,” and in the

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<sup>46</sup> Margaret Thatcher Foundation: The Henderson Dispatch.

<sup>47</sup> Ibid.

<sup>48</sup> Charles Moore. *Margaret Thatcher The Authorized Biography, Volume One: Not for Turning*. (London: Allen Lane, 2013), 333.

spectacularization and commodification of the Falklands victory, which can only be described as positively British.<sup>49</sup>

The spectacularization and commodification of British imperialism and nationalism was born out of the Victorian Era. The origins of this public spectacle and consumer culture that would become integral parts of Britain's popular imperialism can be found in the 1851 Great Exhibition of the Works of Industry of All Nations. The Great Exhibition took place in Hyde Park, London, and was housed in the Crystal Palace. A building representative of Victorian industry and ingenuity, the Crystal Palace was constructed with a skeleton of iron with walls and ceilings of plate glass.<sup>50</sup> In the fourteen-acre Palace were more than 100,000 exhibits displaying everything from raw materials and machinery, to manufactured goods and the fine arts.<sup>51</sup> Under red banners hanging from the ceiling, indicating each nation's booth, were representatives from Britain, the Empire, and the world. The western half of the palace showcased the Best of British with exhibits for Britain and thirty-four imperial dependencies, including the Falklands, while the eastern half held booths from forty-four other countries.<sup>52</sup> On 1 May, Queen Victoria travelled to Hyde Park to formally open the Great Exhibition. Her route was lined with thousands of spectators cheering and hollering as Her Majesty went by. The opening ceremony dripped with imperial pomp as Queen Victoria, along with the rest of the Royal party, received the report from the Commissioners on a dais in the centre of the Crystal Palace.<sup>53</sup> The first day alone saw 25,000 people visit the Exhibition, with more than six million visiting by October.<sup>54</sup> By its close,

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<sup>49</sup> Margaret Thatcher Foundation: Margaret Thatcher Speech to Conservative Rally at Cheltenham, 3 July 1982.

<sup>50</sup> Jeffrey A. Auerbach. *The Great Exhibition of 1851: A Nation on Display*. (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1999), 1.

<sup>51</sup> Cannadine. *Victorious Century: The United Kingdom, 1800-1906*. (New York: Viking, 2017), 277.

<sup>52</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>53</sup> Auerbach, 1.

<sup>54</sup> *Ibid.*

the Great Exhibition had cemented both the public spectacle and consumerism as central parts of Britain's popular imperialism.

Following the Great Exhibition, events across the United Kingdom and the Empire were celebrated with larger and grander spectacles along with an associated, diverse range of commodities. The very public spectacles saw British institutions taken off of their high pedestals, allowing Britons to interact and participate with them. The pinnacle of these imperial spectacles was Queen Victoria's Diamond Jubilee in 1897. On 22 June, a procession, which included The Queen, a Royal Party, Dominion Premiers, Colonial Administrators, and 50,000 British and imperial soldiers, travelled through the streets of London, passing thousands of cheering and crying Britons on their way to St Paul's Cathedral for Queen Victoria's National Service of Thanksgiving.<sup>55</sup> The service was unique for it too, like the procession, took place outdoors, on the west steps of the Cathedral, greatly adding to the public spectacle. From start to finish, the crowds were as much a part of the spectacle as Queen Victoria and other central figures.<sup>56</sup> The festivities of the Diamond Jubilee, in addition to displaying the importance of spectacle to British popular imperialism, also showed the importance of the Empire as well as the British military in such celebrations, both of which would play integral roles in the public spectacles that followed.

By the time of the Diamond Jubilee, commodities were more than related to the celebrated event, they were part of it, actually helping turn the event into a grand spectacle. As Tori Smith argues, events like the Jubilee needed to be seen as important, and the production and purchasing of souvenirs helped mark this significance.<sup>57</sup> In attributing significance to various

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<sup>55</sup> Cannadine, *Victorious Century*, 436.

<sup>56</sup> Unknown, "Royal Jubilees," St Paul's Cathedral, accessed March 21, 2022, <https://www.stpauls.co.uk/royal-jubilees>

<sup>57</sup> Tori Smith. "'Almost Pathetic... But Also Very Glorious': The Consumer Spectacle of the Diamond Jubilee," *Histoire Sociale/Social History* 29, no. 58 (1996), 342.

commodities, manufacturers and retailers flooded the market with commemorative pieces, allowing everyone to take part in the celebrations and contributing to the significance of the whole spectacle.<sup>58</sup> In this commodification, just like in the spectacularization, no restraint was shown; as a collector's guide remarked, the Jubilee "was commemorated with such a mass of plates and mugs and jugs and cups, and even toastracks that no full list can ever be compiled."<sup>59</sup> Coming out of the Jubilee, British tradition had been born, and this popular commodity-driven imperialism would reappear with every major event that related to or affected Britain or the British Empire. By 1982, this included the Boer War, the First World War, the Second World War, the British Empire Exhibitions (the largest and most famous occurring in 1924/1925), the British Empire and later the British Commonwealth Games which were held every four years beginning in 1930, the state funeral of Sir Winston Churchill in 1965, the coronations of King Edward VII, King George V, King George VI, and Queen Elizabeth II, as well as the Jubilees of King George V in 1935 and Queen Elizabeth II in 1977, the Royal weddings of King George VI and Queen Elizabeth in 1923, Queen Elizabeth II and Prince Philip in 1947, amongst others, with the most recent spectacle being the wedding of The Prince and the Princess of Wales in 1981. The Falklands War would follow suit, seeing similar public spectacles and similar products with traditional imperial images and messages produced for the commemoration of the victory in the South Atlantic.

This thesis is about how the British public celebrated, commemorated, and remembered the war to retake the Falkland Islands between its conclusion in June of 1982, and the end of the year. In the post-imperial world of the 1980s, Britons should not have looked upon the Falklands as they did. The British Empire had collapsed. Besides a few remaining colonies, now known as

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<sup>58</sup> Ibid, 338.

<sup>59</sup> Ibid, 339.



dependencies, that remained loyal only because their populations wished it, the Empire had been shoved behind them—long ago and far away. The decades-long processes of decolonization after the Second World War took away far more than territory, and saw the taking away of British identity. The Empire had become central to British identity and British life and by the 1980s “Britain was,” as noted by Thatcher, “a nation in retreat.”<sup>60</sup> But the war fought over those few months in 1982 to liberate the Falklands from Argentine occupation not only halted this retreat, albeit temporarily, but seemingly turned the tide.

The resurgence of this popular imperial nationalism during and after the Falklands War is significant because despite taking place in the post-imperial age of the late twentieth century, a clear majority of Britons were excited when war came and revelled in the resurgence of their patriotism. In the early stages of the war, a MORI poll was published in *The Economist*, on 17 April, which saw an overwhelming majority of Britons declare their support.<sup>61</sup> When asked how much they personally cared about Britain regaining sovereignty over the Falklands, 83% responded that they did care (this could be subdivided into 51% who cared ‘very much’ and 32% who cared ‘a little’).<sup>62</sup> The same percentage also responded that they supported the sending of the task force, which saw a mere 6% claim disapproval.<sup>63</sup> This support only increased in victory. In a MORI poll published in the *Sunday Times* on 20 June, a majority of 81% agreed with the prompt that “despite the loss of lives it was right to send the task force”, with only 14% disagreeing.<sup>64</sup> In another MORI poll published in *The Economist* on 26 June, when asked “are you satisfied or dissatisfied with the way the Government is now handing the situation in the

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<sup>60</sup> Margaret Thatcher Foundation: Margaret Thatcher Speech to Conservative Rally at Cheltenham, 3 July 1982.

<sup>61</sup> Margaret Thatcher Foundation: Public Opinion Background Note 109, 19 April 1982.

<sup>62</sup> Ibid.

<sup>63</sup> Ibid.

<sup>64</sup> Margaret Thatcher Foundation: Public Opinion Background Note 118, 20 June 1982.

Falklands Islands”, 84% claimed that they were satisfied.<sup>65</sup> And when asked “250 British servicemen have lost their lives recapturing the Falklands and the operation is estimated to have cost £1 billion. Given the cost in lives and money, do you think Britain should have sent the Task Force or not?” the results found that 76% thought that they were right in sending the task force.<sup>66</sup> There were, of course, those who disapproved of the war, seeing it as a positively antediluvian exercise. But no matter how strong their emotions were, they were largely drowned out by those who were of the pro-war opinion.<sup>67</sup>

In the context of its imperial spectacularization and commodification, the Falklands War was unique. Unlike imperial wars of the past that were so frequent, and often lasted for years, the Falklands lasted less than three months, and unlike state events that were planned meticulously in advance, the Falklands occurred quite suddenly. One would expect such a wealth of objects manufactured, or an array of spectacles planned for an historical occasion such as the Jubilee of 1897, but not for the war to liberate the Falklands. This assumption would be quite wrong. For almost every spectacle or commodity related to earlier imperial events, there was a Falklands equivalent. The Falklands War was reacted to, celebrated, and remembered by Britons in the same fashion that past wars were at the Empire’s height. The liberation of the Falklands can be seen as a remarkable moment linking British nationalism in the 1980s with the British nationalism espoused in the late Victorian Era. In the short time between the conclusion of the war in June of 1982 and the end of the year, the resurgence of British nationalism was experienced publicly and privately through both spectacles and commodities, along with their

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<sup>65</sup> Margaret Thatcher Foundation: Public Opinion Background Note 119, 27 June 1982.

<sup>66</sup> Ibid.

<sup>67</sup> For further polling data, see Anthony King and Robert J. Wybrow. *British Political Opinion 1937-2000: The Gallup Polls*. (London: Politico’s Publishing, 2001). or Sir Lawrence Freedman. *Britain and the Falklands War*. (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1988).

imperial images and messages, seemingly doing away with years of rot and malaise that had overtaken Britain, and allowing the ‘Empire to strike back.’

Readers who look to this work for new insights into the political jostling or the combat that took place between 2 April and 14 June 1982 will be disappointed. I have nothing to say about the war itself, which has been the topic of much historical inquiry. Before the Argentine invasion and subsequent British victory, the Falkland Islands had been confined to footnotes or incredibly small, overlooked chapters and a few almost forgotten monographs. In Hector Bolitho’s *The British Empire* (London: B.T. Batsford, 1947), an edited collection of chapters on the various Dominions and colonies making up the Empire, the Falklands occupy a mere two and a half pages of the over 200-page book. Among the few monographs dedicated to the Falklands were Julius Goebel’s *The Struggle for the Falkland Islands: A Study in Legal and Diplomatic History* (Port Washington: Kennikat Press, 1927), a case study surrounding the 1770 Falklands Crisis, and Ian Strange’s *The Falkland Islands* (Newton Abbot: David and Charles, 1972), which was more of a travel book discussing, in addition to the Island’s history, the geography and wildlife of the Islands. But riding the wave of patriotism that was born out of and expressed during the Falklands War came the almost immediate publication of monographs concerned with the war. Seemingly cashing in on the public’s desire to better understand the war, going beyond what they had read in the newspapers or seen on the television, various authors and publishers produced general histories of varying sizes and scopes, with many being released before the end of 1982.<sup>68</sup> But despite the eagerness of authors to be among the first to publish on this extraordinary event, the monographs published did not always match the enthusiasm of their creators. One of the main reasons for this was the thirty-year rule enforced by the British

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<sup>68</sup> For commemorative publications including magazines, special editions, or other documents considered ephemera, see Chapter II.

government. According to this rule, all government or military documents, unless otherwise stated, shall remain secret for thirty years after their creation or the conclusion of the events that they deal with. Once these thirty years have passed, then the government shall make, unless there are some pressing issues making it impossible, these documents public. Since 2012 marked thirty years since the Falklands War, those monographs published before that year were slightly less informed, while those published after had a greater abundance of sources. The majority of monographs published on the Falklands War were produced before 2012, with most being produced in the 1980s, reflecting the inquisitiveness of historians and their readers' desire to understand the war in the here and now, not in thirty years' time. This ultimately saw authors write on general topics with much success, but miss out on certain details. For instance, British military historian Martin Middlebrook published *Task Force: The Falklands War, 1982* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1987), originally published as *Operation Corporate: The Falklands War, 1982* (London: Viking, 1985). It is an entertaining book that goes into a great detail on the operations and events that took place in the South Atlantic, with personal testimony making it both highly readable and effective in telling the story of the Falklands War. Unfortunately, the monograph is representative of scores of other early publications in that, while they are not bad histories, the authors lacked the evidence and sources to be able to discuss certain topics with authority. An example of this was the debate over the possibility of Special Air Service teams covertly operating within Argentina. In his 1987 revised edition, Middlebrook stated:

In the original version of this book, I floated the suggestion that the helicopter flight was a hoax, that no SAS men were landed in Argentina... I based that supposition on my belief that the British War Cabinet would never escalate the war to the mainland. I now think that the hoax scenario was wrong. There was still not, at the time of writing this edition, been any authoritative statement, but several fragments of information have come my way.<sup>69</sup>

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<sup>69</sup> Martin Middlebrook. *Task Force: The Falklands War, 1982*. (Hamondsworth: Penguin, 1987), 192.

This example perfectly illustrates where a great many Falklands publications falter. With perhaps a little more evidence, Middlebrook makes the claim that British soldiers did operate in Argentina. But, as Middlebrook admits himself, no authoritative evidence had been found, so the point remains unsubstantiated.

Major General Julian Thompson, who commanded 3 Commando Brigade, stated in his memoir *No Picnic* that he wrote his book because “very few accurate accounts of the Falklands War had appeared by mid-1983” and that “only Max Hastings’s *Battle For The Falklands* and Robert Fox’s *Eyewitness Falklands*” were accurate portrayals of the war.<sup>70</sup> Max Hastings and Simon Jenkins’, *The Battle for the Falklands* (London: Michael Joseph Limited, 1983) and Robert Fox’s *Eyewitness Falklands* (London: Methuen, 1982) are not only accurate portrayals of the war, as Thompson observed, but they continue to serve as authorities on the subject. The reasons for their high praise were that the authors, as journalists, were in the thick of it in the Falklands or in Whitehall during the conflict, and the information to which they were privy was more than any other journalist could have dreamt of. Hastings and Fox, serving as war correspondents during the war, were attached to or had some affiliation with various units and regiments including 2 and 3 Para, and 40, 42, and 45 Royal Marine Commandos. As they were in the field, they also had access to the commanders including Major-General Jeremy Moore and Brigadier Julian Thompson. This access to the men fighting, as well as their commanders, gave them materials and insights that journalists and historians writing later could not attain. Jenkins remained in the United Kingdom as a journalist in Whitehall taking in the political element of the war and, while he certainly was not privy to the level of information his peers were in the South Atlantic, his addition to what Hastings or Fox wrote added the all-important political element to

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<sup>70</sup> Major-General Julian Thompson. *No Picnic: 3 Commando Brigade in the South Atlantic: 1982*. (London: Leo Cooper, 1992), xvi.

the war's story. As journalists, their inquiry was not historical in nature. The purpose of the books was to tell the story of the war, not historicise it or attempt an historical argument. In that regard, they are quite successful.

Before returning to Portsmouth, HMS *Hermes* laid off Spithead and was visited by Margaret Thatcher who wished to greet the ship's company to tell them how proud she and the nation were. She also told those she met that they should write of their experiences in the South Atlantic, and many veterans heeded her advice.<sup>71</sup> The vast array of material written by those who were there allow the historian to see the war from a great many points of view, including politicians, military personnel, and Falkland Islanders themselves. Political memoirs have been written by various politicians, allowing a wide range of interpretation of the government and the House of Commons during the war. Margaret Thatcher's *The Downing Street Years* (New York: Harper Collins, 1993) is perhaps the most comprehensive political memoir regarding the Falklands. As she served as Prime Minister during the war, Thatcher's thoughts and opinions on the matters are integral to understanding the government's motives and movements during those strenuous months. Thatcher stated that a few weeks after the war, "I wrote down my detailed recollection of events as I had lived through them at the centre of government... Parts of it will have to remain secret for a considerable time to come, but it is upon my personal memoir that I have based this account."<sup>72</sup> With the British government's thirty-year rule, all the facts could not be retold publicly. While one may argue that this hinders the reader, reading what the Prime Minister has to say regarding a war during which she headed the government is still richly appealing and quite useful. Other Falklands related political memoirs include Rex Hunt, *My*

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<sup>71</sup> "Return of HMS *Hermes* from the Falkland Islands (1982)," YouTube video, 2:42, from a BBC news programme televised in 1982, posted by "CultMark," 8 August 2017, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rDHeocu0PU0>

<sup>72</sup> Thatcher, *The Downing Street Years*, 174.

*Falkland Days* (London: Politico's Publishing, 1992), John Nott, *Here Today, Gone Tomorrow: Recollections of an Errant Politician* (London: Politico's Publishing, 2002), and Lord Carrington, *Reflect on Things Past* (London: William Collins Sons & Co., 1988). John Major's *The Autobiography* (New York: Harper Collins, 1999), is also helpful. Despite focusing on his life, primarily his time as Prime Minister from 1990 through 1997, Major was a junior MP at the time of the war, and while he never discusses cabinet meetings or other such opportunities that he was not privy to, it allows one to understand what the average MP witnessed during the war. It should be noted that each of these memoirs are self serving in some form or another. As politicians, each author had come under public scrutiny at various points of their careers. These memoirs were an opportunity for them to tell their side of the story, providing reason and justification for their part in the events discussed. Despite this bias, each memoir is still an undeniably useful source.

Militarily, memoirs and recollections by those who served in the South Atlantic are so numerous that every branch of the military, and almost every regiment, has seen the publication of personal experiences. The naval war was presented from both top and bottom perspectives, including the commander of the task force, Admiral Sandy Woodward's *One Hundred Days: The Memoirs of the Falklands Battle Group Commander* (London: Harper Collins, 2012), and David Yate's account of serving aboard HMS *Antrim*; *Bomb Alley, Falkland Islands 1982: Aboard HMS Antrim at War* (London: Pen & Sword, 2013). The war in the air was also well represented with recollections from various pilots who flew various different aircraft and missions during the war including Commander 'Sharkey' Ward's *Sea Harrier Over the Falklands: A Maverick at War* (London: Leo Cooper, 1992), Jerry Pook's *RAF Ground Attack Falklands* (London: Pen & Sword, 2011), which discussed the role of Royal Navy Sea Harriers

and Royal Air Force Harriers over the Falklands, or Colonel Richard Hutchings' *Special Forces Pilot: A Flying Memoir of the Falklands War* (London: Pen & Sword, 2014) which discusses the role of Sea King helicopters in the war. The ground war memoirs also benefited from being written by those in command and those in the field. Command memoirs include Major General Julian Thompson, *No Picnic: 3 Commando Brigade in the South Atlantic: 1982* (London: Leo Cooper, 1992), Major General Nick Vaux, *Take that Hill! Royal Marines in the Falklands War* (Washington: Pergamon-Brassey's International Defense Publishers, 1986), and Major-General Edward Fursdon, *The Falklands Aftermath: Picking Up the Pieces* (London: Leo Cooper, 1988). There is a great variety of accounts of particular units and regiments during the war, such as Philip Neame's *Penal Company on the Falklands: A Memoir of the Parachute Regiment at War 1982* (London: Pen & Sword, 2022), Tony Shaw's *SAS South Georgia Boating Club: An SAS Trooper's Memoir and Falklands War Diary* (London: Pen & Sword, 2022), and Mike Seear's *With the Gurkhas in the Falklands: A War Journal* (London: Pen & Sword, 2017) discussed the infantry war. Tom Martin's *Falklands Gunner: A Day-by-Day Personal Account of the Royal Artillery in the Falklands War* (London: Pen & Sword, 2017), and Roger Field's *Scimitar into Stanley: One Soldier's Falklands War* (London: Pen & Sword, 2022) illustrated the war fought by the artillery and armoured regiments. Brian Short's *The Band that went to War: The Royal Marines Band in the Falklands War* (London: Pen & Sword, 2021) showcased a different side of the war, including the entertaining and ceremonial roles that the Royal Marines Band took up, as well as its role when the fighting started. These select few demonstrate the variety that exists in military memoirs after the Falklands War. From commanders to the sailors and soldiers on the ground, from each branch to various different regiments, and different duties, the memoirs of



those who fought in the South Atlantic hold a substantial place in the historiography of the Falklands War.

Falkland Islanders have also told their stories of life under occupation, through war, and in victorious liberation. Before the Falklands were invaded, British territory had not been under enemy occupation since the Nazis invaded and occupied the Channel Islands. Neville and Valerie Bennett's *A Falklands Family at War: Diaries of the 1982 Conflict*, edited by Rachel Simons (London: Pen & Sword, 2021), gives great insight into life in the Falklands during those dark days. Neville Bennett was the chief fireman on the Falklands and Valerie Bennett worked as a nurse at Stanley Hospital. The two of them both had to get on with their jobs, which were impacted by the Argentines, as well as take care of their two children, one of whom is Rachel Simons. Graham Bound is another Falkland Islander who published his experiences after the war. As founder of the Falkland Island newspaper *Penguin News*, and a correspondent with British newspapers after the war, Bound was no stranger to journalism, and wrote his experiences from the war in *Invasion 1982: The Falkland Islanders' Story* (London: Pen & Sword, 2016). He would return to the topic of the Falklands, looking at the aftermath of the war and life in the Falklands post-1982 in *Fortress Falklands: Life Under Siege in Britain's Last Outpost* (London: Pen & Sword, 2012). The Falkland Islanders, only 1,800 in number in 1982, were, and remain, small in number and besides noting that they wish to remain British, are often overlooked or given minor consideration in larger discussions of the Falklands War. Their own voices are integral in showing how Falkland Islanders felt during the war, which was, after all, in effort to release them from Argentine occupation.

The Falklands War and the imperialistic patriotism expressed with such fervor coincided with a resurgence into historical inquiry regarding the British Empire and related imperial topics.

For instance, John M. MacKenzie, Professor of Imperial History at the University of Lancaster, one of the foremost imperial historians who grew up and traveled throughout the Empire, saw this historical trend and capitalized on it. In 1984 he published *Propaganda and Empire: The Manipulation of British Public Opinion, 1880-1960* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1984), and two years later, he edited a collection of essays on various imperial topics for the 1986 monograph, *Imperialism and Popular Culture* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1986). It became difficult for British imperial historians of the 1980s to ignore the Falklands. As MacKenzie wrote in the introduction to *Propaganda and Empire*, “the Falklands war of 1982 aroused many echoes of the earlier period of popular imperialism.”<sup>73</sup> It is here that this thesis is inserted into the historiography of the Falklands War. Despite acknowledging that the war had aroused echoes of Britain's popular imperialism, very little effort has been put into actually discussing how those echoes manifested in 1982 British society. It is through the examination of the spectacularization and commodification of the Falklands War that it becomes clear how Britons truly felt about the war to liberate the Falkland Islands.

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<sup>73</sup> John MacKenzie. *Propaganda and Empire: The Manipulation of British Public Opinion, 1880-1960*. (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1984), 11.

## Chapter I

## “All Brass and Nostalgia”: The Spectacularization of the Falklands War

The reaction to British territory being invaded and occupied by a foreign power was one of anger, confusion, and disbelief—a national humiliation. Some Britons took to the streets foreshadowing the public spectacles to come. *The Sun* reported that “youths demonstrated outside the Argentinian Embassy in London... They sang “Rule Britannia”, ending with ‘Don’t Cry for me, Argentina, we’re going to Nuke you’.” As John Major recalled, when Margaret Thatcher “left Number 10 for the emergency session of Parliament she received a hostile reception from the crowd gathered in Downing Street. Other ministers, too, were booed and hissed as they drove into the Commons.”<sup>74</sup> Thatcher echoed the mood of Britain. In the House she demanded that the Falklands be “freed from occupation and... returned to British administration at the earliest possible moment.”<sup>75</sup> The government responded swiftly, ordering a task force to sail to the South Atlantic. The British public reacted in kind through public spectacles, such as the unofficial, spontaneous flocking of thousands of Britons to the waterfronts in the south of England to see the departure, and later return, of the task force. These were followed by official victory parades and concerts, and the co-opting of state and public events that could be connected to the conflict. The Falklands War was celebrated and experienced by Britons through great public spectacles in the same traditions of previous imperial wars and festivals.

The public spectacles that occurred in 1982 were rooted in the imperial spectacles of the past when the British military occupied a lofty place in the public psyche. This was most evident

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<sup>74</sup> *The Sun*, 3 April 1982, and John Major. *The Autobiography*. (New York: Harper Collins, 1999), 76.

<sup>75</sup> Thatcher. *The Collected Speeches of Margaret Thatcher*, 150.

with the public celebrations surrounding Queen Victoria's Diamond Jubilee in 1897. The Queen was naturally at the heart of the celebrations, but imperialists such as Joseph Chamberlain saw the Jubilee as an opportunity to put the Empire on display.<sup>76</sup> Dominion Premiers, Colonial leaders, and soldiers from across the Empire arrived in London to partake in the festivities.<sup>77</sup> The procession of 50,000 soldiers, the largest military force ever to assemble in the city, marched through the streets of London to St Paul's Cathedral for a service of thanksgiving.<sup>78</sup> These soldiers, of various races and cultures, dressed in the exotic yet British uniforms of their colonial regiments, displayed the reach of the Empire. As the *Daily Mail* described, the imperial soldiers were "all so smart and straight and strong, every man such a splendid specimen and testimony to the greatness of the British race that there was not an Imperialist in the crowd who did not from the sight of them gain a new view of the glory of the British Empire."<sup>79</sup> The British military, however, would later fall from grace. During the decades of decolonization after the Second World War, the British fought many conflicts in an attempt to maintain their already crumbling Empire. Militarily, there were both successes and losses. Regardless, these conflicts contributed to the further loss of British territory, the loss of Britain's prestige as a world power, and the loss of Britain's moral reputation. Some historians mark the Second Boer War as the start of Britain's moral decline.<sup>80</sup> For patriotic imperialists, however, it was a British victory like any other, and saw, as Richard Price described, "an orgy of patriotism, the like of which had never been seen before; men really did flock to the colours to show their involvement in the dreams of Empire."<sup>81</sup>

The actual moral decline was found in the small imperial wars after the Second World War,

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<sup>76</sup> Cannadine. *Victorious Century*, 436.

<sup>77</sup> Ibid. James Morris. *Pax Britannica: The Climax of an Empire*. (London: Faber and Faber, 1968), 31.

<sup>78</sup> Ibid, 31.

<sup>79</sup> Quoted in Ibid, 32.

<sup>80</sup> For instance, see Philippa Levine. *The British Empire: Sunrise to Sunset*. (Harlow: Pearson, 2013), 182.

<sup>81</sup> Richard Price. *An Imperial War and the British Working Class: Working-Class Attitudes and Reactions to the Boer War 1899-1902*. (London: Routledge, 1972), 1.

which saw Britain no longer pitted against an aggressor with the survival of their island home at stake like it had been against Napoleon or Hitler, but peoples who had become disgruntled living under British control. These conflicts, recognized by Britons as blights upon their nation, were no more than native peoples fighting for independence and the British fighting for an already lost Empire, often with extreme violence and retribution. This public disapproval of British military actions after 1945 was reflected through public spectacles. Once having the British military take on a central role, these spectacles were altered. Other entities, the Monarchy above all else, were central to these spectacles with the military taking on only supportive roles, until 1982.

The Falklands War would see the British military return to its former place, as in those previous imperial pageants. With the dispatch of the task force, in a show that Britain's "diplomacy [was] backed by strength, and [that Britain had] the resolve to use that strength if necessary," the spectacles had the military at the very heart of the festivities in departing for war, and even more fervently returning in victory.<sup>82</sup> At their core, these spectacles were the same pageants produced at the height of the Empire, making it appear as though the British were merely picking up from where they had left off. These spectacles saw the British, having fought and won an obviously imperial war, celebrate it with vast public spectacles that used traditional imperial images, sentiments, sights, and sounds. From the flying of flags and banners to the playing and singing of imperial anthems, these spectacles revived a nationalism more suited for the late Victorian Era than the 1980s. There was the addition of modern elements which saw the combination of traditional and modern British values into single spectacles. There were those who opposed both the war and the production of such spectacles, but only a few of them made their opinions known. The majority of those in opposition simply chose not to take part, which

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<sup>82</sup> Thatcher. *The Collected Speeches of Margaret Thatcher*, 161.

gave the spectacles an almost entirely pro-war or celebratory tone. In a twist of fate, the British had seen their empire disappear through decolonization. Coupled with the loss of their nation's and military's reputation, it would take a war for a colony-turned-dependency; one that most Britons could not point to on a map, some 8,000 miles away, to see Britain return to the spirit that had been at the centre of their imperial achievements.

## I

On 5 April 1982, the first of the task force sailed from Portsmouth, followed by a formidable force comprising of 100 ships. This armada was made up of both naval and civilian vessels ranging from the aircraft carriers HMS *Invincible* and HMS *Hermes* to cruise liners such as Cunard's *Queen Elizabeth 2* and P&O's *Canberra*. The fleet that was sailing to liberate the Falklands from Argentine occupation was the largest naval task force since the Second World War. Indeed, the entire spectacle that surrounded the departures was reminiscent of the Second World War. As Robert Fox, a war correspondent aboard *Canberra*, remarked: "the whole scene of the departure... resembled a newsreel of forty years before."<sup>83</sup> The spectacle of the task force departing was divided into two parts, the ships at the centre and the civilians along the waterfront at England's southern ports, including Portsmouth, Plymouth, and Southampton. Following naval tradition, the crews of the ships stood at attention along the ship's sides from bow to stern, dressed in their No.1 dress uniforms. The carriers, in addition to their crews, displayed their complement of Sea Harriers and Sea Kings on their flight decks. The Sea Harriers were placed diagonally along the flight deck with a single Harrier tied down upon the ski ramp at the bow,

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<sup>83</sup> Robert Fox. *Eyewitness Falklands: A Personal Account of the Falklands Campaign*. (London: Methuen, 1982), 1.

and the Sea Kings were tightly packed across the stern of the carriers from side to side. The



Figure 1: View from the tower of HMS *Hermes* as she departs for the South Atlantic. (IWM FKD 672)

display of this “deadly hardware” was done purposely in the full knowledge that news broadcasts in Argentina would show the departure spectacles, and so know the determination of the British.<sup>84</sup> The whole scene was quite moving. As Max Hastings, a war correspondent aboard *QE2*, described: “as the ships cast off their lines and began to move out of the harbour, vast throngs of flag-waving, cheering people gathered to bid them goodbye and good luck...Bands played, women wept. It was the beginning of a unique episode in modern British history, a

<sup>84</sup> “HMS *Invincible* leaves for Falkland Islands with nuclear weapons—Daily Mail,” YouTube video, 2:34, from a news programme televised in 1982, posted by “Daily Mail,” 8 March 2018, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VoO7RYDpW68>

throwback Edwardian or even Victorian in character.”<sup>85</sup> The Victorian or Edwardian elements were at the heart of the spectacle. The images and sounds displayed pride in the British military heading to war as they had done to defend the Empire and British interests for hundred of years. There were, of course, modern, 1980s elements present such as modern songs and the use of popular culture to display the same traditional spirit. The events were not without those who ridiculed them, but, as Hastings wrote, “even the most ardent cynic must have been moved by the spectacle of the Royal Navy’s surface fleet... sailing forth out of the ports which Nelson and St Vincent, Rodney and Collingwood had gone.”<sup>86</sup> Indeed, when one looked upon the dockyards filled with cheering, crying, flag-waving Britons, besides the fact that it was 1982 and not 1805, it was hard to distinguish between what was occurring in the here and now, and what was experienced when Nelson departed for Trafalgar, as so vividly and uncannily displayed in Andrew Carrick Gow’s “Farewell to Nelson” or Fred Roe’s “Good-Bye My Lads.”<sup>87</sup>



Figure 2. Fred Roe, *Good-Bye My Lads* (RMG PAI7651)

<sup>85</sup> Hastings and Jenkins, 121.

<sup>86</sup> *Ibid*, 122.

<sup>87</sup> Royal Museums Greenwich: Andrew Carrick Gow, *Farewell to Nelson*. and Royal Museums Greenwich: Fred Roe, *Good-Bye My Lads*.



Hastings was right when he called the departures “the beginning of a unique episode in modern British history”, because for such a large number of people partaking in the spectacle, all the reactions to the departure of the task force were very similar.<sup>88</sup> For instance, Tommy Mallen, a First World War veteran who was interviewed by the *Daily Mail*, felt a reassurance in his national pride when the fleet sailed from Portsmouth. “I thought England was done for, spineless, a doormat for the world,” Mallen said remorsefully, “I’d pass the war memorials or see Nelson’s *Victory* and wonder what it had all been for. But I was wrong, thank God. We are still a



Figure 3. Crowds bid farewell as HMS *Invincible* sails from Portsmouth en route to the Falklands. Note the banner in the centre that states ‘Britannia rules OK.’ (IWM FKD 207)

<sup>88</sup> Hastings and Jenkins, 121.

proud country, and we'll still protect our own.”<sup>89</sup> Mallen was not alone in his belief. Those who agreed with him, and also appeared to enjoy the show of patriotism, were sometimes those one would least expect. For instance, Jonathan Raban watched the departures on the television in the comfortable surroundings of his home. Watching the spectacle in black-and-white, the picture suddenly became less clear, as to his surprise, Raban was crying. “It was absurd... like crying over a bad movie in an empty cinema... The families on the shore the receding ships, the bands and streamers had me blubbering with silly pride in Queen and Country.”<sup>90</sup> Whether one liked it or not, the departure of the task force struck a nerve with Britons.

One of the most prominent national and imperial symbols present was the Union Jack. Introduced on 1 January 1801, the Union Jack, was the national flag of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland. Incorporated in its design were the crosses of St George, St Andrew, and St Patrick, the patron saints of England, Scotland, and Ireland respectively. The Union Jack symbolized all things to all people—a symbol for Britain, the unity between the nations that make up the United Kingdom, their shared history, values, laws, along with the various rights and privileges of British citizenship. Above all else, the Union Jack became a hallmark of British military strength and the British Empire. Whether flown by the Royal Navy, British Army, Royal Air Force, above government houses and colonial offices, as part of a Dominion’s or Colony’s ensign or as an Armed Forces branch or regiment ensign, the Union Jack was omnipresent in the context of the Empire and Britain’s place on the world stage. This concept of the Union Jack was perpetuated by its use in imperial writings and images from Rudyard Kipling poems to Benjamin West paintings. Britain’s imperial legacy, however, stained the Union Jack. When Britain entered into the post-imperial world of the late twentieth century,

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<sup>89</sup> Sandbrook. *Who Dares Wins: Britain, 1979-1982*. (London: Allen Lane, 2019), 762.

<sup>90</sup> *Ibid*, 761-762.

many people were unable to separate the flag of the United Kingdom from a symbol of empire. By 1982 this interpretation still remained, most evidently with all the remaining dependency ensigns, including the Falkland Islands' ensign, containing the Union Jack. And with the invasion of the Falklands, the Union Jack returned to its high place as "the flag that's braved a thousand years, the battle and the breeze," representing a proud former imperial nation on its way to fight an imperial war.<sup>91</sup>

The Union Jack, in addition to its use as a banner being waved, was presented in all manner of ways from the subtle to the grandiose. For instance, plastic hats were sold decorated with the Union Jack. There were also buttons for purchase, which like those used for election campaigns, were pre-existing methods of displaying support and spreading messages. For instance, one small square button, made of card, was decorated with the Union Jack and the phrase 'Falk off Argentina' inscribed in its centre.<sup>92</sup> Another had the Union Jack with 'Falkland Islands' written across the horizontal line of St George's cross, with 'Our Empire Strikes Back!' on the lower white lines of St Andrew's cross.<sup>93</sup> This use of the Union Jack became more intimate for some, such as the women who displayed their support through the painting of the Union Jack upon their breasts, or the extreme as exhibited by Ken Bailey.<sup>94</sup> Bailey, Britain's self-appointed number one flag-waver, attended some of the departures in a red coat and tails, John Bull Union Jack waistcoat, top hat with a Union Jack attached to the front, a large Union Jack button upon his lapel, with a large flag in hand to finish off the look.<sup>95</sup> Bailey certainly was in a

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<sup>91</sup> Nick Groom. *The Union Jack: The Story of the British Flag*. (London: Atlantic Books, 2006), v.

<sup>92</sup> Author's Personal Collection: "Falk off Argentina" pin

<sup>93</sup> Author's Personal Collection: "Our Empire Strikes Back!" pin

<sup>94</sup> Groom, 291.

<sup>95</sup> Unknown. "Falklands War, British Soldiers Wait to Depart from Southampton on the QE2," photograph, Alamy (CEW7KK), <https://www.alamy.com/stock-photo-falklands-war-british-soldiers-wait-to-depart-from-southampton-on-43580759.html>

league of his own when it came to visual displays of patriotism, but the sentiment exhibited was shared by all in attendance, in a manner of ways, from the waving of the flag to the wearing of it.

Popular culture was also used to help display patriotism at these departure spectacles. For instance, one woman waved to a departing loved one with tears in her eyes, while wearing a

white t-shirt which stated 'Hey Argentina' below an image of Mickey Mouse with an angered look on his face, holding a Union Jack in one hand, and displaying his middle finger with the other.<sup>96</sup> The reworking of the famous 1976 song "Don't Cry for Me Argentina" also made it onto t-shirts. Robert Fox noted seeing "two well upholstered young ladies [who] sported the latest T-shirts, their ample frontage bearing the slogan: 'Don't cry for me Argentina, we're going to knock the \*\*\*\* out of you.'"<sup>97</sup>

Another such example was designed and printed by South Coast Fashions Ltd. in Portsmouth. In the centre of the shirt was a



Figure 4. With tears in her eyes, a woman waves to a loved one bound for the Falklands. Her t-shirt displays a sentiment shared by many Britons. (Sunday Express)

cartoon naval vessel with three large, imposing cannons facing toward the viewer with small silhouettes of the rest of the British fleet following behind. Above and below the image was

<sup>96</sup> The Sunday Express Magazine team. *War in the Falklands: The Campaign in Pictures*. (London: Book Club Associates, 1982), 30.

<sup>97</sup> Fox, 1.

another variant of the slogan: “Don’t cry for me Argentina ‘cause we’re going to beat \*\*\*\*! Out of you.”<sup>98</sup> The same spirit displayed by wearing such t-shirts was presented with homemade banners. Messages included “Go get ‘em”, “Give ‘em hell”, “God Bless”, “Britannia rules ok” or “Up Yours Argentina”. While many were hastily made, the messages that they displayed were quite symbolic. There were the base sentiments of “up yours Argentina” or “Falk off Argentina” which maintained the opinion that the Falklands were British, and that Argentina was in the wrong and should be removed by force. But Britons, even in the post-imperial world of the 1980s, could not help but use traditional imperial imagery. Britannia, as a representation of Britain, symbolised all that Britain stood for. Usually shown with a Union Jack shield and a trident, perhaps accompanied by the British lion, Britannia displayed the strength and determination of Britain entering an imperial war, and her place in the departure spectacles, saw the merging of old and new ideas of Britishness.

Music greatly enhanced the departure spectacles. As Fox remarked, departing aboard *Canberra*, the spectacle was “all brass and nostalgia” with the playing of two of Britain’s greatest imperial pieces—“Rule Britannia!” and “Land of Hope and Glory.”<sup>99</sup> “Rule Britannia” was written in 1740 by the poet James Thomson as part of Thomson’s and David Mallet’s cowritten masque “Alfred”, which explored the life of Alfred the Great.<sup>100</sup> The words specific to “Rule Britannia” would later be accompanied with music composed by Dr. Thomas Augustine Arne, who had previously composed the British national anthem, “God Save the King.”<sup>101</sup> “Rule

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<sup>98</sup> Author’s Personal Collection: “Don’t Cry for me Argentina” t-shirt.

<sup>99</sup> Fox, 1.

<sup>100</sup> Chris Brooks and Peter Faulkner Eds. *The White Man’s Burdens: An Anthology of British Poetry of the Empire*. (Exeter: University of Exeter Press, 1996), 79

<sup>101</sup> Ibid.

Britannia” was, a rallying call to a nascent empire, with the original first verse and chorus proclaiming:

When Britain first, at heaven’s command,  
Arose from out the azure main;  
This was the charter of the land,  
And guardian angels sung this strain:  
Rule, Britannia, rule the waves;  
Britons never will be slaves.<sup>102</sup>

After the original version was composed, it went through various lyric changes, including the removal of three verses. The most important change, however, came in the nineteenth century with the rewording of the chorus. The original chorus of “Britannia, rule the waves” was modified to “Britannia rules the waves.”<sup>103</sup> The original incited what Britain should do, whereas the final version affirmed that Britain did in fact rule the waves. The singing of “Rule Britannia!” at the departure of the task force would make it a rallying call to a nascent nation, reaffirming the song’s message. It also, in the proclamation that Britons would never be slaves, made the Argentines out to be slave makers, with the Falkland Islanders under their yoke. The British forces would come to the rescue reaffirming that Britain, despite the past three decades, still ruled the waves.

“Land of Hope and Glory” was just as imperially evocative as “Rule Britannia!” The 9<sup>th</sup> of August 1902 marked the official start of a new era. With the coronation of King Edward VII and his wife Queen Alexandra, the Victorian Era came to a close and the Edwardian Era began. Coming out of what was seen as a glorious imperial age, the coronation of the new King and Queen showcased the continuation of the previous reign in a spectacular imperial pageant. For the coronation, Sir Edward Elgar composed the “Coronation Ode”, which included his earlier

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<sup>102</sup> Ibid.

<sup>103</sup> Jeffrey Richards. *Imperialism and Music: Britain 1876-1953*. (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2001),98.

composition, “Pomp and Circumstance March No. 1.”<sup>104</sup> Elgar’s music was the backdrop to the now famous words of poet A. C. Benson.<sup>105</sup> What was created was a song with a powerful imperial statement. A hallmark of imperial Britain, “Land of Hope and Glory” became an unofficial second national anthem.

Dear Land of Hope, thy hope is crowned.  
 God make thee mightier yet!  
 On Sov’ran brows, beloved, renowned,  
 Once more thy crown is set.  
 Thine equal laws, by Freedom gained,  
 Have ruled thee well and long;  
 By Freedom gained, by Truth maintained,  
 Thine Empire shall be strong.  
 Land of Hope and Glory, Mother of the Free,  
 How shall we extol thee, who are born of thee?  
 Wider still and wider shall thy bounds be set;  
 God, who made thee mighty, make thee mightier yet.<sup>106</sup>

With its assertion of divine endorsements for the Empire and the promise to see the boundaries of the Empire forever expanding, “Land of Hope and Glory” joined “Rule Britannia!” as an imperial anthem. In addition to the coronation, 1902 also saw a British military victory at the conclusion of the Second Boer War. “Land of Hope and Glory,” with lyrics such as “wider still and wider shall thy bounds be set,” seemed to celebrate the expansion of the Empire, including the new territory in South Africa. Some historians mark the Second Boer War as the event that seriously damaged Britain’s reputation internationally, making “Land of Hope and Glory” a rallying call for an Empire which was already showing signs of strain by looking backwards to the imperial expansion of the previous century. In the context of the Falklands, “Land of Hope and Glory” spoke to the return of Britain’s vows for the future. These ideas of freedom and truth, which Britain’s imperial nostalgia held deep, was vital to the task force being dispatched with the

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<sup>104</sup> Brooks and Faulkner. 332

<sup>105</sup> Ibid.

<sup>106</sup> Ibid.

popular objective of reaffirming such British values, seemingly in the same way they were espoused in the Victorian or Edwardian Eras.

Composers and their music were representative of societal practices and cultural ideas. “Rule Britannia!” in 1740, with later changes in the nineteenth century, and “Land of Hope and Glory” in 1902 were representative of Britain at the time of their compositions. Neither Thomson nor Elgar would have thought that their pieces would continue to be played in concert halls and stadiums, for classical performances and public events alike. But the playing and singing of these two imperial anthems in connection to the Falklands showed how much their imperial messages resonated with Britons in 1982. Also representative of the time was the addition of modern songs played in conjunction with the imperial anthems of “Rule Britannia!” and “Land of Hope and Glory,” making the departure spectacles as modern as much as they were old fashioned. When *Invincible* departed on 5 April, Rod Stewart’s cover of “Sailing” was played from the loud speakers at the quay.<sup>107</sup> With the lyrics “we are sailing stormy waters to be near you to be free” and “can you hear me? Can you hear me? Through the dark night, far away” symbolized for those onboard *Invincible*, and on the docks, that Britain was sailing stormy waters to free the Falkland Islanders. Dark clouds hovered over the Falklands, but when the British task force arrived, the Falklands would be set free, and the British could sail “home again, cross the sea.”

As the fleet slowly sailed away, the bands stopped playing, the singing and cheering slowly subsided, *Hermes*’ whistle loudly sounded a signal—V. Captain John Newbury, who would find himself in the South Atlantic aboard CS *Iris*, was amongst the crowd gathered to see the “pride of the British Navy” sail from Portsmouth south to the Falklands.<sup>108</sup> He noted that as

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<sup>107</sup> Commander ‘Sharkey’ Ward. *Sea Harrier Over the Falklands: A Maverick at War*. (London: Leo Cooper, 1992), 90. And Jonathan Glancey Boyce. *Harrier: The Biography*. (London: Atlantic Books, 2013), 175.

<sup>108</sup> Captain John Newbury. “CS ‘Iris’ Goes to War.” *Sea Breezes* 81, no. 739 (2007), 259.



*Hermes* “passed out through The Narrows, she sounded dit dit dit da on her whistle. With tears of pride running down my cheeks I wondered how many other people gathered there on the shore realised the significance of the Churchillian signal. The Old Man would have been proud.”<sup>109</sup> Indeed, many likely missed the symbolism of the signal. Dit dit dit da, or dot dot dot dash, morse code for the letter V, which for all Britons, not only the Churchillians and those of the Second World War generation among them, stood for victory. As it had been forty years earlier, Britain’s policy towards the Falklands could be answered as Churchill had done in 1940: “Victory, victory at all costs, victory in spite of all terror, victory, however long and hard the road may be; for without victory, there is no survival.”<sup>110</sup> As true as that was for the Falkland Islanders living under the rule of the Argentines, it was also true for Britain. As tragic as war was, the invasion of the Falklands presented an opportunity for Britain to build back from the losses suffered since the end of the Second World War. The signal, along with the playing of “Rule Britannia!” and “Land of Hope and Glory,” the waving of flags, displaying of banners, not to mention the thousands of people who flooded the dockyards to see off the fleet, symbolized the return of Britain’s imperial traditions and spectacles. With his love for the Empire, Captain Newbury was likely right: Churchill would have been proud.

## II

“Support for the despatch of the task force was likely to be strong,” Thatcher remarked in her memoirs, “but would it fall away as time went on?”<sup>111</sup> It became clear, through the spectacle of the various components of the task force returning in victory, that not only did that fervent

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<sup>109</sup> Ibid.

<sup>110</sup> Winston S Churchill. *His Complete Speeches: 1897-1963, Volume VI: 1935-1942*, 6220.

<sup>111</sup> Margaret Thatcher. *The Downing Street Years*. (New York: Harper Collins, 1993), 181.

support remain, but Britons were even more celebratory following the victory in the South Atlantic. No matter how ecstatic some Britons could be that they were once more marching towards a just war, there was a great deal of trepidation, for it was not merely young men departing to fight the Argentines, but husbands, fathers, brothers, and sons. The return of the task force saw more of the same “brass and nostalgia,” but having secured victory and knowing that Britain’s boys were now home, brought a heightened level of spirit and jubilation at the homecomings.<sup>112</sup> As elements of the task force returned, those onboard did not know what to expect. Captain Lynn Middleton, who commanded *Hermes*, stated the day before their return that “we don’t know what to expect, really. It’s the middle of the week. We’re expecting a large number of ships company families. But I don’t know what else to expect.”<sup>113</sup> In response, Michael Burke, the interviewing war correspondent, foreshadowed the spectacle by replying, “Captain, I think you may be surprised tomorrow.”<sup>114</sup> The whole spectacle with the flags and signs, cheering and singing, was a complete sensory overload. As described by the BBC upon the return of *Hermes*, it was a reception that the members of the task force could not have imagined:

On shore, there was an upsurge of excitement and emotion. People had flocked here from all over Britain, jamming the roads to the dock yards, pushing dozens deep to the edge of the key sides. Shouting, crying, and singing. At last, the *Hermes* was home. It seemed an achingly long time tying up to the dock. All the while the crowd going wild with pride. There were thousands of them, too many properly to estimate their number... It had been an extraordinary and moving occasion. The band played; the people wept. The most famous naval port in the world had welcomed the victors home.<sup>115</sup>

With the use of traditional imperial images, sentiments, sights, and sounds, the arrival spectacles were conducted in the same style as the departures, but in an even more over-the-top, triumphant

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<sup>112</sup> Fox, 1.

<sup>113</sup> “Return of HMS *Hermes* from the Falkland Islands (1982),” YouTube video, 2:42, from a BBC news programme televised in 1982, posted by “CultMark,” 8 August 2017, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rDHeocu0PU0>

<sup>114</sup> Ibid.

<sup>115</sup> Ibid.

mood. The task force returned as victors, in the same spirit as the Royal Navy had after defeating the Spanish Armada, after the Battle of Trafalgar, or after the defeat of the German Navy in the First and Second World Wars.



Figure 5. *Hermes* receives a jubilant welcome on both land and sea. (Reddit)

British patriotism manifested in various ways in celebration of the return of the task force. Like the departure spectacles, thousands of people flocked to the dockyards and waterfronts to welcome home their loved ones. But as a seafaring nation, Britons also took to the waterways to celebrate. As the ships approached the cheering and flag waving spectators on the docks, hundreds of small crafts swarmed the returning vessels. Ranging from tugboats to small pleasure craft, and everything in between, the intercepting of the homeward-bound ships created a new aspect of the spectacle. In the departures, the spectacle had two distinct parts: the departing ships and the crowds on shore. But the meeting of the naval and civilian vessels allowed the two aspects of the spectacle to interact, creating a single larger spectacle. The spectacle seemed to become so large that small passenger ships were filled to the gills to allow as



Figure 6. *Invincible* receives an equally jubilant welcome home. Note the crowds onshore in the top right. (Department of Defence)

many people as possible to see the returning task force, both on land, and at sea.<sup>116</sup> These boats, in addition to their sailing alongside the returning vessels, displayed similar images as those on land. Tugboats sprayed water celebratorily into the air.<sup>117</sup> Other smaller craft flew Union Jacks and homemade banners with messages like “welcome home”, and one sailboat, coming up along

<sup>116</sup> “HMS *Bristol* Falklands 82 Homecoming 3,” YouTube video, 28:05, posted by “Tony Garrity,” 18 September 2016, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UGY64f1UgrM>

<sup>117</sup> Ibid.

side HMS *Bristol*, made a most welcome display of patriotism when the jubilant civilians produced cans of beer which they threw to the Royal Navy crew members on deck.<sup>118</sup>

The Union Jack once more took pride of place when the ships of the task force returned. When HMS *Alacrity*, the first ship of the task force to return home, docked, two large Union Jacks fluttered in the breeze from the cranes above the large crowd of family, friends, and dockyard workers.<sup>119</sup> The flag was present at all the returning spectacles, and again, took on various forms. From plastic hats to large balloons floating above those trailing boats, the Union Jack was an omnipresent symbol of Britain and Britain's military success. The pride that did not need to be articulated could be summed up by Thatcher, who stated after the war, "there is only one banner that Britain flies, the one that has kept flying for centuries—the red, white, and blue."<sup>120</sup> Indeed, the colours of the Union Jack were just as omnipresent, if not more, than the flag itself. Red, white, and blue bunting and streamers hung from buildings on the dockyards, clothing was worn, Hawaiian leis hung around necks, and pom poms were flailed about in excitement. When *Invincible* and her escort *Bristol* returned in August, a tugboat ahead of the destroyer released coloured smoke in a show of pride.<sup>121</sup> And when HMS *Arrow* returned, the Royal Air Force's aerobatic team, the Red Arrows, flew overhead in a nine-plane formation with smoke trailing behind.<sup>122</sup> Perhaps the most wonderful display of the colours of the Union Jack came with the return of *Canberra* to Southampton on 11 July. Officially ending her time at a sea, a large clear plastic bag was ripped open on the dock ahead of the ship releasing hundreds of red,

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<sup>118</sup> Ibid.

<sup>119</sup> "HMS *Alacrity* Homecoming," YouTube video, 11:21, from a BBC news programme televised in 1982, posted by "John Fosbery," 29 August 2016, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eyXboRsQdUA>

<sup>120</sup> Margaret Thatcher Foundation: Margaret Thatcher Speech to Conservative Party Conference, 14 October 1983.

<sup>121</sup> "HMS *Bristol* Falklands 82 Homecoming 3," YouTube video, 28:05, posted by "Tony Garrity," 18 September 2016, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UGY64f1UgrM>

<sup>122</sup> Author's Personal Collection: City of Plymouth Welcomes home the Task Force Official Programme, 26.

white, and blue balloons into the air.<sup>123</sup> As the balloons rose, filling the air with the colours of Britain a great cheer came from the crowd as their boys returned home.<sup>124</sup>



Figure 7. *Canberra* is welcomed back to Southampton by an escort of small boats and a large, enthusiastic crowd waving Union Jack Flags. (IWM FKD 895)



Figure 8. HMS *Arrow* is welcomed home to Devonport Naval Base by the Red Arrows. (Reddit)

<sup>123</sup> “Return of the *Canberra* from the Falkland Islands (1982) (ITN/ITV),” YouTube video, 19:01, from an ITN/ITV news programme televised in 1982, posted by “CultMark,” 8 August 2017, [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AI33Hhda4\\_o](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AI33Hhda4_o)

<sup>124</sup> Ibid.

The return spectacles also saw the displaying of homemade banners. But unlike the departure spectacles, the welcoming home banners were far greater in number, and were displayed by both those on shore and the returning soldiers themselves. For instance, with the return of *Canberra*, banners with messages such as ‘We’re proud of you,’ ‘Up the Royals,’ ‘Brits have gotta lotta bottle,’ and ‘*Canberra* walks on water’ were seen amongst the cheering crowd.<sup>125</sup> Onboard *Canberra*, draped from railings and portholes, were even more banners stating ‘Call off the rail strike... or we’ll call an air strike!,’ ‘Maggie rules OK,’ ‘59 Commando RE, Rule Britannia’ with a Union Jack painted between the five and the nine, ‘40 Commando Royal Marines Signals Troop, Hello Mum!,’ ‘RECCE 42 hello Mum,’ ‘.... .. -- .. -- [Hi Mum] Signals Troop 42 Commando,’ and ‘7 Commando Better, thanks all.’<sup>126</sup> These banners, both on ship and on shore, display a wide range of sentiments. Some expressed gladness at the return, such as ‘We’re proud of you’ on shore or the various shipboard signs saying ‘Hi Mum,’ but there were also those that maintained the same sentiment that was evident at the departure, such as ‘up yours Argentina’, now in victory saying that ‘Brits have gotta lotta bottle’ having proved themselves in the South Atlantic. They also made their opinions clear on other matters, including rail strikes, and their opinion of the Prime Minister. The signs, once again proved imperial imagery was essential in their displays of patriotism with one banner onboard *Canberra* referencing Britannia and various using the Union Jack as some form of decoration.

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<sup>125</sup> Ibid.

<sup>126</sup> Ibid.



Figure 9. Large crowds, displaying Union Jacks and homemade banners, welcome the task force home. (Getty Images)

The return spectacles, also saw unique, very personal celebrations. For instance, Battersea florist David Connelly decided that the greatest act of patriotism that he could muster was to give a rose to each returning sailor aboard the four largest ships. Wearing a white suit with Union Jack pockets and back, along with a matching Union Jack flat cap, Connelly gave away ten thousand roses, including a basket of them to The Queen when she visited *Invincible* upon its return.<sup>127</sup> When asked why he was doing it, all Connelly responded was: “because I’m a patriot. And I decided at the beginning when the Falklands was over, shall I send some money to the fund, and the family, it is a family concern, we decided, no, we would give a rose to some of

<sup>127</sup> *Navy News*, October 1982



the troops coming back.”<sup>128</sup> While it was not much, the giving of a rose to each returning sailor, or their family, was a touching tribute. and the gesture symbolized not only the importance of the victory to Britons, but also how their celebration manifested in the most personal and unique ways.

Music again greatly heightened the spectacle. The imperial anthems “Rule Britannia!” and “Land of Hope and Glory” were played with even more jubilation and celebration than at the departures. “Well, it’s almost like the last night of the Proms,” said one announcer for ITV, “this is the kind of jingoistic, nationalistic sort of feeling that is so abhorred in some parts of our country. Well, its good that they are allowed to say that. But this is what these people want to say and sing.”<sup>129</sup> Indeed, part of the reason for the war Britain had just fought was for the right of self-determination, allowing Falkland Islanders to do and say what they please as Britons. So, for those who thought it distasteful for countless Britons to celebrate the victory in such a way were able to object by way of the same values the task force went to fight for. Indeed, the playing of these imperial anthems by a Royal Marines Band, again and again, was so well received that the fervent singing and cheers of the crowd almost drowned out the band itself.

Just like the playing of Rod Stewart’s “Sailing” as the task force departed, other popular British songs were played upon their return. For instance, upon the return of one of the Royal Navy’s submarines from the South Atlantic, a Royal Marines band played popular songs including the theme from *Thunderbirds* and the Aces High March from the 1969 film *The Battle of Britain* soundtrack.<sup>130</sup> These two pieces of music had nothing to do with the Falklands, but

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<sup>128</sup> “Plymouth Falklands Victory Parade 1982,” YouTube video, 14:15, from a news programme televised in 1982, posted by “Cyberheritage Steve Johnson,” 28 January 2010, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JBCpw4PvQUY>

<sup>129</sup> “Return of the *Canberra* from the Falkland Islands (1982) (ITN/ITV),” YouTube video, 19:01, from an ITN/ITV news programme televised in 1982, posted by “CultMark,” 8 August 2017, [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AI33Hhda4\\_o](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AI33Hhda4_o)

<sup>130</sup> “HMS *Alacrity* Homecoming,” YouTube video, 11:21, from a BBC news programme televised in 1982, posted

ultimately, they were both part of the British psyche and were co-opted to show the feeling felt at the conclusion of the conflict. *Thunderbirds* was a 1960s supermarionation television programme created and produced by Gerry and Sylvia Anderson, whose other credits included similar programmes such as *Stingray*, *Captain Scarlet*, and the live action show *Space 1999*. The show centred around the Tracy family who ran the organisation International Rescue in the futuristic world of the mid- to late twenty-first century. When someone was in grave danger, usually with impossible odds against them, they called International Rescue who would, inevitably, come to the rescue. For Britons in 1982, the task force was like the *Thunderbirds*. Hearing the distress call from the Falklands, they headed south and rescued them, arguably with no better odds than those the *Thunderbirds* faced on screen. *The Battle of Britain* naturally showed how Britain, against horrendous odds, was able to repel the Luftwaffe from July through October 1940, under the looming threat of a Nazi invasion. While the Falklands were invaded, the British task force went south in the same spirit as those airmen in the summer and fall of 1940. The Falklands also saw the return of the ‘Dunkirk spirit’, which instead of hundreds of small boats crossing the English Channel to evacuate the British Expeditionary Force from the beaches at Dunkirk between the 26th of May and 4th of June 1940, saw a large naval task force sail 8,000 miles to rescue the Falkland Islanders. The year 1940 became a national symbol, when Britain stood alone against a dictator despite the odds, which, as Malcolm Smith put it, remains “one genuinely heroic moment in twentieth-century British history.”<sup>131</sup> The Second World War, and 1940 above all else, were not direct references to the British Empire, but as noted by Mercau,

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by “John Fosbery,” 29 August 2016, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=evXboRsQdUA>

<sup>131</sup> Malcolm Smith. *Britain and 1940: History Myth, and Popular Memory*. (London: Routledge, 2000), 1.

such references “could not but strike an imperial chord.”<sup>132</sup> And in the seemingly similar circumstances of the Falklands War, “1982 [was] the 1940 of the late century.”<sup>133</sup>

### III

Following the public-driven spectacles of the departure and return of the task force, officially planned events were produced both to celebrate the victory that had been won, and to pay tribute to those who gave so much in defence of their nation’s interests, especially those who paid the ultimate price. The first public spectacle was a concert in early July that was set up at Portsmouth harbour.<sup>134</sup> The main performer, who was flown in from her home by the RAF, was none other than the legendary Second World War singer—Dame Vera Lynn.<sup>135</sup> At the show, Dame Vera performed her famous song, “We’ll Meet Again,” along with her new Falklands inspired single, “I Love This Land.”<sup>136</sup> The song, which has a sound reminiscent of the famous war songs of the Second World War, talks of Britain’s hills, rivers, and trees, and describes Britain as a “sweet gentle land, standing in the ring of silver seas.” With the chorus declaring that Britain “will stay that way forever, which is why I love this land,” the song made the statement that Britain in 1982 was the same as it was in the past, or as Thatcher put it, Britain still had “those sterling qualities which shine through [its] history.”<sup>137</sup> It is humorous to note that while the song was officially credited to Vera Lynn, “I Love This Land” was actually written by Andre Previn, who wrote the mocked and satirized “Don’t Cry for me Argentina” six years earlier.<sup>138</sup>

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<sup>132</sup> Mercau, 108.

<sup>133</sup> Smith. *Britain and 1940*. 126.

<sup>134</sup> Klaus Dodds. *Pink Ice: Britain and the South Atlantic Empire*. (London: I.B. Tauris, 2002), 7.

<sup>135</sup> Ibid. And Dame Vera Lynn. *Some Sunny Day: My Autobiography*. (London: Harper Collins, 2009), 291.

<sup>136</sup> Dodds, 7.

<sup>137</sup> Margaret Thatcher Foundation: Margaret Thatcher Speech to Conservative Rally at Cheltenham, 3 July 1982.

<sup>138</sup> Unknown. “Vera Lynn/The Victory Group—I Love This Land/The Victory Theme.” Discogs. Accessed March 15, 2022. <https://www.discogs.com/release/5527332-Vera-Lynn-The-Victory-Group-I-Love-This-Land-The-Victory-Theme>

The concert was short and to the point, but was produced in the same vein as those concerts of the Second World War, with the same performer and some of the same songs speaking to a new generation of people. The concert showed the style in which Britons celebrated the Falklands victory, ultimately in similar fashion to previous imperial wars.

The first major public spectacle was A National Salute from the British Theatre on 18 July. That star-studded gala took place at the London Coliseum, and included such notable British stars as Lord Lawrence Olivier, Roger Moore, Christopher Lee, Ronnie Corbett, and Dame Vera Lynn, amongst others.<sup>139</sup> The show played to a full house with The Prince of Wales in attendance. The evening included various dramatic, comedic, and musical acts reminiscent of the vaudeville shows in celebration of the 1897 Diamond Jubilee.<sup>140</sup> The musical acts saw the playing and singing of popular songs and imperial anthems, as well as displaying the rekindled relationship between civilians and the military. The first notable song was, like the departure of *Invincible*, Rod Stewart's "Sailing" performed by Twiggy and Naval Ratings.<sup>141</sup> The finale of the programme saw a large massed military band and the entire celebrity ensemble gather on stage under a large Union Jack to perform Elgar's "Land of Hope and Glory." Just like the BBC Proms, this led into an encore performance of the piece to a standing audience. Following the rousing performance, Roger Moore introduced British actress Virginia McKenna who quoted from Noël Coward's *Cavalcade*:

Let's couple the Future of Britain with its past. Its glories and victories and triumphs that are over, and its sorrows that are over, too. Let's think of her sons who made part of the pattern and of our hearts that died with them. Let's remember too the spirit of gallantry and courage and hope that one day this country of ours, which we love so much, will find dignity and greatness and peace again.<sup>142</sup>

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<sup>139</sup> Sandbrook. *Who Dares Wins*, 842. A National Salute Programme, 22-23.

<sup>140</sup> Smith, 337.

<sup>141</sup> Author's Personal Collection: A National Salute from the British Theatre Programme, 22.

<sup>142</sup> "Tommy Steele and Vera Lynn Falkland Island Tribute Finale," YouTube video, 10:16, from A National Salute

The quotation recited at the National Salute contained some paraphrasing by McKenna, but also contained a very important change. The original began, “let's couple the Future of England with the past of England,” while the National Salute version began with “the Future of Britain.”<sup>143</sup>

The change signified the importance of the victory to the whole of the British Isles. England had her victories in the past, but the Falklands victory, and those that would follow, were firmly British. To conclude the festivities, the whole of the Coliseum rose to sing the national anthem, “God Save the Queen,” followed by cheers, whistles, and thunderous applause. As described by Selina Scott, A National Salute was “a unique evening in British showbusiness history. An evening when the stars paid tribute to the men who died and to those who fought so gallantly in the Falklands.”<sup>144</sup> Not everyone was entertained, as exemplified by Kenneth William, who wrote in his diary, “thank goodness I didn't get mixed up in that!... It was excruciating: the sort of patriotic jingoism and amateur theatricals which leave you squirming.”<sup>145</sup>

The great celebratory spectacle of A National Salute, with its minor opposition, would be juxtaposed with the Falkland Islands Service, held at St Paul's Cathedral at the end of July, which, in addition to marking the end of the conflict, it also displayed some of the most fervent opposition to the war. The government saw the service as an opportunity to pay tribute to the British servicemen who fought in the South Atlantic, especially those who paid the ultimate sacrifice, as well as their families. The Church of England, however, saw it as an opportunity for reconciliation between the United Kingdom and Argentina. The government's intentions for the

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from the British Theatre televised 18 July 1982, posted by “operathephantom,” 27 May 2011, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JXEQJWvS1U>

<sup>143</sup> Noël Coward. *Cavalcade*. In *Collected Plays Three*. London: Methuen Drama, 1979. 98–157. Accessed May 30, 2022. <http://dx.doi.org/10.5040/9781408163115.00000004>.

<sup>144</sup> “Tommy Steele and Vera Lynn Falkland Island Tribute Finale,” YouTube video, 10:16, from A National Salute from the British Theatre televised 18 July 1982, posted by “operathephantom,” 27 May 2011, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JXEQJWvS1U>

<sup>145</sup> Quoted in Sandbrook. *Who Dares Wins*, 842.

service were clear from what they regarded as an appropriate title—A Service of Thanksgiving for the liberation of the Falkland Islands and in remembrance of the fallen.<sup>146</sup> But the Church, in an attempt to make the service about reconciliation rather than celebration, initiated various squabbles over every aspect of the service from its title to who would be allowed to attend. As John Nott, Secretary of State for Defence, later remarked, “it almost seemed as if our disagreements on the form of worship were more about the Church of England’s own war against Margaret Thatcher and her policies than about comforting the families of our dead.”<sup>147</sup>

The Church of England was determined to make the service interdenominational, and the Dean of St Paul’s, the Very Reverend Alan Webster, planned the service along with Cardinal Basil Hume of the Roman Catholic Church, and Reverend Kenneth Greet of the Free Churches Federal Council.<sup>148</sup> Greet was completely opposed to both the war and any form of celebration of it, Hume disliked the mention of the liberation of the Falklands, and also wished to have no military personnel taking part in the service, and Webster preferred reconciliation to thanksgiving, going so far as to suggest that the Lord’s Prayer be said in Spanish during the service.<sup>149</sup> These proposals were met with anger. When Thatcher found out that the Dean wanted the Lord’s Prayer recited in Spanish, “her eyes widened in absolute horror”, and with the suggestion that the service should be geared towards reconciliation rather than thanksgiving, “she struck the table a tremendous blow and exclaimed scornfully ‘A service of reconciliation!’.”<sup>150</sup> Both Thatcher and the Ministry of Defence wanted members of the military to play a central role, which was rebutted by some clergymen saying that they would not take

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<sup>146</sup> Sir Lawrence Freedman. *The Official History of the Falklands Campaign, Volume II: War and Diplomacy*. (London: Routledge, 2008), 663.

<sup>147</sup> John Nott. *Here Today, Gone Tomorrow: Recollections of an Errant Politician*. (London: Politico’s Publishing, 2002), 317.

<sup>148</sup> Freedman. *The Official History of the Falklands Campaign, Volume II*, 663

<sup>149</sup> Ibid.

<sup>150</sup> Moore. *Not for Turning*, 757.

part in the service if members of the military were to also play a role. The conservative Bishop of London, the Right Reverend Graham Leonard, told a furious Thatcher to seek help from either the Archbishop of Canterbury, or even The Queen, to set things right.<sup>151</sup> But Thatcher knew she need not go that far, and relied upon the fervent public support that was evident in the aftermath of the war. Thatcher threatened to make public “the stupidity of the bishops of the Church of England”, as Nott later described it, through the House of Commons, seemingly allowing for the reaction of the British people to show the clergy their folly.<sup>152</sup> Her threat ensured that there would be some compromise after all.

The service was held on the 26th of July, and it was ultimately a mass compromise, with elements of both thanksgiving and reconciliation. The military played an active role, although, as Thatcher later wrote, “no parade was allowed to the cathedral, no colours to the Altar and it was as much as we could do to persuade the Church authorities to allow anyone who had taken part in the Falklands campaign to take part in the service.”<sup>153</sup> Only two members of the military were allowed to partake in the reading of scriptures, most notably Reverend David Cooper, who was Chaplain to the Second Battalion of the Parachute Regiment, while all others sat with their fellow servicemen and families in the congregation. After all the bickering between political and Church leaders, the service was, as the Archbishop recalled in an interview, “not well arranged.”<sup>154</sup> Thatcher later pinpointed the issue with the service, which was that “the Thanksgiving part was virtually dropped from the Service”, and it was only saved by “the presence of the Queen and all the Royal Family—the superb pageantry of the military band—trumpeters, [which made] the service... a great comfort to the bereaved and that mattered more

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<sup>151</sup> Ibid.

<sup>152</sup> Ibid, 756. and Nott. *Here Today, Gone Tomorrow*, 317.

<sup>153</sup> Moore. *Not for Turning*, 756.

<sup>154</sup> Ibid.

than anything else.”<sup>155</sup> When it was all said and done, the Falkland Islands Service had done its job, but all the quarrels had given it a bitter edge. The Queen summed up the issues with the service, and perhaps how those Britons who were pro-Falklands felt when confronted by those against the war, when she told the Archbishop before leaving St Paul’s: “I don’t think you should ever leave a Christian service feeling sad.”<sup>156</sup>

Four months after A National Salute and the Falkland Islands Service, the British public had the opportunity to pay tribute to those who fought in the South Atlantic. Victory parades presented the perfect opportunity for a completely public spectacle. Celebratory events such as A National Salute or the Falkland Islands Service at St Paul’s contained public parts to the spectacle, but the main aspects of their events were only available to a select few. Both of these examples, as well as the events to come, were televised, but victory parades allowed for an almost unlimited amount of public participation. On 12 October, the first major victory parade, The City of London’s Salute to the Task Force, took place. The mile-long parade route took the 1,250 servicemen, representative of all units that fought in the South Atlantic, through the heart of the City of London, starting at Armoury House, passing a saluting base in front of Mansion House, and finishing at the Guildhall.<sup>157</sup> The weather was appropriate, with a light rain and overcast, grey skies; it mirrored the South Atlantic conditions the task force faced in the Falklands. With the parade beginning twenty-five minutes after noon, all the offices in the financial district had let out for lunch, many taking the period off specifically for the parade,

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<sup>155</sup> Ibid.

<sup>156</sup> Ibid, 757.

<sup>157</sup> Author’s Personal Collection: The City of London’s Salute to the Task Force Official Programme, 40-41.



which saw the city turn “out in force” to celebrate the Falklands victory, with attendance estimated at between 30,000 and 300,000.<sup>158,159</sup>

The front of Mansion House was decorated with the flags of the City of London, the United Kingdom, and the Falkland Islands. On a balcony, under a red and white striped awning, was the Lord Mayor of the City of London, Sir Christopher Leaver, joined by the Prime Minister, the Leader of the Opposition, Michael Foot, Secretary of State for Defence, John Nott, Admiral of the Fleet Sir Terence Lewin, Chief of the General Staff Field Marshal Sir Edwin Bramall, and Admiral Sir John Woodward, amongst others. Below the balcony, at street level, were “the captains and colonels of the campaign [who gathered] to watch too. Together with the Chelsea pensioners, the veterans of earlier wars.”<sup>160</sup> Before the parade reached Mansion House, the first of two flypasts took place. Seventeen helicopters in total, representative of the types used in the Falklands campaign, flew over in five vee formations. Following the flypast was the parade with the Royal Navy in the lead, followed by the Royal Marines, the British Army, and finally the Royal Air Force. In addition to the marching sailors, soldiers, and airmen, were various vehicles used during the campaign including 105mm Light Gun Detachments, Scorpion and Scimitar Armoured Fighting Vehicles, and Rapier Ground to Air Missile Launchers. After

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<sup>158</sup> Various estimates have been made on the number of spectators who attended the Victory Parade. Sir Lawrence Freedman stated “about 30,000 spectators” were in attendance, with Alistair Burnet, during the televised parade suggesting 50,000 spectators had lined the streets. This number jumps to “more than a quarter of a million people” as reported by *The Guardian* and “almost 300,000 people” as reported by *The Financial Times*. Despite not having an exact number, it is clear that the crowds that attended the City of London’s Victory Parade were quite large.

<sup>159</sup> “Falklands Conflict—12<sup>th</sup> October 1982—City of London Salutes the Task Force,” YouTube video, 38:33, The City of London’s Falklands victory parade televised 12 October 1982, posted by “cyberheritage Steve Johnson,” 18 December 2009, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eoMy1FyKOVs>. Freedman. *The Official History of the Falklands Campaign, Vol II*, 664. And Dodds, 174.

<sup>160</sup> “Falklands Conflict—12<sup>th</sup> October 1982—City of London Salutes the Task Force,” YouTube video, 38:33, The City of London’s Falklands victory parade televised 12 October 1982, posted by “cyberheritage Steve Johnson,” 18 December 2009, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eoMy1FyKOVs>

the final detachment of the parade had passed the saluting base, the second flypast of fixed wing aircraft flew over Mansion House.<sup>161</sup>



Figure 10. The Band of the Welsh Guards leads an Army detachment through the packed streets of London as part of the City of London's victory parade (Rex Featres)

The victory parade, in addition to its military pomp and professionalism, saw an abundance of public pride and participation. The light rain did nothing to stop the thousands of spectators from coming out in support of the task force. Displaying once again the Union Jack in the form of flags, balloons, clothing, streamers, and bunting, the crowd showed the pride that had been on full display at the return of the task force months earlier. With nine regimental bands partaking in the festivities, music was an integral part of the victory parade. The first detachment of the parade to pass the saluting base was the Massed Bands of H.M. Royal Marines followed by the Royal Navy. As they marched through Bank Junction, the band played “Heart of Oak”. Written by David Garrick in 1759, “Heart of Oak” was composed in celebration of the British victories in the ongoing Seven Years’ War.<sup>162</sup> In the same vein as “Rule Britannia!” and “Land of Hope and Glory,” “Heart of Oak” spoke to the greatness of imperial Britain:

Come cheer up my lads, ‘tis to glory we steer,  
To add something more to this wonderful year.  
To honour we call you, not press you like slaves,  
For who are so free as we sons of the waves?

Heart of oak are our ships, heart of oak are our men;  
We always are ready—steady, boys, steady—  
We’ll fight and we’ll conquer again and again.<sup>163</sup>

“Heart of Oak” noted the glory and the honour of the Empire, in addition to the freedoms that Britons enjoyed, and echoed “Rule Britannia!” that Britons were not slaves. With the lyrics “we always are ready” and “we’ll fight and we’ll conquer again and again,” it also related to the message of the Falklands, that they had been prepared to do battle if necessary, and when such battle had begun, they were destined to be successful.<sup>164</sup> Towards the end of the parade, the Mounted Band of The Blues and Royals rode through Bank Junction. Their song of choice was

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<sup>162</sup> Brooks and Faulkner, 86.

<sup>163</sup> Ibid.

<sup>164</sup> Ibid.

“Rule Britannia!”, which was played at a slower tempo “for everyone’s benefit” as described by Alistair Burnet, the commentator of the televised parade.<sup>165</sup> The playing of one of Britain’s greatest imperial anthems resulted in the crowd erupting into singing, which continued long after the band had passed through.

The imperial nature of the event did not go unnoticed. The route of the parade, as well as its location, bespoke Britain’s imperial legacy. London had been, of course, the capital of the Empire as much as the capital of the United Kingdom. As described by geographers Driver and Gilbert, “it was surely no coincidence that eighty-two years later [after the celebration of the relief of Mafeking] Margaret Thatcher chose to review the Falklands War ‘Victory Parade’ outside Mansion House; there was presumably no better location in which to resuscitate vestigial memories of imperial power.”<sup>166</sup> The historic intersection of Bank Junction, where the parade marched past the saluting base was, as Jane Jacobs wrote, “a symbolic site of Britain made great by its global reach... an imperial space in a postimperial age.”<sup>167</sup> The heart of the financial district of London, as important as it was in the 1980s, was symbolic of the financial power of Britain’s imperial achievements. Britain was made rich by the Empire, and the money that Britain wielded allowed them to further develop and sustain their imperial endeavours. At the five-road intersection of Bank Junction were such imperially important structures as the Bank of England, the Royal Exchange, and Mansion House, as well as the equestrian statue of the Duke of Wellington, a hero of imperial Britain who defeated Napoleon at Waterloo in 1815. Thatcher

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<sup>165</sup> “Falklands Conflict—12th October 1982—City of London Salutes the Task Force,” YouTube video, 38:33, The City of London’s Falklands victory parade televised 12 October 1982, posted by “cyberheritage Steve Johnson,” 18 December 2009, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eoMy1FyKOVs>

<sup>166</sup> Quoted in Dodds, 173.

<sup>167</sup> Jane M Jacobs. *Edge of Empire: Postcolonialism and the City*. (London: Taylor & Francis, 1996), 38.

summed up the opinions of the day in her speech at the luncheon at the Guildhall after the parade:

Military parades and pageants are part of the distinguished history of the city of London. And it is right—and the whole nation will feel that it is right—that we gather in the heart of the city of London to honour all those who took part in the Falklands campaign. And what a wonderful parade it has been. Surpassing all our expectations as the crowd, deeply moved and sensing the spirit of the occasion, accompanied the band by singing “Rule Britannia!” ... As the Reverend Sidney Smith said of our countrymen many years ago: and I re-affirm his words today, “I have boundless confidence in the British character... I believe more heroes will spring up in the hour of danger than all the military nations of ancient and modern Europe have ever produced.” today we know that is true... We, the British people, are proud of what has been done, proud of these heroic pages in our island story, proud to be here today to salute the task force. Proud to be British.<sup>168</sup>

The City of London’s victory parade followed those previous imperial pageants, with the same locations, routes, styles, and songs, making it, like Bank Junction itself, an imperial event in a post-imperial age.



Figure 11. Two RAF Vulcans fly over St Paul’s Cathedral at the conclusion of the City of London’s victory parade. (IWM FKD 815)

<sup>168</sup> Margaret Thatcher Foundation: Margaret Thatcher Speech at the Salute to the Task Force Lunch, 12 October 1982.

A month after the City of London's Salute to the Task Force, the City of Plymouth held its victory parade on the 12th of November. Marching from the Royal Citadel, the parade route zig-zagged down Citadel Road, Notte Street, Royal Parade (passing a saluting base), and finally Princess Street ending at the Guildhall.<sup>169</sup> The 1,200 servicemen were representative of the branches that served in the South Atlantic, although emphasis was placed upon the Royal Navy because so many of the ships that took part in the campaign were based in Plymouth. A Royal Marines band led the Royal Navy contingents, which included those who served on some of the ships lost in the conflict, followed by the British Army, Royal Marines, and the Royal Air Force.<sup>170</sup> The parade looked to be marred by what *The Journal* described as "South Atlantic type weather", but two minutes before the lead detachment departed from the Royal Citadel, the "weather gods smiled, and... the rain... stopped."<sup>171</sup> But despite the threat of rain, Plymothians, like Londoners, turned out in force. Office workers took an early lunch, and 5,000 school children were given the day off to attend, with the total spectators being estimated at 30,000 people.<sup>172</sup>

Taking the salute was the Lord Mayor of Plymouth, Counsellor Reg Scott, who had been the driving force behind the holding of the parade, despite ardent opposition. He was accompanied by Brigadier Julian Thompson, who had played a role in the planning of the land campaign to regain the Falklands. In addition to the marching sailors, soldiers, and airmen, like London's victory parade, representatives of the aircraft used during the campaign flew overhead.

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<sup>169</sup> Author's Personal Collection: City of Plymouth Welcomes home the Task Force Official Programme, 26-27.

<sup>170</sup> Author's Personal Collection: City of Plymouth Welcomes home the Task Force Official Programme, 22-23.

<sup>171</sup> *The Journal* 13 November 1982, and "Plymouth Falklands Victory Parade 1982," YouTube video, 14:15, from a news programme televised in 1982, posted by "Cyberheritage Steve Johnson," 28 January 2010, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JBCpw4PvQUY>

<sup>172</sup> *The Journal* 13 November 1982, and "Plymouth Falklands Victory Parade 1982," YouTube video, 14:15, from a news programme televised in 1982, posted by "Cyberheritage Steve Johnson," 28 January 2010, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JBCpw4PvQUY>

Before the first contingent of the parade reached the saluting base, a fly past of eighteen helicopters, including one Sea King co-piloted by Prince Andrew, flew overhead. A second fly past consisting of eight fixed-wing aircraft followed as the final contingent marched past the saluting base. At the conclusion of the parade, the marching servicemen were provided food and drink at the Guildhall, in what was reported to be the “largest catering function ever held in Plymouth.”<sup>173</sup> The day was one of pride. Both in the accomplishments of Her Majesty’s forces, but also the role Plymouth had played, as the Lord Mayor stated: “This was Plymouth’s war, and this is Plymouth’s day.”<sup>174</sup> Indeed, with Plymouth playing backdrop to another Falklands celebration, the imperial history of the city came rushing back. Plymouth had an association with the British military dating back to the reign of Edward I, when the King assembled a fleet in what would become Plymouth Harbour in 1295.<sup>175</sup> Plymouth played a role in almost every British conflict since, with the Falklands War being to those who planned the parade, just “another chapter of British history” which would be one in a continuing line of “mutual attachment[s] between the services and the city.”<sup>176</sup>

But as the *Guardian* noted, “Pacifists turned out as well” to London’s victory parade.<sup>177</sup> “A group of women turned their backs in protest, 17 people were arrested when a group of anti-militarists tried to chain themselves to nearby lamp posts, and a tall cross holding the message ‘Jesus Christ was murdered by the military’ was erected in the front of a Cheapside church.”<sup>178</sup> The Plymouth parade too had those show up to protest, but as reported in *The Guardian*, “two

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<sup>173</sup> “Plymouth Falklands Victory Parade 1982,” YouTube video, 14:15, from a news programme televised in 1982, posted by “Cyberheritage Steve Johnson,” 28 January 2010, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JBCpw4PvQUY>

<sup>174</sup> *The Guardian*, 13 November 1982.

<sup>175</sup> Author’s Personal Collection: City of Plymouth Welcomes home the Task Force Official Programme, 28.

<sup>176</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>177</sup> *The Guardian*, 13 October 1982.

<sup>178</sup> *Ibid.*

anti-war banners were torn from demonstrators' hands by angry spectators," clearly displaying on which side the majority of spectators were on.<sup>179</sup> These were, however, isolated incidents. While a few displayed their disapproval of what they perceived as a celebration of war, they were greatly outnumbered by those who attended the parade to participate in the celebrations as they were planned. Public spectacles were presented with a particular audience in mind, and those who attended in protest were not alone in their opinion, but for one to disagree with the reasons for the victory parade, it was far easier to just stay away, than to make the effort to attend in revulsion.

#### IV

The fighting in the South Atlantic, and subsequent victory, impacted many pre-existing events and spectacles, placing a heightened level of significance on what would normally be seen as either traditional or even mundane events. The first event to see an impact of the war was Trooping the Colour. The marking of the British Sovereign's official birthday every June is a tradition that can be traced back hundreds of years, and has become a standard spectacle for both the Monarchy and the military.<sup>180</sup> With over 1,400 infantry soldiers, accompanied by 200 horses and 400 musicians, the spectacle is a display of British military might and professionalism as much as a celebration of the Sovereign's official birthday.<sup>181</sup> Taking place on Horse Guards Parade in St. James' Park, London, Trooping the Colour is one of the few exclusively public spectacles. With the Sovereign and a Royal party travelling down the Mall from Buckingham Palace, followed by the parading regiment, the streets lined with spectators, with many more

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<sup>179</sup> *The Guardian*, 13 November 1982.

<sup>180</sup> Unknown. "What is Trooping the Colour?" The Royal Family. Accessed May 20, 2022.

<https://www.royal.uk/trooping-colour>

<sup>181</sup> *Ibid.*



sitting in stands placed around the perimeter of Horse Guards Parade square. By 1982, the public spectacle of Trooping the Colour was well entrenched, taking place alongside previous imperial events as a spectacle that was celebrated and looked forward to throughout the rest of the year as one of Britain's most popular events.

On 12 June 1982, the occasion was celebrated under a dark cloud. Not only was there rain, the first time the festivities had been conducted in poor weather in recent memory, but in the morning before the event, news had reached London that HMS *Glamorgan* had been hit by an Argentine Exocet missile.<sup>182</sup> Thatcher recalled in her memoir “how bitterly depressed [she] was”.<sup>183</sup> She decided to wear black, recalling that she felt “there was much to mourn.”<sup>184</sup> It was reported later that afternoon that the crew of *Glamorgan* had contained the fires onboard, and she was steaming at twenty knots.<sup>185</sup> While this was good news, Trooping the Colour had still been tarnished by the events of the South Atlantic, for five ships of the task force had already been sunk, with countless lives already lost. The war in the South Atlantic, in addition to impacting the mood of the occasion, also impacted the logistics of the actual event. Trooping the Colour, like so many other British institutions, was unchanging, and only adapted to special circumstances when it was absolutely necessary. Two of the most noteworthy examples are the cancellation of the annual event during the First and Second World Wars, with its resuming only in peacetime. In June of 1982, Trooping the Colour was not cancelled, but it saw minor changes to the sequence of events. The first was the observance of a minute's silence before the start of the event, as a show of respect for those who had lost their lives and those who continued to

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<sup>182</sup> Thatcher, *The Downing Street Years*, 234.

<sup>183</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>184</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>185</sup> *Ibid.*

fight.<sup>186</sup> It also saw the reduction of parading battalions from eight to six, along with a change of the regiment that trooped their colour. The 2nd Battalion Grenadier Guards replaced the 2nd Battalion Scots Guards and 1st Battalion Welsh Guards, which, instead of being on ceremonial duties in London, found themselves in the thick of it in the South Atlantic.<sup>187</sup> Colonel Reckitt of the Welsh Guards was quoted by John Witherow of *The Times* stating that “we are celebrating the Queen’s Birthday by lying here in the cold. We tuned into the World Service and heard them marching down the Mall.”<sup>188</sup> The Falklands War, which a great many people thought should not, and would not, impact Britons the way previous wars had, showed that the campaign had far more impact than many Britons expected, such as with this very public military spectacle.

Charity also saw various events co-opted, at least in part, to be about the Falklands. The South Atlantic Fund, a government-run charity, was created in May 1982 to make the collecting and distributing of money easier for those affected by the Falklands War, including those who fought in the South Atlantic along with their families.<sup>189</sup> In addition to general donations and the sale of commodities (discussed in Chapter II), the South Atlantic Fund looked to raise funds by participating in the various spectacles that were seen across Britain after the war. The sixth annual Berkeley Square Ball in London on 19 July was one such event. Described as “London’s highlight of the summer social scene,” the Ball saw the closure of Berkeley Square for the holding of a magnificent gala of music, dancing, as well as fine food and drink.<sup>190</sup> With ticket prices set at £75, the socialites of Britain, including Princess Margaret, came together to help raise funds for various charities, including the South Atlantic Fund. Part of the festivities was a

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<sup>186</sup> *The Times*, 14 June, 1982.

<sup>187</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>188</sup> Quoted in: Nott. *Here Today, Gone Tomorrow*, 314.

<sup>189</sup> Jean Carr. *Another Story: Women and the Falklands War*. (London: Hamish Hamilton, 1984), 94.

<sup>190</sup> *The Times*, 19 July, 1982.

concert which, again, saw Dame Vera Lynn perform her new Falklands single, “I Love This Land”. The concert, with Dame Vera as one of the headliners, similar to the short concert following the return of the task force in Portsmouth, was reminiscent of musical shows from the Second World War, in artist, songs, and atmosphere.

The Falklands also impacted other perfectly ordinary events such as football matches. For instance, on 2 August, the Aldershot Football Club faced off against Manchester United Football Club. The match was, at its core, an average preseason football match that saw Manchester defeat Aldershot, 3-1.<sup>191</sup> But with its connection to the Falklands, a heightened level of significance was placed on it, in addition to those presenting the match becoming authors of one Falklands spectacle just as the military or the Government did with their own spectacles. In the opening message of the souvenir programme R. J. Driver, Chairman of Aldershot F.C., discussed the price of freedom. In stating the importance of the Falklands campaign in relation to a people’s right to freedom, he stated that “we are not only grateful to our Task Force for defending our right to be free; we are also proud of the way that they did it, and many who are not British share our views and benefits, for it was an act in defence of freedom throughout the world.”<sup>192</sup> The chairman of the match’s sponsor, Pace Petroleum, reiterated this by stating “our own slogan is ‘British and Independent’—and we are proud of the way our Servicemen... so recently upheld that British tradition which we all believe.”<sup>193</sup> A similar match, between Plymouth Argyle Football Club and Everton Football Club, was played the following week on 13 August. The sentiments of the match were similar to the previous one, with the Lord Mayor of Plymouth, Councillor Reg Scott, stating in his civic welcome in the match’s souvenir

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<sup>191</sup> Unknown, “Aldershot v Manchester United 02/08/1982 Falklands Match,” Football Programme Centre (Blog), 17 September 2012, <http://www.footballprogrammecentre.co.uk/forum/viewtopic.php?p=73452>

<sup>192</sup> Author’s Personal Collection: Aldershot versus Manchester United Programme, 1.

<sup>193</sup> Ibid, 2.

programme, “tonight’s match has been arranged with recent events in the Falkland Islands very much in mind.”<sup>194</sup> Both matches were celebrations of sport and the Falklands victory, with a spectacle that saw the civilian fans and the British military come together as one united group.

Both matches presented similar pre-game spectacles. The Aldershot match began with music from the Band of the Junior Musicians Wing, Household Division, which returned to entertain the crowd during half time, followed by a gymnastic display by the Fox Gymnastic Club, while the Argyle match began with music and community singing, for rather campy fun, led by “Plymouth’s extrovert entertainer,” Len Jackman.<sup>195</sup> The military also took an active role in the spectacles. At the Aldershot match, the official parachute display team of the British Army and the Parachute Regiment, the Red Devils, parachuted down into the stadium to present the match ball before kickoff.<sup>196</sup> The Royal Marines Free Fall Parachute Team put on a display after the Argyle match in a show of military precision.<sup>197</sup> Amongst the fans were representatives of the military, including Admiral Sir John Fieldhouse at the Aldershot match, with many individuals who had taken part in the Falklands campaign attending the matches. The matches, as much as they were celebrations of the victory in the Falklands, were conducted to raise money for the South Atlantic Fund, with the slogan of the matches becoming “they gave... thank you for giving to the South Atlantic Fund.”<sup>198</sup> Through raffles and private and corporate donations, the fund-raising was a great success with the money raised from the Aldershot match alone reaching an impressive £20,182.42.<sup>199</sup> These two football matches display the level of support that existed in

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<sup>194</sup> Author’s Personal Collection: Argyle versus Everton Programme, 2.

<sup>195</sup> Author’s Personal Collection: Aldershot versus Manchester United Programme, 2. and Author’s Personal Collection: Argyle versus Everton Programme, 7.

<sup>196</sup> Author’s Personal Collection: Aldershot versus Manchester United Programme, 2.

<sup>197</sup> Author’s Personal Collection: Argyle versus Everton Programme, 7.

<sup>198</sup> Author’s Personal Collection: Aldershot versus Manchester United Programme, Cover.

<sup>199</sup> Author’s Personal Collection: Poster Celebrating the Funds Raised at the Aldershot versus Manchester United match.

Britain after the war. They also show how a simple event such as a football match could be elevated by its connection to the Falklands from regular events into great spectacles. Football was, and remains, a large part of British society, and the linking of the Falklands and football made for a very meaningful connection in the British psyche. It seemed appropriate to conclude in the Aldershot programme by congratulating “the courageous winning team—The South Atlantic Task Force.”<sup>200</sup>

The final event of 1982 to be impacted by the Falklands was The Queen’s Christmas Message. The tradition was started by King George V, who broadcast the first Royal Christmas Message on the wireless in 1932, allowing the Sovereign to speak directly to his subjects in Britain and across the Empire.<sup>201</sup> Following that first historic occasion, each Christmas day, the British Monarch has broadcast a short message with a central theme, in reference to the previous year, along with a message wishing all Britons a happy Christmas. Christmas Day 1982 was no different, and people across Britain and the Commonwealth turned on their televisions and radios to hear the fiftieth Royal Christmas Message. Filmed in the library at Windsor Castle, the message centred on the theme of ‘the sea’. Her Majesty spoke of its importance throughout British history, particularly to the freedoms enjoyed by Britons across the globe:

In Britain we owe our independence to the seamen who fought the Armada nearly four-hundred years ago and to Nelson and his band of brothers who destroyed Napoleon’s dreams of invasion. Nor could the great battles for peace and freedom in the first half of the twentieth century have been won without control of the seas. Earlier this year in the South Atlantic the Royal Navy and the Merchant Navy enabled our sailors, soldiers, and airmen to go to the rescue of the Falkland Islanders 8,000 miles across the ocean; and to reveal the professional skills and courage that could be called on in defence of basic freedoms.<sup>202</sup>

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<sup>200</sup> Author’s Personal Collection: Aldershot versus Manchester United Programme, 6.

<sup>201</sup> Unknown. “Christmas Broadcast 1982.” The Royal Family. Accessed May 25, 2022.

<https://www.royal.uk/christmas-broadcast-1982#:~:text=The%20Queen's%20Christmas%20Broadcast%20in,Islands%20in%20the%20South%20Atlantic>.

<sup>202</sup> Ibid.

The Queen's Christmas message was a calm, sober reflection on the year, and was the final of so many patriotic spectacles of 1982 that saw the pride of Britain on full display. A striking part of the impacting of events by the war was with the heightened level of significance having been placed upon them, those who did not want to think about the Falklands and attended such events in an attempt to enjoy them for what they were at their core, found themselves, whether they were overtly aware of it or not, participating in an event to support the war.

What had been performed and experienced, from the return of the task force starting in July until the end of the year, was a remarkable sequence of events. The infiltration of daily life by war had not been seen in almost forty years by the time Britons were once again singing and cheering for the Falklands as if nothing had changed. Impromptu events, such as the departure and return spectacles, the official spectacles planned by the military or government, such as concerts or victory parades, and the co-opting of other events from football matches to The Queen's Christmas message, made the Falklands an event of the most national importance. Some Britons looked upon the war in disgust, and the celebratory spectacles that followed even more so. But despite the few who attempted to display their disdain publicly, many of those in opposition stayed away from such events, seemingly waiting for the displays of overt nationalism to be over. In the absence of overt public opposition, these events became great public, celebratory spectacles resembling those of the British Empire at its height. With all the sights, sounds, symbols, and sentiments of Britain's imperial age, the Falklands was celebrated as if the British had started again from where they left off. But public spectacles, however grand and well received, were not enough. Britons needed something more personal and tangible, that allowed anyone to celebrate the Falklands War in their own way.

## Chapter II

## “Falk Off Argentina”: The Commodification of the Falklands War

Following the Falklands War, the British celebrated the military victory in the South Atlantic with large, grandiose public spectacles. These spectacles took on an imperial style, seeing the Falklands victory celebrated with similar festivities as wars of the past. Closely linked to the spectacularization of British popular imperialism was the commodification of it. Events such as successes on the battlefield needed to be marked as significant. The production and sale of celebratory and commemorative products for the Falklands made it clear that the war was significant, and as a by-product, made those commodities significant themselves by virtue of association with the conflict. When compared to earlier imperial conflicts, the Falklands War is not special in the production and sale of commodities—it seamlessly blends in with the past imperial wars. What makes the Falklands commodification significant is that after three decades of violent misguided conflicts, the war in the South Atlantic marked the great return of British popular consumer imperialism. Expensive and luxurious items celebrated the war, elevating the Falklands victory to an event worthy of such high-priced souvenirs. Similarly, the Falklands War elevated mundane or common items that normally would have little value. Ephemera and other everyday use items too were elevated from their humble origins to become part of the consumer spectacles at the conclusion of the war, and saw, more so than other commodities, the most fervent anti-war propaganda circulated. These items, both pro- and anti-war, saw the return of imperial symbols, iconographies, and designs, linking the production and purchasing of imperially nostalgic commodities for the Falklands with the commodity-driven celebrations of the past.

The commodities created during and after the Falklands War were rooted in the Victorian Era. As Thomas Richards wrote, the Great Exhibition of 1851 was the “first outburst of the phantasmagoria of commodity culture. It inaugurated a way of seeing things that marked indelibly the cultural and commercial life of Victorian England and fashioned a mythology of consumerism.”<sup>203</sup> This consumerism and its association with spectacle, which would be espoused by the emerging middle classes, would take on an important role in the creation of a popular consumer imperialism that allowed everyone to show pride in, and participate in, the Empire and all of its pomp and circumstance. The first, and most notable, of these Victorian public spectacles was Queen Victoria’s Diamond Jubilee, which as Tori Smith wrote, was “commemorated with such a mass of [products] that no full list can ever be compiled.”<sup>204</sup> Coming out of the Jubilee, this commodification of imperial events saw objects produced for Royal weddings, jubilees, coronations, imperial exhibitions, sporting events, and wars, the last of which to be commemorated in such a way being the Second World War. The various imperial conflicts fought during the decades of decolonization after 1945, however, were not celebrated through commodities. One would hardly wish to purchase a fine bone china cup commemorating a defeat such as the Suez Crisis or a commemorative portfolio with images celebrating the withdrawal of British forces from east of Suez. Similarly, the brutal suppression of rebellions in Malaya or Kenya, as well as ongoing conflicts like the Troubles, could not be viewed in the same light as previous imperial glories, such as the battles of Trafalgar and Waterloo, and did not merit commemorating, least of all through the production and sale of commodities. The Falklands War, however, saw the return of this imperial commodification.

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<sup>203</sup> Thomas Richards. *The Commodity Culture of Victorian England: Advertising and Spectacle, 1851-1914*. (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1990), 12.

<sup>204</sup> Smith, 342.



**I**

Pro-war commodities were the most plentiful of all products produced during and after the Falklands War. Following the trend of British public opinion, manufacturers quickly capitalised upon the celebratory sentiments expressed so vividly through grandiose public spectacles. The items produced ultimately related the Falklands back to previous imperial wars. In doing so, they employed the use of traditional British symbols and images, including Britannia, the British Lion, the British Bulldog, and the Union Jack, as well as images of British sailors, soldiers, and airmen along with their equipment to create items that celebrated and commemorated the war. In addition to the traditional symbols used, these items also used Victorian or similar features, both in the use of decorations and overall design. These items were frequently multifaceted with the display of various imperial iconographies, modern elements, and classic design features all interacting with one object. Pro-war commodities also saw a wide range of items produced, from the luxurious and expensive to the modest and even mundane, with something at every price point, and style, in between. These various items signified importance of the war by their creation. Expensive, luxurious items showed consumers how significant the war was, being worthy of commemoration by such a prestigious item. A more common item also showed the significance of the war, in that it elevated items from their humble origins into a very special item because of its relationship to the Falklands. Whether items were produced as ornaments or intended for daily use, the pro-war items available during and after the conflict were so numerous that Britons had almost unlimited choices when it came to celebrating and commemorating the war on a personal level.

The Caverswall Fine Bone China Company, founded in 1973 and priding itself upon the quality of its hand made china, produced a line of products that included a commemorative plate, mug, thimble, and miniature teacup and saucer.<sup>205</sup> The central figure of the Caverswall Falklands products was Britannia. Outlined and detailed in gold, Britannia was seated with her right arm resting upon a Union Jack shield, allowing her trident to slip into the crook of her elbow. With her left arm outstretched, she held an olive branch. Laying behind her, with only his head, mane, and forepaws showing, was the British lion. The image of Britannia was quite symbolic. Britannia, the figure representative of Britain sat resting her hand upon a shield and presenting an olive branch, as if to show the hope for peaceful resolution. That being said, she still had her trident and the British lion at hand, symbolic of Thatcher's foreign policy, which mirrored traditional British policy— "diplomacy... backed by strength, [with the] resolve to use that strength if necessary."<sup>206</sup> Artistically, the image of Britannia and the lion was striking. The figure was completely white with her outline and details all in gold. The only colour shown in the central image was on the Union Jack shield, whose red, white, and blue were bright and vibrant against the rest of the subtle image. Around the central image was a laurel wreath for the victory in the Falklands, which evoked the Roman practice of presenting a victorious general with a laurel crown during the triumphal procession through the streets of Rome. But unlike the Romans who presented the laurels of victory to one general or one emperor, the laurel of the Falklands victory was symbolically given to Britannia, and in turn, the whole of Britain. At the top of the plate were the four flags of the British Army, Royal Navy, Merchant Navy, and the Royal Air Force wrapped in a gold banner inscribed with 'Falkland Islands 1982'. This

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<sup>205</sup> Author's Personal Collection: Caverswall Commemorative Plate. And Unknown, "The Caverswall English China Company," Caverswall English Fine Bone China, accessed 15 January 2022, <https://www.caverswallchina.com/pages/the-caverswall-english-china-company>

<sup>206</sup> Thatcher. *The Collected Speeches of Margaret Thatcher*, 161.

corresponded with the Union Jack and the Ensign of the Falkland Islands draped at the bottom of the plate. Superimposed on the central laurel wreath and around the edge of the plate, in gold, were the emblems of each regiment that participated in the Falklands campaign, including large and colourful emblems for the Army, Navy, and Air Force. Around all of these were laurels and rope, symbolising military victory and unity. On the reverse was a list of the Armed Services and regiments that took part in the Falklands Campaign. This was, like the obverse, all in gold with the Union Jack and the Falkland Islands Ensign draped from above with laurel leaves, oak leaves, and rope encircling the list.<sup>207</sup>



Figure 12. Caverswall china plate produced in celebration of the Falklands victory. (RMG ZBA4397)

<sup>207</sup> Author's Personal Collection: Caverswall Commemorative Plate.

The Caverswall products epitomized the elegant pro-war commodity. As the products got smaller, from the large plate and mug to the small thimble and miniature teacup and saucer, less detail was added, but each still retained their elegance and their clear demonstration of the imperial-style pride in the military success in the Falkland Islands. The Caverswall products used almost all of the traditional British symbols and icons—Britannia, the British Lion, and the Union Jack; as well as other traditional imperial iconographies such as the laurel wreath. Other companies would, in turn, use these symbols in varying degrees to tap into the same imperial nostalgia. For instance, St. George Fine Bone China England produced a rather elegantly shaped mug with gilt scrolling rims, reminiscent of opulent tableware from the Victorian Era. On the obverse of the mug was a large waving Union Jack with a map of the Falkland Islands superimposed upon it. Above and below the flag, the mug was inscribed ‘The Falkland Islands 1982’.<sup>208</sup> On the reverse, beneath the crossed Falkland Islands Ensign and the White Ensign, was the message stating the purpose of the product: ‘To Commemorate the Liberation of the Falkland Islands from Argentine Occupation by Her Majesty’s Forces operating from a Royal Navy Task Force 1982.’<sup>209</sup> This same simple yet effective design was also applied to a thimble, and was also used by another company, Finsbury China, which used the design on its Trent Tankard and Harrogate cup, displaying both a traditional and modern aesthetic, incorporating gold bands and elements onto the rims and handles, in addition to their own line of thimbles.<sup>210</sup>

The Union Jack, the British Lion, and the Falkland Islands were also used to decorate a Crummles & Co. snuff box.<sup>211</sup> On the lid was the Falkland Islands set in a blue and white sea;

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<sup>208</sup> Author’s Personal Collection: St. George Commemorative Mug.

<sup>209</sup> Ibid.

<sup>210</sup> Author’s Personal Collection: Finsbury China Commemorative Tankard and Harrogate Cup.

<sup>211</sup> Author’s Personal Collection: Crummles & Co. Snuff Box.



Figure 13. St. George fine bone china mug. (RMG ZBA4396)

the Islands, painted gold like some precious gem, were protected by a pale crowned Lion passant guardant who stood upon the Falklands. The Lion passant guardant is a lion walking, the dexter forepaw raised, with the three others firmly upon the ground, and his head turned to look at the viewer.<sup>212</sup> A lion passant guardant is the position in which the British lion is officially shown as part of the Royal Coat of Arms of the United Kingdom as well as the Royal Standard. While officially, the lion passant guardant is never granted to an individual due to its specific usage under Royal Warrant, the use of the crowned lion passant guardant by Crummles & Co. made a clear statement regarding the sovereignty and protection over the Falkland Islands.<sup>213</sup> Along with a draped Union Jack and White Ensign behind the crowned lion passant, the answer to any question of sovereignty was made quite clear in the most elegant of ways.

The design of the snuff box, which in and of itself was an item reminiscent of a bygone era, saw the Falklands, with the British lion, encircled by a band inscribed with ‘The Falkland

<sup>212</sup> Arthur Charles Fox-Davies. *A Complete Guide to Heraldry*. (London: TC & EC Jack, 1909), 181.

<sup>213</sup> *Ibid.*

Islands 1982'. The image of the golden Falkland Islands, Britain's treasure in the South Atlantic, set upon a sea that was encircled by a protective barrier with the British Lion standing upon them was a visual representation in the same vein of Shakespeare's literary description of England:

This other Eden, demi-paradise,  
This fortress built by Nature for herself  
Against infection and the hand of war...  
This precious stone set in the silver sea  
Which serves it in the office of a wall  
Or as a moat defensive to a house,  
Against the envy of less happier lands,  
This blessed plot, this earth, this realm, this England<sup>214</sup>

Britain and the Falkland Islands, as island homes, had a shared identity. As Thatcher stated in the House of Commons on 3 April, "the people of the Falkland Islands, like the people of the United Kingdom, are an island race. Their way of life is British, their allegiance is to the Crown."<sup>215</sup> This sentiment was also expressed by *The Times* when it stated that "the Falklanders are our people. They are British citizens. The Falkland Islands are British territory. When British territory is invaded, it is not just an invasion of our land, but of the whole spirit. We are all Falklanders Now."<sup>216</sup> The Falkland Islanders, despite being 8,000 miles away, were just as British as anyone living in the



Figure 14. Crumles & Co. snuff box.  
(Author's Collection)

United Kingdom. At the close of the article, *The Times* returned to this shared identity between Britons and Falkland Islanders, stating that "we are an island race, and the focus of attack is one

<sup>214</sup> William Shakespeare. *Richard II*, Act 2, Scene 1, 47-56.

<sup>215</sup> Thatcher. *The Collected Speeches of Margaret Thatcher*, 157.

<sup>216</sup> *The Times*, 5 April 1982.

of our islands, inhabited by our islanders.”<sup>217</sup> The commodification of such a war ultimately saw the Falklands easily slipping into the mold of former imperial wars.

Pro-war commodities also took on the form of average items, more appropriate for daily use by the average Briton. For instance, Prince William Pottery company, which was established in 1937, began producing printed mugs shortly after the Second World War, with the coronation of Queen Elizabeth II in 1952 marking the first national event commemorated by the company.<sup>218</sup> During and after the Falklands War, the company produced two earthenware mugs celebrating the departure to war of the task force, and its later victorious return. The first mug saw a cartoon scene depicting the task force, with the fictional ship HMS *Britannia* in the lead, with various ships and aircraft following behind. The British armada sailed towards an island, symbolising the Falklands, with a large Union Jack flying above and an Argentine soldier frantically fleeing in the opposite direction holding up a white flag. The whole scene was summed up with the slogan ‘Go get ‘em lads!’ emblazoned above the Union Jack.<sup>219</sup> The second mug displayed a central image, within a ring of rope, of a small village or town, representative of Port Stanley and the Falkland Islands, with another large Union Jack flying above. On either side were ships, and aircraft, representing the task force now in port, along with a cartoon soldier on one side with rifle in hand and rucksack upon his back, and a sailor on the other, complete with duffle bag over one shoulder, both with gleeful expressions having just returned victorious, and safely, from the South Atlantic. The mug was, as the item itself read, produced with the simple point in mind, to ‘Welcome Home’ the task force.<sup>220</sup> What ultimately made items like these

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<sup>217</sup> Ibid.

<sup>218</sup> Unknown, “Our History,” Prince William Pottery, accessed March 15, 2022, <https://promotionalmugs.co.uk/our-history/>

<sup>219</sup> Author’s Personal Collection: Prince William ‘Go get ‘em lads!’ Mug.

<sup>220</sup> Author’s Personal Collection: Prince William ‘Welcome Home’ Mug.

Prince William mugs different from those produced by Caverswall or St. George was that they were actually meant to be used in daily life. A commemorative plate, or elegant and even dainty china cup, could be used if one wished, but were in their production and sale ornaments, and were to be displayed rather than used. Items like these two earthenware mugs displayed similar pride in their commemoration, indeed with some of the same symbols used, but in their day-to-day use, became more tangible, and perhaps constant, reminders of the Falklands victory.

Individuals, both civilians and military personnel, also created their own unique items. In the overtly corporate commodification of the war, these pieces showed individual ideas and initiative in their creation, however, used the same imperial images that were produced and sold on the mass marketed products. For instance, artist Monica Dewey created a sculpture of the British lion standing upon a small indistinguishable rocky isle.<sup>221</sup> The sculpture was identical to a cartoon titled “Victory in the South Atlantic,” by the artist Garland, which was published in June



19th edition of *The Spectator*.<sup>222</sup> Set upon a blue oval sea, an oversized lion stands at attention upon the islands with a stern expression upon his face, seemingly telling the viewer if he dare to attack, as the Argentines had, then he would be quick to defend. Besides the inscription ‘Falkland Islands April-June 1982’ upon the base, the

lion stands upon an island that could be

Figure 15. Monica Dewey, *Falkland Islands April-June 1982*. (Author’s Collection)

<sup>221</sup> Author’s Personal Collection: Monica Dewey, *Falkland Islands April-June 1982*.

<sup>222</sup> *The Spectator*, 19 June 1982



any British territory. There was a certain pragmatism to it. The lion, symbolising Britain as a military and political power, was also a symbol of British nationalism and British imperial nostalgia. The large, almost inflated nature, of the lion was a stark comparison to the small, almost miniscule islands, which, with no defining features, were less an image of importance than insignificance. Dewey's and Garland's British lion symbolised Britain in 1982. It had a right to be proud of what had been accomplished in the South Atlantic, but should not get too far ahead of itself.<sup>223</sup> The fighting of an imperial

war had done wonders to alleviate the imperial nostalgia from which they suffered, but the proud and steadfast British lion stood upon an indistinguishable and insignificant island, which as a representation of the British Empire, saw a sad and small remnant of what had been the world's largest empire, after decades of crumbling and grinding away with time. Other examples produced by military personnel include a t-shirt that was created by crew members aboard *Hermes* during their

return to Britain.<sup>224</sup> A design competition was held on the carrier to commemorate their part in the Falkland War, and the winning design featured a large cartoon image of a British bulldog. Wearing a Rating's No. 1 dress uniform, the grinning bulldog proudly stands with his arms



Figure 16. The winning design of the *Hermes*' t-shirt contest (Author's Collection)

<sup>223</sup> Andrew Thompson. *The Empire Strikes Back? The Impact of Imperialism on Britain from the Mid-Nineteenth Century*. (Harlow: Pearson, 2005), 226.

<sup>224</sup> Author's Personal Collection: HMS *Hermes* T-Shirt, 'Just Doing Our Job.'

behind his back and his right foot effortlessly squashing an Argentine soldier, humorously drawn as a helmet with hands, red nose, and a large mustache protruding out from under it. Another item, which was likely decorated by someone who took part in the campaign, was a Mark IV ‘turtle shell’ helmet.<sup>225</sup> Upon the helmet is a map of the Falklands painted in the colours of the Union Jack. Beneath the Falklands was the inscription ‘The Falklands War 2<sup>nd</sup> April-14<sup>th</sup> June 1982’. The object, which is more a form of trench art, uses a central symbol of British, and Falklands War, commodities, the Union Jack. In doing so, it takes a simple helmet, a symbol of war, and incorporates a strong patriotic message.

Along with the return of prominent imperial symbols, and imperial-style spectacles and commodities, the Falklands brought the British military back to a central place in the British psyche. Towards the end of the Victorian Era, the British military experienced extraordinary interest, and their conflicts “aroused a more intense and popular appeal than ever before.”<sup>226</sup> Such pride saw the commemoration of imperial wars, such as the Boer War or the First World War, with commodities that displayed images of British men at arms, their equipment, and the famous faces that led them into battle. These commodities, however, ceased to be produced in the aftermath of such seemingly unnecessary imperial wars after 1945. The Falklands War saw the recapturing of public interest in the military. This resulted in Falklands commodities displaying British servicemen along with the ships, aircraft, and vehicles they used to win the war, just as frequent as those traditional British symbols. For instance, like former wars, the Falklands saw the return of the war hero and famed commanders—individuals whom the general public held in their esteem for their part in the conflict, and propped up as representatives of all those who served. One mug presented a 1980s version of a Boer War or First World War cup.

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<sup>225</sup> Author’s Personal Collection: Mark IV ‘Turtle’ Helmet Trench Art.

<sup>226</sup> Edward M. Spiers. *The Army and Society: 1815-1914*. (London: Longman, 1980), 206.

Across the top of the mug was in bold red lettering, ‘The Falklands Campaign’, bookended by ‘1982’ with a central image of a grassy hill, symbolising the Falklands, with a large Union Jack on the peak and the crest of the Islands below. To the left and right were the images of the two commanders of the Falklands’ sea and land forces. In the same spirit of selling a mug with Lord Kitchener’s or Field Marshal Haig’s image, the Panorama Studios mug followed suit with Rear Admiral John Woodward on the left and Major General Jeremy Moore on the right.<sup>227</sup> Another



Figure 17. Panorama Studios mug displaying images of Rear Admiral Woodward (left) and Major General Moore (right).  
(Author’s Collection)

example was a stamp set produced to commemorate the 150th anniversary of the establishment of the Victoria Cross. The Falkland Islands produced a small, three stamp sheet with one displaying the VC, with the others simply having images of the two British servicemen who had both been posthumously awarded Victoria Crosses—Lt. Colonel H. Jones, VC OBE and Sergeant Ian J. McKay, VC.<sup>228</sup> These stamps, as well as the mug, were as much about the

<sup>227</sup> Author’s Personal Collection: Panorama Studios Commemorative Mug.

<sup>228</sup> Author’s Personal Collection: Falkland Islands, Victoria Cross 150<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Commemorative Stamp Sheet.

Falklands War, as the individuals they displayed. Trafalgar and Waterloo had Nelson and Wellington—the Falklands had Woodward and Moore, Jones and McKay.

Other items went out of their way not to display individual figures, and to show, above all else, the tools the British used to get on with the job. For instance, various etchings were produced displaying ships, aircraft, and British servicemen. The scenes depicted were not realistic like other pieces of art (see below) and acted as collages, with all aspects of the task force being brought into a single frame. Two examples, designed by W. H. Gibson, had a single blue-tinted

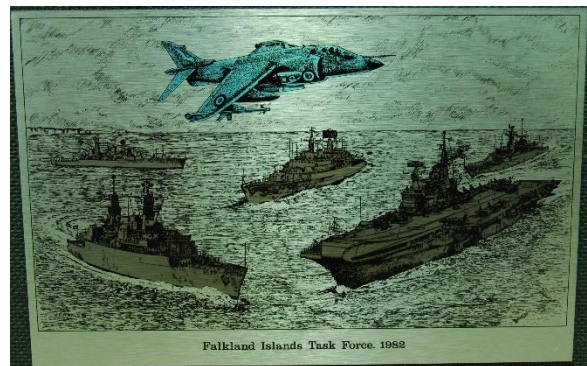
Royal Navy Sea Harrier flying over various ships in the task force, with *Invincible* and three escorts, along with various landing craft and auxiliary ships in the background of one etching, and *Hermes* and four escorts in a second.<sup>229</sup> One

etching, produced by an unknown artist, had two members of the Parachute Regiment hoisting a Union Jack, with the background showing the landings at San Carlos, with landing craft, a Fearless-class amphibious warfare ship, a Round Table-class landing ship logistics, along with Sea Harriers, a Sea King, and a Chinook flying

overhead. The etching was topped off with the coat of arms of the British military and a map of the Falklands and South Georgia.<sup>230</sup> The intended purpose of etchings was not accuracy, but satisfying the need of visual representations of the equipment that helped win the war. Other



Figure 18. Two etchings showcasing the ships and aircrafts of the task force. (Author's Collection)



<sup>229</sup> Author's Personal Collection: Falkland Islands Task Force, 1982 Etching (*Invincible*)

<sup>230</sup> Author's Personal Collection: Falkland Islands Task Force, 1982 Etching (*Hermes*)

artists, however, such as Robert Taylor, produced far more realistic images, depicting now historic scenes from the conflict. One of Taylor's prints was 'South Atlantic Task Force', which displayed *Hermes*, *Sheffield*, and *Arrow*, with *Glamorgan*, *Ardent*, Fleet Auxiliary Tanker *Olna*, Fleet Replenishment Ship *Resource* in the background, all steaming south towards the Falklands.<sup>231</sup> A similar piece of art was Jon Westwood's limited-edition print 'Black Buck One—Britain Strikes Back', which portrayed a Vulcan bomber being refueled by a Victor tanker on its way to attack Port Stanley airport.<sup>232</sup> Ultimately both Taylor's and Westwood's representations of the conflict depicted ships and aircraft that took part in the war, without actually depicting the Falklands or their military actions. Indeed, the Westwood example does not even mention the Islands in the title of the work. Such depictions of the war placed all



Figure 19. Robert Taylor, *South Atlantic Task Force*. (Fleet Air Arm Museum)

<sup>231</sup> Fleet Air Arm Museum: Robert Taylor, *South Atlantic Task Force*.

<sup>232</sup> Author's Personal Collection: Jon Westwood, *Black Buck One—Britain Strikes Back*.

attention on the British military, with an especial emphasis on the machines they used, removing the imperial or national symbols and allowing the military victory to speak for itself.

In an attempt to make certain commodities more desirable, companies also produced products as limited editions. The production of such items made the Falklands not only an event to be marked, but one that the average consumer, if they acted quickly enough, could celebrate with a select group of other purchasers. For instance, Graham Payne produced a limited-edition thimble with a run of only 250.<sup>233</sup> On the thimble was a hand-painted image of two silhouetted soldiers raising a Union Jack following the liberation of the Falklands on 14 June. In the background was the orange glow of the morning sun which symbolized the dawn of a liberated Falkland Islands, free from Argentine occupation and free to choose their own destiny. Another company that produced an exclusive item was Pettis Studio Glass Ltd., which sold a commemorative plate, titled ‘Task Force 1982,’ in a limited production of 2500.<sup>234</sup> The central image on the plate was a map of the Falklands that indicated the main battle locations. Around the outside of the plate were twenty regiment emblems, representative of all the Armed Services that fought in the South Atlantic, supported by images of HMS *Invincible*, a Sea King helicopter, RFA *Sir Lancelot*, a Sea Harrier, and soldiers of the Parachute Regiment. In the letter that came with the plate, the company went into great detail regarding the impossibility of including every regiment or military unit that were part of the task force. They made it clear that the plate was not perfect, partially due to military secrecy and artistic representation, “but our Task Force 1982 plate is our tribute not only to all those who enjoyed success in the South Atlantic but also to those who made their ultimate sacrifice for British soil and people.”<sup>235</sup> These products, with their

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<sup>233</sup> Author’s Personal Collection: Graham Payne Thimble.

<sup>234</sup> Author’s Personal Collection: Pettis Studio Glass Ltd. ‘Task Force 1982’ Commemorative Plate.

<sup>235</sup> Ibid.

limited production runs, made them more desirable, despite being similar to other products produced in larger quantities. The sale of limited-edition products was not limited to the immediate aftermath of the war. In 1992, in celebration of the tenth anniversary of the Falklands War, Royal Doulton produced a bone china tankard titled ‘The Return of the Canberra 1982’ featuring artwork by military artist Geoff Hunt. The image showed the return of *Canberra* to Southampton, with crowds of people waving flags and banners, red, white, and blue balloons floating above, along with small



Figure 20. Royal Doulton’s ‘The Return of the Canberra 1982,’ no. 1421. (Author’s Collection)

craft following the ‘Great White Whale.’ It was almost an exact image of what occurred on 11 July, and payment of £49.95 secured one of only 14,750 tankards.<sup>236</sup>

With pro-war commodities, there came an expectation that they were produced in Britain. By the end of the Victorian Era, manufacturers looked to “exploit [the popular imperialism] more effectively in a period of increasing world economic difficulty.”<sup>237</sup> This saw products and their associated advertisements branded with slogans such as “British made—British owned,” “Support British trade—buy home-made goods,” often accompanied by figures such as Britannia or John Bull, that beckoned consumers to purchase products that were British in origin.<sup>238</sup> After the Falklands War, it was not necessary to advertise products as British made in addition to being related to the Falklands. The products’ relationship to the conflict was what made Britons want to purchase them; the British production of the item was taken for granted.

<sup>236</sup> Author’s Personal Collection: Royal Doulton, ‘The Return of the Canberra’ Tankard.

<sup>237</sup> John M. MacKenzie. *Propaganda and Empire: The Manipulation of British Public Opinion, 1880-1960*. (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1984), 10.

<sup>238</sup> Robert Opie. *Rule Britannia: Trading on the British Image*. (Harmondsworth: Viking, 1985), 14.

## II

The Falklands War was also a war of ephemera that saw instant publications of souvenir books and booklets and stamps and postcards. Ephemera was the largest category of Falklands commodities, not only for its wide range of publications or products, but the sheer amount produced. Items such as posters or small booklets were both relatively cheap to produce and cheap to purchase, making them ideal for both those who wanted to sell Falklands related items, as well as those who wished to buy them. Pro-war ephemera was the most common, with thousands of pieces being made celebrating the Falklands victory. Due to the cheapness of the medium, ephemera also saw anti-war products produced in great numbers. Items produced out of paper were also easily displayed or distributed, which made them the most ideal kind of product when companies or individuals wished to get a particular message across.

In the wide array of pro-Falklands ephemera that was produced, two categories can be discerned: products that were created simply to fill a gap in the Falklands market; and those that were created with a specific purpose. Magazine companies and printing houses, just like all other British manufacturers, were quick to capitalize on the hankering of British consumers for materials related to the Falklands. For instance, *Tribute to our Victorious Task Force: Photo-Diary of a Conflict*, was published by Time-Scan Publications.<sup>239</sup> The 30-page magazine, costing only 95p, was as its title suggested, a photo-diary recounting the events of the Falklands War with large colourful images providing the reader with a sensational view of the war. Another example was *Falklands Invasion*, produced by Punch Publications.<sup>240</sup> The booklet, which cost the consumer a mere 50p, folded out with one side giving a general overview of the war,

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<sup>239</sup> Author's Personal Collection: *Tribute to our Victorious Task Force: Photo-Diary of a Conflict*. London: Time-Scan Publications, 1982.

<sup>240</sup> Author's Personal Collection: *Falklands Invasion*. Milton Keynes: Telstar Publications, 1982.



accompanied by various photographs, with the other displaying a large map of the South Atlantic region along with the ships and aircraft of the two opposing forces. Another product that appealed to any military buff was *The South Atlantic Commemorative Folio* by The Military Gallery.<sup>241</sup> Within the folio was a four-page history of the Falklands War by Robert Weston, and ‘Order of Battle’ timeline, a ‘Battle Map’ showing the movements of British troops, the locations of the major land battles, as well as where each of the attacked Royal Navy vessels were sunk, and the ‘Falklands 1982 Forces Profiles’ which with limited accuracy related how many ships, aircraft, and personnel the opposing forces had in the South Atlantic. The major draw of *The South Atlantic Commemorative Folio* was four glossy Robert Taylor prints, which displayed images from the war, including a Sea Harrier during an operation over the Falklands and *QE2* sailing towards the South Atlantic. Such items were exactly what many Britons wanted. Photographs, maps, statistics, general overviews—each product blended into the next. Their production ultimately filled the need of Britons to know more about what had happened in the South Atlantic, and in such a way that made it exciting and exhilarating, and worth spending money on. The two-part work, *Falklands: Task Force Portfolio*, was different from other books published after the war. Instead of filling a gap in the commodities produced, it was published with a purpose. With 232 pages in total between the two parts, the *Task Force Portfolio* was produced, “rather than publish another book repeating all that we have read in the newspapers,” to present the many images from the war.<sup>242</sup> As noted in Mike Critchley’s introduction, some of the photographs were already well known and had been in the newspapers or on the televised news, but he hoped that “this book will be in circulation much longer than the average

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<sup>241</sup> Author’s Personal Collection: *The South Atlantic Commemorative Folio*. Bath: The Military Gallery, 1982.

<sup>242</sup> Mike Critchley Eds. *Falklands: Task Force Portfolio, Part 1*. (Duloe: Maritime Books, 1983), 2.

newspaper—as an historical record of the force.”<sup>243</sup> By doing so, the *Task Force Portfolio* became a more authentic and more well-rounded product, well worth the £3.95 for Part 1 and £4.50 for Part 2.

The war to liberate the Falklands had people glued to their television screens and their radio sets. What was going to happen next for their loved ones and nation in the South Atlantic was of paramount importance. Marshall Cavendish, through its production of the weekly magazine *Falklands War*, proved that the interest of Britons was not limited to the war period itself.<sup>244</sup> In truth, Cavendish’s fourteen-part magazine read like a comic book at times, with exciting images and storylines; readers were left waiting until the next issue was released to find out what happened next to their forces in the South Atlantic. The Falklands also saw the production of a board game—War in the Falklands.<sup>245</sup> Produced by Mayfair Games, the gameboard was a simple map of the Falklands with a square grid on it, allowing players to move their ships, aircraft, and troops around the board. The game was actually two games in one, allowing players to play out the events of the 1982 war, or the Battle of the Falkland Islands in 1914.<sup>246</sup> In an ultimate connection between Britain fighting over one of the last bastions of her Empire and a past imperial war, Mayfair Games made it easy for the twelve and over audience to see the current war through the lens of the past. Whether it was a quick publication or something that was to stand the test of time, a weekly magazine, or a board game, all of the pro-war ephemera produced signified the British public’s great desire to consume every imaginable product that was related to the Falklands War.

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<sup>243</sup> Ibid.

<sup>244</sup> Author’s Personal Collection: Marshall Cavendish, *The Falklands War: The Day-by-Day Record from Invasion to Victory, Parts 1-14*. London: Marshall Cavendish Limited, 1983.

<sup>245</sup> Author’s Personal Collection: Mayfair Games, War in the Falklands.

<sup>246</sup> Ibid.

Ephemera was also the one commodity produced with both pro-war and anti-war sentiments. Postcards, above all other items, were used to display disdain for and opposition to the war, as well as making fun of certain aspects of the conflict that many Britons were so serious about. Using the same traditional British symbols and iconographies, those who railed against the war wished to show the parallels between the Falklands War and previous imperial wars, not to show pride but shame. Those in opposition to the war produced hundreds of thousands of postcards; with relatively low production costs, and equally low sale prices, their opinions on the war, or national disgrace as they saw it, could be easily distributed.

One company that satirized the war was South Atlantic Souvenirs, a partnership between Rick Walker and Steve Hardstaff.<sup>247</sup> The two met in the late 1970s when Walker ran a commercial print shop above a bookstore in Liverpool and Hardstaff worked as a designer, making album covers for various bands including the Beatles, Led Zeppelin, Fleetwood Mac, and Dead or Alive.<sup>248</sup> The two had contemplated working together before, but it was not until the start of the Falklands War that they took their chance. Walker recalled “driving out with friends to Lyme Park on the day of the Commons debate which led to the sending of the task force...we could not believe our ears—it just seemed like a huge joke.”<sup>249</sup> Both Walker and Hardstaff opposed the war, thinking that the Government was out of step with modern Britain and reality. When the two were at a café trying to think of a name for their new partnership, they noticed someone reading the 4 May edition of *The Sun* with the large headline “Gotcha”; in disgust the two left. As they were leaving, Walker thought of the idea to call themselves South Atlantic

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<sup>247</sup> Manchester City Art Gallery. *The Falklands Factor: Representations of a Conflict*. (Manchester: Manchester City Art Galleries, 1989), 41.

<sup>248</sup> Unknown, “South Atlantic Souvenirs,” The British Museum, accessed 10 February 2022, <https://www.britishmuseum.org/collection/term/AUTH225532>

<sup>249</sup> Manchester City Art Gallery. *The Falklands Factor: Representations of a Conflict*, 41.

Souvenirs, which Hardstaff immediately agreed with because of the unintentional acronym of SAS (the same as the British Army's Special Air Service, which had deployed to the Falklands).<sup>250</sup> But despite their convictions in their opposition to the war, they had reservations about making their views and their products public. Walker recalled that "the tide of hysteria whipped up by the tabloids made me... worry that... we might get attacked in our homes."<sup>251</sup> It was a legitimate worry as *The Daily Mirror* attempted to track Walker and Hardstaff down, but with no success.<sup>252</sup> Their first postcard series was produced with a focus on the war, using familiar imperial British imagery and symbols to show the imperial nostalgia, which they deemed ludicrous, that was felt during the Falklands War.

One of their first postcards, '600,000 Sheep Can't be Wrong', pictured a central aircraft carrier sailing towards the Falklands littered with sheep.<sup>253</sup> The carrier, representative of the task force, sailed on a sea made of wool with "the rhetorical claims of Westminster and the Conservative press... depicted as hollow bleatings."<sup>254</sup> From flag poles protruding out from the carrier draped four Union Jacks which were flanked on either side by Britannia, who grasps in one hand a trident and rests the other upon a Union Jack embossed shield. Above all of this, the postcard displays the dates "1592... 1914... 1982...20" which correspond with the first recorded discovery of the Falklands by Captain John Davis, the Battle of the Falklands Islands during the First World War, the Falklands War that was upon them, and the assumption that in the twenty-first century, Britain would once again fall into the trap of fighting an imperial war for the 600,000 sheep that called the Islands home.

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<sup>250</sup> Ibid.

<sup>251</sup> Ibid.

<sup>252</sup> Ibid.

<sup>253</sup> Author's Personal Collection: South Atlantic Souvenirs, *600,000 Sheep Can't be Wrong*.

<sup>254</sup> Manchester City Art Gallery, 14.



Figure 21. South Atlantic Souvenirs, *600,000 Sheep Can't be Wrong*. (Author's Collection)

Another postcard from the series was their take on the famous First World War enlistment poster with Lord Kitchener beckoning the viewer to enlist. In the original, designed by Alfred Leete, a central image of Field Marshal Lord Kitchener, from the neck up, stares at the viewer with his right hand pointing directly forward. Above Lord Kitchener was the word 'BRITONS' in all caps in red ink, with 'WANTS YOU' below, signifying that for the Britons looking at the poster, Lord Kitchener himself wanted them to join the British Expeditionary Force. Below, the original poster declared 'YOUR COUNTRY NEEDS YOU' and 'GOD SAVE THE KING'. The South Atlantic Souvenirs version had, in place of Lord Kitchener, a large central penguin aggressively staring at the viewer. Above the penguin was the start of the message 'your country', which was in red ink like the original poster. The penguin stood upon the word 'needs', again in red, which was carved out of stone that seemed to be cracking and slowly crumbling. The penguin, to show that it was not an Argentine penguin, wore in John Bull fashion a bright Union Jack waistcoat. Around the base of the image and in the background are

various smaller penguins and snow, with mountains in the background, scenery generally more akin to Antarctica than the Falklands.<sup>255</sup>

Other postcards produced by South Atlantic Souvenirs included ‘The Climate is Bleak but Healthy’ which related the current conflict to the First World War using a map of the Battle of the Falkland Islands in 1914, showing the movements of the British and German squadrons and where the German ships were sunk.<sup>256</sup> ‘The Home Front’ also related the 1982 conflict to a previous war, specifically the Second World War. The design of the postcard was to appear like a newspaper with the title across the top, a price in the upper left corner, and an advertisement in the upper right. The

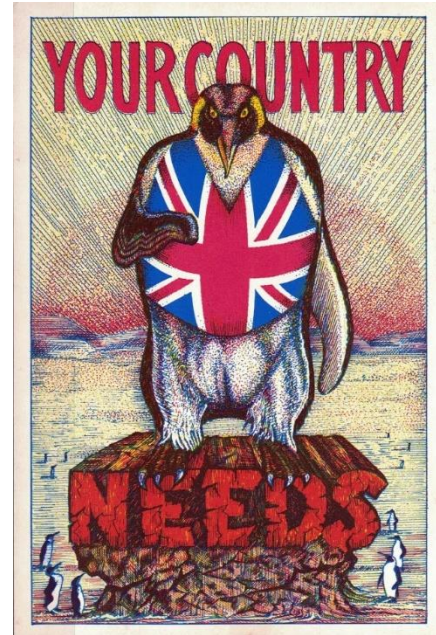


Figure 22. South Atlantic Souvenirs, *Your Country Needs You*. (Author’s Collection)

main image of the postcard was a cut-away diagram of a missile with the headline: “Make your own Sidewinder heat-seeking missile!” The missile coincidentally appeared to be more of a rocket, seemingly a Second World War V-2 instead of the American-made AIM-9 Sidewinder. The postcard even included the supplies needed to “help boost the national effort,” including “14,000 frying pans (or equivalent), 20 TV sets (or 15 video recorders), lots of wiring, alarm clock, screws, masking tape, epoxy resin, pliers, hammer, [and] rubber gloves.”<sup>257</sup> Across the bottom, the postcard jokingly added that next week ‘The Home Front’ would tell readers how they could keep their spirits up while taking care of enemy sympathisers. ‘Rejoice’ which depicted a large, smiling whale with a Union Jack on its belly, represented the British success in

<sup>255</sup> Author’s Personal Collection: South Atlantic Souvenirs, *Your Country Needs You*.

<sup>256</sup> Author’s Personal Collection: South Atlantic Souvenirs, *The Climate is Bleak but Healthy*.

<sup>257</sup> Author’s Personal Collection: South Atlantic Souvenirs, *The Home Front*.

the retaking of South Georgia, whose old whaling station was central to the Argentines occupying the island.<sup>258</sup> The title reflected Thatcher's remarks on 25 April to the press following the successful operation: instead of taking questions, she stated, "just rejoice at that news and congratulate our forces and the Marines."<sup>259</sup> A second, punchier postcard was released with the title 'Rejoice!'. Under Thatcher's quote "Rejoice at that news", the postcard listed what the designers saw as more significant news, including "jobless back above 3 million...number on poverty line approaching 6 million...replacing HMS Sheffield to cost £100 million-plus."<sup>260</sup>

South Atlantic Souvenirs' most successful postcard was 'Crime Wave', which sold tens of thousands of units as part of their post war set called 'Return to Normalcy'.<sup>261</sup> Under the title were two images of Prime Minister Thatcher, looking something like Batman's Joker with yellow hair, ghost white skin, red lips, and a dark green coat. At the bottom of each of the images in a black rectangle is what would be Thatcher's prisoner number, 210135, suggesting that she should be regarded as a criminal.<sup>262</sup> South Atlantic Souvenirs' postcards were, all considered, rather tame. The designs were ultimately not aggressive in their opposition to the war but more satirical, poking fun at the establishment and the idea that in the post-imperial world of the 1980s, Britain would fight for a set of islands that were, as far as Walker and Hardstaff were concerned, not worth the nation's time. The spectrum of products produced by South Atlantic Souvenirs is also interesting. It produced the more direct 'Rejoice!' which declared all of the

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<sup>258</sup> Author's Personal Collection: South Atlantic Souvenirs, *Rejoice*.

<sup>259</sup> "Archive: Thatcher 'rejoices' at Falkland victory," YouTube video, 1:52, from a Telegraph news programme televised on 25 April 1982, posted by "The Telegraph," 8 April 2013, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qHwCbIEVmG0>

<sup>260</sup> Author's Personal Collection: South Atlantic Souvenirs, *Rejoice!*

<sup>261</sup> Manchester City Art Gallery, 41.

<sup>262</sup> National Portrait Gallery: South Atlantic Souvenirs, *Crime Wave*. (NPG D48906).

awful things occurring in Britain, but it also produced the rather humorous ‘Trees of the Falkland Islands’, more in line with British humour, which apart from the title was a blank white postcard,

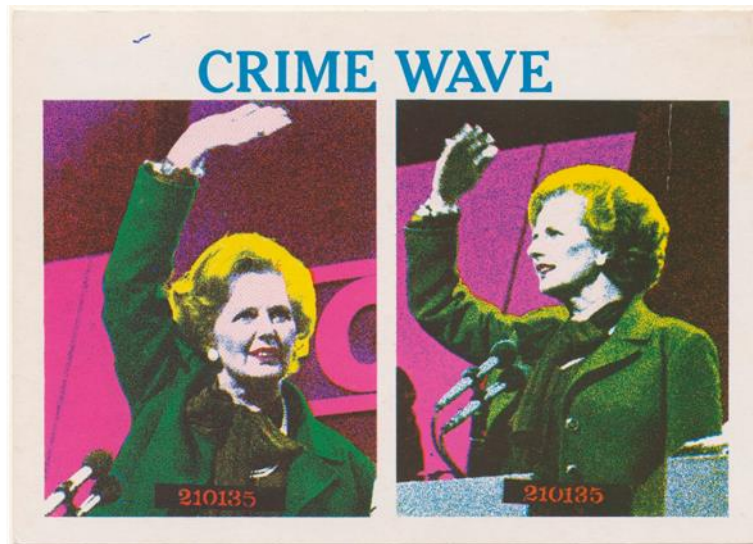


Figure 23. South Atlantic Souvenirs, *Crime Wave*. (NPG D48906)

reminding the viewer on the reverse that “regrettably it is too cold for trees to grow in the Falkland Islands.”<sup>263</sup> And while Walker admitted that “the joke was on us” in that the majority of Britons agreed with the Government and the aims of the war, South Atlantic Souvenirs “hit the nerve for a lot of people”, selling out of the first set in a couple of weeks.<sup>264</sup> South Atlantic Souvenirs’ products ultimately looked on the humorous or satirical side of the war and, while being blunt on occasion, they were never hurtful or harmful in their process or aims.

Leeds Postcards was another anti-war postcard company, but while South Atlantic Souvenirs went for satire, Leeds went for a punch, symbolized by their logo: a boxing glove on a spring punching through a card. The company was started in 1979 by Richard Scott, a trade unionist and member of the Communist Party of Great Britain.<sup>265</sup> Scott realized that while

<sup>263</sup> Author’s Personal Collection: South Atlantic Souvenirs, *Trees of the Falkland Islands*.

<sup>264</sup> Manchester City Art Gallery, 41

<sup>265</sup> Unknown, “The Story of Leeds Postcards,” Leeds Postcards, accessed 3 January 2022, <https://leedspostcards.co.uk/about-us/>



posters required permission to be displayed in the workplace, postcards could be placed on desks without issue. Influenced by the political art of Klaus Staeck, Scott started Leeds Postcards out of his house, publishing his first postcard for health and safety at work sponsored by the British Society for Social Responsibility in Science (BSSRS).<sup>266</sup> Scott's Marxist ideology influenced his postcard designs, which included illustrations of Marx, pro-abortion messages, or general anti-Conservative messages including the fourth postcard which simply stated, "I didn't vote Tory". Leeds Postcards were extremely political and ultimately held nothing back.<sup>267</sup>

Leeds first Falklands related postcard was number 091 'Glorious/Senseless'. The postcard presented two newspaper front pages side by side. On the left was the 26 May edition of the *Daily Mail* which showed HMS *Antelope* exploding after being hit by an Exocet missile under the headline "Antelope dies in a blaze of glory." On the right was the 26 May edition of the *Morning Star*, which showing the same image, had the headline "Senseless sacrifice." On the



Figure 24. Leeds Postcards, number 091, *Glorious/Senseless*. (Author's Collection)

<sup>266</sup> Ibid.

<sup>267</sup> Ibid.

reverse of the postcard, it was stated that “the Daily Mail said the trenches of the 1<sup>st</sup> World War were glorious too. The verdict of history is different. Without the *Morning Star*, progressive opinion would have no daily voice. Don’t wait for history to prove the point!”<sup>268</sup> In a single postcard, Leeds revealed the two sides to the war, laying bare the imperial nostalgia that was present at the time. Those who had pro-war sympathies saw the war as a glorious display of British military heroism, just as they viewed previous wars, whereas those with anti-war sympathies saw it for what war is at its core, not a gentlemanly act, but a dastardly deed.

One of Leeds Postcard’s biggest critiques of the war was the sinking of the Argentine cruiser, the ARA *General Belgrano*. The theme of shame for the sinking of the *Belgrano* was the most constant critique over the years. The first postcard in the Belgrano series was ‘Ye Hypocrites’ published a year after the war in 1983. The front of the postcard followed the custom of Victorian souvenirs, adding facts and dates as a design element. With a central image of a sinking ship through the periscope of a submarine it stated “Saturday 1<sup>st</sup> May 1982 8pm *General Belgrano* ordered to return to port in the light of Peruvian peace proposals Sunday 2<sup>nd</sup> May 2pm. *General Belgrano* sunk on orders from PM Thatcher.”<sup>269</sup> It also included a quotation from the Scottish poet, Robert Burns, which was taken from a dinner commemorating an imperial naval victory: “Ye Hypocrites! Are these your pranks? To

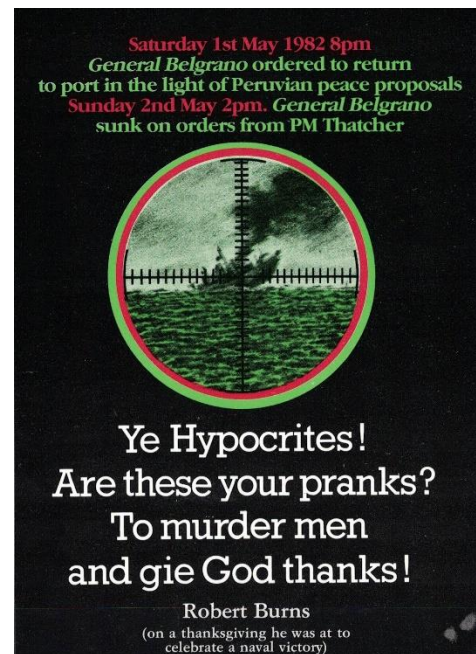


Figure 25. Leeds Postcards, *Ye Hypocrites*. (Author’s Collection)

<sup>268</sup> Author’s Personal Collection: Leeds Postcards, number 091, *Glorious/Senseless*.

<sup>269</sup> Author’s Personal Collection: Leeds Postcards, *Ye Hypocrites*.

murder men and give God thanks!”<sup>270</sup> Another postcard used the label of England’s Glory matches.<sup>271</sup> England’s Glory was a brand from the Victorian and Edwardian eras that displayed on their packaging the ship *England’s Glory* steaming from one side to the other.<sup>272</sup> Leeds took this design, with its large-print title, England’s Glory, across the top and bottom of the postcard, with a Union Jack on either side of the central image, but instead of the ship *England’s Glory*, it was the *Belgrano* sinking.<sup>273</sup> With the changing of the central image, Leeds questioned what was really glorious about Britain’s most recent war.

### III

During and after the war, various armed forces charities appealed to Britons to donate money in support of those who fought and their families, especially those who lost their loved ones in the South Atlantic. The first charities to collect for the Falklands were relatively small and were products of the shock of events in the South Atlantic. Following the death of twenty sailors in the 4 May Exocet missile strike on HMS *Sheffield*, the destroyer’s adoptive city set up an appeal fund for the next of kin.<sup>274</sup> The same occurred in Hereford following the death of SAS personnel in the bird strike that took down a Sea King.<sup>275</sup> And following the death of thirty-two sailors aboard HMS *Coventry*, the city of the same name did likewise.<sup>276</sup> Before long, thousands of pounds were being sent to the Ministry of Defence in the same patriotic spirit that drew crowds of cheering, singing, flag- and banner-waving Britons to the dockyards to see the departure and the return of the task force, as well as the subsequent victory parades and shows.

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<sup>270</sup> Ibid.

<sup>271</sup> Manchester City Art Gallery, 25

<sup>272</sup> Opie, 16.

<sup>273</sup> Manchester City Art Gallery, 25.

<sup>274</sup> Carr, 94.

<sup>275</sup> Ibid.

<sup>276</sup> Ibid, 95.

On 25 May, John Nott announced the creation of the South Atlantic Fund which would collect money and pass it on to existing military charities for distribution to families. Each branch of the British military had its own charity: the Royal Navy had the King George's Fund for Sailors, the Royal Air Force had the Royal Air Force Benevolent Fund, and the Army had the Army Benevolent Fund. In *The Times*, Nott "asked members of the public, who... understandably wished to make donations, to direct them to this central fund, so as to save confusion and difficulty."<sup>277</sup> Donations came in rapidly, with £1,000 being raised in the first few hours. General donations contributed a great deal to the funds raised, which would finally total an impressive £16 million, but the sale of commodities allowed for an easy exchange.<sup>278</sup> In buying a commodity, one supported the South Atlantic Fund and also received something tangible in return—something more than the knowledge of having done something good. Most of the products were not made by the South Atlantic Fund, but were new or pre-existing products sold on behalf of the Fund. For instance, Pinder Bros. Ltd., silversmiths based in Sheffield since 1877, sold a pewter tankard "to commemorate the great victory of British Forces in the Falkland Islands and in memory of those who gave their lives or suffered injury in the service of their country."<sup>279</sup> The tankard was decorated with etched images of a map of the Falklands, HMS *Invincible*, and Royal Marines hoisting a Union Jack. The tankard also followed the Victorian decorating principle of adding dates and facts, and included the dates of the Argentine invasion and subsequent Argentine surrender. The tankard was sold in a limited edition of 10,000 with the incentive that Pinder Bros. would donate £1 for every tankard sold, giving half to the HMS *Sheffield* Appeal and half to the South Atlantic Fund.<sup>280</sup>

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<sup>277</sup> *The Times*, 26 May 1982.

<sup>278</sup> Carr, 95.

<sup>279</sup> Author's Personal Collection: Pinder Bros. Commemorative Tankard.

<sup>280</sup> Author's Personal Collection: Ibid.

A more luxurious option was offered by Halcyon Days, which produced a small enamel commemorative snuff box to assist the South Atlantic Fund. The oval box had a blue base with gilded rims and hinge. The lid was vividly decorated with a Union Jack, superimposed with a quotation from Thatcher's statement to the House of Commons on 20 May: "Britain has a duty to the whole world... to uphold the cause of freedom."<sup>281</sup> The inside of the lid displayed a map of the Falkland Islands with the bottom of the snuff box stating, "the occupying



Figure 26. Halcyon Days snuff box. (Author's Collection)

Argentine forces surrendered to the British 14th June 1982."<sup>282</sup> The snuff box, using the imagery of the Union Jack and the words of the Prime Minister, and providing the simple fact of the date of the Argentine surrender, offered an elegant, luxury commemorative piece. It was also representative of British craftsmanship, artistry, and tradition. The art of enamelling on copper was popular in the mid to late eighteenth century, but by the mid-nineteenth century, it seemed to only be used for saucepans and other such items.<sup>283</sup> Halcyon Days, whose name spoke of nostalgia, revived the techniques and began making their now famed enamel snuff and pill boxes in 1950.<sup>284</sup> By commemorating the Falklands victory with one of these items, Halcyon Days not only made a product showing the magnitude of the event and aligning it with previous occasions such as the marriage of the Prince and Princess of Wales a year earlier, but also likened the

<sup>281</sup> Author's Personal Collection: Halcyon Days Falklands Snuff Box.

<sup>282</sup> Ibid.

<sup>283</sup> Unknown, "Our Story," Halcyon Days, accessed 14 December 2021, <https://www.halcyondays.co.uk/pages/our-story-1>

<sup>284</sup> Ibid.

Falklands to other imperial traditions of the past when such techniques and items were commonplace in the commemoration of imperial events.

The South Atlantic Fund eventually sold products in the widest of ranges. This included everything from the practical or commonplace *Service Wives' Cookery Book: In Aid of the South Atlantic Fund* published by The Forces Press (NAAFI) and Dame Vera Lynn's Falklands record, "I Love This Land", to the limited and luxurious Pinder Bros. tankard or Halcyon Days snuff box.<sup>285</sup> For those with deeper pockets, a South Atlantic Fund auction saw the sale of rarities such as Prince Andrew's flight gloves, which raised £500, or Major General Mario Benjamin Menendez's top hat, which raised an astounding £5000.<sup>286</sup> Objects like gloves or a top hat were, intrinsically, unremarkable. The gloves worn by Royal Air Force and Royal Navy pilots could be purchased at any military surplus store, and anyone could order a top hat made to fit at one of London's premier hatters. However, the objects' relationship to the war and to certain individuals made them worth far more than the object on its own. Such rarities were ultimately only the possession of a select few willing to pay for the privilege. The general public had to make do with more commonplace items that allowed them to support Her Majesty's Armed Forces, connect to, and even play a part in the war and its remembrance.

Another charity that sought to raise money for those who fought in the South Atlantic was the King George's Fund for Sailors. The charity was established during the First World War in 1917 in reaction to the outpouring of support from Britons who wanted to give to those injured and the families of those lost at sea.<sup>287</sup> The fund was an immediate success, raising £207,000 in

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<sup>285</sup> IWM: *Service Wives' Cookery Book: In Aid of the South Atlantic Fund*. (Aldershot: Forces Press (NAAFI), 1982). (LBY K. 15/42).

<sup>286</sup> Carr, 96.

<sup>287</sup> Unknown, "Our History," The Seafarers' Charity, accessed 14 May 2022, <https://www.theseafarerscharity.org/who-we-are/our-history>

its first year, including £5,200 from King George V, which resulted in the naming of the charity on 5 July 1917 in the His Majesty's honour.<sup>288</sup> In 1982, the King George's Fund for Sailors worked with the South Atlantic Fund, receiving "valued support" for Falklands-related efforts.<sup>289</sup> The fund also produced its own products as a way of raising funds for Falklands Royal Navy veterans and their families. One such product was "The Falklands Collection" postcard set. Released on 14 June 1983, the first anniversary of the liberation of the Falklands, each set contained 113 postcards decorated with a black-and-white photograph of a British vessel that had been part of the task force. If the allure of a boxed postcard set was not enough, the Falklands Collection was sold as a limited edition of 1,000, with the first set being given to The Queen by the Fund (although the Royal Collection Trust at Windsor Castle has no knowledge of the set being given to Her Majesty).<sup>290</sup> But despite the first set not actually being in the possession of The Queen, the claim certainly added enticement to purchasing the postcard set by connecting the British military, the Monarchy, the general public, and the charity through the purchase of one item.

The Soldiers, Sailors, Airmen and Families Association (SSAFA) was another charity that sought to capitalize on the sale of commodities following the Falklands War. Major James Gildea founded the Association in 1885, hoping to raise funds and volunteers to help the families of those serving in the British Army and Royal Navy around the British Empire.<sup>291</sup> This resulted in the creation of the Soldiers' and Sailors' Families Association, as it was then called, and under the presidency of The Princess of Wales, later Queen Alexandra, the Association played a role in

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<sup>288</sup> Ibid.

<sup>289</sup> Ibid.

<sup>290</sup> Dr. Carly Collier, Personal communication with author, 12 August 2021.

<sup>291</sup> Unknown, "Our History," SSAFA, the Armed Forces Charity, 14 May 2022, <https://www.ssafa.org.uk/about-us/our-history>

supporting British military personnel and their families in every war Britain fought since the Association's formation.<sup>292</sup> In 1982, the SSAFA provided support for the families of those who served in the Falklands, which included sending the 541 bereaved relatives to the Falkland Islands social workers a year after the conflict.<sup>293</sup> In 1992, with the tenth anniversary of the liberation of the Falklands, the SSAFA produced a bifold booklet with four commemorative stamp sheets.<sup>294</sup> Each sheet was from a different territory that took part of the conflict, including the Falkland Islands, South Georgia and South Sandwich Islands, Ascension Island, and St Helena. The Falklands as well as South Georgia and South Sandwich Islands, saw Argentine occupation and war fighting; Ascension Island and St Helena took part in the logistics of the war with Ascension being used as a forward base and St Helena sending RMS *St Helena* to join the task force along with nineteen St Helenian volunteers. Each sheet was identical in design, with various aircraft, ships, and soldiers around the border to represent all the services that took part in the conflict. The four stamps per sheet were specific to each territory but all related to the conflict whether it be specific locations, events, or objects. On the back of the booklet was a message from Admiral Sir John Woodward, who stated that the war to liberate the Falklands brought "death, injury and destruction of livelihood and property for both civilians and Servicemen" and that by "buying these stamps and by so doing perhaps helping a family of a Serviceman who did so much to defend peace and the rule of law in 1982."<sup>295</sup> The stamps appealed to Britons' good nature, and represented a sober reflection after ten years. The stamps, as much as they were examples of a nation's pride in their Armed Forces and the victory they had won, omitted Britannia and the British lion; instead, they featured the common soldiers and

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<sup>292</sup> Ibid.

<sup>293</sup> Ibid.

<sup>294</sup> Author's Personal Collection: SSAFA 10th Anniversary of Liberation Stamp Booklet.

<sup>295</sup> Author's Personal Collection: SSAFA 10th Anniversary of Liberation Stamp Booklet.



their equipment, for it was the individual who required help, because the nation had already been saved.

On 2 April 1997, the fifteenth anniversary of the invasion of the Falklands, the South Atlantic Medal Association 1982 (SAMA 82) was established. The main purposes of SAMA 82 were and remain to “maintain and promote a sense of pride and comradeship among all veterans of the South Atlantic campaign, and to keep them in touch with each other” as well as to support veterans in financial or other difficulties.<sup>296</sup> In achieving their aims, SAMA 82 offered both members and civilians branded products raising funds for the charity. These products included lapel pins, a tie slide, bookmarks, fridge magnets, and a shield that were embellished with maps of the Falklands coloured as the Union Jack, the image of the South Atlantic Medal, or the blue, white, and green colours from the medal’s ribbon. A tea towel, made in association with the ABF-The Soldiers Charity, featured a map of the Falklands denoting the locations of the various battles, as well as images of ships, aircraft, and men of the task force to represent the various services and events of the war.<sup>297</sup> With the charity being run by Falklands veterans, the items that they produced were strikingly similar to those produced by other charities and civilian manufacturers after the war.

April-June 2022 marked the fortieth anniversary of the Falklands War. In the same vein as a ruby jubilee, forty years since the liberation of the Falklands was presented as a significant milestone to be marked by the production and sale of commodities. Charities that continued to provide funds and other supports to Falklands veterans and their families capitalized on the

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<sup>296</sup> Unknown, “The Aims & Purposes of The South Atlantic Medal Association SAMA (82),” SAMA 82 South Atlantic medal Association 1982, accessed 10 May 2022, <https://sama82.org.uk/aims-and-purpose-of-sama-82/>

<sup>297</sup> “SAMA 82 Shop,” SAMA 82, South Atlantic Medal Association 1982, accessed 1 June 2022, <https://sama82.org.uk/product-category/shop/sama-82/>

anniversary. For instance, the SSAFA produced a small range of items for the fortieth anniversary, including a mug, pen, fridge magnet, and lapel pin.<sup>298</sup> The products were decorated with a map of the Falklands coloured as the Union Jack with various ships, aircraft, and tanks around the central islands. One of the most intriguing commodities sold by the SSAFA was a limited-edition model of HMS *Hermes*.<sup>299</sup> The small carrier was made out of material from *Hermes*' original flight deck, reclaimed during her dismantling in India, and was displayed on a wooden base. Produced by Icarus Originals, a veteran-owned and -operated business, the SSAFA charged £180 for each model.<sup>300</sup> The Ancre Somme Association, which was formed in 2009 in honour of the Ulster Battalion soldiers who died during the Battle of the Somme and subsequently buried in the Ancre cemetery, followed with its own line of Falklands products.<sup>301</sup> Its design, which incorporated the Union Jack, Falkland Islands, Major-General Moore's famous communiqué, and the prayer and the anthem—God Save the Queen—was presented on a mug, shirts, a sweater, tote bag, cushion, pin badge, and a flag.<sup>302</sup> The Falklands War was seemingly outside of the scope of the Somme Charity purposes. However, the charity had a central aim of remembering the sacrifices of British soldiers in past wars, disregarding the slaughter-like conditions of the Somme, and focusing on the glorious example of British servicemen sacrificing all for King and country. With no glorious example of sacrifice after the Second World War, the Falklands was seen as a return to such honourable sacrifice for Queen and country. As far as the Ancre-Somme Association was concerned, the fortieth anniversary of the Falklands War was a milestone that needed commemorating, having been an event that saw the continuity of history.

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<sup>298</sup> "Falklands 40, SSAFA Shop," SSAFA, the Armed Forces Charity, accessed 1 June 2022, <https://www.ssafastore.org.uk/categories/falklands-war-40>

<sup>299</sup> Ibid.

<sup>300</sup> Ibid.

<sup>301</sup> Mark Jameson, "About," Ancre Somme Association, accessed 1 February 2022, <https://www.asauk.org/about>

<sup>302</sup> "Falklands," Empire Poppy Store, accessed 1 February 2022, <https://empirepoppy.store/>

The Royal British Legion also capitalized on the fortieth anniversary of the war to raise money for its charitable aims. The Legion's Falklands collection included a range of commemorative poppies and pins, but the most intriguing was a commemorative mug.<sup>303</sup> With the 'Falklands 40' mug, the Legion used the Victorian decorating style by plastering names, locations, and facts on the mug, with small images as decorations.<sup>304</sup> On the simple white mug, with a single red band at the rim and at the base, the decorative facts were printed in varying fonts and sizes, and all in red and black, the colours of the poppy. Only three names were listed, including not surprisingly the only two men to be awarded Victoria Crosses for their part in the war, Lt. Col. H Jones, VC and Sgt. Ian McKay, VC. The third name listed, rather surprisingly, was Galtieri, the leader of the Argentine Junta who had ordered the invasion, and subsequently started the war. It is interesting that on a mug that contains the names of two Victoria Cross recipients, the name of Galtieri is included and not Margaret Thatcher, Prince Andrew, or any other prominent Briton who had a role in the conduct of the war. Locations of battles included South Georgia, San Carlos Water, Mt. Longdon, Goose Green, Bluff Cove, Mt. Tumbledown, Darwin, Mt. Kent, and Port Stanley. The mug also listed ships, regiments, and military equipment that were representative of the war as well as the phrase '74-day war' and the term 'yomp' which was used by Royal Marines to mean marching briskly with a great deal of equipment. All around the mug, in the limited space, were small images including the Union Jack, a poppy, a map of the Falkland Islands, the RAF roundel, crests of the Royal Navy and Para regiment, a Royal Navy ship, a soldier, Falklands War memorials and cemeteries, and most abundantly poppies, with forty in the centre. The design of the mug certainly was chic and fit

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<sup>303</sup> "Poppy Shop," Royal British Legion, accessed 1 February 2022, <https://www.poppysshop.org.uk/collections/falklands>

<sup>304</sup> Ibid.

with the ascetics of the 2020s. That being said, while stylistically modern, it was no different than a mug produced in 1897 with key events and dates from Queen Victoria's reign, or the jigsaw that used facts to create the image of The Queen.<sup>305</sup> Ultimately, the Royal British Legion's commemoration of the Falklands War's fortieth anniversary, while seemingly modern, used the same techniques as those flamboyantly imperial products of the Victorian age.

Just like Queen Victoria's Diamond Jubilee, no complete list of products can be compiled for the Falklands War. To many Britons before or during the war, the thought of this commodity-driven celebration being in the same vein as previous imperial wars would have been absurd. But when the war had been won and Britons had regained their patriotism, as much as Britain had regained the Falklands, there was apparently no commodity that could not be purchased for one to celebrate and commemorate the war. The willingness of people to spend hundreds of thousands of pounds on trinkets and souvenirs indicates a high level of support for the war. Britons, rightfully, had a great deal of trepidation going into the war, but in victory, it was like a weight had been lifted from their shoulders. Without skipping a beat, they began to produce and purchase commodities pertaining to the Falklands. The great public spectacles, such as victory parades, concerts, shows, or other events, were very important to how the nation as a whole would celebrate the victory. But it was the products that allowed all Britons to participate in the overall victory in some way. The addition of charity made Britons want to partake in the commodity culture even more fervently, since their purchase would go to help those who fought in the Falklands and their families. While the public spectacles came and went, Falklands commodities remained, and as the memories made when one stood at Portsmouth Harbour or in

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<sup>305</sup> Smith, 339-340.

Bank Junction, waving a flag and singing “Rule Britannia!” faded away, the Falklands mug, plate, book, board game, postcard, or one of the thousand other things remained.

## Conclusion

On 14 June 1982, Margaret Thatcher went to the House of Commons in the evening to tell the House of the events in the South Atlantic. After quickly scribbling her statement on a scrap of paper found on her desk, Thatcher entered the Chamber at 10 in the evening and asked the Speaker of the House to make a point of order. With great pride she declared that: “after successful attacks last night, General Moore decided to press forward. The Argentines retreated. Our forces reached the outskirts of Port Stanley. Large numbers of Argentine soldiers threw down their weapons. They are reported to be flying white flags over Port Stanley.”<sup>306</sup> The war was over—Britain was victorious. With the victory in the Falklands came a rush of celebratory and jubilant feelings of patriotism that had not been felt or witnessed in years. Between the end of the Second World War and the start of the Falklands War, Britain’s mood was characterized by the long and arduous process of decolonization, seeing the gaining of independence by British colonies across the globe, and Britain’s loss of its identity and self-respect. Britain became a broken nation. With the victorious military campaign to liberate the Falklands, Britain had seemingly undone years of turmoil and returned to the spirit it had when it was at the heart of the world’s largest empire. In the immediate aftermath the long-term effects of the war were not fully known, and many, like in the May 29th edition of the *Economist*, suspected that “there will be a surge of self-confidence within the British nation which could have great and lasting effects.”<sup>307</sup> This surge of self-confidence was characterised by the spectacularization and commodification of the war. Through grandiose public spectacles and a wide array of commodities, the Falklands victory was celebrated and commemorated just as those wars from the heady days of the Empire had been. These celebrations were not confined to the period

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<sup>306</sup> Thatcher. *The Collected Speeches of Margaret Thatcher*, 188-189.

<sup>307</sup> *The Economist*, 29 May 1982.

between the conclusion of the war in June 1982 and the end of the year, even though that period presented the height of these events.

The patriotism associated with the Falklands victory would ultimately live on. This was first, and most vividly evident, during the 1983 general election. The ‘Falklands Factor,’ as it was dubbed, would see Britons, enamored with the victory in the South Atlantic, connect the military victory with the political leadership of Thatcher’s Conservative government, ultimately voting on the basis that the Falklands victory and subsequent upsurge of patriotism could be traced back to the Tories. The fear of this “Falklands madness,” as it was called in the *Tribune*, was discussed in the press, with the *Financial Times* saying it threatened “to polarize electoral politics though 1983” with the possibility of the Falklands victory becoming a sole determining factor in the election campaign.<sup>308</sup> Before the war, as Dennis Kavanagh wrote, Thatcher was seen as “divisive, condescending, and out of touch,” but the Falklands victory saw the increase of “public respect for her.”<sup>309</sup> Edwina Currie, MP for South Derbyshire from 1983-1997, had initially been unable to see the point of spending “millions of pounds and putting thousands of lives at risk in order to rescue the Falklands,” but when campaigning in 1983, she came to understand how many Britons felt about the victory.<sup>310</sup> As she mused during her speech to the Oxford Union, while campaigning a typical voter told Currie: “That Margaret Thatcher, she’s absolutely right. Which one did you say you were? Conservative? I’m going to vote for you.”<sup>311</sup> In the end, the Conservative Party won a landslide victory with 13,012,316 votes, 42.4 percent of

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<sup>308</sup> *The Tribune*, 11 June 1982, *The Financial Time*, 16 June 1982, Anthony Barnett. *Iron Britannia*. (London: Allison and Busby, 1982), 78-79.

<sup>309</sup> Dennis Kavanagh. *The Reordering of British Politics: Politics After Thatcher*. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997), 134.

<sup>310</sup> “Edwina Currie, Thatcher was a Hero for the Working Class (5/8), Oxford Union,” YouTube video, 11:12, 2019 Oxford Union proceedings, posted by “OxfordUnion,” 14 April 2019, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=agRV1uB9ccY>

<sup>311</sup> *Ibid.*

the total vote. Having won 397 seats, the Tories sat comfortably with a 144-seat majority.<sup>312</sup> It is impossible to say that the Falklands victory was the one factor that led to the Conservative victory. Wars fought in close proximity to elections have played key roles before. The 1900 ‘Khaki’ election, for instance, saw a Unionist majority elected, while the 1945 Labour landslide saw the defeat of Churchill’s Conservatives despite their part in the Second World War victory. A great variety of personal opinions and motives played into why Britons voted how they did in 1983. Nevertheless, the political classes at the time certainly accepted that the Falklands and the patriotism it aroused did play a significant role in the outcome of the election.

After the spectacularization and commodification of the war; the rejoicing turned into remembrance, and celebration turned into ceremony. A central aspect of the remembrance of the conflict was the creation of memorials commemorating those who took part in the war to liberate the Falklands, especially those who made the ultimate sacrifice. The memorials took on a wide range of forms from the traditional, to the modern, and even the peculiar. One of the first monuments to be unveiled after the war was the Liberation of the Falkland Islands memorial in Port Stanley. Unveiled in 1984, the monument proclaimed on its front, in gold lettering, “in memory of those who liberated us” under a bronze relief of the crest of the Falkland Islands. On the other three sides of the tall plinth were the regiments that took part in the conflict, and adorning the top of the monument was a large bronze statue of Britannia. Standing victoriously, she held her trident, Britain’s military might, in her right hand, with her Union Jack shield upon the ground resting against her leg. Behind the monument was a small wall in a semi-circular shape, upon which were tablets with the names of the British servicemen who died during the

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<sup>312</sup> Moore. *Margaret Thatcher, The Authorized Biography, Volume Two: Everything She Wants*. (London: Allen Lane, 2013), 63.



conflict.<sup>313</sup> In addition to the liberation memorial, the Falklands saw the creation of memorials for ships lost during the conflict, and battles fought, as well as the construction of cemeteries that



Figure 27. Liberation of the Falkland Islands Memorial. (Alex Petrenko)

became the final resting place of British soldiers on the Islands they sacrificed all to liberate. The liberation memorial in the Falklands was, perhaps, the most traditional choice for a Falklands War memorial. In Britain, however, a wide array of memorials have been produced. In 1992, for instance, Thatcher unveiled *The Yomper* in Portsmouth.<sup>314</sup> Sculpted by Philip Jones, the eighteen-foot-high statue was a bronze depiction of the famous photograph of Corporal Robinson of 45 Commando yomping towards Stanley. The large statue, with its real Union Jack, was a massive testament to what the Royal Marines, and all that fought in the South Atlantic, had

<sup>313</sup> IWM: Liberation of the Falkland Islands (84916).

<sup>314</sup> IWM: Royal Marines Falklands 1982—*The Yomper* (21326).

accomplished. Other memorials were far more inconspicuous. For instance, at the entrance to a shopping mall in Fareham was The Falklands Arch.<sup>315</sup> The £25,000 iron arch was created to commemorate the sacrifice of the 255 British personnel who died during the war, and was dedicated by Thatcher on the twenty-fifth anniversary of the conflict. On one plaque was a description of the Falklands War and the purpose of the arch, with another listing the names of those Britons who made the ultimate sacrifice. Commemorative benches were frequently used as memorials. Some, such as the Plymouth Falklands Bench which displayed a timeline of events and two maps on three plaques, or the RAF Regiment Falklands Bench which showed a silhouetted image of soldiers, aircraft, and ships with the inscription “Lest We Forget,” were more general in their commemoration of the war as a whole, while others, such as the Falkland Islands Bench in Ross on Wye or the 3 Para Falklands Bench in Aldershot included specific names of local men who died during the conflict.<sup>316</sup> All of the memorials, no matter their design, made the clear statement that the Falklands War was an event deserving of the nation’s memory.

The ultimate connection between the Falklands War and those wars of the past was the inclusion of Falklands war dead alongside those of the First and Second World War on memorials across the United Kingdom. In the commemorating of the Falklands in the same manner as the two World Wars, often on the same memorials, an image of the Falklands War was formed as a conflict fought and won with the same ideals and honour as those two wars. Neither the Malaya, Kenya, nor Aden Emergencies saw the inclusion of their war dead upon memorials, remembered alongside those of the two World Wars or other past conflicts, whereas

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<sup>315</sup> IWM: The Falklands Arch (66599).

<sup>316</sup> Unknown, “Plymouth Falklands Memorial Bench,” HMS *Ardent* Association, accessed 15 November 2021, <https://hmsardent.org/ardlines-news/plymouth-falklands-memorial-bench>  
IWM: RAF Regiment Falkland Islands 1982 (100154), Falklands Islands Bench (77373), 3 Para Falklands bench (97147).

the Falklands did. Because the memorials remembered local soldiers who died, instead of the often-lengthy list of local war dead from the World Wars, the Falklands addition was often a single name. Large stone memorials such as the one in Tweedmouth, Northumberland, originally unveiled in 1920, or the memorial in Ruthin, Wales, unveiled in 1925, list over 100 names each of local men who died during the First and Second World Wars.<sup>317</sup> They were amended after the Falklands, each to include a single name, allowing the death of a single local soldier in the Falklands War to be remembered alongside those hundreds. Plaques and other memorials, too, were amended after the Falklands War. The Parklands High School memorial saw the addition of a small bronze plaque commemorating the death of a single former pupil.<sup>318</sup> The Greens Norton memorial likewise saw the addition of a single name to their local war dead.<sup>319</sup> At St Peter and St Paul's Church in Charlton Horethorne, Somerset, the same was done with the addition of a third brass plaque to their war memorial. With the inscriptions on the three plaques echoing those on the other war memorials, "To the glory of God and in honoured memory of the following members of this parish who laid down their lives in the Great War 1914-19... their name liveth evermore 1939-1945... South Atlantic..." the St Peter and St Paul's Church had the Falklands seamlessly join the World Wars.<sup>320</sup> The memorials, whether erected by a church, school, or a community, placed Falklands War dead alongside those who died during the First and Second World Wars, aligning the conflicts, their aims, and their outcomes.

The Falklands, in joining these past conflicts, also met their fate. When all that remained of the Falklands spectacles were the memories, the commemorative items collected dust, and the memorials saw the number of veterans decreasing year after year, playing host to tourists and

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<sup>317</sup> IWM: Tweedmouth (33533), Ruthin—WW1, WW2 and Falklands campaign (7150).

<sup>318</sup> IWM: Parklands High School, Chorley—Falklands (51394).

<sup>319</sup> IWM: Greens Norton—WW1, WW2, and Falklands (15038).

<sup>320</sup> IWM: Charlton Horethorne—WW1, WW2 and Falklands (24836).

pigeons the rest of the time, the Falklands became like all other imperial conflicts, a past war. The Falklands War was the “considerable jolt” that Sir Nicholas Henderson believed Britain needed, which unleashed an orgy of patriotism.<sup>321</sup> In the wake of the Falklands victory, the general malaise that had festered in the British spirit was replaced by a flag waving, crying, singing patriotism that was almost identical to the patriotism expressed during Britain’s past wars. As Price said in regard to the South African War, “men really did flock to the colours to show their involvement in the dreams of Empire.”<sup>322</sup> So too did Britons in 1982 flock to the waterfronts, streets, shops, and memorials to participate in what they saw was the rejuvenation of their nation. The national attention and spirit would return in 2007 with events involving Royal, Government, and military participation to celebrate the twenty-fifth anniversary of the war. The Falklands, however, just like other conflicts, outside of the initial climax or significant anniversaries, became passing moments, represented as the Royal Marines yomping towards Stanley, like the title sequence to the 1990s sitcom *As Time Goes By*.

April-June 2022 marked the fortieth anniversary of the Falklands War. In celebration of this milestone, as well as in the eternal remembrance of all that was given to the conducting and winning of the war, 124 official events were planned and experienced in the Falklands and in Britain.<sup>323</sup> Ranging from thanksgiving services and parades to the opening of special museum exhibitions and veteran reunions, these events were not confined to the seventy-four days the war was fought, but were spread out across the entire year. Most of these events, however, saw minor public participation or attention, and were primarily attended by Falklands veterans, their families, and those few civilians who wished to partake and witness the historic occasion. The

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<sup>321</sup> Margaret Thatcher Foundation: The Henderson Dispatch.

<sup>322</sup> Price, 1.

<sup>323</sup> Unknown, “Looking Forward at Forty,” Falkland Islands Government London Office, accessed 5 July 2022, <https://www.falklands.gov.fk/londonoffice/falklands40th>

year 2022 also marked the seventieth anniversary of Queen Elizabeth II ascending to the throne—a milestone the nation would celebrate. The Platinum Jubilee celebrations were both widespread and comparable to the Falklands spectacles of 1982, with their mass public attention and participation. With its spectacles and commodities, the Platinum Jubilee became the national occasion that Britons could latch onto with their remaining imperial nostalgia.<sup>324</sup> The Falklands had served its purpose. Britain moved forward, and over the forty years since the war, with countless national events including Royal Weddings, and The Queen’s Golden, Diamond, and Platinum Jubilees, in addition to the daily lives of millions of Britons, the Falklands became, like all of Britain’s imperial wars, a thing of the past.

The significance of the Falklands War is not, however, its impact on the 1983 general election, nor is it its commemoration and remembrance over the forty years since the guns fell silent in the South Atlantic. The greatest significance of the war is that the spectacularization and commodification of the victory was not unique. Britons did not celebrate the war through modern or innovative ways, making the Falklands a hallmark of 1980s Britishness. Instead, Britons went out of their way to celebrate the war in the same spirit of those fought to build and maintain their Empire. In their celebration, Britons consciously used the various sights, sounds, and sentiments that were hallmarks of imperial Britain. This was not done subtly, or surreptitiously. It was clear to all that Britain as a former imperial power was celebrating an imperial war. As John MacKenzie observed, “a Britain without an Empire seemed almost a contradiction in terms.”<sup>325</sup> The degree to which nineteenth-century symbols were mobilised is

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<sup>324</sup> For more on imperial nostalgia in twenty-first century Britain, including topics of Brexit, see Dorling, Danny and Tomlinson, Sally. *Rule Britannia: Brexit and the End of Empire*. London: Biteback, 2019. And Mitchell, Peter. *Imperial Nostalgia: How the British Conquered Themselves*. Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2021.

<sup>325</sup> MacKenzie. *Propaganda and Empire*, 10.

extremely telling, returning to old modes of expression that everyone had assumed had become irrelevant and obsolete. And what is striking through an examination of the spectacularization and commodification of the Falklands War is how easily British society returned to those old ways of viewing things. In 1982, the old “defensive, nationalist popular imperialism [that] had become so familiar as to be barely noticed” remained as the shorthand that Britons used to celebrate and commemorate war.<sup>326</sup>

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<sup>326</sup> Ibid.

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