

THE FALKLANDS CONFLICT 30 YEARS ON

A conference at the University of Kent, Canterbury, 26 to 28 April 2012

THE FALKLANDS WAR started on Friday, 2 April 1982, with the Argentine invasion of the Falkland Islands and South Georgia. Britain's Conservative government, under the leadership of Margaret Thatcher, launched a naval task force to retake the islands.

The conflict ended with the Argentine surrender on 14 June 1982. It lasted 74 days and resulted in the deaths of 255 British and 649 Argentine soldiers, sailors, and airmen, and the deaths of three civilian Falkland Islanders.

The conflict was the result of a dispute over the sovereignty of the islands. Neither state officially declared war. Argentina characterised its invasion as the re-occupation of its own territory: the UK defined it as an invasion of a British dependent territory. The political consequences of the conflict were felt in both countries. A wave of patriotic sentiment swept through both: the Argentine loss hastened the downfall of its military government. In the United Kingdom, Prime Minister Thatcher's government was boosted to victory in the



1983 general election.

To mark the thirtieth anniversary of the conflict, the School of History and the Centre for Journalism at the University of Kent will unite policy-makers, academics and reporters at a unique conference. Argentine and British historians of the conflict and journalists who covered it will share analyses, perspectives and memories with residents of the islands and service personnel who fought over them.

Historians including Professors Peter Hennessy, Klaus Dodds and Sir Lawrence Freedman will be

joined by correspondents including Robert Fox, Michael Nicholson and Kim Sabido. Sir John Nott, the Secretary of State for Defence who despatched the Royal Navy Task Force, will open proceedings. Major-General Julian Thompson and Commodore Michael Clapp will describe how the amphibious phase of British military operations was planned. Peter Hennessy will assess what British intelligence knew of Argentine intentions on the eve of the invasion. A panel of islanders including Patrick Watts, the former head of Falklands Radio who was

broadcasting when Argentine soldiers captured his studio on 2 April 1982, will describe their experiences and recollections. We invite you to register to attend.

REGISTRATION FEES:

Academic staff:
£35

Students: £20

South Atlantic
Medal holders: £20

The Falklands Conflict

30 years on Conference Programme: 26-28 April 2012

Thursday 26 April

10-11am **Registration**

11am – 1pm **The view from Whitehall, 1982**

Opening Reflections from Sir John Nott
Professor Peter Hennessy (QMUL): British intelligence and assessments of Argentine intentions on the eve of invasion

1pm-2.30pm **Lunch**

2.30pm – 5pm **The background**

Professor Klaus Dodds (RHL): Kith and kin: the Falkland Islands and the development of a culture of loyalty, c.1960-1982

Professor George Philip (LSE): Argentine politics; the closing of the options 1955-82

Dr Celia Szusterman (Westminster): Maintaining the struggle for the Malvinas: the role of the Malvinas in Argentine life since 1982

Tea: 4-4.30pm

Questions for panel: 4.30pm – 5pm

Friday 27 April

9.30am- 12.30pm **Media Panel**

Introduction by Professor Jean Seaton (Westminster)
Panel – Chaired by Allan Little (BBC News).

Participants: Robert Fox, Jon Snow, Michael Nicholson and Kim Sabido

Dr Alasdair Pinkerton (RHUL): Calling the Falklands: 'acoustic spaces' and 'radio wars'
(Panel to include tea break 10.30am-11am)

12.30pm-1.45pm **Lunch**

1.45pm-3.15pm **Writing histories**

Professor Sir Lawrence Freedman (KCL): Independence and Balance: Challenges in writing official histories

Hugh Bicheno: The other side of the hill: writing an unofficial history



3.15-3.45pm: **Tea**

3.45pm-5pm **The aftermath**

Peter Johnston (Kent): "Why We Fight": How the Falklands Challenged Perceptions of the British Military

Dr Matt Benwell (Liverpool): Affective commemorations: considering representations of the Malvinas conflict in the year of Argentina's bicentenary

Saturday 28 April

10am – 1pm **Veterans' panel**

Major-General Julian Thompson and Commodore Michael Clapp: Joint Planning and the Execution of the Amphibious Phase of Operation Corporate
Captain Chris Wreford-Brown: HMS *Conqueror's* war patrol

1pm- 2pm: **Lunch**

2pm-3.15pm **The Falkland Islanders' view**

A panel of islanders including Patrick Watts formerly of Falkland Islands Broadcasting Service

3.15pm-5pm Closing reception