

Falkland Islands back in control of the British.

In April of 1982, when commencing the military action to reclaim the Falkland Islands,¹ The Iron Lady,² used the words 'British Sovereign Territory has been invaded by the foreign power'.³ Commonly known as The Falkland Conflict, it can be distinguished by the fact that at no point did either side officially declare war. The Prime Minister of Great Britain, during her famous historic words 'Mr Speaker',⁴ in her speech addressing the House of Commons on the 3rd of April 1982, she did not mention that her country was at war even once. That said, the British swiftly rose to the challenge, as the Prime Minister sent thousands of soldiers, including the aircraft carrier, which, when moving out of the harbour, had all of the aircraft and helicopters aligned on its deck, which considering the fact it went against the standard procedure, could only be perceived as the British display of strength.⁵

In reality, the Falkland Islands, far away from the British Isles, were populated by a relatively small number of people, that is around two thousand people of British nationality and did not present any economic value as a territory, that said, it remained under the rule of the British Crown for over 150 years.⁶ It is understandable then, that the military action in the Falklands could be perceived as The Iron Lady's personal war, whose monicker perfectly suited the situation. In reality, the support for Margaret Thatcher was at an all-time low before the military actions over the Atlantic, whilst after reclaiming the Falklands it led to a landslide election in 1983 which Prime Minister Thatcher won.⁷ One of those that left a lasting historical impact, was a short joint speech of Secretary of Defence and Prime Minister Thatcher, in which John Nott said 'the british troops, landed on the South Georgia this afternoon, shortly after 4 pm London Time, they have now successfully taken control of grid bricker'.⁸ In the same announcement, the Iron Lady became associated with the phrase 'rejoice'⁹ as an answer to the questions posed by those gathered around.¹⁰

The announcement made that day by Margaret Thatcher has been quoted quite often. The same with the fortunate phrase 'Successfully taken control', which years later inspired a well-known Swedish metal band Sabaton, whose amongst its members counts a historian, to create a song "Back in control" which lyrics say 'we are back in control, force them to surrender, take what is ours, restore law and order, back in control, push them further out to sea',¹¹ a song that millions of people listen to until this day.

The war did not last long, mostly due to appropriately made strategic decisions. One of those, if not the most important, was the inclusion of SAS forces in the military movements. Margaret Thatcher knew that reclaiming the small islands would depend on small, specialised units.¹² The SAS Special Forces not only neutralised the deadly Argentinian jets stationing in the Falklands,¹³ but also the

¹ TheRoyalPalace, *Thatcher Announces The Falklands Invasion To The House Of Common*, online video recording, YouTube, 6 September 2009, <<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GZaP0TgOpig>> [accessed 12 November 2024].

² Iconic, *Margaret Thatcher's Iron Lady Speech*, online video recording, YouTube, 8 November 2010, <<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oAgM6YHioxI>> [accessed 12 November 2024].

³ TheRoyalPalace, *Thatcher Announces The Falkland Invasion*.

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ On Demand News, *Margaret Thatcher's Victory In The Falklands*, online video recording, YouTube, 8 April 2013, <<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bmlzDKev4ec>> [accessed 12 November 2024].

⁶ 'Retaking the Falklands', *Great SAS Missions*, BBC Worldwide, 2003, online video recording, Alexander Street, <https://video-alexanderstreet-com.ezproxy.uwtsd.ac.uk/watch/retaking-the-falklands?utm_campaign=Video&utm_medium=MARC&utm_source=aspresolver> <accessed 12 November 2024>].

⁷ On Demand News, *Margaret Thatcher's Victory In The Falklands*.

⁸ The Telegraph, *Archive: Thatcher 'Rejoices' At Falkland Victory*, online video recording, YouTube, 8 April 2013, <<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qHwCbIEVmG0>> [accessed 12 November 2024].

⁹ The Telegraph, *Archive: Thatcher 'Rejoices' At Falkland Victory*.

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ Joakim Brodén, Pär Sundström, *Back In Control*, Sabaton, (Sweden: Black Lodge Records, 2006).

¹² 'Retaking the Falklands'.

¹³ Ibid.

Argentinian artillery.¹⁴ This allowed for the full invasion and capture of the Island's capital by the British forces.

During the battles, the Argentinian forces broke international treaties by attacking the British infirmary ship.¹⁵ Their forces also managed to destroy the British HMS Sheffield.¹⁶

The military movements aiming to completely reclaim the islands began in earnest at the end of May 1982, it took them as little as 3 weeks to reach the capital.¹⁷ The entire informal war took 914 lives of those who died during the battles.¹⁸

Margaret Thatcher very well summarised the Falkland War in her speech to the House of Commons on the 14th of June 1982, when she also said the words 'The Falkland Islands are once more under the Government desired by their inhabitants. God Save the Queen.'¹⁹ quoted by the Iron Lady from General Moore's report.

Signing the act of surrender on behalf of Argentina was General Menendez, whose forces included 11,000 soldiers in Port Stanley and 2,000 in West Falkland, including those arrested by the British Forces beforehand, the number of war prisoners reached 15,000.²⁰

The war left its imprint on the pages of history as swift and very political. It was not only a show of power by Prime Minister Thatcher, who after the victory was re-elected in 1983, but also led to the downfall of the dictatorship in Argentina, who whilst hoping to gain support from their people and protesting workers, only showed their weakness.

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ On Demand News, *Margaret Thatcher's Victory In The Falklands*.

¹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹ Margaret Thatcher, *Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher Announcing Victory In The Falklands Conflict* (London, England: N/A, 1982) <<https://www.britpolitics.co.uk/british-politics-speeches-margret-thatcher-falklands/>> [accessed 12 November 2024].

²⁰ Margaret Thatcher, *Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher Announcing Victory In The Falklands Conflict*.

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