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The NetWorker

The Pen & Sword Club includes serving and retired members of Britain's Regular and Reserve forces and Government information staff who worked in media operations. Our membership, which is by invitation and recommendation, also includes NATO officers, civilian practitioners sympathetic to military media operations or who work With Ministry of Defence organisations. The club's prime mission is the promotion of media operations as a valued and necessary military skill in the 21st century.

THIRTY YEARS ON FROM THE FAKLANDS WAR

Colonel Mike Peters asks: will the armchair pundits fight the war again in 2012?

Thirty years ago the British government, the military and the media were locked in a battle that ran in parallel with the war to liberate the Falkland Islands in the South Atlantic. The spring and summer of 1982 was an interesting time - in the terms of the oft-quoted Chinese proverb. The establishment and the fourth estate were players in a conflict that was to provoke a new look at the needs of the military to maintain secrecy in operations in which men and women were putting their lives on the line; the support of the public - without which no military action can be sustained; and the desire of the media to inform – and meet the pressures of circulation and ratings.

The Royal Navy has been - often unjustly - at the forefront of the controversy for traditionally the Royal Navy is the Silent Service. It is not accustomed to revealing the movements of ships and, particularly submarines.

Recent comment out of Argentina about the Royal Navy's HMS Dauntless moving to the South Atlantic and claims of British nuclear submarines in the southern ocean serve to highlight the effect of warship movements in peacetime let alone in the run-up to a shooting war. So, in 1982, the prospects of embarking a press party aboard the Task Force, each looking for a by-lined exclusive story every day was hard to reconcile. It is easy to sympathise with the Royal Navy's anxieties as events were to produce emotive photographs like that of HMS Sheffield, pictured left. While the Army had recent experiences of the Northern Ireland Troubles and had become accustomed to their actions being scrutinised via the nation's TV sets, the Royal Navy was new to such intense media coverage. The Royal Air Force was in some ways side-lined in the early media battle until the Black Buck Operations brought their own press scrutiny and controversy.

In the early Eighties communications technology was developing rapidly and the expectations of media coverage from a war some 8,000 miles away from base were high. Yet it was not that simple! In fact some of us had been warning, in the context of British Army of the Rhine, that backpack television reporting was on its way and that its effects on battle preparations could be devastating. Major British military preparations would be covered in extraordinary depth and with the same effect that TV produced among the American public who experienced the Vietnam War brought to their living rooms each night.
Satellites were then available to beam information to the world but their 'footprints' did not cover the vast areas of the South Atlantic on a 24-hour basis. Warships and some merchant ships taken up from trade – STUFT as they became known - by the MoD had long-range communications but often with a limited capability and capacity. Mobile telephone technology was not even a large-brick-in-the-hand that almost certainly would not work in the electro-magnetic fields of a warship heading towards battle. The chattering telex was still a main method of communication.

Compare that to the reality of a few months ago when it was possible for a TV crew to operate in Libya, in clandestine mode, with a small camera, a lap top computer and a satellite uplink powered from a car cigarette lighter.

In 1982 many still had not accepted, despite the lessons learned, or perhaps forgotten, by the Americans in Vietnam and the British in Northern Ireland, that the international news machine can drive events and political reaction: or that creating a news vacuum leads to it being filled with unpalatable misinformation. Nor that responsible, contemporary journalism would generally steer towards an impartial telling of the tale.

Was the media really expecting that the battles to come in the South Atlantic would be fought to suit the deadlines of breakfast radio, the evening TV news or to provide lurid headlines. Probably most editors were already calculating and planning for the difficulties that the embarked press were to face and protested for the best of reasons, but the confrontation that eventually involved the Prime Minister's office was to sour relations for a long time. The NetWorker does not set out to provide answers or solutions to the dichotomy of the military desire for secrecy and the media's pursuit of freedom of information. Here it seeks to record the individual experiences of club members and some journalist colleagues who took part three decades ago. We believe that their narratives will go a long way to revealing and explaining, the happenings of the times. We couple this with the hope that in future conflict the attitudes of the media and the military are more closely aligned.


THE Sun

QE2 IS SET TO SAIL FOR WAR

We told you first

GOTCHA

Our lads sink gunboat and hole cruiser

UNION BOYCOTTS WAR

In this busy year, the Queen's Diamond Jubilee and the London Olympics will dominate news diaries. But there is still time to reflect on the military brilliance, failures and the sacrifices of 1982 and, no doubt, there will be appropriate ceremonies in the South Atlantic and closer to home. No doubt, too, that the armchair pundits will fight the war many times on our TV screens in 2012.

So far I have seen one major TV programme that 'reveals' it was a close run thing and that there were errors on both sides of the front line. Is not that the nature of war and the fog of battle? Frequently the message is aired that we could not re-take the Falklands if the Argentines were to successfully invade again. That is for the military pundits to argue. But let us hope that we will not rue the lack of Royal Navy carriers and a naval air capability for a decade or more.

Since the Falkland war the skill of military media operations has advanced rapidly. It will develop further as technology and the demand from the public for information in war and peace- keeping operations expands.

This noteworthy year gives the Pen & Sword Club an opportunity to play its part in examining and promoting the role of military media operations. In the autumn the club will host a one-day seminar in Central London that will debate the growth of media operations and the opportunities and challenges that face its practitioners.

THIS IS WHAT IS LIKELY TO HAPPEN TOMORROW!

No control over some embarrassingly accurate speculations

Neville Taylor, right, one of the Pen & Sword's Vice-Presidents, entered the military and media debate as the Ministry of Defence's new Chief of Public Relations after the Task Force steamed south. He was to face an uphill struggle to change views and opinions embedded within parts of the Ministry and to harness and release the professionalism inherent in his information team.

Where to begin? Always a problem when trying to recall and unemotionally describe events that occurred 30 years ago, especially when the world around us has changed so much. But, perhaps, it is impossible to exaggerate the extent to which the technology of communications, the immediacy of the media and the nature of military relationships have changed the rules of our game since the Falklands experience.

Countless books were written about the Falklands War, but I have yet to find one that gives equal praise and balanced criticism in describing the clash between media and military participants. However, I believe Bernard Ingham, the Prime Minister's Press Secretary, came near to summarising the issues in his autobiography *Kill the Messenger:*

' . . . Our problems stemmed from a lack of preparedness in Government, a hostility to the media on the part of the Royal Navy, concentration within Government on the issues to the virtual exclusion, for a time, of presentational consciousness, often a dearth of hard information, some rivalry and the controversial issue of the role of the press – and more especially of television – in a war.

There was also an inherent conflict between the military that, understandably, wished to confuse the enemy, and the Government Information Service, including myself, among whose jobs it was to maintain public support for the Government's conduct of the war. Underlying that was my utter refusal to get involved in dis- or misinformation . . .'

I had a less jaundiced view about the Navy, which Bernard had not been able to enjoy and experience, because I had, spent years in the Admiralty in London, on the Naval staff at HQ Far East Fleet in South East Asia, and (briefly) as Deputy to DPR (Navy) in the MoD.

Two Admirals at the MoD helm did not constitute the whole Navy, but I understood why they were constantly worried that secrecy of movement and deployment might be comprised by the media being afloat. A naturally nervous Secretary of State was bound to feel happier sharing the Admirals' approach. Nevertheless, the dispatch of the Task Force with no media aboard was bound to be akin to lighting a blue touch paper while the Secretary of State (John Nott) and the Chiefs of Staff retired!

My view is that the relationship between the Task Force and the subsequently embarked media never fully recovered from that dogmatic stance of near total reluctance to accept that a media presence was an essential element of 'going to war.' My own involvement in all this was still to come.

In November 1981 I had been selected as the MoD's next Chief of Public Relations and part of the selection process included a (somewhat icy) meeting with Mr (now Sir John Nott.) I knew I was not his first choice because his preferred Acting CPR, Ian McDonald, who had failed to get the job. He ,nevertheless ,accepted the recommendation of the Cabinet Office that I should be appointed.

There then ensued a battle between Norman (now Lord) Fowler, my Secretary of State in the Department of Health and Social Security, and John Nott. Neither wanted me to move, but for different reasons! I had been at DHSS for three years and the S of S insisted I could only be released when a replacement was in post and it obviously suited John Nott that Ian McDonald could stay in place as his Acting CPR in MoD, so a six-month compromise was reached.
This detail explains why Ian McDonald was such a key figure in much that happened in the opening shots of the media battle to have representation in the Task Force, and perhaps even more importantly, why he remained the Secretary of State's personal and insistent choice as the MoD's spokesman for all but a very short period at the end of the war.

As Robert Harris recorded in his book G*OTCHA – the media, the Government and the Falklands Crisis:*

'……the man in charge of dealing with the media in the Ministry of Defence at this time, Ian McDonald (pictured right) was not a PR specialist but a career civil servant previously concerned with the Ministry's recruitment and salaries . . . his natural habitat was Whitehall's undergrowth of committees and non-attributable briefings, hidden from view.'

As so often happens, agendas can be dominated by personal chemistry; Bernard Ingham's and Ian McDonald's could not have been more alien. But Ian and Secretary of State John Nott were as inseparable as Bernard and the Prime Minister. It was inevitable that this made a chaotic backcloth to many unresolved demands pulling in different directions for media access and relationships. These clashes inevitably hindered the development of a cohesive PR and operational information policy.

I became 'piggy in the middle 'of these events when I was phoned at home on a Friday evening and told that No.10 were very unhappy with the PR handling in the MoD and it had been agreed I should move in as CPR forthwith. Accordingly I arrived at the main entrance on Monday, 13 April to get the first taste of what was to become an internal MoD battle to achieve some co-ordinated control on the information activity. It was essential from the outset to harness the experience and advice of all three Service Directors of Public Relations who had largely been side-lined by the Secretary of State and his spokesman.

Our club patron, General the Lord Ramsbotham, was then a Brigadier and the Director of Public Relations (Army) and he was immediately supportive, together with his Royal Navy and RAF colleagues and the whole MoD PR staff, as we struggled to mend fences and restore working relationships in the PR machine.

This was an uphill task, not least because on my arrival at the main entrance of MoD I found that the Permanent Secretary's office had not told anyone that I was expected. There was no pass to get me into the building, but a friend in the press office eventually came to vouch for me so I could begin my first day in the job by calling in on the Permanent Secretary. It was a shock to me (and especially to No.10) to be handed a letter stating that I would be responsible for all MoD public relations, except those relating to the Falklands which would continue to be run by Acting CPR Ian McDonald working directly to the Secretary of State.

My office on the Ministerial floor was bare. There was no secretary. No internal telephone directory, no hand-over papers – nothing except the feeling that my accelerated appointment was not entirely flavour of the month upstairs, though generously welcomed downstairs by the PR teams.

Eventually, through the pressure from No.10, we gradually clawed our way in with the support of the Service DPRs, but we were never able to dent the relationship between the S of S and his Acting CPR. Finally I was given the necessary security clearance to attend the morning Chiefs of Staff conference that, in turn, enabled me to cascade briefings to the rest of the office.

The DPRs were, of course, able to get direct briefings from their individual Service Chiefs but PR policy was always inherently difficult to co-ordinate or plan because of the individual and secretive nature of the 'MoD

spokesman.' He refused to prepare any written news releases and insisted on speaking very slowly to TV so everyone could take notes!
As there was a real war going on, my words 30 years later will inevitably sound so trivial. However at the time, the sour relationship at the top of the PR machine was a significant barrier to my Service Directors of PR and our staff getting to grips with endless daily problems of guidance, briefing and communication. Only the Acting CPR had the close relationship with the Secretary of State and we were often in the position of going into Press conferences to listen to the 'MoD spokesman' to find out what they had decided to announce.

Against this background, at my request and with a great sense of relief, I was able to enlist the help of a close friend and former colleague, Colonel David McDine - pictured far right with Keith Hamilton, defence editor of the Portsmouth Evening News while on exercise in German - join me as my personal assistant in MoD. It is much to his credit that his calming influence and complete unflappability stopped me on many occasions from committing acts of grievous bodily harm.

Of course, despite all the internal wrangles we were able to achieve some semblance of order and consistency in the PR policy, but much was unattainable. The disparate way in which journalists and broadcasters were spread throughout different levels of command structures in the Task Force meant they each had a monocular vision of the war. The Information Officers assigned to them had a wider responsibility and remit to be helpful, but not irresponsible ,in a dangerous operational environment, though it was nearly always the case that the media demands and timetables were impossible to satisfy.

Unfortunately, I believe we failed in MoD to fully appreciate the need for a constant and direct feed to our own deployed staff with the Task Force, but in any case the rapid changes in information policy in Fleet Headquarters and MoD meant that even in London we were running to keep up with events.

Finally the flow of material coming back from the embarked and deployed media tested our resources to near-breaking point. As far as I was aware at the time, the needs and methods of censorship had never been an element of media exercises. If we ever thought about it at all, we had always assumed that personal relationships of trust with the defence correspondents would suffice. How naïve we were!

As copy and pictures flooded back to London we were overwhelmed and ill-equipped, working only with a guidance which in effect dictated the 'if-in-doubt-cut-it-out' approach. Not surprisingly this caused heated rows with news editors and correspondents and confusion with the Operational Information Officers.

The bottom line, 30 years on is that in MoD as an operational PR unit we only just about got away with it. We were totally unprepared at the start of OP CORPORATE and still trying to get our act together at the end of it. The operational war was won with great skill, planning, and bravery and professionalism by all three Services, but sympathetic and supportive public presentation was achieved more by luck than design. It was possible because secrecy was just about maintained when and where it was essential for that success.

As I had to tell the Chiefs of Staff on several occasions, at our daily morning conferences, we could not control speculation which sometimes turned out to be embarrassingly accurate, with Peter Snow's nightly BBC output of 'This is what is likely to happen tomorrow' being the best/worst example of that particular problem.

It probably was the last war that could be won by secrecy. America had to abandon the Vietnam war after the folks back home were shocked by one horrific picture of a blazing child caught up in a napalm attack.

No such live pictures ever reached the UK from the Falklands. Had they done so it is likely the public mood would have been different here too. The Welsh Guards screaming and on fire as they jumped overboard into a flaming sea from Sir Galahad and Sir Tristram at Bluff Cove on June 8 would have been some of the most sickening sights ever transmitted had they been screened as they happened. Obviously, things will be very different now.

Pictured right in Stanley at the war's end, with a Mercedes 4X4 'liberated' from the Argentinians are four of the six Minders (Operational Information Officers) who accompanied the Task Force. From left to right, Roger Goodwin, who cross-decked several times during the conflict, Alan George, who was frustrated by the speculations of reporters, Alan Percival, who 'yomped' across the Falklands with the Royal Marines and Martin Helm, who had a hard campaign managing an unsympathetic military and media.

THE FALKLANDS CONFLICT – THE PRESS PARTY

'I'm sorry Admiral, The Prime Minister insists!'

Club President Hugh Colver worked closely with Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher's Press Secretary, now Sir Bernard Ingham, during the 1982 conflict. Hugh recounts the No. 10 Downing Street reaction to the first days of the Falklands conflict and ' looked somewhat askance at the thinking in the Ministry of Defence ' that a Task Force press party was not on the agenda. It was clear, he says, that the Royal Navy did not expect to have an argument. But Downing Street considered that a media party was not only desirable but essential.

The Falklands conflict is now so long ago that in writing about it we have to remember the context in which we were operating, the attitudes of the time and the limitations of technology. When the conflict began I had recently joined the Press Office team in the Prime Minister's Office at Downing Street. Technically, my day- to-day responsibilities had little to do with defence – we had a Foreign Office staffer to cover that. Obviously when acting as the Downing Street spokesman of the day I covered the whole range of subjects across Government but in the normal course of business I covered the responsibilities and policies of a range of Whitehall departments, Parliamentary business and – particularly – co-ordination of announcements in Parliament, news management and the Westminster/Whitehall diary.

However, as we looked somewhat askance at the thinking in the MoD around the Press Party that we assumed would accompany the Task Force hastily being assembled to go to the Falklands it became apparent that we would have to intervene. The Royal Navy's view at the time was that there was no space for

the media at all. Everything that could be gathered together in time was being stuffed into every available corner of every available ship.

Personnel numbers – compared with a normal ship's company complements – were being stretched to the absolute limit, and soldiers and Royal Marines – to provide fighting boots on the ground – were clearly the highest priority after the ship's own operational needs.

It should be said that the Royal Navy was not just saying there was no space. For many of the commanders the idea of a press presence was abhorrent. How would operational security be maintained? How would the 'obviously necessary' censorship be managed? What kind of extra personnel would be required to manage and brief the press? How would the press communicate their material back to their Editors? All pretty good questions. Ask them of commanders at that time, in the context of what was being put together, and the answers would argue strongly against a press party. There were some who recognised that it had to be done but they were very much in the minority.

The Prime Minister's Press Secretary was in no doubt. It was vital that the conflict was covered; it was essential that the media was given the opportunity to report on it and it was crucial – in political terms – that we retained support for our actions both at home and abroad.

I had just come to No. 10 from being Staff PRO to Flag Officer Scotland and Northern Ireland and I had handled the media on board several different frigates over a couple of months off Iceland in the Cod War. I was known to the Royal Navy and in the MoD. Accordingly, I was despatched across the road to Main Building with the task of persuading the MoD that a Press Party had to go to the Falklands with the Task Force. I went to see the newly arrived (poor chap!) Director of Public Relations of the Royal Navy. Captain Ian Sutherland was, and is, a good chap. However, he was new to the business and he had some pretty formidable Admirals looking to him to handle the PR implications of all that was going on.

He was sympathetic and understood where I was coming from (in more ways than one). However, he quickly gave me to understand that I was wasting my time. The Navy view was that the media could not be accommodated, could not be managed, could not be controlled, would be given no access to communications and would put security of operations at risk.

It was clear that the Navy did not expect to have an argument about this – and, of course, all these issues did indeed represent a major challenge. However, I put the counter arguments and said that it was the clear view of Downing Street that a media presence was not only desirable but also essential.

DPR (N) said we would have to talk to Commander-in- Chief Fleet. This was one Admiral Sir John Fieldhouse – not a man to be trifled with, as he was to prove in the succeeding weeks and months. I was told that I would get nowhere because he was adamant on the subject.

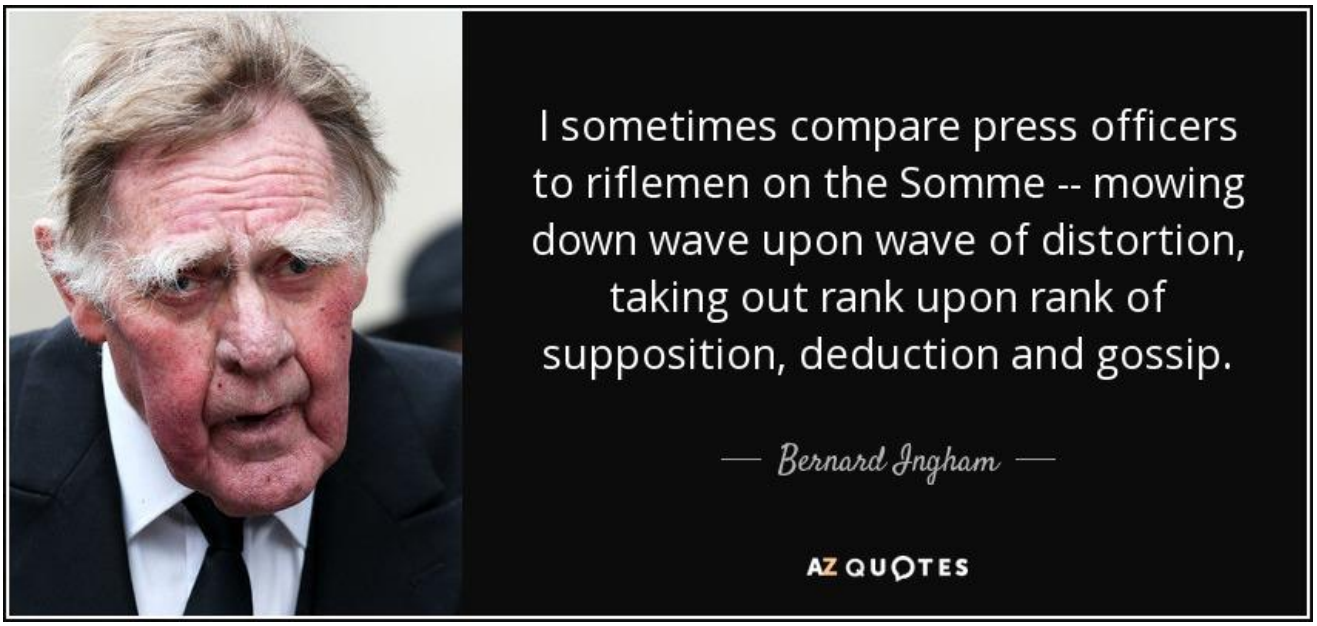
Admiral Sir John Fieldhouse, left, talking with Defence Secretary John Nott .

Somewhat apprehensively, Ian phoned Fleet HQ, got the C-in-C on the phone and explained that he had a chap from No. 10 in his office who wanted to put Press in the Task Force ships. C-in-C Fleet was clearly surprised that somebody should suggest such a thing. He advanced all the reasons why not and then delivered what he clearly judged to be the deciding line: 'Every journalist, every cameraman, every photographer we put in a ship will mean taking off a combatant. Is No. 10 seriously suggesting that we diminish our fighting capability in order to accommodate the press?'

My instructions and duty were clear. I also knew from my recent Cod War experience that it would not actually be necessary to take people off the ships, the press would have to put up with less than ideal or

comfortable conditions but if they had to be taken then the Navy – in its usual resourceful way – would cope. The Admiral was not best pleased. I was told that it wouldn't happen so there was an end to the matter.

It was at this point – because I had no alternative – that I uttered words that I do not remember ever using before or since: 'I'm sorry, Admiral, the Prime Minister insists.' I was sure that the Prime Minister would, certainly Bernard Ingham would, but I have to confess that I was pretty sure at that stage that the Prime Minister's view had not been canvassed.



As those reading this will know, a Press Party did indeed go down to the South Atlantic and much has been written and said about how that all worked. The experience was often difficult for all concerned – commanders, minders and journalists alike – but it worked after a fashion and there were some memorable outcomes. 'I counted them out and I counted them back:' Brian Hanrahan's memorable words reporting a Harrier operation - represent a good example of how it worked – preservation of operational security, communication of an effective operation, and a demonstration of taking the fight to the enemy while telling the folks at home the pilots had come back to their ships safe and sound.

It was by no means all smooth, relationships were seriously strained, there were constant battles between minders, commanders and journalists, the communications problems were deeply challenging, some of the attempts at censorship ludicrous and there was constant frustration at No. 10 and at the MoD that the media did not understand their 'responsibilities' and that military commanders did not understand the political imperatives around some of the media activity.

One of the remarkable things about the conflict was that the media – at least in their published work – remained largely supportive not only of 'our boys' but of the Government. Right was on our side, the will of the Falkland Islanders had to be respected, aggression had to be resisted.

Imagine the consequences if there had been no on-the-spot reporting. Would our briefing alone have been believed and reported? How would Argentine propaganda – which demonstrated no scruples – have been treated? How would fiction, tittle-tattle and rumour have been handled?

In any conflict we can imagine now – in however remote a place – reporters would be on the ground, largely free to report in whatever way they liked. The circumstances of the Falklands were unique. The presence of the media was largely in our gift. True there would have been contact with Falkland Islanders through the telephone/radio nets – there was a radio station there – but those links would have been vulnerable and unreliable and could only ever have shone but one small light onto the facts of the situation.

The military desire to control the message in an operational context and the politicians desire to control the mood music and paint the positive picture must surely always be placed only on a canvas that can also be painted on by the media themselves gleaning information, analysing it and coming to a view. The reporting

of events on the ground, tempered by the briefing inputs, will get us somewhere near the ‘real picture. ‘Recent history demonstrates that.

The Commander-in-Chief Fleet was not given a choice about that early decision - but in reality, there was no choice. Even today, with all the experience of the Falklands, the Gulf, the Balkans, Iraq and Afghanistan, are we sure that all the key participants understand that?

‘Deceiving the enemy is a fine art but deceiving the media is unwise’

Michael Evans, currently the Pentagon Correspondent of The Times and for many years its defence editor was defence correspondent on the Daily Express in 1982. The Falklands War, he says, was a steep learning curve for everyone

The Falklands war presented a huge challenge, not just for the Armed Forces but also for Ministry of Defence public relations. In 1982, being open about sensitive military matters was anathema to the MoD, but the PR hierarchy quickly appreciated that the decision to liberate the Falklands from the Argentine occupiers was going to be of unprecedented public interest. Covering the whole operation in a veil of secrecy was not going to be either realistic or practical, or, indeed, beneficial to either the military fighting in the South Atlantic or to the MoD in Whitehall.

It rapidly became apparent, however, that the MoD's decision to allow reporters on to ships going down to the South Atlantic was not going to generate a feast of detailed military reports from the ‘front-line.’ The Task Force reporters found that everything they wrote had to go through a pretty severe censorship system, which caused delays and rising frustration.

There were moments of high drama, not least the wonderfully graphic reporting of the late Brian Hanrahan, pictured left, of the BBC who came up with his famous ‘I counted them all out and I counted them all in’ - referring to the launching and landing of the Sea Harriers as they took off for missions. Later, when the ground war was launched, there were stirring reports from the battlefield, but most of the reporters in the Falklands found themselves being scooped by the defence correspondents back home who were getting regular briefings from senior MoD civilian and military officials which provided for newspapers and the rest of the media sufficient detail to let the general public know what was going on 8,000 miles away.

This was a novel experience for the MoD and for the defence correspondents and there were concerns, among the reporters, that they were being used on occasions to disseminate propaganda or to put out false stories to confuse or fool the enemy.

The classic case was the briefing given by Sir Frank Cooper, then the MoD Permanent Secretary, who told the defence correspondents in the lead-up to the land war and before any conventional troops had set up a beachhead on the islands, that there was to be no D-Day, no grand invasion involving thousands of troops. Instead, he said, there would be a series of smash-and-grab raids to test out the Argentine troops.

We all fell for it because we had no reason to check whether this was accurate. It seemed to make sense, and the headline on the front page of the Daily Express the following day faithfully repeated the Cooper line of raids, not an invasion. While, in retrospect, this deception may well have helped the troops on ships off the Falklands to carry out their ‘invasion’ without much opposition, my feeling all these years later - with

Bosnia, Kosovo, Iraq, Afghanistan and other conflicts under my belt - is that deceiving the enemy is a fine art but deceiving the media is generally unwise. Better to say no comment than to make up a story, which turns out to be deliberately false.

But the Falklands War provided a steep learning curve for everyone. The MoD was, rightly, concerned about the amount of information that could be divulged each day, especially when, in the early stages of the war, there were so many setbacks and individual tragedies. The sinking of a ship became an issue of the greatest concern. The assembled media at the MoD wanted to know what ship, how many on board had died and what was the significance of the sinking for the rest of the operation.

The MoD never really came to grips with this sense of urgency. Ian McDonald, the civil servant who was given the job of making solemn announcements each day before the television cameras, had a script that was limited and frustratingly lacking in detail.

Unquestionably, the priority was for the families of the crewmembers on the ship that had been attacked. But to reporters, it seemed that naming the ship made more sense than just informing the public that 'a warship' had been targeted. It would be anguish for the families of that specific ship, but relief, if that were the right word, for the families of those serving on other ships that had not been targeted.

Today, of course, everything is instant because global communications have transformed the information business and, as a result the MoD and other relevant government departments are obliged to be more forthcoming. When a helicopter crashes in Afghanistan, it is not long before reporters will find out how many on board have been killed, the circumstances that led to the crash, and who was responsible.

In 1982, information was hard to get, explanations were even harder, and there was a constant battle between the reporters and the MoD over what was truly going on in the South Atlantic. When the dispatches from the embedded reporters out in the Falklands eventually arrived, they were often too late because the censorship process took too long. No one in an official position out there had the reporters' interests anywhere near the top of their priorities.

The MoD in Whitehall filled in the gaps by giving background briefings, but for the reporters in the field the war was an endurance test, not just physically but professionally because they were unable to fulfil the reporter's most important function: to gather information and to file a story as rapidly as possible to meet the daily deadline.

The defence correspondents in Whitehall had their own frustrations but they were pretty well served by the regular background briefings, which put flesh on the bare bones of Mr. McDonald's daily pronouncements. There were times when the correspondents were trusted sufficiently to be given operational details of missions even before they took place.

This was aimed at putting us in the picture but strictly on the basis that nothing was to be reported until the MoD gave the go ahead. This system worked well, not just because it meant Defence Correspondents would be better informed but because it was an acknowledgement on the part of the MoD that we were playing a crucial role in keeping the public abreast of what was developing in the war, and that we could be trusted not to abuse the MoD's faith in us.

This was a serious story which required trust on both sides. Inaccurate or false stories could risk lives or give comfort to the enemy. Buenos Aires claimed on a number of occasions to have sunk a Royal Navy aircraft carrier, but because of that trust that developed slowly with the MoD and, in particularly, with certain key officials, we were confident that this was untrue and was merely Argentine propaganda.

There was a famous moment when a brigadier informed the Defence Correspondents that a commander in the Falklands had used a public telephone box to phone through to troops under fire in Bluff Cove. We all ran it, it was just too good to ignore but I still do not know to this day whether it was true. But that wasn't deception that was just a bit of theatre, which did no harm and provided a personal touch to what was, unquestionably, a bleak moment for the British forces in the Falklands War.

Many media lessons were learned from the war. The MoD realised that in future wars there would need to be intelligently constructed ground rules under which the maximum amount of information could be made available provided it did not compromise operational security or put at risk the lives of members of the armed forces. Journalists understand this. They want to write authoritatively and accurately but they also know that when lives are at stake there are higher priorities. The Falklands War, or at least the public relations side of it, was run from Whitehall.

With the fighting taking place 8,000miles away and with communications that were totally inadequate for passing back instant detailed reports, Whitehall took charge and the results were often unsatisfactory for a media that was desperate for up-to date and dramatic news. But by the time the white flags were flying over Port Stanley, the MoD and the media had developed a relationship, which boded well for the future, even if it was still at an early stage of development.

Why didn't they listen?

A waste of talent and ideas as the MoD Press Office professionals went unheeded

National Chairman Colonel Mike Peters spent some ten years as a Ministry of Defence civilian press officer during which time his experience as a Territorial Army military policeman, Light Infantry officer and as Commanding Officer of Media Operations Group (V) was put to good use. He served in British Army of the Rhine, Northern Ireland, with the Multi-National Force in Sinai and in Beirut during 1983 on Operation Hyperion. Throughout the Falklands War he ran the Army's 24/7 press desk in Whitehall and later accompanied the Governor, Sir Rex Hunt on his return to the South Atlantic. His war was one of frustration!

As 1982 opened the Main Building Press Office had an enviable position. Its ten-man team was a collection of long-term Ministry of Defence information officers whose knowledge of the armed forces and the media was top line. Unlike most of Whitehall the MoD's press officers tended to stay within the Ministry. All had long experience: some had worked for navy, army and air force in various posts; many had served in Northern Ireland during the Troubles and others had written, photographed, filmed and broadcast military news from all parts of the world before graduating to the MoD's front line.

Formed into three service desks, plus a central group led by the highly respected Douglas Johnson (Lt Col Royal Artillery) whose tales of meeting his father on the beaches of Dunkirk; of calling down corps artillery 'stonks' in the Western Desert and precision targeting in the 1944-45 battles in France, Holland and Germany helped oil many a meeting with defence correspondents over a pint or two in our 'local' – the Red Lion in Whitehall. Douglas had an encyclopaedic memory for the details of defence debates and parliamentary questions and answers.

This then was the strength of the Defence Press Office. There were no computer terminals and Google searches available. Each desk and press officer had a deep knowledge of the armed forces and maintained

an information paper bank, meticulously researched and updated. Relations with the service directors were first class and the flow of information to the defence correspondents – many of who were, and still are, friends – was enhanced. All the team were trusted and could relate instances of working successfully together with the defence media, whether one of the national organisations, local or 'trade' press, and hard won relationships were ignored at the clarion call for war. We were to face weeks of restrictive communications policies before, officially at least; the press office again began to brief individual journalists.

It all began slowly. Duty Press Officers took calls in the small hours about goings-on in South Georgia and handled the shock reaction to the surrender in Stanley. Desk Officers were being kept informed via the usual channels and through controlled relationships with those who worked on higher floors of Main Building and there was no hint of the trouble to come.

Life in the press office changed with the decision to send a Task Force. The information flow dried up and we were battered with demands for answers that we did not have. The reasons are suggested elsewhere in this edition but, simply, old habits of keeping the media, not only at arm's length, but also at the other end of the playing field kicked in. That some exchanges with the media became warm, if not heated, I am not surprised. The first hint of the creation of a news vacuum produced what almost became hysteria as individual journalists, then news desks and Fleet Street editors learned of the Task Force and demanded a place in the press party.

The trouble for the Press Office was to discover if consideration was being given to media sailing with the Task Force. This quickly escalated to the highest levels in Government. My TA boss, Colonel Alan Protheroe, who just happened to be the Assistant Director General of the BBC responsible for news, was bending my ear. He was asking the same question - what is going on? How can Britain go to war without considering the needs of the Press?

Not surprisingly a 'regimental' tie appeared that was to be worn by both press officers and the media. It showed a Penguin representing the Falklands and an anchor representing the Task Force. The third logo was a question mark. What the f..k is happening?

Came the agreement to an embarked media party another problem developed. Just who was to go? I recall a discussion with Max Hastings, right, who was not on the list. His tirade that he was the best-qualified journalist in the land stays with me. Within minutes I was also speaking with an irate Commander on one of the Royal Navy's carriers who berated me about moving fighting men out of their bunks or hammocks to make way for journalists. And it was not even my decision, but like a good press officer I always answered my phone!

With the press group subsequently identified came the decision to take up more cabin space. The Ministry needed experienced press officers to accompany the media, advise the Task Force commanders and to keep looking over their shoulders to London while maintaining the Ministry's line. This was never going to be an easy job and though many volunteered there were those who subsequently were pleased they didn't go following unjustified vilification of the Minders.

Within the Ministry's communications group there was much heart searching. The press office asked: 'Can we see the operational media plan?' Whether or not there was any plan I still do not know. Rumour control said that a plan had been drafted some time before but it was invisible to us. What I do know is that there was a vacancy in MoD's public relations. The former Chief of PR had gone and an administrative civil servant, who took little heed of his professional staff, was in place. It was to be weeks before we breathed a sigh of relief as a professional head of communications moved into the job.

Much debated was the need for a balanced team of press officers with the Task Force. A one star leader in uniform with a combined military and civilian team was mooted. This would have countered the problems

faced down south as military media inexperience, and sometimes bloody-minded interference, over-ruled civilian communications staff. Such a team is obvious by today's standards but it never happened.

I proposed a dedicated Press Ship to accompany the Task Force. It sounded a good idea to declare the neutrality of a Press Ship and then have appropriate staffs and dedicated communications. The idea fell down flat when I expressed a strong view that one of the best ways to stop the war would be to have Argentinian media aboard who could film the Task Force as it progressed south and revealed its firepower. No one had the stomach for it even though I mentioned that Lord Louis Mountbatten had provided vessels with communications for the press in the Far East in 1945. Today it is called 'influence planning.

Deeper thinking was coming out of the Press Office. If UK TV journalists were to be included with the Task Force why not send a MoD combat camera team. The TA Pool of Information officers had been advocating Brigade Combat Camera Teams in British Army of The Rhine for some time and had the capability if not the right equipment. There were at least two Regular officers with recent media experience who had led the highly successful BAOR camera team and, perhaps not surprisingly, as I had worked with both, and the same cameraman for several years, I volunteered.

The idea was rejected by a civil servant because the cameraman happened to be a German national. Gerd Medoch's 20 years at the spearhead of BAOR newsgathering was not sufficient for one leading civil servant who had the blatant cheek to question our abilities even though we could produce the footage and media references of our worth.

This was a lost opportunity when one considers the sterling performance of Soldier Magazine stills photographer, Paul Hayley, right, when attached to the Task Force .

To say world media interest was high is an understatement. We needed more than a night duty officer and the office went over to a 24-hour shift system. As the sun came up in New Zealand - the press started calling in. As the day progressed the calls moved west and, after the first bacon-butty from the canteen had arrived, the American early-bird press was on the line. I gave dozens of down the line interviews. Our line was that we would never tell an untruth but we would not discuss or reveal anything that might cost the lives of people in the task force or compromise the operation. That never caused a problem with overseas journalists but for some strange reason was not always understood in the UK.

Throughout the war there were those in the Press Office who rarely went home. The usual break was to see the family, collect some new linen and get back to the grindstone. Press officers camped out in vacant offices or in the 'comfort' of the underground gym. It had rubber mats to lie on! Others dozed at their desks as the MoD's own ' dawn chorus' - the cleaning ladies - dusted around the desk and scattered files. Nothing compared to the Minders aboard the Task Force but it was a constant and hard grind.

And so it continued day and night. The Acting Chief of PR called press briefings and the media duly turned up. The prime rule of press conference is having something relevant to say. Information in the early days was sparse and, frankly, often not credible. A repetitive discussion was based on where the Task Force was at any given time. The journalists did not really expect an answer but it became a battle of wills with the Secretary of State's spokesman, Ian McDonald, to see if they could vary his response.

As the battles on the Falkland's developed a Press Centre was opened in the south hall of the Main Building. There Ian McDonald's monologue delivery earned him the title among the media as ' the warm up man for the Lutine Bell.' To be fair there were times when Ian's wit came through. Entrapped into a question on casualties his answer to how many needed to become casualties before he would use the word 'heavy, ' he replied: ' Every single casualty is heavy to some-one.'

Accusations of censorship by the MoD press office have often been thrown at me. To my knowledge no one in the Defence Press Office was ever involved in censorship. It was not our job. Censorship, or guidance, to the writer, whatever you want to call it, has to come at the sharp end where the facts are known in real time.

My fund of anecdotes would fill far more space than I have. Indeed there are answers to questions that I would like. Such as what happened to the detailed log book of copy arriving by telex from the Falklands? This had disappeared by the time of the official inquiry. Some newspapers claimed copy filed by their man in the Falklands never got to the right pigeonhole in the south hall. As I supervised this on my shift I would ask the question: who actually 'collected' the missing copy?

I sign off with the news that I eventually got to the Falklands. My protestations that I was a trained, and fit, Light Infantry officer, the Training Major for the TA Pool of Information Officers, and had spent my working career in journalism and 'blue chip' media communications produced a result. As the surrender was being signed I was warned off to fly south and accompany the Governor, Sir Rex Hunt on his return. It was too little and too late for me though I may, sometime in the future, relate the tales of 'minding' 12 different journalists every week for months as they toured the battlefields and we tip-toed through the minefields. And of opening up Ascension Island to the media for the first time in the aftermath of the war. The memories of sunnier climes of the tropics, silver beaches, masses of flowers and the lovely nurses of the local hospital are still with me…. even though it delayed my homecoming.

A chapter of muddle, improvisation, obstruction, disdain, bitterness, bile, outrageous media behaviour and from both sides – arrogance!

Roger Goodwin, a highly experienced MoD press officer, was one of the Task Force Minders. Like the others he faced shot, shell and media and military calumny. Pictured right, Roger examines one of the Exocet missiles found at Stanley airport. He has appeared in TV documentaries about the Falklands War and is oft quoted in the media for a vigorous defence of his colleagues who went south. In the last 30 years his experience and knowledge has carried him successfully through senior MoD information postings including the sensitive hand-over of Hong Kong to the Chinese and the politically challenging job of head of communications in Northern Ireland.

There were two wars over the Falklands; one with Argentina, the other with the British media. That's an aphorism, which has been well used over the last 30 years, not least by me. And like most aphorisms, it encompasses both wild over-generalisation, and no small measure of truth.

Operation Corporate was Britain's first modern media war, for which it was even less prepared than it was to send an expeditionary force 8,000 miles to the other end of the world and then fight a short war on the enemy's front doorstep. The latter campaign, if a damned close-run thing, was conducted brilliantly; the former was a chapter of muddle, improvisation, obstruction, disdain, bitterness, bile, outrageous media behaviour, and – from both sides – arrogance.

The best that can be said for it was that the experience finally broke the dam of entrenched and determined disregard for modern media handling within the Ministry of Defence and the Armed Forces, and led ultimately to today's more enlightened attitudes.

I was the Duty Press Officer in Main Building on the night the Argentinians invaded. Called to Navy Ops on the sixth floor at one in the morning, I listened as the First Sea Lord, Admiral Sir Henry Leach, gave his early instructions as to the disposition of the Fleet. He had just returned from his now-famous meeting with Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher, when he contradicted his own Secretary of State, John Nott, and promised her that the Royal Navy could re-take the Falklands.

At a stroke he thus saved his beloved service from the ravages of Nott's recently completed Defence Review, which had seen the sale of HMS Invincible to Australia and the withdrawal of the ice patrol ship HMS Endurance – which had precipitated the Argentinian action in the first place.

Up to that point it had been a quiet night, punctuated by just a couple of strange telephone calls from agencies across the Atlantic, asking vaguely if anything was 'happening,' but unable to put their fingers on what! In all honesty, I could only assure them that there wasn't - unlike the following day when the world burst around us in the Press Office.

By now the news of the invasion was out and we became the focus of a media siege not seen before or since. We watched the world wake up, and all of it wanted to sail with the Task Force. I remember taking calls from Japan's Asahi Shimbun, which demanded a place based on its claim to be the biggest newspaper in the world, and from the Rocky Mountain News in Denver, Colorado, although what their particular justification was is long forgotten.

Every single British media organisation, of course, claimed a divine right to be included, preferably also to the exclusion of all others. The BBC alone wanted over 100 places.

All of which first brought the Royal Navy into brutal contact with modern media – and political – realities. A request to HQ Fleet at Northwood for an indication of the number of media places that would be made available produced the astonishing reply, even for those days – none! In turn that brought a short, pithy, Yorkshire response from Bernard Ingham, the Prime Minister's Press Secretary and in his way as powerful in his day as Alastair Campbell was to become a generation later. In very short order, using his mistress's name without even bothering to consult her, he made sure that a couple of very senior Admirals quickly discovered just where lay the limits of their power.

Pictured left aboard ship are the BBC's Brian Hanrahan (far right), cameraman Brian Hesketh, soundman John Jockells, and 'Minder' Alan George, in anti-flash gear.

Eventually 15 journalists and cameramen sailed with the carrier force, with a further 16 following 10 days later aboard the hastily-converted troopship Canberra. With them went five (eventually six) MoD Information Officers, little realising the professional maelstrom into which we were sailing. Competition to make the trip, at least within the Press Office, had been intense. Friendships went out of the window as we competed to go. Those not selected were bitter indeed. Little did we know!

In the chaos of improvised planning, I got six hours' notice – sort of. At 1000 in the morning of Sunday, April 4, 1982 I was in the Press Office in Whitehall when I got the word to go home and get packed; 'they' would work out later what I was to do. Three hours later, the phone rang at my home outside Camberley: make my way to Portsmouth – details (again) later. Five hours after that, by which time I had progressed to the wardroom at HMS Nelson, I was, finally instructed to board HMS Invincible, where I was to act as escort officer to five national newspaper journalists. Less than 12 hours later we sailed.

After 30 years, memories of the three months which followed are a kaleidoscope of images. Arriving on the bridge to see the mushroom cloud on the horizon which was the stricken HMS Sheffield. Contrary to expectation, the complete silence in a crowded wardroom when news arrived of the Belgrano's sinking. The flushed excitement of the young fighter pilots safely returned from the first day of air combat.

Creeping into San Carlos Water at night aboard RFA Resource, the only light in the utter blackness coming from the burning HMS Antelope. The adrenaline rush of the air attacks.

Pictured right: San Carlos Water taken from the gun camera of an Argentinian attack aircraft.

The sudden unbidden thought, hastily banished: 'They don't pay civil servants to do this.' First contact with Falklands soil when our helicopter hurriedly pancaked as another raid swept in. The completely illegal temporary acquisition of a Self-Loading Rifle so that I could join the ship's anti-aircraft party – which fortunately for all concerned I never got a chance to use.

The luxury of showers on demand during a spell aboard Canberra. The muck and the rubbish and the dejected, filthy young Argentinian conscripts when we first went ashore in Stanley the day after the surrender. The warmth and the welcome of the islanders.

Eventually the flight home, initially in a crowded Hercules to Ascension, afflicted half way there, and to the considerable discomfiture of my neighbours, by a violent dose of 'Galtieri's Revenge.' Then an empty VC-10 all to ourselves for the rest of the way, and a relieved family waiting eagerly at Brize Norton, the best sight of all.

I was lucky. None of my ships were hit, I didn't see any of the pitifully burned survivors from Sheffield or Ardent or Coventry or Sir Galahad or Sir Tristram or the Atlantic Conveyor. I was a Navy press officer so I didn't suffer the discomforts of living in sodden trenches or yomping across the islands, or see any of the wounded and the destruction of the final battles in the hills above Stanley.

My war with the Argentinians was not fun; no war ever could or should be that. But it was an adventure, like living a Hollywood war movie but infinitely more exciting. With the final withdrawal from Hong Kong, it was the high point of a 32-year career in defence public relations; the one I shall bore my grandchildren rigid with, if ever I have any.

The second war, the one with the British media, is not so fondly remembered. Six junior information officers, all volunteers and none above the grade of Senior Information Officer (SEO equivalent), were in the improvisation of the moment hastily sent forth to do our best.

Pictured left are two members of the Press Party. The Sun's Tony Snow and Daily Telegraph's A J McIlroy, right, prepare copy after returning from the attack on Tumbledown.

We were, I think, the only Ministry of Defence civil servants to accompany the Task Force throughout other than those for whom it was an inevitable part of their normal service, such as the crews of the Merchant Navy and the Royal Fleet Auxiliary, ship's NAAFI managers and so on. We were, in the memorable phrase of the then Permanent Secretary, Frank Cooper, always the hinge on which the gate was going to grate.

Boy, did it grate. Dubbed the 'minders' as a term of derision by the media, it is a title which defiantly we have adopted and worn ever since with some pride. Throughout, we struggled with the diametrically opposed requirements of a conservative military increasingly scandalised by the media's antics, and a press pack increasingly frustrated by the limitations, some justified, some not, imposed on their normal freedom of action by the circumstances of a military expeditionary force in a combat zone. Invincible's Captain took to referring to my lot as the Fifth Form, but demoted them to the Fourth after a particularly spectacular outburst

of childish petulance. We caught the ire of both sides as we fought to avoid a complete breakdown of relations.

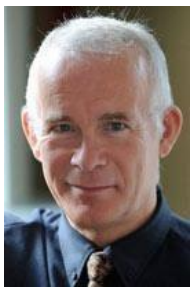
Somebody said at the time that the Ministry was happy to let us ‘swing in the wind’ and deflect the media flak from where it should more properly have been aimed, at Whitehall and at Northwood. I think there is probably some truth in that. As the storm raged in the aftermath, we were allowed little opportunity to defend ourselves, and nobody did it for us. Only Bernard Ingham, from his position of power in Downing Street, insisted on according us some recognition. Inevitably, there is a legacy of anger, and no small degree of bitterness.

Looking back from 30 years on, the consolation is that, finally and not before time, the lessons were learned. From the six junior civilians deployed on Operation Corporate, we moved to deploying over 60 military and civilian media ops staff, led by fistfuls of one-stars, colonels and equivalents, on Britain’s next major military adventure, the Gulf War. Today, observing from the comfort of retirement, it even seems likely that the pendulum has if anything swung too far the other way.

Everyone from soap opera actors to footballers and pop stars – even a second-hand car salesman from a minor niche-market programme on satellite TV – seem able to make their way to the front-line in Helmand at the drop of a hat, all administered by a unprecedentedly – massive media handling empire which appears to expand exponentially as the Armed Forces it represents get smaller.

Relations with the media on operations will never be comfortable, which is not only inevitable but also healthy and as it should be. But the bad old days are gone. And the poor, beleaguered, wilfully-disregarded, mishandled, shamefully-sacrificed Minders can, in a very real sense, claim the credit for that.

THE FALKLANDS WAR - CLICHES UNDER FIRE



In April 1992, ten years after the Falklands War, West Midlands journalist and former TAPIO, Peter Rhodes, interviewed many of those who served in the South Atlantic. Well known to Peter, the Chief Feature writer on the award-winning Wolverhampton Express & Star was club member and former E&S reporter Roger Goodwin whose words published in Peter’s book, *For a Shilling a Day* tell their own story.

War? It was every cliché you can think of, says Roger Goodwin.” There was no warning. I just heard something going dacka-dacka-dacka. There was this frozen moment. We just looked at each other. I suddenly realised it was a machine gun going off. So I shouted 'hit the deck!' Just like something out of a John Wayne movie.

Can you believe it? Hit the deck?” Over a steak sandwich in a Wolverhampton wine bar, Goodwin roars with laughter at the madness of Bomb Alley. Roger Goodwin is head of public information for the British Army in Wales and the West Midlands. Ten years ago he was a Press 'minder' in the Falklands War. Under fire for the first time, he hit the deck in the bowels of an ammunition ship in San Carlos Water. For 20 minutes as Argentine warplanes strafed and bombed, he examined the carpet and analysed his feelings.

"I remember quite coldly thinking 'how do I feel?' I wasn't scared. I was elated, excited and fatalistic. There was a heightening of all your sensations, alertness, and astuteness. The sky was bluer, the colours sharper. There were loads of schoolboy emotions. I remember it going through my head like a piece of ticker-tape: They don't pay civil servants to do this'."

At 39, Roger Goodwin was the Navy's duty public-relations man in Whitehall on the "fairly quiet night" of April 1 -2, 1982. Suddenly, "all hell broke loose" as news came in of the Argentine invasion. Goodwin was sent south on HMS Invincible as minder to five Fleet Street reporters. He frankly admits there were two wars, one against the Argentinians, the other against journalists who brought peacetime practices to the business of war reporting. Sharing an 18,000-ton warship with five news-hungry hacks and Prince Andrew was not, he says, an enviable experience.

There were lighter moments, as when the Prince spoofed The Sun with yarn about how he relaxed in force nine gales by playing pool on a gyro-stabilised table. No stranger to Fleet Street, Goodwin admits he was shocked at the behaviour, and the naiveté, of some of his charges, especially their belief that it would not come to a shooting war.

"I am no great political analyst but why couldn't they see that here were two right-wing politicians who had painted themselves into a corner and, if either side blinked, their government would fall?"

When victory came, Goodwin sent a telegram not to his wife, Wendy, but to his parents, "because mothers worry".

"It was just a string of words, a jumble of emotions. Happy, elated, proud."

Interrogation – An unpleasant experience for the Editor of Penguin News

Islanders relied on BBC World Service, says Graham Bound

We communicators should avoid clichés at all costs, and certainly we should never begin a written or spoken piece with one. But the cliché I am about to utter just will not lie down: *It seems like it was only yesterday.* I am referring to the day, 30 years ago, when Argentina invaded my homeland. Freud would probably tell us that, as far as our subconscious is concerned, such vivid events *are* no further back in our minds than yesterday. Certainly, if I close my eyes for just a second, any number of images and memories, both inspiring and frightening, flood back.

Among them is the most significant 'media moment' of my life, when I actually felt blood draining away from my face. The Falkland Islands Broadcasting Station, amusingly known by its acronym FIBS, interrupted its programmes on the evening of April 1, 1982 to say that the Governor, Rex Hunt, would soon be making an important announcement. Rex came on the air a short time later and dropped his bomb shell: he had received intelligence that the crisis that had been brewing around South Georgia for the last few days, had escalated and he had been advised by the Foreign Office that an Argentine naval force would arrive off Stanley at around 6.00 the next morning.

In our naivety, we had never thought the Argentines would do this, but now there was nothing and no one, other than a handful of Royal Marines, and even fewer poorly training local part-time soldiers, to stop them. That was why the blood drained from my face. I had just put the latest edition of Penguin News to bed. It was much delayed, as I had been attempting to cover every small development in the escalating crisis to the South West, so I reflected that whatever happened in the coming days, I could at least be pleased that I had produced a rough and ready little paper that was as up-to-date as it was possible to be.

Penguin News was my baby. I had launched it just three years earlier and, if I say so myself, it had done a good job questioning the colonial government, supporting local people against overwhelming domination by British business, and having occasional pokes at the Argentines. Momentarily that evening, it was this tendency to criticise the very unpleasant military government of Buenos Aires that worried me. I recapped on what had I said in the latest edition that could bring the invaders to my door. Other than the running account of the developing situation, I had editorialised that it was now time for HMS *Endurance* to put the Argentines going from South Georgia and show them that we, the UK and the Royal Navy were not going to stand for any of their silly nonsense.

With hindsight, I could see that such pugnacity might not have been good for my health, but nerves apart (and I suffered from lots of them that night) I was glad I had expressed an opinion I could be proud of.

We relied on that wonderful British institution the BBC World Service to know what was going on in the outside world, so I took my small short wave transistor to the Upland Goose Hotel, where I knew that a decent. Argentine reporter called Rafael Wolmann (we remain in touch even today), Simon Winchester of the Sunday Times and handful of other hacks were desperately trying to find out more. We huddled around my little transistor, tuned it to 11.75 megahertz and digested the detailed update from Radio Newsreel. Then we all went our own ways to spend a nervous night waiting.

I had been a part time broadcaster at FIBS, so felt I should turn out and spend a shift or two helping to keep it on the air, but by the early hours I had been dismissed, and the remarkable live coverage of the actual invasion (bang on schedule at 6.00 AM) was down to the station manager, Patrick Watts, pictured left. He did an excellent and brave job.
I was an enthusiastic photographer so as soon as the sun came up, I began snapping off rolls of black and white film, capturing images of the Argentine troops marching in, and their heavy Amtrak troop carriers rumbling through the town. The pictures were invaluable later when I wrote a book about the experiences of Islanders that day and during the subsequent occupation.

"Despite our fears, we all survived 2 April. The Argentines had been genuine in trying to moderate the force they used. They said later that their navy and army had been ordered to take Stanley without killing a single Islander or British Marine if possible, and they did that. However, they unleashed a huge amount of firepower at Government House, which was defended by the Marines. At least one Argentine was killed there, and two others were seriously injured, although there was speculation that the real figure was higher.

When the dust settled, the Argentines turned the immediacy and the reach of the radio station to their own advantage. By lunchtime on 2 April, their national anthem was blaring forth, and edicts governing the way Islanders would live were being broadcast thick and fast. Due respect would have to be shown to Argentine national symbols.

All meetings of more than just a few people were banned. If people required assistance, they should display a white flag from their windows. All weapons and radio transmitters were to be handed in. And so on, and so on. The Argentines said that they wanted us to continue our lives unchanged. That was darkly ironic given the fundamental denials of freedom that they had just broadcast. For the next few weeks, while the task force gathered and steamed south, the new rulers did their best to make us feel that life under the Argentine dictatorship would not be so bad. They even brought a group of Anglo-Argentines to the Falklands to tell us how good it could be living under the blue and white flag. That did not go down well, and I was present at a public meeting where some of these unfortunate English-speaking Argentines broke down tears in the face of the Islanders undiluted anger.

FIBS became Radio Islas Malvinas, and began transmitting in both languages. Some of the local staff faced the difficult moral choice of continuing to work at the station, or leaving the Argentine to their own devices. It may have been as well that some of them did stay on at their jobs, as they were able to moderate the worst of the Argentine propaganda, and at times even conducted usefully robust interviews with senior Argentines. Years later, when I trawled through the station's archives, I uncovered news bulletin scripts which the locals had edited with heavy pen excising the worst of the absurd claims.

As the war intensified, however, the local broadcasters found it ever more difficult to control the output, and the station became irrelevant. Much more important was the BBC World Service. Short wave receivers had not been formally banned, but they had been confiscated in

an ad hoc fashion, so Islanders concealed their radios, and when, about a month into the occupation, a strict curfew was declared, we would take comfort

from tuning through the crackling interference to hear Calling the Falklands. This programme had been broadcast once a week for many years, but until 1982 it had simply been a medium for music and messages from families in the UK. Now, though, Bush House began broadcasting a longer edition every evening, dedicated to news about the conflict and inspiring messages from public figures and the families of those who were effectively imprisoned in the Falklands. These were often highly emotional broadcasts.

However, at about the same time that the curfew was declared, an Argentine signals unit began jamming the programme. The voice of the main presenter, Peter King, would gradually be obliterated by a mechanical noise. This was hugely frustrating, and it was not until BBC correspondents Robert Fox and the late Brian Hanrahan landed with the forces at San Carlos that word of the jamming got back to Bush House. At that point, World Service began broadcasting on a second frequency. To our relief, the Argentines never succeeded in jamming that one, so normal morale-boosting service was resumed.

I was faced with the difficult choice of what to do with Penguin News. I had faced interrogation early on in the occupation, and when my file was produced and slapped on the desk between the military police officer and me, I realised that they knew of me and what I did for a living. I was asked why I had been seen wielding a camera during the invasion. I answered, truthfully, that I was a journalist, and I needed to take photos for my paper, if I was ever able to resume publication. It was an unpleasant experience designed to intimidate, and many Islanders faced something similar.

I decided to resume publication on my own terms if it was possible to do so, and so approached the Argentine Governor's staff requesting interviews with he and his top commanders.

'Certainly,' I was told. 'We want you to continue life as before.' I was given an appointment to meet General Mario Menendez, pictured right, but when I turned up for it, he did not. 'We have decided that this would not be a good time for you to publish, Mr Bound.' The reality was that I, and my compatriots, were under their strict control. I was a one-man-band, gathering news, writing it and winding the handle of an ancient duplicator. Islanders were leaving town in large numbers, the mail service around the Islands had ceased, making distribution almost impossible.

The icing on the cake was that an Argentine army unit had occupied the building in which my trusty, rusty Roneo was housed. I did not have much choice. An underground newspaper would have survived for about a day in Stanley. If I had agreed to produce a paper that contained their propaganda, they would probably have given me all the help that I required, but I was not prepared to do that. It was better to take some pride in the final pugnacious edition of Penguin News, close down for the duration and record the Islanders' experience ready for a proud re-launch when we were once again free.

I am glad I did that, and the cover of the first edition of the paper to be produced after the Argentine surrender still hangs in my office. The headline occupied the entire cover. It read: "Victory, Freedom and an Future!

Until 1982 there had been no TV station in the Falklands, but Buenos Aires was quick to offer us this service. A TV studio was set up within days, but of course there were no TVs on which to watch the station's output. So the Argentines imported hundreds of sets and offered them to the Islanders on generous credit terms. My family did not buy one, but some of my friends who did so argued that as they were required to pay only £20 a month, these would probably be the cheapest TVs ever sold. Predictably, the output was propaganda, including repeated claims that HMS Invincible had been sunk by an Exocet missile. We did not believe it, of course, because World Service did not confirm it. Every night, however, there would be a chilling hell-fire and brimstone sermon from a dour Argentine Catholic priest. He insisted that the British

would be defeated because God was firmly of the opinion that this was Argentine territory. Troops were urged to fight and die if necessary 'por la patria.'

The Argentines were intensely worried about amateur radio operators in the Islands who might have been transmitting intelligence to the British. They would use dogs and heavily armed men to isolate houses, apparently picked at random, to search for the sets. We had a chilling indication of what they might do if they uncovered a radio operator who was transmitting information of real value to the task force.

On 1 May, our friend Robin Pitaluga, a farm manager, had attempted to relay a radio message from the task force commander Sandy Woodward to the Argentines. The admiral was offering the occupiers the chance to surrender before the situation became really bad. Robin was arrested then subjected to a gruelling interrogation and a mock execution. He spent the rest of the war under house arrest.

Only later did we discover that two radio 'hams' had indeed been very bravely transmitting intelligence on a regular basis. Reg Silvie carried his small transceiver around Stanley in a shopping bag, and sometimes hid it in his oven. Whenever possible, he would erect a temporary aerial and transmit his observations to another radio ham in the UK, who would, in turn, pass the information on to the MoD. On distant Saunders Island Tony Pole-Evans was taking a similar risk, transmitting information about shipping movements and troop locations to a ham operator in Britain. The Argentines never found these men.

In the very broadest sense, the communications media played an important role in the occupied Islands. We were kept informed and our morale remained high. Argentine propaganda was diminished, and information emitted covertly from the Islands helped the British effort. However, I cannot help thinking that if Falklands War II ever breaks out, a renewed media struggle would be lost, and the lives of Islanders would be so much darker. Ham radio, for example, is almost a thing of the past, having been made redundant by broadband Internet. In a tiny community like the Falklands, an invader could close the Internet down in minutes.

The local radio station remains important and would be an object of desire by both defender and invaders. As would the recently established TV station which now broadcasts to almost all Islanders. The accurate reports of the BBC World Service Radio would no longer reach the Islands, as short wave transmissions are no longer aimed at the South Atlantic. Instead, the BBC is received via satellite and re-broadcast on FM. The Argentine would not need to resort to crude jamming: they would just unplug it.

Penguin News survives and is much more professional than in my time. Then it was published more or less monthly, but now PN is a reliable weekly, run off on a modern offset litho press, and with a website. Future invaders would see it as a much more useful asset. Islander staff would be swiftly replaced by Argentines, and the paper would be turned on its loyal readers and even on the outside world.

Friends in the Falklands often tell me that the next Falklands War – and some do believe there will be one - will be a much uglier event. Of course, there is no reason to assume that an Argentine attack would succeed and that an oppressive occupation would ensue, but if it did, the lights would go off in the archipelago, and so, in all probability, would all independent communications.

Decisions that allowed Argentina to win PR victories ..and Washington and other capitals to think twice.

Colonel Paul Beaver was an early member of the TA Pool of Information Officers and now serves as Colonel Army Air Corps and Assistant Director Reserves in Joint Helicopter Command. He was Publisher and Editor-in-Chief of Jane's Defence Weekly and is now a specialist advisor to the House of Commons Defence Select Committee and still broadcasts and writes when the mood takes him.

General Leopoldo Galtieri really was my literary agent – although at the time he must have had other things on his mind and didn't know me from Adam. He changed my life - from being a mining engineer whose hobby was matters defence to a full time writer and commentator.

By April 1982, my sixth book was leaving the printers for the technical bookshops. *The Encyclopaedia of the Modern Royal Navy* was due to be published on April 2 and so when the pre-publication releases hit the news desks, the various editors and producers had a windfall. A new book which gave details of the Royal Navy in every detail including the Naval Party then in the Falklands and soon to become front-page news. My scrapbook is full of predictions, some of which came true!

Needless to say, I learned much about the media in the next few weeks. I had already toured local radio and TV stations four years early with my first book, a history of *HMS Ark Royal.* So the protocols and discipline of speaking live had already been drummed into me by veteran presenters.

By the time of the Falklands, what to wear and how to construct a sound-bite had become second nature. This was also the time that the TV pundit was born – initially a host of retired admirals and generals who mostly got it wrong. Some uninformed commentators who did not know that sometimes a little knowledge is dangerous and reporters who should have known better, spilt beans which gave the Argentine media monitoring services much valuable information.

I also learned much in that first week about the preparedness of the British armed forces. By the time that the Encyclopaedia was ready to hit the shops, I was already working on another tome, the *History of the British Aircraft Carrier* which would eventually have three editions and cover much of the exploits of HMS Hermes and Invincible 'down south'. Part of the research I was working on with the Fleet Air Arm was to establish contemporary capabilities. Although most people did not realise it at the time, there was a determination of the then First Sea Lord and the rest of the Royal Navy to do something and do something significant. The armchair generals were helping by saying that the Falklands were lost and all was doomed.

The fact that the Fleet Air Arm was on the front foot was made very clear to me around this time – I don't remember the exact date but before there was any public announcement – when a scheduled day with the Commando Helicopter Force at RNAS Yeovilton was cancelled at the last minute. This was before the days of mobile phones, so an early morning call from the then CO 845 Naval Air Squadron was cryptic. I remember the words 30 years later 'there's something going on – we must have seen the papers – call me tomorrow.'

The something going on was the detailed planning to get the whole of the CHF aboard a variety of ships, naval and taken up from trade. The following day, rather than Yeovilton on the phone, I had a call from HMS Antrim's ship's flight at Portsmouth. I had recently written a feature for an aviation magazine on the Wessex and its capabilities and had been adopted by the ship's flight. The fact that I was a private pilot and had flown helicopters, passed the Fleet Air Arm aptitude test and my background checked out, meant I was 'friendly forces'.

’Do you want to come for trip? It will be about a month away and it could be exciting. We have a spare bunk space and the Captain is very wilco!’ Although it wasn’t said, it was clear. I had been invited to a party in the South Atlantic. All that was needed was MoD’s permission. That’s when I discovered just how unprepared was the MoD. ‘ No, you can’t go aboard HMS Antrim*’* (pictured above) came the reply – ‘we have no one to escort you’. My retort that I couldn’t do much in mid-Atlantic and that the ship knew me fell on deaf ears.

Ironically, the MoD press officer concerned soon left HM’s employ and became Editor of Jane’s Defence Weekly and my first boss on this prestigious journal – even more ironic that two years after joining Jane’s, I became his boss as Publisher and Editor-in-Chief of JDW. I can have only mentioned, once or twice, his dogmatic denial of what would have been a three-month’s cruise.

He said I wouldn’t have liked it and he had a point, of course, it wouldn’t have worked as the opportunities for filing stories were few and far between and who in the mainstream had ever heard of me. So who would have taken my copy? it might have made a good book though.

So denied a trip ‘down South’, I turned to other media endeavours. The local newspapers were busy using me, and radio too. It was very clear that the MoD’s press machine had not understood the immediacy of the media and the two weeks delay in news reaching the London media, while it delighted the civil service, allowed Argentina to score many PR victories which certainly caused Washington and many other friendly capitals to think twice about whole-hearted support to the British cause.

In the vacuum left by the lack of good MoD briefing and support, it fell to people like me to step in. This was the dawning of the TV commentator and the informed ‘op-ed’ in many newspapers. The lessons identified were that MoD needed to drastically up its game and bring in expertise.

For me, there were two immediate consequences of General Galtieri’s little South Atlantic adventure. The first was that I went full time as a freelance journalist and writer, founding a magazine of rotary wing aviation, ‘Defence Helicopter World’ which is still going today, 30 years later. This led to be talent-spotted by Jane’s for Jane’s Defence Weekly when it launched a couple of years later and hence into TV commentary and reporting, eventually leading to defence consultancy.

By the time that my other literary agent, Saddam Hussein invaded Kuwait, I was well and truly in the rent-a-mouth contact books of every newspaper, TV and radio station. As Media Week put it in 1991: ‘Paul Beaver even gives interviews in the bath.’ Interest in the talking-head and trying to beat the Government with analysis and prediction has worked well for the practitioners and the MoD now understands the value of talk-heads. It would have been a painful lesson to learn in 1990-91.

Without the baptism of fire that the Falklands gave the MoD – the sinking of HMS Sheffield, the Sir Galahad incident and the sinking of the Belgrano could have been so much better handled if there had been more visitors within the MoD with a good knowledge of the modern media. By the liberation of Kuwait and subsequent crises like Bosnia and Kosovo, the system was tried and tested.

For me, the need to improve communications led to membership of a select band on brothers (and sisters) in the Territorial Army in what was then called the TA Pool of Information Officers which later became Media Ops Groups (V). I spent a decade in its service and enjoyed almost every minute of it – St Martin's Plain Camp in winter is an acquired taste, don't you think?

My son does not exist anymore!

Doug McArthur was the MoD information officer at HQ Wales in 1982 and faced confusion and farce as 5 Brigade arrived at the Sennybridge training area. This was nothing to the experience of grief and anger as the magnitude of the Welsh Guards disaster at Bluff Cove for the broke in the stunned towns and villages of the Principality. Doug was on hand as the world's press turned up at Bradbury Lines in Hereford. Even today handling the deaths of a large group of SAS would still prove daunting.

It is one of my life's regrets that I never made it Down South. I volunteered when the Task Force was being assembled and I remember that we were in Grantham at my father's house for the bank holiday. We had been out for the evening and came home about midnight to find him still up because the MoD had called for me. I got through to the duty officer and was told I was on standby for the Task Force. Unfortunately, when I got back to Brecon, I was stood down because I was the only MoD information officer on the left-hand side of the UK map.

My Falklands war started with the warm up exercise at Sennybridge for 5 Brigade, which someone decided to call Welsh Falcon although allegedly it had nothing to do with the Falklands. This typical MoD subterfuge was rumbled before the exercise even started when 'the boys' all jumped into their Land Rovers, lorries, transporters, heavy wreckers and so on, filling the M4 motorway from Aldershot to the Severn Bridge. Unfortunately, the movers had obviously consulted an out of date AA map book because the whole division was routed through the small Welsh Valley town of Pontypool. It was Market Day!

My phone was red hot with the media and public wanting to know if the country was being invaded. The satisfying part came later when I organized a firepower demonstration for the Press that included a Harrier strike and 105mm artillery pounding the impact area at Sennybridge. I don't normally play Favourites with a press party but on this occasion roped in a friendly Gazelle pilot who took a German TV crew for a spin and the aerial shots of the Harrier strike were outstanding. The film went out in Argentina that evening.

The first drama in which I was deeply involved was the Chinook carrying special forces going down while cross decking. The loss of life and the stories of amazing heroism have been chronicled elsewhere but I was faced with the security problem. We quickly got round the usual plan of denying SAS involvement and giving out parent regiments but there was another - if ranks were disclosed it gave the enemy an indication of the numbers on the islands and from that it's a quick step to figuring out what their objectives might be. I was not helped by the Argentine equivalent of the SAS training at Bradbury Lines in Hereford only 18 months before.

I arrived at the Lines and booked into the Officers Mess about 2200 that night and next morning I was on the gate with the MoD Police fielding media from all over the world.
I made it clear that I would not lie to them so my only comment was 'I can say nothing at present, this will hopefully change soon.' Luckily, I knew enough of the journalists personally to explain that they would be giving information as soon as possible. But they could not interview anyone in a sand coloured beret. Eventually I put up the welfare officer for a short interview. It was particularly difficult for him, because unbeknown to the interviewers his son was in-theatre and he had not heard from since the engagement started.

My favourite story of the episode is of a French TV crew who made the mistake of asking Hereford locals for directions to the 'SAS army camp'. They were carefully directed miles away to the town of Leominster and then to Abergavenny. They eventually arrived at the gate hours after everyone else had got fed up and gone home.

Then the Sir Galahad was hit. This was a particular tragedy for the Welsh Guards who lost so many men of Support Company. Communications through Inmarsat were not perfect so to transmit names and numbers without mistake was time consuming - especially with so many soldiers named Jones involved.
Nobody wanted to make a mistake. The other difficulty was that although the battalion was based in Pirbright, at the start of the action, most of the families had 'gone home to Mam.'

So, they were without the battalion family support system. I was in close consultation with the team who then set up in Maindy Barracks at Cardiff. The Welsh local media played the game and were understandably reluctant to bother families - but, at the same time, they were looking for a story. With liaison from the Families Officer I arranged to approach bereaved families and explain that the press was outside their homes and would like to talk to them. It was a family decision to talk to them or not. And I was happy to sit in and make sure there was minimum distress. The media were, bless them, extremely sensitive.

Such was the interest and so the decision was taken to invite the media to a family day at Maindy Barracks. A number of brave mothers came out, holding hands (none of the fathers could face this ordeal) and they tried to answer questions. Perhaps, you have been present at those sorts of interviews where the questions tail off, but no one wants to close notebooks in case the prime question suddenly gets asked. Then one reporter finally asked ' will you be calling for your son to be returned.' One of the ladies turned to him and said quietly – ' my son doesn't exist anymore and there is nothing to bring home.'

I called a halt and ushered the ladies away while two regimental policemen restrained the Welsh Guards families' officer who was trying to thump a very ashen-faced reporter.

Embedding the media is the optimum approach

Former Chief of the Air Staff, Air Chief Marshal Peter Squire reflects on his dealings with the press throughout his career. He was Commanding Officer of No.1 Fighter Squadron during the Falklands War where his bravery in flying low level land attack and reconnaissance missions off the Royal Navy's carriers won him the Distinguished Flying Cross.

My first meaningful, albeit one sided, encounter with the media as a serving officer came shortly after my arrival at RAF Kemble in the autumn of 1973. I had been appointed, unwisely as it turned out, to take over from Ian Dick as RAFAT Team Leader with a direction from on high to change some of the long standing characteristics of their flying – not least in height above ground level.

In about my second week, I was confronted by a newspaper photograph of the team, supposedly taken during their display at the Shawbury Families Day earlier in the year. The photograph appeared to show the Team in 'Concorde' formation at very low altitude directly above the heads of a group of children sitting on the grass. The photograph accompanied an article under the heading: 'Red Arrows to Fly Most Dangerous Manoeuvre Ever.'

It had taken a considerable amount of time and effort to persuade higher authority that the Opposition Loop, to be flown be the synchro-pair, could safely be included in the 1974 Display. The sensational headline combined with the Shawbury photograph, which turned out to be a 'cut and paste' job, was the last thing I needed. Fortunately, the spectre of a three-day working week and its ramifications for the nation was a sufficient distraction for Headquarters Flying Training Command and the moment passed.

However, the three day working week and a perceived concern that the media and/or public might resent seeing the team using fuel for training – even aviation kerosene – resulted in a four month training embargo and any realistic chance of my remaining in post for the 1974 season.

Although a disappointment at the time, moving to the Harrier Force in 1975 put me in a position to command No 1(Fighter) Squadron in 1982 and the opportunity to lead a fixed wing squadron in conflict, flying from an World War. My aircraft were initially deployed as attrition replacements for Sea Harriers lost in combat but, in the event, they were used as reinforcements and, on arrival in the Total Exclusion Zone, took on the responsibility for all subsequent land attack and low level reconnaissance missions.

Our first operational missions were flown on the day before the amphibious landings at San Carlos, by which time the team of war correspondents, including Max Hastings, Brian Hanrahan and Tony Nicholson were in the process of moving ashore to follow the progress of the land battle. My contact with journalists at that stage was, therefore, short lived and, thereafter, the air war received little coverage other than the unfortunate disclosure in UK that Argentinian pilots were flying too low for their bombs to fuse.

In most if not all other respects, I suspect that MoD and the Services were well pleased by the modus operandi imposed on correspondents deployed to the South Atlantic, as defence owned all the communication nodes and, certainly, all the satellite links, which gave a significant degree of control over the content and timing of media reports.

Following the cease fire, I was invited to get my aircraft and personnel ashore as soon as possible to take on the air defence task over the Islands in order that HMS Hermes and, subsequently, HMS Invincible could return to UK. Some 10 days after our disembarkation to Stanley, the detachment received a combined visit by members of the All Party Defence Committee and the Press. Conditions on the airfield were challenging to say the very least, with personnel living in tents, snow on the ground and temperatures well below freezing. The Press were keen to record a traditional reveille scene but I knew this would not be appreciated by my team but some were content to be filmed out 'walking the dog' (a beer can on a piece of string) last thing at night!!

In early November, we were again visited by the BBC and ITN in the guise of Nicholas Witch ell and Brent Sadler, and Jeremy Harris from BBC Radio. By now the operation was well established, albeit conditions and facilities were still somewhat bleak. It was most pleasant, therefore, to be taken for dinner at the Upland Goose on the night before our visitors departed on the daily C130.

From my perspective, I believe the concept of embedding the media within military units – as it worked during Desert Shield / Desert Storm during Gulf War 1 – is the optimum approach to balanced reporting.

Many such journalists were given extensive and privileged access to commanders' intentions on the basis that release of such plans was embargoed until a given time, but it allowed them to prepare copy and have it ready for immediate transmission when cleared. At the same time, it was difficult – even if they had

wished – to resist the bonds of loyalty that were created with the units themselves. While strongly supporting this model, I fully accept that others must be able to operate remote from own troops in order to present the wider picture.

During Gulf War 1, I was running the RAF Operations Room in MOD on behalf of the Assistant Chief of Air Staff – AVM (later ACM) John Thomson. On two or three days a week, there were 'Un-attributable Press Briefing' chaired by the then Assistant Under Secretary for Commitments, a delightful civil servant of the old school who wished to reveal as little as humanly possible; indeed, his resistance to interrogation technique was masterful.

On the morning of Day Seven, when on each of the previous nights we had lost a Tornado aircraft for any one of a variety of causes, our chairman was tackled by Peter Snow, in his very direct manner, as to how many aircraft had now been lost. After a series of deflecting answers to the same straight question, he agreed that it was 'about six'.

'Would that be 5.9 or 6.1,' was Peter Snow's immediate response and, with reluctance, it was agreed that six was the answer. These were not particularly illuminating sessions, but it was an opportunity to meet faces from the media – TV, radio and press – that would be valuable experience for the future.

As Deputy Chief of Defence Staff for Programmes and Personnel, I oversaw the MoD's response to the Commission for Racial Equality (CRE) charge of systemic racialism within the Armed Forces. The degree, to which the accusation was correct or not, was not relevant. We had to increase our appeal as a career of choice across the diverse population of the UK and this would not happen against the backdrop of such a charge. Through a considerable amount of interaction with the CRE and the media, it was possible to turn the tide of criticism to the benefit of the three Services and move forward, although in the field of personnel there will always be set backs that catch you wrong footed.

On becoming Chief of the Air Staff in March 2000, I took the decision that I would not openly seek exposure through the media, while being prepared willingly to respond to legitimate requests. It was also a time when genuine defence correspondents were in short supply; many had more than one hat – akin to the subsequent fate of the Secretary of State for Defence.

"For the greater part of my three years as Chief, there was reasonable stability in funding and harmony in inter-Service relationships; indeed the top military team of that time got on extremely well and there was no systematic leaking, counter briefing or special pleading. I enjoyed what links I had to individual journalists and I hope that my infrequent formal briefings to them were balanced and soundly based. It was most gratifying on retirement to be 'lunched out' by a broad cross section of defence correspondents at the RAF Club.

THE TASK FORCE REQUEST PROGRAMME

Alan Grace, veteran broadcaster and official historian of British Forces Broadcasting recalls how the Services' radio station swung into action as the Task Force sailed.

'The time in Britain is twelve noon, in Germany it's one o'clock, but home and away it's time for Two Way Family Favourites.' That was probably one of the most famous announcements on radio during the 1950s and 60s. At its peak the programme had an audience of 16 million in Britain alone, but it had not always been like that. Before 1941, there had been no concept of a record request programme for the Forces but after receiving a postcard from three army sergeants serving in the Western Desert, the Head of Presentation for the BBC's General Overseas Service, suggested a record request programme be produced for personnel serving overseas.

Following a fall-off in requests for the programme, the last Family Favourites was broadcast on 13 January 1980 during Pete Murray's Sunday Show. From over 1,000 requests a week at the height of its popularity, it was down to between 20 and 30 and the programme was no longer viable.

It was, therefore, surprising following a suggestion from the MoD to broadcast a request programme for the men and women travelling to the South Atlantic in 1982. Would anyone be interested? However, the number of letters in late April 1982 had reached 1,000 per day. This was due entirely to the support of Fleet Street, who carried the story of the programme linked with a photograph of the presenter, Sarah Kennedy.

Sarah, pictured below, who had just been voted ITV's personality of the year and had been a former member of BFBS, was a natural for this programme. Each evening I sorted out, from the hundreds of letters, the selection for the next day's programme. Special emphasis was given for wedding anniversaries and birthdays. Although on one occasion, during a special programme for 2 Para, one of the wives, who was being interviewed, announced on air that she was pregnant! Her husband discovered this as he was sailing south.

Originally, the idea was for three half hour programmes per week, which would be transmitted by the BBC, through their system on Ascension Island, down to the Falkland Islands. Each letter had to be carefully checked for any form of information, which might have been of some use to the Argentinians.

I remember one such letter from a proud grandmother for her grandson, who informed me that he was on board one of the supply ships for HMS Invincible. It was a case of quick censorship before the requests were handed to Sarah. Once the fighting had begun, the number of request programmes increased to seven a week and Sarah, pictured right, was joined by Nicol Raymond from the BFBS TV service.
The biggest problem was how to file the letters and so I asked our BFBS stores for 50 box files. Each file would be given over to a regiment, squadron or a ship. The stores in Kings Buildings could not supply the requisite number and a request for extra files to the MoD met with the question: 'Why do you want so many?'

We had a number of service wives, who were helping to index the various requests and one of these, Mo Maltby, whose husband was on the staff of Admiral Sir John Fieldhouse at Northwood. Mo offered to ask her husband that evening if he could help and the next morning, bright and early, the box files arrived.

The news that Prince Andrew was taking part in the Falklands War prompted stories in the media about requests for him. It was not long before at least 100 requests per day were arriving at Kings Buildings for the Prince. A Mrs. Pamela Richardson wrote: 'please mention HRH Prince Andrew in one of your requests. I mean, his mother can hardly write in for a mention, can she?' Another request coupled the BBC's correspondent Brian Hanrahan with Prince Andrew and wishing them both a speedy and safe return home.

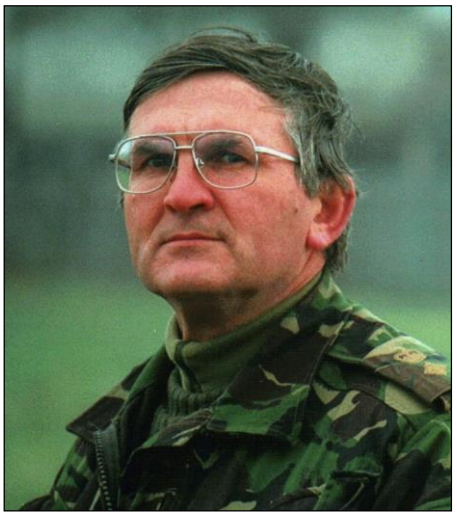
The BFBS team always checked with the MoD before the programmes were broadcast regarding casualties and on their advice, the occasional request was deleted. I remember going to meet the wives and families of HMS Glamorgan and I was editing the programme when I received a call informing me that the ship had been hit. I checked the list with the Admiral's staff in Portsmouth and fortunately, none of the people mentioned on the tape had been injured during the attack.

The Task Force Request Programme, which began on April 26th 1982 ended on July 16th. During the 76 programmes, over 7,000 requests had been broadcast to the men and women in the South Atlantic.
It was at this point the request team began to develop special programmes for individual units and ships by interviewing the wives and families back in the UK. The programmes, on cassette, were flown out to the units wherever they happened to be.

At the same time, well-known personalities offered their services as guest presenters on these special unit programmes. Among them was Fiona Richmond, pictured left with a Task Force Mascot knitted by the mother of a Royal Marine, Windsor Davies, The Three Degrees and David Hamilton.

A VIEW FROM AUSTRALIA – the Falklands war from down-under

Lieutenant Colonel Barry Hawgood discovers that in the aftermath truth can be stronger than fiction.



When working on the other side of the world in 1982, before we were all into mobile communications and laptops of any significance, and when needing to communicate with the family at home, the main methods was by an expensive telephone call or writing an air mail letter. So while working as a staff officer with a bunch of Australian serving officers, plus a New Zealander and Canadian in the newly formed Australian Joint Warfare Establishment, an outpost of the Australian Defence Department, I found myself in a most interesting position with regard to the developments in the South Atlantic.

I came into work one day and the headlines in the Australian Daily newspaper was 'Argentineans Invade South Georgia'. Previous to this the Australian media had been reporting that Argentina was seemingly gearing up for some form of offensive action, and what was clear to me at the time as well as my other staff officers was that the United Kingdom seemed to be unaware of the developing crisis. Until that particular day.

The Australian media were certainly on the ball with regard to following the subsequent events and then we heard that the UK government was finally reacting to the incident, by developing plans to retake South Georgia. Before that happened of course, we heard that the Argentineans had attacked the Falkland

Islands. I had a very good friend working in the British Embassy at the time and I rang him to find out what was happening and whether or not we were going to be recalled. From that call I learnt that those of us who were currently pilots and on an exchange with the Australians were the only people being recalled. The rest of us were told to get on with our jobs!

I returned to the UK to work in the MoD as the Royal Marines' press officer, and for the next two years I and my small team found ourselves immersed in media enquiries from those who wanted to write a book about different aspects of the operation, to those who wanted to make a film.

It became a very busy time and the one media event that stood out for me was when the Corps in conjunction with the Naval media staff decided to make a PR film that featured the Royal Marines during the weeks they were fighting the Argentineans. One thought had been to do a film featuring the exploits of the SBS (Special Boat Service), but as most of their operations took place at night, it seemed inappropriate. So searching for another theme, I was on the train with a Captain Rod Boswell, who had been 3 Commando Brigade's mountain and arctic leader but in the Falklands he headed up the Brigade's eyes and ears.

Talking to him on the train about one incident, when he and his men attacked Argentinean special forces who were holding a tactical position on the path to Stanley, called Top Malo House, the remains of the house after the action are pictured right, it came clear to me that this was the incident that would really reflect the Royal Marines' ethos and capabilities.

So was born a short film that turned out to be so powerful that, while it went out to be shown in cinemas around the country in support of one of George Peckinpah's full-on war films, the short film about the Royal Marines' success at Top Malo House was withdrawn because complaints indicated the film was showing too clearly what the war in the South Atlantic was truly like.

No sleep as the Falklands news dominated BAOR exercises

Major Ian Proud soldiers on as HQ staff avidly follow the BBC reports

Whilst the Falklands absorbed huge amounts of men, materials and public interest, British Army of the Rhine continued with its role of defending West Germany from an attack by the Warsaw Pact. So in May 1982 BAOR ran one of its regular CPXs.

In those days CPXs then were mini FTXs in that all the HQs down to brigade level were deployed in the field, so the actualities of moving main and alternate HQs could be practiced as well as the realities of working in full 'Noddy Suits' and finding a place to sleep sleeps in yet another barn.

At the time I was with CVHQ (RA) as a G3 (Ops) watch keeper with 1 Armoured Division. Whilst one of my friends in CVHQ (RA) self-deprecatingly described himself as one of the highest paid Lance Corporals in the Army, we were the continuity in these HQs.

We had been on many exercises over the years, and had seen the Divisions defend from all corners of the compass and we knew how to exploit the 'water sandwich' in the middle of the 1st British Corps area and how to use the Sibesse Gap to delay any aggressive incursion amongst other ploys.

We would fly out to BAOR, dump our kit in the mess and deploy immediately into the field. Normally with exquisite timing it would mean we would go straight to work at midnight for an eight-hour shift, at the end of which there would be four hours of blessed sleep. Except the Falklands war meant nearly everyone on the exercise knew someone down south and followed the news with avid interest.

So as one crashed down for sleep, having heard the top of the hour news and just drifting nicely into the land of nod, the radio in the sleeping area would be turned on for the mid-hour news at which half the people in the sleeping area would clump across the room to listen before clumping across the wooden floor for a quick kip before the top of the hours news and so on.

As the HQs were only in position for 24 hours before moving to yet another site, every third sleeping session was spent in a vehicle moving to the next location. The most 'comfortable' move was in the back of a 432 APC sleeping on a pile of sand bags. This made a change from camp beds in the back of a four tonner.

After about three days of nearly no sleep, we watch keepers opted to commandeer our own barn and sleep uninterrupted by news-hungry soldiers. A day or two later having recovered from lost sleep we were able to take a little more interest in news from the South Atlantic.

The good news was that despite having a Div HQ wiped out by a Scud missile (devilishly clever DS) 1 Armoured Division successfully thwarted yet another attack across the Inner German Border without even using one media operations officer.

As a fascinating post script: in October 1982, at a CVHQ (RA) training weekend we had a presentation on the battle of Tumbledown Mountain by the Battle Adjutant' of the 2nd Bn Scots Guards. It made FTXs in Germany look tame.

Ah Well! Back to Normal

Former TAPIO, Major Peter Rhodes followed the Falklands War from the news desk of the award-winning Wolverhampton Express & Star. Like many of his TA colleagues of 1982 he was frustrated at not being involved. He adds this postscript to *The NetWorker's* review of members' experiences.

O it's Tommy this, an' Tommy that, an' Tommy, go away;
But it's Thank you, Mister Atkins, when the band begins to play,
The band begins to play, my boys, the band begins to play,
O it's Thank you, Mister Atkins, when the band begins to play

Those of us who joined the TA in the 1970s were regarded by our contemporaries at best as a little odd, at worst as warmongers. We had grown up in the Swinging Sixties when, as everybody knew, all you needed was love and all the complexities of the world could be summed up in a button badge or a placard.

"Wars will cease when men refuse to fight," read the little blue badge I wore with pride on my school blazer. Utterly meaningless, in hindsight. We wore our hair long and our idols were Lennon, McCartney, Hendrix and Che. And then, for reasons I could never quite explain, I took myself off to the Drill Hall in Stratford-upon-Avon. I became Signalman Rhodes in 67 (The Queen's Own Warwickshire & Worcestershire Yeomanry) Signal Squadron, an excellent little unit which, against the odds, managed to keep its traditions and its name through 40 years of TA reforms.

I joined in 1977 in an age when most people knew we had an army but didn't entirely understand what it was doing in Northern Ireland. The mood towards the military was no more than vaguely supportive and occasionally hostile. I recall one recruiting display at a summer fete which coincided with Mass ending at the nearby Roman Catholic Church. "Ye murderers!" snarled an Irish girl as one of our signalmen attempted to chat her up. In

uniform at weekends, people rarely made eye contact and we Territorials had to choose our pubs with care. And then, on Friday 2nd April 1982, everything changed. The day after the Argentine invasion of the Falklands, we had a squadron maintenance weekend. I called my troop together, told them as much as I knew about the history of the Falklands, the invasion and the Thatcher government's determination to reclaim th0se little islands 8,000 miles away.

I reminded them that a unit such as ours, with long-range HF Marconi radios, might well find itself needed Down South. For the first time since any of us had joined, there seemed a real possibility that we might go to war. I told my troop to hope for peace but keep their powder dry. In the event we were not needed although much of our tentage and other equipment was (I believe it went down on the Atlantic Conveyor.)

But over the next few weeks something strange happened. As we travelled on convoys, people sounded their horns, pulled alongside, and gave us big smiles, waves and thumbs-up signs. Strangers would approach us on exercise; ask us how we though this Falklands business would turn out, and wish us well. In Kipling's immortal words, it was "Thank you, Mister Atkins", when the band begins to play."

A steady stream of old soldiers turned up at the drill hall, to ask it they might be needed. I recall a couple of more mature chaps who had missed National Service and wanted to enlist with us, in case they could help. A curious thing was happening. The Great British Public was rediscovering its armed forces and deciding it

was pretty damn proud of them. It didn't seem to matter who you were; if you were in DPM and boots, the people loved you, especially after that dreadful night when news came that HMS Sheffield had been sunk and the talking war turned very serious.

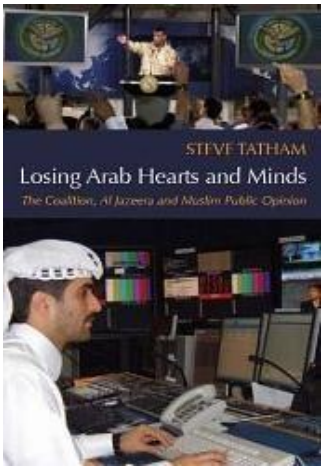
I don't think any of us imagined the Falklands War would be over so quickly. There was much talk about endless street fighting in Port Stanley. And then the white flags suddenly appeared, the Union Jacks were run up the flagpoles and we rejoiced.

And the Great British Public? The honeymoon period did not last forever. Those of us in uniform resumed our lukewarm relationship with a public which was delighted to see the Falklands liberated but complained endlessly about our Bedford lorries blocking their streets, or the noise of rifles on the ranges or generators being test-run.

Some weeks after the Falklands War was over, we were returning from Salisbury Plain when a car behind our Land Rover sounded its horn. The soldier in the back, a TA military policeman, turned round genially to acknowledge this gesture of good will. The driver of the car behind, a man of the National Service generation with some unresolved issues, pointed first at the MP's red beret and then gave him a big, angry V-sign.

Ah, well! Back to normal.

The Pen's authors at work



The failure to win over Arab Hearts and Minds

A courageous book, says Major Gerry Bartlett

'Arab intellectuals are so angry about Western behaviour, and so trapped in their own humiliation in the defeat of Saddam, that they deny realities or invent new ones - which they then believe. It is part of the martyrisation of Saddam... 'Professor George Joffe on Arabian psyche and the West's failed Hearts and Minds' campaign in Iraq.

Relentless demonisation of the Arab media, plus nagging doubts and divisions among Coalition forces fighting in Iraq, meant failure to win-over public hearts and minds, according to a new book. Steve Tatham, a serving Royal Navy officer and corporate communications specialist, the author of "Losing Arab Hearts and Minds," worked alongside the American military in the Gulf in 2002-3, co-ordinating the huge media offensive that preceded and accompanied the invasion of Iraq.

Steve witnessed how, in advance of the invasion, the US administration recognised the need to win over public opinion in the Arab world through a concerted 'hearts and minds' campaign. But, as fighting intensified, Steve Tatham, RN spokesman on the Coalition operation, gradually became aware of how badly the Arab media were treated, in particular the personnel of Al-Jazeera satellite TV, whose Baghdad offices were attacked by tank fire.

It seems that the mounting death toll among both military and Iraqi civilians, and the emerging post-occupation insurgency, prompted American media managers to virtually ignore Arab journalists, focusing instead on a largely acquiescent US press. And broadcasts by the Arab media of images of dead and captive US servicemen led the Bush administration 'to demonise such channels and accuse them of anti-Western bias.'

In his rich, gripping and insightful book, Tatham recalls that in July 2004, he was invited as the British Ministry of Defence representative, to attend the first Al-Jazeera world forum in Doha, Qatar. During that forum he appeared on the channel's flagship current affairs programme The Opposite Direction,' hosted by British-educated Dr Faisal al-Kasim.

He asked Al-Kasim about events in Iraq, and after considering his questions carefully, Al-Kasim, in quiet articulate English, said: 'Saddam Hussein should now be released from jail without charge.' As a military officer intimately involved in the planning and subsequent operation to remove Saddam from power, Tatham was stunned - and asked if the victims of Saddam's numerous crimes of torture, execution and mass murder did not deserve justice.

The highly intelligent, influential and renowned broadcaster, Al-Kasim told Tatham with 'absolute sincerity' that: 'Iraq's mass graves contained, not victims of the regime, but victims of the Iran-Iraq war and that Halabja had been poison-gassed not by Saddam but by Iran.'

Asked to apply some context to Al-Kasim's comments, Professor George Joffe, the world-renowned experts on the region, said: 'You have had the great Middle-East self-denial experience. Arab intellectuals are so angry about Western behaviour and so trapped in their own humiliation in the defeat of Saddam that they deny realities or invent new ones - which they then believe.

'It is part of the process of the martyrisation of Saddam - of course he did most, if not all, alleged against him, but many Arabs need to deflect blame that might rebound on them.'

This is a book crying out to be written and Steve Tatham has done an excellent job with it, dotting the Is and crossing the Ts which for so long have been puzzling military, media and Gulf War enthusiasts on many counts - not least the reasons why the military lost the war of words and sent the Arab press to Coventry.

This is a courageous book which bows the knee to no man - Brit, Iraqi or American - and the author should be congratulated on the lucid and informed way he tells it as it was.' One particularly lucid passage in The Reckoning chapter features an Australian journalist, Paul McGeough, of The Age newspaper: I have just returned to my Baghdad hotel in Abu Nuwas Street, which runs along the east bank of the Tigris, when a US Humvee roars past. Blaring from a block of six big speakers strapped to its rooftop is John Mellencamp's 1980s American anthem, Pink Houses: Ain't that America? You and me! Ain't that America? Something to seeeee !

'This may be a huge joke for someone whose global horizons end at his extended fingertips, but such vulgar and contemptuous performances announce to the Iraqi people: 'The hell with you and your culture. We own your country and we'll do what we damn well please. And if you're praying when we blast by in our Humvee, then too bad.'
In Tikrit, one US Army Colonel told Associated Press (AP): 'The enemy is a coward. He continues to hide behind women, children and his own population.' But as Steve Tatham observes: 'Yet Arab TV channels regularly aired coverage of Iraqi men being forced to lie face-down in the dirt with their hands tied behind their backs while their families looked on at what was clearly a humiliating scene.

‘The paradox was acute, and the inability of senior officers to recognise the effect on Arab opinion on images and statements such as these, was disastrous. The absence of sophistication among US troops was probably based on understandable but remediable ignorance.

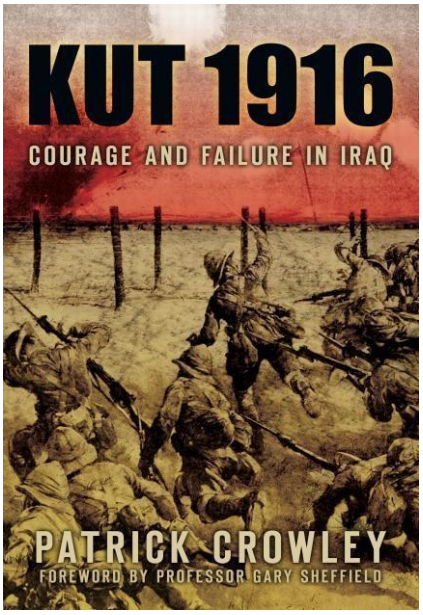
‘British forces in the southern part of the country were praised for their handling of sensitive situations, many commentators referring to the experience gained in Northern Ireland. This may be the case although British troops generally have a less gung-ho attitude than their US counterparts.’

This is a fascinating book that should be on the compulsory reading list of all Services Media Ops officers.

LOSING ARAB HEARTS And MINDS, by Steve Tatham , hard-back £20. Published by Hurst & Company, 41 Great Russell Street, London, WC1B 3PL. ISBN 1-85065-811-0

Enduring untold viciousness and cruelty

Major Gerry Bartlett writes: ‘It is with the ground commander that the buck must stop for he can lead.....or resign. Townshend did neither and is damned for all time. Physical courage requires nothing more than the brutal application of willpower and whilst the officers and soldiers were not short of this.... it was moral courage that was lacking and that is the measure of a Genera.’ Lt. Gen. Sir Graeme Lamb, Commander Field Army 2009



The First World War Mesopotamian Campaign resulted in one of the British Army's worst-ever defeats in its military history, according to a new and authoritative book by a serving infantry officer.

Kut 1916, by Colonel Patrick Crowley, a Deputy Regimental Colonel in The Princess of Wales's Royal Regiment, majors on our soldiers' exemplary courage and abject failure, culminating in Major-General Sir Charles Townshend's surrender of his force to the Turks at Kut -al- Amara on April 29, 1916.

More than 13,000 British and Indian troops went into captivity - many did not survive their incarceration and brutal treatment by their captors, while others were able to stoically endure untold viciousness and cruelty and even make elaborate escape plans. There had been 3,776 casualties during the four-month siege of Kut, 23,000 men were killed or wounded during the unsuccessful relief attempts, and a further 4,000 were to die as prisoners

This riveting and exciting book, a must for any military field commander or military history enthusiast, gives a clear insight into the horrors of war, the problems caused by mirages and frequent sandstorms in theatres such as Iraq - and the inadequacies, poor logistics and political dissentions which often taunt our Generals.

From an avid reader of military history's point of view, this book-the first detailed account of the human dimension of war in Mesopotamia I have ever seen - really brings the campaign to life and gives us an insight into the hardships endured and valour shown by our soldiers.

Unquestionably, this book is a carefully- researched and powerful story of blunders, sacrifice, Imprisonment and escape throughout the Allied campaign in Mesopotamia (now Iraq) which began in 1914 as a relatively simple operation to secure the oilfields in the Shatt-al-Arab delta and Basra area.

Initially, it must be said, the operation was a great success, but as the Army progressed towards Baghdad, its poor logistic support, training, equipment and command, left it isolated and besieged by the Turks, without a sign of relief by 1916.

Professor Gary Sheffield, Professor of War Studies at Birmingham University, says: 'The Mesopotamia Campaign of the First World War remains a neglected facet of that terrible conflict - although events of recent years have given it additional currency. "The campaign was a product of two interweaved factors: the deadlock on the Western Front and

British imperialism. Once it became clear that the fighting in France and Flanders was going to be long, drawn- out, bloody and indecisive, decision makers began to search for strategic alternatives." In 1914, Mesopotamia was a province of the Ottoman (Turkish) Empire. British and Indian Troops were landed at Basra, at the head of the Persian Gulf, at the end of 1914, in a limited and sensible move to secure oil supplies.

But under the pressure of events, the aims of the British forces became increasingly ambitious. Although primarily a struggle to prevent German domination of Europe, the war was also seen as an opportunity to strengthen and expand the Empire. Turkey, says Professor Sheffield in his forward to this fascinating book "had been the sick man of Europe for decades, and the time seemed to have arrived for the Ottoman Empire to be partitioned between Britain, France and Russia.

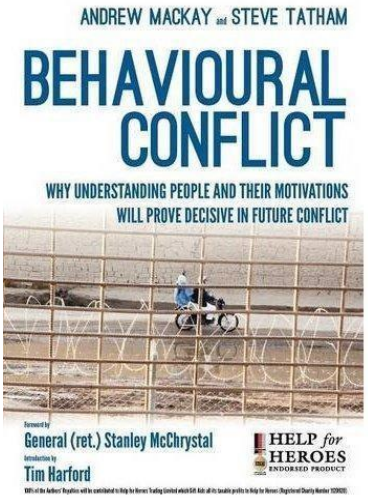
Almost as a reflex, bit by bit, the British forces advanced deeper into the interior. The defeat at Kut, a story well told by Patrick Crowley, pictured right, in his book, was a disaster waiting to happen. In his compelling 'Afterword,' Lieutenant-General Sir Graeme Lamb, Commander Field Army 2009, says that Kut 1916 is a tale "Of the hardihood, endurance and courage of the British Army, but it is also a depressing story of political and military foolhardiness.

"It is a story littered with ambition, ego, ignorance, indifference, failure in communication, double talk, and double crossing, a lesson in tactics, the operational art or lack of it, and, ultimately, strategic drift.

"Colonel Crowley has, in a very soldierly manner, taken an almost forgotten campaign, certainly a forgotten army, and captured the soul of what it must have been like to have fought and won, to have fought and lost, of hopes raised and dashed, of the fortitude of our forefathers, and brought it to life nearly 100 years on."

Kut 1916, by Patrick Crowley, The History Press, £25. ISBN 978 0 7524 5447 4

WAR IS NOT A MARKETING EXERCISE



It is an understatement of epic proportion, but every discussion of counter-insurgency should begin with the truism that it is complex...” General Stanley McChrystal, former Commander ISAF, Afghanistan writes Major Gerry Bartlett

An Army General and a Royal Navy Officer are so frustrated at the paucity of understanding about which key audiences were for the West's message in Iraq and Afghanistan, that they have written a new book urging “profound change” to the conduct of war amongst the people.

In their book, `Behavioural Conflict,' Major General Andrew Mackay and

serving Royal Navy Commander, Steve Tatham, say that whilst geopolitics, economics, religion and ethnicity all play crucial roles in starting and sustaining conflict, they both believe:

“It will be people's behaviour, and our ability to understand and alter that behaviour, which will become *the* defining characteristic of resolving armed disputes – be it before (and thus acting as a deterrence) or after.

“We believe that whilst behaviour is undoubtedly determined by a complex set of individual experiences, it may also be based upon a reality of perception (perception shaped by both the new frontiers of the information age, particularly the internet and the so-called 'citizen journalist) and concurrently upon centuries-old constructs that guide and govern group behaviours.”

The authors of this ground-breaking and excellent book, say they have often heard their adversaries’ activities described as “irrational” but they suspect that the only irrationality is our ability to make a conceptual leap into the world that has shaped and formed their actions.

“Had we done so, and had we really understood what it was that drove people's behaviour, rather than judging it against our own values and moral compass, we suspect that we would not be talking about irrationality quite so flippantly and that the Afghan conflict, perhaps even the Iraqi one that preceded it, would not have cost us so much time, blood and treasure.

“We believe that Her Majesty’s Armed Forces, and those of our allies, will have to understand these concepts and then apply that understanding to military and diplomatic advantage in the future. Increasingly we (and in particular the British Army) have started to generically refer to this as `influence,' but we do so without any real understanding of what the word really means.

“This book then is the (incomplete) story of our journey in that understanding.”

Commander Steve Tatham, who currently divides his time between the UK and Afghanistan, where he advises on strategic and tactical influence, told me: “ We wrote this book as a result of frustration: frustration at the paucity of understanding as to whom the key audiences for the West's message were in Iraq and Afghanistan.

“We don't understand the motivations for people behaviours – not in 2001 and not now. And I was particularly frustrated, at the manner in which huge, and often-nugatory effort was put into shaping attitudes, in huge advertising and marketing-type campaigns, with little understanding that attitudes do not lead to behaviours and that war is not a marketing exercise, particularly for a population as complex and disparate as Afghans.

Major General (Retd) Andrew MacKay

This complex and incredibly erudite book needs to be studied closely and rationally, but one section which stands out in my mind, was that detailing a Royal Marines 40 Commando troop patrol in the unpopulated area south of the Kajaki Dam in southern Afghanistan, which came across a lone farmer sowing seeds in a field.

In the pattern of life prevailing in an area where the local population had long fled because of continual fighting, this was an event worthy of investigation – doubly so, because the planting season was at the very end of its cycle.

The Royal Marines initial assumption that the farmer was planting poppy seed was abysmally wrong – he was, in fact, planting wheat seed. His answer to the obvious question `why?' suprised the young Royal Marines patrol commander: As a result of the assasination of Benazir Bhutto in Rawalpindi, the farmer had calculated that the price of wheat was going to soar and he wanted to take advantage.

To the Royal Marines and to their senior officers in HQ, this was astonishing – but there are other more fundamental lessons to be learnt from the incident. The first is that all of The Royal Marines' instincts and

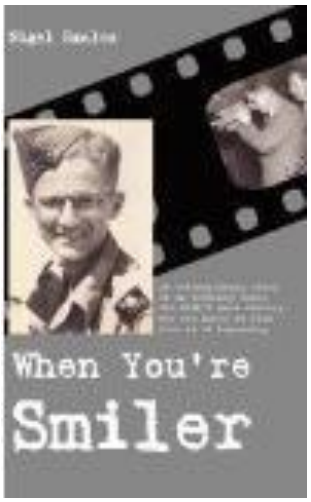
experience had led them to make the *wrong* assumption about the man's motivation and he was not, after all, involved in illegal activity.
Despite being some of the world's most highly trained troops, the Royal Marines stumbled, by accident, upon an understanding of the motives of the people they were there to protect.

A hard-hitting, uncompromising but valuable book that I commend to anybody concerned with the hearts and minds of a people involved in conflict.

Behavioural Conflict, by Andrew Mackay and Steve Tatham, £18.95 but discounted to £17 if bought via the book's website, www.behavioural conflict.com. All authors' profits go to Help for Heroes. Military Studies Press. ISBN: 978 1 78039 468 8

Well-done 'Son of Smiler!'

"A painstakingly-accurate portrait of a brave Army cameraman at work amid battlefield slaughter, when all the human mind wants to do is turn away from man's inhumanity to man...." writes Major Gerry Bartlett



The Army's Film and Photographic Unit, responsible for ground-breaking combat films and features throughout World War Two, is a largely "forgotten band of military publicists" which has never been given the credit it was due.

Not until now, that is, because the devoted son of a pioneer unit film cameraman, has written a new book about his father, the late Eddie `Smiler' Smales, who was an accidental pioneer in British feature films in the 1930s, a combat cameraman in the 1940s, and in television news from the 1950s.

Nigel Smales, 61, a retired management consultant, who lives with his wife, Caroline, and daughter Keira, in Taplow, Buckinghamshire, and is the author of *When You're Smiler,* said: "My Dad and all the other members of the AFPU never get the credit they deserve.
"I understand that it would be hard to give individuals credit, but the unit should be acknowledged collectively – and Dad did his bit. His is a lovely, lovely story of an ordinary chap who did something extraordinary. He made Desert Victory, for instance, perhaps the most famous campaign film of all time."

This extraordinarily well-researched and highly emotionally-charged book, details Smiler's life from birth in Port Said in 1920, his wanting "to be in pictures" as a young boy, to joining the Royal Engineers' Embodied Territorial Army on June 7, 1939, and his exciting career thereafter.

Smiler's world changed dramatically in the Autumn of 1941 when, during a spot of home leave, he bumped into an old friend who told him that the Army was talking about putting together its own film unit.

The War Office approved the establishment of the AFPU on October 24 – just in time to save `Smiler' being confined to a desk with the Royal Army Ordnance Corps. As soon as the AFPU announcement appeared on his camp notice board, he did something that generations of old soldiers always fought against – he volunteered. And by the end of January 1942, he was in Egypt, as one of the original contingent of cine-cameramen and stills photographers in No. 1 Army Film and Photographic Section, the first section of the AFPU to be formed.

Unlike the Germans or the French, at the outbreak of war the British had no cameramen or photographers in uniform – it just was not done, perhaps for four reasons: The first, and least, perhaps, was the military view that non-combatant personnel with heavy equipment would just get in the way. The second, and most divisive, was rooted in profound, long-standing suspicion between the various military and civilian authorities – especially the Foreign Office, the War Office and the Ministry of Information.

It did not help that the Ministry of Information had no clear or accepted guidelines about the extent of its responsibilities or powers. What was plain, however, was that the Press saw it as shambolic, disorganised and downright obstructive. The third, and most telling reason, says the author was: “Just plain, universal naivety about the possible benefits either for military analysis or for publicity and propaganda purposes.

The fourth, and most subversive reason centered on the sharp political differences of the time, with Left and Right seeing the creeping gremlins of Fascism and Communism working surreptitiously to manipulate public opinion one way or the other. “It was a very British minefield with each faction determinedly wearing tailor-made blinkers and looking after only its own.”

Smiler's was a “good” and intensely busy war in many and varied theatres, all of which the book details graphically and interestingly. Smiler, pictured right, admitted to getting ammunition for his German Luger pistol from German prisoners and corpses and admitted to “firing it once or twice” - but never answered questions about whether or not he had actually killed anybody.

This fascinating and highly entertaining book, gives a personal perspective on the dramatic evolution of factual film and television in the mid-20th Century, set against the social, political and military history of the times. It tells tales of halcyon days in the British film industry and of early life and times at BBC TV, News, but its primary focus is on Smiler's adventures with the ground-breaking British Army's Film and Photographic Unit during World War Two.

The story is illustrated with 83 poignant photographs and sprinkled with anecdotes of well-known characters `Smiler' Smales worked with, including Alexander Korda, Laurence Harvey, Peter Ustinov, David Niven, Dickie Attenborough, Bernard Montgomery, John Mills and a host of other celebrities.

I would recommend this book to anybody with an interest in publicity, films and documentaries – particularly in a theatre of war. For a former Daily Telegraph military staff writer like me, it is an eye-opener and a salutary lesson in dogged determination and professionalism in the face of gut-wrenching battlefield slaughter.

Well done Son of Smiler, We will all learn much from this painstakingly accurate portrait of your brave Dad, a film cameraman, at work with his trusty camera when the human mind wants nothing more than to turn away from man's inhumanity to man.

`When You're Smiler,' by Nigel Smales. Limited edition £12.99 plus post and package The online version is £16.99 and can be ordered from www.lulu.com. The ISBN is: 978-1-4709-0463-0 Printed and bound in Great Britain by Marston Book Services Limited, Oxford. Produced in association with WORDS by Design, www.wordsbydesign.co.uk