



# Tidsskrift for Søværnen

UDGIVET AF SØE-LIEUTENANT-SELSKABET

NR. 3-4 · 2017 · 188. ÅRGANG



*Enduring lessons from the Falklands War for the U.S. Navy*



*Marinehjemmeværnet. Skitse til Flådplan 2032*



*Danske ubåde i Østersøen?*



*Søkadet 1942-43. Erindringer*



*Salget af De vestindiske Øer*



om ubådsvåbnets fremtidige muligheder i denne udvikling. Orlogshistorikeren Hans Christian Bjerg var indkaldt som særligt sagkyndig til at fremkomme med sit syn på ubådens muligheder i Østersøen. Han efterlyser i sit indlæg en genoptagelse af ubådsvåbnet i det danske søforsvar, og peger specielt på det arbejde omkring ubåde, der er indledt mellem den norske og den tyske flåde. Et udviklingsarbejde, som Danmark, efter hans mening, burde have tilsluttet sig for at følge med i, hvad der sker inden for dette område, der fortsat er under rivende udvikling.

I år var det 100 år siden, at de dansk vestindiske øer blev solgt til USA. Redaktøren publicerer i den anledning et essay, hvori han gør opmærksom på dette salgs flådemæssige aspekter. Siden 1860'erne har den amerikanske flådeledelse været klar over den strategiske betydning specielt af havnen på Skt. Thomas, og var gennem 50 år interesseret i en amerikansk erhvervelse. Under 1. verdenskrig var det i høj grad flådepolitiske grunde, der fik USA til at fremprovokere en dansk afhændelse.

Søe-Lieutenant-Selskabet er fortsat inde i en god udvikling med velbesøgte foredrag. Formanden, kaptajnøjntant Anna

Seidelin, redegør for status for selskabet i formandens beretning, der er gengivet i dette nummer.

Selskabet har været inde i en større omkalfatring i forbindelse med revision af medlemslister, abonnemeter til tidsskriftet og kontingentopkrævninger. Dette har været årsagen til, at tidsskriftets årgang for 2017 bliver udgivet i papirudgave senere end beregnet. Årgangen vil bestå af to dobbeltnumre med lidt udvidet sidetal i forhold til de normale udgivelser. Medlemmerne har været varskoet om dette forhold, ligesom tidsskriftets 2017, 1-2 nummer har været tilgængelig som pdf-fil for medlemmerne. Det forventes, at årgangen 2018 vil indeholde tre numre.

Det har tidligere herfra været nævnt, at bestyrelsen for Søe-Lieutenant-Selskabet planlagde en digitalisering af Tidsskriftet, fra det begyndte som Archiv for Søevæsenet i 1827 og frem til i dag som Tidsskrift for Søvæsen. Denne plan er ved at tage form, og vil efter alt at dømmes blive realiseret i 2018. Tidsskriftet er en guldgrube for al maritim forskning i Danmark igennem snart 200 år.

*Hans Christian Bjerg*

Artikler og indlæg der ønskes optaget i tidsskriftet, bedes fremsendt elektronisk i WORD format.

Bøger, der ønskes omtalt eller anmeldt, fremsendes til redaktørens privatadresse eller ekspeditionens adresse.

Annoncer og individuelle abonnemeter tegnes ved henvendelse til ekspeditionen

## ENDURING LESSONS FROM THE FALKLANDS WAR FOR THE U.S. NAVY 35 YEARS LATER

By  
**Dr. Sebastian Bruns**  
University of Kiel

*Dr. Sebastian Bruns heads the Center for Maritime Strategy & Security (CMSS) at the Institute for Security Policy University of Kiel (ISPK). His work focuses on naval strategy, maritime geopolitics, the German and United States navies, and maritime security issues. Dr. Bruns holds a PhD in Political Science (U of Kiel). His study "US Naval Strategy and National Security. The Evolution of American Maritime Power" (Routledge: London, 2017) follows American naval strategy from 1981 to 2016. He is the editor of the Routledge Handbook of Naval Strategy and Security, together with Joachim Krause (Routledge: London, 2016). He is the Director of the Kiel Seapower Series, Conference Chairman of the Kiel International Seapower Symposium, and was a major driver behind the Kiel Conferences on Maritime Security Challenges in 2016 (Focus: High North) and 2015 (Focus: Baltic Sea).*



### I. A peculiar little War

One of the more anecdotal accounts of the Falklands War relates to a rather chilling display of British black humour: On 4 May 1982, the Type42 destroyer HMS Sheffield (D80) was hit by an Argentine

Exocet antiship missile, costing the lives of 20 of her crew. The sevenyear old, 4,800ton warship was mortally disabled. It eventually foundered and was abandoned. Six days later, it was scuttled using depth charges. In the process of being rescued from the doomed vessel, sailors and officers are reported to have struck up the song "Always Look on the Bright Side (of Life)" together, a tune made famous in the 1979 movie "Monty Python's Life of Brian". Although this illustration may be cynical to the casual observer, the incident offers a sense of the mindset with which Britain went to war over the Falklands three and a half decades ago. Obviously, the conflict in the South Atlantic provided a host of other, much more sober insights – not least for the United States of America in general and the U.S. Navy in particular. In fact, it remains a principal point of departure for many naval observers to understand some dynamics of war at and

from the sea, if only because similar maritime engagements have been far and few since 1982.

The Falklands War was analysed in great detail, and not just in the U.K. and Argentina<sup>1</sup>. The United States tasked a group of researchers under the leadership of noted naval analyst Norman Polmar to study lessons for the U.S. Navy. As Ian Speller (2002:4) has stated, the conflict provided a rare insight into the performance of many modernday weapons, platforms, and sensors in actual combat. In addition, new tactics and techniques were tried and tested. They underlined (and in some case, confuted) particular skills and competence of the men and the machinery involved. The Falklands War was a conflict of many “firsts” of which the U.S. Navy interestedly took note:

- It was first time in the Cold War that a major navy came under sustained attack at sea by enemy aircraft;
- it marked the first successful attack of a nuclear hunter/killer submarine against a major enemy surface combatant;
- it was the operational debut of the vertical/short takeoff and landing (V/STOL) aircraft, the Harrier (the British lost a combined 10 of these jets in combat); and,
- it was the first illustration of the Royal Navy’s new Invincibleclass aircraft carrier in combat action (and accordingly, this particular warship’s strengths and vulnerabilities).

The course of conflict also provided some lessons in naval diplomacy. After the sinking of the cruiser ARA General Belgrano (C6) (2 May 1982) and HMS Sheffield effectively ruled out a peace

agreement, the political course of action was set for armed conflict. The U.S. was not a warring party, but Washington soon sided strongly with the government in London. A negotiated settlement or a peace plan would have likely frozen the status quo, significantly complicating any British attempts to expel the Argentine forces from the islands. It also would have robbed the U.K. of diplomatic clout and political and military momentum<sup>2</sup>. As recently declassified documents have shown (National Security Archive 2013), the United States covertly supported the United Kingdom since the early days of war, while publicly assuming the role of a mediator. This public “ringside seat” (Lehman 2012) included shuttle diplomacy by Secretary of State Alexander Haig between the United Kingdom and Argentina. Haig and then U.S. Representative to the United Nations Jeane Kirkpatrick, the administration’s strongest advocates for the Argentine position, were outmanoeuvred by the unconditional supporters of the British in the Reagan administration. The United States eventually provided intelligence, fuel, missiles, logistical assistance, and Phalanx guns in support of its venerable British ally. As John Lehman (Secretary of the Navy 1981-1987) unveiled on the occasion of the 30th anniversary of the war in 2012, “so great was the commitment to the cause that I was authorized to prepare a U.S. helicopter carrier, the USS Iwo Jima (LPH2), for use by the Royal Navy should HMS Invincible [R05] or Hermes [R12] be lost.”<sup>3</sup>

In February 1983, the Department of the Navy’s (DoN) Office of Program Appraisal (OPA) in Washington, D.C. issued an official, unclassified “Lessons of the



Falklands Summary Report”. Under a year after the outbreak of the hostilities in the United States’ backyard, the Department of the Navy’s analysis listed implications for the U.S. Navy for no less than 18 distinct fields of naval operations and associated areas. These included air operations, anti-air warfare (AAW), antiship missile defence, antisubmarine warfare (ASW), antisurface warfare (ASuW), amphibious operations, command/control/communications,<sup>4</sup> electronic warfare (EW), intelligence, environmental conditions, logistics/sustainability, mine warfare and countermeasures (MCM), personnel, press coverage, readiness and mobilization, ship survivability, special forces operations, as well as submarine and surface ship operations. As it were, the Falklands War provided a rare opportunity to study a broad number of issues relating to naval operations, maritime warfare, and strategy – not least for a dominant seapower such as the United States. And as a unique conflict this clash from more than 35 years ago holds continued relevance for naval forces in expeditionary operations until today and the U.S. Navy must heed those lessons in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

Navies often take a certain pride in relating to some enduring principles regarding their missions and the constants of seapower over the ages despite the advent of new technology and constant innovation and adaptation. When such analyses go back one hundred years and more, to the likes of Alfred Thayer Mahan and Julian Corbett, it is reasonable that going back a mere thirty-five years cannot possibly be a bridge too far for an assessment of enduring principles associated with a particular conflict. The issues identified in

the Department’s Falklands report serve as the point of departure for the following analysis. After pointing to the continuing relevance for the U.S. Navy and outlining some framework thoughts on how lessons are being learned, this essay looks at selected issues covered in the report. It will cursorily review how the U.S. Navy has fared in heeding some lessons associated with the war. It will explore whether there are patterns within the U.S. that are rooted in that war, and provide some broad observations regarding the larger strategic lessons that can be derived from the conflict for the U.S. Navy for more contemporary challenges. After all, the Falklands War has a surprising number of similarities to many potential flashpoints that U.S. naval (and policy) planners must take into consideration in the years to come. These may range from supporting Western allies against a resurgent Russia in the Baltic Sea and the Black Sea (as demonstrated in the wake of the Ukraine Crisis since 2014), to crisis response in the Western Pacific to diffuse territorial disputes in the East and South China Sea. The Navy may also need to ensure freedom of navigation through the Strait of Hormuz or other critical artificial or natural maritime choke points. In short, one of the greatest contingencies to plan for by the U.S. Navy in the post-Cold War, post-9/11 world is a regional aggressor that possesses advanced and capable weapons systems and which is determined to conduct an anti-access/area denial (A2/AD) campaign. As Griffin (2012) noted using the Falklands example, “It may seem strange to argue that a 30-year-old war between two Western nations is more relevant for the Navy of tomorrow than the last ten years of counterterrorism operations, but that is the most likely reality.”

## II. The Falklands War as an recurring point of Departure for the United States and its Navy

The war, and the subsequent report, came at a time of significant sea changes for the U.S. Navy. Work on “The Maritime Strategy”, an unclassified version of which was eventually published in 1986, was in full swing. That strategy was a global, joint and forward-operating declaratory capstone document that confronted the Soviet Union and served the dual purpose of being “a rationale for naval forces and an overall strategy on how to conduct maritime campaigns in the event of war [...]” (Barnett 2009:86). “The Maritime Strategy” succeeded in laying out a plan of how to strategically use the U.S. Navy in confronting the Soviet Union and it was placed in an overarching strategic framework of reference. It did not emphasize Falklands-style intra-alliance wars per se, but it anticipated clashes of an offensive-minded naval strategy with Warsaw Pact naval forces, and the resulting possibility of battle at sea. Against that background, drawing operational and tactical lessons from the Falklands War was in considerable demand for the authors of “The Maritime Strategy”. However, the end of the Cold War rendered the business model of “The Maritime Strategy” useless, for the time being. Instead, the Navy began a quest to align its strategy better to the realities of the post-Cold War world, churning out a number of capstone documents to reflect reductions in force level and the budget in the process.<sup>5</sup>

The unique strategic and political relationship between the U.S. and the U.K., going back long before the Falklands War, has continued to be a shaping force

in world politics well into the 21<sup>st</sup> century (recall the combined operations in Afghanistan and Iraq). That and the periodical resurgence of the subject matter underline that the lessons of the Falklands War should have an enduring relevance on both sides of the Atlantic. In fact, the conflict and its lessons transcend the interest of a narrow group of naval historians. Instead, as a point of departure it offers valuable broader lessons for today. There simply has not been a similar, comprehensive display of naval military technology in action since. As “the most notable naval event of the decade” (Grove 1990:159),<sup>6</sup> the Falklands War stood out not only for the United States’ muscular support of the special relationship between Washington and London. It was more: As an exercise in expeditionary operations unrivalled by anything else since the Korean War, it was a complex conventional maritime and combined arms campaign. It featured surface combat, submarine operations, missile warfare, carrier and land-based aviation, long-range bombings, mine countermeasures, amphibious operations, and a logistics tail that reached halfway around the globe. At least as eye-catching were the electronic warfare and intelligence engagements in this first war of the emerging computer age. On the strategic level (regarding the use of military force for political ends), the British expeditionary operation proved the conviction of the Thatcher government to stand up for British soil. It was also a warning that budget-driven force reduction as it was conducted in the U.K. at the time was the worst possible way to modernize the forces.

The actuality of the lessons of the Falklands War is even more apparent if one

accepts the premise that tectonic changes are underway in the international security and geopolitical environment. The two and a half decades since the fall of the Berlin Wall saw a host of new policy challenges and military operations that were all too “unFalklandish”. The “Global War on Terrorism” in the aftermath of the terrorist attacks of 2001 for the time being magnified a trend towards transnational and asymmetric threats. Climate change, civil wars, famines, insurgencies, organized crime, terrorism, and hybrid warfare were but some of the problems focused upon by policymakers; but in an increasingly comprehensive, all-encompassing understanding of security, these increasingly matter. Naval operations (and its underlying strategy) focused on naval operations other than war, including humanitarian assistance/disaster relief, embargo operations, maritime security operations, antiterrorism measures, and maritime presence mission. The possibility of state-on-state, Navy-on-Navy, Falklands-like engagements slowly but steadily faded from the minds of political decisionmakers in the 1990s and 2000s. Only the U.S. Navy, still the world’s qualitatively dominant seapower, and to a lesser degree some of the European allies, attempt to preserve and project broader capabilities – and maintain appropriate force structure, posture, training, doctrine, and equipment. The “Cooperative Strategy for 21<sup>st</sup> Century Seapower” (Department of the Navy 2007) sought to capture the increasing focus on broader, systemic, and ultimately softer naval missions.

With the most recent US naval strategic document, the “Cooperative Strategy for 21<sup>st</sup> Century Seapower Revised” (De-

partment of the Navy 2015), the focus on highend warfighting emerged once again – just in time with the advent of the candidate, now President Donald Trump and his notable 350ship navy policy platform. Accordingly, the fight against alQaida and its allies has taken more of backseat in the U.S. strategic mindset; the rising power and influence of Islamic militants in Syria, Iraq, and other failing states notwithstanding. Nation states and their hegemonic ambitions – from China to Russia, from Iran to North Korea – will continue to rise in importance, and recent nationallevel capstone documents like the National Defense Strategy speak towards this. Instable states, such as Pakistan, might engage in military action as well that could be reminiscent of some of the Falklands issues. With A2AD of particular relevance in the Western Pacific, it simply must be prudent to ask, analyse, and rationalize what, for instance, China can learn from the Falklands War, and what in turn that means for the United States and its Navy.

Two key domestic trends in the U.S. – a growing unwillingness to commit costly land forces for years of nationbuilding abroad, and the U.S. deficit crisis deeply affecting defence budgeting and force posture – currently change the way America conducts its security and defence policy thinking. The long view beyond the “War on Terrorism” and a return to thinking in more conventional conflict patterns comes at a price, but at a time when the U.S. is increasingly looking inward.

### III. Politicians and Military Leaders as members of learning organisations

It should be noted that lessons drawn from

any given event, especially in the military world, can very seldom be easily applied to another even modestly similar occurrence. The late American author Mark Twain reminds the analyst that, “History does not repeat itself, but it does rhyme.” Strategic, political, technological, and operational conditions change over time, sometimes hardly palpable, sometimes rapidly. This makes adhering to lessons of the past, especially the *right* lessons (or in other words, the rhyme scheme), a complex and conceptually challenging task for policymakers and military planners alike. It gets even more difficult if the need for abstract thinking prevails, for instance if one was not a warring party of the initial armed conflict in any larger sense, but wants to draw conclusions for one’s own future posture and operations. After all, absent a crystal ball, planning for the future is inherently difficult. Without the theoretical (worst case and ultimately undesirable) reallife test of a Falklands War 2.0, it is therefore more feasible to focus on the macrolevel of planning and facilitating military operations at sea.

Military and political planning in the increasingly fastpaced, events and mediadriven environment of today is a challenge. Some of the factors that influence defence and security decisionmaking have already been mentioned; on top of them, some issues inherent to many democratic systems of government (and their armed forces, if democraticallycontrolled) factor in: For instance, researchers often lament that politicians quite comprehensibly aim for the next election, which for the U.S. is never more than six years away (for the U.S. Senate; four for the President, or just two for members of the House of Representatives). Resources are always

finite, and more so when financial abysses, domestic crises, or simply the search for targets of opportunity squeeze defence budgets.<sup>7</sup>

The U.S. military obviously operates under different parameters, although it is not an independent entity but clearly under the direction of the President of the United States. Military leaders are not elected, but rather appointed into functions and positions. They are required to strike a balance between the political priorities and the demands of short, medium and longterm planning. For instance, decisions in force posture, in particular in a Navy, have ramifications well beyond the next couple of decades, given that warships (that are, on top of that, quite expensive to procure and operate) remain in service for 30 or more years. Against the backdrop of constantly evolving political conditions at home and abroad as well as and changing frameworks, it is vital to preserve the military’s institutional knowledge. That is inherently difficult, not least because institutions whose profession it is to preserve and reflect on lessons from the recent past – such as military schools, training commands, or naval history institutions, are under at least the same efficiency pressures as other parts of the military service. Additionally, an imbalance in the Navy’s posture may also negatively affect institutional learning. For the U.S. Navy, Pete Haynes (2013:7) writes,

*“The establishment after the Second World War of lengthy overseas deployments as standard practice meant that the institution’s knowledge became almost exclusively operationalexperiential. ‘Operations’ – meaning being at sea – became the lens by*

*which Navy officers viewed the world and, to most in the Navy, its raison d'être. Given the constant demands of operations and advancing naval technology, Navy officers now had little room in their careers to take up the (potentially) careerdamaging task of contemplating the Navy's purpose beyond operations."*

If one accepts these broadly sketched premises regarding the conditions under which political and military leaders institutionally learn, it is apparent that the balance tilts in favour of the operational, not the strategic realm. In the following, some selected observations regarding the relevance of Falklandish lessons for the U.S. Navy in these two areas will be discussed. While the reciprocity between operations (even tactics) and strategy (and politics) is often difficult to tease apart – operational decisions and events may have strategic consequences, and vice versa – the following generic division between operations and strategy should be understood as purely for analytical purpose, not academic.

#### **IV. Some U.S. Lessons in Naval operations**

A look at a world map will demonstrate the imperative of a reliable logistics train in support of expeditionary naval operations, as was the case for the British "Operation Corporate". As the DON report states (1983:6), "The old aphorism that amateurs talk about strategy while professionals talk about logistics was validated again in the Falklands." Whereas the Royal Navy had to traverse some 7,000 nautical miles from the U.K. south to the Falklands in 1982 (with the staging base of Ascension Island in the South Atlantic

at roughly halfway), the U.S. Navy routinely and for decades builds on forward-deployed forces and advanced bases, with rotating forces transiting to and from the continental United States. Bahrain, Japan, and Italy, to various degrees, serve as such forward fleet hubs for rotating or forwardstationed assets. However, in the face of a relative decline of U.S. military power and the political will to dispatch it, "Many U.S. allies and friends are worried regarding U.S. ability to guarantee their safety and the future of the U.S. security umbrella." (Forster 2011:56) Coupled with advanced propulsion technology (nuclear power), the ability to forwardbased stores and supplies (such as maritime prepositioning), mastering of replenishmentatsea (RAS), and some allied burdensharing, this allows for a considerable degree of global power projection. That unique geopolitical and strategic opportunity still builds on unimpeded logistical support in times of crises and war, or more specifically on a substantial number of sealift ships (a strategic factor that "The Maritime Strategy" recognized but that has taken a bit of a backseat in more recent documents) and a high degree of sea control.<sup>8</sup>

The Falklands War also showed the utility of a versatile fleet.<sup>9</sup> Quite generally, the discussion relates to the degree of abuse ships can take in combat, but also touches on just how capable ships are to deploy to faroff areas and still function under adverse conditions. A simple look at photographs of the major units departing from Portsmouth and arriving after the end of hostilities illustrates the enormous wear and tear that these ships – not to mention their crews – were faced with (although it is in the nature of expeditionary naval

operations that materiel and personnel are under increased stress and pressure). Another aspect related to this is the question of survivability of a vessel. Both issues have very real ramifications for force structure and shipbuilding. In principal, the force structure is a function of the strategic role that a Navy is tasked for by the senior policy leaders. Coastal defence navies do not need aircraft carriers; they can field small frigates and corvettes as their largest units to conduct sea denial and limited sea control. Escort navies require another different setting, fielding destroyers and cruisers, for example. Bluewater expeditionary navies may rely on capital ships such as helicopter carriers, amphibious transports, frigates, destroyers, submarines, and corvettes. The Falklands War reminded planners, however, that smaller, cheaper, and lesswell armed combatants can be a very false economy because of their much higher degree of vulnerability, as demonstrated by the loss of four Royal Navy combatants (Department of the Navy 1983:3).<sup>10</sup> In short, the question begged to be answered is, 'Which types of ships, and how many of them, are to be built for what kind of purposes?' The debate usually comes down between those that favour larger, expensive, versatile vessels such as aircraft and helicopter carriers, and those that advocate for smaller, fast, inexpensive combatants such as the ascending littoral combat ships of the Freedom/Independenceclasses or corvettes and light frigates. At the same time, not unlike the 'HighLow' mix advocated by thenChief of Naval Operations Admiral Elmo Zumwalt from the 1970s, those that favour a middle route will often argue for a more balanced fleet and structure (often without being able to point to what exactly such a balance entails).

These are imperative strategic decisions, because

*"Effective and flexible naval forces cannot be bought off the shelf when needed. They have to be in place and ready for use at short notice to meet [the political and military] criteria. [...] Because the lifespan of a warship is now 30 to 35 years and a warship takes 1015 years to design and build, decisions on new fleet concepts made today need to ensure that the operational concepts used will remain valid."* (Haydon 2011:3)

The British destroyers and frigates were indispensable for the whole Falklands operation. Without them, the aircraft carriers would not have been defensible, the picket ships and the air defence perimeter could not have been held, and the bombardment of Argentine positions as well as the escorting of the landing fleet to the beaches would have been impossible (Dodd 1982:394). The (dire) issue of the expendability of warships in the face of enemy fire power has been mentioned previously. In effect, "those who advocate a navy comprised of lowercapability or niche forces, for whatever reason, do a country a great disservice because they deny politicians the ability to make a flexible naval first response to a crisis." (Haydon 2011:3).<sup>11</sup>

Eric Grove (1990:70) cautioned against overestimating of the threat of antiship missiles, stating "The missile's capabilities have been overrated. No single 'wonder weapon' can affect something as complex as maritime operations." Other analysts such as Waynes Hughes (2000: 153155) noted the vulnerability of wars-

hips in the face of contemporary threats. The Falklands War, after all, has demonstrated that hits even of unexploded ordnance can yield mission (even unit) kills. Examples include the destroyers HMS Glasgow (D88), HMS Antrim (D18), and the amphibious warfare landing vessels RFA Sir Tristram (L3505) and RFA Sir Lancelot (L3029). The Argentines only had five air-launched Exocets. They used them to devastating effect. The U.S. Navy has since 1982 had its share of experience regarding damage control on warships, too.

- The guided-missile Perry-class frigate USS Stark (FFG31) was hit by two antiship Exocet missiles in the Persian Gulf on 17 May 1987, during the Iraq-Iran War (1980-1988). 37 sailors lost their life that day. The vessel, although badly damaged, survived and remained in active service until 1999.
- On 14 April 1988, a sister ship of the Stark, the guided-missile frigate USS Samuel B. Roberts (FFG58), ran on an Iranian mine. The blast severely damaged the warship's structure. The ship, on route for the Persian Gulf to participate in "Operation Earnest Will", was eventually saved. 10 sailors were injured. The incident triggered a U.S. operation against Iranian command and control facilities ("Operation Praying Mantis"). The Samuel B. Roberts is in active service as of 2014.
- On 18 February 1991, while underway as part of "Operation Desert Storm", the amphibious assault ship USS Tripoli (LPH10), hit an Iraqi mine. Four sailors were injured in the incident, which temporarily disabled the veteran IwoJima-class ship. It was repaired and

returned to action, serving in the Navy until 1995.

- The same day, another U.S. warship was hit by a mine: The Ticonderoga-class guided missile cruiser USS Princeton (CG59) also participated in "Operation Desert Storm", and was severely damaged. No injuries or casualties are reported, and the ship stayed on station before being relieved. As of 2014, the cruiser is still in service.
- In the Yemeni port of Aden, on 12 October 2000, the guided-missile destroyer USS Cole (DDG67) was attacked by a suicide attack in a small boat. 17 people of the Arleigh-Burke-class vessel's crew were killed, and many more were wounded in what remains one of the few instances of maritime terrorism to date (and sometimes seen as a prelude to the terrorist attacks that would follow one year later). The severely damaged warship was piggybacked to the United States aboard a specialist commercial ship. It returned to sea again in 2004.

Only one of these ships was hit by an antiship missile, but in all instances, sound damage control proved imperative for the survival of the ship, sparing the U.S. Navy larger casualties and potentially even more harmful images of American warships going under. Given the proliferation of antiship missiles and the continuing threat of their use against ships – on 14 July 2006, the Israeli corvette INS Hanit was hit by an antiship missile fired by Hezbollah, but managed to survive – the debate about ship survivability against such missiles is likely to continue well into the future. With a notable focus on the littoral regions of the world, where naval

mines and maritime terrorism threats are more likely (and frankly, more common) than on the high seas, the risk assessment quickly expands in depth and breadth. And if difficult navigation was not already an issue in such quarters, coastal submarines and asymmetric swarm boat attacks hold a threat as well. Antisubmarine warfare (ASW), a key concern for the Royal Navy in 1982, "will remain a core mission area for the United States Navy. Execution of that vital mission will be critical to protecting the strategic speed and operational agility of joint and coalition forces across the largest maneuver space in the world – the sea." (Department of the Navy 2005:1) Yet, the number of ASW forces in the U.S. Navy has declined markedly. It remains to be seen if the new littoral combat ship (LCS) sea frames will successfully accommodate its planned ASW module.<sup>12</sup> The proliferation of diesel-electric submarines among South East Asian nations is a signal for a rising demand for ASW capabilities. Exercises with air-independent propulsion, conventionally powered U-boats (such as a German Navy class 212A) have repeatedly demonstrated the need for sound ASW capabilities for the U.S. Navy.<sup>13</sup>

The Falklands War was also the first maritime campaign that occurred at the time of the advent of cable television and an increasingly fast-paced, assertive media. Thus, the effects of press coverage and public imagery and their utilization on political ends needed to be weighed heavily in the decisions of policymakers. It holds true that images of deploying soldiers have been used for propaganda at least since World War I when German soldiers boarded train cars marked with patriotic

slogans; and a ship departing a harbour with people waving is a more instrumental image than perhaps deploying an army brigade or an airwing. For the Falklands War, the media played an important role. The heroic, well-staged images of warships departing from Portsmouth naval base notwithstanding, the underlying worry – "What if they do not return victorious?" (Aitken 2013:334) – was only muted temporarily. One may also recall the headline "Gotcha" by the tabloid daily "The Sun" on 4 May 1982, after the sinking of the ARA General Belgrano by HMS Conqueror (S48). The blurry photographs of the stricken cruiser, taken from a lifeboat in rough seas, or the horrible pictures of burning and sinking British warships on other occasions transported the grave imagery of a war to the audiences at home. 35 years later, for the U.S. Navy, sending off and welcoming home warships is today an increasingly common way of generating publicity, especially in light of the opportunities of modern social media (Facebook, Youtube, Twitter, etc.). The "CNN effect" (the ramifications from media reports on policy decisions, troop morale, and even military operations) has widened considerably. Attempts are made to contain it by providing the public media with selected, but highly regulated access to operations ("embedding"), and by shaping the public's perception through own reporting (often using the grandiose images that only seapower can provide)<sup>14</sup>. On the same token, accidents like the recent collisions involving guided-missile American destroyers in Asia with 17 dead sailors immediately flood social media and the public discourse (often inciting wideranging speculation), coupled with powerful imagery of maimed steel.

## V. Some U.S. Lessons in Strategy

Perhaps one of the most striking lessons of the Falklands War is concerns the strategic consequences of deep cuts in a military's power projection capacity. In the 1981 Defence Review by the British Ministry of Defence, decisions were made that would have quickly stripped the Royal Navy of a large quantity of its vessels. While these cuts were deduced from the military planning focus at the time (a land war on the Central European front that in the minds of planners at Whitehall could easily forgo naval assets slated for transfer/decommissioning) they sent a most grave signal to the Argentine government.<sup>15</sup> The symbolism of planning to cut the presence of the U.K.'s Arctic patrol vessel HMS Endurance, the ship on station at the Falklands at the time, cannot be overrated. Endurance was supposed to be withdrawn from service later in 1982 without a replacement. At the same time, for costcutting reasons, the aircraft carriers HMS Hermes and HMS Invincible were to be decommissioned, too. An understanding of the symbolic value of giving up large capital ships was obviously not far developed at the time (Aitken 2013:324). For Great Britain, it was an unexpected coincidence that the cuts did not come into full effect before the invasion of the "Malvinas", as the islands are known in Argentina. The two amphibious ships (HMS Fearless and HMS Intrepid) that were the backbone of the operation would also have been cut. Had the cuts gone through to full effect, the retaking of the Falklands would have been virtually impossible to conduct. As a traditional seafaring nation, Britain was able to marshal an enormous fleet (that eventually included more than 100 warships, cargo vessels, and passenger liners) to support

the expeditionary operation in the South Atlantic (Dodd 1982:392393).

The U.S. Navy today is in the fortuitous position that it need not make such drastic cuts akin to those that were proposed in the 1981 U.K. "Nott Review", or the 2010 Strategic Defence and Security Review (a White Paper whose eventual cuts severely curtailed the Royal Navy's ability for sustained expeditionary operations and caused many navalists to rule out a future Falklandstyle engagement for the simple lack of capabilities).<sup>16</sup> U.S. naval ships have become significant visible signs of American commitment to many regions and are therefore important stabilizers and first crisis responders in many political conundrums of the world.<sup>17</sup> Examples include the only forwarddeployed U.S. Navy aircraft carrier in Japan and the continuous presence in the Persian Gulf/Arabian Sea area (usually by the rotating deployment of an aircraft carrier and its task group). Maritime presence comforts and assures allies, deters rivals and competitors, and allows deepening alliance coherence and tactical and operational proficiency. However, with shifting geopolitical priorities and a tighter grip on resources, the future of U.S. naval presence in some areas will not be left untouched. In absolute numbers, the U.S. Navy is in decline. As of December 2017, the U.S. Navy operated 281 warships, with roughly 1/3 deployed at any given time.

Presence cannot, however, always deter what John Lehman has termed as "wars of principle" (1988:263). Sometimes nations fight for principles, not just for interests, and military and grand strategy can only hedge against a limited number of poten-

tial engagements. In 1982, for Argentina, the Malvinas were a matter of national pride. For the U.K., the guiding factors were the principles of selfdetermination and international law. This was not a war of imperialism or colonialism, nor a proxy conflict of the Cold War, nor a religious or ethnic strife, nor a war about ancient hatred between two nations (Laucirica 2000:84). Reagan's South America policy was illprepared for an intrasystem war that displayed a certain degree of irrationality. Such "wars of principle" have not ceased to be a threat thirty years after the Falklands War. The tensions between causes leading to violence remain opaque, and the management of potential risks must rest of the more solid foundations of realist assessments. At the same time, the global jihadist/Islamic movements or the clashing ambitions recently displayed in the East and South China Seas transcend hard interestdriven politics. They can serve us well as reminders of 'Falklandish' conflict dynamics in this 21<sup>st</sup> century.

## VI. Conclusion

The Falklands War offers some enduring lessons for the U.S. Navy in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. They also provide models for the opportunities and pitfalls for security policy and military planning. For many strategists, the three decades since the Falklands War (and in particular since the end of the Cold War) provided a host of new challenges and tasks. Missile defence, antisubmarine warfare, or an opponent's battle force were not likely subjects of concern during the time when asymmetric conflicts and terrorism in landlocked Southwest Asia were high on the agenda. However, given the geopolitical and geostrategic trends, the lessons from the Falklands War are likely to return to the spot-

light. Thus it is imperative to learn from the few instances where combat did indeed occur. Regarding naval operations, the vulnerability of surfaced submarines, the speed and stealth of nuclear submarines, the difficulty of ASW, the viability of carriers, the need for airborne early warning and electronic warfare defences, and the importance of logistics are among those lessons (Swartz 1998:10). Strategically, as Jim Griffin (2012) notes,

*"The Falklands War was the first modern antiaccess/areadenial (A2/AD) war, pitting a joint expeditionary force against a regional power with modern land, air, and sea capabilities fighting over control of territory close to home. As such, it may prove far more relevant for the future U.S. Navy than any conflict in the past two decades."*

Although some pundits may proclaim that this particular war, routed as it is in the context of Cold War days, should in a metaphorical way slip beneath the waves of history, it is important to remember (and even institutionally treasure) its lessons and transfer the experience into the minds of 21<sup>st</sup> century planners and operators. The Falklands War, after more than a decade on the backbench of strategic and operational thinking, has lost none of its relevance; not least for the world's still dominant Navy. Its allies would do well to also study the conflict intimately. It is clear that the U.S. does not plan to fight a Falklandsstyle war anytime soon; but it if must, it better be prepared. Perhaps the 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the war will prove whether the lessons – those beyond the surreal rendition of a Monty Python song, that is – have been remembered.

## VII. Bibliography

Aitken, J. (2013): *Margaret Thatcher. Power and Personality*. London: Bloomsbury.

Barnett, R. (2009): *Navy Strategic Culture. Why the Navy Thinks Differently*. Annapolis: Naval Institute Press.

Bear, G. (1996): *One Hundred Years of Seapower. The U.S. Navy, 1890-1990*. Stanford: Stanford University Press.

Bruns, S. (2012): "30 Jahre nach dem Falklandkrieg – was bleibt? Einige Lektionen für das 21. Jahrhundert", in: *Leinen Los! (September 2012)*, pp. 2225.

Bruns, S. (2018): *US Naval Strategy and National Security. The Evolution of American Maritime Power*. London: Routledge.

Cordesman, T./Wagner, R. (1990): *The Lessons of Modern War, Vo. III. The Afghan and Falklands Conflicts*. Boulder/San Francisco: Westview.

Department of the Navy (1983): *Lessons of the Falklands. Summary Report, February 1983*. Washington, D.C.: Office of Program Appraisal.

Department of the Navy (2005): *Anti-Submarine Warfare. Concept of Operations for the 21st Century*. Washington, D.C.: Task Force ASW. Available online at [www.navy.mil/navydata/policy/asw/aswconops.pdf](http://www.navy.mil/navydata/policy/asw/aswconops.pdf) [14 December 2013]

Department of the Navy (2007): *A Cooperative Strategy for 21st Century Seapower*. Washington, D.C.: Department of Defense. Available online at <http://www.navy.mil/maritime/> [14 December 2013]

Department of the Navy (2015): *A Cooperative Strategy for 21st Century Seapower*. Washington, D.C.: Department of Defense. Available online at [www.navy.mil/local/maritime/150227CS21RFinal.pdf](http://www.navy.mil/local/maritime/150227CS21RFinal.pdf) [28 February 2018]

Dodd, N. (1982): "Einige Lehren aus dem Falklandkrieg", in: *Europäische Wehrkunde 9/1982*, pp. 392397.

Forster, L. (2011): "Trust Cannot Be Surged. Challenges to Naval Forward Presence", in: *Military Power Revue der Schweizer Armee*, No. 2/2011, pp. 4658.

Griffin, J. (2012): Still Relevant After All These Years, in: *U.S. Naval Institute Proceedings, Vol. 138/6/1,311*. Available online at <http://www.usni.org/print/24528> [10 December 2013].

Grove, E. (1990): *The Future of Sea Power*. London: Routledge.

Haydon, P. (2011): "The Falklands War. Lessons Learned and Not Learned", in: *Canadian Naval Review, Vol. 7, No. 2 (Summer 2011)*, pp. 23.

Haynes, P. (2013): *American Naval Thinking in the PostCold War Era. The U.S. Navy and the Emergence of a Maritime Strategy, 1989-2007*. Monterey: Naval Postgraduate School.

Hughes, W. (2000): *Fleet Tactics and Coastal Combat*. 2nd edition. Annapolis: Naval Institute Press.

Höpker, W. (1983): *Südatlantik. Machtvakuum der Weltpolitik*. Herford: Mittler.

Laucirica, J. (2000): *Lessons from Failu-*

*re. The Falklands/Malvinas Conflict*, in: *Seton Hall Journal of Diplomacy and International Relations, Summer/Fall 2000*, pp. 7995.

Lehman, J. (1988): *Command of the Seas*. Annapolis: Naval Institute Press.

Lehman, J. (2012): "Reflections on the Special Relationship", in: *Naval History Magazine, Vol. 26, No. 5*. Available online at <http://www.usni.org/print/25075> [10 December 2013].

Lundesgaard, A. (2011): "US Navy Strategy and Force Structure after the Cold War", *IFS Insights 4/2011*, 30 pp.

National Security Archive (ed.) (2012): *National Security Electronic Briefing Book No. 374*, 1 April 2012, edited by Carlos Osorio, Sarah Christiano and Erin Maskell with the collaboration of Anne Morel and Marcos Novaro. Available online at: <http://www2.gwu.edu/~nsarchiv/NSAEBB/NSAEBB374/> [20 November 2013].

Silverstone, P. (2007): *The Navy in the Nuclear Age, 1947-2007*. London: Routledge.

Speller, I. (2002): "Delayed Reaction. UK Maritime Expeditionary Capabilities and the Lessons of the Falklands Conflict", in: *Defense and Security Analysis, vol. 18, no.4*. 16 pages, available online at <http://eprints.nuim.ie/844/1/Speller.pdf> [11 December 2013].

Swartz, L. (1998): *Beyond the General Belgrano and Sheffield. Lessons in Undersea and Surface Warfare from the Falkland Islands Conflict*. Naval Science

2 – Research Paper. Stanford University. Available online at <http://xenon.stanford.edu/~lswartz/falklands.pdf> [19 November 2013]

Swartz, P., with Karen Duggan (2011a): *The U.S. Navy in the World (1970-2010). Context for U.S. Navy Capstone Strategies and Concepts*. Volume 1, Document No. MISC D0026417.A1/Final. Alexandria: Center for Naval Analyses. Available online at <http://www.cna.org/research/2011/usnavyworld19702010contextusnavycapstone> [14 December 2013]

Swartz, P., with Karen Duggan (2011b): *The U.S. Navy in the World (1970-2010). Context for U.S. Navy Capstone Strategies and Concepts*. Volume 2, Document No. MISC D0026417.A2/Final. Alexandria: Center for Naval Analyses. Available online at <http://www.cna.org/research/2011/usnavyworld19702010contextusnavycapstone0> [14 December 2013].

Swartz, P., with Karen Duggan (2011c): *The U.S. Navy in the World (1981-1990). Context for U.S. Navy Capstone Strategies and Concepts*. Document No. D0026419.A1/Final. Alexandria: Center for Naval Analyses. Available online at <http://www.cna.org/research/2011/usnavyworld19811990contextusnavycapstone> [14 December 2013].

Swartz, P., with Karen Duggan (2011d): *The U.S. Navy in the World (2001-2010). Context for U.S. Navy Capstone Strategies and Concepts*. Document No. D0026242.A2/Final. Alexandria: Center for Naval Analyses. Available online at <http://www.cna.org/research/2011/usnavyworld20012010contextusnavycapstone> [14 December 2013].

Swartz, P., with Karen Duggan (2012): *The U.S. Navy in the World (19912000). Context for U.S. Navy Capstone Strategies and Concepts*. Document No. D0026420. A2/Final. Alexandria: Center for Naval Analyses. Available online at <http://www.cna.org/research/2012/usnavyworld-19912000contextusnavycapstone> [14 December 2013].

For valuable comments on earlier versions of this paper, the author would like to thank LT Matthew Hipple (U.S. Navy) and CDR (ret.) Chuck Hill (U.S. Coast Guard).

1. To date the best study remains the book by Cordesman/Wagner (1990, pp. 238-436).
2. President Reagan in fact made a last-minute plea to Prime Minister Thatcher that the British assault to retake Port Stanley should be called off. He suggested a diplomatic contact group to be installed as a mediator. According to documents released in December 2013, Thatcher (citing the loss of valuable British ships and invaluable British lives) was unwilling to concede the political-military momentum that had built up by the British expeditionary operation. Reagan's call not to humiliate the Argentinean forces and General Galtieri, the Argentine dictator, fell on deaf ears in Downing Street 10.
3. It must be noted that this wide-ranging commitment never came to be needed, and it ultimately remains speculative what a loss of

one of the Royal Navy's capital ships would have meant for the campaign – and what signal the advent of a U.S. warship to participate in the hostilities could have sent to allies and antagonists.

4. This warfare area, owing largely to technological progress and the multiplication of operational complexities, is known today as C4ISR, the acronym for Command, Control, Communications, Computers, Intelligence, Surveillance and Reconnaissance.
5. For a concise overview of U.S. Navy strategy and force structure since the end of the Cold War, see Lundesgaard (2011). For a thorough study, see Sebastian Bruns (2018).
6. For the United States Navy perhaps only rivalled by the repeated confrontations with nascent Libyan dictator Muammar Gaddafi over the Gulf of Sidra (Mediterranean Sea) throughout the 1980s, and the involvement in the Iran-Iraq-War (1980-1988), which saw naval escort duties for reflagged crude oil tankers towards the end of the conflict, in the course of which a number of Falklands War lessons had to be readily applied (i.e. damage control on a stricken warship, command & control, air defences, etc.).
7. The United States continues to face a deficit gap as well as heated partisan confrontations between Democrats and Republicans about the future direction of the country. This already led to sustained government shutdowns and harmful across-the-board spending cuts.
8. This was different in the case for the British who in 1982 scramble forces designed for NATO contingencies in Europe and then hurled them half-way around the globe through mostly uncontested waters. In the immediate waters around the Falklands, the submarine threat and – closer to the Argentine mainland and the islands itself – air warfare were a considerable impediment. Meanwhile, the long, overstretched Royal Navy logistics tail was buttressed by a temporary forward base at Ascension.
9. As a reminder: navies are built for war, in the overwhelming number of cases they are used MOOTW, thus contributing to protection

of national interests in the absence of armed conflict. Ship-building, from procurement, to design and construction, to actual operations, needs to take that into account.

10. These were HMS Sheffield, the Sheffield-class destroyer HMS Coventry (D118) on 25 May 1982, the Type-21-frigates HMS Ardent (F184) on 22 May 1982, and HMS Antelope (F170) on 24 May 1982. The landing ship RFA Sir Galahad (L3005) and the merchant marine cargo vessel SS Atlantic Conveyor were also destroyed by enemy action with considerable loss of life as well. Two more British destroyers, 14 frigates, and two landing ships were damaged.
11. The U.S. Navy currently operates a deployable battle force of 283 ships, with just one class of destroyers (Arleigh-Burke) and one class of cruisers (Ticonderoga-type) quantitatively making up the vast majority of the surface fleet. In addition, the Navy fields large nuclear-propelled aircraft carriers of the Nimitz-class type, a number of amphibious transport ships, flat-top smaller carriers for helicopter and V/STOL flight operations, and dock landing ships. Under the sea, the types of warships in service are the Los-Angeles-, Virginia- und Seawolf-SSN and the Ohio-Class SSBN submarines. The streamlining of warship classes is a notable difference to earlier times: Until the 1990s, the U.S. Navy would operate several classes in parallel.
12. The other two modules are mine countermeasures and surface warfare.
13. Griffin (2012) concedes that “undersea warfare is an easy area to underfund and underemphasize. It is a complex, expensive capability, with limited utility in low-intensity, non-traditional naval missions, or when conducting unhindered power projection ashore.” In short, it can easily be out of sight, and thus out of mind.
14. With the advent of the Tomahawk cruise missile as a weapon of choice in the 1990s, the (odd) image of majestically rising missiles on their way into a target area has become a symbol of very limited U.S. strikes. Examples include attacks against Iraq, Afghanistan, and Sudan.

15. A number of parallel events, competing and conflicting decisions eventually led to the outbreak of hostilities, the exact share of each difficult (if not impossible) to assess. The publicly announced cuts to the Royal Navy's expeditionary capabilities may have been a key sign of encouragement to the Argentine junta in their quest to retake the Falklands from the British. As Laucirica (2000: 83) put it, “Human actions and decisions, evaluated in terms of opportunities, mounted on long-held grievances deeply imbedded in the national imagery, set in motion state policies against the background of a permissive international structure.

16. Sequestration, 'or the process of mandatory across-the-board cuts in military spending enacted in the United States in early 2013, would be hardly comparable to such White Papers. The U.S. defence budget is still very much a product of more than a decade in inflated military spending, which saw the expansive investments in the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, and the 'Global War on Terrorism'. Whereas the cuts are thus only relative in nature, they do have the potential to inhibit current operations and readiness because of a lack of strategic logic behind it. In simply withdrawing funds without adjust the underlying political parameters, one increases the risk of catastrophic failure and displays a rather short-sighted policy guidance for the military.
17. For overviews of the U.S. Navy's very recent history, including operations, strategy, and geopolitical context, see for example Bear, G. (1996), Silverstone, P. (2007), and the comprehensive slides by Swartz, P. (2011a-d, 2012).
18. From the German perspective, very little has been published on that topic. The only existing monograph is date (Höpker 1983), but only short chapters deal with the Falklands War (pp. 12-18), the U.S. force disposition in the South Atlantic (pp. 24-27), and the area as a concern for NATO (pp. 89-95). The 30th anniversary of the conflict in 2012 was reflected in a few newspapers and professional magazines, including the author's own essay (Bruns 2012).