Falklands Royal Navy Wives: fulfilling a militarised stereotype or articulating individuality?

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Abstract

‘Falklands Royal Navy Wives: fulfilling a militarised stereotype or articulating individuality?’

Key words: Falklands War/1980s/naval wives/oral history/remembrance/commemoration/gendered conflict/media/naval welfare/PTSD

This thesis demonstrates that Falklands naval wives were not the homogeneous and stereotypical group portrayed in the media, but individuals experiencing specific effects of conflict on combatants, wives and families. It contributes originally to oral history by exploring retrospective memories of Falkland’s naval wives and their value to wider history.

Falklands naval wives as individuals had not been researched before. The conflict was fought in the media using gendered and paternalistic language and images, a binary of man fighting versus woman serving the home front.

The aim is to widen the scope of the gender, social, naval and cultural history of the Falklands Conflict by recording naval wives' views before they were lost, thereby offering new insight into the history of the Falklands Conflict.

Original research described in this thesis addresses several important research questions:

1. If a group of naval wives underwent the same events, would their views/thoughts/experiences be comparable?
2. Was the image depicted in existing literature the only view?
3. Did the naval community differ from the rest of society; how were its gender roles defined?
4. Did the wives’ thoughts and feelings differ from those reported in the press?
5. Did media views reinforce previous militarised patriotism and gender roles?

Pilot interviews revealed wives’ techniques of coping with deployments, views on media intrusion, and PTSD effects on families. This original research extended that work by disclosing, through successive stages, how military life affected wives’ lives.

Oral history methodology was adopted because wives were accessible and could remember. Enloe’s institutionalisation of military wives’ theory was interrogated. One-to-one, not group interviews, were selected because groups could have reinforced military culture and hierarchy. Questionnaires would have provided poorer data.

Deployed naval personnel totalled 18,000. Fifty wives recruited from the south of England constituted a small population; accessing a representative sample after thirty years introduced problems of balance and retrospective memory. Measurable variables included ages, jobs, children and naval experience. Absent from pilot interviews were education, political allegiance and newspaper choice, thus omitted from questions.

Oral History Society training and academic oral historian guidance predicated re-interviews with more open questions and props, to enrich initial data and explore further the Falklands naval wives’ individual experiences of family life during and after a conflict. It offers unique but generalisable insight into gender issues in the British armed forces.
Declaration

Whilst registered as a candidate for the above degree, I have not been registered for any other research award. The results and conclusions embodied in this thesis are the work of the named candidate and have not been submitted for any other academic award.

Signed: [Signature]

Date: 8th December 2018

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Dedication

Near and Far

I can see your presence is here
But your spirit’s in a different place
That keeps you from being near
Suspended in time and space
Where it is always that fateful day
The same scene inside your head
Will not stop it continues to play
Till your spirit is the weight of lead
Life is happening outside of your shell
Folks all around laughing and talking
Only you know that you are in hell
For you are a dead spirit still walking
And searching for the life that was
Before that trauma which seemed to halt
Your world for the Falklands’ cause
The door to your heart is locked tight
Makes no difference what key you use
It never seems to fit just right
So you try to be a husband and dad
Whilst desperately searching for your world
In the land of normal before it all went bad

**Dissemination**

March 2007 New Researchers in Maritime History, Falmouth:
‘Media representations of Naval Wives and Families and Families during the Falklands War’.

December 2009 Laughton Naval History Seminar Series, Department of War Studies, King’s College, London:
‘The Falklands War and the Media’.

July 2010 International Oral History Association Conference, University of Economics, Prague, Czech Republic:
‘The Experiences of Naval Wives and Families during the Falklands War (1982)’.

September 2014 Women’s History Network ‘Home Fronts: Gender, War and Conflict’ Conference, University of Worcester:
‘Waiting is the woman’s role: The Falkland’s War (1982) the Homefront’.
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Chapter 1 Introduction

This thesis demonstrates that Falklands naval wives were not the homogeneous and stereotypical group portrayed in television and newspaper reports in 1982, but individuals experiencing specific effects of conflict on combatants, wives and families. It contributes to oral history by exploring the retrospective memories of Falklands naval wives and their value, for the first time.

The nature of Falklands naval wives as individuals had not been researched before. The conflict was reported in the media using gendered and paternalistic language and images, a binary of man fighting versus woman serving the home front.

On 2nd April 1982, the Argentinian forces invaded the British Overseas Territory of the Falkland Islands. Argentina had claimed sovereignty over the islands for many years and its ruling military junta did not envisage that Britain would attempt to regain the islands by force. The islands were 8,000 miles away, yet Britain, under the leadership of Margaret Thatcher, assembled and sent a task force of warships and swiftly refitted merchant ships to the islands. The task force reached the islands in early May. On 2nd May, the Royal Navy submarine HMS Conqueror sank the Argentinian cruiser General Belgrano, with the loss of over 300 crew. Following this, the Argentinian ships remained in port. However, the Argentinian Air Force posed a threat. The Royal Navy lost several warships to attacks from Argentinian aircraft. Its Fleet Auxiliary ships were attacked at Fitzroy and the supply ship Atlantic Conveyor was also sunk. On 21st May, British forces landed on the islands. After engagements with a well dug-in, but ill-trained conscripted Argentinian army they began the battle for the capital, Stanley, on 11th June. The Argentinian forces surrendered on 14th June. The Falklands Conflict was brief, lasting seventy-four days.¹

There is some debate over as to whether the Falklands campaign was a war or a conflict. The difference is largely a matter of semantics and politics. War was not declared, but a nation does not have to declare war to be in a state of war. The Falkland Islands themselves were formally declared by both sides as a war zone. In Britain, there is a campaign

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medal (South Atlantic Medal), which is typically given out for wartime service in war zones. In Argentina, it is always called a war (La Guerra de las Malvinas, or La Guerra del Atlántico Sur). The wife of a Royal Marine Officer, who was 29 at the time of the conflict, was adamant that what occurred in 1982 in the South Atlantic was a conflict not a war, stating ‘war was not declared so you do know technically it was a conflict, not a war’.\(^2\) For the purpose of this thesis, the term conflict rather than war will be applied.

In the Falklands Conflict, gender divisions were outlined conspicuously: men went to war while women waited at home. The male task force, represented in the media and discussed in parliament, was seen as an assemblage of combatants fighting for the rights of ‘our’ islanders. The women at home were ‘waiting’ for news of their men; their rôles were supportive, caring and traditional.

The aim of this thesis is to widen the scope of the gender, social, naval and cultural history of the Falklands Conflict by recording naval wives’ views before they are lost, thereby offering new insight into the history of the Falklands Conflict. The original research described in this thesis addresses several important research questions:

1. **If a group of naval wives underwent the same events, would their views / thoughts / experiences be comparable?**

Pilot and Stage 1 interviews revealed wives’ views and experiences of coping strategies during deployment, the use of official and unofficial support during the Falklands deployment, the wives’ and combatants’ attendance at Falklands commemorative events and the short and long-term effects of the conflict on both the veterans and themselves. Stage 2 interviews extended that work by exposing how military life affected wives’ lives by probing further into such matters as the effects of relocation on themselves and their children, how wives’ career choices were influenced by their husbands’ careers, casual factors of stress in military marriages, and the support available after the conflict when veterans had been diagnosed with Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD). Responses were analysed both graphically and discursively to determine how far the wives’ thoughts, views and experiences were comparable.

\(^2\) Mrs S., interview by V. Woodman, May 5, 2012.
2. **Was the image depicted in existing literature the only view?**

The secondary literature pertaining to Falklands naval wives portrayed them in collective terms, the term ‘naval wife’ applied to them all, as if the reader had a preconceived image of who/what a naval wife was. When mentioned in the news reports or newspapers in 1982, the wives were described as ‘the wife of Captain X, or the wife of Petty Officer X. They had no identity of their own; their job, at times not even their name, was mentioned. Wives and mothers were seen as supporters of their men, they added human interest and complimentary emotional contrast to the sexist, paternalistic and traditional imageries of the brave, fighting men. The Falklands naval wives interviewed were asked about their recollections of the media depiction of naval wives at the time of the conflict, and how their views differed.

3. **Did the naval community differ from the rest of society; how were its gender rôles defined?**

There was a clear expectation from the military establishment that service families ran on traditional lines. The serviceman was head of the household; his wife supported him, and the military helped him look after her and their family. To maintain morale in the forces, the serviceman’s family would, when feasible, follow him from one posting to another, renting a married quarter on a Ministry of Defence estate built on, or close to, the military base. The base and estate had a social life and community of its own. Military work is often demanding and dangerous; to maintain cheerful community spirit is important. The military, with paternalistic care, provided the best affordable facilities, but when wives and families used them they did so as ‘wife of’ or ‘child of’. They were still dependants; they had no entitlements of their own. The facilities were provided to enable the serving man to feel secure in the knowledge his family were provided for in readiness for his deployment and often unsocial working hours, to keep his attention on the job.

4. **Did the wives’ thoughts and feelings differ from those reported in the press?**

The wives’ thoughts and feelings were rarely directly reported. Journalists were reluctant to give the Falklands naval wives a voice, preferring instead to interview professionals and experts. Pictures and film were shown in newspapers and television of
wives and families, but the captions and voiceovers were from paternalistic and authoritative figures, such as a padre or a (male) member of naval welfare. Journalists were not asking what the women did or thought, but only what they felt. They were not reported as active members of society, but as acceptable feminine supportive vessels of emotion.

5. Did media views reinforce previous militarised patriotism and gender roles?

The Falklands naval wives were only newsworthy in this instance because the men who were making the news were absent. Due to censorship issues and the distance to send copy to London, the wives filled a news gap. Journalists were given the opportunity to report from naval housing estates to comment on an area of life that the news usually neglects. Yet the journalists resorted to old-fashioned stereotypes of women’s roles and family life. Military wives were shown in relation to their men, not as individuals.

There has been no full-length academic study carried out solely on the experiences of naval wives and families at the time of the Falklands Conflict, nor one utilising oral history methodology. This thesis will add to the historiography of the conflict and fill in the gaps in an under-researched aspect of women’s history. Additionally, this research will place the lives of this group of people, whose experiences have so far been omitted from the existing literature, within a historical, social, economic and cultural context.

This study, whilst being historical, will also have relevance to contemporary Ministry of Defence personnel, as naval welfare charities are continuously updating and revising their policies on how best to prepare military families for service life. The Royal Navy and Royal Marines Welfare Team ‘provide accessible support services that strengthen and enhance the resilience and resourcefulness of Naval Service personnel, their families and communities’. In recognition of the ‘diverse’ needs of service personnel and their families, the welfare team offers help and advice with ‘the very specific challenges that can be encountered during life in – or with – the Royal Navy.’ The help and support offered covers such issues as: coping with deployment, relationship breakdown, money/debt problems, housing issues, bereavement, child care concerns and health issues.\(^3\) Military welfare bodies also carry out research. The

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Royal Navy and Royal Marines Children’s Fund commissioned the Overlooked Casualties of Conflict Report twenty-five years after the Falklands, when the charity was seeing the effects of the conflict on children of veterans. The report listed some recommendations and concluded that service lifestyle can have a distinct impact on a child’s behaviour, emotional well-being, psychological development and even their educational attainment.⁴

This thesis is a socio-historical analysis of a significant but under-researched aspect of the Falklands Conflict. The hypothesis is that the naval wives were not in their views, thoughts or experiences homogenous, which this thesis will demonstrate and qualify.

Objectives

1. Engage with the theoretical debates surrounding the methods and methodologies employed by those using oral sources in historical research.

The researcher’s use of oral history methodology analyses the ‘experiences’, an analysis not attainable through other methods and one that can only be made retrospectively through speaking about the past. The use of oral history methodology does not allow the researcher direct access to the wives’ experiences, although it does reflect emotion and narratives and deliver memories. The recording of these life experiences, stored in the memories of those who experienced them first hand, are reached, retrieved and recorded through the adopted methodology. This allows people whose voices might not otherwise be heard to share their experiences and fill gaps in our history.

2. Investigate the experiences/perceptions and attitudes of naval wives and families during the Falklands conflict.

In 1982, the expectation of the military establishment was that service families were run on traditional lines. The armed forces, whilst embracing technological innovation, were reluctant to welcome social change. For our society to be defended, our armed forces should


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be well managed, efficient and contented. To achieve this the military person should be aided to preserve a balance between the claims of service and those of family.

The Falklands wives interviewed for this thesis were predominately the wives of higher ratings and officers. Some fulfilled a pastoral rôle, assuming a position which echoed that of their senior rank husbands. These women saw this rôle as a duty, it was their place to become a guardian to young, impressionable wives and in doing so they were also supporting their husbands in doing what was expected of them. Social class is mentioned by the women, but rank is cited more often.

3. **Demonstrate that commemoration of ‘normal’ peoples’ lives and the rôles they played are an important part of our history.**

Although there is a plethora of literature about the conflict, there is little relating to the experiences of the wives and families left behind. Secondary sources comprise media or journalistic accounts, political analyses or first-person accounts written by members of the task force. The lack of research on naval wives not only validates the choice of methodology but analyses the effects of conflict from an alternative perspective and assigns the women rôles in the history of the conflict. Social history emphasises the experiences of ordinary people, placing such groups as workers and women as principal agents in the making of history. The Falklands wives were not powerful leaders, royalty or celebrities, but they were active representatives of an historical event.

Research on other groups of corporate wives has revealed that some issues faced by military families is synonymous with other careers. Competition for the (male) breadwinner’s time is evident in research on executives and police workers, where work can spill over into non-work time. Wives have complained of ‘insufficient time for family life’ and feeling ‘cheated of companionship’. The military ethos of always being available is also a characteristic of other occupations. The clergy are expected to be constantly available, leading to confrontation between the spatial relationship of work and home.

4. **Evaluate a case study of servicemen and their families with a bearing on skilled workforce recruitment and retention in the MoD.**

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To retain a trained and skilled workforce, the armed forces need to subscribe to the ideals of the symmetrical family. An antagonistic family can put pressure upon a combatant to leave the service. This might occur if a wife was displeased with the amount of time her husband was on deployment or the location of a shore draft. Therefore, observing the experiences and views of those who had been part of the military establishment, albeit outside it, is of utmost importance to retaining skilled personnel. This is pivotal when the armed forces are competing with other employers to attract highly educated young people who are seeking career development. Recruits will ask questions concerning military life which the armed forces need to address. Furthermore, the professionalised training of a member of the armed forces is costly. The MoD makes an investment and therefore needs to address the work/family balance.

5. Examine how the conflict has been remembered or commemorated. as commemoration is a powerful analytical tool to re-evaluate a military event for contemporary society.

Commemoration of a conflict from the perspective of those left behind is a powerful analytical tool to re-evaluate a military event for contemporary society. Did the Falklands naval wives’ experiences fit within both the official and unofficial commemorations. Political massaging emerged at the time of the conflict, has continued and has affected how the conflict has been commemorated. The Ministry of Defence (MoD) was eager to control reporting about the Falklands for what it called operational reasons and to preserve life. It was argued at the time that its censorship extended beyond this to the management of news to procure a positive impression of the conflict. Copy from journalists with the task force was censored twice; by MoD officials on the Falklands and public relations staff at the ministry in London. Additionally, broadcasters and journalists imposed their own levels of censorship, editing words and pictures deemed to be in bad taste or detrimental to the public mood. An example of this was calling the Belgrano incident a ‘tragic incident’, which was later edited from the report. Reporting on the conflict and its commemoration are still controversial. For

6 An egalitarian or symmetrical family structure is one where men take a more active role in childrearing and domestic chores and women can go out to work and contribute to the family income. In this type of family responsibility is shared more equally between men and women for important decisions that affect the family.
the twentieth anniversary of the conflict the *Guardian* published a commemorative supplement, introduced:

The Falklands War rehabilitated Britain's reputation as a military nation and handed Margaret Thatcher another eight years in power. But, two decades on, are we any closer to understanding why hundreds of lives were lost for an island group the Foreign Office had been trying so hard to give away? And do we realise the full horror experienced by those who fought in it?7

More than thirty years on, debate still surrounds the relationship between the media, armed forces, government and the public. How did the presentation of the conflict at the time shape public perception and vice versa? This context would shape the nature of future commemorations. What did the wives’ think of the nature of the commemorations?

The five objectives were met through the qualitative research methods utilised. Objectives 1-5 were resolved through oral history interviews and secondary sources. Objectives 4 and 5 were also satisfied through examining commemorations and commemorative sites of the conflict and analysing media reports. The five research questions were developed from the pilot questions to test the hypothesis. The interaction between research questions and objectives guided the structure of the thesis.

The historiography of the Falklands Conflict reveals that shortly after it ended, a mass of literature appeared. This literature fell predominantly into one of four categories:

1) Interviews or first-person accounts from members of the task force, who had their own created, convenient and self-serving, heroic narratives to tell.8
2) Journalistic accounts of the conflict written by members of the press who accompanied the task force.9
3) Political Interpretations, mainly on Margaret Thatcher’s rôle and how the conflict raised her popularity amongst the British electorate.10

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4) The media coverage of the conflict and analysis of the conflict.  

Virtually no mention is made in the secondary literature of the wives and families of the task force, which further validated the research topic and methodology. A review of other research studies revealed a lack of investigation concerning naval wives and families during the Falklands Conflict. Some of the personal accounts mention wives or girlfriends, maintaining that it was the contact with home that kept them going in the days of uncertainty, but the women had scarcely any voice, or even mention. Lucy Noakes devoted a chapter to the Falklands Campaign, but it looked at national identity and popular memory. Jean Carr’s work was based on interviews carried out with service families both during and immediately afterwards. At the time Carr was a features writer with the Sunday Mirror; a journalistic rather than historical approach, is palpable; there are no references and the book maintains a highly selective and unbalanced account.

The interviewees for this research project are not only armed forces wives, but naval wives, in a particularly short conflict, who were being interviewed over thirty-years after the event. The researcher was aware that she was dealing with retrospective memories that had been shaped by what had happened since 1982. Both the public presentation and memory of the Falklands Conflict and how the wives shaped their own narratives may have affected what they recall.

Academic research has examined the lives and experiences of military families, especially on issues such as military housing and coping with long absences. Joan Chandler’s PhD Sailors’ Wives and Husband Absence was concerned with the social situation of wives enduring their husbands’ intermittent absence. Chandler examined the ‘disruptive’ element of service wives, such as employment opportunities and relationships with children. She maintained that although absence and separation is a common circumstance for service

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families, reunions and reintegration are equally problematic.\(^{14}\) Professor Christopher Dandeker studied the deployment experiences of British army wives. This study was concerned with the wives’ experiences before, during and after deployment, satisfaction with military life and support networks.\(^{15}\) This academic work was fundamental in assisting with a design framework and a basis for a deeper understanding of contemporary military life.

Other studies were consulted for this thesis, particularly to understand the particularities of military family life. Sue Jervis studied the emotional responses of British servicemen’s wives to, often repeated, military relocation. She considered both their deeply personal experiences, and how these were influenced by their membership of the military community. The study argued that trailing ‘military wives’ sustained significant losses each time they relocated and that these distressing losses could undermine previously established identities. She also argued that any adaptation to frequent relocations was unwittingly hindered by the military institution’s expectations of wives.\(^{16}\) Ruth Jolly’s work on the social pressures on servicemen with families and the operational implications of social change on the armed forces was instrumental in identifying trends in military families around the time of the Falklands Conflict.\(^{17}\) However, these works were investigating military life during peacetime, unlike this research which is examining the effects of war.

The choice of a research topic for this thesis developed from an oral history project carried out as part of the researcher’s undergraduate studies. Work undertaken then gave her an understanding and awareness of the subject and the methodology and provided some useful background bibliographical references to carry out a preliminary survey of secondary source material for the doctoral study. Additionally, it was recognised that this topic was an under-researched area, and the people involved were reaching middle-age and above. The time was right to conduct the interviews, thus creating the primary data. After the research topic had been decided and a research proposal had been produced, the researcher was

\(^{14}\) Joan Chandler, *Sailors’ Wives and Husband Absence* (PhD Thesis, Plymouth: Plymouth Polytechnic, 1987). Although this research project commenced a few years after the Falklands, there was no mention of it in the thesis. The focus was on the West of England (Plymouth) and Wales.
fortunate to secure three years’ full-time funding from the University of Portsmouth supported by MarMu (Maritime Regions: Making Museums Commercially Competitive), part of the European Union Interreg IIIC Research Project MarMu Commerce Training Programme, 2004–07.¹⁸

This thesis favours the qualitative analysis of empirical data within a theoretical framework which evaluates the value of the oral history interview as a method for analysing war and woman’s history. Preliminary reading of secondary source material combined with the use of electronic databases and indexes supported an extensive overview of themes relating to the research. These included support networks and coping strategies, commemoration, and the long and short-term effects of participating in the conflict on both the respondents and their partners. Additionally, a thorough literature search revealed the locations of primary documentation. For this study a wide range of documentary material was surveyed, including newspapers, journals, photographs and letters; most available in museum archive collections, but some made available to the researcher by the respondents, as the material is still in their private possession. The most significant source of data was the oral testimony collected by the researcher. However, the methodological issues surrounding oral history had to be addressed to enable analysis of naval wives.

An initial analysis and examination of the secondary source textual documents allowed the researcher to place the study into a broader historical, social and political context. This literature continued to be reviewed throughout the duration of the doctoral study. Due to the limited timescale of the conflict, it was decided that the chapters would be thematic by topic and analysis, rather than chronological. The thesis would contain eleven chapters, five common to any research degree framework: introduction, literature reviews, research design and methodology, and data analysis. One chapter describes how data were collected. Six further chapters present primary interview data, media, commemoration and conclusions.

Media communications were frequently discussed during the interview process, with the wives claiming it was often the only way they could follow what their husbands or partners were doing. Using newspaper reports and TV news bulletins, portrayal of the task force

families as part of the human-interest story was analysed. Chapter 2 investigated the highly gendered reporting of war under the home front/war front dichotomy, how did the women interviewed view the way they were portrayed? This chapter was placed before the literature reviews and the methodology and data chapters as the media was instrumental in not just keeping the wives informed, but also in shaping the knowledge of the conflict to those at home.

Literature review and historiography chapters 3 and 4, on Women and military wives and Women’s Oral History and the Falklands Conflict, structure and critique the three themes which emerged from the research questions to drive the thesis:

1. **Gender, women and military history**

   This section examined literature on gender and military history, analysing predominately research on women connected to the military through marriage or relationships, including changes to women’s service in the Royal Navy.

2. **Oral history methodology**

   This explored the relationship between oral history and women’s history, with attention being paid to feminist writers. The methodological issues of ‘muted’ channels and ‘composure’ are also addressed here.

3. **Falklands Conflict**

   To contextualise the interviewees’ experiences and place them into an historical frame, the last section reviewed literature of the Falklands Conflict. The most frequent publications of the conflict were personal accounts from members of the task force who sailed to the South Atlantic in 1982. These texts were examined by the researcher for two reasons: they placed the conflict into political and historical context and they might have influenced the narratives of others, including the interviewees.

   It was decided to divide the literature and historiography chapter into two as the research topic covered many genres. Additionally, the Falklands naval wives had to be placed within a historical and cultural context. Chapter 3 examines advances in women’s history, the
changing perception of gender rôles, gender, women and military history and women and the military. Chapter 4 examines literature on oral history and the Falklands Conflict to contextualise the women’s experiences within an historical timeframe.

Chapter 5, Research design and methodology for data collection and analysis, discusses the concept of a research project, encapsulating the choice of topic, title, choice of methods (qualitative/quantitative) and philosophical and methodological problems. This chapter then investigates narrative and oral history analysis whilst also determining interview frameworks. The correlation between feminist history methodology and oral history methodology is also explored. This chapter defines how the researcher located respondents and identifies limitations to the study. No research project would be complete without an ethical process, including informed consent and ownership of material. The oral history methodology terminology of subjectivity, advocacy and empowerment is defined and applied to the project, to determine how the research was placed within the themes.

Chapter 6, discloses how naval wives and families’ data were collected for Stage 1 and Stage 2 interviews. This chapter examines the profiles of the respondents. How the researcher would code to discover patterns of behaviour is also discussed, including a key for the colour-coded interview data, which was used to code responses. The structure of the interviews and the list of themes and questions for the ten Stage 2 interviews are also contained in Chapter 6.

Chapter 7 examines how the conflict has been commemorated. Firstly, hypotheses on commemoration examined claims that the commemorative process is a political, cultural or social construct. The researcher also added psychological, sociological and economic theories and considered terms commonly used in literature relating to Falklands commemoration. Terms that frequently occurred during the interview process are defined. An analysis of various commemorative rites and the agencies involved was made, exploring finally how, and if, the wives’ and families’ experiences are included in commemoration and remembrance of the conflict.

Chapter 8, Stage 1 interview data analysis encompasses the main corpus of the data and details of the respondents. Additionally, this chapter contains codified themes, some in
tables and some discursively. The themes analysed through the data include the media, support networks, coping strategies, commemorations and the short-term and long-term effect the war had on both their partners and themselves. This chapter explores the retrospective memories of the wives as individuals. The data collected addressed the research questions via themes and topics revealed during the pilot interviews. Moreover, background reading of secondary sources exposed the lack of material concerning those themes and topics.

Stage 2 interview data is contained in Chapter 9. The researcher intended to re-interview some of the respondents to probe further on some of the original findings and ask some new questions. The new questions were on subjects such as what constitutes home, particular postings and deployments, naval wives’ groups and the support available to them as family of a veteran. The researcher also introduced prompts into Stage 2 interviews, one of these being music popular at the of the conflict. The data in this chapter was presented discursively. The researcher was aware of retrospective memories and how the respondents would be recollecting how they thought they felt at the time.

Chapter 10, Interview data analysis, examines the cumulative process of collecting oral history data. Also, the researcher discussed the use of the methodology examined in Chapter 5, stating which methods were useful for this research. The revelations of personal and emotive data are covered here, with changes between both stages of data being acknowledged. This chapter concedes that the wives had shared experiences, yet the data reveals patterns themes and differences.

To summarise, this thesis reveals that Falklands naval wives were not in their views, thoughts or experiences homogenous. To test this hypothesis the five research questions and the five objectives were resolved through qualitative research methods, primarily oral history interviews. Oral history can never be said to be historically representative of the experiences of all, as it is fundamentally unrepresentative. The value of the interviews rest on their ability to bring the Falklands naval wives’ individual life stories into focus, thereby demonstrating the diversity of the human experience and how events have affected the women’s understanding of their identities at the time of interview. The rich primary data explores the Falklands naval wives’ individual experiences of naval family life during and after a conflict.
Chapter 2 The Media and the Falklands: Making News

This purpose of this chapter is to examine how the task force families were portrayed in the newspapers and television reports during the Falklands Conflict. There has been much written on how the media prepared to accompany the task force, the journalists sent, the handling of the news in London, the political debates that emerged from the way in which the MoD released the news and the political attacks made on the media for the way in which the conflict was reported. Therefore these issues will not be examined here. This chapter examines the home front and task force families; wives’ mothers and sweethearts of the task force, and how they were reported and the media, the home-front and gender stereotypes. The researcher included the media (specifically television and newspapers) as one of the themed chapters as media communications were a frequent topic of discussion during the interview process, the wives stating it was often the only way they could follow what their husbands/partners were doing, or rather what the press wanted them to know they were doing.

The Falklands Conflict was a conflict where gender divisions were distinctly defined; men went to battle while women waited at home. The male combatants, seen in the media and spoken of in parliament, were seen fighting for their country; the women at home were passive, seen as waiting apprehensively for news of ‘their’ men. Lucy Noakes has examined how the press and parliament evoked memories, images and language of the Second World War to mark the Task Force as being both specifically masculine and linked with the combatants of the Second World War. It is not the researcher’s intention to re-examine Noakes’s work. However, if the combatants were portrayed in overtly masculine terms, evoking images of an old England from a past age then the researcher believes that women would have been depicted in traditional caring, supporting roles, reminiscent of post-war Britain.

19 For example, Susan L. Carruthers, The Media at War (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011); David E. Morrison and Howard Tumber, Journalists at War: The Dynamics of News Reporting during the Falklands Conflict (London: Sage, 1988); Robert Harris, Gotcha! The Media, the Government and the Falklands Crisis (London: Faber and Faber, 1983); Valerie Adams, The Media and the Falklands Campaign (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1986).
Home Front and Task Force Families

Due to censorship and the lack of hard news from the task force, the media had to fall back on their daily practice of telling and retelling events. Not knowing the outcome of the conflict, the press resorted to human interest stories: the birth, death, marriage and divorce, health, wealth and habits of the rich and famous, especially royalty. The same minutiae about ordinary individuals must have a sad, funny or unusual element to make them newsworthy and interesting. However, these human-interest stories in the news are seen as the way individuals assign meaning and perceive a sense of unity to the situation unfolding. Sociologists claim that ‘human interest’ is ‘not simply a neutral window on a multifaceted and diverse world but embodies a particular way of seeing the world’.

The placing of the human-interest story within its everyday practice helps to place the media close to the official account of events. There is an analogy of interests between the government, the armed forces and the media in these matters. Human interest stories are widely read, and they appeal to, and reach across, gender, class and age. Stories written from this perspective can transmute overtly political news. According to John Taylor this results in awkward questions about the (historical) social relations of power being unasked, and history is replaced by whatever can be felt, such as ‘natural revulsion’ or ‘common-sense’.

This section will analyse images of TV news reports and newspaper articles on the relatives of the Task Force waiting at home to determine what was portrayed. Also, Mass-Observation Directive no. 5 will be consulted to assess the correspondents’ experiences and thoughts about the media in 1982. Additionally, data collected from interviews will be

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20 John Taylor, ‘Touched with Glory: Heroes and Human Interest in the News’, in James Aulich (ed.), Framing the Falklands War: Nationhood, culture and identity (Buckingham: Open University Press, 1992), 13-33;18. It is not my intention to discuss The Queen and her female allotted position (as the mother of Prince Andrew who went with the Task Force) or the birth of Prince William to Prince Charles and Princess Diana who was born at the cessation of the conflict.


considered alongside the journalistic evidence to determine how those left behind now say they remember viewing the media reports pertaining to the conflict and the media’s portrayal of those women waiting, especially in their role as models of support for the war.

The family and friends of those serving in the Task Force had a vital part to play in the reporting of the home front. Although the viewing public was said to have a voracious appetite for Falkland related news, and the Prime Minister insisted the islands ‘were but a heartbeat away’, most British people were not directly involved. Few had previously heard of the Falklands: many newspapers showed maps so readers could locate them. The fighting was invisible, thousands of miles away, and, according to the Financial Times (April 7, 1982) ‘no vital national interest in any material or strategic sense’ was at risk. During the first week of the conflict reports on friends and families of the Task Force was a regular item on news reports. Viewers were offered a personal insight into the experiences of the Task Force families and therefore their portrayal was seen in the capacity of a national experience of the war. Sara Jones the widow of Colonel ‘H’ Jones, speaking in April 1983, claimed: ‘Ordinary people with no military involvement felt it was their lads out there, fighting for what they believed in’. 25

The Glasgow University Media Group (GUMG) analysed 141 national news items relating to Task Force families from bulletins shown during the period 1 May to 14 June 1982, and found that seventy-one covered families waiting at home, fifty-one with partings and reunions, and eighteen with memorial services. On some occasions the views of family members of the Task Force were sought, for example, the report on the first deaths of servicemen the father of a Sea Harrier pilot who had died said ‘I am proud to have a son who died for the country he loved’. 27 A local Portsmouth newspaper sent a young reporter to cover the task force sailing for the South Atlantic, where one wife’s fears were reported. A review for the thirtieth anniversary shared a quote from Kathie Davies, of Ferry Road, Eastney,

26 The researcher contacted local TV stations to determine if recordings of local TV news were archived and available to view, to be told they were not digitised and not recoverable. Therefore, for TV news the researcher had to rely on the research of the Glasgow University Media Group.
whose husband was a helicopter pilot: ‘For most naval families this is a terrifying new experience. Never before have we had to watch our men sail on what could well be active service.’

When HMS Sheffield sank, one bereft mother reported: ‘I’m proud of him, I’m extremely proud of him, and if he’s gone to war and fought for his country and died for his country, I’d like everybody to feel that it’s not in vain’. Yet, during the period of fighting the GUMG found only one incident of a bereaved family’s reservations over the campaign being cited, in this report on the casualties of HMS Sheffield: ‘Twenty-year-old Neil Goodall had planned to get engaged at Easter. Instead he sailed with the task force…. His mother who lives in Middlesex said, “My son never joined the Navy to die for something as wasteful as this”. The point is here that for wives and families being interviewed by the press, it would have been difficult to think and speak in a non-hegemonic way.

Interviews where relatives implied the loss of life might not be worth it were rarely seen. On one late night news report a naval wife (shown with no other information about the wife) claims: ‘I didn’t want them to go out there….. I feel now I’d like to see it go to the United Nations…. I feel there has been too much bloodshed already and I feel that if there is any more the nation is going to turn against the government’. Furthermore, in a lunchtime bulletin, where two naval wives (no information shown) gave their less than supportive opinion when they stated: ‘I just think neither of them want to lose face, do they? Just give it back to them….I mean it’s our men that’s out there, if they can blow up one ship, how many more are going to go? It’s ridiculous’. Later the remarks were edited out and replaced by an interview with the wives of two survivors, in which the only question broached was: ‘How did you pass the time?’ Mrs H. the twenty-five-year-old wife of a chief petty officer on HMS XXX when she was hit in 1982 when told of this report in 2012, stated:

I really cannot believe that, so wives were just invisible, I mean nothing about our worries, or sitting up all night waiting for the phone to go, but not wanting it to in case

it is bad news, I mean I knew if it was really bad news that someone from the navy would knock on my door, but no words could describe the sick feeling I had in the pit of my stomach when I heard a type 42 had been hit.\textsuperscript{34}

What was impossible for the researcher to assess after thirty years is what and how the respondent felt at the time these reports were originally published, what the researcher is examining is what the respondent remembers thinking, these are retrospective memories.

During the first days of fighting the task force families materialised as protagonists of the campaign. However, as the number of losses increased and their suffering intensified, they disappeared from the television screens, only to be readmitted when the survivors returned. The bulletins and remarks are television images; what was the true experience of those close to someone in the task force? Clearly it is impossible to measure the varied views and responses of people who lived through the conflict knowing that someone close to them faced death or disablement. Yet the task force relatives were an important group for the coverage of the conflict at home because they did face up to and ultimately bear the human costs. It is also true that not all relatives responded in the same way; it would be naïve to try to differentiate between critics and supporters of the conflict, as relatives could feel both anger and pride. Opposition to the conflict could be expressed fiercely due to personal experience, especially after loss. The brother of a sailor lost on XXX stated:

\begin{quote}
We probably all thought it was worth it at the time...but when you finally do lose someone, it makes you wonder then whether it was worth it. I probably would’ve thought it was if my brother hadn’t been lost in it, but it makes you look at it completely differently when you lose someone.\textsuperscript{35}
\end{quote}

The wife of a caterer on an aircraft carrier asserted:

\begin{quote}
I think it should never have happened-this government virtually invited Argentina in...Throughout this whole crisis the only ones who really feel it are those who have actually lost someone or had someone injured. It just doesn’t hit home with the rest of us, and that’s the unpleasant reality- that’s why they can yell and cheer on the quayside...There’s no glory to war, and despite what’s being said about patriotism really-what’s there to be proud to be British about?\textsuperscript{36}
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{34} Mrs H. (D), interview by V. Woodman, April 1, 2013.
\textsuperscript{35} Ben Bullers, brother of a sailor killed on Sir Galahad, \textit{The Friday Alternative}, (London: Channel 4 News, Jul 1, 1983).
The mother of a sailor killed on HMS XXX stressed whilst although being proud of her son but not proud of the fact that he died for his country in a war which was not necessary. I accept that it’s a serviceman’s duty to fight, but in a futile situation like this, I think it’s evil to put men’s lives at risk when negotiations around a table can save so much heartbreak.37

The task force families’ opinion and emotions were carefully controlled by the television news representatives. If the families’ dissatisfaction had been articulated more vehemently by the television news bulletins it may possibly have had some influence on the outlook of the ‘ordinary people with no military connection’ who felt ‘it was their lads out there’.38

This simplistic idea of representation would be fervently disputed by Marxist critiques of media control. Marxists believe that media owners (who are members of the capitalist elite) use their media outlets to transmit ruling class ideology. It is argued that the rôle of the media is to shape how we think about the world we live in, which suggests that audiences are rarely informed about crucial issues such as inequalities in wealth or why poverty persists. The capitalist system is rarely criticised or challenged. Instead, Marxists suggest that owners shape media content so that only ‘approved’ and conformist views are heard. However, Curran’s (2003) detailed systematic examination of the social history of the British press does suggest that the evidence for owner interference in and manipulation of British newspaper content is strong. Curran notes that in the period 1920–50 press barons openly boasted that they ran their newspapers for the express purpose of propaganda that reflected their political views. Curran points out that even when engaged in investigative reporting, the majority of newspapers in Britain have supported the Conservative Party. Curran also notes that the period 1974–92 saw the emergence of Rupert Murdoch. However, Curran rejects the idea that Murdoch is part of a unified capitalist elite but acknowledges that Murdoch’s newspapers are conservative in content and strongly supportive of capitalist interests. He argues Murdoch’s motives are economic rather than ideological in that Murdoch believes that right wing economic policies are the key to vast profits.39

37 Mrs Samble, Bridport News, June 18, 1982 quoted in Glasgow University Media Group, War, 97.
38 Glasgow University Media Group, War, 97.
However, the Glasgow University Media Group (GUMG) suggests that media content does support the interests of those who run the capitalist system. However, this is an unintended by-product of the social backgrounds of journalists and broadcasters rather than a conscious capitalist conspiracy. The GUMG pointed out in 1985 that most journalists working for national newspapers, television and radio tended to be overwhelmingly male, White, and middle class, e.g. 54% were privately educated.40

Following the sinking of HMS Sheffield on 4th May 1982, the BBC Board of Governors delivered a firm ruling that the relatives of the dead would not be interviewed. The official grounds were of ‘privacy’ and ‘taste’, but the result was a silencing of those who could have revealed the most about the effects and human costs of the conflict and thereby censor any misgivings they may have over whether the fighting was worthwhile. The BBC though did make special concessions. At a News and Current Affairs (NCA) meeting, the chief of current affairs programmes stated that:

Nationwide had shown one [interview with a bereaved relative] which was impeccable and had given him no concern on any score. He had referred to ADG [the Assistant Director General, had then discussed it with DG [Director General], and had given the go-ahead.41

The BBC Assistant Director General’s defence of the ban on interviews with the bereaved is noteworthy here:

Put brutally, interviewing a widow was an ‘easy’ story and he was strongly against an opening of the floodgates when restrictions were eased. The answers that the bereaved would give were, after all, largely predictable. 42

He dismissed as ‘largely predictable’ the rights of those affected by the conflict to express their opinions. Most noticeably, exposure of the bereaved has to mean ‘interviewing a widow’, therefore revealing a preconception that the significant others of those left behind are women and wives, there is little mention of mothers, and none on gay, bi-sexual or transgender partners.

40 Glasgow University Media Group, War, 4.  
41 NCA minutes, June 8, 1982, quoted in Glasgow University Media Group, War, 99.  
42 NCA minutes, 8.6.82, quoted in Glasgow University Media Group, War, 98.
Wives, mothers and sweethearts

While the men of the Falklands Conflict appeared in the media and in parliament predominantly as heroes, fighting for comparable aims and objectives to those of the Second World War, women generally appeared in the media as wives, mothers and girlfriends. They had no active part on the conflict but were feminine complements to the masculine combatants.

In a total of forty-eight television interviews with relatives at home during the time of fighting all, apart from four, show wives, mothers and fiancées. Three ‘proud’ fathers appear, and Prince Charles who says that Prince Andrew is ‘doing the most important job’. 43

The opinion that all those left ‘waiting’ were women and waiting was their ‘role’ ensures that ‘wives’ seems transposable with ‘families’ in the journalists’ terminology:

These remarks highlighted a particular problem for the families of servicemen, of which reports to believe and which to discount. [Our reporter] has been finding out how naval wives in Portsmouth have been coping. 44

Many of the daily papers conveyed pictorial stories about the fleet leaving Portsmouth in early April, and the script accompanying most of the stories concentrated on the women at the quayside. The Daily Mail recounted ‘tearful farewells at the dockyard gate’, 45 the Daily Mirror’s headline was ‘Tears of war’ 46, the Sun’s was ‘Tide of tears’ 47 while the Daily Express told that ‘the Hermes ups anchor and heads for the Falklands-with the hopes and hearts of all the girls left behind’. 48 Women reporters were also more evident in the ‘waiting at home’ stories than in any other Falklands related reporting, which further validates the view that the media considered waiting at home to be a women’s affair.

Patriotism, pageantry and politics

45 Daily Mail, April 5, 1982.
46 Daily Mirror, April 6, 1982.
47 The Sun, April 6, 1982.
48 Daily Express, April 6, 1982.
The task force, in 1982, was manufactured by the printed press in a grand historical narrative linked to such national heroes as Admiral Nelson, to remind the public of Britain’s seafaring traditions. Throughout the nineteenth-century the British public held the navy in high esteem.

The concept of ‘being in it together’ and ‘having to do something’ was a theme that occurred in the special Falklands Directive 1982, Mass Observation. After the initial confusion at the start of the conflict some of the Mass Observation respondents talked about a sense of urgency for some sort of action, many of their comments contained an element of patriotism. Respondent C108 was very straightforward with her answers, curtly answering the directive with, ‘Yes we should act. Fight.’ This trend continued with 40-year-old female W633’s original reaction to the crisis, that of ‘a feeling that we had to fight.’ It was even talked about in the streets, as G226 overheard what she called a group of pensioners proudly say, ‘We’ll show ‘em we’re British, eh?’ referring to the thought of sending a Task Force. A ‘show of strength’ was also the right and necessary action in the mind of S496.49

Even customary royal pageantry was drawn into the Falklands web. When the Queen was filmed walking into Westminster Abbey in formal robes, the male ITN newscaster Michael Nicholson affirmed:

The Queen looked pensive this morning when she attended a service at Westminster Abbey for the Order of the Bath. Yesterday she said her thoughts and prayers were with the servicemen in the South Atlantic. They of course include Prince Andrew.50

A month later at the Chelsea Pensioners’ founders’ day ceremony the male BBC reporter Richard Baker said: ‘As the Queen arrived to take the salute; nobody needed reminding that once again British servicemen are fighting for their country’.51 Similarly, at the royal/military phenomenon that is the Trooping of the Colour: 'Things weren’t totally normal...everyone conscious of the situation in the South Atlantic'. 52

49 The Mass Observation special directive Falklands 1982 can be accessed at: http://blogs.sussex.ac.uk/observingthe80s/home/mass-observation/
The link between the royal family, tradition and history was also upheld in the task force itself:

The ships of the Task Force weren’t too busy to forget naval tradition when they crossed the Equator on their way south… And who better to play the King of the Sea than Prince Andrew? 53

In order to reinforce awareness of Britain’s historical traditions at a time when the armed forces were defending them, the Falklands coverage inserted historical references into reports. For example, interviews with commuters and tourists in London include shots of a naval relic: ‘In the Thames sat the old seadog HMS Belfast looking sombre and refer to older victories too: Above the tourists towered Britain’s greatest naval hero, Lord Nelson’.54 Reports and interviews from Portsmouth naval estates zoomed into street names as a chance to make historical links, as the reporter says: The people are not strangers to famous sea battles. 55

A familiar analogy was: people haven’t known anything like it since the Second World War. 56 It was contentious to claim that the Falklands were really like the Second World War at all, as national security was not under threat, and most people were not directly involved. However, it appears that some blatant attempts were made to intersperse the Falklands conflict with historical references wherever possible and thereby integrate the Falklands within British history and legend. One way this was undertaken was to appeal to selected memories of the last war, for instance Vera Lynn, who released a record during the Falklands campaign. The BBC treated this as an historical and newsworthy event; with wartime stills of the ‘forces sweetheart’, extracts of her new song, an interview with Vera Lynn and contemporary film of her strolling through an English country garden. Yet other songs released especially for the Falklands conflict, such as Crass’s ‘How does it feel (to be the mother of 1,000 dead?)’, which lacked the patriotic constituent of Lynn’s ‘Love This Land’, did not make the news.57 Songs/music that the wives remember in 1982 is discussed more in Chapter 9. Debatable parallels were also drawn between Churchill and the Prime Minister

57 Glasgow University Media Group, War, 123.
Margaret Thatcher, the Task Force on the QE2 and troop embarkation of the Second World War and Harrier pilots and dogfights of the Second World War.

**The media, the home-front and gender stereotypes**

The lives of married women at home are rarely newsworthy. In this instance they were only newsworthy because the men were absent, and the men were making news. Although, because of the distance involved in sending copy to London, and the censorship issues the absence of conflict news caused a focus on wives and home views, they filled a gap. Journalists were given the rare opportunity to report from naval housing estates to present an area of life that the news usually neglects. However, the journalists fell back on the old-fashioned stereotypes of women’s rôles and family life. The television news reports on both BBC and ITN presented the conventional stereotypes; women were shown in relation to their men, and not as individuals. In the coverage of the task force wives, fiancées and mothers there were no details of their jobs, or any activity at all apart from waiting for their men. Typical introductions to interviews with women would be:

Karen Murphin’s only source of information was on news bulletins. She last saw her husband in November. Since then Kevin, who is a stoker and his shipmates were in the Mediterranean before going to the Falklands.

In one fairly long interview with a naval wife, the woman is not even named; instead the camera zooms in on her two-year-old son as she feeds him, and the reporter begins:

Peter Goodfellow’s father is a sailor too. He was the engineering officer aboard the frigate HMS Antelope. Commander Goodfellow was injured. When the news was first broken to his wife, the Navy still had no extent of his injuries. She had to wait.

Such reports revealed the men’s jobs, the boy’s name, but nothing about the women. These stereotypical images are not consistent with contemporary surveys, or my interviews. The women interviewed so far, except one, had paid jobs outside of the home;

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60 London: BBC 1 News, June 4, 1982, 18:00.
61 1980 General Household Survey. This showed that conventional family units, couples living with children, made up only 31% of households. Households were the woman is dependent on the man and stays at home to look after the children are only 13%. Altogether two-thirds of married women had paid jobs outside of the home.
their jobs included psychiatric nurse, teacher, amusement company manager and civil servant. The researcher does not wish to cast doubt on the genuine warmth, security and family solidarity that the media captured, or the depth of joy and relief felt in reunions with survivors after the war. The point is that the media images of wives and families was selective; it selected images of unity and family, concealing much of the true conflict and attitudes of both the families and the country. As well as being shown in relation to their men, the wives were portrayed not as active members of society, but as acceptable feminine vessels of emotion. Reporters, both television and newspapers, seemed uninterested in what the women did or thought, but only in what they felt. Furthermore, the journalists were reluctant to give the women a voice, preferring instead to turn to professionals and experts. There were pictures on both the television and newspapers of wives and children, but the captions and voiceovers were from authoritative or paternalistic figures. It seemed that wives and mothers could only contribute individual, emotional reactions and not objective or political views. For example, a television report, supposedly on the families at a Gosport naval estate, shows film of the estate, women pushing children on swings, a family at home and a naval chaplain arriving to visit. The only person allowed to speak is the chaplain, who says, ‘It’s been marvellous to see the amount of support that these families have had...really remarkable, their resilience is superb’.62

Home front women, if not seen as supporters or vessels of emotion, were reported as objects of ‘sexual interest’, an added extra on the fringe of the real business of the news. For example, a woman at the dockside in black stockings delivering a singing telegram as the troops embark was picked out and described as ‘some cheeky light relief’.63 Over close-ups of women dancers a reporter commented: ‘Hot Gossip gave the troops something of what they’ll no doubt want to see.’64 Women who were actually involved in the campaign received the same sort of treatment: the commentary for film of nurses working in a military hospital is ‘but now it’s over and there’s time to chat up a nurse.’65 The researcher asked one of the respondents who was a twenty-five-year-old, full time Naval Nurse at RHN Haslar at the time

what she thought of such commentary, ‘I find it offensive seeing it now, but thirty years ago it was the sort of comments you heard every day’.  

Why were these women not allowed to speak for themselves in the media? This researcher does not believe it is enough to give these women ‘a voice’. As an historian, some understanding as to why these women were not allowed to speak for themselves should be sought. Perhaps the media thought the women would speak out against the conflict, thinking purely of themselves and their emotions. However, this is not borne out in my interviews; the women were not submissive to their husbands, although they were to their husbands’ careers. Any grievances or dissent uttered was quickly superseded by words of support.  

The influence of the media is present in every Mass Observation special directive file, some more explicit than latent. The first shape the media took within the recordings was how it actually moulded the correspondent’s daily habits during the crisis. Contributor W633 noted how uninformed of current events she was at times when there was no looming crisis, stating that at these times she lived with her ‘head in the sand’, only casually listening to a morning radio programme while having breakfast and occasionally reading a newspaper. She then explicitly states that she will make a conscious effort to consume three times more media ‘than she used to, with plans to ‘tune in at 1pm, 5pm, and 10pm’.  

This chapter addressed research question 5. Did media views reinforce previous militarised patriotism and gender rôles? and objective 5. Examine how the conflict has been remembered or commemorated. as commemoration is a powerful analytical tool to re-evaluate a military event for contemporary society. This chapter also sets the scene for the following two literature chapters.  

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66 Mrs T. (M), interview by V. Woodman, March 15, 2013.  
Chapter 3 Literature Review: Women, particularly military women

Unfortunately, there has been virtually no research undertaken into what one might call the female half of the naval community as a whole; not the minority of women who went to sea, but the wives and mothers who stayed at home, bringing up small children, earning their living as best they might while their menfolk were at sea, enduring years of absence and uncertainty. They represent an enormous void of ignorance, and our knowledge of the social history of the Navy will never be complete until someone fills it.68

The resolve to break through restraints, defy the taboos around femininity and become new women were fierce and undeniable. The collective culture of the new movement was springing from individual desires for personal transformation which went deeper than any ideology. It involved a psychological break with all that had gone before.69

The first quote was chosen as it is highlighting the lack of research into the families of not just naval, but seagoing men. The eminent British naval historian, N. A. M. Rodger, was commenting on the eighteenth century, but this review reveals his words are relevant to contemporary history too. The second quote, from the socialist feminist Sheila Rowbotham, describes the resolve of the Women’s Liberation groups of the 1970s. These groups would have affected gendered social change for the Falklands naval wives, contrasting with the wives’ integration into a traditional, militarised and patriarchal institution.

The purpose of this chapter is to identify and critique the theories relevant to the Falklands wives in the literature. It is necessary to characterise a framework of women and military history, service institutionalisation, militarisation and socialised culture from the Falklands wives’ perspective. This was significant to naval wives who were incorporated into the traditional paternalistic institution of the military. This process involved reading on culturally and socially gendered depictions of conflict and naval wives’ perceived rôles as supporters of ‘their’ men. It will show that 1980s literature and media depicted them mostly as homogeneous and stereotypical. What could a naval wife say or think then? What cultural

expectations was she dealing with, consciously or unconsciously? It will track changes between the 1980s and the twenty-first century.

Four sections will examine advances in the academic discipline of women’s history, focusing on the influences of feminist writers; women and the 1980s, especially the changing perceptions of gender rôles, gender, women and military history and finally, women and the military. This will explore the experiences of women connected to the military through marriage, paying attention to the military actively socialising women to become ‘model’ military wives. Because Falklands wives were women, theories about women were central. Literary theory was used to place the naval wives within a norm of 1980s family rôles, to distinguish between naval wives’ norms and the actuality of what the Falklands wives really felt.

**Academic women’s history**

Retrieving the lives of women from the neglect of historians was the aim of women’s history from its beginning. Since its establishment as an academic discipline, its methodology and concerns have advanced. According to the socialist feminist writer, Sheila Rowbotham, from its early days of classifying great women in history in the 1960s and ‘70s, it focused on recording ‘ordinary’ women’s expectations, aspirations and status. Women's history has always been closely associated with contemporary feminist politics and within the discipline of history itself. When women sought to question inequalities in their own lives they turned to history to understand the roots of their oppression and to see what they could ascertain from challenges that had been made in the past. If a woman's rôle could be shown to be socially constructed within a specific historical context, rather than natural and universal context, then feminists could argue that it was open to change.

During the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, campaigners within the first organised women’s movements found that women were principally non-existent in standard history texts and this encouraged them to write their own histories. M. Wollstonecraft, *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman* (1792), I. Pinchbeck, *Women workers and the industrial revolution 1750–1850* (1930) and B. Hill, *Women, work, and sexual politics in eighteenth*

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century England (1989) were engaged participants and historians. Barbara Drake and Barbara Hutchins published accounts on women’s work, trade unionism and political actions. Although suffrage campaigners were instrumental in constructing a narrative of the movement, it was the Women’s Liberation Movement (WLM), or ‘second wave feminism’, from the late 1960s, which had the utmost influence on the writing of women’s history. Sheila Rowbotham published a ground-breaking study, which was followed by exhaustive research into aspects of women’s lives such as employment, family life, trade unionism, women’s groups and sexuality. A context within which to place women’s lives was offered by developments in social history and the social sciences, which sought to pursue the history of less powerful groups – ‘history from below’ – and challenged established judgments about what should be historically significant.

The influence of feminists on these developments focused on women’s experiences in institutions such as the family, highlighting the significance of sexual divisions in the workplace and in the home and investigating interconnections between public and private life. By querying narratives and concepts of time, feminists argued that family matters, emotional support and personal associations were as important as politics and paid work. In doing so women were removed from the conventional framework and the writing of women’s history was reformed, thus changing the way that history, in the broadest sense, was written.

‘Women’s history’, ‘gender history’ and ‘feminist history’ appear at times to be used interchangeably. However, some feminist historians would assert that such a claim minimises their precise methodology. Feminists maintain that the power relationship between men and women is just as vital as that between social classes in understanding social change, and that acknowledging conflicts between men and women precedes a re-interpretation of traditional accounts of social movements and ideas, as well as initiating new fields of investigation.

73 Rowbotham, Hidden, 5.
74 June Hannam, Women’s history, Feminist history, accessed on December 29th, 2016. http://www.history.ac.uk/makinghistory/resources/articles/womens_history.html
Women are not always the focus of feminist history; a feminist approach can be used to understand all areas of history, including oral history. For example, Sonya Rose brought feminist insight to the study of national identity, race and citizenship during the Second World War and the post-war years.\textsuperscript{75}

The 1970s and ‘80s saw an accrual in women’s history writing, principally in the United States and Britain. However, style and emphasis between the two was distinctive, highlighting divisions between socialist and radical feminists. In Britain, where labour history was more pronounced and many feminists had emerged from socialist politics, the stress was on waged work, trade unions and labour politics. In the United States, research focused on a distinct women’s culture, the family, sexuality and the growth of all-female institutions.\textsuperscript{76}

To understand women’s experiences better, socialist historians advanced the concept of patriarchy, to survey effectively the complex correlation between Marxism and feminism. This, they claimed, conveyed meaning to the fact that ‘women have not only worked for capital, they have worked for men’.\textsuperscript{77} Limitations between the different approaches became more fluent, for example Sally Alexander’s study of early nineteenth century working-class movements\textsuperscript{78} investigated how the unconscious entered politics and how the perception of self and sexual identity modified an academic understanding of class. The writing of women’s history was influenced by the lack of cohesion within the movement, where criticism concerning the dominance of interest in white, western women and their concerns took precedence. Extra concentration was afforded to the differences between women, including race, ethnicity, class and sexual orientation. Although this was of relevance to British society at the time, these issues were not covered with the interviewees and were beyond the scope of this thesis.

Research into Black and Asian women emphasised the importance of race as well as sex and class in moulding lives. In 1978 Stella Dadzie co-founded the Organisation for Women

\textsuperscript{76} June Hannam, Women’s history.
\textsuperscript{78} Sally Alexander, ‘Women, class and sexual differences in the 1830s and 1840s: Some reflections on the writing of a feminist history’, \textit{History Workshop Journal}, 17 (Spring 1984), 125–49.
of Asian and African Descent (OWAAD), which over the next four years campaigned on issues including immigration and deportation; domestic violence; exclusion of children from school; industrial action by black women; policing and defence policies; and health and reproductive rights. Their campaigns on reproductive rights included protesting against the testing of contraceptive drug Depo-Provera on women from marginalised communities.\(^79\) In Spring 1980, the *Oral History Journal*, in a ‘Black history’ edition, featured articles on West Indian migration by Elizabeth Thomas-Hope, West Indian communities in Brixton by Donald Hinds, Pakistani life histories in Manchester by Pnina Werbner, and an overview of ‘Black labour’ by Harry Goulbourne.\(^80\) Some wives in the total population of Falklands wives may have been black, but it was not relevant to the researcher’s cohort because none were black. An in-depth investigation into black issues was considered beyond the scope of this thesis.

Since the 1980s, Lesbian, Gay, Bi-Sexual and Transgender (LGBT) issues became relevant in terms of background. Until 1999, the Ministry of Defence (MoD) policy maintained a long-standing ban on homosexuals joining any of the armed forces, forcing about sixty homosexual service personnel to leave the services a year. The MoD stance was that gays in the military were bad for morale and vulnerable to blackmail from foreign intelligence agencies. This made life extremely difficult for lesbians and gays who had to hide their sexuality and risked being court-martialled, jailed and losing their careers.\(^81\) In 1999 the European Court of Human Rights overturned the ban of lesbians and gays serving in the armed forces. The European judges declared that such a bar on entry into the army, navy and air force was illegal under the European Convention on Human Rights, which safeguards an individual’s right to privacy. Today the Air Force and the Royal Navy have attained prestigious recognition by Stonewall as a Top 100 employer for Lesbian, Gay Men and Bisexual people.\(^82\)

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81 Proud to Serve https://plymlgbtarchive.org.uk/2012/06/17/proud-to-serve/

82 Stonewall is a lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender rights charity in the United Kingdom named after the Stonewall Inn of Stonewall riots fame in New York City's Greenwich Village. Stonewall’s history accessed at: http://www.stonewall.org.uk/about-us
This indicates that military attitudes to personal opinions and lifestyles have changed since the 1980s, but an in-depth investigation into LGBT issues was considered beyond the scope of this thesis.

During this period, despite research advances, mainstream history texts and academia often overlooked women’s experiences and there was an inclination to interpret women’s history as separate from other developments. Therefore, in the 1990s, Jane Rendall and others advocated a new gender history that would relate the themes raised by women’s history to both genders and would concentrate on the various ways in which gender differences across time and space have been created and identified. Leonore Davidoff and Catherine Hall in their study of family life in Birmingham in the early years of industrialisation adopted this method to examine the gendered connections in family relationships, sex rôles, work and class identity. Yet, some feminists were critical of this ‘gendered centred’ method, claiming that women’s explicit experiences would be lost in a methodology that viewed the experiences of the sexes as being analogous. Therefore, according to June Hannam, feminist historians advocated that the only way to guarantee that sexual inequalities and the power relationship between men and women would remain significant in historical enquiry was to adopt an emphasis on women’s history.

Postmodernism, with its stress on language and discourse, has confronted old feminist inevitabilities about lived experience, women’s subordination and the classification of ‘woman’. There was a move towards representation, symbolism, discourse and text and a shift away from material conditions. The new cultural history approach has initiated new areas of research; the ‘female body, the emotions and the construction of historical memory as well as drawing attention to the shifting, multiple and often conflicting ways in which women develop gendered identities’. This approach was useful in this research as it was not focused on events (Falklands Conflict), but on memory, experiences and the way in which

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83 Hannam, Women’s history.
85 Hannam, Women’s History.
86 Hannam, Women’s history.
individuals (Falklands wives) would articulate their gendered identity within a traditional, patriarchal structure.

Offering a complementary discourse, postmodernist ideology advocates a retelling of history that serves the purpose of gaining power for some repressed groups (naval wives). According to the postmodern condition, the discipline of history has turned away from the study of significant individuals and the struggles between nations to focus on social groups and institutions. This revisionist rewriting of the past to serve a purpose, contributes to empowering oppressed social minorities. Thus, feminist histories attempt to expose a male-dominated, patriarchal past and point the way to empower women. The researcher considered postmodernist conditions when devising research questions as the Falklands naval wives could be considered an oppressed minority among 1980s women.

The growth in the higher education sector, along with more women holding academic posts, encouraged the growth and popularity of both gender and women’s history. Women could shape the syllabus and offer women’s history courses. Additionally, an assortment of journals and publishing outlets relating to women’s and gender history emerged. Groups aiming to give women’s history a voice, to endorse the study of women’s history and to maintain links with contemporary feminist activists developed. In 1991 leading women historians came together to launch the Women’s History Network (WHN), a national association and charity for the promotion of women’s history and the encouragement of women and men interested in women’s history. The website states:

...we have grown year by year and today we are a UK national charity with members including working historians, researchers, independent scholars, teachers, librarians, and many other individuals both within academia and beyond. Indeed, the network reaches out to welcome women and men from any background who share a passion for women’s history.

Women’s history is now embedded within the higher education syllabus; there are far more publishing outlets and the number of females in academic posts has increased somewhat.

87 Publishing outlets increased with the development of a women’s press, notably Virago and Honno, and new journals, including the Journal of Women’s History, Gender and History and the Women’s History Review.
In 2007, Dr Margarette Lincoln, a maritime historian from the generation of women who entered higher education in the 1970s,\(^{89}\) in *Naval Wives and Mistresses*, aimed to ‘fill a distinct gap in social and maritime history’. Her study examined the lives of naval women during the years 1750–1815, providing historical parallels with the Falklands wives. The preface stated that the study:

...explores the lives and experiences of naval women, who for the most part, remained ashore when their husbands went to sea. While there has been keen interest in the minority of women who went to sea disguised as men, there has been virtually no research into the wives and mistresses of seamen who stayed at home, bringing up small children, earning their living as best they might, often enduring years of absence and uncertainty.\(^{90}\)

Apart from fundamental changes in social class structure and the technological changes which affected such issues as communication (the postal service), especially during wartime, Lincoln concluded that the problems affecting naval wives in 1815 were virtually the same as those nearly two hundred years later. She examined such issues as anxiety and separation, where it was declared by the author that ‘the stress and anxiety suffered by women whose husbands were at sea were common to all naval wives’ and that husbands of this (upper) class ‘hoped their wives’ upbringing and education would permit them to rationalise their fears but they also advised wives to seek the support of friends and family during their absence’.\(^{91}\) Lincoln divided her chapters into ‘classes’: the aristocracy and the gentry; the middling sort; and labouring and criminals. Each chapter examined themes such as managing finances, running the home and children. There does seem to be an assumption that only the labouring classes were prostitutes and only the labouring classes indulged in prostitutes.

Lincoln’s study revealed a perception of support networks in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries which helped naval wives to manage and cope with the burden of responsibility in their husbands’ absence. This perception would guide this researcher’s interview methodology. Lincoln’s research also exposed an ‘unofficial’ chain of

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\(^{89}\) Dr Margaret Lincoln, Deputy Director at the National Maritime Museum, 2007–15, now Visiting Fellow at Goldsmiths, University of London. Her books include *Representing the Navy: British Sea Power 1750–1815*, *Naval Wives and Mistresses 1745–1815*, and *Pirates and British Society, 1680–1730*. She is currently working on a peoples’ history of maritime London, 1768–1802.


\(^{91}\) Ibid. 65.
communication, where women from the upper ranks helped seamen’s women from the middling and lower ranks, especially in such matters as communication, by passing on news and letters. Furthermore, Lincoln exposed what could be described as the foundations of a naval estate/community when she asserts: ‘Where families with a connection to the navy lived in close proximity, they seem to have formed a community with a distinct identity’.92 Although this study presented a formative analysis of life for women connected with the navy during the late eighteenth century, its themes resonated with Falklands wives, and influenced the research questions.

Notwithstanding women’s academic advances, women’s studies courses, both at undergraduate and at postgraduate level, have declined since 2000 and many mainstream history texts still give limited space to women and their specific experiences. In 2012 the European Commission argued that ‘Women account today for almost 60% of university degrees in Europe, and they achieve excellent grades, better on average than their male counterparts. However, their presence at the top of scientific and academic careers is scarce. Only 18% of full professors in Europe are women; 13% of heads of higher education institutions and 22% of board members in research decision-making. Women’s skills, knowledge and qualifications are grossly underused in the labour market.’93 In 2014 the Royal Society investigated low numbers of women University Research Fellows (2 out of 43) appointed in that year. The Royal Society panel ‘concluded that it could not identify any factor or combination of factors to explain why the outcome in 2014 was so extreme. But they and the Royal Society Council shared the view that the outcome is unacceptable and that the Society must take what actions it can to ensure that it attracts women to apply and judges their applications on a par with those by men’.94 Although the educational debates were not applicable to the Falklands naval wives in the 1980s, they were instrumental in shaping and forming the researcher’s education and thus the focus, research and collection of the wives’ narratives.

92 Ibid., 194.
Progress and advances in literature about women were fundamental to develop this research. Both the naval wives and the researcher were affected by changes in women’s lives and increased academic interest in gender relations, especially the patriarchal power relationship which is evident in the relationship between the MoD and the Falklands wives. This literature raised questions concerning how naval wives’ lives, within a patriarchal and traditional institution, fitted into contemporary feminist’s theories on the power relationships between men and women. The naval wives’ power relationship was not just man versus woman but woman versus institution. The literature also prompted questions on changing social attitudes on the concept of being ‘married to the job’.

**Women and the 1980s**

Despite Britain acquiring its first female prime minister in 1979, many biographers argue that this did not lead to increased rights or advantages for women during Margaret Thatcher’s three terms (1979–90). John Campbell, the British political writer, stated that Thatcher’s position on the rights of women changed as her political career advanced, that over time she became less keen to ensure that other women could enjoy the advantages that she had.\(^{95}\) In a 1960 article by Thatcher for the *Daily Express* (which stated she was talking as a mother and not an MP), she vowed that she would send her daughter to university rather than ‘to finish abroad’; she often talked about education and careers appropriate for a woman. Yet she also emphasised the importance of marriage for women and the value of ‘domestic arts’.\(^{96}\) This researcher was astounded when initially reading some of the comments made by Thatcher in the article. Despite her declared support of women’s education, one remark was: ‘I believe that a girl’s appearance is very important for her self-confidence. She will do her best when she is looking attractive and knows it.’ Thatcher has been accused of hypocrisy,\(^ {97}\) and nowhere does the researcher believe this is more blatant than in the 1960 article, where the virtues of an education for her daughter were then undermined by comments on her appearance:


I believe that a girl’s appearance is very important for her self-confidence. She will do her best when she is looking attractive and knows it. She will want to wear make-up in her middle teens so I shall see that she is taught to use it properly.

Similarly, Thatcher stressed learning domestic practicalities whilst her daughter was young (at the time of the article Thatcher’s daughter, Carol, was six years old) when she wrote:

...I am determined to teach my daughter to be a good and economical cook. She loves good food and is always anxious to help with cooking and of course to scrape out the mixing bowl.98

It should be acknowledged that the perceived change in Thatcher’s stance on women during office was not judged only as a use of double standards. It was due also to the nature of discussion around women’s rights which had changed with the rise of feminism in the late 1960s and 1970s and the passing of the Equal Pay Act in 1970, which came into force in 1975 (despite being limited by what constituted ‘equal work’).

Thatcher insisted that she was not a ‘feminist’, and characterised ‘women’s lib’ with contempt. Speaking to a group of children in 1982, she said:

I think most of us got to our own position in life without Women’s Lib and we got here, not by saying ‘you’ve got to have more women doing so and so’ but saying ‘look, you’ve got the qualifications, why shouldn’t we have just as much a chance as a man?’ And you’ll find that so many male bastions were conquered that way, whereas Women’s Lib, I think, has been rather strident concentrated on things which don’t really matter and, dare I say it, being rather unfeminine. Don’t you think that? What do the girls think; don’t you think Women’s Lib is sometimes like that?99

According to Richard Vinen, Thatcher’s gender, which had been a disadvantage when she was trying to get into Parliament, might have been advantageous as an MP, at least unless and until she sought a major office of state. From 1959 until her entry into the cabinet in 1970, she benefitted from the need for token women in certain rôles and positions, alongside the attention given to someone relatively youthful and attractive.100

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100 Vinen, Thatcher’s Britain, 26.
The socialist feminist historian Sheila Rowbotham acknowledged that the individualistic prominence of the 1980s could emancipate women from inhibiting constraints and duties, but it also generated confusion, removed traditional protection and left an undercurrent of unease.\textsuperscript{101} Conservative women who were interviewed for Beatrix Campbell’s book \textit{The Iron Ladies} in the 1980s, were confused about the repercussions of sexual autonomy associated with the contraceptive pill.\textsuperscript{102} One of Campbell’s respondents was unhappy about women going back to work after they had children: ‘we’re made to feel guilty for staying at home, because of all the opportunities available for mothers to work now. I want respect that is what we have lost’.\textsuperscript{103} For this respondent respect came from caring for family and not something asserted or won. Furthermore, there was a difference between the opportunities which beckoned and actuality. Campbell’s respondent had ‘tried to do everything properly, to stay at home and bring up the children because society said you should. Society was wrong.’\textsuperscript{104} Rowbotham claimed that:

...throughout the decade a muffled chorus of women’s voices murmured about what individual endeavour forgot, the importance of human connection and interaction. On the political right this meant traditional values and the family. On the political left, interconnection seemed to denote the wider community. This resulted in more women on the right adopting a language of individual assertion, while women on the left yearned for a responsibility of conserving communities and resources.\textsuperscript{105}

The issue of working mothers was relevant to the Falklands wives. According to the government-sponsored British Social Attitudes Survey (BSAS), support for a traditional division of gender rôles has declined over time, though substantial support remains for women having the primary caring rôle when children are young. In the mid-1980s, close to half the public agreed ‘a man’s job is to earn money; a woman’s job is to look after the home and family’. Just 13% subscribed to this view in 2012. This decline was primarily a result of generational replacement, with succeeding generations becoming less supportive of traditional gender rôles. Now only 33% think a mother should stay at home when there is a child under school age, compared with 64% in 1989. The most popular choice now is for the

\textsuperscript{101} Sheila Rowbotham, \textit{Century of Women}, 471.
\textsuperscript{103} Dianne Charles quoted, ibid., 154.
\textsuperscript{104} Ibid., 155.
\textsuperscript{105} Rowbotham, \textit{Century of Women}, 472.
mother to work part-time (26% in 1989, 43% in 2012). Periodically since the mid-1980s, British Social Attitudes surveys have included attitudinal questions about the rôles of men and women within the family, in particular concerning earning an income from work versus playing a caring rôle in the home. Tracking responses to these questions over the past three decades, they reported on whether, in line with women’s increased participation in the labour market, there had also been changes in what the public believes men’s and women’s rôles should be. In the mid-1980s, close to half (43% in 1984 and 48% in 1987) of people supported a gendered separation of rôles, with the man in the ‘breadwinner’ rôle and the woman in the caring rôle. Clearly, at that time, there was a strong belief in the traditional gender divide. Since then, there has been a steady decline in the numbers holding this view. In 2012, only 13% of people thought that this should be the case. So, in respect of whether women should stay at home rather than take on paid work, there has been a dramatic shift in attitudes to gender rôles in the past thirty years. The researcher contends that this information highlights societal change in attitudes to women’s work during the period the women were naval wives and the time they were interviewed. Furthermore, the non-serving spouse is traditionally seen as the ‘supporter’ to and of the serving spouse, regardless of their employment status.

Janet Finch and David Morgan’s research into marriage in the 1980s adopted the concept of realism as the central theme. For the purpose of this thesis, Finch and Morgan’s research was consulted, as all but three of the interviewees in 1982 were married. Finch and Morgan were not suggesting that there was a ‘dramatic reversal around 1979/80 in the way people organised their lives’, but they were ‘aware of the essential artificiality of an approach which sees particular ‘decades’ characterised by specific social norms or ways of living’. Therefore, unlike much research concerning marriage in the previous two decades, Finch and Morgan asserted that public debates about family life were not primarily concerned with

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107 Ibid., 118.
108 Ibid., 120.
110 Ibid., 55.
ideas of sexual permissiveness, openness or ‘doing your own thing’. In fact, Finch and Morgan suggested that research shows that the institution of marriage and continuity had remained just as popular. This, they stated, was validated by notions of marriage and family being firmly placed on the political agenda in the 1980s, which was not visible in the 1960s and ‘70s. Finch and Morgan also acknowledged that most research on the family during the 1980s was small-scale and locally based, but evidenced continuities with the past rather than drastic changes.  

Finch and Morgan divided their research into four themes: the material of marriage; changing gender relations; violence in domestic life and processes over time in domestic life. Much of this was of no benefit to this researcher. However, in the theme of the material of marriage, which examines the recognition by social scientists of the economic aspect of marriage and domestic life, Finch and Morgan discussed briefly the ‘complex and varied ways in which a wife was married to the job’. Their research stated that much had been made between sexual divisions of labour in an industrial society and sexual division of labour in the home but an investigation into the ways in which a wife was influenced by her husband’s work, even when she had no paid employment status of her own, had yet to be explored. This perceived influence was not just in terms of income, but that the ‘occupational status of the husband often provided spatial and temporal parameters limiting the wife’s spheres of activity’. An example of this was revealed within the armed forces, but similarly in other professionals such as the clergy or businessmen, where geographical career moves would affect other family members. Additionally, there were other ways that the wife could be incorporated into her husband’s work, especially in the clergy, but also in the armed forces where officer’s wives were expected to adopt a pastoral rôle, or in businessmen’s and diplomat’s wives where they were expected to entertain clients or other diplomats. Therefore the wife’s rôle had economic significance even where she did not actively earn a wage or leave the home. This aspect would bear a direct relationship to the Falklands wives’ experience.

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112 Finch and Morgan, ‘Marriage’, 56.
113 Finch and Morgan, ‘Marriage’, 60.
114 Ibid., 60.
115 For example, see Janet Finch, Married to the Job: wives Incorporation in Men’s Work, (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1983).
Conservative political inputs into the family were also relevant to the Falklands wives’ situation. Conservative family policy in the 1980s had to adapt to pressures, including the Conservative Women’s Organisation, which had fought attempts to abolish child benefits and opposed family credit being added to the male wage packet. Although child benefits were cut by 5% in 1985 and frozen in 1987 and 1988, this universal benefit survived the Thatcher era. The Conservatives did not directly oppose equal opportunities; European equality legislation had to be implemented. However, Tory employment legislation restraining social rights like maternity provision and cuts in special spending ensured that child-care provision remained inadequate.\textsuperscript{116} It appeared that neither women nor poor families were favoured by Thatcherism.

The internationally accredited market research organisation, Ipsos MORI, noted that in 1979, 1983 and 1987, Conservative popularity lessened amongst women voters, although this change was very slight, dropping from 46% of women voters in 1983 to 43% in 1987.\textsuperscript{117} In 1983 and 1987, while professional, managerial and white-collar women (and men) were declaring a preference for the Conservatives, skilled and unskilled manual women moved away from them. The feminist Rowbotham remarked in 1983 that 34% of women manual workers voted Labour, but by 1987 that had risen to 43%.\textsuperscript{118}

Rowbotham maintained that whilst Margaret Thatcher was admired by some women as a strong leader, her policies also aroused opposition.\textsuperscript{119} Thatcher found resistance from women problematic; perhaps she had little interest in women or in women’s networks and did not empathise with women who neither resembled her nor fitted her stereotypes. These women were driven to take action; seen in the women’s peace protests where women marched and protested against Thatcher’s acceptance of Cruise missiles. Women with small children marched to the Greenham Common airbase in August 1981. The media ignored them; women protesting was not a story, so as they approached Greenham some women decided to chain themselves to the gates. The Conservatives were caught off-guard by

\textsuperscript{116} Rowbotham, \textit{Century of Women}, 479.
\textsuperscript{118} Rowbotham, \textit{Century of Women}, 479.
\textsuperscript{119} Ibid., 480.
Greenham and the peace movement in which many women played an important rôle.\textsuperscript{120} The constraints of the thesis did not afford space to explore an interesting juxtaposition of naval wives and the Greenham peace women: two groups of women whose lives and experiences were newsworthy for a short period.

During the decade, various forms of feminism infiltrated the media and women’s studies courses appeared in universities, colleges and schools. Gender awareness reached religious organisations, and feminist ideas were affecting trade unions. Pressure groups for civil liberties, against poverty and for welfare provision had all adopted a ‘women’s agenda’ and all the political parties, not just Labour and Conservatives, but the Liberals, Social Democrats and the new Green Party, were all compelled to respond.\textsuperscript{121} Some feminists turned to the Labour Party, whilst others turned to the extreme left or rejected politics altogether. According to Sarah Perrigo in the article \textit{Socialist-Feminism and the Labour Party: Some experiences from Leeds}, the Labour Party had seen an influx of socialist feminists into the party, especially in cities and larger towns where the women’s movement had built a strong community network. Perrigo cited three factors causing women to join the party from the late 1970s. First, from the late 1970s there had emerged a hostile political and economic climate which progressively threatened the evolution of the women’s movement. Therefore, some feminists deemed it vital to forge alliances with ‘other movements similarly threatened if gains won were to be defended and the movement progress’.\textsuperscript{122} Secondly, Perrigo claimed that some socialist-feminists thought that the women’s movement had reached stalemate. Questions were raised on how to increase working class and ethnic minority input into the women’s movement and ‘more generally about how to link class and gender issues and how to establish a significant feminist dimension in the theory and practice of the socialist and Labour movements.’\textsuperscript{123} Thirdly, the Labour Party was undergoing a period of change. Perrigo, though, made it clear that it was dangerous and naïve to overestimate what the Labour Party had achieved during this period as formal policy in relation to women was:

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{120} Ibid., 481.
\item \textsuperscript{121} Rowbotham, \textit{Century of Women}, 487.
\item \textsuperscript{123} Ibid., 101.
\end{itemize}
... formulated within an equal rights model of equality, the effect of which is to silence demands for any substantive shift of power from men to women both in the party and in society generally. For many Labour leaders it is a policy designed to win votes rather than to tackle seriously fundamental inequalities of resources and power.\textsuperscript{124}

Furthermore, although women comprised around 40\% of Labour Party members, they were noticeably absent from leadership or authoritative positions. Among female MPs, councillors and full-time party officials, few were sympathetic to feminism ‘or even saw themselves as having any responsibility for articulating women’s experiences or representing their interests’.\textsuperscript{125} This influenced the research design as women, including Falklands naval wives, were almost wholly absent from the decision-making processes within defence. The literature depicted overwhelmingly that officers’ wives conformed to traditional patriarchal military rôles, rules and behaviour, and this filtered down to ratings’ wives.

The nature of feminist debates on sexism and pornography also changed over time. In the late 1960s and early 1970s, pornography tended to be analysed and opposed in the context of broader objections to the portrayal of women as predominantly objects of male desire, for instance the Miss World contest, the use of women’s bodies in advertising and strip shows. The Miss World contest was disrupted in 1970 and stickers saying, ‘This advert degrades women’ were stuck on London Underground posters and elsewhere.\textsuperscript{126} By the late 1970s/early 1980s, many radical feminists had concluded that men’s use of pornography was evidence of their aggression towards women and that violence was an important dimension of male heterosexuality. This analysis was not accepted by all feminists and contributed to divisions between radical and socialist feminists in the WLM. According to Dany Lacombe in \textit{Blue Politics: Pornography and the Law in the Age of Feminism}:

Thus, despite the apparent differences between the two opposed feminist positions in the pornography debate, there are important affinities in their accounts of pornography and sexuality. Conceived either as the eroticization of the sexual subordination of women or as the representation of this process, sexism is the content of pornography. Sexism, moreover, is presented as a structural force so powerful and

\textsuperscript{124} Ibid., 103.
\textsuperscript{125} Ibid., 103.
\textsuperscript{126} Feminist Theories: Sexism and Pornography, \url{http://pers-www.wlv.ac.uk/~le1810/1980s.htm} accessed September 1, 2017; Miss World contest, \url{http://www.bl.uk/learning/histcitizen/sisterhood/clips/bodies-minds-and-spirits/body-experience/143246.html} accessed 14.3.18. Later in the 1970s, the portrayal of women as sexually available to men in certain films and in the material sold in sex shops was the focus of the feminist critique. Film clubs and sex shops were attacked as part of ‘Reclaim the Night’ and anti-rape campaigns.
encompassing that it determines pornography and our reaction to it. Thus feminists decry the need to establish a feminist ethics to judge representations and desires.\footnote{Dany Lacombe, \textit{Blue Politics: Pornography and the Law in the Age of Feminism} (London: University of Toronto Press, 1998), 56.}

The researcher analysed sexism in the 1980s briefly after examining copies of the \textit{Navy News}, which has been the official newspaper of the Royal Navy and the broader community, which includes wives and families, since 1954. This publication was freely available in ships and naval establishments and many copies found their way into naval homes, including that of the researcher. While researching the publication for this thesis she was shocked to view some of the sexist articles and advertisements contained in early 1980s editions (including those published during the conflict). For copyright reasons the researcher could not display the material in this thesis. One article contained three photographs of young ladies, scantily clothed, under the headline ‘So cheer up, me lads’. The opening line of the article read: ‘... bless ‘em all - all three of these lovelies who are shaping up to support the Fleet’. It was also deemed important to share the vital statistics of one of them.\footnote{\textit{Navy News}, July 1982, 3.} The August 1982 edition of the same publication had a revealing picture of the actress Bo Derek, sitting on a beach wearing nothing more than a thin wet beach cover-up, with the only caption being ‘the film ‘10’ released to the Fleet by the Royal Navy Film Corporation, also starring Dudley Moore’.\footnote{\textit{Navy News}, August 1982, 3.} The same edition also contained T-Shirt advertisements, one for ship’s crests using images of large chested women wearing just a t-shirt and a pair of briefs, and one reading: ‘we’re BIG in British T-shirts’.\footnote{\textit{Navy News}, August 1982, 9, 17.}

These sexist pictures, articles and advertisements were synonymous with much 1980s popular culture. Many of the famous 1980s ‘teen movies’ contained sexist jokes and scenarios that would be deemed politically incorrect today. For example, in \textit{Weird Science}, of course Lisa was not a real person but a computer programme created by two nerds seeking the perfect woman, but the sole purpose of her existence in Hughes’s \textit{Weird Science} is to make the two teenage boys feel better about their own sexuality. And in \textit{Splash}, Tom Hanks’s character exhibits degrading behaviour towards Daryl Hannah’s Madison throughout the film. He belittles her, treats her as though she is stupid, and even barges in on her in the bathroom.
when she just wants to be alone. He treats her as property, not an equal.\textsuperscript{131} The 1980s \textit{Navy News} articles and advertisements were typical of media/social attitudes at the time. Emma Taaffe's thesis pertinently highlighted the contemporary sexism of dockyard magazines.\textsuperscript{132} This raised important questions regarding the Falklands wives’ self-images.

By the early 1980s, due to the decline of UK coal, steel and shipbuilding industries, between 15% and 20% of the country’s manufacturing base was lost. Unemployment, which at the end of 1979 was 1.4 million, reached over 3 million by the end of 1982. This coincided with the global restructuring of production and the impact of new technology. The consequences for women, especially in the manufacturing sector, were two-fold.\textsuperscript{133} As male employment and work conditions worsened, more women took jobs in the private and public sectors. From the mid-1980s the percentage of workers in low-paid jobs expanded. By the end of the decade over half the low-paid full-time workers and 80% of part-time workers were women. The increase in working wives (along with increased home ownership) was a factor that contributed to the ‘civilianisation’ of military families during the 1980s. However, the trend amongst military wives was:

Owing to reduced job opportunities for women who keep moving house every two years or so, the proportion of Service wives seeking work is higher than that amongst the rest of the community and the proportion in work is smaller.\textsuperscript{134}

Ruth Jolly in \textit{Military Man, Family Man, Crown Property?} claimed that around 40\% of service wives had employment in the mid-1980s. However, many of these women were not entirely content with the type of work they were doing, and on securing a good job they were loath to leave it when their husbands were posted out of the area. This applied predominantly to professionally qualified women, mostly, although not exclusively, married to officers.\textsuperscript{135}

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{131} 1980s movies were full of sexism that would not be acceptable today. \url{http://www.sheknows.com/entertainment/articles/1075851/things-in-80s-movies-youd-never-see-in-films-today} accessed September 1, 2017.
\item \textsuperscript{133} Rowbotham, \textit{Century of Women}, 488.
\item \textsuperscript{134} Ruth Jolly, \textit{Military Man Family Man, crown property?} (London: Brassey’s, 1987), 14.
\item \textsuperscript{135} \textit{Survey of Wives of Service Personnel}, HMSO, 1985.
\end{itemize}
\end{footnotesize}
The researcher expected that respondents for this research would have been affected by changes in women’s lives through the 1980s. This chapter will now deepen the focus on research and issues relating to military wives.

**Gender, women and military history**

Gender is a concept which encompasses males and females and the notions and opportunities that impact on their lives. This researcher focused on the interplay between masculinities and femininities which are constructed during and after wartime. Scholars from various disciplines have argued that gender is not a biological fact, but rather a social and political construction of rôles, behaviours, attributes and characteristics.\(^{136}\)

In 2001, Joshua A. Goldstein noted that since the Gulf War (1991) the rôles of women in war have received attention in both scholarly and political debate. This he attributed to United States mums going to battle, and the fact that western militaries were slowly increasing female participation in combat rôles.\(^{137}\) He defined gender as:

...masculine and feminine rôles and bodies alike, in all their aspects, including (the biological and cultural) structures, dynamics, rôles, and scripts associated with each gender group.\(^{138}\)

He defined ‘masculinism’ as an ideology justifying, promoting, or advocating male domination and feminism as an opposition to male superiority, promoting women’s interests and gender equality. Goldstein praised feminists for treating the question of gender and war as important, when many of their male counterparts have not maintained the same interest.\(^{139}\) After many lengthy chapters with explicit hypotheses and in-depth interdisciplinary evidence, Goldstein concluded that:

- Gender is about men as much as women, especially when it comes to war.
- War is an extremely complex system in which state-level interactions depend on dynamics at lower levels of analysis, including gender.

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\(^{138}\) Goldstein, *War*, 3.

\(^{139}\) Ibid., 34.
• War is a pervasive potential in the human experience that casts a shadow on everyday life—especially on gender roles—in profound ways.\textsuperscript{140}

He ended the discussion by writing that the ‘gender-war connection is complex and that nobody can claim to understand it well or fit it into a simplistic formula...real peace and real gender equity remain generations away.’\textsuperscript{141}

On reviewing the literature, it appears that Goldstein’s assertion regarding the issue of gender and war and the concentration of interest from feminist commentators is substantiated. Many of the political science studies of gender and war derived from a feminist perspective and were written by women.\textsuperscript{142} Laura Sjoberg and Sandra Via adopted a feminist approach to: ‘dissect, explain, and critique...the political workings of masculinities and femininities in war zones, in military institutions and in militarised cultures’. Whilst recognising there was an overlap between gender perspective and feminist perspective, they alleged that some scholars described their analytical approach as being a ‘gender perspective because it is less frightening, less radical and less political than a ‘feminist perspective’.\textsuperscript{143}

Sjoberg and Via’s collection of chapters focused on two interconnected issues in the complexity of gender, war and militarism: the impact of war and militarism on people (not just women) and the gendered construction of war and militarism, linked to systems of power and inequality. Denise M. Horn’s chapter on strategies adopted by the United States military to inculcate loyalty among military spouses was of particular interest. As a case study, Horn focused on the United States Marine Corps, as they had high recruitment and retention rates but historically were slow in providing support for military dependents. A feminist analysis was adopted, as Horn asserted that:

...national interest shows there is a connection between the formation of the national interest and questions of gender and power. This is an important point when considering military ‘family readiness’ policies because these policies are based on gendered notions of family responsibilities...family readiness policies address the

\textsuperscript{140} Ibid., 403.
\textsuperscript{141} Ibid., 413.
\textsuperscript{142} For example, Cynthia Enloe, \textit{Bananas, Beaches and Bases: Making Feminist Sense of International Politics} (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1989).
\textsuperscript{143} Laura Sjoberg and Sandra Via (eds.), \textit{Foreword in Gender, War and Militarism: Feminist Perspectives} (Oxford: Praeger, 2010), x.
military family’s unique role as the foundational support of the national interest’s defence.¹⁴⁴

Horn concluded her study by stating that:

...despite new military spouse support programmes, the focus is on accepting increasing hardships, rather than addressing the root of family problems. The result of the changes strengthens the homefront/warfront dichotomy, reflected in the language of readiness, where the military must be prepared for battle.¹⁴⁵

Two more recent publications written by women who had either been a former military wife or an immediate family member, were by Annabel Venning (2006) and Penny Legg (2015). Both these books adopted the past/present dichotomy: Venning’s on the lives of army wives and daughters, and Legg’s on a generic study of military wives from the First World War to Afghanistan.¹⁴⁶ In a newspaper article Venning examined the support available in modern times to service families:

For those who are struggling to cope there is now an array of support agencies they can turn to. Gone are the days when army welfare consisted of the commanding officer’s wife turning up on the doorstep to ask briskly if everything was alright before inspecting the house for signs of neglect.¹⁴⁷

This article addressed advances in communications which allowed many army units to send regular briefings and newsletters when the units are on combat. Soldiers are allocated thirty minutes a week on a satellite phone, although there are ‘shutdown’ times whenever there is a casualty, or the unit goes on operation. In recent years many wives and partners have found solace through online chat forums, where issues affecting military life are discussed. The Falklands wives did not have this resource. Legg’s study was divided into five chronological chapters, the introduction declaring:

Marrying, or in this day and age, partnering, a member of Her Majesty’s Armed Forces is not something that is undertaken lightly. Throughout history, it is the service personnel who put their lives at risk for monarch and country, and their loved ones

¹⁴⁵ Ibid., 67.
¹⁴⁷ The Times, September 26, 2006, 8.
who are left behind, to wait, hope and worry until they come back. If they don’t return, life is never the same.148

After the totality of the Second World War, the post-war era brought a plethora of smaller wars and crises in Greece, Malaya, Korea, Kenya, Suez, Aden, Yemen, Brunei, Sarawak, the Cod Wars and the Beira patrol blockading Rhodesia, the Dhofar Rebellion against Muscat and in Oman, Indonesia, Northern Ireland, the Falklands, Sierra Leone, Nepal, and the Gulf. In the twenty-first century, Afghanistan, Iraq, Somalia, Libya and Syria. Legg remarked that throughout, women have been behind their men, getting on with their lives, whilst giving the stability and domestic home life that balances the contrast between homefront and military. The book, while following a chronological chapter order, contains a collection of written memories and reminiscences from named military wives (Legg did not explain why she named her respondents or how she located them). Although this study offered no analysis, extracts capture the frustrations, trials, laughter and tears of being a military wife. The researcher suggests that its target audience were military wives rather than an academic market. Sales of the publication (£1 from each book) raise funds for the Sailors, Soldiers, Airmen and Families Association (SSAFA).

A contemporary collection of accounts of life as a military wife is The Military Wives’ (2012) Wherever You Are. The Military Wives Choir Foundation is a network of choirs which connects military community. It was set up to provide support, guidance and funding for individual choirs, but predominantly to bring women closer together through singing. The book includes twenty-five accounts of women who were members of the first military wives’ choir, who caught the nation’s attention when they took part in the fourth series of Gareth Malone’s BBC/Twenty Twenty Series, The Choir, entitled The Choir: Military Wives. The introduction (no author mentioned) states:

We don’t just marry a man we love: we marry a way of life. Our lives are dominated by his career, in a way that rarely happens outside the military...its not an easy life, and that’s without the biggest challenge of all: our men leave home to go to the world’s most dangerous places, leaving us behind to nurse our loneliness and learn to be both mother and father to our children...we struggle to put a brave face on...when he’s gone we shake ourselves out of our misery and get on with it...we made a choice

148 Legg, Military Wives, 10.
to be with them...we are not complaining. Military wives are a stoical band: we get on with it.\textsuperscript{149}

Venning’s, Legg’s and the Military Wives Choir’s contributions of insight into the life of a military wife, both historical and contemporary, were all composed by women who had and are experiencing this ‘stoical’ phenomenon. This contrast suggests to the researcher that these women fitted the predetermined model of the prototypical military wife and the talents/skills and qualities they should possess; brave, non-complaining and stoic. The researcher believes that only such women’s views and experience were selected by these writers as relevant and worthy of mention. This is possibly because they were, or currently still are, part of the military community, the very community and patriarchal hierarchy that has conditioned them to fit the ‘ideal military wife’ model.

\textbf{Women and the military}

This section will explore women and their interaction with the military through relationships or marriage. An examination will be made of how women are socialised institutionally as military wives and thus sustain the military’s goals. Examples of this are in wartime, that a ‘socialised’ officer’s wife would be mobilised to calm the worries of enlisted men. Military wives can help with public relations, civilian support and sympathy for the military by creating a ‘human interest’ aspect and thus making the military appear a less brutal and insulated patriarchal institution. Furthermore, military wives can address crises within military enlistment, re-enlistment and retention, particularly if they find their own militarised lives fulfilling. It appears that the official military rhetoric of the ‘military family’ is juxtaposed with the daily isolation many wives experienced, so the questions to be answered are ‘what constituted the ideal military wife?’ and ‘did the naval wives feel that they were ideal military wives?’

In the 1980s, UK women were not active combatants, but this had changed when the Falklands wives were interviewed. Theories and language defining servicewomen’s status and employment changed over time and between the three services. From the re-establishment of women’s auxiliary services in 1938/9, women were described as non-combatants. There were no clear or legal definitions of non-combatant or combatant rôles, however. While a

man could be a combatant or non-combatant, depending on his primary rôle, a woman’s status was prescribed by gender. Whatever their work, women had non-combatant status, even if their primary function was the same as a male colleague. More importantly, women’s non-combatant label affected their careers. It regulated the number of women recruited, their rôle, promotion, pay and pensions.\textsuperscript{150} This status of servicewomen continued until the late 1970s with the acknowledgement that they were members of the armed forces and therefore combatants with the right to take part in hostilities. Yet they were still excluded from rôles described as combatant. Small arms training was introduced for women in the Army and the Royal Air Force in 1982, but the Navy thought it was irrelevant to the development of the Women’s Royal Naval Service (WRNS) at that time.\textsuperscript{151}

The WRNS was formed as a shore-based support service, separate from the Royal Navy, but defined as part of the country’s naval service. Women were not governed by the Naval Discipline Act until 1977, so in law they were civilians with a voluntary code of conduct.\textsuperscript{152} A 1974 report listed the four main benefits of the WRNS:

- Availability of well qualified female recruits who filled rôles for which male recruitment was difficult.
- Women were cheaper to employ than sailors.
- Women could be posted to locations where it was difficult to appoint civilian staff.
- They were a loyal workforce at a time when reliance on potentially unionised militant staff was a risk.\textsuperscript{153}

However, seagoing was still not available to women, so career progression remained limited.

With the status of the WRNS under scrutiny within the quinquennial Armed Forces Act, the 1974 study into women’s naval employment made what was perceived by the then Second Sea Lord (Admiral Sir David Williams) as a provocative recommendation to supplant the voluntary code of discipline with the Naval Discipline Act (NDA). Male and female senior officers defined the voluntary code as the basis of the special relationship between the WRNS

\textsuperscript{150} Kathleen Sherit, Combatant Status and Small Arms Training: Developments in Servicewomen’s Employment, \textit{British Journal for Military History}, 3(1) November 2016, 68-87; 69.

\textsuperscript{151} Ibid., 70.


\textsuperscript{153} Sherit, Combatant Status, 72.
and the Royal Navy.\textsuperscript{154} The introduction of the NDA for women was seen as a measure of their generation, a judgement that they could not maintain discipline without resorting to military law. However, the introduction of the act had the dual effect of formalising the WRNS as part of the Royal Navy and opening far more career opportunities for the women. The difference could even be seen in language: women no longer enrolled, they enlisted. The service became increasingly indistinguishable from the regular navy until eventually it was disbanded in 1993.\textsuperscript{155}

The eminent feminist, Cynthia Enloe, examined the rôle militarisation plays in women’s lives. Enloe defined militarisation as ‘a step-by-step process by which a person or a thing gradually comes to be controlled by the military or comes to depend for its well-being on militaristic ideas.’\textsuperscript{156} She demonstrated that people who become militarised are not just the obvious ones: executives and factory floor workers who make fighter planes, land mines or intercontinental missiles. They are also employees of food companies, toy companies, clothing companies, film studios, stock brokerages, and advertising agencies. Enloe also explored the complicated militarised experiences of women as prostitutes, rape victims, mothers, wives, nurses, and feminist activists. She uncovered the ‘maneuvers’ that military officials and their civilian supporters have carried out to ensure that each group of women feel special and separate. Of interest to this research is Enloe’s work on military wives as she defined them: ‘women married to the military’.\textsuperscript{157} Much of her work concentrated on the United States (US) military; however, parallels can be drawn between the experiences of US and UK military spouses.

In 1983, Janet Finch had stated that ‘when a woman marries, she marries not only a man but also, she marries his job, and from that point onwards will live out her life in the context of the job which she has married’.\textsuperscript{158} Finch’s PhD examined previous studies into wives’ relationships with men’s work: business managers, police, diplomats, doctors,

\textsuperscript{154}Ibid., 73.
\textsuperscript{157}Ibid., 153-197.
clergymen and politicians. According to Enloe, all these occupations ‘have distinct notions about what sort of spouse is best suited to the institution’s own well-being and what those spouses should be doing to maximise their value to the organisation’. However, what is distinctive about militaries is ‘how clear and how patriarchally feminized that message is. It is spelled out in rituals, in memos, in orders, and in handbooks written by military wives themselves’.

Enloe compiled a comprehensive profile of the Model Military Wife, summarised here:

- She considers herself part of the ‘military family’.
- She sees it as her ‘patriotic duty’ to be a supportive military wife.
- She accepts that in terms of ‘national security’ she will logically have to accept. She presumes that her husband performing his military job effectively is important for her and her family’s well-being.
- Several constraints and restrictions (for example when she spends time with her husband due to deployments and duties, her career and where she lives).
- She views the material benefits as a source of security and fulfilment.
- She is a good mother and does not burden her husband unjustifiably with maternal worries.

In addition, a ‘Model Military Wife’ should become a proficient single parent and competent in budgeting and completing basic house DIY (plumbing etc.). But she must surrender her head of household rôle on her husband’s return from deployment and recognise that due to his stressful occupation she should make allowances for his short-temper, moods and impatience succeeding his deployment to a conflict zone. She should view his postings as opportunities to make new friends and explore new places, and if she or her husband are from discriminated ethnic or social groups in the civilian world, the military wife should welcome the opportunity, training, respect and income the military offers. She should be comfortable with social orders based on rank, and help and support younger wives as her husband gains promotion. Additionally, she should undertake unpaid voluntary work, be sexually faithful and express pride if her children join the military. She should not become anxious when her husband works with female colleagues and remain militarised when her

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159 Enloe, *Maneuvers*, 162.
160 Ibid., 162.
husband leaves the service by supporting him through the effects of conflict (PTSD), at times
during public criticism of those actions.161

The evolution of the military family, from the birth of the British empire to the
twentieth century, exhibited traditional paternalistic gender rôles. During the growth of the
empire, raising forces when necessary and paying them off at the end was deemed inefficient,
therefore a sizeable professional standing army and navy developed. As the military was
deployed mostly overseas, regiments and crews fostered an independent spirit and, isolated
within unfamiliar societies, looked inward to uphold discipline, standards and morale. Being
mostly away from home, the professional military man was also distanced from British social
and political life.162 Until the military was reformed following the Crimean War, commanding
officers took a paternalistic, if strict interest in the conduct and morale of their men. Up until
this time many of the ‘support’ rôles were carried out by ‘camp followers’ (washer
women/seamstresses/prostitutes). A reform and recruitment drive after the Crimean War
saw military authorities recruiting personnel to carry out the tasks that had been performed
by camp followers, and the paternalistic concern that had hitherto been reserved for the
menfolk was extended to legitimate wives and children.163

When the military adopted more responsibility for families, standardised procedures
emerged. According to Jolly, these included allowing wives and children to join men on long
tours of duty and provision for families on military bases such as schools, houses and medical
facilities. However, these provisions were not for the good or welfare of the women, but
were instigated because ‘respectable’ family life was an asset to a serviceman’s career. It
confirmed his ‘qualities of dependability, his good, conventional morality and his fitness for
promotion to greater authority over his fellows’.164

Once accommodation for military families was widely available, the same social
hierarchical framework was applied to the wives as to the men. The commanding officer’s
wife headed the social pyramid of wives, and just as her husband would know all his men, she
would ideally know all their wives. Although their lives were protected, the flipside was that

161 Adapted from ibid., 162-165.
162 Jolly, Military Man, 1.
163 Ibid., 2.
164 Ibid., 2.
they were also restricted. Myna Trustrum, in her 1984 book *Women of the Regiment*, quoted an army chaplain talking about the life of a soldier’s wife: ‘As soon as the marriage knot is tied, she becomes an institution. She is part of the regiment and has a recognised rank in it...’ Dr Trustrum went on to state:

And so the system of military marriage absorbed women and children into the hierarchy of the regiment. The threat posed by family ties to a man’s military efficiency could be minimised by placing the whole family under army discipline...In return for granting women and children certain welfare provisions the army could regulate families’ lives and demand a certain kind of behaviour from them. These provisions were not seen as rights but were referred to as ‘privileges’ and ‘indulgences’ with the implication that families should be grateful for them. Women who broke the regimental rules risked being struck off the strength and hence being denied these ‘privileges’.  

With the military population extended beyond serving personnel, the commanding officer’s wife was expected to provide practical and moral support to other wives. By the second half of the twentieth century, community integration and development tasks were undertaken, not just by commanding officers’ wives, but also wives of NCOs and officers commanding sub-units. No payment or training was offered. Chris Jessup in *Breaking Ranks: Social Change in Military Communities* claimed in 1996 that some women embraced the status such rôles afforded them within the community. The social status and the hierarchical structure of the wives, though based and adapted from that of their serving husbands, became implemented and regulated by the women themselves. Rachel Newey, the wife of a Royal Marine stated in 2012 that when she went to mother and baby groups:

...there was a bit of an attitude: naval wives are a bit funny with marine wives, and the first question anyone ever asks is, what rank is he? I hate that. Why does it affect wives? I want to shout, you’re meeting me, not him and I don’t have a rank. Now I’m used to it I say he’s a Royal Marine, and you don’t need to know his rank.  

According to Jessup, the higher levels of accompanied mobility experienced by Army and Air Force families had imposed expectations on specific wives to assume leading rôles in rebuilding and stabilising communities exposed to multiple house moves and ever-changing social membership. Jessup declared that naval wives were far less exposed to these pressures

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166 Ibid., 4.  
as they never served with their husbands on board ship and could choose a location to buy or rent housing, or remain static and find employment in the local civilian labour market, with their children attending non-service schools. Therefore, naval families have assimilated more into civilian communities than their Army and RAF colleagues, which Jessup declared resulted in the wives of navy husbands seeing their commitment and loyalty being to their families and own careers, rather than to the navy.\textsuperscript{168}

Sue Jervis, \textit{in Relocation, Gender and emotion: A Psycho-social Perspective of the Experiences of Military Wives} (2011), agreed with Jessup that:

\ldots since the wives of Navy personnel are more likely to reside in their own homes, they are potentially less likely to be affected by military control within Britain than their RAF or Army counterparts.\textsuperscript{169}

However, as service accommodation is allotted only to military personnel, naval wives in married quarters do not qualify as tenants. They can live in the property under licence from the Secretary of State, but the husband is the licensee; the wife has no rights if they separate. The principle of support in the military housing estates also exhibited a high degree of control, which has been examined through the work of Finch and Jessup.\textsuperscript{170} Finch (1983) argued that the purpose of housing military personnel in tied accommodation facilitated their operational readiness and mobility.\textsuperscript{171}

Military control became social control over the service families living in military housing, as those residing in the property had to conform to required standards of behaviour or risk losing their home. Not only were the wives subjected to military and social control, but household chores control too; her household maintenance and housekeeping were inspected by her husband’s employer. So, control and standards filtered down to the wives and became part of the corporate norm.

According to Jessup, \textquote{there are aspects of service in the community which transcend rank and status. At one time, church attendance and its accompanying involvement in

\textsuperscript{168} Chris Jessup, \textit{Breaking the Ranks: Social Change in Military Communities} (London: Brassey’s, 1996), 102-104.
\textsuperscript{170} Finch, \textit{Married to the Job}, 60; Jessup, \textit{Breaking Ranks}, 22-24.
\textsuperscript{171} Finch, \textit{Married to the Job}, 59.
voluntary tasks was dominated by the officers and their wives’. However, according to Jessup, the previously held belief that members of the service community were active in the church or church-linked associations for the prestige to be gained were untrue, as those active in these associations were devotees.172

The decline in religion among the military reflected a general trend in the UK. According to the BSAS, since the 1980s levels of religiosity have declined. One in three (31%) in 1983 did not belong to a religion, compared with one in two (50%) in 2016. The largest decline has been in Church of England affiliation, which has halved since 1983 (from 40% to 20%). This change – which is likely to continue – can be explained by generational replacement, with older, more religious, generations dying out and being replaced by less religious generations. There is little evidence that substantial numbers find religion as they get older.173

Although this research did not focus on religion, the researcher understands that the role of the chaplain or padre is seen by many serving personnel as being pastoral, rather than religious. The worry for some military observers, therefore, is that if serving personnel are leaving organised religion and thereby losing counselling offered by religious-backed organisations, how will their needs and those of their families be catered for? Furthermore, many ceremonies for troops are conducted as purely religious ceremonies. In 2014, a spokeswoman for the MoD said:

We recognise that religion is a personal matter and give those who wish to do so the opportunity to practise their religious observances provided their practice does not conflict with the Services’ core values and standards.174

While religious faith is declining in Britain, MoD figures reveal that religious affiliation, particularly to Christianity, is still markedly stronger in the armed forces than in the wider society.175

172 Jessup, Breaking Ranks, 50.
175 Of almost 180,000 members of the forces who selected a religion in an internal system used to record vital information such as next-of-kin contact details in April 2012, almost 83 per cent opted for Christian, with the Church of England by far the largest denomination. That compares with only 59 per cent of the population.
Jolly, herself a veteran of the Women’s Royal Air Force, stressed the importance of military padres (and doctors) in ‘lending an ear to the troubled serviceman’. She did, however, impart the view that amongst the professional padres and doctors there were ‘a number who were almost more ‘military minded’ than their fighting colleagues’. By this she meant they have a ‘strong loyalty to their service, that can render them less objective and on occasions eager to toe the party line’.\(^\text{176}\) Using Jolly’s observations, the researcher suggests that padres and doctors consulted by a serviceman or his wife seeking objective counselling and advice on the perceived harsh and uncaring military ethos of dividing families might experience pro-military attitudes.\(^\text{177}\)

In early 2017 the 28th International Military Chief of Chaplains Conference (IMCCC) was held in Portsmouth. A conference section on the official Royal Navy website is entitled Religion in the public sphere – the role and function of military Chaplains. It states: ‘It is clear that religious faith and activity still has power in the public sphere’. Furthermore:

Military Chaplains work in organisations that are clearly public bodies and organs of the state, which reflect to some extent the societies from which they are drawn. Operating as they do between church, state and society, Military Chaplains therefore inhabit the interface between public / private, secular / sacred spheres.\(^\text{178}\)

For the Royal Navy, therefore, religion still plays a socialising rôle in contemporary military society.

Jessup claimed that the armed forces embodied Lewis Coser’s concept of the ‘greedy institution’.\(^\text{179}\) According to Coser, these ‘seek exclusive and undivided loyalty...their demands on the person are omnivorous’ and are ‘...characterised by the fact that they exercise pressure on component individuals to weaken their ties, with other institutions or persons that might

\(^{176}\) Jolly, Military Wives, 93-94.

\(^{177}\) An example of this would be experiencing a first pregnancy during deployment.


\(^{179}\) Jessup, Breaking the Ranks, 1.
make claims that conflict with their own demands. Jessop stated that due to the armed forces’ exemption from the social control that established workers’ rights, conditions and contracts, the military had been able to demand indefinite commitment by all service personnel, a demand which had major repercussions for families. Despite increased support systems for military families, such provision has not been unconditional. In return for support, families have been required to follow certain lifestyles and behaviour approved by the military employer. Therefore, spouses have no contractual commitment to the service but are duty-bound by their loyalty to the serving spouse to participate in prescribed and approved behaviour or risk the unfavourable career repercussions for the military employee. However, military families themselves have been branded as greedy institutions. Due to societal trends and military family patterns, the adaptability of military families became problematic. This has been attributed by Jessup and Segal to changes in the 1980s, including changes to women’s rôles in society (especially increased labour force participation); increased numbers of married junior enlisted personnel, lone parents, women on active duty and dual-service families. These changes have increased potential conflict between the military and the family.

The researcher attempted to obtain precise statistics of the numbers of naval personnel involved in the Falklands Conflict who were married, to identify the potential population of wives. This proved impossible. A Freedom of Information request sent to the Ministry of Defence yielded the response:

I can confirm that information on married personnel during the Falklands conflict is held by the Ministry of Defence. However, I have to advise you that we will not be able to answer your request without exceeding the appropriate cost limit. This is because to retrieve and extract information in scope of your request would involve searching individual records of all personnel who deployed to the Falklands to identify all those who were married and this would require more than a year’s worth of effort. Section 12 of the Act makes provision for public authorities to refuse requests for information where the cost of dealing with them would exceed the appropriate limit, which for central government is set at £600. This represents the estimated cost of one person

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spending 3.5 working days in determining whether the department holds the information, and locating, retrieving and extracting it.\textsuperscript{183}

The researcher consulted \textit{Jane’s Fighting Ships}, which disclosed figures of officers and men serving on the ships which sailed to the South Atlantic,\textsuperscript{184} but no figures of married personnel in 1982. In October 2007, the MoD made extrapolating figures on the marital status of personnel even more difficult. In ANNEX B to 2005DIN02-186 there was a revision from entitlement (formerly marital status) to Personal Status Category Definitions. All personnel were placed into one of the following five PStat Cats (Personal Status Category Definitions):

\textbf{PStat Cat 1.} Those in PStat Cat 1 will meet one of the following qualifying criteria:

(1) A legally married member of the Armed Forces, who lives with their spouse, or who would do so but for the exigencies of the Armed Forces.

(2) A member of the Armed Forces, who is registered in a civil partnership in accordance with the Civil Partnership Act 2004, or is in a civil partnership under or is in a civil partnership under an overseas scheme recognised under that Act, and who lives with their registered civil partner, or who would do so but for the exigencies of the Armed Forces.

\textbf{PStat Cat 2.} Those in PStat Cat 2 will meet one of the following qualifying criteria:

(1) A member of the Armed Forces who has parental responsibility within the terms of the Children Act 1989 for a child(ren) and who satisfies all of the following conditions:

(a) Can properly be regarded as the centre and prime mover in the life of the child(ren).

(b) Provides a home where they normally live with the child(ren) except where unable to do so for reasons attributable to their service in the Armed Forces.

(c) Provides, where the child(ren) is unable to care for itself, a child carer who can look after the child(ren) during their absences attributable to their service in the Armed Forces. The child carer must not be the other natural parent of the child(ren). The other natural parent should normally only have staying access to the child(ren) for an aggregate of 56 days in any 12-month period. Staying access greater than this may render the Service person ineligible for PStat Cat2 (these restrictions on access do not apply while on recognised Unaccompanied Duty).

(d) Accepts financial responsibility for the child(ren).

\textsuperscript{183} Personal communication Ministry of Defence, April 3, 2014.
\textsuperscript{184} \textit{Jane’s Fighting Ships 1982-3} (London: Jane’s Publishing Company, 1982).
**PStat Cat 3.** A member of the Armed Forces who is not in PStat Cat 1 or 2 and who provides financial support for their spouse or former spouse, civil partner or former civil partner, or child(ren) by voluntary agreement. In this case, voluntary agreement means financial support provided other than pursuant to an order made by a court, a Child Support Agency Maintenance Assessment, or the MOD under the relevant Service Act.

**PStat Cat 4.** A member of the Armed Forces who is not in PStat Cat 1 or 2 and who provides financial support for their spouse or former spouse, civil partner or former civil partner or child(ren) under an order made by a court, a Child Support Agency Maintenance Assessment, or the MOD under the relevant Service act.

**PStat Cat 5.** All other members of the Armed Forces.  

As there is ambiguity and variance between sources and commentators, it is impossible to attain an accurate figure of numbers of royal naval personnel who served in the Falklands. A study by Defence Analytical Services and Advice (DASA), published in May 2013 revealed that 25,948 UK armed forces personnel served in the Falklands Conflict. The figures from *Jane’s Fighting Ships* total 9,139 not including Royal Marines. Therefore this figure will be taken to represent the maximum number of naval wives/partners, and thus the potential population of interviewees.

The purpose of reviewing literature concerning gender, women and military history was to contextualise the Falklands naval wives’ lives within feminist theories and publications about military wives’ lives, to identify similarities and contrasts.

In conclusion, it may be seen that social changes have placed a strain on the traditional image of the family. After the Falklands, Jolly described a new ideal in 1987 as ‘the symmetrical family’, where each parent and child should contribute to all aspects of family life. However, the military is not an occupation which tolerates sharing family responsibilities. It is a way of life which is attuned to the traditional division of labour between the breadwinner and the housewife. It is also not agreeable to change; the serviceman belongs to the military

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185 ANNEX B to 2005DIN02-186 Revised Entitlement (Formerly Marital Status) Personal Status Category Definitions

186 Taskforce South - The Falklands War At Royal Navy Museum http://www.culture24.org.uk/history-and-heritage/military-history/art45736 accessed October 24, 2017. The figure quoted here is 18,000 naval personnel, including the Royal Marines, this number seems too high, and there is no citation detailing where the figures were extrapolated.


and cannot decide how he spends his time between work and family. His hours of work and commitments mean it is difficult for him to share domestic responsibilities or for his partner to pursue a parallel career. Additionally, the military establishment expects that service families will continue to follow traditional ideologies. The researcher considers that despite some changes within traditional family life, the military still operates, if not a gendered division of labour (due to some women serving, whilst the male partner stays at home and looks after the children), a rôle-based division of labour, whereby the non-serving partner is expected to support the serving partner.

The paradox for the military is that it is at the forefront of technological developments, requiring high levels of knowledge and performance from its employees, but lags behind other occupations in implementing social change. The paradoxical expectancies of the military are that it can recruit technologically able men for the job, yet in their home life those men should be conservative and embrace the social attitudes of earlier generations. What will happen to the military man’s morale if families live their own lives away from military bases? If the military cannot control families through financial or social pressure, how can they predict the ways in which they might influence the serviceman? Where will the serviceperson’s loyalty lie in time of conflict and danger? This is a cause of military resistance to change. Wives are aware and concerned that their own behaviour and lifestyle might affect their husband’s career. More recently, the military have had to adjust to the number of male partners married to servicewomen.

It has been demonstrated that women marrying into the military still enter a society different from that of civilian women. One example concerns women communicating with their partner when away from home. Currently, the Royal Navy ‘recognises and fully appreciates the importance of keeping in touch with your loved ones and friends when they are deployed’. A page dedicated to ‘Keeping in Touch’ on the Royal Navy’s official website lists the various methods of communication. Families are warned to remember, when using mobile phones, that ‘they are not secure so be careful what you discuss.’

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190 Ibid., 12.
191 Ibid., 13.
192 Ibid., 15.
social media, especially in terms of security, are also highlighted: ‘In the digital age, "think before you share" is the mantra to live by.’

This chapter has examined attitudes influencing the Falklands naval wives. How far did advances in the academic discipline of women’s and feminist history; changing perceptions of gender rôles and women and the military, affect the active socialisation of women to become ‘model’ military wives? How far would the Falklands wives comply?

The stereotype presented by the 1980s literature was that naval wives did not test the majority norm or challenge traditional paternalistic family patterns. Venning, Legg and the Military Wives Choir followed this view. The publications by Jolly and Jessup did challenge the traditional norms but recognised that the armed forces are slow to initiate social change. The eminent feminist writer Enloe recognised the feminised militarisation of military wives and noted what attributes contributed to the perceived norm. What was different about Enloe’s research is that she examined the militarisation of women beyond the traditional military community.

This chapter refined the aim of widening the scope of gender, social, naval and cultural aspects of the Falklands Conflict. It also prompted objective 2 (investigate the experiences/perceptions and attitudes of naval wives and families during the Falklands conflict) and objective 4 (Evaluate a case study of servicemen and their families with a bearing on skilled workforce recruitment and retention in the MoD). It developed research questions 1 (If a group of naval wives underwent the same events, would their views / thoughts / experiences be comparable?), 3 (Did the naval community differ from the rest of society; how were its gender roles defined?) and 5 (Did media views reinforce previous militarised patriotism and gender roles?) By consulting and analysing secondary literature on women and service wives, interview questions were designed which investigated themes omitted from this literature. The next chapter will review the literature on oral history and the Falklands Conflict.

Chapter 4 Literature Review Women’s Oral History and the Falklands Conflict

By the end of 1982 I had met a number of women - widows, wives and mothers - who were angry and confused about the purpose of the war and, after their men had been killed or injured, the attitudes of the Armed Forces and a government led by Britain’s first woman Prime Minister. The war had revealed aspects of the Services that would only have become apparent during such a large-scale conflict. But the impact on the women I knew - and still keep in touch with – really needed the perspective of time. It was not until a year later, and largely at their suggestion, that I decided to record their stories, aware that other people’s experiences could have been different.\textsuperscript{194}

This quote from Jean Carr resonates with the mood and feelings of some Falklands wives. It also captures the spirit of oral history: collecting testimony within the perspective of time, with a realisation that not all individual experiences are the same. This chapter examines literature on oral history and the Falklands Conflict to contextualise the women’s experiences within an historical timeframe.

Oral history

A long and creative relationship between oral history and women’s history is reflected in the literature. Female oral historians have been especially influential in ‘history from below’. Although not all women’s oral history has been conducted by feminists, feminist theory has made an important contribution to the ways in which many oral historians design their studies, work with those they research, and analyse the narrated memories they collect. Most challenges raised in women’s oral history can be applied more broadly. For example, Susan Armitage’s and Sherna Berger Gluck’s dilemma expressed in their question, ‘How do we simultaneously understand and document women’s subordination and resistance?’ is applicable to all oral historians.\textsuperscript{195} This sentiment influenced the researcher’s methodology, as the women being interviewed were part of a patriarchal network. While not subordinate, they were expected to follow a set of unpublished but nonetheless intrusive lifestyle rules.

The researcher was aware of this when considering question design and how far to challenge this issue.

Kathryn Anderson’s and Dana C. Jack’s innovative work on the need for interviewers to be ‘self-aware and to listen carefully, and in women’s particular perspectives, to ‘listen in stereo’ to both facts and feelings’,\(^\text{196}\) was an important concept for this research. Especially relevant was the authors’ use of ‘muted channels’. This, they stated, is where ‘women’s experiences as women are often muted, particularly in a situation where women’s interests and experiences are at variance with those of men’.\(^\text{197}\) According to Anderson and Jack, a woman’s narrative of her life may amalgamate two separate and sometimes conflicting perspectives. One reflects men’s dominant position in society, the other is informed by the realities of a woman’s personal experience. Where this does not fit culturally dominant meanings, alternate concepts may not be suitable. Therefore, unconsciously, women often mute their own thoughts and feelings when they ‘try to describe their lives in the familiar and publicly acceptable terms of prevailing concepts and conventions’.\(^\text{198}\)

To hear women’s views, according to Anderson and Jack, we have to ‘listen in stereo’, hearing both the dominant and muted channels and understand the relationship between them. Furthermore, interviewers are advised to search for the choices, the pain, the stories that go beyond the constraints of customary discussion. The researcher considers the muted channels notion to be significant when researching such traditional, patriarchal institutions as the armed forces and the highly gendered event of war. To penetrate the muted channels of women’s subjectivity, she realised that interviewers must ask whose story the interview is telling, who interprets the story and with what theoretical frameworks?

As oral historians of women’s history have highlighted, there is a dialectical relationship between people as actors and as subjects of their own histories. How people talk about this can be perceived as historical consciousness and has provided an important approach in women’s oral history. Oral history and feminist history have proved reciprocally


\(^{197}\) Ibid., 179.

\(^{198}\) Ibid., 180.
supportive at points, especially in understanding the significance of women’s biographies in history. This includes exploring the gendering of memory and the past-present dialectic. Professor Penny Summerfield, professor of modern and oral history, whilst expressing the effect of cultural studies on oral history, stated:

Understanding is integral to memory and, like any other knowledge, it is constructed from the language and concepts available to the person remembering. The challenge for the historian is to understand the cultural ingredients that go into accounts of a remembered and interpreted past.\(^{199}\)

Summerfield reflected that this is problematic to feminist theorists who:

...argue that the power of dominant masculinity to define the parameters of identity and behaviour possible to women as ‘others’, and hence to regulate them, has contributed historically to the conceptualization of the special fragility of feminine subjectivities.\(^{200}\)

Her work on masculinities during the Second World War revealed that fragmentation and confusion concerned masculine identities during the war, which resulted in a hierarchy of male identities amongst combatants and non-combatants. Therefore, gendering of memories is not simply male versus female but there were also variants within the genders. But the revisionist cultural historian, Anna Green, criticised Summerfield’s approach. In her study of individual and collective remembering she queried the categories of narrative Summerfield used, ‘stoic’ and ‘heroic’, and argued:

Rather than exploring how and why ideas, values and beliefs are critiqued, reassembled, juxtaposed or rejected, her focus appears to be how far the oral narratives fit pre-existing cultural frameworks.\(^{201}\)

Since the 1970s, oral history in Britain has grown from a method in folklore studies to a key factor in exploring marginalised people such as women, working class and ethnic minorities. Oral history continues to be an important arena where non-academics can

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\(^{200}\) Ibid., 71.

participate actively in ‘making history’. Falklands wives interviewed for this thesis would be making history by re-telling their experiences of a time and event that had not been subjected previously to in-depth academic inquiry.

Through the practice of oral history, the experiences and insights of groups of people otherwise ‘hidden from history’ have been added to the historical record. Through oral history interviews, working-class men and women, indigenous peoples or members of ethnic minorities, among others, have inscribed their experiences on the historical record and offered their own perceptions of history. More importantly, interviews have celebrated particular aspects of historical experience which are often missing from other sources, such as family life, domestic work or personal relationships. Recent oral histories have dealt with such subjects as birth control, abortion and gay and lesbian histories.202 Janet Finch’s interviews carried out with the wives of clergy, policemen, prison officers, merchant seamen, businessmen and academics to define corporate wives, derived from a sociological approach.203 Military oral history collections at the Imperial War Museum and the National Museum of the Royal Navy feature family recollections and experiences, both audio and visual, in the SeaYourHistory and HMS – Hear My Story galleries. These galleries contain personal oral histories of naval personnel and their families. The researcher was involved in the HMS project as an interviewee because I was a former ‘naval wife’ and a current ‘naval mum’. This gave the researcher scope to re-visit and re-evaluate her experiences and insight into contemporary naval family life.

More recently, the Britannia Royal Naval College (BNRC) project collected memories of cadets trained at the college during the twentieth century.204 Of interest to the researcher were the interviews with former cadets who served in the Falklands, but no family or wives’ views are included in the project. This collection offers insight into life at the college, including changes, such as interviews with some of the first women to attend the college. The focus,

however, is on the traditions and ethos of the establishment and the constant pride experienced by the cadets. The project comprised eighty hours of recordings, which formed an important archive for the college, describing life and training between 1930 and 1989 in the former cadets’ own words. The two-year project was made possible through a £45,000 grant from the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF), support from the Britannia Association (the college alumni association) and the Foyle Foundation.205

In 1990, oral and public history professor Michael Frisch maintained that oral history is:

A powerful tool for discovering, exploring and evaluating the nature of the process of historical memory—how people make sense of their past, how they connect individual experience and its social context and how the past becomes part of the present, and how people use it to interpret their lives and the world around them.206

However, the researcher was not convinced, from her practice, that many interviewees would use the experience of being interviewed to interpret the world around them.

The cohort of Frisch and John Tosh began dissecting oral history and public history in the 1980s, followed by Alistair Thomson, Rick Halpern and Alessandro Portelli in the 1990s. Thomson asserted in 1998 that oral history is ‘the interviewing of eyewitness participants in past events for the purposes of historical interpretation and reconstruction’.207 Halpern defined oral history as ‘an interpersonal experience whose product, the interview, is the result of the formal recorded dialogue between interviewers and the rapport established through informal conversations that never appear on the tape’.208 John Tosh differentiated between oral reminiscence or oral history which is ‘the first hand recollections of people interviewed by a historian’ and oral tradition that is ‘the narratives and descriptions of people and events in the past which have been handed down by word of mouth over centuries’.209

205 Ibid.
The researcher, after exploring various definitions of oral history, agreed and identified closely with Thomson’s definition. It is the most straightforward definition and places the interviewee in the predominant position, while recognising the purpose for the oral historian: historical interpretation and reconstruction.

According to Portelli, the first thing that makes oral history different is that ‘it tells us less about events and more about their meaning’. Oral sources may not add much to the ‘facts’ of history, for example, dates, times and costs of events. However, oral testimony tells us not just ‘what people did, but what they wanted to do, what they believe they were doing, and what they now think they did’. This statement relates exactly to the Falklands wives, as the interviewer did not need to ask about specific events and dates of the conflict - the focus was on the experiences and thoughts associated with the women’s individual actions.

Three later oral history works developed Thomson’s and Portelli’s theories on the practice of oral history. Pamela Jane Smith asserted that ‘no more elegant tool exists to describe the human condition than the personal narrative. Oral recordings can capture the tone, volume, silence, emotion and personal meaning of events, the ethos and etiquette’. In Smith’s view the primary merit of oral recollections is that they help to recreate the complexity and uniqueness of past experiences. History, therefore, becomes enriched and more complete. This researcher strove to keep Smith’s ethos and views at the forefront of the research. The sentiments acknowledged by Smith are apparent in two oral histories on birth control and abortion. Kate Fisher stated that it is easy to see the benefits of using oral history methodology to investigate a subject such as birth control behaviour where little archival material exists on the details and meanings of everyday choices, practices and beliefs. David P Cline published a collection of edited interviews with individuals who helped secure women’s access to birth control and abortion in western Massachusetts 1961–1973. It broadened the historical treatment of this movement, introducing activists from women’s grassroots organisations and accentuating the contributions of professionals who

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213 Kate Fisher, Birth Control, Sex and Marriage in Britain 1918-1960 (Oxford; Oxford University Press, 2006), 5.
established networks and services which made free choice possible for some women before state law extended those rights. The interviews in Cline’s book show the impact of the state’s reluctance to legalise abortion and contraception and the multifaceted efforts of individuals intent on changing or working around legal restrictions.214 The researcher examined Fisher’s and Cline’s research which concerned contemporary women and were difficult/emotional subjects which no previous academic research had addressed.

Memory has been a crucial theme and issue in the study of oral history.215 Originally concerns were over the reliability of memory, but these evolved into concerns over how individual memories conform to/conflict with historical collective/social memory. The primary concern for oral history is the extent to which accurate recall of the past is possible. It is often thought that it cannot achieve this. The historian and sociologist, Trevor Lummis expressed this view:

The difficulty lies in the fact that memory does not constitute pure recall; the memory of any particular event is refracted through layer upon layer of subsequent experience and through the influence of the dominant and/or local and specific ideology.216

This is relevant to this research as the Falklands wives were being interviewed three decades after the event; they would be retelling memories of a time that might be distorted by subsequent events, such as divorce and dealing with the effects of Post-Traumatic-Stress Disorder (PTSD). Furthermore, the wives would have read publications about the conflict and its effects, and spoken with their husband’s family or other naval wives about the conflict and their experiences. Dominant or specific ideology of a military event is culturally gendered, traditional and patriarchal; therefore, the wives would have been exposed to these values and norms, which could distort their individual memories.

Situated within Marxist philosophy, dominant ideology denotes the attitudes, beliefs, values, and morals shared by the majority of a given society. As a mechanism of social control, dominant ideology frames how most of the population think about the nature of society, their

place in society, and their connection to a social class. However, oral historians, including Alistair Thomson and Penny Summerfield, drew on Graham Dawson’s idea of ‘composure’. Theorists of cultural or popular memory and oral testimony argued that discourses of dominant ideology or culture in personal and locally told narratives result in narrators drawing on generalised, public versions of their lives to construct their own particular, personal accounts. Summerfield argued that individuals borrow or select some aspects of public discourse from media images, word of mouth and films or television. However,

...these discursive formulations are inevitably selective; they omit some dimensions and emphasize others, and they are likely to contain contradictory conceptualizations of experience and identity, all of which make problematic the construction of subjectivities from them.

Furthermore, Thomson shows how remembering is a social as well as psychological process, that we draw upon the language and meanings of our culture to articulate our experience and seek social recognition and affirmation of our memories from family, peers, community or nation. ‘Composure’ refers to the process by which subjectivities are constructed in lifestory telling. Graham Dawson’s Soldier Heroes elaborated on the double meaning of the term to characterise life-story telling. Composure occurs when a narrator composes a story about him- or herself, so here composure refers to the composition of the narrative. It also refers to the way in which a narrator seeks a sense of ‘composure’ from constituting themselves as the subject of their story. According to Thomson, composure is never fully achieved, although a life narrative can be comforting and useful, it will not be a cure for life’s problems. Thomson’s theories were of relevance to this research as the Falklands wives were given a platform through this research to narrate and analyse their experiences, but this would not change or alleviate the effects of the war on them or their husbands.

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218 Summerfield, ‘Culture and Composure’, 69.
219 Thomson, Anzac, 305.
220 Ibid.
The interdisciplinary nature of oral history has been significant since the 1980s, demonstrated in the myriad of academic discourses and intellectual fields that acknowledge memory as a valued historical source. Oral historian Valerie Yow wrote about the ‘trickle over effect’ from such discourses as qualitative sociology, anthropology, biographical and literary studies and life review psychology.221 Alistair Thomson added cultural studies, linguistics, communication and narrative studies to interdisciplinary work exploring the relationship between memory, narrative and identity.222 While Thomson recognised that the theoretical and methodological developments in these fields have improved the practice of oral history, oral historians themselves have made considerable contributions to the theory, method and politics of qualitative research through their interdisciplinary considerations on interview relationships and on the interpretation and use of recorded memories. The researcher found this to be relevant to this research, as a positive interviewee/interviewer relationship was crucial, concerning potentially sensitive subject matter. Therefore, the researcher read work by psychologists, especially military psychologists, sociologists and research utilising qualitative research. These included works by Professor of Collaborative History, Lucy Robinson, the sociologist Joan Chandler’s research on naval wives in Plymouth, the psychologist Nigel C. Hunt’s work on war trauma and memory and the maritime historian Hanna Hagmark-Cooper’s qualitative research on fishermen’s wives.223 Collaborative research carried out by psychiatrists and psychologists, especially to determine the long and short-term effects of war on veterans was also consulted.224

Thomson asserted that ‘among the most obvious sources for contemporary history are the memories of people who have lived through past events’.225 However, oral historians have been beset by criticisms about ‘unreliable memories’. The main criticism of oral history in the 1970s was that memory was unreliable as a historical source. According to critics,

224 K. Burnell, P. Coleman and N. Hunt, ‘Falklands War Veterans: perceptions of social support and the reconciliation of traumatic memories’, Aging and Mental Health, 10(3); 282-289.
225 Thomson, ‘Unreliable Memories?’, 23.
memory was distorted by physical decline and nostalgia in old age, by the personal prejudices of the interviewer and interviewee, and by the influence of public and collective accounts of the past. In 1979, the Australian historian Patrick O’Farrell stated that oral history was moving into ‘the world of image, selective memory, later overlays and utter subjectivity... and where will it lead us? Not into history, but into myth’.\(^{226}\) Farrell was not referring to any particular myths, but what he saw as oral history adopting a ‘cheerful, mythologizing approach’ claiming that he doesn’t ‘blame the survivors for making the most of their memories’ but that oral history ‘shrinks and cossets reality, makes its re-living bearable, copable with, even enjoyable, certainly positive in its life stance’\(^{227}\) Farrell was referring to oral histories of the 1930s depression, where he claimed oral historians ‘sanitised’\(^{228}\) reality; what is clear is that Farrell was not an exponent of oral history methodology.

During the late 1970s some oral historians refuted these criticisms and argued that the purported unreliability of memory was also its strength, and that the subjectivity of memory augmented the meanings of historical experience, whilst also providing insight into the relationship between past and present, between memory and personal identity, and between individual and collective memory. For example, Luisa Passerini’s research into Italian memories of inter-war Fascism highlighted the rôle of subjectivity in history, and illustrated how the influences of public culture and ideology upon individual memory might be revealed in the silences, discrepancies and peculiarities of personal testimony.\(^{229}\) Also in the 1970s, Frisch argued that memory, ‘personal and historical, individual and generational’ should be the object, not purely the method of oral history. Used in this way, oral history could become a tool to discover, explore and analyse the features in the process of historical memory - how people make sense of the past, the link between individual experience and its social context, the past/present connection and how individuals use it to interpret their lives.\(^{230}\) Consequently, memory became the subject as well as the source of oral history. The work of Italian oral historian Alessandro Portelli refuted the critics of ‘unreliable memory’ by claiming


\(^{227}\) Ibid.

\(^{228}\) Ibid.


\(^{230}\) Frisch, *Shared Authority*, 188.
that ‘the peculiarities of oral history’: orality, narrative form, subjectivity, the credibility of memory, and the relationship between interviewer and interviewee, should be seen as strengths, not weaknesses, a resource rather than an obstruction.\(^{231}\) This shaped the researcher’s methodology: in the first instance in the choice of oral history methodology, but also by investigating how the participants’ memories have changed and confirming the importance and relevance of the interviewer/interviewee relationship. For example, the researcher was female, in a similar age bracket to the interviewees and more importantly, had experienced being a military wife in the period immediately following the conflict. Nevertheless, the researcher comprehended that it was imperative to keep the relationship on an interviewee/interviewer footing. Research on inter-subjectivity has grown in recent years. In her famous article, ‘Do I like them too much’, Yow identified increasing awareness of the interactive process of interviewer and narrator, as various disciplines began questioning the ideal of scientific objectivity.\(^{232}\) Yow concluded: ‘we cannot go about research without questioning ourselves, our biases, our purposes, our reactions to the narrator and the process, and the effects our research have on the narrator’.\(^{233}\) This is covered in more depth in the methodology chapter.

Early critics of oral history were concerned with the relationship between the oral historian as interviewer and analyst. Oral historians are aware of the complexities of the interviewee/interviewer relationship and have imposed a framework by which to assess their reflexive alertness. These include asking:

- Why am I doing this research?
- How do my own ideologies fit within the research?
- Why am I asking those questions? Could there have been an alternative?\(^{234}\)

The relationship between the historian as interviewer and analyst has added to the interdisciplinary nature of academic studies based on memory, with historians utilising

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\(^{233}\) Ibid., 62.

\(^{234}\) Yow, ‘Do I Like Them Too Much?’, 70.
research in the sociological, literary and life story psychological fields to augment the practice of oral history.\textsuperscript{235}

Media technology has also changed how oral historians can approach potential interviewers. This researcher planned to contact some respondents via the social media site Facebook. This means of contacting potential interviewees would also affect the researcher/interviewee relationship, risking a lack of objectivity, which is covered in the methodology chapter.

Although the most vehement critics of oral history were conservative historians such as Patrick O’Farrell, challenges also came from the left. During the late 1970s and early 1980s socialist historians were disparaging towards the idea that oral history methodology was essentially radical and democratic. Luisa Passerini rebuked the ‘facile democratisation’ and ‘complacent populism’ of oral history projects which encouraged members of oppressed groups to ‘speak for themselves’ but did not appreciate how memories might be influenced by dominant histories and therefore require critical interpretation.\textsuperscript{236} Similarly, the Popular Memory Group developed a critique of British oral history in their analyses of ‘popular memory’. Writing in 1982, this post-positivist group charged oral historians with unquestioning empiricism. The Group placed academic and historical practices within ‘the social production of memory’ and argued that public battles over the structure of the past are significant both in contemporary politics and for individual remembering.\textsuperscript{237} The Popular Memory Group concluded that the radical potential of oral history as used in community or women’s history was weakened by a cursory understanding of the connections in oral testimony between individual and social memory and between past and present, and by the unequal relationships between professional historians and other contributors in oral history projects.\textsuperscript{238}

The researcher was aware that interviewing the Falklands wives thirty years after their experiences meant that they could have been influenced by what they had since read, heard

\textsuperscript{235} Thomson, ‘Four paradigm’, 63.
\textsuperscript{236} Passerini, ‘Work, Ideology’, 88.
\textsuperscript{238} Popular Memory Group, ‘Popular Memory’, 227.
or seen. This could of course be true regarding the conflict itself and people’s views and thoughts of the event, and it is impossible to assess the extent to which that occurred. The researcher was also aware of influences shaping the interviewees’ narrative construction. These included printed secondary publications pertaining to the war, news bulletins and newspaper articles the interviewees may have read both immediately after the conflict and subsequently. Additionally, talking to other women who were military wives at the time was another influence that could mould interviewee narratives. If their individual memories did not reflect those of the other women, they might have thought their memories did not fit into the predominant group memories. This could result in them not responding or adapting their narrative to resemble the groups. For this reason, the researcher decided not to conduct group interviews or focus groups. While she did not anticipate her respondents fitting their memories within predominant group memories, it is impossible to assess what private conversations the women had had with other wives before the interviews.

More recently, Green has criticised oral and cultural historians for minimising, and even discarding, the value of individual memory. Green did not reject the valuable contributions of the cultural construction of memory and the social context of remembering but asserted that historians should research the cultural discourses used by individuals to make sense of their lives, and why. Green concluded:

Oral historians need to re-assert the value of individual remembering, and the capacity of the conscious self to contest and critique cultural scripts or discourses. Rather than seeking to fit oral narratives to pre-existing cultural representations or psychoanalytic templates, would it not be more fruitful for oral historians to explore those points of conflict and rupture in people’s lives that create confrontations with discourses of power?239

The researcher recognised that this confrontation could be a risk in oral history of Falklands wives, as the MoD, which dominated discourses of power on this occasion, had preconceived ideas of how a military wife should behave, for example being supportive. Therefore, any discontent or dissatisfaction voiced over their place and importance within the military network would be seen by those in power as disloyal and unsupportive. To mitigate

this risk, the methodology included anonymisation of interviewees and recruitment criteria excluding participants whose husbands or partners were serving in the military.

In recent years popular interest in history, memory and personal testimony has grown, due partly to the millennium and the proliferation of commemorations and anniversaries defining events of the twentieth century, particularly the world wars. Some oral historians see this as the ‘point’ of oral history, not just to present analysed testimonies in academic publications, but also to a wider audience. This is one interpretation of Frisch’s ‘shared authority’\textsuperscript{240} which resonated with this researcher. In Frisch’s view, the increased use of oral history in the public domain, especially with the World Wide Web revolution, was returning aurality to oral history, and non-text digital index and search mechanisms will enable imaginative, unforeseen uses for oral history.\textsuperscript{241} However, ten years later, Joanna Bornat was critical of embedding memorialising and heritage in public life. She asserted that the over-use of ‘heritage’ in our cultural life could result in oral history being routinised and legitimised out of recognition.\textsuperscript{242} The researcher did not anticipate this as a risk because she identified more closely with Frisch’s interpretation and viewed the research as a collaboration between the academic population and the wider audience (academics/researchers, interviewees, the public and the military community). Therefore, recalled events and emotions would both be embedded within interviewees’ memories and reflect contemporary public and military discourses.

Since the 1980s, increasing use of oral history in British museums and heritage sites has altered approaches to the presentation of the past. Oral history has been utilised increasingly as an important interpretive tool that ‘brings to the visitor a depth of human experience which inanimate displays cannot do’.\textsuperscript{243} The oral-history-based exhibition has been integrated into museums across Britain, and since the 1990s, audio and video extracts from recorded interviews have been incorporated increasingly into museum displays. Some

\textsuperscript{240} Frisch, \textit{Shared Authority}, xx. According to Frisch, ‘what is most compelling about oral and public history is a capacity to redefine and redistribute intellectual authority, so that this might be shared more broadly in historical research and communication rather than continuing to serve as an instrument of power and hierarchy’.


museums, such as the Imperial War Museum and the British Museum, have established oral history archives, fundamental to their social history collections. In Portsmouth the D-Day Museum, the National Museum of the Royal Navy and the Royal Marines Museum have incorporated oral history testimony within their exhibitions. Oral historians Ann Day and Ken Lunn asserted in 2004 that the use of oral sources in maritime museums has

...contributed to a radical re-shaping of ideas about British maritime heritage. More democratic and engaging forms of expression, as well as more encompassing narratives about associations with the sea, have clearly resulted from effective employment of oral history'.

This research sought narratives associated with the sea, but also those concerning women’s experiences of war, the MoD’s treatment of military spouses and an alternative narrative of the Falklands Conflict.

How does the future of oral history relate to this project? A major challenge is how to respond to the growth in interest and use of oral history, whilst continuing to support community-based oral history projects and maintain academic oral history. This growth in oral history may, however, reflect the historical and heritage-aware society we are currently living through. The researcher’s aim is to widen the scope of gender, social, naval and cultural history of the Falklands Conflict, so that Falklands wives’ testimonies will illuminate the experiences of naval wives in 1982 and differences and similarities between that conflict and subsequent conflicts.

Oral historians should continue to connect with narrative and memory work, as this researcher believes that the use of ‘narrative’ in the social sciences and the increase in ‘memory’ studies in the arts and sciences offers new opportunities and the prospect of recruiting important allies who can maintain and further develop oral history. However, the tension between community (public) and academic factions within the oral history movement will prompt further debates.

Two years after the Falklands Conflict ended, Jean Carr published Another Story: Women and The Falklands War. This was a clear model to be analysed in relation to the

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current study. Although she did not follow oral history principles, her data constituted oral history. Carr asserted that her book was:

...not a history book, a war correspondent’s diary, or a political analysis...it is Another Story, the story of women caught up in a totally unexpected conflict and how it affected their lives.²⁴⁵

At the time, Carr was a feature writer on the left-wing Labour tabloid, the Sunday Mirror. She noted that most Fleet Street reports were written and presented by men. She wondered what the servicemen’s families felt about the often contradictory and speculative stories that were circulating. Carr stated that her initial introductions to service families were through friends in the west country. Once the interviews commenced more respondents contacted her. The book makes no mention of the approach Ms Carr adopted during her initial contact with the respondents, but she viewed the armed forces clearly as ‘secretive and chauvinistic and an all-male military hierarchy’.²⁴⁶ Carr’s editorials about the Falklands wives’ treatment led to the Sunday Mirror spearheading a campaign for compensation for the families of the bereaved and injured.

Carr’s study included forty interviews with wives of members of all the armed forces. This was not an academic account, so there are no footnotes, references or bibliography. She asserted that the armed forces were unprepared, both militarily and in dealing with the domestic consequences, and that the attitudes in the male-dominated military hierarchy had not changed since the Second World War. Carr argued that this was unacceptable to a generation of articulate women who had grown up in a non-conscript and welfare state era. Carr’s presentation of military wives ran counter to that of the MoD corporate naval wife. The conclusions of Carr, a woman with no previous personal connection with the military, were also in complete contrast to those of Venning, Legg and the Military Wives Choir (Chapter 3). Instead of presenting the military wives as a homogenous community, Carr presented words of anger, confusion and dissent. She depicted the Falklands military wives as being the driving force for social change within the then all-male hierarchy. Regulations ensured that men could not offer personal opinions to the media, but none could silence the wives.

²⁴⁵ Carr, Another Story, xiv.
²⁴⁶ Ibid., xiv-xv.
In the concluding chapter Carr reviewed the shortcomings and failures of the armed forces, but particularly the Royal Navy during and after the conflict:

- The need for the wives to be kept informed of what was happening. This lack of communication led to increased anxiety for the families and did not prepare them for the consequences of war - death and injury.
- A reassessment of the navy’s relationship with the media. She questioned the necessity of subjecting relatives at home to mental suffering through partial press releases, and why the army could achieve outstanding PR when the navy failed to do so.
- The insensitive manner in which some of the bereaved received their men’s posthumous South Atlantic campaign medals, in pieces, in Jiffy bags, through the post.
- The need for a review of compensation and insurance for war wounded servicemen.
- The greatest criticism was of the service charities, which she stated were the ‘repositories for the most conformist attitudes within the Armed Forces, the epitome of an unshakeable, all-male military hierarchy’. The assessment panel and the board of trustees of the South Atlantic Fund were unrepresentative of those for whom they were making decisions; no war wounded, no widows and no parents.247

The influence of Carr’s book was evident when it was mentioned in Parliament by MP Tam Dalyell who stated:

In the past fortnight a formidable and important book has been published by a Sunday Mirror journalist called Jean Carr, entitled "Another Story. Women and the Falklands War".248

Dalyell referred to specific pages and interviewees in his speech, matching Carr’s condemnatory comments on the treatment of service families and the dispersal of the South Atlantic Fund. He closed his speech:

However, the issue has now been brilliantly and powerfully put into print and I hope that there will be a measured response to Jean Carr’s book, which is as important as the dispatches of some of the correspondents of The Times were during the Crimean war. The Army really must look at this book.249

The researcher cannot determine whether the Army, or any of the Armed Forces consulted Carr’s book. However, during her interview Carr asserted that the South Atlantic

247 Ibid., 151-59. The South Atlantic Fund became a focal point for the anger, grief and bitterness felt by many about the conflict. The fund was closed and the £3 million left was distributed amongst the main military charities.
249 Ibid.
Fund, along with other military charities, were unrepresentative of those seeking support, she claimed the trustees were representing a male dominated paternalistic institution.\textsuperscript{250}

In 2007, Thomson claimed that in recent years there had been ‘four paradigm transformations in oral history’.\textsuperscript{251} These were stated as:

- the post-war renaissance of memory as a source for ‘people’s history’
- the development, from the late 1970s, of ‘post-positivist’ approaches to memory and subjectivity
- a change in the perception of the oral historian as interviewer and analyst
- the digital revolution.

How does the Falklands Conflict and this research link to these recent oral history paradigms? This project is an investigation into naval wives’ experiences and memories. Although the researcher suggests it does not conform to the traditional hypothesis of initiating a ‘history from below’, as many of the women interviewed were married to leading ratings or officers, it does investigate and analyse experiences and people who have hitherto been ignored in history, with the aim of discovering a variety of individual memories and experiences. This includes experiences relating to how the wives received news of their husbands, how they viewed commemoration of the conflict and any changes they had seen in their husbands’ behaviour since their return.

A post-positivist approach to memory, history and subjectivity is valid in this research. While positivists emphasise independence between the researcher and the interviewee, post-positivists accept that theories, background, knowledge and values of the researcher can influence what is observed. They pursue objectivity by recognising the possible effects of bias. Memory is only one of the sources used; as with any historian, the experiences recalled in the interviews are checked alongside other written sources. A method of sampling is employed, along with the knowledge of bias, the issue of speculation and the effects of the interviewer. These theoretical guidelines provide useful indicators for reading memories and experiences.\textsuperscript{252} Examples of what the researcher checked are actual news headlines mentioned by the interviewees and dates and events of the conflict.

\textsuperscript{250} Jean Carr, interview by V. Woodman, September 9, 2017.
\textsuperscript{251} Thomson, ‘Four Paradigm Transformations in Oral History’, 49.
\textsuperscript{252} Bornat and Diamond, ‘Women’s History’, 19-39.
A thorough literature review on oral history methodology was carried out to instruct and shape the collection of primary data. Theoretical methods relating to retrospective memory and history were important, as the women interviewed were re-telling their memories more than thirty years after the event. This literature also addressed objective 1 to ‘engage with the theoretical debates surrounding the methods and methodologies employed by those using oral sources in historical research’ and research questions 1 (If a group of naval wives underwent the same events, would their views / thoughts / experiences be comparable?); 3 (Did the naval community differ from the rest of society; how were its gender rôles defined?) and 4 (Did the wives’ thoughts and feelings differ from those reported in the press?).

Falklands Conflict

And all through, one had to live through that. All of a sudden, no-one else was at risk, and you sat down and realised the enormity of it, and that really is when you just flop, and you see, while it was on, nothing else mattered. You had to carry on with other things. People perhaps do not realise the whole strain you are under because of the young and people’s lives at stake. And because of their courage and because we would not be free unless through the ages there had been people who were prepared to lay down their lives for it.253

This quotation from Margaret Thatcher was taken from an interview with Dr Miriam Stoppard for Yorkshire TV, where Thatcher is asked what she did ‘when the Falklands crisis was over?’ Thatcher’s comments portrayed a human, caring side to the ‘Iron Lady’.254 The final sentence used similarly poignant language to ally herself to tradition and historical continuity.

Thatcher’s rôle in the conflict was ambiguous. According to the historian Richard Vinen, the Falklands was not a Thatcherite war, as it was not associated with traits that had been assigned to the first three years of Thatcher’s government.255 Vinen posed the

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253 TV Interview with Yorkshire TV, broadcast on 19th November 1985, interviewer Dr Miriam Stoppard, who asked Margaret Thatcher PM what she did ‘when the Falklands crisis was over’. Margaret Thatcher Foundation Website document number 105830, accessed July 20, 2016, https://www.margaretthatcher.org/document/105830.
254 Thatcher’s soubriquet has been originally attributed to a Red Army newspaper, after hearing what they termed a banal speech entitled ‘Britain Awake’ in 1976.
distinction: it was not a Thatcherite war but was it ‘Thatcher’s war’? He stated that she had no military experience, and although she was solid on defence, had taken no interest in the details of military matters. The historian Peter Clarke argued that the Falklands Conflict

...so notably revived her political fortunes, was the moment of truth for Mrs Thatcher’s political leadership. She was subsequently taken at her own valuation and she subsequently felt an unshakeable confidence in her own judgement, which she was ready to back against all-comers.

Vinen asserted that Thatcher’s ‘very incongruity was her strength’ and that she was ‘the perfect war leader’: she did not share the masculine obsession with weapons and tactics that still ‘gripped many [male] Conservative MPs’.

Clarke and Vinen suggested that Thatcher was rebranded following the conflict, however the form of that rebranding is open to doubt. D. George Boyce claimed that it was ‘certain that Mrs Thatcher’s response to the crisis gathered and retained an impressive (if by no means unanimous) degree of public support’. Yet Boyce claimed that there was also dispute over what part the conflict played in Thatcher’s general election victory of 1983. Vinen maintained that Thatcher’s most obvious political victory following the conflict was her position in the Conservative Party. Previously she had been a peculiarity, a woman from outside the traditional ruling class holding no great office of state before becoming prime minister. The woman with no experience of defence or foreign policy was now a ‘warrior queen’.

Literature appeared shortly after the Falklands Conflict ended. It fell predominantly into three types: interviews or personal accounts from members of the task force, who had their own heroic tale to tell; journalistic accounts written by members of the press who accompanied the task force; and political interpretations, mainly on Margaret Thatcher’s rôle and how the conflict raised her popularity amongst the British electorate. The most frequent analyses reflected the media’s coverage of the conflict. The researcher examined conflict

256 Ibid., 149.
257 Peter Clarke, ‘The Rise and Fall of Thatcher’, Historical Record, lxxii, 177, (1999), 301-22; 316.
258 Vinen, Thatcher’s Britain, 149.
259 Clarke, ‘Rise and Fall’, 171-2; Vinen, Thatcher’s Britain, 150.
261 Vinen, Thatcher’s Britain, 151.
literature for two reasons. One was to put the event into an historical and political context. Secondly, although it comprised predominantly male memoirs and written sources, these texts may have affected other narratives, for example by the wives. The literature appeared either immediately in the first five years, at the twenty-fifth and thirtieth anniversaries, or emerged from other disciplines.

From the onset of the Falklands Conflict, the public expected and was given entertainment. Racial and xenophobic aspects were clear from the stereotypical images of the enemy in most cartoons and in the abusive language used by much of the tabloid press. An explicit example was the Sun’s most infamous headline: ‘Gotcha!’, used to describe the sinking of the Argentine cruiser General Belgrano on May 2nd.\textsuperscript{262} It was used as Robert Harris’s 1983 book title. This book examined how the press and media were managed by the Ministry of Defence (MoD) and eventual lessons learnt. What becomes clear from this book is how the British media fought amongst themselves during the conflict. Harris argued that this was the ‘worst reported war since the Crimea’.\textsuperscript{263} Harris, a journalist and BBC reporter, was aware that the task force could have been put at risk by indiscreet reporting, and the MoD did not want to use the word ‘censorship’, yet the rules were strict, forbidding any reporting of strengths, intentions, or weapon systems. Even the weather could not be reported.\textsuperscript{264}

One immediate publication presenting a different aspect of the media’s coverage of the conflict was the Glasgow University Media Group’s study (GUMG). This concentrated on television news reporting, examining the coverage of controversial issues such as the sinking of the General Belgrano. The book’s introduction stated:

The Falklands experience revealed conflicts of principle and interest. The right to the free flow of information in a democratic society was set against the need for censorship in the interest of the war effort. The right to present different points of view about the issue was set against a call to speak for the ‘national interest.’\textsuperscript{265}

\textsuperscript{262} The headline was published in The Sun on May 4th.
\textsuperscript{263} R. Harris, ‘Gotcha!’ The media, the Government and the Falklands Crisis (Faber and Faber: London, 1983), 53.
\textsuperscript{264} Ibid., 26.
\textsuperscript{265} Glasgow University Media Group, War and Peace News (Milton Keynes: Open University Press, 1983).
The group also examined the balance between military and diplomatic coverage of the conflict on television news and how, in television news portrayal of the ‘home front’, certain connotations of family and nation were deployed to create a sense of unity and patriotism in time of crisis.\textsuperscript{266} Recognition has been made of the GUMG’s contribution to a school of media sociology.\textsuperscript{267} However, a critique of the GUMG is that they were male-dominated, and there is also a perception that the group used a biased Marxist analysis and was motivated by a conspiracy theory of the media, although the group disseminated their ideology-critique as left-wing sociology.\textsuperscript{268} This publication affected the approach the researcher took on analysing and critiquing media reports, both television and newspaper, as reports in 1982 were targeted and amended for the intended audience. Also, the examples of the television reports that the GUMG used were chosen to criticise the royalty, the military and the media, therefore the researcher conducted her own analysis of the reports.

Some literature from Royal Navy task force individuals was published immediately after the conflict. Published by the father after his son’s death on HMS Glamorgan, was a series of letters and poems written by Lieutenant David Tinker RN, in which Tinker criticised sharply the origins of the conflict and the manner in which it was conducted. These letters divulged a sympathetic yet humorous account of day-to-day shipboard life whilst conveying poignancy, as the reader knows Tinker’s fate. What Tinker perceived as a military and political fiasco is clear when he wrote:

\begin{quote}
It is quite easy to see how the war has come about; Mrs Thatcher imagined she was Churchill defying Hitler, and the Navy advised a quick war before the winter set in; the Navy chiefs also wanted maximum use made of the Navy for maximum publicity to reverse the Navy cuts: which has happened. For [utmost] worth, victory or defeat would have the same result; publicity and popular support, either congratulations or sympathy.\textsuperscript{269}
\end{quote}

\begin{footnotes}
\textsuperscript{266} Ibid., 144-171.
\textsuperscript{269} David Tinker Lieut. RN, \textit{A Message from the Falklands} (London: Junction, 1982), 177.
\end{footnotes}
This publication suggested to the researcher that veterans’ experiences and thoughts, like those of the naval wives, were not homogenous. Not all veterans’ voices were supportive of the conflict.

Although the focus of this research is on the ‘naval’ experience of the Falklands Conflict, the researcher feels it is relevant here, both in terms of the literature and the change in focus and sentiment of Falklands veterans’ memoirs, to mention published accounts concerning Scots Guard Robert Lawrence. Lieutenant Lawrence was shot in the head during the battle for Tumbledown Mountain. Partially paralysed as a result of his injuries, he was rejected and abandoned by his regiment when he expressed dismay at his treatment by the medical profession, the South Atlantic Medal Fund (set up to offer financial assistance to those injured in or bereaved by the conflict), and the military. The first of Lawrence’s accounts appeared in Max Arthur’s Above All, Courage, a collection of interviews with twenty-nine men and one woman, all of whom served in the Falklands, most of whom were decorated for their actions. The interviews took place with members of all three services over a period of two and a half years after the conflict, thus conveying relatively current memories and feelings. The researcher pondered on whether the accounts would have resonated differently if they had been carried out say five or ten years after the conflict, when the participants had had time to reflect on their experiences. These accounts would provide useful comparisons for her own data.

Arthur stated that the purpose of the interviews and the subsequent book publication was to ‘provide a unique chronicle of almost every facet of the Falklands campaign, but also illustrate the indomitable spirit of the British soldier at war’. Arthur singled out Lawrence when he wrote: ‘I was especially moved by the bravery of Bob Lawrence and his astonishing determination to overcome the severe injuries he sustained’. Arthur recounted Lawrence’s assault on an Argentine machine gun post, for which he was awarded the Military Cross, as a positive rite of passage, an experience that improved him. Lawrence’s experiences were subject to selective construction and Arthur makes no mention of Lawrence’s subsequent disillusionment, focusing instead on his heroic actions in the battle at Tumbledown. Arthur

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271 Ibid, x.
272 Ibid, 405-414.
originally interviewed 250 men and women of all ranks, therefore inclusion in the published edition was subject to a selection process. Despite contacting the publishers, the researcher could not ascertain how it was decided what and who were included in the final printed version.

By contrast, both Charles Wood’s screenplay *Tumbledown* (1987) and Lawrence’s own memoir, *When the Fighting Is Over* (1988) devoted considerably less time to the battlefield, focusing instead on the consequences and effects of war. Wood’s play emphasised Lawrence’s disbelief and frustration at being confined in civilian clothes in an obscure corner of St Paul’s Cathedral for the Falkland Islands Service:

Two hours. I’ve been sitting here two hours. Colour Sergeant. Couldn’t see anything. Couldn’t be seen. Couldn’t wear uniform. What are they frightened of? It’s as if we shouldn’t have come back or something.273

Lawrence was perceived officially as a political embarrassment. In this endeavour to expunge Lawrence and other injured veterans from the official narrative of the war, Lawrence refused to go quietly. He challenged society with the costs of the conflict and contended that any shame arising from it should not only have burdened those who bore the wounds but also those who profited from it and would not acknowledge them.

Lawrence’s autobiographical memoir focused on the uncertainty of his future, his ongoing anger at the treatment he received and his recognition that there was no place for him in the Falklands narrative.274 He articulated the purpose of his account:

I have a duty now, I believe, to inform my generation not only about what the fighting was like, but about what can happen to you if you get injured, in some sort of attempt to make them think twice about getting involved in another war.275

Yet despite Lawrence’s critical stance on his post-war treatment, he believed that Britain’s cause in the Falklands had been a just one which was clear when he proclaimed:

I still believe that what I did in the Falklands War was worth doing. I still believe that what I did had to be done...What I didn’t realise, until, like so many others, I came back crippled after doing my bit for my country, was the extent to which we had been

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275 Ibid., 193.
conned. Conned into believing in set of priorities and principles that the rest of the world and British society in general no longer gave two hoots about. We had been ‘their boys’ fighting in the Falklands, and when the fighting was over, nobody wanted to know.\textsuperscript{276}

Five years after the conflict, some veterans reflected within a larger discourse about warfare, that:

...the war was less an affirming experience than a full-scale assault on the ideals for which they had fought. When they queried the conflict’s aims, questioned its management or condemned its destructive effects on their lives they commonly did so by contesting its construction as a journey towards the moral and physical affirmation of the hero and his or her community.\textsuperscript{277}

Significantly, this was published by Pluto Press, publisher of the International Socialists, now the Socialist Workers Party, and ‘one of the oldest radical publishing houses in the UK, but our focus remains making timely interventions in contemporary struggles.’\textsuperscript{278} In all these accounts, many political agendas, overt or covert, influenced the selection and telling of the stories.

One of the first twenty-fifth anniversary accounts was David Yates’s \textit{Bomb Alley: Falklands Islands 1982 Onboard HMS Antrim at War}, which was less well received than the two previously mentioned. It was written by a ‘below deck sailor’ and not an officer, drawing heavily on the diary Yates maintained before, during and immediately after the war. It was marketed by a specialist military history publisher as:

This is a tale that recounts a heroic event in the true spirit of the British sailor. It melds humour, pathos and sheer guts into a fascinating adventure of true naval tradition and pulls no punches.

It describes a rite of passage for David; the last sentence of the book: ‘Now a much older, curly haired laughing sailor came home again’.\textsuperscript{279}

The book’s publicity used the stereotypical language of a Jolly Jack Tar, heroic, humorous, British adventure and tradition all rolled into one. A search of reviews for the book

\textsuperscript{276} Ibid., 191-2.
\textsuperscript{277} Kevin Foster, \textit{Fighting Fictions: War, Narrative and National Identity} (London: Pluto, 1999), 107.
\textsuperscript{279} David Yates, \textit{Bomb Alley: Falklands Islands 1982 Onboard HMS Antrim at War} (Barnsley: Pen and Sword, 2006), 199.
revealed that non-military readers found it ‘interesting and informative’, and a change from reading accounts from ‘those in charge’\textsuperscript{280} However, reviews from those who had served, some of them with Yates, slated the book for:

...being at best a very self-serving account of what happened at a very difficult time for many sailors who were at war. At worst, it is libellous and the author should prepare himself for what may well follow.\textsuperscript{281}

Another review denied vehemently the validity and accuracy of Yates account:

I served in HMS Antrim during the Falklands War and agree with 'Mike' that this book is completely self-centred and self-serving fantasy by the author. Much of the information is inaccurate and is a poor historical source for what actually occurred. Scarcely any incident described in this account is factually correct and it would have been impossible for the author to have witnessed some of them unless he had been absent from his place of duty. To have seen the bombardment of South Georgia would have required him to be in the way and to be able to see through a substantial chunk of mountain. He cannot even get the names of the ship's officers correct\textsuperscript{282}

This publication stimulated debate, which shows how strongly veterans felt about the public accounts: they were trying to establish a truth. The reliability of memory and subjectivity (the conscious and unconscious meanings of experience as lived and remembered) in oral history will be addressed in the methodology chapter.

One of the most compelling, unsentimental and frank accounts at the twenty-fifth anniversary came from David Hart Dyke (2007), captain of HMS Coventry, the Type-42 destroyer lost in the latter stages of the conflict. Hart Dyke had only taken command of the ship a year earlier but had used the time to bond with his 300 officers and men. He wrote:

I could scarcely believe that we were going to be asked to resolve the issue by force when we were so heavily outnumbered on the ground and in the air: I thought the Argentinean Air Force alone could win the war [and] feared for both the reputation and future of the Royal Navy should we fail.\textsuperscript{283}

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{280} Reviews: https://www.amazon.co.uk/Bomb-Alley-Aboard-HMS-Antrim/dp/1844156249 accessed February 7, 2017.
\item \textsuperscript{281} Ibid.
\item \textsuperscript{282} Ibid.
\item \textsuperscript{283} David Hart Dyke, \textit{Four Weeks in May: The Loss of HMS Coventry, a Captain’s Story} (London: Atlantic Books, 2007), 27.
\end{itemize}
Hart Dyke was excellent in conveying the traumatic transition from peace to war: the issue of wills, morphine, survival suits and identity discs; the painting of recognition marks on the top and side of the ship; and, most poignant of all, the writing of ‘last letters’ home. His own letter, written on April 25, was selfless, assuring his wife that he has ‘slipped quietly beneath the waves’ and encouraging her to remarry and ‘look to the future and your life with the girls’. He was, he admitted, ‘far more likely to be burnt to a cinder or blown to bits’. It almost came to that when Coventry was struck by three 1,000lb bombs (two exploded) from two enemy Skyhawks on May 25. The force of the explosions shook Hart Dyke’s whole body ‘to the core’.285

In his preface, Hart Dyke stated:

Many people who have suffered in war do not care to talk about their experiences because, when they do, they relive them intensely- as if these events had only happened yesterday, not years or decades earlier. Some go to their graves without ever feeling able to describe or discuss what they went through, even with close friends and family. I was lucky: over time, I learnt to shut out the more painful memories and to live more easily with them.286

He also sought to tell Coventry’s story before he got too old, a motivation echoed by the researcher, who did not want to lose viable memories. In the first chapter, he extolled the naval connections of his wife Diana, whom he calls D. Her father was a diplomat, but her great-grandfather, great-uncle, both grandfathers and an uncle were all admirals. He said: ‘I was fortunate to be married to someone who had a naval background and therefore understood the life of a sea-going naval officer and the necessary separations involved.’287

Tribute was also paid to Diana in the acknowledgements when Hart Dyke wrote: ‘My wife D deserves special praise for both her important contribution to the book and for living through the dramatic events of 1982 with remarkable calm and strength.’288 Apart from these instances, his wife is not mentioned; the reader knows nothing about what she did, how she

284 Ibid., 143-145.
285 Ibid., 150.
286 Ibid., xxii.
287 Ibid., 5.
288 Ibid., xx.
was feeling or her thoughts. Her rôle in his experience of the war is refracted only through his stereotyped image and described only in supportive terms.

Another twenty-fifth anniversary release was John Lippiett’s publication of letters sent during the conflict to and from his wife, Jenny, which gave a fascinating insight into life on both the war and home fronts in 1982. John Lippiett was then second-in-command of HMS *Ambuscade*. Jenny’s concerns were those of military wives throughout history: worry for her husband’s safety counterbalanced by more mundane domestic issues such as the bank overdraft, paying bills, digging the garden and looking after two toddlers. But unlike wives in most previous wars, Jenny had to cope with bad news from the front almost as soon as it happened. ‘We are all shocked and stunned by the news of the *Sheffield,*’ she wrote on May 6, two days after the destroyer was sunk by an Exocet missile, ‘and tonight’s loss of two more Sea Harriers brings it all home yet again. I weep for the wives and pray for you.’ She must have felt that her prayers had worked because her husband’s ship, having only arrived in the South Atlantic a few days earlier, was the original target for the Exocet missile that sunk the container ship Atlantic Conveyer on May 25. *Ambuscade* was saved by firing decoy chaff.289

Lippiett reflected that the conflict of 1982 may have been the last where letters played a part, but whatever form of communication is used in correspondence, the sentiments are the same:

...from the fighting front, a factual account, normally underplayed regarding danger, with a yearning to return to loved ones. From the home front, a brave face, stories of family and home and a desperate wish to keep the recipient out of danger’s way.290

The letters were published in chronological order, which Lippett said:

...shows how out of synch we were with each other’s knowledge of the day’s events. We often didn’t get letters from each other for several weeks and then they would come in a bunch, though occasionally with one or two missing from sequence.291

The researcher approached John and Jenny Lippiett for interview, but they declined, stating they felt they had been over-exposed and would have nothing new to say beyond the book and other interviews. This highlighted an issue experienced by the researcher, that most

290 Ibid., 8.
291 Ibid., 12.
interviewees would be wives of officers or higher ratings. They did however pass onto the researcher the contact details of four naval wives whom they believed would agree to be interviewed for this research. Two of these contacts were interviewed, the other two declined.

Written during the research, a book with a strong ‘naval’ connection which was published during the Falklands thirtieth anniversary year, was Adam Joe Lawton’s *Journey to Peace*. The book cover stated that it:

...tells the story of the author’s baptism by fire onboard *Sheffield* when she was hit by an Exocet missile. Twenty of his shipmates died in appalling circumstances, which for a young man on his first watch was beyond comprehension.\(^{292}\)

This is a personal recollection and a chronological account of Lawton’s ‘Journey to Peace’ when he ‘confronted, in person, the demons that had haunted me and affected my life, and I subsequently exorcised those ghosts’.\(^{293}\) Lawton’s mother was interviewed by the researcher, as it was considered advantageous to compare the two experiences. The book highlighted the armed forces’ humour and camaraderie and stirred up emotions in the researcher ranging from laughter to tears when Lawton retold his transition from a fresh-faced seventeen-year-old to an eighteen-year-old filled with anger, hatred and aggression. Lawton commented on, after his return to the United Kingdom, incidents of drunken violence he was involved in, and his change of personality, but ‘Not one single individual Naval Officer, doctor, psychologist or counsellor approached me and so much as asked, are you ok?’\(^{294}\) Lawton later commented on the government’s moral duty of sending people to war, that they should be looked after and help offered to enable them to deal with the trauma.\(^{295}\)

The second part of Lawton’s account is about his therapeutic return to the Falklands nineteen years after the war. The nineteenth anniversary was a troubling yet decisive time for Lawton. He wrote: ‘As usual I went and sat in a church and cried. It was affecting me very badly that year. My work was suffering; I wasn’t eating properly’. He was certain that coming to terms with his experiences lay in a return to the islands and not on a ‘shrink’s couch’.\(^{296}\)

\(^{293}\) Ibid., ix.
\(^{294}\) Ibid., 83.
\(^{295}\) Ibid., 84.
\(^{296}\) Lawton, *Journey*, 90.
This book ends with an afterword entitled ‘Closure’ where on the twentieth anniversary of the conflict he had visited the Falklands and attended the HMS Sheffield reunion. His final words were: ‘I knew for certain that for me, after twenty years, the war was finally over. I had not only survived the war, I had also survived the peace.’ This was very relevant in revealing that the conflict did not end for some: coming to terms and accepting life’s experiences is an incessant process. It also highlighted the effects of PTSD with which many of the women were living and the triggers of anxiety around anniversary dates. It appears from these accounts that the act of writing and communicating was also a means of coming to terms with trauma.

The researcher noticed a new trend in publications for the thirtieth anniversary of the conflict. There were new editions of previous publications, but a change from the previously published heroic tales of individual veterans was the publication of collections of stories and experiences. These collections addressed the price the veterans had paid, especially regarding Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD). The effect war trauma had on families had become recognised. Additionally, some of the publication royalties were donated to forces’ charities.

Few of these publications were by women. One exception was Nicki Pugh’s *White Ship Red Crosses: A Nursing Memoir of the Falklands War*. Pugh created a comprehensive and historically useful account of the efforts of the medical teams and crew aboard the British SS Uganda Hospital Ship during the Falklands Conflict. In addition to describing the conflict itself, the book details in some depth the many transformations of the ship as she was fitted out as a hospital, as well as the trials of the Royal Navy medical and nursing staff as they fought against time to convert the former P&O Cruise Ship SS Uganda into a floating hospital working in the South Atlantic Ocean. Pugh was a Naval Nursing Sister and the accounts in the book are first hand. The final few chapters, added for the thirtieth anniversary of the conflict, ‘bring the book right up-to-date, with comparisons to current conflicts, and the importance for 1982

297 Ibid. 283.
299 For example, Dale, *Memories.*
Falklands War veterans to maintain their links with The Falkland Islands today.’ This reveals that for the participants and their families, the Falklands Conflict is a continuing experience.

Oral history has been subjected to a theoretical and contextual evolution. Since the Falklands, women have been more vocal and articulate about their thoughts and feelings. Women are becoming more visible, proactive and prominent in the British armed forces. There is more pressure on the armed forces to recognise that the welfare of those left behind is of extreme strategic importance in terms of recruitment and retention. With more women being deployed, and as a bid to ‘stop women leaving the service before they get to the senior ranks’, the navy launched their Naval Servicewomen Network. Set up by Commander Ellie Ablett, who entered in 1993, the year the Women’s Royal Naval Service (WRNS) was integrated into the regular Royal Navy, she hoped to attract as many of the 3,150 women serving in the organisation in 2013 as possible. In 1987, before the WRNS was integrated, 21% of naval recruits were female. Now, the inflow of women into the organisation is less than 10%. Ablett claims that the reason women are leaving the service is:

Gender comes into it once people start getting married and having families – and this usually affects female officers more. How do you make a career work when that career means you have to drop everything and suddenly serve overseas?

Conclusions

These two literature review chapters have shown that published literature regarding women and the military and the Falklands is incomplete in style and content.

Firstly, the literature review revealed prime minister Margaret Thatcher’s views on the rôle of women, with Richard Vinen claiming that she benefitted from her gender, particularly regarding the need for a token woman in some political rôles. John Campbell however, commented on Thatcher’s changing stance on women’s rights and how she failed to ensure

302 Richard Vinen, Thatcher’s Britain, 26.
other women enjoyed the same advantages as her.\textsuperscript{303} The Falklands wives did not enjoy the benefits of career and family support that Thatcher’s class did. They suffered.

A context in which to place the Falklands wives’ lives was proffered by Sheila Rowbotham’s research into women’s lives in such areas as family, work and sexuality.\textsuperscript{304} For the purpose of this research, Janet Finch and David Morgan’s work on marriage in the 1980s was consulted. Of interest to the researcher was Finch and Morgan’s work on how a wife was influenced by her husband’s career, therefore becoming ‘married to the job’.\textsuperscript{305} Finch’s earlier work on wives ‘incorporated’ into their husbands’ work\textsuperscript{306} bore relevance to the research as Falklands wives’ lives were incorporated into their husbands’ patriarchal military lives. Ruth Jolly’s work was instrumental in the history of the rôles and militarised functions of military families. Jolly’s work embraced the homogenous military family genre but hinted at some dissatisfaction, especially among professional women who sacrificed their own careers.\textsuperscript{307} The British Social Attitudes Survey offered an insight in to changing social attitudes towards women’s rôles both in the home and in the workplace.\textsuperscript{308} The surveys provided a contrast between the era following the Falklands Conflict and the time the wives were interviewed.

The wives of officers David Hart Dyke and John Lippiett, as portrayed by their husbands, followed the traditional patriarchal armed forces stereotype; the stereotype and status that Jessup claimed some women embraced themselves, within a forces’ wives’ self-regulating social structure and hierarchy based on the rank and status of their husbands. Ablett’s evidence on diminishing female naval recruitment is an indication of how the MoD is still treating women.

Naval wives have been largely absent from the literature. Existing literature on military wives, such as Legg, the Military Wives Choir and Venning also portrayed the wives as being supportive, corporate and militarised, with no words of discontent revealed. These

\begin{footnotes}
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three works were published while British forces were operating in Iraq and Afghanistan. These accounts would provide useful contrasts for the researcher’s own data, deriving from a period when the navy was in a conflict situation.

The literature of Enloe and Jessup focused on gendered infrastructure control and corporate militarism which transcended to militarised corporate religion.\footnote{Cynthia Enloe, ‘(London: University of California Press, 2000). Chris Jessup, \textit{Breaking the Ranks: Social Change in Military Communities} (London: Brassey’s, 1996).} Jessup goes as far as calling not just the military but military families greedy institutions. This, Jessup attributed to societal changes which have been problematic for military families, a concept that had to be considered during this research. Berger and Gluck’s documented dilemma concerning women’s resistance and subordination was also a concept adopted during this research.\footnote{Susan H. Armitage and Sherna Berger Gluck, ‘Reflections on Women’s Oral History, an Exchange’, in \textit{Women’s Oral History: the ‘Frontiers’ Reader}, eds. Susan Armitage, Patricia Hart and Katherine Weathermon (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press 2002), 75-86} The Falklands wives, while not subordinate, were incorporated within a traditional patriarchal institution, where they were viewed in terms of their ‘usefulness’ to the organisation (military).

Jolly and Jessup offered an insight into military family life, but these publications were focusing on life in peacetime, not wartime, without the extra worries and concerns affecting combatants and their families. They recognised the gendered militarised stereotype but acknowledged that armed forces are slow at instigating social change.

Carr’s work presented an alternative view of military wives. She did not portray the women as being a homogenous group adhering to a corporate stereotype. Her work portrayed the women’s anger, confusion and dissent; she saw them as a catalyst for social change within a traditional patriarchal establishment. Carr’s work concerned all three forces and was not an in-depth academic analysis, however it presented an alternative view, one mirrored in this research.

These literature reviews revealed much debate amongst oral historians over validity, memory and the meaning of oral history.\footnote{Frisch advocated oral testimony use to inspire interviewees to interpret the world around them. Thomson viewed oral history as a means of historical interpretation and reconstruction. Halpern stated that oral history is an interpersonal experience incorporating formal and informal processes. Portelli asserted that oral history} For the Falklands Wives, oral history meant that
their experiences and views of the conflict were recorded, highlighting an alternative view of the effects of a contemporary conflict on those left behind.

Sources on interviewer objectivity were imperative to this research. The fundamental source for this issue is Yow. She declared that it was essential for interviewers to question themselves, their biases, their purposes, their reactions to the narrator and the process, and the effects their research has on the interviewee.\textsuperscript{312} Yow recognised the importance of the interviewer/interviewee relationship, a sentiment that this researcher endeavoured to follow, whilst maintaining a professional working relationship with her respondents. Oral historians are aware of the complexities of the interviewee/interviewer relationship and have imposed a framework by which to assess their reflexive alertness. These include asking:

- Why am I doing this research?
- How do my own ideologies fit within the research?
- Why am I asking those questions? Could there have been an alternative?\textsuperscript{313}

This researcher is carrying out this research as an insight into the Falklands naval wives’ experiences and views have largely been omitted from academic inquiry therefore these had to be recorded before it was too late. The researcher’s ideologies were paramount during this research, although she did not reveal to the interviewees during the initial recruitment stage that she was a former naval wife, once that was revealed prior to the interview it created an element of trust and empathy on both sides. The researcher was also the same gender and within the same age range of the interviewees who had experienced military life in the period succeeding the conflict. The questions posed by the researcher had evolved from gaps in the literature, however, the researcher recognised that the cumulative effect of oral history is such that alternative questions could always be asked with any research.


\textsuperscript{313} Yow, ‘Do I Like Them Too Much?’, 70.
The value of oral history in museums to relay stories to future generations was revealed in the literature. This is of importance to this research to tell the narrative of the Falklands naval wives. Frisch disclosed that the use of oral history in the public domain will lead to new uses for orality and oral history. Bornat criticised the overuse of ‘heritage; in cultural life, she claimed that oral history will become repetitive and legitimised. Day and Lunn advocated increased use of oral history in maritime museums as they saw it as a democratic and engaging means to retell narratives relating to British maritime heritage. Finally, Wincup viewed oral history as a way to enhance museum visitors’ experience. The Falkland wives testimony could enhance museum interpretation by offering an alternative understanding of the consequences of war on those left behind. A senior curator at a maritime museum confirmed that oral history enhances visitor experience and interpretation, but that this particular museum is ‘bad at capturing visitor feedback’ so she did not have ‘hard evidence to support this’, it was ‘informed by anecdotal feedback’.

The second literature gap was that no previous academic project had been completed on the Falklands wives. Therefore, there were no existing academic case studies for comparison. However, Carr’s work on Falklands women and Legg’s work on military wives (Chapter 3) enhanced the researcher’s awareness of issues affecting military wives, thus shaping the themes of the interview questions. Furthermore, Finch’s work on wives’ incorporation into their husbands’ jobs, though not focusing on the military, was instrumental in understanding the extent women’s lives were controlled and determined by their husbands’ careers.

Falklands veterans’ literature offered an historical contextual framework within which to situate the women’s views and memories. However, as was shown, not all veterans’ experiences and memories were analogous. Arthur’s collection of Falklands veterans’ experiences was collected in the two years after the conflict, when they had had little time to

318 Anonymous pers. comm. May 8, 2018
reflect, and before the onset of PTSD for many of them. There was also a selection process employed; whose memories, recollections and experiences were chosen for publication, and why? Lawrence’s account differed from others, as he questioned his place within conflict narratives. Although he challenged the cost of the conflict, especially in the post-conflict treatment of veterans, he still maintained that Britain’s cause in the Falklands was justified. The most vehemently critical publication of the Falklands, published posthumously in the same year as the conflict, came from Tinker. This officer died unaware of the long-term and future effects which would afflict his shipmates and their families.

The process of the literature review for the researcher was cumulative. As she gained more understanding of the topic, she returned to earlier texts, reworked, rethought and refined them, while continuing further literature searches to be informed about the latest literature and research. For instance, an exhibition entitled ‘Not Just a Wife’ moved from the Shrivenham Defence Academy to the Army and Navy Club, Pall Mall London in 2018. It uses pictures of fifty army spouses with cards voicing their thoughts and emotions of marrying into the army. The aim of the exhibition was to represent what it means to be an army wife in contemporary society. This emphasises the third gap in the literature, that military wives’ particular experiences of having a corporate image thrust upon them are ongoing: ‘When we met we both had jobs we really liked. Somebody had to give up something. You've got to give it up without resentment.’ And: ‘I had a sense that I wanted to do something and have an identity that is purely mine - not a wife and not a mum.’

This literature review pulled together academic literature on Falklands veterans and PTSD. Publications by Arthur, Woods, Lawrence and Yates were vital to the context of the Falklands wives. It is clear from Lawton, Lawrence and Yates that the act of writing and communicating is also a means of coming to terms with trauma. The researcher identified that for participants and their families, the Falklands Conflict is a continuing experience. For military wives, particular experiences of having a corporate image thrust upon them are ongoing. These accounts would provide useful comparisons for her own data.

Fourthly, the researcher identified a pattern of periodisation and agency, to set the wives’ interviews within a distance and retelling framework. Publications immediately succeeding the conflict were veterans’ narratives, mostly heroic and justifying their rôle in the conflict, journalists’ reviews of the conflict or political commentaries. More recent works are analytical and reflective, analysing and exposing the long-term effects of war on combatants and their families and questioning the value of the conflict. Lawton’s and Pugh’s publications highlighted the increased sensitivities of major anniversary years. In all these accounts, many political agendas influenced the selection and retelling of the narrative, evident in Lawrence’s and Arthur’s work. These narratives reflect the Popular Memory Group’s critique of oral testimony: that respondents conform to dominant stories and testimony is weakened by a cursory understanding of the connections in oral testimony between individual and social memory and between past and present.  

The researcher used these literature reviews to establish theoretical frameworks for Falklands wives, oral history and women and the military. It gave the researcher an awareness and understanding of key terms, definitions and terminology within oral history discourse such as Dawson’s ‘composure’ and Frisch’s ‘shared authority’. Reviewing previous projects employing oral history methodology gave the researcher insight into the methods used in previous research concerning women and sensitive themes/topics, for example Fisher’s and Cline’s work on birth control. Anderson and Jack’s work on the need to ‘listen in stereo’ when interviewing women was an important concept for this research. Additionally, they have explored women’s ‘muted’ experiences and memories, when women’s experience does not fit culturally dominant (male) meanings. Summerfield’s assertion that gendering of memories is not simply male versus female, but variants within the genders are also of interest and relevance to this research. The four gaps identified in the literature revealed that there has been no academic historical research on:

- Falklands naval wives’ experiences;

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• the difference between the naval community’s and civilian perception of the conflict;
• how the Falklands wives viewed the traditional patriarchal military role within which they had become incorporated;
• how periodisation and the effects of distance has affected the Falklands wives’ memories.

This original research will investigate these gaps through the five research questions, to be tested by interviews:

1. If a group of naval wives underwent the same events, would their views / thoughts / experiences be comparable?
2. Was the image depicted in existing literature the only view?
3. Did the naval community differ from the rest of society; how were its gender rôles defined?
4. Did the wives’ thoughts and feelings differ from those reported in the press?
5. Did media views reinforce previous militarised patriotism and gender rôles?

The process of obtaining interview data from these research questions will be explored in the methodology chapter.
Chapter 5 Research design and methodology

Title

The title was the initial focus, amended as the research evolved. John W. Creswell noted that many researchers ‘frame their study in complex and erudite language’. A. M. Wilkinson offered useful advice for creating a title: ‘be brief and avoid wasting words...avoid unnecessary words...use a single or a double title’. Initially the title was: *Speak for Themselves: The Experiences of Naval Wives during the Falklands War (1982)*. During the process it was amended to: *Falklands Royal Navy Wives: fulfilling a militarised stereotype or articulating individuality?* This study focuses on the experiences, views and thoughts of a group of Falklands naval wives, connected by the conflict of 1982.

The literature review clarified the methodology by identifying gaps and enabling the researcher to identify and analyse gendered patriarchal militarised stereotypes, alongside evidence of the Falklands wives’ individual views and experiences. The literature review directed the methodology to provide responses to:

The aim:

- To widen the scope of the gender, social, naval and cultural history of the Falklands Conflict.

The objectives:

1. Engage with the theoretical debates surrounding the methods and methodologies employed by those using oral sources in historical research.
2. Investigate the experiences/perceptions and attitudes of naval wives and families during the Falklands conflict.
3. Demonstrate that commemoration of ‘normal’ peoples’ lives and the rôles they played are an important part of our history.
4. Evaluate a case study of servicemen and their families with a bearing on skilled workforce recruitment and retention in the MoD.

5. Examine how the conflict has been remembered or commemorated, as commemoration is a powerful analytical tool to re-evaluate a military event for contemporary society.

To set the research questions:

- If a group of naval wives underwent the same events, would their views / thoughts / experiences be comparable?
- Was the image depicted in existing literature the only view?
- Did the naval community differ from the rest of society; how were its gender rôles defined?
- Did the wives’ thoughts and feelings differ from those reported in the press?
- Did media views reinforce previous militarised patriotism and gender roles?

**Approaches to research design**

**Features of quantitative/qualitative and mixed methods approaches**

Social research design literature identifies two broad traditions of quantitative and qualitative research, referred to by the social scientist Professor Colin Robson as ‘fixed design’ and ‘flexible design’.325 The value of mixing both research styles has been acknowledged. Robson was ‘convinced that this is preferable to the more commonly used ‘quantitative design’ and ‘qualitative design’ in that, among other issues, so-called ‘qualitative designs’ can often, with advantage, use not only qualitative but also quantitative methods.326 Professor of family medicine John W. Creswell also examined the mixed method approach which blended features from both types of inquiry and integrated the collected data. Creswell claimed that this procedure uses both predetermined and emerging methods, asking open and closed questions to acquire multiple forms of data and conducting statistical and data analysis.327 One of Robson and Creswell’s criteria was relevant to Falklands naval wives research, that objective knowledge/facts can be acquired only by direct experience or observation.328

In quantitative research, positivism adheres to the view that only ‘factual’ knowledge gained through observation (the senses), including measurement, is trustworthy. In positivist

326 Ibid.
studies the researcher’s rôle is limited to data collection and interpretation which is often quantifiable, leading to statistical analysis, which is not the case in this study. This research on Falklands naval wives is a study of human experience and behaviour. It is an empirical study of naval wives during the Falklands Conflict, concerned with verification by observation and experience rather than logic and pure theory.

Qualitative research emphasises that meaning is created by the respondents.\textsuperscript{329} The experiences and thoughts of the Falklands wives had not been published previously, therefore the women constructed their own meanings. Qualitative research uses little or no numerical data. Within the qualitative research tradition experiences are expressed from the viewpoint of those involved in an event or phenomena. This research is from the viewpoint of the naval wives’ who were connected to the event (Falklands Conflict in 1982). Projects utilising qualitative research are generally small-scale in both numbers of people and the circumstances researched.\textsuperscript{330} This research fitted that model as it involved fifty interviewees and investigated their experiences and thoughts resulting from the Falklands Conflict (1 April–20 June 1982).

**Qualitative paradigm**

Some writers encapsulate the nature of qualitative research by offering working definitions or by recognising a set of key characteristics. N. K. Denzin, professor of sociology, and Y. S. Lincoln, professor of educational administration and human resource development, suggested the following definition:

Qualitative research is a situated activity that locates the observer in the world. It consists of a set of interpretive, material practices that makes the world visible. These practices...turn the world into a series of representations including fieldnotes, interviews, conservations, photographs, recordings and memos to the self. At this level, qualitative research involves an interpretive, naturalistic approach to the world. This means that qualitative researchers study things in their natural settings, attempting to make sense of, or to interpret, phenomena in terms of the meanings people bring to them.\textsuperscript{331}

\textsuperscript{330} Ibid.
Some of the qualities stressed by Denzin and Lincoln are supported by others. Professor of organisational and social research Alan Bryman asserted: ‘The way in which people being studied understand and interpret their social reality is one of the central motifs of qualitative research’. 332

Some writers have also concentrated on key features of methodology as defining the attributes of qualitative research. 333 These include the research perspective and importance of the participants’ frames of reference; the nature of the research design; the volume and depth of qualitative data; idiosyncratic approaches to analysis and interpretation of qualitative data results. Some data collection methods are also synonymous with qualitative research: in-depth interviews, group discussions, narratives and observations. Due to the subject matter and nature of this research, observations of the initial situation could not be employed. It was also decided by the researcher that group discussions/focus groups would not be used as some participants might feel uncomfortable if other wives’ husbands held a higher rank than their own.

Practitioners of qualitative research differ significantly in the degree to which they rely on particular data collection methods. Sociologists A. L. Strauss and J. Corbin defined qualitative research as any research not based principally on counting or quantifying empirical material: ‘By the term “qualitative research” we mean any type of research that produces findings not arrived at by statistical procedures or other means of quantification.’ 334

Regardless of definition, all writers assert that qualitative methods are used to confront research questions which entail explanation or understanding of social phenomena and their settings. They are predominately suited to examining intricate issues and processes which emerge over time.

333 Bryman, Quality and Denzin and Lincoln, Handbook.
The historical development of qualitative research and its situation within the wider context of the development of social research (empiricism, positivism and interpretivism) has been well documented.\textsuperscript{335}

Robson highlighted social constructivism as a ‘broadly based mainstream qualitative approach with affinities to phenomenology and hermeneutic approaches’.\textsuperscript{336} Social constructivism signifies that social properties are constructed through relationships and interfaces between people, rather than having a separate existence. Constructivism usually focuses on the individual rather than a group, and how individuals construct and make sense of their world; meaning is inferred when people interact and participate in interpretation.

**Philosophical and methodological Issues**

**Ontology and Epistemology**

Methodology conceptualises the approaches and inquiry methods used in research. These are based on implicit assumptions and paradigms derived from reading, listening and gradually developing what seems to be the most beneficial line of investigation, refined cumulatively. A paradigm is a set of assumptions about the world, and about what constitutes themes and systems for inquiring into that world.\textsuperscript{337} Sometimes ‘inquiry paradigm’ is used, covering elements of epistemology, theory and philosophy as well as methods. They define what researchers are concerned with, and what falls within and outside the limits of legitimate inquiry, which address three fundamental questions:

1. The ontological question: What is the form and nature of reality and, therefore, what is there that can be known about it?
2. The epistemological question: What is the relationship between what we know and what can be known?
3. The methodological question: How can the researcher go about finding out what can be known?

Therefore, paradigms direct:


• What the reality is like (ontology);
• What the relationship is between the researcher and that reality (epistemology); and
• What methods can be used for studying the reality (methodology).  

These three interconnected questions direct how the Falklands wives are incorporated into the research design, using oral history and narrative.

An oral history of Falklands wives in 1982 would deliver narratives of individual lives and illustrate how individuals use shared narratives to make sense of the past in their journey to the present. Also, how their experiences and memories were constructed through interaction with society, culture and ideology. The literature indicated that memories of the Falklands wives would be affected by gendered culturally dominant discourses to which they had been exposed at home through printed media, television and male-focused veteran memoirs, reunions and social media.

Oral historian Alistair Thomson, partly responding to positivist critics of oral history, supported early oral historians ‘borrowing’ practices from other fields, such as psychology, anthropology and sociology. From these fields oral historians adopted such methods as representative sampling, defining the relationship between interviewee and interviewer, and reflecting on the significance of retrospection, all of which were major considerations in this thesis.

**Narrative analysis and oral history methodology**

Some writers place oral history within narrative research or narrative analysis, which concentrate on the stories that people use to understand and describe facets of their lives. It includes biographical, autobiographical, life history and oral history approaches. ‘Narrative’ has many meanings and is used differently by many disciplines. Due to its association and

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340 Ibid., 54.
interchangeability with ‘story telling’, some writers overlook its use entirely as an important and viable research method, whilst others barely give it a mention. Some acknowledge the difference between ‘narrative’ as an individual’s account of their own experiences and ‘story-telling’ as its retelling by others.

Doctors of social work and the meaning of narratives, C. K. Reissman and I. Quinney, compared definitions within various disciplines:

In social history and anthropology, narrative can refer to an entire story, woven from threads of interviews, observations, and documents... At the other end of the continuum lies the very restrictive definition of sociolinguistics. Here a story refers to a discrete unit of discourse: an answer to a single question, topically-centred and temporally-organised... Resting in the middle on a continuum of definitions is work in psychology and sociology. Here, personal narrative encompasses long sections of talk-extended accounts of lives in context that develop over the course of single or multiple interviews.

Differentiation between narrative and other forms of discourse rests therefore on sequence and consequence. Events are selected, organised, connected and evaluated by the narrator as meaningful for a specific audience. Some writers warn that the substance of first-person narrative transpires inevitably from memory, which is selective. Remembered events and experiences indicate significant aspects of individual social reality, but many researchers find research use of narratives problematic. Some, such as qualitative health researchers P. Atkinson and S. Delamont, asserted that narratives afford access to confidential and personal experiences which frequently include misplaced notions about human actors and social actions. They claimed that too many qualitative researchers yield to the culture of ‘the interview society’ and commend narratives and biographical accounts per se, instead of analysing them. Thus, to place a first-person narrative, via an interview or a biographical account into context, the researcher needs to analysis and evaluate the data alongside other sources.

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343 Creswell, Research Design, 185-188, talked about interviewing and questioning but failed to mention anything on oral history methodology.
Oral history is defined as the collection and study of historical information using tape recordings of interviews with people having personal knowledge of past events. But this definition omits the scholarly process, the relationship between researcher and participant, and the researcher’s active participation in the knowledge building process. Furthermore, the process of data collecting, and analysis is a cumulative, not an iterative process, as understanding and information collected from interviews informs subsequent interviews and writing, to develop future questions and discourse.

Oral history specialist Pamela Jane Smith encapsulated the advantages of using oral history research when she described the methodological process:

Oral recordings can capture the tone, volume, silence, emotion and personal meaning of events, the ethos and etiquette. A primary merit of oral recollection is that they help to recreate the complexity and uniqueness of past experiences. History becomes enriched and more complete.

An alternative definition from art-based qualitative researcher Patricia Leavy:

Oral history is a method of qualitative interview that emphases participants’ perspectives, and generally involves multiple open-ended interview sessions with each participant...oral history is a method of collecting narratives from individuals for the purpose of research...oral history is an effective method for gaining in-depth knowledge.

The historiography of oral history was examined in the literature review. It has anthropological origins, based on oral traditions of knowledge transmission: the passing down of family or community knowledge from one generation to the other. However, professional historians are charged with verifying oral history officially as a valid research method. Sometimes oral tradition is confused with oral history. In the former, accounts are passed down through generations; while oral history derives from the principles of an oral tradition. The terms are not interchangeable. The researcher distinguishes the ‘purpose’ or ‘intention’: oral history is the means whereby narratives are collected for research and ontologically is based on a notion of research as a process, not an event.

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Qualitative interview methods aim to collect data directly from individuals. Material sought usually includes personal experiences, memories of an event, attitudes, beliefs and opinions. Oral history is a unique, qualitative interview method; it adheres to an inductive and open-ended interview archetype. Conducive to clarifying the uniqueness of oral history as a research method, it is useful to compare it with other interview methods.

**Distinctive features of oral history methodology compared with other interview methods**

a) Tapping into processes: oral history researchers may tap into any combination of: 1) historical processes, 2) agency within shifting contexts, and 3) holistic understandings of lived experiences. Considering *historical processes*, this research is exploring changing gender norms within a highly gendered patriarchal establishment (Royal Navy/conflict). With reference to *agency within shifting contexts*, this research examines how women’s experiences and feelings about the Falklands Conflict changed over time, as do other factors such as relationship or work status and family commitments. Lastly, regarding *holistic understandings of lived experiences*, specific experiences are examined and recognised contextually. For example, how being part of a naval ‘family’ was experienced (coping with the absences, means of communication and practical ways of dealing with crisis in the home in their partner’s absence) and how participants’ reflections help them make sense of their own experiences.

b) Micro-macro links: oral history associates the biographical experience with its social/historical context. Therefore, researchers can link micro-level experiences and the macro-level settings which outline and encompass these experiences. For example, this research project will examine Falklands wives’ daily lives (micro) during the conflict (macro). More importantly, what were their individual lives like during the conflict and how did the media reflect the actuality of Falklands wives’ lives in 1982?

c) Comprehensive understanding: with data being created through open-ended and inductive interviewing, oral history seeks holistic perception. Oral history interviews generally cover long periods and a variety of correlated life experiences. For example, 

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350 An example of this is Thomson, *Anzac Memories* where Thomson shows how the identity of Australian First World War veteran Fred Farrall was shaped by his war memories.
in Christopher R. Browning’s work on survivors of the Starachowice factory slave labour camps, eyewitness accounts collected for institutions such as USC Shoah Foundation Institute and London’s Wiener Library, were utilised alongside his own interviews. Interviews spanned sixty years. This allows the researcher to gain an understanding of participants’ experiences and place them contextually and not as isolated issues. Moreover, events in participants’ lives can be linked and given holistic meaning. This research is analysing the wives’ experiences of events which occurred over thirty years ago and lasted two months. Recollection and creating individual narratives of the event resulted in the women making retrospective sense of their feelings and experiences thirty years after the event.

d) Bearing witness and filling in the historical record: This can occur in two ways. Firstly, oral historians pursue first-hand accounts whilst they are still available. Secondly, individuals or groups whose experiences and views have been omitted from the historical record are often adopted in oral history projects. This research encapsulated both these points as the interviews collected were first-hand accounts from people involved in the event who have viable memories. The wives’ views and experiences had previously been left out of the historical record.

e) Collaboration in the meaning-making process: It is recognised that an oral history project depends on collaboration between the researcher and participants. Alistair Thomson in Anzac Memories acknowledged the value of the collaborative relationship, an approach that was also important in this project. The interviewees would be aware that the interviewer was a research student at the University of Portsmouth, but until the first interview they would be unaware of the researcher’s age, which was in the same range as most of the interviewees. She explained that she was interested in the wives’ experiences of the conflict and that she herself was a previous ‘naval wife’ but had not been married at the time of the conflict. The researcher explained how important it was to conduct these interviews, to ensure that

352 Thomson, ‘Four Paradigm’, 52. Thompson stated that the lived experience of working class, women’s or black history was undocumented or ill-recorded and oral history was an essential source for the “history from below” fostered by politically-committed social historians in Britain and around the world from the 1960s onwards.
353 Thomson, Anzac Memories, 229-233.
their experiences were not lost and how it would convey insight into an alternative version of war and its effects on those left behind. Collaboration in the data-generation process is also paramount. The researcher and participant produce a narrative (the interview transcript) via an interaction between them. Furthermore, the participant is identified as an important source of knowledge.

One of the most important features of oral history and memory studies since the 1980s has been their interdisciplinary nature. History has been just one of the many academic disciplines which work with memories, using the interview as its primary source. Theoretical and methodological developments in such fields as qualitative sociology, anthropology, psychology, autobiographical studies and feminist theory have enriched the practice of oral history. All these developments explored the relationship between memory, narrative and personal identity. The next section will explore the relationship between feminist research and oral history methodology.

**Feminist Research and Oral History Methodology**

While feminists accept that an idiosyncratic feminist mode of inquiry exists, there is little consensus on what this means or involves. During the 1980s, the feminist philosopher of science, Sandra Harding, distinguished between method, methodology and epistemology, concluding that ‘method’ was often used for all three features. This lack of clarity, she says, hindered feminists in their pursuit to set out what was specifically ‘feminist’ about their work. The idea that feminism had a specific method of conducting social research was advanced in the early years of second wave feminist scholarship (from the 1960s and ’70s) a view which continues. This supported and defended a qualitative research approach to understanding women’s lives, arguing that dominant quantitative modes of research inhibited a sociological understanding of women’s experiences. Quantitative research,

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355 The second wave of feminism in Britain, in the 1960s and ’70s, also known as the Women’s Liberation Movement or Women’s Lib, expanded feminist discussions to equality in marriage and the workplace; sex and sexuality; and violence against women. Notable developments included the introduction of the contraceptive pill (1961), sewing machinists at the Ford factory in Dagenham striking for equal pay (1968), and the passing of the Sex Discrimination Act (1975). Sheila Rowbotham, *A Century of Women: The History of Women in Britain and the United States* (London: Penguin, 1997), 364.
mainly surveys and questionnaires, were seen to signify a ‘masculinist’ form, where the focus was on the detachment of the researcher and the collection and analysis of ‘objective’ social facts through an (alleged) value-free form of data collection. A qualitative mode of inquiry was relevant for this study as the researcher’s aim was to investigate the wives’ thoughts and feelings, which were not facts but an investigation into meaning. This method was appropriate to measure factors such as coping strategies and the long and short-term effects of conflict on both interviewee and spouse. The subjective experiences and meanings of those being researched were apposite to the kinds of data that feminists wanted to make available.\(^{356}\)

According to professor of sociology Mary Maynard, in *Methods, Practice and Epistemology: The Debate about Feminism and Research*, this initial feminist critique of quantitative modes of inquiry was born from the 1970s arguments of phenomenological sociologists, who claimed that the structure of most questionnaire or interview schedules produced a false body of data, which distorted rather than reflected respondents’ meanings. Likewise, Maynard argued that production of facts fractures people’s lives, stating that research focused only on part of an experience and was performed in a static and chronological manner, resulting in a template of standardised variables which fails to convey in-depth understanding of, or sentiment for, the people being studied. Moreover, it was understood that research practices which use pre-coded categories based on assumptions was of limited benefit when trying to understand women’s previously under-researched lives. Research based on assumption is sociologically neither explorative nor investigative.\(^{357}\) It could be argued that research based on assumption is also not conducive to oral history or feminist methodology. Furthermore, sociologists investigate the behaviour of groups in society rather than individuals.

Initial feminist research indicated a research approach which investigated experience, rather than imposing defined structures on women’s lives. Consequently, feminists such as Kathryn Anderson and Dana C. Jack stressed the importance of listening to, recording and

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understanding women’s descriptions and accounts. This allowed researchers to gather knowledge about women in paid work and schooling, previously only viewed from a male perspective. It also prompted women-orientated research fields, for example domestic violence, sexuality, childbirth and domesticity. However, a problem arising from this approach was the assumption that only qualitative methods, especially the in-depth interview, were feasible in feminist terms. This tendency has continued.

In recent years, feminist researchers highlighting the potential of the in-depth interview technique in social research, thus oral history, have led to some categorising oral history erroneously as a ‘feminist’ method, although there is no doubt that feminist researchers have added to our use and understanding of oral history. According to Leavy, second-wave feminist researchers such as Anderson, Jack, Susan H. Armitage and Sherna Berger Gluck have examined the marginalisation of women in social science research when they found that their experiences and feelings had been invisible in quantitative/positivist methods of research. Therefore, feminist research focuses on women’s perspectives whilst attempting to uncover women’s suppressed experiences. There have, however, been few studies on service wives. The researcher anticipated that any potential feminist studies on service wives might emphasise anti-war feelings or opinions on the effects of war/conflict. Furthermore, knowledge of the women’s surprise at their own stoicim and the man’s war/woman’s isolated misery dichotomy might be revealed through structured question design and the use of prompts.

Feminist qualitative researchers bring a specific set of concerns to the research process:

- They usually seek out marginalised groups for inclusion in social research. This could result in working with participants from disenfranchised groups; this brings certain issues to the research project.

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361 Leavy, Oral History, 4.
• As feminist researchers aim to uncover subjugated knowledge, they seek meaning from the perspective of those being researched. Researchers must therefore build a rapport with their participants and the researcher-researched relationship becomes collaborative.

• Feminist researchers wish to add to the bigger project of feminism, which permeates the process with an activist or public element and they seek social change.362

Thus, oral history can be an academic and activist initiative, contributing to empowerment and social change, often at community level. Oral history is an effective methodology within feminist projects, which aim to gain in-depth knowledge of women’s feelings and experiences. Similarly, feminist researcher techniques, whereby the researcher is empathetic with the respondent to highlight thoughts and experiences, are synonymous with oral history methodology. This is relevant in this research as the researcher is a female, a former military wife and in a similar age bracket as the respondents, so had experienced similar issues. This ensured that she was not only empathetic towards their experiences but that the respondents were willing to share their thoughts and views. They might have been less open if the researcher had not experienced life as part of a military family. Feminist approaches to subjectivity and inter-subjectivity will be examined later in this chapter.

The question of how feminist methodology fits in with the research is therefore relevant here. Not all research on women’s lives is overtly feminist; some feminist research focuses on men and masculinity. Elizabeth A. Stanko has pointed out that research on domestic violence against women centres on men and challenges masculinity: how men see violence in their own lives affects how they characterise this in the lives of women.363 Feminist research methodology did not influence the researcher’s choice of methodology or subject matter, but oral history methodology had some influence: she sought primary data for a previously un-studied topic. She may also have been influenced at undergraduate level, as a prominent lecturer was a feminist historian, but it is impossible to measure the influence/effect that had on this researcher’s choices. What is also impossible to measure is the influence of feminist methods on the participants; what is fundamental is how the participants viewed themselves. They were a marginalised group, and oral history focuses on

362 Ibid., 5.
groups previously left out of history, but marginalised groups are not specific to feminist research. This research is gender specific as in 1982 only men went to sea and the armed forces recognised only heterosexual relationships. If a more recent conflict was being researched the gender balance would be considerably altered. To conclude this section, the researcher acknowledges that the research focus is gendered but not feminist and the modes of inquiry adopted in feminist research are not exclusive but synonymous with those of oral history methodology.

Finding respondents

Due to the nature and purpose of this study, the researcher adopted ‘non-probability sampling’. This method is commonplace in small-scale surveys where the aim is not to produce a statistical generalisation of any population beyond the sample surveyed. Typically, this method is used when the researcher uses their judgement to reach a specific purpose, sometimes referred to as ‘purposive samples’. This sampling technique involves the researcher identifying specific groups of people who either possess characteristics or live in circumstances relevant to the social phenomenon being researched. The research population inclusion criteria for this research comprises women married to or partners of serving members of the Royal Navy who went to the South Atlantic during the conflict of 1982. Exclusion criteria would be women unconnected to the naval task force population in 1982.

The researcher also implemented snowball sampling where one or more individuals were identified from the population of interest. After participants had been interviewed, they informed the researcher of other members of that population who would be potential respondents. This was useful in identifying and gaining access to members of this group. As well as identifying a sample, this method also clarifies or explains social networks. A disadvantage of this may be that they are introducing interviewees from an already occurring category, for instance relating to close neighbourhood proximity, age, whether they had children or not, whether they were ex-military, whether they knew each other before the research started, husbands’ rating or ship, thus potentially replicating shared viewpoints.

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364 Social research manuals contain a plethora of probability and non-probability sampling methods. For example: Robson, *Real World Research*, 270-277.
The aim of this research, to widen the scope of the gender, social, naval and cultural history of the Falklands Conflict by distinguishing the experiences of Falklands wives in 1982, could only be achieved by conducting an exploratory study, therefore a systematic large sample, better suited to large scale quantitative studies, was not required. The researcher investigated other research utilising oral history (or interview) methodology to determine a viable number of respondents. Michelle Thomas, researcher at the Seafarers International Research Centre at Cardiff University, in her study of UK-based seafarers, conducted thirty-four interviews. An investigation into the experiences of seafarers’ wives from the Aland Islands in the Baltic by maritime historian Hanna Hagmark-Cooper was the result of seventy-five life stories. Finally, after consultation with an oral history practitioner in a military museum, it was decided that a valid sample size for this style of research would be about fifty. It was ascertained in chapter two that 25,948 UK armed forces personnel served in the Falklands conflict and that the number of royal naval personnel (not including Royal Marines) totalled 9,139. Therefore, fifty respondents represent 0.0019% of the total potential Falklands veterans’ wives, and 0.0055% of the total potential Falklands royal naval veterans’ wives.

To locate potential respondents, the researcher initially placed requests in local naval museums, publications such as the *Navy News* and *Globe and Laurel* and approached ships’ associations. Ships connected with the conflict which had active associations who regularly met were approached mainly through websites and by email. The researcher felt that by placing requests and allowing potential respondents to approach her made the process less intrusive and therefore addressed some ethical issues which will be discussed later. The researcher’s initial appeals resulted in twelve potential interviewees (or their spouses) making contact. However, one wife changed her mind about participating, stating she ‘felt she had nothing to say’. One spouse contacted the researcher by phone and said he would talk to his wife as he was sure she would be interested in being interviewed, however the next day he called and said she did not want to be interviewed.

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As the research progressed, use of the internet and social media sites such as Facebook and Twitter enabled the researcher to extend the search and the nature of the research to a wider audience, which was not aimed specifically at wives. Technology has changed how oral historians can approach potential interviewees. While oral histories may be housed in a variety of institutional repositories, researchers need to go to where people are to disseminate their work. In today’s rich technological landscape, connecting with new audiences through social networking is a logical step. According to the oral historian Juliana Nykolaiszyn, at the heart of social networks is the ability not only to develop how the world sees research and oral history projects, but also to become a responsive resource where oral historians engage in discussions and obtain responses in the virtual environment. For example, this researcher asked for suggestions, sought feedback, and requested assistance in narrator recruitment. When questions are asked by users in a social networking community, being proactive in answering requests is the key to developing and building relationships virtually.

This method produced several task force wife respondents and put the researcher in contact with many veterans’ groups and other researchers in similar fields. The researcher, unlike many others in social research, did not experience non-response. Perhaps this was because the researcher was located on the south coast of England which contains many former and serving naval personnel. The researcher could not obtain figures for the percentage of naval families living in the Portsmouth area at the time of the conflict. In 1982 approximately 5,000 naval families lived in married quarters in Portsmouth, but there are no statistics for those living in private accommodation.

**Triangulation of data**

Triangulation uses multiple sources to augment the accuracy and validity of the research. Some see triangulation as a method for corroborating findings and as a test for validity. This, however, is controversial. This assumes that a weakness in one method will be compensated by another method, and that it is always possible to make sense between

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different accounts; this is unlikely. Rather than viewing triangulation as a form of verification or validation, it should be utilised to ensure that research is comprehensive and well-developed. The sociologist N. K. Denzin identified four types of triangulation:

- **Data triangulation** examining the consistency of different data sources from within the same method. For example:
  - at different points in time.
  - in public vs. private settings.
  - comparing people with different viewpoints.
- **Observer Triangulation** using more than one observer in the study.
- **Methodological triangulation** combining qualitative and quantitative methods.
- **Theory triangulation** using multiple theoretical perspectives to examine and interpret the data.\(^\text{371}\)

This research used data triangulation to enrich the research and to validate the methods and theories, whilst contextualising the subject. This was achieved by reading literature on changes in women’s lives in the 1980s alongside that on social and cultural norms concerning marriage and work. The types of data/sources used are shown in Fig. 5.1

**Fig. 5.1 Interview Triangulation**

![Diagram of interview triangulation]

**Question design**

The researcher decided early on that the preferred form of interview question would be semi-structured, predominantly because she sought respondents' experiences. A semi-structured interview allows respondents flexibility of response. The researcher maintained an interview guide which served as a checklist for topics/themes to be covered, as a prompt for the researcher and provided an orderly flow to the interview.

Psychologists Steinar Kvale and Svend Brinkmann addressed the procedure and rules of conducting a research interview. They examined the choice of approaches and techniques at different stages of the interview process and devised a seven point linear progression from the original research idea to the final written report. The seven points are:

1. **Thematising** - convey the purpose of the research and the theme to be examined before the interviews start. The why and what should be elucidated before the method question of how is asked.
2. **Designing** - plan the design adopting the seven stages of investigation before the interviews start. Designing the study extends knowledge and considers the moral/ethical requirements.
3. **Interviewing** - conduct interviews based on an interview guide and reflective approach to the knowledge pursued and the interpersonal relation of the interview situation.
4. **Transcribing** - prepare the material for analysis, usually a transcription from oral to written text.
5. **Analysing** - decide what form of analysis is appropriate for the interviews.
6. **Verifying** - determine the validity and reliability of the research.
7. **Reporting** - disseminate the findings of the research and the methods used. Use appropriate methods, consider ethical aspects and collate the results into a readable document.

During the first year of the research degree a pilot study was conducted with four naval wives who had been interviewed in a group research project in the final year of the researcher’s undergraduate degree. The interviewees focused on what they remembered as being of importance to them during the conflict. Lack of communication by the navy and reliance on television, radio and newspaper reports were common themes. The extent of the effects of the conflict on combatants and their families became clear. This proved invaluable, as along with the secondary data, it highlighted a series of themes which had not been covered elsewhere. Furthermore, the pilot study validated the choice of interview and

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373 Ibid.
question techniques and established a feasible question sequence which became the model for the Stage 1 interview questions.

The researcher also wrote synopses for oral history interviews at the National Museum of the Royal Navy and transcribed some interviews for a research paper on the women’s liberation movement. Although the subject matter was different, this experience and practice was applied to this research. One practice was to compose synopses of the interviews, logging the subjects/themes covered in five minute intervals, instead of completing full transcriptions of the interviews, because it was less time-consuming. However, the researcher realised that a synopsis did not extrapolate sufficient in-depth data for analysis, so the more in-depth ten Stage 2 interviews were fully transcribed.

Some questions were open-ended, allowing the respondent to discuss freely their thoughts and feelings. The researcher felt the advantages of this interview style were its flexibility. It allowed the researcher to go into more depth, encouraged cooperation and rapport and gave insight into the respondent’s experiences. The sequence of interview themes and questions is examined later in this chapter.

New digital technologies have transformed the ways in which we record, preserve, catalogue, interpret, share and present oral histories. Interviews can be recorded and disseminated via the internet through such applications as Skype and podcasts. Many smartphones have a recording facility so recordings can be made spontaneously. Researchers no longer have to carry around large tape machines, as digital recorders are the size of a pen, allowing many hours of recording time. The researcher used a small, portable digital recorder, Philips Clear Voice recorder model: LFH0655 which was light and easy to transport. More importantly, because it was so small, therefore discreet and unobtrusive, interviewees felt comfortable and did not look constantly at the recorder.

Stage 1 interviews were based on themes deriving from the pilot interviews and gaps in the literature. The women were asked how they had heard about the conflict, what support networks they had used and their views on commemoration of the conflict. Stage 1 interviews included questions about how the wives responded to media reporting and what they remembered feeling about the reports.
Stage 1 interview themes allowed more questions to evolve throughout the interview. Probing answers for more information is regarded by the Oral History Society as more important than working through a list.

**Themes**

1. Background, age at time of the conflict, job, any family connections to the Royal Navy.
2. Connection to Falklands conflict/navy in 1982. How did you find out about the conflict?
3. What, if anything, did you know about the Falklands (where they were).
4. How did you feel when you found out?
5. The media- what did you feel about the reports, did you think they were intrusive? Can you remember how they portrayed wives/families? Your feelings about the media/
7. Your feelings on how the war is remembered/commemorated. In your view is the conflict adequately remembered?
8. Do you think the wives/families should be incorporated into commemoration? How do you feel when you hear/read about the conflict (anniversaries etc).
9. Have you visited the islands? If so how did it affect your feelings/thoughts on the war?
10. The effects on you both: short/long term effects of being involved in conflict.
11. Do you think it was worth it? Why?
12. Does your connection with the Falklands affect how you feel generally about conflicts/wars especially the more recent conflicts?

It was recognised, however, that these themes were too general and not sufficiently probing. The researcher had an oral historian supervisor when she devised them, then for a while had no oral history supervisor. She sought, and the university provided further oral history training and advice from an external oral history practitioner. The researcher attended a one day course run by the Oral History Society entitled ‘Developing your oral history skills’ which developed strengths and challenges in interviewing. Students provided extracts of their work which led to reflection and discussion on issues arising from oral history. This one-day course prompted a change in interview and question design for Stage 2 questions.

For the Stage 2 questions, University of Oxford Lecturer in History, Laura Tisdall reviewed and advised on interview question design to probe and thus extrapolate richer data. She also suggested using prompts. The researcher had previously posted a query on a Falklands Facebook veterans’ site concerning music which they recalled from their posting to the Falklands in 1982. A track mentioned frequently was Simple Minds, *I Promised You a Miracle*, which the researcher used as a prompt. Stage 2 interviews used this and a news report of the Margaret Thatcher (Prime Minister in 1982) as a prop during the interviews, asking the interviewees if they remembered how they felt hearing/watching news reports of the conflict in 1982 (Appendix 6). This encouraged a discussion about the prime minister’s views on women and how representative her views were of the naval wives’ lives at the time. Interviewing therefore became a cumulative process, resulting in Stage 2 questions:

**Personal Information** (sent to respondents prior to the interview)

- Husband’s service
- Husband’s rank
- Age at time of the conflict
- Military or non-military family of origin (Did you have any previous connection/experience of service life?)
- Qualifications
- Occupation, before and after marriage
- Number and ages of children (at the time of the conflict)
- Mobility: how many times did you move in how many years of marriage?
- Where were you living at the time and was it service accommodation or your own home?
- Experience of different lifestyles: Did you move if your husband had a posting to a different port? Did you move to an overseas base? Did your children attend boarding school? Did your husband commute?
- Interview (will review previous questions as an icebreaker and to confirm information/ if respondent already submitted information it will be printed of and used as a checklist)

**Postings**

Looking back over your years of married service life, are there any postings which you remember with particular affection, as times of family stability and contentment? Also the converse: did any postings produce more than their share of family worries? (age and stage of family at the time, location, changes to lifestyle)

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375 Many male veterans recalled this track, Simple Minds, ‘I promised you a Miracle’, [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HAgBby2VsD0](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HAgBby2VsD0) accessed April 22, 2017.
Home

- What to you constitutes ‘home’ (people, possessions, house, locality, lifestyle)?
- If you moved around, or moved to be with your husband how did it affect you (ties with friends and family, job- did it lead to loss of status, loss of confidence, self esteem)?
- How did moving around affect your children?

Absence of husband

- What were the main difficulties you faced when your husband was away?
- How did you manage the readjustment on his return?
- How did your feelings about deployments differ before the conflict and returning from the Falklands

Music popular in spring 1982

- Do you remember this track (‘I promised you a Miracle’)?
- Is there any particular song/music you remember from this time?
- How important was music to you both?
- Did you send any music to your husband? What tracks/artists were your favourites?
- How do you feel if you hear those tracks now?

Aftermath and Support

- When the sort of problems we have already talked about arose, who did you talk to?
- Over the years how involved in ‘official’ support activities were you? (mess functions, wives clubs, children’s activities)
- Do you remember enjoying those activities, which ones? Did you find any of them a strain, which ones?

PTSD and after effects

- What help/support have you received?
- How did you find out about the support available?
- How did your partner feel about that?
- How do you feel about the support available to families, both then and now?

Thinking about leaving

- How would you explain the effect that military life was having on your relationship? On the children? Was this before or after the conflict? Can you recall an occasion when you wished your husband would leave the service?

Props

- Margaret Thatcher TV interview April 1982
- How do you feel when you hear this interview?
- When you watched/listened to reports of the conflict at the time, how did you feel?

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OR

- Margaret Thatcher document/speech Falklands
- What did you think about Margaret Thatcher’s views on women and families?
- How did this fit in with your situation at the time?
- How do you feel about that now, has it changed?

‘Married to the Job,’ ‘Married to the Navy’, changing social attitudes

(These terms may come up in conversation, if not, ask the respondent if they have heard the terms/are familiar with them)

- Can you explain to me what you think/feel about the term/s?
- In what ways do you feel this applied to you?
- How did your husband’s career affect your own career/employment choices?
- How did your husband’s career affect your children? How did your husband being in the conflict affect your children?
- How would you explain your experience of naval family life?
- How do you feel your experiences compared with other military families?
- If you had to explain to someone outside the military family what being married to a sailor is like what would you say?
- In your opinion is the experience different now?
- What has changed?

Stress factors in military marriages (show respondent these factors on a card)

Research has shown/it has been recognised that military marriages are exposed to circumstances which impose stresses over and above those occurring in any relationship. It is the combination and frequency with which these occur in military marriages which pose the challenges. The six major underlying factors are:

- Issues arising from accommodation.
- Issues arising from turbulence/geographic mobility.
- Concerns about the education of children.
- Limitations on spouse employment opportunities.
- The management of temporary separations; and
- Issues arising from accompanied postings.
- What other factors do you feel are missing from these factors that affected you as a military spouse?

The oral history course and the guidance from Laura Tisdall allowed the researcher to reflect on the research design, especially regarding interview question structure and how, with some changes to question style and structure, richer data would be extrapolated.

Project management

The researcher kept a diary to plan the interviews. Stage 1 interviews were carried out 2012–15, mostly in the Portsmouth area, but one was in Somerset and one in Dorset. After potential interviewees expressed an interest in participating, the researcher responded by phone or email to explain further the purpose of the research and stress the importance of their contribution. A spreadsheet collated basic information, such as contact details, age, previous connection to the armed forces, job and number and ages of children. (Appendix 6)

After each Stage 1 interview a synopsis was compiled and the interview was summarised in five minute sections, representing an overview of the data. Data were then colour-coded, for example how the respondent had heard about the conflict/support networks/coping with separation/coping strategies. A sample is presented in the Data Collection and analysed in the Data Analysis chapters. Each theme contained a number of concepts which were communicated both discursively and statistically (pie charts). This line-by-line textual analysis was time-consuming but helped to build a detailed, structured, conceptual data model.

Ethics

Due to documented cases of unethical research,378 projects are reviewed by an ethics committee. Ethical practice requires conformity with a code of conduct or set of principles. There are several different approaches, some created by organisations whose representatives use social research methods. Examples include those of the British Psychological Association, British Sociological Association and British Educational Research Association. The University of Portsmouth ethics webpage provides ethics advice and guidance links to Chartered Association of Business Schools, NHS Research Ethics Service, British Sociological Ethics and Market Research Society Code of Conduct.379 The researcher used guidelines from the Oral History Society, oral history practitioners from local military museums and recommendations

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378 Robson, Real World Research, 195-196. Robson quoted the American Tuskegee Syphilis study, which was criticised due to the absence of informed consent and misinformation about the purpose of the research and the psychologist Milgram’s study. Milgram was accused of use of deception, possible harm to participants and failure to give the right to withdraw.

from the university ethics review board. However, even with these measures in place, the researcher experienced an issue within the University of Portsmouth Faculty of Technology ethics review process.

These concerns were regarding sensitivity (to the respondent), risks to the researcher and anonymity. A codicil which addressed these issues was therefore submitted and favourably reviewed:

- **Sensitivity** - the researcher clarified how the respondents were sought (above: Finding respondents) and potential interviewees approached the researcher, in the first instance, by phone or e-mail. The researcher explained the nature of the research. After the initial contact (where the researcher explained the nature of the thesis and of the respondents’ input) if the potential respondent decided they did not feel they wanted to contribute no further contact was made. All the respondents who decided to be interviewed said they felt it was beneficial to them to share their thoughts (even the one respondent who had been left a widow by the conflict). Only two potential respondents refused to be interviewed. Their reasons being that they did not feel they had anything to say and they did not want to revisit that time in their life.

- **Risks to self** - Apart from one interview, all were conducted in a public place (museum/coffee shop/library); the one interview conducted in the respondent’s home was with a Falklands wife with whom the researcher was already familiar. At no time was the researcher’s safety, or that of the respondent in jeopardy. The researcher always had a mobile phone, and left details with an adult of where she would be and at what time. This decision to interview in a public place could be seen to be non-conducive to frank disclosure. Oral History Society guidance: ‘The person’s own home is by far the best as they will be much more relaxed.’ And: ‘Privacy encourages an atmosphere of trust and honesty.’ However, the first ethics review was delayed as some members of the ethics committee felt that visiting people’s homes unaccompanied was too high a safety risk.

- **Anonymity** - The consent form, given to respondents before the interview, included a section where the respondent could state whether they wished to remain anonymous. This, the researcher felt, was important as it gave the respondent control and their wishes would of course be paramount. The respondents were almost unanimous in wanting to preserve their anonymity (48/50). They were also offered a copy of the interview, so if they were uncomfortable with anything it would be deleted and not included in the writing up stage.

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Ethical issues not only guide the interview stage; they must be addressed in data analysis and interpretation and during the writing and dissemination of the research. How long or where data should be kept and the purpose it can be used for should be made clear to the respondents. The researcher created a consent form (Appendix 3) which included a section on where the interviews/data might be presented. All respondents were agreeable to the data being interpreted in the thesis and in academic papers, but one stated that after the thesis had been written she did not want her interview data to be used by other researchers. The use of where and how research may be disseminated does, the researcher believes, address the matter of ‘ownership’. As there was a clear understanding between the researcher and the respondents over ownership, this did not pose a problem. Regarding interpretation of data, the researcher offered all respondents a copy of the interview, but they all declined. During the writing and dissemination period the researcher must not suppress, falsify or invent findings to meet their, or an audience’s research requirements. This researcher has not participated in these practices. Releasing details of the research design so that examiners and readers themselves can establish the credibility of the study removes the potential risk of fraudulent practice.

A second ethics review was completed by the researcher because the university had updated its ethics procedure between Stage 1 and 2 interviews. The new review was more complex (Appendix 1). The second review returned a favourable outcome. Correspondence from the Faculty Ethics Committee included a summary of discussion from the review meeting stating that the reviewers felt that the application was well written and had considered all the ethical considerations. The reviewers were complimentary about the high standard of the submission.

Subjectivity

An oral history interview is an exchange between the researcher and the respondent. The respondent answers questions posed by the researcher, therefore the story told is a creation of communication between two interrelating individuals or two subjectivities to

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383 Creswell, Research Design, 66.
384 Ibid. 67.
386 Ibid.
create an effect called inter-subjectivity. Subjectivity, in an oral history context, denotes how interviewees create identities for themselves by mustering existing cultural constructions in public discourse. It also refers to the connection between respondent and interviewer, which, according to gender and oral historian Professor Lynn Abrams, reveals:

The interpersonal dynamics of the interview situation and the process by which the participants cooperate to create a shared narrative. The interviewer by word, deed and gesture in the interview solicits a narrative from the narrator; a different interviewer would solicit different words, perhaps even a very different story or version of it.

Thus, the oral history interview is a three-way dialogue (see Fig 5.2) resulting in the composition of a memory story. The interviewer and the respondent are present at the conception of the oral history story; there is no objectivity or neutrality. Professor of modern and oral history Penny Summerfield stated that ‘it is thus necessary to encompass within oral history analysis and interpretation, not only the voice that speaks for itself, but also the voices that speak to it’.

The notion of subjectivity itself is open to several interpretations; with a shift from structuralist to individualist interpretations. Structuralists view subjectivity as being consciousness affected by the ‘social’, therefore constructs in society such as social class, race and gender. The philosopher Pierre Bourdieu introduced what he calls a habitus, where an individual assumes the structures of the outside world such as class. These structures form a way of thinking, a character that conforms to the boundaries of the structures. Sociologist Anthony Giddens disputed the emphasis on the incapacity of subject and placed more importance on individual action, claiming that people are ‘knowing subjects’ and therefore have the ability to engage with and respond to external structures in diverse ways. Individuals have a self-reflexive understanding of their biography: their life, actions and influences make sense to them, which can then be explained to other people. This theory was relevant to

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388 Ibid. 55.
the Falklands naval wives as they were recalling their individual experiences within a traditional paternalistic military narrative of the conflict.

Alistair Thomson identified subjectivity as useful to oral historians:

...the subjectivity of memory provided clues not only about the meanings of historical experience, but also about the relationships between past and present, between memory and personal identity, and between individual and collective memory.\(^{392}\)

Respondents draw upon a range of ideas and meanings to build the subject in the context of the interview, but the subject is fluid, not static, shifting and changing over time. In this study this would have been affected by the passing of over thirty years since the event being recalled. Furthermore, the researcher’s own subjectivity might change, for example during a follow-up interview or during interviews with different people.

To explore subjectivity, the researcher must recognise his or her own subjective position; observing the absence of neutrality. This means being reflective about their rôle as a researcher: being aware of and reflecting upon one’s own presence in the research process. From the 1990s subjectivity has developed into a positive element of oral history research. Alessandro Portelli offered a thoughtful challenge to all historians who had criticised ‘unreliable memories’ when he stated oral sources are: Not objective....they are artificial, variable and partial.\(^{393}\) Porteli’s challenge was germane to the Falklands naval wives as the purpose of the research was not to extract objective truths pertaining to the Falklands Conflict but to reveal the wives’ experiences and views, which were fluid and non-static. It became, therefore, a testimonial of how they believed they felt, and what they now remember thinking they felt.

Furthermore, oral historians began to conceptualise the self as the product of a dialogic process, as an individual’s consciousness or subjectivity interacts with existing discourses in society.\(^{394}\) For this research the existing discourses and processes which have interacted with the individual respondents would have been narratives about the conflict.


\(^{394}\) Abrams, *Oral History Theory*, 57.
reported in newspaper and television reports, conversations with their husbands or other veterans and their wives and the publication of veterans’ memoirs. Added to this are the changing cultural, social status and rôles of wives which were examined in Chapter Two, where paternalistic military control evolved to become social control of naval families, especially those living in married quarters. This idealised formula of what constitutes a military wife could result in some wives feeling they are not good enough, thus affecting the individual narratives of their lives.

Academic oral historians, becoming aware of various theories, view the self as possessing a flexible subjectivity; conveyed in any form of life story, be it an oral history interview or an autobiography. Therefore ‘the self’ under this theory would be a cultural/societal representation consisting of shared ideas and conventions, so not an account of a life but a version within the convention. Gender historian Joan Scott argued that no one personal testimony can produce an objective truth independent of discourse because experience may only be remembered through a sequence of discourse. For Scott, we can only narrate our ‘experience’ of the past by using existing discourses and linguistic formulations.395

These theories have offered oral historians a range of conceptual frameworks to grasp the subjective construction of memory narratives. When oral historians recognised that they were part of the research process the next step was to consider the ways their own subjectivity influenced the stories they were told. The oral historian cannot play such an active rôle in the creation of a primary source and then underestimate his or her own presence in the process of analysis: they are part of the story. Oral histories, all memory stories, are not sources of an objective truth about the past; they are narratives partially shaped by the relationship that facilitates the telling.

**Inter-subjectivity**

The researcher established earlier in this section that the oral history interview comprises the active interaction of subjectivities. There is an acceptance that both

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interviewers’ and respondents’ rôles draw on their pasts and contexts to particularise identities or ‘selves’. Inter-subjectivity describes the interaction between the two subjectivities of interviewee and researcher; it also describes the way the subjectivity of each is moulded by the encounter. Contacting potential interviewees through social media affected the relationship between researcher and interviewee; it meant that we were compereas; the researcher was not solely a professional or outsider. This raised the risk of a lack of objectivity and distance on the part of the researcher. Oral historian Valerie Yow argued that from the late 1980s:

A new paradigm encouraged ‘awareness and use of the interactive process of interviewer and narrator, of interviewer and content’, and that oral historians were increasingly alert to the ways that they were affected by their interviews and how the interview, in turn, affected the interview relationship, the data it generated and the interpretative process and product. 396

Yow asserted that although she was aware of some effects on herself after carrying out interviews in the 1970s, this aspect was barely mentioned in history textbooks or oral history journal articles. She emphasised the conceptual shift which in recent years has recognised the researcher’s reactions to, and intrusions into, research ‘speakable’. 397 After examining various disciplines which use interviews as a research method, Yow concluded that:

...liking or not liking, feeling repelled by difference in ideology or attracted by a shared world view, sensing difference in gender or age or social class or ethnicity, all influence the ways we ask questions and respond to narrators and interpret and evaluate what they say. 398

Subjectivity and inter-subjectivity are therefore present in every interview. The history document fashioned from the oral history interview is the product of a three-way dialogue:

397 Ibid. 55.
398 Ibid. 67.
This dialogue creates individual memory stories which are formed by the inter-subjective relationships found in the interview. What researchers hear are narrative creations of memories of experiences shaped for an audience. The story that is related is thus incomplete, or at best an account of the past shaped within a precise context and for a precise purpose. Oral historians have advanced two further theoretical theories to understand the process whereby personal memories are extracted. One is the concept of the cultural circuit where personal memories of events and public representations (locally, nationally and through the media) inform one another. The most noticeable example of this is in Alistair Thomson’s work on the Anzacs. The other is the concept of composure, a term originally devised by the historian Graham Dawson and referred to the process by which subjectivities are constructed in life-story telling, examined in Chapter Three.

399 Alistair Thomson, Anzac Memories: Living with the Legend (Melbourne: Oxford University Press, 1994). In this research Thomson found that Australian and New Zealand veterans of the First World War described scenes from the film Gallipoli as if they were accounts of their own experiences in battle in the First World War. The film had been released shortly before Thomson undertook his oral history research, and it gave powerful expression to enduring notions of Australian masculinity and national identity.
No oral historian would be comfortable with the supposition that respondents’ narratives are solely constricted by dominant discourses. Certainly, evidence suggests that many respondents are capable of agency or a “critical subjectivity” which comprises a subject internalising, reflecting upon and then reacting against a set of circumstances or a widely accepted version of the past.\textsuperscript{400}

Some oral historians have been derogatory about interpreting individual memory narratives as always being a product of public discourse.\textsuperscript{401} However, many oral historians use theories of the cultural circuit and composure to facilitate analysing the intersubjective relationship between memory narratives and public discourses. They have clarified the dialogue we all engage in culturally, as well as the individual personal stories.

**Advocacy and empowerment**

Michael Frisch writing about oral history in the 1970s, said it was regarded as a:

...challenge to all the assumptions of conventional scholarship, a way for a new kind of history from the bottom up and the outside in to challenge the established organisation of knowledge and power and the politics that rested on it.\textsuperscript{402}

Over the years, oral history has extended areas of practice, from shop floors to indigenous populations, but it has largely maintained its rôle as a means of advocacy for groups marginalised or omitted from the means of power. According to the gender and oral historian Lynn Abrams, ‘oral history is the juncture of academic research and the political sphere; intended to give a voice to the voiceless, a narrative to the story-less and power to the marginalised.’\textsuperscript{403} The researcher perceived Frisch’s and Abram’s theories as being relevant: Falklands wives are a group of women who have been left out of traditional published histories of the conflict, therefore this study is assigning them a narrative within the political and patriarchal discourse of war memory.

\textsuperscript{400} Abrams, *Oral History Theory*, 70.
\textsuperscript{401} See Anna Green, ‘Individual Remembering and ‘Collective Memory’: Theoretical Presuppositions and Contemporary Debates’, *Oral History*, 32(2) (2004); 35-44.
\textsuperscript{403} Abrams, *Oral History Theory*, 154.
The first systematic group recordings were with Holocaust survivors. With the vast amounts of time and money allocated to Holocaust projects, and the central location of their oral testimony, oral history remembrance was about empowerment, a move to persuade victims to see themselves as survivors. Many of the first wave of professional oral historians and community activists aimed to give those left out of mainstream histories an opportunity to ‘speak for themselves’.

This philosophy pervades most oral histories, but according to Abrams ‘more analytical, abrasive and dialectical techniques were also being developed’. In the UK, many early oral historians had links with nascent social and labour history in the 1960s and 1970s which promoted ‘history from below’. A strong supporter of this approach was Raphael Samuel for whom ‘oral tradition’ counteracted the introspective, sectarian and elitist history that dominated academic publishing. For Samuel, oral history was necessary to direct ‘the historian’s attention to the fundamental common things of life: the elements of individual and social experience rather than upon administrative and political chronologies’. Samuel’s publications concentrated on the hidden lives of labouring men, emphasising the importance of people interpreting their own lives.

For historians who acknowledged this critical and often socialist view, oral history challenged traditional historical narrative and respondents’ views might represent the voice of the people. In the UK and the USA, oral history had been utilised to identify and spotlight class relationships by accessing the workers in many industries. Some oral historians viewed oral history as a way of bringing together workers and historians, merging academic practice with political engagement.

Many historians during the 1970s and 1980s took this method further. Michael Frisch and his associates were concerned with the possibility of oral history to offer a stage for political change but understood the embedded problems of this approach. Frisch commented on ‘political projects of resistance’, where conflicts arose between researchers and publishers

404 Ibid, 155.
and researchers and curators. Many professionals were content to show the pain and suffering of the working class, but did not want to display their ideas, values, experiences and social consciousness.\textsuperscript{407}

But to allow people to speak is not enough. This study provided an outlet for Falklands wives to share their remembered narratives of their experiences. This study challenges and enhances the traditional historical narrative by including and analysing war from another perspective, that of those who live with the consequences.

**Critiques of empowerment**

Luisa Passerini was critical of a populist trend in oral history, she referred to the reasonable yet naïve principle that oral history would be a way in which people ‘spoke for themselves’. Her stance was clear when she stated: ‘that is, to replace certain of the essential tenets of scholarship with facile democratisation, and an open mind with demagogy.’\textsuperscript{408}

Passerini asserted that the interview is complex; it had to be heard with many possible voices, and not through a crude notion that a ‘true voice’ would be perceived from the interview. As historians proceeded with a more critical approach to the issue of empowerment, they realised that the democratisation and emancipation of oral history was compromised by theoretical and methodological problems:

- The inequality of power entrenched in the interview relationship.
- The disparity of power that occurs at the point of interpretation and publication.
- The supposition that respondents speak for themselves.

In 1982 the Popular Memory Group epitomised the quandaries faced by those who pursued a political change through oral history:

The historian may assert that he [or she] has ‘sat at the feet of the working-class witnesses’ and has learnt all he knows in that improbable and uncomfortable posture. It is, however, he that produces the final account, he that provides the dominant interpretation, he that judges what is true and not true, reliable or inauthentic ... In all this, at best, the first constructors of historical accounts - the 'sources' themselves -

\textsuperscript{407} Frisch, *Shared Authority*, 2.

the process except in what they have given up - are left untouched, unchanged by the whole process except in what they have given up - the telling.\textsuperscript{409}

Two criticisms arose from these problems, one from feminist scholars, the other promoting a redistribution of authority.

In the 1970s, feminist researchers pointed out that the oral history interview was not always a balanced relationship. In fact, they described the power imbalance between researcher and respondent, stating that even the act of arriving at an interview with recording equipment and research questions gave the researcher legitimacy and hence power. Consequently, a feminist methodology built on empathy, mutual respect and an awareness of the inter-subjective relationship between researcher and respondent was endorsed as the solution to extract meaning and expedite agency for the respondent.\textsuperscript{410} This methodology also became popular in the disability/health care/reminiscence and history community.

The power imbalance in this research derived from the researcher approaching the potential interviewees as an academic, which could make some women wary. This was tackled by explaining to the respondents the purpose of the research and her own connection as a contemporary naval wife. This balance ensured a degree of trust, empathy and understanding within the researcher/respondent relationship. This however, raised the issue of interviewer objectivity.

Some feminist practitioners contended that the methodology was unrealistic, as a detached objectivity was impossible and a claim to sisterhood was improbable.\textsuperscript{411} It has been pointed out that the relationship between researcher and respondent is not equal, as in the analysis and interpretation stage the researcher holds a privileged position, as they are often academics or professionals. Researchers use their privilege to gain access to individuals and their memories. However, the interviewee possesses the desired knowledge: \textit{their} memories.

\begin{thebibliography}{9}
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One solution feminist oral historians offered was to share the interview material with their interviewees, proposing that respondents give the final permission for material to be used by the researcher. This may work on some levels but relies upon respondents being interested or able to engage with researchers at this level. Additionally, it is at this point that academics begin to place interpretations on respondents’ views, which may originate from academic theoretical opinions or conceptual frameworks, removed from the matter of the interview itself. Penny Summerfield acknowledged the problem when she decided to anonymise the names of her respondents.\footnote{Summerfield, ‘Reconstructing Women’s Wartime Lives’, 26.}

However, as many respondents would recognise themselves in a written published text, this solution only works with the issue of public recognition; it does not change the power imbalance.

The researcher also recognised that interviewees’ opinions could be a risk in oral history of Falklands wives, as the MoD, which dominated discourses of power on this occasion, had preconceived ideas of how a military wife should behave, for example being supportive of their husbands and their rôles. Therefore, any discontent or dissatisfaction voiced over their place and importance within the military network would be seen by those in power as disloyal and unsupportive. To mitigate this risk, the researcher assured the interviewees that their identities would not be revealed, so disclosures would not identify the source. Furthermore, of the women interviewed for this research, no husbands or partners were still serving in the military when the interviewees were contacted, therefore the women would not risk jeopardising their husbands’ careers by their individual narratives.

It is concluded that there is no feminist resolution to the problem of the disparities that exist between researcher and respondent. All endeavours to adopt greater collaboration and subject involvement fail because there are no strategies to offset the structural inequalities that are inherent in the research project. To uphold oral history’s place in academia, and as a method for social and political change, we need to recognise the power imbalances and try to reduce them whilst not ignoring the difficulties.\footnote{Abrams, \textit{Oral History Theory}, 166.}

Addressing issues of power is not solely the domain of feminist oral historians. The idea of shared authority enunciated by Michael Frisch grew from the feminist debates already...
mentioned. Frisch was enthused by the potential of oral history’s ‘capacity to redefine and redistribute intellectual authority’, to attain an interpretive synthesis which benefitted scholars and the public.\footnote{Frisch, Shared Authority, xx.} Therefore collaboration between intellectuals and ‘the people’ results in a shared authority praxis empowering all factions interested in the place and power of historical understanding in society. Frisch wrote:

If oral historians need to understand that their method can do much more than the extraction of knowledge from human history mines, public historians need to realise that their method can do much more than merely redistribute such knowledge. It can, rather, promote a more democratised and widely shared historical consciousness, consequently encouraging broader participation in debates about history, debates that will be informed by a more deeply representative range of experiences, perspectives and values.\footnote{Ibid, xxii.}

Frisch’s concept of shared authority was applied to the interview itself, yet oral history practitioners have integrated the concept within a collaborative procedure that encompasses project design, interviews, analysis and dissemination of the product. According to public and oral historian Linda Shopes, in many cases this was not a suitable methodology due to time constraints, moral and ethical issues concerning interpretation and critical control.\footnote{Linda Shopes, ‘Commentary: Sharing Authority’ The Oral History Review, 30(1) (2003), 103-10.} This researcher would agree with Shopes that this methodology is at times unsuitable, however shared authority within the interview process in this research was a technique to which this researcher aspired, to make the respondents feel that their narratives were important and deserved a place in the history of the Falklands. They as respondents had the memories (the material); the researcher had access to the means to share and distribute the narratives.

A leading researcher in the discipline of oral history and disability forged collaboration with her respondents, intending to thwart some of the obstacles that prevented the voices of the disabled being heard, therefore having a say in the policies that affected them. Using life maps and adopting terminology that would have been familiar to her respondents, Walmsley believed she would attain a degree of shared ownership between herself and the respondents. However, despite making every effort to explain the nature of her research to
respondents, Walmsley concluded that shared ownership was virtually impossible because of the comprehension disparity between herself and her interviewees. 417

It can therefore be seen that shared authority has its limits, particularly for academics. Academic research is formed during an unequal relationship, aiming to extract people’s memories for its use, often for academic advancement. That does not mean that the respondent does not at times benefit, but that it is coincidental and unintentional. Most oral history ventures result in both sides getting what they wanted: the chance to tell their story to a captive listener on one side and the collection of primary research material on the other. However, there have been instances when the respondent is not happy for the researcher to retain interpretive jurisdiction of the material. 418 This did not happen in this project.

Within oral history practice a recent preference has moved towards advocacy rather than empowerment. Early oral history work was driven by the aim to allow interviewees to have a voice, where they advocated for themselves. Advocacy in oral history is regarded as a means by which respondents themselves are empowered to change their lives. This practice has been particularly useful in oral histories involving poor or marginalised communities talking about the experiences and needs of those affected by development policies. 419 Therefore advocacy suggests that the respondents have an active position within the project and identify that their involvement can be beneficial in both community and political terms.

The implementation of a qualitative research paradigm for Falklands naval wives was significant as qualitative methods can confront research questions leading to explanation or understanding of social phenomena and their settings and are suited to examining intricate issues and processes which emerge over time. The data sought could be acquired only from

418 Tracy K. Meyer and Glenn Crowthers, ‘If I See Some of This in Writing, I’m Going to Shoot You: Reluctant Narrators, Taboo Topics and the Ethical Dilemmas of the Oral Historian’, The Oral History Review, 34(1) (2007), 71-93. This example was of a light-skinned African-American woman who crossed the colour line during her life in racially segregated Kentucky. There emerged a conflict between the researchers’ desire to conduct an interpretation of the material she provided and their ethical concerns when the respondent tried to control what material was a final publication. The resulting compromise was that the transcript respected the respondent’s demands, but the historians retained the right and responsibility to use their own interpretive skills.
those with direct experience or observation of the event, with the Falklands wives creating meaning.

The researcher’s adoption of oral history methodology directed its distinctive features of tapping into theoretical and interview processes and making micro-macro links, for example linking individuals’ lives to the event of the Falklands Conflict and data creation: adding to the historical record and collaboration in the meaning-making process. It addressed objective 1 (engage with the theoretical debates surrounding the methods and methodologies employed by those using oral sources in historical research) and delivered explicitly objective 2 (investigate the experiences /perceptions and attitudes of naval wives and families during the Falklands Conflict). Macro aspects enhanced objective 3 (demonstrate that commemoration of ‘normal’ peoples’ lives and the rôles they played are an important part of our history), objective 4 (evaluate a case study of servicemen and their families with a bearing on skilled workforce retention in the MoD) and objective 5 (examine how the conflict has been remembered or commemorated, as commemoration is a powerful analytical tool to re-evaluate a military event for contemporary society).

The feminist research ethos of investigating women’s ‘experiences’ rather than imposing defined structures on women’s lives, whilst attempting to uncover women’s hitherto suppressed experiences, is relevant to this research. There have been few previous studies on service wives, therefore identifying Falklands naval wives as a marginalised group and enabling them to reflect on their own agency is a topic promotable by feminist qualitative (and oral history) researchers. Feminist research methodology also met objectives 1 and 2.

In conclusion, Chapter 5 validates and justifies the methodologies adopted through the research. The adoption of a qualitative method of research corroborates the researcher’s aim: To widen the scope of the gender, social, naval and cultural history of the Falklands Conflict. The researcher refined her methodology through her practice, from the pilot stage through Stage 1 to Stage 2, to deepen her understanding and data retrieval.

Chapter 6 will profile the respondents and examine how the data was collected and Chapters 8 and 9 will display the codified and discursive primary data collected from Stage 1 and Stage 2 interviews with Falklands naval wives.
Chapter 6 How Naval Wives and Families’ Data were collected

The data presented in the two data collection chapters addresses the aim of this thesis ‘to widen the scope of gender, social, naval and cultural history of the Falklands Conflict.’ They tackle the five research questions:

1. If a group of naval wives underwent the same events, would their views / thoughts / experiences be comparable?
2. Was the image depicted in existing literature the only view?
3. Did the naval community differ from the rest of society; how were its gender rôles defined?
4. Did the wives’ thoughts and feelings differ from those reported in the press?
5. Did media views reinforce previous militarised patriotism and gender rôles?

And the five objectives:

1. Engage with the theoretical debates surrounding the methods and methodologies employed by those using oral sources in historical research.
2. Investigate the experiences/perceptions and attitudes of naval wives and families during the Falklands conflict.
3. Demonstrate that commemoration of ‘normal’ peoples’ lives and the rôles they played are an important part of our history.
4. Evaluate a case study of servicemen and their families with a bearing on skilled workforce recruitment and retention in the MoD.
5. Examine how the conflict has been remembered or commemorated. as commemoration is a powerful analytical tool to re-evaluate a military event for contemporary society.

The Stage 1 respondents were chosen based on the criteria of their connection with a serviceman who had sailed with the task force and their experience of separation from their loved ones during a time of conflict. The ages of the women at the time of the conflict ranged from 18-35, apart from one mother who was slightly older. Apart from five respondents, all the women had children (ages at the time ranged from a baby of two months to eighteen years). See Appendix 6 for a profile of the Falklands wives’ interviewees.

All but three of the women undertook paid work outside the home. The jobs held by respondents included psychiatric nurse, teacher, civil servant, naval nurse, Ministry of Defence administrator, amusement centre manager, receptionist and part time worker in a local shop. The women partook in work outside the home because they sought time away
from the intensity of home and family when their husbands were away at sea. A twenty-eight-
year-old wife of a chief petty officer, with a two-year-old daughter at the time said, ‘I only
worked part-time in a chemist, but I needed adult conversation during the day. I was lonely
when my husband was away, especially in the winter when it got dark early, and I saw no one
until the next day. We didn’t really need the money, I did it to keep myself sane’.420 Two of
the women had previously served in the Women’s Royal Naval Service (WRNS). How would
their responses differ from those of non-WRNS wives? Most of the women lived on the south
coast of England, the majority in the Portsmouth area; one lived in Somerset (her husband
was in the Fleet Air Arm); one lived in London and one in Scotland. Only three of the women
were living in married quarters at the time of the conflict, two in Portsmouth and one in
Scotland.

As mentioned in the research design and methodology chapter, the wives/partners of
the lower ranks were not equally represented in this research. The majority of the women’s
partners were officers, petty officers or chief petty officers. One was a warrant officer, one a
lieutenant commander, one a chaplain with the Royal Marines. Two women had connections
with able-bodied seamen (lowest rate in the Royal Navy) and one respondent’s partner was
a Royal Marines pilot (lieutenant).

In addition to the fifty Stage 1 interviews with wives, girlfriends and a mother of Royal
Navy Falklands personnel, the researcher carried out three interviews with professional
individuals who were involved in welfare or social issues concerning naval families at the time
of the conflict. These interviews are not included in the data analysis graphs, as the same
questions were not asked of them. However, the professionals’ comments and views will be
included in the text to offer contrasts or comparisons with the respondents’ views, to
triangulate the wives’ data. The three professionals were:

- Director of the Naval Families Federation (female) at the time of the
  interviews (2010-2013) who offered an insight into welfare changes from
  the Falklands to contemporary times.
- Chief Staff Officer (Families) to Commander-in-Chief, Naval Home
  Command, Portsmouth (male), who in 1982 was instrumental in setting up
  Naval Family Services, thus responsible for communicating with naval
  families in the Portsmouth area.

420 Mrs M. (C), interview by V. Woodman, April 21, 2012.
• Reverend (male) at Britannia Royal Naval College (BRNC), Dartmouth, who had only taken up the post in spring 1982, having just left as the Chaplain of HMS Invincible.

When analysing a single-issue testimony, based on personal experience, there is no quantifiable or experiential data accessible to authenticate the objective truth of the collected data. However, each story and set of experiences, although subjective, is not constructed in isolation. The respondents and the researcher are both products of the socio-political and cultural conventions of the society in which they live. Therefore, this researcher would agree with the findings of Hanna Hagmark-Cooper, who stated that although each story is unique, the way in which they are remembered and reconstructed is collective. This triangulation procedure, where different sets of evidence are checked and compared against each other to see whether they support and complement each other or whether they contradict, is especially important when using first-hand accounts. This process was examined in detail in the methodology chapter.

The researcher, at the time of the initial interviews, was in her late 40s, a divorced female who had entered university education as a mature student. She was the former wife of a charge chief artificer, whom many would have seen as middle class, therefore the researcher had experienced life as a ‘naval wife’. The hierarchical nature of military personnel was reflected in the social stratification of military wives, experienced personally by the researcher. In 1985, as a recently married twenty-one-year-old, she travelled to meet her then husband in Mombasa for two weeks, the first time she had travelled abroad. On arriving at Heathrow Airport she met other wives, one of whom she had already met through her work as a sales receptionist. During a conversation one of the women in the group asked what the researcher’s husband did. When the reply was ‘a tiff’ the woman spat on the ground and turned her back on her. These women did not talk to the researcher again throughout the two-week trip. The researcher did not experience life as a military wife during a time of conflict but had experienced the issues and problems associated with long periods of separation, such as enduring weeks of receiving no communication from the military spouse and having to make decisions about the home and children and finances with no input from the partner. Therefore, the researcher, female, of a similar age to the respondents and having

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experienced military life, sought to ensure that the respondents felt at ease and comfortable during the interviews. She empathised with the respondents, which led to richer data.

Data analysis will address the researcher’s own subjectivity and voice, which was discussed in the methodology chapter. The aim is to analyse and interpret the personal testimonies provided by the women to arrive at an analysis of their experiences.

It was appreciated early in the research design that a method of analysing the data collected through the interviews would be required, as there would be analysis implications from amassing large amounts of interview data. It was therefore decided that for each of the respondent’s answers to most of the Stage 1 questions a coded tabulation would be performed. This would allow the researcher to discover patterns of behaviour and experiences and determine similarities, differences or trends.

The first part of the interview consisted of an introduction where the interviewer/researcher introduced herself and explained face-to-face the purpose of the interview. This had already been outlined on a written sheet, posted or handed to the respondent before the interview. Assurances of confidentiality were established, and the researcher asked for permission to tape and/or write notes through the interview. The ‘warm-up’ section of the interview sequence comprised factual questions such as age at the time of the conflict, residence, job and any prior family connection to the armed forces, which the researcher decided not to code, although it was noted that the age range of the respondents was 18-35, apart from the mother of a serviceman, who was slightly older at the time of the conflict.

The main body of the interview covered the purpose of the research and included themes/topics which had emerged through pilot interviews. The semi-structured method meant that the order could be varied, with some themes being omitted if the respondent had made reference to them previously, or if the respondent’s reactions indicated discomfort about themes (although it should be noted this did not occur during any of the interviews). The next part of the interview sequence was the ‘cool-off’ period where a straightforward question such as ‘Is there anything further you think I should have asked?’ could be posed to disperse any tension, followed by asking if there was anything the respondent would like to add. The last part of the interview sequence was ‘closure’; a copy of the interview was offered
to respondents with a thank you and goodbye. This was devised because the researcher realised during the pilot interviews that some respondents would continue talking after the tape was switched off, which could result in interesting material not being recorded.

The sixteen interview themes were also colour-coded:

1. Respondent’s background (pink)
2. How the respondent heard about the conflict (plum)
3. Respondent’s previous knowledge of the Falkland Islands (light orange)
4. Respondent’s awareness of risk (gold)
5. Support networks (formal and informal) (orange)
6. What the respondent felt about separation/role as a service wife (indigo)
7. What the respondent felt regarding other naval families not involved in the Falklands Conflict (lavender)
8. Respondent’s coping strategies (formal and informal) (bright green)
9. Communication and respondent’s responses (red)
10. Aftermath: short and long-term effects on men (lime)
11. Aftermath: short and long-term effects on respondents (green)
12. Commemoration/Remembrance (violet)
13. Visiting the Falkland Islands (brown)
14. Respondent’s socio-political responses (in the widest sense) (light blue)
15. Respondent’s attitude to the media (sky blue)
16. Was it worth it? Feelings about war (teal)

These themes are examined in detail in three transcribed interview extracts.
Stage 2 Interviews

It was realised after discussion with a professional oral historian that there was more work to be done regarding the interview data. The first stage questions were seen to include some closed questioning, although they had provided some revealing data and answered three out of the five research questions; notably the questions on the comparability (or not) of the wives, the accuracy of the images and perceptions regarding the wives and the naval community being different from the rest of society.

The researcher received additional oral history training and guidance in question design and analysis prior to conducting Stage 2 interviews. An Oral History Society training course ‘Developing your Oral History Skills’ provided the researcher with a forum to share extracts of interviews and reflect and discuss issues arising from not just the researcher’s interviews, but from a range of interviews provided by the other course participants. Attendance on the training course ensured the researcher analysed and reflected on the Stage 1 question design and interview style, leading to Stage 2 questions being more open-ended and probing. Thus, the interview technique became more fluid and responsive, with the researcher challenging interviewees’ answers to delve for deeper memories or reflections.

The Stage 2 interviews addressed the aim of widening the scope of gender, social, naval and cultural history of the Falklands Conflict by:

- asking questions about what constitutes home, the changing attitudes and thoughts on being ‘married to the navy’ and memories of music/tracks popular at the time of the conflict and meanings that the women and/or veteran attributed to the tracks (social/cultural).
- examining the effects their husbands’ careers had on their own career opportunities/choices and the use of the Margaret Thatcher speech on women prompt, which addressed what the women believed they thought at the time and how they felt about women’s roles in the home at the time of the interview (social/gender).
- from the perspective of those left behind (the wives) this was reached by covering such topics as absence, postings, the aftermath of conflict and the support offered and stress factors in military marriages (naval history).

These second stage interviews contained a set of questions/props validated by Dr Laura Tisdall, then an oral historian at the University of Oxford, which reinforced the
researcher’s objective further to ‘engage with the theoretical debates surrounding the methods and methodologies employed by those using oral sources in historical research. The use of this methodology analyses the ‘experiences’, an analysis not attainable through other methods and one that can only be made retrospectively through speaking about the past. However, she was conscious of dealing with memories shaped by what had happened since 1982, through public presentation and memory of the Falklands, but also how the wives have shaped their own narratives of that time and thus may have changed what they remember.

The researcher contacted fifteen previous interviewees and ten agreed to be re-interviewed. The other five decided not to take part: one had recently lost her husband and the other four said they wanted to ‘move on’. Reasons given were that the marriage had broken up, they wanted to put the whole experience behind them, or they had nothing to add.422

**Questions/Prompts Second stage interviews**

*Personal Information (sent to respondents before the interview)*

- Husband’s service
- Husband’s Rank
- Age at time of the conflict
- Military or non-military family of origin (Did you have any previous connection/experience of service life?)
- Qualifications
- Occupation, before and after marriage
- Number and ages of children (at the time of the conflict)
- Mobility- how many times did you move in how many years of marriage?
- Where were you living at the time and was it service accommodation or your own home?
- Experience of different life styles-Did you move if your husband had a posting to a different port? Did you move to an overseas base? Did your children attend boarding school? Did your husband commute?

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422 Personal emails from Mrs E. (J), Mrs G. (J), Mrs I. (M), Mrs L., Mrs J. (S) received April 2017.
Interview (will review previous questions as an icebreaker and to confirm information/ if respondent already submitted information it will be printed off and used as a checklist)

Home

What to you constitutes ‘home’? (people, possessions, house, locality, lifestyle)

If you moved around, or moved to be with your husband how did it affect you? (ties with friends and family, job- did it lead to loss of status, loss of confidence, self-esteem?)

How did moving around affect your children?

Postings

Looking back over your years of married service life, are there any postings which you remember with particular affection, as times of family stability and contentment? Also, the converse: did any postings produce more than their share of family worries? (age and stage of family at the time, location, changes to lifestyle)

Absence of husband

What are the main difficulties you faced when your husband was away?

How did you manage the readjustment on his return?

(ask about the differences on deployments before the conflict and returning from the Falklands)

Music 1982- popular in the spring- many of the male veterans asked remembered/recalled this track

Accessed at: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HAgBby2VqD0

Do you remember this track?

Is there any particular song/music you remember from this time?

How important was music to you both?

Did you send any music to your husband? What tracks/artists were your favourites?

How do you feel if you hear those tracks now?

The Aftermath and Support
When the sort of problems we have already talked about arise, who did you talk to?

Over the years how involved in ‘official’ support activities were you? (mess functions, wives clubs, children’s activities)

Do you remember enjoying those activities, which ones, did you find any of them a strain, which ones?

*when we talk about PTSD and after effects:*

What help/support have you received?

How did you find out about the support available?

How did your partner feel about that?

How do you feel about the support available to families, both then and now?

*Thinking about leaving*

How would you explain the effect that military life was having on your relationship? The children? Was this before or after the conflict? Can you recall an occasion where you would have wished your husband to leave the service?

*Prompts*

Margaret Thatcher TV interview April 1982 accessed:

http://www.margaretthatcher.org/document/112746

How do you feel when you hear this interview?

When you watched/ listened to reports of the conflict at the time, how did you feel?

*OR*

Margaret Thatcher document/speech Falklands/women accessed:

http://www.margaretthatcher.org/document/122990

What did you think about MTs views on women and families?

How did this fit in with your situation at the time?

How do you feel about that now, has it changed?

*‘Married to the Job’ ‘Married to the Navy’ Changing Social Attitudes*

(these terms may come up in conversation, if not ask respondent if they have heard the terms/are familiar with them)
Can you explain to me what you think/feel about the term/s?

In what ways do you feel this applied to you?

How did your husband’s career affect your own career/employment choices?

How did your husband’s career affect your children? How did your husband being in the conflict affect your children?

How would you explain your experience of naval family life?

How do you feel your experiences compared to other military families?

If you had to explain to someone outside of the military family what being married to a sailor is like what would you say?

In your opinion is the experience different now?

What has changed?

*Stress factors in military marriages* (show respondent these factors on a card)

Research has shown/it has been recognised that military marriages are exposed to circumstances which impose stresses over and above those occurring in any relationship. It is the combination and frequency with which these occur in military marriages which pose the challenges. The six major underlying factors are:

- Issues arising from accommodation.
- Issues arising from turbulence/geographic mobility.
- Concerns about the education of children.
- Limitations on spouse employment opportunities.
- The management of temporary separations; and
- Issues arising from accompanied postings.

What other factors affected you as a military spouse?

The questions and themes used for the Stage 2 interviews were deeper and more probing than those used for the Stage 1 interviews. The arrangement of the prompt sheet used by the researcher allowed some structure whilst also enabling the researcher to deviate from the order of questions if the respondent did not have anything to say about certain
themes, or if they felt uncomfortable. This resulted in richer, balanced and more nuanced data.

The researcher’s oral history skills were sharpened by attending the Oral History Society training course and guided by oral history practitioner Dr Laura Tisdall. These skills manifested themselves by the researcher embedding a more profound question design within Stage 2 interviews, enabling her to gain finer qualitative data. She also progressed beyond merely listening to the answers to reflecting and probing the interviewees further on topics and issues covered during Stage 1 interviews. This enhanced knowledge and understanding of the oral history interview process will be a long-lasting outcome of the thesis. The introduction of props and music into the Stage 2 interview process also enriched the process, locating the respondents’ memories of the event and era more deeply within the cultural and historical contexts of the conflict. Data from the Stage 1 and 2 interviews will be presented in chapters 8 and 9.
Chapter 7 Commemoration of the Falklands Conflict

This chapter will examine theories of commemoration and how Falklands naval wives’ experiences fitted into both official and unofficial commemorations. What did the wives think of the nature of the commemorations?

When Argentina invaded the Falkland Islands in April 1982, the South Atlantic became a grand military stage which engaged the world’s attention for the next seventy-four days. It was a swift, unanticipated, limited conflict fought for limited objectives with limited means in a remote corner of the earth. However, its outcome at the end of June resulted in the ousting of the Argentine military junta and the return to democracy for a country long bowed by military dictatorship and oppression. For the British Prime Minister, Margaret Thatcher, victory in the Falklands justified the decision to challenge Argentine aggression, symbolised a victory for ‘democratic principles’, and guaranteed a further term in office. For the British government, victory resulted in global respect and a reputation for opposing dictators. For the British people, victory stimulated jubilation, and the belief, so dear to a seafaring nation, that Britannia still ruled the waves.\footnote{Daniel K. Gibran, The Falklands War: Britain Versus the Past in the South Atlantic (Jefferson, North Carolina: McFarland & Co., 1998), 1.} Victory did not signify merely that Britannia ruled the waves but for many British people it put the Great back into Britain and stirred up a patriotic fervour which was reflected in many of the interviews contacted with veterans’ wives.

Heroes, leadership and popularity

The Falklands Conflict was not predominantly a naval battle, unlike some other battles, most notably Trafalgar, and did not produce a definitive ‘hero’, namely Admiral Lord Nelson. Some personalities were constructed and made heroic in response to political needs which will be examined later in the chapter. Simon Weston, who was in the Welsh Guards and was on board RFA \textit{Sir Galahad} which was bombed in the Bluff Cove attacks. Throughout years of extensive reconstructive surgery, Weston has campaigned for various military and disfigurement charities. Another perceived hero of the Falklands was Colonel Herbert Jones known as H. Jones, who was a British army officer and posthumous recipient of the Victoria Cross. He was awarded the VC after being killed in action during the Battle of Goose Green.
for his actions as commanding officer of 2nd Battalion, Parachute Regiment during the Falklands Conflict.

Leadership of the Falklands cannot be discussed without mentioning the effect the conflict had on the profile of the then Prime Minister, Margaret Thatcher. It is often argued that the Falklands Conflict revived Margaret Thatcher’s (and the Conservatives’) political fortunes, with one historian stating: it

...was the moment of truth for Mrs Thatcher’s political leadership. She was subsequently taken at her own valuation and she subsequently felt an unshakeable confidence in her own judgement, which she was ready to back against all-comers.424

It was also argued that the war’s successful outcome encouraged Thatcher’s ‘wild streak of moral authoritarianism’ provisionally solving all her political problems and creating the inception for a style of Thatcherite triumphalism that came to parody her earlier successes: ‘hubris was inexorably succeeded by nemesis’.425

The debate on the part played by the conflict on the Conservative Party victory of 1984 continues to be the subject of dispute.426 With a recession deepening in the early 1980s and high unemployment, Mrs Thatcher’s popularity was at an all-time low, but during the Falklands Conflict her satisfaction rating for a prime minister went up from 25% to 50%. The debate over the part played by the conflict in the Conservative’s general election victory has been disputed. However, David Sanders et al. contend that the boost to the Conservative party popularity at this time was minimal, at most three percentage points for a three-month period. Furthermore, government popularity was accelerating as a result of macroeconomic factors before the onset of the Falklands conflict. Thus, the Falklands crisis merely coincided with a jump in government popularity which would have occurred anyway in the wake of Geoffrey Howe’s 1982 Budget.427

Additionally, another issue of debate and criticism was the use of the rhetoric of the Second World War, to impart moral righteousness and obscure problems on the conflict.

425 Ibid. 321.
Much of this was present in popular culture (such as cartoons and postcards) but some was promulgated by the Prime Minister herself in speeches, for example ‘we have ceased to be a nation in retreat’ proclaimed at Cheltenham on 3 July 1982. There were also evocations of the Prime Minister portrayed as ‘a warrior queen exhorting the people to battle against a foreign tyranny’. Much of this material was satirical, but it was also a commentary of dissent; not everyone agreed with the government or the conflict. James Aulich claimed that the professionalism, courage, integrity and belief in the cartoonists are not questionable, but stated that:

Democracy demands that the people rule, but large sectors of the press disseminate potent oversimplifications in various national narratives whose parameters are defined by the interests of individual ownership, advertising, government and, finally, the military. These stand in opposition to the interests of a significant proportion of the population who were perceived as a threat to government authority and, therefore, paradoxically, a threat to democracy.

Moreover, increasingly critiques came from those who had fought in the war, through personal memoirs and recollections. The first and most vehement of these was Army Officer Robert Lawrence of the Scots Guards who in his autobiographical account Tumbledown, claimed ‘when the fighting was over, nobody wanted to know’, yet despite the Army’s neglect of its wounded, Lawrence thought that the conflict was worth the cost. The researcher listened to the wives who reported men’s bitter complaints that their contribution was not properly acknowledged. However, Mrs J, a thirty-four-year-old lieutenant commander’s wife, said she ‘was fed up with hearing about the men being left out, what about us? I mean I am not saying the men deserve to be treated badly or that just because they signed on the dotted line that their lives don’t matter, but what about us?

The British task force lost 255 men, and many veterans returned to share their experiences and re-tell their version of events. These memoirs had to fit a dominant narrative, one that revealed no information that would jeopardise the veterans’ signing of the Official

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429 Ibid. 114.
Secrets Act (and had to be approved by the Ministry of Defence), loyal to their comrades and a masculine story of war. Those publications revealing PTSD and the veterans’ fights to deal with it emerged later, twenty years after the conflict. But how could the veterans’ memories, and thereby the wives’ and families’ conflict experiences be presented to British minds that were not militarised? What would this entail to any future remembrance, commemoration or celebration of the conflict?

Hero worship (of a non-celebrity), patriotism, military action and duty may have become unfashionable, yet the ‘anniversary’ years, of the conflict, 2007 and 2012, as the literature review shows, marked a rise in interest in the conflict and a rise in memorials, commemoratives and literature. To determine how the Falklands Conflict is remembered by wives and their partners, firstly theories on commemoration will be examined. Then terms that are commonly used in the literature pertaining to Falkland’s commemorations, and by the families interviewed, will be defined. Various commemorative rites and the agencies involved will be analysed. Finally, how the wives’ and families’ experiences or memories are acknowledged in any form of the commemorations will be explored.

Terms and theories

The terms ‘celebrate’ and ‘commemorate’ do at times appear synonymous. However, most of the literature concerning the thirtieth anniversary of the conflict use the term ‘commemorate’. The Oxford English Dictionary (OED) defines commemorate as ‘to mention as worthy of remembrance. To call to remembrance or preserve in memory, by some solemnity or celebration’. According to the OED, celebrate means ‘to observe with solemn rites (a day, festival, season); to honour with religious ceremonies, festivities, or other observances (an event or occasion).”

The meaning of patriotism has changed over time. The OED denotes three historical definitions for the term: ‘the character or passion of a patriot; love of or zealous devotion to one’s country, sometime ironically’. From the early eighteenth century, the term could be

432 For example, Order of Service, Portsmouth Cathedral, ‘A Service to commemorate the 30th Anniversary of the Falklands Conflict’ Sunday May 6, 2012.
434 Ibid.
understood as acting like a father to his country; public spiritedness. By the nineteenth
century patriotism could be seen as the hatred of other countries designed as love of our
own.\textsuperscript{435} In the eighteenth century, patriotism was connected discursively to liberty and the
belief that love of one’s country was a virtue essential to internal civic unity and ensured a
hatred of factualism and corruption. The North American patriots who rebelled against
George III exemplified the connections between civic freedom and patriotism. Eighteenth
century patriotic sentiments were often radical, serving as veiled critiques of corruption at
court as an indication of community feeling against despotism and dynasticism.\textsuperscript{436} But by the
last quarter of the nineteenth century, patriotism became identified with conservatism,
militarism, royalism and racism, with opposition only from a small minority.\textsuperscript{437}

The term ‘hero’ cannot be defined easily. According to the era and speaker it can imply anything from the bravery of a single course of action to the courage and statesmanship
of a lifetime.\textsuperscript{438} According to the \textit{OED} the term denotes;

a name given to men of superhuman strength, courage, or ability, favoured by the
gods; at a later time regarded as intermediate between gods and men, and immortal.
A man distinguished by extraordinary valour and martial achievements; one who does
brave and noble deeds. A man who exhibits extraordinary bravery, firmness,
fortitude, or greatness of soul, in any course of action, or in connection with any
pursuit, work, or enterprise; a man admired and venerated for his achievements and
noble qualities.\textsuperscript{439}

This definition does not reflect the cultural environment in which the construction of
a hero takes place. The assumption here is that a hero is brave, which conjures up an image
of physical strength and military might. However, in contemporary society a pop star or
footballer is Justas likely to be named a ‘hero’. The researcher taught on a master’s degree
seminar concerning glorious heritage, in which students were asked to define ‘hero’. The
diversity of the term was highlighted when examples such as ‘superhuman’, ‘strength’ and
‘superman’ were suggested. In addition a hero was ‘someone remembered’, ‘someone who

\textsuperscript{435} \textit{OED}, 1989.
\textsuperscript{438} C. I Hamilton, Naval Hagiology and the Victorian Hero’, \textit{The Historical Journal 23} (1980), 381-398, 381.
\textsuperscript{439} \textit{OED}, 1989.
suffers’ and an ‘icon to be revered’ finally the term ‘hero’ was always masculine.⁴⁴⁰ A study by Stephen H. White and Joseph E. O’Brien concluded that students, regardless of age, used an operational definition of a hero, but when asked to identify a hero most of them named a person with whom they have had a personal experience of, for example a family member and not a character from popular culture.⁴⁴¹

David Lowenthal was critical of the term ‘hero’, characterising the term as a cultural construction and: ‘Heroes are often memorialised in garb reflecting a retrospective ideal’.⁴⁴² Graham Dawson criticised its political connotations, claiming that popular heroes such as Nelson, were used symbolically to portray British national identity, imperial identity and patriotism.⁴⁴³ Recently former Falklands marine veteran, Dr J, told the researcher that he considers the use of the term hero as problematic because it ‘reinforces the conflicting polarities of a veteran, are they heroes or victims?’⁴⁴⁴ Therefore is the wife a hero’s wife or a victim’s wife? This is not a position she chooses, but one imposed by the media, her peers and society.

Commemorative rites and sites are relevant to interviewing wives during the Falklands post-commemorative era, as their narratives would have been affected by the tailored versions of Falklands commemoration. They fall within discourses including history, heritage, sociology, politics, cultural studies, and to some extent psychology. This ensures that there is no consensus regarding commemoration, but most theories claim that the commemorative process is either a political, cultural or social construct.

Eric Hobsbawm’s hypothesis examined the rôle played in contemporary societies by fabricated notions of ‘the past’, and of the continuity between past and present in constructing social cohesion, legitimising authority and socialising populations into a common culture. Hobsbawm maintained that these ‘invented traditions’ were ‘highly relevant’ to analysis of the ‘nation with its associated phenomena: nationalism, the nation-state, national

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⁴⁴⁰ Heritage Theory Seminar, May 9, 2005 with Dr Ray Riley and Dr Ann Coats, University of Portsmouth.
⁴⁴⁴ Phone interview with Dr J., interview by V. Woodman, November 29, 2015.
symbols and histories’. Although Hobsbawm was careful to differentiate between what he called the ‘official’ and ‘political’ invention of tradition as implemented ‘by states or organised social and political movements’, from its ‘unofficial’ and ‘social practice’ by social groups’ whose objects were not specifically or consciously political, such as clubs and societies’. The naval wives were members of such groups, as well as targets of television and media propaganda. Yet, despite the differentiations, in his analysis there is no doubt that Hobsbawm considered the state to be paramount in shaping commemorative traditions when he stipulated that:

...the state linked formal and informal, official and unofficial, political and social inventions of tradition...and seen from below, increasingly defined the largest stage on which the crucial activities determining human lives as subjects and citizens were played out.446

Thus, in Hobsbawm’s view, commemoration is explicitly political. Another staunchly political view of commemoration was held by Raphael Samuel, who maintained that Nelson and his victories were used to symbolise English maritime power and defence of the realm which is linked to patriotism and national identity. The heroic image of Nelson is utilised in ‘exceptional circumstances linked to national events’, therefore Nelson personifies the nation.447 Therefore the Falklands wives, connected to the personification of the nation, become national wives, for the use of nationalistic politics.

Patrick Wright’s alternative hypothesis argued that the appeal of the national past can be envisaged in relation to the present to serve different interests at different times. This past/present alignment is not dependent on any understanding of either times and relies in part on a vague, nostalgic and invocatory sense of the past.448 Commemorative events mean that ‘we [the public] can re-connect with the past, but in a way that has little to do with the historical passage of years’. This perceived link between past and present represents a desire for continuity, which according to Wright, develops ‘when the present seems to lack the

quality, meaning and significance of history’. 449 This view was shared by David Lowenthal, who also claimed that heritage, and therefore commemorations, are created in the present for use in the present. According to Lowenthal, heritage is not history at all; while it borrows from and ‘enlivens historical study, heritage is not an enquiry into the past but a celebration of it, not an effort to know what really happened but a profession of faith in a past tailored to present-day purposes’. 450 Furthermore Lowenthal asserted that commemorative events ‘rarely resemble what they are meant to recall, they are initiated to remind society what to believe and how to behave’. Additionally, the sites of many commemorative occasions have no connection with the commemorated person or event. 451 Examples of this for the Falklands include many of the anniversary rites performed in towns and cities where some of the members of the armed forces were based, or even departed from on their way to the South Atlantic, but these are not where the action took place. There is also the Falklands Plantation on Portsdown Hill, overlooking the Solent, but with no connection with the conflict itself. The Falklands Memorial Chapel, Pangbourne, will be examined later in this chapter, along with the National Memorial Arboretum, Alrewas, Staffordshire. This has no military connection but contains memorials to the Falklands alongside many other conflicts and those involved in them, not just the armed forces, but also the police and fire service.

These theories see commemoration as being a predominantly cultural construct. The wives felt that commemoration was important; that the sites of commemoration have no direct relation to where the action took place, even to their husbands, is not important to them. Mrs C. who was the thirty-one-year-old partner of a petty officer with a five-year-old son said, ‘It is important that the conflict is remembered, where does not matter, I hope that some of the commemorations reflect the suffering that both my partner and myself suffered, if the war gets forgotten, well then [pause] the lives lost and ruined, well it wouldn’t have been worth it, would it?’ 452

Other writers on commemoration see them as either a social, sociological or even a psychological process. John Gillis construed commemoration as being a construct of memory

449 Ibid. 166.
451 David Lowenthal, Past, 321-323.
452 Mrs C. (M), interview by V. Woodman, February 2, 2013.
and identity. ‘That identities and memories change over time and space is sustained by remembering; and what is remembered is defined by the assumed identity’. Gillis was critical of the status given to memory and identity as he claimed they are often referred to as ‘material objects’. Memories and identities, Gillis asserted, are not fixed, but ‘representations or constructions of reality, subjective rather than objective phenomena’.\textsuperscript{453} Nigel C. Hunt, unlike Gillis, viewed memory as being important in the study of commemoration and memorialisation. Hunt’s study explored the broad psychosocial impact of war (and its commemoration/memorialisation) the significance of ‘understanding memory not just as individual memory, but also as the ways in which other people, society and culture, and history, all affect how we remember’.\textsuperscript{454}

Hunt stated that the concepts of narrative, social discourse and collective memory were the predominant arguments in his study. Our narratives supply us with memories and a set of values by which we live our lives; they are individual, logical and consequential and how they affect us depends on our characteristics and circumstances. Hunt also asserted that the significance of social discourse (the way people view events) should not be underestimated. The social discourse is the way events are construed, plays an essential rôle in people’s individual and collective memories of an event. In addition to these two variables, Hunt added collective memory which is knowledge that is collected over the years and develops into the accepted social norm, so is essential in the progress of personal narratives and social discourse. This researcher criticised Hunt’s study for conflating a homogeneous military group as soldiers, that all veterans are soldiers and all veterans who suffer from war trauma are soldiers.\textsuperscript{455} He thereby excluded naval wives and naval veterans from being veterans and veterans suffering trauma. This focus on soldiers continued the valorisation of male definitions of military life and failed to mention other participants.

\textsuperscript{454} Nigel C. Hunt, \textit{Memory, War and Trauma} (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 2.
\textsuperscript{455} For example, when examining personnel leaving the armed forces he has a section on ‘After the war; soldiers leaving the armed forces’, 11. And when reviewing the Sallyport Memorial plaque in Old Portsmouth, a plaque dedicated to the Royal Marines, Royal Navy, Royal Fleet Auxiliary and Merchant Navy personnel lost during the Falklands, he states erroneously that ‘this is engraved with the names of every British soldier killed’. 183.
A further study, using as data the events and persons commemorated in the United States Capitol, demonstrated how the magnitude of historical events changes from one generation to the next according to a changing infrastructure of societal problems and needs. Barry Schwartz began his inquiry by stipulating that ‘recollection of the past is an active, constructive process, not a simple matter of retrieving information. To remember is to place a part of the past in the service of conceptions and needs of the present’. Schwartz’s aim was to establish an alternative theory which lies between the absolutist, which locates the significance of commemorative events in the nature of the events themselves, and a relativistic theory, which places the significance of events in the perspective of the observer, so in this theory the Falklands wives. The first theory suggests that there is nothing accidental about our historical understandings, the second that there is nothing constant.\(^{456}\) By way of positing a theory between the two extremes, Schwartz coded, then analysed iconography displayed at the Capitol Building, Washington, which is both a commemorative archive and seat of governmental authority. As far as the researcher is aware, no similar inquiry has been made at similar British sites of importance. Schwartz suggested that he attempted to combine the ‘historian’s interest in describing changing attitudes to the past’ with the sociologist’s more general interest in ‘establishing a link between collective memory and social structure’.\(^{457}\) As well as art there are other forms of domestic iconography, for example knitted baby clothes on the Greenham Common fences. The personal was made political through the feminine activity of needlework, a non-verbal form of storytelling. The Greenham women embroidered banners and attached them to the fence, their way of campaigning against nuclear threat as women. These women used a culturally endowed feminine resource to make a public and political statement.\(^{458}\)

During his study Schwartz found that while the object of commemoration is usually found in the past, the issue which motivates its selection and shaping is always to be found in the present. He observed that in times of political instability founding heroes were commemorated, whereas in times of unity political representatives resorted to


\(^{457}\) Ibid. 395.

commemorating their past and present bureaucratic leaders. Schwartz concluded by stating that we should not assume ‘that the historical significance of a social origin is a sufficient condition for its commemoration.’ America’s originating events and early leaders are not symbols of national unity because of their factual importance but because their importance has become and remained convenient objects of consensus among later generations.\textsuperscript{459}

T. G. Ashplant, Graham Dawson and Michael Roper attributed much of the contemporary obsession with commemorative dates to the mass media. The increase in anniversary commemorations signifying the beginning and ending of wars, key episodes and personalities is an element of a wider commemorative explosion. The media grasp forthcoming dates and stimulate a reporting of ceremonies and events, increasingly with many staged for television. Contemporary meaning is analysed as well as commemorated in special edition publications, reports and documentaries where cultural and political significances are given a ‘human face’ in re-enactments and reconstructions.\textsuperscript{460} The claim in this theory is that much of the commemorative process is articulated in some cultural form, which has been disseminated by political narratives, through ‘shared or common memories’. This means that official memory is shaped by political inference resulting in some individual or common memories being selected into the cultural norm whilst others are excluded.\textsuperscript{461} In the case of the naval wives from 1982, their individual and common memories have been excluded. Consequently, the nation-state is dominant in deciding and organising which wars and war heroes are remembered and commemorated; this is achieved through permanent war memorials and a calendar of ceremonies, both annual and anniversary, which recollect key events and consider their meanings.

The hypothesis of Ashplant et al. was fundamentally political. However they introduced the view that commemoration and war memory can be ‘significant primarily for psychological reasons’, as a statement of mourning and a form of human expression to the death and suffering that war instigates on a vast scale.\textsuperscript{462} The researcher asserts that this is

\textsuperscript{459} Ibid. 396.
\textsuperscript{461} Ibid. 20. For definition of ‘shared, common and official memory’ see 20-22.
\textsuperscript{462} Ibid. 22.
evident in commemorations of the Falklands as many veterans attend events to catch up with those they served with and view the events as a chance to talk with them in a way they do not feel confident with doing with their immediate families; thus constituting an unofficial form of therapy. It must be noted, however, that not all veterans attend these events, as is clear in the coded data contained in the Stage 1 Interview data collection chapter. I believe Ashplant’s theory on the psychological aspects of commemoration could be applied to memory and commemoration of wars conducted in living memory, but not to a battle fought two hundred years ago. Ashplant’s work made a vital point in accusing many writers on commemoration of focusing on only one perspective and basing their analysis on that theme. This is attributed to divisions in the various discourses involved in memory studies. For example, historians influenced by political science, international relations or sociology; and those influenced by anthropology, cultural criticism or psychology.⁴⁶³

More recently Karen Burnell and Rachel Jones (a psychologist and a historian) have argued that to be able to understand commemoration we need to break down artificial disciplinary boundaries and develop a research methodology that incorporates elements from different disciplines. Using the disciplines of psychology and history, Burnell and Jones considered how both disciplines channel our understanding of private and public commemoration of the Falklands Conflict.⁴⁶⁴ They examined public commemorative custom through memorials that, they claim, supports a socio-cultural public narrative of the conflict. They also maintained that the reconciliation of traumatic memories arise through the creation of a personal narrative as a model of private commemoration. According to Burnell and Jones, memorials and public commemorations in the late twentieth century became models of visual post-modernity, a consequence of the rise of subjectivity and an end to post-war historical certainty. This occurred because of a change in the perceptions of wars, from the ‘just’ Second World War to later wars, such as Afghanistan, where the principles were less clear and unjustified for many people, including the Falklands wives. Burnell and Jones stated that the Falklands is an interesting case study, as although it was a later twentieth-century conflict, public narratives of the conflict reflect Second World War narratives. This borrowing

⁴⁶³ Ibid. 7.
of narratives can be problematic for veterans of conflict, and their partners, as they try to come to terms with their own experiences.

In addition to the theories already examined, the researcher would add economic theories, which few writers on commemoration have addressed. Robert Hewison, in a polemical and scathing attack on Britain’s rise in heritage sites and commemorative rites in the 1980s, condemned such places and occasions for being compensatory for Britain’s decline in manufacturing industries. However, the commemorative and celebrative culture has created a market for ‘souvenirs’ and this market has created a ‘heritage industry’ as opposed to a manufacturing industry.\[465\] This researcher has seen no evidence of this occurring in the remembrance and commemorative rites surrounding the Falklands. However there has been a rise in printed publications during prominent anniversaries. Such marketing was extensive during such anniversaries as Trafalgar 200 (the bicentennial anniversary of Trafalgar and the death of Nelson). Trafalgar 200 was important to heritage and tourism revenue and the event itself, through corporate sponsorship, was heavily branded. Lowenthal cynically asserted that ‘commemorations spawn souvenir kitsch’ and ‘heritage is entrepreneurial’.\[466\] Perhaps it is deemed acceptable to market a distant victory whose deaths are forgotten, but not where deaths and casualties are still dominant.

**Falklands Memorials**

There are few memorials to the Falklands Conflict. They take many forms and are spread throughout the United Kingdom and the Falkland Islands. They are not all a response to grief and mourning, but like other narratives, derive from political state-centred ritual and symbolic tradition. Due to these politically centred commemorations, and the language of mourning traditional to war memorials, we see ‘death as a patriotic force, binding the individual with the nation’.\[467\] Therefore, observers are directed into seeing death not as a righteous wrath against warmongers but as a form of bias against what would have been naturally divisive. Burnell and Jones offer two examples of Falklands memorials in Hampshire and consider how they support two opposing narratives of the Falklands War. The Gosport

\[466\] Lowenthal, *Heritage*, 98-99
\[467\] Burnell and Jones, ‘Public/Private’, 48.
Hard Mosaic Memorial was dedicated by Margaret Thatcher in 1997 on the fifteenth anniversary of the end of the conflict. It is circular, representing a two-dimensional globe lining up the Falkland Island geographically with the United Kingdom. The memorial at Sallyport, Old Portsmouth, is a large plaque with the names of Royal Navy, Royal Marines, Royal Fleet Auxiliary and Merchant Navy personnel lost in the conflict. Whilst there was interest and commemorative action when the Gosport Hard memorial opened, it is not generally used as a site to commemorate the Falklands War. It is not used as a site of memory, no dedicatory objects are left there, and it appears to hold no special significance for the veterans or their families. In contrast, the Sallyport plaque is utilised more, at times serving as a site of pilgrimage by veterans and families; items such as crosses, wreaths, personal messages and photographs are frequently left at the site, with such activity increasing around the anniversary of major events of the war. Burnell and Jones attributed the veterans’ use of the Sallyport plaque to its relevance to private narratives; it is not associated in any way with the Second World War and stands alone as a memorial to the Falklands War. Furthermore, it is not only consistent with veterans’ private narratives but also public narratives of the conflict.\(^{468}\)

As an act of gratitude, the Falkland Islanders helped to build and maintain a network of memorial sites on the islands: plaques and crosses were erected commemorating individual regiments. However, the most spectacular memorial is found in front of the Secretariat of the Falkland Islands Government, Stanley. Liberation Monument was funded and built by islanders at an estimated cost of £70,000. The memorial is surrounded by a memorial wall containing the names of those who gave their lives. A large statue by Gerald Dixon, composed of a polished granite pillar inscribed with the names of the participating military units dominates the site. Placed atop the pillar, looking over Stanley Harbour, stands an eight-foot bronze figure of Britannia. Murals depicting fighting scenes also adorn the walls, while the front of the monument contains the simple inscription: ‘In memory of those who liberated us, 14th June 1982’.\(^{469}\) The researcher can find no mention of the three female civilian Falkland islanders killed by friendly fire. Therefore, the memorials contain silences,

\(^{468}\) Ibid.
both in who was lost and issues the islanders had concerning some of the troops’ bad behaviour.

**Agencies and aims of Falklands commemorations**

The first instance of what could be deemed commemoration of the Falklands Conflict was, in the researcher’s view, the survivors’ homecoming. The task force homecomings were treated as major media events, comprehensively covered, often in the style of a royal wedding, for example the return of the QE2 was the subject of an eighty-minute special news programme on BBC1, using eight on the spot reporters, and a fifty-minute special on ITN. It had been extensively advertised the previous day, possibly to generate the crowds which the TV cameras subsequently filmed. These resources had not been utilised in coverage of the equally significant but unhappier feelings on the home front. A senior reporter with ITN stated to the Glasgow University Media Group that:

> You compared the return of the QE2 and the Canberra. When we did the QE2 it was a big megalopolis special. When the Canberra came home, with the bodies-what was it?-a minute, twenty-second quickie. In strictly moral and human terms we should have honoured the return of the dead.470

**Falklands victory parade**

The next act of remembrance was the Falklands victory parade, London, October 1982. When Margaret Thatcher announced this commemorative rite to recognise the achievements of the task force, the City of London seemed politically and culturally the most apt location. A plethora of street names exists in the capital with connotations of the South Atlantic (Shackleton Road, Falkland Road). According to the geopolitician, Klaus Dodds, London is strewn with imperial symbols, statues, memorials and shrines demonstrating Britain’s global empire. Furthermore, the City of London contains familiar financial institutions which had borne witness to previous financial relations between Anglo-Argentine mercantile

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relations as sources of credit, financial proficiency and major projects, such as railway construction.471

The parade took place on Tuesday 12 October 1982, crowds lined the streets, and nearly 30,000 South Atlantic Medals were awarded. It proceeded in a military fashion, almost four months after the Argentine surrender, and was the first time the City had celebrated a military event since it had entertained the crew of HMS *Amethyst* in 1949. The Lord Mayor of London, Christopher Leaver, took the salute on the steps of Mansion House. With him for the salute were Admiral Sir Terence Lewin, the Chief of the Defence Staff, and Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher.472 Margaret Thatcher addressed the lunchtime audience in a reflective mood:

Military parades and pageants are part of the distinguished history of the city of London. And it is right and the whole nation will feel that it is right that we gather in the heart of the city of London to honour all those who took part in the Falklands campaign. And what a wonderful parade it has been. Surpassing all our expectations as the crowd deeply moved and sensing the spirit of the occasion, accompanied the band by singing "Rule Britannia". The Falklands campaign was one of the most brilliant achievements of modern times, a triumph of endeavour and skill of planning and imagination. We owe that triumph to the best, the bravest and the most professional armed services in the world. We thank you all; those who are here the many more who, for reasons of space, could not be here, the 777 valiant young men who were wounded, the 255 who gave their lives and whose memory will be honoured forever. We grieve for them and we think especially of their families in their sorrow. We also thank those who served in the royal fleet auxiliary, the merchant seamen, the workers in the dockyards and supply depots, the nurses and other volunteers and those in British industry who made such splendid efforts to ensure that the force was properly equipped and supplied.473

It is worth remembering that a Prime Minister is always marshalling public emotions, an event such of this would require a degree of pre-mediated spin-doctoring.

Some pacifist commentators denounced the event as an unnecessary glorification of war, while others criticised the disinclination of military leaders to include those seriously wounded in the parade. Excluding amputees is akin to excluding wives, it creates an engineered masculine military event. One respondent for the Mass Observation Special

Falklands Directive stated that the television mentioned the parade ‘considerably’ but there was ‘not so much coverage in the popular press’. She claimed that ‘no friends or relatives even spoke about it’ and that she ‘only discussed it with my husband’. None of the wives interviewed attended the parade, in fact Mrs C. the wife of a Chief Petty Officer asserted ‘I did not even know about it’.

Initially the political and military élite anticipated minimising the physical and psychological costs of the conflict. However, after intense criticism, the Ministry of Defence conceded, and the *Daily Mail* led with the headline, ‘The bravest of the brave’ and stated that ‘They could not march. But it was their parade as much as anybody’s’. One newspaper reported:

Pacifists turned out as well. A group of women turned their backs in protest, seventeen people were arrested when a group of anti-militarists tried to chain themselves to nearby lamp posts, and a tall cross holding the message ‘Jesus Christ was murdered by the military’ was erected in the front of a Cheapside church.

The Falklands victory parade manifested a ceremonial definition of political and cultural identification of the Falklands conflict and Britain. Its route passed iconic constructions of British national identity, with images of Second World War flypasts of bombers over St Paul’s Cathedral, symbolising courage and resilience, widely published. One Mass Observation correspondent described how she ‘was looking forward to the victory parade’ and how she ‘felt very emotional on seeing the British and tourists mingling for such a fine celebration’, she did also comment on the ‘drizzly and grey weather’ which exemplified for her ‘good hardy British spirit’. The correspondent also commented on how ‘the victory parade was a glory to watch and I felt proud of our forces’. Coincidentally, on the same day as the parade, the *Mary Rose* was raised to the surface of the Solent, also symbolising historical and national recovery. Symbolising a past/present dichotomy, the great

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475 Mrs C. (P), interview by V. Woodman, February 23, 2012.
maritime past symbolised in the *Mary Rose* and the present symbolised by military victory in the Falklands.

**Falklands Memorial Chapel**

The Falkland Islands Memorial Chapel at Pangbourne College was, according to the chapel’s website:

...built to commemorate the lives and sacrifice of all those who died in the South Atlantic in 1982 – to stand as a permanent and ‘living’ memorial to remember them – and the courage of the thousands of Servicemen and women who served with them to protect the sovereignty of the Falkland Islands.480

It was not until November 1999, seventeen years after the conflict, that the chapel was dedicated, with its official opening in March 2000. It was conceived almost by accident. Pangbourne College in West Berkshire had long been associated with the royal and merchant navies, and they required a chapel for religious and community-based services. The original plan was to transport an existing church from Salisbury, but this fell through. The then headmaster, Anthony Hudson, discussed the plan with a former pupil who was acquainted with Falklands veteran Admiral Sandy Woodward. They proposed that the school would be a suitable site. With the support of Admiral Woodward, a board of trustees was appointed to organise an appeal fund in 1995. Three applications to the National Lottery Commission were rejected, but a series of events, including a party in London hosted by Lady Thatcher and dinner hosted on board HMS *Victory* raised over £2.3 million in two years.481

Under the direction of the Royal Fine Arts Commission a competition was organised in 1997, with the winning design for the chapel chosen from seventy-three entries. Architect Crispin Wade oversaw the project; construction began in October 1998 with completion a year later.

The shape of the chapel is reminiscent of a ship’s hull, almond or ‘mandorla’ shaped, signifying hands cupped in prayer.482 To convey the losses, a visitor centre was incorporated

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481 Anthony Hudson, *Just to see his name: A history of the Falklands Islands Memorial Chapel at Pangbourne School* (Pangbourne: Falklands Islands Memorial Chapel Trust, 2002), 5-12.

into the chapel. The resultant commemorative garden was deemed too close to the chapel by the Royal Arts Commission.

The commemorative garden constitutes a contemplative space. A wall features a geographical portrayal of the Falkland Islands (on a recent visit the researcher noticed the map had become faded). The dedication service in November 1999 was attended by relatives of the dead, who praised the value of the chapel as a ‘living memorial’. According to Dodds, during the early years of the appeal, support from the armed forces was lukewarm, perhaps, he suggested, because they thought Portsmouth or Aldershot would have been a better location.\textsuperscript{483} For the widows and women suffering, due to the distance to travel for some, a naval location would have been better. The building of the chapel could also be seen as political hypocrisy during large defence cuts, even though it was funded by public appeals.

The grounds of the chapel also contain a memorial cairn that contains a collection of stones which had been brought back from four key battlefields of the Falklands Conflict (Goose Green, Tumbledown, San Carlos and Mount Longdon), two hundred and fifty-eight stones to represent each service man and the three female civilians killed. The idea of this simple but reflective memorial had been in fruition over many years, its eventual completion in 2007, the twenty-fifth anniversary. The Queen attended the annual anniversary service and blessed one of the cairn stones. Also, in attendance at the service were the former Prime Minister Baroness Thatcher, the then Prime Minister Tony Blair, senior military figures and six hundred veterans and families whose loved ones never returned. The local BBC reporter wrongly stated, however, that the memorial was to ‘commemorate the 255 soldiers killed’, again excluding three female deaths.\textsuperscript{484}

Annually, near the Argentine surrender, a special service of thanksgiving and remembrance is held at the chapel. The service is well attended with delegates from armed forces charities and associations, veterans and their families and past and present military figures. The Falkland Islands Memorial Chapel Trust’s 2015 newsletter described the most recent annual service as being ‘another joyous and memorable gathering’ in an ‘almost full

\textsuperscript{483} Dodds, \textit{Pink Ice}, 178.
chapel’. The précis of the service began with a mention of the special guests, which included Admiral the Right Honourable Baron West of Spithead with Lady West. The address by former Para 2 Chaplain and Chapel Trustee, Reverend David Cooper, which was described as ‘thought provoking and notable’, is also cited:

He set out to encourage those of us who had not been to war to think deeply about those who had, the sacrifices they had made, the physical or mental conditions they still endure and, of course, those who had paid the ultimate price.485

The community aspect of the chapel is also reflected in the newsletter along with congratulatory praises for some of the college’s pupils. An element of fundraising is also revealed with comments on the cost of repairs and upkeep of the chapel.

The ten wives interviewed for the Stage 2 interviews had all attended the chapel. Mrs R. a former Wren and girlfriend of a Royal Marine, said ‘I have attended the annual service there about five times now, I find the Garden particularly calming, a place I sit after the service and think of … for a while’.486 It therefore appears to be an important Falklands wives’ collective rite to bond them to this community, or do they attend to accompany/support their partners? Mrs C. (P), the wife of a chief petty officer, said ‘the service there is an excuse for the men to get together and reminiscence, sometimes I think the get togethers are an excuse for an afternoon of drinking, as we get older neither of us can handle that, so yes I have attended in the past, but as time passes our memories will be commemorated at home, or at least not in an organised manner’.487

National Memorial Arboretum

Mrs A. the widow of an able-bodied seaman, is a volunteer at the Arboretum, she holds regular talks about the effects of the Conflict to school parties visiting the site. She said that ‘I enjoy my times at the Arboretum, apart from the site being a place of quiet reflection for me, I believe that talking about the non-military, non-glorified effects of war are

486 Mrs R. interview by V. Woodman, August 11, 2012.
important. I am a strong supporter of the Armed Forces, even after my experience, but all sides should be remembered, we are all victims.\(^488\)

The Arboretum is not exclusively a memorial or commemoration of the Falklands, but the conflict is included in its memorials. The origins of the Arboretum can be attributed to David Childs \textit{RN} (Rtd) who, after visiting the Arlington Cemetery and National Arboretum in Washington, believed that similar concepts could be established in Great Britain to provide a meaningful memorial to those who had served since 1945. Childs was supported by Group Captain Leonard Cheshire DSO DFC, who was anxious about future remembrance and became influential in the concept of the Arboretum. The amphitheatre at the site is dedicated to his memory.

The then Prime Minister, John Major launched the appeal in November 1994, when there was no land or money for the project, but this was quickly resolved when Redland Aggregates (now Lafarge) generously donated eighty-two acres of reclaimed gravel alongside the banks of the River Tame, later extended by a further seventy acres which includes a wildlife lake.

The Arboretum was officially opened by HRH the Duchess of Kent on 16 May 2001. The design was chosen to provide both a space for peaceful contemplation and a living and growing environment for trees and wildlife. Veterans, families and friends can remember loved ones in a tranquil setting.\(^489\) Contained within this setting is also the Armed Forces Memorial, which was dedicated in the presence of the Queen on 12 October 2007 and was marketed as a nationally significant focus for remembrance, providing recognition and thanks for those who have given their lives in the service of the country since the two world wars.\(^490\) The memorial is important for the families who have no grave to visit, or who remember those in graves in far-off places.

Unlike previous war memorials, this memorial has a poignant element as it contains vast uncut spaces of stone, awaiting the names of those yet to die in service for their country. This memorial looks to the future, whereas previous memorials have looked to the past.

\(^{488}\) Mrs A. (M), interview by V. Woodman, March 11, 2011.  
\(^{490}\) Ibid.
Therefore, in this way the Armed Forces Memorial is not only a memorial to the past, but also to the present and future and will achieve this through commemorative events and the education of the younger generation.491

On the thirtieth anniversary of the Falklands Conflict a new national Falklands memorial was unveiled at the Arboretum, initiated by the South Atlantic Medal Association 1982. It had been built to honour the Task Force and remember the 255 servicemen and merchant seamen who gave their lives and to inform visitors of this historical event. The memorial had been designed to reflect the Falklands landscape and echoes the commemorative wall at the San Carlos Cemetery. The intention was to create a restful space for contemplation by visitors and incorporates a seven-foot-high curved wall of Cotswold stone overlooking a rock from the Falklands. It also features two granite benches and granite plaques, including one on which the names of the three Falkland Islanders who lost their lives are engraved. The unveiling ceremony was attended by hundreds of current and ex-service personnel and their families and culminated with a flypast by a Vulcan bomber and three military helicopters. The Vulcan was flown by Flight Lieutenant Martin Withers, the pilot who led the Black Buck 1 raid on Port Stanley’s runway in 1982.

Sara Jones, the widow of Colonel ‘H’ Jones, read the lesson. Mrs Jones said:

I think it’s very important for our families to have somewhere they can go which is special for them. It’s special to come to this wonderful place. It is a beautiful setting and they can be quiet and contemplate and remember.492

A Falklands widow, Margaret Allen, also lit a single candle in the Millennium chapel at the Arboretum, which burnt for seventy-four days, the length of the war.493

With nearly every town and village having its own memorials to the two world wars, it is interesting that it was deemed necessary to create another site of remembrance and commemoration in Britain. Did this reflect a national need for remembrance, or is it that remembrance is being used as a learning objective; a means to educate future generations about the past? Or was it a political tool to aggrandise militarism and make future British

491 Hunt, Memory, 183.
invasion appear acceptable? War memorials are now being used to educate young people and those without war experience to understand and realise why we commemorate past wars. War commemoration is not just about ageing veterans marching past the stone memorials with flags in their hands. The arboretum merges both the experiences of war throughout the twentieth century and future wars in one place not just to commemorate a person or group but in a way to understand the greater context of war.

**Respondents and commemoration**

The coded responses to the researcher’s question on how the respondents felt about commemoration of the conflict are examined in the Interview data analysis chapter, but the thoughts of some of the respondents about the nature of Falkland’s commemoration are included here.

Mrs L., the mother of a young sailor at the time of the war, said that she had ‘attended some remembrance events, but the one she remembered most was the twenty-fifth anniversary’. She commented that she thought that Falklands commemoration became more ‘visible’ that year, but she wasn’t sure why. The same respondent remembered meeting wives and mothers of some of the men whom had served with her son and said she felt ‘humbled’, especially on meeting the ‘brave’ wife of a chef who was killed. Mrs E., whose husband was a warrant officer, talked about attending some of the ship’s association reunions with her husband, she stated some of them were ‘boozy affairs’ with some of the men ‘reminiscing in a corner’. She noted that the twentieth anniversary reunion was ‘low-key’ and more ‘reflective’, adding that by then some of her husband’s old shipmates had been diagnosed with post-traumatic-stress disorder and that some of the conversation turned to ‘who had suffered what’. After that reunion she commented that they ‘did not attend any more of the anniversary events, commemoration and remembrance did not work for them’.

Mrs C., the wife of a chief petty officer with three children aged seventeen, fifteen and nine at the time of the conflict, declared that the commemorations should be ‘a remembrance service for those who did not return’. She stated that people ‘are not interested

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495 Mrs L., interview by V. Woodman, May 9, 2012.
496 Mrs E., interview by V. Woodman, February 25, 2012.
in the Falklands Conflict now and that people will remember what they want to remember. Their views thus portrayed some men’s desire to recapture their memories with the aid of alcohol, and wives’ individual perceptions.

This chapter has examined theories and language surrounding commemoration and commemorative rites whilst also analysing sites of Falklands commemoration and the agencies who are paramount in funding and publicising the commemorations. The research for this chapter addressed research questions 1. If a group of naval wives underwent the same events, would their views/thoughts/experiences be comparable? and 4. Did the wives’ thoughts and feelings differ from those reported in the press? Additionally, this chapter engaged with objectives 3. Demonstrate that commemoration of ‘normal’ peoples’ lives and the rôles they played are an important part of our history and 5. Examine how the conflict has been remembered or commemorated. As commemoration is a powerful analytical tool to re-evaluate a military event for contemporary society, it, together with the wives’ testimony in the Stage 1 Interview data chapter, has demonstrated the wives’ changing views about commemoration and their rôles over thirty years.

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497 Mrs. C., interview by V. Woodman, February 23, 2012.
Chapter 8 Stage 1 interview data

According to Lynn Abrams, oral history comprises four stages: the interview, the recorded version of the interview, the transcript and the interpretation of the interview (or data analysis).498 The next two chapters contain what Abrams claims is the fourth and final stage: the main corpus of data collected from respondents. The primary data for this thesis derives from the collection of oral history interviews and some recorded written experiences of the fifty women interviewed during this project. These were predominately the wives or girlfriends of serving members of the Royal Navy who sailed to the Falklands in 1982. The researcher has also interviewed some veterans who were involved in the conflict to establish some context and reviewed such topics as commemoration. The data collected from veterans’ interviews is included in the commemoration chapter, rather than here. This is because the bulk of the data was collected from the wives, and the only interviews with veterans concerned their feelings about remembrance and commemoration of the conflict. Ten women were re-interviewed in a second stage of interviews.

This chapter reduces gaps in research pertaining to the conflict, identified in the literature review chapters, by exploring the retrospective memories of the wives as individuals. It also adds credence to the thesis aim of widening the scope of gender, social, naval and cultural history of the Falklands Conflict. It presents the codified Stage 1 data in twelve themes, both in tables and discursively. Stage 2 re-interview data is presented in chapter 9, presented discursively.

Stage 1 Interview data

One of the first questions concerned each respondent’s connection to the Falklands Conflict/Royal Navy in 1982. This addressed her partner’s role in the Falklands Conflict and other naval connections the woman may have had. The second part of this theme led to the question ‘How did you find out about the conflict?’

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Table 8.1 Respondents’ knowledge of the Falklands

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
<th>Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Family</td>
<td>4% (2)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Media</td>
<td>70% (35)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spouse</td>
<td>8% (4)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Knew it</td>
<td>10% (5)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Friend</td>
<td>6% (3)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neighbour</td>
<td>2% (1)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>100% (50)</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

It is clear from the chart that most respondents found out about the conflict from the media: television and radio news reports.

The next theme concerned the respondent’s knowledge of the Falkland Islands prior to the onset of hostilities, with the question asked, ‘did you know where the Falkland Islands were?’
Table 8.2 Respondents’ knowledge of the Falkland Islands location when the conflict began

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
<th>Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Scotland</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No idea</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S. America</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>After news</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>100%</strong></td>
<td><strong>50</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As can be seen from the graph, there was no consensus regarding this question. Ignorance of the Falkland Islands location was not unique to the women interviewed. Many, maybe most people in Britain, did not know where they were. Contemporary newspapers frequently published maps showing where the islands were situated, alongside editorials detailing the conflict’s progress. Random television interviews in the street produced ambiguous responses, such as that the Islands were somewhere ‘up north’; ‘off the coast of Scotland’; ‘near France’; and ‘something to do with Denmark’. \(^{499}\) One commentator asserted that in Britain there was no tradition of using maps to clarify the legitimacy of British sovereignty and this had to be rectified. Therefore, during the conflict British newspapers and television offered more detail of the islands, showing, for example, the exclusion zone. For the British public this was essential, especially to understand the proxemics of the war. \(^{500}\)


One of the themes which had emerged during the pilot study was the role of the newspapers, radio and television. Questions were posed, ‘How did you find the news reports; did you think they were intrusive?’

The researcher asked the respondents if they went to the quayside. None of the respondents went to view the ships sailing from port to sail to the South Atlantic. There were various reasons for this; the most dominant being that many of the respondents’ partners were already on deployment when they were re-directed to the South Atlantic. One interviewee stated, ‘I never went to watch the ship sail, we said our goodbyes at home in private and I had to accept I wouldn’t see him for months.’\(^501\) Another was ‘living too far from the base and had a two year old son and another baby on the way’ and ‘wanted her tears to be in private’.\(^502\) Furthermore, some interviewees had jobs where they could not get time off to watch the ships sail from port: ‘at the time I worked nights at Royal Naval Hospital Haslar’, confirmed one respondent, ‘we said our goodbyes the night before, I knew I would have to keep myself busy and get on with it’.\(^503\) This was typical of some of the naval wives, including the researcher, although, apart from the wives who lived far from the naval base, not watching the ship sail was unusual. Mrs D, the wife of a naval officer, with a two-year-old son and a five-year-old daughter at the time said, ‘usually I went to the Round Tower in Portsmouth and watched the ship leaving, usually along with some other wives I had got to know, but that time in 1982 was different. I knew there would be more cameras there than usual, and I didn’t want to upset the children, they may have overheard something, especially my daughter, so I guess I was protecting them. I also thought I would get overwhelmed and cry, I usually did [pause] but that time it was different’.\(^504\)

\(^{501}\) Mrs G., interview by V. Woodman, May 9, 2013.
\(^{502}\) Mrs I., interview by V. Woodman, August 23, 2014.
\(^{503}\) Mrs T. interview by V. Woodman, March 13, 2013.
\(^{504}\) Mrs D. (L), interview by V. Woodman, March 23, 2013.
The women's thoughts and experiences of the media at the time of the conflict are examined here. While all the women interviewed stated that primary method of receiving updates on the progress of the conflict was through the media, 40% stated that they found the media intrusive. The women left at home were generally not critical of the press during the time of the Falklands. Mrs E. (J) the thirty-five-year-old wife of a warrant officer, who worked as a part-time civil servant said she, ‘believed the media accurately portrayed events, but their timing should have been questioned’. She said, ‘one particular shot of a man being dragged out of the water with his leg off’ stuck in her mind, she would ‘like to think his family had been informed beforehand, but believed they probably hadn’t’. Mrs H. (D) a twenty-five-year-old wife of a chief petty officer with a two-year-old daughter claims that ‘the media did the best they could’. ‘All the family watched the news, did not want to switch off the radio or television as this is where they got information from’, claimed Mrs C. (P) a thirty-five-year-old...

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505 Mrs E. (J), interview by V. Woodman, February 25, 2012.
506 Mrs H. (D), interview by V. Woodman, April 1, 2012.
-year old who worked full time and had three children. Mrs G. (J) a twenty-eight-year-old wife of a naval officer with a five-year-old and a four-year-old son stated that, ‘while her husband was away she had very little contact with him’. She ‘received almost all information on the progress of the war from the media, who always knew exactly what was going on’. Mrs H. (D) a twenty-five-year-old part-time teaching assistant with a two-year-old daughter said she ‘did believe that the media were very intrusive’ but still ‘followed the news regularly as it was the only source of information on what was going on’.

Mrs L. the mother of an able-bodied seaman on HMS xxx said that ‘My husband went and bought the papers as soon as the newsagents opened at six in the morning, some mornings he had been awake until four listening to the radio for any news reports.’ She added ‘we slept with the radio on, silly I suppose, but we just wanted news.’

Although they were asked, none of the wives interviewed commented on the media portrayal of the wives, Mrs T. (M) a twenty-eight-year-old wife of a Chief Petty Officer with a three-year-old son said she didn’t remember that they were reported in such an ‘impersonal way’, only ‘in relation to their husband’s role’, but that ‘it was typical of the navy at that time so why wouldn’t the press be the same?’

The researcher’s interviews reveal that although some, including the wives, were critical of some aspects in the reporting of the war, due to the lack of official information from the Royal Navy it was their only way of finding out what was going on.

The media reports portrayed naval wives at the time in terms of loyalty, although one respondent, the forty-three-year-old mother of an able-bodied seaman, who had been on a ship that had been hit in the Falklands, declared that ‘I could never have been so matter of fact if someone had asked me about my son, I was in bits in the morning when I heard a type 42 had been hit, that was even before we knew it was the ship my son was on.’ The same respondent continued, ‘because we lived away from the naval towns we were sort of left

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507 Mrs C. (P), interview by V. Woodman, February 23, 2012.
508 Mrs G. (J), interview by V. Woodman, April 3, 2012.
509 Mrs H. (D), interview by V. Woodman, April 1, 2012.
510 Mrs L. interview by V. Woodman, May 9, 2012.
511 Mrs T. (M), interview by V. Woodman, March 15, 2013.
512 Mrs L. interview by V. Woodman, May 9, 2012.
alone’, this naval mother did ‘write to the BBC about some of the graphic images that were shown, but I never got a reply back’.  

**Support networks and coping strategies**

Royal Naval, like other military wives, had to endure absences and needed to turn to someone for support. These subjects were therefore discussed during the interviews. All the Stage 1 women interviewed had experienced some absence from their partner, whether it was weeks on a training course, or months as part of the usual six-month deployment. However, none of them had experienced separation during a time of potential and actual conflict.

While most spouses/partners would turn initially to their partner for support, this opportunity is not always available to military wives. This is because on an average three years’ posting, the ship could be on deployment overseas for 50% of the time, depending on the age of the vessel and whether it will spend some time in re-fit. It must also be noted that if naval personnel wish to progress through the ranks they have to spend a proportion of time at sea. The armed forces are not exclusive in their incorporation of wives into their husbands’ work, but the literature review showed that the armed forces imposed the same social hierarchical framework on the wives as the men, resulting in the wife herself becoming part of the institution.

A wide range of occupations, from the obvious stereotypes: services, diplomatic, clergy and political wives, to the wives of policemen, merchant seamen, prison officers and academics find their lives being affected by the work of their husbands and ultimately get drawn into it. The interviews revealed that the naval wives had various levels of support, ranging from personal networks (families, friends and work colleagues) to official networks (naval welfare services and groups set up via a chain of communication through their husband’s ship or establishment). Not all the women’s experiences were the same; the level of support and/or help needed varied. Some women, especially those who had moved from familiar surroundings and thus their family and friends’ networks, felt isolated. Those women

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513 Ibid.
not in paid work outside the home and with young families felt the most isolated, especially if they had also moved away from their family. In fact, a twenty-seven-year-old pregnant wife of a chief petty officer, with a two-year-old son, stated that when becoming aware of her husband being sent to the South Atlantic, 'I packed up and went back to my parents’ home as I didn’t want to be in a strange place with few friends if anything bad happened'.

Some women had already moved hundreds of miles to reside close to their partners’ base or port in which their ship was based and had moved many times. Most of the women relied heavily on the support of their families and friends, with many women depending on their in-laws. However, these were not so much patrilocal marriages as marriages determined geographically by naval needs.

Very few of the respondents lived in married quarters. In 1982, only married couples were entitled to a married quarter; those co-habiting or in common law relationships were not permitted such provision. At the time of the conflict those military wives who were living in married quarters were aware that their accommodation went with their husband’s job, so if they were bereaved they would have to find alternative housing. While there was no suggestion that they would be evicted immediately, the then family officer in Portsmouth stated ‘they can’t stay there forever...however we would give them assistance to look to the reality of their own lives...and obviously eventually they are going to have to move’.

Following the Falklands Conflict, the researcher considers that due to various associations such as The Royal Navy and Royal Marines Widows Association, naval policy on bereaved families and married quarters is not now so brutal. More recently, if a family is living in married quarters and the naval partner is killed in service the family can remain in the accommodation until they feel ready to move on. However, they will be charged rent at market value, and not the subsidised military rent.

Those living in private accommodation felt that they were not as well informed or included in meetings, events or social occasions as their counterparts living in married quarters. This, the researcher believes, was not a deliberate action by any of the naval groups.

515 Mrs I. interview by V. Woodman, September 19, 2014.
516 Kim Richardson, Director, Naval Families Federation, interview by V. Woodman, March 13, 2013.
517 Captain Tony Oglesby OBE, Chief Staff Officer (Families) to Commander-in Chief, Naval Home Command, Portsmouth.
518 Kim Richardson, OBE, Director, Naval Families Federation. Interview by V. Woodman, March 13, 2013.
but due purely to logistics. Organising and advertising a wives’ meeting at a community centre in married quarters was one thing; disseminating that information to scattered individuals throughout the country was another matter in an era before email and social media. Some respondents also believed that Navy Family Officers viewed wives and families ‘as a hindrance’. By this the respondent explained that many felt they would rather the ‘women weren’t there’; they were always supporting the ‘navy’s interests and views, and not ours, the wives’. One respondent who did reside in married quarters, claimed that she felt ‘let down by navy welfare’. She felt that ‘they could have done more to support wives’ and that ‘the navy and the media used images of wives for propaganda’. The researcher’s conclusion is that despite the recognition by the Royal Navy that help and support for families would be required, the attitude of the naval welfare centre at the time was that ‘self-help is the name of the game’. In a radio interview in June 1982 the man then responsible for naval families in Portsmouth stated:

In the navy, in fact, we don’t have to do an enormous lot for them [naval families]; we depend upon the independence, fortitude and resources of our families.

In 1982 50% of married personnel lived in married quarters. According to the Reverend at BRNC in 1982, among all the armed forces, the RN had encouraged people the most to buy their own homes and integrate within their local communities:

And this proved true as we gradually discovered more and more people living in the geographical area allocated to BRNC and from memory I believe we eventually became aware of almost 400 families living within a 30-mile radius of Dartmouth of whom we knew nothing before the conflict.

All the professionals interviewed maintained that the Royal Navy was unprepared for the events of 1982. This did, however, result in some lessons being learnt, one of which was the difference between next of kin (NOK) and the person to be notified in the event of a casualty (PTBN). According to the Reverend of BNRC:

519 Mrs T., a nurse at Royal Naval Hospital (RNH) Haslar, interview by V. Woodman March 15, 2013.
520 Ibid.
521 Mrs C., interview by V. Woodman February 2, 2013.
NOK is a legal status; PTBN could be a sibling to inform elderly parents, or parents to inform a wife if there were difficult family circumstances. The golden rule was that despite any extraneous information we would only react to an official signal and notification from Portsmouth.  

One significant finding of this research was that many of the women had no desire to be part of what they termed ‘the naval wives brigade’, believing these groups to be an extension of the naval hierarchy experienced by their husbands. Asked what they meant by this, the reply was, ‘there seems to be a code where officer’s wives mix with other officer’s wives and if your husband isn’t one of them they speak to you in a condescending manner’. The portrayal of naval wives as an homogenous group was further disproved when one respondent, a nurse then serving at Royal Naval Hospital Haslar, declared, ‘many of the wives saw me [a woman in uniform], as a threat’. She reported she was treated with ‘animosity’ by some other wives on the married quarters, as they thought she ‘knew more about events than they did’.

Table 8.4 Respondents’ coping strategies

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Percentage</th>
<th>Number</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Family/Friends</td>
<td>70% (35)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Naval Groups</td>
<td>12% (6)</td>
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524 Ibid.
525 Mrs. C., interview by V. Woodman, February 23, 2012.
526 Ibid.
527 Mrs T., interview by V. Woodman, March 15, 2013.
From the Stage 1 interview evidence, most of the respondents (70%) relied on their family or friends for support when their husband/partner sailed with the task force. The interviews revealed that many women felt the Royal Navy did ‘not provide satisfactory support or information’ but ‘considering the numbers involved and the context of war this she felt was not surprising’. This is synonymous with the professionals’ affirmation that the Royal Navy, more than the other services, was unprepared to support the families in 1982.

The responses from the question on coping strategies led the researcher to ask the question ‘Did you find naval wives more understanding?’

Table 8.5 Did you find naval wives more understanding?

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>30% (15)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>60% (30)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hadn’t thought</td>
<td>10% (5)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>100% (50)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

528 Mrs C., interview by V. Woodman, March 18, 2013.
This demonstrates that most wives did not find other naval wives more understanding. During Stage 2 interviews the researcher questioned these responses more deeply.

**Communication**

In this section the respondents were not asked about communication with their husbands, as it was known that during the conflict communication was sporadic. However, some did mention communication, or lack of it, with their partners. There was no consensus over communication and the amount of time the women went without receiving letters from their husbands. Rather, it would appear this depended on their husbands’ circumstances. One respondent said she had no contact from her petty officer husband ‘for three months’ although she ‘wrote to him every day’. Another stated that her husband, a lieutenant commander was away for seven months and the main contact was by letter, although by the time his ship reached the South Atlantic the conflict was almost at an end. However, communication remained sparse as the ‘war had not formally ended, and they were still at action stations’. This respondent felt it was easier to ‘handle’ the absence then as there ‘was no texting or e-mail’ so ‘you had to get on with the crisis and to some degree less contact was less upsetting’. One wife talked about the logistics of sending mail from a ship at any time, but during a time of conflict communication was worse. This respondent received no communication with her chief petty officer husband for eight weeks. When she finally ‘received a letter, [she] also had a phone call and telegram from him on the same day’. During the time of the Falklands Conflict, post was by Forces Free Aerogramme, known as Blueys; stamps were not required. There were of course restrictions on mail, concerning quantity, mail pick-ups and censorship.

Some respondents talked about communication they had with other wives. This again seemed to vary depending where their husbands were based, or what ship they were on. One of the ships, HMS Bristol, operated a ‘chain of communication’ where the captain’s wife would contact officer’s wives and communication would filter down through a network of

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529 Mrs T., interview by V. Woodman, February 18, 2012. The husband’s job was to clear mines, so he moved from ship to ship, and for a while was based on the Falklands.
530 Mrs J., interview by V. Woodman, January 4, 2013.
531 Mrs H., interview by V. Woodman, April 1, 2013.
contacts. One of the respondents, an officer’s wife, said she knew she ‘had information that ratings and their families had no access to’. She declared that this made her feel ‘guilty’ and only socialised with women who would have had ‘access to the same information as me’, as she felt that her position would have created ‘divisions’ between her and other wives. Another respondent stated that ‘the families of men serving on the Bristol were like one big family, conflict made them bond more’. This perceived cohesion between families of the Bristol was further validated by articles in the Navy News, where pictures were shown of smiling families (minus the men), on visits to Bristol Zoo and a special get together in the chief petty officer’s mess at HMS Sultan. The event was videoed and sent to the ship, with a gift from every wife present. Some respondents maintained that the sense of community and camaraderie was present before the conflict. However, one respondent, the wife of a Royal Marine, contended that ‘she believed that the Marines provided plenty of support for the wives and families’ but did not ‘believe that was the case with the navy’.

Commemoration

Commemoration of the conflict will be covered in depth in the commemoration chapter. However, this chapter displays the data responses to the question ‘In your view is the way the conflict was commemorated the right way?’

532 Three of the respondents (Mrs C, Mrs E. and Mrs J.) had husbands on the same ship and they all talked about the sense of community and the lines of communication which filtered down from the captain’s wife.
533 Mrs E., interview by V. Woodman, February 25, 2012.
535 Mrs H., interview by V. Woodman, April 1, 2013.
Many of the respondents felt the conflict was appropriately commemorated (58%), with 32% claiming that to remember it was the most important thing; how it is commemorated was not an issue to them. The thirty-four-year-old wife of a warrant officer with three children stated that ‘although the conflict was mentioned on a yearly basis, it was only during the twentieth anniversary that people started to realise the effects that the war had created’. 536 Mrs R, the twenty-three-year-old wife of a chief petty officer said, ‘we owe it to those who died, and those still suffering to remember them, whose place is it to decide what is important enough to be remembered’. 537 The researcher also asked whether the women thought it was important to have their experiences or memories incorporated into the commemorations of the war. The overwhelming consensus on this was ‘no’. The twenty-five-year-old wife of a chief petty officer with a two-year-old daughter suggested that the wives and families had ‘to a large extent been forgotten and their experiences and memories

536 Mrs H., interview by V. Woodman, October 1, 2012.
537 Mrs R. (A), interview by V. Woodman, December 3, 2012.
were yet to be acknowledged’. She felt that it was ‘important to tell our side as we are affected too’. Asked what she would like she replied, ‘some acknowledgement of our sacrifices.’ Mrs R. who was twenty-one at the time and had a strong naval background with a father, uncle and brother in the navy expressed the view that ‘women are not seen to be important in most commemorations, I mean the effect the war had on me and my life is still haunting me thirty-years later, it is a case of hiding the effects, I guess if the public were reminded of the effects of war would any one sign up? So it the good things are remembered and played up and the bad are hidden. Due to the lack of literature pertaining to the wives at the time of the conflict, it demonstrates that her sentiments were well founded. This is examined in depth in the literature review.

The researcher then asked the question, ‘does your husband/partner attend any anniversary/commemorative events. If he does how often is he involved?’

**Table 8.7 Respondents’ husbands/partners attending commemorations**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Attending Commemorations</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes-regularly</td>
<td>36% (18)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes-but only occasionally</td>
<td>22% (11)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No-prefers to meet those he served with</td>
<td>30% (15)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No-none at all</td>
<td>8% (4)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

538 Ibid.
539 Mrs R., interview with V. Woodman, August 11, 2012.
No response 4% (2)  
Total 100% (50)

Two respondents did not answer this question. The responses show that most veterans in this sample have commemorated the conflict in some manner, although fifteen partners preferred to honour it with their shipmates and do not attend ‘official’ events organised by veterans’ groups or ships’ associations. Some of the women attended these events, at times involving a weekend away in a hotel. The women who do this say they have a ‘bond with the other women’ and realise that their partners will become ‘maudlin, thoughtful, and even depressed’ during the time leading up to the reunions. A thirty-three-year-old officer’s wife working as a part-time sales assistant with two sons aged five and seven, stated that the conflict should be commemorated, but it ‘should be reserved for those who took part, and wives and families should not take part, only be there to support their partners’. This respondent had previously experienced a father and brother in the Royal Navy. Another officer’s wife aged twenty-five said that she ‘had mixed feelings about commemoration’, as she felt it ‘was an excuse for people to strut about in their medals’.

Part of this section of the interview asked if the women had visited the Falkland Islands with their husbands. Very few, only three of those interviewed, had done so. One of the respondents who visited the islands has documented her experience in Christopher Hilton’s *Ordinary Heroes: Untold stories from the Falklands Campaign*. She acknowledged that visiting the islands filled her with ‘a mixture of overwhelming feelings and memories’ and that she came away from the trip ‘with a totally different attitude to the Falkland Islands and the islanders; a lot more positive and a better understanding of why it had to happen’.

**Long and short-term effects of being involved in the conflict**

The researcher asked the respondents about any short or long-term effects on themselves through being connected with the Falklands Conflict. At this point some of the respondents talked about the effects on their husbands, which naturally would have affected

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540 Mrs. C., interview by V. Woodman, February 23, 2012; Mrs. G., April 3, 2012.  
541 Mrs I., interview by V. Woodman September 1, 2014.  
544 Mrs H., interview by V. Woodman, October 1, 2012.
them too. Some of these effects will be analysed in the aftermath chapter. The respondents all recognised and admitted that the conflict had affected them. A thirty-two-year-old officer’s wife with a son and a daughter aged two and five acknowledged that ‘those few weeks were important to me, they were life changing’. This same respondent acknowledged that her husband had changed ‘from the time he returned home’. One eighteen-year-old fiancée of an able-bodied seaman (AB) admitted that the short-term effect was ‘numbness’ which later ‘progressed to OCD and depression’. She had also suffered from anorexia nervosa (an eating disorder).

**Table 8.8 Long or short-term effects of the conflict on the respondent**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Effect</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
<th>Notes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Short term including stress, panic</td>
<td>20% (10)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Long term including depression</td>
<td>44% (22)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Long term with physical effects including an eating disorder, PTSD</td>
<td>16% (8)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Long term but suffering through change in husband/partner or dealing with bereavement</td>
<td>20% (10)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>100% (50)</strong></td>
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All the respondents suffered either short or long-term effects. Those who suffered long-term with either physical or mental issues had to wait many years to be diagnosed. One

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545 Mrs D., interview by V. Woodman, March 12, 2012.
546 Mrs H., interview by V. Woodman, October 1, 2012.
of the bereaved respondents was herself diagnosed with Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder ten years after the conflict.\textsuperscript{547} She described returning to work just three weeks after learning about her young husband’s death: ‘I did not have to return so early but I thought going to work would keep me busy, some normality’.\textsuperscript{548} However, in later years the respondent realises that ‘I was wrong, I needed time to grieve’. Three months after this his ship returned to port a shipmate was asked to return his belongings. As the respondent was out at work, the shipmate left her deceased husband’s kitbag on the doorstep. Returning home from work the respondent described how ‘stumbling over the kitbag I almost died, I thought [my husband] had come home. When this happened I just shut down.’\textsuperscript{549}

**What was the effect on the husband/partner of participating in the conflict?**

The respondents were asked what changes they had noticed in their husband’s behaviour. Forty-six women said they had noticed changes, their nature recorded. Four women replied ‘No’.

**Table 8.9 Effects on the men**

![Pie chart showing effects on the men]

- withdrawn
- not talk
- on own
- noises
- nightmares
- moody
- drink

\textsuperscript{547} Mrs A., interview by V. Woodman March 11, 2011. During the interview she asked for me to use her words.\textsuperscript{548} Ibid.\textsuperscript{549} Ibid. She stressed she felt no ‘malice’ towards the young sailor who had followed orders and brought her husband’s belongings home stating it was just pure lack of thought about the effect it would have on her.
Men became withdrawn 20% (10)
Men didn’t want to talk about the conflict 28% (14)
Men wanted to be on their own 14% (7)
Reacted to loud noises (fireworks) 10% (5)
Suffered from nightmares 6% (3)
Became moody 12% (6)
Drank more 10% (5)
**Total** 100% (50)

The women were then asked if the men had suffered more than one effect. It was recognised by the researcher that this would be an emotive subject, but all the respondents were willing, and in some cases eager to share the information. The researcher concluded that this eagerness to share their experiences resulted from the lack of interest that had been shown previously towards the wives’ predicaments. A twenty-seven-year-old wife of a chief petty officer, who was pregnant, with a two-year-old son during the conflict, said that ‘she wanted people to know how they [the men] and their families had suffered’.

Table 8.10 Which effects did the men suffer?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Effect</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Suffered more than one effect</td>
<td>40% (20)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Suffered two or more effects</td>
<td>30% (15)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Suffered a combination of all the mentioned effects</td>
<td>22% (11)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No response</td>
<td>8% (4)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>100% (50)</td>
</tr>
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</table>

550 Mrs I., interview by V. Woodman September 1, 2014.
This evidence shows that the effects suffered by the wives were complex, therefore could not be resolved easily. The long and short-term effects suffered by the veterans after the conflict, and the respondents’ coping strategies, are investigated further in Stage 2 data.

Falklands, and other war veterans took court action against the MoD in 2003, citing war as being the cause of their PTSD, but lost their case. Mrs R. (A) a twenty-three-year-old wife of a chief petty officer in 1982, said her husband had changed from the day he got home, and she remembered the court case in 2003, ‘I followed it closely as it would have affected me and many others in my position’. She continued, ‘I remember being angry watching the news, thinking this is all about money, why pay when you can say you have looked after the men sufficiently but anyone in my position knows that’s not true’. A high court judge in London dismissed allegations that the Ministry of Defence had systematically failed to protect service personnel from the psychological consequences of their exposure to the horrors of war. A loss for the MoD would have resulted in a pay-out of over £100 million in compensation.

There were few military charities offering advice to wives in 1982. One of the respondents in the research had lost her husband in 1982. Mrs A. (M) eighteen in 1982, who had only been married two weeks before her husband sailed, was complimentary about the support she received from the War Widows Association. However, this support related to practical matters; nothing prepared her for the long-term effects of being a Falklands widow; she was diagnosed with PTSD herself some ten years after the war. After losing a loved one, the normal process is to go through various stages of grief. According to bereavement counsellors there are seven stages of grief. These are:

- Shock and disbelief
- Pain and guilt
- Anger and bargaining
- Depression, reflection and loneliness
- The upward turn
- Reconstruction and working through

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552 Mrs R. (A), interview by V. Woodman, December 3, 2012.

553 War veterans lose trauma claim case, www.theguardian.com/society/2003/may/22/themilitary.publichealth

554 Mrs A., interview by V. Woodman, March 11, 2011.
• Acceptance and hope.  

Unfortunately, the respondent got stuck in the first phase, ‘shock and disbelief’, mainly due to not being able to have his body back home. She continued to function, but she said:

Nothing was really going in, and nothing was going out. I only realised I needed to do something about it some 10 years later, when the Gulf War started. By that time I’d remarried and had two beautiful children, but the war meant I had started to relive […] death very specifically. I kept expecting them to come to the door to tell me […] had died all over again.  

The respondent claimed it was only when one of her children asked her why she was crying all the time that she:

Went to the G.P. and told her what I’d been experiencing. Fortunately, she knew someone who dealt specifically with ex-service personnel, so I went to see him, and they did some tests. He confirmed that I was suffering from Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder, but said the bad news was that it would take about twelve weeks to sort out. It actually took two years, and it was only after that stage that I could finally join the human race again.  

For this respondent part of the recovery process was to re-visit the Falklands after her treatment, she had previously visited in 1983, but stated that time she ‘was looking for […]’, thinking I would find him alive’. However, on the second visit she planted a bush in San Carlos cemetery and visited the memorials and something that was crucial to her was ‘placing flowers on some Argentine soldiers’ graves as their families were grieving too’. Mrs A. (M) did not visit the islands alone, she went with other widows and veterans organised by the South Atlantic Medal Association.  

Mrs R. (A) who was married to a chief petty officer said her husband returned from the Falklands a ‘changed man’ and asserted: ‘the actual conflict doesn’t compare to the after effects’. This respondent recalled the thirty years of ‘torment’ she had endured, but not once had she considered leaving her husband. She criticised the ‘medical professions over-use of drug therapies’ when she stated that the drugs had changed her husband physically as he ‘had put on a lot of weight with them’. She recounted the number of times she had had

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556 Ibid.
557 Ibid.
558 Ibid.
559 Mrs R., interview by V. Woodman, December 12, 2012.
to call the police out to her husband when he was threatening ‘to end his life’ and how once she had turned to him and said, ‘okay do it’. Some of the veteran support groups were also criticised by the respondent. She claimed they were not ‘supportive of the wives’ and that they were run by the ‘same paternalistic and chauvinistic men from the armed forces, who viewed women as only being supportive and not allowed to have a mind of their own’. She recalled an occasion when she and her husband had travelled, at their own expense, many miles to attend a veterans’ meeting that was advertised as being a forum for families and somewhere they could get help and advice. She recalled: ‘every time a female raised her hand to ask a question or make a statement they were talked down and spoken to like they were stupid and didn’t know what they were talking about’. She and her husband walked out and did not renew their membership of that particular association. This respondent’s support came from family and friends but also from the women she had befriended through attending reunions organised through her husband’s ship association. These women, she said ‘knew exactly what she had to contend with’, even though some men suffered different symptoms, they [the wives] ‘were all living with damaged men’.

For some veterans and their families, it appears that writing poetry about their experiences becomes a form of therapy and a coping strategy. The researcher has no statistics on this but some of the Falklands social media sites to which she belongs often share war poems written by veterans. Mrs R. (A), the wife of a chief petty officer with two young children in 1982, had written poems to help her express her experiences but also to ‘be a voice for service and ex-service families who had suffered, and their suffering is never fully realised’. This respondent’s husband had been reported missing when his ship was hit in 1982; quite a few hours later it was reported that he in fact was not missing. Her husband was subsequently medically discharged with PTSD in 1987. This respondent stated there are what she believes to be many more ‘Falklands veterans’ who are also the ‘forgotten heroes’;

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560 Ibid.
561 Ibid.
563 Mrs. R., interview by V. Woodman, December 12, 2012.
by that she meant the ‘wives, sweethearts, mums, sisters, daughters, sons, brothers and dads of veterans’.\(^{564}\) She described PTSD as being:

> Like a fungus that just keeps growing outwards affecting everyone in its path. Sometimes a little breakthrough is made to halt the growth and just when you think it’s dead up it pops again.\(^{565}\)

The respondent gave the researcher permission to quote some of her poetry as she publishes under a pen name. Her published poems all describe a sense of searching for something lost and talked about the returning servicemen as being ‘shells’:

\[\text{A river of tears cannot cleanse} \\
\text{The unseen wound which does not heal} \\
\text{There are more than battlefield shells} \\
\text{So many human shells return home} \\
\text{To the family never to be the same...}\]

Another poem talked about the changes in her husband:

\[\text{Have you ever felt that your husband is so far away} \\
\text{When he is right next to you} \\
\text{Have you ever felt-why has he changed so much} \\
\text{Have you ever felt-why is he always shouting} \\
\text{Have you ever felt-why is he always drinking} \\
\text{Have you ever felt-why is he always angry} \\
\text{Have you ever felt- why does he always want to be alone}\]

The researcher asked Mrs R. (A) what kind of responses she had received from other wives, she replied that the ‘response has been phenomenal, I already knew a lot of wives from my husband’s ship, they have a very strong ship’s association that meets at least once a year. But after the poems were published I received letters sent via the publisher from women who said they can understand what I am saying in my words as they have been there too.’\(^{568}\)

It has been acknowledged that a return to the Falklands is a step in the PTSD healing process for veterans. However, it has also proved to be a conciliatory phase for wives and

\(^{564}\) Ibid.  
\(^{565}\) Ibid.  
\(^{567}\) Ibid. 71.  
\(^{568}\) Mrs R. (A), interview by V. Woodman, December 3, 2012.
families too. A respondent who accompanied her husband to the Falklands in 2005 stated that as the day to depart for the islands approached she felt ‘mixed emotions, trepidation, animosity, apprehension and curiosity’.\textsuperscript{569} She said she realised she was not just going on the trip to be her husband’s support, she needed:

...this experience too. I had many unresolved feelings for what happened all those years ago. It was time for both of us to face up to and talk about those issues that we hadn’t really been able to for twenty-three years.\textsuperscript{570}

The respondent claimed that she came away from the trip ‘with a totally different attitude towards the Falkland Islands and Islanders, she had wanted to hate them as the protecting them could have led to losing her then fiancé but they were so accommodating and grateful for what the British forces had done for them that I had to accept what had happened and move on’.\textsuperscript{571}

**Was it worth it?**

After any conflict the question is often asked, ‘Was it worth it?’ The researcher asked the respondents if, thirty-years after the event, they thought it was worth it. Most of them related this to their partners and said they believed it was their partners’ ‘duty’ as they ‘had signed on the line to serve Queen and country’. None of the women were overtly critical of what they saw as the reason for the conflict, which one twenty-six-year-old wife of a chief petty officer, with a five-year-old daughter maintained was ‘protecting our islands and our people from a dictator’.\textsuperscript{572} Any hint of dissent or grievance was qualified quickly by words of support. A twenty-eight-year-old wife of a naval officer, not working at the time and with two children, said ‘they [the men] had no choice; it’s what they were trained for’.\textsuperscript{573} Another wife declared ‘It’s what my husband was in the navy for, to defend our rights’.\textsuperscript{574} A thirty-one-year-old wife of a chief petty officer, with a son aged six did reveal that ‘when men started to die and the ships started to go down I did question what it was all for’.\textsuperscript{575} But another response from a twenty-eight-year-old officer’s wife, with a five-year-old daughter and a four-

\textsuperscript{569} Mrs. H., interview by V. Woodman, October 1, 2012.
\textsuperscript{570} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{571} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{572} Mrs J. (A), interview by V. Woodman, March 5, 2012.
\textsuperscript{573} Mrs G., interview by V. Woodman April 3, 2012.
\textsuperscript{574} Mrs C., interview by V. Woodman, February 23, 2012.
\textsuperscript{575} Mrs C., interview by V. Woodman, March 18, 2013.
year-old son, declared ‘that from a moral point of view the Falklands did belong to England, it was invaded, therefore the war was worth it’; also ‘there was a great deal of public support in Britain’. The general consensus can be summed up by a thirty-five-year-old petty officer’s wife, who was working full time as a shop manager with two children: ‘I was supportive of my husband, and I knew what his job was when I met him’.

The researcher analysed the words that were used in the respondents’ answers to this section of the interview and discovered there were certain terms that were common in most of the interviews. The data revealed:

Table 8.11 Was it worth it? Common terms

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Term</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
<th>Count</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>His job</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Duty</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My role to support him</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Defend our rights</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Margaret Thatcher was right</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Used more than one of these terms</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>100%</strong></td>
<td><strong>148</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

576 Mrs G., interview by V. Woodman, April 3, 2012.
577 Mrs T., interview by V. Woodman, February 18, 2012.
Note: This numerical data adds up to more than fifty (the number of respondents), as some of them used more than one of the terms. To calculate the percentage, the researcher coded each response and counted the number of times a word/term was used.

A specific word or term which emerged in this section was ‘patriotic’. One respondent, Mrs. J. (D) a twenty-nine-year-old officer’s wife with two daughters also claimed that at the beginning of the conflict, when her husband was out in uniform, people showed ‘reverence’ to him, ‘touching his uniform and saying good luck mate’. To the researcher this evoked parallels with the grand historical narratives linked to describe such national heroes as Nelson, held in high esteem during the nineteenth century by the British public. A mixture of patriotism and politics in the home-front was reflected in the interviews. Mrs E. (J) a thirty-five-year-old wife of a warrant officer with a ten-year-old daughter said, ‘that when she first heard about the possible conflict over the Falklands, she had purely selfish thoughts, and was concerned about the effect it would have on her’. However, she added she was ‘very patriotic and felt Mrs. Thatcher was doing the right thing’, at the time she can remember saying ‘up the British’. Mrs C. (P), a thirty-five-year-old chief petty officer’s wife with three children, stated that she ‘supported the war, she felt it had to be done’, though she ‘found it difficult to start with, as had never heard of the Falklands’. This respondent also claimed being ‘very British and felt that we had to defend what was ours and supported Mrs Thatcher every way on it’. Mrs C. (P) did state, however, that ‘I was already a Tory voter and that I would have supported Margaret Thatcher on this anyway, my views didn’t change’. The respondent added, ‘I still think today [2012] that she did the right thing’. Therefore her husband’s involvement in the conflict had no impact on her political allegiances.

Dual rôles

Many of the respondents talked about leading ‘a double life’ or having to adopt ‘dual rôles’ when their husbands were absent. This was not particular to a time of conflict, but during any deployment.
Some of the respondents talked about ‘being independent’ and ‘learning to do jobs like change a plug, put oil in the car’ and other household tasks they would usually have left to ‘the man of the house’. However, others seemed to enjoy the independence and confidence they gained from having to cope in certain situations and under pressure. One respondent said she ‘had gained experience in loads of household tasks she wouldn’t have done if she had not spent periods of time being the head of the household’. She claimed she ‘delighted in decorating when her husband was away so he didn’t know what he would find when he returned’. But other respondents did not enjoy the military life. Being in a conflict situation highlighted this. One respondent said she felt her husband was ‘married to the navy’ and she saw herself as the ‘mistress’ and the navy was her husband’s ‘wife’.

Former WRNS wives’ responses differed from those of non-WRNS wives in this aspect of the interviews. Those women who had served in the military appeared to be more accepting of separation and the degree of independent living they endured. A naval nurse at Haslar, married to a chief petty officer, ‘enjoyed’ her role, stating she had left home to become a nurse and was ‘independent and able to look after a home on her own. She had ‘travelled’ and ‘lived in Gibraltar’ at a time when her husband spent time at sea. This respondent, aged twenty-five at the time of the conflict, saw herself as being ‘married to her job’. The concept of dual rôles for this respondent was through her own career choice and not her husband’s.

Respondents’ thoughts about war

Towards the end of the interview respondents were asked ‘In your opinion did being involved in the conflict change how you feel about war generally?’

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583 Mrs G., interview by V. Woodman, April 3, 2012; Mrs W., interview by V. Woodman. February 25, 2012. Throughout the interview Mrs G. quite frequently talked about what her husband said and did and not her thoughts and feelings.

584 Mrs J., interview by V. Woodman, January 4, 2013.

585 Mrs W., interview by V. Woodman, February 25, 2012.

586 Mrs T (M.), interview by V. Woodman, March 15, 2013.
Table 8.12 Feelings about war

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<table>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>54%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Don’t know</td>
<td>16%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As can be seen from the data, most respondents said they did not feel differently about war after their experiences. However, one respondent said it had ‘made me more thoughtful towards what women had put up with in the past, like the Second World War, where the men were away for much longer, and with no communication at all’. One respondent commented that she felt ‘the Falklands war was justified as “we” were protecting “our” own people, whereas more recent wars, for example the Gulf, was not “our” war’.

The respondents were supportive of their husbands’ involvement in the conflict; any words of dissent or grievances were superseded with words of support. One wife said, ‘it was what her husband was trained for.’ Mrs. C. (P) a thirty-five-year-old full time psychiatric nurse declared ‘that is what my husband is in the navy for, to defend our rights.’ The general consensus can be summed up by Mrs T. (A) a thirty-five-year-old wife of a Petty

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587 Mrs C., interview by V. Woodman, March 18, 2013.
588 Mrs I., interview by V. Woodman, September 1, 2014.
589 Mrs G., interview by V. Woodman, April 3, 2012.
590 Mrs C., interview by V. Woodman, February 23, 2012.
Officer with a son of six and a daughter aged ten who said, ‘I was supportive of my husband, I knew what his job was when I met him’. 591

Of the women interviewed, none saw themselves as being feminists, or indeed acknowledged being active in any women’s rights groups, although they would have been affected by social change in women’s lives through the 1970s. Mrs P., an officer’s wife, who was aged twenty-nine at the time of the conflict, stated that:

I didn’t, and still don’t really know what feminism is [pause] ...I mean umm...I am independent and can take responsibility for running the home and more....but I see being independent as being my job, umm I support him and it’s my responsibility to make sure everything is running in the home. And what is Women’s Liberation? [pause] I mean I agree that in some instances women have had it tough ...I mean in terms of work and pay and even education, but I don’t see myself as having any active part of women’s liberation. 592

The researcher asked for the respondents’ thoughts on the Greenham peace women. The naval wives had little or no sympathy with, or comprehension of the Greenham peace women’. How much of this was due to newspaper and television reports it is impossible to ascertain. However, Mrs C. a 35-year-old psychiatric nurse, said that:

...those women were wrong, I heard that they lived like hippies and abandoned their families, for what? I had to go to work and look after my family. I didn’t have time to go and protest...why would you put yourself in that position? 593

Another respondent, Mrs J, aged 29 and an officer’s wife, said that ‘as a military wife I know we need deterrents, but as a mum of two young children I can understand what the women are fighting for, even if I don’t agree with their methods’. 594

Some saw themselves as fitting the stereotype of corporate naval wives. Mrs T., who was married to a chief petty officer and aged 28 at the time of the conflict, was proud that she ‘could change a plug’ and stressed that before he went on deployment her husband had shown her how to ‘perform basic tasks on her car, such as check the oil and water.’ 595 The women seemed to derive great pride in claiming that they had to adopt some of the male

591 Mrs T., interview by V. Woodman, February 18, 2012.
592 Mrs P., interview by V. Woodman, April 11, 2012.
593 Mrs C., interview by V. Woodman, February 23, 2012
595 Mrs T., interview by V. Woodman, February 2, 2012.

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rôles when their partners were absent. This seemed to be more likely if they had children. Mrs G., the wife of an officer and aged 28 at the time of the Falklands, expressed her pride ‘in decorating the house’: she did not always tell her husband when he was away, so ‘he would return from deployment and look around the house to see what had changed’. The Royal Navy encouraged and supported this behaviour and attitude intentionally, the ‘I can cope without my man/warrior’ assertiveness. Mrs S., a 29-year-old wife of a Royal Marines officer, said, ‘my husband showed me how to change a plug, where the fuse box was and how to put oil and water in the car before he went away’. She did add that this was ‘before his first deployment after we had married’ and that ‘I was 20 at the time and had never lived on my own’.

None of the women interviewed were derogatory about Thatcher, her leadership or her handling of the Falklands conflict. Mrs E., who was 35 at the time of the conflict and whose husband was a warrant officer, claimed that ‘the Prime Minister had no choice, she did what she had to do’. When the researcher asked the respondent how she felt about her husband being sent into that situation by a woman and a woman whose husband would not have to do the same, she replied, ‘it was his job, I knew that when I became involved with a sailor’.

During the interviews, the researcher did not seek to clarify the political leanings of the interviewees. On reflection this was a failing, as political allegiance is a measurable variable.

Social aspects of military life became apparent through the interviews. One of the interviewees, Mrs H., 32-year-old wife of a naval officer, expressed this view:

I saw myself as being lucky to be married to a naval officer. When he was on deployment I would often fly out to where the ship was for a couple of weeks. I visited Singapore and Africa, places that people didn’t visit in the 1980s. The navy negotiated a good deal on the travelling as usually 30 or so wives would be travelling.

Mrs G., interview by V. Woodman, April 3, 2012.
Mrs S., interview by V. Woodman, March 20, 2012.
Mrs E., interview by V. Woodman February 25, 2012.
Mrs H., interview by V. Woodman, October 1, 2012.
Mrs T., a 28-year-old married to a chief petty officer and working part-time in administration said:

I had no experience of navy life and the lack of social mixing between officers and men, or their wives. There were times when I met other naval wives, maybe just in a local shop or at school and when they asked me what my husband did, and I said a CPO they just looked at me and they did not say anything else.

She continued: ‘I found out afterwards they were the wives of ABs (able bodied seaman, the next to lowest rating) maybe they thought I wouldn’t want to talk to them, or they thought I was snobby or something?’600 This behaviour could be described as ‘inverted classism’.

Mrs H., the 32-year-old wife of a naval officer, saw her job as secondary to her husband’s and her rôle was ‘to be there for my children as they needed one parent to be around constantly’. However, she also said on occasions that her husband had ‘asked her to contact one of the young wives or girlfriends’ of the men on the ship as they were finding the separations difficult and she was asked to give ‘some morale support and advice’. She added she was ‘happy to do this’ as she knew it could be tough but in a comment that characterised her corporate naval rôle, she said ‘I don’t know why some girls get involved with sailors, I mean they know they will go away, and then they do nothing but moan! I guess a naval wife is born and not made’.601

Mrs E., a 35-year-old married to a chief petty officer, was not living in married quarters at the time of the interview but had lived in one earlier in her marriage. She said the quarters were furnished so ‘I had no say over the colour of the carpets or walls’. She also commented on the procedure when they vacated the married quarters. She said ‘everyone on the estate would know you were moving out, men in uniform came to the door with the inventory, signed when we moved in, and they checked the walls and doors, any holes or marks in the wall you would be charged for. They even checked to see how clean the oven was’.602 Mrs E. declared that ‘women on the patch would discuss other wives mustering out’ (the process

600 Mrs T., interview by V. Woodman, February 18, 2012.
601 Mrs H., interview by V. Woodman, April 7, 2012.
602 Mrs E., interview by V. Woodman, February 23, 2012.
of checking the inventory) and they would comment about those ‘who had been penalised’. They seemed to ‘take great delight in a wife having a dirtier quarter’ than them.603

Only one of the interviewees mentioned religion, disparagingly. Mrs M., a thirty-two-year-old petty officer’s wife, and a part-time receptionist in 1982, stated: ‘I know the officers and their wives went to church on Sundays, it was part of their job to be seen, think it was like a get together and a social event, rather than religious’. Mrs M went on to say that she only attended church ‘on special occasions’ and felt she could be a ‘good person’ without going to church. When asked what a ‘good person’ was she responded with ‘someone who helps people’604. Therefore if religious affiliation was greater amongst the serving family member, this did not appear to be reflected in the non-serving family member.

To address the concept of muted channels, the researcher endeavoured to ask the interviewee how and what meanings she gave to her experiences. A blatant example of an interviewee extolling the dominant view was when Mrs C. a 31-year-old full time manager for an amusement company asked, ‘did I tell you what you wanted?’ 605 The same interviewee, several times through the interview said ‘my husband said’606 when the interviewer asked about ‘her’ thoughts and experiences.

The testimony of one respondent who was a mother of a Falklands veteran, who was interviewed for this research, focused on the ‘helplessness’ and ‘emptiness’ she felt on hearing her son (who was only seventeen at the time) was on his way to the Falklands. The respondent’s husband had been in the Merchant Navy, so the family were used to separations, but to ‘potentially go to war’ was ‘not something we were prepared for’. She described her feelings on hearing the ship (HMS xxx) had been hit and the ‘frustration of not being able to talk to anyone at naval welfare’ as ‘the lines were clogged’. She ‘talked to a photo of her son’ and remembered ‘tying a yellow ribbon’ around the frame. She described her son as ‘a happy go lucky guy when he left’ on his return he ‘had a very short fuse’. 607

603 Ibid.
604 Mrs M., interview by V. Woodman, March 15, 2013.
605 Mrs. C., interview by V. Woodman February 2, 2013.
606 Ibid.
607 Mrs. L., interview with V. Woodman, May 9, 2012.
In addition to the pie charts the researcher transcribed extracts from three Stage 1 interviews according to the sixteen colour-coded themes. These themes were presented in Chapter 6, How data was collected. The transcriptions were recorded in 10-minute sections, hence 10:00 was ten minutes into the interview, etc. The researcher followed the practice of the National Museum of the Royal Navy where she had previously transcribed interviews from the collection. The inclusion of pauses and laughs were adopted, as it was the practice of an oral history practitioner for whom the researcher had transcribed some interviews for publication. The colour coding of the transcriptions allowed the researcher to group data into themes, thus enabling the process of extrapolating data for analysis and review. To protect respondents’ anonymity ships names have been hidden in the transcript extracts.

Interview with Mrs W (husband was a chief engineer based on HMS xxx transferred to HMS xxx) 25 February 2012.

Mrs W was born in the Portsmouth area, she had no military background apart from two uncles on her grandmother’s side, one in the RAF and one in the RN. Mrs W met her husband in a club, the Mecca whilst in her early 30s. They went out together once and he was posted to Hong Kong. She received a letter proposing marriage and, despite having always sworn never to marry a sailor, she married in Hong Kong in 1975. The family returned to England in 1978 and were initially allocated a married quarter but arrived too late on the Friday to in-muster. They had no option but to stay with her husband’s family in Plymouth until they could move in on the Monday. Because of this they decided to buy their own home, so within three weeks they had bought a house in Gosport.

The respondent had two children, a son and a daughter, aged three and five at the time of the conflict and worked part-time in an office.

10:00

I What was life like being a ‘navy wife’?

AW It was hard to adjust to being part of the military life, the rules are different, the life of a civilian and service person are completely different.

I in what way?
AW ...[pause]... well, naval wives are not allowed to behave badly as it might affect your husband’s job...[pause]... naval wives have to ’sit down and shut up’ [Mrs W’s stress of words].

I were you separated a lot of the time?

AW The longest separation was ten months, that was hard with a young family... [pause]... but I am independent and used to dealing with family affairs and finances. Also, my husband was away on many ships prior to the conflict.

I How did you find out about the war?

AW ...[pause]... I first heard about the Falklands invasion at home on the television, I remember being told about the preparation of a task force, but I can’t remember who told me. My husband was at home during the start of the conflict, he left four weeks into it.... [pause]... I only knew a week before he flew out; although he told me later he had known for a while longer but didn’t want to worry me. I didn’t understand it all, it didn’t become reality until the first ship was hit.

20:00

I so when your husband was with the task force what was communication like?

AW I didn’t really hear from him for a while, but I wasn’t expecting to. I heard nothing for days, until I found out on the 10 o’clock news that a ship had been hit, I was aware my husband’s ship was in the area that the targeted ship was at the time...[pause]... then the shock of hearing it was the xxx that had been hit... [pause]... all that went through my mind was ‘they should have told me’ [words stressed by Mrs W]. After a few days I received a phone call from my husband letting me know that he had actually been transferred to HMS xxx before the attack took place...[pause]... it was a worrying few days.

I Were you supportive of the war?

AW ... [pause]... I guess I was naïve, I thought the situation would end quickly, hopefully before anyone got hurt. I truly believe that Thatcher was correct in her
response to the invasion…. [pause]...and it was my husband’s job to defend his country, after all he is paid twenty-four hours a day to do that. I know my husband felt the same, he wanted to defend his family and fight for Queen and country, it was his job… [pause]... perhaps if British subjects weren’t involved I feel the Falklands war would not be justified, but as it was Thatcher was fully justified in defending British citizens.

I Did you know where the Falklands were?

AW Situated? Not exactly, no. But I believe that people were aware that they were originally Argentinian territory, but then no country is original, territory is merely the spoils of war.

[Mrs W continually emphasised the need to believe in government and country, she avowed a few times that ‘they keep us so we owe them our husband’s lives’]

I Did you feel the navy had its own community? Did you use any official or unofficial networks?

AW The xxx had a very good network... [pause]... a way of keeping the women informed, my friend Jo organised everything. We attempted to meet weekly in order to create videos to send to our partners ... [pause]... we did on one occasion receive a video back. I do believe ... [pause]... that communication was all ‘rank and file’ (Audrey’s stress on words) I am sure officers and their wives had information that ratings and their families had no access to. My friend Jo knew people and knew more than some of us, she passed it on. The captain’s wife of the xxx was very good, she produced a monthly newsletter. If it wasn’t for ‘the girls’ [Mrs W’s stress on words] I would have been lost. My husband communicated when he could, but I realised it was a difficult situation. I kept busy by looking after my children, I had to protect them, and so I chose not to let them know the extent of the situation.

I do you remember anything about the media at the time?
AW ... [pause]... I remember the propaganda was hard to cope with. I refused to watch the news, especially when the children were around... [pause]... I occasionally turned on the 10 o’clock news once the children were in bed...[pause]... I also refused to buy any newspapers at the time. I believe the media to be hyped; they never discussed the needs of service families.

I what coping strategies did you have, if any?

AW Well I was working part-time and I had a young family that kept me busy. I would regularly meet the other wives... [pause]... at weekends I would watch videos and play games with the children, that was my way of coping and escaping.

40:00

AW ...[pause]... I believe the navy appreciated service families, even if the public didn’t. There were attempts to send groups of families on holiday as a way to relieve the tension.

I Who organised that, naval welfare or the individual ship’s organisations?

AW I am not sure ...[pause]... I do believe a lot more could have been done. My friends whose husbands were on the same ship did a lot of organising, they organised races, magicians, well anything to unite the families in the area. The xxx organised an event where the children were all taken to Bristol Zoo and the Warrior by sea cadets whilst the wives made videos in a pub to send to the ship.

[This was reported in an issue of Navy News July 1982, 10-11]

I Was there any resentment towards women whose husbands had not gone to the Falklands?

AW No, not that I was aware of. I found all the military families very caring. Apart from family all my support came from fellow naval wives...[pause]... I don’t believe anyone else would have understood.

50:00
I What do you think about commemoration of the Falklands?

AW It shouldn’t be forgotten, but as time goes on it is less important. Those who were involved will never forget. When my husband first came home I didn’t think about anything but having him back home, there was no media hype for us, it was concentrated on the Queen as she was there to welcome her son back.

I did you notice any changes in your husband?

AW … [pause]… yes, he was glad to be back of course … [pause]… but very subdued. He barely slept, and he hardly mentioned his experiences to me, but I know him and I know he is deeply affected…[pause]… the navy is a small place in a way, he lost friends you know. He has received no emotional or mental support, I think his escape was to go and fly kites…[pause]… if you ask him he would say he would do it all again.

Mrs W subsequently divorced her husband but was adamant that this did not affect her views/thoughts. She said she still held affection for her husband and she did not blame his career on their break-up.

Interview with Mrs G (wife of RN Officer based on HMS xxx) 3 April 2012

Mrs G was born in Buckinghamshire and had no previous military connections. She met her husband (R) at a Boxing Day party in 1973 and they were married in 1975. Her husband was an officer on HMS xxx at the time of the Falklands. Her husband remained in the navy until 2006 and was involved with the Trafalgar 200 celebrations. At the time of the conflict they had two children, a girl aged five and a boy aged four. Mrs G didn’t work at the time and they were living in private rented accommodation in Portsmouth.

10:00

I How did you feel when you found out about the conflict and that your husband would be sailing down south?

JG R’s ship sailed from Plymouth, myself and the children went down to Plymouth to say goodbye before he sailed. We were allowed on the ship the night
before she sailed... [pause]... it was being stocked with food and provisions. ...[pause]...
I remember there being a ‘buzz’ in the air and the men seemed to be in ‘high-spirits’ [stress on words by J]. I can’t remember there being a big scene at the actual time of departure, there were other wives and families there to wave them off, but the ship did set sail very early in the morning. I recall the ship set sail about three weeks after the outbreak of the crisis and the ship sailing. ... [pause]... When I first heard that war had broken out I couldn’t believe it, I had no previous knowledge of grievances between Argentina and the Falklands and Britain... [pause]... [laughs]...I did not even really know where the Falklands were in geographical terms...[pause]...and I really had no idea in the beginning that the situation would become so serious.

I So did you believe we did the right thing by sending a Task Force down?

JG ...[pause]...Oh yes, of course, I was totally behind the war effort. My husband had been trained to do this all his life, and morally the Falklands did belong to us, it was invaded and the people didn’t know what would happen to them, so yes it was a good cause... [pause]...I also knew, when I married my husband, what his job was, I knew that something like this could happen one day, and I would have to support him, even if it meant losing him. It’s life as part of a service family. Generally speaking, I am sure there was a great deal of public support for the war in Britain.

20:00

I How did you feel when ships started getting hit?

JG...[pause]... I went into Portsmouth to do some shopping and everything seemed to be quiet, much quieter than normal, and there was what I would call a depressed nature in the town...[pause]...perhaps it was that moment that it all ‘hit home’ [words stressed by Mrs G] I, and maybe others suddenly realised how vulnerable our men were.

I What was communication with your husband like at this time?

JG I had very little contact with him...[pause]... I followed the progress of the war from the media...[pause]...they always seemed to know what was going
on...[laughs]...[pause]...my husband’s ship was hit...[pause]...it was due to a bomb that was dropped on the deck, but because it was dropped from a high enough height it did not explode. It had to be dismantled by explosive specialists, I was told later by my husband that something went wrong, and the bomb exploded, one of the men trying to dismantle it was killed but luckily the rest of the men had been evacuated in time. I originally found out about this from my mother-in-law who had seen it on the news...[pause]...and of course the report stated that one man had lost his life, but we didn’t know who that was....[pause]...although I am sure family of that man knew, I received no contact with my husband until a week after this had happened. I received a telegram...[pause]...it was only then I felt completely at ease.

I what support did you get? Was the support personal (family/friends) or official (Royal Navy)?

JG I was aware that there were families’ groups and support available from the navy, but I never looked for it...[pause]...I suppose I was lucky because I had a very close, supportive family. My mother came to stay with me, and R’s parents were extremely supportive too....[pause]...no I never looked to the navy for anything. When my husband’s ship was hit his parent’s phoned naval support, but they refused to release any information to anyone except me...[pause]...when I did eventually get through myself they in fact could not tell me anything that I had not already learnt from the media....[pause]...the navy did what they could in the circumstances, but they were not good at keeping families informed.

30:00

I How did you feel about the media’s portrayal of the war?

JG I don’t think they sensationalised it in any way...[pause]...they didn’t hype up their reports. I believe ‘horrific’ [Mrs G stressed the word] things did happen, things we may never know about.

I did you think the media were insensitive or intrusive?

JG ... [pause]...no I don’t recall that happening, or I was not aware of it.
MRS G then showed me a copy of magazine of colour photos printed in The Telegraph of the events leading up to, during and after the war. There was a picture of her, her husband and two children hugging on the day his ship returned to port. She was very proud of the picture.

I some people say there is a naval community, or family. What do you think of this?

JG I think there was a strong connection, or bond between the wives of officers serving in the war... [pause]...but I can’t remember meeting up with any of them during the crisis. I suppose it was difficult, we didn’t all live in Portsmouth, and people had jobs and families. I wasn’t living in naval accommodation either, I think that makes a difference... [pause]... when you all live in the same area there is a greater sense of community... [pause]... but I think that community is always there, it existed before the war. I mean I have attended Ladies Nights that were arranged for wives of naval officers.

40:00

I Were you aware of any tension/animosity between the wives of those men who were involved in the conflict and the wives of those men who weren’t?

JG ... [pause]...no I don’t recall any, everyone stuck together. I know many of the men who hadn’t gone wanted to; they felt it was what they were trained for. I know R would have hated not to be involved; he really doesn’t like being sat behind a desk.

I How did you cope; did you have any coping strategies?

JG [laughs] having young children kept me busy, they were a ‘good diversion’ [Mrs G stressed the words]. Having the children meant I had to keep going, I couldn’t just crumble... [pause]... they didn’t need sheltering from anything as they were too young to comprehend the situation.

I So what was life like when R returned?
JG ... [pause]... R did not talk about the war with me, I am only aware of him having two dreams about the event... [pause] ... he generally came back with a very positive attitude about the events and what occurred... [pause]... but then my husband is a very strong character. Yes, we had no difficulty returning to family life on R's return.

I What does being a navy wife mean to you?

JG ... [pause]... I believe being a navy wife is very different from life as a civilian. I feel for wives of those serving in the middle east, it must be awful for them... [pause]... I always think it must be riskier for soldiers than it is for those in ships, those men are very brave.

[I pointed out that it must have been just as difficult for her when her husband was away].

JG The Argentinians did have an air force, which had bombed the ships, and the men were vulnerable...[pause]... when my husband's ship was hit the bomb landed only 10 feet from his feet. We were lucky, I did not know about this until after my husband had returned home.

[Mrs G talked a lot about her husband’s experiences rather than her own]

Interview with Mrs L (mother of AL HMS xxx) 9 May 2012

Mrs L had two children, a son A and a younger daughter. Her husband, A’s father, had been in the Merchant Navy. At the time of the conflict the family were living in Norwich.

5:00

I How did you feel when you learnt that A was heading down south?

JL The ship and its crew had already been on deployment for 6 months and were on their return home. On the Sunday before they were due back the ship called into Gibraltar. I received a phone call from A saying that the ship was turning back and he didn’t know when they would be back.
I Did you know anything about what was going in the Falklands?

JL Yes, I had been following the news, but didn’t take it seriously at first. I didn’t even know where the Falklands were! [Mrs L laughed at this point].

I Did you have access to networks, people you could talk to, for example the mothers/families of other men on the ship?

JL No, not at that time. We were living in Norwich, a long way from Portsmouth. We had some literature given to us by A when he joined up, I think it gave us details about how to make contact in an emergency and what information to provide, such as service number and rank and last known deployment. I never imagined we would need to use that information. I suppose being the mum, and not the wife/partner, you sort of …. [paused]… take a back seat, I guess … [pause]… I guess the boys go off and you don’t want to be seen as an overprotective mum.

10:00

I How were you aware of what was going on?

JL Myself and A’s dad, B, were constantly glued to the TV… [pause]… no I remember listening to the radio more…[pause]… I suppose we forget there weren’t twenty-four-hour news channels in those days. Oh yes, I know on the day the xxx was sunk we went out and bought a radio, we took it upstairs with us and had it playing constantly. [sniggers] maybe we thought any bad news would wake us up. I can picture that dour man now. What was his name? Dr Death we called him… [pause]… Ian?

I McDonald?

JL Yes, that’s him. Every time he came on screen we thought it would be bad news, he had no emotion to him, and the thought of seeing him brings a shiver down my spine. When we heard the xxx had been hit we put the TV onto BBC and left the radio playing. Our neighbours came rushing over on hearing the news, as they were of course aware of where A was, and what ship he was on… [pause]… for hours we
didn’t know if A was safe. B tried ringing, I think it was HMS Nelson, a contact number, not even sure now where we got the number from. The line was constantly clogged. Understandable I suppose, hundreds of worried families, and we now know not enough people to deal with it. I will say, when you did get through to the services they were wonderful, especially when they had something positive to say... [pause] ... thank God we didn’t have the negative. My husband didn’t go to bed until 4:00am the next morning; he sat listening to the radio all night. I talked to A’s photo, the one of him looking proud in his uniform on the day of his passing out parade ... [pause]... I tied a yellow ribbon around the photo.

I The not knowing, the waiting must have been terrible for you?

JL Yes, there is no other feeling like it. We didn’t want to keep trying to phone for information, but it was so frustrating. The men had a habit of sending flowers home to their mums when they stopped somewhere on the deployment, the last bunch I had received were still in a vase, I vowed to keep them until he got back ...[pause]...Anyway, the next day, around 7:30, my husband went and got the papers. Shortly afterwards, we got a phone call saying the guys had been taken off the xxx and that A was alive.

I Can you remember who the phone call was from?

JL I think it was naval information, or something? To be honest we were so pleased to hear something it was a bit of a blur. The person on the phone told us that A had been given the option to come off the ship at Ascension Island (he was not yet 18) but A refused.

(At this point J talks about a book her son has published which is due out in June. The book describes A’s transition from a young lad to a troubled man, and his battle with PTSD)

15:00

JL A was a happy go lucky guy when he went, now he has a short fuse. The guys were local heroes for five minutes, then they were left to cope with it...[pause]...
I remember just after A returned home, there was a thunderstorm during the day, A was in his room. I had cluttering in the bedroom above me, I was in the kitchen, A had jumped out of bed and was grabbing clothes and cowering on the floor by his bed...[pause]... he later told me he was reliving the bombing.

I How did you deal with the changes in your son? Did you have anyone to talk to?

JL It was difficult, he was my son and I wanted to protect him. But we didn’t know what we were protecting him from. After a couple of weeks leave the men were back at work, there was no counselling offered at that time...[pause]... as you know it was different later, but immediately after there was nothing. Many women can’t cope with the changes in the men, A has told me of many marriages that broke up, many because of the way the men behave with their wives especially the mood swings and aggression.

[J then went back to talking about the media]

JL Thinking about the news reports I wondered how they gathered their information. Do you know, I wrote a letter complaining about Michael Nicholson, I thought his reports were too graphic ... [pause]...I always thought Brian Hanrahan was more careful. The thing was, the only way families could get information was through the TV newsreels and the radio.

20:00

I How do you think the Navy coped with the families, especially regarding getting information out to them?

JL ... [pause]... they didn’t know how to deal with it. There were people on the ground, who I am sure worked really hard. When they contacted us there were just marvellous. ... [laughs]... I remember now writing to somebody in Plymouth, can’t remember who, about setting up a local naval families group, in Norwich ...[laughs]...I suppose it was just to keep me busy and keep my mind off things. I did have a friend
with a son in the Navy and if we knew anyone else locally in the same situation we would try and contact them.

30:00

I What do you think about commemorations/remembrance of the Falklands?

JL I have been to a few, but with A now living out of the country it has not been many. A likes to remember in his own way, with those he shares a bond with. They are a very close group the xxx gang. But A’s attitude is that you have to move on, recognise you were involved and live with it... [pause]...I remember going to the 25th Anniversary events and I met the wife of a chef that was killed, I thought she was very brave. Some people are disappointing ... [pause]...

I In what way?

JL In their reactions... [pause]... I can’t believe how some people react. I have a friend who was a paramedic, a female; she said ‘why all the fuss, they joined up, they knew what they were doing’. Not very sympathetic ... [pause]... the thing is, yes they were volunteers, and are more than aware of the roles in the event of conflict, but, as A says, despite the training, you can’t be prepared for the realities of war, and nothing prepares you for living with it afterwards.

40:00

I Have you visited the Falklands, or would you like to?

JL No, no reason for me to. A went a few years ago, he met with locals and spent some time on the Islands. It was a very good experience for him, helped him come to terms with his PTSD, he has written about it in his book.

(J talked about A’s book and how useful it had been for him to write it)

JL I think remembrance of the war should be carried on for those who were involved, but the general public don’t care. A says some men stay away from the remembrance parades too, and I guess everyone has their own way of dealing with
what happened to them. There are some people who can’t or won’t move on; they I would think are the worrying ones. A says it was a few weeks of his life, and it won’t determine everything that he is.

[Mrs L mentioned here another veteran who has a ‘shrine’ to the Falklands in his house. This she thinks is sad, don’t forget, but move on]

50:00

The interview culminated in Mrs L talking about poetry she had written to her son when he was on deployment, not relevant to the conflict as they were written at the beginning of the deployment, however she did email a copy of one poem she was particularly proud of.

The varied evidence presented in this chapter adds immensely to our understanding of the Falklands naval wives’ experiences. The Stage 1 questions resulted in a variety of responses, while the colour-coded transcriptions revealed highly nuanced individual responses. To extend the Stage 1 data, deeper research was carried out with ten of the original fifty interviewees. Following further Oral History Society training and in consultation with Dr Laura Tisdall, it was decided that Stage 2 interviews would benefit from a review of the question design and the introduction of prompts into the interview process. The Stage 2 data is presented in the next chapter. The Data Analysis chapter will evaluate all the interview data in detail.
Chapter 9 Stage 2 Interview data

It was the researcher’s intention to re-interview some of her participants to probe some of the original interview findings more deeply and ask some new questions. To enhance the Stage 2 interviews, the researcher attended an Oral History Society training course, ‘Developing your Oral History Skills’, and received support from Dr Laura Tisdall, an academic oral historian, regarding question design and the use of prompts.

The women interviewed in Stage 2 ranged in age from eighteen to thirty-five at the time of the conflict, forty-eight to sixty-five at the time of Stage 1 interviews and fifty-three to seventy at the time of interviewing in 2017. One interviewee, the mother of a veteran was forty-three at the time of the conflict and seventy-three at the time of Stage 1 interviews but did not wish to be interviewed for Stage 2 as her husband had passed away. Eight out of the ten wives interviewed had since retired; one has her own cake making business and one is a civil servant. Two of the interviews were conducted via Skype, two were in a quiet coffee shop in a museum (requested by the interviewees as their husbands were at home and they did not want to be overheard; one respondent’s husband was suffering badly with his PTSD at the time), and six were in the respondents’ homes. The researcher was aware constantly of the effect of retrospective memories and how the interviewees would be recalling how they thought they felt at the time.

As part of the Stage 2 data collection, the researcher arranged an interview with the writer Jean Carr, who published a book about Falklands wives in 1984 (discussed in Chapter 3). The researcher wished to ascertain how and why Ms. Carr became involved with the Falklands women, especially as she had no previous personal connection to the armed forces. Carr explained that one of her first jobs when she was a journalist in Manchester was ‘to interview a family whose 17-year-old son had been killed by the IRA’.608 When Carr arrived at the home she ‘realised that some members of the family were not aware’ of the death, she recognised that there were ‘no lines of communication’ for families.609

609 Ibid.
Referring to issues concerning the Falklands women, Carr stated that when she started writing her views on the treatment of military families, ‘wives and parents began to contact me by letter and phone at the Sunday Mirror, a publication that had a circulation of three and a half million at the time.’ Carr also criticized the Ministry of Defence and the media for ‘not addressing single women, women who were engaged but not married’, stating ‘it was more emotive to talk about married men, especially those with children’. When the researcher asked Carr what issues the women contacted her about, Carr replied ‘lack of communication, the women wanted to know what had happened’. She was critical of the military, stating ‘women were seen as excess baggage’. Carr’s publication and the interview were crucial to this research as they offered an alternative, less military and male-conditioned view than any of the other publications of interviews with military wives. Although Carr did stress that the women ‘agreed the men should go to war’, they were ‘critical of their loss of identity and lack of communication.’

The first new question was about ‘home’. The respondents were asked ‘What constitutes home to you? One respondent, aged twenty-three at the time of the conflict and a part-time nurse, but now a civil servant, said, ‘home is where my family is’. The interviewee went on to explain that she ‘didn’t originate from England’ and that her own children and grandchildren were home to her as she had left her original home. A wife who was eighteen in 1982, who was a receptionist but now had her own business, said that ‘where I live is important’. She then went on to say she had moved many times, ‘not just in the years my husband was in the navy, when he left the navy we went to live in America as my husband got a job there’. The family have now settled in a part of the country where ‘none of us had any connection but we wanted a fresh start’. A respondent who was aged thirty-four at the time of the conflict and whose grandfather and uncle had served in the Royal Navy said ‘To me home is where I live, I know you could say that’s my house, but to me it is one and the same thing.’ Mrs E. (J) who was aged thirty-five at the time of the conflict and had

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610 Ibid.
611 Ibid.
612 Ibid.
613 Ibid.
614 Mrs R. (A), interview by V. Woodman April 8, 2017.
615 Mrs H. (K), interview by V. Woodman, June 3, 2017.
616 Mrs I. (K), interview by V. Woodman, July 8, 2017.
previously served in the Women’s Royal Naval Service (WRNS) stated, ‘home to me is where my family and friends are, where I feel comfortable.’\textsuperscript{617} A respondent who worked full-time as a psychiatric nurse in 1982 said to her ‘Home is where you come from you know where you are born, but it is also where you live.’\textsuperscript{618} Eight out of the ten respondents stated that family was ‘home’ to them, the other two claimed it was locality, but for one of those the locality was her birthplace.

The researcher then asked the respondents if they had moved around to be with their husbands and if so, how it had affected them. A respondent who was a full-time teacher with two sons aged ten and seven at the time of the conflict and had relocated from Plymouth to Portsmouth to be with her husband, described her experience:

I left my parents in Plymouth, I was an only child, so well in the beginning, when I umm first moved, I, well I missed them terribly, think it was the same for them too. They did eventually move down to Hampshire to be closer to me and their grandsons. But, well I umm didn’t settle in well at the start, I had left my home, job, family and friends. We had no phone in the married quarter, so I had to walk a few streets to go to a pay box, remember there were more of them in those days, there were no mobiles, or even phones in all houses. I was homesick and missed everything, but I had made a commitment and wanted to be with my husband. I know some women who stayed in their home towns and their husbands returned home and weekends, or whenever they could, but umm we had discussed that, and it wasn’t what we both wanted from a marriage. Luckily, once X was based in Portsmouth, his whole naval career was here, I mean there were times he travelled to Plymouth, but he was not based there, or anywhere else, so we didn’t move around every 2 or 3 years like some people seemed to.\textsuperscript{619}

Mrs. H. (K) who was eighteen at the time of the conflict and engaged to an able-bodied seaman said, ‘The first time I moved in the early years of our marriage I hated it.’ When asked why, she responded,

[I] missed my family, I did not drive then, and we had no phone in our married quarters umm, it is not like today with mobile phones and laptops where you can see your family, you know talk on Skype or Facetime. I was a young mum and needed my mum at times.\textsuperscript{620}

\textsuperscript{617} Mrs E. (J), interview by V. Woodman, May 6, 2017.
\textsuperscript{618} Mrs C. (P), interview by V. Woodman, April 23, 2017.
\textsuperscript{619} Mrs I. (K), interview by V. Woodman, July 8, 2017.
\textsuperscript{620} Mrs. H. (K), interview by V. Woodman, June 3, 2017.
Mrs C. (P), who had three children at the time of the conflict lived in a naval area and met her future husband there. When asked about the effect on her of moving around, her response was:

...well I met my husband on an evening out, was introduced to him through a friend. He was based locally, and well, apart from courses, he was always based on a Portsmouth based ship, so umm well I didn’t have to make a decision and move from family and friends. We were very young, I was 17 when I met X and we married and had our first child when I was 18. Luckily, well my family were very supportive, I managed to carry on with my nursing training when the children were young and carry on working afterwards. If I had moved, well say to Plymouth, well I wouldn’t have been able to do that.⁶²¹

One respondent who had served in the WRNS, therefore had been used to being away from home and family but had previously stated that she had not relocated throughout her husband’s naval career as he had always been based on the south coast of England. The researcher asked her ‘how do you think you would have felt if you had to move when X was in the navy, or if he had been based somewhere else would you have moved with him?’ Her response was:

...well when my daughter had started school it would have been a difficult decision to make, and there was my job, my mother looked after my daughter when I was at work, you know in the holidays. But, umm I don’t think I would have wanted a long-distance marriage, as I said traveling was not so easy in the 1970s and early 1980s, depending where X would have been based of course. Luckily, I, we didn’t have to make those choices. I suppose I would have managed, I mean I had moved away from home myself when I was in the WRNS, but, well for practical reasons, well I am pleased we didn’t.⁶²²

Mrs R. (A) had left her family and relocated to the UK to be with her husband. When asked about the effects of relocation on her she replied:

...well I moved to the UK to be with my husband, I have been here nearly 40 years now. I missed home, XXX terribly in the beginning and I missed my family. My in-laws were very supportive though. We did not move around with X’s job, if he was based in Portsmouth it was a doable commute, and he would be home most evenings and weekends when the ships were in port. I suppose what I missed out on was having the support of my own family, especially when the children were born.⁶²³

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⁶²¹ Mrs C. (P), interview by V. Woodman, April 23, 2017.
⁶²² Mrs E. (J), interview by V. Woodman, May 6, 2017.
⁶²³ Mrs R. (A), interview by V. Woodman, April 8, 2017. Respondents home blanked out to retain anonymity.
Another wife also did not have to move:

...luckily, he requested a Rosyth based ship and he always got it, maybe we were lucky, as I know some weren’t and well [pause] umm travelling from Scotland to Plymouth or Portsmouth was not easy in the 1980s, in fact it still isn’t now. I had been based in Gibraltar when I was still in the wrens but that was before we were married, and of course in those days once you had a child a woman had to leave the service. So, to answer your question it didn’t affect me.\footnote{Mrs I. (S) interview by V. Woodman June 10, 2017.}

The next question asked was ‘How did moving around affect your children?’ Six out of the ten said they had not moved during their husband’s time in the Royal Navy. Four of the interviewees had relocated to the south coast when they married, but they said their husbands were lucky to get Portsmouth-based ships, so they remained in the area. One wife with teenage children was thankful that her husband’s posting remained in the Portsmouth area, as she would not have wanted to move them from their schools at that crucial stage.\footnote{Mrs C. (P), interview by V. Woodman, April 23, 2017.}

One interviewee, who had previously been in the WRNS and had been used to being away from home, was pregnant with her second child during the conflict. She claimed that ‘my son, who was two at the time of the conflict, suffered from us moving away from my parents. At the time of the conflict we were living in Scotland near my parents, but after he returned we moved down south for a while’. The respondent stated that her son became very close to her parents at the time of the conflict, especially as she ‘needed support as I was heavily pregnant at the time’. During a moment of reflection, she added ‘I remember he became very clingy when we moved, so I suppose the moving around affected his self-confidence, and he didn’t want to get to know new people, was very guarded, he still is now as an adult’. The wife also added that she wasn’t sure if her son’s ‘lack of confidence was due to moving and separation from his father when he was at sea’, or ‘due to picking up on my worries and stress when he was away, and the effects PTSD has had on his dad since he came back from the Falklands’.\footnote{Mrs I. (S), interview by V. Woodman, June 10, 2017.} One former wife said that ‘X was away when our second son was quite young, still a baby really, 6 months to a child is a big part of his life, so X missed out on his first steps.’ She recalled that ‘Our son was scared of his dad when he first got home. I
mean now there is Skype and things but then it was not seeing anything but photos for 6 months or more.627

Asked about postings and any postings they remembered with particular affection or as a time of family contentment and stability, one respondent stated that ‘

...shore postings were always preferable to sea time, you know apart from duties X was home every evening and most weekends, so I suppose as a family it was a stable time for us. X could get involved with homework and school activities.

She was thankful that ‘he was always home when I gave birth, some families aren’t so lucky, umm, always at the back of your mind was that the shore time was only temporary.’628

For one wife, the benefits were:

...we would eat together most nights, you know if X was home or on a shore base they usually finished early like 4:30, so he would eat with the boys. Having someone to help with homework was great too, the boys liked their dad helping with umm maths especially. We knew of course that shore time was temporary and that in a year or eighteen months things would change again.629

One respondent said no postings came to mind but continued:

We were stable as we didn’t move around. The deployments before the Falkland’s were, well less worrisome, I mean I guess we were naïve and thought nothing would ever happen. Shore time was always better than deployments, of course, it meant X was home, well most evenings and we could plan family events, you know dinners, going to the theatre or cinema, and sometimes he would be home just after the boys came home, so he would help with homework or taking them to rugby practice.630

Mrs C. (P) responded that, ‘No, I can’t say there are [memorable postings], I umm, I because X didn’t move around like some men seem to have to, well I would say our family life was stable’ she went on to say ‘The deployment to the Falklands was a worry’ and ‘being apart is always difficult, but no there are none that I recall being memorable one way or the other.’631 Another respondent stated that ‘Although it was a worrying time, you know with the Falklands and everything, the time that X was on the xxx has had a huge effect on me.’
This, she claimed, was due to the friends she made at that time, and the bond with other women whose husbands served on the same ship as her husband. She went on to say, ‘I would say we always had stability in the family, even when X was on deployment, I know it is horrible being apart from those you love, but that does not mean our family weren’t stable.’ Another respondent said that she remembered no postings with affection, but:

...shore time in the early years of our marriage and before the Falklands was always a good thing, I mean no one wants to be away, you know umm separated from their partner. So, shore postings I would say were a time of stability, I mean I know there were duties and some weekends at work, but X would be home most evenings and could help with family chores.

Regarding the possibility of joining a naval wives’ group for support, one respondent who was aged thirty-five at the time of the conflict and had three children aged seventeen, fifteen and nine, said:

...living on a married quarter there was always something going on in the local naval community centre, in Rowner, but I didn’t really get involved, anyway I was too busy with work and children. Coming from the area I had my own friends and family around. I think they have a place, if you move to an area and have no friends or family around I can see why it would be useful. I heard they can be a bit [pause] you know cliquey, you know some women feeling they are better than you because their husband is a higher rate.

But another respondent asserted, ‘It was not for me, I felt my husband was in the forces, not me. [pause] I had friends that I made through my husband’s ship, you know [pause] wives of his shipmates who we socialised with, but a formal group was not my sort of thing, I wanted to choose my own friends.’ She made ‘some lifelong friends, particularly others who have been affected, we say we have a xxx family and we are all very close.’

A further respondent stated she did not join a naval wives group as:

...I was busy, newly married and a full-time job, I also fell pregnant not long after we moved here. Umm, when we first moved to the married quarter I had a knock on the door one evening and a contingent of wives, think there were 3 or 4 of them from what I recall, had called around, said they did it every time someone new moved in. I mean they were, umm pleasant enough, but I did not want to get involved in clubs and meetings and things. I was very polite, and I got involved in some charity

632 Mrs E. (J), interview by V. Woodman, May 6, 2017.
633 Mrs R. (A), interview by V. Woodman, April 8, 2017.
634 Mrs C. (P), interview by V. Woodman, April 23, 2017.
635 Mrs H. (K), interview by V. Woodman, June 3, 2017.
fundraising through the ship a few times, but no, I was never an active member of the wives’ groups. The longer I lived in the area I made my own friends, and yes some were the wives of men on X’s ship, some were other naval wives, and some were through work or mother and toddlers groups.  

One former Wren was more forthright:

Well, this may seem, seem [pause] a bit harsh, but some women were pathetic, I mean, why marry someone who could spend months away from home, if all you will do is complain and try and get him home. I know it may be easy for me to say, as I made the choice to join the forces too, but really. There is support there for practical things and, well if you live near a base there is naval welfare and groups to join. Some people are not made to be military spouses.

When asked about joining naval wives groups she said:

I, I umm did not belong to any wives’ groups set up by the navy, but I did arrange some family days, and met up with wives of men in X’s mess, sometimes he would ask me to contact a wife or girlfriend if they were finding the men being away difficult to cope with. I suppose well umm, I was older than some of the women, and had some experience of being away, so maybe X thought I would be like a mother figure [laughs]

Mrs R. (A), who did not live close to the naval base stated that:

It was not something I became involved in. I mean I know if you live in a married quarter they are quite active, but I met people through work and then local mother and toddler groups, living where I did I was too far from the bases to get involved, but as I said it was not something I felt I wanted to get involved with. If I had lived in Portsmouth or Plymouth it may have been different, but I am not sure even then, I heard they could be a bit unfriendly at times, especially if your husband was a certain rank and some women could look down on you. The women were also said to gossip and it, well it just wasn’t my scene.

The respondents were then asked about the main difficulties they faced when their husband was away. Eight of the ten wives said communication or lack of it and having to make ‘difficult and important decisions on my own’. When asked what sort of decisions these were, the respondent identified ‘moving house, replacing the car and choosing schools’, but also ‘what news I should tell my husband when he was away’. She added ‘if our daughter

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636 Mrs I. (K), interview by V. Woodman, July 8, 2017.
637 Mrs E. (J), interview by V. Woodman, May 6, 2017.
638 Mrs E. (J), interview by V. Woodman, May 6, 2017.
639 Mrs R. (A), interview by V. Woodman, April 8, 2017.
640 Mrs E. (J), interview by V. Woodman, May 6, 2017.
was ill, by the time my husband had received the letter she would have been ok, so I didn’t want to worry him’. 641 This wife was thus protecting her husband.

Another respondent, who had two teenage sons and a nine-year-old daughter and worked full-time at the time of the conflict, talked about the difficulties of keeping in touch when her husband was away, stating:

... it wasn’t always so easy to keep in touch, now with phones and email well it’s instant. Letters from a ship could take weeks, and sometimes letters sent never arrived. X told me sometimes mailbags fell into the sea when they were being transferred. Sometimes I would receive no mail for weeks, then get a handful in one post. I always tried to keep the letters umm well light-hearted and did not talk about problems, I think X probably would say he did the same. 642

Mrs I. who was a thirty-four-year-old officer’s wife at the time of the conflict also talked about difficulties with communication as well as lack of support for ‘the boys’ when her husband was at sea.

...Contact, well communication, was not so easy in the 1980s. Even if I had a copy of the ship’s itinerary, well it was always subject to change, so I was never sure when I may get a phone call. When the ship called into a port, well, not all places had easy access to phone boxes, and a ship or two calling into a port with an average of 250 men onboard, with most of them wanting to call home, well you can imagine. Sometimes, well I would get calls in the early hours of the morning. We, we of course wrote letters, sometimes they could take weeks to reach X, and the same for mine sent to the ship. X sent the boys postcards, if he could, from everywhere he visited. I remember they liked taking them to school, and the teachers were very good and let them talk about where their father was, in one class they even had a map and tracked where X was, [pause] good of them really, of course mine were not the only naval children in the school. And, of course, I tried to be mother and father for a while, you know when X was on deployment. [laughs] it was a bit like being a temporary single parent. I did what I could but my interest in sport, well it wasn’t the same as X’s, I took them to rugby training, and knew some of the parents there, but well, I couldn’t talk tactics and rules of the game. 643

One respondent who was aged twenty-three with two young children, a son aged three and a daughter less than a year old in 1982, also identified lack of contact as one of the main difficulties:

641 Ibid.
642 Mrs C. (P), interview by V. Woodman, April 23, 2017.
643 Mrs I. (K), interview by V. Woodman, July 8, 2017.
... never knowing when I may get a letter or phone call. There are times you are desperate to talk to that person and you know you can’t. It’s not the practical things, I was, am capable and I had a great support network, but there are times when you want to just speak to your husband. You know like umm when you want to tell him something about the children, share news with him about their milestones. So, it was the lack of emotional, well and moral support that was difficult to deal with when X was away.644

This question led to asking about readjustment on the men’s return and how the wives managed it. One wife, whose Falklands serving husband was her second husband, and at the time had a five-year-old son, explained that ‘I didn’t manage it, I felt all sorts of emotions, excitement at him coming home, annoyance that he would come home and upset my routines, even anger at him for being away’.645 Another wife also felt ‘we just had to get used to being together, in a family again. It was an adjustment for both of us, having to consider someone else.’ She knew

...some couples found it difficult, some women became too independent and their husbands could not deal with that, you know women coping on their own, and well some women liked their independence. But, well anyway, I suppose we just got on with it, it was no big deal for us. We never knew of course when we would be apart again.646

For one fiancée, ‘it was emotional support that was the difficult thing for me, [pause] when X was home he was a good listener and would just tell me to calm down and we could sort problems out.’647 Mrs I. talked about routine and getting ‘alone’ time as a form of readjustment when her husband returned from deployment:

...after the boys were born, well they monopolised the first hours back, you know they had missed the father and it was right for them to get used to him again. After my parents moved here, well some time just after the ship had returned and X was on leave for umm usually two to three weeks, we tried to either get away, or have some time alone. My parents would mind the boys for a day or so. X used to walk around the house and see what had changed, in 6 months there was usually something new. He also walked around the town centre, always amazed at what had changed in those months, you know, places closed down, new places opened, new places built even. Sometimes, [pause] having to get used to sharing your life and home again, well even with your husband was hard. I had my own routines and then I had to consider someone else. Some marriages cannot cope, I know of many that didn’t, or the other

644 Mrs R. (A), interview by V. Woodman, April 8, 2017.
645 Mrs C. (M), interview by V. Woodman, June 18, 2017.
646 Mrs C. (P), interview by V. Woodman, April 23, 2017.
647 Mrs H. (K), interview by V. Woodman, June 3, 2017.
thing is marriages that break up after the serving person has left the forces. People being together every day, they can’t handle it. We, well we did manage it, but it was far from easy, you had to be considerate of someone else’s needs, and that works both ways.648

One former Wren, then pregnant, noted:

This wasn’t the first deployment for me, I had already been through two of them and as I said separation is never easy [pause] but to have to live with the realisation that your other half is in a dangerous situation is umm well it is different, it was much harder to get through. I remember having this constant sick feeling at the pit of my stomach [laughs] and it wasn’t just the pregnancy. I wanted to hear the news, but didn’t, as I was scared what I would hear. That deployment, X had named his next of kin as his dad, so he would get told first if the worst happened and then his dad would tell me. Deployments after the Falklands, umm well the worry was worse umm more, I mean I had this dread of what if something happens again.649

Another respondent also talked about readjustment after deployment not being easy, and mentioned ‘alone’ time:

...we tried to spend some time just us, well and the children when he got home. The children needed to get used to having their dad home, well I did too. Sometimes, well sometimes I would say it was like getting to know someone again, five, six, eight months apart is a long time, lots can happen in that time. And, umm well I suppose the readjustment is on both sides, X had been sharing a small space with loads of men, remember there were no women on ships then, and well sometimes he would come home and forgot not to use the sort of language that all males together would use [laughs] I had to get used to having a man in the house, a man who wanted to well sort of I suppose pick up where he left off, be a husband, look after me. I had been used to looking after myself, sometimes, well sometimes that would cause friction between us. We both had to try and understand the other, but it’s not always easy.650

The researcher then asked about any differences in deployments before and after the conflict. For one respondent, ‘the Falklands was the first deployment for me after we had met, obviously it wasn’t supposed to be the Falklands, it was a deployment to the Gulf’. So ‘deployments after were a worry, as my first experience could have resulted in me losing my fiancé’.651 One wife said, ‘my husband had left the navy soon after returning from the Falklands. That was already planned before he went out there as we believed our sons were at an age where they needed their father around’. Her sons were aged seven and ten at the

648 Mrs I. (K), interview by V. Woodman, July 8, 2017.
649 Mrs I. (S) interview by V. Woodman June 10, 2017.
650 Mrs R. (A), interview by V. Woodman, April 8, 2017.
651 Mrs H. (K), interview by V. Woodman, June 3, 2017.
time. She went on to say that ‘the Falklands deployment was the worse, I had never experienced my husband being in a war zone before, so naturally I was more concerned’. She added that she had learnt to accept the two roles of single mother and being both parents while also being a wife with no husband present but having to give up one of them ‘when my husband returned’. 652

All the women agreed that having to cope with and manage the home-coming after deployment in a war situation was different. The wife of a lieutenant commander with three children aged nine, eleven and fourteen at the time, disclosed that ‘I hugged my husband more closely on his return, I’m not saying I didn’t do that on his return from previous deployments, it was just more emotional as one realised what one could have lost’. 653 When one partner returned, his fiancée said ‘there was an understanding that we wanted, well no needed, time on our own.’ Also, six-month absences meant many things had changed, but ‘for the men, they expected to come home and find everything as it was when they left’. 654

Regarding media and naval communications, one experience was notably insensitive. When the ship of one respondent’s fiancé was hit, the local newspaper ‘wanted a statement from me, but I refused.’ She reflected ‘I think they tended to forget we were connected.’ When asked who ‘they’ were, she replied ‘everyone, the TV, newspapers, well umm even the navy’. She gave a particular example: ‘they totally disrespected the fact that the families of HMS xxx hadn’t been informed before they broadcast that the ship had been hit by a missile on the 9 o’clock news that evening of the 4th May.’ 655

Issues of Royal Navy class and hierarchy emerged. One fiancée never joined any wives’ groups, although she had individual friends whose husbands served on the same ship as hers, because she ‘felt that women would judge you.’ When asked how she had experienced that, she replied ‘some women felt they were better, you know their husbands were a higher rank and well, if their husbands were on the same ship they like well, told tales and gossiped.’ She added, ‘when we moved out of married quarters you weren’t part of the gang, the clique.’ 656

652 Mrs I. (K), interview by V. Woodman, July 8, 2017.
654 Mrs H. (K), interview by V. Woodman, June 3, 2017.
655 Mrs H. (K), interview by V. Woodman, June 3, 2017.
656 Mrs H. (K), interview by V. Woodman, June 3, 2017.
While one former wife did not experience this herself, she witnessed it. They ‘thought that if their husband was higher up, or an officer, they assumed that rank amongst the wives too.’ She saw that ‘some women felt intimidated by that and well they either accepted it, or just did not bother getting involved in it.’ She ‘knew some women who did live through their husband’s career.’

The researcher had previously posed a question to a private Falklands veterans group, to which she belongs on the social media site Facebook, where she asked the veterans what music they remembered from the Falklands period. While the group comprised 3,530 members, only twelve responded. They all mentioned the song by Simple Minds, I Promised You a Miracle. The researcher downloaded a copy of this track to her phone and asked the wives if they remembered the track. Eight out of ten interviewees said they remembered it but were not sure what year it was. One wife, who was only eighteen at the time, and subsequently lost her nineteen-year-old husband in the conflict, stated that it was ‘one of my husband’s favourites, but I couldn’t listen to it for years after the war, as it was no miracle for me’. The eighteen-year-old fiancée of a then able-bodied seaman pronounced that she remembered a song called ‘I love a man in a uniform’ but ‘I can’t remember who the group was’, but at the time ‘it seemed appropriate’. She went on to say, Rod Stewart’s Sailing always sends shivers down me, although that was from the 70s I think, so not specific to the Falklands, but it is often played by a band when the ships deploy and return. I remember people talking about the song Shipbuilding by Elvis Costello, but it has no special meaning for me.

An officer’s wife, with two sons, who was aged thirty-four at the time of the conflict, stated, ‘I do remember that track, but I must be honest I am not sure I would have associated it with the conflict, umm I mean I have heard the track. I remember the 1980s being the era of, what was it they called it? Was it new romantics, you know the frilly shirt and men wearing make-up, I think it was Boy George and Adam Ant?’

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657 Mrs C. (P), interview by V. Woodman, April 23, 2017.
658 Mrs A. (M), interview by V. Woodman, July 5, 2017.
659 Mrs H. (K), interview by V. Woodman, June 3, 2017. The researcher searched for the song and found it was recorded by a group called ‘A Gang of Four’.
660 Mrs H. (K), interview by V. Woodman, June 3, 2017.
661 Mrs I. (K), interview by V. Woodman, July 8, 2017.
Six out of the ten women interviewed claimed that on previous deployments they had sent music tapes out to their husbands. They all stated that during the Falklands deployment they did not. The reasons given by an eighteen-year-old fiancée at the time were ‘I didn’t think about it, I was too worried’.\(^\text{662}\) A thirty-four-year-old officer’s wife claimed that ‘I did not think the tape would reach my husband, I didn’t believe personal mail would have had postal priority at the time, although I did still keep writing, although I found out on my husband’s return that sacks of mail went missing’.\(^\text{663}\) Mrs R., who was a part-time nurse at the time of the conflict, talked about the group Human League and how she remembered ‘a lot of women had their hair cut like the blonde female singer in the group, it was a sort of purdy cut I think they called it?’ She went on to say that she could not ‘remember any music that reminded her of the Falklands’ but that she knew ‘X liked a track by Dire Straits, Brother’s in Arms, I am not sure if it was out in 1982, but I am sure it was re-released some years later and proceeds donated to a military charity’.\(^\text{664}\)

After discussing music, the interview moved on to the aftermath of the conflict and support the wives received. The researcher asked, ‘when you had any problems after your husband returned, who did you talk to?’ This had already been covered in the first stage interviews, so the researcher was previously aware that the wives had experienced problems when their husbands had returned from the Falklands thirty-five-years before. The researcher recognised here that there would be a difference between who they spoke to at the time, and whom they had approached since, partly because recently there has been a greater understanding from military charities about the effects of war on families, and the ‘rippling’ effect of PTSD.\(^\text{665}\)

On their husbands’ return, all the wives (10/10) said that they had spoken to other military wives and friends about their husbands and any concerns they had about their behaviour. None of the wives had approached official channels, such as their doctor, or any naval welfare charities. Furthermore, eight out of ten said they had not spoken to either their

\(^{662}\) Mrs H. (K), interview by V. Woodman, June 3, 2017.
\(^{663}\) Mrs. I. (K), interview by V. Woodman, July 8, 2017.
\(^{664}\) Mrs R. (A), interview by V. Woodman, April 8, 2017.
\(^{665}\) These include Soldiers, Sailors and Air Force Association (SSAFA), Combat Stress, Combat PTSD Angels and The Ripple Pond, the last two founded by wives and mothers of PTSD suffering veterans. The rippling effect denotes the effect of PTSD on those people around the suffering veteran, wives, families and friends.
parents or their in-laws. One fiancée said she ‘had no contact with any organisations’, as she was not married at the time. This respondent went on to say:

When X first returned in 1982 I didn’t talk to anyone, I would describe my feelings then as being numb, but he was home and I, we, had a wedding to plan. I didn’t talk to my family about my feelings, [pause] I suppose I didn’t want to worry them. I have since found out that veterans do not often display symptoms of PTSD until 10, 15 even 20 years after the conflict, war situation. So [pause] like many others X did not show any signs on his return. 666

Another respondent, who was thirty-five in 1982 with three children but subsequently divorced her husband, had previously said she had seen no signs of PTSD when she was married to her husband. However, following their divorce, she thought about ten years after the war, he started to display signs of depression and anxiety. She said originally it was not diagnosed, but five years or so after it was. She said her husband also started to drink a lot. This respondent talked about who she talked to when she first noticed a change in her husband’s behaviour:

... to begin with, well no one, I mean we were not married then, he was my children’s father but well they were older, the oldest 26 or 27, the youngest 19. He, X, did go a while without seeing them, said he needed to sort his head after the divorce. I think he had found leaving the navy difficult to adjust to as well. He was used to being part of a big network, someone telling you what to do, what to wear and well umm he found that adjustment hard. When I did realise there was an issue, I [pause] I spoke to my eldest son. He had friends whose fathers had suffered after the war and they suggested maybe X needed some help. The thing is he had to see he needed help too. 667

Mrs E. also admitted not talking to anyone when she first noticed her husband needing time alone:

When I first noticed the changes, like X needing time alone, well I, I did not talk to anyone. Of course, by the time we had got to the 10th anniversary people, well these who were affected had begun to talk more, and well, I realised it was not just my husband who was behaving differently. Then again, the wives from the xxx who I kept in contact with, we did talk about the men and how they had changed, I mean some women could not handle it, and many marriages did not survive. I also lost contact

666 Mrs H. (K), interview by V. Woodman, June 3, 2017.
667 Mrs C. (P), interview by V. Woodman, April 23, 2017.
with some of the women, some moved, some men left the navy, and as I said some marriages broke up. But. Well, the best support for me were the other wives.⁶⁶⁸

During Stage 1 interviews one respondent, who was a full-time teacher with two sons at the time of the conflict, had stated that her husband had suffered some anxiety problems after returning from the Falklands. Her husband had known some of the men lost on the other ships. Mrs. I. had noted that the men had no support or briefing when they returned, it was leave and then back to work. She had previously stated that her husband had been diagnosed with suffering from survivor guilt. This respondent, when asked to whom she talked, said:

… initially I spoke to friends, some other naval wives I was friendly with, we were all having coffee one morning, and I think we were all worried but, well you know, no one wanted to be the first to say anything, once one woman did, well we all said there had been changes in the men when they returned.

When asked what sort of support her friends had provided, she stated:

Then, the degree of support was, [pause] just having someone to talk to. We supported each other, even just by talking and recognising there was a problem. I know the problems I was seeing with X, [pause] umm well it was nothing like the problems some other women were experiencing. I am not saying I was lucky, just that the problems were less severe. Of course, at the time, umm well, we didn’t talk about PTSD, I am sure some people were aware of it, but umm well it wasn’t shared with us. No one came to us, well not me anyway, considering us, we the wives’ and families, would in most circumstances be the first people to notice changes in the men on their return. No one told us that this could happen.⁶⁶⁹

Another respondent, who was aged twenty-three with two young children at the time of the conflict, stated that:

When they first returned, umm from the Falklands, well I didn’t really notice anything, I mean I thought there would have been some effect as being on a ship that was hit, and X lost some shipmates, you know a ship’s crew, even when you are talking 200 odd men, well they are confined to a small space for months, so they all know each other. So, well initially I did not talk to anyone, and well no one, you know from welfare or anything came to us and said your husband may have problems on his return, there was no warning to us and there was no trauma risk management, which is different now. I am umm I am aware of these things as I spent a lot of time

⁶⁶⁸ Mrs E. (J), interview by V. Woodman, April 6, 2017.
⁶⁶⁹ Mrs I. (K), interview by V. Woodman, July 8, 2017.
researching, well and talking to other wives after the problems we have had since X’s return.670

When asked why they did not talk to family, a wife who was twenty-three at the time of the Falklands, and married to a chief petty officer, claimed there were two reasons for her: ‘I didn’t want to worry my family, my husband hadn’t experienced mood swings before and I guess I hoped it would go away’. Also, ‘I didn’t think they would understand, both sets of parents had never gone through anything like this, why would they understand?’671 One fiancée said ‘When X first returned in 1982 I didn’t talk to anyone, I would describe my feelings then as being numb’. She was just glad that he had returned safely, and they could plan their wedding. She discovered later that ‘veterans do not often display symptoms of PTSD until 10, 15 even 20 years after the conflict, war situation. So [pause] like many others X did not show any signs on his return.’672

However, years after the conflict, all interviewees acknowledged seeking help and support from veterans’ charities or mental health practitioners. The level of support varied from an officer’s wife who was thirty-four at the time, whose degree of support was ‘just having someone to talk to’,673 to a wife who had been an eighteen-year-old fiancée, who later needed support for both her and her husband. She admitted ‘needing mental health support for myself, as I had suffered from an eating disorder caused by stress and anxiety’, to receiving care and respite for my husband from Combat Stress’. She also said that ‘more recently my husband had joined various veterans’ groups who offer such activities as woodturning and exercise-based activities, as a way of getting some self-esteem and confidence back’. She added that ‘where we live now has no local meetings, but I can message them if, when things are bad, and I just need someone to talk to.’674 This respondent also mentioned the charity The Ripple Pond, stating she found ‘they were very friendly and gave me a lot of advice on people and agencies to approach for support for me and the children, I found they were better

670 Mrs R. (A), interview by V. Woodman, April 8, 2017. Trauma Risk Management (TRiM) is a system of post incident management which intends to allow commanders to provide appropriate support to their subordinates in the aftermath of traumatic events. TRiM has been in use in both Iraq and Afghanistan. Although TRiM originated from within the Royal Marines, it is now widely used in the Royal Navy, Army and introduced into specific components of the Royal Air Force such as for the RAF Regiment.

671 Mrs R. (A), interview by V. Woodman, April 8, 2017.

672 Mrs H. (K), interview by V. Woodman, June 3, 2017.

673 Mrs I. (K), interview by V. Woodman, July 8, 2017.

674 Mrs H. (K), interview by V, Woodman, June 3, 2017. Combat Stress is the UK’s leading charity for veterans’ mental health.
at offering support for the wives than some other military charities, as with most of them they are still geared towards helping the men first’.\textsuperscript{675} One respondent mentioned how the naval welfare and military charities were unprepared for the effects of war on both the veterans and their families:

\begin{quote}
...I think in 1982, well umm none of the military charities or groups were really aware of how the war would affect those who took part, or their families. I am not excusing them, it just was not known. The British Legion could help with things like, well legal advice and suchlike, but when it was mental health and emotional trauma, well they were not well umm they were not well equipped for it.\textsuperscript{676}
\end{quote}

When asked how the wives felt about the support available for \textit{them}, both in 1982 and now, they were unanimous in stating that there is now increased awareness of the effects of PTSD on families, but getting the support was and is not always easy. In 1982, one respondent felt that

\begin{quote}
...we the wives’ umm we were invisible. I am not saying some people did not work hard on our behalf, especially during the conflict, you know welfare trying to keep us informed of what was going on. And of course, when the ship was hit they had the unenviable task of contacting the families of those lost or injured, and of course worried parents and wives calling to check if their loved ones were safe. Now, well now, the armed forces and some charities and umm [pause] well some in the community are more aware of the psychological effects of war, and I hope the effect on those around them. This is not just our, well I mean umm our problem, it is societies, you send men to war you have to have some support in place when the men try to live with the side effects. I would like to think [pause] well in future wars the support would be there, but I fear it will not be.\textsuperscript{677}
\end{quote}

One former Wren ‘attended a wives and families meeting where I could have requested a “buddy”, you know, someone I could call when things were difficult, but well I didn’t feel I needed that sort of support.’ In 1982, she ‘thought no one cared about the families, we were just there, I mean at times I felt we were a hindrance to them’. When the researcher asked what she meant by hindrance, she replied:

\begin{quote}
To the powers that be, umm, the military, I felt at times that they thought we had our place but when things went wrong the men were the most important thing to deal with and no thought of us poor women, you know wives and mothers at home. I had a friend whose husband was on the \textit{Sheffield}; their treatment was terrible. I mean,
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{675} Mrs H. (K), interview by V. Woodman, June 3, 2017.
\textsuperscript{676} Mrs R. (A), interview by V. Woodman, April 8, 2017.
\textsuperscript{677} Ibid.
can you imagine hearing your husband’s ship had been hit on the 9 o’clock news before you had been informed?\textsuperscript{678}

Another former wife said in 1982:

...the families were forgotten, hidden, we were there as support, but that was it. I know there was support there, living on a married quarter I was aware of that, but sometimes it was, I thought, because they had...not wanted to. Some of the welfare people were, what you would call dry, you know unemotional, rational, I guess they had to be, but to some women that time was well a very emotional time. Now, now I feel the families are much better served, you know they get information and there is a lot of support, if you want it. Of course, technology plays a part on that too, it is easier to reach a wide area with the internet, and enhanced phones, they don’t have to physically visit people. And, and well information is available, who to contact....\textsuperscript{679}

Mrs E. also asserted:

In 1982, well no one cared, umm no that is probably unfair, those who weren’t affected didn’t think about it. And, well immediately afterwards I don’t think people really knew what a problem it would be, you know umm the psychological effects. Thinking about it I suppose, well it didn’t really affect that many people so we, it was hidden. Now, well now we are, by we I mean society, is more aware of the long-term effects, there are more charities geared towards helping both the men and their families. So, education and well, talking about the effects has brought the issues into the open. I am not aware how useful, or how easy it is to get help now, as I have not needed it, I mean I am sure, like everything else, the support you will get depends on funding. Some people now, you know young people may not be aware of that little war in the Falklands, I mean Afghanistan and Iraq will be the ones they are aware of, the Falklands barely gets a mention on the TV, you have to look for it.\textsuperscript{680}

A respondent who was a full-time teacher with two sons aged ten and seven in 1982 acknowledged the lack of support for families but recognised that this had now changed:

In 1982, well I don’t think anyone knew what would happen, and if they did they umm well they weren’t prepared. What support there was, which was little, well you had to go and find it. Now, well there are leaflets given to families, and contact information and I suppose with the internet, well it’s so much easier to find information. The military are also more aware of the effects of war on veterans and families.\textsuperscript{681}

One respondent, who was engaged to a chief petty officer in 1982, revealed:

\textsuperscript{678} Mrs I. (S) interview by V. Woodman June 10, 2017.
\textsuperscript{679} Mrs C. (P), interview by V. Woodman, April 23, 2017.
\textsuperscript{680} Mrs E. (J), interview by V. Woodman, May 6, 2017.
\textsuperscript{681} Mrs I. (K), interview by V. Woodman, July 8, 2017.
I have tried to seek help and support for myself. There is a long waiting list for counselling, and although I have visited such places as Veteran's Outreach Support, who have been great, but they are [only] available one day a month, what do I do all the other days when my husband has a panic attack, or is in a depressive mood?  

This respondent’s opinions were reflected in a recent poll by the Soldiers, Sailors and Air Force Association (SSAFA), where it was revealed that 7/10 people interviewed for the survey believed that Britain does not do enough for the armed forces, or their families. The poll was also critical of the Armed Forces Covenant, which was introduced into British public life in 2000 to address the mutual obligations between the nation and its armed forces. The covenant is said to be:

...a promise from the nation that those who serve or have served, and their families, are treated fairly. We’re working with businesses, local authorities, charities and community organisations to support the forces through services, policy and projects.

According to Vice Marshal David Murray, Chief Executive of SSAFA, despite the promises made in the Covenant, the Armed Forces, in general, are in danger of remaining a disadvantaged group. ‘The Covenant is an excellent concept but if its principles are not observed it will achieve nothing.’ One former fiancée still feels that ‘to a large extent the wives/families’ experiences have been forgotten and are yet to be properly acknowledged.’ She is still ‘sad…that all concerned will never be free of them and how far the ripple effects stretch.’ However, when she reads ‘about the war, memories, in some ways I feel less alone with my own thoughts.’

The respondents were then asked if they ‘recalled an occasion when they would have wished their husband to leave the service?’ The women seemed to leave a longer pause before answering this. The researcher cannot be sure why this occurred, only that it did. Perhaps it was because the wives would not want to admit that they had these thoughts. One wife, who had been in the WRNS, and who had a young child at the time of the conflict,

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682 Mrs A. (C), interview by V. Woodman, July 12, 2017.
685 Ibid.
686 Mrs H. (K), interview by V. Woodman, June 3, 2017.
exclaimed, after a pause, ‘No, I would never have wished him to come out, and if I did I would never have suggested it, even looking back and experiencing what the Falklands has done to him, us, there is no point in saying “what if?”’ This view was modified by one respondent who said ‘I would have wished it every day on his return from the Falklands’, but she ‘would never have demanded it.’ The researcher cannot help but wonder how much this sentiment is due to the militarising of the military and military wives discussed in Chapter 3. A respondent who was thirty-five at the time of the conflict, and whose marriage had broken up in 1987, was asked about the effects of military life on her marriage asserted that she did not blame the military way of life for her marriage breakdown, stating:

> It would be easy to blame the military life on our marriage breakdown, but I am not sure it was, there were cracks there before he came out of the navy and well the drinking problem, well its part of the navy culture, or was. Separations and lack of communication are not good for any relationship and maybe when you get to accept them, well that’s worse. I made some friends from the xxx crew, still talk to some. It wasn’t all bad, I would never say that, I had a happy marriage for years and three lovely children, sometimes people just move on.

As a new Stage 2 technique, the researcher introduced a prompt: an extract from a 1982 BBC television interview given by Margaret Thatcher to John Cole. The researcher played the respondents the extract and asked what they thought after hearing it. In the interview, broadcast on April 5, 1982, Thatcher was asked how far she was prepared to go for the Falklands. She replied:

> It is still British, and the people still wish to be British and owe their allegiance to the Crown. How far? We are assembling I think the biggest fleet that’s ever sailed in peace time, excellent fleet, excellent equipment, superb soldiers and sailors, to show our quiet professional determination to retake the Falklands because we still regard them as sovereign British territory and the fact that someone else has invaded them does not alter that situation.

On hearing this interview, eight of the ten respondents said that Thatcher was right. Mrs C., whose partner had been on HMS xxx, said ‘yes, I agreed with what she said and did at the

687 Mrs I. (S), interview by V. Woodman, June 10, 2017.
688 Mrs H. (K), interview by V. Woodman, June 3, 2017.
689 Mrs C. (P), interview by V. Woodman, April 23, 2017.
time, and I still think what she did was right'. However, another wife, Mrs M., whose husband had been a chief petty officer, took an opposite view, saying, ‘at the time I thought she was right in what she did, but now I question why she did it, that is not just because of the effects that the conflict had on my husband, it’s because I think there should have been more work towards a peaceful ending, one where our men didn’t get killed’. It is of course impossible to measure if this respondent’s retrospective views were due to the effect that the conflict had on both her husband and herself.

When asked what they thought of Margaret Thatcher’s views on the rôle of married women and careers, one respondent thought that ‘at the time I wouldn’t have thought there was anything wrong with it...be[ing] at home for the family’. She gave up work when she had her children, and her husband’s working hours were irregular, so ‘I was a homemaker and our family was traditional in the sense that the man worked, and I cared for the children.’ But now ‘I have a daughter who has followed her own career and I would expect her to work and not just be an unpaid child minder or home maker.’ However, a respondent who was thirty-five at the time of the conflict and working full time with three children had this to say about Margaret Thatcher’s views on working mothers:

I suppose it applied to some people at the time, but not me, I worked when I married and worked after having children. I know it would depend on your situation at home, you know with childcare etc, but that was not an issue with me, maybe I was lucky having family nearby. Among my friends at the time I would say it was a mix of those who worked and those who didn’t, especially when they had a young family.

A former Wren disagreed with Thatcher:

I gave up my naval career just after I married, which was the norm in those days, completely different now of course. But I worked as a civil servant, firstly full-time and when my daughter was young I went back part-time. I had good local support from family, but for me I needed a job as well, not because we needed the money particularly, I needed it for my sanity, I loved working and having some independence, but I also enjoyed the social interaction, you know, talking to other people, not just family and children.

Mrs C. (M), interview by V. Woodman, June 18, 2017.
Mrs M. (C), interview by V. Woodman, June 8, 2017.
Mrs H. (K), interview by V. Woodman, June 3, 2017.
Mrs C. (P), interview by V. Woodman, April 23, 2017.
Mrs E. (J), interview with V. Woodman, May 6, 2017.
And another former Wren replied:

...because of the rules of the navy at the time, I had to give up my job, well career, in the navy when I became pregnant. After having my first son I took on a part-time administrator job, but it wasn’t the career I set out to do. But no, I still worked and didn’t have a traditional family in that X worked and I kept house. So, Mrs T’s views did not reflect my thoughts then or now.696

One respondent who was twenty-three with two young children at the time of the conflict said she found the views,

...well a bit dated and traditional, I do not follow politics but at that time wasn’t there a drive to get women back to work and equality and all that, but these views are traditional and men being breadwinners and women keeping house. It’s a contradiction isn’t it, I mean a woman in a powerful position telling other women what and how they should behave, it’s a case of do as I say and not as I do [laughs]697

Another former Wren felt that many would have agreed with Thatcher at the time, but ‘now it seems, well so old-fashioned.’ Although she only had one child, she had still ‘worked in the 1980s.’698

The next section of the Stage 2 interviews involved changing social attitudes. If the terms ‘married to the navy’ or ‘married to the job’ had not arisen during the interview it was intended to ask the women if they had heard the terms or if they were familiar with them. Seven of the ten women said they were familiar with the term. A former wife said, ‘I have heard married to the navy, or married to the mob, before.’ She thought it was true:

...you get into a relationship with a sailor, you umm you accept that their life isn’t their own, I mean they have to adhere to a set of rules and regulations, so yes. A military life, is well it is not a job is it, well not a 9-5 one, you cannot just get fed up and give a months’ notice, or at least you couldn’t then, you know. I do not feel it is a bad term, it is just well actually an accurate term.699

Mrs E., the wife of a warrant officer, who was aged thirty-five at the time of the conflict, had used the term ‘married to the navy’ when she was discussing her experiences of naval life.700 When asked what she implied by that term, Mrs E. said ‘I felt like I was as much

696 Mrs I. (S) interview by V. Woodman June 10, 2017. Until 1990 it was compulsory for Wrens to leave the service when they became pregnant.
698 Mrs E. (J), interview with V. Woodman, May 6, 2017.
699 Mrs C. (P), interview by V. Woodman, April 23, 2017.
700 Mrs E. (J), interview with V. Woodman, May 6, 2017.
in the navy as my husband, even though there were unwritten rules about how and what I should do, I still felt a kind of responsibility and duty, if not to the navy, to my husband.  

This respondent had been in the WRNS herself, so she had been previously acculturated into a militarised way of life and thus a sense of duty. For a former wife, naval life was a ‘time of comings and goings, X I mean, partings and re-unions, it was my life, my whole young adult life.  

One former Wren had heard the term before:

I mean some would say I was married to the job myself for a while, the navy was not just my job, it was my way of life, so I would not be umm derogatory about the experience as I made that choice to. I mean the navy umm well they own you don’t they.

When the researcher asked what she meant by that, Mrs I said, ‘we are told what to wear, when to eat and sleep, when we can go home you know.’

For a former Wren, the obvious change in attitudes

...was during the Falklands, when as the wife of a warrant officer, I well I kept a chain of communication running, you know letting people know what was happening, and kept them informed of family events organised at the time. I also contacted wives, girlfriends when their partners first joined the ship, especially those new to the area. Now of course, I understand this is not needed, the Royal Navy have ships forums that anyone connected to the ship can sign into and talk to someone, there are also online wives’ and girlfriends’ groups. I have, of course, not used them, but I feel they would be impersonal, it is so much better to talk to someone face-to-face.

Mrs R., who was married to a chief petty officer and was aged twenty-three at the time, claimed that the phrase had been used by a friend just after she got married. She stated that ‘my friend said it in a derogatory way, like being married to a sailor was somehow a bad thing, although being married to a sailor was not common where I come from’

Mrs A., who was engaged to a chief petty officer in 1982, said, ‘being married to the navy, is that a bad thing? I didn’t see it as being bad, yes his job dictated where we lived, when we saw each

701 Ibid.  
702 Mrs C. (P), interview by V. Woodman, April 23, 2017.  
703 Mrs I. (S) interview by V. Woodman June 10, 2017.  
704 Ibid.  
705 Mrs E. (J), interview with V. Woodman, May 6, 2017.  
706 Mrs R. (A), interview by V. Woodman, April 8, 2017.
other but other jobs do that too’. The researcher asked her ‘what other jobs?’ Mrs A. replied, ‘well umm vicars and top civil servants and to some extent academics, but I know they are not ready to go to war zones and put their life on the line’. A fiancée of 1982 had also experienced her father being in the Royal Navy, therefore a militarised home life was not a surprise, and thought that ‘if you marry a sailor you take on not just him but his whole lifestyle. So yes, technically he is married to his job, and by association so am I.’ She reflected that ‘the navy owned’ her husband. When asked how, she qualified this statement: ‘they didn’t, I mean I know I was a support to him, and surely isn’t that what the military want, loving supportive wives?’ She felt that the Royal Navy had less control over her because they lived ‘away from the confines of a married quarter.’ This practice of almost understating the specific mores of being a naval wife was common. How much of this was due to military conditioning, a sense of stoicism that would have been actively encouraged by the military hierarchy?

The respondents were then asked how they thought their husband’s career had affected their own career or employment choices. All the women interviewed in Stage 2 had jobs, four of the women holding down professional jobs at the time; two full time nurses, one part-time nurse and a full-time teacher. These four women all said they didn’t feel their husband’s career had affected theirs in any way. One former wife said ‘I had always wanted to be a nurse, I trained and did that as a wife and young mum. Due to family support I was able to do the job I wanted, so it did not affect me at all.’ Mrs R. claimed, ‘actually it was having children that affected working women at the time, not my husband being in the navy, child care was not so reliable, or easy to find in those days’. However, Mrs H. who was an eighteen-year-old receptionist at the time said ‘my husband’s job always came first, I may have thought of doing something worthwhile, maybe going to university and becoming a teacher’. She then added:

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707 Mrs. A. (C), interview by V. Woodman, July 12, 2017.
708 Ibid.
709 Mrs H. (K), interview by V. Woodman, June 3, 2017.
710 Mrs C. (P), interview by V. Woodman, April 23, 2017.
711 Mrs R. (A), interview by V. Woodman, April 8, 2017.
712 Mrs H. (K), interview by V. Woodman, June 3, 2017.
...my husband would never have stopped me, but we went on to have four children, and even when he left the navy he took jobs that involved time away from home, I didn’t live near my family when the children were young, and I suppose it was up to me to follow a career, not blame my career, or lack of it, on the navy.

A respondent who had pursued a nursing career, when asked if her husband’s military career had affected her career, stated, ‘I umm wouldn’t say it did. I had always wanted to be a nurse, I trained and did that as a wife and young mum. Due to family support I was able to do the job I wanted, so it did not affect me at all.’

Another respondent, who had herself served in the Royal Navy before 1982, said she did not think her husband’s career affected her own choices as:

In those days whatever the career of someone I married I would have had to give up my naval career, so really it was me, my sex, sorry my gender, that affected my career. Once I had my daughter, even if X had a normal job, you know home every evening, I would have still worked part-time. I was able to work due to the support of my family, that would have been the same whatever job X had.

Another former Wren agreed:

I wouldn’t say it did, [but] my gender affected my career as I could not pursue it when I got pregnant. If I was in the service now it would be different, but I cannot say I would do anything differently as I do not think I could leave my children for nine months at a time.

The data here reveals that for these women their husband’s chosen career was not necessarily the primary influence on their own employment choices. None made the link between those choices and a geographically controlled job such as the armed forces.

Coming to the end of the interviews, the researcher asked the wives how they would describe their experience of naval family life. Mrs C., who was thirty-five at the time of the conflict and had three children aged nine, fifteen and seventeen, said ‘at times frustrating, at times lonely and sometimes worrying, especially during the Falklands’. She also added: ‘I visited places I wouldn’t have done if I had not been married to a sailor, I went to Singapore

713 Ibid.
714 Mrs C. (P), interview by V. Woodman, April 23, 2017.
715 Mrs E. (J), interview by V. Woodman, May 6, 2017.
716 Mrs I. (S) interview by V. Woodman June 10, 2017.
and Hong Kong in the 1980s when people didn’t travel to those far-flung places’. Mrs C. viewed her experience as being a cultural education; maybe the travelling was compensation for the absences and worries. Another respondent who was a thirty-four-year-old officer’s wife in 1982 also mentioned the potential for travel when she said:

A period of partings and homecomings. It had its good times and bad, it allowed me and the boys to travel as when X was on deployment we would go and meet the ship in some exotic place. Mrs R., a twenty-three-year old mother of two at the time, had a different view, ‘I would like to say it was an enjoyable time of my life’, she said, ...

...but I think my memories are blurred by the problems I have had to endure since my husband returned from the Falklands. We have good days and bad days. In 2012 we had a bad year. I was close to ending my marriage, I couldn’t cope. My youngest son, conceived and born after the war, has never really known his dad, he is not the dad he could have been. The one good thing that has come from my naval experience is that I have made some really good friends, friends who have experienced the same issues as me, it is them who keep me going.

A respondent who had been in the armed forces herself and was aged thirty-five with a ten-year-old daughter at the time of the conflict, viewed her experiences of naval family life as a ‘time of contrasts’ with ‘...you know partings and reunions. A time of joy and sadness, joy in our marriage, daughter and friends and sadness in the deployments and separations, and also of course the effects of the Falklands on people that we knew. I suppose, well umm I guess me making a decision to join the navy myself, well I accepted the naval way of life more than someone who had no experience, plus of course my father was in the navy when I was younger.’

Mrs H. who was eighteen at the time of the conflict, talked about the camaraderie among the women who had ‘shared’ experiences when she stated:

For me it was a time of ups and downs and contrasts. Obviously, any experiences I have, both good and bad, are affected by the war and its consequences on my

717 Mrs C. (P), interview by V. Woodman, April 23, 2017.
718 Mrs I. (K), interview by V. Woodman, July 8, 2017.
719 Mrs R. (A), interview by V. Woodman, April 8, 2017.
720 Mrs E. (J), interview by V. Woodman, May 6, 2017.
husband. I have made some lifelong friends, particularly others who have been affected, we say we have a xxx family and we are all very close.721

Mrs R. was the only interviewee who voiced her experiences in a negative manner; the other respondents viewed their experience in a more positive light, even if their husbands had suffered as a consequence of their military service.

The wives were then asked how they thought being married to a sailor would differ now from 1982. All ten said the one difference that they would see is in communication. Now everyone has mobiles, although they cannot always be accessible when at sea due to signal reception and their use has to be authorised by Command. If communications are restricted due to safety or security reasons family and friends will, where possible, be notified via the Royal Navy forum.722 One respondent who was aged twenty-three with a young son and daughter at the time of the conflict mentioned communication and awareness when she said:

Communication and awareness. Communication as it must be so much easier now with phones and email, although receiving a letter is something special, it is good to keep reading it, and well emails, how do we keep them for. I used to keep all my letters, put them in a box, and take them out and re-read them, especially when mail was sparse. And awareness, well I think now serving military and their families are made more aware of the psychological effects of war, and I would like to believe the support is there for them.723

Mrs E. also stated the main difference she saw in being married to a sailor in 1982 and 2017 was increased forms of communication:

Communication, I mean now you can in theory be in contact 24 hours a day. I know of course that even with the availability of phones and internet, that due to operational constraints, say someone on a ship could not be in contact. [pause] I suppose those left at home, well the expectation would be to be able to be in contact and umm well that wouldn’t always be practical. But, well the means of communication are there, so when a ship calls into dock, unlike 30 odd years ago when you had 200 plus men vying for one or two phones, they can leave the ship, take out their mobile and contact home straight away. I also believe that society is more aware of the effects of war, so I would. like to think that in another situation like the Falkland’s, well help and support would be available.724

721 Mrs H. (K), interview by V. Woodman, June 3, 2017.
723 Mrs R. (A), interview by V. Woodman, April 8, 2017.
724 Mrs E. (J), interview by V. Woodman, May 6, 2017.
Mrs I., an officer’s wife, expressed the view that ‘deployments seem to be longer now, in 1982 it was usually six months, now deployments are nine months, so even if it is easier to keep in touch, the time apart is longer’. She added: ‘to be honest I think being able to talk and see your husband on Skype or Facetime would be worse for me, I would hate to be able to see him on a screen but know we couldn’t touch, it would probably be beneficial to the children though as it would strengthen their bond’.725 One respondent felt ‘that the age of deployed service personnel shouldn’t be less than 25 years old. And only after they truly understand the implications of War.’726 One former wife said: ‘Over the years my thoughts on wars have changed, but perhaps they do as you age?’ Regarding the Falklands, she ‘believed that was a just war, we were looking out for our own. The wars in Afghanistan, well we should not have been there’.727

The final Stage 2 questions were about stress in military marriages. Here the researcher showed the respondents a card with six underlying causal factors of stress in military marriages: issues arising from turbulence/geographic mobility; concerns about the education of children; limitations on spouse employment opportunities; the management of temporary separations; issues arising from accompanied postings and issues arising from accommodation. The researcher asked what other factors affected them as a military spouse? All the women agreed with these factors. Mrs C. said ‘yes, I can sympathise with all those issues, I suffered them all, but don’t think I have anything to add’.728 Mrs R. said isolation was a big issue for her, she had moved away from her family and ‘I had to try and settle into a town where I knew no one, this caused me to be unhappy, at first we had no phone, I had to call my family from a call box at the end of the road, then just after I moved, the ship my husband was on was on sea trials and he was away Monday-Friday, I used to get the train to see family as I hated being alone’, she went on ‘also I felt that I was the only one feeling this way, I didn’t want to tell my husband as I wanted to be with him, I just hated the loneliness, so yes, the feeling of isolation was my issue’.729 This respondent, when asked about causal stress factors, said:

725 Mrs I. (K), interview by V. Woodman, July 8, 2017.
726 Mrs H. (K), interview by V. Woodman, June 3, 2017.
727 Mrs C. (P), interview by V. Woodman, April 23, 2017.
728 Mrs C. (P), interview by V. Woodman, April 23, 2017.
729 Mrs R. (A), interview by V. Woodman, April 8, 2017.
...they pretty much cover everything, I think well if not a factor an increased awareness of the perils of being a military wife, well amongst the civilian community would be an advantage, but people aren’t interested unless it affects them I guess.  

Another respondent stated:

I think my thoughts on wars and conflicts have changed, I mean I think we, as a society, should be more careful, thoughtful on where we send our military and should consider consequences more, but I guess that will never happen.

And another respondent reflected:

The only thing I would add, maybe it is not a factor but my connection to the war has shaped how I feel about war, any conflict. I feel that the age of deployed service personnel shouldn't be less than 25 years old. And only after they truly understand the implications of War. I also have a dislike of weapons and fighting, though truly believe as human beings we are a long way from understanding how to settle Conflicts any differently.

Mrs I. claimed the after effects of war had affected her rôle as a military wife:

The after effects of war, it’s something that not everyone in the military, or their families will have to deal with, some of my generation had to, and many since. I don’t think it matters how much you talk about it or how much training you have, before, during or after, nothing can prepare you for the real thing.

One respondent also added a lack of empathy with military life to the list of causal stress factors when she said:

Yes, I would agree with all of those [factors]. I mean accommodation was not an issue for us, we didn’t live in married quarters. Always had our own home, but I umm realise that it can be an issue for other military families. I would also add a lack of understanding about military life, families, from wider society, only those involved really understand the issues. I was raised and still live in a community that has a strong naval influence, but there are still those who have no understanding or empathy with military life.

It can be seen that within the causal stress factor of living in a militarised home environment, military wives shared common reactions.

\[^{730}\text{Ibid.}\]
\[^{731}\text{Mrs I. (S) interview by V. Woodman June 10, 2017.}\]
\[^{732}\text{Mrs H. (K), interview by V. Woodman, June 3, 2017.}\]
\[^{733}\text{Mrs I. (K), interview by V. Woodman, July 8, 2017.}\]
\[^{734}\text{Mrs E. (J), interview by V. Woodman, May 6, 2017.}\]
It is difficult to assess whether any of the Falklands naval wives placed themselves within an historical continuum, however one interviewee, Mrs H., an eighteen-year-old fiancée at the time of the conflict, compared her experiences with that of her mother who had also been a naval wife for twenty-five years. This respondent saw her experiences of military family life as highlighting ‘how awful it must have been for my mum all those years ago’.735

The researcher gained answers to the five research questions posed:

1. If a group of naval wives underwent the same events, would their views / thoughts / experiences be comparable?
2. Was the image depicted in existing literature the only view?
3. Did the naval community differ from the rest of society; how were its gender rôles defined?
4. Did the wives’ thoughts and feelings differ from those reported in the press?
5. Did media views reinforce previous militarised patriotism and gender rôles?

The data collected reveals that the wives, while experiencing the same event (Falklands Conflict), did not all have the same thoughts, views and feelings. The interviews disclosed identities, careers and views that were not exposed in the television or newspaper reports in 1982, when they were recorded as being the wife or partner of a member of the armed forces, but rarely was any information regarding the women themselves reported.

The primary data in these two data chapters has revealed new insights into the Falklands naval wives’ individual retrospective memories of the conflict, thus addressing the aim of the research. The five research questions and five objectives explored through the two stages of the interviews filled the gap identified by the literature review, namely that the individuality of Falklands naval wives’ experiences has been omitted from existing research, thus offering a new contribution to knowledge of the conflict and how the wives were affected. Although, based on this data, an objective truth of the experiences of naval wives at the time of the Falklands is impossible to elucidate definitively, much more nuanced and individual particularities have been collected.

735 Mrs H. (K), interview by V. Woodman, June 3, 2017.
Chapter 10 Interview data analysis

Miroslav Vanek advocated the significance of analysis and interpretation when he stated:

...we felt that the historian’s task was not complete after ‘only’ recording, collecting, transcribing, editing and publishing the interviews. In our efforts to provide evidence for the validity and reliability of oral history itself, we considered the analysis and interpretation of the interviews a necessary component to our work.736

The cumulative process of oral history data collection in this research examined the lives and experiences of naval wives during the Falklands Conflict in 1982. The specific literature reviews in Chapters 3 (Women and military wives) and 4 (Women’s Oral History and the Falklands Conflict) provided an extensive theoretical framework to assure the validity and reliability of the research. Additionally, the literature reviews placed the Falklands naval wives and the research into historical, social, cultural and political contexts. Chapter 5 (Research Design and Methodology) explained in detail the rationale and process of the mostly qualitative research design and methodology pertaining to oral history data collection and the analytical process utilised for this thesis. The researcher did consider and use all the methods discussed. Of particular relevance to this research was oral history methodology concerning the definition of the interviewer/respondent relationship and the significance of retrospective memories. The researcher also acknowledges her use of adopting research methods synonymous with feminist methodology whilst recognising these methods are also common to oral history methodology. These included assuming a qualitative mode of inquiry. This method was used as the researcher’s aim was to investigate the wives’ thoughts and feelings, not facts but an investigation into meaning. The method of triangulating data worked well in this research as this system placed the women’s interviews into social, cultural, historical and political context whilst ensuring that the research was comprehensive and well-developed.

Notions of subjectivity in oral history were paramount in this research; in the oral history context this represents the interviewer/respondent relationship, how the researcher

reflects on their own part in the research process and how the respondents create their identities within existing public cultural constructions. An aspect of the methodology that was not useful in this research and one that the researcher did not feel was relevant to the respondents was empowerment. The researcher identified with Passerini’s critiques of empowerment as there is disparity of power in the interpretation and publication of the research and the hypotheses that the respondents speak for themselves. In order to make the respondents feel that their narratives were important and deserved a place in Falklands Conflict history the researcher espoused the concept of shared authority. Although the researcher recognised this method is not always suitable, for this research it was adopted as the respondents had the memories (the material); the researcher had access to the means to share and distribute the narratives. Following the research design and methodology chapter, Chapter 6 described how the data were collected.

In the next stage of the research process, the collected interview data was analysed and interpreted systematically. The research results were firstly presented in Chapter 8 Stage I interview data. The results of the individual semi-structured interviews were analysed first using a quantitative technique (pie-charts), the researcher chose to use this means to display the data as it was the appropriate way to show visually the proportions of different opinions amongst the respondents. Additionally, pie charts are suitable when displaying six or less categories. The presentation of the pie-charts was followed by an analysis of the qualitative data utilising synopses of the individual interviews, presented discursively and thematically.

A synopsis summary was compiled for each Stage 1 interview, which logged the subjects/themes in five-minute sections. These represented an overview of the data. This synoptic practice was adopted as it was less time-consuming than completing full interview transcriptions and created an initial scope of the principal themes. It also allowed the researcher to analyse the interviews for nuances not conveyed through the pie-charts. Data was then colour-coded, for example, how the respondent had heard about the conflict/coping strategies/support networks/coping with separation. Coding the data revealed that each theme contained a number of concepts which were communicated both statistically and

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737 Luisa Passerini, ‘Work, Ideology and Consensus in Italian Fascism’, History Workshop Journal, 8 (1979), 82-108, 84
discursively. This practice highlighted the respondents’ views and opinions pertaining to their shared experience, whilst also revealing patterns, themes and differences. As the synoptic practice would not extrapolate the required in-depth data from the ten Stage 2 interviews, the researcher transcribed their richer findings.

The colour coded data reveals both common and individual opinions. Most of the wives articulated support for their partners during the conflict and moderated their own feelings and accounts to spare the men further worry. They were thus complying with the militarised wife model, even though some resented the pressures imposed by being militarised. They were also sheltering their children by not showing the news when the children were around, and keeping going for their sakes. Many believed they were indebted to the ‘government’ because of their husbands’ employment, ‘so we owe them our husband’s lives.’ Another wife said ‘I would have to support him, even if it meant losing him. It’s life as part of a service family.’ One ‘believed the navy appreciated service families’, referring to ‘attempts to send groups of families on holiday as a way to relieve the tension.’ Views of the media were conflicted. While news came almost entirely from the media, one wife ‘refused to buy any newspapers at the time. I believe the media to be hyped; they never discussed the needs of service families.’ She reported cynically that when her husband came home ‘there was no media hype for us, it was concentrated on the Queen as she was there to welcome her son back.’

In Stage 1 interviews all the women stated that they followed the progress of the conflict through the media (television/papers/radio), although twenty of the women interviewed (40%) said they found the media intrusive. The issue of the media’s effect on society has been documented in *Impacts of Media on Society: A Sociological Perspective* where Hakim Khalid Mehraj et al. employ what they name one of the sociological theories on how people digest and handle the information from the media as the use and gratification theory:

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738 Mrs W., interview by V. Woodman, February 25, 2012.
740 Mrs W., interview by V. Woodman, February 25, 2012.
741 Mrs G., interview by V. Woodman, April 3, 2012.
742 Mrs W., interview by V. Woodman, February 25, 2012.
743 Mrs W., interview by V. Woodman, February 25, 2012.
This theory has emerged out of the studies which shifted their focus from what media do to the people to what people do with media (Katz, 1959). The uses approach assumes that audiences are active and willingly expose themselves to media and that the most potent of mass media cannot influence an individual who has “no use” for it in the environment in which he lives. The uses of the mass media are dependent on the perception, selectivity, and previously held values, beliefs and interests of the people.\(^{744}\)

The ‘uses’ approach manifested itself through the Falklands wives as they were using the media as the only means of receiving updates on the conflict’s progress. An example of this was when one respondent said she ‘received almost all information on the progress of the war from the media, who always knew exactly what was going on’. When her husband’s ship was hit the Royal Navy told her no more than what she had already heard on the media.\(^{745}\)

In the communication section the respondents were not asked about communication with their husbands, although some of the women did discuss lack of communication and mail delivery problems affecting both partners. It was therefore known that communication during the conflict was intermittent. On reflection this topic should have been included in the questions, as it would have provided more information on how wives kept their partners informed of what was happening at home and the issues of maintaining a marriage/relationship with no or little contact. There was no consensus concerning delays in receiving letters (at this time it consisted of letters or occasional phone calls as there were no texts or emails). One respondent considered the lack of communication as being ‘less upsetting’ and made the ‘situation easier to handle’.\(^{746}\)

The communication section also revealed similarities with Dr Margarette Lincoln’s research on the lives of naval women in the late eighteenth century.\(^{747}\) Lincoln’s study revealed the adoption of support networks which helped the naval women left at home to manage the burden of separation. These ‘unofficial’ chains of communication, where the wives of the upper ranks helped seamen’s wives, especially in passing on news and letters, was paralleled in this research with Falklands wives. On one ship the captain’s wife operated

\(^{745}\) Mrs G. (J), interview by V. Woodman, April 3, 2012.  
\(^{746}\) Mrs J., interview by V. Woodman, January 4, 2013.  
a ‘chain of communication’ by contacting officer’s wives to transmit communication.\textsuperscript{748} One mother, living in a non-naval town, set up a local naval families group, ‘just to keep me busy and keep my mind off things’ by contacting local families, similar to eighteenth century wives.\textsuperscript{749} Another parallel from Stage 1 interviews occurred when one respondent said she felt her husband was ‘married to the navy’ and she saw herself as the ‘mistress’ and the navy was her husband’s ‘wife’,\textsuperscript{750} relating ironically to Lincoln’s study’s title of \textit{Naval Wives and Mistresses}.

Following questions on communication, the next section concerned coping strategies and support networks which the respondents utilised. It was revealed that all the women had previously experienced separation from their military partner; to some it was previous long term six-month deployments and to others it was a few weeks on a training course. This section revealed common, but not exclusive, aspects of a military marriage. The Stage 1 interviews revealed that the wives needed and wanted various levels of support. Additionally, the literature revealed that there are other occupations, such as the diplomatic service, the clergy and politicians, where wives’ lives are affected by their husband’s occupation and ultimately get drawn into it. However, Janet Finch also examined wives of policemen, merchant seamen, prison officers and academics. Her work barely covered military wives, therefore this research has filled a gap in the literature in addressing the particularities of military life, for example wives living with the fear of the military husband being sent into a conflict zone.\textsuperscript{751}

Many of the respondents’ views on leading ‘a double life’ or having to adopt dual rôles’ during their husbands’ absence related to other occupations where one partner spends recurrent absences from home and the family. Michelle Thomas’s research of merchant seafarers found parallels with offshore oil workers.\textsuperscript{752} Hanna Hagmark-Cooper’s study on Aland seafarers’ wives also examined the ambiguities around dual rôles, claiming that many of her respondents, while feeling relief when their partners were home, also found it difficult

\textsuperscript{748} Three wives had husbands on one ship where the captain’s wife gave a sense of community through communication networks.
\textsuperscript{749} Mrs L., interview by V. Woodman, May 9, 2012
\textsuperscript{750} Mrs W., interview by V. Woodman, February 25, 2012.
\textsuperscript{751} Janet Finch, \textit{Married to the Job: wives Incorporation in Men’s Work} (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1983).
\textsuperscript{752} Michelle Thomas, \textit{Lost at Sea and Lost at Home: The Predicament of Seafaring Families} (Cardiff: Seafarers International Research Centre 2003), 20.
to surrender the sole responsibility of ‘keeping everything up and running while the seafarer was away’. These research findings therefore deepened understanding of the Falklands wives’ experiences and made their experiences more universal.

This research revealed that former WRNS wives’ responses differed from those of non-WRNS wives, especially concerning the dual rôles section of the interviews. These wives appeared to accept separation and the independent living aspect of military life. A twenty-three-year-old naval nurse, married to a chief petty officer at the time of the conflict, saw herself as ‘being married to the job’. Therefore, for this respondent, dual rôles were achieved through her career choice and not that of her husband.

The next Stage 1 section concerned commemoration of the conflict. The researcher asked respondents: ‘In your view is the way the conflict was commemorated the right way?’ The majority of the wives, twenty-nine of the fifty interviewed (58%), felt the conflict was appropriately commemorated. With hindsight this question should have been phrased differently as it implied that there was a right or wrong way to commemorate the conflict. Additionally, the researcher had to probe why they gave the responses they did. However, one respondent’s view, relating to the lack of literature addressing the wives’ concerns at the time of the conflict, was apt when she stated that ‘wives and families to a large extent had been forgotten’ and ‘it is important to tell our side as we are affected too’.

The researcher then asked the respondents if their husbands attended any commemorations or anniversary events. The responses divulged that the majority had commemorated the conflict in some way (88%), although fifteen of the veterans preferred to commemorate with those they had served with rather than attending an organised event. In this section those women who attended commemorative events with their partners said they felt ‘a bond’ with some of the women whilst recognising that their husband may become

753 Hagmark-Cooper, To Be, 16.
755 Ibid.
756 Mrs H., interview by V. Woodman, October 1, 2012.
‘maudlin, thoughtful, and even depressed’ in the period leading up to the commemoration.\footnote{Mrs. C., interview by V. Woodman, February 23, 2012; Mrs. G., April 3, 2012} One officer’s wife, who had previously served in the WRNS, had no time for the commemorations claiming they were ‘an excuse for people to strut about in their medals’.\footnote{Mrs E., interview by V. Woodman, February 25, 2012} Therefore it can be seen that there was no homogeneity amongst the wives regarding commemoration of the conflict.

The next Stage 1 theme concerned long-term and short-term effects of being involved in the conflict, on both the veterans and the respondents. The coded data disclosed that all the respondents had suffered effects, with ten (20%) of the respondents stating they had suffered short-term effects of stress and panic. The remaining forty respondents said they suffered from long-term effects which included depression, coping with changes in their husband and physical effects like an eating disorder. The researcher then investigated the effects on the veterans of participating in the conflict. Only four women said they originally noticed no changes. The most common observation from the wives was that the men did not want to talk about the conflict; fourteen wives (28%) noted this. Ten respondents (20%) said their husbands became withdrawn and seven respondents (14%) claimed their husbands wanted to be alone. Other observations were that the men became moody, drank more or reacted to loud or sudden noises. This data revealed that regarding the effects of the conflict the women all experienced and witnessed some changes in their husband, resulting in this theme demonstrating homogeneity among the wives in this instance.

The Stage 2 discursive data examined the concept of the aftermath in greater detail to deduce richer and in-depth data. All ten wives re-interviewed stated they had spoken to other military wives and friends about changes in their husbands’ behaviour. Initially all the women stated they had not sought help from doctors or other official channels, such as military welfare charities. However, over time all the wives did approach veteran’s charities or mental health practitioners. What is not clear is why the change; why did they seek help when they did? Was it because their husband’s behaviour got worse over time? Or, were the military organisations and health practitioners more active in promoting their services? One respondent who was aged twenty-three at the time of the conflict claimed that in 1982, when
the men returned, the military charities and groups were unaware of the effects on men and families. This respondent claimed that organisations such as The British Legion at that time could help with legal advice ‘...but when it came to mental health and emotional trauma well they were not well umm they were not well equipped for it’.759

The Stage 2 data also revealed emotional and personal memories when all the wives were asked what support was available to them in 1982. The women all agreed there is growing awareness on the effects of PTSD on both veterans and families, but getting support was and is not always easy. One respondent claimed that in 1982 ‘we, the wives, were invisible’.760 Whereas another respondent stated that in 1982 she ‘thought no one cared about the families, we were just there, I mean at times I felt we were a hindrance to them’.761

This next section asked the customary post-conflict question: ‘was it worth it?’ which revealed certain shared views. Using a simple coding system of analysing the words used in the respondents’ responses the researcher revealed certain terms were present in responses, these included: his job/duty/my rôle to support him/defend our rights/Margaret Thatcher was right. However, most of the respondents related this to their partners and not themselves, for instance stating it was ‘his duty’ as he had ‘signed for Queen and country’. This ‘muting’ of women’s thoughts and feelings is synonymous with Kathryn Anderson’s and Dana C. Jack’s theory of muted channels depicted in Chapter 3, particularly where women’s experiences are at a variance with the dominant (male) cultural perspective.762

Both interview stages included a section on the wives’ feelings about war to examine if they believed their feelings on war/conflict had altered due to their connection to the Falklands conflict. Stage 1 data revealed that twenty-seven of the fifty respondents claimed that they did not feel differently about war. One respondent related her experiences in historical terms claiming that it made her thoughtful towards ‘what women had put up with in the past, like the Second World War, where the men were away for much longer, and with

759 Mrs R. (A), interview by V. Woodman, April 8, 2017.
760 Ibid.
761 Mrs I. (S) interview by V. Woodman June 10, 2017.
no communication at all’. Another respondent claimed her views and thoughts had not changed when she stated she felt ‘the Falklands war was justified as “we” were protecting “our” own people, whereas more recent wars, for example the Gulf, was not “our” war’. When re-interviewed for Stage 2 the respondents were reflective and analytical surrounding their thoughts on conflict. One respondent felt that ‘the age of deployed service personnel shouldn’t be less than 25 years old’ and that ‘I also have a dislike of weapons and fighting, though truly believe as human beings we are a long way from understanding how to settle Conflicts any differently.’ Another respondent stated ‘I think my thoughts on wars and conflicts have changed, I mean I think we, as a society, should be more careful, thoughtful on where we send our military and should consider consequences …’ One respondent summed up her changing views on conflict when she said, ‘I don’t think it matters how much you talk about it or how much training you have, before, during or after, nothing can prepare you for the real thing.’

Stage 2 data reinforced that the ‘stability’ of shore time was perceived as the ideal situation for most wives, as it allowed good relations to develop with children, and the sharing of normal childcare tasks and normal family life. Adding the trauma of possible death or injury was bound to increase the disconnect between Falklands wives and other Royal Navy wives and non-military wives. This highlighted the effects of separation, that ‘normal’ family activities are not possible, with the home partner talking on the roles of both parents, plus often being a wage earner. It thus modified the declarations that the wives were ‘married to the job’, because what they wanted was a normal civilian lifestyle.

One significant finding of this research was that many of the women had no desire to be part of what they termed ‘the naval wives brigade’, believing these groups to be an extension of the naval hierarchy experienced by their husbands. This finding challenged the media image of the naval wives being a homogeneous group. Newspaper and television news reports during the conflict described the wives using collective terms, there was no

763 Mrs C., interview by V. Woodman, March 18, 2013.
764 Mrs I., interview by V. Woodman, September 1, 2014.
765 Mrs H. (K), interview by V. Woodman, June 3, 2017.
766 Mrs I. (S) interview by V. Woodman June 10, 2017.
767 Mrs I. (K), interview by V. Woodman, July 8, 2017.
768 Mrs. C., interview by V. Woodman, February 23, 2012.
individuality they were ‘naval wives’, they had no voice and were newsworthy only in relation to their men.\textsuperscript{769} The research also revealed that some of the naval wives were suspicious of ‘military’ women, those in uniform, one naval nurse who was married to a Falklands veteran claimed that she was treated with ‘animosity’ by women on the married quarter as they thought she ‘knew more about events than they did’.\textsuperscript{770} A strong emotion expressed was the feeling of being excluded from, or not wishing to join, wives’ cliques, whether based on hierarchical distinctions or differing levels of inclusivity on ships. Where the officers’ wives were proactive in bonding all ranks of wives, this does seem to have given the wives some comfort, to carry them through worrying times when there was no, or bad, news. This seemed to vary depending where their husbands were based, or what ship they were on. As previously mentioned, one of the ships, HMS xxx, operated a ‘chain of communication’ where the captain’s wife would contact officer’s wives and communication would filter down through a network of contacts.\textsuperscript{771} However, the access to information that some officer’s wives filtered down to the wives of ratings highlighted the hierarchical divides present in their husband’s workplace. An officer’s wife who was aged thirty-five with a ten-year-old daughter at the time of the conflict claimed that she felt ‘guilty’ about hearing news before some other wives, and that she was aware that this could cause ‘divisions’.\textsuperscript{772} The twenty-nine-year old wife of a chief petty officer validated the view on hierarchical divides when she stated that she believed that communication was ‘rank and file’ and that she was sure ‘officers and their wives had information that ratings and their families had no access to’.\textsuperscript{773}

The Stage 1 colour coded data revealed that only six of the fifty wives (12%) used official welfare or wives’ groups as a means of coping when their partner was on deployment with 35 of the women (70%) preferring to turn to family or friends for support. Remarkably, the coded data revealed that thirty of the fifty women interviewed (30%) did not find naval

\textsuperscript{769} An example of this was, London: ITN News, May 5, 1982, 22:05. Where a group of women were shown at a naval estate, they were described as a group, with no personal details about them.

\textsuperscript{770} Mrs T. (M), interview by V. Woodman, March 15, 2013.

\textsuperscript{771} Three of the respondents (Mrs C. Mrs E. and Mrs J.) had husbands on HMS xxx and they all talked about the sense of community and the lines of communication which filtered down from the captain’s wife.

\textsuperscript{772} Mrs E., interview by V. Woodman, February 25, 2012.

\textsuperscript{773} Mrs W., interview by V. Woodman, February 25, 2012.
wives more understanding, although a Stage 1 interviewee said ‘all my support came from fellow naval wives...[pause]... I don’t believe anyone else would have understood.’

The Stage 2 interviews also explored the phenomena of naval wives’ groups and women’s groups and how those experiencing similar events would support each other. However, the findings for this research, both in Stage 1 and Stage 2 data, reveal that the women did not join official wives’ groups. Issues surrounding hierarchical divisions amongst the women also appeared in Stage 2 interviews with one wife, who was aged thirty-five at the time with three children, stating that she had heard the groups were ‘cliquey’ and that ‘some women thought they were better than you’ because ‘their husband is a higher rate’. Another respondent claimed the groups were ‘not for me’ as her ‘husband was in the forces, not me’. This wife made friends with wives of her husband’s shipmates, but the formal wives group was ‘not my sort of thing’ stating she ‘wanted to make my own friends’. One former member of the WRNS was less than complimentary about some naval wives, thus further disputing the theory of naval wives being a homogenous group of women. The former Wren, who was aged thirty-five at the time of the conflict and worked part-time as a civil servant, said she found some naval wives ‘pathetic’ as ‘why marry someone who could spend months away from home and then complain’. She mentioned the help and support available, such as naval welfare and the wives’ groups, but stated she ‘did not belong to any wives’ groups set up by the navy’ but she did ‘arrange some family days’ when her husband was on HMS XXX.

From this sample, it can therefore be seen that most wives preferred informal groups of other mothers or husbands’ shipmates’ wives which developed naturally, rather than fitting into a prior setup. Therefore, the differences in how the wives’ groups were set up and run is crucial. It would have been useful to delve more into these mechanisms.

The Stage 2 data revealed that the respondents were shaped by specific mores of being a naval wife, although some women understated them. One respondent who was eighteen at the time of the conflict claimed that the Royal Navy had less control over her

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774 Mrs W., interview by V. Woodman, February 25, 2012
775 Mrs C. (P), interview by V. Woodman, April 23, 2017.
776 Mrs H. (K), interview by V. Woodman, June 3, 2017.
777 Mrs E. (J), interview by V. Woodman, May 6, 2017.
because they lived ‘away from the confines of a married quarter.’ However, one respondent encapsulated the militarisation of service wives theory when she said ‘I felt like I was as much in the navy as my husband, even though there were unwritten rules about how and what I should do, I still felt a kind of responsibility and duty, if not to the navy, to my husband.’ Another respondent, who had been in the WRNS, was aware of her militarisation when she stated she had been ‘married to the job’ herself and that ‘the navy own you’ she continued, ‘we are told what to wear, when to eat and sleep, when we can go home you know.’

Retrospective memories would have affected both stages of data. Retrospective memories have been criticised for their lack of reliability. One concern has been the problem of respondents reflecting back on their lives, using the prism of the present. How do past experiences, views shaped by culture and society, alongside present beliefs affect these accounts? Retrospective memory is vital to come to terms with the past, to offer a framework of interpretation. Alistair Thomson in *Anzac Memories*, highlighted how the World War One veteran, Fred Farrell’s identity was shaped by his war memories. The women’s narratives were not just what they did, but what they thought they did, and what they later remembered about what they thought they did. This research resulted in the researcher and the interviewee making links between the macro-level settings (the historical/social context) and micro-level experiences (the respondents personal experiences).

These interviews and the resulting data are unique in that the collaboration between researcher and respondent created the opportunity of reaching beyond conventional stories of women’s lives, to expose experience in a less culturally edited method. As noted in the methodology chapter, oral history tells us more about experiences and meaning than it does about events. Nowhere, in this study, is this more evident than in the presentation of the data shown in Chapters 8 and 9. The quality and characteristics of the individual material interpreted here could only have been obtained though oral history, which further validates the researcher’s choice of methodology.

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778 Mrs H. (K), interview by V. Woodman, June 3, 2017.
779 Mrs E. (J), interview with V. Woodman, May 6, 2017.
780 Mrs I. (S) interview by V. Woodman June 10, 2017.
Chapter 11 Conclusions

This research project investigated the opinions and experiences of the Falklands naval wives and families during and since the 1982 Conflict, to differentiate them as individuals from their stereotypical media portrayal and their corporate military image. The project suited a qualitative approach, with its affinity to phenomenological and hermeneutical methodologies, as the purpose of the research was to extrapolate data concerning the respondents’ experiences, memories, attitudes or beliefs and opinions or views. Also, research employing qualitative research is generally small-scale, both in numbers of respondents and the circumstances researched. This research fitted that model as it involved fifty interviewees and investigated their experiences and thoughts resulting from the Falklands Conflict. The rubric of the project is encased in the social constructivism paradigm, where social properties are constructed through relationships between people rather than individuals. This fits in with oral history methodology where collaboration is essential in the meaning-making process. This collaboration occurs between the respondent and researcher, but also within the placing and locating of potential respondents. The objective is to interview a group of people to discover trends, comparisons and differences, to reveal the social meaning of their experiences. A myriad of literature concerns theoretical and methodological aspects of qualitative research and oral history, but there is no academic study specific to this topic.

The aim of this study was to widen the scope of gender, social, naval and cultural history of the Falklands War. As well as adding to the historiography of the Falklands Conflict, it is anticipated that my findings will have contemporary relevance to the Ministry of Defence (MoD), a case study of servicemen and their families has a bearing on skilled workforce recruitment and retention. Re-evaluation of the Falklands Conflict from a hitherto unexamined aspect will have ongoing value for the wars in the Gulf and Afghanistan. Its themes covered the Falklands Conflict, gender, women and military history and oral history methodology.

The first objective, to engage with the theoretical debates surrounding the methods and methodologies employed by those using oral sources in historical research was addressed by adopting distinctive interview methods as discussed in the research design and
methodology chapter. This utilised the historical process to explore changes in gender norms within a highly gendered establishment (Royal Navy) and the perceived (in 1982) highly gendered event of war. The researcher also needed to comprehend the respondents’ understandings of their ‘lived’ experiences, therefore a holistic recognition of experiences specific to a naval family (absences, communication, being independent). Another methodological issue was to link the micro experiences within the macro settings. This was achieved by comparing the naval wives’ lives with those of other women. Were they working more or less than women outside the naval community? An in-depth literature review of primary and secondary sources ensured the research was contextualised within contemporary cultural, social and political mores. The methodological adoption of open-ended and inductive interview techniques ensured the researcher gained an understanding of the women’s experiences and enabled her to place them contextually and not analyse them as isolated issues. This meant that events in the respondents’ lives could be linked and given holistic meaning.

This research also addressed the oral history theoretical and methodological endeavour to bear witness and fill gaps in the historical record. The study had to be carried out whilst those with first-hand accounts of the event were still available. Women’s experiences have tended to be omitted from the historical record, so are now often a focus for oral history projects. As the data analysis chapter discloses, the women were willing and at times eager to share their experiences, with one stating ‘she wanted people to know how they [the men] had suffered’.

The second objective, to investigate the experiences/perceptions and attitudes of naval wives and families during the Falklands Conflict, was validated and verified by the data analysis and themed chapters. The only way to extrapolate this rich and at times emotional data was to espouse the methodologies referred to above. The data revealed that the women were strong with careers of their own, and not just supporters of their husbands. The women may have been subordinate to their husbands’ careers, but not to their husbands. The data shows that many of the women enjoyed the independence that resulted from separation from their husbands. However, the term ‘married to the navy’ was used a few times to

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782 Mrs I., interview by V. Woodman, September 1, 2014.
describe their husbands’ allegiance and control by the establishment. One wife claimed she saw herself as a mistress; the navy was her husband’s wife.\textsuperscript{783}

The third objective, to demonstrate that commemoration of ‘normal’ peoples’ lives and the rôles they played are an important part of our history, was more difficult to achieve. The researcher appreciated its importance. Ultimately, this whole project commemorates the women and their rôle in the event. However, their rôle has not been recognised in ‘official’ commemorations. They are thanked in speeches and services, for example the 30\textsuperscript{th} Anniversary Service at Portsmouth Cathedral. The padre officiating at the service praised ‘the families for their support and resilience’ but their support and resilience is not recognised in a tangible memorial. It must be noted that when the researcher asked the respondents if they felt it was important to have their memories incorporated into commemorations of the war the answer was a resounding ‘no’.

However, the experiences of naval families, although not specific to the Falklands, are being recognised within the museum sector. The National Museum of the Royal Navy has in recent years included the experiences of naval families in their new galleries. To do this they established a relationship between the museum and the personnel on one of the new Type-45 ships before it went on its maiden deployment. They recorded and filmed the experiences of some families and launched an art project for children of the servicemen to create a banner for the ship’s homecoming.

The fourth objective, to evaluate a case study of servicemen and their families relevant to recruitment and retention of the skilled MoD workforce, was achieved by interviewing the Director of Naval Families Federation who outlined changes made in such areas as housing policy and contact with families. After the Falklands, if a woman lost her husband she was not removed from married quarters immediately, but it was understood that she would need to move within a short period of time. Now, if a man dies in combat, the wife and family can stay in the house until they feel ready to move, however long that may be, but the rent will be raised to that of a market rate and not subsidised. Another change is the recognition of

\textsuperscript{783} Mrs W., interview by V. Woodman, February 25, 2012.
common-law relationships; a couple does not now have to be married to be allocated a married quarter.\textsuperscript{784}

How the conflict has been remembered and commemorated was the fifth objective. Falklands commemorations, apart from the big 25\textsuperscript{th} and 30\textsuperscript{th} anniversaries, have been mostly low-key affairs. The commemoration chapter examined theories, the researcher evaluating commemorations not as economically driven occasions, as they are very personal. They are more sociological and/or psychological events. This breaking down of disciplinary and genre boundaries is a recent paradigm in historical and oral history methodology, and a boundary that this researcher had to be comfortable with, especially whilst researching and writing the aftermath chapter, where she had to learn and be familiar with psychological terms and concepts. The data revealed that many women felt excluded from commemorations of the war. One wife stated that the war should not be forgotten, but that commemoration ‘should be reserved for those who took part...women should be there for support’.\textsuperscript{785} If the women themselves feel this, then there is no onus on the authorities to include them in any commemorations. Chapter 7 examined Falklands commemorations and affirmed that commemorative rites and sites are relevant to interviewing wives during the Falklands post-commemorative era, as their narratives would have been affected by the tailored versions of Falklands commemoration. However, as the women’s memories have largely been omitted from the commemorations, they assist the wives’ narratives by highlighting their rôle as supporters of their military man. The nature of the Falklands commemorations reflects the political theories of commemoration as studied by Raphael Samuel and Eric Hobsbawn and examined in Chapter 7. The Falklands wives became national wives through their connection to their hero/military man’s personification and symbolisation of the nation. Furthermore, T.G. Ashplant’s, Graham Dawson’s and Michael Roper’s cultural/political theory of commemoration is evident in Falklands remembrance. This hypotheses view commemoration as a cultural construct disseminated by political narratives. This means that the official memory is shaped by political interference, while Falklands naval wives’ personal or individual memories are excluded.

\textsuperscript{784} Mrs Kim Richardson, OBE, Director of Naval Families Federation, interview by V. Woodman, March 13, 2013.
\textsuperscript{785} Mrs I., interview by V. Woodman, September 1, 2014.
The study sought to answer the following research questions through qualitative and triangulated data:

1. If a group of naval wives underwent the same events, would their views/thoughts/experiences be comparable?
2. Was the image depicted in existing literature the only view?
3. Did the naval community differ from the rest of society; how were its gender rôles defined?
4. Did the wives’ thoughts and feelings differ from those reported in the press?
5. Did media views reinforce previous militarised patriotism and gender rôles?

To answer the first research question, the data revealed that in such instances as first finding out about the conflict there was a clear consensus. Seventy per cent of the women interviewed found out through television and radio reports. However, the lack of unity, or perceived unity, is exposed when examining the living arrangements of the wives. Some felt that those living in married quarters were more informed about what was happening during the conflict. Yet some living in married quarters accused navy welfare of not doing enough to support wives. An unexpected result was that most of the respondents did not desire to be part of the ‘naval wives brigade’ as they were critical of the hierarchy, believing that the groups were either for ratings’ wives or officers’ wives, but the two did not mix socially. This reluctance reflects Joan Chandler’s research on sailors’ wives where her research revealed that women on naval estates in Plymouth in 1985 did not join the naval wives’ groups; the reasons given were fundamentally class-based, based on experiences of jealousy, gossip and cliquism amongst women from different backgrounds.\(^\text{786}\) Diversity among naval wives was demonstrated when a respondent who was also a naval nurse claimed she was treated with animosity: as a woman in uniform she was viewed as a threat. Moreover, the data disclosed that twice as many wives interviewed believed that naval wives were no more understanding of their situation than non-military wives.

The duality of naval life was referred to throughout the research. This applied whenever their husbands were deployed, not just during a time of conflict. Duality of rôles is not exclusive to naval marriages; it is present in other occupations where one partner spends significant periods of time away from home as Hanna Hagmark-Cooper and Michelle Thomas.

deduced in their studies.\textsuperscript{787} Any of the harmonious women’s groups that appeared to transcend the class, background and hierarchical naval divisions of officers and ratings were established before the conflict, and they were localised. For example, the researcher discussed the cohesion of the families on HMS \textit{Bristol}, this cohesion was due to the captain and his wife wanting to establish a strong relationship between officers and men and was not an official move by the Royal Navy. Although Chandler’s research was not about wives in the Falklands period, some of her respondents had been living in married quarters in Plymouth at the time. Her research revealed that any sense of community, especially groups that evolved to unite the wives of officers and ratings in a sense of commonality, was short-lived: as soon as the men came home from the South Atlantic the groups dissolved.\textsuperscript{788} This research reveals that not all the women’s experiences were comparable, although the women shared a plight; the experience was not the same for all of them.

The second research question regarding images of the naval wives during the war revealed that media images during the war conveyed the women as those left at home. As the media chapter indicated, any naval women shown in the media at the time were not described in individualistic terms, some reports not even naming them; they were introduced as Mrs ... wife of..., not even by their first name. There was no mention of their careers; they were described only in terms of their connection to a member of the task force. The research revealed that ‘home front’ women (a term not used by the women, but the Glasgow Media Group dedicated a whole chapter to ‘The Home-Front’\textsuperscript{789}) were depicted as vessels of emotion, not active members of society. Few reports gave the women an opportunity to speak. Reports were subjected to the voiceover, or [male] professionals. The research did not reveal the reason behind the decision not to allow the women to speak for themselves. Perhaps the reporters thought the women would be emotional, not give an objective comment or might be critical. However, the group of women interviewed for this research did not wholly bemoan their fate. Any criticisms about the Royal Navy or not feeling supported were always followed by the claim that they were supportive of their husbands. None of the wives

\textsuperscript{787} Hanna Hagmark-Cooper, \textit{To be a Sailor’s Wife} (Cambridge: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2012); Michelle Thomas, \textit{Lost at Sea and Lost at Home: the Predicament of Seafaring Families} (Cardiff: Seafarers International Research Centre, 2003).
\textsuperscript{788} Chandler, \textit{Sailors’ Wives}, 297.
\textsuperscript{789} Glasgow University Media Group, \textit{War and Peace News} (Milton Keynes: Open University Press, 1985), 93-143.
interviewed commented on how they were portrayed in the press at the time, so the question was asked. One woman, a 33-year-old wife of a petty officer with two young children at the time, said she ‘was too busy and worried about what was happening down there to worry about what was being said about us.’\textsuperscript{790} Another view was ‘we were invisible, we still are’\textsuperscript{791} Yet one wife did imply that an organisation that was traditional and paternalistic would also want those values to be shown in the media.\textsuperscript{792} The evidence suggests that the image promulgated in the media was not the only one; in fact, in regard to the navy wives it was not even the right one. Images and language were selective, endeavouring to show the women as waiting for their men.

The third research question is linked to the previous one. Was the naval community different from the rest of society? The research would suggest not. Firstly no one group in society can live completely alienated from what is happening around them. The women interviewed had paid jobs outside the home, and contemporary surveys revealed this as being the norm in 1982, yet the naval women were only described in relation to their men.\textsuperscript{793} In 1982 the naval community was different from the rest of society. Partners live with the possibility of their serving spouse going to war, and possibly losing their life. Working in such a hierarchical, patriarchal and traditional institution necessitates conformity and conservatism and respect for past wars. It also produces resistant sub-cultures and behaviour. The military person’s future career is linked to political decisions (defence cuts), and at times the families’ housing and schooling provisions are lost alongside the career. The navy is very clearly a different world, including its semi-autonomous branches (ships and shore establishments). The data chapters exposed the effects on the men and revealed that forty-six of the fifty women interviewed claimed their husbands had changed since their return. Furthermore, twenty out of the forty-six said their husbands suffered more than one effect. One surprising revelation was that many of the women had suffered effects themselves, ranging from stress, depression, eating disorders and PTSD. Therefore, the naval

\textsuperscript{790} Mrs H (S), interview by V. Woodman, October 12, 2012.
\textsuperscript{791} Mrs H (K), interview by V. Woodman, April 7, 2012.
\textsuperscript{792} Mrs T., interview by V. Woodman, March 15, 2013.
\textsuperscript{793} 1980 Household Survey showed that two-thirds of married women worked outside the home.
community was different from society in 1982, the problems they had experienced and continued to experience ensured that the conflict would not go away for them.

The Falklands Conflict was fought under distinct gender divisions. Women were not allowed to fight. The divisions were not imposed by the women, but by the ‘rules’ of society. They were applied by the navy, the press, television media, parliament, and ultimately, society. The task force was portrayed as masculine; the women were wives, mothers and girlfriends. As the data revealed, many women held jobs and knew how to carry out basic maintenance tasks such as change plugs and put oil in the car. Some of the respondents enjoyed the confidence and independence having to take on dual (as then perceived by many) rôles bestowed on them. It can be concluded that although the media described the women, and the war using highly gendered language, this was not reality to the naval wives.

The question of whether the wives’ thoughts and feelings different from those reported in the press is difficult to assess, mainly because most of the views in the press were not reported directly from the women. The media chapter includes some remarks concerning the few occasions when women did talk about their feelings, yet any less than supportive sentiment was later edited out of the broadcast. When the respondents were asked ‘was it worth it? most of the respondents referred back to their husbands and talked about ‘duty’ and ‘it was what they were trained for’. There was little criticism and no sign of dissent. It is important to state that the women themselves were not critical of the Royal Navy or their lives; they just at times wanted to be kept informed. Most of them recognised that the navy were unprepared for the war and that the welfare services were overwhelmed, this was reflected in the data on coping strategies, where it was revealed that 35/50, or 70%, of the women interviewed turned to their family and friends for support. One twenty-nine-year-old wife of a Royal Marine Officer, a full time civil servant with two daughters, stated that ‘they didn’t know what to do, the welfare service did the best they could in the circumstances’. The interview data revealed that some women felt the navy did ‘not provide satisfactory

794 See Chapter 8, table 8.11, was it worth it?
795 Mrs R. (D), interview by V. Woodman, May 20, 2012.
support or information’ but considering the numbers involved and the context of war .... this was not surprising’. 796

The final research question: ‘Did media views reinforce previous militarised patriotism and gender rôles?’ reinforced the hypothesis that the media strengthened notions of patriotism and traditional gender rôles. The insertion of historical references into news reports was examined in the media chapter. The integration of the Falklands within British history was apparent. Some of the respondents revealed a mixture of patriotism and politics. One respondent claimed she was ‘very patriotic’. Another said she was ‘very British’. 797 The data analysis chapter also showed a parallel with these research findings and those of the respondents from the Mass Observation, Special Directive, 1982. Many comments made by the respondents of mass observation contained an element of patriotism. Using Lucy Noakes’ research on how the media and parliament evoked images and language of the Second World War to highlight the masculinity of the task force and draw parallels with Second World War combatants, the researcher acknowledges that women would have been depicted in feminine caring and supporting rôles. 798 However, what is clear from this thesis is that although the media were reinforcing stereotypical views of patriotism and militarised gender rôles, the naval wives were also exposed to this same militarisation of their lives through their husbands’ careers.

The researcher deems it important here to acknowledge that some members of the armed forces went beyond expectations to help the suffering families receive information about their loved ones during the conflict. Three members of the Women’s Royal Naval Service (WRNS) were awarded the British Empire Medal (BEM) in the post-Falklands honours list for work they performed with Naval Personal and Family Services (NPFS) and the Casualty Care Unit. Leading Wren Dental Hygienist Kim Toms, was seconded to the Casualty Care Cell at HMS Nelson, the secondment involved working long hours, keeping in touch with and disseminating (often distressing) information to the dependents of deployed personnel. Kim Toms was awarded the BEM for the sensitivity and dedication with which she handled the

796 Mrs C., interview by V. Woodman, March 18, 2013.
797 Mrs E., interview by V. Woodman, February 25, 2012; Mrs C., interview by V. Woodman, February 23, 2012.
Two Chief Wrens who worked with the NPFS at the time of the conflict were also awarded the BEM. Chief Wren Education Assistant Ann Monckton was a member of the Central Casualty Reporting Unit in Portsmouth, the centre dealing with hundreds of telephone calls, many from distressed relatives seeking information. Chief Wren Family Services Barbara Travers was the senior NPFS representative at RAF Hospital, Wroughton, Wilts, to which all returning casualties were first taken. Her rôle was to give information and practical help to the men and their families, co-ordinate offers of help from the public, working with the medical, nursing and welfare teams.

The second stage interviews, with revised question themes, revealed that the women saw their rôles as mirroring Enloe’s list of the attributes of the ‘model military wife’ summarised in Chapter 3 (part of the military family, patriotic duty to be supportive, good mother and not burden husband with maternal worries). One respondent, who was engaged to a chief petty officer in 1982, who married after the conflict, stated in 2017 that she was aware of what would be expected of her: ‘after all military life was not just a job, it was a way of life’ and she recognised that his career would always be ‘more important’ than hers. At the time the respondent was a full-time nursery nurse.

One interviewee, a thirty-four-year-old officer’s wife, a full-time teacher with two sons, stated in 2017 that during her time as a naval wife she saw her rôle as ‘being supportive to my husband’ claiming it was her ‘duty’. These respondent’s views are synonymous with Janet Finch’s hypotheses on when women marry they marry not just the man but his job. Although this can also be true of various occupations, vicars, doctors and politicians for example, what is different about the military is how strong and patriarchally feminised the message is. Wives should be suitable and valuable to the military institution. Research by Ruth Jolly and Chris Jessup were of importance to this study, they offered a framework to test and compare the findings, although it must be said that both authors had served in the military. Additionally, Cynthia Enloe’s work on the militarisation of women was not specific to but included military wives. Of particular interest to this study was Enloe’s profile of the model military wife, which

801 Mrs A. (L), interview by V. Woodman, June 10, 2017.
802 Mrs I. (K), interview by V. Woodman, July 8, 2017.
although based on the American military, paralleled that of the British military in expecting military wives to become part of the ‘military family’ and have a ‘duty’ to be a ‘supportive’ wife in times of national need. What was different about Enloe’s research is that she examined the militarisation of women beyond the traditional military community. This applied to this research, as although some of the respondents were aware of their own ‘militarisation’, especially those who had themselves served in the military, the other women were not conscious of their indoctrination into the gendered militarised way of life.

A critique of the methods used by the researcher acknowledges that the first stage interviews might have been better phrased, their data revealing that some were closed questions. If more questions had been open perhaps more nuanced data would have emerged. For the first stage interviews the researcher colour-coded the data into themes, using pie-charts as a visual means to display the data. After recording the second stage data in a discursive manner the researcher now considers that she should have displayed all the data in a discursive, rather than numerical style.

A further critique is the snowballing sampling method the researcher used. Although this was a way of gaining access to a potential source of respondents it could be problematic when introducing interviewees from an already occurring category, for example from close neighbourhood proximity, similar age group, whether they had children or not, whether they were ex-military, whether they knew each other before the research started, husbands’ rating or ship, thus potentially repeating shared views and experiences.

The methods of feminist oral history methodology are followed in this thesis, for example muted channels, dominant (male) memories and the inter-relationship between researcher and respondent. As mentioned in chapter 4, the methodology is not exclusive to feminist oral history. However, feminist methodology concerning the construction of women’s historical memory was paramount in this thesis. Examining how and why women explain, justify and make sense of their past offers insight into the social and physical framework within which they function, the choices they make within their cultural environment revealing the relationship between individual perception and culture. The method of triangulation of data, placing the women’s testimonies within other secondary and primary data was also a relevant method utilised for the thesis. One concept the researcher
did not address at the beginning of the project was that of retrospective memories, relevant as the interviewees were remembering what they did/or thought they did thirty-years after the conflict. However, when the researcher became aware of this concept she read studies such as Thomson’s *Anzac Memories* to familiarise herself with issues, for example how the respondent’s individual narratives can be influenced by outside cultural and social agencies. The issue of retrospective memories was discussed in Chapter 3 and mentioned in Chapters 8 and 9, the two primary data chapters, where the respondents’ narratives were being re-told thirty years after the event. Therefore, they were re-telling what they thought they felt and what they remembered thinking.

It was no secret that Thatcher did not see herself as a feminist,\(^{803}\) and the research dictates that the respondents did not view themselves as feminists either. They viewed themselves as being ‘supportive’\(^ {804}\) women, who due to their unusual circumstances sometimes became ‘a single parent’ and learnt to become head of the household through ‘budgeting and learning basic chores, such as ‘changing plugs, checking the oil in the car and unblocking the sink’.\(^ {805}\) What was particularly revealing in this study was that despite societal changes regarding gender rôles and responsibilities, the problems facing naval wives were fundamentally the same as those facing their counterparts one hundred and sixty-five years earlier.\(^ {806}\) However, the data in this research discloses that although the women were all involved in the event (Falklands Conflict) and were all naval wives, their individual narratives exposed contrasts in some of their views and experiences. While the media portrayed the women as a homogeneous group, the interview data proved otherwise.

Whilst pursuing this research the researcher reflected on the academic skills refined by completing a research degree: research skills, project management, computer and communication skills. The researcher also experienced the rôle of respondent on two occasions during the course of the research. She was asked to be part of a Sea Your History museum display on family life at the National Museum of the Royal Navy. For this she was

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\(^{803}\) See Margaret Thatcher Foundation Website and conduct a keyword search using the word ‘feminist’ for example TV interview for TYNE TEES 28/11/74. Accessed at the Margaret Thatcher Foundation Website document number 102439 retrieved October 20, 2015 at: http://www.margaretthatcher.org/document/102439

\(^{804}\) For example, Mrs I. (K), interview by V. Woodman, July 8, 2017.

\(^{805}\) Mrs E. (J), interview by V. Woodman, February 25, 2012.

interviewed about life as a naval wife and mother. Also, a Falklands veteran completing his PhD wanted to talk about coping strategies for military wives. This experience gave the researcher a taste of what it is like on the other side of the recorder. One vital skill which has improved during the course of this research is interviewing technique. An empathetic manner whilst maintaining a professional and at times challenging stance has been successfully pursued. Furthermore, the procedure of coding, analysing and interpreting the oral history interviews has enabled the researcher to become more observant of the subjective elements of historical events and past activities. Having a rapport with the respondents and making them feel comfortable enough to share their thoughts and feelings on an emotive subject is a privilege.

The research journey bought frustration, joy and tears. The main frustration was having the time to schedule interviews. Most of the interviews were conducted within easy travelling distance of my home, yet with other commitments such as work and family, along with some respondents having to cancel interviews, the process took longer than anticipated. The joy experienced throughout the research journey was encapsulated in the rapport established with the women, made stronger by the revelation early in the process that the researcher had been a naval wife, and more recently a naval mother. The tears were related to the women’s testimonies, some of whose lives were turned around by their partner’s involvement in the conflict. Their partners’ behaviour changed and the frustration of trying to secure, not just recognition, but support for their predicament resulted in stressful, and at times, impossible marriages.

In conducting the interviews, the researcher endeavoured to remain as objective as possible, while recognising many parallel patterns. However, although the researcher understood the context, for example being a naval wife, to which the women were referring, she would ask them to explain the context in more detail. Throughout the research process, the researcher realised that there were aspects of her culture that she took for granted. Questioning her own biases, upbringing and class were at times challenging. As discussed in the methodology chapter, subjectivity within the oral history research process, and the meaning attached to participants’ testimony is known as reflexivity. One aspect of reflexivity is researcher bias, therefore one aspect of the research journey for this researcher was to question continuously her understanding of each phase of the study, to produce authentic
One difficulty she faced was how to measure her reflexivity. The importance of reflexivity is acknowledged in publications, yet the practicalities, methods and difficulties of doing it are rarely recognised.

This research points out how far society has changed since the 1980s. This is shown in changing attitudes to mental health issues and how society now does not just view military combat as being a male-dominated arena. A 2014 report on the UK military revealed how women may be allowed to fight in front line combat rôles as early as 2016. In 2014, women could serve on the front line, but not where the primary aim was to ‘close with and kill the enemy’. A review paper was published in December 2014 and as a result, further research was undertaken looking at the physiological demands on those carrying out ground combat rôles. An initial report was released in mid-2016. However, the researcher is sceptical that this is actually an advance in gender rôles and acceptance, as an article suggests that this move could also be due to a stalling in recruitment to the armed forces.

Downing Street announced on July 8, 2016 that women would be allowed to serve in front line rôles for the first time. Combat rôles for women were phased in over three years. This began by allowing women to serve in all roles within certain units of the Royal Armoured Corps (RAC) from November 2016. This was reviewed after six months before being expanded to other units of the RAC. Therefore, the assumption is that the aftermath of future conflicts could feature women more prominently. Would perceptions and portrayals of war trauma and PTSD be different from those male-dominated accounts we see now?

In addition to answering the research questions this thesis displays how the methodology employed enhances the uniqueness of oral history. The collaboration between researcher and respondent exposes experiences in a more direct method. The data material generated from this research could only have been obtained from adopting this method. The

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methodology put the women at the forefront of the thesis and the second stage interviews refined the direction and focus of this research.

This thesis has made an original contribution to research by confronting issues of feminism, gender equality and historical research within the field of a highly gendered and paternalistic establishment and concept; the Royal Navy and war. What this research endorses is that Oral History gives the women a voice, a fundamental feature of its theory. An enhanced knowledge and understanding of the oral interview process will be a long-lasting outcome of the thesis. What is ironic about the early 1980s is that despite having a female Prime Minister and monarch, society sustained inherited gender divisions. The literature review demonstrates that Thatcher’s appointment as Prime Minister did not lead to increased rights or advantages for women. Her term in power coincided with a transformation in the nature of discussions concerning women’s rights which had changed with the rise of feminism in the 1960s and 1970s. Finally, this study reveals how responsive servicemen and their families are to society’s image of them, and how it affects them and our perceptions of them.

‘Falklands Royal Navy Wives: fulfilling a militarised stereotype or articulating individuality?’ To answer the title question, as a group, the women were and are individuals within a social time continuum. This study alerts historians not to homogenise any study population.
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https://www.theguardian.com/world/2007/jan/21/falklands.uk1

TV interview for the BBC (Falklands)
https://www.margaretthatcher.org/document/104782

University of Portsmouth, Ethics, http://www.port.ac.uk/research/ethics/


War veterans lose trauma claim case
www.theguardian.com/society/2003/may/22/themilitary.publichealth

What it’s really like to be an army wife, https://www.forces.net/news/what-its-really-being-army-wife

Women’s Aid: our history https://www.womensaid.org.uk/about-us/history/

Women’s Royal Naval Service
http://www.plimsoll.org/SeaPeople/womenandthesea/womenandwar/womensroyalnavalservice.asp?view=text

WRNS history, http://www.wrens.org.uk/history
## Application for Ethical Review – Staff and Postgraduate Students

### 1. Study Title and Key Dates

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1.1 Title</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Speak for themselves: The experiences of Naval Wives during the Falklands War (1982).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.2 Key Dates</td>
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<tr>
<td>Date of submission: 19/5/17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Version Number: V1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ethics Committee Reference Number:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intended Start Date of Data Collection: June 2017.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Projected Finish Date of Data Collection: fully written up October 2017.</td>
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### 2. Applicant Details

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>2.1 Principal Investigator</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Name: Victoria Woodman</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Title /Role /Course of study: PhD</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Department: School Civil Engineering and Surveying                                                   Faculty: Technology
Telephone: 02392 842517                                                                   Email: victoria.woodman@port.ac.uk

| Has the principal investigator attended the graduate school (for students) or researcher development programme (for staff) research ethics training session? | No; March 2010: PGC Social Research Methods, including Research Skills for Social Scientists and Research Design and Data Collection; May 2014: Skills Forge Writing and Revising your thesis workshop |

### 2.2 Supervisor (if Principal Investigator is a student)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name: Dr Ann Coats</th>
<th>Title /Role: Senior Lecturer Heritage Property</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Department: School Civil Engineering and Surveying</td>
<td>Faculty: Technology</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Telephone: 02392 842517</td>
<td>Email: <a href="mailto:ann.coats@port.ac.uk">ann.coats@port.ac.uk</a></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Names and email of any other supervisors:

- Tim Goodhead *tim.goodhead@port.ac.uk* Advisory role especially concerning content and project design.

- Dr Laura Tisdall *laura.tisdall@lmh.ox.ac.uk*. Advice on interview question design, interview practice and oral history methodology.

| Has the supervisor attended the researcher development programme research ethics training session? | No; Association of Research Ethics Committees Training event for Ethics Committee Members 18 July 2012 |

| Promoting Ethical Research | 13 June 2014 |

Update for Experienced Supervisors

Best Practice in Supervising Part Time and Professional Doctorate Students

Catch Me if You Can: How not to ruin your research career with authorship disputes, misconduct allegations or unethical practice

A good read: the elements of a successful application for ethical review of research

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<tr>
<td>13 October 2014</td>
<td>Update for Experienced Supervisors</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16 December 2014</td>
<td>Best Practice in Supervising Part Time and Professional Doctorate Students</td>
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<tr>
<td>18 March 2015</td>
<td>Catch Me if You Can: How not to ruin your research career with authorship disputes, misconduct allegations or unethical practice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 December 2015</td>
<td>A good read: the elements of a successful application for ethical review of research</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2.3 Others involved in the work/research including students and/or external collaborators (name, organisation/course, role in the project)

None

3. Details of Peer Review

I will seek peer-review from the Oral History Society FE Group following attendance at the OHS course on 20/21 May 2017. Laura Tisdall (not-independent) but is an experienced oral history practitioner.

4. Funding Details

The first three years of this project were funded by the University of Portsmouth, endorsed by the European Union InterregIIIC Research Project, Maritime Regions: Making Museums Commercially Competitive (MarMu). Subsequent years (part-time) have been self-funded. I will receive no payment.

5. Sites/Locations
Research will take place at a site prearranged with the interviewee. This may be in a library or museum (quiet room arranged) or at the interviewee’s home. The standard UoP risk assessment form will be completed.

6. Insurance/indemnity Arrangements

No significant risks were identified with this research which will breach UoP insurance policies.

7. Aims and Objectives/Hypothesis

7.1 Aims

The broad purpose of this research is to capture the voices of a relatively neglected section of a community directly affected by the Falklands War: the wives and partners of Royal Navy personnel engaged in the South Atlantic in 1982 with the aim to widen the scope of gender, social, naval and cultural history of the Falklands War.

7.2 Primary Objective

The primary objective is to determine, by interviewing those directly involved, their experiences of war which have been largely omitted from the secondary literature. This will address how the naval community differed from the rest of society at the time; how were its gender roles defined through the highly-gendered event of war?

7.3 Secondary Objective(s)

Secondary objectives are:

- Engage with the theoretical debates surrounding the methods and methodologies employed by those using oral sources in historical research. My use of this methodology analyses the ‘experiences’, an analysis not attainable through other methods and one that can only be made retrospectively only through speaking about the past.
- Investigate the experiences/perceptions and attitudes of naval wives and families during the Falklands War
• Demonstrate that heritage is not always tied to buildings and places; commemoration of ‘normal’ peoples’ lives and the rôles they played are an important part of our history and heritage.

• Evaluate parallels and continuities with current naval policy in dealing with families. As well as adding to the historiography of the Falklands War, it is anticipated that my findings will have contemporary relevance to the Ministry of Defence (MoD), as a case study of servicemen and their families has a bearing on skilled workforce recruitment and retention. Re-evaluation of the Falklands War from a hitherto unexamined aspect will have ongoing value for the wars in the Gulf and Afghanistan.

• Examine how the war has been remembered or commemorated, as commemoration is a powerful analytical tool to re-evaluate a military event for contemporary society.

8. Study Summary

8.1 Justification/Summary of Study (no more than one side)

The choice of a research topic for this thesis derived from an oral history project carried out as part of my undergraduate studies. Work undertaken at this time enabled me to gain an understanding and awareness of the subject and the methodology and provided some useful background bibliographical references to carry out a preliminary survey of secondary source material for my doctoral study. Additionally, it was recognised that this topic was an under-researched area, and the people involved were reaching middle-age and above, that the time was right to conduct the interviews, thus creating the primary data.

The historiography of the Falklands reveals that shortly after the conflict ended a mass of literature concerning the war appeared. This literature predominantly falls into one of four themes:

1) Interviews or first-person accounts from members of the Task Force, who had their own heroic tale to tell.\(^{810}\)

2) Journalistic accounts of the war written by members of the press who accompanied the Task Force.\(^{811}\)


3) Political Interpretations, mainly on Margaret Thatcher’s rôle and how the conflict raised her popularity amongst the British electorate.\(^{812}\)

4) The media coverage of the war and analysis of the war.\(^{813}\)

Virtually no mention is made in the secondary literature of the wives and families of the task force, which further validated the research topic and methodology.

A review of other research studies revealed a lack of research concerning naval wives and families during the Falklands War. Some of the personal accounts mention wives or girlfriends, maintaining that it was the contact with home that kept them going in the days of uncertainty, but the women have scarcely any voice, or even mention. Lucy Noakes devoted a chapter to the Falklands, but it looked at national identity and popular memory.\(^{814}\) Jean Carr’s work was about women and the Falklands War, based on interviews she carried out with service families both during and immediately after the war.\(^{815}\) At the time Carr was a features writer with the Sunday Mirror; the journalistic, not historical approach is blatant; there are no references and the book maintains a highly selective and unbalanced account.

There has been academic research into the lives and experiences of military families, especially on such issues as military housing and coping with long absences. Joan Chandler’s PhD *Sailors’ Wives and Husband Absence* was concerned with the social situation of wives intermittently absent from their husbands. Chandler examines the ‘disruptive’ element of service wives, such as employment opportunities and relationships with children. She maintained that although absence and separation is often the foci of service families, reunions and reintegration are equally problematic.\(^{816}\) Professor Christopher Dandeker studied the deployment experiences of British army wives. This study was concerned with the wives’ experiences before, during and after deployment, satisfaction with military life and support networks.\(^{817}\) This academic work was fundamental in assisting with a design framework and a basis for a deeper


\(^{816}\) Joan Chandler, *Sailors’ Wives and Husband Absence* (PhD Thesis, Plymouth: Plymouth Polytechnic, 1987). Although this research project commenced a few years after the Falklands, there was no mention of it in the thesis. The focus was on the West of England (Plymouth) and Wales.

understanding of contemporary military life; however, both the works were investigating military life during peacetime, unlike this research which is examining the effects of war.

There has been no full-length academic study carried out solely on the experiences of naval wives and families at the time of the Falklands War, nor one utilising oral history methodology. This thesis will add to the historiography of the war and also fill in the gaps on an under-researched aspect of women’s history. Additionally, this research will place the lives of this group of people, whose experiences have so far been omitted from the existing literature, into a historical, social, economic and cultural context. This study, whilst being historical, will also have some relevance to contemporary Ministry of Defence personnel, as naval welfare charities are continuously updating and revising their policies on how best to prepare military families for service life.

The Stage One interviews failed to deliver sufficient in-depth data, so an oral history academic has advised further on interview question design, interview practice and oral history methodology, hence the need for a further Ethical review.

8.2 Anticipated Ethical Issues

This is the second stage of interviews carried out by the researcher and some previous interviewees are being revisited. Some of the second stage interviews will be with new participants.

- **Autonomy** – participants are invited to contact the researcher in the first instance, this is managed through requests and advertisements placed in periodicals and websites that potential interviewees would access (e.g. The Navy News/ Royal British Legion/ The Globe and Laurel/ships associations). After the initial contact is made and the respondent shows some interest in the research a participant information sheet will be offered (email or posted copy) if the respondent feels at this stage that they do not want to participate no further contact will be made.

- **Non-maleficence** – Ethical issues are not only present during the interview stage; they must be addressed in the data analysis and interpretation and during the writing and dissemination of the research. Anonymity has been covered above, but how long, or where, any data should be kept and the purpose it can be used for should be made clear to the respondents.\(^{818}\) The researcher created a consent form that included a section on where the interviews/data might be presented. The first choice was in the thesis itself, followed by academic conference papers, then museums (such as Royal Marines Museum and The National Museum of the Royal Navy). In view of the increasing amount of academic research published on-line recently the researcher thought it beneficial to add

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appropriate websites and/or blogs as an alternative site for the completed research. Additionally, in the interpretation of data, researchers need to offer a truthful account of the information. The researcher addresses this by offering all respondents a copy of the interview in the first instance, and all respondents offered the opportunity to receive a copy of the analysis where their responses were coded (although all quotes are anonymous).

- Beneficence – in the first stage of interviews some respondents declared that they were pleased they had taken part as they at times felt their experiences were not recorded or were important so the experience of being interviewed empowered them.

### 8.3 Anticipated other Risks or Concerns

The UoP risk assessment codes will be followed. The researcher’s previous ethics review highlighted three risk issues, which were addressed and led to a favourable ethics review.

Risks to participants:

**Sensitivity** - the researcher clarified how the respondents were sought so potential interviewees approached the researcher, in the first instance, by phone or e-mail. The researcher explained the nature of the research. After the initial contact (where the researcher explained the nature of the thesis and of the respondents’ input) if the potential respondent decided they didn’t feel they wanted to contribute then no further contact was made. During the first stage interviews all the respondents who decided to be interviewed said they felt it was benefic to them to share their thoughts (even the one respondent who had been left a widow by the conflict).

**Anonymity** - The consent form, given to respondents before the interview, included a section where the respondent could express whether they wished to remain anonymous. This, the researcher felt, was important as it gave the respondent control and their wishes would of course be paramount. The respondents have been divided on their take-up of anonymity some wished to remain anonymous, some not. They were also offered a copy of the interview, so if they were uncomfortable with anything it would be deleted and not included in the writing up stage.

**Risks to researchers** - Apart from one interview, all interviews were conducted in a public place (museum/coffee shop/library); the one interview conducted in the respondent’s home was with a Falklands wife with whom the researcher was already familiar. At no time was the researcher’s safety, or that of the respondent in jeopardy. The researcher always had a mobile phone, and left details with an adult of where she would be and at what time.

### 8.4 Medical Cover (if applicable)
9 Description of Method/Protocol

The main method of primary data collection will be oral history interviews. The initial interviews lasted between 1-2 hours. It is acknowledged that some respondents may find some of the issues arising from the interview sensitive, although it has been ascertained that due to the ages of the respondent’s husband/partner that it is unlikely they would still be serving members of the Armed Forces.

A pilot study of four interviews was carried out. This proved invaluable, as along with the secondary data, it highlighted a series of themes which had not been covered elsewhere. The pilot study also gave validation to the choice of interview and question techniques and established a feasible question sequencing which became the model for subsequent interviews.

It was decided early on in the research design process that the preferable method to adopt was that of qualitative/positivist research design due to its features being consistent with researching ‘experiences’. Features include:

- Meaning does not exist in its own right; it is created by humans as they interrelate and connect in interpretation.
- There is little or no use of numerical data or statistics.
- An emphasis on meanings.
- The significance of contexts; there is a requirement to understand phenomena in their setting.
- Experiences are described from the viewpoint of those involved.
- Research design develops as the research is carried out and is flexible.
- The significance of the values of the researcher is recognised.
- Sincerity and approachability of the researcher is valued.
• Findings offering a broad view is not a major concern.

• Research takes place in natural settings.

• The commitment and reflexivity of the researcher is respected.

• The project is usually small-scale in terms of people or circumstances researched.

• The social world is seen as a conception of those people involved.

Whichever definition of qualitative research is adopted, all writers assert that qualitative methods are used to confront research questions that entail explanation or understanding of social phenomena and their settings. They are predominately suited to intricate issues and to examining processes that emerge over time.

Robson, whilst recognising that many researchers will not fit systematically into the categories of any given typology, asserted that he highlighted social constructivism as a ‘broadly based mainstream qualitative approach with affinities to phenomenology and hermeneutic approaches’. Social constructivism signifies an interpretation that social properties are constructed through relationships and interfaces between people, rather than having a separate existence. Constructivism usually designates a focus on the individual rather than a group and is related to how individuals construct and make sense of their world; meaning is inferred when people interact and participate in interpretation.

Generally speaking, qualitative interview methods all aim to collect data directly from individuals. The type of material sought will vary, but usually covers the following: personal experiences; memories of an event; attitudes or beliefs; opinions and views. Oral history is a unique, qualitative interview method; it adheres to an inductive and open-ended interview archetype. According to Patricia Leavy the features of oral history interviews are that they are:

‘Open-ended, taps into processes, micro-macro links, comprehensive understanding, bearing witness/filling in the historical record, participant-researcher collaboration, emphasises participants’ points of view.’

The use of a semi-structured interview technique was the most appropriate style for this research project. It is small scale and the researcher is also the interviewer. The interview schedule used in the first stage of interviews was relatively simple; consisting of introductory demographic questions, a list of around

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a dozen themes/headings, a list of prompts and some closing comments. As the researcher became more confident the prompts and comments were not needed.

The second stage interviews comprise of a more structured technique (questions attached) and are focusing on some questions/issues that arose from the first viva. The researcher is aiming to re-interview around 10 previous respondents, plus five new respondents.

10 Compliance With Codes, Guidance, Policies and Procedures

The Oral History Society (OHS) guidance and codes of practice will be followed alongside the UoP policies and procedures. The OHS’s latest advice regarding safety/ethics/consent and copyright can be accessed at: http://www.ohs.org.uk/advice/ethical-and-legal/3/#candc-meaning.

11. Recruitment of Participants

11.1 Who are the Research/Participant Population?

The population are women who were married to, or partners of, serving members of the Royal Navy who went to the South Atlantic (Falklands) in 1982. It is difficult to ascertain the true figure of how many service personnel actually went to the Falklands in 1982 as at that time there was no centralised electronic database to capture UK Armed Forces personnel data, with most of a Service persons military record being held in paper files. It has also been impossible to determine numbers who were married. In 2009 Defence Statistics identified that the names and Service numbers for those UK Service personnel who deployed on the Falklands campaign were held by the MoD Medals Office. Over the course of 12 months’ staff in Defence Statistics (Health) transcribed 25,948 entries from paper records onto an electronic database.821

11.2 Inclusion/Exclusion Criteria

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**Inclusion Criteria:** Portsmouth-based naval wives at the time of the Falklands War whose husband/partner sailed to the South Atlantic with the Task Force.

**Exclusion Criteria:** Those women who were not connected to the Armed Forces in 1982.

### 11.3 Number of participants (include rationale for sample size)

The first stage interviews comprised 50 interviews, mostly with wives/partners but also some experts such as a padre and the Director of Naval Family Welfare. The second stage of interviews will be revisiting around 10 previous respondents and 5 new respondents.

Due to the aforementioned lack of a centralised electronic database it is difficult to establish the total population of naval wives living predominantly in the Portsmouth area.

**Sampling strategies**

Due to the nature and purpose of this study the researcher adopted the sampling method known as ‘non-probability sampling’ or ‘systematic non-random sampling’. This method is commonplace in small-scale surveys where the aim is not to produce a statistical generalisation to any population beyond the sample surveyed. Typically, this method is used when the researcher uses their judgement to reach a specific purpose, sometimes referred to as ‘purposive samples’. This sampling technique involves the researcher identifying specific groups of people who either possess characteristics or live in circumstances relevant to the social phenomenon being studied.

Informants are identified because they will enable exploration of a particular aspect of behaviour relevant to the research. The researcher also implemented snowball sampling where one or more individuals were identified from the population of interest (former naval wives). After they had been interviewed, they informed the researcher of other members of that population who would be potential respondents. This was useful in identifying and gaining access to the members of this particular group. As well as identifying a sample, this method is also used to clarify or explain social networks.

The purpose of this research was to conduct an exploratory study in an under-researched area, therefore a systematic large sample, better suited to large scale quantitative studies was not required. The researcher investigated other research utilising oral history (or interview) methodology to determine a

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**822** Robson, Real, 270-277.

**823** Robson, Real, 270-277.
viable number of respondents. Michelle Thomas, in her study of UK based seafarers, conducted thirty-four interviews. An investigation into the experiences of seafarers’ wives from the Aland Islands in the Baltic by Hanna Hagmark-Cooper was the result of seventy-five life stories. Finally, after consultation with an oral history practitioner in a military museum, it was decided that a valid sample size for this style of research would be about fifty, or when the information collected from the interviews was adding little or nothing new to the study. We label this data saturation to differentiate it from the grounded theory concept of theoretical saturation. Saturation has also become widely recognized as a guide or indicator that sufficient data collection has been achieved.

11.4 Recruitment Strategy (including details of any anticipated use of a gatekeeper in host organizations to arrange/distribute participant invitations)

In the first stage interviews, in order to locate potential respondents, the researcher initially placed requests in local naval museums, publications such as the Navy News and Globe and Laurel and approached ships’ associations. Those ships connected with the conflict which had active associations who regularly met were approached mainly through websites and by email. The researcher felt that by placing requests and allowing the potential respondents to approach her it made the process less intrusive and therefore addressed some ethical issues (previously discussed).

As the research progressed, the use of the internet, especially through social media sites, such as Facebook and Twitter, enabled the researcher to extend the search and the nature of the research to a wider audience. This method produced a number of respondents and put the researcher in contact with many veterans’ groups and other researchers in a similar field. The researcher, unlike many others in social research, did not have a problem with non-response. Perhaps this was because the researcher was geographically in a location which contains a high number of naval personnel, both veterans and serving members. It is of course impossible to say if the research would differ in any way if there had been more respondents (request for respondents attached).

824 Michelle Thomas, Lost at Sea and Lost at Home: the Predicament of Seafaring Families (Cardiff: Seafarers International Research Centre, 2003), 8.
11.5 Payments, rewards, reimbursements or compensation to participants

No payment will be offered to respondents, although if meeting in a public place the offer of tea/coffee will be made. The respondent will be aware prior to the interview that no payment will be made; the focus is on the value of the respondent’s testimony to the research.

11.6 What is the process for gaining consent from participants?

The consent of individual participants will be obtained after an overall explanation of the project to the study population, with a review of the consent and information forms. At the initial meeting the researcher will take each participant through the forms before they are signed. The formal consent form and information sheet are attached. The OHS states that: Preparing an interviewee with an explanation of what is involved is an important part of the process of preparing for an interview.\footnote{http://www.ohs.org.uk/advice/ethical-and-legal/3/}

First contact with an interviewee may be face-to-face, by phone, by email or letter. Whatever the approach it is important to ensure that right from the start people have information about the purpose and nature of the project or research, and what consenting to take part will mean. Interviewees should be provided with a copy of the project information sheet, and it is important to ensure that he or she has understood this.

It is anticipated that the research/work will be explained in person, but it is appreciated that this is not always possible. The participants will be given five days to consider the information before being asked to provide consent.

Participants will be informed that the results of the research will be published in the PhD and in various other academic journals (information sheet attached).

All participants will be informed as to the nature of the research, and the publication and dissemination of data prior to signing the formal consent form and participating in the research study.

11.7 Has or will consent be gained from other organisations involved (if applicable)?

N/A
11.8 Arrangements for translation of any documentation into another language (if applicable)?

N/A

11.9 Outline how participants can withdraw (if applicable), and how data collected up to this point will be handled. Also stop criteria for specific tests (if applicable)?

The participants will be informed that they may withdraw from the study at any time during the interview; this will be explained before the interview and in the information sheet. If they do so after some data have been collected, they will be asked if they are content for their data collected thus far to be retained and included in the study. If they prefer, the data collected pertinent to them will be destroyed and not included in the study. Once the data has been written up it will not be possible for them to withdraw their data from the study.

During the interview, if the researcher feels the respondent is suffering mental distress, she will terminate the interview using her own judgement.

11.10 Outline details of re-consent or debrief (if applicable)?

The participants will be offered a copy of their interview and will be informed as to when the research will be completed. A follow up thank you for your participation e-mail will be sent after the interview, no other consent will be or de-briefing is anticipated.

12. Data Management

12.1 Description of data analysis

Data for this research will be collected using individual interviews/recordings and transcripts. These will be placed into historical context using secondary sources such as historical records, newspapers, journals and other historians’ research.

Analysis will be both statistical (coding) and descriptive. The interviews will be analysed using open-coding technique. Open Coding includes labelling concepts, defining and developing categories based on their properties and dimensions. It is used to analyze qualitative data and part of many Qualitative Data Analysis methodologies like Grounded Theory.829

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We need to give names to our ideas and concepts to define, analyze and share with others. Once it is defined, we can begin to examine them comparatively and ask questions to systematically specify the states and to imply possible relations with others. It is also important that we name our concepts appropriately; because “people act toward things based on the meaning those things have for them; and these meanings are derived from social interaction and modified through interpretation.”\(^830\)

The first step in qualitative data analysis is to go through the data (i.e. interview and transcript) to break down into pieces to examine closely, compare for relations, similarities and dissimilarities. Different parts of the data are marked with appropriate labels or ‘codes’ to identify them for further analysis.

To analyse the first stage interviews the researcher transcribed some interviews, but this is time consuming, therefore synopses were constructed of the remaining interviews where themes arising from the interviews were colour coded. For example, how the respondent heard about the conflict/support networks/separation/coping strategies. When the researcher created pages of colour-coded themes, it became apparent that each theme contained a number of concepts. For example:

How the respondent heard about the conflict
→ radio → television → friend → neighbour

This analysis was then expressed both narratively and statistically (pie charts).

This line-by-line form of open coding is time consuming, but it helps to build a detailed, structured conceptual data model. When any new concepts are not found, but repetition of the existing labels, it is time to stop carrying out this very detailed analysis.

### 12.2 Where and how will data be stored?

The research data will be stored on the N-drive at UoP. With permission being given in the first stage interviews for copies of interviews to be stored at the National Museum of the Royal Navy. (Previous ethics certificate 19/1/15)

### 12.3 Destruction, Retention and Reuse of Data

The research data will be retained in the university repository for future research. The demographic information is anonymous and can be used for further research.

The original consent forms will be retained securely by the researcher for 30 years from completion of the study in accordance with the UoP Retention Schedule for Research Data. Paper records will be scanned and originals destroyed. The data will be saved in N-drive and the department will be responsible for retaining the data when the PI leaves the University.

### 12.4 Personal Data – How will confidentiality be ensured (for instance will anonymisation be used?)

In the case of respondents’ profiles, demographic data collected in this research will not identify the respondent. The profile data sheet constructed by the researcher will not be public as the respondents could be identified through their association to the veteran. For example, there might only have been one Warrant Officer (WO) or Chief Petty Officer (CPO) serving on a ship, therefore if a respondent is identified as Mrs A, husband a WO on HMS….it would be possible to identify the said respondent.

\(^830\) Ibid.
Publications or reports which come out of the project may use quotations of participants’ words. In the consent form participants will be asked to confirm that they are happy for their quoted words to be used. They will be asked how they wish to be cited if they agree to be quoted: Mr/Mrs/Ms A. etc, or by their first name. It is also possible after archiving that their words may be used by other researchers or academics with the permission of the research team. They will be asked in their consent form if they approve this.

12.5 How will organisational data (publically unavailable data) be handled (if applicable)?

N/A

12.6 How will security sensitive data be handled (if applicable)?

No security sensitive data to be collected.

13. Publication / Impact / Dissemination Plans

It is intended to publish research as part of a PhD, to share with other academics as a source and guide for future studies. The material will also be available under Open Access through the UoP Research Data repository.

The outcomes will also be the subject of presentations at academic conferences and may also be published in appropriate academic journals within the fields of

- Oral History
- Gender History
- Women’s History
- War History
- Maritime History
- Contemporary British History
- Social History

14. References


Harris, Robert., ‘Gotcha!’ *The Media, the Government and the Falklands Crisis* (London: Faber and Faber, 1983).


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15. Appendices

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<th>Version No.</th>
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<td>V1</td>
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<td>17.5.17</td>
<td>V1</td>
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<td>V3</td>
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<td>Supervisor Email Confirming Application</td>
<td>Emailed</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evidence From External Organisation Showing Support</td>
<td>17.5.17</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Terms of Reference for Steering / Advisory Group</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Survey Instrument</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interview Questions / Topic List</td>
<td>17.5.17</td>
<td>V3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Focus Group Questions / Topic List</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td>Focus Group Ground Rules</td>
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<tr>
<td>Script for Oral Consent</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Questionnaire</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Observational Data Collection Form</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
16. Declaration by Principal Investigator and Supervisor (if applicable)

1. The information in this form is accurate to the best of my/our knowledge and belief and I/we take full responsibility for it.

2. I/we undertake to conduct the research/ work in compliance with the University of Portsmouth Ethics Policy, UUK Concordat to Support Research Integrity, the UKRI Code of Practice and any other guidance I/we have referred to in this application.

3. If the research/ work is given a favourable opinion I/we undertake to adhere to the study protocol, the terms of the full application as approved and any conditions set out by the Ethics Committee in giving its favourable opinion.

4. I/we undertake to notify the Ethics Committee of substantial amendments to the protocol or the terms of the approved application, and to seek a favourable opinion before implementing the amendment.

5. I/we undertake to submit annual progress reports (if the study is of more than a year’s duration) setting out the progress of the research/ work, as required by the Ethics Committee.

6. I/we undertake to inform the Ethics Committee when the study is complete and provide a declaration accordingly.

7. I/we am/are aware of my/our responsibility to be up to date and comply with the requirements of the law and relevant guidelines relating to security and confidentiality of personal data, including the need to register, when necessary, with the appropriate Data Protection Officer. I/we understand that I/we am/are not permitted to disclose identifiable data to third parties unless the disclosure has the consent of the data subject.

8. I/we undertake to comply with the University of Portsmouth Data Management Policy.
9. I/we understand that records/data may be subject to inspection by internal and external bodies for audit purposes if required.

10. I/we understand that any personal data in this application will be held by the Ethics Committee, its Administrator and its operational managers and that this will be managed according to the principles established in the Data Protection Act 1998.

11. I understand that the information contained in this application, any supporting documentation and all correspondence with the Ethics Committee and its Administrator relating to the application:

- Will be held by the Ethics Committee until at least 30 years after the end of the study
- Will be subject to the provisions of the Freedom of Information Acts and may be disclosed in response to requests made under the Acts except where statutory exemptions apply.
- May be sent by email or other electronic distribution to Ethics Committee members.

Principal Investigator Date 17.5.17

Supervisor (if applicable) Dr Ann Coats Date 17.5.17

*

To whom should I send my completed application?

Faculty of Technology: Ethics-tech@port.ac.uk

How long will the review take?

Ethical review is normally undertaken within a period of 15 working days. Ethics committees will normally require a response and then need time to review your response, which again could take 15 working days. You should take account of university closure dates and check with the relevant committee if other closures are operating.

What sort of response can I expect from the Committee?

Faculty Ethics Committees can issue a favourable opinion, an unfavourable opinion or a provisional opinion. The most frequent response is provisional and you may be asked for further
information or required to make amendments to your protocol. The resubmission must make responses to the Committee clear – THIS SHOULD BE SHOWN IN THE FORM OF TRACKED CHANGES TO THE APPLICATION DOCUMENTS AND A DETAILED COVER LETTER EXPLAINING YOUR RESPONSE. The Committee will review your amended documents, again within 15 working days. If all conditions are met you will be issued a formal favourable opinion letter. The letter will normally be sent to you as an email attachment, copies are sent to supervisors where relevant. PGR students should include the letter in their bound theses thereby providing evidence of ethical review.

YOU MUST NOT ATTEMPT TO RECRUIT ANY PARTICIPANTS OR COLLECT DATA UNTIL A FAVOURABLE OPINION HAS BEEN ISSUED.
Appendix 2

Technology Faculty Ethics Committee
ethics-tech@port.ac.uk

22/6/17

Victoria Woodman

School of Civil Engineering and Surveying

Dear Victoria,

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Study Title:</th>
<th>Speak for themselves: The experiences of Naval Wives during the Falklands War (1982).</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ethics Committee reference:</td>
<td>VW1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The Ethics Committee reviewed the above application by an email discussion forum between the dates of 5/6/17 and 22/6/17.
Ethical opinion

The members of the Committee present gave a favourable ethical opinion of above research on the basis described in the Application Form and accompanying documentation. **Conditions of the favourable opinion**

**Conditions**

None

**Recommendations:** (You should give these due consideration but there is no obligation to comply or respond)

None

The favourable opinion of the EC does not grant permission or approval to undertake the research. Management permission or approval must be obtained from any host organisation, including University of Portsmouth, prior to the start of the study.

Summary of discussion at the meeting

The reviewers felt that the application was well written and had considered all the ethical considerations. The reviewers were complimentary about the high standard of the submission.

Documents reviewed

The documents reviewed at the meeting were:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Document</th>
<th>Version</th>
<th>Date</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Application Form</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>17.5.2017</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Questionnaire</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>NA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Informed consent form</td>
<td>V3</td>
<td>17.5.2017</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Statement of compliance

The Committee is constituted in accordance with the Governance Arrangements set out by the University of Portsmouth

After ethical review

Reporting requirements

The attached document acts as a reminder that research should be conducted with integrity and gives detailed guidance on reporting requirements for studies with a favourable opinion, including:

- Notifying substantial amendments
- Notification of serious breaches of the protocol
- Progress reports
- Notifying the end of the study

Feedback

You are invited to give your view of the service that you have received from the Faculty Ethics Committee. If you wish to make your views known please contact the administrator ethics-tech@port.ac.uk

Please quote this number on all correspondence: VW1

Yours sincerely and wishing you every success in your research

John Williams

Chair Technology FEC

Email: ethics-tech@port.ac.uk
Please include this completed form as an appendix to your thesis (see the Postgraduate Research Student Handbook for more information).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Postgraduate Research Student (PGRS) Information</th>
<th>Student ID: 051412</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>PGRS Name:</td>
<td>Victoria Woodman</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Department:</td>
<td>SCES</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>First Supervisor:</td>
<td>Dr Ann Coats</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Start Date: (or progression date for Prof Doc students)</td>
<td>Oct 2010</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Study Mode and Route:</td>
<td>Part-time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------------------</td>
<td>-----------</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title of Thesis:</th>
<th>'Falklands Royal Navy Wives: fulfilling a militarised stereotype or articulating individuality?'</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Thesis Word Count: (excluding ancillary data)</th>
<th>101, 094</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

If you are unsure about any of the following, please contact the local representative on your Faculty Ethics Committee for advice. Please note that it is your responsibility to follow the University’s Ethics Policy and any relevant University, academic or professional guidelines in the conduct of your study.

Although the Ethics Committee may have given your study a favourable opinion, the final responsibility for the ethical conduct of this work lies with the researcher(s).

**UKRIO Finished Research Checklist:**

(If you would like to know more about the checklist, please see your Faculty or Departmental Ethics Committee rep or see the online version of the full checklist at: [http://www.ukrio.org/what-we-do/code-of-practice-for-research/](http://www.ukrio.org/what-we-do/code-of-practice-for-research/))
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<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Question</th>
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<th>No</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
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<td>Have all of your research and findings been reported accurately, honestly and within a reasonable time frame?</td>
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<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>NO</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b)</td>
<td>Have all contributions to knowledge been acknowledged?</td>
<td>YES</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>NO</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c)</td>
<td>Have you complied with all agreements relating to intellectual property, publication and authorship?</td>
<td>YES</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>NO</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d)</td>
<td>Has your research data been retained in a secure and accessible form and will it remain so for the required duration?</td>
<td>YES</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>NO</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>e)</td>
<td>Does your research comply with all legal, ethical, and contractual requirements?</td>
<td>YES</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>NO</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Candidate Statement:**


I have considered the ethical dimensions of the above named research project, and have successfully obtained the necessary ethical approval(s)

Ethical review number(s) from Faculty Ethics Committee (or from NRES/SCREC):

If you have not submitted your work for ethical review, and/or you have answered 'No' to one or more of questions a) to e), please explain below why this is so:

Signed (PGRS):

Date: 04/12/2018
INFORMED CONSENT FORM

School of Civil Engineering and Surveying
Faculty of Technology, University of Portsmouth
Portland Building, Portland Street
Portsmouth, PO1 3AH
www.port.ac.uk

Researcher: Victoria Woodman

Supervisor Dr Ann Coats anncoats@port.ac.uk

Speak for themselves: The experiences of Naval Wives during the Falklands War (1982).

Aims of this research: The broad purpose of this research is to capture the voices of a relatively neglected section of a community directly affected by the Falklands War, the wives and partners of Royal Navy personnel engaged in the South Atlantic in 1982 with the aim to widen the scope of gender, social, naval and cultural history of the Falklands War.

If you agree to take part you will be required to provide some general details about yourself (via a short questionnaire), then take part in an interview concerning this topic. This will last for a maximum of two hours. This discussion will be recorded using audio equipment. You will be given details of how you may find out more about this project if required. Data gained from this study will form part of the findings and may also be published in appropriate academic journals. All data will be kept in a secure place.
You have the right to access the data by completing the University ‘Subject Access Request’. See p. 6 of University of Portsmouth Data Protection Policy November 2009. Any person who wishes to exercise this right should complete the University ‘Subject Access Request’ form available from the University’s Data Protection Officer, or from the University web pages (www.port.ac.uk/departments/services/universitysecretary/dataprotection/subjectaccessrequestform).

The University reserves the right to levy a standard charge of £10 on each occasion that access is requested to cover the administrative costs involved, although the fee may be waived in certain circumstances.

PLEASE READ THE FOLLOWING AND DELETE QUESTIONS IN ITALICS AS REQUIRED;

PLEASE SIGN AT THE BOTTOM TO CONFIRM YOUR PARTICIPATION AND CHOICES

I understand that:

1. The interview will last for a maximum of two hours.
2. I may refuse to answer any question.
3. I may choose to leave the interview at any point and I will be asked if I am content for the data collected thus far to be retained and included in the study. If I prefer, the data collected pertinent to me will be destroyed and not included in the study.
4. The interview will be recorded using audio equipment.
5. All data will be kept securely.
6. Findings will be used in a student thesis and may be included in academic publications, public talks and lectures, and in peer reviewed journals.
7. I have the right to obtain information about the findings of the study by contacting the student or supervisor at the University of Portsmouth.
8. I give permission for my name to be used in this study (Please delete as required)
9. I give permission for my words to be quoted in this study (Please delete as required)
10. I give permission for my words to be used by other researchers or academics with the permission of the interviewer and supervisor. (Please delete as required)
11. I give permission for my photograph/and any images brought by me to the Focus Group to be used in this study (Please delete as required)

I agree to participate in this study. Please refer to me as:

(your full name, Mr/Mrs/Ms A. etc, or first name)

Name of Participant (PLEASE PRINT)

Signature Date:

As part of this research, we would like first to collect some general details about you. Please answer the questions below.

- Husband’s service
- Husband’s Rank
- Age at time of the conflict
- Military or non-military family of origin (Did you have any previous connection/experience of service life?)
- Qualifications
- Occupation, before and after marriage
- Number and ages of children (at the time of the conflict)
- Mobility - how many times did you move in how many years of marriage?
- Where were you living at the time and was it service accommodation or your own home?
- Experience of different life styles-
  - Did you move if your husband had a posting to a different port? Did you move to an overseas base? Did your children attend boarding school? Did your husband commute?
Participant Information Sheet: Speak for themselves: The experiences of Naval Wives during the Falklands War (1982).

Victoria Woodman

You are being invited to take part in a research study. Before you decide whether to take part it is important for you to understand why the research is being done and what it will involve. Please take time to read the following information carefully.

Aim of the thesis: The broad purpose of this research is to capture the voices of a relatively neglected section of a community directly affected by the Falklands War, the wives and partners of Royal Navy personnel engaged in the South Atlantic in 1982 with the aim to widen the scope of gender, social, naval and cultural history of the Falklands War.

Each person invited to take part has been selected for their knowledge/experience of the Falklands War 1982. Approximately 10 other people will be asked to participate. This study starts in
June 2017 and ends in August 2017. Please feel free to talk to others about the study if you wish. Do ask if anything is unclear.

Publications or reports which come out of the project may use quotations of your words. In your consent form you will be asked to confirm that you are happy for your quotations to be used. You will be asked how we should refer to you if you agree to be cited or quoted: your full name, Mr/Mrs/Ms A. etc, or by your first name. It is also possible that after archiving that your words may be used by other researchers or academics with the permission of the research team. You will also be asked in your consent form if you are happy with this. If you agree to take part, we will then ask you to sign the attached Consent Form, dated 16 May 2017 Version 3.

All those who take part will be offered a summary of research findings, which are likely to be published in working papers for the funding body, academic journal articles and books.

Thank you for agreeing to take part. You will be given this information sheet to keep. You are free to withdraw during the interview without giving a reason.

In the interview, which will take place in a pre-arranged location (home or museum/library), lasting around 2 hours, you will be asked your thoughts of the conflict and your experience of being a military wife.

**What are the disadvantages involved in taking part in the study?** I hope that the experience of taking part will be enjoyable. However, I am aware that some sad experiences might also be recalled.

You will not receive any payment for taking part, but refreshment will be provided. However, society and University of Portsmouth students and staff may benefit from the results of this work through gaining personal knowledge/experience, furthering our understanding of the topic, etc.

**What happens to the recordings?** The recordings will be transcribed and stored digitally at the University of Portsmouth for 10 years: encrypted on the University N drive which is password protected. Paper records will be scanned and originals destroyed. The data will be saved in N-drive and the departments will be responsible for retaining the data when the PI leaves the University. Storage will comply with the University Research Data Management Policy and the associated retention schedules. Names and personal details of participants will not be passed on to third parties without their consent. If you do withdraw from the study during the Focus Group after some data have been collected you will be asked if you are content for the data collected thus far to be retained and included in the study. If you prefer, the data collected can be destroyed and not included in the study. Once the interview has ended, it will not be possible for you to withdraw your data from the study.

**Confidentiality or Anonymisation:** the decision is yours.
• If you wish, the information collected will be kept strictly confidential. Confidentiality, privacy and anonymity will be ensured in the collection, storage and publication of the research material.

• If you consent to having your name published and being quoted it can give you a voice.

The results of the research study will form part of a Coursework artefact of a University of Portsmouth degree and research projects. A summary of the completed material can be obtained from the student and the supervisor.

Who is organising the research? A student of the University of Portsmouth through the School of Civil Engineering and Surveying in the Faculty of Technology.

Who has reviewed the study? The Faculty of Technology Research Ethics Committee of the University of Portsmouth has given this research favourable ethical opinion.

Contact for further information: Dr Ann Coats, ann.coats@port.ac.uk or The Head of the School of Civil Engineering and Surveying, Faculty of Technology, University of Portsmouth, Portland Building, Portland Street, Portsmouth, PO1 3AH, www.port.ac.uk

Thank you for taking time to read this information sheet and for considering volunteering for this research. If you do agree to participate your consent will be sought; please see the accompanying consent form. You will then be given a copy of this information sheet and your signed consent form, to keep.
Appendix 5

John Cole, BBC
Prime Minister, what new appointments have you made for the gaps in your government?

Mrs. Thatcher
I have appointed and the Queen has approved the appointment of Francis Pym to be Foreign Secretary, it’s not his first experience of foreign affairs, he was shadow Foreign Secretary when I was leader of the opposition, as you know he’s been Secretary of State for Northern Ireland under Ted Heath’s government for a part of the time and then of course during my government at first he was Secretary of State for Defence, so he’s well known internationally, has a good deal of experience, was a very gallant soldier in the wartime, and is a man of considerable political stature.

John Cole, BBC
And his post as Leader of the House of Commons?

Mrs. Thatcher
His post as Leader of the House of Commons will be taken by John Biffen, very much a House of Commons man who loves the House of Commons and who is viewed, I think, with great affection and respect on all sides of the House. I’m sorry to lose him as Secretary of State of the Board of Trade, he’s been superb in that but the job of Leader of the House of Commons is very very important indeed and of course he’ll be Lord President of the council as well. Two, I think, very good appointments.

John Cole, BBC
Now, Prime Minister, you’ve lost your Foreign Secretary and two of his team in the middle of an international crisis. Does that put the survival of your government at stake in this crisis?

Mrs. Thatcher
No, I don’t believe it does. It was with very very great regret that I heard of Peter Carrington’s decision. I spent a long time on both Saturday and Sunday trying to dissuade him because I knew that, man of honour that he is, he would feel that if the policy pursued by his department failed, he would feel that he ought to resign. I felt, and you can understand this, that we needed Peter Carrington. I’ve been with him on so many international negotiations, he’s absolutely outstanding, but he put to me this point of honour and said that there had to be honour in politics, and he would feel it deeply if, and indeed Peter said I really wasn’t at liberty not to accept his resignation on those grounds, and I understand that view and of course Humphrey Atkins then was … also felt the same way, from the same department, so it was a very … it was a blow but in a way it’s never a blow for politics if you have someone who does what he deems to be the honourable thing.

John Cole, BBC
Prime Minister, I must ask you, do you feel any personal responsibility for what went wrong in this crisis?

Mrs. Thatcher
In the end of course, the Prime Minister always does, when you see the Argentines invading the Falklands, we all feel the same, we all feel they’re British there and they owe the allegiance to the crown, that’s why I feel so deeply and strongly that we have to regain the Falklands for British sovereignty.

John Cole, BBC
How far are you prepared to go?

Mrs. Thatcher
It is still British, and the people still wish to be British and owe their allegiance to the Crown. How far? We are assembling I think the biggest fleet that’s ever sailed in peace time, excellent fleet, excellent equipment, superb soldiers and sailors, to show our quiet professional determination to retake the Falklands because we still regard them as sovereign British territory and the fact that someone else has invaded them does not alter that situation.

Mrs. Thatcher
In the end of course the Prime Minister always does, when you see the Argentines invading the Falklands, we all feel the same, we all feel they’re British there and they owe the allegiance to the crown, that’s why I feel so deeply and strongly that we have to regain the Falklands for British sovereignty.

John Cole, BBC
How far are you prepared to go?

John Cole, BBC
And if that fails what are the political consequences?

Mrs. Thatcher
I am not talking about a failure with the kind of fleet and the kind of people we have assembled. I’m talking very quietly about succeeding, in a very quiet, I hope, British way.

John Cole, BBC
Thank you, Prime Minister.

Source: TV interview for BBC https://www.margaretthatcher.org/document/112746 shown April 5, 1982
**Appendix 6**

**Falklands Interviewees - Profiles**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Age at time</th>
<th>Connection to war</th>
<th>Prev. experience of naval life</th>
<th>Housing (Private or married quarter)</th>
<th>Children at the time</th>
<th>Working (P/T, F/T)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mrs A</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>Husband a Junior Rate on HMS xxx</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>Private</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>F/T</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
<td>Married just a few weeks before sailed</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mrs A</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>Engaged to a Senior Rate on HMS xxx</td>
<td>Not direct, a distant uncle had been in the RN</td>
<td>Living with parents</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>F/T</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mrs B</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>Husband RN officer on HMS xxx</td>
<td>Yes. Father and Uncle</td>
<td>Private</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>F/T</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mrs D</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>Husband RN Officer on HMS xxx</td>
<td>Father and Brother</td>
<td>Private</td>
<td>Yes, two under 7</td>
<td>P/T</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(J)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mrs D</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>Husband RN Officer on HMS xxx</td>
<td>Uncle</td>
<td>Private</td>
<td>Yes, two under 5</td>
<td>P/T</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(L)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>*Passed away June 2015</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mrs H</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>Fiancé a Junior Rate on HMS xxx</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Living with parents</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>F/T</td>
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<tr>
<td>(K) x</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mrs H</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>Husband Officer on HMS xxx</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Private</td>
<td>Yes, one under 4</td>
<td>P/T</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(C)</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Mrs L</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>Son a Junior Rate on HMS xxx</td>
<td>Yes, husband Merchant Navy</td>
<td>Private</td>
<td>Yes, two under 18</td>
<td>P/T</td>
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<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mrs M</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>Husband RN Officer aboard HMS xxx</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Private</td>
<td>Yes, three under 10</td>
<td>P/T</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(L)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mrs M</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>Husband a Senior Rate on HMS xxx</td>
<td>Father and uncle</td>
<td>Private</td>
<td>Yes, one under 4</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(H)</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>Husband a Senior Rate on HMS xxx</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Private</td>
<td>Yes, two under 7</td>
<td>P/T</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Name</td>
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<td>Relation</td>
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<td>Quarter</td>
<td>Maternity Leave</td>
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<td>----------------</td>
<td>---------</td>
<td>---------</td>
<td>-----------------</td>
<td>-------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mrs M(C)</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>Husband a Senior Rate on HMS xxx</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Married Quarter (not for long)</td>
<td>Yes, one under 3</td>
<td>P/T</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mrs M(S)</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>Husband Senior Naval Officer on HMS xxx</td>
<td>Yes Uncle, father, brother</td>
<td>Private</td>
<td>Yes, one under 8</td>
<td>P/T</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mrs M(K)</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>Husband a Senior Rate on HMS xxx</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Private</td>
<td>Yes, one under 1</td>
<td>No-maternity leave</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mrs P</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>Husband RN Officer on HMS xxx</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Officers Married Quarters</td>
<td>Yes, one under 3</td>
<td>P/T</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mrs R</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>Ex BF RM pilot</td>
<td>Yes Father, Uncle, Brother and in the WRNS</td>
<td>Private</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>F/T</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mrs R(A)</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>Husband a Senior Rate on HMS xxx</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Private</td>
<td>Yes, two under 3</td>
<td>P/T</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mrs R(D)</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>Husband on HMS xxx (RM) Officer</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Married quarters</td>
<td>Yes, two under 8</td>
<td>F/T</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mrs E(B)</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>Husband RN Officer HMS xxx</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Private</td>
<td>Yes, one under 4</td>
<td>P/T</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mrs H(S)</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>Husband a Senior Rate on HMS xxx</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Private</td>
<td>Two</td>
<td>P/T</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mrs I(K)</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>Husband RN Officer HMS xxx</td>
<td>Yes Grandad and Uncle</td>
<td>Private</td>
<td>Two under 11</td>
<td>F/T</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mrs S(J)</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>Husband (HMS xxx) Naval Pilot</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Married quarters</td>
<td>Yes, two under 11</td>
<td>F/T</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mrs S</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>Wife of RM Officer XX Commando</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Private</td>
<td>Yes, two under 7</td>
<td>P/T</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mrs T(B)</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>Husband was xxx Staff Officer onboard HMS xxx</td>
<td>Yes, father and uncles</td>
<td>Private</td>
<td>Yes, one under 4</td>
<td>P/T</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mrs W</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>Husband a Senior Rate originally on HMS xxx transferred to HMS xxx</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Private</td>
<td>Yes. Two under 6</td>
<td>P/T</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mrs C(P)</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>Husband a Senior Rate on HMS xxx</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Married Quarters</td>
<td>Yes. Three under 18</td>
<td>F/T</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Name</td>
<td>Age</td>
<td>Husband's Military Role</td>
<td>Children</td>
<td>Employment Status</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------</td>
<td>-----</td>
<td>-------------------------</td>
<td>----------</td>
<td>------------------</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mrs J</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>Husband a Senior Naval Officer on HMS xxx</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Private</td>
<td>Yes, Three under 15</td>
<td>P/T</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mrs T (L)</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>Senior Rate not based on a ship as a mine clearer moved from ship to ship</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Private</td>
<td>Two under 8</td>
<td>P/T</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mrs E (J)</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>Husband a Senior Naval Officer on HMS xxx</td>
<td>Yes, Father and brother in the RN and Mrs E had been in the WRNS</td>
<td>Private</td>
<td>One under 11</td>
<td>P/T</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mrs C (M)</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>Partner on HMS xxx a Senior Rate</td>
<td>Yes (second marriage, first husband had also been in the RN)</td>
<td>Private</td>
<td>Yes, one under 12</td>
<td>F/T</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mrs G (J)</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>Husband RN officer HMS xxx</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Private</td>
<td>Yes, two under 6</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mrs C (A)</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>Husband a Senior Rate on HMS xxx</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Private</td>
<td>Yes, one under 7</td>
<td>P/T</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mrs T (M)</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>Husband a Senior Rate on HMS xxx</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Married Quarter</td>
<td>No (first child in 1986)</td>
<td>F/T</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mrs I (M)</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>Husband's Senior Rate on HMS xxx</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Private</td>
<td>Yes. One under 3</td>
<td>P/T</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mrs J (D)</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>Husband RN Officer on HMS xxx</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Private</td>
<td>Two under 7</td>
<td>P/T</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mrs T (A)</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>Husband a Senior Rate on HMS xxx</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Private</td>
<td>Two under 11</td>
<td>F/T</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mrs W (B)</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>Husband RN Officer HMS xxx</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Private</td>
<td>One under 5</td>
<td>P/T</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mrs M (C)</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>Husband a Senior Rate on HMS xxx</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Private</td>
<td>Two under 10</td>
<td>P/T</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mrs J (S)</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>Husband a Senior Rate on HMS xxx</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Private</td>
<td>Two under 7</td>
<td>P/T</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mrs H (D)</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>Husband a Senior Rate on HMS xxx</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Private</td>
<td>One under 3</td>
<td>P/T</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mrs B (J)</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>Husband RN Officer HMS xxx</td>
<td>Yes, Grandad and Uncle</td>
<td>Private</td>
<td>One under 8</td>
<td>F/T</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mrs S (M)</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>Husband a Senior Rate on HMS xxx</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Private</td>
<td>Two under 9</td>
<td>P/T</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----------</td>
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<td>----------------------------------</td>
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<td>---------</td>
<td>-------------</td>
<td>-----</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mrs M (F)</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>Husband RN Officer HMS xxx</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Private</td>
<td>One under 6</td>
<td>F/T</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mrs S (J)</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>Husband a Senior Rate on HMS xxx</td>
<td>Yes Father</td>
<td>Private</td>
<td>Two under 10</td>
<td>P/T</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mrs I X</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>Husband a Senior Rate on HMS xxx</td>
<td>Yes, had previously been in the WRNS</td>
<td>Married Quarter</td>
<td>Pregnant with one child under 2</td>
<td>P/T</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mrs T (M)</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>Husband a Senior Rate on HMS xxx</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Private</td>
<td>One under 3</td>
<td>P/T</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mrs P (I)</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>Husband RN Officer HMS xxx</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Private</td>
<td>Two under 9</td>
<td>Yes F/T</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mrs J (A)</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>Husband a Senior Rate on HMS xxx</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Private</td>
<td>One under 6</td>
<td>P/T</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mrs H (C)</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>Husband RN Officer HMS xxx</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Private</td>
<td>Two under 10</td>
<td>P/T</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mrs G (T)</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>Husband in First Gulf War 1991 HMS xxx (interviewed as to get some contrast/similarities on what had changed)</td>
<td>Yes had been in the WRNS</td>
<td>Private</td>
<td>No (thought not having to deal with children helped her)</td>
<td>F/T</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The researcher hid the names of the ships that the respondent’s husbands were serving on at the time and the actual ratings and ranks of the men for reasons of data protection as some women could be identified as there was only one person of some ranks serving on a ship.

x denotes those who took part in the second stage interviews.