

Secrets of the Conqueror: The Untold Story of Britain's Most Famous Submarine
by Stuart Prebble.
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No one who remembers the Falklands War from its very beginning will be able to forget its key aspects: from the initial invasion of South Georgia to the Argentine surrender we followed events thousands of miles away; for many it was their first introduction to the impact of UK military casualties on the national mood, something with which we have all become familiar since the first Gulf War in 1991.

The defining event of the brief Falklands War was the sinking of an Argentine cruiser, the Belgrano, with the loss of 323 crew members in the icy south Atlantic waters. The Belgrano's nemesis, the nuclear submarine HMS Conqueror, the military top brass and above all the government of the day, lead by Mrs Thatcher, found themselves embroiled in controversy almost as soon as the news of the sinking broke, and the event became a cause celebre thanks to a redoubtable Labour MP, Tam Dyell, and investigative journalists.

In Secrets of the Conqueror, Stuart Prebble, former editor of ITV's World in Action current affairs programme, who got involved with the story early on when a missing log book became part of the government's pursuit of a hapless crew member who they blamed for undermining their statements about the event to Parliament, tells the whole story, partly due to the release of formerly classified material under the 30 years rule.

Prebble tells the tale of the Conqueror and her crew, its legendary role in the Cold War, and particularly of Narendra Sethia, the Lieutenant who found himself subjected to the most horrendous pressure by the agents of government. Although much material remains classified, Prebble tells the story of the Conqueror's voyage into military history, explains the sequence of events leading up to the Belgrano's sinking, and the aftermath, and then tells the shameful story of the Conservative government and its mendacious ministers lying to Parliament and Press and trying to pin the blame on a single crew man.

Secrets of the Conqueror is a powerful, pacy and evocative reminder of a major military event in UK 20th century history, of the heroism of the silent service, and of the dishonour of some of the major names of the Thatcher era.

Rabbi Dr Charles H Middleburgh