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Gordon Smith, **Battle Atlas of the Falklands War 1982 by Land, Sea, and Air**, Penarth: Naval–History.Net, 2006. 140 pp., maps, illustrations, appendix, bibliography, and index.

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Battle Atlas of the Falklands War 1982 by Land, Sea, and Air is the title given to Gordon Smith's 2006 revision of his 1989 work, *Battles of the Falklands War*. The book's new title denotes both a change in publishers, the original title being offered by Ian Allen Ltd., and one might suspect a desire to reflect Smith's success in compiling a remarkably functional reference tool. The book does indeed provide maps detailing the sites of key events in the war that lasted from the beginning of April to mid-June 1982. However, to consider this merely an aid to understanding the geography associated with the conflict is to sell this book well short of its full usefulness. While there are the obligatory maps, Smith has managed to provide what might best be termed a concise encyclopedia of the Falklands War that is constructed along chronological lines.

Beginning with a synopsis of the physical geography, economic activities, and general demographics of the Falkland Islands and Argentina, Smith proceeds to offer a brief description of the roots of the conflict between Great Britain and Argentina. His chronology dates back to the 16th century and the first European sightings of the islands, then moves on to the increased tensions emerging in the 1960s that eventually led to war in 1982. His remarks concerning the quarrel are brief and matter of fact. The remainder of the text follows in much the same manner—Smith highlights the relevant events transpiring daily and then provides slightly detailed thumbnail sketches to acquaint his readers with the significance of those events. In fact, the book's greatest value is to be found in its service as an annotated timeline of the crisis.

While it has great merit as a detailed chronology, it should be seen as neither a comprehensive history of the conflict nor an expansive collection of cartographic art. The book is not designed to provide analysis, and the author even offers his suggestions for sources that are better suited to provide answers to the how and why questions of the war. If one looks to gain a better appreciation for the Herculean task that confronted Rear Admiral John "Sandy" Woodward and the other planners of this remarkable case of expeditionary warfare, it will come through self-directed interpretation of the details contained in this book and not from an overarching narrative provided by Smith. It should also be noted that even though the book has the word atlas in its title, it suffers

from a paucity of large and detailed maps. There are only 49 maps in the book and none of them is as large as a full page. While the maps are undoubtedly of great value, they would have been of much greater benefit if they had been made friendlier to the eye.

Despite its minor defects, the book serves an important function as a handy reference for students of this conflict. Readers will find that there are numerous charts detailing the composition of both British and Argentinean forces, as well as pictures of many of the key British participants and hardware from both sides. While the comments concerning any of the matters contained in this book are brief, they are well chosen and of considerable utility. For example, Smith details the importance of Ascension Island to securing Britain's victory and in so doing provides the reader with a short history of the island and such important information as its distance between Britain and the Falklands and the fact that there was only one jetty at Clarence Bay to assist in the servicing of British forces (p. 43). Regardless of one's familiarity with the Falklands War, this book serves well as a day-to-day guide to the conflict and as a quick reference to the actions involving its best known participants.



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