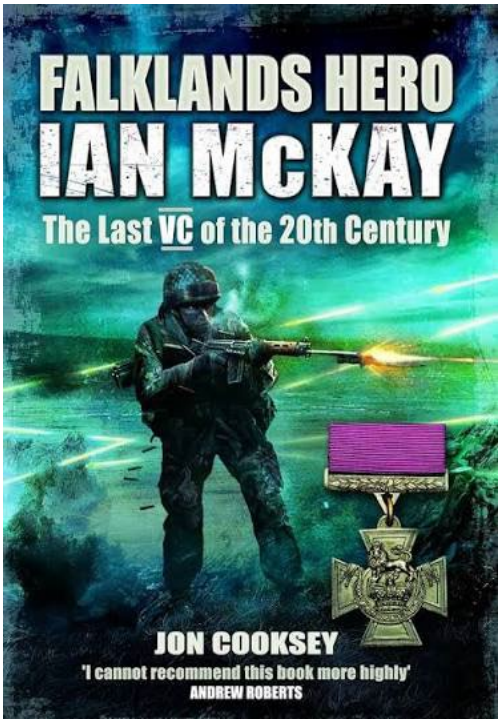



Falklands Hero, Ian McKay
by Jon Cooksey
ISBN: 978 1 84415 493 7; Pen & Sword;
262 pages; £19.99

The author of this book, the late Jon Cooksey, was a leading military historian and battlefield guide who took a special interest both in the history of the two World Wars and, latterly, the Falklands War.

The first half of the book recounts Sergeant Ian McKay's (Ian's) early life in Rotherham and his subsequent military career leading up to his deployment to the Falkland Islands with the 3rd Battalion, The Parachute Regiment (3 Para) in 1982. Joining the Regiment at the age of just 17, Ian undertook two tours in Northern Ireland, followed by two postings to Germany. In Northern Ireland, he was involved in the events of Bloody Sunday, featuring in the findings of both The Widgery Tribunal (1972) and The Saville Inquiry (1998–2010). It was during his first posting in Germany that he met his future wife, marrying Marica in 1976.

The second half of the book chronicles, in almost forensic detail, Ian's passage to the Islands onboard SS Canberra, his arduous journey by foot to Mount Longdon, and the ferocious fighting that ultimately led to his act of supreme gallantry and sacrifice - and to the award of a posthumous Victoria Cross (VC).

In compiling this account, the author has drawn heavily on interviews with family members (including access to the letters that Ian had written), friends and Ian's colleagues who were with him in the South Atlantic. The result is a well-written, compelling narrative which sets out the key influences in Ian's life and pays tribute to the man that he became. As well as a devoted family man, Ian was clearly a consummate soldier: ambitious; motivated; professional - and a little stubborn.

This book is highly recommended. Whilst honouring the last VC of the 20th Century, it graphically describes what it was like to be on the ground in the Falkland Islands in May and June 1982, including a gripping account of 3 Para's assault on Mount Longdon. Perhaps the last words should be the ones chosen by Marica and inscribed on Ian's headstone in Aldershot: *To the World a Soldier; To us the World; Till we Meet Again*.

R. G. MELLY
Rear Admiral