



# Command Decisions: Langsdorff and the Battle of the River Plate:

*David Miller*

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## **Command Decisions: Langsdorff and the Battle of the River Plate:** David Miller

This compelling new study of the Battle of the River Plate concentrates on Kapitän zur See Hans Langsdorff, the commander of the German pocket battleship Graf Spee – it is written from his point of view. The story of his mission at the start of the Second World War to prey on merchant shipping is graphically retold, and Langsdorff's command decisions are the primary focus of David Miller's gripping narrative.

He considers in vivid detail the factors Langsdorff had to consider as he assessed the situation of his ship and choose his course of action. He describes the intelligence Langsdorff received and his knowledge of the position and strength of the forces of the Royal Navy that were arrayed against him. Langsdorff's interpretation of his mission and the tense calculations he had to make in order to carry it out are the essential elements of this dramatic story.

Langsdorff, operating alone and thousands of miles away from home and with no prospect of support, had to grapple with the enormous burden of a lone command. He made grave mistakes, and these are ruthlessly exposed. But this fascinating re-examination of his actions and his leadership does nothing to diminish his reputation as a brave and honourable officer.

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