



The First South Pacific Campaign: Pacific Fleet Strategy December 1941–June 1942

John B. Lundstrom

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On May 7 and 8, 1942, fast carrier task forces from the United States and Imperial Japanese navies met in combat for the first time in the Battle of the Coral Sea. A strategic victory for the U.S. in spite of the loss of the carrier *Lexington*, the destroyer *Sims* and the fleet oiler *Neosho*, the battle blunted the Japanese drive on Port Moresby, a valuable Allied air and naval base controlling the western Coral Sea and northern Australia.

John B. Lundstrom offers a detailed analysis of the fundamental strategies employed by Japan and the U.S. in the South Pacific from January to June 1942, including Japanese equivocation regarding advances in the South Pacific and the vigorous actions of Admiral Ernest J. King to reinforce the area in spite of the presidential decision to concentrate American efforts on Europe and the problem of Germany.

Writing in a clear, concise, and readable style, Lundstrom combines strategic insight and careful scholarship with previously untapped source materials to present a book that provides a superb overview of the first six months of the naval war in the South Pacific. First published in 1976, *The First South Pacific Campaign* is essential reading for a full understanding of the Pacific Fleet's strategy before the Battle of Midway.

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