



## Pedestal: the Malta Convoy of August 1942

*Peter C. Smith*

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In the summer of 1942 one of the main issues in the balance was the fate of Malta. The island was still a bastion of the Royal Navy in the Mediterranean and a constant threat to the supply route for the enemy land forces in North Africa. It bravely resisted every onslaught of the Axis powers, but food supplies were desperately short and fuel oil running low. In August of that year Operation Pedestal was launched - a last attempt to relieve Malta. Fourteen merchant ships were allocated to it and the Royal Navy provided the most powerful force ever to escort a convoy including four aircraft carriers. Operating from Sardinia and Sicily, the Germans and Italians let fly with their shore-based aircraft on an unprecedented scale. The losses on the British side were appalling, but the objective was achieved and the blockade of Malta was finally lifted.



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