



The Santa Marija Convoy: Faith and Endurance in Wartime Malta, 1940-1942

Dennis Castillo

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Malta is one of the smallest nations in the world, yet has one of the longest histories of any country. During World War II, Malta played a key role in the Mediterranean campaign, its submarines, light surface forces, and aircrafts destroying supplies desperately needed by Rommel's forces in North Africa. The price the Maltese paid for this effort was the most sustained and intensive bombing campaign in the war, enduring over 130 tons of bombs per square mile. This, compounded by the Axis blockade that attempted to starve Malta into surrender, set the stage for numerous convoy battles, the most dramatic being Operation Pedestal, remembered on Malta to this day as the Santa Marija Convoy.

In *The Santa Marija Convoy*, Dennis Castillo uses published histories as well as interviews and oral histories to explore the experiences of the Maltese and how their faith sustained them through this dark period of Malta's history. Malta is an ancient Catholic culture, with roots going back to the founding of Christianity on the island by St. Paul. Their faith was sorely needed as they suffered both bombardment and hunger from June 1940 to August 1942. This faith was rewarded when, on August 15, 1942, The Feast of the Assumption, 5 out of 14 ships won through to Malta's harbor bringing crucial supplies for the islands survival.

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