



## Operation Pedestal The Siege of Malta - 1942-43

The Siege of Malta was a military campaign in the Mediterranean Theatre of World War II. From 1940 to 1943, the fight for the control of the strategically important island of Malta pitted the air forces and navies of Fascist Italy and Nazi Germany against the Royal Air Force and the Royal Navy.

Malta was pivotal to the North African Campaign. British Prime Minister Winston Churchill called the island the "unsinkable aircraft carrier". From Malta, British air and sea forces could attack Axis ships transporting vital supplies and reinforcements from Europe to the Axis forces in North Africa commanded by General Field Marshal Rommel. Rommel warned "Without Malta the Axis will end by losing control of North Africa".



There were several attempts by the British navy to reinforce Malta with food, guns and ammunition. The larger and most significant of these convoys was code named "Pedestal". Some sixty surface ships and eight submarines set out of Gibraltar headed for the besieged island. So fierce was the ensuing sea and air battle that every single one of the ships was hit. One the "Ohio", a fourteen thousand ton American tanker was marked for special treatment. Hit and damaged by more blows any ship can endure, she made her agonizing way to Malta under constant air attack strapped between two escort destroyers, with a third vessel acting as her rudder.

By 1942, the bitter struggle for control of the central Mediterranean reached its climax. To the German mind there was then no alternative: either Malta, the thorn on their side must fall, or the German Africa Corps under command of the legendary desert fox, General Erwin Rommel would be lost. Field Marshall A. Kesserling, C-in-C German Armed Forces in the area, decided Malta was too great a nuisance to be allowed to live. It was to be smashed, made silent and uninhabitable, then invaded. Accordingly he ordered a change in the German attack tactics on Malta, from single sorties or small formations, to carpet-bombing by dense concentrations of bombers.

## The Siege of Malta –

Our version of Operation Pedestal begins as Roosevelt, at the request of Churchill, is delivering more vitally needed Spitfires to Malta aboard the USS Wasp (substituted with USS Intrepid), and Mussolini is positioning his naval fleet and Royal Air Force for a final deathblow to the island.

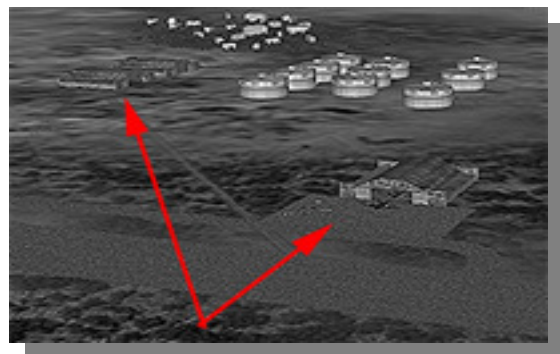
### The Axis Directive: ACHTUNG, ACHTUNG!

The USS Wasp is entering the theater from the West (substituted with the USS Intrepid), we must destroy her at all costs. If she is sunk, we will not only remove her as a an airbase, but we will also crush the enemy's ability to use the Spitfires in any further sorties! The carrier is accompanied by 2 re-supply tankers, a destroyer, and a

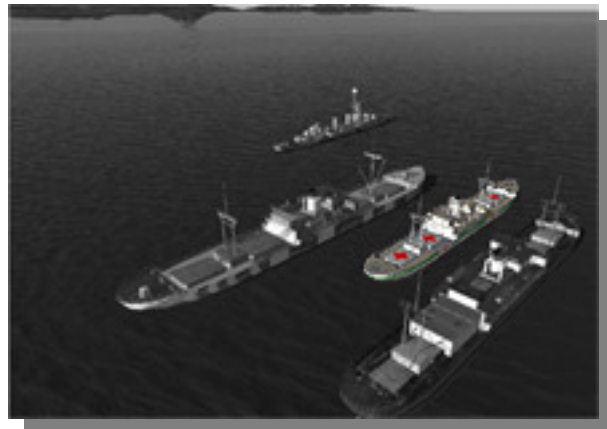


battleship last seen in AH12-6 heading due East. Intelligence reports say that the Carrier group will anchor South of Malta to provide fighter cover and the re-supply tankers will continue with light escort to port in Birzebbuge.

35 new Spitfires, delivered last week, are being fitted at the hangars located at AI13-3. They are feverishly attempting to fit these aircraft and put them into service. Eliminating these hangars, which are seen in this photo on the isle of Gozo just N.W off the main island of Malta, along with the nearby fuel dump will further demoralize their efforts to hold Malta. There are also other targets of opportunity to be exploited between Gozo and the two ports on Malta.



Additionally, there are two tankers and a hospital ship being escorted to Malta by a destroyer. They were last seen heading south in AI14-8. **WARNING!! DO NOT DESTROY THAT HOSPITAL SHIP!!** If you do, we will be tried by the Geneva Convention and penalized greatly by point deductions! Precision strikes will be required to sink the transports without sinking the hospital ship.



## The Siege of Malta -

### The Allied Directive: ALERT!

The USS Wasp is entering the theater from the West, protect her at all costs! If she is lost, we not only lose the ability to launch from her deck, but we also lose the use of the Spitfire!

#### IMPORTANT INTEL:

Mussolini's Battleship Littorio is in route to Priolo. Our last Intel says she was sighted at AK16 heading South, off the East coast of Sicily. She will be joining 2 cruisers docked in Priolo bay at AK15-9 where they will await their orders to finally destroy Malta. Sink Mussolini's pride and joy and dash his dreams of a Naval victory over the US. While your there, send his 2 destroyers to Jones' locker.

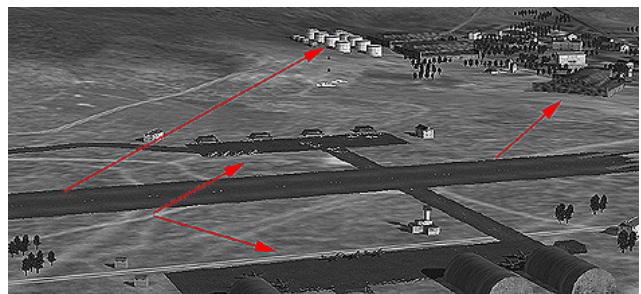


A wrecked tanker temporarily blocks the two cruisers, Trento and Zara, awaiting the Littorio. They are extremely vulnerable until the bay is reopened. If they are still afloat when the Littorio arrives, the three together will be overbearingly powerful.

Rommel's re-supply ships have departed from Pachino escorted by a Italian Destroyer and Cruiser They are racing South to his aid in North Africa. Rommel cannot be re-supplied. Stop this convoy at all costs!.

Recon has provided Intel on a fuel depot and motor pool used to supply Rommel located on the North East edge of the village of Comiso in AJ15-5.

Recon has also provided evidence of a buildup of Stuka's, BF109's, and JU88's at both Comiso and Lentini airfields in Sicily.

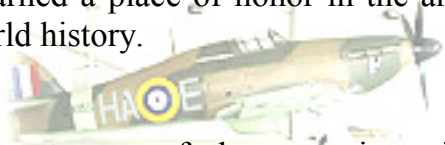


## The Siege of Malta -

### Historical Outcome

By early 1943 the German-Italian effort to subdue Malta came to a final end. The island now rearmed, resumed its former function as a deadly predator on the Axis supply routes to North Africa. The pendulum had swung again.










In recognition of the great discipline and valor shown under siege by its people, King George VI awarded Malta the George Cross that same year. In September 1943, Admiral of the Fleet, Sir Andrew Browne Cunningham C-in-C Mediterranean, sent a message to the Admiralty in London, England, which read in part, "Please to inform your Lordships that the Italian battle fleet now lies at anchor under the guns of the fortress of Malta". In May 1945 the war in Europe came to an end, and with it Malta had earned a place of honor in the annals of world history.



Malta was one of the most intensively bombed areas during the war. Of its meager island population, the Maltese people suffered 2000 civilian deaths during the 3-year siege.



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Siege of Malta	
	
Service personnel and civilians clear up debris on a heavily bomb-damaged street in Valletta, Malta 1942.	
<b>Date</b>	June 11, 1940 - December 1942
<b>Location</b>	Malta
<b>Result</b>	Decisive British/Maltese victory
Belligerents	
 United Kingdom	 Germany
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li> Malta</li></ul>	 Italy
Commanders	
 William Dobbie	 Albert Kesselring
 Keith Park	 Martin Harlinghausen
Casualties and losses	
<b>Aircraft:</b> 369 RAF fighters and a further 64 on the ground	<b>Aircraft:</b> 357 <i>Luftwaffe</i> 175 <i>Regia Aeronautica</i>
	<b>Ships:</b> 72% of the Italian Navy's transport fleet 23% of Axis merchant fleet