



# **At All Costs: How a Crippled Ship and Two American Merchant Mariners Turned the Tide of World War II**

*Sam Moses*

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In this gripping, page-turning account, Sam Moses has told a story in the tradition of Sebastian Junger's *A Perfect Storm*, Robert Kurson's *Shadow Divers*, and Hampton Sides's *Ghost Soldiers*. It's a story about the heroism of two men in battle at sea during World War II, and one woman fleeing Nazi Norway with her child. It's about how courage can change the course of history.

AT ALL COSTS: How a Crippled Ship and Two American Merchant Marines Turned the Tide of World War II is the astonishing untold account, with original historical reporting, of how two men faced unfathomable danger to help save the island of Malta, Churchill's crux of the war.

In 1942, the tiny island of Malta was the most heavily bombed place on earth. Hitler needed Malta as a stepping-stone to get to the oil in Iraq and Iran (Persia at the time). Blockaded by sea, Malta was running on empty, in food, fuel and ammunition. Axis U-boats and dive-bombers made supply convoys to Malta more like suicide missions. In this last-hope convoy, 50 warships escorted 13 freighters carrying aviation fuel, and a single critical tanker, the *SS Ohio*, with 107,000 barrels of oil from Texas. Winston Churchill had traveled to Washington and asked FDR for the tanker—his prime ministership was at stake over this mission to Malta. Relentlessly dive-bombed and repeatedly torpedoed, the *Ohio* suffered huge hits and was abandoned. Two young American merchant mariners—pulled from the sea after their own ship went down in flames—boarded the ravaged tanker, repaired her guns and fought off German and Italian dive-bombers, as the sinking *Ohio* was towed at 4 knots toward Malta with a tiny crew of volunteers.

Sam Moses' AT ALL COSTS is a triumphant story of human bravery: fearless, selfless acts by men determined to save a ship and win a war; profound communal courage from an island under brutal siege; and leaders who understood the cause of freedom.

*Kirkus* (starred review)

A historical footnote provides a riveting tale of true American grit during World War II.

In 1942, the island of Malta was the primary launching point in the Mediterranean for Allied aircraft and submarine attacks against Axis supply convoys. At the height of the North African campaign, Rommel's tanks prepared to sweep into Egypt, Iran and Iraq. The only thing they lacked was the fuel to get there, and the shortage was equally desperate on Malta. The Allies launched Operation Pedestal, a last-ditch effort to re-supply the base by sending a convoy from Britain through the Gibraltar Strait to the beleaguered island. The convoy, which included the American tanker *Ohio* and the U.S. freighter *Santa Elisa*, was anything but a milk run. Vietnam vet Moses (*Fast Guys, Rich Guys and Idiots*, not reviewed) crafts a thrilling adventure on the high seas, though it takes a while to get started. The book's first third juxtaposes Malta's plight against the stories of two American merchant seamen on the *Santa Elisa*: Lonnie Dales and Fred Larsen, through whose eyes the battle will be viewed in bluecollar detail. Once Operation Pedestal begins, the narrative is all action. The convoy comes under repeated attack, lives are lost, the *Santa Elisa* is sunk. Dales and Larsen find themselves aboard the wounded *Ohio*, full to the brim with Texas crude. If they can hold off Nazi attacks and keep their new ship afloat long enough to reach Malta, the operation will be a success. Moses takes readers directly into the heat of battle, demonstrating a strong command of historical detail.

Highly recommended for fans of naval adventure. (*Agent: Peter Riva/International Transactions, Inc.*)

"*At All Costs* is an extraordinary work of research and an exciting read that pays tribute to a crucial

enterprise taken against incredible odds. Sam Moses has brought the ghastliness of war and the beauty of heroism together, in jarring union." –Frank Deford

“This book tells a great story. But Sam Moses is not just sharing a gripping tale. He is sharing an important and oft neglected story about a battle that played a decisive role in shaping the outcome of WW II. You will meet people who will linger in memory for their bravery, foolishness, or wisdom.” –Ken Auletta, author of *Backstory*

“Thrillingly told and beautifully researched, *At All Costs* is not just the against-all-odds story of the saving of Malta, but also of how the fate of nations can turn on the personal bravery of two ordinary men.”  
–Robert Kurson, author of *Shadow Divers*

“Sam Moses has skillfully blended the vivid recollections of many eyewitnesses with a wealth of original documentary research to produce an immensely readable and authoritative account of this crucial operation.”  
–Mark Whitmore, Director of Collections, Imperial War Museum, London, England

*From the Hardcover edition.*

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