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Nota di bibliografia	Includes bibliographical references and index.
Nota di contenuto	The vital sea -- Malta and the Mediterranean war to 1942 -- The Mediterranean war January to May 1942 -- Global snapshot, June 1942 -- Operation Vigorous -- Operation Harpoon -- The Battle of Pantelleria -- The August convoy -- Torch to the end of the war.
Sommario/riassunto	By mid-1942 the Allies were losing the Mediterranean war: Malta was isolated and its civilian population faced starvation. In June 1942 the British Royal Navy made a stupendous effort to break the Axis stranglehold. The British dispatched armed convoys from Gibraltar and Egypt toward Malta. In a complex battle lasting more than a week, Italian and German forces defeated Operation Vigorous, the larger eastern effort, and ravaged the western convoy, Operation Harpoon, in a series of air, submarine, and surface attacks culminating in the Battle of Pantelleria. Just two of seventeen merchant sh