



Official Newsletter of the Michigan Company of Military Historians & Collectors
June 13, 2016

“Decoration Day..is a day that can never become national...It is an occasion for heaping epithets of infamy upon one set of graves while piling flowers upon another set—for reviving the bitter memories of conflict...” **New York Times, editorial, June 3, 1869.**

“A wounded enemy is guest. A prisoner is a guest. That is the doctrine of military courtesy.” **General Arthur MacArthur to the U.S. Senate Committee on the Philippines, 1901.**

“(Environmentalists) have learned the trick of Hitler-type propaganda...If you lie often enough people will begin to believe it.” **Earl B. Barnes, chair of the Dow Chemical Company, speaking about some of the company’s Christian shareholders, 1980.**

“If we don’t take care of our veterans and reservists—who will fight the next war?” **Lieutenant Colonel Richard Christian (U.S. Army, retired), October 12, 1987.**

“Women who answered the call to serve in World War II were later told they could not be considered veterans.” **The Bettmann Archive**

Our June speaker will be Warren Roosen. He is a Air Force veteran and flew a P-51 during the Korean Conflict. His father was a WWI veteran and fought the Russians as a snowbird.

MEETINGS take place the second Monday of every month at the **Riverfront Hotel Grand Rapids** 270 Ann St NW, Grand Rapids, MI 49504 (616) 363-9001. Socializing begins at 6:00 (1800), dinner at 7:00 (1900), business meeting 7:15 (1915), and program at 8:00 (2000).

GENERAL STAFF
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COMPANY

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Company Notes

- ◆ **Brian Castner, former OPEN MESS Speaker, will be paddling from Great Slave Lake to the Arctic Ocean. You can follow his journey on Delorme Map, <https://share.delorme.com/Brian7>.**
- ◆ **Joint Special Operations University has released this new JSOU Press publication available to the public electronically on the JSOU Library web site.<http://jsou.libguides.com/jsoupublications>. Interesting articles going back over 11 years.**

The editorial opinions and articles in *The Cannon Report* do not represent any official position of the Michigan Company of Military Historians and Collectors (MCMH&C) only the opinions of the editor. The MCMH&C is a non-partisan, non-ideological association. All members are welcome to submit material, letters, “For the Good of the Company items”, etc. Direct inquiries or comments to kuziaks@me.com

Brilliance Over Brawn

While serving in the Continental Navy, Joshua Barney had been captured by the British and was shipped to England in a 3-foot-high box, receiving minimal food and water during the 53 day voyage. With the help of a friendly guard, he escaped from prison and returned to America.

Undaunted by his ordeal as a prisoner of war, in March of 1782 Barney was given command of an armed merchantman in the Pennsylvania State Navy named the *Hyder-Ally*. Fourteen days he was underway, escorting a convoy of seven merchant ships down the Delaware River. When the convoy encountered a group of British ships cruising off the the mouth of Delaware Bay, Barney ordered his merchant flock to flee, positioning the *Hyder-Ally* to serve as a rear guard. Several of the British vessels chased after the convoy, but one, a 250 ton sloop-of-war, came after the *Hyder-Ally*. At the time Barney had no way of knowing that the enemy ship was the *HMS General Monk*, formerly the *General Washington*, which had been captured by the British earlier in the war.

It was not a fair match-up. The 100 ton *Hyder-Ally* carried only 16 six-pounder cannon to the 250 ton *General Monk*'s 20 nine-pounders. The British captain—Josias Rodgers—and his crew were experienced, having previously captured 60 vessels, while the Americans were largely a band of neophytes on their first cruise.

As the two ships drew near to one another, Barney kept his gunports closed and his gun crews hidden, hoping to convince the British captain that he intended only to present a moving target to screen his fleeing convoy and buy them time to escape. Rogers took the bait, heading straight for the *Hyder-Ally*. Soon it was bow on to the Americans in a classic “crossing the T “ situation when Barney opened his gunports and fired a broadside of round shot, grape, and canister. The barrage found its mark, damaging the main mast and shredding many of the *General Monk*'s sails. The two ships began exchanging broadsides, a tactic that put the *Hyder-Ally* at a disadvantage because of the enemy's heavier firepower, so Barney decided that boarding the enemy was his best bet. Closing the distance, he quietly told his helmsman to “follow my next order by the rule of the contrary.” When ships were very close, he yelled to the helmsman, “hard a-port your helm.” As Barney hoped, Rogers heard the order and immediately ordered the *General Monk* to come”hard a-port” as well, so that the the two vessels would pass close aboard but not make contact. To his astonishment, the *Hyder-Ally* came right instead, and in seconds the two ships collided and we're locked in a deadly embrace. Savage hand-to-hand fighting ensued. As Barney climbed atop the binnacle box to direct the action, a musket ball passed through his hat, leaving a minor slap wound in its wake, and another passed through the tail of his coat, evoking a less-than-polite curse from the young captain. The binnacle box was soon shot out form under him, but Barney was not injured.

After 26 minutes, the brawl was over, with the more powerful British ship in American hands. The victor had suffered 4 killed and 11 wounded, while the vanquished had lost 20 killed and 33 wounded. In his 1845 *The History of the Navy*, James Fenimore Cooper described the victory as “one of the most brilliant...under the American flag.”

After the Revolution Barney joined the French Navy. Between 1796 and 1802 Joshua Barney served as a captain of the French frigate *Harmonie*. At the outbreak of the War of 1812, after a successful but unprofitable privateering cruise as commander of the Baltimore schooner *Rossie*, in which he captured the Post Office Packet Service packet ship *Princess Amelia*, Barney entered the US Navy as a captain, and commanded the Chesapeake Bay Flotilla, a fleet of gunboats defending Chesapeake Bay. He authored the plan to defend the Chesapeake, which was submitted to Secretary of the Navy, William Jones and accepted on August 20, 1813. The plan consisted of using a flotilla of shallow-draft barges, each equipped with a large gun which would be used in large numbers to attack

and annoy the invading British, then retreating to the safety of shoal waters abundant in the Chesapeake region.

On June 1, 1814, Barney's flotilla, led by his flagship, the 49-foot sloop-rigged, self-propelled floating battery *USS Scorpion*, mounting two long guns and two carronades, were coming down Chesapeake Bay when they encountered the 12-gun schooner *HMS St. Lawrence* (the former Baltimore privateer *Atlas*), and boats from the 74-gun Third Rate *HMS Dragon* and *HMS Albion* near St. Jerome Creek. The flotilla pursued the *St Lawrence* and the boats until she could reach the protection of the two 74s. The American flotilla then retreated into the Patuxent River where the British quickly blockaded it.

The British outnumbered Barney by 7:1, forcing the flotilla on June 7 to retreat into St. Leonard's Creek. Two British frigates, the 38-gun *HMS Loire* and the 32-gun *HMS Narcissus*, plus the 18-gun sloop-of-war *HMS Jasseur* blockaded the mouth of the creek. The creek was too shallow for the British warships to enter, and the flotilla outgunned and hence was able to fend off the boats from the British ships.

Battles continued through June 10. The British, frustrated by their inability to flush Barney out of his safe retreat, instituted a "campaign of terror," laying waste to "town and farm alike" and plundering and burning Calverton, Huntingtown, Prince Frederick, Benedict and Lower Marlboro. On June 26, after the arrival of troops commanded by U.S. Army Colonel Decius Wadsworth, and U.S. Marine Captain Samuel Miller, Barney attempted a breakout. A simultaneous attack from land and sea on the blockading frigates at the mouth of St. Leonard's creek allowed the flotilla to move out of the creek and up-river to Benedict, Maryland, though Barney had to scuttle gunboats No. 137 and 138 in the creek. The British entered the then-abandoned creek and burned the town of St. Leonard, Maryland.

The British, under the command of Admiral Sir Alexander Cochrane then moved up the Patuxent, preparing for a landing at Benedict. Concerned that Barney's remarkable flotilla could fall into British hands, Secretary of the Navy Jones ordered Barney to take his squadron as far up the Patuxent as possible, to Queen Anne, and scuttle the squadron if the British appeared. Leaving his barges with a skeleton crew under the command of Lieutenant Solomon Kireo Frazier to handle any destruction of the craft, Barney took the majority of his men to join the American Army commanded by General William Henry Winder where they participated in the Battle of Bladensburg. Frazier scuttled all but one of the vessels of the Chesapeake Bay Flotilla.

During the Battle of Bladensburg, Barney and 360 sailors and 120 Marines made a heroic defense of the national capital—fighting against the enemy, hand to hand with cutlasses and pikes. The battle raged for four hours but, eventually, the British defeated the Americans. The defenders were forced to fall back after, nearly being cut off, and the British went on to burn the Capitol and White House. Barney was severely wounded, receiving a bullet deep in his thigh that could never be removed.

During the battle, President James Madison personally directed the marines led by Barney (prior to the battle, Madison had narrowly avoided capture). This battle is one of only two instances, of a sitting president exercising direct battlefield authority, as Commander-in-Chief, the other having occurred when George Washington rode out and personally, crushed the Whiskey Rebellion.

Commodore Barney died in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania on December 10, 1818, at the age 59, en route to Kentucky, from complications related to the wound he received at the Battle of Bladensburg. His remains rest in Allegheny Cemetery in Pittsburgh.

The Great Siege of Malta

At dawn on May 18th, 1565, one of the largest armadas ever assembled appeared off the Mediterranean island of Malta. Its 200 ships had been sent by Suleiman the Magnificent, sultan of the vast Ottoman empire to destroy the Knights of Malta who had long been a thorn in his side. Aboard were crammed some 40,000 fighting men, including 6,000 of Suleiman's elite infantry, the Janissaries, another 9,000 cavalry and seventy huge siege cannons, one or two of which were capable of hurling 600lb stones a mile and a half. Opposing this force were just 600 knights, a few thousand mercenaries and a few thousand Maltese irregulars – in all between 6,000 and 9,000 men. Once Malta fell, which Suleiman's commanders thought should take a week, the Turks would evict the Spanish from Tunis and then invade Sicily and Italy.

Rarely in military history have the odds been so unequal and the stakes so high. Yet in dealing the first true defeat to the Ottomans in over a century, the Knights of Malta became the heroes of the age and the siege one of the most celebrated events of the sixteenth century. Nearly 200 years later Voltaire could write, "Nothing is more well known than the siege of Malta." Yet, three centuries later the events of 1565 have receded from the minds of most military historians. No longer do you find it on lists of the "seventy most decisive battles in history". Nevertheless, the siege captures the imagination of anyone who stumbles across it.

At the time the Ottoman empire was the most powerful in the European and Mediterranean world. Its slaving operations – and those of its vassals, the Barbary corsairs based on the coast of North Africa – were integral to its naval operations, although the empire itself allowed its citizens more freedom than many Christian states at the time. Religious refugees from Christendom made their way to the capital (and the world's largest city) Constantinople, where they could worship as they pleased. Suleiman himself was intelligent, highly educated, an accomplished poet and determined.

The stronghold of Suleiman's adversaries was decidedly not the setting of Christopher Marlow's Jew of Malta (c.1589-90), in which a rich Jew and the son of the Turkish Sultan could scheme against an unwitting governor. The island had been taken by Muslims in the ninth century, but reconquered by Norman Christians in the eleventh, and became part of the Kingdom of Sicily in 1127; then part of the Spanish empire in the mid-fourteenth century. Malta was a rocky limestone island that had been deforested over the previous century by the demand for ship- and fire-wood, so that the inhabitants had to resort to burning cow dung for fuel. There was no such thing as any spring water, nor indeed, any well, and the inhabitants were forced to supply that defect by cistern. The population of Malta, and its neighboring island of Gozo, totalled about 20,000, almost all of them poor, illiterate farmers or peasants who came to the small harbor town of Birgu – the Borgo – to labor at the docks. Such was the poverty that perhaps two-thirds of the women, whether married or not, worked openly as prostitutes. The main saving grace were two large harbors which could provide 'proper' anchorage for any fleet.

Since 1530 the Knights Hospitaller of the Order of St John of Jerusalem, as the Knights were properly called, had owned the island, which was ruled by the Order's Grand Master and its Council of Seigneurs. The Order, or Religion, as it was also known, had by then been in existence for over 400 years, having been founded during the First Crusade as an Order of nurses. Afterwards, it rapidly evolved into a unique organization whose first duty was to care for 'Our Lords the Sick', and whose second duty was to fight the infidel. In 1113, Pope Paschal II granted the Knights the right to choose their leaders without interference from the Holy See and the Order of St John became sovereign, beholden to none but Christ and the Pope.

The Religion's fortunes waxed and waned with the centuries. After the fall of Acre, the last crusader outpost in Syria, in 1291, the Knights seized Rhodes, where they remained for over 200

years, reinventing themselves into a naval force. With their tiny fleet (which officially never numbered above six or seven vessels), they preyed upon Turkish traders as part of the centuries-long *guerre de course*, or *corso*, between Muslims and Christians. The primary object of this legalized piracy was to seize the enemy's cargo, which included humans, who could be ransomed in order to fill the coffers of the treasury. Those who were not ransomed became galley slaves. Since Sultan Mehmet II's capture of Constantinople in 1453, the Ottomans had increasingly dominated the Eastern Mediterranean. Nevertheless, the Knights' depredations on their shipping continued, and Mehmet laid siege to Rhodes in 1480. One of Suleiman's first acts upon ascending the sultanate in 1522 was to order the Knights off the island and when they refused, he commanded a second siege of Rhodes. After six months of resistance, the small garrison of Knights finally surrendered in exchange for Suleiman's offer of safe passage.

Seven years later, after endless negotiations with the Pope and the Holy Roman Emperor Charles V, the latter offered the Order the islands of Malta and Gozo in perpetual fiefdom in return for one falcon sent annually to the Viceroy of Sicily. The Knights reluctantly accepted the gift and there established a theocracy where the Grand Masters actively persecuted non-Catholics: in 1546 at least two members of the small Lutheran community were burned at the stake by the Inquisitor. The only Jews and Turks on the island were slaves, and carnal knowledge with either was punishable by ten years exile, or death by hanging. Tensions between the Knights and the Ottomans continued to escalate. As part of his offer of Malta, Charles V had insisted that the Knights also garrison Tripoli on the Libyan coast of Africa, which lay within the territory of the Barbary corsairs but which a Spanish force had seized in 1510. However, the feared Turkish corsair and naval commander Turgut, or Dragut, Reis also had his eye on Tripoli. Born as early as 1485, by the mid-sixteenth century the aging corsair was terrorizing the central and eastern Mediterranean with his small fleet of galleys. In 1551 he and the Ottoman admiral Sinan decided to wrest Tripoli from the Knights. En route, they invaded Malta with a substantial force of 10,000 men. Only several hundred Knights were on the island and the assault might well have spelled the end of the Order of St John, but Turgut mysteriously broke off the siege, sacked Gozo instead and carried off the entire population of about 5,000 into slavery. Continuing on to Tripoli, he quickly forced the garrison there to surrender. Turgut became *beylerbei*, or governor, and the Ottomans controlled the entire eastern Mediterranean.

Anxious to be rid of the Turkish corsair, in 1560 Philip II of Spain assembled the largest armada in fifty years to evict him. But the expedition, which consisted of about 56 galleys and 14,000 men, was surprised and utterly destroyed by the Turkish admiral Piyali Pasha off the Tunisian island of Djerba. The surviving forces holed up in a fort on the island. After a siege of nearly three months the garrison surrendered. Some 9,000 men perished and 5,000 were taken in chains to Constantinople. It was Christendom's greatest naval disaster since the ill-fated invasion of Algiers in 1519. The siege of Malta was the climax of this escalating chain of events. The match that ignited the powder-keg was the exploits of the Order's notorious seafarer, *Fra Mathurin aux Lescaut*, better known as Romegas. Nothing is known about Romegas' early career except that he was born in Provence, professed as a Knight in 1547 at the age of eighteen and quickly established a reputation as a fearless marauder. Within a few days during 1564, he captured several large Turkish merchantmen, one of which carried a cargo belonging to the Chief Eunuch of the Seraglio, valued at 100,000 Venetian gold ducats. Romegas took about 300 prisoners, among them the governor of Cairo, the governor of Alexandria and Giansevere Serchies, the former nurse of Suleiman's daughter, returning from a pilgrimage to Mecca.

By this time Suleiman, was eyeing Italy for an invasion. The Spanish still controlled La Goletta, off Tunis, the largest fortress on the Barbary coast and Christian forces had just seized the Peñon de Velez, an important Moroccan fortress. Romegas' captures provided a *causus belli*. By the

end of 1564, Suleiman had decided to wipe the Knights off the face of the earth. Fernand Braudel, whose Mediterranean World in the Age of Philip II (1949) is the standard history of the period, begins his discussion of the siege of Malta by asking, ‘Was it a surprise?’ No one has ever claimed it was. The Turks had sent spies disguised as fishermen to Malta the previous summer to survey the fortifications, later building a scale model of the island in Constantinople. The Grand Master Jean de Valette, meanwhile, had his own network of agents in place in Constantinople, headed by Giovan Barelli, which kept him informed of Suleiman’s intentions. A master of languages, Barelli pulled off one of the greatest espionage coups of the age: to smuggle out a complete report of the Turkish invasion plans as they were being decided. In an attempt to avert an invasion, the Grand Master ordered a diversionary attack on Malvasia, in the southeastern Peloponnese. This tiny island had been ceded by the Venetians to the Turks around 1540. Connected to the mainland by a causeway, Malvasia was a natural fortress akin to Gibraltar and hardly less impregnable. In September 1564 de Valette sent a small force led by Romegas to scale the rock at night and seize the garrison above. The plan misfired: Romegas’ men failed to find a path to the summit and when news of the expedition reached Suleiman, it only increased his determination to eradicate the Knights.

But the Lord of Lords did not count on the aging but remarkable Grand Master. Little is known about his early life. Universally referred to as ‘La Valette’, he was never called that during his lifetime. He was simply Jean de Valette, nicknamed Parisot, but in the decades following his death he became ‘La Valette’ in confusion with the name of the city he founded when the siege was over, La Città Valletta. As a young Provençal, de Valette had survived the siege of Rhodes and was among those who arrived at Malta in 1530. He seems never to have left the island thereafter, except on his ‘caravans’ against the infidel. During one of these, in 1541 he was seriously wounded and made a galley slave; Turgut himself evidently arranged for some leniency and after a year de Valette regained his freedom in a prisoner exchange. Captivity permitted him to add Turkish to his arsenal of French, Spanish, Greek and Arabic languages. The monument on Valette’s tomb, erected twenty-three years after his death, gives his dates as 1494-1568, suggesting that he was seventy-one during the siege. De Valette rose in the ranks of the Religion, despite a violent temper: in 1538 he had nearly beaten a man to death and was sentenced to four months in a hole in the ground – then exiled for two years to Tripoli (as governor). In 1554 he was elected Captain General of the Knights’ galleys. At constant loggerheads with the enemy, between 1557 and his death in 1568, de Valette captured nearly 3,000 Muslim slaves. At his death he reportedly owned 530, most of them probably as galley oarsmen.

As Grand Master he was a man of extremely conservative opinions. One of his first acts on being elected in 1557 was to ban stockings of mismatched colors, in order ‘to avoid the ruin of man’. He hanged or gave long prison sentences to anyone who crossed him, and he also attempted to set up a *collachio*, an enclave in Birgu that isolated the Knights from the lay populace, in other words the prostitutes; it failed. Knowing an invasion was imminent, de Valette made preparations, recalling the Knights to the island, raising troops, laying in stores of food and water and improving the fortifications, which were already considerable. Decades of labor had gone into adding walls and bastions to the main stronghold on the Great Port, Castle St Angelo, which was by 1565 fairly impregnable. A smaller fort, St Elmo, which had been built in 1552, guarded the harbor entrance and a third, St Michel, built at the same time, protected Birgu from the inland side. But de Valette refused an offer of 3,000 troops from Don Garcia of Toledo, the viceroy of Sicily, telling him to send them to La Goletta instead. When the invading armada appeared on Friday, May 18th, de Valette was still frantically making preparations, but he was not surprised.

The exact size of the force Suleiman sent against Malta is in some doubt. The main eyewitness account, a diary of the siege written by the Spanish poet-mercenary Francesco Balbi, lists just under 30,000 ‘special forces’, including the Janissaries and *spahis* (cavalry). He adds that the total number

of invaders, including the corsairs who eventually arrived, numbered about 48,000. A lesser-known work by the Knight Hipolito Sans tallies quite closely with Balbi's. By any reckoning it was an overwhelming force, supplemented by nearly seventy siege cannon. A roll-call in early May had turned up 546 Knights and Serving Brothers. Balbi lists a total of exactly 6,100 defenders, half of them mercenaries, half Maltese irregulars. Giacomo Bosio, the Order's official historian whose massive account was published in 1588 and who seems to have had first-hand information, gives about 8,500 defenders. The disadvantages were not all on the Maltese side. Malta lies a thousand miles from Constantinople, and the Turkish fleet had to be provisioned en route; for the army of 50-80,000 men to be fed on Malta, supplies needed to be brought from Barbary. Worse, Suleiman split the command between Vizier Mustafa Pasha, who was in charge of the ground forces, and Admiral Piyale Pasha who had routed the Christian fleet at Djerba; Suleiman exhorted both to defer to Turgut in all decisions when the corsair arrived from Tripoli.

The bickering that resulted between the two commanders had disastrous consequences. Mustafa sensibly planned to attack the unprotected old capital Mdina, at the island's center, then besiege the port of Birgu by land. Piyale, though, demanded to anchor his fleet in Marsamxett harbor, just north of the Great Port, both to shelter it from the sirocco and to be near the action. To do so required first reducing Fort St Elmo, on the narrow peninsula of Mt Sciberras and guarding both harbor entrances. Had Mustafa's plan been followed, the attack on St Elmo would have been unnecessary, but the Vizier relented, reasoning that to destroy the fort would take only a few days. That is the traditional story. However, a letter dated December 7th, 1564, from 'one in Constantinople who usually tells the truth' (perhaps the spymaster Barelli), suggests that the Turks had planned from the outset to take Fort St Elmo first, establish a position at the mouth of the Great Port and besiege Castle St Angelo, even if that meant wintering on Malta. Perhaps Mustafa had thought better of the idea; in the event attacking St Elmo proved a fatal mistake.

After three weeks of fighting, the fort still held. The few hundred soldiers stationed there withstood an unremitting bombardment from Turkish guns, which quickly reduced St Elmo to rubble, then fought off assault upon assault, some with as many as 8,000 attackers, according to Balbi. The defenders made extensive use of incendiary weapons – fire hoops, primitive flame throwers and grenades – while de Valette, determined to hold out until Don Garcia sent a relief, resupplied the fort each night across the harbor and evacuated the wounded. Nevertheless, by June 8th the Knights garrisoning the fort were on the verge of mutiny and wrote a letter – which despite publication in some popular histories has never been found – begging the Grand Master to allow them to sally forth and die with sword in hand. De Valette's response was to pay the soldiers, then shame them by offering to send replacements. Honor prevailed and the defense continued.

The siege of St Elmo left Mdina untouched by the fighting and it therefore served as a way-station for communication to Sicily, where Don Garcia was organizing a relief force. When Turgut arrived on Malta in early June, he saw that it was too late to correct the Turks' tactical error. Redoubling their efforts, the Turks eventually destroyed St Elmo and butchered the defenders almost to a man, but Turgut did not live to savor the victory. He died, probably on June 23rd, the day the fort fell, killed, according to Balbi and Sans, accidentally in an instance of 'friendly fire'. Yet the Turks' success at St Elmo probably cost them the siege. They lost between 4,000 and 6,000 men, including half the Janissaries, while the defenders lost 1,300 men, including a quarter of the Knights. Disease, which would eventually kill another 10,000 or 15,000 of the besiegers, was also beginning to take its toll. Despite the losses, and Turgut's death, Mustafa persisted with the siege, in African heat, for another two months.

The bombardment of Birgu soon commenced. The town was surrounded by sixty-five to seventy large-calibre guns. Bosio speaks of two '*basilisks* that could hurl stones of weight beyond

measure'. The famous Turkish siege cannons screwed breech and barrel together to form a gun of twenty or more feet in length, and thirty tons in weight: Balbi mentions that their balls buried themselves 'thirty palms under the earth'. He also records that by the end of July, at the height of the bombardment, the thunder was so great it 'could be heard distinctly in Syracuse and even at Catania, forty leagues away', and that 'it seemed as if the end of the world had come'. The Maltese took refuge in large cisterns under their homes but ultimately, Balbi writes, 7,000 inhabitants perished. Meanwhile, couriers were desperately passing to and fro between Mdina and Sicily. As word of the siege spread, soldiers and adventurers were arriving in Syracuse. In early July, apparently on the fourth attempt and aided by fog, the Viceroy's captain-general succeeded in landing 600 men and getting them into Birgu. This small relief lifted spirits, but Mustafa was unrelenting. On July 15th, he launched a massive double assault on Senglea, a peninsula in the Great Port occupied by Fort St Michel at the inner end. The Turks ported a hundred small boats over Sciberras into the harbor and attacked Senglea by water, while 8,000 troops attacked the fort by land. The sea assault would have succeeded and Malta fallen that day, had not the Turkish boats come into range of a sea-level battery that de Valette had constructed at the base of Castle St Angelo. Several salvos destroyed the vessels and most of the attackers drowned. He had also constructed a floating bridge to allow reserves to cross from Birgu to Fort St Michel, with the result that, after a day of ferocious fighting (costing the Turks, Balbi says, another 4,000 men), the fort held.

Still no end was in sight. On August 7th, Mustafa launched another massive assault against Fort St Michel, as well as against Birgu itself. This time, the Turks breached the town walls, the old Grand Master went forth to fight with his troops, and was wounded. It seemed as if the end had come, but the Turks miraculously broke off the attack and retreated, believing the Christian relief force had arrived. In fact, cavalry Captain Vincenzo Anastagi had sallied forth from Mdina, massacring the sick and wounded Turks left in the unprotected field hospital. Anastagi's actions have subsequently been excused with the observation that the concept of mercy in battle was nonexistent. When Mustafa took Fort St Elmo he had beheaded and disembowelled the bodies of the commanding Knights and floated them across the harbor to St Angelo; de Valette had retaliated by decapitating his Turkish prisoners and firing their heads across the harbor. Yet, Bosio described how after the assault on Senglea some Turks 'threw down their arms, demanding "good war"'. To no avail: such was the thirst for vengeance on the part of the Maltese that the Grand Master had these prisoners tortured and thrown to the crowd. After the battle of August 7th, the spirit of the Turks seems to have flagged, though they continued the bombardment and launched at least one more major assault against St Michel and Birgu. At some point in August the Council of Seigneurs made a decision to abandon the town and retreat to Castle St Angelo. De Valette refused to desert his subjects who had fought so bravely, and vetoed the proposal. He apparently realized that the enemy was becoming as exhausted as the defenders, and, indeed, the Turks did not at once re-attack.

Accounts of the siege's final weeks are hazy as Balbi's diary becomes increasingly sparse. A deadly and ingenious game ensued, of mining and countermining, with single combats between men carrying flame-throwers. The Turks attempted to build a bridge to St Michel in order to storm it; a Maltese engineer lowered himself over the fortress wall in a protective shell to cut a hole to allow a cannon to be trained to destroy the bridge. The Turks raised a siege tower, but the engineers tunneled out through the rubble of the fort and with a point-blank salvo of chain-shot destroyed the tower's legs. Increasing desperation overtook the Turks. Towards the end of August the Janissaries mutinied, then Mustafa ordered an abortive attack on Mdina in order to winter there. A long letter from Captain Anastagi, the liaison with Sicily, of August 11th, to Ascanio della Corgna, one of the commanders of the assembling relief force, observes: that the Turks do not have more than 12 to 13,000 fighting men,

of whom the only ones worth anything are the janissaries; the flower is dead, and the survivors no longer dare approach the walls, even though they are forced with cudgels by the Pashas.

Eventually, the siege ended in exhaustion. By September the weather was turning; in the rain the survivors had to resort to using crossbows instead of arquebuses. Food was running low but the defenders were not starving: Balbi speaks of exchanging bread for melons with the Turks, and Anastagi writes that in Mdina, cattle remained plentiful, although the wine had run out. The Turks knew that winter was upon them. After the abortive march on Mdina they began embarking their artillery and by September 8th, the siege was over.

How many men died? According to Balbi, 35,000 Turks; Bosio, 30,000. About a third of the defenders perished, and a third of the Maltese population. Traditionally, it is said that by the end only 600 of de Valette's men could walk. Money now poured into Malta, allowing the slow reconstruction of Birgu, which had been levelled by 100,000 cannonballs, as well as the construction of the first modern planned city, the fortified La Valletta, named after the Grand Master, on the slopes of Mount Sciberras. For his slowness in organizing the relief expedition, Don Garcia became the villain of the piece and most writers have him dismissed from his post, although he remained viceroy until 1568 and served as chief adviser to Don John of Austria at Lepanto three years later. Moreover, the correspondence between de Valette, Don Garcia and Philip II of Spain makes it fairly clear that if Don Garcia was cautious, he was cautious because the King Philip was more so.

Partisans of the Turks have pointed out that the failure of the siege did nothing to alter the balance of power, that the Ottomans continued to control the eastern Mediterranean, just as they were quickly able to do even after the battle of Lepanto off Corfu, six years later, which saw the destruction of the Turkish armada at the hands of a Christian armada led by Don John. Even so, the stand on Malta prevented another battle for North Africa at La Goletta, which the Turks had intended to take immediately afterwards, and stopped a possible invasion of Italy. And it showed that the previously invincible Ottoman empire could be halted. In that sense Malta was more decisive than Lepanto, and the Knights – and especially de Valette, who died before his new city was complete and now lies in its cathedral – were showered with honors.

Islam-a Religion of Peace?

A German's view on Islam. This is one of the best explanations of the Muslim terrorist situation I have ever read. His references to past history are accurate and clear. Not long, easy to understand, and well worth the read. The author of this email is Dr. Emanuel Tanya, a well-known and well-respected psychiatrist. A man, whose family was German aristocracy prior to World War II, owned a number of large industries and estates. When asked how many German people were true Nazis, the answer he gave can guide our attitude toward fanaticism.

“Very few people were true Nazis,' he said, 'but many enjoyed the return of German pride, and many more were too busy to care. I was one of those who just thought the Nazis were a bunch of fools. So, the majority just sat back and let it all happen. Then, before we knew it, they owned us, and we had lost control , and the end of the world had come.'

My family lost everything. I ended up in a concentration camp and the Allies destroyed my factories.' We are told again and again by 'experts' and 'talking heads' that Islam is a religion of

peace and that the vast majority of Muslims just want to live in peace. Although this unqualified assertion may be true, it is entirely irrelevant. It is meaningless fluff meant to make us feel better, and meant to somehow diminish the specter of fanatics rampaging across the globe in the name of Islam.'

The fact is that the fanatics rule Islam at this moment in history. It is the fanatics who march. It is the fanatics who wage any one of 50 shooting wars worldwide. It is the fanatics who systematically slaughter Christian or tribal groups throughout Africa and are gradually taking over the entire continent in an Islamic wave. It is the fanatics who bomb, behead, murder, or honor-kill. It is the fanatics who take over mosque after mosque. It is the fanatics who zealously spread the stoning and hanging of rape victims and homosexuals. It is the fanatics who teach their young to kill and to become suicide bombers.'

The hard, quantifiable fact is that the peaceful majority, the 'silent majority,' is cowed and extraneous. Communist Russia was comprised of Russians who just wanted to live in peace, yet the Russian Communists were responsible for the murder of about 20 million people. The peaceful majority were irrelevant. China's huge population was peaceful as well, but Chinese Communists managed to kill a staggering 70 million people.' The average Japanese individual prior to World War II was not a warmongering sadist. Yet, Japan murdered and slaughtered its way across South East Asia in an orgy of killing that included the systematic murder of 12 million Chinese civilians; most killed by sword, shovel, and bayonet. And who can forget Rwanda, which collapsed into butchery? Could it not be said that the majority of Rwandans were 'peace loving'?

History lessons are often incredibly simple and blunt, yet for all our powers of reason, we often miss the most basic and uncomplicated of points: peace-loving Muslims have been made irrelevant by their silence. Peace-loving Muslims will become our Enemy if they don't speak up, because like my friend from Germany, they will awaken one day and find that the fanatics own them, and the end of their world will have begun.'

'Peace-loving Germans, Japanese, Chinese, Russians, Rwandans, Serbs, Afghans, Iraqis, Palestinians, Somalis, Nigerians, Algerians, and many others have died because the peaceful majority did not speak up until it was too late.' Now Islamic prayers have been introduced in Toronto and other public schools in Ontario, and, yes, in Ottawa, too, while the Lord's Prayer was removed (due to being so offensive?). The Islamic way may be peaceful for the time being in our country until the fanatics move in.'

In Australia, and indeed in many countries around the world, many of the most commonly consumed food items have the halal emblem on them. Just look at the back of some of the most popular chocolate bars, and at other food items in your local supermarket. Food on aircraft have the halal emblem just to appease the privileged minority who are now rapidly expanding within the nation's shores.' In the U.K, the Muslim communities refuse to integrate and there are now dozens of "no-go" zones within major cities across the country that the police force dare not intrude upon. Sharia law prevails there, because the Muslim community in those areas refuse to acknowledge British law.' As for us who watch it all unfold, we must pay attention to the only group that counts - the fanatics who threaten our way of life.'

Lastly, anyone who doubts that the issue is serious and just deletes this email without sending it on, is contributing to the passiveness that allows the problems to expand. Extend yourself a bit and send this on. Let us hope that thousands world-wide read this, think about it, and send it on before it's too late, and we are silenced because we were silent!!!" *Editor's note: this article should not be considered political, just a statement of facts. Every culture has demonstrated willful ignorance on the effects of their country's or religion's decisions on other individuals. Our own Silent Majority (1970-80's) is slowly being viewed as "Ignorant Bigots" in some quarters.*

