

# THE MALTESE PRESENCE IN NORTH AMERICA



## E-NEWSLETTER

Issue 6

SEPTEMBER 2019

No. 2

### MEDAL OF HONOR CERTIFICATE

ISSUED UNDER THE PROVISIONS OF THE ACT OF CONGRESS APPROVED APRIL 27, 1916.

To whom it may concern:

This is to Certify, That Orlando E. Caruana  
 was enrolled on the seventh day of  
August, 1861, at three years, and was  
 discharged on the seventh day of September, 1864,  
 by reason of expiration of term of service  
 while holding the grade of Private, in Company K,  
Fifty-first Regiment of New York Inf.  
 that a medal of honor was awarded to him on the fourteenth  
 day of November, 1890, for distinguished services in actions of  
New Bern, N. C., March 14, 1862 (eight of our men killed, color sergeant and color under heavy  
fire of enemy) & South Mountain, Md., September 14, 1862 (one of four soldiers who vol-  
unteered to determine position of enemy - other three were killed.)  
 that his name was entered and recorded on the Army and Navy Medal of Honor Roll  
 on the Twenty-ninth day of April, 1916, as  
 authorized under the provisions of the Act of Congress approved April 27, 1916,  
 and that he is entitled to receive the special pension granted by that Act.

Given at the War Department, Washington, D. C., this twelfth day of  
May, 1916.

By authority of the Secretary of War:

MEDAL OF HONOR CERTIFICATE ISSUED TO ORLANDO E. CARUANA, MAY 12, 1914

(See story, pages 7-9)

## EDITORIAL COMMENT



**Dan Brock**

Thanks to submissions over the past two months and a number of anniversaries during the month of September this issue has been expanded to 16 pages, rather than the usual 12.

Charles Buttigieg of Malta has been patiently waiting two months for his article on the Malta Migration Museum to appear. (pages 5-6) I have visited the Museum twice and have contributed to it both financially and with materials pertaining to the Maltese Diaspora. The article itself is part of my ongoing endeavour to introduce the reader to institutions which might assist in learning about one's ancestors who came to North America from Malta. Last month, it was the article on the Maltese-Canadian Museum Archives and Visitors Centre St. Paul the Apostle Church Complex.

I have encouraged readers to send in personal accounts of growing up in North America with a Maltese background. Rena Xuereb's "Growing Up Maltese-American in Detroit" (pages 7-8) is such an account. I'm sure, like me, you'll find it a delightful read.

The May/June issue contained a biographical sketch of Dr. Raymond Xerri who was to become the new Consul General of Malta to Canada. Since his arrival, he has taken the GTA by storm. His activities can be followed on the Facebook webpage of Consulate General of the Republic of Malta to Canada, Twitter and Instagram # Malta in Canada. Pages 4 and 16 show some of the activities and events Dr. Xerri has been engaged in since

taking up his new posting.

As a follow-up to Dr. Aaron Attard-Hili's article on Giuseppe Bajada and Sette Giugno in the May/June issue of this journal mention is made of his forthcoming book *Dies Irae, Dies Illa* on this tragedy.

Two emails have prompted two of the shorter articles, namely that from Dr. Charles J. Vella of California relating to chain migration of the Vassallo-Vella family (pages 4-5) and from Brenda Bandy of Sarnia, ON relating to her mother, Jane Porter, who immigrated to Canada in October 1948 (page 6).

As to anniversaries occurring in September, the feature article relates to Orlando E. Caruana, an American Civil War hero, who died on September 14, 1917. (pages 1, 9-11) While much can be found about him on line, this article reveals, for the first time, exactly when Caruana arrived in the United States and by what ship and also his family connections back in Malta which, again, until now have been unknown to his biographers.

September 8<sup>th</sup>, *il-Vitorja* or Victory Day in Malta, also marks the 89<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the establishment of St. Paul the Apostle Parish in Toronto and the 63<sup>rd</sup> anniversary of the blessing of the present church. (pages 12-13)

September 21<sup>st</sup>, *Jum l-Indipendenza* or Independence Day in Malta, will also mark the second anniversary of Maltese American Day in the State of Michigan. (page 13)

September 15<sup>th</sup> marks the 71<sup>st</sup> anniversary of the earliest known trans-Atlantic flight from Europe to Canada by Maltese emigrants, (pages 14-15) while September 13<sup>th</sup> marks the 76<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the earliest documented evidence of a Maltese Canadian travelling by plane (pages 11-12)

This issue also includes the regular columns: excerpts from Fr. Mario Micallef's Sunday bulletins (page 3), reader comments (page 3) and activities within the Maltese Communities (page 4)

I would like to thank the following

who either directly or indirectly contributed to the content of this issue: Dr. Aaron Attard-Hili, Brenda Bandy, Charles Buttigieg, Danny Conroy, Richard Cumbo, the late Frank & Yvonne Gatt, Gregg Knapp Fr. Mario Micallef, Charles Said-Vassallo, Dr. Charles J. Vella, Dr. Raymond Xerri and Rena Xuereb.

Once again, my thanks go to Mona Vella Nicholas for her proofreading of this issue and to Albert Vella for updating the Table of Contents. This is an invaluable contribution to the quality and value of the journal.

Work is ongoing on the October and succeeding issues. You are encouraged to share information on activities within your Maltese community, to submit articles and to share this publication with relatives and friends.

Let's all do our part to uncover and preserve the Maltese presence in North America in whatever way we can such as sharing stories with children and grandchildren or getting these accounts down in print. This journal can be such a vehicle for the latter.

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## GLEANINGS FROM THE SUNDAY BULLETIN

### PASTOR'S THOUGHTS...



*Fr. Mario Micallef, M SSP, is pastor of St. Paul the Apostle, Toronto, the only Maltese national parish in North America. These "Pastor's thoughts..." are extracts from his commentaries on the Sunday readings which are published in the Parish's Sunday Bulletin.*

#### Jesus Teaches Us to Pray

For Jesus, prayer was not just rituals, or saying formulas, often expecting some magical outcome. For Jesus, prayer is a dialogue with a loving Father, a Father who knows what is good for us, a Father who would never do anything that would harm us. More importantly, Jesus invites us to enter into a relationship with a God who wants to be close to us. This is why prayer is so important. Because, not unlike any other relationship, our relationship with God has to be nourished and nurtured in order to grow. Otherwise it will slowly taper off and die. "Lord, teach us to pray". This is a good question to ask, as disciples of Jesus.

#### Money Is a Great Servant but a Bad Master

Neither Paul nor Jesus tell us that we should not be careful with our money or possessions. It is needed and without money life would become much harder to deal with. But, the moment I find that I am losing my peace because of money, or that earthly possessions are becoming more important than my blood-relations, I realize that there is something wrong. I cannot give money that power over my life. Because, as the English philosopher Francis Bacon rightly put it: Money is a great servant but a bad master.

Only love survives beyond death.

#### Do Not Be Afraid

"Do not be afraid" is the refrain that keeps echoing in our minds as we journey with Jesus. Changing direction, letting go of that which gives us security or comfort, can be difficult and also scary. But, really, there is no need to be afraid. If we are ready, if we recognize Him and welcome Him, He will "come and serve us". What could be more comforting than that?

## "Go Forth and Set the World on Fire"

As we journey with Jesus being his disciples, we are invited to share in his mission of spreading this fire. So, the first question that comes to mind is: "Do I have the fire burning inside me?" Because, the simple truth is that, unless I have it, I cannot share it with others! Perhaps a better question would be, "What kind of fire do I have burning inside me?" Because we all have something we are very passionate about in our lives.....

As Christians, as followers of Jesus, all we have to do is to keep walking on the footsteps of our Master. Often, a small good action can have great effects. It is like a small spark, which can spread into a huge fire. To share in the mission of Jesus we might not be asked to do great things. As St Catherine of Siena reminds us: "Be who God meant you to be, and you will set the world on fire."

**Fr. Mario Micallef, M SSP  
St. Paul the Apostle Church,  
3224 Dundas St. W. Toronto, ON M6P 2A3  
1-416-767-7054**

#### READER COMMENTS

Congratulations for a very interesting and informative newsletter; keep up the good work!!

George Xuereb, Toronto, ON

We appreciate the work you are doing to assist others to pursue historical research and make records of past lives and times available to us all. Having had your kind of help and very professional and personal interest, we all now feel more motivated to take the time to know our families better....Your work is certainly contributing significantly to restoring family connections and providing knowledge and insight to history otherwise lost.

Anne White, Ventura, CA  
and her daughters, Doree and Toby

Many thanks for your initiative in publishing this very interesting journal. I have read through all of them and I have copies of the back issues and made extra copies to be left in the Consulate General's lobby for all 400-50 people that visit our office weekly to see, read or take home. All of you are doing a great job....I will send a post soon about the journal to all 1000+ follows we have so far on Facebook as a form of advertising the Journal for you.

Dr. Raymond C. Xerri,  
Consul General of Malta (Canada), Toronto ON

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Since July 18<sup>th</sup> field studies have taken place on the site of Louis Shickluna's shipyard in St. Catharines, ON headed by Archaeologist Kimberly Monk of Brock University.

## ACTIVITIES WITHIN THE MALTESE COMMUNITIES

### Dan Brock

#### London, Ontario

As of Wednesday, August 14<sup>th</sup>, some members of the Maltese community in the area have been enjoying weekly get-togethers at Springbank Park to socialize, play bingo and bocci, etc. This is a resurrection of the past tradition of having such gatherings on Sunday afternoons during the summer. Lately, however, Springbank Park has become too crowded on Sundays.

For a change of pace, instead of the monthly luncheons at a restaurant, the usual group met at Weldon Park in Arva where the afternoon was spent playing bingo and bocci and everyone brought and, in some cases, shared their food and drinks.

#### British Columbia

Sue Schembri, one of two councillors appointed by the Maltese Government to represent all Maltese Canadians on the Council for the Maltese Living Abroad, paid a courtesy call on the new Consul General of Malta in Canada when on a visit to Toronto in early August.



**Dr. Raymond C. Xerri, Consul General of Malta  
(Canada) and Sue Schembri**

Consulate General of the Republic of Malta to Canada  
Facebook webpage

#### The Greater Toronto Area, Ontario

The feast of the Solemnity of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary into Heaven, commonly known as *Santa Marija* among the Maltese and “very dear to Maltese Catholics,” was observed at St. Paul the Apostle Church during the 10:30 Mass in Maltese on Sunday, August 18<sup>th</sup>. This feast is usually observed throughout the Catholic Church on August 15<sup>th</sup>.

The San Gaetano Dinner & Dance was held at the Malta Band Club on Saturday, August 10<sup>th</sup>



Consulate General of the Republic of Malta to Canada  
Facebook webpage

The Malta Band Club will be holding its II Vittorja Dinner and Dance on Saturday, September 14<sup>th</sup>. A trip to Casino Rama is planned for Saturday, September 21<sup>st</sup> followed the next day by a car show. Malta Day will be held on Saturday, September 28<sup>th</sup>. The Mro Paul Gauci Concert is to be held on Saturday, October 19<sup>th</sup>.

## TWO MORE LINKS IN THE MIGRATION CHAIN TO THE BAY AREA

### Dan Brock

In the August issue (page 6) I wrote of the migration of several members of the Vassallo-Vella family to the Bay Area, ending in 1950 and going back to 1907 with possible links extending back as far as the 1880s.

Less than an hour after sending out that issue, I received an email from Dr. Charles J. Vella of the Bay Area who is a member of the Vassallo-Vella family and who immigrated to the United States as a child with his parents and siblings in 1950.

It turns out that another two “links” can be added to the Vassallo-Vella migration chain.

Joseph Vella, another uncle of Charles J. Vella, also immigrated to San Francisco in 1947. Joseph had crossed the Atlantic on the *Marine Shark* in July, a month earlier than his brother Emmanuel who came out on the *Marine Tiger* in August 1947. Like other members of the Vella family who immigrated to San Francisco, Joseph was sponsored by his brother Frank who had immigrated to the United States in 1939.

Charles also notes that Joseph Vassallo, his great uncle and a brother of Albert Vassallo had immigrated to the United States in 1916. Joseph had boarded the *Duca d’Aosta* in Naples in late July and joined his

brother in San Francisco the following month. The brothers ended up owning a wrecking company in that city.

Dr. Vella's email to me is yet another example of how this journal can expand and preserve our knowledge of the Maltese who migrated to and left their mark on North America.

Further research has led to further possible links.

Accompanying Joseph Vassallo to San Francisco were three other Maltese men: Paolo Vassallo, Giuseppe Abela and Giuseppe Calleja.

Paolo Vassallo was going to join his brother Carmelo Vassallo who had earlier migrated to San Francisco. Carmelo and Paolo may have been cousins of Alberto and Joseph Vassallo. Nothing further is presently known of Carmelo and Paolo Vassallo.

Giuseppe Abela and Michele Angelo Calleja stated they were friends of Alberto Vassallo and, like Joseph Vassallo, were planning to stay with Alberto for a time at 1640 Vancouver St.

Nothing further is known of Giuseppe Abela, but in 1922, Angelo Callejo (aka Michele Angelo Calleja) married Mary De Brincat who, like Angelo, had been born in Mosta.

## **MALTA MIGRATION MUSEUM**

### **Charles Buttigieg**



*In October 2001, Charles was appointed Malta's first Refugee Commissioner. Since 2009, he has been Secretary of the Migration Museum. Charles is also an occasional lecturer on international refugee protection and migration phenomena.*

### **Dar I-Emigrant**

Since 1972, *Dar I-Emigrant*, in Valletta, was best known among Maltese migrants as a beehive of activity by the Emigrants' Commission in their best interest and that of their families.

Suffice it to say that under the steadfast leadership of Mgr. Philip Calleja, the social assistance offices of the Commission dealt with around 25,250 cases during the post-war migration experience from Malta. The people involved were linked to immigration to Australia (11,500), USA, Canada and the UK (12,500). There were also 759 marriage-related cases and 500 concerning people whom the Emigrants' Commission helped to obtain a travel loan from the International Catholic Migration Commission (ICMC) Loan Fund.

Step by step, especially when Maltese migration started to subside, the mission of the Emigrants'

Commission was enriched with a wider dimension. New initiatives started to emerge and pick up within it. These included the Apostleship of the Sea, the Religious Tourism Organisation, the Apostolate of Aviation, the Personal Parishes, the Secretariat for Maltese Priests Overseas, the Ecumenical Commission, and the Inter-Faith Commission.

In 2003, the Archbishop of Malta appointed Fr (now Mgr.) Alfred Vella as his Delegate for the Secretariat for Emigration and Tourism, a responsibility which until then was in the hands of Mgr. Philip Calleja. On his part, Mgr. Calleja continued to give his services in the role of President of the Commission, primarily in the assistance offered to asylum-seekers reaching Malta and seeking all sorts of help from the Emigrants' Commission.

The second decade of the new millennium is seeing the Commission focusing on four main areas of activities: migration, refugees, the Catholic Enquiry Centre and a Digital Migration Museum aiming at passing to future generations the story of emigration from Malta to the Mediterranean countries and other receiving countries over a span of some two hundred years.

### **The story of emigration**

The Migration Museum has been set up at *Dar I-Emigrant*.

The Emigrants' Commission took this initiative in the contest of the active and main contribution it had been making for decades in assisting the number of emigrants setting off from Malta and the fact that, as a result, it has extensive memorabilia.

The scope of the museum is to record how emigration started off and subsequently developed, as well as how the communities of Maltese emigrants integrated in the various countries where they settled and what they contributed in these places.

The museum also seeks to further strengthen the migrants' sense of belonging to their Maltese origin and thus continue to maintain strong ties with Malta despite the geographical distance and cultural variations.

Another aim for setting up the museum is for the Maltese in Malta, especially the new generations, and the Maltese communities abroad to understand better the realities of migration and the value of social inclusion.

### **Digital collection, archive and library**

The initial stage of the Museum was inaugurated on 22nd December 2011, during the Emigrants' Commission's annual Christmas get-together. The first phase featured a digital collection management system aimed at recording, consolidating and preserving all the Emigrants' Commission's vital records and artefacts relating to Maltese Emigration for posterity.

The central digital information podium, which is in the

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main hall, has eight LED screens, eight touch screen interfaces and computers to drive the digital system.

This presents an opportunity to display a large number of items in an interactive way. Visitors are encouraged to use the central podium to browse through digital information using natural hand movements.

The next step was the setting up of an archive and library to preserve and catalogue material in the form of various media in relation to migration for use by scholars and the general public seeking additional or deeper information to that provided in the digital section of the Museum. The documents have been scanned and are being inserted in a proper database. The work is mainly carried out by volunteers, including returned Maltese migrants, who are effectively supporting the initiative with their much-appreciated skills and time.

### The way ahead

The Migration Museum is currently concentrating on the further enhancement of its database and the acquisition of more technological facilities to ensure a better set-up for the transfer of information to its digital management system.



### The LED Screens, Touch Screen Interfaces and Computers in the Main Hall

The progress in the museum's aims continues to depend very much on the strength of the support the initiative receives, primarily from migrants of Maltese birth or blood, wherever they may be, who truly believe in the value of such a project.

Migrants are primarily encouraged to share their personal, family or community stories with the museum for posterity and to include the museum in their programme of activities if and when they happen to visit Malta.

Financial contributions towards funding the further progress of the museum are also most welcome. The contact details of the Migration Museum administration are as follows:

Telephone – 356 2122644, 21240255.

E-mail: [maltamigrationmuseum@melita.com](mailto:maltamigrationmuseum@melita.com).

## DISPELLING SOME CONFUSION

Dan Brock

In the August issue (page 4), there was a photo of a woman looking at a volume of some kind but without any caption. In actual fact, the explanation was in the last paragraph on the previous page.

The photo, slightly cropped, appears below.



It shows Jane (Farrugia) Porter sitting out on her apartment balcony enjoying the sunshine and reading the back issues of this journal, which her daughter, Brenda Joan Bandy had printed off and put into a binder.

Jane is the widow of George S. Porter. She immigrated to London, Ontario in the fall of 1948 and, since 1956, has lived in Sarnia. Her mother, the late Carmen (Sant'Angelo) Farrugia, is believed to have been the oldest living Maltese immigrant in North America.

## GROWING UP MALTESE-AMERICAN IN DETROIT\*

**Rena Xuereb**

*Rena lives in Belleville, Michigan with her husband Fernando Campos. They have six children and four grandchildren. She is a trustee on the executive board of the Maltese American Community Club in Dearborn. She wants to share stories her mother passed on to her and her siblings regarding life and Malta and the courage it took to eventually leave the Island and is, therefore, working on a book entitled "Courage of a Maltese Immigrant."*



*book entitled "Courage of a Maltese Immigrant."*

My name is Nazarena "Rena" Xuereb, and I am the youngest of seven children. My father, John Xuereb, "Ganni ta Grima" arrived in the States June 1950 by way of England and Bermuda and quickly secured a job at the Ford Motor Co., earning \$2.00 an hour working with the hot coke ovens. My father managed to purchase a car and a home near St. Anne's Catholic Church, all while renting a room from a Maltese lady named Sara in that part of Detroit known as Corktown.



**My Father's Passport Photo, 1950**

Ten months later he sent for us. My mother Giuseppa "Josephine" (Gauci) Xuereb hesitated because that would mean she would be leaving her oldest child Marija Xuereb Gatt, who was married with two small boys. She resentfully left her island, her family and her eldest child not knowing if she would ever see any of them again.

Passports were in order and in June of 1951 we left for the States on the Italia. Picture 13 days on a ship

with six children from 19 to four years of age! Let me point out that none of us spoke English and some were severely seasick the whole trip. We made it to the Port of New York then arrived in Detroit by train, with my father waiting for us. We moved into Most Holy Redeemer Parish a year later.



**My First Day in Kindergarten, 1952.  
My Brother Victor is in the Background**

Since there was a large concentration of Maltese in Detroit we never felt like immigrants; everyone was like us. Mothers kept cooking Maltese foods. Pastizzi were a staple. Men would dress in suits and hang out on Sundays. The downtown Detroit Maltese Club on Michigan Avenue was the glue that kept everyone together. We had Maltese priests like Fr. Michael Cefai, Fr. Robert Cini and now Fr. Joe Mallia who were and are a big part of our community. We had social functions at the Club. Everyone was happy. A second Maltese Club in Dearborn opened its doors in the 1980s to accommodate the families moving out to the suburbs.

We slowly adjusted to our new home and our new surroundings. My brother Frank stated that we were in America and had to start speaking in English. I was the youngest and just turned four years old, I can't recall anything about Malta or our ship experience. Although I have no past memory of Malta as a child before we left, my heart never left.

My parents eventually started going to Malta every couple of years, enjoying their time with family and their oldest daughter whom they hadn't seen for years. I find myself going to Malta several times a year with my husband who also loves Malta. Maybe I'm trying to make up for those first few years of my life, trying to fill the gap. Each and every time I get my first view of my Malta from the plane my hair stands up and as soon as I'm on land I feel like I've never left.



**Our Family's First Portrait in the United States,  
Taken in 1953**



**Frank and Victor Adjusting to American Life,  
Adopting "American" Clothing, 1955**

My siblings and I returned to Malta in 1998 for our sister Mary's 50<sup>th</sup> wedding anniversary.

My family, minus my mother, all became American citizens. In 1967, I was sworn in and felt a great sense of pride. Our recent trip to the State Capitol brought out that pride once again with all the Maltese presence and those in spirit. Seeing all those people there, hearing Lisa Buttigieg LiGreci sing both the American and Maltese national anthems. Watching our first Maltese legislator Darrin Camilleri give a history of Malta and our contributions to Detroit, then introducing a resolution to declare September 21<sup>st</sup> as Maltese American Heritage Day in the State of Michigan—the same day we recognize Malta's independence. [see article at bottom of page 14] Once again, my hair stood up as if I was flying over Malta and seeing it for the first time.



**From left to right is Mary, Grace, Joe,  
Victor, Frank, Dolores and Rena, 1998**

When in Malta I'm asked where I'm from because of my American accent. I jokingly say St. Paul's Bay knowing damn well they mean where am I living. Then they ask again, Canada? Australia? I say no, America.

I've had my dual citizenship for a number of years now and I find people in Malta say, oh you're not Maltese because you left so young. They might as well stab me with a dagger, that hurts terribly. I immediately pull out my Maltese passport and ask them what does that say? I have so much pride in my Maltese heritage that I do a lot of research. My family line goes back 12 and 13 generations to the 1500s, so don't tell me I'm not Maltese.

Then just the opposite, I get Americans who say you were born here right? They are quite shocked when I tell them no, in fact, I was born on the island of Malta. Sometimes I get, where is that? Fortunately for me, that's when I can start bragging like an historian about Malta's history, temples, beaches, sunshine and on and on.

*\*This is basically the same article which first appeared as "Maltese American Heritage Day – A Personal Experience" in Maltese E-Newsletter, issue 280 (August 2019), pages 6-7.*

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### **GO WEST**

Dr. Charles Mattei had been to North America on more than one occasion and he was of the opinion that Maltese migrants would be wise to forget all other suggestions and join the rest of the Europeans in trying to make their American dream materialize. On July 21, 1910 he wrote to a Maltese daily newspaper giving his opinion on Maltese emigration to the U.S.A. He recommended those who were thinking of leaving Malta to find work abroad to go to the Pacific slope of North America, to the states of Washington, Oregon and California. (Fr. Lawrence E. Attard, *Early Maltese Emigration* (1900 – 1914), 1983, 29)



**ORLANDO EMANUEL CARUANA:  
AN AMERICAN CIVIL WAR HERO  
AWARDED THE MEDAL OF HONOR\***

**Dan Brock**

Saturday, September 14<sup>th</sup> marks the 102<sup>nd</sup> anniversary of the death of Orlando E. Caruana whose remains were interred in Mount Olivet Cemetery, Washington, DC. He had been awarded the Congressional Medal of Honor in 1890 for his two acts of courage and heroism 28 years earlier.

Until recently nothing was known about Orlando's early life by his descendants and others generally other than that he was born in Valletta, Malta on June 23, 1844.

An email to Charles Said-Vassallo of Australia (see July issue, pages 5-6) revealed that, in his Caruana data base, Orlando turned out to be one of 13 known children of Dr. Emmanuele Caruana, a Valletta lawyer and his wife, the former Francesca Cassar Desain. The Caruana ancestry, in turn, has been traced back directly to Nicola Caruana who, in 1433, married Perona Fanata.

Returning to Orlando, the next documentary evidence we have of him is the fact that he boarded the *Europa* in Malta and was one of only two cabin passengers who arrived on board the brig in New York Harbor on July 29, 1858. He had given his age as 18, when he was in fact only 14, and his occupation back in Malta as a clerk. (see below)

W. B. F. HALL, Printer and Stationer, 54 Wall st., cor. Nassau, N. Y.

District of New-York—Port of New-York.

I, Joshua Francis Master of the Brig Europa do solemnly, sincerely and truly swear that the following List or Manifest subscribed by me, and now delivered by me to the Collector of the Customs of the Collection District of New York; is a full and perfect list of all the passengers taken on board of the said Brig Europa at Malta from which port said Brig Europa has now arrived; and that on said list is truly designated the age, the sex, and the occupation of each of said passengers, the part of the vessel occupied by each during the passage, the country to which each belongs, and also the country to which it is intended by each to become an inhabitant; and that said List or Manifest truly sets forth the number of said passengers who have died on said voyage, and the names and ages of those who died.

So help me God.

Sworn to this 29<sup>th</sup> July 1858 by Joshua Francis

Subscribed and sworn to before me this 29<sup>th</sup> July 1858 at Malta whereof Joshua Francis is Master, from Malta burthen 145 British tons.

NAME	AGE		SEX	OCCUPATION	The country to which they severally belong	The country to which they intend to become inhabitants.	Died on the voyage	Part of the vessel occupied by each passenger during the voyage
	Years	Months						
<u>Erigo Cozzitani</u>	<u>55</u>		<u>Male</u>	<u>Seaman</u>	<u>United States</u>	<u>United States</u>		<u>main Cabin</u>
<u>Orlando Caruana</u>	<u>18</u>		<u>Male</u>	<u>clerk</u>	<u>Malta</u>	" "		" "

JTT

**PASSENGER LIST FOR THE BRIG EUROPA, JULY 29, 1858**

Orlando was living in a boarding house with 25 others, in the 16<sup>th</sup> ward of the 3<sup>rd</sup> district of New York City at the time of the 1860 federal census taken in June and gave his age as 17 and occupation as a clerk. Also living in this boarding house was Stephen B. Caruana with his wife Elmira and daughter Carrie. Stephen, an importer, was born in Malta, about 1825, and had immigrated to New York, on board the brig *Dussan*, in July 1838. Whether Stephen and Orlando were related is presently unknown.

We next hear of Orlando when, at the actual age of 17, while still in New York, he enlisted, on August 7, 1861 for a term of three years, in the Union Army, saying his age was 20. In October, he was posted as a second sergeant to Company K, under Captain

Thomas Phillips, in the newly-raised 51<sup>st</sup> New York Regiment. Orlando's unit was assigned to the 2<sup>nd</sup> Brigade, 9th Army Corps, "The Wandering Corps."

In his obituary, Caruana is said to have later been "promoted to first sergeant" and while he is described as a private upon receiving the Medal of Honor, there is no question but that he was a second sergeant in Company K in October 1861.

The Union troops under General Ambrose Burnside captured the strategic Roanoke Island, off the North Carolina coast, on February 7-8, 1862, thereby securing control of the region. Among those engaged in this battle was Orlando Caruana of the 51<sup>st</sup> New York Infantry, who was later described as a private.

On March 14<sup>th</sup>, in the Battle of New Bern, North Caro-

lina, Company K, of the 51<sup>st</sup> New York Infantry, attacked along the railway line. Suddenly the company found itself in a clearance looking straight into nearby Confederate redans. The Confederates opened fire on the exposed Yankees, yet the 51<sup>st</sup> advanced and returned fire but took heavy casualties.



**REGIMENTAL COLORS OF THE 51<sup>ST</sup>  
NEW YORK INFANTRY REGIMENT**

During this exchange, the color sergeant was wounded and fell. Pvt. Caruana seized the regimental flag and helped the color sergeant off the battlefield.



**Flank Marker of the  
51<sup>st</sup> New York Infantry Regiment**

The Battle of New Berne had cost the 51<sup>st</sup> one officer, Captain David R. Johnson, and 18 enlisted men killed and four officers, including Lieutenant Colonel Robert B. Potter and 64 enlisted men, wounded. It was the greatest loss of any regiment in the battle.

Caruana was at the Battle of the Second Bull Run in Prince William County, Virginia on August 28<sup>th</sup>-30<sup>th</sup> of the same year.

The Battle of South Mountain was fought September 14, 1862, as part of the Maryland Campaign. Three pitched battles were fought for the possession of three South Mountain passes: Crampton's, Turner's, and Fox's gaps. The Union Army of the Potomac commanded by Major General George B. McClellan needed to pass through these gaps in pursuit of the Confederate General Robert E. Lee's army of Northern Virginia. Despite being significantly outnumbered, Lee's army delayed McClellan's advance for a day before withdrawing.

During the battle, Pvt. Caruana was one of four soldiers who volunteered to scout and determine the position of the enemy and their movements at Fox's Gap. Caruana was engaged, fired upon by the enemy and wounded and his three companions were killed, but he managed to escape, rejoin his command in safety and bring back vital information.



**Private Orlando E. Caruana**

Three days later, on September 17<sup>th</sup>, Caruana took part in the Battle of Antietam, Maryland. This day has been remembered as "the bloodiest day in American history. The 51<sup>st</sup> Regiment of New York, with the 51<sup>st</sup> Pennsylvania, made the historic charge by storming Burnside's Bridge.

June and August 1863 found Caruana "on invalid detachment" in Washington, DC.

The last battle in which Caruana is known to have participated was the Battle of the Wilderness, on May 5-7, 1864 in Spotsylvania, Virginia. Here, he was wounded in the last charge made on the rifle pits at the Spotsylvania Court House.

Having served his three-year term, Private (some sources say Sergeant) Caruana was "mustered out" of the Army on September 6 (some sources say 7), 1864.

Orlando E. Caruana, his baptismal name appears to have been Emmanuel Orlando Caruana, was awarded the Medal of Honor on November 14, 1890.

This Medal was introduced for the Navy in 1861 and was soon followed by an Army version in 1862. This highest and most prestigious personal military decoration which may be awarded to United States military service members who have distinguished themselves by acts of valor saw a total of 1,522 such

medals, some 40 percent of those given out to date, awarded to those who were engaged in the American Civil War.

The citation for Caruana's is as follows:

The President of the United States of America, in the name of Congress, takes pleasure in presenting the Medal of Honor to Private Orlando Emanuel Caruana, United States Army, for extraordinary heroism on 14 March 1862, while serving with Company K, 51st New York Infantry, in action at New Bern, North Carolina. Private Caruana brought off the wounded color sergeant and the colors under a heavy fire of the enemy. He was one of four soldiers who volunteered to determine the position of the enemy at South Mountain, Maryland on 14 September 1862. While so engaged was fired upon and his three companions killed, but he escaped and rejoined his command in safety.



#### The Medal of Honor Awarded to Orlando Caruana

A Medal of Honor Certificate was issued to Caruana on May 12, 1914. (see front page)

After the War, Orlando E. Caruana became a clerk in the War Department in Washington, DC.

While living in Washington, he was active in several veteran organizations. He was a member of Lincoln Post, No. 3, Department of the Potomac, GAR (Grand Army of the Republic), adjutant of the Encampment No. 69, Union Veterans' Legion of Washington, DC and of the "Old Guard," also of Washington. By 1906 he was commander of John A. Rawlins Post No. 1, Department of the Potomac.

Orlando married Francis Marion "Fanny" Harvey, in Washington, on February 16, 1865. Their first child, Madaline Sophia "Lilly," was born in November 1866, followed by Mortimer Emanuel in September 1873, a daughter in September 1880 and Edgar Ermonia in July 1885.

Fanny died on December 19, 1891 and, on 1896 Orlando married Mary Catherine Fullerton.

Orlando E. Caruana died in New York City on September 14, 1917, at the age of 73. His funeral was held at St Martin's Church and he was buried in plot section 3, lot 33, Mount Olivet Cemetery, Washington, DC



#### Orlando Caruana's Grave Marker, Mount Olivet Cemetery, Washington, D.C.

*\*I wish to thank Charles Said Vassallo for providing the link between Orlando Caruana and his Caruana ancestors, Danny Conroy for the documentary material he has unearthed relating to Orlando and Gregg Knapp, a direct descendant of Caruna, for sharing information on Orlando's children. Among the many fine references to Caruana in the States wish to particularly note that by Denis Darmanin which originally appeared in the December 7, 2014 issue of The Sunday Times of Malta.*

#### THE FIRST MALTESE CANADIAN TO TRAVEL BY PLANE

##### Dan Brock

The earliest documentary evidence of a Maltese Canadian travelling by plane is that of John Sammut who flew from Toronto to La Guardia Airfield in New York City to visit his brother Anthony Joseph Sammut and his family in Astoria, Long Island. This momentous event occurred 76 years ago, on September 13, 1943.

John flew from Toronto to La Guardia Field in New York on board a Lockheed aircraft via Trans-Canada Air Lines (now Air Canada).

While it is not known when Anthony John came to North America. Giovanni "John" Sammut, the son of Carmelo and Francesca (Teuma) Sammut, arrived in Quebec City Harbour, on board the *Reuthenia*, on June 4, 1913. He was born in Hamrun on June 23, 1889 and was a carpenter by trade.

Like so many others at this time, he settled in Toronto. He returned to Malta in early 1916 for a visit and possibly to look for a wife. In any case, he arrived back in Toronto in late March of the same year and, on December 16<sup>th</sup> was married in Toronto to Ester Cassin who stated she was also born in Hamrun but now living on Winder Street in Toronto. John resided on

Parliament Street at the time. Their daughter, Mariam, was born about 1917.

In September 1924, the family returned to Malta and lived in Hamrun where a second daughter, Maria Carmela "Carrie" was born about April 1925.

The family returned to Toronto in March 1926.

Following John's flight to New York from Toronto in September 1943, his two daughters, Mariam and Carrie, followed the same course, via a Trans-Canada Air Lines Lockheed on September 30, 1944, thus becoming the second and third Maltese Canadians known to have travelled by plane.

**ST. PAUL THE APOSTLE PARISH:  
NORTH AMERICA'S ONLY MALTESE NATIONAL  
PARISH\***

**Dan Brock**

September 8<sup>th</sup> marks the 89<sup>th</sup> anniversary of St. Paul the Apostle Parish and the 63<sup>rd</sup> anniversary of the blessing of the present church.

The physical beginnings of St. Paul the Apostle Church, 3224 Dundas St. W, Toronto took place in 1930 with the completion of the basement, which served as both chapel and hall.

The spiritual force behind this "basement church," officially opened on September 7<sup>th</sup> and elevated to parish status the following day, was Fr. Alphonse Cauchi, who had been stationed at St. John the Baptist Church, nearly 4 miles (over 6 km) farther east along Dundas St. In 1928 he had been appointed chaplain to the Maltese in Toronto. It was he who was appointed pastor to this Maltese national parish dedicated to St. Paul the Apostle.

The physical force behind all of this, however, was the Maltese-Canadian Society of Toronto (M.C.S.T.), which was founded in 1922, mainly to work towards establishing a Maltese national church. It was members of the Society who pressured the Archdiocese into giving the Maltese a church of their own and who had selected the plot of land in the "Junction" on which the basement for the church was built.

The mortgage on the church was paid off in about seven years, despite the fact that there were only some 100 families in the parish, none of them particularly well off, and it was the decade of the Great Depression. Again, much of the work in the construction of the church had been by volunteers and financial support came from the M.C.S.T., popularly known as *il-kazin tal-knisja* (the club of the church). In November 1938 the newly-built parish hall adjacent to the church was officially opened.

Fr. Cauchi died in October 1943 at the age of 63. During his last year, he had been assisted by the young Fr. Thomas Fulton who later became bishop of St. Catharines. Fr. Vincent Egan served as

administrator of the parish for a year after Fr. Cauchi's death.

The parish's second pastor was Fr. Daniel O'Neill, who served from 1944 until 1951. During this time, the young Maltese-Canadian Basilian priest, Fr. Grace Agius, occasionally assisted in the parish.

"The next important stage in the development of the parish," according to Professor John P. Portelli, came in 1951 when the Maltese Franciscan Province of the Friars Minor, dedicated to Saint Paul the Apostle, agreed to assume responsibility for St. Paul's Parish. Fr. Lawrence Bonavia, O.F.M. an assistant pastor of St. Agnes Church in Toronto, was appointed St. Paul's first Franciscan pastor.

Fr. Emidio Cremona, O.F.M. and Fr. Albert Vella, O.F.M. had joined Fr. Bonavia by 1953.

A new church for St. Paul's Parish was built and officially blessed on September 8, 1956. By February 1959 the mortgage on the church had been fully paid. Meanwhile, the old rectory had been demolished in 1957, as seen in Freddy Fenech's "The 1957 demolition of St Paul the Apostle rectory Toronto." A new hall and rectory were completed in 1960.

By 1964, Fr. Bonavia's assistants were Fr. G. Micallef, O.F.M. and Fr. V.R. Puis, O.F.M. They were joined by Fr. S. Camilleri, O.F.M. by 1967.

Fr. Bonavia was succeeded in 1970 by Fr. F. Lewis, O.F.M. He, in turn was succeeded by Fr. Ellul Vincenti, O.F.M. and Fr. Joachim Grech, O.F.M.

Fr. Phillip Briffa, O.F.M. followed Fr. Grech and was in turn succeeded by Fr. Edward Zammit, O.F.M. and then Fr. Jimmy Zammit, O.F.M.. The latter was the only pastor of St. Paul's who was born in Toronto and raised in this parish. At the end of Fr. Jimmy Zammit's pastorship Archbishop Aloysius Ambrozic dedicated the church on September 8, 1990, the 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary of its foundation.

Fr. Raymond Falzon, O.F.M. was pastor after Fr. Jimmy Zammit and was in turn followed by Fr. Paul Attard, O.F.M. and then Fr. Raymond Camilleri, O.F.M. The last administrator of St. Paul's, under the direction of the Franciscans, was Fr. Paul Galea, O.F.M. His associate was Fr. Anthony Vella, O.F.M.

In February 1999, the Missionary Society of St. Paul agreed to take over the direction of the parish. The first pastor under the new direction was Fr. Mark Demanuele, M.S.S.P. He was assisted by Fr. Dominic Cachia, M.S.S.P.

Fr. Demanuele was succeeded by Fr. Karm Borg, M.S.S.P. in 2001. During Fr. Borg's pastorate, a set of 10 stained glasses depicting the life of St. Paul were installed in the church, as well as chair lifts to St. Paul's Hall and the DePiro Hall. Both projects were completed in 2005.

In 2015, Fr. Borg in turn was succeeded by Fr. Manuel Parnis, M.S.S.P. The parish was reduced to one priest when Fr. Dominic Cachia returned to Malta during Fr. Manuel's term of administration.

Fr. Manuel was succeeded by Fr. Mario Micallef, M.S.S.P. in January of this year. In July, he was joined by Fr. Ivano Burdian, MSSP as associate pastor.

The Parish has always welcomed people of other nationalities. In the beginning it was those of Irish, English and Scottish descent.

They in turn were followed by those of Italian and Portuguese background. Of late, they have been joined by those of Polish, Filipino and East-Asian heritage. They have “enriched and enlivened” the parish by their efforts.

The mission statement of the Parish is as follows:

*We, the community of St Paul the Apostle, are a Maltese Canadian personal Parish, founded on September 8, 1930, and administered by the Missionary Society of St Paul. We are a faith community reflecting the gospel values of Christ*

*according to the teaching and tradition of the Roman Catholic Church. We serve the Maltese community, welcoming also other people from other nationalities. Our mission is to follow Christ by sharing our gifts of time, talent and treasure: by imitating Christ; and by giving witness to our faith through our everyday lives.*

*\*This is basically an update of the article of the same title which appeared in The Maltese Canadian Club of London Newsletter, vol. 37, no. 1 (May/June 2016), 15-16 with the addition of the photo below.*



**Celebrating the 75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Parish**  
 (l to r) Godwin Darmanin, John Portelli, Violet Sillato, Nenu Dingli, Louise Debono, Fr. Dominic Cachia, MSSP, Fr. Karm Borg, MSSP, Milo Vassallo, David Vella, Joe Sherri, Alfred Catania, Larry Cini and John Vella.

*(Courtesy of Richard Cumbo, Toronto)*

**MALTESE-AMERICAN DAY**

**Dan Brock**

Darrin Quiroz Camilleri, whose father emigrated from Malta, became Michigan’s first legislator of Maltese descent.

Two years ago this month, on September 20, 2017, he stood up in the State’s House of Representatives to propose September 21, 2017 as Maltese-American Day. His proposal, which was approved by the House, was witnessed by a group of about 50 Maltese-Ameri-

cans. House resolution No. 152 made September 21<sup>st</sup> the first ever Maltese-American Day in the State of Michigan.



**THEY CAME BY PLANE TO BE REUNITED  
WITH THEIR HUSBANDS AND FATHERS\***

**Dan Brock**

The earliest arrival by air of Maltese emigrants to the United States appears to have been on February 20, 1946. That year saw at least 16 more flights into the United States with Maltese emigrants on board. Forty-eight such flights have been documented for the year 1947.

July 10, 1947 saw the arrival by air of the first known Maltese emigrants en route to Canada. This was followed by flights carrying Maltese emigrants destined for Canada and first landing in New York on August 24<sup>th</sup>, October 10<sup>th</sup> and October 27<sup>th</sup>.

The earliest documented trans-Atlantic flight from Europe to Canada carrying Maltese emigrants occurred on September 15, 1948. Of the passengers, at least seven – four wives and three children – were Maltese.

They had been among the 37 passengers who left the Grand Harbour on board the ship *Transylvania* on September 4<sup>th</sup>.



**Three of the Women and Two of the Children en Route for London, Canada taking a Dghajsa to the *Transylvania* anchored in the Grand Harbour, September 4<sup>th</sup>**

**Maltese-Canadian Museum Archives  
and Visitors Centre  
St. Paul the Apostle Church Complex  
3224 Dundas St. W.,  
Toronto, ON, M6P 2A3  
1-416-767-7054**



**The *Transylvania* Anchored in Grand Harbour, September 4<sup>th</sup>**

Those whose destination was Canada disembarked from the *Transylvania* at Marseille on September 9<sup>th</sup>. The next day they were in Paris. On crossing the English Channel, they spent a few days in a hotel near Trafalgar Square in London, England before being flown on board a four-propeller plane—Flight 2201. The flight took 16 hours, no doubt stopping at Gander, Newfoundland, before touching down at Dorval Airport, Quebec on September 15<sup>th</sup>.



**Flight 2201 Just Landing at Dorval Airport, September 15<sup>th</sup>**



**Passengers Disembarking from Flight 2201 at Dorval Airport, September 15<sup>th</sup>**

Photos courtesy of the late Frank and Yvonne Gatt

On leaving Dorval Airport, Guza Abela and her two children Peter and Josephine, Tonina Gatt and her son Ferdinand, Tonina's sister-in-law Yvonne Gatt and Connie Darmanin then boarded a train which took them to London, Ontario to be once again reunited with their husbands and fathers who had arrived in Canada in May and in June of the same year.

*\*This article is based on the Maltese Canadian Club of London Newsletter, vol. 39, no. 3 (September/October 2018), 6 and "Reuniting families of Maltese emigrants across the Atlantic," The Sunday Times of Malta, October 7, 2018, 54-55.*

### **DIES IRAE, DIES ILLA**

**Dan Brock**

The feature article of the May/June issue of this journal was by Dr. Aaron Attard-Hili and gave an original account of Giuseppe Bajada, a native of Xagħra, Gozo and former immigrant to Canada, who was one of four men killed during the riots of June 7, 1919 in Valletta. This day became known as *Sette Giugno* and is now a national holiday in Malta.

Dr. Attard-Hili has completed his research on Bajada and the riots and his book *Dies Irae, Dies Illa—That Day is a Day of Anger*—should appear later this month in the Cacciensia series by the author.

The account of Bajada's death is set within the whole story of *Sette Giugno* which contains evidence given by several Gozitans who happened to be in Valletta at the time of the riots. The work also takes into account the social situation of the island of Gozo at the time as well as the factor of emigration from the Maltese islands to the British dominions.

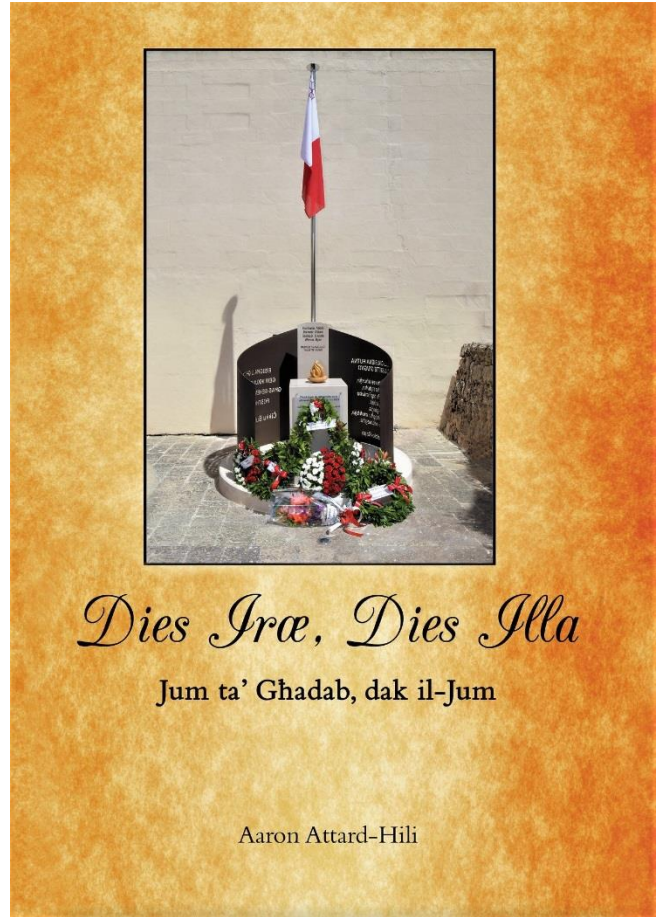
This publication, written in Maltese, is based on research carried out in public and private archives. Much of the information contained therein has never been published before and is being brought to the public for the first time.

The book consists of 90 pages containing more than 100 illustrations. It sells for €15 and may be obtained by contacting the author at [aaronattardhili@gmail.com](mailto:aaronattardhili@gmail.com).

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#### **DONATION TO THE MALTA WAR RELIEF FUND**

Charles Bartolo, proprietor of the Family Shoe Store, 2535 Macdonald Avenue, Brooklyn, NY, donated 50 pairs of shoes to the Malta War Relief Fund in the late Summer of 1940. (Cited from *The Maltese Journal*, vol. VI, No. 9, New York, Sept. 1940, 2)



## *Dies Irae, Dies Illa*

Jum ta' Ghadab, dak il-Jum

Aaron Attard-Hili

**LEHEN MALTI**  
**(Maltese Voice)**  
**Omni 1 TV**  
**Toronto, Ontario**  
**Saturdays 8:30 a.m.**  
**Tuesdays 3: 30 a.m. & 11.30 a.m.**  
**Wednesdays 11:00 p.m.**  
**Thursdays 8:30 a.m.**

**Dr. Raymond C. Xerri**  
**Consul General of Malta**  
**Sun Life Financial Centre**  
**3280 Bloor Street W.**  
**Suite 1060, 10th Floor—Centre Tower**  
**Etobicoke, ON M8X 2X3**  
**Phone: 1-416-207-0922**  
**Fax: 1-416-207-0986**  
**E-Mail: [maltaconsulate.toronto@gov.mt](mailto:maltaconsulate.toronto@gov.mt)**

**DR. RAYMOND C. XERRI'S FIRST WEEKS AS CONSUL GENERAL OF MALTA (CANADA) IN TORONTO, ONTARIO**



**With Staff Members Denise Falzon and Karen Polidano Zahra of the Consulate General of the Republic of Malta to Canada**



**At the Malta Bake Shop on Dundas Street**



**At a Reception Held in His Honor in the Parish Hall of St. Paul the Apostle Church**



**With the Melita Soccer Club**



**With Fathers Mark Grima, Frankie Cini and Mario Micallef of the Missionary Society of St. Paul**



**With the Lehen Malti Television Production Staff Mary Rose Aquilina, Karen Polidano Zahra and Joe Sherri. Absent, Albert Vella**

Photos courtesy of Consulate General of the Republic of Malta to Canada Facebook webpage