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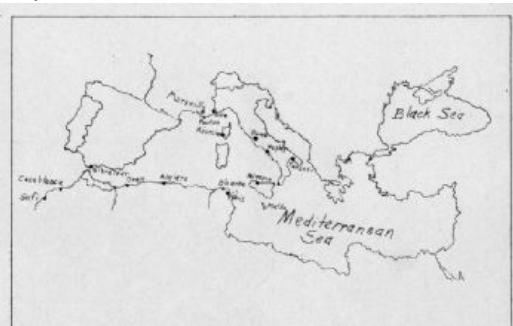
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Can You Find the Island of Malta on this Map?

Friday, March 12, 2021



I found this hand traced map of the Mediterranean in my Dad's WWII diary.



Malta is that little dot to the left of the "M" in "Mediterranean Sea" directly south of Sicily. It would not likely have been a travel destination for us except it was part of my goal to walk in my Dad's footsteps during WWII. In March 2019 we made it to Malta.

Because of its strategic location, Malta was bombed continuously from 1941 – 1943 by both German and Italian planes. 95% of the island suffered bomb damage, but they never surrendered

When Dad's ship was badly damaged at Anzio in May 1944, they limped to Malta for repair. I recognized that several of Dad's photos were taken at the Barrakka gardens, a national landmark.

The island was a British possession at that time. Dad wrote that his ship was moored next to the HMS Dido. Here is my Dad with one of his new friends, a British sailor at the Barrakka Gardens

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Look closely at the fence with its pattern of Maltese crosses.

As I follow Dad's footsteps, I try to recreate his photos. The bomb damage to the arches has been repaired, the landscaping is different, but the fence in Dad's photo still stands 75 years later.



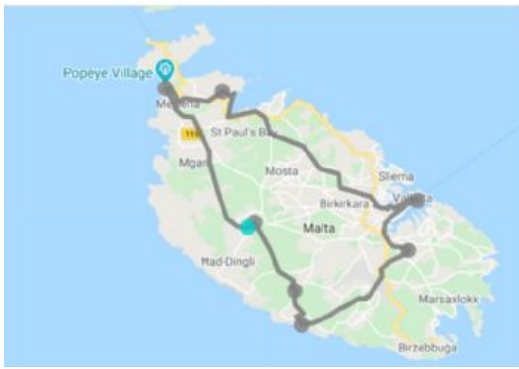
The reason for our visit interested several local people including an 84 year old woman, a child during the war years, who verified the location where ships were repaired.



The Grand Harbor of Valetta is a peaceful place now.
The battery only a tourist attraction.



I have just completed a virtual walk around the island.



In 2019 we followed Dad's diary to places of interest that he described.
St Paul's Bay looks out at the tiny island of Gozo where St Paul was shipwrecked.

We arrived in the town of Rabat on March 17th and it was obvious that they were having a special celebration. St Patrick's Day? No, no Shamrocks or any green in sight.
They were celebrating St Joseph's Day (March 19th) with a weekend festival



Dad described ancient ruins on the island. The war had interrupted the excavation.
In 2019 there was much to explore there. The site is called Hagar Qim (3600-3200 BC)



The walled city of Mdina was Malta's first capital. It has an ancient history and a modern one as well.
GAME OF THRONES fans may recognize some sites here as King's Landing and the Red Keep. During our visit we followed a family recreating their own pictures in Game of Thrones' filming locations.

In 1944 my Dad wrote in his diary that he took a bus to Mdina and from the city wall looked out at Valletta in the distance.
I saw the same view 75 years later.



When travel is safe again, Joe and I want to return to Malta.
My virtual trek included sites we did not see in 2019.

Most important though is to visit my Dad's photos and artifacts in the WWII museum.
The curator was also interested in my story and requested these items for their display. He said they did not have much from all the thousands of sailors who spent time on the island.

Dad once told me that no one was interested in seeing his pictures.
I think he would be pleased to know people are interested in them now.

Just some other stuff:

While I virtually trek locations of interest to me personally, I also walk with Spark friends on much longer routes. Currently we are nearly 75% along a 2500 miles route to Lapland.

Maybe someday I will see Lapland in person.

I find it motivating to see where all my daily steps would take me if laid out end to end. If interested in joining us, just let me know.

Still deciding where to go next.

Here's one possibility. Reminds me of that time in the mid 90s when I asked my Mom if she and Dad would like to join us on a Mediterranean cruise. No, she said, "Dad has already been there"
LOL Maybe he would like to see it again without people shooting at each other?



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MORTICIARAVYNN

AWESOME



74 days ago



DONNA_CPS2



Nice tour! I went to Malta in 2007 for part of a day. Thabks for the pics. 🙌🌍



GREAT JOB!
★

80 days ago



WHILLSW



I've heard of Malta for years as Mom had a male pen pal living there....never knew much about it except it was where he lived & sent us gifts. Your travels....very interesting....



82 days ago



GYORGYB



Thanks for taking us to Malta. I enjoyed the trip very much!

83 days ago



DI_NAMIC



What a fascinating blog. I have my Father's photographs from travel during his Service in WW2 and his letters to my Mother, whom he met on a train going on leave. 'Not only did you look divine, my darling, but you had chocolate as well.'. Both my parents were in the Royal Airforce. Malta is a lovely place to visit and I'm glad you could do this to honour your Father's memory. I hope we all get the opportunity to travel again soon.

83 days ago



MICHELE1423



Good read from the past and present.



83 days ago



AMUSICALIFE



wow! I love you are taking me out of my little town in America. Amazing trip!

83 days ago



JPPERSELL



You are so amazing tracking your dad's steps. Your dad would be so proud of you!

84 days ago



ANNAALISE



Wow!

84 days ago

Comment edited on: 3/14/2021 5:35:04 PM



HOLLYM48



Wow, simply amazing to be tracing your father's footsteps after all these years and sharing his story! Thanks for inviting us along!

84 days ago



ALIHIKES



Wonderful blog. It is great that you are retracing part of your dad's war experience. And so neat that you are taking virtual treks around the world. My dad was at Pearl Harbor when it was bombed but he did not want to go to the memorial with me when we were in Hawaii. Too many tragedies.

85 days ago



THINCPL2004



Fascinating story, and pictures!



85 days ago



JUDYD207



Thanks for sharing!



85 days ago



RACHNACH



85 days ago



SPARKFRAN514



85 days ago



AZMOMXTWO

this is so interesting thank you for sharing the trip with us

85 days ago



PHEBESS

I've always wanted to visit Malta, it looks like such a fascinating place!!!!

85 days ago



GRAMPIAN

Fascinating.

85 days ago



JUNETTA2002

So interesting

85 days ago



KITTYHAWK1949



85 days ago



DONNALEE-53



85 days ago



UPTOIT59



85 days ago



RHOOK20047

Fascinating seeing the world through your eyes and words. Thanks for sharing!

85 days ago



CHERYLHURT

Yes, we were there in 2019.

85 days ago



ROBOZILLA

Thanks for the tour. I just watched "Spitfire, The Plane that Saved the World" on Netflix. It included a section on Malta and how difficult it was to find from the air. These pilots flew off aircraft carriers to defend the island - many with zero experience doing this. Many of us will never comprehend what our parents lived through in WWII. Thanks for sharing.

86 days ago



JSTETSER

I'll be looking at the map for Malta now!

86 days ago



PLCHAPPELL

So interesting

86 days ago





ETHELMERZ

Such an interesting story you have, and you actually visited there, that does not happen often. Hope you can travel again.
86 days ago



LIS193

We lived in Paphos, Cyprus in the late 80's - beautiful island. We got married there and our daughter was born there, lots of great memories!
86 days ago



WOOFERCOALBOY

Very cool!
86 days ago



MARYJEANSL

As a matter of fact, I can. My lovely daughter went on a mission trip to Malta in March of 2019. The humorous sequel is that, a few months later, when she tried to donate blood, she was asked if she had been out of the country. She said she had been to Malta. She was not allowed to give blood because the man at the bloodmobile told her Malta was too close to Sierra Leone, where malaria is endemic. Still shaking my head over that one (too close evidently being 2,513 miles).

Apparently you and she were there at the same time. I wonder if your paths ever crossed. Kind of neat to think about.
86 days ago

Comment edited on: 3/13/2021 2:13:51 AM



PATRICIAAK

Makes me wonder more about my Dad's WWII experience was like. He served stateside. Other than knowing he was in Little Rock, he's chosen not to share.

86 days ago



CHERIRIDDELL

This is fascinating I am sure your Dad would be thrilled to have people interested in his photos and his war. My Father was a military police officer in World War 2 .He went through France Belgium,Holland and then liberated concentration camps .I too have been there but it did not make for such pretty pictures though I do have a photo beside a pile of glasses and one under the gates with "Arbeit Macht Frei" the atmosphere was oppressive in the concentration camps I don't think I believe there are ghosts there I like to believe those people have gone on to something better but there is perhaps a heavy sadness that will linger there forever.
86 days ago



GREYDOLPHIN

This reminds me how quickly time flies. How wonderful that you had the words of your dad to guide you. I waited too long. All of the older relatives are now gone and didn't ask the pertinent questions when I had the opportunity. My uncle had been in World War II--in the navy as a gunner. Thank you for the interesting tour of Malta.
86 days ago



DESIREE672

I enjoyed today's trip round Malta and I love old photos.
86 days ago



QUARTERMASTER3

AWESOME
86 days ago




RAZZOZLE

AWESOME
86 days ago



PHOENIX1949


86 days ago



SCDALYNCH

Wonderful history about the life of your father. It is definitely a place to visit. Enjoy travel again when this COVID is over .

Thank you for writing
86 days ago





LINDA!

This is very interesting. Loved the photos.
86 days ago



HAYBURNER1969

I think more people are seeing Papa's pictures than he ever could have imagined.
86 days ago



HARROWJET

How nice that you could see where your father served.
86 days ago



DOVESEYES

Wonderful great to follow the trips with you :)
86 days ago



MEADSBAY

That is so interesting... Thank you for sharing.
My father fought and was injured in World War II in Italy but I'm not sure where... My brothers all know.
I see in my old family tree book that I had an ancestor from Malta, she was named Emma Maltaise but I think she probably picked that name up at Ellis Island.



86 days ago



MTN_KITTEN

I love you share your Dad's story.



86 days ago



52BINCE

What an interesting adventure and great tribute to your dad!
86 days ago



ALEXSGIRL1

wonderful to follow your dads footsteps
86 days ago



DARLENEK04

What a wonderful thing to do, trace your Dad's footsteps during the war.....I asked David if he had ever been to Malta and of course he had.....lol.....I don't know why I bother to ask....he has been so many wonderful places. I'd be happy to see Malta...and also would love to tour thru Ireland...There are several things here in our country I'd like to see so I'm guessing I won't be going to Ireland...or Italy.
86 days ago



WHYNOTTRY45



86 days ago



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