

PRESS RELEASE

....of Maltese Generals and Admirals

(Lt. Colonel Charles A. Gauci)

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Colonel Charles Gauci is well known for his books on the genealogy and heraldry of the nobility in Malta, on Maltese heraldry and on the Imperial Palaeologos family. He has also written two textbooks on interventional pain therapy, one of which (now in its third edition and translated into both Korean and Spanish) has become a standard world-wide reference book.

In***of Maltese Generals and Admirals***, he writes about men of Maltese lineage who have, over the years, achieved the actual or effective rank of *General* or *Admiral* in the armed forces of foreign powers or of Malta itself.

Col. Gauci first looks at *Generals* in the armies of Wallachia, Hungary, Poland and Bavaria.

Tales are told of how a Maltese mercenary took command of the army of his adopted homeland leading them to victory against the Turks and was elected a sovereign prince; of how another was given successful command of the imperial artillery at the siege of an Ottoman fort in Hungary and was ennobled by a grateful Holy Roman Emperor and of how one of this general of artillery's descendants became a Polish national hero. Col. Gauci ends this first section of his book by relating how a Maltese nobleman who started his military career as a "simple soldier" in Bavaria, eventually became a Major General, a member of the Royal Guard, Chamberlain to the King of Bavaria and tutor to the Crown Prince.

The author goes on to relate the story of the two native Maltese Generals who led the 1798 insurrection against the French and he then deals with Maltese Generals in the Army of the British Empire and of the United Kingdom.

He relates how in his youth, one of these future generals was involved, as a second, in a duel by pistols, which resulted in the death of a young Englishman; how another general at the venerable age of 91 years, was given the honour of reviewing Maltese troops going into battle and how another, despite having practically financed the building of a church oratory now lies buried in an unnamed grave.

Col. Gauci considers, in some detail, the honorary rank of Brigadier General conferred upon the Bishops of Malta by the British government and explains how Mgr. Michael Gonzi was "promoted" to the rank of Major General.

A number of interesting facts and anecdotes are revealed in this book, not least the fact that HRH The Duke of Edinburgh has Maltese ancestry and so, consequently will all the future Kings and Queens of England.

Turning his attention to *Admirals*, the author relates the tales of sailors in the navies of Argentina, the Napoleonic kingdom of Naples and the British Royal Navy. Once again, Col. Gauci relates a number of interesting tales, such as how a sailor from Senglea became a revered national hero in Argentina; how a Maltese sailor, who was instrumental in convincing General Bonaparte to capture Malta was later made a Neapolitan baron, allegedly betrayed King Joachim Murat and reputedly made off with his treasure and how another, who took part in the World War 2 D-Day landings as a young British Lieutenant in command of an escort-destroyer, eventually became one of the most senior officers in the Royal Navy, second only to the Lord High Admiral himself.

The rank of Brigadier General in the British Army was abolished in 1921, but since *Brigadiers* are, in effect, one-star generals, the author includes a detailed appendix covering all Maltese officers who have reached the rank of Brigadier in the British Army, the Malta Land Force and in the Armed Forces of Malta (AFM).

This section includes the biography of a Brigadier who, as a young captain, won the MC in Gallipoli in WW1 and who eventually became the one and only Maltese Colonel Commandant of the RMA; of one of the most renowned marine commandos in World War 2, who held commissions in both the Army and the Navy and who canoed into Boulogne harbour to blow up a German tanker, “*making it home for breakfast*” and collecting a DSO in the process; of another DSO holder, who won his award fighting the Japanese in Singapore, who then spent 3 ½ years as a prisoner of war in the notorious Changi prison which almost killed him but who was eventually appointed the director of the Federation of Malaya’s Military Forces adding a CBE to his honours. Details are given of a Maltese medical officer who reached the top military position in his chosen specialty.

The author sets the record straight about the commander of the Maltese National Guard (under the French), who is sometimes erroneously referred to as a *Brigadier*, but who had the equivalent rank of *Colonel* in the French revolutionary army.

He also takes the opportunity to trace the steps involved in the formation of the Armed Forces of Malta (AFM) from the Malta Land Force (MLF) which had its roots in the Royal Malta Artillery (RMA), a proud regiment in the British Army. Brigadier Rupert C. Montanaro AFM (Retd), who has an encyclopaedic knowledge of Maltese military history proved an invaluable source of fascinating information about both the MLF and the AFM. Comprehensive biographical notes are provided for all the Brigadiers who took command of the Maltese Armed Forces.

This work, which is dedicated to the officers and soldiers of the Armed Forces of Malta and which is written in memory of the author's late brother, Robert Gauci BEM, MBE, carries a special foreword by the current AFM Commander, Brigadier J. Curmi.

The book was written with the enthusiastic support of a number of military figures. These include Major General Arthur Denaro CBE DL who personally led the British armoured vanguard against Saddam Hussein's tanks in the First Gulf War and Admiral Sir William Donough O'Brien, KCB, DSC, who allowed the author free access to his private memoirs. These memoirs chart the Admiral's rise from a young boy in Malta to the highest naval corridors of power in the western world. The fact that the Royal Navy had such a distinguished high-ranking officer, who was half-Maltese and whose late wife was also Maltese, is not widely known or appreciated in Malta.

....of Maltese Generals and Admirals is extensively illustrated, comprehensively annotated and indexed with all its sources accurately listed in a detailed bibliography. Its publication is sponsored by The Baron de Giorgio of de Giorgio Wealth Management Ltd., by Blevins Franks Financial services Ltd. and by Enrico Cohen, Director of CoMedical Ltd. All the author's profits from this book are being automatically donated to Noah's Ark Dog Sanctuary of Mellieha.

Although the Maltese islands are tiny, both in population and land mass, the Maltese have always punched far above their weight and this book aims to show the force of that punch.

In his introduction to this work, Col. Gauci admits that writing this book gave him an extraordinary sense of pride in being Maltese; he hopes that it will engender the same sentiment in all fellow Maltese readers and those others who read it, will understand this feeling.

To paraphrase the American General, Douglas MacArthur, *Old soldiers (and sailors) never die, they just fade away.*