

Everyone has a history, a place where their story began. My story began two generations ago on a small island named Malta, 2 hours from Rome, 1 hour from Libya and a lifetime away from my everyday life. I have always been grateful for my heritage, and going to see my legacy laid out as a timeline in front of me, gave me the experience I am most thankful for.

This past summer I had an action packed six weeks in which I explored Italy and France. The most incomparable part, however, was visiting the place I can now call home. The people of Malta live their lives carefree and treasure the close knit community around them. It's very different from our work based cut and dry life style. As Americans we are always going here, doing this and that, and never stopping. On the other hand, the Maltese take their time living in the moment and absorbing life around them. Now, being able to take part in this customary routine, I can understand why my grandparents always appreciated small moments and why laughter is the key to enjoying life.

World War Two is an enormous part of world history, but is a prominent part of my history. The island of Malta was the most bombed place during the War. I remember when I was a little girl my grandfather told me stories of running through towns while holding a pail to get to bomb shelters. The pail was needed in case he knocked into anything because they shut off every light in the country, so the tiny island didn't draw any attention to it as planes hovered over it. I cannot even explain how grateful I am to have had the experience of witnessing the locations he had to escape from.

I'm grateful for having the opportunity to walk the streets my grandparents walked, ride the roads they rode, and live the life they lived. I ate the foods they have countlessly talked about, and swam in the crystal blue Mediterranean Sea they had made an abundance of memories in. Encountering their experiences has made me appreciate my heritage more than I thought was possible.