

GAME OVERVIEW

You, as the player, choose to take control of the besieging Ottoman Turks (hereafter Turks) or the besieged Knights of Malta (hereafter Knights).

Game play is centered around you issuing one order a turn, using your Field Orders Book or the Orders cards that replicate the same detail corresponding with the army you control.

You then reveal the top card of the deck you are fighting against (so, the top of the Knights' deck if you are the Turks) and correlate the enemy's counter order with your order. This tells you the column on which to roll a die for a result, or will otherwise instruct you on how the turn concludes. The result is often such that morale on one side or the other must be reduced, or calls for tokens on the board to be eliminated - which usually also means the reduction of morale too.

Sometimes this opposing deck of cards may help you, representing aspects of the siege not under your direct control but beneficial to you all the same. Mostly this deck will harm you and represents, in conjunction with the pieces on the board, the strength of the force you must overcome.

The Knights win the campaign if they hold out until the Turkish fleet departs. The Turks win the campaign by eliminating all Knights troop markers from all three of the locations at Senglea, Birgu, and St.Elmo. Either side can be defeated by their morale falling to zero.

Many game rules of what can and cannot be done are within the Field Orders Book orders, the cards, and the board.

GAME BOARD

The game board map represents the locations around Grand Harbour on the main island of Malta in the Western Mediterranean archipelago. These locations were prominent during the siege. There are 12 land locations and 2 coastal locations. Turks locations are in red and they are St. Elmo Approach, Senglea Approach, Burgu Approach, The Marsa, Gallows Point, and Corradin Heights, and the 2 coastal locations of Marsaxlokk, and Marsa Creek. Knights locations are in white and are Fort St. Elmo, Fort St. Michael, Fort St. Angelo, Mdina, Sicily, and Heights of St. Margaret. Each location is named and has spaces for troop markers on the land locations and ship markers on the coastal locations. The marker spaces are in red for the Turks and white for the Knights.

The game board map is used to display the impact of orders by either removing troop markers from play, moving troop and ship markers, or recording effects to morale. The Morale Track on the game board is used to track reductions and additions to the morale of the Turks and Knights. If the morale falls to 5 you, as the player, lose 1 Janissary/Knights reroll ability. If these have already all been expended, ignore.

There are five other tracks:

- One track for Turk Musketry (+1 to roll), one track for Turk Janissaries (rerolls), one track for Knights' Greek Fire (+1 to roll), and one track for Elite Knights (rerolls). In each case these totals begin at 3 and are reduced by 1 for each use. But only the army you are controlling uses this track. The army you do not control has no ability during the game.
- One Turk ammunition track, which starts at 5, and is reduced by 1 each time there is a Turk Order 4 (Bombard St. Angelo) or a Turk Counter Order B (Bombard). If all the ammunition has been expended, apply a +2 modifier to the die roll resolving Order 4 or Counter Order B (Bombard). This track is used whether you are controlling the Turks, or fighting against them.

The board also covers some other aspects of the rules:

- If all the Knights' pieces are eliminated from Mdina there is a -2 reduction to the Knights' morale. This does not increase by 2 if a piece is placed back in Mdina at a later time.
- If the Turks have at least 1 ship marker in Marsa Creek, and they have a troop marker in both Corradin Heights, and in Gallows Point, there is a -2 modifier to all die rolls when resolving a Turk Order 2 (Attack Grand Harbour), or if the Counter Order is B (Attack Grand Harbour).

- If the Turks have a Siege Tower in place, there is a -2 modifier to all die rolls when resolving a Turk Order 2 (Attack Grand Harbour), or if the Counter Order is B (Attack Grand Harbour).

GAME MARKERS

The troops of Knights and Turks and ships of the Turks are represented by wooden markers placed in the game board location spaces. White markers represent the Knights and red markers represent the Turks.

Markers are also used to track morale, show the selection of orders and Aggressive Commander actions, and to track the expenditure of other resources shown on the board. A red cube is used to mark the presence of a Turk siege tower (if it is present).

SETUP

Place the same color marker on the game board in the locations with troop and ship spaces of the corresponding color. If a location has spaces that have diagonal lines in it, leave it empty (Sicily, Gallows Point, Corradin Heights, Siege Tower, Reinforcements) to start the game. There will be 3 white tokens for the board not placed at the start of the game. These are for the Knights' reinforcements which muster in Sicily and may transfer to Malta. These tokens might not be used, depending on how each game develops.

On the game Morale Track place a corresponding wooden marker (white for Knights, red for Turks) on the 10 space to start the game.

Select the side you want to command, Turks or Knights.

The Turks Counter Orders deck is used when you control the Knights. The Knights Counter Orders deck that is used when you control the Turks. These cards, together with the markers on the board, are what you, as the player, are fighting against.

There are five other tracks. Not all are used in the same setup. Place the same color marker on the 3 of the resource tracks of the side you are commanding - Musketry and Janissaries for the Turks, Greek Fire and Knights of Malta for the Knights.

Regardless of the side you are commanding, place a red marker on the 5 of the Turk Ammunition track.

Use the Field Orders Book and/or the Order Cards for the side you are commanding. Those for the side you are not commanding are not used.

Decide how strong your non-player opponent is by the number of cards in the Counter Orders deck.

Enemy Deck Size

Play as the Knights:

Opponent Skill (size of the Turks Counter Order deck you play against)

The enemy is strong: 27 cards or more

The enemy is average: 24 cards

The enemy is weak: 20 cards or fewer

Play as the Turks:

Opponent Skill (size of the Knights Counter Order deck you play against)

The enemy is strong: 20 cards or fewer

The enemy is average: 24 cards

The enemy is weak: 27 cards or more

Once the skill level is decided, deal out that many cards, then shuffle the Counter Orders deck into a pile facedown, and place it within easy reach. The undealt cards are set aside unrevealed and not used for this game.

Additional Difficulty

For additional difficulty remove the re-roll and +1 roll modifiers for the game.

GAME END & HOW TO WIN

The game ends when one side or the other has zero morale on the Morale Track. That side has lost. If both sides reach zero at the same time the Knights are the winner. They have outlasted the siege - albeit barely.

The Counter Orders card deck represents the passage of time during the campaign. At the end of the turn when the last card is played, the game also ends. The Turkish Fleet departs to avoid the seasonal storms in the Mediterranean. If the Turks have not won the game at this point, then it is a victory for the Knights of Malta. They have outlasted the siege.

The game also ends automatically if Senglea, Birgu, and St.Elmo are all vacant of Knights' troops at any point. The Turks have shattered the defenses of Malta and captured the fortresses.

SEQUENCE OF PLAY

Each turn uses the same Sequence of Play:

1. **Select Order:** select one of your available Orders by placing a marker on the Order Card corresponding to the choice you make.
2. **Use Additional Action:** decide if you want to use one Aggressive Commander action (or, for the Knights, a Defiant Speech action). If so, place a marker on that card too.
 - a. The use of an Aggressive Commander action also refreshes all expended Orders, and flips any facedown Order cards face up (except Knights' Order 6: Launch Reinforcements, if it is not yet available).
3. **Events & Special Events:** reveal the top card of the Counter Orders deck and place it face up. Implement any effects from the Event section of the card, or take them into account in any ensuing die rolls in the current turn. Then implement any effects from Special Effects (icons at the bottom of the cards.)
4. **Correlate Order & Counter Order:** if the turn still proceeds, find the column on your issued Order that corresponds with the Counter Order from the side you are not controlling, then roll the white die, applying any modifiers, to calculate then apply the result. If an Aggressive Action or Defiant Speech is played, roll the black die calculating results from the relevant table, then apply results.
 - a. Optionally, you may use your +1 ability (if you have any remaining) - your Musketry (for Turks) or Greek Fire (for Knights). Only one may be used per turn, and it may only be used on an Order. But you must decide the use of this ability **before** you roll, then apply results.
 - b. Optionally use your reroll ability (if you have any remaining) - your Janissaries (for Turks) or Elite Knights (for Knights). Only one may be used per turn, and it may only be used on an Order, then reroll and apply results.
5. **Order Expended:** once you have finished rolling for the current turn, flip the selected Order facedown. It cannot be selected again until refreshed.

Begin next turn.

Play stops immediately victory conditions have been reached.

1. SELECT ORDER

There is a Field Orders Book for the Turks and a Field Orders Book for the Knights (who spoke a variety of languages, but French was their official and most predominant language). You use the Field Orders Book for the side you choose to play in the campaign. Each book is laid out with the Orders available for you to issue each turn.

In addition, or alternatively, because the same information is held on them but in a smaller text size, there are Order Cards.

Each turn you choose **one** order from your available options - selecting from the Book or Cards. Each Order has accompanying Restrictions meaning the Order cannot be played if those conditions are not met.

In order to keep track of your selection place one of your available markers not being used on the board on the appropriate Order card.

Each time you choose an order it becomes expended. Troops become tired and can't be put to work in the same way indefinitely. To show that an order has been expended you must flip that corresponding Order Card facedown. This renders the order unavailable until the order options are refreshed.

NOTE ON ORDER TYPES

The Orders fall into general types based on results. Attack type orders, like Sortie, or Launch Reinforcements, generally cause troop losses. Other orders, such as Bombard St. Angelo, or Cavalry Raid, generally cause morale reductions. Move type orders, such as Move Troops, and Move One Ship, allow the movement of troops and ships into the empty spaces of locations.

NOTE ON KNIGHTS' ORDER 6.

Order 6: Launch Reinforcements is not available unless the reinforcements have come into existence and they have been placed in Malta. Knights' reinforcements are activated through a Knights Galley icon at the bottom of the Turk Counter Order deck. Until reinforcements arrive the Order 6 card should be placed facedown.

*Note: you **must** choose your Order before revealing the Counter Order card.*

Troop markers can only be moved by a Move Troops order, or some Events listed on the Counter Order deck, and only to land locations. Ottoman Turks ship markers can only be moved by Move One Ship order and can only be moved in the water location, Marsa Creek. Troop and ship movement can be affected by the Counter Order card in play in the current turn.

When moving troop and ship markers, the movement must be *from* a location that has markers in its spaces *to* a location that has empty spaces. If no empty spaces exist, then a move to that location is not possible.

For the Turks player using the Move Troops command order, the troop markers cannot move into empty ship marker spaces. For the Move One Ship order, the ship markers cannot move into empty troop marker spaces.

2. USE ADDITIONAL ACTION

In addition to issuing an order during a turn, a player has the option of using an Aggressive Commander action at the same time. Alternatively, the Knights player could play a Defiant Speech action instead of an Aggressive Commander action, at the same time as their one order. (Knights may not play an Aggressive Commander action and a Defiant Speech in the same turn.)

Every time an Aggressive Commander action is used it automatically refreshes all your expended Order cards, including the Order issued in the current turn.

In addition to refreshing Order cards, Aggressive Commander actions can also be used to roll a black die in an attempt to inflict additional losses (morale, or troops + morale) on the enemy. These rolls, however, can backfire.

Losses and morale reductions from your Aggressive Commander actions are *in addition* to any losses and morale reductions resulting from your orders.

Alternatively, in addition to refreshing Order cards, Aggressive Commander actions (accompanied by the specified Order) can ensure that a Turk siege tower materializes or is removed.

Alternatively, the Knights may use a Defiant Speech to increase their morale by 1. But in return the Knights burn the bridge of boats linking Senglea with Birgu (place a black cube in the empty space on the board) which prevents the Knights from using Order 7 (Move Troops) for the remainder of the game, and the card should be removed from play.

The Turks and the Knights have markers to help them keep track of how many Aggressive Commander actions they have taken.

In addition, the Knights have another marker to help them keep track of how many Defiant Speeches they have made.

Turks may not apply Musketry (+1) or Janissaries (reroll) to an Aggressive Commander roll. These modifiers are applied to the roll resolving an Order.

Likewise, Knights may not apply Greek Fire (+1) or Elite Knights (reroll) to an Aggressive Commander roll. These modifiers are applied to the roll resolving an Order. The Knights may also not apply these modifiers to a Defiant Speech roll.

You should track your use of Aggressive Commander actions and Defiant Speeches with a marker, placed on the Order card. Once expended, these abilities cannot be refreshed.

Canceled orders also cancel Aggressive Commander actions played (and so save them for later).

3. EVENTS & SPECIAL EVENTS

Reveal the top card from the facedown Counter Order deck.

These Counter Order cards provide some brief historical text, and can have up to three additional elements: Events, Special Events, and Counter Orders.

Events are listed at the top of the card, then explained briefly below an image. Events are things that happen over the course of the siege that have some modifying effect either generally, or in a specific location or set of locations. Sometimes these Events are such that your Order is canceled and there is no Counter Order and the turn ends immediately. Sometimes Events give you a choice.

For example, if you, as the Turks commander, issued an Attack Mdina order and the Knights' Counter Order card revealed "Conflict in Turkish Command; No Turkish attack this turn. OR Maintain attack with +2 modifier."; you may decide to cancel your order instead of going forward with an attack with an unfavorable modifier.

Special Events are represented by an icon at the bottom of some Counter Order cards. This icon key is on the board.

[INSERT THE KEY HERE TOO]

Icons on the Turks Counter Order Cards:

- Turk Galley Icon: Move one Turk ship marker from Marsaxlokk to The Marsa. If there are already 3 markers there, ignore.
- Knights Galley Icon: Add one Knights marker to Sicily. If there are already 3 markers, move all 3 of them to Malta, to the Heights of St.Margaret and add +2 Morale to the Knights. If the markers are already on Malta, or have been eliminated, ignore.

- Turk Infantry Icon: From The Marsa, move 2 Turk markers to St. Elmo Approach, 1 to Senglea Approach, 1 to Gallows Point, and 1 to Corradin Heights, if possible. If there are no empty spaces for markers in those locations, ignore. If you run out of markers ignore. Fulfil in sequence outlined above.

Icons on the Knights Counter Order Cards:

- Knights Cannon Icon: Remove the red Siege Tower cube from the board. If already removed, or it is not yet placed, ignore.
- Knights Galley Icon: Add one Knights marker to Sicily. If there are already 3 blocks, move all 3 of them to Malta, to the Heights of St.Margaret and add +2 Morale to the Knights. If the markers are already on Malta roll one die and apply these results:
 - 1-2: Remove 1 block from Reinforcements, but do not reduce Morale.*
 - 3: No effect.*
 - 4-5: Reduce Turk Morale by 1.*
 - 6: Remove 1 Turk block from anywhere (and reduce Morale by 1)*
- Knights Infantry Icon: Restore 1 marker to Senglea, Birgu, or St.Elmo, in that order, providing the selected location has at least 1 troop marker in it, and there is at least one empty space in that location. Increase Morale by 1 at the same time.

4. CORRELATE ORDER & COUNTER ORDER

Counter Orders are shown on the Counter Order cards inside a text box near the bottom of the card. Counter Orders are the orders of the opposing commander. They are given as an A, B, C, or D on the cards with an accompanying description of the Counter Order. Cross refer Counter Orders with your own order (in the Field Book, or on your Order cards) to see which column to roll on, or follow other instructions to resolve the turn.

For example, if you control the Knights and you decide to issue order 2 (Cavalry Raid) and the Turks counter order played is D (Probe) the results will probably turn out poorly for the Knights as your point of attack was anticipated. However, if the Turks counter order played is C (Bombardment) the results will probably turn out poorly for the Turks.

Each Order has a table that shows the column to refer to when you intersect your Order with the enemy's Counter Order.

Important: Some Counter Order Events can remove troop markers in an area that makes the area empty. If an Event or a player order "empties" your area BEFORE your order is executed then it cancels your order.

You then roll a six sided die and read the result off the corresponding column.

Some Counter Order cards have die roll modifiers listed that are applied if the die is rolled this turn. Adjust the actual die roll up or down for the modifier to determine the die roll result on the table.

For example, as the Turks, you play the Attack St.Elmo order. The Knights Counter Order card revealed is Conflict in Turkish Command, which requires you to cancel your order or proceed with a +2 modifier. If you proceed with the order, then die rolls using results tables will add 2 to the die roll. If a 4 is rolled add 2 for a die roll result of 6.

The results can be No Effect and Success which is a gray box. Results of Success or Failed apply to troop and ship moves.

Results for troop and morale losses are shaded to show which side it applies to. Red shaded boxes mean that the troop and/or morale losses are applied to the Turks.

White shaded boxes mean that the troop and/or morale losses are applied to the Knights. Troop losses are designated by a number. Morale losses show a minus sign and say "morale".

Any numbers indicate the number of troop markers to be removed. Usually every troop marker removed from the board is also accompanied by the reduction of morale on the Morale Track on the board for the same side by the corresponding number of spaces.

For example, 1 troop marker means the reduction of 1 'step' on the morale track. You will see that this doesn't always mean 1 morale point.

Each Order you issue details which locations troop losses come from - your own, or the enemy's.

Morale losses not involving troop losses are applied directly from the Morale Track.

For example, if the results say -2 morale and is red shaded, then Turks morale on the Morale Track would be moved two spaces downward.

Note that although vacant troop spaces in a location can prevent you from using an Order related to that location, the location itself can still be attacked by your opponent. **When this occurs it immediately reduces your morale by 1.** Any troop losses for you come from other locations of your choice, reducing morale further.

Optionally, you may choose to apply additional resources in relation to your roll.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Additional resources are new elements not featured in *Quebec 1759*. Players must declare the use of their -1/+1 modifier (Musketry for the Turks, Greek Fire for the Knights) BEFORE dice are rolled. These modifiers are not cumulative and only one can be used in a turn. Each time a modifier is expended the marker on the resource track is adjusted down. If there are no remaining uses the marker should be removed from the board.

Although players cannot use more than one -1/+1 modifier in the same dice roll, they may combine it with their reroll ability (Janissaries for Turks, Elite Knights for the Knights). In this case the modifier is retained. So long as players still have remaining re-rolls they may expend as many as they like on the same turn, to try to get the result they want.

The Turk player has the additional resource of ammunition to track. This limits the amount of times Order 4 (Bombardment of St. Angelo) or Counter Order B (Bombard) may be issued at full effectiveness. Each time this order is issued the marker on the track must be adjusted down. If all the ammunition has been expended, apply a +2 modifier to the die roll resolving Order 4 or Counter Order B.

5. ORDER EXPENDED

With the end of the turn, remember to turn the expended Order facedown. Expended Orders may not be used again until refreshed.

There are two ways to refresh the available Orders - either by having ALL Orders expended and facedown (the moment this happens all become automatically available again), or by issuing an Aggressive Commander action, which also automatically refreshes all expended Orders.

If you have Orders face up, and so seemingly available, and yet Restrictions apply and so the Order is not playable, then consider them expended for the purposes of triggering a refresh condition. You must always have at least one playable Order.

Designer and Historical Notes:

Designer Notes on the Series (Mike and Grant)

We wanted easy mechanics yet have enough decision points to provide meaningful and historical choices for players based on what the solitaire opponent threw at them in the way of actions and Counter Orders that could adversely affect their choices.

As the Ottoman Turks player, a smaller opponent deck gives you less time before the Turk admiral Piyale Pasha takes the fleet back east for the winter, and therefore makes for a more difficult opponent. Conversely, as the Knights of Malta player, a smaller opponent deck reduces the time he has to defeat you before his fleet leaves, so the easier it is for you.

The principle of the player Field Orders Book and the Counter Order Cards is they represent the army units and commanders of the siege campaign and their potential capabilities. They lay out the possible results based on the choice of the order you issue and the solitaire opponent's actions and Counter Orders as they intersect with your own order.

The Field Orders and Counter Orders represent the options available to each side during the siege. Both armies were very different and their commanders faced tough decisions based on the capabilities of their units and those of the opponent contesting them.

Historical Notes on *1565: The Siege of Malta* (Maurice)

The Great Siege of Malta, as it came to be known, was part of the culminating act in the contest for control of the Mediterranean between Christian alliances and the Islamic Ottoman Empire that had been playing out since before the Fall of Constantinople. Indeed, in many ways, the Siege of Malta was the final act in the drama that was the Crusades - unless you take the view that this ideological conflict has yet to end. The Siege - together with the heavy Christian defeat at the Battle of Djerba (1560), and the decisive Christian victory at Lepanto (1571) would - it would later transpire - bring the curtain down on the Ottoman expansion into Europe. We do well to remember that there was nothing inevitable about this at the time, and had Malta fallen, a rapid westward expansion including into Sicily, southern Italy, and the Iberian Peninsula, and possibly even France (although it held an alliance with the Turks at the time of the siege there is little reason to think it would hold for long once other targets had been seized) seems the most likely outcome.

The Knights of Malta were a holy order with its roots in the crusading order The Knights Hospitaller, founded around 1099. Their official title was the Sovereign Military Hospitaller Order of Saint John of Jerusalem, of Rhodes, and of Malta. The Knights, once ejected from the Levant after the fall of Acre in 1191, had relocated to the island of Rhodes. In 1525 they had fought to defend the island against the Turks, but had been overwhelmed, and permitted to leave. Their next home was the rather inhospitable rock of Malta. The Grand Master, John de Valette, commanded around 500 knights and 5-6,000 soldiers, including Maltese civilians and galley slaves. Valette knew from spies that the Turks were coming in the spring of 1565. He had done what he could to prepare defenses and to entreat Don Garcia, Viceroy of Sicily, to persuade King Philip II of Spain to send help. Don Garcia had promised to send help but it would take some time to assemble. The rest of Europe, at the level of state government, largely adopted a 'we wish you well, but you're on your own'

attitude. The Holy Roman Empire had its own troubles with the Turks still not far from the gates of Vienna (after the failed siege of 1529). France was allied to the Turks. England, under the reign of Henry VIII had abolished the Order of St. John during the dissolution of the monasteries three decades earlier, and Queen Elizabeth I was hardly on the best of terms with Catholic Europe. There was just one English knight at the Siege of Malta, Oliver Starkey. He was stationed on Birgu and survived the siege.

The Turks arrived in Malta May 18.¹ They came in 380 ships with 40,000 troops - an utterly huge armada. The Spanish Armada of 1588 totaled around 130 ships.² They were commanded by Mustafa Pasha and Piyale Pasha - general and admiral respectively. These two commanders were seldom in unison and a muddled if not outright conflicted chain of command from the Sultan was complicated by both being told to defer to the legendary corsair Dragut when he arrived on the island from Tripoli.

The Turks anchored their fleet at Marsaxlokk and established camp to the west of the Marsa. As cavalry raids came from Mdina and the rare sortie from Birgu, the Turks began to dig trenches and to bring artillery closer to their targets at the three forts.

St. Elmo was the first target. Once it was secured the other two forts of St. Michael and Fort St. Angelo would be subject to intense artillery bombardment on three sides.

Turk progress was slow. Although the bombardment soon began to damage the stone walls, the tenacity of the defenders was considerable. The Knights orchestrated a defense utilizing fire hoops and Greek fire. The long white robes of the Turks, ideal for summer were death traps for those caught by fire. The Turks countered with satchetti - primitive fire grenades - but the defenders would jump into barrels of water stationed nearby to douse the flames and were able to keep fighting. Aside from the incendiary weapons, we would do well to remember the Maltese summers are hot, not far off the temperatures of the Holy Land, and the Knights fought (and some of their resilience can be attributed to this) in plate metal armor - at least breastplates and helmets, if not also other pieces covering legs or arms. This armor gets incredibly hot under a summer sun.

As the attack on St. Elmo gathered momentum, almost every night Valette shuttled troops and supplies over to the fort to replace those lost and expended during the day. He had to balance this with maintaining sufficient strength in the other two forts at any time.

Turk progress accelerated once Dragut arrived May 31. His reputation was considerable and derived from military and naval experience spanning decades. He questioned why Mdina had not been captured first - the cavalry raids from the city had been a nuisance throughout operations. However, since an attack was already in progress on St. Elmo, he maintained it. He coordinated operations between the navy and army, concentrated and accelerated Turk artillery fire, and positioned new batteries at strategic locations, like Gallows Point. The rate of Turk fire on St. Elmo intensified, and the Turks began to make up for lost time.

On the night of June 3 the Turks discovered the ravelin - a ditch outside the gates of St. Elmo - was un-watched. It is not known why. Desertion or sleep of the sentry are possible reasons, but so too is Turk arquebus fire. Throughout the siege the defenders of St. Elmo had been subjected to almost constant sniper fire, and the lack of crenellations in the fort's walls exposed defenders trying to return fire. That same night the ravelin was

¹ Allem p99. OR Bradford (audio book) Chapter 8.

² Allen p 101.

stormed, and despite fierce resistance the Turks secured the position. St. Elmo's days were now definitively numbered.

A mutiny - of sorts - occurred on June 9, when some of the younger knights saw little point in fighting for St. Elmo - its fate now certain. Valette sent messages to control the situation, aware that every day St. Elmo remained out of Turk hands delayed the time when they could bear down on Fort St. Angelo (where he was positioned) and Fort St. Michael. The more the Turks were delayed the more their morale would fall, the closer the winter season got, and, perhaps, the more likely it would be that Christian soldiers would come from Sicily to assist the island. The Turks were fighting against time. Turk galleys were little different from Roman designs many centuries earlier, and ill suited to the winter seasons in the Mediterranean. They were too shallow to handle the winds that could be expected in storms. This meant either ferrying the Turk army back east with them, or leaving them encamped to last out the winter. But unlike the fertile soil of Rhodes, where the Turks had lived off the land during the siege 40 years earlier, Malta offered an invading force little to sustain them. Even before the Turks had arrived Valette had ensured the crops had been harvested and there was little left for the invaders to seize. All the Turk supplies had to be taken from their own stores. Wintering on the island was logistically problematic - it would mean long and precarious supply lines, open to the vagaries of the weather. So Mustafa Pasha was attempting to secure all three forts in Grand Harbour before the winter.

Whether fired by the defenders, or an accident as Turk gunners brought their guns too low, Dragut was killed by splinters from a cannonball explosion June 18. His injuries did not kill him outright, but he died a few days later. The morale of the Turks was shaken.

On June 21, the end in sight for St. Elmo, Knights burned or buried their holy relics, to ensure they did not fall into the hands of the infidel. (A rather neat ironic symmetry of the siege is that the Muslim word for god 'Allah' was also the Maltese word for god, albeit the Maltese people themselves were Christian - and amongst the first Christians in Europe.)

On June 23 St. Elmo fell. Few defenders survived. Nine knights were captured for ransom by Dragut's corsairs, and a few Maltese escaped to swim across to Fort St. Angelo. There are no records of those knights ever being ransomed. They perhaps were killed soon after, or lived out wretched lives as galley slaves. The bodies of dead knights were decapitated and their torsos tied to wooden crosses and floated towards St. Angelo. In response Valette ordered the execution of all his prisoners, and used their heads as cannonballs firing a statement back at the Turks.

Mustafa Pasha attempted to negotiate with Valette, but the Grand Master offered him only the ditch of ground before his defenses.

Now Mustafa Pasha - perhaps taking inspiration from a scheme of Dragut's - dismantled ships and had them dragged across land from Marsaxlokk to Marsa Creek. From there they could apply severe pressure on the two remaining forts.

Mustafa Pasha chose Fort St. Michael next. The spirits of the Knights were then lifted by the arrival of the 'Piccolo Soccorso' (or 'Small Relief') a force of 42 knights, 20 gentlemen volunteers from Italy, three from Germany, and two from England, and 600 Spanish infantry. The force had managed to reach the fort undetected, having been dropped off at the north of the island and found their way past Turk camps and patrols.

The siege then progressed with a rhythm of *move* and *counter move*. When Mustafa unleashed the next attacks they combined an attack on land with a seaborne attack of ten

boats with a hundred Janissaries in each. But Valette had predicted this and cannon at sea level met the Janissaries' boats and blew them from the water. Mustafa responded by bringing his siege tower to the walls of Birgu. Valette had a hole made in his walls to allow a sortie to scale the tower and destroy it before it could reach the defenses. Mustafa intensified bombardment again, to drive down the morale of the defenders, but his ammunition supplies were starting to get low. So Mustafa targeted Mdina, thinking it a soft target. But civilians dressed as soldiers patrolled the city walls in a display of strength. Although Mdina had little ammunition it fired salvos at observing Turks to give the impression of vast stores. The ruse worked and the Turks did not follow through with an attack

Pressure was, nevertheless, still mounting on the defenders. By early August both Senglea and Birgu were struggling to maintain cohesive defenses. On August 7 an intense artillery bombardment on Senglea was followed by a massive infantry assault. Once again the elite Janissaries were at the forefront of the attack. The Fort of St. Michael looked set to fall. But then Mustafa Pasha - hearing alarming reports of a large force to his army's rear - sounded the retreat to regroup. It turned out, there was no large force. It was a cavalry raid from Mdina that - alerted by the sound of the bombardment, sensing Valletta needed help - had found the Turk camp at The Marsa all but abandoned. The few guards and the wounded were slaughtered and the camp was looted.

August 23 the situation on Birgu was desperate. The consensus was that it could not be held. Only Valletta opposed the notion. The knights had to make a stand at Birgu to the last man, just as they had done at St. Elmo. Every day of delay was crucial to the chances of success. Valletta blew the bridge of boats that connected Birgu to Senglea. There would be no more movement between locations, but it also signalled to the defenders, as much as to the attackers, that this was a fight to the death.

Birgu, and Senglea held on, and the summer was now slipping away from the Turks. They began to prepare to leave. On September 6 a relief force of around 10,000 men from Sicily landed at Mellieha Bay, in the north. Characteristic of much of the Turk campaign there was confusion and miscommunication. The relief force was thought to be much larger than it transpired it was. After a fierce argument between Mustafa and Payale, some Turk troops were disembarked. It was the last disaster for the Turks, and the campaign ended with a famous victory for the Knights of Malta. The siege then passed into legend as perhaps the greatest siege of the sixteenth century, and perhaps one of the greatest in all of history with ramifications far beyond the meagre number of defenders involved.

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The Turks player is pressed for time - trying to wrap up the siege before the weather turns against them, but the arrival of reinforcements from Sicily on the side of the Knights will also complicate things, so an early victory is what they want. Available strategies include - as Dragut suggested - targeting Mdina first to eliminate the irritant of cavalry raids, which will also reduce the Knights morale by 2. Another strategy is to predominantly focus on one of the forts - once one is eliminated the Knights will bleed Morale points. Yet another strategy is to mix up assaults with bombardments to reduce the defender's morale. If you can get your fleet to Marsa Creek - dismantling and transporting them - and move troops to Gallows Point and the Corradin Heights you will gain a -2 modifier on attacking the Grand Harbour (Order 2). If you use an Aggressive Commander Action to create a siege tower you gain a -2 modifier on attacking Fort St. Angelo (Order 5).

For the Knights it's a matter of delaying the Turks. Fire ships will push back the Turk fleet from Marsa Creek. Although, in reality, the fire ships didn't push the fleet back to Marsaxlokk the game uses this approach to simulate disruption to the Turk fleet. The reality is the fleet was so vast there was never any likelihood that its entirety might be destroyed by fire ships, so the game doesn't give the Knights player the chance of causing lasting destruction, but, instead, the game represents the idea that Turk plans may be frustrated and delayed. Although you can't do anything to accelerate the arrival of reinforcements, if they do arrive it's usually a good idea to send them into action soon. Beyond that you will often need to shuttle troops between your three forts, just as Valette did during the siege, to stop the defenses of any fort being too thin to resist the next Turk onslaught.

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