





Il-ħajja fi kmamar imħaffrin fis-swar tal-Belt

Ħafna Maltin kienu telqu minn djarhom u marru jgħixu fejn l-aħjar li setgħu jsibu bħala kenn. Dawn il-postijiet kienu, fost l-oħrajn, il-mina tal-ferrovija fil-Belt Valletta u l-Furjana, katakombi, għerien u bdew anki jagħmlu kmamar imħaffrin fil-fosos tas-swar. Fl-ewwel żminijiet tal-gwerra, ix-xelters kienu inezistenti. L-Awtoritajiet kienu ħasbu għal xi attakk bil-gass billi qassmu l-maskri tal-gass madwar Malta kollha u kienu jaħsbu wkoll li l-bini kien jiflaħ għall-bombi u għalhekk kien sigur minnu nnifsu. Malli bdiet il-gwerra dawn iż-żewġ fatturi dehru li kienu żbaljati. Wara ftit, f'Settembru tal-1940 twaqqfet awtorita' li bdiet tiegħu ħsieb tħaffer ix-xelters. Ingabru l-baqqunera kollha li kien hawn u anki iġiebu diversi rġiel minn Għawdex biex jagħmlu dan ix-xogħol. Għall-ewwel ix-xogħol beda jsir fil-Belt Valletta u l-Kottonera li kienu l-aktar inħawi perikolużi iżda wara, ix-xogħol nxtered ma' Malta kollha.

Life in rooms cut in Valletta's bastions

Numerous Maltese left their homes looking for safe shelter. These places included the railway tunnel underneath Valletta and Floriana, catacombs and caves. Rooms were also created by cutting into the fortifications ditches. Shelters didn't exist in the initial phase of the war. The authorities had only planned for gas attacks and had given a gas mask to every person in Malta, believing buildings were strong enough to resist bombs. Once the war began these two beliefs proved incorrect. In September 1940, an authority was established with a remit to dig shelters. All diggers were gathered and even Gozitan men were brought over to help in this job. Shelters were dug first in the most dangerous places, Valletta and Cottonera, and then all over Malta.