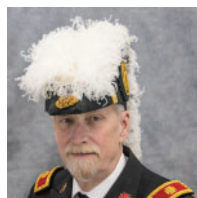




New Mexico Supplement



H. C. Sky Olsen
Grand Commander

Sir Knights,

I hope this finds you and yours in good health and Happiness.

I'm looking forward to returning to the Asylum as the virus abates so we may resume our work. However, since many of our members are in a vulnerable group, it may be that when we return, some will want to wait longer before entering a crowded meeting. That is perfectly acceptable. Each Sir Knight must make his own decision regarding his health.

This circumstance may lead to commanderies of only five brothers. This is now permissible, but there has been some confusion about how to open with a small number. The Grand Encampment has directed that in such circumstances we are to use the Short Form Opening found in the Ritual of the Grand Encampment, the black book, on page 98.

I would like to see more uniformity in the sword work in our conclaves and to that end will distribute copies of the Tactics Manual to the commandery officers and active members.

In particular I call your attention to the command, "Return Swords". We have all taken a position in the lines during the opening ritual wherein after the cuts and words are given, the command, "Return" is given and every Sir Knight grasps his scabbard and chases its opening with the wildly wobbling tip of his sword while looking down and to the left where the two, in an ideal world, should meet. Unfortunately, when one tries to return his sword in this manner he tends to turn his body to the left and may twist half way around, like a dog chasing its tail, until the two finally meet. (I've never seen anyone turn a full circle but it has been pretty close a few times) Then one or two will slam their

swords all the way in before the command "Swords" is given or, worse yet, the Commander will say "Return Swords" as though they are one word and a long, ragged performance ensues.

Instead, do it the way the Manual describes:
"At the command Return, seize the scabbard near the mouth with the left hand, inclining it a little forward, and keeping the right hand near the body, drop the sword blade forward and to the left so that the point is about six inches from the floor and pointing to a line which is a prolongation of the left foot. Move the sword hand to the left, then raise the hand, drawing the sword blade between the first two fingers of the left hand. Insert the point of the blade into the mouth of the scabbard, edge to the front, assisted by the thumb and fingers of the left hand, eyes to the front, thrust the blade into the scabbard until the right forearm is horizontal. When all have reached this position, the command "Swords" is given. Return the blade smartly and drop the hands to the sides."

By using this method you can easily get the sword point into the scabbard without twisting around and looking like a group of half-drunk line dancers in a cowboy bar. An unfortunate image indeed, since there are no women in this particular dance. You also may notice that keeping eyes front, there is much less erratic motion in the line. Our chapeaux are so long front to back that every motion of your head is magnified. If you move your nose two inches, the front and rear tips move six.

I'm looking forward to seeing you! If you have any questions or concerns, don't hesitate to contact me.

Courteously,

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