



The Florida Knight

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Hello Fellow Fraters.

Wow does time fly. It is hard to believe that 2020 is here. My wife Connie and I wish each and every one of you, your families and all Sir Knights wherever dispersed a very happy and most prosperous New Year. May your year be filled with abounding blessings, good health and many happy occasions.

I trust that all our Commandry elections are now completed and maybe by the time you receive this writing some installations are completed as well. To the soon to be new Eminent Commanders and new officers I wish you the best for a successful year. As I have stated before my door is always open and our Grand Line Officers stand ready to assist you should you need help. Please be sure to use you District Deputies and District Instructors as well. They are my eyes and ears.

For those that don't know I am a sort of history buff and am always trying to learn more about our order and its history. If one takes some time and makes use of the tools we have available today we can learn much of the fantastic history of our rich Order. Knight Templars are surrounded in mystery and intrigue. Some say we are keepers of the Catholicism's greatest and dangerous secrets, others think we are keepers and guardians of the Holy Grail, Arc of the Covenant or other Holy relics. What do you think?

The next few paragraphs are about the Knight Templar Apron. I love the apron and wish I could wear it on a regular basis. Thankfully one of our Sir Knights has taken the time to research and write about the apron. If you desire to read the complete article it is in the August 1989 Knights Templar Magazine submitted by Ron Blaisdell and he is credited with the research and information presented.

His first introduction to the Knights Templar Apron occurred when he made a visit to the George Washington Masonic Memorial at Alexander, Virginia. The George Washington Memorial is on my bucket list of places to visit. He noticed in the ante room a portrait of Lafayette wearing a black apron on which was a skull and cross bones. He enquired about the apron and was informed it was a Knight Templar Apron. Lafayette received the Templar Orders as well many others while he visited during the Colonial Revolution. Sir Knight Blaisdell was also told there were three other Knight Templar Aprons in the Memorial. Makes you want to go look doesn't it? I wonder how many examples of the Knight Templar Apron existed in the world. From what Sir Knight Blaisdell stated there are at least two examples in the state of Michigan.

History tells us very little has been written on the dress of early Templars prior to "Monitor" written by Thomas Smith Webb in 1797 in which he suggests the origin of the Templar Apron. For those who are Scottish Rite Masons will find the next part of this very interesting. Early references to the history of Templary in Great Britain a significant reference is made. Amazingly all Templar encampments were authorized to give the degrees of the "Rose Croix? And the "Kadosh" which existed as Templar Degrees before the establishment of the Ancient and Accepted Scottish Rite. The "Rose Croix de Herodom (sic)" was one step above the

Templar Installation, and followed by the "Kadosh." Now isn't this interesting?

The significance here is that under British Masonry Templary was related to the Rose Croix and Kadosh degrees. Now what does all this have to do with our skull and cross bones apron? So let's see. The Rose Croix apron was described as white lined in Black and outlined in Red. The white side depicting a pelican feeding her young and on the black side a Latin cross. Perhaps this gives us an early look into the potential design of the Knight Templar apron prior to Webb's "Monitor. Additionally, Templar degrees were given in England under the sanction of the "Blue Lodges'. With this factual information it is possible that the Knight Templar apron was a result of modifying Symbolic Lodge aprons to fit ritualistic legends of the Templar Orders. The actually first written "standard for the Knight Templar apron published comes from Thomas Smith Webb's "Monitor" in which Webb describes the apron as White, with a black border or black with a white border. The flap was black and a skull and cross bones embroidered in silver on it. Webb's was accepted by Early Templars until after the Grand Encampment came around and in 1839 they published the general statues and agreed on a new permanent design.

Chapter 4 of the General Statues of the Grand Encampment is where can be found the Templar Uniform and under Article 1 is found the Knight Templar apron. It is to be a black velvet apron of triangular form, having on the center a patriarchal cross, on the flap a skull and cross bones all in silver. The edging of the aprons and collars shall be gold for Grand Bodies and silver for Subordinate Commandries.

There is much more on the subject of the Knight Templar apron to be read in the article written by Sir Knight Ron Blaisdell but I will leave that for you to search on your own should you desire. I challenge each and every one of you to do some Masonic reading and if you find something really good please let me know and I will add it into my supplement to share depending on the size or I will put it in the newsletter for all to read. If it is on Templary great, but it is not required to be such.

Eminent Commanders and Knights as you start this New Year keep in mind the things I have asked you to work on from last year. Keep working to bring in new members to our order, together with the information listed above, let's make a push to gain some of the Scottish Rite Masons that are not yet York Rite and Knights Templar among our roles. Is 2020 the year that all members of your Commandry become life sponsors? Think Holy Land Pilgrimage. Start today finding the money you need to send a minister to the holy land. Give a look into Commandries joining together to raise the necessary funds and alternate ministers from one Commandry to the next. It works for us in District 10. We have sent a Minister to the holy land from district 10 for the last 6 years by pooling our funds together. Each and every Sir Knight is important. So let's make sure we let them know they are needed at our Conclaves and that they are important to our Order. Please do not forget to check on those that are sick or missing from our Conclaves. Out of sight out of mind, and it is easy to do that. I am a strong proponent of education so make sure your meetings include education and are fruitful for all in attendance. Have some fun while you are at it.

Starting this January through March I plan to make several visits to those Commandries way south of me. I have been to a few closer to home and have some installations to do before I start my New Year's travels. I plan to visit many of the Commandries I have not been able to visit in the past. Lastly, as stated above, Happy New Year to each and every Sir Knight and their families. May 2020 be the year that your dreams and wishes come true. May each of you have good health and God Bless.

Yours in Faith and Christ our Savior,

Ronald L. Parks, KYCH
Right Eminent Grand Commander