




ILLINOIS SUPPLEMENT

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Pro Deo et Patria

Greetings Sir Knights,

This month I want to share with you a story about a sword carried by a sojourner Sir Knight, a kind and gentle man who changed my life and who has become one of my Masonic heroes! Our life paths crossed on Saturday, 4 April 2012 in the town of Alton, IL. The morning of this day was marked by extremely heavy rain and lightening, making travel risky at best. Most people were happy to stay inside the safety of their home and enjoy a day of relaxing. On this stormy day I was scheduled to receive the Order of the Temple at the annual inspection of Belvidere Commandery, No. 2 in Alton, a 51 mile trip from my home. My mentor, "J.P." who was driving me to Alton, did not tell me of the drama that had played out a few days before when he was informed by the person setting up the slate at Belvidere Commandery that no Eminent Commander was available to conduct the Order of the Temple!

My mentor "J.P." was a Vietnam Veteran who had grown accustomed to surviving the unexpected and he immediately went into "survival mode" and called a Sir Knight who lived 90 miles north of Alton, a two hour drive, and asked for help. The Sir Knight whom "J.P." called had a well-deserved reputation of responding to any Commandery who needed help and he was highly skilled in conferring the Order of the Temple; he did not hesitate to say he would be at Alton for the Order. Before sunrise on this stormy Saturday morning the Sir Knight and his Lady headed south on the two hour drive to Alton, in very dangerous weather, arriving in his usual cheerful mood!

The perfection demonstrated by this sojourner Templar will be forever deeply embedded in my mind. The ritual of the Order he conferred was mystical in its presentation and I still remember the gentle touch of the sword on my shoulder! Throughout my Templar journey, I have crossed paths with this sojourner Templar many times and I never fail to thank him for taking a day of his life to change my life!

I am telling this story because there are becoming fewer sojourner Templars who will devote the time to responding to calls for assistance

in emergencies. I am sure we can all think of someone who helped our Commandery when we desperately need ritual expertise. It is these sojourner Templars who go "above and beyond" in their effort to keep Knights Templar the most prestigious body in York Rite. Do you and your Commandery make sure these sojourners know how much they are appreciated? Simply saying "I remember" is sometimes all that is needed.

Now, let me get back to that legendary sojourner Sir Knight whose sword gently touched my shoulder back in Alton. He called me on the morning I penned this article, 30 July 2020, to tell me how much he enjoyed reading my first article in the August issue of the Knight Templar magazine which he had just received. We talked probably about 30 minutes, with him congratulating me on becoming Grand Commander and reminiscing about his early years in Templary; he is now 92 years young and still active in Masonic bodies -- 67 years as a Master Mason! We talked about swords and Templar history and he told me that he now proudly carries THE SWORD owned by the Sir Knight Commander who knighted him on 13 February 1957. I wonder if that Commander knew back in 1957 how much he would change the lives of so many people by being the one who dubbed this Freemason a Sir Knight!

Life takes us down some interesting roads and I often think of the words from Robert Frost's poem, The Road Not Taken, which reads *"Two roads diverged in a wood, and I— I took the one less traveled by, And that has made all the difference!"* My "road less traveled by" was that of becoming a Knight Templar. It was on that road less traveled by that I met a sojourner Templar who changed my life as well as well as hundreds more in central and southern Illinois!

Who made the difference in your life? Remember, we have the ability to change someone's life by guiding them onto the road less traveled by -- that road of becoming a Knight Templar. Become a sojourner and visit other Commanderies, assist where you can, recruit your replacement and hopefully someday someone will tell stories of how you recruited them into Templary and changed their life!

In summary, let's get back to the story of THE SWORD now carried by my hero. In the phone call this morning with my dear friend, Sir Knight Harris Edwin Boeker, GWB, KTCH, of St. Aldemar Commandery, No. 47, I reminded him that THE SWORD that knighted him in 1957 was the very same sword that he used to dub me a Sir Knight back in 2012 in Alton, Illinois! The circle is unbroken.

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