



VIRGINIA SUPPLEMENT

Carry the shield forward.



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Knightly Greetings,

“What a long, strange trip it’s been”, coined by songwriter Robert Hunter and performed by the Grateful Dead, is the quintessential definition of the past year. No Sir Knight and his family were untouched.

A discipline of survival psychology shines a light on the present moment and contains wisdom that teaches all of us something.

Vice Admiral James B. Stockdale was held prisoner in the infamous “Hanoi Hilton” for seven years. As the ranking naval officer and leader of American resistance against Vietnamese attempts to use prisoners for propaganda purposes, he organized a system of communication and developed a cohesive set of rules governing prisoner behavior. Codified in the acronym BACK U.S. (Unity over Self).

“The Stockdale Paradox”

When asked about the personal characteristics of prisoners who did not make it out of the camps he replied, “The optimists. Oh, they were the ones who said, ‘We’re going to be out by Christmas.’ And Christmas would come, and Christmas would go. Then they would say, ‘We’re going to be out by Easter.’ And Easter would come, and Easter would go. And then Thanksgiving, and then it would be Christmas again. And they died of a broken heart ... This is a very important lesson. You must never confuse faith that you will prevail in the end—which you can never afford to lose—with the discipline to confront the most brutal facts of your current reality, whatever they might be.”

We, the Sir Knights that compose our Order, certainly have kept that faith during these uncertain times. We know that they will come to an

end but do not hold false hope by setting dates or time frames. Our dedication to our Order keeps us working and moving forward with what we have available to us.

This past year, with all its’ trials, tribulations, challenges, and adjustments in our lifestyles, has not been a disappointment to me serving as your Grand Commander. Instead, it held many opportunities. In fact, what other time in the history of our Grand Commandery has there been opportunities to develop virtual ways to conduct our business, hold virtual meetings, recruit candidates, expand our website, visit as many Commandries as we could, hold religious celebrations, and by means of a hybrid video teleconference charter a new Commandery? The answer, none. A new virtual age has been thrust upon us and we are meeting the challenge.

What does the future hold?

We have learned that normal is fluid, elastic, and ever changing. If you stop and look in our history, you will find that change is constant and normal moves with it. Our Order will evolve as it is our nature and it will prosper as we have a guide that will never fail us, our Savior Jesus Christ.

In parting it has been an honor and pleasure to serve as the Grand Commander of the Grand Commandery of Knights Templar of Virginia. To the Sir Knights that rose to meet the challenges, my sincerest and everlasting gratitude.

“Carry the shield forward.”

With All Knightly Courtesy,

J. Jeffrey McClelland, KCT
Grand Commander