



**VIRGINIA SUPPLEMENT**  
*Carry the shield forward.*



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Knightly Greetings,

The month of March contains the anniversary of the execution of Jacques de Molay, the last Grand Master of the ancient Knights Templar. After the mass arrest of all Templars in France on Friday October 13, 1307 under false charges, he was imprisoned until his execution by burning at a stake on an island in the Seine River in front of Notre-Dame de Paris on March 18, 1314. That brought the apparent sudden and violent end to the two-hundred-year-old Order.

At the beginning of his knighthood, DeMolay was a simple monk and soldier who trusted in authority and the chain of command. In the end he had believed that the pope would come forth and rescue the falsely accused Order.

With the fall of Acre in 1291, the last Templar stronghold in the Mediterranean, there were few surviving knights. Jacques de Molay was one and the Templars elected him Grand Master. He believed, as soldiers do, that on coming home from fighting the battles he had been ordered into, his masters would recognize and respect the Knights Templars contributions. To the local Christians, the Templars were heroes but on their return to Europe, they suffered the fate of many of history's soldiers.

Two millennia earlier, when Odysseus returned to Ithaca after a decade fighting at Troy, he barely recognized the society he found. More tragically, few recognized him save his faithful dog Argos. The same occurred to the American soldiers returning from Vietnam as they faced a similarly disconnected homecoming. Jacques de Molay and the last

crusaders upon returning home found that Europe had moved on, and the battles where they had shed blood of no importance to most of the people and rulers in whose name they had fought.

The apparent end of the Order ended the lives of the faithful knights in 1314 but proved again that you may destroy the flesh and blood, but you cannot kill morals and faith. The Templars live on in us, today's Knights Templars, through their moral beliefs and faith in the Christian Religion that we hold dear.

Today we find our Order at another defining point due to the pandemic we are facing. The enemy is apathy within our own ranks. It takes innovation, improvisation, and tenacity to overcome apathy. Most Sir Knights have risen to meet the challenge and thrive. They did not scabbard their swords and not don their uniforms. They did not dwell on the past as the past and should remain where it is as we are facing current challenges that were unthought of just a few years ago. Are those challenges impossible to overcome? No, but it takes every Sir Knight acting in unison as our ancient brothers did with their massed cavalry charges to succeed.

Sir Knights heed the lesson and legacy that our ancient brothers left us. Mount up, advance, and forge into the future, it is ours to make. Our Order needs all of us.

*"Carry the shield forward."*

With All Knightly Courtesy,

J. Jeffrey McClelland, KCT  
Grand Commander