



GRAND COMMANDERY KNIGHTS TEMPLAR LOUISIANA



**Knight Templar State News
August 2022**



Commander: REGC Charles Bertrand
Website: <https://www.yorkritela.org>

GRAND COMMANDER'S MESSAGE

To: The Officers and Sir Knights of the Grand and Constituent Commanderies of Knights Templar of Louisiana

I would like to thank all the Sir Knights that came out to our Quarterly meeting July 30th.

Louisiana York Rite Bodies, Grand Chapter, Grand Council, and Grand Commandery met in Alexandria, LA at the Abe Hinson Lodge #472 for their quarterly meeting. There was a very good showing of Companions/Sir Knights. Many topics were discussed to advance all York Rite Bodies into the future.

I would like to thank all the Sir Knights for helping to achieve the goals that the Grand Commandery is trying to achieve. I know that some of you are and have been saying that I am repeating the same things every month in my newsletter.

I hope that lets you understand that I feel these things are very important.

We need to continue to work on:

1. Membership – Recruit, Restore, Retain
2. MMS Roster – Communication for Retention (emails, phone numbers, and addresses)
3. Building an excel spreadsheet that has a list of all Knight Templars listed with contact information - next is a list of all those who were Sir Knights we might Restore
4. 100% Knight Templar Eye Foundation \$3,300 dollars to go; for 200% \$31,560
5. Holy Land Pilgrimage Endowment Fund to underwrite annual ordained minister pilgrimages so any commandery may be successful with their nomination
6. Educational Programs every month – Again, Retention
7. Festivals – Fun and Recruitment

PGC Keith Gates established the Holy Land Pilgrimage Endowment Fund as an integral part of our completely new Constitution approved in 2019. We need to promote that endowment fund so that we can build our foundation that helps send an ordained minister to the Holy Land every year. We have established a method to make small recurring credit card payments with Sir Knight Scotty Adams S2HScotty@gmail.com, Sir Knight Wilson Cook wilsoncook@icloud.com, and the Monroe Valley to make monthly credit card payments until you reach \$1,000 and receive the Holy Land Pilgrimage Medal. We also have other ways that a Sir Knight can achieve the medal with monthly payments. If interested please contact the Grand Recorder or your Local Recorder. Our goal is for at least 10% of all Sir Knights to be wearing this medal at the Grand Conclave next year.

South Central will be held in Sam's Town, Shreveport, LA. September 16-17, 2022. The information is on the web site. We need to attend and represent Louisiana with the most Sir Knights.

Shreveport will have a Festival on August 27th Ascension Commandery at 1805 Creswell St. Shreveport, LA. 71101. For information contact Commandery Recorder – Albert G. Simms, PC asimmsjr@gmail.com

Houma will have a Festival on November 12th and 19th. The Chapter and Council Degrees on November 12th with the Commandery orders on November 19th. For information contact Unity Lodge – Freddie Touchet PC fj2chet@comcast.net

If you are a Facebook member or you have friends that are, please have them “like” our page. We are now at 1800 and I would like to reach 5000 this year. <https://www.facebook.com/groups/lagrandyorkritebodies/>

The Monthly News Letter will be adding a Bio of the Elected Line Officers and for August we profile our Grand Captain General, Sir Knight Michael Watts.

Sir Knights,

As your Grand Captain General, I have been tasked by the Grand Commander to provide a Biography and short view of my objectives for our Grand Commandery. I am Michael A. Watts, originally from Jonesboro, Louisiana.

After High School graduation, I soon enlisted in the United States Army and found a twenty-four-year career. My overseas assignments carried me to Germany, Kuwait, Haiti, and other exotic places; stateside assignments at Fort Knox, KY; Fort Hood, TX; and Fort Polk, LA kept me grounded in American life. Ultimately, I retired at Fort Polk and pitched my tent on Black Lake near Natchitoches, LA. Having then earned an undergraduate degree at Northwestern State University in Natchitoches and a graduate degree at Norwich University in Northfield, VT; I gained a second career in Juvenile Justice and retired in 2017.

Being a son of a Free-mason, I entered the Fraternity at Barker Lodge #129, at West Point, KY during one of my assignments at Fort Knox. During one of my postings in Germany, I joined and am a Past Master of Pyramid Lodge #869, at Vilseck, Germany. After retiring from the Army and moving to Black Lake, I joined and became the Master of Phoenix Lodge #38 in Natchitoches and am also currently a member of O. K. Allan Lodge #33 in Winnfield, Louisiana.

I entered the York Rite Bodies shortly after being raised at Barker Lodge. After retiring from the Army, I affiliated with Coushatta Chapter #102 and Red River Council #52 in Coushatta, LA; and served as High Priest and Illustrious Master and when Jerusalem Commandery #30 was

chartered, I affiliated with that Commandery as well. I also affiliated with Winnfield Chapter, Council, and Bethlehem Commandery # 20 in Winnfield, LA where I served as Eminent Commander of the Commandery and Secretary or Recorder of the three Winnfield Bodies. In 2018, I was elected to serve as Grand High Priest of the Grand Chapter of Royal Arch Masons of Louisiana.

The English-speaking Masonic Community was extensive in Europe during the last quarter of the 20th century due to the large United States Military presence there. I entered the Scottish Rite, Southern Jurisdiction at Frankfurt, Germany. When I retired from the Army, I affiliated with the Monroe Valley and served as Venerable Master of the Lodge of Perfection. I also have been honored and humbled to be coronated an Inspector General, Honorary.

Shortly after joining the York Rite Bodies in Kentucky, I became a member of Kosair Shrine Temple in Louisville, KY and was surprised how hot the sands could be in Louisville. After military retirement, I transferred my membership to El Karubah Temple in Shreveport.

Additionally, I have served as a Past Sovereign of Ouachita Conclave, Red Cross of Constantine at Monroe and am a member of Saint Matthews Conclave in Bossier City as well as a Past Governor and Order of the Purple Cross in the Louisiana Chapter of the York Rite Sovereign College. I am a past President of the Beauregard-Anderson Chapter of the National Sojourners and perform in the Heroes of '76 program. Other organizations I belong to or orders I have received include the Operatives, Knight Masons, Order of High Priesthood, Order of Silver Trowel, Knight Crusader of the Cross, Knights Preceptor, Knights of the York Cross of Honor, and the Eastern Star.

During one of my tours of duty in the United States Army, I was selected to serve as a Drill Sergeant. Anyone having served in the Armed Forces probably remembers the kind, considerate, and gentle soul that guided the young service member through their initial training - I was one of those Drill Sergeants. In the Army, a Drill Sergeant Candidate successfully completes a school that teaches and tests the proficiency of the Candidate's ability to instruct all the entry level tasks a soldier should know. Upon Graduation, the Drill Sergeant receives the famous or infamous Campaign Hat and a Badge identifying completion of the school. The hat was worn only while serving as a Drill Sergeant, but the Badge is a permanent part of the soldier's uniform. By now you may be postulating, why is he babbling on about Army Drill Sergeants? There is a manual, "Drill Regulations" published by the Grand Encampment that teaches a Sir Knight the proper method of Sword usage. This manual can be purchased from your Recorder. If he has none, the Grand Recorder can supply your Commandery with as many as you need... for a nominal fee of course. Army Drill Sergeants taught and tested all enlisted soldiers out of a manual called Drill and Ceremonies. We have a manual that provides us instruction concerning the proper usage of the Sword. Perhaps in a few years, we may find in the Louisiana Grand Commandery, some Sir Knight Drill Instructors that can teach and test proper sword work.

Thank you, Grand Commander, for providing me this opportunity to share a few of my experiences and thank you Sir Knights for providing me the honor and humble experience of receiving the Office I hold.

I am sending this out to each Knight Templar in the state of Louisiana. I hope to encourage you to attend your next Commandery meeting. Please let me know if I can assist you in any way. My phone # is 985-860-9308.

Always remember to put on the Armor of God, (Ephesians 6:10-18).

Onward Christian Soldiers

S/K Charles Bertrand, Grand Commander, Grand Commandery, Louisiana

"Chivalry, Christianity, Templary – A Way of Life