

GRAND COMMANDERY KNIGHTS TEMPLAR OF TENNESSEE

Tennessee Knight Templar News

SIR KNIGHT JOHN W. SIMMONS II, RIGHT EMINENT GRAND COMMANDER

September AD 2024 / AO 906

Edited by: Jesse J. Harper, KYCH



The Fellowship Hall of Kingsport Masonic Lodge #688 was named in honor Right Eminent Past Grand Commander Don Clayman. He is pictured above (2nd from the left) with Right Eminent Past Grand Commanders Charles Thames and Robert Beam and the Eminent Grand Generalissimo, Tim Sutton.

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Sir Knights,

If you are aware of any members who are not currently receiving this monthly newsletter, then please have them send an email to Steve Guendert with their name, email address, and Commandery number: sguendert@ieeee.org

Currently only about half of our membership is receiving this newsletter on a monthly basis. Assist us in getting this newsletter distributed to every Sir Knight on our rolls.



JOHN WISEMAN SIMMONS II
RIGHT EMINENT GRAND COMMANDER
Grand Commandery Knights Templar of Tennessee



September Message from the Grand Commander

Sir Knights,

This will be a brief article, as I am getting ready for travel.

On August 1, I presented Clint White, the Recorder of Phillip Lacy Commandery #46 in Selmer, with the Grand Encampment Membership Medal. Clint has been the first line signer on ten petitions for the orders. This is a worthy goal for us all. Congratulations, Clint!

On August 10, I was back in Selmer to confer the Order of the Red Cross and Order of Malta. It is always great to see new members coming into the Order. I hope it was a meaningful experience for them.

As I write this, I am preparing to travel to the 69th Triennial Conclave of the Grand Encampment, which will be August 17-21 in Salt Lake City, Utah. I am looking forward to an exciting meeting with our grand line officers and to seeing friends from other states. There will be many new friends to meet as well. And as soon as I get back, on August 24, I will be heading to Jackson Commandery #13 for their conferral of the Commandery Orders.

Inspection season is just around the corner. There is an inspection almost every weekend in September and October. Your grand officers and I look forward to seeing you as we travel. Come out and support your Commandery!

Courteously,

John Simmons REGC

Grand Commandery of Knights Templar, Tennessee

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From the Very Eminent Deputy Grand Commander John L. Palmer, KGC

Why I Think Knight Templars Are Special

I grew up in a small, rural southern town in the 1950s and 1960s. During these years, I had two basic classes of heroes. One of these classes consisted of real life people and the other of fictional ones.

During my early childhood, we had neither air conditioning nor television. As a result, after supper, the men in the neighborhood, many of whom were relatives, would drag their metal lawn chairs to someone's front yard under a shade tree, sit, smoke, and talk to each other. Some of these talks were "war stories." Some were tales of their childhood experiences in the rural south or history or jokes or legends. These men became my heroes. Most of them were recently returned World War II veterans and had seen combat. Many were Freemasons. All were honest, hardworking men who neither expected nor would they accept a handout from anyone. They took their families to church every Sunday. These men were extremely intolerant of lying, stealing, immorality, or what they considered uncivil behavior. They had a highly developed sense of what was right and wrong. They contributed to the community, and many were members of some benevolent civic organization. None of them were wealthy, but they looked out for their families and their neighbors. These were the men I admired during my youth.

Then, along came air conditioning and television. Two things happened. First, the evening daily neighborhood discussion groups faded and died, primarily due to air conditioning, which reduced my exposure to these men to times like Sunday afternoons and holidays.

Second, television introduced me to an entirely new class of heroes. My typical Saturday television experience started with Roy Rogers, followed by the Cisco Kid and the Lone Ranger, and concluded in the evenings with *Have Gun Will Travel* (Paladin) and *Gunsmoke* (Matt Dillon). These men shared almost all of the traits demonstrated by my real life heroes. They were absolutely honest, always spoke the truth, were one hundred percent reliable, said what they meant, and matched it with their actions. They were moral, and shared a code of ethics and behavior that I later recognized as being chivalric, although I knew very little about knights at the time. I did not even know that "Paladin" was another word for "Knight." These men spent most of their time helping others, in particular, protecting others from evildoers. In those days, the distinction between the good guys and the bad guys was very evident and had nothing to do with the color of their hats. They also all carried guns. Without the guns, they would have been ill-equipped to right the wrongs they encountered every Saturday.

As a matter of fact, these stories were essentially my first exposure to "bad guys." Before then, except for stories of the Japanese, the Germans, and *Bible* stories, I had been pretty much sheltered from the evil in this world. There was very little crime or immorality in my world.

On my fourteenth birthday, because of some of my friends, I petitioned the Order of DeMolay. It was here that I learned what a Knight was. Concepts of morality; respect for others, especially women; the value of an education; and the importance of integrity and fidelity were emphasized and more

rigorously defined for me. DeMolay also taught me the satisfaction that could be derived from being a part of a successful team working together. The westerns had generally portrayed heroes as rugged individualists, but DeMolay demonstrated that there could be entire groups of heroes working together to right the world's wrongs.

Another concept that DeMolay exposed me to was that I, personally, was responsible to contribute to society. It was my personal duty to serve others, to right wrongs, and to lead others to attain a higher level of life experience. DeMolay also exposed me to Freemasonry and to real life Knights, called "Templars." Not surprisingly, many of these men were the same ones I had regarded as heroes before the days of television. I learned of the history and the values of the ancient Templars. Interestingly, several of my fellow brother DeMolays were Jewish, but that was not even noticed, as DeMolay was about character, not religion.

I liked the organization and what it stood for, so on my twenty-first birthday, I petitioned the Freemasons and continued my chivalric and fraternal experience with zeal. As soon as I could afford it, two years later, I became a Knight Templar. This is where my fraternal experience and my Christian experience came together. The ideals of Templary matched exactly the ideals of my childhood and the ideals of my religion.

Great things are generally accomplished by special people, people who are different than the average citizen, people who have superior standards and expectations. In 33 AD, a group of twelve men established an institution that eventually had a profound and positive effect upon millions. In 1118 AD, a group of only nine men founded an institution which has also had a profound and positive effect upon millions, although few people today understand the connection. I believe that we are the heirs of both of these institutions, and that we have the responsibility to carry the work forward.

Everyone does not feel led to contribute to the good of society. Most Freemasons are focused only on self-improvement, rather than the welfare of the world at large. Most Masonic Templars do not even understand the significance of our purpose. It may be time to imitate Gideon and begin to winnow our institution down to include only the ones who understand, share the passion, and are willing to sacrifice to be of service to mankind. Even my neighborhood heroes understood this.

When I was young, I thought that most of the world shared the morals and character of my heroes. Boy, was I wrong, and things have gotten much worse since then. If we are to be part of Christ's solution to the world's problems, it is time to get started. Otherwise, our institution is irrelevant.

John L. Palmer, KGC, VEDGC
Grand Commandery of Knights Templar, Tennessee

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From the Eminent Grand Prelate

Sir Knight James O. Weir II

A few weeks ago, I was very excited to put the cave degree on my calendar. I booked a room and got more and more giddy as the days passed on the calendar. I have been wanting to attend this for a very long time, and this was the year, so I packed my bags three days before leaving. Nothing was going to stand in my way this year. That is, except another series of unfortunate events that seem to make up my life and derail all my plans set in motion by my family. Perhaps you can relate. It started the day before I was set to leave. My oldest son burnt his hand while pulling something hot out of the oven, causing a trip to the minor med, but I was determined that it was not going to keep me from leaving.

That night I awoke to screams and crying from my daughter's room upstairs. Then I heard rushing around and stomping on the floor above me. The screams and crying got louder. I popped out of bed like a jack-in-the-box and ran to the stairs as my oldest daughter was carrying my youngest daughter down the stairs, and right before my eyes in the panic of the moment, she rolled her ankle on the stairs but refused to drop her sister. One fell out of the bed and cracked her head, and the other is now in a cast, recovering from a fracture.

Needless to say, I stayed home that weekend. My plans were apparently not God's plans, and while that is disappointing, it is also an answer to prayer. We ask God's will to be done on earth as it is in heaven. So mote it be. We have to be okay when our will and God's disagree. I believe in a sovereign God, and either He is sovereign over everything, or He is not. There are some who might disagree, and that is okay, but I find comfort that, as a believer, I cannot be outside of God's will. He is leading and directing my paths, and even though I stray daily, it does not change his plan for my life.

In the book of Numbers, we read a story about a talking donkey. While that may be interesting enough, the whole story is about the sovereignty of God. Balak wanted Balaam to curse the children of God multiple times, and each time God intervened. What is intriguing is that Balaam was not a follower of God, in fact some translations state that he was a wicked prophet. God is sovereign. In I Samuel Chapter 10, we read where Saul was chosen by lot to be the king of Israel. What did he do? He was afraid and hid. Not a godly king at all. God is sovereign.

Years later, a census was taken, and all male children were put to death. God is sovereign. There was no room at the inn. God is sovereign. The incarnation took place in a stable. God is sovereign. Jesus was falsely accused and put to death for our sins. God is sovereign. Paul was thrown in prison to prevent the spread of the gospel. God is sovereign.

The issues I seem to face weekly with my family changing my plans pale in comparison to these examples of plans going awry. Your plans no doubt often do not go according to schedule either, but there is one thing that you and I have in common with the godly, and the ungodly, in scripture. God is sovereign. I remind myself of this when facing any trial or temptation, or when my plans meet dynamite. It does not matter how dark the night, the weight of grief, or how sharp the sting of pain may be. It does matter how great the victory, precious the moment, or how beautiful the occasion. Trust that God is sovereign.

Chief Strength and Support

by Jesse J. Harper, KYCH

Generalissimo, Appalachia Commandery #45

If you are active in your Blue Lodge, which I hope you are, then you will know the duties of the Senior Warden. As a refresher, his duty is to see that none go away dissatisfied, because harmony is the chief strength and support of every well governed institution, more especially our Lodges. True harmony can only be attained though when everyone is agreeable to allow it. While this is the duty of the Senior Warden, the responsibility truthfully falls upon every Brother. I would go so far as to say that this responsibility is exponentially more critical for every Knight Templar, because we are held to a higher standard; at least I will say that is my opinion. It concerns me when I see discord reign inside a Lodge, and when a York Rite Mason, especially a Knight Templar, is at the center of it.

There are many factors that can disrupt true harmony, but I think one of the most detrimental factors is the unwillingness to forgive. While the Blue Lodge and other Masonic organizations are composed of men from an assortment of all the various worldly religions, we, as Knights Templar, are Christian Knights. Because of this, we are called to love our neighbors as ourselves, we are called to forgive our neighbors, we are called to not judge each other. The *Holy Bible* is very clear about these teachings, below are just a few examples:

Matthew 22:36-40

36 "Teacher, which is the great commandment in the Law?" 37 And he said to him, "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. 38 This is the great and first commandment. 39 And a second is like it: You shall love your neighbor as yourself. 40 On these two commandments depend all the Law and the Prophets."

Matthew 6:14-15

"For if you forgive other people when they sin against you, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. But if you do not forgive others their sins, your Father will not forgive your sins."

Mark 11:25

"And when you stand praying, if you hold anything against anyone, forgive them, so that your Father in heaven may forgive you your sins."

Luke 6:37

"Do not judge, and you will not be judged. Do not condemn, and you will not be condemned. Forgive, and you will be forgiven."

This topic brings up two conversations I have had with a couple of our distinguished Sir Knights. Among other responsibilities I have, I am the Assistant Class Director for the Knoxville Valley of the Scottish Rite, and while attending a Scottish Rite Reunion this past weekend, Past Grand Master Casey Hood stated to the class that one of the things that drew him to Freemasonry and other appendant organizations was the commonality in beliefs that is shared among brothers. If I understood him correctly, his statement was essentially that the friendships we develop with our neighbors and coworkers are developed through proximity and not necessarily through similarities we

have with each other. While I understand the point he was making, I believe that we are a fraternity that is composed of men with different temperaments, talents, and convictions.

There are going to be disagreements, there are going to be arguments, there are going to be differing opinions, there are going to be differing beliefs, but that is the beauty of our organization. We do not always have to agree or even have the same mindset, but we do have to have the ability to forgive when we feel that someone has wronged us. Sadly, one of the aspects of modern society that has crept into our organizations is the increased divorce rate. While divorce may not be a common analogy used to describe our Lodge and Commandery memberships, that is exactly the term that applies the best. It used to be that when conflict or strife arose inside the Lodge or Commandery that actions were taken to rectify the issue, so that everyone could move forward amicably. Heartfelt conversations were had, opinions were shared, and grievances were rectified. Regrettably, this is not always the case anymore. After the first sign of struggle or the first hurt feeling, then brothers flee. This sometimes could be moving their membership to another location, but it unfortunately also comes in the form of demitting completely.

This brings me to the second series of conversations I have had about this topic, which were with our Past Grand Master and current Very Eminent Deputy Grand Commander, John Palmer. He and I have had numerous conversations in the last year and a half, since I have been appointed to the Grand Commandery Membership Committee, also especially since I have taken over as Editor of the *Tennessee Knight Templar News*, about self-control and mindsets. Through both these two positions, I have had various people reach out to me with issues they have experienced or something they have gotten upset over. One of the many lessons that John has taught me is that getting your feelings hurt or being upset over a disagreement is a matter of choice. We cannot control other people's words or their actions, but we can control the way it impacts us and the way we react to it.

As most, if not all, of you are aware, animosity, grudges, and malevolence typically do more harm to the person holding them than the person who they are held against. Anyone who has experienced the loss of a parent, a spouse, or a child should be able to tell you that there are much larger concerns in this world than harboring those types of feelings. While I am probably closer to the younger end of the spectrum in our fraternity, I have learned that petty differences are a waste of my time and energy. I will be the first to admit that it is not an easy mindset to learn, and that it takes conscious effort and dedication to maintain initially.

I would never advocate for staying in a hostile situation or belonging to a body where you are mistreated, but I would hope that we, as a fraternity, can work our way back to where we diligently work out our differences before walking away or giving up. I would encourage everyone to find a place that feels like home to you. Our membership no longer requires us to join the closest body to our residence. It may not be the closest Lodge or Commandery to you, but there is somewhere out there for everyone. The Grand officers, or I, would be happy to help any brother or Sir Knight who feels like they need assistance reconnecting with their local body, or who feels like they need help finding somewhere else to belong. The important thing is that we do not lose memberships over matters that can easily be resolved or straightened out.

Jesse J. Harper, KYCH
Editor, *Tennessee Knight Templar News*

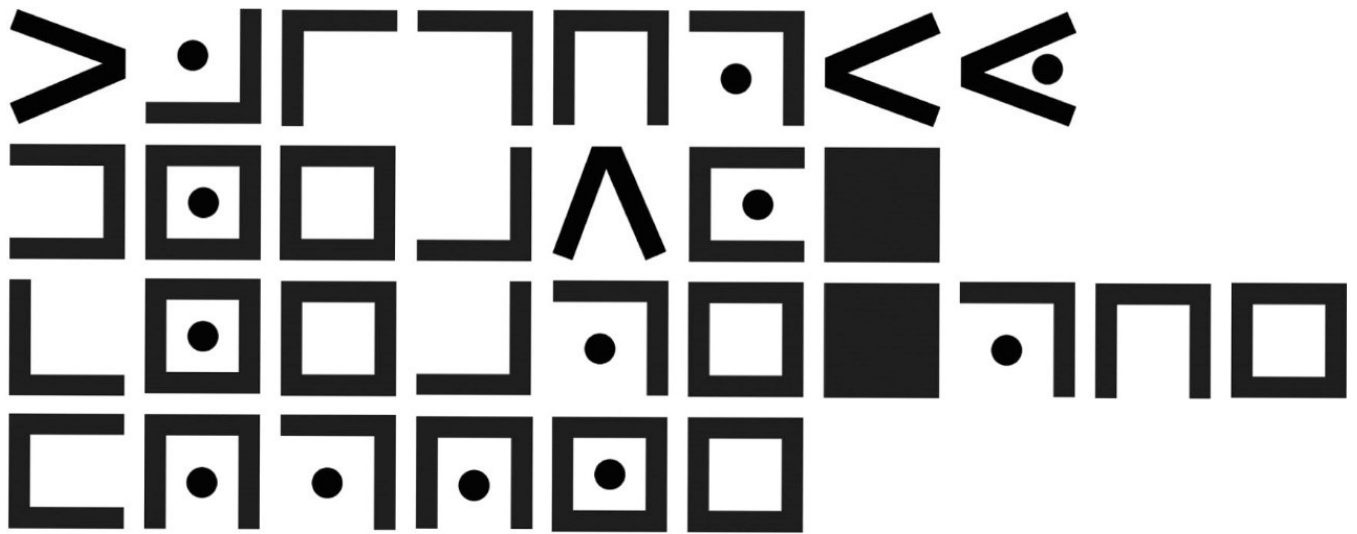
2024 COMMANDERY INSPECTION SCHEDULE

*****Updated*****

Below is the schedule for Commandery Inspections. Meals begin one hour before Inspection time (6:00 pm, 8:00 am, 2:00 pm.) For more information, contact your Recorder.

<i>Date</i>	<i>Time</i>		<i>Commandery</i>	<i>Location</i>
Thurs., Sept. 5	7:00 pm	ET	Greeneville No. 43	Greeneville
Fri., Sept. 6	7:00 pm	ET	Cyprus No. 23	Maryville
Sat., Sept. 7	9:00 am	ET	Coeur de Lion No. 9	Oak Ridge
			Chevalier No. 21	
	3:00 pm	ET	Appalachia No. 45	Fountain City
Fri., Sept. 13	7:00 pm	ET	Athens No. 34	Athens
Sat., Sept. 14	9:00 am	ET	Cyrene No. 42	Dayton
	3:00 pm	ET	Lookout No.14	Chattanooga
Fri., Sept. 20	7:00 pm	ET	Campbell Co. No. 44	LaFollette
Sat., Sept. 21	9:00 am	CT	Plateau No. 38	Crossville
	3:00 pm	CT	Cumberland No. 26	Cookeville
Fri., Sept. 27	7:00 pm	CT	Clarksville No. 8	Clarksville
Sat., Sept. 28	9:00 am	CT	Dickson No. 41	Dickson
	3:00 pm	CT	Nashville No. 1	Nashville
Thurs., Oct. 3	7:00 pm	ET	St. Omer No. 19	Bristol
Fri., Oct. 4	7:00 pm	ET	Watauga No. 25	Johnson City
Sat., Oct. 5	9:00 am	ET	Carter No. 37	Unicoi
	3:00 pm	ET	Kingsport No. 33	Kingsport
Thurs., Oct. 10	7:00 pm	CT	Manchester No. 40	Manchester
Fri., Oct. 11	7:00 pm	CT	Murfreesboro No. 10	Murfreesboro
Sat., Oct. 12	9:00 am	CT	Baldwin No. 7	Lebanon
	3:00 pm	CT	De Payens No. 11	Franklin
Thurs., Oct. 24	7:00 pm	CT	Jackson No. 13	Jackson
			Union City No. 29	
			Lexington No. 36	
Fri., Oct. 25	7:00 pm	CT	Paris No. 16	Paris
Sat., Oct. 26	12:00 pm	CT	Park Ave. No. 31 (HC)	Memphis
			Rosemark No. 39	

****Due to Phillip Lacy Commandery #46 being newly chartered and being composed of primarily new Sir Knights, they will not be holding an inspection for 2024.****



Request for Submissions!

Sir Knights – We need submissions for the *Tennessee Knight Templar News*. Is your Commandery going to confer any of the orders soon? Did you have some sort of unusual or fun event? Send us an article to share with the other Tennessee Knights and include photos if you have them.

We would also like to have your thoughts and ideas about how we can make Tennessee Templary more fun and exciting. Send us an article!

Please send news and events going on in your Commandery to:

TNKTNewsEditor@gmail.com