

Tennessee Knight Templar News

SIR KNIGHT RONALD J. COATES, RIGHT EMINENT GRAND COMMANDER
GRAND COMMANDERY KNIGHTS TEMPLAR OF TENNESSEE

August A.D. 2025 / A.O. 907

Edited by: Jesse J. Harper, KCT



De Payens Commandery wearing Cap and Mantle uniforms for their conferral the Order of the Temple

Please be sure to share any photos from your conferrals or events so that they can be publicized.

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If you are aware of any members who are not currently receiving this monthly newsletter, then please have them send an email to Jesse Harper with their name, email address, and Commandery number: jessharp@comcast.net

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.



**From the Right Eminent Grand Commander
RONALD JASPER COATES
RIGHT EMINENT GRAND COMMANDER
Grand Commandery Knights Templar of Tennessee**

August Message from the Grand Commander

James Knox Polk



James Knox Polk, the eleventh President of the United States, was a member of Columbia Lodge #31 at Columbia, Tennessee. He was initiated on January 5th, 1820, and raised to the sublime degree of Master Mason in September of the same year. He later served his lodge as Junior Warden. Polk was born in Mecklenburg County, North Carolina, in 1795. His father was a farmer who, in 1806, moved to the valley of the Duck River in Tennessee. After going through school in Tennessee, Polk became a student at the University of North Carolina in 1815, from which he graduated with honors in 1818, and at once was admitted to the bar.

In 1825, he was elected to Congress, where he became a figure in the administration of John Quincy Adams. Polk served fourteen years in Congress before finally declining renomination. He went on to serve this state as Governor and was nominated for President in 1844, with George Dallas as Vice President. His opponent was Henry Clay, and to be elected over such a giant of altruism, ability, and integrity is proof of his worth. Polk's Secretary of State was James Buchanan, who was a Past Master of his lodge. The Secretary of War was William Marcy, and the Secretary of the Navy was the famous George Bancroft.

The first question his administration had to settle was the Texas-Mexico affair. President Polk, with his able cabinet, went deeply into the question before making a move. The nation was then small, our resources were undeveloped, with only the skeleton of an army and very little navy. The president thought we were on the defensive and backed General Scott in his invasion of Mexico.

Another problem to face was the dissatisfaction of the French over their sale of Louisiana and their eagerness to recover it. Spain was also regretting having to part with Florida. The question of deciding on the natural lines between Oregon and Canada presented the most acute issue the Administration had to meet but proved to be the least difficult, as we had honorable people with whom to deal. Polk was alive to the glory of planting our flag on the forts in California and commended Commodore Sloat.

The principal measures that distinguished President Polk's term of office were the adoption of the low tariff of 1844 that replaced the protective one of 1842; the establishment of the independent treasury system by which the revenues of the government were collected in specie without the aid of banks; the creation of the Department of Interior; and the admission of Wisconsin as a state.

When nominated in 1844, he stated he desired but one term, and in 1848 he was big enough to stick to his word and declined renomination. Polk retired from office in March of 1849 and died at his residence in Nashville, Tennessee, on the 15th of June at the age of 54. He was of medium size, with a receding brow and sharp, penetrating eyes. He was quick in his motions and plain in his dress and demeanor. His character was unsullied and without blemish.

James Knox Polk is buried in Nashville, and a beautiful memorial is erected over his grave.

One of the inscriptions upon it reads:

"The beauty of virtue was illustrated in his life. The excellency of Christianity was illustrated and exemplified in his death. By his public policy, he defined, established, and extended the boundaries of his country. He wanted the laws of the American Union on the shores of the Pacific. His influence and his councils tended to organize the National Treasury on the principle of the Constitution and to apply the rule of Freedom of Navigation, Trade & Industry."

Respectfully in your service,

Ronald J. Coates
Right Eminent Grand Commander
Grand Commandery Knights Templar of Tennessee

From the Eminent Grand Prelate

Sir Knight Dickie W. Johnson, PGC

Prelates Devotion for August

The Danger Of Pride

Jesus told many stories, or parables, to help His disciples and others understand what He was teaching. In one of His parables, Jesus talked about two men who went up to the temple to pray. One was a Pharisee and the other a tax collector.

The Pharisees were a prominent Jewish religious and political group. They were better at keeping the Law of Moses than anyone else and they were very proud of it. They were admired by many of the common people for their apparent piety.

The Hebrew people despised the tax collectors. They were Jews hired by the Roman government to collect taxes from the Hebrew people. The Romans allowed them to collect more than was required and to pocket the difference. The people hated paying taxes to a foreign government, and they hated being cheated by one of their own.

Jesus said that the Pharisee stood up in the temple and prayed about himself. He thanked God that he was not like other men—robbers, evildoers, adulterers—or even like the tax collector who stood at a distance. He bragged that he fasted twice every week and gave a tenth of all he received.

The tax collector stood off from others. He would not even lift his eyes to heaven but beat upon his breast and cried, "God, have mercy on me, a sinner." Jesus said that the tax collector was the one who went home justified before God and not the Pharisee.

The Pharisee did not go up to the temple to pray to God but to announce to all who could hear him of how good he was. The tax collector went up to the temple, recognizing his sin and begging for mercy.

When I think about the Pharisees, it scares me a little. It is so easy to let our pride cause us to act like the Pharisee. Our Masonic affiliations award us with many honors and titles. We must be very careful to not think we are better than others because we have received an honor. Remember, we are all on the same level! Likewise, we should never seek a title or position just for the honor of having it. We should always have a desire to help others. Jesus said, "Everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted."

Pride is dangerous. It can cause us to feel better than others and keep us from being close to our Lord and Savior. The tax collector's prayer should be our prayer because we all need the mercy of God. We must not let pride in our achievements stand between God and us!

In His Service,

Dickie W. Johnson, PGC

Eminent Grand Prelate

Grand Commandery Knights Templar of Tennessee

From the Very Eminent Deputy Grand Commander

Tim Sutton, KTCH

What Does Templary Mean To You?

Sir Knights,

Templary holds a special place in my heart. I love how unique it is compared to all the other Masonic bodies, from its lessons to the uniforms. My interest in Templary in Tennessee began before I had even taken my first step as an Entered Apprentice Mason. My journey started with a few casual conversations with coworkers, who I knew belonged to the fraternity, but I really was not sure if Masonry would be something I wanted to do. Over a period of time, I did a little research online about what was involved and found information on appendant bodies and discovered that the Knights Templar are actually a body of Masonry. I have always been interested in the history of the Templars, and the more I read about Masonic Templars, the more interested I became in joining.

This is what led me to petition to join my Blue Lodge and begin my journey as a Mason and eventually a Knight Templar. I progressed through my degrees with my goal of being knighted as my motivation, but I found my lodge had something to offer that I did not realize. I was starting to make friendships with guys that I would have never met if it had not been for the Lodge. This was what kept me coming back to every degree while I was working on my own. My first step into the York Rite came the day after my third degree. Less than 24 hours after being raised a Master Mason, I was sitting in a small class receiving the Mark Master Degree. I, like several other members across the state and in my own class that weekend, was pulled out of the class after the Order of Malta and told I would receive the Order of the Temple at a later date.

I received the Order of the Temple at an inspection and did not realize what my fellow Knights in my own Commandery had done for me, as, that night, I truly fell in love with Templary. It is truly special to be the active candidate in such an inspiring and impressive Order. I found myself renewed in my faith, impressed with the uniforms and outstanding ritual work, but most of all, with the friends I made that night. That night I met Knights, whom I had not yet met through the Lodge. I had several that made a lasting impression with kindness. Even at the dinner before the inspection, they had me sit between the Commander of my local Commandery and the Grand Commander. I was out of my comfort zone, but they have become lifelong friends.

Ask yourself, what makes you return to your Commandery every month? Is it the ritual? Is it the uniforms? Is it the history of the Order? Is it the Knights who you choose to surround yourself with? For me personally, it is absolutely the Knights I enjoy spending my time with. Through Templary I have made many great friendships, and I look forward to meetings to enjoy the fellowship with the Knights. I encourage you to attend regularly, no matter what made you interested to begin with, and enjoy the time you will be able to spend with like-minded men who also share the Christian religion. I encourage you to have that same fellowship outside of meetings and, my personal favorite, to have meals together.

Sir Knights, as you continue to confer this impressive Order, remember that you will make an impression on the candidate. I truly feel that if you make him feel welcome, and he sees the Knights of his Commandery that look forward to being there, he will be an active and lifetime member.

Tim Sutton, KTCH

Very Eminent Deputy Grand Commander

Grand Commandery Knights Templar of Tennessee

From the Eminent Grand Recorder

Quentin Bolden, KCT

It is that time of the year again in Tennessee! I can hear John Ward's voice ringing in my ears, but it is not football time; it is time for Annual Inspections to begin. Let us look at our inspections as a family reunion, when a bunch of your crazy uncles show up for a visit. Inspections should be a time of fun and fellowship mixed with some work to be done. It should not be a time of dread.

During our Battalion meetings, many of you learned that this year's inspection will be conducted a bit differently. The previous year's focus was based 51% on what the Recorder did and 49% on the conferral of the Order of the Temple. This focus leaves little room for error in order to earn a good grade for the Commandery. Ritual is important; that is what sets us apart from other fraternal organizations, but when we focus solely on ritual, we offer little opportunity for the Sir Knights to put into practice the precepts that they were supposed to learn when going through the Orders.

The innovative approach is the engagement of our Sir Knights in their Commanderies as well as Templary in general; being a Sir Knight is much more than simply obtaining the Order of the Temple. It should be how we interact with one another and the world around us. The Grand Commandery is looking at how our membership engages with one another as well as the world around us. We will be looking at the attendance of your membership as well as your elected and appointed officers. It is difficult to lead others if you are not present to do so. The other question is, what is your Commandery doing at your Conclaves to make it worth the effort to attend? Are you providing good and wholesome instruction? Are you providing education? An education not simply on tactics and ritual, but are you providing a general education on who the Templars were, how to live a Chivalric lifestyle, and what it means to be a Christian Knight? What is your Commandery doing for recruitment and retention of your members? All of this is important to keep your Sir Knights engaged.

The last, and certainly not the least, area of focus is our Knights Templar Charities. What is your Commandery doing to raise funds for the Knight Templar Eye Foundation and the Holy Land Pilgrimage? Passing the hat is fine and dandy, but if you notice, you are only collecting from the same guys. It will not be long before they grow weary of being nicked and dined to death. Is your Commandery thinking outside the box to collect from the community as a whole? Are you taking time to educate the community on what our charities are and how they can benefit from them? Fundraising also has a tendency to create some side benefits. One of the best benefits is that it creates fellowship among the members, as it will engage others who are not ritualists, and it will get them to focus on a common goal, creating Esprit de Corp.

To this end, Sir Knight Burks will be focusing on the ritual part of the inspection. I will be reviewing the Recorder's part of the inspection. Please document attendance, complete Ordinance Reports and submit them to the proper committee, and document in the minutes what you have done and what you are doing. All the areas that we are reviewing will gain points for the overall inspection grade, not just the ritual. This will give you a complete picture of what you are doing well and areas that need improvement.

If you need anything from the Grand Recorder's office, please do not hesitate to contact me. We will see you soon.

In the love of Christ,

Quentin Bolden, KCT
Eminent Grand Recorder
Grand Commandery Knights Templar of Tennessee

From the Grand Instructor/Inspector

Burks Taylor, KTCH, PGC

Leave No Doubt

The movie Remember the Titans has many memorable scenes, but one of my favorites is the scene where Coach Yoast walks out on the field and tells the referee to call the game fair or he will go to the newspapers and expose everyone involved and see them all thrown into jail. He then calls all the defensive players together and gives them a motivational speech! His final statement is, "Run it up, Herman! Leave No Doubt!"

This scene reminds me of an incident in the Bible, found in the Gospel of John, Chapter 11:38-42. In this passage, Jesus leaves no doubt about his identity. He tells Martha that if she believed in him, she would see the glory of God. Some of the people there said, Could not this man, who opened the eyes of the blind, also have kept this man from dying? Lazarus had been dead for four days, but Jesus cried with a loud voice, Lazarus, come forth! Jesus had been healing the sick for a while, but raising a man from the dead who had been in the tomb for four days would leave no doubt about his divinity.

Now, you may be wondering how this relates to your Commandery's inspection. I believe it has everything to do with it. If the candidate is the focus of the inspection, then we as Knights Templar must leave no doubt about who we are and what we believe. Jesus gave his all for each of us, and we should strive to give him the best of ourselves when we are performing the Order of the Temple. If we do no less than our best, what impression are we leaving with the candidate?

A candidate will not know if you miss a word, but they will sense that you are unprepared if you keep glancing at your book to figure out what is coming up and what you need to do. As a Knights Templar, it is your responsibility to be well-prepared. Memorize your lines, familiarize yourself with the small print, and understand when to use your sword. If you have been practicing all year, you will give it your best shot. However, if you do not study your part and keep looking at your book, others, and the candidate, they will know that you have not prepared and that you are not giving it your all!

I sometimes find myself perplexed by my brothers who attend the Lodge, work diligently, and practice their craft to perfection. However, they fail to demonstrate the same level of commitment and dedication to the Commandery, and they are Commandery Officers!

The yearly inspection serves as an opportunity for your Commandery to showcase its proficiency in conferring the Order of the Temple. You are informing the candidate that this night holds immense significance for him, as the Commandery will share profound teachings about Jesus, leaving no doubt in his mind that Jesus is and will forever be his Savior.

So, Sir Knights, giving less than your best is like a sounding brass or a tinkling cymbal—it means nothing, and that is what you will be telling the candidate.

In His Service,

Burks Taylor, KTCH, PGC
Grand Instructor/Inspector
Grand Commandery Knights Templar of Tennessee

From the Eminent Grand Captain General

Inspection time is coming; it is almost here! Sir Knight Burks informed us at the Battalion meetings of certain details of our ritual performances he will be watching for this year.

Sir Knight Burks strongly emphasized speaking loud enough for the Inspector and the candidate to hear, uncovering and recovering the chapeau in unison with the Commander when around the triangle, keeping enough distance around the triangle to be able to step in for libations, and proper drawing and handling of swords, including proper salutes from a junior officer to a superior. These are not all the subjects he talked about but are very important nonetheless.

Remember, our candidates are the most significant people at our inspections; they deserve the best we can give them. With all of this said, I say let's have a great time at the inspections without getting too stressed out.

Fraternally,
Gerry Reed
Eminent Grand Captain General
Grand Commandery Knights Templar of Tennessee

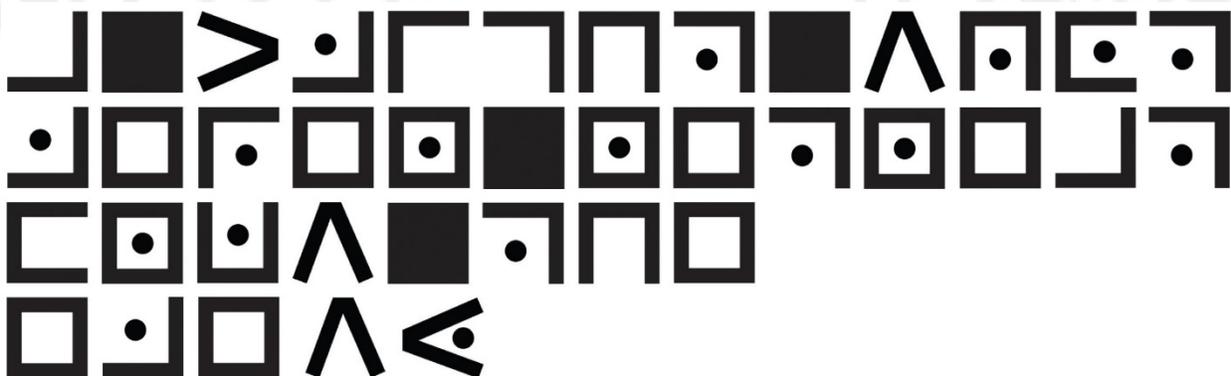
Upcoming Events

August

Saturday, August 9th -
Murfreesboro Commandery #10
Ill. Order of the Red Cross and Order of Malta
Eat at 8 AM
Conferrals to Follow

Monday, August 11th -
Murfreesboro Commandery #10
Order of the Temple
Eat at 6 PM
Conferral to Follow

Something to Decipher



2025 COMMANDERY INSPECTION SCHEDULE

Below is the schedule for Commandery Inspections. Meals begin one hour before Inspection time (12:00 PM and 6:00 PM) For more information, contact your Recorder.

Date	Time	Commandery	Location
Sat., Sept. 6	1:00 PM	CT Southwest No. 31	Memphis
	7:00 PM	CT Phillip Lacy No. 46	Selmer
Sat., Sept. 13	1:00 PM	ET Greenville No. 43	Greeneville
Fri., Sept. 19	7:00 PM	CT West TN Regional No. 13	Jackson
Sat., Sept. 20	1:00 PM	CT Paris No. 16	Paris
	7:00 PM	CT Clarksville No. 8	Clarksville
Thurs., Sept. 25	7:00 PM	ET Appalachia No. 45	Knoxville
Fri., Sept. 26	7:00 PM	ET Cyprus No. 23	Maryville
Sat., Sept. 27	1:00 PM	ET Chevalier No. 21	Oak Ridge
	7:00 PM	ET Coeur de Lion No. 9	Oak Ridge
Fri., Oct. 3	7:00 PM	CT Cumberland No. 26	Cookeville
Sat., Oct. 4	1:00 PM	CT Baldwin No. 7	Lebanon
	7:00 PM	CT DePayens No. 11	Franklin
Fri., Oct. 10	7:00 PM	ET Watauga No. 25	Johnson City
Sat., Oct. 11	1:00 PM	ET St. Omer No. 19	Bristol
	7:00 PM	ET Kingsport No. 33	Kingsport
Fri., Oct. 17	7:00 PM	ET Carter No. 37	Elizabethton
Sat., Oct. 18	1:00 PM	ET Cyrene No. 34	Dayton
	7:00 PM	ET Lookout No. 14	Chattanooga
Sat., Oct. 25	1:00 PM	CT Manchester No. 40	Manchester
	7:00 PM	CT Murfreesboro No. 10	Murfreesboro
Sat., Nov. 1	1:00 PM	CT Nashville No. 1	Nashville
	7:00 PM	CT Dickson No. 41	Dickson

Please refer to the Grand York Rite Calendar for the most up-to-date information
 The address for each Inspection is listed on the Grand York Rite Calendar

<http://www.tngrandyorkrite.org/calendar>

May We Be That Lighthouse

Rob Farmer, MEGHP

Companions, I want to take a moment to thank you during our family's difficult time this week. I have had countless calls and messages of support and comfort this week. We never really know how God is speaking to us and through us. It is no coincidence that last week at our group meeting my talk was about the importance of lighthouses to our family. Many companions came to me afterward and told me how lighthouses are important to them and how that light in the darkness guided them. On Wednesday at 9:38 AM, my family was cast into the darkness, but the light has been clear and bright. Thank you for that, Companions.



Today, I want to share a simple image with you—an image that has guided sailors for generations, weathered storms, and stood tall in the darkness: the lighthouse. Lighthouses do not move, and they do not chase. They stand strong, they shine, and because they do, others find their way.

Now let us pause and think about what that really means. A lighthouse does not remove the storm, but it gives hope in the midst of it. It does not change the sea, but it changes the outcome. And friends—that is what we are called to be.

As York Rite Masons, we are called to be lighthouses. Beacons of faith, of service, and of truth. Standing tall not for our own glory, but to reflect a greater Light—the Light of Christ, the true cornerstone of our faith and our lives. Scripture tells us in John 8:12, “I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will not walk in darkness but will have the light of life.” Jesus is the original lighthouse. He came into a world clouded with confusion, sin, and despair, yet He stood firm, and He did not waver. He shined with love, with truth, and with grace, and through His sacrifice, He lit a path for all humanity to follow.

Now, as Christians and as Masons—especially within the York Rite—we are called to reflect that Light. From the Royal Arch to the Cryptic degrees to the sacred orders of the Knights Templar, our journey is not just symbolic—it is spiritual. It teaches us that service, humility, and faith are not just

ideals. They are actions, and they are how we shine. But here is something beautiful: just like the lighthouse must be anchored to withstand the storm, we must be anchored too. Anchored in Christ, anchored in Scripture, and anchored in our Masonic principles of brotherly love, relief, and truth. And when we are, we become more than men. We become the mission. We become the kind voice in a harsh world. The steady hand in uncertain times. The shield for the vulnerable and the mentor for the lost. We become a beacon.

Think about your own community, your lodge, your church, and your home. What would it look like if every one of us chose to shine—every day? Maybe it's volunteering, maybe it's mentoring a young man who needs direction, or maybe it's praying with a neighbor who's struggling. These are not grand gestures. They are faithful flickers of light, and together, they become a blaze.

Do not forget, lighthouses are not built in safe harbors. They are built on rocks, where the waves crash hardest, so don't be discouraged if your path is difficult. That is where you are needed most.

Let me remind you, too, that the light does not come from the lighthouse itself. It comes from the source inside. Our source is Christ, and our calling, as York Rite Masons, is to keep that light burning—not just in ritual, but in life. We are not perfect, but we are called. Called to carry the banner of faith, called to build a legacy of honor, and called to love as Christ loved.

So stand tall, brothers. Shine bright and remember: a single lighthouse, in the darkest night, can save countless lives.

May we be that lighthouse. May we reflect His light. And may we guide others safely home—not by force, but by faith.

Thank you, and may God bless you.

Rob Farmer
Most Excellent Grand High Priest
Grand Chapter Royal Arch Masons of Tennessee



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MISSION

The mission of the Grand Commandery Knights Templar of Tennessee is to provide every Christian Freemason in Tennessee the opportunity and resources to develop, be engaged in, and exemplify a Christian chivalric lifestyle.

THE VISION OF THE GRAND COMMANDERY OF KNIGHTS TEMPLAR OF TENNESSEE

The Knights of the Grand Commandery of Tennessee are a group of men who share the Christian faith, exemplary character, a dedication to excellence and the service of others, and a desire to share the chivalric experience with other Christian Freemasons. Our Knights are actively engaged with one another in accomplishing this goal and in maintaining this standard of lifestyle and behavior.

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