

Tennessee Knight Templar News

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

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Edited by: Jesse J. Harper, KCT



On November 19, Right Eminent Ronald Coates, Grand Commander of the Grand Commandery Knights Templar of Tennessee, and Right Eminent Bruce Von Dwingelo, Grand Commander of the Grand Commandery Knights Templar of Kentucky, attended the conferral of the Order of the Temple at Clarksville Commandery #8. Several additional Grand York Rite officers from both Tennessee and Kentucky were also in attendance.

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: jesssharp@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**

January Message from the Grand Commander

Traditions Should Be a Rudder, Not an Anchor



Freemasonry possesses many traditions of which it has just cause to be proud, provided those traditions are employed as a guiding rudder rather than a restraining anchor.

When we point with pride and complacent self satisfaction to the cherished traditions of Freemasonry and allow them to lead us into inactivity, we misuse their true purpose. In such cases, those traditions do not hold us to a worthy course in fulfilling our obligations and assuming our responsibilities as Freemasons. Instead, they bind us to inaction.

The achievements of Freemasons of the past, when invoked with pride yet used to excuse present inaction, cease to function as a living legacy. Such misuse deprives future generations of any comparable record of accomplishment and transforms time honored traditions into a restraining anchor, preserved in form but no longer engaged as a dynamic force directing progress toward achievements worthy of equal esteem.

Are we not, as those with many years in Freemasonry, inclined to recall the accomplishments of our earlier service with pride, when we were active in the work, advanced through the line, and occupied the Master's chair, yet permit those experiences to justify present inactivity? In doing so, we allow past service to anchor us rather than guide us, neglecting the greater measure of service that our accumulated experience uniquely qualifies us to render.

Let us not be content merely to point with pride to our long established traditions. Let us not rest upon the number of Freemasons who signed the Declaration of Independence or served in the Constitutional Convention. Let us not rely solely on the accomplishments of George Washington and his generals, nor on the Freemasons who have held office as Presidents, governors, members of the Supreme Court, or in countless other positions of honor and trust. Let us not be satisfied simply to recall the deeds of great Freemasons whose names are emblazoned upon the pages of history.

While we should rightly take pride in the accomplishments of Freemasons of former generations, such pride must not anchor us in self complacency. Their achievements should serve as a guiding rudder, directing us to labor in a comparable manner for our God, our country, our brethren, and the Freemasonry of our own time. In honoring the past, we must also fulfill our responsibility to the present, ensuring that the legacy we leave is worthy of those who will follow.

Traditions are splendid if used as a rudder instead of an anchor.

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 January

A New Beginning

"At that time Jesus came from Nazareth in Galilee and was baptized by John in the Jordan." (Mark 1:9)

As we begin a new year, let us look at another beginning that took place more than 2,000 years ago. Mark's message is threefold. First, the baptism of Jesus and the beginning of His public ministry usher in the New Age. The signs are the splitting of the Heavens, the descent of the Holy Spirit, and the voice from Heaven. The one more powerful than John is here!

Mark's second message is that Jesus is the Son of God. Jesus, as the Son of God, is portrayed as both sovereign and servant. The third message is the commissioning of Jesus for His ministry. Jesus proved to be more powerful than John. In the power of the Holy Spirit, He did battle against demons and evil forces that maim, cripple, alienate, and destroy human life. Yet, in Him there is no arrogant display of power, for He is the Servant of God whose ministry will take Him to the cross.

As we consider these three messages from Mark, let us look at some things of interest. Why would the Son of God be baptized? John was hesitant to baptize Jesus. After all, we are talking about the Son of God! But Jesus told John, *"It is proper for us to do this to fulfill all righteousness."* For Mark, the baptism of Jesus is an epiphany, a declaration of the Son of God. By Mark's time, it was also a statement of the Church's understanding. As Disciples of Christ, we are people of the New Age. As people of the New Age, Jesus' followers shared that power made available through Him and the Holy Spirit (and we do too). Also, Jesus does not call us to do anything He would not do Himself. With His baptism, Jesus was setting an example. What kind of an example are we setting today?

What does baptism mean to us? Baptism was a beginning point for Jesus. Should it not also be a beginning point for us? Remember that Jesus was committed to doing the will of God. He would do dramatic things like driving out demons and raising the dead, but He also went to the cross! How committed are we? Sometimes we are committed only as long as it is convenient. We all have many things to do—important things to do. But we also have God's work to do!

Baptism is also a mark. It shows the world that we are following Jesus! It is a mark that says to the world that we want and desire a relationship with God. And God wants a relationship with us. When Jesus suffered and died on the cross, the great curtain around the Holy of Holies was torn apart, signifying that God wants nothing to stand between Him and us. God has gone to great lengths to give us the opportunity to have a relationship with Him. Even to the point of allowing Jesus to suffer and die on the cross! Can you see the grace of God in all this? Grace, God's grace, grace that is greater than all our sin!

In His Service,

Dickie W. Johnson, PGC
Eminent Grand Prelate
Grand Commandery Knights Templar of Tennessee

The Significance of a Drill Team In Relation to Commandery Activities

By Roy Wilford Riegler, PGC

Originally printed: *Knight Templar Magazine*, January 1963

Our great Order of Christian Knighthood is a militant body. A uniformed knight in the Asylum or on the street publicizes our Order and the ideals for which it stands. A knight in uniform shows his brother Masons and the world that he is proud to be a Knight Templar. The marching columns of knights, preceded by the flag of our country, and the Grand Standards of Templary, are testimony of our faith in God and our belief in the Christian religion. At the same time they demonstrate our allegiance and loyalty to the nation we love. For centuries these hosts of knights with plumes of white and in their uniforms of black have marched down the streets of a thousand and more cities to the beat of "Onward Christian Soldiers." Spectators on the street never hear the strains of this powerful, marching hymn, and see the columns of white plumes, without standing in awe and admiration.

The dignified uniform of a Knight Templar should be seen on more public occasions. As Knights Templar we should always present our cause to the best advantage. The public appearances of Knights Templar in full uniform create a high regard for our Order. The precise conduct of marching knights in drill team formation, with its orderly system of movements and maneuvers, incites the admiration of both young and old. Many a lad who watched a Knight Templar parade from the sidelines later became a devoted Sir Knight.

Our great Order means more than banners and plumes. It means more than swords and drills. It means, first and above all, our support of the Christian religion and the practice of the Christian virtues. So long as there are orphaned lives to shelter and aching hearts to comfort, so long as there are minds to develop and eyes to mend, our Order will have a recurring and unfinished service to perform. Therefore, we include the Educational Loan Fund and the Eye Foundation in our permanent and expanding program to aid the helpless, destitute and needy. To show our faith in God and Jesus Christ, we give special attention to Easter, Ascension Day and Christmas, and we have divine services during each of our Grand Conclaves. Through our Patriotic Activities we arouse love for country and flag. The Stars and Stripes occupies the position of highest honor in our Templar Asylum.

Templary offers the knight many opportunities for self-expression. He can find an outlet for his interest and energy in that place in the Asylum which appeals to him most. If he is an executive, his talents can be utilized in positions of leadership and administrative responsibility within our Order. If he is an able speaker, the dais is available to him on many occasions, and he can represent his Commandery and our cause in other places when it is appropriate. If he is a ritualist, the Triangle and its inspirational devotions are awaiting him. If he desires action the knight can achieve an amazing amount of satisfaction and render invaluable service to his Commandery by mastering with other fraters the beautiful maneuvers of the drill team." The camaraderie engendered by a drill team-no matter what its size-leads to closer bonds of friendship within a group of dedicated Sir Knights than can be acquired in any other way.

The Committee on Drill Regulations of the Grand Encampment, which is primarily responsible for the promotion of drill teams, understands fully that this program is not the ultimate goal of Templary. However, the Committee does believe that nothing promotes more interest in a Commandery than an

active and proficient drill team. The encouragement and success of the militant phase of our Order is directly related to the advancement and influence of Templary everywhere.

Every Commandery that has a drill team, be it large or small, is a better and stronger Commandery in every other department of the work. Such a Commandery executes its floor work in the Asylum in a precise manner, and is bound to perform its ritualistic work more impressively. Also, the members of a drill team form a ready stockpile of future officers. The Commandery with an active drill team has a well-groomed and well-disciplined unit ready for funerals, the opening of the Commandery in full form, the prelate's escort, the Triangle guard, parades, and the dedication of public buildings. The drill team is ever ready to perform all these duties and such other approved functions as may develop from time to time.

Furthermore, the drill team is one way of attracting candidates to the Order, as well as bringing back into the fold those knights who have wandered away. A drill team has the faculty of sustaining the interest and enthusiasm of both the new and old Sir Knights. It is one way by which the Commandery can "travel forty miles and more over frozen ground" on the wonderful adventure of glorious and knightly service. It is one way by which we can keep the spirit of Christ-our guiding spirit-alive and fresh in our hearts; a way by which we, by our personal conduct and deeds of charity and pure beneficence, can impress this spirit upon our friends and the public. If Sir Knights keep this spirit solely to themselves, then they are hiding their light under a bushel. If the rose is to develop and bloom, it must be exposed to the sun. The church was not born out of the experiences of men praying alone in their closets, but out of the experiences of men of the world praying and worshiping together. The drill team is one sure way of making certain that our Order does not lose ground and that it will continue to play its full part in our day and generation.

The organization, training and support of a drill team is not a difficult undertaking for any Commandery. The drill teams that won second place in Class A and first place in Class B at the Cleveland Triennial in 1961 both came from small Commanderies. Any Commandery can have and support a drill team if it so resolves. It may be only a small team trained to assist in the full form opening and floor work of the Commandery. Or it may be a larger team that is capable of winning honors in its Grand Commandery and going on from there to the Triennial Conclave. Enthusiasm of the participating knights and capable and energetic leadership are essential to the organization and development of a drill team. Encouragement and cooperation from all members of the Commandery are also vitally necessary. A drill team cannot be equipped and trained to a high degree of proficiency without determined effort and much work. However, once a drill team is organized and the formations and maneuvers are mastered, the reward for all this hard work is great. The Commandery sponsoring the drill team gets a face lifting and a new glow permeates its entire membership. Something indefinable takes hold of the Commandery, activity in the Asylum increases, and problems are faced with more determination.

From 1929 to 1952 a Commandery in a Midwestern city boasted one of the best drilled teams in the Grand Encampment. This drill team won first place each year in state competition from 1930 to 1952, during which period it placed high in Grand Encampment competition. Then, because of old age, loss of manpower, and lack of interest, the team disintegrated. For ten years the knights of this Commandery waited for the day when they would have another drill team. In the meantime the members dreamed but did nothing, while their Commandery deteriorated in many of its activities.

Indifference and complacency crept into the Commandery. The knights were content to perform routine duties and take the path of least resistance. The opening of the Commandery in full form and the other formations on the floor of the Templar Asylum were performed in an ill-prepared manner. The ritualistic work was given in a half-memorized, ritual-in-hand fashion. Because the Grand Conclave was coming to this city, the knights of this Commandery finally aroused themselves. Their drill team was reorganized and a rigorous training period was climaxed by winning first place in its division. Now, the knights have set their eyes toward the next Triennial Conclave in Philadelphia in 1964. The reorganization and success of its drill team have rejuvenated this Commandery. Once more this Commandery and its drill team are riding the crest of enthusiasm and high resolve for the cause of Him under whose Banner we are enlisted. It is obvious that a Commandery can be stirred from its lethargy and stimulated to its fullest capacity by a drill team.

The Committee on Drill Regulations is "spreading the gospel" about drill teams and urging their formation on every hand. However, this program of the Grand Encampment cannot succeed if left solely to this Committee. Every Templar magazine and periodical throughout our land should give full coverage to drill teams and their importance to our Order. Drill teams should be one of the subjects on the agenda of all Templar speakers and should be encouraged and praised at every opportunity by all Sir Knights. When this is done, Templary will be well served.

Columbia Commandery # 47 Officer Installation

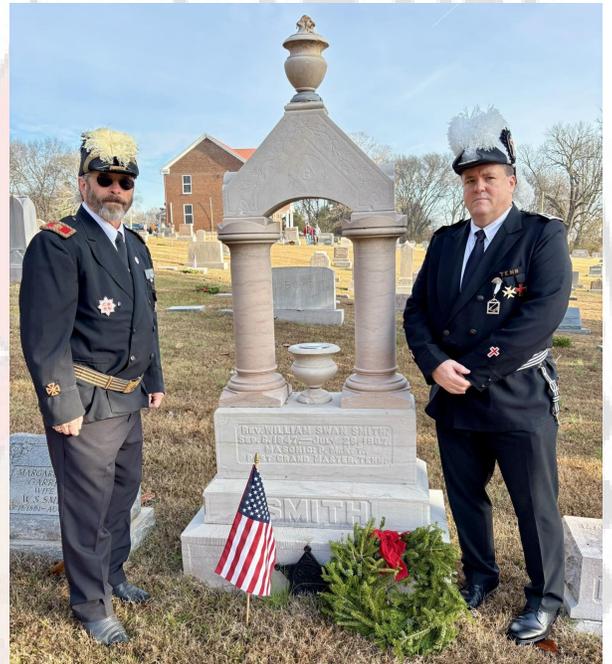


On December 22, Right Eminent Grand Commander Ronald Coates had the honor and pleasure of installing the officers of the newest chartered Commandery in the state, Columbia Commandery #47. Sir Knight Troy Maynor of De Payens Commandery #11 served as the Installing Marshall for the installation.

Wreathes Across America



Pictured left: Sir Knights Bill Caffey, Very Eminent Deputy Grand Commander Tim Sutton, and Eminent Grand Sword Bearer David Harwell. These Sir Knights, among several others, represented the Commanderies of the Upper East Battalion.



Pictured right: Sir Knights Jim Yoder and Jeff Noland, the Eminent Commander and Senior Warden, respectively, of Coeur de Lion Commandery #9. They are placing a wreath at the grave of William Swan Smith, who served as Most Worshipful Grand Master of the Grand Lodge of Tennessee in 1891.

A Prayer For The New Year

Originally printed: *Knight Templar Magazine*, January 1967

Lord, thou hast been our dwelling place in all generations, and we who are pilgrims would learn by faith to walk with Thee. We know that Thou wilt guide us in the future as Thou hast in the past. We do not know what the New Year will bring, for we cannot see our way. But Thou canst see the end from the beginning and we can trust our lives to Thee. As we set our course in the New Year, we know full well that it will bring many changes. The old must give place to the new. Help us to live every hour of every day of it with unwearied zeal and devotion that we may continue the works of goodness and justice and mercy. Enable us as Sir Knights to be thy partners in determining the shape of things to come. School us to heroism in daily living. Make us high-minded disciples. Grant unto us a broad vision, to better chart our course in Thy service. In things little and large may we cultivate the inner eye which dwells upon the strong Son of God, until we become in ourselves shrines of spiritual strength. Send us forth into the New Year to our several tasks and battles with the courage and fortitude that belongs to Knights of the Cross. This we pray in the name of Him, who is the same yesterday, today, and forever, even Christ our great Captain.

AMEN

-Dr. Howard R. Towne, D.D., G.P.



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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