
RENEWING TEMPLARY RITUAL AWARDS

The Opportunity We Face

During a 2023 Department Conference, the Grand Master, Sir Knight David J. Kussman, noted that there were several Grand Commanderies which were unable to confer the Orders because they lacked Knights capable of conferring the Orders. This has led to the untenable and unsustainable situation where candidates for the Orders are required to have the work conferred in other jurisdictions or the Orders are conferred not from memory but from reading the work from the Ritual book. While the former is certainly preferable to the latter, it is clearly in violation of the spirit, if not the letter, of Section 176 of the Constitution, Statutes, and Decisions of the Grand Encampment

This presents us with several opportunities. One is the opportunity to clarify Section 176 to remove any ambiguity. This will be addressed elsewhere. Another opportunity is to address methods we might invoke in order to encourage greater study and proficiency in our Ritual work, ensuring that every Commandery, and thus every Grand Commandery, has the ability and the resources to create new knights which we so desperately need if we are to reverse the downward trend in membership and provide those new knights with the high quality ritualistic work to which they are entitled and we have long claimed is a core principle of our being the “premier Masonic body.” It is this opportunity addressed here.

Recovering Our Ritual Proficiency as Individual Knights

The inspection process is the “stick” in the “carrot and stick” model. The “carrot” consists of the rewards and incentives presented to the individual knights and the Commanderies as they take steps to improve themselves. The Grand Encampment cannot mandate education or training, but it can encourage and acknowledge it. For example, we have the highly successful York Rite Leadership Program and the quickly growing Commissioned Templar Chaplain and Templar Education programs. These programs not only provide outstanding educational benefits, but those who complete them are duly recognized. We need to adopt a similar program to recognize individual Ritual excellence as well.

Several Grand Commanderies have some form of Ritual proficiency recognition. Virginia, Indiana, and Maryland are three that have certainly built a reputation. Indiana’s program, in fact, was adopted with a modification for the short form of the Order of Malta in Maryland back in 2015, and Maryland in fact uses the same metal ribbon jewels as Indiana. Prior to 2015, Maryland had a regulation that required candidates for Captain General to be certified to confer the Order of Malta, Generalissimo to confer the Illustrious Order of Red Cross, and Commander to confer the Order of the Temple before election to that office. This

requirement was removed as a result of Vaught Decision 8, as it violated the Grand Encampment constitutional right of any Sir Knight to be elected to any office. While a noble goal, it only ensured that the presiding officer part in each of those Orders (Prior, Sovereign Master, Commander respectively) was able to be proficiently conferred, as the inspection system did not ensure the Commandery was able to confer the Orders.

In the system developed by Indiana, a metal military-style ribbon jewel is awarded for points earned by performing certain sections of the Ritual. Longer and more involved parts score more points than short ones, of course, and the expectation is to confer a given part twice on active candidate (two separate instances). One such ribbon is worn at a time, with a lower-ranking ribbon exchanged for the next higher one earned. Such recognition is focused on the individual's achievement and recognizes not just pure memorization and recitation to an evaluator or mentor, but active participation in the conferring of the Orders and the creating of new knights. As a ribbon, and not a large jewel, it helps to provide easy identification without adding to the growing clutter of jewels (medals and breast stars) that have become as ubiquitous as lapel pins.

Both the General Grand Chapter and General Grand Council have established Ritual proficiency awards for their respective member bodies. It is logical for the Grand Encampment to take a similar approach in recognizing Ritual proficiency. The use of a system like Indiana, Maryland, or Virginia, using a ribbon-style rather than a jewel, not only reduces the uniform clutter, but also reduces the cost for the recognition. By standardizing such a program at the Grand Encampment, we all benefit by not only having a universal program in place, but we leverage the benefit of our standard Ritual, allowing knights who relocate permanently or temporarily to a different jurisdiction to be easily identified as ritually-proficient, but to continue to qualify for additional levels of recognition without having to start over under a new jurisdiction's guidelines.

Further, recognizing individual achievement encourages Knights to be active participants and engaged in learning and conferring multiple roles on multiple occasions. Since the requirements mandate performing a part twice in order to receive credit, there is an incentive for Commanderies to ensure multiple conferral cycles each year *and* for Knights to travel and assist other Commanderies as needed in order to receive the necessary credits toward the recognition. This becomes a win-win situation, because the more we confer the Orders well, the more proficient we become *and* we are creating more Knights in our Order, increasing our membership and strengthening our Commanderies.

How These Two Approaches Work Together

We have an opportunity before us to rebuild our membership and our ability to recognize the work of individuals necessary to accomplish that rebuilding. Inspections (addressed in a separate white paper) are never fun, but without inspections, there is no independent evaluation to confirm our own self-assessment. Inspections and evaluations are but one method to take a snapshot in time and say, "This is what was

observed, both good and bad, on this particular day with these particular circumstances.” Inspection reports then become the roadmap for the Commanderies to move forward and prepare for the next year, but more importantly, to provide a better experience for our future knights receiving the work in the Commanderies. Providing a better experience sets a proper level of expectation for the new knights, and most certainly will encourage them to seek out opportunities to assume roles and be an active participant in the work of their new Commandery.

Individual recognition through the Ritual Proficiency program becomes one of the ways in which both new and experienced knights can not only engage in the study of our Ritual and Tactics but be a part of the conferring of the Orders on candidates. As more knights engage in the Ritual Proficiency program, Commanderies have more members ready and willing to participate in the conferral of Orders. This allows the elected and appointed officers to place more focus on the planning and executing of programs for the Commandery while those valuable and valiant knights on the sidelines are taking an active role in the Commandery’s work as well.

An active and engaged member generally stays that way and is present at most of the Commandery activities because he understands and appreciates the value and importance of his participation. This aids in increased participation by others, greater retention, and stronger recruitment of like-minded men. It will not correct a 200,000 member reduction overnight, but it is a starting point and a very strong tool in our toolbox for recovery and restoration of the premier Masonic status Knights Templar claim as our own.

Attachment: Grand Commandery of Indiana Ritual Award Program

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Order of the Red Cross		
Sovereign Master	120	_____
Prince Chancellor	15	_____
Prince Master of the Palace	15	_____
Master of Cavalry	10	_____
Master of Infantry	100	_____
Excellent High Priest	70	_____
Master of Finance	5	_____
Master of Dispatches	5	_____
Warder	35	_____
Jewish Guard	5	_____
Persian Guard	15	_____
Vow	45	_____
Sash	10	_____
Sword	10	_____
Means of Recognition	30	_____
Banner of the Order	10	_____
<i>(Jewish Council)</i>		
Jeremiah	10	_____
Isaiah	15	_____
Haggai	10	_____
Hosea	15	_____
Obadiah	10	_____
Amos	15	_____

Mediterranean Pass		
Prior	60	_____
Chaplain	5	_____
Marshall	15	_____
Captain of the Outpost	15	_____

Order of Malta		
Prior	170	_____
Lieutenant Commander	5	_____
Captain General	5	_____
Chaplain	5	_____
Marshall	75	_____
Captain of the Outposts	15	_____
Birth Banner	15	_____
Life Banner	15	_____
Death Banner	30	_____
Resurrection Banner	15	_____
Ascension Banner	15	_____
Knight at the West Table	30	_____
St. John Banner	20	_____
Malta Banner	5	_____

Order of the Temple		
Commander	205	_____
Generalissimo	15	_____
Captain General	25	_____
Senior Warden	55	_____
Junior Warden	90	_____
Prelate	160	_____
Standard Bearer	5	_____
Sword Bearer	10	_____
Warder	40	_____
Hermit	10	_____
Prelate's Escort	5	_____
Guards	5	_____
Ode to the Skull	15	_____
Sword	25	_____
Baldric	10	_____
Spur	5	_____
Chapeau	10	_____
Remaining Attributes	45	_____
Banners	15	_____
Flag Lecture	20	_____
Explanatory Lecture	80	_____

Procedure to submit form for award:

1. Review the list of parts and lectures. Initial the points by the parts that you have given from Memory twice during the Orders.
2. Add-up the total points.
3. Enter the total here _____

PLEASE PRINT:

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____

State/Zip: _____

Telephone: _____

E-Mail: _____

Commandery: _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____




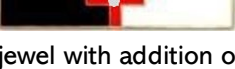
Local Recorder's Signature

Attachment: Grand Commandery of Indiana Ritual Award Program

As a way of increasing the interest and participation in the ritual work at the local level, the Grand Commandery of the State of Indiana has instituted a **“Ritual Award Program.”**

The program is based on the three Orders conferred in the Commandery. The award is to be a Bar to be worn on Uniform and a certificate to be printed with the level of proficiency. Each part must have been performed two (2) times for credit. All work is to be done from memory and in full form. You are expected to do a creditable job in the part you are exemplifying. This implies not just memorization but also correct tactics, vocal emphasis, gestures, etc. appropriate to the part. Credit for previous exemplifications will be accepted on your honor as a Knight Templar. All work done is to be attested to by the application of your signature and the signature of your local recorder to this form.

There are four levels of proficiency for the Program:

Level	Title	Jewel Bar
Level 1	Pilgrim	
Level 2	Warrior	
Level 3	Knight	
Level 4	Commander	 (Same as Knight jewel with addition of a diamond chip)

THE CHALLENGE

As a Knight Templar, you are challenged to select and perform from the various parts and lectures from the rituals of three Orders that make up the Commandery. This provides you with an opportunity to play an active role within your Commandery. By taking part in this program, you will be making YOURSELF a dedicated Ritualist and your Commandery stronger.

On the reverse side of this form are the point values for the different parts. Please initial by the point value for that part. Total up the points and submit this form along with a check made out to Grand Commandery of Indiana in the amount of \$10.00 to your local Recorder. He will sign off on the form and submit it to the Grand Recorder:

Awards will be sent to the local Recorder for proper presentation. Incomplete or improper forms will be returned to the Recorder.

(The \$10.00 is the cost for the first award. After attaining enough points to move to the next level, you have to update your form and resubmit it along with your previous award bar.)

The Ritual Bar is to be worn to the right of the ITA bar. In the absence of an ITA bar, it will be worn where the ITA bar is shown below. If the ritual bar is the only bar worn, then it will be centered 1/2" to 3/4" above the pocket welt.

