The Commander of each Commandery is ordered to read this general order at the first Conclave following receipt.

The Grand Commandery, 
Knights Templar, State of New York

SK Donald J. Berry, Grand Commander 2012-2013 
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General Order No.1
To the Grand Line Officers, Past Grand Commanders, and all Sir Knights of the Constituent Commanderies of the Grand Commandery, Knights Templar, State of New York

“SPUR TO ACTION”

Knightly Greetings:

The Knights Templar of the Crusades instituted their Order with a clear mission to protect pilgrims traveling on the roads to the Holy Shrines of Palestine. We honor their valiant memory in our Order. We take the title of Sir Knight as an outward sign that we serve our Savior and follow his discipline of humility and truth. When we draw swords and give the cuts in our opening ceremony we feel the strength of our special branch of the Masonic family. When we give thanks and ask guidance from our Savior and our Creator and repeat the articles of our belief we are reminded of our humility and our vocation as Knights in this modern world.

That vocation is Charity and Hospitality to all people regardless of their stations and beliefs. As Masons we learned that integrity and fidelity are their own reward. As Royal Arch Masons we learned that our spiritual temple must be rebuilt with perseverance. As Cryptic Masons we learned that our commitments should be inviolable. When we took up the sword as Knights Templar we took up the discipline of honor and service to all people and to our religion. Our quest is to improve ourselves as men of faith and honor.

It is our duty to find in ourselves that Knight who would protect the roads to the sacred places of our Fraternity and all its branches. Our time is precious, our Commanderies need our participation to thrive and grow, but we are part of the system of Freemasonry. We should not forget this, nor be forgotten by that system. Those places where we have made our mark as Masons should know that we are Knights Templar. Our usefulness as mentors and honor guards should be fully employed in the Masonic realm with that aim in view. We should invite our Brothers and Companions into our Commanderies for an open night and explain why our Order is important to us, and why it should be to them as well.
New Membership and Retention are two sides of the same coin. Our new Knights need an education in the history and the current workings of our Order. Education evenings in your regular conclaves will draw out some of your missing Knights who will attend to find out if they agree or disagree with those teachings. Productive meetings are the positive key to retention. An organization that is doing something interesting attracts membership, both new and existing.

Communication is the key to our survival and success as an organization. A Commandery that is having difficulty communicating will have difficulty surviving. We live in an information age. Failure to supply information is to fail as an organization. Unless our Knights and friends know what we are doing they will assume that we are doing nothing. Our Commanderies must communicate the date and time of our monthly conclaves to our Knights by mail, email or telephone and let them know our plans. Our Knights have a right to know what is happening in their Commandery; a right to know the decisions and communications of the Grand Encampment and this Grand Commandery. Information should come from the individual Commandery where it has been directed for dispersal. We have the tools in this computer driven age to communicate with relative ease. Put some of your Knights to work on a communication strategy and give them the chance to show their skill at this task. Chances are you will find those Knights enjoy their work, and your Commandery will enjoy the results.

Conferral of the Orders and our Tactics are the answer to one of our most important problems in our Commanderies. Our Orders are the central reason for our existence as a fraternal Order. The York Rite is composed of three units which confer degrees and orders of great Masonic importance. Our Order is the most significant for a Christian Mason. We have a duty to support and maintain this ritual effort. If your Commandery is not already conferring the Orders in full or short form this should be the central goal of your work every year, even if done for rehearsal. By doing this you maintain interest and foster a better understanding of our work. You have officers and Knights and they need something to do beyond the opening ceremony - ritual work is the answer.

The tactics of opening and closing a Commandery are similar to the opening of a Lodge, Chapter or a Council and should be complete and well performed. If a Commandery cannot open per tactics for lack of Knights, those present should practice their roles at the conclave. By doing this, they will advance their knowledge and encourage participation. If we wish to improve we must seek perfection. Trying to attain it is a noble effort worthy of our skill and ability.

Zone Schools of Instruction and Seminars assist us in pursuing proficiency and understanding in the ritual experience. These events bring new ideas to our eyes and ears regarding the tactics, sword manual, uniform, regulations and other issues. This year there will be morning sessions and sessions held in conjunction with regular Commandery Conclaves. The Grand Generalissimo and Grand Captain General have good experience in our work. They will make it an event well worth attending. The topics this year will be the Duties of the Eminent Commander, as outlined in our Training Manual, the Manual of the Sword, and the correct parade uniform as found in our regulations. Your attendance as Sir Knights is requested. Locations and times are listed below, in the Roster (Red Book) and on the Grand Commandery Website: www.grandcommanderyktny.org.

ZONE SCHOOLS OF INSTRUCTION AND SEMINARS 2012-2013
SK Charles Roberts, GG, & SK Fred Beitter, GCG (ordered by event date)

Zone 12 – Monday, October 8, 2012, Roberts (Commanderies 20, 30, 34, 40, 64, 78, 80)
Lake Erie Commandery No. 20 - Evening Session – Begins at 7:30 pm
Masonic Community Center, 692 Ridge Road, Lackawanna, N.Y. 14212-1508

Zones 3 & 4 – Thursday, November 8, 2012, Beitter (Commanderies 42, 43, 53, 67)
Cyprus Commandery No. 67– Evening Session – Begins at 7:30 pm
1-7 Courtland Street, Middletown, NY 10940

Zone 6 – Thursday, November 8, 2012, Roberts (Commanderies 46, 76)
Inspections are an important tool of our Grand Commandery for two reasons; they help the Grand Commander and his successors better understand the state of our jurisdiction and its concerns, and they allow the Sir Knights of all Commanderies a chance to meet and enjoy an evening with every Grand Line Officer before he becomes Grand Commander. Your Inspecting Officer will communicate with you prior to his inspection. I trust you will show him the same courtesy and hospitality you showed to me when I inspected your Commandery.

Inspection Requirements for 2012-2013 are chosen by your Grand Commandery to create a picture of the workings and health of our Commanderies. This year you will find changes in the inspection form which reflect a better idea of what you are doing and allow more credit for your work. Letter grades are used to categorize the health of a Commandery. They are not intended to boost or lessen the morale of the Officers and Knights of a Commandery. Explanation of the Inspecting Officer’s grading is included in his report. If you do not receive a copy of your inspection report, inform me. I will make sure you receive it.

Grand Line Officers are directed to inspect Commanderies of this jurisdiction on the dates listed in the Roster (Red Book). It is their duty to inspect the following items: Paraphernalia, Equipment, Charter, Recorder and Treasurer’s books and records, audit reports, a current copy of completed Form “F” and the latest Annual return. They must receive a copy of the Recorder’s worksheet in advance, or at the inspection, for inclusion in the report before submitting it to the Grand Commander, Zone Commander, Inspection Review Board and your Commandery.

Ritual Requirements for Inspections: Each Commandery is required to perform the Opening and Closing Ceremony as per Tactics, including the Rehearsal of Duties and the Sword Manual as found on the Grand Commandery Website: www.grandcommanderykttny.org (Recorder’s Documents)

In addition, the following work from the Ritual of the Grand Encampment of Knights Templar of The United States of America, 1979 edition is to be performed by the Commandery, or Commanderies, being inspected:
The Illustrious Order of the Red Cross: page 39 beginning with "This Sword, of which...", and ending on page 40 with "...of this Illustrious Order."

The Order of Malta: page 77 starting with "I now invest you...", and ending on page 78 with "...or lay it aside."

The Valiant and Magnanimous Order of the Temple: Page 146 starting with "As a Knight Templar...", and ending on page 146 with "...shall become universal and eternal."

In the fortunate event of an Order being performed at the time of his inspection, the Inspecting Officer may allow entire Order to serve as the ritual requirement for the Inspection and grade accordingly, but the requirements of opening fully per Tactics including the Rehearsal of Duties and the Sword Manual must be performed before the Order is conferred, with the Closing per Tactics at the conclusion of the evening.

The Grand Line Officers are your future Grand Commanders. As they advance through the Grand Line, what they learn about you forms their understanding of this jurisdiction. Share your problems with them, seek their advice, ask questions, and knock on their door for help in making your Commandery a place of pride and enjoyment for all who enter.

Our Charities are our face to the world outside our Order. For those who do not know the Knights Templar, information about the Knight Templar Eye Foundation’s role in research of diseases of the eye, the Knight Templar Scholarship Fund’s grant to a deserving student or a Pastor receiving a sponsored trip to the Holy Land will bring them to awareness in a sudden flash. Our Charities have suffered in the recent downturn in the economy but participation is most important. If you can donate five dollars or more to one or more of these charities and your fellow Sir Knights match your contribution, we will have given more than in many previous years. Your part in making us more visible to the public will help you recruit new members.

Grand Commandery Events

The Grand Commander's Reception will be held on Saturday, October 27, 2012 at the Hudson Valley Resort and Spa. All Sir Knights, their ladies and friends are invited to attend. Invitations have been mailed to your Recorder and an information form is available at the Grand Commandery Website: www.grandcommanderyktny.org

Regional Seminars/ Zone Schools of Instruction will be held on dates and in locations as listed in the Roster (Red Book) and at the Grand Commandery Website.

Annual Inspections of Commanderies will be held on dates as listed in the Roster (Red Book) and at the Grand Commandery Website.

The 86th Annual Grand Encampment Easter Sunrise Service will be held in Alexandria, Virginia, on Easter Weekend 2013. This is a wonderful way to spend Easter weekend with your family and fellow Sir Knights of other Jurisdictions. More Information can be found on the Grand Encampment Website: www.knightstemplar.org

St John’s Day in Utica, NY, at the Masonic Care Community is another good way to show others that we are part of the Masonic Structure. If you not already in the Saturday parade, I encourage you to put on your uniform and sword and march with your Grand Commandery. We form a reception line for the Grand Lodge as they march into Tompkins Memorial Chapel and perform an arch of steel for the Grand Master. I encourage your participation at this event.

The 200th Annual Grand Conclave of the Grand Commandery will be held on September 21, 22 & 23, 2013 at the Hudson Valley Resort and Spa. Information will be found nearer the date at the Grand Commandery Website.

Dispensations will be granted for public ceremonies and parades where our Sir Knights appear in uniform, and changes of dates and locations of summoned conclaves. The request should be sent to your Zone Commander and he will forward it to the Grand Commander. Dispensation is not required for honor guard duty at a Masonic related activity, appearing in a Masonic setting in uniform, or a
special conclave of your Commandery. These activities should be listed on your annual return and inspection form.

In Conclusion, we must set our hearts and minds to work if we wish to prosper as an organization. In this 199th year of our Grand Commandery, we can look back over two centuries of effort by those who came before us but we cannot rest on their accomplishments. We must spur to action to accomplish our individual objective of self improvement as men of faith, honor and valor, and our common objective of spreading the Light of brotherly love and affection.

Chivalry is our code, Masonry is our objective and the Great Light is our guide. The Great Captain of our Salvation, our Savior Jesus Christ, gave us the greatest commandment to love God with all our heart, soul and mind, and love our neighbor as we love ourselves. These are tools to help us move forward to success as an Order whose grand characteristics are Charity and Hospitality. Let us exercise these ideals in our hearts and in our lives and our Order will prosper.

Sir Knights, I am humble in the face of this service and honor to which you have elected me. It is the greatest honor bestowed upon me in my Masonic career. May God grant me the spirit and strength to serve you with charity and kindness.

Courteously,

SK Donald J. Berry
Grand Commander 2012-2013

Given under my hand and Seal of the Grand Commandery, Knights Templar, State of New York, at New York, New York, this 16th day of September, 2012.

Attest: Steven L. Wing
Steven L. Wing, PGC, KCT
Grand Recorder
Exhibits A - K are found in the Roster of the Grand Commandery (Red Book)

Exhibit A - Officers for 2012-2013
Exhibit B - Standing Committees
Exhibit C - Special Committees
Exhibit D - Special Assignments
Exhibit E - Advisors, Zone Commanders, Deputy Zone Commanders and Commanderies
Exhibit F - Grand Representatives
Exhibit G - Inspection Schedule for 2012-13
Exhibit H - Regional Seminar / Zone Schools of Instruction Schedule
Exhibit I - Patrons
Exhibit J - Website and email addresses
Exhibit K - Materials (listed below)

Rituals .............................................................................$8.00
Tactics .............................................................................$15.00
Statutes and Regulations ........................................on line only
Proceedings .................................................................$8.00
Installation Book .........................................................$7.00
50 Year or more Certificates .......................................$5.00
50 Year Lapel Button (Green for SK) .........................$12.00
50 Year Lapel Button (Red for PC) .........................$12.00
25 Year Certificate of Membership ...............................$5.00
25 Year Lapel Button (Green for SK) .........................$12.00
25 Year Lapel Button (Red for PC) .........................$12.00
Past Commanders Certificate ....................................$5.00
Honorary Past Commanders Certificate .........................$5.00
Meritorious Service Award ........................................$5.00

Send your order for the above materials to our Grand Recorder:
Steven L. Wing,
4689 Route 39
Bliss, New York 14024-9712

With your check or money order made payable to:
   Grand Commandery, Knights Templar, State of NY.

Sales tax and shipping charge will be added when appropriate, and required.