

# Commandery Basics

A Brief Guide for New Sir Knights in Iowa

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Grand Commandery of Iowa

September 2013

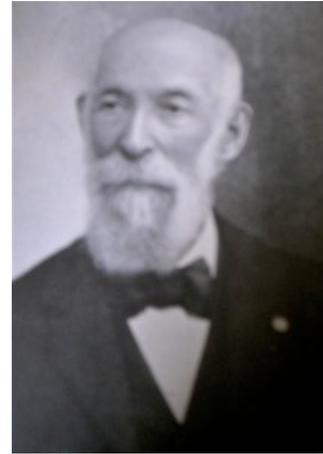


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# History

*Adapted from the Iowa supplement of Knight Templar Magazine, Volume LVIII Numbers 9 and 10*

The first three Commanderies in Iowa were formed starting with DeMolay Commandery 1 in Muscatine, which received dispensation on March 14, 1855; and chartered on September 11, 1856. SK T.S. Parvin served as the first Eminent Commander, although he lived in the then State capitol of Iowa City. Palestine, No. 2 in Iowa City, chartered on September 15, 1856 by the Grand Encampment, with SK Kimball Porter serving as the first Eminent Commander; and Siloam, No. 3, constituted by SK T.S. Parvin by order of the Grand Encampment on February 9, 1857, and chartered on September 19, 1859; were the founding three Commanderies of the Grand Commandery of Iowa.



T.S. Parvin  
First Right Eminent Grand  
Commander

SK Parvin, among having served as a teacher, lawyer, and librarian who moved to the Iowa Territory from Ohio and later became the private secretary to the first Territorial Governor, Robert Lucas; also served as the first Most Excellent Grand High Priest of the Grand Chapter of Royal Arch Masons of Iowa.

On September 24, 1857 several Sir Knights gathered at the Lodge Hall of Pioneer Lodge 22 AF&AM in Fort Des Moines for the purposes of petitioning the Grand Encampment for dispensation to form a Commandery in Des Moines. The Grand Encampment issued dispensation to Des Moines Commandery (the name was later changed to Temple Commandery) in 1859 to operate and confer the Orders we now hold so dear. Sir Knight John Scott served as



John Scott  
First Eminent Commander of Des  
Moines Commandery

the first Eminent Commander of what was then known as Des Moines Commandery. Eventually, a photo of SK Scott was placed on the wall of the offices of Temple Commandery 4. The photo portrays SK Scott as the elder statesman, and after reading more about him, you will find that he actually was a statesman. SK Scott served in Iowa State Senate in 1859, leaving in 1861 to enlist as the Captain of Company E of the 3rd Iowa Volunteer Infantry Regiment to fight in the war between the States. He was later promoted to Lieutenant Colonel and then transferred to the 32nd Iowa Infantry Regiment and promoted to Colonel. The 32<sup>nd</sup> Iowa Infantry Regiment distinguished itself in the Red River campaign. SK Scott left the Army in May of 1864 and returned to his political career, serving as the Lieutenant Governor of Iowa (1867-1869). SK Scott left this earth on September 23, 1903.

No story is complete without tragedy, and this one is no different. The Civil War was more than just a tragedy for Templary in Iowa, it was a tragedy on the battlefield, in the homes of the families of our nation both North and South, and has caused a rift in our nation that still lives today in some areas. The Civil War touched Templary in Iowa as it did many organizations. The minutes of the Grand Commandery of Iowa from the 1864 Grand Conclave note that the dispensation granted to Des Moines Commandery was forfeited between 1860 and 1864 as membership in Des Moines Commandery declined significantly as many members had left to serve in the “armies of the republic” (Union Army).

Just like the phoenix, Templary in Iowa rose from the ashes of the Civil War. While many of their neighbors were still serving, or at home preparing for spring planting, representatives from DeMolay Commandery 1 in Muscatine, Palestine Commandery 2 in Iowa City, Siloam Commandery 3 in Dubuque, and Des Moines Commandery in Des Moines traveled to Des Moines. On June 4, 1864 the Grand Commandery of Iowa was formed in Des Moines, and the famous T.S. Parvin served as the first Right Eminent Grand Commander of Iowa. However, only DeMolay Commandery 1 in Muscatine, Palestine Commandery 2 in Iowa City, and Siloam Commandery 3 in Dubuque held charters at the outset of this first Grand Commandery Conclave. That was remedied on June 6, 1864 when SK James R. Hartsock, Eminent Commander of Palestine Commandery 2, a Daguerreian Professor (Photography), and representative of SK B.B. French, Most Eminent Grand Master of the Grand Encampment proposed that Des Moines Commandery be issued a charter. A charter was issued on June 10, 1864 to Des Moines Commandery 4 from the Grand Commandery of Iowa, making the host city the first Commandery to receive a charter from the Grand Commandery of Iowa (remember, the first three received theirs from the Grand Encampment).

## Structure

The local body of Knights Templar is called a commandery. Commanderies can be of any size, with a minimum of nine being the constitutional number.

A number of local commanderies within a geographic area in Iowa form a District. Iowa has six districts, each with a District Commander assigned to assist them.

(Figure 1)

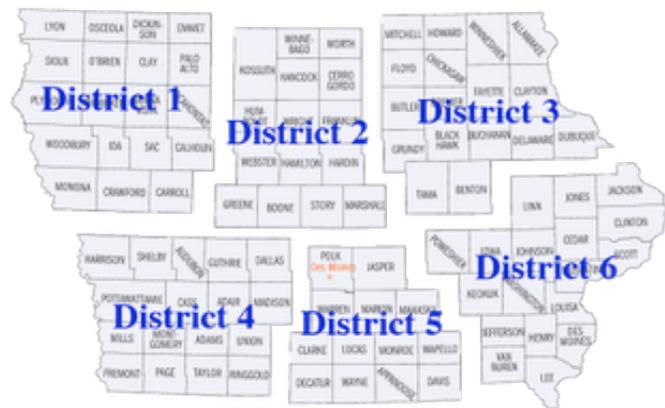


Figure 1: Iowa Districts

The Eminent Commander, Generalissimo, and Captain General of each local commandery holds a vote at the annual Grand Commandery Conclave. Past Eminent Commanders also hold a vote at the Grand Commandery Conclave.

The nation is then sectioned into several departments, each by geographical region. Iowa is part of the North-Central Department, along with Minnesota, Nebraska, North Dakota, and South Dakota. A department has a Department Commander, who has served as the Grand Commander of his respective state's Grand Commandery.

These regional departments form the Grand Encampment of the U.S.A. The Grand Encampment is led by the Most Eminent Grand Commander. All Past Grand Commanders hold a vote at the Grand Encampment Triennial Conclaves.

## Titles

All Knights Templar have the title of Sir Knight, regardless of any office they may hold. Officers are referred to as:

- SK *Name*, Eminent Commander
- SK *Name*, Right Eminent Grand Commander
- SK *Name*, Right Eminent *Grand Encampment Office*
- SK *Name*, Most Eminent Grand Master

## Uniform Basics

There are two different uniforms used in Iowa. The most common is the formal uniform, consisting of a black suit, either single-breasted or double-breasted; white collared shirt (not a button-down collar), and black tie. Traditionally, a Sir Knight who does not hold an office wears a single-breasted suit, while an officer traditionally wears a double-breasted suit.

The second type of uniform is the summer uniform. It is worn at the discretion of the Right Eminent Grand Commander. It consists of a white short-sleeved shirt.

There are several other items that are part of the uniform, which are specific to a Sir Knight's status in the commandery.

### *Sir Knight*

In addition to the black suit, a Sir Knight wears silver crosses with red enameled passion crosses. These crosses are located on each sleeve, one inch from the cuff. (Figure 2) They should be positioned on the sleeves so that they are clearly visible from the front. Two additional crosses are worn vertically on the collar, centered approximately one inch from the edge. (Figure 3)



Figure 3: Collar Cross Placement



Figure 2: Sleeve Cross Placement

Each Sir Knight also wears a chapeau. The chapeau features a black rosette on the left side with a silver edged red passion cross. Additionally, each Sir Knight carries a silver sword with

black grip. In Iowa, the guard of the sword consists of angel wings. This sword is carried in a silver plated scabbard suspended from a leather belt, with thin silver and black stripes. The belt buckle of a Sir Knight is silver with a red passion cross on it. To handle the sword, Sir Knights in Iowa wear buff (light cream) colored gloves.

There are other parts of a Sir Knight's uniform. The Knight of Malta jewel with Iowa bar above it is required to be worn by all Sir Knights. (Figure 4) When no other jewels are being worn on the uniform, this jewel is to be worn centered on the left breast pocket, with the Iowa bar directly above it. Additionally, a Sir Knight may also wear the Order of the Red Cross jewel, left of the Knight of Malta jewel. (Figure 5)



Figure 6: Veteran's Bar

Additionally, all Sir Knights who have served in the US Armed Forces are entitled, and encouraged, to wear the veteran's bar centered above the left breast pocket. (Figure 6)

### Local Officers

The uniform of local officers is very similar to that of a Sir Knight, with the exception of the dais officers. Appointed officers wear the uniform of a Sir Knight with their jewel of office worn to the right, from the wearer's perspective, of the Knight of Malta jewel.



Figure 7: Generalissimo Shoulder Board

Dais officers have additional shoulder boards that are worn adjacent to the seam for the sleeves of their jacket. These shoulder boards have a green background, with an image of the jewel of office centered on it. (See Figure 7 for an example)

The uniform of the Eminent Commander has some additional differences. The Eminent Commander may wear a chapeau with gold ribbon on the left side, along with a rosette with a gold outlined red passion cross. Additionally, the sleeve and collar crosses of the Eminent Commander should be a gold outlined red passion cross, unlike the silver outlined passion cross of a Sir Knight. Finally, the Eminent Commander's sword belt is thinly striped gold and black with a gold belt buckle with a red passion cross on it. The Eminent Commander may also carry a gold sword with white grip that is of the same style as that of a Sir Knight.

### Grand Commandery Officers

The uniform of officers of the Grand Commandery have several additional differences to that of a Sir Knight and local officers.

Many officers of the Grand Commandery have several jewels/medals that may be worn. However, in addition to the required Knight of Malta Jewel, only three additional jewels may be



Figure 4: Order of Malta



Figure 5: Order of the Red Cross



Figure 9: Past Eminent Commander Shoulder Board

worn at a time. These additional jewels are to be worn right of the Knight of Malta Jewel, again from the wearer's perspective, with the Knight of Malta Jewel to be worn at the left edge of the left breast pocket, with the Iowa bar above it. Additionally, the Knight York Cross of Honor bar is authorized to be worn by those who have received such an honor. (Figure 8) This bar is worn to the left of a veteran's bar when applicable, or in the same position of a veteran's bar when the Sir Knight is not a veteran.



Figure 8: KYCH Bar

Past Eminent Commanders of local commanderies are members of the Grand Commandery. Their uniform is like that of the local Eminent Commander, with a couple of differences. The background of their shoulder



Figure 10: Past Eminent Commander Collar/Sleeve Cross

boards is red, and all of the crosses on their sleeves, collar, and gold belt buckle feature a sunburst behind the gold outlined red passion cross. (Figures 9 and 10)

Officers of the Grand Commandery, regardless of office, wear red cross pattées on their collars and sleeves instead of the passion cross. (Figure 11). The rosette on their chapeau also features a red cross pattée instead of a passion cross, as does their belt buckle and shoulder boards. The jewel of office of a Grand Commandery officer is worn on a red rope suspended around the neck.



Figure 11: Grand Commandery Officer Collar/Sleeve Cross

### *Grand Encampment Officers*

The uniform of Grand Encampment officers is much like that of Grand Commandery officers, with exceptions.



Figure 12: Past Right Eminent Grand Commander Shoulder Board

Past Grand Commanders are considered members of the Grand Encampment, and wear shoulder boards like those of Grand Commandery officers, but with a purple background. (Figure 12) Additionally, the collar/sleeve crosses feature a purple cross pattée, as does the belt buckle and chapeau rosette.

Grand Encampment Officers wear the jewel of their office suspended around their neck by a purple rope, and wear purple patriarchal crosses. (Figure 13)



Figure 13: Grand Encampment Officer

### *Basic Commands*

There are several commands that are used in a commandery. Typically, these commanders are given in two parts: the preparatory command, and the command of execution. The preparatory

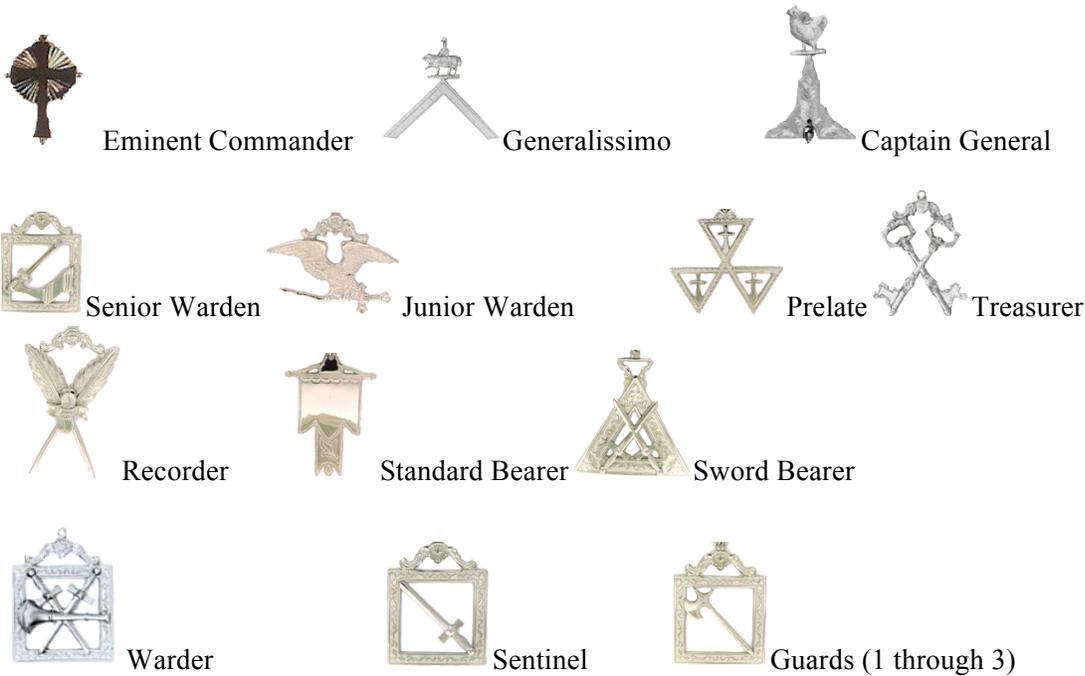
command is given in order to prepare one for a greater command, or command of execution. Some preparatory commands are associated with specific actions. Common commands include:

- Sir Knights: Fall- In
- Sir Knights: Attention
- Right- Dress
- Front
- Draw: Swords
- Present: Swords
- Carry: Swords
- Return: Swords
- Un/Re: Cover

One is encouraged to regularly attend meetings of their local commandery, knighting ceremonies, commandery schools, and other Templar events in order to learn how to properly execute these commands.

## Local Officer Jewels

Below are the jewels of office of local commanderies, with the most senior officer's jewel first:



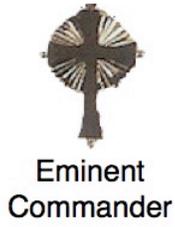
# Commandery Layout



Prelate



Generalissimo



Eminent  
Commander



Captain  
General



Recorder



Treasurer



Junior  
Warden



Senior  
Warden



Warder



Standard  
Bearer



Sword Bearer



3rd Guard



2nd Guard



1st Guard



Sentinel