

GUIDELINES
f o r
PATRIOTIC and CIVIC ACTIVITIES

*“... Promote the General
Welfare and Secure the
Blessing of Liberty to
ourselves and our
posterity...”*



Committee on Patriotic and Civic Activities
Grand Encampment of Knights Templar
of the United States of America

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PATRIOTIC AND CIVIC ACTIVITIES

At the 49th Triennial Conclave of the Grand Encampment at Philadelphia in 1964, the purpose of this Standing Committee was re-stated:

The Committee shall foster and supervise activities of a patriotic and citizenship nature, whether in peacetime or in wartime, and shall present its recommendations for civic responsibility by Knights Templar individually and collectively, compatible with the patriotic principles of Templary.

Grand Encampment Committee on Patriotic and Civic Activities:
(1967-1970 Triennium)

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THE PREMISE

The true image of Templary is exemplified by deeds, not only words. It is important that others – the general public – know what we are and what we stand for, but before we can transmit that awareness to them, we must be *doing* something, and that “something” must be an activity that demonstrates the purpose of Templary.

Our general concerns and interests as Knights Templar are in four significant areas: Christianity, Country, Community and Commandery. Encompassed under these headings are all the tenets of our Order and the Templar code of ethics.

The Grand Encampment Committee on Patriotic and Civic Activities has been charged with the assignment of providing Guidelines and suggestions for Templar programs and projects in the categories of Country and Community.

It is the Committee’s conviction that the major accent, particularly at the Constituent Commandery level, belongs in the realm of Community Activities. The Community is the “Blue Lodge” of our Country – the first step, the parent body, so to speak. Before there could be a Republic there had to be Communities. There can be no better Templar program to show our love for Country and for our fellow citizens than participation, constructively and willingly, in Community Affairs.

This means no lessening of emphasis on the theme of Patriotism, as the term is understood. Every Templar, by conviction and training, is a loyal citizen. Individually and collectively, every Templar needs to communicate love and respect for his Country to his fellowmen – not by mere flag waving, but by education (programming), and by example in his daily life.

One of the Webster definitions of a patriot is this: “one who loves his country and zealously supports its authority and interests.” Let’s carry that a step further in Templary and add another line to the definition: “and one who strives to implant and strengthen those feelings of love and support in others.”

On the following pages are suggestions and examples of Patriotic and Civic Activities and recommendations for Grand Commandery and Constituent Commandery organization in these fields.

We are hopeful that they will provide a platform upon which each Commandery can build a strong and effective structure of programs and projects – especially in the history and development of our Country and in Community Involvement. As Templars, we have a splendid opportunity to plan and participate in programs designed to commemorate the third century of our nation.

The Grand Encampment of Knights Templar strongly urges support for the observance of patriotic holidays, but equally important is *local involvement* on the part of Constituent and Subordinate Commanderies. The Committee suggests **PARTICIPATION IN COMMUNITY AFFAIRS OF EVERY HELPFUL AND PROGRESSIVE NATURE.**

I.

THE GRAND COMMANDERY

Patriotic and Civic Activity has long been recognized as an integral part of Templar responsibility but has suffered from a lack of direction. It needs to receive full and wholehearted programming in every Grand Commandery.

The functions of a Grand Commandery Committee for Patriotic and Civic Activities are:

1. To have a Patriotic and Civic Activities Committee formed in every Commandery in the jurisdiction.
2. To insist the Committee be representative of the membership rather than from a list of officers or past officers. It may be the means of reactivating a member whose interest in Templary is waning or was never motivated.
3. To encourage and assist each Commandery to plan and execute at least *one* appropriate project during the Templar year.
4. To enlist a panel of informed and able speakers on patriotic and historic subjects in every section of your state who will be available to speak at Commandery Conclaves and at Commandery-sponsored meetings where non-Templars might be invited to attend.
5. To plan and supervise statewide patriotic observance at historical sites and patriotic shrines within the state.
6. To evaluate and follow the progress of the Committee in each Commandery and to re-encourage and re-activate those Commanderies not reporting activity.
7. To inform the Grand Encampment Committee of the progress of the overall program and to report any outstandingly effective and productive program or activity.

II.

THE CONSTITUENT COMMANDERY

The Grand Encampment Committee has made a survey study of programs and activities and offers the following as suggestions; some are appropriate for a single meeting, some as a continuing project and some for both. These are *suggestions* and not more than one or two should be planned by most Commanderies. Each Commandery Committee must be governed by local conditions and opportunities as well as by the number of Sir Knights and the financial capabilities of the Commandery. No Commandery should feel bound to use these specific suggestions. All Commanderies are encouraged to use their local initiative in planning Patriotic and Civic Activities.

1. Assist your Commander in planning a patriotic program for a Conclave near a national holiday.

2. Lead a discussion on the Asylum floor discussing how your Commandery can express itself in the Community by service.
3. Plan a program stressing law and order either for a Conclave or, preferably, for a Commandery-sponsored public meeting.
4. Sponsor or join in sponsoring a Naturalization Court. Sponsor a recognition dinner for new citizens with judges and other public officials in attendance.
5. Encourage members to register and vote in every public election. Sponsor or join in sponsoring a public campaign to register and vote.
6. Develop a dinner with a patriotic theme, patriotic speaker, patriotic decorations and patriotic music.
7. Join with other organizations in patriotic parades and public patriotic displays.
8. Encourage members to assist all youth organizations: DeMolay, Rainbow, Job's Daughters, Boy Scouts, Girl Scouts and others.
9. Sponsor junior citizenship awards and patriotic competitions in your Community.
10. Sponsor school essay contests on patriotism.
11. Provide speakers to carry the message of the Knights Templar Eye Foundation and the Knights Templar Educational Foundation to service clubs, youth organizations, parent associations, medical societies and similar groups.
12. If possible, arrange a presentation at a local school assembly on historic themes: The American Flag, Declaration of Independence, etc., or plan a program around an individual – a local patriot and/or Mason – whose name is recognized in the community.
13. Seek a Community need and go to work to alleviate it. Provide hospital bed loans, wheel chair loans, crutch and walker loans, respirator loans.
14. Bring Commandery activity and co-operation to Community causes – blood bank, United Campaign, Christmas Seal drive and others.
15. Organize assistance to police and juvenile courts.
16. Plan picnics, parties, programs and outings for local orphans and underprivileged children and senior citizens.
17. Charge every Sir Knight with his responsibility:
 - a. To set an example to his children and others by obeying the laws himself.
 - b. To vote his convictions at every public election.
 - c. To accept the Bill of Responsibility as well as the Bill of Rights.
 - d. To become part of the vocal majority as well as a part of the statistical Majority

- e. To learn about his police department, his school board and his local courts of law.
- f. To know his children's friends and associates.
- g. To co-operate and assist in his Commandery's Patriotic and Civic Activity Program.

KNIGHTS TEMPLAR AND THE U.S. FLAG

Historically, Knight Templary is the most visible branch of Freemasonry, participating in uniform in parades and patriotic observances. Swords, plumes and flags flashing in the breeze, we represent the entire Masonic fraternity to the profane world.

When a Knight Templar fails to show the proper respect for the Flag of the United States, it brings discredit upon the Order, as well as the Flag. A few simple rules of flag etiquette, if observed by ALL Sir Knights, will serve as an example for everyone. As militant Christian Masons, we must be ever vigilant in showing the way "by precept and example."

HOW TO DISPLAY THE FLAG

Laws have been written to govern the use of the flag and to insure a proper respect for the Stars and Stripes. Custom has decreed certain other observances in regard to its use. Rules on flag display having direct bearing on Asylum usage are given below. What follows, however, is not intended as a complete list of rules.

The National flag should be raised and lowered by hand. Do not raise the flag while it is furled. Unfurl, then hoist quickly to the top of the staff. Lower it slowly and with dignity. Place no objects on or over the flag. A speaker's table should never be covered with the flag.

When displayed in the Asylum (or on a platform in a church) the flag should be placed on a staff at the Commander's (or clergyman's) right; other flags at his left.

When displayed over the middle of the street, the flag should be suspended vertically with the union to the north in an east-west street, or to the east in a north-south street.

When displayed with another flag from crossed staffs, the flag of the United States of America should be on the right (the flag's own right) and its staff should be in front of the staff of the other flag.

When flags of states or cities or pennants of societies are flown on the same halyard with the flag of the United States of America, the latter should always be at the peak. When flown from adjacent staffs the Stars and Stripes should be hoisted first and lowered last.

When the flag is suspended over a sidewalk from a rope extending from house to pole at the edge of the sidewalk, the flag should be hoisted out from the building, toward the pole, union first.

When the flag is displayed in a manner other than by being flown from a staff, it should be displayed flat, whether indoors or out. When displayed either horizontally or vertically against a wall, the union should be uppermost and to the flag's own right, that is, to the observer's left. When displayed in a window it should be displayed in the same way, that is, with the union or blue field to the left of the observer in the street. When festoons, rosettes or drapings are desired, bunting of blue, white and red should be used, but never the flag.

When a number of flags of states or cities or pennants of societies are grouped and displayed from staffs with our National flag, the latter should be at the center or at the highest point of the group.

Do not use the flag as a portion of a costume or athletic uniform. Do not embroider it upon cushions or handkerchiefs nor print it on paper napkins or boxes.

When the flag is used in unveiling a statue or monument, it should not serve as a covering of the object to be unveiled. If it is displayed on such occasions, do not allow the flag to fall to the ground, but let it be carried aloft to form a feature of the ceremony.

Take every precaution to prevent the flag from becoming soiled. It should not be allowed to touch the ground or floor, nor to brush against objects.

When carried the flag should always be aloft and free — never flat or horizontal. We can do a big service for the Masonic-oriented youth groups by advising them of this, as well as other methods of displaying the flag.

Never use the flag as drapery of any sort whatsoever. Bunting of blue, white, and red — arranged with the blue above, the white in the middle, and the red below — should be used for such purposes of decoration as covering a speaker's desk or draping the front of a platform.

No other flag may be flown above the Stars and Stripes, except: (1) the United Nations flag at U.N. Headquarters; (2) the church pennant, a dark blue cross on a white background, during church services conducted by naval chaplains at sea.

More than fifty years ago it was the custom to salute the National flag by uncovering; nowadays the hand salute is rendered by the entire personnel of the Armed Forces and all Knights Templar in uniform.

During the ceremony of hoisting or lowering the flag, or when the flag is passing in a parade or in a review, those present in uniform should render the right-hand salute. When not in uniform, men should remove their headdress with the right hand and hold it at the left shoulder, the hand being over the heart; men, not covered, and women should place the right hand over the heart.

It is the universal custom to display the national flag from sunrise to sunset on buildings and on stationary flagstaffs in the open on all days that weather permits, but especially on national holidays and other days that may be proclaimed by the President of the United States. The U.S. flag may be displayed 24 hours a day if properly illuminated during hours of darkness.

The flag can be displayed on all days when the weather permits, especially on New Year's Day, January 1; Inauguration Day, January 20; Lincoln's Birthday, February 12; Washington's Birthday, February 22; Easter Sunday (variable); Mother's Day, second Sunday in May; Armed Forces Day, third Saturday in May; Memorial Day (half-staff until noon), May 30; Flag Day, June 14; Independence Day, July 4; Labor Day, first Monday in September; Constitution and Citizenship Day, September 17; Columbus Day, October 12; Veterans Day, November 11; Thanksgiving Day, fourth Thursday in November; Christmas Day, December 25; such other days as may be proclaimed by the President of the United States; the birthdays of States (dates of admission); and on State holidays.

When the flag is in such a condition, through wear or damage, that it is no longer a fitting emblem for display, it should be destroyed in a dignified way, preferably by burning.