



Military Commandery of the Western United States of America Volume II Issue 2

SITREP

The commandery is settling in to the new formation in good order. Chairs of the various committees are implementing their plans of action.

BILLETS

Chevalier Don Witt's relocation to the Sacramento area and his approved request to join the Sierras Commandery has brought our roster to 20 Knights and one Dame.

Acting Commander: Knight Commander Bill Buchanan

Deputy Commander: Chevalier Rhett Hart

Hospitaller Chair: Chevalier JR Hastings

Chevalier Merlin Davis

Chevalier Terry Howell

Chevalier Bill Musgrave

Chevalier Bernard Vash

Almoner Chair: Chevalier Art Hurley

Chevalier James Brown (Chair of the AT&T Subcommittee)

Chevalier Art Flegel

Dame Jamie Payne

Chevalier John Sollner

HE Conventual Bailiff Bill Peacock

Membership/Recruiting Chair: Chevalier Doug Moore

Chevalier John Fitzpatrick

Chevalier Keith Kerr

Chevalier Chris L'Orange

Chevalier Don Reid

Chevalier Dean Winslow

Treasurer: Chevalier Jim Boucher. Chevalier Jim Boucher is coordinating with the Almoner regarding financial support of the chosen charities, a reasonable basic reserve, and a reserve for contingencies.

Caring Officer: Chevalier Dr. Don Bradley

Herald/Secretary: Open



At the Alameda County Sheriff's range in Dublin WMC Treasurer Chevalier Jim Boucher practices one of his techniques for collecting overdue oblation payments

EVENTS

Force Multiplier:

A wise philosopher named Woody Allen famously remarked, "You know, half of life is just showing up." In the case of the Military Commandery of the Western United States, this is doubly relevant because we rarely have the horsepower to plan and execute fund raisers of any significance. That has always been the case with this Commandery. So how do we generate funds for charitable causes? One way is to convince sponsors to contribute, such as Chevalier James Brown has done with AT&T. The other way is to attend the main events that occur annually in this Priory. The hosting Commandery shares net-net profits from these events with the other three Commanderies according their participation. For instance, if the Summer Garden Party attracts 200 Knights and Dames and the entire WMC shows up (21), then we're in line for 10% of the net net profits. Signing up for these events achieves success at two levels: you validate your status as a Knight or Dame by supporting a Priory event, and you make it possible for us to achieve our mission of generating funds for the poor and sick in Christ. This should be the minimum effort on the part of every member of this Commandery.

On the informal side, our Hospitaller Chevalier J.R. Hastings has not been idle; by the light of a single candle and quill pen, he has scratched out a rough calendar of events for the Western Military Commandery. Here are some of them:

16 July: Tour of the Red Oak Victory Ship followed by lunch at the Mac Hotel in Pt. Richmond

10 September: Summer Garden Party at Winchester House in San Jose;

15-18 September: East Bay Stand Down, Alameda County Fairgrounds in Pleasanton.

October: victuals, fermented malt drinks, a jester, jousting knights, wolf-baiting, and dancing ladies at the hillside castle of Chevalier J.R. Hastings.

3 December: White Cross Ball

East Bay Stand Down

Chevalier Don Bradley continues to monitor the planning and execution of East Bay Stand Down (<http://www.eastbaystanddown.org/>) a biannual effort held at the Alameda County Fairgrounds in Pleasanton from September 15-18. Please contact our Hospitaller J.R. Hasting if you would like to roll up your sleeves and help setting up.

One Step Closer Equine Assisted Therapy



One Step Closer™
THERAPEUTIC RIDING

Winston Churchill, military veteran and expert horseman, maintained, "There's something about the outside of a horse that's good for the inside of a man." What is it about horses that helps those who suffer from physical and/or psychological problems? On 4 June in Morgan Hill, Chevalier Art Hurley, Chevalier Rhett Hart and his wife Pat, Chevalier JR Hastings, and your Acting Commander found the answer. Mark Keirstead and his wife Landa, both devout Christians, and co-founders of One Step Closer Therapeutic Riding, Inc., assert on their web site <http://osctr.org/about-osctr/>, "One Step Closer is a Christian-based organization. In the Christian faith we are called to serve those with special needs (Luke 14:13). One Step Closer is created to respond to this calling without bias of race, economic status, or religious beliefs". They told us horses have evolved over millennia as prey animals into highly perceptive and emotionally sensitive beings. Horses are naturally empathetic; members of the herd feel what is going on with other members of the herd. It has been clinically documented that just being around horses changes human brainwave patterns. We calm down and become more centered and focused

when we are with horses. For those with lower extremity damage or weakness, riding a horse stimulates and strengthens muscles and nerves normally essential to walking. Balance, coordination, and motor skills improve. Riding a horse in beautiful natural surroundings increases the patient's sense of well-being and enjoyment. We expressed our appreciation for the unique services Landa and Mark provide to wounded veterans by handing over a check for \$5,500.



CARING OFFICER

Dr. Don Bradley reported that Chevalier Bernard Vash developed some biomechanical problems and veered off course for a few days. Minor adjustments to his carburetor corrected the situation and he now is flying straight and level, with the help of his highly skilled co-pilot Elizabeth. It takes considerably more than a minor fuel line blockage to ground a seasoned bomber pilot like Bernard.

KNIGHT PROFILE:

Knight of Honour Art Hurley

We welcomed our newest member, Knight of Honour Arthur Timothy (Art) Hurley, USAF into our ranks at the 16 March Investiture ceremony. He was introduced to the Sovereign Order by Chevalier J.R. Hastings. Art has two sons, Arthur Edward, and John Gordon. A native San Franciscan, he attained his BS in General Social Science at the University of Oregon in 1968 and an BA from Southern Illinois University in 1974. He and his wife Susan have lived in Napa since the seventies.



Imagine yourself at the controls of a C-5 Galaxy cargo aircraft about the size of Philadelphia rolling down the runway on full throttle and you have a picture of Art's Air Force career as a C-141 (Starlifter) and C-5 (Galaxy) pilot from 1968 to 1989. He then retired as a Reserve Lt. Colonel Command Pilot. From 1976 to 1987 he flew commercial aircraft for Western Air Lines and trained Flight Engineers. From 1985 to 1987 he trained pilots in the DC-10. After seven more years as a Boeing 767 pilot with Delta, he retired as a Captain. The Air Force recognized him as the Youngest Aircraft Commander in the Military Airlift Command in 1971 and selected him to take part in the opening of the US Legation, Peking, China, in May 1973.

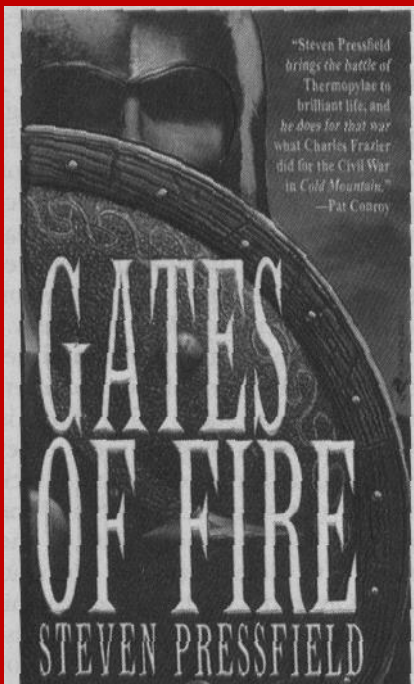
Art is a regular volunteer in a local Napa program that provides daily meals to the needy of the community. He also has contributed to the success of a program that helps mentor Foster children upon High School graduation. As co-founder of Rebuild Southern Africa Association, a non-profit that helps raise funding for the Khayelisha Care Agency in Tugela Ferry, South Africa, he has contributed to the support of over 600 AIDS orphans in the Zulu nation.

Art is a trained archaeologist with a keen interest in scientific research about how North America initially was populated, so he spends a lot of time in eastern Oregon rooting around for evidence. Before you spend a lot of money on Ancestry.com, check with Art. Another of Art's passions is fly fishing. We are fortunate to have Art aboard; his energy and enthusiasm already have infused the Almoner position with considerable momentum.

BOOK REVIEW

Courage in the Face of Death

Reviewed by William L. Buchanan



GATES OF FIRE. By Steven Pressfield. Bantam Books, NY, 1999, 442 pp., \$6.50. (Member \$5.20)

Four hundred and fifty years before the birth of Christ, Greek city states faced a crisis of epic proportions; two million men under the command of Persian King Xerxes had crossed the Hellespont and were sweeping westward, intent on destroying the armies of Sparta, Athens, Marathon, Olympia, and others and enslaving those democratic societies.

In an act of incredible military and political genius and incomprehensible courage (by today's standards), 300 seasoned Spartan warriors and their Thespaian allies took leave of their families and friends and made a forced march to a narrow pass that protected the heartland of Greek democracy:

Thermopylae—the Gates of Fire. During a ferocious seven-day battle, all 300 died, but not before sending the souls of 20,000 Persian fighting men to their proper reward. The valor, the finely honed military skill, and the unquenchable courage of the Spartans inspired the disparate armies of the Greek city-states to unite in fierce defense of their homeland,

ultimately defeating superior Persian forces that fall and spring.

Through the eyes of Xeones a young battle squire from Astakos, who follows his platoon commander, Dienekes, to the horrific battleground of Thermopylae, we observe the crucible of Spartan training, the agog, or training platoons, instil an unshakable warrior ethic among its youth. We learn how warriors wielded Spartan weapons—bronze shields and armor weighing 70 pounds, 8-foot spears tipped with foot-long burnished spear points

flashing in the sun, the deadly xiphos swords. The Spartan Skiritai Rangers—lightly armed and fast moving reconnaissance units—scouted the battlefields and the deployment of enemy troops before the arrival of the main body. Xeonos then observes his first battle—an attack by Spartan forces at the port city of Antihirion—and describes the precision tactics that carry the day: how the disciplined Spartiate heavy infantry formed up eight ranks deep, advanced first at a walk, then a trot, then a full run, snapping precisely aligned rows of 8-foot spears from the vertical to the horizontal just before slamming into the first ranks of the enemy. Those enemy soldiers who somehow survived the shock fell victim to the succeeding ranks of Spartans who methodically dismembered them as they rolled over. It is obvious Pressfield conducted heavy research into the weapons and tactics used in those days. But he delves as deeply into the brutal training ethos and Greek societal factors that produced some of the finest infantry fighters of the day. We gain insights into Greek leadership when platoon commander Dienekes, lecturing a squad of his men during a field exercise, poses a question: "What is the opposite of fear?" The answer may surprise you. Later, on the eve of the great battle, his response to the description of Persian archers launching clouds of battle arrows that would block the sun was, "Good. Then we'll have our battle in the shade."

Pressfield's powerful prose carries us right into the meat grinder that the front ranks at Thermopylae had become:

The Spartans came in frontally eight deep, at a double interval, allowing the Thespaian rearmen to withdraw between their files, man by man, one rank at a time. There was no order to it; the Thespaians just dropped from exhaustion; the Lakedaemonian tread rolled over them. When the Spartan promachoi, the forerankers, got within three shields of the front, their spears began plunging at the foe over the allies' shoulders. Many of the Thespaians just dropped and let themselves be trampled; their mates pulled them to their feet once the line had passed over them.

Yours in St. John

Chevalier Bill Buchanan KCSJ

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