



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

SITREP

An opportunity for Knight Commander Brendan Kearney to take advantage of a position at the Priory leadership level prompted Prior Wilcox to ask Knight Commander Buchanan to accept the mantle of responsibility once again after so many years. Knight Commander Buchanan agreed to fill the position for twelve months through Investiture 2017 so that a nominating committee then can stand up to fill the two-year term with an expanded slate of qualified candidates available. We want to thank Knight Commander Kearney for his diligent leadership over the past year and especially for his many years of loyal service to the Nation as an Officer of Marines. We look forward to his continued guidance and wise counsel from within the Priory hierarchy.

It is this Commander's Intent that each Knight and Dame strive to implement those passages in Rules of the Order that refer to: *Uphold and promote unity and harmony within the Commandery...* to...*promote good communications among members of the Commandery, with the Prior, among other Commanderies within the Priory, and with Officers of the supervising Grand Priory while making sure that Members understand and respect that they should communicate with higher authority through the proper chain of command.*

T.O.

Our Table of Organization changed for the better when Knight of Honour Art Hurley joined our ranks at the 16 April Investiture. The median height also increased. Along with the Class of '15 and the Class of '14 Art represents new energy, new perspectives, and new ideas that can benefit the Commandery and help fulfill its mission. Knight Commander of Grace Bob Leonard's request for a transfer to the San Francisco Commandery has been approved and will be implemented shortly. We will miss Bob's devotion, camaraderie, historical insights, and hard work, but respect his reasons for making the change. Knight Commander of Grace Bill Highlander opted to transfer over to the St. Joseph Commandery. Their gain is, of course, our loss.

CHAIRS

Deputy Commander: Position open

Hospitaller: J.R. Hastings has agreed to assume the responsibilities of Hospitaller, the planner and organizer of events for the Commandery. We look forward to his whimsically historical approach to bringing us together from time to time.

Almoner: Our newly anointed Knight of Honour Art Hurley will be responsible for identifying and vetting suitable recipients of our charitable largess. He will insure that each individual or group's mission and objectives align with our mandate to help the poor and sick in Christ.

Treasurer: Chevalier Jim Boucher has a firm grip on Commandery finances, as you would expect from a guy with his financial management background. At a lunch in Berkeley on Monday 2 May, Jim assured me Commandery finances are in order and are robust enough to support a number of charitable causes this year.

Recruiting and Membership: Open

Herald/Secretary: Open

Caring Officer: Open

Committees:

It is your Commander's intent that Commandery Chairs actively recruit and motivate each Knight and Dame whose interests, abilities, and availability align with the mission of that particular Chair. Full participation by Knights and Dames as Officers or Committee Members is the goal.

2016 INVESTITURE

This year's ceremony to bring aboard 15 new Knights and Dames into the Priory of the Western United States was typically solemn, compelling, and precise. Evening light filtering through Grace Cathedral's stained glass windows lent special beauty to the ancient ritual of welcoming and acceptance. Scarlet and alabaster robes decorated by the striking Alafi Cross proclaimed our legacy of faith and service to humanity. We missed the gravitas and humility of Grand Master David Rolph, who is recovering from an injury. Chevalier Rhett Hart, Chevalier Bill Musgrave, and Chevalier Ray Mendoza served as Deputy Marshals and made sure no one got lost. Assembled guests and especially potential Aspirants could not fail to be impressed.

EVENTS

East Bay Stand Down

With his typical understated humility, Chevalier Don Bradley has taken it upon himself to attend planning meetings for East Bay Stand Down (<http://www.eastbaystanddown.org/>) a biannual effort held at the Alameda County Fairgrounds in Pleasanton from September 15-18 to bring wounded, homeless, and disoriented veterans back inside the wire. At the last East Bay Stand Down, the Western Military Commandery sponsored several tents. We intend to repeat that level of support. Our Hospitaller will be accepting offers of help from Knights and Dames who don't mind rolling up their sleeves and getting a little dirty.

One Step Closer

One Step Closer offers adaptive horseback riding and equine-assisted-therapy to individuals with physical and/or emotional disabilities, including U.S. veterans recovering from the physical and emotional scars of war. Before my current tenure as Commander, the decision was made to support One Step Closer (<http://osctr.org/>) with a substantial contribution. The Treasurer has cut the check; therefore, those involved with supporting this worthy cause should plan and execute the presentation as soon as practicable.



BOOK REVIEW

The Last Stand of Fox Company : Award-winning authors Bob Drury and Tom Clavin take us about as close as we'll ever want to be to the subzero action in November 1950 north of the 38th Parallel in Korea. Fox Company, Seventh Marine Regiment, is deployed on a hill east of the Main Supply Route (MSR) that snakes south from Chosin Reservoir. Their mission is to keep the MSR open to accommodate the movement south of U.S. units that are fighting a rear-guard action against a tsunami of Chinese regular army troops—ten divisions pouring south from the Yalu River. Temperatures of thirty below zero have turned the ground to concrete and made blocks of ice out of C-rations. For over a month, the 240 Marines of Fox Company hold off night assaults by Chinese units four times their numbers, dropping their functioning complement by three-quarters. Instead of sandbags, Fox Company Marines use the frozen bodies of enemy soldiers as fighting hole fortifications. This is a high-paced compelling piece of writing punched up by

personal narratives that not only will keep you turning the pages, but will infuse you with a deep admiration for the sheer grit, unit coherence, and fortitude of the Marines of Fox Company. You also may find yourself looking at Chevalier Sgt. Don Reid, a machine gunner with the First Marine Division, a little differently.

Yours in St. John

Chevalier Bill Buchanan KCSJ

Commander,

Military Commandery of the Western United States of America

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