

The Canadian Templar



News and Report from our Grand Prior

I hope everyone enjoyed their summer, it just seemed to fly by. Throughout the summer I had the privilege of meeting and talking with many of you at the various events, and for those that I met for the first time, welcome to the Order. As you will read in this newsletter many things still happened despite the summer 'lull'. Now it's time to get back into the fall routine.



Last month St James Priory in Toronto invested five new Knights into the Order; Gregory Astourian, Manuel Dacosta, Brian Moniz, Ted Opitz, and Richard Towey – welcome! And two Knights, Neven Bozovic and George Jackowski, were recognized for their service and devotion to the Priory and were elevated to the rank of Knight Commandeur. Thank you and congratulations to you both. Next month the Priory of the Ascension of Our Lord will have their Investiture on Saturday November 2 in Windsor, with 10 to be invested. All are welcomed.

Right after the Toronto Investiture, the Vicar General Ronald Matthewman, my wife Theresa and I,

Grand Chancellor Nola Crewe (Toronto), Gillian Stefanczyk (Windsor), and Alan Williams (Ottawa/Halifax) went to Athens Greece for the Grand Magistral meetings and the installation of our newly elected officers. The Grand Priory of Greece and their members made every effort to make us feel very welcomed. The installation of OSMTH Grand Commander Dr. LCol Marcel De Picciotto (France), Deputy Grand Commander BGen Ron Mangum (Austria), and Secretary General Rev Pertti Ruotsalo (Finland) and the investiture of 24 Knights and Dames were carried out with precision. The Greeks hosted a first class event.

The new Grand Commander appointed the Deputy Grand Commander to Chair the Clean Water Committee, a key humanitarian project of the Order to build wells. The GC also announced the formation of a Christians At Risk Committee, designed to focus on the plight of Christians in some countries and to promote peace and interfaith. He noted that the activities of the committee in bringing awareness to the world are delicate. Our Order has been very active and many times successful in tense situations that required skilled negotiations at the highest levels. Some of our Canadian members have suggested an aggressive and public OSMTH stand against terror attacks. While such an approach may make us feel good at the time, reckless condemnation would add no value and could jeopardize our position as an NGO at the United Nations. It would take only one (Muslim) country to vote to have our Order expelled from the UN. Then Christians would be at greater risk worldwide. Suffice it to say, OSMTH leadership has recognized this as a serious issue and is dealing with it in a way that brings laudable respect on the world-wide stage at the United Nations.

Joining us for the meetings was His Beatitude, the Armenian Patriarch of Jerusalem, himself a member of our Order. He is the Prince Primate of the oldest church in the world and is the only See to stay in Jerusalem throughout Christ's time and all Muslim occupation under Saladin and on to current day. He was very much interested in what was happening in Canada since he previously had been the Orthodox leader of all the Americas and had visited Montreal and Toronto several times. In his current position he is regarded as being equals to the other religious leaders of the world; the Pope (Roman Catholic), Archbishop of Canterbury (Anglican), and the Bishop of the Lutherans (fellow Templar, His Grace Bishop Younan), etc. He made the invitation to all OSMTH Templars to visit him at the Armenian palace if we ever came to Jerusalem.

The Jordan River Project travel plans are coming together quickly. It will be a trip of a lifetime. King Abdullah of Jordan has given four parcels of land to the Christian Churches in order for them to build churches on the banks of the Jordan River at the very spot where Jesus was baptized by John the Baptist. The King, a devout Muslim leader, wants the Christians to have a greater presence in Jordan – amazing!! His Grace, Bishop Younan of the Lutheran Church has invited the Knights Templar to actively participate in the building of the Church and the celebrations around its dedication on January 6, 2014. The Grand Priory of Canada has committed \$25,000 over a span of five years for the church building project. Many Christian leaders will be present along with several of our Order's Royal Patrons. King Abdullah has assured us royal protection during our stay. In conjunction with the dedication of the church and grounds, the Vicar General has organized a trip to Jerusalem right afterwards. Most of you have seen emails to this effect and we now have ten confirmed travellers. Time is running out if you want to join us, but if you do, contact him immediately at cmatthewman@sympatico.ca. The cost will be approximately \$5000 with travel dates January 3-15, 2014, in and out of Detroit (but you can make your own flight arrangements).

Personal notes: Last edition I had mentioned that Chev LCol Morris Brause was heading off to Afghanistan and I requested you keep him in your prayers. You will see later below an update from Morris and a recent news article about local school children sending him letters. Congratulations to Chev Brad Corlett (Windsor) on his promotion to Chief Petty Officer First Class, the highest non-commissioned rank achievable in the Royal Canadian Naval Reserves. Last month in Halifax on September 20, Edmonton's Commander Rob MacMullen married his sweetheart Jodie Beauchamp, congratulations to you both. And congratulations to Chev Mike Braga (Windsor) and wife Victoria on the safe arrival of their first child, Harrison Lyle Braga, on October 1st and thrilling newly grandparents Chev Peter and Dame Theresa Kelly. While there were many happy moments during the summer, I know some of you have had health issues, struggled in everyday life, and have grieved the loss of loved ones. We think of you and pray for God's comforting arms to be around you and your families and that He will give you courage and comfort.

Blessings,
Cdr. (ret'd) Peter L. Kelly, CD, GCTJ
Grand Prior

A Message from LCol Morris Brause in Afghanistan:

"Sir Morris Brause arrived in Kabul, Afghanistan on Friday, 28 June, after a long 34 hour journey from Canada. He took a few days to get his kit sorted out and to go through ranges to confirm his weapons, then moved to Camp Eggers, Kabul. Camp Eggers is right downtown, very close to the Canadian Embassy. The City of Kabul has been rebuilding and working on housing the 4.5 million people that live here. Huge improvements have occurred over the last 7 years, with a great deal of traffic and normal life that you would see in this region. Albeit that there are the occasional attacks, the Afghans are realizing a life that they once knew and appreciate the Coalition's efforts at securing peace. LCol Morris Brause is the Director of Plans and Policy for the Afghan National Police training. His role is to work with the Afghans in developing and accrediting courses to enhance the professional training that the Afghanistan National Police receive. This runs from basic training, to NCO and Officer training, to specific and special requirements.

Our team continues to also develop their national HQs and training schools. The objectives, well on the way to being accomplished, is for the Afghans to plan courses, instruct them and ensure that standards are maintained. We have also trained them on how to conduct needs analysis, develop a course based on the analysis, and then finalize the process with proper course certification. From there, they then send trained standards personnel to review training and find ways to improve. Sir Morris will be in Afghanistan for nine months, and will return to Canada late March 2014. You are more than welcome to e-mail him at: morris.brause@hotmail.com."

All the best to all Templars. Keep me in your prayers, and please remember my family while I am away.

God Bless:

Morris



Students at Gosfield North Public Elementary School hold supplies they're donating to kids in Afghanistan, October 4, 2013

Students at Gosfield North Public School in Cottam are shipping school supplies to students in Afghanistan. Ten boxes full are on their way to the Middle East, and grade four student Jake Wilkins says it makes him feel really good to be helping out. "We're basically giving stuff to people that we don't even know and they will be really surprised about it." The exchange was set up by Gosfield North vice Principal Patty Brause, whose husband is Lt. Col. Morris Brause. The colonel is currently training Afghan police, as well as taking on local charity projects, such as supplying schools with supplies.

Story courtesy of Blackburn news.

Notable Upcoming Events

Canadian International

October 26th: Meeting of the Priory of Simon Peter, Ottawa

November 2nd, 2013: Priory of the Ascension of our Lord Investiture, Windsor

December 9th, 2013: Annual Christmas Social at the Windsor Yacht Club

January 6th, 2014: Jordan River Project Dedication

Forward news of any upcoming events at your Priory to:

alastairi@electricscotland.com

News from the Priory of Ascension of Our Lord, Windsor

It is with a heavy heart that I begin this article with the sad news of the passing of Mrs. Dorothy Matthewman on 09 July 2013. Dorothy was the wife of our Vicar General, HE Sir Ron Matthewman and the mother of Dame Anne Matthewman and Dame Gillian Stefanczyk. We offer our sincere condolences to the family on your loss. Dorothy was truly a lovely gentle lady and she will be greatly missed.

In the midst of a summer filled with our members vacationing and taking a well deserved break, we have had only two scheduled events. The first was our Summer Social held at the beautiful country estate of our Grand Prior and his wife, HE Sir Peter and Dame Theresa Kelly. We had a great afternoon with a good attendance of members and postulants and this is our typical venue for introducing the postulants who will be invested into the Order in November.



Knights and Dames enjoying the beautiful ambience and hospitality of the Grand Prior's home.



Dame Gillian Stefanczyk, Sir Terry Fink, Prior Roy and Chancellor Terry Pearce with donation to the Wellcome Centre



The Vicar General

Our other major event was the delivery of donation cheques to our selected charities. Our Chancellor Sir Terry Pearce and I had the pleasure of presenting cheques to the Salvation Army, St. Leonard's House, Second Chance Ministry and the Friendship Bible Club. Our National charity The Military Families Resource Centre, due to the distance involved had to have the cheque delivered by Canada Post. Likewise with the Jordan River Project and the Canon Andrew White initiative Peace and Reconciliation cheques shall be delivered by the Grand Prior at the Athens meetings later this month.



Chancellor Sir Terry Pearce, Mr. Skip Graham of St. Leonard's House and Prior Roy with donation to St. Leonard's House.



Prior Roy, Major. Scott Rideout and Chancellor Sir Terry Pearce with donation to the Salvation Army.



Reverend Mike Rovers of Second Chance Ministry receives a donation cheque from Prior Roy.

The links below will take you to videos about the Second Chance Ministry.

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9UvHU0ZN5Ls>

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DtvisvR5Kp8&feature=youtu.be>



Prior Roy, Mrs. Mary Rovers of the Friendship Bible Club and Chancellor Terry Pearce presenting a cheque.

Looking ahead, our annual Convent and Investiture will be held on 02 November at the Church of the Ascension of Our Lord and we extend a warm invitation to all to attend.

Looking further ahead we will be holding our Annual Christmas Social at the Windsor Yacht Club on Sunday afternoon 09 December from 2 till 5 PM. The cost will be \$25 per person and we look forward to a great turnout to get us all in the Christmas spirit. As with all our activities all Knights and dames and spouses/friends are invited to attend.



Emergency Phone Numbers

When in sorrow, call John 14

When men fail you, call Psalm 27

If you want to be fruitful, call John 15

When you have sinned, call Psalm 51

When you worry, call Matthew 6:19-34

When you are in danger, call Psalm 91

When God seems far away, call Psalm 139

When your faith needs stirring, call Hebrews 11

When you are lonely and fearful, call Psalm 23

When you grow bitter and critical, call 1 Corinthians 13

For Paul's secret to happiness, call Col. 3:12-17

For idea of Christianity, call 2Corinthians 5:5-19

When you feel down and out, call Romans 8:1-30

When you leave home for labor or travel, call Psalm 121

When your prayers grow narrow or selfish, call Psalm 67

For a great invention/opportunity, call Isaiah 55

When you want courage for a task, call Joshua 1

How to get along with fellow men, call Roman 12

When you think of investments/returns, call Mark 10

If you are depressed, call Psalm 27

If your pocketbook is empty, call Psalms 37

News from St James Priory, Toronto

The Priory of St. James invested six knights on Saturday September 14th. Here are some pictures from that event.



Piper leading the way into the church



The New Postulants being promoted to Knights



Sir Neven Bozovic promoted to Knight Commandeur



Sir George Jackowski promoted to Knight Commander



Group Shot



The Great and the Good of the Grand Priory of Canada

The Banquet was catered by Nola's son in law, Alex, and it was excellent. And to my astonishment after the main course they came around offering seconds! Well done Alex!

Here are some pictures from the Banquet...

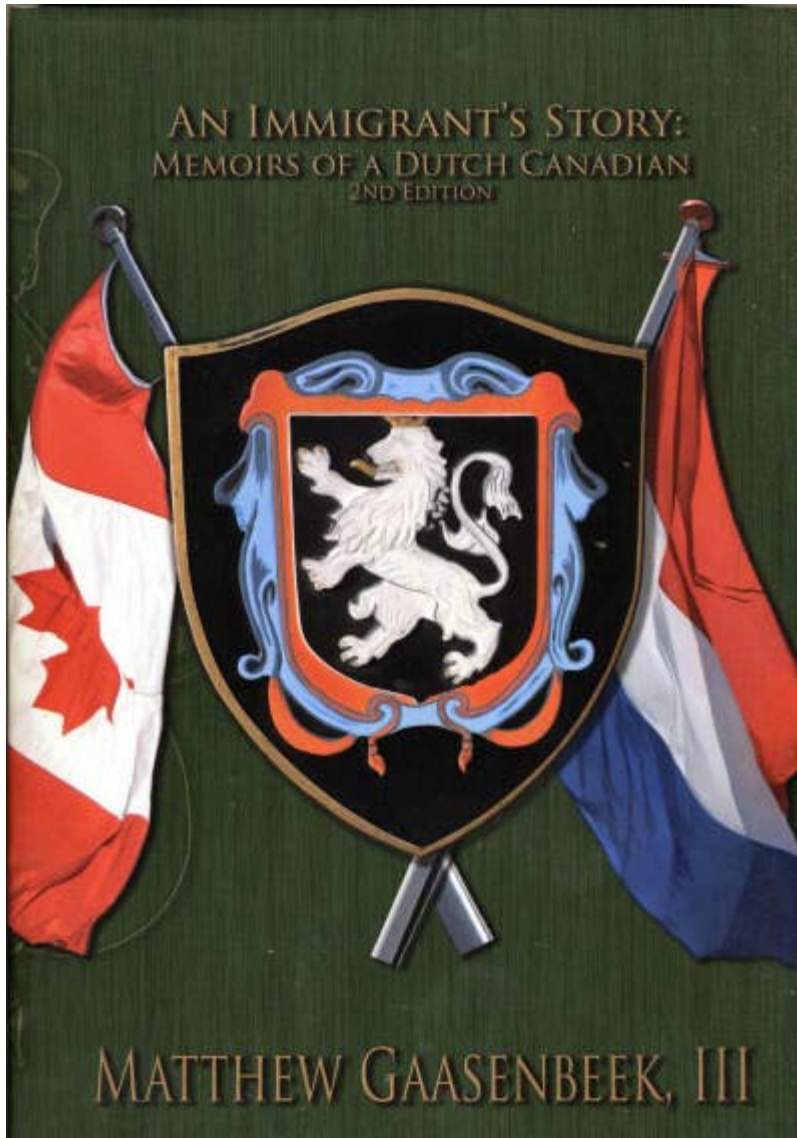




The evening before the investiture the Grand Prior hosted a dinner where a number of the priory attended including your editor. As we had one long table it was difficult to chat with everyone at the event but I certainly enjoyed it and did get to talk to quite a few. There was a clear desire to do a lot more at St James Priory and everyone seemed to be looking forward to the St James Priory Commander, Sir Nick, taking over as Prior next year when it was felt real progress could be made as he has the organisational skills to make things happen. I also got to talk to Sir Stuart Ross who has

been selected to represent OSMTM at the UN and will be attending events at the United Nations four times a year in New York.

I also had a quick chat with Prior II, Sir Matthew Gassenbeek, who has published an autobiography of his life. He promised to send me a pdf of his book for my ElectricCanadian.com web site which will go into our "Makers of Canada" section.



An Immigrant's Story: Memoirs of a Dutch Canadian. It is only occasionally that an autobiography like this comes along with broad appeal due to the depth of knowledge and experiences of the writer and the honesty and humour with which he writes. This unique story will touch, inspire and entertain the reader.

In "An Immigrant's Story: Memoirs of a Dutch Canadian", Matthew Gaasenbeek III takes us from the Second World War Nazi occupation of Holland to his emigration and life in Canada. He shares the influences of those years in shaping the person he is today.

Praise for "An Immigrant's Story: Memoirs of a Dutch Canadian"

"This is the remarkable story of a remarkable life - still in progress. What Matthew Gaasenbeek has learned and what we can learn from his insights into the most profound questions of human existence, makes this one of the truly inspiring life stories of our times. The interests and experiences we have shared in our business and public service careers have made our friendship one of the most enduring and precious of any in my own life".

Maurice F. Strong, PC, CC, OM, FRSC,

and former Under-Secretary-General of the United Nations (USG)

"The first time I met Matthew Gaasenbeek he was giving a speech on his wartime experiences as a young boy in war-torn Holland at a Remembrance Day dinner. His memoirs include his immigration to Canada and becoming one of the first immigrants to graduate from a university Business School. This is an account of how one man conquered the business world while maintaining an environmental conscience: a rare combination. It is a great biography permeated throughout by his loyalty to Canada and in particular the Canadian military."

Lt-Col William Adcock, OMM, CD

"Truly an amazing story of life from Nazi-occupied Netherlands to a life of freedom in Canada. That freedom gave Matt Gaasenbeek the opportunities he needed to become a true North-American patriot, banker, financier, environmentalist, and advocate of the people. An amazing life, well lived for family, Canada and our planet."

Rear Admiral [Ret.] James J. Carey,
Chairman, Admiral Carey Foundation

"A young wartime immigrant to Canada from Holland, "Matt" Gaasenbeek has spent his life contributing to society, business and other endeavors including the preservation of nature and wildlife. Through leadership and devotion, his activities have included, the Quetico Foundation, Federation of Ontario Naturalists, Ontario Council of University Affairs, Bird Studies Canada and the Royal Canadian Military Institute".

A. George Fells, Toronto, M.A. Oxford, Author, Business Executive

You can purchase a copy of this book from Amazon.com

Sir Matthew has always been in favour of clean water and in his time as Prior of St. James Priory he did much towards that end. This week he sent in some interesting information for this newsletter...

In the Feb 2012 issue of Christianity Today Bruce Wydick, a developmental economist who teaches at the U of S F polled the worlds' top developmental economists to rate from 0-10 the effectiveness of currant aid programs used to help relieve poverty:

The results are:

10. Give a kid a laptop (1.8/10)
9. Drink Fair Trade coffee (1.9)
8. Donate a farm animal (3.8)
7. Fund reparative surgeries (3.9)
6. Give microfinance loans (4.2)
5. Give wood burning stoves (6.0)
4. Sponsor a child (6.9)
3. Provide mosquito nets (7.3)
2. Fund de-worming treatment for children (7.8)

And The most effective way to fight poverty is...

1. Get clean water to rural villages (8.3/10)

The cost of providing clean water for life is estimated to be about \$10 - \$15 per person!

Water Facts:

- 1.1 billion people (1/6 of the world) lack access to clean water
- 2.6 billion people (40% of the world) lack adequate sanitation (toilets)
- 1.5 billion people suffer from water borne parasites (worms, protozoa, bacteria)

6000 children die daily from water borne disease. In the last 10 years more kids have died from diarrhea diseases than all people killed in armed conflict since WWII

30,000 people die daily from drinking bad water 300,000 died in the Boxing Day Tsunami in 2004 (That is same number that die every 10 days from drinking bad water)

Half of the hospital beds in the world are occupied with patients suffering from water borne disease

80% of world disease is due to inadequate water or sanitation

In the Developing World, women and children walk miles to get water

The UN estimates that the average is 40 pounds of water carried 4 miles (18 kg - km) This takes hours, can't attend school/work, deforms the spine and can leave women vulnerable to assault

Sadly, much of the water they find to drink we wouldn't wash our car tires in it

The first step in development is clean water.

The first step in fighting HIV-AIDS is administering medications with disease free clean water.

Report from Dame Barbara



Our Toilet in the Bush

Good morning everyone. Finally a little rest. We are truly working in the bush and there is so much need here that we even worked yesterday (Saturday) our day off. We are all exhausted. Had my first experience of "someone possessed" . I thought she was having some kind of seizure and I caught her before she fell to the ground. Yelling for help, I was told that she was possessed by demons and needed to be exorcised.

We are lodged in a modest facility on the shores of Lake Kariba. Food is excellent. Zebras, impala, bushbuck roam on the grounds. It is our little green oasis. However, our 19 km. Drive to the clinic site takes a full hour over sometimes sandy roads, and sometimes hard light clay with deep ruts. The further away from the lake, the drier and dustier it gets, until there are only rare splashes of green.

Our work area is dry and desolate. We pass small communities of houses made of either sticks or adobe, with thatched roofs, and occasional houses made of brick with corrugated tin houses. We cross over several bridges that go over bone dry river beds, and I try to imagine what it must be like

in the rainy season when water runs so fast and furious that the road is impassable. I see many beautiful birds on the way to work, and of course, many cows or goats on the road as well as the odd wild animal. No lions in this area. They are shot as they are such a threat to the cattle. We see many people walking along the road. Women carry everything on their head, including 25 litre pails of water. Water is from boreholes (wells), which can be several kilometres away. I do not think that I could even lift 25 litres, never mind getting it on my head, and then carrying it, barefoot, on hot roads to my village.

We work long days- 8 a.m. To 4:30 and get back just as the sun is going down. We come back covered in dust and try to get a shower in before dinner. A rudimentary "long-drop" (Toilet) was made for us. We work with only a ten minute break for lunch. The people here speak Tonga, and our translators are most important and vital to our work. I explain medication times according to the sun: "When the sun comes up, when the sun is high in the sky, and when the sun goes down" (e.g.), all the while, gesturing the direction of the sun with my hand. I must show them how to open the bottles of medication or how to push a pill through a sealed package, and tell them to keep the medication out of the sun, as there is no refrigeration.

Jeff is really enjoying this mission. When we left home, he said it would be his last. Now he is talking about returning. He is in charge of registration and is kept very busy. My job is to explain the prescriptions, and I am also doing wound care.

Thank-you to anyone who has sent some info from home. We miss you all, but find great satisfaction in our work here. Thank-you also to all who contributed medical supplies or the gifts for children and adults. You have no idea how very much all have been appreciated. The smallest gesture means so very much.

Love to all, Barbara

News from the Priory of Simon Peter, Ottawa

The summer has been a time of reflection at the Priory of Simon Peter. We have been actively pursuing our charities, as we noted in the previous report, and we continue go do so, but the time has come when a thorough renewal of our goals and objectives is in order. We have been active for four years now, and we have begun to develop our routines such as we use for the annual Walk and Talk for the Aphasia Centre of Ottawa;



in that connection we have taken on further responsibilities for the sale of tickets and minor administration for four other Aphasia Centre fundraising activities between now and Christmas under the capable direction of Chevse. LCdr Nicole Lassaline. The Hockey Knights project has 20 boxes of used youth hockey equipment packed (thanks to Chev. Frank Ritchie), waiting for us to find some way to get them to Yellowknife. A good problem to have.



Our annual Convent and Investiture took place on June 8th in the afternoon. Three postulants, Louise Mercier, Christopher Killacky and Major Paul Gauthier were given the Accolade by the Grand Prior and a blessing by the Vicar-General. Responsibility for the Priory of Simon Peter was then handed over from Chev Joe Peters to Chev Bill Megill in a ceremony reminiscent of Change of Command parades in the Canadian Armed Forces, whereby the Priory Flag was handed by the outgoing prior to the Grand Prior as a symbol of relinquishing command, and was then passed by the Grand Prior to the incoming Prior to symbolize his acceptance of responsibility for the Priory. The Vicar-General then gave his blessing to the new prior.



Chev Bill Megill then confirmed the Priory Council members, Chev Jim Gervais as Chancellor, Chevse Nicole Lassaline as Inspector and Secretary, and Chev John Ommanney as Treasurer. Chev Joe Peters and Chev Ted Griffiths graciously agreed to provide support as Past priors.

Following the convent, a banquet was held in the Wardroom of HMCS Bytown, when with a maximum of good food and wine, and a minimum of speechmaking, certificates were presented to the new Knights and Dames. A surprise Birthday celebration was held for the Vicar-General as well.



So with these activities in the background, we will on October 26 take a day to re-examine our commitments and the resources we assign to them. We need to know just what it is, among all possible charitable activities we could carry out, that would bring the greatest personal satisfaction to our members, and would correspond the closest to what the Templars mean to them. And then we need to find the resources to carry out each of the activities properly.

Chev David Moore has asked a friend of his, Lyle Makosky, a professional facilitator to take this on for us, and Lyle has agreed to donate a day. Our planning session for the "strategy session" revealed that Lyle is indeed the person for the job and we are looking forward to a very successful day.

That's all for September. We will include a commentary on the strategy session in our next update.

News from the Commandry of Edmonton

We would like to congratulate our Commander Robert MacMullen on his recent marriage to Jodie Beauchamp-MacMullen on Sept. 20, 2013 in Halifax Nova Scotia.

The Edmonton Commandry welcomed six new members at our investiture this past spring including new knights David Skrypichayko and Tim Des Roches, new Dames Joanne Neal and Annelies van der Made and new Pages Sean Borle and Graeme MacDonald.

We have been active with Hope Mission this past spring serving meals to the homeless over Easter.



Behind the counter left to right are Knight David Unsworth, Dame Jocelyn King, Knight Ian MacDonald and Knight David Skrypichayko. In front of the counter is Knight Weston Fader with another Hope Mission volunteer. The Edmonton Commandery has committed to volunteering at Hope mission quarterly throughout the 2013/2014 year, with our next involvement to fall around Remembrance Day.

The Shoe Program in partnership with All Saints Cathedral in downtown Edmonton has donated over 100 pairs of shoes and boots to individuals and families in just a few short months. We continue to gather donated shoes to keep the program running and providing footwear a second life for those in need.

We wish Chevalier Bertand Malo good fortune on his performance this fall in the Edmonton Opera's presentation of SALOME running October 26 to October 30. Several members plan on attending to cheer Bert on. Break a leg Bertrand!

Jordan River Project Dedication - January 2014

Our Grand Prior has provided us with some information on this project...

Here is the latest from our Grand Master on the Jordan River Project. A number of our Canadian Knights and Dames have expressed an interest for more information and may attend, so please send this out to them.

This is all the information I have right now, but let's try to get a feel for how many from Canada do want to go. It is a long way to go and perhaps 'we' can organize a short add-on (but not sure what that would entail). Also ask if there is any interest to further this idea and if someone would be interested in taking on the task.

Let me know....

From: Patrick E. Rea

Dear All,

This string of E-Mails will give you a good idea about the planning for the Dedication of the Jordan River Project. The dedication will be on Monday, January 6th and we believe that most people will arrive on Saturday, January 4th or Sunday 5th and stay in Amman until at least Wednesday, January 8th.

I will work with Dr. Picciotto, Princess Elizabeth, the Duke & Duchess of Mecklenburg, Prince Ali, Pertti, BG Mangum, MG Disney and the GMC to assure their arrivals. I plan with Princess Elizabeth to host a luncheon or afternoon reception for their HHs Duke Borwin and the Duchess, His Highness is the Grand Master of the Order of Griffin, HRH Prince Ali is the Chairman of the Council of Afghan Tribal Leaders and also representatives of the Royal House of the Kingdom Jordan. The time and date of that will depend on the arrival of our Grand Priors and the agreement of the Palace.

Please feel free to begin your own planning. There are still some key data to get to you, but everything written above is solid as directed by our senior Host, His Grace Rt. Rev. Dr. Younan the Lutheran Bishop of Jordan and the Holy Land.

Patrick E. Rea
Brigadier General - AUS Ret.
Grand Master III
OSMTH-I

We have got a good price from Marriott hotel as follows:

Single room: JD 105 (\$US 148)
Double room: JD 115 (\$US 161)

As you know we can't recommend any travel to use unless we know the exact time of the visitors arriving,

Transfer from Amman airport to Marriott hotel or back in a car \$US 37 per way, with a Mini Van (6 seats) \$US 55 per way.

Best regards,

Adel Shatara

Editors Note: More information on this project can be found at:
<http://www.osmth.org/humanitarian-projects/jordan-river-project>

OSMTH 2012 Annual Report



Allow me, on behalf of Order Supremus Militaris Templi Hierosolymitani, to introduce you to our inaugural annual report where you will find an overview of who we are and what we do as Knights and Dames in the twenty-first century.

Our Order was founded on the principles first adopted by the original Templar Knights in France in the Year 1118 and carried out in those early days from their home in the Temple of Solomon in the Holy City of Jerusalem, provided for them by then King of Jerusalem Baldwin, the Second. In these modern times, OSMTH is international in nature with members from over 40 nations, ecumenical Christian in our religious beliefs welcoming Members of all Christian religions, and focused on matters of human rights, political and religious freedom, and humanitarian aid to the world's less fortunate. We are officially recognized by the United Nations in Special Consultative Status and furnish OSMTH Official Delegations to the United Nations in New York City, Vienna, and Geneva.

Please take the time to look at the humanitarian projects in progress and supported by the member Grand Priories. We welcome your visit to the website and encourage you to explore membership in one of the Grand Priories.

Grand Master, Patrick E. Rea
Brigadier General - US Army (Ret.)



On behalf of the more than 5,000 members worldwide of Ordo Supremus Militaris Templi Hierosolymitani (OSMTH) – the Knights Templar International – a modern day Christian chivalric Order, I welcome your visit to this website where you will find information about the many activities and projects of our member Grand Priories (National entities).

Each Grand Priory strives to reach high levels of volunteerism for the greater good of mankind and thus increase the worth of the Order to those who are less fortunate than us. Through the Grand Priories each member is urged to become more involved in the humanitarian and charitable efforts of the Order as a whole.

Like the Knights Templar of old, we operate as a modern-day worldwide network of educated professionals from such widely diverse backgrounds as senior government officials, members of the Diplomatic Corps, senior clergy, military officers, physicians and surgeons, engineers, historians, lawyers, humanitarian aid caregivers and representatives of many other vocations. OSMTH

members include many of the most respected and credible senior officials in their home nations thus

providing a highly respected body of expertise and an influential voice supporting the Order's commitment to help the less fortunate of the world regardless of race, colour, creed or political persuasion. OSMTH members promote the time-tested chivalric ideals of honour, honesty, civility, tolerance, care for our fellow man and support of ecumenical Christian religious faith throughout their individual nations and throughout the world community.

Please take the time to look at the humanitarian projects in progress and supported by the member Grand Priors.

Grand Commander, Major General (Ret) Robert C. G. Disney

Note that this report is an incomplete report but none the less well worth a read.

The Annual Report can be downloaded at: <http://www.osmth.ca>

In the event you can't find it you can also download it at:

<http://www.electricscotland.com/history/OSMTH-ANNUAL-REPORT-2012.pdf>

The OSMTH web site is at <http://www.osmth.org>

International News

Taizé at Pine Ridge: "Our pot is empty - you have to fill it"



One participant from Canada thanked the native family that hosted the gathering: "Thank you for trusting our intentions. So often people with good intentions have caused more suffering. Thank you for daring to trust once again, in spite of the past."

How can we allow ourselves to be welcomed by those who seem most different from us, in order to create bonds of friendship and solidarity, even when past relationships have been marked by exploitation, violence and mistrust? As an attempt to give a lived-out answer to this question, a stage in the pilgrimage of trust was held from May 24-27 at Red Shirt Table, on the Pine Ridge Lakota Indian Reservation in South Dakota (USA). The weekend brought together over 500 pilgrims from throughout North America, and others from as far away as Finland, Germany, France and Austria, who were joined by many Native Americans and other local people. All the seven Indian reservations in the State of South Dakota were represented.

The Pine Ridge gathering was the result of several years of reciprocal visits between South Dakota and Taizé. Last December, a large group of native and non-native youth came to the European meeting in Rome. Gradually, trust was built and the dream of organizing something on the Pine Ridge reservation became a reality. The Two Bulls family in Red Shirt offered to welcome pilgrims to their home. In April, two brothers went to the reservation to live and were then joined by others. In early May, three teams of brothers and young people undertook a pilgrimage throughout the state,

visiting churches both on reservations and in cities for evenings of prayer and reflection.

Preparations for the meeting brought together different denominations and churches. The Episcopal Church has historically been very present on the reservation and in ministry with the Lakota, and without the spiritual and material support of the diocese and its bishop the meeting would not have been possible. The brothers were offered warm hospitality by a community of Jesuit priests who run a school at Red Cloud, and the Catholic bishop of Rapid City attended part of the meeting. Lutheran and Presbyterian retreat centers, as well as a small non-denominational community in Rapid City, helped house volunteers during the time preceding the meeting. A host of churches, families and individuals gave generously of their time and energy to make the gathering possible.

Relations between natives and non-natives in that part of the United States are not without problems, due to the complex history of their interactions. Prejudices still abound. "A Church group made a report on our reservation a few years ago, said one person from the Crow Creek Reservation. They called us 'poor'. We were shocked because we never thought of ourselves as poor. In our culture, money was never a standard by which to measure wealth. We are rich. We have a rich culture. We have much to share." A woman from the Pine Ridge Reservation, a pillar of hope in her local church, told one of the brothers: "The lack of self-esteem we suffer from will not be solved overnight. It will take years to change. We must accept that and work towards that goal."

Visits to the reservations for purposes of tourism, or by Church groups or non-profit organizations seeking to offer assistance, are fairly common, but the idea of simply being welcomed by local people in order to live and search together seems never to have been attempted. Perhaps surprisingly, the idea was almost immediately understood by the Oglala Sioux tribe and its leadership, who strongly supported the gathering, among other things by offering two buffalo which served to feed participants in the course of the weekend. One participant from Canada thanked the native family that hosted the gathering: "Thank you for trusting our intentions. So often people with good intentions have caused more suffering. Thank you for daring to trust once again, in spite of the past."

The meeting itself followed the usual pattern of the pilgrimage gatherings, adapted to the local situation. Participants stayed in tents, and prayed together three times a day in a natural outdoor amphitheater. On Saturday, there were two bible introductions followed by small-group sharing as well as a dozen different workshops. On Sunday, participants shared the worship of various local churches and, in the afternoon, chose from among four "field trips" to different locations. The largest group went to visit Wounded Knee, site of a notorious massacre in 1890 and demonstrations in the 1970s, for a time of silent prayer, led by a team of young adults, both native and non-native. In the evenings, there were group sessions under a large tent, involving reflections by native leaders and Brother Alois and Lakota cultural presentations. One evening, Brother Alois presented the tribe with a piece of pottery from Taizé, made entirely out of earth from the region of Burgundy. "We wanted to bring a piece of our land to your land," he said. "But this pot is empty. You have to fill it. We did not come to bring a message or to give you advice. We want to share our gifts and listen to your words, and build a relationship."

The hope is that the relationships created will continue in the coming months and years; already a group from the area is planning a return visit to Taizé.

[A longer report of this event can be found here](#)

The Knights Templar School

I found out about this school which is in Herts in England. Here is what they say about themselves...

We are proud of our school as a community comprehensive serving the people of Baldock and the surrounding villages and our pupils' learning is greatly enhanced by the strong links with our local area. That is why, to strengthen our position as a highly successful all-ability school at the very heart of our community, in April 2011, Knights Templar became an Academy.

Excellent academic achievement

Academic achievement, underpinned by the highest quality teaching, means we are consistently among the top 10 per cent of schools in the country, with OFSTED judging us to be “a good school”. We do, however, see our role as more than simply academic educators.

Committed to developing well-rounded individuals

We believe strongly in exposing our students to the widest possible range of experiences and opportunities that will enable them to achieve their maximum potential. We consider it our responsibility to ensure they leave the school respectful, successful, happy, well-rounded individuals who are a credit to themselves and their community.

All abilities and backgrounds welcome

Success to us is not, however, simply about focusing on the brightest and most gifted. The school is open to children of all abilities and our pastoral care ensures that every student receives the nurturing, support and guidance they need. As an integral part of our community, we accommodate students from all backgrounds and while the school is broadly Christian, we are equally welcoming to those of other faiths and no faith.

We hope you will have the opportunity to visit us at Knights Templar in the future; to allow us to show you in person our school and the pupils of which we are all so proud.

Andrew Pickering
Headteacher

You can find out more about them at: <http://www.ktemplar.herts.sch.uk/>

Editors Note: And of course your Editor feels this must be a great school as they are having a Ceilidh on October 4th, 2013! I might also add that they do their own newscast video magazine so you can watch some of the ones that are on the site.

This could also be another consideration for our Pories in that we might consider sponsoring a local school or somehow getting involved with one? Note that this school is not affiliated with our order OSMTH.

Jerusalem Bishop outlines plans for diocese



The bishop of the Episcopal diocese of Jerusalem, Suheil Dawani, leads a diocese with 7,000 members spread across five political regions.

Photo: Art Babych

The Bishop of Jerusalem, the Rt Revd Suheil Dawani, has outlined plans for a £33 million British Pounds (US\$ 50 million) development plan for the his diocese and is seeking the views of the wider Anglican Communion as the proposals take shape.

The diocese has 7,000 members in 24 parishes across five political regions; and runs two hospitals with 200 beds, two health clinics, 13 schools (including a school for children who are deaf and blind), two rehabilitation and vocational centres and an orphanage. It also runs a college for pilgrims and students, four guest houses in Jerusalem, Nazareth, Jordan and Palestine; and employs 1,500 individuals.

It has now drawn up a programme for development covering five key areas: healthcare, education, building a church on the River Jordan, clergy pensions and guest house upgrades.

The diocese says that its top priority is ensure the continued provision of medical treatment to the most vulnerable people of Gaza at its Al Ahli Hospital; and expanding its services to treat cancer. This, together with additional investment in the Zebabdeh Clinic, the Ramallah Clinic and the Birzeit Elderly Home has been costed at £6 million.

It wants to spend £3.5 million on four priority education projects at the Vocational School in Ramallah; the Bishop's School in Husun, Jordan; St John's School in Haifa, Israel; and Christ School, Nazareth, Israel.

The most intriguing development is the building of a new church on land adjacent to the River Jordan donated by King Abdullah II of Jordan to the diocese. The site, at Bethany, was rediscovered in 1996 and is said to be the site where Jesus was baptised by John the Baptist. This, together with improvements to existing churches in Jerusalem, Ramleh, Nazareth, Acre and Jaffa, will cost £6.4 million.

The diocese also wants to create a £5.3 million endowment to fund clergy pensions and provide economic security to those serving the church; and spend £1.3 million upgrading St Margaret's guest houses in Nazareth and St George's guest houses in Jerusalem that provide a welcome for pilgrims and income for the diocese.

"In order to provide witness for faith and values, serve our neighbours through our ministries in healthcare and education, and host our brothers and sisters in their own pilgrimages to the Holy Land, the diocese is considering a focused fundraising initiative," the bishop said in a written "preliminary case for support. "Through a campaign, we would invite other members of the Communion to support the Church's work in the Holy Land as we face urgent challenges, such as making our ministries more sustainable, maintaining the physical expression of our faith in our churches and institutions, and providing dignified care to our retired clergy."

Anglicanism can date its presence in Jerusalem to a permanent CMS station, established in 1833. The first bishop, the Right Revd Michael Alexander, arrived in 1841 and the first Anglican church, Christ Church at Jaffa Gate in the Old City, was dedicated in 1845. In 1898, St George's Cathedral in Jerusalem was built and dedicated in 1898. Bishop Suheil Dawani, the 14th Anglican bishop in Jerusalem, was enthroned in On April 2007.

The diocese of Jerusalem has prepared a [two-page summary](#) of its proposals and brief electronic survey to gauge the views of Anglican and Episcopal members and charitable foundations about their priorities and to discover the likely levels of support.

Vicar of Bagdad

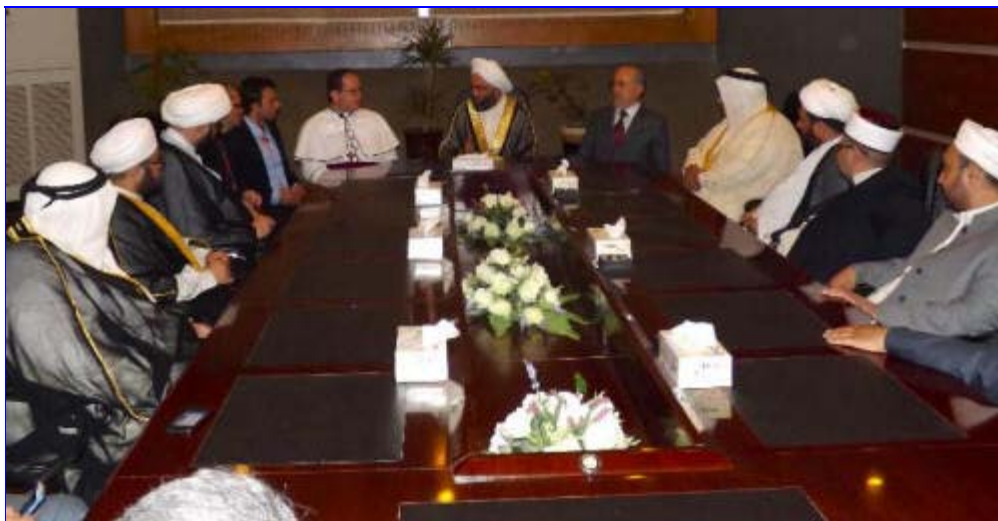
Our Grand Prior sent out a communication on 30th July...

Your members should be aware of our Order's significant contributions, financially and physically, for Canon White and his Foundation of Relief and Reconciliation in the Middle East. His life is under constant threat by radical Muslims and yet he persists in staying in Bagdad to help and minister to the Iraqis and breakdown religious barriers. Canon White, also known as the Vicar of Bagdad, is a Templar and occasionally finds time to come to North America to gain support for his centre. Check out his website and calendar. He is coming to the Hamilton area in late September. Not sure of his itinerary, but will keep you informed.

Here is what Canon White said in his last newsletter...

Dear Friends,

In the past few days we have again seen the way that hope and tragedy go hand-in-hand in this country. We were able to hold a large iftar followed by a reconciliation meeting on Saturday night with many of the key Sheikhs from both the Sunni and Shia communities, as well as our own Bishop Michael from Cyprus. Many of these leaders were new to these peace and reconciliation meetings and were eager to be involved in this process. The meeting was a success and saw the Sunni and Shia leaders praying together and then discussing together how they can help stop the violence. There was a very firm commitment to join in the reconciliation work, and to attend future meetings.



From the hope of that meeting we then moved on to this morning when there were at least 10 car bombs set off in Bagdad alone. The total amount of casualties is as yet unknown, but the targets seem to be primarily Shia areas. This is the type of sectarianism that is trying to rip this country apart. This violence also follows a major prison break last week. Roughly 500 prisoners escaped from two different prisons, and some reports say 4 top al-Qaeda leaders escaped as well. Whether or not they were directly involved in planning the bombings today has yet to be proven, but it is consistent with the goals of al-Qaeda to attack Shia areas. Despite this danger and turmoil we persevere on with the work of reconciliation and peace. We are very hopefully that the coming months will see some major conferences, which will lead to tangible change here.

We will be leaving soon to go to America for a week of speaking engagements. Please check our [website](#) for more information.

The Grand Chancellor's Corner

When you were first introduced to the role and responsibilities of being a Templar, a major change for many was including a time for meditation in your daily life. It is a simple concept: a time to turn your heart, soul and attention to God . . . but it is easier said than done. To help, I have some

suggestions that work for me -- sometimes!

1. If you can, set aside a particular time each day: the first few moments when you wake up, before the world descends and distracts, or a quiet time at the end of the day when you can put aside the demands of day-to-day living and listen to the demands of God and our Order. Some can use the time travelling by transit or train: removing themselves from the mundane and reaching inside themselves to the peace and order they seek. Take a few moments to envisage the time and space you need. Each individual has different ways to approach meditation: learn yours.
2. Pick a theme for the week or month . . . it can be as broad as forgiveness: working your way through those you need to forgive, those you need to seek forgiveness from; Christ's injunctions; what forgiveness means; how much easier it is to forgive strangers than loved ones; how the word sounds in your head or heart; is it a sweet or bitter taste on your lips? When you take a word and start exploring it, it seems that a few moments will be all you need . . . and a month later you can still be exploring the nuances.
3. Others find reading something that will lead their hearts to explore an idea is useful. If you fall into this category, series such as Daily Bread or on-line sites often prove useful.
4. Open your Bible randomly and read until something intrigues you. Then think on it.
5. Begin with prayer . . . as simple as "Lord, help me to know You better." or The Lord's Prayer, or a psalm of praise or a chant, a hymn or song that means something to you and your Creator.
6. Or, best of all, just sit quietly and listen. Open yourself up to learn what it is that the Spirit has to tell you.

I hope something here will help you as you work at fulfilling the promises you undertook the day you were called to the chivalric Order of the Knight Templar.

If you have questions about this, or anything else, please feel free to contact me anytime: stmonance@hotmail.com

Athens

Nola kindly sent in some pictures from the Athens meeting...



Our Grand Prior at the Round Table



The Greek Grand Marshall and the Blessing of the Postulants



The Mantles, Swords and Regalia and the new Knights raising their swords



The Postulants and Swords extended in salute



Reminder of our Faith in the Greek HQ and Lunch Time Entertainer



Our Intrepid Scribe and the Barefoot Chef Restaurant



Temple of Poseidon and Tourist Time



Protecting the Past



Our Leaders International and Domestic

And here is her article on the event...



If you have the chance to attend an international meeting, treat yourself to it: you will have no regrets. Aside from the up-datings on all that is going on in the other 21 Grand Priories, you have the chance to meet with incredible men and women who share your values and seek to serve as you do. BUT in such different ways.

I had the opportunity to attend the Convent in Greece in September and discovered an incredibly active group of Templars who approach their mission and membership very differently from staid Canadians. I leave it to the Grand Prior to relate the business aspects of the meetings but from the moment of arrival, the Priory greeted and hosted us in grand style. I like to think that I was the most fortunate, my greeter host, the Greek Grand Marshall, Chevalier Alexis Panagiatopoulos, met my plane and took me on a grand tour, describing each fascinating point along the way; challenging me to visit everything from historical treasures to local markets.

Following a day long meeting on Thursday, our host, the Greek Grand Prior, H.E. Chev. Dr. Paul Tsolakian, GCTJ, surprised us with an invitation to visit their headquarters: with a bus awaiting outside the hotel. And what headquarters they are . . . one stepped from the 21st century to the 12th. A round table that accommodated at least 28 people – swords extended (or reversed for the clergy and dames) adorned it and elaborately carved chairs surrounded it. It has been constructed in such a way that everything can be taken down and moved to another facility, should that prove necessary. The “stone” walls; the stained glass windows; the table divided into endless pie shapes; everything was designed with an eye to any potential future move... much as the mobile Templars of generations past.

And at the banquet, which followed the Investiture, I met a trio, Natalia and Joanne and Chev George Morfopoulos (a senior member of the Grand Priory) who spent their youth in Montreal. Together they have a business that makes the many types of memorabilia that make an investiture so special. They gave me a beautiful Greek column to hand into my Church -- to remind us that it was Greek, and not Latin, in which Christ's words were recorded! They also gave me a Pantheon Marbles Selene Horse commemorative gold stamp! One cannot look upon it without being transported back to a magical evening in Athens.



On a final note: having been the hosts in 2010 I know that we did not provide a comparable level of hospitality and I can only commend the Greek Priory for their commitment to every aspect of ensuring our enjoyment of their country. For me, my Templar "host" took me on a tour of the coastline, the Temple of Poseidon, a dip in the sea and a dinner at a restaurant with seafood to die for and a chef in bare-feet. What a way to entice OSMTH back to Athens and to ensure that we all salute the wondrous hospitality of the Templars of Greece.

Editors Note: And finally Dame Nola sent me in a great presentation about an alternative view of creation which can be download at:

<http://www.electriccanadian.com/religion/Creation1.pps>

I think you'll need to save it to your hard disk before you can run it as it's a pps file.

Canadian History

Sometimes we just don't have the time to read histories so in this issue I bring you videos you can watch. Note that all the links go to the Electric Canadian web site but you can elect to watch them on YouTube as well.

Canada: A People's Video History

This is a 17 part history of Canada produced by CBC with each part being around 1 hour in length. This is a great way to learn about the history of Canada and you could watch an episode each week and by the end you'll be well informed about our history. Perhaps also a weekly time to spend with your children or grand children so you can learn together?

You can get to this series at:

http://www.electriccanadian.com/history/canada/canadianhistory_videos.htm

Over the Top with the 25th

Chronicle of events at Vimy Ridge and Courcellette by Lieut. R. Lewis M.M.

The Battle of Vimy Ridge was a most significant moment in Canadian history and this is a book about the 25th's participation in it along with a 1 hour video. Well worth viewing.

You can read and view this at:

<http://www.electriccanadian.com/forces/25th/index.htm>

Canada and the Great War

And on the same theme I found a series of videos exploring the role Canada played in the Great War. There are nine in the series so around 2 hours viewing in total. You can get to this at:

http://www.electriccanadian.com/forces/great_war.htm

Putting us Brits to Shame, Take a lesson from the Canadians

This is actually an old video (c2008) but I do believe it is well worth viewing again. You can view this at <http://youtu.be/5pKzAZc3So8>

A coincidence that leaves me worried about our lives

An Article that should make us think by Alex Wood

Perhaps I shouldn't read too much into the coincidence but I've had almost exactly the same experience twice in the last fortnight and I'm concerned.

The first occasion was at Waverley Station entering from Market Street. As ever the place was awash with travellers in a hurry. A young woman with a baby in a buggy stopped at the head of the stairs and sighed audibly. It's more than 20 years since my kids were in a buggy but I knew what she was feeling: 'How do I do this without becoming totally knackered?'

I turned to her and offered to help carry the buggy. We got it down to the platform level and she thanked me. The thanks were profuse, seriously profuse. I waved my hand: 'No problem. Take care'. And I moved on.

I didn't rethink the matter until yesterday. Again, it was in a station, this time Linlithgow station. I was in the queue, a busy queue, at the ticket office when a young woman, again with a buggy, leaned over and informed the ticket clerk that the lift to the platform would not open. 'Afraid it's not working,' he replied. Again, the woman's doleful look said it all.

I left the queue and offered to help get the buggy and baby to the platform. I took the front of the buggy, she took the back and 30 seconds later she and the buggy were on the platform. The coincidence, however, wasn't that I'd twice helped a woman hoist a buggy either down or up station steps. It was the profuse nature of the thanks I received.

The task on both occasions was simple, not physically challenging and consequently on both occasions the gratitude seemed to me, initially at least, out of all proportion to the routine favour granted.

One explanation is simply that I bumped into two women prone to hyperbole and exaggeration but I do not think so. What hit me after the second experience was that on neither occasion, despite the many other passengers in the vicinity, did another soul make even a move to help. The response of these women was less about gratitude for the brief assistance I had rendered but rather an acknowledgement that such behaviour was not the norm. It did not accord with their routine experience.

I'll return to that theme shortly but after, on the latter occasion, I had completed my supportive behaviour, I returned to the ticket queue when I experienced my one moment of frustration. Despite the fact I had left the queue to help someone in need, my queuing associates stood their ground to a person. Not one of them suggested I re-enter my original place in the queue. They all saw me leave the queue and why I did so. Several turned and saw me return but their eyes quickly refocused on the ticket clerk, on their journey and on their own concerns. A few minutes at the end of the queue gave me time to pause and consider what had happened.

I started to reflect on that experience and on the experience of a fortnight earlier. It was not merely that I was alone in offering assistance – and I am certain that the profuse thanks were a reflection of that. It was that for so many of my fellow passengers, engrossed in their mobiles or iPads or conversations with friends, focused on their own particular journey or simply not considering that it

was the job of 'someone else' to help, the plight of a fellow traveller was not even visible.

I am not an advocate of a return to some mid 20th-century culture of male etiquette, where men automatically give up seats on public transport to women. I would have done exactly the same on both occasions had the buggy-wheeler been male.

There are, however, basic courtesies which oil the wheels of social connectedness. Offering help to someone patently in need of it is the most basic of such courtesies. Courtesy generally is a social lubricant. As a teacher I told young people that terms such as 'Please' and 'Excuse me' gave a signal to others that we respected them and that we were not putting ourselves and our interests ahead of them and theirs. Consequently it made them relate more warmly and connect more readily to us.

In our atomised, goal-focused culture, we are in danger of losing sight of the fact that it is our very inter-connectedness which makes us human. The small courtesies and kindly behaviours of daily behaviour among individuals are the essential underpinning of cooperative relationships in society at large.

That may be naïve. Perhaps Thatcher was right, not ethically right but predictively accurate: '...there is no such thing as society. There are individual men and women, and there are families'. If that is the case we should not be surprised at some of the cruel and callous behaviour which has recently been uncovered in hospitals and care settings. It is simply the extreme end of a spectrum of the relentless individualism which left countless passengers blind to the dilemmas of two women with buggies facing stairs they could not tackle alone.

Alex Wood is a retired head teacher

The article came from the Scottish Review <http://www.scottishreview.net>

Book Review

Templar: new 480-page graphic novel about the Knights Templar, Review by Cory Doctorow.

Templar is a beautifully executed historical thriller written by famed game designer Jordan Mechner (who created Prince of Persia) and drawn by Leuyen Pham and Alex Puvilland. As the title implies, the story is a conspiracy thriller about the treasure of the Knights Templar, an order of Crusaders who were persecuted by the King of France in the early 1300s; rounded up, tortured, accused of gross and sinful deeds, subjected to show-trials and put to death. The story of the Templars has been told many times, and there are umpty-leven conspiracy theories about what became of the treasure the order looted during the Crusades. Mechner and co have created a smashing addition to the canon.

Templar is a fictional account of the lives of some of the (real) Templars who escaped the king's roundup; in this telling, they become badass ronins who wander the land, determined to clear the order's name and reclaim its treasure. What flows out of this is a classic caper story filled with glorious and horrible swordfights, skullduggery, torture, romance, banditry, piety, bravery and treachery. I came to this not knowing much about the Templars and caring about them even less, but found that once I picked the (massive) book up, I couldn't put it down. This is some great and exciting storytelling.

If this sounds familiar, it may be because you read the first third of it in 2010, published as Solomon's Thieves (Templar takes the story to some very good places that Solomon's Thieves can't get to). You also may be familiar with the team from the Prince of Persia graphic novel (I confess I didn't like that one very much -- but I love this).



Though this is thoroughly fictionalized, the team are careful to mark out the bits that are historically accurate (to the best of anyone's knowledge, anyway), and they include a sweet little biography suggesting further reading. This is a great comic for grownups, but it's also a great way to introduce younger readers to medieval history.

You can see some sample pages at:

<http://boingboing.net/2013/07/13/templar-new-480-page-graphic.html>

A Poem Worth Reading

Sent in by Prior Roy at Windsor

He was getting old and paunchy
And his hair was falling fast,
And he sat around the Legion,
Telling stories of the past.

Of a war that he once fought in
And the deeds that he had done,
In his exploits with his buddies;
They were heroes, every one.

And 'tho sometimes to his neighbors
His tales became a joke,
All his buddies listened quietly
For they knew where of he spoke.

But we'll hear his tales no longer,
For ol' Joe has passed away,
And the world's a little poorer
For a Soldier died today.

He won't be mourned by many,
Just his children and his wife.
For he lived an ordinary,
Very quiet sort of life.

He held a job and raised a family,
Going quietly on his way;
And the world won't note his passing,
'Tho a Soldier died today.

When politicians leave this earth,
Their bodies lie in state,
While thousands note their passing,
And proclaim that they were great.

Papers tell of their life stories
From the time that they were young
But the passing of a Soldier
Goes unnoticed, and unsung.

Is the greatest contribution
To the welfare of our land,
Some jerk who breaks his promise
And cons his fellow man?

Or the ordinary fellow
Who in times of war and strife,
Goes off to serve his country

And offers up his life?

The politician's stipend
And the style in which he lives,
Are often disproportionate,
To the service that he gives.

While the ordinary Soldier,
Who offered up his all,
Is paid off with a medal
And perhaps a pension, small.

It is not the politicians
With their compromise and ploys,
Who won for us the freedom
That our country now enjoys.

Should you find yourself in danger,
With your enemies at hand,
Would you really want some cop-out,
With his ever waffling stand?

Or would you want a Soldier
His home, his country, his kin,
Just a common Soldier,
Who would fight until the end.

He was just a common Soldier,
And his ranks are growing thin,
But his presence should remind us
We may need his likes again.

For when countries are in conflict,
We find the Soldier's part
Is to clean up all the troubles
That the politicians start.

If we cannot do him honor
While he's here to hear the praise,
Then at least let's give him homage
At the ending of his days.

Perhaps just a simple headline
In the paper that might say:
"OUR COUNTRY IS IN MOURNING,
A SOLDIER DIED TODAY."

Scotland storms the programme at the "world's most influential film festival"

This was a headline on the Scottish Government web site and guess who they were referring to? Toronto International Film Festival (TIFF). Sometimes we don't realise just how good we are in Canada. Here is the full article so you can get a flavour of how well respected we are....

Four Scottish films will premiere at the Toronto International Film Festival (TIFF) this week, helping to cement Scotland's reputation for both quality film-making and as a great location for shooting.

Creative Scotland has contributed funding to four films which will make their debut at the prestigious event, which is often referred to as the world's most influential film festival; Sunshine on Leith; The

Railway Man; Under the Skin and Starred Up, which was shot in Belfast under Scottish director David Mackenzie. Each of the four films received £300,000 from Creative Scotland.

In order to champion Scotland's interests as a world-class shooting location, Creative Scotland's locations team will travel to TIFF, where they will meet with industry leaders to discuss production opportunities, funding, locations, crews and facilities. The team will offer assistance to productions seeking to film on location in Scotland.

The inclusion of four Scottish films in the TIFF programme also serves to highlight the need for a dedicated film and TV production studio facility in Scotland. The change to UK tax breaks to include high end television drama - which came into effect in April 2013 - highlights a significant opportunity for Scotland's film and television industry.

In May, Culture Secretary Fiona Hyslop set up a film studio delivery group to actively pursue proposals for a new film and TV production facilities in Scotland.

Fiona Hyslop, Cabinet Secretary for Culture said:

"The Toronto International Film Festival is hugely respected and influential, and for films premiering there, it is an opportunity to be launched on an international stage and to grab the attention of some of the key players in the industry.

You can learn more about TIFF at <http://tiff.net/>

Canada's Banks Ranked World's Soundest for 6th Straight Year

Canada's banking system was ranked the world's strongest for the sixth straight year by the World Economic Forum. Canada's banks received the No. 1 spot in the Geneva-based organization's Global Competitiveness Report, which was released today (4th Sept 2013). The report includes 148 countries.

"Having a strong and profitable banking system is the backbone of the Canadian economy," Terry Campbell, president of the Canadian Bankers Association, said in a statement.

The Middle East in Transition

Every day in the news we are following breaking news about the situation in Egypt, Syria and Iran and how it might affect other parts of the Middle East. When you read what I've posted below new events may well have overtaken us. However what I've made available for you to read at least provides some thoughtful information on the various parties in the Middle East which I hope will help to educate you on the issues. These articles come from various sources such as an important think tank in Israel, a Scottish press article, a Canadian writer on Middle Eastern affairs, and a US Army Colonel (Rtrd) with considerable experience on the Middle East. etc.

On the main OSMTH web site we read...

Hope Amidst the Darkness in Syria

Last month, ICRD (International Center for Religion and Diplomacy) conducted back-to-back, faith-based reconciliation workshops in Midyat, Turkey for Kurdish, Syriac Christian, and Arab tribal leaders from the Al-Hassake region of Eastern Syria. [Read the full report.](#)

28 August, 2013

Dear Dr. Johnston,

Thank you for this important Templar Up-Date. We Templar's have noted with prayers and support the success of Canon Cox and the ICRD in his vital work in Syria and share with you our overwhelming concern for our Coptic sisters and brothers. Last week after thought and prayer and with the approval of our Grand Commander, MG Robert Disney, and Grand Commander-elect, Colonel Dr. Marcel DePicciotto, a successful meeting was held in Chicago under the Chairmanship

of our Grand Chaplain General, HG Bishop Younan and guidance of HB Metropolitan THEODOSIUS. The purpose for this meeting was to decide how better OSMTH-I can address the exact issues you discuss in this Report.

We appointed an assistant to the GM to focus on "Christians at Immediate Risk". He will work directly with the Christians in the Countries concerned, coordinate with and through all of our Christian churches that are addressing this problem, seek UN action as possible through our UN delegations, broaden and deepen our cooperation with other NGO's involved, and prepare on-site reports to spot light the crisis thus hoping that governments will respond to these issues. Of course, we will try to be of assistance to Canon Cox as requested and the ICRD.

Patrick E. Rea
Brigadier General - AUS Ret.
Grand Master III
OSMTH-I

So this is a good way to set the scene as it were for the following articles where we will try to educate you on the situation in the Middle East...

So what's going on in Iran?
From the Glasgow Herald Newspaper of 15th June 2013

Made in Glasgow: Hassan Rouhani, the moderate who has become Iran's next president.

The man today declared as Iran's next president grew up in Glasgow, completing a degree and doctorate at Glasgow Caledonian University.

Hassan Rouhani, an avowed reformer, urged to a wide lead in early vote counting today, and the country's interior minister declared him the victor at 5pm today.

He studied at the old Glasgow Polytechnic (now GCU) in the 1970s and returned to undertake a law doctorate in the 1990s. He then went by the name of Hassan Feridon

Mr Rouhani, 64, who is married with children, is a cleric who speaks English, German, French, Russian and Arabic.

Earlier today, he had more than 51% of the more than eight million votes tallied so far, well ahead of Tehran Mayor Mohammad Bagher Qalibaf with about 16.6%. Hard-line nuclear negotiator Saeed Jalili was third with about 13%.

The strong margin for Mr Rouhani gave him an outright victory and avoided a two-person run-off next Friday. Iran has more than 50 million eligible voters, and turnout in yesterday's poll was believed to be high.

Many reform-minded Iranians who have faced years of crackdowns looked to Mr Rouhani's rising fortunes as a chance to claw back a bit of ground.

But even Mr Rouhani's presidency could be more of a limited victory than a deep shake-up.

Mr Rouhani led the influential Supreme National Security Council and was given the highly sensitive nuclear envoy role in 2003, a year after Iran's 20-year-old atomic programme was revealed.

"Rouhani is not an outsider and any gains by him do not mean the system is weak or that there are serious cracks," said Rasool Nafisi, an Iranian affairs analyst at Strayer University in Virginia. "The ruling system has made sure that no-one on the ballot is going to shake things up."



Yet a Rouhani victory would not be entirely without significance either. It would make room for more moderate voices in Iranian political dialogue and display their resilience.

It also would bring onto the world stage an Iranian president who has publicly endorsed more outreach rather than bombast toward the West.



Opinion: Hassan Rouhani, Victim of a Possible Attack on Syria? By Shahir Shahid Saless. 31st August 2013.

While most news agencies report that an attack by the US and its allies on Syria is imminent, new developments have cast doubt upon those predictions. The British Parliament rejected a proposal for military action in Syria by a 285 to 272 margin. The vote was nonbinding, but David Cameron stated that he will not proceed without the Parliament's approval and that the government "will act accordingly."

Given the outcome of the US/UK-led invasion on Iraq in 2003, the UK's decision is sensible. Prior to the 2003 invasion, the British and American governments asserted that Saddam Hussein possessed a large cache of chemical and biological weapons. Those claims proved false, severely damaging the two governments' credibility. This time, the British appear to be more cautious. If UN experts' findings conflict with the UK's claims that the chemical attacks were the work of Bashar Al-Assad's regime, there would be no grounds for an invasion that many observers believe could result in dangerous and unpredictable consequences. The likely UK exit will impose pressure on President Obama, since he now has to go it alone.

Following a briefing for lawmakers featuring top administration officials on the evening of Thursday, August 29, members of Congress maintained that President Obama still has to gain political support for military strikes against Syria. This is a hurdle that the US administration has to overcome in the coming days.

However, Pentagon officials assert that the US is prepared to act unilaterally and that it has already "passed the point of no return." They maintain that strikes are likely "within days."

The US administration seeks to attack Syria for two reasons. First, according to some reports, Jeffrey Feltman, UN Under Secretary-General for Political Affairs, also a former US Assistant Secretary of State and Ambassador to Lebanon, conveyed a message to Tehran during his recent meeting with high-ranking Iranian officials including Mohammad Javad Zarif, Iran's foreign minister.

According to the reports, "Feltman warned that a successful Geneva II should be preceded by the restoration of a balance of power, and that Iran should understand the importance of this for the greater goal of bringing peace back to Syria."

Sources in Tehran said that the Iranians perceived that Feltman was calling on them to remain calm if there were strikes on Syria.

The postponement of Geneva 2, the international peace conference for Syria that was scheduled for Wednesday, August 28, in The Hague, corroborates with these reports. In other words, the US government believes that the balance of power in Syria must change before there can be any earnest discussions regarding the fate of Syria.

The other reason that the US seeks to attack Syria is that last year, President Obama proclaimed the use of chemical weapons a "red line" for Syria. Great powers, especially the United States, draw red lines as preventive measures to the formation of destructive wars. Now, with the occurrence of chemical attacks, if the United States does not show any reaction it would call into question the credibility of such "red line" proclamations, rendering them empty and baseless.

Unless clear, compelling and indisputable evidence is reported by the UN inspectors indicating that the Syrian government was not behind the recent chemical attacks, Obama is left with no alternative to military action against the Syrian government.

Meanwhile, Obama has so far drawn two “red lines” for Iran: first against closing the Strait of Hormuz in the Gulf, and second against Iran's effort to acquire nuclear weapons. If the United States, as a super power, adopts a passive stance against recent developments in Syria, Iran could reasonably question the sincerity and fortitude behind the red lines drawn around it by the US. Such a perception of weakness behind these red lines would have negative consequences on the international level. Any perceived lack of consequence for Syria's crossing of the chemical attack red line may portray the US more as a paper tiger than a superpower.

Iran's likely reaction to possible attacks by the US and its allies will depend on their intensity. Iranian officials, such as the commander of the Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC), Major General Mohammad Ali Jafari, warned the United States government that they risked engagement in a costly and protracted struggle if they intervened in Syria. To take an absolutely pacifist stance will put Iran in the same position as the United States if they did the same. In other words, when it comes Iran's moment of truth, standing by as a spectator while the US thrashes Syria's military infrastructure, might manifest the appearance of fearing to confront the US, specifically by the IRGC.

Therefore, if the US attacks Syria, Iran's government might inconspicuously engage in the confrontation. Their reactions will be primarily focused on missile attacks against US assets.

If the US operations against Syria are limited, Iran probably will not see any reason to escalate the confrontation. However, if the attacks are comprehensive and aim to destroy Assad's military infrastructure in order to change the balance of power in favor of the opposition, then, as Commander Jafari has warned, Iran and Syria may expand the war theater, drawing Israel in.

There is another threat in this conflict to consider. Even if Iran and Syria's last resort of engaging Israel does not come to pass, jihadi groups may conduct false flag operations. For example, launching rockets on Israeli cities would ultimately force Israel to take military action against the Syrians.

In any case, regardless of how a US-led military operation shapes up, the outcome of such a manifestation would be the renewal of Iran's radical foreign policy and the weakening of Rouhani's newly established, moderate government.

A US attack on Syria would render direct talks between Iran and the US impossible for the foreseeable future. Rhetoric and accusations from both sides would emerge, and the conflict over Iran's nuclear issue would deepen. As tensions spiral, the US will implement more punitive sanctions on Iran. This will marginalize Rouhani and his foreign policy team led by his moderate and pragmatic foreign minister, Mohammad Javad Zarif, whose emergence has created high hopes of ending Iran's aggressive foreign policies.

In an environment filled with hostility and mistrust between Iran and the US, both sides would likely benefit from a more moderate government in Iran. In practice, however, in the event of a US led engagement with Syria, hardliners would most probably resume control of Iran's foreign policy. This could be a road to a destructive confrontation between the US and Iran.

Shahir Shahid Saless is a political analyst and freelance journalist, writing primarily about Iran's domestic and foreign affairs. He lives in Canada. Email him at shahir@iranamerica.com

Here is a Synopsis about Hassan Rouhani's speech at the United Nations compiled by the Guardian Newspaper on 24th September 2013 which many think will jump start Nuclear negotiations

30m ago

Rouhani begins with an invocation and some formalities.

Then he says the world is made up of fears and hopes:

Fear of war... fear of deadly confrontation, of religious, ethnic and national identities... fear of poverty.. of disregard for human dignity and rights, and fear of neglect of morality.

Alongside these fears, however, there are new hopes... Of 'yes to peace' and 'no to war.' and the preference for dialogue over conflict, and moderation over extremism. The recent election in Iran represents... hope of the people of Iran... The people transfer of executive power manifested that Iran is an anchor of stability in an ocean of regional instability.

He praises "reliance on the ballot box as the basis of power."

28m ago

Rouhani criticizes the "cold war mentality" and "bipolar mentality" that separates the world into "superior us and inferior others."

Any miscalculation of one's position and of course of others will bear historic damages. A mistake by one actor will have a negative impact on all others... at this sensitive juncture... the age of zero-sum gain is over, although a few actors continue to rely on archaic ways... to retain their domination.

Military means to subjugate others are failed examples of the perpetuation of old ways in the new circumstances.

He also calls out "coercive economic policies" that negate peace – sanctions, it seems.

25m ago

Rouhani is describing a perilous global balance threatened by brinkmanship and "strategic violence" meant to upset regional actors.

"Efforts to redraw political borders and frontiers is extremely dangerous and provocative," he says, without naming names.

"The center of world powers is hegemonic. Relegating the south to the periphery has led to the establishment of a monologue at the level of international relations," he says.

It sounds like this speech was written by a foreign affairs academic who came back to life, barely, for the occasion.

22m ago

Rouhani begins to lay crimes at the door of the United States and its allies. He lists "the arming of the Saddam Hussein with chemical weapons" and establishing al-Qaeda in Afghanistan.

Iran, on the other hand, is irreproachable: "Iran poses absolutely no threat to the world or the regions... in fact my country has been a harbinger of just peace and security."

Rouhani lists what he says are infractions in North Africa and west Asia (Afghanistan, Iraq and Kuwait); the "brutal oppression of the Palestinian people" and "terrorist bombings in countries like Iraq, Afghanistan and Lebanon."

He says "structural violence" is being carried out on "the people of Palestine."

Israel, incidentally, has boycotted Rouhani's address.

19m ago

Rouhani blames chemical weapons use in Syria on "terrorist groups" and calls it a regional danger:

The access by extremist terrorist groups of [chemical weapons] is the gravest danger to the region... the actual use of force will only lead to a further exacerbation of violence.

Rouhani condemns drones:

Extreme action such as the use of drones on innocent people in the name of combatting terrorism should also be condemned.

Then Rouhani says he should say a word about the Iranian nuclear scientists who have been

assassinated.

For what crimes have they been assassinated? ... Have the perpetrators been condemned?

15m ago

Rouhani says Iran will "act responsibly" to cooperate with "other responsible actors."

He says Iran believes in "peace based on democracy" and "believe there are no violent solutions to world crisis."

16m ago

Rouhani turns to the war for the soul:

Violence and extremism nowadays have now gone beyond the physical real... and infected [spiritual] life.

Intolerance is the predicament of our time. We need to promote and reinforce tolerance....

Then he makes sounds that optimists will highlight:

We should not just tolerate others. We should rise above mere tolerance and work together. People around the world are tired of war. This is a unique opportunity. The Islamic Republic of Iran believes that all challenges can be met successfully.

11m ago

Now Rouhani turns to the nuclear issue. "Iran seeks to resolve problems, not to create them," he says:

There is no issue... that cannot be resolved by mutual respect... Iran's nuclear dossier is a case in point.

Acceptance of the inalienable right of Iran constitutes the best and the easiest way of resolving this issue....

"Put otherwise," he says, "Iran and other actors should pursue two common objectives... for the nuclear dossier":

- 1) Iran's nuclear program... must pursue exclusively peaceful purposes. ... I declare here ... this has been and will always be the objective of the Islamic Republic of Iran. Nuclear weapons... have no place in Iran's security and defense doctrine...
- 2) Right to the enrichment Iran and other related nuclear rights. ... Nuclear technology has already enriched [on an] industrial scale

Rouhani asserts that the nuclear program is too far along to deny.

7m ago

Rouhani says he listened to Obama:

I listened carefully to the statement made by President Obama today at the GA. .. [I'm] hoping that they will refrain from following the short-sighted interests of warmongering pressure groups we can arrive at a framework to managing our differences.

Talks can happen; equal footing and mutual respect should govern the talks, he says.

Of course, we expect to hear a consistent voice from Washington," he says. The dominant voice in recent years has been for a military option, he says. He has a different idea.

Then Rouhani drops an acronym: The Wave: World Against Violence and Extremism.

I propose as a starting step... I invite all states... to undertake a new effort to guide the world in this direction... we should start thinking about a coalition for peace all across the globe instead of the ineffective coalitions for war.

He says Iran invites the globe to join The Wave.

7m ago

"A good and bright future awaits the world," Rouhani says.

He's done. Applause from the gallery.

A View on Syria

I was watching the CBC news on 31st August where they were interviewing retired US Army Colonel Douglas MacGregor (<http://www.douglasmacgregor.com/>) who as it happens was against any military action by the USA. He mentioned specifically the fact that Asad actually supports Christian groups.

He went on to say that Asad is actually fighting the very people that caused so many lives to be lost in Iraq, the Sunni Islamists. These are the people that have already attacked some 60 Christian churches in Egypt.

This tweaked my interest as the media usually takes the approach of attacking Asad so to hear this on the main media was a bit of a surprise so I did a bit of research on this and found a fairly substantial article and here is how it starts...



Minority alliances in the Middle East have been a constant reality for groups under threat from perceived "majority" interests. Most of these alliances were military in nature and often covert. Israel has reached out to Christians in Lebanon and Kurds in Iraq. Berbers in Morocco have also engaged Israel. In their shared effort to fight Turkey, the Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK) entered into an alliance with the Armenian Secret Army for the Liberation of Armenia (ASALA). Yet in Syria, where minority Alawites dominate the government and find themselves in conflict with not only the Sunni majority but other minority groups, minority alliances take on a new precedence in their efforts to control the country.

Syria has been described as a "safe haven, in a region where religious minorities often struggle for survival." However, Syria is currently descending into what may become a sectarian civil war, with the mainly Alawi minority-run Ba'thi regime of Bashar al-Asad facing off against Syria's majority, Arab Sunni Muslims. This Levantine state is morphing from a quasi-paradise into a boiling cauldron. The way the Asad regime gained and retained its increasingly important allies in the Druze and Christian communities, and a general quiescence from the Kurds, can be used to chart how long the regime can stay in power, in addition to establishing the solidity of Damascus's important minority alliances.

It is well known that Syria's ruling elite itself comes from a minority, namely the Alawi sect. It has also been asserted that because of the Alawite's own precarious position vis-à-vis Syria's Sunni majority that they are natural allies for most of Syria's other minorities. Through a mixture of

patronage networks, fear of massacre at the hands of Sunni Muslims, and a wish not to cede power, most Alawites have remained loyal to their coreligionist rulers. Though, support for the Ba'thists from other minority groups has not always followed this specific model.

Unlike other Arab Spring states, such as Egypt, Tunisia, and Libya, Syria is home to a wide and diverse range of ethnic and religious minorities. These groups include the dominant Alawites, Druze, various Christian groups, Kurds, Shi'i sects, and small numbers of Yazidis. According to most estimates, the collective numbers for these minorities range between 25-36 percent of the Syrian population. What is more, around 7-15 percent of the Sunni Muslim population is not Arab, but ethnically Kurdish.

You can read the rest of this article [here](#). however the Conclusion of the article is worth quoting...

Bashar al-Asad has specifically tailored his approach to numerous minority groups, based on their utility to his regime and on how he could best keep them within his fold. Working to appeal to, oppress, or pit minorities against each other and against the majority has been of extreme benefit for the regime. Engaging coreligionists and coethnics abroad has also created a far more complicated and dynamic relationship within these minority communities. These further complications have only added to the influence Asad has been able to wield within Syria.

The fractious Kurds, longing for a more formal autonomy, have seen some of their major wishes granted by the regime. They too are playing the waiting game. Even after over 40 years of discrimination, Asad's support to some Kurdish groups has created a mixed impression for Syria's Kurds—one of an oppressor and ally. These opposing tactics have given rise to a Kurdish paralysis.

The destruction and oppression of the region's Christians has also caused the group to back the proverbial "lesser of two evils." Asad's recent pushes with the community have built a form of loyalty from the community. Now Asad can pose as a more legitimate defender of Christian rights. With Asad, Syrian Christians have found security, access to political leadership, and a quasi-acceptance of their unique cultural attributes.

As those backing anti-Asad movements become more militant and Asad reacts with a heavier hand to counter them, minorities will do their best to remain out of the crossfire. The fact that minorities are attempting to remain neutral suggests some of Asad's tactics to win the favor of these groups have been successful. In the wake of anti-minority Islamist takeovers in other post-revolutionary Arab states, some minority groups see that the only way to protect their hard-won stability and cultural recognition is by backing the devil they know. In this current environment, Asad will continue to hold sway among Syria's minorities.

END.

This article was produced by The Global Research in International Affairs (GLORIA) Center, directed by Barry Rubin, and is a research center located at the Interdisciplinary Center, Herzliya (IDC). IDC is Israel's first private institution of higher learning. They focus on the modern Middle East and its relations with other regions, through a unique and creative application of new information technologies to scholarly and analytical work. They believe that these new tools can revolutionize the study of international affairs. Their basic conception in this regard is presented in the article "Bringing Middle East (and International Affairs) Studies into the Twenty-First Century."

BBC: Battle for Syria Christian town of Maaloula

A BBC correspondent in Syria has said the battle for an ancient Christian town is continuing, despite reports that government forces had retaken it.

Maaloula has several churches and important monasteries, including Deir Mar Takla, which is visited by many Christians and Muslim pilgrims.

Inscriptions found in some of the caves in the mountainside on which the town sits confirm it as one of the earliest centres of Christianity in the world, and some residents can still speak Aramaic, the language of Jesus Christ.

When the uprising against President Bashar al-Assad erupted in March 2011, many Christians were cautious and tried to avoid taking sides.

However, as the crackdown by security forces intensified and opposition supporters took up arms, they were gradually drawn into the conflict.

Many fear that if the secular government is overthrown, they will be targeted by Sunni jihadist rebels calling for the establishment of an Islamic state and that Christian communities will be destroyed, as many were in Iraq after the US-led invasion in 2003.

Full report can be read at <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-middle-east-24051440>

Putin urges international community to resist repressions against Christians

The rights of religious minorities, including Christians, are being infringed all over the planet and humanity must take measures to stop such instances, Vladimir Putin said at the meeting with Orthodox Christian leaders in Moscow.

For the full article see:

<http://rt.com/politics/putin-christians-repressions-resistance-584/>

Editors Note: I actually spent several days working on this section as I wanted to learn more about the countries in this region so I could better understand all the turmoil going on. Some of the information surprised me and has perhaps swayed me in my own views. At the end of the day most of us just sit back and watch and accept the news we are given without doing any work to find out information for ourselves. The fact that we support charity projects in the Middle East really should mean that we take more of an interest on what is going on as our own order does.

I have a book on my Electric Scotland web site entitled "The Scottish Churches' Work Abroad" under which is a chapter on "At The South Gate Of Arabia". On that page I gathered a selection of videos about parts of the Middle East and Holy Land which I felt would help to educate my visitors on the various countries of this area. You can watch these videos if you'd like to educate yourself on the Middle East and get some background from which to better understand the situation there today.

You can get to this at: <http://www.electricscotland.com/bible/church/chapter11.htm>

Village of the Templars

The Knights Templar were a major power in the 12th and 13th centuries protecting pilgrims on their way to the Holy Land. They gave their name to the village of Templecombe in Somerset. Time Team visits the village in search of evidence of the Templars. Can the team find the preceptory which was their main base? And does the mysterious picture of the disembodied head of Christ hanging in the local church have anything to do with the order of fighting monks?

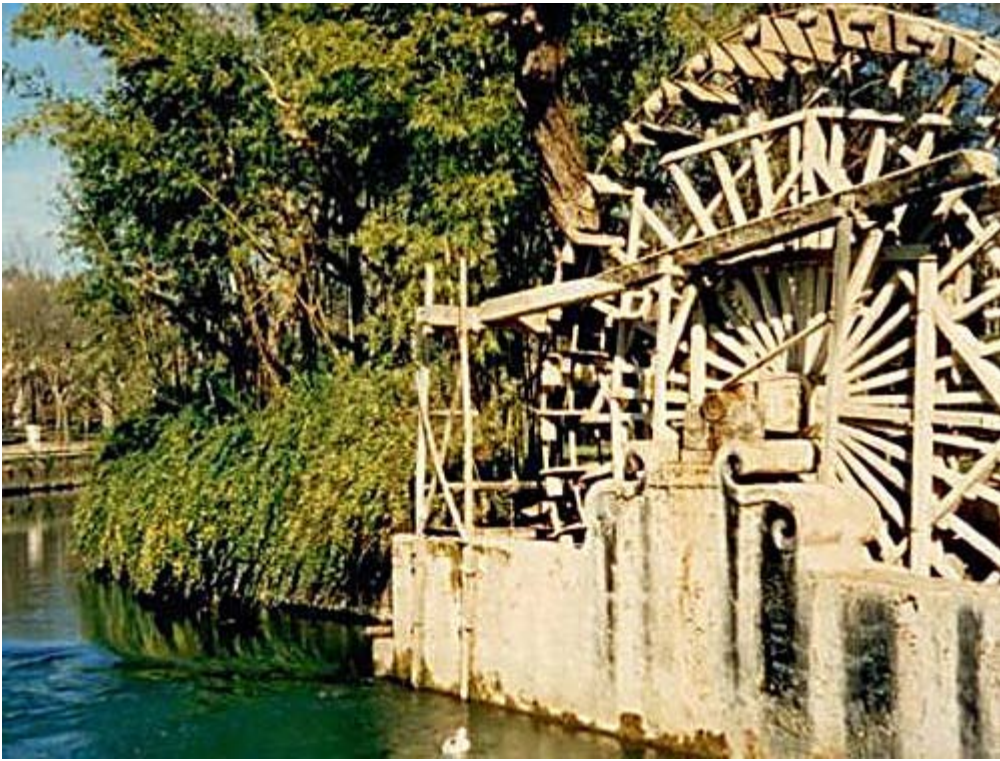
You can find out at http://youtu.be/NL_gq5wwR8k

Knights Templar, Tomar

Seeing as Tomar is now our permanent home of the International Order I asked Peter if he could give us a write up of the place so that when any Knights and Dames visit they could take advantage of a tour of the area. Here is the article he provided.

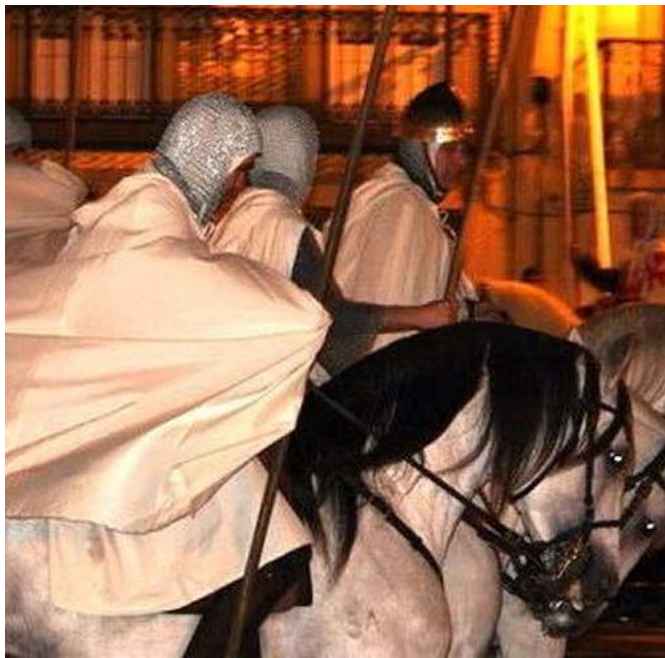


One of the best kept secrets in Portugal is the ancient Knights Templar city of Tomar in central Portugal. It is a one hour drive north, by highway, from Lisbon Airport. But the slightly longer journey by National Road, past nesting storks and flamingoes, takes you through the fertile heart of rural Portugal. Tomar sits on the Nabão River once used by the Knights Templar Order to irrigate their extensive lands. As you enter the town you can see the replica Arab water wheel turning on the Nabão, reminding us that for over 400 years Islam dominated this part of Europe.



Arabic Waterwheel

Now the International home of OSMTH, Tomar, is aiming to become known as the Knights Templar capital of the world. Everywhere one goes in Tomar there are obvious signs of the links to the Templars. Everywhere is the Cross of both the Knights Templar Order and the Order that replaced them, the Order of Christ. This year Tomar held its first 'Festa Templária' a three day spectacular medieval festival. The main event, a torch lit parade led by mounted Knights, was stunning. The Festa Templária will now be an annual event with the next one taking place in May 2014.



Festival

Tomar was founded by the Romans as Selium. The Romans took the land from the ancient Lusitanians and eventually the Visigoths took it from the Romans. By then the Visigoths had been converted to Christianity and they built at least one church in Tomar. But only 50 miles from Southern Portugal another mighty religion was waiting its turn. After conquering the whole of the Middle East and North Africa at lightning speed, Islam was preparing to invade Christian Europe.

By the year 732 the Moors, as the Islamic forces were known, had swept through Spain and Portugal and southern France. Then at a battle at Poitiers in central France they were halted. One of the most influential figures of the day, Charles Martel, the Hammer of the Franks, routed the Moorish army. The Moors retreated back to Northern Spain which became the border between the Christian North and the Muslim South for the next 400 years. Other than its impact upon art, architecture and language there is little to day to remind us of Tomar's Moorish past. But much of that is due to the 16th Century Inquisition's attempt to 'air brush' the huge influence of both Moors and Jews on Portugal and the rest of the world.

Around the end of the 11th Century the Christian kingdoms started the push south known as the Reconquest. This gradual re-Christianisation of Muslim dominated southern Spain and all Portugal would take several centuries to accomplish. The process produced a number of larger than life figures. One of whom was Gualdim Pais, Grand Master of the Knights Templar Order in Portugal. Gualdim Pais had fought in the Holy land with the Knights Templar Order and he was a formidable warrior. Having been in many battles in the 'Reconquest' he arrived in Tomar in the year 1157. Three years later he began the building of the Templar fortress and Church that still stands today at the summit of the hill overlooking the town.

Gualdim Pais and the Knights Templar Order and their successors the 'Knights of the Order of Christ' built many fine castles and churches. Many of which still exist today. But the most outstanding of them all is Tomar Castle and the Convent of Christ which lies within its walls. Designated a 'World Heritage Monument' by UNESCO in 1983 it is the most stunning and best preserved Knights Templar site anywhere in the world.

Covering a vast expanse the ancient castle with its honey coloured walls is an amazing sight. Particularly when the rays of the setting sun seem to set its walls ablaze. As you enter through the castle gate the sight of the incredible round Charola church takes your breath away. As you pause and savour the tranquility and fragrance from the wonderful surrounding gardens you know you are in a special place. And it is a very special place. Particularly for Knights Templars.

You enter the Convent, not actually as the name suggests for nuns, but a place of worship for the Templars. Inside are what seems like endless beautifully tiled cloisters. Wandering through the building, looking in the now mostly empty rooms, the sheer size and magnificence is overwhelming. Amid the plethora of astonishing architecture and with the sheer weight of Knights Templar history threatening to blow your mind, you need to stop from time to time to let it all sink in. Then you really do have your mind blown. Not once but twice. First when you see the vast window known as the 'window of the discoveries'. Constructed in the 16th century by King Manuel of Portugal it is a masterpiece of classical late gothic architecture. Said to celebrate the Portuguese discoveries of America and the Far East you can stand for hours taking in its intricate carvings. A true wonder of the world.

Next to blow your mind is the ultimate 'Wow Factor' of the convent. The Knights Templar Charola. Words don't do justice to this incredible Knights Templar building. Constructed in the 12th century and said to be a replica of the church of the Holy Sepulchre in Jerusalem it is both visually stunning and deeply moving. On certain holy days the Knights of the Temple Order would ride in to the Charola on horseback. With its magnificent 15th and 16th century paintings and frescos on top of the original 12th century Templar architecture it is one of those places you have to visit at least once in your life time.



Beyond the Convent of Christ Tomar offers a host of buildings and structures connected to the Knights Templar Order and its successors. Not least is the former pantheon church of Santa Maria do Olival where the Grand Masters of the Knights Templar Order were buried. Connected to the Castle by tunnels it is said to have once been the repository for the Holy Grail. Is there any truth in this? No one can be certain but there is an ancient engraving of a grail on a flagstone inside the church. And for some reason the church authorities don't like people moving the bench which always seems to cover it.

Further afield the number of ancient castles, abbeys, Templar watchtowers and commanderies within an hour's drive from Tomar is huge. It would take at least a week to visit them all. Which is exactly how long the most extensive tour run by the Knights Templar Tours partnership takes. A partnership between Caminhos da Historia managed by a Knight of the Order of OSMTH, João Fiandeiro and Peter Moore of Templar Knights of Tomar.



Convent if Christ, Tomar



Peter, who is now a Scout in OSMTH, first came to Tomar with his wife, Sylvia, in 2001. Sylvia, a medieval historian, had been commissioned to write a guide to the Knights Templar of Tomar. They both fell in love with the Historic Templar City and its beautiful, tranquil, countryside. They bought a house near the lovely nearby Zezerè River and turned their love of Knights Templar History in to a business. Working with João, who has a Masters Degree in Tourism and is an expert on the Portuguese Knights Templar Order, they now run Knights Templar tours lasting from between 1 and 7 days. Anyone interested in what they have to offer can visit their web site at www.templarknights.eu. Or email Peter at templarstomar@aol.com

Buffalo News Article about Canadians

An article posted in the Buffalo News by Gerry Boley and our thanks to Sir Matthew Gaasenbeek for sending this in for us to share.

Misconceptions in the United States about Canada are quite common. They include: there is always snow in Canada; Canadians are boring, socialists and pacifists; their border is porous and allowed the Sept. 11 terrorists through; or, as the U.S. Ottawa embassy staff suggested to Washington, the country suffers from an inferiority complex. With Canada Day and America's Independence Day just past, this is a great time to clarify some of these misconceptions and better appreciate a neighbour that the United States at times takes for granted.

With the exception of the occasional glacier, skiing in Canada in the summer just isn't happening. Frigid northern winters, however, have shaped the tough, fun-loving Canadian character. When it is 30-below, the Canucks get their sticks, shovel off the local pond and have a game of shinny hockey.

The harsh winters have also shaped Canadians' sense of humour. Canada has some of the world's greatest comedians, from early Wayne and Shuster, to Rich Little, Jim Carrey, Russel Peters, Seth Rogan, Mike Myers, Leslie Nielsen, John Candy, Martin Short, Eugene Levy and "Saturday Night Live" creator and movie producer Lorne Michaels.

The suggestion that Canadians are soft on terrorism is a myth. Prime Minister Pierre Trudeau backed down the Front de Liberation du Quebec terrorists during the 1970s. And the 9/11 Commission reported that terrorists arrived in the United States from outside North America with documents issued to them by the U.S. government. Likewise, the Canadians in Gander countered despicable terrorist acts with love and caring to their U.S. neighbours when planes were diverted there.

Americans glorify war with movies, but it is the Canadians who are often the real "Rambo." The Canadians are anything but pacifists and their history is certainly not dull. Be it on the ice or

battlefield, this warrior nation has never lost a war that it fought in – War of 1812 (versus the United States), World War I, World War II, Korea and now Afghanistan. During the '72 Summit Series, Soviet goalie Vladislav Tretiak said, “The Canadians have great skills and fight to the very end.”

In hunting the Taliban in Afghanistan, U.S. Commander and Navy SEAL Capt. Robert Harward stated that the Canadian Joint Task Force 2 team was “his first choice for any direct-action mission.”

Contrary to Thomas Jefferson's 1812 comment that, “The acquisition of Canada will be a mere matter of marching,” the wily Native American leader Tecumseh and Maj. Gen. Isaac Brock captured Brig. Gen. William Hull's Fort Detroit without firing a shot. The Americans never took Quebec and when they burned the Canadian Parliament Buildings at York, the White House was torched in retaliation.

Canada consolidated its status as a warrior nation during World War I battles at Vimy Ridge, Passchendaele, Somme and the Second Battle of Ypres, where soldiers were gassed twice by the Germans but refused to break the line. By the end of the war, the Canadians were the Allies' shock troops.

In the air, four of the top seven World War I aces were Canadians. Crack shots, the names William “Billy” Bishop, Raymond Collishaw, Donald MacLaren and William Barker, with 72, 60, 54 and 53 victories, respectively, were legendary. These were the original Crazy Canucks, who regularly dropped leaflets over enemy airfields advising German pilots that they were coming over at such and such a time, and to come on up. Bishop and Barker won the Victoria Cross, the highest award for gallantry.

The pilot who is credited with shooting down the Red Baron, Manfred von Richthofen, with a little help from the Australian down under, was not Snoopy but Roy Brown from Carleton Place, Ont.

During World War II, Winnipeg native and air ace Sir William Stephenson, the “Quiet Canadian,” ran the undercover British Security Coordination under the code name Intrepid from Rockefeller Center in New York, as a liaison between Franklin Roosevelt and Winston Churchill. Stephenson invented the machine that transferred photos over the wire for the Daily Mail newspaper in 1922. Americans were not aware that the BSC was there or that it was stocked with Canadians secretly working to preserve North American freedom from the Nazis.

Also little known is that Intrepid trained Ian Fleming, author of the James Bond series, at Camp X, the secret spy school near Whitby, Ont. Five future directors of the CIA also received special training there. It is suggested that Fleming's reference to Bond's 007 license to kill status, his gadgetry and the “shaken not stirred” martinis, rumored to be the strongest in North America, came from Stephenson.

When Wild Bill Donovan, head of the U.S. OSS, forerunner of the CIA, presented Intrepid with the Presidential Medal of Merit in 1946, he said, “William Stephenson taught us everything we knew about espionage.”

American military writer Max Boot wrote recently in Commentary magazine that Canada is a country that most Americans consider a “dull but slavishly friendly neighbour, sort of like a great St. Bernard.” Boot needs to come to Canada, have a Molson Canadian and chat about Canadian history. He owes his freedom to Canucks such as Stephenson and the courageous soldiers and fliers of the world wars who held off the Germans while America struggled with isolationism.

Canadian inventions such as the oxygen mask and anti-gravity suit, the forerunner of the astronaut suit, allowed U.S. and other Allied fighter pilots to fly higher, turn tighter and not black out with the resulting G-force. The 32 Canadians from the Avro Arrow team helped build the American space program and were, according to NASA, brilliant to a man. The most brilliant, Jim Chamberlin, chief designer of the Jetliner and Arrow, was responsible for the design and implementation of the Gemini and Apollo space programs.

Although Canadians have had a free, workable medical system for 50 years, they are not socialists and there are not long lineups, as some politicians opposed to Obama care suggest. This writer has had a ruptured appendix, hip replacement, pinned shoulder, blood clot, twist fracture of the fibula and

broken foot, and in every case, there was zero cost to me. Canadians have and value a medical system for all Canadians that is free with minimal waits. That is not socialism; that is caring about fellow Canadians.

Americans may be surprised by the Canadian content in their life. Superman – “truth, justice and the American way” – was co-created by Canadian Joe Shuster, the Daily Planet is based on a Toronto newspaper, and the 1978 film’s Lois Lane, Margot Kidder, and Superman’s father, Glenn Ford, were both Canadians. The captain of the starship Enterprise was Montreal-born William Shatner. Torontonian Raymond Massey played Abraham Lincoln in 1956. And as American as apple pie? Ah, no. The McIntosh apple was developed in Dundela, Ont., in 1811 by John McIntosh.

Many of the sports that Americans excel at are Canadian in origin. James Naismith from Almonte, Ont., invented basketball. The tackling and ball carrying in football were introduced by the Canucks in games between Harvard and McGill in the 1870s. Five-pin bowling is also a Canadian game. Lacrosse is officially Canada’s national sport, and hockey – well, Canadians are hockey. And Jackie Robinson called Montreal “the city that enabled me to go to the major leagues.”

To make everyone’s life easier, Canadians invented Pabulum, the electric oven, the telephone, Marquis wheat, standard time, the rotary snowplow, the snowmobile, Plexiglas, oven cleaner, the jolly jumper, the pacemaker, the alkaline battery, the caulking gun, the gas mask, the goalie mask and many more.

Canadian inferiority complex? That is another myth. Never pick a fight with a quiet kid in the schoolyard. Never mistake quiet confidence for weakness. Many a bully has learned that the hard way. Canadians are self-effacing and do not brag. That does not mean we do not know who we are. We are caring but tough, fun-loving but polite and creative, and we share with each other and the world. Our history is exciting but we don’t toot our horn. The world does that for us. This is the third year in a row that Canada has been voted the most respected country in the world by the Reputation Institute global survey.

Perhaps once a year around our collective birthdays, Americans can raise a toast to their friendly, confident neighbour in the Great White North.

Gerry Boley is a high school teacher, university lecturer and writer living in St. Catharines, Ontario, Canada

A Wee Bit of Humour

Newfoundland Declares War on the U.S.A.

This is actually an old story but if you haven't seen it before I hope you enjoy it...

President Obama was in the Oval Office wondering what he would do next, when his telephone rang.

"Hallo, President Obama " a heavily accented voice said. "This is Archie, up ere at the Harp Seal Pub in Badger's Cove, Newfoundland, Canada eh? I am callin' to tells ya dat we are officially declaring war on ya!"

"Well Archie," the President replied, "This is indeed important news! How big is your army?"

"Right now," said Archie, after a moments calculation "there is myself, me cousin Harold, me next-door-neighbor Mick, and the whole dart team from the pub. That makes eight!"

Obama paused. "I must tell you Archie that I have one million men in my army waiting to move on my command."

"Holy jeez," said Archie. "I'll have ta call ya back!"

Sure enough, the next day, Archie called again. "Mr. Obama, the war is still on! We have managed to acquire some infantry equipment!"

"And what equipment would that be Archie?" Obama asked.

"Well sir, we have two combines, a bulldozer, and Harry 's farm tractor."

President Obama sighed. "I must tell you Archie, that I have 16,000 tanks and 14,000 armoured personnel carriers. Also I've increased my army to one and a half million since we last spoke."

"Lard t'underin' bye", said Archie, "I'll be getting back to ya."

Sure enough, Archie rang again the next day.. "President Obama, the war is still on! We have managed to git ourselves airborne! We up an' modified Harrigan's ultra-light wit a couple of shotguns in the cockpit, and four byes from the Legion have joined us as well!"

Obama was silent for a minute then cleared his throat. "I must tell you Archie that I have 10,000 bombers and 20,000 fighter planes. My military complex is surrounded by laser-guided, surface-to-air missile sites. And since we last spoke, I've increased my army to TWO MILLION!"

"Jumpins," said Archie, "I'll have ta call youse back."

Sure enough, Archie called again the next day. "President Obama! I am sorry to have to tell you dat we have had to call off dis 'ere war."

"I'm sorry to hear that" said the president . "Why the sudden change of heart?"

Well, sir," said Archie, "we've all sat ourselves down and had a long chat over a bunch of pints, and come to realize dat dere's no way we can feed two million prisoners."

CANADIAN CONFIDENCE CANNOT BE SHAKEN!

The Canadian Templar completes its first year of publication

This is the fourth quarterly issue which completes our first year of publication. We have tried to bring you a good mix of articles to entertain, educate and inform and we would like to thank the individual Pories for their reports which provides us with an insight into all the good works that they do throughout the year.

Thanks also go to individuals that have sent in articles for us to publish and we look forward to receiving many more in the months and years ahead.

Our Grand Prior made this newsletter a high priority so that we could better communicate the work of the Grand Priory and our Canadian Pories. As they are sent to all Pories for distribution to all Knights and Dames within the Grand Priory we hope everyone has received copies but should you have missed an issue feel free to email the editor and he will be happy to email you back a copy.

Copies of this newsletter also go out to the wider Templar community around the world and we hope in future issues to tell you more about our International community of Grand Pories so that we can learn from them as well.

Enigma Machine

Here are the answers to the Enigma Machine puzzle from the last newsletter.

1. trampled under foot
2. a fork in the road
3. bad aftertaste
4. I'm in charge
5. Jack in the Box (not Jill)
6. 2:00 in the afternoon
7. Slow down.

8. cap and gown
9. man in the moon
10. pen and paper
11. missing in action (missing "n")
12. First Class

And mind if you enjoyed these puzzles then you can find others at:

<http://www.electriccanadian.com/lifestyle/enigma/> where we are adding a puzzle each week.

THE SOVEREIGN MILITARY ORDER
OF THE TEMPLE OF JERUSALEM



MAJOR SIR ROY EMBURY, CD, GOTJ
PRIOR OF THE PRIORY
OF THE ASCENSION OF OUR LORD
AND
THE KNIGHTS AND DAMES OF THE PRIORY
HEREBY INVITE YOU AND YOUR GUESTS TO

THE PRIORY'S ANNUAL
CONVENT, INVESTITURE, AND BANQUET

SATURDAY
NOVEMBER 2ND
IN THE YEAR OF OUR LORD, 2013

THE PRIORY OF THE ASCENSION OF OUR LORD

NAME: _____

YES, I WILL BE ATTENDING THE CONVENT AND INVESTITURE

NO, I REGRET THAT I CANNOT ATTEND EITHER *

YES, I WILL BE ATTENDING THE RECEPTION AND BANQUET

I HAVE INVITED _____ GUESTS TO THE BANQUET

(PLEASE WRITE THEIR FULL NAMES BELOW)

(ALSO NOTE ANY DIETARY RESTRICTIONS NEXT TO THE NAME)

PEOPLE (INCLUDING MYSELF) AT \$80 EACH IS \$_____ TOTAL

YES, MY CHECK (MADE OUT TO SMOTJ) IS ENCLOSED

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