So you are going to be Commander...

A Guide for Those About to Assume Office

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Table of Contents

So you are going to be Commander...

Section 1: Why are you doing this?

Section 2: Setting Attainable Goals

Section 3: Planning your Term

- Part 1: National and State Bodies
- Part 2: Commandery Activities

Section 3: Officers and Committees

- Part 1: Officers
- Part 2: Committees

Section 4: Your Installation

- Part 1: Date, Time, and Place
- Part 2: Organize an Installing Team
- Part 3: Preparing for the Installation
- Part 4: Installation

Section 5: Your First Conclave

Section 6: Final Thoughts

Commander's Appointments Worksheet

- Elected Officers
- Appointed Officers
- Committees

Sample Meeting Agenda

So you are going to be Commander…

Congratulations on being elected Commander of your Commandery! You are embarking on a part of your Masonic journey that many find challenging, but also very rewarding. Being Commander is unlike being the leader of any other Masonic body. As Commandery is a Christian military order, its rituals and customs are very different from that of the rest of Freemasonry, and therefore it offers an excellent opportunity to learn and apply your skills in a very unique way!

This booklet is meant to guide you through the process of planning your term as Commander, and offer you some tips on how to make your year as successful as possible. This booklet is in no way a complete work though, and you should be consulting your Division Commander regularly for guidance and advice. Also, don't forget that the Sir Knights of your Commandery also wish to see you succeed, and seeking the advice of your members and Past Commanders can also lead to positive results.

So, get out there, and show the world what Commandery is all about!

Section 1: Why are you doing this?

So, here you are, in line to be Commander, and ready to take on the world. Before we delve into specific topics on planning and logistics, let's take a moment to reflect on your obligations and goals as Commander.

Being Commander comes with great responsibility. It is your job to lead the Sir Knights of your Commandery in bettering themselves and the organization, while upholding the principles of the Order, and the regulations of the Grand Commandery. Let's face it; it's not all fun and games!

So why do you want to be Commander? Are you doing it to better yourself and learn? Perhaps you have some skills that you think your Commandery could benefit from? Or perhaps you were thrown into the position simply because no one would do it. There are varied reasons for your ascension into this position, but understanding your own motivations can go a long way towards making your year as Commander the best it can be. Therefore, it is encouraged that you do some self reflection before standing in the East. Each Knight was symbolically required to travel the path of a Pilgrim, wage years of warfare, and suffer as a penitent on his journey to become a Knight. Reflect on these principles and align your heart with that of your God and your Savior, and he will lead you aright.

Section 2: Setting Attainable Goals

Now that you've thought about what it is to be Commander, what exactly do you plan to do? This is the area where many Commanders fail to provide proper thought. Being Commander is more than just presiding at meetings and passing inspection. Those Commanders that are remembered and have a positive impact on their Commandery are the ones that set attainable goals for themselves and their Sir Knights.

Simply put, goals should be SMART:

- **Specific –** The goal should set out very detailed parameters for accomplishment. Saying "I want a stronger Commandery" is all well and good, but stating "I want to have a 10% increase in attendance at my meetings" is much more specific and useful.

- **Measurable –** How do you know if you've accomplished a goal if you can't determine its success? Ensuring that your goal can be measured is a great way to show the impact that you've had as Commander. Simply put, there is a difference between "Raising money for the Eye Foundation" versus "Raising $10 per member for the Eye Foundation!"
- **Attainable –** There is nothing more depressing than not reaching your goals, and if you don't set your sights on something that could actually succeed, then you are just setting yourself up for failure. Very few Commanderies could ever hope to raise $100,000 for the Eye Foundation within one year, however many Commanderies could raise $1,000 in that same time frame.
- **Realistic –** This goes hand in hand with being attainable. Saying that your Commandery is going to perform all three Orders by itself, every month, for new Sir Knights isn't very realistic for most Commanderies. Instead, how about offering to put on the Orders twice a year, and help the other Commanderies in your Division if they need help during the down time? Now that's a more sensible goal!
- **Time Sensitive –** All goals should have a beginning and ending date. Many of your goals as Commander are going to begin and end with your term; however some goals may be shorter or longer term. Commanderies that have truly mastered the art of term planning may have goals that take years to accomplish, and require the work of several Commanders, but more realistically you should be trying to accomplish things in a timely manner. Having a fundraiser before December is easier to determine and plan when compared to the idea of just raising some money!

Setting SMART goals is all about setting yourself up for success as Commander. A good rule of thumb is that you should have at least three goals as Commander, but no more than five. This way you have specific projects and challenges to apply your energy towards, and can give good directions to your Officers and members. Take some time and really think about and plan your goals. They may include membership, ritualistic perfection, drill and tactics, fundraising, and administrative tasks among others. You'll thank yourself later when you're standing in the East trying to remember what you're going to do for the next year!

Section 3: Planning your Term

The one thing that causes the most angst among Commanders, and those about to assume leadership, is having a plan laid out for the coming months. Being proactive and developing that plan early is a great way to relieve some of the stress placed on you, and to prepare for a successful year. There will always be issues and problems that you can't envision, but having a road map to help you along the way is another way to help!

The first step to take in this task is getting yourself a date book, planner, or some other calendar so that you can get your bearings and start to outline your ideas. This is very important for the rest of this section, so if you don't have it handy, go grab it now! First, find a date for your Installation. Many Commanderies do their Installations on the night of their Conclaves in December. Ensure that you know when you are going to be installed, and coordinate this with your current Commander. Once you have that down, it's a good time to start looking at the rest of the calendar. Tips on planning and organizing an Installation are presented later in this document.

There are several things to consider when constructing your plan, but breaking them down into smaller groups and tackling them individually is the easiest way to go about building the foundation for your

term. Before we begin worrying about what YOU want to do, we have to first ensure that we are doing what Grand Encampment and Grand Commandery want us to do.

Part 1: National and State Bodies

Step 1: Grand Encampment Activities

The Grand Encampment of Knights Templar of the United States of America has only a couple of programs that would generally concern a local Commandery. These include:

- **Easter Sunrise Service (Washington, D.C.)**
    - This is a yearly program where Sir Knights from all over the country gather in Alexandria, Virginia, to march up Shooter's Hill at the George Washington Masonic Memorial on Easter Morning, which is then followed by a religious service.
- **Department Conclaves (Varies)**
    - These meetings are held throughout the year in different parts of the country for the Grand Commanderies of each Department. By their nature, these events bring together Sir Knights from multiple states, and serve to discuss the programs of Grand Encampment.

These two programs are the only ones that you should be concerned with, unless your Division Commander directs you otherwise. The dates for these events are usually found in the Knights Templar magazine, published by Grand Encampment, as well as being on the Grand Encampment's website. If you can't find the dates there, check with your Division Commander. Remember, you aren't required to attend these, it's just so that you can supply the information to your members.

Step 2: Grand Commandery Activities

• The Grand Commandery of Minnesota is set up to oversee the operations of all the Commanderies in the State, and to provide them with administrative and operational support. To fulfill that mission the Grand Commandery sponsors activities throughout the year that are beneficial to your Commandery. Your Division Commander should be able to provide you with these dates. They are also available on the Grand Commandery website at https://knightstemplarmn.org

- **Grand Commandery Conclave**

  • The Conclave of the Grand Commandery is held in June of each year, and moves around the State. During this event the business of the Grand Commandery is conducted, and the Grand Officers are elected for the ensuing year. As Commander of your Commandery you have earned the right to vote in these elections and you are counted upon by your Sir Knights to participate in this process.

Step 6: Final Thoughts

• After those two steps, you should have dates on your calendar, ensuring that you are well on your way to a great year as Commander! Now that we have Grand Encampment and Grand Commandery taken care of, we can start doing what you want, right? Sure! Thankfully the Grand Commandery has also provided some guidelines to aid you in preparing your term as well!

Part 2: Commandery Activities

Now comes the time for you to plan some activities for your own Commandery. Before we do that though, go ahead and pencil in the dates of all of your Stated Conclaves. These will form the back bone of your program, and it's important to be ready for each meeting.

With your Conclaves on the books it's time to start preparing for your other programs throughout the year. If you haven't already received one, you should obtain a copy of the rules for the following awards:

- **• the Ralph Kirk**
  - Awarded to the Commandery that actively participates in different fields of interest
- **• Mathison Traveling Bible**
  - Awarded to the Commandery performing the best Full Form Opening (can be jointly held by partnering with another Commandery)
- **• Long Sword**
  - TBD
- **• Short Sword**
  - Awarded to a Commandery with the best attendance and participation for the year

These awards are given based upon your Commandery participating in several specific types of events throughout the year. It serves to provide a great framework for you to build your term around.

You should also make yourself aware of those awards that recognize the individual members of your Commandery that have contributed to Templary:

- • the Knight Templar Cross of Honor
- • the Knight Commander of the Temple
- • Companion of the Temple
- • Meritorious Service Award.

This information should be available on the Grand Commandery website, or from your Division Commander.

With this information in hand, let's go down the list of requirements and use it to plan the next year.

Step 1. Leadership Training and Proficiency

This section mainly deals with items we have already placed on our calendar in the last step, but it does have one very important addition, the Inspection. This event has been causing terror in the hearts of Commanders for years, but it needn't be scary if planned for.

Your job as Commander during an Inspection is to know your Ritual work, and ensure that your Officers are proficient in their own work. This document wasn't designed to give tips on memorizing or drill and tactics, but suffice it to say they will play a very important part in your inspection. Therefore, it is advised that you plan the date for your Inspection for the middle part of your term or later, so that you have ample time to prepare your Officers.

So, let's go ahead and add three important dates to our calendar. First, pick a Conclave in the middle to end of your term (but no later than November 30th) at which you would like the Inspection to occur. Traditional months include September, October, or November. Once you have that date in mind, contact your Division Commander to see if that date works for him. If it does, go ahead and schedule your inspection. The Division Commander will schedule an inspection team, but now it's time for you to plan for a good inspection.

With the date for inspection set, pick at least one, but preferably two nights where you can get your Officers together before the inspection to practice. Generally speaking, if you can practice for inspection three weeks before the date, and then again the week before the inspection, you should be in pretty good shape for the presentation of your ritual. It is also a good idea to line up some senior members of your Commandery, notably Past Commanders, to come and help you during these practices. Later we will

discuss appointing a Drill and Tactics Committee. If you have this committee they should be present to help with your practice. These people will be able to spot minor flaws in ritual work, and help you earn a better overall score.

On the night of the inspection come prepared for your meeting and most importantly, relax! While an inspection score is important, it's not the end of the world if you miss one or two words! This is your chance to shine as Commander, so enjoy the spotlight a bit!

Step 2: Religious, Patriotic, and Program Activities

The Knights Templar are dedicated to several causes, but mainly focus on those that have to do with worshiping our God and his son, as well as serving our country and honoring its veterans. This section reminds us of those duties and encourages you, as Commander, to plan the following activities:

- **• Church Service**

  This is one of the simplest events to plan, as all it requires is for you to contact your minister and ask for permission for the Sir Knights of your Commandery to attend in uniform. You may find that he or she is willing to give you a few minutes to explain what Commandery is, or perhaps they would like you to serve as an usher during the service. Either way, enjoy the opportunity to share Templary with others, and worship with your fellow Sir Knights.

- **• Christmas Observance**

  The season of Christmas is an especially busy one for Masons and their families. However, it is important to take a step back and remember what the season is truly about, the birth of our Lord and Savior. With this in mind, each Commandery is encouraged to plan a Christmas Observance. This program can be as simple or elaborate as you want, but should contain some basic elements, such as prayer, a message from a minister or lay leader, and a benediction. Remember, the true purpose of this ceremony is to commemorate the birth of Jesus and the reason for the season.

- **• Ascension Day Service**

  Ascension Day (observed on the 40th day of Easter) marks the time when Jesus went to Heaven to sit at the right of God. This service can be planned in much the same way as the Christmas Observance, or could provide another opportunity for your Commandery to attend church together.

- **• Participation in Funeral Services**

  While no one likes to plan for a funeral, there is a good possibility that someone in your Commandery will pass away during the year. Be prepared to attend the funeral in uniform with his Lodge, or find another time to pay proper respects that are in line with the family's wishes.

- **• Participation in the Easter Sunrise Service**

  As outlined in the Grand Encampment Section

- **• Parades**

  Each Commandery is encouraged to get involved in their local communities and march in parades marking special occasions such as the Fourth of July or Memorial Day. Contact your local government to find out when these events are and see if your Commandery could field a presence during the celebration.

- **• Friend to Friend Memorial Service**
  - As outlined in the Grand Commandery Section.

- **• Public Flag Ceremonies**

  Many local communities have events where a flag is raised to mark the beginning of major gatherings such as fairs or festivals. In most cases they are in need of an honor guard to help with those ceremonies.

Contact the local authorities, VFWs, or American Legions to find out if you can also participate in these events.

- **• Veteran's Day Observance or Activity**

Remembering our Veterans is a key tenet of Commandery, and it is only right that we take a moment each year to remember their sacrifices. This could be as simple as inviting a veteran to talk about his experiences after your Conclave, or could involve an entire program with speakers and guests. This is another opportunity for you as Commander to show that you care, so plan accordingly!

- **• Other Programs**

Sir Knights don't come out to Conclaves to watch the Officers walk about the floor and banter ritual. You should have some kind of program planned for before or after each Conclave to provide some knowledge and perhaps some fellowship time to those Sir Knights who have taken time out of their busy schedules to attend your meeting. Ensure that the program is meaningful, relevant, and planned in advance of the Conclave. Most Commanderies or Lodges have lists of speakers that can be called on for just such an event, so ask around – you never know who might be willing to speak at your Conclave!

Step 3: Membership

As with any Masonic body, increasing your membership, and retaining your current roster, is an important part of being Commander. Following the guidelines set out in the Grand Commandery's Inspection Form can give you an idea of what you should be striving for during the year.

Firstly, taking in new members is important, but where are these members going to come from? Why, your local Lodge of course! Hence, we come to our next date to schedule:

York Rite Presentations

• Each Commandery should be actively going to Lodges and other Masonic groups to discuss the benefits of being a York Rite Mason. Many Lodges are more than willing to have York Rite Officers come in and talk about what the York Rite is, and how people can join. This is the only way you are going to get new Sir Knights, so get out there and talk to your Lodge Brothers about membership!

While getting new members is key, retaining current members is also important. Ensure that each request for a demit received by your Commandery is for a reason outside of your control. Call the Sir Knight who is asking for the demit, and see if he is demitting because he doesn't feel like his membership is paying off, or if it is for a more personal reason. You'll never know if you don't ask, so, just pick up the phone and find out!

Step 4: Fundraisers

Commanderies don't operate for free, and while many get by on a shoe string budget, it doesn't have to be that way. A few well planned fundraisers can go a long way towards making your Commandery financially solvent, and a generous donator to charitable causes. During your year as Commander you should generally plan three fundraisers to benefit the following causes:

Knights Templar Eye Foundation

• This charity provides grants to doctors and hospitals to come up with new and innovative treatment methods for ocular diseases. A good rule is that your Commandery should try to donate funds equivalent to $10 per member, per year.

Your Own Commandery

• Let's not forget about you! Raising money for your own programs is important too, so, don't forget to plan a way for your Commandery to generate some income to help cover the costs of your term!

Step 5: Administration

While you may think that the job of administration is performed by the Recorder or Treasurer, it is your duty as Commander to ensure that these tasks are being carried out in a timely and proper manner. This won't require you to schedule events per se, but it is a good idea to talk to your Recorder about when monthly returns are being filed, audits completed, and general returns sent in. We will discuss the Recorder and his duties later, but for now just make some notes on your calendar to remind you to check in with your Recorder.

Step 6: Final Thoughts

After finishing part two you should have added a total of 11 dates to your calendar, if not more! Now is a good time to go back and review to make sure that you've got all the key dates marked down.

So, now you've written down some ideas and penned in some key dates for the year. To finish up planning these events we encourage you to use an Event Planner. This will help you further flesh out your ideas and get ready for your events.

Now that your calendar is done, you can take a moment to breathe a sigh of relief. A big portion of your work is now complete. There are still a few more tasks to be done however, so read on!

Section 3: Officers and Committees

Being Commander is a big job, but trying to do it alone makes it even harder. A good Commander will recognize that the easiest and best way to succeed is to surround himself with capable and hard working Sir Knights who can aid him throughout his term. The Commander is afforded much leeway in appointing Officers and Committees, and with the exception of a few select jobs, he gets to appoint whomever he would like to have fill those vacancies. Appointing just anyone is a sure fire way to add extra burden on to yourself. Making quality, carefully selected, appointments can only serve to help you have an easier year. With this in mind, let's take a look at some of the offices, committees, and other duties you will need to assign throughout the year.

Part 1: Officers

Appointing officers provides a way for you as Commander to get new members involved in your Commandery, as well as having older, more experienced members around to guide them. Use these appointments to get people involved, and set yourself up for success.

It is your duty as Commander to assign Sir Knights to fill the following chairs for the year:

Sentinel – This job is perfect for a Past Commander or someone who wants to remain involved in Commandery but doesn't necessarily want to move up the line. Often, Sentinels will remain outside until the meeting is opened, and then come inside once the ritual work is complete.

Warder – The Warder is the most movement intensive job within the Commandery. He has to get up and check the doors, communicate with the Sentinel, and march with the color guard. This is a job well suited to a younger member of your Commandery, who may want to get involved and get a taste of what the organization is all about.

Sword Bearer – The Sword Bearer is a position of drill and tactics. This is the one of only two appointed officers who issues commands to another officer during the opening of the meeting. When appointing this office, keep in mind that the movements and commands issued by the Sword Bearer are very specific

and therefore it should be filled by someone with a good understanding of, or willingness to learn, tactics.

Standard Bearer – The Standard Bearer is another great starter office. While it has a few more lines of ritual, especially during the Rehearsal of Duties, it doesn't require as much movement. It does require a slightly more complex piece of floor work when placing the flag, but overall this office is suited to a newcomer to the organization.

Junior Warden – In many Commanderies the unofficial line of succession starts with Junior Warden. It is often thought that a person taking this chair will move on to Senior Warden and then up to the dais to become Commander some day. This office is great for a second year or third year member who is wishing to take on a little more responsibility, but who does not want to deal with lots of tactics and drill. This office can also serve as a proving ground for members who are thinking about moving on.

Senior Warden – As with the Senior Deacon in Lodge, it is generally thought that the Senior Warden will advance to the Chairs in short order. The Senior Warden should be a trusted member of your Commandery, who you can give a little extra responsibility to when times require it. Fill this office carefully, as this person can be the lynch pin to future success.

Prelate – The Prelate receives a special place in the Commandery, and whomever you appoint to this position should be carefully chosen. The Prelate will lead your Commanderies religious observances, and as such, he should be intricately involved in the planning of any religious activities that you may intend to have.

Now that you've thought about your appointments, it's time to start talking to people, and asking them to fill your chairs. Hopefully you've selected well, and they all accept! If not, it's okay. Go back to the drawing board and think again. Many times you'll be forced to use a Past Commander in some of these chairs when new members are fewer in number.

So what about those other chairs within your Commandery… the elected ones? How much should you really pay attention to those? The answer is simple – a lot! The other elected officers are quite literally your right and left hand folks. Why do you think they sit where they do? While you don't have the opportunity to appoint whomever you'd like to these jobs, you are still responsible for coaching them, and helping them grow as Knights. These jobs include:

Treasurer – Your Treasurer is most likely a very well respected and trustworthy member of your Commandery. His reputation should be beyond reproach, and in many cases he serves in this capacity for years at a time. If you don't already have a relationship with your Treasurer, get to know him! He controls your purse strings, and in many cases, can help you set up a good budget for your year.

Recorder – If there is one person in your Commandery that you should talk to at least once a week, it's your Recorder. The man holding this job is your lifeline to the Grand Commandery, your personal assistant, and your confidant. In most cases this person is a Past Commander who has seen many terms, and can offer you council and assistance in running your Commandery. A good Recorder supports his Commander and keeps him on track while still letting the Commander run the show. Take some time and build up a trust with your Recorder, you'll be glad you did!

Captain General – The job of Captain General is one of tactics, commands, and orders. If you had the opportunity to advance through the chairs, you've realized how intense the job of Captain General is. You may need to spend some extra time with this officer, practicing his ritual, and helping him to master his complex part in the opening of the Commandery.

Generalissimo – Quite literally your right hand man! The Generalissimo should be your "go to guy" for helping with projects, solving problems, and preparing your term. This officer is going to succeed you as

Commander, so let him be involved in your year. He is going to have to live with whatever you do, so listen to his counsel, and let him have a say. Wouldn't you have wanted that same opportunity as Generalissimo going into the job of Commander?

Trustees – If your Commandery has a Board of Trustees, it should be noted that in the past, Trustees were sometimes underrated in their responsibility. Being a Trustee is a big job and they help serve your Commandery as gate keepers to larger funds. When using large sums of reserve cash, or dealing with property, heed their advice because it may be just what you need to hear.

Part 2: Committees

Now you have a nice full corps of Officers. Congratulations! Officers aren't the only ones who get work done though! Often times the real bulk of the duties of your Commandery is devolved to committees who help you accomplish you goals. Many times your officers will serve on these committees, but don't forget to include your membership as well. Some Sir Knights aren't active in our Conclaves, but they might be more than willing to serve on a committee throughout the year. The following is a list of recommended committees and their sizes, to get you planning for the future. Remember, however, that these are just recommendations and that your Commandery may have different committees required by your by-laws or different traditions for handling these situations.

• **Drill and Tactics (3 members)** – This group is going to be your main aid in all matters of Opening and Closing your meetings. The men on this committee should be experienced Sir Knights, who can attend your rehearsals before Inspection and help polish the floor work and ritual of your officers.

• **Membership and Finance (6 members)** – The workhorse of your committees is going to be Membership and Finance. This committee is going to be the real backbone of planning for your year by helping you in your financial matters and working on bringing in new members. This committee should consist of the three dais officers (EC, Gen., CG), Past Commanders, and highly involved members

• **Knights Templar Eye Foundation (1 or more members)** – The Knights Templar Eye Foundation is one of the main charities of your Commandery. You should therefore have a Sir Knight appointed to head up your fundraising efforts and to serve as a contact for more information about the program.

• **Religious Activities (3 members)** – This committee should consist of three Sir Knights. If you happen to have a religious leader in your Commandery this is the perfect place to get him involved. This group should help you plan your Christmas and Ascension Day services, as well as coordinate any visits to local congregations you may make.

• **Audit (3 members)** – The Auditors of your Commandery should be financially savvy, and willing to ask the tough questions. These Sir Knights will be working with the Recorder, Treasurer, and Trustees to help balance the books, and keep an eye on funds. Any Sir Knights with a financial background would be great appointments to this committee.

• **Furniture and Regalia (1 or more members)** – The person holding this position may also be referred to as the Quartermaster or Armorer. This person is responsible for keeping an inventory of the items of the Commandery and ordering regalia when it is needed after the approval of the Commandery. This may include collar crosses, sword slings, shoulder patches, etc. Past Commanders make great Quartermasters in many cases

• **Awards Committee (3 members)** – This is an optional group to serve on. This committee evaluates members of the Commandery to recommend to the Commander the person or persons deserving of the Meritorious Service Award. The sitting Commander may elect to give one of these awards each year, so,

by appointing a committee to make that decision it relieves the Commander from any suspicion of favoritism. Any member of your Commandery can serve on this committee.

• **Directors of Work (3 members)** – With Grand Commandery gaining steam on the idea of having Divisional Commanders it may not seem like having a Director of Work for each Order in your Commandery is all that important. However, having a person who understands what's required during each degree, and can help members of your Commandery practice for upcoming conferrals is a useful tool. You should assign a Director of Work for each of the Orders (Red Cross, Malta, Temple) who can serve as a liaison with the Division Commander in setting up these ceremonies.

• **Youth Activities (1 or more members)** – Given their long history of benevolence, it is not surprising that many Commanderies are actively involved with their local Masonic Youth Groups. If you Commandery is, or would like to be, ensure that you have a Sir Knight who can give a report when necessary and be your ambassador to the youth.

• **Social Order of the Beauceant (1 or more members)** – Appoint a Sir Knight to represent you to these bodies. This will aid you in communicating and coordinating efforts with the women who support your Commandery.

If you were to fill each of these spots with different Sir Knights, it would require 23 appointments. However, many Sir Knights serve on multiple committees during a year. It may be a good idea to consult with your Recorder, Generalissimo, Captain General, Past Commanders, and Division Commander when making these appointments

As with anything, this is not a complete list of who you can appoint. Remember, you are the Commander, and you have the ability to appoint whomever you would like in an effort to get the job done. Do you need a Patriotic Activities Committee? Then appoint one! At the back of this booklet you will find a Commander's Appointments Worksheet to use when making these decisions. This is your chance to shape your Commandery, so use this opportunity wisely!

With committees selected, you should now have a team of Sir Knights to help you in moving your Commandery into the future

Section 4: Your Installation

Your Installation is an exciting day in your Commandery career. It is on this day that you finally take the reins of leadership and begin to steer the course of your Commandery. Diving right into this day isn't the best way to ensure that it leaves good feelings though. A little advance planning can really bolster the event, and provide great memories.

Part 1: Date, Time, and Place

This is the simplest and most important step. Talk to your Commander and other officers and determine a date and time for your Installation. In many scenarios the Installation follows a Commandery meeting. Some Commanderies do have their Installations on separate days. While detailed planning of the Installation itself isn't covered in this manual, suffice it to say that if you are having a larger event than a post-Conclave Installation you are going to need to do some more planning.

However, to keep things simple, find a good date and time for you and your officers to be installed. The December or January Conclave is usually a perfect time to do the ceremony. Hopefully the Conclave is short, as the current officers are changing and their programs are complete. If you choose this option you may want to have some light refreshments for after the Installation.

If you choose not to do the Installation following your meeting, ensure that you book the facility in advance and have someone set up the appropriate furniture in the room being used for the Installation.

Part 2: Organize an Installing Team

Now that you know when and where you are being installed you can talk to some folks and see if they can perform the ceremony for you. Many times Commanderies have specific Past Commanders or others within the Division that know this ceremony. Talk to your Past Commanders and find out who installed them. They should be able to put you in contact with at least one person who can perform the ceremony.

In total you will need two people to be on the Installing Team – an Installing Officer and an Installing Marshal. When contacting a person to do the part of Installing Officer ask him if he has any recommendations for who could serve as Installing Marshal. If no names come to mind, check with your Past Commanders, who usually are very willing to help.

Part 3: Preparing for the Installation

Prior to the Installation you should call all of your appointed and elected officers and ensure that they are going to be able to attend the Installation. You may want to put a reminder in the Commandery notice, or send out an extra invitation to remind them of the event.

This is also a good time to determine if the Installation is going to be open or closed to the public. If closed, only Sir Knights are admitted. Many Sir Knights like to have their "significant other", family members, or friends present, so if you plan on having an open installation, ensure that word gets out so that they know they can attend.

Chances are with all this pomp and ceremony you are going to be called upon to give an inaugural address, and talk about what you are going to do with your year as Commander. This is also the time when many choose to offer thanks to those who have helped them during their Commandery career. Preparing for this moment is very important. This is not the time to "wing-it" and speak off the cuff. Have some prepared comments, or at least a bulleted list of items to discuss. This will ensure that you talk about everything you wanted to cover, and thank everyone who you wish to offer appreciation to.

Part 4: Installation

This is it! You are grabbing the wheel and charting the course! You have put in months of effort in getting your officers and committees lined up, planning your term, and preparing for this night. While it may be hard to do, this is a time to relax. If you have truly prepared yourself this night should go pretty easy. Enjoy the ceremony and being in the limelight – you deserve it! There will be lots of work ahead, but for now everyone is watching you and enjoying your success. Congratulations Eminent Commander!

Section 5: Your First Conclave

Now that the Installation has become a fond memory, it's time to get down to business. You have an organization to run, and the meetings hinge on you being prepared and ready to run an orderly and efficient meeting.

First, you should make sure that you have your ritual down pat. This doesn't mean that you are going to be word perfect in delivering it, but you should be comfortable with the flow of the Opening and Closing, as well as the floor work required of you. Don't fret if it isn't exact. You should have a meeting or two before being inspected, so take this chance to acclimate yourself to being in the East.

Next, you should have been in contact with your Recorder following the Installation. He can tell you if there are pressing issues or other items that need to be placed on the agenda for the evening. Remember, the Recorder is there to help keep you on track, so: talk to him often!

Being prepared is a big part of being Commander. Before the meeting you should make an agenda of all of the things that you need to talk about. A sample outline agenda is presented at the end of this book. Use this as a guide to help you plan out how your meeting is going to run. Bring a copy of this with you to the meeting. You may also want to have copies available for the members so that they can follow along as you progress through the night.

If you have planned out an agenda and talked to your Recorder there shouldn't be any surprises at this meeting. You might have an ambitious Sir Knight offer up an idea for a program, or perhaps an event. Listen to his thoughts and then offer to discuss it with him after the meeting. This will give you an opportunity to hear your member's wants without derailing your meeting. He will also feel good about being heard as a member and having his opinion count.

One meeting should be in the books, but you have many more ahead of you. Only you know what you can accomplish during this next year!

Section 6: Final Thoughts

As you can certainly see, being Commander is a big responsibility that can have an even bigger impact on your community and the Masonic Family. By putting a little extra effort into planning for this office you can have a great year, and help the fraternity grow. Enjoy your time as Commander, and when you're finished, offer to help those that follow you. You are now a member of an exclusive club of current and Past Commanders, and you are encouraged to participate in discussions with others who have held that post.

Commander's Appointments Worksheet

Commandery: _____ Year: 20___ to 20___

Elected Officers

Commander: _____
Generalissimo: _____
Recorder: _____

Captain General: _____
Treasurer: _____

Appointed Officers

Prelate: _____
Junior Warden: _____
Sword Bearer: _____
Sentinel: _____

Senior Warden: _____
Standard Bearer: _____
Warder: _____

Committees

Drill & Tactics:	Chairman: _____
	#2: _____
	#3: _____
Membership:	Chairman: _____
	#2: _____
KTEF:	#1: _____
Awards:	Chairman: _____
	#2: _____
	#3: _____
Directors of the Work:	Red Cross: _____
	Malta: _____
	Temple: _____
Youth Activities:	#1: _____
Social Order of the Beauceant:	#1: _____

Sample Meeting Agenda

Commandery: _____ Date: _____

Opening Ritual

Approval of the minutes of the last stated Conclave.

Reading of Communications.

Receiving of Petitions

Receipts to the Commandery

Treasurer's Report

Sickness or Distress a. Deaths

Reception of Grand Officers

Reports of Committees

- a. Ladies Auxiliary or Beauceant
- b. Youth Groups
- c. Membership
- d. Other Committees as Needed

Unfinished Business

- a. Programs
- b. Events
    - a. Goal 1: Discuss progress on your first goal.
    - b. Goal 2: Discuss progress on your second goal.
    - c. Goal 3: Discuss progress on your third goal.
    - d. Goal 4: Discuss progress on your fourth goal.
    - e. Goal 5: Discuss progress on your fifth goal.

New Business

Good of the Order

Closing Ritual