

## Grand Commandery of Knights Templar of Florida

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### GRAND COMMANDER'S MESSAGE

Greetings Sir Knights:

When it comes to February I cannot help but think of the Father of our Country Brother George Washington. Henry (Light Horse Harry) Lee wrote the famous epitaph of George Washington, "First in War, first in Peace, and first in the hearts of his countrymen". Washington's Birthday was first celebrated as a holiday in the District of Columbia in 1880. It was made a federal holiday in 1885, when President Chester Arthur signed a bill making it a federal holiday. The holiday was originally held on the anniversary of George Washington's birth, on February 22. In 1968, Congress passed the Monday Holidays Act, which moved the official observance of Washington's Birthday from Feb. 22 to the third Monday in February. Some reformers had wanted to change the name of the holiday as well, to Presidents Day, in honor of both Lincoln and Washington, but that proposal was rejected by Congress, and the holiday remained officially Washington's Birthday.

Nevertheless, there was a popular misconception that the day had been officially renamed, a misconception only reinforced by the fact that the third Monday in February can only occur between Feb. 15 and Feb. 21. This means that the holiday is always after Lincoln's birthday and before Washington's Birthday, without ever coinciding with either. Furthermore, some states which had previously celebrated Lincoln's Birthday dropped the observance after the federal holiday reforms, supporting the notion that the two presidential birthdays had been combined.

While the name change has never been authorized by Congress, it has gained a strong hold on the public consciousness, and is generally used on calendars, in advertising, and even by many government agencies. There have been attempts to introduce legislation requiring federal agencies to call the day Washington's Birthday, but these have never gotten very far. No matter what's in the law books, the popular usage is now well established. This holiday is legally designated as "Washington's Birthday". Though other institutions such as state and local governments and private businesses may use other names, it is the federal government's policy to always refer to holidays by the names esignated

in the law.

I ask that all commanderies in the month of February have some type of Americanism program to show our love of country

I have had the honor and privilege to install many Commandery Officers this year and have witnessed their energy, enthusiasm and dedication to our Templar Order. My congratulations to all the newly installed Eminent Commanders and their officedrs throughout this Grand Jurisdiction. Remember, that no matter how motivated or dedicated these officers are they cannot be successful unless we all work together. Please start to raise money to send ministers to the Holy Land for next year in February of 2016. Remember all monies and paperwork must to be turned in to the Grand Encampment by October 15, 2015.

Dates to remember:

I again would like to remind each Sir Knight that our goal is to Knight over 250 new members by May of 2015. We only need to Knight 109 more new members to accomplish this goal. Please don't forget the Statewide Festival that will be held on Friday night March 6<sup>th</sup> and Saturday March 7<sup>th</sup> in honor of our Most Worshipful Grand Master James Ford. All the Degrees and Orders will be conferred outdoors at Box Ranch located at 7150 Kanner Hwy. Indiantown, Florida. The work will be conferred by several different York Rite Bodies from around the State. Our Most Worshipful James Ford is a KYGCH and has served the Plant City York Rite Bodies for many years. If you can't make this class, we still have several other Festivals that will be going on around the State from February through April. Please get involved and remember that your Grand Commandery Officers are here to assist you.

This year's Grand Commander's Homecoming will be in conjunction with the 100 year anniversary of St. Lucie Commandery No. 17 KT. It will be held on April 18, 2015 at the St. Lucie Shrine Club in Ft. Pierce.

Please mark your calendars for our annual Grand Convention which will take place at the Edgewater Beach and Golf Resort in Panama City, Florida on May 17-20. Please save the dates. Web site is [www.edgewaterbeachresort.com](http://www.edgewaterbeachresort.com). When making your reservation please give the booking code 1058HY. Also get your Bodies to buy an ad in the Souvenir Program, this helps with the cost of the Convention.

Yours in Christ,

S.K. Paul W. Friend, KTCH  
Right Eminent Grand Commander