

## DISPATCHES FROM HEADQUARTERS

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**THE CRUSADES**

What were the crusades and why did people think that they were necessary?

For centuries, Christians from the West had been making pilgrimages to holy places in Jerusalem and elsewhere. To bring these places into Christian hands and keep them was the chief objective of the Crusades. The first Crusade began in 1096, the outgrowth of an appeal by Pope Urban II in a sermon at Claremont. He appealed to all Christians in Europe to join the Crusade. They were to wear a cross on their breasts as they went forth, and upon their backs as they returned, as a holy sign of their sacred mission.

They reached Constantinople, and were almost entirely destroyed by the Turks in an attempt to reach Nicaea. A year later, in June 1097 a crusading army captured Nicaea and defeated the Turks and by October, besieged Antioch, which they captured in June 1098. Godfrey of Bouillon was chosen as Protector of the Holy Sepulchre.

The Crusaders established themselves in various centres in Syria and Palestine, where the ruins of their strongholds can still be seen. The greatest support for the Crusades came from the military orders. Their members took vows of poverty, chastity and obedience and were soldiers who had dedicated their lives to the service of Christ. Most famous were the Templars and Hospitallers or Knights of St. John.

The Templars were founded in 1119 by Hugo de Payens and were granted quarters near the site of King Solomon's Temple in Jerusalem. Their purpose was to protect pilgrims and to fight in defence of the Holy Land.

They became very wealthy through gifts and, in 1307, because of jealousy, they were suppressed and much of their property went to the Hospitallers. These, or the Knights of St. John, were based upon a hospital in Jerusalem, near the Church of St. John the Baptist, which had been originally founded by Charlemagne. Their object was to care for the sick, but, in the 12th Century, they were made into a military order. They maintained their headquarters on the island of Rhodes (1310- 1523) and then on Malta (1530-1798). Their emblem is the Cross of Malta. The second Crusade under Bernard of Clairvaux (1144) was a failure, with most of their forces perishing in Asia Minor. In 1148 Jerusalem was recaptured by the Moslems under Saladin. He recaptured the Holy land and the Third Crusade followed. This Crusade was led by the Emperor Barbarossa, Philip Augustus of France and King Richard the Lion-hearted of England. Barbarossa was accidentally drowned in Cilicia and his army went to pieces. Philip Augustus and Richard quarreled, but the crusaders managed to capture Acre.

The fourth Crusade in 1202 was aimed at Egypt where Saladin's strength lay. The crusaders stormed Constantinople in 1204, and plundered it.

A very sad episode in the Crusades was the so-called "Children's Crusade", in 1212 thousands of children straggled across Europe only to be taken and sold into slavery in Egypt.

The sixth Crusade succeeded in securing Jerusalem by a treaty in 1229 with the Sultan of Egypt, and Jerusalem was once more in Christian keeping until 1234 when it was permanently lost.

The last considerable expedition was that of Prince Edward, son of Edward I of England. In 1291 the last of the Latin holdings in Palestine was lost. The Crusades were over, though men continued to

talk of new expeditions for nearly two centuries more.

The Crusades had important consequences. They stimulated growth of trade and commerce. They brought Western Europe into intimate contact with the civilizations of the Near East. In Europe, universities sprang up and there was great development in architecture, especially the Gothic in cathedrals. Not until 1917 when it fell to a mixed force of French, British and Indian troops did Jerusalem slip once more from Moslem grasp. On December 9<sup>th</sup> 1917 General Allenby received the surrender of Jerusalem. Two days later he entered the Holy City on foot. The first Christian master since the Crusades.

### Travels

On May 4, 5 and 6<sup>th</sup> I attended the Grand Chapter of NS & PEI and the SGC EJC R&SM and KYCH where I was received in all bodies with due honours. This also caused double duties as I was in charge of the colour party. The weekend was reasonably well attended and ended with a banquet on Saturday evening.

On May 9<sup>th</sup> Eileen and I flew to Glasgow and then on to Comrie in Scotland. On the following week we embarked on a tour of Cornwall-England. On June 5<sup>th</sup> we flew out to Bucharest-Romania to attend a "Romanian York Rite" week. I represented Knights Templar of Canada at the following meetings during the week. AMD, KYCH, HRA, HRAKTP. The week culminated with a meeting of all Past Grand Masters of Europe. We returned to Glasgow and then back to Halifax on the 12<sup>th</sup> of June.

On the 16<sup>th</sup> of June I flew out to Timmins to visit Temiskaming Preceptory No. 60 and was met at the airport by R.Em.Kt. Kian Jensen. A quick change of clothing then off to a reception hosted by R.Em.Kt. Terry Pachal and his wife Cathy, along with several other Sir Knights and their ladies. A very pleasant and relaxing evening. The following morning I attended a breakfast meeting of the Preceptory. The Preceptory was then formally opened at 11:00, lines were formed and I was received in due form. On closing the Preceptory a delicious lunch was served and on completion I was returned to my hotel. The following morning R.Em.Kt. Kian Jensen drove me to the airport and I flew to Toronto, where my son picked me up and I spent the night with him and my Grandsons.

On June 19<sup>th</sup> I was picked up by Em Kt.

Brian Kiernan, Presiding Preceptor of Godfrey De Bouillon Preceptory No. 3 and we drove to Hamilton for a meeting of his Preceptory at the Scottish Rite Temple. We had a delicious dinner attended by 38 Sir Knights and their ladies. The Preceptory was then opened and I was received through the lines in due form. A most enjoyable meeting. It was nice to see PSGM Gordon Stuart GCT at this meeting. I wish to thank the Sir Knights of Godfrey De Bouillon for their most generous donation which was duly passed on to the KTCF. On completion of the evening I was returned to Toronto. A very special thank you to Em.Kt. Brian Kiernan who looked after my transportation.

As this is my last Dispatches, I wish to thank all Preceptories and Sir Knights who expedited my travels and comfort through my many visits. The ladies of the various organizations who catered our meals. The many drivers who drove untold miles to make sure we arrived at our destinations on time. The Sir Knights and families who hosted me in their homes. The DGM, R.Em.Kt. David Hardie KCT, who went out of his way to attend as many meetings as he could. Finally to our Grand Chancellor R.Em.Kt. David Walker KCT, who has worked very hard to facilitate my visits right across our Great country.

In August I will be in Dallas-Texas attending the York Rite Sovereign College of North America, and finally in Calgary in August to attend Grand Imperial Conclave and the Sovereign Great Priory of Canada.

I would urge all Sir Knights to attend if possible. I know the committee have been working very hard to ensure we have a successful meeting.



*Gerald A. Riley*, GCT, SGM

**You are a volunteer in your Lodge, Chapter, Council or Preceptory until you are elected by the members as an officer. Now you have become the servant of the members and must strive to bring honour to your office and to yourself.**