

The Grand Commandery Knights Templar of Texas
Office of the Grand Commander
Amarillo, Texas
June 26, 2020

GENERAL ORDER NO. 4, SERIES 2020-2021

Subject: Patriotic Message (Saturday, July 4th, 2020)

To: The Grand Officers, Past Grand Commanders, Officers and Members of the Constituent Commanderies of Texas.

Greetings, Sir Knights:

“AMERICAN PATRIOT”

This title belongs to all of us. Every Masonic Lodge, and any other gathering of good men made better by their Masonic teachings, who will continue to honor their oath by taking that title to their hearts as a nation.

Listen closely my fellow Knights Templar. I am your nation. I was born on July 4, 1776, and the Declaration of Independence is my birth certificate. The bloodlines of the world run in my veins, because I alone offered freedom to the oppressed. I am many things and many persons. I am 330 million living souls, and the ghost of the millions who have lived and died for me.

I am Nathan Hale and Paul Revere. I stood at Lexington and heard the shot heard around the world. I am Washington, Jefferson, and Patrick Henry. I am John Paul Jones, the Green Mountain Boys and Davey Crockett. I am Abe Lincoln, Grant and Roosevelt, Alvin York and Audie Murphey.

I remember the Alamo, the Maine, and Pearl Harbor. When freedom called, I answered and stayed until it was over, over there. I left my heroic dead in Flanders Field, on the rocks of Corregidor, on the frozen slopes of Korea, and in the steaming jungles of Vietnam. My citizens lie dead in the sands of Afghanistan and Iraq.

I am the Brooklyn Bridge, the granite hills of Vermont, and the golden wheat fields of Kansas. I am the coal mines of Virginia and Pennsylvania, the fertile lands of Ohio and Iowa. I am the Golden Gate and the Grand Canyon. I am Independence Hall and the Monitor and Merrimac, and I am big. I sprawl from the Atlantic to the Pacific, and my arms stretch out to embrace Alaska and Hawaii. I am over 4 million square miles. I am over 12 million farms and ranches. I am forests, fields, mountains, and deserts. I am quiet, peaceful villages, and I am huge raucous cities that never sleep.

You can gaze upon me and see Ben Franklin walking in the streets of Philadelphia. You can see Betsy Ross with her needle and thread. You can see the lights of Christmas and hear the strains of “Auld Lang Syne” when the calendar turns. You can witness the sounds and colors of fireworks on the Independence Day.

Furthermore, I am Babe Ruth and the World Series. I am Daytona and Talladega. I am the NFL, and high school ball on Friday nights. I am 415,000 schools and colleges, and the 530,000 churches where my people worship God as they feel is best for them. I am a ballot dropped in a box or recorded on a computer. I am the roar of a crowd in a stadium, and the voices of choirs in cathedrals. I am an editorial in a newspaper, and a letter to a Congressman.

I am Eli Whitney, Stephen Foster, Thomas Edison, and Billy Graham. I am Horace Greely, Will Rogers, the Wright brothers, and George Washington Carver. I am Jonas Salk, Reverend Martin Luther King, Jr, and Longfellow. I am Harriet Beecher Stowe, Walt Whitman, Thomas Paine, and John Wayne. Some of these men were Masons, some were not, but all were great men and women.

YES! I am *the* nation, and these are some of the things that I am. I was conceived in freedom, and with God willing, I will spend the rest of my days as such. May I always possess the integrity and the strength to keep myself unshackled, and to remain the citadel of freedom. With the beacon of hope carried in each Sir Knight present, I will continue to shine my light and my patriotism to the world.

Freedom Is Not Free

I watched the flag pass by one day. It fluttered in the breeze. A young MARINE saluted it, and then he stood at ease.

I looked at him in uniform. So young, so tall, so proud. His hair cut square, his eyes alert. He stands out in any crowd.

I thought how many men like him had fallen through the years. How many died on foreign soil? How many mother's tears?

How many pilots' planes shot down? How many died at sea? How many foxholes were soldiers' graves? No, freedom is not free.

I heard the sound of "TAPS" one night, when everything was still. I listened to the bugler play, and felt a sudden chill.

I wondered how many times that "TAPS" had meant "AMEN". When a flag had draped the coffin of a brother or a friend.

I thought of all the children, of the mothers and the wives. Of fathers, sons, and husbands, with interrupted lives.

I thought about a graveyard at the bottom of the sea. Of the unmarked graves in Arlington-

No, Freedom is not free.

This message was prepared by Sir Knight Dallas Alford, U.S. Army, P.H., Vietnam Veteran, P.C. Amarillo Commandery #48.

This General Order is to be read aloud at the next Stated Conclave following its receipt, and the action noted by the Recorder in the minutes with a copy attached thereto.

Fraternally and in His name,

Gary H. Freedman

Gary H. Freedman
Grand Commander

Attest:

Jerry N. Kirby

Jerry N. Kirby
Grand Recorder

