

WILLIAM J. BERENBROICK

GRAND COMMANDER
140 CRESCENT AVENUE
LEONIA, N.J. 07650-1907
(201) 965 – 9060
wberenbroick@yahoo.com



The Declaration of Independence serves as one of America's most treasured symbols because it identifies the moment at which the nation was born and, in stirring language, describes the reasons for its birth. It announced the separation of the thirteen colonies from England and recounted, for Americans and the international community, the grievances that had led to the call for independence.

By the middle of the eighteenth century, differences in life, thought, and economic interests had formed between the colonists and England. The British government tried to regulate colonial commerce in the British interest. The Stamp Act passed by Parliament in 1765 roused a violent colonial outcry as an act of taxation without representation. The Townshend Acts (1767) led to such acts of violence as the Boston Massacre and the Boston Tea Party (1773). In 1774 Britain responded with the coercive Intolerable Acts. The first Continental Congress met in September, 1774 and petitioned King George III for redress of their grievances. The king ignored the colonists' complaints and declared the colonies were in rebellion. By the time the Second Continental Congress met in May, 1775, armed conflict had begun in Lexington and Concord, Massachusetts . In June, the Continental Congress created a committee of five members to draft a statement of independence.

Benjamin Franklin, John Adams, Thomas Jefferson, Roger Sherman, and Robert R. Livingston comprised the committee charged with drafting the Declaration, but the task fell to Jefferson, as he was considered the most eloquent writer. After Jefferson drafted the document, the committee and Congress made a total of eighty-six changes. Jefferson was well-versed in the ideas of the French and English Enlightenments, and he drew inspiration from English philosopher John Locke. He also used many ideas from his own draft of the Virginia Constitution, as well as the Virginia Declaration of Rights by George Mason. The Declaration of Independence claimed that if a government was tyrannical, the people had a right to overthrow it. It included a long list of the ways the British king had oppressed the colonists.

And finally it concluded that because of the king's oppressive acts, the colonies had the right to declare themselves free and independent states.

On July 4, 1776, the Second Continental Congress met in the Pennsylvania State House (now Independence Hall) and approved the Declaration of Independence. Two days earlier the Congress had voted in favor of Richard Henry Lee's motion to declare the freedom and independence of the thirteen American colonies from England. The Declaration was written to influence public opinion and gain support both among the new states and abroad - especially France, from which the new "United States" sought military assistance.

Spotlight on a Commandery

Does your Commandery participate in activity in your community? If so, write an article and I will include it in the State Supplement.

Thank You

Thank you to all of the Sir Knights who marched in parades during Memorial Day and Fourth of July parades around the State. This is a good way for the public to see the Sir Knights.

Thank you to the members of Corson Commandery for presenting the Colors at the opening of the Eastern Star Session. . Corson has preformed this duty for many years now, and the ladies of Eastern Star love to see them.

Food Drive

Please remember that my Special Project this year is the Food Banks of New Jersey. Please make every effort to collect canned goods at each Commandery meeting and then bring them over to the local food bank/pantry. These are difficult times for everyone, but let us remember back to our vows to "FEED THE HUNGRY".

Official Visit/Inspection Schedule

Updated for July, 2009

PLEASE CHECK THE CALENDAR ON THE KNIGHTS TEMPLAR YAHOO GROUP FOR ANY UPDATES

- September 1, 2009 – Crusade No. 23
- September 9, 2009 – Atlantic No. 20
- September 15, 2009 – Olivet No. 10
- September 24, 2009 – St. Johns No. 9
- October 15, 2009 – Corson No. 15
- October 19, 2009 – Trinity No. 17
- November 18, 2009 – Melita No. 13
- January 7, 2010 – Helena No. 3
- February 22, 2010 – Hugh de Paynes No.1

HOLY LAND PILGRIMAGE

Sir Knights, it has always been a honor and privilege for the Grand Commandery, or a constituent Commandery, send a deserving member of the Clergy to the Holy Land. The Grand Commander would like to once again send a Clergy member, but we have a problem. Our funds are a little low. Please make every effort to support this worthwhile program. The members of the clergy, who have gone in the past, have had a wonderful experience. Please let us continue the work of this Christian Order by sending a member of the clergy over to the Holy Land. Contact SK Robert Sheridan for more information.