



**GRAND COMMANDER'S MESSAGE FOR JULY 2017**

*"Work for the Cause, not the Applause"*

Normally the July issue is when the Grand Commander introduces his new appointment to the progressive line, but I am going to defer that article until next month so that I can share my experience from the first week of being your Grand Commander

On May 27, 2017, I had the extreme honor to constitute Morris Siminoff Commandery as the 80<sup>th</sup> Commandery in the state of California, and later in the day, install all of the officers of this new Commandery. It has been 10 years since we constituted a Commandery in the State of California and there have only been 4 other Commanderies constituted in California in the last 50 years. I can only imagine what it would be like if every Grand Commander had the opportunity to constitute at least one Commandery a year. Of course I would like to see many Commanderies constituted each year but even one Commandery a year would be a great start

Let me tell you a little about these extremely committed men of Morris Siminoff Commandery. In 2015, these gentlemen decided that they would like to start Morris Siminoff Commandery and approached the Grand Commandery of California and were given the permission to start the process to form this new Commandery. They have served under dispensation for the last 2 years and have met all of the requirements to request their charter. Their Charter was signed at the Grand Sessions in 2017

They decided that the name would honor Morris Siminoff because of his extreme commitment to Masonry. His history is extremely interesting and you can look forward to a more detailed account of Morris Siminoff and the newly constituted Commandery in one of the future editions of this publication. Sir Knight Siminoff was from a middle class Russian family of substantial means and had an uncle who was a General in the Imperial Russian Army. He emigrated in 1885 and moved to San Francisco in 1890 and started the Golden Gate Cloak and Suite House on Market Street. It is not certain when Sir Knight Siminoff became a Mason. He joined California Chapter No. 1 Royal Arch Masons and California Commandery No. 1 Knights Templar. His donation of \$30,000 in the early 1900's, which would be in excess of \$1 million dollars today, to the Masonic Home at Union City resulted in the building of a Lodge, Chapel and cottages "for the aged". The cornerstone was laid and the building was dedicated in 1903. After the earthquake in 1989 the old building was dismantled and as you enter the new building, the brick wall is from the original building as are the refurbished chandeliers in the Lodge Room. There is a picture of Morris Siminoff in the uniform of California No. 1 Knights Templar in the foyer. I would like to thank Sir Knight

foyer. I would like to thank Sir Knight Edgar W. Fentum, PC, for working so hard to collect this information about Sir Knight Morris.

Morris Siminoff became known as the "Cloak Man" and it is fitting that the Commandery has adopted the Cap and Mantle as their uniform. Sir Knight William Price, Past Commander, donated a sword from California Commandery No. 1 that was used in 1906, and I have given the Commandery the permission to use this sword as the official sword that will be used by the Commander each year. Morris Siminoff has 22 members with a full core of extremely committed officers. I wish I had the time to tell you a little bit about each of these members but I encourage each of you to reach out and get to know these gentleman and let some of their sincere compassion and commitment to York Rite spread onto all of us

I had the honor of being joined by the Grand High Priest, Most Excellent Companion Randy Downey and the Grand Master of Cryptic Masons, Most Illustrious Companion Lee Whelan. Both of these gentleman carved time out of their very busy schedules to show their commitment to York Rite Masonry and it meant so much to this new Commandery to have them there. We were also joined by 6 Past Grand Commanders, including the Right Eminent Grand Captain General of the Grand Encampment, 6 Grand Officers, and we were honored to have Bruce Galloway, the Deputy Grand Master from the California Grand Lodge also in attendance. Let's work together to see how we can continue to constitute Commanderies and see Commandery grow and flourish in the state of California

Thomas N. Thomas  
 Grand Commander  
 Grand Commandery of California

**GRAND COMMANDER'S ITINERARY---2017**

			July
	1	Reception, 3-way	San Luis Obispo
	3	Recepttion, 4-way, LA Commandery No. 9	Van Nuys
	4	Parade, 4th July	Newhall
	14	Reception	Folsom
	15	Reception	San Jose
	22	Reception	Red Bluff
August	4	Reception, North Bay	Fairfield
	5	Reception, East Bay	Alameda
	6	Reception, SF/Peninsula	Orange Park, SSF
	19	Reception, Department I	Riverside