

A Historical Summary
of a
Department Commander, Grand Encampment
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The purpose of this paper is to provide a short historical review of the origin and function of a Department Commander serving the Grand Encampment of Knights Templar of the United States of America.

Defined in the Constitution, Statutes and Approved Decisions of the Grand Encampment, revised September 30, 2012 under Section 29 1/2:

Section 29½. The Grand Master shall group the Grand Commanderies, and at his option any or all subordinate Commanderies, into not less than six nor more than fifteen Departments, and shall appoint for each Department a Department Commander, whose duties shall include the status of Proxy of the Grand Master within such Department on all occasions when the Grand Master or other Special Proxy is not present. Such Department Commanders shall be under the immediate direction of the Grand Master, and shall perform such duties as he may direct. (1964, p. 6 & 334 - 338)(2012).



From the Grand Encampment proceedings and as listed on the Grand Encampment web site, the first Department Commanders were appointed by S.K. Robert Brainerd Gaylord, Most Eminent Grand Master in 1949. He appointed 7 Department Commanders.

The first instance of an 8th Department Commander, was the appointment of S.K. George M. Fowler, 1955 - 1958 as Department Commander of the Subordinate Commanderies. Next was S.K. Richard M. Straus, 1991 - 1994 and the Subordinate Commanderies of Italy and the Phillipines were listed as the subordinates. At the 61st Triennial held in Nashville, Tennessee S.K. Willard R. Clutter was appointed by S.K. William Jackson Jones and he covered the Subordinate Commanderies. The appointee, S.K. Willard R. Clutter, Jr. whom also served as Chief of Staff, and had been previously appointed to the rank of Honorary Department Commander by S.K. James Morris Ward, Most Eminent Grand Master. S.K. Clutter served from 2000 - 2003. The next subordinate Department Commander was not appointed until the 66th triennial in 2012. The appointment was S.K. Edward R. Trosin Jr., of New York and was appointed by S.K. David Dixon Goodwin, Most Eminent Grand Master.

There are now 9 Department Commanders serving Grand Encampment. During the term of S.K. Richard Baldwin, whom had resigned during his term as Most Eminent Grand Master due to health reasons, S.K. William Koon appointed Joaquim Pinto Coelho, a Past Grand Commander from

Portugal as the 1st European Department Commander. S.K. Coelho was again re-appointed at the 64th Triennial by S.K. William H. Koon, Most Eminent Grand Master.


In 2006, S.K. Richard B. Baldwin, Most Eminent Grand Master created a new Department now known as the Mid Atlantic Department, which consists of Delaware, District of Columbia, Maryland, North Carolina, Virginia, and West Virginia. The first Mid Atlantic Department Commander to serve in that position was S.K. William R. Brunk, a Past Grand Commander from North Carolina whom was replaced during his term by S.K. Paul S. Newhall, a Past Grand Commander from Virginia. The Northeast Department had consisted of the States of Maine, New Hampshire, Vermont, New York, Mass/RI, Connecticut, Pennsylvania, New Jersey, Maryland, District of Columbia and Virginia. This effectively split the Northeast Department which presently covers 8 states.

Northeast Department:

The Northeast Department which had been comprised of 11 Grand Commanderys, which were Maine, New Hampshire, Vermont, Mass/RI, Connecticut, New York, Pennsylvania, New Jersey, District of Columbia, Maryland, and Delaware. To these, the State of Virginia was added and was noted in General Order 1, printed in the 2006 Triennial proceedings. Two (2) Department Commanders were appointed, which were S.K. Robert P. Winterhalter, whom was appointed as Northeastern Department Commander (North) and S.K. Edwin R. Carpenter Jr., whom was appointed as Northeastern Department Commander (South). During their terms they agreed that they would be known as the Northeastern Department Commanders, their assigned states per their appointments by S.K. Kenneth B. Fisher to remain intact. The reasoning for this was clearly pointed out in the report by S.K. Carpenter in his report as Northeastern Department Commander as listed on page 145 of the 2006 Triennial proceedings.

Of note, the now Northeast Department had been the North Atlantic Department. The change in name was noted in the printing of the 1970, 51st Triennial proceedings on page 569.

In the Northeast Department, the appointment for the Sir Knight chosen is usually announced in September of the year before the Triennial at the Regional Department Conference.

 I was appointed to serve as Department Commander of the Northeast Department by S.K. William Howard Koon II and was installed at the Triennial in Roanoke Virginia on Wednesday, August 19, 2009, AO 891. I was the second from Connecticut to be appointed, the first was S.K. Guy Irving Robb, whom served from 1961-1964 and was appointed by S.K. Paul M. Moore, Most Eminent Grand Master. My term in office was for three years and was completed at the Triennial Conclave in Arlington, VA on Wednesday August 15, 2012. Prior to the completion of my term in office, and per tradition, I was appointed as Eminent Grand Standard Bearer of Grand Encampment which expired upon the completion of the Triennial. S.K. Thomas X. Tsirimokos, a Past Grand Commander from New Hampshire was appointed by Sir Knight David Goodwin, Most Eminent Grand Master and installed as the Northeast Department Commander.