



IDAHO KNIGHTLY NEWS

Barry E. Newell, KTCH, KCT, Editor
306 Maple St., Emmett, ID 83617
ksigmason@gmail.com

Editor's Note

If anyone would like to submit an article for the Idaho Knightly News, please email me your article using Microsoft Word. Keep it between 1 page and 1.5 pages.

Upcoming Events:

Northwest York Rite Conf. Oct 17-18
Thanksgiving.....Nov 27
Christmas Day.....Dec 25

Reminder

Sir Knights,

Please remember that any proposed legislation for consideration must be submitted to me no later than December 15.

Also, as we enter this season, I encourage each Commandery to begin planning for its Christmas Observance. Once dates have been set, please inform the Grand Commandery office so that the Right Eminent Grand Commander can plan accordingly.

History of the Teutonic Knights

By Barry E. Newell

Last month, I introduced the Sir Knights to the Teutonic Order and its internal hierarchy. Having established how the Order was organized and governed, it is now fitting to turn from its framework to its history.

The Teutonic Knights were established in 1191 and recognized by Pope Celestine III in 1192 at Acre. Founded by merchants from Lübeck and Bremen who had opened a hospital during the siege, the Order originally cared for German knights and soldiers who could not speak Latin or French. By 1198, it had become a military order led by a Hochmeister (Grand Master), and in 1209, it abandoned its hospital work. The knights received lands in Germany, Italy, and the Levant, supported largely by donations from the Holy Roman Empire. Frederick II granted them exemptions from taxes and the use of imperial lands.

Though never as prominent as the Templars or Hospitallers, the Teutonic

Knights gained renown for their fighting. In 1211, they moved to Transylvania to defend Hungary against the Kipchaks but were expelled in 1225 by King Andrew II. In 1226, Konrad of Masovia invited them to protect his borders from pagan Prussians. In 1230, they began the Prussian Crusade with imperial rights of conquest. They built a fortress at Thorn (Toruń) and gradually established their own monastic state. Fierce conflict with the Prussians gave way to assimilation, while settlers from Germany and the Low Countries emigrated into the region. In 1237, they absorbed the Livonian Brothers of the Sword after the Battle of Saule, continuing campaigns into Lithuania and occasional raids into Russia.

From their base in Chełmno Land, the knights formed the independent Monastic State of the Teutonic Order, sparking friction with Poland. After the loss of Acre in 1291, their headquarters moved to Venice, then to Marienburg in 1309. The war with Poland ended with the Treaty of Kalisz in 1343, which left Chełmno Land to the knights. They also campaigned against Baltic piracy, defeating the Victual Brothers in 1398. By 1407, the Order controlled Prussia, Pomerelia, Samogitia, Courland, Livonia, Estonia, Gotland, Dagö, Ösel, and the Neumark.

The rise of a Christian Polish–Lithuanian alliance led to war in 1409. At Grunwald in 1410, the knights suffered a crushing defeat, though Marienburg held out. The First Peace of Thorn (1411) left most of their territory intact, but their reputation and power declined. They fought Poland again in the 1430s, but were defeated and signed the Peace of Brześć Kujawski. Internal conflict weakened the Order further. In 1454, the Prussian gentry, supported by Poland,

rebelled in the Thirteen Years' War. The Second Peace of Thorn (1466) left them only eastern Prussia under Polish suzerainty, with Königsberg as their capital.

By the 16th century, the Order had lost its independence. Grand Master Albert of Brandenburg embraced Lutheranism in 1522, resigned, and became Duke of Prussia under Polish overlordship. The Order retained scattered lands in the Holy Roman Empire, restructured into commanderies and bailiwicks. The Livonian territory was lost in 1561. The Order survived as a largely German institution, admitting some Protestants after the Peace of Augsburg, though most members remained Catholic.

The Napoleonic Wars ended their remaining temporal power. The Treaty of Lunéville (1801) and Napoleon's dissolution of 1809 stripped the Order of its lands. It lingered ceremonially in Austria and Tyrol until Hitler banned it in 1938. Re-established after 1945, it exists today as a charitable Catholic order based in Vienna, focused on social and medical work. A Protestant branch also endures in Utrecht.

