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THE BADGES OF THE EQUESTRIAN ORDER OF THE HOLY SEPULCHRE OF JERUSALEM

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The Equestrian Order of the Holy Sepulchre of Jerusalem is one of the two surviving Great Orders created during the period of the Crusades, having been founded in Jerusalem a few days after the capture of that city by the Crusaders in 1099. The other, the Sovereign Military Hospitaller Order of

St. John of Jerusalem of Rhodes and Malta (frequently referred to as the Order of Malta) was founded at about the same time. Two other major Orders of knighthood from that period are no more. The Order of Poor Knights of Christ and of the Temple of Solomon (the Knights Templar) was suppressed in 1312, and the Brothers of the German Hospital of St. Mary in Jerusalem (the Teutonic Order) became strictly a clerical organization in 1929.

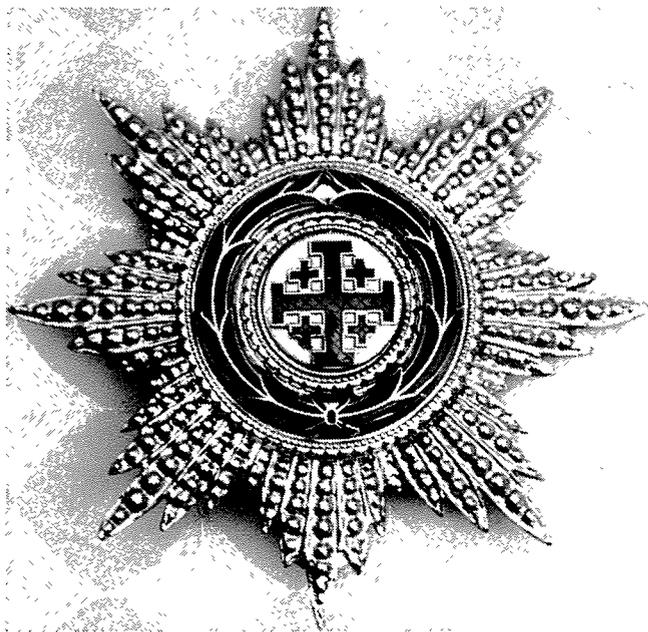


The Order of the Holy Sepulchre (from now on referred to as the Order) was founded to defend the just-conquered Holy Land from various Muslim forces which were very interested in recapturing the region. After the final expulsion of the Latins from the Holy Land in 1291 it remained a military organization and it was only in 1928 that the word "Military" was replaced by "Equestrian" in the title of the Order. At this time the primary role of the Order is to assist in maintaining a Christian presence in the Holy Land by sponsoring and financing various works and projects needed by the Patriarch of Jerusalem. Only members of the Roman Catholic Church may become members of the Order and women have been admitted as members since 1888.

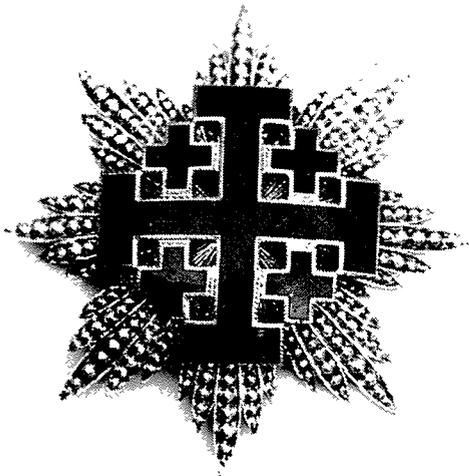
The Order has five ranks, each of which is for Knights or Ladies (or Dames, depending on local usage or custom), these being Knight (or Lady), Knight/Lady Commander, Knight/Lady Commander with Star, Knight/Lady Grand Cross, and Knight/Lady of the Collar.

The Badge of the Order most commonly seen is a gold bordered red enameled Cross of Jerusalem (a cross potent with a small cross between each arm). The badge of a Knight is about 1½ inches by 1½ inches, and that of Knight Commander (left) is about 2 inches by 2 inches. Both are suspended from a military trophy which hangs from a 2 inch wide black ribbon. The same crosses are worn by Ladies, but the suspension is a bow. There is also a crown suspension which is discussed later in this article. These and other

badges denoting rank within the Order are normally worn only on ceremonial occasions or with formal attire.



The Knight's and Lady's badges currently being awarded in the Lieutenancies (regional administrative divisions) within the United States are neck badges, worn in the same way as Commander's badges. Breast badges were replaced with neck badges in the Lieutenancies of the United States and Canada as it was easier to "dress" new members with these during their investiture, but the breast badges are still authorized for wear here and they are still utilized in the European Lieutenancies of the Order. Knight or Lady Commanders with Star wear the neck badge of Commanders as well as a Commander's Star, a red Cross of Jerusalem

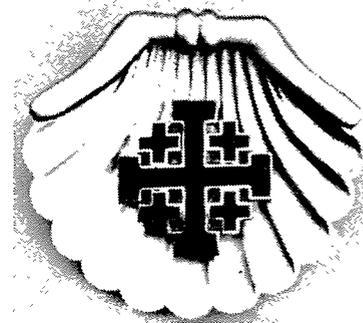


within a green wreath centered on a radiate star 3¼ inches across. (left, above) These are normally worn by Knights on the left side. Ladies/Dames have the option of wearing them in the same way or suspended from a black ribbon around the neck, replacing the neck badge. The highest rank normally encountered is Knight Grand Cross. The badge of this rank is a larger Cross of Jerusalem worn suspended from a rosette at the lower end of a black sash ribbon worn over the right shoulder with the badge hanging near the left hip. The star for this rank is a larger Jerusalem cross on a radiate star worn in the same manner as that of a Knight Commander. (left, below)

The Highest rank of the Order, Knight/Lady of the Collar, is rarely encountered, there being only twenty living holders at this time. The collar consists of a Cross of Jerusalem in a wreath suspended from a military trophy which is part of a gilt collar consisting of 14 rectangular segments inscribed **DIEU LO VULT** (GOD WILLS IT in Old French), there being a circle containing a Cross of Jerusalem after each pair of rectangles. A holder of the Collar wears a star similar to that of a Commander with Star.

Several other awards of the Order came into being after the Second World War, these being the Pilgrim Shell, The Palms of the Order, and the Cross of Merit.

The Pilgrim Shell (right) is a two inch wide silver scallop shell with a red Cross of Jerusalem in the center. It is a highly prized award for members of the Order who complete a pilgrimage to the Holy Places and is usually presented by the Patriarch of Jerusalem. It is worn on the upper left breast when in formal attire and during religious services it is worn on the left breast of the member's cape.



The Palms of the Order are awarded to members for especially meritorious service to the Order. It is similar to the breast badge of a Knight or Lady except that the military trophy device is omitted and the cross has palm branches on either side. Unfortunately no photograph is available.



The Cross of Merit (above) is awarded to persons of any faith for their help in the good works of the Order, but this award does not constitute membership in the Order itself. It has the same five ranks as the Order. The badge is a red-enameled cross potent encircled with a gilt crown of thorns. It is suspended from a ribbon of alternating red and white stripes.



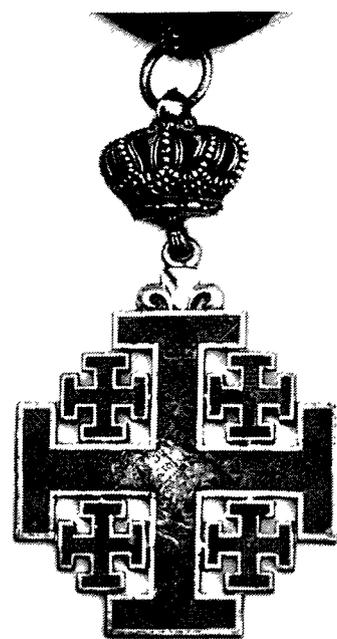
The Commander's star has the crown of thorns-encircled cross potent centered on a silver star, while holders of the Grand Cross have a gold star. (bottom of previous column)



As mentioned earlier, Knight's breast badges (left) were used within the United States Lieutenancies, but I do not have a time frame for the change-over. They are still being awarded in Europe. My research on this particular badge continues and any information that any of our readers may be able to provide will be greatly appreciated.

A second inquiry of mine to our readers deals with

badges bearing crowns as their suspension device (below). I have seen a breast badge with this suspension device being worn by a priest at an annual meeting several years ago, but I did not have an opportunity to speak to him. As numerous other orders which developed in Europe have had different suspension devices to denote military or civil classifications of awards, I'm wondering if the crown device on some of the badges of the Order may reflect such a classification or perhaps may denote an award to a member of the clergy. As before, any assistance will be greatly appreciated.



In a similar light I have encountered a variety of ribbons on badges of the Order, namely black ribbons with a narrow red stripe on each edge. The first occasion was while traveling in Bolivia several years