

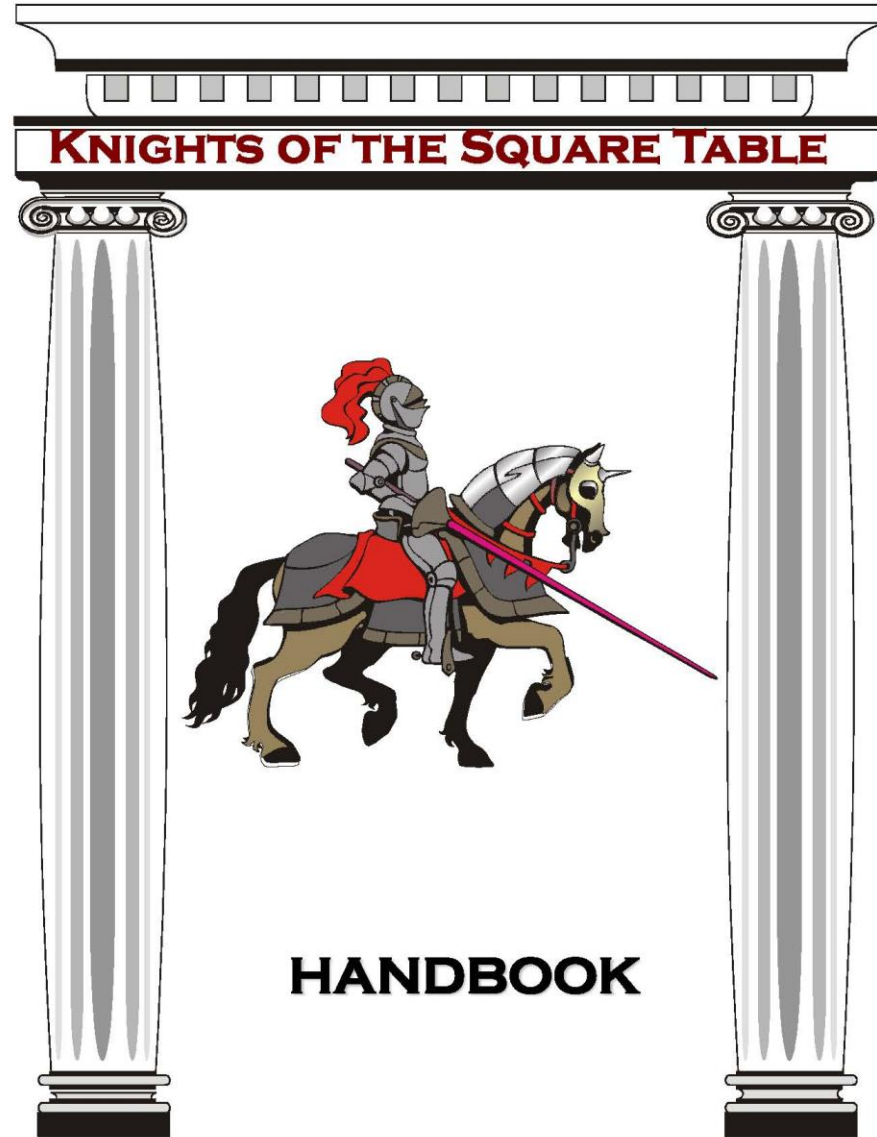
Final Comments

As a Knight, you have shown you are a leader amongst your peers and ready for further challenges and responsibilities within the Association. You have completed the required 6 steps and have climbed each rung of the ladder successfully.

Jim Duncan said it best, prior to his departure as NCOA President, “I regard my fellow Knights and Ladies as peers within our order, each having reached this plateau only after climbing each rung of the ladder of achievement equally. Each step to Knighthood was carefully developed to ensure that only the most dedicated and conscientious Association members could qualify.” This is as true today as it was then.

This Handbook should only be used as a guide. If you have further questions, first look in the Rules of the Order or the Code of Ethics to find your answer. If your question was not answered there, contact the Chapter Knight Advisor, Grand Knight, Grand Knight Elect, any Past Grand Knight, Scribe, Exchequer, or other Knight in your area. These people should have an answer for your question or research your question to come up with an appropriate answer. Keep in mind that questions raised that may affect all Knights in general may be held over for the annual business meeting for resolution.

So, my fellow Knight, remember well your Oath and Code of Ethics. Be knowledgeable of the Rules of the Order. And the most important of all: Knighthood is a commitment and one that should not be entered into lightly.



Introduction

My fellow Knights,

If you are reading this, you are obviously a Knight or a Squire/Dame about to be Knighted. You should be extremely proud of yourself for your accomplishments that have afforded you this recognition, and I congratulate you. Becoming a Knight was one of the proudest days in my life, and I look back on it with fond memories. However, it is important to remember that this is only the beginning. You have been selected not only for what you have already accomplished, but for what we expect you to continue to do in the future. The NCOA can only survive with your efforts and leadership. Remember our motto “Strength in Unity” and preserve the Knights Creed.

Congratulations on your selection to the highest honor that can be bestowed on a member of NCOA. This handbook is designed to give a brief insight into the Knights of the Square Table. It is by no means the end, but it is just the beginning of a great and long-lasting adventure.

Grand Knight

Knight History

With any organization or association, a handbook cannot be complete or accurate without some type of history of how things got started and to show how they got to be where they are today. This is true within the Non Commissioned Officers Association and the Knights of the Square Table.

All histories have their origins in occurrences or events that in and of themselves do not resemble the historical activities of primary interest. So it is with the actual beginning of the Knights of the Square Table. As you read this, you will find how the “Rat Pack Chapter” was formed. Keep in mind that even though the Rat Pack is mentioned, it will be brought together with the Knights.

In 1964 Jim Duncan, still on active duty with the Air Force, attended the Worlds Fair in New York City. He met a young woman who placed a rat pin on his necktie as a remembrance of his experience at the event.

After his retirement, Jim Duncan, then Director of Development for NCOA, was searching for some type of recognition for people who made significant contributions to the growth of the association. He thought of the movie stars that had formed their own “Rat Packs” and the militaries “Desert Rats.” He then decided upon the formation of the “Rat Pack Chapter” with their symbol of membership being the rat pin from the Worlds Fair.

Word of The Rat Pack spread like wildfire throughout the association. So much so that it was necessary to enlarge the scope of membership. Acceptance of the challenge to recruit 100 new members in 90 days was greater than expected and new qualifiers were knocking on the door for admittance.

Lifetime Achievement Award

The Knights of the Square Table Lifetime Achievement Award shall be awarded by the Grand Knight in recognition of sustained support to the ideals and goals of the Knights of the Square Table. The following criteria applies for consideration:

- a) Must be a Knight in good standing (paid member of the KST) or had been a paid-up member at time of nomination/death.
- b) Nominee must have attained the highest level of Knighthood at time of nomination/death.
- c) The term “Lifetime” should be considered as “over a sustained period of numerous years”. The nomination must document specific examples of the nominee's commitment and contribution to the Knights of the Square Table.
- d) All nominations must be submitted to the Grand Knight. The Grand Knight may/may not appoint a special awards committee to review the nomination(s). Final approval/disapproval rests with the Grand Knight, who will communicate with those submitting the nomination(s). No more than one Lifetime Achievement Award will be presented each year.
- e) If approved, the Grand Knight, or suitable representative will present the Lifetime Achievement Award at the next Knights Assembly, or if unavailable, to their appropriate family member at a suitable place/time.

Proper Display of Shields

When displayed, the shields representing the levels of knighthood will be displayed in order of precedence with the highest level of knighthood, Grand Knight Shield, placed in the position of honor, shield's right, and the remaining shield displayed in order of precedence. To clarify, when viewed from the audience, the shields will be displayed from left to right in the following order: Grand Knight, Order of Excalibur, Order of the Sword, Knight of the Square Table, and Order of Crusader.

Proper Wear of Knight's Emblems

The Knight's Garter and Medallion shall ONLY be worn with formal wear, coat and tie or appropriate female attire. It shall be worn to officially scheduled NCOA functions. It may be worn at other functions where it would lend credibility to the Order and NCOA. Knight Shield insignia may not be worn with the Garter and Medallion, except for the Knight Crusader Shield, Knight Emeritus "E" pin, and the round Knights Crest lapel pin.

The Knight's Crest and/or appropriate Shields and insignias authorized by the Order may be worn with appropriate civilian attire at Chapter Meetings and NCOA hosted or sponsored social functions, when wearing the Garter and Medallion would be inappropriate. They may be worn as collar, lapel pins or tie tacks, when not wearing the Garter and medallion.

As a reminder, when wearing the Garter and Medallion, your Order Shield will not be worn. The Garter and Medallion signify which Order you are in, and both shall not be worn together. However, as stated above, the Knight Crusader Shield and Knight Emeritus "E" device shall be attached to the garter centered on the "V" point above the medallion. If wearing both, place the Emeritus "E" device below the Crusader Shield and center them both along the seam of the "V" point above the medallion.

The NCOA Conference **Business Meeting** and Knights' Assembly are officially scheduled functions and the proper wearing of the Garter and Medallion is encouraged. Never wear the Garter and Medallion or Knight's Crest/Shield at any event that could result in improper behavior or bring discredit to the NCOA and the Knights of the Square Table.

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By the early 1970's the Rat Pack was no longer the motivational inspiration to continued involvement in NCOA that it had been. It was as if members had hit the wall for recognition they deserved. Excitement was fading fast.

In early 1974 Jim Duncan, then NCOA President, and Mac McCaughey, Director of Public Relations, brainstormed and researched an idea for a new level of recognition. This new idea evolved around the theme of the knights, like those of the early days of yore. Since it was inappropriate to plagiarize the "Knights of the Round Table" it was decided that the "Knights of the Square Table" would be best to identify this new order of recognition.

Requirements for selection as a Knight include 10 steps a person must achieve. Qualifications included Rat Pack Membership and Life Membership. It seemed logical that the members would be in the best position to describe their accomplishments, it was agreed that the application must come from the person desiring Knighthood. Verification of data would be checked through NCOA Headquarters records. It was determined that honesty would be the governing criteria. Endorsement of other Knights came later, to add further strength to the petition. The selection committee is the final method to verify data.

And so, it was in June of 1974 at the Henry B. Gonzales Convention Center of the Performing Arts, the first 25 Knights of the Square Table were dubbed into the Association's highest honor.

By 1977 the growth of the association and the Knights necessitated further expansion of recognition. Thus, the addition of 2 levels of advancement within the Knights was enacted. That year the Order of the Sword was added and in 1980 the Order of Excalibur was created.

Though we started with 10 original steps, then changed to 8, and most recently to 6, the goal of Knighthood is attainable. We, the members of the Knights of the Square Table, salute the founders of our Order. This is their legacy for others to follow and attain the mantle of Knighthood, but we must be ever vigilant and watchful for other worthy members and help them to attain Knighthood as well.

Knighthood, Now What?

OK, now I am a Knight. What does a Knight do and what does Knighthood represent? These questions can be answered rather easily. As a Knight, you are a leader. Look around you and at the other Knights. All the other Knights are leaders, within the Association, their Chapters, or region.

Levels of Knighthood

Once you have been selected for Knighthood by the Council for Knighthood, you are a Squire/Dame. This is basically your probation period. Being dubbed as a knight/lady is a great honor; however, Level 1 is only the beginning. It is expected that each knight/lady would continue to provide service to advance the goals and prospects of the Non Commissioned Officers Association by seeking advancement in the Knights Order.

Level 1, Knight of the Square Table

Chevron maroon, centered on a field of gray; gold helmet centered below maroon chevron; gold five-point star centered in first quarter (top left side of shield). The maroon chevron represents the NCO's and Petty Officers of the U.S. Armed Forces; the gold five-point star represents the five branches of the U.S. Armed Forces that existed when the KST was originally formed; the Knight helmet, first level of Knighthood.

The garter is Red, White and Blue with a Gold Medallion. The White is for the first level of Knighthood, the blue (azure) for Order of the Sword, and Red (light gules) for Order of Excalibur.

Level 2, Knight of the Sword (Order of the Sword)

Knight's Battle swords crossed, points up, centered on four quarters: first and fourth quarters maroon and gray (NCOA colors), second and third quarters Blue (azure), the color of the Knight's garter worn around his/her neck. Gold battle swords on each side of garter, point up, sword at the fighting position to defend Knight's honor and NCOA, never points down – sign of surrender.

Level 3, Knights Excalibur (Order of Excalibur)

Knight's Excalibur battle sword, points up, center through King Arthur's Crown, centered on field of Red (light gules), the color of the Knight's garter worn around his/her neck. Pewter battle swords on each side of garter, point up.

Knight Crusader

Knight Crusader is not a level of Knighthood, it recognizes those gallant Knights who have served overseas or during a period of armed conflict in direct support of the theater of operations, on land, sea, air, or space. Knight's Crusader Cross is Red (light gules) centered on White field. The shield is symbolic of the Knight Crusaders who went abroad to fight for the Holy Land. The Crusader Shield is worn centered above the medallion on the garter. The Knight Crusader coat of arms is never worn by itself but may be worn with any other knight's level pin.

Knight Emeritus *s*

Knight Emeritus is also not a level of Knighthood, but an honor bestowed on a Knight after a long and fruitful service to NCOA and his/her fellow Knights of the Square Table. The Silver E shows that the Knight is regarded as a teacher and mentor and should be looked upon for leadership and guidance. The Knight Emeritus is still ever vigilant to the aims and goals of NCOA and at the ready to defend his/her honor and the Knights of the Square Table. The Knight Emeritus E is worn centered below the Crusader Shield above the medallion on the garter.

Grand Knight

Three gold Knight's helmets in profile proper, on a field of purple (royal purple). The three Knight's helmet shows the Knight has passed all levels of Knighthood and has been selected Grand Knight by the Knights' Assembly of the Knights of the Square Table. The garter is purple (royal purple) worn with a distinctive Grand Knight medallion. This is typically a one- or two-year term of office; however, the Grand Knight may hold this position longer if circumstances prevent the Grand Knight Elect from taking office. At the end of the term, the mantle of Grand Knight is passed to the Grand Knight Elect as he/she assumes the role of Grand Knight.

Past Grand Knight

As each Grand Knight relinquishes the mantel, he/she enters the honorable ranks of the Past Grand Knights. The past Grand Knight still wears the coat of arms displaying the three gold Knights helmets in the field of purple; however, the garter is a rainbow of colors worn with a Grand Knight medallion. The Past Grand Knights will wear the appropriate Garter & Medallion from that time forward. These knights are a strong resource to keep each new and future Knight aware of the rules and requirements of the order.