

ST. MARY THE VIRGIN

Sovereign Military Order of the Temple of Jerusalem

Read More About It:
Ranks and Promotion

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INTRODUCTION



Ranks and Promotions

An order of chivalry, order of knighthood, chivalric order, or equestrian order is an order of knights typically founded during or inspired by the original Catholic military orders of the Crusades (circa 1099–1291), paired with medieval concepts of ideals of chivalry.

Since the 15th century, orders of chivalry, often as dynastic orders, began to be created in a more courtly fashion that could be created *ad hoc*. These orders would often retain the notion of being a confraternity, society or other association of members, however, some of them were ultimately purely honorific, consisting of a medal decoration. In fact, these decorations themselves often came to be known informally as *orders*. These institutions in turn gave rise to the modern-day orders of merit of sovereign states.

This publications reviews the ranks within the Order, guidelines for promotions, and the SMOTJ awards system.

Ranks

Most multi-level European orders comprise five ranks or classes. The highest is usually called the Grand Cross, then descending with varying titles. Alternatively, the ranks are referred to by number (for example "1st class" instead of "Grand Cross").

Typical rankings are:

Class	Common Names
I	Grand Cross, Commander Grand Cross, Grand Cordon, Grand Collar
II	Grand Officer, Commander 1st Class, Grand Commander, Knight Commander, Knight Companion, Commander with Star
III	Commander, Commander 2nd Class, Companion
IV	Officer, Knight 1st Class, Member 1st Class
V	Knight, Knight 2nd Class, Chevalier, Member

The Order recognizes the usual European degrees of rank, using the French title *viz*: Grand Croix, Grand Officier, Commandeur, and Chevalier. However, there is no further differentiation in any rank associated of type of membership in the Order, such as "of Grace" or "of Justice" as occurs in foreign countries. In Europe, "of Justice" is reserved for persons of noble blood, "of Grace" for those of non-noble blood. The Order in the United States does not recognize these distinctions, which would be contrary to our American customs and established protocol.

In the Grand Priory of the United States, as in Europe, the Grand Prior is "*primus inter pares*" or first among equals who are members of the Order.

The Order uses the following designations. Each has a post-nominal used within the Order to designate rank.

<u>Rank</u>	<u>Knights & Dames</u>	<u>Chaplain Corps.</u>
Knight	KTJ	ACTJ
Dame	DTJ	ACTJ
Knight Commandeur	KCTJ	CTJ
Dame Commandeur	DCTJ	CTJ
Grand Officer (Knight/Dame)	GOTJ	SCTJ
Grand-Croix (Knight/Dame)	GCTJ	GCRTJ

Order of Merit

Companion (Knight/Dame)	OMTJ	OMTJ
Commander (Knight/Dame)	CMTJ	CMTJ
Grand Commander (Knight/Dame)	GCTJ	GCTJ
Grand Cordon (Knight/Dame)	GCMTJ	GCMTJ

Promotions

In the Sovereign Military Order of the Temple of Jerusalem, promotion of member Knights and Dames is the principal means of recognizing major accomplishments and effort expended on behalf of the Order. Because of the important role promotion can play in rewarding good work and stimulating further exemplary efforts, it is imperative that the process by which promotions are accomplished is well understood and scrupulously observed.

To determine whether promotion or one of those special awards is more appropriate for given actions, the member's performance must be judged against his/her sustained performance in the current rank over the requisite period of time noted below. Time-in-grade requirements are considered to be minimums. However, promotion is not automatic and should not be recommended based solely on the length of time in a current rank.

In order to be eligible for promotion to a higher rank, the person being considered for promotion must be a member in active status, with his/her oblations paid in full for the current year to both the Grand Priory and the Priory or Commandery in which he/she has primary membership. Each Knight or Dame nominated for promotion **must** meet minimum time in grade standards to be considered for elevation to the next rank.



For promotion to the rank of Knight or Dame Commandeur, the Knight/Dame being recommended must have been proactive for the good of the Order in positive, recognizable ways.

For promotion to the rank of (Knight or Dame) Grand Officier, the accomplishments on behalf of the Order must be significant and involve considerable effort over an extended period of time.



Grand Croix is the Order's highest rank. It is rarely awarded. Promotion to this rank is to be reserved for those individuals who have made an extraordinarily effective and sustained effort involving many tasks that the individual has accomplished in service to the Sovereign Military Order of the Temple of Jerusalem, including support of its activities with OSMTJ and other noteworthy activities in which the Order is directly engaged.

For promotions below the grade of GCTJ, time in grade requirements may be modestly deviated from when a member's eligibility date falls shortly after the date of that member's home Priory Convent in the same seasonal Convent cycle. The Grand Chancellor is provided with this discretionary authority and will work closely with the Grand Registrar in assessing such waivers. Conversely, **for promotion and elevation to the dignity of Grand Croix, the minimum time in grade must be met not later than 31 December** of the year preceding said member's selection for promotion. The time in grade requirements are:

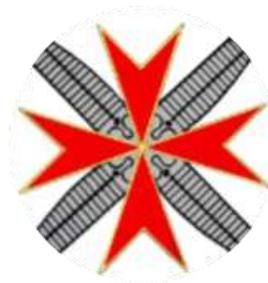
- Knight/Dame Commandeur: minimum of two years in service in the rank of Knight (KTJ) or Dame (DTJ).
- Grand Officier (GOTJ): minimum of three years in service in the rank of Knight Commandeur or Dame Commandeur (KCTJ/DCTJ).
- Grand Croix (GCTJ): minimum of four years in service in the rank of Grand Officier (GOTJ).

Other Orders of Merit

The Order of Merit within the Sovereign Military Order of the Temple of Jerusalem is patterned after the various Orders of Merit that have existed throughout the centuries. The Commonwealth order of merit recognizes distinguished service in the armed forces, science, art, literature, or for the promotion of culture. The first mention of a possible Order of Merit was made following the Battle of Trafalgar in 1805, in correspondence between First Lord of the Admiralty Lord Barham and William Pitt, though nothing came of the idea. Later, it was thought by Queen Victoria, her courtiers, and politicians alike, that a new order, based on the Prussian order *Pour le Mérite*, would make up for the insufficient recognition offered by the established honors system to achievement outside of public service, in fields such as art, music, literature, industry, and science. Victoria's son, King Edward VII, eventually founded the Order of Merit on 26 June 1902. From its inception, the order has been open to women, Florence Nightingale being the first woman to receive the honor, in 1907. Several individuals have refused admission into the Order of Merit, including Rudyard Kipling, A. E. Housman, and George Bernard Shaw. To date, Prince Philip, Duke of Edinburgh, remains the youngest person ever inducted into the Order of Merit, having been admitted by Queen Elizabeth II in 1968, when he was 47 years of age.

Order of Merit

The Order of Merit of the Grand Priory of the United States of the Sovereign Military Order of the Temple of Jerusalem was created as a method to award distinguished persons and to recognize their service in support of the goals of the Grand Priory of the United States of the Sovereign Military Order of the Temple of Jerusalem. Recipients neither need to be members of the Sovereign Military Order of the Temple of Jerusalem nor Christians.



The Order of Merit is specifically limited to outstanding members of our Order as well as others whose contributions and endeavors for our Order, or to society in general, merit such a distinction and should include support of the specific goals as noted in the Obligations of Membership above. This is not a promotional step. Membership requires such outstanding stature and accomplishments as to set this person apart from all others.

There are in essence two categories of membership in the Order of Merit: Knight or Dame of the SMOTJ, and persons who are not members of the SMOTJ (known, for the most part, as a Companion of the Sovereign Military Order of the Temple of Jerusalem).

Each member of the Order of Merit becomes a member of the Titular Priory of Nieuw Amsterdam. Those members of the Order of Merit who are also members of the SMOTJ remain Principal Members of their regular Priory, with the exception of the Prior of the Titular Priory of Nieuw Amsterdam. That individual becomes a principal member of Titular Priory of Nieuw Amsterdam and an Associate Member of his or her regular Priory.

Memberships are divided into four ranks.

Companion (OMTJ)

To be appointed a Companion, a person has a genuine interest in the Sovereign Military Order of the Temple of Jerusalem, its principles and goals, be of good moral character and active in community life, must not be a member of SMOTJ, Inc., and not be otherwise eligible for membership in SMOTJ.

That person also has met a broader prerequisite for membership at any rank in the Order of Merit. He or she has distinguished himself or herself by making considerable personal or monetary contributions to helping the principal causes of the Order of Merit, which are:

- To assure access to the Holy Land to all persons, without regard to color, creed, gender, or national origin;
- To assure safe access to Christians, Jews, and Moslems who seek to travel there on pilgrimages;
- To work to establish peace, stability, and prosperity in that area, to be enjoyed by all persons without limitation. In general, these goals may be characterized as “keeping the road to Jerusalem open.”

Commander (CMTJ)

To be appointed as Commander, a person has similarly contributed to Holy Land-related efforts and served the Order with outstanding distinction for a substantial period of time in a position of considerable responsibility (e.g., within the Grand Priory as the Prior of an active and functioning Priory or as a key Grand Officer). Further accomplishments that might be considered favorably in determining selection to this rank include exemplary performance outside the Order as a General or Flag Officer; as a high ranking government or religious official of the U.S.A.; or of a friendly foreign power (e.g., Lieutenant Governor of a state; diplomatic representative of the U.S.A. or foreign friendly country; Bishop, Rabbi or Imam); performance of an outstanding act of moral heroism; or performance resulting in an outstanding award (e.g., Olympic medal winner, holder of the Distinguished Service Cross, Navy Cross, etc.).

Grand Commander (GMTJ)

To be appointed as Grand Commander, a person has performed extraordinary service on behalf of the Order, either as a member or a non-member, and have the qualifications of a Commander, but to a higher degree or level (e.g., assignment as a current Cabinet officer or Ambassador; as a Governor of a state or friendly foreign country; be a winner of the highest available national or international awards; or be an Archbishop or of similar religious rank).

Grand Cordon (GCMTJ)

To be appointed a Grand Cordon, a person has the qualifications of a Grand Commander, but to the highest degree. The rank of Grand Cordon is reserved primarily for heads of state who facilitate the Order's goal of keeping the roads to Jerusalem open and safe; or for "fonts of honor" whose similar benefit to the Order is virtually immeasurable.

Membership in the Order of Merit is for life, except for resignation or in the unlikely event the member is convicted of a crime involving moral turpitude or follows a course of action detrimental to the Order of Merit or the SMOTJ, in which case a Court of Honor, convened by the Grand Prior of the United States, may remove said member from the Order of Merit.



The administrative structure of the Order of Merit is the Titular Priory of Nieuw Amsterdam (named after the Dutch settlement on Manhattan Island). The Grand Master of the Order of Merit (The Grand Prior of the Autonomous Grand Priory of the United States) shall appoint the Prior of the Titular Priory of Nieuw Amsterdam. This position is for life. The Prior of the Titular Priory of Nieuw Amsterdam, in consultation with the Grand Master, may appoint an Order of Merit Board, a Chancellor, a Secretary, a Councillor, and a Chaplain who will serve on that Board. Any Prior Emeritus of the Titular Priory will also serve on that Board. These Officers serve at the pleasure of the Prior.

Approval of Promotion Recommendations

Only the Grand Prior or the designated Officiant may promote members to a higher rank. The Grand Prior's designated Officiant will not promote any individual whose promotion was not approved in advance.

The **Grand Chancellor** will approve or disapprove the recommendation for promotion to the ranks of Knight or Dame Commandeur and Grand Officier.

On rare occasions, the Grand Prior may deem it appropriate to promote a Knight or Dame to the rank of Commandeur or Grand Officier in his presence. No other form of unauthorized "spot promotion" is permitted under our Grand Statutes. The Prior or Commander, at whose investiture this type of promotion occurs, is responsible for documenting any such spot promotion.

Approval of promotion to the rank of Grand Croix is more complex. the Grand Chancellor will review the submitted nominations and forward his/her inputs to the Grand Croix Review Board. The Grand Croix Review Board, appointed by the Grand Prior, will consist of a minimum of five distinguished Knights or Dames. All members of the Review Board must hold the Templar rank of Grand Croix. At least one member of the Board must be a Dame. The Grand Croix Review Board will normally convene annually every January to review nomination packages submitted by the preceding December 31st.

The Grand Prior will consider the recommendations of the Grand Croix Review Board and make the final determination as to which nominees will be approved for elevation to the dignity of Grand Croix. Nominees for Grand Croix Religious (GCRTJ) will be reviewed by the Board and approved by the Grand Prior. The Grand Prior's final decisions will be announced with an email sent to all members of the Grand Council and all Priors and Commanders. This email will announce only those approved for elevation and will make no mention of those considered but not selected. All Board proceedings, final selection decision-making, and other aspects of the GCTJ selection process will be kept in the strictest confidence.

In general, promotion to the dignity of Grand Croix will normally only be performed by the Grand Prior, preferably at a Grand Convent.

Recommendations for membership in the Order of Merit may only be initiated by members of the Grand Council of the Autonomous Grand Priory of the United States of America. In general, the process is:

- The sponsor initiates a recommendation
- The sponsor's Prior receives the recommendation, evaluates it, and forwards it to the Deputy Grand Prior
- The Deputy Grand Prior reviews and comments on the Prior's forwarded recommendation, forwarding it to the Grand Registrar
- The Grand Registrar accepts the package and forwards it to the officers of the Titular Priory of Nieuw Amsterdam, who conduct an internal Order of Merit Awards Board review of nominations for the Prior of the Titular Priory
- The Prior of the Titular Priory is the approval authority for acceptance and determination of rank; he notifies the Grand Prior of his decision, confers with the Grand Prior about an installation venue, and notifies appropriate Grand Officers in the SMO'IJ chain of command once all that is accomplished.
- All parties in this chain of approval are to maintain secrecy while the process is underway. The name of the potential candidate and the status of the approval process are not to be revealed to anyone outside of the process

Awards

The second method of recognition by the Order are awards. As with promotions, it is the prerogative and responsibility of the Prior to formally recommend a member for promotion and transmit the recommendation to promote to the Grand Chancellor. The Prior must develop and endorse a written recommendation citing the reasons for recommending a particular member for promotion.

The Grand Priory of the United States awards – in order of precedence (from highest to lower) – are grouped into the following categories:



Cross of Valor. This extremely rare award is presented to any member of good standing in the Grand Priory of the United States who distinguished him/herself by extraordinary heroism. The performance must have involved personal hazard or danger and the voluntary risk of one's own life. Final approval for this award is reserved for the Grand Prior.

Meritorious Awards. These awards are presented to members of the Grand Priory of the United States to recognize unique and sustained service to the Order. These awards include the Distinguished Service Award, Legion of Merit, Meritorious Service Medal, Commendation Medal and Achievement Medal. A gold star is worn on an existing medal in lieu of a second or other subsequent award of the Legion of Merit, Meritorious Service, Commendation or Achievement Medal.



Distinguished Service



Legion of Merit



Meritorious Service



Commendation



Achievement

Longevity Awards. Long and Faithful Service awards are presented to recognize long and faithful service to the Order. The awards include the Gold medal with Gold star (25 years), the Gold medal (20 years), the Silver medal (10 years) and the Bronze medal (5 years).



Longevity Awards: Gold (20), Silver (10), Bronze (5)

Other Medals

Pilgrim Medals

The Pilgrim Medal Program was established as a charitable project to assist with the preservation of the Holy Places in Jerusalem and promote the pious practice of pilgrimage. Three distinguished medal sets have been created to recognize members of the GPUSA, members of OSMTH, and Friends of the Order who actively support these principles and who have fulfilled the requirements outlined below. For procedures see Awards Section of App. G. of the *Manual of the Order*.



Palmer Medal



Pilgrim Medal



Templar Medal



High School University
Scholarship Medals

Palmer's Medal (gold)

The Palmer's Medal is awarded to applicants who make a pilgrimage to the Holy Land and who contemplate, either by participating in a religious service or by solitary reflection their spiritual heritage in six major sites in the Holy Land.

Pilgrim's Medal (silver)

The Pilgrim's Medal is awarded to applicants who make a pilgrimage to a major Christian holy place in Europe or the Middle East that is recognized as a pilgrimage site during the time of the Templars and who contemplate, either by participating in a religious service or by solitary reflection, their spiritual heritage.

Templar Medal (bronze)

The Templar Medal is awarded to applicants who make a pilgrimage to recognized Templar sites in Europe or the Middle East and who contemplate, either by participating in a religious service or by solitary reflection, their spiritual heritage. The only requirement is that the individual has contemplated their spiritual heritage at that site.

Scholarship Medals

Scholarship Medals are awarded to applicants who sponsor a high school or university student through SMOTJ/GPUSAs scholarship program. In keeping with the Order's ecumenical tradition, scholarships are provided at various church supported high schools and universities rather than just a single school. Pories, Commanderies, and individuals may elect to sponsor a student either by name or anonymously. Scholarships are usually multi-year so that the educational endeavors of the student can be maintained rather than having to deal with the uncertainty of year-to-year funding.

Priory Medals

Priory Medals are authorized and designed to recognize service to a Priory of the GPUSA. St. Mary the Virgin presents the St. Mary the Virgin Award to any member of the Order or non-member who has distinguished themselves by emulating the chivalric and charity traditions of the original Templars; applying themselves energetically and selflessly to Christian charitable endeavors.

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