

First International Outing for Grand Master's Bodyguard Makes History for Great Priory of Germany



The weekend of the 23rd November will live the minds of many hardened Templar Knights as warm and happy memories. With Athens the location and the Great Priory of Greece the host, all was set for something special. We were not to be disappointed. Visitors came from overseas Great Priories

that included France, Bulgaria, Netherlands, Switzerland and Germany.

Led by the Grand Master of the Great Priory of Germany (GPvD) ME Kt Roddy MacKenzie GCT, his contingent included his Grand Chancellor (RE Kt Lt



Col (Retd) Ian Harper KCT GMA, Grand Secretary, RE Kt Norbert Schoen KCT GMA and Deputy Grand Secretary Mark Stanley. However, for the first in the history of the Great Priory of Germany, the Grand Master was accompanied by a full complement of his Bodyguard with both the Commander (E Kt Scott Hunter) and his Deputy (E Kt Kevin Mouzon-Wilson) as part of the international delegation. Of note, the Bodyguard, in its current form, was only recently raised and personally appointed by ME Kt Roddy MacKenzie GCT at a special ceremony in Herford in July. However, what is not obvious is this

Bodyguard also has a similar and long standing role as the Provincial Prior's Bodyguard for Northumberland. Planning for the trip to Greece started shortly after the investiture of the Bodyguard being affectionately known as Operation Athena. Hotels and flights were booked before the end of July, four months ahead of the Great Priory Officers, such was the level of commitment. Arriving early in Athens, members of the GM's Bodyguard, along with wives, had time for some sight seeing and savouring Greek hospitality and cuisine.

On the big day, the flurry of activity started to build with robing rooms prepared, seating plans posted and the registration desk manned. Permissions sought and given, the GPvD GM's Bodyguard assembled in two ranks outside the Temple door and step off for the first of several



Right (From left to right): Rear rank, E. Kts Tony Hunter, Guy Smith, Paul Baker, Paul Johnson, Craig Lilley. Front rank, E,Kts Paul McKay, Kevin Mouzon-Wilson, Scott Hunter.

rehearsals. Being happy with our drill, the Greek Grand Marshall was then invited to review our procedure so as to content himself and “sign-off” our precession. Whilst his words may have been modest, his broad smile painted a very different picture of positive approval.



With the moment of truth fast approaching, all members of every visiting delegation were robbed in their finery waiting to enter and be received and welcomed by their Greek brother Knights. All assembled in line, and finally, the most senior of the visiting international delegations, it was Germany’s turn to be received.

Left: Front centre, the Grand Master, ME Kt Roddy MacKenzie GCT, flanked by his Commander, Deputy and immaculately turned out Body Guard.

Stepping off under an Arch-of-Steel, the contingent marched in to the Temple, wheeled right then as a unit halted. Following a pause, the Grand Chancellor’s party moved in to position and on orders, as one, all turned inwards. Following a further pause, with batons raised and heads bowed in reverence, in hushed silence, ME Kt Roddy, majestically approached

the East to be warmly welcomed with the hand of fellowship by ME & Rev Andreas Spyropoulos GCT. Pleasantries completed and observed, the German contingent, in unison, turned to the East, and as one bowed acknowledging the authority and Office of the Grand Master of Greece, who reverently returned the compliment.

With the meeting coming to an end, the Grand Master of Greece welcomed and addressed all visiting delegations in impressively and fluent English as well as French. Such is the depth of friendship between Grand Masters, that Grand Master Andreas personally invited and invested the Grand Masters of the Netherlands, France and Germany to be the country representatives to Greece, a great distinction and honour seldom conferred.

In order of seniority all delegations were then thanked and each presented a gift to the Grand Master. The final thank you for visiting being made to the Grand Master of Germany who in turn spoke of the warmth and depth of the long standing relationship to then call his ADCs forward to present a gift of two large painted figures, one a Templar Knight, the other, a Hospitaller. The joy on the face of ME Kt Andreas spoke volumes confirming the choice of gift was totally on point.



Above: Great Priory of Germany delegation with wives and Grand Master (Netherlands) at the Gala dinner.

Too soon, the meeting came to an end and in due form the meeting was closed and senior delegates retired in order of seniority. Adjourning to the robing room, the Great Priory of Germany's contingent was asked to assemble to be addressed by ME Kt Roddy, who with great pride and happiness said "Thank you for being here today and supporting me. What you did in the Temple was brilliant. The standard of your drill and how you performed has propelled you on to the International stage within Knights Templar. Today you have made history. The unsolicited applause from the Knights assembled tells you all you need to know as to how well you are regarded and respected".

Commenting in amazement, two other Grand Masters, ME Kt Frank Poot, Grand Master of the Great Priory of the Netherlands said, "Not only do they all look the same, they even have the same style of shoes". The Grand Master of Greece, ME & Rev Andreas Spyropoulos GCT, with a smile said to the one of the delegates from Germany, "You do know that you will now have to come back next year to do the same".

Shortly after the meeting wives and partners started to assemble to attend the gala dinner where all delegates whiled away the evening with good food, wine and outstanding company. Perhaps the comment by one of the Guard best sums the meeting up, "I never thought I would be doing this, this has just been totally amazing, I can't believe how much fun this has been, I can't wait for the next meeting".



Above (Picture by courtesy of Scott Hunter): The Temple of Athena on the Acropolis. The pillars being the original work reflecting the Corinthian and Doric!