



# The Ashlar



May 2021

**Kempsville Lodge No. 196, A.F.&A.M.**  
**[www.kempsvillelodge.org](http://www.kempsvillelodge.org)**

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## The History of the Poppy



The poppy as the memorial flower for the American war dead is a tradition which began in the years following the first World War. Veterans returning to their homes in this country remembered the wild poppies which lined the devastated battlefields of France and Flanders, and the soldiers of all nations came to look upon the flowers as a living symbol of their dead comrades' sacrifice. A Canadian officer, Colonel John McCrae who was killed during the war, immortalized the flowers in his famous poem, "In Flanders' Field." Its opening lines are familiar to

millions of people around the world. The poppy has a Masonic significance and history as well from the 2nd World War.

Adolph Hitler considered Freemasonry a threat, as he did any group that "mistakenly" taught that all men were equal and encouraged independent thought. When Hitler rose to power, he set out to destroy his perceived enemies--the Freemasons high on his list. The ten Grand Lodges of Germany were dissolved, and many prominent members of the fraternity were sent to concentration camps as political prisoners. Freemasons were targeted by the Gestapo--membership lists of the Grand Lodges were seized and Masons had their libraries and collections of Masonic objects looted by the Gestapo. Many of these objects seized were exhibited in an "Anti-Masonic Exposition" inaugurated in 1937 by Herr Dr. Joseph Goebbels in Munich.

The same thing happened in Austria when the country was captured by the Nazis. The Masters of the various Vienna lodges were remanded to some of the most notorious concentration camps, including the Dachau in Bavaria. Then it happened in Czechoslovakia, then Poland . . . Holland . . . Belgium . . . Norway . . . In Spain, General Franco in 1940, sentenced all Freemasons to ten years in prison as soon as they were identified as members of the craft. When France fell to the Nazi's, the Vichy government caused the two Masonic bodies of France--the Grand Orient and the Grand Lodge of France--to be dissolved, and all their property was sold at auction to fuel the Nazi war machine. As early as 1934, Freemasons in Germany knew they were suddenly at tremendous risk--many went underground. They left their traditional symbols, like the square and compass, and adopted one in its place the Nazi's wouldn't recognize--a small blue flower called a Forget-Me-Not. It was common at the time--a pin given to those that had given to a charity (much like the orange poppies given out today by the American Legion Auxiliary). But that flower came to mean much more to underground Masons in Germany at that time. By this flower, and perhaps a handshake, Freemasons were able to identify each other in public, and in concentration camps. It was worn by Freemasons who stubbornly refused to allow the light of Freemasonry to be extinguished by the Nazis, and by that symbol, Freemasonry emerged again from the semi-darkness of World War II to thrive again.

The number of Freemasons who were killed by the Nazi's is not precisely known, but it is estimated that between 80,000 and 200,000 Freemasons were murdered by the Nazis. Many Freemasons throughout the world still wear the small blue flower pin, in memory of those Brothers who died at the hands of the Germans.

Those tiny pins are still widely available--now that you know what it means, maybe you should get one in remembrance of a time when your "hobby" might very well have cost you your life. It was not so much a hobby with those in Europe during World War II--it was something worth preserving, even at the risk of their own lives.

## From The East



As a veteran; and many of our members are, May is a special month for us to reflect on our service to our Nation and our fellow man. Especially those who have given the ultimate sacrifice. Take a moment and reflect on all the blessings we enjoy.

The flowers are blooming, spring is in the air (to include pollen), and optimism springs eternal during this time.

It is with great pleasure, I am able to announce that we are opening back up to a bit of normalcy. The State of Virginia is relaxing COVID restrictions and likewise the Grand Lodge is following suit. We are allowed to open the Lodge for Stated meetings, degree work, and fellowship once again.

There are still some constraints. Up to 50 people, social distancing, mask wearing, COVID screening, and cleaning requirements are a few of the necessities. Unfortunately, we are still restricted regarding food service. We look forward to this constraint being lifted as well.

In anticipation of the pandemic moving behind us, your Lodge is making plans to return to full operations. We are planning a Past Masters' Night and preparing for our annual Bull Roast. We have candidates in line for catechisms and degree work. And Saturday morning coffee fellowship is happening. Watch our website calendar and follow us on Facebook for the latest updates and schedules. We look forward to seeing you back in Lodge and visiting again.

Your Lodge continues to do all we can to remain active and offer the membership opportunities to engage. You will see later in this letter some of the more recent activities your Lodge has ongoing.

Brother Mike Denning  
Worshipful Master

## From The West



One of the most symbolic teachings in Freemasonry comes in the metaphorical rhetoric of the ashlar. We are taught that, at the beginning of our Masonic journeys, our minds are akin to stones taken directly from a figurative quarry. These stones are then conveyed through Masonic education facilitated by the Supreme Architect of the Universe, who serves as a spiritual mentor, metaphorically a "builder," until, upon the

completion of our apprenticeship and tenure, our minds have been forged singularly into smooth stones or ashlars- cumulatively into a building composed of the minds of our fallen Brothers.

As a Mason's Masonic education progresses, he is invested with the speculative working tools of the Craft. These tools are prefaced by their antiquated roles in operative Masonry, before their more noble and glorious purposes are revealed to us. By the time we become Master Masons, we are made fully aware through Masonic Light that our working tools are not only the accouterments of tradesmen from earlier times, but tangible, centuries-old analogies imperative in the preservation of peace of mind.

As the central theme or slogan of our Fraternity suggests, we pride ourselves in "taking good men and making them better." The indefatigable beauty of this slogan is identified through its implications- we do not seek to take good men and make them perfect, we only strive to improve them. As such, any Mason who aspires to become the perfect ashlar is endeavoring away from the purpose. In our ancient comparison, harmony among Brothers serves as the sacred mortar between the ashlars that are our minds, thereby joining us, and concealing all vices and superfluities unable to be removed through our Masonic educations.

The result is a common mass or building, comprised of ashlars cut from what were once rough stones, and bound by the precious bond that only we as Masons truly comprehend. Our minds, although they will never be entirely perfect, have been positively influenced, shaped, and finished into an ashlar as close to perfect as is feasible. Only when our Masonic education has concluded, and we pass on to the Celestial Lodge above, will our minds become perfect ashlars- set in the harmony-enriched, tempered mortars of the Brothers who build there, in that spiritual building, that house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens.

Brother John Settle, Senior Warden

## From The South



As I am studying for my Warden's Certificate, I have been giving some serious thought about the theme for my year in the East. Last year I gave a lecture on the cable tow that struck home in my soul. The fact that a cable tow has two ends, means one for the candidate and

one for the lodge, normally through the Coach/Mentor.

All Master Masons are mentors! If a candidate comes to you and says, "May I ask you a question?" are you going to say No or go call 411? Or will you give your best Masonic effort to help a brother, and whisper good counsel in his ear?

So, the theme for my year will be "Bind Anew"! Remembering that you have a responsibility to YOUR lodge to help bring a candidate along and make a good man better through masonic example and leadership. Get involved! Do you fondly remember your Coach/Mentor? Learn to coach a catechism. There are many people available to help you become a coach. I fear the day when we must tell a candidate that I am sorry, we have nobody to coach you right now, you will have to wait.

Brother Pat Blankenship, Junior Warden

### Masonic Birthdays for May

- |                             |                             |
|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|
| Christopher Anders, Jr. '11 | Leslie H. Miller '72        |
| Brandon R. Angel '07        | Steve T. Miller '71         |
| George R. Bunch, Sr. '82    | Larry Montgomery, Jr. '97   |
| Kevin T. Cotter '11         | Stanley D. Moss '96         |
| Wayne C. DeFord '93         | Daniel F. Oliver '14        |
| Frank Filippone '15         | John H. Phillips '18        |
| James O. Freeman '74        | Gregory K. Pruitt '02       |
| J. Timothy Freihofer '15    | Christopher Robertson '13   |
| Billy F. Gordon, Jr. '03    | Joseph T. Salt '62          |
| Herbert T. Gordon '86       | Jimmy B. Shehan '97         |
| Adam Hernandez '07          | Larry L. Strait, Jr. '12    |
| John M. Hewitt '02          | Russell P. Tjepkema '85     |
| Monte P. Howell '70         | William T. Whitmore '73     |
| Ross O. McLeod '06          | William O. Wyndham, Jr. '83 |
| Joseph W. Miechle '09       |                             |

The Brethren shown above have a total of 723 years in Masonry!

### Lodge Activity



Brother Mike Blankenship executed another successful Blood Drive at Kempsville. One of our own, Brother Keith Ingraham, donating to the worthy cause.

We conducted our first degree work in almost a year in April, an Entered Apprentice Degree initiating Brother Leandro Filipe de Mello Herculano. A bit rusty but we initiated a new Brother none the less.



Worshipful Monte Howell receiving his 50 year Masonic Veteran's Award during the April Stated.



As many of you may know, we continue our Sunday Zoom meeting with our Brethren from Somerset, England. We have even had one of the Brothers stay up late in England and join us during our Zoom portion of Stated Communication. If you haven't joined during these sessions, I encourage you to do so.



