



# The Ashlar



February 2019

**Kempsville Lodge No. 196, A.F.&A.M.**  
**www.kempsvillelodge.org**

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I recently ran across this very interesting story. At first, I thought it was folklore but it is completely true and read like the screenplay for a Hollywood movie. Although not specifically Masonic, it reflects the tenants of institution and the humanity that I hope lies within all good Masons.

## **The Four Chaplains**



The SS Dorchester, a US civilian troopship as part of a convoy of three other ships (SG-19 convoy), left New York on January 23, 1943, in route to Greenland, carrying approximately 900 military passengers including four chaplains. Most of the military personnel were not told of the ship's ultimate destination but were aware of the dangers they faced at sea. The convoy was escorted by Coast Guard Cutters Tampa, Escanaba, and Comanche.

The ship's captain, Hans J. Danielsen, had been alerted earlier in the day that US Coast Guard sonar had detected a submarine in the vicinity. Captain Danielsen knew that German U-boats were monitoring sea lanes and had damaged and sunk ships in this vicinity earlier in the war. He placed the crew on high alert even before he received that information, he ordering the men to sleep in their clothing and keep their life jackets on.

"Many soldiers sleeping deep in the ship's hold

disregarded the order because of the engine's heat. Others ignored it because the life jackets were uncomfortable."

During the early morning hours of February 3, 1943, a German submarine, U-223 approached the convoy and fired a salvo of three torpedoes. One struck Dorchester. That hit was decisive—and deadly—striking the starboard side, amid ship, far below the water line. The torpedo knocked out Dorchester's electrical systems, leaving the ship dark. Panic set in among the men on board, many of them trapped below decks. Captain Danielsen, alerted the passengers that Dorchester was taking on water rapidly and sinking, he gave the order to abandon ship. In less than 20 minutes, Dorchester would slip beneath the Atlantic's icy waters.

The four chaplains sought to calm the men and organize an orderly evacuation of the ship, and helped guide wounded men to safety. As life jackets were passed out to the men, the supply ran out. The chaplains removed their own life jackets and gave them to others. They helped as many men as they could into lifeboats, and then linked arms and, saying prayers and singing hymns, went down with the ship.

Grady Clark, a survivor of the attack recounted, "As I swam away from the ship, I looked back. The flares had lighted everything. The bow came up high and then she slid under. The last thing I saw, the Four Chaplains were up there praying for the safety of the men. They had done everything they could. I did not see them again. They themselves did not have a chance without their life jackets."

According to some reports, survivors could hear different languages mixed in the prayers of the chaplains, including Jewish prayers in Hebrew and Catholic prayers in Latin. Only 230 of the 904 men

*(continued on page 3)*

## From The East



Our Lodge is off to a fantastic start. So far in 2019 we have seen one of the most well attended stated communications in recent memory. I have heard that "a stated meeting hasn't seen that kind of attendance since the '80s." I'm not sure how big of fish tale that is but proud of the reception all the same. I can attribute the attendance to a few notable events, the food, fellowship and the important nature of business.

The Stewards and company put together a fabulous meal of German fare that was very well received. I applaud the Stewards and all the helpers for putting so much work into the meal. The Brethren of this lodge can rest assured that this meal was not a fluke. I am certain there will be many more exceptional dinners throughout the year.

With over 90 Brethren in attendance, one couldn't help but feel welcomed and the warmth of friendship in the lodge. Some of that might be due to the visitors from Botetourt Lodge No.7, Gloucester, VA and Brethren attending to extend congratulations to Broother Hank Foiles, who received his 60 Year Masonic Pin. I am honored and proud to call Hank a Brother and a friend as so many of us are.

We also had to take care of some business during the meeting, most notably electing a District Deputy Grand Master candidate and alternate for the 2021 Masonic Year. I am proud to say that Worshipful Robert Wesley Stanek was elected as the primary and Worshipful Michael Duane Johnstone was elected as the alternate candidates to be appointed by the Grand Master during the 2020 session of the Grand Annual Communication.

We have also started the year off busy with degree work. We initiated two new Entered Apprentices and are in the process of validating another candidate before election at the February stated meeting. We have also supported the Brethren, Worshipful Masters' and the District Deputy Grand Master, Matthew Morse Hood, by attending the two DDGM official visits and all stated meetings in the district.

Brethren, I would like to end with this very important thought; Masonry is Universal. It unites men of every country, sect and opinion. It doesn't regard the external but the internal qualifications of the man. The door of Masonry is opened to those who ask, seek and knock, regardless of their appearance, profession, wealth or religion. As

Masons we are obligated to uphold these and other tenants and not soil the fabric or the fraternity with hate, bigotry or ignorance.

Brother Roger Taylor, Worshipful Master

## From The West



It is hard to believe that the first month of the Masonic year is already behind us! Kempsville is off to a great start, including a packed house at our January Stated meeting, a number of well-attended visits to other Lodges, and two candidates initiated to the degree of Entered Apprentice. We have already captured the District travelling gavel twice, a trend we hope to keep up throughout the year.

I would like to personally thank all of the brothers and their families who responded to my request at the December Stated to send Christmas cards to the granddaughter of one of our brothers who resides at the Saint Mary's Home for Children. This young lady received over 30 cards as well as some gifts from Lodge members. Needless to say, she was as excited as she could be that she was in all of our thoughts over the holidays and she proudly showed off her cards to all of the residents and staff at the home. This is the true spirit of both Christmas and Masonry!

Brother Dave Trzeciakiewicz, Senior Warden

## From The South



It is hard to believe our first month has come and gone. How time flies when you are having fun; and fun we are having at Kempsville.

Kempsville Lodge has been well represented throughout the District at every Lodge's first Stated as well as the first two DDGM visits in the District. Our presence has been noticed by capturing the traveling gavel twice already this year. Saturday morning fellowship is also exceeding expectations. We have had up to 25 Brothers on Saturday morning enjoying fellowship, coffee, doughnuts, cookies, other treats, and of course a wild story or two. We will have had our first monthly Saturday breakfast by the time this is published and if it is anything like last year will be a huge success with a packed house.

Our degree work continues unabated. We have initiated two Entered Apprentice's so far and expect a third in February. A fourth Entered

Apprentice is planned in March. Our degree work and ritual is rock solid. (Although I still need a lot of work.) You can see we will remain busy as usual. If you are interested in participating during degree work, just let me know and we will get you prepped to fill a role. Or just stop by the Lodge on a Monday night at 6:30PM for practice. Practices are always good for a tease and joke. You will definitely leave with a smile.

Kempsville Lodge has the enviable recognition of abundant participation and enthusiasm in all we do. I believe this is due to the Brothers in our Lodge and the Lodge's personality. Our Lodge is full of good food, good fellowship, good fun, and ample opportunity. It is all of these things together that make Kempsville successful and I am proud and honored to be a part of this Brotherhood; especially Kempsville Lodge No. 196.

Brother Mike Denning, Junior Warden

## Trestleboard

February 6 ..... DDGM Official Visit to Princess Anne Lodge No. 25  
 February 7 ..... DDGM Official Visit to Bayside Lodge No. 218  
 February 12 ..... Stated Communication DDGM Official Visit Dinner 6PM, Lodge 7PM  
 February 18 ..... District Blood Drive Lynnhaven Lodge No. 220, 2-7PM  
 February 19 ..... Entered Apprentice Degree, 7PM  
 February 23 .... Monthly Lodge Breakfast, 8-10AM  
 March 1 ..... Division Leadership Conference Granby Street Temple, 5-8PM  
 March 5 ..... DDGM Official Visit to Willis V. Fentress Lodge No. 296  
 March 12 ..... Stated Communication Dinner 6PM, Lodge 7PM

For the latest, up-to-date schedule, check our web site at [www.kempsvill lodge.org](http://www.kempsvill lodge.org).

## The Four Chaplains *(cont'd from page 1)*

aboard the ship were rescued. Life jackets offered little protection from hypothermia, which killed most men in the near freezing water. By the time rescue ships arrived, "hundreds of dead bodies were seen floating on the water, kept up by their life jackets."

One witness, Private William B. Bednar, found himself floating in oil-smearred water surrounded by dead bodies and debris. "I could hear men crying, pleading, praying," Bednar recalls. "I could also hear the chaplains preaching courage. Their

voices were the only thing that kept me going." "Valor is a gift," Carl Sandburg once said. "Those having it never know for sure whether they have it until the test comes." That night Lt. George L. Fox, Methodist Reverend; Lt. Alexander D. Goode, Jewish Rabbi; Lt. John P. Washington, Roman Catholic Priest; and Lt. Clark V. Poling, Dutch Reformed Reverend passed life's ultimate test. In doing so, they became an enduring example of extraordinary faith, courage and selflessness.

## Masonic Blood Program

The American Red Cross is currently facing a blood emergency!

You and our donors are desperately needed now, so blood can be available for patients during this critical time. Medical conditions and emergencies don't stop during these times of shortage.

Our blood drives helps to ensure blood is available to support patients' ongoing needs as well as unforeseen trauma situations. Blood donations are currently being distributed faster than they are coming in, but patients and their families are still counting on us. Please do everything you can to recruit more blood donors for our drives.

Brother Mike Blankenship, Blood Coordinator

## Masonic Birthdays for February

Alex H. Adkins '76	William F. Grice '70
Chandler E. Anderson '18	Robert H. Johns '05
David H. Armstrong, Jr. '77	Kenneth W. Lancaster '05
Scott E. Bateman '99	Marvin B. Lancaster '05
R. Gillium Clyburn, Jr. '17	Brian D. Littlehale '10
Dennis L. Eaton '11	David J. Meers '10
Charles F. Edwards '70	John M. Nuzum '02
Edward J. Foley '93	Galen K. Rogers '99
Lewis J. Forrest '85	Joseph M. Snook '65
Glenn D. Fraser II '80	William C. Vahle '13
Glenn L. Gilman '78	Arthur F. Wadford, Jr. '08

The Brethren shown above have a total of 522 years in Masonry!

## To Our Masonic Widows

Happy Birthday to our special ladies in February:

Nancy Moffat	February 4 <sup>th</sup>
Lorraine Johns	February 5 <sup>th</sup>
Ann Akers	February 17 <sup>th</sup>

If any of our ladies are in need of assistance from the Lodge, please don't hesitate to contact Right Worshipful Bill Knowles or the Secretary.

## Reminder and Save The Date

You may have noticed on the website, Facebook or the Lodge Directory that the May Stated Communication is being held on Saturday May 18<sup>th</sup> at 11AM This is not a mistake. Kempsville Lodge will host a very special and exceptionally interesting program, Cleopatra's Needle.

Please adjust your calendars' accordingly. More to follow on this program in later Ashlar articles.

## Meet Your New Tiler



Early in the year of 2016, during a Monday evening school of instruction, a knock came at the second floor emergency exit door (which we now refer to as "Ben's East Gate"). The person knocking was our current Tiler, Brother Ben Jamal.

Ben identified himself as a Master Mason by producing a membership card from his mother-country of Lebanon, on which his photograph and other Masonic information appeared. (Truly a "traveling man".) Ben was living and working in USA, and was interested to affiliate his membership in Kempsville Lodge.

Regrettably, information from our Grand Lodge revealed that the Grand Lodge in Lebanon, of which Ben belonged, did not share fraternal communication with our Virginia Grand Lodge. Ben was not deterred by this. After discussion, and that he was not returning to Lebanon to live, Ben

decided to renounce his membership with his Lebanese Lodge and begin his degree work again in Virginia. Ben was once again Raised a Master Mason in Kempsville Lodge on July 5, 2016. He has been a regular attendee since that date.

A very proud time for many members of Kempsville Lodge was to travel to the US Courthouse in Norfolk in March of 2018 to witness Brother Ben take his oath and become a US Citizen. How proud we were to stand with our Masonic Brother. At the very next Stated Communication, Brother Ben served as Marshal and presented "his" National Flag at the Altar when we all Pledged Allegiance.

Now in 2019, Brother Ben is our Tiler. If you have not met him, you will when you attend Lodge – maybe not at "Ben's East Gate", but surely at the Door.

## Lodge Officers

Worshipful Master	Roger Taylor	478-5498
Senior Warden	Dave Trzeciakiewicz	620-8311
Junior Warden	Mike Denning	651-0712
Treasurer	Chris Anders	635-7617
Secretary	Bob Stanek	255-8336
Senior Deacon	John Settle, III	675-9695
Junior Deacon	Pat Blankenship	406-6166
Senior Steward	Todd Moissett	604-3085
Junior Steward	Doug Dunn	781-389-6557
Chaplain	Scott Sherman	597-1150
Musician	R. Scott Foxwell	536-1659
Marshal	Dickie Cooper	971-7347
Tiler	Ben Jamal	553-2635
Instructor of Work	Tom McGowan	497-3881
Education Officer	William Rawson	724-4867
MAHOVA Ambassador	Ray Connard	630-5797
Blood Coordinator	Michael Blankenship	438-2862
Youth Advisor	Eddie Foley	581-8144



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