

St. James Lodge No. 47 F. & A.M.

David Thomas Dodge, W.M.

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Stated Communications: 1st & 3rd Thursdays at 7:30 p.m.



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Monthly News letter for May 2006 – June 2006



June, the beginning of Summer, school is out and vacation trips with the family are planned. However: if you are in town, try to come to Lodge this month. We are going to have two meetings you will be interested in attending.

St. James will honor St. John, The Baptist, on our first meeting June 1st. Brother Steve Newman will be in charge of the program to honor St. John. Please come out and support Brother Steve.

At this time in history, our Nation is under great stress. We have the War in Iraq and against Terrorist, Federal Judges handing down decisions that affect our daily lives and Illegal Immigrants flying the American Flag upside down with the Mexican flag above it. We must not forget the price of liberty and what it means to guarantee our heritage as the people of the United States. It had to be repurchased by each succeeding generation and must be re-won again and again until the end of time, least it too shall pass like the ancient Empires of Greece and Rome.

June the 14th is National Flag Day and on June the 15th St. James Lodge will honor our Flag. We are going to have a Flag Day Program presenting the history of the American Flag from the beginning to the present and display actual Flags depicting the different times in the history of the Flag. This will be an open meeting with the dinner beginning at 6:30PM and the program starting at 7:30PM. Please come out and bring a guest.

June 18th is Father's Day and I hope all you Fathers will be able to be with family and friends.

Be careful out there and I hope to see you at the meeting place soon.

David Dodge, WM

RECENT EVENTS

March 4 - St. James Lodge recognized Honesty and Integrity by presenting awards to Zach Barilleau, Christine E. Paxton, Michael Schillage and Jene I. Slatton.

March 16 - The recipient of a 50-year membership certificate and recognition in St. James Lodge was Philip Kirkpatrick Jones.

Bro. Col. Philemon A. St. Amant gave an interesting talk on the history of his home Lodge Hancock No. 311 AF&AM of Kansas and its namesake. This allowed him to take us through a Civil War story of two West Point graduates that fought against each other at Gettysburg, thence to the legendary tomb of Hiram of Tyre in Lebanon, and the Western Wall of King Solomon's Temple in Jerusalem. It was an enlightening and worthwhile journey.

The sense of loss was heavy as the news of W. Brother C. Lenton Sartain's loss of his wife, Peggy Lou, was announced to the lodge.

FUTURE EVENTS

-----Begin Casual Summer Attire, except for Degrees-----

Jun. 1	St. John the Baptist Program
Jun. 15	*Honor the Flag of Our Country Program
Jul. 6	4th of July Program
Jul. 20	Treasurer's Report & Committee Reports
Aug. 3	Masonic Education Program
Aug. 17	TBA

-----End Casual Summer Attire-----

Sep. 7	*Guest Night (Open/meal 6:30 PM)
Sep. 21	Remembrance Night (Deceased Brothers)
Oct. 5	*Past Masters' Night (Open/meal 6:30 PM)
Oct. 19	TBA
Nov. 2	St. John the Evangelist & Election of 2007 Officers
Nov. 16	*Thanksgiving Program (Open/meal 6:30 PM)
Dec. 7	Install Officers for 2007 (Open/meal 6:30 PM)

* Represents possible entertainment

TBA = To Be Arranged

Other Masonic Events –

Downtown York Rite Bodies meet regularly on the 1st Saturday of each month at 8:00 a.m. with breakfast at 7:30 a.m. Scottish Rite Baton Rouge Valley meets on the 2nd Monday of each month at 7:30 p.m. Acacia Shrine Temple meets on the 3rd Wednesday of each month at 7:00 p.m. with dinner at 6:00 p.m.

The Lodge of The Nine Muses, No. 9, F.&A.M., meets on the 2nd Wednesday of each month in the Red Room of St James Lodge. If you are interested in visiting, contact one of the members to find time, dress code and other details. Ernest Easterly, W.M., Ricks Bowles, S.W., Adib Shala, J.W., Sam Roberts, Treasurer, Larry Moore, Secretary, William Mollere, Chaplain, Naresh Sharma, Sr. Deacon, Danny Smith, Master of Ceremonies, Gerard Ruth, Sr. Steward, Robert Zinn, Jr Steward, Kristopher Easterly, Tyler, Tim Atkins, Jim Pecoraro

SICKNESS and RELIEF, keep these in your thought and prayers: It is with a sad heart I inform you that Miss Peggy Lou Sartain passed away May 18th at 11:00 a.m. Her family was with her.... --Naresh Sharma

Our condolences to W. Brother C. Lenton Sartain, and his family, on the loss of his wife. We will ALL miss seeing her smiling face and hearing her cheerful voice at the open meetings. –bz-

My Good Brothers,

May 21, 2006

On April 27, 2006, I was diagnosed with lung cancer, (non-small cell). During the past few weeks, a number of tests have been performed. It appears that surgery is not an option so I will have to rely on Chemo and/or Radiation therapy. Many of you know that these treatments are very involved and the side effects can be quite severe. You also may know that long-term survival is quite rare and that death usually occurs within a few months, or at best a few years. As I face the reality of this situation, I have decided to limit my Masonic commitments and spend as much quality time with my wife as I can.

Please do not call at this time, but feel free to e-mail me if you so desire. Jim Pecoraro jepecoraro@cox.net.

Don't forget to invite someone for the open meeting and meal, September 7th!

From 'Somewhere in the MidEast'
Arabian Knight Experiences

By Brother Evan E. Cooper, LCDR USN

Since my last comms to you much has happened. I had to take an unexpected trip from Kuwait back to Balad, Iraq. A small town about 50 miles Northeast of Baghdad. That has turned out to be a lot bigger and longer than originally thought. First, let me tell you about the people with whom I work and those I command.

I have a Navy Chief, an E-7 that is as tough as deck plates. He went into the Navy as a submariner on active duty. Now, like me; he has been cast to the fortunes of the tide. We work well together. He handles the discipline with the sailors and other senior enlisted. I handle the officers in the Battalion and other officers with whom we do business. My Chief's name is Troy Cox, from Detroit, Michigan. Now resides in Lexington, Ky. He grew up fighting in the streets of Detroit and carried that practice to the Navy and Iraq. Chief Cox is incredibly strong and as fat as a Master Chief. He has to lose some weight for the Navy weight and body measurements, but all in all can still move the mass like a mountain lion. I do not want to cross his path. He certainly makes my job easier, and supports my decisions. Every officer needs a senior enlisted like Chief Cox. The skipper likes our work product and lets us steer the Battalion's course.

Since I have been here in the sand box, I have lost a little weight, but fatty still seems to win the hand to hand combat. When I make it to a base camp, we have chow halls that are called DFAC facilities. These facilities have ice cream and all the hot food you can eat. Needless to say, I do my best on pecan pie with ice cream, cookies, and flan occasionally. Some days I have to move around as much as six miles, but that only means I eat that much more at dinner.

While in Camp Anaconda, which is Balad, several things have happened. Some my doing, other not my doing; I came up to Camp Anaconda to relieve the senior enlisted person immediately and not long after that I relieved the Officer in charge of Navy Customs. You can not really fire anyone in the military, but the enlisted man went from being 2nd in command, to washing the Skipper's car, and the Officer went from being in command to heading up Rest and Relaxation (R & R) flights to Qatar for the Battalion. We are finally entitled to a 96 hour pass. Do not get my R & R until approximately late August. Will I be happy for that event to happen! Qatar is supposed to be a beautiful place, fishing, leisure time, and no mortar rounds.

After management choices were made and plans of action were executed, I was the only officer for Navy Customs in Iraq for a period of time. When I fired all the senior leaders and sent them packing, I became the leader and Officer in charge until I could get their replacements on station. That did not happen for almost a week. Then the decision was made to change out the crew. That did not go over well. The crew on location was told to pack their sea bag and be ready for re-assignment to other locations. I do not know if I upset some informal deals that were consummated with a hand shake, but in the end, all will get on the plane. Like I said, I was going to be in Iraq for less than a week, now it has been almost three weeks. For three weeks, I have not slept more than a few hours a night. I think the longest period of time without having a mortar or rocket launched at me has been a little over 28 hours. One day I was caught in the open and the first one went off within a couple of hundred yards of me. Buildings were shaking, concussion waves were going by and I was looking for a concrete bunker.

Of course when you really needed one, you can not find one. The temperature is well over 100 degrees every day; I have shed my 45 pounds of body armor, taking the risk of a wound over the weight and heat of the amour. I still wear my helmet, but that is hot as a crawfish pot in the sun. I finally found a bunker just before I figured I had to go straight to dirt. Several others were in it, but I jumped right in as if I was a full back looking for the goal line. I have found that under an attack with incoming, rank means nothing.

One night, several days ago, we came under attack about 0200 hours. The harassing fire continued until close to dawn. I was tired of running to bunkers, no sleep, and hot dirty holes in the ground covered by concrete. On the last few warnings, I thought about carrying my cot to the concrete protection, but finally said, "this is your free one. If you feel lucky, give it your best shot." They shot but I am here to write this letter.

When the rounds start coming into our position Army aviation takes action. It is good to have friends in high places, especially close to the heavens. You can hear the turbine engines whine as they begin their warm up. As they lift off, clouds of dust lift with them. They fly dark under the infrared scope. I can hear them sometimes and then *schazam*, they are directly overhead. Very happy they are on my side. When the helicopters find a target, or think they have one, weapons fire like you can not imagine. To back them up, if there is enough time there is a Close in weapons support machine gun here. Out in the fleet it is called the CWHIZ, stands for Christ it won't shoot. It is the same one that protects the carriers from incoming. The other day it went off, just incredible what it can do. And it did it. It hit the incoming missile and there was quite a boom. But a good boom.

In this camp there is an Air Force field hospital. At night the wounded are brought in and transported out. The medivac helicopters seem to always come in fast and loud just over my hooch. Between mortar alerts and rotor wash, there are constant distractions to keep me from more than a few hours of sleep a night. No complaints from me because I know that 911 call is from someone who gave their all. If the corpsmen are able, they transport the wounded to Germany when they are stable. Just last week, an IED exploded under a vehicle just outside the wire and killed 2 men. I try to fly everywhere I travel, but ascent and descent are made very fast and in zig zag fashion. No problem for me, but I have seen a few people feel like their head hit the top of the aircraft.

Not out of sea stories to tell, but out of time. Night operations are about to begin and I must turn my attention to them. I was not able to proof this email for spelling or grammar, so do not hold me or the expensive high school and college education to fault.

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