

VETERANS DAY MESSAGE FROM THE GRAND COMMANDER

Sir Knights and Ladies of Ohio.

I want to take this opportunity to thank my brothers in arms for your service to our country and its citizens. When people say to me “Thank you for your service” I deeply appreciate their consideration and I always try to respond with, “It was my honor.” I genuinely believe that those of us who were fortunate enough to serve in the military were given an incredible opportunity to answer a higher call.

There are many Sir Knights in Ohio who have served in the military, and I am grateful to each and every one of you and especially to your Ladies who share the rigors of military life. Although I have no way to know who they are, I am sure that there are several Ladies of our Sir Knights who are also proud veterans and I extend my sincere thanks and admiration to you for your service.

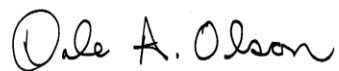
Military service requires a tremendous sacrifice from all members of a military family. Long family separations, constant moves, and the uncertainty of the future place tremendous stress on spouses and children. Everyone who serves in the military is acutely aware of these sacrifices that our families make, and we all appreciate their support.

Of course, not all memories of military service are of hardship and sacrifice. Every veteran has thousands of fond and poignant memories of their military service. My own includes the sensation of being squeezed back into the ejection seat when engaging the afterburners of my T-38 and watching the Mach indicator slide up past Mach 1.0, 1.1, 1.2 and finally settle on Mach 1.3. Being in an HC-130 flying in the mountains of New Mexico, desperately trying to find a helicopter that was running out of fuel. Finally finding them and rendezvousing for a refueling in a blinding snowstorm. Once again, being in an HC-130 and watching the space shuttle Challenger explode 73 seconds after liftoff, turning to my co-pilot and uttering the understatement of my life, “Dave, that aint’ right”. More recently, I had the privilege of flying a photo mission for FEMA to assess damage from the flooding in Kentucky. Believe me when I tell you that flying seven hours in a Cessna 182 is not fun, but I would not trade these experiences for ANYTHING!

Sir Knights, it is my honor and privilege to serve as your Grand Commander. If you are a veteran, I urge you to wear your veterans bar and wear it correctly. There is a reason that it is worn above all other jewels on the uniform. Be proud of your service to our great country.

In closing, I am reminded of the words of Major Dick Winters at the end of the "Band of Brothers" miniseries. He recalls a story of one of his fellow soldiers who was asked by his grandson, "Grandpa, were you a hero in the war?" His response was, "No, I was not a hero, but I served in a company of heroes." No matter where or when you serve, you are ALL heroes! Be proud Sir Knights and please accept my deepest appreciation for your service and your sacrifice.

With profound gratitude,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Dale A. Olson".

Dale A. Olson, KCT

Grand Commander

