The Master’s Message

Greetings Brethren!

On May 18th, St. John’s Lodge was the proud recipient of the Mark Twain Award for Masonic Awareness as well as the Grand Master’s Award. You probably already knew this since we have been bragging about it over the course of the past couple months, but how many knew that Mark Twain aka Samuel Langhorne Clemens was a brother? Indeed, Brother Clemens was raised to the sublime degree on July 10, 1861 at Polar Star Lodge in St Louis. Next chance you get, please check out the trophy situated over the mantle in the Hackett House dining room.

Brother Clemens was a good friend of Portsmouth’s own Thomas Bailey Aldrich, author of The Story of A Bad Boy. Clemens’ Wife Olivia was the daughter of Jervis Langdon, but little information is available to conclude that they might be of the same stock which derived Langdons of Portsmouth notoriety.

This month, scholarship recipients and their families will be joining us at our stated meeting. Please introduce yourselves and congratulate them on their accomplishments.

Past Masters’ Night is on the 19th. Prime Rib is on the menu. The meal is free, compliments of St. John’s Lodge. Please make reservations by calling Rodney at 603.436.3743 (Ok to leave a message)

Our annual St. John’s Sunday event will be on June 23rd. I highly recommend that any New Hampshire Mason that has never Marched with us before do so at least once in your Masonic career. You will never forget it. We assemble at the Pitt Tavern in Strawberry Banke (sic) at 8:30am and March at 9am.

At the July Stated there will be chicken ($8), however if you would like lobster ($13) too, please email me at moontowncafe@myfairpoint.net in advance to reserve your lobster. If you don’t have a computer you can call me at 603.300.9093

Please mark your calendars for the Joint Veterans Program on July 15th. St. Andrew’s Lodge to host.

Have a wonderful June and a Happy Father’s Day! Fraternally Yours,

Wor Jonathan Neihart

If you’re wondering if John Dore was a Freemason, I can assure that he was! Brother John Knight Dore, Jr. was initiated as an Entered Apprentice on April 26, 1946 in St. John’s Lodge four months after returning injured from the War in Europe. He was passed to the Degree of Fellowcraft on July 10, and then on October 23, 1946, he was Raised a Master Mason in our Lodge, with his father, Brother John Knight Dore, Sr., a then 27-year member of our Lodge present. As I mentioned, John Jr. passed from Labor to Refreshment on February 4, 1957 at the age of 36 years; his father, Brother John Dore, Sr. passed away a few months later on December 30, 1957 at the age of 78 years.

– Alan Robinson
Historian

Cookout after Church on St John’s Sunday
11 AM
Our Chef
Will have Hamburger and Hot Dogs
Chips and Drinks for the Huge sum of $5.00

Contact Information:
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John Knight Dore, Jr. was born in Portsmouth, NH on April 28, 1920 a son of John Knight and Luella (Young) Dore, Sr. He attended local schools and graduated from Portsmouth Senior High School with the class of 1939. He was inducted into the U.S. Navy in February 1943 and on June 19, 1943, following training at Fort Bliss, Texas, he was promoted to the rank of Corporal. He graduated from a Navy machinist apprenticeship in August 1943 and on July 26, 1944 was deployed to the European Theater of Operations, World War II. At the Battle of the Bulge and specifically during the Siege of Bastogne, John was seriously wounded and eventually evacuated. He was awarded the Purple Heart on April 14, 1945. On December 17, 1945, he left the European Theatre and returned home two days after Christmas 1945. On January 6, 1946, he was honorably discharged from the Navy at the age of 26 years.

On June 8, 1946, John married Rose Vernile in Lawrence, MA, a marriage that would eventually end in divorce. In July he began work at the Portsmouth Police Department and on February 2, 1950, he graduated from a two-week Law Enforcement school. He continued to work for the Portsmouth Police but by April 1953, something was definitely wrong.

For health reasons, John was forced to go out on extended sick leave beginning on April 3, 1953. The poor man was suffering from the affects of his injuries suffered during the Siege of Bastogne. On February 28, 1954 he mustered enough strength to return to work, but only for a very short time. He married again on October 8, 1955 to Ms. Chase and the following year she gave birth to a little boy whom they named John Chase Dore.

Sadly, on February 4, 1957, just three months after his son was born, John Dore passed away from Chronic Glomerulonephritis, an acute failure of the kidneys which was a complication of his War injuries; he was just 36 years old.

John Knight Dore, Jr. was a good man, a skilled craftsman, a hard working public servant, a dedicated husband and parent, and a Patriot. He was a war hero who fought to help save the world. And as did tens of thousands of brave sailors, soldiers, airmen and marines, he gave the last full measure of devotion to the Country he loved so well. He and his fellow countrymen held the critically important town of Bastogne free from further German advancement. And by their enduring strength, fighting together as a single Allied Force, victory in Europe during World War II was achieved.
Bastogne is a pretty little town in southeastern Belgium, about 25 miles from the border of Germany to the northeast and France to the southwest. In this quiet, forested area of Belgium was where from December 6, 1944 to January 25, 1945, the United States and its Allies fought Nazi Germany at the Battle of the Bulge during World War II.

The Battle of the Bulge was a German offensive and surprise attack that initially caught the Allied forces off guard. It was the costliest battle of the War in terms of American casualties; 19,000 Americans were killed, 47,500 were wounded, and 23,000 troops were captured or missing.

In early December 1944, the Allied forces in Belgium amounted to 83,000 men, 242 medium tanks, 182 other tracked vehicles, 394 artillery pieces, 4 infantry divisions, and 1 armored division. A few weeks later, the Allies were reinforced with 20 infantry divisions and 9 armored divisions. On Christmas Eve 1944, there were 610,000 Americans, 55,000 British, 4,155 artillery pieces, 1,616 medium tanks, and 6,000 aircraft. The Allied Forces were led by the Supreme Allied Commander, Brother and General Dwight D. Eisenhower, with General Anthony McAuliffe (101st Airborne Division), Brother and General Omar Bradley (12th US Army Group), General Courtney Hodges (1st US Army), General George Patton (3rd US Army), and British General Bernard Montgomery (21st Army Group).

During the two-month long Battle of the Bulge, there was an engagement from 20-27 December 1944 referred to as the Siege of Bastogne. The goal of this particular German offensive was the control of the harbor at Antwerp. In order to reach it before the Allies could regroup and bring their superior air power to bear, German forces had to seize the roadways through eastern Belgium. Because all seven main roads in the area converged on the small town of Bastogne, control of its crossroads was vital to the German attack. The German army surrounded the town and the besieged American forces of the 101st Airborne were outnumbered 5-1. To make matters worse, our troops were lacking in cold-weather gear, ammunition, food and medical supplies. Due also to the worst winter weather conditions in memory, the surrounded American forces could not be resupplied by air nor was tactical air support available due to the perpetual cloudy weather. By the third day of the Siege, the situation was bleak. That’s when General von Lüttwitz sent the following ultimatum to General McAuliffe; it read:

To the U.S.A. Commander of the encircled town of Bastogne.
The fortune of war is changing. This time the U.S.A. forces in and near Bastogne have been encircled by strong German armored units. More German armored units have crossed the river Our near Ortheuville, have taken Marche and reached St. Hubert by passing through Hompre-Sibret-Tillet. Libramont is in German hands.

There is only one possibility to save the encircled U.S.A. troops from total annihilation: that is the honorable surrender of the encircled town. In order to think it over a term of two hours will be granted beginning with the presentation of this note.

If this proposal should be rejected one German Artillery Corps and six heavy A. A. Battalions are ready to annihilate the U.S.A. troops in and near Bastogne. The order for firing will be given immediately after this two hours term.

All the serious civilian losses caused by this artillery fire would not correspond with the well-known American humanity.

The German Commander

Well now; you can just imagine what General McAuliffe was thinking when he read the note. He was a man who never used profanity and reportedly took the note, crumpled it up and threw in a waste basket, uttering the words, “Aw, Nuts”. The officers with McAuliffe prepared the General’s response to the note that was then delivered to the German Commander by Colonel Joseph Harper; it read:

To the German Commander
NUTS!
The American Commander

Upon reading the response, the German Commander looked confused and asked Colonel Harper to explain the message. The Colonel replied, “In plain English? Go to Hell.”

The Siege of Bastogne continued and for the next several days the nearly defeated Americans of the 101st Airborne continued to hold fast their position. They might have ultimately prevailed on their own, but as it turns out they didn’t need to; on December 27, reinforcements from General Patton’s 3rd Army arrived in Bastogne. After assessing the new situation, the German Army retreated. The brave men of the 101st Airborne had held Bastogne but in doing so had suffered approximately 1,000 deaths and 2,000 wounded. Among the seriously wounded was a young man named John Dore.

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