

The History of Chi Omega Rho (The Knights of CORR - the Collegiate Order of Royal Rangers)

By Michael D. Harris

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Earlier in the summer of 1973, National Commander Johnnie Barnes was approached by college students from Central Bible College and Evangel College of Springfield, Missouri and began to discuss the idea of forming a college organization involving former boys of Royal Rangers. Dave Hudson, the first President (Regent) of the Central Bible Chapter of Chi Omega Rho (CORR - Collegiate Order of Royal Rangers), related, "...several concerned Royal Ranger people at CBC and Evangel began discussing the need of a regular, consistent system of information to the student body about Royal Rangers as well as providing a means for students to be involved in the Royal Rangers ministry while at either college."

These discussions resulted in an idea of a collegiate organization of Royal Ranger leaders. During the 1973 fall college session, plans for an induction ceremony were made. A constitution and by-laws, an emblem and official letterhead were presented to the charter members following the induction ceremony.

According to the original Chi Omega Rho handbook, the mission of the new organization was to provide fellowship to the former Royal Rangers on the campus, to promote Royal Rangers to interested students, provide education and service opportunities in the local districts and outposts, and to foster comradery among the COR members thorough outdoor activities, social meetings and special Royal Ranger projects.

During the 1973 Thanksgiving week, the first induction ceremony consisting of twenty-one candidates from Central Bible College and about twenty-three from Evangel College gathered at Fantastic Caverns, northwest of Springfield, Missouri, Paul Feller, former National Training Coordinator and Southern Missouri District Commander, and Dr. Steve Davison, Professor of Biology of Evangel College, supervised the activities. Dave Hudson, the first president of the Central Bible College chapter and David Barnes, the first president of the Evangel College chapter, assisted National Commander Johnnie Barnes in conducting the induction ceremony. "Enthusiasm was high," wrote Dave Hudson, "as the ceremony ended and we all returned to campus determined to develop the Chi Omega Rho chapters into meaningful, worthwhile campus organizations."

Dennis Faulkner, one of the first candidates from CBC, recalled how dark the cave was and most of the candidates' movements were in total darkness. Candidates' faces were drawn on by markers and the students from CBC were instructed to leave it on for classes the next day to build excitement on the campus for the new organization. Beads were given to each candidate and much like FCF, a bead had to remain on the strand or you would fail to complete the initiation. He recalled having to discover where "blind fish" were living in part of the cave though no one was able to discover their location thus no one was penalized for the failure. He recalled having to locate a mud mound and try to find something hidden there though Dennis does not remember what it was. "It was so dark in the cave that at times, candidates were physically pulled around to keep from falling off ledges," Dennis lamented. By the end of the evening, all candidates were covered with mud but everyone was excited about the new group.

Dennis Faulkner recalled the distinctive Chi Omega Rho patch had not been developed yet, so the first members were not given them initially. Soon afterwards, the National Commander Johnnie Barnes, created a special shield-shaped patch to be worn on the Royal

Ranger uniform in the area of the district name. The small oval shield included the Chi Omega Rho name, the all-points star familiar in the Royal Ranger emblem and a closed-faced knight's helmet on top. Due to production costs, the patch was later changed to a round design in the early 1980's. The Chi Omega Rho chapters were directed under the auspice of the chapters' college and the national office.

Drawing from Ephesians 6:11-18, the Apostle Paul tells Christians to put on the whole armor of God and the theme of the Christian knighthood was chosen. The theme would be used to give the group a distinct appeal to others on campus as well as a way to express the group's identity.

The function of the new organization took root immediately. COR provided needed information about Royal Rangers to the college students who were unfamiliar with the ministry of Royal Rangers. Students were encouraged to stay active in their local church outposts and to take leadership training courses. Each chapter of Chi Omega Rho provided members to assist in district and national Royal Ranger activities.

By 1981, other Assemblies of God colleges adopted the Chi Omega Rho program, including Southeastern Bible College (now Southeastern University) at Lakeland, Florida and Southwestern Bible College (now Southwestern Assemblies of God University) at Waxahachie, Texas. Chi Omega Rho chapters were guided by a college faculty sponsor and the groups held weekly meetings. The chapters planned activities with churches, worked in district activities, presented leadership training and created outreaches to local boys to help bring them into the Royal Ranger program. Chi Omega Rho presented special programs on the college campus to generate interest in the student body about Royal Rangers and its mission.

In 1982, the chapter of Chi Omega Rho at Central Bible College of Springfield, Missouri began revamping of the CORR program. The knighthood theme was used to bring a new focus on Chi Omega Rho. When Chi Omega Rho members appeared at churches and Royal Ranger events wearing armor, welding swords and shields, a new excitement was generated, opening the door for ministry.

In 1983, the COR induction which had resembled the FCF induction was changed to "The Quest", which embraced the knighthood theme and became a night of adventurous challenges and comradery. During the same year, the Chi Omega Rho alumni association was formed to bring together those who had served in the ministry in previous years. Maintaining a list of past and current members strengthened support for the ministry.

In 1984, Johnnie Barnes appointed Michael D. Harris to become the National Chi Omega Rho Representative. It became the mission of the National Representative to become the liaison between the National Office and the COR chapters. Chi Omega Rho would be directed by the national Royal Ranger office but serve in the districts the chapters were formed.

During the same year, the new COR handbook, "The Book of the Ordre of Chivalry or Knyghthode: The Chi Omega Rho Handbook," was written and later revised in 1986 and 1990 by Michael D. Harris. The publication included advancements to encourage members in the original objectives and mission of Chi Omega Rho. The program emphasized COR members could be "plugged" back into an outpost as leaders, no matter where members may go at the end of their college career. Chi Omega Rho activities on the college campus took on the knighthood theme still providing fellowship, comradery and support of its members while promoting Royal Rangers to other college students.

The chapter at Evangel College (now known as Evangel University) became known as "The Shire of the Crusader," and the Central Bible College (now part of Evangel University)

chapter became the “Shire of the Holy Sword.” Another Chi Omega Rho chapter developed in Trinity College in North Dakota in 1986.

During the 1986 National Camporama, the CORR section called Camp Stronghold, was created which introduced the knighthood theme throughout Royal Rangers. Rangers enjoyed “Tilting the Quintain”, stick fighting, sword combat and other related activities. The Knights of CORR from both Evangel College and Central Bible College performed in duels and fights for hundreds of Rangers attending the event. During one evening, the Quest was held for thirty new recruits. Several of those experiencing the Quest were from other countries such as Great Britain and Ireland. More enthusiasm for the program was generated. Later that same year, National Representative Harris was sent to Wales to assist in forming the knighthood-themed "Fellowship of the British Isles", an auxiliary organization of the Royal Rangers of the United Kingdom.

Advancement patches were designed by National COR Representative Harris and added in 1988. A national newsletter, “*The Swordpoint*,” was published and mailed to new members as well as alumni starting in the same year.

At the 1988 National Royal Ranger Council, Dana Lemieux (Sir Gryswald the Grey) of Evangel College, was dubbed first member of the order of the banded Staff (Knight Errant), a special award for outstanding service in Chi Omega Rho.

In April of 1988, the first Chi Omega Rho Knight Baronet Vigil was held near Springfield, Missouri. Robb Hawks and Clint Davis were the first to complete the vigil. Robb Hawks was appointed as the National Chi Omega Rho Herald.

Starting in 1988, the Royal Rangers Leadership Training Course included teaching leaders about the Chi Omega Rho program. The COR section of the LTC assisted in educating Royal Ranger leaders in the purpose and mission of Chi Omega Rho around the nation.

At the 1990 National Camporama, the 2nd National Chi Omega Rho Camp Stronghold once again added to the excitement of the event. “Tilting the Knight”, crossbow shooting, and dagger and battle axe throwing were added to the activities of the camp for Rangers to enjoy. The clanging of swords and flash of armor added to the experience of the hundreds of Rangers wandering into Camp Stronghold. The camp was joined by the jester, Timothy Moore (Sir Leo of the Mountains) who had just begun a new CORR program at Emmanuel College of Franklin Springs, Georgia for the International Pentecostal Holiness church.

By 1991, new shires were added to CORR. Dale Sorenson (Sir Thorfin Battleshield the Just) who had an alumni of the Shire of the Crusader, formed the Shire of the Lance in Arizona. Michael Dyer (Sir Jaspens the Steadfast) formed The Emerald Forest Shire at Whitworth College in Spokane, Washington.

In March of 1991 the National Royal Ranger office empowered Robb Hawks to run a pilot program to examine new avenues of implementing the Chi Omega Rho program. Robb Hawks wrote, *The Complete Book of Lords, Ladies, Knights and Chivalry* (1991).

Michael D. Harris resigned as National Chi Omega Rho Representative in 1992.

By February of 1994, after review of the pilot program, the Royal Ranger Executive Committee, meeting in Springfield, Missouri, decided that this new Chi Omega Rho could not be adopted nationally. Since the experimental program involved elements which fell outside the parameters of Royal Rangers, the National Office chose to conclude the pilot program in Florida.

In 1998, Michael D. Harris was asked to rewrite the Chi Omega Rho handbook and submit it for republication. The new edition was submitted but not published.

The National Royal Rangers Executive Committee in March of 1999 "approved the recommendation that the national office no longer support Chi Omega Rho and that a committee

be formed to explore ways to involve college age Royal Rangers in ministry and fellowship."
Chi Omega Rho as an organization ceased to exist.

Publications

Chi Omega Rho Handbook
By Johnnie Barnes (Sir Strongheart)
1st Edition 1973

The Boke of the Order of Chyvalry or Knyghthode: The Knights of CORR Handbook
By Michael D. Harris (Arch-Duke Sir Stalwart the Oak Heart)
1st Edition 1984

The Boke of the Order of Chyvalry or Knyghthode: The Knights of CORR Handbook
By Michael D. Harris
2nd Edition 1986

The Boke of the Order of Chyvalry or Knyghthode: The Knights of CORR Handbook
By Michael D. Harris
3rd Edition 1998

Chi Omega Rho Induction Handbook
By Michael D. Harris
1985

The Quest: Chi Omega Rho Induction Handbook
By Michael D. Harris
1987

The Chi Omega Rho Manual
By Michael D. Harris
1988

Chi Omega Rho Pages Handbook
By R. Charles Nance (Sir Roric Lightingspear).
1988

Chi Omega Rho Officers Handbook
By Dana Lemieux (Sir Gryswald the Grey) and Kevin Warnock (Sir Hurin the Iron Hammer)
1987 (this was according to Dana) 1988 according to my earlier transcript

Castle Ironwood Blueprints
Proposed by Michael D. Harris
Drawn by Randy Wilson of Evangel College
1988

The Swordpoint

National Chi Omega Rho Newsletter
By Michael D. Harris

No.1 February 1986
No. 2 September 1986
No. 3 April 1987
No. 4 June 1988

Pilot Program

The Complete Book of Lords, Ladies, Knights and Chivalry
By Robb Hawks 1991

Pins – these were never in production

Advancements: Knight Esquire – 1984 – 1986 - Knight's Spur
Knight Bachelor – 1984 – 1986 – Battle Axe
Knight Baronet – 1984 – 1986 – Knight's Helm

Patches

Chi Omega Rho emblem with dark blue field – oval – 1974-1982
Chi Omega Rho emblem with dark blue field – round – 1982 – 1999
Advancements: Knight Esquire – 1988 – 1999 - Knight's Gauntlet
Knight Bachelor – 1988 – 1999 – Knight's Broadsword
Knight Baronet – 1988 – 1999 – Knight's Great Helm
Chi Omega Rho Camporama patch for 1990 by International Pentecostal Holiness church

Alumni Patch: only prototypes – described as being like the regular Chi Omega Rho patch but the field was burgundy, and the banner name of Chi Omega Rho was replaced with degree, i.e. Associate, Bachelor, Masters, Doctorate. Each had a separate insignia if degree was earned more than once. Only in possession of Johnnie Barnes.

Awards

Order of the Banded Staff – Service Honor certificate