

A fellow Knight has recently fallen. We have lost George Flanders.

Who can stop mentioning George's name? From Brother Knight Joe Marandola's memorable eulogy and through talking to others who have known George, I have been impressed with the number of stories that people have about him. It seems as if in so many ways he touched all of us – and always for the better.

I mentioned him at the end of our Council's Meditation in January of this year. I said:

So I asked Brother George, our Council's centenarian, what was the secret to aging well. He responded without hesitation:... "Fast cars and fast women."

George never said that, of course. In fact, I resisted asking him what the secret of aging well was; I figured he might have been tired of being asked that question. But it was easy to see, by just knowing him, how he led his life.

Learning that he was once in the Navy I told him, to make small talk, that I was a Lieutenant Commander at one time in the United States Public Health Service. You see, all Doctors who are in the Military or quasi-military services are given officer rankings no matter what they know of military affairs.

George said that was wonderful; and that's all. I had to ask him details about his military service before he told me how he had started as an enlisted man and was gradually promoted, through the ranks, to Lieutenant Commander – through two wars and commands of two ships. And said it without bragging; just matter-of-factly. He was humble. And I was humbled. The image of the bars on my old uniform suddenly appeared very small in my eyes.

Brother Knight Joe Marandola had previously enticed me to become a 4th degree Knight by telling me I could wear a sword. I'm a sucker for uniforms and swords in particular.

When George was wondering if he should become a 4th degree Knight, I told him "Just think, George; you can then get a sword!" George looked at me kinda funny and said, "Why would I want a sword? I already have had a sword." I thought 'how stupid of me; he probably has had his fill of real guns and swords.' Suddenly **my** sword appeared very small in my eyes.

I really got know George through the Christ Renews His Parish program in which many Knights participated. When it was his time to speak of his life he told a remarkable history. He would share with others when they asked about him, but he was also always interested in you.

In a sense, he was a man of extremes:

He could talk about his accomplishments and achievements but was really very humble.

He could be irascible and irritable, but could always laugh and smile.

He had lived through history that most of us have only read about; but he was also very modern and lived in the present day -- even enjoying learning about computers.

He would express his opinions and needs; but he was also very sensitive to the needs of others.

He didn't mind trying to feel physically better, but as exemplified by his devoted relationship to his wife, he lived his life trying to relieve distress in others.

He was a model for all of us.

George could even teach us to pray. At lunch, during the CRHP program, George demonstrated how he saw life: both reverently and with a sense of humor.

He was asked to say Grace. George prayed:

God of goodness, bless this food
Keep us in a happy mood
Bless the cooks and all who serve us
And from sin and indigestion – Lord preserve us

God bless **you** George.