

DAREDEVIL EVEL KNieVEL AND FREEMASONRY

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Evel Kneivel Shrine Badge

The word 'daredevil' usually applies to a person who enjoys doing reckless things. However, many daredevils take risks not to be reckless, but rather as 'showmen' or 'stuntmen' or to 'push the boundaries of achievement' to greater and greater lengths.

In the late 1800's and early 1900's our Masonic Brother William F. "Buffalo Bill" Cody, 32^o, and a Knight Templar, promoted his Wild West Show featuring trick horse-riding, trick shooting of firearms (such as done by marksman Annie Oakley), and other feats intended to either recreate or embellish past feats of bravery.

In the early 1900's, another Masonic Brother Harry Houdini {1874-1926} (birth name: Eric Weiss) was a master of illusion; but is best remembered for mastering "great escapes" from padlocked chains, shackles, strait-jackets. Bro.: Houdini gave a benefit performance for the Valley of New York, which filled the 4,000 seat Scottish Rite Cathedral, which raised thousands of dollars. In the final weeks of his life, in October 1926, Houdini became a member of Mecca Shriners Center. It has been said Bro.: William E. Parker, 33^o said: "There is little doubt Houdini presented his death-defying escapes in a dazzling manner peculiar to his own personality".

Although the motorcycle jumping daredevil, the late Robert Craig "Evel" Knievel 1938-2007 was not a Freemason, he had many friends and admirers who were Masons and Shriners. In the first decade of our current 21st Century, a Mason bequeathed his Ararat Shrine Motorcycle Corps Badge to Evel Knievel during one of Knievel's stops in Kansas City. Evel Knievel attempted more than 75 ramp-to-ramp motorcycle jumps between the years 1965 and 1980. He suffered more than 433 bone fractures, thus earning him recognition in "The Guinness Book of World Records" as the survivor "of the most bones broken in a lifetime". Knievel jumped cars, Greyhound buses, and even attempted the Snake River Canyon.

Although the stuntman Evel Knievel was not a Mason, he had Masons who admired his skill, talent and sheer courage. We can learn a lot by what he experienced. One of his best 'sayings' was: "If you fall during your life, it doesn't matter. You're never a failure as long as you TRY to get up".



*Sources / References / Exhibits /Recommended Readings:

- Mackey's Encyclopedia of Freemasonry by Dr. Albert G. Mackey, M.D., 33^o and a Knight Templar.
- EXHIBIT: Ararat Shrine Center Motor Corps Badge bequeathed to daredevil Evil Knievel sometime in the years of the early 21st Century "in the early 2000's".
- Personal Electronic Mail transmission between eBay member "daredevil-entertainment {eBay Member since February 10, 2001} to Frater James A. Marples, VIII^o sent on February 26, 2015. Frater Marples asked "Can you give an approximate estimate of the year Evel Knievel received the Ararat Shriners Motor Corps badge? ". The reply from daredevil-entertainment of Butte, Montana {Knievel's hometown} : "It was some time in the early 2000's".
- "Houdini, Master Mason, and Master of Illusion" by Bro.: William E. Parker, 33^o. Published in The Scottish Rite Journal, August 2001.
- Archives, St. Cecile Lodge #568 in New York City.
- Archives of The Masonic Grand Lodge of British Columbia and Yukon, Canada.
- Archives Grand Lodge of Kansas A.F. & A.M
- Macoy's Masonic Manual by Robert Macoy, 33^o and a Knight Templar. Fifteenth Edition. New York. Published in New York, Year 1861 by Clark, Austin, Maynard & Company located at 3 Park Row & 3 Ann Street, New York, New York. "A Pocket Companion for the Initiated".

*About the Author:

Frater James A. Marples, VIII^o is a Perpetual Life Member of Mulvane Masonic Lodge #201 A.F. & A.M. in Mulvane, Kansas. He is a Life Member of The International Peace Gardens Lodge of Freemasons (Canada-USA) and also an Honorary Member of Golden Rule Masonic Lodge #562 in Willard, Ohio; as well as an Honorary Member of Nelson Masonic Lodge #77, in Nelson, Nebraska, which has recently consolidated with the Superior Masonic Lodge at Superior, Nebraska.

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