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Articles

Grand Encampment of Knights Templar of the USA: A Historical and Statistical Reconstruction of the Number of Deceased Members of the Organization (1816–2016)

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Abstract

The article examines the number of deceased members of the Grand Encampment of Knights Templar of the United States over 200 years, from 1816 to 2016. The purpose of the study is to provide a historical and statistical reconstruction of the number of deceased members of the Grand Encampment based on published sources and calculated data. The materials of the study were the proceedings of the triennial conclaves of the Grand Encampment, containing extensive statistical information on the membership of the Grand Encampment and the number of deceased Knights Templar. The study employed historical-statistical and comparative-historical methods, as well as methods of mathematical modeling and linear interpolation.

As a result of the study, it was established that 784,804 deceased members of the Grand Encampment were recorded in the examined reports for 1887–2015. Taking into account the calculated data for 1890 and 2016, the estimated number of deceased members for 1887–2016 amounted to approximately 789.5 thousand people. To reconstruct the earlier period (1816–1886), data on the membership of the Grand Encampment and a calculation coefficient determined on the basis of statistics for 1887–1889 (one deceased member per 70.3 members of the Grand Encampment) were used. This made it possible to estimate the presumed number of deceased members for the specified period at approximately 14.4 thousand people.

Thus, the total number of deceased members of the Grand Encampment and its subordinate structures included in its reports for 1816–2016 is estimated at approximately 804 thousand people. The resulting figure represents a historical-statistical estimate, since part of the data was reconstructed through calculations.

Keywords: Grand Encampment of Knights Templar of the United States, Freemasonry, Knights Templar, USA, 1816–2016, historical statistics, number of deceased members, historical-statistical reconstruction.

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1. Introduction

The history of the Grand Encampment of Knights Templar of the USA spans more than 200 years. In 1816, the Grand Encampment of Knights Templar was established, becoming the central governing body of American Masonic Knights Templar Commanderies. Throughout the 19th and 20th centuries, the organization developed from a relatively small association into one of the largest structures of American Freemasonry. Its development was accompanied by changes in membership, expansion of its territorial presence, and transformations of its organizational structure.

The main source of information on the number of deceased members of the Grand Encampment is the statistical materials published in the proceedings of the organization's triennial conclaves. However, the surviving reports do not make it possible to directly establish the corresponding figures for the entire period of its existence. In particular, statistical information on deceased members for 1816–1886 was not found during our research. This circumstance necessitates the application of calculation methods to reconstruct the missing data.

The purpose of our study is to reconstruct the number of deceased members of the Grand Encampment of Knights Templar of the USA for the period 1816–2016 on the basis of published reports and historical-statistical calculations. The scientific novelty of the study lies in the systematization of information on deceased members over an extended historical period and the development of a quantitative estimate for those years for which the corresponding information is unavailable.

2. Materials and Methods

The materials for our study consisted of the published proceedings of the triennial conclaves of the Grand Encampment of Knights Templar of the USA for the period up to 2015. Of particular value are the statistical data contained in these proceedings on the membership of the organization and the number of deceased Knights Templar. To reconstruct the dynamics of the organization's membership in the 19th century, we also used the results of our previous study devoted to changes in the membership of the Grand Encampment in 1816–1899 (Cherkas, 2026).

The methodology of the study is based on the principles of historicism and systematicity. The historical-statistical method was applied, making it possible to systematize information on deceased Knights Templar and trace changes in their number over two centuries. The comparative-historical method was used to compare indicators from different chronological periods, while the mathematical modeling method was employed to reconstruct missing statistical data.

3. Results

It should be clarified from the outset that the deceased include all categories, namely those who died as a result of accidents, wars, diseases, etc. No statistics on deceased members of the Grand Encampment of Knights Templar of the USA for the period from 1816 to 1886 were found. The data for the period from 1887 to 2015, identified by us in the proceedings of the triennial conclaves of the Grand Encampment of Knights Templar of the USA, were compiled in Table 1.

Table 1. Dynamics of the Number of Deceased Knights Templar among the Members of the Grand Encampment of Knights Templar of the USA, 1887–2015 (Proceedings..., 1889: 124; Proceedings..., 1892: 80; Proceedings..., 1895: 111; Proceedings..., 1898: 96-98; Proceedings..., 1901: 130-132; Proceedings..., 1904: 137-139; Proceedings..., 1907: 178-180; Proceedings..., 1910: 166-168; Proceedings..., 1913: 203-205; Proceedings..., 1916: 227, 229, 231; Proceedings..., 1919: 242, 244, 246; Proceedings..., 1922: 124, 126, 128; Proceedings..., 1925: 222, 226, 228-229, 232-233; Proceedings..., 1928: 170, 172, 174; Proceedings..., 1931: 139, 141, 143; Proceedings..., 1934: 291, 293, 295; Proceedings..., 1937: 135, 137, 139; Proceedings..., 1940: 108, 110, 112; Proceedings..., 1943: 50, 52, 54; Proceedings..., 1946: 149, 151, 153; Proceedings..., 1949: 111, 113, 115; Proceedings..., 1952: 129-130, 132-133, 135-136; Proceedings..., 1955: 148-149, 151-152, 154-155; Proceedings..., 1958: 51-52, 54-55, 57-58; Proceedings..., 1961: 71-72, 75-76, 78-79; Proceedings..., 1964: 105-106, 109-110, 112-113; Proceedings..., 1967: 510-511, 513-514, 516-517; Proceedings..., 1970: 64, 66, 68; Proceedings..., 1973: 62-63, 66-67, 70-71; Proceedings..., 1976: 50-51, 54-55, 58-59; Proceedings..., 1979: 56-57, 60-61, 64-65; Proceedings..., 1982: 42-43, 46-47, 50-51; Proceedings..., 1985: 84-85, 88-89, 92-93; Proceedings..., 1988: 86-91; Proceedings..., 1991: 72-77; Proceedings..., 1994: 82-87; Proceedings..., 1997: 48-53; Proceedings..., 2000: 38-43;

Proceedings..., 2003: 60-65; Proceedings..., 2006: 87-92; Proceedings..., 2009: 86-91; Proceedings..., 2012: 84-89; Proceedings..., 2015: 67-72)

Years	Died	Notes
1887 1888 1889	2901	Statistics are provided for three years combined.
1890	-	Statistics were not published.
1891 1892	2645	Statistics are provided for two years combined.
1893 1894 1895	4228	Statistics are provided for three years combined.
1896	1528	
1897	1593	
1898	1658	
1899	1851	
1900	1979	
1901	2024	
1902	1908	
1903	2193	
1904	2229	
1905	2465	
1906	2468	
1907	2592	
1908	2891	
1909	2892	
1910	2950	
1911	3331	
1912	3415	
1913	3566	
1914	3662	
1915	3754	
1916	4085	
1917	4252	Beginning in 1917, the number of deceased members of the Subordinate Commanderies was also taken into account.
1918	4412	
1919	5291	
1920	4784	
1921	4767	
1922	5409	
1923	5611	
1924	5865	
1925	6062	
1926	6194	
1927	6607	
1928	6910	
1929	7261	
1930	7582	
1931	7497	
1932	7584	
1933	7649	
1934	7436	

Years	Died	Notes
1935	7351	
1936	6979	
1937	7112	
1938	6851	
1939	6574	
1940	6460	
1941	6383	
1942	6046	
1943	6010	
1944	5997	
1945	6165	
1946	6091	
1947	6573	
1948	6863	
1949	7109	
1950	7086	
1951	7471	
1952	7576	
1953	7701	
1954	7853	
1955	7816	
1956	8208	
1957	8526	
1958	8860	
1959	8710	
1960	8971	
1961	9250	
1962	9365	
1963	9456	
1964	9745	
1965	9650	
1966	9675	
1967	9969	
1968	9995	
1969	10067	
1970	10055	
1971	10085	
1972	10057	
1973	9821	
1974	10083	
1975	9661	
1976	9632	
1977	9588	
1978	9387	
1979	9001	
1980	9264	
1981	9089	
1982	9054	
1983	8961	
1984	9150	
1985	8826	
1986	9161	
1987	8818	
1988	8753	

Years	Died	Notes
1989	8663	
1990	8363	
1991	7878	
1992	8041	
1993	7791	
1994	7666	
1995	7421	
1996	7172	
1997	6942	
1998	6436	
1999	6733	
2000	6441	
2001	6411	
2002	6485	
2003	5790	
2004	4397	
2005	4596	
2006	4990	
2007	4601	
2008	4114	
2009	3452	
2010	3563	
2011	3775	
2012	3408	
2013	3407	
2014	3701	
2015	3626	
2016	-	
Total	784804	

Analyzing Table 1, it is important to clarify from the outset that the number of deceased members also includes information on deceased Knights Templar from the Grand Commanderies of the Philippines and Italy, although the number of Knights Templar there was relatively small. For example, in 2014, there were 6 deceased members in the Grand Commandery of Italy and 2 in the Grand Commandery of the Philippines (Proceedings..., 2015: 72).

According to Table 1, a total of 784,804 members of the Grand Encampment and its subordinate Commanderies died during the period 1887–2015, while statistics for 1890 were not published. To determine the number of deceased members in 1890, we must refer to the statistics for the preceding and subsequent periods. Thus, during 1887–1889, a total of 2,901 members died, although annual statistics for this period are unavailable. Nevertheless, these data allow us to determine an average of approximately 967 deaths per year. In 1891–1892, the total number of deceased members was 2,645, or 1,322 per year. Based on these figures, we can determine the average value for 1890 as 1,144 deceased members. Thus, the total number of deceased Knights Templar during the period from 1887 to 2015 amounts to 785,948 people.

Let us now turn to the data on deceased members in 2016. We did not find official information, so we will use the available statistics. From 2009 to 2015, the annual number of deceased members of the Grand Encampment of Knights Templar of the USA ranged from 3,407 to 3,775 people. Over these seven years, a total of 24,932 Knights Templar died, averaging 3,561 people per year. Thus, the number of deceased members in 2016 can be estimated at 3,561 people, bringing the total number for the period from 1887 to 2016 to 789,509 people.

To determine the approximate number of deceased Knights Templar during the period from 1816 to 1886, it is necessary to examine the ratio of the number of deceased members to the total membership of the Grand Encampment. In another of our studies on the membership of the Grand Encampment of Knights Templar of the USA during the period 1816–1899, we collected membership data for the Grand Encampment from 1816 to 1899.

We present this table in full here (see Table 2).

Table 2. Membership of the Grand Encampment of Knights Templar of the USA in 1816–1899 (Cherkas, 2026: 6-7)

Years	Membership
1816	500
1848	1200
1856	4710
1859	7344
1865	10000
1866	11602
1867	14414
1868	20118
1869	22522
1870	25844
1871	30351
1872	34468
1873	37294
1874	39364
1875	44018
1876	46235
1877	48539
1878	49260
1879	49924
1880	50894
1881	53083
1882	54510
1883	59125
1884	63387
1885	65227
1886	67300
1887	70746
1888	73471
1889	76986
1890	81802
1891	85584
1892	90306
1893	95912
1894	100134
1895	103541
1896	109704
1897	112036
1898	114540
1899	118550

In another study published in the journal *Population Processes*, Irina Yu. Cherkasova applied a statistical calculation to determine the ratio of deceased members to total membership, using the Grand Lodge of Texas A.F.&A.M. during the Second World War as an example (Cherkasova, 2026: 16).

We use the same model to obtain an average value based on the available data for 1887–1899. These data are presented in Table 3.

Table 3. Grand Encampment of Knights Templar of the USA: Total Membership and Number of Deceased Members in 1887–1899

Years	Membership	Dead
1887	70746	2901
1888	73471	
1889	76986	
1890	81802	1144
1891	85584	2645
1892	90306	
1893	95912	4228
1894	100134	
1895	103541	
1896	109704	1528
1897	112036	1593
1898	114540	1658
1899	118550	1851

As can be seen from Table 3, during the period 1887–1889, the total membership over three years amounted to 221,203, while 2,901 members died during this period, resulting in one deceased member for every 76.2 members. In 1890, this ratio was one deceased member per 71.5 members; in 1891–1892, per 66.4 members; and in 1893–1895, per 70.8 members. In 1896, there was approximately one deceased member for every 71.8 members; in 1897, this figure was 70.3 members; in 1898, 69.1 members; and in 1899, 64 members. For better visualization, these statistical data are presented in Figure 1.

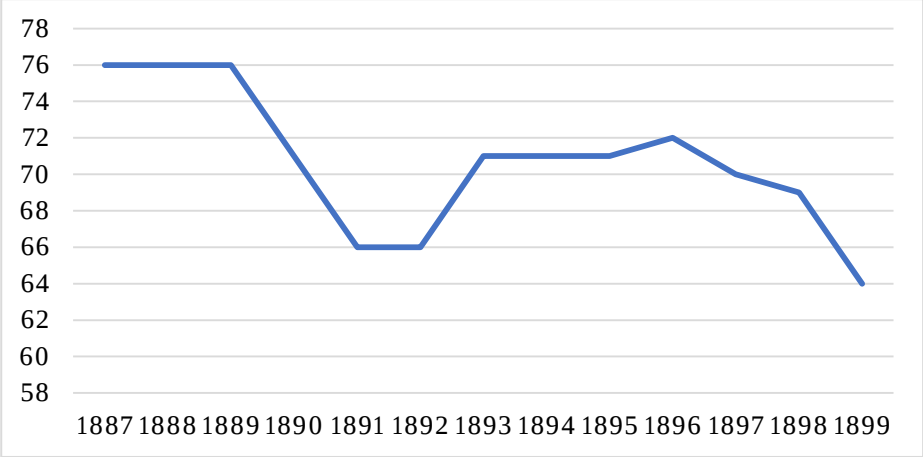


Fig. 1. Average Ratio of Grand Encampment of Knights Templar Membership per Deceased Member in 1887–1899

Analyzing Figure 1, we can see that during the last 13 years of the 19th century, there was one deceased Knight Templar for every 70.3 members of the Grand Encampment. Based on the available data for 1887–1899, the average ratio between the membership of the Grand Encampment and the number of deceased members was determined. The resulting figure was used as a calculation coefficient for the retrospective estimation of the number of deceased members for 1816–1886. At the same time, its application to the earlier period is based on the assumption of relative stability in mortality and does not mean that the actual figures remained unchanged. Incidentally, similar figures were also obtained by Irina Yu. Cherkasova in her study, in which there was one deceased member for every 69.4 members of the Grand Lodge of Texas A.F.&A.M. during 1941–1945 (calculated by us: Cherkasova, 2026: 16).

Using the average ratio between the membership of the Grand Encampment and the number of deceased members (70.3:1), established for 1887–1899, it is possible to make a retrospective estimate of the number of deceased members for 1816–1886. The results obtained are calculated

estimates and depend on the assumption that this coefficient is applicable to the earlier historical period (see Table 4).

Table 4. Membership of the Grand Encampment of Knights Templar and Calculated Data on the Number of Deceased Members in 1816–1886

Years	Membership	Dead
1816	500	7
1848	1200	17
1856	4710	67
1859	7344	104
1865	10000	142
1866	11602	165
1867	14414	205
1868	20118	286
1869	22522	320
1870	25844	367
1871	30351	431
1872	34468	490
1873	37294	530
1874	39364	559
1875	44018	626
1876	46235	657
1877	48539	690
1878	49260	700
1879	49924	710
1880	50894	723
1881	53083	755
1882	54510	775
1883	59125	841
1884	63387	901
1885	65227	927
1886	67300	957

While data on the number of deceased members for the period from 1865 to 1886 are presented annually, the same cannot be said for the period from 1816 to 1864. Moreover, the period from 1816 to 1848 is the least represented, as we have information only for the first and last years. To calculate these figures, it is preferable to use the method of linear interpolation (see Figure 2).

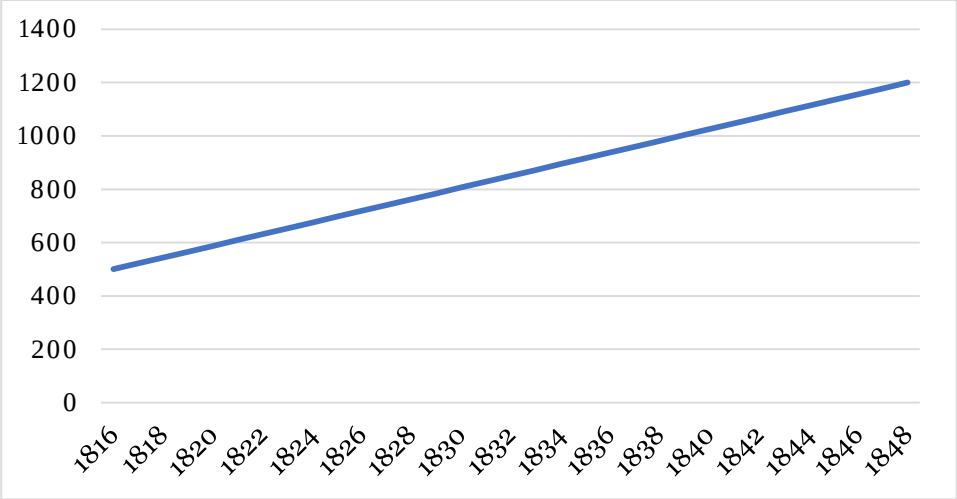


Fig. 2. Membership of the Grand Encampment in 1816–1848

As a result of applying the method of linear interpolation, we obtained the following data on the membership of the Grand Encampment during the period from 1816 to 1848 (see Table 5).

Table 5. Membership of the Grand Encampment of Knights Templar in 1816–1848, Calculated Using the Method of Linear Interpolation

Years	Membership
1816	500
1817	521
1818	543
1819	565
1820	587
1821	609
1822	631
1823	653
1824	675
1825	696
1826	718
1827	740
1828	762
1829	784
1830	806
1831	828
1832	850
1833	871
1834	893
1835	915
1836	937
1837	959
1838	981
1839	1003
1840	1025
1841	1046
1842	1068
1843	1090
1844	1112
1845	1134
1846	1156
1847	1178
1848	1200

According to Table 5, we can see that if we apply the method of linear interpolation to the available statistics, the Grand Encampment exceeded the following membership levels: 600 members in 1821, 700 in 1826, 800 in 1830, 900 in 1835, 1,000 in 1839, and 1,100 in 1844. Let us now calculate the number of deceased members (see Table 6).

Table 6. Membership of the Grand Encampment and the Number of Deceased Knights Templar in 1816–1848

Years	Membership	Dead
1816	500	7
1817	521	7
1818	543	8
1819	565	8
1820	587	8
1821	609	9

Years	Membership	Dead
1822	631	9
1823	653	9
1824	675	10
1825	696	10
1826	718	10
1827	740	10
1828	762	11
1829	784	11
1830	806	11
1831	828	12
1832	850	12
1833	871	12
1834	893	13
1835	915	13
1836	937	13
1837	959	14
1838	981	14
1839	1003	14
1840	1025	14
1841	1046	15
1842	1068	15
1843	1090	15
1844	1112	16
1845	1134	16
1846	1156	16
1847	1178	17
1848	1200	17
Total		396

According to the calculation model developed and presented in Table 6, the estimated number of deceased members of the Grand Encampment in 1816–1848 amounts to approximately 396 people.

Let us now turn to the statistics for 1849–1864. For this purpose, we must use the available data for 1848 and 1865, as well as the intermediate values for 1856 and 1859. To do this, we will construct another diagram (Figure 3).

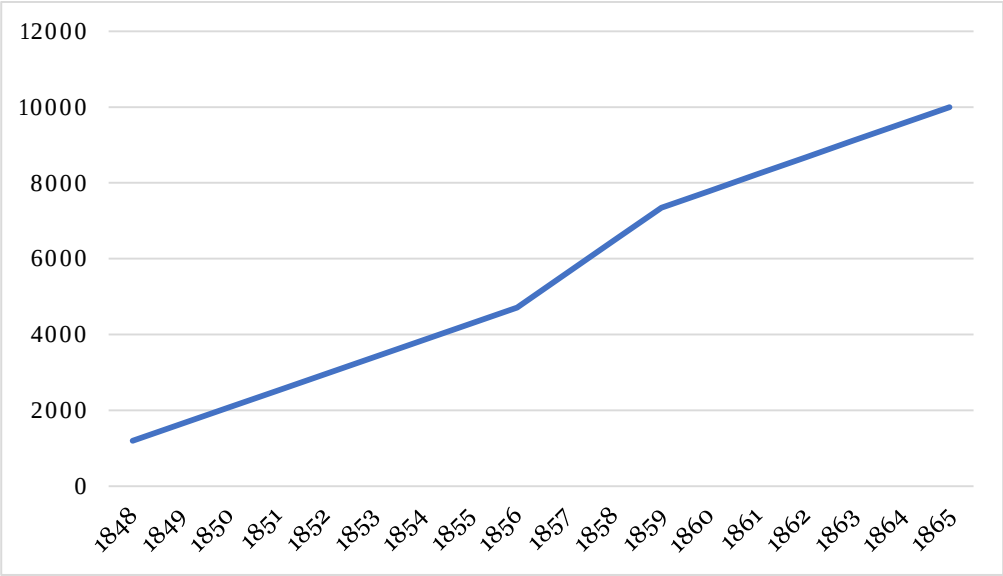


Fig. 3. Membership of the Grand Encampment in 1849–1864

As a result of applying the method of linear interpolation, we obtained the following data on the membership of the Grand Encampment during the period from 1849 to 1864 (see Table 7).

Table 7. Membership of the Grand Encampment of Knights Templar in 1849–1864, Calculated Using the Method of Linear Interpolation

Years	Membership
1849	1638
1850	2077
1851	2516
1852	2955
1853	3393
1854	3832
1855	4271
1856	4710
1857	5588
1858	6466
1859	7344
1860	7786
1861	8229
1862	8672
1863	9114
1864	9557

As can be seen from the data in the table, according to the linear interpolation model, the membership of the Grand Encampment exceeded 2,000 members in 1850, 3,000 in 1853, 4,000 in 1855, 5,000 in 1857, 6,000 in 1858, 7,000 in 1859, 8,000 in 1861, and 9,000 in 1863.

Let us calculate the number of deceased members for this chronological period (Table 8).

Table 8. Membership of the Grand Encampment and the Number of Deceased Members of the Grand Encampment in 1849–1864

Years	Membership	Dead
1849	1638	23
1850	2077	29
1851	2516	35
1852	2955	42
1853	3393	48
1854	3832	54
1855	4271	60
1856	4710	67
1857	5588	79
1858	6466	92
1859	7344	104
1860	7786	111
1861	8229	117
1862	8672	123
1863	9114	130
1864	9557	136
Total		1250

Thus, during the period from 1849 to 1864, approximately 1,250 Knights Templar died.

Let us now examine the period from 1865 to 1886 (Table 9).

Table 9. Membership of the Grand Encampment and the Number of Deceased Members of the Grand Encampment in 1865–1886

Years	Membership	Dead
1865	10000	142
1866	11602	165
1867	14414	205
1868	20118	286
1869	22522	320
1870	25844	367
1871	30351	431
1872	34468	490
1873	37294	530
1874	39364	559
1875	44018	626
1876	46235	657
1877	48539	690
1878	49260	700
1879	49924	710
1880	50894	723
1881	53083	755
1882	54510	775
1883	59125	841
1884	63387	901
1885	65227	927
1886	67300	957
Total		12757

The study established that during the period from 1887 to 2015, a total of 784,804 deceased Knights Templar were recorded in the reports of the Grand Encampment of Knights Templar of the USA. Taking into account the calculated estimates for 1890 and 2016, the total number of deceased members for 1887–2016 amounts to approximately 789.5 thousand people. The retrospective reconstruction of the period 1816–1886, carried out on the basis of the dynamics of the organization's membership and a calculated mortality coefficient, suggests approximately 14.4 thousand additional deceased members. Thus, the total number of deceased members of the Grand Encampment and the subordinate structures included in the study for 1816–2016 is estimated at approximately 804 thousand people. This figure represents a historical-statistical estimate rather than a fully documented indicator.

4. Conclusion

As a result of our study, the dynamics of the number of deceased members of the Grand Encampment of Knights Templar of the USA during the period 1816–2016 were reconstructed. The study was based on statistical information contained in the proceedings of the triennial conclaves of the Grand Encampment, supplemented by calculated data for periods for which the corresponding reports were unavailable.

It was established that 784,804 deceased Knights Templar were recorded in the examined reports for 1887–2015. Taking into account the calculated values for 1890 and 2016, the estimated number of deceased members for 1887–2016 amounted to approximately 789.5 thousand people. To reconstruct the earlier period (1816–1886), data on the membership of the Grand Encampment, the method of linear interpolation, and a calculation coefficient determined on the basis of statistics for 1887–1899 (one deceased member per 70.3 members of the Grand Encampment) were used. As a result, the estimated number of deceased members for 1816–1886 was approximately 14.4 thousand people.

Thus, the total number of deceased members of the Grand Encampment and the subordinate structures included in the study for 1816–2016 is estimated at approximately 804 thousand people. The resulting figure is a historical-statistical estimate, since part of the original data was

reconstructed through calculations. The greatest uncertainty is associated with the reconstruction of the first half of the 19th century, for which only fragmentary information on the membership of the Grand Encampment has survived.

The study made it possible to systematize information on deaths among members of the Grand Encampment over an extended historical period and to propose a quantitative estimate of membership losses due to death. The results obtained may serve as a basis for further research into demographic processes among American Masonic Knights Templar, including comparisons of the absolute number of deceased members with changes in the organization's total membership and the study of the dynamics of relative mortality rates.

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