

# **An Outlanders Guide to Obtaining Knighthood**

(without being seen as belt hungry)

## **Introduction**

Becoming a knight in Amtgard (especially the Iron Mountains) when you live far away from the kingdom/imperial core is a tough feat. Take heart, its not an impossible endeavor. In this document, we will provide some valuable hints and suggestions about what steps you can take to make knighthood more likely. There are four main areas that we will address in this document: attitude, personal visibility, award visibility and how to solicit your lands sponsorship without seeming overly ambitious.

Knights are created through a process that includes being recognized by the current knights of your kingdom/empire as being worthy. These knights must see you as a peer and decide that they want you to be a part of their peer group and to represent them to the rest of Amtgard. To be knighted, usually you have to have an existing knight bring your name up at the Knights' Circle as a candidate and the other knights have to agree that you deserve the honor. Knights are seen as leaders and are pointed to as the best examples of Amtgard. You must be seen in this way for you to achieve knighthood. These valuable hints and suggestions will provide information that will help you get recognized by those who will be a major deciding factor in getting you knighted.

## **Attitude**

A prospective knight's attitude is one of the first things most brought up in a knighting discussion. From a local prospective, this is important. From an outlander's prospective, it is doubly important and can make or break a Knights' Circle recommendation. Remember that knights base their decisions on what they know. If they only see you occasionally, then every impression you make is crucial. Unlike those who are part of the core and are seen weekly, every appearance you make is very important. Something to consider, it takes 1 bad day to ruin 10 good days' worth of reputation, and 10 good days to make up for 1 bad day. Positive attitude must be something you always project. Now this could lead to the desire to "perform" every time you are in front of a knight from the core. One word of advice, DON'T. Most of us have been at the game for a very long time and either despise or choose not to respect a person who is fake. Take our word for it, most knights can tell a "performer" within a few minutes and will just as quickly write you off. Just be yourself. Be the best version of yourself, but be yourself.

Another key aspect about attitude is the way your own group portrays you. You cannot be nice to members of the core and help out at every kingdom/imperial event, but have your own group hate your guts. The Knights will look at that negatively. We expect our knightly candidates to be good people as well as good Amtgardians. We know what you're thinking, "I have met some really terrible people that are knights". We all have, that doesn't mean we want anymore.

In summation, be yourself. Be genuine, have a positive attitude, be a good person, and this little piece of eligibility will be a cakewalk. Most of the people that do well with this aspect don't even think about it.

# **An Outlanders Guide to Obtaining Knighthood**

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## **Personal Visibility**

An important key to becoming a knight is visibility. The worst thing that can be said about you in a Knight's meetings is "Who?" When that word is uttered, the knight that has brought up your name has to fight off the desire to sigh deeply in defeat. Visibility will be a common thread throughout this whole document. It is doubly important for an outland candidate. You must be considered worthy of becoming a knight by the existing knights. You cannot be considered if you are not known.

Here are the steps to greater visibility for an outlander who wants to be a knight:

### **Step 1.**

TRAVEL (cannot emphasize this enough): Make it to at least two big events a year. (For IMers, one of them has to be Rakis. :) A good suggestion for the other is Clan, Harvest War or Banner Wars. Somewhere that will have a decent concentration of your kingdoms members. Then you should hang with them. Get to know them and don't seem like a hanger on. Pick out the easy casual folks and start hanging out with them. Fight beside them and sit by their fire. One mistake frequently made is that you hang out, but you never introduce yourself. Hey, you want to be knighted, you can't be afraid to tell people your name. Speak UP. We're not telling you this to be a spy. We're telling you this because making friends at the kingdom/imperial core is very important. Even more important is that making friends in Amtgard is one of the best parts of the game. It just helps if those cool friends are also knights from the core. Trust us on this.

The more you travel to events and people get to see you face-to-face, the easier it is for them to place your face with an achievement or attitude. Putting a face to a name is extremely important if you're to be seen as a peer. Many of those who have been knighted from outlying groups are those who went through extreme measures to be able to attend events. It's this kind of dedication and commitment to the game that impresses the Knights' Circle.

### **Step 2.**

TRAVEL: Try to make it to the kingdom/imperial level coronations and mid-reigns. As we have all been a part of lands not part of the "core", one thing we found to be critical to our success was to always try to attend the kingdom's coronations and mid-reigns (if possible). Attend one Coronation a year as a minimum. It shows that you care and they are infrequent enough (2 times a year). This will truly cement your status as a MEMBER of the kingdom.

### **Step 3.**

INTERNET MAILING LISTS: Join the kingdom/imperial mailing list and the Amtgard mailing list. Be selective with your posting. We cannot emphasize enough the statement "BE SELECTIVE WITH YOUR POSTINGS". You never want your first impression to be, "Hey, aren't you that irritating guy who posts all the damn time and never says anything". People are extremists by nature so don't encourage them. Be considerate in your posts, be polite but honest, and avoid being stupid, childish, or moronic. Respond to event postings and ask questions about things you don't understand. Announce when things of significance happen in your land. Only the real important stuff

# **An Outlanders Guide to Obtaining Knighthood**

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like “we are having mid-reign”, or “we have a big quest coming up, can anyone attend”. Never announce your own awards over the list as this is a BAD idea. If you are the leader of your group, it shows good faith when you mention all the awards you gave, especially those that are high level relative to what your group can give. A smart person works with their leaders so that the leader posts to the various lists and your name gets mentioned because of your efforts.

Another use of the mailing list is to let people know that you’re coming to an event. It’s not a bad idea to ask if there is anybody going to the event that might be able to help you. Ask to have a camping site saved or ask if they can show you around. If you say you’ll be there – don’t flake – be there. This is advantageous because the person who helps you is now a starting point for getting to know others, including the knights.

## **Step 4.**

INTERNET FORUMS: Become active on other internet forums like Electric Samurai ( [www.dragonspine.net/samurai](http://www.dragonspine.net/samurai)) Many of the older, experienced knights frequent these lists. If you are smart about your responses you can build good relationships and a bit of a reputation. Be careful, bad posting habits can lead to disaster and destroy any chances you might have.

In summation, it’s critical for your success in becoming a knight that members of your kingdom/empire know you and see you as a peer. The best ways to achieve this is to get an online presence and more importantly a real face-to-face presence with the members of your kingdom. That way, if one knight says “WHO?” The others can say, “You know, <put your name here>. They are always posting and up here all the time visiting for events.” Remember that “can do” attitude will help things go your way.

## **Achievement Visibility**

Visibility of ones achievements is the trickiest thing to manage as a prospective knight. You guessed it, it is doubly hard for an outland candidate. You have to balance visibility against being seen as belt-hungry. There is a difference between letting people know about your accomplishments and bragging about them. Let your accomplishments speak for themselves and spend your time having fun and making friends. To help you with this a little bit, let us break this out into the different belt categories because the methods for Achievement Visibility differs depending on the belt you’re seeking.

### **Serpent**

Serpent, historically for many kingdoms (especially the Iron Mountains), is the hardest belt to obtain. However, we believe it to be one of the two easiest for a potential knight from the outlands to obtain. Don’t read easiest as easy, btw. The reason it is one of the two easiest is the visibility factor. If you play your cards right and you have the talent, getting your entries seen is simple.

Starting with the lower awards, you can just enter your local competitions. Post your really nice stuff to a website and send the link to the mailing lists saying “hey if you have time, check this out”. Later on, with some shipping costs, you can continuously enter your gear in kingdom/imperial level competitions. This will work pretty much on

# **An Outlanders Guide to Obtaining Knighthood**

**(without being seen as belt hungry)**

all artistic and scientific entries. Writing entries can be emailed directly to the judges. Winning a couple of these competitions will have the knights take note of your name. The trick is to consistently improve your entries with each competition.

Entering the major competitions also comes into play heavily with this belt quest. kingdom/imperial Dragon Master and Olympiad A&S competitions should be your two main targets. You win one of those and you are officially on the radar. You win one and place in another and your name has an excellent chance of being mentioned in the Knights' Circle. Keep your standards for yourself high and continue to evolve and diversify and you can't go wrong. There is a definite road map to success with this belt.

Travel is still a very important aspect of this. Always show off your best work when you travel outside your homelands or when visitors do drop by. If you have an amazing piece of armor, make sure it gets worn in a battle game where it can be seen and admired. If you can sing like a goddess, participate in the bardics where you can be heard. Never forget to use your name so it's attached to your accomplishments. Someone compliments your armor, ask their name, give them yours and tell them you made it. Also, be willing to teach if asked, or learn something if somebody has something similar but a little better made. Nothing impresses a knight more than an artisan who is willing to take the time to teach or learn.

## **Flame**

Flame is the other belt that is considered among the two easiest for outland knights. The reason for this is simple, there are a million and one opportunities to serve at the kingdom/imperial and local levels and be recognized for your efforts. Even more of these opportunities exist if you create them for yourself.

You can start small by helping prepare and serve feasts. Pick up trash around your park. Pitch in setting up at events. Perform water bearer service at events. Help set up the IM castle. Help take down the IM castle. Help with any kind of major setup/tear-down is always remembered as a huge service.

You can get bigger by sub-autocrating events. Organize all of the war events for an event. Organize all the bardic or feasting at an event. You get the idea.

The final step of course is running an entire event by yourself. You will have to do this most likely a few times to be considered a master in the service orders.

Always be willing to step up and help, especially at times when everybody else seems to be too busy. One thing that is crucial to remember, provide service consistently, not just for the big show. Be very active in your own park. Write newsletters, organize battlegames, and promote your park. Helping should be something you volunteer for, not something you should be asked to do. That "can do" attitude is critical in achieving this belt and does tend to be the best attitude of flame knights. These are all invaluable things that come naturally to a flame knight and thus will be looked for in candidates for this belt. A word of advice, if you want to be hated by your group and seen as a being belt hungry, then only help at major events for the kingdom/empire.

As with all areas of achievement, putting your best foot forward when you see and are seen by other Amtgarders, particularly core members, is a great idea. This can mean volunteering for a gate or reeve shift at Clan or jumping on a larger piece of service at Rakis. You can almost always find a way to serve which will be appreciated at a large event. Don't forget about visibility. Always introduce yourself and take the time to learn

# **An Outlanders Guide to Obtaining Knighthood**

**(without being seen as belt hungry)**

who the people are that you're helping. The more people who know you, the better it is. Next event, they'll remember you as a friend who helped out.

## **Crown(\*Note - unless you serve in a Duchy or higher, Crown is usually unattainable)**

Visibility for crown is the most straightforward; either you served in office or you didn't. However, it's also the most subjectively judged category for the Knights' Circle. Judging ones efforts as a Prime Minister, Consort/Regent, or Monarch is difficult enough when you're from a core group being seen all the time. Imagine how hard it is to judge your efforts when nobody from the core group (especially the knights) is there to personally witness them. Many knights measure the success of a candidate's term one way, while the rest do it another way. More times than not, you will have multiple groups of knights with very different opinions of what was a successful office. Don't fear, we also believe that if you can hit the high points (see next paragraph) you will be kosher with most, if not all, the knights.

The most important objectives in any term of office are: stability, progress and attitude. These are the foundations for any good term in office be it Monarch, Consort/Regent, P.M., etc. Achieving them is not as easy as it seems and this is why you can get knighted for your efforts. Crown knights are known for their ability to work with all the people to make the park a fun and rewarding experience for everybody. They also know how to work with the system to get their people recognized at the kingdom/imperial level and to get stay in touch with the rest of Amtgard. To make your park grow, and if possible, take it to the next level (shire to duchy and beyond...) without alienating the current populace is a demanding job that goes on every day of the week, not just at the park. To be successful at this is extremely rewarding. To be recognized and knighted for it is what you'd like to have happen. Now to the visibility part of this discussion. If you are an outland officer, promote your group to the rest of the kingdom/empire. You can do this by coordinating special events and inviting the "core" members to visit. This will benefit you, your group, and the kingdom/empire as a whole. Make sure people are aware of what you're doing to make your group bigger and better. That stuff about being on mailing lists and forums discussed earlier is critical for this visibility. Not only will it help your case as a possible knight, but it really does an amazingly huge amount of work towards helping your entire group.

Crown knighthood is achievable and there is a clear path to it even if you aren't in the core. It is a very hard path but very rewarding. That path is to take a leadership role in growing your group to kingdom size and work them through the process to achieve kingdom status. No IM group has yet achieved this goal but we have seen other kingdoms go through this process. The leaders of such successful efforts are almost always rewarded with Crown belts. Do remember that this method while almost sure fire, its not your only path.

## **Sword**

There are three things to remember about earning this belt.

1. BE DOMINANT. You need to be granted the title of Warlord by your kingdom/empire nowadays to be seen as a possible Sword Knight. Be a presence on the battlefield. Make a difference for your team. Push yourself to learn as much as you can

# **An Outlanders Guide to Obtaining Knighthood**

**(without being seen as belt hungry)**

from as many people as you can. When you travel, FIGHT. A LOT. When you see good fighters on the field, either fight beside them, or against them. See them work and learn it. Be the person they're talking about around the fire in a good way. Win the tournaments in your own lands. Then attend the tournaments at the kingdom/imperial level. You want to be a Sword Knight, don't travel for the coronations, travel for the tournaments. Be there for weapons master. Do well by either placing or winning. If possible, travel to other kingdoms and fight in their tournaments too. Winning is very important.

2. BE HONORABLE. No one likes or respects a sluffing rhino-hider that has be pounded like a nail before they'll take their shots. Amtgard has enough Sword Knights with bad reputations. Most Knights' Circles have no intention of adding to that number. Don't be the person they're talking about around the fire in a bad way. Be the person that impressed everyone with your fighting skill and your ability to take your shots.

3. TEACH. Pass your knowledge onto others. If this sounds like a monumental achievement, it's only because it is. You need to teach others your skills. Nothing improves a fighter like trying to teach another. It's easy to dominate a field of unskilled people. It's truly impressive to dominate a field of really good fighters. But the ultimate is if you taught them all to be good.

The fact is this will be the hardest belt for an outland knight to achieve. Knight of the Sword is not won through the internet. It is won on the battlefield and in tournaments. This is where visibility is beyond critical. You have to be known as somebody who kicks ass on the field. Period. Politics will not win you this belt. You must be able to master all weapon types, you must be able to hold your own against other Sword Knights, and you must dominate all others. The Sword Knights of your lands must know your name and the only way that happens is when you beat them in a tournament consistently. To put it simply, you must win one of your kingdom/empire's tourneys before the Sword Knights will even consider you. You must win consistently to be considered ready for the belt.

If you cannot be at your kingdom/empire's tournaments, the only way to be even noticed is if you fight some of the kingdom/empire's best (ditch battles and battle games at major events), had at least a couple of tourney wins in kingdom level tourneys (not your own kingdom) against other fighters your own knights know to be great, or win a multi-kingdom tournament, like Olympiad. This MIGHT be enough for the knights of your lands to consider you without winning an imperial IM tournament. Sword Knights (especially those of the IM) consider themselves to be the best in the game and they expect to see the same skills from all perspective Sword Knights. So our advice is practice, fight the best, and travel to your kingdom/empire's tourneys. There is virtually NO other way.

## **Your Lands Sponsorship**

You must have the support of your own lands and they must feel that you deserve to be knighted. We cannot stress how incredibly important this last point is. We, as a

# **An Outlanders Guide to Obtaining Knighthood**

**(without being seen as belt hungry)**

circle, would be hard pressed to vote “yes” for a candidate not pushed for by their own land. Your people have to truly believe you are a knight and treat you like a knight before we ever strap a belt around your waist. Our natural instincts are to tone down the rating of a local land for their candidate. So if you get a lackluster or bad review from your own land, its pretty much over. It is also worthwhile to get multiple voices speaking for your land. This is where its important as a leader to get others from your lands involved on the email lists and the internet forums. The more varied the voices, the better. If there is only one voice, even if that voice is solidly in your corner, there might be questions about whether that person might be biased. If several leaders in a row speak highly of you and a number of people from your lands are on the lists speaking highly of you, and maybe include a petition from all those in your lands, it goes far in establishing your credibility and really does look better than having only one advocate.

## **In Closing**

We certainly hope this guide has been useful to you. We want to stress that this is written by three knights of the IM to help people outside of their kingdom/imperial core. This is in no way an IM “sanctioned” document. All three knights have lived in “non-core” lands and are experienced with these situations. Based on this experience, we have endeavored to give you a road map to success even when you live in the outer reaches of your kingdom/empire. This is not an absolute blue print and it does not guarantee knighthood in any way. These are hints and suggestions that we have witnessed be successful in the past. Please keep in mind it takes a monarch to make a knight. The Circle of Knights for most kingdoms is an advisory board. In some kingdoms, the King can only knight those provided by the Knights’ Circle. (In the IM, a VERY high percentage of the time the Emperor listens to the Circle’s advice and is willing to knight or not knight based upon their recommendation).

Good luck to all of you.

Sir Guy Kasama: KoF, KoSw, KoC

Sir Michael Hammer of God: KoF, KoSw, KoC

Sir Jetara Starlamaine: KoSw, KoF