

Grand Cross Pro Merito Melitensi

The Highest Order of Merit for Ambassador Ardeshir Zahedi

On Wednesday 24 February 2016, in a ceremony in Montreux, in recognition of his life-long devotion to charity and humanitarian causes, Ambassador Ardeshir Zahedi received the highest decoration of the order of Malta, THE GRAND CROSS OF MALTA Merito Melitensi.

On February 18th.2016, Dr Gilles de Weck, President of the Association of the Order of Malta had written to the Ambassador to officially inform him of the decision of the Sovereign Council of the Order of Malta to manifest their recognition for his continued support and devotion to the humanitarian causes by presenting him with their highest distinction:

Grand Cross Pro Merito Melitensi



Addressing the distinguished personalities present in the ceremony of February 24th., President Giles De Weck spoke about the reasons why the Sovereign Council of the Order of Malta in its annual meeting of February 4, 2016 had reached such decision. He added:

“Your Excellency Ambassador Ardeshir Zahedi: we are grateful to you for your life-long dedication to charity. You have been one of the longest and the most loyal friends of the Association, devotedly and generously participating in all our humanitarian activities, from the construction of hospitals to relief aid to victims of wars or natural calamities. On behalf of our Sovereign Council, I have the honour to award you this decoration of the GRAND ORDER PRO MERITO MELITENSI. “

Ambassador Zahedi said how grateful he was for this honour and expressed his sincere thanks to the members of the Sovereign Council and to President De Weck for this special honour. He also said how much he has appreciated the people and authorities of Switzerland for having so warmly received him in their community and most particularly after 1980. He continued:

“I have always been proud to be associated with the activities of the Order of Malta that is so genuinely devoted to human causes. I remember well that early in the 1960’s the Order had decided to build a fully equipped modern hospital in Tehran named Notre Dame de Fatima. The Musi family who were friends of my father then living Switzerland had asked him for support. On his advice, I approached His Majesty and got his full sympathy and approval for the project. Dr Homayoun Bahadori, who worked with the minister of the imperial court, was appointed in charge and the project was completed in due time to become one of the most important and highly solicited medical centres for the deprived people of Tehran.

Jean Marie Musi, the senior, had two sons. The elder, Pierre Musi who served the army and reached the rank of general, was appointed head of the Swiss intelligence during the Second World War before becoming the Swiss Military attaché in Tehran from 1950 to 1954. He was well known to my father who had a particular affection for Switzerland and the Swiss. His younger brother, Luigi Musi, became the President of the Swiss Association of Order of Malta in 1980’s. In the third generation, the son of Luigi and Mary Musi, Jean-Marie Musi, the junior, a career diplomat, and currently Ambassador to Spain, represented the Order of Malta and came to Tehran for the opening ceremony of

the great medical centre in presence of Princess Shamas Pahlavi who was president of the Iranian Red Cross (the Lion and Sun).

So you see, Mr President and my dear friends that my relations with the Order of Malta and its activities are deeply rooted and have a long history that stretches over more than sixty years.

May God bless you for all the wonderful things that you do."

The order of Grand Cross Pro Merito Melitensi, is a decoration generally reserved to the heads of states and renowned personalities who have rendered exceptional services. Amongst the few recipients in the past we can see the names of Prince Albert II of Monaco, President Dwight. D. Eisenhower, Président Jacques Chirac, President Roland Reagan, Franz, the Duke of Bavaria and Président Valery Giscard d'Estaing and President H.W. Bush.

The Order of Malta itself is one of the few Orders created in the Middle Ages, more precisely in 1113, and after 903 years is still active today and more than ever before. It is also the only one that is at the same time religious and sovereign.

The knighthood nature explains and justifies the maintenance of the noble ambition of the Order, as most of its Religious Knights came from chivalrous and noble Christian families. Today the majority of Knights belong to all classes of society. The members of the Order may be defined as believers enlivened by nobleness of spirit and behaviour.

All Knights must meet the traditional requirement for the bestowing of knighthood: distinguish themselves for special virtues, moral value, characterised by the spirit of service, sacrifice and discipline.

Battles are no longer fought with swords, but with the peaceful tools of the fight against disease, poverty, social isolation and intolerance, as well as the defence and promotion of the faith.



H.E. Gaudenz VON SALIS, Prince Renaud Of Belgium, Princess Lea Of Belgium, Mayor of Montreux and Elect conseil National Mr. Laurent Wehrli, Contess Anne BLANKART DE PALEZIEUX, H.E.Ardeshir ZAHEDI,Contess Isabelle VON SALIS, H.E. President of Order of Malta Mr. Gilles DE WECK, Princess Mahnaz Ministre of Belgium Mr. ZENNER



H.E. Ardeshir ZAHEDI, H.E. President of Order of Malta Mr. Gilles DE WECK



Figure 1