



# FACT SHEET

## Eagle Scouts

- Significance** The fact that a boy is an Eagle Scout has always carried with it a special significance, not only in Scouting but also as he enters higher education, business or industry, and community service. The award is a performance-based achievement whose standards have been well-maintained over the years. Not every boy who joins a Boy Scout troop earns the Eagle Scout rank; only about 5 percent of all Boy Scouts do so. This represents more than 1.7 million Boy Scouts who have earned the rank since 1912. Nevertheless, the goals of Scouting—citizenship training, character development, and personal fitness—remain important for all Scouts, whether or not they attain the Eagle Scout rank.
- Progression** To earn the Eagle Scout rank, the highest advancement rank in Scouting, a Boy Scout must fulfill requirements in the areas of leadership, service, and outdoor skills. Although many options are available to demonstrate proficiency in these areas, a number of specific skills are required to advance through the ranks—Tenderfoot, Second Class, First Class, Star, Life, and Eagle. To advance, a Boy Scout must pass specific tests that are organized by requirements and merit badges.
- Merit Badges** Merit badges signify the mastery of certain Scoutcraft skills, as well as helping boys increase their skill in an area of personal interest. Of the 120 merit badges available, 21 must be earned to qualify for Eagle Scout. Of this group, 12 badges are required, including First Aid, Citizenship in the Community, Citizenship in the Nation, Citizenship in the World, Communications, Environmental Science, Personal Fitness, Personal Management, Camping, and Family Life. In addition, a Scout has a choice between Emergency Preparedness and Lifesaving and a choice among Cycling, Hiking, and Swimming.
- Scoutmaster Conferences** At each of his rank advancements, a Boy Scout takes part in a Scoutmaster conference. These conferences help the Scout to set goals for himself in line with his individual talents and abilities. At each conference, the Scoutmaster helps him evaluate how well he accomplished his present goal and then works with him in setting new goals.
- Service and Responsibility** Beginning with the Star rank, and continuing through Life and Eagle, a Scout must demonstrate participation in increasingly more responsible service projects. At these levels, he also must demonstrate leadership skills by holding one or more specific youth positions of responsibility in his troop.
- Steps in Advancement** Advancement, one of the eight methods by which the aims of Scouting are achieved, has four steps through each award level.
- First, the Scout *learns*. Much of his learning comes from other boys in his patrol or troop and by active participation in troop program. His patrol activities are directed toward the skills he needs. Every troop hike, camping trip, or other activity offers potential learning experiences. A Scout learns to pitch a tent by pitching one, to use a compass by finding directions, and to cook a meal by having to prepare and eat it.

Second, the Scout is *tested*. The specific requirements determine the kind of testing. Verbal testing is sufficient in some instances. In other instances, a Scout must demonstrate his skills by doing.

Third, the Scout is *reviewed*. The purpose of the review is to ensure that all requirements for advancement have been met. This includes a check of the Scout's attitude and practice of the ideals of Scouting, in addition to his Scoutcraft skills. The decision regarding whether a Scout has met the required standards to qualify for rank advancement begins with the troop and, for the Eagle Scout rank, is approved by the district, local council, and finally, the National Council.

Fourth, the Scout is *recognized*. The final step in advancement involves presentation of the badge, usually at a ceremony before the entire troop.

**Boy Scouts With Disabilities**

Boy Scouts with disabilities may qualify for the Eagle Scout rank. The Scout must earn as many of the required merit badges as he can. He then submits an application for alternate merit badges. His BSA local council determines the alternate merit badges for him to earn.

**National Eagle Scout Association**

Founded in 1972, the National Eagle Scout Association (NESA) maintains contact with Eagle Scouts to sustain their interest in Scouting. Any Eagle Scout may join the association. Applications for membership in NESA are available through your local council, on the BSA Web page ([www.scouting.org](http://www.scouting.org)), or by contacting the Eagle Scout Service at the national office.

**Distinguished Eagle Scout Award**

The Distinguished Eagle Scout Award was established in 1969 to acknowledge Eagle Scouts who have distinguished themselves in business, professions, and service to their country. Only Eagle Scouts who earned the Eagle Scout rank a minimum of 25 years previously are eligible for nomination. The award is given by the National Eagle Scout Service upon the recommendation of a committee of Distinguished Eagle Scouts.

**A Sample of  
Famous Eagle  
Scouts**

Willie Banks  
Olympian, former world record holder,  
triple jump and long jump

Lloyd M. Bentsen Jr.  
Former secretary of the treasury and  
former United States senator, Texas

Bill Bradley  
Former United States senator,  
New Jersey

Milton A. Caniff  
Cartoonist

William C. DeVries, M.D.  
Surgeon and educator  
Transplanted first artificial heart

Thomas Foley  
Former Speaker of the House and  
former United States representative,  
Washington

Dr. Robert M. Gates  
Former director, CIA  
President, Texas A&M University

The Honorable Gerald R. Ford  
38th president of the United States

J. Stephen Fossett  
First to circumnavigate the Earth solo in  
a balloon

Michael Kahn  
Stage director  
Academy Award-winning film editor

John Koncak  
Center, Orlando Magic, National  
Basketball Association

James A. Lovell Jr.  
Apollo astronaut and business executive

The Honorable Richard G. Lugar  
United States senator, Indiana

J. Willard Marriott Jr.  
Chairman of the board and president,  
Marriott Corporation

Sam Nunn  
Former United States senator, Georgia

H. Ross Perot  
Founder, Electronic Data Systems  
Corporation and The Perot Group

Donald H. Rumsfeld  
Secretary of defense

Harrison Salisbury  
Pulitzer Prize-winning author

Togo West  
Former secretary of veterans affairs