



SCOUTING PROGRAM HANDBOOK



THE VFW SCOUTING PROGRAM

The close relationship between the Veterans of Foreign Wars and the Boy Scouts of America dates back 100 years when VFW Post 2100 teamed up with another civic organization to establish Troop 1 in Everett, Washington. That century-long affiliation has fostered true patriotism, community service and strong, moral character throughout the ensuing decades. During World Wars I and II, Boy Scouts played a major part in helping collect food and other items to support the troops in the war. Since that time, scouting has continued to be a supporter of the VFW and Scouts have grown up, joined the military, fought in wars and subsequently become members of the VFW. It is only fitting that we focus the efforts of those who have been Scouts to continue guiding VFW Posts in their support of all scouting efforts.

All scouting organizations provide a first-class youth development and education program for use by qualified organizations. The VFW is an ideal organization to incorporate the scout program into our support for youth in our local communities. Every VFW Post has the opportunity to work in partnership with the Boy Scouts or the Girl Scouts when they sponsor/charter a scouting unit. Direct involvement in the scouting program presents VFW Posts with the opportunity to positively affect the lives of the youth in our communities while developing positive youth/adult partnerships.

Through scouting (including Girl Scouts, Venturing, and Sea Scouts), VFW Posts have the opportunity to expand their community outreach while developing a clear resource for veteran's families and their children. The Department Scouting Team's primary objective is to encourage local Posts to incorporate Boy Scouting, Girl Scouting, Venturing, and Sea Scouts into their Youth Activities Programs. Department Scouting Chairpersons must help Posts recognize the value of scouting by pointing out the following advantages:

- a. Scouts are often willing to do service projects that benefit the Post directly such as flag retirement, maintenance of Post facility and grounds, assistance with "Buddy"® Poppy distribution, color guards, and participation in Post community activities and events.
- b. Working with scouts provides incentives for veterans with young families to join and become active members.

- c. Post members can serve as mentors and provide a positive image to a new generation of potential service members.
- d. Recognition of scouting provides Posts with positive public visibility.
- e. Scouts often join the military, become eligible and become members of the Post.

ORGANIZING YOUR DEPARTMENT TEAM

The Department Scouting Chairman is responsible for organizing and managing scouting within their Department. These appointments are only for the administrative year to which you were appointed. In addition to being a VFW member (mandated by the National By-Laws), the Department Scouting Chairman should:

- a. Demonstrate a history of Scouting participation and adult leadership experience.
- b. Demonstrate a history of commitment to the VFW as indicated by successful leadership positions held.
- c. Be the Department "expert" on all phases of Scouting.
- d. Must cooperate with Department, District and Post leaders, and Scouting leadership.

The Department Scouting Chairman is the Department Scouting Team leader. They are responsible for recruiting, organizing, training and maintaining an effective team for the Department. This begins with recruiting and building of your Department team.

There is no required number of Department Scouting Team leaders; the Department Scouting Team Chairman will need to determine the appropriate number to effectively cover your Department. Those selected should demonstrate the same attributes as listed above, and team leaders may be VFW and Auxiliary members. They may also be members of troops/posts/packs sponsored by VFW posts or units sponsored by other activities or at a district or council level.

The Department Scouting Chairman should maintain copies of all applications and approval status for all his team members. The Chairman should publish a list of all Department Scouting team members and make it available to Posts throughout the Department. The Chairman is also responsible to ensure that all new Department Scouting team members take the BSA Youth Protection class online and maintain a current Youth

Protection Certificate and remain current with other certifications as required by the BSA for positions held. The Department Scouting Chairman should coordinate with other Department Chairmen on activities that may affect programs in their Department.

The Department Scouting Chairman is responsible for working with the Department Commander and Quartermaster for a budget for the team and for scout recognition. To be more efficient and effective, the Department Scouting Chairman should communicate regularly with the Department leadership as to the status and progress of the program. Additionally, they should provide quarterly reports and be prepared to present the report at their Department Council of Administration meetings.

TEAM DUTIES

Scout of the Year

Each Department may select an individual who is an Eagle Scout, a Girl Scout Gold Award recipient, a Venture Summit Award recipient or a Sea Scout Quartermaster Award recipient as the first-place Department Scout of the Year winner and provide the application packet to the VFW National Headquarters for recognition.

Eligible Scout of the Year applicants can be recruited from individual units, visits to round tables or other scouting functions in the community. It should be remembered that the VFW is not the only organization seeking to recognize these young people. Because there is a lot of competition from many organizations for recognizing these Scouts, Boy Scout and Girl Scout councils often will not be able to take active action to distribute literature for any one organization. The VFW Scouting Team should be in the active mode, visiting round tables, camporees, and individual units where the program can be presented by a VFW Scouting Team member.

The ideal process is to have each Post in the Department select and recognize a Scout of the Year; submit the winners to District level for judging, and forward those winners to the Department for judging. Following the selection of Scout of the Year by Posts, if practical, a District-level judging should be conducted. The District Scouting lead or Youth Activities Chairman can organize

a judging team consisting of local teachers, religious leaders, school teachers, or utilize members of the State/Department Scouting Team. Again, the winner should be recognized at a Post/District meeting and the application forwarded to the Department for their Department judging process.

The Department judging can be done by the Scouting Team or by a board of people appointed by the Scouting Team. Awards and presentations to the winning Scouts should come from the Departments. Recognition of this winner at the Department convention is a great opportunity for the Scout to see the VFW in action. The Department Scouting Chairman is responsible to ensure that this is a great moment for the Scout and the VFW. The application for Scout of the Year can be found enclosed and is available online at vfw.org/scout on the Scout of the Year web page.

Organize Scouting Units

Using the BSA/GSA steps to organize a unit, the Department Scouting team should work with posts to determine if the posts have the available resources to organize units. The unit Chartered Organization Representative (COR) must belong to the sponsoring post and work to make the unit successful. It never hurts to engage with the new parents coming into the unit for possible eligibility to the VFW. The Scouting team members should work with these units to help them be supportive of their VFW sponsor. Scouts are an excellent resource for flag retirements, road clean up, grounds clean up, parades and many other areas of support to the sponsoring post.

MEETINGS, TRAINING AND AWARDS

Communicate Scouting Objectives

The Department Scouting Chairman should participate in the annual Department School of Instruction for new commanders and officers and make a presentation on the scouting team and scouting objectives. This is a great opportunity to inform commanders and others on who to contact for support and assistance, but more importantly, it gives the Team the chance to promote the program and encourage participation.

The Department Scouting Chairman is responsible for training their team members. An excellent opportunity would be to have scouting training the same weekend your Department is holding their School of Instruction or at your Department Convention. If these are not options, someone can arrange for a military base, local scout

camp, hunting club or other area where the team can get together to develop a plan for your team over the next year.

There are lots of diverse ideas on what can be done and the team can develop a team strategy and plan that will work in your state. There should be an annual team meeting to ensure the team is on track and that all team members understand what to do and fully understand their roles. Additionally, your scouting team members should gather at Department Convention and winter department meetings to follow up on progress and planning.

Department and District Officers

As the Department Scouting Chairman, you are an integral part of the Department Commander's staff. You are responsible for working with the Department Commander and the Adjutant/Quartermaster to ensure that any department funds allocated to Scouting programs are budgeted and available to support the scouting program. As mentioned earlier, you should be prepared to report to the Commander on the status of the scouting program at Department Council of Administration meetings and also to ensure proper expenditure of any Department funds for the program. The Department Scouting Chairman should also work with District Commanders as necessary to ensure implementation of the program at all levels. In short, they are responsible for communicating and promoting the scouting program throughout the Department.

If you need any additional assistance or have any questions about the VFW and Scouting, contact the Youth Programs Coordinator at the VFW National Headquarters, at 816.968.2787 or scouting@vfw.org.

NOTE:

Scouters are excellent candidates for Patriot's Pen and Voice of Democracy contests. The team should take the opportunity to advertise these to the scouting community and scout troops with which you work directly.

The VFW Youth Activities, Voice of Democracy/Patriot's Pen Chairman's Manuals have information about these programs as well as the Scout of the Year program. For further information on the VFW Scouting Program, contact:

**Youth Programs Coordinator
VFW Programs
VFW National Headquarters
406 W. 34th Street
Kansas City, MO 64111**

**816.968.2787
youthscholarships@vfw.org**

SCOUT OF THE YEAR Program



WHAT IS THE SCOUT OF THE YEAR PROGRAM?

Annually, the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States recognizes individuals who are: Eagle Scouts, Girl Scout Gold Award recipients, Venture Summit Award recipients and/or Sea Scout Quartermasters who have risen above their peers in exemplifying the qualities of that rank.

AM I ELIGIBLE?

To be eligible for the award, the candidate must:

- Be the recipient of the Eagle Scout Award, Girl Scout Gold Award, Venture Summit Award or Sea Scout Quartermaster Award.
- Be a registered, active member of a Boy or Girl Scout Troop, Venturing Crew or Sea Scout Ship at the time the above reward was received.
- Have demonstrated exemplary citizenship in school, Scouting and community.

Prior National Scout of the Year winners are ineligible. There is no minimum age requirement for applicants as long as all other eligibility criteria has been met. The maximum age requirement for applicants is 18 years old. If an applicant reaches their 18th birthday during the nomination year, they remain eligible as long as they are still in high school at the time of the submission deadline. A Scout may enter through only one VFW Post. A local Post can be identified by zip code at vfw.org/FindaPost.

WHAT ARE THE DEADLINES?

- Deadline for entry to VFW Post is **March 1**.
- One candidate with full entry criteria must be submitted by a VFW Post to the next level of judging by **April 1**. The VFW Department Scouting Chairman can provide this information.
- The Department winner must be selected and submitted by their Department Scouting chairman to the VFW National Headquarters by **May 1**.

Questions should be directed to 816.756.3390, ext. 6787 during normal business hours Monday through Friday or emailed to scouting@vfw.org.

Official Entry Form

SCOUT OF THE YEAR Program

**MUST BE COMPLETED BY EACH CONTESTANT
and submitted directly to a VFW post in your community.**

Name: First, M.I., Last

Address

City, State, Zip

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Home Phone

Email

Date of Birth (dd/mm/yyyy)

Scout Troop Number

SCOUT/VENTURE CERTIFICATION

I hereby certify that the foregoing information is accurate and if I am the winner, I will make myself available to receive the award at a presentation ceremony as designated by the Veterans of Foreign Wars.

Scout/Venture Signature

Date (mm/dd/yyyy)

UNIT LEADER'S CERTIFICATION

I hereby certify that the above-named Scout/Venture is an active member of our unit or was when the award was received and the information supplied by the candidate is accurate to the best of my knowledge.

Unit Leader's Signature

Date (mm/dd/yyyy)

PARENT'S CONSENT

I hereby certify that all information on this application is correct. I willingly submit this name for consideration as the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States' Scout of the Year. If this individual is selected as the winner, I will ensure that he/she is allowed to attend a presentation ceremony as designed by the Veterans of Foreign Wars.

Father, Mother or Guardian Signature

Date (mm/dd/yyyy)



VETERANS OF FOREIGN WARS.

SCOUT OF THE YEAR Program

VFW DEPARTMENT SCOUTING CHAIRMAN

PHONE: _____

SPONSORING VFW POST

POST NUMBER: _____

ADDRESS: _____

POST COMMANDER'S SIGNATURE:

DISTRICT CERTIFICATION

IF APPLICABLE, CHECK WITH THE VFW DEPARTMENT SCOUTING CHAIRMAN

DISTRICT #: _____

DISTRICT CDR.: _____

DEPARTMENT CERTIFICATION

MUST BE COMPLETED BY DEPARTMENT VFW SCOUTING CHAIRMAN OR DEPT. COMMANDER

DEPARTMENT: _____

SUBMITTED BY: _____

SIGNATURE: _____

WHAT DOCUMENTATION IS REQUIRED?

The following documentation should be submitted:

- **Photograph of the Scout** — must be attached to this form. The Scout must appear in correct, complete uniform for their current rank. Recommended size 3" x 5".
- **School Participation Record** — a single page, one-sided resume of the candidate's school activities indicating academic achievements, offices held, honors received and significant participation in other activities.
- **Scouting Record** — maximum of three pages, one side only, listing of all Scouting participation beginning with Cub Scouts or Brownies - years of participation, unit numbers and sponsors. Also include when Eagle, Gold, Summit or Quartermaster Award was received and Palms. Identify leadership positions held at all levels, participation in Scouting activities (jamborees, Order of the Arrow conferences, etc.) and the candidate's Eagle Scout, Girl Scout Gold Award, Venture Summit or Sea Scout Quartermaster Project.
- **Community Service Record** — a single page, one-sided resume listing participation in community and religious service organizations (excluding Scouting and school), noting leadership positions held and any recognition received.
- **Letters of Recommendation** — Submit three letters, no more than two pages in length from:
 - A scout leader.
 - A community member.
 - A teacher/faculty member (if homeschooled, a parent letter is allowed).
 - In addition, you may include one or two additional letters, no more than two pages in length from local community members who have special knowledge of the candidate's abilities/accomplishments.
- **Completed Entry Form** – submitted to a local VFW Post. Local Posts can be identified by zip code at vfw.org/FindaPost.

WHO MAKES UP THE VFW SCOUTING TEAM?

The backbone of Scouting in the VFW is the VFW Scouting Team. These VFW members are deeply involved in Scouting, most with decades of experience.

Appointed by their Department Commander, they are responsible for promoting scouting in their state. They are available to encourage Posts to sponsor units, support units and individual Scout projects. They should be the Department's "expert" on all phases of scouting. Many Departments have multiple members of the VFW Scouting Team, but every Department should have at least one individual to promote the values of scouting to youth and to the VFW itself. For more information on the VFW Scouting Team call 816.756.3390, ext 6787, or email scouting@vfw.org



VETERANS OF FOREIGN WARS.