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Recruiting Eagle Scouts for Commissioner Service

A History of Eagle Scouts in the Pee
Dee Area Council



Ed Suggs Doctoral Thesis

UNIT COMMISSIONER CHCORA DISTRICT PEE DEE AREA COUNCIL

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INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this thesis is to re-engage Eagle Scouts into volunteer service with Scouting, particularly in the Pee Dee Area Council. I want to make this point, I have met many volunteers who are great assets to our Council, not just Eagle Scouts and I want anyone who reads this to know and understand some of our best volunteers are not Eagle Scouts. Everyone who has a passion for Scouting is always welcome in our volunteers efforts in the Council. The primary focus for this thesis is as I said to re-engage Eagle Scouts because studies have shown that although a large percentage do volunteer in one aspect or another, there are also a great number of them who are not involved with scouting anymore. I am a firm believer in “Once an Eagle, always an Eagle” and I believe it is every Eagle Scouts duty to give back to Scouting. It is from that viewpoint that I base this thesis on.

I earned my Eagle Scout on October 18, 1980 from Troop 64 in York, Pennsylvania and returned to Scouting in 1998 as a Tiger Cub Adult in the Pee Dee Area Council. I have been an active Scouter ever since and am currently the NESAs/Alumni Chairman, Chicora District Membership Chairman, Unit Commissioner, and a Troop Committee Member. I hope you enjoy my thesis and please contact me if you have any questions or have anything to add. If you are an Eagle Scout, please forward your information to me for our database.

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The Eagle Scout Award. It's Scouting's highest rank and among its most familiar icons. Men who have earned it count it among their most treasured possessions. Those who missed it by a whisker remember exactly which requirement they didn't complete. Americans from all walks of life know that being an Eagle Scout is a great honor, even if they don't know just what the badge means. The award is more than a badge. It's a state of being. You *are* an Eagle Scout, never *were*. You may have received the badge as a boy, but you earn it every day as a man. In the words of the Eagle Scout Promise, you do your best each day to make your training and example, your rank and your influence count strongly for better Scouting and for better citizenship in your troop, in your community, and in your contacts with other people. And to this you pledge your sacred honor. Given the Eagle Scout rank's prominence, it might be surprising that it had no place in the original Boy Scout advancement program. *Scouting for Boys*, Robert Baden-Powell's 1908 Scout handbook, included just three classes of Scouts, Tenderfoot, Second Class, and First Class, along with the Wolf badge, which was "a reward for very special distinction." This badge was so significant that no more than one would be granted each year. The wolf seemed an appropriate symbol. In 1896, when B-P was fighting in what is now Zimbabwe, Matabele tribesmen nicknamed him *Impeesa*, meaning "the wolf that never sleeps." Ernest Thompson Seton, whose Woodcraft Indians program helped inspire the creation of Scouting, called himself Black Wolf. After the Boy Scouts of America was founded in 1910, Seton created a proof edition of the *American Handbook for Boys* that combined material from *Scouting for Boys* and his own *Birch-Bark Roll of the Woodcraft*

Indians. The handbook incorporated Baden-Powell's advancement scheme but with a twist. The Silver Wolf Award would go to any First Class Scout who earned all 14 "badges of merit": Ambulance, Clerk, Cyclist, Electrician, Fireman, Gardener, Horseman, Pioneer, Marksman, Master-at-Arms, Musician, Signalers, Seaman, and Stalker. The Silver Wolf and the badges of merit were never produced. People who reviewed the proof handbook suggested that, founders' nicknames notwithstanding, America's national bird should grace Scouting's highest award. The 1911 *Handbook for Boys*, the first publicly available edition, introduced the Eagle Scout Award, as well as two lesser awards: Life Scout and Star Scout. At first, Life, Star, and Eagle were not considered ranks. Instead, they were special awards for earning merit badges, roughly equivalent to today's Eagle Palms. The Life Scout badge went to First Class Scouts who earned five specific merit badges: First Aid, Athletics, Lifesaving, Personal Health, and Public Health. (Note how all five relate to life in some way.) The Star Scout badge required another five elective merit badges. The Eagle Scout badge which the handbook called "the highest scout merit badge" required a total of 21 merit badges. In 1911, Scouts had 57 merit badges to choose from. Like today, these badges covered basic scouting skills (Camping, Cooking, Swimming), trades and careers (Business, Firemanship, Poultry Farming), science and nature (Chemistry, Conservation, Ornithology), and hobbies (Angling, Handicraft, Music). The Aviation merit badge demanded a working knowledge of "aeroplanes, balloons, and dirigibles." Invention required the Scout to obtain a patent. The requirements for one badge, Scholarship, hadn't been determined when the book went to press. That wasn't the only thing that hadn't been determined at press time. Page 43 of the *Handbook for Boys* described the Eagle Scout badge as "an eagle's head in silver," but the same page

showed a very different (and, to modern eyes, very unfamiliar) medal: an eagle in flight suspended from a broad, single-color ribbon.



The illustration of the Eagle Scout badge in the 1911 Handbook for Boys

THE FIRST EAGLE SCOUT

The confusion over the Eagle badge's design lingered into 1912. In fact, the first badge wasn't produced until the first Scout had already earned it. That Scout, Arthur Rose Eldred, was a member of Troop 1 in Oceanside, New York, a troop his brother Hubert had founded in November 1910. The younger Eldred earned his 21st merit badge in April 1912 at the age of 16. All that remained was an appearance before a board of review (then called a court of honor). Since there were no provisions for local reviews in those early days, Eldred was examined by perhaps the most exalted and intimidating board of

review in scouting history: Chief Scout Executive James E. West, Chief Scout Ernest Thompson Seton, and National Scout Commissioner Daniel Carter Beard (another BSA founder), and Wilbert E. Longfellow of the U.S.

Volunteer Life Saving Corps, who had written the *Handbook's* sections on swimming and lifesaving. Eldred survived his high-powered grilling. On August 21, 1912, West notified him that he was the BSA's first Eagle Scout. However, he would have to wait until Labor Day to receive his badge because the dies for making the metal badge hadn't been created yet.

Eldred's Eagle medal, now on display at the National Scouting Museum, was rather crudely modeled, and the silver coating easily wore off the bronze scroll and pendant. Nevertheless, the medal had an impressive and dignified look that's been retained, with only minor variations, for nearly 100 years.



Arthur Eldred's Medal



1924-1932

THE EAGLE SCOUT AWARD'S FIRST DECADE

Through Scouting's first decade and into the early 1920s, the advancement requirements remained fairly constant. The 1915 *Handbook for Boys* offered alternatives for two Life Scout merit badges: Scouts could substitute Physical Development for Athletics and Pioneering for Lifesaving. Moreover, the Eagle Scout candidate now had to earn 11 specific badges, First Aid, Physical Development, Lifesaving, Personal Health, Public Health, Cooking, Camping, Bird Study, Pathfinding, Pioneering, and Athletics along with 10 badges of his choice. A slight change the next year added Civics to the list of required badges and allowed the Scout to choose either Athletics or Physical Development. Despite the strengthening of the Eagle Scout requirements, the number of Eagle Scouts increased steadily. Just 23 Scouts had earned the Eagle badge in 1912; more than 2,000 earned it in 1922. This remarkable increase soon encouraged Scout officials to refine and strengthen the badge's requirements.

ROARING INTO THE TWENTIES

In 1924, BSA officials made two changes, one that seemed obvious at the time and one that seems obvious in retrospect. First, they made the Swimming merit badge a prerequisite for Lifesaving, meaning that 12 of the 21 badges for Eagle were now effectively predetermined. Second, they reversed the order of the Life and Star ranks. With the annual number of new Eagle Scouts pushing past 3,000, officials also

considered more drastic changes including the idea of creating another rank beyond Eagle. Any such award would be based on civic service and participating citizenship, not just on earning merit badges. Fortunately, tradition prevailed, and the Eagle Scout Award retained its position of prominence, although with a new set of requirements. These requirements, which appeared in the *Handbook for Boys* in 1927, added a service component to the Star, Life, and Eagle ranks. To become a Star Scout, a First Class Scout had to furnish “satisfactory evidence” that he had been living the ideals of Scouting and had made an “earnest effort” to develop his leadership ability. He also had to earn five merit badges of his choosing. The Life Scout requirements were identical, except that the Scout had to earn 10 merit badges (including the badges long associated with this rank). Finally, the Eagle Scout Award required a full year’s service as a First Class Scout, along with a total of 21 merit badges as before.

That 1927 *Handbook for Boys* also introduced the concept of Eagle Scout Palms, a compromise gesture to those who wanted to create a rank beyond Eagle. Much like today, a Scout could earn a Palm for earning five additional merit badges, continuing to live out the ideals of Scouting, and maintaining “an active service relationship to Scouting.” The Bronze Palm represented five merit badges, the Gold Palm 10, and the Silver Palm 15.

Despite the strengthened requirements, the number of Eagle Scouts continued to grow. In 1927, the annual rate was 4,500. By 1932, that number had more than doubled to 9,200. For the next six years, however, the annual number of Eagle Scouts fluctuated around 7,000, probably because of the upheaval in society caused by the Great Depression (although the number did jump to 10,000 in 1939).

As countless Scoutmasters and countless Eagle Scouts left home to fight in World War II, numbers continued to fluctuate. The Eagle rank's requirements remained relatively steady, however. In the early 1930s, the year of tenure required to become an Eagle Scout was split into parts: three months as a First Class Scout, three months as a Star Scout, and six months as a Life Scout. At the same time, the Safety merit badge was added to the list of required merit badges. One thing that had changed greatly over the years was the assortment of merit badges Scouts could choose from. The 1943 *Handbook for Boys* listed 111 merit badges, including 23 related to agriculture and four related to aviation, a subject that was constantly in the news that year. But even the required merit badges taught timely skills. According to the handbook, "Such skills have great value in times of emergency when resourcefulness and knowing how to carry on are called for." It further emphasized that "Scouts have always been found eager and prepared to accept responsibility both in local and national emergencies."

The postwar years led to a boom in involvement in Scouting, with more than 14,000 Scouts becoming Eagles each year during the mid-1950s. The era also saw a complete overhaul of the advancement program. Back in 1911, the first *Handbook for Boys* had described the Eagle Scout as “the all-round perfect Scout.” In 1948, the BSA set out to make sure Eagles were well-rounded, too. That year, Scouting’s 100 merit badges were grouped into 15 subject areas: animal husbandry, aquatics, arts, building, campcraft, citizenship, communication, conservation, crafts and collections, nature, outdoor sports, personal development, plant cultivation, public service, and transportation. An Eagle Scout candidate still had to earn a core group of merit badges, which now comprised Camping, Swimming, Nature, Public Health, Firemanship, Cooking, Lifesaving, Personal Fitness, Safety, and First Aid. In addition, he had to earn six badges from specified groups. These included one from conservation, three from citizenship, one from outdoor sports, and one from animal husbandry, plant cultivation, communication, transportation, or building. (His remaining five badges could come from any group.)

Many copies of the *Boy Scout Handbook* printed in 1965 included two sets of advancement requirements: those requirements that had been in effect with few changes for 17 years and those that would take effect on October 1, 1965. The differences were extensive. Virtually every requirement for every rank was changed, and the merit badge groups were eliminated. Perhaps the most far-reaching changes appeared in the Star, Life, and Eagle rank requirements. Each rank, including the lower ranks, now required a personal conference with the Scoutmaster to discuss Scouting ideals and the Scout's future plans. Each rank now required the Scout to serve as a "troop warrant officer", patrol leader, senior patrol leader, quartermaster, etc. In addition, each rank now required participation in service projects. Star and Life candidates had to participate in two projects for each rank: a conservation project and a more general community service project. Eagle candidates had to do just one, but it was a special project that would become synonymous with the Eagle Scout Award in years to come. In the words of the 1965 handbook, the Scout had to "plan, develop, and carry out a service project helpful to [his] church or synagogue, school, or community approved in advance by [his] Scoutmaster." The Eagle Scout leadership service project had been born. Despite the stiffened requirements, Scouts by the thousands continued to earn Scouting's highest rank. In 1963, 27,000 Eagle badges were awarded. By the end of the decade, that number had topped 30,000. But more changes were on the horizon.

In the early 1970s, the United States was reeling. After a decade of war, civil unrest, and social upheaval, traditional institutions like Scouting seemed woefully behind the times. In an effort to make Scouting more relevant and appealing in an increasingly urban culture, the BSA introduced the Improved Scouting Program. The cornerstone of this program was a new advancement system that offered Scouts unprecedented flexibility. To earn Tenderfoot, Second Class, and First Class, Scouts no longer completed specific requirements (take a hike, sharpen an ax, describe the American flag, etc.). Instead, they chose eight of 12 skill awards—belt loops in specific subjects—of which only Citizenship and First Aid were specified. Tenure requirements were also added for each rank. The Star, Life, and Eagle requirements looked much as they had before, but the list of Eagle-required merit badges was significantly different. In keeping with the Improved Scouting Program, the list deemphasized some traditional skills. Gone were the Camping, Cooking, and Nature merit badges.

Swimming and Lifesaving were still on the list, but Scouts could take Personal Fitness or Sports instead of Swimming and Emergency Preparedness instead of Lifesaving. To the chagrin of many longtime Scout leaders, a boy could, in theory, become an Eagle Scout without ever going camping, hiking, or swimming. The 1972 requirements also increased the number of merit badges required for Eagle to 24—the only increase since 1911. However, just 10 badges were required, letting Scouts choose 14 elective badges from a list that now included Space Exploration, Computers, and Environmental Science.

The Improved Scouting Program turned out to be a short-lived experiment. The 1979 *Official Boy Scout Handbook* written by Baden-Powell protégé Bill Hillcourt, retained the skill awards program but specified that Scouts had to earn the awards for Citizenship, Hiking, First Aid, Camping, and Cooking. The number of Eagle-required merit badges returned to 21, and the list reemphasized core skills (although recent innovations weren't completely abandoned). Scouts now had to earn First Aid, Citizenship in the Community, Citizenship in the Nation, Citizenship in the World, Communications, Safety, Emergency Preparedness or Lifesaving, Environmental Science, Personal Management, Personal Fitness or Swimming or Sports, and Camping.

It was during this time that the BSA reached a major milestone. In 1982, Alexander Holsinger of Normal, Illinois, became the one-millionth Eagle Scout. Holsinger was one of 25,573 Scouts who became Eagles that year. By the time the next handbook appeared, in 1990, skill awards had gone the way of berets, and the Tenderfoot, Second Class, and First Class requirements looked much as they had a generation before. To become a First Class Scout, a boy again had to master basic skills in camping, cooking, first aid, swimming, and nature study.

The only changes since 1990 have been relatively minor. A workbook to document the Eagle Scout candidate's leadership service project has been required since 1991, and district or council approval is now part of the process. Family Life became a required merit badge in 1994, just three years after its introduction. In 1999, the list of required badges changed slightly again when Hiking and Cycling were added, Safety and Sports were

dropped, and Personal Fitness again became mandatory. As of 2008, the list included these badges: First Aid, Citizenship in the Community, Citizenship in the Nation, Citizenship in the World, Communications, Personal Fitness, Emergency Preparedness or Lifesaving, Environmental Science, Personal Management, Swimming or Hiking or Cycling, Camping, and Family Life.

MOVING INTO THE FUTURE

More Scouts than ever, more than 50,000 now earn the Eagle Scout Award each year. Sometime in 2009, the two-millionth Eagle Scout will be named, and somewhere in the United States, in a church basement or school auditorium or union hall—that young man will stand and repeat words that echo across time and space:

I reaffirm my allegiance

To the three promises of the Scout Oath.

I thoughtfully recognize

And take upon myself

The obligations and responsibilities

Of an Eagle Scout.

On my honor I will do my best

To make my training and example,

My rank and my influence

Count strongly for better Scouting

And for better citizenship

In my troop,

In my community,

And in my contacts with other people.

To this I pledge my sacred honor.

Just like Arthur Eldred and Alexander Holsinger, just like Gerald R. Ford and Neil Armstrong—that young man will know that he *is* an Eagle Scout.

PEE DEE AREA COUNCIL

The Pee Dee Area Council of the Boy Scouts of America (BSA) was formed in July 1928. A meeting was held in Darlington, SC during May of that year to discuss the need for scouting in the Pee Dee region of South Carolina. The region, including the counties of Sumter, Florence, Darlington, Horry, Lee, Clarendon, Marlboro, Chesterfield, Marion and Dillon, was very rural and the group really wanted to bring the program to the boys of the area. Williamsburg County was added to the council later.

The man hired to be the first Scout Executive of the council was William E. Czarnitzki. M. S. Lumiansky was chosen as President. The original scout office was at city hall in Darlington. It was soon moved to Florence because it was more centrally located and could better serve the area. (Blackmon 1945) Czarnitzki saw the establishment of the new summer camp for the council named Camp Pee Dee. He also served as camp director during the first summer it was open.

That was the early days of the Pee Dee Area Council and today the Council encompasses 11 counties within 4 districts named, Atakwa, Henry Shelor, Great Northern, and Chicora, each with a District Executive supervised by a Scout Executive and a Field Director.

SANTEE LODGE AND THE ORDER OF THE ARROW

In the Pee Dee Area Council, the seeds for its Order of the Arrow lodge were laid shortly after the summer program at Camp Pee Dee got underway in 1929. A popular Southern Camp Honor Society called the Ku-ni-eh was introduced for exemplary campers. (Dixie Book 1991) The society held their ceremonies on the island at camp and members wore a patch on their merit badge sash designating them as being a part of the Ku-ni-eh tribe.

Ed Sallenger, in a letter to his future wife, wrote about a ceremony of the Ku-ni-eh tribe that was conducted on a Wednesday night at camp during the 1930s. He described how the boys in camp were led into the council ring in silence and sat in a circle around the large campfire. The ceremony began with Indian braves dancing to the sound of a tom-tom. Candidates for the tribe were picked out and then led to the Ku-ni-eh ceremonial grounds which were on the island at camp. The great chief told them about the tribe and used, "many interesting sidelights that make the invitation one of the most impressive I have ever seen or heard."(Bernshouse 1992)

In 1938 Ralph Mozo, the scout executive and camp director, along with council camping chairman Ed Sallenger got a charter to form an Order of the Arrow Lodge. Lodges were already in existence in Greensboro and Raleigh North Carolina along with one in Augusta

Georgia. On June 24-26 J. Rucker Newbery, the scout executive in Augusta, brought a team of arrowmen to conduct the first ordeal at Camp Coker and founded the lodge. Ceremonies were held on the island and were done in secret. Members of the Ku-ni-eh tribe were extended an invitation to join. Records show that the name the new lodge requested was Cherokee. (Arapaho 1988) However, lodge 50 in Birmingham, Alabama already had this name. The name Santee was finally decided upon. An executive committee meeting in April 1939 decided on the Palmetto Tree as the totem of the lodge. (Whittle 1995) By late 1954 the totem for the lodge was the Carolina Parakeet. (McLean 1995).

EAGLE SCOUTS OF THE PEE DEE AREA COUNCIL

The only information I was able to retrieve was an Eagle Scout list which is generated from National and I don't believe it to be complete. Mr. William Tyson, a long time Scouter and Eagle Scout in the Pee Dee Area Council believes the first Eagle Scout Award recipient was sometime in the late 1920's, however the report from National shows the first one being William Ammon Smith from Surfside, SC in 1939. I think most would agree that there must have been Eagles earlier than that since the Council was first chartered in 1928.

Mr. William Tyson, a prominent attorney in the Florence area received his Eagle in 1963 from Troop 477 in Darlington, SC. Mr. Tyson is one of the most active registered Scouters

in the Council currently serving as the Vice President of Finance on the Executive Board. He is also the past NESA/Alumni Chairman.

There are many Eagle Scouts from the Pee Dee Area Council that have contributed to the community in one form or another; Mr. Eaddy, who received the BSA Lifesaving Medal, the National President of the Phi Beta Kappa, the son of the first Council President, Mr. William Westmoreland, Frank Blair who was an NBC Commentator and TODAY Show host, and Alan Clemmons, our state representative

While there are too many to mention, the Council is blessed with many active Eagle Scouts of all ages and they participate in one form or another whether it be Friends of Scouting, volunteering to help at events or holding volunteer positions throughout the Council as well as some of our paid professionals.

For the first time, the NESA/Alumni Committee will be presenting the Outstanding Eagle Scout Award to a very deserving Pee Dee Area Eagle Scout to be awarded at the Council Banquet. The award is sponsored by the National Eagle Scout Association for local recognition.

Recruiting volunteers in Scouting is a challenge for all and considering that volunteers make up approximately 80% of the entire leadership of the Boy Scouts of America, we can see the importance of it and understand that without these volunteers we would not have this institution we call Scouting. Although Eagle Scouts make great unit leaders, I feel they are a better fit for many other positions as well.

The Boy Scouts of America relies on dedicated volunteers to promote its mission of preparing young people to make ethical and moral choices over their lifetime by instilling in them the values of the Scout Oath and Scout Law. Today, nearly 1.2 million adults provide leadership and mentoring to Cub Scouts, Boy Scouts, and Venturers.

Through the dedication of these many volunteers, the Boy Scouts of America remains the foremost youth program of character development and values-based leadership training in America.

To these volunteers we would like to say thank you for your dedication to Scouting.

And, to adults who are not currently Scout volunteers, we invite you to become a volunteer and share in the positive experiences of the Scouting programs.

Leadership Roles

Scout leaders serve in one of the BSA's most important roles. Our Cubmasters, Scoutmasters, and crew Advisors directly mentor youth and make a difference in the lives of millions.

- **Scoutmaster**
- **Assistant Scoutmaster**
- **Committee Member**
- **Parent Coordinator**
- **Cubmaster**
- **Assistant Cubmaster**
- **Den Leader**

Administrative Roles

Share your expertise and special talents to serve your local BSA council. Councils are always in need of active and engaged board members, unit committee members, merit badge counselors, and special event committee personnel.

- **Executive Board**
- **Council Committee**
- **Council Commissioner Staff**
- **District Committee**
- **District Commissioner**
- **Unit Commissioner**



Facebook NESAs Chapter

In April 2012, I created a local NESAs Chapter on Facebook to provide a forum for all Eagle Scouts within the Council borders. Currently, only 86 members are registered but it is a work in progress as myself and the 4 other administrators locate Eagle Scouts to add to this group in an ongoing process. There are many more that we need to find. This group has been helpful for recruiting volunteers and for Friends of Scouting. Below is the mission statement:

“National Eagle Scout Association Pee Dee Area Council Chapter; Purpose of this group is to gather all Eagle Scouts of the Pee Dee Area Council into one forum for communication of events including Eagle Court of Honors, camporees, training & education, news, and anything else that would involve Eagle Scouts. To be straight forward, the aim & goal of this group is to keep Eagle Scouts active in the Council Scouting through volunteer efforts. Once an Eagle, always an Eagle. This group is not affiliated with or approved by the Boy Scouts of America or the National Eagle Scouts Association as well you do not need a membership in NESAs to be part of this group, you do however need to be an Eagle Scout. I highly encourage you to enroll in NESAs membership.”

Newspaper Announcements

I find that the more we get “Scouting” out into the public eye, the better results we will have for membership of youth and adults. From time to time I submit Eagle Court of Honor photos or coordinate with the Scouts parents who submit them. It is great community recognition for the new Eagle Scout and their family but also shows the community that Scouting is happening all around them.

Once a year I also submit an article or announcement for an Eagle Scout search. I have put ads in many newspapers from Myrtle Beach to Darlington and they usually stay in the paper for many months at a time as an “ongoing” ad. Slowly I receive emails from adult Eagle Scouts with their information that I keep for a database. I have received many response so far. Excellent tool for locating Eagles and getting Scouting in the eyes of the public.

Eagle Gathering Events

Preparing for and holding special events can be very time consuming but well worth the time and effort. Holding an Eagle Scout Gathering when prepared for properly can have an instant effect on rekindling a former Scouts fond memories of Scouting and in the process it helps to ignite their feelings of “giving back” to Scouting through volunteering within the Council. Holding at least one event per year is the norm. Eagle Scouts will come back year after year to “rekindle” those Scouting memories. It is at this time or shortly after that recruitment is possible. Sign in sheets asking for information like emails

and phone numbers help us in our effort to recruit in the future and also afford us the ability to keep our database of Eagles as current as possible.

Camp Coker Alumni Events

Although this event brings together all former and current scouts, opportunities still arise to recruit Eagles but this event also gives us the opportunity to recruit from a wide range of Scouter and Scouts. These events tend to bring back warm feelings of camping with fellow Scouts from our youth and also makes for a positive experience.

Commissioners are district and council leaders who help Scout units succeed. They coach and consult with adult leaders of Cub Scout packs, Boy Scout troops, and Venturing crews. Commissioners help maintain the standards of the Boy Scouts of America.

Supporting unit growth in the Journey to Excellence criteria: JTE measures performance characteristics that unlock the door to a successful unit. We should analyze the unit's program and identify JTE areas where help is needed to move the unit to a higher level of JTE success.

Linking district committee resources to the unit: We should support the district committee's delivery of a "catalog of services" to support the specific JTE elements needed for a particular unit's health and success.

Visiting units and logging the visits into the Unit Visit Tracking System (UVTS): Our core task remains visiting the unit. UVTS input feeds critical information to the district committee to help link resources to the unit.

Supporting on-time charter renewal: The commissioner's focus is the retention of the unit, though we should be especially mindful of supporting new youth membership efforts as we move more toward a volunteer-led, professionally guided approach to increasing membership.

Retention Mission Statement

The retention mission of the commissioner corps is best achieved by providing an adequate number of trained unit commissioners who provide a link to district committee resources in support of a quality unit program.

Roles the Commissioner Plays

A commissioner plays several roles, including friend, representative, unit "doctor," teacher, and counselor.

The commissioner is a **friend** of the unit. Of all their roles, this one is the most important. It springs from the attitude, "I care, I am here to help, what can I do for you?" Caring is the ingredient that makes commissioner service successful. He or she is an advocate of unit needs. A commissioner who makes himself known and accepted now will be called on in future times of trouble.

The commissioner is a **representative**. The average unit leader is totally occupied in working with kids. Some have little if any contact with the Boy Scouts of America other than a commissioner's visit to their meeting. To them, the commissioner may be the BSA. The commissioner helps represent the ideals, the principles, and the policies of the Scouting movement.

The commissioner is a unit **"doctor."** In their role as "doctor," they know that prevention is better than a cure, so they try to see that their units make good "health practices" a way of life. When problems arise, and they will even in the best unit, they act quickly. They

observe symptoms, diagnose the real ailment, prescribe a remedy, and follow up on the patient.

The commissioner is a **teacher**. As a commissioner, they will have a wonderful opportunity to participate in the growth of unit leaders by sharing knowledge with them. They teach not just in an academic environment, but where it counts most—as an immediate response to a need to know. That is the best adult learning situation since the lesson is instantly reinforced by practical application of the new knowledge.

The commissioner is a **counselor**. As a Scouting counselor, they will help units solve their own problems. Counseling is the best role when unit leaders don't recognize a problem and where solutions are not clear-cut. Everyone needs counseling from time to time, even experienced leaders.

Boy Scouts of America: <scouting.org/scoutsource/adult>

BSA Commissioners: <scouting.org/Commissioners>

National Eagle Scout Association (NESA): <nesa.org>

Alumni Association: <scouting.org/Alumni>

Jason Spangler: <History of the Pee Dee Area Council & Santee Lodge>; Jason earned his Eagle Scout in 1989, Lodge Chief 1990-91, SE-5 Section Chief 1992-93, Vigil Honor in 1991, Camp Coker Staff for 7 years, District Award of Merit 2008, Scoutmaster.

William Tyson: < History of Pee Dee Area Eagle Scouts>; Bill earned his Eagle Scout in 1963, has held many positions at District level as well as Council level, currently Vice President of Finance on the Executive Board. All around dedicated Scouter who passionately cares about Camp Coker and our Council as a whole.

***Other sources are shown in parenthesis in the articles covering the History of the Pee Dee Area Council and Santee Lodge.**