

= Order of the Arrow =

The Order of the Arrow (OA) is most commonly known as the National Honor Society of the Boy Scouts of America (BSA) . A more clear definition would be that the society was created to honor Scouts that best exemplify the Scout Oath and Law . It uses American Indian @-@ styled traditions and ceremonies to bestow recognition on Scouts selected by their peers as best exemplifying the ideals of Scouting . The society was created by E. Urner Goodman , with the assistance of Carroll A. Edson , in 1915 as a means of reinforcing the Scout Oath and the Scout Law . The goal was to establish these as lifelong guidelines , and to encourage continued participation in Scouting and camping . Influenced in part by camp traditions , and Indian folklore , the OA uses " safeguarded " symbols , handshakes , and ceremonies to impart a sense of community . The use of these traditions has been controversial and been criticized by Native American groups .

Inducted members , known as Arrowmen or Brothers , are organized into local youth @-@ led lodges that harbor fellowship , promote camping , and render service to Boy Scout councils and their communities . Members wear identifying insignia on their uniforms , most notably the OA pocket flap (representing their individual lodge) and the OA sash (worn at official OA functions) and are eligible for special OA awards . The OA program sponsors several events , awards , and training functions .

= = History = =

= = = Founding and development of the society = = =

In 1915 , E. Urner Goodman , a newly hired field executive for the Philadelphia Council , was assigned to serve as director of the council 's summer camp at Treasure Island Scout Reservation on the Delaware River . He believed that the summer camp experience should do more than just teach proficiency in Scoutcraft skills ; rather , the principles embodied in the Scout Oath and Scout Law should become realities in the lives of Scouts . Along with his assistant camp director , Carroll A. Edson , he started an experimental program , Wimachtendienk (" Brotherhood " in the Lenape language) , to recognize those Scouts best exemplifying those traits as an example to their peers .

Goodman and Edson decided that a " camp fraternity " was the way to improve the summer camp experience and to keep the older boys coming back . In developing this program they borrowed from the traditions and practices of several other organizations . Edward Cave 's Boy 's Camp Book (1914) was consulted for the concept of a camp society that would perpetuate camp traditions . College fraternities were also influential for their concepts of brotherhood and rituals , and the idea of new members pledging themselves to the new organization . Inspired by Ernest Thompson Seton 's previous Woodcraft Indians program , American Indian lore was used to make the organization interesting and appealing to youth . Other influences include the Brotherhood of Andrew and Phillip , a Presbyterian church youth group with which Goodman had been involved as a young man , and Freemasonry .

The traditions and rituals of Freemasonry contributed more to the basic structure of the OA ritual than any other organization . In fact , there appears to be no known fraternal organization more faithful in form to Freemasonry than OA . Familiar terms such as " lodge " and " obligation " were borrowed from Masonic practice , as were most of the ceremonial structures and ritual formulae . Even the early national meeting was called a " Grand Lodge , " a Masonic reference . Of course , despite several facts ? the common intent to impart a sense of obligation to a higher moral authority ; that groups such as OA that employ these rituals share many of the moral precepts ; and even that there are historical connections to the founders of OA and other organizations to Freemasonry ? nothing should imply any political connection to Freemasonry itself .

They ultimately devised a program where troops chose , at the summer camp 's conclusion , those boys from among their number who best exemplified the ideals of Scouting . Those elected were acknowledged as having displayed , in the eyes of their fellow Scouts , a spirit of unselfish service

and brotherhood . Edson helped Goodman research the traditions and language of the Lenni Lenape ? also known as the Delaware ? who had once inhabited Treasure Island . The brotherhood of Scout honor campers with its American Indian overtones was a success and was repeated again the following summer at Treasure Island . Those Scouts honored at Treasure Island in 1915 and 1916 would become members of what is now Unami Lodge .

By 1921 , Goodman had spoken to Scout leaders in surrounding states about the honor society resulting in a number of lodges being established by Scout councils in the northeastern United States . The name of the society was changed to Order of the Arrow , and in October 1921 , Goodman convened the first national meeting of what was then called the " National Lodge of the Order of the Arrow " in Philadelphia ? where Goodman was elected as Grand Chieftain . Committees were organized to formulate a constitution , refine ceremonial rituals , devise insignia , and plan future development .

In the early 1920s , many Scout executives were skeptical of what they called " secret camp fraternities . " By September 1922 , opposition to the Order of the Arrow was such that a formal resolution opposing " camp fraternities " was proposed at a national meeting of Scout executives . Goodman argued against the motion : " Using the Scout ideals as our great objective " , he said , a camp activity that will " further the advancement of those ideals " should not be suppressed . The motion was narrowly defeated , and the fledgling Order continued as an experimental program throughout the 1920s and 1930s . In 1931 , there were OA lodges in seven percent of BSA councils nationwide . By 1948 , about two @-@ thirds of the BSA councils had established OA lodges . That year , the OA was also integrated as an official part of the Scouting program .

= = = Order in the 21st century = = =

Over the century since the Order of the Arrow 's founding , more than one million Scouts and Scouters have worn the OA sash on their uniforms , denoting membership in the Brotherhood . The four stated purposes of the Order of the Arrow are : " (1) Recognize those who best exemplify the Scout Oath and Law in their daily lives and through that recognition cause others to conduct themselves in a way that warrants similar recognition ; (2) Promote camping , responsible outdoor adventure , and environmental stewardship as essential components of every Scout ? s experience , in the unit , year @-@ round , and in summer camp ; (3) Develop leaders with the willingness , character , spirit and ability to advance the activities of their units , our Brotherhood , Scouting , and ultimately our nation ; and (4) Crystallize the Scout habit of helpfulness into a life purpose of leadership in cheerful service to others .

In a new program of national service conducted from June through August 2008 , the OA offered ArrowCorps5 to both youth and adult Arrowmen . Described as " one of the largest conservation efforts in Scouting 's history " by the Boy Scouts of America , approximately 3 @, @ 500 Arrowmen converged on five national forests to work on various conservation projects such as building new trails and helping preserve nearly extinct species , as well as removing invasive species , in cooperation with the U.S. Forest Service . The five national forests are : Mark Twain National Forest , Manti @-@ La Sal National Forest , George Washington and Jefferson National Forests , Shasta @-@ Trinity National Forest and Bridger @-@ Teton National Forest .

= = Membership = =

More than 180 @, @ 000 youth and adults are members of the Order of the Arrow . This number is approximately one @-@ seventh of the total number of those registered in the BSA . Youth members are elected by their local unit . In contrast to Boy Scouting , where youth members are under 18 and adult members are over 18 , OA youth members include all persons under 21 years of age while those 21 and over are considered adult members .

The OA is a part of the Boy Scout program . Youth members are elected from Boy Scout troops and Varsity Scout teams . To be eligible for induction , a Scout must have achieved the rank of First Class , spent at least 15 days and nights camping within the last two years (six of which at a

resident camp) , and gain the approval of their unit leader . Once elected , a youth must complete their Ordeal within one year . Adults who had not previously joined the Order as a youth member may become members by being nominated by the unit , district , or council committee and then approved by the lodge adult selection committee . Adults must meet the same camping requirement . In addition , at least one youth from the adult 's troop or team must be elected to the OA in that year for an adult to be nominated . A unit may nominate up to one third of the number of adults as the number of youth elected . Honorary membership was once bestowed in special circumstances , as with Franklin D. Roosevelt and Dwight D. Eisenhower , but this practice was officially discontinued in 1953 .

= = = Ordeal = = =

After being elected or nominated , candidates may participate in a call @-@ out ceremony to recognize those Scouts and Scouters that were selected before they attend their Ordeal . The call @-@ out ceremony may be performed at summer camp , a camporee , a call @-@ out weekend or at a unit meeting . Candidates subsequently participate in an Ordeal , intended to emphasize service and selflessness . During the induction , " candidates maintain complete silence , receive small amounts of food , work on camp improvement projects , and are required to sleep alone , apart from other campers , which teaches significant values . " If they succeed in their ordeal the candidates are then welcomed as Ordeal members in a formal Ordeal Ceremony .

= = = Brotherhood = = =

Ordeal members are entitled to all the same rights and privileges of membership in the Order as Brotherhood and Vigil Honor members ? there are no ranks within the Order . However , moving on to Brotherhood membership offers an opportunity to reaffirm one 's commitment to the Order . Arrowmen may " seal " their membership after ten months by demonstrating their knowledge of the traditions and obligations of the OA . They then participate in an induction ceremony and become Brotherhood members .

While the Ordeal consists primarily of physical impressions , " the Brotherhood ceremony is one of deeper and quieter mental impressions . "

= = = Vigil Honor = = =

The Vigil Honor is a recognition given to Arrowmen for distinguished contributions beyond the immediate responsibilities of their position or office to their lodge , the Order of the Arrow , Scouting , or their Scout Camp . The Vigil Honor may be conferred upon Arrowmen who have completed a minimum of two years as a Brotherhood member and have performed exceptional service above and beyond their immediate responsibilities through leadership , exemplary efforts , and dedication . However , under no circumstances should tenure in Scouting or the Order of the Arrow be considered as reason enough for a Vigil Honor recommendation . Selection is annual and is limited to one person for every 50 members of the lodge , and members of the Order can be inducted into the Vigil Honor only with the written approval of the national Order of the Arrow committee .

As a part of the Vigil Honor induction , each new Vigil Honor member is given a Vigil Honor name in the language of the Lenni Lenape , on whom the traditions and ceremonies of the Order are based . An English translation of the Vigil Honor name is also provided , and the name often represents a characteristic of the individual .

= = Organization = =

The Order of the Arrow places great emphasis on being a youth @-@ led organization . Only youth under the age 21 are voting members and are eligible to hold elected offices . Professional and volunteer adults are appointed in non @-@ voting advisory positions at the chapter , lodge , and

section levels .

= = = Lodge = = =

The basic unit of the OA is the lodge , which is chartered to a local BSA council . The lodge chief is the elected youth leader , the lodge adviser is a BSA adult volunteer appointed by the Scout executive , and the lodge staff adviser is the council Scout executive or his designated council professional Scouter . The lodge youth officers , consisting of the lodge chief , one or more vice chiefs , a secretary , and a treasurer are responsible for organizing and leading the various programs and activities of the lodge . Many lodges have standing committees responsible for ceremonies , service projects , publications , unit elections , camp promotions , and dance teams composed of youth members . Lodges can also divide into chapters , usually corresponding to districts within the council . The chapter is led by the elected youth chapter chief , chapter vice chiefs , secretary , and a volunteer adult is appointed as the adviser , the district executive is the professional (staff) adviser .

= = = Section = = =

Lodges are grouped into sections that are then grouped into regions . The section chief is the elected youth leader , a volunteer adult is appointed as the section adviser , and the area director (or his designate) is the professional (staff) adviser . In addition to the section chief , the section has two additional elected officers . The vice chief and secretary are elected immediately following the election of the section chief at the section 's annual business meeting . All sections gather annually at a section conclave held in the late spring or early fall . The section officers lead the planning of this weekend with the help of the lodge chiefs in the section .

= = = Region = = =

The Order of the Arrow is organized into four regions , Central , Southern , Northeast and Western Region ; the boundaries of each OA region correspond with the boundaries of the BSA 's regions . Each region has an elected region chief , a volunteer adult who is appointed as the region chairman to oversee its region committee , and an appointed professional (staff) adviser . Each region chief is elected at the national planning meeting the day after the election of the national chief and vice chief by a caucus of the section chiefs from the given region . The members of the region committee consists of the region chief , the region chairman , all national committeemen from the region , and other appointed adult volunteers . Each region annually has a gathering of all section officers and advisers . As a region they are trained in topics relevant to their jobs . Each region also provides opportunities for Order of the Arrow members to go through a National Leadership Seminar . This weekend course is highly rated and a lasting memory for many members .

= = = National = = =

The national chief and the national vice chief are selected by a caucus of the section chiefs at the outset of the Order of the Arrow 's national planning meeting . At the national level , the OA is headed by the national Order of the Arrow committee of which the national chief and national vice chief are voting members. The national adult leadership includes the volunteer national chairman and the OA director , a professional Scouter .

= = Symbols = =

Arrowmen are identified by a white sash bearing a red arrow that is worn over their right shoulder . An Ordeal member wears a sash with a lone arrow . The Brotherhood member wears a sash bearing an arrow with a red bar at each end of the arrow . A Vigil Honor member wears a sash with

the same bars of as the Brotherhood sash at each end of the arrow , and a Vigil Honor triangle on the center of the shaft . Members wear the sash at Order of the Arrow functions and special Scouting activities when members need to be identified as Arrowmen rendering special services . The OA sash is not worn at the same time as the merit badge sash , nor worn folded in the belt . The sash as a form of recognition dates to the founding of the Order and has a long history of changes in usage and design .

The OA Universal Ribbon is worn suspended from the right uniform shirt pocket button . Vigil Honor recipients may add the Vigil Honor pin to the ribbon . Lodge affiliation is indicated by the wearing of the lodge emblem (commonly known as a lodge flap) , an embroidered patch worn on the right pocket flap of the uniform shirt . Each lodge flap has a unique design , generally reflecting the name , geography or history of the lodge . Special issues of flaps may be created to commemorate anniversaries and other events and are a popular item for those who engage in Scouting memorabilia collecting .

Arrowmen also exchange a special handshake as a token of brotherhood , along with other signs and passwords . A signature acronym , WWW (Wimachtendienk , Wingolauchsik , Witahemui - The Brotherhood of Cheerful Service) is often depicted in publications , regalia , etc .

= = Ceremonies = =

The Order of the Arrow utilizes three nationally standardized ceremonies for Ordeal , Brotherhood , and Vigil Honor memberships using themes , stories , and symbols centered on American Indian traditions as interpreted by the Order of the Arrow . It also utilizes symbolic progression , so that no symbols are introduced before the proper time . This is done to keep the sense of mystery surrounding the ceremonies and their various symbols . There is an element of mystery in the ceremonies for the sake of its effect on the participants , and so the three membership ceremonies are not performed in public . The ceremonies were standardized almost from the beginning of the OA to avoid misunderstandings regarding the diversity of religious beliefs among BSA members .

Ceremonies were once considered to be secret , and consequently the OA has been viewed by some as a secret society . With the introduction of Youth Protection program guidelines in 1980s , the BSA has made clear that any concerned parent , guardian , or religious leader may view a video of the ceremonies , attend meetings , or read ceremonial texts upon request to a council , district , lodge , or chapter official to assure themselves that there is nothing objectionable . Such persons are asked to safeguard the details relating to ceremonies for the sake of the participants . The intent of the provision for parents and religious leaders to be allowed access to ceremonies is to ensure that there is no religious conflict or violations of youth protection guidelines occurring . Parents have long been discouraged in many Lodges from seizing the opportunity to use the provision for photo opportunities with their sons , and some lodges have instituted bans on photography during the ceremonies . Hazing or demeaning initiation pranks are also prohibited by the OA and the BSA .

The ceremonies utilize symbolic settings , rites , and principles to convey various Scouting ideals to participants . As one author depicts a ceremony , " The values of the Order of the Arrow , ' a brotherhood of cheerful service , ' were passed on during a night @-@ time ceremony : an arrowhead outlined with stones on the ground , candles on the stones , a huge bonfire at the base of the arrowhead , and at the point of the arrow a lectern from which was read , and danced , the story of heroic sacrifice for others . " Ceremonies also utilize the OA song , commonly referred to by its first line of lyrics as Firm Bound in Brotherhood , and titled Order of the Arrow Official Song and The Order of the Arrow Song in the printed music score of official OA publications . It was written in 1921 by OA founder E. Urner Goodman to the Russian hymn tune God Save the Tsar ! , composed by Alexei Lvov in the 19th century .

OA ceremony teams are also occasionally asked to assist local Cub Scout and Boy Scout units with special ceremonies including Arrow of Light ceremonies for the Cub Scouts and Eagle Scout ceremonies for Boy Scouts .

= = Awards = =

Awards are separate and distinct from the membership levels of Ordeal and Brotherhood . Awards available through the Order of the Arrow include : Vigil Honor , Founder 's Award , Distinguished Service Award , Lifetime Achievement Award , Red Arrow Award , E. Urner Goodman Camping Award .

= = Events = =

Most lodges hold several annual events , such as one or two annual lodge fellowships , an annual lodge recognition dinner , and one or more Ordeal weekends which usually include Brotherhood ceremonies as well . Many larger lodges delegate responsibility for Ordeal weekends and other service projects upon the individual chapters . Individual summer camps may also host " OA days " during which members of the OA may receive small tokens of recognition in exchange for showing their sash .

The section conclave is an annual activity (prior to 1972 known as an Area OA Conference) involving three or more lodges in an established geographic area . Each conclave is led by section youth officers elected from among the member lodges at the previous year 's conclave , and the event itself is prepared in cooperation with various other lodge officers , and with one lodge serving as the " host lodge " .

The national OA committee also sponsors various national service opportunities , the oldest of which is the National OA Service Corps at the national Scout jamborees , at which Arrowmen have helped with many functions including shows and the Outdoor Adventure Program exhibit .

= = = High Adventure Program = = =

The National OA Committee also sponsors service groups to the three National High Adventure Bases , originally starting with the Order of the Arrow Trail Crew at the Philmont Scout Ranch working to build new trails and repair old ones . This expanded to the Northern Tier National High Adventure Bases with the OA Wilderness Voyage , repairing the portage trails in the Boundary Waters area , and then to Florida National High Adventure Sea Base in 2005 with Ocean Adventure , which works to remove invasive species on some of the Keys and promoting and carrying out of the Bleach watch program in the Florida Keys . In the summer of 2009 , the OA began the OA Canadian Odyssey program which provided service similar to the OA Wilderness Voyage to the Donald Rogert Canoe Base in Atikokan , Ontario of Northern Tier National High Adventure Bases .

= = = National Order of the Arrow Conference = = =

The National Order of the Arrow Conference (NOAC) is a multi @-@ day event which usually takes place on a university campus , bringing together thousands of delegates from OA lodges around the nation for training and activities . NOACs are held every two years , with exceptions made to align the event with significant anniversaries . As a youth @-@ led organization , these national conferences are organized and directed by the elected section and region youth officers , who serve on committees responsible for various conference aspects under the leadership of the conference vice @-@ chief . Events include training for programs , leadership and American Indian culture ; competitions in athletics , ceremonies , cooking and American Indian dances ; and exhibits on OA history , outdoor activities and camping . There are also opportunities to talk with national leaders , perform service work and trade patches . Evening shows have different themes , including American Indian culture and recognition of dance competition winners , presentations of awards including the OA Distinguished Service Award and other entertainment .

= = Training = =

In addition to training courses available at a NOAC or section conclave , the OA offers specialized

leadership training as weekend events for members : Lodge Leadership Development (LLD) , National Leadership Seminars (NLS) , and National Lodge Adviser Training Seminar (NLATS) . LLD is a one @-@ day or two @-@ day event conducted by a lodge to train their officers and advisers . NLS 's are conducted by regions for lodge officers and advisers . Many lodges send key officers to receive training . Typically , each region schedules three or four NLS weekends annually , at geographically dispersed locations within the region . NLATS is a training event for adults , usually held in conjunction with an NLS and conducted by regions , on the role of advisers in the OA .

= = = Lodge Leadership Development (LLD) = = =

The LLD ? s primary objective is to train and orient lodge and chapter officers to the logistics of operating their chapters and lodges . Lodges are primarily responsible for providing this training to its officers , and there are resources available online to add to the course ? s syllabus .

= = = National Leadership Seminar (NLS) = = =

Each region in the Order of the Arrow is responsible for putting on three to four NLSs each year in different areas of the region . The NLS has received praise for being one of the most valuable training offered by the BSA . Participants spend a weekend with Arrowmen in different parts of the region learning about the theory and practice of effective leadership . Each region is responsible for their NLS ? s program , and the weekend is organized by the region chief and his support staff . Primary NLS staff go through a national training weekend called Train the Trainer , put on once every two years .

= = = National Lodge Adviser Training Seminar (NLATS) = = =

Largely considered the adult equivalent of the NLS program , NLATS ? s primary objective is to provide advanced training to adults in each lodge . NLATS and NLS usually happen concurrently on the same weekend . The event is planned and executed by a staff of adults .