

2022 July Patriotic Instruction

Brothers,

Last month I dedicated my instruction to one of the programs our Order offers in the ROTC Program. This month I am going to continue with this theme and highlight the Eagle Scout Program. Much like last month, I am not going to dive into the award. However, I am going to highlight ways in which we can work with local Troops to not only bring our Order to the forefront of these young minds, but to try to instill in them Patriotic values. As an Order we must not only focus on how we can teach these values to ourselves, but to those in the public as well and the GAR, SUVCW and Boy Scouts of America a very long history together.

One of the ways in which we can get our lessons to these young Scouts is by first and foremost reaching out to Troops or Councils that are close to us. Many of these are run by younger adults or by senior level Scouts and have a social media presence. That makes it a lot easier for us to pester, I mean reach out to, these Troops to try to set up classes on who the GAR was and what the men of the Union suffered through during the Civil War. The Scouts have Merit Badges that focus on citizenship, it has been a few years but last I remembered they are Citizenship in the Society, Citizenship in the Community, Citizenship in the Nation, and Citizenship in the World. What does knowing this tell us? That these young people are already learning about how they can help better their communities, States and the Country, something that fits in naturally with our values as well.

Knowing that the Scouts offer these Merit Badges gives us an avenue of approach when we reach out. In the Citizenship in the Community Merit Badge, one of the requirements is that the Scout must identify 3 Charitable Organizations that are outside of Scouting that interest the Scout and bring people in your community together to work for the good of the community. They must then pick one of those 3 and learn more about the organization and finally contact that organization and find out what the Scout and their fellow Scouts can do to help. Finally, they must volunteer at least 8 hours of their time with that organization. What does all this information mean? Well, without these groups knowing who we are, how can we be listed as one of those 3 organizations? How can we then get those Scouts to learn more about us and volunteer with us and maybe even join us after the fact? It is simple we can't do any of that if they don't know who we are!

How can we fix that? We reach out to them, we set up presentations, we ask them to help with our projects. We need to take the first step in reaching out. In today's day and age, it is easy to send an email or social media message to these groups to try to set up these programs. Breaking the glass will lead to more opportunities. We get one Scout in a Troop that reaches out to get their Citizen in the Community Merit Badge, that can lead to a Scout reaching out to do an Eagle Scout Project with our assistance. All of this starts with us pushing the first domino, which is reaching out, and soon the other dominos will fall, and we will be more involved with the Scouts than ever before. As many of you know I like to end my Instructions sometimes with a challenge, and my challenge this month is simple, reach out to a local Troop or Council and see how we can help them in modeling today's youth into great Americans.

In Fraternity, Charity, and Loyalty,
Br. Ben Frail, PDC
National Patriotic Instructor