

# ADVANCEMENT BOARD OF REVIEW GUIDELINES

## CONTENTS

THE BOY SCOUT ADVANCEMENT PROCESS . . . . .	1
BOARD OF REVIEW ORGANIZATION. . . . .	2
GENERAL PROCEDURES. . . . .	4
APPEALING A DECISION . . . . .	5
TENDERFOOT BOARD OF REVIEW . . . . .	6
SECOND CLASS BOARD OF REVIEW . . . . .	7
FIRST CLASS BOARD OF REVIEW. . . . .	8
STAR BOARD OF REVIEW . . . . .	9
LIFE BOARD OF REVIEW . . . . .	10
EAGLE BOARD OF REVIEW. . . . .	11
EAGLE PALM BOARD OF REVIEW . . . . .	12
BASIC CHECKLIST SHEET. . . . .	13

A Boy Scout advances from Tenderfoot to Eagle by doing things with his patrol and the Troop, with his leaders, and on his own. It's easy for him to advance, if four opportunities are provided for him in which:

1. *The Boy Scout learns.* A Scout learns by doing. As he learns, he grows in ability to do his part as a member of the patrol and the troop. As he develops knowledge and skill, he is asked to teach others; and in this way he begins to develop leadership.
2. *The Boy Scout is tested.* His Patrol Leader, Scoutmaster, Assistant Scoutmaster, a Troop Committee member, or a Merit Badge Counselor may test a Scout on requirements. The Scoutmaster or the Advancement Chair maintains a list of those qualified to give tests and to pass candidates. In Troops, this includes a Scoutmaster Conference to determine whether or not the Scout is ready for a Board of Review.
3. *The Boy Scout is reviewed.* After a Scout has completed all requirements for a rank, including a Scoutmaster Conference, he has a Board of Review. For Tenderfoot, Second Class, First Class, Star, Life, and Eagle Palms, the review is conducted by members of the Troop Committee, under the direction of, or delegation from, the Advancement Chair. The Eagle Board of Review is directed by a District Advancement Representative with no connection to the Troop, but staffed by Troop Committee members.
4. *The Boy Scout is recognized.* When the Board of Review certifies a Scout's advancement, he deserves to receive recognition as soon as possible. Except for Eagle, the rank is usually awarded at the next Troop meeting, unless a formal Court of Honor is planned within the next month where this and other accumulated awards will be given to the Troop as a whole. The Eagle rank is awarded about two months after the Board of Review, subsequent to approval by the National Eagle Scout Service in Texas. An individual Court of Honor to formally award the Eagle rank is usually organized and scheduled with the Troop by the boy and his parents.

This booklet contains guidelines for organizing and conducting Boards of Review in Troops, and includes suggested questions for the board members to ask in the review for each rank. These are not rigorous requirements; not every question needs to be asked. Other questions may be appropriate depending on the boy and his individual situation. This document will also be amended and revised as dictated by its use.

I hope this document will be of use to you in Scouting.

--- Ed Schuman  
Grand Canyon Council  
Advancement Committee  
May 2003

## BOARD OF REVIEW ORGANIZATION

I. Personnel

- A. For Boy Scout, no Board of Review is held, because it is a joining level, not a rank. The boy can be reviewed and signed off as a Boy Scout by Scoutmasters or the Advancement Chair. If the boy earned his Arrow of Light as a Webelo, he usually earns Boy Scout almost automatically.
- B. For Tenderfoot, Second Class, First Class, Star, and Life, plus Eagle Palms:
  1. The Board is composed of at least three adults who are members of the Troop Committee. The Advancement Chair, or designee, will conduct these Boards.
  2. The parents of a boy being reviewed may not attend nor participate in their son's Board.
  3. Scoutmasters may not participate in a Board of Review, but may attend as observers, but they should sit behind the boy, out of his view.
- C. For Eagle Rank:
  1. The Board will be conducted by a representative of the District Advancement Committee who is not associated with the Troop. It can include at least two, but no more than six other members from the Troop Committee members or parents, and include the Advancement Chair, or designee. Some Districts hold monthly Eagle Boards staffed by District Advancement Committee Members at a central location.
  2. The parents of a boy being reviewed may not attend nor participate in their son's Board. Often, the parents wait outside the Boardroom.
  3. Scoutmasters may not participate in a Board of Review, but may attend as observers. However, Scoutmasters may participate in Boards for another Troop.

II. Scheduling

- A. Up to Eagle Rank:
  1. The Advancement Chair will schedule the Board of Review as soon as possible, but usually one week after successful completion of the Scoutmaster Conference. The Advancement Chair will have verified that the boy has met all requirements for the rank to be reviewed before the Scoutmaster Conference.
  2. The Board will be scheduled first on the availability of potential members, and then on the availability of the boy, although there will be flexibility in timing. It is suggested that the Boards not be held during Scout meetings, but be held before, or after, or on another evening, so as to keep the boy in his regular meeting.
  3. More than one Board of Review may be scheduled consecutively, as demanded by the "backload" of those boys who are ready to advance. However, only one boy will be reviewed at a time.
- B. For Eagle Rank:
  1. The Advancement Chair will schedule the Board of Review after:
    - a. Verification that the Service Project and Report, all required Merit Badges, and the Application Form are complete.
    - b. Completion of the Scoutmaster Conference
    - c. Receipt of the Eagle Award Application and Service Project

Report back from certification by District/Council.

d. Correction of any omissions or deficiencies noted by the certification. This will also doubly verify that all requirements have been met.

2. The Board will be scheduled normally around the availability of the District Representative. This usually occurs about one to two weeks after the Council certification. The boy and Board members will be contacted after the District Representative is scheduled. Districts who conduct monthly Boards usually have a standard schedule, often on weekends.

3. Only one troop Eagle Board should be scheduled on a given date because there is no predictable length to an Eagle Board. The Candidate deserves all the discussion time he requires. A District may hold several consecutive Boards on the same day for more efficient use of the time of District personnel.

C. Facilities:

1. The Advancement Chair will arrange for a room at an appropriate facility at a time other than during the weekly Troop meeting. District Eagle Boards are usually scheduled at a common, central location used regularly.

2. The room will be set up with a table and chairs, and be private enough to prevent interruptions. The Board members generally sit across the table from the candidate.

III. Requirements

A. The Candidate

1. The boy is expected to show up on time, in full Class A uniform, and with his Scout Handbook. If he is more than 10 minutes late, at the discretion of the Board, the Board of Review is cancelled and will be rescheduled by the Advancement Chair.

2. The uniform need not have a neckerchief, and the boy may wear his Merit Badge or Order of the Arrow sash as he chooses. Some exceptions to the uniform can be made at the lower ranks; these are covered in the guidelines for those ranks. If the uniform is not complete in accordance with the description included in the Appendix, the boy should be informed of the discrepancies, and told that his Board will be rescheduled when they are corrected. If Troop policy is less than full uniform, inspect the boy to the troop standard, and act accordingly.

3. He should present a clean and neat appearance to the Board along with behavior that becomes a Boy Scout as set forth in the Scout Law and Oath.

B. The Board

1. The members should arrive shortly before the boy, in case there are last-minute items to be discussed before the formal Board begins. For an Eagle Board, the members should arrive about 20 minutes before the boy in order to review his application, report, and other data.

2. The members should also be dressed neatly and appropriate for the season. If any members have a full Scout uniform, it should be worn as an example for the boy.

3. The Advancement Chair should provide a copy of the Troops official records on the boys progress, achievements, and activities for the Board's

review. The boy's own book may not be entirely up to date. Most advancement software programs can print out a "Board of Review" sheet with all pertinent information for the rank in questions, plus space for the Board to sign their approval or rejection.

## GENERAL PROCEDURES

The Board of Review has four purposes:

- a. To make sure that that work has been learned and completed.
- b. To check the kind of experience the boy is having in his patrol as well as the Troop.
- c. To encourage the Scout to advance to the next rank beyond the current one.
- d. To assess whether the boy is ready to advance.

Because many boys are ill at ease when talking to adults, especially those they may not know, it is important to keep the atmosphere relaxed during the Board, even if some formality of questioning will be followed during the review. Begin with some casual comments or questions to attempt to put the boy at ease.

Then the Board should proceed with questions appropriate to each rank. The enclosed sheets can be used for each rank as guidelines. Every question need not be covered, and the boy's comments may stimulate other questions or comments from the Board. Remember the sheets are aids only, not firm requirements. The boy has already completed the firm requirements by getting to the Board of Review.

The Board should try to avoid yes or no questions, and use statements like:

"Tell me about. . ."

"What do you like best about. . ."

"Suppose this happened. . . what would you do about it?"

The Board of Review is not an examination--- it is a review of what he has learned. The Board wants to get the boy to open up and talk, so it can understand what he is thinking, how he feels about Scouts, and judge how he would conduct himself in the next rank. It is also an excellent way to measure how well the adult leadership is doing in helping the boys achieve their goals.

Notes are generally not kept on successful Boards of Review below Eagle, unless a particular incident arises which should be documented, such as a problem in the Troop. Notes on an Eagle Board may be kept by a Board member, and given to the Advancement Chair to hold until the Eagle is formally awarded by the National Eagle Service.

As the review progresses, the Board usually begins to get a sense of the boy's knowledge and philosophy. Most reviews take the approximate time listed on the sheet for that rank. However, the Board should last until each member has no further questions, and the boy has no additional comments.

At that point, the boy is asked to leave the room until he is called back. The Board then discusses their comments and conclusions as to whether the boy is qualified for the rank or palm. The Board members are encouraged to make open and honest comments about their reactions. Most members have a positive or negative sense about the boy develop during the Review. However, the Board's decision must be unanimous.

If the members conclude that the boy is ready to advance, he is called back into the room, and informed of the decision and congratulated by the Board Chair. His book is signed by the members and dated. A printed BOR sheet may also be signed and given to the boy. Two of the Board members must also sign the formal Advancement Report which is sent to the Council. In addition, the Eagle Application is signed by the District Representative. The boy should be informed as to when he will receive the actual rank insignia.

If the members conclude that the boy is not ready for the rank, then the boy is called back into the room, and informed what he has not done satisfactorily. The items in question should be documented in notes and given to the Advancement Chair, if he/she is not present. The boy should be told specifically what he should do to correct his weaknesses, and that another board will be rescheduled for him with an approximate schedule. If a printed BOR sheet is available, it can be given to the boy with notes on what he must correct. If a boy fails an Eagle Board, he must be informed in writing as to why he failed, and what he must do to obtain a re-Board. The Advancement Chair will inform the Scoutmasters of this situation, and will track the tasks with the boy so that the re-Board can be scheduled as soon as possible. Most Scouts accept responsibility for what needs to be done, and eagerly work toward the second Board. Thus, very few boys in actually fail a Board of Review--- some may take more than one try. Generally, however, the Scoutmaster Conference has detected and corrected the weaknesses before the boy comes to a Board of Review.

However, if a boy fails an Eagle Board near, at, or past the age of 18, a re-Board is usually not possible. In this case, the boy's only recourse, at his discretion, is to appeal the decision.

## APPEALING A DECISION

Two sets of circumstances may lead to the appeal of a decision by a Board of Review:

1. If the Scoutmaster or Committee does not sign the application, especially for Eagle, the Scout or other interested party may appeal the decision.
2. If the Board of Review does not recommend the candidate for advancement, the Scout or other interested party may appeal this decision.

Appeals are very rare, because of the involvement of Scoutmasters in the preparation process, and because the reasons for not advancing a boy are usually quite specific. In most cases where a boy does not advance, another Board of Review is scheduled after an appropriate length of time for the boy to correct any deficiencies.

Any appeal will be handled by the Advancement Chair in accordance with established Boy Scout procedures.

## TENDERFOOT BOARD OF REVIEW

This level of Board is usually straight-forward. If a boy knows the requirements, he'll generally do well.

Length of time: 15 to 20 minutes are usually sufficient.

Uniform: Full Class A should be worn, with neckerchief and hat as options. However, if one or two items such as a belt or an insignia are missing, the Board may proceed with a warning to the boy that the items must be corrected before the next rank.

The Scout is asked to stand while his uniform is inspected, and then to recite the Scout Law or Scout Oath. He should give the Scout Sign while he is reciting the item. He may sit down for the remainder of the Board.

Checklist of items for review:

1. Scout Laws
2. Scout Oath
3. Scout Motto
4. Scout Slogan
5. Scout Badge
6. Outdoor Code
7. Scout Salute
8. Scout Handclasp

A Tenderfoot should know what most of these are, and what they mean, although he may miss a few words, or have them out of context. The main intent is generally to know what they are about.

The Board can intermix other questions such as those listed below with the items from the checklist. These have no right or wrong answers, but are intended to find out about the boy and what he thinks.

1. What does it mean to you to be a Scout?
2. What does it mean to "do your duty to God and Country?"
3. Did you do a good turn today? What was it?
4. How does your patrol leader help you with your beads?
5. What do you enjoy most (or least) about Scouting?
6. What skills have you learned so far?
7. What Merit Badges are you working on?
8. What is the buddy system?

## SECOND CLASS BOARD OF REVIEW

A candidate for Second Class should be familiar with the Troop and camping. Unless the boy really stumbles in his answers, he should do well at this level.

Length: 15 to 20 minutes

Uniform: Full Class A should be worn, with neckerchief and hat as options. An item such as a belt can be missing, but if it's a big item such as a shirt, the Board should not be held, and the boy told it will be rescheduled when he has the full uniform.

The Scout is asked to stand while his uniform is inspected, and then to recite the Scout Oath or Laws while using the Scout Sign. He may then sit for the remainder of the Board of Review.

Checklist of items for review:

1. Scout Laws
2. Scout Oath
3. Scout Motto
4. Scout Slogan
5. Scout Badge
6. Outdoor Code
7. Scout Salute
8. Scout Handclasp

A Second Class Scout should only miss a few words here and there on these items. Point out what he has missed, and go on.

We can intermix questions below with the items from the Checklist; as before, there are no right or wrong answers. We want to see how he thinks and what he has to say.

1. What does "On My Honor" mean in the Scout Oath?
2. Pick one of the Scout Laws--- what does it mean?
3. How do you feel about drugs and alcohol?
4. What service projects have you worked on lately?
5. What was your favorite activity so far in Scouts?
6. Did you have a chance to cook on a campout, and how did you like it?
7. Tell the difference between heat exhaustion and heat stroke.
8. What Merit Badges have you earned?
9. What Leadership positions are you interested in?
10. What are your goals for First Class?

## FIRST CLASS BOARD OF REVIEW

Most Scouts are ready for First Class after about a year in the Troop, some earlier, some later. By this time, they should be turned on to Scouts with their enthusiasm showing. The Board needs to build on this enthusiasm to keep him going. The Board may also know of leadership qualities emerging by now.

Length: 15 to 20 minutes

Uniform: Full Class A, with neckerchief and hat as options. At this level, the uniform should be complete, including all appropriate insignia. A Troop is proud of the way its boys look. If the uniform is not correct, inform the boy of the discrepancy, and tell him the Board cannot be held, and will be rescheduled when he has the appropriate uniform.

The boy is asked to stand while his uniform is inspected, and then to recite the Scout Oath or Laws while using the Scout Sign. Then the boy may sit for the remainder of the Review.

Checklist of items for review:

1. Scout Law
2. Scout Oath
3. Scout Motto
4. Scout Slogan
5. Scout Badge
6. Outdoor Code
7. Scout Salute
8. Scout Handclasp

A First Class Scout should really know these items cold, since he has had to recite them many times by now. The Board should use its judgment as to how well he does, and whether his answers are sufficient for advancement. However, when in doubt, the advantage should go for the boy, not against him, unless it is something major.

Work the following questions in with the Checklist, again to see how the boy thinks and what he has to say.

1. What does "Be Prepared" mean to a First Class Scout as against a Second Class Scout?
2. What other service should a First Class Scout perform other than a "Good Turn Daily?"
3. What does good citizenship mean to you?
4. Do you have a Leadership position in the Troop, and how do you feel about it?
5. Explain what you would do for first aid such as burns or if you had to perform CPR.
6. What Troop outing did you like best and why?
7. Describe what gadget you made with ropes and knots.
8. Which Merit Badges have you liked best (or least)?
9. What do you think about the Troop?
10. How well is the Troop doing in helping you achieve your goals as a Scout?
11. What are your plans and goals for Star rank?

## STAR BOARD OF REVIEW

Above First Class, Board of Review evaluations obviously get more subjective. Often there is no solid pattern of progress, but the Scouting interest is still there. Consequently, it becomes more important to find out what the boy is thinking, and how he feels. What kind of person is he? If we can draw him out, we may find some well-considered opinions, which may change previous perceptions of him.

Length: 20 to 30 minutes

Uniform: Full Class A is required, with neckerchief and hat as options, but with appropriate insignia. If the uniform is incorrect, the Board is cancelled and will be rescheduled when the candidate has the correct uniform. A Star candidate in a good Troop should know by now what the proper uniform is.

The boy should stand and recite the Scout Oath or Law with the Scout Sign while his uniform is being inspected. Then he may sit for the remainder of the Board.

We assume the boy knows the Checklist by now, and it is not usually reviewed, except that questions of what an item means may be asked.

At this level, we are more interested in how the boy thinks or feels, and what he has to say than in whether he can recite the Scout Checklist. A boy at this level may have some well-defined opinions that need to be explored. Typical questions:

1. What should "A Scout is (one of the Scout Laws)" mean to a Star Scout in setting an example for a lower rank Scout?
2. How is a Star Scout different from First Class?
3. What would you say to a new Scout about your experience in your Troop?
4. What part do you play in Troop meetings? Patrol meetings?
5. Tell about your Leadership role since you became First Class
6. Pick one or two Merit Badges he has earned. What did he like best (or least) about them? What did he learn from them? Will they be useful to him?
7. How did you participate in service projects since you were First Class?
8. What does he think about the Troop now?
9. How is the Troop doing in helping you achieve your Scouting goals and plans?

## LIFE BOARD OF REVIEW

Life Rank is a pivotal level--- a boy who achieves this has really done well, even if he does not make Eagle. Judge his attitude and maturity. He may have completed all the necessary requirements, but is he ready for Life rank? There is less of a checklist to be used here, for a boy reaching this level usually has his act together.

Length: 20 to 30 minutes

Uniform: Full Class A, with neckerchief and hat as options, but with appropriate insignia. A Merit Badge sash or Order of the Arrow sash is also optional, but a question could be asked why he is not wearing these important aspects of his Scout uniform. As before, without a complete uniform, no Board of Review is held. It will be rescheduled.

The boy stands and recites the Scout Oath or Scout Law with the Scout Sign while his uniform is inspected. Then he may sit for the remainder of the Board of Review.

The Board is looking for a sense of how rounded the boy is in his Scouting and personal life. The questions may lead to a discussion, but the Board should listen as much as possible to form its opinion on how the boy thinks and acts.

1. How does Life Scout differ from a Star?
2. How does he think he is doing in Leadership? What could he have done better?
3. How has he used the Outdoor Code?
4. Give an example of how you helped a younger Scout.
5. Relate some of the Scout skills you have learned to your school, home, or community.
6. How can the Troop be a better Troop? What would you do?
7. Talk about what you have learned from your two most favorite Merit Badges.
8. What leadership have you given in service projects?
9. What do you think about (a current event happening in the Community, the Country, or the World)?
10. How do you feel about wearing your uniform to school or in public outside of Scouting functions?
11. Do you have any ideas for an Eagle Project?

If the boy is advanced to Life Rank, tell him he will be given an Eagle packet and a short briefing from the Advancement Chair, either after the Board of Review, or at one of the next Troop meetings.

## EAGLE BOARD OF REVIEW

As with Life rank, The Board has to judge whether the boy has the attitude and maturity to become an Eagle Scout. The Board members may compare him in their minds with the other Eagle Scouts in the Troop, or others they may know. The Eagle rank is not given lightly or automatically in any Troop. This rank is the toughest call for both a Scoutmaster and a Board of Review. An Eagle Scout not only represents himself, but the Troop, and Scouting in general. And he may soon be gone from the Troop--- will he stuff it away in a drawer, or wear it proudly? Do we sense a fine young man developing into an equally fine young adult? More than any other rank, the Board is looking for the individual inside who will uphold what it feels are the ideals of Scouting.

Length: Approximately 30 minute, although some may run longer.

Uniform: Normally, full Class A, with neckerchief and hat as options, but with appropriate insignia. A Merit Badge sash or Order of the Arrow sash is also optional, but a question could be asked why he is not wearing these important aspects of his Scout uniform. **However, BSA Policy prohibits withholding the Eagle Rank for lack of an official uniform.**

A good place to start is by reviewing his project. Did he think it was a good one? What was hardest about it? What would he change? Does the Board approve his project?

Ask him to tell the Board about himself.

Does he consider the Eagle Rank an honor or a responsibility?

How does he feel about Scouts now? What does he plan after Eagle?

If he is a member of the Order of the Arrow, how active is he?

What are his thoughts on the world environment? Pick a current event; ask him about it.

What would he do differently in his Scouting career if he had to do it all over again?

Why should he be given the Eagle rank? What does Eagle mean to him?

What are his activities outside of Scouting? What plans does he have in this area?

How does he feel about wearing his Scout uniform to school or in public outside of Scouting functions?

Which Merit Badges have suggested a possible career to him?

What suggestions does he have on improving the Troop program, the Troop adult leadership or patrol councils.

The Board should beware of the cocky attitude, which implies that: "I've done all the requirements, now give me my Eagle."

## EAGLE PALM BOARD OF REVIEW

To earn a Palm, a boy should remain reasonably active--- although "reasonable" may be a matter of individual definition to a 17 year old busy with school, social life, or college preparations. This Board is mostly a "check-in" discussion. The Board can review his plans now, and the amount of his involvement in the Troop or other Scouting activities. The Board will use its judgment, but it is important to remember that the boy is already an Eagle Scout

Length: Usually 15 minutes are sufficient.

Uniform: Full Class A, with neckerchief and hat as options, plus he should be wearing his Eagle rank badge. A Merit Badge sash or Order of the Arrow sash is also optional, but a question could be asked why he is not wearing these important aspects of his Scout uniform. As before, without a complete uniform, no Board of Review is held. It will be rescheduled, even for an Eagle Palm.

## BASIC CHECKLIST SHEET

### SCOUT OATH:

On my honor, I will do my best  
To do my duty to God and my country,  
and to obey the Scout Law;  
To help other people at all times;  
To keep myself physically strong,  
mentally awake, and morally straight.

### SCOUT LAW:

A Scout is--- Trustworthy, Loyal, Helpful,  
Friendly, Courteous, Kind, Obedient, Cheerful,  
Thrifty, Brave, Clean, Reverent.

SCOUT MOTTO: Be Prepared!

SCOUT SLOGAN: Do a good turn daily!

### OUTDOOR CODE:

As an American, I will do my best to---  
Be clean in my outdoor manners,  
Be careful with fire,  
Be considerate in the outdoors, and  
Be conservation minded.

SCOUT SIGN: Raise your right hand, palm  
forward, with the three middle fingers  
upward, and your thumb on the nail of your  
little finger. Hold your upper arm straight  
out to the side with your forearm straight up.

SCOUT SALUTE: Place the fingers of your right hand in position for the Scout sign. Bring the hand smartly up to your head until your forefinger touches the edge of your hat or your forehead above the right eye.

SCOUT HANDCLASP: Extend your left hand, nearest your heart, with the thumb separated from the other four fingers, and firmly grasp your friend's left hand.

### SCOUT BADGE:

Fleur-de-lis or  
Trefoil points Scout  
to right way in life; 3  
points stand for 3  
parts of Scout Oath

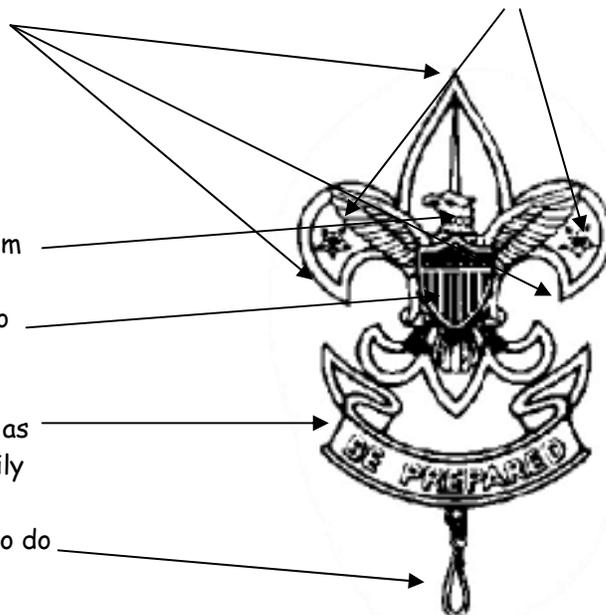
Eagle means freedom

Shield--- readiness to  
defend freedom

Scroll--- Scout smile as  
he does good turn daily

Knot reminds Scout to do  
a good turn daily

Stars--- Truth and Knowledge



Uniform Check: Use the Insignia Guide, Uniform Inspection Sheet, or the Boy Scout Handbook

Board of Review Guidelines