

HISTORY OF THE ORDER OF THE ARROW

The Order of the Arrow (OA) was founded by Dr. E. Urner Goodman and Carroll A. Edson in 1915 at the Treasure Island Camp of the Philadelphia Council, Boy Scouts of America. It became an official program experiment in 1922 and was approved at the start of the Scouting program in 1934. In 1948, the OA, recognized as the BSA's national brotherhood of honor campers, became an official part of the Boy Scouts of America.

In 1998, the Order of the Arrow was recognized as Scouting's National Honor Society when it expanded its reach beyond camping to include a greater focus on leadership development. Membership extension, adventurous programming, and broader service to Scouting and the community. Today, its service, activities, adventures, and training for youth and adults are models of quality leadership development and programming that enrich, support, and help extend Scouting to America's youth.

MEMBERSHIP

The OA has over 180,000 members located in lodges affiliated with 207 local BSA councils.

ELIGIBILITY

To become a member, a youth must be a registered Boy Scout or Varsity Scout and hold the First Class rank. He must have experienced 15 days and night of Boy Scout camping during the two-year period prior to election. The 15 days and night must include one, but no more than, long-term camp consisting of six consecutive days and five nights of resident camping, approved and under the auspices and stands of the BSA. The balance of the camping must be overnight, weekend, or other short-term camps. Following approval by the Scoutmaster or Varsity team Coach, Scouts are elected to seek membership in the Order by their fellow unit members. Then, after competing an Ordeal experience, they become member of the Order of the Arrow.

ORDEAL MEMBERSHIP

The induction process, the Ordeal, is the first step toward full membership in the OA. During this period the member is expected to strengthen his involvement in the unit and encourage Scout camping.

BROTHERHOOD MEMBERSHIP

After 10 months of service as an Ordeal member and after fulfilling certain requirements, a member may take part in the Brotherhood ceremony, which places further emphasis on the ideals of Scouting and the Order. Completion of this ceremony signifies full membership in the Order of the Arrow.

VIGIL HONOR

After two years of service as a Brotherhood member, and with the approval of the National Order of the Arrow Committee, a youth or adult Arrowman may be selected to be recognized with the Vigil Honor for outstanding service to Scouting, their lodge, or the Order of the Arrow. This honor is limited to not more than one Arrowman for every 50 members registered with the lodge each year.

LODGES

An Order of the Arrow lodge is granted a charter from the National Council, BSA, upon annual application by the lodge's local council. The OA lodge helps the local council provide a quality Scouting program through recognition of Scouting spirit and performance, youth leadership development, adventurous programming, financial support, and enhancement membership tenure.



SECTIONS

An Order of the Arrow section consists of lodges within a geographic area of the region. Once each year, representatives of the lodges in the section come together for a conclave to share in fellowship, program ideas, training, and skills development. In addition, the section creates a monitoring/mentoring relationship with its lodges, provides leadership development opportunities, fosters understanding and adherence to national OA policies and procedures, and coordinates OA administrative and program functions. The section key three leadership consists of the section chief, section adviser, and section staff adviser.

REGION LEADERSHIP

The region chief is the youth leader of the region elected by the section chiefs for one year. This election is held in conjunction with the annual OA planning meeting where the national chief and national vice chief are also elected by section chiefs and the next year's program of emphasis is planned. The region Order of the Arrow chairman and professional staff adviser are adults appointed by the region director.

NATIONAL CHIEF AND VICE CHIEF

The national chief and national vice chief service as the top youth leaders of the Order, responsible not only for providing youth leadership to the national program of emphasis, but serving with the four region chief, on the national committee to provide youth involvement in decisions affecting the program nationally. These national offices also oversee the national leadership seminars.

NATIONAL OA COMMITTEE

The national Order of the Arrow Committee is a group of veteran Arrowmen, appointed by the National OA Chairman, to oversee the national OA program. The professional adviser is the OA Director, a staff member of the national Boy Scout Division.



PURPOSE OF THE ORDER OF THE ARROW

- To recognize those campers – Scouts and Scouters – who best exemplify the Scout Oath and Law in their daily lives and by such recognition, cause other campers to conduct themselves in such a manner as to warrant recognition.*
- To develop and maintain camping traditions and spirit.*
- To promote Scout camping, which reaches its greatest effectiveness as a part of the unit's camping program, both year-round and in the summer camp, as directed by the camping committee of the council.*
- To crystallize the Scout habit of helpfulness into a life purpose of leadership in cheerful service to others.*



OUR VISION FOR THE ORDER OF THE ARROW

As Scouting's National Honor Society, the Order of the Arrow is an integral part of the council's program. Our service, activities, adventures, and training for youth and adults are models of quality leadership development and programming that enrich and help to extend Scouting to America's youth.

For ninety years, their peers have honored those Scout who "best exemplify the Scout Oath and Law in their daily lives" with membership in the Order of the Arrow. This recognition provides encouragement for other to live these ideals as well. We will provide ways and means for members of the Order of the Arrow to do more to assist their units and councils, and help them succeed in doing so.

In support of our vision as Scouting's National Honor Society and an integral part of every council, the Order of the Arrow will further increase its service to Scouting.

For additional information: www.oa-bsa.org