

Private Issue Scouting Square Knots (Experimental, Locally Authorized, Fake and Spoof) Part 1 of 5: Locally Authorized Knots

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Changes from V 9.0 are shown in blue.

In a different paper, *Illustrated History of Knot Evolution*, I have discussed how the Boy Scouts of America official square knots evolved. These represent major awards for youth and adults. In that paper I had the assistance of a great deal of BSA documentation, as well as the pamphlet, *BSA Fruit Salad*, by Len Michaud. See also *Trading Tent*, August/September 1981, "Square Knots." There is much less documentation on the subject of experimental, local, and private issue square knots. Len Michaud does treat some of them in his pamphlet, and I have been in contact with the key modern issuers. Some internet information also exists. This is Part 1 of five parts, made for easier internet downloading.

There is not necessarily a clear distinction between the categories above. Some of what I write is hearsay, and I would appreciate correction by those who have the actual facts, especially if they were personally involved or have some kind of documentation to help establish the facts.



NESA DSA

An experimental knot that was not adopted is the National Eagle Scout Association **Distinguished Service Award (NESA DSA)**. NESA DSA was awarded to 29 people between 1974 and 1989. I have learned that a different knot was proposed, and turned down. Following that, the knot at left was made up unofficially, with several being sent to each DSA recipient. It is estimated that a loom run of perhaps 200 was made. It may not have been made by the BSA knot manufacturer, but is very close. The knot pattern is exact, and the white twill is just like the Quartermaster and Heroism knots. However, see Ship 90 below, for similar knots.



Antarctica Service

Beginning with Paul Siple in 1929, Scouts (usually young men 18-22) have been going to Antarctica with the United States expeditions there. There is a square knot for those invited to participate. Michaud states it was awarded by the National Science Foundation, circa 1960s. Gary Whitman, another collector, had been told verbally by a person at National that the knot was authorized by the BSA, but we have been unable to find a document saying so. Only a few (less than 10, only six by 1990) Scouts/Scouters have qualified in the Scout role. The military awards a campaign medal and ribbon for **Antarctic Service** to people who meet certain criteria. Many more have probably earned the military decoration. [In 2010, I was advised by Parker Smith, a Jamboree Sea Scout I served with, that the South Florida Squadron uses this knot for their "Shackleton Award" for leadership named after the famed Antarctic explorer, Capt. Ernest Shackleton.](#)



Eagle - ANG

In the 1960s, the **Eagle Scout** knot was adapted slightly by the **Air National Guard (ANG)** and by the **US Coast Guard (USCG)**. It was issued to Eagle Scout adults who were leaders in Air Explorers and Sea Explorers. The Air Explorer knot had a blue border, the Sea Explorer knot had a white border. The Sea Explorer knot did not have the same pattern of red/white/blue rope twists as the standard Eagle knot. These knots were never adopted by BSA. Another variety has a rolled edge, and was remembered by Frank LaGrange as from the CAP from 1962-3 when he was an Air Explorer.



Eagle - USCG



Eagle - CAP



Distinguished Eagle

The Boy Scouts of America authorized local council Scout Executives to issue insignia to be worn on the uniform. Some Scout executives chose to allow square knots or square knot size patches to be worn on the uniform above the left pocket. These are “local council authorized” square knots. We have a number of examples of these.

The red bordered Eagle knot on the left is a local council authorized **Distinguished Eagle** knot, even though the BSA uses the gold eagle on the regular Eagle knot to identify a Distinguished Eagle.



BDAC Big Horn

The Boulder Dam Area Council (now Las Vegas Area Council) authorized its Big Horn District to award a Figure 8 knot to the outstanding **Scouters of the Year** of the district (Cubs, Scouts, commissioner, etc.)



College of Comm Science

The Great Salt Lake Council has a knot-sized award, red with a white commissioner’s wreath, which is awarded to those who attend their **College of Commissioner Science**. The Doctor’s pin (illustrated) or a Master’s pin may be attached to indicate the degree



earned.



College of Comm Science

The Blue Ridge, Sequoyah, Palmetto, Great Smoky Mountains, Indian Waters and Daniel Boone councils have adopted a single, common locally authorized knot for the **College of Commissioner Science**. The silver mylar bowline is emblematic of the lifesaving function of the commissioner staff. These councils are located near the eastern seaboard in the south central part. Since 2002 the knot is stocked by Chris Jensen of Streamwood.



Okfenokee FOS

Beginning in 2002, the Okfenokee Council in Georgia awarded a white square knot (and other regalia) to the unit leader of a unit that raises \$1000 or more for **Friends of Scouting**.



Mataguay IOTC

The Desert Pacific Council (southern California) has authorized the **It is OK to Care** (IOTC) knot for the staff members at their Camp Mataguay. There are specific requirements for the award.



Paisano Award

The Rio Grande Council (in the boot of Texas) has two awards. First is the **Paisano Award**. This is a Spanish word, informally meaning friend or pal. It is for outstanding service furthering international brotherhood among Scouts and Scouters. Due to location, it especially emphasizes Mexico. The knot is illustrated at left. The award is on a purple ribbon. This knot and award was originally approved at National as a council award in 1964. I have no information on the second at this time.

There are a number of unofficial knots identified by Mike Walton, one of the major contributors to US Scouting Service Project (www.usscouts.org). There are links to his knot pages from there, www.mninter.net/~blkeagle/cnclknot.htm (as of December 2007). At that site, he lists and illustrates the following:

Why Knot, originally a spoof which actually developed into the Scoutmaster’s Award of Merit as a quick, visible recognition of success as a unit leader. It looks like the **Scoutmaster’s Award of Merit that ended in January 2010**.



Silver Scouter

Silver Scouter was awarded at Eastern Kentucky College and two others to college Scouters for service. The knot was all silver on khaki, and is apparently no longer awarded. The scan I have (courtesy Shay Lelegren) looks a bit different than Mike’s web site’s image. More recently, Mike Walton has updated his site to say that Boise State and Purdue used the knot. Purdue called it the College Scouter Award. The color was changed



College Scouter

to maroon and white. See the illustrations below. These might be confused with a Silver Buffalo, but most 22-year-olds don't have that particular knot.



College Scouter



Tippey Award

Silver Alligator is awarded by Troop 339 of Tampa, Florida for outstanding service. It is a triple sheet bend on lime green.

Tippey Award is awarded by Tippey Reynolds to new Scouters in her district. It is black ropes on an orange background. This is an eBay image.



District Scouter of the Year

District Scouter of the Year, Gamehaven Council, Rochester, MN is awarded to unit serving Scouters and commissioners. It is currently a Scout emblem in a red circle and a deer print in a brown circle. The award is given to Scouters who are becoming active in district operations, but before they have enough service to be selected for the District Award of Merit. The upper scan is from Dawn Dace, of an earlier version of the knot. It has changed in color and size from the first version to the second. Lower scan courtesy of Peter Sanders.



Youth Leadership In America

Youth Leadership in America was an official award for senior patrol leaders and Explorer post presidents. The illustrated knot (red and green on white with a gray border) is the proposed knot that was sent to National but never approved. It has been produced slightly differently by Chris McCullough (which see).



Silver Jackalope

Silver Jackalope, illustrated left, was awarded to Mike by a district out West for his on-line Scouting service. At this writing, only 7 individuals have been awarded the knot, certificate and pin. This knot is made of glow-in-the-dark thread! The criteria is outstanding service to preserve Scouting history and heritage, including training, collecting artifacts, writing a history, or having an on-line site detailing awards or history.

Dan Coberly kindly provided copies of **University of Scouting** knots for the Alabama-Florida Council in the mid 90s. They are descendents of Atlanta Area Council knots of the early 80s. These knots are intentionally oversize, so they are not worn on the shirt, rather on the red jacket or a patch blanket. The first version is the attendee, the second is staff, and the sizes are slightly different. The staff version also comes in square corners. The third item, on the left and reduced, is unique, for the dean of the college, gold and silver mylar ropes.



Dean Univ Scouting



University of Scouting,



University of Scouting Staff



Pocono District Service Award



Minsi Trails Akela-land Outstanding Service Award



NYLT Staff



La Orden Del Espiritu De Las Buenas Obras



Chehaw Council 2010 History Knot



Chehaw Council 2010 History MB

Arnold Traupman provided a copy of the **Pocono District Service Award**. The district is in the Minsi Trails Council in Pennsylvania. This knot was not authorized by the council, and has stopped being issued. It is violet and red on light blue with a maroon border, gauze-plastic back.

In 2007 Arnold found the Akelaland Outstanding Service Award at his council's Cub Scout camp, "Akelaland." This one must be council authorized.

The **NYLT (or JLTC) Staff Recognition** knot is a gray square knot on a green background with a gray border. Daniel Webster Council, Pacific Harbors Council, and Mt. Baker Council adopted the knot from 2003-05. "Course Directors/Scoutmasters and Senior Patrol Leaders wear the Boy Scout device centered on the knot. The colors are the same as the colors of the Senior Patrol Leader shoulder patch. These colors are not used for any other knot, official or unofficial, and are different enough from the other knots as to stand out on the uniform." NYLT stands for National Youth Leadership Training, and JLTC stands for Junior Leader Training Course.

Smokey Bassett reports that he and others traveled to the Panama Canal Council in 1987 to assist with a Wood Badge staff shortage. At the end, he was presented with "*La Orden Del Espiritu De Las Buenas Obras*." I believe this translates roughly as "The Order of the Spirit of the Good Works." It came on a bright red ribbon. A red ribbon with a gold frame was also presented, to be worn in place of a square knot. This was an official presentation, with the Scout Executive, President and Commissioner signing it. In fact, the ribbon presented is an Army Meritorious Unit Citation.

For the Centennial, the Chehaw Council issued an unofficial merit badge (and knot for adults) which could be earned for completing a merit badge pamphlet covering the history of Scouting, Chehaw Council, and the Scout's troop. Each scout (or adult) could buy only one either a merit badge or knot. This is the only set other than the three sets given the members of the Centennial Committee. 250 merit badges and 100 knots were made. The winner gets a copy of the pamphlet also.

Please go on to Part 2 of five. I would like to thank Greg Anthony, [Smokey Bassett](#), Al Bormuth, Allan Coady, George Cuhaj, Barry Ekle, Jim Ellis, Linda Friedrich, Ron Hall, Frank LaGrange, Shay Lelegren, Len Michaud, Craig Murray, Chris McCullough, Bruce Noonan, Mark Ritter, Peter Sanders, Rafi Sharif, [Parker Smith](#), Arnold Traupman, Mike Walton (the Black Eagle), and Ernie Walley for information, help or knots and images to add to the paper. Any errors are mine.

If you are interested in specific varieties of all or a single series of knot over time, a monograph titled *Varieties of Official BSA Square Knots* is available. It covers all official knots from their first issue to the current issues with scans of each major variety. It is also available from the author.

It is the nature of this information to change, sometimes rapidly. I hope this exposition has been of interest. As you can see, there are still some gaps to fill in. If you have information that would help, please contact me at George@Crowl.org or 832-467-1998 or 16213 Congo Ln, Jersey Village, TX 77040-2011.

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