

**Private Issue Scouting Square Knots**  
**(Experimental, Locally Authorized, Fake and Spoof)**  
**Part 4 of 5: Craig Murray and Copies of Official Knots**

George Crowl

**Changes in blue from V12.0.**

In 2002, **Craig Murray**, [www.sageventure.com/store/knots.html](http://www.sageventure.com/store/knots.html), issued five green background knots. They are the Silver Beaver, Eagle, Scouter's Key, Scouter's Training Award, and Venturing Advisor's Award of Merit. In 2003 he added a plethora of knots, including Honor Medal, Silver Buffalo, Silver Antelope, Medal of Merit, Whitney Young, Explorer Scout Ranger, Explorer Silver Award I, Hornaday Award, Arrow of Light, James E. West Award and International Scouter Award. The scarce knots have been produced in very limited quantities and are now sold out. There will be no more, because Craig was told by the BSA to cease producing them. Pictures are below. The green backgrounds are much closer to the original color than Sharif's knots. These are excellent reproductions that can be distinguished from the originals by the twill pattern and the gauze-plastic backing. The twill runs about 90° to the BSA twill. The backing is lighter in color and plastic is more thickly applied. In addition to the green knot replicas, Craig had two of the more complex knots delivered in error, so he has made available an Eagle Scout error knot and a Hornaday Award error knot. In those knots, the knot itself is correct, but the Eagle red and white colors are reversed, and the Hornaday green and white reversed, as can be seen by comparison.

The knots below are in the 1978 order of precedence for wear on the uniform (except the Arrow of Light! and with interpretation of later knots).



**Honor Medal**



**Silver Buffalo**



**Silver Antelope**



**Silver Beaver**



**Medal of Merit**



**Whitney Young**



**Eagle Scout**



**Explorer Ranger**



**Explorer Silver I**



**Hornaday Award**



**Arrow of Light**



**Scouter's Key**



**Scouter's Trng Awd**



**Intl Sctr Awd**



**SM/VA Awd of Merit**



**James E West Awd**

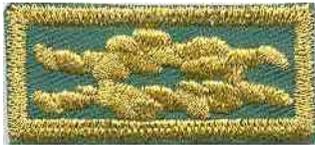


**Eagle error knot**



**Hornaday error knot**

In 2005, Craig added three knots to his list. They are the Girl Scout Gold Award, the Hornaday Gold Badge (awarded to adults, not the Gold Medal which authorizes wear of the knot) and the Hornaday Silver Badge (awarded to youth). While his other knots are just green versions of official knots, some of which were officially produced in green in the past, these three are knots that are not based on anything official. He is one of two producing a Girl Scout Gold Award knot to wear on the BSA uniform. He is the only one to produce a cloth badge in imitation of the metal Hornaday Badges.



**Girl Scout Gold Award**



**Hornaday Gold Badge      Hornaday Silver Badge**

In 2008 Craig produced NESAs Life Member Eagle knots with green background for the Venturing community, plus black, white and tan for Sea Scouting, at left and below.



**NESA Life Member Green**



**NESA Life Black      NESA Life White      NESA Life Tan**



**Boyce Tan and Green**



**Venturing Leadership Awd**

In 2006, Craig produced a carrick bend knot for Richard Stone to indicate membership in the Kudu Rover Crew of Bardstown, KY, founded in 1984. The knot shows membership in the crew. It can have a six-pointed star affixed for Good Scout, and a large French palm for Distinguished Service Award ([www.kudurovercrew.com/awards.html](http://www.kudurovercrew.com/awards.html)). Rovering is a program of Scouting founded by Baden-Powell for young men 17-25, used in the US from about 1928 to 1965. Current US Rover crews are either independent (as is the Kudu Rover Crew), or may be associated with US Rovers, who are in turn associated with the World Federation of Independent Scouts (WFIS) and take some of their information from the Baden Powell Scout Association (BPSA) in Britain. They are not a BSA sanctioned section of Scouting. The Kudu membership knot measures about 19mm x 57mm, and is about 3mm longer than a knot of the BPSA. The US Rovers Cornwell Scout Badge is 16x32mm, about the size of the Canadian Figure 8 knots. The Cornwell Badge is for courage in severe difficulty. If you want to know more about the badge, see the UK section of my *Knot Awards of Non-US Scouting Associations*.



**Kudu Rover Scouting Membership      US Rovers Cornwell Scout Badge**

The Cornwell Badge above and the YPT badge to the left are 2007 manufacture.



The black and white overhand knot at left is for Youth Protection Training, and “Learn the rules in black and white.” A large order of 2400 was made for Westchester Putnam Council.



significant differences in the Southern Store. First are somewhat different basic knot designs. Second is that their Quartermaster knot is a reversion to the blue-on-black design issued prior to 1954.



Silver Antelope

Silver Beaver

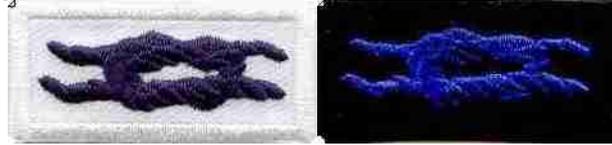
District Award of Merit



Eagle Scout

Eagle Scout

Eagle Scout



Quartermaster

Quartermaster



Seabadge Course Director

Seabadge Staff

Seabadge



Seabadge

Seabadge (blue)

Seabadge



Arrow of Light

Arrow of Light

James E West Award



Scouter's Key



Advisor AOM

Scouter's Tng Award

International Scouter Awd

In 2003, Gary Whitman produced some Seabadge knots, as illustrated below. They resemble Sharif's knots, but are Creslon backed. They have blue and mylar borders as illustrated.



Seabadge



Seabadge Staff



Seabadge

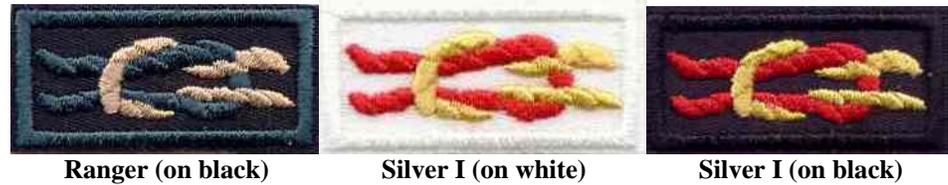


Seabadge Staff

The next series is older, probably 60s or 70s, proven by an article in *Trading Tent*, August/September 1981, "Square Knots" to be before 1981. Several of these fit into a pattern. The BSA stopped manufacturing the square knots for the **Ranger Award** in 1951, and for the **Ace** and **Silver Award I** in 1954, but people who earned them and collectors wanted them. These were probably made to fill that vacuum. Five are similar. The Ranger green and tan and the Silver I blue background knots have real counterparts. The Silver I tan and the Ace tan backgrounds have no official counterpart. Note that the Silver I knots have the rope colors backward. The Ace copy I have actually has a gauze backing, the remainder are all "Creslon." I call these knots Creslon because I have seen the backing referred to by that name. It is a fine fabric, not woven, just matted together.



In 2007 Charles Ced of Ship 77 in Dallas produced a set of knots for adult members of his ship and for others that he knew who hold the older summit ranks. He produced the Ace, Ranger, and Silver Award I knots. The latter he produced on white and on black. This is a limited run, not intended for commercial sale.



In 2008, TSPA had an Ace and a Ranger private issue knot for sale that were apparently from the same manufacturer. Their provenance is unknown. Note the twill right at a 60° angle, not a BSA pattern until into the 1990s. TSPA believes the knots to be "vintage."



In 2011, Jim Clough in Maryvale, TN had both Air Scout Ace and Explorer Silver Award I knots made so he could wear the correct knots on his uniform. He is a memorabilia dealer and he put them on eBay as well.



At least four other **Ace** private issues are extant. The left one below dates from about 1992, the second was sold on eBay in June 2002 and again in 2005, the third on eBay in November 2002. The one on the extreme left was on eBay in 2010. The first is roughly

done, the knot is not correctly formed. For the second, note that the knot colors and the border colors are a little light. However, the knot itself is not BSA standard, and the ropes go to the border. The twill behind it looks gray, and rougher than the real knot. The sellers had no additional information about the knot. The third has a well formed knot, but the blue border and rope are too light a color, the twill is not right, and it has a gauze/plastic back. The real Ace knots had a gauze back. The knot on the extreme left is probably the same vendor as the Creslon knots above. I can't tell the difference in front. The reverse resembles the Creslon knots above, but is slightly different. This has a Taiwan manufacture sticker on it. It may be much more recent. If anyone has information, I would like to see it.



Ace



Three Different Ace Knots



Ranger (from SK)



Ranger (from SK?)



Ranger Bar #1



Ranger Bar #2



Ranger Bar #3



Over 25 years ago, I personally manufactured **Ranger** knots using brown permanent magic marker on a Scouter's Key with a green background. I did it for a friend whom we found out was a Ranger, but had no knots. At that time, mid-70s, I don't believe the "catch-all" Silver Award II knot specifically mentioned the Ranger and Ace knots.

Another **Ranger** private issue that Shay Lelegren has is made from an older issue knot (note the rough twill, characteristic of pre-1966). It too appears to be made from a Scouter's Key by coloring the white thread. Note the border is khaki, not green.

A recent development is cloth **Venturing Ranger bars** to sew on in place of the pin-on Ranger bar approved by the BSA. In 2001, Cindy Sanders, 312 12<sup>th</sup> Lane SW, Oronoco, MN 55960 sold the first item. The #2 came out in 2004 from Ora Sheffler, 1735 24th AVE SE, Albany, OR 97322, 541-905-2776, o\_sheffler@yahoo.com. It also follows the newer variety bar. Ora's #3 bar is somewhat larger than illustrated, and comes out on a forest green backing. It was available in January 2007. The problem is that the Ranger bar pokes and prods and catches on branches and people during activities, and the sew-on bar does not.

In the summer of 2007, Ora came out with three more bars, representing the **Venturing Silver Award** (even though it has an official square knot), the **Quest Award** and the **TRUST Award**. All of these are approximately 62x15mm (2 7/16 x 9/16"), considerably larger than the actual bars that they represent. The latter two fill the gap in logic of having a Ranger bar, but not a Quest or TRUST bar.

The **Silver Award I** knot has attracted several people to duplicate it. For the few of us who earned it, it seems to have attracted more attention than it may deserve. Anyhow, here are three more examples of private issue Silver Awards. While the khaki/green knot is clearly not standard, two of the knots on blue are pretty close to the real thing. Al Hoogeveen (*Scouting Collector's Quarterly*, Spring 1981, p. 46) stated the middle knot was made by a council, perhaps in Minnesota. A youth earned the knot, the council did not have any, so they had some made up. The youth kept many of them, and they have come on the market gradually since then. Mitch Reis provided the reference. The right hand knot was offered on eBay in November 2002. It is apparently a companion to the Ace knot above, with similar twill and gauze/plastic backing. [The left hand knot came up on eBay in 2011.](#)



**Four Different Silver Award I Knots**

The **Silver Award II** knot has two known copies so far, illustrated at left. We have no information on these knots, except their obvious origin. Any information will be appreciated.



**Silver Award II**



We have also found two varieties of a private issue **Quartermaster** knot on white, of unknown origin. Ken Leja, himself a Quartermaster, found them in a West Coast council trading post, and a second example of the first item was on eBay in 2002. We are agreed they do not fit any national standard issue, but are puzzled why they would have been in a trading post. The QM knot on blue is also of unknown origin, not standard issue. It was offered for sale on eBay in 2006 as an early knot, but in several expert opinions is private issue.



**Quartermaster**



**Medal of Merit prototype?**

The Medal of Merit prototype came from TSPA. Their sale said, "Patch came out of the sample book of a patch company in the midwest. From what we can tell it's 50's vintage and completely authentic. Not a later made up deal, this is a true prototype directly out of the files of a patch company." The Medal of Merit knot came into the catalog in 1953, so it is possible. It may also be something else.

The Las Vegas International Scouting Museum has a Navy blue and a white version of the **Arrow of Light** that is not a product of one of the known producers. [These were first seen in 2001, and scanned by a museum staff member then.](#)



**Arrow of Light (Blue)**

**(White)**



The second set of knots was bought in 2013 and scanned like most of the rest of these knots. I do not know if the orange vs. red color difference is a function of the scan, but the lower scan is very color true. The seller in 2013 had no idea where these came from.



This Arrow of Light was auctioned in 2013. The seller only knew the original owner was from the Omaha, Nebraska area. The light blue background is unusual, I can only think of someone trying to match an Air Scout background, but the AOL knot itself is well after the demise of the Air Scout program.



**Silver Fawn**

The blue and white on blue knot at left is supposed to be a **Silver Fawn**. The white rope does not follow the standard BSA pattern. To the best of my knowledge, no Silver Beaver knots in blue twill were produced by the BSA. See my monograph, *Illustrated History of BSA Knot Evolution*, where I discuss the Silver Fawn knot.



**Eagle Scout on white**

I recently found this “stand alone” Eagle Scout knot on white, on sale from Sharon Hanna, vizsla2000, on eBay. It very closely resembles the Southern Store Eagle on white.



**Fake Skippers Key**

Some knots are good enough to deserve the label “fake.” These knots can be confused with the real thing. This is especially appropriate when the knot itself is valuable. Here is a very good fake **Skipper’s Key** in khaki. Beside it, I will put a real Skipper’s Key for comparison. Note the main difference is in the color of the thread. The cloth is rough twill, the knot weave is quite good, etc. In 2001, another reproduction Skipper’s Key was sold on eBay, but it was clearly a reproduction because the rope pattern was similar to that in the Mataguay knot on page 2. Craig McCullough’s knots are shown in his section.



**Real Skippers Key**

In 2012 a reproduction Vale La Pena knot showed up on eBay. The reason given was that they were hard to find, which is exactly by design! They are given only to the few who have earned them. Mark Ports is doing them for the Tannu OA chapter of the Nevada Council. Immediately following were several more, the Asian-American, Explorer Silver I knot, Explorer Ranger, Eagle NESAs Life in white, Commissioner Award of Excellence in Unit Service, District Award of Merit in white, and the Unit Leader Award of Merit in white. In addition, they are selling small sew-on badges of the Venturing Gold and Bronze ribbon awards.



**Vale la Pena!**



**Explorer Silver I**



**Explorer Ranger**



**Eagle NESAs white**



**Asian-American**



**Commish Awd Excellence**



**District Award of Merit**



**Unit Ldr Awd of Merit**



**Ranger Bar**



**Gold Award**



**Arts and Hobbies**



**Outdoors**



**Sea Scout**



**Sports**



**Youth Ministries**

## Hornaday Unit Award

The Hornaday Unit Award in actual fact is just a certificate for the unit, and does not authorize the members to wear anything at all. The knot below left has an unknown origin. It is a well-done figment of the originators imagination, because the actual medals and badges are executed in bronze, silver and gold, and are therefore all one color. Compare Craig Murray's cloth badges on page 2 of this section. This “knot” is almost  $3\frac{1}{4} \times 1\frac{1}{2}$ , so it is actually debateable whether it is a patch or a knot.



Please go on to Part 5 of five.

I would like to thank Al Bormuth, Smokey Bassett, [Jim Clough](#), Allan Coady, George Cuhaj, Barry Ekle, Jim Ellis, Linda Friedrich, Ron Hall, Frank LaGrange, Ken Leja, Shay Lelegren, Len Michaud, Craig Murray, Chris McCullough, Bruce Noonan, Mark Ritter, Rafi Sharif, Ora Sheffler, Parker Smith, 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](mailto:George@Crowl.org) or 832-467-1998 or 16213 Congo Ln, Jersey Village, TX 77040-2011.

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