

Introducing

DAN COBEN

WORLD SCOUTER

By Mike Walton



RLY

I want to introduce you to indeed a “World Scouter,” one of many within the BSA. This particular Scouter is a former military officer, martial artist, Hollywood stuntman, and proud head cheerleader for the ideals of Scouting and what it truly means to live Scouting. He’s also a journalist, which is another reason why I want you to meet him – for we hope you will read a lot of Dan Coberly’s insight, experiences and knowledge as this magazine reaches more and more Scouters.

Coberly, the son of a career Army Special Forces Soldier, started his formal Scouting adventure in the Panama Canal Zone. Before that, he participated with Cubs in Munich, Germany. Years later, he enlisted in the Army, carrying on his family’s strong military tradition of service and patriotism pre-dating the American Revolution. He received an Army officer’s commission but retained his enlisted rank and rose up to become one of the Army’s leading public affairs advisors before retiring after 28 years of service.

Not many people can say that they have lived a World Scouting adventure in more than 30 countries, including places in Europe, the Far East, South America and Africa, or that they have also been a leader in 12 BSA councils. For 45 years, Dan Coberly has done just that.

Dan’s Scouting adventures began during the early 1960s in the jungles of the Panama Canal Zone. An Army brat, he was a member of Chiriqui Lodge #391 until his family returned to Europe in the 1970s where he became an Eagle Scout in Troop 62, Wurzburg Germany. There, he served as a Chapter and Lodge Chief of Black Eagle Lodge #482. During the 1980s, he and the Scout Executive formed Achapteuny Lodge #498 in the Far East, and Dan became its first Lodge Advisor, traveling throughout Asia to revive the Order of the Arrow program there. By age 28, he was also a Wood Badge Course Director for Boy Scout and Cub programs and helped to

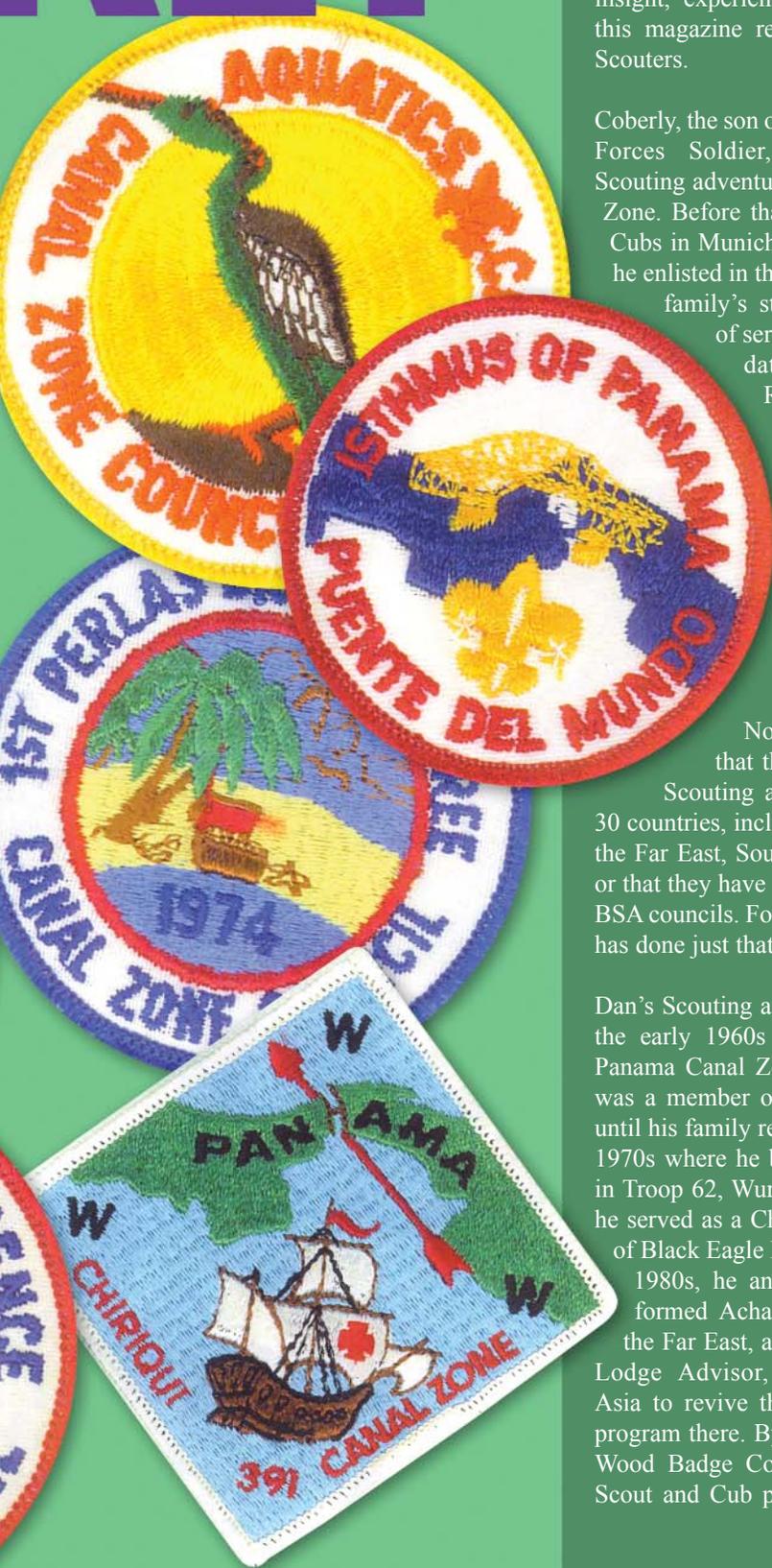
re-establish an International Wood Badge course and served as Program Director for the National Camping School in the Asia-Pacific Region.

During his nearly 30-year career as an award-winning military journalist, his articles on the plight of Amerasian Children and Child Abuse in the military won critical acclaim. He traveled around the world several times, serving overseas and stateside as a Council Executive Board Member on International Camp Staff Selection committees and as an International Representative for several BSA councils. By age 36, he had attained the highest Army enlisted rank of Sergeant Major and the rare distinction of concurrently holding a Presidential Army Reserve direct commission as a Captain. For many years, he was an official Army representative to the BSA.

As a Scouter, Dan has held nearly every volunteer position from Scout to Scoutmaster, from acting Council President to BSA Ambassador and NESAs Regent. For more than 20 years, he served as a member of several BSA National and International Committees. He also served on various BSA Western and Southern Regional Committees. Dan is perhaps best known for leading, editing, or advising several national BSA publications such as the *Jamboree Journal*, *Jamboree Today*, *Leader’s Update*, three NOAC publications, and the NESAs Eagletter. One of Dan’s articles lives on forever on the internet: “A Scouter For All Time” is a moving eulogy of the late “Green Bar” Bill Hillcourt.

I first ran across Dan Coberly during a national Scout Jamboree, but I did not know he was in the military – and in the same military specialty as myself (public affairs) – until several years later when we both found ourselves supporting the same military command in southern Europe. Over a twenty-year period, Dan and I have traveled many of the same paths – the ones with the Army as well as those within our shared Scouting experiences and histories.

It is much of that history of “Overseas Councils” (see sidebar: “Overseas Scouting”) and their Order of the Arrow (OA) Lodges which are getting lost over time. Efforts – websites and books – are



being produced to put down on paper and in electrons what has been long forgotten in many of those local councils whereby today you're the Scoutmaster of one of the few Troops there, next month you're the Lodge Advisor or the Council Commissioner because that person had to "rotate" or "PCS" (Permanent Change of Station) back to the States or to another foreign location. Unfortunately, sometimes the old adage of "if you hear a story often enough it must be true" comes into play, especially as the various badges, patches and other pieces of Scouting memorabilia – items created to support council and lodge activities way back when, and then were presented or stored – now come out from storage, get more interest, and are traded or sold through forums like Yahoo auctions and eBay.

To help financially support overseas Scouting and to preserve the history, Coberly helped form the Overseas Arrowman Association (OAA) more than 16 years ago. The OAA is composed primarily of Order of the Arrow members from around the world who have held Scouting membership within an overseas council and/or Arrowmen whom are committed to further assisting BSA councils, and in particular overseas Order of the Arrow Lodges, in today's period of reduced membership and rising expenses. The OAA is open to thousands of Arrowmen – and their friends who may not be OA members – asking them for their remembrances, copies of their photos and documents, and for aid in keeping alive the memories of those former lodges and the councils they belong to.

The opportunity presented itself recently to exchange stories, memories and experiences with Dan and to ask him some personal questions about his service as a true "World Scouter." As one of my mentors both in Scouting as well as in the Army, it was fantastic to talk again with a great Soldier and a true Scouter.

Digest: *Why do you continue with Scouting after nearly 50 years?*

Dan: That's easy. First, I've never met a Scout that I didn't like. **Second,**

Scouting is the world's largest and most successful peace movement. Think of it. For 100 years, Scouts around the world have set the example to improve our quality of life. How many other organizations have that kind of positive impact on the world or even in a local community? **Third, Scouting is also the world's largest educational institution and we are on the faculty.** That's a rather sacred trust and a call to duty we cannot shirk. **Fourth, Scouting is a great equalizer. Every Scout has the same opportunities for advancement. Fifth, the names of several of my Scoutmasters are on the Vietnam Wall, so I continue their work for them.** There are many other reasons. For example, Scouting keeps us young and is a great way to spend time with your own children!

Digest: *Describe your Scouting experience in Panama, Europe, and the Far East – particularly the importance of the Order of the Arrow as a part of your life.*

Dan: It's always awkward being the new kid on the block, even more so when your neighborhood is in a strange country. One of the best and fastest ways to make new friends and to find your way around was to join a local Scout unit. Scouts had a lot of fun camping in the jungle, traveling through Europe and the Far East, making friends wherever we went. Our troop's annual trip to Berlin when the wall was still dividing East and West was always an adventure. The Arrow's significance as the mark of a leader made a deep impression that lasts to this day. We met thousands of drafted soldiers back then who were members of the Order.

Digest: *We were talking about the impact of our Eagle Scout service projects. You earned Eagle in Germany. What was your Eagle Scout service project?*

Dan: Eagle Projects are very limited and difficult to accomplish overseas since we are visitors in a host nation. Add a military setting and there are even more restrictions. My project involved three months of planning and

leading outdoor work at the 33rd Field Hospital in Wurzburg, Germany. There, we planted more than 1,000 trees and shrubs all around the very large hospital for the benefit of patients and cleaned up miles of overgrown cobblestones by converting old fire extinguishers into devices used to spray an environmentally safe weed killer we made from rock salt and water. We also helped to inventory and replace outdated items in a pre-positioned stock of medical supplies. I visited the hospital in late 1999 and the trees and shrubs are still looking great.

Digest: *How was Achpateuny Lodge formed and how is it pronounced? Share the story of you traveling with the Scout Executive to resurrect the OA in FEC.*

Dan: Lodge #498 has a long an interesting history, from Hinode Goya to Ikunhkatsi to Achpateuny. When I arrived in Japan in 1982 to work on the American newspaper, *Stars and Stripes*, the Far East Council was struggling in debt and there were only two professionals serving Japan, Korea, Okinawa, Thailand, Taiwan and the Philippines. The Scout Executive, Dick Weidman, succeeded in doing a remarkable job of bringing the council out of debt in record time. However, during that time lack of funding and the constant turnover of people had adversely affected lodge memberships. There were no lodge officials, and only two or three Vigils left in the lodge on our rolls. The lodge had already failed to re-charter on time. Dick and I studied the history of the lodge and its membership. Dick, as the Supreme Chief of the Fire, took action. I was appointed Lodge Advisor and we in turn temporarily appointed lodge officers to get the lodge going again until elections could be held. The name *Hinode Goya* meant "Rising Sun", and that name and flap design upset many peace activists and war veterans. The name *Ikunhkatsi* reportedly meant "a gathering of nations" in Tagalog, a language of the Philippines, which did not make people in other countries happy. We looked through a copy of the English-Lene Lenape Dictionary in search of a new lodge name and a new spirit. We found

OVERSEAS SCOUTING HISTORY:

The Rest of the Stories

Mike Walton with Dan Coberly

While standing in a line during the recent National Jamboree, two Scouts in front of me were interested in the shoulder patch I wore that day.

I wore a 40th anniversary CSP from the Transatlantic Council (TAC) – one of four BSA councils currently serving youth outside the 50 United States. The Scouts were wondering whether my patch was “legit” or not. The taller of the two was in the “if he’s wearing it, it must be for real” camp. The other simply thought my patch was made up for the Jamboree.

They finally asked me: “Is that for real? I mean, Scout’s honor – is there really a ‘Transatlantic Council?’”

I assured them both that Scouting does indeed have councils overseas. I know because I started my Scouting as a member of TAC more than 30 years ago. Other councils outside the United States currently include the Far East Council (FEC), the

Puerto Rico Council (PRC), the Aloha Council (AC) and the Virgin Islands Council (VIC). American Scouts living overseas are also served through the Direct Service program office of the BSA’s International Division.

As Paul Harvey would say, “The boys wanted to know the rest of the story.” “Why don’t we know about those councils? Are they at the Jamboree? Do we really have *American* Boy Scouts and leaders in Europe or the Near East?” I nodded and shared with them how I became a Cub Scout and later Boy Scout while living in Germany; and how I became an Order of the Arrow member as a Lone Scout living in Luxemburg (at that time, not a part of TAC, but instead Direct Service).

We finished our conversation and as I moved forward to get my mug of coffee refilled, I thought about that factoid – the fact that most kids today (and probably many adults involved as well!) have no clue as to the fact that “American Scouting” exists outside of the borders of the grand old US of A. I wrote about it later that evening as part of my daily “summary” of my Jamboree day to the Scouts-L youth programs discussion group.

I asked longtime volunteer World Scouter

Dan Coberly to assist me with his personal perspectives to answer several questions dealing with American Scouting overseas.

“What’s the thumbnail history of Scouting overseas?”

Dan Coberly: Depending on your definition of “overseas,” you’ll find that, since the 1930s, BSA has a long supported Americans overseas via what were then called “Extra-Regional” American Boy Scout councils in places like Peking, China, the Panama Canal Zone, Europe, the Far East, and in American territories such as Guam, and Saipan. Some people view BSA councils in Alaska and Hawaii as being overseas, too. Then there are the Lone Scouts and Scouters who are served by the Direct Service program office of the International Division, covering areas where there really aren’t enough Americans to support a BSA council.

During the late 40s and early 50s, the diplomatic corps, doctors, engineers, multinational executives, and of course, members of the military and their families, brought American Scouting overseas. Each of the “overseas councils” was formed primarily by military officers and civilian corporate leaders who wanted a Scouting experience for their families comparable to

BIOGRAPHY DAN COBERLY

*Senior Science Communication Officer
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Dan Coberly is an award-winning public affairs officer who previously served the Department of Defense for more than thirty years. He is a well-known writer, speaker, workshop facilitator and media consultant.

As public affairs officer for the Huntsville Center, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Dan supported worldwide projects such as Unexploded Ordnance removals from former defense sites, Captured Enemy Ammunition in Iraq, Chemical Demilitarization, Environmental Restoration, Installation Support and Missile Defense. The Center’s annual budget was \$ 1.5 billion, with more than \$6 billion in contracts.

Dan previously served as Executive Officer at the U.S. Army Space and Missile Defense Command Public Affairs Office. His key military public affairs assignments included the Centennial Olympic Games Joint Task Force, Atlanta; the Southern European Task Force (Airborne), Italy; Supreme Headquarters, Allied Powers Europe, Belgium; 1st Infantry Division (Fwd), Germany; the 21st Theater Support Command, Germany, Hungary, and Croatia; Pacific Stars and Stripes daily newspaper, Tokyo; United Nations Command, Korea; U. S. Forces Command, Atlanta; U.S. Aviation Center and School, Ft. Rucker, AL; the Military Police & Chemical Schools and the Women’s Army Corps Center, Ft. McClellan, AL; and the DOD 50th Anniversary Commemorations of Aviation & Women in the Military.

He earned a master’s degree in communication from Norwich University and completed advanced public affairs graduate training at Oklahoma University. He spent

27 years on active military duty, retiring in April 2000 as Sgt. Major, Senior Public Affairs. He was advanced on the retired list to the rank of Captain.

During 1998, Dan was selected U.S. Army Europe’s NAACP Roy Wilkens Award winner for his work in support of minorities; he was named a Baden-Powell Fellow by King Carl Gustav XVI of Sweden for his support of international Scouting. In recognition of his national public relations work for the Boy Scout of America, he received the Silver Antelope Award and was named a Distinguished Eagle Scout by the Secretary of the Army. He was recently appointed a BSA Ambassador. His more than 40 awards for journalism and public relations excellence include the Silver Anvil Award, several Thomas Jefferson and Keith L. Ware Awards, 4th Estate Awards, the Legion of Merit and many other military decorations.

“*Achpateuny*,” which means East Wind. We wanted a simple design that included a well-known symbol of the Far East Council, so the dragon was retained as the Lodge Totem. The name is properly pronounced “*awk-pot-teh-un-neh*.”

For several months, the Lodge Chief and I accompanied Dick Weidman to every District and country in the Council to help reestablish the lodge by conducting OA ceremonies led by the Lodge Chief. We also presented Silver Beaver Awards and conducted the first Vigil ceremonies in many years in Districts such as Korea, Taiwan and the Philippines. The facts are all outlined in the lodge newsletter of that time, *The Arrow*. Under the guidance of the Scout Executive, we did what any Vigils should do to keep the spirit of the Order alive. We delivered the program to the members.

Digest: *How well does the military support Scouting?*

Dan: Despite increasing restrictions, the military supports youth programs extremely well. Nearly every senior leader I’ve ever met, from Secretaries of Defense to Secretaries of the Army on through the ranks, was an Eagle Scout or a former Scout. They were strong supporters of Scouting because they knew that sooner or later, most young men face a fork in the road of life. In my case, many of my friends were joining gangs of bad thugs. I chose to join a good gang of Scouts. Without Scouting as an option, I would not have had a choice to make. Like many young men, I was lucky to gain a substitute family from Scouting, for my father was often away for years at a time. My Scouting family provided important role models I might not have otherwise had. I learned from the many fine men and women who led us that *if we want to our children to be good, we must offer them good opportunities.*

Digest: *I remember when you served as the Army’s public affairs representative to BSA – and in 1997, you received the Distinguished Eagle Scout Award from the Honorable Togo West, at the Worldwide Public Affairs Symposium. West was at that*

time the Secretary of the Army, and later became the Secretary of Veterans Affairs. You are still the only enlisted soldier in the armed forces to receive a DESA. How was that experience?

Dan: I’m fortunate to have set the minimum standard for the award! Mr. West was very kind to support the award and to make the presentation in front of my peers. He is a strong supporter of Scouting.

Digest: *As a Distinguished Eagle Scout, what do you think about the caliber of today’s Eagle?*

Dan: One always has to put things into the context of today, rather than making comparisons about yesterday. It’s never been easy to become an Eagle Scout. Today’s aspiring young Eagle faces a completely different set of circumstances in life, just as every Eagle in the years before him faced something different and unique. Throughout time, Eagle Scouts demonstrate leadership by overcoming challenges. I believe today’s Eagles are every bit as good or better. I think we should expect more from Eagles once we pin their wings. We should expect them to be in the forefront more often no matter what their age.

This is probably a good place to remind us that we place a lot of emphasis on being an Eagle Scout. We have produced well over a million Eagles, but we have also produced many millions more of simply good Americans. There is no shame in not becoming an Eagle Scout if you did your best. We need to say that more often.

Digest: *If you could be the BSA National President or Chief Scout Executive for a day, what would you do?*

Dan: I’d be very proud of the Boy Scouts of America, first and foremost. I’d do just as the current Chief and President are doing; continue to work hard to resist those who seek to undermine Scouting and other fine American institutions. And I would ensure that every adult understands that no position or appointment is for-

ever. Aside from being a unit leader, all other positions should be temporary appointments, not to exceed two years. In fact, I’d make sure that every adult gets a letter of appointment that clearly spells that out. I’d make sure that all of our doctrine and training supports a concept of increasing levels of responsibility based on performance. During your second year in a position, we’d start looking for a new position for you based on a peer evaluation, and we’d recognize you for your service. That way, there is always a steady stream of fresh faces and opportunities and we all learn a deeper understanding, appreciation, and respect for how the Scouting Program works. If the Chief and National President can rotate every few years, you can too.

Digest: *You mentioned how outside forces are seeking to undermine Scouting and other institutions. Please elaborate.*

Dan: I’ve submitted a draft of a book on leadership to a publisher. The book explains how our society is comprised of *Caretakers, Innovators, and Undertakers*. There is also a model outlined called *Frustration, Confrontation, Escalation*. America has long been known for innovations. History teaches us that when we fail to nurture innovation, *Undertakers* grow bolder, and will make their move to destroy a society while the majority of a population remains in a *Caretaker* state. Scouting has always been a strong leader of basic values and innovation, and that makes us a fine target for people with an axe to grind. If we study the FCE model, we know that *frustration* leads to *confrontation*, and if confrontations are not resolved, they will *escalate* and the model will repeat itself until something finally relieves the frustration. If you are observant, you see that happening at work, at home, in your community, in your nation, in the world around us. It takes strong leaders to stand tall while weathering such as storm. Scouting produces strong leaders. Scouting survives as an institution because Scouting has always been on the right track. For example, parents have a right to determine who will lead and be entrusted with their children ... our

those experienced by Scouts and Scouters in the United States. Most overseas BSA councils began unofficially after WWII and were eventually granted charters. The BSA granted its first overseas council charter to the Peking Council and later gave that council number, 802, to the Transatlantic Council in 1952. Charters were also granted to the Philippines Council and the Far East Council (1953), the Canal Zone (1950) and Aloha Council (1961), Kilauea Council in Hilo, Hawaii (1951), Chamorro Council, Guam (1970) Puerto Rico Council (1961), the Virgin Islands Council (1963), the Maui County Council (Maui County Council was founded in 1917, and is one of the very few councils that has not undergone a name change or merger in its entire history), and in 1955 established the Direct Service Council for youth serving in all other areas of the world. After World War II, in cases where host nations had no Scouting program of their own, BSA allowed some foreign nationals to temporarily earn the Eagle rank until national Scouting programs could be formed.

“Most of us don’t know much about American Scouting overseas. What is unique about living and being a Scout overseas? Why should we have BSA programs overseas?”

Dan Coberly: Hundreds of thousands of Americans live in communities overseas that are very tightly knit. There is a much greater sense of adventure when living in a foreign country, so they offer much greater support and emphasis on youth programs. BSA programs overseas help bring a touch of home away from home to young people during very formative years. Imagine changing schools more than 20 times as you grow up in various countries. Not a lot of stability or consistency there, but you do gain a more worldly perspective and a tolerance for other people and beliefs. Scouting skills teach you how to use those experiences in positive ways.

For a young man overseas, BSA councils also represent a chance to continue something at the same level no matter where you live. You don’t have to start over at Tenderfoot; you can keep hiking along the trail to Eagle. And it is exciting, because there are a variety of new experiences in other cultures. Living as a Scout overseas is almost like one continuous international

Camporee. There is always something different to do. One day you might be camping in the jungles of Panama or the Philippines, the next hiking Mount Fuji in Japan or at Camp Kandersteg in Switzerland, often with Scouts from several host nations.

There are hardships too, such as 24 million square miles of water separating various districts representing 6-7 countries in the Far East Council, or the many miles separating 10-20 or more countries in the Transatlantic Council in Europe. That makes it difficult to hold a lodge event or sometimes even a Camporee or a roundtable. It’s not easy getting permission to work some Life or Eagle projects due to host nation or military restrictions, language barriers, or a lack of resources. Yet, because the America Scouting experience overseas is so intense, everyone works harder to make it successful and no one ever forgets that happy taste of success.

Many of the functions which career Scouters do stateside – organization and re-chartering units, raising Friends of Scouting funds, cultivating and developing new chartered partners – in those far-flung areas are conducted almost entirely by volunteers with gentle assistance by professionals. This is because unlike most professionals stateside, who have several counties or part of a metropolitan area to manage, BSA executives overseas may have several countries to travel back and forth between. Therefore, an increased reliance on volunteers is not only essential, but in most cases a necessity.

As the numbers of Americans living overseas continues to decline, overseas BSA councils face many obstacles to keep Scouting alive. Many of the youth and adults registered in one of those council territories spend two to four years on an assignment, then return to the United States. Many volunteers who worked with in Direct Service, Transatlantic, Aloha or Far East Councils return back home actually missing the way that they have been able to “do Scouting” in a way they feel the BSA envisioned Scouting being conducted while overseas.

Dan Coberly adds: Few people realize that quite literally, hundreds of thousands of and Scouters became active in American Scouting through membership in overseas

BSA councils during the past 50 years, and thousands of them continue their involvement in Scouting today in councils throughout the United States. They are making a vital difference in the Boy Scouts of America.

However, because of the nature of military assignments, nearly two thirds of an overseas council’s membership moves every year. That’s a huge turnover of experience for any council. Not all are military people; many work for U.S. corporations overseas. Unlike in the United States, people don’t leave Scout camps and money in their wills to overseas councils, so funding programs and operating Scout camps is always a challenge.

Many Scouters are surprised to learn that the BSA programs run as close to, if not an identical mode as, the way they are operated back in the United States. There are units, chartered partners, youth and adult leaders, and training courses and opportunities for those leaders.

Dan Coberly adds: The Order of the Arrow operates overseas just as they would in any other BSA council. But there is something unique about having your Ordeal, Brotherhood or Vigil ceremony on Mount Fuji, or in a jungle atmosphere in Panama, or Guatemala, or at Camp Freedom in central Germany. For example, I remember a Vigil ceremony in the Philippines. We slept under the stars in perfect weather. It was near Easter, and all around us in the distant mountains, the Moro Indians were faintly chanting and beating drums. Folks thought it was part of the ceremony. It wasn’t. But it did add a memorable touch! Similarly, the Kuna/San Blas Indians in Panama taught us how to make dug out canoes to race through the Panama Canal. In Europe, we once held a lodge event in an old castle.

Because of experiences like those, the Overseas Arrowman Association (OAA) exists to financially support overseas lodges and to maintain an alumni group that can keep in contact with one another.

Tell us more about the OAA and how it benefits the Order of the Arrow and Overseas councils.

Dan Coberly responded: It has been estimated that during the past 50+ years,

nation's future. Pay attention and you'll see that the people who throw the most rocks at us usually are diverting attention from something else. Often, it is something in their own behaviors that are contrary to the Scout Oath and Law.

Digest: *What is your position on a young man who becomes an Eagle Scout and then proclaims himself to be an Atheist?*

Dan: In my opinion, I'd say he is a very troubled young man. Fortunately, these situations are the exception and not the rule. When it happens, the focus should not be on religion but on concepts of honesty and trustworthiness. Focus on the apparent behavior of publicly professing to believe in a Supreme Being for 3-4 years simply to attain a coveted rank and social status. Focus on being deceitful every time the Scout Oath and Law were repeated, to include the Eagle Court of Honor. So I'd say that young man never was an Eagle Scout and never could become a real one. For, being an Eagle Scout is a lot more than a badge you wear on your chest. It's a spirit that you carry in your heart.

Digest: *Why don't we hear more about the early founders of Scouting?*

Dan: Enlightened Scouters are wise to learn from their examples. It seems that these days, heroes are rock stars, movie stars and athletes. Americans seem to have an aversion to anything that smacks of hero worship of anyone else, like a teacher or scientist. Yet we all need real role models and heroes. Baden-Powell was a true hero. Anyone who studies his life, his work, or his family takes with them a keen appreciation of the amazing difference one person can make in the world. Anyone who knew his daughter, the late Lady Betty Clay, would say the same thing. The same is true for the early BSA founders, Dan Beard and Ernest Thompson Seton. They were the last frontiersmen. None of them ever got rich, as some of our patch collectors, because of Scouting. Few among us today will ever be considered as self-sufficient and as knowledgeable about nature as they proved to be. Imagine

watching one of them today on the TV show Survivor!

Digest: *There seems to be a lot of overseas Scouting history being lost. What is happening there?*

Dan: Thanks to the internet, there is now as much history being captured as there was once thought lost. Organizations like *Overseas Brats* and *Military Brats* have helped friends to reconnect and provide historical data. There are always dedicated people who keep and preserve enough data and memorabilia to help shape history. Two recognized historians are Ken Kittelberger for Black Eagle Lodge, and Bob Cylkowski for Far East Council and related lodges. Chuck and Matt Kirkland, Sheldon Dick and Bob Zadina (the former longtime Scout Executive) have done a great job of capturing Transatlantic Council history. The Overseas Arrowman Association newsletter, the *Deep Water Traveler*, publishes American overseas Scouting history when it can be verified. We've also donated American Overseas items to various Scouting museums.

Digest: *A small cottage industry has emerged to sell books and other data useful to collectors of Scouting memorabilia. Like a Scout asked at the Jamboree, how does one know what's "legit" from an Overseas Council?*

Dan: If every BSA council ordered every patch from National Supply, things would be much easier to determine, and the BSA program and councils would benefit more from the transaction. Nonprofit, volunteer organizations don't usually have resources to devote to keeping track of long-term histories of memorabilia. I'd go so far to say that today's collector is often far more serious and emotional about older items than the boy who actually earned them as a Scout. For the most part, we rely on memories and published data, such as newsletters. Still, most of the information published regarding an overseas council's history represents only a snapshot in time. Some are better than others. None are 100% complete.

Digest: *As a student and collector of early Scouting memorabilia, you've often been called upon to give advice to other experts. What advice do you have for novice collectors?*

Dan: A Scout is Helpful, Friendly, Kind, Cheerful and Thrifty. Avoid rabid collectors and self appointed experts. Remember that Scouting isn't about collecting patches and awards, it's about building character. Seek to demonstrate good character as a collector. You know, there is a normal, predictable phenomenon that occurs among collectors – Most of us could not afford a vast collection early in life, so we do so when we become more affluent. However, some people become obsessed.

There are indeed many credible experts, but there are a few with a form of Gold Fever who seek to obtain and define a specific type of collectable to the point where they declare items "official," "unofficial" or "fake" simply because they don't have one in their own collections. Think of it as you would when dealing with a stock-broker or an investment. Such declarations often represent a personal and professional conflict of interest, because opinions help determine the ultimate value of their own personal collections and the books they help to sell. Books are fine, yet few people seem to realize that "expert" experiences and recollections sometimes merely represent a snapshot in time in a particular lodge or council; so if personal opinions are not expressed in that context, they should be suspect. In my view, if a BSA council didn't benefit from the production and sale of the item, it probably isn't "official." That doesn't automatically mean an item isn't collectible or is less valuable. Scouting has been around a long time, and like all other things in the history of the world, people discover new things daily. Fact is, many early items, particularly those from overseas councils, were made by whoever could afford to make them. People lived and worked in relative isolation, so a person in one district or chapter might not know what was going on in another more distant location at a particular moment in time.

more than 265,000 Scouts and Scouters have taken part in American Scouting overseas. Of those people, it is estimated that about 75,000 were Arrowmen. That's not counting drafted soldiers whom were already members. At its peak enrollment during the 1960s, about 500 Arrowmen returned to the United States each year to make a vital difference in the Order and in Scouting. Many of those same Arrowmen remain active in stateside councils and lodges today. We recently had a national Vice Chief from an overseas lodge.

The OAA is an incorporated, private association with about 600 current members whom are also registered Scouters and members of the Order of the Arrow. The organization exists primarily to support overseas lodges and councils via manpower and financial support. For example, the OAA provides a number of camperships to various lodges to promote attendance at

overseas summer camps. Occasionally, where there is an OAA chapter, financial support is provided to a Conclave through the host lodge. The OAA also helps maintain an alumni base so that members can maintain their unique fellowship. The OAA helps to document American Scouting history overseas. The organization has a high number of James West and Baden-Powell Fellows who make other contributions to Scouting. Basic members represent about 20 current or former overseas lodges; however, anyone can join as an Associate Member.

Several councils have websites with additional information and background on the history of their local councils:

Aloha Council, BSA
(<http://www.alohacouncilbsa.org>)

Maui County Council, BSA
(<http://mauibsa.org>)

Puerto Rico Council, BSA
(<http://www.geocities.com/Yosemite/9920>)

Transatlantic Council, BSA
(<http://www.tac-bsa.org>)

Far East Council, BSA
(<http://www.fareastbsa.org>)

Direct Service, BSA
(<http://www.directservicebsa.org>)

(The Virgin Islands Council, BSA does not have an active website presently; information on it along with general information about Overseas Scouting can be found through Wikipedia (<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki>)

More information on the Overseas Arrowman Association (OAA) is found by emailing the President of the OAA, Tom Slavicek at tslavicek@aol.com

Most enlightened collectors know that the emotional or historical significance of an item is far more important than the intrinsic value. They are more interested in making a friend than in making a buck.

Digest: *If you could improve one thing about American Scouting, what would it be?*

Dan: I would include in all of our volunteer training very specific information that will enhance understanding and support for district and council operations. For example, why and how we must conduct fundraising, and the roles of the volunteer and professional. Clearly, we have too many volunteers who believe rumor and innuendo and act upon assumptions about how a nonprofit organization must operate. Because they don't have enough facts, they don't always set the best examples. When that happens, it's easy to assume that our few paid employees are glorified Scoutmasters. When that happens, there is sometimes little or no empathy, understanding or appreciation for the two toughest jobs in Scouting: the District Executive and Scoutmaster. I was briefly a parapro-

fessional in college, and I observed that it's no fun trying to keep yourself or your spouse happy while you work nights and weekends and holidays, even if your livelihood depends on it. As a Scoutmaster, I learned that we have some very dedicated field professionals among us who can only be optimally effective when they are properly supported by trained and enlightened volunteers. Enlightened volunteers are the ones who understand that their position exists to support the boy, the program and the unit leader.

Digest: *What advice do you have for Scouters?*

Dan: Scouting has a place at the table for everyone. It's a terrific program, ideally designed for parents to work with their children as they grow up through the program in say, 4-8 years. We will always need good volunteers. Yet, some folks seem to think there are two main programs, one for adults and one for youth, with their own separate ranks and awards. So I advise every adult to check their ego at the door. I'm fond of pointing out that being a Scout leader isn't a license to exercise your

personality quirks. It's isn't about collecting a bunch of "hangy-downs" – awards to improve your self-esteem. It's about what you've done lately to improve the life of a Scout. It's about earning the right to wear whatever award you have every day. It's about exceeding the minimum standard for doing what is needed by being alert to the needs of others. Whether you wear an Eagle Badge or Silver Beaver, no one should have any doubt about how you earned it or why you wear it, simply from the positive example that you set.

Digest: *What's the best thing you've gained from Scouting?*

Dan: Good friends around the world and a sense of purpose and camaraderie. Aside from friendships, there are the skills we learn as Scouts, such as teamwork, abilities to lead, plan and to organize. Those skills help many a young person build successful adult lives.

Dan Coberly has proven himself extremely valuable to the programs of Scouting, not only in the United States

but in many other countries around the world.

Dan holds the Silver Antelope and Silver Beaver Awards and has been recognized with the NESA Distinguished Service and OA Founder's Awards. In 1997, he was named a Distinguished Eagle Scout and a Baden-Powell Fellow. He currently serves as an Executive Board member of the Greater Alabama Council and as a BSA International Ambassador.

His military awards include the Legion of Merit and the Bronze Star. He splits his time between a farm in Alabama and his job as Senior Science Communication Officer for the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's Office of Research and Development in North Carolina.

