

# VENTURING MAGAZINE

**My Venture to the 23<sup>rd</sup> World Scout Jamboree** by Mariah Houston      **March 2016**



Mariah and 4 Boy Scouts represented the HOAC

Six thousand, one hundred and four miles is the farthest I have ever been from home as a Venturer. With my scouting duffel bag, backpack, and ukulele in hand, I departed the Kansas City airport in July of 2015 unaware of the incredible experience that awaited me at the 23<sup>rd</sup> World Scout Jamboree in Japan. Meeting the rest of my Central Region Troop 102 along with several other BSA contingents in Chicago was exciting but the real fun began once we disembarked after the 13 hour flight to Narita, Japan. Hauling our bulky duffels through heat and humidity that my Midwestern physique had never quite experienced before, we loaded into a shuttle that delivered us at a dainty hotel. We spent one night in luxury before departing the next morning for the Jamboree site.

We traveled from Narita to Tokyo by charter bus and then from Tokyo to Yamaguchi by “bullet train”. Hundreds of scouts packed the sleek train, and we spent the next three hours speeding along at just under 200 miles per hour as we walked up and down the train cars meeting different people and reuniting with old scouting friends. Once we reached the Jamboree site at Kirara-hama, eccentric colors flooded my sight and surrounding me were people of all ethnicities and cultures. My troop of 36 scouts grabbed our duffels and began the hike to sub camp Daihatsu to set up our campsite.



Venturers & Scouts of Central Region Troop 102 arrive in Japan for the World Scout Jamboree



Enjoying a cultural day and seeing all the flags

The enormous campground was divided into four hubs, and within each hub were several sub camps. The incredible size of this event and the vastness of the campground are impossible to portray. Everywhere I looked stood flags of different countries and rows of tents that stretched for many hundreds of yards. If we weren't walking around the hubs meeting people and trading patches and uniforms, we were at daily activities planned by the wonderful staff of the Jamboree. These activities ranged from learning about Japanese culture at the Global Development Village, to swimming and Frisbee at the beach, to visiting museums and monuments in Hiroshima.

During the Jamboree, I learned a great deal about being a leader. Our troop was divided into four patrols, and I was the patrol leader for one of them. My patrol was unique in that it consisted of a combination of 3 Boy Scouts and 6 Venturers. I kept track of people using a simple but effective method of head-counting. I helped choose the activities our patrol would partake in, and I acted as a role model for my scouting companions as I tried to maintain a positive attitude through every heat wave. The patrol method of organization helped our troop keep our campsite clean and our bellies full as we always had one patrol on camp clean up duty, one patrol on meal clean up duty, one patrol on cooking duty, and one patrol with the day off.



Mariah's patrol posing with their flag



Making friends with Japanese Scouts

Along with learning leadership skills, I acquired new social skills. Meeting people from all over the world with different native languages requires a certain approach to communication that can be difficult to grasp. Barriers can be found between different cultures that make it hard to relate to and connect with each other. Despite these barriers and my typically shy behavior, I befriended hundreds of scouts from dozens of different countries, and had stimulating and interesting conversations every day.

The 23<sup>rd</sup> World Scout Jamboree really expanded my global frame of reference and taught me much about Japanese culture, teamwork, leadership, and human relations; but more importantly, the Jamboree brought me special moments I will never forget. I will always remember images of fireworks exploding in the air behind a giant stage as a guitarist performs a solo in the center; staying up until four in the morning laughing with people I now consider some of my closest friends; learning new riffs on my ukulele from an Australian girl who doubled as a music prodigy. These are just a few of the memories I made at the 23<sup>rd</sup> World Scout Jamboree. Although I was over 6 thousand miles from home, this amazing event allowed me to discover a world scouting family right there in Japan.



Playing Ukuleles with some Scouts from the U.K.



Visiting the Unknown Scout Soldier Monument

### **Unknown Scout Soldier Monument**

#### ***The translation of the plaque is ...***

*This statue is a memorial of a true story of a fierce battle in World War II, which happened on an island in the South Pacific Ocean somewhere. An American soldier was seriously wounded, and he was lying where he had fallen. The sound of gunfire stopped, and the surroundings quieted down. He heard someone's footsteps approaching him. A Japanese soldier who had a gun with a bayonet was standing over him when he opened his eyes. He thought that he was going to be killed by the Japanese soldier, and he fainted. After a while, he woke up. He found a white slip of paper on the sand by his side, and he put it in*

*his pocket. He was carried on a stretcher to the field operations aid station soon after that. When he was put on the operating table, he remembered the slip of paper in his pocket, and gave it to the doctor. It was a message from the Japanese soldier, and was as follows: "When I was about to kill you, you made the three fingered Scout salute. I am a Scout. A Scout is a brother. Therefore, I could not kill any person who lost the fighting spirit. I tended to your wound. Good luck!" After the war the American soldier and his father visited the Boy Scout headquarters in the United States, and told this story. They donated money for the Boy Scouts to put up a monument to the Scouting Spirit. In 1952, Mr. Finnel came to inspect the Boy Scout movement of Japan from the headquarters in the United States and passed on this true story as a fine anecdote from during the war. The American soldier's name is not known. The Japanese soldier was killed. This monument is to the Unknown Scout Soldier. This is an example of the Scout Spirit of Japan.*