

## THE EAGLE "HOME STRETCH"

### **PART I: Steps Involved after the Eagle Project to get to the Eagle Court of Honor**

After a Life Scout has completed his Eagle Project, he is tempted to think that he is nearly "all the way home" for Eagle - that there are just one or two little things remaining to be done until he can have his Eagle Court of Honor.

That assumption is incorrect. There are still a number of steps, and a lot of things that the Scout still needs to prepare. The point of this paper is to set out what these steps are.

Remember: **time can be of the essence**. A Scout must have his Scoutmaster Conference before he turns 18, and he must have his Eagle Board of Review no later than 3 months after his 18th birthday.

It will usually take at least 6 weeks to complete the steps necessary to hold a Scoutmaster Conference, and then another 8 to 10 weeks to have an Eagle Board of Review. So do not dally!

There is a great deal of information about these steps on the "Life to Eagle" section of the Troop 5 website, [www.troop5.com](http://www.troop5.com). A Scout who is working on his Eagle paperwork should print out each of the following documents that are posted on the website:

- Life to Eagle Instructions
- Potawatomi District Eagle Process Advice
- Eagle Binder Contents

Review these documents carefully and frequently. They have a great deal of important advice about this process.

**Important Note:** This set of instructions assumes that the Eagle candidate has completed all of his merit badges and has sufficient Position of Responsibility credit. If there is any doubt about that, contact the Scoutmaster immediately.

**1. Finish all Eagle "Paperwork."** There are a number of documents the Scout needs to prepare:

- Project Report
- Statement of Ambitions and Life Purpose
- List of leadership positions held
- Eagle application

(See Part II of this Memo for important commentary on the contents of each of these items of paperwork.)

The Scoutmaster will review and comment on all of these papers; it is almost always the case that the Scout prepares two or three drafts before these are finalized. The better the first draft is, the faster this step will go.

**2. Call the NEIC to Request a Draft Eagle Application.** Contact Ms. Cheris Thomas-Phillips in the NEIC office (847.748.9155 or [cheris.phillips@scouting.org](mailto:cheris.phillips@scouting.org)) and request a “working copy” of your Eagle application. She will prepare that working copy based on the NEIC’s records and send it to you, along with a complete set of instructions on what you need to do to fill in any missing information, or correct any wrong information, in the application.

**3. Check the working copy of the Eagle Application.** You need to check your own records against the working copy, to see if you note any discrepancies. You also need to supply any missing information that Ms. Thomas-Phillips identifies. When the information in the Eagle application is complete (other than the references, which you will fill in later), she will send you a “verified copy.” When she sends that to you, fill in the information on references on the front of the application.

**4. Make sure all recommendation letters are sent out.** The Scout should have received the forms to request these letters from the Potawatomi District reviewer (e.g., Mr. Handler) at the time his project was approved. The completed recommendations need to be received by the NEIC before the Scout can have the Board of Review discussed below in step 9.

**5. Prepare three ring "Eagle binder."** This needs to be prepared before the Scoutmaster Conference, and the Scoutmaster will need to review it before the conference.

**6. Have the Eagle Scoutmaster Conference.** When the Scout has completed steps 1, 2 and 4, the Scoutmaster will schedule a Scoutmaster conference. The Scout should be in full uniform for the conference, and should bring the Eagle binder with the original Eagle Application and other contents. The Scout should also bring his Scout Handbook.

**7. Get signatures on the verified copy of the Eagle Application.** You need to get the signature of the Scoutmaster and the Troop Committee Chair on the verified copy of the Eagle Application.

**8. Take the completed Eagle application to Ms. Phillips Thomas at NEIC for further processing.** Make a copy to put into your Eagle binder, and take the original up to Ms. Phillips-Thomas (who will sign it and should give you back a copy with her signature).

**9. Deliver one copy of the Eagle binder to the Potawatomi District Eagle Advancement Chair.** The name and address of this person is listed on the materials on the Troop 5 website. Currently, it is Mr. George Sullivan. He will review certain aspects of the Eagle binder. If he believes changes are in order, he will contact you.

**10. Satisfying Conditions for Eagle Board of Review.** Mr. Sullivan will be ready to schedule an Eagle Board of Review when:

- (a) he is satisfied with the Eagle binder

(b) Ms. Phillips Thomas tells him that she has received the 4 recommendations

(c) Ms. Rhodes tells him she has approved the Eagle application

It usually takes at least 4 weeks for all these things to occur, and it can be much longer if a recommender is slow with a letter.

**11. Scheduling of Eagle Board of Review.** Once the conditions in step 8 are satisfied, Mr. Sullivan will schedule the Board of Review. That will usually take another 2 weeks, and possibly 4 weeks, depending on how many Eagle Board of Reviews Mr. Sullivan is trying to schedule and how much of a backlog there is.

The members of the Eagle Board of Review will be Scoutmasters and other Scouters from troops and crews other than Troop 5 and Crew 5.

**12. Application is sent in to BSA National.** After the Eagle Board of Review, the NEIC sends the application to BSA National headquarters in Texas. It usually takes them about a month to approve it. There is a way to expedite this process by paying some kind of fee, perhaps around \$35 or so. If the Scout wants to expedite the process, he should mention this to Mr. Sullivan.

**13. NEIC Postcard.** Once BSA National approves it, the NEIC sends a postcard saying that the Eagle "hardware" (Eagle medal, cloth patch, mom and dad pins and Eagle certificate) can be picked up.

**14. Schedule the Eagle Court of Honor.** Consult with the Scoutmaster and the Parent Committee Chair to schedule this event. There are many considerations for this court of honor that are not covered in this document.

## **PART II: COMMENTARY ON CONTENTS OF EAGLE PAPERWORK**

Each of these items of Eagle paperwork should be prepared with care. The Scoutmaster is a stickler for grammar; write thoughtfully and carefully. Make these your best work product, something that will make you proud when you look back at your Eagle binder later in life.

The audience for whom you are writing these materials is, ultimately, the Eagle Board of Review. They are adult leaders from other troops; they will not have participated in your project, nor in all likelihood will they know you. Your task is to help them get to know you through this paperwork. You should want to give them your finest work product: *They are the ones who decide whether you will become an Eagle Scout.*

### **A. Project Report**

Make sure you review the Life to Eagle Instructions before you write your report. Pages 3 and 4 have a number of questions that you must answer in writing the report. Here are some other pointers on this report:

- This document is a formal report. Include a cover page and, if appropriate, a table of contents. Organize it thoughtfully. Remember that the reader does not know you or anything much about Troop 5, so write it so that a person without that kind of background will understand the report. For example, you should not say “we met in the church parking lot”; rather, you should specifically identify the First Presbyterian Church of Wilmette.
- It is usually 6 to 10 pages long, double-spaced.
- It should include a narrative of each day on which significant work was done by volunteers on your project. Include in the narrative the actions you took and the decisions you made that demonstrated leadership. Having the narrative enables the Eagle Board members to “approve the manner in which the project was carried out.”
- Include charts showing the names and hours worked by volunteers, and the materials used in the project and their cost (if applicable). If other charts are appropriate, include them, too. Generally speaking, the charts should be placed as appendices at the end of the report.
- Compare the results of your project with your expectations at the outset. There are several dimensions in which you can make this comparison: number of volunteers; total hours for the project; cost of materials or source of funding; difficulty of completing the project.
- As is evident from the Life to Eagle Instructions, an important component of this report is what you learned about leadership from the project. Be thoughtful in writing this section of the report.
- Another important component of the report is the section on what changes occurred from your plan. Be thorough here. Describe how and why the changes occurred, and what you did to deal with those changes.

## **B. Statement of Ambitions and Life Purpose**

The Statement of Ambitions and Life Purpose is the one that tells the Eagle Board of Review the most about who you are as an Eagle candidate. You should treat writing this Statement as an opportunity to think deeply about what Scouting has meant to you. Think of it as an essay about yourself; do not take it as a series of discrete answers to specific questions. Be introspective. Put meaning into your Statement.

The Life to Eagle Instructions have some guidance on the Statement on pages 6-7. Make sure you read that guidance.

Your Statement should be at least three pages long, double-spaced. Many have been much longer, sometimes up to 10 pages.

*Mandatory Topics.* There are a few topics that **must** be covered in your Statement:

- What influence has Scouting had on your personal and professional goals?
- How has Scouting influenced your personal and spiritual growth?
- How do you plan, during the rest of your Scouting career as a youth, and then as an adult, to be involved in Scouting?
- What are your current plans or expectations for what you will do when you graduate from high school?

*Optional Topics.* There are a great many other topics that Eagle candidates have explored in their Statements. Among them are the following:

- How my attitude toward Scouting changed over the years
- When I decided I wanted to be an Eagle Scout
- What I enjoyed most about Scouting
- Why I waited so long to finish my Eagle requirements
- What the Scout Oath and Scout Law mean to me
- Things I now realize about Scouting that I didn't understand until recently
- The hardest thing I did in Scouting
- Lessons I have learned from Scouting
- Other significant activities in my life beyond Scouting
- What I think I want to study in college
- What I hope to do when I finish college

The key to the Statement is to make it *personal*. This is your chance to talk about yourself. There is no formula for this document. Tell the Eagle Board about you.

### **C. List of Leadership Positions**

The List is discussed somewhat on pages 6-7 of the Life to Eagle Instructions (under the heading for the Statement of Ambitions and Life Purpose). It is also referenced in the Eagle Application.

Please note that the List is not just a list of Positions of Responsibility in Troop 5 and Crew 5. Rather, it is supposed to be a list of positions, along with honors and awards, from all the types of organizations and programs in which you have participated: Scouting, place of worship, school, extra-curricular activities, volunteer organizations, and so on.

This list can be a separate document, or it can be included at the end of the Statement of Ambitions and Life Purpose.

**D. Eagle Application**

The Life to Eagle Instructions have very detailed instructions regarding the application, starting on page 2. Follow them closely.

Please use the electronic form of Eagle Application that is found on the Troop 5 website. You can type download that form and type directly into it; that is much easier than handwriting your application.