



**BOY SCOUT TROOP 5**  
Wilmette, Illinois

**TO:** Eagle Scout Candidates

**FROM:** Kenneth P. Morrison  
*Life to Eagle Advisor, Troop 5*

**DATE:** February, 2014

**RE:** The Journey to Eagle: The Eagle "Home Stretch"

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After a Life Scout has completed his Eagle Project, he is tempted to think that he is nearly "all the way home" in his journey to 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 to take, and a lot of things that you, the Scout, still need to prepare. The point of this memorandum is to set out these steps.

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 6 months after his 18<sup>th</sup> birthday.

It will usually take at least 6 weeks to complete the steps necessary to hold a Scoutmaster Conference, and then another 4 to 6 weeks to have an Eagle Board of Review. So do not dally!

**Important Note:** This memorandum assumes that you have completed all of his merit badges and have sufficient Position of Responsibility credit. If there is any doubt about that, contact the Scoutmaster or the Life to Eagle Advisor immediately.

There are two parts to this memorandum. The first part reviews the steps to be taken, and the second part contains some tips on the reports and essays that you must write.

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

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

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

- Eagle application

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

The Life to Eagle Advisor will review and comment on all of these papers; it is almost always the case that an Eagle candidate 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 the NEIC's Advancement Report.** Contact Mr. Jake Hirsh in the NEIC office [(847.748.9167 or ) and request an Advancement Report that shows your status on the NEIC's records. He will send that report to you. The NEIC's records are the official records.

**3. Get your Troop 5 Troopmaster Advancement Report.** Troop 5 maintains an unofficial database known as Troopmaster that has records on your advancement. Ask the Scoutmaster, the Life to Eagle Advisor or the Troop Registrar (currently Mr. Dave Rader, [rader.dave@gmail.com](mailto:rader.dave@gmail.com)) for a copy of your Troopmaster Advancement Report. If there are discrepancies between the Troopmaster Advancement Report and the NEIC Advancement Report, be sure to tell the Life to Eagle Advisor, so that you and he can work together to figure out how to fix those discrepancies.

**4. Prepare a draft of the Eagle Application.** The official Eagle Application can be found on the Life to Eagle page of the Troop 5 website. It is a "fillable pdf" document. There are several steps involved in preparing the Eagle application:

a. Download the fillable pdf to your computer and fill it out. You should use your own records, the Troopmaster Advancement Report and the NEIC Advancement Report to prepare a against the working copy, to see if you note any discrepancies. *There is some guidance in Part II.D. of this memorandum on particular parts of the Eagle Application. Be sure to read that.*

b. Once you have completed a working draft, send it to the Life to Eagle Advisor, along with your NEIC Advancement Report and Troopmaster Advancement Report. He will check it over.

c. Once you have made any revisions suggested by the Life to Eagle Advisor, send your draft Eagle Application to Mr. Hirsch at the NEIC to see if it is complete.

**5. Make sure all recommendation letters are sent out.** You should have received the forms to request four other people to write recommendation letters for you from the Potawatomi District reviewer (e.g., Mr. Handler) when your project was approved. The completed recommendations need to be received by the NEIC before you can have your Eagle Board of Review.

**6. Prepare three ring "Eagle binder."** This needs to be prepared by you and reviewed by the Life to Eagle Advisor before you schedule your Scoutmaster Conference. *See Part II.E. of this memorandum for a list of the contents of the Eagle binder.*

**7. Have the Eagle Scoutmaster Conference.** When you have completed steps 1 through 6, you may contact the Scoutmaster to schedule a Scoutmaster conference. You should be in full uniform for the conference and should bring the Eagle binder with the original Eagle Application and other contents. The candidate should also bring his Scout Handbook.

**8. Get signatures on the final copy of the Eagle Application.** You also need to get the signature of the Troop Committee Chair on the final copy of the Eagle Application.

**9. Take the completed Eagle application to Mr. Hirsch at NEIC for further processing.** Make a copy to put into your Eagle binder, and take the original up to Mr. Hirsch. He will keep that original, which he will deliver to Mr. Sullivan for your Eagle Board of Review.

**10. Deliver one copy of the Eagle binder to the Potawatomi District Eagle Advancement Chair.** Mr. George Sullivan holds this position. He will review certain aspects of the Eagle binder. If he believes changes are in order, he will contact you.

Mr. Sullivan's contact information is:

George P. Sullivan, Jr.  
1040 Locust Ave.  
Wilmette, IL 60091  
847.251.2266  
[sullivangp@sbcglobal.net](mailto:sullivangp@sbcglobal.net)

Mr. Sullivan has a box outside of his front door to which you should deliver one copy of your Eagle binder.

**11. 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) Mr. Hirsch tells Mr. Sullivan that he has received the 4 recommendations

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.

**12. Scheduling of Eagle Board of Review.** Once the conditions in Step 11 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 Boards 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.

**13. 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.

**14. NEIC Postcard.** Once BSA National approves it, the NEIC sends a postcard to Troop 5 saying that the Eagle "hardware" (Eagle medal, cloth patch, mom and dad pins and Eagle certificate) can be picked up. The Troop 5 Advancement Chair (currently Ms. Monica O'Connor) will pick that up and hold it until your Eagle Court of Honor.

**15. 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 Life to Eagle Advisor 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**

The Project Report template has been specified by the Boy Scouts of America; it is part of the Eagle Scout Service Project Workbook. For your convenience, Troop 5 has prepared a Word version of the Project Report template. You can download it from the Troop 5 website and use it to prepare your Project Report. The Word version is much easier to work with than the pages in the fillable PDF workbook, and we strongly recommend that you use the Word version.

Here are some tips on writing your Project Report:

#### **General Guidance**

- This document is a formal report. Write it in that fashion. Use complete sentences.
- An approach that has worked well for a number of Troop 5 Eagle candidates is to start by writing up a *chronological summary* of your workday(s). This summary can describe the way in which each workday unfolded, the challenges you faced, the ways that you responded, the number of volunteers, and any other information you want to include. Often, Eagle candidates have included pictures in this summary, showing different stages of work or other aspects of the project. Writing such a chronological summary is not required, but doing so will create a nice record for posterity of your project. It will also make it much easier to finish the rest of the Eagle Project Report. This summary would typically be included as the first appendix to the Report.

- The BSA form is, in various respects, difficult to use. There are a lot of overlapping subject areas, and some topics could be addressed in any of three or four different places. For example, a particularly significant change in the way you decided to handle some part of your process could be described in answer to any of the following questions:
  - Summary - What was challenging?
  - Changes - What changes were made as the project was conducted?
  - Leadership - What was most difficult about being the leader?
- 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.
- When discussing the various phases of your project in the Report, do not forget to talk about the recruiting phase as well as the workdays.

Specific Sections of the Project Report (*Note: If you have written a chronological summary as an appendix, then you don't need to cover all that information again in the sections described below. Instead, you can just answer those sections briefly, or cross-reference a discussion of the topic in your chronological summary.*)

- **What Went Well.** In this section, we recommend that you include a summary of the different parts of your project. Briefly discuss each date on which you recruited volunteers, acquired materials or held a workday. Include the date, the number of participants and a brief description of the principal activities. Then the readers will have a good sense for how your project unfolded.
- **What Was Challenging.** In this section you should discuss the various aspects of the project that were challenging. As part of this section, discuss what you did to meet these challenges. Also discuss whether, in hindsight, there might have been something you could have done differently in the planning process that might have eliminated or mitigated this challenge. (But you do not need to be really hard on yourself; often, these challenging situations cannot reasonably be anticipated.)
- **Changes.** Be thorough here. Describe how and why the changes occurred, and what you did to deal with those changes. Tie this discussion back to the project phases that you outlined in your Proposal and your Final Plan. 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.
- **Entering Service Project Data.** This section asks for select data about volunteer hours. *In addition to filling in this data, please include as an appendix one or more charts showing the names and hours worked by volunteers.*

- **Leadership.** An important component of this report is what you learned about leadership from the project. Be thoughtful in writing this section of the Project Report. Look at the *11 Skills of Leadership*, and discuss some of the aspects of leadership listed there - do not concentrate just on the “command and control” aspects of leadership. For example, you could discuss how you knew of, and used, the resources of the group. You could discuss the various methods of communication you used. You could discuss how your planning affected your leadership of the project.
- **Materials, Supplies, Tools.** We suggest that you include a separate appendix that lists your final costs for the project. In this section of the report, we suggest that you discuss any significant differences in costs between your estimates and the actual costs (as well as discussing the other topics described in this section).
- **Photos and Other Documentation.** Be sure to include photos as an appendix; it is helpful to provide some kind of caption on them, so that the reader knows what is being shown in the picture.

## **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.

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 members of the Eagle Board about you.

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

The requirement for this list is 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**

As described in steps 2 and 3 in Part I of this memorandum, you must work with the Life to Eagle Advisor and Mr. Hirsch at the NEIC to finalize this document. Here are a few tips on specific aspects of the application:

- *Had you completed fifth grade upon joining?* This is sort of a trick question. Most Scouts join in March of their fifth grade year; if that is you, then the answer is “No.”
- *References.* You need to fill in this information, and send your recommendation requests to at least four of these references (not counting your parents). Here are some tips:
  - *Religious.* This person does not need to be a minister, priest, rabbi, imam or other cleric. It does need to be a person who will testify, if asked, to your belief in a supreme being (though I'm not aware of a case in the NEIC where that question has been asked).
  - *Employer.* Only fill in if you have an employer.

- *Two other references.* These two other references should not be the Scoutmaster or an Assistant Scoutmaster with Troop 5.
- *List of merit badges.* There are a few tricky parts here:
  - Use the dates from the NEIC Advancement Report, in the case of a discrepancy with the Troopmaster Advancement Report.
  - Note that there are two places where you need to cross out one or two Eagle-required badges (for example, if you earned Lifesaving but not Emergency Prep, cross out Emergency Prep). If you earned both badges, count one as the Eagle-required badge and cross out the other one, but then list the other one as an optional badge.
  - Note that you only list 21 badges. If you earned more than that, make sure the ones you choose to include show that you had 7 total badges by the time of your Star board of review and 11 total badges by the time of your Life board of review.
- *Requirement 4 - POR credit.* You should always talk with the Scoutmaster or Life to Eagle Advisor about the appropriate dates (and, perhaps, positions of responsibility) to fill into these blanks. The application only allows two lines for POR credit, and it's entirely possible that you might have held more than 2 PORs while a Life Scout, or had PORs that covered "split" time periods. In such cases, some judicious determinations will need to be made.

#### **E. Eagle Binder Contents**

The binder is a three ring binder, usually white, of the type into which an outside cover page can be slipped. The contents of the binder are:

- some kind of cover page that has your name, Troop, some reference to Eagle, and maybe a picture or computer graphic of your choosing
- numbered, lettered or titled tabs or dividers between the sections
- the following sections:
  - table of contents
  - Eagle Application
  - Eagle Scout Service Project Workbook (with signatures)
  - Eagle Project Proposal
  - Eagle Project Final Plan
  - Eagle Project Report, including pictures
  - Statement of Ambitions and Life Purpose
  - Listing of Leadership Positions