

## *Using the Order of the Arrow in Your Troop*

“Have you ever considered the Order of the Arrow to be a resource?”

### *Order of the Arrow Background*

The Order of the Arrow is Scouting’s national honor society. The OA has been around since 1915 and exists to serve the local council. Members of the OA are referred to as Arrowmen, and their main duty is to serve their unit. They wear red and white sashes and a patch on the right pocket flap of the Scout uniform to identify their lodge affiliation.

### *Benefits to the Individual*

The Order of the Arrow has several key benefits for the individual. First, the OA is a way for peers to recognize Scouts who exemplify the Scout Oath and Law in their daily lives. In order to gain membership into the OA, a Scout must meet certain criteria and be elected by his peers in the unit. A Scouter must meet the same criteria and be selected by the troop or team committee. This recognition instills a sense of pride within an individual. Second, the OA gives Scouts an opportunity that might not be found at the unit level. They have a chance to sharpen their leadership skills by leading others at a local council or national level, by planning and promoting events, by communicating, and by attending leadership programs. They are then able to return to their troops and provide leadership. By allowing Scouts to actively participate in the OA, troop and team leaders are allowing them to develop their leadership skills, which will improve the unit. Third, the Scout may actively participate with his troop or team for a longer period of time if he is active in the OA. Arrowmen are more likely to continue to participate in troop or team functions because they are still involved with Scouting. Fourth, there is also a nationally recognized leadership position for rank advancement: the troop/team representative. The troop/team representative acts as a liaison between the unit and the OA lodge or chapter and communicates future program opportunities to unit members. Your representative would also coordinate any interaction between the unit and the OA (i.e., help with activities at troop meetings or outings). This is a great way to strengthen leadership skills in a younger Scout to prepare him for further unit leadership. Fifth, the Order of the Arrow operates three great high-adventure programs—Philmont Scout Ranch, Northern Tier, and the Florida Sea Base. These programs are open to youth Arrowmen at a discounted rate.

### *Benefits to the Unit*

The Order of the Arrow is full of knowledgeable Scouts and Scouters who are dedicated to the BSA program and are willing to assist your unit. When you have tried new approaches and nothing seems to be working, or you are just looking for a fresh idea, feel free to contact the OA. Arrowmen could assist with a skill that is going to be taught at a troop meeting, attend a troop or team outing, help promote weekend and summer camp, help with leadership activities, or be present at troop functions to serve as a positive role model for those troops with many younger

Scouts.

The Order of the Arrow is not designed to take older Scouts away from the unit. The Order is designed to keep Scouts in Scouting as they mature. When Scouts go through their Ordeal, the first interaction between the Scout and the OA program, it is stressed to them to remain active in their unit. These are just some of the benefits your troop or team could receive from utilizing the Order of the Arrow.

### *Benefits to the Council*

When the troop is receiving assistance from the Order of the Arrow, the council is also benefiting. The mission of the Order is to become an integral part of the council. The lodge is charged with providing program that enables youths to become better leaders and continue to serve their unit. In many places across the country, the lodge provides support to council programs and camps. Discuss with participants what the lodge has done locally for the council and camping.