



Are you a Knotty Scouter?

You undoubtedly have seen a variety of square knots on the upper left pocket of many a Scouter. Where did the idea of the square knot come from? Do you know what they all stand for? Did you ever wonder how someone would become eligible for any of these badges?

The square knot is used as the basis for at least 30 of the BSA's recognition awards which carry an emblem for uniform wear. The reason why the square knot was chosen is rooted in the history of the Boy Scouts of America. The first Chief Scout Executive, James West, decided to end the long tradition of allowing BSA Scoutmasters and Commissioners to wear military medal ribbons and other military-looking ribbons to represent Scouting awards. It is rumored that he chose the square knot as the emblem to represent the Eagle, Scouter's Key, Scouter's Training Award and the Silver Beaver because the square knot would remind Scouters to continue to be of service to others. With different combinations of rope colors, and later with different background colors, the square knot became Scouting's "informal ribbons" representing national, regional, local Council and district awards.

There are several good websites which can 'translate' the knots. The website: www.boyscouttrail.com/square-knots.asp explains which knots are available under headings such as: Personal Achievement, Recognition, Service and, Training. Also here can be found the paperwork forms needed for the knots. Another website that shows and explains some of the Scouter Square knots is <http://www.ussscouts.org/awards/whysquare.asp>. If you want some clip art of the Square Knots go to: http://clipart.ussscouts.org/library/BSA_Square_Knots/

Many of the awards are based on specific training and tenure while others are awarded through recognition of service and/or personal achievement. Paperwork for the requirements is involved with all of them! If specific instructions are given for routing of paperwork, please follow them. If not, forward the paperwork to the Lighthouse District Executive. Remember to obtain required unit signatures (such as the Troop Committee Chair) when applicable and notification information (such as to whom and where the notification should be sent). The District Executive will work through the necessary steps at the District, Council, and/or National level and will then present and/or forward the award to the appropriate folks.

An important thing to remember when you sew your knot(s) on is that there is a correct placement. BSA offers a booklet titled "*Uniform Insignia Guide*". This is a good reference to work with for the Scouter Knots in addition to other uniform insignias and patch placements. Refer to this and the first website listed above for the proper orientation.

Knots are just one of the ways for adults to be recognized for all they give to Scouting. Take the time to look through the requirements and fill out the paperwork for yourself and/or in recognition of your colleagues. Become a 'knotty Scouter'!

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