

COMMISSIONER SERVICE

Our First Hundred Years



Randy Worcester

Assistant Council Commissioner – Western Area
Middle Tennessee Council

Past Council Commissioner
Attakapas Council

Boy Scouts of America

2010

Middle Tennessee Council College of Commissioner Science
Nashville, Tennessee

CONTENTS

Introduction.....	3
The Roots of Commissioner Service.....	4
The Rise of the Commissioner in the BSA	5
Scout Commissioners Evolution	7
National Field Commissioners	13
First Class Councils	15
The Wreath of Service	17
District Commissioners.....	18
Field Commissioners	20
Neighborhood Commissioners	21
Commissioners of the Round Table	22
Flexibility and Change.....	23
Female Commissioners.....	25
Commissioner Tools & Publications.....	26
Commissioner Training	26
Commissioner Recognition	28
The National Commissioner	30
The International Commissioner	34
The Next Hundred Years	35



INTRODUCTION

As we enter the second century of Scouting and the Commissioner service, we need to look back and salute those Scouters that have worn the insignia of the commissioner.

Scouting has changed in those many years. Requirements and uniforms have changed. Council structures and boundaries have been altered. But the role of the commissioner as Scouting's conduit for unit service remains unchanged.

I have been honored to serve as a Unit Commissioner, Camp Commissioner, Assistant District Commissioner, Assistant Cub Scout District Commissioner, District Commissioner in three councils, Assistant Council Commissioner, and Council Commissioner. My experience is that it can be the most difficult position in Scouting. But it can also be one of the most rewarding jobs in Scouting.

As we reach Scouting's centennial, the commissioner position is getting renewed emphasis and exposure. Funding for non-profits is getting harder to come by resulting in less growth of the professional staffs. The need for more volunteer commissioners is as great or greater than anytime in the past.

Our role in Scouting will continue to be fundamentally important for the next 100 years. As commissioners, we must make sure that every unit is offering their boys exactly what is promised to them.....fun, excitement, adventure, and ultimately a quality experience.



The Roots of Commissioner Service

As commissioners in the Boy Scouts of America, we are delegated authority and responsibility from the National Council through our “Commission” per the By Laws of the National Council. Our responsibility is to help units succeed.

The word “commission” dates back to 1344 where it was derived from the Latin word *commissionem* meaning “delegation of business”. The nation’s monarch delegated authority to a



**1917 First
Commissioner Handbook**

deserving few. These individuals had to qualify as a “gentleman”. As legally defined, a gentleman earned his income from property and as such was independently wealthy with time to devote to other agendas. And it was exactly this kind of man that BP wanted as his volunteer commissioners.

In 1909, Baden Powell was still a working General in command of the Northumbrian Division of the Territorials when his new idea took hold in the imagination of boys everywhere and exploded into a full blown movement. He quickly realized that a system of organization and administration was needed. He put together an executive committee of prominent men. Among them, he named an old military friend, the recently retired Lieutenant-General Sir Edmond Roche Elles, as the first Chief Commissioner to fill in for him and direct the nomination of local County Commissioners and help to organize their associations. He held this post until 1922.



After nomination, the County Commissioners were approved by the Executive Committee. The County Commissioners nominated District Commissioners to help them within the civic divisions of the county. The local commissioners were expected to deal with Scoutmasters' questions and concerns.

By nominating prominent men for commissioner positions, BP helped gain support and recognition for the program. Some were working commissioners while some were commissioners in name only, but either way the movement benefited from their involvement.

W. F. deBois MacLaren was a District Commissioner in Scotland. He is best known for donating Gilwell Park. The MacLaren tartan on the Woodbadge neckerchief is worn in his honor.

Famous author, Rudyard Kipling had a son at the second Brownsea. Baden Powell named him the Commissioner of Wolf Cubs. Kipling also had a big influence on Scouting founder, Earnest Thompson Seton, being published.

The Rise of the Commissioner in the BSA

Troops popped up around the country even before the National Council got organized. As communities formed more troops, it became evident that some form of leadership was needed to maintain standards, provide camping opportunities, recruit leaders, give training, establish local Courts of Honor, and stimulate local Scouting. This person was the "Commissioner".



The Scout Commissioner represented the local community committee or council. A great deal of importance was placed upon the selection of this man. He was expected to have a great deal of outdoor experience and act as the local authority in all Scoutcraft matters.

The 1912 BSA Annual Report mentions that there were 290 Scout Commissioners.

The commissioner was “commissioned” through the National Council. Commissioning a leader meant that they were authorized to render specific services provided for in the by-laws of the Boy Scouts of America.

While originally a volunteer, in some areas the community was able to raise enough funds for the Scout Commissioner to become a salaried position. The areas with paid leadership known as the Scout Executive or Executive Secretary became known as First Class Councils while those with a volunteer head called the Scout Commissioner were known as Second Class Councils.

At the time, registration fees were 25 cents. If it was a first class council headed by a professional, the local council kept 15 cents locally. If it was a second class council, they kept only 5 cents.

The Great Depression hastened the demise of the second class council through mergers. By 1931, there was only one Second Class Council left; the Canal Zone of Panama.





Scout Commissioner (left) and Deputy Scout Commissioner (right)
The Scout Commissioner badge was one of the original badges.

Scout Commissioner's Evolution

The Scout Commissioner is a position that has had its ups and downs. In some years it has played a vital role in organization and training, while in other years the function was weakened to an honorary title.

In Scouting's initial years, a great deal of the success of Scouting in a community as a result of the Scout Commissioner. He was expected to act as the authority in Scoutcraft matters and give leadership to the Scoutmasters. While he was a volunteer, the Scout Commissioner was supposed to be able to give considerable time to their Scout work. (1913)



Many, but not all Scout Commissioners became professional scouters. Some had jobs or family duties that would not allow for a career change.

Even with a paid Scout Executive, the Scout Commissioner was meant to be an active servant who with the Executive Committee provided direction to the Scout Executive. On occasion personal jealousies and antipathy developed between the two as their positions were not clearly defined. The first Professional guide, *Community Boy Leadership*, addressed this issue by suggesting clearly defined duties and doing what was best for the welfare of boyhood. This was of such importance that it was specifically addressed in the National By-Laws that when a council had both positions:

"In such a case the local council, by a resolution, definitely fixes the responsibility of the scout commissioner and the scout executive in order to prevent conflict of authority and make clear the responsibility of the Scout Executive to the Executive Board of the local council in all matters excepting those specifically assigned to the Scout Commissioner."

Chief Scout Executive, James West, in the first National Conference of Scout Executives, suggested that the Scout Executive should be the General in the background with the Scout Commissioner as the ranking uniformed officer giving leadership to the Scoutmasters and act as the ranking officer in public appearances. West recognized that Scout Executives move around and that the Council would benefit from finding and developing a good Scout Commissioner. At the sixth National Conference in French Lick, Indiana, a group of Scout Executives were asked if they had gotten past the fear of the commissioner usurping their authority. Most indicated that they had.



But West also had issues with many Scout Commissioners that were reluctant to give up their turf. While some became professionals, others retained their title with a severe cutback in their duties so that the position became an honorary one. One in St. Louis was particularly irksome to James West as he did not respond to correspondence, got the BSA in trouble with a union, and smoked in public.

At the 1928 National Training Conference for Scout Executives, the group assigned to the task of commissioner service was split evenly with half wanting to totally eliminate the position and the other half wanting the position to be the volunteer head of Troop service for the council.

The Scout Commissioner became an elected position on the council board where his job was to represent the Scout leaders. Overall, his job was to promote Scouting in the area. (1939)

In the forties, the position was being used by councils around the country in many different ways. The recommended council by-laws suggested that the duties of the Scout Commissioner were determined by the local Council. Alternatives were:

1. Counselor and Adviser to the Scout Executive;
2. Chief Inspection Officer;
3. Chief Morale Officer;
4. Preside over gatherings and publically represent the Council
5. Serve as an honorary officer of the council.



Council By-Laws in the forties had all the other commissioner positions reporting to the Scout Executive. District Commissioners answered to the Scout Executive. The position was totally ignored in the Scout Executive guide, *Personnel Administration in Scouting* even though there was an entire chapter devoted to commissioners. Commissioner training at the time did not even mention the position. This demonstrates that the Scout Commissioner was a figurehead in many councils.

In the mid fifties, councils were asked if they had an honorary or active Council Commissioner. Of those councils responding, 90% indicated that they had an active Council Commissioner. Sixty percent of the responding councils said that their Council Commissioner presided at monthly District Commissioner meetings and quarterly meetings of the entire commissioner staff. A large number had the Council Commissioner visit at least one meeting per year of the District Commissioner staff. The evidence showed that those councils that had monthly district commissioner meetings did the best job with their commissioner staffs. The survey showed that the Council Commissioner was responsible for the annual membership roundup and served as the morale officer for the council.

The respondents made a special point of the wholesome working relationship between the Council Commissioner and the Scout executive.



The Council Commissioner as a figurehead was effectively gone. Throughout the sixties, it was felt that a man with the character to be the Council Commissioner would not be satisfied



with simply a title. He was named to head up all the commissioner service in the council by leading monthly District Commissioner meetings, keeping his commissioners informed, planning the Commissioner Conference, realize measureable accomplishments, and be a strong influence in council, district, and unit activities.

By 1971, he was also accountable for the national standard unit goals in the council, and on time charter renewals. Additionally, emphasis was placed on commissioner staff – district committee relationships being understood and developed.

In 1975, the position became optional for councils. After over 20 years of nurturing the “active” Council Commissioner, the new recommended structure did not include the job. This was an effort to streamline accountability from the top to the unit level.

Many councils did not eliminate the Council Commissioner so that by 1980, it was back in full action. The Council Commissioner was viewed as heading all commissioner personnel. His duties now included:

1. Supervise the activities of the commissioner staff and preside at council wide meetings of district commissioners and conduct commissioner conferences.
2. Give leadership to the recruiting and training of adequate commissioner staff so as to provide continuing and effective commissioner service to each unit.
3. Maintain the standards of the Boy Scouts of America, uphold national policies, promote good uniforming and the correct wearing of insignia, and give leadership to the holding of regular roundtable programs in the districts.



4. Be concerned about the proper recognition of unit leaders and the maintenance of their morale, and periodically report unit conditions to the executive board.
5. Help the district commissioners to maintain a good working relationship with related district Scout executives.
6. Maintain procedures that will assure maximum unit charter renewal by district commissioner staffs.
7. Work with the council president to secure help of committees in meeting unit needs.

It was recognized that he may now share parts of his job with assistants. But ultimately the Council Commissioner was held accountable for the unit service program.

In 2002, as greater importance was beginning to be placed on commissioner service, a handout was developed on *Selecting the Council Commissioner (14-160)*. The Council Commissioner was expected to be the morale officer and give leadership to the commissioner corps to help all units become successful. The leaflet stated that "Effective commissioner service is also one of the major causes of a growing council membership."



National Field Commissioners

During the first three years, the National Office drowned in a sea of applications and correspondence. Finally, a program of decentralization was begun with volunteer Field Commissioners to help with the organization of councils to handle local administration including the appointment of Scout Commissioners and Scoutmasters.

Volunteer Field Commissioners known as Field Secretaries were available as early as 1910 to help communities organize their local council and troops. At the first annual meeting of the BSA in February of 1911, James West expressed concern about the immediate demand for Field Secretaries to help organize states, counties and communities around the country. I for one am glad that he changed the term to commissioner. This happened around the time that West changed his title from Executive Secretary to Chief Scout Executive.

A National Field Commissioner named Samuel A. Moffatt was chosen in 1911. With an assistant, Arthur R. Forbush, they made up the National Field Staff. There were 68 volunteer Field Commissioners in 1913. W.A. Whiting became the National Field Commissioner in 1917. He was renamed National Field Scout Commissioner in 1918. Many of the volunteer Field Commissioners worked for other agencies such as the YMCA and traveled extensively, helping with Scouting wherever they went. Besides organizing new councils, they had to spend time correcting false starts and restrain those that wanted to implement their own brand of Scouting. These men were expected to make quarterly reports to the Field Department on the conditions of their geographic area and any recommendations.



From 1913 to 1917, six districts were established with a District Commissioner for each National District. This was later expanded to 12. The original six were:

Harry D. Cross – West Coast

Judson P. Freeman – Midwest

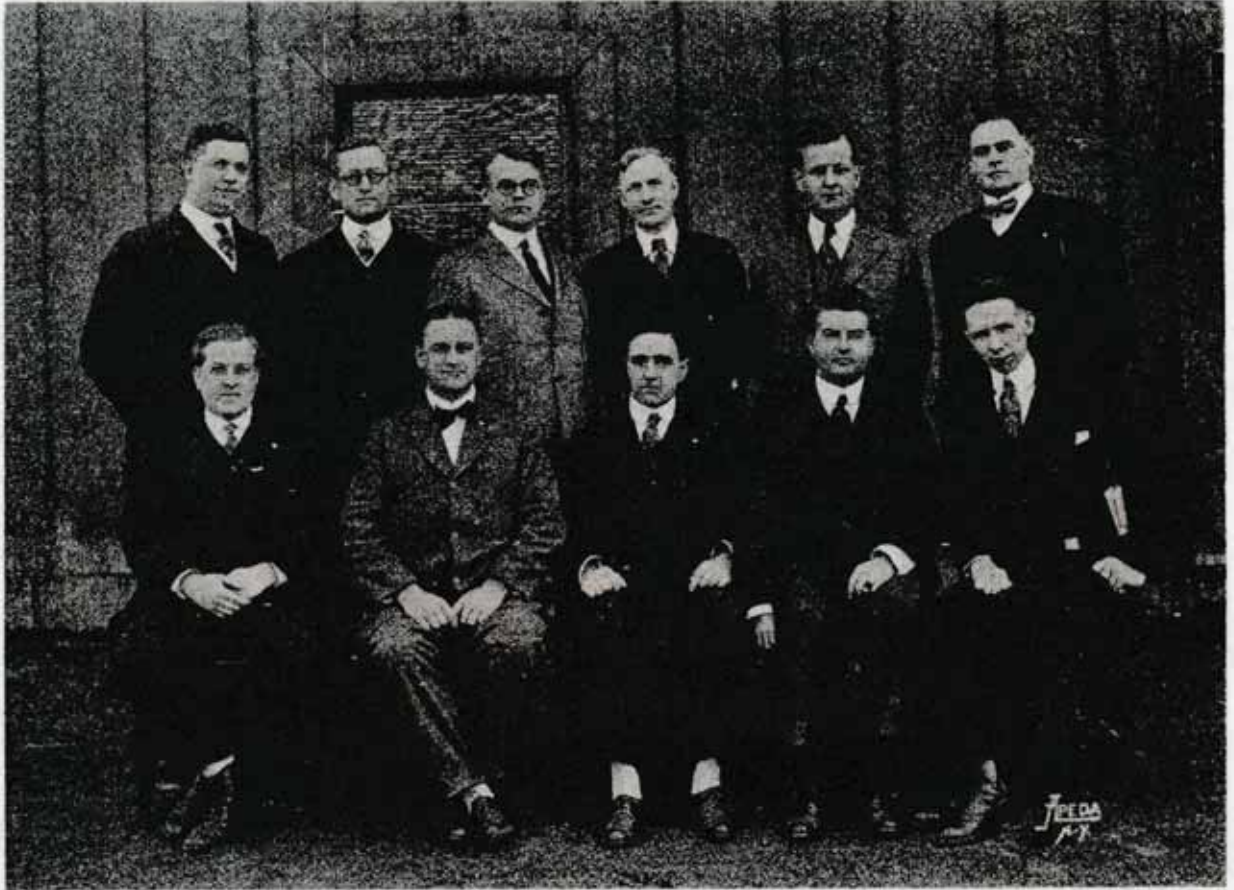
Roy N. Berry – New England

John Boardman – New York/New Jersey

Haywood M. Butler – Pennsylvania

Stanley A. Harris – Southern District





**NATIONAL FIELD SCOUT COMMISSIONERS ATTENDING CONFERENCE
SEPTEMBER, 1916**

From left to right, top row: Mr. Walter H. York; Mr. Clarence M. Abbott; Mr. James E. West, Chief Scout Executive; Mr. Lewis Buddy; Mr. Judson P. Freeman, in charge of Middle West Districts; Mr. Edward C. Bacon

From left to right, bottom row: Mr. A. C. Olson, Secretary to the Chief Scout Executive; Mr. W. H. Weisheit; Mr. S. A. Moffat, Director of Field Work; Mr. H. M. Butler; Mr. H. Laurance Eddy

First Class Councils

While the British continued their organization of volunteers, the National Office felt that the use of career professionals was more successful. In 1920, the newly appointed Deputy Chief



Scout Executive Dr. George J. Fisher was given the task to create and promote the First Class Council concept throughout the country. He did this through his Field Department (replacing Moffatt as head of Field Service) and the National Organization and Field Committee headed by Mortimer Schiff. The position of National Field Scout Commissioner was eliminated.

	COUNCIL		-----TROOPS-----			-----SCOUTS-----		
	Local Councils		Local Councils		Not Under Council	Local Councils		Not Under Council
	1st Class	2nd Class	1st Class	2nd Class	Direct Service	1st Class	2nd Class	Direct Service
1915	47	263	2,891		4,484	59,866		83,916
1917	136	227	5,880		7,368	132,535		148,509
1919	270	151	7,850		8,326	184,944		175,125
1921	416	181	10,278	750	6,561	239,324	17,240	134,818
1923	531	100	13,951	557	5,805	315,603	12,716	116,317
1925	634	41	18,937	228	3,798	411,669	4,922	75,693
1927	638	21	23,156	117	2,375	506,270	2,562	47,825
1929	633	8	27,077	43	649	586,408	120	14,453
1931	583	1	28,989	7	478	636,581	308	9,966
1933	551	1	29,048	11	529	661,561	263	11,709
1935	544	1	32,252	11	442	728,621	330	9,477

Source: The History of the Boy Scouts of America Pg 259

Many of the volunteer Field Commissioners became Professionals following the establishment of the 12 regions in November of 1920.



The Wreath of Service

Originally, the laurel wreath was a Greek symbol denoting victory and courage. Commissioners normally agree with the courage part the first time that they attend the troop meeting of a 25-year Scoutmaster.

The addition of the wreath to the first class badge is thought to be an outgrowth from its use for commissioned personnel in military insignia. Today, our movement is less connected to military tradition and the commissioned wreath insignia is thought of more as “the wreath of service” that surrounds all commissioner and professional position badges.

We call it the wreath of service as a symbol for the service rendered to units by the commissioner.

As it also appears on professional insignia, it further symbolizes the continued partnership of the professional and the commissioner and their commitment to program and unit service.



1914 Scout Commissioner (left) and Scout Executive (right) insignia feature the wreath for the first time.



District Commissioners

The Deputy Scout Commissioner existed to help organize an assigned territory that could not support a full time executive. Once a Field Scout Executive (later District Executive) was in place, the need for a commissioner was questioned.

The National by-laws had given authority for commissioners to the Scout Executive and not the Scout Commissioner. The result was that many councils failed to organize a commissioner corps of any kind.

The 1928 National Training Conference of Scout Executives encouraged keeping the Deputy Commissioner as a representative of the council to see that the Scout Program functions in his District. At this meeting it was recommended that the title be changed to District Commissioner. It was also noted that there was a need for defined job descriptions and literature regarding the use of commissioners. The title change took place around 1931.

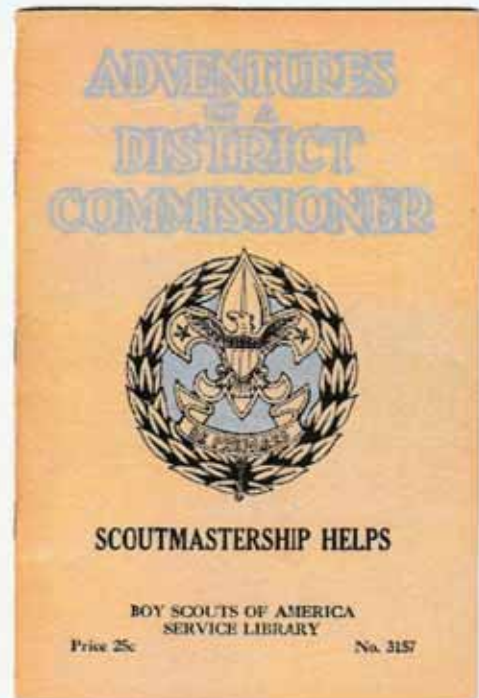
District Commissioners evolved to fill in and bring Scouting to the rural areas of councils that could not support a full time executive. By 1936, 81% of possible district areas had been organized as such.

The book, *Adventures of a District Commissioner*, was the first printed material from the BSA for guiding commissioners. In a narrative fashion it laid out the qualifications for and duties of the position.

This publication laid out essentially six duties for the District Commissioner.



1. Visit the Troops.
2. Stay in touch with the Field Scout Executive.
3. Keep in contact with the Troop Committee
Chairman.
4. Recruit new Scouters.
5. Cultivate new Troops.
6. Hold a meeting for Scouters once a month.



A 1935 publication, *The Committee on Organization and District, Neighborhood, and Field Commissioners*, emphasized the commissioner duty of Troop service while leaving organization of new units to the Committee on Organization. Additionally, it gave more in depth information on the position of the Neighborhood Commissioner.

As the commissioner staff expanded to include Neighborhood Commissioners, another duty was added; the monthly commissioner meeting. Here he was expected to hold a session for training, reviewing reports of unit visitations, and planning the District work.



Field Commissioners

While the Neighborhood Commissioner was viewed as a Doctor, the Field Commissioner was the Specialist that was “on call” to other commissioners.

Field Commissioners were specialized representatives of the council considered to be on an equal level with the District Commissioner. They served a functional responsibility such as Cubbing, Senior Scouting, Catholic Scouting, Camping, Emergency Service Corps, or Sea Scouts.

The position became a catch all for any Scouting need. In Nashville, there was even a Scout Fire Commissioner and Scout Police Commissioner who helped guide the troops sponsored by the city. Another council had a commissioner for uniforming. The Field Commissioner was “on call” to the District or Neighborhood Commissioners as a technical expert in his program. They were not necessarily to wait for a call from the District Commissioner, but were encouraged to go out on their own initiative and visit with units in their respective area of expertise.

There was also talk around 1936 of having an Institutional Commissioner that took care of all the units (a term discouraged at the time) under a single chartering institution although this position never came about.

By 1947, the use of Field Commissioners had fallen by the wayside.



Neighborhood Commissioners

The Great Depression curtailed non-profit funding so that more had to be done utilizing volunteer commissioners instead of professionals. The organization grew and District Commissioners could no longer get around to visiting all their units. This task was given to a Deputy Commissioner so that units would continue to get a monthly visit. The title quickly changed to Neighborhood Commissioner as it was thought that the title of Deputy Commissioner was not descriptive enough.

An increased emphasis on the development of strong commissioner staffs was begun in the late 30's following the Scout Executives National Training Conference at French Lick, Indiana in 1936. With the addition of the Assistant District Commissioner; the structure that we are familiar with today began to take shape.

Scouting at the time was very community focused so the Neighborhood Commissioner position was conceived to serve up to 4 units in his immediate local area.



Scouting units were originally organized around the group of kids in the neighborhood. The times change and Scouting changes with it. Packs and Troops became more associated with their charter partner and the focus for the commissioner became the unit. The Neighborhood Commissioner evolved into the Unit Commissioner who was expected to bring the whole Scouting family of troops, packs, crews, and ships to the Charter Partner.

Commissioners of the Round Table

Very early on, council leader meetings were just for Scoutmasters and was known as the Scoutmasters Association. From early on, District Commissioners were expected to hold a monthly meeting of the “District Scouters Round Table”.

Eventually, this became too much for the District Commissioner to handle and was delegated to a “Round Table leader”. Later, an ADC was designated for the task. In the seventies, the Roundtable Commissioner became an official title.

The addition of the Roundtable Commissioner completed the District Commissioner’s evolution into an “administrative” commissioner.



The use of an Assistant District Commissioner for Roundtables gained momentum in the early fifties. Patches titled for the Cub Scout Roundtable Commissioner and the Boy Scout Roundtable Commissioner followed shortly after in 1973.

There was often confusion over whether the Roundtable Staff were commissioners. National ruled that the Roundtable Staff position was not considered “commissioned” and had the wreath removed from the patch for several years in the mid-nineties.

Flexibility & Change

In the late sixties, about 20 councils experimented with alternative forms of council and district structures. These experiments resulted in a new recommended council structure. The new plan for organization was approved by the National Executive Board in 1973 and presented nationally in 1974. The existing form of organization was referred to as the “traditional” structure.

The main theme was that the council be organized around the program areas of Scouts (the term “boy” was dropped), Cub Scouts, Exploring, and support.

As one Scouting Professional explained it, “Single-line volunteer accountability was the goal – the president and the district chairman.”

A Cub Scout District Commissioner and a Scout District Commissioner were accountable to the District Chairman for Cub Scouts and the District Chairman for Scouts. This person in



turn was accountable to a District Chairman. There were also Assistant District Commissioners and Roundtable Commissioners for Scouts and Cub Scouts. The Unit Commissioners became program focused and were re-titled Troop Commissioner and Pack Commissioner.

The Council Commissioner became an optional position for the council. If used, their position was more ceremonial in nature. Although, if approved; they could provide supplemental training to the commissioner staff.

Exploring had council level accountability. The program was served by a commissioner equivalent known as the Service Team which reported up through a council level Service Chairman.

A new commissioner emphasis in the late seventies highlighted the traditional method so that by 1980, the "recommended" plan disappeared from the manuals. See Exhibits A & B.



Female Commissioners



First female khaki uniforms 1976

Except as a Women's Auxiliary, women were discouraged from taking part in early Scouting. The prevalent thinking at the time was that boys needed a strong male role model. Cubbing changed all that with the position of Den Mother who was an aid to the Den Chief for the first two years of the Cubbing program,

Societal changes pushed for women to take on new roles in Boy Scouts; including the role of

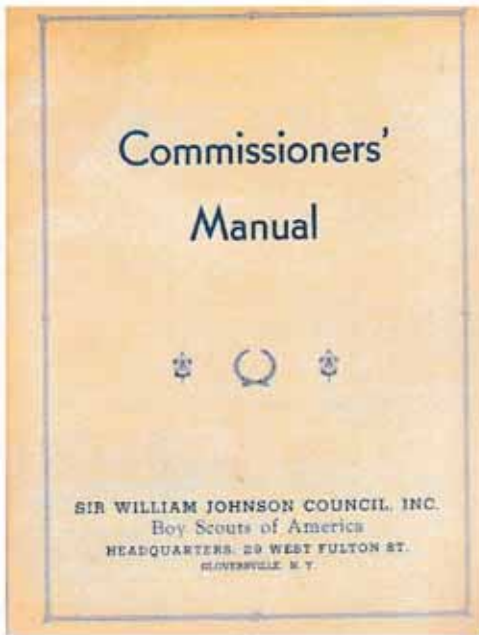
commissioner. In 1973, women were allowed to become Cub Scout Unit Commissioners or Cub Scout Roundtable Commissioners.

The major change came in 1976 when women were allowed to hold any commissioner position. A month later women were given the option of a khaki uniform. Today, there are about 400,000 registered female volunteers.



Commissioner Tools & Publications

The commissioner work kit was a local assembly of National and local forms and reference materials for commissioners to carry as determined by the local Scout Executive. The work kit



1939 Council Manual

was an early development and was also referred to as the Commissioner Manual before the introduction of the “Official” Commissioner Manual”.

After a four year study, a manual was finally produced by the National Office in 1943 that was meant to be used alongside the Council’s version.

The *Commissioner Fieldbook* was created in 1954.

In the early seventies, the *Commissioner Field Book* was introduced in a handy loose leaf design to place in a binder and replace pages as needed. This is an idea that has come back around today.

Commissioner Training

A specialized course for the District Commissioner was developed by the Educational Service in the early thirties.



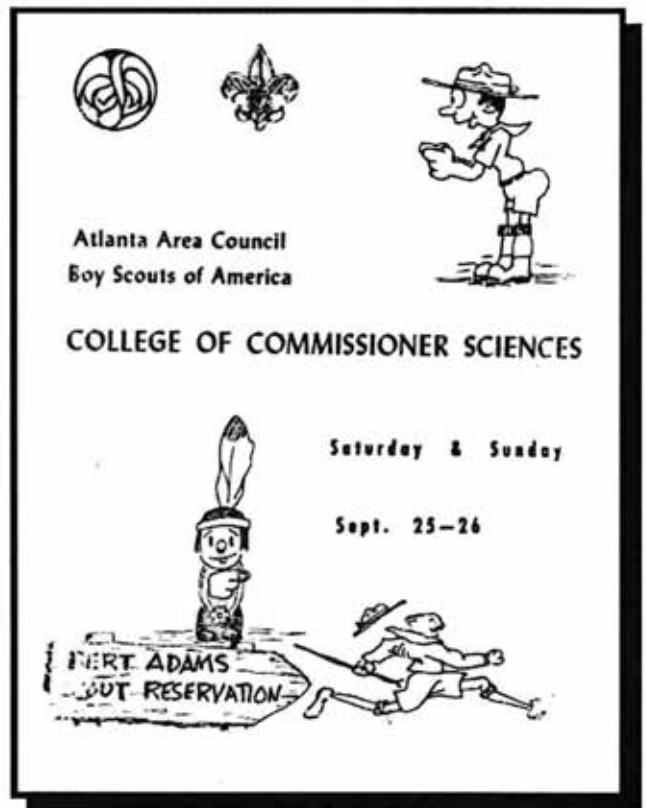


Commissioner courses were initially held at the Mortimer L. Schiff Scout Reservation and known as *Troop and Pack Service* in 1942. This training was offered to those individuals with responsibility for training in their local councils. Philmont instituted national commissioner training in 1951.

As the commissioner membership grew so did the need for training. A *Commissioner's Training Course* was introduced "For Experimental Use" in 1943. The course was timed for release with the new *Commissioner Service Manual*. The training met the requirements for the 5 year training program toward the Scouters Training Award. The country was at war and faced increased turnover in Scouting professionals and volunteers. Commissioners were vital in helping Scouting to respond to all the wartime demands placed upon it and maintain the esprit de corps.

As soon as a Council had enough commissioners to fill a room, there was a need to get together and trade ideas. These later evolved into more elaborate conferences for training and fellowship.

Although many councils still successfully make use of the Commissioner Conference, others have adopted the College



format that was introduced in Atlanta in 1976.

Courses at the first *College of Commissioner Sciences* included:

- Physical Education
- Staging Roll Call and Inspections
- Exciting Charter Presentation Ceremonies

Commissioner Recognition

Arrowhead Honor

The silver Arrowhead Honor Award was introduced in 1952. The Arrowhead was an award that fit between the Scouter's Training Award and the Scouter's Key for Scoutmasters and Commissioners. It was brought out as a part of the three year



THE HONOR AWARD
THIS IS A CLOTH
ARROWHEAD, SILVER
IN COLOR, IT IS
WORN ON THE LEFT
SLEEVE JUST BELOW
THE BADGE OF OFFICE

leadership training plan. At one time, there was a gold arrowhead for Assistant Scoutmasters. Originally pointing down, it was turned around in 1954. The Arrowhead Honor was changed to white in 1970. It is now a symbol of pride and identification of a well trained commissioner. This award is unique to the commissioner service and is unusual in that it requires the application of the knowledge learned in basic commissioner training. It means that you have proved yourself on the job.



Commissioner Key – Scouters Key

Prior to 1948, the Scoutmaster's Key required 5 years of satisfactory service. It allowed for 3 years as a scoutmaster and 2 years as a commissioner. In 1948, the Scoutmaster's Key was renamed the Scouter's Key and the tenure requirement dropped from five to three years. It could now be earned by commissioners. For commissioners, the Scouter's Key incorporated the Arrowhead requirements plus preliminary and basic training. When earned by a commissioner, it is usually referred to as the Commissioner's Key.

Distinguished Commissioner Service Award

The Distinguished Commissioner Service Award was introduced in 1987. Because it requires 5 year of tenure and active registration as a commissioner, it is considered a difficult award to earn. The award itself is a plaque and bolo with a medallion in Silver, Gold, or Bronze. Following the military and Scout tradition, the silver is awarded to Council or Assistant Council Commissioners, Gold to District or Assistant District Commissioners, and Bronze to the Unit Commissioner. The brochure on the award shows the Gold at a higher level. There is also a square knot to represent the award.

Doctorate of Commissioner Science Knot

The Doctorate of Commissioner Science Knot was introduced in 2008. Joseph E Wherry, Assistant Council Commissioner in the Mid-America Council, was instrumental in proposing this new award to recognize completion of a standardized program leading to the



completion of a thesis or project and the award of the Doctorate of Commissioner Science from a College of Commissioner Science.

The National Commissioner

National Commissioners of the BSA

2008–Now	Tico Perez
2004–2008	Donald D. Belcher
1999–2004	William F. "Rick" Cronk
1995–1999	Frances Olmstead
1985–1995	Earl G. Graves
1944-1984	Vacant
1943–1960	George J. Fisher
1942	Vacant
1910–1941	Daniel Carter Beard
1910–1911	Peter S. Bomus
1910–1911	William Verbeck

Along with Dan Beard, Col. Peter S. Bomus and William Verbeck were named National Commissioners. The three had been heads of competing Scout-like organizations that were folded into the BSA. Colonel Peter Bomus headed the Boy Scouts of the United States and

Colonel William Verbeck lead the National Scouts of America. Dan Beard had established the Boy Pioneers (formerly the Sons of Daniel Boone).

Both Bomus and Verbeck served for only 2 years from 1910 to 1912. Uncle Dan spent 31 years as the most recognizable volunteer in the nation.

The minutes of the annual meeting of the National Council in 1913 set out the duties of the National Scout Commissioner:

“The National Scout Commissioner is the head of staff of official representatives of the various national organizations engaged in work with boys and also interested in the Scout Program. The Commissioner and his staff shall adapt the activities to the needs of the groups represented, and work for the development of a high grade of leadership in boy’s work. He is also an honorary member of all standing committees.”

As described above, Dan Beard had no direct authority. He was an honorary member of all standing committees and was very good at making his opinion known; especially when it came to his opinions of Earnest Thompson



Past National Commissioner Earl Graves



Seton and James West. Dan Beard was the Chairman of the National Court of Honor. He became a well known symbol of and cheerleader for Scouting.

Beginning with the restructured position of the National Commissioner in 1985, there has been increasing emphasis on the role of the Commissioner. The first to be named National Commissioner in the modern era was Earl Graves, Publisher of Black Enterprise magazine. He had previously served as Commissioner for New York City. During his term, *the Commissioner*, National Commissioner newsletter was begun.

Francis Olmstead, Jr served as National Commissioner from 1994 to 1999. He started the tracking of the unit-to-commissioner ratio by council and began the gatherings of Council Commissioners at the Annual National Meetings.

In June, 1999, Rick Kronk, president of Dryer's Grand Ice Cream, agreed to fill the role.



National Commissioner, Tico Perez

During his tenure, commissioner identity items were introduced through the Scout catalog and through his efforts the visibility of the commissioner role was raised nationwide.

Following Kronk, Don Belcher filled the position whose role was identified as developing national unit service

programs and commissioner training programs.

Today's National Commissioner, Tico Perez, while still a cheerleader for Scouting, has had a much more participatory role in improving commissioner service and leading the commissioner corps. He serves a four year term and has a large influence over the quality of the program.

Tico Perez established a volunteer group, The National Commissioner Service Task Force, whose goal is to positively impact the quality of commissioner service provided to Area, Council, District, Unit and Roundtable Commissioners. Everything that they do is designed to make the commissioner function easier for the volunteer and assist the commissioner corps in delivering a quality program to the unit.



The International Commissioner

The Boy Scouts of America is represented in world contacts and developments by the volunteer International Commissioner. He plays a key role in representing the BSA at world conferences and events.

The first International Commissioner was Mortimer Schiff. There is no complete list of International Commissioners, but the following men have been identified as holding the position.



Mortimer Schiff

Thomas J Watson

Irving Feist

Edward C. Joullian III

Richard Burdick

Steve Fossett

Wayne M Perry

James Turley



The Next Hundred Years

During all these many years, commissioner service was the one unifying factor that made Scouting permanent. The commissioner has remained the line of service from council to unit and chartered organization.



Just as Scouting has evolved over the last 100 years, so has the commissioner position. Wherever Scouting needed us, commissioners were there to take on the task.

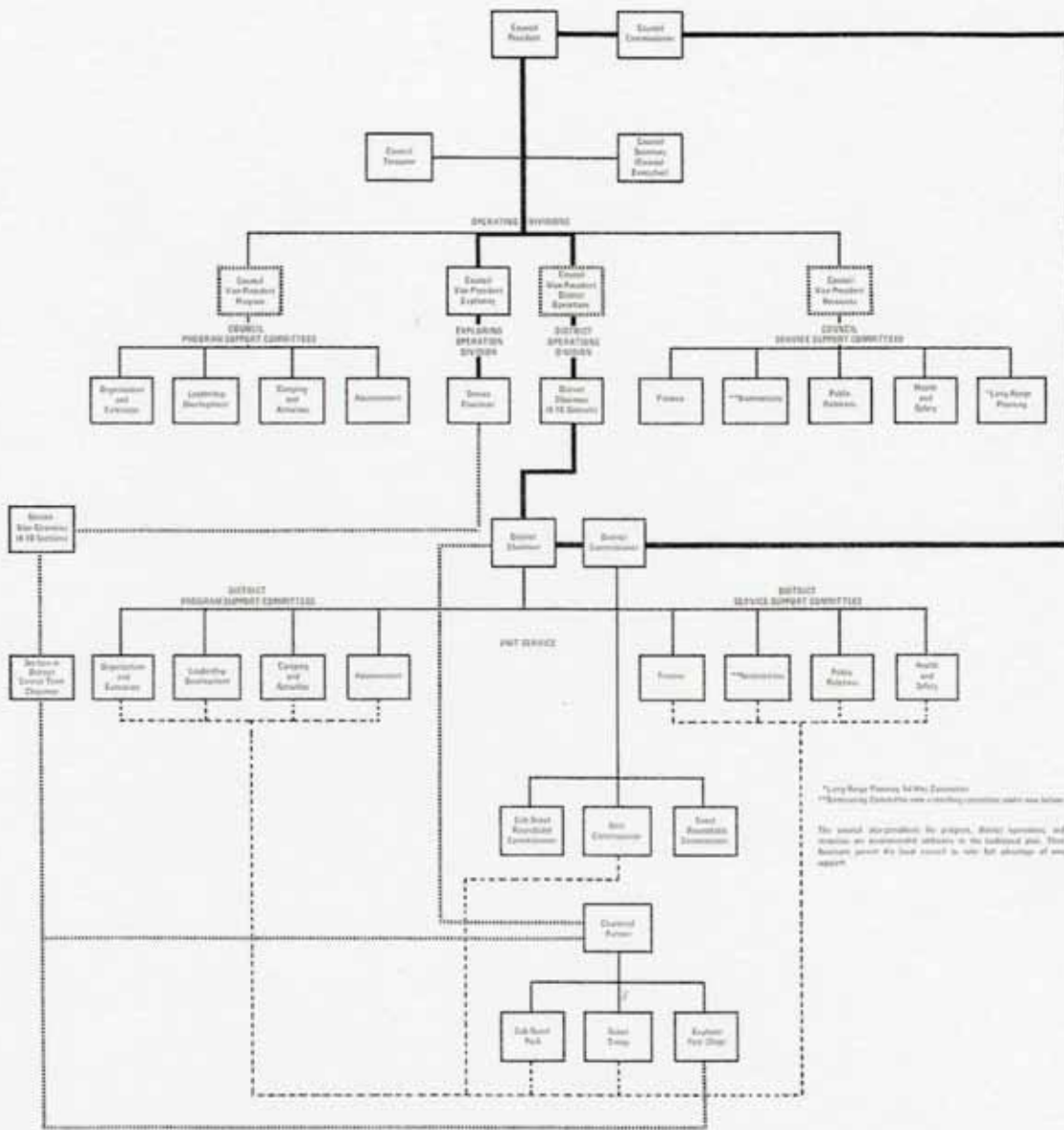
It has always been the mission of every commissioner to see to it that the spirit of Scouting as embodied in the oath and law is a living reality in every unit.

With your help, commissioner service will continue to be the catalyst for growth and quality in the BSA for the next hundred years.



Exhibit A Flexibility & Change

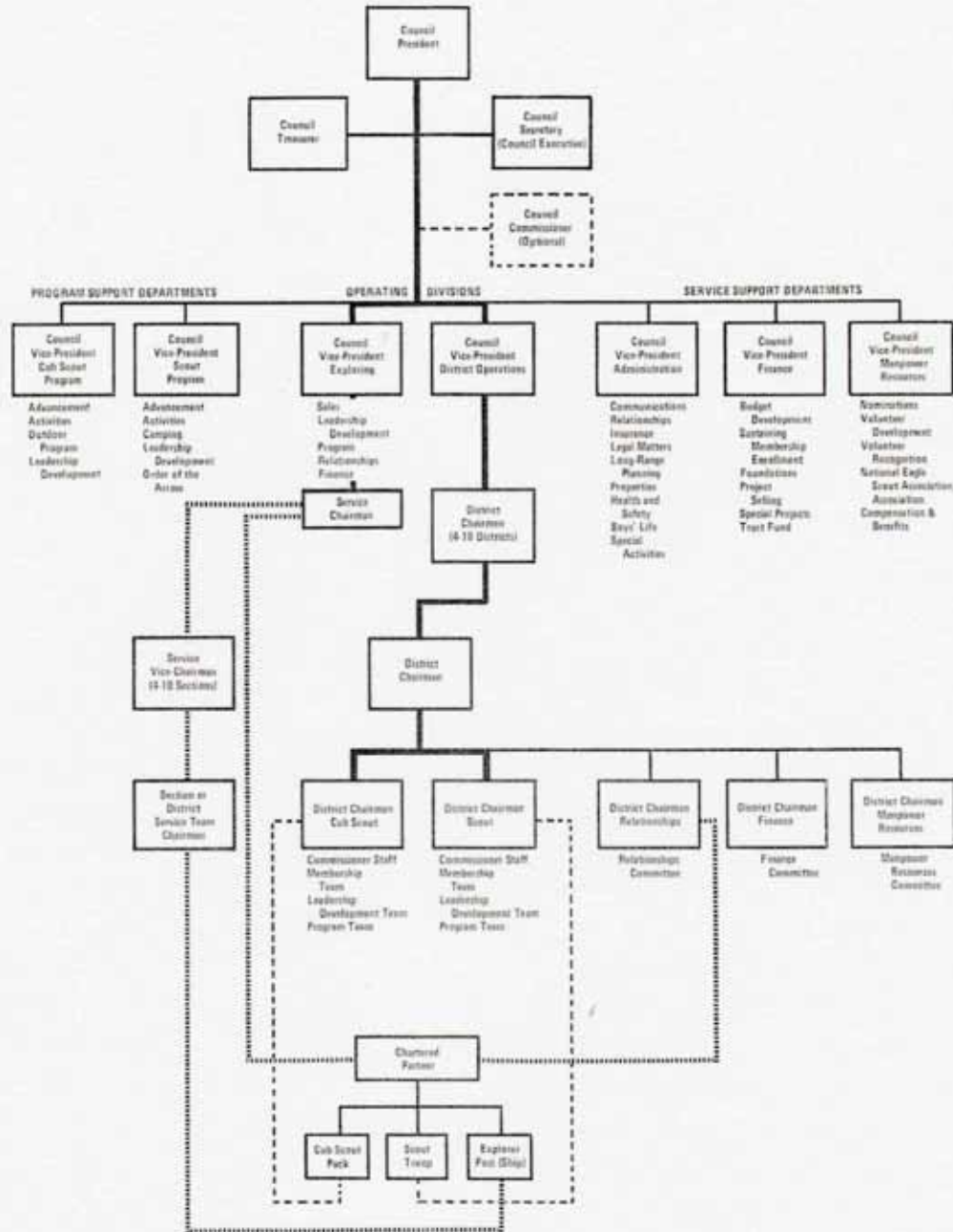
TRADITIONAL PLAN OF COUNCIL AND DISTRICT ORGANIZATION



Commissioner Concept

Exhibit B Flexibility & Change

RECOMMENDED PLAN FOR COUNCIL AND DISTRICT ORGANIZATION (OPTIONAL)



Commissioner Concept



Exhibit C

ONE HUNDRED YEARS OF COMMISSIONER TITLES/POSITIONS IN THE BSA

Area Commissioner	District Scout Commissioner
Assistant Commissioner	Division Commissioner
Assistant Council Commissioner	Exploring Zone Commissioner
Assistant Deputy Commissioner	Field Commissioner
Assistant Deputy Scout Commissioner	International Commissioner
Assistant District Scout Commissioner	International Scout Commissioner
Assistant District Commissioner	National Field Scout Commissioner
Assistant Field Commissioner	National Scout Commissioner
Assistant Roundtable Commissioner	National Commissioner
Boy Scout Roundtable Commissioner	Neighborhood Commissioner
Camp Commissioner	Neighborhood Scout Commissioner
Community Commissioner	Pack Commissioner
Council Commissioner	Regional Commissioner
Cub Roundtable Commissioner	Roundtable Commissioner
Cub Roundtable Staff	Scout Commissioner
Cub Scout Roundtable Commissioner	Scout Roundtable Commissioner
Deputy Commissioner	Special National Field Scout Commissioner
Deputy Scout Commissioner	Troop Commissioner
District Assistant Cub Scout Commissioner	Unit Commissioner
District Assistant Scout Commissioner	Varsity Huddle Roundtable Commissioner
Deputy Special National Field Scout Commissioner	Venturing Roundtable Commissioner
District Commissioner	Zone Commissioner
District Cub Scout Commissioner	Zone Commissioner Varsity Scout



Exhibit D

Timeline of Commissioner Service

- 1344 The word *Commissionem* is introduced to the English language during the rein of Edward III.
- 1908 Baden Powell appoints the first volunteer Commissioners.
- 1910 Daniel Carter Beard named National Commissioner.
Local council Scout Commissioners named.
- 1911 National Field Commissioner is named.
- 1914 Wreath of Service is added to the Commissioner insignia.
- 1917 First British Conference of Scout Commissioners at Matlock.
First British Commissioner manual introduced.
Teddy Roosevelt named Scout Commissioner of the Nassau County Council.
- 1931 District Commissioner position introduced.
- 1933 *Adventures of a District Commissioner* published.
Neighborhood Commissioner position introduced.
- 1936 All Councils become First Class Councils headed by professional staff.
- 1941 Daniel Carter Beard passes away at 90 years of age.
- 1943 Commissioner's training course introduced.
Commissioner Service manual introduced.
George Fisher named National Commissioner.
- 1948 First International Commissioners Meeting at Kandersteg International Scout Centre in Switzerland.
- 1951 First Commissioner Training at Philmont Training Center.
- 1952 Commissioner Arrowhead award introduced.
- 1973 Women are allowed to become Cub Scout Unit Commissioners or Cub Scout Roundtable Commissioners.
- 1975 Alternative council's Commissioner structure offered based on program areas.
- 1976 Women are allowed to hold any Commissioner position.
First Commissioner College held in Atlanta.
- 1985 National Commissioner position restructured. Earl Graves named National Commissioner.
- 1989 The Distinguished Commissioner Award is introduced.
- 1991 "*the COMMISSIONER*" quarterly National Commissioner newsletter started.
- 1995 Frances Olmstead, Jr named National Commissioner.
- 1999 Rick Cronk named National Commissioner.
- 2003 National Commissioner web site activated.
Line of Commissioner products offered.
- 2004 Don Belcher named National Commissioner.
- 2008 Tico Perez named National Commissioner.
Area and Regional Commissioner positions are established.
College of Commissioner Science Doctorate square knot introduced.
Unit Visitation Tracking System officially launched.
- 2009 Introduction of Volunteer National Commissioner Service Support Staff.
- 2010 Commissioners celebrate 100 years of service to units!



Exhibit E

Original Volunteer National Commissioner Service Support Staff

National Commissioner Service Organization

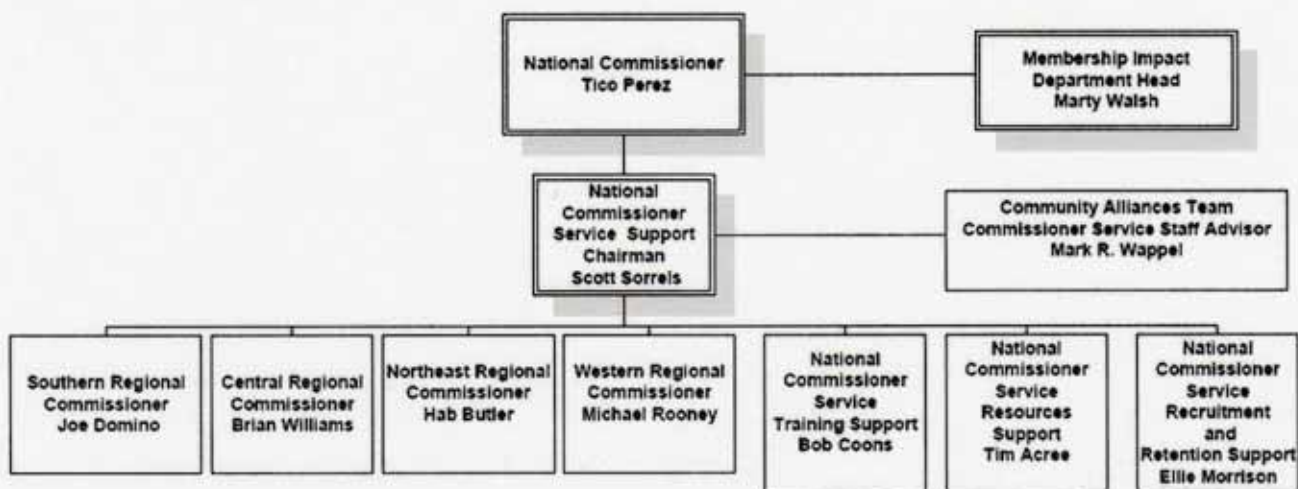



Exhibit F
Commissioner Service - The First Hundred Years
PowerPoint

A copy of the accompanying PowerPoint presentation can be found at
<http://clarksvillehomepros.com/files/1026854/CommissionerHistory.pps>




A Century of Service

Commissioner Service The First Hundred Years

Randy Worcester
Assistant Council Commissioner
Middle Tennessee Council

Past Council Commissioner
Attakapas Council



100 YEARS OF SCOUTING
Celebrating the Adventure • Continuing the Journey

REFERENCES

1. *21 Years of Scouting*, E. K. Wade 1929
2. *A Guide To Dating and Identifying Boy Scouts of America Badges, Uniforms, & Insignia*, Mitch Reis, Third Edition 2000
3. *Adventures of a District Commissioner*, Stuart Walsh, Boy Scouts of America, 1933
4. *Atlanta's College of Commissioner Science, Scouting*, Ernest Doclar, Boy Scouts of America, October 1979
5. *Baden-Powell The Two Lives of A Hero*, William Hillcourt, G.P. Putnam's Sons, First American Edition 1964
6. *Baden-Powell*, Tim Jeal, 1989
7. *B-P's Scouts: An Official History of the Boy Scouts Association*, Henry Collis, Fred Hurl, Rex Hazlewood, 1961
8. *Building Character In The American Boy*, David Macleod, University of Wisconsin Press, 1983
9. *Commissioner Fieldbook for Unit Service*, Boy Scouts of America, 1990, 1996 Printing
10. *Commissioner Fieldbook*, Boy Scouts of America, 1971
11. *Commissioner Service*, Boy Scouts of America, 1943, 1945 Printing
12. *Commissioner's Training Course Notebook*, Boy Scouts of America, Proof Edition 1943
13. *Commissioners' Manual*, Sir William Johnson Council, Boy Scouts of America, Circa 1939
14. *Community Boy Leadership*, Boy Scouts of America, Second Edition Copyright 1922
15. *Eighth National Training Conference of Scout Executives*, Boy Scouts of America, 1947
16. *Fifth National Training Conference of Scout Executives*, Boy Scouts of America, 1928
17. *Fifty Years of Scouting in America and the Pioneers*, Harold Pote, Circa 1963
18. *Handbook for Scoutmaster's*, Boy Scouts of America, Proof Edition Copyright 1913



19. *History and Evolution of Commissioner Insignia*, Edward M. Brown, Longhorn Council
Commissioner College Thesis, 2009
20. *History of Cub Scouting*, Boy Scouts of America, 1987
21. *Neighborhood Commissioner Instructor's Guide*, Boy Scouts of America, 1964
22. *Neighborhood Commissioner Training Plan Arrowhead Honor Book*, Boy Scouts of America,
1953
23. *Personnel Administration in Scouting*, Boy Scouts of America, Third Edition, 1944
24. *Regional Executives of the Boy Scouts of America*, 1968
25. *Selecting the Council Commissioner (14-160)*, Boy Scouts of America
26. *Seventh National Training Conference of Scout Executives*, Boy Scouts of America, 1940
27. *Sixth National Training Conference of Scout Executives*, Boy Scouts of America, 1936
28. *the Commissioner*, Boy Scouts of America, Various 1991-2009
29. *The Committee on Organization and District, Neighborhood, and Field Commissioners*, Boy
Scouts of America, 1935
30. *The History of the Boy Scouts of America*, William D. Murray, Boy Scouts of America, 1937
31. *The Local Council Exchange*, Boy Scouts of America, February 1942
32. *To Do My Best: James E. West and the History of the Boy Scouts of America*, Edward L Rowan,
M.D. Las Vegas International Scouting Museum, 2005



IN APPRECIATION

Many thanks to Edward M. Brown for permission to use scans of commissioner patches from his 2009 Commissioner College thesis *History and Evolution of Commissioner Insignia*. And thanks to Mitch Reis, Mike Walton, George Crowl, Ed Brown, and Tim Acree for reviewing this document for content and accuracy.

If you have suggestions for additions or changes in this manuscript, please email me.

Randy Worcester

randywoo@aol.com

Doctorate of Commissioner Science - Middle Tennessee Council College 2010

Dean of Roundtable Science – Middle Tennessee Council College 2010

Masters of Roundtable Science – Shawnee Trails Council College 2010

Master of Commissioner Science – Dan Beard Council College 2009

Bachelors of Commissioners Roundtable Science – Shawnee Trails Council College 2009

Bachelors of Commissioner Science – Piedmont Appalachian College 2008



A PUBLICATION FOR COMMISSIONERS AND PROFESSIONALS
THE COMMISSIONER



**"TO IMPROVE THE QUALITY OF PROGRAM
IN EVERY UNIT IN AMERICA!"**

www.scouting.org/commissioners

"The role of the unit commissioner is to help every unit be successful. Unit success is defined by the unit achieving Centennial Quality Unit status and demonstrating an improvement in the retention of its members."

National Commissioner Minute



My fellow commissioners:
Are you aware that the "wreath of service" is worn by only two groups within the Boy Scouts of America—the professional Scouters and the commissioners?

The reason is some of the first BSA volunteers in early 1910 were commissioners who later became the first professional Scouters. Today, commissioners and professional Scouters work together to support Scouting units in our local councils.

The wreath of service has a long history, and we were fortunate to have it captured in a special PowerPoint presentation developed by one of our commissioners, Randy Worcester, who organized it for his doctorate degree in the College of Commissioner Science. It is called, "Commissioner Service: The First Hundred Years," and you will find a good portion of his presentation inside this anniversary edition of *The Commissioner*.

This is an exciting time in the history of the Boy Scouts of America and commissioner service. Both are celebrating their 100th Anniversary in 2010!

As we draw nearer to the BSA's centennial celebration on February 8—and to commemorate this special occasion—I have received special permission from the National Council to introduce the first and only centennial commissioner patch! All of the patches are presented in this newsletter on page 3.

These patches will be available for purchase from the National Supply Division for all commissioner positions. Your patch can only be ordered if you are a registered commissioner in 2010. It is our way of saying "thank you" for a century of service to youths. Keep up the good work for the next 100 years!

God bless you all.

Tico A. Perez



100 Years of Service

The Boy Scouts of America isn't alone in turning the page on its first century. Commissioner service is also celebrating 100 years of coaching, consulting, and supporting adult leaders. Take a tour of the history of commissioner service.

Pages 4-9

**Welcome to Our 3,019 New
Unit Commissioners**

By Scott Sorrels, National Commissioner Service Chairman



We were excited to pass the recruitment threshold in August for new unit commissioners, year over year. That's old news. Now, there are 3,019 more unit commissioners than last year. On the council/district committee front, we have added more than 2,500 newly registered volunteers.

Thank you, and congratulations on your efforts to recruit and register quality commissioners. Your enthusiasm and hard work are evident.

Continued on Page 2

Continued from Page 1

We have already accomplished much as a team. Our regional and area commissioners are building a strong volunteer/professional network to support our councils, we have developed great newsletters and other resource materials, and we continue to enhance the Unit Visit Tracking System. We have revised the Philmont Training Center curriculum, changed the national Web site (the public side is still in progress), developed new training materials, and Tico Perez and our commissioners continue to speak across the country to spread the message about how special it is to be a commissioner on the eve of our 100th Anniversary.

Our efforts should continue to focus on improving the quality and quantity of successful unit visits. We accomplish this goal by supporting our councils and reaching these volunteers, including finding ways to use technology as a communications advantage. In the near term, we should focus on building relationships with our council commissioners and council commissioner leadership. By doing that, we'll demonstrate that we exist to help them be successful by supporting their council commissioner corps.

Thanks for all you do for Scouting.

Commissioner's Best Methods

If we could capture the BEST METHODS of the great program ideas and activities generated by commissioners and their staffs from across the country, we could share them with other commissioners on the national commissioner Web site, or feature articles in *The Commissioner* newsletter. Everyone would benefit! To submit your great ideas and best methods, please e-mail Tim Acree, the national commissioner service resources chair, at tim.acree@comcast.net.

Administration Manual Revised

The *Administration of Commissioner Service* manual, No. 34501, has been revised slightly for 2010. The resource has a new cover, and inside, alterations have been made to improve the table of contents and include new BCS Venturing course outlines. The publication will be available on the Commissioners Web site in 2010.



Register for Philmont Commissioner Training 2010

There is a new policy change for volunteer Scouters attending the Philmont Training Center. A volunteer/commissioner can sign up early for PTC 2010, and local council/Scout executive approval is no longer needed.

Go to www.myscouting.org and register under the Events Registration tab. Click on Philmont Scout Ranch, then Philmont 2010 Conference Registration. View the 2010 schedule online at www.scouting.org/Training/Adult.aspx.

Week 2 Schedule (June 13–19, 2010)

- The Unit Commissioner—Supporting Units' Needs
- The Council Commissioner (NEW!)
- Council Key 3
- District Key 3: Leadership for the Future
- How to Conduct a College of Commissioner Science (NEW!)
- Effective Leadership of Commissioner Service

For more information on training at Philmont, contact Bob Coons at bcoons@Curative.org.

New Commissioner Patches Help Commemorate the Centennial

You must be a registered commissioner in 2010 to purchase and receive the 2010 centennial commissioner patch for your position.

The new National Commissioner Service Chairman and National Commissioner Support Staff centennial patches will be handled at the National Council and are only available to these positions. Requests to purchase these patches should be placed by national personnel only and sent to Belynda Dean at Belynda.Dean@scouting.org.



The new regional and area commissioner centennial patches will be handled through Supply at the National Council and are only available to these positions. Requests to purchase these patches should be placed by regional personnel only and sent to Tina Barsanti at Tina.Barsanti@scouting.org.



The new district and council centennial patches are available through Supply for these positions for purchase. Please contact your local council Scout shop or call National Supply Group at 1-800-323-0732 for customer service.



History of Commissioner Service: The First 100 Years

Royal Beginnings

com · mis · sion (k) [kuh-mish-uhn]

The word "commission" dates back to 1344, when it was derived from the Latin word *commissionem*, meaning "delegation of business." Monarchs delegated authority to a deserving few.

Baden-Powell's Gentlemen (1908)



Robert Baden-Powell

as his volunteer commissioners—those of money and leisure.

Some of Baden-Powell's early commissioners included W. F. de Bois MacLaren, who donated Gilwell Park, and Rudyard Kipling, author of *The Jungle Book*.

Individuals identified by the monarch to be commissioners had to qualify as a "gentleman." As legally defined, a gentleman earned his income from property, and as such was independently wealthy with time to devote to other agendas. It was exactly these kind of men that Robert Baden-Powell, the founder of Scouting, wanted



Rudyard Kipling

The BSA Needs a Few Good Men (1910)

As communities formed more troops, it became evident that some form of leadership was needed to maintain standards, provide camping opportunities, recruit leaders, facilitate training, establish local courts of honor, and stimulate local Scouting. This person was the commissioner.

The Scout Commissioner (1911)

While originally serving as a volunteer, some areas of a community were able to raise enough funds for the Scout commissioner to become a salaried position. The areas with paid leadership, known as the Scout executive or executive secretary, became identified as First Class Councils. Meanwhile, those areas with a volunteer head called the Scout commissioner were known as Second Class Councils.



The deputy Scout commissioner (left) and Scout commissioner badges. The Scout commissioner badge was one of the originals.

Wreath of Service (1914)

Today, our society is less connected to military tradition, and the commissioned wreath insignia is thought of more as "the wreath of service" that surrounds all commissioner and professional position badges. This wreath is a symbol for the service rendered to units. It also symbolizes the continued partnership between volunteers and professionals. The wreath represents the commissioner and executive commitment to program and unit service.



The 1914 Scout commissioner (left) and Scout executive insignia featured the wreath of service for the first time.

National Field Commissioners (1910–20)

Volunteer national field commissioners were available as early as 1910 to help communities organize their local council and troops. There were 68 volunteer field commissioners in 1913.

Many of the volunteer field commissioners worked for other agencies and traveled extensively, helping with Scouting wherever they went. Besides organizing new councils, they had to spend time correcting "false starts" and restraining those who wanted to implement their own brand of Scouting.



Guided by the Scout Commissioners Handbook, volunteer national field commissioners traveled throughout the United States overseeing the early stages of the Boy Scouts of America movement.

James West's Influence



James West

council would benefit from finding and developing a good Scout commissioner.

Chief Scout Executive James West, speaking at the first National Conference of Scout Executives in 1920, suggested that the Scout executive should be the general in the background with the Scout commissioner, as the ranking uniformed officer, giving leadership to Scoutmasters and acting as the ranking officer in public appearances. West recognized that Scout executives moved around and that the

The District Commissioner (1931)

District commissioners were introduced in 1931 as an outgrowth of the deputy Scout commissioner position. The book, *Adventures of a District Commissioner*, was the first printed material from the BSA for guiding commissioners.



Howdy, Neighbor (1933)

The growth of Scouting overloaded the district commissioner and his deputy. This made it necessary to add commissioners to serve specific troops, ships, packs, and Rover crews. Scouting at that time was very community focused, so the neighborhood commissioner position was conceived to serve up to four units in his immediate local area.

Local Field Commissioners (1930s)

Field commissioners were specialized representatives of the council and served a functional responsibility such as Cubbing, Senior Scouting, Catholic Scouting, Camping, Emergency Service Corps, or Sea Scouts. He was "on call" to the district or neighborhood commissioners as a technical expert in his program. Later, Exploring posts had commissioners known as the Service Team.



Field commissioner for Cubbing



Assistant field commissioner for Cubbing



Exploring Service Team

The Commissioner Manual (1943)

Councils developed their own commissioner manuals. Following a four-year study, a manual was finally produced by the national office in 1943 that was meant to be used alongside the council's version. Most manuals contained forms and reference materials that a commissioner may need.



Commissioner's manuals from Sir William Johnson Council (1939), national office (1943), and Transatlantic Council (1976).

Commissioner Arrowhead (1952)

The silver Arrowhead Honor was introduced in 1952. It is now unique to the commissioner service and is unusual in that it requires the application of the knowledge learned in basic commissioner training. The Arrowhead Honor was changed to white in 1970.



The Commissioner Council (1950s and 1960s)

The Scout commissioner at this point became the council commissioner. The position was still honorary in many councils. However, it was beginning to transition into a job with active leadership of the commissioner staff.



Unit Focus (1970-72)

The neighborhood commissioner evolved into the unit commissioner, and the mission of the commissioner became clear: Help units succeed. The *Commissioner Fieldbook* was introduced in a handy loose-leaf design to be able to place in a binder and replace pages as needed.



Commissioners of the Roundtable (1970s)

From early on, district commissioners were expected to hold a monthly meeting of the "District Scouters Round Table." Eventually, this became too much for the district commissioner to handle, and was delegated to a roundtable leader. Later, an ADC was designated for the task. In the 1970s, the roundtable commissioner became an official title. This also completed the district commissioner's evolution into an administrative commissioner.



Experimentation Continues (1975)

In 1975, an alternative was offered whereby councils could have their commissioners specialize in a program area. Both organizational structures remained focused on the unit. By 1980, the optional plan disappeared from the manuals.



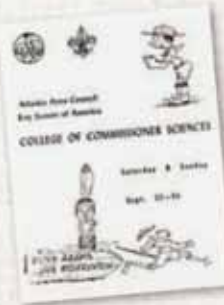
Female Commissioners (1973-76)

Women were allowed to become Cub Scout unit commissioners or Cub Scout roundtable commissioners in 1973. Three years later, women could hold any commissioner position and were given the khaki uniform to wear.



Commissioner College (1976)

The first College of Commissioner Sciences was held in Atlanta in 1976. Course topics included physical education, staging roll call and inspections, and exciting charter presentation ceremonies.

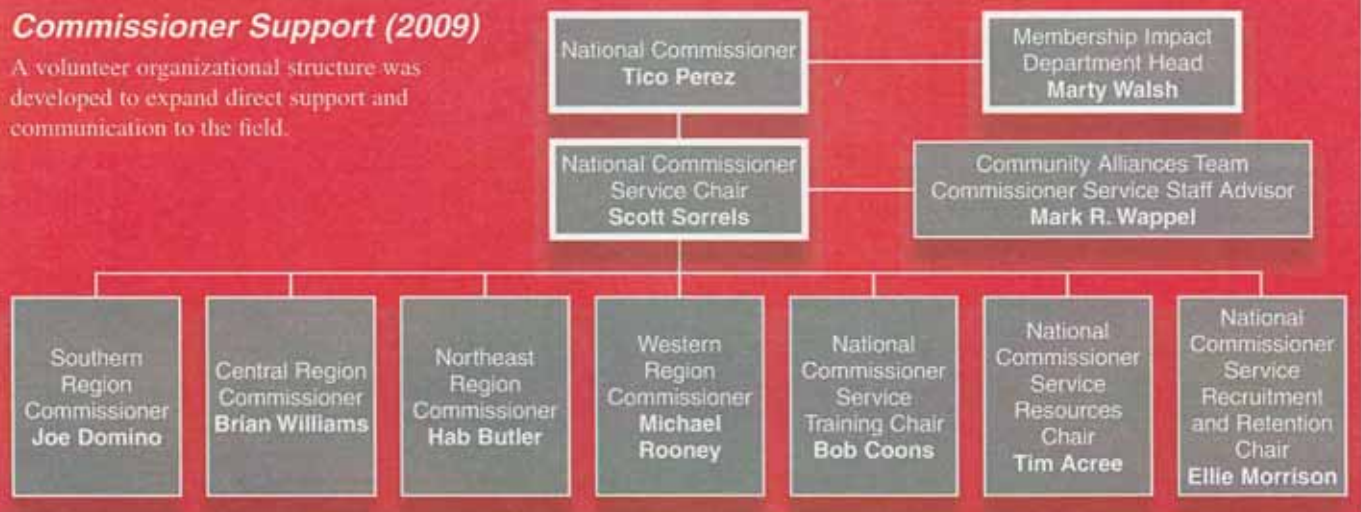


Commissioner Service is Reborn (2008)

Today, council commissioners are accountable for the unit service program in their councils. The appointment of area and regional commissioners expands the direct support to the council and demonstrates—that at all levels of the organization—the importance of commissioner service is being recognized.

Commissioner Support (2009)

A volunteer organizational structure was developed to expand direct support and communication to the field.





Tico Perez, National Commissioner

National Commissioners

- 2008–present Tico Perez
- 2004–2008 Donald D. Belcher
- 1999–2004 William F. "Rick" Cronk
- 1995–1999 Frances Olmstead
- 1990–1995 Earl G. Graves
- 1943–1960 George J. Fisher
- 1910–1941 Daniel Carter Beard
- 1910–1911 Peter S. Bomus
- 1910–1911 William Verbeck

Role of the National Commissioner



National commissioner badge used today

Dan Beard was the chairman of the National Court of Honor. He became a known symbol of and cheerleader for Scouting. Today's national commissioner, Tico Perez, while still a cheerleader for Scouting, has a much more participatory role in improving commissioner service and leading the commissioner corps.

National commissioner badge from the 1930s used by Dan Beard



The International Commissioner

The Boy Scouts of America is represented in world contacts and developments by the volunteer international commissioner. The first international commissioner was Mortimer Schiff.



Famous Commissioners

Theodore Roosevelt

- Scout commissioner of the Nassau County Council
- President of the United States
- First (and only) Chief Scout Citizen



George J. Fisher

- National commissioner
- Inventor of volleyball


"Uncle" Dan Beard

- National commissioner
- Illustrator of Mark Twain books



"Uncle Dan's" 90th birthday celebration, Boy Scout Day, New York World's Fair, 1940

A Century of Service

com · mis · sion  [kuh-mish-uhn]



Baden-Powell



Daniel Carter Beard



Teddy Roosevelt



Earl Graves

Rick Cronk



Don Belcher



Tico Perez

- 1344** The word *commissionem* is introduced to the English language during the reign of Edward III.
- 1908** Baden-Powell appoints the first volunteer commissioners.
- 1910** Daniel Carter Beard is named national commissioner. Local council Scout commissioners are named.
- 1911** A national field commissioner is named.
- 1914** The wreath of service is added to the commissioner insignia.
- 1917** First British Conference of Scout Commissioners at Matlock. First British commissioner manual is introduced. Teddy Roosevelt is named Scout commissioner of the Nassau County Council.
- 1931** The district commissioner position is introduced.
- 1933** *Adventures of a District Commissioner* is published. The neighborhood commissioner position is introduced.
- 1936** All councils become first class councils headed by professional staff.
- 1941** Daniel Carter Beard passes away at 90 years of age.
- 1943** A commissioner's training course is introduced. The *Commissioner Service* manual is introduced. George Fisher is named national commissioner.
- 1948** First international commissioners meeting at Kandersteg International Scout Centre in Switzerland.
- 1951** First commissioner training at Philmont Training Center.
- 1952** Commissioner Arrowhead award introduced.
- 1973** Women are allowed to become Cub Scout unit commissioners or Cub Scout roundtable commissioners.
- 1975** Alternative council's commissioner structure is offered based on program areas.
- 1976** Women are allowed to hold any commissioner position. First Commissioner College is held in Atlanta.
- 1989** The Distinguished Commissioner Award is introduced.
- 1990** National commissioner position is restructured. Earl Graves is named national commissioner.
- 1991** *The Commissioner* quarterly national commissioner newsletter is started.
- 1995** Frances Olmstead Jr. is named national commissioner.
- 1999** Rick Cronk is named national commissioner.
- 2003** The national commissioner Web site is activated. A line of commissioner products is offered.
- 2004** Don Belcher is named national commissioner.
- 2008** Tico Perez is named national commissioner. Area and regional commissioner positions are established. The College of Commissioner Science doctorate square knot is introduced. The Unit Visitation Tracking System is officially launched.
- 2009** Introduction of volunteer national commissioner service support staff.
- 2010** Commissioners celebrate 100 years of service to units!

Commissioner Titles/Positions Through The Years

- AREA COMMISSIONER
- ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER
- ASSISTANT COUNCIL COMMISSIONER
- ASSISTANT DEPUTY COMMISSIONER
- ASSISTANT DEPUTY SCOUT COMMISSIONER
- ASSISTANT DISTRICT COMMISSIONER
- ASSISTANT DISTRICT SCOUT COMMISSIONER
- ASSISTANT FIELD COMMISSIONER
- ASSISTANT ROUNDTABLE COMMISSIONER
- BOY SCOUT ROUNDTABLE COMMISSIONER
- CAMP COMMISSIONER
- COMMUNITY COMMISSIONER
- COUNCIL COMMISSIONER
- CUB ROUNDTABLE COMMISSIONER
- CUB ROUNDTABLE STAFF
- CUB SCOUT ROUNDTABLE COMMISSIONER
- DEPUTY COMMISSIONER
- DEPUTY SCOUT COMMISSIONER
- DISTRICT ASSISTANT CUB SCOUT COMMISSIONER
- DISTRICT ASSISTANT SCOUT COMMISSIONER
- DEPUTY SPECIAL NATIONAL FIELD SCOUT COMMISSIONER
- DISTRICT COMMISSIONER
- DISTRICT CUB SCOUT COMMISSIONER
- DISTRICT SCOUT COMMISSIONER
- DIVISION COMMISSIONER
- EXPLORING ZONE COMMISSIONER
- FIELD COMMISSIONER
- INTERNATIONAL COMMISSIONER
- INTERNATIONAL SCOUT COMMISSIONER
- NATIONAL FIELD SCOUT COMMISSIONER
- NATIONAL SCOUT COMMISSIONER
- NATIONAL COMMISSIONER
- NATIONAL COMMISSIONER SERVICE CHAIRMAN
- NATIONAL COMMISSIONER SERVICE SUPPORT STAFF
- NEIGHBORHOOD COMMISSIONER
- NEIGHBORHOOD SCOUT COMMISSIONER
- PACK COMMISSIONER
- REGIONAL COMMISSIONER
- ROUNDTABLE COMMISSIONER
- SCOUT COMMISSIONER
- SCOUT ROUNDTABLE COMMISSIONER
- SPECIAL NATIONAL FIELD SCOUT COMMISSIONER
- TROOP COMMISSIONER
- UNIT COMMISSIONER
- VARSITY HUDDLE ROUNDTABLE COMMISSIONER
- ZONE COMMISSIONER
- ZONE COMMISSIONER VARSITY SCOUT



Looking into the Future



During all these years, commissioner service was the one unifying factor that made Scouting permanent. The commissioner has remained the line of service from council to unit and chartered organization. With your help, commissioner service will continue to be the catalyst for growth and quality in the BSA for the next hundred years.



The Unit Visit Tracking System (UVTS) Update

Once the Unit Visit Tracking System is adopted throughout the country, and all councils are using it for all unit visits, we will have a true national reporting system that will show us the effectiveness of our commissioner service.

The UVTS is now in Phase 2, and improvements have been made during the first nine months of use. Feedback from users at conferences and webinars has been most helpful. Some changes are not visible to users but important to the system.

Enhancements made to UVTS

1. Eliminated the server error 500 that could occur when users with multiple commissioner roles, including unit commissioner, entered or edited visits and attempted to save information.
2. Enhanced the Role Selection process to provide appropriate results when unit visit reports are filtered based on the selected commissioner role.
3. Clarified the steps of the Add Visit and Edit Visit processes to assist the user with the entry of Quality indicators and comments. The navigation buttons become active when the basic visit entry information is saved.
4. Added the Unit Visit Tracking Overview video link to the home page for easy access by commissioners.
5. Enhanced the date calendar that is used to set visit report dates—to set dates for the data sort filters, and to select dates when creating a focus. This enhancement significantly improved the calendar function.
6. Enhanced the validation on required fields to trigger when Save is clicked at Add Visit or Edit Visit to streamline the entry of new visit reports and the editing of existing reports.
7. Enhanced the Export File and PDF report to return the appropriate visit reports when the unit visit reports data has been filtered by user selection.

UVTS Enhancements Coming in 2010

The two most requested UVTS enhancements from the field are:

1. Administrative commissioners will have access to add comments to unit visit reports entered by unit commissioners within assigned council positions.
2. Administrative commissioners will have the capability to use Add Visit to create unit visit reports for all units within assigned council and district positions.

These two enhancements are on the 2010 priority list of the BSA's national information technology department to be developed and proposed to be activated by the National Annual Meeting in May. They will take about five months to develop.

Unit Visit Tracking System Statistics

	3/23/2009	5/15/2009	7/21/2009	9/10/2009	10/2/2009	12/14/2009
Councils with unit visit reports entered	122	148	164	177	186	224
Total visit reports entered by unit commissioners	2,596	5,757	7,981	9,669	11,710	16,273
Distinct number of units with unit visit reports	1,264	2,389	2,901	3,332	3,806	4,760



BOY SCOUTS OF AMERICA

UVTS Implementation Plan

Phase 1: Test UVTS pilot with all councils. Completed December 2008–May 2009.

Phase 2: UVTS enhancements are completed. June 2009–May 2010.

Phase 3: All councils are using and adopting UVTS on a volunteer basis to prepare for 2011. June 2010–December 2010.

Phase 4: Possible utilization of UVTS by all councils, areas, and regions for the new 2011 Centennial Award. January 2011–December 2011.

The Unit Visit Tracking System continues to be well received by councils throughout the country. It is being utilized by **224 councils** that have registered and entered reports—more than half of all councils in the country. Councils that have not adopted it are encouraged to do so. In the councils that have adopted it, more than **4,760 units** have had reports filed about visits to them. The total number of reports filed to date is approximately **16,273**.

For commissioners to access the Unit Visit Tracking System:

1. You must be a registered commissioner in a multiple or primary position.
2. To access MyScouting, go to www.scouting.org and create an account. Use your registration membership ID to create your MyScouting account.
3. Unit commissioners must be assigned to units in ScoutNET by the local council.

For assistance and support with UVTS:

Go to the UVTS section on the commissioner Web site, www.scouting.org/commissioners, or contact the BSA Help Desk by sending an e-mail to myscouting@netbsa.org.



Recruitment and Retention

In 2006, the Boy Scouts of America chartered 13,833 new units nationally. By the end of September 2009, only 4,817 of those units were still chartered. For every dropped unit, there are disappointed kids and parents.

There are some very important steps that should be taken in the new-unit organization process to ensure retention. Several councils across the country have focused on this situation, and the following is an overview of their strategies.

How Commissioners Can Help Retain New Units

- The district commissioner should meet with the district executive and district membership chair to review the list of prospective new units. At this stage, a volunteer new-unit organizer is identified along with a new unit commissioner before any new unit is organized.
- Once recruited, the district executive, new-unit organizer, and unit commissioner meet with the prospective chartered organization. A district executive should not go alone.
- Commissioners should work with the new-unit organizers during the organization process to encourage the new unit to begin with at least 10 youths: two full dens or patrols, or a crew of 10. Units most likely to succeed will have at least five adults in leadership roles.
- Commissioners should help new units set goals to achieve their Quality Unit Award and help with a program plan.
- Once the unit is chartered, the new-unit commissioner stays with this new unit for 36 months to ensure its longevity. Many councils use a color code to identify unit health, such as: green=active units; yellow=slightly active; red=dropped units; orange=new units, regardless of strength.
- Unit commissioners should add unit visits in UVTS.

- Commissioners continue to meet with unit leadership to keep the unit organized and on target with its goals.

For more information, check out the two new PowerPoint presentations on the Web site—Retention: New Unit Focus, and Strengthening Your Unit.

New-Unit Focus

The National Capitol Area Council recently put new-unit retention at the top of its priority list. Through extensive research and a creative action plan, the council has begun to see real results. Other councils have contributed ideas, and the result is a new national strategy that will be part of a pilot study this year.

New-unit focus is a multi-faceted approach. Research revealed that although many new units successfully recharter after the first year, the success rate has dropped with the second- and third-year recharterers. We need to change commissioner thinking about how long a unit should be considered "new."

The plan recommends that a unit receive special attention for three years. The plan combines the use of an assistant council commissioner for new units as defined in the commissioner manual with other "specialty" assistant district commissioners for new units. In addition, there will be unit commissioners who specialize in serving new units. They will be called new-unit commissioners (N-UC), and will have special training as well as a service plan focused on the needs of the units they serve. The plan encourages the early involvement of the N-UC in the organization of new units and outlines the ideal role the district committee should play in supporting these units during the first three years.

If your council would like more information on this project, please contact National Commissioner Support Chair for Recruitment and Retention Ellie Morrison at esmorrison@sbcglobal.net.

Unit Commissioner Box Score

As of December 2009

Region	Traditional Units*		Unit Commissioners Needed		Unit Commissioners Registered		Need to Recruit		Percent of Need Filled		Commissioner Ratio	
	Last Year	This Year	Last Year	This Year	Last Year	This Year	Last Year	This Year	Last Year	This Year	Last Year	This Year
Northeast	18,962	18,364	6,320	6,120	4,101	4,335	2,219	1,785	64.9%	70.8%	4.6	4.2
Southern	29,905	29,500	9,966	9,836	6,765	7,646	3,201	2,190	67.9%	77.7%	4.4	3.9
Central	26,272	25,742	8,752	8,577	5,926	6,726	2,826	1,851	67.7%	78.4%	4.4	3.8
Western	45,021	44,582	15,006	14,859	9,498	10,602	5,508	4,257	63.3%	71.4%	4.7	4.2
National	120,160	118,188	40,044	39,392	26,290	29,309	13,754	10,083	65.7%	74.4%	4.6	4.0

* Does not include Explorer posts or Learning for Life groups

National Commissioner Service Team

National Commissioner Service Chairman	Scott Sorrels	Scott.Sorrels@BryanCave.com
National Commissioner Service Resources Chair	Tim Acree	tim.acree@comcast.net
National Commissioner Service Training Chair	Bob Coons	bcoons@Curative.org
National Commissioner Service Recruitment and Retention Chair	Ellie Morrison	esmorrison@sbcglobal.net
National Commissioner Service Staff Advisor	Mark R. Wappel	Mark.Wappel@scouting.org

Roundtable Administrative Ideas

By changing some of the ways you and your assistants administer basic roundtable functions, you may find you are improving your roundtable AND making your own duties more organized and less hectic. Here are some ideas:

1. Make your sign-in sheet more "semi-automatic." That is, since many of the same leaders attend roundtable each month, use preprinted sign-in sheets that list the usual attendees in unit number order and by position such as unit leader, assistant, committee member, or parent. This helps speed up the sign-in process.
2. Still looking at the sign-in process? You may wish to arrange the room so all of the literature and sign-in sheets are placed on tables in the back of the room. Then late arrivals will be less likely to disturb the rest of the attendees and they will feel encouraged to

check their names on the preprinted roster and grab the handouts.

3. One of those handouts at the back of the room is the agenda. It serves as a good way to help everyone understand the flow; gives them a preprinted outline for note taking; contains contact data for those making announcements, the presenter, and the Scouting professionals; and includes future district events such as next month's roundtable topic.
4. Let's go back to the numerically ordered sign-in sheets. Now that it is easier to tally the attendance, you can place the information in a spreadsheet to track monthly—not only by total per unit attending, but also by position. How is this helpful? Send that spreadsheet to those helpers called unit commissioners. They will help in their monthly calls to encourage unit leaders to attend your roundtable programs.

2010 Dates of Interest

February 8-10, 2010

BSA 100th Anniversary Celebration, Omni Shoreham Hotel, Washington, D.C.

May 26-28, 2010

National Annual Meeting, Hilton Anatole, Dallas, Texas

June 13-19

Week 2 Commissioner Service, Philmont Training Center, Cimarron, New Mexico

For comments or more information:

EDITOR: Mark Wappel, Community Alliances Team, Membership Impact Department, Council Solutions Group
National Council, Boy Scouts of America, SUM 211
1325 West Walnut Hill Lane • P.O. Box 152079
Irving, TX 75015-2079

Telephone: 972-580-2388 • Fax: 972-580-2340
E-mail: Mark.Wappel@scouting.org

Thanks to the commissioners in the field who contributed to this edition of *The Commissioner*: Jon Baake, George Downs, Randy Konkel, Garry Lewis, and Randy Worcester.