

OA TROOP REPRESENTATIVE GUIDE



ATTA KULLA KULLA LODGE 185

“Let us realize the significance of the Order in the unit – for the unit is our best hope in Scouting.” – Dr. E. Urner Goodman, Founder of the Order of the Arrow

Welcome

The Order of the Arrow focuses on the importance of cheerful service, camping, and giving back to the troop. I hope that this Troop Representative Guide enhances your troop’s experience with the OA.

The OA Representative program is designed to allow the Lodge to give out face-to-face communication directly to its members, and to promote the movement to the rest of the troop. Your OA Representative should be promoting and explaining what the Chapter and Lodge are doing in front of the entire troop. He should also attend monthly Chapter meetings. If you already have an OA Representative, please submit to your local Chapter leaders his contact information. If you currently do not have an OA Representative and your troop has Order of the Arrow members, please have one become an OA Representative and send in his information to your local Chapter. The Boy Scouts of America has also created an adult position as an OA Representative adviser. Please appoint an assistant Scoutmaster to the adviser position and share his or her contact information with the Chapter as well.

For your participation in the OA’s unit program, your troop is eligible for the Unit of Excellence award. This national award recognizes units who participate in the Order of the Arrow and meet some basic criteria. More information about this program is available on the national OA website at (<http://www.oa-bsa.org/uploads/resources/forms/unitexcellenceaward-2013.pdf>). If you qualify for this award, please let the Lodge know so you can be recognized. Please do not hesitate to let us know if you have any questions or suggestions for how the Lodge can serve your unit.

As a final note, please encourage your troop OA members to stay active in the Chapter and Lodge. The experience of the Order of the Arrow is one that is rewarding and fun and will build life-long friendships and memories.

In Cheerful Service,

Matthew Watson

Dedicated to Troop 159 – Simpsonville, SC

What is the OA Troop Representative Program?

The Order of the Arrow Troop Representative is a youth serving his troop as the primary liaison to the troop's lodge or chapter. He meets the unit's needs by providing a communication and programmatic link to and from all Arrowmen, Scouts who are not presently members of the Order, and adult leaders. These efforts are meant to assist the unit and its members in achieving the mission of the Boy Scouts of America, and at the same time fulfilling the lodge's role in the Strategic Plan of the Order of the Arrow of being an integral part of the council. By setting a good example, he will enhance the image of the Order as a service arm to his unit.

OA Troop Representative Responsibilities:

1. Serves as a communication link between the Lodge, Chapter, and the troop.
2. Encourages camping in the troop.
3. Encourages Scouts to actively participate in community service projects.
4. Assists with leadership training in the troop.
5. Encourages Arrowmen to assume leadership positions in the troop.
6. Encourages Arrowmen in the troop to be active in OA activities and to seal their membership by becoming Brotherhood members.
7. Enthusiastically wears the Scout uniform correctly.
8. Lives by the Scout Oath, Scout Law and Obligation.
9. Exemplifies Scout spirit.

Qualifications:

1. Under 18 years old
2. Appointed by SPL with SM approval
3. OA Member in good standing with dues paid

Reports To: Senior Patrol Leader

Role in the Troop

Unit Election

The Lodge is responsible for conducting unit elections in every troop in the council that desires to have an Order of the Arrow election. All unit members, including non-OA members, elect those Scouts who best exemplify the Scout Oath and Law in their daily lives to become OA members. In this way, membership is controlled by the youth in their own units and not by those who are already Arrowmen. The unit elections team needs to be prepared and do an excellent job when it visits a unit. Most of the members of the unit will never become members of the Order of the Arrow. Their experience with the Order of the Arrow during the unit elections may be their only exposure to the Order. The performance of the unit elections team can create a very positive image of the Order of the Arrow with both the youth and adult members of the unit. The team must ensure that elections are meaningful experiences for the Scouts and leaders, for Arrowmen in the unit who are conducting the election, and for the new candidates being elected. Recruit the team members well in advance of the election and practice the election presentation until all the members of the team know their roles. The

Order should be represented by a two- or three-member team from the Chapter unit elections committee. All elections team members must be trained and in proper uniform during the election. Immediately after the election the Unit Elections Report is completed and signed by the elections team members to certify the results. Please show the video below at the election. Introduce and assist your Chapter election team in the election process for your unit. The mystery of the Ordeal is important in the Induction. If asked about the Ordeal by a candidate, be vague if possible and do not tease. Remember, the OA is not a secret society. If candidates or parents have serious concerns about the Ordeal or the programs of the OA, refer them to your Chapter and Lodge leadership.

Brotherhood Conversion

Keep the OA members in your unit engaged in the OA and always promote Brotherhood conversion. It is important that you guide them in finishing their induction by sealing their bars. Help them learn what they need to know before Brotherhood Questioning and make sure they are fully prepared.

The requirements for Brotherhood membership, as stated in the OA Handbook, are as follows:

1. Memorize the sign of Arrow Membership.

Memorize the Obligation of the Order, which you received from Allowat Sakima (printed on the back of your membership card and in this handbook.) Also memorize the Order of the Arrow Official Song, the Admonition, the sign of Ordeal membership, and the Arrow handclasp.

2. Advance in your understanding of the Ordeal.

Gain a thorough understanding of the Ordeal through which you have passed. See the ‘Customs and Traditions of the Ordeal’ in this handbook.

3. Serve your unit.

Maintain your registration in Scouting. During a period of at least 10 months, strive to fulfill your Obligation by continuing and expanding your service to your own troop or team.

4. Plan for service in your lodge.

Pay your dues in your Order of the Arrow Lodge. Be aware that acceptance of Brotherhood membership involves a pledge of future service to the lodge. Develop a concrete idea of how you plan to fulfill this pledge.

5. Review your progress.

When you earnestly feel that you have met the four challenges above, write a letter to the lodge secretary. In this letter:

- Explain what you think the Obligation means
- Describe how you have been fulfilling this Obligation in your troop or team and in your daily life, and how you have used your understanding of the Ordeal to aid in your service
- Describe your specific plans for giving future service in the lodge program.

Service

The OA is the Brotherhood of Cheerful Service and it is very important to be seen as a servant leader in your troop. You will want to promote all service opportunities such as food drives, merit badge universities, OA service projects, Eagle projects, and troop service projects.

Atta Kulla Kulla Lodge is involved in several service projects throughout the year:

Lodge Workday

OA Workday at Camp Old Indian to clean up and get ready for the upcoming campers in the summer.

Ca-Nu-Pa's Service to Veterans

In November, Ca Nu Pa Chapter members visit the Richard Michael Campbell Veterans Nursing Home in Anderson. Every year, the Chapter does this, delivering gift bags for the residents in Honor of Veterans Day. Months are spent collecting items, ranging from mint candies, socks, DVD's, sodas and various other foods.

Gobbler Grab

Every year since 1997, Arrowmen from Atta Kulla Kulla Lodge collect turkeys to feed the needy in Upstate South Carolina. The Gobbler Grab started in Ani-Wa-Ya Chapter, but now the entire Lodge has joined in. The success of this project resulted in feeding thousands of needy families, an article in the March-May 2002 issue of the OA National Bulletin (page 5), and required shipping some frozen turkeys as far away as Charlotte, NC to have room to store them.

Christmas Gifts from a Chapter Party

Each December, Arrowmen from Ani-Wa-Ya Chapter bring unwrapped toys for children in local foster homes and in needy families.

Good Fellows Food Distribution

Food and other items are organized in boxes and distributed to needy families identified by the Salvation Army at the Palmetto Center in Greenville, SC each December.

Camping Promotion

OA members are "honor campers" and events you can promote include troop campouts, Camp Old Indian, Camporees and Exporees, Jamborees, high adventure trips, and all OA functions. Be sure to check out Atta Kulla Kulla's Where To Go Camping Guide for more information

Scenarios You May Face as a Troop Representative

Problem #1

Troop leader is reluctant to embrace the program

Possible Solutions:

Explain benefits to unit

The OA Troop Representative program is an excellent way to bring the benefit of the OA directly to troops. The OA has a lot to offer boys that are involved, and the lessons that Scouts learn by taking part in the OA make them not only superior Scouts, but also more confident leaders, citizens, and individuals.

Tell the troop leader that the OA is not stealing his Scouts

Many troop leaders are under the mistaken impression that the OA will ‘steal’ scouts from their troop program. The reality is quite the contrary. As we know, the OA puts involvement in the troop over involvement in OA programs, for the simple reason that ‘the ones who chose you need you’. Applied correctly, the OA Troop Representative program actually *increases* youth participation and leadership in the troop, because the position requires dedication beyond that required by for a ‘normal’ troop leadership position.

Problem #2

Troop Representatives don’t show up to events or to stay in contact

Possible Solutions:

Talk to the representative directly and find the problem

Go directly to the source and find out what the problem is. Maybe the Scout so involved with his troop, sports, school, or religious institution that he is having trouble taking on this additional responsibility. He might be having issues in his personal life that require his attention. Whatever the cause, find out if the Scout is still interested in being a representative. If he is, develop a personalized plan for him to balance his responsibilities.

Talk to troop leadership

If the root of the problem is in the troop, follow up with the unit and see why the representative hasn’t been showing up. The troop’s events might conflict with OA events, for instance, or maybe the scoutmaster is reluctant to embrace the program. Work together to find a solution that accommodates the needs of the Representative, the troop, and the chapter.

Problem #3

Troop Representatives don’t attend training events

Possible Solutions:

Talk to the representative directly and find the problem

Maybe OA Troop Representatives haven’t been hearing about trainings because someone in the Lodge or Chapter hasn’t promoted their events. Maybe the Scout is having trouble balancing all of the activities he is involved in, as described above. If so, get in contact with the Scout and come to an agreement about exactly what the issue is and how to resolve it.

Offer diverse training opportunities/venues

People are more likely to come to events that are engaging, convenient, and don’t conflict with other events in their lodge, chapter, or troop. By holding a variety of trainings at different events, you are maximizing the chances of making the program accessible to troops.

Flow of Information

The following is a list of information that needs to flow between the OA Troop Representative and the Lodge or Chapter:

Lodge/Chapter to Unit:

- Lodge/Chapter Calendars
- Unit Elections visit
- Camp Promotions visit
- Community service project opportunities
- Invitations to Ordeal members to obtain Brotherhood membership
- Invitations to candidates to attend their Ordeal

- Resource lists
- OA Representative Registration Forms
- Encourages OA members to be active in their Lodge and Chapter

Unit to Lodge/Chapter:

- Does the unit conduct monthly campouts?
- Does the unit attend a long-term camp?
- Do the unit's older scouts participate in high adventure programs?
- Does the unit need assistance with its outdoor program?
- Does the unit need assistance with community service projects?
- Does the unit need assistance with training?
- Do the unit's OA members participate in Lodge and Chapter functions?
- Name of the new OA Troop Representative
- Reaction of the Troop members to the Lodge and Chapter program

Lodge

The Lodge leadership is responsible for planning meetings, events, activities, and service projects at the Lodge level. In return, they take suggestions from lodge members about how to improve their activities and program. The Lodge also oversees the induction of those elected from your troop.

Chapter

Chapter Chiefs attend Executive Committee Meetings (ECM's) to learn about and vote on important issues. At the ECM, Chapter Chiefs report on the activities of their Chapters and important events being planned and organized by troops or individuals within the Chapter. They bring to the ECM's attention concerns, petitions, and questions from troops and individuals.

Troop Representative

Troop Representatives attend monthly chapter meetings and learn about what is going on in the Lodge as well as any Chapter events in the works. They also have the opportunity to ask for resources and ideas to support the programs of their troops.

Troop

Troop Representatives attend regular troop meetings and update their troops about the latest OA news.

Frequently Asked Questions

1. What is the OA Troop Representative?

Answer: The Troop Representative program was begun in 1999, and is a program of the Order of the Arrow that has been officially adopted by the Boy Scouts of America. The OA Representative is an official leadership position within the troop, and boys can earn time towards their leadership rank requirements, just as with Den Chief, Troop Scribe, or any of the other leadership positions.

2. What are the responsibilities of the Troop Representative?

Answer: There are numerous possibilities for the job description of the OA Representative. The beauty is that it is flexible enough to allow your unit to fine-tune the exact responsibilities. However, the most basic tasks of the Representative will be to coordinate service opportunities within the unit,

to coordinate unit involvement with the Order of the Arrow, including Unit Elections, Camp Promotions, and Inductions, and to request lodge and chapter resources to help meet unit needs. The Representative should provide feedback to the Lodge/Chapter as to the success of their initiative.

3. *Who can serve as a Troop Representative?*

Answer: Anyone in the unit who is under the age of 18 can serve as the OA Representative for the unit, provided he is a dues-paid member of the Order of the Arrow. He should be appointed by the Senior Patrol Leader, and will be a member of the Patrol Leaders' Council and invited to attend lodge and chapter meetings.

4. *Will there be an Adviser for the Troop Representative?*

Answer: As with all positions in the Order, the OA Representative should have an adult as his Adviser. This adult will be a dues-paid member of the Order of the Arrow and be appointed by the Scoutmaster.

5. *What if a troop does not appoint an OA Troop Representative?*

Answer: The Troop Representative is a troop position and is therefore up to the unit to adopt and use the program. If the unit does not wish to appoint a Representative, the lodge and chapter should encourage the units to utilize the program by pointing out the benefits to the troop and team.

6. *What recognition is available for OA Troop Representatives?*

Answer: There is a troop position patch available. Lodges and chapters are encouraged to develop recognition similar to what they use for other lodge and chapter officers and committee chairs.

7. *Should OA Troop Representatives meet as a group?*

Answer: The OA Representatives are expected to attend all Lodge and Chapter functions.

The OA Representative Adviser

Troop Representatives should have an adult adviser if possible. The adviser should be able to help guide the representative in his responsibilities.

Qualifications:

- A unit leader appointed by the Scoutmaster
- OA Member in good standing

Reports To:

- Troop Scoutmaster

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