Order of the Arrow Unit of Excellence Award

I. Background & Purpose of the Award

As the primary platform where the Scouting program is delivered to youth, the unit is the most vital and important level of the BSA for the Order to support.

The **Order of the Arrow Unit of Excellence Award** seeks to identify those units, and the leaders within them, who excel at incorporating the OA into their annual planning. This award is intended to provide a tool for lodges to recognize, incentivize, and operationalize unit-level participation in Order of the Arrow programs.

The **OA Unit of Excellence Award** criteria recognize units that invite the lodge to conduct quality OA elections, participate in lodge events and meetings, and operate a complete OA Troop Representative program. Our hope is that units that complete these criteria will benefit from the support programs that the Order of the Arrow has implemented to strengthen unit-delivered program. This recognition program, along with other tools for unit support, should be distributed and promoted to Scoutmasters, OA Troop Representatives and Advisers, and chapter election teams to include in communication to units.

II. Award Requirements

Units must complete all of the requirements listed below in order to be eligible as an **Order of the Arrow Unit of Excellence**. If all requirements are completed, the unit receives a ribbon for their troop flag, per annum. In addition to the ribbon, the award system has built in recognitions for the key players in each unit responsible for creating a strong Order of the Arrow culture in that unit. These awards are available for the following three positions:

- Scoutmaster
- Troop/Team Representative (TTR)
- Troop/Team Representative Adviser (TTRA)

Order of the Arrow Unit of Excellence Award:

1. Leadership: *Implement the Troop OA Representative and Troop OA Representative Adviser programs in your unit.*

- Every six months, ensure that the senior patrol leader appoints one scout to serve as Troop OA Representative and the Scoutmaster appoints one adult to serve as Troop OA Representative Adviser.
- Feature an annual presentation at a Court of Honor by the Troop OA Representative on the Order of the Arrow with a focus on the accomplishments of unit members.

2. Participation: *Promote lodge events and provide transportation to all Arrowmen wishing to participate.*

- At least 50% of unit OA members attend at least one lodge event other than their Ordeal, and at least one unit OA member attends 100% of full-lodge events.

3. Elections: *Schedule a unit election with the chapter election team annually.*

- Hold an election and have 100% of elected Scouts complete their Ordeal.

4. Planning: *Maintain an active planning process that prevents overlap between lodge and chapter events with unit events.*

- Review the local OA calendar with the Patrol Leader's Council during annual troop program planning and schedule unit events so that 100% of troop programs do not overlap with any full-lodge events.

5. Conversion: *Demonstrate the depth of your unit's OA program through Brotherhood conversion.*

- At least 30% of eligible troop members seal their membership in the Order by converting to Brotherhood.

Order of the Arrow Scoutmaster of Excellence:

- Lead your unit in earning the **OA Unit of Excellence Award** three times during your tenure as Scoutmaster.

Order of the Arrow Troop/Team Representative of Excellence:

- Lead your unit in earning the **OA Unit of Excellence Award** during your tenure as a Troop/Team Representative.

Order of the Arrow Troop/Team Representative Adviser of Excellence:

- Advise at least two Troop Representatives towards earning the **OA Unit of Excellence Award** during your tenure as Troop Representative Adviser.

Note: The OA Troop/Team Representative Adviser is a new, official BSA adult position of responsibility that has been created in conjunction with this award. Its purpose is to create the role for an adult to guide the youth TTR and be a 'voice of the Order' at the adult level in the troop structure.

III. Award Design/Format

Units and unit leaders selected to receive the **Order of the Arrow Unit of Excellence Award** will be recognized as follows:

- **OA Unit of Excellence**
  - National: Troop flag ribbon, per annum
  - Local: Lodge and council recognition

- **OA Scoutmaster of Excellence**
  - National: Certificate
  - Local: Lodge and council recognition

- **OA Troop/Team Representative of Excellence**
  - National: Gold-bordered Troop/Team Representative patch
  - Local: Lodge recognition

- **OA Troop/Team Representative Adviser of Excellence**
  - National: Gold-bordered Troop/Team Representative Adviser patch
  - Local: Lodge recognition

IV. Awarding Process:

Order of the Arrow Unit of Excellence Awards can be bestowed by any chartered lodge of the Order of the Arrow upon units in their council that meet the requirements of the Award. The lodge should track these requirements, and **Units of Excellence** should be identified and recognized annually.

Ribbons, patches, and certificates can be ordered for your lodge's **Units of Excellence** by filling out the order form and mailing it in to the national office at the following address: Order of the Arrow, Boy Scouts of America, 1325 West Walnut Hill Lane, P.O. Box 152079, Irving, TX 75015-2079. The order form will be available on the national website starting January 1, 2013.

In addition to national recognition items, lodges should actively work to recognize **Units of Excellence** annually, because **Units of Excellence** provide the base of support that will build a strong chapter and lodge program. Active recognition will increase the strength of your troops' OA programs, and through that, your chapters and lodge. Here are some suggested recognitions:

- Present ribbons, patches, and certificates annually at troop meetings or Courts of Honor
- List Troop Numbers, Scoutmasters, and Charter Partners in lodge and council publications, banquet programs, and on the OA and/or council website
- Invite all recognized Troop Reps, Troop Rep Advisers, and Scoutmasters to an annual "thank-you" dinner, hosted by the lodge
- Create a special event at district or council camporees to recognize *Units of Excellence*

V. Appendix: Example Letter to Unit Leaders Announcing Award Opportunity

Dear Unit Leader,

Thank you for your service to the youth of the Boy Scouts of America. The Order of Arrow, as Scouting's National Honor Society, is committed to serving and supporting the Scouting program on all levels. The national Order of the Arrow committee is focusing on a concerted effort to create tools and develop resources for local-area Scout leaders. In order for the Order of the Arrow to provide the best support to units, we have created the **Order of the Arrow Unit of Excellence** recognition program.

This program incentivizes your unit to participate in local Order of the Arrow events, hold annual elections for those Scouts who are eligible for OA membership, and implement the OA Troop Representative Program. Our hope is that units that complete these criteria will benefit from the support programs that the Order of the Arrow has implemented to strengthen unit-delivered program. Units who qualify for **OA Unit of Excellence** recognition will be presented with a ribbon from your local lodge to be displayed on your unit flagpole. In addition, your unit's Troop Representative, Troop Representative Adviser, and Scoutmaster are eligible for awards associated with their roles in supporting the achievement of your troop's **OA Unit of Excellence** status. Requirements for the award are attached.

As new members are elected into the Order of the Arrow from units, they experience leadership development opportunities that build upon the lessons learned in their units about living a life of character and leading by example. Lodge and chapter events are designed to improve upon the experience of OA members so that they can bring back greater value to the Scouts in their unit.

The OA Troop Representative program offers a youth in your unit the chance to develop leadership and communication skills as an officer of the troop and bring greater connectivity between your OA lodge and the youth of your unit. In order to effectively implement the OA Troop Representative program, you should also appoint an adult leader to serve as an OA Troop Representative Adviser. The OA Troop Representative Adviser is a new, official BSA adult position of responsibility that has been created in

conjunction with this award, and formally establishes the role for an adult to guide and mentor the youth Troop Representative.

If you have any questions about the Order of the Arrow or the programs your unit can participate in, please contact:

Chapter / Lodge contact: _Lodge Chief__ Email: __Use the e-mail contact list on the website. _____

Thank you again for your service to Scouting and we hope you will participate in the **OA Unit of Excellence** program.

Yours in Scouting,

John Rehm
2012 National Chief

Preston Marquis
2012 National Vice Chief