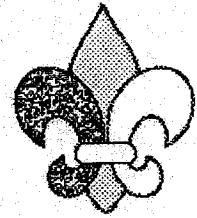


More Great Stuff:

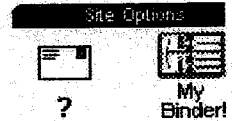


FAQs



...preparing future stro citizens of quality character...

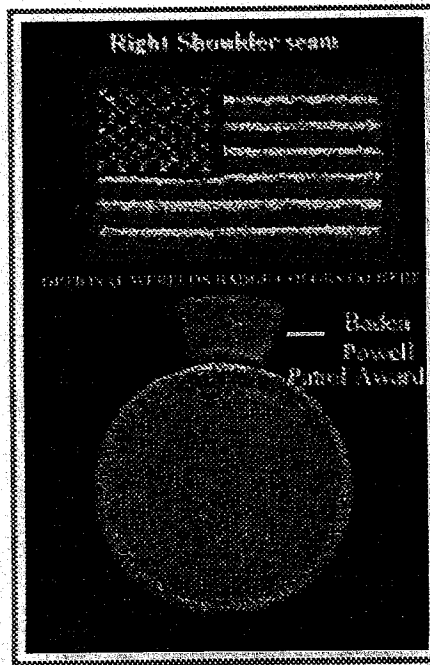
All Uniform Right Side U.S. Flag



Why Is the BSA's U.S. Flag Emblem Backwards?

A LOT of Scouts and Scouters (as well as military people!) have asked me:

why is the flag displayed with the union to the back of the right shoulder



This has gained SO MUCH of my personal mail over the last

three months (partly because I am now on active duty in Kuwait; partly because of the nature of the question), that I will be adding it my Frequently Asked Questions at the end of this month (considering, of course, that I will STILL have Internet access by then).

Here's the bottom line:

- The Boy Scouts of America makes wearing of the U.S. Flag insignia an OPTIONAL ITEM. It has been this way since 1957, when the U.S. flag emblem was first added as a piece of BSA insignia in advance of the World Jamboree in Idaho in the early 60s.
- The Boy Scouts of America's National Uniform and Insignia Committee established HOW and WHERE the U.S. Flag insignia would be worn IF a Scout or Scouter chose to wear it on the official uniforms. It is worn on ALL UNIFORMS as the top-most piece of insignia on the RIGHT SHOULDER and no other location on an official BSA uniform, to include the red or blue jac-shirt and their lighter weight jackets. The Committee determined that since the U.S. Code does NOT specifically address the direction the flag should be worn on an article of clothing, that the flag would be worn as if you are looking at that flag from afar, with the stars *to the rear*.
- The Boy Scouts of America has NO PLANS to alter that flag emblem; and Scouts and Scouters should wear the U.S. Flag emblem as displayed in the BSA's Insignia Guide.
- With regard to "who's right," since the U.S. Code does not place *in writing* how our national flag would be worn on a uniform, both the military and the BSA (and other organizations) are absolutely correct. Each organization sets their own uniforming policies and it is NOT dictated by "congress" nor by anyone else other than that organization. Note that while the BSA is chartered through an act of Congress, that the BSA is free to provide their own policies concerning uniform and insignia wear without Congress' input (and this is a **GOOD THING**)!!
- Finally, Scouts and Scouters should be proud to wear our nation's flag on the uniform, but not all Scouts and Scouters **can do this**. So let's not be forcing kids and adults to do something which is against their moral or religious upbringing, okay?? There are several religious organizations and faiths who do NOT allow their members to wear anything which symbolizes an allegiance toward. These faiths and organizations believe that "God" or "Allah" is more important

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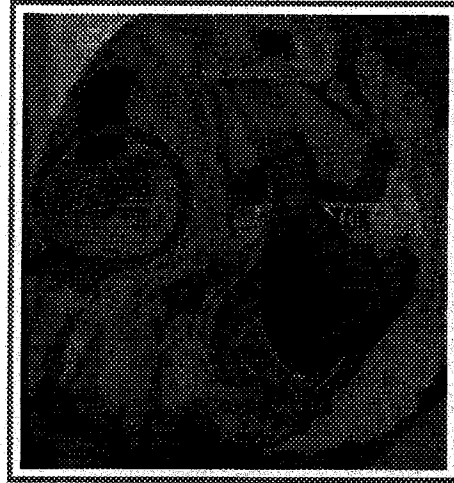
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than "country" -- and this is EXACTLY WHY the BSA does NOT and WILL NOT make the wearing of the U.S. Flag emblem MANDATORY.

Hope that all of these points helps you and your Scouts in coming to grips with "why do the military wear the flag "backwards" and we in Scouting wear the flag "forwards".

(and for the record, I'm wearing my military desert battle uniform with the American flag *backwards* as prescribed by military policy!)



Settummanque!

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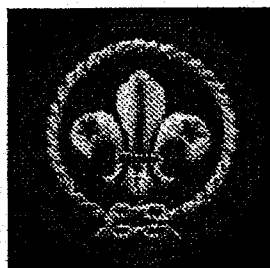


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The World Crest Badge...(and why do we *all* wear it?)

Description:

The patch has always had the same design. The patch is one-inch in diameter, in the same two colors. The design is the international fleur-de-lis (flower of the lily), with two stars symbolizing "truth" and "knowledge" and alluding to the outdoor nature of Scouting, surrounded by a rope symbolic of unity and one-ness ties at the bottom by a square knot, a symbol of service. Those white items are on a deep purple (not maroon, but royal purple) background. The 1995 Insignia Guide states that the World Crest should be centered horizontally over the left shoulder and vertically between the left shoulder seam and the top of the pocket.



Background:

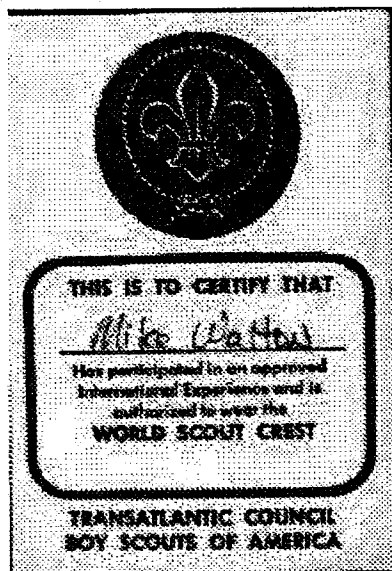
The World Crest is a smaller symbol associated with the World Scout Flag which flies at the World Organization of Scouting Movements (WOSM) in Switzerland. It is the sole insignia common to ALL member nations of the WOSM, and in most if not all nations, where they base "their" national symbol of Scouting from. Only recently, has the Boy Scouts of America decided that all of its members will wear the World Crest as a symbol of unity and world brotherhood.

The World Organization decided after the second World War that all member nations would issue and wear a patch with the World Crest on it as a sign of world brotherhood and unity among all Scouting organizations in the then "free world". The BSA along with a small group of other countries agreed but declined to carry out the mandate, stating that their program "will do so when the time is right for it to happen", stated then-Chief Scout Arthur Schuck.

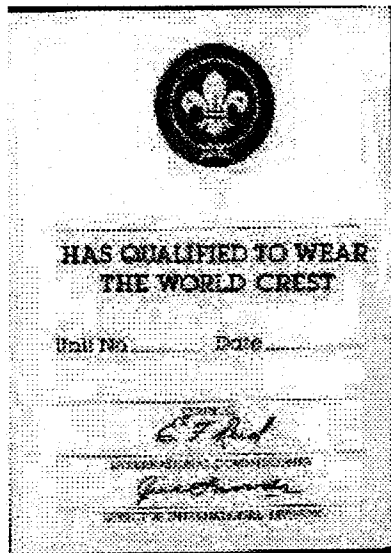
The first uses of the World Crest was during the World Jamboree in 1955, although the badge was available to Scouts and Scouters several years before. In 1956, however, the BSA decided that Scouts and Scouters that participate in an approved "international activity or event" would wear the Crest to and from that event as members of other nations would be doing. The following year, 1957, the BSA made the World Crest available to local Councils (it was previously only available from the BSA's International Service), and established

the requirements which lasted until 1991: "take part in an organized international activity or event with Scouts from another member nation of the World Association". It also established the World Crest as one of the few PERMANENT patches or insignia on the Boy Scout or Scouter's uniform.

No matter how many "international activities" you took part in, you could only wear ONE per life of the Scout. Nor could you purchase a World Crest without a card (similar to the Eagle Scout card) which states that you are indeed the holder of the World Crest.



The crest became known as the "Overseas" patch of Scouting informally by Scouts and Scouters, because while a few were earned by Scouts and Scouters taking part in events in Canada or Mexico, many more...the majority...were earned by Scouts and Scouters serving as members of the Transatlantic (Europe, Near East, and North Africa), Far East (Far East, Japan, and the Phillipines), Canal Zone (Panama) and Direct Service (all other areas around the world) Councils. Scouts and Scouters in those Councils routinely had interactions with host-nation Scouting groups and many of those Scouts and Scouters developed lifelong associations with individuals and groups over the years, camping and doing social events with them and their members. As those folks came back to the States, proudly displaying their World Crest, they were singled out for many special tasks and events in their Councils because "they have done something with foriegn Scouts".



So why does EVERYONE get to wear it now?

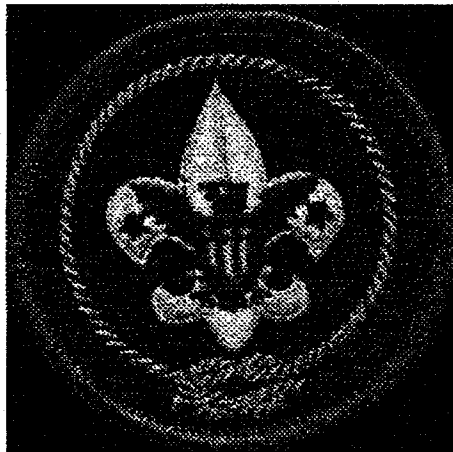
My best guess is that there were many jealous Scouts and Scouters that could not go overseas, could not attend a Jamboree or some other event, and could not, therefore, earn the World Crest. The BSA did something about this, in 1990, and changed the rules allowing for Scouts and Scouters in the USA to earn a World Crest by simply "taking part in an international exhibit or display or an international event.", whether or not Scouts from another country were present or not. Robert Zadima, the Council Executive of the Transatlantic Council and his Far East counterpart, along with some members of other US local councils, strongly made their objections known to the BSA's National Director of Operations and to the International Division, but those appeals fell on deaf ears, and the policy was changed.

In 1991, the BSA once again changed the policy over the objections of many local councils, whose volunteers and professionals had grown to respect the World Crest and what it stood for. The present policy is that the patch **WILL BE WORN BY ALL YOUTH MEMBERS AND BY ALL ADULTS, VOLUNTEER OR PROFESSIONAL, AS A SIGN OF WORLD BROTHERHOOD AND UNITY WITH OTHER MEMBERS OF THE INTERNATIONAL SCOUTING COMMUNITY.**

Is there anything that has taken the place of the World Crest?

In order to earn the World Crest Badge before 1991, you must have participated in an international Scouting event or activity lasting five days or more. Today, each local Council has the authority to determine requirements for the International Activities badge, a 3-inch patch which is worn as a **TEMPORARY EMBLEM** on the

right pocket of the Scout or Scouter. It is **NOT** worn in the **PLACE OF** or alongside the World Crest emblem.



Additionally, the BSA has developed the World Conservation Awards for Boy Scouts and Cub Scouts and this emblem is likewise a **TEMPORARY EMBLEM** to be worn on the right pocket of the Scout. Scouters cannot earn the World Conservation Award. The World Conservation Award is **NOT a PERMANENT award**, and therefore only the World Crest Badge is worn on the left side of the shirt above the pocket (or above square knots and/or year pins).

Here are one local Councils' requirements for the International Activities Badge;

and here are my comments and opinions on the current usage of the World Crest Badge.



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Designed by Mike Walton
Created with DiDa!*

Combating the "Patch Police" - or Preventing Being Perceived as an "Patch Police Officer"

Ever attended a Scouting event or activity whereby you observe someone going up to some Scout or Scouter (or YOU!) and start in...

"You can't wear that there...it's not official.."

"What is this. I've never seen this...you sure this is a Scout patch?"

"This is the old version...you are supposed to only wear the current version..."

Many of these people have the best of intentions, but for some reason or another, they either have self-appointed themselves or use the wrong tact in informing you that the things you are wearing are in the wrong location, or that they should not be worn.

Many Scouters and Scouts call these people the "patch police".

Are what they are doing "legal" or "official"?? Maybe.

First, remember that Commissioners -- ALL Commissioners, not just the unit level or District/Council level Commissioners -- have a responsibility to insure the correct wearing of the official uniform and insignia. That's part of their jobs, and most Commissioners view it as a teaching, coaching and training part of their jobs. This does NOT mean, however, that they can go about this in a mean-spirited manner, talking down to the Scout or Scouter whom really was either told incorrectly or did not receive ANY guidance at all as to where to place the various badges and insignia of Scouting.

The BSA's Insignia Guide is the overall "guidance" on what goes where. This site supplements the official guide by providing information on how those badges and insignia are to be worn, what they look like IN COLOR, and some background on some variations of the insignia or uniforming item.

Second, remember that for the most part, there is a place and location for EVERY piece of insignia that is produced by the Boy Scouts of America, it's local Councils and Districts, and units. **NOT EVERYTHING GOES ON THE UNIFORM SHIRT AND NOT EVERYTHING IS WORN AT ALL TIMES.** For instance, merit badge sashes are worn only during formal occasions; medals and ribboned awards are worn only during formal occasions; and aquatic badges and insignia are worn only on swimwear.

Third, some of these people may have NEVER seen what you're wearing, so it is immediately "assumed" that since they've never seen it, then it's not official. That's human nature working at its worst.

I see someone wearing a badge or item incorrectly. What do I do?

First, insure that they are indeed wearing the badge or item incorrectly. If you're a Commissioner, you should be carrying in your binder or notebook a current copy of the BSA's Insignia Guide. If you're just "joe or jane Scouter", you may not have a copy but try to have one handy for such occasions.

Not ALL insignia and uniforming items are in the Insignia Guide. That in part is why I built this site. If in doubt as to the official nature of an item, let it go and ask other Scouters if they've seen it or heard about it. Check this site out often, as I'll add new or changed insignia in the "News" section of the site.

Second, remember that the Scouter you're going to approach is going to be a bit embarrassed at the fact that they are wearing something wrong. So remember "praise in public, criticize in private." Take them off to the side and let them know of the error. **DO NOT DEMAND THAT THEY "FIX IT NOW"**. They won't be able to. Suggest, as in "Are you aware that this badge is for the Scouts only?" They may not be aware that some badges and insignia are **ONLY** to be worn by our youth members. "You know, some folks here are going to try to correct you about wearing this..." goes a longer way than "Hey. You can't wear that on your shirt!"

Third, remember that you are talking to a fellow Scouter or to a Scout. You're not talking to a soldier in the military. If a badge or item is a few inches off, at least they are wearing it.

Fourth, offer to sew or place the item on the uniform in the right place. A lot of times in which I attend various Scouting activities, I see the year pins on youth and adult uniforms worn on the left pocket flap instead of above the pocket where it belongs. **I ALWAYS ASK FIRST IF THEY DO NOT MIND ME FIXING THEIR UNIFORM SHIRT**. This gives them the opportunity to say "Why" in which it gives you (or me) the chance to explain where the badge or item belongs.

Finally, make sure that you let them know where they can get more information about where the item is to be worn. They simply **MAY NOT KNOW** that the item is only to be worn on a vest or that they can not wear a temporary patch where the Jamboree emblem is to be worn...they saw someone wearing what looked like a temporary patch there, and they don't know that "every badge has its place" on the shirt, jacket or vest".

How can I prevent being attacked by the Patch Police?"

First, insure that the things you are wearing on your uniform conforms to what the Insignia Guide (and perhaps this online guide) says. Take your uniform shirt and take a look at the full color scans to insure that the "knot emblems" are "right side up"; that the year pins have the right color backing; and that you are wearing the insignia according to the illustrations.

Second, if your Council has special insignia or items which can be worn on the uniform shirt, make sure that you know where they are to be worn. Councils have the authority to supplement the official insignia with insignia and badges of their own. Check with a Commissioner or your Council's Scout Executive or representative.

When someone confronts you with one of those "Are you **SURE** you're supposed to wear this" question or the "You're not supposed to", simply and politely **ASK THEM WHERE IS THIS IN WRITING**. Most Scouters with good intentions will find you a copy of the Insignia Guide or some other printed publication (or will point you to a page here or elsewhere online) which explains where the item is to worn.

DO NOT TAKE IT PERSONALLY. The person is merely either trying to honestly make all Scouters and Scouts look good, or he or she is exerting their personal "power" and you just happen to be the hapless victim. Instead, acknowledge the person and thank him or her for their concern and explain that you will "check it out" before changing your uniform. And do so when you get back.

Finally, if someone tells you "**TAKE THAT OFF NOW!**", simply explain in a polite tone that "I will remove it when I return home if I can be shown in a written, printed publication that what I have on is illegal or not official. If you can show me right now something in writing which says that what I am

wearing is not official for wear where I am wearing it, then I will be happy to borrow a pocketknife and go to a room someplace and remove the item. But in all due respect to you, I will not remove something merely on the words of someone else."

There is **NO SUCH THING AS A "SPECIAL"** distribution or "private" listing which only goes to professionals or to key volunteers dealing with uniforming and insignia issues or items; those telling you that there is such a publication are lying. Whenever the BSA's National Uniform and Insignia Committee releases information about any change or addition to the official uniforms or the insignia which goes onto them, it is **IMMEDIATELY RELEASED TO THE ENTIRE MEMBERSHIP and there are NO PRIVATE PUBLICATIONS**. Such changes are released through national publications, through local Council publications and during staff meetings of both volunteers and professionals.

(and because I or other volunteers get copies of those releases, we add them here to this site as well as to share them with several online forums. Copies of what is being released as changes or new items are also placed on the US Scouting Service Project's website).

Some folks will tell you "It just came out as a change", or "I have read it before I got here", both which could be correct. Your response should be "Can you please get me a copy of it? The BSA says that they send their changes to everyone, so you should be able to get me a copy, right?"

Don't let people - with good intentions or not - bully you around just because they are wearing "more stuff" than you, or because they are perceived as "higherups". We are ALL in the same game together. There's no reason why ALL of the rules dealing with uniforming are not available to everyone. That too, is why this site exists. Simply ask them to provide you the information in a printed matter so you can have it as reference.

You know...*They* could be wrong.

I hope that this information has helped you to understand the role of the "Patch Police" and helped you to deal effectively when they "pull you over" and attempt to correct or inform you why they "pulled you over"!!

If you have any questions about the "Patch Police", please post me and I'll do my best to assist you.

Settумmanque!