

BOY SCOUT HEROES

Juvenile Order of Knighthood Established



Bosley Frazar

Crosses of Honor Now Conferred Upon Scouts Who Exhibit Great Courage—This New Decoration Is in Three Grades—Bronze, Silver and Gold—Twenty-seven Lads Have Had Order Pinned on Their Breasts—What They Have Done to Earn It.



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WE still live in an age of hero worship. But it is one of the promising signs of our time that civilian heroes who save life are coming in for a share of the glory and reward monopolized hitherto by military heroes who take life. Mr. Carnegie, through his "hero fund commission," has lately shown the way toward such a consummation, and now steps into line that vastly multiplying juvenile army of ours, the Boy Scouts of America—399,000 strong—with a similar enterprise for fostering this higher and truer spirit of heroism.

The National council of this juvenile army of peace has authorized an "honor medal" to be conferred upon each Boy Scout for whom it can be proved that he risked his own life to snatch the life of another from the jaws of the grim destroyer.

But before such a precious decoration can be conferred the evidence of such youthful heroism must be investigated by the court of honor of the local council of Boy Scouts, which may invite experts to share in its examination and recommendations. If the report is then favorable, the facts are next presented to the court of honor of the National council, which is a tripartite tribunal composed of Ernest Thompson Seton, "chief scout of America"; Daniel Carter Beard, "National scout commissioner," and James E. West, "National scout executive." This supreme tribunal, after carefully weighing the evidence, awards or refuses the honor medal, as it sees fit.

To the Boy Scout this new decoration is as precious as is the famed Order of the Garter or of the Golden Fleece to the aristocrat of the Old World. By receiving the order upon his breast he becomes one of our youthful knights and the insignia is a token that he may be depended upon to defend and succor the weak and helpless and to exercise the chivalry of the young knights of old who pledged themselves to the defense of women and devotion to their honor and persons.

The honor medal is a National honor, states the new handbook of the organization. Like foreign orders, it is awarded in different grades. There is a bronze cross "awarded to a scout who has saved life." It is worn suspended from a bar by a red ribbon. Next higher is the silver cross awarded to a scout "who saves life with considerable risk to himself." A blue ribbon holds this to its bar. And the highest and most coveted grade of all is the gold cross, suspended from its bar by a white ribbon. This gold cross "is the highest possible award for service and heroism." It attests that its wearer "has saved life at the greatest possible risk to his own life."

Each of these orders is in the form of a Maltese cross, superimposed upon which is the American eagle and shield of the first-class scout's badge. The bar from which the medal is suspended bears the admonition "Be Prepared." The decoration in whatever degree awarded, is worn upon the left breast. To date it has been conferred upon 27 young heroes, and I am indebted to Chief Scout Executive West for descriptions of the deeds of valor which have earned them. But before describing some of the most interesting of these rescues it would be well to explain that a considerable space in the official handbook issued to our Boy Scouts is devoted to instruction in first aid to the injured and endangered.

Scout masters throughout the country are placing much importance upon the training of their armies in this work. In which the scouts take much pride. Consciousness that in case of emergency they are prepared to help either strangers or those near and dear to them soon thrills them with satisfaction.

THE GREAT BLACKBEARD AND OTHER PIRATE CHIEFS BY JOHN T. M. CUTCHEON.



WHEN Columbus first landed in the Western Hemisphere it was on one of the Bahama Islands. At that time many of the islands of this group were inhabited, but Columbus continued his cruise on to Cuba and Hayti, where he established settlements and began that great work of exploitation which in a few years nearly wiped out the native population. When the natives were so reduced in numbers that there were not enough to work the mines, the Spaniards sent expeditions up to seize the natives of the Bahama Islands. This work was so thoroughly done that within 40 or 50 years the Bahama were totally depopulated. And it was not until a hundred years later, in 1647, that an English adventurer, named Captain Sayle, made the first white settlement that was started in the Bahama. He called it New Providence. One hundred and seventy-five years had passed since the first white man had landed in the group, and in all that time not one had discovered what a beautiful spot the little island of New Providence is.

Time after time they returned to wipe out the pirates, but without success. Finally the pirates scouted some ships of his British majesty and King George sent Captain Woods Rogers with instructions to wipe them out. At that time Nassau was the rendezvous of Edward Teach, alias "Blackbeard," the leader of the most desperate band of pirates the world has ever seen.

Blackbeard was a pirate who lived up to all that one would expect of a pirate. He had long, black, flowing whiskers, which he wore twisted in little tails, and had lighted matches under his hat, sticking out over each of his ears. At such times he looked like the devil, and it is said that to be the latter's mortal understudy was his chief ambition in life. If one would have called him a demon incarnate, Blackbeard would have considered it a great compliment.

To illustrate just the sort of a pirate Blackbeard was, the following little incident may be illuminating. One day while his pirate ship was lying under the lee of Hog Island in Nassau harbor, he decided that things were dull and that he would get up a little amusement to while the idle hours away. So he made himself look more devilish than usual and took all his crew down between decks, battened down the hatches, and set fire to a ton of brimstone. The crew nearly perished before they could burst open the hatches and escape, but Blackbeard sat through it all, breathing fumes and smoke and grinning with diabolical glee.

When the pirates of Nassau heard that Captain Woodes Rogers was coming over they held a congress to decide what their action should be. Some wished to fortify the island and defy the captain; others were in favor of accepting the terms of His Majesty's proclamation, which granted them pardon for past offenses if they behaved in the future.

Thus, upon a beautiful day, the ten backsliding pirates were brought out in the open air to fulfill their part in the ceremony. Grouped around them were hundreds of reformed pirates, who were addressed in scathing and contemptuous terms by the condemned men. The details are from Johnson's "History of the Pirates."