

BRYAN ON SCOUTING



A Blog for the BSA's Adult Leaders

HOME SCOUTING MAGAZINE FORUMS ASK THE EXPERT CONTACT

MERIT BADGE CALENDAR EAGLE BEFORE & AFTER

LATEST POSTS > Eagle Scout's free service a must for any parent

SEARCH ...

ADVERTISEMENT

Pins with a point: How to properly wear BSA service stars

April 2, 2014 Bryan Wendell Ask the Expert, Awards, Scouting Tips, Service 154 Comments



Been involved in Scouting for more than a year? You get a gold star.

All youth or adult leaders who have reached one year of tenure with the Boy Scouts of America are eligible to begin wearing service stars.

BRYAN ON SCOUTING NEWSLETTER

Join 11,466 people who get Bryan on Scouting in their inbox. We'll send one email per weekday, and you can unsubscribe any time.

Email Address:

Your email address

First Name:

Your first name

The stars are an underused outward symbol of how long you've been involved and a quick way for new Scouts, parents and leaders to see who has Scouting experience.



Anyone can simply walk into a Scout Shop (or go to scoutstuff.org) and purchase the pins and color background. There's no application.

Scouters and Scouts are trustworthy, so the BSA trusts someone born in 1960, for example, not to purchase and wear a 60-year pin.

Stars start at one year and go up to an impressive 90 years (though you can combine multiple stars to send that number even higher). They're worn with a specially colored backing that corresponds to the appropriate Scouting program.

But what if your Scouting tenure spans several programs, includes time spent in Scouting as a youth or has a gap of several years? That's when things get a little trickier — but not much. I'll answer those questions after the jump.

Which numbered service star do I wear?

First, figure out your registration date with the unit. At the year anniversary of that date, you're eligible to wear a 1-year service star. Repeat that every year. Most units will wait to award their service stars at a court of honor or special ceremony.

Here's how the stars break down for Scouts and Scouters. Note that there are differences in the way Scouts wear them and the way Scouters do.

For Scouts

The *Guide* says: "If an individual's primary registration is in one phase of Scouting and later in another, separate stars with the appropriate background and numerals may be worn simultaneously."

Example 1: A boy was in Cub Scouting for three years then crossed over into Boy Scouting and has been there for two years. He would wear two stars. One 3-year (with gold backing) and one 2-year (with green backing). More on backings later.

Last Name:

SIGN UP

BLOG CONTRIBUTORS



Bryan Wendell, an Eagle Scout, is senior editor of *Boys' Life*, *Scouting* and *Eagles' Call* magazines.



Michael Freeman, an Eagle Scout, is associate editor of *Boys' Life*, *Scouting* and *Eagles' Call* magazines.

BROWSE BY CATEGORY

BROWSE BY MONTH



Example 2: A boy was in Cub Scouting for four years, spent five years Boy Scouting and now has been a Venturer for a year. He would wear three stars. One 4-year (gold backing), one 5-year (green backing), one 1-year (red backing).

Example 3: A boy joined Boy Scouting two years ago, and is still involved. He would wear one 2-year star (green backing).

Example 4: A girl joined three years ago and is still involved. She would wear one 3-year star (red backing).

Example 5: A boy was in Cub Scouting for a year, left the program, and returned to Boy Scouting, where he's been registered for two years. He would wear two stars. One 1-year (gold backing) and one 2-year (green backing).

To be clear, the boys in Examples 1, 2 and 5 **cannot** combine their time in separate programs into one pin. So the boy in Example 2 would wear three separate pins as explained above, **not** one 10-year pin.

For Scouters

Adult leaders are a different story. The *Guide* says: "Leaders may combine youth and adult tenure into one or two stars with blue backgrounds."

Leaders are allowed to represent their time spent as a youth in Scouting separately through an additional pin or pins as mentioned above. But I imagine most will want to show the *total* time they've spent in the program. That means they get to wear a larger number, after all.

Example 1: An adult was in Cub Scouts for four years and Boy Scouts for six. Now he's been a registered adult leader for 10 years. He would wear a 20-year star (blue backing). (Or he could wear a 4-year star with gold backing, a 6-year star with green backing and a 10-year star with blue backing.)

Example 2: An adult was a Venturer for three years and has been a Venturing advisor for four. She would wear a 7-year star (blue backing). (Or she could wear a 3-year star with red backing and a 4-year star with blue backing.)



Example 3: An adult was in Boy Scouts for five years and has been registered as an adult leader for 30 years. There's no 35-year star, so he would wear a 30-year star and a 5-year star — $30+5 = 35$ (blue backings on both). (Or he could wear a 5-year star with green backing and a 30-year star with blue backing.)

Example 4: An adult was in Boy Scouts for two years then wasn't involved in Scouting for 10 years. Now he's back and has been a Scouter for two years. He would wear a 4-year star (blue backing). (Or he could wear a 2-year star with green backing and a 2-year star with blue backing.)

Example 5: An adult was in Boy Scouts for five years and has been registered as an adult leader for 71 years. He would wear a 70-year star and a 6-year star — $70+6 = 76$. Or, I suppose, a 75-year star and a 1-year star — $75+1 = 76$. And he should get a parade in his honor immediately. (Or he could wear a 5-year star with green backing and a 70-year and 1-year star each with blue backing. Three stars total.)

Example 6: An adult wasn't involved in Scouting as a youth but has been a volunteer leader for five years. He would wear a 5-year star (blue backing).

Example 7: An adult wasn't involved in Scouting as a youth. He's been registered the past five years with a pack and the past three with a troop. Those years overlapped, so his total time with Scouting has been five years. He would wear a 5-year star (blue backing).

The pins themselves

The numbered gold pins include every digit from 1 to 10 and jump by 10s from there: 20, 30, 40, 50, 60 and 70. After that the gap is every five years: 75, 80, 85, 90. With those last few you're getting into rarified air.



Here are the pins along with their Supply number. Protip: The number makes it easy when searching at ScoutStuff.org. Just enter the number in the search box, and you've saved yourself a few steps.

1-year service star, No. 71.

2-year service star, No. 72.

3-year service star, No. 73.



- 4-year service star, No. 74.
- 5-year service star, No. 75.
- 6-year service star, No. 76.
- 7-year service star, No. 77.
- 8-year service star, No. 78.
- 9-year service star, No. 79.
- 10-year service star, No. 80.
- 20-year service star, No. 68.
- 30-year service star, No. 69.
- 40-year service star, No. 70.
- 50-year service star, No. 81.
- 60-year service star, No. 82.
- 70-year service star, No. 83.
- 75-year service star, No. 1182.
- 80-year service star, No. 1183.
- 85-year service star, No. 1184.
- 90-year service star, No. 1185.

You can present them with the certificate seen here (Supply No. 34396).



That ensures that the star isn't lost before you're able to present it to the Scout or Scouter.

Most units will pin the star to the certificate and present it all as one.

What colored backing do I wear?

The stars must be worn with a colored background.

For Scouts, that background represents the phase of Scouting in which the service was rendered:

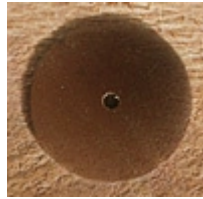
Gold backs (No. 63) are for youth Cub Scouting service (Tigers, Cub Scouts, Webelos Scouts).



Green backs (No. 66) are for youth Boy Scout service.



Brown backs (No. 67) are for youth Varsity Scout service.



Red backs (No. 65) are for youth Venturing service.



For adults, the same backings are used regardless of program. And as I explained above, an adult may combine youth and adult service to come up with one number of total service to Scouting.

Blue backs (No. 64) are for adult Scouter service.

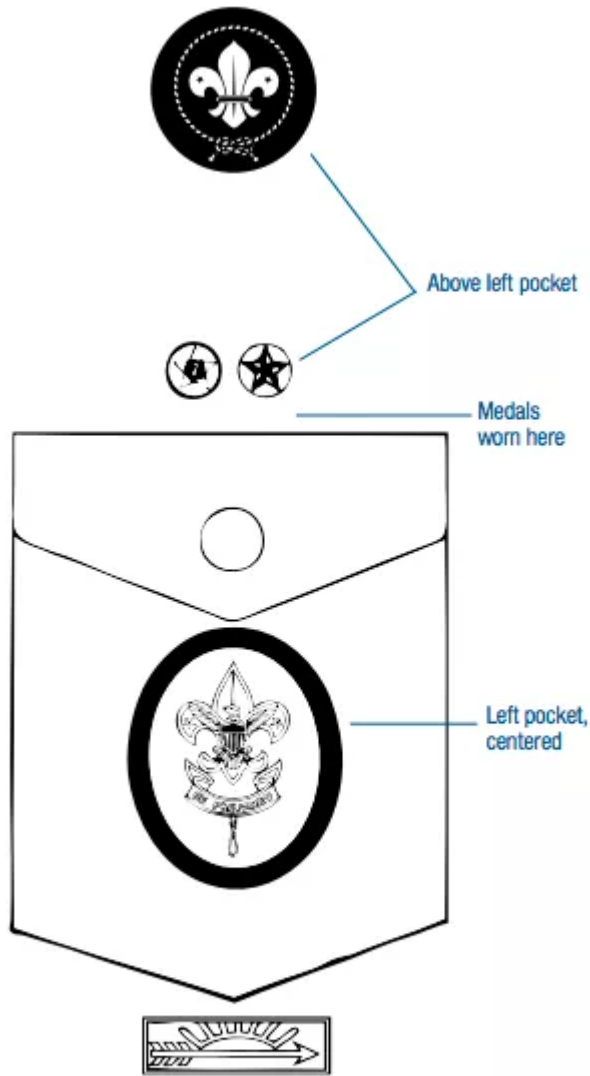


Where are the service stars worn?

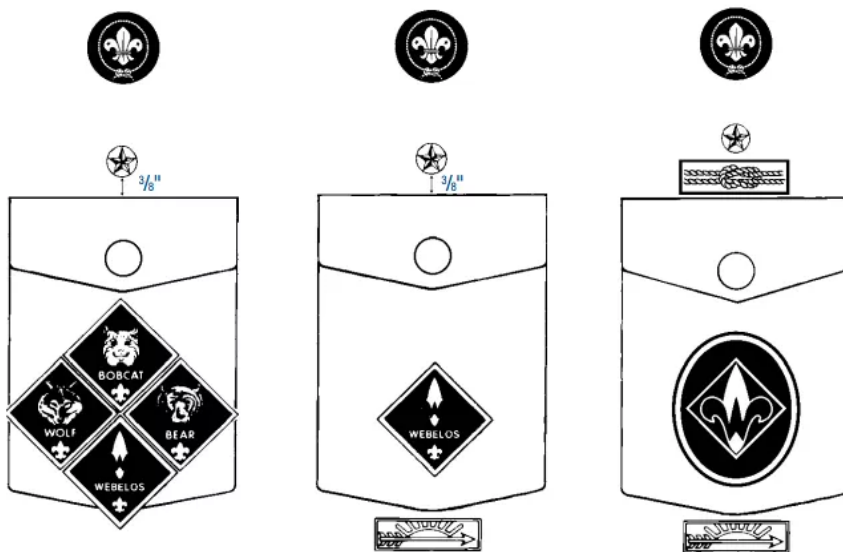
Service stars are worn centered above the left pocket, about three-eighths of an inch above the seam/flap.

If a medal or an embroidered knot is worn, service stars are worn above the left pocket a quarter-inch above the medal or knot.





Left Pocket



Webelos Scout Left Pocket (blue or tan shirt)

Webelos Scout Left Pocket (blue or tan shirt)

Webelos Scout Left Pocket (tan shirt)



The source

This information came from Page 63 of the BSA's *Guide to Awards and Insignia* and was verified by Peter Self, team leader with council support here at BSA.

H/T: Thanks to Peter Self and to Scouter Brandon Kleimann for suggesting the blog post idea.

Share this:



RELATED



How to nominate someone for the Sea Scout Leadership Award
December 15, 2017



Report to the Nation 2016: A preview of the BSA's week in Washington
March 4, 2017



Full speed ahead: Your Sea Scouting questions, answered
April 5, 2016



« **PREVIOUS**
BSA introduces Virtual Reality Scouting

NEXT »
Ask the Expert: How should Scouters handle insurance for troop trailers?



Bryan on Scouting Comment Policy

Comments that are Helpful, Friendly, Courteous and Kind will be approved.

Please read our [Comment Policy](#) before commenting.

Comments

Community



♥ Recommend

🔗 Share

Sort by Best ▾

