

Scouting in Arlington

AHS Museum Exhibit on Arlington Boy Scouts

BY *GEORGE DODGE*

The Arlington Historical Society opened its museum exhibit "Scouting in Arlington" on July 30, 2000. This exhibit included several hundred artifacts and photographs of Arlington scouts and scout leaders dating from 1916 to 2000. The exhibit featured the activities of Arlington troops, such as camping and canoeing, as well as their summer camp experiences at locations such as Camp Theodore Roosevelt, Goshen Scout Camps and Philmont. Appalachian Trail back-packing, climbing Old Rag Mountain and C & O Canal trail hiking were illustrated as popular activities. Examples of unusual aspects of Arlington scouting like the Sea Scouts and a Mounted Cub Pack at Fort Myer were presented. Arlington scouts at National Boy Scout Jamborees, conducted every four years, were also depicted.

The first Boy Scout Troop in Arlington appears to have been Troop 101. It was chartered in 1916 and sponsored by the Ballston Committee on Scouting. Over the years numerous civic organizations, churches and schools have sponsored Arlington Cub Packs, Scout Troops, Explorer Posts and Sea Ships. The American Legion, Civitans, Kiwanis, and Lions are some of the civic organizations that have supported Arlington scouts. Arlington schools have also served as the chartering institution for scouts. However, throughout the century most Arlington scout units were sponsored by houses of worship. By the year 2000 all sixteen Arlington troops



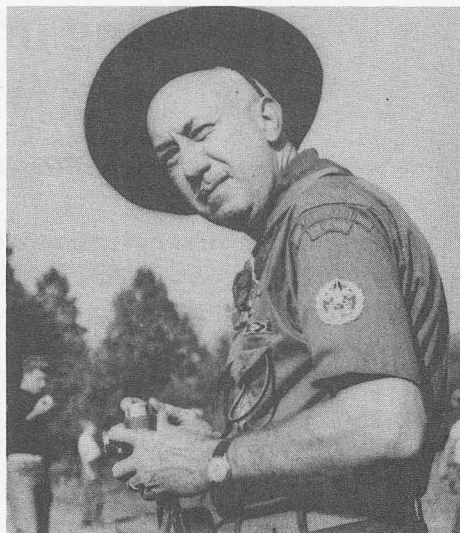
George Dodge

From the exhibit: The shirt of Arlington Boy Scout Robert Stafford, who served in the local Emergency Service Corps from 1941-45. Note the white Civil Defense helmet, whistle lanyard, and Emergency Service armband. On the left is an ESC stretcher with a splint and bandage case, used by Arlington Boy Scout Troop 143 for first aid drills during World War II.

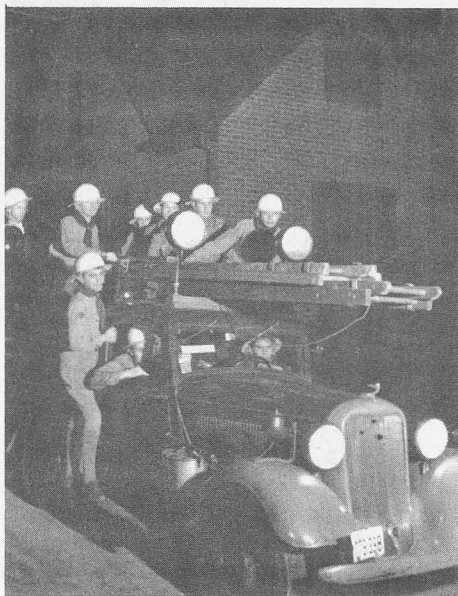
and a Sea Scout unit were sponsored by churches.

David Lockling-Arlington Scout Commissioner

The central figure in the evolution of the Boy Scouts in Arlington was H. David Lockling, the first registered scout of Troop 149, nee Troop 1, of Cherrydale in 1917. He served as assistant scoutmaster of Troop 149 from 1927 to 1929. In 1930, at the age of 26, Lockling became District Commissioner of the Arlington Boy Scouts, a position he held for the next thirty years. During the Great Depression, Lockling lobbied local churches



George C. Beatty collection
David Lockling, Arlington Scout Commissioner, in 1953.



George C. Beatty collection
Scouts of Arlington Troop 149 in 1944 on their emergency service vehicle. Note the white Civilian Defense helmets on the boys.

and civic associations to charter and support scout units in Arlington. He then initiated the practice of Arlington scouts conducting annual pilgrimages to Mt. Vernon to honor George Washington, and also to Arlington National Cemetery, where scouts, for a time, placed American flags on the markers.

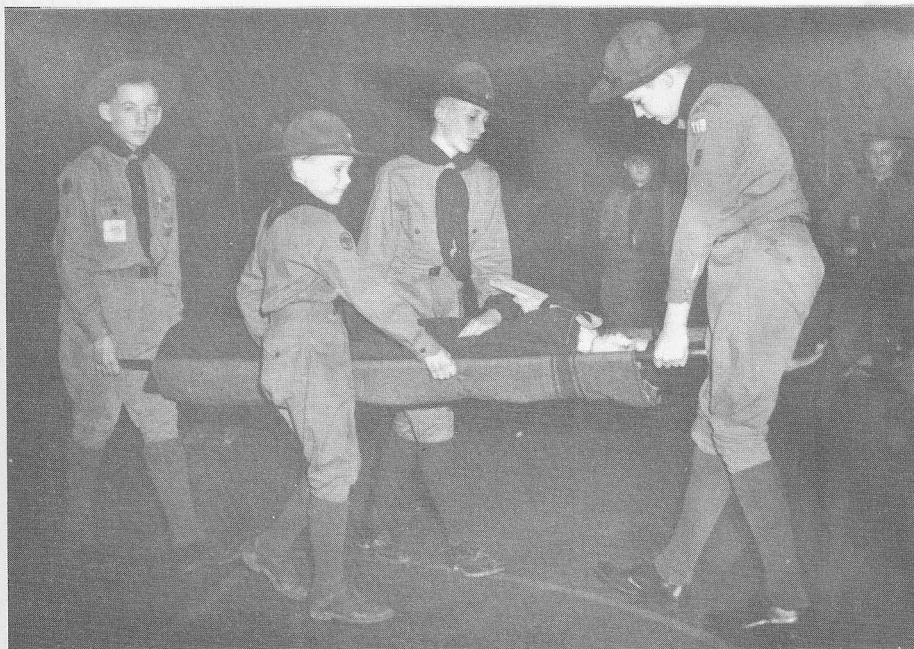
In 1937, Lockling organized 100 Arlington and Alexandria Boy Scouts to act as guides to area shrines during the first National Boy Scout Jamboree which was held in Washington, DC. During that charter jamboree a number of troops camped in Arlington along the Potomac River near Arlington Memorial Bridge. His contributions to the success of this jamboree resulted in his being awarded

the Silver Beaver Award, the highest adult's award in scouting, in 1940. In 1941 he initiated the formation and training of scouts for the Emergency Service Corps, rescue units consisting of scouts and scout leaders. The success of the scout emergency service units also received national attention.

Lockling planned many annual Arlington Camporee and Projectoree camp-outs and utilized sites in Arlington for camping, including Fort Scott and Lubber Run. He also developed regular camping sites at N. 16th Street and Patrick Henry Drive and an area known as Terrell's Field, between Military Road, Lorcom Lane and Nellie Custis Drive. On camp-outs, Lockling entertained with his accordion and unparalleled scout spirit. He was also an accomplished bugler. In 1944, he completed and was awarded the rank of Eagle Scout, when it was still permitted to be earned as an adult. Lockling continued to promote scouting until his death in 1960 at age 56.

Arlington Boy Scout Emergency Service Units

There are many positive aspects of the Arlington scout experience. Perhaps the most compelling story of Arlington scouts is from the 1941-1945 era. In 1941 there were 335 registered Boy Scouts and 128 adult leaders in Arling-



George C. Beatty collection

Arlington Boy Scout First Aid contest at Washington-Lee High School gym, March 14, 1942.

ton, Virginia. Prior to the entry of the United States into World War II, many of these boys and leaders formed an Emergency Service Corps that worked with other Arlington rescue units under the supervision of the Arlington Office of Civilian Defense. The Arlington Boy Scouts were organized into four Emergency Service Units, a Commissary unit to prepare meals, and a Camping unit to provide shelter for displaced citizens. Qualified scouts were issued white Civil Defense helmets and a Civil Defense badge or arm bands.

On March 14, 1942, three months after the bombing of Pearl Harbor, the Arlington Boy Scouts conducted a first aid contest in the gym at Washington-Lee High School. The contest was performed with limited lighting to simulate air raid blackout conditions. An audience of Arlington citizens peered through the dimly lighted gym as scouts diagnosed and treated their "victims." This demonstration was the beginning of a series of First Aid and Emergency Service public exhibitions that would take place during the war. Exhibition sites also included the Washington-Lee football field, the Westover neighborhood, and Bailey's Crossroads.

During the war, Arlington Boy Scouts participated in collection campaigns for aluminum, scrap rubber, and salvage paper, and also in the Red Cross war



George C. Beatty collection

Arlington scouts practicing "black-out" first aid in 1941.

fund drive. In addition, scouts distributed ration books for gasoline and kerosene, and delivered to the community Civilian Defense pamphlets such as "What Can I Do." Although actual scout rescues were limited to flood victims along the Potomac River, the readiness and activity of Arlington Boy Scouts contributed to the war effort and presumably to the morale of the community.

George Dodge was chairman of the committee that developed the Arlington Museum exhibit "Scouting in Arlington." He frequently researches and writes stories about Arlington's rich history.

Sources

Interviews with George C. Beatty, John W. Brentlinger, (both were members of the Arlington Boy Scout Emergency Service Corps 1941-1945), and Curtis U. MacDonald (an Arlington air raid warden 1940-1945).

Newspaper articles, documents and photographs from the collection of George C. Beatty.

Arlington Boy Scout District meeting minutes taken by George Fischer, Arlington Boy Scout Assistant District Commissioner, and covering the period 1941 to 1945, also from the collection of George C. Beatty.

Documents of David Lockling, Arlington Boy Scout District Commissioner.



Harrison S. Krider collection

Arlington Troop 125 backpacking in 1932.