



The National Society of  
**Scabbard and Blade**

**A Brief History and  
Pledge Manual**

*A Review of the Traditions  
of the Five Stars*

Published by the National Headquarters  
of Scabbard & Blade:

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*These five cadet officers at the University of Wisconsin hold the distinction of having founded Scabbard and Blade in the academic year 1904-05.*

# **Honoring outstanding midshipmen, cadets and others through membership in the Society of Scabbard and Blade**

The National Officers and Alumni of Scabbard and Blade wish to provide Professors of Military, Naval and Aerospace Science throughout the Nation the opportunity to recognize outstanding ROTC cadets and midshipmen through Active membership in the 90-plus-year-old Military Honor Society. Additionally, civilian university officials, faculty members and active or retired commissioned and noncommissioned officers may be granted Associate membership. Individuals also may be recognized for their achievement of distinction and their valuable service in promotion of national defense through Honorary membership.

## **Recognizing Individuals**

Professors of Military, Naval, or Aerospace Science, military Commanding Officers, or Scabbard and Blade alumni may nominate deserving individuals to active, associate or honorary membership as appropriate. When the nomination occurs in the academic setting, an officer of the institution should also sponsor the nominee. The Society Nomination for Membership offers provisions for both military and academic sponsors, but the academic sponsorship may be waived when an associate or honorary member is being nominated outside of the academic setting. Special cases should be referred to the National Headquarters.

### **Eligibility**

In general, those elected to membership must be of outstanding ethical and moral character. Active membership is

limited to the top 10 percent of the Cadet Corps; grade point averages are not recommended since different institutions may vary widely in terms of academic requirements. Cadets and midshipmen in the status of second semester MS1 and above may be nominated; qualities of exemplary future military officers is the guide. Outstanding officers of all services and components may be nominated for associate membership.

### **Nomination Process**

Sponsors should contact the National Headquarters to obtain nomination folios which will contain complete instructions, a nomination form, a Brief History of the Society, a jewelry and uniform item order form and related items. Nominees for Active membership must complete a brief membership test based on the Society's history and traditions. Nomination forms are submitted with appropriate fees which are refunded in full if the nomination is not accepted.

### **Initiation**

The Presentation Packet sent to new initiates features a handsome full color personalized membership certificate, an individually numbered membership medallion suitable for wear at formal military balls, the most recent national publication, society auto sticker, and letters of greeting from various officers of the Society. Additionally, uniform items such as membership and officer ribbons and medals, the Society citation cord, and various items of Society Jewelry may be ordered in advance. Arrangements are made to initiate all new members through the original ritual and ceremonies conducted by Scabbard and Blade alumni.

## **Scabbard and Blade Companies**

Over 230 Companies of the Society have been chartered in 21 Regiments during its 90-plus-year history, beginning

with A Company, 1st Regiment, at the University of Wisconsin in 1904. All active, associate and honorary members of the Society will be affiliated with a Scabbard and Blade company. All companies are associated with academic institutions; campuses on which active companies have not been chartered are provided provisional Scabbard and Blade companies aligned with numbered regiments 50 and above.

### **Establishing Chartered Companies**

Functioning chartered Scabbard and Blade companies allow cadets and midshipmen to improve their military skills through company leadership duties, extra training activities, company-sponsored talks by officers on active and reserve duty, terrain walks, field exercises, visits to military bases and organized service projects. While a suggested company program of work is provided by the National Headquarters, each campus designs its Scabbard and Blade company activities around its unique needs.

Generally, ten or more new members may apply for charter by developing company bylaws, establishing a program of professional development and service and petitioning the National Headquarters. Society alumni posts and district advisors work to support and assist chartered companies. Military and academic officers may request further information about chartering companies.

### **Tradition Represented in the Five Stars**

Society members enjoy life-long association with other recognized leaders in the Corps of Cadets and active and reserve units of all the Nation's military services. The traditions and principles revealed during the Society ritual through the Five Stars sustain and inspire Scabbard and Blade members throughout their lifetime.

## **The Founding of the Society**

Scabbard and blade is a national military honor society founded by five field officers at the University of Wisconsin. They organized in 1904-1905 what is now known as A Company, First Regiment. These five men were Charles A. Taylor, Victor R. Griggs, Albert W. Foster, Harold K. Weld, and Leo Marshall Cook. Founder Cook once related that he remembered well the founding of the society.

As I remember it, one day after regimental drill, Griggs, Foster, Taylor, Weld, and myself were in the gallery watching company drill. I was talking about the organization of a military society. It was only a few minutes before the five of us were over enthusiastic with regard to the idea of starting the Society.

From the wisdom of these five founders came the establishment of this lasting society which is recognized both locally and nationally as an organization of high prestige and ideals.

The growth of the society has been steady in both members and companies. Companies have been established in many of the nation's leading colleges and universities which have Reserve Officer Training Corps. In 1915 there were approximately 866 members; in 1921, 2,900 members; in 1930, 14,300 members; in 1940, 31,000 members; in 1950, 51,000 members; in 1960, 107,000 members; in 1980, 123,000; and in 1990 approximately 137,000 active and alumni members, as well as 8,925 honorary and associate members.

## **Purposes and Ideals**

The purposes and ideals of the Society are best stated in the Preamble to the Scabbard and Blade Constitution:

Believing that military service is an obligation of citizenship, and that the greater opportunities afforded college men and women for the study of military science place upon them certain responsibilities as citizens, we cadet officers in various colleges and universities conferring baccalaureate degrees, do form this society and adopt this constitution in order to unite in closer relationship the military departments of American universities and colleges; to preserve and develop the essential qualities of good and efficient officers; to prepare ourselves as educated men and women to take a more active part and to have greater influence in the military affairs of the communities in which we may reside; and above all to spread intelligent information concerning the military requirements of our country.

The Society has become totally inactive on two occasions. These were during World War I and World War II, when there were no courses of military training in universities and colleges because every able bodied man was in the service.

The first National Convention was held on May 11, 1906, at Madison, Wisconsin, and was attended by representatives of the four Companies which then comprised the Society. Conventions were held annually until April 1916, after which no convention was held until February 1920. This inactivity was due to World War I. Following the 1920 meeting, conventions were held every two years. This practice continued until 1940 when war interrupted the progress of the Society and all companies were directed by General Order to bring their affairs to a close. In November 1947, after seventy companies had been reactivated, a convention was called. As of 1994, there have been forty-one conventions.

The Silver Anniversary of the Society was part of the Seventeenth Convention in Minneapolis, Minnesota, in 1930.

For the first time since the earliest conventions, all of the founders were present. At that time there were 77 companies.

On June 3, 1932, a flagpole was dedicated at the University of Wisconsin which commemorated the founding of the Society. Located in front of the University's Historical Library, it is raised on a granite and concrete base that bears the emblem of the Society and names the five founders. This memorial was rededicated on November 17, 1955 during the observance of the Fiftieth (Golden) Anniversary. That was the Twenty-Seventh National Convention, and at that time there were 137 companies.

## **Scabbard and Blade Administration**

The supreme authority of Scabbard and Blade is vested in the companies assembled at the Biennial National Convention where each company is represented by one voting delegate. Companies may send alternate delegates who enjoy all of the privileges except the right to vote. Outstanding students from leading universities and colleges across the country join together in convention to exchange ideas and determine the policies of Scabbard and Blade.

Administration of the Society between conventions is conducted by the National Officers elected by the convention. These officers are the National Commander, Deputy National Commander and the National Executive Officer, each of whom must be an alumni member of Scabbard and Blade. The National Executive Officer directly supervises the activities of the National Headquarters, which was moved to Stillwater, Oklahoma, in January 1993.

The Society is divided into fourteen districts on a geographic basis. District Advisors are appointed by the National officers to provide a liaison between the individual companies and the National Headquarters. The District Advisors,

who must also be alumni members, provide guidance and instruction to the companies in their districts and make personal visits as required. It should be noted additionally that the National Officers and the District Advisors serve without remuneration.

The Scabbard and Blade Districts are:

District I — Connecticut, Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, Rhode Island, Vermont.

District II — Delaware, District of Columbia, Maryland, New Jersey, New York.

District III — Pennsylvania, West Virginia.

District IV — North Carolina, South Carolina, Virginia.

District V — Alabama, Florida, Georgia, Tennessee Puerto Rico.

District VI — Kentucky, Michigan, Ohio.

District VII — Illinois, Indiana, Wisconsin.

District VIII — Arkansas, Louisiana, Mississippi.

District IX — Iowa, Missouri.

District X — Minnesota, North Dakota, South Dakota.

District XI — Kansas, Nebraska, Oklahoma, Texas.

District XII — Colorado, New Mexico, Utah, Wyoming.

District XIII — Idaho, Montana, Oregon, Washington, Northern California.

District XIV — Arizona, Nevada, Southern California.

Members of the Advisory Council are appointed by the National Officers to offer advice, counsel and assistance. The Advisory Council consists of ten to twelve members, two of whom are past National Officers of Scabbard and Blade. Among the other members are military officers with expertise in ROTC affairs and distinguished educators. The Alumni Council is made up of outstanding Society alumni who address issues of special interest to Scabbard and Blade alumni.

The administration of each local chartered company is the responsibility of four active members who are usually

elected to office annually: the Captain, First Lieutenant, Second Lieutenant, and First Sergeant.

## **Membership**

Scabbard and Blade is the most distinguished and prestigious military honor and service society in the nation. Thus, only the finest individuals are eligible for membership, which is by election. There are four categories of membership: Active, Alumni, Associate, and Honorary.

Active members are chosen from outstanding Cadets and Midshipmen in the courses of the Army, Navy/Marine Corps, and Air Force ROTC programs. Alumni members are those who have graduated from the university or college. Associate membership generally includes civilian university officials, ROTC faculty members and other active commissioned and non-commissioned officers. Honorary membership is usually reserved for individuals who have achieved great distinction and who have effectively promoted national defense. All Scabbard and Blade membership is for Life.

Some of our outstanding honorary members have been Will Rogers, Charles A. Lindberg, General John J. Pershing, Bob Hope, President Franklin D. Roosevelt, General William C. Westmoreland, President Gerald R. Ford and General Colin L. Powell.

Many of our active members have expectedly gone on to achieve notable careers in both civilian and military pursuits. Some of the most renown active members include President Herbert E. Hoover, Secretary of State Dean Rusk, Astronaut John W. Young, Astronaut Eugene Cernan, General Lewis W. Walt, and Sam Walton, founder of Wal Mart.

Numerous presidents of our leading colleges and universities and professors of Military Science, Aerospace Studies, and Naval Science are associate members. A number of these important individuals have been directly responsible

for the establishment of Scabbard and Blade companies on their campuses.

## **Responsibilities After Graduation**

Graduation from college does not mark the end of the member's relationship with the Society. As an alumnus, the member may continue to serve by becoming a District Advisor or National Officer. If residing or stationed near a school that has a Scabbard and Blade company, the alumnus may contact the company and volunteer assistance to the membership. The member may also elect to enter the status of "Active Alumni" or "Life-Member Active Alumni" by paying annual or Life-Member dues. Beginning in 1993, a member data base was established in which each Scabbard and Blade initiate is entered, along with those past members the National Headquarters staff can locate. Thus, the National Headquarters attempts to maintain contact with all Society members to keep them informed of Scabbard and Blade activities and to continue to offer the benefits of membership to all alumni. Members are encourage to contact the National Headquarters at any time by calling 405-377-2237.

## **Chartered Company Activities**

Chartered Company activities are many and varied depending upon local conditions. They are always based on service to the university, community, or nation. Society members also endeavor to improve their military skills through extra training activities. Some of these Scabbard and Blade activities include conducting campus blood drives; preparing homecoming floats; sponsoring lectures for the student body on military affairs; orienting freshmen and sophomores on ROTC and its purposes; sponsoring ROTC drill meets; and conducting various community projects. During ROTC summer training, Scabbard and Blade members are encour-

aged to get together to become acquainted and exchange ideas in order to further the goals of the Society when they return to their respective schools.

## National Activities

The work of the National Society includes coordination of alumni programs, facilitating district and regional functions, and the administration and coordination of the work of the local chartered companies. Since Scabbard and Blade is the only national organization that represents all services — Army, Navy, Marine Corps, and Air Force, etc. — it is continually striving to increase the efficiency of the Reserve Officer Training Corps.

Many projects of assistance to ROTC have been undertaken. Prior to World War II, a survey was made of a large number of ROTC graduates to determine the factors that govern the study and advancement of reserve officers. The results of this survey were turned over to the War Department to assist them in the administration of the Organized Reserve Corps. At a later time, a study was made of ROTC summer camps in order to improve training efficiency.

Scabbard and Blade is naturally interested in any legislation that will affect the efficiency or strength of ROTC. Numerous appearances have been made before State and Congressional committees studying ROTC to present to them the needs of ROTC as well as the viewpoints of its members. In the interests of ROTC, Scabbard and Blade has assisted in the filing of a brief of *amicus curiae* when matters of vital concern to ROTC were submitted to the United States Supreme Court for decision.

Since 1957, Scabbard and Blade has sponsored a breakfast and/or discussion panel on ROTC at the Annual National Reserve Officers Association (ROA) Convention. This breakfast has served as a sounding board for the problems facing

ROTC and has provided for a gathering of all Scabbard and Blade members attending the ROA convention.

Scabbard and Blade also publishes its own national magazine called *The Scabbard and Blade Journal*. It is through this publication that news about activities at the national and local level is disseminated to the Scabbard and Blade members. Also providing news of the Society is the tabloid newspaper *Scabbard & Blade Today*. The *Journal* and the tabloid are published four times annually: Spring (March), Summer (June), Fall (September) and Winter (December).

## **Scabbard and Blade Endowment Resources Foundation (SABER)**

As directed by the Thirty-Third National Convention, the National Officers began to organize and plan for a Scabbard and Blade Foundation. A committee composed of National Officers and selected District Advisors prepared by-laws and incorporation papers. On 15 February 1969, the by-laws were approved and the name "The Scabbard and Blade Endowment Resources, Inc." (SABER) was officially adopted. On 1 August, 1969, the incorporation papers were officially filed in the office of the Secretary of the State of Ohio.

SABER is a non-profit organization which seeks gifts and endorsements for the purpose of supporting the principles of ROTC by establishing scholarships for outstanding cadets and midshipmen and providing other monetary services to active Scabbard and Blade companies and scholastic pursuit.

## **Insignia**

All members of the Society are entitled to wear the official insignia. Most notable among these is the Membership Medallion, suspended from a neck loop so as to be suitable

for presentation and wear at formal military balls. Each medallion is serially numbered and recorded in the national member data base. The reverse of the medallion features space on which a member typically engraves his or her name, year of initiation, and company and regiment or school affiliation. Among other items available are awards medals, decals, uniform and blazer patches, mugs, and distinctive jewelry items. While in military dress, the Scabbard and Blade member may be recognized by his or her membership ribbon bar and citation cord. The membership ribbon bar is divided in half. The top half is red and the bottom half blue. Along the dividing line are five silver stars representing the five original founders. The citation cord is interwoven with red and blue strands, red being predominant, and is worn on the left shoulder circling the arm. A distinctive ribbon for each chartered company officer also is available. The Scabbard and Blade members in military dress, should be the true picture of military excellence. A photograph of these insignia may be found on the back cover of this manual.

## Pledge Program

Pledge training is a subject of utmost importance to every chartered company and every effort should be made to use the pledge period as profitably as possible to broaden and increase the military efficiency of the member nominee. The pledge period must be productive and include informational instruction concerning the traditions and roles of all three branches of service. **All forms of hazing are strictly prohibited.** There are many other methods that can better be used to further the knowledge of the pledges.

The length of the pledge period varies widely among the companies, but it should be long enough to enable the new men and women to understand their obligations and responsibilities as officers, and also enable them to gain valu-

able information that may be of use to them in performing military tasks more professionally and efficiently. The pledge period should not continue over too long a period of time. The new men and women can render valuable service as active members. Pledges should learn the history, aims, and objectives of the Society. Memory work, such as General Orders, military biographies, and preparation of military papers, can be assigned. The <MI>Constitution<D>, section 114a, provides for a pledge test to be taken by each pledge prior to initiation. These tests are available through the National Executive Officer.

Various pledge activities are reported by the companies. Some companies require each pledge to make a pledge book, containing the names of all of the active members in the company. Each pledge must secure the signatures of all of these members before the formal initiation. The pledge book cover is illustrated with the emblem of the society and is uniform in appearance with those of the other pledges. Under such a program all pledges learn the positions and responsibilities of the company members and staff. Some companies require their pledges to fashion wooden sabers which are signed by each active member after the pledge correctly performs a military task or assignment. Close order drills, military problems, military law, military courtesies, and other means may be employed to increase the knowledge and efficiency of the pledge. Pledge Manuals are available, at cost, through the National Executive Officer.

# Current National Officers

## National Commander

Major Dana P. Thorpe

## Deputy National Commander

Liet. Col. Stephen E. Broughall, Jr.

## National Executive Officer

Maj. Gen. Douglas O. Dollar



To order additional copies of this publication contact:

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## Dedication



*Ed Glover is the Chair of the Scabbard and Blade National Alumni Advisory Council. He is a past National Commander and National Executive Officer. Ed served in World War II as an infantry platoon leader in the European Theater where he was wounded and became a prisoner of the German Army.*