

## Gettysburg Eagle Scout Earns All 129 Merit Badges



When Douglas M. Miller II first joined Troop 73 in Gettysburg at age 11, his Dad asked him what he wanted to accomplish in Scouting, quoting famous business management expert Dr. Steven Covey to “begin with the end in mind.”

Among the goals Miler set out to accomplish was to earn every merit badge offered by the Boy Scouts of America, and when he finished the Bugling merit badge in January 2011, he had wrapped up earning all 129 of the merit badges offered by the BSA during his tenure in Scouting.

“In the beginning, I did not realize how challenging it would be to achieve this goal,” Miller said. “When I started my quest to earn every merit badge, I thought this to be more of a personal goal. What I have learned was important than my original goal. I learned about the value of perseverance, determination,

overcoming obstacles and asking for guidance. Without the guidance and inspiration from many counselors who freely gave me their time and knowledge, success would have more difficult, if not impossible to achieve.”

Miller said he was inspired to achieve this accomplishment from his family and from an unlikely source, film producer Steven Spielberg., who also earned every merit badge. Three of Miller’s uncles and his father also earned the Eagle Scout award, and Miller wanted to be the youngest member of his family to complete his trail to Eagle, which he accomplished when he was 13 1/2 years old back in October 2006.

After earning his Eagle, Miller has gone on to earn a total of 15 Eagle Palms (five Bronze, five Gold and five Silver). He attended the 2005 and 2010 National Jamborees at Fort AP Hill, Virginia, as well as the 2007 World Jamboree in London, England. A Brotherhood member of the Order of the Arrow, Miller has also earned the World Conservation Award and has attended BSA summer camp at Hidden Valley, Camp Rodney and Camp Tuckahoe.

While the BSA doesn’t officially keep track of the number of Scouts that earn every available merit badge, it’s a highly unusual accomplishment. At MeritBadgeKnot.com, a website dedicated to recognizing Scouts who have earned every available merit badge as a youth, provides a self-described, “far-from-complete” listing of just 143 documented Eagle Scouts who have earned every merit badge.

Miller credits Scouting and his quest to earn every merit badge for taking him out of his “comfort zone.” He overcome his fear of heights and flew an open cockpit biplane in earning the Aviation merit badge. Other merit badge events that left lasting impressions was having having access to the nuclear reactor at the United States Naval Academy for Nuclear Science merit

badge, working with a skilled blacksmith for Metal Working merit badge and Scuba Diving with manatees and sharks.

Miller also said the process of earning Disability Awareness merit badge for having a significant impact on him regarding human sensitivity.

“Our troop camped with another troop comprised of special needs Scouts,” Miller said. “This was a life-changing event for me. Many things I took for granted such as getting dressed or eating without assistance changed during this camp out. I am forever grateful for this experience.”



Providing service to the community is another one of the goals Miller had established for himself when he first became a Boy Scout, and he has served as co-chair for his troop’s annual Spaghetti Dinner fundraiser. The troop has donated half of the proceeds from this event to other causes such as Tsunami Relief, the Eric McCullough Scholarship (in honor of a troop Eagle Scout killed in action during the war on terrorism), the Gettysburg Soup Kitchen, Habitat for Humanity, Children’s Advocacy Center and the Central Asia Institute.

One of Miller’s former Scoutmasters, Gettysburg-area attorney John Wolfe said “It is a rare individual who can set a goal at such a young age and carry through as well as Doug did. This is a testament to his focus, achievement, interests and character. I have been proud to call Doug a member of our Troop and join in the congratulations this effort warrants.”

Miller plans to pursue studies in either either medicine and astrophysics after graduating from Gettysburg Area High School, where his numerous academic accomplishments are just as impressive as his Scouting resume.

“Earning 129 merit badges has been a great journey,” Miller said. “I know that I have so many friends, educators, Scout leaders, counselors, pastors and family to thank. I learned that my journey was much more than achieving every merit badge. Scouting has taught me the value of perseverance, overcoming obstacles and service to the community.”

*Special thanks to photographer Byron L. Wilt for the photographs used with this story.*

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