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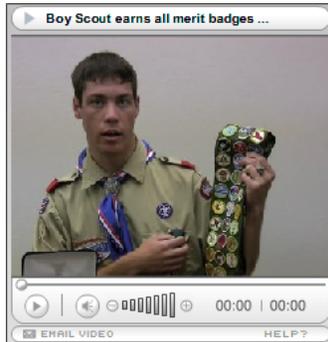
Logan Tipton achieved Eagle Scout honors at 15. Since then he's been earning his Precious Medals

By Sue Guinn Legg
Press Staff Writer
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Now 18, he has earned 122 merit badges.



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"He came up to me after the ceremony and said, 'So, what now? You're 15. What are you going to do next?'" Tipton recalled.

"I told him I'd get back to him on that. ... He had a good point, what am I going to do next? At the reception, I told him, 'I'm going to get every single merit badge.' At first, everyone sort of laughed but I got them all."

Just two days shy of his 18th birthday, Tipton completed the requirements for his 122nd merit badge. His list includes all 121 badges currently offered by the Scouts plus the discontinued "Atomic Energy" badge, which was replaced two years ago by the "Nuclear Science" badge.

While the Boy Scouts of America do not keep record of how many Scouts earn all its merit badges, the local Sequoyah Council office confirmed Tipton is one of a the rare few.

"I've been here 35 years and I know there have been others who've done it but not very many," said Kathy Broyles, administrative assistant at Sequoyah Council Service Center that serves the 16 counties of Northeast Tennessee and Southwest Virginia.

Nationally, only about 5 percent of Scouts achieve Eagle Scout rank. And of those, Broyles said, most earn only a few badges beyond the 21 specific badges required to be an Eagle Scout. Those who go on to claim all 121 badges come along very infrequently, she said. "It's not something you see every day."

For Tipton, the badges were an accomplishment nearly seven years in the making, a quest he began at age 11 and wrapped up in April.

The patches hand-stitched to his extended Boy Scouts sash represent his exploration, preparation and hands-on experience in "everything from swimming, life saving, fishing, and conservation (of) soil and water to rifle shooting and wilderness survival."

Alphabetically, their topics run from American business to woodwork. And those embroidered in silver designate Eagle Scout merits.

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He recalls the COPE (Challenging Outdoor Personal Experience) badge with its high rope course requirement as one of the most physically challenging badges he attained and also as one of his favorite Boy Scouts experiences.

The medical badge was his most difficult. And the dental badge is the one he will always point to as the badge that set the course for his future.

He remembers dentist Kevin Lewis as his merit badge counselor for the badge and the instructor of the dentistry class featured in the Merit Badge University event he attended East Tennessee State University.

"He sparked my interest in the business and, since I took that badge, I have shadowed other dentists and decided that's what I'm going to college for."

He plans to begin work on that goal this fall as an undergraduate at ETSU, continue with four years of dentistry school at a yet to be selected university and wrap up with three years of specialty training.

At this point, he's leaning toward pediatric dentistry but he's still undecided. What he is certain of is that his future will include more Scouting.

Now a youth leader and assistant troop leader for Troop 231 at the Boys & Girls Club of Johnson City/Washington County, Tipton said, "I want to spark other Scouts in ways that will influence them for life, the way I was influenced while I was earning the merit badges.

"Scouts got me involved in a lot of things I never thought I would be involved in. It's a way of branching out. ... It's influenced my whole life and it seems like everything I've done somehow relates back to Scouts."

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Tony Duncan/Johnson City Press

Eagle Scout Logan Tipton shows some of his 121 merit badges and his Eagle Scout medal. Logan is a youth leader and assistant troop leader of Troop 231 at the Boys and Girls Club of Johnson City/Washington County and has earned every merit badge currently offered.

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Medals

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