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FOCUS

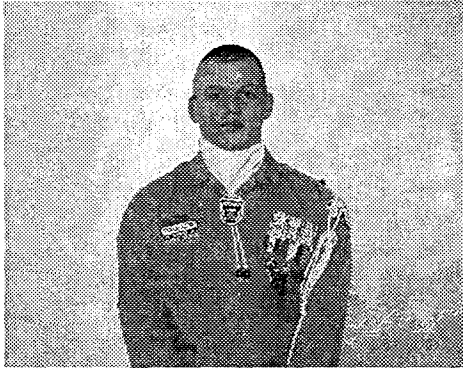
CHALLENGES

VOLUME 6 ISSUE 2



WINTER 2000

District Honors Two GMA Recipients



Seth Masterson of Wentworth, NH, was honored on Saturday November 13th, 1999 at a banquet held at Plymouth Assembly of God, Plymouth, NH. Over 100 area, church, local, state, and district dignitaries witnessed the awarding to Seth of

It was a historic evening for Outpost 43's, Grace Fellowship of Nashua as Scott Sigmon was awarded the Royal Rangers' 3786th Gold Medal of Achievement across our country. He is also the 17th GMA recipient in the Northern New England District, and the very first from Outpost 43.



the Royal Ranger Gold Medal of Achievement. This is the highest award given in Royal Rangers. Since 1962, over one million boys have been active in this ministry, however, only a select few have pursued the gold and have earned the right to wear the G.M.A. Seth is only the 18th Ranger in the Northern New England District of Maine, New Hampshire and Vermont and the 3,819th Ranger nationally to have achieved this honor.

Seth became not just a "Gold Medalist", but has gone above the basic requirements to not only receive his Gold Medal of Achievement but also to receive the Gold Buffalo award. Seth has above average abilities, and at age 14, he is the youngest in Outpost 40 to receive the prestigious G.M.A. In the last 6 years, Seth has distinguished himself by becoming the District Ranger of the Year for 3 years, Sectional Ranger of the Year for 3 years, and Outpost Ranger of the Year for 5 years. He received the Commanders Cup this year. He has been involved in several community service projects which have involved the distribution of U.S.D.A. food and helped by passing them out at the church food pantry.

The evening began with a welcome and introduction by Sr. Commander Don Filena. Pastor Tim Katon, of the Plymouth Assembly of God prayed, then a lasagna banquet followed. The ceremony was opened with Outpost 40 Color Guard posting colors. Sectional Cmdr. Jerry Love from Tilton led in the Pledge of Allegiance, Royal Ranger Pledge, and Pledge to the Christian Flag. Pastor Katon gave a short message and charge to Seth. Councilman Ray Burton presented Seth an official photographed copy of the state's constitution. State Representative Langer read a letter. Representative Bill Mosher presented a declaration from the House of Representatives. Sec. Cmdr. Love and District Training Coordinator Kevin McCullough read letters. Cmdr. Love read a letter from Congressman Charles Bass. Cmdr. Filena read a letter from Ken

The sanctuary was dimly lit and a crowd of family, friends and fellow commanders proudly looked on as this outposts first ever GMA escorted his parents to their seats. Following behind were a color guard, courtesy of Deputy District Commander Don Filena, and the district staff. The ceremony opened as Pastor Paul Berube opened with a word of prayer and pledges to our flags were said. Commander Lenny Pettersen, Scott's Trailblazer Commander, gave a few opening remarks and humorous anecdotes while Commander Keith Poirier, Scott's Challengers Commander read Scott's 500 word essay.

The "Charge to Scott" address was delivered by The District Training Coordinator, Kevin McCullough. He focused on character and perseverance, calling Scott to continue his growth in all areas of his life.

District Commander, Mark A. Blanchette, presided over the ceremony wherein Scott was presented with a book containing congratulatory remarks from President Clinton, Governor Shaheen, National Royal Ranger Commander Richard Marriot, and oth-

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Here's what's being delivered!

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A Note From the D.C.

Mark A. Blanchette - District Commander

Warm holiday greetings to you, my fellow Rangers. This is the final publication of the Pony Express for this millennium and as we close the final chapter in 1999 we can look back and see the marvelous things that God has done. Now we move into a new beginning, with new challenges and new opportunities to serve the Master Ranger.

In this publication we have the calendar of events for next year, an article written by Richard Mariott that includes his vision of Royal Rangers and articles of past events. Let me encourage you to read these articles.

I am excited to announce that we will be hosting our Pow Wow in Winthrop Maine at Camp Mechawanna. This years Pow Wow will be in a different setting as we will have the opportunity to sleep in bunk houses and have our meals prepared for us. I'm looking at the total cost for Pow Wow to be around \$35. We will be talking more about Pow Wow at the April 8th District Wide Commanders meeting which will also be held at the same place. You will have an opportunity to scope out the place and see where we will be next year.

I am currently working on putting together a CD that will contain many files that we commonly use. For those of you that purchased the Commander's Notebook, the CD will contain all of that information and more. If there is something that you would like to have included on the CD please send a softcopy to me so that it can be burned into the CD. The CD ROM will be made available to you at the district wide commanders meeting.

I would like to thank each of you for your support and prayers for my family and I this past year. It has been a privilege to serve each of you in the capacity of district commander. I pray that you all have a very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year! Until then, peace be your journey.

Mark A. Blanchette
District Commander

The Pony Express is a quarterly publication of the Northern New England District Royal Rangers, Mark Blanchette - District Commander. The Pony Express is an excellent way to promote what is happening in your outpost, section and district. We welcome you to submit articles, photos, etc. Please send your articles to the address found on the back page. Articles may also be send to us via the internet at gbesaw@ready-page.com

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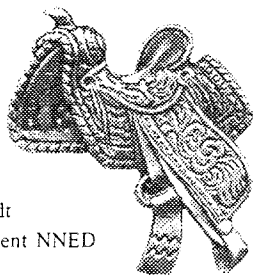
Choice Christian Greeting to all of my brothers & sisters, It has been awhile since I have sent any news out and for that I ask your forgiveness. There is great news to pass on to you at this time. First of all I want to welcome seven new brothers into the King's Pine Chapter of the Frontiersman Camping Fellowship. Some have already gotten their names and I will include them also. They are (Young Bucks first) Brandon Kahl, Andrew Dion, Justin "First Night" Barney, David Blanchette, Jonathan "Laughing Loon" Forsythe, Matthew Spaulding, and the Old Timer is Isaac Ake. They have all earned the right to be a King's Pine Brother by passing all of the testing and the hard work they did. Congrats to all of you. I know you were called out and welcomed into F.C.F. at the Pow-wow and I want to spread the good news.

Speaking of the Pow-wow, this year the guest speaker was Fred Deavers, the National F.C.F. President, and we were happy to have fellowship with him. He noticed that the King's Pine chapter was very active and families were included. Breaking bread with brother Hawkeye was truly a close time of fellowship. The Lord used our brother to bring His words so that many hearts were opened for Him. Praise God for His mighty work at pow-wow this year. When you see as many boys and men answer the Lord's call, you really know why He has placed you in this ministry. I could go on about pow-wow but I have more news to pass on so I'll let someone else tell you about Pow-wow. I do want to thank all of the brothers & sisters for the hard work making the King's Pine village great this year. It is hard to keep the King's Pine village a good working village, but you all did a great job, welcoming our guest and keeping the village open. You sure do make my job easier.

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FROM WHERE I SIT...

Rev. Dennis Marquardt
Assistant Superintendent NNED



Faith's Power In A Young Man

By Dennis Marquardt

The great story of David against Goliath demonstrates the great power of faith at work in a young man. The story is a very familiar one, the Philistines had kept Israel in great fear for some time, and had challenged Israel to a "one on one" fight with their champion named Goliath. In those days nations sometimes decided the "fate of the gods" by having a single warrior representing each nation fight it out on the battlefield and the winner took all—literally! Whoever won the battle of champions demonstrated that their god was the most powerful and therefore they had the right to rule over the other weaker nation with the weaker god. This is what makes the story of David and Goliath so tragic—and so triumphant!

It was tragic in the sense that Israel had lost faith in the God of their fathers, the God who had brought their ancestors out of Egypt. God had made a mockery of the gods of Egypt. The Egyptians had worshipped gods like Seth, the earth god, each of the 10 plagues was a direct attack at one of the gods of Egypt showing it helpless in the battle against the true God of Israel. The earth god Seth was infected with lice as one of the plagues, the Egyptian goddess of fertility Heka (a frog goddess) the Lord multiplied so much that they were found everywhere in Egypt and then they all died! The hail and fire God sent was an affront to the Egyptian gods of fire and ice. How tragic that many years later King Saul and Israel forgot the power of God when they were facing Goliath and the Philistines!

Like so many times in history, revival comes from the young people! Along comes young David... too young to be in the army, too young to be anything more than a simple shepherd boy. BUT, not too young to be used by God! This is the story of Royal Rangers, boys who are never too young to be used by God to do great things! How odd

that when David arrives at the camp of Israel's army to bring his brothers their box lunches and to check out how the fighting is going he finds all his brothers and the rest of the army simply staring each day at the valley where this monster of a man named Goliath came each day to taunt Israel. Israel was frozen in fear! Each day Goliath made his challenge and each day no one stepped forward from Israel. The ridicule was tremendous!

Israel saw an giant so big they couldn't win! David saw a giant so big he couldn't miss! What a difference in viewpoints. What fear did to Israel in letting them see something so big they didn't think they could beat him David saw as simply a huge target that he couldn't miss with God's help! David's statement should be what every Assembly of God Royal Ranger is taught in every one of our Churches, "*Who is this uncircumcised Philistine that he should defy the armies of the living God?*" (1 Sam. 17:26b) Faith in God made the difference. Israel had lost her faith in God and forgot her history—and in the process forgot the promises of God. A young boy reminds them of the real challenge here, Goliath is not challenging them, he is challenging the "armies OF THE LIVING GOD!" You know the rest of the story, David with 5 smooth stones kills Goliath with the first one! This creates a rally of Israel's energy and confidence and they chase all the Philistines down until complete victory is theirs.

There is one part of the story left undone however, what about the other 4 stones that David had picked up? Was David afraid of missing Goliath a few times—NOPE! Goliath had 4 other giant brothers according to the Bible, all warriors like he was. (see 2 Sam. 21:16-22). I have little doubt that David may have planned on killing all 5 of them at once, but after Goliath fell it says that all the Philistines took off running! Later David as a man along with some others finally track down the other 4 brothers and rid Israel of this menace and nuisance. This was a boy's faith carried into adulthood. What David began as a young man he completes as an adult.

This is the goal of Royal Rangers, teach our boys faith and have them lead the way for the next generation. Somewhere in a ranger

Masterson

Bustard, Northern N.E. Sectional Cmdr, and also gave an emotional review of his Royal Ranger experiences with Seth and presented him a book of letters. No. New England District Commander Mark Blanchette read a letter from Governor Jeanne Shaheen. Seth escorted his mother, Nancy, to the platform and she pinned the G.M.A. and Gold Buffalo on Seth's uniform. He escorted his Dad, Clyde "Bud" to the platform and pinned a yellow corsage on Nancy, and a white carnation on his dad. Cmdr. Filena, as Deputy Dist. Cmdr., presented Seth his Junior Commander Bars. District Commander Blanchette bestowed the Commission of Junior Commander. Cmdr. Filena recognized Rev. Ernie Wilkins, Sr., now pastoring in Bethlehem, who began the Royal Ranger group at Plymouth Assembly 6 years ago, and served as the first R.R. Cmdr., along with Cmdr. Bud Masterson. Rev. Wilkin's wife, Tammy, was also recognized as having been Seth's Buckaroo Cmdr. Letters of congratulations were read by District Staff. Gifts and a plaque were presented by Pastor Katon from the church and youth group. District Ranger Scout John McCullough, from outpost 36 in Tilton presented a gift. Cmdr. Filena presented gifts from Steven Corum, and National F.C.F. President Fred Dever from Oklahoma, who gave a portrait of a frontiersmen. Seth's parents and sister Arielle presented him with gifts plus a special R.R. Sweatshirt with the G.M.A. emblem. He also received a Challenger jacket from the Filena family, and a plaque from the Royal Ranger Headquarters in Springfield, MO. Seth sang "History Maker" backed by the youth group. He spoke briefly thanking his parents, the Rangers and others for their support and encouragement he has received. Pastor Katon closed with a special prayer for Seth.

The evening ended with a beautiful decorated large cake with the Royal ranger emblem. Seth's future aspirations are to continue with the Rangers until he graduates and then attend the United States Naval Academy.

group right now sits a David! When we see giant problems so big we can't win he may be seeing a giant problem so big he can't miss showing God's power! Thank God for a young man's faith!

The King's Pine Trace was held in Sept. and went very smooth. There could have been more brothers there; so make sure you get next years schedule wrote down somewhere. I do have to admit that it was the first time I have seen skeet shooting with a flintlock. Talk about following the target. Now we didn't have any skeet for dinner (bad shots), but we did have some great food and fellowship. You know when you miss an event, you not only miss a blessing but you rob your brothers of a blessing also; fellowship with you. You don't have to do the events, just come and fellowship, Praise the Lord, be blessed and enjoy the food.

This year we also went to the Territorial Rendezvous down in PA. It was a drive but was worth it, we had a great time and great fellowship. I really do believe the Lord does bless us in many ways at the events. Fellowship is one way that I am blessed very much (thanks Krazze Dog). The different brothers you meet are from all along the east coast (10 chapters) and everyone is a blessing. Happy Guy really did a great job this year. The District Scout, (Tiny Bear), and Assist. Scout, (Raging Bull), went on the campaign trail this year running for Territorial Scout. I do believe we would have the Territorial Scout in our chapter this year if there were more of our brothers there. As it was, they got quite a few of the votes. I'm proud of both of them, thanks for upholding the standards of the King's Pine Chapter. We had some brothers who went for the first time and I know they are making plans for the next one already. I know I am. This year is the National F.C.F. Rendezvous down on Springfield MO. There will be brothers from all over the world there (almost making it an international rendezvous). Lets make plans to go this year. F.C.F brothers only can attend this and it will be great. Praising the Lord with about 5000 or more brothers, WOW what a blessing.

Another event we held this year was a Thanksgiving Feast and just to give you and idea of what we had to eat. We had a turkey (cooked in a trash can), a spiral cut honey glazed ham, two beef roast, veggies, cookies, pies (apple, blueberry, pumpkin) and a sweet potato pie. We sure had the feast fit for a King and He was there with us. I am sorry that I didn't get the word out to every-

one and that we changed the date at the last minute. The reason we changed the date is one of our King's Pine brothers earned the Gold Medal of Achievement and was honored that evening. Going to honor Seth "No Clue" Masterson took priority. This is a ministry for the boys and the Lord has blessed us for keeping it that way.

I would like to take the time to congratulate some of our King's Pine brothers for some accomplishments they have achieved. Dave "Raging Bull" Dube, Jonathan "Tiny Bear" McCullough for earning the Bourgeois pin in the Trappers Brigade. Ed "White Buffalo" Christiansen, Kevin "Krazze Dog" McCullough, for earning the Free Trapper pin of the Trappers Brigade. For those who don't know what the Trappers Brigade is, it is what the spirit of F.C.F. is about. You earn points for helping somebody out (doing God's work.) outside of your ministry. A Christian service will earn that point (etc. food drives, building someone's house, helping a person in need, watching a child for the parent, filling a place in church (nursery, cleaning the church, usher etc.). The Bourgeois pin takes 60 service points; the Free Trapper takes 120 service points and each numeral another 30 service points. I know White Buffalo and Krazze Dog has at least one numeral on the Free Trapper pin. Thanks to all of you for living the spirit of F.C.F. "As you do unto the least of these, so you do to me." By the way, you earn 1 service point for one hours work or ½ point for one hour work in some cases, so you can see you can't get the award by just sitting in church. There is still one more congratulations due. Jonathan "Tiny Bear" McCullough has earned his Buckskin pin along with the Gold Medal of Achievement. I will be holding a Buckskin ceremony for him and will officially present him with the pin. At this time I will also present (officially) him with the District Scout Award (first in King's Pine chapter). With Brothers like this, it is no wonder the King's Pine chapter is the best. You all really help make my position to be one of the easiest in the district (FCF president). Thanks to all of my King's Pine brothers, you have made our chapter the best and show the others chapters what the Frontiersman Camping Fellowship is all about. Keep up the hard work and keep our standards high for His standard is high. Here are some of the dates for next year:

2000

March 4th -	King's Pine Business Meeting	C.W.C. - Barrington, NH
May -	FCF Clinic	C.W.C. - Barrington, NH
May 26th - 29th	King's Pine Family Rendezvous	
June 9th - 10th	FCF Phase I Testing	
July 7th - 8th	King's Pine Phase II Testing	
July 17th - 21st	National FCF Rendezvous	Springfield, MO
Aug 25th - 25th	District Pow Wow	
Sept 8th - 10th	Frontier Days (Franklin) New - come be a witness for Jesus	
Sept 22nd - 23rd	King's Pine Fall Trace	
Oct 12th - 15th	King's Pine Frontier Trek (2nd to be held in King's Pine Chapter)	
Nov 10th - 12th	King's Pine Thanksgiving Fellowship and Feast	

I know we have a lot of events this year and this is a sign of growing and being active. I will also be scheduling a Black Powder course this year ASAP for all brothers. Try to make the events you can and enjoy the fellowship of your brothers (& sisters). The King's Pine

chapter is a family with in the family of the Lord. Thanks to each and every one of you for being there, your support has been outstanding and I praise the Lord for each of you. May God keep you and yours in His arms as you work for Him. It is nice to feel His arms hugging you, holding you, and I feel this every time we meet in His name. God Bless from me and mine.

Wooly Bear



FOCUS ON THE STAFF



Meet Pete Ebner

On January 21, 1995 my wife and I gave our hearts to the Lord after much prayer and witnessing by my mother and father-in-law. They both talked a lot about Royal Rangers and I was curious about how they were run. I had helped out a friend of mine with some Pinewood Derby workshops that he had set up at the church. I had a great time there and asked him for some more information about Royal Rangers. He told me to come to the Pinewood Derby and meet Commander Tom. I didn't get to meet him there but did finally meet him at a men's barbecue. My friend brought me up to Commander Tom and said "This is Peter Ebner and he is interested in Royal Rangers". Then my friend walked off and left me there. Tom immediately gave me a bunch of High Adventure magazines and told me to come back Wednesday for a meeting. I was captured and I couldn't escape.



In August 1995 I attended my first Pow-Wow as a helper and was so impressed by the discipline and the love for the boys. My heart also was tugged at by the FCF members and their giving attitude. I immediately started in Pioneers as a Lieutenant Commander and assumed command shortly thereafter. I began LTC classes in Waterville and received my LMA. In a period of 1 ½ years I attended NTC, WNTC, NTT, and NCE with a sense of urgency to complete as much training as possible while these events were so close to home. These camps definitely gave me a much bigger view of what Royal Rangers encompasses and the type of wonderful men that are all over this country with the same vision as me.

I became a member of FCF in September 1997 and was elected to the position of Scribe where I still hold that position. In September of 1998 I was appointed to be an Area Commander for the North Central Section which is experiencing some re-birth. I have recently moved over to Buckaroos and am enjoying a different age level. I am currently employed by Bath Iron Works as a ventilation mechanic and have been there for almost 10 years. On April 4, 1999 I celebrated 12 years of marriage with my beautiful wife Dorene. She has always been there for me, but has had to pull back on the reins sometimes to help me to keep my priorities straight. She has definitely sacrificed for our ministry.

My vision is to be a better commander and husband through my ministry in Royal Rangers. Reaching, Teaching, and Keeping boys for Christ can definitely make any man grow into a better person, husband, and father. My prayer is that every commander will put his very best effort in Royal Rangers for these boys because they only grow up once and it's up to us to show them the right path.

In faithful service to the Master Ranger,
Peter Ebner
North Central Section Area Commander

Sigmon

ers distinguished leaders of our government. Other presentations included a Swiss army knife, and some stone-tool quality Arkansas novaculite for flint-knapping to aid Scott in developing a frontier skill as he sets his sights on joining the Frontiersman Camping Fellowship.

Scott received his GMA medal from his mother, while his father, assisted by Senior Commander Ed Christiansen pinned on his Junior Commander bars.

Following the ceremony refreshments were served along with a congratulatory cake in another room where there was much Christian fellowship and munching on delicious sandwiches and finger foods.

The most memorable moment for me was during this time of fellowship. Several younger Rangers came up to me and expressed their own commitment to complete the Gold Medal of Achievement. Not only has Scott aspired to excellence, he has inspired others to do the same.

Ed Christiansen
Sr. Commander
Outpost 43

April is Charter Month

Keeping Your Focus

Weekly Ranger meetings can be a lot of fun, they can also be a horrific compilation of mistakes, conflicting schedules, and unlikely accidents. I'll never forget some of the experiences I've had. What seems like a very long time ago, but was in reality only a few years, I was one of five Straight Arrow Commanders. Due to some extremely serious family situations, they were all out on the same night. For various other reasons several other commanders were out that night as well, so we had absolutely no backups available. 12 Straight Arrows, 1 Commander, "Oh great," I thought. I managed to keep things flowing smoothly until 5 minutes before the end of the meeting. The Straight Arrows were having snack and generally behaving well when one of them came up to me.

"Commander, I have to go to the bathroom," he said.

I couldn't leave the others to escort him so I thought carefully about the possibilities and asked, "It's only a few minutes until the service upstairs is done and your parents come down for you. Can you hold it until then?"

"Yup," he stated confidently and he turned back to his snack.

He lied. OK, he didn't actually lie because Straight Arrows only understand two times: "now" and "forever." I was feeling anger, shame and several other emotions. I apologized profusely to him and his parents (to top it off his Dad is one of the church Elders) and sent him a card in the mail that expressed my regret. He was so happy just to get a piece of mail that all else was forgotten. The situation wasn't my fault and I had done the best I could, but it really made me want to quit.

There are countless incidents that can make you want to throw it all away, and some even involve the very boys we seek to reach. There is an even greater number of daily situations that affect our mood, determination, and effectiveness. The world will grind us down, grind us up, and leave us

with very little energy left to help reach the next generation of Christians. This is by default, without much direct intervention from our spiritual enemy. What can we do?

The Apostle Paul says the following

(Col 3:2 NIV) *Set your minds on things above, not on earthly things.*

(1 Cor 9:24-25 NIV) *Do you not know that in a race all the runners run, but only one gets the prize? Run in such a way as to get the prize. {25} Everyone who competes in the games goes into strict training. They do it to get a crown that will not last; but we do it to get a crown that will last forever.*

(2 Tim 4:7-8 NIV) *I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. {8} Now there is in store for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will award to me on that day—and not only to me, but also to all who have longed for his appearing.*

How often we forget the focus of our ministry. Its not Ranger meetings, its not campouts, knots, cut & chop cards, or even Councils of Achievement. Its not the District Pow Wow, Sectional Round Tables or any of the advanced awards; its not even joining FCF or serving on staff somewhere. Our focus must be on Jesus Christ and Him alone. If we miss this single truth, we have missed everything.

As I strive to be a good Royal Ranger commander, I find I'm successful only if my relationship with Christ is healthy. Whenever I try to do it in my own strength, it takes all my strength. To really fulfill the ministry I find I must take time each day for devotions and sometimes take a day now and then for prayer and fasting before Him. It is out of such devotion that the Azusa Street revival exploded. If we wish the holy fire of God to fall, we must likewise sanctify ourselves, and be doted to Him and Him alone.

(Mat 6:20-24 NIV) *But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where moth and rust do not destroy, and where thieves do not break in and steal. {21} For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also. {22} "The eye is the lamp of the body. If your eyes are good, your whole body will*

be full of light. {23} But if your eyes are—bad, your whole body will be full of darkness. If then the light within you is darkness, how great is that darkness! {24} "No one can serve two masters. Either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve both God and Money.

Although primarily dealing with money, this verse applies equally well to other things in life: you cannot serve God and fashion, God and pride, God and food, God and anything else. It is good to remember these words:

(Ex 20:1-3 NIV) *And God spoke all these words: {2} "I am the LORD your God, who brought you out of Egypt, out of the land of slavery. {3} "You shall have no other gods before me.*

When we live this way, our lives will become shining examples and our service to God in Royal Rangers, and in anything else He asks of us, will become a delight and not a burden. As you focus on God and Who He is and set your path aright before Him, the joy of the Lord will become your strength and somehow the trials, hardships, embarrassments, and problems we encounter become less significant and do not have as much power over our emotions and thoughts because we trust in Him and His care for us.

We have the boys for only a few hours a week and sometimes on weekends. During these times we have an incredible opportunity to introduce them to Jesus, the only One who can give them eternal life. We are their examples when they want to know what a Christian is like. Our devotion to Jesus Christ will be our only lasting legacy because the boys will surely imitate what they see in us. Do your best with the meetings, outings, and advancements, but always keep your focus on the Lord Himself. There is no other way. - Ed Christiansen is senior commander of Outpost 43 and a man who has never met a desert he didn't like!

**Check out the 2000
calendar at
www.rangers-nned.org**

Richard Mariott Shares Goals for Royal Rangers

Changes big and small, but all exciting, are in store for Royal Rangers, the national boys program of the Assemblies of God. Perhaps the newest change is the appointment of National Commander Richard Mariott. Mariott left his position as district commander of the Northern California/Nevada District to fill the position upon the retirement of Ken Hunt, previous national commander. Mariott will pursue 100 percent participation in the Royal Rangers program across the Assemblies of God. Currently, about 55 percent of churches participate in Royal Rangers. Looking at the churches not yet reached, Mariott and Royal Rangers leaders discovered a great need among churches with congregations under 200. "We had too many training requirements for leaders, and a smaller church had very limited resources as far as leaders," Mariott says. Because the Royal Rangers program required a church to have 8 or 9 leaders, many of the smaller churches felt discouraged to be active in the program. Leaders in the older program were required to go through such an extensive amount of training that many dropped out within the first year. Mariott says this is where key changes begin. New books will help to consolidate training information in one area and are designed especially to be "commander-friendly." There will also be changes in the Royal Rangers advancement system. The present system, a linear advancement system, is designed to begin and end just as a normal school year. Though there are many benefits to this system, Mariott says a potential circular system would have "an 8-10 week cycle, and you would get an advancement for completing that cycle. The advancement system would not be based on anything but completing a quarter." This would mean that visitors would have more opportunities for advancement. (Missionettes has already begun this type of system with 1-month cycles and finds it to work well.) Royal Rangers has always had the vision to reach boys for Christ. "Through the years," Mariott says, "we've done this primarily through the camping program. We're going to be looking at all possible other areas, possibly in skills, crafts, and trades, to see how we can integrate all of this into different



ways of reaching boys." Boys can also find ministry opportunities in Royal Rangers. The Trappers Brigade allows them to earn points by going out and working on home missions churches and helping in their own church through ushering, youth activities, and other events. Royal Rangers has recently linked with Light for the Lost, giving Rangers the chance to serve as LFTL Jr. Councilmen. Royal Rangers focus is also on Bible-study and memorization of Scripture throughout the programs. As the Royal Rangers program strives to train boys mentally, physically, and spiritually, it is Mariott's hope that the program will grow in size and influence. Says Mariott, "Royal Rangers best days are ahead of us. Get ready for some exciting times! There's going to be things that boys will want to be involved in as we're getting ready to go into the new millennium with the power of Jesus."

Direct from Richard Mariott...

Royal Rangers is on the threshold of our greatest opportunity. This grand occasion is this: an opportunity to expand our horizons to reach into areas such as camping and non-camping activities, extreme outdoor sports activities, while teaming up with other ministries to offer specialized missions and ministry opportunities. Opportunities also present some challenges - the challenge of working out details, revising curricula and advancements structure, and optimizing

promotions are just a few. But if you are like myself, I thrive on challenges. Challenges cause us to take the ordinary and with God's help to "do the extraordinary." I want to share with you some thoughts from myself and comments from the National Royal Rangers Executive Committee. Keep in mind that some of what I am sharing is still in "clay" and may be molded differently as we get closer to National Council in March, where I can share the presentation with you.

Ranger Kids

Combining the programs of Straight Arrows and Buckaroos into one nonthematic arena, keeping in mind that Straight Arrows adopts the "Indian" theme and Buckaroos uses the "Cowboy" theme. With the name

"Ranger Kids", we would continue to have two different 2-year programs while being enabled to accomplish several objectives. Here are some examples:

1. Have a name that is non-thematic in context.
2. Have additional topics within "Ranger Kids" that are not related to the Indian and cowboy themes.
3. Retain the Indian and cowboy themes ...but provide additional themes.

Royal Rangers

Continued as our camping-based program. In Royal Rangers, we would combine the Pioneer, Trailblazer, and Trail Rangers advancements into one easy-to-understand approach, with a focus on achieving the Gold Medal of Achievement. With camping more popular than ever, this is no time to get out of camping activities.

Discovery Rangers

A side-by-side or stand-alone non-camping-base program. The Discovery Rangers program would apply an advancement system similar to Royal Rangers, but giving optional noncamping activities and advancements, making this program an instant success. Here again, the advancement system will be one easy to understand and focus on, enabling boys to accomplish the Gold Hawk Award, which will be the Gold Medal equivalent for the Discovery Rangers.

JLTC "99"

Awesome!! That was JLTC "99"!! 38 campers came out for the 3 days of team building and fun.

The camp started out with a preview bonus evening Thursday night. God decided that we needed to prepare the soil for the weekend, so he did. It rained in the typical Ranger way, fully equipped with a huge light show and claps of heavenly proportions. It was a true Ranger event!!! Even so, the camp opened to dry skies and stayed the same all through the weekend.

5 patrols were formed and staffed by a total of 22 men and women who turned out to help and lead. A spirit of unity was birthed immediately and stayed for the entire camp. The council fire on Friday night was a time of release and outpouring, one young man was calling out to our Lord and speaking out boldly in tongues for over an hour, while many were sobbing and pouring out their hearts, ministering to each other. It was a special time around the fire that night because the Holy Spirit was there. On Saturday night was a time of testimonies. Teens and leaders shared what was on their hearts and we sang songs of praises and joy while standing in His presence.

Each patrol learned how to do many things as a team, such as, relying on the whole team to do something as simple as stand up! They also learned how to communicate as a leader, by taking turns being the leader or boss as the lessons were un-

folded. We all learned that it is better to command respect from our thoughtfulness than to demand it with our mouths.

The camping skills and witnessing classes were held in a round robin format with excitement flowing out of our leadership staff. The leaders were an inspiration to watch as they passionately poured out their knowledge and experiences to the next generation. I am truly blessed to be surrounded with such capable men and women that are so willing to give of their time and resources to help us prepare our young people for the future.

The food was awesome as well. It must have been because we "all" ate with the patrols as their guests. The staff was full of volunteers after the first day to be the guests at the Moose patrols camp. It was no wonder, because it was almost like mom's home cooking. Yes, the moose patrol was a group of young ladies desiring to learn junior leadership skills, and they were outstanding! The boys of the wolf, bobcat, skunk, and bear patrols were also outstanding. One patrol was so thoughtful to keep some extra hamburgs in their tent for the camp commander and the patrol commander to have as a surprise on Friday night. It is still a topic of discussion to this day.

It was three long years since the last JLTC and the boys can't wait till 2000 for PLTC, JLTC, and AJTC all in the same camp!!! We can't wait as leaders either, to have the opportunity to share and grow in God's grace.

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