



FIRECRAFTERS



- **What Is Firecrafters?**

Firecrafters is a Boy Scout honor camper association similar to the Order of the Arrow. My best information that the only surviving part of the organization is in Crossroads of America Council, Indianapolis, Indiana. This short synopsis of the Firecrafter Organization is dedicated to my late uncle, Henry Marsh, who became an Eagle Scout at Camp Belzer in 1920 and the Firecrafter's first Minisino in 1921. I too am a Firecrafter (1972), though it has been many years since I was last active with them. And yes I am a member of the Order of the Arrow - Vigil 1971. My apologies in advance for any recent changes that I am not aware of having happened.

- **Short History:**

Firecrafters was conceived by Chief Belzer of the then Central Indiana Council in 1920 as an association of honor Scout campers to promote the best values in Scouting among youth. This was in the days before the Order of the Arrow was adopted by the National Office of the Boy Scouts of America as the primary honor camper association.

In the 1920s and 1930s the Firecrafter organization took hold in many Midwestern Councils and was particularly strong in Indiana and Illinois.

Over the years Firecrafters lost ground to the Order of the Arrow and by the late 1960s was only active in four councils. In the early 1970s these Councils introduced the Order of the Arrow and membership gradually declined. As of this writing I am only aware of one Council that continues to have a Firecrafter organization - Crossroads of America Council.

Each Council Firecrafter Organization was composed of Embers (similar to Order of the Arrow Chapters) in each District. Each Ember had a distinctive flap patch (similar to Order of the Arrow flap patches). For Firecrafter service and events members wore an olive drab athletic shirt adorned with a backpatch sized circular badge of Firecrafter rank over a white T-shirt with uniform shorts or trousers. For normal uniform wear a three inch version of the Firecrafter Badge of rank was worn suspended from the right pocket button on a leather backing or sewn in the place of a temporary patch. The round patch has a Red "C" for camping. The fire has three points for the three points of the Scout Oath. Members frequently include "XXX" above their names in the same manner as Order of the Arrow members use "WWW".

- **Purpose:**

In direct pursuit of the principles and ideals of Scouting for boys the Firecrafter Organization was created for and dedicated to service to all phases of the movement.

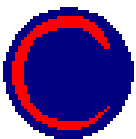
The Firecrafter Organization and each individual Firecrafter shall be directed toward the observance of the following creed:

- That unselfish friendship to others at all times makes a better Scout.
- That high trusts and responsibilities of leadership cannot be neglected or forgotten.
- That sincere lifelong service to Scouting will aid young men in the building of better character and citizenship.

- **Method:**

The Firecrafter program was designed to help Scoutmasters in their responsibility for citizenship and leadership by promoting advancement, camping, leadership training, service, and character development. As part of promoting camping all ranks must be earned during a long term camp (not a campout or camporee). The first two ranks are directly administered by the Scoutmaster. The third rank is administered by Firecrafters in established council camps. The final rank (similar honor to Vigil Honor) is administered by Minisinos in those camps. The first three ranks are earned by completing a succession of requirements that in part reinforce the first three ranks of Scouting and in part challenge the Scout to go a bit further. The rank of Firecrafter is only conferred following a weekend Grand Ritual similar to the Order of the Arrow Ordeal. The Minisino rank is conferred for extraordinary service and may not be earned.

- **Ranks & Requirements**



- **Camper (Based on 1971 Requirements - Abbreviated Version)** These requirements must be completed in five and one half days. If not, the must be started anew.
 - Observe the rules of your camp and show respect and courtesy to your fellow campers and members of your camp staff.

- Pass a standard personal and tent inspection each day of camp.
- Repeat the Scout Oath, Scout Law and Scout Slogan
- Describe the Scout Badge and tell its meaning.
- Tell how Scouting began and how it came to America.
- Tell how a compass works, give 8 principle points and their degree readings. Use the compass to orient a map, then walk a compass course using the map taking at least three degree readings.
- Take an orientation hike and demonstrate proper hiking methods and safety.
- Whip the end of a rope.
- Correctly sharpen a knife and axe and give rules for their safe use.
- Do one hour of service for your camp.



- **Woodsman (Based on 1971 Requirements - Abbreviated Version)** These requirements must be completed in five and one half days. If not, the must be started anew.
 - Observe the rules of your camp and show respect and courtesy to your fellow campers and members of your camp staff.
 - Pass a standard personal and tent inspection each day while in camp.
 - Demonstrate that you are a first class swimmer.
 - Make useful pieces of camp equipment using square, diagonal and sheer lashings.
 - Point out in the sky the North Star and at least 5 constellations.
 - Observe and identify in the field, 10 trees, 5 birds, and 4 edible plants. Tell how the plants are eaten.
 - Tie and explain the uses of the following: Sheep Shank, Sheet Bend, Bowline on a Bight, Square Knot, Girth, Clove, Taut Line, Timber, and Two Half Hitches.
 - Using only a pocket or sheath knife and two matches, build a fire using only natural materials. Set the fire to burn for 15 minutes without adding any more wood to it after lighting.
 - Do two hours of service for your camp.



- **Firecrafter (Based on 1971 Requirements - Abbreviated Version)** These requirements must be completed in five and one half days. If not, the must be started anew.
 - Hold or receive the Camper and Woodsman Ranks.

- Have completed the First Class Rank requirements.
- Be at least 13 and no older than 20 years of age by the time of the Grand Ritual
- Build a fire by friction, using a set made in camp of natural, local material (except thong), unassisted and keep the fire burning for 15 minutes. (Author's note: This was a real challenge and took several hours and three tries for me. In the process I learned more about wood and firebuilding than I had in meeting Eagle requirements.)
- Pass a standard personal and tent inspection each day at camp.
- Complete a leadership assignment of assisting Scouts to advance to Second Class, First Class, Camper, or Woodsman.
- Conduct a campfire program or suitable substitute that demonstrates leadership ability, planning, preparation, execution, and one that creates general interest.
- Know the name of every Scout in your troop in camp (later deleted in 1971).
- Complete the Grand Ritual and pass the "unknown test".



- **Minisino**

The Minisino rank is given for outstanding and distinguished service to Scouting and Firecrafters. This rank cannot be earned or sought.

- **Adult Membership**

Adult membership was in 1971 based on nomination at the rate of one per every 300 youth members. Candidates were screened by youth officers of the Fire and then voted on by the Alumni association and approved by the Council Camping Committee.

- **Additional Information**

Additional information may be obtained by writing to:

Crossroads of America Council
 Boy Scouts of America
 615 North Alabama Street
 Indianapolis, Indiana 46204

Prepared by Michael F. Bowman, Deputy District Commissioner for Training, George Washington District, National Capital Area Council, Boy Scouts of America - a member of both Firecrafters and the Order of the Arrow.