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REMARKS: EAGLE SCOUT AWARD

1962 *Boecher*
Feb. 23, 1962

It is a real pleasure and privilege to present to you, Landon, this Eagle Scout pin as a symbol of your outstanding achievement in Scouting. I want to congratulate you on the record which you have made, on the work that you have done, and on the honor which you have brought to your family, to your Troop, and to the Boy Scout movement.

Since the beginning of time there has been something special about an eagle. It is one of our largest birds and because it can soar at great heights with a beauty to behold, the eagle has long been a sign of power and courage and freedom.

Eagles can be found practically everywhere in the United states including the state of Virginia. The bald eagle is protected by federal statute and the other type of eagle which we have in this country, the golden eagle, is protected in practically every state except South Carolina and Georgia.

The Audubon Society estimates that there are at least 4,000 bald eagles in the 49 states outside of Alaska. In Alaska there is a large and untold number. The bald eagle is not really bald-headed at all but at about three years of age the feathers at the top of his head become white so that at a distance he appears bald. When the bald eagles are young, one or two years of age, it is difficult at a distance to distinguish them from an adult golden eagle. The golden eagle is so called



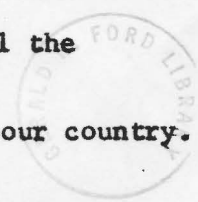
because of the golden tint which runs through the feathers on the neck, legs, and some others parts of his body.

While the bald eagle already is protected by federal law throughout the United States, the golden eagle may be so protected if joint resolutions presently before the Congress are enacted into law. The Fish and Wildlife Service supports the adoption of these resolutions because of its concern for the preservation of these noble birds, the bald and golden eagle of the United States.



As I have said, many centuries ago the eagle was adopted by men and governments as a symbol of strength and skill and bravery. Long before the time of Christ the Romans as well as the Greeks, Egyptians, and Babylonians had made use of the eagle as an emblem. In 104 B.C. the eagle became the chief symbol of the Roman Empire. During the Middle Ages and into modern times the eagle was adopted by many nations to represent it and the strength and skill and bravery of its people.

When the first Congress of the United States under the Constitution met at New York in 1787 it adopted the bald eagle with outstretched wings as the emblem for the United States. This eagle with outstretched wings is still the symbol of the United States and appears on the face of the Great Seal of our country.



Everyone of our dollar bills contains on the back side a reproduction of the Great Seal. There you see the proud bald eagle with outstretched wings holding in one claw a sheaf of arrows denoting the military power and strength of the United States, and holding in the other claw the olive branch of peace which this country values and cherishes for all men. In his beak the eagle holds a banner on which we find one of the mottoes of our country, "E Pluribus Unum," one out of many. One nation out of many states; and one people out of many races, creeds, and national backgrounds. The eagle, a noble bird, is a symbol and emblem of the best and noblest in our way of life.

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It is fitting and proper, therefore, that the highest honor which may come to a Boy Scout should be associated with the eagle and that the top award for outstanding work in Scouting should be the Eagle Scout Award.

Landon, you may be interested to know that only about 1% of the boys associated with Scouting achieve the award which you received this evening. In the National Capital Area Council comprising the District of Columbia, six counties in Maryland and eleven counties in Virginia, only 283 Scouts received the Eagle Award last year. This is about 1% of the Scout membership in the Council.



I am told that while in 1960 there were 16,776 boys who attained the rank of Eagle Scout throughout the United States, this figure also represented only about 1% of the total number of boys in Scouting. You, therefore, have achieved a notable success among the boys devoted to Scouting.

It is not an easy matter to achieve an Eagle Scout Award. The requirements are stringent and not completely elective. There are many requirements which have to be met regardless of the boy's interests or inclination. This is in keeping with the finest traditions of the history of man. All in life is not easy and interesting. Many of us must do many things we would not do of our own choosing; but we do them because the experience of mankind has shown that what we must do is good for us and for those about us.

The eagle has long been a sign of power, courage, and freedom. It has been an emblem of strength, and skill, and bravery. I only covet for you, Landon, continued strength and skill and bravery with that power and courage which will enable you to enjoy true freedom.

