



CANDIDATE AND PARENT LETTER

WINTER ASSEMBLY DECEMBER 6 – 7, 2025, SMILIN V SCOUT RANCH

Dear Scouting Family,

Congratulations! Your child has been elected by their peers, or you have been selected as an adult, as a candidate for the Order of the Arrow, the society of honor campers within Scouting America. The OA is a national brotherhood of scouts that was originated in 1915.

Candidates for the Order of the Arrow are chosen not only for what they have done, but also for what they are expected to do in serving others. Because your child was selected for candidacy by the unique method of being elected by their peers, we are certain that he or she is worthy of this honor.

By National rule, candidates must now participate in an Ordeal weekend (Assembly) within 18 months of the date of their election—NOT the date of their call out ceremony. Our Lodge typically offers two Ordeal weekends per year: spring and fall at Lost Pines Scout Reservation in Bastrop. We periodically offer additional Ordeal opportunities such as the upcoming Winter Assembly at Smilin V.

The Ordeal offers a unique opportunity to reflect on their personal commitment to the principles of the Scout Oath and Law. The weekends will also allow them to become acquainted with the principles and purposes of the Order of the Arrow. The Ordeal must be completed by each new candidate and is a meaningful and inspiring experience that will not be soon forgotten.

This Tonkawa Lodge Assembly will take place at [Smilin V Scout Ranch](#), located just outside Liberty Hill, Texas and comprises the induction processes for new members into the Order of the Arrow. Commonly known as The Ordeal, candidates will meet a series of challenges that will foster self-reflection and test their commitment to a life of cheerful service. For existing members, Assembly Weekend offers a chance to strengthen friendships and serve Scouting in meaningful ways.

The Lodge will be hosting an Ordeal (Assembly) Weekend on December 6, 2025 – December 7, 2025. To register, go to this website <https://www.scoutingevent.com/564-OAWINTER>. You must register to attend. Space is limited for this event so do not wait until the last minute to register.

Candidates should arrive at Smilin V on Saturday, December 6, 2024. Plan to arrive at Smilin V between 4:00 pm and 5:00 pm. Because of the check-in process, please do not be early or late.

To attend this assembly, **it will be necessary that you bring with you the following hard-copy documents:**

- **Part A and Part B of your Annual Health & Medical Record (we need hard copies- do not try to upload at registration) – these forms will not be returned.**
- **WE CANNOT ACCEPT ELECTRONIC COPIES OF YOUR MEDICAL FORM**

The Ordeal will be completed between 6:30 and 6:45 pm on December 7, 2025. You may pick up your child in the parking lot at Smilin V near where you dropped them off. Please do not come early or be late. **Please stay in your vehicle once you arrive for pick up.**

Pursuant to Council policy for health and safety reasons, no visitors will be allowed on camp during this event.

Induction into the Order of the Arrow will open many new doors for your son or daughter. Our Lodge participates in many events every year such as OA Section Conclaves, National Order of the Arrow Conference (NOAC), and various fellowship weekends. In addition, the OA provides some of the most valuable youth leadership training and opportunities available. These opportunities will build upon the knowledge your child has already received during their Scouting experience. This is truly an exciting time for your family. Once again, congratulations.

Richard South

Tonkawa Lodge Adviser

Trevor Suggs

Tonkawa Lodge Chief

Equipment and Packing List

The only gear needed by candidates will be:

The clothes they wear:

- Hat
- T-shirt
- Cloth face mask (optional)
- Work Pants
- Socks
- Work Shirt
- Closed-toed shoes or boots
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Class A or Field Uniforms are not necessary. Class B uniforms are acceptable.

In a small backpack, candidates should carry:

- Weather appropriate gear (fleece or jacket) if necessary
- Poncho or other rain gear
- Sleeping Bag & Pad
- Small bottle of Hand Sanitizer
- Water Bottle (MANDATORY)
- Sunscreen
- Small tarp or backpacking tent
- Gloves
- Flashlight
- Wet Wipes
- Pocketknife (MANDATORY)

If they need medications, those can be packed as well.

Please eat dinner before arriving to check in. No food will be available for candidates on Saturday. Two small meals will be served on Sunday. If you have any special dietary restrictions that we cannot accommodate (please note during registration), you need to bring your own non-perishable ready to eat food for the weekend – all others are expected to eat what is provided.

The registration fee for candidates is \$75.00. First year's dues (for 2025 and 2026) are included in the registration fee. See the [Renew or Transfer Membership page](#) on the Tonkawa website for more information. All candidates MUST bring a non-returnable copy of BSA health form (parts A & B only).

Full or partial payment may be made electronically via the web site, or you can choose to pay at the door. At the site, all outstanding assembly fees are collected by cash, check, or credit cards at the time of check-in on site.

WE DO NOT HAVE ACCESS TO TROOP ACCOUNTS; YOU MUST MAKE PAYMENT THROUGH THE WEB SITE OR AT THE DOOR.

EVENT INFORMATION FOR PARENTS AND CANDIDATES

The Ordeal is a time-honored tradition more than 100 years in the making. Following these rules will ensure that the Ordeal is observed with the utmost respect and decorum.

Use of cell phones, computers and/or electronic devices during assembly is not allowed. Candidates (both adults and youth) should not bring a cell phone or any other electronic device to the assembly to carry with them. Exceptions to this policy can be made for medical reasons with the approval of the Lodge Adviser. **There is little or no cell service on the Smilin V property.**

BEFORE ARRIVAL

Be prepared.

Watch the weather forecast and prepare accordingly. This is an all-weather event. Follow the packing list in your Candidate Letter but bring weather appropriate clothing.

If your child becomes ill at camp, you will be notified to pick them up.

UPON ARRIVAL

Medical check-in will take place inside the Smilin V gate on the path to the big pavilion. You will need to provide the following signed documents:

- Part A and Part B of your Annual Health & Medical (we need hard copies- do not try to upload at registration). These documents will not be returned.

Further check-in will take place along the path after medical check-in. All participants will need your final payment (if you do not pay in full through the registration site).

Every participant on site must be a registered member with Scouting America and anyone over the age of 18 must have a current Youth Protection Training or Safeguarding Youth Training certificate.

Payment can be made online or at Camp when you check in at camp. We accept cash, checks, or credit cards at camp. Due to the remoteness of the site, we would prefer cash or checks.

Checks should be made out to: Tonkawa 99

ORDEAL COMPLETION REQUIREMENTS

By National Rule, Candidate attendance at the Ordeal is mandatory from the beginning of the pre-ordeal ceremony on Saturday evening, until dismissal on Sunday after jumpstart. **This means that leaving camp for any reason during the Ordeal is not permitted.** The only exceptions to this rule are Health and Safety. This means that family activities, school activities, church functions, etc. are not a valid reason for leaving camp once the Ordeal has begun.

ARE PARENTS AND NON-SCOUTERS ALLOWED AT THE ORDEAL CEREMONY?

Only active, dues-paying and event registered OA members may attend ceremonies. Family members who are not OA members may not attend. Below is the national policy on this matter:

“Youth and adult candidates for membership into the Order of the Arrow are introduced to the Order’s concepts of servant leadership through a safeguarded ceremonial induction. Nonmembers should not attend the ceremonies.

Although the content of the ceremonies is private, the ceremonies were designed to avoid offending any religious belief and have received the approval of religious leaders. The ceremonies are consistent with Scouting traditions and the spirit of the Scout Oath and Law.

The Order of the Arrow recognizes and respects the right of any parent, Scout leader, or religious leader to be interested in the content of the ceremony. The lodge adviser, or his designee, may discuss the content of the ceremony and any other issue brought to his attention by one of these interested and responsible adults, with the understanding that the adult will maintain the confidentiality of the ceremony.

If after discussing the ceremony with the lodge adviser, the parent, Scout leader, or religious leader continues to have questions about the content of the ceremony, that person will be permitted to read the ceremony text and view the Order’s ceremony training DVD. Following this, parents will be able to decide whether to allow their child to participate in the ceremony. Candidates may not become members of the Order of the Arrow without completing the pre-Ordeal and Ordeal ceremonies.”

For this event, only members pre-registered and medically cleared can attend.