

R4LA Rover Ranger Award Requirements

(based on the original BSA Ranger Rank, 1944 – 1951)

"I can't tell you what it means to an explorer marching through a fog in a new land when suddenly the fog lifts and he finds himself looking at mountains no human eye has ever seen."

"I only suggest that the better realisation of God may possibly be got through Nature-study rather than through books. I have known it happen in very many cases among woodsmen, seamen, soldiers, and explorers, who had not otherwise grasped any religious faith."

--Lord Robert Baden-Powell, *Rovering to Success*

"If you earn this [Ranger] award, it will say to you and to others that you have worked hard and are now an **elite outdoorsman**. It will say that you are proficient in a variety of outdoor skills or sports, that you are prepared in outdoor safety, and that you are ready to lead outdoor activities."

--Venturing *BSA Ranger Handbook*, 1998

Originally, BSA Explorer Advancement with 4 ranks leading up to Ranger (Apprentice, Woodsman, Frontiersman, and Ranger), was set up in 1944-45, 10 years after Explorer Scouting started, and grew out of the preferences of Explorer Scouts. The original 7 fields of Advancement or Activity Groups were Physical Fitness, Campcraft, Field Craft, Expeditions, Life Work Explorations, Community Participation (including Conservation), and Group Participation, containing 20 requirements for each of the final 3 ranks, for a total of 60 requirements, of which 36 were required (12 for each of the final 3 ranks) to reach Ranger. After the Ranger award was formally retired in 1949 (with a 2-year window to sunset), it was not resurrected until 1998 with the formation of the BSA Venturing program. Between 1949 and 1998, the highest award in Exploring evolved away from the original basis in Scoutcraft and elite outdoorsman skills towards more of a leadership and vocational focus, maintaining only a small requirement for outdoor skills. When Venturing rebirthed the Ranger award in 1998, it was solely focused on Scoutcraft and elite outdoor skills; however, it was made only a secondary award, while the primary path to the highest award in Exploring remained focused on leadership and personal development.

For the R4LA Rover Ranger program, the original highest rank in BSA Exploring has been modified to an optional award, designed to be completed parallel to or after the completion of the Rover B-P Award, restoring the primacy of Scoutcraft and elite outdoor skills from a traditional American Scouting perspective, including wilderness survival and conservation, as the focus of senior Scouting, and giving the option to the Rover to become an elite master outdoorsman. Certain requirements such as Life Work Explorations, and most of the Community and Group Participation requirements have been removed, since these are already accomplished during the progression to the Baden-Powell (B-P) Award. Most of the remaining requirements with their original language are preserved from the *BSA Explorer Scout Manual* (1st ed., 1946). Rovers are recommended to procure a copy of this manual as well as *Exploring* by Gilcraft (1931) to assist them in the completion of Ranger requirements. To qualify, Rovers must be invested as Scouts/Knights and have completed the Practical Training Strip, which is basic training for Rover Scouts.



The original BSA Ranger Award was a circular patch mounted to the left pocket, as the highest rank of Explorer Scouting; it also included a medal with green and white ribbon

pinned to the pocket flap (or above) for formal ceremonies. The current BSA Venturing Ranger Award is a similar medal, with a permanent metal bar that remains on the left pocket flap. The

R4LA Rover Ranger Award distinguishes itself as a silver cloth bar bordered in green with "RANGER" in black capital letters sewn to the left pocket flap.

For the R4LA award of Rover Ranger, the Rover must meet at least 3 requirements from each of the 5 activity groups, I-V; then select 9 more as preferred from any of the activity groups for a total of 24 requirements out of 39 listed.

I. PHYSICAL FITNESS

1. Physical Skills

- I. As part of a plan for physical fitness, develop and demonstrate at least average proficiency in some outdoor skill or sport — such as swimming, rowing, canoeing, skiing, fishing, wrestling, boxing, baseball, or an equivalent as approved by Crew leadership.
- II. Continue your physical fitness plan and demonstrate proficiency in one added physical skill or sport.
- III. Progress in your physical fitness plan and demonstrate proficiency in one added physical skill or sport.

2. Special Toughening Skills

- I. Establish as a basis for personal improvement, your own fitness scores on the Step-Test and on any two of pull-up, push-up, or vertical jump.
- II.
 - a) Climb overhand an 18-foot rope in not more than 25 seconds.
 - b) Establish your own best record at your least fatiguing gait, for one mile; or establish, at the basis for improvement, your own records in high jump, broad jump, and hand vault.
- III. Build an approved obstacle course of at least five units and establish your record for the course.

II. CAMPCRAFT

3. Trail Equipment

- I. On a hike, demonstrate how to improvise and use personal emergency trail equipment — pack, improvised from trousers, sack, or the like — cooking kit made from cans — shelter of coat, poncho or native materials — sleeping bag from blankets or tarp and emergency cover of leaves or snow.
- II. Make and use a back-packing outfit — pack frame, sack, or basket; OR make and use own snowshoes; OR make and demonstrate two or more snares and box traps such as would be used for emergency wilderness food supply.
- III. Make and use a sleeping bag or a tent suitable for your climate, OR a reflector oven and a water bag, OR make a pair of skis or snowshoes, OR build a canoe, kayak, or rowboat.

4. Fire and Food

- I.
 - a) Find in the field suitable local tinder and wood and without matches, produce and use fires for boiling and broiling.

b) Find and prepare for meal, cooked or raw, three wild edible plants or fruits.

II. On a hike, or in camp, prepare for two or more companions, one of the following: bean hole beans, imu, roast on spit, barbecue, clambake, or fish fry.

III. Cook a meal for two or more companions, built around fish, fowl or other game in season secured on the trip (not required for vegetarians: cook an additional vegetarian meal, ideally using food found on expedition, such as mushrooms, herbs, berries, roots, etc.).

5. Backwoods Engineering

I. On a hike, demonstrate proper development of temporary camp site covering shelter, food cache, and measures for cooking, water supply, and sanitation.

II. On a hike, with one or more companions, cross a 20-foot or wide raven, stream or body of water, using rope, vines, temporary improvised bridge or raft; OR build a needed trail bridge.

III. With ropes available and poles to lash, rig a rescue device across a 25-foot body of water or stream bed, with the help of the "marooned" person; OR build some needed camp equipment such as permanent fireplace, dutch oven; OR, with others, if needed, build a cabin.

6. Weather

I. On 4 or more hikes, point out the usual local signs indicating bad or changing weather and demonstrate bad weather fire-making and cooking with only improvised shelter; also point out the four types of lous.

II. From a study of weather records select the best winter season and the best hot weather season for expeditions, and submit plans for necessary clothing and gear for both seasons — demonstrating for one season on a hike; find out what seasons are more free from insect pests and on a hike show how to protect from insects.

III. Outline methods of survival for emergencies in arctic cold, desert heat, when adrift at sea and in jungle wilderness, and demonstrate on hike or expedition survival measures for that season.

III. FIELD CRAFT

7. Stalking and Concealing

I. a) Creep and crawl without being seen to within 25 feet of a person.
b) From a distance of 25 yards, approach a blind-folded listener to within 12 feet without being heard.
c) At command, "freeze" and remain rigidly motionless for 1 minute.

II. Stalk a wild animal or bird for photographing or for bow and arrow hunting, in season; OR track and trail through suitable cover, a companion keeping within 66 feet to 100 feet for ½ mile without being detected.

- III. On a hike or expedition, pitch tent so as to conceal and camouflage it. After its use, cover all signs of camp, including footprints within 15 feet around the site.
8. Orientation
- I. On a hike, follow a compass course (magnetic azimuth) for one mile or more with reasonable accuracy, and with at least four changes of direction and submit sketch map of route.
 - II. On an expedition make a sketch map covering the trip, and showing compass bearings and approximate distances, also places where wild animal life was seen.
 - III. Using compass and grid map, make your way in unfamiliar country (wilderness where possible) through three designated grid map points, involving a 4-mile circuit.
9. Communications
- I. On a hike or in camp, send and receive messages of at least 20 words (minimum of 100 letters) by International Morse Code, using any improvised source of sound; OR make a radio receiving set, any type, OR log at least 20 short wave stations and list Federal Communications Commission rules for licensing of station.
 - II. On a hike or in camp, send and receive messages of at least 30 words (minimum of 150 letters) by International Morse Code, over a distance of ¼ mile or more using heliograph, or special improvised visual means; OR make a short wave receiving set; OR demonstrate your ability to meet the first half of the Federal Communications Commission requirements for Radio Amateur's license.
 - III. On a hike or in camp at night, send and receive at least 40 words (minimum of 200 letters) by International Morse Code, over a distance of ¼ mile using any improvise or homemade blinker device; OR, make a working plan for an amateur's sending set; OR, qualify for FCC Radio Amateur's license.
10. Trail First Aid
- I. On a hike or in camp, demonstrate on others and self, how to improvise, on the trail, sterile dressings for stings, burns and other wounds; splints; non equipment snake-bite treatment, emergency trail handling of shock, heat exhaustion, sunstroke, freezing, and poisoning.
 - II. On a night hike, demonstrate artificial respiration, five types of emergency splinting and bandaging, done entirely in the dark.
 - III. On a hike or in camp demonstrate, over an approved trail, emergency transportation of injured person by one and by two others, including the making of an emergency sling or sledge from poles, ropes, and sticks.

IV. EXPEDITIONS

11. Expeditions

- I. Help plan and participate in at least one expedition of at least two nights.
- II. Participate in expedition of at least three days and two nights' duration, involving transportation by foot, horse, boat, and so forth, and involving more than one campsite.
- III. Present detailed plans as Director of a 5-day, 3-or-more-man expedition and participate in one such trip, involving more than one campsite.

12. Camping

- I. Take part in three or more overnight camping or fishing or hunting trips.
- II. Hike 15 miles with a pack weighting not less than 25 lb., limit of drinking water 1 pint, only food to be emergency rations prepared by self.
- III. Spend a total of at least 10 nights in overnight service, fishing or hunting camps.

V. CONSERVATION

13. Conservation

- I. From field research, find out how a local conservation problem arose and offer one or more possible solutions.
- II. Develop and carry out an original conservation project in consultation with his Post Advisor and government or other conservation leaders.
- III. Survey and report on the main representatives of the families of plant and animal life discovered at any one season in an approved areas, indicating their relation to human life; OR, explore and report on some one form of plant or animal life as to its prevalence, how it lives, what part it plays in its natural setting, and its possible values.