

M. ROBERT MARKS
REFLECTIONS OF A QUARTERMASTER
APRIL 11, 2010

I would like to present Skipper Ballew with a token of your appreciation for being my mentor and my friend.

Skippers, friends, family and future Quartermaster (Zach).

I am very humbled by all this attention.

In the book, "Sea Scouting and Seamanship for Boys" Warrington Baden-Powell wrote

"Joining the Sea Scouts does not mean that you are going to take up the sea profession; it means that you are going to make boating, sailing, camping, fishing, sailing, and watermanship your pastime for your spare time and holiday. As you go on you will see how useful Sea Scouts may be as Scouts, and also how useful the training is for life after you are no longer a Boy Scout"

I joined Sea Scouts in 2006 because I wanted to learn more about the program in preparation for becoming the Northeast Region Venturing President.

While I wasn't chosen for the Region position, I received so much more as a member of Sea Scouts than I could have ever imagined.

Eammon Walsh, who couldn't be here today, was my first Skipper. For over a year, my Dad and I drove an hour each way every Monday to participate in his ship. Eammon made Sea Scouts fun and interesting and started me on the path toward Quartermaster.

Then came my first of three weekends at Catoctin – the annual Sea Scout training event in Maryland. I acquired a great deal of the knowledge I would need to advance and I had a chance to hang out with some really dedicated leaders and crazy Sea Scouts. At about that time I was hooked.

Along the way, I had the opportunity to attend several other training sessions including some awesome sailing adventures in the Chesapeake Bay. Because of the expertise and generosity of a handful of Sea Scout leaders, I learned and practiced the skills necessary to complete the Quartermaster requirements.

I met Skipper Ballew at one of the Catoctin weekend, but really got to know him during a week long program called Camp Able. It was during that week that I would learn and practice the skills necessary to finish the rank of Able -- but

more important I was able to witness a man who treated young adults with respect and understanding and who truly cared about his Scouts.

When Ship 777 stopped meeting, we tried to start a ship in Pittsburgh... with little success. When Ship 306 folded, Skipper Ballew invited me to join his ship and outlined a path to complete the Quartermaster rank.

I was so involved in Scouts at the “advanced age of 19 and 20” that my friends were calling me “super scout” and one even added my name to the online urban dictionary as the definition of “super scout”.

“A ship in the harbor is safe, but that’s not what ships are built for...”

There are so many other things to do when you are 18, 19 and 20. Work, friends, and stuff... To give up would have been the easy choice. For several months after returning from Europe, I wasn’t sure that I wanted to finish the Hornaday or Quartermaster.

But eventually, I decided to take my ship out of the harbor – and finish the journey.

In the words of Skipper, I did not give up the ship! That turned out to be one of the best decisions of my life. It ultimately led to this day of celebration.

Thank you to Skipper Ballew and to Ship 1942 for helping me achieve this goal. The Scouts from my ship were originally considering coming to Pittsburgh for a fun weekend. They have an urgent need to raise \$14,000 in order to repair their boats – so the car wash they held yesterday was more important than driving 10 hours to Pittsburgh. I have received a number of monetary gifts from many of you and from people who couldn’t be here. Thank you for your kind generosity. I will be donating all of the money to my Ship to help them keep Sea Scouting strong. I invite you to help by making a donation for one of Sea Scout magnets that are on the table in the lobby.

Thank you all for being here this afternoon. I hope you enjoyed what you learned about Sea Scouts from the ceremony.

Boy Scouts, Venturing and Sea Scouts have given me an opportunity to learn about life from a diverse group of men and women; adults and youth. Everyone that I’ve met in Scouts influenced me in some way or taught me skills and lessons that I still use today. Many of you who are in this room have had the biggest influences on my life and have helped shape me into the person I am today.

Thank you for your support and for helping make my dreams a reality.