

BSA to Offer Morse Code Interpreter Strip

For many years, Boy Scouts and Scouters have been able to earn an interpreter strip to wear on their uniforms. This strip — worn on the uniform above the right pocket — denotes proficiency in a foreign language or sign language. Each language has its own strip (with the name of the language embroidered in that language), and some Scouts and Scouters wear more than one strip. Now those hams involved with the Boy Scouts can show their proficiency in Morse code with a Morse code interpreter strip (with M-O-R-S-E spelled out in Morse code).



According to BSA Director of Communication Services Jim Wilson, K5ND, the idea for a Morse code interpreter strip came about during meetings preparing for the 2012 Jamboree on the Air (JOTA). “One of the ideas presented was a variation on an interpreter strip for Morse code,” Wilson told the ARRL. “We played around with it a bit and then approached the BSA Awards Committee with the idea. They liked it, so we decided to explore the idea a bit more. We looked at the existing requirements for interpreter strips to see how they could be adapted for code. The BSA approved the strip in April, but we decided to wait until the strips were available before we announced it.” Wilson also serves as the BSA’s National JOTA Organizer and is President and Trustee of K2BSA, the BSA Headquarters Amateur Radio station in Texas.

The requirements to earn the Morse code interpreter strip are in line with the requirements of interpreter strips for other languages:

- Carry on a five-minute conversation in Morse code at a speed of at least five words per minute, and
- Copy correctly a two-minute message sent in Morse code at a minimum of five words per minute. Copying means writing the message down as it is received, and

- Send a 25 word written document in Morse code at a minimum of five words per minute.

“Together, Amateur Radio and Boy Scouting is a wonderful thing,” Wilson told the ARRL. “The new Morse code interpreter strip is a nice recognition of the special skill of Morse code and its use in emergency communications. From my perspective, the strip gives us more buzz on things happening in Amateur Radio. In the past couple of decades, the BSA has seen a tremendous increase in the number of Radio merit badges

that have been awarded. In 1991-2000, we awarded 20,000 Radio merit badges. But in 2001-2010, we awarded 54,000! The interest in this badge has grown by leaps and bounds, indicating not only a keen interest in the art and science of radio, but in technology, too.”

Beginning with the 2013 National Jamboree, Wilson said that they will be teaching the Radio merit badge in four hours: “We will be teaching the badge every hour, on the hour. Scouts will spend 90 minutes in a classroom environment, 30 minutes on the air and then back to the classroom for another 90 minutes. In four hours, they will have their badge.” K2BSA has operated at every National Jamboree since 1977 and will be at the 2013 National Jamboree at the Summit Bechtel Reserve in West Virginia.

“The sole purpose of any interpreter strip is to serve as an immediate, visual cue to others that the wearer is able to perform as an interpreter when needed, not to award the ability to converse in another language,” Wilson explained. “This is also why it is placed on the uniform near the nameplate. When you wear the strip, whether it says Español, Français, Italiano, Signing or Morse, a Scout or Scouter is showing to the world that he or she has that proficiency to be tapped as an interpreter when needed.”

Section Manager Nomination Notice

To all ARRL members in Eastern Massachusetts, Missouri, Nebraska, New York City/Long Island, Northern New York, South Carolina, Southern New Jersey, West Central Florida, and Western Pennsylvania: You are hereby solicited for nominating petitions pursuant to an election for Section Manager (SM). Incumbents are listed on page 16 of this issue.

To be valid, a petition must contain the signatures of five or more full ARRL members residing in the section concerned. It is advisable to have a few more than five signatures on each petition. A sample nomination form is available on the ARRL website at www.arrl.org/section-terms-nomination-information. Nominating petitions may be made by facsimile or electronic transmission of images, provided that upon request by the Membership and Volunteer Programs Manager, the original documents are received by the Manager within seven days of the request.

We suggest the following format:

(Place and Date)

Membership and Volunteer Programs Manager, ARRL
225 Main St
Newington, CT 06111

We, the undersigned full members of the _____ ARRL Section of the _____ Division, hereby nominate _____ as candidate for Section Manager of this Section for the next two-year term of office.

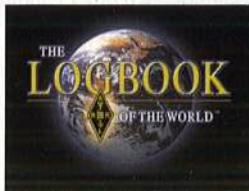
(Signature ___ Call Sign ___ City ___ ZIP ___)

Any candidate for the office of Section Manager must be a resident of the Section, an Amateur Radio licensee of Technician class or higher and a full member of the League for a continuous term of at least two years immediately preceding receipt of a nominating petition. Petitions must be received at Headquarters by 4 PM Eastern Time on September 7, 2012. If more than one member is nominated in a single section, ballots will be mailed from Headquarters on or before October 1, 2012, to full members of record as September 7, 2012, which is the closing date for nominations. Returns will be counted November 20, 2012. Section Managers elected as a result of the above procedure will take office January 1, 2013.

If only one valid petition is received from a section, that nominee shall be declared elected without opposition for a two-year term beginning January 1, 2013. If no petitions are received from a section by the specified closing date, such section will be resolicited in the January 2013 QST. A Section Manager elected through the resolicitation will serve a term of 18 months. Vacancies in any Section Manager's office between elections are filled by the Membership and Volunteer Programs Manager. — David Patton, NN1N, Membership and Volunteer Programs Manager

Logbook of The World Marks 50,000 Users

On May 1, Dragan Pavlovic, YT3PDT, completed his registration process for Logbook of The World (LoTW), becoming the 50,000th person to take advantage of the ARRL's online QSL confirmation system. According to ARRL Membership and Volunteer Programs Manager Dave Patton, NN1N, there are more than 3500 individuals from outside the US in the process of obtaining a digital certificate, and more than 1800 individuals inside the US who have started the certificate process, but not yet finished.



“Radio amateurs around the world consider LoTW to be the ‘must have’ awards and electronic confirmation system,” Patton said. “We look forward to planned improvements and upgrades, and we are gratified that so many people have helped the system grow and become more and more useful.”