

BARBADOS BOY SCOUTS ASSOCIATION INDEPENDENCE PARADE 2004 REPORT

The parade fell under the direction of A.D.C. John King detachment leader, assisted by A.D.C. Martin Taylor, Two I.C. and District Scouter Stephen Kellman as the third officer on parade. A.D.C. Davidson Williams and A.D.C. Grantley Drakes provided much support for the scouts during rehearsals.

Other leaders on parade included Mr. Stephen Hinds, Cheryl Baker, Doriel Green, Andrea Harper, Norma Ashby and Jefferson Greenidge. The colour party comprised Matthew Trotman, Adrian Catlyn and Tyrell Corbin. Mr. William Trotman provided assistance to the group by carrying water and juices for use during intervals. Rehearsals were held throughout November with at least four full rehearsals and those held for officers, flag bearers and attendants.

Preparedness

Preparations for the National Independence Day parade started well in advance this year with drill sessions organized by A.D.C. Davidson Williams at Harrison College. These sessions were held on Saturdays commencing in September with participants from all three districts taking part. The sessions were conducted by an officer (drill instructor) from the Barbados Defense Force and supervised by A.D.C. Williams. Though the response to this initiative was below expectation, the effort by Mr. Williams must be commended and in the end proved to be the foundation around which the staging of a successful parade was built. This initiative should be reviewed and again implemented in advance of the 2005 parades.

It should be noted that the concept behind the drill sessions was to create a “host corp” from which boys could be identified and selected for national duty, having met a predetermined standard in both discipline and conduct. This “host corp” would form the nucleus around which a solid detachment would be developed for events such as parades and the like. It is my belief that the acknowledgement, approval and endorsement of this initiative by the Chief Commissioner of the Scout movement can further add to its success.

Aptitude

A casual observation of the detachment this year revealed many first timers and mainly boys of a younger age i.e. 11+. As a result it was clearly evident that these boys lacked the mental toughness required for the parades. This would further suggest that in order for the Barbados Boy Scouts to give of their best on such occasions that their involvement in training be made mandatory. This should see an improvement in their mental aptitude.

Attendance

The rehearsals put on by the Barbados Defense Force were reasonably well attended by both boys and leaders. However it was pretty obvious that a few groups showed little interest in the parade in terms of their numbers at rehearsals. From the north, Roland Edwards' Scouts were absent on most occasions. When they did turn up only 2 scouts were present. In the case of the South, Society Scout Troop was the only troop present from that District. Whilst in the case of Bridgetown, the St. Pauls Scout Troop was conspicuously absent from the parade.

Scouting is a voluntary organization but in the eyes of the community there is an perception of what a scout is and what he does, in light of this the actions of individual troops or their failure to act can serious jeopardize the mission of the organization. It has been the practice that national activities take precedence over district events and likewise district events hold sway over group activities, this dictum needs to be re-emphasized so that all leaders become aware and comply. By complying, leaders and groups will help to strengthen the support base on which the movement depends for continued survival. It should be noted that where compliance is not forthcoming that adequate measures need to be put in place to ensure that the image of the organization is not tarnished in the eyes of the public through the reckless actions of individual groups.

Notification

This year information regarding the parades was late in coming as a result some groups were unable to pass information to their boys in a timely fashion. It is hoped that this situation can be addressed in time for next year's parades. Concomitantly, the officers selected for parades should be notified by letter, clearly outlining their duties and responsibilities. This should be done well in advance of the parades so that groups taking part in the parades would know who they need to report to when turning up for rehearsals. It is suggested that this information could be circulated to groups for their general information.

Incidents

There were two incidents of note, which took place leading up to the parade. The first involved a youngster from the Hazelwood scout troop named Josuah Dottin. During rehearsals Josuah appeared rather lethargic in his drill routine, this situation was pointed out to him several times. However, there was no improvement, the Chief of staff of the defense force also spoke to Josuah about his lack of effort but still there was no improvement. The Chief of staff then drew the matter to the attention of the detachment leader, Josuah was removed from taking part any further in the parade.

Another incident had to do with a leader taking part in the parade. There is a standing rule that all persons taking part in parades sleep over the night before, failing this, permission must be obtained for such persons to be permitted exemption from this rule. Ingrid Chaderton a leader from the northern district did not sleep over the night before the parade and neither did she seek permission to be exempted. She however turned up at headquarters for the parade. Ms. Chaderton approached the detachment leader and

requested a national scarf, she was informed of the rule relating to persons taking part in the parade. On receiving that information Ms. Chaderton approached A.C.C. Joan White who then intervened and got a scarf for Ms. Chaderton even though instructions to the contrary were given by the detachment leader. In order to defuse what could have become a spectacle in the presence of the boys no further action was taken. However, the matter was reported verbally to the Chief Commissioner.

Conclusion

Notwithstanding the incidents above the parade was deemed rather successful. It should be noted that the relative age of most of the boys on parade fell between 11 + and 13, this means that most of these boys were first timers. With the foregoing in view, the future looks bright for these boys once they are encouraged to practice and to strive for excellence. I would wish on behalf of the officers who took part in the 2004 independence parade to thank the Chief Commissioner and his team for affording us the opportunity to function in the capacity in which we performed. Also, I express my sincerest gratitude to all those persons who assisted in anyway to the success of this activity. Special thanks are extended to A.C.C. Joan White and her team for their provision of refreshments and food during the sleep over.

A.D.C. Scouts Bridgetown

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John King.