

KNOWLEDGE



EISENHOWER LEADERSHIP PATCH Boy Scouts – Citizenship



Dwight D. Eisenhower, 1909

DEFINITION: A good citizen possesses **KNOWLEDGE** of American history and of the United States political system. He is familiar with our founding documents: The Declaration of Independence, the Constitution, and the Bill of Rights. He understands basic concepts of representative democracy and fundamental constitutional principles.

DWIGHT D. EISENHOWER: “[E]quip yourself, by education and all other possible means, to be an informed citizen of tomorrow; in so doing you and all the young people like you will be our country’s greatest asset”

CITIZENSHIP IS ABOUT KNOWLEDGE: David and Ida Eisenhower stressed the importance of education to all six of their sons. The Eisenhower boys were told that opportunity was all around them; they only had to reach out and grab it! Dwight D. Eisenhower learned early that education was one of the keys to opportunity. Decades later, under the personal tutelage of General Fox Conner, he would discover that a deep **KNOWLEDGE** of history and government is fundamental to citizenship in the United States.

Eisenhower met Brigadier General Fox Conner through a good friend, George Patton. Conner invited Eisenhower to serve as his executive officer in Panama. Those years with Conner would transform Eisenhower as a person, as a soldier, and as a citizen. At Conner’s invitation, he read classic works of history, philosophy, political science, and the humanities and he learned to love learning again. On long horseback rides into the Panamanian rainforest, Conner quizzed Eisenhower about his readings—sparking lengthy, lively, engaging discussions. Among the works they discussed and debated, in addition to books on military history, were books by Plato and a collection of essays called *The Federalist*. For the remainder of his life, Eisenhower’s thinking, leadership, decision making, and writing reflected the depth of his **KNOWLEDGE** of subjects central to the development of good citizenship.

“[L]ife with General Conner was a sort of graduate school in military affairs and the humanities. . . . I can never

adequately express my gratitude to this one gentleman . . .
in a lifetime of association with great and good men, he
is the one . . . to whom I owe an incalculable debt.”

VISIT THE EISENHOWER MUSEUM: In the early military gallery, locate the large D-Day planning table. In one corner of this gallery is a display case labeled “1922 – 1924 Camp Gaillard” and “1925 – 1926 Fort Leavenworth.” Examine the photograph of Camp Gaillard, Panama. Above it is a photograph of Eisenhower on his horse “Blackie,” the special companion who shared those long “instructive” rides into the rainforest during the dry season. Read the textbox located here. The first half discusses Eisenhower and Fox Conner in Panama. The second half describes the mentorship role that Conner continued to play in Eisenhower’s education even after Panama. It was difficult to secure a spot in the Army’s Command and General Staff School (CGSS) at Fort Leavenworth, Kansas— but it was *the* prerequisite to someday ascending to the rank of general. Thanks to Fox Conner, not only was Eisenhower well prepared for CGSS, he was one of those selected to attend from 1925 - 26. Ultimately, Eisenhower would graduate first in a class of 245 of the United States Army’s best officers, imbued with a very clear understanding of the requirements for good citizenship.

KNOWLEDGE AND CITIZENSHIP: How did his considerable **KNOWLEDGE** of United States history and government assist Dwight D. Eisenhower in becoming a good citizen?

SHARE WHAT YOU HAVE LEARNED: With whom will you share what you have learned about the role that **KNOWLEDGE** of American history and government plays in the development of good citizenship? List them below.

- 1.
- 2.

YOUR EISENHOWER LEADERSHIP PATCH AND ROCKERS: When you have completed this handout, you have earned the **EISENHOWER LEADERSHIP PATCH** and the **KNOWLEDGE** rocker. If you have already earned the patch, completion of this activity signifies that you have earned the rocker. These items are available at the Visitors Center and Presidential Gift Shop. There are six rockers for the Boy Scout level. Boy Scouts may earn up to two rockers per museum visit.