

## Eric Spaulding's GMA- An Historic First for Outpost #16

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On October 21, 2006, at First A/G in Lewiston, Maine, a Gold Medal of Achievement (GMA) ceremony was held in honor of Eric Spaulding. For Outpost #16, this truly was an historic occasion. Since the Outpost began in 1962, the same year the Royal Rangers ministry was launched, there had never been a GMA recipient at the Lewiston church. That changed with Eric, who, in addition to becoming the first GMA in his Outpost, is also the 36<sup>th</sup> young man in NNED to earn this prestigious award!

That evening, family, friends, commanders, and dignitaries from around Northern New England came to pay tribute to Eric. Cdr. Gary Baillargeon of Outpost 16 served as the Master of Ceremonies, and gave the opening remarks. Following greetings from Pastor Donald Cogle and Senior Commander Tom Whittingham, District Commander Jerry Love gave his remarks, in which he stated, "Today Eric, you have shown us that you are made of something very special, you are made of God's choicest materials; you, Eric Spaulding, are a Royal Priest of the highest order, and a mighty man of God."

Following Cdr. Jerry's remarks, a video of Eric was presented to the audience, which brought laughs from all, and even some happy tears from his proud parents! After the slide show, Maine State Representative Scott Lansley congratulated him on behalf of the State of Maine, presenting him with letters from Senators Olympia Snowe and Susan Collins, and also presenting him with an official recognition of his achievement, that will be kept on permanent record at the State House in Augusta!

FCF had gifts for him, as FCF President Tim "Red Oak" Hatch and President Emeritus Sid "Wooly Bear" Bean presented him with a copy of *The Frontiersman* by Allan Eckert, a Candle Lantern, and a shelter pole to replace the one he mistakenly cut while on his Frontier Adventure. Also, from Cdr. Kendall Sperrey, he received a special paddle to commemorate an incident when he was younger, in which he tipped a canoe and lost a tackle box and fishing pole at the bottom of the lake! This happened with Cdr. John Hutchinson, who told the story behind it. Following Eric's short speech, in which he thanked his parents, friends, and all of the commanders who helped him along the way, especially Cdr. Rick Varney, Cdr. Jerry presented him with the prized Gold Medal of Achievement, as well as a special GMA jacket, a gift the District gives to every GMA recipient. Cdr. Tom presented him with his GMA certificate. Finally, Cdr. Rick presented Eric with his Lt. Commander bars, and gave the closing remarks. For Cdr. Rick, working with Eric was "a roller coaster ride of epic proportions". He had been so close to getting his GMA for so long, but along the way he had lost his momentum. He had to overcome some distractions in the form of a girlfriend, his work, and car maintenance." However, Cdr. Rick acted as a mentor to Eric, and was able to come up with the work needed to complete his GMA by his 18<sup>th</sup> birthday! He added, "I couldn't be prouder of him."

Following the ceremony's closing, there was plenty of time for photo-ops with Eric, who was not only the newest GMA recipient, but also the newest Commander in the District! Looking upon his achievement, Cdr. Eric said, "It was an accomplishment of nine years of work, and to God be the glory." He added, "it's about men helping boys. Cdr. Rick and the other commanders definitely stepped up and helped me go all the way through. If it wasn't for them, I wouldn't have made it through." As for what's next, Cdr. Eric said, "I'm going for my LMA (Leader's Medal of Achievement) and I want to complete that and become a better leader."

As you can see, involvement in Rangers doesn't have to

stop once a boy earns his GMA. He can become involved as a commander, earn his LMA, and work towards Reaching, Teaching, and Keeping the next generation of boys for Christ! Eric Spaulding is the first GMA recipient from Outpost #16, but he definitely won't be the last! NNED is proud of you, Eric!



Eric Spaulding with Commander Rick Varney.



Left to Right: Commanders Ken Bustard, Jerry Love, Eric Spaulding, Kendall Sperrey, and Sid "Wooly Bear" Bean.



Right: Eric gives his GMA speech, thanking all those who helped him along the way to his GMA.