

2024 Elie Wiesel Competition

3rd Place Junior Essay

Max Warburton, 7th Grade

Norfolk Academy, Jennifer Rodgers

My Great Grandfather's Eagle Scout Award

Since the time I was five, I have participated in Cub Scouts and Boy Scouts. This program teaches you skills such as safety, personal responsibility, wellbeing, fire and knife skills, and how to be a leader in society. My great grandfather reached the highest rank of Boy Scouts known as Eagle Scout. This accomplishment takes lots of dedication and passion which makes the level highly regarded among many people. He earned a ribbon for completing this rank and it represents the start of our family's dedication to Boy Scouts.

If this ribbon was to be taken from my family, it would make me feel like there was a hole in my identity. This award my great grandfather received is very important to me. It drives me to do better in not only Boy Scouts, but everything else I do as well such as academics and athletics. If this item was taken from my family, there would be a certain feeling lost inside of me and I would lose some of the drive to reach the Eagle Scout rank myself. Memories from my time in Boy Scouts would feel bleak and less important without the award. Losing the ribbon would show that there was no recognition for my great grandfather and no start to my family's Boy Scout journey.

The ribbon could not be replaced by anything else because it is a one of a kind artifact. Even if it was copied, the ribbon would not be the same as having the original. Just like David Katz's lost violin, another violin would not represent the memories of the original instrument. The feeling of losing something just as important as the violin, like my great grandfather's Eagle Scout ribbon, would be devastating. It would be like if the American flag lost one of its stripes or stars — the history and meaning of the United States would be forgotten. Although the work and effort put in to receive the recognition would still be there, the physical award would be lost as well as the symbol of achievement. Even though everyone in my family will still remember the work put in to receive this award, we would try as hard as possible to get this ribbon back because it means so much to us.

This award possessed by my family represents a legacy of scout qualities such as being trustworthy, loyal, helpful, courteous, kind, and brave. My siblings and I are being raised to act with integrity much like my great grandfather who earned such a high honor. If this ribbon was lost or taken from my family, I would be shattered. Much like David Katz's lost violin, this ribbon symbolizes core values of our family, and I feel that part of our identity would be lost without it.