

PERSEVERANCE



Dwight D. Eisenhower, 1902



EISENHOWER LEADERSHIP PATCH
Cub Scouts – Character

DEFINITION: **PERSEVERANCE** means “not giving up,” even when something is hard, and you feel discouraged. It is the self-discipline to follow a goal or a dream, with determination and patience, when you want to quit.

DWIGHT D. EISENHOWER: “[N]o human problem is beyond solution given the will, the **PERSEVERANCE** and the strength—each of us can help arouse in America a renewed and flaming dedication to justice and liberty, prosperity and peace among men.”

A LESSON IN PERSEVERANCE: When Dwight D. Eisenhower arrived at West Point in 1911, his dream was to play varsity football. “It would be difficult to overemphasize the importance that I attached to participation in sports.” Because he was too light and too small, he had to accept a position on the junior varsity team. For the next year, Ike put in rigorous workouts, ran sprints, and gained nearly 25 pounds. At football practice in the fall of 1912, he worked harder and longer than any other player. The coach took note—Ike made varsity, as a substitute at first. Playing with much intensity and enthusiasm, he made the first team. Ike was euphoric! His **PERSEVERANCE** had paid off. All the glory came to an abrupt end, however, in a game against Tuft’s University—his knee was injured when he was tackled. He reinjured it during a horse-riding exercise and had to drop out of sports altogether. For a long time afterward, Ike was so unhappy that he wanted to drop out of school. Then his football coach asked him to coach the junior varsity team. He accepted. Ike discovered that he could enjoy football again and learn even more about leadership.

“Thirty years afterward, I found myself in the midst of war. I had occasion to be on the constant lookout for natural leaders. . . . But I noted with real satisfaction how well ex-footballers seemed to have leadership qualifications. . . . I believe that football, perhaps more than any other sport, tends to instill in men the

feeling that victory comes through hard—almost slavish—work, team play, self-confidence, and an enthusiasm that amounts to dedication.”

VISIT THE EISENHOWER MUSEUM: Locate the West Point exhibit area. On the wall to your right is the wording, “Wearers of the A,” over a large photograph of the 1915 West Point Lettermen. Find Dwight D. Eisenhower. In the display case is the West Point yearbook, named the *Howitzer*. In the middle of the gallery is a display case containing an “ARMY” pennant and Ike’s Letterman’s sweater. On your left is a large display case of Ike’s West Point uniforms. Take time to read the text labels for this exhibit. Not only did Ike have the **PERSEVERANCE** to become a West Point varsity football player, even more importantly, he **PERSEVERED** through the bitter disappointment that he would never play football again. Instead he discovered that he could enjoy football as a coach.

LESSONS ON PERSEVERANCE: What are the three most important lessons you have learned about **PERSEVERANCE** from your study of Dwight D. Eisenhower and his dream to play football at West Point?

SHARE WHAT YOU HAVE LEARNED: With whom will you share what you have learned about **PERSEVERANCE**? 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 **PERSEVERANCE** 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 Cub Scout level. Cub Scouts may earn up to two rockers per museum visit.

*To learn more about this chapter of Dwight D. Eisenhower’s life, read pages 13 – 16 and 23 from his book, *At Ease: Stories I Tell to Friends*.