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The SE-8 Chenilles

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One of the final emblems issued by Section SE-8 was an attractive chenille patch featuring the stylized campfire logo of the section. When it was designed and ordered the Section officers and Council of Chiefs knew it would be the first and last chenille patch issued by SE-8, because their section would soon be history.

This article explores the history behind the SE-8 chenille, attempts to explain its scarcity, and describes some rare prototypes.

The History of Southeast Region, Section 8

Order of the Arrow Section SE-8 was created in 1982 when a regional realignment split the original Section SE-1 and moved lodges from D.C., Maryland, and Delaware into SE-9, leaving the remaining seven Virginia Order of the Arrow lodges to form the new SE-8.

One year after Section SE-8's ten-year anniversary another national reorganization combined the South Central and Southeast Regions into a new Southern Region, and split the Virginia OA lodges between two sections. Tutelo 161, Shenandoah 258, and Shenshawpotoo 276 joined lodges from Kentucky, Tennessee, and one Georgia lodge in the new SR-6. The remaining Virginia lodges were combined with lodges from North Carolina to form SR-7.

Although the change was intended to occur prior to the 1993 section conclaves, special dispensation was granted to retain the SE-7 and SE-8 alignment until afterwards.

Tutelo Lodge 161 hosted the final SE-8 conclave at Camp Powhatan near Pulaski, Virginia on April 16-18, 1993, with delegations from all of the section's lodges in attendance. Appropriately, the theme for the conclave was "Cherish the Past, Celebrate the Future."

On the same weekend the first SR-7 conclave was hosted by Occonechee Lodge 104 at Camp Durant near Raleigh, North Carolina. Blue Heron, Chanco, Kecoughtan, and Nawakwa lodges each sent a delegation to this conclave as well. On the following weekend Tutelo Lodge and Shenandoah Lodge sent small delegations to the first SR-6 conclave, hosted at Skymont Scout Reservation by Talidandaganu' Lodge 293 of Chattanooga, TN.

The SE-8 Chenille

In addition to the standard pocket and jacket patches a special limited edition chenille emblem was issued at the 1993 SE-8 conclave. Manufactured by Standard Pennant Company of Big Run, Pennsylvania, the chenille measures 5.75 inches high by 5.0 inches wide with a design reflecting the stylized campfire logo of the Section. Since at that time chenille patches were handmade each of the SE-8 chenille patches may be slightly different.

Joe Belmonte of Chanco Lodge was Vice Chief of SE-8 in 1993 and remembers that the chenille was issued as a memento and to draw down the funds in the Section account before the split. Steve

Isom of Tutelo Lodge recently conferred with several Scouters who served on the adult and youth staff for the conclave who agreed that each preregistered attendee was given one chenille patch at no cost.

According to the July, 1993 edition of the Kecoughtan Kryer "each attendee received an embroidered patch as well as a chenille patch depicting the SE-8 logo." The Kryer also reported there were over 600 Arrowmen in attendance at the conclave, a figure corroborated by the Tutelo Lodge history web page summary of events for 1993.

The chenille patches were distributed Sunday morning, and there were no extras available for sale in the trading post. A few changed hands in private sales for around \$50.00 each.

Darrol Davis who attended the conclave as the Lodge 276 professional advisor reports that Doc Miller, the Section Advisor, and several other adults gave up their SE-8 chenille patches so that all of the youth attendees could have one. There was a reorder of the patch after the conclave to provide these adults with their patches.

The SE-8 Chenille Prototypes

A patch auction at the conclave was held Saturday night before a standing-room only crowd in the dining hall. The auction raised \$1,700 to be contributed to a memorial fund honoring Brian Gregson, former Blue Heron Lodge Chief and SE-8 Secretary who disappeared in a surfing accident in January 1993.

Included in the auction were two prototype versions of the SE-8 chenille. Each was declared to be one-of-a-kind, with no others in existence. Alex Wiatt recalls, "They auctioned off two different prototypes at the conclave. The first one sold for \$315 and the second one for something like \$290."

The winner of both was DeWitt Holland of Chanco 483, who kindly supplied pictures of the two prototypes and the released version he obtained at the conclave.

The prototype and release versions can be differentiated by the appearance of the Lodge numbers embroidered at the bottom of the patch.

The first prototype has smooth felt campfire logs and the embroidered lodge numbers have a serif font style (see Figure 1).

The second prototype has "woolly" (chenille) campfire logs, light yellow or tan lodge numbers and the green felt outline has three defined flame points and two rounded flame points (see Figure 2). The final released version has smooth felt logs, sans serif embroidered lodge numbers, and the green felt outline has five defined flame points (see Figure 3).

In 1995 another version of the "woolly log" SE-8 chenille prototype

surfaced, sold by John Conley Williams in the catalog of Scout memorabilia published by his now-defunct business "Heart of Texas Trader." Theresa Williams provided me a picture of this patch at the time numbers (see Figure 4). Note that the lodge number lettering is black, unlike the other "woolly log" prototype with light yellow or tan lodge.

When I recently inquired about the source of this patch Conley advised that it was included in a group of samples that he purchased directly from Standard Pennant Company in 1995.

If you examine the four patches you will note that the flame tips are not all pointed in the green felt outline of the two "woolly log" issues. The felt log versions have a different green felt outline that features defined points for each flame tip.

Postscript

On January 1, 1997 the National Office reorganized several sections within the Southern Region, with changes taking effect after the 1997 conclaves.

SR-7 was split into SR-7A (Virginia lodges) and SR-7B (North

Carolina lodges), while losing three North Carolina lodges to Section SR-5. Section SR-7A gained Tutelo 161, Shenandoah 258, and Shenshawpotoo 276 from Section SR-6B. The net effect was that the Virginia OA lodges were once again reunited as their own section, the same way they were in the former SE-8. Fittingly, the first SR-7A conclave was hosted by Tutelo Lodge at Camp Powhatan, and the conclave theme was "Rekindle the Flame." The campfire logo from SE-8 was modified to include six logs in the fire instead of seven since the 1996 merger of Kecoughtan 463 and Chanco 483 to form Wahunsenakah 333 reduced the Virginia lodges by one.

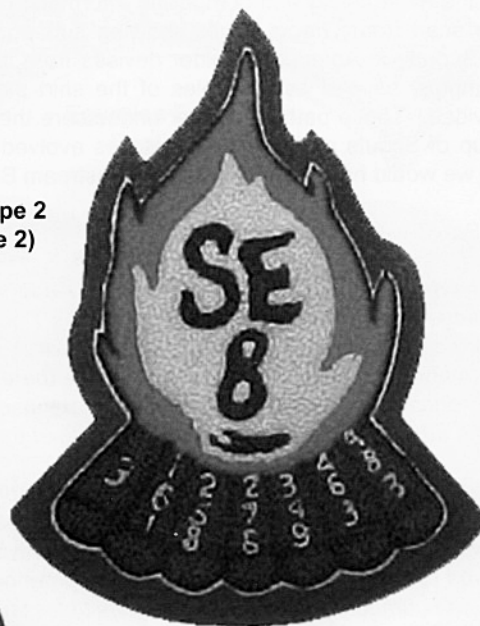
After 15 years of keeping the two prototypes and release version of SE-8 chenilles in his collection, DeWitt Holland sold the set and it now resides in the collection of a former Shenandoah Lodge Arrowman who specializes in Virginia Pow-Wow and Conclave issues. The whereabouts of the second "woolly log" prototype sold by Conley Williams remains unknown.

The SE-8 chenille remains highly collectible and stands as a fitting tribute to the tightly knit group of Virginia Order of the Arrow lodges that from 1982 through April 18, 1993 were known collectively as Southeast Region, Section 8.

Prototype 1
(Figure 1)



Prototype 2
(Figure 2)



Chenille Actually
Released
(Figure 3)



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Prototype 3
(Figure 4)

