

Mr. Clifford Maluegge
% Never Forgotten Honor Flight
903 S. 17th Avenue, Suite C
Wausau, WI 54401

Dear Mr. Maluegge,

Hello, My name is John Weber. I'm a freshman @ Merrill High School. I'll be 15 years old next month.

I'd like to tell you a little bit about myself. I came to America 2 ½ years ago from Russia, with my new family.

I only knew a few words of English. But my parents had me join Boy Scouts right after we came home.

I didn't know what to think about Boy Scouts, as I never knew that such an organization existed.

My parents believed..... who better to teach me about becoming an American boy than Boy Scouts of America.

Basically when I was learning the Boy Scout Law and Oath and the Pledge of Allegiance... I had to learn the English language at the same time. These days however, my native language feels more and more like English.

So it's been awhile since I had to translate back and forth in my head; just to communicate with anyone I met.

A little background information for you: When I first arrived in America, English wasn't my first language and I had to try hard to communicate with people; in fact, it was complicated.

As I said, it was a matter of me translating back and forth in my mind. First I'd hear the person speaking English. Then my mind had to translate that back into my native language. Then I had to say my response back in English....just to be able to speak to anyone. I wasn't sure if I was even saying anything right; but I got many compliments. So I knew I was doing ok.

Right from the beginning, the Boy Scout Law, Oath and the Pledge of Allegiance were special to me. Much like the Lord's Prayer is too.

Each time I say them, I feel those words deep in my heart. I have them all memorized in my heart and my head.

So when I saw my first American Flag, I immediately knew it meant more to me; than 'just a flag'.

I've shown our flag a lot of patriotism and respect ever since I met her. Every time I see our flag flying high; it makes my heart beat just a little faster. It makes me so grateful. Yet I see some people take our flag for granted and that makes me sad.

I think that's why I feel so connected to Boy Scouts and our Veterans; as I love our flag as much as they do.

On my 14th birthday, all I wanted was my very own American Flag. Governor Doyle sent me one; that he flew over our state capital for me; once he heard my birthday request, from my Mom. I even got a certificate and autographed picture of Governor Doyle.

I've met some really important politicians since I came to America too. Some Republicans and some Democrats. That's why America is such a great country...because our politicians take the time to make the next

generation better. Yet I've learned from the moment I met my new Dad and Mom that is was our veterans who we really need to show our gratitude to. Ever since I have been an American citizen, my Mom and I have went to a Veteran's Day Celebration. When my Mom looks at me with tears in her eyes each time we say the Pledge of Allegiance together; I know she's one of the most patriotic people I have ever met. ...next to me that is. 😊

So Mr. Clifford Maluegge and all the veterans on the Honor Flight, I salute you with all my heart. I thank you for your service to the greatest country ever in the world.

Just so you know, I've advanced through the ranks of Scouting *and* I've had a blast. I've met so many nice and interesting people. From where I originally came from; many parents didn't take care of their own children very well. So for an organization that counts on so many volunteers who are adults to keep a good program like Boy Scouts running; I think it's amazing.

Soon I will be Eagle Rank and hopefully by the end of the summer. My heart smiles just thinking about all of this. *I am really thankful for the many volunteers in Scouting who have taught me so much already.* I learned early on in Scouting that this program wasn't just about me advancing in the ranks of BSA. My new parents were right; I've advanced in my own new life here too. I'm really, really grateful to my new county for everything.

So I would like to dedicate my Eagle Service Project to you Mr. Clifford Maluegge and all the veterans who join you on this particular Honor Flight.

For your information my Eagle Service Project; (and I think you will be very happy to learn of it too.)

My Eagle Service Project is: NEW FLAGS FOR MERRILL

Step 1: I'll have to make a list of all the flags that should be replaced in the city of Merrill. This includes businesses and homes that really could use a new flag. I've estimate about 50-75 flags.

Step 2: I'm just starting to contact businesses, patriotic organizations and the media; (Foto News, Merrill Currier newspapers, WJMT AM Radio Station in Merrill, and our Chamber of Commerce to ask them to support this project by donating money or flags. All flags must be made in the USA.

Step 3. I spoke Mrs. Debby Kinsey - the Director Chamber of Commerce just to see if the Chamber would be interested. She thought it was a honor to be asked. So I've confirmed her to be my project's advisor.

Step 4: I'd fund raise enough money and then go and purchase the new flags. I'll ask to be a speaker at the future meetings and present my Eagle Service Project to them and then ask them to participate. I have several contacts in mind and am working on scheduling those meetings. Perhaps some of these organizations might be able to offer me a discounted price; if we buy a lot of flags. The price of each flag can range from a 3 x 5 flag is \$21.88 and a 4 x 6 is \$33.44 There may be different size flags donated and I'll match those sizes as need be. So I'll be busy raising money first.

Step 5: My project is basically two stages. I would contact the Post 1638 Commander, Dennis Brendt, and would ask him to oversee stage 2 of my Eagle Service Project. After the flags were purchased, I'd ask other Scouts and people who would like to help out. I'll create a list of people's names and their contact information.

Then I'll coordinate those willing to help to distribute the flags on specific days. It is also my plan to also collect information to be handed out to each flag recipient about information on how and when to fly the flag. I'll make sure that Scouts are safe when we travel around Merrill and arrange for adults to drive us to gather the old flags while we replace them with the new ones. I'll bring with me necessary safety equipment/tools are available when we do like a small ladder or a hammer and such. Also a cell phone; just in case someone would get hurt. I'm not counting on anyone getting hurt but it's just in case.

Step 6: The Disabled Veterans organizations have flag brochures that are very nicely done. This educational tool can be very helpful for my project. I'll include one brochure with each flag. I estimate this part of the project to take 2 weeks. I also want people to know that if they don't have a flag and would like one... they could contact me and I'd put their name on this list...before we placed the final order. Then they could start showing their patriotism by flying their own flag. It is my plan to hand out 10 flags to those who do want one; beyond the area businesses and homes that currently fly flags.

Step 7: Finally I'd share with our community what the meaning of each color on the Flag stands for and information on when and where to display our flag. And what dates to display our Flag too. This I would schedule with interviews on the radio and while using our local media sources too. I plan to invite the Wausau area tv stations to help me too.

For public places; a flag raising ceremony would be offered by me; with the help of other Scouts. We would present the colors to them.

Just so you know, I used to be a member of the Drill & Ceremony Team in my former troop. We would present the Colors for public and Scouting related events. I also was a member of a funeral color guard for Mr. Ed Zahn who was a veteran and a well-known Scouter. He was my friend and the most important man when it came to Camp Tesomas. I've been invited to Present the Colors at several Eagle Scouts Court of Honor. There was another Honor Flight that came home last year. My family and I drove to the Mosinee airport and I stood in the back by the revolving door. There I proudly stood with my Boy Scout uniform on and saluted each soldier that flew home from Washington D.C. It was my way of saying thank you. I got to meet a lot of the veterans and they were happy I came there too. Please watch for me. I'll be standing there waiting to salute you and shake your hand as well. I feel it's the least I can do for you and all the veterans on this Honor Flight.

So my Eagle Service Project makes good sense to me and my heart. I would like citizens and visitors of Merrill to see that our community flies nice looking flags and many of them. I want everyone to know just how great of a country America is. Maybe this project can be a gentle reminder to everyone to love this Country with all their heart too.

Just so you know Mrs. Polly Schneider was the nicest lady to me when I first started school in Merrill. She was kind and helpful to me when I became a student at St. John's. I was nervous when I started American school but she always had a smile on her face and I really appreciated that. I found out she was your daughter and thought this was also a nice way of letting you know just how terrific of a relative you have. I consider Mrs. Schneider my friend and so does my family. God Bless you Mr. Clifford Maluegge! God Bless of the veterans who will be flying with you too. God Bless America.

Sincerely, John Weber



Me at Mosinee Airport last year.

Me holding my very own American Flag from Governor Doyle on my 14th birthday.



Mrs. Ruth Hawks and my family at the other Honor flight.

Me winning the VFW Voice of Democracy Contest in 01/2011.



My first photo with American veterans.

Me and My Flag.