MRFF Demands that Blatantly Christian Veterans Memorial be Altered or Removed from Government-Run Cemetery

As a Scoutmaster for over 20 years, I have mentored over 100 Eagle Scout candidates. The Eagle Scout project allows young men of character and vision an opportunity to take pride in their achievements. Those of us in the Boy Scouts of America know that the Eagle Scout project is the key hallmark of the Boy Scouts of America. Scouting has defended the use of the name “Eagle Scout” as a protected trademark, and has a pre-approval, approval, coordinating and coaching process associated with each project.

In June, 2020, a Scout from Monument, Colorado, was awarded his Eagle Scout project, certainly with the attributes that would win its approval. I am also a long-standing and devoted Advisory Board member of the National Eagle Scout Foundation, which ensures that Eagle Scouts are celebrated across the United States.

Dear Mikey,

I read the Tribune’s report of the Eagle Scout project by Scout Michael Carlson and was saddened to find the project rife with messaging as an artifact of society’s history. New preferential statements have let stand any historical monuments with preferential religious messages. Note that I have underlined the word new — clear court decisions have held that cemeteries are public property, and they must be kept free of religious messages.

So while your Eagle Scout project presented a veterans memorial to the Town of Monument, Colorado, and was approved by the Pikes Peak Council, it unfortunately included symbols that are not allowed. These symbols are protected for a reason, and are property of the Department of Defense — they were issued by the Department of Defense as its marks. The symbols are protected for the purpose of being meaningful to those of the United States who have served, or the their families and friends.

As a Scoutmaster, I have a political obligation to do everything possible to see that the Scout Carlson’s project is perfect. My purpose is to help him “widen his Eagle Nest” and challenge him to continue to live a life in society that is inclusive of all people irrespective of their faith or personal beliefs. In the scouting community, this is a way of life that is easier said than done

Finally, as an Eagle Scout — BSA teaches inclusivity of all people. This project should have caught this. As a Scoutmaster for over 20 years, I have mentored over 100 Eagle Scout candidates and seen these ideals come to fruition. I have outlined above.

I am following with great interest a news report that involves the intersection of religion and the military. On February 20th, 2021, the Military Religious Freedom Foundation (MRFF) “demands” the town either remove the memorial or alter “its current appearance” because it is “clearly ...”

MRFF “demands” the town either remove the memorial or alter “its current appearance,” but still does not list the reasons. The memorial also displays the trademarked military branch insignias and crosses. As a practicing Christian and living in New Hampshire, I am a 59-year member of the Boy Scouts of America. I have been a scoutmaster for over 20 years and have mentored over 100 Eagle Scout candidates. Scouting has defended the use of the name “Eagle Scout” as a protected trademark.

DoD concurrence — is that the Department would need to articulate the alternative, the issuance by the Department of Defense expressed “DoD marks may not be licensed for ideological movements, sociopolitical and religious purposes”...".

Nothing I have articulated here is meant in any way to impose any sort of ideological or religious beliefs on anyone. The messages are not about religion or ideology, but about the attributes, weight and traditions of the military. I am not saying that one message is better than another, I am saying that one of the messages is a political statement and does not fit into the governmental context of a memorial.

The Scout Carlson’s Trail to Eagle. You have done this fine Scout a terrible injustice by allowing him to present a project that was rife with messaging as an artifact of society’s history. New preferential statements have let stand any historical monuments with preferential religious messages. Note that I have underlined the word new — clear court decisions have held that cemeteries are public property, and they must be kept free of religious messages.

But everything I have articulated here is directed to the participants in the project, the Town of Monument, Colorado, the VFW, the Boy Scout leadership, and his Scout troop and the Boy Scout leaders.

Scouting has defended the use of the name “Eagle Scout” as a protected trademark, and has a pre-approval, approval, coordinating and coaching process associated with each project. The Scout council should have realized this in the process of pre-approval.

I have outlined above.

The Scout council should have realized this in the process of pre-approval. The VFW played a role in the project, but they made a mistake up there in Pikes Peak Council. I hope you stopped by them. I am a practicing Christian and live a life in society that is inclusive of all people irrespective of their faith or personal beliefs. I have outlined above.

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