Scoutmaster's Moment
Fall Court of Honor – September 14, 2026
Written and delivered by Troop 150 Scoutmaster Todd G. Bolick

Star Spangled Banner

Setting: The Senior Patrol Leader and the Quartermaster stand to my left holding the American Flag that was given to the troop on our 75th anniversary. A group of four other members of the staff, led by the Assistant Senior Patrol Leader, are waiting out of sight for a cue to come out and display the troop's large flag. They will hold it under the projected lyrics of the National Anthem. Both groups displaying American flags will fold them after the singing has concluded.

In 2003, at a Court of Honor very similar to the one we are having tonight, I was sitting in this room, in seat right around there. I had recently been elected to my first term as our Senior Patrol Leader and was called up by Tom Davis, our then Representative in the United States House of Representatives, to accept an American Flag that had recently flown over the US Capitol, in honor of our troop's 75th anniversary. That flag is now displayed to you here by our SPL and QM.

Over our troop's 98-year legacy, we have collected some remarkable historical items. Another important object in this room, is the flagpole that we use for our American Flag, at every meeting. A military veteran's spouse donated it to us so that it could continue to be put to good use. We use that flagpole each week in honor of our veterans.

Now with our beautiful patriotic keepsakes in mind and before I get further into my Scoutmaster Moment, I want to ask you, both Scout and adults alike, to think about what positive emotions come to your mind when you see an American flag. For those who would like to share a few brief words that come to mind, raise your hand, and I'll call upon five of you. [call upon five people, mixing Scouts and adults and note their answers]. Thank you!

On June 14, 1777, the Continental Congress passed the flag act, establishing the first official flag of our nation. It instantly became a rallying symbol of the Revolution, with President Washington using it to raise the morale of the forces fighting for our independence as well as to gain added support and energy from others around the new country. Since then, throughout each of our nation's most challenging times, the flag has flown to inspire our nation for what we are yearning to achieve. Our troop recently visited Ft. McHenry, near Baltimore, where during the war of 1812, Francis Scott Key was inspired to write the "Star Spangled Banner" when he saw the flag still soaring, after a night of harsh bombardment. The flag grew dramatically in popularity in 1861, due to the Civil War, as it symbolized our enduring union. On February 23rd, 1945, after fighting in an intense and critical battle, six Marines climbed atop the island of Iwo Jima, and raised a flag, symbolizing the relentless aspirations of freedom, in the darkest of times. In 2001, 25 years ago, after the tragedies of September 11th, our flag became a reassuring symbol of comfort, hope, and determination. Today, as America celebrates its 250th, we continue to revere the flag and all it represents!

The American flag is the physical representation and embodiment of the United States of America. As many of you expressed, people take pride in the sense of; liberty, democracy, innovation, and more when they see it flying! Scouts have proudly worn the American flag on our uniform since the 1950s. We have been called upon to act as honor guards at countless flag ceremonies. Our troop even performed a flag ceremony for President Bush, at the White House, in 2005.

As Scouts, during our nation's 250th anniversary, I challenge each of you, to aspire to live up to all that our flag represents and to contribute toward making the

fabric of our nation even stronger! We are called upon to exhibit Scout Spirit and I believe that includes personifying what the American flag inspires in so many!

Another piece of iconic troop history are the signing boards we have created and signed at Courts of Honor over the decades. These boards have the signatures of Scouts and families who were in attendance, marking the special event. Thanks to the craftsmanship of John Corcoran, we have an America 250 themed signing board for everyone; Scout, family member, leader, to sign. As you add your name to this new signing board, I ask you to consider what you will commit to do to further our nation in marking this milestone anniversary.

A few of our Scout leaders will now display another American flag. [pause while they get arranged] I now ask everyone to join together in singing our National Anthem, "The Star-Spangled Banner," in honor of those lost on September 11th, 25 years ago, and in honor of our nation's 250th anniversary. After we sing, we will observe the Scouts folding the flags. Troop attention, troop salute [count off to three and start singing the National Anthem].

National Anthem lyrics

O say can you see, by the dawn's early light, What so proudly we hail'd at the twilight's last gleaming, Whose broad stripes and bright stars through the perilous fight, O'er the ramparts we watch'd were so gallantly streaming? And the rocket's red glare, the bombs bursting in air, Gave proof through the night that our flag was still there, O say does that star-spangled banner yet wave, O'er the land of the free and the home of the brave?

Too. [honor guards fold the flags] You may be seated. Thank you.