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Scout earns all merit badges

By *Fares Sabawi* of the *Caller Times*

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When Boy Scout Troop 87 held a meeting to award their members with the merit badges they earned, they followed a particular process.

The scout's name was called along with the badges he's earned, and then the scout would walk up to retrieve them.

But when David England's name was called, the list of badges went on and on.

"I counted 21 merit badges (that) night," said Donald Lee, the district advancement chairman for the South Texas Council of the Boy Scouts of America.

England accomplished a rare task that night on Nov. 12. The badges he received that night were the final 21 he needed to achieve his goal of earning every merit badge available during his time as a Boy Scout. All 141 of them.

England, a Boy Scout since 2008, made it his mission to earn every badge.

"When he was doing his Eagle Scout project and did the board review, he already had about 55 or 60 merit badges," said Michael Hess, England's stepfather and scoutmaster. "He thought for a minute and simply said, 'yes.' "

It was not an impossible task, but it required dedication, England said.

"I spent countless hours on this," he said. "I spent summer breaks, spring breaks — all of my breaks really — at camp outs and different things like that just to earn these."

Some merit badges, like the scuba diving badge and the ski badge, could not be completed here, so England had to travel in his free time.

"There's no snow here in Corpus Christi," Hess said. "So we had to take him to New Mexico."

England's full sash displays all the experiences he went through as a Boy Scout, experiences that have widened his horizons.

"I've been able to preview a bunch of different jobs and occupations," England said. "It's broadened my spectrum of searching for specific career opportunities."

The feat is a first for the South Texas Council, Lee said, and English is one of only roughly 200 scouts in the organization's history to earn every badge.

"This is really an accomplishment for Corpus Christi," Lee said. "He's got a drive and a will power and a determination that I honestly feel ... he's going to make something of himself above and beyond the call of duty."

England, an 18-year-old senior at Carroll High School, looks to do that, too. Before attending college to become a chemical engineer, he ships off July 11 to join the Navy reserves.

"Boy Scouts definitely did help in molding me and shaping me," England said. "I also have family members in the military."

England's time as an active Boy Scout is over, but he is already signed up to be an assistant scoutmaster.

"I'm here to help and support all the boys in the troop," he said.

England does not want to be the only person in the troop to have earned every badge. In fact, he's already got his eye on a protégé.

"I've already picked out a boy that's got 30 merit badges and he's only 11," English said. "He still has a quite a few to go, but if he puts in the effort, he can definitely get it."

Boy Scout of Merit Badges

American Business

American Cultures

American Heritage

American Labor

Animal Science

Animation

Archaeology

Archery

Architecture and Landscape Architecture

Art

Astronomy

Athletics

Automotive Maintenance

Aviation

Backpacking

Basketry

Bird Study

Bugling

Camping

Canoeing

Chemistry

Chess

Citizenship in the Community

Citizenship in the Nation

Citizenship in the World

Climbing

Coin Collecting

Collections

Communication

Composite Materials

Cooking

Crime Prevention

Cycling

Dentistry

Digital Technology

Disabilities Awareness

Dog Care

Drafting

Electricity

Electronics

Emergency Preparedness

Energy

Engineering

Entrepreneurship

Environmental Science

Family Life

Farm Mechanics

Fingerprinting

Fire Safety

First Aid

Fish and Wildlife Management

Fishing

Fly-Fishing

Forestry

Game Design

Gardening

Genealogy

Geocaching

Geology

Golf

Graphic Arts

Hiking

Home Repairs

Horsemanship

Indian Lore

Insect Study

Inventing

Journalism

Kayaking

Landscape Architecture

Law

Leatherwork

Lifesaving

Mammal Study

Medicine

Metalwork

Mining in Society

Model Design and Building

Motorboating

Moviemaking

Music

Nature

Nuclear Science

Oceanography

Orienteering

Painting

Personal Fitness

Personal Management

Pets

Photography

Pioneering

Plant Science

Plumbing

Pottery

Programming

Public Health

Public Speaking

Pulp and Paper

Radio

Railroading

Reading

Reptile and Amphibian Study

Rifle Shooting

Robotics

Rowing

Safety

Salesmanship

Scholarship

Scouting Heritage

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Signs, Signals, and Codes

Skating

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Snow Sports

Soil and Water Conservation

Space Exploration

Sports

Stamp Collecting

Surveying

Sustainability

Swimming

Textile

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