

Teenager Earns Boy Scouts Of America Bugle Merit Badge

BY IRIS B. HOLTON
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Recently, a Tampa teenager completed his mission and earned the last of 139 merit badges with the Boy Scouts of America. **N'Jhari Jackson** joins less than 200 of the 8 million Boy Scouts to accomplish this goal. **Thomas Barber** served as his Merit Badge Counselor of Troop 53.

His mother, **Ms. LaShina Lewis** said, "This young man has completed every BSA Merit Badge (139) by earning his Bugle Merit Badge. It took him 3 years.

"Less than 200 of the 8 million Boy Scouts have earned this honor. He has earned every Eagle Palm Award Possible (23; 8 Bronze, 8 Gold, 7 Silver); National Outdoor Awards for Camping, Conservation Award, Hometown Award, 5-Mile Swim, membership in BSA National Honor Society, Order of the Arrow and Lifeguard Certification. His mission is complete!"

Ms. Lewis said **N'Jhari** will accept the Eagle Scout of Year Award/Scholarship from the Florida State Department American Legion next month at the State Convention July 5-8.

Of his accomplishment, **N'Jhari** said, "I have (finally) earned my Bugling Merit Badge (after 3 years) and have Earned ALL BSA Merit Badges, 139 to be exact. I also completed my Red Cross/AHA Lifeguard Certification last month with a goal of being a BSA Lifeguard and helping with BSA Aquatics Camps because I love all things aquatics.

"Also, I was awarded the U. S. Army Pro Football Hall of Fame Award for Excellence (finalist) and will attend Enshrinement Week Festivities in Canton, OH August 2nd-5th. So, what took me so long with bugling... it was HARD!"

N'Jhari said his inspiration for completing the Bugle requirements came about when he attended his grandfather's funeral. His grandfather was a Purple Heart recipient. While in the cemetery, another soldier was being laid to rest and TAPS were played for him as well.

"I play Bass Guitar, which almost comes naturally, but a wind instrument, wow. After hearing TAPS being played live and looking across the way at another serviceman being buried at Lincoln National Cemetery and hear-



N'Jhari Jackson has earned all 139 badges with the Boy Scouts of America. He is shown with President Barack Obama during a visit to the White House as a representative of Boy Scouts of America.

ing TAPS being played on a recorder, made me think that was kind of unfair and motivated me each time I gave up on earning this last badge.

"Today, I submitted my application to join the Youth Trumpet & TAPS Corps in honor of my granddad. During the times I put the bugle and trumpet down in thinking it was just too hard, I filled my time with publishing 3 books, varsity football, varsity lacrosse varsity swimming, volunteering (donating AEDs and delivering Pajama Buddies to sick kids and KoolSox4KoolKidz in group homes) and winning a National Silver Medal for Writing in the Scholastic Art & Writing Awards, along with Regional Gold Key for poetry, 2 Silver Keys for poetry/writing, and 3 Honorable Mentions for poetry."

He plans to spend the summer reviewing for the ACT/SAT, submitting applications for college, football camps, volunteering, and whatever else comes his way.