



[Home \(/\)](#) / [News \(/news\)](#)

Stuttgart student marks rare achievement after earning every merit badge the Scouts offer



(/polopoly_fs/1.562057.1545823514!/image/image.jpg_gen/derivatives/landscape_900/image.jpg)

Gavin Kisby, a student at Stuttgart High School, earned all 137 Boy Scout merit badges earlier this year. While the Scouts don't keep official track of those who have achieved the feat, it is widely regarded in Scout circles as extremely rare.

JOHN VANDIVER/STARS AND STRIPES

(//STRIPES.REPRINTMIN
DEFAULT.HTML?
SRC=HTTPS://WWW.STR
1.562057&CAPTION=GA

Email

Print

Reddit

Tweet

Share

Pinterest

More

(//www.addthis.co

By JOHN VANDIVER (/reporters/2.1272?author=John_Vandiver) | STARS AND STRIPES

Published: December 26, 2018

STUTTGART, Germany — When 17-year-old Gavin Kisby moved to the military community here at the start of the school year, he had one piece of unfinished Scout business that needed tending.

KISBY
STUTTGART
STUTTGART
HIGH
SCHOOL,
EARNED ALL
137 BOY
SCOUT MERIT
BADGES
EARLIER THIS
YEAR. WHILE
DON'T KEEP
OFFICIAL
TRACK OF
THOSE WHO
HAVE
ACHIEVED
THE FEAT, IT
IS WIDELY
REGARDED IN

ing earned the rank of Eagle Scout at 14, his goal was to eventually obtain every merit badge the Scouts had to offer — a rare achievement. This fall, there was one left — water sports — and he needed to find a Scout counselor and a place to get the job done.

“That was a tough one, but it turned out my neighbor across the street was a counselor,” said Kisby, who lives on Kelley Barracks where his dad is assigned to U.S. Africa Command.

After some instruction, Kisby recently received his last merit badge after successfully water skiing around St. Leoner Lake near Heidelberg.

ADVERTISING

The final merit badge was the culmination of a quest that began when he started the Boy Scouts as an 11-year-old.

GALLERY



(/polopoly_fs/1.562058.1545823521/image/image.jpg_gen/derivatives/landscape_900/image.jpg)

Gavin Kisby, a student at Stuttgart High School and an Eagle Scout, earned all 137 merit badges offered by the Boy Scouts. He received his final badge earlier this year after water skiing around St. Leoner Lake near Heidelberg.

COURTESY DOUG KISBY

The Boy Scouts do not keep an official record of all the members who have garnered every merit badge. But the website Merit Badge Knot has become an unofficial record keeper and puts the number at about 400. For perspective, the Boy Scouts of America has had more than 110 million participants since it was founded in 1910.

For Kisby, a student at Stuttgart High School, reaching the milestone has meant having to demonstrate proficiency in a wide range of skills. There are badges for everything from fire safety and first aid to cooking and bugling.

(//STRIPES.REPRINTMINT
DEFAULT.HTML?
SRC=HTTPS://WWW.STRI
1.562057&CAPTION=GAV
KISBY, A
STUDENT AT
STUTTGART
HIGH
SCHOOL,
EARNED ALL
137 BOY
SCOUT MERIT
BADGES
EARLIER THIS
YEAR. WHILE
THE SCOUTS
DON'T KEEP
OFFICIAL
TRACK OF

... of the toughest, Kisby said, was scuba diving because of the cost of learning the skill. So THOSE WHO started up a business, selling wreaths he made out of empty shotgun shells, to pay for it. (//www.stripes.com) Subscribe (/subscribe/) Login

“All profit went to fees and gear for the badges,” said Kisby’s father, Doug. THE FEAT, IT IS WIDELY REGARDED IN SCOUT CIRCLES AS EXTREMELY RARE.)

The toughest for the family involved the ear-piercing hours that Gavin spent learning 15 different bugle calls. It took almost two years to earn the badge, Doug said. But the activities brought the family together.

ARTICLE CONTINUES BELOW ∨

“As the only boy in our family with four sisters, he made it a point to include them as much as possible too,” his father said.

Along the way, Kisby said the quest for all the merit badges has given him more self-confidence.

“I was shy and the merit badges forced me to open up. It helped me to talk with people,” Kisby said. “There’s a lot of commitment that goes into this.”

Meanwhile, through his work on the badges, Kisby said he discovered a love for working with his hands and metal. The welding badge made him think about a future career in welding. Either that, or a park ranger, he said.

vandiver.john@stripes.com (<mailto:vandiver.john@stripes.com>)

Twitter: [@john_vandiver](http://www.twitter.com/john_vandiver) (http://www.twitter.com/john_vandiver)