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Trombonist to play at Army All-American Bowl

JACKSON TEEN JOINS THE FEW

BY **KEITH RUSCITTI** • TOMS RIVER BUREAU • DECEMBER 10, 2008

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Paul Maier of Jackson will be spending most of his 18th birthday on a plane, alone.

But this year, that is all right with him.

Maier is one of a select group of high school seniors from across the country who will be part of the high school marching band at the U.S. Army All-American Bowl football game on Jan. 3 in San Antonio.

He heads for the Lone Star State on Dec. 30.

"I'll be on an airplane by myself for the first time. But I'm really looking forward to it," said Maier, a senior at Jackson Liberty High School.

A trombone player with the Jackson Liberty band, Maier was nominated for a spot on the All-American band by Scott Katona, a music teacher and band director for the school. But it took more than just a nomination to ensure a spot.

Hundreds of high school musicians vie for the honor, according to Liz Meltzer, a promotion representative for Sportlink, the company that produces the football game.

Army Staff Sgt. Daniel Murphy, a Toms River East High School graduate and a local recruiter, said 97 were selected to play at the game this year.

Maier got the ball rolling by applying online to the Music Educators National Conference and then submitted a resume and a letter of interest. After that, he made and sent a video audition.

"It was a pretty intensive audition process," Maier said. "I had to do 40 to 50 takes before I was comfortable with it. Thankfully, I have friends in the TV tech department who helped me out. It was a lot of work."

He was notified by MENC selection administrators he was selected to the All-American roster in August.

Last week officials representing the U.S. Army All American Bowl publicly honored Maier for his feat. The presentation took place at the high school auditorium on Thursday.

Katona hopes Maier's accomplishment will inspire other students at the high school.

"There was no pressure on Paul to go out and do this," Katona said. "This was something he wanted to do. It just goes to show, if you put your mind to it and want to do it, you can."

The football game features the top-ranked high school senior football players in the country.



Paul Maier, a senior at Jackson Liberty High School, is one of 97 band members from across the nation selected to participate in the U.S. Army All-American Bowl in San Antonio. (STAFF PHOTO: SHAWN HUBER)

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Paul Maier's parents, Don and Carol, applaud for their son during a ceremony at Jackson Memorial High School on Thursday.



Army Staff Sgt. Daniel Murphy (left) presents Jackson Liberty High School senior Paul Maier with a jacket during a presentation honoring Maier, who has been selected to perform with a marching band during the annual U.S. Army All-American Bowl game Jan. 3. (STAFF PHOTO: SHAWN HUBER)

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