

Girl Scout member organizes group to play taps at veterans' funerals

By Sarah Kirby Transcript Staff Writer | Posted: Sunday, October 4, 2015 10:20 pm

Hearing taps is enough to bring tears to one's eye. But when Moore Girl Scout member Katie Prior heard that the mournful, 24-note melody is often played from a sound system at veterans' funerals, she was prepared to make every last salute sound as authentic as possible.

Prior, a trumpet player with Oklahoma Youth Orchestras, recruited her friends to play taps live for veterans in her community. She developed the Youth Trumpet & Taps Corps, a nonprofit organization that trains, supports and recognizes high school trumpet players.

Her project became the impetus for the Gold Award, the highest achievement one can receive within the organization.

At the age of 14, she became one of the youngest recipients of the award.

"I had just bridged from Cadettes to Seniors and finished the eighth grade. I got my Gold Award project approval nine days before my 14th birthday," Prior said.

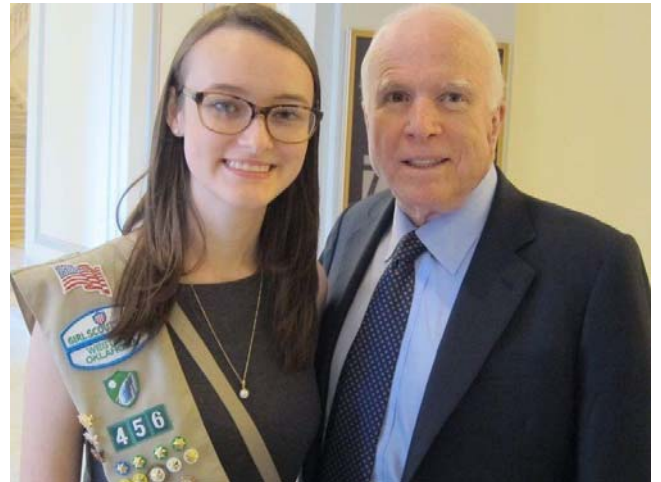
Prior said she put in more than 150 hours in the first six months of working on the project, which was "enough hours for a part-time job."

Prior later became one of 11 women to receive the Champions of Change award during a September ceremony at the White House.

She cited her involvement with Girl Scouts as the key to her success.

According to girlscouts.org, Juliette Gordon "Daisy" Low founded Girl Scouts 100 years ago, forming the first troop on March 12, 1912, in Savannah, Georgia. Girl Scouts' mission is to build girls' courage, confidence and character.

"Everything I do in my life is touched by Girl Scouts," Prior said. "Without Girl Scouts, I would not have learned about trying to solve problems in my community that I personally cared a lot about and



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Moore Girl Scout member Katie Prior poses with Arizona Sen. John McCain.

I know I would never have been the founder of a nonprofit or have gotten to go to the White House.”

Prior said she felt extremely honored, especially after meeting the other Champions and finding out that more than 1,000 applications were submitted.

“Standing up there with so many women who had done amazing things for our country and society made me really proud to be a woman and an American,” Prior said.

Prior has since recruited and trained trumpet players in Oklahoma, Texas, Colorado, Illinois, Nebraska and Wisconsin who volunteer to sound taps at military funerals and perform patriotic music at community events honoring veterans. She has hosted training workshops in Texas and Wisconsin and created an online training that can be taken by any high school trumpeter across the country.

Her plans for the Youth Trumpet & Taps Corps include scholarship programs for taps volunteers and also for music students who come from families of deceased veterans.

“I’m working on expanding into even more states. I’ve created an online training that kids all over the country can take and I expect once the news gets out, that I’ll have many more volunteers in many more states,” Prior said.

For more information about local Girl Scout troops, visit gswestok.org.