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Cheshire High School clarinet player makes the U.S. Army band

By: George Moore , Record-Journal staff

CHESHIRE - Cheshire High School senior Rui Wang will be taking his marching band talents to Texas this January after being selected Wednesday to participate in the halftime show for the U.S. Army's All-American Bowl.

The All-American Bowl is an Army-sponsored game featuring top high school football players and band musicians from around the country.



Johnathon Henninger / Record-Journal
Rui Wang celebrates with his classmates Wednesday at Cheshire High School after he was selected to play the clarinet for the U.S. Army All-American Marching Band. Only 97 band members in the nation are selected to play with the band in Texas in January.

Representatives from the All-American Bowl formally selected Wang, a clarinet player, at a ceremony in the high school auditorium Wednesday. The 17-year-old will join 96 student musicians selected from around the country to perform in the Army's All-American Marching Band.

"It's a great honor to represent the school, represent the student body and of course to represent the state of Connecticut too," he said.

The bowl will be held Jan. 9 at the Alamodome in San Antonio. Wang said he couldn't pass up the opportunity to play during a major halftime show. He also wanted a chance to go back to Texas, where he lived during some of his middle and elementary school years and still has some friends.

Wang was one of 1,300 students nominated to play in the band. With the help of his friend and fellow school band member, Zhaowei Ding, Wang made audition videos of himself playing clarinet and marching. He was nominated by school band director and K-12 Music Department Chairman John Kuhner.

"It's a great honor," Kuhner said. "This is all Rui's project."

Kuhner told his students about All-American Marching Band after attending the All-American Bowl last year. Kuhner said he was impressed with the performance.

Wang was the only student from the state chosen to perform in the band, though two football players from Stamford were selected to perform in the All-American football team.

The Army will pay for Wang's travel and lodging expenses. The All-American band will have about one week to prepare for the halftime show, said Game Representative Cory Berger. The students, all hard-working musicians, get along well, he said.

"They make friends instantly," he said.

The upcoming event marks the 10th anniversary of the All-American Bowl, but it is only the third year that the game has included a marching band component, Berger said. The Army has been increasing its emphasis on the marching band event and interest has grown strong over the last three years, Berger said.

The All-American game will be broadcast on NBC, though the halftime show will be viewable on www.allamericangames.tv. Wang plans to prepare for a career in medicine in college next year.

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