

About the Cover Art



Army Veteran Rick Latty doesn't really know why he lost his vision to the point that he is legally blind, but he doesn't let that stop him from living his life. In fact, he says, the fact that it happened might have presented new opportunities to do what he loves that wouldn't have come his way otherwise.

"I used to be pretty good at drawing when I was younger, but like a lot of things in life, you sort of lose track of it when you get older," said the Battle Creek, Michigan, native. "When I began to lose my vision back in the early 1980s, I needed something to do to keep my mind occupied, especially during the cold winter months." That's when he connected with the Battle Creek VA Medical Center.

"Initially, I connected for my medications and for some support, but I learned that there was much more available, including workshops and resources to help me to do things like read my mail and to really live my life. I was even given the opportunity to attend the Hines School for Blind Veterans in Chicago (The Central Blind Rehabilitation Center at the Edward Hines Jr. VA Hospital), and when they opened a smaller Blind Center in Battle Creek I was asked to come back and help with some of the programs," he explains.

As for his artwork, Mr. Latty's acrylic painting, *Sunrise*, was selected from the Special Recognition Physical Disabilities Category for the 2012 National Veterans Creative Arts Festival to adorn the cover of *JRRD* in 2013.

The self-taught artist said that while he has been recognized for his artwork locally in the feeling — a feeling of accomplishment — when I complete a piece of art. It helps with selfhealing and helps me to remember that I have a lot to offer."

This year marks the 10th year of *JRRD* sponsoring artists for the National Veterans Creative Arts Festival. "This exceptional event is a natural fit for *JRRD*," said Stacieann Yuhasz, PhD, editor. "As the only scientific journal produced by the Department of Veterans Affairs, and since creative arts and creative expression have been shown to provide rehabilitative benefits to people suffering with emotional and physical disabilities, it makes perfect sense for us to partner and support the healing efforts of our Nation's Veterans."

