

About the Cover Art

A *Winter Jewel*, created by 89-year-old Chicago-based Veteran artist Daniel Siculan, was selected as First Place winner in Digital Art in the 2012 National Veterans Creative Arts Festival. While this is not his first award, the artist said this was his most important honor.

“I’m blessed in that God has been good to me and I don’t have any disabilities,” said Siculan. “But at the same time, if I didn’t have my artwork to fall back on, life would be meaningless to me. Creating art has been my life and has brought me everything that I have. I have feelings of wonderment about how this all came to be and I am very appreciative of my blessings.”

Born to Romanian parents and growing up in Martins Ferry, Ohio, Siculan said his mother noticed he had some artistic talent when he was about 4 years old and would sketch on paper. By age 11, Siculan was drawing the comics in the newspaper and carrying them with him wherever he went. With the support and encouragement of his high school teacher, who took up a collection to buy art lessons, Siculan was able to attend the Oglesby Art Institute in Wheeling, West Virginia, for 1 year, which he said “nourished the natural artist in me.”

Even as he served in the Korean War, the Air Force Corporal was drawing maps for the U.S. military and cartoons for his wife, Thelma. After the war, Dan moved to Chicago where he continued his artistry, painting scenes of the city, some right outside of his studio.

Dan also enjoys creating pieces inspired by nature, animals, and people. Later in life, Dan volunteered his talents at the Captain James A. Lovell Federal Health Care Center in Chicago, where he drew portraits of injured Veterans. Siculan estimates he has sketched nearly a thousand Veteran portraits, enjoying conversations with each one, and says, “As much as the art helps me, this seems like an ideal way to open up a person’s mind.”

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 VA, 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.”

