

About the Cover Art



For Navy Veteran Norman E. Cash, the preference to learn a skill rather than accept handouts describes how a construction worker and handyman with attention deficit hyperactivity disorder became an accomplished computer graphics artist and musician.

A native of Baltimore, Maryland, Mr. Cash enlisted in the Navy in the mid-1970s, serving just under 2 years as a seaman apprentice in the combat information center aboard the U.S.S. Norton Sound, a seaplane tender stationed near Long Beach, California. During his service, Mr. Cash says he always felt he was different than others around him and it seemed to take him longer to accomplish tasks because he'd get distracted or overwhelmed. Conversations with medical support personnel earned him an honorable discharge, but he left the Navy without a diagnosis or any real plans for the future.

Mr. Cash said he earned a living working multiple jobs at the same time while doing odd jobs as people needed help. He continued to experiment with art and music, even during a year when he was living on the streets. "It was really just playing with different artistic techniques and shapes, but it helped me to stay focused and out of trouble," he says.

When a friend from church asked for help painting and doing some handyman work, Mr. Cash jumped right in to help. "My friend knew I enjoyed art, had some talent, and told me he had enough work to earn money for a good computer. Another friend paid me with some good digital software. I taught myself how to use the equipment to create digital art, to record and mix music, and to find a marketable skill that I could do on my own," Mr. Cash says.

"Today I have found ways to manage what finally was diagnosed as ADHD, thanks to the support of the VA team at VA Maryland Healthcare System," says Mr. Cash, who has found success with his music and art while living with and helping his elderly parents. "The therapy and lessons provided through the VA in Baltimore and Perry Point, along with a firm hand of a caring physician, changed my life. I still fight with my issues on a daily basis, but now I have a better understanding of what I am dealing with and how to get through it."

White Glass Sculpture was awarded top honors in the Digital Art Category at the 2014 National Veterans Creative Arts Festival in Milwaukee, Wisconsin. "Most of my art started by just playing around with different tools and techniques," Mr. Cash explains. "Sometimes it starts with a photo. Experimentation got this to where I liked it, using 3-D implementation. Like writing a song, it's the rare instance when you will sit down, intending to write a song, and you get it right the first time. But I was so pleased with how it came out, and even more pleased others agreed."

The National Veterans Creative Arts Festival is one of the programs sponsored by the VA National Veterans Sports Programs and Special Events. To participate in the Festival, Veterans first compete locally. Those selected are then provided the opportunity to attend the Festival and compete at a national level.

"I am an advocate of the Special Events, having seen firsthand how participation in these types of rehabilitation programs benefits our Veterans," said Shirley Groer, PhD, *JRRD* editor. "Since the 1980s, the VA has provided opportunities for Veterans to participate in specific sports programs (National Veterans Wheelchair Games) or special events (National Creative Arts Festival and Golden Age Games) as a means to successful rehabilitation. We are honored to be able to display highlights of Veteran's artwork that was presented at the 2014 Creative Arts Festival, and thank the Veterans for their willingness to share their art."

