

## About the Cover Art

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When a head injury derailed Roland Collins' military career, he became angry. The Army Veteran was two years into his second enlistment when a gunshot to the head landed him in a polytrauma center, where he received care for a range of issues. He lost interest in doing anything that he had enjoyed previously, with the exception of art.

Collins' military service, which was highlighted by deployments in Honduras, Panama, and Operations Desert Shield and Desert Storm, had included stints in the military police, the infantry, and radio communications repair. "They were exciting opportunities—I gained a great deal of experience and opportunity, and I came away virtually unscathed." When his children were born in the mid-1990s, Collins took a break from the military to help raise them—and then came September 11, 2001. "I knew there was still more for me to offer, so I re-enlisted," said Collins.

Collins found himself serving in Iraq. "We were taking a water buffalo into a village in Fallujah, and I had a camera so I started taking photos. There was a group of children who came for water, and I saw a boy drinking so I photographed him." Collins said he never thought about the photo again until a few years later.

"I found myself getting very angry and frustrated and experiencing a lot of post-traumatic stress, but I did my best to hide my issues. Then in 2012, I was diagnosed with kidney cancer. When I was going through some boxes during rehabilitation for the head injury I found the photo again, so I put graphite pencil to paper and started drawing. The nurse case manager saw my drawing and encouraged me to enter it in the Veterans competition," he said.

*Drink Water*, featured on the cover of this issue of *JRRD*, was selected to compete nationally when it was judged at the Robley Rex Department of Veterans Affairs Medical Center in Louisville, Kentucky, and ended up finishing second in the 2015 National Veterans Creative Arts Festival in the monochromatic drawing category.

"Most of the time when I was drawing I did it for myself. I think my art has definitely improved over the years. But more important is that art has helped me deal with my anger and it has been soothing enough to help me sleep better. It really has been my best therapy, allowing me to focus on something other than memories and feelings of grief."

