



art • music • drama • dance • creative writing

Performer Profile

Paul Boruff – A Light that Illuminates the Needs of Veterans!

The performing arts have been an entertainment choice for people for as long as they have gathered for enjoyment. As far back as the 1500s, the performing arts began as a stage-based method of entertainment. Centuries later in the 1950s, it started as a school-house method for one combat veteran of the Vietnam War, Paul Boruff.

Ask Boruff what he hopes to accomplish with his eighth performance at the National Veterans Creative Arts Festival and he will quickly tell you that he wants to be a light that illuminates the needs of veterans returning from war. “We are a mirror that shines the light onto those who have needs to be met,” said Boruff. “They need to continue to be seen for who they were before their military conflicts and who they remain today – individuals with a lot of talent.”



Boruff, a 56-year-old Navy veteran from Salt Lake City, is a natural on stage. He grew up singing and playing musical instruments, talents that have taken him far in life. A multitasking musician, he enjoys all types of music including folk, jazz, blues, country and western. He has been involved in the arts since he was eight years old.

“I always knew I’d be in the entertainment business,” Boruff says. “I got my first guitar when I was eight, and I began singing even before that.” During his high school years, he and a group of five other teenagers formed a band called, “The Miscellaneous Assortment,” and he was also a key member of his church choir. When graduation rolled around, Boruff chose to follow his family’s tradition of military service and joined the Navy.

Enlisting in 1969, Boruff was trained to be a part of an aviation squadron in Albany, Ga. Soon after his training, he got the orders sending him to Vietnam. Assigned to the aircraft carriers USS Ranger and USS Saratoga as part of a reconnaissance attack squadron, Boruff saw a great deal of combat. After completing his military service in 1973, he picked up his musical interests right where he left off.

Taking only his backpack and guitar, Boruff set off in search of places to share his profession and earn a living as an entertainer. He entered his first Creative Arts Festival in 2000, winning first place for his own rendition of “Somewhere over the Rainbow,” and was invited to attend the annual event in Washington, D.C. that year. This year marks Boruff’s eighth performance at the Festival, taking place in St. Louis, Mo. This time he will sing, “Roll on Mississippi,” a Charlie Pride hit that earned him first place in the country music category. “You know, I’m still very excited to be participating in the Festival this year,” Boruff says. “I feel very honored to be involved and to be effective to the Help Hospitalized Veterans organization (one of the Festival’s co-sponsors), in reaching those veterans who receive therapeutic benefits from their craft program.”