

National Veterans Creative Arts Festival

SPECIAL RECOGNITION CATEGORY DANCE DIVISION

Ragg Mopp

THE KNOXVILLE DANCING VETS

VA CENTRAL IOWA HEALTH CARE SYSTEM, KNOXVILLE

One to three times each week at the VA Central Iowa Health Care System in Knoxville, four veterans gather to participate in the music therapy program. There are various physical and mental health challenges that exist among the group members, and treatment goals are carefully addressed to meet the needs of each individual.

During the sessions, the veterans work on bell ringing and function as a bell choir, but more recently they expressed an interest in becoming more physically active as a group. Music therapist Suzanne Anderson suggested they try dancing, and work on developing a routine that could be entered into the National Veterans Creative Arts competition. The veterans enthusiastically agreed and set out to develop a dance routine to the spirited song, *Ragg Mopp*, using mops as props for purposes of entertainment as well as to assist with physical balance. Wheelchairs and scooters were abandoned in order to challenge themselves in new and mobility-creative ways.

The outcomes for the veterans known as *The Knoxville Dancing Vets* have been only positive. They have experienced a sense of satisfaction at the accomplishment they have achieved, and have re-established a feeling of cohesiveness within the group. Challenged in a different way, they look forward to continuing to develop more dance routines that reinforce their desire to maintain and improve their physical health and mental well-being.



The Knoxville Dancing Vets

Pictured top row (l to r) Gilbert Coe and Ray Carlson.

Bottom row (l to r) Bill Kizer and Lana Gillaspie.