

Tuesday, October 12, 2004

## Meet Walter Pasciak – A Blind Beat Dancer and WWII Hero!

Every veteran has a story but unless you ask, they may never be told.

Take Walter Pasciak, for instance. A member of the Blind Beat Dancers of Baltimore, he has attended the Creative Arts Festival numerous times. It may surprise you to learn, though, that this World War II veteran recently received the highest honor from the French government for helping liberate France during the summer of 1944.

This past June, Pasciak joined 99 other WWII veterans from across the United States who journeyed to France as a guest of the French government. There, the veterans were treated like royalty.

“At de Gaulle Airport, they had the red carpet out for us – literally,” recalled Pasciak. “The carpet was so thick, it tickled your ankles and it must have been 1,000 feet long. The French Army band played and police escorted us wherever we went. In the military, it was ‘hurry up and wait,’ but it was nothing like that this time. We didn’t spend five seconds waiting for anything, and there were receptions every two hours. It was tremendous.”

The National Order of the Legion of Honor was founded by Napoleon Bonaparte and is the French equivalent of the U.S. Congressional Medal of

Honor. Pasciak is quick to point out that he was not awarded the medal for his own personal acts, and that he was representing all the veterans who helped liberate France. The medal ceremony itself was held at Napoleon’s tomb, where the courtyard was big enough for a full military division to pass in review. According to Pasciak, “The courtyard was all cobblestone but you could eat off that cobblestone – they must have had a division out there with a toothbrush, cleaning.”

“There were lots of big shots there,” he said. “One of the generals came up to me and told me that because of me and my fellow soldiers, he was born free in a free country. He was born in 1945 and as he was saying this, he was very proud.”

Walter Pasciak was a member of the 80<sup>th</sup> Division and landed in France 45 days after D-Day. His division moved through northern France, taking cities such as Angers, Nancy and Strasburg. “Once we got through the German line, we really moved through France,” Pasciak remembers. “We traveled 100 miles a day. At one point, my buddy Charlie and I held 80



WWII veteran Walter Pasciak encourages all veterans to participate in the Veterans History Project.

German prisoners. We were the only ones with rifles. To me, it’s all still fresh in my mind.”

During a Braille lesson, Pasciak learned some history about his days in France. The Germans insisted that all private businesses remove their French signs and replace them with German ones. One street was named “Savage” in French. “Ironically,” Pasciak said, “one

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## “Meet Walter” from page 1

German who was overseeing the transition to all German made an error – or else he was smart, I don’t know which. The street that was named ‘Savage’ in French turned out being named ‘Adolph Hitler’ in German. A lot of people don’t know that.”

Pasciak shared a lot of his memories in an interview with the Veterans History Project, which are recorded in conjunction with the Library of Congress. In fact, he was selected to go to France based on the information provided to the Library through that interview.

“The Veterans History Project is very well worth the time it takes to tell your story,” he said. “My kids hear me talk about the service once in a while, but I don’t know if they really appreciate what went on during the war. As part of my interview, they gave me a tape so now I have a lot of my war memories on record. You don’t leave notes for your kids, but I gave them each a copy of the tape so now they have the basis of it, anyway. I would encourage other guys to do it.”

*~ Interviews are being conducted this week for the Veterans History Project in Room 302.*

## Show Stoppers — Acting Tips

Are you portraying a special part in the stage performance on Friday night? Here are a few tips that could help you as you prepare for the show performance:



### Good Influences on Performance

- ◆ Understand the purpose of the show
- ◆ Understand the character you are portraying
- ◆ Listen
- ◆ Invest in the “need of the moment” and do not anticipate the future
- ◆ Be open to whatever happens next
- ◆ Be relaxed
- ◆ Trust in yourself

### Bad Influences on Performance

- ◆ Focusing on telling the story
- ◆ Believing that a particular scene is a great vehicle for your acting
- ◆ Striving too hard “to be good”
- ◆ Striving to exploit emotion
- ◆ Failing to listen because it is already known what will be said next
- ◆ Listening for cues not meaning
- ◆ Acting (instead of interacting)

## Strokes of Art — Sand Art



Working with sand as an artistic medium is a creative and **fun** experience. Today’s art workshop on sand art takes place from 9 a.m.- 12 noon. at the VA Medical Center and it’s sure to be an experience you’ll remember. When creating with sand,

here are a few tips to consider.

### For Flat Art:

1. Apply one color at a time.
2. It is good to pour a lot of sand onto the area to be

covered. Extra sand that does not stick to the adhesive will be returned to the container.

3. Work from background elements to the foreground and from top to bottom when possible.

### For Three Dimensional Sand Art Containers:

1. Be sure to layer one color at a time.
2. Do not shake the container.
3. A toothpick can be used to create patterns and designs by sliding it between the sand and wall of the container.
4. Apply colors with a desired pattern to create subtle changes as well as dramatic contrast.

# 2004 Stage Performance Sure to be a Hit!



Liz Mackey, national director for the Festival, speaks with the performers during Sunday afternoon meeting.

Just as Salt Lake City welcomed the world for the 2002 Olympic Winter Games, it now proudly welcomes the 2004 National Veterans Creative Arts Festival. Nearly 3000 veterans from 100 VA facilities participated in this year's local and regional competitions. One hundred and eight veterans are attending the Festival this week, along with family, friends, volunteers, employees and special guests.

This year's stage show is sure to be tops and will consist of 72 participants performing four production numbers, 20 individual acts, and one duet. The show includes a variety of music, dance and drama performances from veterans representing all branches of our armed services. We are also fortunate to have 26 states represented at our Festival this year. Participants include 13 veterans from Utah who are truly excited to be able to display their talents to a hometown audience.



Steven Hensley from Tomah, Wis.

Star of Hollywood's golden era, Jane Powell,

is joining us once again as the show's Mistress of Ceremonies. This is her fifth year at the event and she is delighted to host the performance once again. Powell said she is always

inspired by each veteran's spirit of determination to become better at his or her art, as they reach and fulfill higher goals for themselves. Also joining us on Friday evening is Bo Derek, the National Honorary Chairperson of VA's four national rehabilitation special events. Derek believes that the Creative Arts Festival provides an avenue for veterans to fulfill their dreams by expressing themselves through the arts.

Here are just a few highlights to look forward to:

Local veteran Paul Boruff opens the show with a song about his native Utah. Charles Piliero, 85, a Navy veteran from Live Oak, Fla., wrote his original song "Nitey Nite," as a lullaby for his daughter during World War II, with a timeless message for all children whose dads and moms are away at war. And a spirited group of wheelchair dancers, Chairmen of the Floor, are sure to delight the audience as they perform to the music of "Axel F" from the movie "Beverly Hills Cop."

A wonderful men's chorus made up of eight veterans of the Navy, Air Force, Army and Marines, all currently hailing from this area of Utah. They call themselves "The Salty Dogs," and will perform their own special rendition of "It Must Have Been Moonglow."



Salt Lake City's "Salty Dogs"

There is a talented a cappella group called "Men of Vision," from Coatesville, Pa. For this group, singing together for the other veterans at their local VA medical center has been very gratifying and therapeutic for each of them.

"The Faces of Freedom" is just one of the production numbers to be performed by the whole cast. "The Faces of Freedom" was composed for the National Veterans Creative Arts Festival and is meant to honor all veterans and those who love them. It is dedicated to the men and women of the U.S. Armed Forces serving in Operation Enduring Freedom and Operation Iraqi Freedom.

We don't want to give it all away, so come to the show on Friday night and be prepared to be inspired!



# Photos from the Festival



## Artist Interaction Session

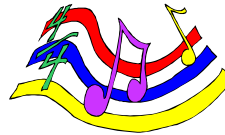




Dancing



Singing



And Playing

Photos from  the Festival



# Artist Interaction Session Highlights

Yesterday's Artist Interaction Session was an astounding success. An annual highlight among Festival events, 35 veteran artists shared their stories, described their artwork, shared the concept behind their visions and explained how each award-winning piece was created.

In the exhibit hall filled with first place artwork, these veterans had an opportunity to shine with their masterpieces beside them, in front of an intent audience of family, friends, media, volunteers and VA staff. Nearly 100 people attended.

One was Brian Nesline, an Army veteran from Buffalo, N.Y., whose "Faces of Buffalo Community" won first place in the digital photo/art category. A first time participant, Nesline whole-heartedly embraces his experience this week. "Seeing

everyone's passion through the art at the Festival solidifies my belief that we are all creative," said Nesline. "Being selected for the Festival is an example that VA cares and invests in our creative talents, which gives me and other veterans an outlet on our roads to recovery. It's very special to me that I'm here."

Another Army veteran and Festival first-timer is Steven Kimmerling of Salt Lake City, who felt that the artist interaction session gave him an opportunity to learn from many other talented artists whose artwork he admires. "I'm a man among giants," said Kimmerling. "I feel like I'm around family who genuinely care about me and are interested in my talents."

Kimmerling's gold-medal entry in the needlework category is called, "Moun-

tain Man Bag Set." A volunteer at the VA Salt Lake City Health Care System, he is no stranger to recreation therapy as tool for healing. He will graduate from the University of Utah in May 2004 with a degree in that field.

"It's an honor to be with people who understand me, who care, who I need and who need me," Kimmerling said, with tears in his eyes. "The company I'm in is so gifted that it is an honor someone thought I was good enough to be here."

*~ Photos from the Artist Interaction Session can be seen on page 4 of this ArtsGram.*

**Check out the Festival Web site at:**

**[www.creativeartsfestival.org](http://www.creativeartsfestival.org)**

Hometown news releases will be available on the Web site Wednesday, and photos should be up by Thursday.



## Utah Museum of Fine Art

**This afternoon, the artists will be touring the Utah Museum of Fine Arts (UMFA).**

**The UMFA has a diverse collection of art from around the world which emphasizes artist's expressions of the world's cultures. Some of the museum's art collections are: African, American Indian, Ancient Greek and Roman, Pacific Islands, Cambodian, Chinese, Egyptian, Spanish, and Thai.**

**Buses will leave the hotel at 1:30 p.m.**



Performers may get their Veterans History Project (VHP) interviews recorded today, from 9 - 10:30 a.m. and from 1 - 5 p.m. Once our artists return to the hotel this afternoon, additional interview slots are available from 6:30 - 9:30 p.m. VHP interviews conclude on Friday. Any veterans who wish to record their interviews, which will be sent to the Library of Congress, should do it soon! Remember, this historic project is meant to honor our nation's veterans by creating a lasting legacy of their military experience. Regardless of branch or period of service, age, military career or experience, all veterans are invited to share it with our VHP program staff and help make history! Please go to the VHP Interview Room at the hotel to sign up (Room 302). Thanks to all the veterans who have already participated. Veterans who are volunteers or staff are welcome to sign up as well.

On **Wednesday**, performers may record their interviews from 9 a.m. - Noon; and from 1 - 5 p.m. Artists may stop by in the evening, from 6 - 9 p.m.

**Thursday** is Artist Day for the VHP! Interviews will be taken from 9 a.m. - 1:30 p.m.; and from 6 - 9 p.m.

# F.Y.I

## Hospitality Room

The Hospitality Room, manned by friendly volunteers, offers snacks, soft drinks, juices and coffee for all Festival participants, staff and volunteers. Open today from 9 a.m. to 11 p.m. in the Willow Room on the fourth floor.



## Professional Continuing Education

Today's seminar, "Very Special Arts and Networking," will be presented by Ruth Lubbert, executive director of VSA arts of Utah. Lubbert will speak about the VSA program, benefits of art for our veterans and networking with the VSA program throughout the country. Utah veterans Mike Thompson and Jeff Peterson will display some of their artwork and discuss how the VSA program has benefited them. The seminar is located in the Oak Boardroom on the third floor from 7:30 - 9:00 p.m.

## Medical Support Room



The medical support team will be located on the second floor, room 202 and available at all times during the Festival week. Medical support team members will also accompany all tours away from the hotel. If you have a medical concern or health issue, please contact your team leader. We hope to make your stay here in Salt

Lake City the very best!

## Health Tidbits

Today you will be on your feet a lot, rehearsing and touring. Be sure to wear comfortable shoes. It is important to pay attention to your feet so please take time to check them. If you are developing red or sore areas then you may want to put a small piece of moleskin or a band-aid over these areas to prevent blister formation. If you notice your feet are getting dry or cracked, take time to soak them and then apply a lotion. This will help to keep your feet in good shape for the rest of the week.

## Meet with Your Team Leader

Meet with your team leader every morning at 8:30 a.m. Check with your team leader for the location of your meetings. On Friday, October 15th, the team leader meetings will be at 9:30 a.m.

## Lost and Found

Lost and Found is located in the Festival Headquarters Room on the fifth floor.

Found: One "Grandpa" hat with pins.

**Today's Weather**  
Mostly Sunny  
High 72° - Low 46°



## Tuesday, October 12

### Breakfast — Hot Start Buffet

Fruit Preserves, Butter, Margarine and Cream Cheese  
Sliced Fruit with a Honey Yogurt Dressing  
Sausage, Egg and Cheese Croissant  
Yogurt, Oatmeal  
Assorted Cereal  
Assorted Breakfast Breads  
Low Fat Milk, Tea, and Hot Chocolate  
Orange, Apple, Cranberry and Grapefruit Juices  
Regular and Decaffeinated Coffee

### Lunch — Stir Fry Buffet

Chicken Stir Fry  
Vegetable Stir Fry  
White Rice And Fried Rice  
Seasoned Vegetables  
Vegetables and Dip  
Rolls and Butter  
Ice Cream and Fortune Cookies  
Coffee, Lemonade and Iced Tea  
Low Fat Milk

### Dinner — Home Style Buffet

Fresh Salad Greens with Dressings  
Home Style Meatloaf  
Mashed Potatoes with Demi-Glaze  
Tender Pork Loin  
Au Gratin Potatoes  
Steamed Green Beans  
Fresh Fruit Tray  
Assorted Desserts  
Coffee, Lemonade and Iced Tea  
Low Fat Milk

# Tuesday, October 12



## Artists



**7:00 - 8:30 a.m. — Breakfast**  
*Bonneville Ballroom 2 & 3, First Floor*

**8:00 a.m.**  
Team leaders meet with Katy Ryan  
*Tiered Theater, First Floor*

**8:30 a.m.**  
Team leaders meet with artists  
*Tiered Theater, First Floor*

**9:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m.**  
Art Exhibit open to the public  
*VAMC, Building 8 - Multi Purpose Center*

**9:00 a.m. - Noon**  
Art Workshop #3 “Sand Art”  
*VAMC, Building 5*

**Noon**  
Artists depart VAMC for hotel

**12:30 p.m. — Lunch**  
*Bonneville Ballroom 2 & 3, First Floor*

**1:15 p.m.**  
Artists board buses

**1:30 - 4:30 p.m.**  
Artists tour the Utah Museum of Fine Arts

**5:30 p.m. — Dinner**  
*Bonneville Ballroom 2 & 3, First Floor*

**7:00 - 9:30 p.m.**  
Artists work on finishing art projects at hotel  
*Fort Douglas Room, First Floor*

**7:30 - 9:00 p.m.**  
Staff CEU Session - “Very Special Arts and  
Networking”  
presented by Ruth Lubbert  
*Oak Boardroom, Third Floor*



## Performers



**7:00 - 8:30 a.m. — Breakfast**  
*Bonneville Ballroom 2 & 3, First Floor*

**8:00 a.m.**  
Team leaders meet with Liz Mackey  
*Bonneville Ballroom 1, First Floor*

**8:30 a.m.**  
Team leaders meet with performers  
*Bonneville Ballroom 1, First Floor*

**9:00 - 10:30 a.m.**  
Chorus number rehearsal with Music Director  
*Bonneville Ballroom 1, First Floor*

**10:40 a.m. - 12 Noon**  
Show order walk-through - EVERYONE  
*Bonneville Ballroom 1, First Floor*

**Noon — Lunch**  
*Bonneville Ballroom 2 & 3, First Floor*

**1:00 - 5:00 p.m.**  
Complete run-through of show order, including  
production numbers (no costumes)  
*Bonneville Ballroom 1, First Floor*

**5:30 p.m. — Dinner**  
*Bonneville Ballroom 2 & 3, First Floor*

**7:00 - 10:00 p.m.**  
Rehearsal with orchestra at hotel  
ALL performers  
*Bonneville Ballroom 1, First Floor*

**7:30 - 9:00 p.m.**  
Staff CEU Session - “Very Special Arts and  
Networking”  
presented by Ruth Lubbert  
*Oak Boardroom, Third Floor*

**9:00 - 11:00 p.m.** Karaoke and social time - *Fort Douglas Room, First Floor*