

A soldier in silhouette, wearing a helmet and a satchel, stands on a grassy field at sunset, playing a trumpet. To the left, a large American flag waves on a tall pole. The sky is filled with soft, colorful clouds in shades of orange, pink, and blue.

U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs

**Fiscal Year 2023
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ABOUT THE COVER

Each year, the Veterans Day National Committee selects a commemorative Veterans Day poster from designs submitted by artists nationwide for the annual Veterans Day Poster Contest. In addition to donning the walls of Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) facilities, military installations and municipal buildings in cities and towns across America, the poster will also serve as the cover of the official program for the Veterans Day commemoration at Arlington National Cemetery on November 11, 2023.

“The Bugler” by Gene Russell, a service-connected disabled Army Infantry Veteran and VA employee won the design for this year’s Veterans Day Poster Contest.

Russell is the principal photographer for the VA Secretary in Washington, District of Columbia, and he spends his days photographing the Secretary’s significant events and documenting other senior VA leaders’ internal and external engagements. Described as “customer-service obsessed” by acting Deputy Secretary Scott Blackburn, Russell received the VA Secretary’s Honor Award for “I CARE” in 2020 for his work on the Center for Women Veterans’ “I Am Not Invisible” campaign. The I CARE Award is VA’s highest honor for customer service and workplace excellence, and refers to VA’s five core values: Integrity, Commitment, Advocacy, Respect and Excellence.

Music was the inspiration for Russell’s submission. He has played the bugle since he was a boy. “Bugle calls are not songs, and they do not have lyrics. Yet, when heard, the calls evoke the emotion and the pride of service for members of every uniformed branch listed on this poster,” he said.

More than 100 bugle calls are used in the U.S. Armed Services, including a few used only in emergencies, such as “man overboard” or “abandon ship.” For that reason, the bugler connects each Service member on land, air and sea.

“My goal was to link the sight, sound and feeling of how we served our country. The pole and American flag in this image are the ones currently flying over VA headquarters in Washington, DC,” he said. “It flies for each of us and those Veterans to come.”