

# U.S. ARMY ART SPOTLIGHT

A watercolor painting on an easel in a disaster-stricken area. The painting depicts two soldiers in camouflage uniforms, one holding a sign that says "Dry Goods". They are standing in a muddy, debris-strewn area with damaged buildings in the background. A palette with various colors is placed on a small wooden stand in front of the easel.

## ARMY ARTISTS DOCUMENTING DISASTER RELIEF

By Sarah G. Forgey

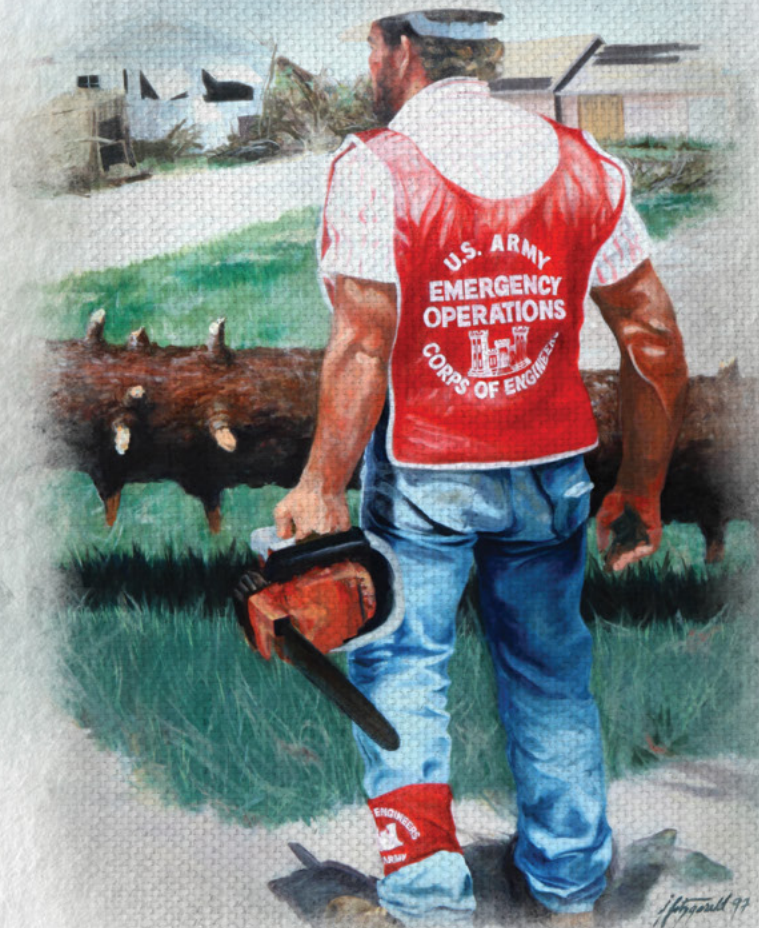
Since the creation of the Army's artist-in-residence position in 1992, the Army has assigned one active duty artist to the U.S. Army Center of Military History. During his or her tenure, this artist's mission is to document the current Army. Numerous artists have covered peacekeeping and humanitarian efforts around the world, training activities and exercises, and the Global War on Terrorism. In addition to capturing images of major Army operations and day-to-day soldier life, the artist-in-residence often records the Army's response to natural disasters.

The Army's first artist-in-residence, Sfc. Peter G. Varisano, had an early opportunity to observe relief efforts after Hurricane Andrew in August 1992. Traveling with General Gordon R. Sullivan, Varisano witnessed the distribution of food and supplies to local citizens who had been affected by the hurricane. From this experience, he produced four watercolor paintings. In 1994, Sgt. Carl E. "Gene" Snyder created a colored pencil drawing, based on one of Varisano's photographs of Hurricane Andrew relief efforts, as his first artwork as artist-in-residence. Years later, in 2017, Artist-in-

Residence Sfc. Juan C. Munoz traveled to Florida and Puerto Rico with General Mark A. Milley to document the Army's response to Hurricanes Irma and Maria. Munoz completed four watercolors related to Hurricane Maria relief and a drawing of a soldier responding to Hurricane Irma.

When artists-in-residence have not been invited to observe disaster response efforts, they have used their ingenuity to create opportunities. Hurricane Sandy hit the eastern coast of the United States in 2012, very early in Sfc. Amy L. Brown's tenure as artist-in-residence. Not wanting to miss the response efforts, Sergeant Brown identified an engineer unit from Fort Belvoir, Virginia, that was leaving for New York. She was able to travel in their company, creating three artworks based on the experience. In connecting with a local unit to document its disaster response, Brown unknowingly had followed in the footsteps of one of her predecessors. In 1992, former Army artist Janet R. M. Fitzgerald, who was working as a civilian employee for the Corps of Engineers at Fort Belvoir, had offered her artistic services to document its response to Hurricane Andrew. She





*In the Aftermath of Hurricane Andrew,*  
Janet R. M. Fitzgerald, oil on canvas, 1997



*Nurse Ambrosich,* Juan C. Munoz,  
watercolor on paper, 2018

*Talking to the Troops,* Juan C.  
Munoz, watercolor on paper, 2018

## DISASTER RELIEF

traveled to Florida just weeks after Varisano had been there.

Disaster response efforts are an important part of the artist-in-residence's mission to document the current Army and a key way in which the Army connects with the American public during times of great need. Like the rest of the Army Art Collection, these disaster relief artworks are preserved at the Army Museum Enterprise's Museum Support Center at Fort Belvoir, Virginia.

**Sarah G. Forgey** is the chief art curator for the Army Museum Enterprise.







*Corps of Engineers*, Amy Louise Brown, oil on canvas, 2012

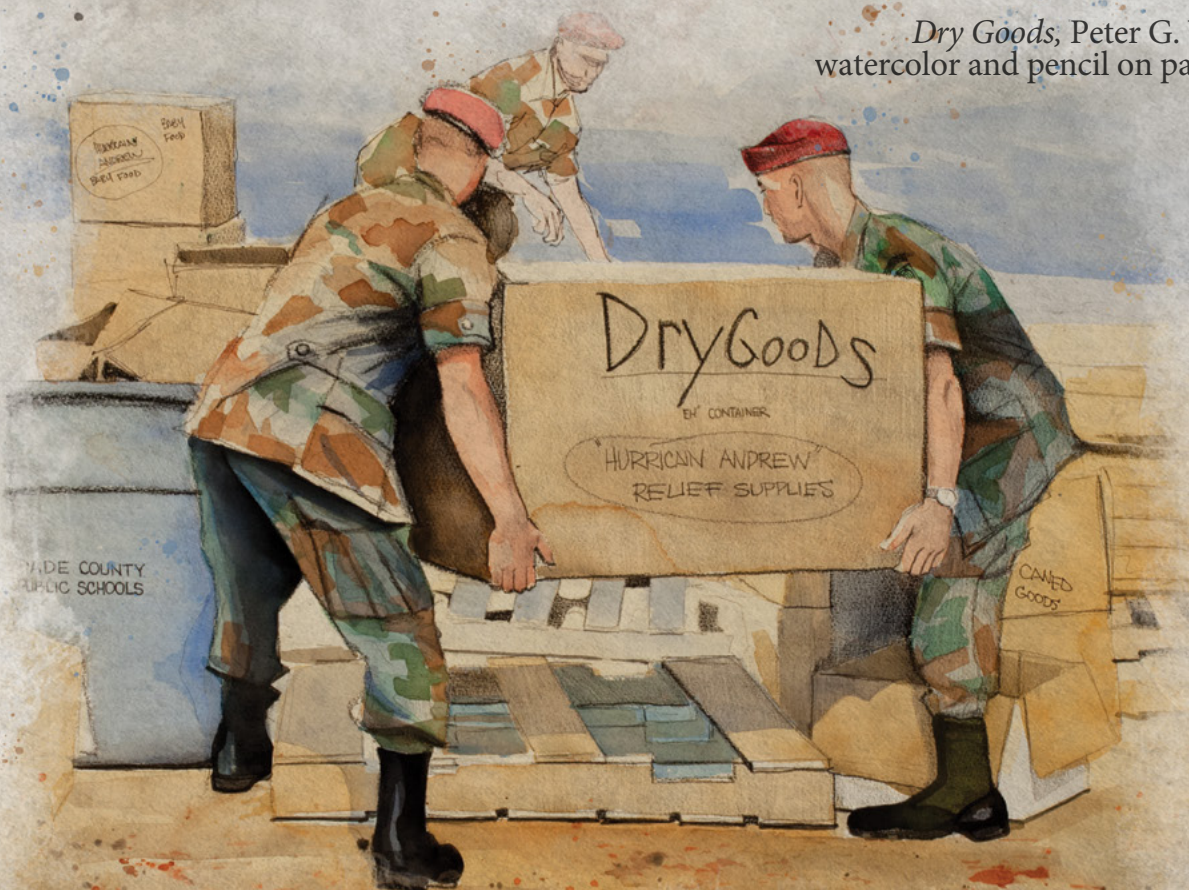
*Food Line - Hurricane Andrew*, Carl E. "Gene" Snyder, colored pencil on paper, 1994







*Providing Necessities,*  
Peter G. Varisano, watercolor on paper, 1992



*Dry Goods,* Peter G. Varisano,  
watercolor and pencil on paper, 1993