



## The United States Navy Band

# COUNTRY CURRENT

The United States Navy Band's "Country Current" country-bluegrass group is the Navy's premier country music ensemble. The seven-member group was formed in 1973 and quickly established itself in all aspects of country and bluegrass music. The group is under the direction of banjoist Senior Chief Musician Keith M. Arneson.

Touring the country each year in support of Navy Recruiting, they have performed with such artists as Boots Randolph, Charlie Daniels, Vince Gill and David Ball. Country Current performed at the "Branson Cares—Help Start the Healing" tribute to the citizens of Oklahoma City and at the Glen Campbell Goodtime Theatre in Branson, Mo., on Memorial Day in 1995. Other credits include the Grand Ole Opry, Wheeling Jamboree and the Academy of Country Music Awards show.

Country Current performed at Branson's Silver Dollar City with Rhonda Vincent and Bradley Walker in May of 2008. The group performed at the Grand Ol' Opry in Nashville, Tenn. in September of 2007. They played for thousands of NASCAR race fans in 2006 at the Coca-Cola 600 in Charlotte, N.C., and the DirecTV 500 in Martinsville, Va. In 2004, they performed at the G-8 Summit in Sea Island, Ga., hosted by President George W. Bush. They celebrated their 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary in 2003 with a concert featuring past members Bill Emerson and Jerry Gilmore. They performed at the 24<sup>th</sup> Annual Congressional Barbecue in 2002, hosted by President and Mrs. Bush. In March 2000, the group was featured at the Mississippi Country-Bluegrass Spectacular in Columbia, Miss. In February 1999, the group performed with country music singer David Ball as part of The Pentagon Pops Musical Salute to America's "Guardians of Freedom" at DAR Constitution Hall in Washington, D.C. In July 1998, the group performed for over 100,000 people at the Fort Vancouver 4th of July Fireworks Spectacular in Ft. Vancouver, Wash. In June 1994, they appeared at the Nova Scotia International Tattoo and in September 1992 at the Swedish Army Tattoo in Stockholm. In February 1989, they entertained Chinese officials in Beijing at a dinner hosted by former President and Mrs. George Bush.

In 1996, Country Current released a compact disc, *Sugarland Run*, featuring 18 country and bluegrass standards and originals. The CD received a rave review in the September 1997 issue of *Bluegrass Now*. The group's latest recording, *Country Current LIVE*, was released in the fall of 2004. The group received national acclaim during "Operation Desert Storm" for an original composition entitled "We Are With You," which aired on ABC's "Good Morning America," TNN's "Nashville Now" and over 500 U.S. and Canadian radio and television stations. Country Current appeared on CBS's "This Morning" in July 1994 and was featured for four consecutive years on the Department of the Interior's "Salute to America" Independence Day Radio Program airing on over 1,600 stations nationwide.

The group features an acoustic bluegrass quintet that was featured in 2002 at the Folk Festival in Anchorage, Alaska and in 2001 at the Mississippi Bluegrass Reunion in Purvis, Miss. They have made multiple appearances at the Wintergrass Bluegrass Festival (Tacoma, Wash.), the Winterhawk Bluegrass Festival (Hillsdale, N.Y.), the Withlacoochee River Bluegrass Jamboree (Dunnellon, Fla.) and the Music in the Mountains Festival (Summerville, W.Va.). They were also featured at the 1999 Kissimmee Bluegrass (Fla.) Festival. The bluegrass ensemble performed at the 2006, 2000 and 1997 International Bluegrass Music Association's "Awards Show" and "FanFest" in Louisville, Ky., and in 1994 they performed at the IBMA's "Showcase" in Owensboro, Ky. In 1995, the group performed with bluegrass legend Bill Monroe in Rosine, Ky. Other festival appearances include "Grey Fox" (Ancramdale, N.Y.), "Festival of the Bluegrass" (Lexington, Ky.) and "Cherokee" (Cherokee, N.C.).

Constantly in demand as part of the Navy Band's "Music in the Schools" program, they offer a variety of concerts and demonstrations that complement music curricula in area schools.

## HIGHLIGHTS

- 2005** - (Jan.) bluegrass quintet performs at **Blythe Bluegrass Festival** in Blythe, Calif.  
- (Mar.) bluegrass quintet performs at **3<sup>rd</sup> Annual Bluegrass on the River Festival** in Parker, Ariz.  
- (Mar.) bluegrass quintet performs at **Withlacoochee River Bluegrass Jamboree** in Dunnellon, Fla.
- 2004** - (Feb.) third appearance at **Wintergrass Bluegrass Festival** in Tacoma, Wash.  
- (May) bluegrass quintet performs at the **Lewis Family Bluegrass Festival** in Lincoln, Ga.  
- (May) bluegrass quintet performs on the Homecoming Stage at the festivities celebrating the dedication of the **National World War II Memorial** in Washington, D.C.  
- (Jun.) perform at the **G-8 Summit** in Sea Island, Ga., hosted by **President George W. Bush**.  
- (Jun.) third appearance at the **Music in the Mountains Festival** in Summerville, W.Va.  
- (Jul.) bluegrass quintet performs at the **Grey Fox Bluegrass Festival** in Ancramdale, N.Y.
- 2003** - (Apr.) 30th Anniversary Concert with **Bill Emerson** and **Jerry Gilmore**  
- (Jun.) second appearance at the **Music in the Mountains Festival** in Summerville, W.Va.  
- (Sep.) perform at the **North Carolina State Fair** in Fletcher, N.C.
- 2002** - (Jan.) bluegrass quartet performs at the **Folk Festival** in Anchorage, Alaska  
- (Jun.) entertain **President and Mrs. Bush** at 24<sup>th</sup> Annual **Congressional Barbecue** at the White House
- 2001** - (Jul.) bluegrass quartet performs at the **Mississippi Bluegrass Reunion** in Purvis, Miss.
- 2000** - (Mar.) perform at the **Mississippi Country-Bluegrass Spectacular** in Columbia, Miss.  
- (Jun.) bluegrass quartet performs at the 20<sup>th</sup> Annual **Music in the Mountains Festival** in Summerville, W.Va.
- 1999** - (Jan.) perform at the 12<sup>th</sup> **Colorado River Country Music Festival** in Blythe, Calif.  
- (Feb.) perform with **David Ball** for **The Pentagon Pops Musical Salute to America's "Guardians of Freedom"** at DAR Constitution Hall in Washington, D.C.  
- (Jul.) fourth appearance at the **Winterhawk Bluegrass Festival** in Hillsdale, N.Y.
- 1998** - (Apr.) 25th Anniversary Concert with **Bill Emerson**, **Jerry Gilmore** and **Mike Stein**  
- (Jul.) perform 4th of July Concert at the **Fort Vancouver National Historical Site**, Vancouver, Wash.
- 1997** - (Jul.) second appearance at **Father's Day Bluegrass Festival** in Grass Valley, Calif.  
- (Sep.) appear at **18th Annual Bluegrass and Chili Festival** in Tulsa, Okla.
- 1996** - (Feb.) second appearance at **Wintergrass Bluegrass Festival** in Tacoma, Wash.
- 1995** - (Apr.) hosts "Spring Concert" with Nashville recording artist **Boots Randolph**  
- (May) perform on Memorial Day at "**Branson Cares—Help Start the Healing**" tribute to Oklahoma City citizens at Glen Campbell Goodtime Theatre in Branson, Mo.  
- (Jul.) perform as part of **Independence Day Celebration** at the Esplanade in Boston, Mass.  
- (Sep.) bluegrass quartet performs with **Bill Monroe**, the "Father of Bluegrass" in Rosine, Ky.
- 1994** - (Jun.) perform as part of the **Nova Scotia International Tattoo** in Halifax, Canada
- 1993** - (Mar.) 20th Anniversary Concert with **Bill Emerson**, **Doyle Lawson**, **Charlie Waller**, **Bill Yates**  
- (Jun.) entertain **President and Mrs. Clinton** at 15th Annual **Congressional Barbecue** in Washington, D.C.

**1992** - (Jun.) performed with **Vince Gill** at the 14th Annual **Congressional Barbecue**  
- (Jul.) perform Chief Musician **Wayne Taylor's "Let Freedom Ring"** on **ABC's "Good Morning America"**/makes sixth annual appearance for **National Independence Day celebration** at Washington Monument  
- (Sep.) perform with the Navy Band as part of the **Swedish Army Tattoo** in Stockholm

**1991** - (Jan.) perform Chief Musician **Mike Stein's "We Are With You"** in support of Operation Desert Storm on **ABC's "Good Morning America"** television show and on **TNN's "Nashville Now."** Song also aired on over 500 radio and television stations in North America, Europe, and the Middle East  
- (Jun.) perform for **National Victory Celebration "All American Picnic"** honoring Operation Desert Storm troops at **White House Ellipse**

**1990** - (May) third appearance on **"Nashville Now"** show hosted by **Ralph Emery**, and third appearance at the **Grand Ole Opry** in Nashville, Tenn.

**1989** - (Mar.) entertain Chinese officials at a dinner hosted by **President and Mrs. Bush** in **Beijing, China**

**1988** - (Sep.) seventh appearance on **Wheeling Jamboree** at Capitol Music Hall in Wheeling, W.Va.

**1986** - (May) appear at **Naval Aviation's 75th Anniversary** in Pensacola, Fla.

**1984** - (Jun.) Senior Chief Musician **Bill Emerson** is inducted into **Virginia's Country Music Hall of Fame**

**1981** - (Aug.) entertain **President Reagan and Mexican President Portillo** at the presidential retreat in Camp David, Md.

**1976** - (Feb.) appear on the **Academy of Country Music Awards** show at the Hollywood Palladium and broadcast on **ABC Television**

**1973** - (Jun.) become the first country music group among the premier service bands

## WHAT OTHERS SAY

**Former Congressman MARVIN LEATH:** "Country Current is the best country band east of Nashville!"

**BOOTS RANDOLPH (Recording Artist):** "These guys can play. Believe me."

**RAY BENSON (Asleep at the Wheel):** "You guys are tight. Awesome musicians."

**CASA GRANDE (Ariz.) VALLEY NEWSPAPERS, INC.:** "The clean-cut, professional and patriotic image that this group portrayed was not only a compliment to the country but also to your branch of the service."

**AIR SCOOP (Toms River, N.J.):** "The concert prompted the audience to standing ovations and the band to a delightfully long encore. Simply put, country music doesn't get any better than this!"

**BANGOR (Maine) DAILY NEWS Letter to the Editor:** "One of my most enjoyable evenings. Country Current was excellent...the best country and bluegrass music I have ever heard."

**The late ROGER MILLER:** "You better have your stuff together to follow a group like this."

**GEORGE MICHAEL (NBC Sports Machine):** "If I worked at WMZQ, I'd be playing [Country Current's] music all the time...you're in for a treat..."

**SONNY OSBORNE (Osborne Brothers):** "There's not a band out there that I'm afraid to follow...except 'The Country Current Bluegrass Group'."

**NAVY BAND PATRON (Nevada, Mo.):** "They have enough energy to float one of your ships."

**SIDEWINDER DANCE CLUB (Columbus, Ga.):** "Their entire program was both uplifting and soothing at the same time...this group represented the Navy at its finest—talent, showmanship, and patriotism."

**FLAGLER COUNTY VETERANS ADVISORY COUNCIL (Bunel, Fla.):** "...Country Current is definitely an outstanding ambassador for the United States Navy. You can be justly proud of each member for they performed their mission in a thoroughly professional and outstanding manner."

**RETIRED U.S. ARMY COLONEL (Calif.):** "That small group presents a very positive image of the Navy. The Current is clean-cut, sharp in appearance, pleasant, friendly, aware that they represent the Navy, and has a positive attitude toward the service and their public relations function."

