

Vernon magician taking his act to Naval bases in Europe

By Eric Bedner

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VERNON — A local magician, who credits his craft with transforming him from a shy child into a live performer, is using his skills to bring smiles to the faces of members of the military and their families as he sets out to tour United States Naval bases in Europe.

The 27-year-old Vernon resident, a native of Buffalo, New York, Brian Miller had an interest in magic from a very young age, first learning elementary tricks around the age of 4.

He says his father and grandfather, whom Miller called “passionate amateurs,” provided early encouragement by purchasing store-bought tricks for birthday and holiday presents.

By the time Miller was in his early teens, his father had taken him to see David Copperfield at least five times, as well as numerous other magic shows.

Copperfield, whom Miller said is “the greatest illusionist of all time,” played a large role in inspiring Miller to pursue his passion at a young age.

Later, he found an appreciation for Penn and Teller, calling Teller “one of the greats of all time,” and one of the greatest magic minds.

The gravitation toward magic, Miller says, came as a result of him being “terribly shy,” resulting in debilitating social anxiety.

For him, “magic was a way out,” enabling him to interact more with and gain acceptance from his peers as they gathered to see his tricks.

While modern aspiring magicians can learn tricks by watching Internet videos, Miller began at a time when the Internet was not as popular or accessible, leading him to learn from books and local magic shops in Buffalo.

By chance at a restaurant, Miller met his mentor, who took him on as a student for a couple of years,



Magician to tour

Magician Brian Miller of Vernon will be heading to Europe on April 24 to tour U.S. Naval bases for ten days entertaining sailors and their families.

teaching him the philosophy of magic, which Miller credits with turning him from a person who does magic tricks to a magician.

Through his training, Miller learned to put on a theatrical and comedic performance, which provides a more fulfilling experience to his audience.

Miller got his first paid job when he was 14 years old and started his own business at 16.

Since moving to Connecticut in 2010, Miller says he's taught about 100 students in group and private lessons, and now performs 250 to 300 times each year throughout the country and internationally.

In the Midwest, Miller performs on many college campuses, while he does primarily corporate events in the Northeast. He also served as the exclusive magician for Foxwoods Resort Casino and delivered motivational speeches to children.

He continues to find the time to teach a handful of students, some of them as young as 8 years old.

Miller leaves Saturday morning for a weeklong tour of Naval bases in Spain and Italy. The tour is produced by Navy Entertainment in recognition of April being the month of the military child, which honors the hardships that children of military families face.

Miller said "it's incredible" to have the opportunity to perform for soldiers, sailors, and their families, who have all made "tremendous sacrifices" on behalf of the American people.

Noting that people often take for granted the freedoms they have, Miller said he jumped at the chance to be able to show his own appreciation.

In addition to his live performances, Miller's TEDx talk, "How to Magically Connect with Anyone," is one of the most popular TEDx talks of all time, he said, and has been viewed on YouTube by more than 1.5 million people throughout the world.