

The following history was provided by an Oregonian who marched locally from 1963 thru 1971.

We thank him for his generous donation of Pacific Northwest Drum Corps history.

### THE PENDLETON - SEATTLE CONNECTION: CURTIS CARROLL

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The Rangers were never fully funded through sponsorships from local community groups, and mostly operated under a "scrape the bottom of the barrel" budget format. It was unforeseen that the corps would ever obtain the services from an outside bugle instructor. But it happened in the fall of 1969, and that person was Curtis Carroll. Curtis moved to Pendleton from Seattle, rented an apartment, and became the bugle instructor for the Rangers. Curtis Carroll was an age-out who once marched with the Seattle Thunderbirds, Norwood Park Imperials, and the Seattle Cascades. Note: Norwood Park Imperials was a top 12 drum corps from the Chicago area and was the namesake origin of the Seattle Imperials name (Chicago area corps "The Vanguard," better known as Des Plaines Vanguard and also a top 12 corps, was the namesake origin of the Santa Clara Vanguard name - that's why the city/county name was included in the California's corps charter name, so as to not confuse it with the Chicago corps).

Curtis was an accomplished soprano/mellophone player, and had a comfort level in the higher ranges (was a "screamer"). He also had some music theory knowledge and skills in running a hornline practice. As expected, the income from the Rangers would not provide for a living salary. So, Curtis took a daytime job at the downtown JC Penneys as a shoe salesperson. He offered to write multiple music scores for the corps, but I only remember one or two (and they could have been written from a previous time). He did, however, furnish the corps with a couple of scores that were previously played by Seattle corps, and Rangers used those in some competitions.

**Malaguena** - the Rangers used this chart at the Salem Optirama one year. This music chart was the same one used by the Seattle Cascades in 1969 (was basically an imitation of the version used by the Norwood Park Imperials (Chicago) in 1967/1968). The 1969 Cascades brass section could create a full and loud sound with their presentation (having 30 plus horns now). The 1970 Rangers brass section (half the Cascades' size) could handle the part requirements, but would not be able to duplicate the Cascades' sound volume. (Seattle Cascades were a small corps up to 1968 and not much different than the Rangers in size and quality. In 1969, they almost doubled in size [in part due to the influx of Thunderbirds who did not field a corps that year. Ed] and had made several improvements to their overall quality.) The Malaguena chart used by the Cascades/Rangers was written in a different style than that used by Madison Scouts (an imitation of Stan Kenton style music). The bugle arrangement used by the northwest corps were much shorter in playing time, and designed for use in both parade and competition formats. Most corps music up until the very early 1970s (almost everywhere) used music for a dual purpose (parades/competitions), except for the concert piece. The Madison Scouts version was longer and included different tempos and pauses, and was only designed for the competitive field show. Wouldn't have worked well in a parade environment.

**The High Chaparral** - The Rangers used this chart also at the Salem Optirama. This music score was the same one used by the Seattle Thunderbirds in 1968. Music is from the theme song of a weekly TV western series. It was said somewhere, that an original music score was used by a Thunderbird arranger (provided by the TV production company) to create the corps' arrangement. The Rangers were able to play the chart well enough, although, not as powerful as the Thunderbirds (whose hornline was twice the size of the Rangers). Thunderbirds went into decline after the 1968 season and did not recover.

Always thought it was a little tacky for one corps to play another corps' "signature" songs. But in the Rangers' situation, it was a breath of fresh air from the multiple year use of Ernie Carroll's arrangements. They were good arrangements, were usually in 8 parts (was just before and around the time when mellophones were starting to be incorporated into hornlines), and most

likely used by multiple corps in different parts of the country. Ernie Carroll (don't think he was related to Curtis) was a music arranger/corps director based out of Wisconsin. He provided a small catalog of about 20 or more pre-arranged music scores, that ranged from medium player ability hornlines to the advanced level, and was available to any corps that wanted them. It almost sounded like some of the early Thunderbird music recordings had some Ernie Carroll styled arrangements. Probably not, but I assume someone from Seattle (who could have received a possible tip from the St. Paul Scouts when they were there) most likely pointed the Rangers in the Ernie Carroll direction for a source of music scores.

Curtis Carroll lived in Pendleton and worked with the Ranger hornline for only a short time before he left for greener pastures, thus ending the Seattle connection. In the following years, there was also a Portland connection and a Tri-Cities connection (with those individuals making the commute to Pendleton for practices/functions rather than relocating to the town full time). All three connection attempts were made with good intentions, but failed to push the Rangers out of its lower tier rankings.

Note: the "top 12" designation refers to the placement of a corps in a most recent or prior VFW Nationals competition (there were other very large national/regional competitions also, but VFW Nationals held the most prestige). Corps that didn't attend that competition (even if they could place high) were not classified as a "top 12." For example, the 1970 Santa Clara Vanguard outscored the top placing VFW finalist corps in a prior competition, but was not able to make the trip to the VFW Nationals in Miami due to finances (car pooled to Portland for the American Legion Nationals to save money). They would have not been classified as a top 12 corps that year, although they could have possibly won the show. When DCI started having national competitions (1972), the "top 12" designation was replaced with the "DCI Corps" designation, as those placing in the top 12 of the national competition were the only ones considered as a DCI corps (an original concept of DCI), with all other corps not considered as DCI corps (and DCI corps would lose their DCI status if they failed to make finals in following years). When the classification of "DCI Corps" was expanded to eventually include all corps (world/open class), the designation of "DCI Finalist Corps" (world class) became the new reference to what was originally called "top 12" corps.



1969 - 1970