

The drum corps of Everett, Washington

by Pacific Northwest Drum Corps.com

Everett, WA, with a 2020 population of 110,629, is located 29 miles directly north of Seattle. By comparison, Seattle's 2020 population was 737,015. As Seattle was, Everett was also a lumber town from the 1890s through the early 21st Century. They still had a paper mill on their waterfront until 2013.

The first Everett senior drum corps was spawned by the Earl Faulkner American Legion Post #6 (right). The post itself was formed in 1919 and created its first corps in 1920. The corps attended Washington State American Legion Conventions in 1926, 1930, 1933 and 1934. They were disbanded in 1937.

In 1945, the same post created a new senior corps, later known as the Everett Blue Knights. These guys had a good run with their corps. They made 11 Washington State American Legion Convention appearances (that we can verify) and were the Washington State Legion Champions in 1964, 1965, 1966 and 1967. The corps disbanded at the end of the season in 1967. It should be noted that by 1967, the Blue Knights were one of the last senior drum corps left in the Pacific Northwest.

As senior corps membership declined to the point of not being sustainable, several attempts were made locally in the early 1960s to lower the senior corps age limit from 21 to 18 so those returning from Vietnam could join a senior corps instead of a junior corps. Those attempts were rebuffed as the junior corps were afraid the seniors would steal all of their experienced members, which was exactly what they were trying to do. When the junior corps won out, the senior corps fates were sealed.

Across town, VFW "Old Guard" Post #2100 created a junior band in 1937. They won the junior band division at the Washington State VFW Encampment in Wenatchee that same year. The junior band ran from 1937 through at least 1939. (Middle right, November 1961 Chicago-based Drum Corps World with Earl Faulkner corps)

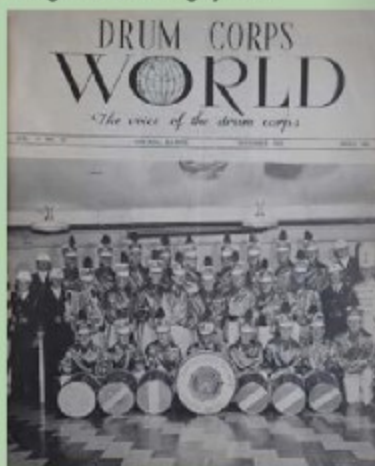
In the 1930s, Washington State VFW Conventions had musical competitions in Junior Bands, Junior Drum Corps and Senior Drum Corps.

In 1950, the Old Guard Post created a senior drum and bugle corps, the Old Guard Senior Drum & Bugle Corps (above). Snappy name, eh? These guys won the Washington State VFW Championships in 1950 and 1951. The last known documentation for this group is from 1951.

The Old Guard senior corps may have been short lived, but they had two members that went on to found two junior drum corps. Bobby Briggs (percussion) went on to found the Longview-Kelso Boy Scout D&BC in 1953 (right). These guys were also known as the L-K (Longview-Kelso, WA) Corps and later as the Mustangs. They marched in President Lyndon Johnson's inaugural parade in 1965 and locally through the end of 1975.

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data has been found for this corps beyond 1955 through 1959.



in April of 1959. They were renamed the Seattle Shamrocks (below) in 1961 and went on to be a perennial winner, with a successful run through the end of 1974.

The last corps associated with VFW Old Guard Post #2100 was Dusty's All-Star Junior Drum & Bugle Corps (middle left). They had 40 members, all under age 12. At the VFW convention parade in Longview, WA, in June 1955, the Longview Daily News said, "They were a crowd favorite and drew repeated applause from the stands." No other



CAUTION -- digression below!

Small towns like Everett spawned drum corps. Lots of them. If you've got 20 guys who can play instruments, then you've got a corps.

Why can't it still be that way? Instead of having a DCI-allowed 165-member limit (in 2022), why not create a local class of corps with a 20- to 30-member upper limit? It's easier to put 20 people

together than 165, is it not?

Instead of having a single 165-member corps that needs a million+ dollar budget to travel out of state to compete, you could have eight 20-member corps competing against each other locally without the burden of huge budgets. They could compete on basketball courts at color guard shows like we did in the 1960s and 1970s. No age limitations -- 15-year-olds marching alongside 65-year-olds. We could bring back G-F bugles and use car pools and school buses for transportation. OOOohhh, sounds like fun.

Best of all? No DCI involvement needed. Paradise. Valhalla at last!

Thank you, Everett Old Guard VFW Post #2100, for graciously sharing your artifacts and the documentation used in creating this article. Muchas gracias, dudes! Long live drum corps! ■■■

Pacific Northwest - Junior vs. Senior Corps Populations 1917 through 2021

