

Pacific Northwest all-girl drum corps

by Carl Latchaw, Drum Corps World staff (latchman44@yahoo.com) © Pacific Northwest Drum Corps.com 2024
and Pacific Northwest Drum Corps.com -- specializing in PNW drum corps of the 1960s and 1970s

This month we're going to talk about PNW all-girl drum corps (DC). We have approximately 15 all-girl corps listed on our site from 1927 through 1977. We won't be discussing each one in detail, but we'll cover an interesting sampling.



All-girl drum corps of fraternal organizations

The best-known drum corps in this category are VFW and American Legion groups. As we all know, the American Legion and VFW organizations were created in 1919 and 1899, respectively, for war veterans -- AKA, Men. The women couldn't join the male drum corps directly, but were allowed to form their own "auxiliary" units, auxiliary meaning supplementary

to the main body (of men). Historically, in the Legion and VFW, "auxiliary" or "aux" meant female. Interestingly, "ux" in Latin



Girl Scout D&BC - November 18, 1928
Eugene, Oregon
Above is the Eugene Girl Scouts drum corps, believed to be the only one in the United States. Members are, back row, left to right: Estelle Hild, Betty Jean Van Meter, Esther Van Meter, Jeanne Sue Alexander, Gladys Smith, Marie Anderson, Mary Gordon, Hazel Cox, Patricia George, Lorraine Webb, June Wick, Jean Morris, Frances Schneider. The local corps is sponsored by the Eugene American Legion auxiliary.

March 12, 1931
Eugene, Oregon

American Legion's Fourth Annual Trade Exposition

The Best Show in Town

EUGENE ARMORY

Thursday—Friday—Saturday

March 12—13—14

Doors Open at 7 P. M.

Admission Free!

Entertainment Free!

BAND — DANCE ACT — VAUDEVILLE — STYLE SHOW
GOLF MATCHES — BOAT RACE

A COMMUNITY PROJECT

Written by Manufacturers, Wholesalers and Retailers

June 6, 1934

Women's Auxiliary of Veterans of Foreign Wars Organize Drum and Bugle Corps



Spokane, WA
VFW Auxiliary D&BC

means wife, as in "et ux," which is close to "aux," but never to be confused with "ox" unless you have a death wish.

Spokane, WA, was a player in all-girl drum corps with both the Spokane American Legion Post #9 Auxiliary D&BC (1927 – 1940) and the Spokane VFW Post #51 Auxiliary D&BC (1934 – unknown).



July 1938
Daughters of Spanish-American War Veterans D&BC

Check out the bugles in these photos. Pretty cool. If only we had sheet music to go with those horns. That would be very interesting indeed.

In 1928 the first Girl Scout DC was formed in Eugene, OR. They were acclaimed to be the very first Girl Scout Drum Corps in the U.S. This group was



Legion Auxiliary Drum and Bugle Corps Entertainment at Larchmont
February 2, 1940

co-sponsored by the Eugene American Legion Auxiliary and existed from 1928 through 1932.

Daughters of Spanish-American War Veterans, Tacoma, WA (1932 – 1940) was sponsored by: Spanish-American War Veterans, John R. Thompson Camp # 1. These local girls added color and precision to events all around Washington State and competed at national conventions across the U.S. In 1933 they took first place in junior corps at the Spanish-American Veterans National Convention in Los Angeles.



1941

– 1949) from Walla Walla, WA, started life as the Walla Walla YWCA D&BC in 1934. In 1935 they parted ways with their YWCA sponsors and became an independent drum corps.

They competed in drum corps contests from



1949
Walla Walla Girls
& Bugle Corps
Walla, WA



October 10, 1952
Knights of Pythias Drum & Bugle Corps
Roseburg, Oregon

1939 through 1941 and were avid community supporters. Our last known documentation on these girls is 1949. [Walla Walla, the city so nice, they named it twice! Sorry, local humor].

The Knights of Pythias DC (1940 – 1968) from Roseburg, OR, were established in 1940 as the "Pepsi Cola Girls." They were a parade corps and performed at football games and special events throughout Oregon and Washington. Their last known appearance was in an Oregon parade in 1968.

Canadian all-girl drum corps

Western Canadian all-girl drum corps existed from 1955 until 1977. Some of these groups started life as a band, morphed into a drum corps, then morphed back into a band.

PNW Canadian corps were a different breed and were sometimes called "drum & bugle Bands." Western Canadian judging



1959 Seafair Parade - Seattle
Vernon Girls Trumpet Band
Vernon BC, Canada

May 19, 1960



was also different than American judging as it was more liberal in nature with the awarded scores being inflated compared to the scores received south of the border.

Vernon Girls Cadet Band (1955 – 1964) from Vernon, BC, Canada, started life as the Vernon Girls Cadet Trumpet Band in 1955 and entertained British Columbia and the PNW until approximately 1964. They were a parade corps except in 1962 when they marched in Washington State drum corps competitions. As far as we can tell, 1962 was the only year they marched field competitions, then they went back to being a parade corps / band.

DRUM CORPS NEWS

JUNE 28, 1968



KNIGHTS OF PYTHIAS Girls' Drum & Bugle Corps, Roseburg, Ore.

Another unique drum corps from Canada, the Victoria Thunderbirds Drum Corps (1960 – 1968), was another literal "drum corps." No bugles in this group, just drums and color guard.

DRUM, BUGLE CORPS

Canadians Greeted At Competition



WYOMING DRUM CORPS: Can. drum corps and bugle corps will be warmly welcomed from June 22 to the 26th at the 1968 Drum Corps World Championships in Colorado Springs, Colo. The 1968 Drum Corps World Championships will be held at the Colorado Springs Convention Center, June 22-26, 1968. The 1968 Drum Corps World Championships will be held at the Colorado Springs Convention Center, June 22-26, 1968. The 1968 Drum Corps World Championships will be held at the Colorado Springs Convention Center, June 22-26, 1968.



1968 Knights of Pythias Roseburg, Oregon

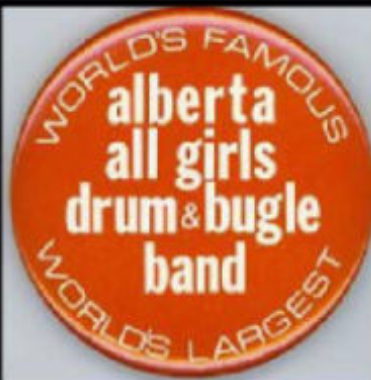


ca 1972 Alberta Girls Alberta, Canada

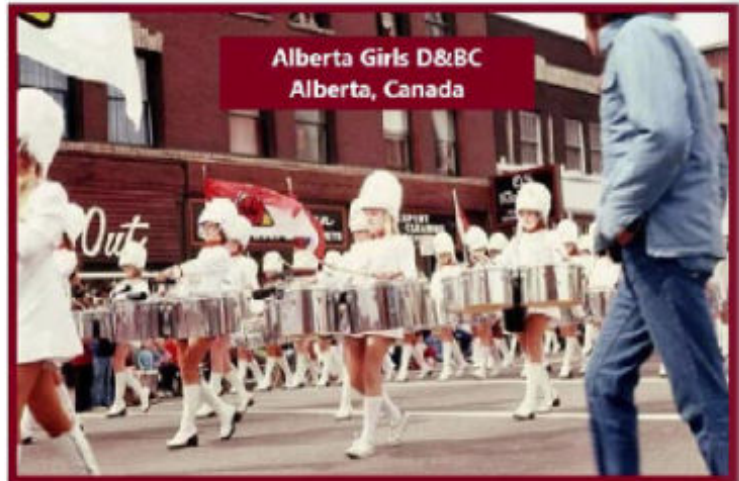


1973 Alberta Girls Drum & Bugle Band Alberta, Canada





ca 1960



Not to be confused with the Seattle Thunderbirds D&BC located 109 miles to the south with a similar name and logo, these gals were a parade corps and as other parade corps did back in the day, they entered the individual drum, bugle and color guard competitions held at our local drum corps shows.

And lastly, one of the most well-known local Canadian all-girl corps were the Alberta Girls (1970 – 1977) of Edmonton, ALB. They were formed in 1970 and were mostly a parade and special event corps. They only competed very sporadically in the PNW as a drum corps between 1974 and 1977.

In 1975 they placed 7th in DCI All-Girl Prelims in Philadelphia, PA. They were known for extensively touring Europe in 1974 and 1977, for 10-weeks at a time.

That's a smattering of the unique all-girl drum corps in our neck of the woods. They are all so different, especially the Canadian corps.

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