

The 1966 All-American Nationals

by Carl Latchaw, Drum Corps World staff (latchman44@yahoo.com)

Before the creation of DCI in 1972, there were other drum corps governing bodies, each one having their own national championships. Some of them were Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW), American Legion (AL), World Open Championships, the Canadian Championships, Catholic Youth Organization (CYO) Nationals, U.S. Open, and Drum Corps Associates (DCA) Championships, to name a few.



In the Pacific Northwest (WA and OR) we had our own local organizations like the Washington State D&BC Assn (1928 – 1966) and the NW Drum Corps Association AKA: NWDCA (1965 – 1985).

That brings us to the All-American Drum & Bugle Corps and Band Association, along with their sub-organization, the All-American Association of Contest Judges. For this article we're going to refer to them collectively as the All-American Drum Corps Association or AADC.

Organized in Chicago in 1932, All-American Drum Corps Association (AADC) was for years the dominant force in the drum corps movement. Its purpose was "to foster, coordinate and perpetuate corps and bands and to extend recognition to individuals who are and have been outstanding in this movement." Somewhat allied to the American Legion with which it shared many members, its annual conventions were held during the regular American Legion national conventions.

The AADC had contests all over the U.S. Quite a few of them were standstill contests held early in the year like the Seattle Thunderbirds' "Mid-Winter Championships" that were held in March. That competition (TBs) had individual, quartet and ensemble contests along with color guard contests and full-corps floor shows on a basketball court.

In Washington and Oregon, the AADC sponsored a few shows in the 1960s and 1970s, but primarily provided judging. Even then, not on a wide-spread basis.

In July 1966 the 35th AADC National Convention was held in Los Angeles CA. They held their national championships that August 7, 26-miles south of L.A. in the city of Anaheim.

Drum corps competing at the show were the Anaheim Kingsmen, Velvet Knights (Anaheim), the Diplomats (Lynwood CA) and the Seattle Thunderbirds. Also scheduled for competition, but did not show, were the Los Angeles Chinese and the Lakewood (CA) Ambassadors.



In addition to the drum corps, they had four bands competing in their own division. That's a total of 10 musical units scheduled for competition.

The results, first place; Thunderbirds, second; Velvet Knights, third; Kingsmen, fourth; Diplomats. The scores were tight, but the Thunderbirds placed either first or second in every caption, enabling their win. The T-Birds were then the 1966 All-American National Champions. Kind of anticlimactic 60-years later, but it was a huge win for the T-Birds on their first-ever trip to





1933 AADC Medal

California.

The 1966 Thunderbirds were also Washington State VFW and American Legion Champions, and Washington State Association of D&BC Champions. They were definitely on a roll.

Later that year, the Anaheim Kingsmen were crowned the California State VFW and American Legion Champions, too.

FACTOID: The Kingsmen were founded in 1958 as the Boy Scout Troop #72 D&BC. In 1963 they changed their name to the Anaheim Scouts. At the end of that season, they split into two corps with the new corps being called the Velvet Knights (VK). Yes, that's right; the same Velvet Knights that were in the competition above.

Out of seven shows we found in 1965 and 1966 where the Kingsmen and

the VK went head-to-head, the Kingsmen came out on top four times. We wish we had more than seven shows worth of data to analyze, but unfortunately we do not, so we cannot say which corps was on average, the better corps back in the day.

By 1970 though, the Kingsmen were outpacing the VK by an average of seven-points in national contests. In 1972, the Anaheim Kingsmen outpaced everyone, winning the first Drum Corps International Championship held at Wisconsin University in Whitewater, WI.

What happened to these corps after 1966?

In 1971, a "great migration" of Diplomats went to the Kingsmen,

1964 Anaheim Kingsmen



1965 Kingsmen

contributing to the Dips disbanding at the end of 1973.

The Kingsmen went on to win the first DCI Championships in 1972, placed in the top 12 in 1973 and 1974.

The VK have an expansive DCI resume. They were DCI Associates six times and made finals eight times in the 1980s and 1990s., a record anyone would be proud to have.

In the fall of 1965, the Thunderbirds feeder corps, the Thunderbird Cadets, split in two with two-thirds of the members going on to establish a new corps in June 1966, two months before AA-Nationals. This new corps was called the Cascade Cadets, now known as the Seattle Cascades.

The Thunderbirds themselves declined after 1967 and did not

The Illinois Chapter All-American

Drum and Bugle Corps and Bugle Bands Association

FIFTH ANNUAL

FOUR CORPS MUSIC STANDARDS CONTEST

SATURDAY MARCH 19, 1966 STARTING 8:00 AM

LANE TECH HIGH SCHOOL AUDITORIUM

200 WEST JOHNSON STREET - CHICAGO, ILLINOIS

— Corps Invited —

- Black Knights, Belleville, Illinois
- 'Boys of '76, St. Louis, Missouri
- Cavaliers, Chicago, Illinois
- Demons, St. Maurer, Ohio
- 'Gambler's, St. Charles, Illinois
- Explosion Scouts, St. Paul, Minnesota
- Explorer Scouts, Madison, Wisconsin
- 'Explorer Scouts, Racine, Wisconsin
- 'Explosives, Sandusky, Ohio
- Honors Indians, St. Paul, Minnesota
- Impalers, Norwood Park, Illinois
- 'Inspirations, St. Paul, Minnesota, Wisconsin
- 'Kingsmen, St. Louis, Missouri, Wisconsin
- Kittens, Racine, Wisconsin
- Men of Brass, St. Charles, Illinois
- 'Warriors, South Milwaukee, Wisconsin
- Next Ambassadors, Chicago, Illinois
- Royal Ains, Chicago, Illinois
- St. Alex's Vikings, Bensenville, Illinois
- 'Vanguard, Chicago, Illinois
- 'Vanguard, St. Detroit, Michigan



DONATION \$1.50
AVAILABLE FROM ALL
PARTICIPATING UNITS
OR AT DOOR

FOR FURTHER DETAILS CONTACT:

JAMES S. UNWRATH, Chairman
100 East Oak Street - Villa Park, Illinois 60131

ALL AMERICAN DRUM AND BUGLE CORPS AND BAND ASSOCIATION

503 2000 - National Headquarters

This volume is published in all the great spirit... (text continues with details about the contest and its purpose)

The All American Contest will be held in... (text continues with details about the contest location and dates)

Corps Invited... (text continues with details about the participating corps)



July 1966 AADC Convention in L.A. California

The Santa Clara Vanguard was formed in March 1967



1966 Lynwood Diplomats

field a corps at all in 1969. They came back with a field show in 1970 and then had one final appearance at the Salem, OR, "Optirama" contest on January 23, 1971.

Epilogue

Drum corps are a tangled web. In 1963 the Anaheim Boy Scout Troop #72 split into two corps, both of which went on to be DCI Finalists. In 1971 a "great migration" of Diplomats helped the Kingsmen become the



1966 Seattle Thunderbirds

first DCI Champions in 1972.

The Thunderbirds' feeder corps fragmented in 1965 and formed the Seattle

Cascades that has also been to the DCI Championships. Hard to believe that this show,



Seattle Thunderbirds' Championship Flag

now 60-years ago, gathered together these four corps that each

contributed significantly to drum corps history.

Long live drum corps! -- ©Pacific Northwest Drum Corps.com 2025. ■



1966 Lynwood Diplomats

The Illinois Chapter All-American

Drum and Bugle Corps and Band Association

PRESENTS

6th annual FULL CORPS MUSIC STANDSTILL CONTEST

SATURDAY EVENING, MARCH 18, 1967 • STARTING AT 7:00 P.M.

ROOSEVELT High School AUDITORIUM
3436 W. Wilson Avenue (4600 North) • Chicago, Illinois

NOTE: WE HAVE CHANGED OUR LOCATION TO PROVIDE YOU WITH:

- BETTER ACOUSTICS
- BETTER LIGHTING
- SEATING FOR 3000
- LARGER STAGE
- PARKING FOR 1000
- DONATION... \$1.50

CORPS INVITED

- NISEI AMBASSADORS
- CAVALIERS
- VANGUARDS
- NORWOOD PARK IMPERIALS
- BELLEVILLE BLACK KNIGHTS
- SPECTACLE CITY MARINERS
- ROYAL AIRS
- O.L.H.R. QUEENSMEN
- IMPERIALS OF ST. PATRICK
- RACINE SCOUTS
- EAGLETTES (All Girls)
- ST. CLAIR SHORES VANGUARDS
- QUEEN CITY CADETS
- KENOSHA KINGSMEN
- DIPLOMATS
- SCARLET KNIGHTS

- ST. ANDREWS HORNETS
- NEE MP's (All Girls)
- McHENRY VISCOUNTS
- BLUE STARS
- GUARDSMEN
- OTTAWA CRUSADERS
- ST. ALEXIS VIKINGS
- PURPLE KNIGHTS
- MILSTADT CRUSADERS
- COLONELS
- MARION CADETS
- GREEN HORNETS
- CENTURIANS
- BOYS OF '76
- SKYLARKS
- MAUMEE DEMONS

1967 Illinois AADC Chapter Contest



1967 Thunderbirds at Disneyland

1967 Seattle Thunderbirds



1967 Seattle Thunderbirds, Cavaliers, Stockton Stars
"March to Victory" Ed. Horn, photo by Roy Perez

ca 1967 Anaheim Kingsmen

May 28, 1967
Velvet Knights



1967 Velvet Knights Compliments of Roy Perez

1968 Lynwood Diplomats



ca 1967 Velvet Knights



ALL-AMERICAN ASSOCIATION OF CONDUCT JUNIORS
(National Tour Events)
100417

Place: Anaheim, Calif. Date: August 7, 1968

Corps	4 R March	5 R Solo	6 R Solo	7 R Solo	Total S.E.	March	4 R	Avg 7 R	Drum Solo	Bugle Solo	Avg Solo	4 R Solo	5 R Solo	6 R Solo	7 R Solo	Final
Kingsmen	147	95	200	157	599	273	231	25	127	265	252	200	210	204		70.45
Diplomats	158	113	200	167	638	274	225	234	96	87	80	187	210	204	204	63.30
Velvet Knights	189	129	200	174	692	275	247	241	200	241	245	181	187	172	172	73.16
Thunderbirds	172	118	200	160	650	277	235	238	186	195	218	176	172	172		70.9



1966 AA-Nationals Score Sheet



May 28, 1967
Velvet Knights

