

Suburban Life

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Parade marks Memorial Day

By Susan Steinmueller
staff writer

DADDY, HOW can they stand so still?" queried an amazed youngster. The boy was referring to the grand spectacle before him — a high school marching band standing at attention, flags raised and batons ready, as band members waited in a line-up to take their place in the Memorial Day parade in Downtown Farmington Monday.

The answer was lost in a loud cheer as band members began high-stepping off to the beat of drums and the blare of tubas, while three U.S. Air Force planes flew over in formation in a hazy sky.

"OK guys, let's go!" came the cry a minute later, and the Elks Lodge of Farmington's motorized drill team, in red T-shirts, were off, circling around and through each other on red motor scooters.

IT WAS ALL part of the excitement of the Farmington Area Veterans' Council annual Memorial Day Parade.

Originating at Grand River and Orchard Lake roads, the procession followed a path east to the Veterans' Memorial, just west of Farmington Road.

Spectators lined the entire mile, which was closed to traffic. Many brought lawn chairs for more relaxed viewing. Sunglasses and hats were in evidence as the weather cooperated to produce an increasingly sunny day.

The four local senior high bands were led by Farmington High, which recently refinished fourth in Division A in the National Festival of Music competition, held in Washington, D.C.

Also participating were the marching bands of Claremontville, Farmington Harrison and North Farmington senior highs.

VETERANS GROUPS included the World War I Veterans, Vietnam Veterans, Veterans of Foreign Wars and American Legion.

A contingent from the Blue Star Mothers and several youth groups also took part.

Reminders that the parade was to honor the war dead were evident in the floats. The float of Cub Scout Pack 162, sponsored by the American Legion Farmington Post 346, displayed white crosses, flowers and the sign, "Remember Those Who Kept Us Free." It was followed by flag-waving Cub Scouts.

This year, the Air Force was the honored branch of service. It enjoyed representation in the sky when three Air Force F-4's participated in a flyover.

In addition, Bill Rogers of New Hudson flew over the route for the third year in the open cockpit of his Army bi-plane, used to train pilots in the 1940s.

FOR THE FOURTH straight year, Wally Christensen of American Legion Farmington Post 346 organized the parade along with his wife, Loraine.

"The school bands were great,"

"I fought for my country. I'm proud to be back (after serving overseas), and proud to be marching in the parade today."

— Harold Rundquist,
senior vice commander
VFW Post 2269
Farmington



Waving "Old Glory," 2-year-old Elena and her mother, Linda Larson, of Novi, celebrated Memorial Day at the Farmington parade. Several family members are from the Farmington area.



Joy Grieco and her 4-year-old daughter, Kara, were among the many Farmington Hills residents who lined Grand River for the parade.

said Rita Tesorero of Farmington Hills after watching her 20th Memorial Day parade. "It shows that our schools are really putting in a lot of effort."

"I'm glad that the people who gave up their lives are remembered," she added.

"I can remember when I used to bring my young daughter here when she was a Brownie," added her husband, Abe. "It was beautiful. I really enjoyed it."

"I'm seeing a lot more patriotism versus what was happening in the 60s," said retired Air Force Sgt. Francis Bremmer of West-

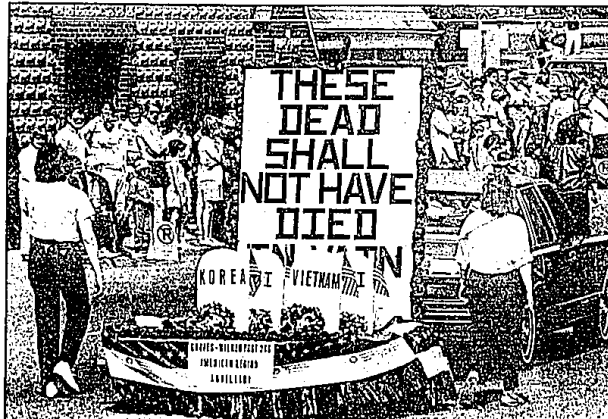
land. "I think we ought to have more of these parades because we get the younger people involved."

Harold Rundquist Sr., vice commander of VFW Farmington Post 2269 and a Farmington resident, served overseas in World War I, most of the time with the 36th Infantry Division. He participated in two invasions, one of Italy, and one of South France.

"I fought for my country," he said. "I'm proud to be back, and proud to be marching in the parade today."



The Veterans of Foreign Wars Farmington Post 2269 Color Guard led the parade procession along Grand River from Orchard Lake Road to the War Memorial.



The American Legion Farmington Post 346 Auxiliary float was in honor of those Americans who lost their lives in 20th century wars.

AT RIGHT: Flutist Keith Leonard marches with Farmington Harrison High School's Hawks.



Staff photos
by
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