

“Sound-Off” An Annual Drum & Bugle Corps Winter Contest Sponsored by the “Irondequoit” based “Emerald Cadets of Rochester, N.Y.” from 1961-through-1969

“Sound-Off” the annual Drum Corps competition was sponsored by the Emerald Cadets Junior Drum and Bugle Corps of Rochester, “Irondequoit” N.Y. and Director, William A. McGrath, Sr. Other sponsors, of this well-run event, were the 209th Veterans Memorial American Legion Post #1790, and the Rice-Hallick VFW Post #5465. These unique “Sound-Off” shows were in operation from 1961 to 1969 (without break) at the War Memorial and were an annual fund raiser for the Emerald Cadets. All work by Mr. McGrath and staff was on a volunteer basis and no one was paid for their time and great efforts.

During WWII, William A. McGrath, (Sr). was the Drum Major and Acting Commander of the Army Air Corps Cadet Training 344th Division Drum and Bugle Corps of Oklahoma City, Oklahoma. That is where the idea of the name “Sound-Off” came from as a remembrance of the formation for a “Ceremonial Battalion Parade” in which a “Sound-Off” segment is performed. After his duty in the Army Air Corps Mr. McGrath was a Combat Infantryman serving with the 86th “Blackhawk” Division, 342nd Infantry Regiment, A&P Platoon in theater ground movement from South Germany to Manheim then deployed to the Philippians.

In a standard “Ceremonial Battalion Parade” formation troops are gathered to their position on the ready line. The commander and staff, of that formation, take their posts prior to adjutant’s call and after the Battalion has been formed on the final line. The adjutant then orders a “SOUND OFF.” The Commander and his staff assume the position of parade rest and remain facing the formation. At the directive of the Commander the band (Drum Corps) plays three “Sound Off” chords. At the conclusion of the third chord, the band moves forward playing a march in quick time. The band executes a left turn to march across the front of the troops on the ready line. At the left of the line of troops, the band countermarches and returns, over the same ground, to the right of the line. After the band has passed beyond the right of the troops, it executes a right turn, countermarches again, and halts in its original position. When the band has halted, it will cease playing, at the next convenient place in music, and play three “Sound-Off” chords again in conclusion.

With the creation of these Rochester, N.Y. Emerald Cadet based “Sound-Off” shows it was taken into consideration while forming this event that drum corps, in general, were obviously not fully ready for the competition season because drill rehearsals were limited by weather. Therefore, corps invited to “Sound-Off” were asked to produce an entrance drill, at an onsite predesignated rehearsal, to create a way to get their corps into a concert formation. Once in that formation the corps then competed as though they were in a standstill contest. When their standstill concert performance was complete the unit then drilled their way off the floor. Therein, two separate awards were presented, one for the on-and-off drill maneuver and one for the concert portion of the performance. These

contests were held in early months to help corps prepare for the upcoming summer competition season.

The Rochester War Memorial was and is home base for the International Hockey League's "Rochester Americans" therefore the ice surface was covered with wood for obvious reasons. When we played "My Romance" the "Minstrel Boy" and other tunes you could actually hear the feet of the performers on the floor in an unmistakably distinct fashion.

The Following are "Sound-Off" Participants Year by Year

Sound-Off for 61...February 25 1961

**Sponsored by: The Emerald Cadets Drum & Bugle Corps of Rochester, N.Y.,
the 209th Veterans Memorial American Legion Post # 1790, and the Bellaires
All Girl Color Guard**

Competing:

Flying Dutchmen Kitchener, Ontario, Canada

Syracuse Brigadiers

Toronto Optimists

Crusaders Rochester, N.Y.

Exhibition:

Garfield Cadets Garfield N.J.

The Eldorado's Twirling Team

Bellaire's All Girl Corps Rochester, N.Y.

Emerald Cadets Rochester, N.Y. "Host"

Sound-Off for 62...March 10, 1962

**Sponsored by: The Emerald Cadets Drum & Bugle Corps of Rochester, N.Y.,
the 209th Veterans Memorial American Legion Post # 1790**

Competing:

Grey Knights Rochester, N.Y.

Les Troubadours Hull, Quebec, Ca.

Ambassadors Toronto, Ontario, Ca.

Appleknockers Geneva, N.Y.

Exhibition:

Garfield Cadets Garfield, N.J.

Sherburne Sentinels Sherburne, N.Y.

Emerald Cadets "Host"

Sound-Off for 63...March 9, 1963

**Sponsored by: The Emerald Cadets Drum & Bugle Corps of Rochester, N.Y., the
209th Veterans Memorial American Legion Post # 1790**

Competing:

Garfield Cadets Garfield, N.J.

Bracken Cavaliers Bracken, Pa.

Marion Cadets Marion, Oh.

De La Salle College Toronto Ca.

Magnificent Yankees Utica, N.Y.

St. Joe's of Batavia N.Y.

Exhibition:

Brigadiers Syracuse, N.Y.

209th Veterans Memorial Post Color Guard

Emerald Cadets "Host"

Sound-Off for 64...February 29, 1964

**Sponsored by: The Emerald Cadets Drum & Bugle Corps of Rochester, N.Y., and
Rice Hallick VFW Post #5465**

Competing:

Starlighters Frankfort, N.Y.

Pittsfield Cavaliers Ma.

Marion Glory Cadets Oh.

Brigadier Jr's Syracuse, N.Y.

Exhibition

Emerald Cadets Rochester, N.Y. "Host"

Reilly Raiders Philadelphia, Pa.

Selden Cadets Selden L.I. N.Y.

Sound-Off for 65...February 27, 1965

**Sponsored by: The Emerald Cadets Drum & Bugle Corps of Rochester, N.Y., and
Rice Hallick VFW Post #5465**

Competing:

Magnificent Yankees Utica, N.Y.

St. Joe's of Batavia N.Y.

Blue Rock Wilmington, De.

York Lions Toronto, Ontario, Ca

Shortsville Shamrocks N.Y.

Graniteers Rochester, N.H.

Exhibition:

Emerald Cadets Rochester, N.Y. "Host"

Grey Knight Post Crusaders Rochester, N.Y.

Sound-Off for 66...January 8, 1966

Sponsored by: The Emerald- Statesmen Drum & Bugle Corps of Rochester, N.Y.

Competing: Blue Rock of Wilmington De.

St Mary's Cardinals of Beverly Ma.

Muchachos Hawthorne NJ

York Lions Toronto Ontario Canada

Arnprior Lions Arnprior Ontario Canada

Exhibition:

Emerald Statesmen Rochester, N.Y. "Host"

Grey Knight Post Crusaders (Rochester, N.Y.)

Sound-Off for 67...February 25, 1967

Sponsored by: The Emerald-Statesmen Drum & Bugle Corps of Rochester, N.Y. ...on the 3rd largest snowfall in recorded history in Rochester, N.Y.

Competing: Seniors:

Canadian Commanders Ontario, Ca.

New Bedford Whalers Ma.

Brigadiers Syracuse, N.Y.

Juniors:

Chessmen St. Catherine's

Les Metropolitans Montreal, Ca.

Optimists Toronto Ontario, Ca.

Exhibition:

Hawthorne Caballeros Hawthorne, N.J.

Emerald Statesmen Rochester, N.Y. "Host"

Shamrocks Color Guard Buffalo, N.Y.

Sound-Off for 67, The April make up Sound Off show

Sponsored by: The Emerald-Statesmen Drum & Bugle Corps of Rochester, N.Y

Competing:

Boston Crusaders Ma.

Les Metropolitans Montreal, Ca.

Marion Cadets, Oh.

Chessmen St. Catherine's Ontario, Ca.

Sertomanairs Sarnia, Ontario, Ca.

Exhibition:

**Emerald Statesmen Rochester, N.Y. “Host”
Brigadiers Syracuse, N.Y.**

Sound-Off for 68...February 10, 1968

Sponsored by: The Emerald Cadets Drum & Bugle Corps of Rochester, N.Y., and Rice Hallick VFW Post #5465

Competing:

St. Joe’s of Batavia N.Y.

Cadets La Salle Toronto, Ontario, Ca.

Blue Rock Wilmington De.

Les Metropolitans Montreal Ca.

Conklin Castlemen Conklin, N.Y.

Exhibition:

Ambassadors Toronto Ontario, Ca.

Emerald Cadets Rochester, N.Y. “Host”

Sound-Off for 69...March 8, 1969

Sponsored by: The Emerald Cadets Color Guard

Competing:

Twin City Imperials Oil City/Franklin, Pa.

St. Rita’s Brassmen Brooklyn, N.Y.

High Risers Arnprior Ontario, Ca.

Guelph Opti Knights Guelph Ontario, Ca.

Blue Rock Wilmington De.

Exhibition:

St. Agnes Fife & Drum Corps Rochester, N.Y.

Bishop Kearney Band Rochester, N.Y.

Skyliners New York, N.Y.

Emerald Cadets Color Guard Rochester, N.Y. “Host”