

WARRIORS DAY PARADE

BY TIM STURM

The Marching Unit traveled to Toronto to participate in their 22nd Warriors Day Parade on August 16.



Chapter 20 Marching Unit Members were initially invited to march in the Warriors Day Parade in Toronto, Canada, starting in August of 1987. I'm happy to report that this was our 22nd year in attendance and we came home with two more First Place trophies: 1st Place for Best Allied Marching Unit and also the Samko Trophy (2nd year in row for both awards), which is awarded for the visiting allied unit obtaining the highest score.

The day was absolutely perfect as we marched thru the Princess Gate and were applauded by the thousands of people who were at the Canadian National Exhibition. The parade itself started in 1921 to honor the World War 1 Canadian Veterans, but the CNE has been going on since 1879.

For those of you who started along with me back in 1987, you'd know the routine. We form up across from the Canadian Armory on Fleet Street in Toronto, then march on through the CNE. We ended up this year marching through the new stadium at the end of the parade. For the new guys that joined me, I'm sure it was a new and exciting experience being applauded by Canadians and Americans alike and marching through a brand new stadium

and hearing over the loudspeaker, "Now entering the stadium, from Rochester, New York -- the Vietnam Veterans of America, Chapter 20. They haven't missed a parade since they were initially invited back in 1987!" The applause raises the hair on the back of your neck as you look in the stands and see a huge number of people applauding and cheering. It makes you proud to be an American, and prouder still to represent the Vietnam Veterans of Chapter 20, Rochester, New York.

Besides myself, the following members partook in the parade: my brother, Dave Sturm; Willie Williams; Jim Hunt (a former Chapter 20 member who drove up from Virginia to march with us); Bruce VanApeldoorn; Joe Peck; Steve Toth; Tom Schrek; Tom Puff; Ray Madigan. Joe Peck's wife, LuAnn, was in the crowd somewhere, but Nancy VanApeldoorn once again carried the "Judging Placard" for the unit. Some of the guys who marched were from other units, which is acceptable by the Canadian Parade Officials.

Following breakfast on Saturday (August 16th) we met across from the Canadian Armory and from there we started off on the parade route. Aside from Bruce's M-16 that needed repair (I'll bring

more electrical tape next year) the parade went off without a hitch. Bruce kept me in line on my side and his wife helped out on the right flank. Unlike the parades here, they have several judges along the route who rate us. The drum beat from the group ahead of us helped out a lot. We got squeezed in a bit at times, but that was a minor inconvenience when we heard and saw all the people applauding and cheering as marched our way thru the CNE and into the new stadium where our Chapter Name was once again announced over the loudspeaker.

All in all, I've heard good things from the guys who went up and some want to go back again as we'll be sent an invitation to an Award's Banquet sometime this Fall. The Canadians treat us well and everyone seems to have a great time up there. We started a tradition a few years back where we sing our national anthem and the Canadian National anthem and it tends to make you proud to sing both songs even though we needed a "cheat sheet" for the Canadian version. I'm already looking forward to next year for better singers...er..."marchers".

Thanks to everyone involved and I hope you all had as good a time as I did!