

Ormand Family Activity

November 2013: Veterans Day Parade

Elsewhere, we have recorded our memories of Rodeo Day parades, which are, of course, unique to Tucson - the "Longest Non-motorized Parade in America". There are other unique spectacles, such as the "Day of the Dead" procession or the "La Posada" in the Barrio Viejo or the "Festival of Lights" parade just before Christmas. Many towns in America have a Memorial Day parade, and Tucson is no exception, but from what I've heard, outside of the IAMAW and Teamsters unions, there's apparently not much to it. I'd have to see to know more. This is the deal with the Veterans Day parade; most towns in America have one, and it was high time to check out ours.

When we arrived, much of downtown was blocked off, and crowds were already lining the parade route. We got into our observation place just in time for a long stream of motorcycles to rumble by. I'm not quite sure what the connection between large motorcycles and veterans is, but a lot of veterans and other riders seem to think there is one.

Then the proper parade started.



The Sons of the American Revolution started the parade, dressed in Continental Army regalia. I'd heard of the Daughters of the American Revolution, but this was new to me.

Antique (or out of service, at least) Army heavy truck.



This old boy has been the poster child for the past several Veterans Day parades, judging from the website. Must be Tucson's oldest Marine.

Another heavy truck, and an Arizona National Guard jeep. There were lots of Willys style jeeps in the parade.





Lots of organizations had a presence. The Elks Club had a car with... an elk.

University of Arizona Navy Reserve Officers Training Corp (ROTC). Lots of ROTC groups were in the parade.



And right behind them was a pack of seamen escorting a large model of the attack submarine bearing our city's name!

The Vietnam Vets had this funny "mule" vehicle.



Desert View High School had an awesome huge Air Force ROTC chapter.

There is apparently a Battle of the Bulge memorial club here. There's a BotB marker in Presidio Park, right behind the Courthouse, and this jeep is towing a trailer with its twin. The man is dressed in period battle dress, but he's not carrying a full-up M1 Garand rifle.





Amazing lot of naval presence for a desert town. When we visited Point Vincent Light in Los Angeles a few years back, they were holding an open house, and had a bunch of high-school age Sea Scouts. Seems Tucson has some, also.

When the Shriners banner went by, we were expecting the old Shriners to putt-putt around on their mini-bikes. They were in little cars instead!



You can tell a *real* parade by the High School marching bands. Here's the Tucson High Badger band.

An impressive and well-practiced band.



I was not surprised to see the Boy Scouts marching in the parade. I was somewhat surprised to see the Christian Scout wannabe groups, such as the Contenders for the Faith. I was quite surprised to see an entry from the homeschoolers.

The University of Arizona Air Force ROTC chapter.





Followed by a troop of airmen from Davis-Monthan Air Force Base, marching past the old Pima County Courthouse.

The Knights of Columbus. Impressive costumes. So the Catholics are involved in the parade as well as the homeschoolers.





There were (only) two marching bands, unfortunately. The Cholla Charger band put on a good show, but it was a pretty small outfit. One trombone...

American ingenuity - little flags being waved by the windshield wipers.



This was a small-town sight: A flatbed semi as a "float". I think this is the Veterans of Foreign Wars entry.

Another small-town sight: A firetruck all decorated up. This is an antique engine, of course; it would have been nice if the real TFD had participated. Or the TPD, as other than parade escorts.



At the end was a procession of old convertibles. We knew it was the end when the parade Grand Marshal rolled by.

A fun part of Veterans Day is that all the government employees, unfortunately the majority of the downtown workforce, are off today, so the downtown is fairly quiet and uncrowded. There's not much going on here other than the parade and the spectators. We had our lunch at the Cafe 54 restaurant on Pennington, sat near the window, and watched the stream of fellow Tucsonans, many in uniform, walk past on their ways home.