

# VENTURING MAGAZINE

## Viet Nam Moving Wall

September 2015



*The Crossroads of America Scout Band is recognized as the oldest, continuously operating Scout Band in America. Founded as a Drum and Bugle Corps in 1917 by Mr. F.O. "Chief" Belzer to play during ceremonies at summer camp and other Council functions, the organization evolved into a full band by the early 1920's. The Band has a rich heritage and has toured throughout the United States, Canada, and England. The Band will be celebrating its 100th anniversary in 2017!*



April 30, 2015, marked the 40th anniversary of the end of the Vietnam War. The following day, May 1, 2015, Fort Benjamin Harrison, Indianapolis, Indiana, was honored with the visit of one of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Moving Walls, a portable version of the Vietnam Memorial Wall in Washington, DC. It was created for those Vietnam veterans who were unable to visit the memorial in DC. Quite impressively standing 6 feet tall at its apex and extending nearly 300 feet long, it carries the names of men and women who gave everything for their country while serving in Vietnam. There are 58,299 names on the Memorial; approximately 1,300 of these names are unaccounted for Prisoners of War and/or Missing in Action. There are 8 women on the list. It was a dirty and unappreciated effort. The cry of the times was "make love not war" - the time of hippies and draft dodgers. The surviving veterans were not welcomed home as in other

wars—they were spat upon, shot at, cursed.

The Scout Band was honored to have been requested to take part in the Ceremonies for the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Moving Wall.

"Indianapolis" translated means



"City of the Indians." The American Indian Council blessed the ground the Wall stood on as well as the Wall itself.

In addition to a wreath, a very noisy and windy tribute to the veterans was the appearance of an American Huey 369, a MEDIVAC (medical evacuation) helicopter actually used in Vietnam. It still has the bullet holes caused by Viet Cong gunfire. Presentation of Colors was made by an Explorer Scout Post, Navy Sea Cadets.



A guest speaker was Congressional Medal of Honor Recipient Sammy L. Davis, a Hoosier (Indiana) Vietnam Veteran. On November 19, 1968, Sammy Davis received the Medal of Honor from President Lyndon Johnson. Years later, footage of LBJ putting the medal around Davis' neck appeared in the movie "Forrest Gump" (with Tom Hanks' head substituted for Davis'), and the Gump's fictional Medal of Honor citation was loosely based on Davis' real one.

Roll Call of the POW-MIA (Prisoner of War/Missing In Action) for Central Indiana was performed by the Rolling Thunder (a motorcycle riding group). After 40 or more years, the list from central Indiana



alone was unreal. The Roll Call was followed by the Indianapolis 500 Gordon Pipers (marching bagpipes), a 21 Gun Salute by the Indianapolis Metro Military Honor Guard, and Echo. Taps by buglers from our Band. 21 Gun Salute and Taps - there wasn't a dry eye to be found.

It was an honor to have been able to take part in these ceremonies for the Vietnam Veterans. This was quite an experience, and as with many Scouting experiences, the youth members learned a bit of history while they thought they were just "playing" their music.



Article provided by: Carol Wiker, Unit Commissioner