



# We loved being in the Pioneers Day Parade

The registration forms for the 2007 reunion in Salt Lake City included the option to sign up to be in a parade the day before the reunion started. I've enjoyed being at many Parades, but I was never in one. I thought it would be fun, so I signed up. It turned out to be an exciting, delightful experience.

Pioneers Day is an annual holiday in Utah, celebrating the July 24, 1847 arrival of the Mormon party led by Joseph Smith. There are many parades in Utah that day, including one in Salt Lake City. I had no idea of what to expect until I woke up that morning. From the local news on TV, I learned that it is the third largest parade in the U.S., and that many folks camp out overnight along the route to get good locations.

The 96th Reserve sent vans to pick us up at the hotel.



We arrived at the staging area, amid floats and marchers,

... and stopped next to two Army trucks, with banners on the sides.



We were given the choice to stay in the air-conditioned vans for the parade, or climb a ladder into a truck. Several of us, with some families, decided on the truck,. The Army provided bottled water to help stave off the heat, and being on a truck turned out to be a good choice.

For a while, we had little to do but get to know the soldiers in the truck, and to look around at others who were also waiting their turn to step off.



Floats



Horses pulling, and horses ridden



... and marchers from the 96th RRC.



Even time for a photo of someone in the other truck taking a photo of us.

Finally, it was time to move out behind the soldiers of the 96th RRC



Look at the size of the crowd! And it seemed like the street led on forever. We finally reached a turn, and the next street went on and on. As did the crowds



My guess is that the route was at least three miles, maybe more.



Along the whole route, there were loudspeakers to tell them that we were WW II vets from the 96th, who fought in the Philippines and on Okinawa. People stood up, cheered, and applauded



We waved back till our arms got tired, then switched arms and waved some more.



There were others waving as well.

