**Armed Forces Medley**

**Service Songs**

Each branch of the U.S. Armed Forces maintains its own military marching band to inspire troops and preserve tradition. Though they now serve ceremonial functions, these bands were once an integral element on the battlefield. To increase the morale and courage of the men, bands would march in front of formations as they entered battle. Yet, as the number of musicians dwindled, commanders delegated marching bands to the rear of the formation, behind the combat-ready troops. Today, bands are no longer involved in armed conflict, but continue to inspire troops through song or hymn that represent the individual histories and traditions of America’s Armed Forces.

These songs pay tribute to those who have proudly served the United States, are serving the United States, and who gave their lives in their service to the United States. Each of these armed service songs has a rich history and special meaning to those who’ve served and their families.

When more than one service song is played, they are played in the order specified by Department of Defense directive: Army, Marine Corps, Navy, Air Force, Space Force, and Coast Guard.

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**CAISSONS - Army**

“Caissons” were wheeled carts used by the Army to carry ammunition and supplies.

The original version of the Army Song was written by Edmund Gruber in 1908, turned

into a march by Sousa in 1917. Interesting note, once Sousa realized that Gruber had written the melody, Sousa made sure that royalties were paid to Gruber.

**ANCHORS AWEIGH – Navy**

"Anchors Aweigh," from an expression meaning the ship's hoisted anchor has just cleared the sea's bottom and, by implication, the voyage is underway.

116 years ago, in 1906, Anchors Aweigh was first sung at the Army/Navy football game in Philadelphia. Charles Zimmerman composed this song with Alfred Miles writing the original lyrics. Lyrics have been added over the years.

**SEMPER PARATUS “Always Ready” – Coast Guard**

“Semper Paratus” was the official coast guard’s motto in 1910. Capt Francis Van Boskerck wrote the music when he was a Commander of the Coast Guard’s Bering Sea Forces in 1927.

“The Coast Guard as established in 1915, shall be a military service and a branch of the armed forces of the United States at all times. The Coast Guard shall be a service in the Department of Homeland Security, except when operating as a service in the Navy.”

**US MARINES HYMN - From the halls of Montezuma, To the shores of Tripoli...**

The melody for the Marine’s Hymn was likely an old Spanish folk song which Jacque Offenbach wrote into a comic opera that opened in Paris in 1867. Words and verses were added with each Marine campaign over the years, with the first printed version published in 1919.

Note: The Marine Corps is organized under the Department of the Navy.

**US AIR FORCE – “Wild Blue Yonder”**

In May 1939, the first verse and basic melody was written by Robert MacArthur Crawford. In 1947, when the Air Force became a separate service, the song was renamed, "The U.S. Air Force."

**THE STARS AND STRIPES FOREVER**

The official national march song for our Nation and one of the most famous patriotic songs in the United States is the “Stars & Stripes Forever.” It was composed by John Philip Sousa in 1896.

**SEMPER SUPRA – “Always Above” US Space Force**

The US Space Force was established in 2019, and has officially adopted its own song titled, “Semper Supra” which was written in 2020. The United States Space Force is a separate and distinct branch of the armed services, organized under the Department of the Air Force

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***John Philip Sousa - The Stars and Stripes Forever***

"The Stars and Stripes Forever." It's the official march of the United States and it's John Philip Sousa's most famous composition. You've probably heard it before, even if you don't know it by name.

All of his life, John Philip Sousa loved music and loved America, so it's no surprise that he wrote this patriotic classic. Sousa grew up in Washington, D.C., during the Civil War. As a kid, he enjoyed hearing the Civil War military bands that filled the streets of Washington as well as the sounds of his father's trombone. His father played in the U.S. Marine Band and Sousa quickly followed in his footsteps. Sousa first enlisted in the Marine Band as an apprentice violinist and later became the bandleader. When Sousa wasn't playing with a band, he was writing music, like "The Stars and Stripes Forever." By the 1890s he had written enough popular marches to be nicknamed the "March King."