

"The Army Goes Rolling Along"

The Official Song of The United States Army



The Army Song had its beginnings during a difficult march across the Zambales Mountains in the Philippines. As a lieutenant leading a small detachment to select a route, Brig. Gen. Edmund L. "Snitz" Gruber overheard a section chief call to his drivers, "Come on! Keep them rolling!"

Gruber, an artillery officer whose relative, Franz, composed "Silent Night," was stationed with the 2nd Battalion, 5th Field Artillery, in the Philippines. In March 1908, about a year after Gruber overheard that section chief in the mountains, six young lieutenants - including William Bryden and Robert Danford - gathered in his thatch hut and decided they needed a song for the field artillery.

"A guitar was produced and tuned and - in what seemed to us a few moments - as if suddenly inspired, Snitz fingered the melody of the now-famous song," recalled Danford, who retired as a major general. Danford and Bryden helped complete the lyrics.

Gruber taught the song to officers of the 1st Battalion as they arrived at Fort Stotsenburg. Wrote Danford: "A few evenings later at the post reception for the new unit and adieu to the old, 'The Caisson Song' was given its first public rendition. Its popularity was instantaneous, and almost in no time all six of the regiments then composing the U.S. Field Artillery adopted it."

During the last days of World War I, senior artillery leaders wanted an official marching song. An artillery officer who did not know Gruber and thought "The Caisson Song" dated back to the Civil War, gave the piece to noted composer and bandmaster John Philip Sousa and asked him to fix it up.



Sousa incorporated Gruber's piece into his composition, which he titled, "The U.S. Field Artillery March" - a few beginning measures being his own and the balance from Gruber.

The resulting song became a blockbuster record during World War I, selling about 750,000 copies. Gruber heard of it and asked Sousa, "How about some money, since I wrote the song?" Embarrassed, the innocent Sousa made certain Gruber got his royalties.

In 1948, the Army conducted a nationwide contest to come up with its own official song. None of the five winners achieved any notable popularity. In 1952, the secretary of the Army appealed to the music industry for a composition. Composers submitted an avalanche of more than 800 songs.

But no submission sparkled enough to be accepted. So a soldier music adviser in the Adjutant General's office was asked to try his hand at it. As a result, H.W. Arberg adapted "The Caisson Song" to become the official U.S. Army song, "The Army Goes Rolling Along."

It was adopted in 1956 as the official song of the Army and retitled, "The Army Goes Rolling Along." The current lyrics tell the story of our past, our present, and our future.

The "Army Goes Rolling Along" is played at the conclusion of every U.S. Army ceremony and all Soldiers are expected to stand and sing. The song should be performed with a short introduction to permit all to stand, followed by the Verse, the Chorus, and the Refrain. When performed as part of a medley of Service songs, the following Department of Defense guidance applies:

The order of performance for Service songs is:

Army: "The Army Goes Rolling Along"

Marine Corps: "The Marine's Hymn"

Navy: "Anchors Aweigh"

Air Force: "Official U.S. Air Force Song"

Coast Guard: "Semper Paratus"

The normal method of performing Service songs will be in the above order. However, certain occasions may call for the order to be reversed, such as in a medley featuring "The Army Goes Rolling Along" as the finale. This is authorized as long as the relative order of songs is maintained. Only medleys containing the service songs in an approved order of precedence will be performed by Army bands. Civilian music organizations are encouraged to follow the same order of preference. When performed as part of a Service song medley, the Army Song will normally include only the Chorus and the Refrain.

Verse:

March along, sing our song, with the Army of the free.
Count the brave, count the true, who have fought to victory. We're the
Army and proud of our name!
We're the Army and proudly proclaim:

Chorus:

First to fight for the right,
And to build the Nation's might,
And The Army Goes Rolling Along.
Proud of all we have done, Fighting 'til the battle's won,
And the Army Goes Rolling Along.

Refrain:

Then it's hi! hi! hey!
The Army's on its way.
Count off the cadence loud and strong;
For where'er we go,
You will always know
That The Army Goes Rolling Along.



Vocal

The Army Goes Rolling Along

(Small Marching Band w/Optional Vocal)

Written & Adapted by H.W. Arberg
Arranged by SGM Paul Murtha

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March a - long, _____ sing our song, _____ with the Ar - my of the free _____ Count the

17 brave, _____ count the true, _____ who have fought to vic - tor - y _____ We're the Ar-my and proud of our

25

Cut to 37 Optional Intro if part of a medley 3

27 name _____ We're the Ar-my and proudly pro - claim _____ First to _____ First to

37 1.

fight for the right, And to build the Na-tion's might, And The Ar-my Goes Rol-ling A - long. _____ Proud of
all we have done, Fight-ing 'till the bat-tle's won, And the Ar-my Goes Rol-ling A

2. 47

45 long. _____ Then it's hi! hi! hey! The Ar-my's on its way. Count off the ca-dence loud and strong:—

55

54 — For where - 'er we go, You will a-lways know That The Ar-my Goes Rol-ling A - long. _____

* All Soldiers are expected to stand and sing the Army Song when it is performed. Bands will ensure appropriate announcements are made to allow audiences time to stand and will always perform the written introduction.

Ver. 1.3 - 7 MAY 2014

