

Marines' Hymn

*CATEGORY 5 – GENERAL MILITARY
SUBJECTS*

*SKILL 4 – CUSTOMS, COURTESIES,
AND TRADITIONS*

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Purpose

This lesson introduces you to the Marines' Hymn. It provides information on the history and traditions that the hymn is based upon.

Introduction

- Webster's dictionary defines hymn as "a song of praise to somebody or something other than a deity."
- Hymns have been an important part of American music culture - mainly religious music - since the first Europeans set foot on the shores of the new world.
- Many of these early settlers from Europe came to the new world to escape religious persecution.
- These settlers brought with them religious hymns from all over the world.
- Just as religious hymns are songs of praise so is the Marines' Hymn.

Early Influences

- The Marines' hymn is the oldest of the official songs of the U.S. Armed Services and is steeped in Marine Corps history.
- In 1805, a small force of Marines stormed the Barbary pirates' stronghold at Derna on the "shores of **Tripoli**," and hoisted the American flag for the first time over a fortress of the Old World.
- Afterward, the Colors of the Corps were inscribed with the words: "To the Shores of Tripoli."
- During the Mexican War of 1847, Marines captured and occupied the Castle of Chapultepec, otherwise known as the "Halls of Montezuma."

Early Influences

- The words on the Colors were changed to read: "From the Shores of Tripoli to the Halls of Montezuma."
- Following the close of the Mexican War, somewhere around 1849, came the first verse of the Marines' Hymn.
- It was written, according to legend, by a Marine on duty in Mexico and sung to a Mexican folk tune.
- The unknown author transposed the phrases in the motto on the Colors so that the first two lines of the Hymn would read: "From the Halls of Montezuma, to the Shores of Tripoli."

French Connection

- Many interesting stories have been associated with the Marines' Hymn. One of the best was published in the *Stars and Stripes*, the official newspaper of the American Expeditionary Force, dated August 16, 1918.
- A wounded officer from among the gallant French **lancers** had just been carried into a field hospital to have his dressing changed. He was full of compliments and curiosity about the dashing contingent that fought at his regiment's left.
- A lot of them are **mounted troops** by this time, he explained, for when our men would be shot from their horses, these youngsters would give one running jump and gallop ahead as cavalry. I believe they are soldiers from **Montezuma**. At least, when they advanced this morning, they were all singing 'From the Halls of Montezuma to the Shores of Tripoli.'

First Official Version

- In 1929, the Commandant of the Marine Corps authorized the first official version of the Marines' Hymn.

Changes to the Hymn

- On November 21, 1942, the Commandant of the Marine Corps approved a change in the words of the fourth line, first verse, to read, "In air, on land, and sea."
- Former Gunnery Sergeant H. L. Tallman, a veteran observer in Marine Corps Aviation and participant in combat missions with Marine Corps Aviation over the Western Front in World War I, had first proposed the change.

John Philip Souza (1852-1932)

- Souza was a famous American bandmaster and composer. At age 13, his father enlisted him in the Marines as an apprentice to the U.S. Marine Corps Band, the official band of the President of the United States.
- Appointed as leader of the band in 1880, he raised the level of performance and instrumentation of the band to a higher standard in his 12 years as bandmaster.
- His marches were recognized as distinctly American as well as brilliant and stirring.
- One of Souza's march songs that all Marines have come to know is, "Semper Fidelis" (1888) along with "The Stars and Strips Forever" (1897) .



Marine's Hymn

- From the Halls of Montezuma,
To the shores of Tripoli;
We fight our country's battles
In the air, on land, and sea;
First to fight for right and freedom And to keep our
honor clean; We are proud to claim the title of UNITED
STATES MARINE.
- Our flag's unfurled to every breeze From dawn to
setting sun;
We have fought in every clime and place Where we
could take a gun; In the snow of far off northern lands
And in sunny tropic scenes; You will find us always on
the job- THE UNITED STATES MARINES.
- Here's health to you and to our Corps Which we are
proud to serve; In many a strife we've fought for life
And never lost our nerve; If the Army and the Navy
Ever look on Heaven's scenes;
They will find the streets are guarded by UNITED
STATES MARINES



Conclusion

- The Marines' Hymn has been sung and played wherever U.S. Marines have landed, and today is recognized as one of the foremost military service songs.
- Copyright ownership of the Marines' Hymn was vested in the United States Marine Corps per certificate of registration dated August 19, 1991, but it is now in the public domain. ❖

Questions

- True or False: The Marines' hymn is the oldest of the official songs of the U.S. Armed Services.
- In 1805, a small force of Marines stormed the Barbary pirates' stronghold at Derna on the "What" and hoisted the American flag for the first time over a fortress of the Old World.
- In what year did the Commandant of the Marine Corps authorize the first official version of the Marines' Hymn?
- Who was a famous American bandmaster and composer. At age 13, his father enlisted him in the Marines as an apprentice to the U.S. Marine Corps Band, the official band of the President of the United States.

Fire Team Exercise

- **Directions:** Each fire team will create pictures representing the verses. The pictures should allow the team to be able to sing or recite the hymn by looking at the pictures they created.
- Verse 1-Fire Team 1 & 2
- Verse 2-Fire Team 3 & 4
- Verse 3- Fire Team 5 & 6