

## **About The Armed Forces Medley**

Arranged By Jim Deeming

### **The Arrangement:**

A few years ago when my cousin shipped off for Marine Corp boot camp, I came up with a simple idea for playing the Marine Corp Hymn at his graduation party. It sat on the shelf since then. That changed recently when my oldest son announced he was following suit. As the weeks to his departure grew short, I started noodling around with the song again. I began to have the idea for a medley of all of the military branches.

While researching the idea, I couldn't help notice that - at least up until now - there doesn't appear to be anyone else on YouTube who has attempted the whole suite on fingerstyle guitar. Choirs and marching bands? Yes. But not on the guitar.

So I got to work, first incorporating just the Army, Navy, Air Force and Marines. After only two public performances it was quickly apparent that leaving out the Coast Guard was unacceptable, so I overhauled the intro to the medley and put that one right up front. I like the sound of it and it has turned into quite an improvement.

Other than the intro and ending, this arrangement makes extensive use of the Atkins/Travis alternating thumb style as the basis for a "march" feel to the songs. I chose the key of A because it gives the broadest range of the guitar tones and most accessible melody notes over several octaves.

These songs are frequently played at the end of military ceremonies and are well known to the members and veterans of each represented branch. When you perform these, be aware that it is protocol for members of these branches to stand at attention when they hear their song.

I have been told that it is a matter of Army regulations that, when more than one service song is played together, they are to be played in the following order: Army, Marine Corps, Navy, Air Force, and then Coast Guard. That is not how my arrangement has turned out but, until such time as I am required to play it on an Army facility I hope I will be in no more trouble than the several choir and marching band arrangements I have heard that have it wrong as well.

This arrangement is still very new and will probably continue to morph a little bit over time but the version as presented in this lesson is complete enough to stand alone - and so far it's been a real crowd pleaser! I hope you enjoy working on it as much as I have.

## The Songs:

### Battle Hymn Of The Republic (Brief Intro)

This was written in 1861 by Julia Ward Howe as an abolitionist hymn and became popular during the American Civil War. It has always remained popular as a patriotic song. Howe visited a Union Army camp on the Potomac River near Washington, D. C. and heard the soldiers singing the song "John Brown's Body". She wrote the words the next day.

The hymn appeared in the Atlantic Monthly in 1862 and was sung at the funerals of Winston Churchill and several American presidents. John Brown, the subject of the original tune, was an American abolitionist who led a short lived insurrection to free the slaves.

Mine eyes have seen the glory of the coming of the Lord:

He is trampling out the vintage where the grapes of wrath are stored;

He hath loosed the fateful lightning of His terrible swift sword:

His truth is marching on.

Chorus:

Glory, glory, hallelujah!

Glory, glory, hallelujah!

Glory, glory, hallelujah!

His truth is marching on.

## Semper Paratus (Coast Guard Song)

Semper Paratus is latin for "always ready". According to the Coast Guard Historian's Office the song was first heard as far back as the 1830s.

### Verse:

From Aztec Shore to Arctic Zone  
To Europe and Far East,  
The Flag is carried by our ships,  
In times of war and peace;  
And never have we struck it yet  
In spite of foeman's might.  
Who cheered our crews and cheered again  
For Showing how to fight.

### Chorus:

So here's the Coast Guard marching song,  
We sing on land and sea.  
Through surf and storm and howling gale,  
High shall our purpose be.  
"Semper Paratus" is our guide,  
Our fame and glory too.  
To fight to save or fight and die,  
Aye! Coast Guard we are for you.

## The Army Goes Rolling Along

Also known as the "Caisson Song", this tune was written in 1908 by soldiers stationed at Fort Stotsenburg in the Philippines. John Philip Sousa was asked to take the original and turn it into a march. From this, Sousa created what he named, "U.S. Field Artillery". Before it officially became the Army song, the lyrics were changed in 1956.

### Verse:

Over hill, over dale

We have hit the dusty trail,

And the Caissons go rolling along.

In and out, hear them shout,

Counter marching and right about,

And those Caissons go rolling along.

### Refrain:

For it's hi! hi! hee!

In the field artillery,

count out your numbers loud and strong,

And where e'er you go,

You will always know

That the Caissons go rolling along.

## Anchors Aweigh (Navy Song)

This song was written as the U.S. Naval Academy fight song by Charles A. Zimmerman and Alfred H. Miles in 1906

### Verse:

Anchors Aweigh, my boys  
Anchors Aweigh  
Farewell to college joys  
We sail at break of day, 'ay 'ay 'ay  
O'er our last night ashore  
Drink to the foam  
Until we meet once more  
Here's wishing you a happy voyage home!

### Bridge:

Heave a ho there! sailor  
Ev'rybody drink up while you may  
Heave a ho there! sailor  
For you're gonna sail at break of day  
Drink a-way, Drink a-way,  
For you sail at break of day, Hey!

The U.S. Air Force (aka Into The Wild Blue Yonder)

Captain Robert MacArthur Crawford wrote this song in 1939 while the Air Force was still known as the Army Air Corps. The lyrics were actually the result of a contest won by Mildred Yount, the wife of a senior Air Corps officer.

Verse:

Off we go into the wild blue yonder,  
Climbing high into the sun;

Here they come zooming to meet our thunder,  
At 'em boys, Give 'er the gun!

Down we dive, spouting our flame from under,  
Off with one helluva roar!\*

We live in fame or go down in flame. Hey!  
Nothing'll stop the U.S. Air Force!

Bridge: "A Toast to the Host"

Here's a toast to the host  
Of those who love the vastness of the sky,

To a friend we send a message of his brother men who fly.  
We drink to those who gave their all of old,

Then down we roar to score the rainbow's pot of gold.  
A toast to the host of men we boast, the U.S. Air Force!

## Marine Corps Hymn

This is the oldest official song of any of the military branches. The author of the song is unknown and lyrics were added over a long period of time, beginning in the mid 1800s. The Marine Corp first copywrote the song in 1891 and the current version was authorized in 1929.

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.

## Star Spangled Banner (outtro)

The United States national anthem was penned by Francis Scott Key during the Battle of Fort McHenry in the War of 1812. The tune was already known as a popular British drinking song. The official adoption as the national anthem happened in 1931 by congressional resolution, signed by President Herbert Hoover.

O! say can you see by the dawn's early light,  
What so proudly we hailed at the twilight's last gleaming,

Whose broad stripes and bright stars through the perilous fight,  
O'er the ramparts we watched, were so gallantly streaming?

And the rockets' red glare, the bombs bursting in air,  
Gave proof through the night that our flag was still there;

O! say does that star-spangled banner yet wave  
O'er the land of the free and the home of the brave?