



MARINE CORPS HISTORY DIVISION

“The Marines’ Hymn”

As with most Marine Corps lore, there is much myth and legend associated with “The Marines’ Hymn.” A version—or versions—of the Hymn was likely played by Marines by the latter 19th century, though the original author is unknown. The music for the Hymn is derived from an aria in the comic opera *Genevieve de Brabant*, which the German composer Jacques Offenbach wrote and first performed on 19 November 1859.

The Hymn’s 19th-century origins can be seen in its lyrics, which immortalize the Corps’ early service in the Mexican War and the Barbary War. The words were altered slightly several times but were finalized in 1929, when the Commandant of the Marine Corps confirmed the Hymn’s lines as we have them today. The Hymn has only been changed once since then. On 21 November 1942, the Commandant of the Marine Corps approved a change in the words of the fourth line, first verse, to read, “In the air, on land, and sea.”

Though it is not clear when the tradition began, as a show of respect all Marines, whether or not they are on active duty or in uniform, stand at attention when “The Marine’s Hymn” is performed.

*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 unfurl'd to every breeze
From dawn to setting sun;*

Collect

Preserve

Promote

Support

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*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.*