

Music by Dr. Glenn

Ruth and I started to spend the winters in Pensacola after our retirement. We picked Pensacola because: we had spent our first Navy assignment there in 1957 and really liked the area; there were plenty of beach front condos on Perdido Key available at reasonable prices; and, we could take advantage of my Naval Reserve retirement benefits at the Naval Air Station only a few miles away. The climate was mild (60s –70-)...just perfect for golf, biking and hiking.

The first month we were in Pensacola, we attended the Navy Chapel on base for church services. I noticed that every Sunday we sang four verses of the Navy Hymn to close the service. The verses were about sailors, marines, aviators and those far away from their homes. The verses were very touching, but something seemed to be missing to me. Nearly three-fourths of the congregation were retired military and their mates, but they were never mentioned. The song verses covered everyone in the Navy except those of us who were retired. I decided to do something about that!

I researched the Navy Hymn and found that it has sixteen verses. Those verses covered nearly every aspect of navy life...women in the navy, Seabees, those serving in the Arctic, those who have died, submariners, the sick, new ship commissions, those who guard our shores (sounds like the Coast Guard to me, although I know the navy is the ultimate shore guarders...so there Coast Guardsers), and astronauts (for God's sake, there are only several dozen of them!).....BUT, no blessings for the retired folks who played

such a role in our navy's history. I decided to do something about this injustice! I wrote a verse for retired navy folks. I asked my good friend, Walter Watson (Owner of Black Squirrel Music Publishing Company) to place the words in the correct places in the Navy Hymn and he agreed to do this favor for me. While doing this task, Walter noted that an eighth note should be added to the music for this particular verse. I pleaded with him to forego adding this note (knowing how the military can sometimes resist change), but he was adamant that the note must be added, and noted that many verses of popular songs have variations to them. The sheet music was completed and I gave it to the choir director and organist.

I had hoped that it might be played in the next few weeks, but I heard no more about it. Finally, I asked the director about the status of the retired verse. He said that when they played it they noticed that it had an extra note, and, that if I would have the note removed, they see how it sounded. I asked Walter to remove the damn eighth note. He refused, saying, "It belongs there...and it wouldn't be right to remove it."

I was caught between principle and practice. Walter won't remove the note, I'm too dumb to change it (I would just rip it out), and the choir director won't play the verse unless that eighth note has been removed. I guess I'll just be composer who remains unpublished. In Walter's defense, the Sunday after the choir director refused to play my verse, all of the music sang that Sunday was printed on sheets without music...just words. When I asked the director why a

congregation could sing new songs without music, but would become confused if an additional eighth note was inserted, he answered, "that's the way we do it around here." No matter, I'm still proud to be a retired Naval Officer...just put the emphasis on retired!

Note: Following this introduction, you may read the sixteen verses of the Navy Hymn and my new verse. See if you can find the offensive note. No prizes will be awarded, but you can be a part of the congregation that sings this verse if you are still alive when my funeral is held!

Navy Hymn

Verse 1

Eternal Father, strong to save,
Whose are hath bound the restless wave,
Who bidd'st the mighty ocean deep
Its own appointed limits keep,
O hear us when we cry to thee
For those in peril on the sea
William Whiting, 1850

Verse 2

Eternal Father, grant, we pray,
To all Marines, both night and day,
The courage, honor, strength, and skill
Their land to serve. thy law fulfill;
Be thou the shield forevermore
From every peril to the Corps.
J.E. Seim, 1966

Verse 3

Lord, guard and guide all those who fly
Through the great spaces in the sky.
Be with them always in the air,
In darkening storms or sunlight fair.
O hear us when we lift our prayer
For those in peril in the air!

Mary C.D. Hamilton, 1915

Verse 4

Lord, stand beside the ones who build,
And give them courage, strength, and ski
O grant them peace of heart and mind,
And comfort loved ones left behind.
Lord, hear our prayer for all Seabees,
Where'er they be on land or sea.

R. J. Dietrich, 1960, alt

Verse 5

Eternal Father, grant, we pray,
To all Marines, both night and day,
The courage, honor, strength, and skill
Their land to serve, thy law fulfill;
Be thou the shield forevermore
From every peril to the Corps.

J.E. Seim, 1966

Verse 6

Lord, stand beside the men who build,
And give them courage, strength, and skill.
O grant them peace of heart and mind,
And comfort loved ones left behind.
Lord, hear our prayer for all Seabees,
Where'er they be on land or sea.

R.J. Dietrich, 1960, alt.

Verse 7

Lord God, our power evermore,
Whose arm doth reach the ocean floor,
Dive with our men beneath the sea;
Traverse the depths protectively.
O hear us when we pray, and keep
Them safe from peril in the deep.

David B. Miller, 1965

Verse 8

O God, protect the women who,
In service, faith in thee renew;
O guide devoted hands of skill
And bless their work within thy will;
Inspire their lives that they may be
Examples fair on land and sea.

Merle E. Strickland, 1972 (Lines 1-4)

Beatrice M. Truitt, 1948 (Lines 5-6)

Verse 9

Creator, Father, who dost show
Thy splendor in the ice and snow,
Bless those who toil in summer light
And through the cold antarctic night,
As they thy frozen wonders learn;
Bless those who wait for their return.

L.E. Vogel, 1965

Verse 10

Eternal Father, Lord of the Hosts,
Watch o'er the men who guard our coasts
Protect them from the raging seas
And give them light and life and peace.
Grant them from thy great throne above
The shield and shelter of thy love.

Author and Date unknown

Verse 11

Eternal Father, King of birth,
Who didst create the heaven and earth,
And bid the planets and the sun
Their own appointed orbits run;
O hear us when we seek thy grace
For those who soar through outer space.

J.E. Volonte, 1961

Verse 12

Creator, Father, who first breathed
In us the life that we received,
By power of thy breath restore
The ill, and men with wounds of war.
Bless those who give their healing care,
That life and laughter all may share.

Galen H. Meyer, 1969

Verse 13

God, who dost still the restless foam,
Protect the ones we love at home.
Provide that they should always be
By thine own grace both safe and free.
O Father, hear us when we pray
For those we love so far away.

Hugh Taylor, date unknown

Verse 14

Lord, guard and guide the men who fly
And those who on the ocean ply;
Be with our troops upon the land,
And all who for their country stand:
Be with these guardians day and night
And may their trust be in thy might

Author unknown, about 1955

Verse 15

O Father, King of earth and sea,
We dedicate this ship to thee.
In faith we send her on her way;
In faith to thee we humbly pray:
O hear from heaven our sailor's cry
And watch and guard her from on high!

Author and date unknown

Verse 16

And when at length her course is run,
Her work for home and country done,
Of all the souls that in her sailed
Let not one life in thee have failed;
But hear from heaven our sailor's cry,
And grant eternal life on high!

Author and date unknown

Verse 17

Almighty God we look to you.
Bless those who served but no longer do.
They fought the wars, they guarded peace.
So fears at home with thanks could cease.
Our grateful hearts to thee we bow.
For those retired or with you now.

Dr. Glenn Saltzman, 2000

Below is the sheet music for the Navy Hymn. See if you can find that note.

Navy Hymn (Retired Verse)

Text by Dr. Glenn Saltzman, Captain, USNR (Ret)

Al - might - y God we look to You. Bless

those who served. but no long - er do. They fought the wars. they

guard - ed peace. So fears at home with thanks could cease. Our

grate - ful hearts to Thee we bow. For those re - tired or with You now.