

# **MUSIC OF THE U.S. MILITARY**

**LESSON PLAN BY  
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# MUSIC OF THE U.S. MILITARY

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# LESSON PLAN: MUSIC OF THE U.S. MILITARY

May 21 is Armed Forces Day in the United States. The celebration is held the third Saturday in May in the U.S. Prior to 1949, each branch of the military observed their own day of celebration. May 20, 1950 was the beginning of Armed Forces Day with the consolidation of all five branches of the military in the U. S. Department of Defense. President Harry S. Truman led the effort to establish a single holiday for citizens to come together and thank our military members for their patriotic service in support of our country. Many countries all over the world have a similar holiday during the year.

Whether it be Armed Forces Day, Memorial Day, Independence Day, Veterans Day, etc. the military deserves our thanks and respect. The men and women serve us all and keep us safe and our country great.

Each branch of the military has their own song. Each has its own story behind the song. The following are the stories about the songs, words and links to the actual song.

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## LINKS

(Be sure to always preview the video clips prior to showing them to the students. You know your students and what will be too long and what will keep their attention.)

### Armed Forces Medleys

[Armed Forces Medley: 2014 National Memorial Day Concert](https://youtu.be/MoNj8qsptjA) - <https://youtu.be/MoNj8qsptjA>  
(The first 4 minutes shows each branch of the military in full dress uniform and their flag while their song is played.)

[US Armed Forces Anthem - "Armed Forces Medley"](https://youtu.be/zudFEvTj9H0) - <https://youtu.be/zudFEvTj9H0> (3:32 minutes, Armed Forces Medley with words)

# MUSIC OF THE COAST GUARD

The U.S. Coast Guard's motto is "Semper Paratus" which means always ready. No one knows how it became the motto. Captain Francis Saltus Van Boskerck used this motto when he wrote the words of this song on board the ship Yamacraw, anchored off the coast of Savannah, Georgia in 1922. It wasn't until 5 years later, 1927, when Boskerck was transferred to Unalaska, that he added the music with the help of Alf E. Nannestad and Joseph O. Fournier, who were both Public Health dentists. Mrs. Albert C. Clara Goss, the wife of a fur trader, let them use a beat-up piano to plunk out the melody.

Boskerck used "Semper Paratus" on the top of his official stationary hoping it would gain the same recognition as the Marines' "Semper Fidelis" and "Anchor Aweigh" of the Navy. It now appears on the Coast Guard official seal.



Captain Francis Saltus Van Boskerck<sup>8</sup>

.....

## LINKS

(Be sure to always preview the video clips prior to showing them to the students. You know your students and what will be too long and what will keep their attention.)

[Coast Guard Song - "Semper Paratus"](https://youtu.be/ayYZg-JpMqE) - <https://youtu.be/ayYZg-JpMqE> (1:23 minutes, 1st verse and chorus twice)

# SEMPER PARATUS: U.S. COAST GUARD MARCHING SONG

Original Version about 1927

*Verse 1:*

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 foemen'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 or sea.  
Through surf and storm and howling gale,  
High shall our purpose be.  
"Semper Paratus" is our guide,  
Our fame, our glory, too,  
To fight to save or fight and die!  
Aye! Coast Guard, we're for you.

*Verse 2:*

SURVEYOR and NARCISSUS,  
The EAGLE and DISPATCH,  
The HUDSON and TAMPA,  
These names are hard to match;  
From Barrow's shores to Paraguay,  
Great Lakes or ocean's wave,  
The Coast Guard fights through storms and winds,  
To punish or to save.

*Verse 3:*

Aye! We've been "Always Ready"  
To do, to fight, or die  
Write glory to the shield we wear  
In letters to the sky.  
To sink the foe or save the maimed,  
Our mission and our pride.  
We'll carry on 'til Kingdom Come,  
Ideals for which we've died.

## Revised Lyrics

The following is a revised version of the first written in 1943

### *Verse 1:*

From North and South and East and West  
The Coast Guard's in the fight.  
Busting subs and landing troops  
The Axis feels our might.  
For we're the first invaders  
On every fighting field.  
From Arctic zone to tropic shore  
You'll find our Silver Shield.

### *Chorus:*

So here's the Coast Guard battle song,  
We fight on land or sea.  
Through howling gale and shot and shell  
To win our victory.  
Semper Paratus is our guide,  
Our pledge, our motto, too.  
We're "always ready", do or die  
Aye, Coast Guard we fight for you!

### *Verse 2:*

SURVEYOR and NARCISSUS,  
The EAGLE and DISPATCH,  
The HUDSON and TAMPA,  
These names are hard to match;  
From Barrow's shores to Paraguay,  
Great Lakes or ocean's wave,  
The Coast Guard fights through storms and  
winds,  
To punish or to save.

### *Verse 3:*

Aye! We've been "Always Ready"  
To do, to fight, or die  
Write glory to the shield we wear  
In letters to the sky.  
To sink the foe or save the maimed,  
Our mission and our pride.  
We'll carry on 'til Kingdom Come,  
Ideals for which we've died.

## Chorus Rewrites

The first line of each chorus was changed in 1969

### *Chorus For 1927 Version:*

We're always ready for the call,  
We place our trust in Thee  
Through surf and storm and howling gale,  
High shall our purpose be.  
"Semper Paratus" is our guide,  
Our fame, our glory too,  
To fight to save or fight and die! Aye!  
Coast Guard we are for you.

### *Chorus For 1943 Version:*

We're always ready for the call,  
We place our trust in Thee.  
Through howling gale and shot and shell  
To win our victory.  
"Semper Paratus" is our guide,  
Our pledge, our motto, too.  
We're "always ready", do or die!  
Aye! Coast Guard we fight for you.

# ANSWER KEY

1. Marine – Semper Fidelis – always faithful and Coast Guard – Semper Paratus – always ready
2. Five
3. Marine’s Hymn
4. Marine’s Hymn
5. A chest or two-wheeled cart used for transporting ammunition
6. The Navy song
7. Air Force – 1939 However the Coast Guard’s song was revised in 1969
8. Chorus – some verses are heard often, too
9. Coast Guard
10. John Philip Sousa, Army

## SOURCES

1. By Hlj at the English language Wikipedia, CC BY-SA 3.0, <https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=2988736>
2. <http://fancyferriage.com/MilitaryCaisson.html>
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7. The U.S. Air Force. [usafband.af.mil](http://usafband.af.mil). Retrieved August 2011
8. [http://www.uscg.mil/history/faqs/semper\\_paratus.asp](http://www.uscg.mil/history/faqs/semper_paratus.asp)

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Stephanie Skolmoski &  
Anneliese Bennion



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