

Voces Novae: Chapman University Historical Review, Vol 8, No 1 (2016)

[HOME](#) [ABOUT](#) [USER HOME](#) [SEARCH](#) [CURRENT](#) [ARCHIVES](#) [PHI ALPHA THETA](#)

[Home > Vol 8, No 1 \(2016\)](#)

"A Singing Army is a Fighting Army": American Soldiers' Songs and the Training Camp Experience in World War I

Maci Reed

Upon reflection of his war experience, veteran John Niles wrote, "As the facts about this man's war slowly come to light, we become more and more amazed at the many things that go to make up a major conflict. And in the conflict of 1914-1918 song was by no means the least of these."¹ Niles claimed that the incorporation of song into the military was a unique and significant part of the American war experience. The United States officially entered World War I in 1917, nearly three years after its beginning, giving the War Department time to first observe their allies' practices, examine their strengths and weaknesses, and then shape the U.S. military in accordance with its findings. American military leaders were especially struck by the French mutinies in the spring of 1917, and consequently decided to devote significant efforts to raising and maintaining the morale of their troops.² Secretary of War Newton D. Baker authorized the formation of the Commission on Training Camp Activities (CTCA) in order to help soldiers constructively manage their free time. During the Great War, the CTCA effectively utilized singing as a strategy to raise morale and increase unit cohesion among the soldiers, while the troops, in turn, embraced song as a form of expression and community-building.

Previous scholars have only superficially examined the impact of song on the American experience in World War I. Mark Miegs introduced some lyrical analysis in his book *Optimism at Armageddon*, which examined American soldiers' attempts to find meaning in their war experience. However, his work included only two citations of song lyrics to illustrate the experience of African-American grave diggers in the army.³ Christina Gier provided a more expansive explanation of the use of song in the American military and the role of the CTCA's music program in "The 'Song Leaders' of the American Expeditionary Forces, 1917-18." The article relied heavily on the leaders' official newsletter, *Music in the Camps*, and two memoirs written by a veteran and a song leader.⁴ Although a valuable article, its central limitations were its brevity and limited source materials. In comparison, this paper expands upon Gier's analysis by utilizing a broader range of primary sources published by the CTCA such as a song leader manual, singing schedules, and morale reports from training camps, all located in the United States National Archives. This paper also examines other works completed by the Camp Music Division such as the formation of camp bands and the publication of the official *Army Song Book*. Relying on these materials, this essay provides the first complete perspective of the CTCA's employment of song leaders and their efforts in musical training.

Benedict Anderson provided an influential theoretical framework in his book *Imagined Communities*. He argued that "nation-ness, as well as nationalism, are cultural artifacts," which is a concept suitably applied to the World War I era American society and military.⁵ The U.S. had a large immigrant

Maci Reed

population that necessitated the socialization of diverse troops, and the transmission of cultural capital by the War Department to these individuals was facilitated largely through song. One of Anderson's concepts that is called into question by this research is that the national community is "conceived as a deep, horizontal comradeship."⁶ This assertion is contradicted by the distinctly hierarchical structure of the military, which was frequently and explicitly criticized by soldiers in their songs. This analysis shows the complex power dynamics involved in the American military; as the War Department tried to enforce their ideals on the soldiers through song, the troops responded by sometimes embracing the songs, changing the lyrics, and writing songs of their own.

The CTCA came into existence due largely to Progressive politics and Secretary Baker's increasingly holistic consideration of the soldiers' well-being. At the beginning of the United States' involvement in the war, senior military officials viewed singing as more of a recreational activity than a military necessity. That sentiment changed, in part, due to Wilsonian progressivism and Americans' expanding conceptions of welfare. The American military was not immune to these reforms, as leaders increasingly came to believe in the power of the human psyche and soldiers' morale in winning a total war. Singing transformed into a military strategy by promising to give soldiers the spirit to go "over the top."⁷ Even high-ranking military officers accepted singing as a necessary drill, and agreed to allocate time within the training camps for CTCA song leaders to direct group sings.

According to the War Department, the CTCA's mission was "to supply the normalities of life to nearly a million and a half young men in training camps, and to keep the environs of those camps clean and wholesome."⁸ The commission aimed to end alcohol consumption and prostitute solicitation by soldiers, and replace these vices with positive recreational activities.⁹ Singing was initially considered a form of entertainment, but as military leaders observed its positive results, they came to consider song as a valuable strategy to raise and maintain morale. Raymond B. Fosdick, Chairman of the CTCA, explained, "our fundamental aim in all this work is to create a fighting machine. We never lose sight of that. You cannot have a fighting machine unless the men composing it are contented."¹⁰ Singing proved an efficient method of maintaining that contentment, as Fosdick also admitted, "[singing] is the most popular thing we have tried thus far. The men are crazy about it, and the officers, too."¹¹

Music was one of many different activities that the CTCA organized in domestic training camps. It provided athletic equipment and coordinated competitions for the soldiers to participate in, and developed a theatre program that produced shows for the troops' entertainment. It procured book donations and established libraries in the camps to supplement soldiers' education and recreation. The commission also worked to stop the spread of venereal disease by promoting social hygiene and collaborating with law enforcement to restrict the sale of liquor and availability of prostitutes to enlisted men. Finally, the commission developed affiliations with private organizations such as the Young Men's Christian Association, Knights of Columbus, and Jewish Welfare Board to expand their efforts in the camps. Chairman Raymond B. Fosdick delegated these many responsibilities to the 10 members of the commission.

CTCA member Lee F. Hanmer was assigned the task of managing camp music, film showings, theater performances, and libraries.¹² Due to the size and complexity of these responsibilities, Hanmer appointed subcommittees to help with organization and implementation. While chairman of the Camp Music Division of the CTCA, he formed the National Committee on Army and Navy Camp Music to specifically manage the appointment of song leaders, formation of camp bands, and dissemination of songs and information pertaining to camp music.¹³ Hanmer served as a member of this committee but named W. Kirkpatrick Brice as its chairman.¹⁴ The National Committee on Army and Navy Camp Music

(hereafter, National Committee) published works that significantly contributed to the development of camp music, such as the official *Army Song Book* and a newsletter titled *Music in the Camps*.

Music in the Camps was the official newsletter of the song leaders and was published weekly from November 1917 to May 1919.¹⁵ Hanmer and Brice used it as a method of spreading information and announcements to the song leaders and included some contributions from the leaders' reports. In the first publication, Brice explained, "the purpose is to provide an interchange of news and experience among all our song leaders, to afford an opportunity to the Committee to advise them of the most recent development in this work, and to give general directions as to policy and procedure."¹⁶ The song leaders sent reports on their work and the morale conditions in their respective camps to the National Committee, and the committee selected segments from these reports to publish in the newsletter. In this way, *Music in the Camps* served as a medium for the song leaders to exchange ideas regarding training methods, to explain their experiences to each other and to the National Committee, and to make suggestions of which songs and activities resonated with the soldiers. Finally, the names and addresses of the song leaders were also published so that they could directly correspond with each other, increasing the speed of information dissemination and promoting cooperation.¹⁷

The National Committee's decision to publish *Music in the Camps* was based largely on utility; the purpose of the newsletter was to aid song leaders and further the development of camp music. Accordingly, many of the segments that were extracted from song leaders' reports and published in *Music in the Camps* featured suggestions based on their experience. For example, the first issue included the following excerpt from the report of Warren Kimsey, song leader at Camp Gordon, Atlanta, Georgia:

I find that a song leader must use his whole body to convey the rhythm to these great crowds- keeping time with the arms plays a very small part. If the song is in march time, I march back and forth before the men; if it is in waltz time, I use a waltz step, and thus by an active use of my feet I am able to carry them thru songs that they are inclined to go to pieces on. Indirectly, I consider the feet the most important- next, the sway of the body, and last, the motion of the arms; and by combining these three I get the best results. For this work the leader must turn himself into a human metronome.¹⁸

In his report, Kimsey explained methods which he found effective for leading group sings. His experiences demonstrated that by moving his body, he could help the soldiers learn the rhythm of the songs, which would help them to keep time while marching. By publishing this excerpt, the newsletter provided a potential solution for song leaders who had difficulties teaching rhythm to the men in their camps. These types of publications were useful to the National Committee, because they provided such a suggestion to all song leaders so that they could try it in their own work and possibly be more effective in motivating the troops.

In addition to this methodological suggestion, Kimsey described his efforts to establish connections with the military officers in the camp. He believed that these relationships would help facilitate the spread of information to the troops. In the same edition of *Music in the Camps*, Kimsey noted:

Had a conference with Major Gen. Swift and his staff this morning. That for which I have been working has been realized- once each week, beginning Monday afternoon, I am to meet all the officers under five commanders. One group has Monday, another Tuesday, and so on. I am to give these officers practical instructions in chorus singing and they will in turn carry the ideas on to their men. This gives me the opportunity to touch practically the entire camp in five days, once a week.¹⁹

Maci Reed

As this excerpt suggests, it was sometimes difficult for song leaders to reach out to all of the soldiers in their training camp, as the capacity for camps reached into the thousands. Teaching song lyrics and rhythms, practicing group sings, and organizing and directing bands for groups of this size gave song leaders many logistical issues. Kimsey described his preferred solution to this problem: teaching commanders, who, in turn, would teach their men. The hierarchical structure of military units was used to the song leaders' advantage. Song leaders could access officers more easily than regular troops, since there were fewer of them, and the officers could then spread the teachings on to their men, who they were in constant contact with. Kimsey developed a regular meeting schedule with unit commanders to ensure that they were equipped to teach music to their men. His description of this schedule provided a model for other song leaders to adjust and follow. Therefore, the excerpts featured in *Music in the Camps* also helped song leaders with practical, logistic issues such as communication.

In addition to its practical utility, the *Music in the Camps* newsletter was used by the National Committee to keep the song leaders' spirits high. As previously discussed, the War Department was devoted to the cause of raising and maintaining support for the war effort; hence, the development of the Morale Branch and Commission on Training Camp Activities. Song leaders played a key role in maintaining troop morale, so it follows that the maintenance of their own morale was also important. The Camp Music Division selected positive anecdotes from the song leaders' reports to be included in *Music in the Camps* so that other leaders would read these stories and be encouraged. Simple reports of successful training methods and particularly cheerful group sings helped to assure the song leaders that their methods were working and that their efforts were appreciated. By reading each other's success stories, song leaders were also encouraged and motivated to continue their work in the camps.

One example of these encouraging anecdotes was song leader Albert N. Hoxie's contribution to the 04 May 1918 issue. Hoxie was stationed at the League Island Navy Yard in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, where he taught camp music to sailors and marines as they prepared for deployment to Europe. His work in an embarkation camp was especially noteworthy, as he supplied the troops with the last musical training that they received before traveling to the front.

Hoxie reported one particularly inspiring experience:

The greatest experience of my life was the singing by 1500 marines and 1,000 Sailors just before they put out to sea. It was just at sun down, the Marines had gone aboard and the Jackies were lined up on the pier ready to embark. They had been told only at noon that they were to go and the surprise and shock of the sudden departure was still in their faces. At the request of the Commanding Officer I took my position on the gang plank and for more than one hour we had the most inspiring anti-phonal singing, —marines from the deck and sailors from the shore. We stopped only because it grew too dark, the sailors went aboard singing, and "sometime in the night" the ship went to sea.²⁰

This report by Hoxie was likely included in *Music in the Camps* because of its strong sentimental value and sense of purpose. The image of sailors lined up on the embarkation pier and marines standing on the ship, both groups singing camp music back and forth to each other, was an ideal encapsulation of the song leaders' purpose. Here was a group of 2,500 men, about to travel to the front lines of the war, consumed with fear and anticipation, who spent their last moments in America singing together. It was the Camp Music Division's goal of sending a singing army to France, fulfilled. Song leaders who read Hoxie's story in the newsletter would have been deeply moved and inspired by this experience. The strong emotional response elicited by this anecdote motivated song leaders to keep working, to train all soldiers to love music and practice it voluntarily. These favorable results, inspiration and motivation, were exactly why the National Committee chose to publish Hoxie's report. It served as a prime example of the potential that *Music in the Camps* had to encourage song leaders and promote their cause.

Since the National Committee chose which excerpts to publish in the newsletter, the majority of the song leaders' anecdotes included were ones that described positive experiences. In one edition, song leader Robert Lloyd of Camp Lewis, Washington, reported on his experience with new recruits. He mentioned that he was training a group of 10,000 soldiers for a program, possibly a fundraising concert. Lloyd expressed his excitement as he organized "the biggest actual singing chorus on record!"²¹ He noted that he had never heard so many men sing together before, and that the experience was "really indescribable," as "the volume of male voices rolled over [the band] like a flood!"²² The enthusiasm apparent in Lloyd's report was infectious; the thought of such a grand exhibition of song excited fellow song leaders and provided them with an impressive goal.

An interesting aspect of this report is that Lloyd claimed to be working with new recruits who had only been in camp for three weeks. To train and rehearse with so many men in that short of a time span would have been a daunting task, making Lloyd's success quite impressive. He went on to explain his triumph:

Colonel Davison told me that my assistance to him in welding the raw new material into shape was simply immense! This is the greatest appreciation I have had. It was affecting and stirring to see these men, all strangers to each other, march down to the lecture-sing-movie affair, as silent as a lot of strange dogs and then to see them come out, form up and march back informing creation at large and Lewis in particular, at the tops of their voices that: "Your Uncle Sammie, He needs the infantry; He needs the Cavalry; He needs artillery-" God bless us all! I choked up and beat it!²³

The incident Lloyd described illustrates the power of camp music in unifying diverse populations of soldiers. Since he trained new recruits, none of the troops were familiar with each other or soldiers' songs. Yet after they practiced singing together, they bonded over their shared experience and expressed their unity enthusiastically through song. The National Committee published stories such as these to show the effectiveness of musical training and to praise the song leaders for their work.

The volumes of *Music in the Camps* primarily contained three types of information: news on policy and procedure, anecdotes about positive experiences, and suggestions based on negative experiences. Policy news had little influence on morale because it was more informational than emotionally affective. The inclusion of reports on positive experiences greatly outnumbered those of negative experiences. As mentioned, the National Committee selected excerpts for publication from the song leaders' reports, so the effect of the numerous positive stories in the newsletter gives the impression that the song leaders' experiences were mostly positive. However, it is important to recognize the perspective of the National Committee members and how that likely affected their decision-making processes. These individuals were deeply invested in their work in camp music and wished for their programs to be successful. Therefore, their optimism in respect to the song leaders' work likely caused them to favor positive anecdotes over negative ones. They published stories about positive experiences in order to inspire and encourage song leaders, provide helpful suggestions, and illustrate the positive effects of the Camp Music Division. Since positive stories were more favorable to publish, it is possible that the results depicted in *Music in the Camps* are not directly representative of the proportion of positive experiences described in the song leaders' reports.

Identifying this bias is significant because it prevents overstatement of the music program's effects. However, this does not mean that evidence from the newsletter is false or cannot be useful. The segments were taken from song leaders' actual reports, they just tended to represent more positivity

Maci Reed

than negativity. Even still, these publications often did include the song leaders' bad experiences, which was information that proved useful.

The first issue of *Music in the Camps* included a note on poor living conditions in the community and training camp at Battle Creek, where song leader John Archer was stationed. It stated, "Mr. and Mrs. Archer have adopted no half-way measures in this war-time emergency and are making their home in Battle Creek. Not all of the discomforts are confined to camp life, Mr. Archer says the coal situation in Battle Creek is very simple, 'There ain't none.'"²⁴ Coal shortages would have provided further difficulties for camp organizers, and Mr. and Mrs. Archer committed themselves to the same struggles as the troops by moving into the camp community. While this short note in the newsletter does not critique camp music specifically, it does illustrate a negative aspect of the song leader's experience. Its publication depicted the dedication of the song leaders, as they sacrificed their domestic comfort by relocating to training camp communities.

Throughout the war, the American War Department continued its devotion to fostering the growth and maintenance of troop morale. As officers and department officials observed the positive and powerful effects of music and group singing on the soldiers, they came to consider song a significant component of military training. The CTCA frequently reiterated the importance of its Song Department and Camp Music Division, and developed innovative methods for increasing awareness of the potential impact of music. Although military officials became familiar with the purpose and results of the music program through reports and correspondence, some members of the CTCA became concerned that this news was not reaching its most important audience: the troops. Consequently, the commission tried to communicate to soldiers that singing was more than solely a recreational activity and that their participation served a larger, national purpose.

This responsibility was most often left to the camp song leaders, who worked directly with soldiers in domestic training camps "to make music an effective factor in military training and efficiency."²⁵ The means used to meet this objective were described by the War Department in *A Statement of the Methods and Activities of the Department of Camp Music*. Leaders were to organize mass singing in their respective camps in order to "develop a sense of unity and team work," and to practice cadences during marches "as a physical stimulus, and a source of good cheer."²⁶ They were also instructed to arrange singing competitions among regiments, direct singing exhibitions at special military functions, encourage recreational singing, train glee clubs and choruses, and appoint subordinate song leaders in each company and regiment.²⁷

These initiatives were intended to produce a wide spectrum of results. Mass group sings inspired the troops and made them feel the connection between their service and the national war objective of defending American land and ideals. Cadences provided a frequent and practical use for song, as they helped soldiers keep time while marching and exercising. Regimental competitions aroused interest and excitement, and caused troops to forge bonds and relationships with their fellow soldiers. Finally, training choruses and subordinate song leaders enabled the troops to coordinate sings without the help of the camp song leader. This ability encouraged the men to continue singing once they left the training camp and traveled to the front lines, therefore fulfilling the War Department's aspirations of sending a singing army to France. The sentiments of the song leaders is perhaps best encapsulated by Major General J. Franklin Bell's statement; "a singing army is a fighting army."²⁸

Even with the vast success of these training methods established by the CTCA, the War Department continued to try and further the advancement of the music program. Major Wiley L. Dixon was the

Officer in Charge of the Music Subsection within the War Department. In February 1920, Dixon developed and endorsed a new method of arousing the troops' interest in music.²⁹ He proposed that the CTCA hold a musical essay competition to encourage troops to think critically about the benefits of music. According to his suggestion, men enlisted in English and music classes in the camps would submit compulsory essays on the "Value of Music as an Aid to the Contentment and Efficiency of a Command," and prize money would be awarded to the first, second, and third best essays.³⁰ He expressed his belief that requiring enlistees to write about the value of music would be "a quick and efficacious way of arousing their interest in music and of crystalizing in their minds the enjoyment derived from it."³¹ Dixon also noted two additional benefits to the contest in his initial memorandum; the essays would provide the Department Music Director with feedback and suggestions from the troops, and the contest would create an opportunity for English learners to practice writing.³²

To advance this proposal, Major Dixon wrote to W. E. Larned, Colonel of the General Staff, Education Section, and further explained the essay contest's potential. He emphasized that writing an essay would call the soldiers' attention "to the benefit and pleasure that may be derived from music," and that this exercise would help them form positive opinions about their musical training.³³ Dixon also listed possible essay topics for soldiers to choose from, including: "Why I Like Music," "How the Different Kinds of Music affect Me," "My Favorite Band Instrument," "My Favorite String Instrument," "The Uses and Value of Music for Military Ceremonies," "The Uses and Values of Music for Recreational Purposes," "Why Ability to Sing Gives the Greatest Pleasure," "The Desirability of Membership in a Glee Club," "Would it Pay me to Enroll in the Vocational School of Music?," and "Are Mass Sings Enjoyable and Profitable?".³⁴ Besides causing the troops to reflect positively on their music experience, these essay topics were also designed to help song leaders gauge the men's responses to singing. Major Dixon believed that collecting this information would provide valuable insight which the Camp Music Department could use to improve their methods and increase soldier satisfaction with these practices.

Despite his good intentions, Dixon's proposal was rejected and the musical essay contest never came to fruition. Colonel Larned wrote back to Major Dixon, explaining his refusal and why he believed that the contest would be impractical to hold. First, Larned pointed out that these essays would be written by a small number of enlisted men, only those in music or English classes, and would therefore not be representative of the soldier population. He also claimed that "the average enlisted man is of such mental calibre that he probably would be unable to express in any valuable form just what need music fills in his life," meaning that the essays would be unlikely to contain useful insight for the Camp Music Division.³⁵ Furthermore, he believed that offering monetary prizes for the contest winners would establish a bad precedent in which troops expected money for their participation in various exercises.³⁶ Larned was convinced that these complications would make the contest too problematic to implement.

Moreover, Colonel Larned was concerned that the very nature of compulsory essays conflicted with the department's morale objectives. The War Department wanted to genuinely raise soldiers' spirits and generate authentic patriotism and loyalty. Larned believed that songs helped meet this objective when the enlistees engaged in group singing and musical activities, not when the men were compelled to write about them. Although he wanted to increase interest in music, he stated, "I very much doubt whether the resort to essays would have the desired result."³⁷

The correspondence between Major Dixon and Colonel Larned was brief, but still serves as a significant example of the War Department's dedication to improving the morale of the soldiers. Dixon's suggestion demonstrates his concern about the troop's opinions and his efforts to collect and consider

Maci Reed

them. Larned's response shows his aversion to compulsory writing and preference of singing as a means of raising morale. The Camp Music Division, like the rest of the War Department, was committed to raising a military that was genuinely inspired and patriotically motivated. Officials shied away from coercive and manipulative methods, and instead tried to gain soldiers' allegiance through interest and enthusiasm. Consequently, the troops' positive responses to group singing and other musical practices were the result of sincere emotions, and not mere exhibitions of obedience.

The War Department's vision of a singing army emphasized the necessity of unity among the soldiers. The diversity of the soldier population made unification and cohesion difficult to achieve, as troops originated from different regions and ethnic groups and held conflicting social values. In any one training camp, officials might encounter difference among their troops' regional backgrounds, races, ethnicities, or languages. The task of unifying millions of men with different lives, cultures, and conceptions of themselves fell to training camp organizers.

One source of dysfunction among new recruits stemmed from their region of origin. Despite common citizenship and nationality, troops from the South often clashed with those from the North, as did citizens from the city with those from the countryside.³⁸ These conflicts arose out of cultural differences that had distinctly separated the North from the South since the colonial era. By 1917, the North had undergone extensive industrialization which expanded populations and the sizes of urban cities. Meanwhile, the South largely remained dependent on an agrarian economy focused more on plantations than industries. Therefore, the citizens from these regions differed in occupation, as well as in lifestyle and ideology.

These regional differences were also marked by race relations among black and white soldiers. Northerners were more friendly towards African-Americans in general, and this acceptance extended into the training camps. Men from Southern regions "resented the familiarity Northern officers sometimes exhibited toward black troops, while northerners viewed southerners as often fanatical in their fear of black aggressiveness."³⁹ These opposing views of race relations caused conflict among white troops from different regions, as they each struggled to maintain their social norms amidst fellow American recruits with opposing views.

Another significant source of diversity in the American Expeditionary Force (AEF) was the inclusion of various European immigrants and ethnic communities. These troops possessed cultures and customs even more divergent than regionally distinct Americans, as many had immigrated themselves or were the children of immigrants. The United States' large immigrant population surged during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, resulting in highly homogenous communities that often retained much of their ethnic cultures. During the Great War, military recruits from these communities underwent Americanization training in order to solidify their allegiance to the United States and self-identity as Americans. These efforts were often undermined by American troops' deeply rooted prejudices against ethnic minorities.

The conflict between American and immigrant troops was met by the War Department's attempts to Americanize immigrants and to convince American troops to accept them as fellow soldiers. Songs served both of these goals, and so the Commission on Training Camp Activities used them as a source of unification. Additionally, the Morale Department tried to "eliminate ethnic slurs from the vocabulary of citizen-soldiers," but this effort was ultimately unsuccessful.⁴⁰

Songs were an effective form of unification because they were warmly received by the troops, who appreciated their recreational nature, and because they operated subtly. CTCA song leaders used music to affect groups of soldiers through slow and deliberate transitions that began with upbeat, popular songs that often did not concern war or patriotism. They would first raise the troops' spirits with these bright songs, and then ease into war songs once the men were engrossed in the activity. Song Leader Eric Dudley of Camp Upton, Long Island, successfully employed this tactic while training an unruly group of draftees. Raising morale was especially important among draftees because they were the soldiers most likely to express dissent. Unlike volunteer soldiers, draftees did not willingly answer the nation's call to arms but were instead forced into the military by conscription. Officials from the Morale Department acknowledged the power of song in changing men's spirits and building allegiance to the nation. In one particular instance, Eric Dudley explained the success of group singing in molding draftees into soldiers.

In July 1918, Dudley was presented with a rugged group of "nearly 1700 slackers, picked up from the slums of New York City," who had fought conscription and were consequently, "an unruly lot, [who] refused to do anything they were told."⁴¹ Dudley described the men as "an evil-looking lot, sullen, resentful, and ugly," and so he began their musical training by simply entertaining them with bright, upbeat songs.⁴² After lifting their spirits with music and inviting them to sing along, Dudley explained the powerful transformation that had occurred:

The change was almost miraculous. Here was something in the Army they had never dreamed of; here was Uncle Sam paying them to come down here to give them a good time, and they had been thinking he was only going to drive them to death. It was a new outlook. They forgot all about the man with the gun and bayonet, they forgot their resentfulness, and gave themselves up to the joy of singing. [...] Then I said:

"I don't suppose you fellows would sing Over There.

"Sure!" some shouted.

"Righto!" I said. And then we went to it and miracle of miracles, these men who were resentful at being drafted into the Army were singing their heads off about what they were going to do to the Kaiser and the whole German outfit. Strangest thing of all they would have nothing but patriotic songs from then on.⁴³

As Dudley experienced, group singing proved to be an invaluable tool in shaping the soldiers' attitudes towards war, raising their morale, and gaining their acceptance of compulsory service. The successful manipulation of draftees was imperative for the War Department because the military relied heavily on conscription during the duration of its involvement in World War I. Unlike previous wars, the U.S. had only a short time frame in which it accepted volunteers, after which, the nation systematized conscription. A large proportion of the military was comprised of draftees, and therefore their acceptance of the war effort and their part in it were essential to the raising of a military of over four million troops.

As the Commission on Training Camp Activities expanded song training, it attempted to station a song leader at every domestic camp. The concept of sending a singing army to France depended on the commission's ability to train each soldier in camp songs. As mentioned, the soldiers learned song lyrics from the song leaders and by reading their copies of the *Army Song Book*. However, an important component was still missing: the music. In order to complete the troops' musical training, the CTCA needed to organize camp bands and hire bandmasters to play along during group sings. Music and lyrics

Maci Reed

worked together to establish songs in the troops' memory so that they could repeat them once they left the training camps and reached the front.

Establishing bands at every training camp was no small venture. The CTCA needed to recruit hundreds of trained musicians to fill all necessary roles. To do so, the commission relied heavily on the aid of the U.S. Army Music Training School and its principal, Captain Arthur A. Clappé. Known as "the 'Grand Old Man' of music," Clappé had many years of international musical training.⁴⁴ He was an Englishman, born in Ireland, where his father was stationed as a regimental commander in the British military. He spent his childhood in London, studied all band instruments, graduated from the Royal Military School of Music in 1873, and retained a faculty position there for seven years. Clappé then became the bandmaster of a British regiment and was stationed in India and later Canada. He moved to the United States in 1888, when he was hired as "bandmaster and teacher of music" at the United States Military Academy, West Point, New York.⁴⁵ Following his term at West Point and some years spent publishing a musical journal, he joined the faculty of the U.S. Army Music School on Governor's Island, New York Harbor, in 1911. Finally, he became principal of the Army Music School and worked in conjunction with the War Department to supply camp band members.⁴⁶

Clappé was instrumental in the establishment of camp bands, as he was a skilled musician and an expert musical teacher with experience training diverse groups. His work at the U.S. Army Music School was profound, as he drastically increased the number of graduates. A prominent musical journal published 1919 explained this feat:

When one considers that each student of the Army Music School is trained in the practical technique of *all* instruments used in the band; in ear training and solfeggi theory, including composition and musical acoustics; in the history of music, arrangement of band music, conducting, teaching, control and discipline— in short, in all details connected with music— we can better grasp some idea of the importance of the School over who destinies preside the genial Captain Clappé.⁴⁷

As this excerpt describes, graduates from the Army Music School were excellent candidates for training camp bandmasters. Not only could they perform a variety of music, but they were trained teachers. Therefore, the CTCA was eager to establish relations with the school and encourage its students to join the war effort.

Captain Clappé's extensive musical experience made him one of the War Department's primary consultants for the formation of camp bands. In addition to training musical experts at the Army Music School, he reached out to other principals of music institutions throughout the country to recruit more musicians and bandmasters. The War Department noted progress made towards recruitment in the *Summary of Reports on Schools for the Training of Band Musicians*. This report listed fourteen schools with cooperating musical programs, from the University of the Pacific in San Jose, California, to the New England Conservatory of Music in Boston, Massachusetts.⁴⁸ These institutions supplied reports on their facilities and programs, and half of them even agreed to inspections by District Educational Directors of the Education and Recreation Branch of the War Department.

The support and cooperation of some musical institutes was the result of Clappé's personal correspondence with them on behalf of the War Department. On 30 August 1918, he wrote to Mr. Lynn B. Dana, President of the Dana Musical Institute in Warren, Ohio, to explain the military's need and request assistance. He revealed that the War Department instructed him to recruit 50 bandleaders and 2,304 musicians and bandmen per month for 10 straight months, and asked Mr. Dana for the names of potential candidates.⁴⁹ Since the U.S. Army Music School could not meet this quota alone, Clappé

established a network of relationships with other music school principals and presidents in order to obtain suggestions for possible recruits. His personal correspondence shows that he was dedicated to the cause of developing camp bands and made great efforts to assist the War Department and specifically the Camp Music Division.

As Clappé's letters indicate, the War Department's primary interest in potential bandmasters and camp bandmen was in highly skilled individuals. The military sought out the best musicians and musical leaders who were highly trained in performance and pedagogy because these people were most likely to be effective musical trainers. This selectiveness was demonstrated by Form 2 and Form No. 3 of the War Department; documents developed by Captain Clappé as a response to principals. The first of these forms did not note a specific recipient but was merely addressed, "Dear Sir," suggesting that this letter was a common response, frequently sent to the leaders of musical institutes who suggested a bandmaster candidate.⁵⁰ The form read:

Dear Sir:

Replying to your request for information in the matter of bandmasters required for service in the U.S. Army, you are informed:

1. That applicants will be required to pass a musical examination by designated examiners at the nearest military center to their place of residence.
2. Applicants who pass the prescribed musical and physical tests will be required to enlist in the U.S. Army preparatory to being transferred to the Army Music Training School, Governors Island, New York, there to undergo a short course of instruction in military and Army band methods.
3. At the conclusion of the course of instruction above referred to, candidates will again be examined, and those who pass will be commissioned as 2nd Lieutenants in the Army for the duration of the war. Those who fail will be recommended for positions as non-commissioned officers in Army bands.
4. Fill out the enclosed form and return in accompanying envelope at the earliest possible date to THE PRINCIPAL, U.S. ARMY MUSIC TRAINING SCHOOL.⁵¹

This form describes the rigor of the application process for bandmasters, even after recommendation by their institute's leader. Form No. 3, which was attached to Form 2, was essentially an application for prospective recruits. In addition to basic personal information, it asked detailed questions about the applicant's experience, such as, "Are you a bandmaster at the present time? If not, have you ever acted as such?," "Name the instrument upon which you are most efficient," "Which other instruments do you play?," "Have you studied harmony? How long?," and "Can you transpose at sight with ease?"⁵² Completion of this thorough application was only the first step in the process of becoming a bandmaster. After initial recommendation, application, and acceptance into the training program, prospects completed an instructional course and then again had to perform while being examined. The application and developmental process was long and taxing on recruits, and therefore yielded only a select number of bandmasters at a slow pace.

As American involvement in the war dragged on and need for new recruits increased, the War Department was forced to abate the bandmaster application process so that it could produce more leaders, more quickly. On 17 October 1918, a member of the department's Committee on Education and Recreation, C. R. Dooly, issued a telegram that read, "please mail special delivery list of men turned down by you who could be inducted at once into bands. Period. Urgent requests here for men to form bands now in replacement camps."⁵³ This message reflected the growing urgency in the development of camp bands, as officials became willing to accept applicants who had previously been denied. As the

Maci Reed

capacity of domestic training camps swelled, the War Department became desperate to find musicians and leaders to fill camp bands.

This desperation illustrated the military's dependency on the Camp Music Division to train soldiers before deployment. Although the War Department could not afford to be as selective as they might have hoped, the importance of the music program remained the same. Officials in the American military knew the value of musical training for soldiers and so they ensured that this experience was made as universal as possible. The War Department's reliance on music showed how effective it was as a training technique; it was essential to military training.

Once singing had been suggested as a military training tool, the American military faced the task of organizing and implementing a system of song leaders and drills. The National Committee on Army and Navy Camp Music convened in Syracuse, New York, from May 31- June 1, 1917, to establish this system.⁵⁴ The committee discussed potential song leaders and how to stimulate community support for wartime songs. At a subsequent meeting held in August, the committee decided to publish an official song book, to be distributed to song leaders, officers, and most importantly, soldiers.

The purpose of the song book was to familiarize soldiers with army songs and encourage their singing by providing copies of the lyrics and music. The National Committee published the first edition of the official *Army Song Book* in the fall of 1917, based on songs that "were then popular in the camps, together with others of sure appeal and true value."⁵⁵ Song leaders from all American training camps reported on the success of these songs in raising morale and made suggestions of new songs, formed by soldiers in the camps, for a second edition. In 1918, the second edition of the official *Army Song Book* was published by the War Department Commission on Training Camp Activities, "compiled with the assistance of the National Committee on Army and Navy Camp Music," and intended "for free distribution to all Officers and Men in the Army."⁵⁶ These songs were chosen in accordance with song leaders' reports on their popularity among the men to ensure that they were actually sung by the soldiers.⁵⁷ Therefore, the second edition of the *Army Song Book* provides insight into the soldiers' camp experience by listing the songs they sang, along with their lyrics and melodies.

The practice of singing began as a top-down expression of power, with military leaders using it as a tool to impose their will on subordinates. But the power structure quickly developed complexities as the soldiers asserted their own power of choice by embracing some songs, altering others, and writing their own. The resulting compilation of songs expressed in the second edition of the *Army Song Book* represented the combined interests of the War Department and of soldiers. As song became part of the soldiers' experience, the lyrics became a valuable form of expression for them.

The songs included in the *Army Song Book* illustrate various themes and motivations. The diversity seen in song themes was intentional, as the National Committee "endeavored to include a fair proportion of songs according to the following classification: national and patriotic songs, folk songs, popular songs of the day, and hymns."⁵⁸ Consequently, the sentiments expressed by these songs are highly variable, but a lyrical analysis of the *Army Song Book* resulted in the discovery of six recurring themes: patriotism, God and religion, love and women, home and nostalgia, the soldier routine, and death.

Since one of the purposes of group singing was to Americanize the soldiers, it is unsurprising that patriotism was a prevalent theme in the songs. The *Army Song Book* began with nine consecutive patriotic songs, five of which were national anthems. These came from Allied countries, including the United States' "The Star Spangled Banner," France's "La Marseillaise," Great Britain's "God Save the

King," Belgium's "La Brabanconne," and Italy's "The Garibaldi Hymn." The inclusion of these anthems exemplifies the American War Department's attempt to unify soldiers, not only with fellow Americans, but with the Allied forces as well.

Songs reinforced the idea that American soldiers fought to defend democracy, freedom, and liberty. Defending these ideals in the context of war also implied an element of sacrifice; Americans were willing to die in order to uphold them. This sacrifice was expressed explicitly in "Battle Hymn of the Republic," as one verse stated, "let us die to make men free," and in "Men of Harlech," which claimed "We will win or die!"⁵⁹ While the common doughboy may not have been as willing to die as the songs imply, the Song Department noted that men enthusiastically sang the songs, which instilled some level of fervor and confidence in them.

Another commonality between many songs in the official *Army Song Book* was frequent references to God and religion. The majority of Americans in the early twentieth century identified themselves as Christians, primarily Protestants, and the men in the training camps followed this trend. Religious appeals were an especially large part of military culture, as soldiers justified their country's war declaration as a divine calling. "Battle Hymn of the Republic" expresses this calling in its fourth verse:

He has sounded forth the trumpet that shall never call retreat; He is sifting out the hearts of men before His judgement seat. Oh, be swift, my soul, to answer Him! Be jubilant, my feet! Our God is marching on. Glory, glory, hallelujah! Glory, glory, hallelujah! His truth is marching on.⁶⁰

These lyrics appealed to religious obligations and encouraged men to answer God's call to action through military service.

Religion was not only referenced as a justification for their cause, but also as a source of safety reassurance. In the face of a modern war with deadly new weapons and high casualty rates, soldiers sought to assuage their fears about combat by placing their trust in God. They believed that divine intervention could deliver them safely home. The song "March! March!" stated, "Prince of Peace, uphold our trust, Tho' we face the battle thrust, Fight we shall while fight we must," and "Prayer of Thanksgiving" claimed that "Thou still our Defender wilt be."⁶¹ These lyrics demonstrated the faith that troops placed in God, as they relied on him to protect them in battle.

The final purpose that religious appeals served was as a source of comfort in case of death. Soldiers obviously did not want to die, but believed that their souls could rest in heaven should their bodies meet that fate. For millions, death was an inescapable consequence of war, but Christianity combatted this fear by providing the promise of a peaceful and comfortable afterlife. Faith in heaven was exemplified in the song "Swing Low, Sweet Chariot" which mentioned "a band of angels coming after me," and a chariot taking souls "home" to heaven.⁶² Death was again referenced in "The Flag," which calls on God to "Bless the soldier in his sleeping; Hush the mother in her weeping."⁶³ Even in death, religion assured that soldiers would be blessed and grieving families would find comfort and peace.

Instead of the spirituality found in religion, some songs expressed physical and emotional comfort by describing the men's desire for love and women. Soldiers in the training camps, embarkation camps, and at the front had very little interaction with women, limited to nurses and the rare female song leader. They voiced their longing for women, in both loving and lustful tones, through songs. Physical desire is a prevalent theme in "Drink To Me Only With Thine Eyes," "Drink to me only with thine eyes, And I will pledge with mine, Or leave a kiss within the cup, And I'll not ask for wine; The thirst that from the soul

Maci Reed

doth rise Doth ask a drink divine; But might I of Jove's nectar sip I would not change for thine."⁶⁴ The singer directed the lyrics to a lover, and the song took on a sultry, suggestive tone as he referenced her eyes and a promising look that they exchanged. He asked for a kiss and noted his thirst, or desire, for her, which he would not trade for divinity. This song clearly expressed the physical intimacy that soldiers longed for.

Lyrical references to women also had a sentimental, emotional tone, as exemplified in the songs "Annie Laurie" and "Believe Me, If All Those Endearing Young Charms." Both of these mentioned love and fondness, rather than lust, which soldiers believed would last in spite of wartime separation. In "Annie Laurie," the singer described a woman who "Gave me her promise true, Which ne'er forgot will be, And for bonnie Annie Laurie I'd lay me doon and dee."⁶⁵ The word "bonnie," in this context, meant beautiful, and "doon and dee" was likely a colloquial phrase meaning down and die. Therefore, the singer asserted that Annie Laurie was beautiful and that he would sacrifice himself for her. More importantly, her promise of commitment to him served as a beacon of hope for the future, something to look forward to after the war was over.

Similar notions of lasting love were found in "Believe Me, If All Those Endearing Young Charms." The singer described the features of a beautiful woman, only to claim that they were unimportant compared to their love. He asserted that though her looks will fade with time, their love will not: "Let thy loveliness fade as it will; And around the dear ruin, each wish of my heart Would entwine itself verdantly still!"⁶⁶ This notion helped soldiers cope with the separation of war and the time lost to it. Both men and women worried that war would weaken their relationships and so ballads helped to alleviate these concerns. Separation anxiety was further addressed in "Believe Me, If All Those Endearing Young Charms," as the singer explained to his lover, "time will but make thee more dear! No, the heart that has truly loved never forgets, But as truly loves on to the close."⁶⁷ The act of singing about their concerns and desires helped soldiers express themselves and establish camaraderie in their common struggles.

Another common theme expressed in the soldiers' songs was a love of home and nostalgia. Many of the songs from the official *Army Song Book*, classified by the War Department as folk songs and "popular songs of the day," included references to the soldiers' homes.⁶⁸ They described physical settings, both natural land features and houses, from a positive perspective and with wistful tones. Singing about their homes served multiple purposes for the War Department and the soldiers.

The War Department benefited from soldiers' songs that expressed their love of home because they also included patriotic undertones. The songs portrayed the United States as a beautiful, wonderful place which men strove to return to after they left. Furthermore, the untouched American landscape stood in stark contrast to Europe and especially France, which was ravaged by years of war. Once the soldiers reached the battlefield, their songs served as distinct reminders of the land they were fighting to protect from the destruction that they witnessed.

The song "America the Beautiful" embodied the popular love of home expressed in these songs. It described various geographical scenes, which resonated with soldiers longing to defend them. One verse read: "O beautiful or spacious skies, For amber waves of grain, For purple mountain majesties, Above the fruited plain! America!"⁶⁹ A later line called on soldiers to defend that beauty: "O beautiful for heroes proved, In liberating strife, Who more than self their country loved, And mercy more than life!"⁷⁰ The progression of the song exemplified the connection between love of home and the need for its protection through warfare. Therefore, soldiers who loved their home and country felt that this justified their effort to defeat Germany and prevent an attack on their land.

A distinct facet of these folk songs was their selective reference to rural, country settings rather than any urban cities. While it is possible that the songs all originated in the countryside and therefore omitted reference to city life, it is striking that such a significant portion of American life was neglected in these lyrics. As mentioned, the American Expeditionary Force included diverse populations from all different backgrounds. Therefore, it seems that songs with references to rural life would only resonate with some of the soldiers, and not those from the cities. However, the training camp song leaders only suggested songs that were popular and actually sung by the soldiers for inclusion into the second edition of the official *Army Song Book*.⁷¹ The War Department's attempt to unify the soldiers apparently succeeded in spite of regional differences among the soldiers.

The diverse soldier population appreciated songs about rural America because they evoked a sense of nostalgia. In 1917, the United States had only recently undergone the Industrial Revolution, and so even city-dwellers could remember or relate to agrarian lifestyles. Songs about life on the farm or in small towns reminded soldiers of simpler times, before the Great War. They reinforced the importance of family, love, and home, which were especially significant to those troops who were experiencing separation. The song "In An Old- Fashioned Town" expressed the love of home that was common among soldiers:

There's an old fashioned house in an old fashioned street
In a quaint little old fashioned town;
There's a street where the cobble stones harass the feet,
As it straggles up hill and then down;
And, though to and fro, through the world I must go,
My heart while it beats in my breast,
Where e'er I may roam, To that old fashioned home
Will fly back like a bird to its nest.⁷²

This song expressed the sentiments of many soldiers, who acknowledged the necessity of their service but still longed to return home. It helped to instill hope by reminding them of the pleasantries that awaited them upon their return. Sentiments and memories also served as strong motivators to end the war quickly so that they could go home.

Another song that expressed the powerful motivation of the home was "Little Grey Home in the West," which described a soldier's return to his house and wife. He recounted the difficulty of his travels but suggested that his land, home, and wife were worth the effort. He also explained how singing eased the burden of his journey, saying "Though the road may be long, in the lilt of a song I forget I was weary before."⁷³ Singing provided a modest form of expression and entertainment that helped the soldier persevere through the hardships of war and return safely home. This song served as a reminder for soldiers that although they experienced danger and hardships, these were only temporary, and the warm and familiar life that they left would be waiting for them once they returned.

The theme of soldiers' daily life was pessimistic in comparison to patriotism, romance, and nostalgia, but still beneficial to troops as a constructive form of communicating dissatisfaction and disillusionment. Verbalizing their hardships also helped soldiers to define their common experience and establish a sense of camaraderie. Although wartime propaganda advertised military experience as an adventure and opportunity for glory, these were not the characteristics of war that defined the soldiers' experiences. Due to the United States' late entry into the war and its complete lack of preparedness, soldiers spent little time actually on the front lines. The majority of their military experience was spent in domestic training camps and traveling to France, and so songs in the official *Army Song Book* about their daily routines reflected these circumstances.

Maci Reed

Many American troops expressed frustration with the tedium of training, as they were eager to get to the front lines where they had potential to make an impact. In the song "Over There," the singer voiced his excitement towards traveling to the front, announcing "send the word over there, that the Yanks are coming, the Yanks are coming, the drums rum-tumming every where. So prepare, say a prayer."⁷⁴ This line showed that the American troops, referred to as "Yanks," highly anticipated their arrival to the front lines, and the inclusion of drums "rum-tumming" built suspense. A later line demonstrated the men's resolve, stating "we're coming over, and we won't come back till it's over."⁷⁵ As this song illustrated, the troops wanted to see action and have their chance to prove themselves, and were committed to ending the war. The consequence of this eagerness was that the men were frustrated in the training camps, and therefore critical of their routines.

One aspect of military life that the soldiers criticized was the physical hardships that they endured during training. The arduous task of marching long distances while carrying heavy equipment was depicted in "The Last Long Mile." This song described the many difficulties:

They marched me twenty miles a day to fit me for the war, I didn't mind the first nineteen but the last one made me sore. Oh it's not the pack that you carry on your back, nor the Springfield on your shoulder, Nor the five inch crust of Khaki colored dust that makes you feel your limbs are growing older. And it's not the hike on the hard turn-pike, that wipes away our smile, Nor the socks of sister's that raise the blooming blisters, It's the last long mile.⁷⁶

These lyrics provided a vivid description of the soldiers' physical training. They had to hike long distances with their equipment packs strapped to their backs. Although the exact weight varied by soldier, the average pack weighed approximately 60 pounds.⁷⁷ Marching with this added weight was a strain on the troops, so they sang about it in order to relieve some of their built up tension. "The Last Long Mile" also suggested that the troops were eager to leave the training camp and progress to the front in the line, "And someday we'll be marching through a town across the Rhine, and then you bet we'll all forget these mournful words of mine."⁷⁸ As the singer implied, the soldiers were exasperated with the drills and routines that they performed in the camps and wished to move on to the combat stage of war.

Another struggle that the soldiers endured was the shortage of supplies, especially uniforms. In response to this need, the Red Cross began a campaign that encouraged women to contribute to the war effort by knitting and donating socks for the troops. "The Last Long Mile" referenced these donations and the Knit Your Bit campaign, calling them "the socks of sister's that raise the blooming blisters," which suggested that they were of low quality and uncomfortable.⁷⁹

Although the *Army Song Book* did contain some songs that commented on the hardships of soldiers' daily life, it also had songs that presented these difficulties with more positive, optimistic tones. The song "Pack Up Your Troubles in Your Old Kit Bag and Smile, Smile, Smile," both acknowledged the struggles that soldiers faced and dismissed them as unimportant. Two lines embodied its message; "What's the use of worrying? It never was worth while, so pack up your troubles in your old kit bag and smile, smile, smile."⁸⁰ By telling the soldiers to pack up their troubles, the singer recognized that there were, in fact, many difficulties in their experience. However, the rhetorical question suggested that worrying, or expressing complaints or dissent, was useless and so the troops ought not to voice their concerns but simply continue on.

This song represented the interests of both the War Department and the troops. Soldiers sang it to legitimize their struggles and validate their criticisms, while the War Department endorsed its concept of discouraging dissent. The songs in the *Army Song Book* that depicted the soldiers' routines exemplified the reciprocal transfer of power between the troops and department officials. The War Department

exercised its ability to manipulate the soldiers' perspective by making them sing songs that supported the war effort. In return, the troops wrote and sang songs that described their hardships, creating an outlet through which they could express themselves and their opinions of the military. The War Department then took their experiences into account and modified the first edition of the song book to include some songs that illustrated the negative aspect of war. This alternating interplay of power occurred continuously throughout the war, as both parties sought recognition and respect for their war efforts.

The final prominent theme presented in the *Army Song Book* was death. Songs that acknowledged the possibility of death provided a way for soldiers to express their fears and cope with the potential ramifications of their service. Similar to the songs concerning the soldiers' daily life, songs about death demonstrated the power dynamics between soldiers and the War Department officials. Soldiers sang about death to help themselves cope with loss and to convey the seriousness of their sacrifice. However, the War Department did not want to overemphasize casualties because that could turn public opinion against the war effort. With these conflicting values in mind, officials chose to publish limited songs that construed death not only as a possibility, but as an honor.

The song "Old Black Joe" embodied this compromise as it described a soldier's grief and acceptance of his comrades' deaths. It was a common folk song that originally referenced the deaths of African American plantation workers, as in the line, "Gone are my friends from the cotton fields away," but its popularity caused the troops to adopt it and apply it to their military experience.⁸¹ The singer questioned himself, saying "Why do I weep when my heart should feel no pain? Why do I sigh that my friends not come again? Grieving for forms now departed long ago, I hear their gentle voices calling, 'Old Black Joe.'"⁸² The lyrics implied that the soldier should not grieve his losses, yet continues to do so anyway. He kept the memory of his comrades alive despite the fact that they had died, suggesting that the war dead would be honored for their sacrifice. Singing about their grief helped soldiers to verbalize the tragedies that they suffered, and the glorification of battle deaths helped motivate them to continue fighting.

There were also more subtle references to death, as in the song "Good Morning Mr. Zip," which alluded to the cyclical nature of life, calling it "ashes to ashes and dust to dust."⁸³ This phrase is an excerpt from the *Anglican Book of Common Prayer*, based on multiple verses from the Protestant Bible. By invoking religious sentiments, "Good Morning Mr. Zip" associated death with religious purpose. Furthermore, the phrase suggested that death is inevitable for everyone, and therefore not an exclusive consequence of war. The implication was that everyone would die eventually, and so fear of death should not be a deterrent from military service. Contrary to the subtleties of "Good Morning Mr. Zip," the song "Men of Harlech" boldly embraced and discussed deaths. It called for men to march forward into war in spite of the casualties that they had witnessed and the prospect of their deaths as well. It said, "On we march whatever befalls us, never shall we fly! Tho' our mothers may be weeping, tho' our sisters may be keeping watch for some who now are sleeping on the battle field!"⁸⁴ This song served as a rallying cry for troops, as it encouraged them to be brave and to never retreat, even though many of them would fall in battle. The theme of death was illustrated in varying capacities throughout the song book, with some songs subtly alluding to it and others openly acknowledging it. Regardless of degree to which death was recognized, each of these songs served as a way for troops to express their fears, cope with their losses, find commonalities among each other, and redirect their grief into aggression towards the enemy.

Macy Reed

The *Army Song Book* themes can be compared with those found in the song book *The Songs My Mother Never Taught Me*, published by a veteran of the war. John J. "Jack" Niles was an American singer, composer, and veteran who served as a First Lieutenant in the United States Air Service during World War I. His interests in music motivated him to collect and transcribe soldiers' songs during his military experience, and then call for further contributions from other veterans after the war. The resulting compilation was a song book titled, *The Song My Mother Never Taught Me*, published in 1929. The book was coauthored by Douglas S. "Doug" Moore, a retired U.S. Navy Lieutenant who would later become a famous American composer. The publication of *The Songs My Mother Never Taught Me* was significant in explaining the common soldiers' experiences with music during wartime. It included the lyrics and scores of 58 popular songs, along with Niles and Moore's descriptions and commentary on each. The book also included many illustrations by A. A. "Wally" Wallgren, the former official cartoonist of *The Stars and Stripes*, a prominent trench newspaper. Niles affirmed the importance of song as a form of expression, claiming, "Yes, we sang! And when we did, our songs revealed thoughts that would have otherwise died unspoken. Our songs told a tale the histories will try to untell for a good many years."⁸⁵ As the quotation suggests, the language and imagery employed in *The Songs My Mother Never Taught Me* presented a much more explicit perspective of military service than that depicted in the official *Army Song Book*. While the War Department endorsed songs that portrayed war as an ideological crusade and a chance for adventure, Niles' songs described it as filthy, rough, and futile.

The themes expressed in *The Songs My Mother Never Taught Me* were best encapsulated in its first song "Mad'moiselle from Armentières." Armentières is a Northern French town outside of Lille, along the Belgian border. The song described a French woman whose husband was either in active military service or killed in action, and his absence led her to have an affair with the singer, an American soldier. It had a risqué element as it described the woman "washin' soldiers' underwear," and alluded to her promiscuity in the lines; "She was true to me, she was true to you, She was true to the whole damned army too."^{86 87} References to women in this songbook were typically more scandalous than in the *Army Song Book*, as they hinted at soldiers' infidelity and French women's licentiousness.

"Mad'moiselle from Armentières" also illustrated other common song topics and employed a comedic tone. It commented on the ruggedness of the soldiers' military experience, claiming that "the Yanks are havin' a Hell of a time, wadin' around in the mud and the slime."⁸⁸ This line depicted the reality of trench warfare on the Western Front, where frequent rainfall and close proximity to the water table kept the trench floor perpetually wet. It also critiqued the lack of available supplies and consequently high prices in France, stating, "When shoes cost twenty bucks a pair, my dog-gone feet are going bare."⁸⁹ Although the song likely overstated cost, the issue of boot supplies and waterlogged trenches did in fact cause serious problems for soldiers. Prolonged tours in wet trenches often led to trench foot, a fungal infection that caused swelling and soreness and sometimes led to gangrene and even amputation. The song also reflected the troops' disdain for officers, which was intensified by the perceived and actual inequalities between the groups. The singer claimed that the General was awarded the Croix de Guerre, a French military decoration, but that "the poor old bozo never was there."⁹⁰ Many soldiers used song to express their dissatisfaction with the celebration of military officers, who they perceived as cowardly for remaining in headquarters and avoiding the front lines. Niles and Moore's decision to place the song "Mad'moiselle from Armentières" first in their book revealed the major themes expressed throughout the rest of the songs: soldiers' daily life, romantic affairs, rank relations, racism, anti-Germanism, and death.

By far the most prevalent theme in *The Songs My Mother Never Taught Me* was the soldiers' daily life. Most of the songs in the book included descriptions of the troops' tasks and living conditions, typically

referenced through satirical criticism. One critique of military life was the low quality and quantity of food supplied for the troops. The song "Home, Boys, Home" introduced the issue of food and expressed the soldiers' resentment of the army cook, who they blamed for serving terrible meals. The singer called the cook "our grease ball," and Niles explained that "a grease ball is a particularly dirty kind of army cook."⁹¹ One verse of the song embodied the resentment harbored by the men: "Three dirty grease balls standin' in a row, A bailin' out chow for the soldier boys to stow, One bailed java and the other bailed slum, And the third bailed nothin' 'cause his gut was full o'rum. Oh, goddam the dirty little grease balls."⁹²

The beginning of subsequent verses acted as a countdown, mentioning "two dirty grease balls" and finally "one dirty grease ball."⁹³ The song's linear transition from three to two to one army cook subtly depicted the soldiers' desire to be rid of the grease balls by picking them off one by one. By scapegoating the cook, soldiers were able to communicate their dissatisfaction with army meals without addressing the larger, economic problems with feeding an army. In his commentary following the song lyrics, Niles acknowledged the difficulty, declaring "But what a job that was! Trying to feed the American Army."⁹⁴ This admission showed that while troops were capable of rationalizing the negative aspects of their experience, they instead coped with them by singing.

Another element of military life that was critiqued in *The Songs My Mother Never Taught Me* was the arduousness of soldiers' tasks. Songs most frequently referenced the plight of the privates, low-ranking regular troops who received the most demanding and dangerous assignments. These soldiers used singing as a way to express their discontentment with their roles in the war effort, which were far less glorious than American propaganda posters suggested. The soldiers' songs described their routines in terms of physical conditions; for them, war was rigorous, frustrating, dirty, and tough.

One grotesque component of the soldiers' lives was depicted in the "Louse Song," which described the prevalence of lice among the troops. It asserted that lice infested ranks from their arrival to the front, claiming "in lousy goddamn freight cars, they haul us to the front, but all the while we're ridin', we're havin' a cootie hunt."⁹⁵ The term "cootie" referred to lice, which especially bothered soldiers as they slept. Another line from the song warned that "they'll bite you boys, they'll bite you. Yes they'll gnaw your skin to bone."⁹⁶ This graphic explanation of the discomfort and annoyance that the men experienced revealed the negative aspects of military life that remained largely unacknowledged in the songs officially endorsed by the War Department. Finally, the song ended with a haunting line: "We lay awake and curse, 'cause the only time the lice don't bite, is when we're in the hearse."⁹⁷ This suggested that the struggles soldiers faced would only end in death, but the graveness of the lyrics were undermined by the comedic tone of the song. Niles cautioned readers not to take the lyrics too seriously, stating "one should be careful to slow down on the last two lines of each verse so as to get over the idea of inevitable suffering."⁹⁸ This suggestion showed that while the concept of suffering was present in the soldiers' minds, they sang in order to alleviate fears and tension, rather than to exacerbate them.

In addition to grimy living conditions and strenuous work, the privates' experiences were characterized by the danger of the front lines. Combat experience in World War I exhibited drastic changes from previous conflicts, as belligerent nations used technological advances to produce modernized, deadly weapons. The use of heavy artillery, flamethrowers, rapid-fire assault weapons, chemical warfare, and aerial bombardments contributed to unprecedented casualties. Consequently, the front lines became regular sites of slaughter. One way that American soldiers coped with the horror of combat experience was through song, which provided an outlet to express fears and make light of terrible conditions.

Maci Reed

The song “Bombed Last Night” encapsulated the realities of combat, as it described soldiers’ responses to frequent attacks. It illustrated the relentless and seemingly endless nature of the war; “Bombed last night, Bombed the night before, Gonna get bombed tonight if we never get bombed any more.”⁹⁹ The repetition in this line reflected the persistence of front line combat, which was marked by the exhaustive use of weapons. The song continued with the singer noting, “When we’re bombed, we’re scared as we can be. Oh God damn the bombin’ planes from Germany. They’re over us, they’re over us. One shell hole for the four of us.”¹⁰⁰ This acknowledgement of soldiers’ fears stood in stark contrast to songs published in the official *Army Song Book*, which portrayed battle deaths as glorious and heroic. Instead, songs written by soldiers themselves recognized more typical responses to the prospect of death, such as fear and anger, as the singer condemned enemy bombers. Chemical warfare was also illustrated in the subsequent verse, which replaced “bombed last night,” with the phrase “gassed last night,” and claimed, “when we’re gassed, we’re as sick as we can be, ‘cause phosgene and mustard gas is too much for me.”¹⁰¹ As this song illustrated, lyrics written and published by the troops tended to contain descriptions of military life that were more realistic than the idealized and romanticized versions endorsed by the War Department.

In the description that accompanied the lyrics of “Bombed Last Night,” Niles explained the value of song as a source for understanding the soldiers’ experiences. He argued that while military records and government documents provide “much material for the scientifically-minded— numbers, figures, facts, endless data,” this information “becomes a dull, pointless sequence of numbers compared to the comedy and the tragedy, the abandon and the reality of the ‘gassed’ song.”¹⁰² As a veteran, Niles believed that song lyrics were more representative of the soldier experience than statistics because of the emotion that they evoked. Although these songs often illustrated the negative aspects of war and conveyed the troops’ dissatisfaction, still they prove that the Commission on Training Camp Activities was successful in its effort to use singing as a factor in military efficiency and morale building. The troops’ expression of dissent through song did not subvert the CTCA’s music program, but actually reaffirmed it, because it demonstrated the acceptance of singing as a part of military life and as a form of expression. Therefore, troops’ criticisms were voiced through a system that had in fact been created and endorsed by the War Department. The fact that soldiers wrote and sang their own songs showed that they had accepted and internalized the practice of singing.

Despite the overwhelmingly critical tone of the songs published in *The Songs My Mother Never Taught Me*, the book did not portray military experience as entirely negative. There are some references to glory and honor earned in war, reminiscent of themes propagated by the American War Department. The song “Marine Hymn” suggested that the singers approved of their service and of U.S. military action in general, claiming that they were “first to fight for right and freedom, and to keep our honor clean. We are proud to claim the title of United States Marine.”¹⁰³ Niles’ decision to publish this song suggested that he considered it to be popular among the troops and representative of at least some of the soldiers’ experiences. As the song continued on to describe different locations that marines had fought in previous wars, it showed the soldiers’ association between World War I and previous American wars. The sense of continuity suggested that the Great War was another one of the United States’ wars to defend freedom and democracy, which existed as points of pride in the national narrative. Therefore, this war, like previous ones, was accepted by the troops as necessary and righteous.

Although many of the songs written by the soldiers illustrated a pessimistic perspective, they did not advocate insubordination. The lyrics did not endorse desertion nor called for the war’s end, they merely expressed the negative aspects of war. Furthermore, their tones were satirical and comedic, which drew

attention to the good-humored nature of the soldiers. It is clear that the troops, while critical, were not strictly opposed to the war effort nor their involvement in it. Furthermore, Niles only published songs that soldiers wrote themselves, so it is likely that these represented the strongest dissenting opinions. The CTCA music program ensured that soldiers also frequently sang more positive songs endorsed by the army.

The songs published in the official *Army Song Book* and in *The Songs My Mother Never Taught Me* primarily represented the experiences of white, natural-born American soldiers, because these individuals held leadership positions in the War Department and as song leaders. The military experiences of African-American troops were vastly different from that of white citizens and immigrants, due to widespread racial prejudices within the United States. As the civilian community practiced racism through systematized segregation, military culture reflected the same cultural norms and restrictions on black soldiers. White Americans' general fear and distrust led them to oppress African-Americans in the military by limiting their wartime service to mostly noncombat positions and not training them in the use of weaponry. While approximately 380,000 African Americans served in the army, only about 40,000 saw combat.¹⁰⁴ This means that African Americans were overrepresented in noncombatant positions, as approximately 60 percent of troops from all belligerent nations served in noncombatant roles, but nearly 90 percent of African Americans served in this capacity.¹⁰⁵ The disparities between the military experiences of different racial groups were demonstrated in *Singing Soldiers*, a book exclusively about African-American soldiers' songs that was also written by John J. Niles.

Singing Soldiers was published in 1927, two years before *The Songs My Mother Never Taught Me*, as Niles' original intention was to only expose the African-American troops' songs and not the white soldiers'. He defended this decision, claiming that "the imagination of the white boys did not, as a rule, express itself in song."¹⁰⁶ The publication of *Singing Soldiers* elicited complaints from the white veteran community, who felt that song was also an important part of their own experiences and should not be attributed only to the African-American community. Niles published *The Songs My Mother Never Taught Me* in response to this criticism. The involvement of African American soldiers in the war was controversial, as it called into question whether or not they would be allowed to serve, in what capacities, and whether this service would change the racial status quo. In some ways, their participation did not help them gain civil rights but maintained oppressive social norms. The segregation of the military perpetuated racism, and white resistance to the social and political advancement of African Americans led to a dramatic increase in postwar lynchings.¹⁰⁷ However, it can also be argued that while military service did not immediately change the African Americans' social standing, it still contributed to the long-term progression of racial equality.¹⁰⁸ It provided more opportunities for them to demonstrate their patriotism and ability to contribute to the war effort. The experiences of black soldiers in World War I cannot be categorized according to a simple binary; they were neither entirely good nor bad, progressive nor stagnate. Rather, their involvement in the war both reflected and produced complexities in American race relations.

These complex relations were demonstrated in *Singing Soldiers*, through both Niles' commentary and the song lyrics. The commentary that Niles wrote on each song illustrated the white soldiers' tendency to speak derogatorily about their African American comrades. Although Niles willingly interacted with these troops and admired their musical talents, an implicit prejudice was evident in his language throughout the book. He frequently referred to the black soldiers as "colored boys," when describing them. This is one example of how the white troops denounced the maturity and masculinity of African American troops, calling them boys instead of men.

Maci Reed

Niles most clearly demonstrated the frequent condescension of African Americans by white troops in his description of the song “Chicken Butcher.” According to Niles, the song was sung by a black soldier “who gained his name from a prewar vocation,” and was confined to a military jail in France.¹⁰⁹ Incarceration had apparently rehabilitated the man, as one verse stated, “Oh, jail-house key, don’t you ever lock me in. Oh, jail-house key— won’t never be bad no more,” and all subsequent verses ended in the line “won’t never be bad no more.”¹¹⁰ The song seemed to simply express remorse. More telling than the lyrics was Niles’ commentary on the song, which patronized African American troops and characterized them as unintelligent. He explained that the song “possessed [...] childish simplicity and naïveté,” comparing African Americans to children.¹¹¹ Niles continued and asserted that “life in Black Jack’s Jail-House had chastened the Chicken Butcher— chastened him more than one would expect. He had even (without knowing it) taken to practising a very efficient modern spiritual belief.”¹¹² In this line, Niles suggested that even when the man progressed into using a modern cultural practice, he was unaware of it. This condescending tone was employed throughout *Singing Soldiers*, representing the white soldiers’ perceived superiority over the black troops. “Chicken Butcher” was also a significant example of white oppression, as the black singer was subdued and jailed by white soldiers, which reasserted their power over him.

This notion of racial superiority was again demonstrated in Niles’ commentary on the song “Ole Ark,” in which he described an African American’s singing as “his childish way.”¹¹³ Niles also depicted the black troops as inherently lazy in his commentary on the “Gimmie Song.” This song illustrated the troops’ reliance on faith and God’s grace to meet their physical needs in wartime:

I knows I’s one ob God’s chillun, an’ he’s goin’ to gimmie what I needs. I knows I’s one ob de select elect, one ob de chillun God always feeds. Oh, why, tell me why, does you stand in de rain, Oh why does you suffer from sickness and pain? For all ob you is God’s chillun and he’s goin’ to give you what you needs.¹¹⁴

While this reliance can be interpreted as the troops trusting God to take care of them, Niles instead interpreted it as an exhibition of apathy and laziness, calling the singer “the slow, easy-going Southern negro.”¹¹⁵ He described what he considered to be a disparity between the demands of war and African Americans’ abilities, and criticized the sluggishness of his black acquaintance, William. “Fighting a war demands movement, speed, and action— but most of all it demands something few of the Southern negroes of William’s type understood— instantaneous action.”¹¹⁶ This quote further illustrates how white troops, such as Niles, perpetuated racial stereotypes by calling African American troops lazy, unintelligent, unfit for war, and generally inferior.

While the white troops’ perceptions of African Americans were largely negative and derogatory, there were some exceptional cases in which racial boundaries were crossed and black troops gained their white comrades’ respect. Niles wrote about an African American orderly, named William, who worked in the 45th Red Cross Hospital in St. Denis, France, and cared for him as he recovered from combat injuries. Niles acknowledged some commonalities between himself and William; “We were Southerners—he was a long, lanky North Carolinian—I was a Kentuckian,” and this shared regional identity contributed to their growing friendship.¹¹⁷ He described William as imaginative, charming, and entertaining; qualities that helped the two bond and distracted Niles from his recovery. He later explained that the hospital was a morbid and dismal place, with thousands of injured and dying men, “and the memories of their suffering through those terrible days and nights are too sacred to recount. I do not know what I should have done without William.”¹¹⁸ The friendship forged between these two men not only eased the psychological trauma that Niles faced, but exemplified the potentially positive relations that black and white soldiers could have had if they only tried to find common ground.

Although military units were officially segregated, the interactions between service members of different roles, such as orderlies and pilots, provided opportunities for men to meet and connect with each other, despite their race.

Although the songs in *Singing Soldiers* were compiled by Niles, they were written and sung by African Americans, and therefore provide insight into their own conceptions of their experiences. The most common theme found in the black soldiers' songs was dissatisfaction with their military role. While many of these men enlisted in order to prove their patriotism and equal abilities, they were largely denied the chance to earn military glory through combat and were instead most frequently assigned to work service positions. These noncombatant roles included army cooks, drivers, grave diggers, dock workers, and other positions which required strenuous labor but did not receive the same cultural status as combatants.¹¹⁹

The song "Diggin'" alluded to many of these roles as it described the singer's army experience in terms of noncombatant work. His labor was portrayed as a mere continuation of domestic work, as in the verse: "diggin', diggin', diggin' in Kentucky. Diggin' in Tennessee. Diggin' in North Carolina. Diggin' in France."¹²⁰ This line suggested that the singer's work was the same abroad as it had been at home, which devalued his efforts and made them seem commonplace. A later verse alluded to the drivers' responsibilities: "motor trucks and caissons cut a mighty trench, have to pile de metal on fur dese poor damn French."¹²¹ This reference to driving provided a connection between the black troops' work and the war effort, as they supplied ammunitions to help defend the French. However, still the singer was limited in his ability to gain recognition for his service, as drivers were not venerated or regarded as highly as combatants.

As the song "Lordy, Turn Your Face" illustrated, noncombatant roles were viewed by African Americans not only as less glorious than combatant ones, but as shameful and embarrassing. The singer of this song described his military service with indignity, claiming: "black man fights wis de shovel and de pick; Lordy, turn your face on me."¹²² Black troops noticed the limitations placed on their military service and were ashamed of their seemingly menial roles. John Niles recalled those singing troops in his commentary: "These colored boys had not seen actual fighting... They had been detailed to a less glorious, but by no means less important side of warfare."¹²³ Although he credited noncombat duties as equally important, this was a view that developed retrospectively and was not voiced until the book's publication in 1927. It is unlikely that combatants would have attributed equal importance to noncombatants during wartime, when only they faced the unique danger of the front lines.¹²⁴

In addition to digging trenches and constructing supply lines, African Americans were often assigned the particularly morose noncombat role of digging graves for fallen soldiers. Burial squads traveled behind the front line troops, collected bodies, dug graves, and buried the dead. This task was important in maintaining both morale and hygiene, as the sight of bloodied and bloated corpses discouraged troops and the decaying process could contribute to the spread of disease. Niles wrote about one burial squad which he encountered, that was made up of entirely "colored boys."¹²⁵ As he watched them work, he heard them singing and recorded the lyrics of the song "Grave Diggers." The melancholy tone of this song reflected the black troops' sorrowful and wretched job:

I've got a grave-diggin' feelin' in my heart. I shivers and shakes in my soul, when I looks in dat big black hole. I've got a grave-diggin' feelin' in my heart. [...] Don't bury dose boys so deep in de ground, dey has to hear Gabriel's reveille sound. I've got a grave-diggin' feelin' in my heart. [...] When I looks in dat grave I gets me a chill, 'cause I

Maci Reed

knows if I gets in, I have to stay until. I've got a grave-diggin' feelin' in my heart. [...] Everybody died in de A. E. F., only one burial squad wuz left. I've got a grave-diggin' feelin' in my heart.¹²⁶

The most prominent feature of these lyrics was the somber attitude; the task of burying war-torn corpses depressed and disheartened the soldiers. The repetition of the line "I've got a grave-diggin' feelin' in my heart," illustrated the emotional and psychological toll that this experience took on the members of the burial squad.¹²⁷ Furthermore, digging graves must have led these men to spend much of their time contemplating death and even empathizing with the fallen, as they sang about themselves getting chills from looking at graves. The line that mentioned "Gabriel's reveille sound" illustrated the black troops' Christian faith.¹²⁸ They referenced the angel Gabriel, who, according to the Christian Bible, will sound a trumpet to signify the Rapture and Jesus Christ's second coming. The song cautioned the burial squad not to bury the bodies too deep, so that the souls of those fallen men would be able to hear Gabriel's trumpet and join the kingdom of heaven. Finally, the last lines of the song demonstrated the hopelessness and desolation that these men felt after burying so many bodies. This work caused disillusionment and led the burial squad to feel that nearly "everybody died in the A. E. F. [American Expeditionary Force]."¹²⁹ This somber perspective differed greatly from some of the more comedic soldiers' songs, which made light of death and underestimated American casualties.

Many of the songs written by African Americans and compiled in *Singing Soldiers* revealed a sad, hopeless perspective of military experience. The songs expressed the soldiers' desire for the war to end and to return home. Niles categorized these songs as blues and claimed that singing the blues was a readily accessible form of expression for the black soldiers, as this musical style was common in their community: "the constant recurring note of sadness in the music of the black man is like the ripple of a stream of water running around a rock—the water being his thought-stream—the rock, suppression."¹³⁰ Moreover, singing provided a way for these men to express their frustrations and sorrows instead of repressing them, as in the song "Long Gone." It suggested that the soldiers would not make it home alive and conveyed loneliness and displacement. The chorus read, "oh, we're long gone from Alabama—long gone from Georgia, long gone from where we come from and we may never see home again. Home—home—home— Oh, we're long gone from where we come from, and we may never see home again."¹³¹ These lyrics reflected the homesickness that black soldiers felt, and alluded to the perceived permanence of their situation. The following verse evoked nostalgia as it described a rural scene: "oh, de whippoorwill's a singin' low and de cotton's in de pod—But many of us is goin' to rest, beneath this far-off sod."¹³² The description of a local bird singing and familiar work awaiting the men caused them to reminisce about prewar times, and romanticize daily life, which was less dismal and dangerous than war. The last line about resting in foreign soil illustrated a somber acceptance of one potential consequence of military service; death.

Aside from the blues and songs that expressed dissatisfaction with noncombat roles, the black soldiers' songs incorporated many of the same themes as the white troops', such as religion, love and women, hatred of the enemy, and rank relations. Like their white comrades, the majority of African Americans were Christians, and reliance on their religion was demonstrated through song. Faith in the afterlife, particularly one spent in heaven, was important for soldiers to maintain as they faced the prospect of death. In the song "Don't Close the Gates," the singer called on biblical figures and instructed them, "don't close does gates, 'cause I'm sure comin' in. Peter, take your hand off de handle ob dat gate, 'cause I'm sure comin' in."¹³³ He demonstrated faith in heaven, as he planned to go there when he died, and wanted to ensure that the apostle Peter keep the gates open for him to enter. His confidence was reasserted in the line, "some folks says dat heaven is a white man's place, but [...] Good Book says it

doesn't matter 'bout de color ob your face. So I'm sure comin' in."¹³⁴ This song reassured soldiers that if they died, their souls could go to heaven and they would not be denied access due to their race.

Another common theme in white and black soldiers' songs was references to women, in both affairs with the French and sweethearts back home. The War Department's recruitment posters portrayed the war as a chance for adventure and an opportunity to prove masculinity and virility through combat. This propaganda advertised the war using sexualized images of women, such as Lady Liberty and Red Cross nurses, in order to entice men and persuade them to enlist.¹³⁵ Lyrics in *Singing Soldiers* suggest that black troops, like their white comrades, accepted and internalized this concept of women as a commodity for the soldiers, as songs alluded to scandalous wartime affairs. The song "Hoochey, Coochey" was as provocative as the title suggested, with the singer asserting in one verse that he was, "goin' to git myself a French gal wid nice smooth flanks, an' tell her de blacks is de best o' de Yanks."¹³⁶ This lyric exemplified both the frequent sexualization of women through song, as it characterized the French women according to her physical appearance, and the racial tensions within the American army, as it challenged white superiority. The singer claimed that blacks were better than whites, and this notion of racial comparison and competition sometimes led to violence committed by white soldiers against black troops. The song's reference to interracial affairs was especially contentious, since "nothing angered southern white troops more than friendships or sexual relationships between Frenchwomen and black soldiers."¹³⁷ "Hoochey, Coochey" demonstrated the tendency for soldiers to sing about women as a physical spoil of war, and to use these relations as way to challenge racism within the American military and society.

Despite the political potency of "Hoochey, Coochey," some lyrical references to women simply illustrated emotional connections to home. In "I Don't Want Any More France," the singer mentioned a romantic relation with a woman back home: "I got a gal—her name is May—She holds me tight mos' all o' de day—I don't want any more France—Jesus, I want to go home."¹³⁸ Although this song did not encourage service or support the war, the lyrics still helped black soldiers cope with their homesickness by reminding them of the loving women who awaited their return. Maintaining an emotional connection to home provided soldiers with a point of hope and optimism; it gave them something to look forward to once the war ended and therefore encouraged them to persevere.

A recurring theme in *Singing Soldiers* that addressed warfare more directly was disdain for the enemy. Troops expressed their desire to defeat the Germans in the song "We Wish the Same to You." It listed the dangers that soldiers faced in combat and noted their wish to reciprocate attacks against enemy forces: "Monday the bullets, Tuesday the bayonets, Wednesday the shrapnel, Thursday the mustard gas, Friday the ambulance, Saturday the hospital, Sunday the graveyard. Oh, you dirty Germans, we wish the same to you."¹³⁹ Niles's inclusion of this song in *Singing Soldiers* is interesting because it referenced the trials of combat, which relatively few African Americans actually faced. The popularity of this song among the black soldiers, who served mostly as noncombatants, illustrated the power of songs to unify troops and create a sense of common identity as soldiers. It also named the Germans as the enemy, which gave all Americans a shared image of the "other," defined not by race but by nationality.

The final song theme in *Singing Soldiers* that promoted commonality between white and black soldiers was rank relations. Like the white soldiers' songs in *The Songs My Mother Never Taught Me*, African Americans' songs represented the perspective of low-ranking soldiers and expressed frustration over the military hierarchy. The "Going Home Song" illustrated the troops' anger and fear of authority, as the singer said "I want to go home, where the Top Sergeants can't get at me, [...] The war ain't so bad if

Maci Reed

you're wearin' a star, but bein' a private don't get you far."¹⁴⁰ These sentiments were again revealed in "I Don't Want Any More France," which claimed, "officers, they live up on de hill, we live down in de muck and de swill."¹⁴¹ Both of these songs criticized the inequality between military ranks by noting that officers received more recognition and lived in more comfortable, less dangerous conditions than privates. Inequality caused by military rank was a particular problem for black soldiers because racial prejudices largely prevented them from advancing to higher ranks, until "lobbying by black organizations and manpower shortages combined to force the army to place some blacks in positions of authority, both as officers and as camp guards."¹⁴² Even those who did become officers were subject to intense scrutiny, blamed by white officers for military setbacks, and disobeyed by white subordinates.¹⁴³ Therefore issues of military rank had significant effects on the black soldiers because institutional racism made it was nearly impossible for them to achieve high rank, and cultural norms prohibited them from earning respectable status.

Black soldiers' experiences in the Great War demonstrated the complexities of American race relations. They were given some opportunities for social and political advancement which defied long-held racial stereotypes. However, many white Americans resisted their advancement and fought to maintain the racial status quo by limiting black soldiers to primarily noncombatant positions and only allowing few black combatants to earn officer rankings. *Singing Soldiers* exemplified this back and forth struggle for power, as Niles himself both patronized blacks and forged friendships with them. The song lyrics demonstrated some sources of commonality between black and white troops, but also called attention to distinct differences in the groups' war experiences. Although soldiers' songs often exposed the negative realities of war experiences, such as racial disputes, their popularity among the troops proved the success of the CTCA's music program and the realization of the War Department's goal to send a singing army to France.

Songs proved to be an effective tool for unifying the soldiers with the community, as well as with each other. Singing was a part of American culture outside of the war, and so continuing the practice in the training camps allowed soldiers to maintain a sense of social connection while separated from the rest of society. CTCA Chairman Fosdick explained the need to normalize life within the camps for the benefit of the troops and the war effort, arguing that, "we cannot take men from their homes, their clubs, their social institutions, put them into a radically new environment without any of the social contacts to which they have been accustomed, and still expect to achieve the right kind of results."¹⁴⁴ War songs supplied a vital connection between the training camps and civilian life. Song leaders sometimes called on the local communities for song suggestions and reported on their group sings through local newspapers. Civilians responded to this outreach by participating alongside the soldiers; "they developed community choruses in towns near their camps and conducted general community singing at many meetings for civilians and soldiers."¹⁴⁵ Furthermore, citizens who drove by the camps while the soldiers were singing honked their car horns as a form of encouragement and support.¹⁴⁶ Lastly, fundraisers were held in training camp auditoriums, where soldiers would perform for civilian audiences and encourage them to bolster the war effort by purchasing Liberty Bonds.¹⁴⁷ The social connections forged through song outlasted the war itself, as Americans continued to accept music as a part of military culture even after the armistice. The military continued its use of song through World War II, and cadences are still practiced at military academies today.

The incorporation of song into the Great War experience also affected a group often marginalized within the military; women. Although their involvement in the war was limited in comparison to men, army nurses staffed the military hospitals in training camps and in France. Like the soldiers, nurses were also trained in singing. One CTCA report described nurses and soldiers singing back and forth to each other at

an embarkation camp as they boarded their respective ships and departed for Europe.¹⁴⁸ Women's roles in the military were mostly limited to nursing, but three exceptional women defied this norm by serving as the only officially appointed female song leaders out of the 80 total leaders employed by the army.¹⁴⁹ The CTCA initially opposed the official appointment of female song leaders, claiming that this practice was "not feasible," and only allowing them to serve in voluntary capacities from their homes.¹⁵⁰ However, Mrs. George Barrell, Miss Antoinette Sabel, and Mrs. Josephine Brown MacClure "succeeded so well that their commanding officers requested their official appointment and gave them every assistance."¹⁵¹ These women helped to organize group sings, obtain instruments, and direct army bands. Their work had an immediate, positive impact on the war effort and helped expand conceptions of women's roles, at least within the CTCA.

The significance of song in the American experience of World War I has been understated and even neglected by many historians. Although it began as a form of recreation, the use of songs quickly evolved to serve a strategic military purpose. Songs were used to unify diverse groups and to motivate draftees and other disgruntled soldiers by exhibiting the positive parts of the war experience. In spite of the CTCA's highly politicized use of songs, the power dynamics grew more complex as the soldiers embraced the practice of singing, and songs became a personally valuable part of their experiences in training camps and on the front. Soldiers used songs as a form of expression and cultural transmission. Group sings helped them to build a community based on common experience, and the song lyrics often provided hope and encouragement to help them through the hardships of soldier life. Finally, civilian interaction with singing helped to integrate the military experience with the civilian community, providing a form of social connection for isolated soldiers during wartime.

¹ John J. Niles and Douglas Moore, *The Songs My Mother Never Taught Me* (New York: The Macaulay Company, 1929), 13.

² See also: Leonard V. Smith, "The Implicit Struggle Becomes Explicit: The Mutinies of 1917," in *Between Mutiny and Obedience: The Case of the French Fifth Infantry Division during World War I* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994), 175-214.

³ Mark Meigs, *Optimism at Armageddon* (New York: New York University Press, 1997), 146.

⁴ Christina Gier, "The 'Song Leaders' of the American Expeditionary Forces, 1917-18," *Journal of Musicological Research* 33 (2014): 130-44.

⁵ Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities; Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (New York: Verso, 2006), 4.

⁶ Anderson, *Imagined Communities*, 7.

⁷ United States, Commission on Training Camp Activities, War Department, *Camp Music Division of the War Department*, (Washington, D.C.: Govt. print. off., 1919), 38.

⁸ United States. Commission on Training Camp Activities, *The War Department Commission on Training Camp Activities*, (Washington, D.C.: Govt., print. off., 1917), 3.

⁹ Raymond B. Fosdick, "The Commission on Training Camp Activities," *Proceedings of the Academy of Political Science in the City of New York* 7 (February 1918): 163. JSTOR (1172212).

¹⁰ Fosdick, "The Commission on Training Camp Activities," 165.

¹¹ Fosdick, "The Commission on Training Camp Activities," 168.

¹² *Music in the Camps* Vol., 1 No. 1, November 3, 1917; *Music in the Camps*, 1918-19; War College Division and War Plans Division, Subordinate Offices, Education and Recreation Branch, Commission on Training Camp Activities; Records of the War Department General and Special Staffs, 1860- 1952, Record Group 165; National Archives at College Park, College Park, MD.

Maci Reed

¹³ Secretary of War Newton Baker created the CTCA and appointed Fosdick as chairman. Fosdick named Hanmer as chairman of the Camp Music Division, a subcommittee within the CTCA, and Hanmer formed a further subcommittee, the National Committee on Army and Navy Camp Music. All aforementioned committees were associated with the War Department.

¹⁴ United States, *Camp Music Division*, 4.

¹⁵ Gier, "The 'Song Leaders' of the American Expeditionary Forces, 1917-18," 130.

¹⁶ *Music in the Camps*, November 3, 1917, National Archives at College Park.

¹⁷ *Music in the Camps*, November 3, 1917, National Archives at College Park.

¹⁸ *Music in the Camps*, November 3, 1917, National Archives at College Park.

¹⁹ *Music in the Camps*, November 3, 1917, National Archives at College Park.

²⁰ *Music in the Camps* Vol., 1 No. 27, May 4, 1918; *Music in the Camps*, 1918-19; War College Division and War Plans Division, Subordinate Offices, Education and Recreation Branch, Commission on Training Camp Activities; Records of the War Department General and Special Staffs, 1860- 1952, Record Group 165; National Archives at College Park, College Park, MD.

²¹ *Music in the Camps* Vol., 1 No. 30, May 27, 1918; *Music in the Camps*, 1918-19; War College Division and War Plans Division, Subordinate Offices, Education and Recreation Branch, Commission on Training Camp Activities; Records of the War Department General and Special Staffs, 1860- 1952, Record Group 165; National Archives at College Park, College Park, MD.

²² *Music in the Camps*, May 27, 1918, National Archives at College Park.

²³ *Music in the Camps*, May 27, 1918, National Archives at College Park.

²⁴ *Music in the Camps*, November 3, 1917, National Archives at College Park.

²⁵ A Statement of the Methods and Activities of the Department of Camp Music, Nov. 1918; General Correspondence File, 1981- 1921; War College Division and War Plans Division, Subordinate Officers, Morale Branch; Records of the War Department General and Special Staffs, 1860- 1952, Record Group 165; National Archives at College Park, College Park, MD.

²⁶ Statement of Methods and Activities, Record Group 165, National Archives at College Park.

²⁷ Statement of Methods and Activities, Record Group 165, National Archives at College Park.

²⁸ United States, *Camp Music Division*, 9.

²⁹ Although the armistice was signed on 11 Nov. 1918, the Treaty of Versailles did not officially establish peace until 28 June 1919. Furthermore, the American military maintained an occupation force in Europe throughout the slow demobilization process. Therefore, many American troops were still in training camps and on the front at the time of Dixon's proposal in 1920.

³⁰ Wiley L. Dixon, Major Infantry USA, Officer in Charge of Music Subsection, Memorandum for: Acting Officer in Charge, Camp Activities Section, 16 Feb. 1920; Morale Branch, 18; Education and Recreation Branch Correspondence of the Education Section, 1918- 1920; Records of the War Department General and Special Staffs, 1860- 1952, Record Group 165; National Archives at College Park, College Park, MD.

³¹ Dixon to Acting Officer, Record Group 165, National Archives at College Park.

³² Dixon to Acting Officer, Record Group 165, National Archives at College Park.

³³ Wiley L. Dixon, Major Infantry USA, Officer in Charge of Music Subsection, Memorandum for W. E. Larned, Colonel of the General Staff, Education Section, 20 Feb. 1920; Morale Branch, 18; Education and Recreation Branch Correspondence of the Education Section, 1918- 1920; Records of the War Department General and Special Staffs, 1860- 1952, Record Group 165; National Archives at College Park, College Park, MD.

³⁴ Dixon to Larned, Record Group 165, National Archives at College Park.

³⁵ W. E. Larned, Colonel of the General Staff, Education Section, Memorandum for Major Dixon, Officer in charge of music Subsection, 28 Feb. 1920; Morale Branch, 18; Education and Recreation Branch Correspondence of the Education Section, 1918- 1920; Records of the War Department General and Special Staffs, 1860- 1952, Record Group 165; National Archives at College Park, College Park, MD.

-
- ³⁶ Larned to Dixon, Record Group 165, National Archives at College Park.
- ³⁷ Larned to Dixon, Record Group 165, National Archives at College Park.
- ³⁸ Jennifer D. Keene, *Doughboys, the Great War, and the Remaking of America* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2001), 32.
- ³⁹ Keene, *Doughboys, the Great War, and the Remaking of America*, 32.
- ⁴⁰ Keene, *Doughboys, the Great War, and the Remaking of America*, 33.
- ⁴¹ United States, *Camp Music Division*, 13.
- ⁴² United States, *Camp Music Division*, 14.
- ⁴³ United States, *Camp Music Division*, 14.
- ⁴⁴ Frank R. Seltzer, "Famous Bandmasters in Brief," *Jacob's Band Monthly* 4 (1919): 10, accessed February 13, 2016, Google Books.
- ⁴⁵ Seltzer, "Famous Bandmasters," 10.
- ⁴⁶ Seltzer, "Famous Bandmasters," 10.
- ⁴⁷ Seltzer, "Famous Bandmasters," 10.
- ⁴⁸ Summary of Reports on Schools for the Training of Band Musicians; Education and Recreation Branch Correspondence of the Education Section, 1918- 1920; Records of the War Department General and Special Staffs, 1860- 1952, Record Group 165; National Archives at College Park, College Park, MD.
- ⁴⁹ Arthur A. Clappé, Principal of the U.S. Army Music Training School, to Mr. Lynn B. Dana, President of Dana's Musical Institute, August 30, 1918; Education and Recreation Branch Correspondence of the Education Section, 1918- 1920; Records of the War Department General and Special Staffs, 1860- 1952, Record Group 165; National Archives at College Park, College Park, MD.
- ⁵⁰ Form 2, War Department, Office of the Principal, U.S. Army Music Training School, October 15, 1918; Education and Recreation Branch Correspondence of the Education Section, 1918- 1920; Records of the War Department General and Special Staffs, 1860- 1952, Record Group 165; National Archives at College Park, College Park, MD.
- ⁵¹ Form 2, War Department, Office of the Principal, U.S. Army Music Training School, Record Group 165, National Archives at College Park.
- ⁵² Form No. 3, War Department, Office of the Principal, U.S. Army Music Training School, October 15, 1918; Education and Recreation Branch Correspondence of the Education Section, 1918- 1920; Records of the War Department General and Special Staffs, 1860- 1952, Record Group 165; National Archives at College Park, College Park, MD.
- ⁵³ C. R. Doolly, War Department Telegram, October 17, 1918; Education and Recreation Branch Correspondence of the Education Section, 1918- 1920; Records of the War Department General and Special Staffs, 1860- 1952, Record Group 165; National Archives at College Park, College Park, MD.
- ⁵⁴ United States, *Camp Music Division*, 12.
- ⁵⁵ United States, *Camp Music Division*, 12.
- ⁵⁶ United States, Commission on Training Camp Activities, *Army Song Book*, 2nd ed., (Washington, D.C.: 1918).
- ⁵⁷ United States, *Camp Music Division*, 42.
- ⁵⁸ United States, *Camp Music Division*, 42.
- ⁵⁹ United States, *Army Song Book*, 3 & 36.
- ⁶⁰ United States, *Army Song Book*, 3.
- ⁶¹ United States, *Army Song Book*, 10 & 16.
- ⁶² United States, *Army Song Book*, 28.
- ⁶³ United States, *Army Song Book*, 37.
- ⁶⁴ United States, *Army Song Book*, 29.
- ⁶⁵ United States, *Army Song Book*, 31.

Maci Reed

-
- ⁶⁶ United States, *Army Song Book*, 35.
- ⁶⁷ United States, *Army Song Book*, 35.
- ⁶⁸ United States, *Camp Music Division*, 42.
- ⁶⁹ United States, *Army Song Book*, 12.
- ⁷⁰ United States, *Army Song Book*, 12.
- ⁷¹ United States, *Camp Music Division*, 42.
- ⁷² United States, *Army Song Book*, 56.
- ⁷³ United States, *Army Song Book*, 58.
- ⁷⁴ United States, *Army Song Book*, 39.
- ⁷⁵ United States, *Army Song Book*, 39.
- ⁷⁶ United States, *Army Song Book*, 44-45.
- ⁷⁷ Anna Vander Broek, "In Pictures: The Things They Carried-- An Infantryman's Supplies 1918-2028," *Forbes*, June 5, 2008, accessed March 25, 2016, http://www.forbes.com/2008/06/05/infantry-supplies-equipment-tech-logistics08-cx_avb_0605carry_slide_2.html.
- ⁷⁸ United States, *Army Song Book*, 44.
- ⁷⁹ United States, *Army Song Book*, 45.
- ⁸⁰ United States, *Army Song Book*, 43.
- ⁸¹ United States, *Army Song Book*, 23.
- ⁸² United States, *Army Song Book*, 23.
- ⁸³ United States, *Army Song Book*, 46.
- ⁸⁴ United States, *Army Song Book*, 36.
- ⁸⁵ Niles and Moore, *The Songs My Mother Never Taught Me*, 13.
- ⁸⁶ Niles and Moore, *The Songs My Mother Never Taught Me*, 16.
- ⁸⁷ Niles and Moore, *The Songs My Mother Never Taught Me*, 21.
- ⁸⁸ Niles and Moore, *The Songs My Mother Never Taught Me*, 21.
- ⁸⁹ Niles and Moore, *The Songs My Mother Never Taught Me*, 17.
- ⁹⁰ Niles and Moore, *The Songs My Mother Never Taught Me*, 21.
- ⁹¹ Niles and Moore, *The Songs My Mother Never Taught Me*, 39.
- ⁹² Niles and Moore, *The Songs My Mother Never Taught Me*, 40.
- ⁹³ Niles and Moore, *The Songs My Mother Never Taught Me*, 40.
- ⁹⁴ Niles and Moore, *The Songs My Mother Never Taught Me*, 39.
- ⁹⁵ Niles and Moore, *The Songs My Mother Never Taught Me*, 35.
- ⁹⁶ Niles and Moore, *The Songs My Mother Never Taught Me*, 35.
- ⁹⁷ Niles and Moore, *The Songs My Mother Never Taught Me*, 36.
- ⁹⁸ Niles and Moore, *The Songs My Mother Never Taught Me*, 36.
- ⁹⁹ Niles and Moore, *The Songs My Mother Never Taught Me*, 43-44.
- ¹⁰⁰ Niles and Moore, *The Songs My Mother Never Taught Me*, 45.
- ¹⁰¹ Niles and Moore, *The Songs My Mother Never Taught Me*, 46.
- ¹⁰² Niles and Moore, *The Songs My Mother Never Taught Me*, 46.
- ¹⁰³ Niles and Moore, *The Songs My Mother Never Taught Me*, 73-74.
- ¹⁰⁴ Pellom McDaniels III, "African American Soldiers (USA)," in: *1914-1918-online. International Encyclopedia of the First World War*, ed. by Ute Daniel, Peter Gatrell, Oliver Janz, Heather Jones, Jennifer Keene, Alan Kramer, and Bill Nasson, issued by Freie Universität Berlin, Berlin 2014-10-08, DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.15463/ie1418.10175>.
- ¹⁰⁵ Keene, *Doughboys, The Great War, and the Remaking of America*, 5.
- ¹⁰⁶ John J. Niles, *Singing Soldiers* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1927), vii.
- ¹⁰⁷ Charlene Fletcher Brown, "U.S. Race Riots," in: *1914-1918-online. International Encyclopedia of the First World War*, ed. by Ute Daniel, Peter Gatrell, Oliver Janz, Heather Jones, Jennifer Keene, Alan

Kramer, and Bill Nasson, issued by Freie Universität Berlin, Berlin 2014-10-08, DOI:
<http://dx.doi.org/10.15463/ie1418.10029>.

- ¹⁰⁸ McDaniels III, "African American Soldiers (USA)."
¹⁰⁹ Niles, *Singing Soldiers*, 103.
¹¹⁰ Niles, *Singing Soldiers*, 104.
¹¹¹ Niles, *Singing Soldiers*, 103.
¹¹² Niles, *Singing Soldiers*, 103.
¹¹³ Niles, *Singing Soldiers*, 84.
¹¹⁴ Niles, *Singing Soldiers*, 82-83.
¹¹⁵ Niles, *Singing Soldiers*, 84.
¹¹⁶ Niles, *Singing Soldiers*, 84.
¹¹⁷ Niles, *Singing Soldiers*, 79.
¹¹⁸ Niles, *Singing Soldiers*, 80.
¹¹⁹ Keene, *Doughboys, the Great War, and the Remaking of America*, 55-60.
¹²⁰ Niles, *Singing Soldiers*, 30.
¹²¹ Niles, *Singing Soldiers*, 31.
¹²² Niles, *Singing Soldiers*, 49.
¹²³ Niles, *Singing Soldiers*, 50.
¹²⁴ Keene, *Doughboys, The Great War, and the Remaking of America*, 56.
¹²⁵ Niles, *Singing Soldiers*, 131.
¹²⁶ Niles, *Singing Soldiers*, 132.
¹²⁷ Niles, *Singing Soldiers*, 132.
¹²⁸ Niles, *Singing Soldiers*, 132.
¹²⁹ Niles, *Singing Soldiers*, 132.
¹³⁰ Niles, *Singing Soldiers*, 154.
¹³¹ Niles, *Singing Soldiers*, 156.
¹³² Niles, *Singing Soldiers*, 156.
¹³³ Niles, *Singing Soldiers*, 21-22.
¹³⁴ Niles, *Singing Soldiers*, 20.
¹³⁵ Jakub Kazecki and Jason Lieblang, "Regression versus Progression: Fundamental Differences in German and American Posters of the First World War," in *Picture This: World War I Posters and Visual Culture*, ed. Pearl James (Lincoln, Nebraska: University of Nebraska Press, 2009), 132- 133.
¹³⁶ Niles, *Singing Soldiers*, 26.
¹³⁷ Keene, *Doughboys, The Great War, and the Remaking of America*, 102.
¹³⁸ Niles, *Singing Soldiers*, 70.
¹³⁹ Niles, *Singing Soldiers*, 115-116.
¹⁴⁰ Niles, *Singing Soldiers*, 2-3.
¹⁴¹ Niles, *Singing Soldiers*, 70.
¹⁴² Keene, *Doughboys, The Great War, and the Remaking of America*, 5.
¹⁴³ Keene, *Doughboys, The Great War, and the Remaking of America*, 160.
¹⁴⁴ Fosdick, "The Commission on Training Camp Activities," 165.
¹⁴⁵ United States, *Camp Music Division*, 32.
¹⁴⁶ United States, *The War Department Commission on Training Camp Activities*, 16.
¹⁴⁷ United States, *Camp Music Division*, 33.
¹⁴⁸ United States, *Camp Music Division*, 26.
¹⁴⁹ United States, *Camp Music Division*, 45.
¹⁵⁰ United States, *Camp Music Division*, 28.

Maci Reed

¹⁵¹ United States, *Camp Music Division*, 28.