

THE OFFICIAL SONGS OF THE SIGNAL CORPS

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Many songs and marches have been composed and used to honor history and mission of the Signal Corps, but only two have ever received the stamp as “official”.

In 1923 the Secretary of War requested that all regimental commanders, corps and branches of the Army adopt a song that reflected the history and mission of the unit. This desire was made official by the promulgation of Adjutant General's Directive, AG 007.13, Regimental Songs, dated 14 Dec 1942.

In response Chief Signal Officer, Maj. Gen. Charles McK. Saltzman issued SC Bulletin No. 24, February 1, 1924 and a Office of the Chief Signal Officer letter to all Corps area and Department Signal officers in search of a suitable song. When these efforts did not provide the desired result, Gen. Saltzman chose a more direct approach.

He contacted Mrs. Bess Heath Olmstead a trained musician and pianist, and wife of Maj. Dawson Olmstead, Signal Officer in Hawaii. On January 8, 1927 Mrs. Olmstead's composition “Song of the Signal Corps” was sent from Hawaii. The song was sent to all officers of the Signal Corps for review and comment and by the end of 1927 the vast majority of officers approved adoption of this song.

In the years intervening between 1927 and the beginning of World War II the song was changed little except for the addition of one verse. During the war several new arrangements and some slight variation in lyrics were made to update the piece. The “Song of the Signal Corps” appeared in the 1941 “Army Song Book” published by the Army Music School. In 1943 Mayhew Lake wrote a stirring march arrangement still used today.

Even though Ms Olmstead's song was superseded in 1961 a fourth “unofficial” verse was written in recent years by Alan B. Salisbury.

The current Official Song of the Signal Corps was promulgated in 1961 on the Signal Corps 100th Birthday by the Office of the Chief Signal Officer, and announced by MG Ralph T. Nelson, CSO. The piece was selected from eight compositions submitted to honor the centennial observance. The piece selected was “US Army Signal Corps March” by Alan Woolley. Mr. Woolley was the husband of a civilian employee at Ft Monmouth, NJ. This piece has been recorded by the US Army Band and the US Army Chorus.