



# Virginia 4-H MAKING the Future

\*18 U.S.C. 707

## The History of Army Bands

### The History Behind it . . .

#### ***When were military bands first used?***

The first recorded American military band was in 1756, when fife-players and other musicians marched with more than 1,000 men in the Regiment Artillery Company of Philadelphia, commanded by Colonel Benjamin Franklin. During the Civil War, both the Union and Confederacy Armies had military musicians to build morale, help to announce position of troops, as well as provide rallying cries in battle.

Revolutionary War musicians, primarily drum and fife majors, were important in many military battles. Some commanders recognized the role that music played in inspiring their soldiers and their drum and fifers played well into enemy positions.

Today, military bands play on the front lines of battle play a valuable role in the morale of our soldiers, as well as serving as peacetime musical ambassadors. Army Band mission: *"Army Bands provide music throughout the spectrum of military operations to instill in our soldiers the will to fight and win, foster the support of our citizens, and promote our national interests at home and abroad."*

#### ***World War I***

In 1916 Congress passed a bill to establish bands for the headquarters companies of infantry, cavalry, and artillery regiments, as well as the Corps of Engineers. After the U.S. entered World War I in 1917, General Pershing was appointed as Commander of Allied Expeditionary Forces (AEF). He believed that military bands were a key element in maintaining the morale of his soldiers. After he arrived in Europe he convinced Congress to authorize 20 additional bands, he increased the number of band members from 28 to 48 members, and he also created a band school in Chaumont, France to train bandmasters and musicians.

In WWI the AEF Army bands played for their units, played concerts for the wounded at Army hospitals and also played concerts at many recreation areas for soldiers and in local French towns to maintain positive relationships between America and France.

#### ***Did you know?***

- Throughout the years, 32 Army musicians have been awarded the Congressional Medal of Honor.
- The Romans had military musicians who provided support for their troops in battle.

#### ***Sources***

- ⇒ US Army Bands: [www.music.army.mil/](http://www.music.army.mil/)
- ⇒ US Army Element, School of Music: <https://fas.org/irp/doddir/army/armybands.pdf>
- ⇒ US Army: [www.goarmy.com/band/about-army-bands/history.html](http://www.goarmy.com/band/about-army-bands/history.html)
- ⇒ US Center for Military History: [www.history.army.mil/html/books/023/23-18/CMH\\_Pub\\_23-18.pdf](http://www.history.army.mil/html/books/023/23-18/CMH_Pub_23-18.pdf)  
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