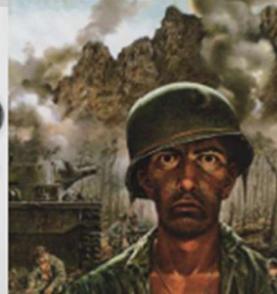




A Musical Journey of the World War II Era



Dedication

This program is respectfully dedicated to the veterans of World War II and to their families.

It honors those who served in uniform, those who endured separation on the homefront, and those who carried the weight of remembrance long after the war ended. Their courage, sacrifice, and resilience shaped a generation and secured the freedoms that followed.

This musical program is presented in recognition of their legacy and with enduring gratitude, at this Iwo Jima Association of America Reunion, February 18th – 22nd, 2026.



Wartime Morale Songs

These songs were performed in camps, aboard ships, and on makeshift stages around the world. They provided energy, humor, and reassurance, reminding service members of home, unity, and the confidence needed to endure long campaigns.

- Boogie Woogie Bugle Boy
- In the Mood
- American Patrol
- Mack the Knife
- Ac-Cent-Tchu-Ate the Positive
- Baby Face
- Ain't She Sweet
- That Old Gang of Mine
- Ta-Ra-Ra-Boom-De-E
- Strip Polka
- Mister Five by Five
- Praise the Lord and Pass the Ammunition
- Bei Mir Bist Du Schoen
- Beat Me Daddy Eight to the Bar
- Jersey Bounce
- Chattanooga Choo Choo
- Tuxedo Junction
- One O'Clock Jump
- Bugle Call Rag
- Drum Boogie
- Five Guys Named Moe
- Swinging on a Star
- God Bless America
- The Caissons Go Rolling Along

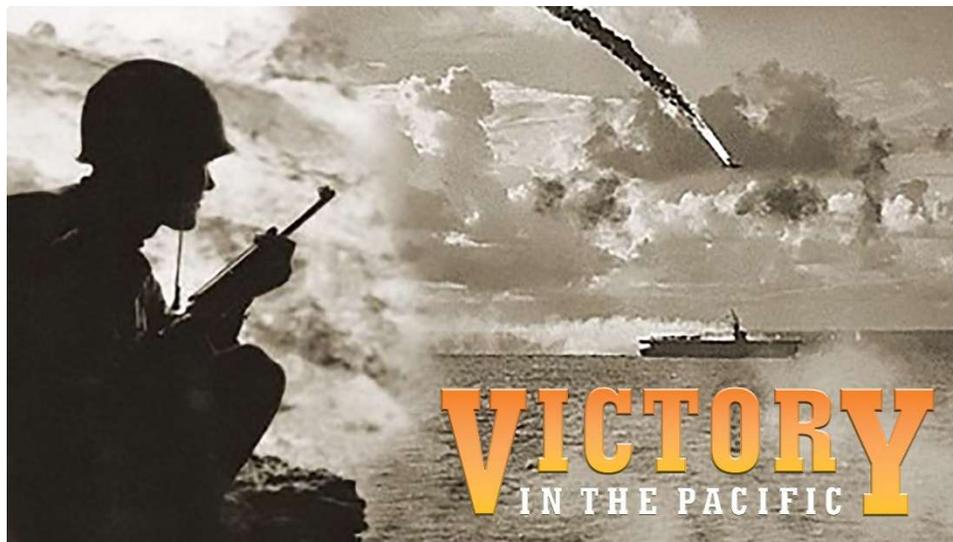


Homefront & Longing

Songs of love, waiting, letters, and the quiet ache of separation

These selections reflect the emotional distance created by war. Sung in living rooms, heard on radios, and remembered in letters, they gave voice to longing, devotion, and the hope of reunion.

- I'll Be Seeing You
- Sentimental Journey
- You Are My Sunshine
- My Blue Heaven
- As Time Goes By
- I'll Never Smile Again
- You'll Never Know
- I Don't Want to Walk Without You
- That Old Black Magic
- Till We Meet Again
- Let the Rest of the World Go By
- Ramona
- Peg O' My Heart
- Silver Moon
- Poor Butterfly
- St. Louis Blues!!
- I'm Nobody's Baby
- You Were Meant for Me
- At Sundown
- Five Foot Two Eyes of Blue
- Down by the Old Mill Stream
- By the Light of the Silvery Moon
- Till the End of Time
- The Nearness of You
- Deep in the Heart of Texas
- If I Loved You
- Rose Marie
- Red River Valley
- Oklahoma!



Postwar Reflection

Songs of reunion, remembrance, gratitude, and the hope for lasting peace

These selections mark the return home and the quiet reckoning that followed victory. They speak to relief, loss, gratitude, and the enduring desire for peace, carrying the emotional weight of a war remembered long after it ended.

- We'll Meet Again
- It's Been a Long, Long Time
- When the Lights Go On Again All Over the World
- White Cliffs of Dover
- Till the End of Time
- Anniversary Song
- You'll Never Walk Alone
- That's All
- If I Loved You
- Some Enchanted Evening
- You'll Never Know
- Try to Remember
- Time on My Hands
- Sweet Violets
- Bye Bye Blackbird
- Now Is the Hour
- Show Me the Way to Go Home
- There Is a Tavern in the Town
- We'll Be Together Again
- Stout Hearted Men



****** The Unspoken Return ******

Not all of the music associated with World War II was written to inspire, console, or celebrate. Some songs of the era, particularly those heard during the final months of the war and in the years immediately following, reflected a different and far more private emotional landscape.

For many combat veterans, the return home marked the beginning of a quieter struggle. The war had ended, but its imprint remained. The language to describe combat fatigue, survivor's guilt, emotional withdrawal, and lingering grief did not yet exist. Public expectations emphasized resilience and normalcy. As a result, much of what veterans carried home was borne inwardly and alone.

The songs included in this reflective grouping were not written about battle. Instead, they expressed themes of isolation, emotional numbness, regret, longing, and unresolved loss. Their restrained melodies and introspective lyrics allowed listeners to sit with feelings that could not easily be spoken. These were not songs for crowds or ceremonies. They were songs for late evenings, low radios, and solitary moments.

Many veterans gravitated toward this music precisely because it did not demand optimism or closure. It offered no solutions and made no promises. It simply acknowledged that something had changed, and that returning home did not always mean returning to who one had been before the war.

These selections are included in this program to recognize that service does not end with the cessation of combat, and that the legacy of World War II includes not only courage and victory, but also the quiet endurance that followed. By acknowledging this less emotional truth, the program honors the full human experience of those who served and the families who stood beside them.

This music stands as a reminder that remembrance is not always loud, and that some of the deepest sacrifices were carried silently, long after the uniforms were put away.



You Don't Know What Love Is

This is not a love song in the romantic sense. It is about emotional deadness after loss. Many veterans related to its resigned tone knowing something once mattered deeply, and realizing it is gone for good.

I'll Never Smile Again

Often misread as sentimental. In truth, it is stark and bleak. The line "*I'll never smile again until I smile at you*" mirrors the emotional shutdown many veterans experienced returning home to people who could not understand what they had seen.

Good Morning Heartache

This is one of the clearest postwar expressions of persistent grief. It does not resolve. It does not heal. It simply *exists*. Veterans often described this kind of sadness as waking up every day with the war still inside them.

You Go to My Head

This song resonated with veterans who could not stop reliving memories not of romance, but of people and places lost. The intoxication metaphor aligns closely with intrusive thoughts and mental fixation.

I'm a Fool to Want You

Although slightly later, it was embraced by WWII veterans. It reflects self-blame, emotional conflict, and quiet anger turned inward, common themes among returning combatants struggling with relationships.

This Love of Mine

This song captures something very specific: Wanting connection, but feeling incapable of sustaining it. Veterans often described feeling emotionally dangerous to those they loved.

Solitude

Despite being older, this song found new meaning after the war. Its slow, empty phrasing reflects withdrawal and emotional isolation, not drama - just absence.

One for My Baby

This is arguably the definitive lonely veteran song, even though it never says so outright. A man talking to a bartender at closing time, unable to go home, unable to explain himself - this resonated deeply with men who felt out of place in civilian life.

Guess I'll Hang My Tears Out to Dry

Released right as the war ended. It reflects emotional exhaustion, not heartbreak theatrics. Just the decision to keep functioning while carrying pain quietly.

The Man That Got Away

Often associated with Hollywood later, but veterans connected with its theme of survivor's guilt - the idea that the person you were did not come home, even if your body did.

Begin the Beguine

Resonated with Pacific theater Marines because it gave shape to emotions they could not name out loud. Its unresolved melody and slow, circling structure mirrored grief that had no funeral, anger that had no target, and sadness that did not pass when the fighting stopped. The song did not offer comfort or closure it simply sat with the listener, allowing loss and bitterness to exist without being explained or redeemed.

Sierra Sue

This song spoke to Pacific theater Marines not as romance, but as absence. Beneath its gentle melody was the ache of what had been severed forever - home, innocence, and the version of themselves that existed before the war. Heard after combat, the song could sharpen grief and anger rather than soothe them, because it reminded the listener that the world it described still existed for others, but no longer fit the man who had survived.

It's all in the game

This song resonated with veterans because it treated loss and betrayal as something to be endured rather than explained or resolved. For Pacific Marines it reinforced a bitter truth learned in war, that pain was normalized, accountability was absent, and the emotional cost of survival was carried quietly and alone long after the fighting ended.





Semper Fi...!!!