

Lore of the Corps

Our Regimental March

Fred L. Borch
Regimental Historian & Archivist

Regimental March
the Judge Advocate General's Corps
CWR Paula Clark
Nov 87

ff
Trum
mp
2-3 cor
mp
mp
Pastoral

While the Regiment does not have a “JAG Corps song,” there is a “Regimental March.” Although it was composed and first performed in 1987, little is known about it today, if for no other reason than it is heard infrequently.

After the Army created a “Regimental System” in 1981, the Corps applied for regimental status, which was granted in May 1986.¹ But even before members of the Corps had any regimental affiliation, Major General Hugh R. Overholt, then serving as The Assistant Judge Advocate General, was thinking of ways to build pride and camaraderie within the new Judge Advocate General Corps (JAGC) Regiment. Ultimately, there would be a new regimental flag and a “Distinctive Insignia” (DI) that all members of the Corps would wear on their uniforms. But Major General Overholt also looked beyond the obvious accouterments of a regiment and decided that a march—brisk music suitable for troops marching in a military parade—would be a good idea.

In early 1985, Major General Overholt approached then Lieutenant Colonel (LTC) Ronald P. Cundick, who was serving as Chief, Personnel, Plans and Training Division, Office of the Judge Advocate General. As then LTC Cundick remembers it, Major General Overholt said to him, “Ron, you are a musician, you play the piano, why don’t you compose us a regimental march?”² There was no timeframe or deadline to accomplish this task, but Cundick assumed that Major General Overholt was serious (which was not always the case with comments from Major General Overholt, who was known for mischievous nature and wry sense of humor).

In July 1985, Major General Overholt assumed duties as The Judge Advocate General and now Colonel (COL) Cundick departed Washington, D.C., for Fort Lewis, Washington, where he assumed duties as the Staff Judge Advocate, I Corps. In this new job, COL Cundick attended a variety of official functions, including those of the 9th Infantry Division (ID), which was part of I Corps. On more than one occasion, COL Cundick heard the 9th ID band perform, and was “impressed with the quality and variety of

¹ On 30 May 1986, the Department of the Army announced that the Corps was “placed under the US Army Regimental System effective 29 July 1986.” Headquarters, U.S. Dep’t of the Army, Gen. Order No. 22, at para. 3 (30 May 1986).

² Letter from Colonel (Retired) Ronald Cundick, to Fred L. Borch, Regimental Historian & Archivist (17 July 2013).

its music.”³ Most division bands he had observed previously “were pretty thin on talent and their repertoire was somewhat limited.” The 9th Division Band, however, was different, and COL Cundick “was particularly impressed with the enthusiasm and professionalism” of its bandmaster, Chief Warrant Officer Two (CW2) Paul Clark.⁴

After a year at Fort Lewis, COL Cundick decided that Major General Overholt’s idea for a Regimental March might be realized if CW2 Clark could be persuaded to author it. Colonel Cundick approached CW2 Clark. He asked the bandmaster “if he would be interested in composing and arranging a Regimental March for the JAGC, and whether he would have time to do it.” Colonel Cundick felt strongly that CW2 Clark not only had the talent to compose a march, but he also felt that any march for the Corps “should be composed by someone who was serving in or had served in the military.” Chief Warrant Officer Two Clark replied that he would be “honored” to take on the project. Colonel Cundick then contacted Major General Overholt to confirm Major General Overholt’s desire for a Regimental March. When the latter assured COL Cundick that he in fact did want a march, CW2 Clark began composing it.

Within two or three months, CW2 Clark had written a score titled “Regimental March, The Judge Advocate General’s Corps.” The original sheet music is dated November 1987 and includes a variety of instruments, including flute (piccolo), clarinet, alto saxophone, horn, trombone, tuba and drums (percussion). On 16 December 1987, Clark sent the score and a tape recording of it (performed by the 9th Infantry Division Band), to COL Cundick. The bandmaster also applied for a copyright for the Regimental March, which subsequently was issued by the U.S. Copyright Office, Library of Congress, on 26 May 1988.

The Regimental March was first performed for a judge advocate audience at the 1988 JAGC Regimental Ball.⁵ Since that time, it apparently has only been performed on one other occasion: by the Fort Lee band on 19 March 2012, during the activation ceremony of Advanced Individual Training for Military Occupational Specialty (MOS) 27D Paralegals at Fort Lee, Virginia.

Whether this recent revival of the Regimental March signals renewed interest in this piece of martial music is an open question. However, it does seem that a Regimental March was only one aspect of Major General Overholt’s concept for regimental music. Major General Overholt “also

wanted to adopt a Regimental Bluegrass song,” and selected “Bringing Mary Home.”⁶ For two years, Judge Advocate Reserve Brigadier General Thomas “Tom” O’Brien played the tune at the Regimental ball. Major General Overholt reminisced: “I think most folks, other than me, were kind of glad when it went away.”⁷

In addition to the Regimental March and the Regimental Bluegrass song, Major General Overholt, encouraged by Major General William K. Suter, The Assistant Judge Advocate General, also identified a Regimental “Fish” and a Regimental “Pizza.” There was also a Regimental “Hot Dog Cooker.” The history behind these three regimental accouterments, however, will have to wait for another day.⁸

More historical information can be found at

The Judge Advocate General’s Corps
Regimental History Website

*Dedicated to the brave men and women who have served our
Corps with honor, dedication, and distinction.*

<https://www.jagcnet.army.mil/History>

⁶ E-mail, Major General (Retired) Hugh R. Overholt to Regimental Historian & Archivist, subj: Seeing Mary Home or Bringing Mary Home (24 July 2013, 08:57 EST). Major General Overholt was especially taken with the song as performed by Mac Wiseman (known as “The Voice With a Heart”). The lyrics follow:

I was driving down a lonely road on a dark and stormy night
When a little girl by the road side showed up in my head lights
I stopped and she got in the back and in a shaky tone
She said my name is Mary please won't you take me home

She must have been so frightened all alone there in the night
There was something strange about her cause her face was deathly white
She sat so pale and quiet there in the back seat all alone
I never will forget that night I took Mary home

I pulled into the driveway where she told me to go
Got out to help her from the car and opened up the door
But I just could not believe my eyes the back seat was bare
I looked all around the car but Mary wasn't there

A small light shown from the porch a woman opened up the door
I asked about the little girl that I was looking for
Then the lady gently smiled and brushed a tear away
She said it sure was nice of you to go out of your way

But thirteen years ago today in a wreck just down the road
Our darling Mary lost her life and we still miss her so
So thank you for your trouble and the kindness you have shown
You're the thirteenth one who's been here bringing Mary home

from <http://www.metrolyrics.com/bringing-mary-home-lyrics-red-sovine.html> (last visited 24 July 2013).

⁷ E-mail from Major General (Retired) Hugh R. Overholt, to Regimental Historian & Archivist, subj: More on the Regimental March (17 July 2013, 10:02 EST).

⁸ *Supra* note 5.

³ *Id.*

⁴ *Id.*

⁵ E-mail from Major General (Retired) Hugh R. Overholt, to Regimental Historian & Archivist, subj: JAGC Regimental March (16 July 2013, 17:31 EST).