The Book of Navy Songs

David Moore wrote: The Book of Navy Songs was copyrighted in 1926 and 1937 by Doubleday. The copyright was assigned to US Naval Institute in 1948. The book was revised in 1955 and that is the one we were issued. There were 94 songs in the book. Near the end of the book is "My Bonnie" (lies over the ocean......). The same tune was used for The Marine Pilot's Hymn (expressing Marine pilots unhappiness with flying from CVEs) and The R.O.T.C. Song (...take down your service flag Mother, Your sons in the ROTC).

Steve Coester found his book and provided the photos.
The R.O.T.C. Song

Some mothers have sons in the Army.
Some mothers have sons o'er the sea.
But take down your service flag, Mother;
Your son's in the R.O.T.C.

Chorus: R.—O.
R.—O.
Your son's in the R.O.T.C., T.C.
R.—O.
R.—O.
Your son's in the R.O.T.C.

Some join for the love of the Service.
Some join for the love of the Sea.
But I know a guy who's a Rotscie:
He joined for a college degree.

Oh, we are the "Weekend Commandos"
The "Summertime Sailors" are we.
So take down your service flag, Mother;
Your son's in the R.O.T.C.

These Navy versions of "My Bonnie" have become quite popular in the Fleet since the Second World War. The first expresses the Marine Pilots' unhappiness at having to operate from escort carriers (CVE's) with their small flight decks, and their envy of the Navy pilots flying from the large carriers (CVA's). "The R.O.T.C. Song" has sprung up from the good-natured rivalry between the Naval Academy midshipmen and the members of the Naval Reserve Officer Training Corps.

The Marine Pilot's Hymn

Navy fighters fly off the big ones.
Army fighters aren't seen o'er the seas.
But we're in the doggone Marine Corps,
So we get these damn CVE's.

Chorus: Cuts and guts.
Cuts and guts.
The guys that made carriers are nuts, are nuts.
Cuts and guts.
Cuts and guts.
The guys that fly off 'em are nuts.

The Midway has thousand foot runways.
The Legato eight hundred and ten.
We'd still not have much of a carrier
With two of ours tied end to end.

Our LSO's never give "Rogers,"
And we're not so sure they can see.
They say as we crash through the barriers,
"He was o.k. when he went by me."

Our catapult shots are quite hairy.
The catapult gear is red-hot.
It never works right when you're ready,
And always goes off when you're not.

We envy the boys on the big ones.
We'd swap in a minute or two.
But we'd hate to see those poor devils
Try doing the things that we do.

The R.O.T.C. Song

This song is in the Army.

Mike Shelley said: It has been many years since I heard the Brigade sing anything other than Navy Blue and Gold or Anchors Aweigh at football games. The fight songs were such a prominent part of our Midshipman years that I wager most of us can remember most of the lyrics even now.

How politically incorrect are the Abdul Abulbul Amir lyrics these days!

Mike Blackledge started the conversation with:
One of our USNA issued "textbooks" was bound in a Navy blue cloth cover, perhaps 50 pages, about 8"x10" and titled something like "The Navy Book of Songs." Music and lyrics not unlike a hymnal, it included Eternal Father (The Navy Hymn), Navy Blue and Gold, and ... Abdul Abulbul Amir.

I'd like to obtain some of these song books for gifts. I know I have a copy around the house somewhere, but ... have not located for awhile. I also have a book of our log tables somewhere...

The Naval Institute, starting in 1985, has issued a similar book under this title. I have ordered one, but obviously "it ain't the original."

Who has memory of this song book? Am I correct in most of the above?

My father (USNA '20) "encouraged" me to memorize Abdul Abulbul Amir years before my acceptance to USNA. I still have it stored in a few memory cells after lo these 60 years, and can belt it out whenever Bonnie requests. (OK, that doesn't happen often). Written to commemorate the Russo-Turkish War of 1876, today it seems a most appropriate description of the Clash of Civilizations with the latest news from Syria and the Middle East. Wiki carries the lyrics, which are exactly as I recall:

The sons of the Prophet are brave men and bold
And quite unaccustomed to fear,
But the bravest by far in the ranks of the Shah,
Was Abdul Abulbul Amir.
If you wanted a man to encourage the van,
Or harass the foe from the rear,
Storm fort or redoubt, you had only to shout
For Abdul Abulbul Amir.

Now the heroes were plenty and well known to fame
In the troops that were led by the Czar,
And the bravest of these was a man by the name
Of Ivan Skavinsky Skavar.

One day this bold Russian, he shouldered his gun
And donned his most truculent sneer,
Downtown he did go where he trod on the toe
Of Abdul Abulbul Amir.

Young man, quoth Abdul, has life grown so dull
That you wish to end your career?
Vile infidel, know, you have trod on the toe
Of Abdul Abulbul Amir.

So take your last look at the sunshine and brook
And send your regrets to the Czar
For by this I imply, you are going to die,
Count Ivan Skavinsky Skavar.

Then this bold Mameluke drew his trusty skibouk,[A]
Singing, "Allah! Il Allah! Al-rah!"
And with murderous intent he ferociously went
For Ivan Skavinsky Skavar.

They parried and thrust, they side-stepped and cussed,
Of blood they spilled a great part;
The philologist blokes, who seldom crack jokes,
Say that hash was first made on the spot.

They fought all that night neath the pale yellow moon;
The din, it was heard from afar,
And huge multitudes came, so great was the fame,  
Of Abdul and Ivan Skavar.

As Abdul's long knife was extracting the life,  
In fact he was shouting, "Huzzah!"  
He felt himself struck by that wily Calmuck,  
Count Ivan Skavinsky Skavar.

The Sultan drove by in his red-breasted fly,  
Expecting the victor to cheer,  
But he only drew nigh to hear the last sigh,  
Of Abdul Abulbul Amir.

There's a tomb rises up where the Blue Danube rolls,  
And graved there in characters clear,  
Is, "Stranger, when passing, oh pray for the soul  
Of Abdul Abulbul Amir."

A splash in the Black Sea one dark moonless night  
Caused ripples to spread wide and far,  
It was made by a sack fitting close to the back,  
Of Ivan Skavinsky Skavar.

A Muscovite maiden her lone vigil keeps,  
'Neath the light of the cold northern star,  
And the name that she murmurs in vain as she weeps,  
Is Ivan Skavinsky Skavar.
Abdul An'nahil Amir

The ship was now far out as everything and hence
And was about to disappear in the dark
But by some magic powers going to the
Current fleet's shadow

That hill beyond Moslem was his family's
Ngwia' Abdul An'nahil Amir
And the current became the hero of the
For Iran-Sovietian dream

They passed and through they rode stopped and died.
Of blood they felt in their heart.
The protectors called for their help
Says that such was the story in that wave.

They fought all that night to save the poor men's
The ship, it was heard from near
And huge multitudes came to grieve for the fate
Of Abdul and Iran-Shakhrisabz

An Anchors sang bravely and bravely they
In fact he was showing "Yorkshire"
He told himself again by his wife Salome.
Court Iran-Shakhrisabz'sedawvar

The cotton drove by in his and breast the sky
Repeating the vision in silence,
But by only dwell sigh to hear the last sigh
Of Abdul An'nahil Amir.

There's a bend comes up whose black Tambah依托,
And spread there to shatter them
In "Strangers when passing oh pray for the soul
Of Abdul An'nahil Amir"

A splash in the Black Sea one dark moonless night
Caused ripples to spread wide and far
It was made by a sink sitting close to the back
Of Iran-Sovietian dream

A Muscovite saved her love vigil keep
Neath the light of the cold northern star,
And the same that she marries is vain as she weeps,
Is 'Iran-Shakhrisabz Sharz'.

This song is representative of the non-national and non-naval song that frequently becomes a favorite in the wavebands of the Fleet. An English correspondent writes that originally it was a ballad of the Russo-Turkish War.