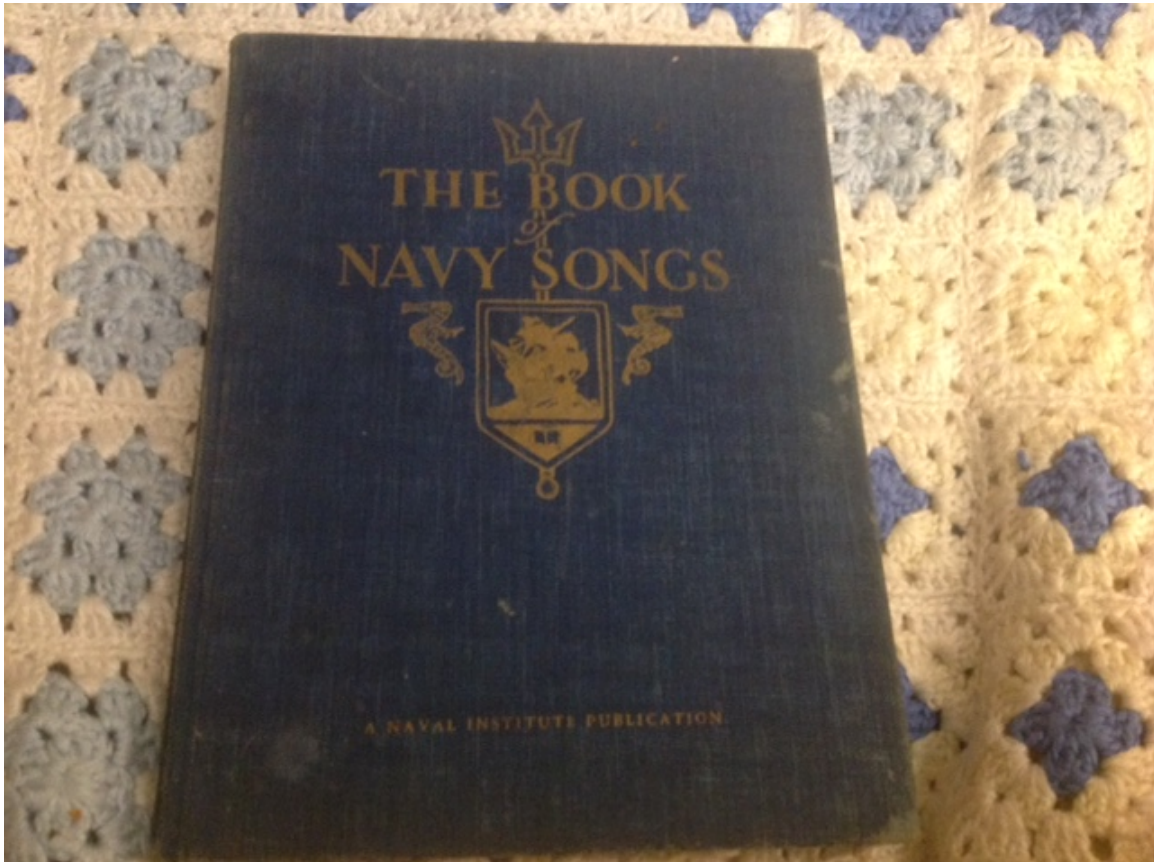


The Book of Navy Songs



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 Rotsie:
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.

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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 *Leyte* 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

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-lah!"
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.

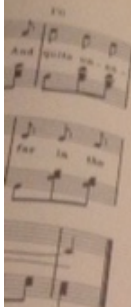
As Abdul's long knife was extracting the life,
In fact he was shouting, "Huzzah!"
He felt himself struck by that wily Calmuck,
Count Ivan Skavinsky Skavar.

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 Abulbul Amir

"He took your best look at me then and then
And said: your papers to the fleet —
For by this I imply, you are going to die,
Count Ivan Skavinsky Skavar!"

Then into bold Marmora drew his trusty cohort,
Singing "Allah! Allah! Allah! Allah!"
And with madhouse intent he fervently went,
For Ivan Skavinsky Skavar.

They perched and thrust, they also stopped and counted,
Of blood they spilled a great part;
The philologist blazes, who seldom reach jokes,
Saw that such was first made on that 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 "Huzak!"
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
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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."

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