Two musicians, a fifer and a drummer, are put to sea on USS Ganges. This combination is used persistently throughout the Revolutionary War.

1798

Crews sang songs, or "sea chanteys," to set a rhythm for hoisting the sails of a ship in unison.

Did you know?

Did you know?

At the Battle of Lake Erie during the War of 1812, the courageous fifer Cyrus Tiffany shields Oliver Hazard Perry from heavy gunfire as they are forced to abandon USS Lawrence.

1813

Ship's bands become more popular in the mid-1820s. By 1825, USS Constitution has a 20-piece band.

1825

"Musician" becomes an official rating of the U.S. Navy.

1835

The Navy School of Music is founded in Washington, D.C.

1838

During World War I, John Philip Sousa, at the age of 62, is commissioned as a lieutenant in the U.S. Naval Reserve after serving with the U.S. Marine Band and having a successful career as a civilian bandmaster. With the Navy, Sousa forms a band of 350 musicians that tours the U.S. and raises more than $21 million for the war effort.

1917

The Navy Schoold of Music is founded in Washington, D.C.

1917

President Theodore Roosevelt’s “Great White Fleet” parades through the harbor of Valparaiso, Chile where Chilean musician Jose Conterreas stands witness to the dramatic show. Conterreas is so moved by the review that he enlists as a Navy musician aboard USS Maryland within the year. Ten years later, he is promoted to the rank of bandmaster, the highest rank attainable by a musician at that time.

1908

During the Cold War, the Navy Band Sea Chanters arrive in West Berlin as part of a concerted diplomatic effort throughout the Eastern Bloc. They perform special Christmas concerts for American military personnel, German civilian groups, hospital patients, and radio broadcasts.

1981

Around the world, Navy bands sound the song of freedom and serve as a shining representative of the United States Navy.

1942

Women Accepted for Volunteer Emergency Service (WAVES) is established to help support World War II efforts. The organization forms both a chorus and Drum and Bugle Corps.

1942

The Navy's 11 bands annually perform at more than 6,000 events for live audiences exceeding 15 million people.

1956

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1972

Evangeline Bailey becomes the first female rated musician of the Navy Band.

1972

The Navy's 11 bands annually perform at more than 6,000 events for live audiences exceeding 15 million people.

1985

The "Sea Chanters," the official chorus of the U.S. Navy, is established.

1985

The U.S. Navy Band performs the “Star-Spangled Banner” for the House Judiciary Committee. One year later, President Hoover signs the bill into law and the song becomes our National Anthem.

1930

The U.S. Navy Band forms the “Sea Chanters,” the official chorus of the U.S. Navy, is established.

Sources: U.S. Navy Band; U.S. Navy Music Program; Navy Office of Community Outreach; Navy Band; Photos and Artwork: Naval History and Heritage Command; Library of Congress; Infographic by: Annalisa Underwood, Naval History and Heritage Command Communication and Outreach Division.