

A 'hymn worth singing' is written for those who serve

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Professor Bert Tussing sings the "In Battle and Campaign: A Soldier's Hymn" at the National Prayer Breakfast on Feb. 27 at the Post Chapel. The hymn will be published in this Military-style bible (photo courtesy of Rev. Arthur Pace).



In Battle and Campaign: A Soldier's Hymn

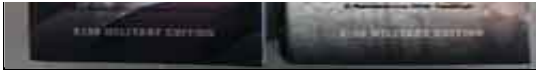
Lord God of Hosts and Author of our freedoms
Stay by our side if we must fight this day
Steel us to face whatever danger comes

As we defend our nation and our way
Thy will be done, in battle and campaign
And if we fall, let no one fall in vain

Almighty God, our Armor and our Guide
Safeguard and hold, in Thy eternal care
The gallant few in combat at our side

Valiant on land, at sea, and in the air
Thy will be done, in battle and campaign
So if they fall, they will not fall in vain

Bestow Thy calm, and Thy divine assurance
Upon the loved ones we have left behind
Lord hold them close, while duty holds us distant.



Grant them Your peace, in heart and soul and mind.
They too must bear the battle and campaign
Grant that their sacrifice is not in vain

Lord God in this, the hour of our service
Lead those who lead the country that we love
To seek Thy will, according to Thy purpose

To pray for grace, and blessings from above
Thy will be done, in battle and campaign
And if we fall, let no one fall in vain

When Bert Tussing sang "In Battle and Campaign: A Soldier's Hymn" at the Carlisle Barracks National Prayer Breakfast on Feb. 27, many took notice ... some were moved ...and former Army Chaplain retired Col. Art Pace took action to share it.

Tussing, Army War College director of Homeland Defense and Security Issues Group, partnered with old friend and retired Army Lt. Col. John Wheatley, to write the hymn. "Bert, there's not a Soldier's hymn, there ought to be, and we ought to write it," Tussing remembers him saying.

"My only regret is the title," said Wheatley. "Many folks limit the term Soldier to just the Army. I really wanted the song to serve all the folks who slug it out on the ground, doing the unglamorous, the dirty, dangerous, day-to-day business of land warfare."

Wheatley once worked with Tussing on wargame development and now writes about Central Pennsylvania's natural history. He recruited Tussing – a retired Marine officer.

"I asked Bert for his help because he is musically accomplished," said Wheatley. "I have no musical ability. I have a rather nice baritone, but sadly, a four-note range." Wheatley added, with a laugh, that he has been "dis-invited" from a number of church choirs and that he has learned his lesson. "I'm just another joyful noise-maker in the pews."

That's where Tussing came in.

"He converted my concepts to song, and made some key changes to the words along the way" said Wheatley.

The hymn is set to the tune of the Finlandia Hymn. Tussing downplayed his musical background, and said that his contributions were his love of music and a love of Soldiers – and Marines, of course.

Wheatley's good friend Dr. Timothy MacDonald was instrumental in the development of the hymn. "He kindly spent a couple of hours on the phone with me trying to impart some of the finer points of composition, said Wheatley about the director of music at Rockhurst University and director of the choral group Musica Sacra of Kansas City. "His recommendations led me to a major re-working of the original concept."

The team started developing the hymn in 2012 and performed it the first time in the spring of 2013 at the Carlisle Barracks Chapel.

"When I heard Bert sing the Soldier's hymn at the Carlisle Barracks National Prayer Breakfast, I was incredibly moved, and knew I had to include it in our upcoming bible," said Pace, an Army War College graduate who served as installation chaplain at Carlisle Barracks, 2006 to 2009. "Best position I ever held in my career," said Pace.

Now, the executive director of the Armed Services Ministry of the American Bible Society, Pace plans to incorporate the Soldier's hymn into their compact military bible, which are distributed to Soldiers, Marines and members of sister Services, and their Families.

"In Battle and Campaign: A Soldier's Hymn" will be first in our hymn section in the bible," said Pace, who noted that the military bible is being edited now for publication in a few months. "It will be read by thousands of folks by year's end."

Tussing and Wheatley had hoped that the hymn would someday be made available widely to Soldiers.

"I'm delighted that the message of the hymn will find a wider audience," said Wheatley. "I hope it well serves those who read it or hear it sung."

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