



The Mini Page

Next Week:
Summer reading

Issue 20, 2026

Founded by Betty Debnam



photo courtesy U.S. Marine Band

Mini Fact:

Each branch of the U.S. military has a band that represents that part of the military.

John Philip Sousa

The 17th director of the Marine Band, John Philip Sousa (SOO-za), gets credit for developing the band to a high level of excellence. His father was a member of the Marine Band, and as a child he studied many instruments, but he loved the violin.



photo courtesy U.S. Marine Corps
John Philip Sousa

When John was just 13, he became an apprentice member of the Marine Band, and he remained a band member until he was 20.

In 1880, when Sousa was 26, he was offered the director position with the Marine Band. He was a strict director, and the band got better. Sousa also wrote many marches for bands. Eventually he became known as the March King. Listen for his music at Memorial Day or Independence Day celebrations.



photo courtesy U.S. Marine Band
The Sousaphone is named for John Philip Sousa.

Americans will celebrate Memorial Day on Monday, May 25. Memorial Day is a special day set aside to honor our service members who have lost their lives while serving in the military.

You might attend a parade or a concert where military bands play patriotic music. Military music has a long tradition. Thousands of years ago, the Greeks and Romans used drummers to help the troops march in step at the same speed.

Today, the branches of our military have bands that play to entertain and inspire those in the armed services as well as civilians. Military musicians are on active duty.

The U.S. Marine Band is our oldest professional musical organization, founded in 1798 by an act of Congress. It has grown from 32 members to about 130.

'The President's Own'

In 1801, the U.S. Marine Band played for President Thomas Jefferson's inauguration. He named it "The President's Own." It has played for every inauguration since.

The mission of the U.S. Marine Band is to play for the president of the United States. The band performs at concerts and ceremonial events



photo by Master Sgt. Kristin duBois, courtesy U.S. Marine Band
The Marine Band plays for some funerals at Arlington National Cemetery.

as well. For instance, the band plays at the White House for the National Christmas Tree lighting, for the Easter Egg Roll and on Independence Day. Marine Band musicians appear at the White House about 200 times each year.

Joining the Marine Band

Musicians must audition to join the Marine Band. First, a musician performs behind a screen so that the judges can't see him or her.

A committee from the band then interviews musicians chosen from the auditions. Once accepted, musicians join the Marine Corps. Members of this band are not asked to go into combat.

The uniform

Members of the U.S. Marine Band wear **scarlet**, or red, coats with blue or white pants or skirts. Their hats are white. These uniforms have been used since the Revolutionary War, when field musicians were used to send signals on the battlefield and in camp and needed to be easily recognizable.

Along with a large bearskin hat, the drum major wears a fancy sash across his chest called a **baldric**. He uses his **mace**, or staff, to signal directions to the musicians.

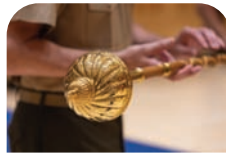


photo by Staff Sgt. Chase Baran
A new mace arrived in Washington, D.C., in May 2022 from Birmingham, England, where it was made.

Resources



On the Web:

- marineband.marines.mil
- bit.ly/41s7Mrq
- youtu.be/YvnnzDgNj6o

At the library:

- "John Philip Sousa" by Mike Venezia

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Try 'n' Find

Words that remind us of the U.S. Marine Band are hidden in this puzzle. Some words are hidden backward or diagonally, and some letters are used twice. See if you can find:



- APPRENTICE, AUDITION,
- BAND, BEARSKIN,
- CEREMONY, CONCERT,
- CONGRESS, DAY,
- DIRECTOR, INAUGURATION,
- INTERVIEW, MARINE,
- MEMORIAL, MUSICIAN,
- OWN, PARADE,
- PRESIDENTS, SOUSA.

D W D X S S E R G N O C H M E
C E N D F N O I T I D U A A D
O I A P P R E N T I C E K R A
N V B X P R O T C E R I D I R
C R C E R E M O N Y D A Y N A
E E X J M U S I C I A N Z E P
R T C I N A U G U R A T I O N
T N I K S R A E B G N V N W O
A I F Q V M E M O R I A L J G
A S U O S S T N E D I S E R P

Cook's Corner

Baked Sliced Tomatoes

You'll need:

- 2 eggs, beaten
- 3/4 cup breadcrumbs
- 3 tomatoes, sliced thick
- salt

- pepper
- 2 tablespoons butter
- 1 cup sharp cheddar cheese, shredded
- paprika



* You'll need an adult's help with this recipe.

What to do:

1. Put beaten eggs in one small bowl and breadcrumbs in another.
2. Dip each tomato slice in the eggs and then in the breadcrumbs.
3. Place tomato slices side by side on a greased cookie sheet. Sprinkle with salt and pepper. Dot tops of tomatoes with butter.
4. Bake in a preheated 350-degree oven for 15 minutes.
5. Remove from oven, sprinkle with cheese and paprika, and bake for 5 more minutes. Makes 4 servings.

Mini Jokes



Mary: What's the longest distance between two points?

Mike: A parade!

Mitchell: How did the band fix a broken tuba?

Maddie: With a tuba glue!

Eco Note



Nineteen cities across Europe, North America and Asia — including London, San Francisco and Beijing — have cut dangerous air pollutants by at least 20% since 2010, with some reducing levels of fine particles and nitrogen dioxide by nearly 45%, according to new research from the Breathe Cities initiative. Measures such as low emission zones, adoption of electric vehicles, cleaner home heating and expanded routes dedicated to cycling were credited with the gains. Beijing and Warsaw led reductions in fine particulate pollution, while Amsterdam and Rotterdam achieved some of the steepest declines in nitrogen dioxide generated by vehicle traffic.

adapted with permission from Earthweek.com

For later:

Look in your local newspaper for items about Memorial Day events coming up in your area.

KidSpot

by Dan Thompson

5-16

Double words
Many words have more than one meaning. The word "fly," for example, can mean an insect or what an airplane does. Write the word that fits both definitions in the blanks below.



1. Nocturnal animal or what you use with a baseball _____
2. Center of the hand or a type of tropical tree _____
3. A public play area or a setting for a gearshift _____
4. A hair fastener or a brief section of a movie _____
5. A steep plunge or a tiny amount of liquid _____

ANS: 1. BAT, 2. PALM, 3. PARK, 4. CLIP, 5. DROP

1. Symbolic cloths with special designs and colors (5-letter plural noun)
□ □ □ □ □

2. Pleasing arrangement of sound (melody, harmony, rhythm) (5-letter noun)
□ □ □ □ □

3. Round musical instruments made with metal or wood (5-letter plural noun)
□ □ □ □ □

4. Person serving in the military, especially the Army (7-letter noun)
□ □ □ □ □ □ □

1. Children and adults waved _____ with stars and stripes.
2. People clapped when the _____ started playing in the parade.
3. _____ and bugles made loud noise along the streets.
4. A _____ in a blue uniform saluted another officer.

ROOTONYM®

by Jan & Carey Orr Cook



Study the definition. When you know the missing word, fill in the letter boxes and the sentence blanks.

Answers: Flags, Music, Drums, Soldier.