



1st Cavalry Division



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Garryowen



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"Official Song of the 1st Cavalry Division"

"Garryowen"

[Synthesized by Charles R. Glasgow](#)



Kilroy was here !!!

Are you sure ???

Well, he left a message !!!

★ "Garryowen, Limerick, Ireland" ★



★ "Garryowen" is an old Irish quick-step that can be traced back to the early 1860s. In 1867, Garryowen was adopted by the 7th Cavalry Regiment as the official Air (tune) of the Regiment, and the historical nickname given to the 7th Cavalry Regiment and troopers. It became the Official tune of the 1st Cavalry Division in 1981. Garryowen has become undoubtedly the most famous of all the regimental marches in the Army.

The geographical area that provided the inspiration and the name of one of the most popular, rollicking folk songs of Ireland, is situated near the City of Limerick and located a half mile southeast of King John's Castle, on the upward slope of a hill at the end of

Garryowen Road in Limerick County. Local traditions and folk lore have preserved the historical significance of the area and the origin of its name "Garryowen", a compound English word composed of two Irish words, Garrai (the Irish word for *Garden*) and Eoin (the Irish word for the name *John*, referencing King John's Castle - a local landmark at the bottom of the hill). The name Eoin, pronounced as "O-in" or "Oh-en", was later phonically transformed to "Owen" in the English language, thus allowing the two separate Irish words "Garrai" and "Eoin" to be translated into the single compound English word, written without a capital "O", as *Garryowen*.

★ "King John's Castle - Limerick" ★



The terrain features of Garryowen provided a broad, commanding view of the richly cultivated surrounding countryside, the old town of Limerick and the valley of the Shannon River which gently washed the battered, fortified towers of King John's castle which was constructed in the late 1180's to control traffic along the river. The surrounding plot of ground soon became a favorite holiday resort with loyal patrons of citizens from near-by Limerick because the atmosphere and local accommodations were somewhat similar to those offered to the London mechanic by the Battersea tea-gardens.

A review of Irish literature reveals that Garryowen became a

general rendezvous for those who sought simple pleasure and amusement. The elderly drank together under the shade of trees and the young played ball, goal, or other athletic activities on the green; while a few lingered in the near-by hedge-rows with their fair acquaintances. Garryowen was soon to become as famous for scenes of strife as it was for mirth and humor; and broken arms, legs and heads became a staple article of manufacture in the neighborhood."

"These new diversions were encouraged by a number of young people having a greater supply of animal spirits than wisdom to control themselves. The young gentlemen being fond of wit, amused themselves by having parties at night to wring the heads off all the geese, and tearing knockers off the doors in the neighborhood. They sometimes suffered their genius to soar as high as the breaking of a street lamp, and even resorting to the physical violence of a watchman. But, this type of joking was found a little too serious to be repeated very frequently, for few achievements of so daring a violence were documented in the records. They were obliged to content themselves with less ambitious distinction of destroying the door knockers and store-locks, annoying the peace of the neighborhood, with long continued assaults on the front doors, terrifying the quiet onlookers with every species of insult and provocation, and indulging their fratricidal propensities against all the geese in Garryowen."

"The fame of the 'Garryowen Boys' soon spread far and wide. Their deeds were celebrated by some inglorious minstrel of the day in that melody which has, since, resounded over the world; and even symbolically competed for national popularity with 'St. Patrick's Day'. A string of verses were appended to the tune which soon enjoyed equal notoriety. The name of Garryowen was as well known as that of the city of Limerick, itself, and Garryowen soon became almost a synonym for Ireland."

★ "The 1st Cavalry Division Band" ★



"Garryowen" is known to have been used by Irish regiments as a drinking song. As the story goes, one of the Irish "melting pot" troopers of the 7th Cavalry, under the influence of "spirits", was singing the song. By chance Custer heard the melody, liked the cadence, and soon began to hum the tune himself. The tune has a lively beat, that accentuates the cadence of marching horses, and for that reason was adopted as the regimental song soon after Custer arrived at Fort Riley, Kansas to take over command of the 7th Cavalry Regiment. It was the last song played for Custer's men as they left General Terry's column at the Powder River and rode into history.

During First Team ceremonies the song is not sung; however, it is customary for the song to be played at the conclusion of the activities and the guests stand and clap.

Lyrics of the song are as follows:

"Garryowen"

[Verse 1]

Let Bacchus's sons be not dismayed,
but join with me each jovial blade,
come booze and sing and lend your aid,
to help me with the chorus:

"Chorus"

Instead of spa we'll drink down ale

*and pay the reckoning on the nail,
for debt no man shall go to jail
from Garry Owen in glory*

[Verse 2]

**We are the boys who take delight
in smashing Limerick lamps at night,
and through the street like sportsters fight,
tearing all before us. (Chorus)**

[Verse 3]

**We'll break windows, we'll break doors,
the watch knock down by threes and fours,
then let the doctors work their cures,
and tinker up our bruises. (Chorus)**

[Verse 4]

**We'll beat the bailiffs out of fun,
we'll make the mayor and sheriffs run,
we are the boys no man dare dun,
if he regards a whole skin. (Chorus)**

[Verse 5]

**Our hearts so stout have got us fame,
for soon 'tis known from whence we came,
where're we go they dread the name,
of Garry Owen in glory. (Chorus)**

In 1905, there was a special set of lyrics written for the special troopers of the 7th Cavalry Regiment:

[Verse 1]

**We are the pride of the Army
and a regiment of great renown,
Our Name's on the pages of History.
From sixty-six on down.
If you think we stop or falter
While into the fray we're going
Just watch the steps with our heads erect,
While our band plays Garryowen. (Chorus)**

"Chorus"

*In the Fighting Seventh's the place for me,
Its the cream of all the Cavalry;
No other regiment ever can claim
Its pride, honor, glory and undying fame.*

[Verse 2]

We know fear when stern duty
 Calls us far away from home,
 Our country's flag shall safely o'er us wave,
 No matter where we roam.
 'Tis the gallant 7th Cavalry
 It matters not where we are going"
 Such you'll surely say as we march away;
 And our band plays Garryowen. (*Chorus*)

[Verse 3]

Then hurrah for our brave commanders!
 Who led us into the fight.
 We'll do or die in our country's cause,
 And battle for the right.
 And when the war is o'er,
 And to our home we're goin
 Just watch your step, with our heads erect,
 When our band plays Garryowen. (*Chorus*)

Reference: Edward L. Daily; "From Custer to MacArthur, the 7th US Cavalry"



Author's Note:



Royal Irish
 Regiment

"Garryowen" was also the Regimental March of another famous fighting unit, *The Royal Irish Regiment*, that was organized in 1684 from Irish Pikemen and Musketeers by the Earl of Granard to fight for King William. This regiment has seen service in all parts of the world. For their outstanding valor at the Battle of Namur, they received the title of "The Royal Regiment of Foot of Ireland". In addition, in recognition of its deeds on this occasion, King William conferred the right of displaying the badge of the Harp and Crown, and that of the Lion of Nassau, with the explanatory legend.

The Royal Irish showed noble courage and performed gallant service throughout the Crimean War. On their colors are inscribed "Egypt"; "China"; "Blenheim"; "Ramillies"; "Oudenarde"; "Malpaquet"; "Pegu"; "Savastopol"; "New Zealand"; "Afghanistan, 1879-80"; "Egypt, 1882"; "Tel-el-Kebir"; "Nile, 1884-85"; "South Africa, 1900-02"; "Flanders, 1914" and "Gallipoli, 1915." The Royal Irish Regiment was disbanded in 1922 on the formation of the Irish Free State.

One cannot wonder how many of the former members of the Royal Irish Regiment emigrated to the United States and enlisted as troopers of the US Cavalry Units. Could this have been how Custer heard this song?



Part of the mystery may be solved. The history of the 69th New York Infantry reflects the history and progress of the Irish in America. From unwelcome immigrants escaping famine and

persecution, they were assimilated and integrated into the society of America. Its ranks were filled with heroes, priests, poets, politicians, laborers, lawyers, in short a cross section of the Ireland's greatest export - her sons.



The "Fighting Sixty-ninth" had its origin in early 1851, when the Irish citizens in New York City formed a militia regiment known locally as the Second Regiment of Irish Volunteers. Unanimously, the group selected "Garryowen" as their official regimental marching song. On 12 October 1851, the Regiment was officially accepted as part of the New York Militia and designated as the Sixty-Ninth Regiment. In 1858, the Regiment would have its first call to duty. Their many subsequent calls to duty included the Civil War, Spanish American War, the Mexican War, World War I and World War II. Today, the 69th is now officially the 1st Battalion, 69th Infantry (Mechanized), and is part of the 42nd Infantry Division.

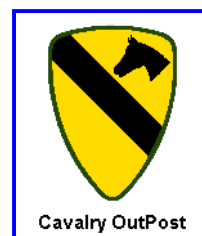


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The End



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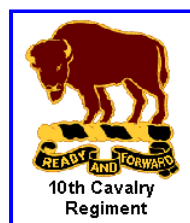
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