

# PACK UP YOUR TROUBLES

One of the best-loved songs of World War I was *Pack Up Your Troubles in Your Old Kit-Bag and Smile, Smile, Smile*.

Most people are familiar with its refrain:

*What's the use of worrying?  
It never was worthwhile;  
So, pack up your troubles in your old kit-bag  
And smile, smile, smile.*

The melody was composed by Felix Powell, and the words were written by his brother, George (who used the pseudonym George Asaf).

The song was entered into a World War I competition for “best morale-building song.” It won first place and was noted as “perhaps the most optimistic song ever written.” It was published in London in 1915, and featured in the American show *Her Soldier Boy*, which opened in December 1916.

The song became very popular, boosting British morale despite the horrors of that war. It was one of a large number of music-hall songs aimed at maintaining morale, recruiting for the forces or defending Britain’s war aims.



Snoopy, Charlie Brown’s pet beagle in the *Peanuts* comic strip, listened to the song on several occasions as he fantasized about being a World War I flying ace. In multiple comics, Snoopy can also be seen on his doghouse singing *Pack Up Your Trouble in Your Old Kit-Bag* and *It’s a Long, Long Way to Tipperary*.

He then concludes saying, “We World War I flying aces are very sentimental.”



Ironically, George Powell, the writer of the lyrics, was a pacifist and became a conscientious objector when Britain imposed a draft in 1916.

His brother, Felix, was an enthusiastic staff sergeant in the army, but he apparently had trouble apprehending the optimism of their creation. In 1942, he put on his uniform and shot himself in the heart with a rifle.

(more)

The words and music he and his brother created had no power to satisfy the deepest longings of his own heart.

The Bible provides instructions on how to deal with our troubles and live successfully:

- *Wait for the Lord; be strong and take heart and wait for the Lord (Psalm 27:14 NIV).*
- *(Jesus said) Peace I leave with you; My peace I give to you. Not as the world gives do I give to you. Let not your hearts be troubled, neither let them be afraid (John 14:27 ESV).*

– Beecher Hunter