

Taps Segment
2016

Conductor or Band member (*stepping into 21st-Century character*):

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Since this performance is a commemoration rather than a celebration of the American Civil War, we have chosen to include the bugle call known as “Taps”. We do so to honor the commitment, dedication and sacrifice of the 90,747 (number of soldiers from state below) soldiers and sailors from Michigan (state in which the performance takes place) who answered President Lincoln’s call to help preserve the unity of these United States when a great Civil War threatened to tear our nation apart.

Like the people serving in this country’s armed forces today, those who served between 1861 and 1865 came from all walks of life. They were farmers, shopkeepers, teachers and students. They were immigrants from around the world. They were African-Americans and Native Americans. They were men, women and even children. Boys as young as 10 years old served as buglers, fifers and drummers. And like those serving today, each gave our country their best so that this great nation might survive and flourish.

While there are several stories surrounding the birth of “Taps”, the most accepted version is attributed to the Virginia Peninsular campaign of 1862. Union Brigadier General Dan Butterfield became dissatisfied with the traditional bugle call for “extinguish lights” and, along with the brigade’s bugler, Oliver Willcox Norton, created the melody now known as “Taps” in honor of the Union soldiers who had survived the brutal Seven Days battle of that campaign. The call quickly spread to other Union Army units and was soon adopted by the Confederate buglers as well.

Although there are no “official” lyrics to the Taps melody, the most well-known and perhaps the most meaningful are:

Day is done, gone the sun
From the hills, from the lakes, from the sky.
All is well, safely rest, God is nigh.

We ask that you now rise, remove your hats, place your right hand over your heart and observe a moment of silence during the playing of “Taps” in honor of those from _____ (state in which the performance takes place) who so unselfishly served their country 150 years ago.