

INFANTRY BUGLE CALLS OF THE AMERICAN CIVIL WAR

Commentary by George Rabbai

With anecdotes and stories from the
accounts of infantry soldiers of the Civil War



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All forty-nine bugle calls are performed by the author on the B♭ infantry bugle and can be heard on the accompanying recording. The recording also includes narration and spoken commands.

AUDIO CONTENTS

- | | | |
|--|---|---|
| 1 Attention [3:28] | 17 For Officers after firing [3:30] | 34 In Retreat [4:48] |
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| 3 The General [1:00] | 19 Officers' Call [3:35] | 36 By the right flank [4:46] |
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| 5 To the Color [5:56] | 21 Dinner Call [4:44] | 38 Commence firing [3:34] |
| 6 The Recall [4:44] | 22 Sick Call [5:53] | 39 Cease firing [2:29] |
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| | 33 Forward [3:34] | |

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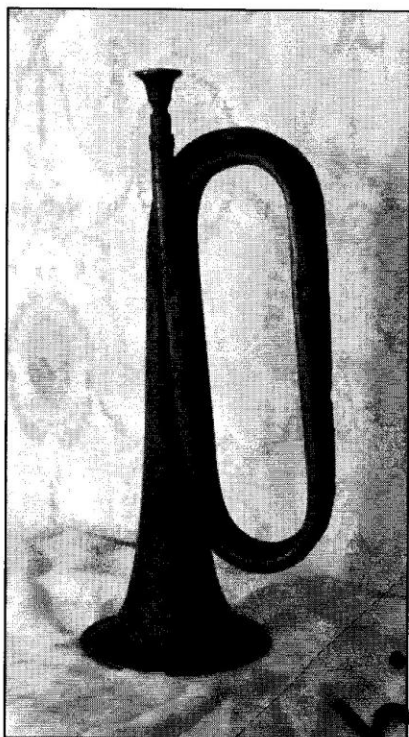
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BUGLE MAKERS AND MANUFACTURERS.



Bugle recovered from a Virginia battlefield. Courtesy of Brian and Bridget Ross. Photograph by David MacGregor.

Brass bands became very popular throughout the United States during the mid-nineteenth century. Community bands were organized in many of the small towns to provide musical services for various town functions. As the movement toward these bands grew, there was naturally an increase in the demand for musical instruments.

The finest brass instrument craftsmen in New England have been steadily turning out quality instruments since the 1800s. Boston enjoyed a reputation in the first instrument produced and abroad. Philadelphia shared its reputation in spite of the production of instruments in the city.

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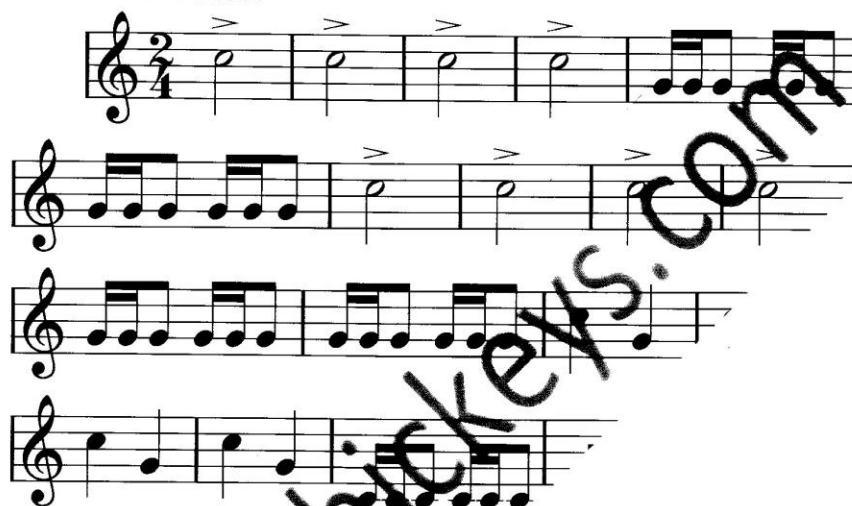
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No. 3. The General.—To any Civil War soldier within a large infantry encampment, this call was very important because when sounded it meant that a great change was about to occur. Immediately upon hearing this bugle call soldiers were to strike tents, break camp, and be ready to march. When assembly was sounded they would form by company, then unite by battalion for the march. Among the soldiers this call was more commonly known as “Pack Up,” and in many instances was sounded unexpectedly.

3. The General.

130 = ♩ **Presto.**



Exhausted by our marches and ex-
campaign to Mine Run we retir-
cember, and were just comf-
when the bugle sounding
burst in our midst. We
o'clock tents were st-
ready to march.

— *The Camp*
land, 1866

No.
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No. 11. *Retreat.*—*Retreat* was sounded late in the day—usually at sunset after final dress parade—for the purpose of taking roll, or reading orders to the troops assembled, after which soldiers were dismissed from all duties of the day.

11. *Retreat.*

76 = ♩ Andante.



No. 12. *Tattoo.*—This call was sounded when the men were formed into companies for the final roll-call of the day. Soldiers were then dismissed and essentially confined to quarters for the remainder of the day.

12. *Tattoo.*

112 = ♩ Allegro.



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ON-FIELD MUSIC AND REGIMENTAL BANDS.

Revised U. S. Army Regulations 1861-63 and Rifle and Light Infantry Tactics manuals refer to buglers, drummers, and fifers as "Field Music," and should not be confused with the regimental band, simply because each organization had its own specific duty in the army.

Regimental bands were used primarily for dress parades and marching, but were also expected to provide music for all ceremonies and concerts in the camps or garrisons. The regimental bands during the early Civil War years actually marched troops into battle many times, exposed to shot and shell as they played. The music for these bands was composed and arranged by the bandmaster, or principal musician, and consisted of military marches, transcriptions of orchestral overtures and opera literature, as well as waltzes, kas, and schottishes played for dancing.

Music for field instruments, however, was limited mostly to the fare-like signals known as "calls." The purpose of the field music was to announce the daily duties outlined for the infantry soldier in the field. Buglers, fifers, and drummers were instructed by the regimental musicians in the essential calls and duties and were expected to become completely familiar with all of the calls in the manuals.

Many boys twelve years old and younger cause they were prohibited from carrying arms. Numerous accounts of brave youths in the ranks most likely started out as field musicians.

An amusing feature in life at C
buglers, who, from early m
merable out of a batter
first, all began with
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sounds; next, sh
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nal tootin
or curse
the r
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