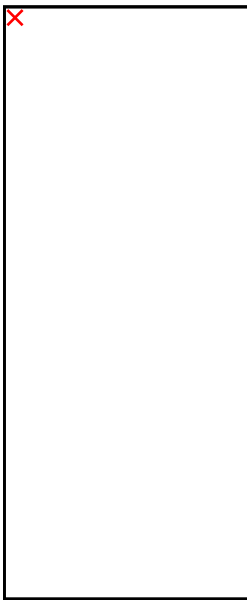
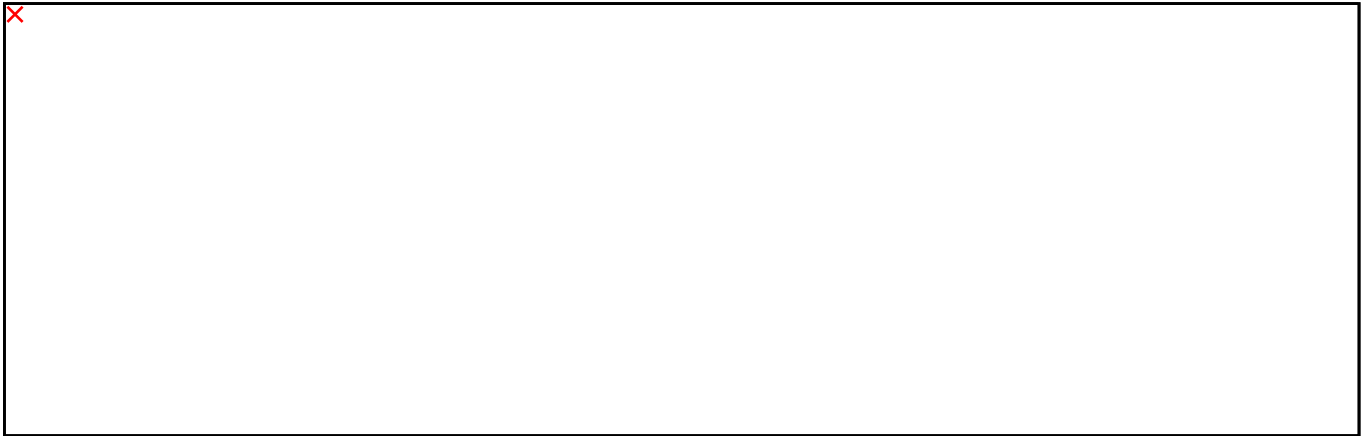


Bugle calls, a link to the past



The Importance of Bugle Calls

Every morning at 0630 and every evening at 1700, Soldiers, Family Members, and Civilian Employees can see, hear, and participate in a ritual that honors our nation, while continuing a tradition as old as the U.S. Army. Cars stop, work pauses, and games cease, while we render honors to the colors. Yet Reveille in the morning and Retreat at night are only two of many bugle calls that punctuate daily life at Carlisle Barracks. Most of us think of old western movies and cavalymen when we hear a bugle call, but few Soldiers understand the significance of most of the bugle calls that we hear throughout the day. This pamphlet will not only explain what they mean, but how these cues have long made life in the Army distinctive and special for Soldiers and Family Members at outposts of pride and military tradition—like Carlisle Barracks, Pennsylvania.

History and Traditions

When George Washington first assumed command of the Continental Army in 1775, drums and bugles were already a fixture of military life and operations. In a time before radios and texting, there was simply no other way for a commander to communicate his orders amidst the din of firing muskets, clashing sabers, and booming cannon. Yet drums and bugles were also useful in camp. For instance, work parties far from camp gathering forage for the horses—even a small army required several tons of feed a day—knew to return to camp when they heard the call for “Recall.” As the U.S. Army developed, it standardized the use of these bugle calls for a disciplined lifestyle.

Life at a Frontier Outpost

In the frontier outposts of the late 1800s, bugle calls united Soldiers and their Families. These small, lonely forts with garrisons of only one hundred Soldiers or less were often far from the nearest town. In these communities, the bugle calls were as much a part of the lives of the Family Members as the Soldiers. Household clocks were set by the bugle calls; one Army wife even used “Assembly” as the signal for the children to take their afternoon nap!

Days began early for Soldiers as they began feeding and grooming the horses before dawn. Following “Reveille” and breakfast, Soldiers came together for inspection when they heard the call for “Assembly.” The Soldier with the best uniform and equipment was selected to be the commander’s orderly, which gave them bragging rights and (sometimes) the following day off. After inspection, the Soldiers trained in critical skills of the day: marching, riding, bayonet drill, marksmanship, and gun crew drills. “Mess Call” to lunch ended the morning’s training. Soldiers spent most of the afternoon in fatigue details, such as chopping wood, maintaining the buildings and stables, and, as always, taking care of the horses. Soldiers returned from these tasks when the bugler sounded “Recall,” giving the Soldiers time to prepare themselves for the evening parade and “Retreat.” The day at most frontier outposts ended with a parade of the entire command around the central field. This was, of course, a way to inspect the discipline and equipment of the unit, but it was also a community social event that was attended by nearly all of the Family Members. Prior to the 1890s, Soldiers were required to assemble for a final roll call at 2200 at the sound of “Tattoo,” but this practice—along with inspections on Sunday—ended when the Army made efforts to improve the quality of Soldiers’ lives.

The Army has changed greatly since those frontier days, but the pride and sense of community associated with bugle calls remained. After returning from nearly two years in a German prisoner of war camp, a World War II Soldier remembered, “It wasn’t until I heard Retreat sound that I knew I was home.”

Purpose of Bugle Calls

First Call

Sounded as a warning for Soldiers to begin assembling for a formation.

Reveille

Signals the Soldiers to Stand-To for morning roll call and accompanies the raising of the National Colors.

Recall

Signals that the present period of physical training, duties, or drill is over.

Mess Call

Signals breakfast, lunch, or dinner.

Assembly

Sounded to call in a group of Soldiers or scouts. It is also sometimes referred to as “Fall in”.

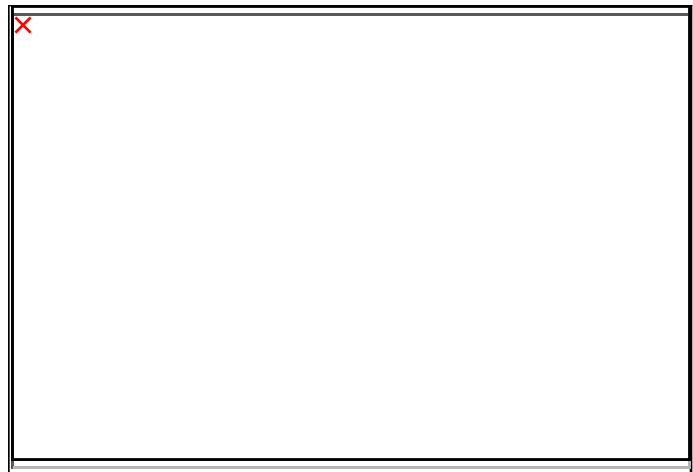
Officer’s Call

Signals all officers to assemble at a designated place.

Retreat

Signals the end of the official duty day.

To The Colors



This call used to render honors to the nation when no band is available or in ceremonies requiring honors to the nation more than once. It requires the same courtesies as the National Anthem. It is used to accompany lowering or casing the National Colors.

Call To Quarters

Symbolically signals all Soldiers to their quarters for the night.

Tattoo

Signals that all lights in squad rooms be extinguished and that all loud talking and other disturbances be discontinued within 15 minutes.

Taps

Signals that unauthorized lights are to be extinguished. This is the last call of the day.

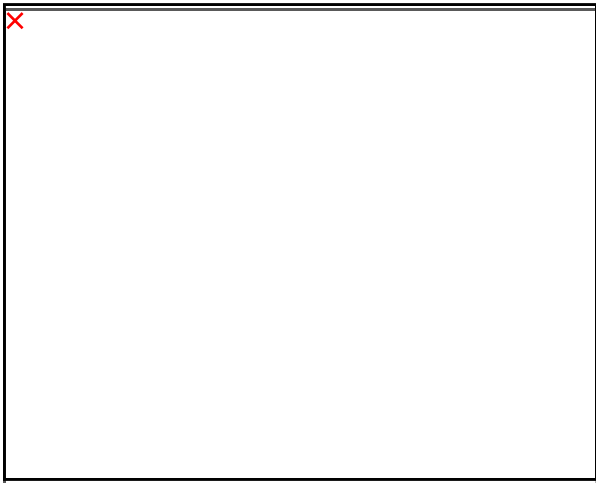
Chapel Call

Signals religious services are about to begin.

Schedule of Bugle Calls at Carlisle Barracks

Monday - Friday

- 0625 First Call
- 0630 Reveille (with cannon salute)
- 0730 Recall
- 0800 Assembly
- 0830 Officer's Call
- 1200 Mess Call
- 1300 Assembly
- 1630 Recall
- 1700 Retreat/To the Colors (with cannon salute)
- 2100 Call to Quarters
- 2245 Tattoo
- 2300 Taps



Saturday & Holidays

- 1200..... Mess Call
- 1700..... Retreat/To the Colors (no cannon salute)
- 2100..... Call to Quarters
- 2245..... Tattoo
- 2300..... Taps

Sunday

- 0900 Chapel Call
- 1200 Mess Call
- 1700 Retreat/To the Colors (no cannon salute)
- 2100 Call to Quarters

2245	Tattoo
2300	Taps

Guide to Proper Courtesies

“Reveille”

1. *Soldiers in formation*: Execute the commands of the officer or noncommissioned officer in charge.
2. *Soldiers in uniform but not in formation*: Face the flag (or the direction of the music if the flag is not in view) and render a hand salute until the last note of music.
3. *Civilians and Soldiers wearing civilian clothes*: Face the flag, come to the position of attention, remove any headgear with the right hand, and place the right hand over the heart until the last note of music. Soldiers, veterans, and retirees may render a hand salute rather than placing their hand over their heart (see note 1 below).



“Retreat” and “To the Colors”

1. *Soldiers in formation*: Execute the commands of the officer or noncommissioned officer in charge.
2. *Soldiers in uniform but not in formation*: Face the flag, stand at attention until the firing of the cannon or the first note of “To the Colors,” then render a hand salute until the last note of music.
3. *Civilians and Soldiers wearing civilian clothes*: Face the flag, stand at attention, remove any headgear with the right hand, and place the right hand over the heart until the last note of music. Soldiers, veterans, and retirees may render a hand salute rather than placing their hand over their heart (see note below).

Note:

Congress passed a law in 2009 that allowed Soldiers, veterans and retirees to render a hand salute when in civilian clothes.