

Taps to Reveille

Today we celebrate the first of the fall Holy Days, The Feast of Trumpets. We know this feast in the plan of God signifies the return of Jesus Christ. This feast is first mentioned in Leviticus: “Then the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, "Speak to the children of Israel, saying: 'In the seventh month, on the first *day* of the month, you shall have a Sabbath, a *memorial* of blowing of ram’s horns, a holy convocation. You shall do no servile work therein; but you shall offer an offering made by fire to the LORD.”- **Leviticus 23:23-25**. It is also mentioned in Numbers; “And in the seventh month, on the first *day* of the month, you shall have a holy convocation. You shall do no customary work. For you it is a day of blowing the trumpets.”- **Numbers 29:1**.

As we just read, it will mean a terrible time of judgement on the people of this world. **Zephaniah 1:14-18** – “The great day of the LORD is near; It is near and hastens quickly. The noise of the day of the LORD is bitter; There the mighty men shall cry out. That day is a day of wrath, A day of trouble and distress, A day of devastation and desolation, A day of darkness and gloominess, A day of clouds and thick darkness, A day of trumpet and alarm Against the fortified cities And against the high towers. "I will bring distress upon men, And they shall walk like blind men, Because they have sinned against the LORD; Their blood shall be poured out

like dust, And their flesh like refuse." Neither their silver nor their gold Shall be able to deliver them In the day of the LORD's wrath; But the whole land shall be devoured By the fire of His jealousy, For He will make speedy riddance Of all those who dwell in the land.”

The blowing of a trumpet, bugle or ram’s horn have been used throughout history as a signal to call together, warn, signal an event or provide other directions. Now most people cannot relate to the blowing of a ram’s horn or shofar. But nearly everyone can relate to the blowing of a trumpet or a bugle. In today’s society, we all have an image or an event that comes to mind when we hear the sound of a trumpet. Now I’m not talking about jazz players like Louie Armstrong or Dizzy Gillespie. I’m referring to an image from an old western, the calvary charge, or the start of the Kentucky Derby and the likes. We can even hear the sounds of a locomotive’s horns at a railroad crossing, a warning we wouldn’t want to ignore.

Now that the images are painted in our minds, I’d like to focus on two trumpet melodies that are probably familiar to most people, primarily military and law enforcement types. They are Taps and Reveille. For those who were in the service, it may bring the image of Taps being played for lights out on the post and reveille was the one that always came too early. Although we didn’t have Reveille in law

enforcement, we've all heard Taps played one too many times at the funerals of fallen officers.

In researching the origins of Taps, I found an article on the website for the Association for the United States Army (AUSA) written by Msg Jari A. Villanueva, USAF. "Of all the military bugle calls, none is so easily recognized or more apt to render emotion than the call Taps. The melody is both eloquent and haunting and the history of its origin is interesting and somewhat clouded in controversy. In the British Army, a similar call known as Last Post has been sounded over soldiers' graves since 1885, but the use of Taps is unique with the United States military, since the call is sounded at funerals, wreath-laying and memorial services." Initially, it was used to signal *lights out* at days end.

"Up to the Civil War, the infantry call for Lights Out was that set down in Silas Casey's (1801-1882) Tactics, which had been borrowed from the French. The music for Taps was changed by Union General Daniel Butterfield for his Brigade (Third Brigade, First Division, Fifth Army Corps, Army of the Potomac) in July of 1862."

"As the story goes, General Butterfield was not pleased with the call for Lights Out, feeling that the call was too formal to signal the day's end. With the help of the brigade bugler, Oliver Wilcox Norton, Butterfield wrote Taps to honor his men

while in camp at Harrison's Landing, Virginia, following the Seven Day's battle. These battles took place during the Peninsular Campaign of 1862. The call, sounded that night in July, 1862, soon spread to other units of the Union Army and was even used by the Confederates. Taps was made an official bugle call after the war.”

So how did Taps become associated with funerals? “The first use of Taps at a funeral during the Peninsular Campaign in Virginia. Captain John C. Tidball of Battery A, 2nd Artillery ordered it played for the burial of a cannoneer killed in action. Since the enemy was close, he worried that the traditional 3 volleys would renew fighting. During the Peninsular Campaign in 1862, a soldier of Tidball's Battery - A of the 2nd Artillery - was buried at a time when the battery occupied an advanced position, concealed in the woods. It was unsafe to fire the customary three volleys over the grave on account of the proximity of the enemy, and it occurred to Captain Tidball that the sounding of Taps would be the ceremony that would be substituted. The custom, thus originated, was taken up throughout the Army of the Potomac, and finally confirmed by orders.” Officially, it was found in the U.S. Army Infantry Drill Regulations for 1891, although it had doubtless been used unofficially long before that time, under its former designation Extinguish Lights.”

As soon as Taps was sounded that night in July 1862, words were put with the music. The first were, "Go To Sleep, Go to Sleep." As the years went on many more versions were created. There are no official words to the music but here are some of the more popular verses:

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

Go to sleep, peaceful sleep,
May the soldier or sailor,
God keep.
On the land or the deep,
Safe in sleep.

Love, good night, Must thou go,
When the day, And the night
Need thee so?

All is well. Speedeth all

To their rest.

Fades the light; And afar

Goeth day, And the stars

Shineth bright,

Fare thee well; Day has gone,

Night is on.

Thanks and praise, For our days,

'Neath the sun, Neath the stars,

'Neath the sky,

As we go, This we know,

God is nigh.

In looking for origins for Reveille, I found a brief history on We Are The Mighty.com by Tim Kirkpatrick. “Reveille comes from the French word “réveiller” or in English to “to wake up.” In 1812, U.S. forces designated the iconic melody to call service members to muster up for roll call to start the work day. It appears there is no official composer of the tune, which is used by about six countries like Denmark, Ireland, and Sweden to mark the start of the day. But the

motivation behind the “Reveille” tune isn’t to *just wake us up*, but instead is to remind us of those who have served in remembrance.” The only lyrics I could find were of a military nature and focused on getting up too early!

With these definitions in mind, think for a moment what that last trumpet will signify. For God's people, the trumpet blast, heralding Christ's return, will be the most significant event imaginable. I’m sure the Angel of the Lord will know just what notes to hit so everyone on Earth knows what is about to transpire **(Rev.11:15-19)**. It will signify the end of the age of man and Satan’s rule on Earth. Definitely Taps and “lights out” for him.

It will also sound Reveille for all of God’s chosen saints to mount up and return with Jesus Christ **(Matt. 24:30-31)** to establish His millennial reign on the Earth **(Rev. 5:10)**. We do not want to be scrambling for our pants when Reveille sounds. We need to keep this tune in our minds. **Matthew 25:13**- "Watch therefore, for you know neither the day nor the hour in which the Son of Man is coming." To put it simply, we’d better be prepared now, while we still have the opportunity before any trumpets sound. Equipped, ready and resurrected, we’ll be able to sound the charge!