



by Freddy Groves

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VETERANS POST

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Only 24 notes

There are over 400 funerals each day at the National Cemeteries. Depending on the veteran and the location of the cemetery, the honors are likely to include two uniformed members of the military, folding and presentation of the flag, three rifle volleys, a horse-drawn caisson and the playing of Taps. At a very minimum, we expect this. We expect to hear Taps at a veteran funeral. It's part of how we say goodbye, hearing the National Song of Remembrance.

In some parts of the country, however, especially in rural cemeteries, there aren't enough buglers, and Taps is played via a CD recording or a special electronic gadget inserted into a bugle that plays a prerecorded Taps. Live buglers are, of course, preferred.

Can you help? Are you willing to be a bugler at veteran funerals in your area?

Before you decline, consider: If you took a semester of band, even in junior high, you're halfway there. If there is a bugle (or trumpet) in your attic, you're halfway there. Is there a high school or college with a music department near you? The department head will help you fine tune the playing of Taps. Best of all, there are only 24 notes in Taps.

Take a look at the organizations that provide buglers for veteran funerals:

— Bugles Across America (www.BuglesAcrossAmerica.org) has been providing this service for 26 years now. Read about Tom Day and why he started the group. According to the most recent Bugler's Post newsletter, last year the group's buglers provided 32,000 hours of their time. Members have provided Taps at 350,000 funerals since the group began in 2000. They have volunteer buglers in 49 states; only South Dakota is missing from the list.

— Taps For Veterans (www.TapsForVeterans.org) is headed up by former military musicians. See the website for more information and how to audition.

At this point, one-quarter of living veterans are over the age of 65; the number of veteran funerals is not going to decline anytime soon.

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