Infantry Bugle Calls of the American Civil War

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Introduction

This study attempts to compile the purpose of infantry bugle calls during the American Civil War based on the army regulations and tactics of the time. Several other musical and military sources have been used to complement these and highlight variations. The practical use of the signals may have differed from the conclusions presented here, as they were embraced by a diverse collection of civilian volunteer forces unaccustomed to military life, often lacking instruction from experienced personnel and they may not have had access to the sources discussed here. Notwithstanding these limitations, I hope this study forms a reasoned basis for living history enthusiasts wanting to employ the infantry bugle calls according to their original intention.

A single comprehensive manual for the bugle from the period has not been found. Studying the more elaborate drum and fife manuals enables us to identifying the purpose of several bugle calls related to the daily military routine, especially where the regulations are vague. In such cases, the name of a bugle signal often links it to its drum equivalent, which intended use can often be traced.

It is known that some infantry regiments counted both drummers and buglers in their ranks during the Civil War. However, the regulations and tactics of the day do not provide guidance in such case. Buglers were supposed to act as field music for light infantry, and drummers and fifers for heavy infantry, though the distinction between light and heavy was rather artificial (see Casey's preface to his Infantry Tactics). Only Klinehanse indicates that the bugle sounds his signal while the drum corps is assembled, the drum corps waiting for him to finish before they beat (Klinehanse, p. 4, under Remark 5th). Joint employment of drummers, fifers and buglers within the same regiment must have varied in practice according to the ideas of the unit's commander and his field musicians. In this study, I assume only buglers are present.
Brevet Lieutenant-Colonel William J. Hardee introduced the infantry bugle calls in his *Rifle and Light Infantry Tactics*, which was an adaptation of the French *Ordonnance du Roi sur l’Exercice et Manoeuvres des Batallions de Chasseurs d’Orléans* of 1845 (or *Ordonnance* for short). He translated most of the work literally and the same goes for the music and purpose of the signals. Most bugle calls were directly copied from the *Ordonnance*, though Hardee chose to substitute some signals with different music or altered their use. He even added a few new signals that he must have thought useful, fitting in with the then current US Army practice. The table below provides an overview. The French calls that designated specific battalions and companies of the *Chasseurs d'Orléans* were discarded, as were the harmonized settings for three bugles of *Aux Champs*, *Le Pas Accéléré* and *La Retraite*. Finally, Hardee changed the order of the signals and listed them according to the use he intended for each of them.

Only a small variation has been found between the consulted American sources in their rendition of the bugle calls. The music is largely identical, and where they differ, I have listed the alternatives. However, the prime source remains Hardee’s *Light Infantry Tactics* as he introduced the calls to the US Army in the first place. They are therefore listed in the order and notation of his book. The signals are classified in general calls and calls for skirmishers. I have added a G or S before their proper number to prevent confusion. Additional signals found in other sources are listed separately at the end.

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**Note**  - This document presents the current status of my research effort and I welcome suggestions for further primary sources, comments and differing interpretations. Please contact me through the website of my re-enactment association, the *Vereniging voor Militaire Living History* based in the Netherlands: [www.vmlh.nl](http://www.vmlh.nl). All comments are much appreciated.
Sources

The abbreviations used in the text body to refer to each work, are given in bold between square brackets. All sources are available free of charge at different websites online.

[Ashworth] Charles Stewart Ashworth: A New Useful and Complete System of Drum Beating. Published by the author, Boston (1812)


[Hart] H.C. Hart: New and Improved Instructor for the Drum with Original Notation. Published by the author, New York (1862)


[Kautz, Customs of Service for NCOs] August V. Kautz: Customs of Service for Non-Commissioned Officers and Soldiers. J.B. Lippincott & Co., Philadelphia (1864)


[Kautz, Customs of Service for Officers] August V. Kautz: Customs of Service for Officers of the Army. J.B. Lippincott & Co., Philadelphia (1866)
**General Calls**

The general calls encompass the signals for the daily military routine, some marches and a few calls with a tactical use. The calls for the daily duty are sounded by a musician on duty at the police guard of the camp. Let us first clarify the context in which this takes place.

The police guard is stationed in the center of a regimental camp with an advanced post 200 paces beyond the color line. Both posts have a drummer with them. The officer of the day has the calls beaten by the drummer of the police guard (see Regulations nos. 564-565). The picket of the regiment also has a drummer (see Regulations no. 586). However, according to Kautz, the practice of having two posts was rarely followed: all of the police guard being near the main entrance to the camp, and in times of war, the police guard was small or even dispensed with (see Kautz, Customs of Service for Officers of the Army nos. 42, 45, 63). A bugler or drummer should always be on duty to give the daily signals on which the command’s daily routine depends. The Sergeant-Major of the regiment ‘generally keeps the time at head-quarters, and sees that the musician detailed for the purpose at head-quarters sounds the calls at the proper time.’ (Kautz, Customs of Service for NCOs no. 545)

The hours for roll-call and duties are set by general orders from the regiment or higher authority (see Regulations no. 423). ‘In garrison, reveille will be at 5 o’clock in May, June, July, and Augusts, at 6 in March, April, September, and October, and at half past 6 in November, December, January, and February; retreat at sunset; the troop, surgeon’s call, signals for breakfast and dinner at the hours prescribed by the commanding officer, according to climate and season.’ (Regulations no. 220)

‘In camp, the commanding officer prescribes the hours of reveille, reports, roll-calls, guard-mounting, meals, stable-calls, issues, fatigues &c.’ (Regulations no. 221) Camp in this context has a wide definition: ‘Camp is the place where troops are established in tents, in huts or in bivouac’ (Regulations no. 489). Kautz clarifies further what this daily routine entails (see Kautz, Customs of Service for NCOs nos. 234-240 and Customs of Service for Officers of the Army nos. 423-425, 433-447).

‘There shall be daily one dress parade, at troop or retreat, as the commanding officer may direct. A signal will be beat or sounded half an hour before troop or retreat, for the music to assemble on the regimental parade, and each company to turn out under arms on its own parade, for roll-call and inspection by its own officers.’ (Regulations nos. 327-328) There is no provision in the bugle calls for the buglers to ‘beat off’ at a parade as drum corps or bands can do. A ‘Troop’ is missing, as is an ‘Adjutant’s Call.’ Both are closely linked to the guard mounting and parades that require it. My interpretation is that buglers were seen as field musicians for duty calls and skirmish calls, but were only
required to invigorate marching troops or provide ceremonial music to a very limited extent.

Each company will always have their field musicians with them: ‘The field music belonging to companies not stationed at regimental head-quarters will not be separated from their respective companies.’ (Regulations no. 79) They will also form with their own companies when the troops are inspected (see Regulations no. 298). The drum-major or principal musician is in charge of the musicians of a regiment when the companies are together. He will keep the roster of the musicians for the duties as orderlies, on guard and for fatigues, and will call their roll. The Sergeant-Major will perform his duties if there is no principal musician (see Kautz, Customs of Service for NCOs nos. 220, 236, 547-548).

G1 Attention

Hardee moved this signal from the Sonneries de Manouevres in the Ordonnance to the general calls section in his Light Infantry Tactics. This probably signifies an intentional more general use of the call. The command attention is the command of caution at which the men fix their attention (see Hardee, Title First no. 62 and School of the Soldier no. 87). After this, a preparatory command and a command of execution may follow.

The intended use of the bugle call fits in with this structure, as found in Hardee, School of the Battalion nos. 65-67. After the colonel has ordered the battalion to stack arms and break ranks, he ‘will cause attention to be sounded, at which the battalion will re-form behind the stacks of arms. The sound being finished, the colonel after causing the stacks to be broken, will command: Battalion. At this command, the men will fix their attention, and remain immovable.’

During a march in the route step, ‘the column should close up just previous to each halt, by calling the command to attention, and closing up the files before resting.’ (Kautz, Customs of Service for Officers of the Army no. 668)

G2 The General

‘When the whole of the troops, in the same camp or garrison, are to depart, the general, the assembly, and to the color, will be beaten or sounded, at the proper intervals, in the
order here mentioned. At the first, the troops will prepare for the movement; at the second, they will form by company, and at the third unite by battalion.’ (Hardee, Volume I p. 219) The intervals between these calls can be found in the Regulations nos. 672-673: ‘The “general,” sounded one hour before the time of marching, is the signal to strike tents, to load the wagons, and pack horses, and send them to the place of assembling. The fires are then put out, and care taken to avoid burning straw, &c., or giving to the enemy any other indication of the movement. The “march” will be beat in the infantry, and the “advance” sounded in the cavalry, in succession, as each is to take its place in the column.’ Gilham adds that the infantry forms in column of companies (see Gilham, no. 771), though this appears to disagree with the use of ‘To the Color’ (G4), which calls the battalion to form in line.

‘The practice of the drums must never begin with the “general,” or the “march of the regiment;” nor the trumpets with the sound “to horse.” The hour for practice is always announced’ (Regulations no. 546) to avoid the men packing up needlessly or giving a false alarm (see also Regulations no. 674 and Hart, p. 52). In case of a real alarm, the bugler has no dedicated call to sound. When an alarm is sounded, ‘the troops form rapidly in front of their camps.’ (Regulations no. 674) For infantry, this means forming the battalion on the color line. Therefore, ‘To the Color’ (G4) appears to be the most suitable call in case of alarm.

G3 The Assembly

This call signals the assembly of each company in a regiment before leaving camp after ‘The General’ (G2) has been sounded and before ‘To the Color’ (G4) will be played (see Hardee, Volume I p. 219). It is the equivalent of the assembly as a call for drummers, which is ‘the signal to form by company, for parade, drill, &c.’ (Bruce & Emmett, p. 36)

When the battalion is dispersed and the
colonel wishes to rally it in column, 'he will cause the assembly to be sounded, and place two markers before the position to be occupied by the first company.' (Hardee, School of the Battalion no. 978)

G4   To the Color

This signal has two main purposes: to rally troops to their color and as a ceremonial salute to the colors. It might also serve as a call for alarm; see notes at 'The General' (G2).

When a regiment is dispersed and the colonel wishes to rally it in line, 'he will cause to the color to be sounded, and at the same time place two markers and the color-bearer in the direction he may wish to give the battalion.' (Hardee, School of the Battalion no. 975) Furthermore, this call signals the assembly of all companies of a regiment before leaving camp after both 'The General' (G2) and 'The Assembly' (G3) have been sounded (see Hardee, Volume I p. 219). 'To the Color' is also used to recall skirmishers covering their battalion while it prepares to form a square (see Hardee, School of the Battalion nos. 963-964).

The method of producing the colors 'with due solemnity' is given in Hardee, School of the Battalion nos. 4-13. In this ceremony, 'To the Color' is sounded twice: firstly, at the moment the color-bearer appears from the colonel's quarters with the colors; and secondly, at the reception of the colors by the regiment when the whole presents arms.

G5   The Recall

In Nevins & Vaas' work, this signal is included twice: once as 'The Recall' and again as 'Recall Detachments' with exactly the same music except for a minor difference in metronome markings (80 and 100 steps per minute, respectively). Several manuals for drummers also included signals under the latter title (for examples see Klinehanse, p. 14 and Bruce & Emmett, p. 53). These clarify the intention of this bugle call. It is safe to assume that this call is sounded to signal the return from work of fatigue
parties, the end of drill lessons and to make any other detachments on duty to return to their quarters.

G6 Quick Time

The standard gait for marching is quick time, ‘its swiftness is at the rate of one hundred and ten steps per minute’ (Hardee, School of the Soldier no. 102) with paces of 28 inches. The metronome marking of the call agrees with this tempo. This is a marching tune and as such can be played at any occasion that requires a march in quick time.

When relieving a guard, except at the outposts, the music of both the old and new guard beats in quick time when the old guard marches off until it has marched off fifty paces (see Regulations nos. 385 and 387). A quickstep is also played when assembling the guard details for guard mounting or when the companies march to the regimental parade ground for dress parade, see remarks under general calls on pp. 4-5 and under ‘Assembly of the Guard’ (G14).

G7 Double Quick Time

‘The length of the double quick step is thirty-three inches, and its swiftness at the rate of one hundred and sixty-five steps per minute.’ (Hardee, School of the Soldier no. 104) However, this rate can be increased to 180 steps per minutes under urgent circumstances (see Hardee, School of the Soldier no. 114). Again, this is a marching tune and can be employed in all cases where a double quick step is required.
G8   The Charge

This call was titled *Pas de Charge* in the *Ordonnance* (listed between the *Pas Accéléré* and the *Pas Gymnastique*), and was therefore most likely meant as a march, not a signal. The gait is slightly faster than quick time. In Hardee’s work, no instruction is given as to its use, just like ‘Quick Time’ (G6) and ‘Double Quick Time’ (G7). I conclude it is meant to set the gait when marching forward in line for a bayonet charge.

\[\text{\textbf{G8}}\]

G9   The Reveille

This signal announces the first roll-call of the day. ‘There shall be daily at least three roll-calls, viz., at *revelle*, *retreat*, and *tattoo*. They will be made on the company parades by the first sergeants, *superintended by a commissioned officer* of the company. The captains will report the absentees without leave to the colonel or commanding officer.’ (*Regulations* no. 224)

‘*Reveille* is the first act of the daily routine, at which all the officers and men of the company should be present, that are for duty. (…) The customary time for *revelle* is between daylight and sunrise, throughout the year; it is subject to variation on the march, and during a campaign. Inspection under arms, particularly in the field, is highly useful…’ (*Kautz, Customs of Service for Officers of the Army* no. 424) ‘The company is formed in the interval between the *musician’s call* and the last note of the assembly, when every man should be in the ranks.’ (*Kautz, Customs of Service for NCOs* no. 428) The musician’s call is clearly the ‘Assembly of the Buglers’ (G13), but the assembly mentioned in this paragraph probably means any of the three signals for roll call.
'At reveille, the police guard takes arms; the officer of the guard inspects it and the advanced post. The Sergeant replants the colors in place.' \textit{(Regulations no. 578)}

**G10 The Retreat**

This signals the second roll call of the day, often combined with the daily dress parade at sunset. ‘A Parade is a ceremony that in our service takes place daily when the weather permits, at sundown; it may be required at other hours, but this is not usual.’ \textit{(Kautz, Customs of Service for Officers of the Army no. 577)} ‘Retreat Roll Call takes place about sunset the year round. It may precede the evening parade; but whilst the parade is often dispensed with, the Retreat Roll Call never should be. The orders are usually published at Retreat, either at parade or after roll call, when the parade is dispensed with. It is the Captain’s duty to have all orders published to his company, particularly if the Adjutant is prevented from publishing them on parade from some unavoidable cause. In quarters, the daily inspection of arms usually takes place at Retreat; but in campaign, and on the march, the men should be required to fall in with their arms, both at Reveille and Tattoo. When there is a parade, at Retreat, or at any other time, after the roll is called, the Captain causes the ranks to be opened, and then makes a rapid inspection, to see that the arms and accoutrements are in order, that the men’s clothes are clean, and shoes blacked.’ \textit{(Kautz, Customs of Service for Officers of the Army nos. 441-442)}

This equally applies to the guard on duty. ‘At retreat, the officer of the guard has the roll of his guard called, and inspects arms, to see that they are loaded and in order; and visits the advanced post for the same purpose. The sergeant of the police guard, accompanied by two armed soldiers, folds the colors and lays them on the trestle in rear of the arms. He sees that the sutler’s stores are then closed, and the men leave them, and that the kitchen fires are put out at the appointed hour.’ \textit{(Regulations no. 576)}

‘When there is a “Dress Parade,” is usually takes place one hour before “Retreat,” in which case, the several \textit{Calls} will be beaten precisely the same as at Guard mounting, observing the same space between each; and the \textit{Retreat} is usually beaten before dismissal. If there is no Dress Parade, the Drummer’s Call is beaten at the Guard-house, fifteen minutes before sunset, when all the field music assemble to beat the \textit{Retreat}.’ \textit{(Bruce & Emmett, p. 40)}

The picket of the regiment forms on the left of the police guards and is under the command of the officer of the day. He has the roll called at retreat and inspects their
arms. During the day, he also calls the roll of his picket frequently, ‘for which the call is sounded from the police guard’ (see Regulations nos. 589-590). It is unclear which bugle signal can substitute the drum signal indicated here and I have not been able to find a specific picket call in any of the drum manuals studied.

G11   Tattoo

The ‘Tattoo’ signals the last roll call of the day. It does not appear in the Ordonnance and may be a composition of Hardee’s. ‘Tattoo Roll Call’ takes place from nine to half-past nine, usually. It is one of the established roll calls at which all must be present, that are not properly excused. In quarters the men are not required to fall in with their arms, but on the march, and in campaign, the men should always be required to fall in at Tattoo, and at Reveille, with their arms.’ (Kautz, Customs of Service for Officers of the Army no. 443)

‘Tattoo is to beat at 9 o’clock, P.M., after which no musician (or soldier) is to be out of his tent or quarters, after having answered his name at Roll call.’ (Bruce & Emmett, p. 42)

This signal has similar implications for troops embarked on a vessel. At ‘Tattoo,’ every man not on duty will be in his berth and lights will be extinguished (see Regulations nos. 848-849).

G12   To Extinguish Lights

This signal is the equivalent of the three taps on the drum. ‘Taps are sounded a quarter of an hour after Tattoo, at which time all the lights must be extinguished, and quiet preserved throughout the garrison or camp. This is a wholesome custom, and should be rigidly enforced.’ (Kautz, Customs of Service for Officers of the Army no. 444) The sentinels of the guard ‘usually start challenging after taps, and continue until reveille; although it is sometimes ordered to commence challenging immediately after retreat.’
Hart gives is at half past nine or ten o’clock with the tattoo sounding at nine (see Hart, p. 55), though others stick to the interval of fifteen minutes after the end of the tattoo (see Bruce & Emmett, p.42).

This signal may also be used during a march to indicate the column to slow down. ‘In night marches, the Sergeant-Major of each regiment remains at the rear with a drummer, to give notice when darkness or difficulty stops the march.’ (Regulations, no. 688) ‘The Taps are for the front to march slower.’ (Ashworth, p. 9 and Klinehanse, p. 5) The bugle call can be used in the same way.

A signal for the whole column to march faster should also be available: ‘To quicken the march, the General warns the Colonels, and may order a signal to be beat. It is repeated in all the regiments.’ (Regulations, no. 689) None of the drum manuals give a clue which signal could have been used here and I therefore refrain from assigning a bugle call to it.

During the Civil War, a replacement of this signal came into use under General Butterfield, now known as ‘Taps.’ As this only found standard use in the US Army after the conflict, it is omitted here.

G13 Assembly of the Buglers

This call appears to be the equivalent of ‘Drummer’s Call,’ also called ‘First Call’ or ‘Police Drummer’s Call’ as found in the drummer’s manuals of the time and is beat by the drummer of the police guard. This allows both the men to prepare as well as the musicians to assemble. As such, ‘Assembly of the Buglers’ precedes all calls that would be sounded by a whole drum corps. The bugle equivalents of these are G2, G3, G9, G10, G11, G14, G19, G20, G21, G23, G24 and G25. The sources vary on the time interval between this signal and the next: it can be five (see Regulations, no. 223 and Gilham no. 764), ten (see Hart, p. 53) or fifteen minutes (see Bruce & Emmett, pp. 37, 40).

‘The drummer’s call shall be beat by the drums of the police guard five minutes before the time of beating the stated calls, when the drummers will assemble before the colors of their respective regiments, and as soon as the beat begins on the right, it will be immediately taken up along the line.’ (Regulations no. 223)
‘One or two musicians march on with the guard, and remain with it at the guard-house during the tour, and sound the musician’s call ten minutes before Assembly, at which signal all the musicians assemble. The roll is called by the chief musician, drum-major, or chief trumpeter, and then they all unite in sounding the calls for the companies.’ (Kautz, Customs of Service for NCOs no. 239)

G14 Assembly of the Guard

‘Guard Mounting succeeds breakfast, and when the first call sounds, the detail is formed and inspected by the First Sergeant. This detail is usually notified the evening previous, at retreat parade. After inspection it is marched to the ground where the guard is usually formed, either by the First Sergeant or a non-commissioned officer.’ (Kautz, Customs of Service for Officers of the Army no. 435 and see Customs of Service for NCOs nos. 437-439)

‘At the first call for guard mounting, the men warned for duty turn out on the company parades for inspection by the First Sergeants; and at the second call, repair to the regimental or garrison parade, conducted by the First Sergeants.’ (Regulations, no. 366) Gilham gives these calls as the ‘a signal’ given ‘half an hour before troop or retreat’ and ‘the Adjutant’s call (...) ten minutes after that signal.’ (Gilham, no. 738)

Hart states that the drummer’s call is beat first, ten minutes later assembly for guard mounting, and another ten minutes later the first sergeant's call. The drum corps then takes position on the parade ground and beats the Adjutant’s call followed by a quick step, when the companies march to the regimental parade ground (see Hart, pp. 53, 55).

A different method is given by Bruce & Emmett, which also applies to dress parade: half an hour before guard mounting, the drummers call is beat at the guard house and then on the parade ground, when the details of each company get ready; fifteen minutes later, the drum corps sounds the drummer's call again as second call; and another fifteen minutes later they beat the Adjutant’s call followed by a quickstep (see Bruce & Emmett, pp. 37, 40).

What could these first and second calls be for the bugle? Without a doubt, ‘Assembly of the Buglers’ (G13) is the first call. My feeling is that ‘Assembly of the Guard’ is the second. The march ‘Quick Time’ (G6) is then played to assemble the details of each company on the regimental parade ground. Alternatively, the ‘Assembly of the Guard’ is
the equivalent of ‘Adjutant’s Call’ for the drum, sounding just before a march. However, there seems to be no signal that would fit the purpose of a second call without some risk of confusion. The drum manuals referred to above suggest ‘First Sergeant’s Call’ (G15), which would fit with the listing sequence of the calls in Hardee, or a repeat of ‘Assembly of the Buglers’ (G13).

**G15 Orders for Orderly Sergeants**

This signal is a deviation from the simpler version found in the *Ordonnance*, but is serves the same purpose. The original French manual included calls for different grades of non-commissioned officers (given in the last section of this study).

‘The orderly hours being fixed at each head-quarters, the staff officers and chiefs of the special services either attend in person, or send their assistants to obtain the orders of the day; and the first sergeants of companies repair for that purpose to the regimental or garrison head-quarters.’ *(Regulations no. 433)*

Gilham adds that the call is also sounded when the morning reports are handed to the Adjutant in the morning. ‘After the surgeon has passed upon the sick, the first sergeants proceed to make off the morning reports of their companies, which, after being signed by their captains, are taken to regimental head-quarters at first sergeant’s call.’ *(Gilham, no. 764)* The call sounds again to return to reports to the First Sergeants and at any other time for the distribution of additional orders. ‘First Sergeants’ Call should sound regularly once a day, about eleven or twelve o’clock, at which hour the First Sergeants repair to the Adjutant’s office and have the morning-report books returned to them, and receive the details for guard and such other orders as there may be for the different companies. This call may sound at any time that is deemed necessary, and is usually the speediest way of communicating with the companies. The orders thus given to the First Sergeants, if of any importance, should at once be communicated by them to their respective Company Commanders, for their information. This mode of transmitting orders has in all minor matters been adopted as official.’ *(Kautz, *Customs of Service for Officers of the Army* no. 437)* In this case, the Adjutant’s office is at the same time the Commanding Officer’s office, thus the head-quarters of a post or regiment (see Kautz, *Customs of Service for Officers of the Army* no. 729).
For Officers to take their places in line after firing

‘At the sound, for officers to take their places in line after firing, the captains, coverings sergeants, and color-guard, will promptly resume their places in line of battle: *this rule is general for all the firings.*' (Hardee, *School of the Battalion* no. 45) This signal will be given after ‘Cease Firing’ (S13) and when the men have brought their pieces to a shoulder. The captain and covering sergeant will rectify any defects in the alignment upon returning to their places. However, the bugle signals will only be employed during the drill when black powder is actually used. Otherwise, the commands ‘cease firing’ and ‘posts’ will be substituted (see Hardee, *School of the Company* no. 64-66). This call is only used in close order. In skirmish formations, the sergeants and officers take their proper places without specific commands to that end.

In the *Ordonnance*, this signal is a single quarter on middle C. Hardee mentions it as such in the first volume of his tactics, translating the French literally, although he writes new music for it at the end of that volume. He corrects himself in volume II, when he no longer writes about the bugle note that follows cease firing, but quotes the full name he gave the new signal (compare the two paragraphs referenced above).

The Disperse

‘The battalion being in line of battle, the colonel will sometimes cause the disperse to be sounded, at which signal, the battalion will break and disperse.’ (Hardee, *School of the Battalion* no. 974) When the colonel wishes to rally the battalion again, ‘To the Color’ (G4) is used to form it in line and ‘The Assembly’ (G3) to form it in column of companies (see Hardee, *School of the Battalion* nos. 975-978).

Officers’ Call

No explicit use for this signal has been found, even though equivalents of it for the drum can be found in many period manuals. Only Hart suggests it may be for the instruction of officers: ‘Officers Drill Call is often at Eleven o’clock, A.M.’ (Hart, p. 55) All company
officers most likely assemble at regimental head-quarters, as the First Sergeants would when called to assemble.

**G19 Breakfast Call**

At this signal, the men of each company fall in to collect their meal from the kitchens, whether breakfast is cooked for the whole company or by messes. ‘Breakfast Call, in quarters, sounds usually about seven o’clock, when the company is paraded, and the roll is called, and then marched to the mess-room. In quarters this is easy enough, but the cooking is a much more difficult question in camp, and on the march, and is greatly influenced by the arm of service, and the means of transportation. Whenever two or three cooks can do all the cooking for the company, it should be done, as it is more economical, both in time and labor, and when more messes are necessary, the fewer the better.’ (Kautz, *Customs of Service for Officers of the Army* no. 434)

If there is a third meal of the day, breakfast call will be repeated in the evening for supper: ‘Supper Call the same as Breakfast Call.’ (Hart, p. 55)

**G20 Dinner Call**

‘Dinner Call sounds usually from twelve to one o’clock, and supper just before or just after Retreat. The same remarks apply to those meals that have been made about breakfast. The calling of the roll may or may not be dispensed with; in parading the company to be marched to meals, the absentees are not necessarily required to account for their absence, as at the stated roll calls, Reveille, Retreat and Tattoo, although the absentees should be known, particularly those who are absent on duty, and where meals must be kept for them, and
it is often convenient to ascertain by a roll call the names of those men for whom the meals must be saved.' (Kautz, Customs of Service for Officers of the Army no. 440) Dinner call sounds at noon and one hour is allowed for this meal (see Hart, p. 55 and Bruce & Emmett, p. 39).

### G21 Sick Call

‘Surgeon’s Call, or Sick Call, sounds usually early in the morning before breakfast call, in order that the surgeon may ascertain who is sick, and who is to be excused from duty, and to enable the First Sergeants to prepare their morning reports, and have them in the Adjutant’s office by nine o’clock in the morning. Men who are sick and desire medicine give their names to the First Sergeant, and when the Surgeon’s Call sounds, they fall in and are marched to the Hospital by a non-commissioned officer, who has the sick-book, and who brings it back to the First Sergeant, in order that he may know who has been put in Hospital, or excused from duty, before he makes his morning report.’ (Kautz, Customs of Service for Officers of the Army no. 433 and see Customs of Service for NCOs no. 432) It is the exclusive remit of the surgeon to decide who are sick, who go to hospital and who are excused from duty (see Kautz, Customs of Service for Officers of the Army no. 614). This signal is ‘to be beat one hour before breakfast-call, or at such other time as the commanding officer may direct.’ (Bruce & Emmett, p. 36)

### G22 Fatigue Call

At this signal, previously assigned detachments will assemble for their specified fatigue duties. Fatigues are duties of the third class without arms, in or out of camp, including receiving issues (see Regulations nos. 552-553). The roster for this duty is kept by the First Sergeant, who details the men at retreat parade the previous day. He assembles the detail of his company and marches it to the rendezvous for the party, where the Sergeant-Major or Adjutant inspects and equips it for their duty. The party is then taken over by the designated officer and is marched off to perform their assignment, which can include all
duties not strictly military, ‘such as laboring in the trenches, making roads, foraging, improving the grounds about a post or camp &c., and is usually performed without arms’ (see Kautz, *Customs of Service for NCOs* nos. 71-73, 102-107 and *Customs of Service for NCOs* nos. 342-346, 397-399, 437).

This call is sometimes styled police call when used in the daily routine. Kautz clarifies: ‘Police call sounds twice in the day, in the morning immediately after Reveille, and again in the afternoon before Retreat parade.’ The first sergeant orders the police detail for his company to fall in and clean the company grounds, while the general police detail or prisoners sweep the regimental parade ground, the color line and the vicinity of the field officer’s quarters (see Kautz, *Customs of Service for Officers of the Army* nos. 115-122 and *Customs of Service for NCOs* nos. 339-341, 388-396). ‘Police Call generally succeeds Reveille, when the grounds are cleaned up and placed in order. Each company takes care of its own company grounds, either by a regular detail of a non-commissioned officer and two or three men, or by requiring all to keep a certain amount of ground or room in order.’ (Kautz, *Customs of Service for Officers of the Army* no. 425) It is usually played fifteen minutes after the end of reveille and one hour after dinner call (see Bruce & Emmett, pp. 36, 40).

**G23 Church Call**

‘Church Call is a beat for a Regiment to assemble for Divine service, or when a Flag of Truce arrives near the enemies lines.’ (Klinehanse, p. 13) ‘A flag of truce (...) is usually a white flag, borne by an officer and accompanied by an escort. The flag is sometimes, particularly at night, preceded by a trumpeter blowing the parley.’ (Kautz, *Customs of Service for NCOs* no. 129) These quotes indicated that the signal to announce parley is useful for both friendly and enemy lines. The parley is the same as church call in several manuals for drummers (see Klinehanse, p. 13 and Bruce & Emmett, p. 48). This double use is therefore most probably the same for this infantry bugle call.
G24  Drill Call

This signal is a deviation from the Ordonnance, where it is styled Aux Champs, the common time march also used for rendering honors in the French system. Hardee’s rebranding of this call signifies a change of its function and suggests that it is an alternative to ‘The Assembly’ (G3) for the specific purpose of assembling the company for daily drill. Some drum manuals contain quite a selection of specific assemblies, so Hardee’s decision was not without precedent.

A further clue for its intended purpose is found here: ‘When the companies of a regiment are to be exercised, at the same time, in the school of the company, the colonel will indicate the lesson or lessons they are severally to execute. The whole will commence by a bugle signal, and terminate in like manner.’ (Hardee, School of the Company no. 358) ‘Drill Call’ can be used to indicate the start of such parallel drill sessions, and ‘The Recall’ (G5) seems best fit to end these.

‘Drill Call is sounded at such hours as may be designated by the Commander of the Company, or other higher authority, and should at least take place twice a day, where there is no good reason for dispensing with drills.’ (Kautz, Customs of Service for Officers of the Army no. 439) A short drill in the morning before breakfast was customary (see Hart, p. 53).

G25  School Call

This signal most likely assembles all privates for general tuition. The Regulations indicate that the Chaplain of a regiment or post also performed the duties of Schoolmaster to instruct the uneducated and even soldier’s children (see Regulations no. 201 and Kautz, Customs of Service for Officers of the Army nos. 258, 468, 642). As such, the subject of the lessons must have
been of a non-military nature and in line with what was thought at regular schools throughout the nation.

This call is most likely for privates only, as all men of higher rank were expected to be able to read and write. The first bars of the call also seem to indicate this. It starts as an assembly of non-commissioned officers, but has only one note following the starting flourish instead of two, three or four (compare this call with those on page 31). A short differentiating tune concludes the call.
Calls for Skirmishers

Hardee translated the title of this set of signals very specifically. The original Sonneries de Manouevre would literally translate as signals for the maneuvers. Hardee’s interpretation conforms more closely to the intention of his system of tactics: that the bugle is only used to indicate maneuvers in skirmish formations. In close order, the voice can provide more detailed instructions and its loudness is sufficient.

‘The movements [of skirmishers] will be habitually indicated by the sounds of the bugle. The officers, and, if necessary, the non-commissioned officers, will repeat, and cause the command to be executed, as soon as they are given; but to avoid mistakes, when the signals are employed, they will wait until the last bugle note is sounded before commencing the movement.’ (Hardee, Instruction for Skirmishers nos. 10-11) If a platoon, company or whole battalion is deployed as skirmishers, each officer in command of the skirmish line will have a bugler with him, as far as buglers are available. The tactics implicitly assume three buglers per company (see Hardee, Instruction for Skirmishers nos. 28, 32, 36). Furthermore, ‘every officer will make himself perfectly acquainted with the bugle signals: and should, by practice, be enabled, if necessary, to sound them. This knowledge, so necessary in general instruction, becomes of vital importance on actual service in the field.’ (Hardee, Title First no. 55)

It is clear that the bugle calls are meant to be used by the officers in command of the skirmish line. However, it is unclear to what extend they should be used to communicate commands from the main body to the officer in charge of the skirmishers. Several signals appear very useful for such a purpose, though Hardee remains silent on the matter.

S1  Fix Bayonet

‘At this signal, the men will fix bayonets without command, and immediately replace their pieces in the position they were before the signal.’ (Hardee, Title First no. 52) ‘Light troops will carry their bayonets habitually in the scabbard, and this rule applies equally to the skirmishers and the reserve; whenever bayonets are required to be fixed, a particular signal will be given.’ (Hardee, Instruction for Skirmishers no. 32) From these quotes, it appears that ‘Fix Bayonet’ can be given in both close order and in skirmish formations at any time.
This is the only call that has no metronome marking. This is also missing in the original French *Ordonnance*. Based on the other calls with the same time signature, I suggest it be played in quick time with an *allegro* character at 110 steps per minute.

**S2  Unfix Bayonet**

No rules for the use of this call have been found in the tactical manuals. The best assumption seems to be that its use is the same as ‘Fix Bayonets’ with the opposite effect.

**S3  Quick Time**

‘The movements of skirmishers will be executed in quick, or double quick time. The run will be resorted to only in cases of urgent necessity.’

(Hardee, *Instruction for Skirmishers* no. 8) The French *Ordonnance* does not include quick time for the maneuvers and Hardee chooses to copy the version from the general calls here.

This bugle call may be used to indicate the gait of a movement, after the movement has been ordered by another signal. It does not make sense to wait for this march to complete, as this conflicts with the speed with which skirmishers are to operate.

**S4  Double Quick Time**

As the ‘Quick Time’ (S3), this march probably indicates the gait of a maneuver. It is unclear why this should differ from its equivalent general call (G7).
S5  The Run

The run is executed according to the same principles as the double quick step, ‘the only difference consisting in a greater degree of swiftness.’ (Hardee, *School of the Soldier* no. 166) As ‘Quick Time’ (S3) and ‘Double Quick Time’ (S4), this call probably indicates the gait of a maneuver after it has commenced.

A variation of the music can be found in Nevins & Vaas: the notes in the first two bars are all on middle C instead of E. This version makes more sense musically, but has not been found in other sources.

S6  Deploy as Skirmishers

When a command has to form a line of skirmishers, it is instructed to do so verbally. The bugle calls will be used as soon as the command is spread out. However, the exact moment to switch from verbal commands to signals is not explicitly indicated in Hardee’s *Light Infantry Tactics*. It is probably safe to assume that bugle calls are employed after ‘First platoon – as skirmishers; on the left file – take intervals; MARCH’ (Hardee, *Instruction for Skirmishers* no. 22) or similar commands have been given. It is therefore unlikely that this call is used to form the whole of the skirmish line from a formation in closed order. Moreover, there are simply too many different ways in deploying a skirmish line to be captured with only one signal. However, it could be used to deploy the groups of four on the alignment. This happens without explicit command when a halt is given. But, ‘if, during deployment, the line should be fired upon by the enemy, the captain may cause the groups of fours to deploy, as they gain their proper distance.’ (Hardee, *Instruction for Skirmishers* no 27) This call may very well be used for that purpose.

Once deployed, the skirmish line may be rallied to resist enemy cavalry. When the threat is removed, the signal ‘Deploy as Skirmishers’ can be used to reform the skirmish line, though Hardee does not mention this specifically.
S7  Forward

This signal indicates an advance of the skirmish line upon the enemy (see Hardee, Instruction for Skirmishers nos. 70-76). As there is no separate command of execution, it is safe to assume that the sergeants move up on the line during this bugle call and any other calls that indicate a maneuver from a halt. The movement itself will commence directly after the last note of the call, as stated previously.

S8  In Retreat

After this signal, ‘the skirmishers will face about individually, and march to the rear’ (Hardee, Instruction for Skirmishers no. 81) preserving their intervals towards the guide.

S9  Halt

This call is given to halt the movement of the skirmish line. Men not in line when the call is given will move up rapidly, although the alignment is not as strict as in close order. ‘Skirmishers should be particularly instructed to take advantage of any cover which the ground may offer, and should lie flat on the ground whenever such a movement is necessary to protect them from the fire of the enemy. Regularity in the alignment should yield to this important advantage.’ (Hardee, Instruction for Skirmishers no. 29) When marching in retreat or by the flank, all will face towards the front after they halt; when deploying the command as skirmishers, each group of four takes their intervals on the line. Finally, ‘the chiefs of sections will promptly rectify any irregularities in the alignment and intervals, and after taking every possible advantage which the ground may offer for protecting the men, they, with the three sergeants in the line, will retire to their proper places in rear.’ (Hardee, Instruction for Skirmishers no. 78)
S10  By the Right Flank

This call signals the march by the right flank, either from a halt or during a movement. The three sergeants will place themselves on the line of skirmishers. The right guide will lead the line abreast the man at the right end of the line and all will follow in his direction, maintaining their intervals. ‘The men should be made to understand that the signals or commands, such as *forward*, mean that the skirmishers shall march on the enemy; *in retreat*, that they shall retire, and to *the right or left flank*, that the men must face to the right or left, whatever may be their position.’ (Hardee, *Instruction for Skirmishers* no. 104)

S11  By the Left Flank

This call has the same use as ‘By the Right Flank’ (S10) but the opposite effect. Note that the first phrase is identical to the one in ‘Forward’ (S7) and in ‘By the Right Flank’ (S10). The last four bars discriminate this call from the other two.

S12  Commence Firing

The signal to commence firing can be given at any time, be it during maneuvering or at a halt. The men of each file will ensure that one or the other always has his piece loaded. Furthermore, ‘skirmishers will not remain in the same place whilst reloading, unless protected by accidents in the ground.’ (Hardee, *Instruction for Skirmishers* no. 110) The guides will probably stay on the line of skirmishers if the firing is executed during the march, as Hardee does not address this situation specifically.

Nevins & Vaas present alternative music for this signal, given below Hardee’s version which conforms to the original used by the *Chasseurs d’Orléans*. The origin of this
alternative version lies in the bugle signals for cavalry, as can be found in Cooke’s *Cavalry Tactics*, amongst others.

**S13  Cease Firing**

As soon as this signal commences, the men will cease firing and load their pieces. This call is the one exception where execution is required at the instant the sound commences (see Hardee, *School of the Company* no. 63 and *School of the Battalion* no. 45). This call is clearly used in both close order and for skirmishers. In close order drill, the bugle signals will only be used when actual black powder is employed. Otherwise, the command ‘cease firing’ will be substituted (Hardee, *School of the Company* no. 65).

As with ‘Commence Firing’ (S12), Nevins & Vaas present an alternative version borrowed from the cavalry’s bugle signals given below the more widespread version found in Hardee’s work.

**S14  Change Direction to the Right**

This signal is used in two cases: first, for a wheeling in line to the right, when the right guide marks time in his place while the left guide moves in a circle to the right; second, for a change of direction when marching by the flank (see Hardee, *Instruction for Skirmishers* nos. 86-89, 105). In this last case, the leading guide marches abreast the man at the end of the line and both march by file right. When a wheel is made while marching in retreat, the call ‘In Retreat’ (S8) is used to continue the march in retreat as before, not ‘Forward’ (S7) (see Hardee, *Instruction for Skirmishers* no. 95). So the left and right of the line change when facing about, but the forward direction for skirmishers is towards the enemy at all times.
S15  Change Direction to the Left

This call has the same uses as ‘Change Direction to the Right’ (S14) but the opposite effect.

Note that the first phrase of both ‘Change Direction to the Right’ (S15) and ‘Change Direction to the Left’ are identical. Only the last four bars indicate right or left and do so with the exact same music as ‘By the Right Flank’ (S10) and ‘By the Left Flank’ (S11). The former moves up in pitch, while the latter ends on the lowest bugle tone.

S16  Lie Down

No particular rule is given for the use of this call. The men can lie down at their own discretion: ‘Skirmishers should ... lie flat on the ground whenever such a movement is necessary to protect them from the fire of the enemy.’ (Hardee, Instruction for Skirmishers no. 29) Therefore, this signal is most probably used to force a prone position on the whole line to conceal it from the view of the enemy.

S17  Rise Up

As with the signal ‘Lie Down’ (S16), no particular rule is given for the use of this bugle call. Skirmishers will rise from a prone position without any further commands when a movement is ordered, as no indications are given to the contrary.

S18  Rally by Fours

‘A company deployed as skirmishers, is rallied in order to oppose the enemy with better success; the rallies are made at a run, and with bayonets fixed; when ordered to rally, the skirmishers fix bayonets without command.’ (Hardee, Instruction for Skirmishers nos. 127) Five different calls are available to signal which rally is to be made:
by fours, by sections, by platoons, on the reserve and on the battalion. Each can be given while marching or at a halt. Furthermore, these can be given subsequently to increase the body of rallied troops the better to resist the enemy.

The signal ‘Rally by Fours’ indicates that each group of four skirmishers forms a small square, serving for mutual support. ‘The four men in each group will come to a ready, fire as occasion may offer, and load without moving their feet.’ (Hardee, Instruction for Skirmishers no. 129) The officers and buglers place themselves in the center of the square formed by their guards while the sergeants join the group nearest to them.

S19 Rally by Sections

This call rallies all skirmishers of one section onto the group selected by its chief. The men form a compact circle and the two exterior ranks will fire (see Hardee, Instruction for Skirmishers nos. 131-134).

Casey presents alternative music for this signal in his Infantry Tactics. Hardee had to invent his own signal for this call as well, as the Ordonnance for the Chasseurs d’Orléans does not include signals for the rally by sections nor by platoons. Casey deviates less from the French example by reusing the starting phrase of a dropped rally call (compare Ralliement sur les Centres on p.233 of the Ordonnance), but his version has not been found in the other sources used for this study.

S20 Rally by Platoons

This signal is given to rally the skirmishers by platoon, according to the same principles as the rally by sections (see Hardee, Instruction for Skirmishers nos. 136-137). Casey’s version is given on the next page. The more commonly found version is the one of Hardee’s Light Infantry Tactics.
S21 Rally on the Reserve

This signal orders the skirmish line to rally on its reserve, forming groups of fours and sections as they rush to the rear in a direction to unmask the reserve. The reserve will form the front half of a square and the incoming skirmishers will complete it by forming its rear. All will fire upon the enemy. The captain can march this square away from danger or redeploy the skirmishers (see Hardee, *Instruction for Skirmishers* nos. 138-159). In the latter case, it is unlikely that a bugle call needs to be used as the company will be in close order once rallied.

S22 Rally on the Battalion

‘At this command, the skirmishers and the reserve, no matter what position the company to which they belong may occupy in order of battle, will rapidly unmask the front of the battalion, directing themselves in a run towards its nearest flank, and then form in its rear.’ (Hardee, *Instruction for Skirmishers* no. 161) The skirmishers will take the quick step as soon as they have passed the file closers and they will be formed into their proper subdivision by their chief behind the wings of the battalion.
S23  Assemble on the Battalion

'A company deployed as skirmishers will be assembled when there is no longer danger of being disturbed; the assembly will be made habitually in quick time.' (Hardee, Instruction for Skirmishers no. 169) Only one signal exists for the several methods given in the Light Infantry Tactics. However, they all follow the same gradual procedure to assemble the men: they form groups of fours, then re-form the company, and finally rejoin the battalion under the command of their captain. As there is no longer any threat, the captain has ample time to instruct his skirmishers as to the exact method he wishes to employ.

This call is an abbreviated version of ‘The Assembly’ (G3) as found in the general calls.
Additional Calls

Orders for non-commissioned officers can be found in Nevins & Vaas. These also appear in the *Ordonnance* with the indication that each call has to be repeated three times. The signal ‘Orders for Orderly Sergeants’ (G15) was all that Hardee deemed necessary for this purpose, though with a much more complicated music. It is unclear whether this call indicates an assembly of all sergeants or corporals in a regiment, or only those on some sort of daily duty. The police guard, either in camp or garrison, would be the most logical place for them to meet and receive their orders.

Honors to be paid by the troops (see *Regulations* nos. 227-240) are included in every drum manual, but Hardee is silent on this topic. ‘The Point of War, or first part of the three Camps, is a Compliment which a guard pays a Governor of a State and to no other person’ except the President of the US (Ashworth, p.20). The general or standing salute in Hart (p. 38) is a march in common time. ‘Honors paid by Drum Corps’ are a national march, ‘three ruffles or cheers,’ two of the same or a march (see Hart, p. 57 and Gilham, nos. 730-731). The honors will also be paid when presenting arms to an inspecting officer at a review, unless the inspecting officer is junior to the commandant of the parade (see *Regulations* no. 343). The bugle equivalent to rolls is a short flourish, which is not included in the infantry calls. However, finding the bugle’s equivalent to a drum roll is possible as the different assemblies for non-commissioned officers all start with a single roll. For the bugle, this is an equally fixed sequence of three notes: two short middle-Gs followed by a middle-G as in the start of the calls given above and in the ‘School Call’ (G25).

In larger formation, specific unit calls were sometimes used. General Butterfield introduced such signals for his command, in effect reverting their removal from the bugle call book by Hardee. These calls would be sounded just before a signal was given to indicate which brigade or regiment was being addressed. These calls were not prescribed but made up by the men of the command.
A **Signal of Execution** is found in Casey’s *Infantry Tactics* but appears to be for large formations only, where the distances and number of men involved bring about an inherent inertia. The signal is ‘to be given by the general commanding more than one brigade of the line.’ (Casey, p. 229)

**Tunes for the Bugle** can be found in the 1861 publication of Nevins & Vaas (pp. 49-51). The latter is listed as their composer. The collection consists of nine marches in quick time and one in common time. No indication for their use is given, though their listing as tunes suggests a musical purpose. In an army context, these can be employed during daily dress parades, guard mounting, weekly inspections and to invigorate the troops during long marches. However, assessing to what extent they have actually been used during the American Civil War is beyond the scope of this study.