



Hancock County TAPS Code of Conduct

To ensure every Hancock County Veteran is honored with a live rendition of TAPS at their funeral or memorial service when possible.

The sounding of Taps at ceremonies is the most sacred duty a bugler can perform. Every effort should be made to sound a perfect Taps in keeping with the solemn and impressive occasion of a military ceremony.

Any standard trumpet, cornet, or bugle may be used to sound Taps for military funeral honors or memorial service.

Acceptance of Volunteer Assignment

1. Hancock County Taps buglers are volunteers and choose which assignments to accept. You are not required to volunteer for an assignment at any time.
2. If you do not wish to accept an assignment, you may simply delete the email.
3. If you want to accept the assignment, you should respond to the email and indicate you will accept it.
4. Before accepting an assignment, the bugler should ensure they are available at the date and time of the assignment. This should include availability at least one hour before and after the assignment to account for early arrival and potential funeral delays.
5. Once a bugler accepts an assignment, it is imperative that they follow through on their commitment. Failure to report to an assignment may dishonor the Veteran and their family members.

Attire

1. The first and most important principle is that the bugler must always present an honorable, respectful, and non-controversial appearance. Discrete civilian attire such as a dark suit and/or

black dress slacks with white dress shirt is always appropriate for male buglers. Similarly, dark skirt or slacks with white blouse would be suitable for females. Any attire must be clean and well maintained. Bugler is to prepare before the funeral, making sure to have the proper uniform and outerwear in case of inclement weather. A bugler's purpose is to provide honor and tribute to our military Veterans, not to draw attention to ourselves.

2. Those who are honorably separated veterans or currently serving members of the armed forces may, in strict accordance with military regulation, wear the dress or Class A uniform of their service. The individual is solely responsible for compliance with any pertinent regulations as to the wear of the military uniform under these circumstances.
3. If the bugler is a member of a Veterans Service Organization, the dress uniform of that group may be worn as well as Designated Honor Guard uniforms. Boy Scouts and Girl Scouts uniforms are also acceptable if complete and respectful in appearance.
4. Attire that is not acceptable includes, but is not limited to: casual civilian attire such as jeans, shorts, or t-shirts. No bright patterns or colors should be worn by any bugler. No marching band or drum corps uniforms are acceptable to sound Taps, as these uniforms draw attention to the wearer rather than the funeral service.

Performance of Taps

1. The volunteer bugler should arrive at the location of a service sufficiently in advance of the expected arrival of the funeral party or program beginning in case of special memorial events. A reasonable rule to follow is to allow a thirty-minute cushion before you are asked to arrive. Remember—you can be two hours early for Taps but you cannot be two minutes late. Please learn how long it will take you to travel to the location and where to report before the day of the event.
2. Bugler is to report promptly to the funeral site and report to a member of the Hancock County Memorial Squad, the funeral director, or other person in charge. The bugler should indicate that they are a representative of Hancock County Taps to perform Taps at the request of the family.
3. The bugler is under the direction of the detail leader, whether this is the Hancock County Memorial Squad, funeral director, or other person in charge. You may suggest details about where and when to sound Taps if asked and in accordance with the directives below.
4. The bugler is to position themselves near the gravesite, angled from the firing party. The bugler should take care to stand in a location where the sound will carry to the funeral party and where they can be seen. The bell of the instrument should be pointed towards the casket or slightly to one side of the casket. A bugler should follow the directions of the Hancock County Memorial Squad if they differ from these instructions.
5. At the service site, the bugler should not perform a full performance of Taps to practice or warm up. You should warm up before your arrival, and may warm up at the site without sounding Taps or any parts of Taps. You should attempt to avoid playing when funeral attendees begin to arrive.

6. The bugler will stand “at ease” (feet shoulder width apart, bugle held in front of you, with both hands on the instrument) during the funeral service. In cold weather, you are permitted to blow warm air through your instrument and to keep your mouthpiece warm.
7. When the service is complete, the OIC or NCOIC will Present Arms. The firing party will come to attention and fire three volleys. The bugler will sound Taps after the third volley. The bugler should wait approximately one to two seconds after the third volley before beginning Taps. After sounding Taps, the bugler will return to the position of “at ease.”
8. When a firing party is not available, the bugler will sound Taps on completion of the service and at an arranged signal by either the OIC, NCOIC, or officiating person. After sounding Taps, the bugler will return to the position of “at ease.”
9. The bugler should remain for the entirety of the funeral service, and shall not leave until the service is complete.

Compensation or Donations

1. Under no circumstances shall a member of Hancock County Taps require, request, or otherwise suggest that they be compensated for their participation in a military funeral honors service.
2. If you are offered unsolicited compensation, first suggest that donations can be made to Hancock County Taps through the Veterans Service Office. If a person insists you accept the compensation, accept the compensation with humility and gratitude.

Members of Hancock County Taps are to uphold and comply with all included requirements herein. Failure to abide by these requirements may result in removal from the organization.