MANUAL FOR BUGLERS

JULY 2003

PREFACE

This manual provides information and guidance on the procedures for performing official bugle calls. As a military Bugler, you are considered the subject matter expert on the proper protocols for all military events involving a solo Bugler. This manual will ensure each Bugler is well prepared to present a sharp, professional performance and appearance.

Prepared by
Navy Music Program Management Office
Navy Personnel Command

INTRODUCTION

Since the early days of sail, the Bugler has been an integral part of Navy Customs & Traditions. It was the Bugler who sounded a warning call aboard ship for almost every activity in which designated groups of Sailors were required. You are probably already familiar with a number of these calls such as *Reveille*, *Mess Call*, *Evening Colors*, and *Taps*, but these are merely four of the over 100 bugle calls that have been used in the Navy over the years.

Before the days of modern technology, the bugle was one of the few means by which orders could be sent from the quarterdeck to any section of the ship. On small ships, a single Bugler could be heard everywhere on the ship while, on larger vessels, as many as two or three additional Buglers were used to relay calls down the hatches into remote parts of the ship.

Even with all of today's modern methods of communication, the bugle remains the preferred means of rendering honors, to gain Sailors' attention for a special announcement, or to honor a fallen Shipmate, to name but a few.

The use of a bugle, or similar instrument, as a military signaling device dates back many centuries; most likely originating when someone discovered a cow's or sheep's horn made a noise when air was blown through it. Down through the ages, many improvements were made on these instruments. No doubt, the first improvement was replacing the animal's horn with one fashioned from metal. Fashioning horns out of metal permitted more careful design of the instruments and since the metal could be formed into almost any shape, it led to a study of proper size and shape of the tube with

which to produce a pleasing sound.

Before the bugle was as well developed as it is now, no one attempted to play a standard set of calls on the instrument. Instead, players invented their own calls and their skill as a Bugler was judged by the loudness of their blasts.

As the quality of the instrument improved, so did the calls performed on them. And the technical skills involved in sounding the calls have changed as well. As a result, bugle calls progressed way beyond being just single tone blasts to take their place among other melodic compositions. Loudness alone is no longer considered a standard of excellence. Today, tone quality, rhythm, and intonation are much more important to you as a Bugler than the amount of noise you can make.

Bureau of Naval Personnel
Navy Personnel Command

CONTENTS

Page

Preface.....i

Introduction.....ii

Required Bugle Calls.....2

Rendering Burial Honors (Taps).....8

Performing Morning Colors.....10

Performing Evening Colors.....11

Performing Other Ceremonies and Events.....13

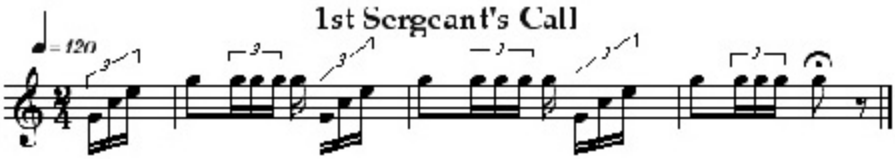
Prescribed Uniform.....14

Appendix A.....A-1

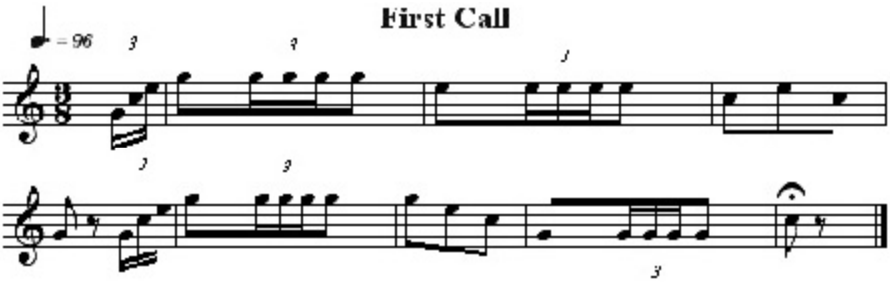
REQUIRED BUGLE CALLS

All Buglers must memorize the following calls, and be ready and able to perform each of them at any time.

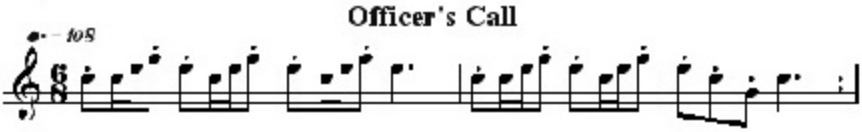
1. **First Sergeant's Call** – This call signals that the First Sergeant is about to form the company. The Marine Corps also uses this call at enlisted Dining-Ins/Dining-Outs.



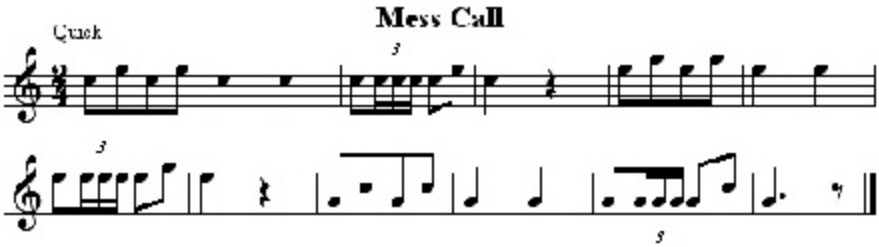
2. **First Call** – Sounded as a warning to notify personnel to prepare to assemble for a formation. First Call is also sounded to signal personnel to stand-by for Colors. First Call is sounded five minutes prior to executing Morning and Evening Colors.



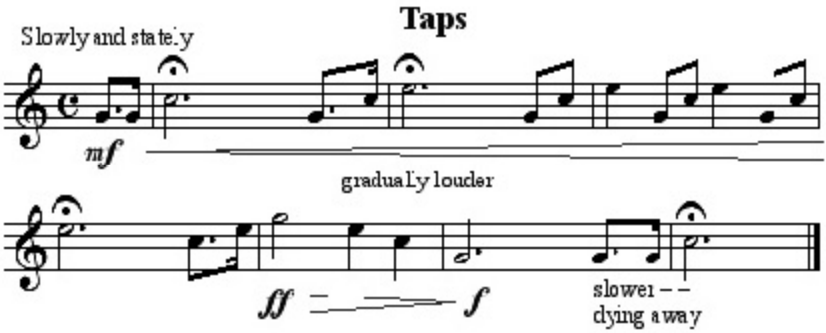
3. **Officer's Call** – This call is used in all branches of service to signal officers to assemble at a designated place.



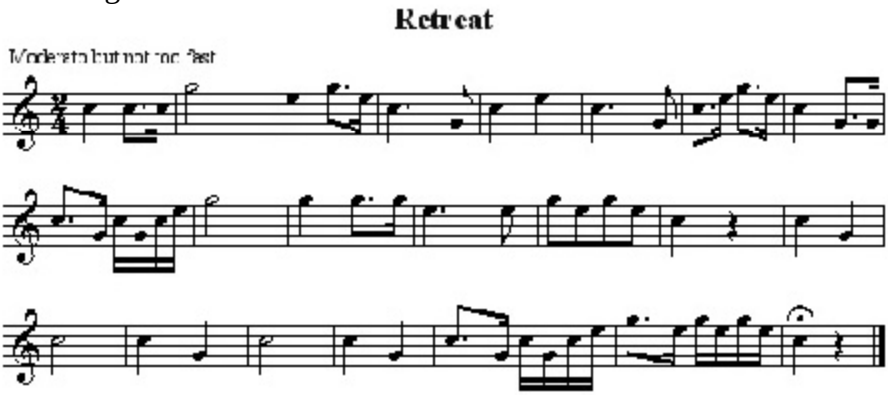
4. **Mess Call** – This call is used in all branches of service to signal personnel to form for breakfast, lunch, or dinner. It is also sounded, occasionally, at Dining-Ins and Dining-Outs to signal mealtime.



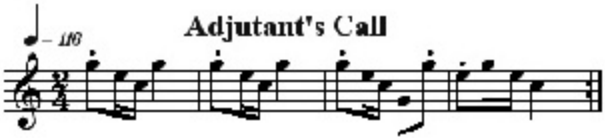
5. **Taps** – This call is sounded at the end of a military funeral, and on other occasions as directed, to signal the passing of a fallen comrade. This call is also sounded at the end of the day to signal *lights-out* [all unauthorized lights are to be extinguished in berthing compartments and other areas, as directed].



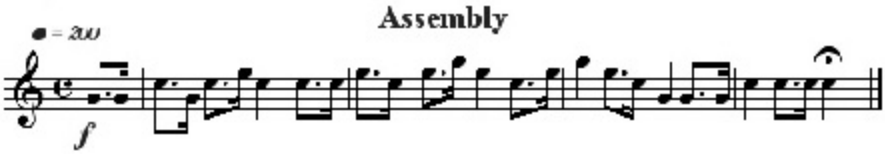
6. **Retreat** – Signals the end of the official workday. It is also sounded for Evening Colors (Navy and Marine Corps) when the Flag is lowered. The Army also uses *Retreat* to precede the sounding of *To the Colors*.



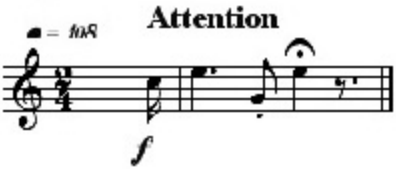
7. **Adjutant's Call** – Indicates the Adjutant is about to form the guard, battalion, or brigade.



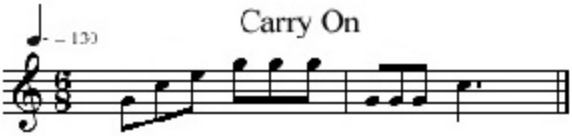
8. **Assembly** – Signals troops to assemble at a designated place.



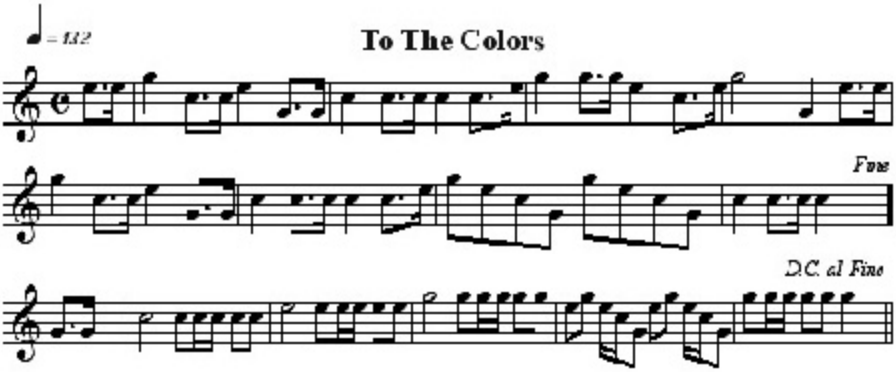
9. **Attention** – Calls troops to attention. This call immediately precedes Colors.



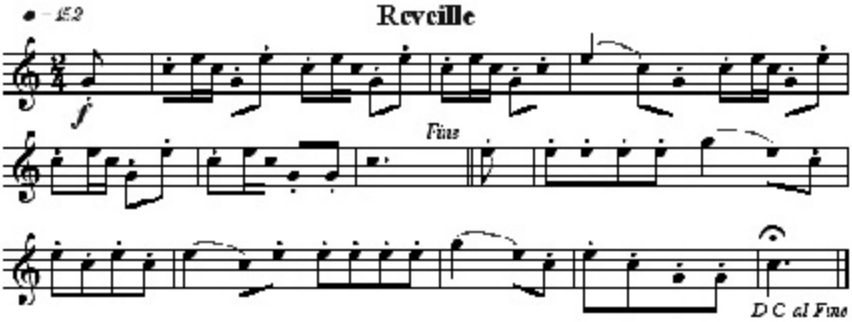
10. **Carry On** – Used in Navy and Marine Corps ceremonies to signify the release of the hand salute and a resumption of duties (primarily used in conjunction with Morning and Evening Colors routines).



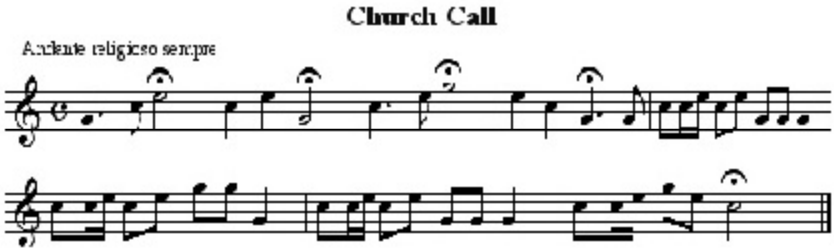
11. **To the Colors** – Sounded in place of the National Anthem during Morning Colors (Navy and Marine Corps). In the Army, it is used to lower the Flag at Evening Colors.



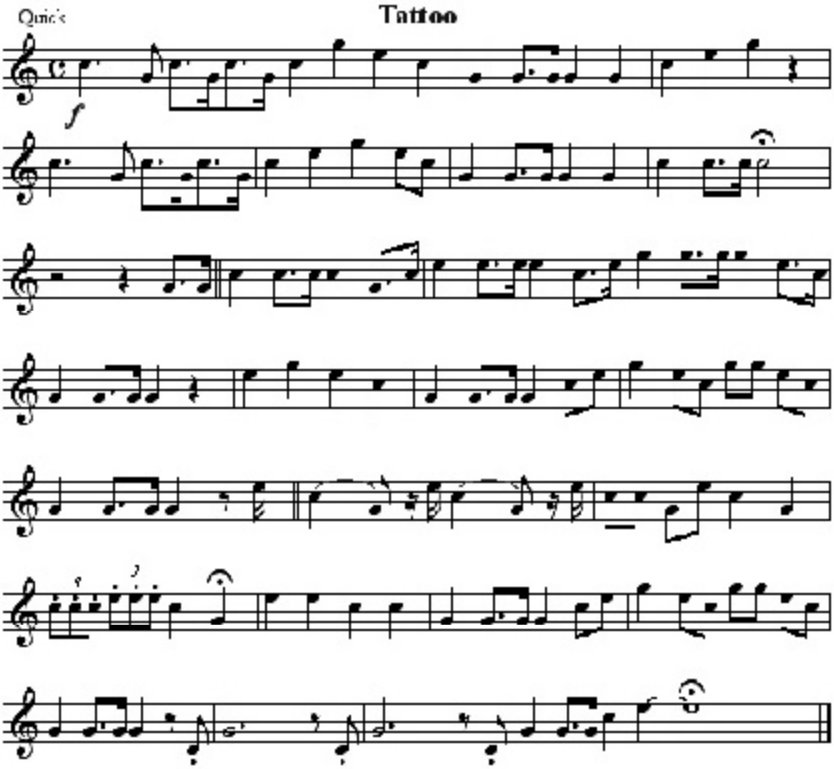
12. **Reveille** – Signals morning roll call or wake up. The Army also uses *Reveille* during Morning Colors ceremonies to raise the Flag.



13. **Church Call** – Signals divine services are about to be held. May also be used to form a funeral escort/procession.

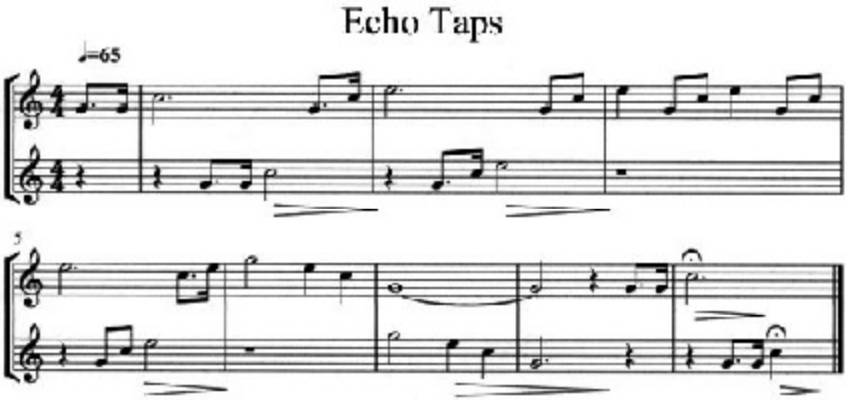


14. **Tattoo** – Sounded to signal that all lights in squad rooms are to be extinguished and all loud talking and other disturbances are to be discontinued within 15 minutes.



15. **Echo Taps** – *Echo Taps* has become popular in recent years for its haunting "effect" and is often used in remembrance ceremonies, Patriotic events, and on special-occasions; however, *Echo Taps* is ***not*** appropriate for use in rendering Burial Honors.

Echo Taps is sounded by two Buglers. To correctly perform this call, the Primary Bugler is positioned in sight of the audience with the Echo Bugler positioned approximately 40-50 paces away and, whenever possible, out of sight of the audience. NOTE: Due to the distance between the two, the Echo Bugler will sound "flat" in comparison to the Primary Bugler. To compensate, the Echo Bugler must tune "high" in order to match the pitch of the Primary Bugler. Correct sounding of *Echo Taps* requires total concentration and cooperation and should always be rehearsed prior to performance; preferrably at the actual performance site.



RENDERING BURIAL HONORS (Taps)

Taps is by far the single most important bugle call you'll perform. This solemn and somber melody must be performed with great dignity and respect. Most often, the Bugler will be the only military musician present at a burial. In this role, you will usually be working with a rifle detail and/or a flag detail. However, there may be times when you are the only military representative present at a burial. In all cases, you must be thoroughly knowledgeable of proper protocols and sequences of events.

With a Rifle Detail

The Rifle Detail will consist of eight members: One Petty Officer in Charge (POIC) and seven rifle bearers. The Bugler takes all commands from the POIC; however, be ready to execute the correct command at the proper time, without prompting, should the POIC fail to issue a required command. You will normally find the POICs to be very experienced and well trained; however, you should always make a point to review the following sequence of events with the POIC prior to arriving at the gravesite. This will help avoid any unnecessary confusion and ensure a professional performance:

Sequence:

1. Be early. Funeral services can vary greatly in length, so it's nearly impossible to predict the exact time the procession will arrive graveside. Nothing is more unprofessional than to see the Honor Detail getting out of vehicles and hurrying to their positions

as the hearse and family arrive. Be early – be in position – and be ready to go.

2. Position yourself 15-20 paces from the rifle detail. Due to varying terrain surfaces and grave locations, the exact placement of your position may vary; however, ensure you position yourself so you are visible to the family.

3. Stand at PARADE-REST (See appendix A)

4. POIC gives the command to come to ATTENTION immediately when the hearse comes into view.

5. POIC gives the command to PRESENT-ARMS when the casket is brought out and begins to move – hold your salute until the casket is in place and the POIC gives the command ORDER-ARMS.

6. POIC gives the command to go to PARADE-REST.

7. Graveside service begins.

8. On POIC's command, come to ATTENTION.

9. POIC commands the rifle detail to "Ready – Aim - Fire." The detail will fire three volleys (3 volleys x 7 rifle bearers = 21 "guns"). Bugler brings horn up on 2nd or 3rd volley to prepare for sounding *Taps* (see Appendix A).

10. Wait for POIC to order PRESENT-ARMS then immediately begin sounding *Taps*.

11. Upon completion of *Taps*, bring horn down to your LEFT hand and SALUTE (see Appendix A).

12. Release salute and remain at ATTENTION.

13. If a Flag Detail is present, they will fold and present the Flag to the family.

14. Follow the POIC's commands to exit the area. Step off smartly with horn at the carry. [step off from a position of ATTENTION with horn in the left hand (see appendix A-3)]

Without a Rifle Detail

The procedures and sequence remain essentially the same as with a Rifle Detail; however, you will execute all commands on your own (i.e., attention, saluting) with the exception of sounding *Taps*, which will be cued by the Chaplain or a designated representative.

PERFORMING MORNING COLORS

Morning Colors routine begins with the sounding of *First Call* ("First Call to Colors") at 0755 followed by the raising of the Flag at 0800 [Note: Every day of the year, on ships and stations throughout the world, the Flag of the United States (Colors) is raised at 0800 while the National Anthem is played or the appropriate bugle call is sounded]. A Bugler performs Morning Colors in the absence of a band, or when otherwise directed. In addition to the band or Bugler, there will also be a Colors Detail. The Colors or "Flag" Detail usually consists of three members; two Flag bearers and a POIC/CPOIC. The POIC/CPOIC will issue all commands. NOTE: In the absence of a POIC/CPOIC to issue commands, sound *First Call, Attention, To the Colors,* and *Carry On* automatically at the appropriate times, as indicated below:

Sequence:

1. Report to the base of the flagpole along with the Colors Detail no later than 0750, or as directed. Assume the position of PARADE-REST (see Appendix A) within 10-15 paces of the flagpole.

2. At 0755 (five minutes prior to Colors), come to ATTENTION and sound *First Call*. Return to PARADE-REST.

3. At 0800, come to ATTENTION, sound *Attention* immediately followed by *To the Colors.*

4. Upon completion of *To the Colors* sound *Carry On*.

5. Bring horn down (left hand – see appendix A) and SALUTE.

6. Step off smartly and exit the area following the Colors Detail.

PERFORMING EVENING COLORS

Evening Colors routine begins with the sounding of *First Call* ("First Call to Colors") at five minutes prior to sunset, followed by the lowering of the Flag at sunset [just as with Morning Colors, every day of the year, on ships and stations throughout the world, the Flag of the United States (Colors) is lowered at Sunset while the National Anthem is played or the appropriate bugle call is sounded]. A Bugler performs Evening Colors in the absence of a band, or when otherwise directed. As with Morning Colors, there will be a two to three member detail to lower the Flag. If there is a not a Detail POIC/CPOIC present, sound *First Call, Attention, Retreat,* and *Carry On* automatically at the appropriate times, as indicated below. Be aware, since Evening Colors is performed at "sunset," it does not occur at the same time every day as with Morning Colors. For that reason, ships and stations publish daily sunset and sunrise times in the *Plan of the Day/Plan of the Week*. Check with the Quarterdeck for the appropriate time before performing Evening Colors, and follow the sequence below:

Sequence:

1. After confirming the correct time of sunset, report to the base of the flagpole along with the Colors Detail no later than 10-minutes prior to sunset, or as directed. Assume the position of PARADE-REST (see Appendix A) within 10-15 paces of the flagpole.

2. At 5-minutes prior to Sunset, come to ATTENTION and sound *First Call.* Return to PARADE-REST.

3. At Sunset, come to ATTENTION and sound *Attention* followed by *Retreat*.

4. Upon completion of *Retreat*, sound *Carry On*.

5. Bring horn down (left hand – see Appendix A) and SALUTE.

6. Step off smartly and exit the area following the Colors Detail.

PERFORMING OTHER CEREMONIES AND EVENTS

Burial Honors, and Morning and Evening Colors are the most common of events and ceremonies involving a Bugler; however, there are a number of other events that also require bugle calls. For example, during ceremonies involving a full band, such as a Change of Command Ceremony, *Attention* may need to be sounded several times. Also, at a Dining-In or Dining-Out, a Bugler may be required to play *Officer's Call* and *Mess Call*. Another common event requiring a Bugler is a Pass-in-Review. On this occasion, a Bugler will be required to sound *Adjutant's Call* and *Attention*.

Each ceremony is different and may or may not involve the sounding of each call as listed. Your Unit Leader will brief and direct you, as needed, during these events. Always warm-up well before any ceremony or event, as you may be required to sound a call after standing idle for some time. Above all, remember accuracy, intonation, military bearing, and a sharp appearance are the keys to a successful performance.

PRESCRIBED UNIFORM

Burial Honors – Full Dress Blue/White [1], as applicable, for any ceremony or event where *Taps* is being sounded in honor of a fallen Shipmate(s). Other occasions where *Taps* is sounded, in addition to burials, may include memorial services, funeral services, days of remembrance ceremonies, ceremonies in honor of National Holidays, and a host of others held to honor the service and sacrifice of a member(s).

[1] Full Dress always includes the wearing of white gloves

Morning & Evening Colors – Uniform of the Day or, as directed.

Dining-In/Dining-Out – Mess Dress or Service Dress Blue/White, as directed.

Other Occasions – As prescribed. Notes:

[1] The Bugler should always wear the uniform prescribed for the *official-party*, unless otherwise directed.

[2] The requestor may not always know which is the appropriate uniform to prescribe, so it is incumbent on you to be knowledgeable of correct protocols.

APPENDIX A

Parade Rest

Trumpet is held parallel to the deck in the left hand. Right hand is behind back, palm facing away from the body, fingers straight and together. Feet are approximately shoulder width apart.

NOTE: For Burial Honors, Morning and Evening Colors, the trumpet is held in the **LEFT** hand vice the usual right hand. This is to allow for salutes.

Modified Parade Rest

Trumpet is held parallel to the deck and across the body in the left hand. Right hand is placed under the left, palm towards the body. Feet are approximately shoulder width apart.

Attention

Trumpet is held parallel to the deck and perpendicular to the body in the left hand. Right hand is held along side at the seam of the trousers, fingers curled. Feet are together with toes slightly separated.

Manual of Instrument

(Count 1)

The manual of instruments is always performed from the position of Attention. On count one, the right hand grasps the trumpet at the lead pipe and valve area.

Manual of Instrument

(Count 2)

On count two, the trumpet is brought to the front, parallel to the body.

Manual of Instrument

(Count 3)

On count three, the trumpet is brought to the playing position.

When taking the instrument down, simply reverse the steps.

NOTE: Be sure to place the trumpet in your LEFT hand on the last count, so your right hand is free to salute.

Salute

Trumpet is in left hand, parallel to the deck. Right hand delivers salute.