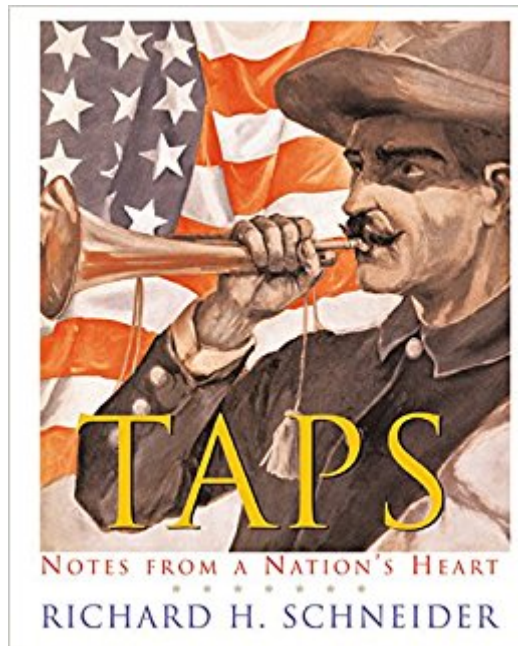




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# Taps: Notes From A Nation's Heart



## Synopsis

No song is more intrinsically woven into the American tapestry than "Taps." Composed of a mere twenty-four notes, for nearly a century and a half it has been played to honor our country's fallen heroes, to pay tribute to our flag, and to herald the end of another day in a nation where freedom never sleeps. At one time or another every American has been touched by its haunting melody -- its clear, sad tones conjuring up memories of loved ones lost, instilling hope, bringing comfort and peace. In a work of heart and scholarship, author Richard H. Schneider examines the legends, the history, and the enduring importance of a simple, soaring anthem that was first played in the aftermath of a horrific confrontation on American soil -- the gift of a Union officer to his brave, battle-weary troops. Here the truths and myths of this plaintive bugle call are brought to light, mingled with poignant and stirring recollections of people from all walks of life -- soldiers and civilians, men and women, young and old -- whose lives have been influenced by it. A song for the generations -- past and to come -- its power is unequaled, its legacy is every American's. In these challenging times of tribulation and uncertainty, Richard H. Schneider's "Taps" serves as a reminder of a great nation's struggles and triumphs, offering a balm for the spirit and hope for a new century.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

This homage to the dolorous military tune "Taps" is light on substance but heavy on sentiment. Schneider, a veteran of the Battle of the Bulge in WWII and author of the forthcoming children's book *Zeek the Christmas Tree Mouse*, begins with the history of the song, dispelling many myths along the way. On a balmy Virginia night in 1862, with Union and Confederate soldiers weary during

the Seven Days Battles, Union general Daniel Butterfield ordered the brigade bugler, Private Oliver Willcox, to write a soothing tune to send the troops to sleep. The poignant tune quickly spread throughout the North and the South, and today it is played at many official funerals and is the last sound soldiers hear before extinguishing their lights. The pace slows when Schneider discusses the origins of the bugle, the national monuments where "Taps" can be heard (such as Arlington National Cemetery) and how the tune has been remembered in literature. Highlighted throughout, however, are many interesting pieces of Americana and sidebars of quotes from such personalities as Yogi Berra, himself a WWII veteran. Schneider also explores the evolution of the lyrics that have been set to the tune (one of the most popular being "Day is done,/ Gone the sun,/ From the hills, from the lake, from the skies") and interviews the bugler at President Kennedy's funeral, whose broken note was seen by the press as a "tear" and was repeated by other buglers for weeks afterwards. While more solid books on a single song have been written before (e.g., Danny Boy by Malachy McCourt), Schneider's story is the only one devoted to "Taps

Schneider provides a cultural history of the origins and significance of one of this nation's most readily recognizable tunes. Penned by Civil War general Daniel Adams Butterfield in 1862, "Taps" was composed as a tribute to both fallen soldiers and distraught survivors. After rapidly spreading through the military, the song took on a life of its own, becoming a haunting musical symbol of solace, solidarity, and sorrow. In addition to tracing the evolution of "Taps" through several wars and countless generations, the author also includes a number of personal accolades written by both famous Americans and ordinary citizens. An authoritative, first-class treatment of a familiar slice of Americana. Margaret Flanagan

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Has all the information related to Taps. Also, what happened to those people who wrote and played it. Recommend this to all and all libraries should have this on their shelves.

arrive on time. very good . Very good for the price. my parents need it, Satisfied.

As a Marine Corps veteran of the Vietnam war, I have to say that Richard Schneider has written (composed from the heart, would be a better description) a wonderful little book about the most beautiful notes ever written. The book is not only a "feel-good" book for those for which "Taps" holds a special place in their hearts, it is also an informative book with historical elements and anecdotes to please the history minded reader. I especially liked the poems in the rear of the book that added

to the poignancy of the theme. This book fills a certain void that occurred after 9/11 because even though the flag got a lot of attention, "Taps" deserves some attention also.

The book is truly a labor of love, and it's obvious. Schneider is to be commended for having once and for all related the history of "Taps," and debunking many myths about its origin. It is fortuitous that the author connected with Jari Villaneuva, an outstanding trumpeter, and the foremost authority on "Taps," living or dead. One minor flaw is an erroneous reference to an E-flat trumpet, near the end of the book. The book loses one star in this review because of the awful design, in which the text is interrupted again and again by sidebar stories. Editor: there had to be a better way to present this information!

This book gives us a handy reference to the origins of Taps. We need it, for, as well as the true story, here is also an exploration of the other, long told and beautifully poetic myth about the origins of the tune. One challenge for historians is this: who wrote the words that we most often sing (or think in our minds silently) to go with the music.... "Day is done...(etc.)" Even the authorities Schneider relies on don't have the answer. It goes back to Harrison's Landing and General Dan.

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