



HE that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches; He that overcometh shall not be hurt of the second death. (Rev 2:11)

BEHOLD, I shew you a mystery; We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, 52 In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. (1 Cor 15:51-52)

The shadows are lengthening for me. The twilight is here. My days of old have vanished - tone and tints. They have gone glimmering through the dreams of things that were. Their memory is one of wondrous beauty, watered by tears and coaxed and caressed by the smiles of yesterday. I listen then, but with thirsty ear, for the witching melody of faint bugles blowing reveille, of far drums beating the long roll.

In my dreams I hear again the crash of guns, the rattle of musketry, the strange, mournful mutter of the battlefield. But in the evening of my memory I come back to West Point. Always there echoes and re-echoes: Duty, Honor, Country.

Today marks my final roll call with you. But I want you to know that when I cross the river, my last conscious thoughts will be of the Corps, and the Corps, and the Corps

General Douglas MacArthur
Farewell Address to Corp of Cadets at West Point, NY

12 May 1962

To every veteran of my generation or earlier, the word 'Reveille' bears a special meaning and particular significance. It is the bugler's call of a new day dawning filled with other challenges and adventures. The notes of the bugler are clear and crisp so that there can be no misunderstanding of the call being sounded. In fact, all bugle calls are distinct and clearly read by the soldier in the profession of arms. It is for this reason that the bugle has been adopted by armies around the world to convey timely commands that cannot be confused in the heat of battle. *7 And even things without life giving sound, whether pipe or harp, except they give a distinction in the sounds, how shall it be known what is piped or harped? 8 For if the trumpet give an uncertain sound, who shall prepare himself to the battle?* (1 Cor 14:7-8)

Unfortunately, in my thinking, the bugle is going the way of mounted cavalry and the saber. War has become impersonal in our push button age. Large segments of the battle line can be destroyed by high tech devices that require no courage or gallantry to activate. Thousands, and indeed millions of a city, can perish by advanced weaponry that does not require the opposing force to even see the city or its inhabitants. An intercontinental ballistic missile has no conscience, no mercy, and no remorse. If we are not required to observe the faces of children who perish at our hands, our consciences are not offended. The bugle no longer heralds the call of troops to the line.

Just as every trained soldier knows well the call of reveille, he also knows the call of Tattoo and Taps. These latter calls also have a special meaning. According to the first chapter of the Book of Genesis, each day begins at night, i.e., *And the evening and the morning were the first day.* (Gen 1:5) So, it seems logical to consider that there are no reveille's without being preceded by Tattoo and Taps. All of our honored military dead are sent into the night of the long sleep by the sounding of taps. They repine in sleep awaiting, as General MacArthur says, *for the witching melody of faint bugles blowing reveille, of far drums beating the long roll.*

Perhaps those faint notes of the bugler's reveille may be heard in faint waftings in the twilight of the final days of an old soldier even before the final taps at graveside.

Every Christian is a soldier in the Army of God; and every non-Christian is also in an army of an altogether different nature. One is on the long march up the slopes to the Gates of Splendor; the other, on a rabble-rousing walk down the Broad Way that leads to the Pit and destruction. These latter do not hear or know the message the Bugle Notes of God convey. So they wander aimlessly and without a moral compass. But we of faith are true-hearted soldiers in the Army of God, and we must know the meaning of God's Bugle calls. We know already that Reveille is our first call issued by the Holy Spirit rallying our souls to life eternal. We had no part in the sounding since we were asleep (dead in trespasses and sins). But we arouse to life and respond to God's call. We know, as well, the final call at the Midnight of Life to be Taps. We may not hear this call since it is the last of our worldly consciousness. What of all the bugle calls between Reveille and Taps?

There are many trumpet calls of the Lord, and they are sounded with no *uncertain sound*. His soldiers, young old, male, and female – will respond with immediate dispatch to those calls of the Lord whether in darkness of night, or brilliance of day. I will cover only a few of those bugle calls of life due to the brevity of a devotion; however, there are many more than the few we cover.

First Call in the Army is sounded a few minutes (usually 10) before Reveille to alert the soldier of the coming moment of beginnings of daily duties. In God's Army, it is the First Call of the Holy Spirit to alert the dead ears of the Spoken Word of Life. The

clear notes penetrate the dead membranes of the ear, into the brain and heart ere a warm pulse of the soul begins to beat at Reveille.

When we first are awakened to the salvation of God, we must have a marching order and ensign. For the Christian, that symbol is the CROSS. Following our arousal from bed, we must acknowledge the Colors of our marching army – that is illustrated by the sounding of the Bugler's Call, *TO THE COLORS*. Every day of my life as a soldier, I stood at reverent attention at this morning call. So should Christians worship the Lord, not in the spirit of worldly revelry, but according to the high honor and reverence due to our Supreme Commander – the Lord Jesus Christ.

In the Church, we are commanded to assemble ourselves together in the Name of our Lord for worship. The Army Bugle Call to alert to this duty is THE ASSEMBLY. The brigade or regiment gathers at this call to receive further instruction. The Church responds to THE ASSEMBLY in order to worship the Lord in the Beauty of Holiness. *23 Let us hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering; (for he is faithful that promised;)* *24 And let us consider one another to provoke unto love and to good works: 25 Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching.* (Heb 10:23-25)

In countries in which the reformed liturgical churches predominate, the church bells are sounded at 6:00 am 12:00 noon and 6:00 pm to remind the people to pray the Lord's Prayer. In some countries, it sounds the Angelus. But on the Lord's Day when the Lord's Supper will be served, the Lord's Bugle call is 'MESS CALL.' Believers gather about the Lord's Table to receive the emblems of Bread and Wine spiritually representing the Presence of the Body and Blood of our Lord Jesus Christ shed for us. An army travels on its stomach, we are told, and so does the Christian Army. If we receive the Communion of the Lord aright, we are strengthened for our long march into enemy territory (which is all that existing apart from the Church).

There is one bugle call in the military which is less attractive to those who are up and about doing the duties of the day. That call is 'SICK CALL.' Those soldiers who are sick must be rehabilitated before joining those in the line. We see the same in the Church. Many are weak or troubled with doubt. They must be attended to with love, sound counsel, and understanding before being entrusted to teach or lead others.

As I mentioned earlier, the old soldier may not hear the playing of Taps in this life, and he certainly shall not hear it in the next because there is no night or sleep in that Paradise of his Final Bivouac. But he will likely hear the Last Tattoo which is the bugle call preparatory to Taps. The haunting melody of 'THE TATTOO' may gradually permeate his conscious thoughts in the winter of his days. It is the Lord's way of alerting his chosen vessel that the march is coming to an end, and the hard road will end soon. It may be nearing the time to transfer out of the old ground army of the Church Militant and be received into the Church Triumphant. General MacArthur heard the faint notes of the Last Tattoo at his last visit to West Point. General Thomas J. (Stonewall) Jackson heard the faint sound of the Trumpet just hours before passing. His last words, *Let us cross over the river and rest under the shade of the trees.* He died on Sunday which fulfilled his desire.

Christian soldiers may all have premonitions of the end. Last words of great ministers are often profoundly spiritual.

In the words of John Bunyan, all of God's Chosen will hear the stirring notes of reveille upon crossing Jordan Banks: As the soldier of the cross passed over, we are told: *Then said he, 'I am going to my Father's; and though with great difficulty I am got hither, yet now I do not repent me of all the trouble I have been at to arrive where I am. My sword I give*

to him that shall succeed me in my pilgrimage, and my courage and skill to him that can get it. My marks and scars I carry with me, to be a witness for me that I have fought His battles who now will be my rewarder.'.... So he passed over, and all the trumpets sounded for him on the other side.

That Bugle Call of Reveille will be the first we hear in Heaven.