

Presentation at the Cemetery Dedication January 21, 2011, by

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At the conclusion of our Nation's great Civil War Union Veterans formed the first veteran's organization called the Grand Army of the Republic. The GAR fought for veteran's benefits. However, as their numbers became smaller over the years they wished to transfer their responsibilities to their heir organization the Sons of Union of Union Veterans of the Civil War, this was accomplished by Act of Congress.

The Sons of Union Veterans of the Civil War, of which I am a member, keeps alive the accomplishments as well as the goals of those Union veterans. We the members of this organization are actual descendants of these veterans.

I commemorate the Civil War, Spanish American War and Indian War soldiers who lay in this historic cemetery and encourage their final resting place be marked with the headstones provided by the Veterans Administration. Their names are Timothy Burk, Robert Hope, John Cooper and John Balback.

In 1862 Civil War Major General Daniel Butterfield was commanding a brigade in the Army of the Potomac. After a particularly hard day of fighting the troops settled down for the night along the James River. On this night General Butterfield felt that the evening bugle call was not as it should be. He felt the day's final call should bring comfort and peace to tired troubled men. With the help of his bugler Oliver Norton, Butterfield composed the music to what we all know today as TAPS.

Later in that campaign a funeral was being held during a lull in the fighting. The bugler played TAPS for the first time in lieu of the usual three volleys of musket fire. This was done because it was feared gunfire would renew the fighting.

The playing of TAPS was eventually written into Army regulations as part of the honors to be paid at military funerals.

I would like to conclude with the original words written for that Bugle Call.

Day is done,  
Gone the sun,  
From the lakes,  
From the hills,  
From the sky,  
All is well,  
Safely rest,  
God is near.

Fading light,  
Dims the sight,  
And a star,  
Gems the sky,  
Gleaming bright,  
From afar,  
Drawing near,  
Falls the night.

Thanks and praise,  
For our days,  
Neath the sun,  
Neath the stars,  
Neath the sky,

As we go,  
This we know,  
God is near.