



Bugle Calls (The Schedule)

The post commander held a wide range of authority in the conduct of the garrison. The daily schedule of bugle calls was one of his tools to regulate the activities of soldiers. Although the schedule would vary from season to season, the routine generally did not. The result was a regimented lifestyle that centered around the bugle call as a measure of time.

This schedule of calls is extracted from schedules used at Fort Union during its time of operation. The bugle calls are presented to help visitors envision Fort Union as an active military post. Differences between the historic army time schedule and this time schedule are noted in the description of the bugle calls. Some of the early and later bugle calls are played in a modern time context to correspond with current park hours.

8:15	Assembly of Trumpeters	The first signal for soldiers to awake from their blissful slumber; this call historically sounded between 4:45 a.m. and 6:00 a.m., depending on the season.
8:20	Reveille	Upon the last note of this call, the flag was raised, the morning gun was fired, and all men were out of their bunks and getting dressed for morning roll call.
8:25	Assembly	The men stood in formation outside their barracks for morning roll call.
8:30	Stable Call	Soldiers in the cavalry put on their white canvas stable clothing and reported to the stables to feed and groom their mounts. This was historically done right after morning roll call, about 6:15 a.m.
8:45	Water Call	Cavalry troopers watered their horses.
9:00	Mess Call	Breakfast usually consisted of bread and bacon, mush and molasses, or pancakes, and plenty of hot, black coffee. This signal ordinarily sounded between 6:30 a.m. and 7:00 a.m.
9:30	Fatigue Call	Those soldiers assigned to a morning work party reported to their assignments for fresh air and physical exercise. Typical work details included building repair and construction, cleanup of the post grounds, gardening, cutting firewood, and hauling water.
9:40	Sick Call	Soldiers who were ill reported to the hospital dispensary for examination by the surgeon. Those who were truly sick were excused from work for the day. Army surgeons were always watchful for malingerers- those who faked sickness to escape work.
10:00	Assembly of Trumpeters; Dress Guard Mounting	This was the first call for "Guard Mount," or the changing of the 24-hour guard detail.

10:05	Assembly of Guard, Details	Men assigned to guard duty assembled in front of their respective barracks.
10:10	Adjutant's Call	The guard details marched to the guard house where the Guard Mount ceremony took place. This historically took place around 8:00 a.m.
10:30	Drill Call	Soldiers assembled who were assigned to morning drill.
10:35	Assembly	Soldiers practiced battle formations and marching. New recruits learned more basic skills.
11:00	Recall	Morning work parties ceased at the sound of this call.
11:30	Recall	Morning drill ceased.
11:45	First Sergeant's Call	Company first sergeants reported to post headquarters with their "Morning Reports," which gave the number of their men sick, on guard duty, on drill or fatigue, or on special assignment.
12:00	Mess Call	Dinner was the main meal of the day- typically consisting of stew, or roast beef and potatoes, or corned beef and vegetables, plus coffee and bread.
1:00	Fatigue Call	Those soldiers assigned to afternoon work details had the opportunity to work off their dinner.
1:30	School Call	School for children resumed at the Post Chapel after dinner.
1:50	Boots and Saddles	This signal alerted cavalymen to put on their riding boots and saddle their horses.
1:55	Drill Call	Soldiers assembled who were assigned to afternoon mounted drill.
2:00	Assembly	Cavalymen practiced battle formations and exercised their horses. New recruits were taught the basics of horsemanship.
3:00	Recall	Afternoon drill ceased.
3:10	Stable Call	Cavalymen repeated the morning care of their horses.
3:15	Recall	Afternoon work parties ceased at the sound of this call.
3:30	Water Call	Horses received their afternoon watering.
3:55	Assembly of Trumpeters	As the preparatory call for Retreat Parade, "Assembly" usually sounded twenty minutes before sunset.
4:00	Assembly	The entire garrison turned out for the Retreat Parade ceremony. The actual lowering of the flag and playing of Retreat were at sunset.
4:25	Assembly of Trumpeters	This was the preparatory call for "Tattoo."
4:30	Tattoo	Historically played at about 9:00 p.m., "Tattoo" was the signal for enlisted men to prepare for bed and to secure the post.
4:35	Assembly	This was the last roll call of the day.
4:45	Extinguish Lights	By the last note of "Taps," all lights were extinguished, all men were bedded down in their bunks, and all loud talking ceased.