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Hello, and welcome to Busy Kids Love Music! I'm Carly, the creator of Busy Kids Do Piano, and I'm so glad you're here with me today.

Next week is Memorial Day here in the United States — a special day when we honor and remember the men and women who have served our country and given their lives in military service.

Today on the podcast, we're going to learn about a very important piece of music connected to Memorial Day. It's called Taps. Even though it's very short — only about 24 notes — it's one of the most powerful and meaningful melodies you'll ever hear.

Taps has a long and important history. It was first written during the American Civil War in 1862. A Union Army general named Daniel Butterfield wanted a new tune to signal to the soldiers that it was time to end the day.

Before Taps, soldiers used a bugle call from the French army. But General Butterfield thought it sounded too fancy. He wanted something simpler and more peaceful. So he worked with his brigade's bugler, a man named Oliver Willcox Norton, and together they created the tune we now know as Taps.

A bugle is a simple brass instrument — kind of like a trumpet, but often without any valves or buttons to press.

Instead of using fingers to change notes like on a trumpet, the player changes the pitch on a bugle just by adjusting how they blow air through their lips. That's why bugle music usually has a simple, clear sound with only a few different notes. Since they're loud and easy to hear outside, bugles were perfect for telling soldiers when it was time to wake up, go to bed, gather together, or honor someone.

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At first, Taps was used just to tell soldiers it was time to go to sleep. But soon, people began playing it at military funerals and ceremonies because its gentle, sorrowful sound was a beautiful way to honor those who had died.

Today, Taps is played at military funerals, Memorial Day services, and other ceremonies of remembrance all across the United States.

When you hear Taps played on a bugle or trumpet, it's usually performed by a single musician. The simple melody and slow, careful notes create a feeling of quiet respect and thankfulness.

As you listen to Taps, notice how even though it's a short song, it carries a lot of emotion.

Can you hear how the music sounds calm and peaceful, almost like a musical way of saying "thank you" and "goodbye"?

On Memorial Day, you might hear Taps played at parades, at cemeteries, or during special moments of silence. Sometimes it's played by a real bugler, and sometimes it's played through speakers. Either way, when people hear Taps, they often stop what they're doing, stand quietly, and place their hands over their hearts to show respect.

It's amazing how music — just 24 simple notes — can say so much without using any words at all.

Taps reminds us to pause, reflect, and be thankful for the people who have protected our freedom. Thank you for joining me today to learn about Taps and how music helps us remember and honor others.

If you'd like to listen to a full performance of *Taps*, I've linked a few beautiful versions in the show notes at busykidsdopiano.com/podcast/150.

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I'll be back in two weeks to kick off our annual summer series – Around the World with Busy Kids Love Music, where we travel the world and learn about folk music from different countries, collecting passport stamps as we go. Until then — keep listening and enjoying music in the world around you. Bye for now!

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