



# Entertaining the Troops

'Oh, oh, oh it's a lovely war.  
Who wouldn't be a soldier, eh?  
Oh it's a shame to take the pay.'

**Courtland and Jeffries**

Music has been used in various ways to support soldiers throughout history. Military regiments often have dedicated bands that provide timing for soldiers on procession and give motivation in battle. When returning home, military bands serve the public by performing in state and civil events, and are commissioned to play at medal presentations and funerals.

The musical instrument associated with the light infantry is the bugle horn. Unlike other regiments, light infantry typically work in a small group and process in advance of the main body of troops. Bugle calls were developed specifically to deliver orders to the light infantry on the battlefield. As a testament to its importance, the bugle is featured on the regimental insignia of the light infantry regiments.

Different bugle calls and marching songs were developed throughout the history of conflict and some of them became very well-known. The "The Last Post" is commonly used in military funerals and Remembrance ceremonies to commemorate the fallen of the First World War. Another famous bugle piece is the marching song "Colonel Bogey March" which was composed by Lieutenant F.J. Ricketts under the pseudonym Kenneth Alford, as having an extra profession was thought improper for military personnel in 1914.

When the band was not available, soldiers often sang songs to entertain themselves when marching or on the frontline. The lyrics were often closely related to where they were stationed and the situation they were facing. The songs reflected soldiers' hopes, sorrows, bitterness and humour in war. Some soldiers cleverly adapted popular songs with their own lyrics, some of which were not the most polite!



Vera Lynn singing on the stage for an Army Reunion in October 1976.