



United States Military Academy Band
West Point, New York 10996



The Hellcats

The Hellcats, an ensemble comprised of buglers and rudimental drummers from the United States Military Academy Band, has played an influential role in over 220 years of musical tradition at West Point. Their legend began early in the American Revolution, when units of George Washington's Continental Army, including fifers and drummers, established the garrison of West Point in January of 1778. Following the Revolution, West Point remained an active federal garrison upon the formal establishment of the United States Military Academy in 1802. During this period, fifers and drummers assigned to artillery and engineer units at West Point perpetuated the pragmatic nature of field music.

During the Revolutionary War, the War of 1812, and the War Between the States, the drum was the primary source of battlefield communication. Throughout the day it signaled various orders, and its steady beat established the cadence for road marches and troop movements. The bugle served an increasingly important role starting in the 1800's. Army commanders grew more dependent upon the bugle's bold, brilliant sound to present commands both in camp and over the din of battle.

The Hellcats' mission today is to provide musical support to the U.S. Corps of Cadets. In addition to sounding Reveille and Retreat at the garrison flagpole, the Hellcats perform a myriad of ceremonial functions, including military reviews and parades. Each weekday they provide music as the cadets march into the mess hall. As the football season nears the annual Army vs. Navy game, special Hellcat arrangements of traditional West Point gridiron songs fan the Army fighting spirit. Hellcat buglers and drummers also have the honorable task of performing muffled drums and Taps for West Point funerals. Annually, a bugler plays Taps at the tombs of presidents Ulysses S. Grant and Franklin D. Roosevelt on the anniversaries of their births.

Pride, intense esprit de corps, and a sense of historical continuity inspire the distinguished service of today's Hellcats. With their precise marching, embellished by the twirls of silver bugles and intricate rudimental drumming, the group delights thousands of spectators each year. In 1994, the Hellcats participated in the deactivation parade of the Allied Strike Force as it made its final departure from the city of Berlin. The Hellcats have also been featured at various military tattoos throughout the United States and Canada.

In 2002, the group performed in Carnegie Hall with the New York Pops Orchestra and for the Fourth of July with the Boston Pops Orchestra. In 2004, the ensemble traveled to Orlando, Florida to participate in festivities honoring Flag Day at Walt Disney World. Recently, the ensemble performed with the Virginia Grand Military Band and was showcased at the Blossom Festival, the summer home of the Cleveland Orchestra, as a part of its Fourth of July festivities. Members of the Hellcats have also been showcased on The Today Show, Fox and Friends, 60 Minutes, Dateline NBC as well as on documentaries occurring on The History and Discovery Channels.

Equipped with instruments designed and hand-made specifically for them, the Hellcats enable the United States Military Academy Band to maintain faithful renditions of traditional American military music while providing the Corps of Cadets with a piece of living history.

BUGLES

SGM Clay Beard*

Hagerstown, Maryland

SGM Lee Anne Newton**

Colorado Springs, Colorado

SFC James Barnard

Chesapeake, Virginia

SFC John Manning

Ebensburg, Pennsylvania

SSG Sarah Botez

Grand Haven, Michigan

SSG Denver Dill

Mansfield, Ohio

SSG Jon Leonard

Fairbanks, Alaska

DRUMS

SGM Eric Sheffler* +

Pittsburg, Kansas

SSG William Calohan

Rustburg, Virginia

SSG William Cuthbert

Lemont, Illinois

SSG J. Andrew Porter

Hartford, Kentucky

SSG Jeff Prosperie

Thibodaux, Louisiana

** Group Leader or NCOIC

* Section Leader

+ Marching Band Drum Major