

## Chapter 6

# CUSTOMS & COURTESIES

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As a paramilitary organization, we follow military forms of customs and courtesies. Military customs and courtesies are proven traditions that explain what should and should not be done in many situations. They are acts of respect and courtesy when dealing with other people and have evolved as a result of the need for order, as well as the mutual respect and sense of fraternity that exists among military personnel. Military customs and courtesies go beyond basic politeness; they play an extremely important role in building morale, esprit de corps, discipline, and mission effectiveness. Customs and courtesies ensure proper respect for the chain of command and build the foundation for self-discipline.

## The Military Salute

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### What is a salute?

Salutes are exchanges upon recognition between officers and warrant officers and between officers or warrant officers and cadets or enlisted members of the Armed Forces. The salute is a courteous exchange of greetings as both a greeting and a symbol of mutual respect, with the junior member always saluting first. As such, it is never inappropriate to salute another individual. When returning or rendering an individual salute, the head and eyes are turned toward the Colors or person saluted. When in ranks, the position of attention is maintained unless otherwise directed.

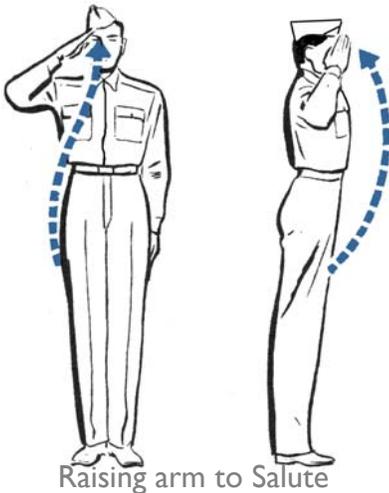


### Origin of the Salute

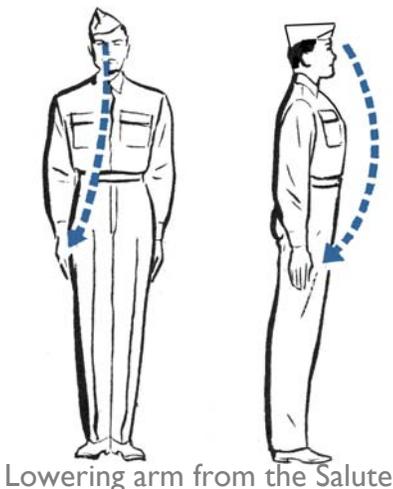
Although the exact origin of the salute is not known, there are a few theories. One theory is that in the age of chivalry the knights were all mounted and wore steel armor, which covered the body completely. When two friendly knights met it was the custom for each to raise the visor and expose his face to the view of the other. This was always done with the right hand, the left being used to hold the reins. It was a significant gesture of friendship and confidence, since it exposed the features and also removed the right hand from the vicinity of a weapon (sword).

The most widely accepted theory is that it evolved from the practice of men raising their hats in the presence of officers. Tipping one's hat on meeting a social superior was the normal civilian sign of respect at the time. Repeated hat-raising was impractical if heavy helmets were worn, so the gesture was stylized to a mere hand movement.

English seventeenth-century military records indicate that "the formal act of saluting was to be by removal of headdress." By about 1745, an English regiment, the Coldstream Guards, appears to have amended this procedure, being instructed to "clap their hands to their hats and bow as they pass by." This practice was quickly adopted by other English regiments and may have spread from England to America (via the War of Independence) and Continental Europe (through the Napoleonic Wars). Accordingly, the truth may lie somewhere in the middle, with the military salute originating as a gesture of respect and politeness parallel to the civilian custom of raising or tipping one's hat, possibly in combination with the warrior's custom of showing an unarmed right hand.



Raising arm to Salute



Lowering arm from the Salute

Regardless of its origin, the salute today is a military greeting, a sign of mutual respect, trust and confidence initiated by the junior in rank, with no loss of dignity on either side. It is also a sign of loyalty and respect to the Service of which a member forms part and the general tone and spirit of the Service is indicated by the manner in which airmen offer the salute and officers return it.

### Rendering a salute

The individual raises the right hand smartly in the most direct manner while at the same time extending and joining the fingers. Keep the palm flat and facing the body. Place the thumb along the forefingers, keeping the palm flat and forming a straight line between the fingertips and elbows. Tilt the palm slightly toward the face. Hold the upper arm horizontal, slightly forward of the body and parallel to the ground. Ensure the tip of the middle finger touches the right front corner of the headdress. If wearing a non-billed hat, ensure the middle finger touches the outside corner of the right eyebrow or the front corner of glasses. The rest of the body will remain at the position of attention. This is count one of the movement. To complete count two of the movement, bring the arm smoothly and smartly downward, retracing the path used to raise the arm. Cup the hand as it passes the waist, and return to the position of attention.



Render a salute to a passing senior ranking member **NOT** more than 30 paces of less than 6 paces

When in doubt, SALUTE!

It is better to salute an airman than to forget to salute a General!

### When and when not to salute

As explained earlier, it is never inappropriate to salute another individual. So a good rule of thumb is, *when in doubt, salute*. You can never show too much respect, but you can offend others by not showing any respect.

There are rules to when and wear to and not to salute.

#### DO Salute...

- When in a military-style uniform
- The President of the United States, all Medal of Honor recipients, and commissioned officers and warrant officers of the Armed Forces who are senior in rank to you.
- Also, if the exchange of salutes is otherwise appropriate, it is customary for military members in civilian clothes to exchange salutes upon recognition

#### DO Salute when outdoors...

- When you are a junior approaching a senior officer. Saluting outdoors means salutes are exchanged when the persons involved are outside of a building. For example, if a person is on a porch, a covered sidewalk, a bus stop, a covered or open entryway, or a reviewing stand, the salute will be exchanged with a person on the sidewalk outside of the structure or with a person approaching or in the same structure. This applies both on and off military installations. The junior member should initiate the salute in time to allow the senior officer to return it. To prescribe an exact distance for all circumstances is not practical, but good judgment indicates when salutes should be exchanged. Typically the junior rank will render a salute a least 6 paces before, but not more then 30 paces before, when passing a senior officer.
- In military-style uniform, you render the military salute, hold it and remain silent during the National Anthem. In any other CAP uniform or civilian clothes, stand at attention and place your right hand over your heart (Men should remove headdress with right hand and hold it over their heart.)
- During the Pledge of Allegiance, when in military-style uniform outdoors, you stand at attention, face the flag, remain silent, and salute.

#### DO Salute when indoors...

You do not salute indoors, unless you are formally reporting to a superior.

#### DO Salute when in formation...

Only when commanded to do so. Do not salute if you are not told to do so.

#### DO Salute when in a group (not in formation)...

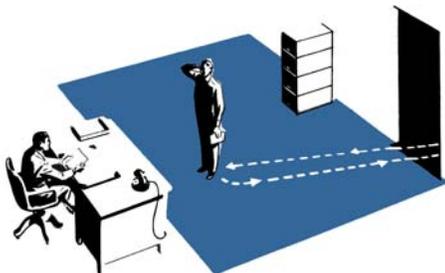
When a senior officer approaches, the first individual noticing the officer calls the group to attention by saying, "Room, ATTENTION" or "Area, ATTENTION". All members face the officer and salute. If the officer addresses an individual or the group, all remain at attention (unless otherwise ordered) until the end of the conversation, at which time they salute the officer.

**DO NOT salute...**

- If you are a prisoner whose sentences include punitive discharges. All other prisoners, regardless of custody or grade, render the prescribed salute except when under armed guard. This is not a situation that a member of the Civil Air Patrol would come across, however the practice is worth mentioning.
- While on the run.
- If you are in a work detail. Individual workers do not salute. The person in charge salutes for the entire detail.
- If in public gatherings, such as sporting events, meetings, or when a salute would be inappropriate or impractical, salutes between individuals need not be rendered.
- If you are a superior carrying articles in both hands. However, he or she should nod in return or verbally acknowledge the salute. If the junior member is carrying articles in both hands, verbal greetings should be exchanged. Also, use these procedures when greeting an officer of a friendly foreign nation.
- During the Pledge of Allegiance, when in military-style uniform indoors, stand at attention, face the flag, but do not salute or recite the pledge. Remember, uniformed men and women have already taken an oath. This oath holds a stronger weight than the pledge, thus uniform tradition indicates that reciting the pledge is not necessary so it is not done.
- When on the run. Come to a walk first, and then salute. If you are running because of an emergency, the senior officer will not feel disrespected if you do not salute. In emergencies, common sense is the rule.

## Reporting

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Take the most direct route upon entry and exit

At times, you will be asked to report to an officer in charge (OIC). This can be either for business or ceremonial purposes, indoors or outdoors. Regardless, it is your responsibility to know how to report and when so as not to embarrass yourself or the Civil Air Patrol. The way you report to an officer will create an impression. When the impression is good, it will be because you reported properly and showed good military bearing. Bearing is how you move, or carry yourself. Military bearing should always be smooth, graceful and proud.

### Reporting Indoors

When reporting to an officer in his office, the junior removes his headgear, unless you are performing guard duty in which you will leave your headgear on. Make any adjustments to your uniform you may find necessary before you enter (such as lint, gig line, shoes, necktie, ribbons and pin-on insignias). Knock on the door once firmly and loud enough to be heard in an average-sized office. If there is no answer within a reasonable amount of time, knock once, again. When you are told to enter, or told to report, enter the room taking the most direct route to within two paces (a pace equals a step or 24 inches) in front of the officer's desk, halt, salute, and report. You will report by saying "*Sir/Ma'am, (your grade and last name) reporting as ordered.*" Omit "*as ordered,*" when you are reporting on your own initiative. For example, "*Sir, Flight Officer Sharpe reporting as ordered.*" The salute is

Do not begin and end your statement with sir/ma'am. This is sometimes referred to as a sir sandwich and is not an accepted custom in the Civil Air Patrol or the U.S. Air Force.

*Tip:* Practice your report speech until it is sharp, clear, and automatic. Try to practice while standing up since posture affects tone of voice.

held until the report is completed and the *salute* has been returned by the officer. When the business is completed, the junior *salutes*, holds the *salute* until it has been returned, executes the appropriate *facing movement* (typically an about, face) and departs. Remember to be courteous and close the door behind you if you found it closed when you arrived.

As mentioned before, you may be asked to report indoors during a ceremony. This is typical during award ceremonies. You report in the same manner as mentioned for reporting to an officer in their office, however you omit knocking. If accepting an award, be prepared to face the audience for recognition and photographs and do not forget to maintain proper military bearing at all times. This is your moment to shine and you don't want to take away from the moment by acting silly or overly casual.

### Reporting Outdoors

When reporting outdoors, the junior *halts* approximately one pace in front of the officer, *salutes*, and reports (as when indoors). When the junior is *dismissed* by the officer, the junior *salutes*, faces about and returns to their prior duties.

If you are apart of a formation, the process is a bit more formal, but essentially the same. The individual in charge of your formation will have you in a formation called in line. They will command, "(Grade, Last Name), (pause) FRONT AND CENTER." For example, "Cadet Sharpe...FRONT AND CENTER." Upon hearing your name, you will assume the position of attention. On the command "FRONT AND CENTER", you will take one step backwards (with coordinating arm swing), face to the left or right, proceed to the closest flank, and then proceeds to the front of the formation by the most direct route. You will then halt one pace in front of the individual in charge, salute and report. When business is complete, the individual in charge will dismiss you by commanding "RETURN TO RANKS". You will then salute, face about and return by the same route to the same position in the ranks.

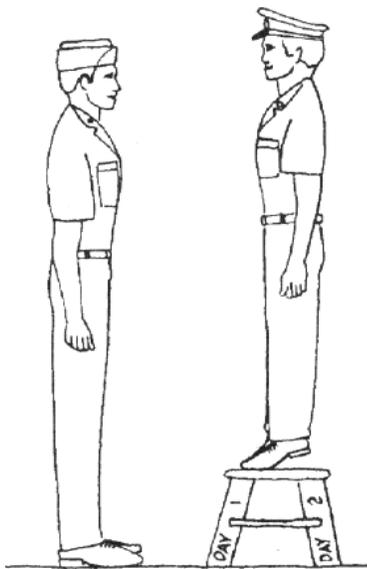
In all cases, but especially when reporting display respect for those with higher rank and grade, don't be overawed by it.

## More Customs

### Grade vs. Rank

If you have been paying close attention so far, you may have noticed that the words "rank" and "grade" have been used. Many think that these words mean the same, but they do not. Let's take a look at the two terms.

Grade is a major step in the promotion structure or program while rank is grade adjusted for time. Captain and major are examples of grade; several individuals can have the same grade. Rank normally shows seniority. No two persons in a grade have the same rank; one is always senior to the other.



"I'm older than you"

"Yes, but I was promoted two days before you"

For example, a unit commander who is a major needs to appoint the highest ranking officer in his command for an assignment. The major needs to decide on one of two captains. The major decides on the captain who was promoted a year earlier than the other captain because she has the higher rank.

**Public Displays of Affection**

Public Displays of Affection (PDA) are not allowed while in uniform. The primary reason for not displaying affection in the public is that it detracts from military bearing. Hand holding, embracing, or walking arm-in-arm is inappropriate actions for members in CAP uniform. Such behavior in public takes away from the professional image CAP intends to protect.

**Terms of Address**

In the beginning, appropriate terms of address may be confusing. You must do your best to learn the appropriate terms when addressing someone so as not to offend them or make yourself look foolish.

For the most part, terms of addressing someone is based on their grade. The exception to the rule is in the case where as the individuals profession takes precedent. Also, you should know that there are formal and informal terms of address.

When introducing an individual, use their formal term of address. The formal term of address will be their full grade title and then full name (example: Major General William Sharpe). Because the use of the formal address is not practical in work environments and when individuals know who you are referring to, the informal address is appropriate. Using the previous example, Major General William Sharpe would be referred to as General Sharpe.

Taking the exception into account, clergy and medical doctors are addressed as "Chaplain" and "Doctor" respectively regardless of their grade.

It isn't appropriate to use terms such as "the old man", "the big cheese", or similar phrases when referring to a commanding officer. Remember to keep a professional military decorum at all times.

**Informal Terms of Address**

GRADE	INFORMAL TERM OF ADDRESS	GRADE	INFORMAL TERM OF ADDRESS
General	General	Captain	Captain
Lieutenant General	General	1 <sup>st</sup> Lieutenant	Lieutenant
Major General	General	2 <sup>d</sup> Lieutenant	Lieutenant
Brigadier General	General	All Flight Officer Grades	Flight Officer
Colonel	Colonel	Chief Master Sergeant	Chief
Lieutenant Colonel	Colonel	All NCO Grades ( <i>other than above</i> )	Sergeant
Major	Major	All Cadet Grades	Cadet

There are many more customs and courtesies than what have been mentioned here. Many have to do with formal ceremonies such as rules for dining in, appropriate display of the U.S. Flag, ceremonial formations, and perhaps those traditions held locally. There are even taboos (something improper or unacceptable) that are not formally written, but are none-the-less prescribed to by the membership. We've focused on those everyday common customs and courtesies that will affect your immediate success. Overtime, you will become familiar with other customs and courtesies as they are pointed out to you.

You may also want to review the following publications:

- **CAPP3, Guide to CAP Protocol**
- **CAPP 50-2, CAP Core Values**
- **CAPP 151, Standard Custom and Courtesies**
- **CAPR 900-2, Civil Air Patrol Seal, Emblem and Flag Etiquette**

**SUMMARY EXERCISE**

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- 1. When is a salute between military/Civil Air Patrol personnel not required even though they are in uniform and are recognized?
  - a. When a junior officer is 10 feet or more to the right of the oncoming officer.
  - b. When both persons are in uniform but off the premises of a military establishment.
  - c. When one or the other of the individuals is carrying articles in both hands, that individual does not have to salute.

2. What is a salute?

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3. How many steps in front of an officer's desk do you stop and salute when reporting?

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4. How many steps in front of an officer do you stop and salute when reporting outdoors?

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5. If you are reporting on your own initiative, what words do you omit?

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6. Public display of affection is acceptable between two uniformed members.

- a. True
- b. False

7. Captain Sharpe was promoted in January this year. Captain Ace was promoted a month later in February. Who has the higher grade?

- a. Captain Sharpe
- b. Captain Ace
- c. They both hold the same grade
- d. Not enough information to determine

8. A Chief Master Sergeant is informally referred to as \_\_\_\_\_.

- a. Sergeant
- b. Chief Master Sergeant
- c. Master
- d. Chief

9. A major who is an active chaplain is would be addressed as \_\_\_\_\_.

- a. Major
- b. Your Honor
- c. Chaplain
- d. Father

10. Describe two occasions when you should execute a salute.

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**NOTES**

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