

American Military Traditions, Customs, and Courtesies

**Army Support Command
Operations Section**

Ceremonies

- Ceremonies help preserve tradition and to build esprit de corps.

Personal Salutes

- Personal salutes are honors given to dignitaries, civil officials, and military officials. They include *cannon salutes, ruffles and flourishes*, and a march or anthem, depending on the official.

Cannon Salutes

- **The number of guns fired depends on the position of the official. For example, the military fires a 21-gun salute for the president, members of a reigning royal family, and chiefs of state of foreign countries.**
- **The vice president receives a 19-gun salute, as do ambassadors and the Speaker of the House of Representatives. Secretaries of the Army, Navy, and Air Force, and generals of the Army and Air Force also receive a 19-gun salute.**

Cannon Salutes

- **When you are in the audience on such an occasion and in uniform, you should render the hand salute as the official party does. When in civilian clothing, you should remove any head covering to salute.**

Ruffles and Flourishes

- **The armed forces plays ruffles and flourishes together — ruffles on drums and flourishes on bugles.**
- **The president, vice president, secretaries and assistant secretaries of the Army, Navy, and Air Force, cabinet members, and ambassadors all receive four ruffles and flourishes.**

Courtesies: *Titles*

- **One military courtesy is the use of titles to show respect for superiors. When you are talking to someone in the military, address that person by his or her rank.**

Courtesies: *Titles*

Title

How to Address

- All Generals “General”
- Colonels and Lieutenant Colonels “Colonel”
- Majors “Major”
- Captains “Captain”
- Lieutenants “Lieutenant”
- Chaplains “Chaplain”
- Cadets “Mister,” “Miss,” or “Cadet”
- Officer Candidate “Candidate”

Courtesies: *Titles*

Title

How to Address

- | | |
|-------------------------------------|---------------------------|
| • Warrant Officers | <i>“Mister” or “Miss”</i> |
| • Sergeant Major | <i>“Sergeant Major”</i> |
| • First Sergeants | <i>“First Sergeant”</i> |
| • All other Sergeants | <i>“Sergeant”</i> |
| • Corporals | <i>“Corporal”</i> |
| • All Specialists | <i>“Specialist”</i> |
| • Privates and Privates First Class | <i>“Private”</i> |

Courtesies: *Titles*

(If you don't know the person's name)

Title

How to Address

- Privates
- All medical officers
- Male officers
- Female officers

“Soldier”

“by their rank”

“Sir”

“Ma’am”

Courtesies: *Whom to Salute*

- You must render the salute to all commissioned and warrant officers. Generally, you do not salute noncommissioned officers or petty officers; however, there are exceptions. For example, when you act as a squad leader, salute your platoon sergeant when making reports.**

Courtesies: *Showing Respect - Senior Officers*

- **When an officer enters an office for the first time each day, the first person to see the officer calls the room to attention.**

Courtesies: *Position of Honor*

- **The *position of honor* dictates that those of lower rank walk, sit, or ride to the left of those with senior rank. When entering a vehicle (car or small boat), you should enter first, staying to the left of the officer. When you arrive at your destination and leave the vehicle, the senior officer should exit first.**

QUESTIONS?