
Section A. Saluting

Introduction This section describes the protocol Auxiliarists use when saluting in various situations. Saluting is not required between Auxiliarists nor is it usually the custom of greeting between them.

A.1. Greetings The hand salute is a long-established form of greeting and recognition exchanged between persons in the Armed Forces. Saluting is proper courtesy for Auxiliarists when greeting commissioned officers of the Armed Forces including National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) and the U.S. Public Health Service (USPHS) uniformed officers who serve with the Armed Forces.

There may be occasions, when in uniform and covered, where courtesy and custom indicate that a salute is in order such as when returning a salute rendered by a member of the Armed Forces. It is also customary to exchange greetings such as, “Good morning,” “Good afternoon,” “Good evening,” etc. along with the salute. The exchange of greetings should also be accompanied by a smile or a cheerful expression.

A.2. National Ensign/Anthem/Taps When out of doors, in uniform, and addressing the National Ensign, or whenever the National Anthem or Taps is rendered, a military salute is given. This particularly applies to the respect paid at Morning or Evening Colors ceremonies aboard a ship (not underway) or aboard a Coast Guard or other military installation. During the ceremony of hoisting or lowering the flag, those present in uniform should come to attention and render the military salute. The same applies if the flag is passing in a parade or in review. The salute to the flag in a moving column should be rendered at the moment the flag passes. During the ceremonial posting of colors indoors and in uniform, Auxiliarists should stand at attention facing the National Ensign until the colors are posted.

During a rendition of the National Anthem or Taps when the flag is displayed or posted, all those present in uniform and covered should face the flag and render the military salute at the first note of the anthem and retain this position until the last note. When the flag is not displayed or posted, those present should face toward the music and act in the same manner they would if the flag were displayed. If uncovered, all those present in uniform should stand at attention facing the flag or music, as appropriate.

Additional details and procedures are provided in United States Coast Guard Regulations, COMDTINST M5000.3 (series).

**A.3. Civilian
Clothes (Not in
Uniform)**

At any time if not in uniform, Auxiliarists should face the National Ensign at attention saluting with their right hand over their heart until the colors complete their passing or posting.

When outdoors, not in uniform, and the National Anthem is played, Auxiliarists may render the same hand salute as that rendered by individuals in uniform. All other individuals present should face the National Ensign and stand at attention with their right hand over the heart. If applicable, such individuals should remove their headdress with their right hand and hold it at the left shoulder with the hand being over the heart. When indoors, not in uniform, Auxiliarists should stand at attention with their right hand over the heart.

A.4. Vehicles

When on a Coast Guard or other military installation in a vehicle at the time of colors, and traffic safety permits, stop and sit at attention, but do not salute. Provided it is safe to do so, it is appropriate to also get out of the vehicle and render honors as in paragraph A.2 above.

A.5. Vessels

If a passenger in a boat, remain at attention, seated or standing. The boat officer or coxswain salutes for the boat. When indoors and the flag is presented and/or the National Anthem is played, all should stand at attention.

**A.6. Pledge of
Allegiance**

Guidance regarding the Pledge of Allegiance is based in 4 U.S.C. § 4 which states, *“The Pledge of Allegiance...should be rendered by standing at attention facing the flag with the right hand over the heart. When not in uniform, men should remove any non-religious headdress with their right hand and hold it at the left shoulder, the hand being over the heart. Persons in uniform should remain silent, face the flag, and render the military salute.”* When the pledge is given, if a man or woman is seen in uniform saluting but not reciting it, then that is the likely reason for their silence.

In lieu of the above, when the Pledge of Allegiance is given, Auxiliarists, in uniform or not, may stand at attention facing the flag with their right hand over their heart while reciting the Pledge. If in uniform and covered, then Auxiliarists shall render the hand salute whether reciting the Pledge or not.

A.7. Proper Salute

When covered in uniform, the hand salute is correctly executed by raising the right hand smartly until the tip of the forefinger touches the lower part of headdress or forehead, above and slightly to the right of the right eye, thumb and fingers extended and joined, palm down, upper arm horizontal, forearm inclined at forty-five degrees, hand and wrist straight. At the same time, one's head is turned toward the person being saluted. To complete the salute, the arm is dropped to its normal side position and eyes are turned to the front.

A.8. Saluting Errors

Some of the more frequently observed saluting errors include:

- a. Failure to hold the position of the salute until it is returned by the person saluted.
- b. Failure to look at the person or colors being saluted.
- c. Failure to assume the position of attention when saluting.
- d. Failure to have the fingers, hand, and arm in the proper position for saluting as mentioned in the previous paragraph.

Gross errors include:

- a. Saluting with a cigarette in the hand or mouth.
 - b. Saluting while the left hand is in a pocket.
 - c. Returning a salute in a casual manner.
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