



JEANNE M. HOLM CENTER

Military Customs and Courtesies

Cognitive Lesson Objective:

- Know the fundamental customs and courtesies practiced in the Air Force.

Cognitive Samples of Behavior:

- Define military customs and courtesies.
- Recognize various enlisted and officer rank insignia.
- Identify when saluting is appropriate.
- Describe the correct procedure for reporting to a senior officer.
- Identify common “do’s and don’ts” of military etiquette.

Affective Lesson Objective:

- Respond appropriately to Air Force customs and courtesies.

Affective Sample of Behavior:

- Practice proper customs and courtesies on all occasions.

Unlike many other professions, the military profession is a calling and a way of life. The Air Force, like the other Armed Services, has its special problems, its customs, and its standards, all developing out of the nature of its mission and the serious responsibility inherent in carrying it out. The more you understand the character of military life in all its facets, the better understanding you'll have of the opportunities the Air Force has to offer.

Military conduct is based on accepted standards of behavior as demonstrated by good manners, consideration for others and courtesy. The Air Force is made up of people from various social groups. It is, in fact, a cross section of America exhibiting all the various manners, aims, morals, and ideals existing throughout the nation. Unless this heterogeneous social group accepts a common code of conduct, no semblance of unity can exist. Hence, there is a vital necessity for military customs. A custom is a social convention stemming from tradition and enforced as an unwritten law. On the other hand, if the guidance is in written form, it's a military courtesy. Military customs and courtesies go beyond basic politeness. They govern our regard for the rights and ideas of others. History shows that a lack of military customs and courtesies has a direct relationship with a decrease in esprit de corps, morale, discipline, and, most importantly, mission effectiveness. Fundamental to this idea is that it's a two-way street. The respect shown to a senior by a junior acknowledges the senior's responsibility and authority. In turn, the courtesy extended to a subordinate reflects the respect and regard for his or her part in accomplishing the Air Force mission.

CUSTOMS AND COURTESIES

Most military customs and courtesies evolve from long-standing practices or have some historical significance. The US flag is folded in a triangular shape to represent the tri-corner hat of early American patriots. The lowering of the flag to half-staff comes from the naval custom of lowering sails upon the death of a crewmember to indicate that things were not "shipshape." The position of honor has always been to the right. This originated from the medieval swordsmen who always wore their weapons on the left side and drew them to their right. The strongest and most experienced warriors were given the place of honor to allow them easy access to their weapons. This practice carried over to today. To allow ease of saluting, the senior person walks on the right.

SALUTING

Origin and Reasons

As with other customs and courtesies, saluting has evolved from history. The ancient knights used the gesture of raising the face visor on their helmets as a greeting. This move signified friendship and confidence as it removed the sword hand from the weapon and provided vulnerability in the suit of armor.

The salute is a respectful greeting exchanged between members of the same profession. It's an everyday courtesy based on mutual respect. It's one of the traditions that bind military personnel together. Salutes are required when you're in uniform. They're exchanged on- and off-duty and on- and off-base.

Salutes are exchanged when meeting outdoors and must be rendered during ceremonial occasions and in public gatherings when the National Anthem or the bugle call "To the Colors" is played. The salute is also required during situations outdoors when the US flag is honored and during the playing of "Ruffles and Flourishes" when specific individuals are being honored.

General Rules

Salutes are rendered as a courtesy. They're required between those junior and those senior in rank. If individuals are equal in rank, salutes may be exchanged. If juniors walking together meet a senior, the juniors salute simultaneously. If a junior salutes a group of seniors, the seniors return the salute simultaneously.

There are no set rules regarding how close or how far away a junior must be in order to render a salute. When a junior recognizes a senior, the junior should initiate a salute. As a rule of thumb, a salute should be initiated by the junior member, a verbal greeting exchanged by both members, with a return salute by the senior member. This action occurs very quickly, usually within a distance of six paces.

You're not expected to initiate or to return a salute if it's impractical or dangerous to do so. The salute is intended to be a dignified military greeting, not a test of manual dexterity. Therefore, you aren't required to give a salute when encumbered (that is, when both hands are full), but you should give a verbal greeting.

If you recognize an officer of one of our sister services or a sovereign power, you should salute in the normal manner.

If a group of individuals (standing still, not in formation) is approached by a senior, the first person who recognizes the senior should call the rest to attention, and each individual should render a hand salute. If the group is walking, all should salute simultaneously.

If a group of individuals is in formation and a senior approaches, the person in charge of the formation should call the formation to attention, and then only the person in charge should salute. If a formation is marching, it continues the march while only the person in charge salutes.

Members of work details do not salute; however, the individual in charge of the detail comes to attention and salutes while the other members continue with their duties.

If an officer stops to converse with an enlisted member or another officer junior in grade salutes should be exchanged before and after their conversation. This is, in effect, "reporting to" the senior ranking officer. Salutes are not exchanged between enlisted members.

Second lieutenants are required to salute first lieutenants. The “unwritten rule” that there is no rank amongst lieutenants does not follow military standards.

When you enter a military installation a gate guard will check your ID card. If it is a military member, they will salute officers. It is customary to return the salute whether you are in uniform or wearing civilian clothes.

Staff Cars

At all bases, military members (as pedestrians) are required to salute staff cars when there’s an occupant inside the car. (There’s no need to salute an unoccupied staff car.) Again, recognition is the key. Staff cars are marked with an eagle (indicating the rank of colonel) or one or more stars (indicating the rank of a general officer) on a placard on the vehicle’s front bumper or a flag on the front fender.

The base/wing commander must also be saluted when riding in a vehicle bearing a plate showing the words “BASE COMMANDER”/“WING COMMANDER” and insignia of grade. Secretary of the Air Force and Chief of Staff also have staff cars with unique plates.

Ruffles and Flourishes

A musical phrase known as “Ruffles and Flourishes” is played to honor certain individuals. It consists of a drum roll (ruffle) and a trumpet fanfare (flourish). Commissioned officers in the grade of brigadier general receive one ruffle and flourish, major generals rate two, lieutenant generals rate three, and four-star generals rate four. Also rating four on certain occasions are such distinguished civilians as the President, the Chief Justice, Cabinet members, Heads of State of foreign countries, etc. Four ruffles and flourishes are the maximum played.

Indoors. Upon hearing “Ruffles and Flourishes” indoors, if you’re in uniform, come to attention, face the individual being honored, and remain at attention until the last note of the music has been played. If you’re in civilian clothes, follow the same procedures as though you were in uniform.

Outdoors. Upon hearing “Ruffles and Flourishes” outdoors while in uniform, come to attention, face the individual being honored, and present arms, remaining at attention until the last note of the music has been played. The individual being honored also salutes.

Military personnel in civilian clothes face the individual being honored and stand at attention.

Air Force Song

It is customary to stand, clap, and join in the singing directed by the nature of the ceremony. Traditionally only the first verse of the Air Force song is played or sung. If at an official ceremony, the words for the first verse will be printed in the program when it is a part of the ceremony.

The same courtesy is rendered to sister service songs.

Saluting Indoors

Reporting. When reporting to an officer in his/her office, knock once on the door. When told to enter, walk directly (squaring any corners) to within two paces of the desk, come to attention (eyes caged forward), and salute. Hold your salute until it is returned and remain standing at attention until you are dismissed or told to be seated.

If you have been directed to report, you will state, “Sir (Ma’am), Cadet (last name) reports or reports as ordered.”

If you are reporting on your own, you will state appropriately:

- “Sir (Ma’am), Cadet (last name) reports to ask a question.”
- “Sir (Ma’am), Cadet (last name) reports to make a statement.”

At the end of the conversation ask, “Will that be all, Sir (Ma’am)?” The officer will acknowledge, then from the same location you reported in, salute and state, “Good morning (afternoon or evening), Sir (Ma’am).” After your salute is returned, drop your salute, execute the proper facing movement and depart. Note: If the officer states, “That will be all” or “You are dismissed” before you ask, “Will that be all, Sir (Ma’am),” then do not ask that question; just salute and render the appropriate exit greeting such as, “Good evening, Sir (Ma’am).”

If you’re in frequent working contact with a senior, the senior may waive the saluting requirement. You’ll still be expected to salute when reporting to other senior officers.

Award Ceremonies. During award ceremonies, it’s mandatory to stand at attention during the presentation. The member receiving an award marches up to the person presenting the award and stops two paces in front of the individual. After the award has been presented, the member salutes, waits for a return salute, then lowers the salute. (Remember: Take, Shake, Salute).

Salute only when the presenter is a military member and his or her rank is equal to or superior to yours. The audience isn’t required to salute at any time.

RESPECT TO THE FLAG AND NATIONAL ANTHEM

Outdoors

AFMAN 36-2203 prescribes procedures for reveille and retreat ceremonies. You must know exactly what is expected of you as either a participant or observer. While at this school, you may be required to participate in these ceremonies, and you’ll undoubtedly take part in them at future duty assignments.

Saluting the U.S. Flag. When you're in uniform and an uncased flag passes by in a parade or any ceremony, you salute when the flag comes within six paces of you and hold the salute until the flag passes six paces beyond you. If in formation, follow the verbal commands of your flight or squadron commander. On the command of "Present Arms," render a hand salute and hold it until the command "Order Arms."

If in civilian clothes, under similar circumstances, come to attention, remove your hat (if you're wearing one), and place your right hand over your heart when the flag is six paces before you; hold until the flag is six paces past you.

Also if in civilian clothes service members and veterans are authorized to render the military style hand salute during the raising, lowering or passing of the flag and during the playing of the national anthem.

At Air Force installations, flags on stationary staffs are saluted at reveille, retreat, and on special occasions. Except at these times, the flag shouldn't be saluted while on a stationary staff.

On Air Force installations, the flag is lowered at the end of each day. Usually, the bugle call "Retreat" is sounded and is followed by the playing of the National Anthem or "To the Colors." If you're outside, you must stop what you're doing and face the flag (if visible) or the music. During the sounding of "Retreat" you stand at parade rest, then, if in uniform, come to attention and salute during the playing of the National Anthem or "To the Colors." If in civilian clothes, come to attention, remove your hat (if you're wearing one), and place your right hand over your heart when the National Anthem begins to play.

During any other flag ceremony, halt, face the flag or music, come to attention, and present arms from the first to the last note of music.

If you encounter a "color guard" outside which has the American flag uncased, you should salute when it comes within six paces of you and hold your salute until the flag has passed six paces beyond you.

If you're driving a vehicle and see a flag ceremony or hear the music, stop and sit quietly until the music ends; your passengers also remain silent.

If caught halfway between the parking lot and your destination when the retreat ceremony is played, don't run to get inside or under cover. Stand and pay a moment's respect to the flag. For Retreat/Reveille, stand at parade rest, then come to attention.

The National Anthem. If you're outdoors, at an athletic event, or other function and in uniform when the National Anthem is played, face the flag (if visible), salute, and hold the salute until the music is finished. If the flag isn't visible, face the music and salute.

If you're in civilian dress, stand at attention, remove your hat with your right hand, hold it over the left side of your chest with your right hand over your heart. If you're not wearing a hat, place your right hand over your heart. In either case, stay in that position until the music stops.

Indoors

Military personnel don't salute the national flag during indoor ceremonies when in uniform. When the National Anthem or "To The Colors" is played, personnel in civilian or military attire will stand at attention facing the flag (or the source of music if the flag isn't visible). When in civilian attire, come to attention, and place your right hand over your heart.

There's no requirement to come to attention when the National Anthem is played on the radio or television (such as before a sporting event or station sign-off).

At base movie theaters, the National Anthem is played prior to the start of the film. You should rise, stand at attention, and, if in civilian clothes, place your right hand over your heart.

Explanation

- When displaying the flag at half-staff, raise the flag briskly to the peak of the staff for an instant and then lower it ceremoniously to half-staff position (1/2 the distance between top and bottom of the staff). Before lowering it for the day, also raise it to the peak first. Flag is displayed with the union away from the building. Place the union at the peak of the staff, unless the flag is at half-staff.
- Suspend flag vertically. If street runs primarily East-West, the union will be at the top and to the North. If street runs North-South, display union at the top and to the East.
- On a stage, the American flag is in place of honor to the speaker's right, other flags to speaker's left.
- Always display the flag with the union to the observer's left. Place above and behind the speaker. Union will be to speaker's right or the observer's left. This holds true regardless of whether flag is suspended horizontally or vertically.
- American flag is crossed over and in front of the other flag. American flag is to the observer's left.
- Display flags on separate staffs of equal height. American flag is to its own right or to the observer's left.
- When displaying with other flags, such as state flags, place American flag at highest point in the center. If using staffs of equal heights, American flag must be on its own right.
- If American flag is carried with only one other flag, color bearer should march in line, but to the right of the other flag. If carried with several other flags, color bearer should march in front and to the right.

- Use the all-purpose flag. Flag is draped over the casket with the union at the head and over the left shoulder of the deceased. Flag is usually given to next-of-kin after the funeral.

Restrictions

- Place nothing on top of flag when using it to cover casket.
- Do not carry the flag flat or horizontal, always free and aloft.
- Do not display flag with union down, except as a distress signal.
- When raising and lowering the flag, do not allow it to touch anything beneath it, such as the ground, floor, or water.
- Do not use flag as cover for a ceiling.
- Do not lower flag into the grave.
- You may use the flag as a distinctive feature of an unveiling ceremony of a statue or monument but never use it to cover the statue or monument.
- Do not use the flag as a drapery of any sort. It is never festooned but always to fall and hang freely.

Additional Restrictions

- Do not use the flag as a receptacle for receiving or carrying objects.
- Never use the flag for advertising purposes.
- Never embroider it on articles such as cushions and handkerchiefs, nor print or otherwise impress it on paper napkins, boxes, or anything designed for temporary use.
- Never use it as a part of wearing apparel.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

In military formations and ceremonies, the Pledge of Allegiance won't be recited.

When the pledge is recited at protocol functions, social events, and sporting events which include civilians, you should:

When in uniform indoors, stand at attention, face the flag and remain silent, but you don't salute. However, if the participants are primarily civilians or in civilian clothes, you may recite the Pledge of Allegiance if you wish.

When in civilian clothes (indoors or outdoors), stand at attention, face the flag, and recite the Pledge of Allegiance while holding your right hand over your heart. (Men should remove their headdress with their right hand and place their right hand, while holding the headdress, over their heart.)

PLACE OF HONOR FOR THE FLAG

When displayed on US territory, the US flag is accorded the place of honor. As an example, when carried with an organization flag, the US flag is carried to the right of the line of march. Although the organizational flag may be dipped in salute to the reviewing officer at a parade, the national flag is never dipped in salute.

Flag Display

There are specific rules prescribed by public law governing the display of national flags. If you're involved with the use and display of flags, consult AFMAN 36-2203, Drill and Ceremony, for more information.

International law forbids displaying one national flag above another during peacetime. When the flags of several nations are displayed together, they're placed on separate halyards or staffs at the same height.

The national flag is never used as a decoration except as an interment flag. It shouldn't be used to drape doorways, arches, furniture, steps, art objects, etc.

When displayed on a wall, it must be hung flat. No lettering, emblem, or object should ever be placed on it.

As with individuals, the courtesy of "honor to the right" applies to the display of flags. The US flag should always be placed to the right of the point of reference.

If, for example, the national flag is placed with the Air Force flag and a general officer's personal flag, the US flag would be to the right of the stage (audience's left). The Air Force flag should be in the middle, and the general's flag would be on the left (audience's right).

If the US flag is displayed with other flags in a radial (curved base) stand, the US flag is placed in the middle (highest) position.

Transporting the US Flag

A flag on a permanent pole should always be furled around the pole before transporting. If the canvas or cloth "case" is available, it should be used. If no cover is available, simply wrap the flag neatly around the pole and secure it.

A flag not on a permanent pole should be removed, properly folded, and carried in front of the body in both hands (cased). The American Flag should never be allowed to touch the ground.

PLACE OF HONOR FOR INDIVIDUALS

While Walking

When walking, a junior officer does not precede a senior officer. The lower ranking member should give the superior walking room, allowing the senior officer to stay on the right. The junior officer should stay in step with the senior officer.

While Riding in a Military Vehicle

When officers of varied grades ride in a staff car or similar military vehicle, the senior officer sits in the right rear position. The next senior sits in the rear left, and the third senior sits in the front seat passenger side.

A junior officer enters the vehicle first and takes the place on the left side. If officers enter the car from the left door, the junior would allow the senior member to enter first so the senior can take the place to the right.

If there are too many people to allow everyone to ride in the rear, the lowest-ranking officer will ride in the front and, upon reaching the destination, will remain in place until the senior officers get out.

When Boarding and Leaving a Military Aircraft

Protocol dictates the order in which military members board and leave military aircraft. The protocol may vary slightly from base to base, but the standard practice is as follows. Dependents of military personnel accompanied by their sponsors come first. Next to board are unaccompanied military members in descending order of grade. Very Important Persons (VIPs; normally colonels and above) board last and depart first.

GRADE INSIGNIAS, PROPER TITLES, AND TITLES OF ADDRESS

All military personnel are addressed properly by their grade or title. Airman First Class Jones is correctly addressed as “Airman Jones.” Master Sergeant Smith may be called “Sergeant Smith” but should never be addressed “Hey, Sarge.” Such an address is neither dignified nor appropriate. You should address warrant officers as “Mister,” “Mrs.,” “Miss,” or “Ms” with their last name. It’s also correct to call a cadet/OT with the family name of Williams either “Cadet Williams” or “Mister Williams” or “Miss Williams.”

Officers senior to you may be addressed by their rank and last name, or as “Sir” or “Ma’am.” If they’re junior to you, use their rank or rank and last name. Rank has no sex and one of the most glaring blunders is to assume a ranking officer is a “he.” A lieutenant is addressed officially as “Lieutenant.” The adjectives “First” and “Second” are not used in conversation. The custom of referring to officers of general rank as “General” has been modified, and today most officers wearing stars are not offended if they are addressed by the term “Sir” or “Ma’am” instead of their grade.

Military physicians and dentists may be addressed as “Doctor” or by their grade and last name.

A chaplain in the Air Force may be addressed by grade in correspondence only and otherwise will be addressed by religious title: “Father,” “Rabbi,” or “Reverend.” The religious title or “Chaplain” is preferred.

The term “Airman” is one which has created some confusion. It’s used in two ways. “Airman” is properly used to address enlisted persons in the lower grades (Airman basic, Airman, Airman first class, and senior Airman). In a broader, second way, the term covers the entire Air Force, and by this definition, a master sergeant and a colonel are both Airmen.

General Terms of Address

The term “Airman” will be used to distinguish Air Force personnel in the same manner as personnel of the Army are known as “Soldiers,” personnel of the Navy are known as “Sailors,” and personnel in the US Marine Corps are “Marines.”

Addressing Officers of Other Services

Military courtesies must be observed when contacting members of other departments of the military service. Airmen meeting officers of the Army, Navy, Marine Corps, and Coast Guard should show respect in the same manner prescribed for Air Force officers.

The grades of commissioned officers of Marines are the same as those in the Army and Air Force. In the Coast Guard, the grades correspond to those of the Navy. An officer in command of a ship of any size is addressed as “Captain” without regard to the actual grade. A student at the Naval Academy has the title “Midshipman.”

Warrant officers are entitled to the salute and are extended the courtesies and respect due commissioned officers. They’re accepted for membership in the officer’s club. They rank immediately below second lieutenants and above the highest enlisted grade. The Air Force has no warrant officers.

<u>AF Pay Grade</u>	<u>Proper Titles</u>	<u>Abbreviation</u>	<u>Title of Address</u>
Supervisor-Manager Tier (Commonly referred to as “Senior NCOs”)			
E-9	Chief Master Sergeant of the Air Force	CMSAF	Chief
E-9	Command Chief Master Sergeant	CCM	Chief
E-9	Chief Master Sergeant	CMSgt	Chief
E-8	Senior Master Sergeant	SMSgt	Sergeant
E-7	Master Sergeant	MSgt	Sergeant
Technician-Supervisor Tier			
E-6	Technical Sergeant	TSgt	Sergeant
E-5	Staff Sergeant	SSgt	Sergeant
Trainee-Apprentice Tier			
E-4	Senior Airman	SrA	Airman
E-3	Airman First Class	A1C	Airman
E-2	Airman	Amn	Airman
E-1	Airman Basic	AB	Airman

NOTE: Use of the proper title is mandatory in most official/written communications but may also be used as title of address. The title of address (i.e., Technical Sergeant shortened to Sergeant) is used in oral communication only.

Rank Insignia of the United States Armed Forces

ENLISTED












E-1	E-2	E-3	E-4	E-5	E-6	E-7		E-8		E-9		SEA	
AIR FORCE													
No Insignia													
Airman Basic (AB)	Airman (Amn)	Airman First Class (A1C)	Senior Airman (SrA)	Staff Sergeant (SSgt)	Technical Sergeant (TSgt)	Master Sergeant (MSgt)	First Sergeant (FS)	Senior Master Sergeant (SMSgt)	First Sergeant (FS)	Chief Master Sergeant (CMSgt)	First Sergeant (FS)	Command Chief Master Sergeant (CCM)	Chief Master Sergeant of the Air Force
ARMY													
No Insignia													
Private E-1 (PV1)	Private E-2 (PV2)	Private First Class (PFC)	Corporal (CPL) Specialist	Sergeant (SGT)	Staff Sergeant (SSG)	Sergeant First Class (SFC)	Master Sergeant (MSG)	First Sergeant (1SG)	Sergeant Major (SGM)	Command Sergeant Major (CSM)	Sergeant Major of the Army (SMA)		
MARINES													
No Insignia													
Private (PvT)	Private First Class (PFC)	Lance Corporal (LCpl)	Corporal (Cpl)	Sergeant (Sgt)	Staff Sergeant (SSgt)	Gunnery Sergeant (GySgt)	Master Sergeant (MSG)	First Sergeant (1stSgt)	Master Gunnery Sergeant (MGySgt)	Sergeant Major (SgtMaj)	Sergeant Major of the Marine Corps (SgtMajMC)		
NAVY													
No Insignia													
Seaman Recruit (SR)	Seaman Apprentice (SA)	Seaman (SA)	Petty Officer 3rd Class (PO3)	Petty Officer 2nd Class (PO2)	Petty Officer 1st Class (PO1)	Chief Petty Officer (CPO)	Senior Chief Petty Officer (CPO)	Master Chief Petty Officer (MCPO)	Force Command Master Chief Petty Officer (FORMC)	Fleet Command Chief Petty Officer (FLTMC)	Master Chief Petty Officer of the Navy (MCPON)		
COAST GUARD													
													
Seaman Recruit (SR)	Seaman Apprentice (SA)	Seaman (SA)	Petty Officer 3rd Class (PO3))	Petty Officer 2nd Class (PO2)	Petty Officer 1st Class (PO1)	Chief Petty Officer (CPO)	Senior Chief Petty Officer (CPO)	Master chief Petty Officer (MCPO)	Command Master chief (CMC)	Master Chief Petty Officer of the Coast Guard (MCPO-CG)			

Rank Insignia of the United States Armed Forces












OFFICERS

0-1 0-2 0-3 0-4 0-5 0-6 0-7 0-8 0-9 0-10 Special











AIR FORCE

										
Second Lieutenant (2d Lt)	First Lieutenant (1st Lt)	Captain (Capt)	Major (Maj)	Lieutenant Colonel (Lt Col)	Colonel (Col)	Brigadier General (Brig Gen)	Major General (Maj Gen)	Lieutenant General (LtGen)	General (Gen)	General of the Air Force (GAF)












ARMY

										
Second Lieutenant (2d Lt)	First Lieutenant (1st Lt)	Captain (Capt)	Major (Maj)	Lieutenant Colonel (Lt Col)	Colonel (Col)	Brigadier General (Brig Gen)	Major General (Maj Gen)	Lieutenant General (LtGen)	General (Gen)	General of the Army (GA)












MARINES

										
Second Lieutenant (2d Lt)	First Lieutenant (1st Lt)	Captain (Capt)	Major (Maj)	Lieutenant Colonel (Lt Col)	Colonel (Col)	Brigadier General (Brig Gen)	Major General (Maj Gen)	Lieutenant General (LtGen)	General (Gen)	


















NAVY

										
Ensign (ENS)	Lieutenant Junior Grade (LTJG)	Lieutenant (LT)	Lieutenant Commander (LCDR)	Commander (CDR)	Captain (CAPT)	Rear Admiral Lower Half (RDML)	Rear Admiral Upper Half (RADM)	Vice Admiral (RDML)	Admiral (ADM)	Fleet Admiral (FADM)

COAST GUARD

										
Ensign (ENS)	Lieutenant Junior Grade (LTJG)	Lieutenant (LT)	Lieutenant Commander (LCDR)	Commander (CDR)	Captain (CAPT)	Rear Admiral Lower Half (RDML)	Rear Admiral Upper Half (RADM)	Vice Admiral (RDML)	Admiral (ADM)	Fleet Admiral (FADM)

WARRANT OFFICERS

ARMY					MARINES				
									
Warrant Officer (WO-1)	Chief Warrant Officer (CWO-2)	Chief Warrant Officer (CWO-3)	Chief Warrant Officer (CWO-4)	Chief Warrant Officer (CWO-5)	Warrant Officer (WO-1)	Chief Warrant Officer (CWO-2)	Chief Warrant Officer (CWO-3)	Chief Warrant Officer (CWO-4)	Chief Warrant Officer (CWO-5)
NAVY					COAST GUARD				
The grade of Warrant Officer (WO) is no longer in use.					The grade of Warrant Officer (WO) is no longer in use.				The grade of chief Warrant Officer (CWO-5) is no longer in use.
	Chief Warrant Officer (CWO-2)	Chief Warrant Officer (CWO-2)	Chief Warrant Officer (CWO-2)	Chief Warrant Officer (CWO-2)		Chief Warrant Officer (CWO-2)	Chief Warrant Officer (CWO-2)	Chief Warrant Officer (CWO-2)	

OFFICER INSIGNIA OF THE UNITED STATES

ARMED FORCES MILITARY ETIQUETTE

In addition to the customs and courtesies just mentioned, there are many Air Force “taboos” to be avoided. As you gain experience, you’ll realize the following list is far from complete. It does, however, represent the most important actions to avoid.

Taboos

Most taboos are no different from social errors to be avoided in civilian life. They stem from common sense and courtesy. If you learn to avoid taboos, you’ll be making a good start toward a successful military career. Just to name a few, here are some taboos to avoid:

Apple Polishing. The “boot licker” or “apple polisher” has no place in the Air Force. The “apple polisher” does a job not out of dedication but out of selfishness or fear of reprisal—often at the expense of subordinates. A distinction must be made, however, between “boot licking” and displaying good manners, cooperation, loyalty, and respect. Steadfast rules can’t be quoted to serve you in all situations; therefore, good judgment must be substituted. Perhaps an example will illustrate the general rule.

If your supervisor asks your opinion, give your honest opinion. Don’t merely say what you feel will please him/her. Remember, your supervisor respects your judgment or he/she wouldn’t have asked for your opinion. You won’t want to be known as a “yes” person. In short, don’t try to curry favors through insincere actions. Fortunately, individuals who violate this taboo are few. Certainly, such behavior isn’t desirable.

Tardiness. Tardiness is not tolerated in the military. It reflects inattention to duty. In addition to being extremely impolite, it’s punishable under the Uniform Code of Military Justice.

Never keep a senior officer waiting because of your forgetfulness or lack of planning. If an unexpected event delays you, call ahead and give an explanation. The same rule applies to appointments and meetings you’ve arranged with subordinates. Don’t keep them waiting. If your subordinates think of you as a “latecomer,” you haven’t set a good example for them.

Violating the chain of command. The “chain of command” is the direct line of authority from the Commander in Chief to the lowest working level. Each level of command or authority is responsible to the next highest level. To bypass your superior and consult a higher authority is contrary to military procedure.

There may be times when, because your supervisor isn’t available, you’ll have to consult a higher authority. In such a case, inform your supervisor of the facts as soon as possible.

Leaning on a senior's desk. Leaning or sitting on a senior's desk is very discourteous and too informal. If your business requires you to be in the office for more than a minute or two, the senior should invite you to sit down.

Indebtedness. In the future when you find it necessary to borrow money or buy on credit, you'll do so not only as a "private citizen" but also as a member of the officer corps. With this in mind, you must protect the reputation of the entire corps as well as your own reputation. You must pay all your just debts when they're due. If for some unexpected reason you can't pay a bill on time, you should contact the creditor and make your intentions known. The creditor will probably arrange a satisfactory settlement procedure.

Appearing encumbered while in uniform. When in uniform, an officer should present a military appearance. The officer should wear the uniform proudly--as an honorable member of an honorable profession. It's impossible to present this image while wrestling bags of groceries, carrying stacks of boxes, or carrying a small child in each arm.

Public display of affection (PDA). PDA such as handholding, embracing, or walking arm-in-arm is inappropriate for members in uniform and may be service discrediting since indiscriminate displays of affection in public detract from the professional image the Air Force is trying to project.

A poor appearance in public. An officer's conduct and appearance must be able to withstand public scrutiny 24 hours a day. Whether on-duty or off-duty, in or out of uniform, an officer must look and act the part. Misconduct brings discredit on the officer personally, the uniform the officer wears, and the entire Air Force. The uniform should always be neat and worn properly. The officer should take special pains to present a fine appearance when in the civilian community.

The officer should not frequent places that have unsavory reputations. No matter how good the intentions, the officer should remember there's a reason for the reputation. Installation commanders publish periodic lists of off-base establishments that, for various reasons, have been found unworthy to serve military personnel. Military members are forbidden to enter these "off-limits" establishments. When arriving at a new station, always find out which places are off-limits and avoid them.

Bibliography:

1. AFI 1-1. *Air Force Standards*, 07 August 2012.
2. AFPAM 36-2241. *Professional Development Guide*, 1 October 2013.