

**The Air University
Protocol Handbook
for the
Air Force Spouse**



**Office of Protocol
Maxwell AFB, Alabama**

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SECTION I: WHAT IS PROTOCOL?

While good manners are the rules followed in everyday contact with other people, protocol is the set of rules which prescribes good manners in official life and in ceremonies involving governments and nations and their representatives. Accepted protocol practices and procedures have developed gradually through the centuries.

Protocol is the accumulation of customs and regulations that deal with ceremonies and etiquette. Protocol is not just an ornate show of ceremony; it reflects the observance of mutual respect and consideration between individuals as well as nations. It is deeply rooted in sound human relationships that have become the mode of behavior most likely to achieve understanding and cooperation in the conduct of international affairs.

Protocol and good manners are very closely related. They mean showing kindness and concern for everyone and respect for the feelings of others. The consideration you grant someone as a person should be done because that person is a human being, not just because that person is important or of high rank.

Common sense also plays an important part in protocol. There may be times when you feel the proper thing to do is the incorrect one. Therefore, it is sometimes better to do the wrong thing graciously than the proper thing rudely. If you are genuinely concerned about the other person's feelings, your common sense, good manners and protocol should see you smoothly through any situation.

In summary, Protocol:

- Is a combination of good manners, proper etiquette and military customs and courtesies wrapped up together to form a set of rules and guidelines
- Is strict observance of social conventions- Are the forms of ceremony and etiquette observed by diplomatic and heads of state
- Helps prevent embarrassing situations and make everyone feel at ease

SECTION II: INVITATIONS, SOCIAL AND PERSONAL CORRESPONDENCE

The invitation is a notification of an upcoming event. It is requesting the presence of the guest at a social function (formal or informal dinners, receptions, and other military functions). It can be typed if formal or handwritten if informal. Invitations should be addressed to who is being invited. If the entire family is invited, it should be addressed to the family or noted somewhere that the entire family is being invited so the recipient knows how to respond. General Officers' invitations should go to the office and thank-you notes should go to the home. Invitations should be extended 2 weeks in advance to allow the guest enough time to arrange his or her personal calendar. On the other hand, invitations must not be extended so far in advance that the guest is unable to determine whether his schedule will permit him to attend. Normally, three weeks is the earliest an invitation should be received.

Elements of an Invitation:

- | | |
|-----------------------|----------------------|
| 1. Who | Host of the event |
| 2. What | Type of Function |
| 3. Why | "In Honor of..." |
| 4. When | Date/Day/Time |
| 5. Where | Location |
| 6. Dress and R.S.V.P. | Dress/Contact Number |

Envelope Samples

- | | |
|--------------------------------|---|
| On-base only | Colonel and Mrs. John A. Smith
Vice Commander, 42d Air Base Wing |
| On-Base | Colonel Frances Martin (Active Duty Female) and Mr. Martin
Commander, 42d Air Base Wing |
| Standard retiree | Major General John A. Smith, USAF, Retired and Mrs. Smith
55 LeMay Plaza North
Montgomery, AL 36116 |
| Standard Active Duty | Major William R. Johnson
225 High Point Avenue
Maxwell AFB, AL 36117 |
| Standard 2
Military Members | Chief Master Sergeant Harry L. Wright
and Senior Master Sergeant Janet R. Wright
144 Day Street
Montgomery, AL 36116 |

R.S.V.P.

If the host or honoree of an event should extend an invitation to you, it is your social obligation to let the host know either in writing or via the telephone number provided if you plan to attend the event. Any invitation with an R.S.V.P. must be answered. R.S. V. P. is the abbreviation for "repondez s'il vous plait," which translates "please reply." An answer should be given within 24 to 48 hours, particularly if one cannot attend, as the hostess may want to invite someone else to complete her dinner party guest list. If R.S.V. P. is stated on the invitation and no telephone number is given, then the reply should be written. Even though an invitation does not have an R.S.V. P., the thoughtful guest will let the hostess know whether or not he/she is accepting the invitation.

If a person should meet her hostess while running errands and mention "We just received your invitation today, and we will be delighted to come," this does not constitute a reply. The reply must be written or telephoned. Otherwise, the hostess may forget to include this guest on the list of acceptances.

If an invitation is issued well in advance of a party and invited guests do not reply promptly, the hostess has every right to telephone these people to find out why they have not responded. Excuses the hostess may use are that she is concerned the invitation may have been lost in the mail or that she needs to know for menu planning and food ordering. The fact that the hostess has had to call to inquire should have a sobering effect on the intended guests. It is also important for parents to teach their children from early grade school years to always respond promptly to an invitation that contains R.S.V. P.

If one of the spouses definitely cannot attend, the one who can, should telephone the hostess and let her know which spouse is unable to attend. This gives the hostess the option of asking

the spouse to come alone or replying that she would very much like for both spouses to attend and will be having another dinner party very soon to include them. On the day following the party, it is a nice gesture to telephone or write a brief note to the hostess thanking her for the invitation to the party. However, if the party was large, please be sure to write a note of thanks instead of telephoning.

Regrets Only: An invitation can be worded “regrets only.” However, as a host, you need to know how many guests are coming. Using this term does not give you an option to call invited guests who have not responded and to get an exact number. Keep in mind, there will always be some people who have not received the invitation or have not responded.

Thank You Note:

At the end of an event, it is always appropriate to thank the host and/or hostess of the event in person. Within a week of the same event, it is appropriate also to send a letter of thanks to the hostess (or both host and hostess). Below is a good outline to follow when writing this note:

Date

Dear Mrs. Washington,

1. “Thank you for...”
2. A nice comment or highlight something special about the event or your experience
3. A statement indicating your desire to see them again soon.
4. An additional statement of thanks/thanks again.

Sincerely,

Letter of Condolence

Although not a common note to write, and usually the most difficult, the Letter of Condolence is a very warm and affectionate gesture during a time when even conversing with close friends is often very difficult. This letter is written to the spouse or closest family member of the deceased individual. The important elements of this letter include the expressions of sympathy, encouragement, and a desire to help in any way possible. Below is a possible format for a letter of condolence:

Date

Dear Mrs. Washington

1. Salutation
2. A sincere expression of sympathy
3. A fond memory of the deceased individual or positive comment of character
4. An additional expression of condolence

Sincerely,

SECTION III: SOCIAL FUNCTIONS, OFFICIAL DINNERS, AND RECEPTIONS

Formal dinners will have place cards with names, full table service, menu cards, seating diagrams, YASA Cards (You are seated at), and seating boards if a large group and includes toasting. If there are name tags, always put your name tag on your right shoulder so when you are shaking hands the eye moves to your right shoulder. The best china, silverware, and linen will be used. At an informal dinner there should not be menu cards. More everyday china, flatware and a more casual linen should be used. If it is a large group, then place cards and

seating diagrams and boards may or may not be used. Informal meals may also be a sit down buffet without place cards.

Host/Hostess Gifts

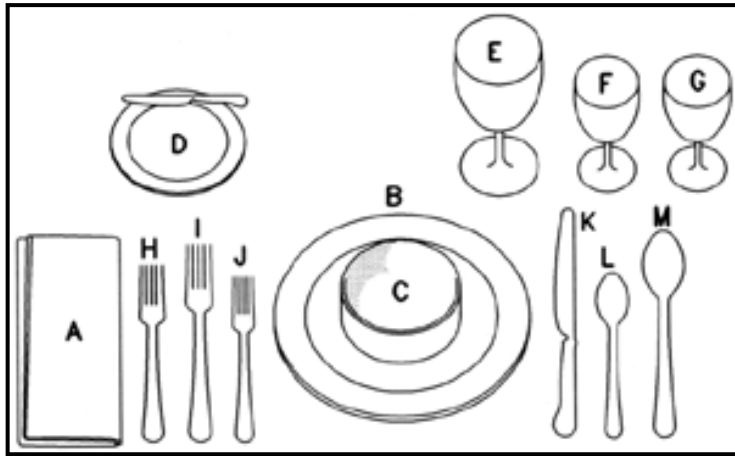
Taking a hostess gift when you have dinner in someone's home is becoming a common practice in the military services. Every host/hostess loves gifts. The gift need not be expensive. Typical gifts are flowers, wine, candy, note cards, and homemade goodies. When determining what host/hostess gift to take, you may want to consider a gift that will not take the host/hostess away from his/her guests. Be sure to enclose or attach a gift tag identifying who brought the gift (unless you are the only guest). The host/hostess will appreciate the reminder when he/she opens the gift after all of the guests leave. When a couple takes a gift, the wife usually carries it and presents it to the hostess (except for wine which is normally carried by the husband and presented to the host). Although appropriate, it is not necessary to send a Thank You note for a host/hostess gift.

Seating Plan

Where to seat your guests depends on the rules of protocol and the personal desires of the host/hostess or commander. There are three general rules: (1) do not seat two gentlemen or two ladies side-by-side, (2) if preferred by host, seat a husband and wife side-by-side, and (3) do not seat a woman at the end of a table. If using rectangular "banquet" tables, you will have problems abiding by all of these rules when the total number of people in your group is divisible by four. If that happens, violate the least serious rule first; i.e., seat two men or two women side-by-side.

You will usually have a simpler time seating guests at round rather than banquet tables. In those situations where you do want spouses to sit side-by-side, i.e., Christmas parties and retirements, seat the wife to the right of the husband. Again, judgment and good taste are your best guides. The place of honor is always to the right of the host/hostess. That position is given to the senior guest in terms of precedence. In order to ensure your guest of honor is seated in the place of honor, it is best not to invite higher-ranking guests. If a higher ranking guest is invited, the host may (1) make the ranking guest a co-host if the event is stag; (2) ask the higher ranking guest to waive his right in favor of the guest of honor; (3) seat guests in precedence even if the guest of honor is not in the place of honor; or (4) divide seating between two tables if number of guests warrants.

The Place Setting



- | | |
|--|-----------------|
| A. Napkin | H. Salad Fork |
| B. Service plate | I. Dinner Fork |
| C. Soup bowl on a liner plate | J. Dessert Fork |
| D. Bread and Butter Plate with butter knife. | K. Knife |
| E. Water glass | L. Teaspoon |
| F. Wine glass | M. Soup Spoon |
| G. Wine glass | |

Rule to follow for setting the table is to avoid overcrowding. Allow at least 24 inches of table space for each person. The minimum place setting is the teaspoon, place knife, place fork, and salad or dessert fork. The next most needed pieces are the butter knife and soup spoon.

Other place setting pieces that are most commonly used are:

The cocktail/seafood fork, demitasse spoon, iced beverage spoon, and individual steak knife.

Menu Cards. Menu cards are used in a more formal setting. They are usually placed in the center of the place (or charger) plate, to the left of the forks, or on a menu card holder.

Centerpieces. Diners should always be able to see over the center-piece. Centerpieces do not need to be elaborate.

Silverware should be placed on the table in the order of its use, starting from the outside and working toward the plate. Here are some basic rules for placing silverware:

1. The silverware, napkin, and plate are lined up approximately one inch from the edge of the table.
2. Forks are placed at the left of the plate, except the cocktail/seafood fork, which is placed at the right of the spoon, tines up.
3. Knives and spoons are at the right of the plate with the blade of the knife facing toward the plate.

4. Dessert spoons and/or forks are usually preset above the dinner plate. The place card sits just above the dessert spoon or fork.
5. The iced beverage spoon may be placed on the table to the right of the soup spoon or it may be laid above the plate with the handle of the spoon to the right.
6. The individual butter knife is usually placed across the top of the butter plate parallel with the edge of the table.

“Place Plate” or “service plates” or “chargers” are the plates that are pre-set on a formal or semi-formal table before the guests are seated. No food is actually served on these plates. If you use a water glass, place it slightly above the tip of the knife nearest the plate and in front of the wine glasses. If serving two wines, place the white wine glass closer to your guests than the usually larger, red wine glass. You may pour liqueur or a cordial in the smaller glass after you serve coffee or, if you choose, pass after dinner drinks on a tray. **Keep in mind when you take your seat at an official dinner, your drinks or glasses are to your right. Your roll or pre-set food items are to the left. A good rule of thumb is to remember: drinks to the right, eats to the left.**

Dining Etiquette Do's and Don'ts

Do:

- ✓ Do spoon the soup toward the rear of the dish. (Any drips will fall into the dish.)
- ✓ Do cut only one bite of food at a time.
- ✓ Do break off one piece of your roll at a time and butter each piece as you eat it.
- ✓ Do break a whole slice of bread at least in half after putting it on the plate.
- ✓ Do take something distasteful or indigestible (such as gristle) from your mouth by discreetly pushing it onto a spoon or quickly taking it from your mouth with your fingers while covering your mouth with the other hand. Then, lay it on your plate.
- ✓ Do use either the continental or American style of eating since both are appropriate.
- ✓ Do rest utensils on a plate rather than on the table when passing your plate for a second helping.
- ✓ Do take pills discreetly, if necessary. Carry the pills in a small pillbox rather than in a medicine bottle. Put the pills in your hand under the table, and then quickly put them in your mouth.
- ✓ Do excuse yourself and retire to the ladies' room to apply lipstick, makeup, and comb your hair.

Don't:

- ☹ Don't begin eating until the host or guest of honor has taken his or her first bite or given you permission to begin your meal.
- ☹ Don't begin eating your dessert until everyone has been served and the host or guest of honor begins to eat.
- ☹ Don't put bread on the table by your plate.
- ☹ Don't use your salad plate for bread and butter. Use the bread plate on your left.
- ☹ Don't smoke at the table. Excuse yourself and go to a smoking area after dessert.
- ☹ Don't spread jam or butter directly from the serving dish onto the roll or slice of bread. Instead, place a small portion to use on your bread and butter plate.
- ☹ Don't place your briefcase, handbag, gloves, or a stack of files on the table. (Put them on the floor out of the way of the waiter's traffic flow.)
- ☹ Don't wipe or blot lipstick on a cloth napkin.

Toasts

Historical Precedent and Custom. In the 16th century it became the fashion in England to add toasted bread to drinks. From this custom, the term “toast” came to be applied to a drink of honor proposed to some person or sentiment during the course of a meal, or at its conclusion. A toast is frequently the occasion for a speech, particularly at a formal dinner of an organization. Do as the Toastmaster does—Stand, if he/she stands and Sit, if he/she sits. The one who proposes the toast and those who drink with him are honoring the person or sentiment being toasted. The person receiving the toast, whether it is for him or for something or someone he represents, does not drink—in fact, he doesn’t even touch his glass—as he would be paying homage to himself by so doing. Never toast yourself—if you are included in a group being toasted, you should not participate in the toast. If you were standing, you should sit down. It is an insult to the person, or sentiment, being honored to refuse to drink the toast. If one is not in favor of alcoholic beverages, he simply lifts his glass with the others and goes through the motion of drinking. Never drink a toast with a liqueur or mixed drink. At a home dinner party, the host should stand, but all other dinner guests and the honorees should remain seated.

SHOULD A LADY STAND WHEN TOASTS ARE PROPOSED?

Unless the hostess stands, all non-active duty ladies should remain seated. Non-military females in attendance at a military event are not required to stand for a toast unless it is to the President of the United States, the US Flag or if the wife of the host rises. According to Air Force protocol, the ladies may remain seated for any further informal toasts. Normally preceding the toasts, you should make a statement to clarify who stands and who sits, such as “Officers, please rise for the toasts, and other guests, please remain seated.” Water is used for toasts honoring service members who are prisoners of war, missing in action or deceased.

Terms of Dress Attire

Individuals will often receive an invitation with the dress specified as either formal or informal. You may also use casual, sport coat and tie, business suit, or mess dress on an invitation. A good host/hostess will try to eliminate confusion on the part of their guests.

Casual means comfortably unrestricted. Men wear short or long-sleeve open collar shirt, perhaps with a sweater, no tie. Women can wear any casual dress, slacks, blouse, and long or short skirts are appropriate.

Sport Coat and Tie is a blazer or sport jacket with coordinated slacks; not a suit. Women can wear appropriate dress or dressy slacks outfit.

Business Suit is with a tie and conservative for men and a dressy street-length or Sunday Dress, dressy pantsuit for ladies.

Coat and Tie is a sports coat with a pair of slacks, jacket with tie. Jacket does not have to match the pants. Ladies wear dressy street-length or Sunday dress or dressy pantsuit.

Formal attire for military is mess dress. Formal attire for civilian men is black tie or tuxedo. For ladies, formal attire is a tea length dress, floor length evening dress, or very dressy pantsuit.

Blue Formal Dress attire is authorized for officers only. It is worn for formal, official evening functions and state occasions (white tie functions). The blue formal uniform is the same as the mess dress with several exceptions. Ladies wear a floor length or tea length evening dress. Gloves for ladies with formal wear are optional.

Four easy tips for successful dressing are: (1) Learn the dress code of the area, (2) Be neat, (3) Keep things simple, and (4) When in doubt, call.

Nametags

Use of nametags is optional, depending on desires of the host and hostess. Nametags primarily assist the visiting guests with remembering the names and ranks of all the staff members and their spouses. If providing nametags for an event, it may be useful to have ribbons available. The nametags can be clipped to the ribbon and then worn around the individual's neck. This eliminates having to figure out how to clip the nametag to a delicate fabric or where there isn't any edge to the fabric. Wear nametags on the right-hand side of the shoulder area. When you extend your right hand for a handshake, the line of sight is to the other person's right side. There is no regulation governing nametags. Typed nametags are difficult to read and often defeat the purpose of providing easy identification of the bearer. We handprint nametags in bold letters using the person's full rank and surname on two lines. At informal functions it may be preferable to print first (preferred or nickname) and last name. Use of calligraphy, which isn't extremely ornate, is appropriate. At a casual, in-house affair, the host or hostess may prefer to use first and last names only, or not to use them at all. Nametags have an additional purpose at an official dinner. As the guests pick up their nametags, you can tell if some of the Distinguished Visitors (DVs) have not arrived and you may want to delay ringing the chimes until they do. Nametags are not authorized with the mess dress or the ceremonial dress. However, if the commander desires, he may make an exception for an event where there are many off-base civilians in attendance.

Receiving Lines

There is no ironclad rule for the formation and location of receiving lines; you will have to make a case-by-case judgment depending on circumstances. An announcer (usually an aide or executive officer) starts the line and introduces the guests to the receiving line participants. For official military functions, the military member (or ranking military member) leads the spouse through the line. He gives the announcer his rank/name and spouse's name (Mrs. XXXX). The announcer's role is to introduce guests – not to greet them, so do not offer to shake hands. Receiving lines should consist of as few people as possible. Do not start a conversation, just greet host and honorees and keep moving. Move slowly, shake hands, and greet each person as you are presented. Please don't use too firm a handshake as the host and honored guests have many hands to shake. To avoid holding up the reception line behind you, please do not stop to chat with those in the receiving line (even if you know the person). After greeting all in the receiving line, you may proceed to the refreshment area, talk to your friends, and enjoy yourself.

The Handshake

We notice persons non-verbally by their touch, and the main way we touch someone in business is with a handshake. You are judged by your handshake far more than you know. You also judge others by the way they shake your hand more than you realize.

- ☞ **Hold a glass** in your left hand to avoid a cold, wet hand at parties and receptions. Then your right hand is always free to shake hands.
- ☞ **Shake** a woman's hand here and overseas just as firmly as a man's.

The Introduction

The basic rule to remember is that the person you address *first* is the one you are honoring by showing deference to them. When it comes to introductions, the most important rule to remember is to make them! Someone who is not introduced is non-verbally told that he is not welcome. A person would rather have you tell him that you forgot his name and ask for it than to stand in a group having not been introduced.

Military person in most social situations

-First and second lieutenants are introduced and addressed as "Lieutenants", lieutenant colonels as "Colonel" and all general officers as "General"

-Senior enlisted advisors and chief master sergeants are introduced and addressed as "Chiefs"

-Medical doctors are introduced using their military rank, however, in general conversation may be called "Doctor" unless they are a hospital commander or general officer

-Military Chaplains are introduced by rank; then, their position should be referenced

-Catholic Priests can be addressed as "Father"

-

Retired military are introduced using military rank, unless their present position is more appropriate (e.g., Mayor, Senator, Ambassador, etc.)

Guidelines for Showing Deference:

1. Present the lower in rank/position to the higher in rank or position.
"Mr. Allen [vice-president of the firm], this is Mr. Adams [a junior executive]."
2. Present a less distinguished person to a more celebrated person.
"Miss Celebrity, may I present Miss Jones."
3. A man is presented to a woman. (EXCEPTION: In business, when a woman employee is introduced to an executive.)
"Mrs. Brown, this is Mr. Smith."
4. Present the younger to the older person.
"Mr. Elder, may I introduce Mr. Young."
5. Present a layman to a clergyman.
"Reverend Stocks, Mr. Glenn."
6. Present others to your parents. (EXCEPTION: When the "other" is a distinguished person.)

7. When there are no discernible differences to guide you in determining deference, it does not matter who is mentioned first.

Other Tips for Introductions:

1. In all social introductions, mention something about the person being introduced so that when you leave, the group has a starting point for their conversation.
2. When dining, you should introduce yourself to those sitting next to you if you have not been introduced previously.
3. Men should rise to meet a woman. Women should rise for a much older man or woman or a person of distinction. If you are unsure about whether to rise or not, then rise.
4. A married woman who has kept her maiden name should *clearly* introduce her husband with his last name.
5. In answering an introduction, the simplest reply is, "I'm glad to meet you".

Children at Social Functions

Check with the host/hostess of an event to see if children are invited or if it is for adults only.

SECTION IV: OFFICIAL CEREMONIES

Official ceremonies are part of the Air Force and military traditions. Most attend some type of official ceremony during their association with the military. Below are the most common, but by no means all of the official ceremonies for the military.

The Change of Command Ceremony

The Change of Command Ceremony is rooted in military history dating back to the 18th Century. At that time, organizational flags were developed with color arrangements and symbols unique to each unit. The flag served as a rallying point and reminder of their allegiance to their leader during battle. To this flag and its commander, military members dedicated their loyalty and trust. When a change of command took place, the flag was passed to the individual assuming command in the presence of the entire unit. All unit members could witness their new leader assume the responsibility and trust associated with the position of commander. He who possessed the flag also held the unit members' allegiance. This symbolic tradition has survived through out military history.

Promotion Ceremonies (Officer and Enlisted)

Promotion Ceremonies are a common part of our Air Force Tradition. The purpose of the ceremony is to provide public recognition and acknowledgement for appointment to a new rank among unit members, family, and friends. The ceremony and reception may be small or very extensive depending on the preference of the promotee. Whatever the choice, the ceremony must be planned and executed in a professional and honorable manner.

Award Ceremonies and Presentation of Medals

When a member receives an award or medal, the award ceremony provides an opportunity for the entire unit to share in the success of one of its members. The ceremony also provides the recipient an opportunity to share words of thanks and acknowledge special family members or guests.

Retirement Ceremony

At the end of a full career in the military, many individuals welcome the opportunity to publicly retire and thank the many individuals who contributed and supported them. As with many traditional Air Force ceremonies, the host and format of the ceremony are the preferences of the retiree. Also, a retirement luncheon or dinner is left to the preference of the retiree, but are definitely appropriate for the occasion.

Dining-Ins and Dining-Outs

The Dining-in and Dining-out represent some of the most formal aspects of military social life. The Dining-in is a formal dinner for the members of a wing, unit, or other organization. The "Combat Dining-in" is far less formal but the basic rules and format of the dining-in apply. The Dining-out includes spouses and guests. The Marine Corps has Mess Night instead of Dining-in and their Dining-Ins are open to spouses and guests. The Army calls their Dining-in-The Regimental Dinner. The purpose of these gatherings is to bring together members of a unit in an atmosphere of camaraderie, good fellowship, and social rapport.

CUSTOMS AND COURTESIES

Display of and Honors to the USA Flag

The display of our National Colors plays an important role in honoring both our heritage and the history of the very country we serve to defend. There are definitive guidelines and proper ways to display our flag with dignity and honor. When flown at half-staff, the flag should first be hoisted to the peak for an instant and then lowered to the half-staff position. The term "half-staff" means the position of the flag when it is one-half the distance between the top and bottom of the staff (the term "half-mast" is a naval term and inappropriate in Air Force Usage). The flag should again be raised to the peak before it is lowered for the day. On Memorial Day, the flag should be displayed at half-staff until noon, and then raised to the top of the staff. By order of the President; the flag shall be flown at half-staff upon the death of principal figures of the United States Government and the Governor of a State, territory, or possession, as a mark of respect. In the event of the death of other officials or foreign dignitaries, the flag is to be displayed at half-staff according to Presidential instructions or orders (or in accordance with recognized customs or practices not inconsistent with law). The flag should never be used as wearing apparel, bedding, or drapery. It should never be festooned, drawn back, nor up, in folds, but always allowed to fall free. Bunting of blue, white, and red, always arranged with the blue above, the white in the middle, and the red below, should be used for covering a speaker's desk, draping the front of the platform, and for decoration in general. No disrespect should be shown to the flag of the United States of America; the flag is not to be dipped to any person or thing. Unit colors, State flags, and organizational or institutional flags are to be dipped as a mark of honor. The flag should never touch anything beneath it, such as the ground, the floor, water, or merchandise.

Honors to the National Anthem

Outdoors. Military in uniform, should come to attention and face

In the direction of the flag (or band if flag not visible) and salute. Civilians should stop, put their right hand over their heart. All should maintain position until last note of music. Vehicles in motion are

to stop; if radio on, turn it off. Everyone remains seated and respectful

or at attention, if military.

Mark of respect is shown to national anthem of any friendly country when played during official occasions.

Indoors. When the national anthem is played indoors at a formal gathering, stand at attention and face the flag if it is present, otherwise, face the music. Civilians (and military, if in civilian or athletic clothes) stand at attention with their right hand over their heart.

Honors During Reveille or Retreat

During the ceremony of hoisting or lowering the flag or when the flag is passing in a parade or in review, all people present except those in uniform should face the flag and stand at attention with the right hand over the heart. Civilians should remove their headgear with their right hand and hold it at the left shoulder, the hand being over the heart. If driving in a vehicle during the playing of Retreat, the operator must come to a complete stop until the playing of the National Anthem is complete and the flag is secured. An individual can stand outside of his/her vehicle to render appropriate honors if he/she prefers (optional).

Dates to Remember

14 June (1775) US Army Anniversary

13 October (1775) US Navy Anniversary

10 November (1775) US Marine Corps Anniversary

4 August (1790) US Coast Guard Anniversary

18 September (1947) US Air Force Anniversary

Flag Etiquette

The Flag should be displayed on all days, especially on:

New Year's Day – 1 January

Inauguration Day – 20 January

Martin Luther King, Jr.'s Birthday, 3rd Monday in January

Lincoln's Birthday – 12 February

Washington's Birthday, third Monday in February

Easter Sunday – (variable)

Mother's Day – second Sunday in May

Armed Forces Day – third Saturday in May

Memorial Day (half-staff until noon) – the last Monday in May

Flag Day – 14 June

Father's Day – third Sunday in June

Independence Day – 4 July

Labor Day – first Monday in September

Constitution Day – 17 September

Columbus Day – second Monday in October

Veterans Day – 11 November

Thanksgiving Day – fourth Thursday in November

Christmas Day - 25 December

Other days as may be proclaimed by the
President of the United States (Birthdays of States [date of admission])
and State Holidays

Order of Precedence

Precedence or "who outranks whom" remains an important issue in matters of protocol. All military personnel understand the significance of rank. Therefore, do not get creative when you are responsible for determining precedence at a function. Base your decisions almost exclusively on date of rank. For general officers, precedence is determined by relative rank. A general officers' relative rank should be available from his/her office. At official functions where participants are not all military, determining precedence is more complicated. Unfortunately, precedence is subject to frequent changes based on the establishment of new positions, retirements of incumbent members, or the direction of those in charge. Normally, you determine precedence of spouses based upon their military members' rank or position. However, precedence for Officers Spouses' Club (OSC) or Enlisted Spouses' Club (ESC) functions is based upon the position of the spouse in the organization. A dinner hosted by the OSC or ESC, the military member would be seated based upon their spouses' position in the organization.

US ARMED FORCES OFFICER RANK ABBREVIATIONS

ARMY

General	GEN
Lieutenant General	LTG
Major General	MG
Brigadier General	BG
Colonel	COL
Lieutenant Colonel	LTC
Major	MAJ
Captain	CPT
First Lieutenant	1LT
Second Lieutenant	2LT

NAVY and COAST GUARD

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

MARINE CORPS

General	Gen
Lieutenant General	LtGen
Major General	MajGen
Brigadier General	BGen
Colonel	Col
Lieutenant Colonel	LtCol
Major	Maj
Captain	Capt
First Lieutenant	1stLt
Second Lieutenant	2ndLt

AIR FORCE

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

* The Navy refers to both O-7s and O-8s as "Rear Admirals." Technically, the O-7 is a Rear Admiral (lower half) and the O-8 is a Rear Admiral (upper half). Keep this difference in mind when rank-ordering officers in these two grades. When writing, refer to them as "Rear Admiral"; when speaking, they are both "Admiral."

MILITARY AND CIVILIAN RANK EQUIVALENTS

Military Rank SES/GS Rating	SES/GS Rating	DV Code	FSO	Diplomatic Title	Executive Level
		DV 2			Executive Level I
		DV 2			Executive Level II
		DV 2			Executive Level III
O-10 General / Admiral		DV 2 DV 3	Career Ambassador	Ambassador	Executive Level IV
O-9 Lt Gen / VADM	*SES Level	DV 4	Career Minister	Ambassador; Counselor	Executive Level V
O-8 Maj Gen / RADM (Upper Half)	*SES Level	DV 5	FSO-1	Ambassador; Counselor	
O-7 Brig Gen/ RDML(Lower Half)	*SES Level	DV 6	FSO-2	Counselor; 1 st Secretary	
O-6 Col / CAPT	GS-15	DV 7	FSO-3	1 st Secretary	
O-5 Lt Col / CDR	GS-13 GS-14		FSO-4	2 nd Secretary	
O-4 Maj / LCDR	GS-12		FSO-5	2 nd Secretary	
O-3 Capt / LT	GS-10 GS-11		FSO-6	2 nd Secretary	
O-2 1st Lt / LTJG	GS-8 GS-9		FSO-7	3 rd Secretary	
O-1 2d Lt / ENS	GS-7		FSO-8	3 rd Secretary	

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 SENIOR ENLISTED ADVISORS

ARMY

no insignia										
Private E-1 (PV1)	Private E-2 (PV2)	Private First Class (PFC)	Corporal (CPL) Specialist (SPC)	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 (PFC)	Lance Corporal (LCpl)	Corporal (Cpl)	Sergeant (Sgt)	Staff Sergeant (SSgt)	Gunnery Sergeant (GySgt)	Master Sergeant (MSgt) 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 (SN)	Petty Officer Third Class (PO3)	Petty Officer Second Class (PO2)	Petty Officer First Class (PO1)	Chief Petty Officer (CPO)	Senior Chief Petty Officer (SCPO)	Master Chief Petty Officer (MCPO)	Force or Fleet Chief Petty Officer (FORMC) (FLTMC)	Master Chief Petty Officer of the Navy (MCPON)

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 (E-7)	Senior Master Sergeant (SMSgt)	First Sergeant (E-8)	Chief Master Sergeant (CMSgt)	First Chief Master Sergeant (E-9)	Command Chief Master Sergeant (CCM)	Chief Master Sergeant of the Air Force (CMSAF)

COAST GUARD

Seaman Recruit (SR)	Seaman Apprentice (SA)	Seaman (SN)	Petty Officer Third Class (PO3)	Petty Officer Second Class (PO2)	Petty Officer First Class (PO1)	Chief Petty Officer (CPO)	Senior Chief Petty Officer (SCPO)	Master Chief Petty Officer (MCPO)	Command Master Chief (CMC)	Master Chief Petty Officer of the Coast Guard (MCPO-CG)

Warrant

ARMY

W-1	W-2	W-3	W-4	W-5
Warrant Officer (WO1)	Chief Warrant Officer (CW2)	Chief Warrant Officer (CW3)	Chief Warrant Officer (CW4)	Chief Warrant Officer (CW5)

NAVY

W-2	W-3	W-4
Chief Warrant Officer (CW02)	Chief Warrant Officer (CW03)	Chief Warrant Officer (CW04)

MARINES

W-1	W-2	W-3	W-4	W-5
Warrant Officer (WO)	Chief Warrant Officer (CW02)	Chief Warrant Officer (CW03)	Chief Warrant Officer (CW04)	Chief Warrant Officer (CW05)

COAST GUARD

W-2	W-3	W-4
Chief Warrant Officer (CW02)	Chief Warrant Officer (CW03)	Chief Warrant Officer (CW04)

Insignia of the United States Armed Forces – Officers

O-1 O-2 O-3 O-4 O-5 O-6 O-7 O-8 O-9 O-10 SPECIAL

ARMY

Second Lieutenant (2LT)	First Lieutenant (1LT)	Captain (CPT)	Major (MAJ)	Lieutenant Colonel (LTC)	Colonel (COL)	Brigadier General (BG)	Major General (MG)	Lieutenant General (LTG)	General (GEN)	General of the Army (GA)

MARINES

Second Lieutenant (2ndLt)	First Lieutenant (1stLt)	Captain (Capt)	Major (Maj)	Lieutenant Colonel (LtCol)	Colonel (Col)	Brigadier General (BGen)	Major General (MajGen)	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 (RADM)(L)	Rear Admiral Upper Half (RADM)(U)	Vice Admiral (VADM)	Admiral (ADM)	Fleet Admiral (FADM)

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 (Lt Gen)	General (Gen)	

COAST GUARD

Ensign (ENS)	Lieutenant Junior Grade (LTJG)	Lieutenant (LT)	Lieutenant Commander (LCDR)	Commander (CDR)	Captain (CAPT)	Rear Admiral Lower Half (RADM)(L)	Rear Admiral Upper Half (RADM)(U)	Vice Admiral (VADM)	Admiral (ADM)	

Websites

JMAR Protocol Training, Florida,
<http://www.protocoltraining.com>

AFMC, Wright-Patterson AFB, OH
<https://www.afmc-mil.wpafb.af.mil/>
HQ-AFMC/CV/cvp

Protocol Reference Library

- The Air Force Wife Handbook, A Complete Social Guide. Ann Crossley and Carol A. Keller, Pub. By ABI Press, Sarasota, FL
- 'Til Wheels Are Up!, Air Force Space Command Protocol Handbook and *Courtesy of Luke AFB) on the AU Protocol* Web Site: <http://www.au.af.mil/au/protocol>
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- Service Etiquette, Fourth Edition. Oretta D. Swartz, Naval Institute Press, 1988.
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MILITARY TIME

AM

PM

