

Customs & Courtesies

1. How the salute originated

- The salute has its origin in another time, when kings ruled, knights wore armor, and courtly manners flourished. It was the age of chivalry. The etiquette of the day dictated that should two friendly knights meet, each would raise the visor of his helmet, show his face, and pay proper respect to the other. Since both knights were completely clad in steel, they could recognize each other as friend or foe by the distinctive emblems and devices on their armor - another custom that still lives. Etiquette also decreed that the knights salute with their right hands. The right hand was the sword hand; raising it was a sign of trust. Even after modern firearms had made steel armor a thing of the past, the knightly gesture of raising the right hand continued to be recognized as the proper greeting between soldiers. The salute is a sign of friendship and mutual respect.

2. What are some other examples of customs and courtesies, besides the salute?

- Calling cadet & senior officers “sir” or “ma’am,”
- Coming to attention when a cadet or senior officer enters the room
- Walking on the officer’s left side.

3. With the history of the salute as an introduction, what do you imagine is the basis for military customs and courtesies?

- Military customs and courtesies like the salute are based on simple politeness and respect. When knights of old saluted one another, and when cadets and officers exchange salutes today, the salute is not indicating that one person is inferior to another. Rather, when you exchange salutes with an officer, you show that you are polite and respectful of other people, especially those in positions of authority.

4. If customs and courtesies are based on respect, does that mean you don’t have to salute someone you don’t respect?

- It is important to note that there will be some people you’ll be proud and eager to salute, but there may be times when you’ll be angry with an officer, or maybe you will simply dislike them as a person. No matter, the custom of the salute calls for you to salute them just the same. You salute a person’s rank or position, not necessary that person as an individual.

5. Cadets are expected to display good military bearing. What does that mean?

- Your bearing is the overall way you conduct yourself, in and out of uniform. It means cadets are not supposed to fool around; they are to show respect for themselves, their leaders, and their uniform; during drill and when formally reporting to an officer, they are to stand at attention properly; in short, you behave in such a way that people see you are serious about being a cadet and becoming a leader

6. Based on your understanding of this background information, why do you think CAP cadets practice military customs and courtesies such as the salute?

- They show our connection to the Air Force; it is a way to develop self-respect and respect for others; it shows we hold ourselves to high standards of personal conduct; it shows that we aspire to the level of professionalism that our military displays.

7. What are some CAP customs & Courtesies?

- Salute
 - Salute outdoors only, unless formally reporting to an officer
 - Salute all cadet officers, senior member officers, and military officers
 - No need to salute while in formation – the commander salutes for you

- Salute when reporting to an officer
 - When in doubt, salute – anyone who sees a need to salute may do so at any time
 - Military bearing / posture
 - Stand erect or sit up straight with hands on lap and eyes straight ahead unless directed otherwise.
 - When given the command at-ease you may not talk unless asked a question.
 - Sit at attention until given at ease. This is a more relaxed posture but still requires you not to slouch; hands may be on table/desk; head can move.
 - When standing in a formation before answering a question or otherwise responding to an officer, or clapping, you must come to the position of attention.
 - When in a classroom to respond to or to ask a question come to the sitting position of attention or stand at attention.
 - Reporting Procedures
 - To Officer in an office – Knock on the door once firmly. Wait a reasonable amount of time before knocking again. When you are told to enter move as though you were marching at attention. Halt two paces in from the officer. Facing the officer directly salute and begin your reporting statement. When your hand reaches the salute position, hold it until you finish reporting and the officer has returned the salute. Report saying “Sir/Ma’am (your cap grade and last name) reporting as ordered.” When you are finished with your business render a hand salute and leave the room by the quickest route and close the door.
 - To an Officer when being called out of formation – step back, and take the most direct path using proper facing movements. Halt two paces in from the officer. Facing the officer directly salute and begin your reporting statement. When your hand reaches the salute position, hold it until you finish reporting and the officer has returned the salute. Report saying “Sir/Ma’am (your cap grade and last name) reporting as ordered.” When you are finished with your business render a hand salute, step back, do an about face, and return to your flight by the most direct path using proper facing movements.
 - Call Room to Attention
 - When an officer, who is higher ranking than anyone present, enters the room
 - Do not call the room to attention during a class
 - Manner of Address
 - Cadet NCOs: By grade and last name, or merely sergeant
 - Cadet Officers: By grade and last name, or merely by grade, or as sir or ma’am
 - Senior Members By grade and last name, or merely by grade, or as sir or ma’am
 - Physical contact between cadets of the opposite sex should be kept to a minimum.
7. Common Courtesies
- Always raise your hand to respond in a classroom setting
 - Always extend proper courtesy to others
 - Allow officers to pass
 - Clean the meeting location before leaving (stow equipment, clear tables, etc.)

Remember

How well you render customs and courtesies reflects on yourself, your squadron, on CAP, and the Air Force. If you are polite and respectful, people will develop a good impression of you and CAP. You'll receive compliments and develop a sense of pride in yourself. If you do not address officers as sir or ma'am, if you goof around in uniform, if you look sloppy, people will not respect you and will be critical of you and all of CAP. People will think you are a slacker, and pretty soon you'll start to think you are, too