

Customs and courtesies



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Marine Corps customs and courtesies are very important to the way the Marine Corps works. They are intended to reinforce discipline and the chain of command, showing how Marines will treat their superiors. They also enhance esprit de corps and unity. This is what makes the Marine Corps the brotherhood that it has become. Military courtesies include correct forms of address like; Sir, and Ma'am, and when each should be used; the salute, and standing at attention, proper wear of military covers, and the rules for behavior in different ceremonies.

Specifics can change depending on an individual's rank, location, and conditions. A military funeral, for example, requires stricter etiquette than a normal day. Courtesies are sometimes relaxed under field conditions; officers may discourage salutes in combat areas to avoid making themselves a target for snipers, and also in the United States of America as well as some allied nations, it is forbidden to salute both indoors, and when in the field, a battle situation where snipers are likely to pick out officer targets watching for salutes. 1] Other military courtesies serve a practical purpose. In the United States Navy, "bracing" is the practice of bracing one's self against the bulkhead (wall) at the position of attention as a superior officer walks by. This practice arose because of the narrow passageways on ships. Since officers may need to quickly move about the ship, sailors would get out of the officer's way by bracing. The tradition has extended to include the corridors and hallways of buildings (depending on the situation).

However it still serves a useful purpose aboard ships (especially submarines.) Courtesy among members of the Armed Forces is vital to maintain military discipline. Military courtesy means good manners and

politeness in dealing with other people. Courteous behavior provides a basis for developing good human relations. The distinction between civilian and military courtesy is that military courtesy was developed in a military atmosphere and has become an integral part of serving in uniform.

Military courtesy has been established over the years from earlier and sometimes remote customs and traditions. But one thing they all have in common is they show the respect and honor the soldiers and superiors have for one another. Military courtesies are often very similar to the civilities found in the civilian world as well as daily life. The only difference is that it is mandatory for the courtesies seen in the military to be adhered to and followed by its soldiers. If these courtesies are not followed, the offending soldier can, and almost always will, be punished. This punishment can come in the form of corrective training, known commonly as extra duty and can go as far as court martial, jail time and/or being discharged from the military. In the military, manners and levels of respect help to identify the difference between junior to senior ranking members. Courtesies and customs of the Army have been practiced for hundreds of years. They involve a code of conduct that is mandatory for every member of the army to follow.

Some are obviously against the rules of professionalism such as public display of affection in uniform, as is being intoxicated in uniform and exhibiting violent behavior are conducts that are punishable in the military code of conduct. Others are unique codes of behavior that must to be followed in order to present a one of a kind organizational structure to the military as these customs and practices instill and show discipline and

professionalism among its members. Most military courtesies have similar manners in the civilian world.

For example, it is mandatory for members of the military to address officers with "sir" or "ma'am," and senior enlisted with their rank, such as "sergeant" or "first sergeant". This is similar to many parents teaching their children the way to address an adult. Even though it is not necessary for the senior officers to be considerate and polite, military courtesy is designed to foster mutual respect among its members. It is give and take. A private will find it hard to respect and show courtesy to an officer if they do not return the same respect.