



UNITED STATES ARMY RECRUITING COMMAND



Military Customs and Courtesies



Terminal Learning Objective



Every day you spend in the uniform you are currently wearing, for the remainder your days as a Warrior, you will be required to know, understand, and perform military customs and courtesies. It does not matter if you are here in Basic Combat Training, or at your first, third, or even tenth duty station, adhering to military customs and courtesies will occur daily in your role as a Warrior. The Army's customs and courtesies are an honor to participate in and reflect hundreds of years of American History.

At the completion of this lesson, you [the student] will:

Action: Render military customs, courtesy, or honor for a given situation

Conditions: In a classroom or field environment, and given information and an individual situation

Standards: Develop a Soldier who will confidently display Army Customs and Courtesies and understands their significance to the Army profession.

Learning Domain - Level: None assigned

No JPME Learning Areas Supported: None





ELO A



Having received instruction on the Army Values and Drill and Ceremony (Stationary Drill Movements), you will apply these skills in order to be prepared to render the correct courtesy and honor and identify rank. These newly acquired skills will be applied everyday you are in the Army and will additionally be trained and tested throughout Basic Combat Training.

ENABLING LEARNING OBJECTIVE - A

ACTION: Explain the history and differences between Customs, Courtesies, and Traditions

CONDITIONS: In a suitable training location/classroom.

STANDARDS: At the conclusion of this session the Soldier is able to define, in writing, the difference between a Custom, a Courtesy, and tradition.

LEARNING DOMAIN - LEVEL: Cognitive - Applying

No JPME LEARNING AREAS SUPPORTED:None





History



History of Customs and Courtesies: (FM 7-21.13, Ch. 4, page 4-1) The Army is an organization that instills pride in its members because of its history, mission, capabilities, and the respect it has earned in the service of the Nation. A reflection of that pride is visible in the customs, courtesies, and traditions the Army holds. Adherence to them connects us with Warriors throughout America's history.

For saluting, some historians believe the hand salute began in the late Roman times when assassinations were common. A citizen who wanted to see a public official had to approach with his right hand raised to show he did not hold a weapon. Knights in armor raised their visors with the right hand when meeting a comrade. This practice gradually became a way of showing respect and in early American history, sometimes involved removing the hat. By 1820, the motion was modified by touching the hat, and since then has become the hand salute used today.





History



As we walk with our superiors or our subordinates walk with us, it is a courtesy for the lower ranking individual to walk to the left and slightly behind the higher ranking individual. This comes from the days of the Cavalry when officers wore a saber. Being they wore the saber on the left side, the saber was drawn out in a sweeping motion and ended up on the right side. To prevent injury to someone on the right side, they walked on the left. This also allowed for the subordinate to protect the right side of the higher ranking individual.

Drums and bugle calls were used to communicate orders to large groups of Soldiers on noisy battlefields. Military buglers have been communicating with Soldiers for centuries. Bugle calls told troops when to eat, when to go to bed, when to wake up, when to attack, and when to retreat just to name a few.





Customs



A custom (FM 7-21.13, Ch. 4, page 4-2 para (s) 4-2 & 4-3)) is defined as an established practice. Customs include positive actions -- things you do, and taboos -- things you avoid. All established arts, trades, and professions, all races of people, all nations, and even different sections of the same nation have their own practice and customs by which they govern a part of their lives. Many Army customs compliment procedures required by military courtesy, while others add to the graciousness of garrison life. The breach of some Army customs merely brands the offender as ignorant, careless, or ill bred. Violations of other Army customs, however, will bring official censure or disciplinary action. The customs of the Army are its common law. These are a few:

Never Criticize the Army or a leader in public.

Never go “over the heads” of superiors—don’t jump the chain of command.

Never offer excuses.

Never “wear” a superior’s rank by saying something like, “the First Sergeant wants this done now,” when in fact the First Sergeant said no such thing. Speak with your own voice.

Never turn and walk away to avoid giving a hand salute.

Never run indoors or pretend you don’t hear (while driving, for example) the bugle call for reveille or retreat. Even while driving.

Never appear in uniform while under the influence of alcohol.

If you don’t know the answer to a superior’s question, you will never go wrong with the response, “I don’t know Sir or Drill Sergeant, but I’ll find out.”





Courtesies



Courtesy(FM 7-21.13, Ch. 4, page 4-4) among members of the Armed forces is vital to maintain 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 between in a military atmosphere and has become as integral part of serving in uniform. For example we train Soldiers to say “Sir” or “Ma’am” when talking to an officer. Military courtesy is not a one-way street. Enlisted personnel are expected to be courteous to officers and likewise, officers are expected to return the courtesy. Mutual respect is a vital part of military courtesy.

The hand salute

Standing at attention when talking to an officer

When you are dismissed by an officer, or when he departs, come to attention and salute

Walking to the left of an officer or an NCO of superior rank

When an NCO of superior rank enters the room, the first Warrior to recognize the NCO calls the room to “At Ease”

When speaking to or being addressed by an NCO of superior rank, stand at parade rest until directed otherwise.

When an officer of superior rank enters a room the first Warrior to recognize the officer calls the room to “Attention”, but does not salute. Only salute indoor when reporting to an officer.

When entering or exiting a vehicle, the junior ranking Warrior is the first to enter, and the senior in rank is the first to exit.

When outdoors and approached by an NCO/Drill Sergeant, you greet the NCO/Drill Sergeant by saying “Good morning Sergeant/Drill Sergeant” for example.





Traditions



Tradition (FM 7-21.13, Ch. 4, page 4-25) is a customary pattern of thought, action, or behavior by an identifiable group of people. It is information, beliefs, and customs handed down by word of mouth or by example from one generation to another without written instruction. Tradition gives Warriors a feeling of pride to understand just why we things the way we do. Examples of traditions are:

Ceremonial duties. Soldiers of the Old Guard have been Sentinels of the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier since 1948.

Bugle calls (will be covered later)

The green berets of the Army Special Forces.

Airborne units' maroon beret.

Army Rangers' tan beret.

The Drill Sergeant Hat!!

Cavalry units' spurs and hats.

Special designations (authorized unit nicknames) such as Manchus, the 9th Infantry Regiment.

Distinctive items of clothing worn in units such as belt buckles and tanker boots.

The promotion party.

Unit Mottos such as "Victory Starts Here!" or "Rangers Lead the Way!"

And the famous "Hooah!" This informal but always understood sound is less a word than an audible affirmation of the Warrior Ethos. The Warrior that utters that sound understands his task and will not quit until it is completed. That sound means Warriors are ready and willing to accomplish the mission at hand.

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Check on Learning



ELO-A Check on Learning

Question: What is an example of a custom? Ask for more than one since there are many.

Answer: The examples are located in B (1)(a) thru (i) above

Question: What is an example of a courtesy? Ask for more than one since there are many.

Answer: The examples are located in B (2) (a) thru (i) above

Question: What is an example of a tradition? Ask for more than one since there are many.

Answer: The examples are located in B (3) (a) thru I above.





ELO B



ENABLING LEARNING OBJECTIVE - B

ACTION: Identify Rank Insignia 12

CONDITIONS: In a suitable training location, given a representation of the Army's rank structure (graphic training aids or actual insignia).

STANDARDS: At the conclusion of this session the Soldier will be able to properly identify the difference between Army officer and enlisted rank.

LEARNING DOMAIN - LEVEL: Cognitive - Remembering

No JPME LEARNING AREAS SUPPORTED: None





Enlisted Rank



Grade	Abbreviation	Rank Name	Insignia
E-1	PVT	Private	No Insignia
E-2	PV2	Private 2	
E-3	PFC	Private First Class	
E-4	SPC	Specialist	
E-4	CPL	Corporal	
E-5	SGT	Sergeant	
E-6	SSG	Staff Sergeant	
E-7	SFC	Sergeant First Class	
E-8	MSG	Master Sergeant	
E-8	1SG	First Sergeant	
E-9	SGM	Sergeant Major	
E-9	CSM	Command Sergeant Major	
E-9 Special	SMA	Sergeant Major of the Army	





Enlisted Ranks



E-1	PVT	Private	No Insignia
E-2	PV2	Private 2	
E-3	PFC	Private First Class	
E-4	SPC	Specialist	

The first four enlisted ranks range from Private E1 to specialist E4.

Privates E1 through Private First Class are addressed as “Private _____” (followed by their last name).

Specialists are addressed as “Specialist _____” (followed by their last name).





Enlisted Ranks



E-4	CPL	Corporal	
E-5	SGT	Sergeant	
E-6	SSG	Staff Sergeant	

Corporals through Staff Sergeants are all Junior Noncommissioned Officers or NCOs and are afforded the courtesies required for NCOs.

Corporals are addressed as “Corporal _____” (followed by their last name). Corporals, like Specialists, are E4s. However, Corporals serve in a leadership position.

Sergeants and staff sergeants are addressed as “Sergeant _____” (followed by their last name).





Enlisted Ranks



E-7	SFC	Sergeant First Class	
E-8	MSG	Master Sergeant	
E-8	1SG	First Sergeant	
E-9	SGM	Sergeant Major	
E-9	CSM	Command Sergeant Major	
E-9 Special	SMA	Sergeant Major of the Army	

Sergeant First Class through Sergeant Major of the Army are all Senior NCOs

Sergeant First Class and Master Sergeant are addressed as “Sergeant _____” (followed by their last name).

First Sergeants are addressed as “First Sergeant _____” (followed by their last name). First Sergeants, like Master Sergeants, are E8s. However, First Sergeants serve in a leadership position.

Sergeant Major through Sergeant Major of the Army are addressed as “Sergeant Major _____” (followed by their last name). All are E9s, however, Sergeants Major serve a command or organization in a staff role.





Officer Rank



WO1



CW2



CW3



CW4



CW5

There are five Warrant Officer ranks and all are addressed as “Mr. _____” (followed by last name or “Ms. _____” (followed by last name). The difference between a Warrant Officer and a Commissioned Officer is a Warrant Officer serves in a technical field.





Officer Rank



O-1	2LT	2 nd Lieutenant	
O-2	1LT	1 st Lieutenant	
O-3	CPT	Captain	

There are three Company Grade officer ranks. All three are addressed as “Sir or Ma’am” (depending on their gender) when speaking directly to them either in person, on the phone, or in correspondence (email). If talking about them to another Soldier, they are addressed by their rank followed by their last name. For example “CPT Smith”. Both 2nd and 1st Lieutenants are addressed in the example as “Lieutenant _____”.





Officer Rank



O-4	MAJ	Major	
O-5	LTC	Lieutenant Colonel	
O-6	COL	Colonel	

There are three Field Grade officer ranks. Again, all three are addressed as “Sir or Ma’am” (depending on their gender) when speaking directly to them either in person, on the phone, or in correspondence (email). If talking about them to another Warrior, they are addressed by their rank followed by their last name. For example “MAJ Smith”. Both LTC and COL are addressed in the example as “Colonel _____”.





Title



O-7	BG	Brigadier General	
O-8	MG	Major General	
O-9	LTG	Lieutenant General	
O-10	Gen	General	
Special	GOA	General of the Army	

There are five General Officer ranks. Again, all five are addressed as “Sir or Ma’am” (depending on their gender) when speaking directly to them either in person, on the phone, or in correspondence (email). If talking about them to another Warrior, they are addressed as “General _____ (followed by their last name). For example “GEN Smith”.

The General of the Army rank is a rarely used rank. There have only been five individuals to reach that rank, and you most likely will not see a General of the Army during your career in the Army.





Check on Learning



Question: What are the three company level officer ranks?

Answer: 2nd Lieutenant, 1st Lieutenant, and Captain

Question: When do we address an officer as "Sir" or "Ma'am?"

Answer: Always when speaking directly to them either in person, on the phone, or in correspondence.





ELO-C



ENABLING LEARNING OBJECTIVE - C

ACTION: Reporting Procedures (Officer and NCO)

CONDITIONS: Indoors or outdoors, in a suitable training area, given oral instructions to report to an officer or NCO, in prescribed uniform, with or without assigned weapon

STANDARDS: At the conclusion of this session each Soldier will be proficient in the proper procedures for reporting (with and without assigned weapon) to an officer or NCO in or outdoors.

LEARNING DOMAIN - LEVEL: Cognitive - Applying

No JPME LEARNING AREAS SUPPORTED: None





Reporting Indoors



Reporting is nothing more than when an Officer or NCO wishes to speak with you, or you wish to speak to an Officer or NCO.

When reporting to an officer indoor, simply knock on the door to the Officer's office. When directed to enter sharply walk to a position centered and approximately two steps from his/her desk. Assume the position of attention, sharply salute, and state, "Sir/Ma'am, PVT Jones reports." The Soldier will remain at the position of attention unless directed otherwise. When your visit with the Officer is complete, the Soldier comes to the position of attention, sharply sautés and states the unit's motto unless directed otherwise, for example, "Black Lion Sir/Ma'am!" The Soldier will not drop his/her salute until the Officer lowers his/her salute. The Soldier will then execute an about-face and sharply exit the office.

When reporting to an NCO indoors, the procedures are the same except the Soldier will not salute.





Reporting Outdoors



When reporting to an Officer outdoors, the Soldier will move quickly to the Officer, halt centered on and approximately two 30" steps from the Officer, salute, and report as stated above in reporting to an Officer indoor.

The same procedures apply for reporting to an NCO outdoor except the Soldier will not salute.

When completed with the discussion, the Soldier will come to the position of attention, salute (Officer ONLY), and state the unit's motto. The Soldier will not drop his/her salute until the Officer lowers his/her salute. The Soldier will then execute an about-face and return to his duty.





Check on learning



QUESTION: When does a Soldier terminate his salute when reporting to an officer indoor or outdoor?

ANSWER: Only when the Officer terminates his/her salute.

QUESTION: How many 30" steps does a Soldier halt in front of an Officer when reporting to him/her outdoor?

ANSWER: The Soldier will halt two steps from the Officer when reporting outdoor.





Reacting to approaching Officer or NCO



ENABLING LEARNING OBJECTIVE - D

ACTION: React to an Approaching Officer and or Noncommissioned Officer

CONDITIONS: Indoors, in uniform, given a situation (simulated or actual) in the barracks and or dining facility or outdoors in a suitable training area as an individual, given a Situation where an officer and or an NCO approaches.

STANDARDS: Assume the proper position/march speed and take the correct actions and correctly render the appropriate honors.

LEARNING DOMAIN - LEVEL: Affective - Responding

No JPME LEARNING AREAS SUPPORTED: None





Reacting to approaching Officer or NCO



Approaching Officer

When an Officer approaches you and gets to approximately 6 steps from you, you come to the position of attention, salute and say, "Good morning, Sir/Ma'am," or "Good afternoon, Sir/Ma'am," or "Good evening, Sir/Ma'am." Again, you hold your salute until the Officer lowers his/her salute. If you are walking and the Officer is either stationary or walking, you DO NOT STOP to salute. You initiate the salute approximately 6 steps from the officer and say one of the appropriate greetings mentioned above. Some units will require you to state the unit's motto instead of "Good _____, Sir/Ma'am."

It is improper to salute with any object in your right hand or any object in your mouth. It is also not required for you to salute if both your hands are occupied with carrying items. It is however appropriate to say the appropriate greeting.





Reacting to approaching Officer or NCO



Approaching Officer

Whom do you salute? It is a requirement to salute all Officers of the Armed Forces (Air Force, Navy, Marines, etc) and Officers of allied nations when you recognize their rank. A salute will not be rendered for Noncommissioned Officers.

If the Officer stops to converse with the Soldier, the Soldier salutes the officer when the officer leaves.

If a group of Soldiers are on detail and an Officer approaches, the first Soldier to recognize the Officer comes to the position of attention, salutes, and renders the appropriate greeting. All Soldiers will not be called to attention or salute.





Reacting to approaching Officer or NCO



Approaching Officer

If a group of Soldiers are in a formation and an Officer approaches, the first Soldier to recognize the Officer comes to the position of attention, calls the group to attention (Platoon, ATTENTION), salutes, and renders the appropriate greeting. All Soldiers WILL come to attention, but only the Soldier that called attention will salute and render the appropriate greeting.

If a group of Soldiers are NOT in formation, but gathered around and an Officer approaches, the first Soldier to recognize the Officer comes to the position of attention, calls the group to attention (Platoon, ATTENTION). All Soldiers WILL come to attention, and ALL Soldiers will salute and render the appropriate greeting.

In all situations, the Officer may give the directive to “Carry On”. This means the Soldier or Soldiers will continue whatever they were doing previously. This same directive may also be given in other situations outside of formation, such as in the barracks or in the break area.





Reacting to approaching Officer or NCO



Approaching Noncommissioned Officer

When an NCO approaches you and gets to approximately 6 steps from you, you come to the position of attention, snap to Parade Rest and say, "Good morning, Sergeant/Drill Sergeant" or "Good afternoon, Sergeant/Drill Sergeant," or "Good evening, Sergeant/Drill Sergeant." If you are walking and the NCO is either stationary or walking, you DO NOT STOP unless directed to do so. You initiate the one of the appropriate greetings mentioned above. Some units will require you to state the unit's motto instead of "Good _____, Sergeant/Drill Sergeant."

NOTE: IT IS NEVER APPROPRIATE TO ADDRESS AN NCO AS SIR OR MA'AM.

It is improper greet an NCO with any object in your mouth. It is also not required for you to assume Parade Rest if both your hands are occupied with carrying items. It is however appropriate to say the appropriate greeting.





Reacting to approaching Officer or NCO



Approaching Noncommissioned Officer

It is a requirement to address all NCOs of the Armed Forces (Air Force, Navy, Marines, etc).

If a group of Soldiers are gathered and an NCO approaches, the first Soldier to recognize the NCO comes to the position of attention, and gives the combined command “AT-Ease” All Soldiers will assume parade rest and sound off with the appropriate greeting.

If a group of Soldiers are in a formation and an NCO approaches, the first Soldier to recognize the NCO comes to the position of attention, and commands, “At Ease” and ALL Soldiers will render the appropriate greeting.

In all situations, the NCO may give the directive to “Carry On”. This means the Soldier or Soldiers will continue whatever they were doing previously. This same directive may also be given in other situations outside of formation, such as in the barracks or in the break area.





Check on Learning



QUESTION: When does a Soldier initiate the appropriate greeting if a Drill Sergeant is approaching?

ANSWER: When the NCO is approximately six 30" steps away.

QUESTION: What does the directive "Carry On" mean?

ANSWER: The Soldier or Soldiers will continue whatever they were doing previously.

QUESTION: What are a Soldiers actions when he/she hears the combined command "AT Ease!"

ANSWER: Sharply assume the position of parade rest and sound off with the appropriate greeting.





React to the Passing of the Colors



ENABLING LEARNING OBJECTIVE - E

ACTION: React to the Passing of the Colors

CONDITIONS: Outdoors, in a suitable training location, as an individual, given a situation (enacted or actual ceremony) with the uncased colors passing the individual's location.

STANDARDS: Render the correct honors when the Colors pass.

LEARNING DOMAIN - LEVEL: Affective - Responding

No JPME LEARNING AREAS SUPPORTED: None





React to the Passing of the Colors



Salute to Colors

National and organizational flags which are mounted on short flag staffs (pikes) equipped with spearheads are called colors. Military personnel passing an uncased national color salute at six steps distance and hold the salute until they have passed six steps beyond it. Similarly, when an uncased color passes by, they salute when it is six steps away and hold the salute until it has passed six steps beyond them. Small flags carried by individuals, such as those carried by civilian spectators at a parade, are not saluted.





React to the Playing of the "National Anthem," and "the Army Song"



ENABLING LEARNING OBJECTIVE - F

ACTION: React to the Playing of the "National Anthem," and "the Army Song"

CONDITIONS: Indoors or outdoors, in a suitable training location, as an individual, given a situation (enacted or actual ceremony) with exposure to the playing of the National Anthem or "To the Colors."

STANDARDS: Correctly identify the appropriate music and render the proper honors.
Value – Honor: Soldier properly responds to the playing of "To the colors," living up to all the Army Core Values with honor.

LEARNING DOMAIN - LEVEL: Affective - Responding

No JPME LEARNING AREAS SUPPORTED: None





React to the Playing of the "National Anthem," and "the Army Song"



Honor to the "National Anthem," and "The Army Song"

Outdoors

Whenever and wherever the "National Anthem" is played, at the first note, all dismounted personnel in uniform and not in formation face the flag (or the music, if the flag is not in view), stand at attention, and render the prescribed salute. The salute is held until the last note of the music is sounded. Military personnel not in uniform will stand at attention (remove headdress, if any, with the right hand) and place the right hand over the heart.



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React to the Playing of the "National Anthem," and "the Army Song"



Outdoors

Vehicles in motion will be brought to a halt. Persons riding in a passenger car or on a motorcycle will dismount and salute. Occupants of other types of military vehicles and buses remain seated at attention in the vehicle, the individual in charge of each vehicle dismounting and rendering the hand salute. Tank and armored car commanders salute from the vehicle.

The above marks of respect are shown the national anthem of any friendly country when it is played at official occasions.

Indoors

When the National Anthem is played indoors, officers and enlisted personnel stand at attention and face the music, or the flag if one is present. They do not salute unless under arms.





React to the Playing of the "National Anthem," and "the Army Song"



The Army Song

The U.S. Army is the only service with an official marching song. It was adapted from the music of "The Caisson Song," written about 1908. The official Army Song was formally dedicated by the Secretary of the Army on Veterans Day, 11 November 1956.

In addition to standing while the National Anthem is being played, audiences render honors while state songs, school songs, and other symbolic songs are being played. Accordingly, Army personnel will stand at attention whenever the official Army Song is played.

[The Army Song](#)





React to the Sounding of "Reveille", "Retreat", and "To The Colors"



ENABLING LEARNING OBJECTIVE - F

ACTION: React to the Sounding of "Reveille", "Retreat", and "To The Colors"

CONDITIONS: Outdoors, in a suitable training location, as an individual, given a situation (enacted or actual ceremony) with exposure to the sounding of "Reveille," "Retreat," or "To The Colors."

STANDARDS: Correctly identify the appropriate music and render the proper honors.

LEARNING DOMAIN - LEVEL: Affective - Responding

No JPME LEARNING AREAS SUPPORTED: None





React to the Sounding of "Reveille", "Retreat", and "To The Colors"



Reveille

That is the sound of "Reveille." It is played when the flag is raised in the morning. It may remind you of the call to CHARGE!! This bugle call is normally played at 0600 hours in the morning. That is 6:00 a.m. for those that do not remember from the Military Time block of instruction. If in doubt about what bugle call is playing, look at your watch or watch the actions of others.

If you are by yourself, the playing of "Reveille" is sounded, come to the position of attention, face the flag, and salute. The salute is terminated on the last note. If you cannot see the flag, face the music and salute.

If you are in formation, the person in charge of the formation will bring the formation to attention, give the command to face the appropriate direction, command present arms (salute), and command order arms. The formation will then continue what it was doing at the direction of the person in charge of the formation. If the person in charge does not hear it playing, DO NOT ignore the bugle call. Take action and call the formation to attention, face them the correct direction, command present arms, and command order arms. No one should chastise you for attempting to do the right thing.





React to the Sounding of "Reveille", "Retreat", and "To The Colors"



Retreat

That is the sound of “Retreat.” It is played before the flag is lowered in the evening. This bugle call is normally played at 1700 hours in the evening, but some posts may play it at 1800. Clarify the time with your supervisor. Again, if in doubt about what bugle call is playing, look at your watch or watch the actions of others.

If you are by yourself or are in a group that is NOT in formation and the playing of “Retreat” is sounded, come to the position of attention, face the flag. You, and all others, if NOT in a formation do not salute since this is the first bugle call to lower the flag. You, and all others, without command will salute on the first note of the next bugle call, “To the Colors.”

If you ARE in formation, the person in charge of the formation will bring the formation to attention, give the command to face the appropriate direction, and command parade rest.





React to the Sounding of "Reveille", "Retreat", and "To The Colors"



To the Colors

This bugle call is called “To the Colors”. It is the bugle call played when the flag is actually lowered in the evening. It directly follows “Retreat” which is played at 1700 hours.

If you are by yourself or are in a group that is NOT in formation and the playing of “To the Colors is sounded, you, and all others, without command will salute on the first note of “To the Colors.”





Check on Learning



QUESTION: What bugle call is played at 1700 in the evening?

ANSWER: “Retreat” followed by “To the Colors”

QUESTION: When is “Reveille normally played on an Army post?

ANSWER: It is normally played at 0600 hours.

QUESTION: If you are not in a formation what position should you be in when “Retreat” is being played?

ANSWER: Soldiers not in a formation should be at the position of attention and facing the flag or music.





Title



Questions?

