

UNITED STATES MARINE CORPS
OFFICER CANDIDATES SCHOOL
TRAINING COMMAND
2189 ELROD AVENUE
QUANTICO, VA 22134-5003

GMS 1010
SEP 2014

CUSTOMS AND COURTESIES

TERMINAL LEARNING OBJECTIVE(S)

1. Without the aid of references, describe common terms, sayings, and quotations used in the Marine Corps without omitting key components. (OCS-HIST-1001)
2. Without the aid of references, describe military customs, courtesies, and honors without omitting key components. (OCS-HIST-1004)

ENABLING LEARNING OBJECTIVE(S)

1. Without the aid of references, describe the common nautical terminology used in the Marine Corps without error. (OCS-HIST-1001g)
2. Without the aid of references, identify saluting procedures in accordance with pgs. 24-3 through 24-6 of MCRP 6-11B. (OCS-HIST-1004a)
3. Without the aid of references, identify all Marine Corps grades, ranks, and insignia without omission. (OCS-HIST-1004b)
4. Without the aid of references, identify the procedures for rendering honors to dignitaries in accordance with the Customs, Courtesies, and Traditions section of MCRP 6-11B. (OCS-HIST-1004c)
5. Without the aid of references, identify the procedures for boarding and debarking a vessel without omission. (OCS-HIST-1004d)
6. Without the aid of references, identify the procedures for reporting in accordance with MCRP 6-11B, pgs. 24-15 and 24-17. (OCS-HIST-1004e)
7. Without the aid of references, identify flags associated with the Marine Corps without error. (OCS-HIST-1004f)
8. Without the aid of references, identify the procedures for entering and exiting a vehicle without omission. (OCS-HIST-1004g)
9. Without the aid of references, identify customs associated with celebrating the Marine Corps' birthday without omission. (OCS-HIST-1004h)
10. Without the aid of references, identify the traditional honors associated with the Marine Hymn without error. (OCS-HIST-1004i)

1. **INTRODUCTION.** The rich history and traditions of the Marine Corps, as well as its distinctive uniforms, set it apart from the other military organizations. The core of Marine Corps traditions is discipline, and that discipline is manifested in our adherence to customs and courtesies. These traditions are closely safeguarded by Marines, and it is the duty of all Marines to carry on with these traditions and pass them on to the Marines who follow. Marine officers are expected to uphold and embrace the customs, courtesies and traditions of the Marine Corps because these represent the foundations of leadership. Customs represent the practices of preserving ideas and actions by passing them down through generations. Courtesies represent respect for authority, responsibility and experience between all members of the armed services. Traditions represent the long history of high standards, teamwork under stress, esprit de corps, and success in battle. It is imperative Marine officers ensure these values are instilled in their Marines to have a highly motivated, well disciplined, and proficient unit.

2. MARINE CORPS RANK STRUCTURE

a. There are three ways to identify military personnel: grade, rank and insignia.

(1) Grade is the abbreviated way of saying pay grade. Pay grade allows Department of Defense a way of defining the monthly pay entitlement and determining what allowances and benefits a service member rates; all services use the same pay grade scale. Marines will never address or be addressed by their pay grade.

(2) Rank is the way to identify service members throughout the armed services. Each rank will be associated with a pay grade. Each service has their own rank structure, for example, an O-3 in the Marine Corps is a Captain as an O-3 in the Navy is a Lieutenant. Pay grade is the same though the rank is different.

(3) Insignia is a device worn on the military uniform to identify the rank of the service member. In utilities, officers will wear gold and silver insignia on their blouse collar; enlisted will wear black chevrons on their blouse collar. In dress uniforms, officers will wear gold and silver insignia on the shoulder straps of the service coat or on the shirt collar when not in a service coat; enlisted will wear the chevrons on the service coat sleeve or shirt sleeves.

b. Marine Corps personnel classifications are divided into two main categories, enlisted and officer.

(1) Enlisted rank structure as follows:



(2) Officer rank structure:



A Mnemonic to Remember the General Ranks:

Be – Brigadier General

My – Major General

Little – Lieutenant General

General

Note on Warrant Officers:

For Warrant Officer 1 and Chief Warrant Officer 2, the non-red portion of their rank insignia is gold, remember, for both officers and warrant officers, gold is always junior to silver. Chief Warrant Officer 3, 4, and 5 has silver behind the red bars. An easy rule of thumb to remember warrant officer rank insignia is the less red, the more senior. For instance look at the W-1 and CWO-2; the W-1 is mostly red with one gold band, whereas a CWO-2 has two gold bands, on a smaller red area.



Dress (gold)



Subdued (black)

All warrant officers wear two collar rank insignia, except for the Infantry Weapons Warrant Officer (military occupation specialty 0306) who wears a bursting bomb insignia on the left collar with the rank insignia on the right collar. The device comes in two sizes, a full-size is 1 1/4 inches and a miniature is 3/4 of an inch. The full-size dress insignia is worn on both shoulder straps of the dress uniform. The miniature subdued device is worn on the left collar.

3. **ADDRESSING AND ACCOMPANYING MARINES**

a. **Forms of Address**

(1) **General**. In written correspondence, both formal and social, full rank precedes the name and is written out.

(2) **Addressing Officers and Enlisted**

(a) **General**. It is appropriate and strongly recommended a person be greeted by grade and name; e.g., "Good morning, Captain Jones." If you are unsure of an enlisted Marine's name or grade, "Good morning, Marine" is appropriate, as is "Good morning, Sir/Ma'am" in the case of an officer.

(b) **Addressing Officers**. Use Sir or Ma'am whenever addressing officers more senior; however, if acquainted with the officer, it is preferable to use both grade and name; e.g., "Good afternoon, Colonel Sands." Whenever addressing a general officer, it is customary to use General in lieu of Sir or Ma'am. When addressing generals, lieutenant colonels, and first and second lieutenants, use their short title; i.e., "How are you, Lieutenant?" or "Good morning, Colonel".

(c) **Speaking to Enlisted Marines**. Address them by rank and last name; avoid casual use of first name or nicknames. Senior enlisted Marines should also be addressed by their full rank and last name. Always refer to a Marine by rank, not pay grade.

(d) **Informal situations**. First names and nicknames are proper with contemporaries or junior officers during social functions, during business hours in the privacy of the office, and in the Officer's Club.

(e) **Miscellaneous**. A common word in reference to a Marine captain is Skipper; however, it is more proper when used in addressing a captain company commander (Skipper is reserved for the Navy captain of the ship when at sea). It should also be noted a Marine warrant officer wearing the bursting bomb insignia may be called "Gunner."

b. **Walking with Marines**

(1) When walking with a senior, always walk to the left, one pace behind, and in step with that senior.

(2) When walking with another Marine, it is customary to walk along side of each other, in column of two's and in step with each other.

4. **SALUTING**. The salute is the most important of all military courtesies, and is the traditional form of politeness in the profession of arms. The salute formally recognizes the officer as a military superior, and returning the salute expresses the officer's thanks for the junior's support.

a. **Hand Salute**. To render a salute the following must be conducted:

(1) Raise your right hand smartly until the tip of your forefinger touches the lower part of the headdress above and slightly right of your right eye, or the brim of your cover.

(2) Your fingers will be straight and joined with the thumb along the forefinger. Your hand and wrist will be straight. You should be able to see your entire palm.

(3) Your upper arm will be parallel to the deck with the elbow in line with the body; your forearm will be at a 45-degree angle.

b. **Individuals Entitled to a Salute**. Salute all officers senior to you in rank in any of the Armed Forces of the United States or of friendly foreign governments, officers of the Coast Guard, Geodetic Survey, and of the Uniformed Public Health Service who are serving with the Armed Forces of the United States.

c. **Appointed and Elected Officials**. Individuals of the United States customarily saluted are:

(1) President of the United States,

(2) Vice President of the United States,

(3) State Governors,

(4) Secretary of Defense,

- (5) Deputy Secretary of Defense,
- (6) Senators and Congressmen,
- (7) Secretaries of the Army, Navy and Air Force, and
- (8) Assistant Secretaries of the Army, Navy and Air Force.

Note: It is customary to salute recipients of the Medal of Honor. It is not, however required by regulation.

d. **Foreign Governments.** Among the members of the friendly foreign governments whom you salute are:

- (1) Heads of State,
- (2) Ambassadors, and

(3) Ministers of Defense or other civilian leaders of defense establishments and their assistants at or above the Assistant Secretary of the Army, Navy and Air Force.

e. **Procedures for Saluting.** When a senior officer approaches walking or riding, render a salute six paces away; accompany the salute with the appropriate verbal greeting, such as “Good morning, Sir/Ma’am.” The salute is held until returned or the senior officer commands “Carry on.”

f. **Rules for Saluting Officers and Uncased Colors**

(1) **Outdoors.** Salute in the open air, the interior of such buildings as drill halls and gymnasiums when used for drill or exercises of Marines, on the weather decks of a man-of-war, or under roofed structures such as covered walks and shelters open at one or both sides to the weather.

(2) **Under arms.** A Marine is under arms when a weapon is in his/her hand, is equipped with side arms, or when wearing equipment pertaining to arms, such as sword sling, pistol belt, or cartridge belt.

(3) **Not in formation.** As a member of a group not in formation, the first member noticing the senior officer should call all to attention, and all will render the salute.

(4) **Overtaking.** Attempt to pass on the left, if possible, just before coming abreast, render a hand salute and say “By your leave, Sir/Ma’am”, when acknowledged, (the correct response is “Granted”), cut the salute and pass.

(5) **Saluting distance.** The maximum distance within which salutes are rendered and exchanged is prescribed as 30 paces. The salute should be rendered when six paces from the person (or color) to be saluted.

(6) **Uncased Colors.** Colors and standards not cased are saluted when either you or they approach or pass within six paces. Hold your salute until the colors have passed or you have passed the colors by six paces.

(7) **Prisoner Chaser.** A prisoner chaser does not salute an officer, except when addressed by an officer in the line of duty.

(8) **Morning and Evening Colors.** When “To the Colors” (Morning Colors) or “Retreat” (Evening Colors) is sounded, all military personnel will act, as follows:

(a) **Walking Individually.** Come to attention, face toward the music, or National Ensign if seen, and salute. Hold your salute until the last note is played, but remain at attention until “Carry on” is sounded.

(b) **In Formation.** Formations are halted and brought to attention, and the commander salutes facing in the direction of the unit's original front.

(c) **Personnel in Vehicles.** All vehicles within sight or hearing of the ceremony will come to a stop. Passengers will not debark, but remain seated at attention.

(d) **In Civilian Attire.** Face toward the music, or National Ensign if seen, come to attention and remain at attention until “Carry on” is sounded.

g. **When not to Salute.** In some situations, the salute is not appropriate. In general, do not salute when:

- (1) Engaged in routine work when a salute would interfere.
- (2) Indoors, except when under arms.

- (3) Carrying articles with both hands or being otherwise so occupied as to make saluting impractical.
- (4) The rendition of the salute is obviously inappropriate, such as in places of public assemblage such as theaters or churches, and in public conveyances.
- (5) Engaged in driving an automobile. However, whenever practical, you should return the salutes of others providing the vehicle can be driven safely.
- (6) In formation, only the person in charge of the formation renders the salute and verbal greeting.
- (7) Within the sight of the enemy.

h. **Special Situations**

- (1) Enlisted Marines may give and receive salutes from other enlisted Marines when in formation and rendering reports.
- (2) After a senior officer has been saluted, if he/she remains nearby and no conversation takes place, no further salutes are necessary. However, if a conversation occurs, the junior officer would salute as the senior officer is leaving.
- (3) A Marine salutes indoors only when under arms, which normally means a duty status with a weapon. In this situation, the Marine remains covered and should salute; Marines not under arms do not salute indoors.
- (4) Marines should never salute uncovered, except for the return of uncovered salutes rendered first by Army and Air Force personnel. The exception in this case follows the general rule that, "social customs or military courtesy should always be interpreted so as to prevent awkward situations." When uncovered, naval officers initiate salutes by coming to a position of attention.

5. **REPORT TO A NEW COMMAND.** Report to your new command in your service "A" uniform. Have in your possession your original orders, medical records, dental records and all travel receipts pertaining to lodging and transportation.

6. **REPORT TO AN OFFICER**

- a. **Outdoors.** When ordered to report to an officer outdoors, the procedures are as follows:

- (1) Approach the officer and halt at the position of attention about two paces in front of the officer. Do not interrupt until recognized.
- (2) Render a salute.
- (3) Report: "Good morning, Sir/Ma'am", state your rank and name, and reporting as ordered. For example: "Good morning, Sir. Lieutenant Lee reporting as ordered."
- (4) Hold the salute until it is returned or acknowledged.
- (5) When you receive the command, "Dismissed", you will say, "Aye, Aye, Sir/Ma'am", take one step back, render a salute and proper greeting, i.e., "Good morning, Sir/Ma'am", then execute an about face and expeditiously leave.

- b. **Indoors.** When reporting to an officer indoors, you will use the following procedures:

- (1) Center yourself 6 inches from the front of the officer's desk.
- (2) If under arms render a salute. Under arms means that you are either armed with a weapon, or are wearing a duty belt (cartridge belt).
- (3) Report in the same manner as outdoors. When not under arms, you will follow the same procedures, except you will not salute.

- c. If in the field, on the drill field, or on a parade ground, it is necessary for juniors to proceed and report on the double.

7. ENTERING AND EXITING A VEHICLE OR SMALL BOAT

- a. **Entering.** The junior officer enters the vehicle first and takes up the seat or the space beginning forward, leaving the most desirable seat for the senior officer.
- b. **Exiting.** The senior officer will exit the vehicle first, followed by the junior officer. Remember, the seniority enters last and leaves first.

8. BOARDING AND DISEMBARKING A NAVAL VESSEL

- a. **Boarding.** As you reach the top of the gangway when boarding a U.S. Navy ship, if between morning colors and evening colors, face aft and salute the National Ensign; then face the Officer of the Deck, salute, and request permission to come aboard.
- b. **Disembarking.** Prior to disembarking a U.S. Navy ship, face the Officer of the Deck, salute, and request permission to go ashore. Once permission is granted, if between morning colors and evening colors, face aft and salute the National Ensign, then disembark down the gangway.

9. FLAGS

a. Colors

- (1) Colors applied to a national flag or a unit or organization distinguishing flag carried by dismounted elements.
- (2) The ceremonial hoisting and lowering of the National Ensign is accomplished at 0800 and sunset daily.
- (3) The National Ensign is authorized in three sizes:
 - (a) The storm flag measures 5 feet by 9 1/2 feet and will be displayed during inclement weather.
 - (b) The post flag measures 10 feet by 19 feet and will be displayed during pleasant weather.
 - (c) The garrison flag measures 20 feet by 38 feet and will be displayed on Sundays, holidays and other national occasions, except during inclement weather.
- b. **Standards.** Standard applied to a flag carried by mounted, mechanized, motorized, or aviation units to identify general officers, or national and foreign dignitaries. Also, the Marine Corps flag is given the name standard.

- c. **Guidon.** The guidon is a small rectangular flag carried by company, battery, platoon or detachment identification flag. It is carried on an 8 foot staff at ceremonies and at other times prescribed by the commander.

10. MUSICAL HONORS

- a. **National Anthem.** When the National Anthem is played, all military personnel come to attention, face toward the music and salute. You hold your salute until the last note of the music. If the National Anthem is being played at a ceremony involving the colors, face toward the colors rather than the music.
- b. **Marines' Hymn.** The melody was written by Jacques Offenbach and was performed for the first time 19 November 1859. Although there is no record of the hymn's author, the words appeared on a recruiting poster in 1898. When the Marines' Hymn is being played outdoors, stop and come to attention; if played indoors, stand up and come to attention. All Marines should memorize all three stanzas of the hymn and be prepared to sing it out loud at any time.
- c. **Rendering Honors to Dignitaries.** During an official visit, the visiting dignitary is usually received by rendering "Honors." These usually consist of a gun salute, "Ruffles and Flourishes" and other martial music. The Marine Officer's Guide outlines exactly what honors are rendered to what dignitary.

11. CUSTOMS AFFILIATED WITH THE MARINE CORPS BIRTHDAY

- a. **The Marine Corps Birthday.** The United States Marine Corps has had a continual existence since 1798; however, the traditional and official founding date of the Marine Corps is celebrated 10 November 1775.
- b. **Marine Corps Birthday Celebration Customs.** All Marine Corps units shall provide for suitable observance of the Marine Corps birthday on 10 November. Such observances shall be appropriate to the size and

mission of the unit concerned in accordance with the local conditions and within financial means of personnel of the host unit.

(1) Troop formations to include parades when practical.

(2) On 1 November 1921, General John A. Lejeune, 13th Commandant of the Marine Corps, directed a reminder of the honorable service of the Corps be published by every command, to all Marines throughout the globe, on the birthday of the Corps. Since that day, Marines have continued to distinguish themselves on many battlefields and foreign shores, in war and peace. On every birthday of the Corps, since, in compliance with the will of the 13th Commandant, his message is republished and read to the troops.

(3) Social observances to include the birthday ball and the traditional cake-cutting ceremony.

(a) The first piece is given to the guest of honor who takes a bite and returns the plate to the cake escort.

(b) The second piece is placed on a plate with two forks and given to the oldest Marine who takes a bite and passes the piece to the youngest Marine who takes a bite. The youngest Marine then returns the plate to a cake escort who places it back on the serving cart.

12. **NAVAL TERMINOLOGY.** The Marine Corps' amphibious capabilities that define our ship-to-shore reputation would not have been possible without the close relationship that exists with the United States Navy. As a result of these close ties with the Navy, nautical terms have always been part of the Marine Corps' tradition. Even ashore, Marines customarily use nautical terms. Such as:

-A-

ADRIFT - loose from towline or moorings; scattered about; not in proper stowage; usage "gear adrift"

AFT - referring to or toward the stern (rear) of a vessel

ALL HANDS - all members of a unit or command

ASHORE - any place outside of a naval vessel or Marine Corps reservation

AS YOU WERE - resume former activity

AWEIGH - the moment a ship's anchor leaves the sea bottom, the anchor is said to be aweigh

AYE, AYE, SIR - required official acknowledgement of an order meaning I have received, understand, and will carry out the order or instruction

-B-

BELAY - to make fast or to secure, as in "belay the line," to cancel or to disregard a statement just made

BELOW - downstairs, lower deck

BREAKOUT - take out of stock or storage

BRIG - a place of confinement, a prison

BOW - the front portion of a ship

BRIDGE - the portion of a ship's structure from which it is controlled when underway.

BROW - a portable walkway from the pier or jetty to the ship's quarterdeck

-C, D, E-

C.P. - Command Post in the field

CARRY ON - resume previous activity

CHIT - a receipt or authorization; a piece of paper

-F-

FANTAIL - the main deck of a ship at the stern

FIELD DAY - barracks cleanup

FIELD SCARF - regulation Marine Corps uniform neck tie

-G-

GALLEY - shipboard kitchen; kitchen of a mess hall; mobile field mess

GANGWAY - An opening in the rail giving access to the ship. It can also be used as a command announcement to stand aside to let someone through.

GATOR - an amphibious ship; one who serves in the amphibious Navy

GEEDUNK - the place (aboard ship) where candy, ice cream, soda, and smokes can be purchased

-H, I, J, K-

HATCH - an opening between decks; door or doorway

HEAD - latrine or toilet

-L, M, N-

LADDER - stairs

LIBERTY - absence of enlisted from the ship or command for less than 96 hours for purposes of rest and recreation which is not charged as leave

-O-

OVERHEAD - ceiling

-P-

PASSAGEWAY - a hallway

PETTY OFFICER - a Navy NCO, E-4 through E-6; Navy E-7 through E-9 are further identified as Chief Petty Officers

POLICE - to straighten or to tidy up

PORT - left

-Q-

QUARTERDECK - the ceremonial location on board ship when the ship is moored or at anchor (it is located close to the brow or accommodation ladder and is the watch station for the Officer of the Deck)

-R-

RATE - a sailor's occupational specialty

-S-

SCUTTLEBUTT - gossip or unfounded rumor; also a drinking fountain

SEABAG - the bag used to stow personal gear

SECURE - stop; finish; end; make fast; put away in storage

SICK BAY - hospital or dispensary

SKIPPER - Commanding Officer

SKYLARK - goof-off; to loiter

SMOKING LAMP - when smoking lamp is lit, smoking is authorized

SQUARE AWAY - to straighten, make ship-shape, or to get settled. Inform or admonish someone in an abrupt manner

STARBOARD - Right

STERN - the blunt end (rear) of a ship

SWAB - a mop

-T, U, V-

TOPSIDE - upstairs; upper deck

TURN TO - begin work; get started

-W, X, Y, Z-

WARDROOM - On board ship, the officer's living room and dining area; also used to signify all of the officers serving on the ship.

NOTES:

REFERENCES:

- | | |
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| 1. MCRP 6-11B | Marine Corps Values: A User's Guide for Discussion Leaders |
| 2. MCM | Marine Corps Manual |
| 3. MCO P5060.20 | Marine Corps Drill and Ceremonies Manual |
| 4. MCO P1020.34G | Marine Corps Uniform Regulation |
| 5. MCO P10520.3B | Marine Corps Flag Manual |
| 6. Semper Fidelis: The History of the United States Marine Corps | Millet, Allan R. |