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The Origins of Saluting by WOFF Chris Dunne,

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There are a number of origins of the military greeting of saluting. In the age of chivalry the knights were all mounted and wore steel armour, which covered the body completely. When two friendly knights met it was the custom for each to raise the visor and expose his face to the view of the other. This was always done with the right hand, the left being used to hold the reins. It was a significant gesture of friendship and confidence, since it exposed the features and also removed the right hand from the vicinity of a weapon (sword). Also in ancient times the freemen of Europe were allowed to carry arms: when two freemen met, each would raise his right hand to show that he held no weapons in it and that the meeting was friendly.

The Coldstream Guards appear to have been the first to depart from this practice as a Regimental Order of 1745 reads: 'The men are ordered not to pull off their hats when the when they pass an officer, or to speak to them, but only to clap up their hands to their hats and bow as they pass them'.

An extract from the Royal Scots Standing Orders of 1762 stated: 'as nothing disfigures the hats or dirties the lace worn more than taking off the hats, the men for the future are only to raise the back of their hands to them (hats) with a brisk motion when they pass an officer'.

From this beginning, although there was some resistance, saluting, as we now know it developed. Saluting in a form can also be traced back to the Stone Age when the open hand held high indicated friendliness; while the holding of the head erect is a reminder that officers and airmen are free men not required to avert their eyes from an overlord.

Regardless of its origin, the salute is a symbol of greeting, of mutual respect, trust and confidence initiated by the junior in rank, with no loss of dignity on either side. It is also a sign of loyalty and respect to the Service of which a member forms part



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and the general tone and spirit of the Service is indicated by the manner in which airmen/airwomen offer the salute and officers return it.

Saluting by airmen/airwomen is recognition of the Queen's Commission, being indirectly a salute to the Sovereign through the individual holding Her Majesty the Queen's authority. Returning a member's salute is not only acknowledgment of a salute to the officer personally, but a recognition of the fact that through an officer, members have given an outward sign of their loyalty to Her Majesty the Queen, Australia and the RAAF.

Saluting, however, should be undertaken intelligently and only when headdress is worn. Salutes, for example, should not be attempted in places where the presence of crowds or where the distance from the officer makes it impracticable to salute. Saluting may be executed in slow time, Quick time or at the halt. A member marching in Double time is to change to Quick time to salute. All members are to salute with the right hand unless physically unable to do so, in which case they are to salute with the left hand. The junior member is to salute first and the senior member is to return the compliment. Her Majesty the Queen, members of the Royal Family, the Governor-General and State Governors are to be saluted at all times by all ranks.

Explanations and illustrations detailing the correct saluting actions/procedures/methods are set out in the chapters of the DI (AF) AAP 5135.002 Manual of Ceremonial.

All non-commissioned personnel are to salute officers of the Australian Defence Force including Naval Midshipmen; (excluding Officer Cadets) holding the Queen's Commission and officers of any foreign service at all times (except in prescribed non-saluting areas). It is the responsibility of all members to be able to recognise the badges of rank of other Australian Services and, where appropriate foreign Services. Members of the Air Training Corps are not saluted.

Saluting without arms



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When a non-commissioned member:

Is to be presented to an officer. He/she is to march to and halt two paces from the officer; salute, step forward one pace and when the officer extends his/her hand shake the officer's hand. When the officer has addressed the member and made any presentation, the officer will again offer his/her hand and after the hand shake the member is to step back one pace, salute, turn and march off.

Addresses an officer. He/she is to march to and halt two paces from the officer, salute and after the address salute again, about turn and march off.

Is halted and an officer is passing. He/she is to face the officer, stand at attention and salute when the officer passes by.

Is passing by an officer. He/she is to salute right/left three paces before reaching the officer.

Recognises an officer in uniform or dressed other than in uniform. He/she is to salute.

When two or more non-commissioned members:

Are sitting or standing together. The senior member present is to order the group to attention, then that member is to face and salute the officer.

Are walking/marching together. They are all, to salute together when passing an officer. When they are being marched as a group, the member in command is to order 'EYES RIGHT/LEFT', and he/she is to then salute as they pass.