

# **TRADOC Protocol, Customs and Courtesies Handbook for the Army Spouse**



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## SECTION I: WHAT IS TRADITION, PROTOCOL, AND ETIQUETTE?

### Tradition

Tradition is the handing down of statements, legends, customs, etc. from generation to generation by word of mouth. It is the practice of an unwritten body of law and doctrine.

### Protocol

While good manners are the rules followed in everyday contact with other people, protocol is the set of rules which prescribes good manners in official life and in ceremonies involving governments and nations and their representatives. It is the recognized system of international courtesy. Accepted protocol practices and procedures have developed gradually through the centuries.\* Protocol is considered the “science,” i.e. the governing rules for good manners.

\* From Protocol, The Complete Handbook of Diplomatic, Official and Social Usage

### Etiquette

As defined by Merriam-Webster, etiquette is the conduct or procedure required by good breeding or prescribed by authority to be observed in social or official life. There is more than just learning the rules and mechanics of good behavior. It means showing kindness and concern for everyone and respect for the feelings of others. The consideration you grant someone as a person should be done because that person is a human being, not just because that person is important or of high rank. Etiquette is not just an ornate show of ceremony; it reflects the observance of mutual respect and consideration between individuals as well as nations. Etiquette is the “art” of the application of rules and principles.

## SECTION II: OFFICIAL CEREMONY ETIQUETTE

Official ceremonies are part of Army and military traditions. Most will attend some type of official ceremony during their association with the Army. The Change of Command Ceremony is one of the most common and is rooted in military history dating back to the 18th Century. At that time, organizational flags were developed with color arrangements and symbols unique to each unit. The flag served as a rallying point and reminder of their allegiance to their leader during battle. To this flag and its commander, military members dedicated their loyalty and trust. When a change of command took place, the flag was passed to the individual assuming command in the presence of the entire unit. All unit members could witness their new leader assume the responsibility and trust associated with the position of commander. He who possessed the flag also held the unit members' allegiance. This symbolic tradition has survived throughout military history. In light of its history, actions associated with ceremonies are important.

**Incoming Spouses:** For incoming spouses, this is often your first appearance in front of everyone and will shape their impression of you. It will be important to know ceremony procedures such as how to honor the flag and words to songs. Remember to stand when presented with flowers and gifts. It is also a kind gesture to extend words of thanks or written thank you notes to those who played a pivotal role in your transition.

**Outgoing Spouses:** For outgoing spouses, this is an opportunity to set your successor up for success. Your willingness to provide as much assistance as possible with the transition and making contact with them beforehand to address any concerns will be most appreciated. Since you know the rules and procedures at your location, your assistance will be invaluable to help ensure the process goes well for the incoming team. Since you will likely receive flowers, also, remember to stand when you are receiving them. Also, don't forget to extend a simple word of thanks or to send thank-you notes to those who have been instrumental in your success.

### Display of and Honors to the US flag

The display of our National Colors plays an important role in honoring both our heritage and the history of the country we serve and defend. There are definitive guidelines and proper ways to display our flag with dignity and honor. The flag should never be used as wearing apparel, bedding, or drapery. It should never be festooned nor drawn back or up. Bunting of blue, white, and red, always arranged with the blue above, the white in the middle, and the red below, should be used for covering a speaker's desk, draping the front of the platform, and for decorating, in general. No disrespect should be shown to the flag of the United States of America; the flag is not to be dipped to any person or thing. Unit colors, State flags, and organizational or institutional flags are to be dipped as a mark of honor. The flag should never touch anything beneath it, such as the ground, the floor, water, or merchandise.

1. Honors to the US flag during a ceremony. There will often be Honors to the Nation during a ceremony which is the playing of our National Anthem. Whether indoors or outdoors, civilians should render honors during the playing of the National Anthem. This means they should stand at attention, face the flag if present and visible, and place their right hand over their heart; men should remove their headdress. If the flag is not seen, they should face the location of the band or music. For an outdoor ceremony where there is a Pass in Review and individuals are passed by uncased Colors, they should, likewise, render honors. As a note, equivalent honors are a mark of respect that should be shown to the national anthem of any friendly country when played during official occasions.

2. Honors to the US flag during Reveille or Retreat. During the ceremony of hoisting or lowering the flag all people present except those in uniform should face the flag and stand at attention with the right hand over the heart. Civilians should remove their headgear with their right hand and hold it at the left shoulder, the hand being over the heart. If driving in a vehicle during the playing of Retreat, the operator must come to a complete stop until the playing of the

National Anthem is complete and the flag is secured. An individual may stand outside of his/her vehicle to render appropriate honors.

3. Honors to the US flag at other times. During the playing of Taps, the Pledge of Allegiance or the movement of a casket, it is appropriate for civilians to place their hand over their heart as a sign of respect.

*Honors to personnel entitled to honors*

During a ceremony, military and civilian personnel entitled to honors will receive the appropriate number of guns, ruffles and flourishes as identified in Army Regulation 600-25 and a hand salute from military personnel as a symbol of respect. Civilians are not required to render the hand salute to either military or civilian personnel entitled to honors, but should face the ceremonial party and stand at attention. For men wearing a headdress, it should be removed (ladies never do so).

### **SECTION III: SOCIAL FUNCTIONS, OFFICIAL DINNERS, AND RECEPTIONS**

There are various topics that arise when either hosting or attending socials, dinners and receptions. Some of the more common topics include gifts, menu cards, name tags, and receiving lines.

#### *Host/Hostess Gifts*

Taking a hostess gift when you have dinner in someone's home is becoming a common practice in the military services. The gift need not be expensive. Typical gifts are flowers, wine, candy, note cards, and homemade goodies. When determining what host/hostess gift to take, you may want to consider a gift that will not take the host/hostess away from his/her guests. Be sure to enclose or attach a gift tag identifying who brought the gift (unless you are the only guest). The host/hostess will appreciate the reminder when he/she opens the gift after all of the guests leave. Although appropriate, it is not necessary to send a Thank You note for a host/hostess gift.

#### *Centerpieces*

Diners should always be able to see over the centerpiece. Centerpieces do not need to be elaborate.

#### *Candles*

The flames from lit candles should be either above or below eye-level.

#### *Nametags*

Use of nametags is optional, depending on desires of the host and hostess. Nametags primarily assist the visiting guests with remembering the names and ranks of all the staff members and their spouses. The preference is to wear nametags on the right-hand side of the shoulder area so that when you extend your right hand for a handshake, the line of sight is to the other person's right side. There is no regulation governing nametags, so at informal functions it may be preferable to print first (preferred or nickname) and last name. Use of calligraphy, which isn't extremely ornate, is appropriate. At a casual, in-house affair, the host or hostess may prefer to use first and last names only without titles and rank. Nametags have an additional purpose at an official dinner. As the guests pick up their nametags, you can tell if some of the Distinguished Visitors (DVs) have not arrived and you may want to delay dinner until they do.

#### *Receiving Lines*

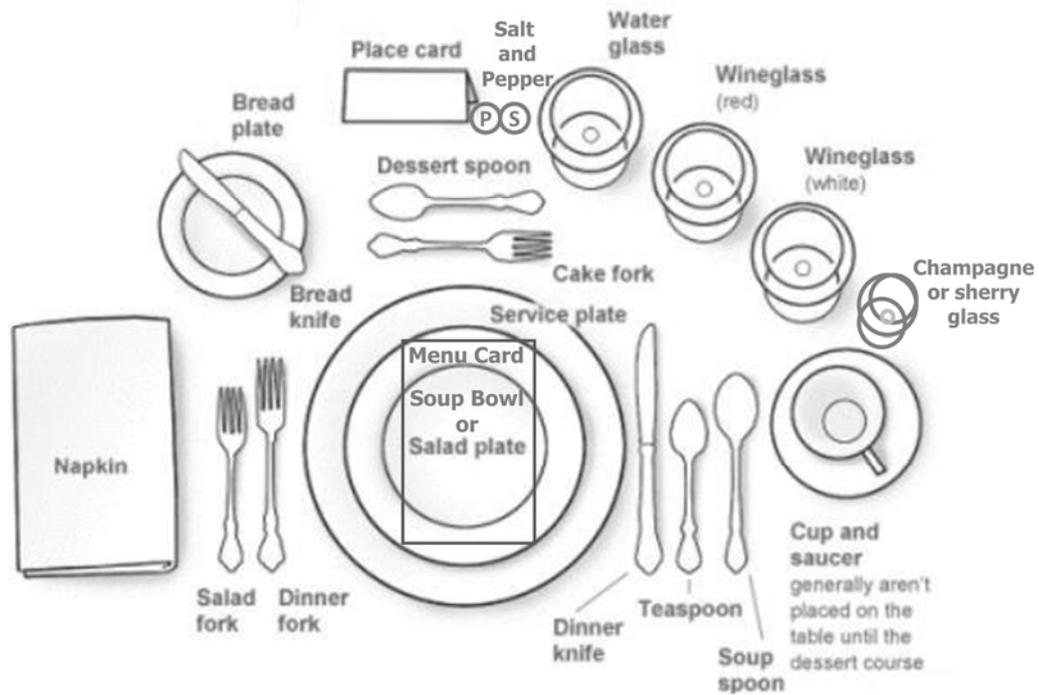
There is no ironclad rule for the formation and location of receiving lines; often times you will have to make a case-by-case judgment depending on circumstances. Typically, the receiving line is formed first by an adjutant or announcer, followed by the Commanding General, the Commanding General's spouse, the Command Sergeant Major (CSM), and the CSM's spouse. The receiving line may also include a Guest of Honor and Guest of Honor spouse in lieu of the CSM and CSM spouse. A couple of notes:

- The announcer is usually an aide or executive officer who starts the line and introduces the guests to the receiving line participants. Their role is to introduce not to greet guests, so they do not offer to shake hands.
- For Army functions, ladies precede their husband or accompanying gentleman guest through the line. The gentleman guest, however, will present both he and his spouse/female guest to the adjutant. As a note, for Air Force functions, the sponsor precedes the spouse. An item for consideration is how to treat same-gender couples and couples where the sponsor is a female. You will have to determine the preference

of your host and what works best at your location, but one recommendation is to continue the tradition of “ladies first” as a general rule and for instances of same gender couples to have the invited guest or sponsor precede their guest in the line.

- A receiving line provides an opportunity to ensure that the hosts meet every invited guest. Receiving line members should try to remember to keep conversations to a minimum so that the line moves in a timely manner. Lengthier conversations may occur during the social event or reception.
- The official party should stand on the red carpet allowing guests to pass by in front of it. This will assist with ensuring that guests don't trip on the red carpet.
- Drinks and cigarettes are not appropriate in the receiving line

Formal Place Setting Example



- Menu Cards - Menu cards are used in a more formal setting. They may be placed in the center of the place (or charger) plate, to the left of the forks, or on a menu card holder.
- Salt/Pepper Shakers - Salt and pepper shakers are optional and not always used at formal settings. If shared sets are used, they may be placed a little to the right and below the outer glass between two settings. If individual sets are used, they may be placed above each dessert spoon.
- Salad Knife - If there is a salad in addition to or in lieu of soup, a salad knife may be added. Placement depends upon the course the salad represents. In the most formal meal, the salad is served as the third course after soup and dinner courses. In this instance the salad knife should be placed to the right of the dinner plate and to the left of the dinner knife. If the salad is served at the beginning of the meal, the knife would be placed to the right of the dinner knife. Silverware is placed on the table in order of use starting on the outside of the place setting and moving inward toward the plate.

- Champagne glass – a champagne or sherry glass may be as depicted above for use at the beginning of the meal for a toast or if the sherry is served with soup. Champagne may instead be served at the end of the meal with dessert and placed to the right rear of the water glass or, if space is not an issue, directly to the right of the water glass. The general rule is that glasses are placed on the table in the order of use.

Seating

There are different plans for seating guests at dinners and luncheons. The social occasion will determine the best plan to use, but for the usual mixed dinner, the traditional arrangement is often used with the host and hostess sitting at the head and foot of the table (Figure 1). An alternate and commonly used seating arrangement places the host and hostess at the center of the table on opposite sides from one another (Figure 2). Some general principles are outlined below, but there are always exceptions to the rule and instances that will require this to be modified such as an unequal number of men and women, a single host, same-sex couples, or when multiples of four are seated. The host's preferences are also to be taken into consideration.

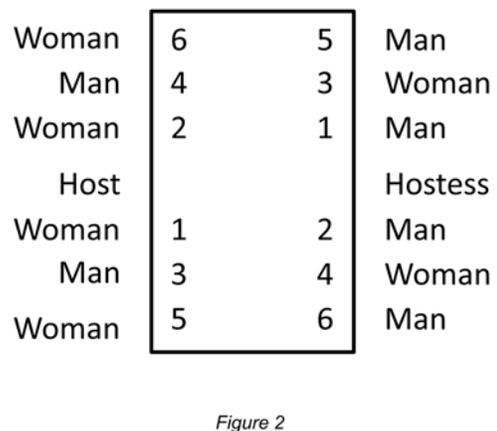
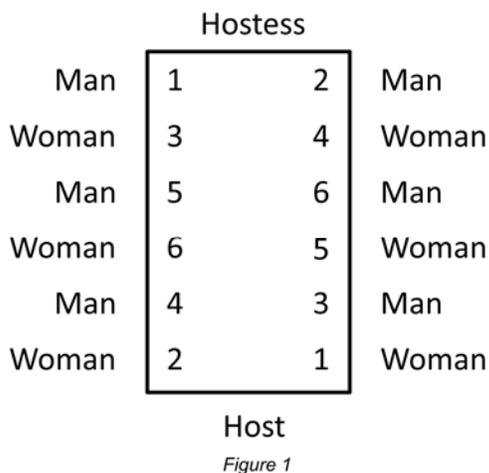
(1) Spouses are seated at dinners according to the ranks of their sponsors unless they personally hold official positions. For example: The wife of the man at the right of the hostess normally would sit at the right of the host. Rule to remember: The ranking female sits to the right of the host and the ranking man to the right of the hostess.

(2) All guests are seated by rank.

(3) In completing the table plan, the second ranking man sits at the left of the hostess; the second ranking woman at the host's left. The third ranking lady sits at the right of the first ranking man; the fourth ranking lady at the left of the second highest ranking man. This continues until all guests are seated. One exception to this arrangement would be if the guest of honor was an international visitor and language capabilities are in question, raising the need for a translator.

(4) If strict observance of rank would seat a wife next to her husband, one of them is moved. Pick that person to be moved and his new position carefully. Cause as little disruption of rank as possible.

(5) The host and hostess do not give up their positions at the head and foot of the table unless a guest is the president, king, or queen of a country.



### The Introduction

Introductions are very simply about meeting people and making them feel welcome. You should smile and appear friendly, shake hands, make eye contact, stay relaxed, listen, and repeat their name. When it comes to introductions, the most important rule to remember is to make the introductions! Someone who is introduced is made to feel special and welcome whereas the opposite may occur when an introduction is missed.

The basic rule to remember is that if you are introducing someone else, the person you address *first* is the one you are honoring by showing deference to them. A few simple rules:

- Military persons of lesser authority are introduced TO persons of greater authority regardless of gender
- In other instances a man is always presented to a woman with the exception of the president of any country, a king, or a church dignitary
- A younger person is always presented to an older person of the same gender
- A single person is introduced to a group

Examples for Showing Deference:

1. Present the lower in rank/position to the higher in rank or position.  
"General Jones [CG], this is Mr. Adams [a subordinate]."
2. Present a less distinguished person to a more celebrated person. "Miss Celebrity, may I present Miss Jones."
3. A man is presented to a woman.  
"Mrs. Brown, this is Mr. Smith."
4. Present the younger to the older person. "Mr. Elder, may I introduce Mr. Young."
5. Present a layman to a clergyman.  
"Reverend Short, I would like to introduce to you, Mr. Glenn."
6. When there are no discernible differences to guide you in determining deference, it does not matter who is mentioned first.

Military person in most social situations:

-First and second lieutenants are introduced and addressed as "Lieutenants", lieutenant colonels and colonels as "Colonel" and all general officers as "General"

-Command Sergeants Major and Sergeants Major are introduced and addressed as "Sergeant Major," First Sergeants, Master Sergeants, Sergeants First Class, Staff Sergeants and Sergeants are all introduced and addressed as "Sergeant."

-Medical doctors are introduced using their military rank, however, in general conversation may be called "Doctor" unless they are a hospital commander or general officer

-Military Chaplains are introduced by rank; then, their position should be referenced

-Catholic Priests can be addressed as "Father"

-Retired military are introduced using military rank, unless their present position is more appropriate (e.g., Mayor, Senator, Ambassador, etc.)

## SECTION IV: INVITATIONS AND R.S.V.P.s

### Invitations

The invitation is a notification of an upcoming event. Formal invitations may be typed, engraved, or handwritten. Today, invitations are widely extended using electronic invitation systems. As a cost-saving measure, the Army has adopted usage of the Air Force Institute of Technology's E-Invitation system at <https://einvitations.afit.edu/generator/index.cfm>. Invitations mailed or hand delivered should be addressed to whom is being invited. If a husband and wife are both invited, it should be addressed to the couple so the recipient knows how to respond. Emailed invitations should include clarity in the body of the email so that it, likewise, is clear who is being invited. Invitations should be extended approximately two to three weeks in advance for smaller events and three to four weeks in advance for larger events to allow the guest enough time to arrange his or her personal calendar. On the other hand, invitations should not be extended so far in advance that the guests are unable to determine whether their schedule will permit them to attend. When children are invited, it will be specified on the invitation.

### Elements of an Invitation

1. Who            Host of the event
2. What           Type of Function
3. Why            "In Honor of..."
4. When           Date/Day/Time
5. Where          Location
6. Dress and R.S.V.P. Dress/Contact Number

### R.S.V.P.s

If the host or honoree of an event should extend an invitation to you, it is your social obligation to let the host/hostess or protocol office know either in writing or via the telephone number provided if you plan to attend the event. Any invitation with an R.s.v.p. must be answered. R.s.v.p. is the abbreviation for "repondez s'il vous plait," which translates "please reply." An answer should be given within 24 to 48 hours if possible as the hostess may want to invite someone else to complete her dinner party guest list. If R.s.v.p. is stated on the invitation and no telephone number is given, then the reply should be written. If a person should meet the host/hostess while running errands and mention "We just received your invitation today, and we will be delighted to come," remember that this does not constitute a reply. The reply should be written or telephoned as the host/hostess may forget to include this guest on the list of acceptances.

If an invitation is issued well in advance of a party and invited guests do not reply promptly, the host/hostess or protocol office may need to telephone these people to receive responses. The attendee list is critical information for menu planning and food ordering, so intended guests should recognize the importance of responding in a timely manner. It is also important for parents to teach their children from early grade school years to always respond promptly to an invitation that contains R.s.v.p.

Sample Electronic Invitation



*General David G. Perkins  
Commanding General  
United States Army Training and Doctrine Command  
and Mrs. Perkins  
and  
Command Sergeant Major Daniel A. Dailey  
Command Sergeant Major  
United States Army Training and Doctrine Command  
and Mrs. Dailey  
cordially invite you to attend the*

*Training and Doctrine Command Headquarters  
Hail and Farewell*

*on Friday, the nineteenth of September  
at half past five o'clock  
Fort Eustis Club - Wheelhouse  
2123 Pershing Avenue  
Fort Eustis, Virginia*

*R.s.v.p. by 12 September 2014  
POC: [TRADOC Executive Services](#)*

*Attire: Come as you are*

*Cost: \$15.00 per person  
Payment due by 12 September  
Hand-carry to Donna Graves, Executive Services Office  
HQ TRADOC, Bldg 950, Room 1050  
Check (payable to ESO) or Cash  
Cash bar available*

[Click Here to R.s.v.p.](#)

Note: The font, pitch, and formatting of this invitation may be modified to fit card stock, general officer stationary, or other note paper. Black ink should always be used.

## SECTION V: ATTIRE

Individuals will often receive an invitation with the dress category specified as formal, semiformal, duty uniform, civilian informal, casual or very casual. You might also see the dress specifically listed as business attire, smart casual, mess dress or civilian open collar on an invitation. A conscientious host/hostess will try to eliminate confusion on the part of their guests, so often times the uniform category is further defined on the invitation to better explain the intent. Unless specifically indicated, jeans are generally not acceptable. However, sometimes an invitation is for an event immediately after the duty day and maximum participation is encouraged, so the dress might be annotated as “come as you are” so that people in any uniform or form of civilian attire are encouraged to attend. To better understand what attire falls within each category of dress, refer to the following table.

Category	Army Uniform	Dress for Civilian Men	Dress for Civilian Ladies
Formal (White Tie)	Dress Mess	Tuxedo, bow tie is standard	Cocktail or Evening Formal gown
Semiformal (Black Tie)	Dress Mess or ASU with bow tie	Dark Dinner Jacket or Tuxedo	Long or short evening dress
Uniform Informal	ASU with four-in-hand tie	Business Attire	Cocktail Dress
Duty Uniform	ACU (or local policy)	Business Attire	Business Attire; afternoon dress or suit
Civilian Informal	See columns to right for civilian attire	Business suit or sport coat and tie	Dress, business suit or pant suit
Casual	See columns to right for civilian attire	Slacks, open collar shirt, jacket or sweater	Casual dress or blouse and simple skirt, slacks with jacket
Very Casual	See columns to right for civilian attire	Open collar shirt and slacks	Slacks with blouse

## SECTION VI: REFERENCES

- Army Regulation 600-25. Salutes, Honors and Visits of Courtesy
- Department of the Army Pamphlet 600-60. A Guide to Protocol
- Army Regulation 840-10. Flags, Guidons, Streamers, Tabards, and Automobile and Aircraft Plates
- Army Regulation 670-1. Wear and Appearance of Army Uniforms
- Letitia Baldrige's New Complete Guide to Executive Manners. *Letitia Baldrige, Macmillan Publishing Company, 1993.*
- Service Etiquette, Fourth Edition. Oretha D. Swartz, Naval Institute Press, 1988.
- The Display and Use of the Flag of the United States. *The Institute of Heraldry, US Army*
- Protocol -The Complete Handbook of Diplomatic, Official and Social Usage. *Jane McCaffree and Pauline Innis, Devon Publishing Co., 1985*
- Kiss, Bow, or Shake Hands, Second Edition. Terri Morrison and Wayne Conaway, Adams Media, 2006
- 'Til Wheels Are Up!, Air Force Space Command Protocol Handbook and Courtesy of Luke AFB) on the AU Protocol Web Site: <http://www.au.af.mil/au/protocol>