

The customs and courtesies observed by service members are some of the oldest traditions of the military, and show respect to our flag, country, Soldiers, Marines, Sailors, Airmen and Coast Guardsmen throughout history to the present day.

Those new to Rock Island Arsenal may not be aware of these military traditions or are curious about the protocol of reveille and retreat ceremonies. The expectations behind what to do during reveille and retreat ceremonies are worth sharing.

The terms "Reveille" and "Retreat" can refer both to the ceremony that is used to show respect to the flag and to the music that initiates the event.

Reveille and retreat ceremonies are conducted daily on Rock Island Arsenal.

"Reveille" is a 25-second bugle call that is played in the morning - at 6:30 a.m. on Rock Island Arsenal - and signifies the beginning of the official duty day. A single cannon salute is fired from a modified M1905 field gun on the first notes of "Reveille."

"Retreat" signifies the end of the duty day - normally 5 p.m. on Rock Island Arsenal - and is a signal to all who hear it that the flag is being secured. It is initiated by the 29-second bugle call, "Retreat," which is followed by a single cannon salute and by the playing of "To the Color." "To the Color" is a 42-second bugle call to render honors to the nation.

The retreat ceremony may be initiated at the installation commander's discretion for special occasions. For example; a retreat ceremony is incorporated into the Army Sustainment Command's quarterly retirement and retreat ceremonies when retreat is, per order of the ASC commanding general, moved to approximately 3 p.m. to coincide with the conclusion of the retirement ceremony.

Below are some common questions regarding the proper protocol to follow during reveille and retreat ceremonies.

If sponsoring guests, including contractors, one should inform them of these requirements.

**What do I do when "Reveille" or "Retreat" and "To the Color" is played?**

During reveille and retreat ceremonies, all personnel on Rock Island Arsenal participating in outdoor activity (to include, but not limited to, walking, individual/unit physical training) should stop their activity to show respect for the flag, according to Army Regulation 600-25, Salutes, Honors, and Visits of Courtesy.

At the first notes of "Reveille" or "Retreat," stop where you are and turn to face the flag. If the flag is not visible, turn in the general direction of the flag or toward the direction of the music.

Civilian: Civilian personnel should, at the first notes of "Reveille," stand with your right hand over your heart. For "Retreat," you should stand after the first notes and place your right hand over your heart for the duration of "To the Color." If you are wearing a hat, remove it with your right hand and hold it at the left shoulder while your right hand is over the heart.

Military: If in uniform, come to attention and salute at the first notes of "Reveille" in the morning and parade rest at the first notes of "Retreat" in the evening. Come to attention and salute at the first notes of "To the Color."

Military: If you are not in uniform, come to attention and place your right hand over your heart at the first notes of "Reveille" and parade rest at the first notes of "Retreat." Come to attention and place your right hand over your heart at the first notes of "To the Color." If you are wearing a hat, remove it with your right hand and hold it at the left shoulder while your right hand is over the heart.

Service members and veterans, even if not in uniform, may render a salute during reveille or retreat ceremonies. During all ceremonies involving the national anthem and/or hoisting, lowering or passing of the flag, members of the military and veterans who are present but not in uniform may now render the military salute in the manner provided for individuals in uniform, according to Section 301(b)(1) of title 36, United States Code as approved in the Defense Authorization Acts of 2008 and 2009.

**What if I'm wearing my physical training uniform?**

Military: Proper military customs and courtesies apply while wearing the PT uniform during reveille and retreat. When in the PT uniform, come to attention and salute at the first notes of "Reveille." For "Retreat," come to parade rest, then to attention and salute at the first notes of "To the Color." Individuals conducting a physical fitness test are not required to stop their activities, however, due diligence should be exercised by officials when planning for physical fitness tests to avoid disruption of the event due to honors to the flag and nation.

**What do I do if I'm driving at the time of reveille or retreat?**

In the interest of safety on Rock Island Arsenal, drivers are not required to stop driving on all roads **except** Rodman Avenue between Gillespie Avenue and Pershing Street East during reveille or retreat ceremonies. Barricades are used by military and Rock Island Arsenal Police personnel requiring drivers to stop their vehicles before they pass the installation flagpole on Constitution Square.

All drivers and passengers, military or civilian, who are stopped at those barricades, are expected to exit or dismount their vehicles - to include motorcycles and bicycles - and render honors as described above. On all other Rock Island Arsenal streets however, stopping is suggested within the limits of safety.

**Where can I find more information?**

Section 9 of title 4, U.S. Code, outlines conduct during hoisting, lowering or passing of the flag and is available for viewing online at:  
<http://uscode.house.gov/download/pls/04C1.txt>.