

CHAIN OF COMMAND, BATTALION STRUCTURE, CUSTOMS AND COURTESIES

TERMINAL LEARNING OBJECTIVE(S)

1. Without the aid of references, describe how the chain of command works and why it exists. (MCM-Marine Corps Manual)
2. Without the aid of references, describe how the Buccaneer Battalion is structured. (NROTCUSFINST 1533.1C)
3. Without the aid of references, describe common terms used in the Navy and Marine Corps . (MCCS-GMS- 1010)
4. Without the aid of references, describe military customs, courtesies and honors. (MCCS-GMS-1010)

ENABLING LEARNING OBJECTIVE(S)

1. Without the aid of references, identify the Buccaneer Battalion Chain of Command without omission. (NROTCUSFINST 1533.1C)
2. Without the aid of references, identify all Navy and Marine Corps enlisted and officer grades, ranks and insignia. (MCCS-GMS-1010)
3. Without the aid of references, discuss why Navy and Marine Corps personnel use naval terminology. (MCCS-GMS-1010)
4. Without the aid of references, identify the correct procedures for saluting. (MCCS-GMS-1010)
5. Without the aid of references, identify the proper procedures for boarding & debarking a vessel and entering & exiting a vehicle. (MCCS-GMS-1010)
6. Without the aid of references, identify the procedures for rendering honors to colors. (MCCS-GMS-1010)
7. Without the aid of references, identify the procedures for reporting to an officer. (MCCS-GMS-1010)

1. **INTRODUCTION.** The Chain of Command is an effective tool our operating forces use to operate efficiently. Understanding our own Battalion structure will help you understand the military chain of command. As members of the Armed Services and the Naval Service in particular, we have certain terminology that the civilian world does not use. This terminology makes communication in person and over the radio easier and the language is part of our history and traditions. Finally, as members of the Naval Service we also have certain customs and courtesies that we must uphold in order to maintain the discipline and professionalism of our services.

2. **THE CHAIN OF COMMAND.**

a. **Purpose.** To assist commanders at all levels to achieve their primary responsibility of accomplishing the unit's mission, while caring for personnel and property in their charge.

b. **Definition.** The succession of commanding officers from a superior to subordinate through which command is exercised. This means that each military member has but one immediate supervisor and that each supervisor has their immediate supervisor. In this way, each supervisor links the different levels of command.

c. **Characteristics.**

1. Two-way communication. Seniors and subordinates must be able to communicate with each other.

2. Responsibilities are clearly defined for senior and subordinate.

3. Each individual knows who they are responsible to and who they are responsible for.

3. **BASIC CHAIN OF COMMAND STRUCTURE.**

a. **SQUAD MEMBER.** They are the first element in the Chain of Command.

b. **SQUAD LEADER.** Supervises the Squad and its members.

c. **PLATOON SERGEANT.** Supervises and controls the platoon; assumes command if Platoon Commander is absent.

d. **PLATOON COMMANDER.** Controls the actions of the Squad Leaders; responsible for training, discipline and welfare of the platoon.

e. **COMPANY COMMANDER.** Controls actions of the Platoon Commanders; responsible for training, administration, discipline and welfare of the company.

4. BATTALION ORGANIZATION.

a. Leadership is a vital factor in any organization. Esprit de corps and teamwork, combined with a capable Battalion Commander and Staff create an effective battalion. The Enthusiasm and professionalism presented by the Battalion Commander must be carried by every member in the battalion and passed on by junior leaders who know their responsibilities. In this way, the student Battalion, can provide its members with both the desire and the means to become capable leaders. All NROTC students must embrace the student Battalion and take pride in the efficiency and effectiveness it bears in accomplishing the NROTC mission.

b. The battalion is organized according to Figure 4-1. It consists of three primary staff billets: Battalion Commanding Officer (BNCO), Battalion Executive Officer (BNXO), and Sergeant Major (SgtMaj)/Command Master Chief (CMC). The students holding these staff billets report to the Unit Staff Battalion Advisor (MOI). These three primary battalion staff billets form a tight group that is responsible for the focus, direction, leadership, administration, and training of the battalion.

c. The battalion consists of two companies: Alpha Company and Bravo Company.

d. Each company consists of a CO, XO, and two platoons.

e. Each platoon within Alpha and Bravo Companies consists of a platoon commander, a platoon sergeant, and three squad leaders. All squads are composed of a combination of Marine and Navy option midshipmen, MECEPs, and OCs. f. HQ platoon consists of the following billets: Operations Officer, Administrative Officer, Assistant Operations Officer, Logistics Officer, Awards Officer, Community Service Officer, Fundraising Officer, First Lieutenant, Academics Officer, and Physical Training Officer.

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5. CUSTOMS AND COURTESIES.

a. Purpose: Customs and Courtesies are the traditions and honors we pride ourselves. They provide a uniform way of showing respect for superiors and subordinates. The terminology allows us to remain true to our roots and hold on to our history.

6. NAVAL TERMINOLOGY.

a. As a Naval Service, the Navy and Marine Corps commonly use nautical terms to describe everyday items.

Adrift: Loose from towlines or moorings, scattered about, not in proper stowage, usage “gear adrift”

Aft: Toward the stern.

All Hands: All members of a unit or command.

As you were: Resume former activity.

Aye Aye: Aye is old English for “yes,” probably taken from Latin verb “aio”— to affirm.

Belay: To make fast or to secure, as in “belay the line”, to cancel or to disregard a statement just made.

Blue Jacket: The first uniform that was ever officially sanctioned for sailors in the Royal Navy was a short blue jacket open at the front. There were no definite uniform regulations for U.S. enlisted men in the War of 1812, but many wore short blue jackets.

Bow: The forward end of a ship or boat.

Bridge: Area in the superstructure from which the ship is operated.

Bulkhead: A vertical partition, never called a wall.

Chow: Food

Chit: (Hindu word Chitti) Letter, note, bill, voucher, or receipt. It came from the old East India Company.

Carry On: Resume previous activity.

Deck: 1. Shipboard floor, horizontal plating which divides a ship into layers.

2. Shipboard floors from Main deck and below numbered 1, 2, 3. Fantail: The after end of the main deck. Fathom: From Anglo-Saxon faehom; Dutch vadem; latin patene, act of stretching two arms wide as rough measurement of six feet.

Flag Officer: An officer of the Navy above the grade of Captain.

Forecastle (Foc'sle): Forward section of the deck on which the anchor handling equipment is located.

Galley: Space where food is prepared. Never called a kitchen.

Gangway: From Anglo-Saxon gang, to go; make a passage in, or cut out, or through.

Hatch: A square or rectangular access in a deck. Never called a door.

Head: Toilet.

Island: Superstructure on the starboard side of the flight deck on an aircraft carrier.

Ladder: A shipboard flight of steps. Never called stairs.

Liberty: Authorized absence of enlisted from the ship or command for less than 96 hours for purposes of rest and recreation that is not charged as leave.

Main Deck: Highest watertight (complete) deck aboard ship. On aircraft carriers, the hangar deck is the main deck.

Mess: 1. Place where meals are eaten, such as Mess Decks, Captain's Mess, etc.

2. A group who takes meals together, such as officer's mess or chief's mess.

Midshipman: Men or boys originally stationed amidships to carry messages, to bring up ammunition, and to relay message from aft to the gun decks. It was in 1815 that midshipmen became a naval rank in the British service. It is now used as a term for those training to be officers.

OOD: Officer of the Deck

Overhead: The underside of a deck from the overhead of the compartment next below. Never called a ceiling.

Passageway: A corridor used for interior horizontal movement aboard ship.

Police: To straighten or tidy up, pick up gear adrift.

Port: To the left of the centerline when facing forward.

Quarterdeck: The ceremonial bridge of a 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).

Scuttle: Round, watertight opening in a hatch.

Scuttlebutt: 1. Drinking fountain.

2. A rumor.

Secure: 1. To make fast, as to secure a line to a cleat.

2. To cease, as to secure from a fire drill. Square away: To put in proper place, to make things shipshape.

Sick Bay: Hospital or dispensary.

Square Away: To straighten, make ship-shape, or to get settled, inform or admonish someone in an abrupt manner.

Starboard: Right of centerline when facing forward. Stateroom: A living compartment for an officer. Stern: The aftermost part of a vessel.

Swab: A mop, also a derisive slang term for a Sailor.

Topside: General term referring to a weather deck.

Wardroom: Officer's messing compartment.

Watch: Tour of duty, usually split into 4 hour time slots.

Weather Deck: Any deck exposed to the elements; a deck outside the skin of the ship.

7. BOARDING AND DISEMBARKING A VESSEL.

- a. **Boarding:** Walk up the gangway to the quarterdeck, face aft and salute the National Ensign, then face the OOD and request permission to come aboard.
- b. **Disembarking:** Face OOD and request permission to go ashore, face aft and salute the National Ensign and then walk down the gangway.

8. ENTERING AND EXITING A VEHICLE.

- a. **Entering:** Most junior person enters first and sits most forward, leaving most desirable seat for the senior. Seniors enter last and leave first.
- b. **Exiting:** Most senior person exits first and most junior exits last.

9. **SALUTING:** The salute is the most important of all military courtesies. Centuries old, this tradition survives today as a traditional greeting among soldiers of all nations. Regulations require that all officers be saluted by their juniors, and that they return such salutes. 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. **Who to salute?**

- All commissioned officers of any branch of service
- The President and Vice President of the United States -Secretary of Defence (SECDEF)/ Deputy SECDEF
- State Governors -Senators, Congressmen and Congresswomen
- Secretaries of the Army, Navy and Air Force -Assist. Sec. of Army, Navy and Air Force
- Heads of State
- Ambassadors
- Medal of Honor Recipients (not required but is customary)

b. **When to salute?**

- Salutes should be rendered when you are 6-30 paces away
- When you are outdoors or under arms
- When overtaking a senior

-Morning/Evening Colors

-Uncased Colors

c. **When NOT to salute?**

- Engaged in routine work

-Indoors (except when under arms)

-Both hands are full

-Areas that are inappropriate (theatres, churches, etc.)

-When driving

-When chasing a prisoner unless addressed in the line of duty

-In formation

-In the field

-When the enemy is within sight

10. **REPORTING TO AN OFFICER.** The procedures for reporting to an officer both outdoors and indoors is as follows:

a. **Outdoors:** Stand 2 paces in front and render a salute, report “ Good Morning/Afternoon/Evening Sir/Ma’am, state your name and rank, and then say “reporting as ordered.”

b. **Indoors:** Same procedure but you don’t salute and if at a desk stand 6 inches from the desk .

11. **ADDRESSING MARINES/SAILORS.**

a. **Addressing officers and enlisted personnel:** It is recommended that you address people by their name and grade (ex. Major Jones or Petty Officer Clark. If unsure address enlisted as Marine/Sailor and officers as Sir/ Ma’am. Try to avoid using first names or nicknames.

12. **WALKING WITH MARINES/SAILORS.**

a. When walking with a senior, stay left, one pace back and in step. When with similar rank walk in column of two’s and in step.

13. **FLAGS**

a. **Types of Flags:**

-Colors: National Ensign

-Standards: Flags of General Officers, Admirals and Foreign Dignitaries

-Guidons: Unit flags (Company, Platoon, Battery, etc.)

b. **National Ensign:**

- Raised at 0800 (Morning Colors) and lowered at sunset (Evening Colors)

- Three sizes:

Storm (5ftx 9.5ft)

Post (10ftx 19ft)

Garrison (20ftx 38ft)

References:

1. NROTCUSFINST 1533.1C - Battalion Structure and Organization
2. MCO P10520.3B – Marine Corps Flag Manual
3. MCM – Marine Corps Manual
4. MCO P5060.20 – Marine Corps Drill and Ceremonies
5. MCCS-GMS-1010 - OCS Handbook “Customs and Courtesies”