

# Retirees and Vets Allowed to Salute Flag

Traditionally, members of the nation's veterans service organizations have rendered the **hand-salute** during the national anthem and at events involving the national flag only while wearing their organization's official head-gear. The National Defense Authorization Act of 2008 contained an amendment to allow un-uniformed service-members, military retirees, and veterans to render a hand salute during the hoisting, lowering, or passing of the U.S. flag. A later amendment further authorized hand-salutes during the national anthem by veterans.

<http://www.military.com/veterans-report/retirees-and-vets-allowed-to-salute-flag>

**Sec. 594.** Conduct By Members Of The Armed Forces And Veterans Out Of Uniform During Hoisting, Lowering, Or Passing Of United States Flag.

**Section 9 of Title 4, United States Code**, is amended by striking "all persons present" and all that follows through the end of the section and inserting the following: "all persons present in uniform should render the military salute. Members of the Armed Forces and veterans who are present but not in uniform may render the military salute. All other persons present should face the flag and stand at attention with their right hand over the heart, or if applicable, remove their headdress with their right hand and hold it at the left shoulder, the hand being over the heart. Citizens of other countries present should stand at attention. All such conduct toward the flag in a moving column should be rendered at the moment the flag passes."

## Veterans Can Now Salute During National Anthem Thursday, November 6, 2008

Veterans and active-duty service-members not in uniform can now render the hand salute during the playing of our national anthem, thanks to changes in federal law that took effect this month. The legislative change was sponsored by Sen. Jim Inhofe, R-OK, an Army veteran, and included in the Defense Authorization Act of 2009.

The new provision improves upon a little-known change in federal law last year (2008) that authorized veterans to render the hand salute during the raising, lowering or passing of the flag. However, it did not address salutes during the national anthem. Last year's provision also applied to members of the armed forces while not in uniform.

The American Legion has opposed the saluting of the U.S. Flag when it is being raised, lowered or is in passing by those who are not in uniform. At its National Convention in Phoenix last August, the Legion passed a resolution against the practice, saying that it "causes confusion leading to breaches of flag etiquette with regard to proper conduct during the recitation of the Pledge of Allegiance."

Furthermore, the Legion is concerned that salutes from veterans and service-members out of uniform will be imitated by the general public as the proper way to honor the U.S. Flag and/or national anthem. In responding to numerous phone calls and e-mails on the issue, the Legion's Americanism Commission offers this advice: "The law does allow veterans to render the right hand salute, but does not mandate it. If you feel uncomfortable in any

situation where the flag is being raised, lowered or is passing in review, the traditional right hand over the heart - with the hat removed - is still a viable and very respectful alternative to the new law."

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## Defense Authorization Act Of 2009

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The president signed the Amendment to Section 9 of Title 4 of the U.S. Code | which was attached with the H.R. 4986 Bill under the National Defense Authorization Act of 2008.

June 4, 2008

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