

Protocol Matters

By Joe Hellner

This month's topic comes from Commodore Frank Garey who asked me at an opening the other day about saluting during TAPS. Always stand and face the departed when TAPS is played and during gun salutes. If you are attending in civilian attire, you will come to the position of attention and remove your headdress if appropriate and place it over your heart. If no headdress is worn, you will place your right hand over your heart. Saluting the flag is not correct because the ceremony is not about country. The key thing to remember about TAPS and Amazing Grace in ceremonies for the departed is that you are paying respects and remembrance to a departed comrade, friend, or loved one and just as you would have faced and saluted them in life, so you face and salute them in death.

At funerals, you should also stand at attention with hand over heart (or salute if in uniform) when the casket is being moved and when being lowered into the grave. As with the wreath for the departed ceremony, you always face the casket.

Another topic that has come up lately is the yachting braid on women officer hats. The answer is yes. The proper protocol is for women officers to wear the braid on their hats exactly as the men do on their hats. I have noticed people getting sloppy with the hat buttons. The color of the buttons and the braid must always match!

Till next month, see you around the Bay!