

10-22-2004

How Presidents Salute

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ScholarWorks Citation

Whitney, Gleaves, "How Presidents Salute" (2004). *Ask Gleaves*. 55.
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How Presidents Salute

What is the protocol presidents should follow when they salute?

Since presidents are the commander in chief, they are at the top of the chain of command and therefore do not have to initiate a salute. They are only expected to return a salute initiated by someone down the chain of command.

There are rules for saluting that every president learns. You should never have something in your mouth or in your saluting hand when you salute.

You should salute the flag when it is 6 paces away and approaching, and hold the salute for 6 paces after it passes.

Ronald Reagan described saluting as the crisp cocking of the arm, followed by dropping the salute smartly to your side in one motion, but without slapping your leg. To make sure it was smart, Reagan advised that you should end the salute as if you were throwing something very unpleasant out of your hand!

(Question from WUOM listener [Ann Arbor, MI])

