

Reveille & Retreat

Target Audience: Total Force

PURPOSE

To remind all personnel of the heritage, pride, esprit de corps and unit cohesion that can result from performing the ceremonies of reveille and retreat as a unit.

DESCRIPTION

Two of the most common ceremonial honors rendered from our military heritage today are reveille and retreat. Reveille, in 1812, was simply a drum call but through time has come to be recognized as when the flag is raised in the morning and the duty day begins—sometimes with ceremony, sometimes without. Retreat, the retirement of the colors from the duty day's activities, is an activity in which the unit honors the U.S. flag (and in some cases host nation's flag) when it is lowered at the end of the traditional duty day—again, sometimes with ceremony, sometimes without.

It's proper for members in the profession of arms, both military and civilian, to render honors to the flag when these official ceremonies are accomplished. One of the greatest feelings of organizational identity is achieved when you and your unit performs these ceremonial honors. Pride, cohesion, and esprit de corps are all tangible benefits from these actions. It also displays the core values of Service Before Self and Excellence In All We Do.

EMPLOY

Want to reconnect to your Air Force identity? One way is to participate in a reveille or retreat ceremony. The steps below are one way to help you do that.

1. Obtain approval from organizational leadership (Commander, First Sergeant, Group Superintendent, Flight Chief, etc., whichever level is appropriate for your organization).
2. Contact your local wing staff agency. Usually this is the protocol office but may vary depending on how your wing or joint base installation is organized. They will instruct you on the proper procedures and specific requirements to setup the detail. It is very common for many installations to have a designated date each month when these ceremonies will be conducted. Be aware that overseas installations will require honors for the host nation's flag as well.
3. Begin assembling your participants. The number can vary from the bare minimum of three (to lower and fold the flag) up to a full squadron size formation assembled in traditional military formation. It is common to have at least one Officer or Non-commissioned Officer be a part of the flag handling detail if possible. Make sure all know about the uniform requirements (preferably blues) and what to do in case of inclement weather.
4. Coordinate a practice session (may require more than one for the flag handlers) in order to get the proper sequencing of events. Your local Base Honor Guard can assist with the specifics for the flag security detail training.

5. On the day of the event (and depending on the size of the formation), have participants arrive 20-30 minutes early in order to get the formation properly assembled and positioned.

6. Once assembled and while waiting for the start of the ceremony, this is a good opportunity to discuss the heritage behind the reveille and retreat ceremony and why it's important for your organization to participate. Emphasize how this event relates to our Core Values of Service Before Self and Excellence In All We Do.

7. This is certainly not an all-inclusive detail of how to perform a reveille or retreat ceremony but it serves as a good starting point to understand the overall process. For more details regarding reveille or retreat, first refer to any local guidance published by your installation. Additionally, you should refer to Air Force Manual 36-2203, Air Force Pamphlet 34-1202, and Air Force Instruction 34-1201 for complete details on the technical execution of these duties.

NOTE: Double click any of the icons below to hear an audio of the bugle call used for reveille or retreat. "To The Colors" can be played in lieu of the national anthem during retreat ceremonies. Be able to recognize it because it requires the same customs and courtesies as when the national anthem is played. There are also examples of how the flights are positioned for a retreat ceremony.



Retreat



Reveille

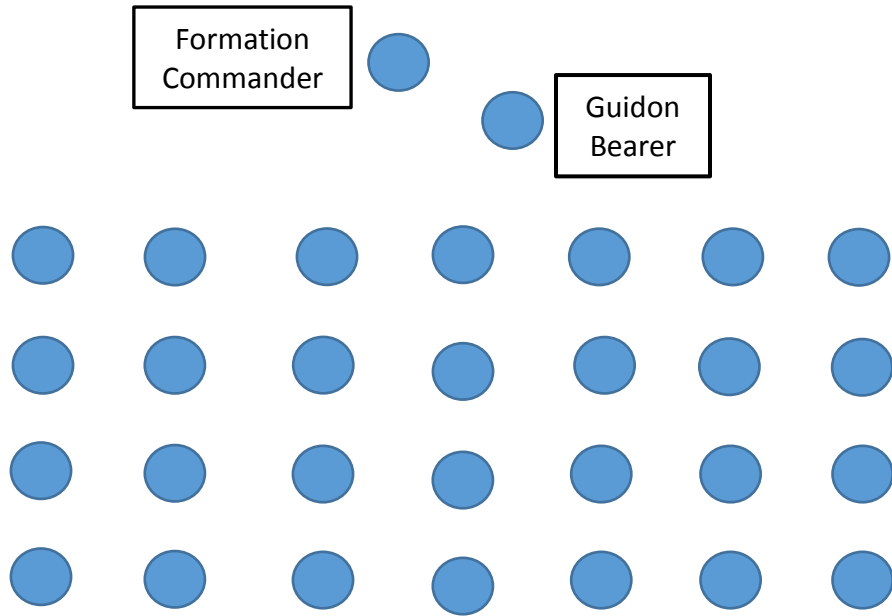
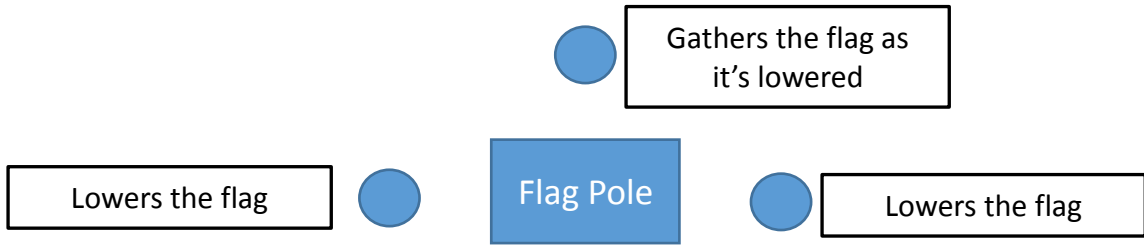


Taps



To the Colors

Single Flight Formation



Multiple Flight Formation

