



New law allows salutes in civvies during anthem

10/31/2008 - **WASHINGTON (AFNS)** -- Veterans and servicemembers not in uniform can now render the military-style hand salute during the playing of the national anthem, thanks to changes in federal law that took effect in October.

"The military salute is a unique gesture of respect that marks those who have served in our nation's armed forces," said Dr. James B. Peake, secretary of Veterans Affairs. "This provision allows the application of that honor in all events involving our nation's flag."

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

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 while wearing their organization's official head-gear.

The most recent change, authorizing hand-salutes during the national anthem by veterans and out-of-uniform military personnel, was sponsored by Sen. Jim Inhofe of Oklahoma, an Army veteran. It was included in the Defense Authorization Act of 2009, which President Bush signed Oct. 14.

The earlier provision authorizing hand-salutes for veterans and out-of-uniform servicemembers during the raising, lowering or passing of the flag, was contained in the National Defense Authorization Act of 2008, which took effect Jan. 28, 2008. (Courtesy of VA News)

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