

CHAPTER 94**GUN SALUTES***(MOD Sponsor: NAVY NPS-EXEC FXO)*

This chapter has been “equality and diversity impact assessed” by the sponsor in accordance with Departmental policy. No direct discrimination or adverse impact was identified. This chapter is due for review at the next routine amendment exercise.

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CHAPTER 94

GUN SALUTES

(MOD Sponsors: NAVY PERS-EXEC FXO)

9401. Governance

1. Ministry of Defence PS12(A) hold the Tri Service lead for matters of State Ceremonial, State and Royal Funerals and Gun salutes. Navy Command shares ceremonial responsibilities amongst several vested interests; Regional Forces co-ordinate the majority of scheduled ceremonial events in the UK, Navy FGEN is point of contact for State and Royal funerals and the Fleet Executive Officer is the first point of contact for any ceremonial queries or occasions not covered by any other established protocol. Key points of contact are:

- a. PS12(A): ArmyPersOps-PS12-TriSvcCer-SO1
- b. FXO: Navy NPS-Exec FXO
- c. Navy FGEN: Navy FGEN-LitM SO1
- d. Regional Forces: Navy Pol-Regional Forces SO1
Navy NRCEE-NLO

9402. Ships Authorised to Salute

1. **Saluting ships.** The following ships are classified as 'saluting ships' when in commission:

- a. Aircraft Carriers.
- b. Landing Platforms Dock and Helicopter.
- c. All Destroyers and Frigates.

2. **Temporary Saluting Ships.** Other warships and ocean survey ships are to apply to Fleet Commander, Portsmouth to be designated 'temporary saluting ships' if it is considered that a specific visit merits a salute because of the high level of ceremonial expected and the Attaché or Defence Adviser recommends it, or for other important naval occasions.

3. **Land Based Saluting Stations.** Navy Command is responsible for the following land based 'Primary' saluting stations:

- a. Portsmouth - either from HM Naval Base Portsmouth (South Railway Jetty) or from Fort Blockhouse (Gosport).. In both cases, manning will be provided by HMS COLLINGWOOD.
- b. Plymouth – either HMS DRAKE firing from HM Naval Base Devonport, or 29 Commando Regiment Royal Artillery firing from The Royal Citadel.

Plymouth salutes are to be co-ordinated between Naval Base Commander Devonport and Commanding Officer 29 Commando Regiment Royal Artillery. Navy Command has no

'Secondary' land based saluting stations. If there is a conflict, due to proximity between a RN and Army unit, the RN saluting station takes precedence.

4. **Fitting and Provision of Saluting Guns.** To maintain sufficient stocks of saluting guns and ammunition abroad to cope with ship's programme changes and unexpected ceremonial demands, ships listed in Clause 1 that are not permanently outfitted with saluting guns and ammunition are to carry guns and ammunition as required by Fleet Commander, Portsmouth.

5. **Standing NATO Maritime Groups 1 and 2.** The Standing NATO Maritime Groups are designated as non-saluting forces.

9403. Salutes by Forts and Shore Batteries

1. Naval saluting batteries are to follow the saluting rules laid down for Her Majesty's ships. Salutes by forts and military shore batteries are governed by *The Queen's Regulations for the Army*, which are generally in accord with the naval rules; such salutes are the responsibility of the military authorities, with whom the senior naval officer should concert arrangements as necessary.

2. *The Queen's Regulations for the Army* direct that salutes from shore batteries are to be fired for Flag Officers and Commodores 'on landing for the first time, being in actual employment.

These salutes will not be repeated more than once in 12 months abroad, and three years at home, unless the officer shall have received an advance of rank'.

3. A list of saluting stations at Commonwealth and Foreign ports is published in Fleet Commander's Port Guides as appropriate.

9404. General Regulations

1. **Authority.** No salutes are to be fired from HM ships without previous permission from the senior officer present, and the firing of salutes when ordered by these regulations is normally to be restricted to those ships which are authorised to salute ([Para 9402](#))

2. **Interval.** The interval between successive guns of a salute is five seconds.

3. **River Thames.** Salutes are not to be fired from ships in the River Thames above Gravesend unless specially ordered.

4. **Salutes between HM ships and Forts or Batteries.** No salutes are to be exchanged between HM ships and forts or batteries.

5. **Salutes between HM ships and Flag Officers and Commodores.** As a rule, salutes between HM ships and Flag Officers and Commodores are only to be fired between morning and evening Colours; but a salute fired by a foreign ship of war outside this period is to be returned. In Commonwealth and foreign ports the custom of the country is to be followed.

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6. **Sundays Salutes.** On Sundays salutes are not to be fired by ships in harbour, or arriving in harbour, between 1030 and 1300; but should this regulation cause a salute to a foreign flag or ship to be deferred, it is to be explained that the delay was on account of Divine Service.
7. **Salutes at Sea.** At sea, the regulations for the interchange of salutes with foreign ships of war are to be observed without unreasonable delay.
8. **Inability to Fire.** If a ship which may reasonably be expected to do so is, for any reason, unable to fire or return a salute, the circumstances are to be explained at once.
9. **Flags Hoisted During Salutes.** Instructions about flags to be hoisted during salutes are given in **9144** to **9147**.

9405. Recognised Governments

1. Salutes to foreign Royal personages and other foreign authorities and flags are authorised only in the case of a government recognised by Her Majesty.

9406. Salutes Not Authorised

1. No salutes other than those authorised are to be fired except on the occasion of a great victory to Her Majesty's arms, or other important national event, when the Governor-General of a Commonwealth country, or other officer administering the government of any of Her Majesty's territories abroad, in conjunction with the senior naval officer present, may direct such salutes to be fired as the occasion may require; but unless the senior officers of the Navy and Army concur in the propriety of the proposed salutes, they are not to be fired by one Service only when both could have done honour to the occasion.
2. The firing of Salutes is a solemn and meaningful nationally endorsed occasion of ceremony. Requests to units to fire salutes in support of charity events or unofficial occasions outside of the regulations in this Chapter, no matter how well meaning, are to be politely but firmly declined.

9407. National Salutes

1. The following regulations, in which the maritime powers generally have concurred, are to be observed for national salutes:
 - a. The Captain of a ship, or the senior officer of two or more ships, when visiting a foreign port where there is a fort or saluting battery or where a ship of the nation is lying, is to salute the national flag with 21 guns on each visit, on being satisfied that the salute will be returned; but by agreement with the local authorities the salute may be dispensed with when a ship returns to port after leaving temporarily.
 - b. During operational visits to foreign ports as defined in **9301**, the customary firing of salutes should be carried out unless mutual arrangements are made to the contrary.

- c. During formal and informal visits to NATO ports, the exchange of gun salutes will be in accordance with international custom. During routine visits no gun salutes will be fired.
- d. On the occasion of a visit to a foreign port where there is no saluting battery and no ship of the nation is lying on arrival, and a ship of the nation arrives during the visit, a salute to the national flag is only to be fired after mutual agreement between the senior officers of the ships concerned.
- e. A salute is not to be fired when passing through territorial waters with no intention of anchoring in them, or making fast in any way, even if a saluting station is passed, unless unusual circumstances make it desirable.
- f. If the ship of a senior British officer is already present in the port, the junior officer is not to fire a salute.
- g. Except when the salute to the National Flag is considered as a salute personal to the Standard as laid down in **Para 9411 sub para 2** and **sub para 3**, the salute to the National Flag is to be returned gun for gun. Should there be no fort or battery from which it can be returned, the senior naval officer present is to do so.

9408. Royal Salutes

1. All Royal Salutes referred to in this section consist of 21 guns.
2. A Royal Salute is to be fired from all HM ships present which are authorised to salute and from a fort or battery from which salutes are usually fired in honour of the following personages:

The Queen; The Duke of Edinburgh; any other member of the Royal Family; a foreign Crowned Head or Sovereign Prince, or his or her Consort; a Prince or Princess who is a member of a reigning foreign Royal Family; the President of a foreign Republican State. The Pope is to be regarded as a foreign Sovereign.

3. The salute is to be fired on the occasions stated hereunder (but see *a/so* **Para 9410 sub para 3**):
 - a. On their arrival at and final departure from any place in the countries of the Commonwealth; but a Royal Salute is not fired when a ship flying a foreign Royal Standard or President's Flag passes a saluting battery but does not intend to berth in its vicinity.
 - b. On their going on board, and again on leaving, any of HM ships; but a Royal Salute will not be fired when a Royal personage, having hoisted his or her Standard in one of HM ships, leaves that ship temporarily, nor shall that ship take part in a Royal Salute fired by other ships while the Standard being saluted is hoisted in her, unless it is considered advisable to do so for some special reason. See **9140**, Dressing ship, and **9202**, Informal visits.
 - c. By HM ships on meeting, passing, or being passed by any ship flying a Standard or Flag denoting the presence of any of the above personages.

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d. When any of HM ships arrives at or departs from a port or place where a Standard or Flag denoting the presence of the above persons is hoisted on shore. A salute is also to be fired when any of HM ships passes a port or place where the Royal Standard or the Standard of any other member of the British Royal Family is hoisted.

e. For the Sovereign, on such other occasions as may be directed.

4. The presence of The Queen or members of the Royal Family is denoted by the Standards and Flags mentioned in **9101** to **9103**.

5. The presence of a foreign Royal personage is denoted by a Standard, and that of a President of a Republican State by the Flag of the President.

9409. Visits of Foreign Heads of State

1. When a foreign ship of war flying a Royal Standard or the Flag of a President of a foreign Republican State arrives at a British port, the Royal Salute ordered by **Para 9408 3 sub para a** shall be fired by HM ships present which are authorised to salute and the fort or battery, after the salute to the National Flag has been fired by the visiting ship and returned by the shore battery.

9410. Order of Royal Salutes

1. Whenever any of HM ships which are authorised to salute meets, passes or is passed by any ship which is flying more than one Standard, or arrives at or leaves any port or place where more than one is flying, or when two or more Standards are broken simultaneously, she is to fire salutes in the following order, saluting the standards of:

- a. The Queen and The Duke of Edinburgh.
- b. The Sovereigns, Consorts, or Heirs-Apparent of foreign nations, or the Presidents of Republican States. The Pope is to be regarded as a Sovereign.
- c. Other members of the British Royal Family.
- d. Other members of reigning foreign Royal Families.

2. In these circumstances only one salute is to be fired for the Standards of any one country, no matter how many may be flying.

3. In the presence on shore or afloat of any Royal Standard, British or foreign, or of the Flag of the President of a Republic, no other authority of that nation is to be saluted by HM ships, but on the arrival of The Queen or a foreign Sovereign a salute is to be fired even though another Royal Standard of the same nation may already be flying. See **Para 9411 sub para 3** on special rules in certain foreign ports.

9411. Royal Salutes at Foreign Ports

1. Whenever any of HM ships which are authorised to salute arrives at a foreign port at which salutes are returned (see [Para 9407](#)) and when the Standard of any Royal personage, British or foreign, or the Flag of the President of a Republic is hoisted, the customary salute to the Flag of the nation to which the port belongs is in all cases to be fired first, the Standards or Presidents' Flags present being subsequently saluted in the order directed in [Para 9410](#).
2. When the Standard of any member of the Royal Family (or the Flag of the President of the Republic) of the country visited is hoisted in the port, the salute to the National Flag is to be considered as personal to that Standard or Flag as representing the nation, and in this case the salute will not be returned. In the event of this salute being returned, a further salute of 21 guns is to be fired.
3. Certain countries have regulations concerning the firing of salutes to, and in the presence of, the Royal Standard or Presidential Flag which differ from the rules in this section. When visiting foreign ports, therefore, Captains of HM ships should, if in any doubt, ascertain the local practice in this respect and act in accordance with it, except that in no circumstances should a Royal Salute of more than 21 guns be fired.

9412. Royal Anniversaries

1. In ports of the United Kingdom a Royal salute is to be fired at noon in celebration of the following:
 - a. The Birthday of the Sovereign (21 April).
 - b. The Accession of the Sovereign (6 February).
 - c. The Coronation of the Sovereign (2 June).
 - d. The Official Birthday of the Sovereign.
 - e. The Birthday of The Duke of Edinburgh (10 June).
 - f. The Birthday of His Royal Highness the Prince of Wales (14 November)
2. These salutes are to be fired on the actual date of the anniversary except that, when the anniversary falls on a Sunday, the salute is to be fired at noon on the following day. See also **9140**, Dressing ship.
3. The captain of a ship, or senior officer of two or more ships, is to ensure a Royal anniversary salute is carried out. However, in the United Kingdom Naval Base Ports it is the responsibility of the appropriate Naval Base Commander to ensure the Royal anniversary salute is conducted. In Her Majesty's Naval Base Devonport, the Naval Base Commander is to locally arrange and agree the firing of salutes with Commanding Officer 29 Commando Regiment Royal Artillery using the Saluting Stations at either HMS DRAKE or the Royal Citadel. Royal Salutes at Gibraltar are the responsibility of the Army firing from Devil's Cap Point or Europa Point unless otherwise ordered by Commander British Forces Gibraltar.

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4. A Royal Salute is also to be fired at noon from HM ships which are authorised to salute on the day announced in the *Gazette* as the official birthday of Her Majesty:

- a. In ports in home waters other than Naval Bases, having made arrangements with local authorities.
- b. In Commonwealth ports, but when the official celebrations are held on a date other than that notified in the *Gazette*, the salute is to be fired on the date adopted for the official celebrations.
- c. In foreign ports only if an official celebration in honour of Her Majesty is held on shore on this date.

5. A Royal Salute is also to be fired on the birthday of any member of the Royal Family whenever any of HM ships which are authorised to salute are present in a port at which a British Royal Standard is flying, or when escorting a ship flying a British Royal Standard at sea, or when lying in the immediate vicinity of a British Royal residence, but no such salute is to be fired without having obtained permission.

6. A Royal Salute is also to be fired when ordered and promulgated:

- a. To mark occasions of Royal or national importance, as ordered.
- b. On Royal arrivals at the request of the Defence Services secretary or the Formation Commander.

7. **Contingency Planning.** All Saluting Stations and deployed Saluting Ships are to be prepared to fire within 6 hours of notification from MoD PS12 of a short notice requirement to fire a gun salute. Saluting ships are to retain sufficient blank 3lb cartridges on board to satisfy the requirement for a gun salute; further details of the contingent requirement have been issued direct to Saluting Ships and Stations by NAVY DACOS FGen.

9413. Royal Salutes not Returned

1. No Royal Salutes, either to members of the Royal Family or to foreign Royal personages, members of foreign Royal Families and Presidents of foreign Republican States, will be returned, whether on arrival at or departure from a port, or when visiting ships of war.

9414. Commonwealth and Foreign Festivals

1. On the occasion of the celebration of:
 - a. important anniversaries and festivals in other countries of the Commonwealth;
 - b. the celebration of the birthday of the Sovereign or Consort of the Sovereign of a foreign nation;
 - c. important foreign national festivities and ceremonies;

HM ships which are authorised to salute may, when in company with ships of other Commonwealth countries or ships of a foreign nation, or in Commonwealth or foreign ports, fire such salutes, not exceeding **21** guns, as are fired by the ships or batteries of the country concerned. These salutes will not be returned. Ships visiting Commonwealth and foreign ports may seek guidance on national anniversaries and other festivals from the British Naval Adviser or Attaché in the country concerned.

9415. Customary Salutes in Commonwealth Countries

1. The Governor-General, Governor, or Officer administering the government of a Commonwealth country is authorised to continue to sanction such salutes as may be customary, and which they may deem right and proper, at religious ceremonies and, further, to cause the usual salutes to be fired at the opening and closing of the Houses of Parliament or Legislature. Such salutes will in no case exceed 19 guns.

9416. British Authorities

1. Salutes, other than Royal, are to be fired in honour of the personages, and on the occasions stated, as laid down in Annex 92A, but see **Para 9410 [sub para 3](#)**.

2. When a diplomatic or Commonwealth personage or an Army or RAF officer, entitled to be saluted on embarking or disembarking, is going on board or leaving either a ship of war not authorised to salute or a merchant ship, the senior naval officer may direct the prescribed salute to be fired from any of HM ships present.

3. Salutes in conformity with Annex 92A are to be fired in compliment to foreign officials, in the same manner and in similar circumstances in which those to a British official would be fired (see *also* **[Para 9425](#)**).

4. None of the salutes laid down in Annex 92A is to be returned except those to Flag Officers and Commodores as laid down in **[Para 9421](#)**.

9417. Limitation of Rank

1. None of Her Majesty's officers under the rank of Commodore, Brigadier, or Air Commodore is to be saluted in any part of the world, but see Annex 92A for return salute to Captains of ships.

9418. When Acting

1. Naval, Army and RAF officers temporarily acting in any higher command and officers temporarily acting in any civil office are entitled, during their temporary tenure, to all the honours and salutes that may appertain to such command or office.

9419. Salute in Higher Rank

1. Such authorities mentioned in **[Para 9416](#)** as may, from their rank and appointments, be entitled to be saluted in more than one capacity, are to be saluted under the rank which entitles them to the greatest number of guns, but on no occasion should the same individual be saluted in more than one capacity.

9420. In Presence of Superior Authority

1. Except in the case of a Royal Salute, no officer of the Royal Navy or a Commonwealth navy is to be saluted by ships of the Royal Navy in the presence of:
 - a. a British Royal Standard (**Para 9410 sub para 3**); or
 - b. the flag or broad pennant of an officer of the Royal Navy or a Commonwealth navy who is senior to themselves.
2. Local regulations should be followed in regard to saluting of Commonwealth navies in the presence of superior authorities of their own countries.
3. Similarly, no inferior Army or RAF authority is to be saluted in the presence of a superior Army or RAF authority respectively.
4. Similar provisions apply to foreign officers of the same nation, but not to personal salutes under **Para 9425**.

9421. Salutes to Flag Officers and Commodores

1. Subject to **Para 9420 sub para 1**, the flag or broad pennant of the senior Flag Officer or Commodore present is to be saluted as follows:
 - a. By the next senior officer present:
 - (1) On being first hoisted in the same period of the former's new command.
 - (2) After the flag of the former's new rank has been hoisted on promotion.
 - b. By a single ship, or by the senior officer only of two or more ships of the same fleet or squadron, on meeting or on arrival, subject to Clause 2.
 - c. By a junior Flag Officer or Commodore:
 - (1) After such officer has hoisted a flag or broad pennant in the period of their new command.
 - (2) After hoisting the flag of their new rank on promotion.
2. No officer in command is to salute the same Flag Officer or Commodore more than once during their command, except in case of promotion. Similarly requests to salute are not normally to be made more than once.
3. These salutes are to be returned according to the scale (Annex 92A).

9422. Commonwealth Naval Officers

1. Commonwealth naval officers should be accorded the same gun salutes as RN officers of equivalent rank and status.

9423. Foreign Flag Officers and Commodores

1. **At Sea.** Subject to the provisions of **Para 9421 sub para 2**, if one or more of HM ships which are authorised to salute meet at sea a foreign warship flying the flag of a Flag Officer or the broad pennant of a Commodore of superior rank to the senior officer in command of HM ship or ships, aforementioned, such senior officer is to salute the foreign Flag Officer or Commodore with the number of guns accorded to his rank by **Para 9424**.
2. **In Port.** If the meeting takes place in port, the salute is not to be fired until the proper National Salutes (**Para 9407**) have been interchanged, and then only if the local regulations admit thereof.
3. **Of Equal Rank, at Sea.** If ships flying the flags or broad pennants of officers of equal rank meet at sea, and their relative seniority in rank is unknown or in doubt, they should mutually salute without delay.
4. **Of Equal Rank, in Port.** Subject to the provisions of Clause 2, if ships flying the flags or broad pennants of officers of equal rank meet in port, the later arrival, irrespective of seniority, shall salute first.
5. **Differing Foreign Nations, in Port.** When ships of different foreign nations are making use of the same port, the following modifications to Clause 1 should be brought into force, subject to the concurrence of the senior Flag Officer or Commodore of each nation represented:
 - a. On the occasions stated in **Para 9421 1 a sub para (1)** and **sub para (2)**, the flag or broad pennant of the senior Flag Officer or Commodore concerned should be saluted by the senior Flag Officers or Commodores of the other nations present who are junior to themselves.
 - b. Subject to the provisions of **Para 9421 sub para 2** and on the occasions stated in **Para 9421 1 sub para b**, the ship or senior officer of ships arriving or meeting should only salute the flag or broad pennant of the senior Flag Officer or Commodore of all the nations represented, provided that such Flag Officer or Commodore is senior to him or her and that an officer of his or her own nation and senior to him or her is not already in company with that foreign Flag Officer or Commodore; but if an officer of his or her own nation is already in company, the ship or senior officer of ships arriving should only salute his or her own senior officer, if so entitled by **Para 9421**.

If the senior officer of ships arriving are themselves senior to all the senior Flag Officers or Commodores of the other nations already in port, all the latter should, subject to the provisions of **Para 9421 sub para 2**, salute him or her after the prescribed National Salutes have been interchanged.
 - c. On the occasions stated in **Para 9421 1 c sub para (1)** and **sub para (2)**, a junior Flag Officer or Commodore should, unless otherwise ordered, fire the prescribed salute to the senior Flag Officer or Commodore of his or her own nation only. Should he or she be that officer, he or she should salute the flags or broad pennants of the senior Flag Officers or Commodores of the other nations who are present and senior to him or her, and will themselves be saluted by those junior to them in accordance

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with Clause 5a; he or she should inform the Flag Officers and Commodores who are to be saluted and at what time it will be done.

d. If any doubt should arise in the application of **Para 9421 [sub para 2](#)** to the orders contained in this Article, the salute should be fired.

6. **Salutes to Flags of British Flag Officers or Commodores.** Salutes to the flags or broad pennants of British Flag Officers and Commodores when met with at sea or in harbour are to be returned gun for gun.

9424. Scale for Foreign Flag Officers

1. The following scale, in which the maritime powers generally have concurred, is to be observed in reference to the interchange of salutes between HM ships and foreign ships of war which bear the flag of a Flag Officer or the broad pennant of a Commodore or a Captain commanding a squadron or division:

	Guns
Admiral of the Fleet or Flag Officer who ranks with a Field Marshal	19
Admiral	17
Vice-Admiral	15
Rear-Admiral	13
Commodore, or Captain commanding a squadron or division	11

2. A Vice-Admiral of the French Navy who is either Chief of the Naval Staff or Inspector-General of the Navy is to be regarded as an Admiral for saluting purposes. They will fly a square flag of the national colours with three blue stars in triangle on the white portion. A Rear-Admiral of the Italian Navy who is Admiral of Division is entitled to a Vice-Admiral's salute.

9425. Personal Salutes to Foreigners

1. If a foreigner of high distinction or a foreign officer should visit one of HM ships, they may be saluted on going on board or on leaving, with the number of guns which from their rank or status, they would received on visiting a ship of war of their own nation or with such number, not exceeding 19, as may be deemed proper; but should the number of guns to which they are entitled from a ship of their own nation be less than that given to an officer or official of their rank in the corresponding British service, they are to be saluted with the greater number. In case of doubt, Her Majesty's diplomatic or consular representative should be consulted, if practicable. Ecclesiastical authorities without diplomatic status are not entitled to gun salutes.

2. On the occasions of an official visit by a foreign Flag Officer or Commodore to one of HM ships, they may be saluted on going on board or leaving with the number of guns specific in [Para 9424](#). This is a personal salute and is distinct from the salute to flag provided for in [Para 9423](#).

3. The personal salutes referred to in this Article are not returned and are not subject to the limitations laid down in Annex 92A (column 10), but should a personal salute fired by one of HM ships, or by a ship of a third national, to a foreign officer be returned, it is to be regarded as an excess of courtesy which is to be reciprocated by returning any personal salute to a British officer fired immediately afterwards under similar conditions.

4. If it is known that it is the custom of a foreign nation to return personal salutes irrespective of the arrangements agreed with the maritime powers, and it is expected that a personal salute to an officer of that nation fired by one of HM ships will be returned, HM ships may take the initiative in returning personal salutes.

9426. Return Salute to Merchant Ship

1. If a British or foreign merchant ship, or any ship not a warship, salutes any of HM ships, the salute is to be returned with 5 guns to a single ship, and 7 guns to more than one sailing in company.