

Saluting the Flag

Veterans and active-duty military 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. This new provision allows the application of that honor in all events involving our nation's flag.

The 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 members of the armed forces 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 authorizes hand-salutes during the national anthem by veterans and out-of-uniform military personnel. It was included in the Defense Authorization Act of 2009, which President Bush signed on Oct. 14. The earlier provision authorizing hand-salutes for veterans and out-of-uniform military personnel 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.

There are many state and federal benefits and programs available to veterans and their dependents. To find out if you are eligible for any of these benefits, visit or call our office. We can and will assist you in completing all required application forms. You can also get information on the web from the Kings County Veterans Service Office website at www.countyofkings.com.

Joe Wright, retired Navy Master Chief Petty Officer, is the Veterans Service Officer for Kings County. Send your questions to the Veterans Service Office, 1400 West Lacey Blvd, Hanford, CA 93230, the phone number is 582-3211 ex. 2662 or email joe.wright@co.kings.ca.us.