In the armed forces, the various grades of colonels, generals, and admirals are spoken to

simply as Colonel, General, or Admiral; their surnames can be added, but during a prolonged conversation the title alone is the simpler option.

- In the Army and Air Force, noncommissioned officers are also addressed officially by their titles, although they may also use "Mr." or "Ms." socially. Warrant officers are called "Mr." or "Ms." both officially and socially.
- Naval officers who rank from lieutenant commander up are called "Commander." Officers below that rank are called "Mr." in conversation but are introduced and referred to by their titles.

- Chaplains in any branch of the service are generally called by their rank- "Colonel Smart"- although informally they are addressed as "Chaplain," "Father," or "Rabbi."
- Doctors in the service are generally called by their rank ("Major Hollingsworth"), although they may be called "Dr." socially when they are junior officers. Officially, they are addressed by their Army or Navy titles for as long as they remain in the service.

Members of the regular armed services retain their rank after retiring. However, it is poor taste for reserve officers who served for only a short time- or those who held temporary commissions during a war- to continue calling themselves "Captain," "Major," or "Colonel." They do, however, use the titles if they resume an active status in a reserve unit or the National Guard. In this case, the initials of their service always follow the name: "Colonel Victor Bacovich, U.S.A.R." (or "N.G.," "U.S.N.R.," or "U.S.M.C.R."). Reserve officers who remain in the service and retire with pay after twenty or more years are, like members of the regular service, entitled to use their military titles.

Rank

In the Armed Services, the Department of Defense is represented in the Cabinet by the Secretary of Defense, who ranks third among Cabinet members. The heads of the military departments of the Department of Defense- the Secretary of the Army, the Secretary of the

Navy, and the Secretary of the Air Force- do not have a Cabinet rank

The rank of deputies and assistants is as follows:

- A Deputy Secretary of Defense is equal in rank to an Under Secretary of the Executive Departments, examples of which are the Departments of Commerce and Agriculture
- Under Secretaries and Assistant Secretaries of the three military departments rank below the Under Secretaries and Assistant Secretaries of the Executive Departments.
- Assistant Secretaries of Defense rank third among Assistant Secretaries of the Executive Departments.

Chiefs of Staff

The Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff takes precedence over all other officers of the Armed Services. The Chiefs of Staff of the Army and Air Force, the Chief of Naval Operations, and the Commandant of the Marine Corps rank themselves according to the date of their respective appointments and are followed by the Commandant of the U.S. Coast Guard.