
Military Time

What time is fifteen hundred? What time is six bells? The military 24-hour time clock prevents ambiguity about a.m. or p.m. times. For example, seven in the morning is “oh seven hundred,” but seven in the evening is “nineteen hundred.” Midnight is zero.

“Oh dark thirty” is slang for the crack of dawn or any other unpleasantly early time.

1:00 am	0100	1:00 pm	1300
2:00 am	0200	2:00 pm	1400
3:00 am	0300	3:00 pm	1500
4:00 am	0400	4:00 pm	1600
5:00 am	0500	5:00 pm	1700
6:00 am	0600	6:00 pm	1800
7:00 am	0700	7:00 pm	1900
8:00 am	0800	8:00 pm	2000
9:00 am	0900	9:00 pm	2100
10:00 am	1000	10:00 pm	2200
11:00 am	1100	11:00 pm	2300
12:00 pm	1200	12:00 am	00

Ship board tradition calls for ringing of bells to mark the hours and half-hours of each four-hour watch. There are seven watches throughout the 24-hour day: Mid, Morning, Forenoon, Afternoon, Dogs (divided into two two-hour watches), and First. Eight bells signal the end of one watch and the start of a new one—“Eight bells and all is well!” Six bells could be 3:00 am, 7:00 am, 11:00 am, 3:00 pm, 7:00 pm, or 11:00 pm. The First Watch begins not at daybreak or midnight, but at 2000 (8:00 pm).

1 bell:	0030, 0430, 0830, 1230, 1630, 2030
2 bells:	0100, 0500, 0900, 1300, 1700, 2100
3 bells:	0130, 0530, 0930, 1330, 1730, 2130
4 bells:	0200, 0600, 1000, 1400, 1800, 2200
5 bells:	0230, 0630, 1030, 1430, 1830, 2230
6 bells:	0300, 0700, 1100, 1500, 1900, 2300
7 bells:	0330, 0730, 1130, 1530, 1930, 2330
8 bells:	0400, 0800, 1200, 1600, 2000*, 00

* First Watch