

Personnel--General

Dining-In and Dining-Out Handbook

This UPDATE printing publishes a new USAREC pamphlet.

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Summary. This pamphlet is a guide for conducting dining-ins or dining-outs.

New Manning System.

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Applicability. This pamphlet is applicable to all elements of this command.

Suggested improvements. The proponent agency of this pamphlet is the Office of the Director of Training and Plans. Users are invited to send comments and suggested improvements on DA Form 2028 (Recommended Changes to Publications and Blank Forms) directly to HQ

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Impact on New Manning System. This pamphlet does not contain information that affects the

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provides an opportunity for members to meet socially at a formal military function to recognize individual and/or unit achievements or any events which are effective in building and maintaining unit esprit de corps. In addition to offering good food and beverages, it provides an atmosphere in which unit tradition, history, and accomplishments serve as a base for building and maintaining professional camaraderie. A dining-in may be held to honor one or more distinguished visitors or to say farewell to departing members and welcome new ones. A dining-in should be viewed as an opportunity to enjoy the companionship of one's fellow soldiers rather than as a mandatory function.

there is no single reference document in the Army which deals with the subject indepth.

b. This pamphlet is intended to act as a reference and guide for an opportunity to add to tradition and improve unit morale and esprit de corps through a formal dining-in or dining-out. This pamphlet should assist you in conducting an impressive program.

b. Some dining-ins now are exercises in conservatism, or how to have fun and not overindulge. Many still follow the old, lively pattern of dining-ins held by units during World War II. These usually include a period of fun and games after the formal program of awards and speeches. An addition to the tradition is the dining-out. This dinner may be held at a civilian restaurant or in post facilities and is no different in fun or frolic from a dining-in, it usually includes spouses or guests, meaning a lighter menu, flowers on the table, and dancing.

4. History

It is believed that the practice of a dining-in began many years ago in England. The origin was probably not a military function but instead a custom practiced in monasteries and early universities. With the advent of the officers' mess, the British military establishment adopted the custom. The close association and camaraderie between British and American military forces during World Wars I and II led to the United States Army's adoption of the dining-in as an integral part of the regimental mess.

2. Related publication

FM 22-5 (Drill and Ceremonies).

5. Planning and preparation

a. Careful, detailed planning is required to ensure that the occasion proceeds smoothly and is enjoyable. The details of the dining-in or dining-out vary according to its purpose, but those details must be thought through in advance. The purpose of a dining-in or dining-out will determine how it is conducted. The sequence of events for a dining-in or dining-out held in honor of a foreign dignitary would be substantially different from the sequence planned for a dining-in that involves the presentation of unit or individual awards.

3. General

a. Some units within the Army still conduct the traditional dining-in, but, like many social customs and traditions, it has generally slipped into disuse. Those units that do conduct the dining-in frequently follow their own procedures, since

b. Whatever the purpose, the presiding officer of the mess, usually the commander or his or her deputy, has a great deal of latitude concerning

1. Purpose

a. The dining-in is a traditional formal dinner for members of a military organization or unit. It

conduct of the proceedings. The key to successful execution of a dining-in or dining-out is organization. Experience indicates that a committee should be formed and tasked with organizing and executing the dining-in. If duties permit, the committee chairman should be the presiding officer or his or her deputy. The size of the committee will vary depending on the purpose of the affair, the extent of formality sought, and the number of individuals available to serve on the committee.

c. Start early, 2 to 3 months before the time set for the dinner. Preparation for the dining-in or dining-out should begin with selection of the date, location, and tentative speaker well in advance. The presiding officer must determine exactly when and where the dining-in will take place. A specific date and place must be determined before the committee can begin detailed planning. The best time to schedule the event is often a Friday or Saturday night. The location should be easily accessible to most guests, and should be held in a suitable place dictated by good taste.

d. The committee will detail the various arrangements and should allocate individuals for specific duties. An order of events or agenda should be prepared and published in a program. The program should contain at a minimum, the agenda, menu, and biography of the guest speaker; it may also include a listing of the toasts and their responses, award recipients, unit lineage, or other items of interest determined by the president of the mess. Formal invitations generally are in order, extended far enough in advance to elicit formal responses so that firm planning can proceed. The dinner menu may consist of from three to seven courses. Toasts are considered a mandatory part of the dining-in. Activities generally are divided into a predinner social period with cocktails, the formal dinner, and an informal period following the formal activities.

e. A planning checklist is provided at figure 1.

6. Duties

It is essential that the key participants in the program (i.e., the color guard, chaplain, presiding officer, vice president (Mr. Vice), and guest speaker) be knowledgeable of the role they will play and are aware of the exact sequence of events.

a. President of the mess. The presiding official is usually designated the president of the open mess and it is his or her responsibility to oversee the entire organization and operation of the dining-in or dining-out. His or her operational techniques will follow those of any formal dinner affair and will include appointment of a host and persons or committees to take care of the arrangements, food, and protocol. The president will:

- (1) Set the date and place for the event.
- (2) Appoint committee chairpersons.
- (3) Appoint Mr. Vice, who should be junior in rank and selected for his or her wit and ability to

speak.

(4) Arrange for a chaplain to give the invocation.

(5) Greet all guests before the dinner.

(6) Open the mess with one rap of the gavel and close the mess with two raps.

(7) Introduce the guest speaker and other honored guests.

(8) Call upon Mr. Vice for the performance of any duty deemed appropriate during the conduct of the affair.

(9) Secure an appropriate guest speaker, provide an outline of the event, and select some suggested topic areas.

b. Mr. Vice. Mr. Vice should be seated at the opposite end of the banquet hall, at a separate table, to permit the president of the mess to easily face him or her during the dinner. Mr. Vice will:

(1) Be the first to arrive at the mess.

(2) Open the lounge at the appointed time.

(3) If dinner chimes are to be used, sound them as appropriate.

(4) Provide poems or witticisms in good taste relating to particular personalities present.

(5) Prepare appropriate toasts as directed by the president.

(6) Test the meat course prior to it being served and announce to the members of the mess if it is fit for human consumption.

(7) Be the last person to leave the mess.

(8) Ensure that all colors and standards are in good order before the event.

(9) Monitor the smoking lamp.

(10) Act as procedural intermediary for the president, his or her function is to add a light touch to the proceedings, prompting a comradely exchange of banter and repartee.

(11) Act as formal procedural control and rigid maintenance of decorum, he or she may adjudge "fines" as appropriate to those members of the mess who violate stated procedures.

(12) Act as coordinator for, and spokesperson of, the junior members of the mess, and will request such help as is necessary from the president.

(13) Assist the president as necessary.

c. Arrangements officer will:

(1) Coordinate table and seating arrangements, place cards, and centerpieces.

(2) Coordinate placement of flags and trophies, or posting of the colors.

(3) Arrange public address system for the president and Mr. Vice.

(4) Provide and place equipment (gavel and board for president, chimes, note pad, and pencils for head table and Mr. Vice, and rostrum for guest speaker).

(5) Gather all awards for presentation.

(6) Arrange photographer.

(7) Publish a detailed agenda, program, and guest list.

(8) Provide biographical sketches of guests as required by protocol.

(9) Check out unit china, crystal, and silver.

d. Host officer will:

(1) Advise the guest several days prior to the event that you are his or her host officer.

(2) Brief the guest on customs of the mess, such as when to rise during toasts, proper dress, time, place, agenda, other guests, and composition of the audience. Brief on where to sit and physical arrangement of the mess.

(3) If a guest is from out of town, meet at airport and arrange transportation and accommodations during his or her stay.

(4) Ensure proper reception is arranged at the mess.

(5) Ensure the guest is introduced to the president, other guests, and as many of the members as possible.

(6) Ensure that the guest is always in the company of several members of the mess, yet take care that no individual or group of individuals monopolize his or her time or the conversation.

(7) Escort the guest to his or her car (quarters if he or she is from out of town), and bid him or her farewell on behalf of all members of the mess.

e. Protocol officer will:

(1) Send invitations signed by the president of the mess to all guests at least 2 weeks prior to the event.

(2) Assist the arrangements officer and host officer, especially in determining the seating arrangements for the head table.

(3) Brief the host officer on any specific protocol requirements relating to the guests.

(4) Furnish biographical sketches of guests to the president, Mr. Vice, and all others concerned.

(5) Prepare followup correspondence to the guest of honor for the president's signature after the dinner.

(6) Prepare invitations for the president's signature.

(7) Provide biographical sketches.

f. Mess officer will:

(1) Reserve dining room and lounge. Arrange a suitable menu.

(2) Coordinate timing of food service.

(3) Arrange for mess charges to be paid.

7. Guests

a. The guest list may include civilian as well as military dignitaries and arrangements are made for each as protocol and custom dictates. The list will be made in accordance with the wishes of the commander of the unit hosting the function. Should the list include dignitaries who are not a part of the installation at which the affair is being conducted, appropriate coordination should be made with the command headquarters of the hosting unit and with the installation protocol office.

b. The guest speaker should be an adult, military or civilian, who can be expected to address the mess in an interesting manner on an appropriate subject. The guest speaker should be contacted well in advance and advised of what can be expected.

c. A guide for attendees is at figure 2.

8. Invitations

Formal invitations should be used with the following general rules applying:

a. Invitations may be engraved, semien-graved, or handwritten and are always worded in the third person. They are printed or written with black ink and are never typewritten, with the exception of letter invitations.

b. The invitation may be engraved on plain white cards, or on the first page of plain or double sheets. Lettering is usually script, occasionally shaded antique roman is used.

c. Those extending invitations refer to themselves by their rank or title and full name (i.e., Lieutenant Colonel John Doe, Junior); when the name is extremely long, "Jr." is correct. Refer to "Second Lieutenant" and "First Lieutenant" as "Lieutenant." Guests or hosts are designated by their rank or title and last name only (Major Smith). The rank or title and full name are always used on the envelope.

d. With established exceptions, abbreviations and initials are to be avoided (exceptions are; Mr., Mrs., Dr., R.S.V.P.). In those cases where an initial is always used in place of a first or middle name, that initial may be used (as in Sergeant Major J. Peter Falstaff).

e. Always spell out the date and hour, but capitalize only the day and month (i.e., Wednesday, the fifth of July). Never use the year in an invitation. The time on invitations to military should not be in the 24-hour clock system. If a printed invitation is to be used for both military and civilians, both times may be shown (i.e., seventeen hundred hours or five o'clock) but is not preferred.

f. R.S.V.P. indicates that a reply is required.

g. The appropriate dress is shown in the lower right-hand corner.

h. The phrase "request the honor of your company" is considered more correct than "...pleasure of your company."

i. Invitations are dispatched 2 or 3 weeks in advance.

9. Decorations

Decorations of the dining hall will depend upon the imagination and skill of the committee members, and to a large extent can depend upon the theme, if there is one. As an absolute minimum, considerations should be given to the use of candelabras and center flower arrangements for each table with special attention devoted to the head table.

10. Sequence of events

a. The president gives the welcoming remarks, which set the tone for the formal part of the agenda. If there is to be an informal portion, such as some form of entertainment, there should be a distinct break between the two. This is usually done by having the mess adjourn to the lounge following the formal portion. The dining room is then cleared and prepared for the informal ceremonies.

b. While the sequence of events shown at figure 3 is only a sample of accepted procedures, it may be altered slightly. However, if the dining-

in or dining-out is to be a matter of tradition in the organization, careful consideration must be given to all aspects before it is initially started. Thereafter, few changes should be made or traditional benefits will be destroyed.

c. The formal portion of the dining-in or dining-out commences when the chimes are sounded. The presiding officer and the guest of honor will be the first to join the head table. Members and their guests move directly to their seats and stand behind their chairs. If chimes are unavailable, the presiding officer should move directly to his or her position in the dining area once notified that dinner preparations are complete. Wine should be poured just prior to attendees arriving at their table positions.

d. The presiding officer bangs the gavel once and directs, "Post the Colors." The bugle sounds attention, the drum rolls, and the colors are posted. These events may be omitted or modified depending on the availability of resources.

e. The presiding officer then asks the chaplain or another appropriate person to give the invocation. The invocation is optional and may be omitted or tailored so as not to prove offensive to individuals with special religious preferences.

f. Toasts are proposed.

g. The presiding officer invites attendees to "Please Be Seated."

h. The presiding officer makes appropriate introductory remarks.

i. The presiding officer introduces all guests at his or her table. The guests should rise when announced and then be seated. If there are guests at other than the head table, the ranking officer at each table, in protocol order, rises and introduces his or her guests. Guests should stand when introduced and then be seated.

j. Once all guests have been introduced, the junior officer, often referred to as "Mr. Vice," then rises and proposes a toast, "To Our Guests." All unit personnel rise and respond, "Hear Hear."

k. The presiding officer then invites attendees to "Please Be Seated For Dinner." All are seated. The president asks Mr. Vice to verify that the meal is edible, "Mr. Vice, taste the meat to ensure it is edible." Mr. Vice samples the meat and responds, "Mr. President, the meal is fit for human consumption."

l. Dinner is served.

m. There should be some distinctive break between dinner and the other formal proceedings. The break serves to highlight the other proceedings. There are many ways of doing this. Customarily, some designated person rises to introduce the evening events.

n. Individual or unit awards are presented.

o. The guest speaker is introduced and given appropriate time to address the mess. The guest speaker should be the final event on the agenda, the highlight of the evening's formal activities.

p. The presiding officer thanks the guest speaker and asks Mr. Vice to propose a toast to the speaker, then makes his or her concluding remarks.

q. The presiding officer then announces, "Retire the Colors" (if the colors were previously posted), and the colors are retired.

r. At this point the presiding officer bangs the gavel twice, chimes are sounded to indicate movement, and the mess is adjourned. The presiding officer might also adjourn the mess with a suggestion to have an after-dinner drink or to partake in some specially arranged or ongoing entertainment. Members should remain at the dining-in or dining-out until the guest of honor and the presiding officer have left. Mr. Vice will be the last member to leave the dining-in.

s. Sample agenda at figure 3.

11. Receiving line

a. The formal dining-in or dining-out may be embellished by use of a receiving line immediately before the informal or cocktail portion of the affair. Should this be the case, the rules of etiquette for the conduct of the receiving line are clearly defined.

b. Arrive some minutes prior to the time announced so that your headgear, and coat if appropriate, may be secured. At a dining-in or dining-out conducted by a large organization, attendees may be directed to proceed through the receiving line at staggered time intervals.

c. Receiving lines may be formed from right to left, or left to right; but the method preferred is from right to left. Usually it is formed in order of rank, with the guest or guests of honor immediately to the left of the presiding official. The presiding official is on the right of the receiving line, and the guest of honor is on his or her left. The adjutant is positioned to the right of the presiding official.

12. Cocktail period

a. During the cocktail period, conversation should be light and of short duration. When the signal is given for dinner, the members enter the dining room and stand behind their chairs. Drinks and cigarettes are to be left in the lounge.

b. Some organizations prepare a special punch at a ceremony with an elaborate mixture and tasting procedure in front of the assembled mess. The cocktail period is an ideal time to schedule this ceremony.

13. Seating arrangements

a. In early regimental mess tradition, the senior officer presided at and sat at the head of the table with the lieutenant colonel to his right and the adjutant to his left; the other officers were seated on both sides of the table according to rank. Dinner was a formal meal with everyone wearing the uniform prescribed. The officers of the mess assembled, and upon arrival of the presiding officer, followed him into the mess and took seats when he had taken his.

b. At a dining-in, the guest of honor sits to the right of the president at the head table, with the next ranking guest on the president's left. Other guests are seated throughout the mess. The

members of the mess are seated according to seniority, with Mr. Vice at the foot of the table.

c. At a dining-out, the guest of honor's spouse is seated to the right of the president, and the second ranking spouse to his or her left. The president's spouse is seated to the right of the guest of honor.

d. To prevent confusion and endless wandering about, a diagram of tables and seats showing the place of each attendee should be prepared for reference before entering the dining hall. Place cards may be set at each seat to aid in the smooth flow of seating the mess. Each officer should determine his or her position at a table as soon as possible after arrival so that he or she may move directly to his or her place upon entering the dining room.

e. About 15 minutes before dinner, the mess steward assembles the waiters inside the dining room and inspects them for cleanliness of dress and person, and issues final instructions. The mess steward notifies the president when dinner is ready. If the senior officer and guests appear to be ready, the president passes the word to the bugler to play "Mess Call." When "Mess Call" is sounded the mess steward opens the door to the dining room. The president takes the principal guests into the dining room and the remainder enter in any order. Each escorting officer accompanies his or her guest (who will be seated to his or her right). Upon arriving at their places, members will stand behind their chairs and follow the directions of the president.

14. Table arrangements

a. The formal dining-in and dining-out tradition requires use of a head table or speaker's table. The presiding officer, president of the mess, sits in the center with the most distinguished guest at his or her right. The next most distinguished person is on his or her left, and so on alternately across the head table until all are accounted for in order of relative rank or importance. The guest of honor and the president of the mess will be the first to join the head table.

b. The table arrangements should be set up in a manner most suitable to the dining area and will depend on the facilities available and the number of people attending the dinner. The head table is usually a long single table. Side tables may be placed down each end in a modified "E" with no seats off center. No one should be seated across from those at the head table. It is important that tables are not crowded, with everyone having plenty of elbow room.

15. Personnel support

a. The number of military personnel required to directly support the ceremony aspects of the dining-in or dining-out increases as the activities become more complex. However, sufficient ceremony may be obtained while holding military personnel support requirements to a minimum. One alternative, which makes use of bandmen, requires personnel in the following categories:

- (1) Noncommissioned officer in charge.
- (2) Bugler.
- (3) Drummer.
- (4) Flutist.
- (5) Color bearers.
- (6) Color guard.

b. The bugler may be used to sound "Mess Call." The drummer and flutist play, "To the Colors" as the colors are being presented, and are available later to provide appropriate music upon termination of dinner.

16. Uniform

a. "Black Tie" is the appropriate dress for a formal dining-in or dining-out and is normally the designation used on invitations. Civilians wear the tuxedo while military personnel wear the black bow tie with one of four appropriate uniforms; Army Blue, Army Blue Mess, Army White, or Army White Mess. The "Black Tie" designation also implies the wearing of miniature medals on the Army Blue Mess or Army White Mess uniforms and the wearing of ribbons, miniature or regular medals on the Army Blue or White uniforms. The term "Military Black Tie" may appear on invitations directed to a predominantly military group, but the same uniform implications apply. Foreign officers should wear a dress uniform of their choice.

b. The formality of the occasion should be maintained even for support personnel. Consequently, whenever possible, personnel supporting the dining-in or dining-out should wear the Army Blue uniform, with bow tie, or the Army Green with white shirt and black bow tie. With the exception of the noncommissioned officer in charge of the support personnel, the following may be worn with the green uniform as a duty uniform: Helmet liners, appropriate for ceremony; branch scarf; and stripped pistol belt.

17. Color guard

a. The color guard is composed of a minimum of three color bearers and two color guards. It is normally recommended by the unit's command sergeant major. All members of the color guard should be approximately the same height to present the most favorable impression. From the right of the color guard the organization is as follows; 1st Guard, Color of the United States, Flag of the United States Army, Organizational Colors, and 2d Guard.

b. The senior (color) sergeant carries the National Color and commands the color guard. He or she gives the necessary commands for the movements and for rendering honors.

18. Display of flags

a. At the dining-in or dining-out, all flags are initially displayed in a row, in a centered position to the rear of the receiving line. The "flag line" is arranged in order of precedence with the Flag of the United States at the right of the receiving line (the observer's left, regardless of the order or location of persons in the line).

b. For personal flags, only one general officer "star" flag, per grade is displayed, regardless of the number of general officers actually present in that grade. When more than one service is represented, "star" flags for each service are displayed with the "star" flag of the senior officer(s) preceding the other(s).

19. Posting and retiring the colors

a. Upon completion of the receiving line, the noncommissioned officer in charge will cause all flags, except those to be posted by the color guard, to be moved to the rear of the head table in the dining room. Colors to be posted by the color guard are (in order); United States Colors, United States Army Flag, Organizational Colors in descending order of precedence.

b. Upon command of the president of the mess, the noncommissioned officer in charge moves the color guard to the rear of the head table to secure the colors.

c. The noncommissioned officer in charge will follow the procedures outlined in FM 22-5, chapter 9, for posting and retiring the colors.

20. Welcoming remarks

After the invocation, the president of the mess seats the mess and proceeds with welcoming remarks which set the tone for the formal part of the ceremony. The president of the mess remains standing while speaking and upon conclusion directs that dinner be served.

21. Use of the gavel

The gavel, in possession of the president of the mess, will be used to signal members of the mess. Three resounding raps require the attention of all members whether standing or seated. Members will rise and stand in place at two raps of the gavel. "Take Seats" is signaled by one rap.

22. Point of order

During the dinner a member of the mess may wish to be recognized for some appropriate reason. In such a case, the member will stand and ask to be recognized by saying, "Mr. Vice, I have a point of order." Mr. Vice responds by calling the individual's rank and name, at which time the member in a polite and forthright manner cites his or her point of order. Mr. Vice may then solicit the recommendation or action of the president, or take appropriate action on his or her own.

23. Menu

a. Dining-ins or dining-outs are meant to be dignified and formal occasions. They should not be cold or portentous events. Emphasis is placed on the careful preparation of the most delicious food possible. The written menu should contain the name of the organization, the date, time, and location, and the food being served.

b. Custom dictates the serving of four or five courses, but as many as seven or as few as three are served. Sample menus are presented at figures 4 and 5.

24. Limericks

a. In certain messes, the tradition of chiding or poking good-natured fun at fellow members of the mess through limericks and ditties is practiced. This is a form of self-generated entertainment during the dinner hour and serves to enhance camaraderie and unit or section esprit while remembering the formality of the occasion. The procedure normally followed by a member who wishes to propose a limerick is to first receive permission by Mr. Vice, then present the limerick to the assembled mess. If the humor of the limerick or ditty is not readily apparent to all members and guests of the mess, a brief explanation should be offered so all present can share in the wit. The group or person referenced in the limerick is bound by honor to refute the remark prior to the close of the dinner hour, least all present believe the remark to be true.

b. An example of a limerick to a recruiting station that lost a sporting challenge to another station might be, "Your ability to shoot baskets is worse than someone in a casket."

c. Limericks or ditties can be posed by a member of the mess to another regardless of rank. Items of personal or unit sensitivity, those which might cause embarrassment, and, of course, those detrimental to the junior's career are never proposed. It is imperative all members of the mess remember the formality of the evening and the purpose behind limericks. Personal vendettas, attacks upon notable or sacred institutions, politics, and matters of the heart are never in good taste. Remember, a limerick should be witty to all, elicit a response from the "attacker," be in good fun and taste, and not cause the proposer or recipient undue embarrassment.

25. Toasts

The offering of ceremonial toasts following the invocation is a traditional Army custom at formal dinners. While unit traditions and the desires of the commander dictate the procedures used, general guidelines are as follows:

a. Toasts must be done in a correct manner. Serious thought and effort must be given to toasts. An incorrect toast will prove acutely embarrassing to the host as well as to the guest. All personnel should be informed of the order of toasts and the correct responses beforehand.

b. Toasts to the President of the United States, the United States Army, and the command or unit are the most common. When very important persons from another country are present, the commander or highest official of the host country proposes a standing toast to the head of the state of the guest's country. The highest ranking guest then responds with a toast to the head of state of the host's country. These toasts may be followed by toasts to the countries or services represented.

c. An important point to remember is a toast is only offered to an office or an institution never to an individual.

d. At any time after the scheduled toasts have been rendered, a member may ask to be recog-

nized for any appropriate reason. A typical reason may be that a toast has been forgotten. In such a case, the member will stand and ask to be recognized by saying, "Mr. Vice, I have a point of order." Mr. Vice will recognize the member by calling his or her rank and name. The member will, in a polite and forthright manner, advise the mess that the toast required by courtesy or protocol has not been proposed. Mr. Vice should then request the member who has the floor to propose the appropriate toast.

26. Gunners

Traditionally, the practice of using "gunners" is followed in some messes. A member of the mess at each table, usually the junior member, is designated the gunner. As such he or she will ensure the beverage containers on the dining table are kept full and that members' glasses are charged throughout the dinner hour. This procedure however, is not used during formal toasting.

27. The smoking lamp

To indicate when smoking is authorized, a single candelabra with new white candles or a clear glass kerosene lamp may be used. The lamp should be placed on a lone table visible to the entire mess. If Mr. Vice is seated at a separate table in view of all, the smoking lamp is positioned on his or her table. When the president of the mess announces that the smoking lamp is to be lighted, the candles or lamp will be so lit.

28. Entertainment

a. If entertainment is to be a part of the formal portion of the dinner, there should be a distinct break between the formal and informal portions. Following the formal portion, adjourn the mess to the lounge and allow the dining room to be cleared and prepared for the informal ceremonies. Each time the mess is adjourned and reassembled, members allow the persons at the head table to be seated and depart before them.

b. The formal portion of the dining-in or dining-out should be just that, strictly formal. However, there is wide latitude for the conduct of informal activities. Events or games which give evidence of irresponsibility and lack of self-discipline should be discouraged. It is not necessary to be destructive or to have fun at the expense of others for the affair to be a success. A wide-range of games and activities are available, being limited by common sense, good judgment, and imagination.

29. Speeches

The dining-in or dining-out is not for use as a testimonial dinner. However, the guest of honor is normally requested to deliver a few interesting remarks on a subject entertaining to all. The presentation is normally delivered as the last formal item of the mess, as it is the highlight of the evening.

30. Music

Background music is encouraged. Certain traditional military tunes and dinner music is espe-

cially appropriate. If the music is live, it can also serve as entertainment after the meal.

31. Departing the mess

During the evening each member attempts to pay his or her respects to the guest of honor. After the mess is adjourned, members should remain until the guest of honor and the president of the mess have departed. If there is to be an extensive delay in their leaving, the president of the mess may allow members to leave at his or her discretion. Mr. Vice should be the last member to leave.

Two to Three Months Out
<input type="checkbox"/> Determine location and type of ceremony <input type="checkbox"/> Draft agenda <input type="checkbox"/> Select and invite guest speakers <input type="checkbox"/> Coordinate with mess facility <input type="checkbox"/> Coordinate entertainment
One Month Out
<input type="checkbox"/> Determine menu <input type="checkbox"/> Determine receiving line requirements <input type="checkbox"/> Select color guard <input type="checkbox"/> Refine agenda <input type="checkbox"/> Invitations to members of the mess <input type="checkbox"/> Publish agenda, guest list, menu selection, and program <input type="checkbox"/> Obtain biographical sketch of guest speaker <input type="checkbox"/> Notify awardees and their families <input type="checkbox"/> Schedule photographer <input type="checkbox"/> Coordinate with RTNCO for training schedule and memorandum of instruction <input type="checkbox"/> Select Mr. Vice and individuals to present toasts <input type="checkbox"/> Gather tentative number of attendees
One Week Out
<input type="checkbox"/> Publish memorandum of instruction <input type="checkbox"/> Confirm number attending <input type="checkbox"/> Prepare seating charts <input type="checkbox"/> Prepare place cards <input type="checkbox"/> Rehearse color guard <input type="checkbox"/> Confirm guest speaker and very important person guests (escort and transport) <input type="checkbox"/> Obtain awards, gavel for president of the mess, chimes for Mr. Vice, smoking lamp, and appropriate flags and colors <input type="checkbox"/> Identify designated drivers and transportation requirements

Figure 1. Planning checklist

Violations of The Mess

- Untimely arrival at proceedings.
- Smoking at table prior to the lighting of the smoking lamp.
- Hagglng over date of rank.
- Inverted cummerbund, wearing clip-on bow tie.
- Loud and obtrusive remarks in a foreign language.
- Improper toasting procedure.
- Leaving the dining area without permission from the president.
- Carrying cocktails into dining area prior to conclusion of dinner.
- Foul language.
- Toasting with an uncharged glass.
- Rising to applaud particularly witty, sarcastic, or relevant toasts, unless following the example of the president.

Things to Remember

- Reply promptly to the invitation, within 3 days after receipt.
- As a member of the mess, you are a host and should act accordingly.
- Do not become intoxicated.
- Do not carry drinks or cigarettes into the dining room.
- In the receiving line, announce your name to the adjutant but do not shake hands. He or she will introduce you to the commander, you exchange handclaps and greetings; the commander will then introduce you to the person to the left and this procedure will be repeated through the receiving line. Move promptly to the next person. Engage in conversation with the members of the receiving line only if your progress is delayed.
- You should introduce yourself to the guest(s) of honor sometime during the evening. All members of the host organization are responsible for showing warm, gracious hospitality to each guest.
- No one may be seated until the official party has entered the dining area, no one may leave the dining area without the permission of the president.
- Do not lean or touch chair while awaiting notice to be seated.
- Do not rap on glass for attention or applause.
- Politics and religion are not discussed in the dining area. Do not discuss business matters or engage in loud or heated discussions.
- Do not discipline the waiters; refer the matter to Mr. Vice.
- Do not drink the toasting wine until all members' glasses have been charged and the first toast proposed. Pick up toasting glass and hold waist level until toast is completed.
- Toasts are to institutions, never to persons by proper name.
- Do not be caught with an uncharged glass.
- Anticipate and immediately react to the gavel and directions of the president.
- You may drink or eat only after the meal has been pronounced fit by Mr. Vice.
- Do not depart until all official guests have departed.

Figure 2. Guide for attendees

Agenda

- 1800 - Lounge opens for refreshments. Host officer in place to meet guests at the club.
- 1815 - Unit members and guests arrive.
- 1827 - Mess call, Mr. Vice rings dinner chimes and group assembles in dining room. All remain standing behind chairs.
- 1830 - The mess is formally opened by the president with one rap of the gavel. Wine is served for toasting.
- 1833 - Posting of the colors.
- 1838 - Invocation by chaplain.
- 1840 - Toasts.
- 1842 - President seats the mess. Welcoming remarks are made and guests at the head table are introduced. President polls audience for introduction of other guests.
- 1845 - Toast by Mr. Vice, "To our guests." Members stand, guests remain seated. Response is "Hear, Hear."
- 1847 - President invites members of the mess to be seated. President: "Mr. Vice, test the meat to ensure it is edible." Mr. Vice: (Samples the meal) "Ladies and Gentlemen, this meat is fit for human consumption." The salad and main course are served. Music may begin.
- 1915 - The president may call for a break (two raps of the gavel). The mess may be invited into the lounge to allow for removal of dishes and replenishing of drinking glasses.
- 1930 - Members return to the mess and remain standing. President will seat the mess (one rap of the gavel). Desert and coffee are served.
- 1940 - Individual achievements recognized and awards presented.
- 2000 - Introduction of the guest speaker by the president.
- 2003 - Address by guest speaker.
- 2033 - President thanks guest speaker.
- 2034 - President: "Mr. Vice."
Mr. Vice: "Yes, Mr. President."
President: "A toast to our distinguished speaker." (Members rise)
Mr. Vice: Appropriate toast ending with, "...to our distinguished speaker."
Response: "Hear, Hear."
- 2035 - Closing remarks by the president.
- 2040 - Retire the colors.
- 2045 - President adjourns the mess (two raps of the gavel).
- 2050 - Members and guests move back to the dining room on sound of chimes for entertainment and informal activities.
- 2055 - President announces entertainment and turns program over to the master of ceremonies.
- 2200 - Proceedings are closed when the unit flag is cased or when the president announces conclusion of the program. Members remain until the guest of honor has departed or when properly excused.

Figure 3. Sample dining-in or dining-out agenda

Menu
Tossed Salad/Italian Dressing
Filet Mignon with Mushroom Cap
Stuffed Potato
French Cut Green Beans
Rolls with Butter
Orange Sherbert
Rose Wine/Nonalcoholic Wine

Figure 4. Sample dining-in or dining-out menu

Menu
First Course: Shrimp cocktail, oysters, or clams.
Second Course: Soup, usually clear.
Third Course: Fish, hot or cold.
Fourth Course: Main course of meat or game, and vegetables.
Fifth Course: Salad.
Sixth Course: Desert.
Seventh Course: Fruit
Lesser numbered course dinners are derived by omitting items from the seven-course menu. As an example, the five-course dinner could omit the fish and fruit.

Figure 5. Sample seven-course menu