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FORMAL DINING-IN HANDBOOK



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CHAPTER I

BACKGROUND ON BRITISH ARMY REGIMENTAL MESS

General

Conduct of the British Officers' Mess over the years has had great influence on many of the procedures practiced today by US organizations in the Formal Dining-In. The British mess was a contrasting source of satire, upheaval and solemn formality; an instigator of duelling and horseplay; a reason for living standards above one's means; and development of long-lasting customs and traditions.

The Officers' Billet

Today's colorful British officers' dinners continue a custom which arose in the eighteenth century. In those days there were no barracks. Consequently, officers and men were billeted wherever lodging was available. A battalion would enter a town, hold a parade, and group the colors at the officers' billet. This billet became known as the officers' mess, and was the central meeting place for officers (11:8-9).

The custom of dining together was especially useful in large units in which many officers might not normally come in contact with one another. During dinners they were, however, brought together in a fraternal atmosphere. The mess, besides entertaining guests in the surroundings of traditions and customs of the regiment, served to make the officers aware of the luxuries of life. Young officers also received training which enabled them to give formal entertainment later as senior officers (11:9-10).

A Source of Satire

While the mess served a functional purpose, it was a constant source of satire. For example, Francis Grose, a one-time adjutant of militia, in his *ADVICE TO OFFICERS OF THE BRITISH ARMY* in 1782 said: "If you belong to a mess, eat with it as seldom as possible, to let folks see you want neither money nor credit. And when you do, in order to show that you are used to good living, find fault with every dish that is set on the table, damn the wine, and throw the plates at the mess-man's head...if you have pewter plates, spin them on the point of your fork, or do some other mischief, to punish the fellow for making you wait." (6:82-3)

Francis Grose used the phrase, "If you belong to a mess..." All regiments at that time did not maintain a mess as it was later to be recognized; such communal life as the officers enjoyed in 1782 was usually found in taverns. The mess proper was largely a nineteenth-century growth (6:84).

A Source of Upheaval

Not only was the mess a constant source of satire, but it was also a source of upheaval within the officers of a regiment and cause for common jealousy and bickering among individuals. Such an upheaval in the 85th Light Infantry occurred in the early 1800's, when because of quarrels, challenges, fights, and courts-martial, all of the regiment's officers were reassigned to other regiments; the new officers were known as "the elegant extracts" (6:165), which became the regiment's nickname. Several years later a similar redistribution of officers resulted in the 10th Royal Hussars after several officers accused their commander of incompetence (6:168). In 1824 the 10th Hussars was again subject to notoriety as a result of events in their mess when their Colonel, the Marquis of Londonderry, met a young officer, Cornet Battier, with pistols after the Marquis had ordered Battier out of the mess (6:168-9).

A Site for Solemn Formality

While the mess had its lighter moments, it also was the site for solemn formality, the breach of which might draw serious rebuke, challenge and courts-martial. In 1840 all of England followed a story dealing with a 'black bottle' incident which took place in the regimental mess of the 11th Light Dragoons (later Hussars). The regiment had been visited by the Inspector-General of Cavalry, who later, with other foreign guests, dined in the mess. This was a champagne occasion, but one of the guests requested Moselle, and a Captain John Reynolds sent for a bottle which was allowed to stand undecanted on the table. To the commanding officer, the sight of that black bottle-containing, as he imagined, ale--was odious and unpardonable. The next day Captain Reynolds was advised that "the mess should be conducted like a gentlemen's table and not like a tavern or pothouse." (6:172) Further rebuke followed and Reynolds was asked to leave the regiment. But, for the officers of the regiment, the day of humiliation came when the Adjutant-General conveyed to them a reprimand by the Commander-in-Chief. The message was delivered at an 'officers only' parade in the mess, but was soon printed in THE TIMES for the whole country to view (6:172-3). The thrust of the reprimand was that "...the rules and regulations of the service require strictly from all (officers) that they should conduct themselves as ought gentlemen in every situation..." (6:173).

Duelling Perpetuated

Duelling, a form of arbitration favored by the world of chivalry, was a part of the gentlemanly code of the time and was to a degree perpetuated by the mess. If a wrong had been perpetrated, it was not important if the officer

wished to forgive and forget; what mattered was whether the regiment was willing to let him do so. The mess had its own code and there were many instances of officers who would never have issued, or answered, a challenge to duel if they had not been goaded into it by fellow officers. While a strong commanding officer could do much to keep down duelling in his regiment, he could not possibly be aware of every quarrel that flared up (6:176-8).

High Living Standards

While each mess received a special allowance, members of the mess were often accused of attempting to live at a standard far beyond their means and frequent attempts were made to reduce the extravagance. The Commander-in-Chief in India in 1849, as an example, vowed to abolish champagne from his table, serving only sherry and claret, while pledging to visit no mess serving expensive wines. He stated that "...we soldiers...burst ourselves in trying to live like men of 20,000 a year in landed property! We, who in private life could hardly buy a pint of beer, must drink the most costly wines...", (6:205). However, the cost of the mess was only one of the many expenses borne by the individual British officer; his uniform, equipment, box at the opera, private chambers, hunters, coats and candles all required an allowance of anything up to 1,000 pounds a year above his pay. In 1857 the Commander-in-Chief passed a law limiting the cost of a mess dinner. Although it was welcomed in some messes, it was ignored in others--in fact, immediately thereafter, one regimental mess offered a menu of thirty-two dishes. Although the cost of smoking was not a serious item in an officer's budget, in 1845 the Duke of Wellington issued a blast against tobacco and asked that all commanding officers of regiments prevent smoking in the mess rooms and adjoining apartments--expense was not the factor here, but the fumes of tobacco and the habit forming characteristics of tobacco were the offenders (6:211-2).

Practical Joking and Horseplay

As duelling was repressed in the eighteen-fifties, a period of practical joking by officers of the Army drew as much attention as had duelling. Practical joking was an inevitable part of the regimental mess system. It was essential that officers be a closely knit group; the misfit had no place in a mess. Hence, it was recommended that should you get an officer of no spirit in the mess "...you must not only bore him constantly at the mess, but should make use of a kind of practical wit to torment him.", (6:213). Such practical jokes might take the form of forcing open his doors, breaking his windows, damaging his furniture, placing items and things in his bed, or loosening his tent cords in windy weather. The officer was simply ragged into conformity or

driven out. It was believed that fierce ragging forged officers into iron. The annals of Sandhurst verify this concept for the following actions were common: blanket tossing; shoveling--placing the victim on a table and striking him with shovels; ventilating--victim tied to a ventilator and stuck with forks; kidnapping the victim after dark, stripping him naked and leaving him on the parade ground--it was believed that a youth who could walk naked into a guardroom was unlikely to be embarrassed by any social mishap in later life (6:215).

Although officers' messes were usually the scene of nightly rioting and dissipation, on special occasions they were quiet to the point of stagnation. At dinner, junior grade officers were discouraged from talking and many topics of conversation were forbidden--no lady's name might be mentioned; religion and politics were taboo; talking 'shop' was in bad taste. However, all regiments set aside certain nights for licensed horseplay to release tension (we see a continuation of this spirit in many a Dining-In conducted by US units today). Accepted sports were: cockfighting--two officers were tied together and had to overthrow each other; high cockalorum--one set of players leaps astride the arched backs of another set, trying to overthrow them; wrestling; wall-scaling; roof-climbing. It was a point of honor by many senior officers to join the horseplay, thereby preventing unpleasant incidents while setting an example of good fellowship (6:239-40). Mess nights were the scene of such practical wit as drinking a glass of water while standing on one's head or repeating phrases and imitating actions in correct sequence with the draining of a glass of liquor at each error. These acts were peaceful when compared to actions by the Czar's officers in St. Petersburg--there it was common practice to shut two officers with pistols in a dark room; each officer cried 'Coo Coo' in turn, and the other fired in the direction of the sound (6:241-2).

A Source of Custom and Tradition

Throughout the years, armies of older countries accumulated fascinating customs and traditions in their dining procedures. Several British regiments do not stand and drink when the king is toasted, for they are "above suspicion;" they have so distinguished themselves that they have been excused by the king from the symbolic proof of loyalty represented by drinking to his health. Another example deals with the Royal Navy which toasts the king without standing; the story is that the Prince of Wales struck his head on a low beam of a warship when the toast was proposed. "When I'm king, there'll be no such foolishness.", he announced (2:137). Upon succeeding his father, the Royal Navy held him to the promise (2:137).

One of the very interesting British traditions is a result of the exploits of the 14th Hussars (then the 14th Light Dragoons). This regiment served through the whole six years of the Peninsular War. After defeating the French at Vittoria, the organization captured Joseph Bonaparte's personal coach. The coach contained a now celebrated trophy-- a silver receptacle (the Emperor's chamberpot), which is maintained in the Officers' Mess, and which on certain anniversaries is filled with champagne and passed around the dinner table (1:93-4).

Summary

While the categories of behavior outlined in this chapter on the British Officers' Mess have been characteristic from time-to-time over the years, this is not to infer that each is currently present in British Army messes. As an example, horseplay to the extent outlined, is a dying phenomenon. "The irresponsibility and lack of maturity and self control manifested by such behavior is strongly discouraged by most commanding officers both on economic and social grounds (12)."

CHAPTER II

BACKGROUND ON U.S. ARMY REGIMENTAL MESS

General

The Officers' Manual, written by Colonel James A. Moss and published in 1929, gives evidence of the U.S. Regimental Mess System of the period. Colonel Moss points out that the mess in the United States Army had not been a generally established institution as it was in the European armies. Consequently, our mess customs were not uniform. It was noted that in most European regimental messes, especially in those of the English and German, there was considerable formality especially at dinner where formal attire was worn. If distinguished guests were present, toasts were made to the sovereign and others, and many customs observed (3:108).

Purpose of Regimental Mess

Colonel Moss advised that the main purpose of a regimental mess was to promote cordiality, comradeship and Esprit de Corps. Although a regimental mess was principally social, the meals, especially dinner, were semi-official. In the tradition of the European armies, to give a post or regimental mess the proper atmosphere, it was recommended that it be the repository of trophies and souvenirs collected during the service of the regiment or the life of the post (3:108). An outstanding example of this procedure would be the 8th Horse, later the 7th Dragoon Guards, of the British Army. This regiment displays a fine pair of French kettledrums in its Officers' Mess. These items were captured by the regiment in the Battle of Dettingen in 1743 (1:35).

Mess Protocol

In the regimental mess of the era of Colonel Moss (1920's), the colonel, or senior officer, presided 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. In addition, the following formalities prevailed (3:108-9).

- a. The "formal" part of the meal ended, and smoking was in order when the presiding officer received his cup of coffee.

b. Before the informal part of the dinner, no officer could leave the table without making his excuses to the presiding officer. At important dinners, no officer was allowed to leave prior to the departure of the presiding officer.

c. The chaplain, by a mere inclination of the presiding officer's head, was directed to say grace before dinner.

d. Guests were always introduced to the presiding officer before the meal.

Stimulus to Dress and Life as a Gentleman

The importance of the mess as related to the image of the officers' corps was evidenced by the recommendation that all newly commissioned officers should carefully make arrangements for messing to enable them to "live with the quiet dignity becoming their station" (3:9). It was pointed out that an officer's pay was given him for that purpose; it was sufficient for expenses, and he owed it to the service to "dress and live, though simply, yet always like a gentleman" (3:9).

The military tradition, that an officer is expected to be a gentleman, has come under careful scrutiny from time-to-time. In the early armies, leadership was a monopoly of the nobility or "gentleman." However, with the bestowing of rank on the basis of merit, officers are still expected to "act like gentlemen" (2:145). While this may draw criticism today, the fact remains that such performance is an obligation rather than a noble concept, for Article 133 of the Uniform Code of Military Justice outlines the acts or omissions constituting conduct unbecoming an officer and gentleman (8:28, 70-71).

Tradition

"The veteran soldier does not need to be 'sold' on the importance of tradition and customs. But, he occasionally reexamines them and does away with ones that no longer serve any purpose or that interfere with military efficiency. But before we condemn a custom, we owe our predecessors the courtesy of realizing that the custom once made sense. We must be sure our refusal to accept a custom is not based on poor judgment or ignorance" (2:137).

In Military Customs and Traditions, the author, Major Mark M. Boatner, III, provides a statement made by Colonel Clifford Walton, British Army: "Every trifle, every tag or ribbon that tradition may have associated with the former glories of a regiment should be retained, so long as its retention does not interfere with efficiency" (2:104). This, needless to say, has not been a concept followed by the United States Army. Major Boatner further explained that he was

unable to provide several pages of interesting US regimental traditions, that they were not available from official Army historical sources, and nothing was to be served by digging them out of old military history books. The real test of tradition lies with the organization--nothing can be called tradition if it is not well known and practiced by the organization today (2:105). The author then provided information on what he termed "representative" traditions of some American organizations, e.g., the "Old Guard," but this was of thin veneer.

While speaking one day to a prominent general, Colonel Moss asked what advice he would give a young ambitious officer just beginning his career. The general replied, "One of the first things I should tell him would be, 'Familiarize yourself with the conventionalities and amenities of life--know the proper thing to do and do it at the proper time.' Men, as a rule, do not realize the importance of this in our present scheme of civilization" (3:6). The problem today is that the US Army has gradually terminated many of the conventionalities previously thought as important. The trend is toward a completely informal, free atmosphere. While informality certainly has its place, Army tradition and custom should not suffer because of it.

CHAPTER III
STANDARDS FOR DINING-IN

General

The Dining-In should be compared to a military reception, as far as its purpose and function is concerned. Therefore, when invited, you should consider your attendance as obligatory and your absence should occur only for those reasons for which you would be excused from any military formation.

President of the Mess

The Presiding Official is usually designated the President of the Open Mess and it is his responsibility to oversee the entire organization and operation of the Dining-In. His 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: appoint Mr. Vice, who should be junior in rank; open the mess with one rap of the gavel and close the mess with two raps; call upon Mr. Vice for the performance of any duty deemed appropriate during the conduct of the affair.

Mr. Vice

Mr. Vice opens the lounge at the appointed time. If dinner chimes are to be used, he sounds them as appropriate. He may be called upon to provide poems or witticisms in good taste relating to particular personalities present. He 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 during the dinner.

Mr. Vice also is responsible for testing the meat course prior to it being served and announce, to the members of the mess, if it is fit for human consumption.

Appropriate Dress

"Black Tie" is the appropriate dress for a Formal Dining-In, and is 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 (10:34).

Sequence of Events

While the sequence of events shown at Figure 2 is a combination of Army and US Air Force Dining-In accepted procedures (7:43), it may be altered slightly. However, if the Dining-In is to be a matter of tradition in the organization, careful consideration must be given to all aspects before it is initially started. Thereafter, as little change as possible should be made or traditional benefits will be destroyed.

Receiving Line

The Formal Dining-In 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 (9:16).

Arrive some minutes prior to the time announced so that your headgear, and coat if appropriate, may be secured. At a Dining-In conducted by a large organization, you may be directed to proceed through the receiving line at staggered time intervals; for smaller organizations, you may proceed immediately through the receiving line upon arrival (9:17).

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 left. The adjutant is positioned to the right of the Presiding Official (9:17). As you proceed through the line and come abreast of the adjutant, announce your name to him, but do not shake hands with him. Never assume that the adjutant will automatically remember your name, even though you may have had a long-lasting friendship with him. The adjutant will in turn introduce you to the commander, whereby you exchange handclasps and greetings; the commander will then introduce you to the person on his left and the procedure will be repeated through the receiving line. Should your name become lost in the process, repeat it to the person being greeted. Always face the person being greeted and move promptly to the next person. Engage in conversation with the members of the receiving line only should your progress be delayed (9:8).

Cocktail Period

During the cocktail portion of the Dining-In, conversation should be light and of short duration. Attempt to talk with as many of your comrades and other guests as possible, remembering that the cocktail period is for lighthearted conversation and entertainment (9:18). You may smoke during this period, but do not take a lighted cigarette or cigar to the dining room (9:13); nor take a cocktail to the dining room.

In lieu of cocktails, you may desire to serve a special punch or alcoholic beverage. Some organizations take advantage of this period by incorporating additional ceremony into the Dining-In, through elaborate mixture and tasting of the beverage in the presence of the entire assemblage. The point to be remembered is that the beverage should be of sufficient alcoholic strength to allow moderate consumption while maintaining the solemnity of the occasion through the formal dinner.

Seating Diagram

To prevent confusion and endless wandering about, a diagram of tables and seats showing the place of each guest should be prepared for reference before entering the dining hall (3:137).

Seating Arrangement

At the Formal Dining-In, tradition requires use of a head table or speaker's table. The Presiding Official, President of the Mess, sits in the center, with the most distinguished guest at his right. The next most distinguished person is on his left, and so on alternately across the head table until all are accounted for in order of relative rank or importance (5:222)(see Figures 3-6). It is customary for all guests to sit at one table (11:18).

Strict protocol dictates governmental, ecclesiastical, and diplomatic precedence. (Official protocol precedence is outlined in Chapter 5, DA Pamphlet, Army Protocol and Social Usage.) A younger official takes precedence over an older one when the younger occupies a higher echelon. Military officers and noncommissioned officers are positioned by grade and rank. The guest of honor might not be seated in the ranking position unless his rank justifies it, or unless the highest ranking guest concedes his position. When guests with no official rank are present, their places are determined by age, prominence, linguistic ability when foreign persons are present, and by congeniality. Non-ranking guests may be placed between those of official rank in the most congenial way for all concerned (10:32-3).

Table Arrangement

The table arrangement will depend upon imagination, the facilities available, and the number of persons attending the Dining-In. Several basic concepts are shown at Figures 3-6. The numerical sequence shown at each table indicates the procedure used to seat by rank or order of precedence.

Personnel Support

The number of military personnel required to directly support the ceremony aspects of the Dining-In 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 bandsmen, requires personnel in the following categories:

- Noncommissioned Officer in Charge
- Bugler
- Drummer
- Flutist
- Color Bearers
- Color Guard

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.

Uniform

The formality of the occasion should be maintained even for support personnel. Consequently, whenever possible, personnel supporting the Dining-In should wear the Army Blue uniform, with bow tie, or the Army Green with white shirt and black bow. 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

Composition and Organization of Color Guard

The Color Guard is composed of a minimum of three (3) color bearers, and two (2) 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, its organization is as follows: 1st Guard, Colors of the United States, Flag of the United States Army, Organizational Colors, and 2d Guard.

Posting the Colors

At the Dining-In, all flags are initially displayed 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). For information on the order of precedence of flags, see Display of Flags herein.

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) (1) United States Colors (2) United States Army Flag (3) Organizational Colors in descending order of precedence.

The Noncommissioned Officer in Charge places the Color Guard in a column formation, the colors at the carry (slings), the guards at Right Shoulder Arms; and upon command of the President of the Mess to "Post the Colors," and with the roll of the drum and sound of the flute, the file advances at half step to the rear of the head table. "Mark Time" is given, "Halt" commanded, and the Color Guard is then faced toward the flag stands; "Present Arms" is given and the color bearers are commanded to "Post the Colors." Guards are given "Right Shoulder Arms" and faced toward the left; all personnel are then marched to the nearest exit. (NOTE: If limited overhead space, the colors and weapons should be carried at Port Arms.)

Retiring the Colors

Upon command of the President of the Mess, the Noncommissioned Officer in Charge moves the Color Guard (reverse order) to the rear of the head table to secure the colors. The file is halted and given "Present Arms"; the Color Guard secures the colors, is given "Right Shoulder (Port) Arms" and marched at a half step to the nearest exit with the 1st Color Guard and then the Colors of the United States leading. The colors are then cased. (NOTE: All commands by the Noncommissioned Officer in Charge should be at a low tone and directly to the members of the Color Guard.)

Display of Flags

At a Dining-In it is customary to display appropriate national colors and distinguishing flags in the "flag line" arranged in a centered position behind the receiving line or the head table (7:26).

Colors and flags are normally displayed in a row, arranged in order of precedence, with the Colors of the United States at the right of the line (observer's left). When

colors and flags are grouped and displayed from a radial stand, the Colors of the United States will be in the center and at the highest point of the group. The Colors of the United States will always be displayed when foreign national flags, state flags, the United States Army flag and/or other organizational colors are displayed or carried (7:26-7).

Order of precedence: (7:26-7):

1. The Colors of the United States.
2. Foreign national colors (displayed in English alphabetical order).
3. Flag of the President of the United States.
4. State flags (displayed in order of admittance of the state to the Union). See Appendix B, DA Pamphlet, Army Protocol and Social Usage).
5. Military organizational colors in order of precedence or echelon. When more than one service color is represented order of service creation is used, i.e., Army, Marine Corps, Navy, Air Force.
6. Personal flags in order of rank.

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) (7:26-7). Flag officers of the Army Medical Services have maroon "star" vice the standard Army red; in this case display of both personal flags in order of seniority would be appropriate, as with different service flags.

Welcoming Remarks

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

Use of The Gavel

The gavel, in possession of the President of the Mess, will be used to signal members of the mess. Three (3) resounding raps require the attention of all members whether standing or seated. Members will rise and stand in place at two (2) raps of the gavel. Seats is signaled by one (1) rap.

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 Point of Order. Mr. Vice may then solicit the recommendation or action of the President, or take appropriate action on his own.

Menu

"Dining-In is meant to be a dignified, formal occasion, but it should not be a cold and formidable affair. 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 and time and location; and the food being served" (7:44).

Custom dictates the serving of four or five courses, but as many as seven or as few as three are occasionally served. The very formal seven-course menu may consist of the following (7:-4):

1. "First Course: Shrimp cocktail, oysters, or clams.
2. Second Course: Soup, usually clear.
3. Third Course: Fish, hot or cold.
4. Fourth Course: Main Course of meat, or game, and vegetables.
5. Fifth Course: Salad.
6. Sixth Course: Dessert.
7. Seventh Course: Fruit."

Lesser numbered course dinners are derived by omitting items from the seven-course menu (7:44). As an example, the five-course dinner could omit the fish and fruit.

Limericks

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 comradery and unit/section esprit while remembering the formality of the occasion. The procedure normally

followed is for the member who wishes to propose a limerick to first secure permission from Mr. Vice and then present his limerick. If the humor in limerick or ditty is not readily apparent to all members and guests of the mess, a brief explanation, but not to divulge the humor, should be offered so all present can share in the wit. A group or a person upon receiving a 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.

An example of a limerick to a person on orders to Ranger School and slightly overweight might be: "Rangers have to dart, So why have you made eating an Art?"

Or another possibility for an information officer or non-commissioned officer who has been unable to have his unit's news published in the local paper...

"It has been told
By a man of old
That your efforts at news
Have been void
In the Post Tabloid."

Limericks/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 women are never in good taste. Remember, a limerick should be witty to all, elicit a response from the "attacked", be in good fun and taste, and not cause the proposer or recipient undue embarrassment.

Ceremonial Toasts

In 1649, Oliver Cromwell took over the government of England on the execution of Charles I. The royal successor, James I, was in exile on the Continent. Thus, it came to pass that certain subterfuge developed in the military among those officers who remained loyal to the crown. Water goblets formerly remained on the table during the toasts, and the officers who were loyal to the uncrowned king always passed their wine over the water in the goblet. In this manner, they were secretly and silently saluting the royal exile, who was "over the water." When the clandestine homage was exposed, the least of the consequences was the removal of the water goblet prior to passing port, a custom which remains with us today.

During the meal, all foods, wines, and dishes are served with the exception of the port. The port is made available

by the waiters who do not again touch the decanters until they are empty. Thus the toast, from the first moment, is a completely spontaneous gesture.

While no longer spontaneous, the offering of ceremonial toasts is a traditional Army custom at a Formal Dining-In. While unit traditions and the desires of the commander dictate the procedures used, general guidelines are offered as follows:

- a. A junior officer or noncommissioned officer is frequently called upon to present at least one toast.
- b. The order and subject of each toast is decided upon in advance and the Presiding Officer and guests are advised of actions expected of them.
- c. Toasts are usually offered at the end of the meal, but may be given before sitting down for the meal. When preliminary toasts are offered, they are made with the wine appropriate for the first course.

Toasts to the President of the United States, the United States Army, the division, regiment, and unit are the most frequent. When officers or noncommissioned officers from other countries are present, near the end of the meal, the commander, or highest official of his country present, proposes a standing toast to the head of 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. All present drink to a ruler or country, but no one drinks to himself or in this case to his own service. It cannot be stressed enough that toasts must be previously planned to preclude error. When more than one country is represented, the host proposes a collective toast to the heads of their several states, naming them in the order of the seniority of the representatives present. To this collective toast the highest ranking foreign officer present will respond on behalf of all guests by proposing a toast to the health of the host's head of state. Toasts are an important and often ambassadorial part of the Formal Dining-In, and great care should be taken to assure that they are properly conducted (10:12-3). It is reported that at a dinner during World War II, Russia's Marshal Zhukov had failed to mention France in a toast praising allied armies. Consequently, France's General de Lattre refused to eat or drink until Marshal Zhukov had proposed a special toast to France (10:13).

While it is our custom to give standing toasts, this does not hold true with all nations and services. As it has been already noted, officers of the Royal Navy have the privilege of remaining seated when toasting the crown at mess. This is further evidence that the procedure to be followed when toasting requires most careful study.

Official titles and forms of address for distinguished Americans and foreigners are outlined in Chapter 6, DA Pamphlet, Army Protocol and Social Usage. An important point to remember is a toast is only offered to an office or an institution never to an individual. Additionally do not embarrass yourself by toasting with an uncharged glass.

Gunners

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

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 candelabra or 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 table. When the President of the Mess announces that the smoking lamp is to be lighted, the candles or lamp will be so lit.

Entertainment

Speeches: The Dining-In 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. This presentation is normally delivered as the last formal item of the mess, as it is the highlight of the evening.

Music: Background music is encouraged. Regimental airs or certain traditional military tunes and dinner music is especially appropriate. If the music is live, it can also serve as entertainment after the meal.

If entertainment is to be a part of the informal portion of the Dining-In, 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.

The formal portion of the Dining-In 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.

Departing the Mess

During the evening each member attempts to pay his 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 discretion. Mr. Vice should be the last member to leave.

CHAPTER IV

ETIQUETTE

Guests

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.

Invitations

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

- a. Invitations may be engraved, semi-engraved, 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 traditionally used by some units.
- b. The invitation may be engraved on plain white cards, or on the first page of plain or double sheets; lettering is usually Script, but occasionally shaded antique Roman is used.
- c. Those extending or acknowledging invitations refer to themselves by their rank or title and full name (Lieutenant Colonel John Doe, Junior); when the name is extremely long, "Jr." is correct. Refer to "Second" 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." (or 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 (Sergeant Major J. Peter Falstaff).
- e. Always spell out the date and hour, but capitalize only the day and month (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; e.g., 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 two or three weeks in advance.

Decorations

Decoration of the dining hall will depend upon the imagination and skill of the committee assigned this responsibility, and to a large extent can depend upon the theme, if there is one, of the Dining-In. As an absolute minimum, consideration should be given to the use of candelabras and center flower arrangements for each table with special attention devoted to the head table.

The Formal Dinner

As the name might imply, the most complex dinner--the formal dinner--is conducted. During the cocktail or informal period, each participant examines the seating chart to determine the location of his place at the table. When the serving of dinner is sounded or announced, the Presiding Official and guests only proceed to the dining room after all other members of the Mess are standing behind their seats. Each place may be marked by individual place cards, and will be so marked at the head table; seats will not be taken until permission to do so has been announced.

Place Setting

Once seated, engage in conversation with those individuals nearby. Each person will find before him a place setting similar to the one shown at Figure 7. "Folded on top of the plate is the dinner napkin. On the left of your plate you may find, in order of use, from left to right, a fish fork, meat fork, and salad fork. On the right side of the plate you may find, again in order of use, from right to left, an oyster fork, soup spoon, fish knife, meat knife, and salad knife. Located to the upper right of the setting will be the glasses. They are identified as follows, from left to right, water goblet, wine glasses (if served), and possibly a champagne glass. Directly in front of the plate you will find either a menu card or name card. Remember, this is but one type of formal table setting, and you may often find fewer pieces before you, depending on the number

of courses and the wines to be served. It is customary for the servants to remove each set of knives and forks, used or unused, and each glass as the course for which they were set is finished. A service plate will be part of the table setting, but it is not intended for use. You will note that the table setting for a formal dinner shows no butter plate. Should you be served bread, lay it on the table near the upper left edge of your plate. A finger bowl is usually served prior to the last course on the plate intended for that course. Often a lace doily is found under the finger bowl. Remove the finger bowl and doily and place the bowl upon the doily to the upper left of your plate. Remove the fork and spoon from the plate and place them to the left and right of your plate, respectively. Finger bowls will normally be served after any course, such as lobster, which requires the use of the hands." (9:22-3)

No more than three forks (not counting the oyster fork) and three knives are placed on the table when it is set. Butter knives and plates are never used (4:174-5).

The type of wine glass depends upon the menu, but their arrangement will be according to size so that small ones are not hidden behind large ones. The water goblet is placed directly above the knives or to the right of the plate; at a slight distance to the right is the champagne glass; in front of and between these two is the red-wine glass or white-wine glass; then further to the right is the sherry glass. Instead of grouping the glasses on the table, some place them in a straight row slanting downward from the goblet at upper left to the glass for sherry at lower right (4:173).

The waiter will always serve the dishes from your left and the beverages from the right. After the table is completely cleared, dessert will be served. At the conclusion of the dinner, coffee and liqueurs may be served.

Wines

Because wines have an important place in Dining-Ins, the following comments are offered (4:178-80):

- a. Sherry is usually the first wine offered at dinner, and then only with a soup containing sherry in the preparation.
- b. A dry white wine is served with fish or with an entree.
- c. Red wine is normally served with red meats, duck, and game.
- d. Champagne, above all other beverages, is for the formal dinner affair. When other wines are served, champagne is served with the meat course. When it is the only wine, it is served as soon as the first course has begun.

To maintain the formal atmosphere, the shape of the wine glass should also be carefully considered. Generally, champagne is served in a wide-brimmed glass such as that shown in Figure 8(A). However, some connoisseurs prefer the glass shown at Figure 8(B); it is believed that this shape of glass tends to prolong the life of the bubbles which contribute so much to the enjoyment of the wine. Other types of wine glasses are shown at Figure 9. Pick them up by the stem rather than the bowl; this helps to keep chilled wines cool, and enables one to appreciate their color (4:181).

Tips on Table Manners

Mastery of correct manners at the table is each person's responsibility. While some fundamentals are outlined below, they are not all inclusive; if in doubt on a certain point, check with a reliable etiquette source.

Selection of Silver

Remember that silver is arranged to allow use of utensils farthest from the plate first and the next item in order with each succeeding course.

When to Start Eating

If your Dining-In is small, do not start eating until the Presiding Officer has started. For a large Dining-In, it is appropriate for you to commence eating when those around you have been served.

Use of the Knife

Do not place the knife on the table once you have used it. When you have finished with the knife, never place the handle on the table with the blade resting on the plate, simply place it on the upper right rim of the plate, with the blade edge turned inward toward the center of the plate. Use your knife for cutting salad only when iceberg lettuce has been served. (All other salads are cut with the fork only.)

Use of the Spoon

When used to eat soup, dip the spoon away from you and then place the side of the spoon to your lips. When finished with the soup course, place the spoon in the soup plate with the bowl up, handle resting on the right rim of the plate; do not place the soup spoon on the under plate unless a light soup or consomme has been served in a cup or bowl, at which time the spoon bowl is placed on the right side of the under plate. When you have used a spoon with coffee or tea, place the spoon, bowl up, on the right side of the saucer.

Use of the Finger Bowl

Dip only the fingertips, one hand at a time, into the finger bowl.

Chicken and Other Fowl

At a Formal Dining-In, no part of the bird is picked up with your fingers. Hold the meat on your plate with the fork, and strip off the meat with your knife. Frog legs are eaten in the same fashion.

Olive Pits, Seeds, and Fishbones

Remove pits, seeds or bones from the mouth with the thumb and forefinger, and place them to one side of your dinner plate.

Long-Stemmed Glasses

Long-stemmed water glasses or wine glasses are held with the thumb and first two fingers of your right hand at the base of the bowl or on the stem. Do not hold the bowl of the glass.

Fresh Fruits

Halve, quarter, and stone the fruit with the knife and fork, but with the exception of peaches do not skin it. The fruit is then eaten with a fork. Fresh grapes and cherries are eaten whole; pits are removed with the fingers and inconspicuously placed on the side of the plate. Grapefruits and oranges are served in halves; they are never squeezed, but are eaten with a fruit spoon or teaspoon. Hands containing traces of fruit juice are never wiped on a napkin without first using the finger bowl.

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

Figure

- 1 Basic Duties Checklist, Dining-In Committee
- 2 Sample Agenda without informal entertainment
- 3 Seating at Head Table
- 4 Alternative Table and Seating Arrangement
- 5 Alternative Table and Seating Arrangement
- 6 Alternative Table and Seating Arrangement
- 7 Place Setting
- 8 Champagne Glasses
- 9 Wine Glasses
- 10 Violations of the Mess
- 11 Things to Remember

Figure 1

Basic Duties Checklist, Dining-In Committee

Arrangements

1. Table and seating arrangement; place cards (lettering should be readable from the standing position; only grade and last name should be used, e.g., MAJOR JONES.); menu cards.
2. Appropriate flags and colors.
3. Public address system (convenient microphones as required for President and Mr. Vice).
4. Gavel and board at President's table.
5. Rostrum w/light.
6. Dinner chimes at Mr. Vice's seat.
7. PIO coverage.
8. Publish detailed agenda and guest list.
9. Biographical sketches of guests, as appropriate.
10. Candelabra or kerosene lamp at Mr. Vice's table.

Mess Arrangements

1. Reserve dining facility; arrange menu with wine(s); coordinate serving of food courses.
2. Lounge facilities and adequate service.
3. Collection of funds; payment of charges.

Protocol

1. Invitations to members dispatched 30 days prior to event.
2. Invitation to guest speaker dispatched 60 days prior to event.
3. Assist in establishing seating arrangement.
4. Brief as required on protocol matters; establish protocol guidelines.

FIGURE 2

SAMPLE

DINING-IN AGENDA

WITHOUT INFORMAL ENTERTAINMENT

<u>TIME</u>	<u>EVENT/PERSON RESPONSIBLE</u>	<u>DETAILS</u>
1830	Arrival of Mess Members	Assemble in International Room, Cocktails, hors d'oeuvres, and meet Guest of Honor.
1915	Mess Call	Move to designated seat, without cocktails or cigarettes. Remain standing.
1919*	Entrance of Official Party	President, Commandant and Guest of Honor move to head table.
1920	President	"Post the Colors."
1925	President	"Gentlemen, the Grace."
1926	Chaplain	Delivers the Grace.
1927	President	"Gentlemen, the Mess is now open." One rap of gavel (seats) -- Welcoming remarks to members.
1931	President	"Mr. Vice, propose a toast to the Commander-in Chief." (Two raps of gavel--rise)
	Mr. Vice	"Gentlemen, I propose a toast to the Commander-in Chief, the President of the United States."
	Response by All	"To the President."
1932	Mr. Vice	"Mr. President, I recommend a toast to the Chief of Staff, United States Army."
	President	Three raps of the gavel (President's concurrence with the recommendation and requests the attention of members) [rise].

*All times following are approximate.

1933	Mr. Vice	"Gentlemen, I propose a toast to the Chief of Staff, United States Army."
	Response by All	"To the Chief of Staff."
	President	One rap of the gavel (seats). Dinner is served. During dinner, members of the Mess may stand, address Mr. Vice and subsequently propose a Timerrick to another member(s) of the Mess. Gunners will insure members wine glasses remain charged.
	President	"Mr. Vice, test the meat to insure it is edible."
	Mr. Vice	Tastes the meat. "Mr. President, the meat is fit for human consumption." The main course is served.
	President	"Mr. Vice, light the smoking lamp."
	Mr. Vice	"The smoking lamp is lit."
2020	President	End of dinner--three raps of the gavel (attention). "Gentlemen, the Mess is adjourned. Please join me in the lounge." (Members stand until departure of Official Party.) (Tables are cleared.)
2040	Mr. Vice	Closes the lounge. Members return to dining area and remain standing behind chairs.
2044	Official Party Reenters	One rap of gavel (seats).
2045	President	Introduces Commandant
	Commandant	Appropriate remarks.
2050	President	"Mr. Vice, direct the wine to be served."
	Mr. Vice	Directs stewards to bring forth the wine. "Members of the Mess will pass the wine and

charge their glasses while observing the tradition of not allowing the decanter to touch the table until all glasses are charged."

"Mr. Vice, a toast to the Commandant." Two raps of the gavel (rise).

"Gentlemen, a toast to the Commandant, United States Army Sergeants Major Academy."

"Hear, Hear."

"Mr. Vice, I would like to propose a toast to the Academy."

"Mr. President, is a toast to the Academy in order?"

Three raps of the gavel (Concurrence and attention of members). [Rise].

"Propose your toast."

"Gentlemen, I offer a toast to the United States Army Sergeants Major Academy."

"To ULTIMA."

One rap of the gavel (seats). Introduction of the Guest of Honor.

Addresses the Mess.

Thanks Guest of Honor and directs Mr. Vice to insure all have a charged glass to toast with.

"Pass the wine."

"Mr. Vice, a toast to our distinguished Guest of Honor." Two raps of the gavel (rise).

"To our Distinguished Guest of Honor."

President

Mr. Vice

Response by all

Designated person

Mr. Vice

President

Mr. Vice

Designated person

Response by all

President

Guest of Honor

President

Mr. Vice

President

Mr. Vice

2100

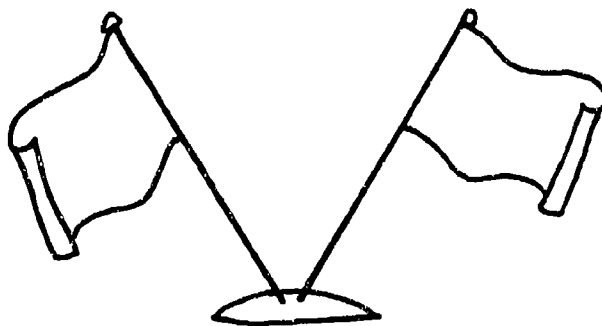
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Response by All	"Hear, Hear."
President	"Mr. Vice, direct the champagne to be served." One rap of the gavel (seats).
Mr. Vice	Directs the champagne to be served. Members pass the beverage as before.
President	"Mr. Vice, extinguish the smoking lamp."
Mr. Vice	"The smoking lamp is out."
President	"Mr. Vice, have one of the members of the mess propose the traditional toast." Two raps of the gavel (rise).
Mr. Vice	" <u>(designated person)</u> , propose the traditional toast."
(Designated Member)	"Gentlemen, I propose a toast to the United States of America and the Army."
Response by all	"Long live the United States and success to the Army."
President	One rap of the gavel (seats). Closing remarks.
President	"Retire the Colors." Two raps of the gavel (rise).
President	After the retirement of the colors, "The Mess is closed." Two raps of the gavel (rise). President, Commandant, and Guest of Honor depart to the lounge.
Mr. Vice	"The Mess is closed and the lounge is open." Members depart for the lounge and leave the club at will upon departure from the club by the official party.

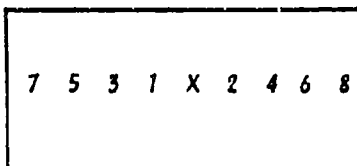
NOTE: Gavel usage - 1 rap signifies: Take seats.
 2 raps " : Rise and stand in front of chair.
 3 raps " : The members are to give their attention, whether standing or seated to the event or speaker. Also indicates concurrence with a toast proposed from the floor. (Toasts are always made standing).

2145
 2150

Fig. 3 -- Seating
at Head
Table



COLORS



X PRESIDING OFFICIAL

1 GUEST OF HONOR

2 SECOND RANKING GUEST

3 R I
4 A M
5 N K P
6 O R
7 T A
8 O F N C E

Fig. 4 -- Alternative
Table and
Seating
Arrangement

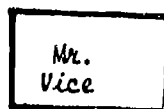
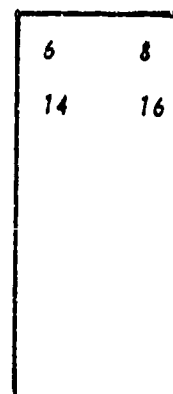
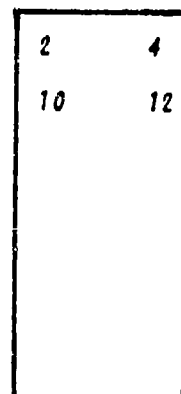
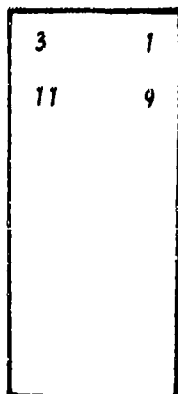
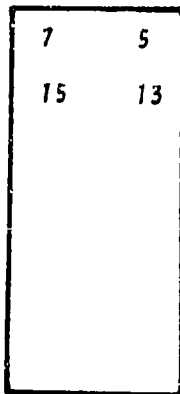
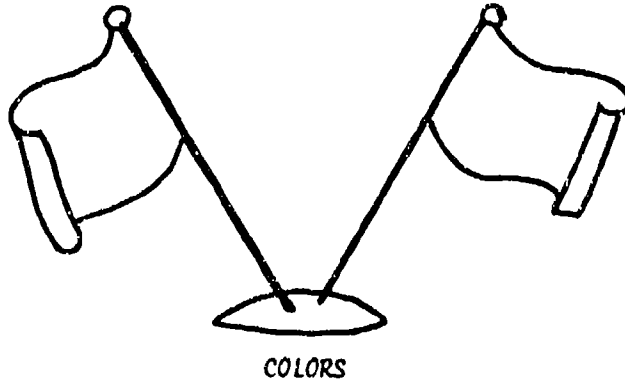


Fig. 5 --

-- Alternative
Table and
Seating Arrangement

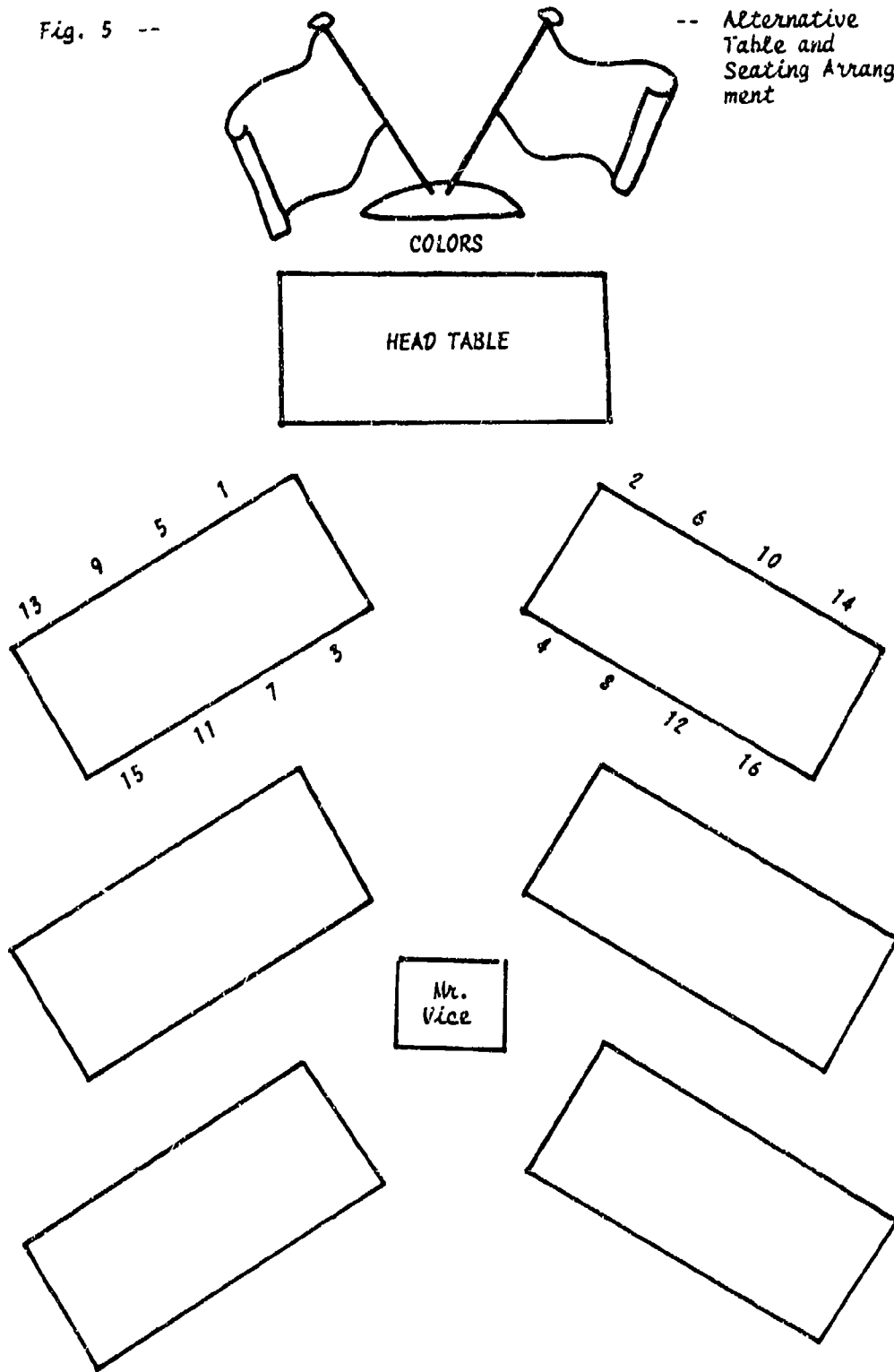


Fig. 6 -- Alternative Table and Seating Arrangement

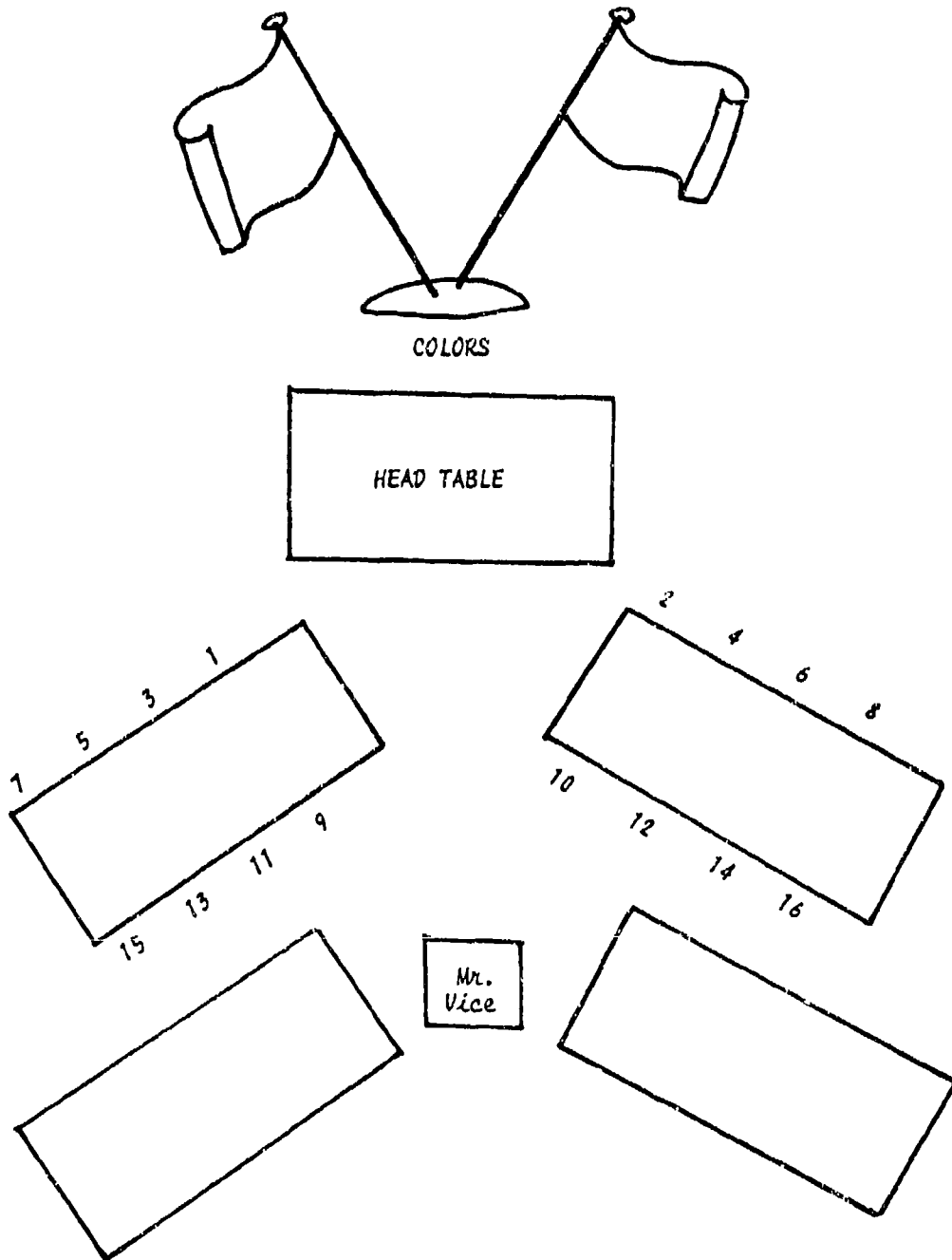
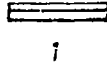


Fig. 7 -- Place Setting



1. The menu card
2. Fish Fork
3. Meat Fork
4. Salad Fork
5. Plate
6. Napkin and place card
7. Salad Knife
8. Meat Knife
9. Fish Knife
10. Soup Spoon
11. Oyster Fork
12. Champagne Glass
13. White Wine
14. Sherry
15. Red Wine
16. Water Glass
17. A white damask tablecloth is used

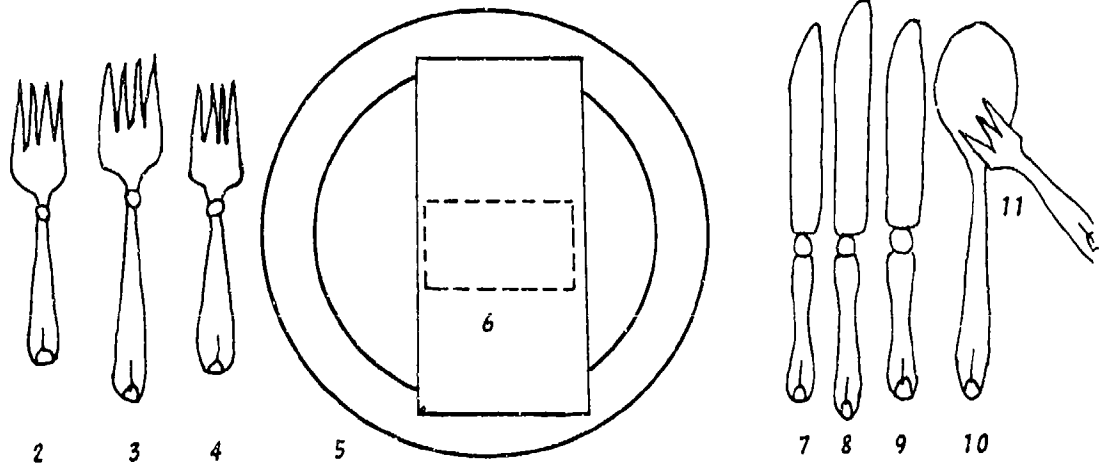
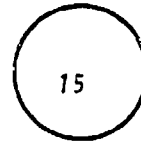
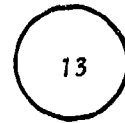
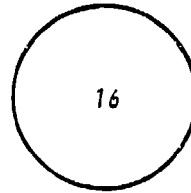
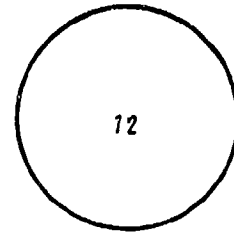
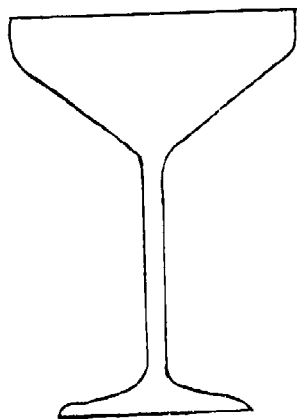
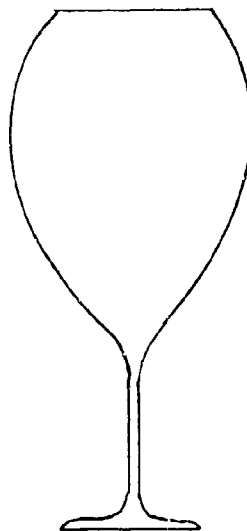


Fig. 8 -- Champagne Glasses

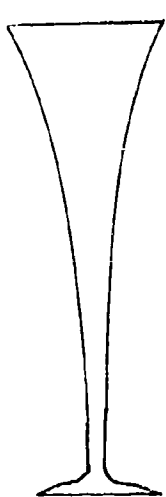


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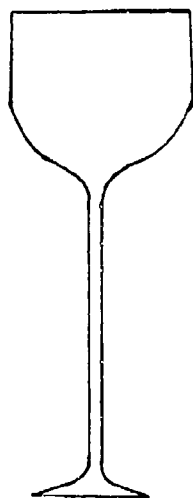


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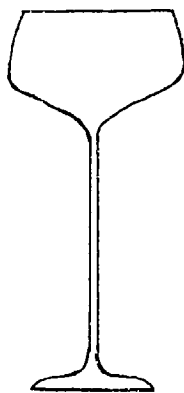
Fig. 9 -- Wine Glasses



Flute



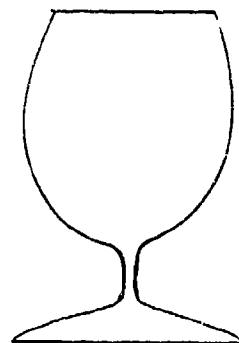
German



Alsace



Bordeaux



Burgundy

Sherry

White wine

Red Wine

Figure 10

VIOLATIONS OF THE MESS

1. Untimely arrival at proceedings.
2. Smoking at table prior to the lighting of the smoking lamp.
3. Haggling over date of rank.
4. Inverted cummerbund.
5. Loud and obtrusive remarks in a foreign language.
6. Improper toasting procedure.
7. Leaving the dining area without permission from the President.
8. Carrying cocktails into the dining area prior to conclusion of dinner.
9. Foul language.
10. Toasting with an uncharged glass.
11. Wearing clip-on bow tie at an obvious list.
12. Rising to applaud particularly witty, succinct, sarcastic, or relevant toasts, unless following the example of the President

Figure 11

THINGS TO REMEMBER

1. As a member of the mess, you are a host and should act accordingly.
2. Do not become intoxicated before the dinner; that is reserved for later.
3. Do not carry drinks or cigarettes into the dining room. Do not delay moving into the dining room.
4. No one may take his place at the table after the official party has entered the dining area, without going up to the President of the mess and requesting permission to be seated. No one may leave the dining area without the permission of the President.
5. Do not rap on glass for attention or applause.
6. Women, politics, and religion are not discussed in the dining area.
7. Do not discipline the stewards; refer the matter to Mr. Vice.
8. At the end of a course that calls for wine, the steward will properly remove your glass. Do not stop him, even though your glass may be full. Do not turn your glass upside down to indicate you do not wish wine.
9. Do not drink the toasting wine until all members' glasses have been charged and the first toast proposed. Do not smoke until the smoking lamp has been lighted.
10. Toasts are to institutions, never to persons by proper name.
11. Do not be caught with an uncharged glass.
12. Do not "bottoms-up" your glass on each toast; only on the final traditional toast. Do not stand or drink a toast to your own service--excluding the traditional toast.
13. Do not depart until all the official guests have departed.

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