

CHAPTER 7

CME MESS AND SOCIAL FUNCTIONS

0701. Engineers have certain obligations regarding mess and social activities and may be called upon to organize and attend a great variety of functions during their careers. Entertaining should be a pleasure but, for those who do not have much prior experience, it can be a daunting task. There are many books, videos and Internet sites with more detailed information on etiquette for those who wish further material on the topic. Above all, you should try to set an example so others can learn from you.

0702. A full social life will often include many different types of mess and social functions including; brunches, luncheons, coffees, promotion parties, farewells, cocktail parties, receptions, open houses, buffets, formal and informal dinners, mixed dining-ins and mess dinners.

0703. This chapter provides some relevant engineer specific guidance on mess and social functions. In addition, this chapter includes some general guidelines on conduct and etiquette at mess and social functions and well as some guidance on the planning of certain CME events.

Personal Conduct and Etiquette

0704. Members may bring either credit or discredit to themselves and their unit by their conduct on or off duty, at the mess or at social functions. A wise military member learns the traditions and courtesies of military life early on. We attend a variety of social functions, from the very casual to the very formal. Protocol is designed to let us know what to expect in a given situation. For most of us, protocol is a combination of military traditions, etiquette and common sense. Knowing some guidelines will help you feel more comfortable in any given situation. Annex D is intended for information, not formal guidance, on conduct and etiquette, however, good manners are the rules in the "*game of life*" and they make people feel at ease with you, with themselves, and with the situation.

0705. Social etiquette and protocol are based on common courtesy, sincerity and consideration for others. They are combination of common sense, good manners and the nicest way to be gracious. If you are truly sincere and keep an open mind and a pleasant attitude you will be successful in most social situations. A simple rule to follow is to be yourself. Social etiquette and protocol may sound like something only a debutante would need to know but, in the military, there are various occasions for which certain social standards and procedures should be followed.

Social Obligations

0706. Entertaining is part of military life. Social gatherings in the military are used to celebrate high points, boost morale, foster team spirit, or simply to get to know others in the same situation in which you have found yourself. It is one of the nicest traditions of our military life. Over the years, each military family develops a style of entertaining that is comfortable for them. Your command team will be happy for the chance to get to know you better in any setting!

Mess Customs and Rules

0707. A mess is considered to be an extension of the home of living-in personnel, a club for all mess members, and a part of all military members' social life in the unit. There is no civilian equivalent to a military mess and mess customs are often foreign to new members. Every mess is unique and members must respect the particular customs of each mess and enjoy the individual atmosphere of every establishment.

0708. Members of the CME normally share a mess with other branches and units, thus, there are no unique CME mess customs. When posted to a new location, members should take the

opportunity to read the mess constitution and by-laws to become acquainted with any particular customs. It is every member's responsibility to become familiar with, and observe, the rules and customs of each mess. Minor infractions of mess rules and etiquette may cause embarrassment to the member, while serious infractions may result in the member being barred from the mess.

Mess Functions

0709. Sharing a mess with other corps and branches provides an excellent opportunity to interact with and promote a team environment within the broader military community. Engineers should take advantage of these opportunities to ensure that they are visible, engaged and appreciated for their part of the overall defence effort. These opportunities include but are not limited to coffee breaks, happy hour functions (TGIF/TGIT) and special entertainment events organized by the mess committee.

Funding a Function

0710. One of the challenges when planning any function is how to make it 'affordable'. Most functions must be self-supporting and the cost of non-paying guests must be a consideration of planning. Members who are being honoured at a function are traditionally non-paying guests and the cost of these meals is generally absorbed in the price charged to paying guests or is paid by unit funds. Also, official guests such as civilian dignitaries or senior members of a foreign service may sometimes be entertained on behalf of the unit, formation or the Department. Official entertainment funds to cover the costs of these guests must be requested from higher headquarters prior to planning an event. When organizing any social function, a complete and auditable record of all income and expenses is essential. A planning checklist is at Annex A to this chapter.

The CME Mess Dinner

0711. The CME Mess Dinner is an important function steeped in tradition. The amount of tradition that is followed varies from unit to unit but the traditional formality of the dinner fosters a refined comradery that may be lacking at other functions and also affords an opportunity for superiors and juniors to meet on a formal but friendly occasion. The traditions and ceremonies observed during the dinner have evolved over time but the basic rules of conduct observed are those of polite society. The customs and traditions observed by the CME are outlined below.

0712. The mess dinner should be considered as a special or ceremonial occasion, carried on from the days when officers dined formally every evening. A commanding officer or the Senior Serving Engineer, for example, may sponsor a mess dinner to honour members who are retiring or to celebrate the CME Birthday. Mess dinners may also be scheduled concurrently with exercises in the field, working groups or conferences, or to extend CME hospitality to visitors or dignitaries.

0713. **Organization.** The mess dinner sponsor appoints an OPI who is responsible for overall coordination and all administrative arrangements. This includes the seating plan, musical program, menu and wine selection, after dinner activities and financial statements. For those engineers who are assigned to organize a Mess Dinner, the format is at Annex B to this Chapter.

0714. **Attendance.** Compulsory attendance is a custom of the service and part of the commitment of a CME member. Remember that Army Regiments and Air Force units also have unique customs and traditions for mess dinners that may be very different from the CME.



Figure 7-1 Mess Dinner

0715. A mess dinner is normally announced in routine orders, by memorandum and by personal invitation. Normally all engineers in the area (serving and retired), are invited. As directed by the sponsor, invitations may also be extended to CME personnel serving outside the region, civilians employed within the CME Family, and members of local CME associations. Spouses and personal guests are never invited to mess dinners. Invitations are normally only issued to guests of honour and should be written in bilingual format. As with all social functions, invitations should be issued at the earliest possible time. See Annex D for more information on formal invitations.

0716. **Dress.** The dress to be worn at the dinner is described in Chapter 6 and is Mess Dress for serving personnel. Permission for former Reserve Force and retired members to wear uniform should be obtained (in accordance with QR&O 17.06) prior to the invitations being issued. For civilians, dress is usually black tie.

0717. **Grace.** Members and guests remain standing behind their chairs on being called into dinner while waiting for Grace. The Padre or another person may say Grace. Being asked to say Grace should not be a surprise and a junior member requested to do so should confirm the appropriateness of their intended Grace with the PMC before the dinner. For a CME dinner either the Engineer Prayer or a simple grace, such as *“For what we are about to receive, thank God.”* is appropriate.

0718. **Speeches.** Normally no speeches are made at CME mess dinners, however, at mess dinners sponsored by other branches the guest of honour may be invited to speak. At a CME Mess Dinner, it is possible and acceptable to make presentations or have a guest make a few remarks before the dinner. This ensures that the ‘Toast to the CME’ is given appropriate honour during the dinner. When addressing the assembly, one always addresses the PMC, followed by the most senior members present (by name), followed by: *“members, ladies, and gentlemen.”*

0719. **The Loyal Toast.** The Loyal Toast is always the first toast. At mess dinners of units in which the Sovereign holds an honorary appointment, the address to the VPMC may include that appointment. At a CME mess dinner the toast may be, “*The Queen, our Colonel in Chief.*” or “*La Reine notre Colonel en Chef.*” When a representative of a country that is a member of the Commonwealth of Nations is present, the loyal toast shall be made to “*The Queen, Head of the Commonwealth.*” or “*La Reine, Chef du Commonwealth.*” Diners should then stand at attention, with their glasses on the table, while the first six bars of *God Save the Queen* are played. Then, raising their glasses, they say “*The Queen*” or “*La Reine,*” and immediately drink to her health. No other words are said after the Loyal Toast (i.e. it is inappropriate to say “*God Bless Her*” or words to that effect).



Figure 7-2 Port

0720. **Toast to the CME.** At a CME mess dinner, the PMC then invites the Colonel Commandant or, in their absence, the senior CME member present to make a toast to the CME. The person making the toast rises and may briefly address the diners after which all present are invited to rise and join in the toast. If a band is present, all guests rise for the opening bars of *Wings* during which time the glasses will remain on the table. At the conclusion of the short piece of music all diners raise their glasses, exclaim “*Chimo!*” and drink to the CME.

0721. **Toast to Fallen Comrades.** It has become customary in most messes to toast fallen comrades and many messes set a separate table place setting in honour of the fallen. For the CME this toast may take the form of a simple toast “*To Fallen Comrades*” or a brief but more meaningful toast delivered by the PMC or one of the members present. Alternatively, and perhaps more suited for training mess dinners, an explanatory description of the place setting may be presented as described at Annex C.

0722. **Marches.** After the toasts, the authorized Regimental Marches of the diners’ regiments or branches are played. The order of playing regimental marches is laid out in *The Honours, Flags and Heritage Structure of the Canadian Forces (A-AD-200-000/AG-000)*. When all members are Engineers, *Wings* is played in its entirety during the toast to the CME instead of only the opening bars and no other marches are played. All CME members will stand when *Wings* is played.

ANNEX A FUNCTION PLANNING CHECKLIST

The preparation for a mess dinner or similar event should begin at least two months in advance of the function, although the facilities may need to be arranged even farther in advance. The points in the following list have been placed in chronological order so that the list may be used as a checklist for event planning. Typical timelines are included (in parentheses). Items should be selected as appropriate to the function:

- a. Determine the official title of function, date and time (D-60);
- b. Designate a junior member as Vice President of the Mess Committee (D-60);
- c. Book facilities, band, disc jockey, piper, bar staff, serving staff and caterer, as required (D-60);
- d. Start your detailed budget and arrange billing of paying guests (D-50);
- e. Determine the guest list and whether a guest is an "invited guest" (non-paying) or an "invited to attend guest" (paying) (D-50);
- f. Review authority for Reserve Force and retired members to wear uniform (QR&O 17.06) (D-50);
- g. Apply for official function status (D-45);
- h. Apply for hospitality funds for foreign guests or guests from industry (D-45);
- i. Send out invitations and advertisements and specify dress, time, location and cost as appropriate (D-45);
- j. Arrange after dinner program (D-21);
- k. Select a menu, wines and liqueurs (D-21);
- l. Order gifts and engraving and determine who will pass plaques and gifts to the presenter (D-14);
- m. Arrange for hosts (ADCs) to look after dignitaries, regarding arrival in town, briefing, transport, drinks, etc. (D-14);
- n. Arrange for a photographer, podium and microphone for presentations (D-14);
- o. Confirm RSVP replies and special meal requirements (D-14);
- p. Arrange for the padre or a designated member to say grace (D-7);
- q. Arrange coat-check, parking and a shuttle bus service as required (D-7);
- r. Review the program, toasts and regimental marches (check for proper order of marches, and ensure that the appropriate marches for all guests will be played) (D- 7);
- s. Print menus, seating plan cards and program cards (D-7);
- t. Prepare cue cards for the host and PMC (include program, order of regimental marches, background for each official guest) (D-7);
- u. Prepare thank-you letters (D-7);
- v. Finalize the seating plan, place cards, and table decorations (D-1);
- w. Send thank you letter (D+1); and

- x. Finalize all accounts (NLT D+7).

ANNEX B PMC FORMAT CME MESS DINNER

The following format is intended to assist the appointed PMC in the conduct of his duties as PMC during a mess dinner:

- a. Arrival of the guests and the guest of honour;
- b. Pre-dinner presentations or speeches;
- c. 15 minute dinner call (Piper);
- d. 5 minute dinner call (Piper);
- e. Escort the senior guest and the head table to their seats, the remaining guests follow as quickly as possible, the VPMC is last to enter dining room. No drinks are permitted in the dining area;
- f. Mess manager reports all present to PMC;
- g. Strike the Gavel 3 times, remain standing and say, "Mr Vice, Grace please." (or another member if they have been asked to say grace);
- h. VPMC (or designated member) may say the Engineer Prayer or a short simple Grace;
- i. Strike the Gavel 3 times, remain standing and introduce the head table;
- j. Invite everyone to begin. Service will continue coordinated by the mess manager. Dessert and coffee will normally be served immediately following the main course. In the past liqueurs have been offered as well as a cheese plate but cost may prohibit these items today. On completion of the meal the tables will be cleared;
- k. Stand, strike the Gavel 3 times and announce a break while the tables are being cleared. The head table will depart first and return in the same manner as before dinner;
- l. Port decanters are placed in front of PMC and at other locations around the table. The PMC will fill their glass and pass decanter to their left to start the general passing of the port, the mess manager informs the PMC when all glasses have been charged;
- m. Stand strike the Gavel 3 times and in either French or English say, "Mr Vice, The Queen!" The VPMC stands and in the opposite language used by the PMC says, "Ladies and Gentlemen, "The Queen!" or, "La Reine du Canada!";
- n. Stand strike the Gavel 3 times and request the senior engineer present to propose the toast to the Branch. Following the toast, the opening bars of Wings played and then all Engineers respond with 'Chimo!';
- o. Stand strike the Gavel 3 times and request the a designated member to propose a toast to the fallen comrades;
- p. The Band plays Regimental and Corps marches in order of seniority (this must be determined prior to the dinner);
- q. Stand strike the Gavel 3 times and request everyone show their appreciation for the band;
- r. Mess Manager asks the Pipe Major, Band Master and Chief Cook to join the guest

- of honour and sponsor for a drink;
- s. Wine stewards, servers and kitchen staff are brought into the dining room by the mess manager. Stand strike the Gavel 3 times and request the everyone show their appreciation for the staff; and
 - t. Stand strike the Gavel 3 times and announce the adjournment of the dinner. Request that guests remain standing until the departure of the head table.

ANNEX C THE TOAST TO FALLEN COMRADES

The 'Toast to Fallen Comrades' as well as the explanation is as follows.

Ladies and Gentlemen:

You have no doubt noticed the empty chair at the end of the head table. It has been placed there to symbolize those who are very precious to our eyes – our fallen comrades. It is there so that we will recall their efforts, bringing to mind the fact that certain members of our profession have fallen in battle. They cannot be with us, but we would like to underline their ultimate sacrifice.

The chair, with only one setting, is simple – it represents the fragility of our comrades in the face of oppression.

The tablecloth is white – it symbolizes the purity of their intentions when they responded to their nation's call to arms. The rose represents the families and loved ones who continue to keep the faith by recalling their sacrifices.

The red ribbon around the vase signifies determination, determination to give body and soul for a just cause. The slice of lemon is there to remind us of the bitterness of battle.

The salt is an element symbolizing the tears of the families left in mourning. The glass is upside down; they cannot feast with us.

The chair is empty, they are absent.

Remember them!!! Those among you who served with them, or who live freely because of them, remember them. Their country counted on them and they gave their lives to save it. Do not abandon them, pray for them and continue to cherish them. We will remember them.

[Piper to play lament]

Ladies and Gentlemen, our fallen comrades.

ANNEX D

SOME SOCIAL ETIQUETTE GUIDELINES

Mess Guidelines

Remember that the mess is the home of all members and behave accordingly. Verbal and physical altercations are not appropriate in the mess and should be avoided at all times. Disruptive members will be asked to leave and may be denied mess privileges.

Strive to interact cordially with all members. Although some may feel more at ease with certain members, mingling is encouraged at all mess functions. Visitors should be given preferential treatment and all members should strive to make them feel welcome. Assume the duty of host readily, as the mess is judged by the way that its guests are received.

Superiors should always be shown the proper respect when they are in the mess but junior members should not be afraid to converse with superiors. When talking with senior members, speak naturally and with respect, but avoid excessive familiarity.

The consumption of alcoholic beverages is common in most messes. All members should drink responsibly and are responsible for their conduct at all times. Members should not encourage others to drink in excess nor shall they press alcohol upon members who choose not to drink. Canadian Armed Forces policy bans all forms of drinking games or activities that may compel members to drink more than is sensible. Local liquor licensing laws also apply to all messes and underage members shall not be served alcohol. As always, it is the bartender's prerogative to refuse service to an individual if they are underage or if they have had too much to drink. Members should watch out for colleagues who have over-indulged and ensure that a suitable means of transportation home is obtained for them. Taxi cabs are commonly available for mess members at all official mess functions.

It is customary for personnel to gather upon promotion of one of their colleagues. When two or more members of the same mess are promoted at the same time, it is acceptable to hold a combined event. Guests should include the promoted member's immediate co-workers, special associates, and friends. This is not just an occasion for free drinks or food, but an opportunity for the promoted member to thank peers for their support and friendship. It is also a time for others to appreciate the promoted member's achievements, to recognize the new rank formally, and offer congratulations. It is traditional for the newly promoted member to purchase drinks for all those present; however, the expense incurred for the function traditionally should not exceed the net increase in salary for one month.

Mess Dinner Etiquette

A mess dinner is a formal function and protocol dictates that members conduct themselves as befits the occasion. It is considered poor manners to engage in discussion of controversial subjects, act boisterously, spontaneously propose toasts, or talk after the PMC has called for attention or rapped for order.

Timings. The traditional time for dinner is 1900 for 1930 hrs, though some messes might adjust this time based on specific requirements. The time will always be given on the invitation (e.g. "1900 for 1930 hrs" or "1830 for 1900 hrs"). There is no such thing as being 'sociably late' for a mess dinner. You are required to be there by the first time given to enable members to meet and entertain guests, have a pre-dinner drink, and determine their position at the table from the seating plan. Members should seek out any guest who may be seated to the member's right. The guest should be treated as the member's personal guest. If it is the guest's first mess dinner, the member should explain the customs and procedures that will be followed.

This time also allows the group to gather before the arrival of the senior or honoured guests

which should be noted by the group. If the arrival of senior guests should be unnoticed by some, the PMC should attract attention by calling "Ladies and Gentlemen." Members arriving after the guest of honour are expected to make their apologies to the PMC. This is also the time when any speeches and presentations are made since there are generally no speeches during or after CME mess dinners.

The Seating Plan. All members except honoured guests should look over the seating plan to ensure they know where they are seated well before the move to the dining room. Particular attention should be paid to the person who is seated to your right. As a general rule you should entertain the guest on your right prior to going into dinner and see that they find their seat. Also, you should entertain this person during the dinner.

The success of a dinner is often related to the amount of time spent on developing the seating plan. When creating the seating plan, the organizer should:

- a. Carefully consider the personality each person attending the dinner;
- b. Avoid concentrating junior or senior members;
- c. Distribute the more outgoing individuals to help liven up the entire group;
- d. Guests shall normally sit to the right of their hosts. If there is a situation where a member is hosting two guests, than he/she should sit between them;
- e. Guests should not sit beside each other if it can be avoided; and
- f. Shifting places is not permitted.

Before each place setting at the table will be a small card displaying the individual's name. This is provided as an aide to finding one's seat. Some place cards are very simple, of white cardstock with typewritten names, others may be more ornate with the Engineer cap badge or Unit's crest emblazoned on them or, for special dinners, the hat badge of the individual member.

The Dinner. When dinner is ready and if guests appear to be ready, the PMC instruct the piper (if in attendance) to play "Mess Call." Mess calls will normally be given 15 minutes and five minutes before entering the dining room. This allows members time to finish drinks and/or visit the facilities before dinner.

At the appointed time the head table (or other officers designated to do so) will lead the assembly into the dining room. If a band is present it would strike up the traditional "The Roast Beef of Olde England" (that was the tune with which Nelson and his officers went to dinner in the flagship on the eve of Trafalgar). The song is played as all the diners file into the dining room.

The sponsoring members escort the next senior guests of honour in succession. Other members and guests then follow the head table. Members should escort any guest seated on their right into the dining room and ensure that the guest is entertained until departure. Usually members enter the dining room by seniority but this is not rigidly followed. Junior members standing near the doorway need not hang back waiting for all senior members to enter. Carrying a drink into the dining room is not permitted since appropriate wine will be served with dinner.

Service. Traditionally, mess guests are served before the PMC and other guests are served before their hosts. Practically, it is best to serve the guest of honour first followed by the head table and then the remainder. The PMC should not delay starting a course, since other diners would wait to follow his lead. No dish should be removed until the last diner has finished eating each course.

Table Manners. Diners should sit up straight at the table with their hands on their lap when not

using table utensils. Elbows should never touch the table. The table napkin should be laid across the lap and not tucked into the tunic. At the end of the meal the napkin should be laid on the table so that it can be taken away as the table is cleared.

When the soup course is served, the soup should be taken from the side of the spoon. A knife is never lifted to the mouth, or used for cutting bread or rolls. Bread should be broken with the hands. After the main course is finished, the knife and fork are placed side by side on the plate to indicate that the plate may be removed.

Additional fine points of table manners to be followed are:

- a. Lumps of sugar are removed with tongs or a clean spoon;
- b. Tea or coffee cups are not held in the hand for long periods. After a short sip, they are returned to the saucer;
- c. Teaspoons are not used to taste the tea or coffee, but rather to stir the ingredients; and
- d. Toothpicks are not used at the table and should only be used in private.

Rules of Order. Whenever the PMC or VPMC taps the table there must be silence until he has finished speaking. The first tap of the President's gavel will normally be for "Grace" and signals that the dinner has officially begun. Between that time and the "Loyal Toast" without the PMC's permission, no one may:

- a. Come in and sit down at the table;
- b. Leave the table;
- c. Return to the table;
- d. Read (except the menu or the musical programme);
- e. Write; or
- f. Speak to anyone not dining (this does not apply to speaking to a server or receiving a message from them).

If a diner is near enough to the PMC to ask his permission regarding any item listed above, he does so. If he is too far away, he may request a server ask the PMC on their behalf. Alternatively, the PMC may address these ground rules of permissions at the start of the dinner. Some other 'DON'Ts' for diners are:

- a. Commence a course before the PMC;
- b. Smoke;
- c. Utter an oath or use foul language;
- d. Place a bet or wager;
- e. Discuss political or other controversial subjects;
- f. Talk "shop" which means that diners are not to conduct normal work business while seated at the dinner;
- g. Speak in a foreign language (except when foreign guests are present);
- h. Tell "off colour" stories;
- i. Mention a specific sum of money; or

- j. Propose a toast ("Cheers" or similar remarks or raising the glass as in greeting constitutes a toast).

Discipline. The method of dealing with misbehaviour or breaking the rules of order may vary significantly between regiments. While there are no unique practices in the CME, it is wise to familiarize oneself about such practices before attending a dinner in a strange mess. The punishment will usually fit the crime. A diner will be ordered to leave for a serious offence such as gross rudeness and serious misbehaviour general results in administrative and disciplinary action, depending on the offence. For other offences, more light-hearted in nature, the offender can be given a chance to exonerate himself by the use of his wits.

After Dinner. If a piper played at the dinner, the senior officer may toast the piper with the customary "*Quaich (kwelx)*." Although the toast is traditionally made with straight scotch whisky, either party may choose another beverage, including water. The senior member may also invite the bandmaster and the chef to attend the head table for a drink in appreciation of their services. Commonly, the mess manager will arrange to bring drinks and the senior officer, senior guest, the bandmaster and head chef will stand, share a few words and a drink. Even if this practice is followed, the PMC will still arrange to extend the diners' appreciation to the band and mess staff sometime during the evening.

Breaks. In the CME (and many others) it is becoming common to hold a 15 minute health break after dessert and/or coffee to allow the clearing of the tables and preparation for the toasts. It is important to respect the timing and to be ready to return to the table when called. Failure to promptly take your seat when asked will delay the progression of the formal activities.

Passing the Port. The senior server reports to the PMC that the port is ready to be passed. The PMC then removes the stopper, pours a partial glass, samples it as one would wine before serving it, and passes the decanter to the left (or '*port*' side). In accordance with CME custom, the port decanter should never touch the table during this ceremony; however, there are some services and branches with different customs such as the Navy. In a mess dinner with many different services, corps and branches, it is possible to see many variations. What is important is that CME personnel observe their custom during this procedure. Except for the sampling of the port by the PMC, port glasses are not touched until the loyal toast. All diners charge their own glasses and then pass the port decanter to the left.

Toasts and Marches. It is extremely rude to carry on conversations, heckle or otherwise make a disturbance during toasts and marches. One must respect the other diners and the pride that they have in their service throughout. It is polite to applaud following a march.

Normally one does not stand for other marches except regimental marches of units in which one has served. This does not include having been attached to a unit which is very common for CME members. For example, CME members who re-mustered from the R22eR may stand for *Vive la Canadienne* but not members who have served in a R22eR Battlegroup. In addition, CME members who wear the RCAF uniform or currently serve in the RCAF should stand for *The RCAF March Past* much the same as CME members serving in the Army would stand for the Army March Past. It has become common practice for members to stand for "Ode to Joy" the march past of the Chaplain Branch. This practice is inappropriate as only the Chaplain should stand for their march past. If no one person is standing for a march past then it is the duty of the PMC to stand for it.

Adjournment. The President will adjourn the dinner and suggest to the guest of honour and others at the head table that they retire to the lounge where they may purchase drinks at the bar. When the PMC and members of the head table rise the other diners should stand and remain standing until these individuals have left the room. Diners are expected to then join the

President and the Guest of Honour without undue delay.

After dinner is the most relaxed part of the evening, affording an opportunity for all members to become better acquainted. Members should not leave the mess until after the guest of honour has departed. If a member has reason to leave before the guest of honour they should first pay respects to them but there must be sufficient members remaining to ensure the entertainment of guests so long as any remain in the mess. Paying your respects merely means saying "Good Night." It is also appropriate to pay similar compliments to the PMC and your immediate supervisor.

Mixed Formal Dinners

Functions with members' spouses or guests in attendance are considered "*mixed*." Although dress is usually mess dress for a formal dinner, these are not mess dinners and are not required to rigidly follow the same format. Most messes choose to follow the format of a mess dinner although some of the traditions, such as playing of the regimental marches, may be omitted.

Seating plans are used at formal functions to ensure that all diners are distributed in a manner that will encourage conversation with new acquaintances. Members of the same unit and members of the same rank are usually not seated next to each other. When dinner is called, a male host should escort the guest seated to his right and a female host escorts the guest sitting to her left. Once at the table, it is correct to remain standing behind the chair until the guest of honour has been seated.

In a banquet setting, there is usually a head table that is organized so the sponsoring host and guest of honour are in the centre. Each guest should have a host and guests and hosts are seated alternately along the table with the most senior guests closest to the centre. Generally, guests are seated to the right of their hosts and two guests should not be seated next to each other if it can be avoided.

At a formal dinner party, the host and hostess are usually seated at opposite ends of the table. The lady guest of honour, or senior lady, sits on the host's right and the lady next in precedence is seated on the left. Similarly, the male guest of honour and the next ranking gentleman are seated respectively to the right and left of the hostess. Other guests normally alternate male-female around the table with juniors in the middle. Couples are not generally seated together in order to encourage conversation with other guests.

If the dinner is a buffet, it is polite for the host/hostess to lead the way through the buffet. For served meals it is customary to await the host's start of each course or direction to begin. At large banquets or buffets it is appropriate to commence eating when those around you have been served.

The correct use of cutlery and glasses is a mark of good manners and guidance can be found in any book on etiquette. At a multiple course meal, each place setting consists of a setting of cutlery and several glasses, one filled with water. While a large, formal place setting may appear intimidating the first time, if in doubt, follow the lead of the head table or a nearby experienced colleague. For cutlery, begin at the outside and work inward. For glasses, start at the bottom and work upwards. Hold long-stemmed water glasses or wineglasses with your thumb and first two fingers at the base of the bowl of the glass or on the stem. Do not place your fingers around the bowl of the glass.

If a band plays during dinner, applause at the end of each piece is customary.

Guests should engage their dinner partners and other close guests in light conversation during the meal. True ladies and gentleman never discuss money, religion, and politics.

If toasts are part of the dinner activities, follow the toastmaster's lead. Toasts are sipped not

quaffed or guzzled. If you do not care for alcohol, simply raise your glass to your lips or sip water. Never drink to yourself. For example, spouses do not drink when the toast "To the Spouses" is given.

Invitations

There are two types of invitations; informal and formal. Informal invitations may be extended by written note, email, or verbally in person, or by telephone. Formal invitations are either printed or engraved. Figure 1 shows an example of a formal invitation.

When you accept an invitation, it is common courtesy to return the hospitality. It is not necessary to return a seated dinner for a seated dinner. Do what is comfortable for you and keep your budget in mind. When planning a guest list for a private function, members should consider other unit members, friends and those who have entertained them. Normally a dinner obligation is repaid with a dinner, a barbecue with barbecue, and so on. However, common sense and economics must be considered. To extend yourself beyond your financial capability is poor judgment and not in good taste. Apologies are not necessary if returning an elaborate dinner with a backyard barbecue.

Formal invitations are always written in the third person. No abbreviations are used, except for Mr., Mrs. and post-nominals. Numbers are written in full, with even the time and year written out. However, numbers are acceptable in the address section or in unit designations.

Ranks should always be written out in full for guests' names. The rank of retired members is optional but, when used, "(Retired)" should follow the name and any post-nominals (e.g. "Warrant Officer G.H. Black (Retired). Guests' decorations should be included on the invitation; however, when a spouse or escort is included in the invitation, the guest's decorations are omitted. The decorations of hosts issuing invitations should never appear. Care should be taken in researching the proper names, initials and decorations. Often abbreviations following a member's name are not decorations and should not appear on an invitation (e.g. PEng, CET, MBA, and PhD should not be included). The title "Dr." should be used for PhD graduates. If the correct decorations cannot be confirmed, they should be omitted and titles may also be omitted. A civilian lady or gentleman may be addressed simply as "A.B. Jones" instead of "Mr. or Mrs. A.B. Jones."

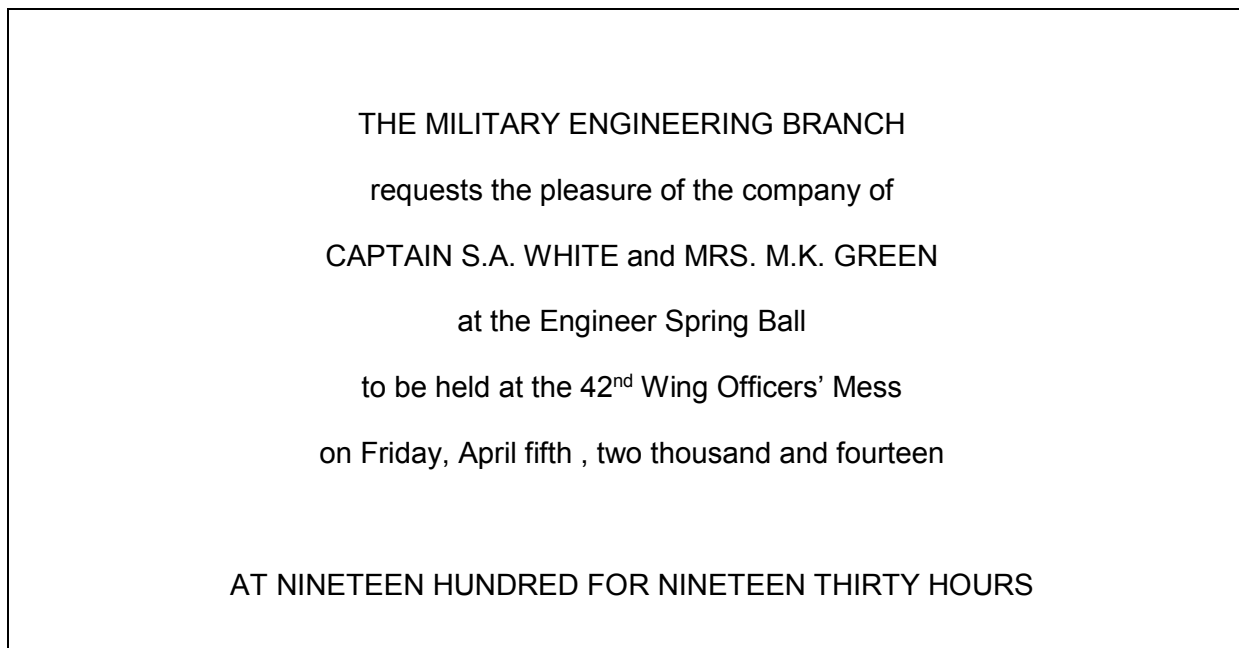


Figure 7D-1 Formal Invitation

Spouses do not always share the same surname. Most unit administrative sections have social lists with the names of member's spouses and they should be checked to ensure that the correct name appears on the invitation. In the case of a married service couple, the spouse's rank should be included in lieu of any other title; for example, "Captain E.G. White and Lieutenant J.K. White." The member who would normally be invited is always placed first and the spouse second, regardless of whom holds the higher rank. If an unmarried member is invited to a mixed function, it is acceptable to say "Captain Smith and Guest."

Invitations should always include the following information:

- a. Date (day of the week and date);
- b. Time (if formal, write out the time, for example, ten o'clock);
- c. Place (where it will be held); and
- d. Host/Hostess (if husband/wife -- informal: Bob and Carol Smith – formal: Maj and Mrs. Robert Smith);

The following guidelines can be helpful:

- a. Always send out invitations 10 - 14 days in advance;
- b. Use black ink;
- c. Avoid initials and abbreviations (Exceptions - Mr., Mrs., Dr., RSVP, or Captain J. Paul Doe); and
- d. Write full titles, ranks, and names (Major, Colonel, etc.).

Etiquette demands a reply as soon as possible as the host/hostess needs to know how many people will attend to assist in making the necessary arrangements. Replies are required to all invitations, whether the response is positive or negative. If you are having trouble giving a response within the time frame given, call the host/hostess to regret and explain your situation. The hostess will then have the option to accept your response or extend your deadline. An invitation, once accepted, must not be subsequently declined except for such reasons as illness or unavoidable absence on duty. Certain invitations are considered official and should normally be accepted, for example: parties organized by superior, official receptions requiring uniform, functions honouring an important visitor to the unit, and meet-and-greet functions.

Replies are made in the form in which the invitation is received unless otherwise indicated. RSVP (répondez s'il vous plaît) on a written invitation followed by a telephone number suggests a telephoned response is appropriate. If a formal reply card is given, it should be returned and, if unable to attend, a hand-written apology should be added. If no reply card is included, a hand-written note is appropriate. Replies should always be written in the present tense and in the same format as the invitations, with the address and date of reply in the bottom left hand corner. When accepting, the day and hour should always be restated to catch any errors and, when declining, a brief reason for the decline should be given.

Only the names of the people on the invitation are invited. Children are not included unless specified and it is impolite to ask if you may bring your children. If you cannot leave your child/children then you should send your regrets. House guests are the same. When you send regrets because of children or house guests, the host or hostess may extend the invitation to include them at which point it is polite to accept. If RSVP/Regrets is not listed on the invitation, the host/hostess assumes you will attend. "Regrets Only" on an invitation means that you are to call only if you cannot attend. It is only appropriate to send regrets at the very last minute due to

a legitimate emergency. Formal invitations may not have as “RSVP” or “Regrets Only” on the invitation and in that case you are expected to attend.

The dress for the function should be clearly stated on the invitation and should not be confusing to the guests. When uniform is to be worn, it should be clearly stated if permission has been granted for Reserve Force and retired members to wear uniform.

Punctuality

Punctuality is a virtue but fanatical punctuality is not always so. For most social functions, it is impolite to arrive early since hosts may still be preparing. It is correct to arrive within five minutes of the stated time. In some instances, the invitation may indicate that guests are to arrive early, perhaps before the arrival of an honoured guest. In this case, the invitation will state 1900 hrs for 1915 hrs, indicating that guests are expected to arrive by 1900 hrs to await the guest of honour who arrives at 1915 hrs. Usually, the more formal the function the closer one follows stated times.

Guests should abide by the time limit shown on an invitation. Should one have to leave before the guest of honour, apologies should be first offered. Guests should be adept at distinguishing between polite requests not to hurry away and genuine requests to remain after the main body of guests has left. In any event, having made a move to go, guests should express appropriate thanks and leave. A guest who does not know when to leave is a burden to any host.

Introductions

When making an introduction, the names of persons being introduced should be spoken clearly and the introduction should be polite and informative. For instance, “Major Black, I would like you to meet Lieutenant Anne White, our new Liaison Officer. Anne, this is our Operations Officer Major Black.” Introductions are always made as follows:

- a. a gentleman is always introduced to a lady;
- b. a younger person to an older person; and
- c. a junior member to a senior member.

Gentlemen and military members should rise for an introduction. It is acceptable for civilian ladies to remain seated. In replying to an introduction, it is sufficient to say, “How do you do?” Strive to remember the names of those introduced and use them occasionally afterwards. A favourable impression is created when enough interest is taken to remember names. Introducing yourself to a former acquaintance is polite, however, you should remind the acquaintance of the prior meeting if there is a possibility of it having been forgotten.

One may use “General” instead of Major General, etc. when addressing a general officer. It is considered courteous to address a senior officer’s spouse as ‘Mr./Mrs. Doe’ if they desire that you call them by their first name, they will tell you. Do not take the liberty until then. If you are asked to use a first name, it is polite to do so.

Expressing Thanks

When invited to a private home, it is appropriate to bring a small gift. This is traditionally flowers, chocolates, or wine. An expression of thanks for hospitality received is appropriate, although the form may vary depending upon the type of hospitality or entertainment. A telephoned thank you is acceptable for informal entertainment, but a written note or letter is more appropriate after a formal invitation. When staying overnight with friends, it is polite to bring a gift and a written letter of thanks is essential.