

# **GUIDE TO THE MILITARY DINING-IN**

**(revised 1999 edition)**

**CADET HOSTESS OFFICE  
CULLUM MEMORIAL HALL  
WEST POINT, NEW YORK**

This guide was designed to assist the United States Military Academy Cadets and the newly commissioned lieutenants in the successful planning and execution of a military dining-in. This booklet was put together with the help of various sources and is intended to serve as a guide, deviations are expected. You will find that most military units and many cadet companies have developed their own very specific and unique traditions conduct of their dining-in.

Additional guidance and assistance can be obtained by consulting your Service Etiquette Book or contacting the Cadet Hostess Office at 845-938-3104.

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# THE MILITARY DINING-IN

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# THE MILITARY DINING-IN

## INTRODUCTION

The dining-in is a formal dinner function for members of a military organization or unit. It provides an occasion for cadets, officers, noncommissioned officers, and their guests to gather together in an atmosphere of camaraderie, good fellowship, fun, and social rapport. It is important to emphasize that a dining-in celebrates the unique bond or cohesion that has held military units together in battle, rather than become just another mandatory function.

The custom of the “Dining-In” can be traced to an old Viking tradition of celebrating their victorious battles and collective feats of heroism with a formal feasting ceremony. It is believed that this tradition later spread to England – possibly carried there with the Norman invasions. The tradition was further passed with the establishment of the Officer’s Mess in British military units. World Wars I and II brought the American and British military close together and exposed U. S. officers to this ancient tradition of the dining-in. Quickly seeing its benefits for the units, we adopted it as our own, and today cadets, officers and noncommissioned officers in the American Army regularly hold dining-ins.

As a cadet or junior officer, you are charged with the responsibility of assuring the survival of the long standing traditions and customs associated with the dining-in. Unlike the regiments of the Army, cadet companies have no collective battle heritage, however, the contributions of former cadets to the leadership of American soldiers in battle in all this Country’s wars is unrivaled by any other institution in the world. This theme of past accomplishments and potential for future contributions should form the unifying theme of a cadet dining in.

## PLANNING THE DINING-IN CONSIDERATIONS AND PROCEDURES

### Overall Planning Considerations:

The first stage in planning, and before any specifics can be considered, is to determine the following:

- 1) Purpose
- 2) Officers of the Mess
- 3) Date and Place

### Purpose:

The purpose of the dining-in could be to recognize individual and/or unit achievements or any events which are effective in building and maintaining esprit de corps to include saying farewell to departing officers and welcoming new ones. The dining-in may also be held to honor one or more distinguished visitors. Whatever it is, the purpose will have a definite impact on determining the conduct of the dining-in. If, for example, the purpose is to honor a foreign dignitary, the sequence of events for the dining-in would be substantially different from a dining-in that involves the presentation of unit, company or individual awards. Whatever the purpose, the president of the mess, usually the commander or his/her deputy, has a great deal of latitude as to how the proceeding is conducted.

### Officers of the Mess:

There are two principal officials of a dining-in.

The *President*, who is usually the Commanding Officer or his/her Deputy Commander. At the Academy, the Cadet Company Commander or Executive Officer usually acts as the President of the Mess.

The President is the central figure of the dining-in. The President sets the date and place of the dining-in, arranges for the guest speaker and other honored guests as desired, such as a Chaplain to give the Invocation. He/she also appoints other mess officers to serve as committee chair persons for such things as invitations, table arrangements, dining room arrangements and protocol. He/she introduces the

speaker and honored guests, proposes the first toast, and presides over the ceremony. The President also appoints the Vice President of the Mess.

The *Vice* addressed as *Mr., Miss, or Madam Vice* (shortened to Mr/Ms vice in this pamphlet) is usually a junior officer selected for his/her wit and speaking abilities.

The *Vice* is the person responsible for the evening. He/she is the first to arrive and the last to leave. He/she starts the cocktail period by opening the lounge, sounds the dinner chimes at the appropriate times, delivers the appropriate toasts and keeps the party moving. He/she is also responsible for testing the main course prior to it being served and announces to the members of the mess, that it is fit for human consumption. Mr/Ms Vice sits at the end of a table or alone at a small table on the opposite side of the room facing the President of the mess.

Other officers of the Mess would include:

*Committee Chairpersons*, are normally appointed by the President of the Mess and tasked with organizing and executing different aspects of the dining-in. At the Academy the Company Activity Officer and Activity First Sergeant usually act as the committee chairpersons. The number and size of the committees vary depending on the purpose of the affair, the extent of formality sought, and the number of individuals available to serve on the committees. Some examples and duties for committees could be:

A *Protocol* Committee would prepare invitations, collect responses, provide biographical sketches, brief the hosts or cadet escorts when necessary, prepare the printed program or schedule of events.

A *Mess Arrangements* Committee would secure the mess hall or dining facility of choice for the date and time desired. Make arrangements for the menu, public address system, awards, flags trophies, photographer, payment of mess and bar charges.

A *Table Arrangements* Committee would take care of place cards, seating, seating charts, centerpieces, silver, crystal, and china.

An *Entertainment* Committee could manage scheduled entertainment (music, speeches) and planned ceremonies (posting and retiring colors, fallen comrades).

A *Master of the Punch* should be appointed by the president when the Punch Bowl or Grog ceremony is a tradition of the unit. The Master of the Punch will select a number of assistants to equal the number of grog ingredients. See examples Appendix A.

*Hosts* or cadet escorts are appointed to contact the invited guest in advance and inform them as to the mess customs, dress, the agenda, and the time allowed for speeches. The hosts or escorts, if unable to arrive with their assigned guests, should be readily on hand to immediately greet them upon arrival, introduce them to other official guests and unit/company members and seat them appropriately. Hosts also arrange for transportation and quarters when needed.

*Gunners*, if a tradition practiced by the mess, are usually the junior member of the mess seated at each table. He/she would ensure the beverage decanters on the table are kept full and those members' glasses are charged throughout the dinner hour. Gunners are not used during the formal toasting.

#### Date and Place

Before listing specifics, it must be decided, exactly when and where the dining-in will take place.

The preferred time in most military organizations is often a Friday or Saturday night and the best place is usually the Officers' Open Mess or Community Club as they generally are more familiar with dining-in procedures and are mutually accessible to all parties. Special care should be taken to insure that the dining-in is not scheduled too close to some other social event which might detract from its effectiveness.

At the Academy the evenings of choice would be Monday, Tuesday, or Wednesday. Friday of an "A" weekend can be used but is not preferred. The Cadet Mess (Washington Hall) in either the newly refurbished Black and Gold and Gray Room or the Regimental Room is the ideal location. Arrangements for use of the Cadet Mess can be made by contacting the Cadet Mess Division. Operations and Plans at 939-2066.

## SPECIFIC CONSIDERATIONS

### Invitations

The dining-in is always a formal affair for all offices, male and female, in the unit and invitations are extended accordingly. All unit personnel invited are expected to attend unless cogent reasons prohibit.

In the military unit it is proper to extend invitations to key noncommissioned officers and civilians of the unit should the president desire. Depending on the purpose of the dining-in, invitations might be extended to other persons outside the unit. If an invocation is desired, it might be proper to invite the Post Chaplain. If an important guest lecturer or foreign dignitary is going to be present, it may be advisable to invite his counterpart, post associate, or person(s) who speaks his language. A guest invited as a lecturer should receive an invitation from the president which includes a fairly precise idea of what he/she can expect and what is required, e.g., a twenty minute speech on the history of the unit or company.

Cadets would usually extend formal invitations to the Company Tactical Officer, Company Tactical Noncommissioned Officer, Regimental Training Officer, guest speaker and any other guest as deemed appropriate by the President of the Mess.

The formal invitation should be extended two to three weeks prior to the event.

The invitation may be hand written, printed or fill in. E-mail, though a very effective means of communication with the intended honored guests, is not a substitute for the formal invitation. An example of an invitation can be found in Appendix B.

### Menu

The food served at a dining-in should be of the best quality, expertly prepared and served in an efficient and timely manner. The dinner may consist of from three to seven courses depending on the number of people involved, facilities, and expense deemed appropriate. Customarily, four or five courses are warranted.

## Table Arrangements and Seating

The number of people attending, coupled with the facility in which the dining-in is being conducted will largely determine the table arrangements.

Tables may be round, square or rectangular and be in any formation, for example, a “T” or “Horseshoe.” Regardless of the configuration, a head table is appropriate. The guest of honor, usually the speaker, sits to the right of the president at the head table, with the next ranking guest on the president’s left. The members of the mess and other guest are seated throughout the mess according to protocol. Mr/Ms Vice is seated at the foot of the table or, preferably, at a separate table of his/her own at the rear of the mess facing the president. Samples of two of the more common table arrangements, along with precedence of seating at the head table, are indicated at Appendix C.

Neat, easily understood seating diagrams should be prominently displayed in the cocktail area or foyer of the dining room. Seating diagrams should be constructed to indicate assignment to a specific table or to a designated place. One or more copies of the seating diagram may be required based on the number of attendees, entrances to the dining area, etc.

Place cards are used as a manner of convenience in seating guests and should always be placed at the head table. Use of place cards at other tables is desirable but not required. Place cards have a distinct position on the table, as do menus, wine glasses, and other pieces of dinnerware. An appropriate place setting is indicated at Appendix D.

Generally, there should not be vacant seats at a formal dinner. In the event of last minute cancellations the entire place setting should be removed from the table.

## Receiving Line

The receiving line is formed from right to left. It is formed in order of rank with the guest or guests of honor immediately to the left of the President of the Mess. The president is on the right of the



receiving line with the American Flag directly behind his right shoulder and the guest of honor to his left. The Adjutant (or receiving line manager) is positioned to the right of the President. As you proceed through the line and come abreast of the Adjutant announce your name but do not shake hands. Never assume that the Adjutant will automatically remember your name. The Adjutant will in turn introduce you to the President of the Mess, whereby you exchange handclasps and greetings. The President will then introduce you to the person to 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.

### 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). Upon completion of the receiving line, the officer in charge of the color guard will cause the 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 (1) United States colors, (2) United States Army flag, (3) organizational colors in descending order of precedence.

The 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”, 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.

All commands by the Officer in Charge should be at a low tone and directly to the members of the color guard. If overhead space is limited, the colors and weapons should be carried at port arms.

## Retiring the Colors

Upon command of the President, the 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 guard secures the colors, is given “right shoulder (port) arms” and marched at a half step to the nearest exit with the 1<sup>st</sup> color guard and then the colors of the United States leading. The colors are then cased.

## Toasts

Toasting is the ancient tradition of drinking together in honor of someone or some group, in order to show respect or appreciation. It is believed that this custom came into wide acceptance after the effects of poisons were discovered. When two persons, who might be antagonists, drank from the same source at the same instant and suffered no ill effects, a degree of mutual trust or rapport was established. Today, toasting is a gesture to honor the person or group being recognized. It is not necessary to drain the glass, or even to sip the wine; a mere touch of the glass to the lips satisfies the ceremony.

Toasts are considered a mandatory part of any dining-in. The format of toasts will vary depending primarily on the purpose of the dining-in. All persons should be informed of the order of toasts and the correct responses before hand. The printed program works well to convey this information. It is important to make the proper toast in terms of both proposing the toast, and responding to it, particularly if foreign dignitaries are involved.

Toasts at a dining-in with foreign dignitaries in attendance are slightly more complex and a service etiquette book should be referenced. Toasts to a foreign head of state will be proposed in order of the seniority of the foreign guest(s) present. After toasts are proposed to each foreign head of state, the senior foreign guest will propose a toast, “TO THE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES.” All respond, “TO THE PRESIDENT”. Toasts to respective services or individuals follow; however, it is advisable to have the junior officer propose a toast, “TO OUR GUEST”,

thereby holding the toasting proceedings within reasonable limits.

There are two simple rules to toasting etiquette:

1. Do as the toastmaster does. The toastmaster is the person offering the toast. If he stands to propose a toast, then everyone joining in should stand as well.
2. Never drink a toast to yourself. Since toasting is done to show respect or appreciation, it is inappropriate to drink when a toast has been proposed for you personally. Therefore, even when the toastmaster is standing, if the toast is to you, you should be seated.

See Appendix E for examples of toasts.

### Fallen Comrades

Most military organizations customarily pay tribute to their fallen comrades at some point during the dining-in. There are many ways this can be achieved with the more commonly used ones listed below.

The fallen comrade table, usually one of its own, contains the complete place setting with the place card addressed to either all the fallen comrades of the unit or a specific person. On the table are also placed items of significance to the unit i.e., beret or designated unit headgear, saber, gloves and unit coin. Footgear, such as the jump, jungle or combat boots are placed at the foot of the table.

The fallen comrade can be honored during the awards ceremony with a specific award being presented in their honor.

The Punch Bowl or Grog Ceremony is also used as a means of paying tribute to the fallen comrade by adding a specific ingredient with a significant purpose. See Appendix A for an example.

When the fallen comrades are recognized with a toast, it is always the last toast of the evening with the Benediction and retiring of the colors following.

## Smoking

Smoking, if permitted in the mess or facility being used, is allowed during the informal sessions of the dining-in. During the formal portion of the dining-in the smoking lamp is used to indicate when smoking is authorized. A single candelabra with a new white candle or a clear glass kerosene lamp may be used. The lamp should be placed on a lone table visible to the entire mess. If Mr/Ms Vice is at a separate table in view of all, the smoking is positioned on his/her table. The smoking lamp is lit by the Vice as instructed by the President. The President will then announce, "Ladies and gentlemen, the smoking lamp is lit." The lamp is then passed to the president, who lights the guest of honor's cigar.

## Use of the Gavel

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

## Point of Order

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

## Rules of the Mess

Traditionally, most military units have very specific "Rules of the Mess". The purpose of these rules is to preserve the unique traditions of the unit

and to ensure the dignified conduct of the members and guests. Since an infraction of the rules usually results in a fine being levied, it is important that the rules be well established and made available to every member and guest.

Sample Rules of the Mess can be found at Appendix F.

### Fines

The President of the Mess has the authority to assess and direct the Vice to collect fines for violations of established customs and procedures, such as bringing a cocktail glass to the table, smoking before authorized, leaving the table during the meal without first seeking permission of the President, or wearing uniform ropes improperly. These fines are administered in good spirit and should not be so excessive as to make them otherwise. Likewise the Offices of the Mess should forewarn guests of their possible unintentional violation of these customs. The fine should be defined and the members and guest be informed as to its nature. The fine, though usually a quarter, does not have to be of a pecuniary nature. Cadet Companies often extract atonement for violations by having the offensive member of the mess consume a glass of grog.

## THE MILITARY DINING-IN PLANNING AND PROCEDURES

### Program Planning

The dining-in is generally divided into formal and informal sessions. Pre and post-dinner activities are usually informal and optional.

The pre-dinner activity is a means of providing flexibility to the dining-in as it gives the president the opportunity to circulate among the guest, enables the dining-in committee to pass on any last-minute changes, and generally lends to a more congenial atmosphere among all participants. The pre-dinner activity is often a receiving line followed by a cocktail period and is conducted in an area separate from the dining room. The length of the period varies, but is seldom longer than thirty minutes.

The formal portion of the dining-in, in addition to the dinner, usually consists of remarks by the president and one event such as an awards convocation for members or guests, a hail and farewell, remarks highlighting the importance of a special occasion, or a lecture by a distinguished visitor. This event should be meaningful, well organized, and be the “highlight” of the evening’s formal activity. Particular care should be taken to ensure that only one event is stressed.

It is essential that the key participants in the program (i.e., the color guard, chaplain, president and guest speaker) are knowledgeable of the role they will play and are aware of the exact sequence of events (see sample at Appendix G).

Once the dinner is adjourned the dining-in may revert to some informal session. Customarily, the president invites the attendees to join him for an informal drink at the bar or to participate in some other on-going entertainment as appropriate.

### Procedures

The formal portion of the dining-in commences with chimes being sounded and the president, guests, and

attendees moving to their respective table assignments.

The president calls for the Posting of the Colors.

The president then asks the chaplain or designated person to give the Invocation. This is optional and may be omitted or tailored as deemed appropriate.

Toasts are proposed.

The president announces “PLEASE BE SEATED” and all are seated.

The president makes appropriate introductory remarks.

If guests are present, the president then introduces guests at his/her table. The guests should rise when announced and then be seated. If there are guests at more than the head table, the ranking officer at each table rises and introduces his guests. Guests should stand when announced and resume seats.

Once all guests have been introduced, Mr/Ms Vice then rises and proposes a toast, “TO OUR GUEST.” All unit personnel rise and respond, “HEAR, HEAR.”

Punch Bowl Ceremony (optional) is introduced.

The president then announces, “PLEASE BE SEATED FOR DINNER”. All are seated. Dinner is served.

There should be some distinctive break between dinner and the remainder of the formal proceedings. This break serves to highlight the remaining proceedings. There are many ways of doing this. Customarily, the mess is adjourned to the cocktail lounge while the tables are cleared. Upon return to the mess, cigars are offered with coffee and the president rises to introduce the evening’s events.

The presentation, address, or rendition, is made.

Final toasts are proposed.

The president makes concluding remarks.

The president then announces, “RETIRE THE COLORS”, and the colors are retired.

At this point the president bangs the gavel twice, chimes are sounded to indicate movement, and the Mess is adjourned.

### Protocol Rules for Attendees

1. Promptly reply to the invitation. Replies should be sent or phoned within three days (72 hours) after being received.
2. The Army Mess Uniform is the standard dress for a dining-in; but the Army Blue/White Uniform is viewed as acceptable. Normally, the invitation is extended with the option of wearing either. The Army Blue/White Uniform is usually worn with bow tie and miniature medals. Name tags are not customarily worn. United States Military Academy cadets should wear the Full Dress or White Uniform. Civilians should wear formal attire or a dark business suit. Ladies' attire is formal.
3. Arrive on time. If cocktails are prescribed, arrival should be no later than ten minutes after cocktails begin. If there are no cocktails, arrival should be ten minutes before dinner.
4. Attendees should be time-conscious and prepared to move from cocktails to dinner without delay. Cocktails should not be carried into the dining area.
5. Smoking is permitted during the informal portions and during the formal portion of the dinner only after it has been indicated that the smoking lamp is lit.
6. Attendees should introduce themselves to the guest(s) of honor either before or after the formal session. Guest(s) of the organization are introduced to all in attendance as part of the formal portion.
7. Attendees should "take seats" only when directed to do so by the president. They should remain seated until the president and guests have left the head table.



## APPENDIX A

### PUNCH BOWL CEREMONY

This first example of the Punch Bowl or “Grog” Ceremony is taken from the 2/11 Infantry Dining in MOI (Memorandum of Instruction).

**President of Mess (POM):** “Mr. Vice, send forth the Master of the Punch and his assistants.”

**Mr. Vice:** “Yes, Mr. President. Master of the Punch, expose yourself.”

**Master of the Punch (MPO):** (Master of the Punch moves to the head table). “Sir, I am exposed.”

**POM:** “Master of the Punch, are you well steeped in the tradition of the 11<sup>th</sup> Infantry Regiment punch?”

**MOP:** “Yes, Mr. President, in fact no one could be more steeped in it than I.”

**POM:** “Then proceed with the preparation.”

**MOP:** “Yes, Mr. President. The 11<sup>th</sup> Infantry Regiment punch is a noble beverage. It is the preferred drink of an 11<sup>th</sup> infantryman, it has a truly inspirational bouquet, a taste that is robust, yet smooth and the color is like that of battle itself, a swirling maelstrom of hues.”

#### **Assistants post to punch bowl table**

**MOP:** “We begin at the birth of the 11<sup>th</sup> Infantry Regiment”.

Assistants state their part in order/MOP adds ingredients.

**Assistant #1:** The 11<sup>th</sup> Infantry Regiment was organized during the American Civil War. The infantrymen of the regular army regiments that gathered to form the 11<sup>th</sup> Infantry brought with them those same qualities that were present in the American Infantrymen of the Revolutionary War, The War of 1812, and The Mexican-American War: courage, tenacity, and ingenuity.

These are the basics of the American Infantrymen. No liquid is strong enough to signify these qualities so we add instead – forged steel in the form of a bayonet. For nothing is as basic to an Infantryman as his bayonet.

**MOP:** Add the bayonet.

**Assistant #2:** The 11<sup>th</sup> Infantry Regiment fought in the Western battles of the Civil War. In this terrible war of brother against brother, the 11<sup>th</sup> Infantry marched and fought through Kentucky, Tennessee, Mississippi, and Georgia. It stood and bled at Chickamauga taking Confederate charge after charge. At Chattanooga, the 11<sup>th</sup> roared up Missionary Ridge, which caused General Granger to, “When these men get going, all hell can’t stop them”. For the courageous men of the 11<sup>th</sup> Infantry we add Kentucky Bourbon – from appropriately, a border state claimed and fought for by gallant Americans of both sides.

**MOP:** Add the Kentucky Bourbon.

*The ceremony continues with the remaining ingredients being added by the POM with suitable remarks by the assistant.*

Upon all ingredients added, MOP addresses POM:

**MOP:** “Mr. President, the punch is prepared. Who shall test it?”

**POM:** “Mr. Vice, will you taste the punch?”

**Mr. Vice:** “Yes Mr. President.” (taste punch) “Mr. President this punch has been prepared correctly and is fit for human consumption.”

**POM:** “Thank you Mr. Vice. Master of the Punch, please see that everyone receives their fair share of this punch.”

**MOP:** “Yes, Mr. President.” (Assistants serve the head table then the rest of the officers and guests.)

This second example, provided by Company G, Third Regiment, United States Military Academy, is offered to demonstrate the “Grog” recipe at the Academy. The cadets follow the same format as above, only alcoholic beverages are not a part of their ceremony so the ingredients have a unique flavor and significance of their own.

#### “GROG” Recipe, Company G-3, USCC

Chicken Wings: Signifying all the hours spent at the Firstie Club and various taverns around New York State where Gopher firsties gather in fellowship and strengthen the leadership bonds within the company. Wherever there are wings and beer you will no doubt find a crowd of Gopher firsties.

Grass: We have toiled for hours and days on the Plain tuning our military skills and becoming more disciplined by the minute. The Plain has taken a lot out of us in four years, and we took a little of it back.

Ice: We have a traditional football game on the first snow every year; firsties and cows vs. yuks and plebes. Through this game we have a chance to see who really is boss on the playing field where everyone is supposedly equal. (The upper-class have never lost to my knowledge). Anyway, the ice represents athletic and friendly competition.

Red Punch: Represents the blood shed by many of our fellow Gophers on Branch Night for the Class of 1998.

The last ingredient is not important in what it is (a table sauce of sorts), but it represents Robert Whitfield, a former Gopher who died of cancer his cow year. The Whitfield Award commemorates his memory each year and is presented to the best squad leader in the company.

APPENDIX B  
INVITATIONS

Generic:

*The Cadets of A Company, Fourth Regiment  
cordially invite you  
to their Dining-In  
on Wednesday, the twenty-seventh of September  
at six o'clock in the evening  
Black, Gold, Gray Room  
Washington Hall*

*R. S. V. P.*

*Formal*

Personal:

*The Cadets of A Company, Fourth Regiment  
cordially invite  
Colonel Smith  
to their Dining-in  
on Wednesday, the twenty-seventh of September  
at half past six o'clock in the evening  
Black, Gold, Gray Room  
Washington Hall*

*R. S. V. P.*

*Formal*

Envelope:

Address using full title, rank, name, and address.

*Lieutenant Colonel John W. Smith  
Regiment Factical Officer  
Fourth Regiment  
United States Corps of Cadets  
West Point, NY 10996*



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APPENDIX D  
PLACE SETTING

A complete place setting is properly set as shown below. Use only what your menu requires. If fewer glasses are needed, move the outer ones in. The water glass always goes at the tip of the first knife. The glass and silverware intended for each course should be removed from the table before the next course is served.

- |                         |                      |
|-------------------------|----------------------|
| 1. Fish fork            | 9. Fish knife        |
| 2. Meat fork            | 10. Soup spoon       |
| 3. Salad fork*          | 11. Cocktail fork    |
| 4. Butter knife         | 12. Water glass      |
| 5. Bread knife          | 13. Red wine glass   |
| 6. Place card           | 14. White wine glass |
| 7. Dessert fork & spoon | 15. Champagne glass  |
| 8. Meat knife           | 16. Napkin           |

\* If salad is served before the entrée, move the salad fork (#3) to the left of the meat fork (#2).

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APPENDIX E  
TOASTS

TOASTING ORDER:

The order of toasts at a cadet company level dining-in which has no foreign dignitaries in attendance:

To the President of the United States  
Response: "To the President"

To the United States Army  
Response: "To the Army"

To the United States Military Academy  
Response: "To the Military Academy"

To Company E-3  
Response: "To the Eagles"

Following the introduction of any guest (s) the final toast should be,

To our guest  
Response: "Hear, Hear"

TOASTING PROCEDURE:

Procedures for proposing and conducting toasts vary, as tradition and commands dictate from unit to unit. At the cadet company dining-in where festivities are subject to a definite time restraint the toastmaster would stand and state his toast:

"I propose a toast to the United States Army"

At the United States Army Sergeants Major Academy the procedure, as tradition dictates, is somewhat more complex:

Toastmaster: (Rises) "Mr. Vice, SGM Smith requests to  
(SGM Smith) be recognized.

Mr. Vice: "SGM Smith has the floor. What is the  
nature of your request?"

- SGM Smith: “Mr. Vice, I would like to propose a toast.”
- Mr. Vice: “SGM Smith, what is the nature of your toast?”
- SGM Smith: “Mr. Vice, In keeping with this most auspicious occasion of honoring a tradition that has endured though the centuries, I would like us to remember another long standing tradition, that of the first toast of the evening being offered to the Commander in Chief, The President.”
- Mr. Vice: “SGM Smith, I find your toast to be most appropriate. Please rise with a charged glass for the traditional toast.” (Raps gavel twice. All members of the mess rise and stand behind their chairs with a charged glass held at waist level.) “SGM Smith, propose your toast.”
- SGM Smith: “Fellow Noncommissioned Officers, I propose a toast to the Commander in Chief, The President of the United States.”
- All: “To the President.”
- (Members of the Mess will remain standing until all the toasts are completed)



APPENDIX F  
RULES OF THE MESS

Example from B Company, 2/11 IN Dining-In MOI:

RULES OF THE MESS

Rules of the mess are established in order to insure dignified conduct of the mess and related ceremonies. Violations of the established rules normally result in the assessment of pecuniary liabilities as adjudged by Mr. Vice or POM. The following rules are hereby announced:

- Members of the mess will not be tardy to any proceedings.
- No member will violate uniform regulations.
- All rules of military protocol and etiquette will be in effect throughout the proceedings.
- All members of the mess will be treated with deference and respect, regardless of rank. Rumors and slander of a sexual nature will not be tolerated.
- Members will not discuss business matters not pertinent to the discussion of the mess.
- Members of the mess will not become intoxicated prior to the dinner.
- No member will take his seat or depart the mess until properly opened by Mr. Vice or the POM.
- Members will not drink from toasting glass until all members' glasses have been charged the first toast proposed.
- Members will dispense completely with all conversation during comments by the President and Guests and the proposal of toasts.

-- Members will pick up toasting glass and hold it waist high except when responding to the toasts proposed, at which time it will be elevated to eye level.

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-- Members will not be caught with an uncharged glass.

-- Any officer wishing to propose a toast, comment on a point of order, respond to the challenge of another member of the Mess, or in general address the Mess, must first address Mr. Vice. The only exception to the rule is in response to a prior question or comment from the POM.

-- Members may eat when served, except for the main course, unless the head table has not been served. The main course will not be eaten until approved by Mr. Vice.

-- Mr. Vice, acting on behalf of the POM, will coordinate all activities of the Mess. All conversations directed to the members of the Mess will be first addressed to Mr. Vice. This approval or recognition is required prior to any member of the Mess addressing either the entire Mess or specific member.

-- Do not rap on glass for attention or applause.

-- All points of order will be directed to Mr. Vice.

-- No member will harass or embarrass the guests of The Mess without permission of the POM or Mr. Vice.

-- No member will use loud, obtrusive, or foul language, nor will any member make any remarks in foreign languages.

-- Additional rules for the conduct of the Mess Will be published at the whim of Mr. Vice and the POM.

APPENDIX G  
SEQUENCE OF EVENTS

The proper sequence of events for the military  
Formal dining-in follows, however, all the events  
Listed are not required for a proper dining-in.

Receiving Line

Cocktail Period

Dinner Chimes – Movement to Mess

Post Colors

Invocation

Toasts

Introduction of Guests

Toasts – to the guests

Punch Bowl Ceremony,  
Entertainment or  
Awards Ceremony

Dinner

Break

Desert – Coffee/Cigars

Highlight Event – Guest Speaker

Closing Remarks

Final toasts – The Unit  
                                Fallen Comrades

Benediction

Retire Colors

Mess Adjourned

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An example of the typical “Schedule of Events” for a cadet company is as follows:

COMPANY G, 3<sup>RD</sup> REGIMENT  
DINING-IN  
21 APRIL 1999

SCHEDULE OF EVENTS

1820	Arrival
1825	Mess Call
1830	President Opens the Mess
1835	Post Colors
1840	Punchbowl Ceremony
1850	Dinner Served
1905	Guest Speaker
1925	Retire Colors

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