

# *A New Officer's Guide to Etiquette and Decorum*



*(or, How To Avoid Embarrassing Yourself In Public!)*

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# INTRODUCTION

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As a commissioned officer, you represent the United States Air Force 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. High standards of conduct, both social and military, are expected of you, and the Air Force officer's reputation as a gentleman is a fundamental responsibility of officership. You come from many different backgrounds and your knowledge of military customs and courtesies varies greatly. Therefore, this guide highlights the standards of decorum expected of you. In situations not specifically covered here, let common sense and consideration for others guide you. Habits of thoughtful, considerate behavior are the foundations of appropriate conduct.

During your first months and years on active duty, you'll be faced with many social situations of both a formal and informal nature that raise questions about correct behavior, dress, and decorum. That's all social etiquette essentially is—the appropriate behaviors in the appropriate situations. Few rules are written, but time and experience has taught us to respond to these often uncomfortable and awkward situations in an appropriate manner. The purpose of this guide is to familiarize you with the more common matters of protocol and etiquette you'll see while on active duty. Don't be afraid! A little knowledge and common sense will help you through these situations—you might even have fun!

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## QUIZ

How much do you know about etiquette and decorum? See if you can answer the 15 most frequently asked questions by new Air Force officers.

1. If I'm at a formal dinner, which fork do I use first? (p. 28)
2. What do I wear if my boss invites me to his home for dinner? (pp. 37-42)
3. If I don't drink alcohol, what do I do during formal toasting at a Dining In/Out? (p. 31)
4. During a change of command reception, who goes through the receiving line first, my spouse or me? (p. 7-8)
5. How do I introduce my spouse to the Commander of my unit? (p. 1)
6. My squadron has a worn-out American Flag. How do I properly dispose of it? (p. 60)
7. If the boss invites me to dinner at his home, should I bring a gift? (p. 26)
8. How do I place my napkin when the meal is complete? (p. 28)
9. What is considered "Informal Wear"? (pp. 37-42)
10. The Commander's wife has a morning coffee with the wives of the unit. Should my wife bring the kids along? (p. 23)
11. If I'm in uniform and I pass a senior officer, while carrying a package with both hands, what do I do? (p. 58)
12. When I'm at a social function, what kinds of topics should I avoid? (pp. 13-15)
13. I just received an invitation to an evening social function. How do I know if it's formal or informal? (pp. 19; 41)
14. I don't drink alcohol. Must I feel compelled to drink liquor at a social function? (p. 31)
15. What do I do if at a formal dinner, and I drop my fork? (p. 28)

If you have these all correct, you have a job in protocol somewhere in your future! If you missed a few, read on so you don't embarrass yourself as you begin your career as an Air Force officer...

# CHAPTER 1

## INTRODUCTION AND TITLES

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Introductions are the most commonly practiced “formal” social customs. They are accepted and necessary procedures for converting strangers into acquaintances. The traditional procedures are the same in the military as in civilian life and are quite simple.

Regarding introductions, your primary responsibility is to ensure they are made when appropriate. It’s rude and inconsiderate to fail to make a necessary introduction. So, never allow someone to stand awkwardly silent because an introduction hasn’t been made. It’s also rude to force introductions when they aren’t appropriate or convenient. Avoid showing someone around in a crowd, hurrying to introduce him or her to everyone in sight, interrupting conversations for a meaningless exchange of instantly forgotten names.

### **Breaking the Ice – How to Make Introductions**

Your basic guideline in making introductions is to ensure each person knows the other’s name and they have enough information to start a conversation. Your first concern should be to state names clearly and correctly. If you have doubt as to one or the other’s correct name, ask, saying, for example, “I’m sorry, your name again, please?”

Your next problem is to make the introduction in the correct format. The single rule to keep in mind is to mention the name of the more honored person first.

Mention ladies’ names first when they’re introduced to any gentleman except the President, foreign royalty, head of state, and members of the clergy.

General priorities or “rules for seniority for introductions” are outlined below.

INTRODUCE SENIORS	TO JUNIORS
Ladies	To Gentlemen
Officers	To Cadets or Officer Trainees
Married Ladies	To Unmarried Ladies
Church Dignitaries	To Laymen
Elderly Persons	To Young People



A more formal introduction, used when one person is considerably senior to the other:

“Colonel Smith, may I present Captain Jones?”

A less formal, equally correct example:

“Mrs. Brown, this is Lieutenant Johnson.”

Especially when the people you’re introducing are contemporaries, names without titles are appropriate. Use first names, but also be sure to include last names if they aren’t known or obvious.

“Mary Andrews, this is Bill White.”

Or if Bill knows that Mary Andrews is your fiancée:

“Mary, this is Bill White.”

Having ensured both persons have heard each others’ names correctly and clearly, you may add a brief comment to serve as a conversation opener for them: “Bill is my roommate,” or “Mary just arrived yesterday.” Avoid giving lengthy or possibly embarrassing information. In many situations, you won’t need to say anything after the names--use your judgment as to what will be most helpful.

## **Introductions to Group**

Introducing an individual to a group is relatively simple. When you have the group’s attention, merely state the newcomer’s name and then the names of others in the group in whatever order they happen to be standing or sitting. It isn’t necessary for the newcomer to shake hands with everyone in the group if it’s inconvenient to him or her. If the group’s too large for you to get its attention, introduce your guest to a small cluster of people.

## **Being Introduced**

The generally accepted response to an introduction is, “How do you do?” although a “Hello” may be friendlier and is acceptable, especially among younger persons. It’s wise for you to add the name of the newly met person. This technique helps fix the name in your mind. Avoid acknowledging introductions with a stuffy “I am pleased to make your acquaintance” or “Pleased to meet you.”

When you’re being introduced and the person making the introduction falters on your name, help them out of a potentially embarrassing situation by saying, “Bill White,” as you extend your hand. This is an important courtesy to both the introducer and the introduced. The object is to make the introduction as smooth as possible, so you must exercise some judgment as to the necessity and timing of the offering of your own name.

## **When to Stand**

The person making an introduction always stands. When you're introduced, stand if possible. However, if you find yourself seated at a crowded table during introductions, don't disrupt the table.

## **Self-Introductions**

Sometimes self-introductions are necessary. If you find yourself thrown together socially with another person when there's no one around to make introductions, a "How do you do? I'm Bill White" or "Hello, I'm Susan Jones" will make the acquaintance. If in the company of a lady, the gentleman should always initiate the introduction.

With the great amount of travel in the military, it's common to meet old acquaintances at unexpected times in odd corners of the world. Remember, names are sometimes hard to remember. When you say hello include your name, and if necessary a further reminder of where you had met before. You might say, "Good morning, Colonel Walls, I'm Captain White; I was in one of your flights in Squadron 7 in 1991," as you extend your hand.

## **Shaking Hands**

Men normally shake hands when being introduced unless it's inconvenient. The handshake should be firm but not crushing. Don't make a sudden "grab" which leaves you shaking "hands" with the other person's fingers. Don't offer a limp, "dead fish" handshake.

Women sometimes shake hands when being introduced to men: it's their choice. If you're a man, don't put your hand out until the woman extends hers. It's generally acceptable for women officers to shake hands when being introduced to male officers. So if you're a woman, go ahead and initiate the handshake.

Remember: A firm handshake and direct eye contact are signs of self-confidence.

## **Titles**

During your military career, you'll meet many people who deserve to be addressed by a title rather than "Mr." or "Mrs." This summary illustrates common examples. As a general rule, use names when possible, as well as titles.

## Persons

Officer (Man)

Officer (Woman)

Chaplain

Military Doctor or Dentist

General Officer

NCO/Airman

Naval Officer

Captain of a Ship

Admiral

President of US

Other High Government Officials

Ambassador

Senator

Representative

Governor

Mayor

Judge

## Form of Address

Rank and name

Rank and name (and as “Ma’am” - not “Sir”)

“Chaplain” Catholic Chaplains of all ranks and Jewish Chaplains as “Rabbi”

“Doctor”

“General” (more proper than “Sir” or “Ma’am”)

Use rank and name, not just last name

Rank and name. When introducing a Naval captain in civilian clothes, specify “Captain (name), US Navy” (remember a Naval Captain isn’t the same rank as an Air Force Captain)

Captain (name)” (regardless of actual rank)

“Admiral”

“Mr./Madam President”

Either “Mr./Madam Vice President”  
Mr./Madam Chief Justice”  
“Mr./Madam Secretary” etc. or “Mr./Ms. (name)”

“Your Excellency” or “Mr./Madame Ambassador”

“Senator” or “Senator (name)”

“Mr./Ms. (name)” or Congressman/  
Congresswoman (name)”

“Governor” or “Governor (name)”

“Mayor (name)”

“Judge (name)” or “Your Honor”

**Persons**

Bishop, Archbishop, Dean, Canon,  
Monsignor, Sister, Archdeacon, Brother,  
Cantor

Priest

Rabbi

Protestant

Professor

Doctor (anyone with a Doctoral Degree)

**Form of Addresses**

Bishop (name)" "Archbishop  
(name)" etc.

"Father (name)"

Rabbi (name)" or "Rabbi" "Dr.  
(name)" if appropriate

With Doctor's Degree —"Dr. (name)" or  
"The Reverend Dr. (name)" With no  
Doctor's Degree—"The Reverend (name)"  
correct

"Professor"

"Doctor"

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# CHAPTER 2

## SOCIAL ACTIVITIES AND THE ART OF CONVERSATION

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### **Formal Activities**

All social activities are classified by type--either formal or informal. A formal affair is one where you're expected to wear formal clothes, i.e., mess dress for the officer and a formal gown or tuxedo for the civilian guest. It's also characterized by certain established procedures. The invitation is written and always takes the same form, whether the function is a banquet, dance, or reception. The affair is conducted according to rules that are fixed, with each type of formal affair making its own established demands on the individual. In summary, the formal affair is relatively ceremonious and stylized.

### **Informal Activities**

In contrast, the informal function is quite different. The clothes you wear depend on the occasion and plans of your host and hostess. The invitation may take almost any form, but the atmosphere is normally relaxed with little, if any ceremony.

### **Receiving Lines**

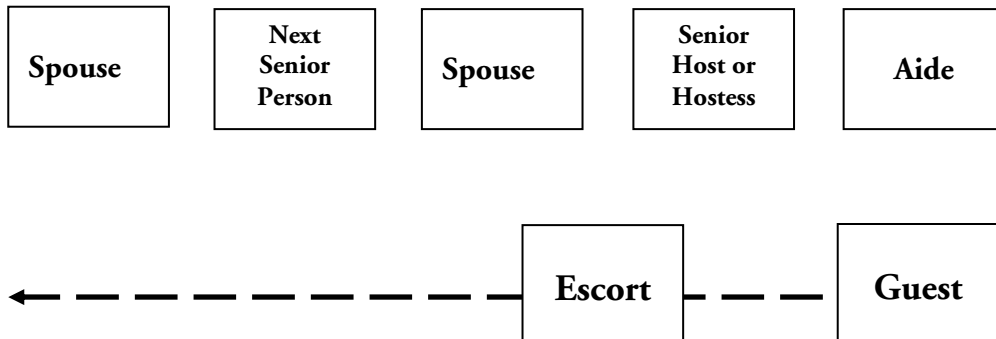
The receiving line is a perfect example of established procedures for a formal occasion, usually a change of command or farewell reception. The receiving line affords the opportunity for you and your guest(s) to meet your new commander or honored guests for the occasion. It's a breach of etiquette for officers and their guests not to present themselves immediately after arrival to those in the line. Be on time for receiving lines, especially if a specific time block by unit or duty section is assigned.

### **Formation**

The formation of a receiving line is based on the position of the senior host or dignitary. He/She is accorded the position of honor and is the first individual to whom you are introduced. The honored person is always second in line; the first member of the line makes the presentations. The third person in line is the spouse of the honored person, if present.

Following are the other members of the receiving party in order of seniority, each with the spouse immediately following. Only at the request of the senior host or visiting dignitary will the order be changed.

## Receiving Line



### Procedures

The procedures for passing through a receiving line are simple. Introduce yourself and your guest to the aide who's assisting the host. After the initial introduction to the honored person, you'll be introduced and passed on to each person in the line by the lady or gentleman preceding that person. Don't hesitate to mention your name to anyone who has missed it. Your greeting should be short and courteous: a strait forward handshake with the man, a firm but gentle handshake with the woman, a polite "How do you do" to both. When you've met everyone in the line, move away (not forgetting your guest behind you) and allow those after you the opportunity to go through the line also. If both you and your spouse happen to be military members, remember the "known" person goes first at the start of the receiving line.

Receiving lines shouldn't make you nervous to the extent that you miss all the formal functions just to avoid them. Once you've made your way through a receiving line, you'll wonder why it concerned you.

### Your Spouse or Guest

Now that you've greeted your host and hostess, center your attention on your spouse or guest. Do your best to ensure he or she has fun. Introduce your guest to your friends. Provide refreshments if available and your guest desires them. Be

attentive as possible. Remember, conversation is a two-way communication. If it's to be interesting to all participants, each must listen as well as talk. Answer all the questions about your life and the Air Force that your guest may ask, but forego the use of slang, technical terms, or shop talk. You'll find enough common interest in topics such as sports, hobbies, or other activities to make conversation enjoyable with you. If you become engrossed in talking about computers, you may find yourself leading a formation of one--you. Your guest just may be smothering yawns and looking around for more interesting company.

## **SPEAKING OF CONVERSATION... (Or, what do I talk about?)**

According to Letitia Baldrige's Guide to Executive Manners, many attributes characterize a good conversationalist, including being polite and caring about other people. A good conversationalist:

**Is well informed and talks on a broad range of subjects.** The person who can talk only about their business bores very quickly even his/her own colleagues. A good conversationalist may be in the business of flying fighters, but also knows how to participate, at least minimally, in discussing subjects like politics, science, and art.

**Shows interest in what other people do for a living,** the conditions of their work, and the new directions in which they may be heading.

**Does not have tunnel vision but keeps abreast of the major news in the world.** Is able to make a fast subject switch, perhaps even from the status of the thrift industry to the political demands of the PLO, or from the debate over stealth technology to the issue of educational reform in the U.S.

**Adjusts to the person with whom he is talking,** whether you both are waiting for a meeting to start, waiting for a plane to depart, or waiting for the dessert course to arrive at the dining-out. For example, an officer sitting with the young non-working wife of a member of his staff should make an effort to talk to her about such matters as her children and the conditions of schools in the area; in drawing her out, he will find subjects interesting to her.

**Makes statements based on knowledge and experience, not just conjecture.** If he's not an expert on a subject, he should not pretend to be. One can easily join in a conversation without being an expert: what is important is not to exaggerate one's knowledge.



If, for example, you were talking with specialists on rice growing in Texas, your best role would be that of an interesting person. “Why is Texas rice gaining such a large share of the market? What’s so special about it?” Never be afraid to admit you do not know something, and remember that people are flattered by having questions asked of them that they are able to answer.

**Looks a person straight in the eye.** Eye contact is very important in any kind of situation. If you don’t look at a person when you’re speaking to him, you’re showing you’re embarrassed or frightened or perhaps hiding something--hardly the presence you wish to project.

## **How to look really bad**

The worst kind of disrespect and an obvious sign of disinterest is when a person talks to another with a roving eye to see who else is at the party or in the room. You’ve seen them--they’re the ones looking over the shoulder of the person they’re talking to, often watching the door to see who walks through it. If someone well known appears, you can bet that person will take off like a rabbit, abandoning you all during the time they are talking to you, whether it’s in the conference room or at the cocktail party. They give you quality attention--the only kind that counts.

## **More Pointers--A good conversationalist...**

**Avoids correcting another’s grammar or pronunciation in public.** It is humiliating to people to have their personal errors pointed out to them in front of their peers. Real friends help their colleagues in private with any language difficulties. Someone with major speech or language difficulties should get help, either by taking courses at night in local colleges or universities or in private tutoring with an English teacher.

**Shows genuine interest in good news about colleagues.** When you hear happy news about one of your peers, and you help spread it, you are demonstrating good team spirit.

**Doesn’t interrupt.** It is extremely rude to interrupt someone who’s in the middle of a story or the explosion of an idea, even if you know that what you have to say is more important, or at least more amusing.

**Knows how to question a stranger in a friendly rather than prying way.** It’s one thing to ask someone you have just met if his unit is a good place to work; it’s another to ask how close he is with the commander. When you meet someone, they’ll be flattered by your interest in them, but keep that interest in a very general frame of reference.

**Accepts compliments gracefully.** Nothing ruins the flow of conversation more quickly than refusing a compliment you have just received. Never disagree with something nice that is said to you or about you. If someone says, “Jan, you were brilliant in your presentation on the budget cuts this morning,” don’t reject the compliment. Don’t say something like “Oh, I didn’t think I did that well. I was too tense, and I forgot the best part of my introduction. I really could have done it a lot better.” Your answer to a compliment should be, “Aren’t you nice to say that! Thank you very much.”

**Knows how to pay compliments gracefully.** A compliment should provide a very “up” moment in the interaction of the people involved. It should cause people to smile. (When they smile, you’ll note their voices become more animated.) Praise should be given in a sincere manner, without exaggeration, unless the person speaking chooses an inoffensively amusing tongue-in-cheek method of praise (ex: “Bert did such a terrific job helping to write the General’s speech, he’s now been tapped to handle another one in December!) When someone in the unit does an excellent job on anything from producing a routine letter to handling the typing of a complicated report, that person deserves a compliment. Give it to them when it will make them feel the best (ex: when a member of senior management is present to hear you pay the compliment).

**Knows when and how to talk about non-business subjects.** This requires understanding what is appropriate and also what good timing is. If you’re talking to someone seriously engrossed in a particular business subject, you should not suddenly interrupt with a new subject that has nothing to do with business: the effect would be jarring and confusing. If the other person is wondering “how great a shortfall there will be in meeting budget this financial year,” that is not the moment for you suddenly to start talking about this year’s winner of the Heisman Trophy. However, if you are relaxing with that person over coffee after the meeting and you are discussing nothing in particular, it’s perfectly proper to bring up this year’s trophy winner (assuming the person is at least something of a sports fan). It’s an “up” subject that is pleasant to discuss.

**Doesn’t overdose on their interests in conversation.** Not everyone may be as interested as he is in the latest computer technology. The woman officer recently returned from maternity leave must know that her conversation should not center solely on her new baby. The officer who flies model planes for a hobby realizes that he must not monopolize every non-business conversation with a discussion of planes. In other words, one should treat one’s own particular passion in life with intelligence and restraint.

**Doesn't burst somebody else's balloon.** If someone has great news to impart, do not try to dampen their spirits, even if you feel you have information that proves them to be overly enthusiastic. If the person sitting next to you makes a stronger positive statement about the economy and you disagree, don't throw a damper on them in front of everyone else.

**Wait to see the person privately before telling why you disagree.** In front of others you can always respond with some sort of statement that does not connote acceptance but is not hostile or accusatory either: "I certainly hope you're right."

**Address everyone within the group, not just one or two people.** If everyone is listening to you, be aware of all members of your audience. Don't have a conversation that shuts out others sitting or standing with you. Glance at each person every so often as you talk: don't discuss something with one person in the group that has no relation whatsoever to any other member of the group (for ex: a party to which only the two of you have been invited).

**Knows how to make a shy person feel part of the group.** Sometimes, it just takes one question to bring a shy person into the group. For ex: if there is a chemist who has not opened his/her mouth, probably out of shyness, throw them a substantive question on chemistry that would interest the group. In other words, give him/her a chance to shine in front of everyone.

**Is aware of when he may have begun to bore an audience.** Even a person who can talk about their jobs in a fascinating way can overdo it. A good conversationalist senses when this happens. If they see the attention lagging, the person should change to someone else's profession or project. It's not difficult to make that abrupt change. You can say something as simple as "Listen, you've all heard more than enough about my trials and tribulations, I'd like to hear about Harry's new job as squadron commander. Is it true, Harry, that...?"

**Steps in to fill an embarrassing void in the conversation.** We have all suffered through uncomfortable moments when all conversation suddenly ceases simultaneously and no one seems to know how to start it going again. Several pairs of eyes stare at the floor or out the window. If you make a joke or say something corny ("Listen, I'll give five bucks to the first person who can recite all of the capitals in five minutes!"), you'll become an instant hero. You will have broken the tension, and the conversation will begin again.

**Is diplomatic when they have a lot of work to do on a trip and is seated next to a person who insists on talking.** When you have a great deal of work to do on the airplane but there's a "Chatterbox" of either sex next to you, it's a time to call on your self-control and good manners. Respond politely but tersely to this person's questions--"Yes, you're certainly right about that." Keep your head bowed low in your work, and by the fourth interruption explain your dilemma. Show your seatmate all of the material you must study; explain all of the deadlines you are facing. Then apologize that this heavy workload is going to deprive you of the pleasure of chatting. Lend your seatmate a book or magazine to read that might be enjoyable. And during the service of the meal, show you are not an ogre by making some pleasant conversation. After all, it's very hard to concentrate on your work when attacking the airlines' standard chicken with rice.

## **Topics to avoid like the plague**

Baldrige lists some subjects a good conversationalist **doesn't** discuss.

**Your health.** No one is that interested in the results of your annual physical or in the state of your allergies. If someone asks you how you are, answer "Fine", rather than giving chapter and verse about your gum surgery, conjunctivitis, and the wart on the bottom of your foot. Your diet is even a more boring subject.

**Other peoples' health.** People who have serious diseases, such as cancer, arteriosclerosis, arthritis, etc., usually do not want the ailment to be everyone's focus of conversation. Don't greet an acquaintance who has been ill with a worried frown when you see him. If he is back at work, even part-time, take it for granted he is going to get well and be fully productive. Treat them like everyone else, not like someone who can't function. Don't keep reminding the person, and everyone, else of what they've been through.

**Controversial subjects when you don't know where people stand.** I once tried hard to stop a young woman from giving a vehement lecture on the subject of a woman's right to choose abortion; we were standing with her boss, and what I knew that she didn't know was that the boss's wife was the vociferous head of the state's pro-life movement. Unless you're on sure ground, it's better not to bring up subjects that people feel very emotional about-and that includes religion, genetic meddling, and nuclear warfare.

**How much things cost.** A person whose entire conversation keeps returning to how much things cost, how much money so-and-so makes, and what kind of net worth everyone has is afflicted with the grossest kind of materialism. It's no one's business how much someone paid for his house, car, or fur coat. The person whose conversation is peppered with "How much?" makes everyone around him extremely uncomfortable. The general reaction of most people is to feel they would not want to have to make a deal with him.

**Personal misfortunes.** Don't keep bringing up with a colleague some great loss they have suffered, whether it's a death in the family, the destruction of the house, the loss of possessions in a robbery, etc. Of course, if the victim brings up the subject himself, then give them all the sympathy and listen for as long as they wish to talk. But don't take on the role of reporter just to satisfy your own curiosity. Often the best kind of conversation to have with someone who has been through a traumatic experience is to let the person do the talking--as much as they want to. This goes back to a basic rule of how to be a good conversationalist. Be a good listener!

**Trite and overdone subjects.** Always bring up topics of conversation that people enjoy discussing, not something that is overexposed and already past its prime as national or international story. If a disaster has been overplayed in the media for a couple of weeks, don't bring it up unless you have some news on the subject no one else knows. Stay away from subjects that might cause others to groan inwardly, "Oh no, not that again!"

**Stories in questionable taste.** Off-color jokes may be great to hear at the water cooler, but they are rarely successful when told in mixed company, or even just with members of one's own sex in public.

**Gossip that is harmful.** There are too many opportunities in the business day to instigate or repeat harmful gossip that might seriously affect some one's career. Think before you participate in gossip, either by adding to it or by reinforcing it, even if you believe it to be true. The officer who defends a colleague-even with an innocuous statement such as "Look, I don't think you're being fair"-shows leadership qualities. If you want to defuse gossip, be ready with an interesting topic of conversation you can use to direct the group's attention. After all, one's entire career and position may be at stake.

## **Questions you're dying to know about but should never ask...**

- Your friend if the rumor is true they've lost their job
- A person who has just been diagnosed as having a feared disease (like cancer) if he would like to discuss it with you
- A person who is obese how much he weighs; a person with big feet what size shoe they wear; an overly tall or small person how tall he is
- Anyone if he or she is wearing a wig or toupee or if the hair is dyed
- A divorcing colleague for personal details, such as alimony payments, agreement on property settlements, child custody, etc.
- Anyone over 30 his or her age
- Anyone what his or her religion is
- A woman if she's pregnant
- If a person is undergoing therapy
- If that person has had a facelift
- About anyone's sex life

## **Shooting the breeze with the boss without appearing to be an apple polisher**

Most young officers dread being alone with the big boss in their office, while both are waiting for a plane at the airport, or when riding a considerable distance in a staff car. Instead of dreading it, they should realize that this is an opportunity and seize the chance not only to learn, but also to bring to light the things that never seem to be brought to senior management's attention.

A junior should "play it cool" and not force the conversation. The senior may be tired, want to think, or prefer to read or work. A bubbling, enthusiastic young officer may be just the kind of company the senior executive is not seeking at that point.

There are obvious cues the younger person should notice. If the senior person seems distracted, lost in his thoughts, it is best not to disturb them. If they answer questions perfunctorily, that means they are not in the mood to talk. At a certain moment the boss will probably put down on his lap what he is reading and address a question to his younger companion. That is the time for the latter to answer with clarity and sincerity. If the senior wants the junior to continue, they will give another cue, directing further questions to his companion, a signal that they are now ready to listen.

If the senior is ready for light talk-something not too serious-the younger person should be ready with some amusing stories of what is happening in the office or interesting news of anyone associated with the unit.

The young officer should follow the boss's lead as to whether they should talk about what is happening within the unit or in his job in particular or whether he/she should talk about anything but business. They can tell by the kind of questions asked. If the boss asks about a junior's squash game, it is not the time to talk about new systems that are not working as well as they should.

## **Shop talk and small talk**

Small talk is exactly that-unimportant conversation, filler for those cracks in substantive discussion when people want to relax and pass the time without intellectual strain. A person who knows how to make small talk has a useful talent. They can use it to fill embarrassingly silent moments, to put people at ease when they don't know each other and are trying too hard to size each other up, or to break tension in a conversation. He can use it to charm someone, flatter someone, or show off his own sense of humor.

If you've been talking assignments all morning and someone at lunch brings up the hockey skater who made a hat trick the night before, that's small talk. When a group has been going over the final draft of the budget and at the break one officer teases another for "looking more like General MacArthur everyday with his sunglasses and cigar," that's small talk.

It's helpful to keep your own data bank on people you meet-your impressions of each person, built up from the way they look, what their wearing, what they said, and what others said to them. You can glean a great deal of helpful information when you meet someone. Another person in the group might mention their children, a new project assignment, or a business trip they just took. You keep adding data to your memory bank. Then, if you have the occasion to talk to that person at a future date, you can introduce subjects of mutual interest with ease.

The more at ease you become in conversation, the better at small talk you become. It's a good way to survive common sticky social situations like being seated at dinner between two people whom you've never met, don't care about ever meeting again, and have absolutely nothing in common with except that you happen to work in the same company or industry as one of them. When you go into a situation like that, be ready to draw from a large group of topics, one of which must strike a responsive chord.

Almost anything is appropriate for small talk, for example:

- Pets
- Movies
- Weather
- Gardening
- Fashion Fads
- Best selling books
- The next Olympics
- Environmental issues
- New developments in science
- Fitness and nutrition programs
- Landlord and real estate trends
- News about local performing arts
- Recent world economic or political developments



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# CHAPTER 3

## SOCIAL CORRESPONDENCE

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During your Air Force career, you'll enjoy a variety of social activities. You'll receive written invitations to various functions, and you will, in turn, be expected to respond correctly to the invitations and to send thank-you notes when they are appropriate. The purpose of this section is to acquaint you with the various types of invitations and the information contained within them and to provide guidance in the area of your written responses.

### **Formal invitations and responses**

On occasion you'll receive an engraved invitation to a social function similar to the example in Figure A. This particular invitation is formal. You must answer it (and all other invitations promptly). There are really several forms of invitations and several ways to answer them correctly.

### **Invitations**

You'll notice on the invitation in Figure A the words are written or engraved (not printed) and that each line is balanced on either side of the center line of the page. The letters "R.S.V.P." stand for the French expression, "Repondez, s'il vous plait," which means, "please reply". Always extend the courtesy of a prompt reply so the host and hostess can plan for their social event.

The best way to answer an invitation of this sort is to copy the style of the invitation as closely as you can. In the event a written telephone number follows the R.S.V.P., it's proper to telephone your reply. But again, remember to be prompt.

Figure B is an example of an acceptance of the invitation in Figure A. Notice the same amount of information is given on each line as in the invitation. Also notice each line is centered and the lines above are evenly distributed vertically. Handwrite such a reply in ink on your most conservative stationary. Note you use the third person in a formal reply just as it's been used in the invitation.

*Brigadier General and Mrs. John Doe  
request the pleasure of the company of*

*Lt. Smith  
at dinner  
on Saturday, the third of November  
at eight o'clock*

*R.S.V.P.  
472-3900*

*Quarters 117*

**Figure A**

*Lt. Robert A. Smith  
accepts with pleasure  
the kind invitation of  
Brigadier General and Mrs. John Doe  
to dinner  
on Saturday, the third of November  
at eight o'clock*

**Figure B**

If illness, a previous engagement, or military duty prevents you from accepting an invitation, you must send a formal regret. Figure C is an example of a formal regret; notice, again, the format is identical to the invitation. In the regret, it's not necessary to include the hour and place, but be sure to include the date, as the couple who invited you may be hosting other events within the same time frame.

***Lt. Robert A. Smith**  
regrets that because of previous engagement  
he is unable to accept  
the kind invitation of  
Brigadier General and Mrs. John Doe for dinner  
on Saturday, the third of November  
at eight o'clock.*

**Figure C**

## **Informal invitations and responses**

The informal invitation is the type you'll receive most frequently. The informal invitation may be written, in which case it will be expressed in the first and second person, for example, in a short note or a calling card. You know the function is informal, even if the word "informal" is omitted from the invitation, when the invitation follows no prescribed form and is casual in expression and tone. Always make your reply promptly using the form as the invitation. At other times a telephone or face-to-face reply is appropriate also. As in replying to formal invitations, address your answer, written by hand, to the person or persons who

invited you. Send it to the reply address, if one is given or to the return address on the envelope in which the invitation came. If the R.S.V.P. is omitted on an informal invitation, it means your hostess is assuming you'll attend if you're able; a reply isn't compulsory.

You may receive an informal invitation by telephone or in person. If you do, either accept or decline immediately. To delay answering leaves the impression you might accept, provided nothing more interesting turns up in the meantime. If you can't give an immediate reply, explain why. In this case, your host or hostess may give you the opportunity to delay your reply for a reasonable length of time. Under such circumstances, you must reply at least a day in advance of the function, and a telephoned acceptance or declination is perfectly proper.

Figure D is an example of an informal written invitation. Note your hostess has signed herself using her Christian name and last name, which is entirely correct. This doesn't give you permission to call her by the name. She's still Mrs. Francis when you speak to her and in the salutation of your reply. Address her as Mrs. Thomas D. Francis on your response envelope, using her husband's name.

May 10

Dear Sue,

We are going to have a barbecue in our backyard Saturday night the 28th of May in honor of Bob and Jill Smith.

We hope you can come and do bring a date if you wish. Let's plan to start around seven so we will have plenty of time to enjoy the evening.

Hope to see you the 28th of May.  
Sincerely,  
Linda Francis

R.S.V.P.: Regrets Only

**Figure D**

Regardless of the type of invitation, keep in mind that a delayed reply without reason, or no reply, or failure to attend the function after accepting the are all serious breaches of etiquette. Don't rely on answering machines or teenagers to R.S.V.P. if communications can get messed up, they will!

## **Baldrige's Rules on Invitation Diplomacy And Related Matters**

### **Not attending after accepting/sending a substitute guest**

It is a sad fact that people today will accept something as important as a dinner invitation and then decide not to go at the last minute, without notifying anyone. When you commit to a party, you should go, unless you notify your hosts immediately.

It's equally rude, if you decide not to attend a function, to send a substitute without notifying your hosts. You may have had a very special seat at the dinner reserved for you, and if you send a substitute simply to fill up the table, you may have committed a gross error. There are functions at which it is perfectly all right to send other people (who like to have a reason to get dressed in evening clothes and go out to a free dinner), but you should know what you're doing before dispatching a substitute.

If at the last minute you cannot attend a dinner you had accepted, call your host's office, transmit your apologies to the host, and ask "if it would help matters" if you send someone from your office in your place. Give your host the opportunity to digest his or her disappointment at your last-minute cancellation and then to decide whether there's someone in his or her unit who should fill your place at the table. (The host probably would rather fill in with one of their own people than with a low echelon person from your office.)

### **Should I bring a date?**

An officer should bring a date to a party only if he has been asked by his hosts to do so, or if he's requested to do so, and the request has been granted.

If the invitation you receive has your name on it and the additional words "and guest," you may certainly bring along someone, but you should let your host's office know the name of that someone. It's really rude to show up with a date unless it has been cleared beforehand with the hosts. You may have been invited by your hosts as a badly needed single man or single woman.

Some single people think it is perfectly all right to show up at a cocktail party with a date (or even with members of the family). If the place where the party is being given is small, the host may have had to pare down his or her guest list carefully. Your showing up with someone who was not invited can cause embarrassment to you and your host.

In other words, never take anything for granted. Ask beforehand. Your host or your host's secretary will probably be very frank with you about whether or not it's all right to bring along someone. Important: If the invitation is to a meal, don't even ask to bring a guest.

### **Should I bring my children?**

If invited to a social function at someone's home, don't bring your children unless you are specifically asked to (except if the child is an infant). For formal, after-six functions, the presence of a child is inappropriate--arrange for a babysitter. If you're still unsure, ask the hostess.

### **Should I invite the boss to dinner?**

It is pretentious of a junior officer to invite a senior and his or her spouse to dinner--unless the junior person knows them well.

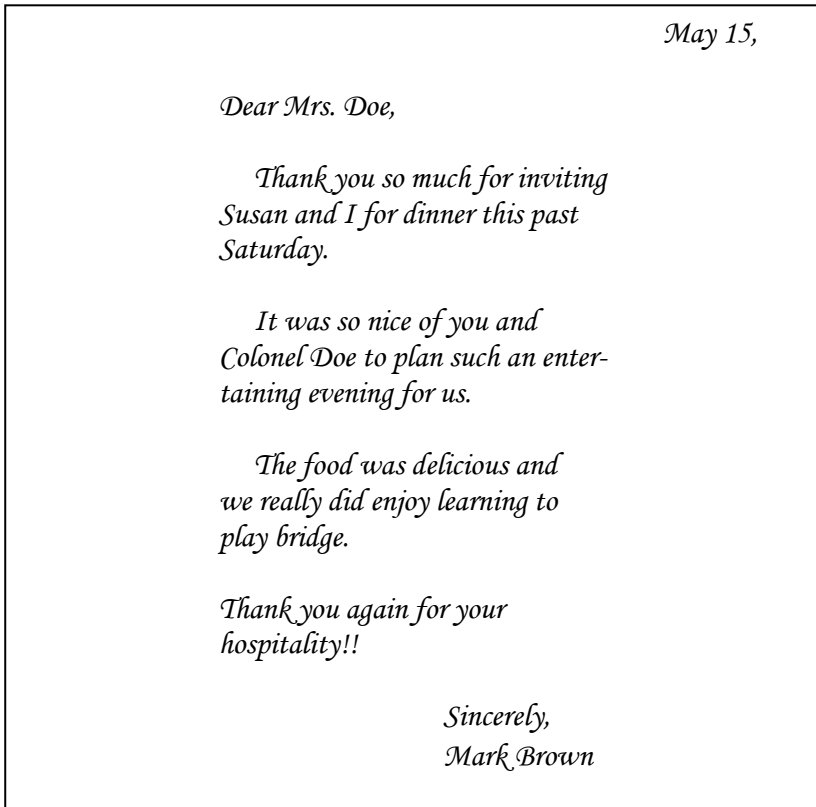
You put your boss on the spot by asking him/her to dinner "anytime-you name the date, any night" it's the wrong thing to do. If you have known your boss all your life, of course, and you have been to his house to dinner, you have a right to ask him to dinner, however, the fewer who know about it, the better. You should not discuss it around the office (nor should the boss's secretary), because your peers may view it as an attempt to gain the favor of the boss.

If you have invited your boss and his/her spouse to a meal and both are much older than you, you might invite another couple nearer their age, along with your friends (outside the office). They will enjoy the younger group, but having one other couple of their own age will make an even better bonding of the group.

Sometimes a junior officer and his or her spouse are repeatedly on the receiving end of the boss's invitations to dinner parties. If you are singled out like this, it probably means you give a lot in social situations and help make the party "work". Again, it's not wise to talk about these invitations around the office. You need not feel compelled to invite your boss and his/her spouse back each time you are invited to a function they host for cocktails or dinner.

### **Thank you notes—timeliness**

Prepare a thank you note as soon after a social occasion as possible, while the memory of the event is still fresh in your mind. Never delay writing more than one week. The only thing worse than sending a late thank you note is to not write one at all. Remember your host and hostess went to a great deal of trouble to entertain you. Failure to thank them properly is considered a social insult.



**Figure E**

Figure E is an example of a thank-you note. Thank-you notes do not follow a rigid format: they allow you to express yourself naturally. Therefore, keep them simple, short, and sincere. A thank-you letter should be from 2 to 3 paragraphs in length. The first expresses your thanks specifically and in detail. The last briefly summarizes your thanks. There should be one paragraph, in the middle; for example, comments on a particular pleasant aspect of the occasion, such as the meal.

Select quality writing paper for your notes and letters. Plain white stationery is always acceptable and a black ink pen is a must. Keep your letters as neat as possible. Remember, thank-you notes must always be handwritten; never use a typewriter or computer. If you have smeared ink or made a messy erasure, it is better to start over than to try to patch up a bad job.

Finally, always address the thank-you letter to the hostess, never to the host or both unless there was no hostess, as in the case of a bachelor host.

# CHAPTER 4

## DINING ETIQUETTE

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### Dining

Many of your invitations will be dinner invitations. Sooner or later, you'll attend dinner engagements of all types, from the backyard barbeque to the formal dinner. As we said, never fail to keep an engagement you've made, even if you regret having made it, unless it becomes impossible for you to keep it. Even then, the most basic manners require you let your host/hostess know in advance if you're forced to change your plans. The checklist below provides you a good general list of things to keep in mind when you're invited to dine out.

#### Checklist For Dining Out (Away from Home)

- Promptly accept or refuse
- Arrive on time
- Greet hostess/host first
- Speak/converse with everyone
- Make introductions, if necessary
- Offer to help the hostess
- Remember your table manners
- Thank your hostess/host
- Make a timely departure
- Send a thank-you note (See Chapter 3)



## **Informal Dining**

Because of their cost and the effort involved in hosting them, formal dinners are becoming less common. Thus, you'll attend many more informal and semi-formal dinners than formal ones. Again, your manners, regardless of the type of engagement, remain the same.

There are many ways in which informal and semi-formal dinners are given. Usually, your invitation will offer a clue as to what to expect. If the gathering is small, you'll probably have dinner at the table. The host or hostess will say when it's time to eat and show you where to sit when you arrive at the table. Gentlemen should help seat the ladies near them. You're expected to engage in general dinner conversation, so don't devote your entire attention to eating.

## **Should I Bring A Gift?**

If you desire, usually something like fresh flowers, a fruit basket, a bottle of wine or after-dinner liquor is appropriate. Remember, if you do bring a gift, be conservative. After all, your host and hostess are bound to figure out that you don't have a wine cellar full of Dom Perrignon champagne on a Lieutenant's salary! On the other hand, a 12-pack of generic beer wouldn't do either...

## **Serving**

If the host serves, assist him by passing plates. He may designate each plate for an individual. If he doesn't, accept the next plate passed your way after the guests beyond you have been served. The lady guest sitting farthest from the host takes the first plate, while the remainder of the guests are served in order of seating with the host serving the hostess and himself last. If serving dishes are passed around the table, insure that the person to your left takes some food before you do. Gentlemen should offer to hold heavy or hot dishes while the ladies serve themselves. Once you've served yourself, pass the dish on to the right. Dishes served by a maid will be presented at your left when it's your turn to serve yourself. Don't begin eating until the hostess begins.

Your host and hostess will offer second helpings if the quantity remaining permits. Don't hesitate if you desire seconds, but remember to gauge your capacity and try to eat what you take. You may refuse food which will make you ill, but mere dislike is not sufficient reason to refuse a dish your hostess or host has prepared with considerable pride.

The table will be cleared when dessert time comes. If the hostess clears the table herself, you can be of assistance by passing your plates to her. However, give only as much assistance as she desires, and don't stack dishes in any manner. Following dessert, coffee may be served either at the table or in the living room. When dinner ends, gentlemen should remember to hold the chairs of the ladies (to the left) as they rise to leave the table.

## **Buffets**

A hostess or host expecting a large group for dinner will often serve the meal buffet style. Buffets are advantageous because the serving problem is reduced considerably; the guests serve themselves.

At a buffet, the host or hostess will announce when the food is ready, and it's then up to you to join the line of guests at the sideboard or serving table and help yourself. Your host will not normally select a dinner partner for you; arrange for one yourself or join any group of guests you desire. Gentlemen, if you do choose a woman partner, you're expected to ensure her needs are taken care of in the way of food and drink. If you join a group, you shouldn't begin to eat until the ladies near you either have been served or have served themselves, as they desire. Again, gentlemen, be prepared to assist the unattached ladies in your group; some will want to choose their own food while others appreciate being served.

You may find yourself eating off your knees, from a small tray, card table, or even from the dining table if the size of the group permits. Your hostess will very often serve nothing which requires the use of a knife, so don't be surprised if knives aren't included as part of the silver laid out with the food. She expects you to eat as much as you desire, which means that a second trip to the serving table is permissible.

## **Table manners – how do I stack up against my friends?**

Many of your table manners are already a matter of habit. If they're incorrect, you probably don't realize it because your friends will never embarrass you by correcting you. This places the responsibility for developing good manners on you alone. Proper table manners are those motions which place food in your mouth quietly, neatly, and unobtrusively. If the motions you make are noisy, untidy, or if they call attention to your eating, they're bad manners. Check your eating habits against the following standards and correct yourself immediately if you need to.

## **Don't Wear Those Vegetables!**

After you sit down, place your napkin on your lap and open lengthwise so it's folded across your knees. Use the napkin primarily to remove food particles discreetly from around your mouth. At the end of the meal, lay it loosely, not refolded, at the left side of your plate, or, if the plate has been removed, in the center. Don't place your napkin on the table until the hostess places hers there to signal the meal is over.

## **Sit Up, Body Checking Not Allowed!**

If one hand is not being used while eating, keep it on your lap. Keep your elbows close to your sides at all times, not on the table or "menacing" your neighbors while you eat. The table, by the way, is meant to support the food and dishes, not the diner. Sit erect, with your feet under your chair.

## **Do I Have To Use My Silverware?**

Yes. Each piece of tableware has a specific use. Usually, the silver at each place is laid out so that you begin with the outside piece on each side and progress inward. If you become confused about which piece of silver to use, watch your hostess and do as she does. Never wipe silverware on your napkin. If you're in a restaurant, you may request another implement if yours is not clean. If a cup or bowl has no saucer, leave the implement you use in the dish; otherwise, place it on the saucer after use. Don't prop your knife and fork against your plate when they aren't in use. They belong either wholly on the plate or in your hand. When you're not using it, place your knife across the top of the plate, blade turned toward you. At the end of the meal, place your fork across the center of the plate, tines up, with the knife placed parallel above it.

## **Proper Grip**

Always hold your fork between the thumb and first two fingers of either hand. Never grasp it in your fist to facilitate cutting meat or other food. In short, holding a fork is more like holding a pencil than a screwdriver.

## **\*#@!, I Dropped My Fork!**

That's O.K., ask for a clean one from your hostess or wait person.

## **Hands Not Allowed!**

Some foods require large serving spoons and/or forks to transfer them from a serving dish to your plate. You can best handle them like this: When both a spoon and fork are provided, place the spoon under the food and use the fork to ensure the food stays on the spoon. Don't use either implement to "dig around" for the most appetizing or largest item in the serving dish. Take the portion which is on top and closest to you. If it has a bread or pastry base, take that at the same time.

## **Straws Not Allowed**

Consume soup or liquid desserts by dipping the spoon away from you and sipping without noise. It's permissible to tip the bowl (also away from you) as the level of liquid nears the bottom. You may drink soup or bouillon served in a handled cup or small cup-sized bowl. Eat large crackers served with soup separately, rather than breaking them up and dropping them in the liquid. Croutons are passed separately in a dish with a small serving spoon so that you may put a spoonful in your soup if you desire. Place oyster crackers on your butter plate (or on the tablecloth if there are no butter plates) and then drop them into the soup two or three at a time.

## **This Isn't a Cooking Experiment!**

Foods served separately should be kept separated on your plate, not mixed into a combination.

## **How to Keep Your Food From Flying Across The Table**

Don't talk while you have food in your mouth. Chew with your mouth closed; you're not expected to talk at all as you eat.

## **Drop That Hand Full of Mashed Potatoes!**

Use your fingers only with foods which can't be eaten more neatly with tableware, such as ears of corn, some fruits, or a sandwich. When you eat chicken, also use a knife and fork unless your host or hostess directs otherwise.

## **How to Gross Out Your Dinner Partner**

Never drink liquids when you have food in your mouth. You'll leave an unsightly smear on the rim of the cup or glass if you do. While it's always tempting, never chew ice at the dining table.

## **Ouch!**

If your food's too hot to eat or drink, don't blow on it. Wait quietly until its cool enough to suit you.

## **Salad Anyone?**

Occasionally, at buffets, for example, salads are served from a large salad bowl. If a separate salad plate isn't provided, place the salad on your dinner plate. It's permissible to use your dinner knife or a salad knife if one is at your place, to cut salad or lettuce in quarters.

## **Forceps, Scalpel...**

Cut your meat one piece at a time. This includes fish and fowl. Each piece should be bite-sized. It should be chewed and swallowed before you cut another. Cut the gristle out unless you happen to like it. If you encounter gristle in a piece you already have in your mouth, don't use your fingers to remove it; use your fork. It's proper for you to place a bite of meat in your mouth with the fork in your left hand, tines down, or with the fork in your right hand, tines up.

## **Eat 'em, Don't Throw 'em!**

Place rolls and bread either on the butter plate, if you have one, or on your dinner plate. Unless they're served bite-size, break small pieces from rolls and butter and eat each piece separately.

## **Don't Swallow Those Bones!**

Remove foreign objects you find in the food in your mouth, such as fish bones or other small particles, discreetly with your thumb and forefinger. Remove olive pits in the same manner. Use your spoon to remove prune and cherry pits. Remove by hand the pits or seeds of fruit you eat with your hands if you cannot extract them before you eat.

## **How to Avoid Tackiness In General**

Your coffee spoon does not belong in the sugar bowl, nor does your butter knife belong on the butter dish. If you don't have the necessary tableware, delay your eating or drinking long enough for the hostess to notice the matter and supply additional silver. If a waiter is present, request what you need. Cleaning your teeth at the table, in any manner, is a serious breach of etiquette. (See How To Gross Out Your Dinner Partner)

## Chillin' Out

When you've finished eating, leave the dishes where they are. Don't play with your silverware, rearrange your place setting, or tip back in your chair. Offer once to assist your hostess when you believe she'll appreciate your help. If you're refused, don't press the issue.

## Cocktails

Often, an after-dinner drink or cocktails are served in connection with a dinner engagement. While consuming in moderation is socially acceptable, there are do's and don'ts you should be aware of. When you're a guest for dinner or other social functions, never inquire if a cocktail or after-dinner drink is available. The offer must be extended by the host or hostess. Even if the offer is extended, you shouldn't assume this is an invitation to "help yourself."

## Drinking in Moderation

Exercise extreme caution when you use alcohol – there's no excuse for over indulging. Your host won't forget your short-sightedness and poor judgment in these situations. Moderation is the key to all situations where alcoholic beverages are involved.

If you do drink, don't forget there is some delay in alcohol's full effect. Drink slowly in order to maintain control. A couple of fast drinks on an empty stomach is a sure way to lose it. Keep in mind, mixing drinks isn't a good policy. If you expect wine to be served with a meal, be extra cautious with the cocktails before the meal. *If you anticipate pre-dinner cocktails and the eating hour is later than you're accustomed to, eat a little food just before arriving to ease the potential over-effect of alcohol on an empty stomach. Sometimes hors d'oeuvres will be available to help line your stomach; however, it's poor manners to stuff yourself.*

Have no fear of turning down a drink when you've had enough or of requesting a soft drink if it's what you'd prefer. Otherwise, a useful technique with your "last" drink is to leave it more than half full until you're sure your host won't insist on another "last one." Don't feel you "must" finish the drink – it isn't so. Drinking, especially before driving, is a matter of judgment, not manners. Remember, no one says you must drink alcohol. If you prefer a soft drink or other non-alcoholic beverage, then ask for one. Don't feel compelled to drink because others do—this is the Air Force, not high school—many of your peers don't drink!

## **Drinking and Driving**

One last point: For officers, *DUI normally leads to UCMJ action and involuntary separation from the Air Force*. Obviously, the people in your car, other motorists, and you are in jeopardy if you attempt it. Your good sense, as well as your personal standards of decorum, dictates you plan ahead not leaving a party with “one more for the road.”

# CHAPTER 5

## TIPS FOR ESCORTS

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### **Manners While Out On the Town**

Rules of conduct are always based on attitudes of thoughtfulness and respect, no matter who's involved. The rules for men's actions towards women have been pretty well established by custom and tradition, and it's safe to stick with the rules. Be careful not to overdo it. Gentlemen, don't patronize your women friends or assume they can't do anything for themselves because they're members of the "fairer sex." Use great care and discretion as you apply these courtesies. While it would be appropriate to open a door or offer your arm to your wife or fiancée, you could offend a woman colleague who's every bit your professional equal. Be careful!

### **Walking**

#### **Position**

When a man walks with a lady, he should walk at her side and closest to the street. When walking in an area without streets, he should walk at her left side. When using circular stairs, he should allow her to be on the inside at a comfortable distance from the rail.

#### **Offering the Arm**

In certain circumstances, it's appropriate for a man to offer his date his arm. A woman will ordinarily accept such an offer when walks are icy or hazardous, when footing is difficult, or when negotiating bleachers at athletic events. The man can then disengage himself as soon as help is no longer required.

#### **Opening Doors**

A man will normally open and hold all doors when practical. Usually, the woman reaches a door first and steps to one side to permit her escort to open it. If she has already grasped the doorknob, a quiet "allow me" and assistance in helping her open the door is proper. If the door opens inward, it's permissible to precede her through the entrance in order to hold the door open.



Also, it's proper for a man to precede a woman when entering a hazardous area such as a poorly lighted room or a steep or winding staircase. **Of course, it's appropriate for women officers who are lower rank to open doors for senior ranking officers,** but otherwise; the traditional standards still exist.

## **Leading the Way**

Normally a man will allow the woman to precede him, such as whenever a waiter or an usher is leading the way. However, when a male military escort and civilian date start through a military receiving line, when there is no waiter or usher present, or when in a crowd, the man should lead.

## **Standing**

A gentleman rarely sits while ladies in his company are standing. When a lady enters or leaves his company, the man should always stand. If it's awkward for him to stand, as it might be at a crowded table, a half-stand or similar brief gesture will suffice. The important thing is for him to be attentive and thoughtful.

## **Driving**

### **Entering and Exiting**

When in the company of a woman, a man should normally be the last to get in the car and the first out. This allows him to open and close the car door and render assistance to the lady as she enters or leaves the car. But if there is a doorman, he should perform the duty.

### **Using a Taxi**

The male escort's task when escorting in a taxi is to direct the driver and pay the fare. If you're in a situation in which you send your date to a different destination, you should offer to first pay the driver and include a 15 percent tip. However, when simply sharing a taxi with another person, it's necessary only to pay your share.

## **Offering Assistance**

### **Coats**

When the woman wears a coat or jacket, the man should assist her in putting it on or removing it. He should hold the coat at a comfortable height and position for her to slip her arms into the sleeves. It's also the man's responsibility to ensure his date's coat is hung up or folded properly on a chair until she needs it.

### **Chairs**

The man should assist the woman when she sits and when she rises from the table. This entails moving the chair away from the table and then placing it gently under her when she's in position. The man should let her make final adjustments. When she rises, he should move the chair out of her way. If a waiter is available to assist her, he should allow him to do so. In any event, the man should be sure that she's seated before he sits down.

## **Public Conduct**

### **Display of Affection (Smooching In Public)**

Any ostentatious display of affection in public is taboo. Such conduct is embarrassing to others and should be left to those who are immature. Moreover, holding hands or walking arm-in-arm is not proper while in uniform; military members are expected to maintain traditional standards of conduct.

## **Public Entertainment**

Conduct at the movies or the theater is a matter of common sense. Here are a few tips:

### **Movies**

- A man often takes his date to the lobby to wait while he buys the ticket. If the weather is nice and the line is long, or if the lobby is very crowded, you might prefer to wait together.
- Men should ask their date where she wants to sit.

- The man should plan on taking the seat nearest the aisle. This avoids having the man to step in front of his date when going to the lobby for refreshments.
- Be sure that you both can see.
- If loud or noisy people are seated nearby, the man should ask them to be quiet. If the disturbance continues, he may ask an usher to handle the situation. Be polite and discreet. Your objective is to enjoy the movie, not to embarrass your date.
- Above all, when you watch a movie, don't talk and carry on while others are trying to listen.

## **The Live Theater**

Your general standards of conduct at a live performance are similar to those in a movie.

A few specific points to remember are:

- Be on time. If you're late, wait for an intermission before you sit down.
- If you want to smoke during an intermission, it's permissible for you to go to the lobby. If you're with a date who wants to smoke and you don't, if a man, you should escort her to the lobby and remain with her there; if a woman, you may remain in your seat while he excuses himself.
- The signal for the end of intermission is normally a dimming of lights or ringing of a bell. Immediately return to your seat.

## **Concerts (i.e. Bach & Brahms, not ZZ Top)**

Concerts are like the live theater:

- Don't interrupt the music with a late arrival; wait for an intermission to take your seat.
- Applaud after the music. If in doubt as to whether or not the piece has been completed, watch the coordinator.

# CHAPTER 6

## CIVILIAN CLOTHES

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When you wear your uniform, you automatically want to look sharp because of your pride in being a member of the greatest Air Force in the world. You stand, sit, and walk erect—with a military image second to none! You keep yourself in good physical condition. Your uniform fits well, it's clean and neatly pressed, and your shoes are shined. When you maintain high standards of dress and bearing, you present a positive image of not only yourself but of the Air Force and gain the respect of everyone who meets you.

Thus, you know how to conduct yourself when in uniform; but what about your appearance in civilian clothes? Do you display the same image and sense of pride in civilian clothes as you do in uniform? First, understand that to look good doesn't require a large wardrobe of expensive clothes. The requirement is the use of good judgment in buying and wearing your civilian wardrobe. Dress appropriately and in keeping with your status as a professional, and you can't go wrong. The subject of civilian clothes isn't governed by a set of rigid rules, so this section attempts only to make suggestions about what to wear, how wear to it, and what to avoid in civilian apparel.

### **Quality vs Quantity**

When you purchase your wardrobe, do some thinking about your needs and buy only essentials. Purchase what you need, including shoes, from well-known, reputable manufacturers. In most cases, ready-made ensembles can be fitted properly with slight alteration. Also, if you buy from an established firm, count on good material and tailoring.

### **Wardrobe**

As an officer, you'll wear civilian clothes much less than your civilian contemporaries. However, you'll attend many functions in civilian attire where you'll be expected to be appropriately dressed. You can achieve a well-groomed look for every occasion by choosing a flexible, well-planned wardrobe. Pieces of any given outfit you purchase should coordinate with items from other outfits you have which will be used for the same kind of events. These inter-changeable wardrobe pieces will make your wardrobe seem much larger than it actually is and will keep the cost down. Flexibility is the key!

It's best for both men and women to begin a wardrobe with classic styles and basic colors. Avoid bright, gaudy colors such as red and Kelly green which will be easily remembered from one occasion to the next and extreme, faddish styles which will quickly become outdated. Instead, consider your wardrobe an investment, and buy the best clothing you can afford. The quality of the fabric, the workmanship, and the fit will pay off, and you will be able to wear the garments for several years. Natural fibers, such as silks and lightweight wools, are your best buy since they can be worn in almost all areas, whatever the season.

Listed below are suggested basic wardrobes for men and women which can be easily modified to suit your individual needs. Start with a few of the basic items and add the remaining pieces as you can afford to invest in them. To get the most for your money purchase all your major items in harmonious colors, textures, and patterns so you have maximum flexibility with minimum cost.

### **Wardrobe Basics (men)**

The following wardrobe will work well for most men. Navy or gray suits are classic and neutral and can be dressed up or down. However, you may elect to go with black and deep brown color scheme, if you feel navy and gray are not the most flattering colors for you.

- A suit (navy or grey) – Even if you only need a suit a couple of times a year, you're glad to have it on hand when those occasions arise. You can even wear the blazer with khakis or jeans. This is an item worth spending some money on.
- Black shoes and belt – These can be worn with khakis, jeans and your suit. This is an essential combo. Before buying brown, get black. You will find you get more mileage out of them, especially when attending more formal or evening functions.
- White dress shirt (good for day and night occasions) – White dress shirts look good on just about everybody. They look sharp and are versatile but should not be worn as a casual shirt.
- Solid tie – Solid ties are easy and versatile. If solid isn't your thing, try a classic diagonal stripe. Having several tie patterns on hand will ensure you are prepared for interviews, weddings and evening events.
- Blue blazer – A blue blazer is good all year round and easily coordinates with khakis and other items. If that bores you, try a tweed sport coat but also keep in mind that tweed is really only useful in fall and winter. Either way a blazer or tweed sport coat holds a look together.

- Khakis and jeans – No explanation necessary here. Jeans are a staple of the American wardrobe. Khakis are the same.
- Overcoat – An overcoat doesn't necessarily mean a long coat. It also means ¾-length or car coat length. This item really finishes an outfit and can be worn with everything including jeans. And everyone needs a coat in winter. Well, maybe not if you live in places like Phoenix or San Diego.
- Briefcase – A briefcase does not necessarily mean a hard case. It can be soft, or messenger bag style. If a man has to carry files and other documents, this is an essential.
- Athletic wear
- Casual shirt – A casual shirt such as a polo or button down is a must have to wear with jeans or other casual pants.
- Raincoat – Solid navy, gray, or tan classic style. May be belted.
- Shorts, shirts, sweaters and socks as needed.

## **Wardrobe Basics (women)**

An overall color coordinated wardrobe is also important for women to allow a combination of pieces. Pick one solid color as your foundation neutral. Black, navy, or camel are traditional standbys, but you could use burgundy, khaki or plum. This must be a color that you love, and one that flatters your skin tones. The basic wardrobe suggested below may be done in any basic color scheme which is complementary to your coloring as long as you avoid bright, flamboyant colors.

- Tailored two-piece suits in non-seasonal fabric, such as lightweight wool or silk (jacket and skirt). Recommended colors are gray or navy blue.
- Blazer. Good lightweight wool in camel or navy blue which coordinates with dresses, skirts or tailored wool slacks.
- Skirts. Two or three tailored, conservative colored skirts to coordinate with blazer and suit jackets. Lightweight wool or gabardine. One skirt may be subdued tweed. One pleated skirt in wool. One tea-length skirt in crepe or silk. Good basic colors are black and white.
- Slacks. Two or three tailored pair in wool or gabardine. Colors should be chosen to coordinate with blazer and suit jackets. One pair designer jeans.

- Blouses. Three to six cotton or silk with simple, classic cuts. Choose plain, subdued colors to coordinate with suits, skirts, and slacks. Sport tops as required.
- Dresses. Two or three simple, classic styled dresses which are solid color and have no frills or ruffles. Blue, black, and beige are preferred colors. These may be dressed up with jewelry for a coat and tie dinner or worn with a jacket for a more tailored look.
- Shoes. Plain pumps with 1 ½ to 2-inch heels, dark, subdued color with closed toe and heel. Two or three pair.
- Accessories. Small dressy handbag in leather to coordinate with shoes. A small black silk evening purse (may be worn with civilian dress clothes or military mess dress).
- Panty hose should always be a neutral, flesh color. Avoid patterned stockings and those in bright, unnatural colors, such as blue or green.
- Coat. Mid-calf length. Solid colors, such as camel, navy, or gray.

### **Proper Fit (men)**

If you buy clothes from reputable tailors or stores, they'll ensure proper fit. They know how your clothes should look on you, and you should rely on their recommendations for alterations. There are a few points to keep in mind, about the fit of your basic items:

- The collar of your suit or jacket shouldn't stand away from your neck.
- The sleeves of your jacket or coat should reveal about a half inch of the cuffs of your shirt when your arms hang at your sides. At no time should they ride high enough to expose all of your shirt cuffs. Sleeves of jackets should be about a quarter inch above your wrist joint.
- The jacket length should reach to the inside of the cupped hand with arms hanging naturally.
- The overcoat should not be longer than just below your knees.
- Whatever is being fitted, adopt your normal posture when you are measured for alterations or tailoring. If you don't, the finished product won't fit.

## **Proper Fit (women)**

- The length of the skirt on a skirted suit should be just below the knee. The coat length should cover the dress.
- Clothes that cling or slink should be avoided.
- The blazer or jacket should be full enough to cover the contours of the bust and should not be pinched at the waist.
- Skirts with ample hems, reinforced waists, and concealed zippers connote quality.
- Slacks: Watch the original tailoring to insure major adjustments are not required. Slacks should be well fitted, not tight-cuffs, and waist fits should have no sagging.

## **Dress for the Occasion (women and men)**

Although you may have purchased correct wardrobe items, you still won't be appropriately dressed unless you learn to dress for the occasion. Definitions of such terms on an invitation as "casual" or "semi-formal" vary in different areas of the country, so when you first arrive at a new location, you may want to ask your peers or hostess about appropriate attire before attending a social event. To avoid nebulous answers, ask specific questions such as, "Should I wear a tie?" or "Will the other ladies be wearing skirts?" This will prevent you the embarrassment of being the only one present in jeans while everyone else is wearing a tie. The following basic definitions may help you select the appropriate attire.

- Very casual. Neat jeans and a sport shirt/blouse or well-tailored sport slacks and pullover. For some occasions, shorts and a knit golf shirt may be appropriate. This doesn't mean old, grungy clothing.
- Casual. Tailored slacks, dress shirt and pullover cardigan for men. Skirt, blouse and blazer or cardigan for her. (In some parts of the country, it is considered appropriate for a woman to wear slacks if well-tailored. It's best to ask the specific question before showing up at an event in pants, however.)
- "Coat and tie" dinner. Suit, tie and dress shirt for men. Classic dress with string of pearls or other conservative jewelry for women. A long skirt with a dressy blouse is also considered appropriate in many instances.
- Formal function. The mess dress is always appropriate for military members, either for a civilian or military function.



## **Clothing care**

As is true of all clothes, your civilian attire will wear longer if you care for it properly. Unless you have an unlimited budget for renewal of your wardrobe, take continuous care of your clothes. Proper care doesn't require much effort on your part if you'll adhere to the following rules:

Keep your clothes, except sweaters, on hangers at all times when you aren't wearing them. Invest in shaped wooden hangers; they won't force a jacket out of shape as a wire hanger will. "Air" suits, jackets, and other fuller garments before hanging them in the closet, and button jackets or blouses when you place them on hangers. Leave enough space between hangers in your closet to allow air to circulate.

## **Clothing maintenance**

A word about the maintenance of your wardrobe. Don't be led astray by the easy fit and casual look of your civies compared to your uniforms. Your civilian clothing also needs occasional cleaning and regular pressing. Make a habit of examining your clothing carefully for small rips, dangling or missing buttons, loose belt loops, or split seams. Small repairs can usually be handled by the tailor, or the cleaners, which in turn, will prevent major surgery later.

## **Basic Wardrobe Guidelines**

- Determine your real needs.
- Buy major items first.
- Seek quality.
- Select conservative styles.
- Be sure colors are compatible.
- Stay within your budget.
- Keep your clothing clean, pressed, and in good condition.

## CHAPTER 7

# MISCELLANEOUS COURTESIES

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Keep in mind customs and courtesies will change over time and location. An officer must be sensitive to surrounding cultures and environments, whether in the very casual confines of the Southwest US or Hawaii or in the more reserved and conservative Northeast. Also of importance is your sensitivity in a host country while serving temporarily or permanently overseas. Remember, you're an ambassador of the Air Force and your country!

### Tipping

Tipping is largely a matter of individual preference. However, there are some individuals who perform services for you and should be tipped, while there are others who shouldn't be tipped. This section will point out these to you and offer suggestions about when and how to tip. The secret's to know how much to tip, and then to tip graciously. A smile and a "Thank you" as you offer the tip communicate your appreciation for the service performed.

### Whom NOT to Tip

As mentioned, some individuals who perform services for you aren't tipped. These are:

- Airline employees, including limousine drivers. However, do tip porters who work for the airport if they carry your baggage. **(This will keep your luggage from going to Bora Bora or Tulsa).**
- Owners or managers of restaurants, hotels, night clubs, barber and beauty shops.
- Employees of private clubs.
- Employees of a club if you're a guest of a member. At clubs where you are a member and you pay cash, expect to tip. Otherwise, only tip at Christmas.
- Friends or people whose station in life is at your level or higher, for example, the pharmacist who's a personal friend, or your lawyer. Instead, you repay your obligation with a present or a favor in return.

## Whom TO Tip

The individuals you do tip should be tipped generously, as stated earlier. You'll run into many such people in a variety of different situations.

- For taxi trips, tip at least 50 cents or more depending on the drivers attitude and the services performed. If the trip is a long one (15-20 miles), use 15 percent of the meter reading as a guide.
- Baggage porters normally charge 50 cents per piece of luggage. Add one or two dollars to this if you have more than two bags or if they are large and heavy.
- Hotel doormen who perform no service are not tipped. However, if one helps unload your luggage or summons a taxi for you, tip one dollar for the bag service and a dollar each time he calls a taxi for you. If your stay is prolonged, tip five dollars at the end of the week. If the hotel has a garage with valet parking service, tip one dollar each time the car is delivered to you.
- Bellhops receive one dollar per bag when carrying your bags to your room. If you have more than one bag, or bulky heavy luggage, tip 50 cents more. For other usual services, such as unlocking the room, tip 50 cents.
- Headwaiters must be tipped if they make advance arrangements for your party. You may have to tip a headwaiter to seat you at a special table or if he does some other special service, such as cooking a dish at the table for you. In such cases, tip approximately 10 percent of your expected bill and never less than one dollar.
- For tipping waiters, use 15-20 percent of your food bill as a guide.
- Cloakroom attendants receive a tip even when there is a charge for checking your coat. If there is no charge, the correct tip is 50 cents per coat for more than one coat. However, if you are checking only one coat, tip one dollar.
- Washroom attendants should never receive less than a 50 cent tip. In expensive restaurants, it may be appropriate to tip one dollar. However, tip only if some service has been performed for you such as the attendant handing you a towel. If she does nothing, no tip is necessary.
- In night clubs, waiters and bartenders (not the owner, remember) receive a tip 15 percent of the bill. Entertainers, such as a pianist receive at least a dollar if you request a special number.

- Barbers can receive up to two dollars, depending upon the type of shop and services you receive.
- In beauty salons, tip 20 percent of the total bill when one stylist shampoos and sets your hair. When several stylists divide the service, tip 20 percent, giving 10 percent to the one who does the set. Divide the remaining 10 percent among the others.
- At a military commissary, baggers work for tips only. A general rule of thumb is 25 cents per bag of groceries or one percent of the total bill.
- The above rules and amounts are only guides. Remember that you are expected to tip more generously than usual on small bills if you patronize the most exclusive spots. Give the gratuity quietly and discreetly and you will always be welcome when you return. Remember that the tip should be deserved. If the service is bad or the personnel rude, inattentive, or careless, reduce the tip accordingly.

## **Smoking – a dying habit**

*More and more people are non-smokers these days and often are critical of those who do smoke.* If you're a smoker, carefully adhere to the rules in this section in order to preserve friendships with non-smokers and prevent embarrassment to yourself and others. Remember the present trend in all branches of the service strongly discourages all forms of tobacco usage. Bases are offering instruction to help smokers quit. If you continue smoking, the following guidelines will be helpful.

### **When and Where**

You should be considerate of others whenever you smoke. If your smoking isn't desired or is forbidden, abide by the rules and delay until you know you will do no harm. When in doubt, ask those around you if they mind if you smoke.

There are times when the smoker must do without smoking. One of these times is when you are in areas where "No Smoking" signs forbid it. Others are when you attend church services, religious ceremonies outside of church, military ceremonies such as parades, and the theater; when riding an elevator; and when visiting hospitals. Smoking in and around military airplanes, boats and on public modes of transportation including trains, buses, and cars is permitted only at specified times and places.

- Don't take a lighted cigarette to the dining table.

- Don't smoke in a car unless you have the other occupants' permission.
- Don't let your smoke drift into anyone else's face.
- If you're with someone you do not know, ask "Do you mind if I smoke?" Wait for an answer and respect the other's wishes.

You've already learned that you don't smoke in formal dinners. At any social function, don't smoke if there aren't facilities for smoking. When there are facilities, make certain that you use them and nothing else. Food dishes, potted plants, vases, and empty fireplaces aren't ashtrays. If you don't know whether an object is an ashtray, cigarette receptacle, or object of art, ask before you put your cigarette in it. Never place lighted smoking materials in or on anything but an ashtray for any reason whatsoever. A careless smoker can do irreparable damage to valued articles.

## **Consideration**

When you smoke, avoid annoying others near you. Do this by keeping your ashes off them and yourself by putting your cigarette in an ashtray when your hands are occupied, and by keeping the smoke out of their view. Also avoid excessive or abrupt hand motions while you hold a lighted cigarette.

## **Telephone tactics**

The telephone is one of the most valuable time-savers ever invented; for official and social purposes, it can be of great convenience in getting things done smoothly and quickly. Some important telephone tips follow:

### **"Who Is This?"**

Whether you're answering the phone or placing a call the first thing you must do is to identify yourself. Unlike talking to someone face to face, the person on the other end of the wire has no way of knowing who you are until you identify yourself. Even on a purely social telephone call, give at least your name when beginning the conversation. Be sure you enunciate and speak clearly and distinctly.

## **“Do You Know What Time It Is Captain?”**

Be careful of your calling hours. Do not call a private residence before nine in the morning or after ten at night unless it's absolutely necessary, and avoid calling at meal hours. Generally speaking, a junior officer should never call a senior after duty hours unless he or she has specified otherwise. In other words, complete business during the duty day.

## **“Could You Ask the Colonel to Call Me?”**

When telephoning, junior officers do not leave messages for senior officers to call them, except in unusual situations where it is important to communicate ASAP. In such cases, apologize to the superior for asking him or her to call.

## **“Sorry, Wrong Number”**

There's etiquette even for wrong numbers. If you're the person placing the call and you get a wrong number, apologize to the person who answers. The person at the other end is not interested in hearing your story about how carefully you dialed; just say, "I'm very sorry to have disturbed you," hang up, be sure you have the right number, and try again. Remember that it's inexcusably rude to hang up without an apology.

## **“May I Take A Message?”**

When you take a message, include the caller's name, phone number, message, time of the call and your name as the person who took the call. It's your obligation to be sure the message is received.

## **“I Can't Come to the Phone Right Now, But If You'll Leave A Message At the Sound of the Tone!...”**

When you encounter an answering machine, leave your name, number, and the time you called, along with a brief message if necessary.

The rules of thumb for telephone etiquette are simple: Identify yourself, be courteous, be brief, and speak distinctly!

## Wedding Spoils – Giving and Receiving

If you aren't an intimate friend of the bride or groom, and you're not invited to the reception, you needn't send a gift. However, you'll probably send presents to your closer friends, whether or not you attend.

- As stated, you aren't obligated to send a gift to everyone who sends you a wedding invitation or announcement. You do send gifts to close friends and close relatives.
- If you accept an invitation to a wedding ceremony, you should send a gift. You may send a gift even if you don't attend.
- When you're invited to a wedding ceremony but not to the reception, you don't have to send a gift, although you may if you wish.
- When not attending a reception, for gift-giving purposes, send your wedding present to the bride's home, addressed to her, before the wedding. If that's not practical, send it to the couple's new home after the wedding, addressed to both of them.
- It's generally best to give smaller gifts of good quality and lasting value.
- Ushers normally give individual or joint gifts to the couple before the wedding. If you are one of those getting married, consult a good etiquette book for your many obligations. You'll want to give gifts to ushers and the matron of honor or the best man, and you'll have to fulfill other obligations not covered in this manual.

When you receive a gift, you are, of course, obligated to give prompt, sincere, and personal thanks in the form of a thank-you note.

## Grooming

Nothing less than scrupulous attention to all aspects of personal hygiene will make you socially acceptable. How you look and how you're groomed is a direct reflection of you and your self-pride.

One dirty or untrimmed fingernail may seem like a small thing to you, but it's unacceptable to other people. Be sure your hair's clean and neatly combed at all times. If you're a man whose beard is such that it's necessary for you to shave twice a day to be presentable, then shave twice a day. Cut your hair regularly while on leave just as you would if on routine duty.

# **Remember: First Impressions Are Lasting!**

## **Sportsmanship**

Good sportsmanship is a mark of strong character and respect for others. In general, the good sports person plays hard to win—within the rules. In victory or in defeat, he or she has enjoyed the game. As a spectator, be quick to applaud the good play of your team, but don't cheer at the misplay of the opposition.

### **Winning and Losing**

As a winner, you should compliment the loser on playing well. Don't be either overly triumphant or too casual about your victory. Talk about the game and how much you enjoyed particular parts of it. Don't dwell on the outcome.

As a loser, compliment the winner on his or her skill.

### **Knowing the Rules**

Know the etiquette of your sport and respect it. While playing, don't deviate from the rules except by mutual consent.

### **The Spectator**

As a spectator, you should participate in sports in the spirit of fair play. Be quiet when a player is making a free throw in basketball or a putt in golf. Respect the value of concentration to the player's game. When watching tennis matches, applaud only good shots, not the opposition's wild shots.

### **Booing the Ump**

As a player or spectator, respect the decisions of the referees, judges, or umpires. If they do occasionally make errors, accept them as the "breaks of the game."



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# CHAPTER 8

## MILITARY COURTESY REVISITED

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### “But I Know This Stuff Already!”

We know you know customs and courtesies cold, but in this chapter, we cover those special instances or situations not covered by regulation or written rules--situations you could trip upon on active duty! Read and heed...

### The Uniform

As you've been taught during your training, respect your uniform. It represents the country you serve and identifies you as a fellow comrade at arms. Needless to say, how you look in uniform is a direct reflection on you and the USAF. Your conduct in uniform should be beyond reproach. Remember, the uniform you wear associates you with all other members of the Air Force, and the military services in general. Even more important, the way you wear it symbolizes your attitude toward yourself and others. Maintain the same high standards of uniform wear as you did at OTS or ROTC.

Remember, bulky items in pockets detract from the uniform. Smoking, chewing tobacco or gum chewing in public or at inappropriate times such as meetings, etc, detracts from a professional image. Having your hands in your pockets doesn't convey a professional image. Pens and pencils aren't military decorations and should be carried where they aren't visible. In short, wear your uniform properly and proudly.

The hat is part of the military uniform. Always wear your hat while under arms (carrying a weapon), no matter where you are. In these circumstances, it's proper to wear the hat even while indoors.

Otherwise, don't wear your hat indoors or under cover. Develop the habit of removing your hat as you enter a building. Some areas seem vague, such as under outside awnings or partial cover; but since they are not "indoors," wear your hat and salute others as necessary. In public buildings, it's always proper to remove your hat. This is a mark of respect to everyone.

## **Places of Honor**

The First Place Of Honor Is On The Right. Always afford seniors this position of honor when walking, riding, or sitting with them. Therefore, when you accompany or join an individual senior to you, always take the position to the senior's left. If you follow this rule, your behavior will always be correct.

The Second Place Of Honor Is That Of Being In Front Or "Going First." As a junior, always allow a senior to precede you through a doorway. If the door is closed, you should normally open the door and stand aside for the senior to pass through. You should follow these procedures unless you are specifically informed to do otherwise.

By now you might have noticed these positions of honor are precisely the same ones observed when a man is escorting a woman. That is, tradition and common courtesy dictates a man hold a door open for a female companion.

In the combination of a junior woman and a senior man, our advice is simply this: To be militarily proper, the senior man should precede the junior woman through the door. Unofficially or in an "off-duty" social situation, the man may extend traditional courtesies and allow the woman the position of honor. In short, Combine Common Sense With Common Courtesy.

There are always "exceptions" to the rules of courtesy and conduct, and the same holds true for places of honor. Two common ones follow:

### **Aircraft**

At times, you may travel aboard a military aircraft assigned to a high-ranking senior when you aren't a member of the official party. In this case, unless instructed otherwise, you should be aboard in a designated seat before the senior arrives at the aircraft. You should remain in your seat until the senior officer leaves the aircraft at its destination unless he/she directs otherwise.

### **Auto/Boats**

When personnel enter an auto or a small boat, the senior officer is the last to enter and the first to leave (unless the officer specifies otherwise). If the driver can't open or close the door, it's proper for a junior passenger to do so. Don't climb over the senior officer; enter or exit on the other side as necessary. The senior officer sits in the extreme right rear of the vehicle, with the 2nd most senior to his left. Remember, rank right!

## **Other Courtesies**

### **Appointments**

The importance of your making all of your appointments on time can't be stressed enough. If something unforeseen delays you, immediately call the officer or office involved and reschedule. Remember, being late for an official appointment not only reflects poor planning and judgement, but could also result in disciplinary action.

### **Assistance To Seniors**

When a junior officer travels with a senior, common courtesy dictates offering assistance with baggage when boarding and departing a vehicle. In similar situations, you should offer such assistance as a matter of common practice.

### **Dining Courtesy**

When you enter a dining room and before joining a senior at a table, you should request permission to do so. This courtesy applies regardless of whether or not you are traveling on the same aircraft or in the same party with the senior. If, however, you've been invited to dine by the senior, requesting permission isn't required. The person who serves the table should await the pleasure of the most senior person present. The honored person should order first, should be served first, and should start eating first.

## **Additional Help**

If you encounter a situation involving military courtesy not adequately covered in this section, your first source of information should be the applicable instruction or publication. If that doesn't clarify your question, a copy of Service Etiquette written by Oretta D. Swartz is a comprehensive guide to most military situations. If you're still in doubt, seek assistance from your local Wing/Base Protocol Office.

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# CHAPTER 9

## SALUTING AND GREETING

### (Reminders)

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Since the earliest days of armed conflict, warriors have used various types of salutes to greet one another. Our own salute evolved from medieval times, when military men often wore armor which included a helmet and visor. Upon encountering a stranger, a knight would lift his hand and raise his visor, thus uncovering his face for recognition. If recognized as a friend, each man left his visor up and dropped his hand and the greeting was completed.

Therefore today, though it varies in form across the globe, the rendering of the hand salute says, in effect, “I greet you.” By returning the salute you say, in effect, “I return your greeting.” The gesture is always friendly and is rendered cheerfully and willingly. It is rendered with pride and as a signal of recognition and respect between comrades in the honorable profession of arms.

#### **When to salute**

Your guide for saluting should be recognition. Distance and uniform shouldn’t be criteria for saluting. When outdoors, salute your seniors. Always salute at the position of attention.

If you’re with a group not in formation and you’re the first to see an officer approach, call the group to attention so all may salute. If you’re in charge of a formation, call the group to attention and salute for the group. You may, of course, give the group at ease or rest after the officer has returned your salute. If the group is walking, or engaged in athletics, do not call it to attention; but as the commander, salute if free to do so.

If you and other officers are walking close together in the same direction but not in formation, salute any passing senior officer in unison. This is called “grouping” the salute and permits the officer to return all salutes at once. Staggering salutes is both annoying and discourteous.

Finally, if a senior officer approaches you to engage in conversation, salute both at the beginning and end of the conversation.

## **The greeting**

We said before the salute is a form of greeting. Additionally, the practice has become almost universal to speak to the person saluted with a “Good morning, ma’am,” “Good afternoon, sir,” or whatever is appropriate. When you encounter someone you know by name, it’s courteous to say, “Good morning, Major Jones” or “Good evening, Colonel Smith.” Similarly, they should respond with your name if they know it. Doing so personalizes the greeting. Definitely use names as much as possible in place of a mechanical “sir”/“ma’am,” or “Lieutenant”/“Captain.”

When you salute an officer who hasn’t seen you, use the verbal greeting to gain the officer’s attention.

## **Saluting distance**

It’s proper to salute at a distance at which recognition is easy and audible. You want to offer your salute early enough to allow the senior time to return it and extend a verbal greeting before you pass.

## **Other saluting instances**

When At Double-Time or Jogging:

Slow your pace to quick-time, render the salute, and resume your pace.

When With an Officer and a Second Officer Approaches:

Follow these guidelines:

If you’re in the company of a junior officer, and a senior officer approaches, ensure the junior is aware of the senior’s approach at the first opportunity, such as a pause in conversation. When the junior officer salutes, salute at the same time.

If you’re in the company of a senior officer and a junior approaches, salute at the same time as the senior, and hold your salute until after both officers have dropped theirs. If the senior officer is unaware of the junior officer’s salute, do not interrupt by rendering your salute to the junior officer. Follow the same guidelines if the individual approaching is the same rank as you.

## **Other Instances**

The requirement for saluting may differ from base to base, depending on command and operational activity. There are a few general rules that will normally see you through most of these situations: use these as a guide:

Saluting is normally required around the base operations building, the passenger terminal, or similar locations. Saluting is **NOT** normally required in:

- An aircraft parking area.
- An area designated for aircraft maintenance.
- An aircraft static display.
- An aircraft alert hangar area.
- An enclosed compound, such as a motor pool or civil engineering work area.

Despite the location, if the situation in your judgement appears convenient for you and the senior officer, you should salute. This is a courtesy that is expected. Remember, *it is far better for you to salute when not required than it is for you not to salute and be in error.* A good system, though it may sound trite, is **When in doubt, salute.**

### **When At a Military Funeral**

Salute the caisson or hearse as it passes and the casket as it is carried by your position. You should also salute during the firing of rifle volleys and the playing of Taps.

### **When At Ceremonial Occasions**

Military members who aren't in ranks render a hand salute at ceremonial occasions if in uniform, and put the right hand over the heart if not in duty uniform, as in civilian clothes or athletic attire. The ceremonial occasions when the salute is rendered, outdoors only, include the following: the passing of uncased Colors, the playing of "Ruffles and Flourishes" (accorded senior officers of the rank of Brigadier General and above), "Hail to the Chief," the National Anthem of any nation, and "To the Colors." At Retreat you face the flag or the source of the music if the flag isn't visible, stand at parade rest for the playing of "Retreat," and then come to attention and salute for the playing of "To the Colors." (Also see Chapter 10, THE FLAG).

### **Seeing Officers in Vehicles**

You are expected to salute senior officers when they are riding in an official staff car. **A plate on the front bumper will identify the occupant as a senior officer,** so salute.



## **“What Do I do If I Pass a Senior Who’s Carrying Packages with Both Hands?”**

You’re still required to salute. While it’s obvious not to expect a salute in return, a verbal greeting is expected. If both the senior officer and junior officer are both unable to salute, both should give an oral greeting in place of the salute.

### **When Not to Salute**

In a few situations, the salute is NOT appropriate. The occasions when you do not salute are:

- At any time the salute is obviously impractical or seriously interferes with the performance of official duties.
- Indoors, when a senior officer enters your room or office. But immediately rise to greet the officer.
- When you’re in the ranks of a formation; however, if at ease in a formation, come to attention when you are addressed by a senior officer.
- When you are a spectator at a public sports event.
- When you are the driver of a moving vehicle. However, when practical, you should return the salutes to others. Thus you will often see other officers return the salute of the security forces member while driving through the gate of an installation.
- When the senior officer in a vehicle salutes and you are junior.

# CHAPTER 10

## THE FLAG

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Your United States Flag represents the heritage of your nation. It has flown victoriously over some of history's most bloody battlefields. It's been raised with pride at both North and South poles and has orbited the earth and flown on the moon as a symbol of the dynamic spirit of our young country. The flag flies today over embassies in all parts of the world and is among the most prominent among those in the United Nations.

The flag has flown through times of civil war and domestic crisis. During times of conflict and times of tranquility, the American flag has flown as a symbol of what has been and is the spirit of the United States of America. You, as an American, should look with pride to your flag and its unmatched record as a symbol of a free nation.

### Your Military Bond

As an Air Force officer, you have a special bond with the flag because it represents the spirit and sacrifice of the military which is dedicated to the defense of the flag and the principles which it represents.

When you salute the flag as it's lowered at the end of the day, **think**. Think about the flag being raised on the top of Mount Suribachi. Think of the flag flying over Arlington National Cemetery. Think of the colors being carried into combat on Spads, Nieuports, Mustangs, Fortresses, F-4's, and F-16's. Think of the freedoms Americans enjoy today – freedoms **you** protect.

### Display of the Flag

#### Flag Precedence

When many different flags are displayed, the American flag is raised first and lowered last.

A flag of one nation will not be flown above the flag of another nation.

- When carried in a procession (e.g. a parade) of other flags, the Stars and Stripes is carried to the right or in front of the center of the row of other flags.

- When the national flag is displayed on crossed staffs with another flag, the US flag appears on the right (the other flag's right). The US flag's staff should be in front of the other.
- When flags are displayed near a speaker, the national flag should be on his or her right. If flags appear in the audience, they should be to the audience's right.
- If the flag is displayed suspended over the middle of a street, it should appear vertically with the blue field on top and either to the north on an east-west street or to the east on a north-south street.

## **Some Don'ts**

**Never** allow the flag to touch the ground or to brush against objects.

**Never** place objects on the flag. The US flag shouldn't be used as clothing.

**Never** dip the US flag as a salute or compliment.

## **Disposal of the Flag**

When a US flag is worn out, destroy it by first cutting the blue field from the flag, and cremating the two pieces. Perform this ceremony with respect and dignity.

## **Saluting the Flag**

When you pass an uncased US flag carried by a color guard, salute it at six paces and hold the salute until you're six paces past the flag (total: 12 paces). The same distances apply when you salute an uncased US flag which passes you. If the flag is cased, that is, if it is furled and covered for protection with a canvas case, saluting isn't required.

## **Reveille and Retreat**

Reveille signifies the beginning of the military day; retreat marks its end. Both ceremonies pay respect to the flag. The courtesy rendered is a salute to the flag as it is raised or lowered.

At Reveille, the flag is raised in one of four ways: without accompanying music, as a bugler plays "To The Colors," or as a band plays the National Anthem. If you can see the flag, face it and render the salute while the flag is being raised. Hold your salute until the reveille duty flag reaches the top of the mast. If you can't see the flag, turn toward the music and salute.

## Other Flag Ceremonies

At flag ceremonies other than Reveille and Retreat, face the flag (or the music if the flag isn't visible) and salute while either the National Anthem or "To the Colors" is played. At indoor sports events, stand at attention and face the flag if a flag is present. Otherwise, stand at attention facing the music. Unless under arms, don't salute. No courtesies are rendered to either the National Anthem or "To the Colors" when ceremonies are broadcast remotely by radio or television. If the flag is raised or lowered for any reason (maintenance, adverse weather, etc.) you should stop and salute while it is moving up or down the pole.

## Civilian Clothing

When you're in civilian clothes, take the same action at all flag ceremonies that you do in uniform **except for saluting**. Salute by removing your headgear, if you have any, and hold it over your heart. If bareheaded, stand at attention, and place your right hand over your heart. Individuals in athletic clothing should remove headgear and come to attention also, but they don't salute.

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# APPENDIX A

## THE DINING-IN/OUT

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1. PREPARATION
2. GUEST SPEAKER
3. DRESS AND ATTENDANCE
4. THE CEREMONY
  - a. Arrival
  - b. Smoking
  - c. Conduct of the Dinner
  - d. Toasting
  - e. Awards
  - f. Entertainment
  - g. Departure
5. THE PRESIDENT OF THE MESS
6. THE ARRANGEMENTS OFFICER
7. THE PROTOCOL OFFICER
8. THE HOST OFFICER (GUEST ESCORT)
9. THE MESS OFFICER
10. MR./MADAM VICE
11. SAMPLE AGENDA (WING DINING-IN/OUT)
12. TABLE/SEATING ARRANGEMENT
13. PLANNING GUIDE

## **The Dining-In/Out**

### **“Why Are You Giving Us Material On How To Run A Dining-In/Out?”**

As a new officer, one of your very first challenges may be to plan and coordinate an organizational dining-in or dining-out. In most units in the Air Force, these duties normally fall to junior officers in the organization (you) and will require all of the leadership and management skills you learned at OTS or ROTC plus a few you'll pick up along the way. To give you a head start, we've included a short section about the kinds of things you'll need to consider as you plan.

### **Background**

The Dining-In is a formal dinner for members of a military organization or unit. The present Dining-In format probably had its beginnings in the Air Corps when the late General H.H. Arnold held his famous “wing-dings.” The association of US Army Air Corps personnel with the British and their Dining-In during World War II gave additional impetus for its growth in the USAF. It is now recognized that the Dining-In is an occasion where ceremony, tradition, and good fellowship play an important part in the life of an Air Force unit.

Specifically, this ceremony provides an occasion for officers to meet socially at a formal military function. It is also accepted as an excellent means of saying farewell to departing personnel and welcoming new ones, and of providing an opportunity to recognize individual and unit achievements. All of these are effective in building and maintaining high morale and esprit de corps. Incidentally, the major difference between a Dining-In and a Dining-Out is that, in the latter case, military members may escort their spouses or dates. Also, a Dining-Out may include some sort of entertainment after the formal portions, such as a concert band or dancing.

### **Preparation**

Preparation for the Dining-In should begin with selection of the date, location, and tentative speaker well in advance. The dinner should be held in a suitable place dictated by good taste. Responsibilities for the various arrangements should be allocated and the specific duties outlined. An order of events, or agenda, should be prepared.

## **Guest Speaker**

The guest speaker can be military or civilian, and is expected to address the mess in an interesting manner on an appropriate subject. The speaker should be contacted well in advance (6-8 weeks) and advised of what to expect and what is expected. Arrangements should be made for the speaker and other invited guests, as protocol and custom dictate.

## **Dress and Attendance**

For **all** officers, proper attire for the Dining-In is the Air Force mess-dress uniform with authorized awards and decorations. Enlisted members wear either the mess-dress or semi-formal uniform combination. Civilian guests wear semi-formal wear, but business attire is acceptable. Retired officers wear either the mess-dress uniform or appropriate civilian attire. All officers and enlisted members of the unit present for duty (not on leave or TDY) are expected to attend the function and are referred to as "Members of the Mess."

## **The Ceremony**

### **Arrival**

Each member of the mess should arrive in the lounge within 10 minutes after the opening time to meet the guests before dinner is served. For most formal events, there will be an area of the ballroom set aside for senior guests to talk and meet each other. This is a courtesy that has mutual benefit to both the guests and the senior guests. Don't intrude upon this area unless you're invited or introductions are appropriate. When the signal is given for dinner, (ringing of dinner chimes) members should enter the dining room and stand behind their chairs.

### **Smoking**

There should be no smoking from the time the members enter the dining room until the end of the function or a break is given.

### **Conduct of the Dinner**

The guest of honor and the president of the mess will be last to join the head table. The president formally opens the mess and continues according to the agenda. The president will ask the chaplain to give the invocation and proceeds with welcoming remarks, which will set the tone for the formal part of the agenda. The president remains standing while speaking but seats other members of the mess



after the toast to the Chief of Staff has been given. Guests at the head table are introduced by the president of the mess. Other guests of the mess should be introduced by the appropriate member.

## **Toasting**

The custom of toasting is universal. It's believed this custom came into wide acceptance after the effects of poison 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 and rapport could be established. With this foundation laid, discussions could continue on a more cordial basis. Today, toasting is a simple courtesy to the person being honored.

It's not necessary or proper to drain the glass at the completion of each toast. A mere touch of the glass to the lips satisfies the ceremonial requirements. Toasts should be proposed in sequence and at intervals during the program of the evening.

The president proposes the first toast(s). If a toast to the colors is done, it is always the first toast, to which the members of the mess respond, "To the Colors."

The second toast, in order of precedence, is to the heads of state of the allied nations represented. The toasts are made in the order determined by the seniority of allied officers present. Remember that Commonwealth nations toast the sovereign, not an elected official. The following are samples of toasts for foreign heads of state:

Toast: "To His Excellency the President of the Republic of Germany"

Response: "To the President"

Toast: "To His Imperial Majesty the Emperor of Japan"

Response: "To the Emperor"

Toast: "To His Excellency the President of the Republic of Korea"

Response: "To the President"

Toast: "To Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth the Second"

Response: "To the Queen"

Consult the installation protocol office or the individual allied officers for the proper terminology to be used in toasting their heads of state.

After the president of the mess has toasted the head of each allied nation represented, the senior allied officer then proposes a toast to the President of the United States. The response is, "To the President."

If no allied nations are represented, the president proposes the toast to the commander-in-chief. The response is, "To the President."

Following the president's or senior allied officer's toasts, Mister or Madam Vice proposes a toast to the USAF Chief of Staff. The response is, "To the Chief of Staff." A toast to the Chief of Staff of the Army, Chief of Naval Operations, and Commandant of the Marine Corps is appropriate if officers of that service are present at the mess. The senior ranking officer representing a sister service would then propose a toast to the heads of state of all the allied nations represented.

Excessive toasting makes for a long evening. While other toasts may be appropriate, too many cause the evening to run behind schedule and dampen the enthusiasm of the members of the mess. At some locations, there may be a number of allied officers present. In this case, it is appropriate to collectively propose a toast to the heads of state of all allied nations represented.

Informal toasts are also an important part of the occasion. They should be humorous, but in good taste. It may be advisable to "plant" some impromptu toasts to set the tone of the evening. Keep them short though.

Following the formal toasts, the president seats the mess with one rap of the gavel.

## **Awards**

If individual and unit achievements are to be recognized, an appropriate ceremony should be arranged. This ceremony should take place during the formal portion of the Dining-In. A convenient time is immediately preceding the guest of honor's speech. Under no circumstances should any ceremony follow this speech, which is the highlight of the evening.

## **Entertainment**

If there is to be an informal portion of the dining-in, such as some form of entertainment, such as a grog bowl, there should be a distinct break between the formal and informal portions. This can be accomplished readily by having the mess adjourn to the lounge following the formal portion. The dining room can then be cleared and prepared for the informal ceremonies.

Each time the mess is adjourned and reassembled, members should stand behind their chairs until the persons at the head table have left the table or are seated.

## Departure

During the evening of the dining-in, all members should try to pay their respects to the guest of honor. After the mess is adjourned, members should remain at the dining-in until the guest of honor and the president of the mess have left. If there is to be an extensive delay in their leaving, the president may allow members to leave early. Some unobtrusive signal, such as casing a unit flag, would be an appropriate means of notifying members the evening's activity is over. Mr./Madam Vice will be the last member to leave the dining-in.

## The President of the Mess (Usually the Commander of the unit holding the Dining-In)

- a. Oversee the entire organization and operation of the Dining-In.
- b. Sets the date and determines the location.
- c. Secure an appropriate speaker. The invitation to the guest speaker should include a description of the audience and the occasion, with some suggested topic areas.
- d. Arrange for a chaplain to give the invocation.
- e. Appoint any or all of the following:
  - (1) Arrangement officer
  - (2) Host officer
  - (3) Mess officer
  - (4) Protocol officer
- f. Appoint Mr./Madam Vice. **He or she should be an officer junior in rank, selected for rapier wit and speaking ability.**
- g. Prepare an agenda (acknowledge guests, promotions, etc.)
- h. Receive all guests before dinner is served.
- i. Open the mess with the rap of the gavel and close the mess with two raps of the gavel.
- j. Introduce the guests to the mess. After the introduction, there should be no doubt in the guests' minds when and if they're to acknowledge the introduction. This precludes possible embarrassment. Introduction of the guest speaker should avoid remarks too flattering or too lengthy.

- k. Call on Mr./Madam Vice to propose toasts. A simple “Mr/Madam Vice” will suffice. Mr./Madam Vice will know which toast is to be proposed.
- l. Cover all items on the agenda.
- m. Announce that smoking will not be permitted during the ceremony.

## **The Arrangements Officer**

- a. Directly responsible to the Commander for comprehensive planning of the Dining-In.
- b. Usually a junior officer in a small unit; a more senior officer in a larger unit.
- c. After the club has been reserved, establish the correct table and seating arrangement and arrange the necessary name and organization cards.
  - (1) The president of the mess sits at the center of the head table with the guest of honor immediately to the right. The chaplain will normally sit to the far left of the president. The remaining guests at the head table are seated according to protocol.
  - (2) The table at which Mr/Madam Vice will be seated should be at the opposite end of the banquet hall. This arrangement permits the president and Mr/Madam Vice to face each other when speaking. (See diagram, page 76).
  - (3) Organizations should be seated at tables arranged in whatever manner local protocol or custom dictates.
  - (4) Folded, white 3”x5” cards may be handwritten or hand lettered in black ink or felt tip pen and used as name cards for the head table. The lettering should be legible from a standing position and written on both sides. If a general officer is the host, his aide should be contacted for use of the general’s stock of place cards (these place cards have an emblem of the general’s star flag on them).
- d. Ensure flags and trophies are in place prior to the opening of the lounge unless posting of the colors is part of the planned ceremony.
- e. Arrange for a suitable public address system. This can normally be furnished by the Officer’s Club. The microphones should be placed for the convenience of the president and Mr/Madam Vice.

- f. Place gavel and board at the president's place.
- g. Provide a rostrum for the guest speaker.
- h. Place dinner chimes at Mr/Madam Vice's location.
- i. Provide pencils and pads for each head table guest and Mr/Madam Vice.
- j. Ascertain that all awards to be presented are on hand.
- k. Arrange for photographs if pictures are desired.
- l. Publish a detailed agenda and guest list. Distribution and content should be determined by the president.
- m. Publish and reproduce a program, complete with biographical sketches of guests as required.
- n. Brief the senior allied officer on the proper toast that he/she will make to the President of the United States, if applicable.
- o. Brief the sister service officer on the proper toast that he/she will make to the Chief of Staff, United States Air Force, if applicable.

### **The Host Officer (Guest Escort)**

- a. Send formal invitations to all guests at least two weeks prior to the event. An earlier telephone call alerting the guests of the time and date of the event is appropriate.
- b. Assist the arrangements and host officers, especially in determining the seating arrangements for the table.
- c. Brief host officer on any specific requirements, i.e., arrival/departure, dietary restrictions, etc., relating to guests.
- d. Furnish biographical sketches of guests to the president, Mr./Madam Vice, media, and all others concerned.
- e. Assist host officer as required.
- f. Brief head table guests on toasts and procedures
- g. Prepare follow-up correspondence to the guest of honor for the president's signature after the Dining-In.

## **The Protocol Officer**

- a. Advise the guest several days prior to the Dining-In you are the Protocol officer.
- b. Brief each guest on customs of the mess, such as when to rise during toasts; proper dress, time, place, and agenda; other guests and composition of audience.
- c. If the guests are from out of town, meet them at the airport and arrange transportation and accommodations as required.
- d. Prior to guests' arrival for the evening program, ensure a proper reception place has been arranged, e.g., the lobby of the mess.
- e. Ensure each guest is properly introduced to the president of the mess, other guests, and as many of the members as possible.
- f. Ensure each guest is always in the company of several members of the mess, yet take care that no individual or group of individuals monopolizes the guest.
- g. Brief guests where to sit and on physical arrangements of the mess.
- h. Upon departure, escort the guest out and bid farewell on behalf of all members of the mess.

## **The Mess Officer**

- a. Reserve the dining room and arrange convenient lounge facilities with adequate service for all personnel attending. (This often-overlooked requirement is vital to a successful evening in view of the limited time available prior to the formal opening of the Dining-in).
- b. Coordinate timing of the food courses according to the president's instructions.
- c. Arrange for mess charges to be paid. (Guests of Honor are not customarily charged).

## **Mr./Madam Vice**

- a. Sit alone at the rear of the dining room facing the president.
- b. Open the lounge at the appointed time.
- c. Sound the dinner chimes at appropriate times.
- d. Prepare appropriate toasts as directed by the president. Composition of appropriate poems or witticisms in good taste relating to personalities and/or organizations present is encouraged.
- e. Stay sober!
- f. Be the last officer to leave the mess.

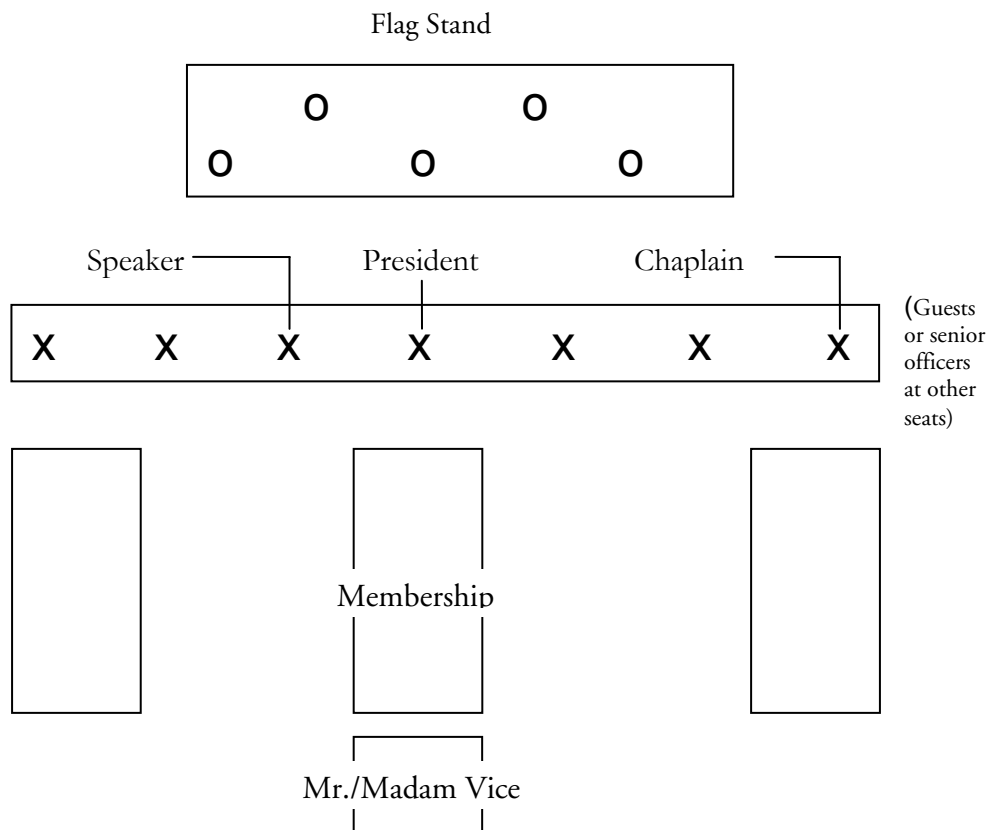
## **Sample Agenda (Dining-In/Out)**

- |      |   |
|------|---|
| 1800 | Lounge opens for refreshments. Host officer in place if meeting guests.   |
| 1815 | Wing members and guests arrive.   |
| 1920 | Lounge closes – refreshment period ends. Mr/Madam Vice rings dinner chimes and group assembles in the dining room. (PERSONNEL REMAIN STANDING BEHIND CHAIRS).   |
| 1930 | The mess is formally opened by the president with one rap of the gavel. Wine is served for toasting. For a Dining-Out, spouses/dates are invited to participate in all aspects of the program.  |
| 1933 | Invocation by chaplain.   |
| 1934 | Toasts. Toast by the president to the colors and to the heads of allied nations represented (appropriate response). Toast to the President of the United States by either the senior allied officer present or the president of the mess (Response: “To the President”). Toast by Mr/Madam Vice to the different services with the Chief of Staff, United States Air Force, last (Response: “To the Chief of Staff”). |
| 1937 | President seats mess. Welcoming remarks are made, and guests at head table are introduced in order of rank with the guest speaker introduced last. President polls audience for introduction of other guests.   |

- 1940 Toast by Mr./Madam Vice, "To our Guests". Members stand (guests remain seated). Response is "Hear, Hear".
- 1941 President invites members of the mess to be seated and to proceed with dinner. Appetizer, salad, and main course are served. Dessert, coffee, and cigars are served as soon as the main course is completed. (Mess may be invited into the lounge by the president to allow for removal of dishes and replenishing of wine glasses).
- 2030 Individual achievements are recognized and awards are presented.
- 2100 President introduces guest speaker.
- 2110 President thanks guest speaker.
- 2111 President: "Mr./Madam Vice."  
Mr./Madam Vice: "Yes, Mr./Madam President".  
President: "A toast to our distinguished speaker".  
Response: "Hear, Hear"
- 2112 President makes closing remarks.
- 2115 President adjourns the mess (two raps of the gavel).
- 2116 Lounge opens.
- 2145 Lounge closes. Members and guests move back to the dining room on sound of chimes for entertainment and informal activities.
- 2150 President announces entertainment and turns program over to the master/mistress of ceremonies.
- 2230 Proceedings are closed when the unit flag is cased or when the president announces conclusion of the Dining-In/Out program. (Members will remain until the guest of honor has departed or when properly excused).
- 2400 Lounge closes.



## Table /Seating Arrangement



### Planning Guide

WHEN D=Day	WHO	ACTION REQUIRED	DATE	REMARKS
D-89	President	Select tentative date and location.		
D-89	President	Appoint and brief the arrangements officer.		
D-89	President	Select desired guest speaker and two alts.		
D-80	Arrangements Officer	Informally check on availability of desired speaker.		

D-75	Arrangements Officer	Prepare letter of invitation to guest speaker.
D-60	President	Select firm date and location.
D-60	Arrangements Officer	Determine musical reqt's
D-55	President	Set budget ceiling
D-45	Arrangements Officer	Select menu and wine. Enter contract w/ caterer.
D-45	Arrangements Officer	Establish tentative per capita costs.
D-45	Arrangements Officer	Prepare and distribute flyer to members of the mess.
D-45	Arrangements Officer	Order invitations and place cards.
D-45	President	Appoint and brief the vice president.
D-40	Members of The Mess	Submit names of desired personal guests.
D-40	Arrangements Officer	Prepare program. Print one per person plus an extra 10 percent.
D-35	President	Prepare list of official and personal guests.
D-30	Arrangements Officer	Select and order guest speaker's gift.
D-30	President	Invite chaplain.
D-21	Arrangements Officer	Prepare and send formal invitations to all guests.

D-20	Arrangements Officer	Arrange for Color Guard, and members for crossed sword entry, if desired.
D-15	Arrangements Officer	From responses, RSVPs, compile list of guests who will attend.
D-15	President	Appoint host officers.
D-15	Arrangements Officer	Reserve quarters for overnight guests.
D-15	Arrangements Officer	Arrange for photographer.
D-15	Arrangements Officer	Order flowers, if necessary.
D-10	Arrangements Officer	Determine firm attendance figures; notify caterer.
D-10	Arrangements Officer	Make sure public address system is available.
D-5	Arrangements Officer	Obtain short bio on each distinguished guest from Protocol Office.
D-5	Arrangements Officer	Determine table and seating arrangements.
D-3	Arrangements Officer	Gather together accouterments of the mess, such as gavel, chimes, grog bowl.
D-3	Arrangements Officer	Prepare seating chart.
D-2	Arrangements Officers	Reserve distinguished visitors (DV) parking.
D-2	Arrangements Officer	Notify gate guards of civilian guests.

D-8 Hours	Arrangements Officer	Perform on-site inspection.
D-2 Hours	Arrangements Officer	Position place cards and programs.
D-30 Mins	Arrangements Officer	Make final check of lounge and dining area. Make sure bartenders are in place.
D-Hour	Vice Pres.	Make sure lounge opens at the scheduled time.
D+1	Arrangements Officer	Remove accouterments of the mess.
D+1	Arrangements Officer	Prepare letter of appreciation to the guest speaker.
D+2	Arrangements Officer	Prepare additional letters of appreciation as required.
D+5	Arrangements Officer	Prepare after-action report.

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