

AUSTRALIAN AIR FORCE CADETS



No 3 WING HEADQUARTERS STANDING INSTRUCTIONS

OPS

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No 3 WING DINING-IN NIGHT PROCEDURES

CERTIFICATE OF AUTHORITY

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No 3 WING DINING-IN NIGHT PROCEDURES

INTRODUCTION

1. 3WGAAFC and its sub-units conduct a number of Dining-in Nights throughout each calendar year. These Dining-in Nights present both a training opportunity as well as social interaction for staff and cadets alike.

AIM

2. This instruction provides members of 3WG guidance relating to the process of conducting a training or social Dining-in Night.

AUTHORITY

3. This instruction is authorised by the Officer Commanding No 3 Wing Australian Air Force Cadets (OC 3WGAAFC).

4. This instruction shall constitute a reasonable direction, the OC 3WGAAFC being authorised to give such directions to all AAFC members within the Wing, by the Director-General Cadets – Air Force.

SCOPE

5. This instruction applies to all members of 3WGAAFC.

6. Squadrons may make alteration to these instructions by including local traditions, provided they do not stray from the intent of the Air Force Dining-in.

INSTRUCTIONS

7. Air Force Dining-in Night procedures may be found in Annex 2B to Air Force Drill and Ceremonial Manual (AFDCMAN) Part 002 Chap 2, which can be found at: <https://members.cadetnet.gov.au/aafc/OIP/SitePages/AAP%205135001%20-%20Manual%20of%20Drill.aspx>

Dining-in Night Preparation

8. The President of the Mess Committee (PMC), or Chairman of the Mess Committee (CMC), in-conjunction with the Officer Commanding (OC) or Commanding Officer (CO), will decide:

- a. the number of official guests
- b. the Guest of Honour
- c. location of the Dining-in Night
- d. cost of the Dining-in Night.

9. The CO will be responsible for sending the invitation to the Guest of Honour.

10. The mess committee, under the direction of the PMC/CMC, will be responsible for the following:

- a. seeking permission to conduct the Dining-in
- b. arranging the menu
- c. sending out invitations
- d. receiving replies and money for the Dining-in
- e. compiling the seating plan, in consultation with the OC/CO.

11. The PMC/CMC will also be responsible for selected suitable members for the roles of:

- a. the Vice President or Vice Chairman, known as Mr Vice or Ms Vice
- b. the saying of Grace
- c. making pre-arranged toasts following the Loyal Toast.

12. The PMC/CMC and Mr/Ms Vice will oversee the Dining-in set up preparations and arrangements at the Dining-in venue. Ensuring clear seating place cards are placed in the correct positions on the table, and a seating diagram is placed in the assembly area.

General

13. In accordance with Youth Policy Manual (YOUTHPOLMAN), **alcoholic beverages** are permitted ONLY when cadets are not attending the function. Where the function is an activity with cadets, alcoholic beverages (including port) MUST not to be served to any persons present. There can be no exceptions to this directive.

14. Members and guests are to assemble in the Mess 30 minutes prior to the notified time and desirably before the Guest of Honour arrives. On arrival, members and guests are greeted by the PMC/CMC and OC/CO. Senior guests when greeted by the PMC/CMC, will then be hosted by members detailed by the PMC/CMC.

15. Mr/Ms Vice, usually a Junior Officer or Junior SNCO, is appointed by the PMC/CMC for the particular Dining-in Night. In some circumstances a more senior member may be appointed.

16. Mr Vice is responsible for announcing the arrival of the Guest of Honour and other high-ranking official guests

17. The seating plan normally takes the form of a letter E or a letter U. The PMC/CMC and official guests are to be seated at the head table, also known as the 'top table'. The Guest of Honour is to be seated on the right of the Dining President with the PMC/CMC seated in the centre. All other official table seating is to be arranged in strict order of precedence. Mr/Ms Vice is to be seated at the end of the centre leg of the table layout in the case of an E formation, or at the end of left arm when looking from the head table.

18. Members should consult the seating plan on arrival, prior to entry into the dining room.

19. **Chair for absent friends.** If seating spaces allow, a vacant place setting with chair may be placed at the end of the right arm when looking from the head table. This setting is referred to as the 'chair for absent friends' (or sometimes as 'the chair for the fallen'). Items such as a folded flag, a Service Hat or Cap or a Jacket can be added to the chair.

20. The empty place setting represents Mess members or unit personnel who cannot attend the function due to death, illness, deployment, or other reasons but are in the thoughts of those in attendance.

Entry to the Dining Room

21. The senior steward, at the PMC/CMC's direction, will report to Mr/Ms Vice that the dining room is in readiness. Mr/Ms Vice will inform those present that the dining room is ready and they should ready themselves for the meal. Mr/Ms Vice will usher the members and their guests into the dining room and ensure they all remain standing behind their respective chairs in silence.

22. At a mixed Dining-In Night, the member should escort to the table, the guest who is to be seated on your right. Partners are usually seated diagonally opposite each other, except for the official table where normal protocol prevails. The table is normally set for the exact number expected. However, if for some unforeseen reason there are more places than necessary, the spare tables and settings will be removed discreetly by the mess stewards before dinner is served. Should any member or guest be late for dinner, he/she should apologise to the PMC/CMC and await the PMC/CMC's permission to go to his/her seat.

Colours, Standards and Banners

23. Air Force tradition is for Colours to be kept in the Officers Mess and so they were often already in place for a Dining-in Night. As the modern custom is for Colours to be displayed at the unit headquarters, the parading of Colours at Officers Mess Dining-in Nights has become common. This custom is easily transferable to the AAFC where SQN Banners are kept on SQN premises. While a widespread practice, the parading of Colours at a Dining-in Night is not mandatory and consideration should be made to reserving the practice to significant occasions.

24. The Colours are to be marched in prior to the saying of Grace and marched out after the official toasts. Members and guests are to continuously face the Colours when they are paraded in the dining room. The procedure is detailed in Part 1, paragraph 8.103 of the AFDCMAN.

25. Musical accompaniment, such as bagpipes or drums, is not required.

Grace

26. Dining President will call on the Chaplain, if present, or a member who has been warned beforehand, to say Grace prior to the serving of the meal.

27. The PMC/CMC should then rise, welcome all to the evening, and may indicate any special rules for the Dining-in format ie, mobile phones, breaks, banter, etc.

The Meal

28. The meal commences with the PMC/CMC being served first, simultaneously with Mr/Ms Vice, followed by the remainder of the head table. Once the official table has been served, the PMC/CMC should commence the meal, thereby signifying permission for others to do likewise. No one is to commence eating before the PMC/CMC. The same procedure pertains to each course.

29. There are to be no breaks during dinner, but where a genuine need to leave exists, individuals, singly rather than collectively, may, after excusing themselves from immediate company, quietly and briefly, absent themselves from the dining room. Leaving the dining room to smoke is not permitted. Members should make their way back to their seat in the most direct fashion and should not talk to other seated members on the way. Enjoyment of the meal should not be spoilt by unsolicited interjections from members until after the 'Loyal Toast'.

30. Conversations should be of a general nature rather than on subjects which could be controversial such as religion or politics. Loud laughter and shouting are to be avoided. All members should be particularly attentive to good table manners. Members and guests are not to engage Mr/Ms Vice or the PMC/CMC in conversation during the meal. Custom is for conversation through Mr/Ms Vice is not to occur until after the 'Loyal Toast'. If you then wish to address the gathering, you may approach the PMC/CMC, through Mr/Ms Vice, for permission to do so.

Comfort Break

31. After the completion of the final course, everything but table decorations and port glasses are cleared from the table. It is normal practice for the Dining President to call a short break to allow the staff to do this.

Passing the Port

32. Once the table has been cleared and all the diners are seated, port decanters are then placed on the table in front of the PMC/CMC and Mr/Ms Vice. Note the restrictions in relation to the serving and consumption of alcohol as detailed in paragraph 13. The PMC/CMC and Mr/Ms Vice will simultaneously remove the stoppers and place them on the table, half fill their glass and pass the decanter to their left.

33. As each subsequent diner receives the decanter, they fill their glass and pass the port outside the glass to the next diner on the left who takes it without allowing the decanter to rest on the table. Passing the decanter from hand to hand represents the unbroken chain of loyalty to the Sovereign, country and service. Passing the decanter outside or over the glass symbolises that nothing should come between a member and the Sovereign. The practise of waving the decanter in circles and other affectations should be avoided.

34. Stewards follow to replace empty decanters, or to serve water to members and guests who prefer not to drink port. When all have been served the stewards will withdraw. Traditionally the passing of the port is done in silence at the SGTs' Mess, while silence is not imperative at the Officers' Mess conversation should be kept to a minimum.

35. When the two original decanters reach the Dining President and Dining Vice President, each fills their glass, place the decanter on the table and replace the stopper. These actions signal the imminence of the loyal toast.

Toasts

36. **The Loyal Toast.** The first toast is always to the reigning monarch. When all glasses have been charged, the PMC/CMC, remaining seated, calls the Mess to order by saying 'Mr/Ms Vice'. The Dining Vice President, now in charge of proceedings, rises and calls, 'Ladies and Gentlemen', on which signal all rise. Glasses remain on the tables.

37. When all have risen and silence reigns, Mr/Ms Vice lifts their glass from the table and says 'Ladies and Gentlemen, The Queen'. All present then pick up their glasses, raise them, and turn to face Her Majesty's Portrait, say 'The Queen' and drink to her health. If there is a band in attendance, immediately after Mr/Ms Vice says 'Gentlemen', the band will commence to play the first four bars and last four bars of the National Anthem. At the conclusion of the National Anthem, all present are to pick up their glasses, raise them, turn to face Her Majesty's Portrait, say 'The Queen' and drink to her health. Following the lead of the PMC/CMC, diners now resume their seats.

38. **Other Toasts.** If citizens of other countries are present, the Dining President would propose a toast to the heads of state of those countries. On occasions celebrating the formation of the Air Force or a unit, a toast to 'The Air Force' or the unit may be appropriate. A toast to "absent Friends" may also be included. Toasts should be kept to a minimum and not be excessive or trivial. Note, toasts are not proposed to Colours, Standards or Banners.

39. Colours, Standards and Banners are to be marched from the dining room immediately following the official toasts.

Appreciation to the Staff

40. At this stage of the evening it is customary for the Dining President to thank the staff for their efforts.

Introduction of Guests, Speeches and Banter

41. PMC/CMC should then stand and introduce the official guests to the gathering. The Guest of Honour may be asked to give an address.

42. Following official speeches, members may engage in banter. If diners wish to address the gathering, they may approach the President through the Dining Vice President for permission to do so. Members wishing to speak are not required to identify themselves but at a large function it would be polite to do so.

43. When addressing the gathering a diner may ask a question of a member present, tell a story, joke or amusing experience. Banter should be conducted in an orderly fashion, only one person (other than the Dining Vice President) standing at once, no questions or responses are to be directed to a member other than through Mr/Ms Vice. Banter is designed to be entertaining for all attendees and should never become personal, vindictive, lewd or unacceptable.

44. Fines or mess contributions imposed on members for breaches of Mess rules or etiquette are illegal punishments and are not permitted. Fines issued during the course of a Dining-in Night by the Dining Vice President that go to a recognised charitable organisation, is a voluntary contribution by the diner and are not enforceable.

Conclusion

45. At the conclusion of all toasts, responses, speeches and short interval for general conversation, the PMC/CMC indicates their intention of leaving by replacing the stopper in the port decanter. The PMC/CMC then strikes the gavel and says, "Mr/Ms Vice, please take my chair". The PMC/CMC stands, followed by the members, as Mr/Ms Vice moves to the back of the PMC/CMC's chair. The PMC hands over the proceedings to Mr/Ms Vice and leaves the dining room with the senior guests and others at the official table.

46. When the PMC/CMC and guests have left the dining room, Mr/Ms Vice sits in the PMC/CMC's chair and all remaining members sit down. Mr/Ms Vice may invite members and their guests to join him/her at the top table. After a reasonable interval, long enough for the PMC/CMC and official guests to partake in after dinner refreshments, Mr/Ms Vice and the remaining members and guests, should leave the dining room and join the PMC/CMC and official guests in the anteroom.

47. On return to the anteroom, all members should ensure that the guests are entertained and that no one is neglected at any time. Members should not leave the Mess until the last official guests have departed.

Dining-in Dress

48. Mess Dress may be worn by entitled members as appropriate to the time of the year, ie MD1 (Mess Dress Jacket) in cool weather, MD2 (short sleeve evening shirt, aka 'Red Sea Rig') in warm weather. MD2 is not to be used as a cheaper alternative of Mess Dress. All other members are to wear SD as appropriate to the time of year. No civilian attire should be worn by uniformed members unless approved by the OC/CO.

49. Non-uniformed members and civilian guests are to wear:

- a. **Gentlemen.** Dinner suit, lounge suit
- b. **Ladies.** Evening dress.

Review

50. This Standing Instruction is to be reviewed periodically as related policy changes, and submitted to the WGWOFF and OC for reauthorisation, amendment, or cancellation as required.

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