

ANNEX D  
TRENTON OFFICERS' MESS BYLAWS  
5 MAY 2022

MESS DINNERS

1. Organization - The PMC through the Mess Committee is responsible for planning and organizing Mess Dinners.
2. Notification - Announcement that a Mess Dinner is to be held shall be made in Routine Orders or by electronic means and, if possible, at a General Mess Meeting. In addition, the PMC shall publish a memorandum specifying the number of officers required to attend from each Unit or Branch. Commanding Officers and Branch heads shall then provide lists of attending officers to the Mess Manager. The Mess Dinner is a parade: an official Canadian Forces' function at which dress, time of assembly, attendance, and other details shall be specified and have the legal standing of orders.
3. Dress - The dress for Mess Dinners is an appropriate order or Mess Dress. For civilians, a tuxedo or dinner jacket is the normal standard expected.
4. Guests - Official guests of the Mess such as visiting military or civilian dignitaries, or retired members, are often in attendance at Mess Dinners. Other guests, such as personal friends of individual officers, may also be invited but only with the approval of the PMC. It is the responsibility of all Mess members to see that guests are properly entertained.
5. Assembly:
  - a. all persons attending the dinner shall congregate in the lounge thirty-five minutes before the dinner is scheduled to start;
  - b. cocktails shall not be served before the arrival of the Wing Commander;
  - c. the PMC shall meet and escort the Wing Commander and the senior guest, if applicable, into the anteroom. The assembled persons will come to attention and will remain so until the Wing Commander, or senior guest, has acknowledged their assembly;
  - d. the assembled persons may then proceed to cocktails, ensuring that all guests have been served first;
  - e. during the assembly period, officers must take advantage of the opportunity to greet their guests, as guests of the Mess are in effect guests of all the officers. As time and numbers permit, all officers should come forward and pay their respects to the senior officers and guests;
  - f. should a member arrive after the Wing Commander, he should make his apologies

to the PMC;

- g. each member is to ascertain his seating position for the dinner prior to the announcement that dinner is served:
  - h. a trumpeter or piper, if available, shall make the appropriate calls to announce dinner. The PMC shall escort the Wing Commander to the head table or, if a guest of honour is present, the PMC shall escort him to the table followed by the Wing Commander who shall escort the next senior guest. Other guests and their hosts should then follow and the remaining officers shall proceed to the dining room in approximate order of rank and seniority. (Note: At mixed dinners, historically gentlemen escorted the ladies seated on their right as indicated by the seating plan). The V/PMC shall ensure that all officers move quickly into the dining room and shall take his position as soon as all officers have entered the dining room and have taken their places.
6. Seating and Conduct of Dinner:
- a. the Wing Commander sits at the centre of the head table, with the senior guest on his right. Other guests and senior members sit to the right and left of the Wing Commander and senior guest. The PMC sits at the right end of the head table, and the V/PMC at the left end;
  - b. traditionally each member and guest shall stand behind his chair until grace has been said by a chaplain or a previously designated officer;
  - c. decorum must be maintained throughout the dinner. A Mess Dinner is a formal occasion and diners are expected to comport themselves with the dignity appropriate to such an occasion. Unruly behaviour (e.g.: throwing food, tying napkins, singing etc.) is not acceptable. Normally, members may not leave the dining room during the dinner. If a member must leave for personal reasons, he must obtain permission from the PMC.
7. The Loyal Toast - After the last course is finished, the Mess staff will remove from the table everything except the table decorations, candelabra, and one wine glass per person. Port decanters will then be placed on the table. The Mess Manager or person acting as Chief Steward shall indicate to the PMC that the port is ready to be passed. The procedure is then as follows:
- a. the PMC will pour a small amount of port into his glass, test it, and pass the decanter to the left. At this signal, each member who has a decanter in front of him fills his glass and passes the decanter left, the decanter shall not be placed on the table until it requires replenishment or has reached the end of the table. Once port has been poured into the glass, it shall not be touched until it is time for the Loyal Toast. It is permissible to drink the toast in water;

- b. when the Mess Manager or person acting as Chief Steward has indicated to the PMC that all officers have been served port, the PMC shall rap his gavel, all conversation shall cease, the PMC will rise holding his glass of port with glass at waist level and shall announce to the V/PMC either in English or French, "Mr. Vice, the Queen of Canada," or "Monsieur le vice president, la reine du Canada".
  - c. the V/PMC will then rise holding his glass at waist level and announce in the other official language, "Ladies and gentlemen, the Queen of Canada" or "Mesdames et messieurs, la reine du Canada", as appropriate;
  - d. at that point, all other officers and guests shall rise holding their glasses at waist level and shall remain standing at attention, and
    - i. if there is no band present, immediately raise their glasses and announce individually, in French or English "The Queen", and take the Loyal Toast;
    - ii. if there is a band present, remain standing until the first six bars of "God Save the Queen" have been played then raise their glasses and announce individually, in French or English "The Queen", and take the Loyal Toast;
    - iii. glasses shall be lowered to the table and the assembly shall be seated.
8. Other Toasts - When foreign officers/dignitaries are present as head table guests, it is appropriate to toast the head of state of the foreign guest. The procedure for doing so is the same as the Loyal Toast with or without a band present.
9. Military Marches - One or more military marches are normally played after the toasts. Members will rise and stand at attention when their branch/regimental march is played. If the RCAF March is the only one played, all members are expected to rise and stand at attention while it is played. The name of the marches and the sequence in which they will be played will normally be indicated in the dinner menu.
10. Following the toasts/Marches - Following the toasts and military marches, coffee is served. The bandmaster and chief cook may at this time be invited by the Wing Commander to join him at the table for a glass of wine/scotch.
11. Completion of Dinner - Indication that the dinner is officially over will be given either by the departure of the Wing Commander and guests, or by the PMC standing up until noticed by all members. It is customary for members to stand until the Wing Commander and official guests, accompanied by the PMC and V/PMC, have left the room.
12. After Dinner - Following the dinner, all members will retire to the lounge where a programme of presentations (e.g. for retiring members), entertainment, or games may ensue. Officers shall pay their respects to the Wing Commander or senior officer present before leaving the Mess.

13. Do's and Don'ts - Please don't be late, don't take drinks or lit cigarettes or cigars into the dining room, or commence a course until the head table has first done so. Above all, don't forget to show the proper military courtesy to the host, the guests, and other senior officers present at the dinner.
  
14. Please do take care to arrive on time and properly dressed, to check the seating plan, to pay your respects to the senior officer present when you arrive, as well as the Formation and Wing Commander and your own Commanding Officer or Branch Head and senior guests as appropriate. Remember you are dining in your home away from home, generally with guests present, so please conduct yourself accordingly. Talk to as many people as you can before and after dinner, guests and senior officers, and make them feel at home. If in doubt about anything during the dinner, discreetly watch the host, the PMC, or one of your more knowledgeable neighbours and do as they are doing.