



DEPARTMENT OF THE NAVY
OFFICE OF THE COMMANDANT OF MIDSHIPMEN
UNITED STATES NAVAL ACADEMY
101 BUCHANAN ROAD
ANNAPOLIS MARYLAND 21402-5100

COMDTMIDNINST 3500.1
CMT
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COMMANDANT OF MIDSHIPMEN INSTRUCTION 3500.1

From: Commandant of Midshipmen, U.S. Naval Academy

Subj: DINING-INS AND DINING-OUTS

Ref: (a) OPNAVINST 1710.7A
(b) Naval Ceremonies, Customs, & Traditions, 6th Edition
(c) Service Etiquette, 5th Edition

Encl: (1) Guidelines for Polite Conduct - Rules of the Mess
(2) Violations of the Mess
(3) Infractions
(4) Addressing the Mess
(5) Limericks and Ditties
(6) Toasting Etiquette
(7) Sequence of Events
(8) Invitations and Envelopes
(9) Programs, Seating Arrangements, and Place Cards
(10) Menu and Table Place Setting

1. Purpose. The purpose of this instruction is to set forth the rules, regulations, procedures, planning, and Code of Conduct to be adhered to by midshipmen and guests in attendance at Dining-Ins and Dining-Outs. Enclosures (1) through (10) outlines the responsibilities of key players, the order of events, and the script for the U.S. Naval Academy formal events. Different Companies may have developed their specific traditions. In such cases, these specific traditions/customs need to be approved by the Battalion Officer in advance of the dining event.

2. Discussion. Dining-Ins and Dining-Outs are formal dinner events meant to honor achievements, honor guests and fallen comrades, and to promote good morale and camaraderie within the Company or organization. The event is meant to be fun and in good taste. A Dining-In will have no family members or "non-official" guests. An "official" guest and/or speaker will have their expenses covered by the members of the Company. A Dining-Out may have non-official guests and/or family members. Personal guests may only be invited with the permission of the President of the Mess. The dinner and bar expenses of personal guests are covered by the member who invites them. The traditions, customs, and special ceremonies associated with Dining-Ins/Dining-Outs have significant historical precedence and meaning. As such, they may only be used at an official Dining-In/Dining-Out.

3. Scope and Applicability. All personnel assigned to the U.S. Naval Academy (USNA) shall familiarize themselves with the USNA Dining-Ins and Dining-Outs regulations and policies listed in references (a) through (c).

4. Roles and Responsibilities

a. President of the Mess (POTM). The POTM will be the Commanding Officer. The President is charged with determining the purpose and overall responsibility for the organization and operation of the Dining-In and Dining-Out. Responsibilities may be delegated to various committee members who work closely with the President to ensure the success of an event.

b. The Gavel. The President is the only person allowed to use the Gavel to signal to members. Three raps requires the attention of the members whether standing or seated. Two raps causes the members to rise standing in place, and one rap is the signal for the members to take their seats. Duties of the POTM include:

- (1) Appoint the Vice President and other committee members as desired.
- (2) Choose an appropriate date and location for the dinner.
- (3) Choose the guest speaker and other VIPs to invite.
- (4) Greet all Guests before dinner is served.
- (5) Open and close the mess.
- (6) Provide welcoming remarks and introduce the Guest of Honor/speaker and other honored guests.
- (7) Choose and explain the significance of the observed ceremonies.
- (8) Propose the first and last toasts of the evening.
- (9) Note infractions at any time that warrant a trip to the grog bowl or other punishments as seen fit.
- (10) Assess the validity of accusations of infractions brought to the attention of the President.

c. Vice President of the Mess. The Vice President will be appointed by the President and addressed affectionately as "Mr. Vice/Ms. Vice." The Vice President will serve as the POTM's principal assistant for organizing the event and during the event. The Vice President will sit alone at the back of the dining room, facing the President. The Vice President will be the first person to arrive and the last person to leave. It is essential that the Vice President be intimately familiar with the customs and traditions of the mess. The success of the evening hinges largely

on the imagination and humor of the Vice President. Duties of the Vice President include:

- (1) Arrange for the color guard and musicians or recorded music.
- (2) Coordinate responsibilities of other committees.
- (3) Direct the activities for the event.
- (4) Open the lounge/cocktail hour at the appointed time.
- (5) Sound the call to dinner at the appropriate time.
- (6) Conduct a grog making ceremony to entertain and instill fear in the mess.
- (7) Prepare appropriate toasts as directed by the President. Appropriate poems or witticisms in good taste relating to the personalities and organizations that are present are encouraged.
- (8) Keep the party moving and stimulate table conversation through keen wit and impromptu speaking ability.
- (9) Note and make special mention of violations of the rules of the mess and breaches of protocol and etiquette.
- (10) Be the last person to leave the party.

d. Arrangements Officer. The Arrangements Officer, typically the activity's Operations Officer, is responsible to the President for the organization of the Dining-Out. The Arrangements Officer may select several minions (collectively known as the Mess Committee) to aid in the planning and execution of the event. The Arrangements Officer will task the Mess Committee as needed to fulfill all reasonable requests of the President. The President may dictate duties as required, but duties of the Arrangement Officer will include:

- (1) Seeking Commandant Operations' (specifically Wardroom or Extracurricular Activities Officer's) approval for event date.
- (2) Suitable financial planning, especially working closely with the Sponsorship Officer.
- (3) Choosing an appropriate location, including transportation considerations and menu.
- (4) Ensuring the venue is set up with needed equipment and tasteful decorations.
- (5) Printing of the programs and invitations, delivery of invitations, and recording the RSVPs.
- (6) Soliciting entertainment from the mess members.

(7) Other arrangements as appropriate.

e. Other Committee Officers

(1) Table Preparation Officer. Menu selection; works with the Protocol Committee in creating seating arrangements, seating chart place cards, and Fallen Comrade Observance ceremony.

(2) Decorations Officer. National and Organizational colors placement during reception and dinner, table centerpieces, and display of trophies or awards.

(3) Sponsorship Officer. Typically the Wardroom Representative or activity's Treasurer; this member is responsible for all financial requirements of the event to include the following:

(a) Routing a Purchase Request (i.e. yellow) form to Midshipmen Welfare Fund (MWF).

(b) Collecting payments for the dinner from members and depositing those funds with MWF. Note that only midshipmen will receive subsidized rates; all other attendees will pay full price. Activity's funds may be applied to guests' meals, as desired.

(c) Paying food and bar charges at event.

(d) Collecting reimbursements from MWF.

(4) Protocol Officer. Prepares the invitations and collects the responses, works with the Table Preparation Committee to create the seating arrangements and place cards, drafts the programs, ensures VIP courtesies are observed and correct order of receiving line and greeting of guest of honor and other guests, prepares scripts for observed ceremonies, and writes the President's Thank You Notes for the guest speaker, and ensures all activities conducted follow the correct protocol.

(5) Order of Events Officer. Coordinates with venue on sound system, places awards table, assists with handing out awards, oversees placement of gavel and chimes, organizes and cues venue wait staff and photographer.

f. Guest Speaker. The Guest Speaker will be treated as an Honored Guest. They shall be invited well in advance (normally three to four weeks) and their remarks shall be treated as the highlight of the evening. Arrangements should be made for them as protocol and custom dictate.

g. Honored Guests. Honored Guests are typically senior in rank to the President. Honored Guests will be given a place of honor at the head table. They will be escorted, as appropriate, during the event and briefed on the customs, courtesies, rules and procedures of the Dining-Out/Dining-In. All members of the mess shall make an effort to meet the Honored Guests during the cocktail hour. Honored Guests shall always be in the Company of several members of the mess at all times.

5. Uniform and Dress Code. Dining-Ins/Dining-Outs are formal events. Uniform and attire will be formal. Dinner Dress Blue or Service Dress Whites/service equivalent for Active Duty members and civilian black tie for non-military members. No uniform deviations unless prior approved by the Battalion Officer. Company and community uniform specifics need prior approval from the Battalion Officer.

6. Alcohol Chits. Chits must be submitted to Commandant Operations three weeks prior to the event. Non-alcoholic beverages must be included in the menu for underage midshipmen.

7. Smoking. As permitted in Midshipmen Regulations and by approval of venue location.

9. Records Management

a. Records created as a result of this instruction, regardless of format or media, must be maintained and dispositioned for the standard subject identification codes (SSIC) 1000 through 13000 series per the records disposition schedules located on the Department of the Navy/Assistant for Administration (DON/AA), Directives and Records Management Division (DRMD) portal page at <https://portal.secnav.navy.mil/orgs/DUSNM/DONAA/DRM/Records-and-Information-Management/Approved%20Record%20Schedules/Forms/AllItems.aspx>.

b. For questions concerning the management of records related to this instruction or the records disposition schedules, please contact your local records manager or the DON/AA DRMD program office.

10. Review and Effective Date. Per OPNAVINST 5215.17A, the Commandant's Protocol Officer will review this instruction annually on the anniversary of its effective date to ensure applicability, currency, and consistency with Federal, DoD, SECNAV, and Navy policy and statutory authority using OPNAV 5215/40 Review of Instruction. This instruction will automatically expire five years after effective date unless reissued or canceled prior to the 5-year anniversary date, or an extension has been granted.



T. R. BUCHANAN

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GUIDELINES FOR POLITE CONDUCT – RULES OF THE MESS

1. Members of the mess should arrive within five minutes of the opening cocktail hour, and never after the Guest of Honor.
2. All members of the mess should make every effort to personally greet and introduce themselves and their personal guest(s), should they have them, to the President and the Honored Guest before dinner.
3. Do not over-indulge in alcohol. Moderation may bring merriment but excess endangers expulsion.
4. Do not bring cocktails or smoking materials from cocktail hour to the dinner table.
5. Do not forget to ask permission to excuse yourself (or your guest) from the Mess to “shed a tear for Lord Nelson,” if the need presents itself.
6. Remember to keep your glass charged with port during the toasts, both formal and informal. It is considered poor form and bad luck to toast with water, to refuse to participate in toasts, or to drink to yourself or your own command. If you prefer not to drink, it is expected that you will still raise your glass during the toast and bring the glass to your lips. There is no need to drink in a toast.
7. There should be no toasting during dinner. However, drawing attention of the mess to topics of timely interest is encouraged. Always use proper procedures for addressing the mess.
8. Toasts and comments shall be kept within the limits of good taste and mutual respect. Sex, sexual orientation, politics, race, and religion are not discussed in the wardroom or mess. Degrading or insulting remarks will be frowned upon by the membership and will not be tolerated at Dining-Ins/Dining-Outs. However, good-natured needling and ribbing are highly encouraged.
9. Applause or gaining attention from the mess will be accomplished by rapping a spoon against the table. Do not strike glassware. Follow the example of the President. As guests are introduced, it is correct and appropriate to applaud each guest as they are introduced and at the conclusion of their remarks.
10. One will fall into disrepute with their peers if their ribbons, medals and warfare devices are not properly placed.
11. Tomfoolery, shenanigans, and hijinks are encouraged. Guests without jokes, limericks, and the like will probably be fined.
12. Do not get caught for infractions or you may be fined. Be prepared to answer fines/punishments as given out by the President, whether or not you plan on committing any violations. Change will not be given. IOUs will not be granted.

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13. Spouses and personal guests of members of the mess, at Dining-Outs, should not participate in any hijinks, unless they too are prepared to graciously accept the punishments given by the President. Members are encouraged to warn their significant others and personal guests of this possibility.
14. Witty rebuttals may alleviate or ameliorate your fines; however, they may also exacerbate or exaggerate your punishment. Tread this road cautiously.
15. Do not hesitate to enthusiastically discharge your punishment(s). A good spirit and good spirits are the best defense against a distasteful task.
16. Remember, this is a ceremony, a celebration and a cacophony of comedic courtesies. This is not a case before a courtroom consisting of a cantankerous cadre of members. Your challenges, defenses, and rebuttals shall be structured accordingly.
17. Do not leave the party until the President and Guests of Honor have departed.

VIOLATIONS OF THE MESS

1. The President of the Mess has the authority to assess and direct the Vice President to collect fines for violations of established customs and procedures. These fines are administered in good spirit and should not be so excessive as to make them otherwise. Likewise the Officers of the Mess should forewarn guests of their possible unintentional violation of these customs. Possible violations of the mess include, but are not limited to:

- a. Untimely arrival at proceedings.
- b. Failure to present oneself to the President.
- c. Failure to compose oneself prior to presenting oneself to the President.
- d. Haggling over date of rank.
- e. Loud and obtrusive remarks.
- f. Improper toasting procedure.
- g. Failure to consult Mr. Vice/Ms. Vice before addressing the President.
- h. Leaving the dining area without permission from the President or Mr. Vice/Ms. Vice.
- i. Carrying cocktails into the dining room.
- j. Foul language.
- k. Being caught with an uncharged glass.
- l. Not rising to speak with the President (Mr. Vice/Ms. Vice).
- m. Rising to applaud or ridicule, unless following the example of the President.
- n. Commencing a course before the President.
- o. Placing a bet or wager.
- p. Telling an off-color or unrefined story.
- q. Discussing issues of a controversial nature.
- r. Discussing work, politics, or upcoming PRT's.
- s. Failure to laugh at any joke rendered by an Honored Guest or the President.

- t. Improper attire.
- u. Failure to recognize an obvious uniform error.
- v. Removing articles of clothing from oneself or others.
- w. Not adequately preparing your date.
- x. Maintaining too low a profile, regardless of its tactical application.
- y. Haggling over fines or penalties assessed.

INFRACTIONS

1. Breaches of etiquette and violations of the Mess may be noted at any time by the President, Vice President, or any member of the Mess. Members bring infractions to the attention of the President by raising a point of order. Infractions may warrant punishment as dictated by the President. The President may delegate or share this authority with Mr. Vice/Ms. Vice. If the validity of the charge is questioned, members may vote by rapping their spoons on the table; however, members of the Mess are reminded to refer to enclosure (2) of this instruction. The President may enforce all manner of penalties, from requiring the violator to take a drink from the grog, do push-ups, sing a song, pay a monetary fine, or otherwise entertain the Mess with a limerick or jokes, or both. Members not prepared to answer for their infractions will only earn further punishment. If the President must leave his position at the head table, he must appoint another individual to assume his position. When the President directs a violator to the grog bowl, the individual proceeds to the bowl promptly. Any trip to the grog bowl shall be carried out as follows:

- a. Arrive in front of the grog bowl at the position of attention.
- b. Fill a cup with the grog, then about-face to face the mess.
- c. Toasts the Mess, "To the Mess!", and drink the grog.
- d. Drains the contents of the cup without removing it from the lips, then places it inverted on their head signifying it is empty.
- e. About-face once more and put the cup back on the table.
- f. With the exception of the toast, "To the Mess," the violator is not permitted to speak during this process.

ADDRESSING THE MESS

1. Members of the Mess may raise a point of order at any time to Mr. Vice/Ms. Vice or the President as appropriate. During dinner, it is customary to solve issues via Mr. Vice, so as not to bother the President whilst they are eating.
 - a. The member will stand at the position of attention and address Mr. Vice: “Mr. Vice, (Rank & Name) requests permission to address the Mess.”
 - b. Mr. Vice/Ms. Vice will address the President: “Mr. President, (Rank & Name) requests permission to address the Mess.” (Note: Mr. Vice/Ms. Vice has the unconditional option to deny or forward the request.)
 - c. Should the President grant permission, the member will address the President and state the charge.
 - d. If the nature of the address is to accuse a member of an infraction, the President has the option of allowing the accused to respond to the accusation, consider charges only, or dismiss the accusation and fine the accuser. For a nominal fee paid to the Mess, an accused member may request that another Mess member respond to the accuser in their stead.
 - e. When addressing the Mess, do not break the position of attention without permission. This requires the individual to request permission to “speak and move about freely.”
 - f. Members denied permission to address the Mess must wait a minimum of five minutes before again requesting permission.
 - g. The Head Table is not required to request permission and may address the Mess directly.

LIMERICKS AND DITTIES

1. Members are encouraged to address Mr. Vice/Ms. Vice during dinner and to bring the attention of the entire Mess to any topics of timely interest. This is called presenting a Limerick or a Ditty. Limericks, ditties, and any charges are not intended to insult a member or a guest, but be presented in good fun and taste; a good-hearted roast. Witty in nature, the limerick or ditty should elicit a response from the subject. This self-generated chiding creates fun and entertainment during dinner to enhance camaraderie and command esprit in the formality of the setting. Mr. Vice/Ms. Vice will mediate as necessary, and allow members to speak or defend themselves as they see fit. If charges or infractions are noted during dinner, the Vice President will make note of them for later presentation to the President for appropriate punishment. At any other time, the President will likely dispense judgment on the spot, as appropriate.

TOASTING ETIQUETTE

1. Formal Toasting. A toast is the traditional and formal way of honoring a country, organization or institution. Formal toasts are never drunk to individual persons by name.

a. During the after-dinner recess, tables will be cleared and port glasses shall be charged for toasting. Port glasses shall not otherwise be touched or picked up until a toast is proposed.

b. The port wine shall always be passed to the left and shall not leave the table until all glasses at the table have been charged.

c. For members of the mess and guests not wishing to drink, they must still raise their glasses so as not to insult the subject being toasted. It is disrespectful for an individual to not participate or to attempt to toast with water. An alternative will be made available.

e. It is neither necessary nor proper to drain the glass at the completion of each toast. A mere touch of the glass to the lips satisfies the ceremonial requirements. Glasses shall always be charged, until the toast, "To the Navy," upon which the port glasses should be entirely drained.

f. Members of the mess and all guests will rise for the formal toasts.

g. The President proposes the first and last toasts of the evening.

h. The President will begin with a toast to the Commander-in-Chief. At the sound of the gavel, everyone shall rise, Mr. Vice/Ms. Vice will second the toast, and all will raise their glasses, sip if desired, and place the glass back on the table. The National Anthem will be played (from a recording); members of the mess should stand at attention.

i. Formal toasting will continue with members of the mess offering toasts to various services and offices. Toasts should be made with the appropriate authority and pride, as befitting naval officers.

2. Informal Toasting. Informal toasts are also an important part of the occasion. Inspired wit and subtle sarcasm are much appreciated. It may be advisable to "plant" some impromptu toasts to set the tone for the evening.

a. Informal toasts may occur any time after the toast to Missing Comrades.

b. For informal toasts, members of the Mess shall stand, but guests may remain seated to drink unless it is considered a standing ovation. Guests should take their cue from the members of the head table.

c. Informal toasts should be humorous, but in good taste. They should be explained thoroughly and will require the second of someone (anyone) in the Mess. The appropriate response by the Mess to an informal toast is "Here, Here!"

d. Toasting to places or things is improper. Thus when proposing a toast to a Command, one must be careful to speak of the Command as an organization of people rather than as a geographical location or facility. When toasting individuals, it is proper to toast the individual's position, but not to toast them by name.

SEQUENCE OF EVENTS

1. Pre-Reception

a. President, Vice President, and committee members arrive 30 minutes prior to start time. The Guest of Honor (GOH)/speaker and anyone else to be in the receiving line, if one is to be used, arrive 15 minutes prior to start time.

b. The GOH and other special guests for the receiving line need to be greeted by the President at the venue main door and escorted to the reception room.

c. Receiving line should be on the right side of the doorway into the reception room. Receiving line order: President, spouse/date of President, GOH, spouse/date of GOH, next most senior special guest, etc.

2. Reception – Informal; lasts 30 – 45 minutes

a. Members and guests arrive. The Vice opens the reception.

b. If there is a receiving line, members go through the receiving line. If there is not a receiving line, members greet the President first, then the GOH and other VIPs. 15 minutes prior to dinner, Chimes are sounded to give warning that dinner will start in 10 minutes.

c. Fifteen minutes prior to dinner, "Dinner Chimes" will be played. This will be the last opportunity for a head call prior to dinner. Five minutes prior to dinner, "Officers' Call" followed by appropriate music will signal for all midshipmen and their guests not seated at the head table to dispose of their drinks, proceed to the dining area, locate their places, and stand quietly behind their chairs.

d. Mr. Vice/Ms. Vice: "Will the members of the mess and their guests please take their seats. The Mess is about to convene."

e. The head table will remain in the cocktail area until the members of the mess have reached the dining room. Head table occupants enter the dining room formally in one of three ways.

(1) President walks first, escorting the GOH on their right. Others pair up with head table co-hosts escorting official guests.

(2) President and GOH enter last after everyone goes in.

(3) Head table party lines up single file according to their table eating order and all file in together. Approach the head table from the right side.

f. Mr. Vice/Ms. Vice: "Attention on Deck." (MUSIC). Head table party to enter dining room. "Ruffles and flourishes" and the "General's March" are played if a flag or general officer is present. All members stand at attention.

Optional Fife or Drum Precession; see reference (c), page 66.

g. Head table occupants walk in and locate their seats. Ladies will be escorted to their seats and the gentlemen will then find and stand behind their seats.

h. As soon as the music has stopped. Mr. Vice/Ms. Vice: "Mr. President, the mess is assembled." At this time, no one may enter/leave without asking for and obtaining the President's permission.

i. The President will rap the gavel for attention (three times) and announce: *Optional Color Guard Presentation; see reference (c), page 66.*

(1) President: "Welcome to the U.S. Naval Academy First Company Dining-Out. I am (name), and your President this evening. Please consult the programs on the table for the order of this evening's events. Ladies and gentlemen, the grace." Upon its completion all members and guests will be seated at the sound of the gavel (one rap).

(2) The President then provides a short introduction of the GOH, other special guests and the Vice President. *Optional Sword Ceremony, Wine Pouring Ceremony, Punch Bowl or Grog Ceremony, Penalty Grog Bowl Ceremony, see reference (c) pages 67-68.*

j. During the Grog Ceremonies, the wait staff may bring out the salads, if not already preset on the table. *Optional Parading the Beef Ceremony; see reference (c), page 68. Conducted by venue wait staff.*

NOTE: If plebes or other midshipmen parade the beef, uniform will be Mess Dress. Anything else needs prior approval from the Battalion Officer. This will not be a hazing ritual.

k. Parading the Beef Ceremony. The President and Mr. Vice/Ms. Vice will announce:

(1) President: "Mr. Vice/Ms. Vice, Parade the Beef!"

(2) Mr. Vice/Ms. Vice: "Parade the Beef!"

l. The beef will be paraded in, accompanied by an appropriate member of the mess and appropriate music. The beef will be paraded around the mess and finally to the President who will bite off a piece to enjoy in front of all. Only the President of the Mess can sample and declare the beef acceptable. Never the Guest of Honor or Speaker.

m. President: "I declare this meat fit for consumption! Let dinner be served!"

3. Dinner – Formal

a. Members of the mess and guests will enjoy their salad, after the President and GOH at the head table begins the course. Shortly after, the wait staff will clear this course and bring out the

Enclosure (7)

main course, starting with the head table, then the Mr. Vice/Ms. Vice, then the other tables. During this time, members of the mess may address Mr. Vice/Ms. Vice with Points of Order, charges, limericks or ditties. Charges and rebuttals may be heard in full, and the President will pronounce punishment later (unless they choose to be timelier). There shall be no toasting during dinner.

b. As dinner winds down, Mr. Vice/Ms. Vice may suggest a 10-minute recess to “ease springs” which will give everyone an opportunity to move about, or answer nature’s call as needed. This exchange between Mr. Vice/Ms. Vice and the President can take place however Mr. Vice/Ms. Vice prepares it, or improvises. The President will grant or deny this request as they see fit. If granted, members will stand by their places until the head table departs.

4. Break. Guests will leave the dining area as needed and the dinner dishes will be cleared and prepared for dessert and coffee service. Mr. Vice/Ms. Vice will keep close watch on the time, and fine any offenders who return to their seats late. After the break, members should remain standing by their chairs until the head table is seated.

5. Post Break. Dessert, Coffee, and Port wine. *Optional Port Wine Ceremony, Rum Punch Ceremony, Smoking Lamp, see reference (c) pages 70-71.*

a. Mr. Vice/Ms. Vice: “Mr. President, the wine (port) is ready to pass, Sir/Ma’am.”

b. The President (or Senior Honored Guest) will begin pouring the port wine to fill their own glass. The senior member at each table will follow their lead, filling their own glass and then passing the port to the left. The port shall never leave the table until the last glass at the table is charged, and each glass shall be charged whether the member plans on drinking or not. A service person will be available at the left end of the head table.

c. When all glasses are charged, the President will rise and call for a toast.

6. Formal Toasts. Keep toasts short and to the point. The President will call for a toast to the President of the United States as the first toast. If there are foreign guests or members present, their head of state is toasted first.

a. The order of formal toasts after the President of the United States is:

- (1) The Joint Chiefs of Staff
- (2) The United States Marine Corps
- (3) The Chief of Naval Operations
- (4) Our Ships and Submarines at Sea
- (5) Navy and Marine Corps Units abroad
- (6) Missing Comrades

b. To the Commander-in-Chief

(1) Mr. President: “Mr. Vice, in keeping with tradition, I propose the first toast of the evening to the Commander-in-Chief of the United States.”

(2) Mr. Vice: “Ladies and Gentlemen, to the Commander-in-Chief of the United States.”

(3) All: “The Commander-in-Chief of the United States.”

(4) All toast, and place glasses on table, remain standing.

(5) MUSIC: The Star Spangled Banner.

c. To the Joint Chiefs of Staff

(1) [TBD]: “Mr. Vice/Ms. Vice, I request permission to address the President and offer a toast.”

(2) Mr. Vice/Ms. Vice: “Granted.”

(3) [TBD]: “Mr. President, to the Joint Chiefs of Staff.”

(4) Mr. President: “To the Joint Chiefs of Staff.”

(5) All: “The Joint Chiefs of Staff.”

(6) All toast and place glasses on table, remain standing.

d. To the United States Marine Corps

(1) [TBD]: “Mr. Vice/Ms. Vice, I request permission to address the President and offer a toast.”

(2) Mr. Vice/Ms. Vice: “Granted.”

(3) [TBD]: “Mr. President, to the United States Marine Corps.”

(4) Mr. President: “To the United States Marine Corps.”

(5) All: “The United States Marine Corps.”

(6) All toast and place glasses on table, remain standing.

(7) MUSIC: Marine Corps Hymn.

e. To the Chief of Naval Operations

(1) [TBD]: “Mr. Vice/Ms. Vice, I request permission to address the President and offer a toast.”

(2) Mr. Vice/Ms. Vice: “Granted.”

(3) All: “Mr. President, to the Chief of Naval Operations.”

(4) Mr. President: “To the Chief of Naval Operations.”

(5) All: “The Chief of Naval Operations.”

(6) All toast and place glasses on table, remain standing.

f. To our Ships and Submarines at Sea

(1) All: “Mr. Vice/Ms. Vice, I request permission to address the President and offer a toast.”

(2) Mr. Vice/Ms. Vice: “Granted”

(3) All: “Mr. President, to our ships and submarines at sea.”

(4) Mr. President: “To our ships and submarines at sea.”

(5) All: “Our ships and submarines at sea.”

(6) All toast and place glasses on table, remain standing.

g. To our Navy and Marine Corps Units abroad

(1) All: “Mr. Vice/Ms. Vice, I request permission to address the President and offer a toast.”

(2) Mr. Vice/Ms. Vice: “Granted.”

(3) All: “Mr. President, to our Navy and Marine Corps units abroad.”

(4) Mr. President: “To our Navy and Marine Corps units abroad.”

(5) All: “Our Navy and Marine Corps units abroad.”

(6) All toast and place glasses on table, remain standing.

h. To our Missing Comrades. *The Fallen Comrade Table Observance ceremony; see reference (c), Chapter 5.*

(1) Designated Member (standing). "Fellow warriors, I too have a toast. I would direct your attention to the table where a place has been set for those who have gone before us and those who remain unaccounted for. The military way of life is filled with much symbolism. The table provides a way to tell us what members of our profession, whom we call "brothers and sisters", are unable to be with us this evening."

(2) "The table is smaller than the others symbolizing the frailty of one prisoner alone against their oppressors."

(3) "The white tablecloth represents the purity of their response to our country's call to arms."

(4) "The empty chair depicts an unknown face, representing no specific Soldier, Sailor, Marine or Airman, but all who are not here with us."

(5) "The table is round to show that our concern for them is never ending."

(6) "The Bible represents faith in a higher power and the pledge to our country founded as one nation under God."

(7) "The black napkin stands for emptiness these warriors have left in the hearts of their families and friends."

(8) "The single red rose reminds us of their families and loved ones; and the red ribbon represents the love of our country, which inspired them to answer the nation's call."

(9) "The yellow candle and its yellow ribbon symbolize the everlasting hope for a joyous reunion with those yet unaccounted for."

(10) "The slice of lemon on the bread plate reminds us of their bitter fate."

(11) "The salt upon the bread plate represents the tears of their families."

(12) "The wine glass turned upside down reminds us that our distinguished comrades cannot be with us to drink a toast or join in the festivities this evening."

(13) Designated Member: "They dine with us in spirit only. Those who have died so that we may live, our former comrades who have earned the glory and have given to us the respect and pride that we, as service members, hold so dear...(inflection pause)... Fellow warriors and honored guests let us honor our fellow warriors, who have gone before."

(14) Designated Member: "Mr. Vice/Ms. Vice, a toast to all comrades who remain missing or have died for our beloved country."

(15) Mr. Vice/Ms. Vice: "Warriors, a toast!" (All rise) "Honored guests, members of the Mess, we will now toast with water instead of wine. Wine is unavailable to prisoners, and water

is a luxury. As we solemnly toast, please keep silent. Please raise your glasses. To our missing and fallen comrades.”

(16) Mess: “Our missing and fallen comrades.” Two Raps of the gavel (all rise).

(17) Mr. President raises their glass and waits for everyone to raise theirs. “To our comrades killed in action, missing in action, or prisoners of war.”

(18) All toast.

(19) Mr. President returns their glass to the table. Moment of silence.

7. Informal Toasts. If you are honored by a toast, return the favor.

a. Mr. President: One rap of the gavel. “Seats. The floor is now open for informal toasts and additional charges and violations.” Members of the mess may propose informal toasts or additional violations.

b. Unfinished Business

(1) Mr. President: “Mr. Vice/Ms. Vice, I believe we have some unfinished business remaining.”

(2) Mr. Vice: “Mr. President...”

8. Introduction of the Guest Speaker. The President will introduce the Guest speaker.

a. Mr. Vice/Ms. Vice: Proposes a toast to the Guest speaker.

b. Mr. President: "Ladies and Gentlemen, we now come to the high point of the evening. I'm sure that all of you have read (Speaker's bio). Ladies and Gentlemen, I present our distinguished guest and tonight's speaker.”

9. Speaker's Remarks. Upon conclusion, the President presents the Guest speaker with a small memento.

a. Guest Speaker's Gift Presentation

b. Mr. President: “Thank you on behalf of all the members of this Mess for making this Dining-Out an evening well worth remembering. As a token of our appreciation, we present you with [gift].”

c. Mr. Vice/Ms. Vice's Toast to the Speaker

(1) Mr. President: “Mr. Vice, do you have a toast for our speaker?”

(2) Mr. Vice/Ms. Vice: "To our distinguished speaker!"

(3) All: "Here, here!"

10. Final Toast & Smoking Lamp. President makes concluding remarks, calls for final toasts, requests to "Retire the Colors", if posted, and indicates the Dining-In/Dining-Out is finished. Invites attendees to participate in any after dinner activities.

a. Mr. President: "I believe that concludes our business."

b. Mr. President's closing remarks.

(1) "Please charge your glasses." All members charge their glasses. If practicable: Mr. Vice/Ms. Vice approaches and fills the port glasses of the head table. Mr. President fills Mr. Vice/Ms. Vice's glass.

(2) Mr. President: Two raps of the gavel. (all rise) "Ladies and Gentlemen, to the United States Navy."

c. Mr. Vice/Ms. Vice: "Ladies and Gentlemen, to the United States Navy."

d. All: "To the United States Navy." (*Music: Anchors Aweigh*)

e. Mr. President: (Comments about smoking laws to be determined). "The Smoking Lamp is now lighted."(ONLY IF VENUE PERMITS)

11. Closing. "The Dining-In/Dining-Out is concluded. Please join us at ..."

INVITATIONS & ENVELOPES

1. The Dining-In/Dining-Out is always a formal event and invitations are extended accordingly. All invited company members are expected to attend unless cogent reasons prohibit. It is mandatory that the Company Officer be in attendance. When not possible, another officer must be substituted. If an important guest speaker or foreign dignitary is going to be present, it may be advisable to invite their counterpart, post associate, or person(s) who speaks their language. A guest invited as the speaker should receive an invitation from the president which includes a fairly precise idea of what they can expect and what is required, e.g., a 20 minute speech. The formal invitation should be extended two to three weeks prior to the event. For the Guest of Honor/speaker and other VIPs, it is customary to invite their spouse or a date. The invitation may be hand written on a formal high quality fold over note card with matching envelope or customized preprinted. For the members of the company, an E-Mail invitation may be used.

2. Invitations should be extended to the following:

- a. Superintendent
- b. Commandant of Midshipmen
- c. Company Officer
- d. Company Senior Enlisted Leader
- e. Guest of Honor/Speaker
- f. Chaplain

Invitation Example

LOGO/Emblem

The United States Naval Academy
Third Company
requests the honor of your presence
at a Dining-In or Dining-Out
on Friday, the tenth of April
cocktails at half past five o'clock
followed by
dinner at half past six o'clock
Calvert House
58 State Circle
Annapolis, Maryland

R.S.V.P. by April 1
xxxx@usna.edu

Dinner Dress Blue
Civilian Black Tie

3. Envelopes. For the Guest of Honor who is the speaker, use full rank, full name, service branch abbreviation, title/position, name of institution, and address. Address centered on the face of the envelope.

Commandant of Midshipmen
United States Naval Academy
101 Buchanan Road
Annapolis, MD 21402

When invitation includes a spouse.

Captain and Mrs. Thomas R. Buchanan, USN
Commandant of Midshipmen
United States Naval Academy
101 Buchanan Road
Annapolis, MD 21402

For VIP guests, not performing an official function, use full rank, full name, and address. Address centered on the face of the envelope.

Commandant of Midshipmen
101 Buchanan Road
Annapolis, MD 21402

Delivery

It is acceptable to hand deliver invitations to individuals located at USNA.

PROGRAMS, SEATING ARRANGEMENTS, AND PLACE CARDS

1. Programs. It is recommended and beneficial to print a program with the sequence of events, explanation of observed ceremonies, and what members and guests are expected to do and not to do. This ensures correct adherence to the formal customs and traditions.

2. Seating Arrangements. The President sits at the center of the head table. Any flags must be positioned directly behind the President, preferably against the wall. The Guest of Honor/Speaker, (VIP #1), always sits on the President's right side. If the GOH brings their spouse/date, that person will sit on the left side of the President. If the President brings a date, that person will sit on the right side of the GOH/speaker. Spouses and dates are not seated next to each other. See service Etiquette, 5th edition chapter 23. The chaplain will sit in the last chair on the left side of the President. The Vice President will always sits at a separate table, never at the head table, directly opposite facing the President. Members and guests are assigned to specific tables and/or seats. Designate table hosts and co-hosts. Post the seating chart at the entrance of the dining room.

Back Wall

Flag Stand

Head Table

	VIP #3	President's Date	GOH/VIP#1	President	GOH Date	VIP #2	VIP #4	Chaplain
(No Dates)	VIP #5	VIP #3	GOH/VIP#1	President	VIP #2	VIP #4	VIP #6	Chaplain

Awards Table

X	X
X	X
X	X
X	X
X	X
X	X
X	X
	Vice President

3. Place Cards. Use place cards for those seated at the head table. If there is a retired officer seated at the head table, the word “retired” is NOT used.

Examples

Service Branch	Rank	Place Card
USA/USFA/USMC	General, Lieutenant General, Major General or Brigadier General	General Jones
	Colonel	Colonel Jones
	Lieutenant Colonel	Colonel Jones
	Major or Captain	Major Jones
		Captain Jones
	Sergeant Major of the Marine Corps	Sergeant Major Green
	First Sergeant, Master Sergeant, Gunnery Sergeant or Staff Sergeant	Full Rank and Last Name Master Sergeant Smith
USN/USCG	Admiral, Vice Admiral or Rear Admiral	Admiral Smith Vice Admiral Smith Rear Admiral Smith
	Captain or Commander	Captain Jones Commander Jones
	Lieutenant Commander	Commander Smith
	Lieutenant or Lieutenant, junior grade	Lieutenant Smith
	Midshipmen	Midshipmen Smith
	Master Chief Petty Officer of the Navy Fleet/Command Master Chief Petty Officer	Master Chief Smith
	Master Chief Petty Officer	
	Senior Chief Petty Officer Chief Petty Officer	Senior Chief Smith Chief Smith
Retired Officer	Basic Rank and Last Name	Colonel Smith

MENU & TABLE PLACE SETTING

1. The food served should be of the best quality and served in an efficient timely manner. The dinner may consist of three to seven courses depending on the budget, the number of people attending, and the restaurant. The Guest of Honor at the head table is always served first. Simultaneously, all other senior VIPs or guests of honor at the attending tables will be served first before everyone else at that table. The table host is always served last. The place setting is a formal one. It is critical to coordinate with the venue wait staff on the timing of food courses and the ceremonies to be observed.

Formal Table Setting

