

OFFICERS MESS & DINING-IN TRADITION

A Working Bibliography of MHI Sources

CONTENTS

American Practices.....p.1
-Note on Regimental Mess.....p.2
-Note on Chits.....p.3
British Practices.....p.4

AMERICAN PRACTICES

Cragg, Dan. The NCO Guide. Harrisburg, PA: Stackpole, 1986. pp. 271-286. U123.N6.

"Dining-In Preserves an Old Tradition." Army Information Digest (Nov 1965): p. 52. Per.
Describes Ft Bragg's monthly practice.

Miller, Charles. The Customs of the Service; Also Some Suggestions and Advice. Ft Leavenworth, KS:
Army Service Schools Press, 1917. pp. 16-19. U353.M5.

Moss, James A. Officers Manual. n.p., 1914. pp. 27, 328-29 & 391. U133.M74.
Procedures and rationale; see also 1941 ed, pp. 95-97.

The Officers Guide. 1st ed. Wash, DC: Ntn'l Srv Pub, 1930. pp. 121 & 125. U133.A6.O3.
See also 4th edition (1941), p. 110; 12th edition (1947), pp. 220-23; 36th edition (1972),
pp. 76-77 & 140; and 29th edition, pp. 70-71.

Patton, Oliver B. "Officers' Messes in the United States." USAWC typescript, 1964. 16 p. UC743P3.
Undocumented but informative account of 20th century demise of regimental officers
messes, along with a useful comparison of British counterpart.

Seibert, Donald A. Memoirs & papers. Arch.
Include material on dining-in and on his experience as club officer in late 1940s.

U.S. Army. Infantry School. Formal Dining-In. Pamphlet, Feb 1973. 47 p. U353.F67.

U.S. Army. Sergeants Major Academy. Formal Dining-In Handbook. Ft. Bliss, TX: By the Academy, 1972? 39 p. U353.F672.

U.S. Army War College. "The Dining-In." Carlisle Barracks, PA: Memo for Chairman, Dept of War Gaming, 14 Nov 1983. 17 p. E-copy in MHI Digital Library.
Background and guidelines.

U.S. Air Force. Office of Air Force History. "The Formal Dining-in." Comp of excerpts. 8 p. (photocopy). E-copy in MHI Digital Library.
Include information on "dining-out" variation, which includes spouses.

U.S. Dept of Army. Open Messes and Other Military Sundry Associations and Funds: Army Regulations 230-60, dated 26 Jul 1956. 21 p. MilPub-Regs.
See also later editions and changes.

U.S. Infantry School. The Formal Dining In. Ft. Benning, GA: Infantry School, 1985. ca 20 p. U353.F673.

U.S. Military Academy. Official Courtesy and Customs of the Service. West Point, NY, 1938. p. 2. U353.O33.

U.S. War Dept. General Regulations for the Army of the United States, 1835. Wash, DC: Globe, 1835. UB501.
Article IX, Paragraphs 20-21, encourage regimental messes; see also General Regulations of 1847.

_____. Post Messes: AR 210-60, dated 16 Apr 1921. 3 p. MilPub-Regs.
See successive editions and changes through 1955.

_____. Regulations for the Army of the United States, 1889. Wash, DC: GPO, 1889. Para 1087. UB501.
Authorizes special mess room for no less than 3 officers.

Vetock, Dennis J. "What a Mess." Vignettes of Military History No 128, USAMHI, 23 Jul 1979. 1 p. D25.A1.U58.

Wallen, Henry D. Service Manual for the Instruction of Newly Appointed Commissioned Officers.... NY: Van Nostrand, 1869. pp. 43-44. U133.W35.

Note: On American Officers' regimental mess

One of the earliest references to a specific American regimental mess was noted by historians of the 6th Infantry Regiment, who recorded that "the Famous Old Regimental Mess" originated at Jefferson Barracks, Missouri, in 1827. See:

Babcock, Elkanah. A War History of the Sixth U.S. Infantry. Kansas City, MO: Hudson-Kimberly, 1903. p. 17. #603-6.1903.

Byrne, Charles. The Sixth United States Infantry: An Historical Sketch. Ft Thomas, KY: Regimental Press, 1893. p. 12. #603-6.1893.

Note: On Chits, Chitting, Chit System (informal term for a bill or credit voucher. In British officers' messes, it denotes an I.O.U.)

The Oxford English Dictionary (1933) traces the origin of the word back to 1785 from an even earlier Anglo-Indian term for letter or note. "Chit" became a British service term for any type of correspondence in general. Apparently, "chit" came to be used more specifically for special bills (and, possibly, regular subscriptions) to the British officers' messes. No entry for "chit" found in official and unofficial dictionaries of U.S. military terms, 1854 to present. American officers received monthly credit from post messes, officers' clubs, etc, but the specific procedures were not explained in Army Regulation 210-60. Service Etiquette (cited below) indicates that various systems of chits and chit coupon books existed as late as 1963. However, in 1975; AR 230-60 prohibited the use of "tokens, coupons, or chit books." Sources:

Customs of the Army: A Guide for Cadets and Young Officers. London: Harrison, n.d. pp. 9 & 29. U767.C98.

Dickinson, R.J. Officers' Mess, cited below. pp. 99 & 119-20. UC745.G7.D52.

Fraser, Edward, and Gibbons, John. Soldier and Sailor Words and Phrases. London: Rutledge, 1925. p. 54. PE3727.S7.F72.

Great Britain. War Office. The Queen's Regulations and Orders for the Army, 1895. London: HMSO, 1895. p. 156. UB626.A2.

Harral, Brooks J., et al. Service Etiquette. Annapolis, MD: Naval Institute, 1963. pp. 287-88. U766.M2.

The Officer's Guide. Harrisburg, PA: Mil Service Publishing, 1947. p. 221. U133.A6.O3.

U.S. Dept of Army. Officers' and Noncommissioned Officers' Open Messes: AR 210-60, dated Jul 1951. p.8. MilPub-Regs.

_____. The Management and Administration of the US Army Club System: AR 230-60, dated Apr 1975. Para 6-14. MilPub-Regs.

U.S. War Dept. Post Messes: AR 210-60, dated Apr 1921. pp. 2-3. MilPub-Regs.

See also:

-Chits from Ft. Riley, KS, and Philippines, Matthew Forney Steele Papers, Arch.

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Customs of the Army: A Guide for Cadets and Young Officers. London: Harrison & Sons, n.d.
pp. 28-31. U767.C98.

Dickinson, Richard J. Officers' Mess: Being a History of Mess Origins and Customs.... Tunbridge
Wells, England: Brooks, 1973. 120 p. UC745.G7.D52.
Descriptions of the 20th-century traditions.

Edwards, T.J. Military Customs. Aldershot, England: Gale & Polden, 1961. U355.G7.E4.
See Chap II, "Officers' Mess Customs."

Farwell, Byron. Mr. Kipling's Army. NY: Norton, 1981. pp. 61-67. U767.F37.

Field, Cyril. Old Times Under Arms: A Military Garner. London: Hodge, 1939. pp. 285 & 289.
UA647.F54.
Pertinent documents of 1792 & 1832.

Great Britain. Army. The King's Regulations For the Army and the Army Reserve, 1935. London:
HMSO, 1935. pp. 428-32. UB626.A21.
See other editions.

Kellett, Anthony. "Messes and Canteens in Canada From Their Origins to 1914." Military Collector &
Historian (Fall 1971): pp. 100-11. Per.
Includes photos & sources.

"Officers' Messes in the British Army." Field Artillery Journal (Sep/Oct 1933): pp. 462-467. Per.
Brief description with commentary by U.S. military attaché in London.

Patton, Oliver B. "Officers' Messes in the United States," cited above. UC743.P3.

"Valor." "Messing Systems for Young Officers." Fighting Forces (Oct 1937): pp. 317-20. Per.
Comparison of British Army & Navy procedures.

Woodville, R. Caton. Social Life in the British Army. NY: Harper, 1899. pp. 40-51. UA649.C13.