

CUSTOMS OF THE ROYAL AUSTRALIAN AIR FORCE



Fourth Edition

Sponsor: DCAS
File: AF95/3330

Issued: January 1996

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INTRODUCTION

101.

The purpose of this book is to help you, as a newly-appointed officer, a newly-promoted sergeant, or a recent recruit, to understand and appreciate some of the traditions of the Royal Australian Air Force (RAAF) and to comprehend the numerous unwritten rules which you will be expected to obey. These traditions and rules, in one form or another, exist in all three Australian Services and in most of the military forces of the Western world. Collectively, they are known as 'Customs of the Service' and in the RAAF they play a large part in the day-to-day activities of all officers. As members of the Royal Australian Air Force high standards of conduct, both professional and social, are expected of you.

102.

Many customs of the Services originated as a result of the diverse background of entrants to military life and the need to ensure that these individuals lived and worked together harmoniously, even under adverse conditions. Due to the different historical backgrounds, operational requirements and living and working conditions of the three Services, many specific, individual service customs have developed over the years. As a result, even the fundamental military concept of discipline is implemented in many different ways throughout the Services.

103.

The RAAF is a high-technology based Service and as such has high expectations of its officers and airmen in regard to their level of specialist knowledge, proficiency and performance in the work environment. The maintenance of high standards of discipline is compatible with these expectations. However, the need for routine and rigid enforcement of strict disciplinary measures in the RAAF is dependent on the levels of achievement of self-discipline amongst its members. In time you will come to recognise when strict discipline is necessary for the proper development of a member's potential, or when the same result may be achieved in other ways. In your formative years, you must expect to be subjected to firm discipline.

104.

The customs and traditions of the RAAF are worth preserving. Their significance for you will grow as your Service experience increases. You will come to appreciate that they represent a tangible and worthy aspect of Service life which will stand you in good stead in any society. Should there be any aspects with which you are unfamiliar or which give you cause for concern, do not hesitate to discuss them with your superiors.

ORIGINS OF CUSTOMS AND INSIGNIA

201.

The customs and traditions of the Royal Australian Air Force are mainly based on those of the British Army and the Royal Air Force. They have been adapted where necessary to meet Australian conditions and requirements. Other customs and traditions unique to the RAAF have also evolved over the years.

202.

The Concise Macquarie Dictionary does not define the length of the period of years which establishes tradition, but describes tradition as 'that which is handed down from generation to generation, especially by word of mouth or practice.'

Origins of the Royal Australian Air Force

203.

The origins of the Royal Australian Air Force were first established at an Imperial Conference held in London in 1911, where it was decided that aviation should be developed within the armed forces of the British Empire. Australia also implemented this decision, the only country to do so, by approving the establishment of the Central Flying School at Point Cook, Victoria in 1912.

204.

This action made it possible to form the Australian Flying Corps within the Australian Imperial Force (AIF). The Corps established a most creditable reputation for itself in both Palestine and France during World War I.

205.

Both the Royal Navy and the British Army had their own air services during World War I (RNAS and RFC). However, they were amalgamated on 1 April 1918, (largely for financial reasons) to form the Royal Air Force - a third fighting force equal with the Navy and Army.

206.

The Australian Flying Corps remained part of the Australian Army until 1919 when it was disbanded along with the AIF. Although the Central Flying School continued to operate at Point Cook, military flying practically ceased until 1920 when the Australian Air Corps was formed. This Corps was still controlled by the Army but plans were then drawn up for the establishment of a permanent air force as a third fighting force.

207.

The Australian Air Force was formed on Thursday 31 March 1921. The prefix 'Royal' was subsequently approved by King George V in June 1921 and became effective on 31 August 1921. The Royal Australian Air Force thus became the second Royal air arm to be formed in the British Commonwealth of Nations.

Preservation of our Emblems and Customs

208.

We should strive to preserve those emblems or customs which originated with our ancestors in the first decade between 1911 and 1921. However, even after such a short time regrettably few remain. So much of what was laboriously built up has disappeared in succeeding years. What is now left should be prized and jealously guarded.

209.

The customs and insignia of the forebears of the Royal Australian Air Force, which are likely to endure and be kept for posterity are outlined in the following paragraphs.

Pilot's Wings'

210.

One of the oldest customs is the award of 'Wings', (or more correctly 'The Flying Badge) to those pilots who have attained prescribed proficiency, flying aircraft.

211.

Designed by General Sir Frederick Sykes and General David Henderson, the flying badge was approved by H.M. King George V in February 1913. It consisted of the wings of a Swift in white silk embroidery, with a monogram 'RFC' in the centre encircled by a laurel wreath of brown silk; the monogram surmounted by a crown, all on a background of drab cloth. The badge was worn on the left breast of the jacket centrally above any decorations or medals. After slight alterations to the colourings and the change of the monogram from 'RFC' to 'RAAF', this badge became the 'Wings' of the Royal Australian Air Force.

Other Aircrew Brevets

212.

Many of the badges worn by aircrew today evolved from the early Royal Flying Corps pilot's badge. Observers, who shared the dangers of battle in World War I with their pilots, had no badge to identify them as combatant fliers until

September 1915 when the Observer Badge was introduced. The qualifications for this badge were somewhat elastic. In some squadrons the period for qualification on active service was such that only a few survived to gain it. There were occasions when replacement Observers arrived from the United Kingdom wearing the badge - this did not meet with approval and it was removed until they had earned it the hard way. The badge consisted of a half-wing protruding from the letter 'O' embroidered in white silk on a drab background. The Navigator badge evolved from the Observer's badge. It was first issued in World War II and unlike the pilot 'Wing' is an Australian design which uses a different wing to that utilised by other Commonwealth Air Forces.

Motto

213.

Out of strange circumstances and after much controversy, our motto originated on 15 March 1913 as that of the Royal Flying Corps, later adopted by the Royal Air Force in 1918 and the Royal Australian Air Force in 1921.

214.

In 1912, the first Commanding Officer of the Royal Flying Corps (then Colonel F. Sykes) asked his officers to suggest a motto which would foster esprit de corps. Soon afterward, one J.S. Yule, a subaltern with the Royal engineers seconded for duty with the Royal Flying Corps, suggested the Virgilian 'Sic itur ad Astra'. However, this was rejected as it merely suggested a 'journey to the stars'. 'Ad Astra per Ardua', the motto of the Drummond family of Midhope, County Perth, UK, seemed suitable but was finally rejected in favour of 'Per Ardua Ad Astra' which might be interpreted as 'Through Struggle to the Stars'. This was forwarded to the British War Office, but long and considerable argument took place before the motto was finally approved by King George V. The motto was also adopted by all the Air Forces in the British Commonwealth.

The Eagle

215.

The 'Eagle' is still conspicuous in many forms on uniforms, badges, crests and memorials. It is one of the oldest remaining emblems, not only in use in the Royal Australian Air Force, but also in many other Air Forces. For many years after its origin with the Royal Naval Air Service (RNAS), the identity of this bird was in hot dispute by ex-naval personnel, who insisted that it was an Albatross. Both sides were badly briefed as the argument could have been settled easily by quoting Admiralty Weekly Order No 2 of 23 June 1914 which reads 'The badge of an Eagle will be worn by members of the RNAS at the top of the left sleeve'.

216.

So from birth it was an eagle. In 1939 the RAAF officially adopted the Australian Wedge-tailed Eagle in the official badge.

The Roundel

217.

When British aircraft flew in battle for the first time in the World War I, they had no national markings; they were fired upon with equal impartiality by friend and foe from the ground. To enable their own forces to identify British aircraft, the Union Jack was painted on both the upper and lower wing surfaces and the fin and rudder. Unfortunately, unless the aircraft was flying very low, the cross on the Union Jack looked very like the German marking so this did not solve the problem.

218.

In October 1914, it was decided to adopt the more easily distinguishable three circles of red, white and blue then in use by the French Air Force but with the colours reversed. The Roundel became the battle colours of British Commonwealth Air Forces with occasional variations dictated by theatre and/or type of operation eg. the red centre was eliminated in the Pacific because it could be mistaken for the Japanese insignia.

219.

In 1956, the RAAF adopted its own Roundel with a red kangaroo in motion in place of the red centre. In 1981, Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II approved this change to the Roundel.

Royal Australian Air Force Ensign

220.

In 1918, Air Council decided that the newly formed Royal Air Force should have its own Ensign; but their proposal did not meet with immediate acceptance, particularly from the Lords of the Admiralty who had the right of veto over any new flag intended for use in British territories. Negotiations and work on the design continued and after some difficulty - as the Roundel was not strictly an heraldic device - the College of Arms agreed to the present design in 1920. His Majesty King George V gave his approval by signing an Order in Council on 24 March 1921. This Ensign was adopted without change by the Royal Australian Air Force in 1922. In 1948 His Majesty King George VI approved a distinctive light blue design for use by the Royal Australian Air Force. The Ensign incorporated the Southern Cross and Commonwealth Star and replaced the Royal Air Force Ensign which had been in use in Australia since 1922. In 1981 Her

Majesty Queen Elizabeth II approved a change to the Ensign; the RAF Roundel was replaced by a RAAF Roundel featuring a kangaroo in motion.

221.

Use of the Royal Australian Air Force Ensign is strictly controlled. Although it may be displayed at indoor functions of a Service nature, it should never be used as decorative bunting on walls, tables or platforms, neither is it used to cover the coffin at a Service funeral.

Colours, Standards and Banners

222.

Throughout their existence armed forces have carried with them signs and symbols of their unity, strength and achievements. Recognition of the achievements of the Royal Australian Air Force has been signified by the award of Queen's Colours. These are awarded sparingly to establishments and units, by order of the Sovereign. The unit or establishment must have been in existence for many years and by virtue of its role contributed to the high standard of efficiency and loyalty within the Service.

223.

Achievements of individual operational squadrons are commemorated by the award of Squadron Standards, either on completion of 25 years service or by having earned the Sovereign's appreciation for especially outstanding operations. Achievements in World War I and World War II are emblazoned on Squadron Standards in the form of Battle Honours.

224.

In 1980 the need for a third ceremonial flag to recognise the service of non-operational units was considered. In January 1981 the Governor General of Australia, His Excellency the Right Honourable Sir Zelman Cowen, AK, GCMG, GCVO, KStJ, QC approved the award of a flag to be known as the Governor General's Banner for the RAAF. The Banner is awarded to those units which are considered ineligible for a Squadron Standard, or for whom a Queen's Colour would be inappropriate, but have completed 25 years service with the RAAF.

225.

Queen's Colours, Squadron Standards and Governor General's Banners are always treated with the utmost respect and veneration. They are only paraded on special occasions and are kept cased or uncased in safe keeping, usually in the Officers' Mess.

Unit Badges

226.

In the 1920's and 30s, some squadrons adopted unofficial badges and it was not until 1938 that a policy was promulgated and an Inspector of Royal Australian Air Force Badges was appointed. Since then all designs for RAAF badges have been approved by, and registered in, the College of Arms. Each badge is approved by the Sovereign who signs the original painting which has been forwarded to London.

227.

Designs for the badges are bound by many heraldic rules. Some of these rules include colours, the use of inanimate objects and the use of animals. Poses of animals also play an important part in a design. A meaning is implied by the position of wings, forepaws, tails and heads. Many units have chosen designs that connect them to their role, a particular event that has taken place during its span or a feature of its geographical operational area.

FOR THE OFFICER - THE SOVEREIGN'S COMMISSION AND RELATIONSHIPS WITH AIRMEN

301.

Your commission places you in a far more onerous position than that of a manager or employee. You have not been 'employed' in the normal sense but have undertaken to serve your sovereign under any condition. You must be prepared to serve in difficult and dangerous situations and forgo the luxury of being able to refuse a lawful order, task or assignment.

302.

On receiving the Sovereign's Commission, you attain a special status in the community. Maintaining that status demands a high standard of behaviour at all times, on or off duty, in public or in your private life. Whatever your rank, you must set an example to your juniors through self discipline, dress, bearing and attitude. You must deliberately develop those essential qualities of leadership expected in all officers.

Loyalty

303.

You must be loyal to both the Service and yourself. Your Service loyalty must extend upwards to your superiors, across to your peers, and downwards to those under your command. You will be required to show courage, to lead in difficult situations, to give orders which may be unpopular and to press a demand with flexibility, initiative and understanding. You must respect tradition and yet be ever alert to the value of new ideas.

Personal Behaviour

304.

You will be judged by your example. Punctuality must become a habit and you must be meticulous in financial matters. Your personal behaviour must at all times be above approach so that you can maintain, uncompromised, your position and the status afforded you by the Sovereign's Commission.

Officer/Airmen Relationships

305.

A fundamental and traditional distinction in any military force is that between officers, who hold the Sovereign's Commission, and the lower ranks who do not. You should note that within the Royal Australian Air Force the general term 'airmen' is used for all members, male or female, who are not officers.

306.

As an officer you are responsible for your subordinates. The acknowledged gap due to rank between you and your subordinates must remain for disciplinary purposes; yet it can be bridged without familiarity by self discipline, mutual respect, justice and courtesy. The airmen's dignity as well as your own, must be respected. You must know your subordinates if you are to direct them effectively in their duties and help with their problems. Genuine interest is required on your part since insincerity will soon be detected.

307.

The RAAF cannot operate without discipline, but discipline must be just and not unnecessarily harsh. The standard of discipline which you should demand must be high and it must be consistent and fair. Above all you must not issue orders which are not realistic, or which you are not prepared to ensure are carried out. Be sure to distinguish between 'advice' and 'orders' and the times when each is appropriate.

308.

Your role as a leader will impose certain restrictions upon your relationships with airmen. Traditionally, officers and airmen do not engage in joint social activities except on a few special occasions, with their commander's approval. The Officers', Sergeants' and Airmen's Messes are completely separate institutions, for sound reasons. Those not familiar with service life will find it difficult to appreciate that this separation is built on mutual respect and military discipline and not just a social distinction. For this reason, social visits between Messes are strictly controlled, and only made with the sanction of the local commander and the President or Chairman of the Mess being visited and your own Mess. Married couples of differing rank status are entitled to visit a Mess of higher status provided certain guidelines are met. These are discussed in more detail in Chapter Five.

309.

To become an effective officer you will have to develop, amongst other things, a reputation for fair and impartial treatment of your subordinates. At some time you will have to administer Service discipline and counsel and evaluate your staff. Your reputation for fairness may suffer if you have not maintained impartiality at all times. Relationships with subordinates must be built on mutual respect, for it is this feeling which forms the basis of the successful officer/airman relationship.

310.

Inevitably, if you fully involve yourself as an officer should in the activities of your base and unit, you will come into contact with some airmen more than others. Some examples include interacting as a member of a sports team, participating in some base activity or club, or through involvement as near neighbours in a community activity. Whilst you are participating in such an activity, the laws, rules and courtesies of that activity, must generally predominate. However, you should resist any tendency to let what can be an acceptable mutual interest develop into too close a personal relationship with any airmen, as you will certainly lose objectivity - at least in the eyes of others. Similarly, you should avoid those public places which are the acknowledged province of airmen: to do otherwise may result in embarrassment for both parties.

311.

Some airmen will inevitably try to become too familiar in behaviour or speech, either through their own inexperience or to take advantage of yours. In resisting this, you have to strike a balance between officiousness and familiarity. You will gain experience in these situations, but do not be afraid to ask for advice from your superiors. You can maintain the proper relationship by your own example and by addressing your subordinates correctly. Airmen expect to be treated with normal courtesy and should be addressed by their rank and surname. They also expect you to properly observe your role and status as an officer.

312.

Developing the ability to learn and remember names is most important. Airman and airwomen have difficulty believing that you have their best interests at heart if their identity is apparently not recognised.

313.

As an officer you are responsible for the moral welfare of your airmen. In the close community of the Service the development of close personal relationships is possible. However, immoral behaviour cannot be condoned within the Service community and relationships between officers and airmen, particularly of the opposite sex, should be circumspect and above reproach at all times.

314.

Your concern for moral welfare will naturally be affected by the prevailing standards in society, but you cannot let outside standards be your sole criterion. Service standards, due to the nature of our task, are necessarily more rigid than those generally found in the rest of today's society and, without being unnecessarily obtrusive, it is Service standards you must uphold.

315.

You must appreciate that when an airman is first promoted to non-commissioned officer rank he begins a most difficult phase of his career. Non-commissioned officers of all ranks must always be supported by their officers and should never be reproved in the presence of junior ranks. Also, you must take care not to issue instructions directly to airmen already acting under the orders of a non-commissioned officer.

316.

You may also find yourself under the instruction of non-commissioned officers on some occasions. You must appreciate the difficult situation in which such an instructor is placed and assist by your considerate behaviour.

The Sergeants' Mess and Lower Rank Clubs

317.

The Sergeants' Mess is the home of warrant officers and senior non-commissioned officers (SNCOs) of a Base. When you visit this Mess you can do a great deal to foster desirable relationships between officers and warrant officers or SNCOs.

318.

You may visit the Sergeants' Mess only when on duty or when invited specifically by the Chairman of the Sergeants' Mess Committee (CMC) and then only with the specific permission of your Commanding Officer and/or other officers as required by the Officer Commanding. You must never casually visit this Mess nor may you accept its hospitality when on duty.

319.

The normal courtesies should be paid to the Chairman of the Mess Committee on your arrival and departure. Approach Mess members with friendly courtesy; familiarity should not be allowed.

320.

As an invited guest you may offer to buy drinks for members of the Mess but as you are a guest you may not approach the Bar on your own behalf. Your stay should only be as long as politeness demands; the senior officer present will usually give the lead when it is time to depart and you should conform. You should resist often well-meant urging by Mess members for you to stay longer than is necessary.

321.

The same principle applies to other lower rank Messes and Clubs, except that more stringent rules are applied concerning frequency and duration of visits.

Conclusion

322.

Handled correctly, the officer/airman relationship is a source of great strength to the RAAF. It is not solely a feature of Australian Service life, it exists in all military societies. Paradoxically, it makes for an easier, closer and more effective working relationship than is normally found in other management/worker situations of today's society.

THE OFFICER ON DUTY

401.

When first joining a unit, junior officers normally report in uniform to their flight commander, Commanding Officer or equivalent. Thereafter, in accordance with unit instructions, the newly-joined officer will be interviewed and briefed.

Compliments

402.

There are a number of ways to pay compliments; rising from your chair, coming to attention, saluting, or, in the case of male officers raising ones civilian hat. Each is appropriate to a different situation; which is correct at the time should be apparent to you.

403.

The exchange of compliments is an expression of mutual respect and should never be interpreted as a mark of servility. Thus, each senior must be given the appropriate compliment and those of a subordinate must be acknowledged in a smart military manner.

Saluting

404.

The origin of the salute is found in antiquity. Men of arms have used some form of the military hand salute as an exchange of greeting since the earliest times. It has been preserved and its use continued in all modern Services which inherit many of their traditions from the Age of Chivalry. The method of rendering the salute has varied through the ages, as it still varies in form between the Services today.

405.

Popular belief states that in the Age of Chivalry the knights were all mounted and wore armour which covered the body completely. When two friendly knights met it was the custom for each to raise the visor and expose his face to the view of the other. This was always done with the right hand, the left being used to hold the reins. It was a significant gesture of friendship and confidence, since it exposed the features and also removed the right hand from the vicinity of the weapon. Also in ancient times the freemen of Europe were allowed to carry arms; when two freemen met, each would raise his hand to show that he held no weapons in it and that the meeting was a friendly one. Slaves were not allowed to carry weapons and they passed freemen without the exchange of a greeting. In the Middle Ages gentlemen often went clothed in heavy capes under which

swords were carried; upon meeting a friend, the cloak was thrown back by raising the right arm, thus disclosing that the right hand was not on the sword hilt.

406.

Regardless of its origin, the salute is a symbol of greeting, of mutual respect, trust and confidence initiated by the junior in rank, but with no loss of dignity on either side. It is also a sign of loyalty and respect to the Service of which a member forms a part, and the general tone and spirit of the Service is indicated by the manner in which airmen/airwomen offer the salute and officers return it. Saluting by airmen/airwomen is a recognition of the Queen's commission, being indirectly a salute to the Sovereign through the individual holding Her Majesty the Queen's authority. Returning members salute is not only acknowledgment of his salute to the officer personally, but a recognition of the fact that through an officer, members have given an outward sign of their loyalty to Her Majesty the Queen, Australia and the RAAF.

407.

Full details on saluting are given in **DI(AF) AAP 5135.001 (Manual of Drill)** but as a guide you should salute:

- a. Every senior officer, except when;
 - (1) under command, in which case only the commander salutes,
 - (2) the nature of duty prevents it, or
 - (3) in a crowded assembly or thoroughfare.
- b. When the National Anthem is played but not when sung as a hymn.
- c. When a staff car is flying a flag or pennant or carrying star-plates;
- d. When the Australian National Flag is raised or lowered.
- e. When the Royal Australian Air Force Ensign is being hoisted or lowered all ranks within view of the Ensign are required to stand to attention and face the flagstaff. Officers and warrant officers should salute if in uniform, until the hoisting or lowering is completed.

- f. When a civilian or service funeral cortege passes or is passed. All members in uniform are to salute whilst the coffin is being lowered.
- g. As a courtesy, on entering or leaving the office of a colleague your equal or superior in rank. Do not salute a junior.
- h. When the Last Post is played as part of a ceremony, but not for the Rouse or Reveille.
- i. When uncased Colours, Standards, Banners or Guidons pass or are passed.

408.

When two or more officers in company are saluted the salute should be returned by the senior or, if all are of the same rank, by the nearest.

409.

When a Royal Salute is given, all ranks, except those under command, should salute. However, when a General Salute is given to a senior officer or dignitary, the compliment is only being exchanged by those on parade and the person receiving the salute. Spectators do not salute but are required to stand.

410.

Unlike members of some foreign services you do not salute when you are not wearing Service headdress. However, you should always endeavour to acknowledge a salute if you are without headdress, or have your arms full. A 'thank you' or 'good-morning', accompanied by you coming to attention is appropriate in some circumstances. An eyes left or right may also suit the occasion.

411.

The senior position is always on the right hand but, in informal situations, the strict adherence to this rule may result in awkwardness or undue formality. Care must be taken to avoid this, having regard to the situation and the relative seniority of the persons concerned.

412.

Officers are to salute the quarter-deck and the officer of the day when boarding or leaving any of Her Majesty's ships or foreign naval vessels. When boarding ships the senior officer should board last but disembark first.

Senior Officer Protocol

413.

You should always defer to senior officers when boarding or alighting from a motor vehicle, lift or escalator. Similarly, you should defer to senior officers when moving through doorways.

414.

On arrival at a unit, a senior officer should be met and escorted by an officer of appropriate rank. In the case of a senior officer or official who is to travel on a RAAF VIP aircraft, he or she should be introduced to other passengers in the assembly area before boarding the aircraft. The host unit should issue a passenger list and seating plan (if necessary) for the flight to each passenger before flight.

415.

You should appreciate the importance of precedence and your attention is drawn to the Commonwealth and State Tables of Precedence. The nature of the occasion will determine which is appropriate, but on all occasions when the RAAF is the host, the Commonwealth Table must be followed.

The Parade Ground

416.

When on the parade ground you should behave in a smart and military manner. You should not saunter about, smoke or use it as a short cut.

Duty Officer

417.

The Duty (or Orderly) Officer, whatever his rank, is the representative of the Commanding Officer and as such may be expected to act on his behalf on all routine matters during his tour of duty. To do this conscientiously, you must be completely familiar with the unit routine and the orders which govern unit activity.

Visiting other Units

418.

When visiting another Base on duty, the wearing of uniform is mandatory unless specific permission is sought from the Base commander to do otherwise. When you visit another Base, you should call first on the relevant unit CO.

Dress and Bearing

419.

Detailed guidance on the wearing of RAAF uniform for special occasions is available to you in the **RAAF Manual of Dress DI(AF) AAP 5135.003**. However, as a general rule civilian clothing should be worn in public except when:

- a. on duty in a public place, or attending official functions;
- b. travelling to and from your normal place of duty; or
- c. you will be required for uniformed duty immediately upon arrival at your destination.

420.

When in a public place in uniform your dress and bearing should be of the highest standard. You should not:

- a. smoke,
- b. slouch or stand or move around with your hands in your pockets, or
- c. drink in a public bar.

As a general rule, caps should be worn with uniform in public. However, there will be occasions when caps can be removed; current orders are your guide.

State Occasions

421.

Attendance at garden parties at Government House is by invitation only and will normally include husband and wife. The Sovereign's Representative will customarily move among the guests and for certain guests to be presented by an Aide-de-Camp (ADC).

422.

Investitures are normally conducted twice a year and may be held indoors or outdoors. Recipients of honours and awards will be invited to attend and requested to indicate the number of guests they wish to be invited. Small children should not be included. Guests will then be invited by Government House. Following the ceremony, details of which will be given to recipients individually, the Sovereign's Representative may wish to meet spouses and friends of recipients informally.

423.

On arrival at Government House, you will be met by the ADC-in-waiting to whom any Entree Card should be passed. Any special briefing will then take place.

424.

On presentation, an officer is introduced before his/her spouse in the following manner:

- a. A third party makes the introduction:
'Your Excellency may I present.....'
- b. If outdoors, an officer, having previously removed his/her right glove will salute, bow his/her head and shake hands lightly if the hand is offered.
- c. If indoors, hat and gloves will not be worn. A male officer will bow his head and female officers will curtsy. All officers will shake hands lightly if the hand is offered.
- d. On such occasions, wives and female officers curtsy to Their Excellencies the Governor-General and his wife; however, on presentation to a Governor and his wife, a curtsy is made to the Governor alone.

- e. Any conversation will be begun by the personage to whom the presentation is being made.
- f. At the conclusion of the presentation, a female officer will curtsy again. A male officer or male spouse will bow his head and his wife will curtsy.
- g. In some circumstances, Their Excellencies may move informally among the guests and join in the conversation. Even though an officer and his/her spouse may have been presented earlier, it is customary for the male officer or male spouse to bow his head again and for his wife and female officers to curtsy as Their Excellencies join or leave the group. The curtsy may be abbreviated on such occasions.

425.

The bow which accompanies a presentation is not made from the waist. The body is held erect and only the head is bowed briefly.

426.

Exceptions to this procedure are:

- a. No curtsy is given to a Royal Personage, having the title 'Royal Highness' (but not including The Duke of Edinburgh), when outdoors.
- b. No curtsy is given to the wife of a State Governor.

427.

In practice, only a half-curtsy is given by female officers in uniform. The right foot is forward, the left drawn behind it and both knees are slowly and slightly bent. At the same time, so that the whole appears as one smooth unbroken movement, the head only is bowed forward. If the hand is offered, it should be taken lightly at this time.

428.

The correct mode of address varies with the personage concerned and the stage of the conversation. On presentation and departure the formal mode is used, at other times an informal mode is acceptable. The procedure is as follows:

<u>Personages</u>	<u>Formal</u>	<u>Informal</u>
Having the title 'Majesty'	'Your Majesty'	Sir' or 'Ma'am'
Having the title 'Royal Highness'	'Your Royal Highness'	
Governor-General or Governor or Administrator of the Commonwealth or Lieutenant-Governor	'Your Excellency'	'Sir'
Wife of the Governor-General or the Administrator of the Commonwealth	'Your Excellency'	'Your Excellency'
Wife of a State Governor or Lieutenant-Governor	By her title and name only 'Lady or Dame ...'	

429.

If you have had an interview with the Sovereign's Representative or have attended any function at Government House, you should sign the Visitors' Book on one of the next succeeding three days. The Visitors' Book should be signed:

- a. Squadron Leader R.L. Hall - in the case of a single or unaccompanied officer;
or
- b. Squadron Leader and Mrs K.L. Brooks - in the case of a married officer.

Local RAAF orders may require you to sign the Visitors' Book when taking up certain posts.

Relationship with Navy and Army

430.

There are many minor differences in customs between the three Services and the responsibility to acquaint yourself with these differences, particularly when working in close co-operation with another Service, is yours.

431.

In particular, the greatest care must be taken to give the correct compliments and to acknowledge them at all times in a correct military manner.

432.

Addressing a person by his/her correct title is good manners, and an officer must be able to recognise the badges of rank of other Services. These ranks should always be used in full except that:

- a. Vice-Admirals and Rear Admirals are addressed as `Admiral',
- b. Air Vice-Marshals, Air Marshals and Air Chief Marshals are addressed as `Air Marshal',
- c. Major Generals and Lieutenant Generals are addressed as `General',
- d. Lieutenant Colonels are addressed as `Colonel',
- e. Army Lieutenants and Second Lieutenants may be addressed as `Mister',*
- f. Naval Lieutenants are never called `Mister',
- g. Naval Midshipmen may be addressed as `Mister',* and
- h. Warrant Officers of all three Services may be addressed as `Mister'.*

**Female equivalents may be addressed as Miss or Mrs as appropriate.*

FOR OFFICERS - THE OFFICERS' MESS

501.

The Officers' Mess meets several different needs; according to your circumstances it will be either your home or your club. It serves as a centre of social and recreational activities for you and your fellow officers.

Mess Rules

502.

Where one centre aims at providing comprehensive facilities for the wide range of ages, seniority and different personalities found on a base, there must be a set of rules to ensure that the interests of all are considered. These are called the Mess Rules; you should take the trouble to read your Mess Rules carefully and observe their spirit at all times. In this way you will be making a significant contribution to the happy and relaxed atmosphere which is traditional in a Royal Australian Air Force Officers' Mess.

Courtesy

503.

A successful, well run Officers' Mess is based on courtesy. Courtesy can be said to be the unwritten regulation which is assumed in all the formal written rules. In the Mess, courtesy must be exercised within a framework of organised behaviour which has been determined over the years through decree or tradition. Indeed, although you will encounter some differences in local rules as you move from Mess to Mess, you will always be conscious of the general ethos which has been determined by long developed customs and patterns of behaviour set down by previous generations. These have been formulated in order to create and maintain a commonsense application of discipline and good manners.

504.

When joining or visiting the Mess for the first time, you should make yourself known to the President of the Mess Committee (PMC).

505.

Every Mess keeps a Visitors' Book in which all visitors should be invited to write their names. You should sign the Visitors' Book on arrival at any Mess other than your home Mess.

Mess Facilities

506.

A comprehensive range of facilities will usually be available in most Officers' Messes. The following paragraphs outline these facilities.

507.

The Ante-Room

The ante-room is equivalent to a lounge room in a family home; it is a place where normally you can relax and pursue your own activity provided no-one else is disturbed. Simple courtesies, such as holding a quiet conversation or replacing newspapers and periodicals when you have finished reading, are appreciated by all.

508.

The Dining-Room.

The large dining-room in most Messes is necessary to accommodate Mess members on formal occasions. At other times local management may utilise the space by allocating various areas for special uses such as formal lunches, light snacks and officers on flying duty. Whilst normal meals may lack the formality of dining-in nights, they too are governed by general rules which are summarised as follows:

- a. The published meal times should be adhered to; unless you are unavoidably delayed you must never wait until the last moment before entering the dining-room. Under no circumstances should anyone enter the dining-room or queue at the door before the meal.
- b. Smoking is not permitted in any part of the Mess other than a members own allocated room.
- c. Newspapers should not be taken into the dining-room except at breakfast.
- d. No seats are reserved except for those of the PMC and Officer Commanding.
- e. Dining-room staff should be addressed by rank and name whenever possible or as 'steward'. Civilians are always addressed as Mr, Mrs or Miss.
- f. Complaints should always be addressed to the appropriate Mess Committee member or, if necessary, to the PMC. You should never admonish staff

directly except in the most extreme circumstances and you should then report the matter to the PMC without delay.

509.

The Bar.

The bar is the natural focal point of Mess social life and you will quickly become aware of the particular rules and local instructions which apply on your base. General points on the use of Mess bars are as follows:

- a. The normal closing times are to be observed. The bar should be kept open late only in the circumstance specifically listed in your Mess rules.
- b. The responsibility to ensure that you adhere to the rules governing drinking before flying, driving or during a normal duty day is yours. There is no tradition that an officer should be a heavy drinker, or, in fact, drink alcohol at all; in any case over-indulgence will not be tolerated. Nor is any officer obliged to invite his fellow officers to drink every time he wishes to do so himself. Large 'schools' of drinkers should be avoided. You should not buy a drink for an officer without his consent. Be sure when you buy another 'round' that you are not embarrassing others with an obligation to remain.
- c. Where Messes have more than one bar, normally there are relaxed rules for one of them. The freedom granted in the informal bar places an extra responsibility on you to ensure that you observe the dress rules in the formal main bar. Again, the reasoning behind these rules is consideration for the wishes of others and a desire to retain the traditional code of behaviour of the Officers' Mess.
- d. Normally, everyone uses the bar for relaxation and behaviour is traditionally informal. However, the bar is not a place to try to resolve personal troubles or complaints.
- e. The Royal Australian Air Force has a tradition of strict punctuality during working hours. This tradition is not relaxed after a late party.

510.

Other Areas.

Entertaining guests in the Mess is permissible, but not all Mess areas are available at all times for this purpose - your Mess rules will provide appropriate guidance.

General Considerations

511.

The Mess is the home of all living-in members. Although your room is your particular oasis of privacy, the considerations of communal living impose some restrictions on liberty. Those whose tastes run to noisy television or record/CD/tape playing are expected to moderate sound output in the interest of others. Within the private areas of the Mess you are generally free to behave as you wish, in moderation, provided of course that you are not interfering with the freedoms of others. There will be at least one television set in your Mess and there will probably be other communal facilities such as billiards or games rooms and laundries. There has always been a tradition in Messes that anyone using a communal facility leaves it clean, tidy and ready for immediate use by another Mess member.

512.

Hats, coats, parcels, sidearms or other weapons or any such items are not to be worn or carried into public rooms of the Mess.

Mess Staff

513.

Stewards in the Officers' Mess are employed to provide table service in the Mess dining-room, act as Bar staff, make beds and clean rooms and communal areas. They must not be burdened with extra tasks which interfere with their basic duties. Always treat the Mess staff with courtesy and consideration and avoid behaving in a way which might cause friction. Thank them for good service but never take up complaints directly with them.

Dress

514.

For many years there was little significant change in fashions and the term 'plain or civilian clothes' was sufficient to indicate the type of dress permissible. Since the advent of high fashion clothing, ideas on acceptable civilian dress in the Mess have diversified. Your Mess rules will indicate the type of civilian dress which may be worn at different times in the public rooms. You should avoid wearing trendy clothes and at all times your dress must be neat and clean.

515.

You should develop good taste in clothes. Remember that good dress sense is shown not only by the choice of style and colour of your clothing, but also by the way in which they are worn and on their appropriateness to the occasion. The appropriateness of dress for the Mess is not dependent on the cost or 'label' of

the garment worn, but on the style and standard that conforms with the general demeanour of the Service and Mess environment. Items such as sports T-shirts, tattered jeans, thongs and running footwear are never worn in the Mess. The normal standard of dress for female officers is to be neat, well tailored and to conform to moderate current fashion styles comparable with male dress equivalents.

Hospitality

516.

A host is always deemed to be responsible for the dress and behaviour of any guests an officer introduces to the Mess. Stating the dress required for an event for which you issue a personal invitation is always a good idea. Never invite a guest to dine in the Mess without first seeking the permission of the PMC.

517.

If visitors to the Mess are unaccompanied, officers should, without hesitation, greet and entertain them until the particular hosts arrive. They should be asked to write their names in the Visitors' Book and be introduced to the PMC and the Officer Commanding, if present, and to three or four other officers. The visitors particular hosts must also be notified of their guest's arrival.

518.

Official guests are normally received by the PMC; however, in his/her absence the senior member present should automatically act on his/her behalf.

519.

When an officer of Air Rank (or equivalent) and his spouse visit a Mess an appropriate officer and spouse will be asked to host the visitors during their stay.

520.

At a reception, ball or other major Mess function, you may well be appointed to host one or more of the Mess guests. You will undoubtedly receive a particular brief for each occasion but the following will normally apply:

- a. Without being unnecessarily obtrusive never leave your guests unattended. If the guest is a complete stranger, circulate with him/her and make any necessary introductions. If, as is often the case, they know other people present, allow them to choose which of their acquaintances they wish to speak to, but you should be on hand to help whenever required.
- b. Ensure that your guest has sufficient food and drink.

- c. Point out where the cloakrooms and toilets are located.
- d. Inform your guest of any special features associated with the function such as squadron standards, photographic displays or tableaux.
- e. At the end of the function or when your guest expresses a wish to leave, escort the guest to the senior host to make farewells. Send for his/her car or escort him/her to the car park before bidding farewell. Your responsibility ends only when your guest has left.

521.

Hospitality should be evident in all RAAF activities and you should bear in mind that the RAAF and a Mess are often judged by the way guests are treated.

Other Mess Customs

522.

You should always rise from your seat when the Officer Commanding or any officer of Air Rank first enters a public room in the Mess other than the dining-room. If not seated you should acknowledge his arrival by facing him. Similarly, a male officer should rise when a lady joins him or his group. She may immediately ask him to be seated, but if not, he should remain standing until she is seated or has joined her companions.

523.

There is no need to rise when senior officers other than those mentioned in the foregoing paragraph enter a room, though normal courtesies should be observed. If a senior officer joins a seated group, all officers junior to him/her should rise.

524.

If you enter a Mess after the PMC, OC or Air Officer, it is not only good manners but mandatory to pay your respects to him/her, but parade ground formality is just as misplaced as undue familiarity. Simply approach the officer concerned, catch his/her eye, and make your greeting. You are then free to continue unless the officer engages you in conversation.

525.

You should not resort to the use of slang, abuses, emotional or obscene language, in conversation. Neither should you gesticulate too much with your hands.

526.

A point worth remembering is that a good listener is often far more respected than a person who is overly loquacious.

527.

In social conversation with senior officers, your attitude should be easy and relaxed but also correct. Refrain from adverse criticism of the Service and any officer.

528.

In the past, certain subjects of conversation were always avoided in military Messes but there are no absolute taboos today. However, particularly in the Messes of other Services and with Mess guests, you would do well to treat the following topics with some circumspection and bear in mind that slanderous or loose talk does not benefit any party:

a. Daily Routine.

At one time discussing work or 'opening the hangar doors' was considered to be in poor taste. Today, however, some discussion of the daily routine is seen not only as a healthy sign of professional interest, but also as beneficial in broadening knowledge of different specialisations. Such talk remains more appropriate to informal gatherings than to formal occasions. Daily work should not be discussed when guests are present unless the guests express a particular interest in some aspect of Service activities.

b. Politics.

As an officer you will be expected to possess a sound knowledge of current affairs and political issues and it would be unreasonable to deny you the chance to develop your views and improve your general knowledge through discussion. You must never forget, however, that you are a servant of the Government of the day and the Sovereign, and you should avoid expressing extreme political views.

c. Religion.

Officers have traditionally been recruited from a broad spectrum of society with consequent diverse religious backgrounds and discussion on religion was discouraged to avoid friction. Again, free discussion in moderate terms can be beneficial, and to a degree, is now accepted. However, take great care in discussing religion. You would be best advised to limit such discussions to those whose background and views you know.

Airmen Visiting the Officers' Mess

529.

Airmen should never be introduced to the Mess as guests. On occasions it may be necessary for drivers and messengers to report to an officer in the Mess. In such circumstances they should never be left alone to search for the officer concerned but should be instructed to wait with the Mess receptionist or another member of staff until the officer is called.

Entry to the Officers' Mess by Spouses/Partners of Junior Rank

530.

In the past access to an Officers' Mess by a serving spouse or partner was not permitted if that person's rank did not satisfy normal entry requirements.

531.

A Mess member may now invite a serving spouse or partner of lesser rank to his or her Mess, under the following conditions:

- a. Entry is to be limited to those occasions on which an approved mixed or official function is being held;
- b. Non-entitled persons must be accompanied by their Mess-member spouse or partner; and
- c. The hosting Mess member is responsible for the dress and behaviour of his/her spouse or partner.

Mess Property

532.

Mess property belongs to all members and is, in effect, yours on trust for those who will follow you and should always be treated with respect. Should you damage Mess property in any way you must report the damage to the Mess Secretary.

Mess Functions

533.

Messes customarily hold functions at which members may give or return hospitality. Such functions are arranged by the Mess Committee with the Base Commander's approval. They may take many forms; a dance, cocktail party, garden party or dinner. However, in each case, they are Mess functions in which all members should participate.

534.

The purpose of such functions is, of course, to offer and return hospitality and to give pleasure to members and their guests. Members should mix freely with their guests and the responsibility of the host is to attend to their guest's well-being. Leaving any guest, particularly a lady, unattended is impolite and should be avoided.

535.

Essential courtesies which must be observed by all members are that spouses and guests should be introduced to the Officer Commanding and PMC on arrival and that they should take their leave of them before departure. Generally, officers and guests should remain until any guest-of-honour has left.

The Mess Dining-In

536.

Mess dinners, or dining-in-nights as they are more customarily known in the RAAF, are a regular feature of Mess life. The essentially simple procedures which are traditional, heighten the enjoyment of the meal and impart a graciousness to the occasion often not found elsewhere.

537.

A Mess dining-in differs from a normal dinner, insofar as both non-resident and resident members are required to attend. Guests may be invited on special occasions. Attendance at a dining-in-night is obligatory. However, your Commanding Officer may approve your absence after consideration of a written application.

538.

In all Messes, a basically similar procedure is followed and minor variations for their own sake are avoided. To avoid any embarrassment the host should advise any guests if there are variations to the normal procedures.

539.

Dining-in-nights are presided over by the President of the Mess Committee (PMC). If he is unable to carry out his duties, the appropriate deputy is to assume the role. The Base Commander may preside for a particular occasion.

540.

A Vice-President, known as Mr Vice, is appointed by the PMC for each dining-in night to assist with the conduct of proceedings. Normally, the person nominated for this task will be a junior officer. Where a female officer is appointed, she will still be addressed by the traditional title, Mr Vice.

541.

Official or personal guests may be invited to a dining-in-night depending on the occasion. A Mess member is always made responsible for each guest. If you are bringing a guest, you should extend the courtesy of explaining the dinner procedure to that guest before their arrival.

542.

Mess members are normally required to assemble in the ante-room 30 minutes before the meal is due to commence. You should arrive at or before the appointed assembly time. To arrive late is an affront to the PMC. Sherry or other short drinks will be served during this period. A seating plan is provided and well before the appointed meal time you should acquaint yourself with your place at the table and that of your guest.

543.

On arrival, you should pay compliments to the PMC and introduce your guests. All official guests are greeted by the PMC assisted by the Vice-President. They should then be introduced to the Base Commander and any Air Rank officer, provided with refreshments and quietly introduced to fellow officers in the immediate area.

544.

The Senior Steward, at the PMC's direction, will advise the Vice-President when the Dining Room is in readiness. This may involve the sounding of a gong or other similar device. Some Messes may employ this method of attention-getting five minutes before commencement of the Dining-In. The Vice-President is to then ensure that all members move into the Dining room without delay, should be the last person to precede the entry of the PMC and those to be seated at the official table. All members and guests will remain standing behind their chair until the PMC is in position. Silence should be maintained by members and guests from the time that they enter the dining-room until the PMC is seated.

545.

On a Mixed Dining-In-Night you should escort to the table the guest who is to be seated on your right. In the dining room, members and guests will go to their assigned places; however no-one is to be seated until the President does so.

546.

The principal guest is to be seated to the right of the PMC unless the Governor-General or Governor is also present. In this case, the principal guest will be seated to the immediate left of the PMC. All other official table seating is arranged in order of precedence.

547.

At Mixed Dining-In-Nights, husbands and wives are usually seated diagonally opposite each other, except for the official table where normal protocols and order of precedence should prevail, left and right of the PMC.

548.

The table is usually set for the exact number expected. However, if for some unforeseen reason there are more places than necessary, the spare table settings and chairs will be removed discreetly by the mess stewards before dinner is served.

549.

When all members are assembled in the dining room the PMC will order the Colours to be marched in. The Colours, under the command of the senior bearer are to be slow marched at the slope and Colour Bearers must wear the Colour belt. Members and guests are to face the Colours when paraded rather than merely standing behind their chairs. This may necessitate adjusting their position to face the Colours continuously as they are paraded.

550.

Colours will be marched in slow time into the dining room in silence. Drum/musical accompaniment, such as bagpipes, is at the discretion of the PMC.

551.

The President will remain standing behind his/her chair until the Vice-President is in position and silence should reign. The PMC will then call upon the Chaplain, or some other member in the absence of a Chaplain, to say Grace. When Grace has been said, the President will take his/her chair, followed by other diners.

552.

The meal is served by courses and you should not start a course until the lead is given by the President. Wine is normally served but you are not obliged to partake of alcohol as water is provided for those who seek an alternative. The normal rules of polite society should prevail throughout the meal. Neither rowdy conversation nor raucous behaviour is customary or warranted. Members should not move or fiddle with table arrangements during the course of the evening.

553.

There are to be no breaks during the dinner. Where a genuine need to leave exists, you may after excusing yourself from immediate company, quietly and briefly absent yourself from the dining room. Emergencies excepted, absences of this nature should not become the norm. Indeed, they should be rare, with members making appropriate pre-dinner arrangements to minimise the need for such absences as well as exercising a degree of self-discipline. Disturbing the places/chairs of absent diners is to be avoided.

554.

After the last course the President will call upon the Chaplain, or some other member in the absence of the Chaplain, to Give Thanks. All diners remain seated for the short prayer. The table is then cleared except for the port glasses which should remain in front of you and aligned. Decanters are then placed on the table in front of the PMC and Vice-President.

555.

Following the lead of the PMC, Mr Vice and at large dinners those with decanters in front of them remove the stoppers, placing them on the table. The decanter is then passed to the left. As the decanters pass around the table, 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. Although silence is not imperative during the passing of the port, conversation should be kept to a minimum.

556.

When all the glasses have been filled, the custom is then for the Loyal Toast to be proposed. To indicate that all are ready for the Loyal Toast, the President and Mr Vice will replace the stoppers (all other decanters will have been removed).

557.

The PMC, who remains seated, with the gavel calls the dinner to order by saying 'Mr Vice'. All conversation must cease immediately so that every diner may hear what follows. The Vice-President, now in charge of proceedings, will arise and say 'Gentlemen' or 'Ladies and Gentlemen'. This indicates to the assembly that they should also rise. Glasses remain on the table.

558.

When everybody is standing and there is complete silence, the Vice President then proposes 'The Queen'. If a band is in attendance the first six bars of the National Anthem are then played. At its conclusion or in response to the Vice-President if there is no band in attendance, all present will raise their glasses, repeat 'The Queen', drink to the toast, and resume their seats, following the Vice-President. During the Loyal Toast, members and guests face the Sovereign's portrait. The custom of embellishing the Loyal Toast is discouraged.

559.

When exchange officers and other foreign representatives are present, the Loyal Toast takes precedence, following which the President will propose the toast to the head of State of the country to which the visitors belong (eg 'The President'). If an anthem is played, the procedure is as for the Loyal Toast. If two or more foreign nations are represented, the PMC uses the toast, 'To the Heads of State

of the nations represented here tonight/today'. The response by the dining members and guests is 'The Heads of State'.

560.

The PMC may, at an appropriate time, circulate the port again, using the same procedure as before. Officers having decanters in front of them will follow the lead given. Subsequent rounds of port are at the discretion of the PMC who indicates when the circulation of port has finished by replacing the stopper in the decanter before him/her. The other decanters are then stoppered also.

561.

After the Loyal and any other toasts have been given, the PMC will direct that the Colours be marched out. The Colour bearers are to assemble at the doors to the dining-room and the mess stewards are to return the Colour belts to the bearers. When the belts are in place, the bearers are to march in quick time in an anti-clockwise direction to their respective Colours. In unison the Colours are to be removed from their stands and held at the slope. On the command of the senior bearer the Colours are to be quick-marched out of the dining-room in an anti-clockwise direction.

562.

Members and guests are not to engage Mr Vice in conversation with the PMC during the meal. Custom and procedure is for conversations through the Vice-President to be disallowed until after the Loyal Toast. If you then wish to address the gathering, you may approach the President - through Mr Vice - for permission to do so. Members wishing to speak are not required to identify themselves.

563.

When the PMC is ready to leave he/she uses the gavel and calls on Mr Vice to take his/her chair. Custom requires all to stand after the President rises and for those wishing to leave to follow the PMC from the dining-room. The Vice-President will then assume the place and duties of the President until those remaining are ready to leave. Their departure should not be unduly delayed, though the port may be circulated again.

564.

On their return to the ante-room, 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.

565.

General high spirits and participation in suitable games are customary but injury to persons or damage to property is to be avoided. Irresponsible behaviour and

over-indulgence in alcohol are not compatible with expected standards of behaviour. Mess jackets are not to be removed without the approval of the PMC or dining President for the evening.

FOR SERGEANTS - THE SERGEANTS' MESS

601.

The Duke of Wellington allegedly formed the first Sergeants' Mess in the British Army (circa 1810) to segregate the Senior Non-Commissioned Officers from the lower ranks.

602.

RAAF Sergeants' Mess traditions commenced with the formation of the Australian Air Force on 31 March 1921 (the prefix Royal was added later in the same year). Members from the Australian Air Corps, which was formed in 1920 after the Australian Flying Corps was disbanded in 1919, transferred to the fledgling Air Force and formed the first RAAF Sergeants' Mess at Point Cook.

603.

All RAAF messes have their own customs and traditions in addition to those of the Service. Whilst the latter take precedence in all cases, the local variations will be published in Local Mess Rules by the Committee of the particular Mess.

604.

Etiquette is the unwritten or conventional law of courtesy observed between members of the same profession. These same unwritten or conventional laws are invariably based on the common sense application of discipline, good manners and consideration for others.

605.

Day to day behaviour in the Sergeants' Mess is governed to a great extent by certain etiquette and a code of conduct which we have inherited from past generations of serving members. You will find, however, that the outmoded or unwarranted rules have been abandoned. Those remaining are necessary for the good running of today's Sergeants' Mess, as they would be for many forms of communal living and, in general, are designed to uphold the dignity of the Mess, our way of life and the service in particular.

606.

This chapter has been produced to introduce and guide the newly-promoted Sergeant in the way of Mess life.

Customs and Traditions

607.

Members should bear in mind that the respect to which they are entitled can only be commanded according to the general tone and behaviour prevailing among

themselves. Members should always remember that their duty to their Commanding Officer is to not permit any breach of the rules. Every endeavour should be made by the members to maintain cordial understanding and good feeling, both in and out of the Mess.

608.

Members should consider themselves on an equal footing in the Mess and, whether a senior or junior member, participate in the same manner regarding the comforts and advantages to be obtained in the Mess. A senior member whilst in the Mess should never endeavour to extract a privilege that a junior member would not venture to demand. Every member, without regard to rank, has an equal voice in matters concerning the Mess. However, junior members should not forget the respect due to seniority and experience in the Service.

609.

Members are to treat the Mess as their home; manners are based on this fact. They must always receive visitors in a courteous manner, assist them, and on all occasions make them feel comfortable and welcome.

610.

The Sergeants' Mess should be a place where members are pleased to gather and discuss matters of mutual interest. There should be an atmosphere of conviviality and comradeship which is the proper entitlement of Sergeants, Flight Sergeants and Warrant Officers as members of the Mess. If by some unfortunate chance a member has a grudge with another member, he should leave it outside the Mess. The maintenance of a high standard of discipline and Mess etiquette does not in anyway prohibit members from enjoying good healthy fun. In fact the playing of customary Mess games, impromptu sing songs and the like, providing it does not interfere with other members, should be encouraged as it helps considerably to establish good harmony and a high standard of esprit-de-corps.

611.

A long standing tradition in Messes is that anyone using a communal facility leaves the facility clean, tidy and ready for immediate use by another Mess member.

612.

The Chairman of the Mess Committee (CMC), who is normally a Warrant Officer, is appointed by the Officer Commanding (or in the case of an independent unit the Commanding Officer) and is responsible for the general discipline, proper management, business and workings of the Mess, including the Committee. The CMC is to be addressed as 'Sir' at all times unless he or she directs you otherwise.

613.

The bell situated in the Mess is considered the property of the CMC. Any unauthorised ringing of the bell traditionally costs the offender a round of drinks for all members present. The custom of the CMC ringing the 'Bell' in RAAF Sergeants' Messes to gain the attention of members is relatively new (there is no reference available to indicate this custom occurred during World War II). It may be a copy of the Navy custom of the Master-at-Arms ringing the bell situated above the rum barrel at the "Mainmast" for the crew to be issued with the regulation "Tot of Rum".

614.

There are many minor differences in the customs between the Services. All Warrant Officers and Senior Non-Commissioned Officers are to acquaint themselves with these differences. Some are markedly different. For example in Naval Messes, ashore or afloat, the Loyal Toast is given seated, even if the National Anthem is played.

615.

While attached to or visiting other Messes your sense of good manners and social responsibility requires you to introduce yourself to the CMC (or the President in a Navy Mess or PMC in an Army Mess) on your arrival.

616.

Warrant Officers and Senior Non-Commissioned Officers are only permitted to visit Junior Ranks Clubs on invitation and then, only after permission has been obtained from their CO and CMC.

Mess Etiquette

617.

Mess etiquette is based on social etiquette and normal everyday courtesy. You will find the same etiquette applies to exclusive clubs and applied courtesy is a sign of good manners.

618.

Guests must be introduced to the CMC, or in his absence the Deputy CMC, or then, the senior member present. If the CMC enters the Mess later, then an effort should be made to introduce your guest or guests.

619.

Never invite a guest to dine in the Mess without permission of the CMC and prior arrangements with the Mess Manager/Mess Supervisor.

620.

Always be punctual for meals.

621.

Exercise discretion in your discussions, especially on religion and politics or any other controversial topic.

622.

Do not complain verbally about things that do not suit you. Others do not appreciate it. All complaints are to be written and handed to the CMC, thus allowing your Mess Committee to take the appropriate action.

623.

Never abuse Mess staff, who cannot answer back. Submit the complaint in writing to the Mess Committee.

624.

Hats, caps, gloves, raincoats are never worn and /or carried in the Mess. Similarly, golf clubs, racquets, weapons and dogs (with the exception of seeing-eye dogs) are never brought into the Mess.

625.

Guests are to be "signed-in" to the Mess by an entry in the Visitors Book. The sponsoring member is responsible for the standard of dress and behaviour of his/her guest(s). A member, whose spouse is a serving member of any armed

forces, and whose rank may be higher or lower than the SNCO status, may be invited to the Mess on prescribed occasions only.

626.

All members are to ensure that their guests are entertained and that no one is neglected at any time. At functions you should not leave the Mess until the official guests have departed. Should a member have a requirement to leave the Mess before the official guests, he or she should discreetly seek permission from the CMC.

627.

For the benefit of yourself and all other members, read the rules and make sure you have a full understanding of them.

Mess Rules

628.

Mess rules are authorised by DI(AF) PERS, Section 15. These orders and instructions cover:

- a. election/appointment of Committee members,
- b. duties of Committee members,
- c. Mess discipline,
- d. Warning-in and Warning-out,
- e. meetings,
- f. minutes of Mess meetings,
- g. responsibility for expenditure of Mess funds,
- h. control of expenditure by Mess Committee,
- i. Mess equipment and property,
- j. insurance,
- k. security, and

1. membership.

629.

All serving members of the mess should make themselves aware of the contents of the above topics. In addition to the above instructions, other topics may be expanded on or added to in Local Mess Rules.

Local Mess Rules

630.

The Officer Commanding/Commanding Officer will ensure that rules are drawn up for each mess, incorporating local matters of detail as well as appropriate information from instructions. These rules will normally be issued as part of Formation/ Unit Standing Orders. You should endeavour to familiarise yourself with them.

Mess Dress Rules

631.

Members are expected to use mature judgement and exercise good taste with regard to dress to ensure a high standard is maintained in the mess. They should bear in mind their status as Warrant Officers and Senior Non-Commissioned Officers and that the Mess, as a social centre for all members and their guests, is conservative by some contemporary standards.

632.

In general, the type of dress should be appropriate for the occasion and the only guidelines seen as necessary are that ties need not be worn unless ordered for a particular function. Female members and guests should observe the same general standards as male members and guests.

Service Dress

633.

Service dress/working dress as promulgated is acceptable on all occasions.

Dining-In-Night Procedures

634.

You will find in every profession that certain rules and regulations have been introduced but at the same time there will exist certain unwritten rules and certain code of conduct. The RAAF is no exception in this respect and, indeed,

much of our way of life is additionally enhanced by traditions and customs of which we can be justly proud.

635.

The procedures for a Dining-in-Night were mostly formulated for the proper conduct of the evening in the Navy and Army Messes long before the formation of the RAAF.

636.

The Dining-in-Night serves two main purposes:

- a. It enables all members, both living-in and living-out of the Mess to dine together.
- b. It provides the opportunity for personal guests and official guests to be formally entertained

637.

The following procedures give an insight to the customs to be adhered to during the dinner. Reference to "member" in the procedures refers to all participants of the Dining-in-Night.

Assembly

638.

Members and guests are to assemble in the Mess 30 Minutes prior to the notified time. On arrival, members and guests are greeted by the CMC. Senior guests are to be met and hosted by members detailed by the CMC.

639.

During this period sweet and dry sherry is served as these wines sharpen one's appetite for the meal to follow. Traditionally only sherries are served at this time. However, at the CMC's discretion other refreshments may be served to members and guests. Members should consult the seating plan, as approved by the CMC, for dinner before moving into the dining room.

Mr Vice

640.

A Vice-Chairman (Mr Vice) sits opposite the CMC at the other end of the table. Mr Vice is appointed by the CMC for the particular Dining-in-Night. It has been a custom in RAAF Messes for Mr Vice to be the most junior Sergeant in the mess. However, in some circumstances, the Chairman will appoint a more senior

member as Mr Vice. Where a female is appointed Mr Vice she will be addressed in the traditional title of "Mr Vice".

641.

Mr Vice, acting on behalf of the CMC, controls the dinner while the CMC entertains the official guests. Any member wishing to address the CMC must do so through Mr Vice who will pass on the message or request if he considers it appropriate. Members addressing Mr Vice will not be required to identify themselves.

Entry To The Dining Room

642.

The senior steward will report to the CMC when dinner is ready. The CMC will invite the members and their guests to enter the dining room. When this has been accomplished the Mess members, led by Mr Vice, will precede the CMC and the official table guests into the dining room. All members should remain standing behind their respective chairs in silence until CMC is seated.

Colours, Standards, and Banners

643.

If Colours, Standards, and Banners (hereafter called simply 'Colours') are to be paraded, they are marched in prior to grace being said. The format for the ceremony is detailed in the RAAF Manual of Ceremonial, DI(AF) AAP 5135.002. The Colours should be paraded in the mess at least once per year. All members and guests are to continuously face the Colours while they are being paraded. The Colours are to be paraded in silence. Musical accompaniment, such as bagpipes, is at the discretion of the CMC. The Colours should be positioned, ideally, behind the CMC and beneath the Royal portrait.

644.

All lights are then extinguished in the dining room. The only illumination will then be candlelight.

The Meal

645.

The CMC then calls for the Chaplain, or in his absence a member delegated by the CMC, to say grace. When this is completed the CMC will sit and all members will do likewise.

646.

The meal commences by the CMC being served first, immediately followed by Mr Vice. When the CMC considers that sufficient members have been served he will commence eating. No one is to commence eating before the CMC. The same procedure pertains to each course.

647.

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. Enjoyment of the meal should not be spoilt by unsolicited interjections from members until after the loyal toast.

648.

Conversations should be on a general nature rather than on any 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.

649.

At the completion of the meal the tables will be cleared with the exception of the port glasses. The Mess Supervisor or Senior Steward the advises the CMC that the tables are cleared.

650.

Two decanters of port are brought into the dining room. A decanter of port is placed before the CMC and another before Mr Vice. Musical accompaniment, such as bagpipes, is not to be used when the port is brought into the dining room.

Passing The Port

651.

While there is no laid down procedure for the passing of the port, the following custom has been honoured in the past.

652.

The CMC removes the stopper from his decanter and pours a small amount into his glass, at the same time Mr Vice does likewise and the port decanter is passed from left to right. After filling one's glass the decanter is passed outside the glass to the person on the left who takes it without allowing the decanter to rest on the table. This is because the port symbolises a toast to the Sovereign, and therefore

nothing should come between a member and the Sovereign. The practise of waving the decanter in circles and other affectations should be avoided.

653.

Silence is observed during the passing of the port. RAAF Sergeant's messes maintain this silence in memory of departed Comrades-in-Arms.

654.

Because of the large number of members it would be very time consuming if only two decanters of port were in circulation. Therefore stewards will place additional decanters at each table. These are not to be placed on the table until after the initial two decanters have commenced circulation.

655.

A steward will carry a jug of water and follow each decanter so that, if a member does not desire port, his/her glass is filled with water.

656.

Decanters should return to the CMC and Mr Vice simultaneously. They then complete filling their glasses and place the decanters on the table in front of themselves. They then replace the stoppers in the decanters simultaneously.

657.

The Mess Supervisor or Senior Steward will ensure that all members have been served port or water before the decanters reach the CMC or Mr Vice.

The Loyal Toast

658.

When the port has been passed, the CMC calls all to order by using the gavel and saying "Mr Vice". Mr Vice then stands and taking control of proceedings says "Gentlemen", or "Ladies and Gentlemen" (as appropriate). All members (and Guests) are to rise, leaving their glasses on the table. Mr Vice, lifting his glass says, "Gentlemen" (or Ladies and Gentlemen) "The Queen". All present then pick up their glasses, raise them, 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 Vice says "Gentlemen" , the band will commence to play the first four bars and the last four bars of the National Anthem. At the conclusion of the National Anthem, all present are to pick up their glasses, raise them, say "The Queen" and drink to her health.

659.

The normal toasting procedure when foreign service personnel or officials are present is for the Loyal Toast to be drunk first, following which the CMC will propose the toast of the Head of State of the country to which the visitors belong (para 559 of *Customs of the Royal Australian Air Force* details these procedures).

660.

If Colours are present they are marched out immediately after the Toast(s) on the order of the CMC, and all present are to stand during their departure.

Staff Appreciation

661.

The CMC will customarily thank the staff for their efforts.

Passing The Port

662.

After a short interval the CMC may decide to circulate the port decanters again but, during this and subsequent circulation, silence is not a requirement and the decanters remain unstoppered. Whilst the second circulation of the port is in progress the CMC strikes his gavel, before rising, and welcomes and introduces to the members his official guest. The CMC may, at this time invite the senior guest to address the members.

Conclusion

663.

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

664.

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

and the remaining members and guests should leave the dining room and join the CMC and official guests in the ante-room.

ETIQUETTE AND SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR

701.

This chapter, which aims at providing you with a reference point on certain customs and ways of behaviour within the Service, is based on the belief that military courtesy contributes positively to military discipline.

702.

Even though subject to a military code of behaviour, you are not absolved from social responsibilities as a citizen. Rather, you are expected to maintain a standard in the community which will reflect credit on yourself and the RAAF.

703.

You and your family must be careful not to set yourselves apart in the community and you should endeavour to make some contribution to affairs outside Service life by involving yourself in service clubs, school and church organisations and sporting clubs or associations.

704.

Although some of the points may seem minor, they do form part of military customs which are the consistent and widely accepted practices which make for a more pleasant life or for more orderly procedures. The inclusion of guidance in this section is governed by the assumption that the purpose of the dining table in any society is not just for nourishment but also for the enjoyment of company.

Invitations

705.

Invitations will either be formal or informal and should always be answered in the form in which they were issued. Invitations should definitely be issued at least three weeks before the event. You should answer all invitations promptly and, once you have accepted an invitation, you should not change your mind except for most pressing reasons over which you have no control - such as illness or absence on duty.

706.

Where married couples are concerned, the ladies customarily issue and answer invitations. A single person inviting a married couple should address the envelope to the lady and a response to an invitation from a married couple should always be sent to the hostess.

707.

There are no fixed rules governing the occasions when formal or informal invitations have to be used and a great deal of flexibility is left to the organiser.

An Officers' Mess will issue formal invitations for a Mess Ball, guest dining-in-night, reception or cocktail party. Formal invitations to private functions are normally used for a dinner or cocktail party where the guests will be other than close personal friends. For a small dinner party or buffet supper an informal style would be more appropriate. When issuing invitations you should choose the most appropriate of the following:

a. Formal

- | | |
|--|--|
| (1) Engraved or printed cards produced especially for the occasion, usually bearing a base or unit badge. | Very expensive and usually reserved for the most formal occasions such as an Officers' Mess Ball. |
| (2) Similar to 1, but having blank spaces where the details of the event are written. | Slightly less expensive and used for Mess Guest Nights, Mess Cocktail Parties etc. |
| (3) Engraved or printed cards bearing the identity of the hosts but with blank spaces for details of the event | Still expensive but often used by senior officers for the more formal occasions in their home. May be used by junior officers but there is no obligation to do so. |
| (4) Blank cards on which all details are carefully written or typed. | The least expensive form but perfectly acceptable for use by junior officers. If good, neat handwriting or typing presents difficulty, use example 5. |
| (5) Printed cards with blank spaces for details of the hosts and the event. | Readily available from stationers and perfectly acceptable for formal use. |

b. Informal.

- | | |
|---------------------------------|--|
| (1) Short letter of invitation. | The most commonly accepted and least expensive form. |
|---------------------------------|--|

- | | |
|-------------------------------|--|
| (2) Printed cards as 5 above. | May be rendered informal by the use of first names when appropriate. |
| (3) Colourful, printed cards. | Used for informal occasions involving close personal friends. |

708.

Two rules should be observed when inserting decorations on invitations or replies:

- a. No post-nominals are written on the invitation card, with the exception of VC, CV, MP, and RAN.
- b. Replies should contain the decorations of the host, but not those of the guest who is replying.

709.

Replies to formal invitations are made formally on plain, not headed, good quality notepaper on which the reply should be spaced centrally. An example of the wording generally used is:

SQUADRON LEADER A.B. SEE
THANKS SQUADRON LEADER AND MRS D.E. EFF
FOR THEIR KIND INVITATION TO DINNER
ON 10 NOVEMBER 1994
AND ACCEPTS WITH PLEASURE *

45 Rundle Street, ADELAIDE SA 5000
26 October 1994

Notes:

1. * Or 'BUT REGRETS HE IS UNABLE TO ATTEND'.
2. The envelope is addressed to Mrs D.E. Eff
3. There is no need to explain the reason for declining the invitation.

710.

Informal invitations vary considerably depending on the type of function and how well known the intended guests are. When in doubt err on the side of formality. Here is an example of an informal letter:

*5/97 Pitt Street, SYDNEY NSW 2000
26 October 1994*

Dear Mrs Ecks,

David and I are having a dinner party on 10 November at 8 pm and we would be very pleased if you and your husband could dine with us.

*Yours Sincerely,
Diana Wye*

Notes:

1. If an informal invitation cannot be accepted, it is usual to state the reason briefly.
2. If a printed card is used for the invitation, it may be that the letters 'RSVP' are crossed out and 'Regrets Only' or 'RO' substituted. In this case acceptance is assumed unless a letter is sent to the contrary.
3. Sometimes a telephone number may be written beneath the letters 'RSVP' or 'RO' to indicate that an oral response is appropriate.
4. First names where appropriate should be used if the persons are well known to each other.
5. Occasionally an invitation may be initially issued orally and, if accepted, followed by a written invitation. In this event, the letters 'RSVP' may be replaced by 'To Remind', requiring no reply.

711.

There are no inflexible rules for arrival and departure times for functions, other than that you should never arrive before the stated time; but there are general guidelines:

- a. At cocktails and drinks parties aim to arrive within 15 minutes of the time stated on the invitation.
- b. For dinner parties aim to arrive within five minutes of the time stated.

712.

Exact departure times are difficult to specify except for those Cocktail Parties where a fixed time is given on the invitation. In such instances aim to leave within 10 minutes of the stated time. In other cases the following general guidelines may be helpful:

- a. Cocktail Parties usually last for one and a half to two hours.
- b. The less formal the function, the more flexible the duration.
- c. On formal occasions, the senior guest normally leaves first. At formal dinners, guests should normally leave a short while after coffee, or after one post-prandial drink - unless the host quite clearly indicates otherwise.
- d. If you have to leave promptly or early, explain the position to your hostess on arrival and leave as unobtrusively as possible when the time arrives.

713.

Following hospitality, you should send a letter of thanks if a meal was served. For cocktails or a short drinks party, a telephone call is acceptable. Remember, however, that all hospitality should be acknowledged. Write all thank you letters promptly; use the first person and be brief, polite and sincere.

Introductions

714.

The traditional conventions governing introductions are:

- a. A man is introduced to a lady.
- b. A single woman is introduced to a married woman.

- c. A younger person is introduced to someone older.
- d. A junior is introduced to a senior.

However, except on formal occasions compliance is not considered important. (Where two or more of the conventions are in conflict apply the seniority rule whenever possible and introduce newcomers to others when ranks and ages are equal).

Correspondence

715.

In official and semi-official correspondence you should follow the rules contained in JSP(AS)102. There are few conventions in private correspondence except in those letters of a non-official nature to people not well known to you. These are:

- a. The address should include the recipient's post-nominal letters.
- b. Ranks or titles should not be abbreviated.
- c. Personal letters are normally handwritten.
- d. A personal letter does not require the writer's name at the top, nor the recipient's address on the first page. Your signature must, therefore, be legible.
- e. *A lady may be addressed on an envelope as 'Mrs, Miss or Ms John Smith', or 'Elizabeth Smith' if preferred.*

716.

When writing personal letters to senior colleagues:

- a. Avoid the salutation 'Dear Sir' or 'Sir'. Either use the rank and name, or more familiarly the rank alone: 'Dear Wing Commander Black' or 'Dear Wing Commander'.
- b. With Air Marshals, Generals and Admirals, it is customary not to distinguish between Air Vice-Marshal, Air Marshal and Air Chief Marshal (and commensurate Army and Navy ranks) and to address all three as 'Dear Air

Marshal, General or Admiral' as appropriate, with the name added if required. The correct rank must still appear in full on the envelope.

- c. If the addressee has a knighthood, the full style and title is not used as a salutation; acceptable forms are 'Dear Air Marshal Smith', or more familiarly, 'Dear Air Marshal' or 'Dear Sir William'.
- d. Always end the letter 'Yours sincerely'. ('Yours faithfully' is appropriate for business correspondence).
- e. Keep the tone of the letter courteous without being servile.

Forms of Address

717.

The following forms of address may be used:

- a. 'Mr' is used in place of Pilot Officer and Flying Officer.
- b. Female Pilot Officers or Flying Officers are to use 'Miss' or 'Mrs' as appropriate. 'Ms' is not to be used.
- c. Squadron Leaders and above are always addressed by their appropriate rank

Social Behaviour

718.

Officers are not expected to be immune from the pressures which occur in personal relationships, whether within or outside the Service. However, in the necessarily closed Service community there is a particular need for cohesion and trust which can be attained only if officers set an exemplary standard in both their private and professional lives.

719.

It is neither possible nor desirable to define social misconduct in precise terms nor to prescribe inflexible rules for the treatment of specific cases. Clear instances of social misconduct, however, are:

- a. Excessive familiarity with junior ranks and/or their partners.
- b. Excessive gambling, indulgence in alcohol, or financial indebtedness.

General Etiquette

720.

Much of what is considered correct in behaviour, or manners, is traditional. A complete coverage of such a broad subject is inappropriate in this book. There are many reference books on the subject and you should consult them for guidance.

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