

## **3 CHAPTER THREE: MILITARY CULTURE**

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### **3.1 Introduction**

The Representative should strive to understand the context and culture in which his ministry operates. This Chapter relates principally to the culture within the Army. Individual Services boast many traditions and customs which are unique to themselves. The Representative is responsible to learn these differences prior to involvement in a function of a Service if he is not familiar with that Service.

The research of such things will be rewarding. Not to do so could lead to the detriment of one's personal image as a Representative and to Everyman's. Ignorance of military customs and laws could give the impression that the Representatives at the very least is being discourteous and could cause offence to those whom he is trying to assist. At worst it could bring to nought years of hard work in the areas of identity and trust, and damage our relationship with the military authorities.

The information set out below, although brief is designed to present a basic outline and is intended to act as an initial aid and guide to understanding "the system". After a period of service under instruction and working within a unit, terminology and correct procedure will become second nature to you.

The Services are rank structured and status orientated organisations which utilise a leadership and command system proven throughout thousands of years which is based upon discipline and accountability to one's superiors. It is of utmost importance to recognise the different ranks and learn to relate approximately the corresponding areas of responsibility and influence which go with such rank. To learn such ranks, refer to a Rank Insignia Chart.

### **3.2 Customs of the Service**

Whilst the Representative is a civilian, they are accorded honorary officer status and should be aware of those customs and courtesies surrounding such a privilege. Lieutenant-General Wilton produced a book on this subject from which we draw heavily, to enlighten Representatives as to the code of conduct necessary to mix and to work harmoniously within the military culture. Each Representative should become familiar with the contents of this particular section.

### **3.3 Joining a Unit**

Prior to joining a Unit, the Area Co-ordinator or CCOM will contact the receiving Unit to ascertain a Point of Contact (POC) for the Representative.

When a Representative has been informed officially of a new posting, he should write to the Commanding Officer of his new unit. This will establish contact, and allow the Unit to initiate any preliminary action that may be desirable.

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When first joining a unit, the Representative will report in uniform to the Adjutant, Duty Officer, or the equivalent. Thereafter, the Representative will seek an appointment with the Commanding Officer to introduce themselves. Note: Senior Officers are usually met by appointment.

To avoid subsequent embarrassment it is a wise precaution at this time to seek guidance from the POC on any variations from the general customs described herein.

### **3.4 Compliments**

The origin of the salute is lost in antiquity. The open right hand has long been the traditional gesture of friendship, to indicate that no weapon was held. In medieval times knights in armour would raise their visors to allow recognition and the salute stems from both these customs. It is a special military custom which must always be given in a smart soldierly manner. Any variation is simply an unmilitary affectation.

As stated in Defence Instructions, Philanthropic Representatives are not entitled to a salute as they do not hold a Commission. However, one is occasionally saluted by mistake. If that occurs the REP is to acknowledge the compliment paid promptly thanking them for it and explaining that they are an Everymans Representative and not a Defence Member and therefore a salute is not necessary. This is a great opportunity to share about Everymans. If the REP cannot explain all this they should come to attention and acknowledge them politely and respectfully. They should seek them out later and explain who they are. On no account should a REP salute.

There are a number of ways to pay compliments - rising from one's chair, coming to attention, saluting with or without arms. Each is appropriate to a different situation. To exchange compliments is an expression of mutual respect and should never be interpreted as a mark of servility. When a compliment is given to a Rep the rep should acknowledge them politely and respectfully.

During parades, when a Royal Salute is given all Representatives should stand to attention while military members salute. However, when a General Salute is given to a senior officer or dignitary the compliment is being exchanged by those on parade and the person receiving the salute only and Reps can remain seated.

### **3.5 Additional Naval Compliments**

In addition to the normal compliments to his seniors, when boarding or leaving one of Her Majesty's Ships it is customary to turn towards the stern and come to attention on crossing the side. Further, when passing onto the quarter-deck one should again come to attention.

In a Naval Mess, on board ship or ashore, the Royal Toast is given seated, even if the National Anthem is played.

### **3.6 The Colours**

Colours are a development of the banners of medieval nobility and trace their origins to the ensigns and standards of the Romans, Greeks and Egyptians. Their evolution was due to the need for some mark of distinction between families, tribes and races and to provide a conspicuous rallying point in battle.

Over the centuries the designs of Colours have been formalised so that now only two types of Colours are recognised, Queens/kings Colours and Regimental Colours. The Queens/Kings Colour symbolises for its holders their loyalty to their country and their Queen/King; the Regimental Colour their loyalty to their regiment and their comrades.

Colours, the term being used here to include Banners, Standards and Guidons as well, derive from The Sovereign who personally approves their design and presents them or arranges for their presentation. They imply The Sovereign's recognition of distinguished service, specific battle honours being emblazoned on the Colours.

This association has resulted in the Colours being regarded with esteem and veneration and in the insistence that they be treated at all times with becoming dignity. Regulations for Colours in their present form were issued in 1747 and there have been no major changes since that time.

After consecration, Colours are normally housed in their case in the Officers' Mess and are only paraded on formal ceremonial occasions and are never moved without their appropriate escort.

Guidons are carried by armoured units and Queens' Colours, Kings' Colours and Regimental Colours by all infantry units, except those units gazetted as Rifle Regiments. There are only a few special and traditional exceptions to these general rules.

In commemoration of some particular service or to mark some special occasion, as a token of The Sovereign's pleasure, a unit may be granted some Honourable Insignia, such as a Banner. These are not Colours, but in all cases they are given the same honours and esteem because of their special significance to the unit so honoured.

### **3.7 The Parade Ground**

When on the parade ground it is customary for all ranks to behave in a smart and orderly fashion. No one should saunter about, walk, or use it as a short cut.

### **3.8 Formed Squad**

REPs must take care not to pass between any squad and its commander.

### **3.9 The Duty Officer**

The Duty Officer, whatever their rank, is the representative to the Commanding Officer and as such may be expected to act on their behalf on all routine matters during his tour of duty. REPs should respect them as such.

### **3.10 Current Affairs**

Not only must a REP be aware of what is happening in their unit, they must also keep abreast of local, national and international events. This is normal with any intelligent and educated person but has special significance for soldiers. Newspapers, periodicals, lectures and discussions help to develop this understanding.

### **3.11 Visiting Representatives in Other Units**

When visiting another unit on duty, it is customary to wear uniform. However, on the occasion of an informal visit, plain clothes are appropriate.

### **3.12 Travelling**

Except when travelling on duty and when the REP will be required for duty immediately on arrival, plain clothes should be worn.

### **3.13 State Occasions**

Prior to attending State occasions, invited guests will usually receive instructions as to dress requirements and how compliments are to be paid. Of course REPs must conduct themselves with Christian decorum, respect and decency.

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, and other times an informal mode is acceptable. The procedure is as follows:

<b>Personage</b>	<b>Formal</b>	<b>Informal</b>
Having the title "Majesty"	"Your Majesty"	"Sir" or "Madam"
Having the title "Royal Highness"	"Your Royal Highness"	"Sir" or Ma'am"
Governor-General	"Your Excellency"	"Sir" or Ma'am"
Spouse of the Governor General	"Your Excellency"	"Sir" or Ma'am"
Spouse of a State Governor or Lieutenant-Governor	By his/her title and name... eg. "Sir/Lady/ Dame/ Mrs ..."	

### 3.14 Mode of Address

It is good manners to address a person by his correct title and a Representative must be able to recognise the badges of rank of all Services. It should be noted that these ranks are always used in full except that:

- Vice-Admirals and Rear-Admirals may be addressed as "Admiral".
- Major Generals and Lieutenant Generals may be addressed as "General".
- Air Chief Marshals and Air Vice Marshals may be address as "Air Marshal".
- Flying Officers and Pilot Officers may be addressed as "Mister".

### 3.15 The Officers' Mess

#### Membership

The REP is extended the privilege of Affiliate membership of the Mess. REPs are encouraged to participate in Mess life contributing when possible. It may be that not all Mess functions need to be attended, indeed some will be more appropriate than others. A REP will need to be discerning, remembering that such functions are costly. Everyman's policy is that dining in nights are classified as part of the staff duties and within reason, HQ will reimburse the costs.

#### Function

In an Officers' Mess the conduct of Officers follows a pattern based on traditional customs and procedures. These have developed our manners and behaviour and been a contributing factor to the high standard of discipline attained. The Mess plays an important part in the life of a regiment and it is a place where officers of all ranks can meet on an equal social footing. Although it is the home of all the Officers of a regiment, it is more particularly the home of resident members.

**Mess Rules**

The conduct of each Mess is the responsibility of its members, however, the basic principles are laid down in "Rules for Messes". It must be appreciated that these rules are not necessarily restrictions but are to ensure the smooth operation of a Mess for the benefit of all its members. Carelessness in the observance of these rules betrays lack of either good manners or good business sense.

**Mess Customs**

Mess life is a blend of formality founded in military custom and informality arising from comradeship. Officers naturally treat their seniors with a courtesy due to their age, rank or experience; their juniors are usually addressed by their Christian name alone an informality which is indicative of the friendly spirit which should prevail.

When the Commanding Officer, or any of his seniors, enters the Mess it is customary for those Officers present to rise, unless they are requested to remain seated. Should an Officer enter the Mess after the Commanding Officer it is good manners to pay one's respect to the Commanding Officer, but parade ground formality is just as misplaced as undue familiarity.

**Hospitality**

A Mess is judged on the way it treats its guests. If a visitor is unaccompanied an Officer should, without hesitation, greet and entertain him until his particular host arrives. He should be asked to write his name in the Visitors Book and be introduced to the Mess President and Commanding Officer, if present, and to three or four Officers. It is important also that the visitor's particular host, should he not be present, be notified of his guest's arrival as soon as practicable.

**Official Guests**

Official guests are normally received by the Mess President, however, in his absence the senior member present should act on his behalf.

**Conversation**

All conversation in the Mess should contribute to the free and relaxed atmosphere. Subjects likely to be controversial or personal, such as politics or criticism of the army or other Officers should be avoided. It is unrealistic to prohibit discussion of "shop" in the Mess but it is essential that such discussion remains within the bounds and is not allowed to degenerate into a dissection of the daily routine. In particular, "shop" of the kind in which a visitor is unable to join should be avoided in his presence. Additionally, it is not normal for an Officer to be reprimanded in the Mess nor should he be rebuked for past shortcomings.

## **Meals**

At informal meals Officers may enter or leave the dining room at their pleasure, within the hours laid down by the Mess Committee. No special seats are reserved.

Formal meals are under the control of a Dining President and Officers move into the Dining Room with the Dining President and remain standing until the Dining President sits. The meal is served by courses and members should not leave until the Dining president gives the lead. Officers arriving late for a formal meal but not including Mess Dinners, tender their apologies to the Dining President and request permission to take their seats.

Letter or notes should not be written or read at the table without the Dining President's approval or on informal occasions, the sanction of one's neighbours.

## **Dress**

Dress requirements vary according to the climate, the type of Mess and the occasion orders of dress are laid down in the Mess rules.

## **Mess Staff**

An Officer should treat the Mess staff with courtesy and consideration but must not encourage familiarity. The staff are in the Mess for the benefit of all members and must not be employed on personal errands.

## **Visitors Book**

A Visitors' Book should be held in every mess in which all visitors should be invited to write their names. Members should write their name on arrival and when leaving a station, adding a note to the effect in the remarks column.

## **Mess Functions**

It is customary for a Mess to hold functions at which members may give and return hospitality. Such functions are arranged by the Mess Committee upon receipt of the Commanding Officer's approval. They may take many forms depending on circumstances. However, in most cases they are Mess functions in which all Representatives should participate.

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 it is the responsibility of the hosts to attend to their guests' well-being.

Essential courtesies which must be observed by all members are that wives and guests should be introduced to the Commanding Officer and the Mess President on arrival and that they should take their leave of them before departure.

### **3.16 The Mess Dinner**

The simple procedures which have become established for formal Mess Dinners heighten the enjoyment of the meal and impart graciousness to the occasion not often found elsewhere. Such dinners are normally made a regular feature of Mess Life.

Mess Dinners differ from normal dinners insofar as both non-resident and resident members are expected to attend and guests may be invited on special occasions. A Representative should only absent himself with the permission of the Mess President

In all Messes, a basically similar procedure is followed and minor variations for their own sake, or suggestive of affectation are usually avoided. On the other hand, customs which have some truly traditional basis are often encouraged. It is the responsibility of the host to acquaint any guests of such variations to avoid embarrassment.

#### **Dining President**

Every dinner is under control of a Dining President. This Officer is appointed by the Mess President for a particular occasion or for a period and may be under an Officer. On special occasions the Mess President may act as Dining President.

The Dining President is responsible for the service of the meal, the wines and the observance of the traditional procedures.

#### **Dining Vice-President**

The Dining Vice-President is appointed to assist the Dining President. He is appointed by the Mess President for a particular occasion and should be a Junior Officer.

#### **Assembly**

On occasions members should assemble in the ante-room at the appointed time. For example, if the timing is 7 for 7:30, that means assembling not later than 7pm in the ante-room.

#### **Guests**

The number of guests to be invited to any Mess Dinner will depend on the occasion but in any case a guests list should normally be prepared and a member made responsible for each guest.

All guests are greeted by the Dining President assisted by the Dining Vice-President. They should then be introduced to the Mess President and the Commanding Officer, provided with refreshment and introduced to the other Officers present. This is the task of the host member and should be carried out naturally and without haste.



**Seating Plan**

A seating plan will be prepared and placed in a convenient position in the Mess. It is the responsibility of members to ensure that they conform to the plan and that their guests know where they are seated.

**Moving Into Dinner**

The Mess Sergeant will report to the Dining President when dinner is ready. The Dining President will then advise the Commanding Officer when he is satisfied that all guests are ready.

With the approval of the Commanding Officer, the Dining President will lead the way into the Dining Room. He is followed by the Commanding Officer who would be accompanied by the Guest of Honour or the senior official guest and a personal guest if he has one. The Second-in-Command would follow escorting his guests. Other members escorting guests would follow the remainder entering without delay.

The Dining Vice-President, who will ensure that everyone moves in quickly, should be the last to enter.

**Taking Your Seat**

In the Dining Room, members and guests will go to their assigned place, however, no one should sit until the Dining President does so.

**Grace**

If Grace is to be said the Dining President will remain standing behind his chair until the Dining Vice-President is in position. He will then call upon the Chaplain or some other member in the absence of a Chaplain, to say Grace. At its conclusion the Dining President will take his seat.

An EWS Representative may be asked to say Grace. It is wise to have a short, pertinent Grace known by heart. Some Messes prefer their Corp Grace.

If Grace is not being said the Dining President stands behind his chair until the Commanding Officer has reached his place whereupon the Dining President will take his chair.

**The Dinner**

Dinner is always served in a clockwise direction beginning with the Dining President and Dining Vice-President simultaneously. At the same time and in the same manner, wine would be served. It is not normal for orders to be taken; however, water should be available for those who prefer not to drink wine. Representatives of Everyman's Welfare Service for the sake of testimony may drink water, alternatively non-alcoholic drinks, if provided.

It is customary not to begin eating until the Dining President begins.

## **Port**

After the last course, the table is cleared, except for the Port glasses, centrepiece trophies and floral arrangements, if any. Decanters of Port are then placed on the table in front of the Dining President and Dining Vice-President, though if the gathering is large, additional decanters may be needed.

Following the Dining President, those with decanters in front of them remove the stoppers, place them on the table and pour a little port in their own glass. The decanter is then passed on to the next person on the left who fills his glass and passes the decanter to the left. When the decanter reaches each of the original Officers he completes the filling of his glass and places the decanter on the table in front of him. There is no special mystique about passing the decanter though many flourishes have been introduced and Representatives should ascertain what the local custom is and follow it.

As the decanters pass around the table, stewards follow to replace emptied decanters or to serve water to those officers who do not wish to drink port. When all have been served the Mess Sergeant and the remaining stewards should withdraw.

## **Toasts**

All glasses being charged, it is the custom for the Loyal Toast to be given. The Dining President, remaining seated, calls the table to order by saying "Mr Vice". The Dining Vice-President will rise and say "Ladies and Gentlemen!" or "Gentlemen!" This indicates to the assembly that they should rise. Glasses should remain on the table. The Dining Vice-President raises their glass and says "The Queen". Members and guests then do likewise. When the dining Vice-President returns to their seat members and guests do likewise.

When distinguished foreign guests are being entertained officially it is a polite gesture to provide for an exchange of toasts. Naturally, this must be arranged beforehand, as it is important that protocol is observed.

On occasion Corps Toasts will also follow.

It is not normal to propose toasts other than these, nor is it the usual practice to have speeches, except on such special occasions as anniversary dinners.

## **Leaving the Table**

Members and guests do not normally leave the table before the second round of port without permission from the Dining President and this should be sought only in exceptional circumstances. Anyone so leaving the table should return.

When the Dining President is ready to leave they rise. It is customary for all to rise and for the rank of Major (or equivalent) and above and follow the Dining President from the room.

The Dining Vice-President will then assume the place and duties of the Dining President until those remaining are ready to leave. Often an event known as a Subalterns Court will be held by the junior Officers after the Senior Officers have retired.

### **Departure**

On their return to the ante-room it is the responsibility of all members to 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.

### **Mess Games**

General participation in suitable games is to be encouraged but care should be taken to avoid injury to either persons or damage to property.

## **3.17 Letters**

Apart from official letters an Officer may expect to write private and demi-official letters, which are considered also in "Staff Duties (Australia)". The style used in private letters is a matter for the individual to decide, but as a general rule, such letters should not be typed. The style used in a demi-official letter should be friendly, but not familiar, particularly with Officers senior to, or not well known by, the writer. The formal modes of address, which should always be hand-written, may be summarised as follows:

The rank and surname is used when writing to an Officer of field rank (Major) or above who is not well known to the writer.

The rank alone may be used in similar cases, except when the Officer is well known to the author.

Rank and surname alone is used when writing to subalterns (lieutenants) and captains who are not well known to the writer and may be used by Senior Officers when writing to their juniors.

The Christian name alone is used only between persons of equivalent rank or when the person addressed is very well known to the writer.

The final greeting should be hand-written and followed by the signature to which no rank should be added.

The sender's rank, name and decorations are typed across the top of the page. The rank name decorations and address of the recipient are usually given on the bottom left-hand corner of the page and on the envelope. Care must be exercised that the detail is accurate since it is discourteous to use incorrect initials or spelling or to omit a decoration.