

# Regimental Dinners

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Regimental dinners originated about 200 years ago, and have always been a key element in the process of fostering high morale, good fellowship and *esprit de corps*. They are occasions when senior and junior members gather to meet in friendly, but formal circumstances, and perhaps to recall their heritage by practising those aspects of the dining ritual which are part of the history and tradition of the corps. The following will serve as a guide for those undertaking the task of organizing a regimental or Mess dinner.

By both custom and design, the dining format for regimental dinners is formal, and it is understood by all that this must be so if the event is to have any significance or purpose. It is an occasion for disciplined and genteel behaviour and high dress standards, since these serve to reflect the corps' standard of excellence and distinguished achievements. No dinner can succeed in this respect if those in attendance do not understand or appreciate this fact, so it is important for all to see that every effort is made to ensure the success of the occasion.

- By their nature, regimental dinners are "family affairs." That is to say, in its purest form, a regimental dinner is not only a "stag" affair, but does not include non-members of the regiment or corps. In modern practice, it is not unusual to invite one or two special guests from other units. For example, the RCMP may invite a military person,

such as the local base commander and/or the base chief warrant officer, or a local police official to attend. Sometimes a prominent or distinguished person is invited as guest of honour or guest speaker, and occasionally, a well known sports or entertainment figure is asked to attend as guest speaker.

- Correct dress for a regimental dinner is: Mess kit or walking out order, for uniformed members of the Force, Mess kit or patrol dress for military personnel, and black tie for civilians. When wearing Mess kit or black tie, miniature orders, decorations and medals are worn.

## Receiving Line

If a receiving line is deemed appropriate or desirable as an element of the dinner, it usually consists of the host and guest of honour (i.e., senior-ranking person). At a sub-division dinner, the CO of the division or other high-ranking person would likely be the guest of honour, unless a higher-ranking person is also in attendance — a federal cabinet minister or chief justice, for example. If a reception is also planned, the receiving line will not normally take place until after the guest of honour has been in attendance at the reception for a short time.