

History of the Naval Mess Night / Military Dining-In

In colonial times, military officers were generally required to pay for their own uniforms and food. Aboard ship, officers would pool their funds together to form a “mess.” At such dinners, formalities were eased to allow for relaxation and camaraderie. However, at times, easements of protocol led to raucous behavior by junior officers. To curb inappropriate conduct senior officers provided for “rules of the mess.” At the end of the mess fines or punishments were imposed on transgressors who could not abide by the simple rules. Some of these punishments included further imbibing, such as the “grog bowl.” At the conclusion of the mess, the fines collected would be given to the tavern keeper to pay for additional drink (if ashore). Today, fines are generally given to local charities. To further develop unit cohesion and esprit de corps, officers periodically invited the enlisted personnel to attend a mess. In the United States Army and the U.S. Air Force, such gatherings are called a “Dining-In.” When lady guests attend, it is called a “Dining-Out.” One of the traditions involved is the “parading of the beef.” Given the surreptitious nature of colonial government contractors, senior officers would have the prepared beef be paraded among the troops so they may see their food in advance. It would then be presented to the senior officer in attendance who would taste the beef first to determine if it’s fit for human consumption. Upon approval, the troops would give a “huzzah” and they would be fed, the lowliest private eating first, and the senior officer eating last with the knowledge that all of his troop have been fed. Today’s fines will be split equally between the NSSAR President General’s wife’s charity (education outreach) and the Michigan C.A.R. President’s project “Battle on the Homefront Memorial.”



THE VICE PRESIDENT GENERAL’S MESS

27th OCTOBER 2023

**Doubletree by Hilton Bay City – Riverfront
One Wenona Park Place
Bay City, MI 48708**

AGENDA

- 5:30-6:00 **SOCIAL – Cash Bar**
- 6:00 **FOUR BELLS – Take Your Seats**
- 6:00-6:30 **MARCH ON THE COLORS, Pledge of Allegiance, SAR Pledge**
- 6:30-6:45 **INTRODUCTION: President of the Mess, Vice-President of the Mess, VIPs and Guests; Explanation of a Mess / MIA Table / Rules of the Mess; Toast.**
- 6:45-7:00 **“PARADE THE BEEF” & INVOCATION**
- 7:00-7:30 **DINNER – Braised Beef with Heirloom Carrots & Great Lakes Whitefish with Lemon Caper Butter, Mixed Greens Salad, Country Potato Salad & Cavatappi Pasta Salad, and various Beverages.**
- 7:30-8:00 **GREETINGS**
-Treasurer General Michael Elston on behalf of President General Dodd, President General NSSAR
-State Regent Kelly Van Wormer, Michigan DAR
-State President – Rodney Modell & Senior State President, Deb Rakoczy Michigan C.A.R.
- 8:00-8:30 **GUEST SPEAKER – Katrina Shafer, Archivist, Project Digitization Technician, University of Michigan Clements Library**
- 8:30-9:00 **FINES & DONATIONS**
- 9:00 **BENEDICTION**

RULES OF THE MESS

1. Mr. Vice will monitor the behavior of the Mess. At the end of the Mess, Mr. Vice will announce the transgressions to the President of the Mess, who will call the transgressor to account. Violators may provide a defense or plead guilty. If found in violation by the President, the violator will assess their own fine.
2. The President, Vice-President, guests and ladies present cannot be charged. Guests and ladies may bring charges.
3. Only the spouse of the President and the spouse of the Vice President, can bring charges against their counterpart.
4. No disparaging comments against: The United States of America, the U.S. Flag, the Commander-in-Chief, U.S. Congress or elected officials, any of the branches of the U.S. Armed Forces, the U.S. Supreme Court, NSSAR, DAR, or the C.A.R. or the NSSAR Color Guard.
5. Discussion concerning sex, politics or religion will be highly frowned upon.
6. No profanity in the presence of ladies or gentlemen.
7. No spitting out of one's food.
8. No overly excessive consumption of inebriating liquors.
9. No disturbing the POW / MIA Table.
10. No drawing one's sword (except for ceremonial purposes)
11. No Smoking of any substances, tobacco or otherwise
12. Failure to maintain polite conversation due to excessive use of one personal device.
13. No speaking and chewing one's food concurrently.
14. No washing down one's food, unless choking (see above rule).
15. No eating with one's hands.
16. No picking at oneself.
17. Improperly addressing the President / Vice President of the mess.
18. One will not toast with an uncharged glass or with water.
19. One will be dressed appropriately and properly.
20. No overly noticeable flatulence.
21. No disruption of speakers through loud talking or guffaws
22. No abuse of the King's English (Colonial vernacular accepted)