

This booklet makes no pretence to be an exhaustive work either on Naval Customs or on Social Usage. It is simply an attempt to give a rough outline of how and why we behave in certain ways and do certain things.

It should never be forgotten that all the forms and customs followed in a truly polite society originate for a specific purpose; namely, to help us all to be considerate, kind, and gracious. Any law or custom or etiquette that ceases to forward that purpose should be discarded as it will then be a nuisance, which is the antithesis of its aim.

This being so, any rules made must be elastic in form, and, to fulfill their design, must be followed as much – if not more – in their spirit as in their letter. They are a guide to a way of living, not orders for a drill movement.

These people who obey the letter of our social laws merely for the purpose of being included in our society do make themselves more acceptable so far as casual contact is concerned, but in the long run, their selfish attitude will have the cumulative effect of discrediting our customs in the eyes of all. Therefore, we must be sure that we act from a desire to be kind and not from a wish to follow convention. Convention is not an end in itself; it is simply a means of attaining an end. The conventional rules of behaviours have evolved because experience has proved to successive generations of thoughtful and kindly people that adherence to them helps all to be considerate of the welfare of others.

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HMCS *Naden*  
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The recent issue of KRCN, Chapter 46 has enabled me to revise this lecture further and I have taken the opportunity to make several additions.

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HMCS *Bytown*  
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# I DRESS AND HABITS

1. “Etiquette” is defined as “the conventional rules of personal behaviours in polite society”.
2. The Naval Officer is a member of polite society and will be accepted as such, so long as his behaviour conforms to the conventional rules.
3. There is little in Naval etiquette that is more than a slight modification of the practice of the other groups which form polite society. It is unfortunate that we are so prone to regard it as a complicated ritual. The basic law governing etiquette is the same the world over – consideration of others.
4. In good society we always dress well. By that I mean that we keep our clothes clean and that we wear garments to suit the occasion. For example, we would not wear tails as a beach party nor attend dinner in flannels and a blazer.
5. We keep ourselves shaved and we bathe regularly; we are particular that our linen is clean and in good repair. In short, there are a hundred different ways in which we show ourselves acceptable to the fastidious – we are fastidious ourselves.

We avoid strange and incongruous dress, such as the “zoot suit”; we do not chew gum in public, nor do we spit. We treat our elders and seniors in rank with deference, but we are never servile; and we treat all men with respect. To do otherwise would cause us to lose our own self-respect and the respect of others for us.

6. We are intensely loyal to all persons, things, customs and traditions, to say nothing of laws, to which our loyalty is due.

Even when we disagree with some order or custom, we obey or conform cheerfully because that is what others expect of us and what we expect of ourselves.

If we think that a wrong has been done or is likely to be done, instead of breaking the law to prevent it, or grumbling about the alleged injustice to our equals and subordinates, we go to the proper persons with courage and good temper. Having obtained the decision of our seniors – if necessary obtained from the highest quarter – we then abide by it loyally.

## II SALUTES

(Full details of marks of respect, ceremonies, etc., will be published in the KRCN Chapters 19 – 20. Until then we are guided by KR & AI, Chapter II.)

1. The most common rule of etiquette to which we conform every day is the raising and removal of the hat.
2. When we are in uniform, we salute instead of raising our hats. When a civilian removes his hat for more than a short period, we, when in uniform, remove our caps. That is all we must remember – assuming, of course, that the civilian concerned is a well-bred man.

You see, the polite civilian will stand still and raise his hat when colours or sunset is sounded and the white ensign goes up or down. Even were he not aware of this custom, he would comply as soon as he saw officers and men standing at attention and saluting, for his common sense would tell him that a mark of respect was being paid and his good manners would indicate his participation. He also raises his hat to his seniors.

3. Naval officers, when in plain clothes, are morally obliged to wear hats – even in sports gear when not actually playing games or lounging in the shade of a tree.

If an officer or man wants to salute when, by chance, he has not a hat, he comes to attention or executes a smart eye right or eye left.

I do not believe there is any regulation which says that we are to wear hats in plain clothes, but good manners require that we do. In some ships, the negligence of officers in this respect has forced the Captain to give orders that hats are to be worn with plain clothes. Apart from causing irritation to the officers concerned, the fact that it is necessary to give such an order shows that officers are not living up to the standards required of them, and the giving of the order is, itself, detrimental to the discipline of the ship, but failure to do so would be even more hurtful.

4. On the other hand it is stated in the regulations that pipes are not to be smoked in public by officers in uniform (KRCN Article 12.17 (4))<sup>1</sup>. Unfortunately, many officers disregard this

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<sup>1</sup> 12.17 -- CONDUCT TO BE AVOIDED

(1) Every one shall:

(a) abstain from:

- (i) cursing, swearing, drunkenness, and dissolute conduct,
- (ii) using abusive or irritating language, especially to inferiors,
- (iii) conduct tending to encourage vice and immorality,
- (iv) gaming; and

(b) discountenance and endeavour to repress all misconduct mentioned in (a) of this clause.

(2) Persons in the Naval Forces shall not engage in any money-lending, bookmaking, or betting business.

(3) Persons in the Naval Forces shall not act as agent for any commercial undertaking in a ship or naval establishment

(4) An officer when on shore in uniform shall not smoke a pipe in a public place

order. Now, many of the men know that it exists, so you can guess the effect on them when they see their officers breaking the law. Worse still, the officers who disobey this rule lower the standards of their group in the eyes of the well-bred society of which it is a part.

Perhaps you think that the rule is foolish, but that is no reason for you to break it. There are many laws in this and other countries which some of the citizens consider stupid but they must keep them just the same.

While we are on the subject of pipes: They should not be smoked at mixed parties, except that at small private affairs the hostess may give permission for their use. Custom has not included cigars in this ban, but a well-bred man should remember that women, as a rule, dislike cigars more than they do pipes, and men should, therefore, be careful when and where they smoke them.

5. To return to salutes.

Officers salute all other officers who are senior to them in rank. A midshipman salutes a warrant officer, and an Admiral salutes an Admiral of the fleet.

There was a time when officers of equal rank saluted one another. This was because a salute was really a greeting between two people who know each other or who have the honour to serve in the country's armed forces. I think it is a pity that the practice has been discarded.

However, officers do salute others of the same rank who, by nature of their appointments, are senior to them. For example, a lieutenant in a destroyer should salute the ship's first lieutenant even though that officer is also a lieutenant. The latter should receive the title of "Sir" when the former addresses him on duty.

6. The Officer-of-the-Watch or Day is entitled to a salute by an officer who approaches him on a matter concerning his office, for he is the Captain's representative. (KRCN 3.25)<sup>2</sup>
7. The Officers of the other two Services and of all foreign armed forces who are senior to us should be saluted, and we should see that our people accord this courtesy to them.
8. A Chaplain should always be saluted by those who meet him, regardless of their relative ranks.
9. A lady bows to her male acquaintance first, and the man then raises his hat. When in uniform, we salute. As the present regulations require that nursing sisters be saluted by their subordinates first, but they are not to salute their seniors below the rank of Commander, I suggest that, should they bow to an officer below that rank, but senior to them, he should

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<sup>2</sup> 3.25 – OFFICER OF THE WATCH

Every officer or other person, below the rank of Captain, not being either the Executive Officer or the Commanding Officer of the ship or fleet establishment, shall be subordinate to the Officer of the Watch, whatever his rank, in regard to the performance of the duties with which he is charged.

salute. If they do not greet him either by bowing or saluting, social usage requires that they be ignored.

10. We always salute our seniors when we pass them in barracks or on shore, but when on board a ship we only salute them when meeting them for the first time in the morning and thereafter when addressing or being addressed by them. The reason for this is obvious: When ashore we do not run across each other at frequent intervals, but in the close confines of a ship we are sure to meet often. The salute is a greeting and its significance would be destroyed if it were carried to irksome and ridiculous length. Remember that all salutes must be returned, with the one exception that the Senior does not return the second salute of the junior when the latter, having made a report, is departing.

On first meeting in the morning the junior salutes his superior in silence. The senior will return the salute and may – probably will – say, “Good morning.” When and if he does, the junior responds. Do not wish your superior a good morning unless he greets you. This ritual may sound silly, but it has its basis in good sense and helps in the maintenance of discipline. It is possible that the senior has a “sore head”, and being human, is not particularly thinking about graciousness and good example at the moment. The result of his sorry state and the impact of the inopportune greeting upon his jangled nerves may cause him to snub his subordinate. As the junior knows that it is not only rude, but very unwise to snub his senior, the fact that his may be the “sore head” can be ignored and both men are protected.

Petty Officers should salute the Captain, the Executive Officer, the heads of their departments, their Divisional Officers and all other officers with whom they have close contact in the way I have just described.

11. As men should rise and stand at attention when their officers pass and, where applicable, salute, it is a custom of the Service that, during non-working hours, an officer passing a group of men will remove his cap as a signal that he desires no other attention than to have a gangway made for him. Officers should only extend this courtesy when they are sure that, if it were not given, the men would observe the rules of good behaviour. In fact, it is a regard for good discipline.

Good manners require that the junior should make way for his senior; they also require that everyone should give the gangway to the man carrying a load, regardless of rank.

12. The regulations for piping the side, salutes on the bugle and with guns, manning and dressing ship are all laid down in the various regulations, which all officers should read. If you are in the vicinity when a salute is sounded, you face the relevant direction, stand at attention, and salute if the circumstances warrant it.
13. When colours or sunset is sounded, you face aft and salute, regardless of the fact that the ensign may be invisible to you or that the quarterdeck of another ship is nearer and is visible.

But if you were standing on the forecastle and the “still” or other call for attention were sounded on the quarterdeck of the ship ahead of you, you should face in that direction and stand at attention.

14. We stand at attention when any National Anthem is played. This is also done for *O Canada*.
15. In places such as arenas where civilians remove their caps on entry and keep them off, we do the same.
16. A well-bred civilian removes his hat in an elevator. If we, when in uniform, do not do so there are always some who will raise an eyebrow; therefore we should remove our caps.

### **III SALUTING BETWEEN DECKS**

1. When you enter one of the following areas, you remove your cap:
  - a) an officer’s cabin
  - b) an officer’s office
  - c) an officer’s mess
  - d) an enclosed mess, that is, any mess that is not a “broadside mess” which is one in an open mess deck.

2. Even when making rounds, the cap is removed in these places, with the possible exception of the officer’s office.

If you go to a broadside mess to speak to someone, it is good manners to remove your cap.

3. Except when reporting to Rounds, you never salute between decks. The junior should come to attention when addressing or being addressed by a senior, just as he would anywhere else, except in the mess or the drawing room.
4. When a space between decks is used in lieu of the upper deck for such events as requestmen, defaulters or payment, the cap is worn and behaviour is exactly the same as if the affair were taking place on the upper deck. That is, on these occasions you do salute between decks.
5. Speaking of being between decks, when your senior sends for you in his cabin or office, you do not sit down or smoke until he invites you to.

Another small point, do not tell your writer to get a senior on the telephone; call him yourself so that he does not have to wait for you to answer.

## **IV THE SHIP**

1. We always salute when going on board a ship in commission, whether boarding over the quarterdeck or not and whether or not we are greeted by the OOW or another member of the quarterdeck staff. When in plain clothes we raise our hats. If, regrettably we are bareheaded we come to attention at the head of the brow or gangway.

When going ashore we do not salute except to return that of the OOW or other officer or man who salutes us as we go.

2. The “still” should be piped if a flag officer or other dignitary passes in a boat or is seen walking past the ship on the jetty; everyone comes to attention facing him and the OOW salutes.
3. Ships at sea salute each other when passing and the junior ship asks permission to proceed.

Should it be necessary or advisable for a junior to cross a senior’s bow, he should ask permission to do so.

4. A ship in commission flies a commissioning pendant at the main top mast head. This is the Captain’s pendant and indicates that she is commanded by an officer commissioned by the King to do so.
5. Whenever you approach or leave your ship, have a good look at her, and if you see anything wrong, report it to the OOW. This is of great help to him, assists in the maintenance of discipline and ensures that your ship is not the ugly duckling of the fleet.

## **V THE QUARTERDECK**

1. You always salute the quarterdeck when you step onto it. You do not salute when stepping off it, unless you are returning OOW’s or quartermaster’s salute as you go ashore.
2. The OOW salutes all officers, regardless of their rank, and all officers’ guests both arriving on board and going ashore.
3. When an officer from another ship, or a guest making a call comes on board to see an officer, the OOW should have him escorted to the Wardroom or to the cabin of the officer concerned. He should not be left to stand about the quarterdeck.
4. If you, although not the OOW happen to be standing by the gangway when an officer or an officer’s guest comes on board, you should salute too.
5. The starboard side of the quarterdeck is the Captain’s property. You are at liberty to use it until he appears on the upper deck, when you should move over to the port side.



6. The members of the quarterdeck staff are the OOW's assistants and they should never be ordered to do any duty without his prior consent. If you want to use the messenger, ask the OOW if you may.

## VI BOATS

1. Juniors enter a boat first and leave it last. When going over a brow or gangway with a senior, the junior should take care to go well in advance, so that there is no embarrassment or jostling. If, by chance, he doesn't make it, he will do as circumstances indicate. As a senior, one should take care to show one's intention clearly; either wait at the head of the brow or gangway for the junior to go first (and this is what you ought to do), or go on down it if you want to, but give him a clear lead. If he is polite – as an officer he should be – he will have made every effort to go ahead of you, but circumstances will have delayed him. You will notice that the drill for going over a brow onto a jetty is just the same as for going over a gangway into a boat. There are some who will tell you that this is wrong, but I assure you that it is not. Seniors disembark from a boat first and go over a brow to the ship first.
2. If you have to cross a boat to reach your destination, always ask the coxswain if you may. All you have to say is: "May I cross your boat, Coxswain?" This custom originated out of consideration for the safety of men and gear; there may be a good reason why you should not cross a boat at a particular time.
3. If the coxswain of a non-routine boat gives you passage, he should be thanked for his kindness.
4. The coxswain of a boat should always salute officers and their guests when they embark from or cross his boat. You should see that your coxswain does so.
5. Salutes given in boats are laid down in KR & AI and in the *Seamanship Manual*. See that you and your coxswain know them and use them.

Coxswain can – and should – help each other in this respect by holding up the number of fingers equalling the number of stripes worn by the Senior Officer in their boats. One finger does duty for cadets and midshipmen, as well as for warrant officers and sub-lieutenants.

Two fingers do duty for lieutenants and lieutenant commanders.

6. An admiral when in a boat and not flying his flags but in uniform will have an "affirmative" disc shown in the bows. This is a red circular disc with a St. George's Cross on it. If he is in plain clothes the boat will show a "negative" disc, which is white with five black St. George's Crosses on it. If, by chance, an admiral has taken passage in a boat not in possession of these discs, the coxswain should hold up his hand with the fingers close together.

7. If there is no officer in the boat the coxswain should hold his hand low and move it back and forth at the wrist as an indication that no salute is required.

NOTE: All salutes must be returned by the senior officer in the boat.

8. The coxswain will greatly help the quarterdeck staff if he uses these signals when approaching a ship.
9. At night a boat approaching a ship should be hailed with “Boat ahoy!”. The various replies are to be found in the *Seamanship Manual*.

One very common mistake made by coxswains is to reply “Aye aye” when an officer below wardroom rank is the senior officer in the boat. The regulations state that this reply is made only when officers of wardroom rank are on boat. There is certain to be some modification of this rule, as Warrant Officers are now Wardroom Officers, whilst the sub-lieutenant lives in the Gunroom.

10. The OOW should always be at the gangway when a boat is coming alongside and while it is there. No boat should ever leave the ship without the OOW’s permission, even should the Officer in the boat be senior to the OOW.

If the Officer in the boat is greatly senior to the OOW, that Officer will show politeness asking him first if he is ready to go, but the coxswain received the order from the OOW. I have seen a good coxswain await the OOW’s order after being told to “carry on” by an impatient senior officer – and the coxswain was quite right.

11. Boats should never be left lying alongside a gangway longer than is absolutely necessary to embark passengers or gear. If a boat is required to wait, it should be told to “lay off”.

Although the coxswain of a boat will already have received his orders from the OOW, she should, when at a landing place, ask the permission of the senior executive officer present who belongs to his own ship and who is taking passage in the boat for permission to carry on.

This officer, if he is tactful, will ask the permission of any other officer in the boat who is senior to him before he ascends, but the senior executive officer is in charge and his orders must be obeyed by all others. (KRCN 3.20<sup>3</sup>, 3.21<sup>4</sup>)

If there is no executive officer belonging to the ship present, the coxswain should ask the permission of the senior non-executive officer. (KRCN 3.50<sup>5</sup>)

Should none of the ship's officers be present the coxswain should ask the permission of the senior officer in the boat in the same order and manner as for his own officer.

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<sup>3</sup> 3.20 -- COMMAND BY EXECUTIVE OFFICERS

An Executive Officer has and shall exercise:

- (a) military command;
- (b) departmental command; and
- (c) command over everyone junior to himself in all branches and components of the Naval Forces necessary to perform the disciplinary duty imposed upon him by Article 1:11 (Observance and Enforcement of Naval Laws, Regulations, and Other Precepts)

<sup>4</sup> 3.21 – COMMAND BY NON-EXECUTIVE OFFICERS

- (1) Except as provided in (3) of this article, a non-Executive officer shall not exercise military command.
- (2) A non-Executive officer shall exercise:
  - (a) departmental command over all officers and men who have been appointed or detailed for duty as his subordinates within his own department.
  - (b) command over all officers and men who have been placed under his orders by superior authority; and
  - (c) command over everyone junior to himself in all branches and components of the Naval Forces necessary to perform the disciplinary duty imposed upon him by Article 1.11 (Observance and Enforcement of Naval Laws, Regulations, and Other Precepts).
- (3) A non-Executive officer may exercise military command only when:
  - (a) ordered to do so by an Executive officer with command over him, or
  - (b) no Executive officer is present and an emergency has arisen that renders it necessary to act without waiting to be so ordered

<sup>5</sup> 3.50 – AFTER OFFICERS

Men shall rank and exercise command after all officers, to the extent and in the order prescribed in articles 3.53 to 3.57 inclusive. (Article 3.53 follows as example.)

3.53 – MILITARY COMMAND

(1) The following men have and shall exercise military command, and, subject to (2) of this article, no other men have or may exercise it:

- |                            |                                |
|----------------------------|--------------------------------|
| (i) chief petty officer    | (i) chief yeoman of signals    |
| (ii) petty officer         | (ii) yeoman of signals         |
| (iii) acting petty officer | (iii) acting yeoman of signals |
| (iv) leading seaman        | (iv) leading signalman         |
| (v) acting leading seaman  | (v) acting leading signalman   |
| (vi) able seaman           | (vi) signalman                 |
| (vii) ordinary seaman      | (vii) ordinary signalman       |

(2) Men who are not included in (1) of this article may exercise military command only if ordered to do so by a superior with military command.

(3) Men shall exercise military command in the order of command prescribed in articles 3.55 to 3.56 inclusive.

Officers must remember on such occasions that the coxswain has already received orders from the OOW who is the Captain's representative, and that these orders must not be interfered with unless such action is necessary. (KRCN 3.25<sup>6</sup>)

## VII THE MESS

1. The officer's mess is the home of a group of well-bred citizens. As such, the members of the group conform to the rules and customs adhered to in good society.
2. As in all walks of life where special circumstances require special behaviour, there are certain extra rules and customs in force in an officer's mess, but these are in addition to, not in lieu of, the code of manners recognized by all well-bred societies.
3. It is permissible, but not good form, to wear both your cap and your sword in your own mess because it is your home. You should never wear either in any other mess, except that, when making rounds or on duty, you do not remove your sword.
4. The origin of the custom of removing your sword when entering a strange mess is that it is a sign that you are not looking for trouble. Of similar origin is the rule that you must never draw your sword in any mess, including your own, without the prior permission of the senior member of the mess present. If you do draw without permission, it is custom that you must stand drinks to everyone present at the time.

Another equally expensive practice is to call anyone a liar in the mess.

5. When the captain of a ship or a very senior officer enters a mess, it is the custom of all officers to rise.
6. Officers, when on board, should normally be dressed in uniform.

They should never enter a mess poorly clothed and, when entering dressed in anything but uniform, they should ask the senior member of the mess who is dressed in uniform – regardless of their relative rank – to “Excuse my rig, please.” I have, on occasion, had the distasteful duty of refusing to grant such permission to my senior.

Incidentally, one should always avoid placing a subordinate in such a position. It is not only inconsiderate and rude; it is bad for discipline because it lowers one in the junior's esteem.

7. We should avoid talking “shop” in the mess. By this, I do not mean that we should avoid Service subjects, although they should be far from monopolizing the conversation. What I do mean is that we should not talk about our current duties or other matters which can be of little or no interest to our hearers. However, some discretion is required about “shop talk”.

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<sup>6</sup> See Footnote 3.

Sometimes great value can be had from retiring into a corner with those concerned to discuss a knotty problem over a friendly gin. But this should not be done often, and never amongst people who have no interest in the subject. This is another of those innumerable cases where good taste and consideration for others must govern us. After all, most social rules are produced to guide and to help us, not to tyrannize us.

8. When a stranger enters your home, you go forward to greet him. The same is true in your mess. As a rule, a visitor will have been invited to the mess and will be greeted by his host, who should make every effort to be there. But it sometimes happens that the visitor is calling on the mess or that his host is not present. In this case, any officer who sees that the visitor is at a loss should go over, introduce himself and be pleasant and helpful. If the visitor is looking for a certain officer, a messenger should be sent for him. In any case, the visitor should be introduced to others and brought into the group, offered cigarette and, when appropriate, a drink.

Is on such occasions that one realizes the value of forbidding “shop talk” in the mess, for the guest can be included in the conversation with ease and can be made to feel at home, instead of feeling that he is an “outsider”.

Don't wait for someone else to go to the rescue of a stranger – go yourself; but don't form one of a mob that descends him in an avalanche of welcome. These things should be done with ease and graciousness.

Remember that any naval officer who does not belong to your ship is a stranger in your mess, unless he is an honoured member, and should be treated accordingly. We must be careful that the provisions of KRCN Article 46.01(5)<sup>7</sup> do not make us forget our duties to strangers.

9. It has been a custom in many RCN messes for some years to practise what we call “West Country Rules” in the matter of standing drinks. This means that, although we go through the polite fiction of offering a fellow member or honorary member a drink, each pays for his own. This was done easily in a small mess, where the steward simply noted the purchase on a list and it was charged at the end of the month, but in messes where chits are signed or payment made in cash, the West Coast Rules (sic) may cause embarrassment. I would suggest, in these cases, that the old system of standing drinks be returned to. Of course, one is at perfect liberty to purchase a drink for oneself without offering one to someone else, but this has never been a Naval practice, and it were best that we should not become lone drinkers.

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<sup>7</sup> 46.01

(5) All officers of the  
(i) Royal Canadian Navy (Retired List),  
(ii) Royal Canadian Navy (Reserve) (Active and Retired Lists),  
(iii) Canadian Army (Permanent Force),  
(iv) Royal Canadian Air Force (Permanent Force)

shall be granted honorary membership (non-voting) in Wardroom messes on shore. Officers electing to take advantage of this privilege may, however, be charged a mess subscription but not a mess entrance fee.

It is a custom of the Service to toast each other with the first sip of a glass when drinking with companions, with some such remark as. "Cheerio".

When offering someone a drink avoid any phrases which include the verb "to buy" or its synonyms, and don't offer people "another drink"; we may have "a drink", "the other half" or any other euphemism.

10. Contrary to present popular belief, it is not the custom of the Service to entertain ladies in the officer's mess, except on such fete days as Christmas or regatta day. In ships that have the space, a large cabin is set aside for a guest room. Otherwise, officers entertain ladies in their own cabins or in a cabin borrowed from some other officer for the occasion.

However, in small ships, where the few officers know each other well and cabin accommodation is apt to be poor, an officer will frequently bring ladies into the mess after asking and obtaining the permission of all officers present in the mess at that time. If the presence of ladies would disturb any member, they must not be brought in.

I remember a disgruntled gunner objecting to the first lieutenant's request to entertain some ladies in the mess, and the first lieutenant, who was a lieutenant commander, brought them to his cabin without protest.

Ladies should not be brought on board during working hours or during the dinner hour. If circumstances make it difficult to keep this rule, the permission of the Executive Officer must be obtained first.

11. The captain of a ship is a full member of the wardroom mess in vessels where no provision is made for him to mess separately. In other ships it is a custom of the Service that he be invited to be an honorary member. This gives him the use of the wardroom and facilities and the privilege of running a mess bill. It is well to remember that, although he has not a vote in the government of the mess and will not, normally, interfere in it, he has absolute power to issue any instructions concerning it that he chooses and he can veto any ruling of the mess, should he see fit.

His responsibilities in this are to be found in KRCN 30.8<sup>8</sup> and 46.08<sup>9</sup>.

12. The mess is the only “Democratic Institution” in the Service and, like all democratic organizations, it can only remain so while all members take an active interest in its operation. So guard your privileges well.

## VIII PARTIES IN THE MESS

1. Officers, due to the degree of self-control and the moral standards which they have attained, are granted the privilege of entertaining liberally in their messes. So long as we conform to the code and conventions of good society, we shall retain this liberty; but with every infraction we endanger our freedom of action.

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### <sup>8</sup> 30.8 – OFFICERS’ MESSES

(1) (a) The Captain shall take care that the officers’ messes are conducted in an orderly manner, and as a rule so economically as to be within the means of every member.

(b) He shall see that there is strict compliance with the rules as to the use of wine and spirits, and for the adjustment and payment of mess debts.

#### (2) *Mess Accounts*

(a) The Captain shall see that all mess accounts are properly kept and regularly audited in accordance with the regulations, and that mess presidents and mess committees carry out their duties efficiently.

(b) If the Captain discovers from any of the books or mess statements brought before him, or from the audited accounts or by any other means, that excess, extravagance, or irregularity has occurred wither in the case of any mess generally, or in case of individual officers, he shall give the directions that he thinks proper to prevent a repetition of it, and, if necessary, report the matter to his Senior Officer.

(3) *Wine Bills* The Captain shall limit or stop any wine bills which he considers excessive or extravagant, having regard to the description of liquor consumed and the amount of hospitality exercised.

#### (4) *Closing of Bars and Pantries.*

(a) The bars and pantries in officers’ messrooms shall close at the following times:

Gunroom and Warrant Officers’ messes . . . . .	At sea:	2200
	In harbour:	2230

Wardroom Mess . . . . . At sea and in harbour: 2300

(b) No refreshments shall be served after these hours without the express permission of the Captain, or, in his absence, the Executive Officer.

#### (5) *Closing of Officers’ Messes.*

(a) The Gunroom and Warrant Officers’ messes shall be closed at the same time as the bar and pantry.

Permission to keep the Gunroom open after these hours shall only be granted with the special authority of the Captain, or in his absence, the Executive Officer.

(b) The Wardroom shall be closed as directed by the Captain.

### <sup>9</sup> 46.08 MESS ADMINISTRATION

(1) A record of all decisions and minutes of all mess and committee meetings shall be kept. The minutes shall be approved by the Captain before decisions contained in them are considered to be final.

(2) Subject to the approval of the Captain, an officers’ mess may be administered on a cash or credit basis at the choice of the members.

(3) Mess rules, regulations or bylaws shall be established for the operation of messes and approved by the Captain. Except in the case of the Captain withholding his approval for service reasons, officers’ messes shall be operated under rules approved by the majority of the full members of the mess.

2. It is out duty, and we should find it a pleasant one, to entertain those who call on our mess, or whose public position entitles them to some recognition on our part. Such entertainment is offered in the name of the Captain of the ship and the members of the mess.

We are permitted, subject to our good behaviour and the Captain's discretion, to entertain privately as well. We can do this either as a group or as individuals, but the consent of all members should be obtained before the mess is used for a private party.

3. As we should normally be dressed in uniform when on board, so we should wear it when attending parties in Naval ships and establishments.

For parties of an official nature – an this includes all those given by the Captain and officers – uniform should, invariably, be worn; but private parties – and these may be given by all members of the mess, and the captain, as individuals – plain clothes are permissible, if there is a good reason and that is the case when it is intended to go from a party on board to some entertainment on shore. But, in ordinary circumstances, when an officer who is entitled to wear the King's uniform is entertained or entertains in one of the King's ships, she should be dressed in uniform. Not to do so is an offence against our customs and good taste.

4. A christening, although private in nature, is, so far as the world is concerned, a public ceremony and record of its performance on board is entered in the ship's log. Therefore, officers and men should attend the service in uniform. The party ordinarily held afterwards is purely incidental.
5. When a party is given in a private home, all its inmates act as hosts. To a certain degree, this includes guests of the family who are staying there at the time of the party, because they know their way about and can assist in making others comfortable. The host and hostess are those giving the party; specific care is taken to greet them on arrival and to make the farewells to them on leaving.

In the mess, at a party given by the mess, we are all hosts. In order to simplify greetings and farewells the Captain and/or President of the Mess (who is, normally, the ship's Executive Officer) act as hosts, or heads of the house.

If the party is given by a group of the mess members, they are all hosts, but if the group be large, the senior member will often act as host. Anyway, good taste will indicate who should be greeted and thanked. We should not do things "by numbers" in social intercourse.

6. When we entertain in our home we place the facilities we have at the disposal of our guests, without granting special privileges to any, unless one of them is infirm or becomes ill. We have invited them to the house because we enjoy their company and so that they may find pleasure in meeting each other.

It must not be forgotten that the guest owes duty to his host just as much as does the host to his guest. A guest in your house cannot expect to segregate himself from the other inmates



and to entertain or be entertained apart from the other guests. Nor may one or two of the hosts form a small private party which excludes the remained of those present.

Out of deference to some dignitary or an aged infirm person, one would, if possible, and desirable, supply a place for his hat, so that he did not have to search for it or wait for its production. One might also supply a room in which he could rest, but one would never segregate him from the others for any other purpose.

The same should hold true in the mess. Honoured guests and dignitaries should not be separated from the remained and formed into small groups, but should be permitted to mingle with the others. Unless special seating and table accommodation are supplied for every person present, none should be provided for selected individuals. They should be permitted to enjoy the company of all and should be allowed the pleasure of meeting them.

Although we do not meet on equal terms professionally, we do meet on equal terms socially.

## **IX DINING IN THE MESS**

1. We have now come to the lengthy ritual followed when dining in the mess. I have decided to give you a full account, because it is really little more than the strict enforcement of rules by which our conduct is generally governed within the mess.
2. You will notice that I say “Dining in the Mess”, and not “Mess Dinners”. In normal times one dines in the mess six days a week – Monday through Saturday. In home ports or in large ports elsewhere small ships generally serve supper instead, as this is more convenient. In big ships supper is served before dinner every night for those who want it. There is generally an extra charge for supper when both meals are served. Officers are expected to dine in the mess at least twice a week, one of which nights should, if possible, be “guest night”.
3. “Guest Night” is something of a misnomer, as an officer may have a guest for dinner whenever he likes, but each officers’ mess in a ship has one night in the week when all available officers are normally bound to attend dinner and they are encouraged to invite guests. On these occasions (vulgarly called “Full Belly Nights”) extra courses are generally served.

By custom, the guest nights for each mess are spaced as follows:

Gun Room	Tuesday
Warrant Officers	Wednesday
Ward Room	Thursday

(Warrant Officers now live in the wardroom and will, therefore, dine there.)

In ships carrying bands, the band is in attendance.

4. In large messes where there is room, the duty officers who cannot dress for dinner or who are likely to be called away during it, eat at a separate table or have supper. If these arrangements cannot be made, the officers not dressed ask the president to “excuse their rig”.
5. Naval Officers normally wear mess undress at dinner, but mess dress may be ordered, and an officer going later to an affair at which mess dress is required is quite correct to dine in it. They may, with the President’s permission dine in dinner jacket or tails, if they have an engagement ashore immediately after dinner, but the President must be asked and he may refuse.

Officers of other services wear their equivalent to mess dress or mess undress when dining in a naval mess.

Civilians should wear tails. The dinner jacket is allowed but it is incorrect.

6. A word about ties – do not wear a made-up tie. Perhaps some of you think this is a foolish rule, but it is one of the standards of the society in which a naval officer has made his place and, without a major crusade, we have no chance of altering it. After all, if you can struggle into a boiled shirt and wing collar, you can tie your own tie.
7. In large messes each officer takes it in turn to be mess president at dinner. On guest nights and other important occasions the president of the mess performs this duty. In small messes the president of the mess normally acts as president at dinner.

The president is in absolute charge of the table, regardless of rank, branch or seniority. He may levy fines (in drinks) or take any other action he deems necessary to maintain discipline and no comment should or can be made, however senior the officer concerned may be.

8. The vice-president’s duties also are taken in rotation by all members of the mess, The vice-president is subordinate to the president during dinner, whatever their relative rank and seniority, but he can fine or warn the president for any infraction of the rules. In a very large mess with more than one table, there is a vice-president for each.
9. Should the officer whose turn it is to be president or vice-president be unable to attend dinner, it is his responsibility to find a substitute and it is absolutely necessary that he do so.
10. The diners gather in the ante-room before dinner, which is normally served at 1945, for talk and drink beforehand.
11. At 1945 the senior steward reports to the president, “Dinner is served, Sir”, and the president leads the way into the mess, the other diners following him. It is incorrect for anyone to precede the president into the mess.

The president goes to his place and sits down, the remainder taking their places without regard to rank. No one should sit before the president is seated.

If an officer has an unfinished drink when going to the table, he may ask the president's permission to bring it with him. If the request is not granted, he must drink it quickly or leave it.

Never go in to dinner smoking.

12. The president sits at the head of the table. At a large table this is in the centre; at a small table this is at the end nearest the door.

The vice-president sits opposite to the president or in the place on the president's right that is the farthest away from him at a small table.

Guests sit on the right of their hosts. If the host has two guests, they sit on either side of him.

A host with three or more guests should have his guests disposed on either side of him in two groups. Guests should not sit beside each other if this can be avoided.

Should there be mess guests – that is, guests who have been invited by the mess as a whole – the guest of honour, or the senior guest if there is no guest of honour, sits on the president's right, the next in importance on his left. Any other mess guests should be seated, in so far as is possible with a member of the mess on either side. The vice-president, also, should look after mess guests and seat those not with the president on either side of him when possible.

There should never be a vacant seat between two diners. If too many places have been laid, the diners should close in between the president and vice-president, keeping the numbers on each side of them and of the table as even as possible. Officers should not sit down at a second table until all seats at the first are filled up. This rule is elastic, as it might separate officers from their guests, or leave one diner by himself, but the principle should be followed.

13. When everyone is seated the senior steward reports to the president "Officers seated, Sir", and states whether or not a Chaplain is present. The president then taps the table for silence.

If there is a chaplain present, he says grace. If there is more than one chaplain, they should arrange beforehand who will do this. One generally does so at the beginning of the dinner and one at the end. If the only chaplains are guests, the president should ask them before dinner if they will arrange to say grace.

If there is no chaplain present the president says grace. Anyone doing this, whether chaplain or president, may say whatever grace he likes and be as long winded as he chooses, but the normal prayer used by presidents, although often not chaplains, is "For what we are about to receive thank God!" The popular idea that the normal Naval grace is simply, "Thank God" is entirely incorrect. Such grace may be used by a flippant and self-conscious president in a gin room mess, but it has no place among mature men.

14. As soon as the president has tapped the table for grace, the following rules are rigidly in force:

Without the president's permission, no one may

- (a) Come in and sit down at the table.
- (b) Leave the table.
- (c) Return to the table.
- (d) Read (except the menu and musical program).
- (e) Write.
- (f) Talk "shop". ("Shop talk" is talk about the duties of the ship. It is not matters of general interest about the service.)
- (g) Speak a foreign language. (This does not apply if foreign guests are present. In Canada, French is not a foreign language; but the language most familiar to the majority present should be spoken.)
- (h) Tell "smutty" stories.
- (i) Mention a woman's name unless she is a celebrity. (The decision of the president on this matter, as on all others, is final. When ladies are present, this rule does not apply.)
- (j) Mention a specific amount of money.
- (k) Propose a toast. ("Cheerio" or similar remark, or raising the glass in greeting constitutes a toast.)

If a diner has been granted permission to sit down late, or to return to the table, he continues with the course then being eaten or served, unless the president gives him permission to eat the course which he missed.

Whenever the president or vice-president raps the table, there must be silence until he has finished speaking.

15. The president is always served first, and no dish is ever removed until the last diner to finish a course has finished eating. Mess guests are served before the president, and other guests before their hosts.
16. Drinks are served during the meal in accordance with the established customs of good society. You will notice that all these rules are the same, or very little different from those practised at any formal dinner in polite circles.
17. When the last course has been eaten, the stewards clear the table of everything except the table decorations, and sweep up all the crumbs.

Should an officer have an unfinished drink, he may ask the president's permission to retain it, but he must not drink any toast with it.

18. When the table is cleared the senior steward reports to the president "Table cleared, Sir".

The president taps the table for silence and grace is said as before, the customary one being "For what we have received, thank God".

The port and other relevant wines are then placed on the table. In a small mess, they are all placed before the president; in larger ones the vice-president and, possibly, other officers have decanters placed in front of them as well.

If dessert is to be served, dessert plates, knives, forks, and finger bowls are also placed on the table. Dessert, by the way, consists of fruits and nuts.

19. When the decanters are all placed on the table, the senior steward reports to the president, "The wine is ready to pass, Sir". The president then unstoppers the decanters in front of him and other officers with decanters in front of them follow suit.

The president passes the decanters one at a time to his left, the other officers doing the same. Remember, the president and other officers in charge of decanters no not help themselves before passing decanters.

The decanters should be at least one place apart during their trip around the table. They should never be allowed to "pile up" beside a diner.

If, due to a shortage of diners, there is a gap at the end of the table, the stewards in that area should move the decanter across it.

When a set of decanters arrives in front of an officer who has charge of a set, she helps himself to what he wants and keeps the new set in front of him. The stewards move the stoppers on from one officer to the other, so that they remain with their own decanters.

Remember that a decanter may never be passed to the right. If an officer thoughtlessly does not help himself when he desires wine, he is out of luck. It is not very good form, but it is permissible for him to pass his glass down to the officer who has the decanter at the moment and ask him to fill it.

No one may touch his wine until the Royal Toast has been proposed.

It is not necessary to take wine if you do not want it, but if you do not take it on the first round of decanters, you may not take it subsequently.

In civilian circles if you do not take wine, your glass will be filled with water, but in the Navy we never drink a toast in water, as superstition says the subject of our solicitude will die by drowning.

When the wine has been passed and all decanters have reached their destination, the senior steward reports to the president, "The wine has been passed, Sir". The president then stoppers the decanters in front of him and the other officers follow suit.

20. The president then taps the table for silence and says, "Mr. Vice, the King". If there is a ban in attendance, it then plays the national anthem, after which the vice-president responds

“Gentlemen, the King”. All diners raise their glasses and repeat, “The King”, and those with wine drink the toast.

21. These are the rules for drinking toasts in Naval Messes and at Official Dinners stated in AFO 723 of 1936:

1. “The Royal Toast”

The health of HM the King should be honoured, seated, in all Naval Messes, whether on board ship or on shore, on all occasions except:

- (a) When the national anthem is being played, the toast should be drunk standing.
- (b) When toasts to foreign Heads of States are included, they and that of “The King” should be drunk standing, whether national anthems are played or not.

2. “Procedure when Foreign Officers are present”

When foreign officers or officials are entertained officially aboard MH Ships or in Naval establishments on occasions when it is customary for toasts to be exchanged, the following procedure is to be observed:

- (a) The British officer acting as host will propose as first toast the health of the Head of the State (Sovereign or President) of the country to which the visitors belong.
- (b) After this has been honoured, the Senior Officer of the foreign guests will propose the health of His Majesty King George VI.
- (c) When more than one nation is represented among the guests, the host will propose a collective toast to the Heads of the several states represented, naming them in order of the rank and seniority of their respective representative officers present. In a foreign port, however, when officers of the state visited are present, the Head of that State should invariably be named first in the collective toast, the remainder being named in the order described in the preceding sentence.
- (d) To this collective toast the senior and highest in rank of the Foreign Officers present will respond on behalf of all foreign guests by proposing the health of His Majesty King George VI.
- (e) This procedure should be arranged beforehand between the British Officer who is host and his foreign guests.
- (f) The first toast should always be proposed in English, but, if possible, it should also be proposed in French, or the language of the visitors.
- (g) Any subsequent toast may follow as the occasion demands.

3. “Foreign National Anthems”

When a foreign national anthem is played in accompaniment to a toast, an abbreviated version should not be used unless it has been ascertained that this would be in accordance with the custom of the country concerned.

22. After the toasts have been drunk the rules are relaxed and cigars and cigarettes passed. Do not, however, light up before the president has done so, or has given permission to smoke. Pipes may not be smoked without the president's permission.
23. If no one takes wine with which to drink the royal toast, the president may have a glass with which to drink it at the mess expense. Except in the case of guests, this is the only one occasion on which a diner may accept a glass of wine to drink this toast, it being a point of honour for each diner to pay for his wine. Except in this one case, it is permissible to "Stand" other diners drinks if you want to.
24. The president may order the wine removed after the toasts are drunk, but it is the custom to sit over it and to pass the decanters at least once more.

After the decanters are passed the second time, the stoppers are left off until the wine is finally removed upon the president's order.

Incidentally, the president, or other officer guarding wine who wants to fill his glass is not at liberty to pick up the decanter in front of him; he must wait until the wine is again passed.

25. During dinner the president may discipline any diner for misbehaviour. He has three alternatives: (i) order the culprit to leave the mess; (ii) fine him an appropriate number of drinks; or (iii) warn him.

An officer coming to dinner late may have his excuse accepted, he may be refused permission to dine, or he may be fined.

Fines vary from a single drink to drinks for all present. The president may award the drinks to any diner he chooses to name, including himself. If there is an offended party he is generally mollified by receiving the payment of the fine.

The vice-president may warn or fine the president.

Fines imposed on a guest must be paid for by his host.

It is permissible for any diner to call the president's attention to a misdemeanour, but he is a wise man who first obtains the president's permission to repeat or demonstrate the infraction of the rules as, without it, he may find himself fined.

The procedure for fining or warning is for the president to tap the table for silence and to say, for example: "Mr. So-and-So will have the honour to give the Navigating Officer (or the two officers on his immediate right or the President) a glass of port" or "Mr. So-and-So will have the honour of passing the port". There is no set phrase, but avoid the horrid expression "will buy a drink". Never use this term at any time. If the president wants to warn someone, he merely says, "Mr. So-and-So is warned"; he may enlarge on any of these remarks should he wish to do so.

Fines are nearly always paid in port or other wine in which toasts are drunk. They are never paid until after the toasts have been drunk and no diner who has not drunk the toasts in wine may accept payment of a fine. Toasts may never be drunk in wine that is served in payment of a fine. Fines are sometimes paid in liquors, in which case these rules do not apply; but this is seldom done, and such a fine is generally imposed only for a flagrant breach of good manners committed after the toasts have been drunk.

Should a diner who was named as the recipient of the payment of a fine not accept that payment, the fine is considered to be paid.

26. If the band is in attendance at dinner, it is a custom of the Service for the president to invite the bandmaster to join him in a glass of port (a large one) after the toasts have been drunk. A chair is placed beside the president for the bandmaster. (While he) is yarning over his wine, his assistant conducts the band in playing soft music.

## **X BEHAVIOUR IN THE MESSES OF OTHER SERVICES**

1. When we find ourselves amongst a group with customs other than our own, we should learn those customs and conform to them, so long as they do not violate our own moral code.

Until we have learned the new etiquette we may be sure that we shall not give offence if we follow that which we know with the graciousness of spirit in which it originated.

## **XI DRESS ON SHORE**

1. Officers, when not performing a specific duty on His Majesty's Service, should when on shore be dressed in plain clothes.
2. You will note that I say "Plain Clothes", not "Mufti" or "Civvies". The expression "Mufti" belongs particularly to the Army: "Civvies" is, presumably, a contraction of the term "civilian clothes", and sounds like the invention of a two-year old. In the Navy we refer to dress which is not uniform as "Plain Clothes". (The modern bathing suit can scarcely be considered an article of clothing.)
3. When we attend certain functions of an official nature, or if we go somewhere in an official capacity, we should wear uniform. On these occasions the senior officer present will decide upon and promulgate instructions concerning dress.

Dances held by ships' companies are official parties, whether held on board or ashore. Therefore, officers and men should be dressed in uniform.



On all other occasions, except in time of war, officers should always wear plain clothes when on shore.

4. As we are members of polite society, it is just as important that we be well dressed in plain clothes as we are when in uniform.

## **XII THE APPOINTMENT**

1. Officers are always “Appointed” to ships – never “Drafted”.
2. You may be notified of your appointment either verbally or in writing (KRCN 4.31<sup>10</sup>) but in either case you must acknowledge its receipt to the Captain of the ship which you are to join (KRCN 4.46<sup>11</sup>).

If there is time this is done by letter, but if there is not, it must be done by telegraph or telephone. In all cases you should give information about what instructions you have received and ask for any special instructions which the Captain may have for you.

3. An example of the letter you should write is shown below. These are some of the rules to remember:
  - (i) Use a sheet of plain foolscap and, although typewriting is permissible, it is best to write your acknowledgement. Do not use ordinary notepaper or lines paper.

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<sup>10</sup> 4.31 -- NOTIFICATION OF APPOINTMENTS

- (1) Officers shall be notified of appointments either verbally or in writing.
- (2) All appointments shall be promulgated in the List of Appointments issued by Naval Headquarters.

<sup>11</sup> 4.46 – OFFICER REPORTING TO TAKE UP APPOINTMENT

- (1) Unless otherwise specifically instructed, an officer, on receipt of notification of an appointment, shall acknowledge receipt of the notification immediately, if time permits by letter or if not by telegram or telephone, addressing his acknowledgement to the Captain of the ship or fleet establishment to which he is appointed and requesting any special instructions as to joining.
- (2) Failing receipt of special instructions, an officer receiving notification of an appointment shall:
  - (a) when appointed to a ship commissioning or recommissioning, report on board at 0900 on the date of his appointment; or
  - (b) when appointed to a ship or fleet establishment in commission, report on board at or before 0900 on the date of his appointment or during the evening of the previous day.
- (3) When an officer receives notification of an appointment which became effective prior to the date of his receipt of the notification, or if other circumstances arise which prevent his joining on the effective date, he shall report on board at the earliest possible date, informing the Captain of the ship or establishment by telegram or air mail of his date of arrival and reasons for joining on the date of the appointment.

- (ii) Couch your letter in formal terms and always use the form shown for the addresses, greetings and the close.
  - (iii) Give full information about your appointment. If you have been appointed merely as, say, "Lieutenant" that is all you need state; but if you have also been appointed for a special duty, for instance, Navigational duties, you must put this in too, e.g., "Lieutenant for Navigational Duties".
  - (iv) The address you give should be one at which you are sure to receive a reply. It may be your ship, your home address or that of friends, a hotel or boarding house.
  - (v) "Balance" your letter neatly on the paper. Do not have it crowded at the top or bottom of the sheet. And leave a good margin. Write clearly, without erasures or crossings out, in good English and watch your spelling. A messy acknowledgement gives your new captain a very poor first impression.
4. An officer appointed to relieve the Captain writes to him in the same way as any other officer.
  5. If, for any reason, you are unable to join at the time required, you must report the fact to the captain, giving your reasons, and you must join as soon as possible.
  6. If you do not receive a reply to your letter or telegram of acknowledgement, you must join on the date given in your appointment, which, incidentally, you will have received from Naval Headquarters.

HMCS *Dash*  
At Halifax, NS  
1<sup>st</sup> June, 1948

Sir,

I have the honour to inform you that I have been appointed Lieutenant, as Gunnery Officer, to His Majesty's Canadian Ship under your command.

I have been directed to take passage in HMCS "QUERY" sailing from Halifax, NS, on the 16<sup>th</sup> June, 1948 and arriving in Bermuda on 20<sup>th</sup> June, 1948.

I request that I may be instructed as to the time and place in Bermuda at which I am to join.

I have the honour to be,

Sir,

Your obedient servant,

R.N. Jones  
Lieutenant (G), RCN

To: The Commanding Officer  
HMCS *Blank*  
c/o Fleet Mail Office  
Halifax, NS

### **XIII JOINING A SHIP**

1. Unless otherwise instructed, you should join a ship commissioning or recommissioning at 0900 of the day on which your appointment takes effect; a ship already in commission at or before 0900 on the effective date or on the previous evening. (KRCN 4.46<sup>12</sup>)

If you join in the evening you may do so in plain clothes but you will be wise to enquire whether there is accommodation for you beforehand.

2. When you arrive on board you report to the Officer of the Watch that you have come aboard to join.
3. Whether you join on the day given in your appointment or on the previous evening, you appear on the quarterdeck at 0900 of the proper date dressed in No. 5's. Before the war, one wore a frock coat and sword if joining before 1600.
4. The OOW will bring you to the Executive Officer, the head of your department or your predecessor, and you will eventually be brought to see the Captain by one of the two former officers.
5. You are normally given twenty-four hours to "sling your hammock". That is, you will be given that amount of time free from ship's duties such as watchkeeping, to take over your job and find your way about. (See KRCN 4.47<sup>13</sup>)

### **XIV FORMS OF ADDRESS**

1. In the Service an officer is introduced by his rank with the exception of Warrant Officers who always receive the title "Mister".

After introduction it is normal practice to speak to and of officers below the rank of Commander as Mr. So-and-So. It is quite correct to use the rank, but "Mister" is much easier to manage.

It was a practice in civilian circles to give a Lieutenant-Commander the courtesy title of "Commander" and a Commander that of "Captain", but I believe the Admiralty issued instructions some years ago that this practice was to cease. As it is quite permissible to call a Lieutenant-Commander "Mister", there seems to be no reason to continue the above mentioned practice.

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<sup>12</sup> See Footnote 10

<sup>13</sup> 4.47 – SUPERSESSON OF OFFICERS – TIME ALLOWED TO TAKE OVER DUTIES

(1) Except when notification of appointment or these Regulations expressly provides otherwise, an officer is normally superseded in an appointment at the end of the day on which his relief joins.

(2) The officer assuming and the officer relinquishing the duties of an appointment shall report jointly to the Captain when the duties have been satisfactorily transferred.

It is still customary to address Rear-Admirals and Vice-Admirals as “Admiral”, and an Admiral-of-the-Fleet the same way

Within the service, Commanding Officers are sometimes addressed or spoken of by the names of their ships, e.g., the Captain of HMCS “Cayuga” might be addressed as “Cayuga”.

2. The methods of referring to naval people in writing are to be found in KRCN 25.04, paragraph 21<sup>14</sup>.
3. No mention is made in Article 25.04 of the written form of address to be used for Chaplains, but the verbal usage is as follows:

A Protestant Chaplain is introduced, for example, as “Mr. Jones” if he is in canonical dress, or as “The Reverend Mr. Jones” if he is in plain clothes. When referring to him he is called “Mr. Jones” or “The Chaplain”; a Roman-Catholic Chaplain is addressed as “Father”. “Padre” is the Spanish and Italian for “Father” and we use the word in the three Services as an affectionate term when speaking to or of the Chaplain; but the word is slang and should not be used for formal reference or address. For example, you should tell the messenger to take this note to the “Chaplain” not to the “Padre”.

4. The slang expressions used when referring to various officers should never be used in formal speech, and giving orders or instructions should always be done formally. Do not tell a man to report to “Number One”; he should be told to report to the “First Lieutenant” or to “The Executive Officer”.

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<sup>14</sup> 25.04

(21) *Personnel and Armament*

(a) The following particulars shall invariably be stated in all correspondence and returns referring to personnel:

- (i) Officers other than Commissioned Officers from Warrant Rank, Warrant Officers, and Midshipmen:  
Rank, specialist qualification, initials of Christian names, surname, initials of the component of the Naval Forces to which they belong, and official file number.
- (ii) Commissioned Officers from Warrant Rank, Warrant Officers, and Midshipmen:  
The prefix “Mr.”, initials of Christian names, surname, rank, initials of the component of the Naval Forces to which they belong, and official file number
- (iii) Chief Petty Officers and below:  
Rating, authorized abbreviation of any non-substantive rate held (if applicable), Christian name normally used in full, initials of any other Christian names, surname and official number, for example, Chief Petty Officer (G.I.) J. Alexander S. Henderson, O.N. 9506E.

NOTE: When referring to officers or men in correspondence or signals, particulars of any decorations held by them shall not be included.

(b) The following particulars regarding men holding the following ratings shall be stated when necessary:

- (i) Engine Room Artificers – Trade
- (ii) Bandsmen – Instruments played

(c) The following particulars shall invariably be stated in all correspondence and returns referring to armament:

- (i) Guns: Mark, calibre, whether B.L. or Q.F
- (ii) Mountings: Mark and type
- (iii) Ammunition: Type, calibre, mark, lot numbers

5. When calling the attention of a senior to something we generally use such a form as “Commander Smith, Sir”. If he is the Executive Officer of the ship, “Commander, Sir” is also used. When speaking to our contemporaries we drop all titles and simply use the surname. When speaking of them to our seniors or other contemporaries we do the same, but when speaking to subordinates we give them their rank, the title of their appointment (e.g., the Gunnery Officer) or “Mister”. This all sounds very straight-laced and formal, but, remember that the practice is fairly elastic as those using it use their good taste in its application. The idea of using the greater formality to subordinates is that we help them to preserve their dignity and to prevent all suggestion of familiarity which might be reciprocated to the detriment of discipline. Perhaps you, personally, are of such character that you can enter upon familiar (as opposed to friendly) terms with subordinates, but you must remember that we are not all of us so fortunate, and out of loyalty to us and to help us to preserve general good discipline, you must support us in all ways that you can. It is natural for a man to believe that if he can call one Lieutenant “John” he may call the other one “Bill”.
6. We must be just as particular that we address the men properly as we are that we, ourselves, are properly addressed. Good manners do not exist as a one-way street.
  - (a) Chief Petty Officers are addressed as such, i.e., “Chief Petty Officer Smith” not “Chief”.
  - (b) Petty Officers are addressed as such, e.g., “Petty Officer Jones” not “PO”.
  - (c) Leading, Able, and Ordinary rates, also, are addressed by their rates: in the case of the latter two groups, surnames only may be used. But no officer should be guilty of an impertinence such as addressing Able Seaman Miller as “Dusty”. And let us pray nightly that we shall never be guilty of addressing one of our own men as “Hey, you!”
  - (d) Acting Petty Officers and Acting Leading Rates are addressed as though they were confirmed.

Incidentally, in slang, an Acting Petty Officer is called a “Square Rigged Petty Officer” because he is dressed in a seaman’s uniform. A confirmed Petty Officer is dressed in “Fore-and-Aft Rig”.

The expression “Rig” for a man’s dress evolves from the term “the rig of a ship”, that is, the dress of a ship. There are “Square Rigged” ships and “Fore and Aft Rigged” ships. There are no “Round Rigged” ships and no “Round Rigged” sailors.

7. “Buffer” is a slang term for “Boatswain”. A Boatswain is a warrant officer who is assisted by men called “Boatswain’s Mates”, the senior of whom is called the “Chief Boatswain’s Mate”. In small ships the boatswain’s duties are normally done by the First Lieutenant, and the chief boatswain’s mate assists him. In small ships, the Chief Boatswain’s Mate is familiarly referred to as the “Chief Buffer” or the “Buffer”. The duty of the modern Boatswain’s Mate is that of making calls with a boatswain’s pipe.
8. When a senior speaks to one of us, we acknowledge that we understand him by replying “Aye-aye, Sir”.

When a junior conveys information to us, we acknowledge its receipt by replying “Very good” or, if there is a lot of noise, by replying “Aye-aye”.

Soldiers and Royal Marines reply “Very good, Sir” to their seniors; we do not.

“OK” and “OK, Sir” sound terrible, and should not be used.

9. You may wonder why we must be so formal and particular, but never forget that “familiarity breeds contempt” and, also, that, when we become slack in one direction, we are almost certain to become slack in others. If we set up a standard, each of us knows precisely where he stands and there is no room for error or inadvertent impertinence. Paradoxically enough, those of us who live under a stricter self-discipline than others can be more easy amongst ourselves because of our greater self-control and the understanding that personal friendship will not be used to the detriment of discipline. We understand that each of us has an “ordinary face” and a “quarter deck face”. When the day comes that all, from the Admiral-of-the-Fleet to the youngest boy seaman, have attained a high standard of self-discipline we can all relax, but that day cannot arrive until after all officers have attained the goal, and that, we know, is far off. In the meantime we must see that we are accorded the proper form of address and that our Chief and Petty Officers and Leading Hands insure that their subordinates address them properly. Also, we must set an example by always using the proper forms of address ourselves both to our seniors and our juniors.
10. When on duty, we always address our seniors as “Sir”. When off duty our relationship to each other governs this practice to some extent, but those seniors whom we do not know very well we continue to accord the title in social intercourse. This is because although we are social equals, we recognize our seniors’ superiority in rank. Our wives, however, have no rank and meet our seniors purely on social, and therefore, equal rank. So our wives should not call our seniors “Sir” but should use the forms of address required by custom or allowed by intimacy.

## XV INVITATIONS

1. Invitations are replied to in the form that they are made.

Naturally, if you are asked to dinner verbally, you reply verbally.

If the invitation is issued in an informal letter, you reply in similar terms, unless asked to telephone or telegraph. In any case, the reply is informal.

Formal invitations are replied to formally. The following is an example of a formal acceptance of an invitation to dinner, issued by Dr. and Mrs. Blake to Lieutenant and Mrs. Jones:

<p>March Street Victoria, BC</p>
<p>Lieutenant and Mrs. G.F. Jones have much pleasure in accepting the kind invitation of Doctor and Mrs. A.L. Blake to dinner at seven-forty-five o'clock post meridian, on sixth June, nineteen hundred forty-eight at the Empress Hotel.</p>
<p>Mrs. A.L. Blake April Avenue Victoria, BC</p>
<p>Second June</p>

If it were necessary to refuse the invitation the reply should be couched in the same vein, regretting inability to attend due to acceptance of a previous invitation or another engagement.

2. The following points should be noted in writing replies to formal invitations:
  - (i) Use good notepaper.
  - (ii) The use of numerals should, so far as is possible, be avoided, although they are permissible in the addresses at the beginning and end of the reply. Anywhere else in the letter, numbers should be spelled out.
  - (iii) You never sign a formal invitation or the reply to it,



- (iv) Abbreviations should be avoided, except those used in form of address, such as “Mr.” And “Mrs.”.
- (v) Use your initials or full name according to the wording of the invitation.
- (vi) It is only necessary to address the reply to one person, although the invitation may be made by a dozen or more, e.g., an Officers’ Mess. Normally, one replies to one’s would-be hostess.
- (vii) When replying to Royalty or the Governor-General, you “have the honour to accept the gracious invitation”.
- (viii) When replying to a Lieutenant Governor you “have the honour to accept the kind invitation”.

If asked to arrive between two times you should do so, e.g., if invited “between 7 and 7:30” you should arrive between these times. You will be within the bounds of good manners if you arrive at 7:30, but it would be better to arrive earlier. But, do not arrive before seven.

When you are asked to arrive at “about” a certain time, half an hour later is the maximum of tardiness allowable, but do not arrive much earlier than the stated time unless your host or hostess suggests that you should.

It is hardly necessary to say that, having accepted an invitation you must arrive. Only the most pressing reasons should prevent you, and the receipt of a more attractive invitation cannot be considered one of them. Again, I stress the need for punctuality. Needless to say, if you are unable to be present or will be late, you should inform your host or hostess that this will be the case as soon as possible after you know it, yourself.

## **XVI CARDS**

1. We and our wives should have visiting cards.
2. A man’s calling card is a piece of pasteboard about 3 inches by 1½ inches. A woman’s card measures about 3¼ inches by 2¼ inches.
3. Cards should be embossed, not printed. That is, you should have a copper plate made from which the cards are reproduced.

The lettering should be in script, not print.

4. The following are examples of cards officers and their wives should have.

Lieutenant-Commander (E)  
J.N. Smith, DSO, BSc,  
Royal Canadian Navy  
HMCS *Canada*

Officers of the rank of Lieutenant and above

Mr. L.A. Jones, OBE  
Royal Canadian Navy  
HMCS *Canada*

Midshipmen, Warrant Officers, and  
Officers commissioned from Warrant Rank

It is customary for acting Sub-Lieutenants to use the same type of card as the Warrant Officers, as their promotion is fairly rapid and their salaries low.

The letters HMCS are optional and are placed in the bottom left hand corner for convenience in completing the address with the ship's name. You may have the name of your ship embossed on the card as well, if you like, but you will require a new plate for each ship you join.

If there is space, rank and name are placed on the same line,

Mrs. John W. Smith  
211 Grass Street  
Victoria BC

A married woman's card

The inclusion of the address on the copper plate is optional. The practice is likely to be an expensive one for a Naval Officer's wife.

Both men and women may use either their initials or their Christian names on their cards, as suits their taste and convenience.

A married woman normally uses her husband's initials or Christian names.

5. When leaving cards the address of the caller should be written in the left hand bottom corner of each card if it is not embossed there already.

An Officer's address is always his ship. If he wants to give another one he may enter it in a convenient place on the lower portion of the card. Some men also have the names of their clubs embossed on calling cards.

The address of an officer's wife is that of the place where they are at the time residing.

The name, with any rank decorations and orders of the person being called upon should be written at the top of the cards that are left on him or her.

## **XVII FORMAL CALLS**

1. The custom of paying and returning formal calls developed quite naturally as a method of making life more pleasant and as a constructive system by which deference and consideration of others might be shown.
2. I read, recently, of two teachers, who were married to each other, arriving in an American city fully expecting the weeks of loneliness that normally follow arrival in a strange place. They were surprised and delighted when other teachers came and called on them. One gathered from the article in the newspaper that this was a new development evolved by our original American cousins, whereas it was merely a return to old-fashioned social usage. (Incidentally, the United States Armed Forces are most particular about social calls.)

Calls are made and returned in order that people may meet each other and that strangers may be given help to establish themselves in their new surroundings. In order to produce uniformity and to ensure that everyone would know what to do and how to do it, a set of rules was developed. This was not done by a person or a group of persons sitting down and inventing the regulations; the system in use was produced by evolution and so grew into custom, altering or becoming established in accordance with the teachings of experience and governed by the good sense and kindness of the people using it.

Should a group try to use these customs, developed in kindness, as a method of marking its members as superior to others, it will almost certainly impose restrictions and new rules of its own, thereby overburdening the system to such an extent that it becomes ridiculous and falls into disrepute, the real reasons for the customs are buried, adherence to them becomes the mark of a snob, and people become impatient with them. They are then disused and all men are the losers. It is important that we should not permit this to occur in the Navy, as it has obviously occurred in civilian life.

When we call, we leave our visiting cards. The reason for doing this is that the people upon whom we have called have a record of our names and addresses. They are then in a position to make further contact with us should they wish to.

It is the custom for inhabitants to call on newcomers first, this being a mark of willingness to help and a desire to meet them. However, as a sign of deference and consideration for those whose professional station is above his own, the newcomer calls on his superiors before they call on him. After all, a busy man cannot know, technically speaking, of all arrivals. In the Navy we must be particularly careful to understand the spirit of these customs, because we are given definite rank and seniority, one above the other. I shall try to explain the resultant situation in a moment.

5. Women do not call on men, but men call on men and women. Because it is often difficult for a man to make social calls, his wife may make them for him. If he is not married, or his wife is absent, he makes them himself.

As a man is, at least nominally, the head of the house, it is the relative rank or station of the husband which governs precedence in social calls between families.

6. It is difficult to explain how this precedence is arrived at, because we are not dealing with arbitrary rules but with a spirit of graciousness, so I will give you an example of a married Lieutenant of the Executive Branch in Halifax to join a destroyer. The Captain and Engineer Officer of the ship, who are married men, are both Lieutenant-Commanders, the Executive Officer is a Lieutenant, also married, and the other lieutenants are all senior to him, some being married.

The new Lieutenant's wife would call on the wives of the Captain and the Executive Officer, the wives of the remaining officers would call on her, and the officers would show kindness by doing the same.

The idea is that the Captain and the Executive Officer are, in the ship's case, "public functionaries"; the remainder, as far as the Lieutenant is concerned, are members of the group which he has joined. If he were a Lieutenant (E), his wife would call on the Engineer Officer's wife first, as well as on the other two, because the Engineer Officer is, in the Lieutenant's (E) case, a "public functionary", being the head of his department.

You can see from this that, under the same circumstances, a Commander's wife should call on the wife of a Sub-Lieutenant.

## XVIII HOW CALLS ARE MADE AND RETURNED

1. There are four types of calls to be made in the Navy:
  - (i) the social calls which we have been discussing,
  - (ii) Official calls within the Service,
  - (iii) calls on other dignitaries, and,
  - (iv) calls made after a formal party.
2. All calls should be made as soon as possible after an officer and his wife, if he has one, arrive on a station. In cases where the new arrivals will receive the first call, they should be given a few days in which to settle in before it is made.

Calls made by a wife are returned as soon as possible; those made by a man are not returned at all.

3. Social Calls made by a new arrival:
  - (a) On Whom Made. (A single officer, or one whose wife is not with him, makes these calls himself, dressed in plain clothes. A Married officer's wife may make the calls for him.)
    - (i) The wife of the Naval Officer in command of the station.
    - (ii) The wife of the Officer's Captain.
    - (iii) The wife of the Executive Officer of the ship.
    - (iv) The wife of the head of the Officer's department in the ship.
    - (v) The wife of the Officer in command of the squadron or flotilla of which the ship is a unit.
    - (vi) Other calls according to circumstances. (Information on this may be obtained from those who call on the newcomer.)
  - (b) Time of Calling. Between 1530 and 1700, but it is best to call before 1600 if possible.
  - (c) Cards to be left. If a man is calling, he leaves one card for the husband, one for the wife, and, if there are any grownup daughters or other women living with the family, one for each of them. A woman does not leave a card for a man, but with that exception she leaves the same cards as does a man when calling.

When the wife makes the call for herself and her husband, she leaves the same number of his cards as he would do himself, and her own cards.
  - (d) Length of Stay. It is only necessary to stay ten or fifteen minutes when calling – say the length of time it takes to smoke a cigarette – but there is no reason you should not stay longer if you wish to. Your hostess may ask you to stay to tea, but she does not have to, nor do you have to accept the invitation; in fact, it is to avoid embarrassment in that respect that one should try to call before 1600, as then you are unlikely to enter the drawing room with the tea-tray or after it has arrived.

- (e) Not at Home. Sometimes the maid will inform you that the lady on whom you call is “not at home”. This probably means that she is out, but it may mean that, although she is in, circumstances (we hope not disinclination) prevents her from receiving you. If no one answers the door, you may assume that no one is in.

In these cases, you leave your cards with the maid, if there is one, and in the letterbox if there is not, and the call will be considered to have been made.

- (f) Calls by Proxy. The only calls that may be made by persons other than the owner of the cards are those which a wife makes on behalf of her husband. In other words, do not ask friends to leave your cards, nor send your chauffeur or servant around with them.

I believe that in some districts, cards are sent through the mail and the call is considered to have been made. I suggest to you that such a practice is contrary to the spirit of the occasion and that, if one has so much to do that one has not time to meet the stranger at the gate, one cannot be of service to him and should, therefore, ignore him. In my opinion, it is such practices as these which cause the gracious custom to fall into disrepute.

- (g) Returning Calls. Social calls made by a wife should be returned as soon as possible in exactly the same manner as that in which the first call was made. Calls made by a man are not returned.

#### 4. Service Calls.

These are made by the officer himself, and he is dressed in uniform when he makes them.

##### (a) On Whom Made

- (i) The Captain. (This will be arranged by the Executive Officer, or by the head of the newly-joined officer’s department, one of whom will bring him to see the Captain on the day that he joins.) No card is left.
- (ii) The Naval Officer in command of the station.
- (iii) The Officer in command of the squadron or flotilla of which the new officer’s ship is a unit.
- (iv) Other calls which may be customary. For example, it may be the practice on the station to call on the senior officers of the other two services.

##### (b) Time of Calling. Between 1130 and 1200.

- (c) Cards to be Left. One per customer, but this is not necessary if the officer keeps a “Visitor’s Book” (This book is described farther on.) See also Paragraph (a) (i) above.

- (d) Length of Stay. It is unlikely that you will be received by most of these officers: and if you are, you will be dismissed, politely, at the proper time.

- (e) Calls by Proxy must never be made.

(f) Returning Calls. These calls are never returned, unless you are the Captain of a ship (see Section XVIII), and, in that case you will be received when you make your call.

5. Calls on other Dignitaries

(a) On Whom Made

(i) Governor General or Lieutenant Governor

(ii) Calls customarily made on the station.

(b) Time of Calling. These dignitaries probably keep Visitors' Books and anyone will tell you during what hour they are available; normally from about 1000 to 1800. There may be exceptions, so enquire as to local custom.

(c) Cards to be Left. None, if there is a Visitor's Book; otherwise as described for social calls.

(d) Length of Stay. You will not be received.

(e) Calls by Proxy. Husband and wife both call, but enquire as to local custom.

(f) Dress. Officers should wear uniform, but again, enquire as to local custom.

6. Calls after formal parties

(a) On Whom Made. By men on late host(s) and hostess(es). By women on late hostess(es).

(b) Time of Calling. Within two days after the party and at the normal time for social calls.

(c) Cards to be left. As for social calls, but only on those mentioned in (a) above.

(d) Length of Stay. As for social calls.

(e) Not at Home. As for social calls.

(f) Calls by Proxy. As for social calls.

(g) Returning Calls. These calls are not returned.

7. If one has been to an informal party, it is a polite gesture to telephone one's host or hostess the following day to say "Thank You".

8. The Visitors' Book. Dignitaries who receive many calls normally keep a Visitors' Book in which the callers write their names. When this is done, so cards should be left, as the whole idea of the book is to do away with the stack of cards which would accumulate.

People whose station necessitates the use of a Visitors' Book do not, normally, return calls. Instead they invite all callers to receptions during the year in which they called.

## **XIX “BREAD AND BUTTER” LETTERS**

1. After we have been staying with friends or relatives we should, as you know, write a letter of thanks shortly after our departure.
2. If it is not possible to call after a formal party, we should write a note.
3. When we are away on cruises we receive a great deal of hospitality from private individuals. If any of these have been particularly kind to one of us, we should write a letter of thanks.
4. Letter of thanks to clubs, societies and other groups who have shown kindness to the ship in general should be written by the Captain. If the mess has been the recipient of their attention, the Mess President should write to them.

## **XX CALLS BETWEEN SHIPS AND MESSES**

1. When a warship first arrives in a port where other warships are lying the Officer-of-the-Guard, with his pendant flying, is sent to her. He should be piped over the side. He brings with him all relevant orders and instructions and any other information which may be of use to the newcomer.
2. If the Captain of the new arrival is senior to all other officers present, the Officer-of-the-Guard asks when it will be convenient to receive the call of his predecessor. If he is a junior, the Officer-of-the-Guard informs him when it will be convenient for the senior officer present to receive him; should this not be done, the junior officer requests by signal that he be informed when it will be convenient to call.
3. If the Captain of the latest arrival is the senior officer present, all command officers call on him. If he is not, he calls on those who are senior to him, and all those of equal or less seniority call on the newcomer.
4. Each Captain leaves one card at each call.
5. If there is a large number of ships present, these calls are only made on the Commander-in-Chief, the officer commanding the squadron or flotilla which the ship is joining and between the captains of the squadron or flotilla. The same general rule holds good for the calls between the messes which I am about to describe.



6. Obviously, it would be a nuisance if all officers called on all messes, so representatives of one entire mess call on the equivalent mess in each of the other ships. These “calling parties” are composed of two or more officers, one of whom carries the “Mess Cards”. These cards are larger than the ordinary calling card and bear the name of the mess and the ship. They are addressed to the recipient in the same manner as the private visiting card. Two of these cards are left in each ship, one for the Captain and one for the mess called on. If more than one mess is visited by the party, a card is left in each. These cards indicate that all members of the mess concerned have paid their call. However, the individual members of the calling party have also leave their own cards, and any other officer who wishes to may call in person on any date.

These calls are returned by calling parties from the ships visited.

Calls on messes are made between 1130 and 1230.

The messes of a new arrival are always called on first, regardless of the relative seniorities of the Captains.

The cards for the Captain may be left with a member of the mess visited, who will see that they reach their destination.

7. Calls should also be exchanged with the messes of the other two Services, should there be any in the port.
8. Various dignitaries, authorities, clubs and societies are also likely to call on the Captain and messes of ships arriving. These calls must be returned.

## **XXI CONCLUSION**

1. By this lecture, you will see that any well-bred civilian, merely by following the rules under which he was brought up, could get by in the Navy without much comment, and it would take him a very short time to learn the few special cases that exist.
2. Ours is a Way of Life, not an adherence to a series of arbitrary rules. We obey the rules, not so much because we have to as because we want to. It is our self-discipline as individuals and as a group that makes us worthy to lead men.