

DINING-OUT

HISTORY

The dining-out is a formal military function which provides the opportunity for officers and their ladies to gather socially. The Dining-Out is a relatively new custom, however it is based upon the historic "Dining-In" which is a function where military men join in traditional, formal ceremony of good fellowship.

There are many stories on the origin of the Dining-In ceremony. The custom, if not the name of Dining-In, has its roots in King Arthur's Court and the Knights of the Round Table. In those days a custom was established to provide an opportunity for the Knights to tell their experiences and exploits in a language unhampered by the presence of the opposite sex.

There is evidence that a similar tradition was practiced by Charlemagne, by Hannibal, and by Alexander the Great. It remained for the French to revive it as an affair underwritten by the nobility as a sort of reward for the Cavaliers who served a particular nobleman or lord.

Dining-In was practiced too by the Germans, particularly in the period prior to World War I.

Dining-In, as originally intended and formed under British Court, was revived by the Royal Air Force in WW-I, continued and flourished in the period between the wars, and came into full being as a custom of that service in WW-II.

One of the early American units used such a ceremony in WW-I, the unit was the famous "Hat in the Ring Squadron". Prior to WW-II, the late General H.H. Arnold held famous "wing-dings" within the Army Air Corps that were forerunners to USAF Dining-In. With the association of the Army Air Forces personnel with the British during WW-II, additional impetus was given to the growth of the Dining-In in the USAF.

Now with the growing proportion of married officers it is recognized that the traditional Dining-In would gain favor if the ladies were included. With this in mind the Dining-Out was initiated.

"Dining-Out History", Informal paper provided by AF/CVAP (Protocal). Source indicates paper is NOT well researched and that originator is unknown.

HQ USAF/CHOR
(Bill Heimenthal)
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BACKGROUND. The dining-out is becoming established as an Air Force tradition. It is a recent variation of the dining-in ceremony. The custom of dining-in is a very old tradition in England, but is not exclusively military. It is believed that the dining-in began as a custom in the monasteries, was adopted by the early universities, and later spread to the military units of the country when the officers' mess was established.

The late General H. H. Arnold probably started the dining-in within the Army Air Corps when he used to hold his famous "wing-dings." The contacts of U. S. Army Air Corps personnel with the British and their dining-ins during World War II gave additional impetus for the growth of this custom in the USAF. It was recognized that those occasions provided situations where ceremony, tradition, and good fellowship could play an important part in the life of military organizations.

Faculty members of the Squadron Officer Course (later designated Squadron Officer School) of the Air University, realizing the value of tradition and ceremony, began having faculty dining-ins. The dining-in was also included in the curriculum for the students. This was also very successful and the custom rapidly spread to Air Force units in other commands. / As the dining-in spread throughout the Air Force many officers (not to mention their wives) felt it would be appropriate and beneficial to have a "dining-in type" ceremony which included wives. The formal portion of the dining-out closely follows the tradition and customs of the dining-in.

PURPOSE. The dining-out provides an opportunity for officers and their wives to participate in one of the traditions and ceremonies which are an essential part of the life of a military organization. The widely dispersed housing in the Washington, D. C. area limits social activities within an Air Staff unit. The dining-out provides a situation where officers and their wives can meet socially at a formal military function.

"Dining-Out", Informal background paper provided by AF/CVAP (Protocol). Source claims paper is thoroughly researched. Apparently drafted in 1964.