

Typescript history of the RAMC Annual Dinner, with ms. comments (post 1923)

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ROYAL ARMY MEDICAL CORPS DINNER.

1. The earliest record of an annual dinner in the possession of the Secretary is of an Army Medical Department Dinner held in 1881, at which 95 officers and 2 guests attended (see a black American-cloth-covered note book).

The tin box in which the records are kept is believed to be the one originally provided by Deputy Surgeon-General W.G. Don when Secretary (in 1886).

2. The Dinner is managed by the following Committee which reports to the Committee of the R.A.M.C. Fund:-

President ... The D.D.M.S., London District
(ex officio)
1 officer from Aldershot,
,, ,, Woolwich,
,, ,, Netley,
The 2nd in command, R.A.M. College (ex officio),
3 retired officers, and
the Hon. Secretary, A.M.D., War Office.

The records of the Committee meetings and all matters affecting the Dinner are kept in a special book (printed on outside cover "R.A.M.C. Dinner Fund").

3. The duties of the Dinner Committee are as follows:-

At the meeting in February they receive the report from the Hon.Secretary referring to last year's dinner; the minutes of the last meeting are submitted, read, confirmed, and signed. The balance sheet and statement of accounts is inspected, audited, and signed by the D.D.M.S., London Dist. The Restaurant at which the Dinner is to be held in the following June is fixed and an executive sub-committee of three (including the Hon.Sec.) authorized to carry out all the arrangements.

A report for submission to the General Committee, R.A.M.C Fund is approved (copies in book).

4. The Dinner Committee usually meet about the 3rd week in February each year.

The Secretary, with the permission of the President, writes to each member somewhat as follows:-

(see copy in book "R.A.M.C. Dinner Fund")

Having

X V M sent

Having ascertained the ^{most convenient} date ~~most favoured~~, the Secretary with the concurrence of the President, sends notices of the place and date of the meeting, usually about 3.30 p.m. in the Board Room at the War Office.

5. The place for the Dinner having been decided upon and an executive sub-committee elected at the Committee Meeting the Secretary orders the notices and cards to be printed at the ^{Bale & Danisellson's} Army & Navy Stores, as in the following specimens:-



This is a
Royal
Dinner Card
8/13

*Annual Dinner
Royal Army Medical Corps,
Empire and Alexandra Rooms,
Trocadero Restaurant,
(Piccadilly Circus, W.)
Monday, June 16th, 1913.
8 p.m. precisely.*

also the env

No.

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also the envelopes and such other stationery required.

6. Advertisements should be arranged as follows:-

The complete notice (blue paper) about the dinner, as printed above should be inserted in the R.A.M.C. Journal (Corps News) for April, May, and June.

An abbreviated notice as under should be inserted weekly under "Regimental Dinners" in the Broad Arrow and Army & Navy Gazette ~~from the first issue in April to the~~ *in the last four issues preceding MAY* ~~Saturday in June previous to the Dinner:-~~

" ROYAL ARMY MEDICAL CORPS DINNER

The annual Dinner of the officers of the Royal Army Medical Corps will be held at on Monday ... June, 19... at 8 p.m. Gentlemen intending to be present should notify the Secretary, R.A.M.C. Dinner Committee (private address)."

~~During the same period,~~ a one-line notice should be inserted in the Morning Post ~~every~~ *on the two* ~~preceding the dinner~~ *preceding the dinner* Mondays in the Future Arrangements column under date of Dinner:- "Royal Army Medical Corps Dinner (place) 8 p.m.". The same notice should appear on the day of the dinner under 'Today's arrangements'. ~~During the week preceding the dinner the~~ *Monday, Wednesday* ~~abbreviated notice quoted should appear daily on the front~~ *page of the Morning Post.*

On

On the night of the dinner a notice should be prepared ready to send off to the Morning Post ~~and the Times~~ as soon as the numbers dining are known:-

"The Annual Dinner of the officers of the Royal Army Medical Corps was held in the Rooms, Restaurant, last night. ^{diint.} ~~Surgeon~~ General, Director-General, was in the chair, and (number) past and present officers attended".

The restaurant should be able to send (this notice) to the papers.

As soon as possible after the dinner, a notice of its having been held and a complete list of the officers present is sent to the R.A.M.C. Journal (Corps News).

Cancelled
~~The abbreviated notice can also be inserted in the British Medical Journal, but they put it in some such place as "appointments vacant" and it is not worth the cost. If the Editor is asked he might insert it under "Medical News" as an item of news, but the best place would be under "The Services" if the Editor would agree. He was asked to this year, but put it under "Medical News".~~

All advertisements and notices (except those for the R.A.M.C. Journal, and the final one for the newspapers about the dinner having been held) can be arranged by May & Williams

Piccadilly

Piccadilly, who of course charge for their work, or might be done direct with the newspapers.

7. The printed notices of the dinner are sent out about the second week in April, as follows:-

Blue notices to D.D.M.S. Officers in Charge ^{of} Military Hospitals, and retired pay officers..

CARDS FOR NOTICE BOARDS
~~White leaflets~~ to London Clubs and R.A.M.C. Messes, London, Aldershot, Netley, and Woolwich.

Early in May 7.
8. ~~About the middle of April or earlier~~, an invitation in the name of the Director-General (by name) and officers, Royal Army Medical Corps, is sent to the only guest (~~Mr.~~ *Sir* Vesey Holt) at his private address; usually written by the Secretary on War Office paper.

*Sir Vesey Holt, ~~Mr.~~ K.B.E.,
Mount Mascot,
Bexley, Kent.*

9. All correspondence with officers about the dinner should be dated from the Secretary's private address so that no "officialdom" may be apparent. Correspondence with the Dinner Committee and with firms can of course be dated from the War Office.

10. In arranging with a restaurant the following should be stipulated:-

That an inclusive charge per officer dining be quoted, and that there be no extras (except perhaps the fee for a toast-master). The charge should include before-dinner drinks, dinner

dinner with wines, cigars, and cigarettes, and after-dinner drinks, table decorations and flowers, suppers (or the equivalent in money) for the bandmaster and bandsmen, the clerk, and a supper and bed for the Mess Serjeant from Aldershot, and safe custody overnight for the silver he brings up. The restaurant must detail a man to collect the money from officers on arrival. He sits with the clerk who takes the tickets.

The restaurant sends a plan of the tables, which (after certain places are marked on it) should be returned to the restaurant on the forenoon of the day of the dinner. It is then to be displayed, with a list of officers who have notified their intention to dine, in some convenient place, so that officers may select places. About an hour before the dinner it is to be taken to the ante-room, and some one must be beside it with cards on which he writes names as places are taken, and a page boy (or two) runs with the cards into the dining room and puts them on the correct place. When a whole table is reserved, it should be so marked with a list of the officers, in this case cards need not be put on the places, the officers can arrange amongst themselves.

*Now
changes
A.G.
insert
his
own -
for
table*

11. The top table is usually for surgeon-generals and senior colonels who have not selected other places. At this table, serving and retired officers should be placed alternately, the guest on the D.C.'s right, the senior retired D.G. on his left, the next senior officer on the right of the guest, then the other officers more or less in seniority towards each flank. The D.G. decides these places usually on the Thursday before the dinner.

No attempt is made to place other officers unless they ask for it. See blue notice.

The members of the dinner committee should each take a table. But in all cases, officers should be allowed to please themselves as to where they sit.

The Peninsular Bell (London Mess) and a card showing the loyal toasts should be put at the D.G.'s place.

No other toasts are customary and the rule is "no speeches".

12. The menu, wines, cigars, flowers, etc., should be approved by the Executive Subcommittee, the middle of May is early enough to begin this. Flowers, it should be stipulated with the restaurant, are to be ordered by the restaurant ~~from Miss Webster, 135, Knightsbridge, S.W.,~~ through Mrs Addison (wife of a former officer of ours). The selection is to be anything in reason at the discretion of the Subcommittee.

*note. Mrs. Addison has since left ~~her address~~
~~4 is now with~~ Rex & Cic, 144 Praeger Road.
 Private address - 21, Hogarth Road. *21. 11/1/22.*
 S.W.*

13. About the last week in May, the Messes at London, ~~Aldershot,~~ and ~~Weelwich~~ should be asked to lend campaign trophies and large centre-pieces, the Dinner Fund paying all expenses. Warn the restaurant that these things will be sent, and that Mess Serjeants will come with them to look after them. They take them away the same night, except the Aldershot silver which is to be kept overnight (see before).

*Only
 London
 in 1921
 1922 T3*

14. In May the Band President should be told how many bandsmen are to be sent (the fewer the better, 12 to 15 should be the limit), and asked to submit a programme which should be light and cheerful, not too classical, and on no account too loud. He should be asked if he wants a piano (if so the restaurant should supply it free) also where he would like to place the band (the bandmaster should visit the restaurant to decide this) and be told that the programme is wanted about the middle of May at latest. When received, it should be circulated to the sub-committee, and when approved sent to the restaurant for printing with the menu. We supply the die for the crest (property of the Dinner Fund). The restaurant does the printing.

15. There is no Dinner Fund proper, but the Secretary has a small account at Holts' which is so called, and to which officers

officers' subscription to the Old Dinner Fund are credited. From this and from non-subscribers tickets or other tickets paid for in advance (officers sometimes prefer to do so), the Secretary has a small balance for use in paying working expenses, postage, clerical assistance (~~5~~£ per annum), advertisements, as petty cash, etc. The restaurant's charges are paid for by the money taken at the doors and a cheque for the balance obtained from the Secretary, R.A.M.C. Fund on the Dinner Secretary's demand. The whole is accounted for in a balance sheet prepared and signed by the Secretary, circulated to the Committee before their meeting in February, and audited at the meeting. It is then sent with the report to the R.A.M.C. Fund Committee.

16. The charge to subscribers (see blue notice paper) has been 7/6 for many years now, As we usually pay 30/- a head to the restaurant, the non-subscribers' charge of £1.12.6 may be considered to include 2/6 to help cover working expenses.

E. J. Buell Major
28.10.12
16 July 1912