



## SOLDIERS' CHRISTMAS DINNER

### References:

- a. General Patterson “Kingston’s Own, The Princess of Wales’ Own Regiment”.

### GENERAL

1. The Regiment holds dear to the military tradition of holding a dinner focused on the soldiers just prior to the holiday leave period. This event affords the Regiment the opportunity to celebrate the holiday season as well as reflect on the year’s accomplishments. This event is also the evening of the Regimental awards presentations.

2. This is an annual event that is currently held on the last training night of the calendar year. It has traditionally been held in the Regimental Armouries, although other peacetime venues have also been used, including the CFB Kingston Messes. In times of conflict the Regiment will hold faithful to the example set by the 21<sup>st</sup> Bn CEF, and hold the Men’s Christmas Dinner as is tactically appropriate. In 1916 the 21<sup>st</sup> Bn CEF, spent the week of Christmas conducting trench raids, and held their dinner days after Christmas when they had moved out of the line.

### NOMINCLATURE

3. This event is focused on the soldiers, or junior ranks of the Regiment. In generations past, all soldiers were male and were often referred to as simply the men; hence the historic name for this event was Men's Christmas Dinner. Now, our soldiers are both men and women and, in keeping with the times, the name for the event reflects that diversity. The designation as a Christmas event draws from the traditions of past generations and it is acknowledge that this is not a faith based celebration.

### PARTICIPATION

4. While this is considered a Regimental Family event, it does not include attendance by the affiliated Cadet Corps. The Cadet Corps traditionally run their own similar Christmas meal. The remaining members of the Regimental Family are encouraged to attend, in particular the Association members, Pipes and Drums, and civilian employees of the Regiment and its institutions.

5. A standing invitation is always put forward to the Comd 33 CBG and BSM, who may or may not be able to attend in person. If Comd 33 CBG is able to be present, he will be afforded the opportunity to say a few words at the beginning or conclusion of the dinner. In his absence the HCol or CO will take the opportunity to pass along the kindest regards of Comd 33 CBG.

### CONOPS

6. The event has three principal components;

- a. Regimental Turkey Shoot;
- b. Dinner with presentations; and
- c. Post dinner mess events.



## DRESS

7. Dress for this event is DEU 3 (tunic with undress ribbons). This is an 'at home' event as opposed to a ceremonial parade or public event, therefore medals are not required. Dress for guests and association members is typically jacket and tie or ladies equivalent.

## TURKEY SHOOT

8. While the tradition of a turkey shoot has existed in various forms with different organizations, for us it simply consists of a marksmanship competition with a turkey as the reward to top shots. While this has been previously run on the indoor .22 range, it is now conducted on the electronic small arms trainer. This event is normally arranged by the Ops Cell, with the range staffed by A Coy small arms coaches or rifle team members. In past years the marksmanship competition has been based up on shooting skill, ie the highest scores win. The presence of the small arms trainer allows for more flexibility and options include shooting scenarios with moving turkeys rather than standard targets. This allows for a more dynamic shoot than simply grouping size on a standard target. The turkey shoot will be completed prior to sitting down for dinner.

9. The traditional prize in this completion has been a frozen turkey for the top eight to ten shooters. More recently the Regiment has transitioned to a gift card from a major grocery chain. This is a more flexible option in particular for those soldiers who might not make use of an actual turkey during the holiday season. The value of the gift card should be appropriate to allow for the purchase of a medium sized frozen turkey, or consistent with the dinner meal allowance amount.

10. It is very appropriate for the OIC of this event to adjust the scores received from the results of the turkey shoot to ensure an appropriate distribution of prizes. As an example, while Officers and Sr NCOs are encouraged to demonstrate their marksmanship prowess, in general neither group shall be considered during the prize distribution. The event OIC might seek the advice of the DSM or RSM if questions remain on appropriate distribution.

11. The Turkey shoot prizes will be distributed by the CO and RSM at the appropriate time during the dinner.

## THE DINNER

12. The dinner will follow a format similar, but more relaxed, than a mess dinner. We hold to the age old customs associated to a military Christmas Dinner that includes the traditional role reversals. The Officers and Sr NCOs not only organize this dinner, they also prepare and serve it to the Jr Ranks. Their job is not completed until everything has been cleaned away at the end of the dinner. In this duty the Officers and Sr. NCOs are often assisted by the Regimental Association.

13. The PWOR Men's Christmas Dinner also includes two very specific instances of role reversal. During the dinner, the Commanding Officer will exchange tunics with the youngest member of the Regiment, who will join him at the head table and help preside over the conduct of the dinner. The RSM will exchange tunics with the oldest serving member of the Jr Ranks mess, who will also join him at the head table. It is the responsibility of the Chief Clerk to research and provide the names of these soldiers to the RSM.

14. The head table is normally prepared with a couple additional Regimental items that are present



for the celebration. This includes the presence of MCpl Herbert from the Jr. Ranks Mess, who hasn't missed a Men's Christmas Dinner since his enrolment with the Regiment. The stands for the Colours will be placed behind the head table prior to marching on the Colours.

15. The following script outlines the typical conduct of the dinner. It will be run by an officer acting as Master of Ceremonies. The PMC of the Officers Mess will act as PMC for the dinner and may also act as Master of Ceremonies.

| Time | Activity  |
|------|---|
| 1800 | Turkey Shoot on SAT range commences, Jr Mess Open.  |
| 1900 | Turkey Shoot complete, all soldiers in Jr Ranks Mess  |
| 1915 | All Troops at parade square standing behind chairs  |
| 1920 | Head table marches on   |
| 1925 | Head table remains standing while CO orders colours marched on  |
| 1930 | Dinner begins including <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- March on the Colours – Sr Subaltern</li> <li>- Introduce head table – CO, RSM</li> <li>- Grace – PMC Officers Mess or Regimental Chaplain</li> <li>- Exchange of Tunics (youngest to CO, oldest to RSM)</li> </ul> |
| 1940 | Meal service begins (Sr NCOs, WOs and Officers)<br>Musical interlude by the Pipes and Drums   |
| 2010 | Loyal Toasts <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The Queen – PMC Sr NCO Mess</li> <li>- Fallen Comrades – PWOR Association representative</li> <li>- Regiment – CO</li> </ul>  |
| 2020 | Welcome to the Regiment, rebadging, coins presented – OPI RSM   |
| 2030 | Regimental Awards (as per Regimental Awards Standing Order)   |
| 2050 | Medals and Commendations  |
| 2100 | Promotions  |
| 2110 | Turkey shoot winners presented with gift cards  |
| 2115 | Bde Comd's remarks, CO's remarks, RSM's remarks   |
| 2125 | Dinner concludes <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- March off the Colours – Sr Subaltern</li> <li>- Head table departs</li> <li>- Dismissal to the Messes - PMC</li> <li>- Clean up / Tear down (Officers and Sr NCOs)</li> </ul>   |
| 2140 | Officers and Sr NCOs return to their messes   |

### **POST DINNER MESS EVENTS**

10. At the conclusion of the dinner, all ranks are dismissed to their messes. The Jr Ranks Mess will continue festivities under the direction of the PMC. It is common for some individual visitation between messes to take place, in particular the HCol is known to make the rounds and visit the Jr Ranks and Warrants and Sergeants Messes.

11. In addition to unofficial visits, the Officers and Warrants and Sergeants Messes take turns each year hosting one another. Hosting duties include a receiving line to greet the members of the visiting mess. The hosting mess is considered 'at home' to the visiting mess. There is a recurring cycle to which mess is at home to the other:



- a. During even years the Sr NCOs and Warrant Officers are at home to the Officers; and
- b. During odd years the Officers are at home to the Sr NCOs.



The Princess of Wales' Own Regiment