

# BERLIN BRIGADE

# SOCIAL HANDBOOK



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## INTRODUCTION

There are dozens of books in print on Army Social Customs and Courtesies. (There are literally hundreds of booklets and pamphlets on the subject that have been published over the years by Army folks.) Each has a different style but include most of the answers to questions about Army customs that arise in the military community. While the majority of Army social customs, courtesy and protocol are the same the world over, each Post and Unit has its own special ones. This information pamphlet is published as a helpful guide for the basics and the Berlin Brigade particulars. While there is something for everyone here, this little pamphlet is mainly for the Berlin Brigade ladies.

## INVITATIONS

Invitations may be issued in the following ways:

1. By telephone. Ask for the wife and issue the invitation through her. Use your first name on the phone (Mary Jones, not Mrs. Jones, but this does not mean you call her Jane. It is best not to use the first name of an older or senior officer's wife unless she asks you to do so.)
2. Handwritten note. Address it to the wife.
3. Informal card. Address it to husband and wife.
4. Calling card in envelope. Address to husband and wife.
5. Fill-in card. Address to husband and wife.
6. Engraved invitation. Address to husband and wife.

On replying to invitations:

1. Formal invitations (and there are few nowadays, other than for weddings) are answered by a handwritten note in the third person, with the same wording and style as the invitation.
2. Written acceptance of an invitation is over your signature, not yours and your husband's. You may wish to say "My husband and I..." but the note is signed by YOU.
3. Official invitations usually state an R.S.V.P. phone number and should be answered as soon as possible.

4. R.S.V.P. on an invitation demands a reply. The thoughtful guest responds within 24 hours, as the hostess may wish to include someone else if you are unable to attend. Even though R.S.V.P. may not be included on luncheon or dinner invitations it is understood that a reply is requested.
5. Reservations for various club functions are, in a sense, accepted invitations. Should you find that you are unable to attend, your reservation must be cancelled before the deadline time; otherwise you will be expected to pay.
6. A personal invitation constitutes an obligation, whether you accept or decline. By the same token, an extended invitation cancels an obligation, whether accepted or declined.
7. Always accept an invitation enthusiastically, refuse regretfully and explain the reason, although it is not necessary to go into detail.

## COURTESIES OF ARRIVAL

Perhaps one of the oldest and still honored customs of the Army Community is that newcomers are well received. Nothing is more gratifying for an Army family than an obviously planned and sincere reception on Post from those with whom they will serve.

The Berlin Brigade has a program of sponsorship for newcomers. The program requires the sponsor to make preliminary arrangements for quarters and transportation from the airport and other basics. However, the success of our sponsor program depends not only upon the initiative of the sponsors, but also upon the willingness of the Community to ensure a true welcoming atmosphere. Especially in family quarters, this warm welcome is important. A pot of coffee or a plate of cookies and a quick call on the day of arrival does wonders for reinforcing a welcome to the community. The early offer of a ride to the PX or a chance to go "junking" will win the undying gratitude of almost anyone.

## CALLING

The Commanding General of the Berlin Brigade has established calling hours on the third Sunday of each month from 1600 to 1800 hours. Newcomers, both officer and civilian, who are assigned to the Brigade are asked to call on the third Sunday following their arrival in Berlin. Uniform for officers is dress blue with four in hand tie. Dark business suit is in order for male civilians. For ladies, a suit or dress, hat and gloves is appropriate. This call will not be returned by the Commanding General unless you are notified in advance by his Aide-de-Camp.

Other calls that should be made will vary according to the current custom in your husband's battalion or section. He should check with his battalion Adjutant or Section Chief for current procedures. As a general rule call on:

Your husband's Commanding Officer and HIS  
immediate Commanding Officer and their wives.

Old friends of yours and of your family.

Newcomers as they arrive.

People who have called on you.

Your husband should wear a uniform, you in a suit or dress (the type you would wear to Sunday church services, remembering this is not a party), gloves, and a hat if it is an afternoon call. General guides are:

Introduce yourself.

Length of stay: 15 or 20 minutes

Leaving: Just rise, say goodbye, leave your  
cards on a convenient table or tray ... and GO.

If the people are not at home, slip cards under the door. It is not necessary to repeat the call.

Check with the Adjutant for local policies, but usually you call:

Within one week of arrival.

Between 7:30 to 9:00 week nights; 3:00 to 5:00 Sundays.

A New Year's call on the Commanding General is traditional. You will receive an invitation in Berlin.

On leaving the station a farewell or PPC (Pour Prendre Conge) call is in order.

PPC calls should be made on your husband's Commanding Officer and others whom you hold in friendship and respect. These calls should take place two or three days before leaving a post for a new station. Write PPC in ink in the lower left hand corner of the card and proceed as above. A PPC card may be posted on a bulletin board at the Club or Headquarters, but this does not take the place of a call on the commander and other friends.



## CALLING CARDS

Calling cards are a necessary part of an Army couple's equipment. They are used not only for social calls but for invitations and gift enclosures as well. They are preferably engraved, possibly embossed, but never printed. Initials are never used.

### TYPES

1. Lady's card:       Mrs. John Henry Smith  
                              (never Mrs. Mary Lou Smith)
  
2. Officer's card:    Captain John Henry Smith  
  United States Army  
  
  -or-  
  
  John Henry Smith  
  Captain  
  United States Army
  
3. Joint cards:        Captain and Mrs. John Henry Smith

The Officer's and the lady's cards are absolutely necessary. Joint cards are useful on many occasions. Foldover cards and informals are good for invitations, notes, etc., but are never used for calling. For a reasonable time after promotion, it is acceptable to draw a line through the former rank and write the new rank above.

The general procedure in using Calling Cards is as follows:

1. Ladies call only on ladies and leave one card for each adult lady of the household.
2. Officers call on both ladies and gentlemen and leave a card for each, BUT NEVER MORE THAN THREE OF EACH TYPE CARD.

3. Calling on a couple:

1 Lady's card	-or-	1 Joint card
2 Officer's cards		1 Officer's card

4. Calling on a couple plus a lady guest:

2 Lady's cards	-or-	2 Joint cards
3 Officer's cards		1 Officer's card

## DRESS REQUIREMENTS

The following terms are used to describe the desired dress for the various social activities in Berlin:

### FORMAL

Officers: Blue or White Mess  
Army Blue or White uniform with bow tie

Civilians: Tuxedo (also for officers when stipulated in the invitation).

Ladies: Evening gown, long or short, dinner gown.

### INFORMAL

Officers: Business suit. Green or Tropical Worsted uniform with blouse is acceptable, but a business suit is preferable unless the uniform is prescribed. Sport Coat with shirt and tie with trousers of matching or contrasting colors may be worn if the function starts before 1800 hours. For those functions commencing after 1800 hours, the business suit is in order. If the event includes a dinner or buffet a business suit is a must.

Civilians: Same as above.

Ladies: Cocktail or dinner dress.

## CASUAL OR SPORTS CLOTHES

Officers: Sport Coat, shirt and tie, with trousers of a matching or contrasting color. A long or short sleeved shirt with tie is acceptable.

Civilians: Same as above.

Ladies: Simple dress (e.g., shirtwaist) of broadcloth, cotton or silk.

NOTE: Slacks, sport shirts, capri pants, pedal pushers, Bermuda shorts, and other sports attire are to be worn only for golf, gardening, tennis, bicycling, etc., and are not acceptable attire for social activities unless the hostess specifically states as much in her invitation.

## DRESS FOR LADIES

As a general rule: dress down before sunset; dress up after.

Any time: No shorts or slacks to the PX, Commissary or downtown; no curlers in public.

Coffees: Tailored clothes, no hat necessary.

Teas: A formal tea calls for a dressy dress or suit, hat and gloves. An informal tea calls for an afternoon dress, hat and gloves.

Luncheons: A pretty hat, gloves and a silken dress or smartly elegant suit are a must for formal luncheon attire.

The silken dress is a manner of speaking - any "dressy" dress of street length in linen, wool or pretty cotton. Sunback or strapless dresses are not suitable for a formal luncheon. Street length linens, cool cottons, wool dresses or suits are the choice for an informal luncheon, with the weather playing an important role in your choice.

Brunch:

If you are going to a brunch after church on Sunday, wear your church-going clothes. If the brunch is given after some kind of sport, informal attire is your choice. If the brunch is given at the Club or in a home as a wives get-together, clothes suitable for the season and the place are the guide.

Buffets:

Buffets, being informal, do not require being "dressed to the teeth". Very often the hostess will mention the dress when she extends the invitation so if she says sport shirts for men, do not wear a cocktail dress. Dress according to the time of day, the degree of informality, the season and what comes next. A buffet may precede attendance at a formal dance, so govern yourself accordingly.

Cocktail  
Parties:

Cocktail dresses range from simple to elaborate and extreme. You will never be wrong if you favour the plain rather than the overdressed.

Dinners:

For formal dinners, dinner dresses-or evening dresses in rich fabrics are appropriate. A dinner dress, long or short, may be sleeveless with a high neckline or

sleeved and with a scooped-out neck. Evening gloves and bag, but never hat, complete the costume. At an informal dinner, unless the hostess has specified "sport shirt", you should wear a dressy dress and your husband should wear a business suit.

Impromptu Parties:

Friends usually invite friends to these parties so it is very easy to find out what everyone will be wearing. If you happen to be included in an impromptu party and do not know what to wear you should ask the hostess what will be suitable. If you do not want to ask, a simple shirtwaist dress will see you through most of the time.

GLOVES

Gloves are appropriate at any time of the day or evening. A lady does not remove her gloves when shaking hands, but never fails to remove them when smoking, eating or drinking. A good rule to remember on gloves: Always neither or both.

Certain indoor occasions demand that gloves be worn. Keep gloves on at a formal reception or ball, in a receiving line, during church services (except when receiving communion).

At a luncheon or cocktail party, you should arrive with both gloves on. Greet the host or hostess, and then remove your gloves.

In a restaurant, gloves stay on until you are seated, then they are placed in your lap under the napkin. When you are ready to leave put on your gloves before rising from the table. If you leave the table to go to the powder room, fold gloves and put them in your purse or leave gloves at the table.

It is quite proper for a woman to shake hands while wearing gloves. Never apologize for your gloves -- the apology is given by a man who is caught unaware by an introduction before he has removed his right hand glove. Men are expected to take off their gloves before shaking hands.

Gloves that reach above the elbow are reserved for formal evening wear. Wrist length gloves are appropriate for day time or casual wear, although fine kid shorties may be worn on semi-formal occasions.

If you are going through a receiving line it is correct to leave gloves on even if ranking lady does not wear gloves.

The problem of gloves is ever with us and sometimes it can be confusing. It is always proper to go through a receiving line wearing your gloves. If you see your hostess without gloves, remember she may be treating this as if she were in her own home so she is correct in not wearing gloves. If you are standing in the receiving line with your hostess and she is not wearing gloves you may remove your gloves. Nothing looks more awkward than someone trying to get gloves off as she approaches a receiving line, so leave them on. After you get through the line remove your gloves. (It should be noted that German nationals, both men and women, always remove gloves before going through a receiving line; other countries, other customs.)

## RECEPTIONS

Receptions are given in the Army from time to time to honor distinguished guests and visitors, to greet large numbers of people, and for various other reasons; you are not expected to repay these official functions.

### THE RECEIVING LINE

#### Formation

Aide-de-Camp where appropriate

The host

The hosts wife

The guest of honor

(his wife if present)

Others to be included, according to rank, gentlemen first.

Women's Club lines: President, Honorary President, guest of honor, other officers.

#### Going Through the Line

The wife precedes her husband.

Your husband gives your last name (i.e. Mrs. Smith, Captain Smith) to the aide who will introduce you to the first person in line.

Shake hands, gently but firmly, with each person in the line.

A mere "how do you do, Colonel Jones", with a smile, is sufficient. DO correct your name (Mrs. Smith, not Jane Smith) if it has become garbled in repeating.

If a guest ahead of you delays your progress, do not turn away from the person you have just met. Continue with casual chatting until



the line moves and you may be introduced to the next person in the receiving line. Pass on to chat with friends and partake of refreshments.

#### DO'S AND DON'TS.

DO be prompt. It is imperative. Cars parked, coats hung, gloves on, and in line as the clock strikes.

DO return to chat with hosts and guest of honor at small private parties after the line has broken up.

DON'T shake hands with the aide who presents you.

DON'T have a cigarette or a drink in your hand.

DON'T hold up a line by talking too long with those in line.

DON'T go back through the line to say goodbye (at small receptions it is polite to say goodbye after the receiving line is over).

## ENTERTAINING

### Home Entertainment

Alcoholic beverages: If you do not care for alcoholic beverages you do not need to serve them, though you may wish to have them on hand for those who do -- just as they can usually serve you something nonalcoholic in their homes if you do not care for a cocktail.

Obligations: In accepting invitations, one acquires obligations. It is not necessary to repay a dinner with a dinner, a luncheon with a luncheon, etc. Your manner of entertainment should fit your budget and circumstances. As a junior officer, a cocktail party may repay all your obligations for a year. Or, you may prefer to have small groups for hamburgers or barbecue. Official dinners, receptions, etc., do not entail a return obligation.

Pouring: Informal coffees and teas are excellent ways of extending your hospitality. A hostess never pours. Never ask the guest of honor to pour, although it is an honor to be asked to pour as one of the guests. Senior officers' wives should be asked to pour first at unit or section affairs. At an informal neighborhood gathering, you may like to ask a special friend to pour for you.

Precedence: A recent custom, although not universal, is that coffee takes precedence over tea. Therefore, the first senior lady would pour coffee, the next tea.

Serving guests: It is a courtesy to ask the Commanding Officer and his wife to precede other guests through the line at a buffet supper, UNLESS there are guests of honor.

Thank you notes: A note or a telephone call the "next day", saying what a good time you had, is a cordial gesture. A note is preferable, as your hostess is probably busy with after-the-party chores and may not have time for answering the phone, but a phone call is the natural thing to do when you have been entertained by intimate friends at a small affair.

Seating guests: It is the prerogative of a hostess to seat guests in whatever manner she chooses. If she wishes to seat them according to rank, there are reference diagrams following in this booklet. It is well to try to avoid seating married couples together in order to promote acquaintance and conversation.

#### WHO WILL BE YOUR DINNER PARTNER?

Your dinner partner for a formal dinner will be arranged for you by the hostess. At a very formal dinner, a seating chart may be placed near the door so that both you and your husband will know where to sit and who your dinner partner is. A Ladies' dinner partner will be on her left. Her dinner partner will escort her to the table. Conversation is rarely general at a formal dinner. Converse with your dinner partner, and from time to time turn to chat with the man on your right. There is one exception to the dinner partner rule. Where there is a male guest of honor, he is always seated at the hostess' right. He is, however, her dinner partner. Consequently, as the guest of honor escorts the hostess to the table, the gentleman to the hostess' left must in turn escort the lady to the guest of honor's right. Everyone else at the table follows the general rule.

## PARADES AND CEREMONIES

A service wife should know how to honor her country's flag.

### Retreat or Reveille

If you can hear the music or see the flag:

In a car: Stop, get out, stand facing the flag.

Walking: Stop, face the flag, stand quietly until the music has stopped.

A woman may properly salute the flag with her right hand over her heart. It is also correct to simply stand, erect and tall.

Children are never too young to learn to honor their country's flag. Teach them early to show proper respect for it, whether it be dismounting from a vehicle and standing at attention at Retreat, or being at their best behavior at a parade.

Civilian house guests will also want to properly salute the flag. A man in civilian attire removes his hat, stands at attention with his hand over his heart. A lady never removes her hat - it is considered part of her costume.

### Parades

Adjutant's call has sounded. The parade has begun. You are in your seat, always with hat and gloves for this ceremonial occasion. The general rules are:

1. Stand when "Ruffles and Flourishes" and the "General's March" are heard.

2. Stand for "To the Colors".
3. Stand when the National Anthem is played.
4. Stand, too, as a courtesy, when a foreign national anthem is played.
5. Stand when the American flag goes by.

Do not smoke or continue your conversation as the colors pass. In fact, do not smoke at all during the parade.

## COMMUNITY SERVICE

Community service is a tradition in the Army. It is what makes life meaningful and helps give us and our children many advantages. Each person should give of their time and talents as much as possible.

Among the community activities in Berlin are:

- German-American Womens Club
- Thrift Shop
- Parent Teachers' Association
- Boy Scouts, Girl Scouts, Cubs and Brownies
- Chapel and Sunday School
- Protestant Men of the Chapel
- Protestant Women of the Chapel
- Annual German American Volksfest
- Annual 49er Party
- Red Cross Volunteer Service
- American Women's Club of Berlin
- American Youth Activities
- American Theater Group

All of the above listed activities directly or indirectly benefit you and your community. They need your active participation.

The American Women's Club of Berlin offers many activities designed to meet cultural, creative, physical and social needs. The success of these activities is related directly to the degree of participation by you, the member. Membership is open to any American woman or women married to an American who resides in Berlin.

## SERVICE COURTESIES

Courtesies are extended to Senior Officers and their wives as they are in civilian life to older people and distinguished guests. While there is no rank as such among wives, official courtesy is extended to them because of the position their husband holds. Protocol dictates that at all OFFICIAL dinners wives are seated in respective seating order of their husband's rank.

A younger woman usually rises when an older woman enters the room, rises when introduced, lets her precede her through a door, offers her a seat, etc. However, at a large gathering, it would cause confusion if an entire room of younger women should rise as a body, like school children rising on the teacher's entrance. Use your own good sense and taste in evaluating such situations, be polite and gracious always, but be sure SOMEONE gets up to greet the older woman and offer her a seat.

The seasoned wife takes her husband's rank and position in her stride. She is proud of him, but never noticeably so. She never forgets that it is HIS position and that the rank belongs to HIM. A gracious and tactful wife is never rank-conscious. "Wear Your Husband's Rank Proudly in Your Heart, but Never on Your Shoulder". Likewise, she speaks of him as Bob or Jim - not as "the major" or "the colonel"; after all, there are a few others of these ranks in the Army. When you want to be formal say "my husband".

An official invitation is to be considered as a "command performance" and is to be complied with unless the excuse would be acceptable for absence from regular duty.

If you attend any party where a head table is involved, do not sit at your table until those at the head table are seated.

Do not eat until those at the head table have started to eat.

You stand for a toast to the President of the United States. You remain seated if the toast is to the ladies and you do not drink for that toast. It is an insult to refuse to toast when it is proposed. If you do not drink, you can go through the motions as a courtesy. Women do not stand for applause given to men, nor do they stand when men give standing ovations to fellow officers.

It is not necessary to wait for the senior officer to start dancing before you dance. He may not feel like dancing that night. A junior officer should not feel obligated to dance with senior officers' wives. It is the courteous thing to do but it is not a "must". An officer should ask every lady in his immediate party to dance, but if a lady refuses the invitation he should not be offended. Some women are not good dancers, do not like to dance to too fast a tempo, have tired feet or have some other reason. She will appreciate the invitation and will look forward to the next party when she is in a better mood for dancing.

Under normal circumstances you do not leave a party until the senior officer present has gone. If the formal part of the party is over and the senior officer announces this fact you may leave the party. Once again, it would be wise to make sure this is permissible. Of course, if you have a child who is ill or a train to catch you have a good reason for leaving a party early. Say good night to the senior officer and his wife and give your reason for leaving early.

"Your conduct, appearance and manners are part of the impression your husband makes. This can influence what his superiors think of him and may often determine the kind of duty he is



given. By reflecting the traditions and customs of the Army, you add to his reputation as an officer with high standards. Remember that while a wife is only a partial contributor toward her husband's success, she can actually be the principal cause of his failure."



