



Ten Marines Selected as Food Service Specialists of the Year
Awards Program Winners Receive Training from Top Chefs

ARLINGTON, Va. –A good meal is key to keeping service members healthy and their morale high, whether they are assigned to duty on a U.S. base, or in a combat zone. The Marine Corps puts a great deal of effort into feeding its active duty Marines and Sailors, and 10 Marines who excel in this work were recently honored with a week-long training session with notable chefs.

The Marines were winners in the annual Major General W.P.T. Memorial Awards Program for Food Service Excellence. As a result, they attended classes by chefs at the Culinary Institute of America (CIA) on its Greystone Campus located in Napa Valley, along with 22 awardees from other Services.

Winners were selected from a group of Food Service Marines from across the Marine Corps who were nominated by their Command. Nominees were to have demonstrated leadership and culinary expertise among other criteria. Categories were designated for different ranks and active and reserve statuses.

A board composed of Senior Enlisted Leaders, civilians and the Director of the Corps' Food Service Program selected final winners who participated, in coordination with the event's main sponsor, the National Restaurant Association.

Corporal Dijon Terry, Marine Aid to Brigadier General Robert F. Castellvi, Commanding General of Marine Corps Installations East, said he "has already begun incorporating some of the information I learned into tasks such as catering dinner receptions for my Command and even "cooking at home with my wife."

LtCol Koehler, Director of the Marines' Food Service and Subsistence Program had high praises for the program. "Working in mess halls, we cook hundreds of batches, hundreds of steaks, hundreds of everything," he said. "But there's so much more to this industry than just institutionalized cooking. We're hoping that not only will this inspire [the awardees] to continue with their culinary skills, but also to take some of that passion back to wherever they're stationed and inspire others."

The curriculum included material that was geared toward military food specialists. For example, one course titled 'Utilization & the Art of Leftover UGR Lunch/Dinner Challenge' encouraged them to innovate with a limited set of food items, a situation encountered often on deployment. Participants used Unitized Group Rations (UGRs), bundles of ingredients used by cooks in the field to prepare 'preplanned' meals to create new, satisfying dishes. LtCol Kohler noted that being able to "create variety in the field" through such methods contributes to overall service member morale.

For more information about the awards and the winners' achievements, please contact the Public Affairs Officer, Marine Corps Installations Command, Rex Runyon (rex.runyon@usmc.mil).

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