

# Army is Conquering Goals to Modernize Its Food Service

**Lt. Col. Byron Coleman, USA, Director, Joint Culinary Center of Excellence and the Army Food Service Program**



Coleman

**Government Food Service:** *The JCCoE held a Partnership Day in September 2017. Please tell us what it is, how it went and about any plans for one in 2018?*

**Lt. Col. Byron T. Coleman:** In September 2017, JCCoE hosted a successful partnership day with 55 industry and strategic members attending and providing positive feedback and reviews. All partners agreed the event and program is essential in forging and reinforcing relationships to ensure the Department of Defense subsistence requirements are met with the right products and capabilities. The JCCoE will host the 17th annual session at a date to be determined in 2018.

**Government Food Service:** *JCCoE also hosts the Joint Services Operational Rations Forum each year. Please tell us about this year's discussions, including any changes in combat field feeding programs, rations and other topics.*

**Coleman:** JCCoE hosted the Joint Service Operations Rations Forum Feb. 8. Discussions and objectives during the government-only meeting covered information and decisions affecting the Joint Services Combat Ration Program. The meeting was attended by military services food program leads: the Natick Combat Rations Directorate, Massachusetts; Defense Logistics Agency – Troop Support, Military Rations, Philadelphia; and a number of auxiliary organizations that impacted and provided value to the deliberations. All areas from service need, research and development and acquisition were addressed.

**Government Food Service:** *Tell us about the Army's 92G credentialing program with the American Culinary Federation and National Restaurant Association. How has it changed since it began in 2009? Is participation growing? Are there any plans to open participation to the other services?*

**Coleman:** The Army 92G, food service specialist, military occupation series credentialing program has grown sig-

nificantly since 2009 with more than 13 installations participating. Currently, the program is being restructured to meet needs of the soldiers based on operations tempo. The American Culinary Federation recently introduced the possibility of a 1,000-hour credentialing program that may better suit the culinarians of the Army food service community. We will assess this option further once the restructuring of our current program is complete. This is an Army-funded program and not open to other military services.

**Government Food Service:** *Please also discuss JCCoE's cooperation with other organizations.*

**Coleman:** The JCCoE Concepts, System and Policy Division works hand-in-hand with Defense Logistics Agency – Troop Support (DLA-TS), Air Force, Navy, Marine Corps, American Culinary Federation, National Restaurant Association, U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), U.S. Department of Commerce, Defense Contract Management Agency and numerous commercial companies to ensure the highest quality and service that we can afford is provided to the warfighter.

The Quality Assurance Division (QUAD) recognizes the important and far-reaching complexities of all the intricacies of being a part of one of the world's most complex, but best-run international food service programs with over \$5 billion of sales.

The Army Food Program touches everybody in the food world from farm to fork, wholesale and retail, and provider to supplier. QUAD's objective is to focus on combat field feeding and provide quality input into all other aspects of the program. The list of supporting organizations and partners is vast and grows weekly.

Primary partners include: DLA-TS, whose contract managers establish prime vendor and manufacturing relationship



U.S. Army Sgt. James Munar, a culinary specialist with the 605th Transportation Detachment, 8th Special Troops Battalion, 8th Theater Sustainment Command, helps prepare lunch with his soldiers on board the Logistic Support Vessel the CW3 Harold A. Clinger (LSV-2) 40-miles south of Joint Base Pearl Harbor-Hickam, Hawaii. (Photo by Staff Sgt. Melissa Parrish, U.S. Army Pacific Public Affairs Office.)



U.S. Army Pfc. Jad King assigned to HHB, DIVARTY prepares croutons from scratch to be used for salads at the Culinary Arts Training Facility on Feb. 23, 2018. King has been a culinary specialist for two years in the Army. (Photo by Sgt. Gin-Sophie De Bellotte, USA, 82nd Airborne Division.)

for our needs, and the U.S. Army Natick staff, which is the research and development arm of combat rations.

Other partners include policy developing organizations like the

USDA and DoD Food and Nutrition Committee; safe-food-practice supporters like the Public Health Command; leadership components from the Army G4 Pentagon; and a robust food industry of manufacturers and suppliers.

**Government Food Service:** Explain JCCoE's support to contingency operations and contribution to subsistence in areas of responsibility.

**Coleman:** The Concept Systems and Policy division (CSPD) supports all current areas of responsibility via teleconferences, audits, technical panels and Food Service Management Board attendance. CSPD controls the contingency menus on behalf of JCCoE and Department of the Army G4. This includes working with Army Central Command, DLA-TS and subsistence prime vendors for catalog maintenance, Army Buyer's Guide compliance to standard and supply chain fitness.

**Government Food Service:** Discuss progress the Army is making with plans to update the Automated Food Management System (AFMIS) to process Subsistence in Kind (SIK) and Non-SIK diners. Did the credit card pilot begin in 2017 and is implementation underway?

**Coleman:** Army released two pilot programs in fiscal year 2017. The first was in conjunction with Department of the Army G1 and G4 sections to place the meal entitlement code on the common access card. This will allow for SIK and non-SIK diners to be recognized. There are two testing locations: Fort Gordon, Georgia, and Joint Base Myer-Henderson Hall, Virginia. The plan for Army-wide implementation is being developed. The second pilot program uses debit and credit card machines for payment in the

dining facilities. The testing location is Kaiserslautern, Germany. The implementation for Army-wide release is currently under development.

**Government Food Service:** The Army began using the military occupational specialty code culinary specialist in 2016, replacing the former food service personnel term. A new Army Garrison Culinary Uniform (AGCU) was also approved and was to be rolled out by the end of fiscal 2017. Please update us on whether this was completed and how it is being received.

**Coleman:** The new Garrison Food Service Uniform (GFSU) was released in January 2016. The uniform release is still following the rollout plan, and all continental U.S. installation fielding will be completed by end of fourth quarter 2018. The original schedule was for completion in fiscal year 2018. There were some production issues early on but these have been resolved and have not delayed release. The Army food service community is extremely pleased with the update to the food service uniform. It has provided a significant increase in morale.

**Government Food Service:** The Army's Food Management Assistance Team (FMAT) contributes to maintaining and improving the quality and efficiency of the Army Food Program. It was scheduled to visit 29 installations in 2017. Please update us on this program and its contribution.

**Coleman:** The FMAT visited 24 installations during fiscal year 2017 (three overseas and 21 stateside). Overall evaluation results were: three, Commendable; 11, Excellent; four, Success; and six, Needs Improvement. FMAT provided additional assistance to those installations that received needs improvement.

During FMAT visits, the team provided training on Over the Counter Channel Application Net, Account Management, Inventory Management, IMT Menu Standards, implementation of Go for Green (G4G 2.0) and Contract-

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ing Officer Representative (COR) surveillance training in Army Food Information System (AFMIS).

FMAT is currently updating the evaluation checklist to include Department of the Army G-4 All Army Activities messages and regulatory changes/updates.

FMAT is scheduled to evaluate 25 installations and conduct two Staff Assistance Visits (SAVs) in fiscal year 2018. FMAT is participating in a working group with the Army Sustainment Command food service office to create a checklist to evaluate Subsistence Supply Management operations across the Army. This effort will promote Class 1 waste management and increase accountability.

**Government Food Service:** Please update us on JCCoE's Facilities and Equipment Division and any construction or renovation projects it has been involved in since last year's Commander's Update.

**Coleman:** During 2017, three Major Construction Army (MCA) project dining facilities (DFACs) were completed. Rhine Ordnance Barracks located in Kaiserslautern Military Community, Germany, just opened its DFAC, capable of preparing and serving 1,300 dinners in 90 minutes.

Fort Gordon, Georgia, opened its DFAC with a capacity to serve 800 and Presidio, Monterey, California, will be completing its project in January 2019 for another 1,300 capacity DFAC. Each of these DFACs has a restaurant-like atmosphere with state-of-the-art food service equipment that supports the best servicemen and women in the world.

**Government Food Service:** Update us on the Army Center of Excellence Subsistence, Operations Directorate, (ACES OD) plans to modernize its food program with campus-style feeding that supplements the traditional dining facilities with kiosks, retail stores and G-stores. The Army began working with a consultant to decide how to proceed with its food program modernization plans under a contract that began Nov. 1, 2015. Who is the consultant the Army selected and how long is the contract for?

**Coleman:** The consultant contract

referenced expired in September 2016, at which time we received all of our deliverables. This was the preliminary step needed to begin the Army Food Service Modernization program. Since then we have begun implementation of The Culinary OutPost Food Truck and purchasing of kiosk equipment for future implementation. We are still in the pilot phase and have not released any solicitations at this time.

**Government Food Service:** Please update us on the Army food truck pilot program. What is being learned about the equipment, menu and viability? What is next for the program?

**Coleman:** We are still in Phase I of the modernization program and The Culinary OutPost Food Truck has been fielded to two locations at this time (Fort Stewart, Georgia, and Fort Carson, Colorado). The feedback we are receiving is extremely favorable. We have discovered the need for some minor equipment modifications to the trucks for efficiency and are making these changes as they are identified. The menus are well received and are under constant review for nutritional value, quality and palatability. We are reviewing the remaining installations in Phase I and beginning Phase II for future truck placement. At this point funding is a factor that Army G4 Headquarters is focused on to continue forward movement in this program.

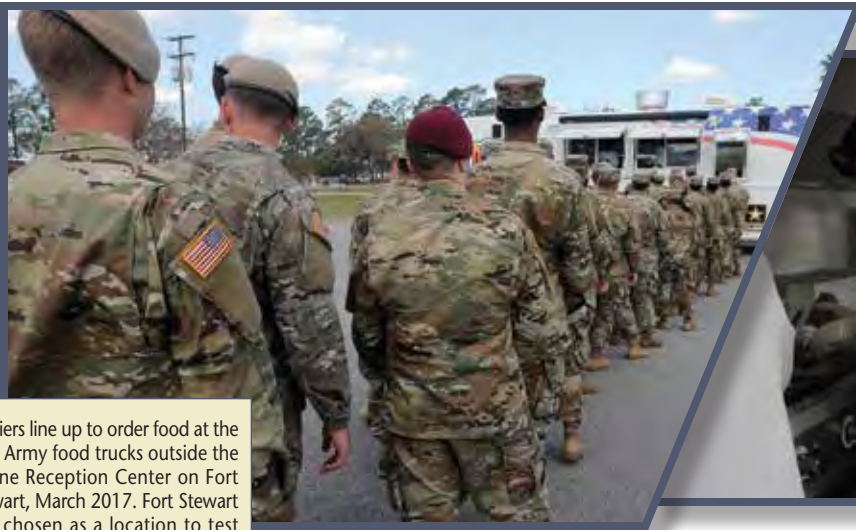
**Government Food Service:** The Army is working with Natick on a replacement for Mobile Kitchen Trailer (MKT). Please update us on this.

**Coleman:** The Army is replacing the Mobile Kitchen Trailer fielded in 1975 with the Battle Field Kitchen (BK). The Battle will provide better meal quality, enhanced versatility and a healthier operator environment through the use of new thermostatically controlled, modular appliances. These energy-efficient, quiet appliances will feature closed combustion to vent burner exhaust from the kitchen.

Culinary Specialist Sergeant 1st Class Michael Bogle, an enlisted aide with 10th Mountain Division, at Fort Drum, N.Y., prepares his cold plate dessert during the 42nd Annual Military Culinary Arts Competition and Training Event, held at Fort Lee, Va., last year. (Photo Credit: Visual Information Specialist Stefanie Antosh, USA.)



U.S. Army Sgt. James Munar, a culinary specialist with the 605th Transportation Detachment, 8th Special Troops Battalion, 8th Theater Sustainment Command, replenishes the bread supply during lunch on board the Logistic Support Vessel the CW3 Harold A. Clinger (LSV-2), 40-miles south of Joint Base Pearl Harbor-Hickam, Hawaii. (Photo by Staff Sgt. Melissa Parrish, U.S. Army Pacific Public Affairs Office.)



Soldiers line up to order food at the new Army food trucks outside the Marne Reception Center on Fort Stewart, March 2017. Fort Stewart was chosen as a location to test the brand new food truck program before it is spread out across the whole Army. (Photo by Sgt. 1st Class Ben K. Navratil, USA.)

en. The man-portable, modular appliances will also be plug-and-play providing the capability to interchange the appliance from once system to another.

**Government Food Service:** *JCCoE contributes to and cooperates with agencies on efforts to improve health, performance and well-being. Are there any updates to nutritional programs like Go for Green or the Initial Military Training menu? Are any new programs being planned? Can you tell us about any progress with work with the U.S. Army Special Operations Command (USASOC) on the Tactical Human Optimization, Rapid Rehabilitation and Reconditioning (THOR3) program?*

**Coleman:** The Army Food Program employs the guidance provided by Army Regulation 40-25, Nutrition and Menu Standards for Human Performance Optimization. The program is also supported by the Human Performance Readiness Center, the Surgeon General and Department of Defense Nutrition Committees. All programs, including the Soldier Fueling Initiative for Initial Military Training, Go for Green 2.0, THOR3 and the Performance Triad, have a sense of continuous improvement aimed at improving diner nutrition through program, products and education. Evaluation tools used by the JCCoE Food Management Assistance Teams, the Quality Assurance Division and Military Nutrition Evaluation and Assessment Tool (mNEAT) continue to find ways for program enhancements. Leadership involvement at the Healthy Army Communities board level continues to drive positive goals for improvements in health, performance and well-being. JCCoE also welcomes the addition of dietary staff at DLA, and looks forward to working with them to continue our goals.

**Government Food Service:** *How is the Knowledge Portal progressing? Can you tell us about response, utilization and any improvements, modifications or revisions?*

**Coleman:** The Knowledge Portal is updated as often



Culinary specialists work together in a food truck at Fort Stewart, Ga., last March, to serve more than a hundred soldiers outside the Marne Reception Center. The soldiers in this truck were serving burgers and rice bowls, made to order, along with sides, salads and drinks. The Army food truck program is part of a larger feeding concept meant to improve food quality and choices for soldiers across the entire Army. (Photo by Sgt. 1st Class Ben K. Navratil, USA.)

as possible. We have multiple avenues to reach the community and the portal is one of these. We have a large number of Blackboard training classes that can be accessed via the portal or our web page. The majority of our audience utilizes the web page for quick access and resources. The portal assists us in supporting larger documents that need to be accessed via Common Access Card, and are useful tools for the food service community.

**Government Food Service:** *The Military Culinary Training Event is an annual success. Tell us about 2017, plans for 2018 and the contribution it makes to improve culinary performance and skills.*

**Coleman:** The 42nd Annual Joint Culinary Training Exercise (JCTE), formally known as the Military Culinary Arts Competitive Training Event (MCACTE), was held March 3 to 10, 2017, at Fort Lee, Virginia, with six of the seven days conducted for public viewing in the new site, the MacLaughlin Fitness Center. The event focused on training readiness and professional development of military culinarians. The United States Army Quartermaster School and the Joint Culinary Center of Excellence hosted 257 competitors and 27 teams representing all five services of the U.S. Armed Forces to include Allied members from France, Germany and The United Kingdom. There were a total of 500 competitive entries, which were all judged using American Culinary Federation (ACF) standards. All competitors earned ACF certificates of participation, and those who scored in the 70-100 point range earned ACF competition medals ranging from bronze to gold.

The event started March 3, 2017, with 20 chefs vying for the title of Armed Forces Chef of the Year. Key events included the Student Team Skills event, Team Buffet Tables, Student Chef of the Year, Nutrition Hot Food Challenge, Army Enlisted Aide of the Year, Live Hot Food Cooking and Pastry events, and the Military Hot Food Kitchen

Competition.

Most notable was the overwhelming success of the new location at the MacLaughlin Fitness Center (MFC). This was the first year that the event was held in the MFC. While some infrastructure enhancements had to be made, the new location proved to be more than adequate and will be the enduring home of the JCTE for years to come. This year's JCTE was held March 8 to 16.

**Government Food Service:** *What plans does the Army have for the Connelly awards in 2018? When are evaluations scheduled and when will winners be announced? Bases were evaluated last year and awards presented in a joint event at the National Restaurant Association (NRA) in Chicago. Tell us about how that went and plans for this year.*

**Coleman:** During fiscal year 2018, the Philip A. Connelly evaluators will use a new and updated evaluation checklist for both garrison and field feeding evaluations. The new checklists are now in line with the all of the Army Food Service initiatives and the Army Modernization transformation. Both checklists contain 10 major categories, with specific subsections to assist evaluators in all phases of the competition. Focus areas are training, readiness and innovation. Also new for 2018, we will field a garrison inspection team and a field feeding inspection team along with a Reserve and National Guard field feeding team. Evaluations began Jan. 23 and will continue to April 5. Winners will be announced by April 15.

On May 19, 2017, the Joint Culinary Center of Excellence, in conjunction with the National Restaurant Association, held the annual joint services award ceremony. The NRA-sponsored event took place in Chicago, Illinois, and capstoned with selected service members attending advanced culinary training at Kendall College. The training

received at Kendall was rigorous and challenging, but provided our culinarians an opportunity to understand

current industry practices. This training equated to all current trends and successful practices top restaurants are using. The military benefitted from this partnership by exposing our junior leaders to better directions and critical thinking. This event provided our culinarians the tools required to have a greater impact across multiple formations affecting the morale of our units.

For 2018, we plan to acknowledge the 50th Anniversary of the Philip A. Connelly Awards Program. Students will again participate in training at Kendall College.

**Government Food Service:** *The culinary training program during the NRA evolved last year with a three-day program at Kendall College that included a day on the NRA exhibit floor. Is there anything you can tell us about response from participants and the value to Army culinary specialists? Are any changes planned for this year?*

**Coleman:** Feedback from the participants was phenomenal. The students truly enjoyed having the opportunity to train with their sister services and learn from experts in the commercial food service world. The best part is that they get to train with industry experts, and then go back to home station and demonstrate what they have learned, as well as pass along their new found knowledge to their co-workers to help them become better culinarians. No word from NRA concerning any changes this year.

**Government Food Service:** *Has the Army food service program been influenced by or implemented any of the dining facility design ideas presented during the three-day NRA training program in its food service operations?*

**Coleman:** Much of what the Army Modernization plan focuses on is ideas and strategies from the commercial world to enhance Army feeding. With the new evaluation checklists we should start seeing more benefit and functionality directly learned for such exposure in Army dining facilities in the very near future. —GFS

Soldiers order the first official meals served out the Fort Carson food truck following a grand opening ceremony outside the Mountain Post Soldier Center Sept. 6, 2017. The food truck is part of an Army pilot program. Culinary specialists will serve breakfast and lunch from the truck at regular dining facility rates. All diners are welcome at the food truck, which accepts soldier meal cards and cash. (Photo by Scott Prater, Fort Carson public affairs.)

Fort Carson culinary specialists work through customer food orders inside a 24-foot food truck during a training day for staff last August, in preparation for its grand opening on Sept. 6, 2017. (Photo by Scott Prater, Fort Carson public affairs.)

