

Europe's best culinary specialists and dining facilities honored at 42nd annual Connelly Awards presentation

By David Melancon

U.S. Army Europe Public Affairs Office

HEIDELBERG, Germany -- U.S. Army Europe and the Installation Management Command-Europe honored their best food service specialists and dining facilities at the USAREUR and IMCOM-E level during the 42nd annual Phillip A. Connelly Awards ceremony at Patrick Henry Village here, Oct. 29.



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Master Sgt. Alice Torres, U.S. Army Europe logistics division, explains Army award administrative details to Sgt. Jesse Parker, Headquarters and Headquarters Company USAREUR, and Spc. Adrianna A. Cooper, Headquarters and Headquarters Detachment, 70th Engineer Battalion, 170th Infantry Brigade. Parker was named the Culinary Warrior Noncommissioned Officer of the Year and Cooper captured Culinary Warrior of the Year honors, at the 42nd annual Phillip A. Connelly Food Service Awards. The awards were presented in Heidelberg, Germany, Oct. 29.

Sgt. Jesse Parker, Headquarters and Headquarters Company USAREUR, was named the Culinary Warrior Noncommissioned Officer of the Year and Spc. Adrianna A. Cooper, Headquarters and Headquarters Detachment, 70th Engineer Battalion, 170th Infantry Brigade, captured Culinary Warrior of the Year honors.

In addition to receiving a trophy, the Soldiers also earned the Army Commendation Medal.

Sgt. Edwin Lozano, 630th Military Police Company, 16th Sustainment Brigade, and Spc. Matthew D. Hendriks, Headquarters and Headquarters Detachment, 28th Transportation Battalion, earned runner-up honors and the Army Achievement Medal for their efforts.

“This award means a lot (to me), said Cooper, a 10-year veteran of Army food service. “I studied a lot, and this feels good.”

Parker, food service NCO and enlisted aide for USAREUR commander Gen. Carter Ham, said earning the title took hard work, dedication, commitment and “a passion for food service.”

“Competitions like this let (food service Soldiers) really get out there and compete and show exactly what they know and their skills,” he said.

The Connelly awards have been around for more than 40 years, and this year marks 17 years for the USAREUR Food Service Soldier and NCO of the year competition. The Soldiers who earned this year's honors had to demonstrate their basic Soldier skills, military bearing and skills as food service specialists before a panel of senior food service NCOs and warrant officers, explained Col. Michael Boone, chief of sustainment operations in the USAREUR logistics division.

“It is a tough, tough task,” he said. “I commend anyone who stands up to the pressure and comes out on top. They show the difference between an apprentice and a chef.”

The Phillip A. Connelly Awards Program, known as the gold standard for Army culinary competitions, was developed to improve skills and provide a venue to recognize exceptional service provided by food service professionals.

Connelly program judges evaluated dining facilities throughout Europe on the preparation and quality of their food and their customer approval ratings.

USAREUR and IMCOM's best small garrison dining facilities are the U.S. Army Garrison Hohenfels dining facility. The Neivis Webb dining facility, USAG Bamberg, was named as runner-up.

The large garrison facility winner is the South of the Alps dining facility, USAG Vicenza, Italy, and the Command Sgt. Maj. Lawrence T. Hickey dining facility, USAG Grafenwoehr, is runner-up.

Col. Brian T. Boyle, IMCOM-E deputy regional director, called the awards one of the most prestigious recognition programs in the Army. “Under this program, thousands of Army cooks have been recognized for their skills and professionalism. They feed and nourish our most important asset ... the individual Soldier.”

The individual and dining facility winners are now competing in the Department of the Army-level competition. The Army's best of the best will be announced in January.



2009: THE YEAR OF THE NCO

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