

16th Eng Bn competes for Connelly



Pfc. Adam T. Putnam, 16th Engineer Battalion, slices ham in preparation for the lunchtime salad bar.

Story and photos by
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GIESSEN, Germany- One by one soldiers and civilians follow their noses toward the delicious smells wafting out of the 16th Engineer Battalion Dining Facility. They filter in, eager to eat at the best dining facility in V Corps.

The 16th Engineer Battalion Dining Facility won V Corps level 33rd Annual Phillip A. Connelly Competition in the large dining facility category, those that serve more than 200 patrons, on March 14.

Each major subordinate command designates two officials to judge the competition. The judges base their decisions on such factors as the quality of training and management, food service sanitation, command and community support, appearance and attitude of personnel, dining area, and food preparation and quality.

To prepare for competition, the dining facility staff concurred that they just did their daily routines. The

Connelly competition is unique in that they are critiqued solely on their day-to-day mission, according to Staff Sgt. Gregory Welch, the facility's assistant manager.

After 1st AD judges evaluate their dining facilities, they submit their nominees to V Corps. The V Corps judges evaluate all the nominees and select their representatives to submit to United States Army Europe level-competition. Those winners then compete at the Army-level.

"Meeting the standards is something we do every day, not something we set aside. We work to standard every day of the year," said Welch, "Many civilians, military personnel and families enjoy our dining facility. It is our way of giving our support back to the community."

The staff is continuously looking for ways to improve the dining experience. One of their latest changes is the buffet-style dining. "The self-service is a good improvement. People can get whatever portion they want," said Ben Sugui, a safety office employee who frequently eats at the dining facility.

The 16th Engineer Battalion Dining Facility's success is a combination of great staff, great food, teamwork and support from the soldiers, community and command, according to Sgt. First Class Joseph Kelly, the 16th Engineer Battalion Dining facility's manager.

Being the best is important to soldiers for various reasons. "The competition pulls us closer together to work as one team, not just one day, but all the time," said Spec. Lesley S. Cislo, food service specialist assigned to the winning facility.

"The competition provides the division with better

quality soldiers, enhances training and ensures soldiers receive nutritious food," said Sgt. Maj. Brenda Parks, the 1AD Food Service sergeant major. "It also instills the pride of having someone to compete overall. It boosts the morale of the soldiers within the division."

Although the 1st Armored Division did not advance at the USAREUR competition, they are proud of the fact that they are the first garrison unit in the 1AD to win at the V Corps level according to Parks.

Look
1st what
Armored
Division
is
cooking
up...

Cooks turn up heat in soldier competition

Story and photos by
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BAD KREUZNACH, Germany- The silence breaks as Sgt. Jennifer Knoble knocks at the door. Knoble struggles to hide her nervousness as she enters the room. Knoble faces the board members, reports and goes through the usual facing movements associated with soldier boards. But that's where the similarities end.

"When does the cooking process begin for frozen vegetables?" asks Sgt. 1st Class Clarence Bowdry.

"What are the two broad classifications that sandwiches are divided into?" he asks.

Despite her nervousness, Knoble answered the questions without hesitation. Her grace under fire earned her the title of 1st Armored Division Cook of the Year in the NCO category.

Four noncommissioned officers and three enlisted soldiers, all food service specialists, competed for the title of Cook of the Year in the NCO and enlisted soldier category.

The Cook of the Year board is the second level of the competition. Each soldier had already competed and won Cook of Quarter, but as the saying goes "There can be only one."

"Winning is important to me because it helps me build a positive self-esteem and it is important in my career advancement," said Knoble, a food service specialist assigned to HHC, 16th Engineer Battalion in Giessen.

Knoble shared the spotlight with Spc. Nicholas Kachiros, a food service specialist assigned to HHC, 1st Battalion, 35th Armored Regiment in Baumholder. The two competed for their titles in Bad Kreuznach, Sept. 6.

The board members are all senior NCOs in the food service specialty. But the questions they ask cover not only food service, but basic soldier knowledge, as well. The board members' topics include questions on categories such as leadership counseling, first aid and the chain of command.

"All military subjects are covered, rather than just food service, to prepare the soldiers for other boards in order for them to progress professionally," said Sgt. Maj. Brenda Parks, the 1AD Food Service sergeant major.

The board acts as a training mechanism to inspire soldiers to

learn all aspects of the Army, master their food service skills and promotes the division incentive award program, a program that is designated to award food service personal with recognition according to Parks.

"The competition is important to the soldiers because it inspires competitiveness to win," said Parks.

For Kachiros, the board helped him prepare for future competitions. "Going to the board taught me how to prepare for other boards and how to carry myself at a board."

Soldiers score points for how well they answer each question, five points being the highest score on each question. The president selects all board questions. A soldier can also score up to 20 points for oral communications and 20 points for their personal appearance.



Sgt. Jennifer Knoble, HHC, 16th Engineer Battalion and Spc. Nicholas Kachiros, HHC, 16th Engineer Battalion both won 1st Armored Division Cook of the Year.

Several of the soldiers honed their skills by paying extra attention to detail on their uniforms and studying Army manuals.

Knoble took a more unique approach. "I had people quiz me with questions and I would do physical training if I got the answers wrong," she said.

Knoble and Kachiros will advance to the V Corps competition to be held in Heidelberg. For winning the division competition, both soldiers received an Army Achievement Medal, a \$100 Army and Air Force Exchange Service gift certificate, a Noncommissioned Officers Association certificate of achievement, and a trophy.