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Event salutes top Army chefs in Europe

HEIDELBERG, Germany – U.S. Army Europe and the Installation Management Command-Europe honored the top Army chefs in Europe when it saluted the USAREUR/IMCOM-E Culinary Arts Team at a luncheon and recognition ceremony here, June 15.

The event at the Patrick Henry Village Pavilion recognized the chefs for their accomplishments at this year's U.S. Army Culinary Arts Competition held at Fort Lee, Va. The team showed off its skills by preparing its award-winning field meal in an Army mobile kitchen trailer on site and serving it to a group of senior USAREUR and IMCOM-E leaders.

"Our purpose today is to highlight the accomplished skills executed by our Soldiers," said Chief Warrant Officer 2 Victor Martinez, the culinary team captain. "Today our team has prepared their field competition meal. We hope that this demonstration of skills will provide our leadership with an experience of the senses."

Following the meal, awards were presented to the Soldiers for their achievements at Fort Lee. Each was presented with an Army Achievement Medal and a plaque in honor of the team winning 21 medals in the competition earlier this year.

"We had a rough start trying to get the team together," said Robert Shamberger, IMCOM-E food program manager. "For them to go and compete, and come back with 21 medals -- these are things that don't come easy; they take a lot of hard work, and it shows. I'm really proud of them."

Participating in the competition provides the team members with more than just medals and plaques, however. Competing is also a chance for them to broaden and hone their skills as chefs.

"There are a great bunch of veterans from the culinary competitions, but also more importantly, young Soldiers who have never done it before," said USAREUR commander Lt. Gen. Mark Hertling. "When they come together on these teams, they learn so much more about their skills and the things that they do as cooks. That takes their skills to the next higher level."

The team's journey to Fort Lee began at a USAREUR culinary arts training workshop in Grafenwoehr in January. At that event 12 were chosen to represent USAREUR and IMCOM-E during the Army-level competition. The group then spent two months training and preparing before deploying to Virginia for the monthlong contest.

The team earned medals in every event they entered, bringing home seven gold, five silver, nine bronze and two “commendable” medals.

For photos of the event visit the [U.S. Army Europe Flickr page](#).

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About us: U.S. Army Europe, with NATO and other coalition partners from throughout its 51-country area of responsibility, trains for, conducts, and supports contingency operations. Headquartered in Heidelberg, Germany, USAREUR has forces throughout Germany as well as in Italy, Belgium, the Netherlands, Bulgaria, Kosovo, and Romania, and in Afghanistan and Iraq.