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American Culinary Federation and U.S. Army Join Ranks to Enrich the U.S. Army's Foodservice Training Program

ST. AUGUSTINE, Fla., September 23, 2009—The U.S. Army prepares more than 1 million meals each day for its soldiers. To prepare and serve those meals, more than 4,000 soldiers complete culinary training each year and 300 complete advanced culinary training. There is no doubt that the quality of training military chefs receive affects the quality of food produced, and in turn, soldiers' morale. The American Culinary Federation (ACF) has joined with the U.S. Army to enhance its current foodservice training program by incorporating the American Culinary Federation Education Foundation's (ACFEF) apprenticeship program into the Army's foodservice training program.

"We already have a very good training program set up, but ACF can help us provide better food service for our soldiers in the military, and can offer certification for chefs that will help them be better prepared for life after the military. It's really a dual benefit," said Master Sergeant David Turcotte, CEC, AAC, directorate of training, noncommissioned officer in charge and enlisted aid advisor, who works alongside Chief Warrant Officer W-4 (CW4) Robert Sparks, CEPC, chief, craft skills training branch. In addition, CW4 Ron Biddle, senior food safety officer who is the action officer for the 92G Credentialing Program, has also played a vital role in implementing the program.

Sergeant First Class (SFC) Clinton W. Francis III, a chef with the U.S. Army, began working at ACF's national office in St. Augustine Fla., in August, and will be stationed there for 12 months, serving as the training-with-industry representative and developing the program. SFC Francis will focus on implementing the ACFEF apprenticeship program for the U.S. Army with a trial group of more than 1,180 soldiers at Fort Lee, Va. He will also work to coordinate ACF certification testing at Fort Lee.

After Basic Combat Training, soldiers advance to eight weeks of Individual Advanced Training, where they will go through the ACFEF apprenticeship program. At the end of training, military chefs will take a written and practical exam to earn ACF's Certified Sous Chef™ (CSC™) designation, which acts as an industry stamp of approval, stating that the chef is knowledgeable in areas ranging from food safety and sanitation to cooking skills and culinary technique.

"Not only will the culinary training set our service members up for success on their departure from the military, but it will also improve the quality of food service our soldiers receive on a daily basis," said SFC Francis, who has served in the U.S. Army for 14 years. "Instead of our soldiers eating traditional fried chicken, we will be able to take it up a notch and serve chicken Kiev or a classical chicken chasseur dish to them.

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“My vision for the apprenticeship program is that it will continue to evolve and to motivate our soldiers to embrace this golden opportunity to become future certified executive chefs, as they continue to provide nourishing meals to our nation’s defenders.”

About the American Culinary Federation

The American Culinary Federation, Inc., established in 1929, is the premier professional organization for culinarians in North America. With more than 22,000 members spanning 230 chapters nationwide, ACF is the culinary leader in offering educational resources, training, apprenticeship and accreditation. In addition, ACF operates the most comprehensive certification program for chefs in the United States. ACF is home to ACF Culinary Team USA, the official representative for the United States in major international culinary competitions, and to the Chef & Child Foundation, founded in 1989 to promote proper nutrition in children and to combat childhood obesity. For more information, visit www.acfchefs.org.

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