

# NATION'S Restaurant News

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## Hennessy Awards honor excellence in foodservice at Air Force bases

By Mark Brandau

CHICAGO — The National Restaurant Association and the Hennessy Travelers Association honored the achievements of foodservice facilities at U.S. Air Force bases throughout the world by presenting the Hennessy Awards on May 20 at the Hilton Chicago here.

An exclusive reception took place May 19 to honor past and present Hennessy Travelers — representatives of the awards' evaluation team who come from varying ranks of the foodservice industry. The travelers visit Air

school or restaurant and hospitality management program of their choosing.

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Travis Air Force Base in California won the Hennessy Trophy for the single-facility category.

Several smaller operations won awards for different categories. The winner for the Air Force Reserve Command category was 911 Services Flight at Pittsburgh Air Force Base in Pennsylvania. Also, 120 Services Flight in Great Falls, Mont., won the Air National Guard category.

The Hennessy Awards also give an award for best service at smaller European outposts. The USAFE Food Service Small Site Award went to 701 Munitions Support Squadron in Kleine Brogel, Belgium.

The awards were presented at an invitation-only breakfast ceremony. This year, the ceremony's special guest speaker was Gen. Norton A. Schwartz, commander of U.S. Transportation Command at Scott Air Force Base in Illinois. The ceremony also featured a report from NRA board members Jack Amon and Pete Mihajlov, the 2006 Hennessy Travelers.

Mihajlov, co-founder and partner of Parasole Restaurant Group in Edina, Minn., said his traveler group visited seven bases that were finalists for the Hennessy Trophy in the single-facility category.

"We were impressed by frankly every one of the seven bases," Mihajlov said. "It was an honor and a privilege to [serve as a

Hennessy Traveler]. We had a great team."

Mihajlov said picking Travis Air Force Base as the single-facility winner was not easy, given the high level of competition. "It was a very tough choice," he said. "I won't get into the specifics of the pecking order, but there were three or four bases we thought were exceptional. At the end of the day, Travis had the highest score."

According to Mihajlov, criteria for judging the Air Force bases included many of the same factors used when judging and evaluating a full-service restaurant. The bases were graded on such criteria as product safety, sanitation, cooking and preparation standards, staff training, and appearance of the dining room. In all, Mihajlov estimated the bases were evaluated on 200 to 250 possible inspection points.

The traveling judges also bestowed the Hennessy Travelers Association Award of Excellence to an individual serviceman or woman in both single- and multiple-unit operations. This year's winners were Staff Sgt. Cinnamon Calloway of Eglin Air Force Base in Florida, for the multiple-facility category, and Staff Sgt. Santiago Padilla of Travis Air Force Base in California, for the single-facility category. ■



**“It is a great honor and pleasure to recognize our servicemen and women for their dedication to providing high-quality meals to thousands of troops worldwide.”**

— STEVEN C. ANDERSON  
PRESIDENT AND CEO,  
NATIONAL RESTAURANT ASSOCIATION

Force bases all over the world during the year to evaluate the contributions of each base's foodservice facilities to the service support and morale of the nation's Air Force servicemen and women.

Also, in recognition of the potential for the future of the industry, the National Restaurant Association Educational Foundation established a scholarship fund for Air Force servicemen and women to pursue careers in foodservice following their military service commitments. In all, 50 awards of \$2,500 each were made available for prospective students to use at the culinary

thousands of troops worldwide, while also marking a half century of excellence in the U.S. Air Force foodservice," said Steven C. Anderson, NRA president and chief executive. "For 50 years, the prestigious Hennessy Awards have commended U.S. Air Force foodservice operations and personnel who have demonstrated excellence in professionalism and serving their colleagues — and most especially, their country."

Two categories of Air Force bases are evaluated each year: those with multiple foodservice facilities and those with a single dining hall. Eglin Air Force Base in Florida was the winner of the multiple-facility category, and

This year marked the 50th anniversary of the awards named after John L. Hennessy, a foodservice veteran and member of the Hoover Commission to improve efficiency of government agencies. Hennessy Awards organizers celebrated the program's past, present and future in conjunction with this year's NRA Restaurant, Hotel-Motel Show.

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