U.S. Army Chefs Win Freedom Chefs Challenge at 2008 ACF Western Regional Conference

Rene Marquis, CEC, CCE, PCEC, AAC, and David Turcotte, CEC, Victorious

St. Augustine, Fla., April 24, 2008–The U.S. Army culinary team was victorious against the other top chefs from the four other branches of the military–Navy, Army, Marine Corps, Air Force and Coast Guard– in the Freedom Chefs Challenge culinary competition during the 2008 American Culinary Federation (ACF) Western Regional Conference, April 19 at the Salt Palace Convention Center, Salt Lake City.

The U.S. Army culinary team of Rene Marquis, CEC, CCE, PCEC, AAC, and David Turcotte, CEC, was declared the winning team of the Freedom Chefs Challenge for their array of diverse and fine-cuisine. The competition dishes presented by Marquis and Turcotte included: beef carpaccio with a mustard caper and garlic cream sauce; sautéed sweetbreads with a mélange of mushrooms and spinach; cream of potato soup laced with roasted tomatoes; seared scallops with field greens and raspberry vinaigrette; lime sorbet with candied thyme; seared duck breast on a bed of julienne vegetables; seared beef skirt steak with glazed root vegetables, creamy risotto and asparagus; and, for dessert, crème brûlée and macerated berries with a chocolate truffle. Five, two-person teams engaged in a two-hour culinary-style hand-to-hand combat cooking competition and were judged by a panel of military generals and elite ACF chefs on taste and creativity.

Marquis of Brandon, Fla., is an executive chef for the U.S. Army and a member of Old Dominion ACF Chapter. Marquis, a graduate of The Culinary Institute of America, Hyde Park, N.Y., has been a personal chef for several U.S. Army generals and currently serves as an enlisted aide for the Commander of United States. He is one of the highest certified chefs in the military and one of only four qualified ACF Army Services judges. He held the title of Virginia’s Iron Chef for two consecutive years.

Turcotte of Stafford, Va., is also an executive chef for the U.S. Army and a member of Old Dominion ACF Chapter. He served as a personal chef for general officers for seven years and was the executive chef of the Chairman’s Mess Hall in the Pentagon. Turcotte is an ACF certified culinary-judge and experienced competitor. He has been a member of the United States Army Culinary Team for 14 years and has won numerous medals. Turcotte received an associate’s degree in restaurant management from Central Texas College, Killeen, Texas.

Chosen for its unique combination of natural recreation and metropolitan attractions, Salt Lake City was the location of the 2008 ACF Western Regional Conference hosted by ACF Beehive Chefs Chapter, Inc. Bringing more than 400 chefs, cooks and foodservice professionals to the city, the conference provided attendees with numerous opportunities to advance their professional development and enhance their culinary skills through informative business seminars, forums, clinics and cutting-edge demonstrations. In addition, the conference offered participants the opportunity to learn about the latest cooking trends and techniques.
Sponsors of the 2008 ACF Western Regional Conference and national award sponsors include: Barber Foods; Buckhead Beef Company; Butterball Farms, Inc.; Canada Cutlery Inc.; The Cheesecake Factory Bakery, Inc.; Contessa Premium Foods; Custom Culinary, Inc.; GFF, Inc./Girard’s Dressings; Guittard Chocolate Co.; La Brea Bakery; Lactalis Foodservice, Inc; Lobster Select; Mann’s Fresh Vegetables; MARS Foodservices; Mind’s Eye Resource Management, LLC; Nestlé Professional; New Mexico Department of Agriculture; NEWCHEF Fashions; Nueske’s Applewood Smoked Meats; Pearson Prentice Hall; R.L. Schreiber, Inc.; Rubbermaid Commercial Products; Seaboard Foods; Splenda®; SYSCO Food Services–Intermountain; Tyson Food Service; U.S. Food and Drug Administration; Unilever Foodsolutions; Utah’s Own; and Wisconsin Milk Marketing Board.

The American Culinary Federation, Inc., established in 1929, is the premier professional organization for culinarians in North America. With 20,000 members spanning more than 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 also holds the presidium for the World Association of Chefs Societies, the largest international network of chef associations with more than 8 million members globally. For more information, visit www.acfchefs.org.

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