Government Food Service: Tell us a little about how the last year has unfolded. Discuss some accomplishments, any unfinished business and any challenges that lie ahead. What is on the horizon for Navy food service? Were any initiatives implemented in 2014? If so, explain. Are any planned for 2015?

Cmdr. Danny King, SC, USN: Last year was an exciting time for the Navy Food Service (NFS) family, and the best is yet to come! Naval Supply Systems Command (NAVSUP), along with our stakeholders, was responsible for serving more than 93 million meals in 2014, with a $409.7 million food budget, and 287 afloat and ashore galleys located strategically around the globe. Our successful 2014 year was solely made possible by our 7,300 culinary specialists (CS), who we have come to recognize as our Navy chefs.

A few of the highlights include: Representatives from NFS representing NAVSUP at the Sea Air Space Exposition (SAS) April 7 to 9 at National Harbor, Md. SAS is the largest maritime exposition in the U.S. and continues as an extension of the Navy League’s mission of maritime policy education and sea service support. I was there, along with my colleagues, to educate audience members about NFS’s worldwide presence and foodservice programs. I had the opportunity to generate awareness of our efforts through media interviews. I also presented briefs to audience members, covering menu development and execution, subsistence prime vendor operations and worldwide readiness, CS training, galley equipment standardization and upcoming developments, and special interest programs (i.e. Ney Awards, the enlisted aide program, presentation silver program and culinary competitions). The highlight of this symposium for the attendees is always our Navy chefs doing live cooking demonstrations.

We provided oversight to CSs from local commands on hand, including a gold-medal and a silver-medal awardee from the Joint Culinary Competition in Fort Lee, Va. The CSs demonstrated cooking techniques they honed through hands-on training from the Navy Food Management Teams, which are located in fleet concentration areas in the U.S. and Japan. The CSs also demonstrated menu versatility encouraged through the Navy Standard Core Menu. The cooking demonstration allowed CSs to actively showcase talents, engage audience members and stimulate attendees’ olfactory systems — something a static galley display could never achieve.

On November 11, Veterans Day, CS1 Stephanie Cooper, from the USS Forrest Sherman (DDG 98), appeared on the “Rachael Ray Show.” The show saluted veterans with its first-ever “Armed Forces Cook-Off!” Servicemen and women from all five military branches cooked their best

Navy Food Service Director Cmdr. Danny King (right) addresses crew at the galley in Yokosuka, Japan. (PHOTO COURTESY U.S. NAVY)
decades-old Armed Forces Recipe Service Cards. We have a ways to go, so partnering with our sister services Army, Marine Corps and Air Force will speed up this delivery process.

All of these undertakings are daunting tasks and require the work of a great many experts to get it right. My staff at NAVSUP provides me with a great deal of know-how to be able to serve as Navy Food Service director; among them are:

— Col. Jay Kyle, USA – Food Safety/Inspection Policy
— Charles Folsom – Quality of Life Services (Policy and Galley Management)
— CW05 Alicia Lawrence – Quality of Life Training Officer
— CSCS Jeff Sulich – Food Service Administration Support
— CSCS Nelle Kigembe – Food Service Readiness Analyst
— Donald Lake – Food Service Training Officer
— Jennifer Person-Whippo – Nutrition Programs (Readiness)
— Duane Wright – Food Service Facilities Specialist (Readiness)
— Eileen Borell – Management Program Analyst (Readiness)
— Mark Emery – Management Program Analyst (Readiness)
— Bobby Winn – Food Service Management 3 Policy Manager
— Beverly Singson – Food Service Policy Manager
— Lt. Gary Pittman, USN, SC – Readiness Officer
— Lorin Schehl – Presentation Silver/Communications Manager
— Anne Linenbroker – Policy Analyst/Auditor
— Cheryl Hernandez – Ney Awards Program Manager

Beyond NAVSUP headquarters are our experts in the field, overseeing our Navy Food Management Teams, who provide over-the-shoulder training and support to our afloat and ashore Navy chefs.
Ofﬁcers and Leading Culinary Specialists include:
— CW05 Todd Grunlien (Norfolk, Va.)
— CW05 William Duka (Pearl Harbor, Hawaii)
— CSCS Wilson Sydenstricker (Puget Sound, Wash.)
— CW04 Theresa Payne (San Diego, Calif.)
— CSS Koi Pham (Yokosuka, Japan)
— CSCS Kathy Ann Gomez (Mayport, Fla.)

**Government Food Service:** DLA is taking steps to consolidate purchasing to reduce costs. Outside the continental United States, DLA is selecting suppliers for specific categories; and it is considering taking the same step in the continental United States. Could reducing suppliers limit choice and variety in the dining facility?

**King:** Whenever DLA, the U.S. Navy or NAVSUP consider cost-cutting measures related to food service, NFS is mindful that there are more important factors than cost-per-plate to consider when feeding the fleet. Food is an important quality-of-life component to a sailor’s tour of duty, and often the ﬁrst issue raised when quality is short-changed. NFS holds bi-weekly teleconferences with stakeholders from across the fleet to maintain fresh and steady feedback from the deckplate on all foodservice matters. NFS understands that sailors are our priority and that our actions must account for their schedules, their nutritional needs and their changing palettes. Sailors are NAVSUP’s customers.

In the same sense, NAVSUP ensures the relationship between DLA and the U.S. Navy is clearly understood. DLA’s mission is to support the Navy, and we are their customers. NAVSUP NFS supports the Type Commanders (TYCOM) in establishing the Navy Standard Core Menu (NSCM), based on sailor preferences and nutritional guidelines. It is DLA’s responsibility to ﬁnd the most cost-efﬁcient subsistence prime vendor (SPV) who can supply all ingredients required by the NSCM. Any measure taken to reduce costs cannot compromise their primary mission to support the armed services.

**Government Food Service:** Last year, you mentioned that Duane Wright, the Navy Food Service equipment expert, had been working on improving galley equipment. Please give an update and explain any changes that might be coming. He was also working on a foodservice analysis tool to better coordinate the logistics of provisions for each platform. How is this progressing?

**King:** NFS continues to listen to the galley equipment needs of the fleet to provide the most efﬁcient and reliable equipment. For years, the fleet looked for alternatives to the deep-fat fryers and their maintenance-intensive fire-control systems. More recently, the company supporting the firefighting system for the fryers went out of business. The Navy asked the Natick Soldier Research, Development & Engineering Center to research new systems or new equipment to replicate the menu items normally prepared using deep-fat fryers. After extensive research, Natick provided the results. The combi-oven unit was commercially available and could bake, steam and cook in a hybrid hot-air/steam mode. While the surface fleet and ashore facilities had access to combi-ovens, the submarine fleet still did not have an acceptable oven. Natick was able to ﬁnd a “sub-hatchable” combi-oven that can support the NSCM. Submarine Forces Command received the ﬁnal report and is evaluating the results carefully before authorizing the transition.

Another promising innovation is the under-counter refrigeration unit. It is currently being tested by Natick Soldier Research, Development & Engineering Center as a cost-effective solution for the Navy’s refrigeration needs aboard ships. The under-counter refrigeration units are modular and skid-mounted, so they can be replaced in an hour if necessary. The legacy system typically needs shore-based expertise to repair, but the under-counter refrigeration units allow for operator-level maintenance or quick replacement. If testing results are positive, these units could minimize refrigeration down time due to maintenance or malfunction.

Related, the U.S. Navy also has a foodservice analysis tool in development. The tool will allow more thorough analysis and stowage of subsistence taken aboard ships. TYCOMs will get to see the tool and have their questions answered at the next TYCOM equipment meeting in spring 2015.
**Government Food Service:** Discuss how nutrition is influencing menu choices available in galleys afloat. Go for Green, for example, educates sailors to choose foods that should be eaten frequently. Is there any evidence that eating choices are changing? Are any findings from the Healthy Base Initiative having an influence?

**King:** Nutrition is a critical component of the NSCM, and influences menu choices available in galleys afloat. All Navy galleys must adhere to the policy outlined in DoD 1338.10, which includes DoD menu standards. The Joint Subsistence Policy Board (JPSB) approved the menu standards and published the most recent version in December 2014. The JPSB sets the minimum guidelines for menu components, including fruit and fruit juices, vegetables, salads, grains and starches, meats and entrees, dairy and eggs, fats and oils, sodium, beverages, condiments, soups and desserts.

Go for Green is the DoD nutritional recognition labeling system. The purpose of Go for Green is to provide military service members with a quick visual assessment of a menu item’s nutritional value in military installation dining facilities, based on nutritional guidelines outlined by policy and evaluated by the Navy’s registered dietitian (RD). Ultimately, the goal is to give service members an easy tool to identify menu choices that optimize performance while moving quickly though the serving line.

After the initial launch of the program, the Navy looked to improve Go for Green. A Go for Green working group actively works to develop trainer guides to educate the foodservice personnel and leadership at commands on the program. Although the Navy hasn’t yet collected evidence to determine whether service members’ eating choices are changing, data are expected to be collected in 2015. Finally, the Navy’s RD works with the Armed Forces Recipe Service to actively revise and develop recipes to make more “Green” (healthier choice) recipes available, but the effort to update the entire recipe file requires a great deal of work.

**Government Food Service:** Last year, the Adopt-a-Ship program was used to provide culinary training to Ney Award winners. Is it only for Ney winners or is it also filling its traditional role to provide training aboard ships?

**King:** The TYCOM Afloat Training Groups (ATG) and NFMTs have been conducting continuous training sessions on ships and ashore. This allows us to leverage already qualified Navy executive chefs on active duty in the Navy to conduct numerous training sessions. These sessions can be planned in advance to build upon each other, thus raising the skill level of CSs receiving a continuous knowledge stream. This over-the-shoulder support is both cost-effective and well-received among CSs who are welcoming the on-hands experiences as an opportunity to reinvigorate their creativity, ingenuity and resourcefulness.

**Government Food Service:** What are plans for the Navy Ney awards? Evaluations were done and winners selected in 2014, and a joint awards dinner was held in Chicago at the National Restaurant Association with the Marine Corps and Air Force. How did this go?

**King:** Last year’s Ney awards ceremony was a tremendous opportunity to recognize our top foodservice teams in a joint forum. Bringing the best-of-the-best together instills pride in the exceptional CSs who have worked tirelessly to contribute to sailors’ morale and readiness. Pride fosters excellence, and I would say it even rubs off on their counterparts. Their dedication to top-notch professional food service multiplies into a substantial increase in the quality of life for our warfighters. So, having the awards ceremony again was great. To add to this, I’m overjoyed to say that the 2015 Navy Capt. Edward F. Ney, SC, USN, Memorial Awards for outstanding food service will be a true “joint” event, with the Army joining the awards ceremony this year, alongside Navy, Air Force and the Marine Corps. It has been a vision of most to bring all the services back together again in one forum showing true “JOINTNESS” throughout DoD; Food has a way to bring us all together as one family!

This year marks the 57th anniversary of the awards program.