

[Ask the Dietician: Army measures for healthiest DFAC](#)

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K-Quad DFAC creates an ice sculpture for condiments and sauces during the first SAW Fueling Competition.

*1st Lt. Elizabeth B. Tankovich
Tripler Army Medical Center
Nutrition Care Division*

HONOLULU — During the week of June 8-12, Hawaii garrison dining facilities (DFACs) participated in the first, annual Soldier Athlete Warrior (SAW) Fueling Competition.

The purpose of the competition was to provide garrison DFACs a chance to enhance the nutritional quality of their menus in order to fuel the SAW.

It also offered the opportunity for food service personnel to use culinary skills and create innovative recipes.

Participating DFACs included the Warrior Inn DFAC (managed by 2nd Stryker Brigade Combat Team, Schofield Barracks), Wings of Lightning DFAC (managed by 25th Combat Aviation Bde., Wheeler Army Airfield), Leader's Den DFAC (at NCO Academy Hawaii) and K-Quad DFAC (managed by 25th Sustainment Brigade – formerly the 45th, SB).

Facilities were evaluated on recipe evaluation (50 percent of the total score), adherence to Department of Defense (DOD) menu standards (25 percent of total score) and diner nutrition education (25 percent of total score).

Recipe evaluation accounted for the majority of the total score (50 percent). Recipes were evaluated by 10 randomly selected diners and three food service personnel judges. However, the diners' scores were weighted more heavily to better represent the typical customer base.

Evaluation

At each DFAC, diners evaluated four recipes (entrée, short order, salad, dessert) on appearance, aroma, taste, texture and overall quality. Judges evaluated the recipes on these same criteria in addition to nutrition criteria.

DFACs were encouraged to incorporate fruits and vegetables, lean proteins, whole grains and healthy fats. Many diners had positive and constructive feedback; however, others were harsher. Examples of diner comments are listed below:

- “Trying to eat healthier. Glad there are these choices.”
- “Could use more seasoning/ flavor.”
- “Would love to see this salad again.”
- “A little too sweet.”
- “Most of the days, the veggies are rotten.”
- “Great presentation with peppers and color.”



The WAAF DFAC features nutrient- dense dessert options, such as yogurt and berry parfaits as part of the SAW competition. (Photos by Capt. Cheryl Milford, TAMC)

Standards

Schofield Barracks' registered dieticians performed assessments the week prior to the competition based on adherence to the Joint Subsistence Policy Board DOD Menu Standards and DA PAM 30-22.

Diner nutrition education was assessed through inspection of Go for Green labeling and nutrition education material displayed in the facility. These educational items ensure that Soldiers are exposed to nutrition knowledge that maximizes performance, maintains long-term good health and sustains morale. Again, adherence to DOD menu standards and diner education each accounted for 25 percent of the final score.

Assessment tabulation

All four DFACs delivered great products during this competition and demonstrated pride in serving their customers quality food.

Results are still being tabulated, and the winner will be announced in the near future by the Hawaii Garrison Installation Food Program Manager's Office.

Bottom line

What does this mean for diners? Eventually, this annual competition should result in improved food choices at Hawaii garrison DFACs. Comment cards are always available in DFACs, and diners should use them to provide constructive feedback year-round (not just during the SAW competition).

The only way to be heard and see change is to voice your opinion.

(Tankovich is a registered dietician in the Nutrition Care Division at TAMC.)

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