Media Advisory

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Fort Drum Public Affairs

Fort Drum Soldiers share Thanksgiving meal together as culinary specialists showcase skills

FORT DRUM, N.Y. (Nov. 26, 2024) -- Culinary specialists across the 10th Mountain Division (LI) put all their efforts into creating a memorable Thanksgiving feast Nov. 26 for Soldiers, family members, and civilian employees at Fort Drum.

The four dining facilities on post satiated everyone’s appetite with pounds of roasted turkey, glazed ham, smoked brisket, salmon, and honey-glazed Cornish hen among the entrees. Tons of sides included mashed potatoes, candied yams, baked mac-and-cheese, collard greens, and corn on the cob.

“Our menu is like a traditional Thanksgiving meal, but with an Asian twist,” said Sgt. 1st Class Raymond Mutchock, Commando Warrior Restaurant manager. “We’re doing seasoned beef and chicken skewers, and we have teriyaki turkey, whole pigs, and a ramen bar.”

Mutchock said the biggest challenge they faced was logistical – ordering the right amounts of food and having the equipment and personnel capable of serving the regular meal schedule in addition to the Thanksgiving meal.

“The effort has been non-stop,” he said. “I don’t know how the other teams are doing, but I feel like my team is second to none. They’ve probably spent the better part of a month, eight to 10 hours a day, with the painting, molding, and decorating.”

Spc. Kevon Fordham has served as a culinary specialist for almost six years, and he said the key to preparing a Thanksgiving meal that serves hundreds is time management. With a lot of moving pieces, he said that everyone focuses on what they need to do to accomplish the mission.

“Honestly, I’d like to just sit back and admire the fact that we did this, and people love this,” Fordham said. “Everyone has a lot of pride in what they did.”

Staff Sgt. Jonathan Twitchell was among the grill masters who also dealt with the morning rain, as he kept watch over racks of meat outside the Warrior Inn Restaurant. Aware of the forecast, he was able to drape a tarp over the large grill to keep the pig roasting at just the right temperature.

“This is the Super Bowl for us,” he said. “We work weeks in advance to make this a special day. We have precise plans for when everything needs to be cooked so it is ready on time.”

Twitchell said his favorite Thanksgiving meal is absent turkey.

“I know that’s traditional, but I’m more about the ham, stuffing, mac-and-cheese, and green bean casserole,” he said.

Inside the Warrior Inn Restaurant, Pvt. Rene Young filled his plate with all the meats.

“Turkey, ham, hen, and I got the pig – that was really good,” he said. “I did not expect anything like this coming in here. I thought it would be like a regular day, so this was way better than I could imagine.”

Some of the staples – like the collard greens and mac-and-cheese – had that homestyle feel that Young said he appreciated.

“The food was amazing; the cooks did an amazing job,” he said.

Culinary specialists with 10th Mountain Division Sustainment Brigade supported the holiday meal preparation at both the Muleskinner Warrior Restaurant and the Flight Line Warrior Restaurant, where Staff Sgt. Margaret Cox is the manager.

With many 10th Combat Aviation Brigade Soldiers currently on deployment, Cox said they weren’t expecting the typical number of patrons, but all were welcome to help celebrate the holiday.

“We are still providing a great Thanksgiving meal to support Soldiers and family members and build up morale,” she said.

As a new manager, Cox said she is continuing a tradition from the previous one where the culinary team dines together at the end of service.

“I was here last year as an assistant manager, and I have never seen a manager do that before – to sit down with your crew and celebrate Thanksgiving together,” she said. “Most people are tired and we just want to go home, but it becomes a really special moment – a bonding moment that really means something.”

Photos from the Thanksgiving meal at Fort Drum are available at [www.flickr.com/photos/drum10thmountain/albums](https://usg01.safelinks.protection.office365.us/?url=http%3A%2F%2Fwww.flickr.com%2Fphotos%2Fdrum10thmountain%2Falbums&data=05%7C02%7Clisa.r.albrecht.civ%40army.mil%7Ca66f402417ee4678f54708dd0e4e8ee7%7Cfae6d70f954b481192b60530d6f84c43%7C0%7C0%7C638682452922617763%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJWIjoiMC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQIjoiV2luMzIiLCJBTiI6Ik1haWwiLCJXVCI6Mn0%3D%7C0%7C%7C%7C&sdata=s3GZIvSCoVjH9P23677h6TFw0Y4qVMwiqEdNwPKs7sM%3D&reserved=0).

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Media with questions regarding this press release should contact Fort Drum Public Affairs, Katie Wright, 315-772-9043 or katherine.e.wright12.civ@army.mil

Photo Captions –

Thanksgiving Meal1: Months of planning led to a flurry of activity this week inside the warrior restaurants at Fort Drum as culinary specialists across the 10th Mountain Division (LI) cooked a special Thanksgiving meal Nov. 26 for Soldiers, family members, and civilians. (Photo by Mike Strasser, Fort Drum Garrison Public Affairs)

Thanksgiving Meal2: Spc. Nashalee Vazquez created an impressive array of cakes and desserts for the Thanksgiving meal Nov. 26 at 1st Brigade Combat Team’s Warrior Inn Restaurant at Fort Drum. (Photo by Mike Strasser, Fort Drum Garrison Public Affairs)