



KOSHER MEALS NOW AVAILABLE TO U.S. SERVICE MEMBERS

After five years of negotiations with the Office of the Chief of Army Chaplains, launched in the aftermath of the Persian Gulf War, the U.S. Department of Defense has announced that fully kosher meals are now available to members of the United States Armed Forces.

Several varieties of kosher MRE (Meals-Ready-To-Eat) field rations may now be ordered utilizing federal service supply numbers. The introduction of kosher MRE's into the military supply system was largely due to the efforts of Rabbi David Lapp, Director of the JWB Jewish Chaplains Council, an agency of the JCC Association of North America. Rabbi Lapp worked closely with Air Force Chaplain Cecil Richardson, and with Army Chaplains Herman Keizer and Lorraine Potter of the Armed Forces Chaplains Board.

Noting that over 5,000 Jewish personnel were called to serve during the Gulf War, the JWB Jewish Chaplains Council requested that the Armed Forces Chaplains Board and the three Chiefs of Chaplains establish procedures for the procurement of kosher MRE's.

Previously, service members were responsible to procure their own kosher arrangements, a task that was often difficult and at times not possible. Since World War I, the JWB Jewish Chaplains Council has sent cases of kosher feed and kosher for Passover kits to active duty Jewish chaplains.

At one point, the U.S. Army tried to introduce a kosher certified vegetarian entree, but the unified position taken by the Chaplains, representing all branches of the Rabbinate, convinced the military decision makers that only a completely kosher meal offering would meet the requirement.

According to Rabbi Lapp, "This major accommodation will allow any active duty service member to request a variety of Kosher meals through their regular channels, thereby making such meals accessible to military personnel stationed throughout the globe."

May Anne Jackson, President of "My Own Meals," a Deerfield, Illinois-based provider of kosher refrigeration-free meals and MRE's, lauded the exceptional efforts of Marine Chaplain Joel D. Newman of Camp Pendleton, CA; Army Chaplains Martin Applebaum, formerly of Ft. Belvoir, VA, Ben Romer of West Point, and Chana Timoner of Ft. Bragg, NC; Navy Chaplain James Apple of Camp LeJeune, NC; and Air Force Chaplain Joel Schwartzman, of Bolling AFB, DC, who persistently emphasized that a fully kosher ration was absolutely essential to meet the dietary needs of Jewish personnel.

Founded in 1917, JWB Chaplains council is the U.S. government-accredited agency designated to help meet religious and morale needs of Jewish military personnel, their families and hospitalized veterans. It provides full support services to Jewish chaplains, administers ecclesiastical approval for chaplain candidates and Jewish lay leaders in the military, and provides religious supplies and counsel to the military and VA communities. JWB Chaplains Council is part of the Jewish Community Centers Association of North America, with offices in New York, Los Angeles and Israel.

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