



G-5's "Eye on AMC" U.S. Army Materiel Command

Essential in Peace, Indispensable in War

April 23, 2004

Microwaves improve processed food quality

Microwave energy, long used in homes to cook or reheat food, is gaining momentum in the United States as a method for processing more palatable shelf-stable foods for the military and commercial market. The microwave sterilization system is already used overseas as an alternative to frozen or refrigerated packaged foods.

A partnership between the Department of Defense Combat Feeding Directorate at the Soldier Systems Center in Natick, Mass.; Washington State University in Pullman, Wash.; and several food processing, equipment and packaging companies are moving ahead with a fresh influx of federal and private sector funding.

Unlike home microwave ovens, the microwave sterilization system is high-powered and treats pre-packaged food submerged in water. This method allows the microwaves to penetrate the food and uniformly cook packaged foods from the inside out, preventing burning around the edges. Sealed in its package before cooking, the goal is to kill all bacteria in the food quickly without damaging its texture or flavor.

"We're talking about a quantum leap in food quality," said Tom Yang, a senior food technologist at the Combat Feeding Directorate, comparing it to conventional retort processing, currently used for the Meal, Ready-to-Eat entrees, tray rations and in canned commercial foods.

Microwave sterilization is a high-temperature, short duration form of processing. Instead of retort's 250 F for 90 minutes, the microwave cooks at 265 F for 10 minutes.

CMA receives a Crystal Award of Excellence

AMC's Chemical Materials Agency received a Crystal Award of Excellence given by *The Communicator Awards* for the Johnston Atoll Chemical Agent Disposal System (JACADS) commemorative items. The *Communicator Awards* is an international competition honoring excellence in communications.

The Communicator Awards recognize winners for the outstanding work they produce which is highly regarded by their peers. It provides an equal chance of winning to all entrants, regardless of size and budget. Since there are no lengthy essays to accompany the entry, all work was judged solely on its own quality, creativity, and resourcefulness.

Each entry is graded by communications professionals who have been selected because of their experience and creativity in the communications field.

The Crystal Award of Excellence is given to those entries whose ability to communicate puts them among the best in the field. The Award of Distinction is presented for projects that exceed industry standards in quality and excellence.

CMA also received Awards of Distinction for the U.S. Army Non-Stockpile Program media kit and the JACADS Commemorative Reach newsletter.

RRAD environmentalists participate in Earth Day festivities

The Red River Army Depot environmental office participated in Earth Day 2004 activities at Texarkana's Central Mall April 7 - 8, an event that reached more than 600 school children from the surrounding schools. This year the Army theme for the event was "Preserving the environment while protecting our freedom."