

EOD technician wins Army championship during chef competition on Food Network

By Walter T. Ham IV 30 May 2023



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CARLISLE BARRACKS, Pa. – A senior noncommissioned officer and Explosive Ordnance Disposal technician was the U.S. Army champion during the Military Salute tournament on the Food Network television show Chopped.

Sgt. 1st Class Brian A. Colvin, the enlisted aide for the commandant of the U.S. Army War College, won first place for the Army in the competition that

pits chefs and teams against each other during timed cooking matches with ingredients that are revealed right before the clock starts.

After first serving as a combat medic, Colvin became an Army EOD technician and took on explosive hazards at the 630th Ordnance Company (EOD) and 774th Ordnance Company (EOD) on Fort Riley, Kansas. Both EOD companies are part of the 79th EOD Battalion, 71st EOD Group and 20th Chemical, Biological, Radiological, Nuclear, Explosives (CBRNE) Command, the U.S. Department of Defense's premier all hazards command.

Headquartered on Aberdeen Proving Ground, Maryland, the 20th CBRNE Command is home to 75 percent of the active-duty U.S. Army's EOD technicians and Chemical, Biological, Radiological, Nuclear (CBRN) specialists, as well as the 1st Area Medical Laboratory, CBRNE Analytical and Remediation Activity, five Weapons of Mass Destruction Coordination Teams and three Nuclear Disablement Teams.

From 19 bases in 16 states, Soldiers and Army civilians from 20th CBRNE Command tackle the world's most dangerous hazards in support of joint, interagency and allied operations.

Colvin said he was drawn to the EOD community because it leverages the expertise of the entire team when confronting and defeating explosive hazards.

"Our mission set is unique as our physical safety and lives are very much intertwined with those who are working with us," said Colvin. "We must all be able to trust each other completely and without reservation, as a private may have the answer to circumventing a hazard that is genius and outside of the box that I may not have otherwise thought of."

A native of Englewood, Florida, Colvin deployed to Afghanistan as an Army field medic with the 101st Airborne Division (Air Assault).

His journey from bomb tech to champion chef began with an email.

"I was on recruiting duty stationed in the Miami Recruiting Battalion and received one of those solicitation emails like, "Do you want to become Special Forces?" said Colvin. "The only difference with this email was it asked if I would like to go through culinary school and cook for a general and flag officer."

Colvin said he said his wife and close friends convinced him to participate in the television competition Chopped.

“I was very reluctant at first but after speaking with my wife, Kaila, and several close friends I ultimately put my name in the hat,” said Colvin. “My biggest key to success has been tasting every ingredient, keeping it simple and just enjoying the event.”

Colvin used the same attributes that made him successful as an Army leader and EOD technician to succeed at the competition.

“My experience as a tech has absolutely helped me, and even helped some of those I was cooking with,” said Colvin. “The EOD motto is ‘initial success or total failure.’ With the understanding of working on explosive hazards, you are either going to do it correctly or it will become someone else’s problem.”

Since joining the National Guard in 2004 and the active-duty U.S. Army in 2006, Colvin has served as a field medic, EOD technician, Special Operations recruiter and enlisted aide.



Colvin said he initially joined for the Army GI Bill

“I have continued to serve for many other reasons,” said Colvin. “I have had several different military occupational specialties in the Army, received my bachelor’s degree, I’m pursuing my master’s degree, and I’m the U.S. Army’s Chopped Champion. What other job in this world will allow you to do all this and pay you for it?”

Colvin earned his bachelor's degree from Southern New Hampshire University with a concentration in business administration and he is currently working on his master's degree at Liberty University with a focus on education and history.

In his current assignment as the first EOD tech to serve as the enlisted aide and estate manager for the 8,156-foot Quarters 1 on Carlisle Barracks, Pennsylvania, Colvin routinely cooks for general and flag officers, elected officials and foreign dignitaries.

Maj. Gen. David C. Hill, the commandant of the U.S. Army War College, said Colvin contributes to the success of the U.S. Army War College through his leadership and service at Quarters 1, which is one of the largest historical homes in the U.S. Army.

"Sgt. 1st Class Colvin provides a margin of excellence to every representational function at Quarters 1. Whether providing world-class food service or diligently caring for a one-of-a-kind historic property, he demonstrates character, competence and commitment," said Hill. "He's just a great NCO, family man and trusted teammate."

