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August 8, 2017

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Big Sky Resort, Montana.

Registration for our 2017 Alcohol Education Summit is now open. Register at www.AlcoholServerTraining.mt.gov (code with this link Alcohol Education Summit

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DATE CORRECTION
APRIL 30–MAY 1, 2018
2018 RRForum National Conference - hosted by the Michigan Liquor Control Commission and will be held in Detroit.

JULY 18-20, 2018
8th Biennial Northwest Alcohol & Substance Abuse Conference
Riverside Hotel, Boise Idaho

The Pre-Conference Sessions are on Wednesday. The official conference kicks off Thursday morning.

Visit NorthwestAlcoholConference.org for more information.

NABCA HIGHLIGHTS

Updated! Alcohol-Infused Food/Beverage section in the NABCA Survey Database.

New! Alcohol Technology in the World of Tomorrow - (White Paper)

Updated! Sunday Alcohol Sales (July 2017)

The Control State Agency Info Sheets. Please view website for more information.

NEW! A three-part webinar series regarding Communications Crisis Planning. Click to review webinar.

NABCA Survey Database – now available for members on the website.

www.NABCA.org
CA: Cashed? California Cannabis Distributors Aren’t Really Distributors

The role of cannabis distributors in California is far from the alcohol model.

Above the Law
By Hilary Bricken
August 7, 2017

Under California’s now-repealed Medical Cannabis Regulation and Safety Act (“MCRSA”), would-be distributors would have had a field day (which became the subject of great debate industry wide). Under the MCRSA, California’s cannabis cultivators and manufacturers would have had to sell their products to licensed distributors who would then sell those products to licensed retailers. MCRSA distributors had to be separately owned from other licensees and the MCRSA draft rules mandated that distributors take title to all product. All of that has changed with passage of the Medicinal and Adult Use Cannabis Regulation and Safety Act (a/k/a MAUCRSA, SB 94, or the Governor’s Budget Trailer Bill), which combines medical and adult use cannabis laws and rules, repeals the MCRSA, and forces withdrawal of the MCRSA draft rules.

Under MAUCRSA, cannabis licensees can vertically integrate and even act as their own distributor. This ultimately means California cannabis distributors won’t really act as distributors as we know them from the alcohol model. Instead, cannabis distributors will mostly help transport product and be the arbiters of product quality assurance.

Under the common three-tier system of alcohol distribution in the U.S., you have three main actors: importers or producers, distributors, and retailers. Essentially, producers (brewers, winemakers, importers, etc.) sell their products only to wholesale distributors who then sell to retailers (bars, liquor stores, grocery stores, etc.). Only retailers can sell to consumers. The alcohol distributor is crucial to the distribution chain and therefore immensely powerful. The distributor is solely responsible for setting up the relationship between retailers and producers and it does this by negotiating prices and providing brand selection between the two. Why have this three-tier model? The main reasons for doing this in the alcohol industry were to limit consumer overconsumption with high taxes (you have more taxable events by having a middle man) and by giving profit access to more players.

California’s version of a cannabis distributor under MAUCRSA seems to have all of the obligations of an alcohol distributor but not really any of the benefits of exclusivity or control between licensees. MAUCRSA defines “distribution” as the procurement, sale, and transport of cannabis and cannabis products between licensees. As of now, distributors are the only licensees that can transport inventory between licensees and the only licensees that must make sure third-party testing is completed and that all product packaging and labeling meet state requirements. Interestingly though, cannabis licensees are not required to sell their cannabis or cannabis products to a distributor and may directly sell to any licensee authorized to sell cannabis and cannabis products to purchasers. Despite this, all cultivation and manufacturing licensees must go through a distributor for testing and packaging and labeling quality assurance and distributors can charge fees for these services. Distributors will also be the ones to collect and remit taxes on behalf of cultivators and retailers and they must secure a Board of Equalization permit (in addition to state licensing) to do so.

Under the MCRSA, it seemed existing alcohol distributors and those acting like distributors under Prop. 215’s medical cannabis collective model were well-positioned to become power players in California’s cannabis industry. But now with passage of the MAUCRSA, it’s likely California will issue a slew of cannabis distributor licenses to actors of all sizes and these distributors will become one-stop-shops for mandatory quality assurance and little more. If California wants to avoid the same sort of distribution problems that befell Nevada in the early days of its adult use sales, it will need to issue a large number of distributor licenses. There may end up being some market for a distribution only model (in the alcohol sense) for distributors that can help their cultivator and manufacturer customers expand their markets and gain market share or that can help retailers secure top quality products and brands at good prices. But now that it will be so easy for cultivators, manufacturers, and retailers to get around distributors to forge their own relationships with each other, the role of cannabis distributors in California is far from the alcohol model.

To help you better understand what is going on with California cannabis and what MAUCRSA means for your cannabis business, three of our California attorneys will be hosting a free webinar on Tuesday August 8, 2017, from 12 p.m. to 1 p.m. PT. From our Los Angeles office, I will be moderating two of our San Francisco-based attorneys (Alison Malsbury and Habib Bentelab) in a discussion on the major changes between the MCRSA and the MAUCRSA, including on vertical integration and ownership of multiple licenses, revised distributorship standards, and what California cannabis license applicants can expect more generally from California’s Bureau of Cannabis Control as rulemaking continues through the remainder of the year. We will also address questions from the audience both during and at the end of the webinar.
TX: TABC officers work to keep tainted alcohol from Texas borders

KFOX 14
By Jessica Gonzalez
August 8, 2017

EL PASO, Texas (KFOX14/CBS4 — Reports of tainted alcohol in Mexico have made their way to Texas border towns.

The U.S. State Department is warning about possible tainted or counterfeit alcohol being purchased in Mexico.

The Texas Alcoholic Beverage Commission says this is a common issue at the Texas-Mexico border.

More than 1,000 containers of illicit alcohol have been seized during the 2017 fiscal year, TABC reports.

The containers were brought into Texas by travelers coming from Mexico.

Illicit alcohol constitutes anything that is not properly labeled or carried in improper containers. This type of alcohol may also contain dangerous or illegal additives, making them unsafe for consumption, officials said.

John Reney, TABC Ports of Entry Chief, said officers often come across this tainted alcohol.

"It's not uncommon for our tax compliance officers to identify alcohol in unmarked containers, such as a gasoline container or water bottle," Reney said. "These products, if allowed to enter Texas, could prove dangerous to consumers. For that reason, we seize the products and destroy them before they can enter the marketplace."

INTERNATIONAL NEWS

Asia: Ministry bans Japanese soy sauce brand after alcohol detected in samples

Alcohol traces detected in sauce samples tested in specialised laboratories

Gulf News Health
August 8, 2017

Dubai: The Ministry of Climate Change and Environment (MOCCAE) issued a warning on Tuesday prohibiting the imports of Japanese Kikkoman soy sauce due to its alcohol content.

The ministry also bans the circulation of the product in the UAE market in accordance with Ministerial Resolution No. (539) of 2012 on the Standard Guide to the Procedures for the Prohibition of Handling and Banning of Food.

The decision came based on the results of tests conducted by specialised accredited laboratories, which confirmed that several samples of the product with different production dates violated the rules.

Having received notifications of alcohol content in Kikkoman soy sauce from the concerned authorities, the ministry urged consumers to dispose of any Japanese-made Kikkoman soy sauce they may have purchased.

The ministry also clarified that this decision targets specifically Kikkoman soy sauce made in Japan and does not include Kikkoman products produced in other countries.

Canada: Feds ponder lowering legal alcohol limit for drivers

CTV Montreal
August 8, 2017

Canada’s legal blood-alcohol limit could be reduced, according to a letter sent by Federal Justice Minister Jody Wilson-Raybould to her Quebec counterpart.

In the letter to Stephanie Vallee, dated May 23, Wilson-Raybould suggested amending the Criminal Code to lower the legal limit for motorists from 0.08 to 0.05, saying the change would “better counter the danger posed by drivers who have consumed alcohol.”

Wilson-Raybould added that the current legal limit was established on evidence showing “the risk of being involved in a fatal accident was twice as high at this blood-alcohol level,” but that more recent research shows the initial data underestimated the risk.
In April, the federal Liberals tabled Bill C-46 which would increase the legal penalties for driving while impaired by drugs or alcohol.

United Kingdom: WSTA and CAMRA call on government to rethink alcohol duty hike to protect pubs

City A.M.
By Alys Key
August 8, 2017

Two leading bodies in the drinks industry have urged the government to rethink alcohol duty and other taxes to help protect British pubs.

British pubs are facing a tax raid of £1bn over the next five years, according to the Wine and Spirit Trade Association (WSTA).

The projected 18 per cent rise in alcohol duty by 2022 could mean every pub landlord in the UK hit with an additional duty bill of £4,374 in that time.

The WSTA has written to communities secretary Sajid Javid, who has overall responsibility for pubs, to express its concerns. The body calculated that changes to alcohol duty will add an extra £110m a year to pub bills by 2022 just for wine and spirits.

“Our research shows that wine and spirits contribute nearly a third to a landlord’s alcohol income,” said Miles Beal, chief executive of the WSTA. “The Government should be supporting landlords, not punishing them, and the best way to do that is to axe planned duty rises on all alcoholic drinks.”

At the same time, new research from YouGov out today has found that 55 per cent of people believe beer duty is too high.

The Campaign for Real Ale (CAMRA) has called for the government to freeze beer duty, which is currently 54p per pint.

Colin Valentine, CAMRA’s National Chairman says: “Pubs are a huge part of many people’s lives. If people can’t afford to visit their local, we will see even more pubs close their doors forever - hurting jobs, the local economy and the community. We urgently need to ease the tax burden on our pubs in order to ensure that pub-going remains an affordable activity for the majority of Brits.”

Yesterday, CAMRA also warned that viable community pubs were being driven out of business by increasing business rates.

The organisation called for relief of £5,000 a year to be made available to individual pubs, building on the government’s existing £1,000 rates reduction.

CAMRA said business rates were contributing to the high rate of pub closures in the UK.

Australia: Back to the future on alcohol reform

The Banned Drinker Register returns to the Northern Territory

Asia & The Pacific Policy Society
By Liam Grealy & Joanna Laidler
August 8, 2017

Will re-establishing a Banned Drinker Register help overturn years of alcohol policy failure in Australia’s Northern Territory? The answer depends on how well the government listens to public advice, Liam Grealy and Joanna Laidler write.

Over 70 submissions have been published and public forums have just concluded for a major alcohol policy review in Australia’s Northern Territory (NT). Despite this public consultation, the NT Labor Government appears fully committed to re-establishing the Banned Drinker Register (BDR) – a policy intended to prevent problem-drinkers from buying or consuming alcohol. With trials beginning in August and a full rollout scheduled for September, the devil is in the detail of this major alcohol reform.

Michael Gunner’s Labor Party returned to power in August 2016 following a landslide victory. Its platform included a commitment to dismantling mandatory treatment for alcohol abuse and reinstating the BDR, which was introduced by the former Labor government in 2011 but discontinued under the Country Liberal Party in 2012.

In January 2017, Health Minister Natasha Fyles announced the “Northern Territory Alcohol Policies and Legislation Review” (Review), later releasing an Issues Paper, calling for public submissions, and stating publicly that “everything is on the table” in the development of an integrated Alcohol Harm Reduction Framework.
In the meantime, the Alcohol Harm Reduction Bill 2017 was tabled in May, setting in motion the abolishment of mandatory treatment and the reestablishment of the BDR.

Submissions published in July provide broad support for abolishing mandatory treatment. Under the Alcohol Mandatory Treatment Act (AMT) a person can be referred to the AMT Tribunal if taken by police into protective custody three times in a two-month period. A residential treatment order requires twelve weeks of mandatory rehabilitation at an AMT facility, which in Darwin is at the old Berrimah prison.

Mandatory treatment has been widely criticised. In addition to its significant operational expenditure of $24 million per annum plus capital costs, an external review found that mandatory treatment lacks evidence of long-term benefit for alcohol addiction and that 77 per cent of people qualifying for it did not proceed to treatment. Other shortcomings include sketchy treatment plans, inadequate record-keeping, inconsistent interpreter use, and deficient post-release services for addressing alcohol misuse.

Critics have also noted that people subject to the mandatory treatment regime have been almost exclusively Aboriginal. Such racialised outcomes are evident across other Country Liberal Party alcohol initiatives – such as “Paperless arrests”, Temporary Beat Locations, and Alcohol Protection Orders – which disproportionately affect homeless people and people marginalised from licensed premises.

The imminent conclusion of mandatory treatment and reintroduction of the Banned Drinker Register might thus appear as a cause for celebration. However, enthusiasm should be tempered by recently published Review submissions, which outline numerous policy features requiring urgent government clarification or consideration.

In its 2011 incarnation, the BDR prohibited listed persons from purchasing, possessing, and consuming liquor. Licensees were required to scan identification at the point of sale and it was an offence to sell alcohol to a person on the BDR.

The 2017 version is very similar. People will be added to the register under Banned Drinker Orders for a wide range of alcohol-related offences, infringements or protective custody episodes, and by self-referral. Predictions estimate approximately 2,500 individuals will be listed on the register by December 2017, although the lower threshold requirement could see this figure exceeded.

In their submissions, the North Australian Aboriginal Justice Agency (NAAJA) and the Central Aboriginal Congress demand an independent and longitudinal evaluation of the BDR and other alcohol reduction measures, which did not take place in 2012. Obtaining accurate benchmark data (regarding alcohol-related offences, hospital and emergency presentations, and so on) depends on clear policies and procedures for collection, record-keeping, and sharing by governmental agencies at the outset. The mandatory treatment regime struggled to establish such systems effectively. This is important for evidence-based evaluations, and to reduce the likelihood of reactionary policy overhauls by future governments.

NAAJA also warns that the Alcohol Harm Reduction Bill 2017 lacks detail regarding any requirement to support people on Banned Drinker Orders to access culturally appropriate treatment options. The former BDR was established alongside the Alcohol and Other Drugs Tribunal and the Substance Misuse Assessment Referral for Treatment Court. These initiatives respectively referred banned drinkers to alcohol treatment options and diverted offenders from the criminal justice system into treatment. Such therapeutic and social support is necessary for addressing ongoing alcohol misuse.

It is also concerning that the new regime intends to make it an offence to knowingly supply alcohol to a person already on the BDR. This will disproportionately affect Aboriginal people who often have ongoing cultural obligations which might complicate a legal requirement to refuse supply of alcohol to family members.

Such issues demand caution regarding the uniform implementation of the BDR across culturally and geographically distinct NT communities. Indigenous people should lead efforts to reduce alcohol-related harm in indigenous communities, including determining how the BDR will interact with precedent alcohol management plans or permit systems. It is also unclear whether Aboriginal Corporation identification cards constitute acceptable proof of identity, and what the implications would be for individuals who lack such papers.

The concerns of published submissions outlined here – regarding evaluation, therapeutic support, criminalisation, and uniform implementation – are a matter for urgent government consideration. If these issues are not addressed in advance, the BDR risks being another NT alcohol regime that is impossible to clearly assess, ineffective, and racially unjust in its application.

We have focused on the BDR because its reinstatement is significant and imminent. However, we hope the Review will also consider other submitted recommendations. These include reducing the density of liquor outlets and trading hours; the introduction of a minimum unit price for alcohol; the abolishment of the paperless arrests provisions and stricter limits placed on police protective custody powers; social strategies that address and alleviate racialised exclusion and disadvantage, and a ban on political donations from the alcohol industry in line with NSW legislation.
Thanks to public consultation, Gunner’s Labor Party has the opportunity to improve upon years of alcohol policy failure in the Northern Territory. The devil may be in the details, but now is the time to get those details right.

PUBLIC HEALTH NEWS

'12-Step' Strategy Boosts Success of Teen Drug Abuse Program

US News
By Robert Preidt, HealthDay Reporter
August 7, 2017

MONDAY, Aug. 7, 2017 (HealthDay News) -- Drug and alcohol abuse treatment for teens and young adults may be more effective when it includes a 12-step program similar to that used by Alcoholics Anonymous, a new report suggests.

The study at Massachusetts General Hospital's Center for Addiction Medicine in Boston lasted nine months, and included 59 people aged 14 to 21.

The researchers found that combining the 12-step approach with standard care led to more successful outcomes than current standard methods alone.

While a well-designed drug and alcohol abuse program can benefit all adolescents, "we showed that adding a 12-step component to standard cognitive-behavioral and motivational strategies produced significantly greater reductions in substance-related consequences during and in the months following treatment," said study leader John Kelly. He directs the Recovery Research Institute at the hospital.

"It also produced higher rates of 12-step meeting participation, which was associated with longer periods of continuous abstinence," Kelly added in a hospital news release.

Group therapy sessions included talking about changing social networks and reducing relapse risk, the study authors noted. Two sessions also featured young members of a 12-step program who shared their experiences with addiction and recovery.

"That peer-to-peer aspect was probably the most powerful in disabusing young people of the negative stereotypes they often hold about 12-step members and about recovery more broadly," Kelly said.

"Similar-aged peers who are in recovery seemed much better able to capture the attention of participants than clinic staff," he explained.

Greater participation in 12-step programs didn't last long term, however. The researchers suggested that this finding shows a need for some type of extended care for teens recovering from alcohol or drug abuse.

"We want to replicate and extend the testing of this treatment even further to determine the benefits of longer-term care," Kelly said.

"We know that the transition to adulthood is fraught with relapse risks for young people recovering from a substance-use disorder, so some kind of regular but brief 'clinical recovery check-up,' like what is common for other chronic conditions like diabetes or hypertension, could improve outcomes," he suggested.

The study was published online recently in the journal Addiction.

More information
The U.S. National Institute on Drug Abuse has more on substance abuse treatment.
‘Sessionable’ Wine Will Help Boost US Wine Sales, Producers Claims

Making wine more ‘sessionable’ will help boost US wine sales and appeal to new consumers, a leading US wine producer has claimed.

Stephanie Gallo, vice president of marketing at E&J Gallo Winery said one of the biggest challenges – as well as the biggest opportunity – in the US market was to continue growing wine sales, but to do so, the focus needed to be not just on selling wine, but on “selling wine in the style, packaging and price points to meet the evolving needs of our consumer”.

This included innovation and making wines more “sessionable,” fun and friendly to appeal to new entrants into the wine category, she argued.

“One of the core values of E & J. Gallo Winery has always been innovation and we want to drive category growth through innovation,” she said. “For example, we have concentrated on category expansion to capture sales from consumers who too often shy away from the wine category choosing to purchase a craft cider, cocktail or beer.”

“We want to provide them an option to meet their needs when they are seeking refreshment such as our popular Barefoot Spritzers. It is a single-serve can that is low in alcohol and lightly carbonated making the wine ‘sessionable’. By placing it in single-serve cans it has enabled us to secure placement in on-premise accounts that have not traditionally promoted wine in a major way such as sports stadiums, outdoor festivals and concert facilities.”

The producer first launched two spritzers in a screwtop bottle in 2013 but last year rolled out the lines in a seasonal can format, adding two new flavours, moscato and rosé, this Spring and making the cans a permanent addition.

She said the results had been “very encouraging” and the fact that there was a strong population demographic coming of age should benefit the wine industry for years to come “provided we continue to meet the needs of current and future wine drinkers.”

“Millennials are fuelling the growth of the wine category and their behaviour is dramatically different than their predecessors. As a winery, we’re witnessing a paradigm shift in how and when people learn about and enjoy wine,” she continued.

Speaking to db about the wider US wine retail landscape, she argued that the US consumer was becoming more knowledgeable about wine and as a result, savvy retailers were moving away from the “sterile wall of wine” to embrace greater interaction with consumers, particularly in grocery and warehouse stores.

“Many of our larger retail customers have made wine a strategic category and have reinvented the category, moving the department to high traffic locations and expanding their assortments,” she told db.

Shot in the Dark: College Students Don’t Know How Strong Their Drinks Are

WASHINGTON — Do you know how much alcohol is in your drink? If you’re making a judgment based on taste and smell alone, you may miss the mark, a new study from England finds.

Young people, in particular, “are really bad at detecting how much alcohol there is in a drink by taste or smell,” said Philip Terry, a professor of psychology at Kingston University London. Terry presented his findings Aug. 4 here at the American Psychological Association’s annual meeting.

To see how well young adults could determine how much alcohol was in a drink, the researchers did two experiment with college students. [7 Ways Alcohol Affects Your Health]
In the first experiment, 48 college students who drank vodka at least once a week tasted three vodka tonics with different alcohol concentrations: 3.8 percent, 7.6 percent and 15 percent alcohol by volume. (Vodka on its own is 40 percent alcohol by volume; on average, beer is about 5 percent and wine is about 12 percent alcohol by volume.) After one sip of each drink, the people in the study completed a questionnaire about the drink’s bitterness, sweetness and strength. The questionnaire also asked how much the participant liked the drink. Then, without looking at the questionnaire, they were asked to rank the drinks in order of strength.

On the first attempt, only 28 of drinkers (about 58 percent) got the order right, the researchers found. Then, the participants had the chance to try the drinks again and change their rankings; five more (about 10 percent of the total group) switched to the correct order.

But why could some people get the order correct, whereas others could not? “We can’t find much at the moment” to distinguish between the people who got it right versus those who got it wrong, Terry told Live Science. For example, more experienced drinkers weren’t more likely to rank the drinks correctly than less experienced drinkers.

Those who did correctly rank the drinks based on alcohol content were more likely to say that they liked the lowest-alcohol drink the most and the highest-alcohol drink the least, Terry said. Therefore, it’s possible that they ranked the drinks based on how much they liked them. In comparison, the people who got the order wrong were more likely to say that they liked all three drinks a similar amount.

In the second experiment, a different group of 48 college students repeated the experiment, but with an additional drink: a sweet alcoholic drink made with lemonade. As in the first experiment, the researchers gave the students three of each drink — each one containing one of three different alcohol concentrations — and asked them to rank the drinks based on strength.

The researchers also added one more step: They measured how well each person responded to a bitter taste (in this case, a chemical called phenylthiocarbamide) and a sweet taste (the artificial sweetener sucralose). People who can taste the chemical phenylthiocarbamide, and are therefore more sensitive to bitterness, are often referred to as “supertasters.”

As in the first experiment, there was no difference between a person’s drinking experience and his or her ability to rank the drinks correctly.

But the supertasters appeared to have an advantage: They were able to correctly rank the lemonade-based drink, Terry said. This advantage was limited to the sweet drink, though; the supertasters fared similarly to the non-supertasters when ranking the bitter vodka tonic.

"So far, that’s the only factor we’ve been able to find," Terry said. "Supertasters are able to discriminate" alcohol strengths, but only in sweet drinks.

Terry noted that the people in the study went into the experiments confident that they would get the drink rankings correct. But in both experiments, about half got it wrong.

People typically believe that they will know if they are given a drink that’s stronger than what they’d normally choose, but these experiments suggest that “their perception doesn't conform to reality,” Terry said. "About half of people would struggle to detect a significant change in the alcohol content of a drink.”

The inability to detect when a drink has more alcohol could make people vulnerable to drinking more than they should, Terry said. But because people may be overestimating this ability, they should be a bit cautious when given drinks with unknown alcohol contents, he said.

The findings have not yet been published in a peer-reviewed journal.

Originally published on Live Science.

How The Navy’s Ban On Booze Birthed A Million-Dollar Floating Ice Cream Parlor

Task and Purpose
By Jared Keller
August 7, 2017

On July 1, 1914, the U.S. Navy implemented the cruelest and most unusual punishment in its venerable history: a ban on alcohol.
Under General Order 99, drinking “alcoholic liquors on board any naval vessel, or within any navy yard or station,” became prohibited, with commanding officers “held directly responsible for the enforcement of this order,” according to a U.S. Naval Institute reflection on the 100th anniversary of the ban in 2014. Secretary of the Navy Josephus Daniels delivered the order; described as a “teetotaler,” Daniels was ridiculed in the press for the decision for years, only for the U.S. to constitutionally establish national Prohibition just six years later.

The Navy’s Prohibition pregame is memorable not just for its ridiculousness but also for giving American sailors (and eventually everyone else) an insatiable appetite for ice cream. Sure, ice cream’s been an American tradition since George Washington spent $200 on the treat in a single summer, but Prohibition created national cravings that persisted across military and civilian worlds even after alcohol was legalized again in 1933. If there’s nothing as American as apple pie, that apple pie tastes a billion times more patriotic with a scoop of ice cream.

Though the Navy only formally banned alcohol for six years until the advent of Prohibition, went wild for ice cream… and stayed that way for generations. Ice cream only gained more cultural significance as a salve for low troop morale during the long overseas deployments World War II.

“In 1942, as Japanese torpedoes slowly sank the U.S.S. Lexington, then the second-largest aircraft carrier in the Navy’s arsenal, the crew abandoned ship—but not before breaking into the freezer and eating all the ice cream,” writes Matt Siegel in a masterful August essay for The Atlantic on the American military’s odd history with the treat. “Survivors describe scooping ice cream into their helmets and licking them clean before lowering themselves into the Pacific.”

“The finest time I had was in the sick bay one day when a Marine obtained an ice cream freezer,” one veteran wounded during the Allied amphibious assault on Japan recalled in a letter published in Anne Cooper Funderberg’s excellent Chocolate, Strawberry, Vanilla: A History of American Ice Cream. “We mixed [the ingredients] all together in the freezer, and there were fellows so homesick they were almost crying.” (Blue Seal ice cream built its first factory on a U.S. military base in Okinawa in 1948.)

The national craze for frozen desserts, and a rival service branch, eventually helped midwife the oddest vessel in modern American naval history: a million-dollar floating refrigerated ice cream parlor.

The Army immediately recognized ice cream’s impact on troop morale. In 1943, the branch’s legendary Quartermaster Corps was shipping more than 135 million pounds of ice cream mix to Allied bases worldwide, per Funderberg; by February 1945, the Corps claimed it could deliver half-pints of icy relief “right to the foxholes.”

But that wasn’t enough: According to Funderberg, Secretary of the Navy James Forrestal put a high premium on keeping American G.I.s well-stocked in ice cream after an assistant reported that the frozen manna “[had been] the most neglected of all the important morale factors.”

To that end, the Navy in 1945 borrowed a concrete barge from the Army Transportation Corps that, retrofitted with heavy-duty refrigeration units, functioned as a floating ice cream parlor for smaller vessels in the Pacific Ocean. Officially called a “BRL” (Barge, Refrigerated, Large, which sounds like a bureaucracy’s take on a Bond martini), the Navy’s beloved “ice cream ship” was basically a 265-foot-long ice cream factory, capable of churning out 500 gallons of the sweet stuff a day (USNI pegs output at 10 gallons every 7 minutes) and stashing another 500 in its cavernous freezers — on top of some 1,500 tons of meat and 500 tons of vegetables.

The Army eventually built three BRLs of its own tasked explicitly for parlor operations, and with good reason. “Can you imagine a greater tonic to body and spirit than real ice cream served in steaming jungles or on hard-won beachheads?” the National Dairy Products Corporation bragged in a 1945 advertisement. “It’s a touch of home as well as a valuable food.”

The BRL wasn’t even the wackiest ice cream scheme that service members devised during those years at war. “By 1943, American heavy-bomber crews figured out they could make ice cream over enemy territory by strapping buckets of mix to the rear gunner’s compartment before missions,” writes Siegel. “By the time they landed, the custard would have frozen at altitude and been churned smooth by engine vibrations and turbulence—if not machine-gun fire and midair explosions. Soldiers on the ground reported mixing snow and melted chocolate bars in helmets to improvise a chocolate sorbet.”

It’s hard to imagine any silver lining for the 13 years of Prohibition, but by banning booze, the Navy may have accidentally catalyzed our cultural devotion to ice cream. And no matter how or where you gulped down your first spoonful, one thing remains certain: God help you if get between a sailor and his snowy snack.
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