

America's North Shore Journal

Marines fix up good eats in combat outpost

- [Home](#)

Dec 15th 2009 by [Chuck Simmins](#)

- [Haiti Earthquake Relief](#)

Posted in [Afghanistan](#), [Marines](#), [Military](#), [War on Terror](#)

Search... [Archives and Categories](#)

Tags: [3rd Marine Regiment](#), [5th Marine Regiment](#), [Afghan food](#), [Marine Police Mentoring Team](#), [Nawa District Helmand province](#), [Patrol Base Jaker](#), [Sgt. Juan A. Flores](#)

- [RSS](#)



Seaman Timothy Wienke, hospital corpsman, Police Mentoring Team, 1st Battalion, 3rd Marine Regiment, and Cpls. Carlos Martinez and Carlos J. Orellana, military policemen, PMT, 1/3, chop vegetables, season meat and cook sides at the Patrol Base Jaker custom field kitchen, Dec. 5. Marines built the kitchen area at Jaker by hand and they say it provides them the luxury to cook and eat something other than field rations while living Nawa District's bazaar. Wienke, 21, is from Chicago, Martinez, 22, is from Roma, Texas, and Orellana, 22, is from Houston. Photo by Sgt. Brian Tuthill

When Marines hear they must live at a small patrol base for a long period of time, many think of primitive facilities, dirty conditions and bland, prepackaged meals coming from brown bags.

For Marines with the Police Mentoring Team assigned to the 1st Battalion, 3rd Marine Regiment, living on Patrol Base Jaker near the Nawa District's bazaar means good eats. Dozens of Marines of Alpha Company, 1/3, and Charlie Company, 1st Battalion, 5th Marine Regiment, skipped the regular meal lines, Dec. 5, and followed their stomachs to the improvised wood stove kitchen on camp, where Sgt. Juan A. Flores and his team were frying chicken, cooking rice and topping it all with fresh pico de gallo over Afghan flat bread. Their fresh ingredients were purchased from the bazaar earlier that day.

The 1/3 Lava Dogs living at Jaker inherited the kitchen from the Marines of 1/5, from whom they recently took over the area. The hand-built, dual-burner stove is made from engineer stakes, barrier steel wire grates, British military ammunition cans and parachute cord.

"Before we made it in October, everyone had their own little cooking areas when we first got here, so we consolidated them into one big one," said Cpl. Michael H. Gobel, a humvee driver for Charlie Company, 1/5, who helped construct the kitchen.

"We looked through the junk pile and scavenged parts to build with," said Gobel, 21, from El Cajon, Calif. "I used it to cook on every night I was here. It was way better than the usual chow and I'm glad we're able to pass it on to the 1/3 Marines so they can enjoy it."

"Out here, real chow halls are not easily accessible, so you rely on your Marine ingenuity to make things better," said Flores, PMT platoon sergeant and a 28-year-old from Los Angeles. "We want to live as comfortably as possible, and dinner is a big deal to all of us. Preparing a meal together, cooking together and eating together – it's just like family."

Flores said he was very happy to see a kitchen already in place on the camp, saving his Marines the effort of building one. Before his team deployed from Military Police Company at Camp Pendleton, Calif., he had already dreamed of making his own meals while deployed.

"When I was deployed to Iraq last year, my staff [non-commissioned officer in charge] wanted to make life better and decided we were not going to eat [Meals, Ready-to-Eat] every day if we can avoid it. We were living in a house with the Iraqi police as we trained them, so we bought and rented pots and pans, a stove – everything we would need to make a good dinner every night.

“Pretty soon, we had infantry Marines from down the street fighting to come over to our house for dinner,” said Flores.

Meals usually start early in the afternoon with PMT Marines chopping vegetables, gathering wood scraps, preparing and seasoning meat, cleaning pots and pans, and buying last-minute ingredients. Their seasonings and spices are mostly collected and donated from care packages. “Out here we can grill it, boil it, bake it or fry it,” said Flores.

Flores admits his team’s cuisine has a Mexican bias, since his main chef and more than half of his Marines are Mexican-American or married to Hispanic women. Judging by the crowd and smiles on faces of Marines gathered around the kitchen, nobody seems to mind.

For other Marines like Cpl. Carlos J. Orellana, PMT, 1/3, who are not as experienced with cooking, they take it as a great opportunity to learn.

“It’s exciting for me to be able to do this here,” said Orellana, a 22-year-old from Houston. “I cooked a little back home, but this is cooking in the raw. It’s a whole new experience and I’m going to learn a lot, too.

“What’s great about this is that it all comes down to taking care of people,” said Orellana. “If someone says, ‘Wow! This is really good!’ then that made everything worth it for us.”

As the PMT Marines begin training local Afghan national police forces, they won’t always be at Jaker to cook, but when they are, “you’ll see us cooking,” said Orellana.

DVIDS

Story by Sgt. Brian Tuthill

« [Tal Afar Asphalt Plant Fully Operational Again](#)
[Rebuilding Iraq – brick by brick](#) »

Comments are closed.

 [Subscribe](#)

[Stumble It!](#) • [Add to Mixx!](#) • [Discuss on Newsvine](#) • [Share on Facebook](#) • [Digg This!](#) • [Save to del.icio.us](#) • [Twit This!](#)

[Heart Attack Survival](#)

Hugh Downs reports on little-known symptom too many tragically ignore

[Distance Learning MBA](#)

From #1 Ranked Business School Designed for Working Professionals

Ads by Google

University of Phoenix

Proven Effective For
Thousands Of Military
Grads Since 1989. Get
Info
Phoenix.edu

To subscribe, enter your email address:

Delivered by [FeedBurner](#)

Health Information
by Charles Simmins

Recent Posts

Mumps continues to spread in downstate New York and in New Jersey

Rochester and Monroe County showing little flu activity

Rochester aids Haiti with people and medical supplies

Clinical trials - the cutting edge of medicine

Earthquake in Haiti increases spread of deadly illnesses

Bestsellers in Software



[Get Widget](#)

[Privacy](#)

Other Work
by Charles Simmins

Recent Posts

- Kentucky National Guard Opens Haiti Lifeline
- Navy Carrier Sails to Rescue - All Ahead Flank!
- On the Fringe: Some of the Sects and Cults on the Boundries of Society
- North Korean "Provocations" Keep U.S. Forces Wary
- Customer Service Tips for Hospitals
- Telangana

• **Visitors**



America's North Shore Journal © 2010 All Rights Reserved.

design.DavidGarlitz.com