

HOT MEALS ARE SPECIAL FOR SOLDIERS IN SOUTHERN AFGHANISTAN

A soldier assigned to Company B, 1st Battalion, 12th Infantry Regiment, 2nd Infantry Brigade Combat Team, 4th Infantry Division, serves vegetables during kitchen police duty in Tarin Kowt, Afghanistan. Soldiers from Company J, 1st Battalion, 41st Infantry Regiment, 2IBCT provide all personnel on the base with two hot meals a day. (PHOTO BY STAFF SGT. NEYSA CANFIELD, USA, 4TH INFANTRY DIVISION PUBLIC AFFAIRS)



Service members with the 1st Security Force Assistance Brigade at Tarin Kowt in Uruzgan Province in Afghanistan primarily perform an advisory mission, but also pull guard duty and repair vehicles and equipment.

Unlike most service members throughout southern Afghanistan, however, the full-course hot meal they look forward to and enjoy at the end of each day, as well as their other meals, is prepared in a mobile kitchen trailer by culinary specialists of Company J, 1st Battalion, 41st Infantry Regiment, 2nd Infantry Brigade Combat Team, 4th Infantry Division.

"Our primary mission here is to provide healthy and hearty meals for everyone twice a day; breakfast and dinner," said Staff Sgt. Pierreline Pierre, culinary NCO in charge for Company J, 1st Bn., 41st Inf. Reg. "It's important that everyone is fed and healthy so they can complete their missions for

the base."

The recently established base, formerly used by NATO Special Operations Forces, was cleared and secured earlier this year by soldiers of the 1st Battalion, 12th Infantry Regiment to assist and support the 1st Security Force Assistance Brigade.

With sometimes-minimal resources, Pierre said she and her team of five soldiers work hard to make sure they complete their mission of providing hot and ready meals for everyone.

"Being in an area with little resources, I have to assess wisely how the food is distributed and prepared," said Pierre. "We try to think out of the box with the food we prepare in the kitchen and if possible we provide sandwiches for lunch so that soldiers and civilians don't have to eat [Meals, Ready to Eat] for lunch every day."

Little gestures like a sandwich bar during lunch go a long way for the soldiers and civilians of the base according to Staff Sgt. James Potier, with the North Carolina National Guard.

"Before the kitchen was set up and running, everyone was eating three MRE's a day and it can be tiresome," said Potier. "Having a hot breakfast in the morning and hot dinner in the evening is amazing; everyone goes through the chow line happy."

The experience that the junior soldiers are gaining during their time in Tarin Kowt will not only enhance their skill sets but it will set them apart from their peers, said Pierre.

"We are the only group of culinary

specialists from the brigade that are providing meals with a [mobile kitchen trailer] in Afghanistan," she said. "My soldiers are getting hands-on experience on how to build a dining facility from scratch, working under stress and with limited supplies."

Pierre said although her team might not have a luxurious kitchen or a surplus of supplies, she is proud of the morale they are able to provide to everyone.

"I remind my soldiers that after a long day everyone comes to our dining facility and looks forward to what we have prepared for them," she said. "I also remind them to put their best foot forward and to be proud of what they are making and serving to everyone, because we are important to the mission as well."

In appreciation, Potier said he and his soldiers are always happy to help the culinary team, whether it is storing away supplies or helping with kitchen police duty.

"With the small crew of soldiers and resources that the culinary team has here, they do a great job of providing and taking care of us," he said. "We appreciate everything they do from waking up earlier than everyone else to make breakfast for us, to surprising us with snacks and treats in the middle of the day, we couldn't be more thankful to have them here."

—GFS

With reporting by Staff Sgt. Neysa Canfield, USA, 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 4th Infantry Division Public Affairs.



Staff Sgt. James Potier, with the North Carolina National Guard, helps a soldier assigned to Company J, 1st Battalion, 41st Infantry Regiment, 2nd Infantry Brigade Combat Team, 4th Infantry Division, store beverages in a container in Tarin Kowt, Afghanistan. (PHOTO BY STAFF SGT. NEYSA CANFIELD, USA, 4TH INFANTRY DIVISION PUBLIC AFFAIRS)