



# COME AND GET IT

By HOWARD  
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They're eating more and better in Uncle Sam's Army than you did twenty-five years back, and they're putting on weight that will help them when they go into action. Yes, that's milk the soldier above is drinking. Every man in the service gets at least a half pint a day.

**T**HE chow that is being fed to the American Army is tops as compared to the fare of other fighting men anywhere in the world. It is also better and more healthful food than that habitually eaten by six out of ten Americans. It costs two-thirds more per soldier per day than the diet of canned willie, goldfish and slum on which the bulk of our Army did O. K. during World War I—but it certainly is worth it.

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Nutrition, the science of providing proper nourishment, variety, bulk, calories, vitamins and minerals in the daily diet, has been ordered on active duty for the duration.

To keep a soldier going at maximum efficiency for 24 hours requires five to six pounds of good food. Multiply that by upwards of three million men and you'll agree with Lt. Col. Paul P. Logan of the Quartermaster Corps that feeding the new Army is "one of the greatest experiences of our generation, and will have a definite effect on national eating habits and national economy after the war."

But the boys who come running when the bugler sounds that welcome mess call aren't so much interested in whether their vitamins and calories are all present or accounted for. They want chow that tastes good and they want plenty of it.

The typical soldier in this youthful Army, statisticians say, is *still growing*. That means he can stow away even more food than a healthy citizen a few years older. Best proof that he thrives on the new scientific diet is that the average trainee in camps in this country gains from six to ten pounds in his first few months in uniform. It builds him up solid and hard and gives him a body to match his fighting spirit.

He likes it, too, though it often takes a little while for those who have been accustomed to limited diets to get used to Army mess variety. Take the rookie



The line every Yank soldier falls for  
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**Show-off stuff this, at a cooks' school** who was discovered passing up supper to go to the Post Exchange for a feast of hot dogs and hamburgers. He had been eating around in roadside diners for so long, in civilian life, that a regular meal, with meat and potatoes, salad and dessert didn't appeal to him at first.

Another complaint was about the pie. Not that it didn't taste all right, since it was prepared according to carefully checked recipes right out of the mess sergeant's famous bible, *The Army Cook*. No, the squawk came from the way they serve it—in a square instead of a wedge. It seems regulation pie pans are square, providing for 70 rectangular slabs of pie per each. Some mathematical Army cook is going to work out a way to cut it into 70 equal triangles, and then even the newest recruit will be satisfied.

That's not the way it was when you and I dined at Uncle Sam's expense 25 years ago. Most of us would have been lucky to see a piece of pie in any shape. Not that the Army coaxes the boys along. It's the same old Army, no foolin' about that. "You'll like it!" they tell the trainee the first day. And he likes it, just as his dad, probably, did in 1918.

The C.O. in a majority of the outfits in 1917-1918 took a personal interest in the food of his men and it was never uncommon to see an officer, inspecting the mess and taking a sip of the soup to make sure nothing phoney had been dropped in by mistake. In fact, it was an officer's duty to ask from time to time if there were any complaints—and on a few occasions there were some dandies. But in this new Army it is common practice for officers to eat at the same table as their men and, this, you'll admit, is something fairly new under the sun. All to the good, too, to



### Here's Type C Emergency Field Ration. Not bad, eh?

judge from the reaction of the boys.

At Fort Sill, Oklahoma, Lt. Col. I. A. Kurtz, C. O. at the Reception Center, recently went one further. He asked a batch of new men to turn in their own ideas for a good day's food. The fellow who wanted lettuce for breakfast actually got it, as did the guy who pined for a mushroom omelet once a day. The soldier who asked for lobster for lunch, however, posed a pretty difficult problem. For ten days the Fort held a "food fiesta," which probably did more to "sell" the recruits on the Army than anything else could have done. The idea has been widely copied, not as regular practice, but over short periods as circumstances permit. Army Bakers and Cooks School men say they learned a lot from the suggestions turned in.

Just try to remember during World War I one ordinary fall day when your mess consisted of something like the following, taken from the Army's new master menu for November:

#### **BREAKFAST**

Orange  
Assorted Cereal  
Fresh Milk  
Cheese Omelet  
Lyonnais Potatoes  
Bread and Butter  
Coffee

After that delicate, post-Reveille repast—fit for any husky appetite—come the more important meals of the present-day soldier:

**COME AND GET IT****DINNER**

Barley Soup  
 Soft Roast Beef  
 Creamed Potatoes  
 Spinach  
 Pickled Beet Salad  
 Bread and Butter

**SUPPER**

Spareribs  
 Boiled Potatoes  
 Buttered Cabbage  
 Bread and Butter  
 Cinnamon Buns  
 Coffee

That is a typical Field Ration A, which has supplanted garrison rations since our entry into the war. Each month a master menu is prepared by the Subsistence Laboratory of the Quartermaster Corps, with complete menus for each day. It is sent to the Commander of each Corps Area and is adapted to local conditions in individual camps, posts and cantonments. Emphasis is placed on the desirability of using local seasonal foods, but the nutritional requirements of the master menu must be met.

The master menu is prepared with the average soldier in mind. He is of medium height and build and weight, but being engaged in strenuous activities, is hungrier than the average citizen. His food provides an average of 4500 to 5000 calories per day, compared to the average civilian adult intake of 2000 to 2500. There is a satisfactory balance of proteins, fats and carbohydrates.

In addition, the menus call for more minerals than meet the requirements of the Nutritional Committee of the National Research Council—iron, in excess of 20 milligrams; phosphorus, 2.2 grams; and calcium, 1.1 grams. The Vitamin A total per day is approximately 7,000 international units; Vitamin C, 115 milligrams; Vitamin B-1 (thiamin), 3.0 milligrams; and Vitamin B-2, 3.1 milligrams.

Great care is taken, in preparing the master menus, to insure that the soldier will not get a surplus of starchy foods at any one meal. Peas, for instance, are not served with corn or beans, nor potatoes with macaroni or spaghetti. Local fresh vegetables and fruits are always substituted for the canned product when available. In fact, 15 percent of all the money the Army spends for food now goes for fruits and vegetables in season.

During World War I, food regulations called for very little in the way of fruits, except for prunes, of which there always

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seemed to be plenty. It is interesting to note that the new regulations provide that troops in camp are not to be served the same menu on the same day in consecutive weeks.

Prunes and beans, those old Army standbys, still are in great demand. Quality standards are assured by the work of the scientific staffs in Food Testing laboratories established by the Q. M. Corps in Kansas City, Chicago, New York, San Francisco, San Antonio, New Orleans and Boston. Even the lowly bean has to stand inspection. Beans bought for Army use must be of proper size and quality. Laboratory men select a sample from a large shipment, for a series of tests. First the beans are rolled through screens of a special mesh to determine size. Those below Army standards drop to a lower container. Then they are put in a brine solution. Those containing excess moisture sink to the bottom and are discarded.

The laboratories are equipped with an impressive array of scientific devices for determining purity and grade of all manner of foods. A centrifuge is used to test fruit extracts. Drying ovens are on hand, to determine moisture content. Special attention is given to milk and dairy products. Incubators are used to determine the bacteria count of a sample of evaporated milk.

Fresh milk is, of course, purchased locally at camps and posts, but here, too, extra precautions are taken. The soldier's milk ration, incidentally, has been doubled since 1918. He now gets a minimum of a pint a day. Elaborate safeguards are used to insure freshness and purity.

At many of the large training centers, such as Fort Dix, Fort McClelland, Camp Devens, Fort Bragg and Lake Charles, regulations require the use of over-all caps or hoods for milk bottle tops, to protect the lip of the bottle from contamination after it leaves the dairy. Importance of this kind of attention to sanitary detail, was explained by Dr. Victor Heiser, medical authority and author of *A Doctor's Odyssey*.

"We see in Europe today the beginnings of what may be a serious epidemic," Dr. Heiser told me. "This is an extreme example of what happens when rules of sanitation and cleanliness are not followed. There is little likelihood of such an epidemic here, but we cannot afford to take chances, with the segregation of large bodies of troops. Adoption of sanitary closures for milk bottles at Army camps may seem a little thing, but actually it is important. Sanitary treatment of all foodstuffs is essential. Milk

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must be given special care."

Army nutritionists in the Surgeon General's Office, after long research and surveys, decided upon one pint of milk and its equivalents as a minimum safe amount in the daily diet of soldiers to protect them against deficiencies in Vitamin B-2 and calcium. The human body possesses very little ability to store Vitamin B-2 and soon exhausts its reserve, Army medical authorities explained. Inadequate supply of this vitamin will cause partial blindness by reducing the transparency of the cornea. It will also cause chronic skin disease. Considerable calcium can be stored in the body, but prolonged deprivation will impair bone structures, teeth and affect the nervous system.

The American Army started out on a milk and beer diet, prescribed on November 4, 1775, the day after George Washington was made its first general. It called for a pint of milk and a quart of beer or cider per day. No milk was available that winter and milk wasn't mentioned again in Army diet for over 100 years.

Beer has not regained a place in the ration, but it is available at Post Exchanges throughout the Army, here and in foreign lands. Incidentally, the alcoholism rate in the Army, which was at 2.3 per thousand just before enactment of the prohibition amendment, rose to 11.5 in 1922. In 1940 it was at 2.7 and gave evidence of decreasing further.

At Camp Edwards, Massachusetts, where 34 canteen branches serve the troops in camp and at outposts, Lt. Col. Howard S. Patterson, Post Exchange Officer, reported that during one month last winter the men visiting the P.X.'s consumed 182,904 cans or bottles and 223 half barrels of beer, besides 96,264 bottles of soft drinks. Despite their 5,000-calorie daily ration, they also stowed away 184,937 candy bars, 117,336 pieces of pastry, 29,488 sandwiches, 3,598 gallons of ice cream, 21,384 boxes of cookies and 9,996 packages of popcorn. The lads have appetites. No wonder they pick up pounds!

A United Press correspondent in North Africa got an intimate slant on how the soldier on active battle duty feels about his beer, as expressed in this dispatch:

"South African forces out here in the parched desert said today to be sure to let you Americans know they could use a few more cans of beer. They had just finished a major battle, but beer was their major interest.

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“The Americans can put beer inside the General Grant and General Lee tanks they are sending,” one man said. “Then the beer won’t take up too much shipping space.”

“Before I could get them to talk about anything else, I had to promise to send word of their desire back home, where it might catch President Roosevelt’s eye.”

Just to supply the regular food—perhaps a million dollars worth a day—and to protect it from spoilage on the way requires the latest scientific skill and knowledge, for preparation of menus by the Subsistence Laboratory. But one clumsy or careless cook could ruin the vitamin content of vegetables and meat for a company of soldiers in a few minutes. The Army takes no chances on the mistakes of rookie K.P.’s. They’re under strict supervision of mess sergeants who have been graduated from a course of several months training in modern large-scale cooking methods.

Each of the nine Corps Areas in continental United States has a Bakers’ and Cooks’ School in normal times. With rapid expansion of the Army, a drastic shortage of trained cooks and mess sergeants developed. A number of subschools have been established, staffed by officers skilled both in teaching and in practical cooking methods. Courses are given in cooking and baking, in nutrition, menu making, accounting and mess management. Through these schools pass several thousand mess sergeants a month.

He takes this skill with him when his outfit moves to reserve or combat positions on an active front. In many countries it is not possible to obtain the fresh vegetables and fruits called for in Ration A. Uncle Sam has thought of that and has worked out a variety of well-balanced dietary rations, for use under widely varying conditions.

The four types of Field Ration for foreign service use are of course fully standardized, as a glance at the accompanying table of rations will indicate. Though the Army naturally is not revealing details on its shipment of rations for our armies on foreign service, two new developments have assumed striking importance as our troops are sent into every kind of climate, from arctic to tropical. First is the adoption of vitamin capsules and tablets in standard rations for northern troops, and second is the enormous improvement in the taste and quality of concentrated foods.

Following a study of the danger of

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vitamin deficiency in the soldier's diet where fresh meats, vegetables and dairy products are not readily available, the Surgeon General's office, working with the National Research Council, authorized the issue of two multiple vitamin capsules or tablets per day for every soldier serving in arctic regions. Army medical men pointed out that in addition to subtle wearing-down effects on sight, hearing and physical well-being, lack of vitamins affect morale and may even lead to diseases of sufficient severity as to cause death. The issue tablets contain Vitamins A, B<sub>1</sub>, B<sub>2</sub>, C and D, as well as the nicotinic acid compound, which provides protection against pellagra.

Concentrated or dehydrated foods have at last become a military asset.

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