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Say Nutritionists- The Army Eats Well

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Say Nutritionists—

The Army Eats Well

Miss Mary I. Barber, food consultant of the Quartermaster Corps, U.S. Army, reports on her newest job. Outstanding in commercial work, Miss Barber heads the American Dietetic Association and the Home Economics Department of Kellogg's.

"How's the food?" is the question put to every young man in the Army. The answer is that the boys are eating well. This is definitely proved by the amounts purchased by the Army and is checked by the pounds gained by the boys themselves. The average increase in weight is ten pounds during the first three or four weeks.

The medical officers feel that failure to gain is often due to psychological reasons. The small percentage of men who resent selective service, who are homesick, who have not been able to make the adjustment from civilian to military life are the ones who do not put on pounds. The well balanced, normal, fun-loving, athletic boys settle down quickly to Army life, just as they do to the change from prep school or college or to any job away from home.

The program of Army feeding is a tremendous one. At present there are about 1,400,000 men to be fed and the food budget is in the neighborhood of $175,000 a day.

The country is divided into nine corps areas, each one made up of a number of forts, camps or harbor defenses, differing in size. The food problem is further complicated by the fact that the same corps area may differ widely in climate. For instance, the West Coast is semi-tropical in the south and cold in the north. Vegetables and fruits are in season in some parts of the country long before others.

Additional problems arise from the fact that some posts are in close proximity to marketing centers and others present difficulties in food transportation. Then too, the consumer must be protected. Too heavy buying of any one food for the Army can create a food shortage and a price increase for the civilian.

Army rations are classified into five broad categories known as the Garrison ration and rations A, B, C and D.

The Garrison ration is used in normal times. Each mess sergeant makes his own menus and purchases his supplies from local merchants and the post commissary, just as you buy and charge provisions at the grocery store. He may purchase anything he desires as long as he does not exceed the allowance set by the commanding officer. This allowance is approximately 44 cents per day per man.

In time of war or emergency, the type of food is designated as Field Ration A. This is as near like the Garrison ration as possible. The main difference is in the method of purchasing. Instead of permitting the mess sergeant to purchase his supplies, the food is bought by the quartermasters of the posts and supplied to the camps in the former's area.

Ration B is the reserve ration. This is made up entirely of non-perishable foods. Every post has enough B ration to feed the men should perishable supplies be cut off.

Ration C is provided for troops on the march. It consists of six cans for one day of food. Three contain meat dinners, one for each meal. Breakfast consists of meat and vegetable stew; dinner, of meat and beans; and supper, of meat and vegetable hash. Each of the remaining cans contains five biscuits, a container of soluble coffee, three lumps of sugar and a chocolate wafer.

Ration D is a chocolate bar weighing four ounces. It contains chocolate, sugar, dried milk, oat flour and thiamin. The flour is added to keep the chocolate from melting in hot climates. Each bar yields six hundred calories.

Rations for parachute and ski troops are being developed. The Subsistence Laboratory in Chicago is in close touch with the research which is being conducted on food needs for men under special conditions which cause intense fatigue.

Meat is the backbone of an Army menu. It is used fresh, salted, dried and canned. Also on the menu are fresh and canned vegetables; fruit, fresh, canned and dried; cereals; eggs and milk. The allowance of eggs is one per man per day; milk, one-half pint of fluid milk, evaporated milk for cooking and dried milk for bread.

The rapid increase in the size of the army has created a shortage of trained bakers and cooks. In normal times there is one cooking and baking school in each corps area. Sub-schools have now been established and cooks and bakers are being trained as rapidly as possible. Every selectee who plans to become a cook or baker is required to have ninety days of basic training. He then attends the school for two months.

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