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Gertrud Ortgies
Iowa State College

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Foreign Foods Vary

Service Menus

Foods of foreign lands add variety to the menus of fighting men overseas, says Gertrud Ortgies

ARMY and navy chow has taken on a new version for American fighting men in foreign lands. The food of these countries is supplementing army and navy rations with a resulting diet that is varied and interesting. Letters to Iowa State friends from men overseas give enlightening pictures of changes in their eating habits.

During the time that President Roosevelt and Prime Minister Churchill were solving world problems, the servicemen in Africa were solving food problems. Staff Sergeant James Turner of the Army Air Forces writes an account of the situation.

"The typical dinner we could buy in Africa consisted of what they called steak, eggs and chips. All of this was fried in deep fat. The steak was at times camel and at other times jackass, which is much more stringy than camel steak. For this meal we paid 40 pestoes, or \$1.60 in American money. Their soup, a green vegetable cooked with small potatoes, tasted terrible.

"Egyptian food was prepared much better and in Cairo we could even get some American food. They use only brown bread and no butter. Sugar is unheard of."

When the troops moved north he wrote about the new changes in food. "In Sicily we could get a good meal for \$1. We had brown spaghetti, little tomatoes, hard bread, macaroons, brown sugar, plenty of wine and ice cream which we were disappointed to find quite different from ours.

"Having been in South America previously, Sergeant Turner continued, "In South America we had plenty of everything. One might have a meal of pineapple which was put on the table in large slices. We also had bananas and excellent steaks. Prices were more reasonable than anywhere along the way."

The English have had a big job keeping themselves fed, as well as all the servicemen. Sergeant Rudy Carlson of the RCAF, now in England, says, "You must realize that conditions are enormously different over here. England has been at war for five years and in that time has had to feed millions of fighting men. Since food is not plentiful, none is

wasted. The trend is not towards a variety of foodstuffs, but a variety of ways in which one food item can be prepared. The staples, potatoes, meat and greens are the backbone of all the meals including breakfast. The dietitian must find new ways to prepare these to prevent distasteful monotony. To make a 'feast fit for a king' out of these is no small task.

"Dried eggs and fruits, powdered milk and margarine are used in large quantities. The Ministry of Foods, under Food Minister Lord Wootton, dictates what the Briton eats. Posters advise to 'Eat more potatoes, save bread and save materials and labour.'

"Bread is made according to the wartime standard and is a coarser product. White bread is non-existent. Milk is not plentiful because of the labor shortage and I have never drunk so much tea in my life. At home we had snack bars where we'd get hamburgers or cokes; here we go into a similar place for the equivalent—a dish of fish and chips—and tea."

A corporal in France writes about the food in that theater of war. "Traveling in France is quite the thing. Food is not obtainable en route, so we take it and our blankets with us. When evening comes we look for a nice spot to cook the food; our stove consisting of a tin can half filled with gas into which a match is dropped. For meat we have a choice of bacon or roast beef. Other food on the menu may include coffee, canned milk, jam, vegetables (usually sweet corn), fruit (peaches, pears, fruit cocktail), pressed ham, dried egg yolk, preserves and even salt. We may buy bread in the town through which we're passing. There's a great amount of candy, gum and cigarettes which we toss to children on our way . . . I'm getting so that I can speak enough French to trade my P-X rations for eggs and tomatoes."

Because of the present scarcity of pineapple, it's difficult to realize that some servicemen tire of it, but Corporal Joe Schafer is one who did. Having been in the Hawaiian Islands, and now in the Gilbert Islands, he says, "Here at the Gilbert Islands we eat about the same as we did in the Hawaiian Islands. The thing I didn't like back there was too much pineapple.

"Most of the things we get here are canned. The first three months we did not have anything but 'C' and 'K' rations. The 'K' rations, which are much better than the 'C', consist of soybean cookies, a small can of cheese or meat, a fruit bar, chewing gum, cigarettes, candy and coffee. They also have a 'D' ration which is only chocolate candy, but is really good.

Barnay Kommel, an Australian in the United States Army, has written about the Aussie meals that the Yanks receive in the restaurants and cafes of the continent "down under."

For breakfast there is a choice between bacon and eggs, scrambled eggs and sausages, or omelet and chops. A porridge, thicker than our cooked cereal, is served with milk and sugar. Usually sandwiches, accompanied by tomatoes, eggs, corn beef or garlic are served for lunch. The evening meal is known as tea. The main dish may be grilled steak, sausages, chops, kidneys, meat pie or lamb stew.

An overseas soldier gets that far-away look remembering foods the way they are back home

