Navy Menus On Review

Eileen Cooper
Iowa State College

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Eileen Cooper summarizes the results of Miss Edna Bruno's dietary survey of the Navy food

The first dietary study reported for a United States Naval training base was conducted this year at Iowa State by Miss Edna Bruno. Miss Bruno used the survey of the food served to the Naval trainees as the subject of her thesis for her Master's Degree in Institution Management. Since this is the only survey of its kind recorded in Washington, D. C., Naval authorities have recognized its value.

Miss Bruno took her undergraduate work at Pennsylvania State College and her training as student dietitian at the University of Michigan Hospital. Before coming to Iowa State to complete work on her Master's Degree, she was therapeutic dietitian at Mt. Sinai Hospital in Philadelphia.

The Navy Mess Contract with the college provides a pattern which must be followed in serving the trainees. But it was believed that a survey of the nutritive value would be an aid to the dietitian in planning, preparing and serving the meals. In order to know the correct serving portion and to discover the likes and dislikes of the men, a study also was made of the food waste. Miss Bruno collected data for a two week period. The daily nutritive value of the Iowa State Naval trainees' diet was determined by the method used by Col. Paul E. Howe of the U. S. Sanitary Corps in conducting a study on 117 mass dietaries at Army bases. A food inventory was taken at the beginning of the period, the purchases for two weeks added and an inventory again taken at the end to determine the amount of food provided. The food was divided into 17 classes, including milk and milk products, eggs, meat, butter, sugars and others.

The results of the survey were then compared with Howe's allowances for troops and with the survey of food prescribed in the 117 Army messes. The nutritive value of the trainees' diet was above that for Howe's allowances for both moderately active and active troops. It also was above that for the 117 Army messes except for carbohydrate. In comparing the food issued per man per day, it was shown that the trainees were higher in the three classes: meats, fish, and poultry; eggs; and milk and milk products. These three classes are sources of the important nutrients protein, calcium, iron and vitamins A, D and some of the B complex. The larger supply of these three classes overcomes any deficiency which might result from a smaller serving of the other classes, such as leafy green and yellow vegetables and dry legumes. The trainees' diet includes meat or fish for lunch and dinner and pancakes or waffles with syrup and sausage, or two eggs with bacon or ham for breakfast. Hence a liberal amount of protein is provided.

For her study of the food waste, Miss Bruno collected every 25th tray from the scraping counter and weighed the food remaining. The trays thus taken numbered 1802. The resulting data showed that the highest waste was in potatoes. From observations this was believed due either to a dislike of the food or to the concern that potatoes would cause a gain in weight. Meat was next in rank with most of the edible waste being fat. The meat substitutes and vegetables wasted comprised approximately 7 percent of the total waste per man per day. Too generous servings of baked beans may have caused the waste of this meat substitute. Many of the trainees also said that they had not been in the Navy long enough to appreciate baked beans for breakfast. Vegetables which were refused frequently were not served again.

Desserts, mainly puddings, and gelatin salads had a high percentage of waste. Because many men took the fresh fruit with them to eat between meals, this waste could not be calculated. Fresh grapefruit seemed the least popular, probably because it took time to loosen the sections from the skins.

Calculations showed the waste was .597 pounds per man per day or 9.54 percent of the food issued. These figures are less than one percent higher than similar findings by Howe in his study of the 117 Army messes. The reasons for this percentage of waste may be due to the limited time the trainees are given for meals and to the fact that they come from various parts of the country and are unaccustomed to some of the food.