

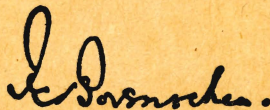
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**OPERATIONAL FEEDING
THE USE OF FIELD RATIONS
1942**

By Command of the Army Council,



THE WAR OFFICE,
14th October, 1942.

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OPERATIONAL FEEDING

THE USE OF FIELD RATIONS

A. REASONS FOR SPECIAL RATION SCALES.

1. It must be made clear to all ranks that overseas operations with an expeditionary force necessitate a complete change in the type of food provided for them.

2. For example, in the early stages of operations, instead of bread, biscuit is issued. Similarly frozen meat ships and cold storage cannot be expected, and a varied collection of canned food is substituted. The ration provided is an excellent one, but *it is different* from what they are used to, and this continues for at least six weeks from the time operations begin.

3. If forewarned of this, and if the operational reasons for it are simply and truthfully explained to the men by their regimental officers, it will be generally accepted by them as part of the plan of operations. It is important that this should be so, as they will certainly miss the bread to which they are accustomed.

4. The reasons which must be explained to the men are:—

- (a) Every available inch of shipping space which can be saved for fighting equipment and petrol means more hitting power and mobility for the fighting troops. To ship field bakeries instead of, say, field batteries, would be weakening the Force, just for the sake of providing bread, which is not a necessity. Biscuit will serve the same purpose, and saves a great deal of space for real necessities.
- (b) With tinned food, packed 14 complete rations in one box, much space is saved and the distribution of rations can be effected in a fraction of the time that it takes to cut up and weigh such items as meat, cheese, tea, sugar, etc. Complete rations, properly made up like this, can be delivered with much greater certainty, in these "composite" cases, however difficult the operations may be. Furthermore, they are certain to be clean and good to eat, however long they have been delayed *en route*. The amount of labour and facilities required for cooking are cut down to the barest minimum and hot meals can be produced in a much shorter time than with normal rations and without cookhouse fatigues, peeling potatoes, etc.
- (c) With this type of food any commander can have a free hand to despatch any Force in any direction at any time with a complete quantity of food to make it self-contained for as long as he likes, and these "composite" rations occupy the minimum weight and space in the transport available. This obvious advantage will be easily realized. Bread and frozen meat would, of course, soon get stale or bad, fresh vegetables would rot, etc.

5. In short, troops must realize that anything which contributes to the success of operations must be accepted, and a saving of space and weight on food is a direct contribution to this. Except for having biscuit instead of bread, the ration is actually better than they are receiving at home.

The troops can also be assured that a normal diet of bread and other fresh food is always provided as soon as shipping and other arrangements make it possible to do so without detriment to the operations in hand.

B. TYPES OF RATION.

The following are types of ration issued in operations involving landings in areas where normal supplies are not immediately available:—

1. *The emergency ration* is for men temporarily out of reach of any other source of food. In order to save weight it is made as small and light as possible. Its purpose is only to ward off hunger and exhaustion for a period of about 24 hours. It does not purport to be a complete day's food. It weighs $\frac{1}{2}$ lb.
2. (a) *The mess tin ration or 48-hour ration* provides subsistence for the first 48 hours after landing.
 (b) *Armoured fighting vehicle ration pack* is a tinned ration and similar to the composite ration, made up in suitable packs for stowing inside tanks, but is only used when the normal ration cannot be delivered to and cooked by A.F.V. crews for operational reasons. Since the vehicles must replenish with petrol, such occasions will be of rare occurrence.
3. *The composite ration pack*, which is composed entirely of tinned commodities packed in wooden cases containing 14 rations (i.e. food for 14 men for one day) and which is used until such time as fresh rations become available. This ration supersedes the older type of compo pack which contained 12 rations, and which will no longer be issued except for training.
4. *The field service ration* is a scale of fresh and tinned food brought into use as early as possible in the field, and suitably adapted for use in different climates.

C. DESCRIPTION OF THE RATIONS.

1. Emergency ration.

This consists of a small tin box about the size of a 2-oz. tobacco tin, and contains a solid mixture of a chocolate type of food, concentrated to give the maximum amount of food value for weight carried. It is intended only to be used in EMERGENCY when all other sources of supply fail. It is issued on the scale of ONE to every officer and man and MUST NOT BE EATEN EXCEPT ON THE ORDERS OF AN OFFICER. It can be either chewed in small pieces or ground up and mixed with hot water to make a sustaining drink.

2. Mess tin ration.

This consists of tinned commodities of a sustaining nature packed in a form suitable for carrying in the two halves of a mess tin, together with a Tommy cooker, which contains enough solidified fuel to make hot drinks. The food items are:—preserved meat, biscuits and dripping, which are suitable for a breakfast meal; and cheese, chocolate and boiled sweets which make a suitable mid-day meal or haversack ration, and in addition there is a tin of tea powder ready mixed with dry milk and sugar which will make a mug of tea with each cooked meal. There are NO cigarettes.

This ration is issued either before embarking, if the voyage is a short one, or during the voyage if it is a long one—BUT—wherever the ration is issued, it is important to remember that it is for consumption during the first two days after disembarkation. *Therefore, troops must not get inquisitive and sample the tins before they disembark* or they will go hungry after landing, when they really require good feeding. The ration must be packed in the mess tin in accordance with the diagram issued with the rations, and produced intact when instructed for inspection by an officer, which should be a daily routine. Opening the tins before landing may result in salt water getting into the biscuits or tea mixture and making them useless. It will be the only food for the first two days and if lost or eaten before disembarkation NO MORE CAN BE PROVIDED DURING THIS PERIOD.

3. Armoured fighting vehicle ration pack.

This is a similar scale to composite ration, but is packed in special containers suitable for stowing inside tanks. These packs are made up for two, three or five men; the latter is becoming obsolete as a pack for five can be made up from a two and a three pack. The manufacture of A.F.V. packs in war presents certain difficulties and entails the use of a high proportion of tin plate. Their use should therefore be limited to those shown in sub-para. (a) below and only for periods of operational mobility. During active operations, tank and armoured car personnel must be capable of cooking and feeding on a crew basis since halts must, of necessity, be of uncertain length and at uncertain times and A.F.Vs. will be dispersed over a wide area for the greater part of the 24 hours. The composite ration cannot be distributed and stowed satisfactorily in a tank or armoured car to meet such conditions. When armoured forces are at rest, tank and armoured car crews, etc., will be able to feed on composite ration pack or field service ration.

Tanks and armoured cars will land overseas carrying A.F.V. packs for consumption in lieu of mess tin rations

(a) Arm'd. Div. H.Q.

Arm'd. Bdes. including Motor Bns.

Arm'd. Bde. Coys. R.A.O.C.

Arm'd. Car Regt.

Rece. Regts. and Sqns. (Scout Troops only).

4. Composite ration (14-man pack).

This, like the mess tin ration, is composed entirely of tinned commodities and has nine different varieties of daily ration scale. It is intended to be used for the first four to six weeks until it is possible to issue fresh rations, which involve baking bread and handling fresh meat through cold storage facilities. The food is contained in a wooden case of 2 cubic feet. It is sufficient food, in bulk, for 14 men for one day, or for say seven men for two days, but it does not lend itself to being sub-divided into 14 single rations. It is intended that cooking facilities should be available when the composite ration comes into use, but for isolated detachments improvised cooking will be necessary. No Tommy cookers are included in the pack, but a limited scale is available for issue in addition to the pack. Units when drawing or demanding compo rations from R.A.S.C. sources should make certain that they get varieties of packs, otherwise they will not have the advantage of the different types to vary their daily diet. There are seven cigarettes for each man a day.

5. Field service ration.

This scale of rations comes into use when normal facilities are available. Composite rations and special preserved scales will probably still be issued to troops employed on mobile roles, or as a result of local conditions which prevent the issue of fresh rations.

6. Miscellaneous items.

Whenever troops are being landed in a country where water supplies are poor, facilities will be provided for drawing water in tins and troops will also be supplied with water sterilizing outfits.

- (i) *Water.* Owing to the weight and difficulty of distribution, water supplies in tins are generally limited to $\frac{1}{2}$ gallon for each man a day and are only supplied until such time as facilities can be provided for sterilizing water in bulk. It is most essential that in countries where local water supplies are bad, only water that is prepared for issue to troops should be consumed.
- (ii) *Water sterilizing outfits*, and in malarial climates *anti-mosquito cream*, are a normal issue to troops. These items are meant to be used for safeguarding health. They are not manufactured and issued for nothing. It is important to remember this, as a man who becomes a casualty from drinking contaminated water or from preventable disease, is a liability to himself and his comrades. He should, therefore, read the instructions carefully on these items and make sure that he knows how to use them properly, and above all, he must, for certain, have the correct quantities when he disembarks. He must never drink water that has not been sterilized unless it is *known* that it is pure.


7. The ration scales are shown on the Appendices:—

- (a) Appendix A—Mess Tin Ration, with notes on its use.
- (b) Appendix B—The Composite Ration, with notes on the meals which can be provided.
- (c) Appendix C—A.F.V. Pack.

APPENDIX A.

MESS TIN RATION

SCALE:—

Biscuits, service	9 ozs.	In 1 sealed tin which fits in the larger half of the mess tin.	All tins, including Tommy cookers and also the matches are delivered to the ships in bulk quantities, e.g. cheese tins in boxes of one gross $1\frac{1}{2}$ oz. tins and marked S.R.D.  CHEESE.
Biscuits, sweet	3 ozs.		
Raisin chocolate	8 ozs.		
Sweets, boiled	$4\frac{1}{2}$ ozs.		
Cheese (2 x $1\frac{1}{2}$ oz. tins)	3 ozs.	These tins fit in second half of mess tin.	
Dripping spread (1 tin)	2 ozs.		
Tea, sugar, milk powder (1 tin)	5 ozs.		
Meat, preserved	12 ozs.		
Miniature safety matches	1 box		

1 Tommy cooker (round type) to be carried separately.

It is suggested that the ration might well be employed in the following manner over the 48 hours, but it must be realized that this is only a guide and the nature of the operations will be the deciding factor:—

- (a) As operations will not permit regular meals, the energy producing foods, such as sweets, chocolate and sweet biscuit, should be consumed throughout the two days, as the needs of hunger dictate to the individual; they will provide warmth and energy for physical work.
- (b) Tea should be taken (so far as practicable and provided the use of Tommy cookers may be allowed during darkness), during periods of greatest cold or fatigue, generally during the night, early morning, or following periods of great exhaustion.

The Tommy cooker when in use *must* be shielded from all draughts, either by being placed in a trench, or protected by a tin, etc., or even by the hands. Water is brought to the boil much more rapidly if the top of the mess tin is covered. As the Tommy cooker cannot heat sufficient water for the whole of the tea ration, fires should be used when weather and air conditions permit.

- (c) The dripping spread with service biscuit is most suitable for breakfast, and the preserved meat, cheese and biscuit for dinner and/or supper. These foods, with the tea, should be eaten during the periods of lull. The preserved meat for two days is in one tin; therefore, when practicable, two men should arrange to share their tins, opening one tin only during each 24 hours.
- (d) On no account will the ration be taken or accepted from wounded men, as otherwise dressing stations may find considerable difficulty in feeding patients during the first 48 hours of the operations.

NOTE.—The tea-sugar-milk powder produces five to six pints of tea.

APPENDIX B.

COMPOSITE RATION PACK. TYPE "A."†

(14 men for one day.)

Contents and suggested use.

BREAKFAST.

Tea * 3 tins (2 tall, 1 flat—Tea, Sugar
and Milk Mixture).

†Sausage (1 hour) 2 tins.

Biscuit * 1 tin.

Margarine * 1 tin.

(*Items marked thus are also to provide for other meals.)

DINNER.

†Steak and kidney pudding

($\frac{1}{2}$ hour) 11 tins.

†Vegetables ($\frac{3}{4}$ hour) 4 tins (2 large, 2 small).

Tinned fruits 2 tins.

TEA.

Tea — (* see above.)

Biscuit — (* see above.)

Margarine — (* see above.)

Jam 1 tin.

SUPPER.

†Baked beans ($\frac{3}{4}$ hour) 3 tins.

Biscuit — (* see above.)

EXTRAS.

Cigarettes 2 tins (1 round, 1 flat—7 cigar-
ettes for each man).

Sweets 1 tin.

Salt — (packed with sweets above.)

Matches — (packed with sweets above.)

Chocolate — (1 slab for each man—packed
with biscuit.)

Latrine paper.

Directions.

Tea, sugar and milk powder.—Use a dry spoon and sprinkle powder on heated water and bring to the boil, stirring well. Three heaped teaspoonfuls to 1 pint of water.

† May be eaten hot or cold. To heat, place unopened tins in boiling water for minimum period as indicated. Sausage may be fried (using margarine) if preferred.

‡ This is only one of nine types. The others are B, C, D, E, F, G and X and Y, containing items such as:—

Type. Breakfast.

B Bacon

C Sausage

D Bacon

E Sausage

F Luncheon meat

G Sausage

X Luncheon meat

Y Sausage

Dinner.

Steak and kidney

Date pudding

Irish stew

Sultana pudding

Stewed steak

Rice pudding

Haricot oxtail

Marmalade pudding

Preserved meat

Mixed fruit pudding

M. and V. Ration

Treacle pudding

Preserved meat

Tinned fruit

M. and V. Ration

Tinned fruit

Tea/Supper.

Jam

Soup

Cheese

Soup

Sardines

Soup

Sardines

Cheese

Jam

Salmon

Soup

Jam

Soup

Jam

Salmon

Soup

Sardines

Soup

A.F.V. PACK

APPENDIX C.

Commodity	Scale for each man a day	Size of tin	No. of tins for each pack		
			2 men	3 men	5 men
Preserved meat	12 ozs.	12 ozs.	2	3	5
Service biscuit	10 ozs.	10 ozs.	2	3	5
Unsweetened condensed milk	2½ ozs.	6 ozs.	1	2	2
Sardines	2 ozs.	4 ozs.	1	2	3
Margarine	1½ ozs.	2½ ozs.	1	2	3
Tea	¾ oz.	1½ ozs.	1	2	3
Sugar	1½ ozs.	3 ozs.	1	2	3
Beans	4 ozs.	8 ozs.	1	—	1
		12 ozs.	—	1	1
Jam	4 ozs.	4 ozs.	2	3	1
		16 ozs.	—	—	1
Latrine paper	6 sheets		12	18	30
			sheets	sheets	sheets

The above is all packed in one square container, except the biscuits, which are packed separately in a round tin.

Catering advisers with armoured formations will assist with advice regarding the best method of utilizing the A.F.V. pack, to suit the particular circumstances in which operations are taking place.

