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C-Rats tip of the day

By David Janoff

Just because you're going to be spending weeks at a time in the field doesn't mean you'll have to eat hardtack biscuits and beef jerky. During REFORGER hot meals will not be provided at the noon meal. But don't worry, you'll have the soldier's standby, C-rations.

"C-rats are disgusting," is the cry of those who haven't yet learned how to use those little green cans in ways that would delight any gourmet.

Consider the humble cheese spread. If you use it only on the crackers, it's wasted. Melt it into any of the meat and potato meals to add flavor. Cheese added to a spaghetti meal transforms it from bland to a flavorful repast from guard duty.

Combine spiced beef with spaghetti or the meat patties with a bean dish for a hearty meal. For something quick, you can put the tuna fish, boned chicked or turkey on crackers.

What do you drink with this glorious feast after the sodas run out? Anyone can make the coffee or cocoa, but the field gourmet combines the two and adds the cream and sugar packets for cafe mocha. Try it with your peaches and pound cake or warmed fruit cake.

"But I'm alone in my van. How can I do any of this when I can't even warm my C-rats up?" Be inventive. Open that cracker can, punch holes in the sides and ignite some heat tablets or just use a small candle.

Once you've finished eating, don't throw those cans away. The jelly can, with the lid still attached and bent



back, makes a good candle holder for the times the generator dies. Use the B-3 unit can with the sides crimped as an ashtray. You'll be policing up the area, so keep it clean.

Think of eating in the field as a challenge. If you bring a duffle bag full of munchies, then you've missed part of the training experience and a lot of good eating.

Six things to remember

1. Use a ground guide to check doubtful terrain.
2. Take precautions to prevent forest or brush fire.
3. Observe posted road restrictions, traffic signs, and bridge classifications.
4. Clear highways of excessive mud caused by vehicles entering road from field locations.
5. Cross railroads and autobahns only at authorized crossings.
6. Minimize vehicular movement in bivouac areas.