

C-RATIONS

Commercially prepared meals were used in the field and at times when hot meals were not available. These meals came in a case containing 12 meals. Each meal was in its own cardboard box, which contained the individual items sealed in cans. A can opener (called a "John Wayne" or a "P-38") was needed to open the cans. The accessory pack with each meal was sealed in a foil pouch.

This is the official Quartermaster's description of C-Rations used in Vietnam

"The Meal, Combat, Individual, is designed for issue as the tactical situation dictates, either in individual units as a meal or in multiples of three as a complete ration. Its characteristics emphasize utility, flexibility of use, and more variety of food components than were included in the Ration, Combat, and Individual (C Ration) which it replaces. Twelve different menus are included in the specification.

Each menu contains: one canned meat item; one canned fruit, bread or dessert item; one B unit; an accessory packet containing cigarettes, matches, chewing gum, toilet paper, coffee, cream, sugar, and salt; and a spoon. Four can openers are provided in each case of 12 meals. Although the meat item can be eaten cold, it is more palatable when heated.

Each complete meal contains approximately 1200 calories. The daily ration of 3 meals provides approximately 3600 calories."

There were 4 choices of meat in each B group. Because there were several "vintages" of C's issued to the military in Vietnam, more than 4 items may be listed in the B groups as well as the brands of cigarettes included in the accessory pack

<u>B-1 Units</u>	<u>B-2 Units</u>	<u>B-3 Units</u>
Meat Choices (in small cans): Beef Steak Ham and Eggs, Chopped Ham Slices Turkey Loaf Fruit: Applesauce Fruit Cocktail Peaches Pears Crackers (7) Peanut Butter Candy Disc, Chocolate Solid Chocolate Cream Coconut Accessory Pack*	Meat Choices (in larger cans): Beans and Wieners Spaghetti and Meatballs Beefsteak, Potatoes and Gravy Ham and Lima Beans Meatballs and Beans Crackers (4) Cheese Spread, Processed Caraway Pimento Fruit Cake Pecan Roll Pound Cake Accessory Pack*	Meat Choices (in small cans): Boned Chicken Chicken and Noodles Meat Loaf Spiced Beef Bread, White Cookies (4) Cocoa Beverage Powder Jam Apple Berry Grape Mixed Fruit Strawberry Accessory Pack*

*Accessory Pack

Spoon, Plastic
Salt
Pepper
Coffee, Instant
Sugar
Creamer, Non-dairy
Gum, 2 Chiclets
Cigarettes, 4 smokes/pack
Winston
Marlboro
Salem
Pall Mall
Camel
Chesterfield
Kent
Lucky Strike
Kool
Matches, Moisture Resistant
Toilet Paper



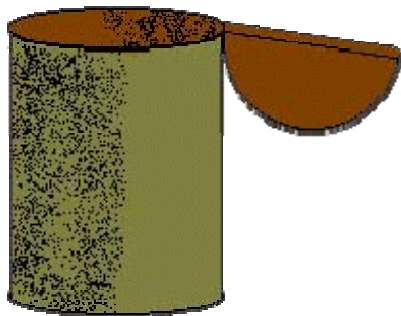
How to make a C-Ration Stove

The small cans included in the meal were ideal for making a stove. Using a "John Wayne" pierce a series of closely spaced holes around the top and bottom rims of the can.

This stove was satisfactory, but did not allow enough oxygen to enter which caused incomplete burning of the blue Trioxin heat tablet, causing fumes which irritated the eyes and respiratory tract. A whole heat tab had to be used.

A better stove was created by simply using the can opener end of a "church key" (a flat metal device designed to open soft drink and beer containers with a bottle opener on one end and can opener on the other commonly used before the invention of the pull tab and screw-off bottle top) to puncture triangular holes around the top and bottom rims of the can which resulted in a hotter fire and much less fumes. With this type of stove only half a Trioxin heat tab was needed to heat the meal and then the other half could be used to heat water for coffee or cocoa. A small chunk of C-4 explosive could also be substituted for the Trioxin tablet for faster heating. It would burn hotter and was much better for heating water.

A stove was usually carried in the back pack or cargo pocket and used repeatedly until the metal began to fail.



How to Heat a C-Ration Meal

1. Choose the meal to be consumed
2. Open the can lid leaving at least 1/4 inch metal attached
3. Bend the still attached lid so that the inside of the can lid is facing 180 degrees from it's original position (inside up).
4. Bend the edges of the can to form a handle
5. Set meal on stove and heat to desired

temperature, stirring frequently to prevent burning.

"Outstanding" Ham & Mothers

- Open and heat a can of Ham and Lima Beans
- When hot, add one can of cheese spread and stir until all cheese is melted.
- Crumble 4 crackers into the mixture and blend thoroughly.
- Eat when the crackers have absorbed all excess moisture.

How to make a C-Ration Coffee Cup

1. Obtain the B (large, dry) can from the C-ration meal
2. Follow steps 2 thru 4 in How to Heat a C-Ration Meal above.

Deluxe (reusable) Version*

1. Remove the top of the can completely.
2. Obtain 2 lengths of the bailing wire off of the C-Ration case.
3. Obtain a solid, sturdy stick about 4 inches long.
4. Notch out a groove around the stick near both ends.
5. Wrap each length of wire around both top & bottom ends of the can and twist the wire around itself leaving enough twisted wire to twist around the grooves in both ends of the stick 1 inch from the can creating a very nice handle.
6. Trim off excess wire.

