

Cordon Bleu in a can

—by Lois Taylor—

The "C" in C rations doesn't stand for Cordon Bleu. It stands for combat. But according to old soldiers who served in World War II, the quality of combat rations has risen like a guided missile.

"I guess you have to say that nothing could have been worse than the old K ration, though," suggested Sgt. Bernard Kraus.

That was an emergency ration used during World War II which consisted of four cigarettes, a chocolate bar, and a nameless high protein food all packed into a paraffin box, which could be burned with the leftovers at the end of the meal.

The C rations, which were first introduced after World War II, are being eaten by the troops of the Army's 29th Infantry Brigade during their first field training exercise in the Kahuku area.

colonies of Kawela Bay and Malaekahana.

It was the day that the announcement was made that the Army will release National Guardsmen and reservists on active duty five months early. Most of the members of the 29th Brigade were called up last year from these two groups.

"There is an absolute mood of euphoria around the camp," said Maj. Wills. This is a very literate group, you know. For example, this training exercise is known not as Operation Huliabalo or Operation Bluebird as other Army exercises have been. It is called Operation Leppar Lapin I.

"Leppar Lapin' is a cor-

rupted Latin form of 'running hare,'" explained Maj. Wills, in case you didn't know.

The running hares in the Koolaus and their pursuers are nourished by C rations which are delivered to base camps from the supply company stationed at the Haleiwa airstrip. The deliveries are made either by Army trucks or by helicopter.

S. Sgt. Calvin C. Davis, a regular Army man stationed with the 29th Brigade and in charge of the Headquarters Co. mess, said that many of the men prefer the canned C rations to the hot food dished up from the cook tent.

"The only problem is that the servings are small in the C rations, and you can't go back for seconds," he said.

Sgt. Davis explained that each case of C rations contains 12 boxes, each with a combat meal.

There are 12 different main courses: beef slices and potatoes with gravy, beans with frankfurter chunks in tomato sauce, boned chicken, beefsteak, chicken and noodles, beef with spiced sauce, turkey loaf, sliced cooked ham, sliced cooked pork, meat balls and beans in tomato sauce, spaghetti and ground meat and chopped ham with scrambled eggs.

This last, strangely enough when you consider that the meals are eaten most often cold, straight from the can, is a big favorite among the men.

Each main course is served in a round flat can about the size of a tuna can.

The menu also includes a larger can of fruit, a can which holds three soda crackers and two round chocolate candy bars, a small can of something to spread on the crackers, a cellophane packet of beverage powder and, the only standard thing in all 12 varieties, an accessory packet.

The accessory packet houses four cigarettes, special



LUNCH WAGON—Spec. 4 Donald E. Woods Jr., left, takes delivery of a case of C rations from S. Sgt. Calvin C. Davis, mess sergeant for the Headquarters Co., 29th Brigade. Each case holds a dozen complete meals which can be eaten without any further preparation.

Kraus said, were opened with a key that unwound a strip of metal, as canned walnuts or canned hams are opened, and were heated by holding the opened can by the partially unwound strip over a fire made by burning the container.

Any woman would understand that. The two men are both assigned as helpers to the mess steward and prepare the cooked meals for the company.

As any cook knows, somebody else's cooking always tastes better than your own.



ATTACK BY THE P-38—The C ration meal is of no use to the fighting man if he isn't armed with this small steel can opener designated by the Army as a "P-38."



Spec. 4 Dennis Miyashiro and Spec. 5 Bernard Aoto agreed that on the whole, tastes better than your own.



DINE WITH A FRIEND—

"Always eat with somebody who has different rations from yours," advises Spec. 4 Edward R. Mitzner, at left, who shares his strawberry jam with Spec. 4 Donald E. Woods Jr. Specialist Woods drew peanut butter with his rations of beef with spiced sauce, so the two men had peanut butter and jelly sandwiches.—Photos by Terry Luke.

eties, an accessory packet. The accessory packet houses four cigarettes, special matches which will hopefully light when damp, two pieces of chewing gum and small packages of instant coffee, sugar, dried cream substitute, salt and toilet paper.

If a soldier has any option, it's usually a good idea to eat with somebody who drew a different ration, to trade and consolidate the meals.

"Depending upon the situation," said Sgt. Davis, "the men heat their food if possible, otherwise they eat it cold. The cans can be dumped into boiling water on the squad stove."

Of course, this whole meal is of no use without the P-38 issued to everyone on the exercise. That is the high-flown designation for a can opener, and, according to Maj. Wills, has no relation to the P-38 fighter plane used by the Army Air Force in World War II.

"The army puts a letter and a number on everything," said Spec. 4 Donald Woods Jr., "so it's just a coincidence."

The old K rations, Sgt.



PEACHES FOR DESSERT —

Spec. 4 Donald E. Woods Jr. polishes off the canned peaches which are the final course in his C ration. "These dinners are sometimes better than the stuff we get in the mess hall, but there aren't any seconds," he said.



DINNER FOR ONE—The contents of each C ration pack include a main course, canned fruit, canned crackers and chocolate, a canned spread for the crackers and two cellophane packets. One contains a beverage powder and the other holds cigarettes, matches, and chewing gum. There are a dozen different menus.