



## Improved Military Food Supply for PLA

**OE Watch Commentary:** On 1 December, the Chinese state media outlet *People's Liberation Army (PLA) Daily* published an article that stated the PLA's military food supply and support systems has improved. According to the article, "with the advancement of the People's Liberation Army, our support system has been gradually improving in the course of deepening national defense and military reforms. By focusing on service and improving combat effectiveness, we have continuously made new progress in terms of supply standards, support methods, food management, and cooking training." According to the article, the PLA previously changed "food standards" for military rations at least 27 times from the reform era to this year. The article also asserts that military food supplies have tripled overall since the reform era.



*Soldiers of the Chinese People's Liberation Army, 2011.*

Source: Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff via Wikimedia Commons. [https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Soldiers\\_of\\_the\\_Chinese\\_People%27s\\_Liberation\\_Army\\_-\\_2011.jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Soldiers_of_the_Chinese_People%27s_Liberation_Army_-_2011.jpg), Public domain

The PLA is utilizing vehicles and equipment for cooking and distributing food. The article states, "individual soldiers have a variety of ready-to-eat, self-heating, and collective foods. They rotate free of charge according to standards, and standardized fast foods are on the training ground. New integrated field supply equipment units, cooking trailers, self-catering cooking vehicles, staple food processing vehicles, food refrigerated and insulated vehicles have become the main force for food production when troops have military exercises and fight against emergency disasters." The vehicles and equipment can provide ground troops with sufficient means of accessing food during military drills or other non-combat environments, but this may indicate the vehicles and equipment cannot be used during wartime.

The PLA has also updated its food management system. "The army's provision of support for innovation and development is centralized by the combination of battalion, company, and life service centers, and is explored and promoted in the area of non-staple food. The food support of non-combat troops in large and medium-sized cities has been socialized. The army food management information system has been digitalized. Army food accounts have been informatized, and officers and soldiers have 'electronic nutritionists.'" Lastly, PLA soldiers are receiving additional training for cooking during combat missions. "Food support training has become a compulsory training course for all units. Garrison training, military exercises, and major military operations actively carry out adaptive food training for the field in order to improve the ability to provide food for emergency responses." Adaptive food training refers to desensitizing soldiers to foods in wildlife environments during combat missions.

A news article published over a year ago by the Hong Kong-based *South China Morning Post* noted that PLA troops disliked the ration packs provided to them during military exercises and drills so much that they brought their own meals instead. Citing a *PLA Daily* report about the issue, the article stated, "a survey was carried out among troops of one the PLA's ration packs containing beef and vegetables and '58 percent of the soldiers found a strong need to improve its taste, which is not only boring but also affects their appetite.'" According to the article, PLA rations during 2018 contained high energy foods like self-heated instant rice or noodles and luncheon meat. The *PLA Daily*'s open admission of large numbers of soldiers disliking the rations over a year ago may have been a part of the current push to improve food supply and support systems and provide PLA soldiers with better meals. **End OE Watch Commentary (Hartnett)**

***"With the advancement of the People's Liberation Army, our support system has been gradually improving in the course of deepening national defense and military reforms. By focusing on service and improving combat effectiveness, we have continuously made new progress in terms of supply standards, support methods, food management, and cooking training."***



## Continued: Improved Military Food Supply for People's Liberation Army

**Source:** Sun Xingwei & Dong Kui, "The army's supply and support system is improving," *People's Liberation Army Daily*, 1 December 2019. [http://www.mod.gov.cn/power/2019-12/01/content\\_4856009.htm](http://www.mod.gov.cn/power/2019-12/01/content_4856009.htm)

*With the advancement of the People's Liberation Army, our support system has been gradually improving in the course of deepening national defense and military reforms. By focusing on service and improving combat effectiveness, we have continuously made new progress in terms of supply standards, support methods, food management, and cooking training.*

*Since the reform and opening up, they have adjusted the army's food standard 27 times and adjusted the military's food quantitative standard three times. Since the 18th National Congress of the Party, food input has continued to increase.*

*Individual soldiers have a variety of ready-to-eat, self-heating, and collective foods. They rotate free of charge according to standards, and standardized fast foods are on the training ground. New integrated field supply equipment units, cooking trailers, self-catering cooking vehicles, staple food processing vehicles, food refrigerated and insulated vehicles have become the main force for food production when troops have military exercises and fight against emergency disasters.*

*The army's provision of support for innovation and development is centralized by the combination of battalion, company, and life service centers, and is explored and promoted in the area of non-staple food. The food support of non-combat troops in large and medium-sized cities has been socialized. The army food management information system has been digitalized. Army food accounts have been informatized, and officers and soldiers have "electronic nutritionists."*

*Food support training has become a compulsory training course for all units. Garrison training, military exercises, and major military operations actively carry out adaptive food training for the field in order to improve the ability to provide food for emergency responses.*

**Source:** "Chinese soldiers' 'boring', 'tasteless' food rations come under fire," *South China Morning Post*, 5 July 2018. <https://www.scmp.com/print/news/china/diplomacy-defence/article/1820207/chinese-soldiers-boring-tasteless-food-rations-come>

*China's military has encountered another problem as it attempts to weed out corruption and modernise its fighting forces – its soldiers don't like their food. A report in the PLA Daily newspaper has revealed that most troops dislike the ration packs they are given during military exercises and drills and bring along their own grub instead.*

*A survey was carried out among troops of one the PLA's ration packs containing beef and vegetables and '58 per cent of the soldiers found a strong need to improve its taste, which is not only boring but also affects their appetite,' the report said.*

*PLA rations packs often contain high energy foods, such self-heated instant rice or noodles and luncheon meat.*

## THE MAD SCIENTIST INITIATIVE SURVEY

The U.S. Army's Mad Scientist Initiative is conducting a short on-line survey querying your thoughts about the Operational Environment (OE). Please take about 5 minutes to complete our Global Perspectives Conference Survey by going to the Mad Scientist Laboratory blog site at: <https://madsciblog.tradoc.army.mil/> and clicking on the survey link on the sidebar at right hand side of the screen under HOT!!! We will brief back our interim findings at the Mad Scientist Global Perspectives in the Operational Environment Conference on 29 January 2020 (livestream this virtual event at: <http://www.tradoc.army.mil/watch> [note that this link is not live until the conference]). Subscribe to the Mad Scientist Laboratory blog site and watch for our post in February describing what we have gleaned from the survey regarding potential OE trends, challenges, technologies, and disruptors.

