



# New “Fast Food” to Replace Rations and Field Kitchen Meals in the PLA

**OE Watch Commentary:** The PLA is attempting to speed up, systematize and improve the quality of their food service for soldiers. As the PLA increases the regularity and degree of realism with which it trains, the way logistics support units feed the PLA is also having to adapt. The accompanying excerpted article outlines the steps that the Chinese military is taking to improve the speed with which food can be prepared while improving quality. The effort involved all Chinese services, the Central Military Commission’s Joint Staff, Political Work, Logistics Support, and Equipment Development Departments as well as five other organizations under the training administration department. A key consideration mentioned in the article is that every operational unit is expected to go out on exercises for at least seven contiguous days every year. Such demands make traditional ways of feeding soldiers in the field impractical. This is involving a cultural shift from traditional Chinese expectation that “four dishes and a soup” will be served at every meal to prepackaged, or less time-intensive dishes. This appears to be part of a broader discussion the PLA is having internally about the quality of its rations and food services, perhaps sparked by recent reports that soldiers were bringing their own food to field exercises.

Mirroring a broader effort to make better use of local companies to support PLA operations, units are being encouraged to work with catering companies to reduce cost, improve quality and strengthen military-civil fusion. Other avenues to streamline the logistics “tail” for military catering units are being explored. In June 2018, for example, an air force unit under the Central Theater Command experimented with delivering field equipment and food via UAV to a logistics support company. The article ends by mentioning that the updated guidelines for food service will be incorporated into the Outline of Military Training Evaluation (OMTE; 军事训练大纲). The PLA hopes to improve conditions at its bases and in the field, while reducing its logistics footprint and allowing more effective deployments and training. **End OE Watch Commentary (Wood)**



Chinese army flag.

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**Source:** “全军野战饮食快餐化保障体系加快推进 (Accelerate Adoption of “Fast Food” Field Ration Support System Throughout the Whole Military),” *PLA Daily Journalist Department*, 9 November 2018. [http://army.81.cn/content/2018-11/09/content\\_9339704.htm](http://army.81.cn/content/2018-11/09/content_9339704.htm)

*Field food catering is an important part of combat power generation. In recent years, the Logistics Support Department of the Central Military Commission has resolutely implemented the spirit of CMC Chairman Xi Jinping’s series of important instructions regarding the battlefield rations and food services, and the systemic obstacles to the field catering training and the “four dishes and one soup” [according to Chinese culinary tradition most meals include four dishes (hot and cold) and soup]. The question of structural contradictions between soldiers’ traditional diet and new policy that are not supported by the standard of protection have fully promoted the overall transformation of the field food security.*

*When creating the “Fast Food” Field Ration Support System model, the approach must change depending on the operational conditions, support environments and force compositions to offer appropriate levels of service. Catering support will be contingent upon the unit mission requirements, at the individual, tactical and campaign levels.*

*Units will set requirements, and with the government providing a platform, and enterprises supporting through research, officers and soldiers will test idea of field rations, field catering equipment and equipment research, direct use of local high-quality scientific research force to carry out technical research, but also direct choice of local mature products and technology. Aiming at the forefront of international and domestic science and technology, actively develop and apply new materials, technology, new technologies, the introduction of a number of high-energy, light weight, small volume of field food and integrated, intelligent, fast field catering equipment.*

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