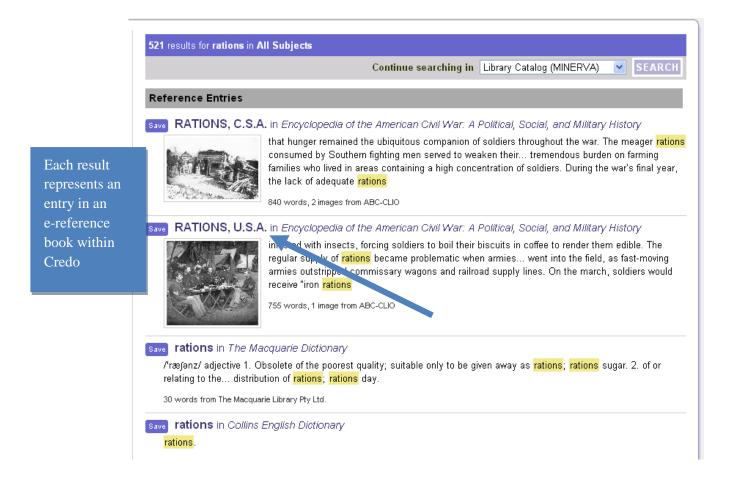
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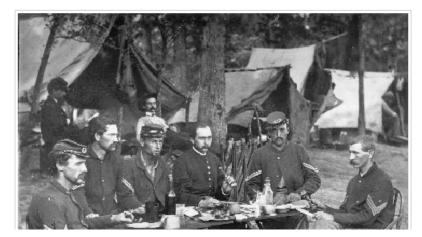
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## RATIONS, U.S.A.

One of the truest adages is that an army marches on its stomach, with the most powerful army vulnerable to defeat if its soldiers cannot be fed. Fortunately for the Union, its superion voduction and logistic capability more often than not provided its military forces with nutritious, if not varied, sustenance.

Food for the Union army was issued by the army's Commissary Bureau. In 1861, the standard ration consisted of twenty-two ounces of bread (usually in biscuit form known as hardtack) issued daily, either twelve ounces of pork or sixteen ounces of salted beef daily, and eight quarts of beans (replaceable by two hundred fifty ounces of desiccated vegetables), ten pounds of coffee, fifteen pounds of sugar, and four quarts of vinegar twice a week. Fresh meat was generally available only when in camp, and soldiers had to suffice with the canned salted variety. Also, hardtack stored in wooden boxes became infested with insects, forcing soldiers to boil their biscuits in coffee to render them edible. The regular supply of rations became problematic when armies went into the field, as fast-moving armies outstripped commissary wagons and railroad supply lines. On the march, soldiers would receive "iron rations": hardtack, a few ounces of bacon, salt, and all the coffee the soldier could carry. If supplying the army became difficult, only hardtack and coffee, the core of the soldier's diet, would be issued.



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