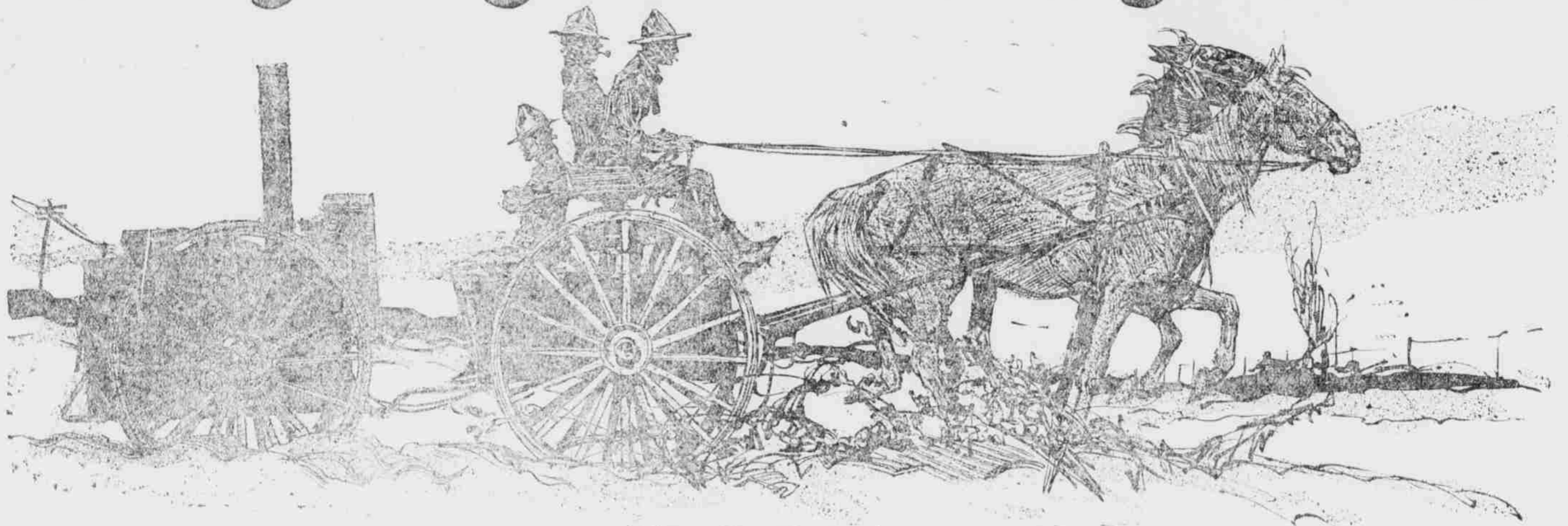


The Fighting Boys' Rolling Kitchen



A Novel Example of Yankee Ingenuity and the Part It Plays in the Life of the Soldiers in France

By RENE BACHE

AMERICAN soldier boys in France are better fed than "rolling kitchens" this other picturesque descriptive term being applied to certain new-fangled military outfits on wheels that go along with the American armies abroad.

This novel style of military kitchen is quite a marvel of Yankee ingenuity. Drawn by a couple of horses, it resembles in a way an artillery limber and gun-carriage. Replace the latter with a cook-fore and the former with a cook's chest (surmounted by a driving seat), and you will understand the arrangement. The stove and chest being each of them mounted on a pair of wheels.

Thus, when troops are halted for a meal, the cook-fore may be detached from the limber, or front part, and, though standing on a pair of wheels, it is made a fixture by setting a large and dropping four steel pins to hold it square in position.

It would be more appropriate to call this part the cooking section, inasmuch as it is a good deal more than a mere stove. It is of sheet-



"Lining up" for a Meal at the Rolling Kitchen Headquarters.

6000 leaves per day, of any size, weight and shape that may be desired.

The rolling bakery makes a loaf from start to finish, taking the flour and other ingredients on board in bulk, preparing the dough in an automatic mixer, kneading it, discharging it into "rising troughs," and kneading it again as it passes along chain-operated belt-conveyers, to be molded into loaves and discharged ready for the ovens.

The bread-making apparatus weighs three tons. It is 7½ feet wide and 20 feet long, with a six-foot drop extension in the rear, a little lower than the main body, so that the bread can be panned at a man's standing height. One side of the body of the machine unfolds to form a baker's work bench. When set up for operation, the whole affair is covered by a canvas tent 28 by 24 feet.

Soldier Critics.

The soldier is always a very exacting person in regard to what he calls his "grub." If it be not just as he wants it, he is discontented and may even become mutinous. Uncle Sam's fighting men are in this respect rather pampered. Dr. Harvey W. Wiley, the food expert, says that they would be better off with half as much to eat, but other authorities would be likely to disagree with him.

A soldier, for fighting purposes, is no better than his stomach. It is of utmost importance not only that he shall have enough to eat, but that his digestion shall be kept in good order. In former days it was customary for soldiers to make and bake their own bread in the field. This is no longer allowed.

The war department maintains schools for bakers, in which enlisted men thoroughly learn the trade. Thus American troops, wherever they may be, are always supplied with bread as good and wholesome as any city bakeries could furnish.



Lifting Out Cans of Stew and Soup from the Rolling Stove.

steel, with a cast-iron firebox, and the rear has an oven that offers accommodation for one huge roasting-pan on its bottom and two smaller ones on a shelf above.

Supplementing the oven are four cylindrical food-containers with a capacity of 12 gallons each, for soups, stews and boiled meats. Two of them are set in heavy metal jackets, to prevent scorching of meats cooked in them.

Soup, Stew, Tea and Coffee.

Ordinarily two of the four cylinders are used for soup or stew, and two for tea or coffee. But when a larger quantity of food is needed, use can be made of two more cylinders, carried in the front section, or limber. By this means an additional 24 gallons may be supplied.

The two cylinders in the limber, however, are meant under ordinary circumstances for other purposes. They are in effect the inner linings of a pair of enormous thermos bottles, in which soup or other food may be kept hot for 24 hours if desired.

It appears then that the rolling kitchen has a maximum capacity for boiling 72 gallons of food and drink. One such outfit is designed to feed 200 soldiers, giving to each man one pint of stew or soup, one pint of tea or coffee, and one liberal helping of roast meat (from the

oven), supplemented, if it be desired, by one pint of any other liquid from the cook-pots in the thermos bottles.

The thermos bottles, so to call them, have lined covers, clamped tight by heavy springs. Mineral wool (in preparation of asbestos) is used to insulate their contents. They have been tested in zero weather, and even under such conditions will keep their contents above "eating temperature" for 24 hours.

Now suppose that the troops have come to a halt, awaiting for the night or longer. The front section (limber) of the rolling kitchen is detached from the cooking section, and from the former is removed the cook's chest—a roomy box of sheet steel that furnishes a wonderful variety of useful things, presently to be enumerated.

The thermos cans are likewise removed and placed on the ground near by, conveniently for use if required. In case it be so desired, those insulated receptacles may be employed as fireless cookers. This leaves the limber (on two wheels and drawn by the pair of horses) free for use as a wood cart, supply cart or water cart. The six cylindrical cooking vessels will serve to fetch 72 gallons of water—enough for an entire company.

The cook's chest, placed on the ground, does

serve as a working table, the roasting-pans from the oven being placed upon it, and the men receiving their individual portions of meat from the cans as they pass by in single file, each one presenting for the purpose his aluminum plate. Further along he gets his helping of soup or coffee in an aluminum cup with a tin-rod handle.

Operating the Containers.

The 12-gallon containers for soup or coffee (for stews are, of course, very heavy when full), but, to lift them into or out of the "stove," and for carrying the cooked foods over short distances, freedom wooden poles are provided, fitted with hooks so adjusted as to grapple (through suitable holes) the edges of the huge cooking-pots. When not in use, the poles are held by cleats along the sides of the cooking section and limber.

Thanks to these ingenious arrangements, an entire company of 200 men can be served with a meal in a very few minutes. And, by the way, it is worth mentioning that the above-mentioned steel legs of the cooking section are unbreakable. If a careless driver were to move off with the machine, without lifting the legs into their carrying position, they would simply trail behind.

The cook's chest is a miteum in parvo, comparable to the famous and inexhaustible bag of Mrs. Sals Family Robinson. In the bottom of it are six canisters, for holding sugar, beans, etc. A triple compartment contains salt, pepper and spice. In camp, the canisters are placed on convenient shelves and the emptied chest serves the purpose of a big bread-box.

The chest also contains a cleaver, a meat saw, two slicing knives, two skinning knives, a steel for sharpening knives, two big forks, two big dippers, two big ladles, two big spoons and a food-chopper. Additional tools are carried in a tool-box beneath the footboard of the limber.

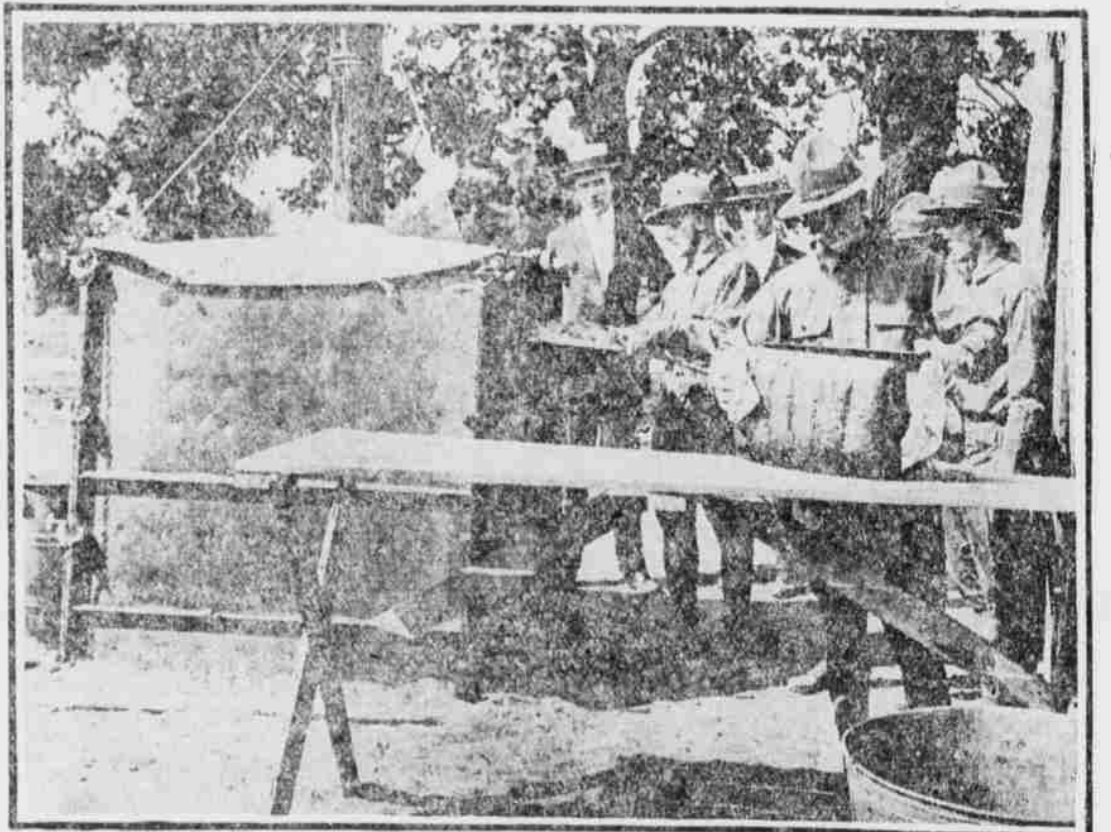
The Rolling Bakery.

Even more remarkable than the kitchen on wheels is the "rolling bakery," which (a new American invention) is now under consideration by the war department. It is an automobile bakery, mounted on the chassis of a motor truck, and, with five men to operate it, does (it is claimed) as much work as 112 army bread-makers can accomplish by methods hitherto adopted.

Such a motor bakery can keep up with the most rapid movements of troops in the field—a very important advantage, inasmuch as its output of fresh bread is always available for the soldiers; of bread, that is to say, right out of the oven. Its capacity of production is 3000 to



The Kitchen Separates Into Two Parts. The Forward Part, or "Limber," Is Here Shown Being Drawn Off by the Horses.



The Army Bakery in Action.