



## US ARMY presents the new more compact and nutritious field ration

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An innovative and compact field ration is about to revolutionize the way U.S. soldiers tackle prolonged missions in challenging environments. It is called the **Close Combat Assault Ration (CCAR)** and is the result of years of research and development by the **Army Combat Capabilities Development Command**, which began in 2019.

This new individual ration is designed to provide maximum nutritional intake while occupying less space and weight compared to previous solutions. According to [a statement from the U.S. Army](#), the CCAR will allow small units to operate independently for periods of 7 to 10 days, even in the absence of regular supplies.

### From MRE to CCAR: an operational necessity

Until now, soldiers primarily used **Meal, Ready to Eat (MRE)** or **First Strike Ration** during missions. However, these packages have proven too bulky and heavy to meet the needs of operations in extreme scenarios, where every gram counts.

The **CCAR** represents a significant quality leap: compared to the First Strike Ration, it features a **39% reduction in volume** and a **17% lower weight**. This means that a soldier can carry the necessary nourishment for **five days in the space that would have previously been needed for three**.

Initially, designers considered including only highly nutritious bars, but they abandoned this solution after gathering direct feedback from the military.

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Developed by the Department of Defense (DoD) Combat Feeding Division (CFD) of the U.S. Army Combat Capabilities Development Command Soldier Center (DEVCOM SC), the Close Combat Assault Ration (CCAR) is a new lightweight, high-energy-density, nutrient-rich individual field ration that significantly reduces the volume and weight of rations that military personnel must carry. (Source: DEVCOM Soldier Center Public Affairs)

## A project built by listening to soldiers

From the preliminary stages, the development of the CCAR was based on feedback from the troops. In 2019, designers consulted elite units such as the **10th Special Forces Group** at Fort Carson (Colorado), the **10th Mountain Division** at Fort Drum (New York), and the **2nd Reconnaissance Battalion** of the Marines at Camp Lejeune (North Carolina).

The goal was clear: reduce weight and bulk without sacrificing taste and nutritional value. “We have an old saying in the military food world: *it's not nutrition if it doesn't get eaten*,” explained Erin Gaffney-Stomberg, head of the **Combat Feeding Division**. “It's essential that soldiers receive the best possible nourishment, when and where they need it, in a form that is appetizing, safe, and practical.”

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The CCAR offers three menu options and is now available for all branches of the U.S. Armed Forces. The image shows a side-by-side comparison illustrating the volume and weight reductions between the standard individual Meal, Ready to Eat (MRE) (left), the First Strike Ration (FSR) (center), and the CCAR (right). (Source: DEVCOM Soldier Center Public Affairs)

## Improved performance and fewer energy deficits

Field studies have shown that soldiers consuming the CCAR ingested more calories and experienced fewer energy deficits compared to those using the First Strike Ration. The credit goes to the **increased energy density** of the new package.

James McClung, head of the **Military Nutrition Division**, emphasized the importance of this result: “A negative energy balance, or the inability to consume enough calories to meet metabolic needs, is a threat to the fighter's performance.”

Fortunately, tests have confirmed that the CCAR does not compromise soldiers' physical capabilities, making it an ideal solution for short-term missions where reducing the logistical load is essential.

“With the constant goal of optimizing the performance and lethality of our military, the CCAR represents a promising option for operations where every gram and every centimeter of space in the backpack make a difference,” added McClung.

## **Towards the future: less weight, more energy**

The launch of the **Close Combat Assault Ration** marks an important step forward in military logistics. The combination of compactness, acceptable taste, and improved physical performance could make the CCAR a standard for special operations units and all departments destined for missions in hostile territories.

With a lighter and more nutritious package, soldiers will be able to face extreme challenges with an adequate energy reserve, without suffering the typical performance drops due to caloric deficiencies.

In an era where the modern fighter must operate with increasing autonomy, the CCAR could become a fundamental component of the 21st-century soldier's field kit.

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