

RACE S Notes for 07/23/2008

News and Announcements

1) Upcoming Events:

8/30-31 9/1 - Paradise
9/1 2-14 – Southwest Convention, Mesa
9/20-21 - SAR Training: Overnight at E. Stronghold—All Specialties
10/11 – Cochise Perimeter Bicycling Classic

2) Paradise – Just a reminder that Paradise is only a month away.

3) File Naming Convention – We would like to establish a file naming convention for the comm logs that we create during missions. The convention will consist of the year/month/date (YYYYMMDD) and the name of the mission. Here is one example:

[20080308SAR-Keuper.doc](#)

One of the benefits of this convention is to quickly locate all the missions for a given year.

Training - Perishable Rotation – While cleaning out my 24 hour Go-Bag I was checking the date codes on my MREs that I carry for food backup and realized I had not looked at them for awhile. They are grossly out-of-date so they went into the trash this week. If you are not familiar with how to read the codes, it is fairly simple. Some case lots will use a standard month day year such as 03/05/1995 or month year such as 03/95. Others are slightly more complicated using a four-digit code starting with the first digit as the year of manufacture 0-9 followed by a 3 digit day-of-the-year. Example, mine were from 9035 meaning it was manufactured in 9 (1999), on the 35th day (4 February). The color of the bag is also a good hint. If you have any of the dark brown MRE bags, that was discontinued in 1995 and switched to a light tan bag in 1996. You probably want to seriously consider disposing of the dark brown bagged items. If you open the bags to save just the entr e or components you will find that individual meal components are also date stamped.

So long do they stay "fresh"? The average numbers I hear a lot for MRE freshness are 3 years at "normal" temperatures (80 degrees F). I've also heard 10 years if they're stored in cool conditions. But that's it for the "official" information.

Practical Life of MREs

Practically, the darn things last a long, long, time. As long as the individual MRE components aren't damaged, punctured, leaking, or SWELLING!!, they should still be edible. Some people on the web say that an MRE may lose its flavor or turn an unappetizing color but will still retain all the nutritional value. But other people will say the nutritional value decays over time. Take your pick of opinions. If you want to really be safe, don't base your nutritional health on 10-year old MREs. But for occasional eating/camping/etc you're probably ok.

But how do they really taste? I've eaten everything from one month old MREs to 11 year old MREs. While I haven't been brave enough to try the 10 year old Omelet with Ham, I

have tried the 11 year old corned beef hash and the 11 year old ham slice/potatoes au gratin. They were both perfectly tasty (if you like those kinds of foods). The ham slice was nice and tender - more like Hormel's Tender Chunk Ham. The corned beef hash was like any can of corned beef hash I've ever eaten. All the other MRE entrees I've tried - from 1998, 2000, 2001, 2002 have all been good - no sort of off-flavors or bad tastes. For practicality and safety I have decided that 10 years is the maximum that I plan to keep anything in my go-bag. I will toss anything that shows signs of decay such as possibly leakage, discoloration of packaging or swelling. If you rotate food items every couple of years though you will be assured of fresh and somewhat tasty meals.

For more complete information on date codes and shelf life information I am including a web-site address for you to check out:

<http://www.mreinfo.com/us/mre/mre-date-codes.html>

The Heater Meals option that some of us have purchased usually recommends a shorter shelf life varying from 2-3 years. Again, storage conditions will impact how long they will last safely.

Remember that high heat such as the trunk of your car will impact how long your food will remain viable.

Of course if you pack any of your own items into plastic bags, be sure to mark the date you packed it and put it into your Go-Bag. Practically speaking you can make your own meals-ready-to eat from various canned foods and vacuum packed snacks.

We will now go down the roster for comments.

Bob

Robert L Hollister

Thought for the day:

"When you fish for love, bait with your heart, not your brain" - Mark Twain