

Tin Cans Go To War

Cans Fight, Save Lives, Feed, and Do Double Duty on War and Home Fronts as Millions Are Being Produced Daily



SGT. THOMPSON'S TABLE IS A MACHINE GUN, BUT HIS MEAT HASH IS GOOD.

IN peacetime Americans open, discard, and replace an average of 45 million tin cans daily. Today, as a part of America's industrial might, those tin cans are helping to win the war. They are cans filled with food and explosives, and an amazing variety of necessities for the fighting fronts. Nothing is more American than the tin can; and Yankee ingenuity never stops. GIs use empty tin cans for literally everything from ashtrays to shelters.

An English engraver, Thomas Kensett, who came to U. S. in 1812 is responsible for the huge tin can industry. When Nicholas Appert invented a method of preserving sterilized food in air-tight bottles, Kensett visualized the possibilities of food in cans. He got a patent in 1825 and set up a factory, sold canned food to masters of sailing ships. His cans really were of tin; but today, though the name has clung, they are 98½% steel with a thin coating of tin.

A ship is torpedoed, a plane is forced down at sea, and these cans save lives because they are part of lifeboat and liferaft equipment: A sea marker can, filled with fluorescent paint, splashes the sea with color for searching planes to find. A balloon SOS can holds a balloon that soars 300 feet in the air, carrying aloft a radio aerial for SOS messages from a portable radio. A smoke flare can sends spirals of smoke into the air that can be seen five miles away. A fishing kit can holds hooks, lures, lines, jigs, to catch fish. A blanket can contains three army blankets and serves as a rain-catcher. A still to convert salt water into drinking water, and a can of massage oil are also included. Americans even put motorcycles in cans for use of paratroopers. Small, folding gasoline scooters, packed in a can, dropped by light parachutes from planes, can be opened quickly and a motorcycle assembled in a few moments.

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A SMALL PARACHUTE IS FOLDED up inside first can below, left, and a bomb fits on screw top. When bomb and can are dropped, parachute automatically unfolds. Beside it is canister holding steel balls for 37mm tank gun. Next is can of wax, which is rubbed on shoes and clothing to protect against gas fumes. Army and Navy fliers carry sardine can of concentrated food tablets. Part of lifeboat equipment is daytime smoke distress signal. Two small cans carry distilled water and life-saving blood plasma for transfusions. Beer cans now carry emergency drinking water. Small can contains a cloth which prevents eye pieces in a gas mask from fogging. Cloth has been treated with special substance for purpose.



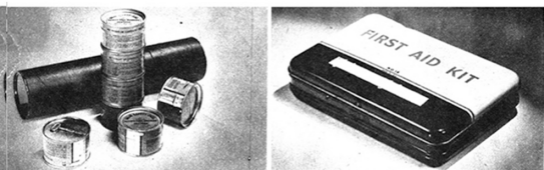
SMOKE BILLOWS from a tin can as Sergeant Ralph E. Vanlandingham stages a simulated gas attack at Camp Joseph T. Robinson in Arkansas. Such attacks prepare men for enemy gas.

Postwar consumers will benefit from the canning industry's research and experimentation to give fighting men the best possible diet. Thanks will also go to a "guinea pig club" of civilian tasters for the Quartermaster Corps who try out new concoctions daily: pies made of dehydrated ingredients, a new fruit drink powder, canned ham and eggs, or salads. The postwar housewife will get canned whipped cream, new subtropical fruits, canned bananas, and new combinations of fish. Dehydrated products, soups, corned beef hash, rice pudding, and other foods developed in quantity for the armed forces need sturdy containers. How popular dehydrated foods will be is now debatable, but the present need for cans for these, and the million other wartime uses, is unquestioned. The campaign to get housewives to turn in every tin can to the salvage depot has been intensified and yet it is reported that a third of the cans New Yorkers use are being thrown away. These cans are badly needed today to make morphine holders for wounded soldiers on the battlefronts. They are also needed to carry blood plasma.

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SEVEN CANS IN GROUP below are part of life-boat emergency equipment. They are burners to heat salt water stills. First aid kit holds precious drugs and medicines. Former paint can, first on lower row, carries a compound that protects army leather.

Ex-coffee container holds colored flare cartridges to signal position of survivors at sea. Life-raft ration is well protected in can. Fuse flare in former beer can sets off a flare that shows bombardiers their target. Another beer can adaptation holds chemicals that start fires when thrown by hand. Last fighting can is used to patch holes in smoke screen. When it hits ground, smoke billows up. These are necessary when wind is blowing.



COOKING THEIR 10-IN-1 ration cans of beans a la Boston style in the field at Treviere, France, are S/Sgt. Steven J. Arch, T/5 Uno E. Annila of Wisconsin, and T/5 Talmadge Mulkey of Alabama.