

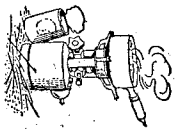
August 45

A stove to warm the GI's heart—and other accomplishments

He Has Provided

A LOT OF COMFORT

Condensed from *The American Legion Magazine* • LEWIS NORDYKE



W. C. COLEMAN, a 75-year-old Kansan, figured out a little gasoline stove which gives the boy in a foxhole, tank or bomber a combination kitchen range, hot-water system and heating plant that is easy to carry. About the size of a quart thermos bottle, it weighs three pounds, is a cinch to operate, is absolutely foolproof, and is easily the most popular nonshooting piece of equipment to come out of the war.

On a cup of gasoline from plane or jeep, the soldier can have a fire for two hours in his tent or foxhole; he can warm rations, brew coffee or cook a meal. He can heat shaving water in a couple of minutes.

The stove was designed for ski-troopers and Alaska patrols; but the device filled such an enormous need that it is now standard equipment for all branches of the service. The millionth stove was sent to a fellow Kansan, General Eisenhower, last April.

It's versatile. The case makes a quart-sized stew pan. The top makes a smaller one. The stove lights instantly, burns with a blue flame that is practically invisible even at night. Temperature and altitude make no difference; it worked equally well in the humid jungle, in the Aleutians or high in a bomber.

The stove burns any kind of gasoline—a trick which makes engi-

neers marvel. The lead in ethyl gas wouldn't vaporize and quickly gummed up stove burners. Coleman's engineers solved the problem.

The GIs appreciate little things that Coleman added to the stove. He fastened on all removable parts with little chains. No one can endanger his life by pouring in gasoline while the stove is burning, for when the fill plug is unscrewed the pressure puffs out and the stove can't burn. Spare generators, other parts, and a wrench are attached inside the frame. For foxhole comfort, the control screwhead is so made that it stays cool; no burned fingers.

"You have no idea what a big thing some practical little device like a successful stove is in the life of a man at the front," Ernie Pyle wrote, and went on to tell how the Coleman stove always worked. Soldiers brew coffee just before battle, Tommies depend upon it for tea, Commandos take it along on raids.

Coleman's name has long been known in rural America. In 1899 he was selling typewriters to earn money for a law course in the University of Kansas. A flood of white light pouring from a drugstore in Brocton, Alabama, attracted his attention. It came from a gasoline lamp. Coleman, half-blind since boyhood, had never been able to read

at night; but under the soft glow of the gasoline lamp he could read the labels on the bottles.

People who have to depend on a dismal kerosene light should buy this wonderful service, Coleman thought. So he set up an agency in Oklahoma. Then he found that gasoline lamps had a bad name. They worked poorly.

Coleman then had the novel idea of selling light instead of lamps. He rented lamps and agreed to keep them working. Storekeepers jumped at the chance to buy light, provided they didn't have to tinker with the lamps. Within a year Coleman was lighting a score of towns in Oklahoma, Texas, New Mexico, Nevada and California. He hired lampfitters to tend the lamps. In working on defective lamps, Coleman learned why they wouldn't function. Then he designed one that worked. He sold millions of them—still sells a lot, in areas not yet electrified, and in far-away lands.

For the benefit of people who rarely had a chance to attend sports events, Coleman proposed to light a football field for a night game. That was in 1905. One of Coleman's crazy ideas, people thought. But Fairmount College and Sterling College played their football game that year at night.

Coleman also perfected an outdoor gasoline lantern, which today is

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almost as popular in the services as the GI stove. He wanted a lantern that would withstand a Kansas twister, so he tested it for several years in blizzards and rainstorms. Now his lantern is standard equipment in outposts and where power lines have been destroyed.

When the war started, Coleman was heating more American homes than any other manufacturer. His farm stove looks something like a cabinet radio, because Coleman wanted it to be as attractive as a piece of furniture. One model burns oil, another gas. One stove will keep a five-room home at an even, comfortable temperature. The ordinary stove sends most of its heat up the flue or to the ceiling. This one doesn't. The heat can be deflected to any part of the room by simply adjusting a side door on the heater.

Coleman is a silver-haired, kindly man who looks much like a retired small-town preacher. His 16-acre plant did \$10,000,000 worth of business a year even in peacetime. Now he has more employes than ever, and he intends to keep every wartime worker who wants to stay.

He is ready to come out with a new line of heating equipment, but a big part of the plant will have to be devoted to the making of the GI stoves. Apparently every fighting man who has used one wants one.



» In South Carolina, a highway filling station and barbecue stand, forced to close because of wartime shortages, posted a huge sign: OPENED BY MISTAKE.

READER'S DIGEST TELLS "520" STORY

On another page of *Coleman News*, readers will find a reproduction of a story on the famous Coleman "Pocket Stove" published in *Reader's Digest*. The story is also a tribute to the Coleman Company's founder and president, W. C. Coleman, and the great service he and his company have performed in behalf of mankind. The "Pocket Stove" is one of the finest examples of what the writer had in mind. *Coleman News* therefore here presents the chronological history of the No. 520 or "Pocket Stove":

March, 1941 - First request made by National Ski Association which had been commissioned by the U. S. Army to assist in the development of equipment for Ski Troops.

April 1, 1941 - Development started.

May 20, 1941 - First working model developed from scratch in about 60 days.

July 1, 1941 - Approved model successfully passed field tests by Army Quartermaster Corps and production started. Specifications called for a "one-man" stove that must be small in size, light in weight, strong to stand abuse, simple and easy to operate, all parts attached to prevent loss, hot as a range burner, and must operate successfully in weather 125 degrees above zero down to 60 degrees below zero, using any gas 52 to 100 octane.

Oct. 1, 1941 - First delivery of 1,204 stoves made to Army Quartermaster.

Nov. 8, 1942 - Used by American Forces in the invasion of North Africa. 5,000 stoves were rushed by express on fastest trains to New York City, to go with Invasion Forces.

April 11, 1944 - Ernie Pyle, famous war correspondent, broke the news about the use of the Coleman "G.I." Pocket Stove by our servicemen. Subsequently, it was repeatedly referred to in news dispatches by other war correspondents.

Early 1944 - Mauldin, famous war cartoonist, repeatedly included the "G.I." Stove in his "G.I." cartoons.

June 6, 1944 - On D-Day, landed with American "G.I.'s" in France.

May 2, 1945 - The Millionth Coleman Military Burner to come down production lines presented to General of the Army Ike Eisenhower by Coleman Employees.

August, 1945 - Featured in a special article in the *American Legion Magazine* - condensed and reprinted in *Reader's Digest*, August issue.

1942-43-44-45 - Used by Uncle Sam's G.I.'s on all battlefronts of the world:

In Europe - In Africa, Sicily, Italy, France, Germany.

In the Far East - India, Burma, China.

In the Pacific - New Guinea, Solomons, Guam, Philippines, Okinawa, Japan.

Used to cook food; provide warmth; make hot drinks; boil water for drinking, washing clothes, etc. Used by medics, tankmen, infantrymen, flyers, paratroopers, ski-troopers, or any serviceman who could get one.

V-J Day, Aug. 1945 - "Keep on Making 'Em," says the G.I.'s. "We want this pocket stove for fun when we come home."

Chronological history
of the Coleman No. 520
Military Burner, better
known as the "G.I."
Pocket Stove. Also
called the "Ernie Pyle
Stove" A later version
of the No. 520 carried
the number 526. A civilian
version was called the 530.