



The Jerry Can

By: Bjoernung Jensen

This story is a short summary, translated and adapted from a story printed in 4WD, The Norwegian Land Rover Club's Magazine. The story appeared in issue no. 6, 1991, without any references.

The Jerry Can is an example of a small, seemingly insignificant item, that had a pronounced effect on the course of the second world war. The Jerry can is the square, flat fuel tank often seen with military vehicles, on the back of a Jeep or a Land Rover. Many will associate the Jerry Can with USA or England. Jerry was the name the Americans and British (and others) used for a German, during the second world war. The can is actually a German design and it took quite some time before it dawned on the Allied how significant this little detail actually was.

Hitler, on the other hand, realized early the importance safe fuel supplies would have for his plans of a Blitzkrieg. He ordered a transportable fuel container that would minimize loss of fuel during supply and battle.

The design was developed under secrecy. The final version consisted of two halves, welded together. This weld together with the impressions in the side panels was strong enough to hold it together after a full day in 50degC. It had three grab handles in order to let one man carry two cans and hand them over to a second man or for two men to carry one can between them. It had room for 20 liters when full and full it weighed approximately 20.5 kg.

Due to its built in air pocket (notice design of the top), it should float in water if dropped, even full with fuel. The filler tube and lock is also cleverly designed and there is (or should be, if the can is of correct design) an internal air pipe from the lock/filler tube to the air pocket which allows for even/constant flow when emptying.

Some say they prefer it over the U.S. Army "merrican" (is this the same as the NATO one?) of the wide spout type which apparently do not seal as well and do not pour as well.



The labeling says at the top:
Besnin = Gasoline
and at the bottom:
lisdfarlig = Flammable



The air pocket that will form
at the top keeps the can
floating, even full of fuel.



This particular jerry can is
from 1954, as is stamped
on the can itself.

Jerry Can history and photos of 1954 can provided by:

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Modern day fuel can made by Wedco



Modern day water can made by Wedco



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