

ETHYL GASOLINE CORPORATION

CHRYSLER BUILDING
405 LEXINGTON AVENUE

NEW YORK

INTER-OFFICE
CORRESPONDENCE

June 27, 1939

cc: Dr. R. A. Kehoe

MEMORANDUM TO MR. J. H. SCHAEFER

Replying to your note and confidential memorandum to Dr. Kehoe and yourself from Hugh Fossett, on the proposal to build bomb proof blending plants, I find myself at variance with the proposal submitted. I would not attempt a correction of the present design because I think the entire thing is fundamentally wrong.

The proposal to build such a plant under a hill indicates they must expect plenty of high explosives and possibly some incendiary and gas bombs. Why even think of blending while the bombing is taking place? And, if they get what they seem to expect, certainly electric current for lights, and power for blowers will be cut off. The possibility is that with gasoline inside such a trap, we will either have men asphyxiated or they will use an open light and blow themselves up. The possibility of a bomb blocking one entrance and trapping people within, or ruining the blending plant is quite large. The ventilator out of the top might be a target, and would probably put the ventilating system out of commission if a bomb fell in the vicinity. In a wholesale condemnation of such a scheme, I suppose one should have a workable alternate.

My proposal would be to have their blending plant run along orthodox lines, but possibly camouflaged. I think a very good camouflage would be to have the plant represent a Bavarian Beer Garden - to be facetious about a particularly grim subject. This presumably would be a mile or so from the blending tanks which, unless I am mistaken, enemy aviators could probably spot as large round mounds recently covered with nice green grass. At any time up to the time of actual bombing by an enemy, such a plant could be used with full ventilation, washing facilities, etc. In time of war, everything is different, and the danger from lead of a solid nature is much greater than that of some fumes from a liquid lead. I should

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suggest having our cache in the side of the mountain all right, but simply as a storage terminal. Also, this storage should be in a tunnel open at both ends, thus natural ventilation through the tunnel will occur with the prevailing winds. In case of destruction of the orthodox blending plant (camouflaged, of course) the reserve Fluid is rolled out of the tunnel, probably at night or during one of England's cloudy or foggy days. In the shade of an old apple tree, we probably have a gasoline engine running a pump (because by our hypothesis steam and electric current are not available). At or near that point appear several stubs of pipe, very similar in appearance to our Fluid standpipes. I should say that the drum would have the bungs taken out and one of these 3/4" pipes placed in the Fluid. The suction of the gasoline pump is connected both to aviation gasoline under one of the mounds and this Fluid standpipe. Both gasoline and Fluid are sucked out simultaneously and the gasoline from the gasoline driven pump goes back into the tank and this process continues until as much Fluid is used as the gasoline requires. As far as the men's washing is concerned, a little rinse off with the gasoline at that point and a thorough wash with soap and water when the men get back to their bomb proof shelters would suffice. If a lucky shot hits the pump under the tree or blocks the entrance to our little tunnel, facilities at the other end of the tunnel unable us to continue with the battle. Blending might be curtailed during a raid, but unless bombs fall continuously night and day this should not be a serious matter. A bomb proof gasoline tank could carry a concentrated mixture of Fluid as a "Master Mix", for blending down further as required.

It seems a sad commentary on 1939 that we should be considering living like moles and working in the dark. I think the proposal I have outlined more feasible than depending on mechanical devices for ventilation, washing, and other customary functions deep in the ground. I realize such suggestions for handling Fluid from one in the Safety Department are heresy but the fundamental conditions are different in war than in peace. The principal object in time of war is to "carry on." I think my plans much more practical and less expensive, but herewith admit I may have overlooked some fundamental factors which a closer view would reveal.



V. B. LEWIS

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cc: Dr. R. A. Kehoe

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