

1995 Cap Tin Update

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In this update we welcome new contributors Eric Twitty and Bob Williams, as well as old faithfuls John Kynor and Bob Schroth. Eric is currently preparing a book on dynamite boxes, so let him know about your rare ones. Bob W. somehow manages to find great tins while stranded in New Orleans.

The **Hecla Powder** tin is certainly quite a find. I thought it might be associated with the large Calumet and Hecla copper mine, but it turns out that this is not the case. The Hecla Powder Company was a small firm located on the east coast. The name may perhaps come from the famous (in the last century) Icelandic volcano Mount Hecla. The company was started in 1880 by Charles Morse and his relatives. He picked up experience making dynamite while working for DuPont, and figured he could make more money by starting his own outfit. A small factory was built north of Rahway, NJ, and a general office was opened in New York City. Hecla supplied dynamite under the trade name "Miners Friend."

Unfortunately for Hecla, the business was not as profitable as expected, and they were also sued by the Atlantic Giant Powder Co. for patent infringement. Lamot DuPont bought some Hecla stock in 1883, and by 1885 DuPont interests controlled Hecla and closed the Rahway plant. It seems that for Charles Morse, the moral was: *you can run, but you can't hide*. In 1896 DuPont bought up the rest of the stock and changed the company name to Hecla Dynamite Company. This dates the Hecla tin to roughly a 16 year period (1880 - 1896). The tin has a tabbed bottom construction, and was probably made for Hecla by the Metallic Cap Co.

The **Hercules** tin is a variant of the standard Hercules, No. 8, Powder container. The primary difference is the two added stars on either side of the Hercules logo, and

there is also a size reduction. One guess is that these caps were special-ordered for the US military. Perhaps the military fuse was smaller in diameter than mining fuse, which would explain the reduction in size. Any readers who can shed some light on this are encouraged to contact John or myself.

Tracing the history behind the **Atlantic Dynamite** tin gets pretty confusing. First came the Atlantic Giant Powder Co., which lasted from 1870 to 1882. This turned into the Atlantic Dynamite Co., incorporated in California. In 1895 the western holdings were bought out, and a "new" Atlantic Dynamite Co. was incorporated in New Jersey. Finally, there was later an Atlantic Dynamite Co. of New York, which existed from about 1902 to 1904. Bottom line: Eric's tin dates from about 1895 - 1905, and is a pretty tough one to come by.

The **Davey Bickford Smith** item is a cousin to the tin described in the April 1993 Eureka!. That one was made in Italy, while this one may come from Germany, as "BRISKA" is seen on other German tins.

The **100 No. 6 Blasting Caps** tin does not give a manufacturer on the paper labels which cover the lid or bottom, so the maker is unknown at present.

References:

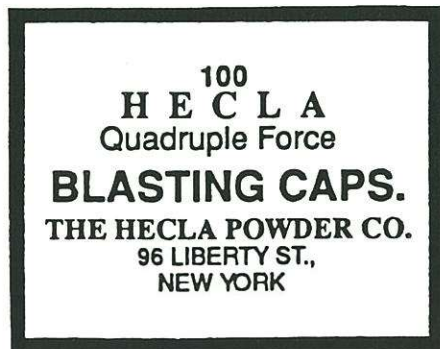
Arthur P. VanGelder and Hugo Schlatter, *The History of the Explosives Industry in America*, 1927.



AETNA POWDER, QUINTUPLE, LION
Embossed Lid
Reported by John Kynor



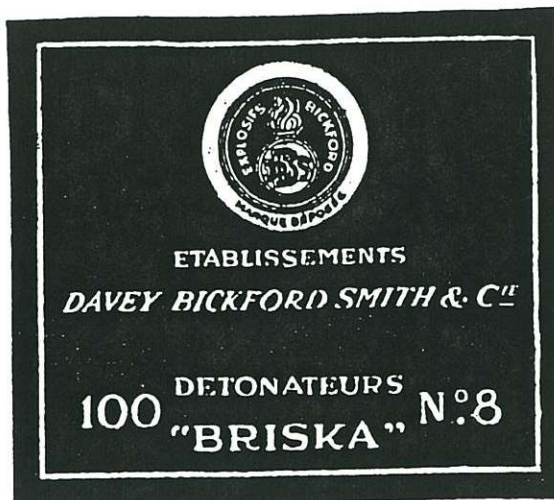
ATLANTIC, TRIPLE, round
Embossed Lid
Reported by Eric Twitty



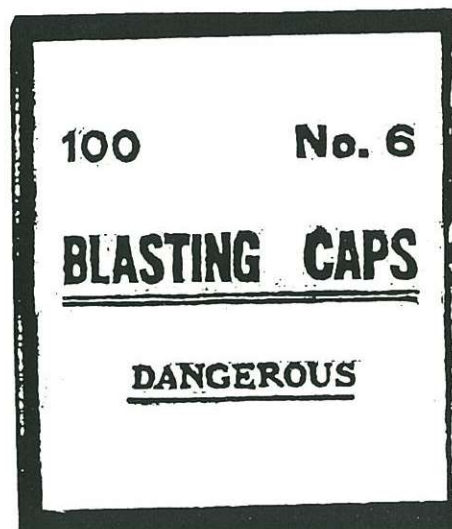
HECLA POWDER, Quadruple
Red and white paper label
Reported by John Kynor



HERCULES, No. 8, POWDER, ★★
Smaller than standard tin
Reported by John Kynor



DAVEY BICKFORD SMITH & C^E
Painted red with white Letters
Reported by Bob Williams



100 No. 6 BLASTING CAPS
Black and White(?) paper on Gold Tin
Reported by Bob Schroth