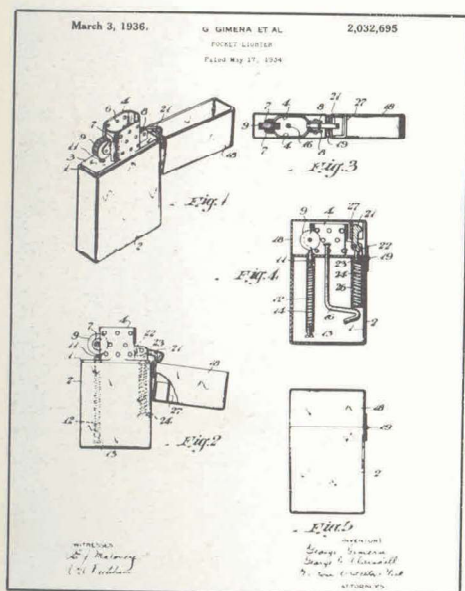


## Zippo

The Zippo Manufacturing Company was founded by George G. Blaisdell in 1932 at Bradford, Pennsylvania. George Blaisdell, then joint owner of Blaisdell Oil Company, had by chance met a friend who was using a one-dollar Austrian lighter and he noticed its ugliness; but the friend told him that it operated very well. That short discussion inspired Blaisdell with the idea of importing foreign lighters into the United States, but the financial profit which this brought was small. He therefore decided to design a model of lighter which, in addition to functioning perfectly, would have a pleasant external appearance. Attracted by the name of what was then an extremely recent invention, the zip, he baptised his lighter Zippo, and kept its design almost unchanged for half a century, except for the externally welded hinging. Blaisdell began to produce this lighter with only six persons in a room over the old Rickerson and Pryde garage in Boylston Street, Bradford, and made various attempts to market and advertise his product. With an old childhood friend who was working at the Bradford bus station, he distributed his lighters to the drivers of the long-distance buses, so that they could offer to sell them to the passengers. He realised at once that advertising support was of fundamental importance and, in 1937, acquired a full page in Esquire Magazine, a review with a high reputation; but his distribution system was still insufficient and prevented him from deriving the proper profit from this step. Better results were obtained by selling lighters to various companies with publicity engraving, which the companies gave as gifts to employees and customers. For example, the Kendall Oil Company of Bradford ordered a lot of five hundred.



804. U.S.A. — Patent of lighter shown in fig. 805, by George Gimera and George G. Blaisdell, Bradford, 17th May 1934, Reg. No. 2032695.

## Zippo

La Zippo Manufacturing Company venne fondata da George G. Blaisdell nel 1932, a Bradford, in Pennsylvania. George Blaisdell, allora comproprietario della Blaisdell Oil Company, avendo per caso incontrato un amico che usava un accendino austriaco da un dollaro, ne sottolineò la bruttezza; ma l'amico ribatté che funzionava benissimo. Quel breve colloquio fece nascere in Blaisdell l'idea di importare negli Stati Uniti accendini esteri; ma il profitto, economico che ne trasse fu assai scarso. Decise allora di disegnare un modello di accendino che oltre a funzionare perfettamente avesse anche un piacevole aspetto esteriore.

Affascinato dal nome di un'invenzione allora recentissima, la chiusura lampo (*zipper* in inglese), battezzò Zippo il suo accendino, che per circa mezzo secolo rimase pressoché immutato nel disegno, salvo per l'incernieratura saldata esternamente. Blaisdell cominciò a produrlo con appena sei persone in una stanza situata sopra il vecchio garage Rickerson and Pryde in Boylston Street, a Bradford, e fece diversi tentativi per commercializzare e propagandare il suo prodotto. Con l'aiuto di un amico d'infanzia che lavorava alla Bradford Bus Station distribuì i suoi accendini agli autisti che guidavano gli automezzi sui lunghi percorsi, affinché li mostrassero ai passeggeri per venderli. Si rese subito conto che la pubblicità era d'importanza fondamentale e nel 1937 acquistò un'intera pagina sulla prestigiosa rivista *Esquire Magazine*; ma la sua rete distributiva era ancora insufficiente e non gli permise di trarre il dovuto profitto da questa iniziativa. Ebbe risultati migliori vendendo a varie aziende accendini con incisioni pubblicitarie, che le aziende stesse regalavano a impiegati e clienti. La Kendall Oil Company di

*With the increase in earnings, Blaisdell extended the small factory, taking over the whole second floor of Rickerson and Pryde, and opened new offices at 21 Pine Street. In 1938 the factory and offices were moved to 36 Barbour Street.*

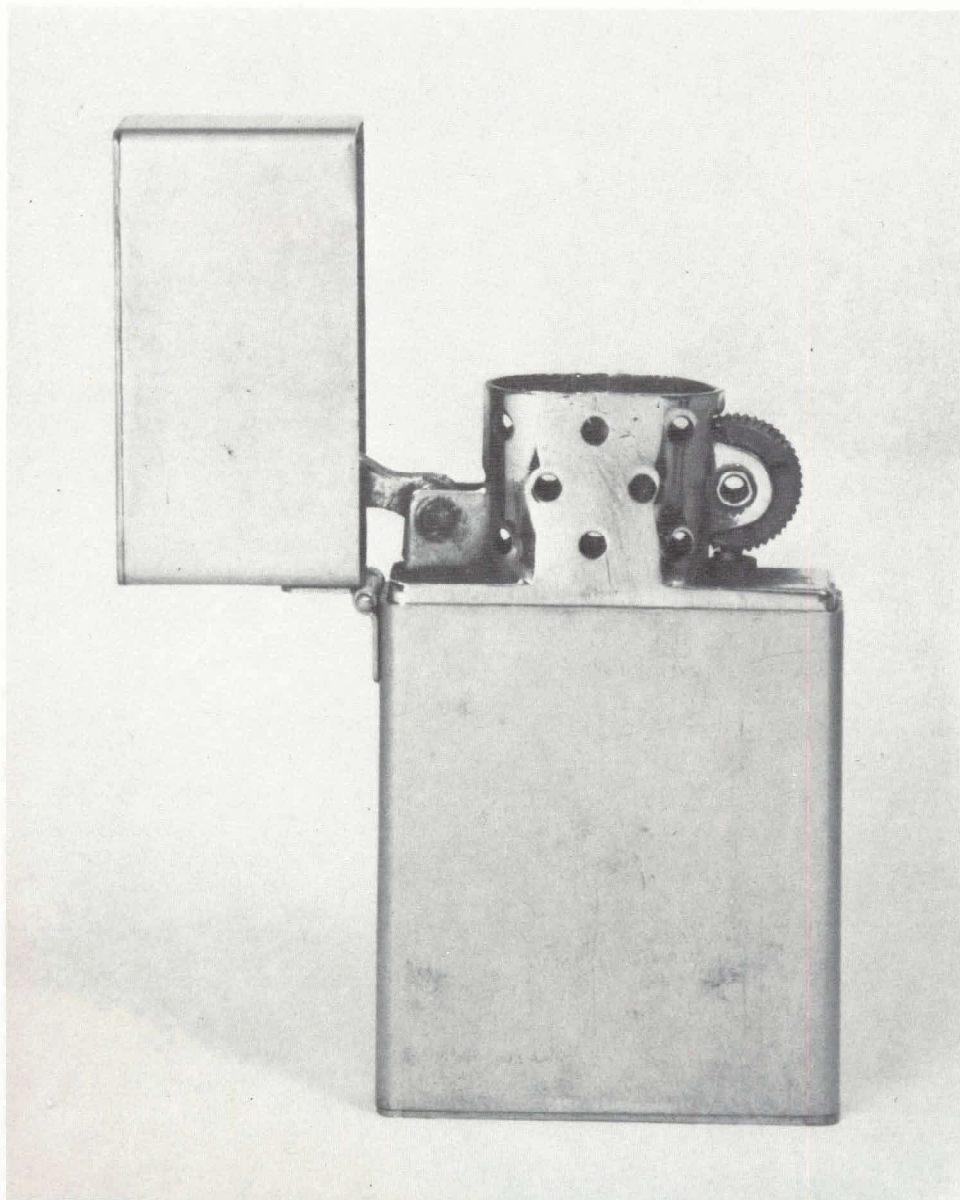
*From 1932 to 1937 both the inside and the outside of the lighter were made from rectangular brass pipes. During the following year Blaisdell modified the design and the working of the lighter using an external drawn casing; this resulted in a more elegant and modern structure, rounded at the corners.*

*With the outbreak of the Second*

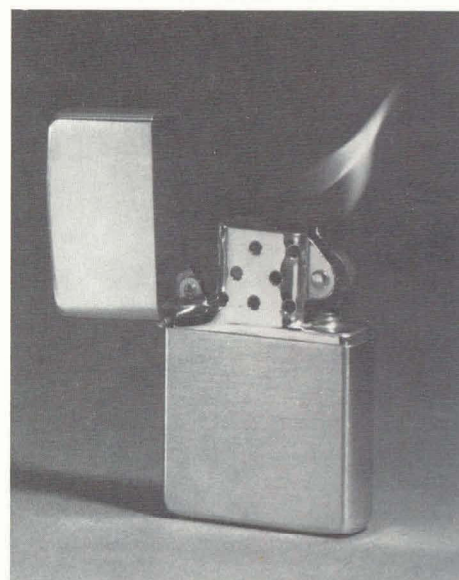
*Bradford, per esempio, ne ordinò in blocco 500.*

*Con l'incremento dei guadagni, Blaisdell ampliò la piccola fabbrica annettendosi tutto il secondo piano di Rickerson and Pryde e aprì nuovi uffici al 21 di Pine Street. Nel 1938 fabbrica e uffici furono trasferiti al 36 di Barbour Street. Dal 1932 al 1937 sia l'interno sia l'esterno dell'accendino erano ricavati da tubi rettangolari di ottone. L'anno seguente Blaisdell modificò il disegno e la lavorazione dell'accendino con una cassa esterna trafilata; ne risultò una struttura più elegante e moderna, arrotondata agli angoli.*

*Con l'intervento nella seconda*



805

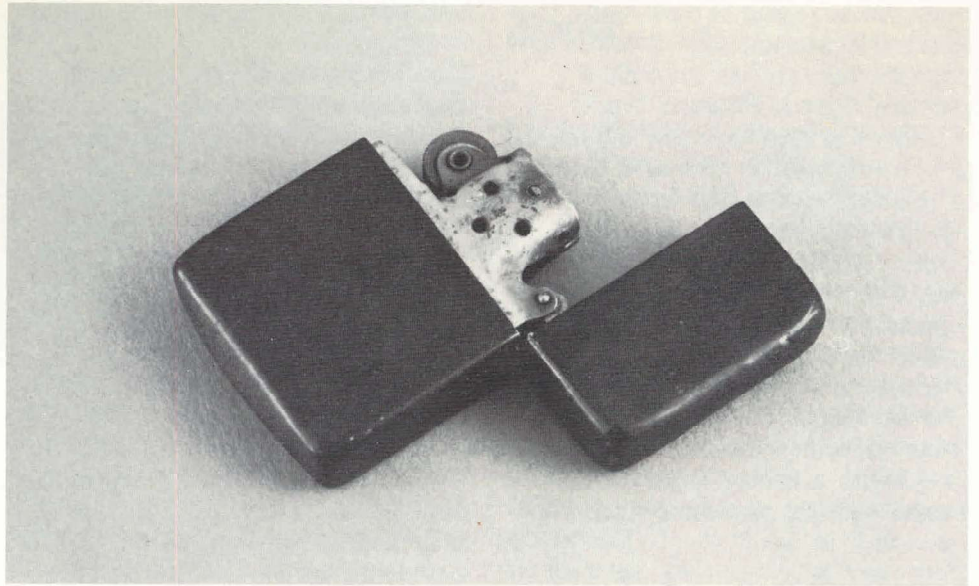


806

*805. The first Zippo lighter. Regular size. Pocket. Outer hinge. Chromium-plated brass. Wheel and flint. Petrol. c 1932.*

*806. Regular size. Pocket. Brushed chromium-plated brass. Wheel and flint. Petrol. c 1937.*

807. Regular size. Pocket. Enamelled steel. Wheel and flint. Petrol. c 1943. mm 57 x 40.5



807

### LIGHTER IDENTIFICATION CODES BY YEAR

YEAR	REGULAR		SLIM	
	Left	Right	Left	Right
1932	Patent pending			
1937	Patent "2032695			
1950	Patent "2517191			
1957	Full stamp with patent pending		....	....
1958	Full stamp with no patent pending			
	....	....	....	...
1959	....	...	...	...
1960	...	...	...	..
1961	...	..	..	..
1962	..	..	..	.
1963	..	.	.	.
1964	.	.	.	
1965	.			
1966	IIII	IIII	IIII	IIII
1967	IIII	III	IIII	III
1968	III	III	III	III
1969	III	II	III	II
1970	II	II	II	II
1971	II	I	II	I
1972	I	I	I	I
1973	I		I	
1974	IIII	IIII	IIII	IIII
1975	IIII	III	IIII	III
1976	III	III	III	III
1977	III	II	III	II
1978	II	II	II	II
1979	II	I	II	I
1980	I	I	I	I
1981	I		I	
1982	IIII	IIII	IIII	IIII
1983	IIII	III	IIII	III
1984	III	III	III	III
1985	III	II	III	II
1986	II	II	II	II
1987	I	II	II	I
1988	I	I	I	I
1989	I		I	



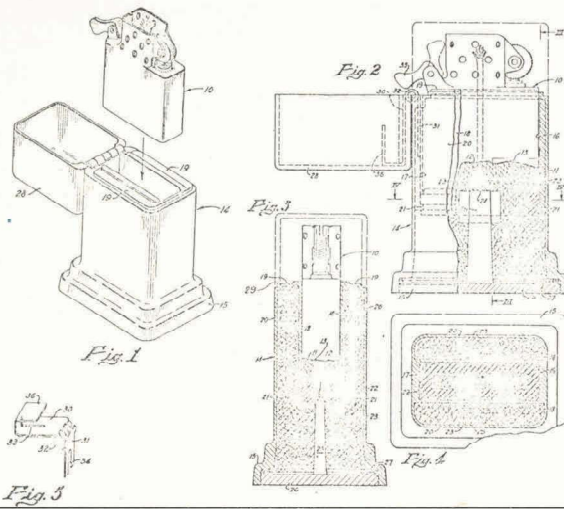
808

808. Lighter bottoms through the years, illustrating the various designs and patent numbers.

809. Zippo's unusual coding system.

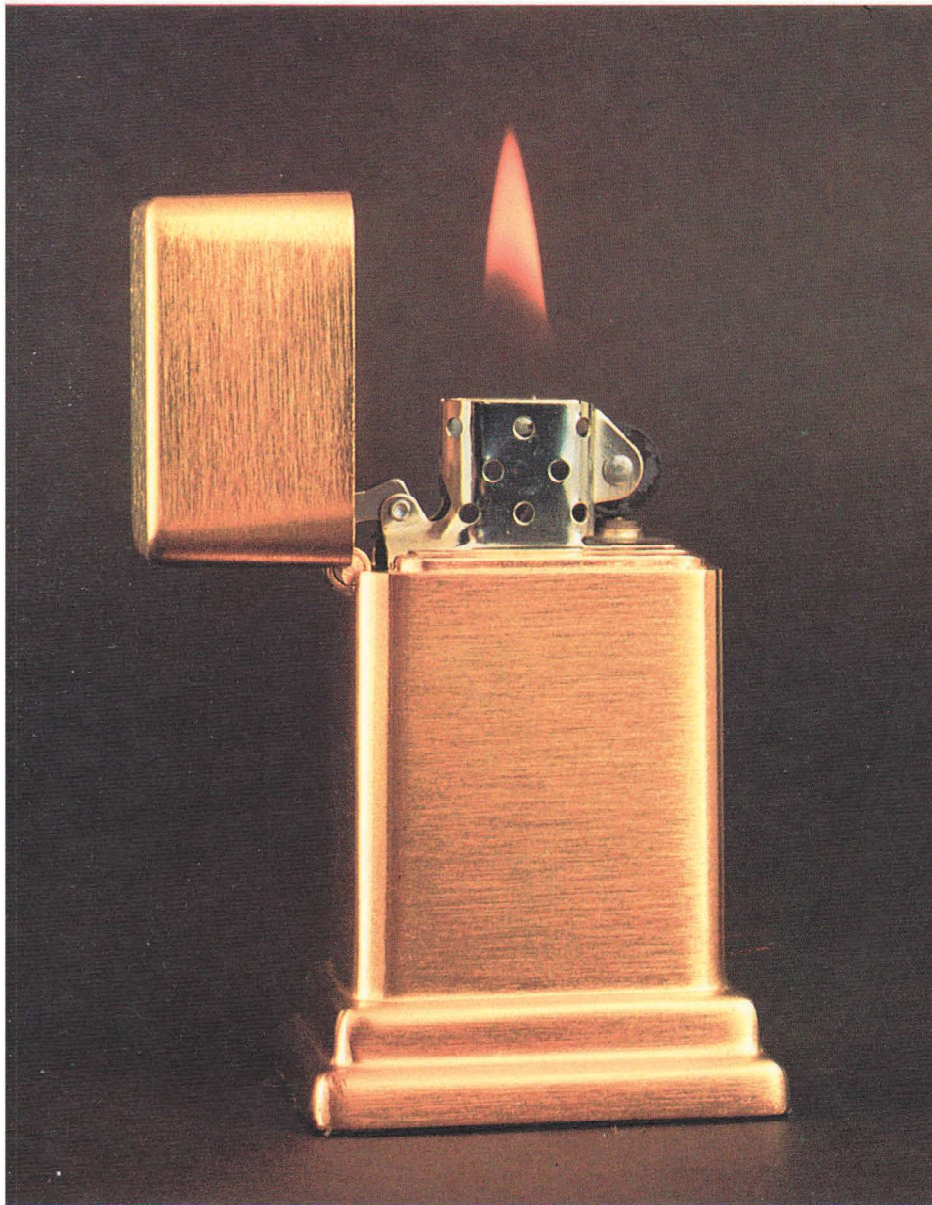
ZIPPO MANUFACTURING COMPANY - BRADFORD, PENNSYLVANIA 16701

809



810

810. France — Patent of lighter shown in fig. 811, submitted by Zippo Mfg. Co., U.S.A., 12th January 1955, Reg. No. 1117670. American patent, by George Grant Blaisdell and Lester Flickinger, on 12th January 1954.



811



812



813

812. Sterling Silver — Lighter bottom. The identification code is missing.

813. Bottom of lighter shown in fig. 819.

811. Barcroft — Table. Brushed brass. Wheel and flint. Petrol. c 1955. mm 84 x 55

321

World War, the government of the United States stopped production of many consumer items in December 1941; and Zippo, being without brass, which was reserved exclusively for military purposes, produced the lighter in poor-quality steel, which was painted black and then stove-enamelled to give it the typical appearance of crackle-enamel. The Zippo production was completely taken over by the armed forces; the lighters were even used to light campfires in the jungle, to heat food in mess tins and helmets and, at night, as a recognition signal. Blaisdell became famous as Mr. Zippo, thanks to the articles by the famous war correspondent Ernie Pyle; his lighters were distributed as awards to deserving military men who were overseas. In 1945, when Pyle was on a ship in the South Pacific, a young officer asked him whether he knew their destination. Pyle took hold of the soldier's Zippo and wrote on it the word "Tokyo".

After the war, Zippo lighters became even more widespread and, in 1946, Blaisdell decided to replace the flint wheel – acquired outside the factory and of poor quality – and produce it himself. After numerous experiments and attempts he succeeded with his colleagues in creating a wheel which even now is considered to be unbeatable, the processing of which is still cloaked in secrecy. In the 'fifties the economic development of the United States was rapid and turbulent in all fields. Zippo was no exception.

Blaisdell restructured his sales organisation and in 1950 he set up a small factory on the Canadian side of Niagara Falls; in 1954 a new building was equipped in Congress Street for the chroming and plating operations; other offices were added in Barbour Street during the following year. The 'sixties and 'seventies saw further development of the Zippo, with the use of new technology;

guerra mondiale, nel dicembre 1941, il governo degli Stati Uniti arrestò la produzione di molti prodotti di consumo; e la Zippo, mancando l'ottone, riservato esclusivamente ad usi militari, produsse i suoi accendini con un acciaio di qualità scadente che veniva prima dipinto di nero, e poi cotto al forno per ottenere il tipico aspetto di vernice screpolata. La produzione Zippo venne completamente assorbita dalle forze armate; gli accendini erano anche usati per accendere fuochi da campo nella giungla, per riscaldare il cibo nelle gavette e negli elmetti, e di notte come segnale di riconoscimento. Blaisdell divenne famoso come "Mister Zippo" grazie agli articoli del corrispondente di guerra Ernie Pyle; i suoi accendini venivano distribuiti in premio ai militari meritevoli che si trovavano oltre oceano.

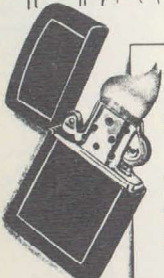
Nel 1945, mentre Pyle si trovava su una nave nel Pacifico meridionale, un giovane ufficiale gli chiese se sapesse qual era la loro destinazione. Pyle si fece prestare lo Zippo del militare e vi incise sopra la parola "Tokyo". Dopo la guerra la diffusione degli accendini Zippo aumentò ulteriormente e nel 1946 Blaisdell decise di sostituire le rotelle per la pietra, acquistate fuori dalla fabbrica e di scarsa qualità, producendole lui stesso. Dopo numerosi esperimenti e tentativi, riuscì con i suoi collaboratori a creare una rotella che ancora oggi viene considerata insuperabile, e la cui lavorazione è tuttora coperta dal segreto.

Negli anni Cinquanta lo sviluppo economico degli Stati Uniti fu rapido e tumultuoso in tutti i campi; la Zippo non fece eccezione. Blaisdell ristrutturò la sua organizzazione di vendita e impiantò una piccola fabbrica sulla sponda canadese delle cascate del Niagara; nel 1954 attrezzò un nuovo edificio in Congress Street per le operazioni di cromatura e di placcatura; e l'anno seguente

Why ZIP, ZIP, ZIP,



when ONE-ZIP does it!



get a **ZIPPO**  
the one-zip  
Windproof Lighter

Two brand new beauties! Above—the luxury look in pocket lighters, Leather Crafted Cases. Choice of genuine hand-burnished Calfskin and imported, hand-grained English Morocco—both in red, blue, green and tan. \$5.50

Below—packing "Lady Bradford" table model. Richly plated with tarnish-proof Rhodium, a Platinum group metal. Shown 1/2 actual size. \$10, no federal tax. Engraving \$1 extra. See them at better stores everywhere.

Unconditionally Guaranteed!

will never cost anyone a penny to repair.



©1950 ZIPPO MFG. CO., BRADFORD, PA.  
Zippo Mfg. Co. Canada, Ltd., Niagara Falls, Ont.

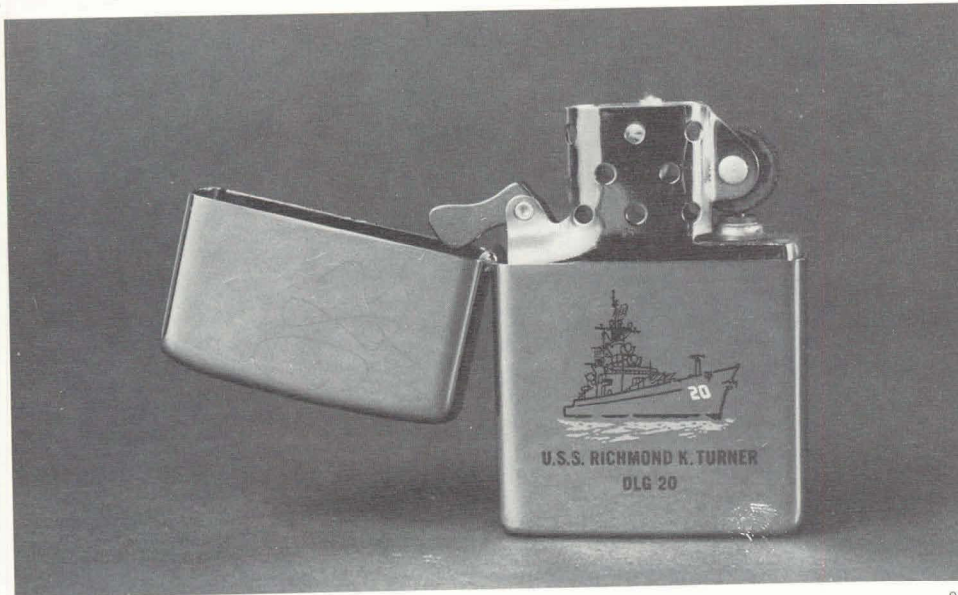
automatic machines for the production of lighters and computers.

George G. Blaisdell died in 1978. In 1982 the Zippo Company celebrated its fiftieth anniversary with a special model in brass.

aggiunse altri uffici in Barbour Street.

Gli anni Sessanta e Settanta videro la Zippo svilupparsi ancor più con l'impiego di nuove tecnologie: macchine automatiche per la fabbricazione degli accendini e computers.

George G. Blaisdell morì nel 1978. Nel 1982 la Zippo raggiungeva il prestigioso traguardo del Cinquantenario, che veniva celebrato con uno speciale modello in ottone.

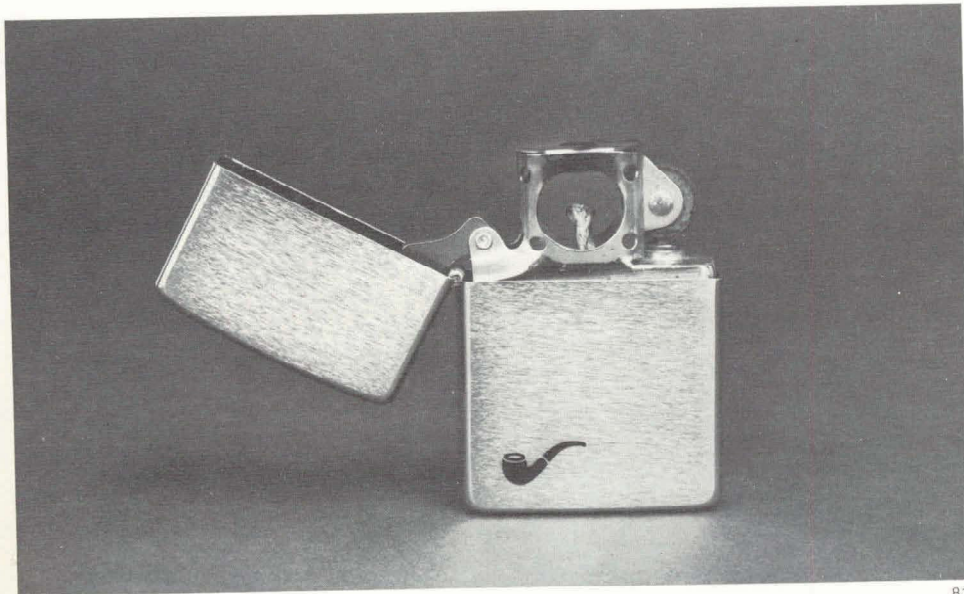


815

— Opposite page. —

814. U.S.A. — Advertisement in "Esquire", 1950.

815. Regular size. Pocket. Blaisdell, Bradford, 17th May 1934, Reg. No. 2032695.



816

816. Pipe — Regular size. Pocket. Brushed, chromium-plated brass. Wheel and flint. Petrol. 1982. mm 57 x 39.5

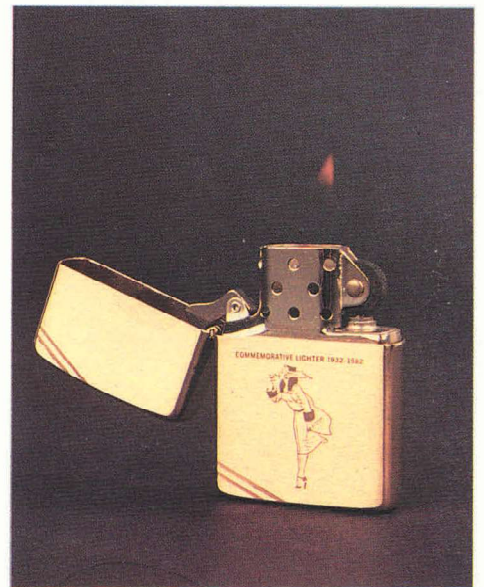
817. Regular size. Pocket. Brushed chromium-plated brass. Wheel and flint. Petrol. 1982. Military, Coast Guard Parris Island, S.C. mm 57 x 39.5



817



818



819

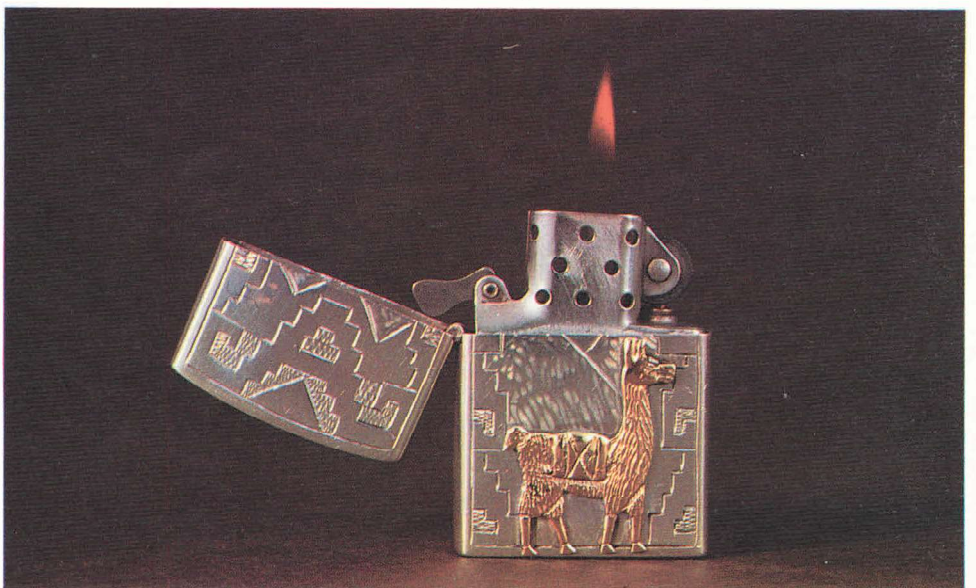
818. Commemorative 1932-1982 — Slim size. Pocket. Chromium-plated brass. Wheel and flint. Petrol. mm 57 x 32

Solid brass — Slim size. Pocket. Brushed brass. Wheel and flint. Petrol. 1983. mm 57 x 32

819. Commemorative 1932-1982 — Regular size. Pocket. Brushed brass. Wheel and flint. Petrol. 1982. mm 56.5 x 39

820. Pocket. Silver and 18 ct gold outer jacket (made in Peru). Wheel and flint. Petrol. c 1980. mm 57.5 x 40

An example of a successful combination of the simple and reliable Zippo mechanism in jewellery.



820