

Heathkit of the Month #55:  
by Bob Eckweiler, AF6C

# Heathkit®

## Heathkit GDP-5457 Miniature Flashlight

### Introduction:

Sadly, it's April again and I received only one response to my multiyear query of Heathkits powered by gasoline (See the HOM articles for April, 2011, 2012 and 2013). The writer, whom I will only say is from Wartrace, TN (he knows who he is), commented that "Who cares about gasoline powered Heath stuff...?" (See Editor's note at end for a response received from Australia after this article was written.)

Thus, as promised last year, this month's article covers a Heathkit "give-away" flashlight. As there is only so much I can write about a flashlight, this will be a short article indeed!

In the eighties Heathkit was offering free gifts with your purchase. Thus with the purchase of an ID-2295 Indoor/Outdoor Digital Humidity Meter from an early 1988 catalog, I also ordered the free Heathkit branded GDP-5457 Tekna Micro-Lite flashlight.

### Heathkit GDP-5457 Tekna Flashlight:

The GDP-5457, shown in figure 1, is a miniature flashlight made in the USA and sporting the Heathkit logo in dark red. It came completely assembled; however, any good kit aficionado can field strip the GDP-5457 flashlight into its ten component parts (see figure 2) and reassemble it in a matter of minutes. This is one Heathkit where the manual failed to provide clear instructions - there was no manual. The specifications for the GDP-5457 are given in table I.

Probably the most exotic feature of this kit is the choice of batteries. The GDP-5457 uses two of the comparatively expensive (\$1.50 to \$2.00



Figure 1: GDP-5457 Flashlight

range ea.) and hard to find 'N' alkaline batteries. For those unfamiliar with the 'N' battery, it is 3/5th the length and slightly smaller in diameter than the standard AA battery. The 'N'

Specifications: Heath GDP-5457	
Size:	4-3/8" x 1-1/4" dia.
Weight:	2 oz. (with batteries)
Batteries:	2 x 'N' size 1-1/2V alkaline
Bulb:	#222 2.25V @ 0.25A
Battery Life:	Approx. 1 hour continuous
Attachment:	5/16" hole for lanyard

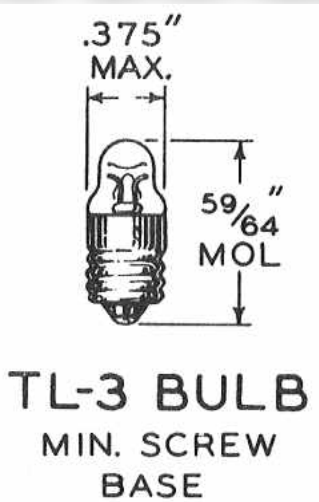
**Table I**



Figure 2: Flashlight components (clockwise from lower left): Case (with O-ring installed), Bracket, Spring (shown mounted on bracket), bulb, socket, batteries, reflector, lens cap ass'y.

battery is used in some cameras and many HP calculators such as the HP-41C.

The GDP-5457 flashlight uses the common #222 focused bulb (TL3) with a miniature screw base. This bulb is typically used in penlights. It has a short life of 5 hours and probably lasts even less than that due to the 2.25 V lamp being run on 3 V when the flashlight batteries



are fresh. The bulb will easily outlast a few sets of batteries. An outline of the #222 bulb is shown in figure 3.

**Operating the GDP-5457 Flashlight:**

This flashlight has no **On/Off** switch per say. Instead the flashlight is turned on by turning a threaded lens cap that is tightened onto the case. An o-ring on the case provides mechanical resistance to prevent the lens from easily turning accidentally and draining the battery unexpectedly. This o-ring also provides some protection against water entering the flashlight should it find itself in a wet environment.

To use the GDP-5457 you just turn it on and point it to where you need light - but you already knew that; it's just plain intuitive, which makes this Heathkit worthy of a special April honorarium article. Also remember to turn it off!

**Conclusion:**

This flashlight has been in use now for over 25 years - that's hard to believe. For years it was stationed by the home thermostat so the heat could be checked in the darkness of night. That service was relegated some years back to a Harbor Freight 9-LED flashlight (also free with a minimum purchase) and the Heathkit flashlight was moved into the kitchen for those moments when a little extra light is needed.

Other than trying to find (reasonably priced) "N" batteries, this device continues to serve well!

73, from AF6C



*This article originally appeared in the month 2014 issue of RF, the newsletter of the Orange County Amateur Radio Club - W6ZE.*

*Remember, if you are getting rid of any old Heathkit Manuals or Catalogs, please pass them along to me for my research.*

*Thanks - AF6C*

**Editor's Note:**

*After this article was written I did get a real response to my challenge of naming "other gasoline powered Heathkits". Unfortunately, I was so sure I would not receive anymore answers, I wrote the article immediately (late last April 2013), and the response came later, in August.*

*Since the response came from Australia, and none were received from any club members nor even anyone living in the Americas (Wartrace excepted) I decided to go ahead and use the article for this April. After all it is probably a Heathkit collector's item! Here is the response I received from Justin in Australia:*

**August 5th, 2013**

**Hi Bob,**

**Can't believe no one suggested the Boonie bike. They are still popular!**

**Thanks for the articles – I enjoy reading them.**

**If looking for ideas, maybe you could do one on Nixie display kits, or Panaplex. Heath made clocks, DMMs, counters – of which I have a few.**

**Justin VK2CU**

*I will try to cover some of the Heathkits Justin referred to in his email. - af6c*