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America Helps Germany in “the Battle for Borocaine”



Manufactured by Sharp & Dohme of Baltimore, each corked vial (above) contained 20 soluble hypodermic tablets of Borocaine “under license from the British Drug Houses, Ltd., London.” Because each tablet contained 0.1 g of procaine borate, dissolving a tablet in 5 ml of sterile water yielded a 2% solution of this ester local anesthetic. Unfortunately for Borocaine’s British licensing firm, the American Medical Association’s Chemical Laboratory determined that the “formula $2(C_{13}H_{20}O_2N_2), 4H_2O, 5B_2O_3$, as given by the manufacturer...is incorrect; on the other hand, it appears that borocaine has the formula $C_{13}H_{20}O_2N_2 \cdot 5HBO_2$ ” and is “identical to the one first prepared by Einhorn and Uhfelder some years ago” in Germany. And this is how America helped Germany in “the Battle for Borocaine.” (Copyright © the American Society of Anesthesiologists’ Wood Library-Museum of Anesthesiology.)

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