

Factory Shipped to the U.S. – by David Gray

An article, written from New York, appeared in the *Saturday Evening Post* in September 1942 under the headline:

‘BRITISH WORKS SHIPPED TO U.S. - LEND-LEASE NOT A ONE-WAY STREET’

This was the amazing story of how a British arms factory was transported lock, stock and barrel to the United States, described by the U.S. Lend-Lease Administrator, Mr. Edward Stetinius.

“Lend-Lease,” he wrote, “has been broadened to meet the challenge of total war. It is no longer a one-way street and has not been for some time, although the rules of military secrecy have kept many details from being published.

In a bomb-scarred British city six months ago stood a gun factory. It made the best guns of its type United Nations’ engineers had been able to devise. Today that factory has gone, down to the last bench and machine tool. But it wasn’t the Luftwaffe that wiped it off the landscape. The factory is now in the United States. Piece by piece it was dismantled by its own workmen and packed into crates.

Taken in British Ships

The crates were loaded into British freighters, and several weeks later they were unpacked in the United States. Because this factory made a gun which was needed urgently, the British decided it would be more valuable to the United Nations here than in Britain. In short, it was easier and faster in this case to ship the factory than to ship the guns.



We paid nothing for this arsenal. The British consider themselves amply repaid by the damage these guns will inflict on Germans and Japanese in the hands of our soldiers. This is ‘Lend-Lease’ in reverse.”

Recalling how Lend-Lease was adopted as Britain began to exhaust all her gold and dollar resources in America, Mr. Stetinius said:

“Our intelligence services have since discovered that in 1940 the Nazis spent

millions in espionage and research trying to discover the extent of British dollar holdings in the United States. Dr. Goebbels was confident that when the British dollar balances ran out in the spring of 1941 the war would be practically over.

Well, the doctor was wrong. He had misjudged the American people again.”

A day later another related article appeared in the *Saturday Evening Post*. This time the headline read:

‘BRITISH GUNS DEFEND U.S. CITIES – WIDE LEND-LEASE AID’

This story revealed the sweeping extent of British, Australian and New Zealand lend-lease aid to the United States and coincided with the ratification at the State Department of the supplementary lend-lease agreements between the United States on the one hand and Britain, Australia and New Zealand on the other.

These agreements established on a formal basis the reciprocal aid already given to the United States by the three 'British' nations in accordance with the principle enunciated in the previous January in the United Nations' declaration that all countries would pool their resources in the common effort against their Axis foes.

Mr. Hull, the American Secretary of State, said that preliminary conversations had taken place with Canada with the object of putting on a similarly formal basis the aid which Canada was giving to the United States, notably in Alaska. At some future date it was said, similar agreements might be made with South Africa and Russia.

HOW BRITAIN HELPS U.S.

The following methods by which Britain had given lend-lease aid to the United States were set out in a statement issued by the U.S. Office of War Information after an exchange of notes between Viscount Halifax, British Ambassador, Sir Owen Dixon, Australian Minister, and Mr. Nash, the New Zealand Premier, with Mr. Hull:



"In the United States itself, lease-lent British anti-aircraft guns are stationed alongside American guns to defend American cities against attack. They are also helping to defend the Panama Canal.

Thousands of barrage balloons were rushed across the Atlantic soon after Pearl Harbour, and are now in use along the west coast.

Technical information has been freely supplied."

[This gold-mine of technical information that Britain 'gave' to America is breath-taking in its importance:

- **Radar:** The compact, high-power cavity magnetron, essential for advanced microwave radar, was perhaps the most valuable item, transforming radar capabilities.
- **Jet Propulsion:** Details of Frank Whittle's pioneering jet engine designs were shared, laying groundwork for U.S. jet development.
- **Weaponry:** Blueprints for gyroscopic gunsights, self-sealing fuel tanks, rockets, and superchargers were provided.

- **Atomic Research:** The MAUD Report, detailing the feasibility of an atomic bomb, was also part of the exchange.
- **Other:** Information on penicillin production and submarine detection devices (ASDIC/SONAR) also formed part of this technical transfer.]

“Britain has lease-lent a number of corvettes and smaller craft to help in anti-submarine warfare off the Atlantic coast.

In addition to these outright lease-lend transfers, the British Admiralty has assigned destroyers, corvettes and trawlers for temporary duty with the United States Atlantic Coast Command, while RAF planes and pilots are also on anti-submarine duty in American waters.”

Ships for American Troops

“American troops moving abroad to the fighting fronts have travelled on British ships.



In the British Isles Americans are flying British Spitfires as well as American planes, and are using British 25-pounders as well as American ‘seventy-fives.’

The output of a number of British ordnance factories is being lease-lent to American troops.

RAF officers are training American airmen in the specialised European type of air warfare.

A quarter of a million British workmen have built American aerodromes, troop cantonments, bases and storage facilities. One of these depots covers 600 acres and has 1,500,000 square feet of flooring.

United States ships are repaired and supplied in British ports throughout the world.

The extent of lease-lend aid which the United States receives will be a revelation to the majority of the American public, which has tended to regard the lease-lend principle as a one-way road along which American supplies moved to other countries with very little coming back in return.”

U.S. ARMY REJECTS BATTLE-DRESS

One British offer was, however, roundly rejected when it was mentioned. Brigadier-General R. M. Littlejohn, Chief Quartermaster of the United States Army, stated at this time that there were certain peculiarities about the British battle-dress which did not meet the requirements of the American Army authorities.

The Americans had designed their own uniform of battle-dress material which they felt would meet their needs. He said that the American soldier ate more than the British soldier. They had a higher percentage of butter and margarine and ate more meat. It took ten and a half tons of shipping to bring an American soldier to [Britain], and one and a half tons monthly to keep him here!

It is easy to infer from this that the American soldier was too fat for British battle-dress. However, there were other, more practical reasons for its rejection:

1. **American Uniform Development:** The U.S. Army was already working on its own combat uniforms, like the durable M-1941 Field Jacket and trousers, designed for mass production and U.S. climate/needs.
2. **Standardization & Logistics:** The massive U.S. military machine prioritized uniform standardization for supply, training, and identification, making it difficult to integrate a foreign design.
3. **Practicality vs. Style:** While British Battle Dress was practical, the U.S. preferred its own utilitarian designs, though the shorter cut of the British jacket inspired the famed "Ike Jacket", adopted much later in the war,

[Lend-Lease or Lease-Lend? This term seems to be interchangeable and the reader will note both terms used in this article as well as others. I am quoting people at the time and it appears both versions were used for items travelling from America and to America. I don't suppose it mattered much; everyone knew what they were talking about.]