

It recommended the Cromwell, and so a test batch of six Cromwell IVs arrived in Baku, Azerbaijan in August 1944. Tests began in the autumn of 1944 at Kubinka. The tests concluded that the Cromwell was inferior to the M4A2 Sherman in all respects except for road speed. The comparison was even worse if the Cromwell was measured against the newer M4A2 (76mm) that was beginning to arrive in the USSR. As a result, the Red Army rejected any orders of the type. At least one Comet tank was delivered later.

The United States sent a few tanks late in the war for trials including the M24 Chaffee light tank and the T26E3 (M26) Pershing tank.

FINAL ASSESSMENT

Assessing the impact of Lend-Lease aid to the Soviet Union in World War II is clouded by the Cold War controversies that erupted about the subject. The Western perspective was that Lend-Lease was a “lifesaver” and a critical element in the eventual Soviet victory. The Soviet viewpoint was that Lend-Lease aid was minor and inconsequential. Information about Lend-Lease was heavily censored in the Soviet Union until the 1991 collapse of the USSR.

US aid to the Soviet Union totaled \$10.8 billion of which \$5.5 billion was military aid from the US War Department. The remainder was industrial and commercial products including food, fuel, raw materials, and machine tools. Tanks and other combat vehicles were only a small portion of US aid totaling \$618.1 million, or about 11 percent of military aid or about six percent of overall aid. This was in no small measure due to Soviet decisions about aid. Soviet disdain for US tanks, especially in the early war years, led to reduced levels of tank delivery. In contrast, the Red Army’s need for American trucks meant that far more aid was provided in this category, totaling some \$1.14 billion or about 20 percent of total military aid. It is also worth noting that the cost of the infrastructure for delivering this aid was quite considerable, for example some \$11 billion being spent on the creation of the Persian Gulf facilities and \$53 billion on the Alaska–Siberia route.

British aid totaled some £420 million consisting of £308 million in military aid and £112 million in raw materials and industrial aid. At the Bretton Woods fixed exchange rate, this translates to \$1.7 billion in total and \$1.2 billion in military aid. Canada provided 1,388 tanks of the 5,218 sent to the Soviet Union, or about a quarter of the British total.

Soviet tank production in World War II was about 85,890 plus a further 21,475 assault guns. The US and Britain shipped 11,663 tanks of which 10,419 arrived, or equivalent to about 13 percent of the Soviet tank force during the war. A less apparent contribution was in the form of machine tools, raw material, and alloys. The US provided the USSR with about 60 percent of its wartime aluminum supply, an essential ingredient in every T-34, KV, and IS-2 engine.

Lend-Lease aid in the form of military trucks was far more significant than tanks. As mentioned earlier, in 1943 the Soviet delegations in the Lend-Lease negotiations cut back the supply of US tanks in exchange for larger shipments of trucks. Moscow selected items for Lend-Lease to cover gaps in its own military industrial capability. Tanks were important in 1941–42 after the disruption of the tank industry by the German invasion but, once



An M3L of the 23rd Guards Tank Brigade of the Western Front in Belgorod in February 1943 with a T-34 behind. This is from the fourth production series with the interim D58101 turret.

the tank industry was restored in 1942–43, Soviet needs for Lend-Lease tanks declined. The Soviet requirement for cross-country trucks was modest in 1941–42 when the Red Army was on the defensive, but Soviet needs for military trucks increased in 1943–44 as the Red Army shifted to the offensive and required greater mobility. The Soviet tank industry had been reconstructed partially by using resources out of the automotive industry, leading to a significant drop in military truck production during the war years. Lend-Lease aid filled this gap. The US provided 501,660 military vehicles to the USSR including 77,972 ¼-ton Jeeps, 151,053 1½-ton trucks, and 200,662 2½-ton trucks; British shipments were far smaller totaling 4,343 trucks and 1,721 motorcycles. Domestic Soviet production during the war was 342,624 vehicles of all types for both civil and military use. The Red Army vehicle park at the end of the war in May 1945 was 640,821 vehicles of which 62 percent was of domestic production, 31 percent Lend-Lease, and the remainder captured German vehicles. Lend-Lease truck supplies indirectly assisted Soviet tank production, since it freed up the resources of the Soviet automotive industry to shift towards armored vehicle production.

The Lend-Lease truck supply was more important in terms of capability than simply in terms of raw numbers. At the beginning of July 1944, the Red Army had received 284,678 new vehicles of which 58 percent were Lend-Lease. Not only did Lend-Lease vehicles represent the majority of new vehicles in Red Army service, they were by far the most important in

motorizing the Red Army in time for the 1944 offensives. About 144,000 trucks and military vehicles were delivered by Lend-Lease from January 1943 to June 1944 as the Red Army began to shift to the offensive. Not only did they come at a critical time, but the quality of the equipment was significantly better than domestic Soviet production. The Red Army was still heavily dependent on the GAZ-AA and its variants and the ZiS-5 truck and its variants which were both license-built copies of early 1930s American commercial trucks. These had very poor cross-country capability. In contrast, the Lend-Lease deliveries include types such as the Jeep and 2½-ton Studebaker US6 that were modern military trucks with good cross-country capability. The Red Army of 1944–45 depended primarily on domestic tanks such as the T-34 and IS-2, but the motorization of its combat units depended on Lend-Lease trucks.

Red Army Tank and Assault Guns, June 3, 1945

	At the front	In reserve	In districts*	In repair	Total
Lend-Lease light tanks	207	109	295	303	914
SU-57	250	66	10	14	340
Lend-Lease medium tanks	877	219	275	446	1,817
Soviet light tanks	300	269	2,006	1,108	3,683
Soviet medium, heavy tanks and assault guns	10,382	2,302	2,494	3,065	18,243
Total	12,016	2,965	5,080	4,936	24,997

*These are mainly tanks in training units or new units being formed.

Obsolete Lend-Lease Tanks in Red Army, May 20, 1945

	In service	In repair/training units	Total
Matilda	40	182	222
Churchill	7	67	74
M3L	126	77	203
M3S	29	42	71

Lend-Lease Tank & AFV Deliveries to the Soviet Union 1941–45

	1941	1942	1943	1944	1945	Sent*	Delivered*
Matilda II	145	626	147	–	–	932	918
Valentine	216	959	1,776	381	–	3,275	3,332
Churchill	–	84	179	–	–	258	263
Cromwell	–	–	–	6	–	6	6
Tetrarch	–	20	–	–	–	20	20
M3 Stuart	–	977	255	–	–	1,676	1,232
M5A1 Stuart	–	–	5	–	–	5	5
M24 Chaffee	–	–	–	–	2	2	2
M3 Lee	–	812	164	–	–	1,386	976
M4A2 Sherman	–	36	469	2,345	814	4,102	3,664
M26 Pershing	–	–	–	–	1	1	1
M10 3in GMC	–	–	–	52	–	52	52
M18 76mm GMC	–	–	5	–	–	5	5
T48 57mm GMC	–	–	241	409	–	650	650
M31 ARV	–	–	41	86	–	115	127
Total	361	3,514	3,282	3,279	817	12,485	11,253

*"Delivered" counts vehicles received by the USSR. "Sent" includes those dispatched; some were sunk in transit by sea.

Tanks and AFVs Delivered to the Soviet Union from Britain and Canada			
	Sent	Sunk	Arrived
Tetrarch	20	–	20
Matilda III	113	–	113
Matilda IV	915	221	694
Matilda IVCS	156	31	125
Valentine II	161	25	136
Valentine III	346	–	346
Valentine IV	570	71	449
Valentine V	340	113	227
Valentine VII	1,388	180	1,208
Valentine IX	836	18	818
Valentine X	74	8	66
Churchill II	45	19	26
Churchill III	151	24	127
Churchill IV	105	–	105
Cromwell IV	6	–	6
Valentine Bridgelayer	25	–	25
Total	5,251	710	4,491

US Tank and AFV Lend-Lease Deliveries			
	Sent	Sunk	Arrived
M3 Light Tank	1,676	443	1,232
M5A1 Light Tank	5	–	5
M24 Light Tank	2	–	2
M3 Medium Tank	1,386	410	976
M4 Medium Tank	4,102	438	3,664
T26E3 Heavy Tank	1	–	1
M10 3-in GMC	52	–	52
M18 76mm GMC	5	–	5
T48 57mm GMC	650	–	650
M15 MGMC	100	–	100
M17 MGMC	1,000	–	1,000
M31 Tank recovery vehicle	130	3	127
M3A1 Scout Car	3,340	228	3,034
M2, M3 half-track	404	–	–
M5 Half-track	420	–	–
T16 Universal Carrier	96	–	–
LVT-2 Amtrac	2	–	–
Note: The Sent and Sunk figures above are taken from US shipment records and the Arrived figures are taken from Russian acceptance records. Any inconsistency in this table is due to discrepancies between the US and Russian archives.			

FURTHER READING

There are no monographs on Lend-Lease tanks in English, and few in Russian. The Kolomiets/Moshchanskiy book detailed below provides the story from the Russian perspective. There are a number of English-language histories of Lend-Lease but these tend to look at it from the diplomatic and strategic perspective, usually with little detail about actual weapons delivery.