

YANKEE SPITFIRE

RESTORED SUPERMARINE SPITFIRE CARRIES THE MARKINGS
OF AN AIRCRAFT FROM THE 309th FIGHTER SQUADRON
BY DARREN HARBAR

With war raging in Europe during 1940, President Franklin Delano Roosevelt wanted to provide Britain with as much aid as he could, without committing the United States to actual war. He sold the idea of supplying arms to Europe to a sceptical nation, by suggesting it was like lending a hose to a neighbour whose house is burning down, and that they would return it once having put out the fire. He went further in December 1940, by stating that "We should do everything to help the

British Empire defend itself." They went well beyond that as history has shown, but it wasn't all a one-sided deal, as Britain did its bit to help the USAAF too, by supplying Spitfires.

Signed into law on 11 March 1941 and titled the "Act to Promote the Defense of the United States," the program supplied countries deemed to be vital to the defense of the United States. This included the United Kingdom (and British Commonwealth), France (prior to its surrender and occupation), the Republic of China and latterly Russia with

supplies like food and oil, aircraft, and other hardware between 1941 and 1945. The aid was in most cases supplied free of charge, with the intention of the hardware being returned once the war was over. In return, the United States was offered leases to bases in Allied territory during the World War II and for 99 years after signing. Despite the United States entering the war in late 1941, the Lend-Lease agreement was continued, and proved vital to the fight against Germany in Europe. Britain was heavily



Insignia of the 309th Fighter Squadron was supplied by Walt Disney.

George Hays piloting his Spitfire near Duxford airfield.



George Hays is now the caretaker of the historic Spitfire.