

Buy American Mention of the Week

Keeping American factories kicking with American boots

By Roger Simmermaker

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With the ranks of American manufacturing jobs wearing thin these days, one way to stand up for an American industry that is in danger of extinction is by wearing American-made work boots from The Union Boot Pro. The United States once held a position in footwear that was virtually unchallenged. Imported footwear didn't pass the 10 percent share mark until 1964, but by 1979 it had climbed to 50 percent, and it topped 75 percent in 1985, according to the Footwear Industries of America. By 1999, 94 percent of all footwear purchased in the United States was imported, and I doubt that today's percentage is any more favorable to American industry. According to Gus Stelzer in his book, *The Nightmare of Camelot*, President Gerald Ford set specific limits (quotas) on imported shoes from 1976 through July 1981. During this period, over 100 factories opened, \$400million was invested, and 30,000 new jobs were created. For the first time in a decade, the footwear industry turned a profit. When those quotas came up for renewal under President Reagan, the International Trade Commission recommended that the import limits be continued. It saw the large national investment and employment gains that resulted from the quotas. However, U.S. Trade Representative William E. Brock, who was paid \$500,000 by Mexican interests to grease the skids for NAFTA, advised Reagan not to continue the import quotas. Reagan sided with Brock. Within five years, over half of the newly opened factories had closed, and over 40,000 jobs vanished. These grim statistics don't mean that we have to stand around in a pair of imported shoes or boots thinking that there is nothing we can do. Patriotic consumers can buck the trend of ever-increasing imports if they know where to find the 6 percent of footwear that is still made in the United States. We don't have to be walking examples of why the share of imported footwear increases with each passing decade. A good place to start is by supporting an American company that has been making work boots in America since 1892! The Weinbrenner Shoe Company (WSC) of Wisconsin is one of a few remaining American footwear companies still making work boots in the USA, and you can buy this fine footwear through www.theunionbootpro.com, the same place I buy all my work boots. Over 140 styles are offered, so you're bound to find something that fits your needs. Weinbrenner is employee-owned, so you know that those employees have a stake in making sure that your boots not only fit the best but that their customer service is the best fit too. They want your return business. The Union Boot Pro has an unbeatable 120 percent best-price guarantee, which means that if you see an item for a lower price on another website, it will refund you 120 percent of the difference. Shipping is absolutely free on all ground orders (there is an extra charge for express, two-day, or three-day shipping). There is a minimal \$5.00 handling fee added to each pair of boots purchased on the website, which is a fee charged to The Union Boot Pro for the convenience of drop-shipping directly from either the Thorogood or WorkOne warehouse in Wisconsin. If you happen to belong to a union like the workers who build these fine boots, you can apply to get 27 percent off of your order by filling out a simple form. But right now, you can save 30 percent with the New Year Countdown Sale through January 3, 2013. So saving money and getting a guaranteed great pair of American-made boots couldn't be simpler. Visit www.theunionbootpro.com and start to walk your patriotic consumer talk.

Roger Simmermaker is the author of *How Americans Can Buy American* and *My Company 'Tis of Thee: 50 Patriotic American Companies American Consumers Should Know About*, and writes "Buy American Mention of the Week" articles for wnd.com and his website www.howtobuyamerican.com. Roger has a degree in Electronics Engineering Technology, is president of his local Machinists Union, has been a frequent guest on Fox News, CNN, and MSNBC, and has been quoted in *The Wall Street Journal*, *USA Today*, and *Business Week* among many other publications.