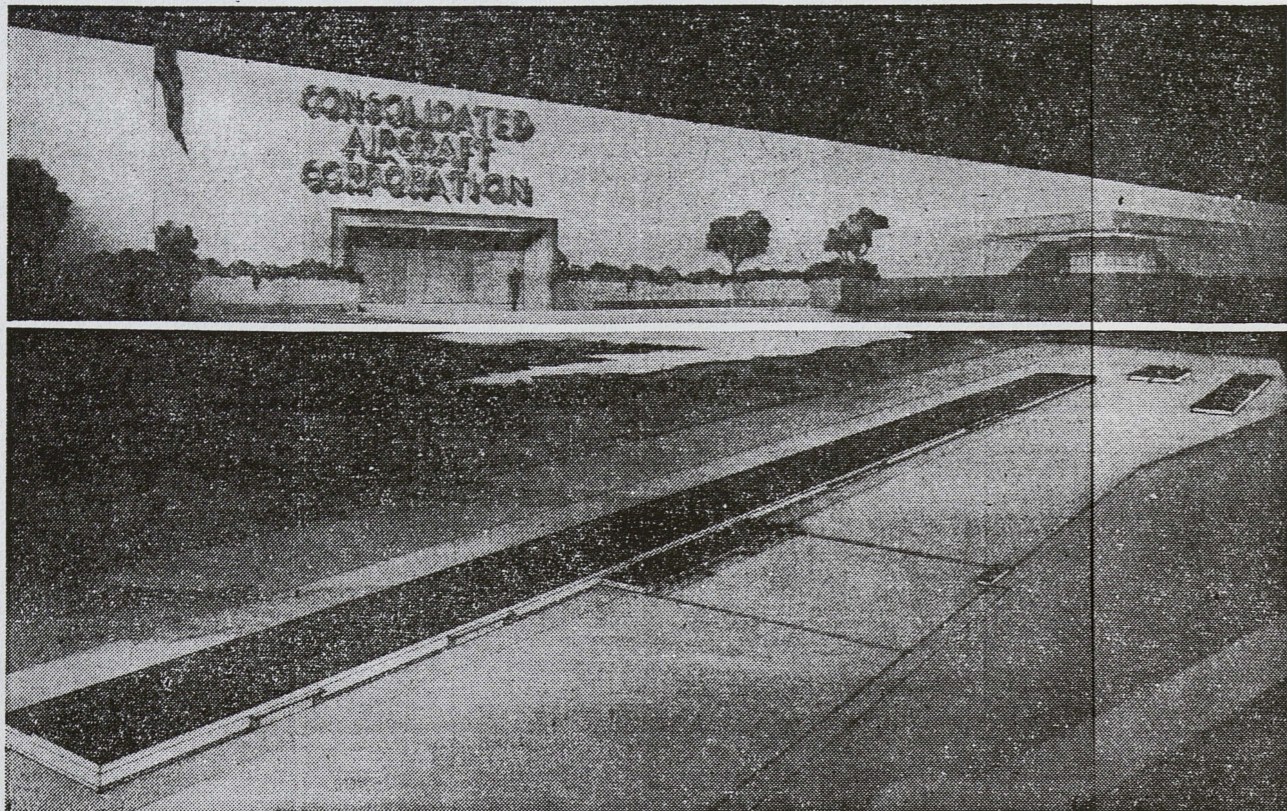


# Architect's Sketch for Lake Worth Plane Assembly Plant



Here's the architect's conception of the largest "blackout" aircraft assembly plant in the Nation—the Consolidated Aircraft Corporation's Lake Worth plant scheduled to cost in excess of \$10,000,000. Top, the administration building. Below, the completed plant, showing the huge main assembly structure and four lesser buildings. Ground breaking at the site started Friday.

# Bomber Plane Plant Construction Begun 105 Busy Days After War Department Decided on Fort Worth as Site

Ground breaking for the Lake Worth bomber assembly plant Friday signalled the beginning of construction on one of the key projects in the Nation's defense effort, and what is destined to be Fort Worth's largest industrial plant.

Decision to build the \$10,000,000 plant here, to be operated by Consolidated Aircraft Corporation of San Diego, Cal., was reached by War Department officials on Jan. 3. Actual construction thus got under way just 105 days after the site election—105 busy, almost frenzied days for hundreds of persons, both here and in Washington, who were directly or indirectly responsible some phase of the job.

Selection of the site, after months of unceasing effort had been directed to the task of presenting all of Fort Worth's superior advantages to officials both of Consolidated on the West Coast, and War Department in Washington. Effort had its genesis last May, 24 hours after President Roosevelt had called for 50,000 airplanes a year to defend American and help Britain beat off the of the Nazi invasion.

**Action Begins at Once.**

R. H. Fleet, president and manager of Consolidated, advised Carter by telephone the day after the President's speech that "all new airplane plants were to be built in the Middle West."

Carter and the Chamber of Commerce swung into action immediately, and within 24 hours the first plan for Fort Worth's advantages had been prepared.

In the months that followed, the contest for the plant to be operated

the site and the remainder will be used for an industrial airport and testing field for the bombers.

Chamber of Commerce officials accord to Senators Sheppard and Connally and Representatives Lanham and Rayburn much of the credit for obtaining the plant in the face of the severest sort of competition.

They also pay high tribute to Carter for keeping Fort Worth's bid before the proper officials, with whom he kept in almost constant contact for months, either in person or by telephone.

An unusual aspect of the cooperative effort to bring Consolidated to Fort Worth was the fact that in the latter stages of the contest this city had the active support of Dallas interests.

Dallas, which already had been awarded the North American Aviation factory at Grand Prairie, also put in a bid for the Consolidated plant. When it became apparent that Dallas was out of the running, civic leaders there threw their support to Fort Worth.

**Promised to Provide Site.**

In order to obtain Secretary Patterson's approval of the site, Holden pledged the city and county, among other things, to provide the site for the plant and the adjacent airport, develop the landing field, construct necessary highways to the area and extend water, sewer and light facilities.

Promise of such co-operation had been given Holden by the City Council and Commissioners Court earlier in the game.

Making good on those promises

necessitated the issuance of bonds by both the city and the county. Groundwork for the special elections was started on Jan. 8, immediately after high ranking United States Army engineers inspected the proposed site in company with Consolidated officials and pronounced it "fine."

Heading the army group on the inspection trip were Col. Walter J. Reed of the Air Corps building and grounds division, and Lieut. Col. S. L. Scott, Southwestern division engineer under whose guidance the plant will be erected.

**Consolidated Officials.**

Consolidated officials who visited Fort Worth at the same time included C. A. Van Dusen, vice president; A. M. Hall, assistant general manager who subsequently was designated as manager of the Fort Worth plant; and F. D. Schnacke, attorney for the company.

After completion of surveys and cost estimates, Commissioners Court on Jan. 18 issued its call for a \$1,250,000 bond issue election to be held on March 4 to finance improvement of county roads leading to the plant and three other projects in the county.

Meanwhile, after City Manager Bothwell had gone to Washington to find out exactly what would be required to fulfill the city's pledges, the City Council called an election on five separate bond issues, to be voted on the same day as the county election.

The five issues totalled \$3,000,000. Of this amount, \$1,250,000 was for

acquisition of the plant site and landing field; \$1,112,000 was for street construction and improvements; \$320,000 for a central garage incinerator; \$160,000 for new city garage and shops, and \$158,000 for extension of sanitary sewers.

**Carried by Big Majorities.**

All of the bond issues carried by overwhelming majorities, one of them rolling up a 15 to 1 lead, and none receiving less than 4 to 1.

In Washington, meanwhile, contract was signed by officials of Consolidated with the War Department to serve as consultants to the Corps of Engineers in constructing the assembly plants both at Fort Worth and Tulsa.

Under the terms of this contract, Consolidated engineers were to design the entire plant layout, subject to approval of Washington authorities.

Consolidated already had opened negotiations with the Ford Motor Company for the manufacture of parts to be assembled at the Fort Worth plant. Ford officials "sold" Consolidated on the idea of adapting automobile line production methods to the assembling of the bombers, and the engineers subsequently designed a building 320 feet wide and 4,000 feet long.

The giant plants will start at one end of the building, move forward as the work progresses and emerge as a completed unit, except for painting, at the other end of the structure.

**Smaller Structures.**

In addition to the main building, there are to be several smaller structures. One of these will be for executive offices, another will be a paint house, a third will serve as a hangar, and a fourth will be for guards and watchmen.

It is to be the first airplane pro-

# Bomber Plant Luncheon Held

### Distinguished Visitors at Groundbreaking Are Honor Guests at Club Affair.

Distinguished visitors drawn to Fort Worth for the bomber assembly plant ground breaking program were honor guests at a luncheon at the Fort Worth Club at noon Friday.

Joint hosts were directors of the Chamber of Commerce, the special committee in charge of the bomber plant, and city and county officials.

The visitors were welcomed by A. A. Lund, Chamber of Commerce president, who referred to the occasion as a "red letter day in the history of Fort Worth, and one long to be remembered."

The guests, introduced by Amon Carter, included:

Brig. Gen. G. C. Brant, commander of the Gulf Coast Air Corps Training Center, Randolph Field, who also was present at the dedication of Casa Manana in 1936.

Capt. Alva D. Bernhard, commandant of the new Naval Air Station at Corpus Christi, and Lieut. Comm. Clifford H. Duerfeldt of the same station.

Col. William B. Wright, commander of the army air base at Meridian, Miss., personal representative of Lieut. Gen. Delos C. Emmons, commander of the G. H. Q. Air Force, Langley Field, Va.

Col. H. W. Holden, executive officer of the Gulf Coast Air Training Center, Randolph Field.

Lieut. Col. R. K. Simpson, medical officer; Maj. J. R. Morgan, director of training; Maj. C. R. Storie, assistant director of training, all of Randolph Field, and Maj. Gordon E. Textor of Denison, members of the board of selection for air training schools.

Albert S. Low of Cleveland, Ohio, vice president of the Austin Company, architectural, engineering and construction contractors on the plant.

A. D. Engle, chief engineer; R. C. Farrington, chief mechanical engineer; Norman R. Crater, general superintendent, and Edwin Renz, assistant chief engineer, of the Austin Company.

Lieut. Col. Stanley L. Scott, division engineer, United States Army Corps of Engineers.

Capt. John H. Anderson, in charge of the army engineers' office at the plant site.

Col. George E. Lovell of Fort Sam Houston, representing the Eighth Corps Area.

Col. Lawrence Westbrook of Washington, assistant administrator of the federal works agency.

A. M. Hall of San Diego, assistant general manager of Consolidated Aircraft Corporation, who has been named general manager of the Fort Worth plant.

T. E. Braniff of Oklahoma City, president of Braniff Airways, Inc.

Maj. T. S. Power and Captain Smart of Randolph Field.

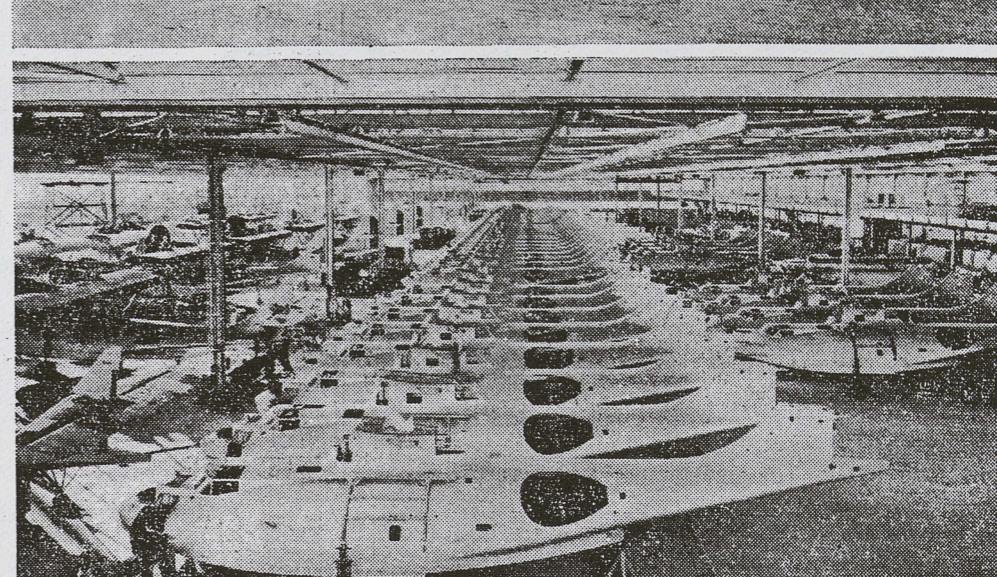
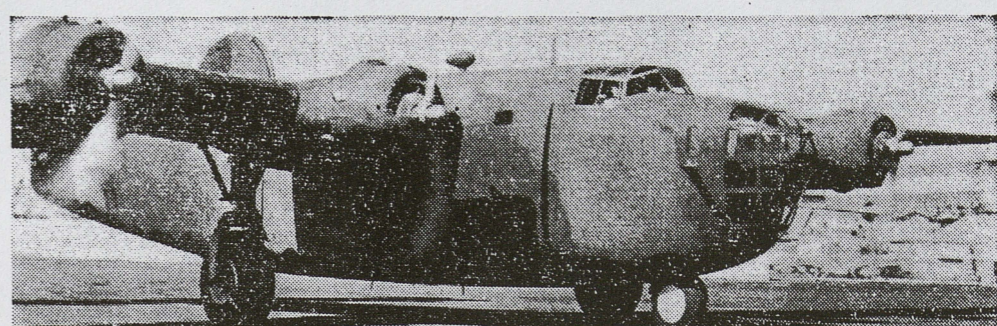
Maj. W. F. Long and Maj. B. S. Graham of Hicks Field.

E. J. Rivers, general superintendent of the North American Aircraft Company's Grand Prairie plant.

Mayor C. H. Veale, Clyde King, president, and Marvin Hurley, assistant manager, of the Chamber of Commerce, all of Tulsa.

Representative Marvin B. Simpson Jr. of Fort Worth, who maneuvered the airport zoning bill through the lower House of the Legislature this week.

# They'll Soon Be Rolling at Lake Plant



Scenes like these soon will be duplicated in Fort Worth's Consolidated bomber assembly plant. At bottom, an assembly line of the Consolidated factory at San Diego, Cal., showing United States Navy PBV patrol bombers, two-engined craft which the

British call the Catalina patrol bombers. At top, a completed long-range, four-motored Consolidated B-24 bomber such as will roll off the assembly line here. Many of these 20-ton planes already have passed through Fort Worth from San Diego on

—Associated Press Photo. route to Great Britain. These bombers are powered by four 1,200-horsepower, 18-cylinder radial engines that give them a cruising range exceeding 3,000 miles and a top speed of better than 300 miles an hour.

# Distinguished Visitors From All Over U. S. Comment on Bomber Plant Here

Many were the commendations heard Friday at the bombing plant ground-breaking. They came from highly placed officials in military service, from city officials, engineers,

have learned the lessons of the last World War when we had some 18,000 pilots but had no combat planes for them to fly."

Col. George E. Lovell, Fort Sam Houston, representing the Eighth Corps Area—

"I know Fort Worth and the spirit here since I was here 22 years ago as commander of Benbrook, Everman and Hicks Fields. The site is fine, particularly this open country, for the testing of bombers. It is excellent if one ever needs to come down in a hurry. The city is very fortunate in having this link in the chain of the defense projects so vital to defense of our country."

Capt. Alva D. Bernhard, commandant of the Corpus Christi Naval Air Station—

"It looks to me like an ideal site, well drained, beautiful country, ideal flying weather the year around. I

of Southern Flight— "A splendid place for such a plant."

KING.

Col. William B. Wright, commanding officer of the Meridian Air Base—

"This is a wonderful place—I've seen it from the air—and it is fine that they will have it here with both land and water facilities. Consolidated is well known for its astounding, new four-engine bombers."

Col. Lawrence Westbrook, Washington, D. C., assistant to the administrator of the Work Projects Administration—

"The plant is wonderfully located. Incidentally, your own Congressman here (Fritz Lanham) is the author of two very important bills that will do much for this country. One concerns defense housing and the other concerns activities such as educational needs that will arise in such defense areas."



VEALE.

and from those associated with the aviation industry.

Typical of them were the following:

Clyde A. King, president of the Tulsa Chamber of Commerce—

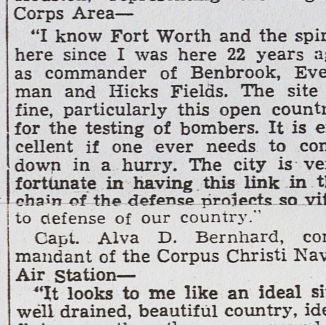
"The plant in Tulsa will be a duplicate of the one here, and it is certain they will mean a great deal to the two cities. They are going to bring about a terrific increase in business. In Tulsa, we figure that the average salary paid by the plant will be \$142 a month, which means a payroll of \$26,000,000 a year. The same will be true in Fort Worth. People don't yet realize what the value of the plants to the two cities will be."

C. H. Veale, mayor of Tulsa—

"The assembly plants here and at Tulsa mean the beginning of a great industrial development. Many industries, both of a defense nature and otherwise, are certain to be attracted by the plants and many industrial benefits are sure to follow directly in their wake."

T. E. Braniff of Oklahoma City, president of Braniff Airways, Inc.—

"The impetus given to aviation development by establishment of plants for military aircraft will be of permanent benefit because of its effect on commercial aviation of the future. The aircraft plants now being



COLONEL SCOTT.

don't see how you could find a better site."

George Haddaway, Dallas, publisher

# Texas Youths Are Quick to Learn Aircraft Work

Texas youths are taking quickly to the training required to make them skilled workers in the aircraft industry. E. J. Rivers, factory manager of the new North American Aviation plant at Grand Prairie, said here Friday.

Rivers was one of the visiting army, navy and aviation officials whose comments gave confirmation to the War Department's judgment in selecting the Lake Worth site for the Consolidated Aircraft Corporation bomber assembly plant.

From his experience in operating the Grand Prairie plant, Rivers said the aptitude of Texas youth in learning the skills needed in aircraft production offers an easy solution to the problem of trained labor for plane factories established in this section.

"I have been at the Grand Prairie plant since Nov. 1," he said, "and in that time we have trained more than 2,000 Texas boys. There is plenty of help available and all it needs is to be trained. The young men who have been taken into our plant or who have come to us from training schools show an outstanding aptitude for learning the things they need."

"In filling stations, behind ribbon counters, and in other jobs there are hundreds of young men who readily can be trained to become efficient aircraft workers."

Texas labor, Rivers said, has done more than 80 per cent of the work on the few planes so far turned out by the Grand Prairie plant.

"Aircraft plants will find no labor problem in Texas," he said.

Looking over the level, lakeshore tract that forms the site of the Consolidated plant here, Rivers termed it "a wonderful layout for a plant of this type."

"With its nearness to Lake Worth," he said, "no better site could have been picked."



COLONEL LOVELL.

established under the national defense program will continue to be of immense value to the country. When the need for military aircraft slackens, planes will be put to a great and growing constructive use instead of destructive use."

Lt. Col. Stanley L. Scott of Dallas, United States division engineer for the Southwest Division—

"I predict an increase in the establishment of aircraft factories in the Southwest."

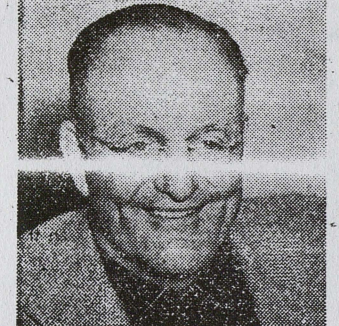
(Colonel Scott's division embraces 600,000 square miles and includes the Galveston, Denison, Tulsa, Little Rock, and Caddo, Colo., districts.)

A. M. Hall, who will be manager of the plant here—

"It will be one of the finest plants in the country when finished. We (Consolidated officials) won't be down here permanently until the plant is ready to open."

Brig. Gen. George C. Brant, commander of the Gulf Coast Air Corps Training Center—

"The building of these immense airplane factories indicates that we



MAJOR FLEET.

by Consolidated narrowed down to Fort Worth and Tulsa.

Fort Worth's prospects of success appeared near the vanishing point when, on Dec. 21, the War Department announced that Tulsa had been definitely chosen for the plant.

A week later, however, it was announced that at the personal insistence of the late Senator Morris Sheppard, signing of the contract, between the War Department and Tulsa had been delayed for a week to permit the filing of an additional brief for Fort Worth.

**Prospects For Both Cities.**

The brief was filed, and by Dec. 30 Senator Sheppard was able to announce there were prospects that both of the rival cities would get plants, the one in Fort Worth to be operated by Consolidated and the one in Tulsa by Douglas Aircraft Company.

Copies of Fort Worth's brief were laid before President Roosevelt by Senators Sheppard and Connally on the last day of the year, and three days later—Friday, Jan. 3—the long sought prize was landed.

William Holden, executive vice president of the Chamber of Commerce, made the announcement in Washington after the selection had been given the final approval of Undersecretary of War Robert P. Patterson.

At the same time, it was announced that the Douglas plant had been located at Tulsa.

The two plants are to be almost identical, designs worked out by Consolidated engineers being used for both. Each is expected to turn out around 50 of the largest type of heavy bombers, costing \$400,000 each, a month when they get into production early in 1942.

**1,400-Acre Tract.**

The site submitted by Fort Worth was a 1,400 acre tract on the south shore of Lake Worth. The plant proper is to be built on 400 acres of



ROBT. P. PATTERSON.

duction plant of its kind in the world. None of the buildings will contain a single window, necessitating the use of artificial light and mechanical ventilation throughout.

On March 8, the War Department awarded the architectural, engineering and construction contracts on the plant to the Austin Company of Cleveland, the total estimated cost being \$10,511,400. In addition to this expenditure, it is estimated that from \$2,500,000 to \$3,000,000 will go into equipment and machinery in the plant.

Maj. Gordon E. Textor, in charge of the \$54,000,000 dam project at Denison, has been designated as the supervising army engineer on the plant project. A field office to house his staff already has been completed on the site, and a second one, for use of the Austin Company, is nearing completion.

**Title Snag Struck.**

One of the worst snags struck by the city was the acquisition of the necessary land, owners generally asking much higher prices than the city estimated the property was worth. Condemnation proceedings were resorted to, the land values being established by appraisers named by the county court.

The city has not yet obtained clear title to a single acre of the tract, but has taken possession of that portion of it needed for the buildings and granted the right of occupancy to the War Department so that construction might proceed. When the litigation is finally ended, the city is to transfer title to the property to the United States.

The plant is to be owned by the War Department, and will be operated by Consolidated under a management and production contract which, so far as is known, has not yet been signed.