$211,000 Gross Sales Grew to $10,426,476

Twenty-nine years ago a group of aeronautical pioneers gathered at their small plant in East Greenwich, R. I., to close the books in June 1924 on their first year's operation.

Looking thoughtfully at the totals was Maj. Reuben H. Fleet, founder and president of the fledgling Consolidated Aircraft Corporation, and now a resident of San Diego, Cal.

"Well, anyway," he commented wryly, "at least we stayed in the black."

And they had. On a gross volume of $211,000 in sales, the net profit was exactly $201.98.

Today, that same company — merged in 1943 with Vultee Aircraft, Inc., to form Consolidated Vultee Aircraft Corporation, Convair for short—is a multi-millioned giant producing aircraft for the Air Force, the Navy, and commercial airlines throughout the world, and a leader in the field of guided missile production.

That first year's gross of $211,000 would not cover the cost of even one of the more than 250 Convair-Liners in service with 30 domestic and foreign airlines.

CLAIMS TO FAME.

A quick look at the company's imposing record during this 50th year of powered flight shows that Convair:

Operates the nation's first integrated plant for production of Navy guided missiles;

Produces the world's largest bomber, the intercontinental Air Force B-36, is building the airframe for the world's first atomic bomber; and holds a preliminary design contract for the world's first supersonic bomber;

Designed, developed, and is building the world's first supersonic, delta-wing, jet interceptor, the Air Force F-102;

Designed, developed, and constructed the world's first delta-wing, high-speed, jet seaplane, the Navy XF2Y-1;

Designed, developed, and constructed the world's first delta-wing research interceptor, Model 7002, later designated the Air Force XF-92A;

Constructed the world's largest landplane, the Air Force XC-99 troop-and-cargo transport;

Designed, developed, and constructed the world's first turbine-propeller driven seaplane, the Navy XP5Y-1;

Produces America's leading twin-engine commercial transport, the Convair-Liner, and built the nation's first turboprop commercial transport, the Convair-Turboliner.

And the company's net profit in 1952 totaled $10,426,476.

McNARNEY SCHOOLMATE.

It is a far cry back three decades to the day on May 29, 1923, in East Greenwich, R. I., when Major Fleet and a group of associates began operations as Consolidated Aircraft Corporation. Initial capital for the venture was supplied by Fleet, a native of Montesante, Wash., and his sister, Mrs. E. K. Bishop.

He was a National Guard officer who obtained his wings in 1917 at the Army's Signal Corps Aviation School, North Island, now the site of the naval air station in San Diego. (A schoolmate of Fleet's, Joseph T. McNarney, then an Army officer, retired in 1952 as a four-star Air Force general, and is now president of Convair.)

During his military career, Fleet served as contracting officer for the Army Aviation Service and business manager of McCook Air Field, Dayton, Ohio.

In 1922, as a civilian, he took over management of the Gallaudet Aircraft Corporation in East Greenwich. He soon decided that Gallaudet had "nothing worthy of continuity or perpetuity" except its limited manufacturing facilities and and Army contract for a few TW-3 primary trainers.

Resigning from Gallaudet, Fleet exercised an option for Dayton Wright Aircraft Company engineering designs, including the TW-3 contract in Gallaudet's leased facilities and also built the prototype of an improved trainer, designated the PT-1.

A large Army order resulted from a successful demonstration of the PT. With this new contract, Consolidated needed better facilities, so it moved in 1924 to the World War I-built Curtiss Company plant at Buffalo. The Navy became a trainer customer the following year.

STEADY EXPANSION.

Besides the PT-1 and NY-1 (Navy version), the trainer was developed commercially as the Husky and a smaller Fleet. All were tandem-seaters and they all set new standards for inherent safety and rugged dependability.

Their fame spread world-wide, with 22 foreign nations among the customers. And business was so brisk that Consolidated provided the Army with one lot of 50 PT's for a token $1 each.

Observation planes were added to the Consolidated line in 1928 after Thomas-Morse Aircraft of Ithaca, N. Y., was absorbed.

In this era also were developed a Navy dive bomber, Fleetster cabin monoplanes, and the company's first flying boat, the PY-1 Admiral. From the latter evolved Consolidated's first transport, the 32-passenger water-based Commodore, and later the renowned P2Y and PBY Catalina patrol bombers.

An increasing need for year-around flying weather and ice-free seaplane testing waters prompted Consolidated to move from Buffalo to San Diego in the fall of 1935.

RECORD DELIVERY.

The new factory there consisted of one building measuring 300 by 900 feet, bordering the municipal airport, Lindbergh Field, and was constructed on then-moist San Diego Bay tideland. Until necessary fill work was completed some years later, San Diego Bay waters lapped at a corner of the factory during high tides.

This original structure today is but a small part of the company's present-day San Diego Division Plant 1, and the bay is a half-mile removed.

Consolidated's new California plant soon was employing thousands and enjoying a profitable business, mostly Navy.

Then in 1939, with the world preparing for war, the Air Force ordered a four-engine heavy bomber which Convair designed and delivered in record time. This became the B-24 Liberator, soon to be mass-produced, together with its transport version, the C-87 Liberator Express, and its Navy counterpart, the PB4Y Privateer, in Convair and other plants during World War II. Counting equivalent spares, Consolidated built 11,679 B-24-type planes alone.

Just prior to Pearl Harbor, controlling interest in Consolidated Aircraft was purchased by Vultee Aircraft, Inc., of Downey, Cal., a subsidiary of The Aviation Corporation and long famous in its own right.

Harry Woodhead, Vultee board chairman, succeeded Fleet at Consolidated and also became president of Vultee. The transaction was formally completed with the merger of Consolidated and Vultee in March 1943, making the combine Consolidated Vultee Aircraft Corporation.

The name Vultee came from a young engineer and pilot named Gerard (Jerry) Vultee. He formed the Airplane Development Corporation in 1932, together with E. L. Cord, who in 1929 had become majority stockholder of the Stinson Aircraft Corporation. In 1934, Airplane Development Corporation was acquired by Aviation Manufacturing Corporation. In 1936, the company was liquidated and became Vultee Aircraft Division of Aviation Manufacturing Corporation.

BACK TO STINSON.

Vultee Aircraft, Inc., was formed in 1939 to acquire the assets of Aviation Manufacturing Corporation, a subsidiary of The Aviation Corporation.

The oldest company in the Vultee group dated back to 1925, when Eddie Stinson and several Detroit business men formed the Stinson Airplane Syndicate. Later known as the Stinson Aircraft Corporation, located at Wayne, Mich., it was purchased by Aviation Manufacturing Corporation in 1934.

In addition to acquiring Stinson, Aviation Manufacturing Corporation took over Barkley-Grow Aircraft of Detroit. Both of these divisions were put into Vultee Aircraft, Inc. The final acquisition by Vultee prior to the merger with Consolidated was the purchase in July 1942 of Intercontinent Aircraft Corporation, of Miami, Fla., which had been organized in 1940.

During World War II, Convair operations expanded to 13 divisions throughout the nation, and peak employment exceeded 101,000. Manufacturing plants were located at San Diego and Downey, Cal.; Fort Worth; Nashville; Wayne, Mich.; Allentown, Pa.; New Orleans, and Miami.

Modification plants were located at Tucson, Ariz.; Louisville, Ky.; and Elizabeth City, N. J. The Stout Research Division was located at Dearborn, Mich.

The 13th division was a trans-Pacific airline known as Consairway, operated by Convair under contract for the Air Transport Command.

Between Dec. 7, 1941, and Aug. 15, 1945, Convair delivered more than 350,000,000 pounds of airframes, or nearly 13 per cent of the total output of the nation's industry. This poundage comprised more than 28,000 completed aircraft and approximately 5,000 equivalent planes delivered as spares, or a total of more than 33,000 military aircraft. Included were thousands of B-24 Liberator bombers, PBY Catalina and PB2Y Coronado flying boats, BT-13 Valiant trainers, and L-5 Sentinel liaison planes.

SLOWED AFTER WAR II.

Demand for military aircraft virtually halted with the end of World War II. Contract cancellations closed all company divisions except those at San Diego, Fort Worth, Nashville and Wayne.

In 1945, Convair began operating the Navy Bureau of Ordnance Aerophysics Laboratory at Daingerfield, Texas, now the Daingerfield Division.

The Nashville Division—which had converted to production of

Tur nto Convair on Page 8.

START OF PLANT—Brig. Gen. G. C. Brant and Amon Carter break ground for the start of construction of the Convair plant in Fort Worth. This event took place April 18, 1941 in a drenching rain on the prairie land on which the multi-million dollar aircraft plant was built.

B 36 Armada Ranks Along With Atom Bomb

America's B-36 airmada is credited equally with the nation's atomic stockpile as the principal deterrent to global aggression

Friend and potential foe alike respect it as the "big stick" of America's inter-continental striking power. Fleets of B-36's are operated by the U S. 8th and 15th Air Forces of the Strategic Air Command, but the exact numbers in service and rates of production or delivery are secret.

The jet-augmented B-36 bomber—and its sister-ship, the RB-36 reconnaissance bomber — are built by Convair. It is the world's largest and mightiest bomber, able to carry a heavier load of bombs for a greater distance at a higher altitude than any other aircraft in existence.

The B-36-RB-36 combination mark another milestone in Convair's three decades of operation which have seen other bombers preceded in the years since the company was founded at East Greenwich, R. I., in May 1923, as Consolidated Aircraft Corporation. They includeo the XBY-1, a single-engine Navy dive bomber; the famed B-24 Liberator of World War II and its Navy counterpart, the PB4Y-2 Privateer; the B-32 Dominator; the four-jet YB-46; and eight-jet, sweptwing YB-60. The company is also developing a supersonic bomber and the airframe for the world's first atomic-powered bomber.

The B-36 was designed to carry 10,000 pounds of bombs halfway or farther on a 10,000-mile non-stop mission

Maximum load for shorter ranges is 84,000 pounds (42 tons), the all-time world record payload for bombers.

Wingspan of the B-36 is 230 feet; its height, 47 feet; and its length, 162½ feet.

The B-36 carries 6 20-mm cannon, has four-wheel "roller-skate" landing gear, is powered by six Pratt & Whitney 3800-hp piston engines and four General Electric J-47 jet engines each of which produces more than 5,200 pounds thrust.

The B-36 and the RB-36 have a top speed of more than 435 miles per hour, a service ceiling exceeding 45,000 feet, and a gross weight of 358,000 pounds.

Health Group Helps India Projects Most

NEW DELHI, May 30 (AP).—The World Health Organization assists more projects "in active operation" in India than anywhere else in the world, a WHO announcement says.

Out of 200 health projects launched with WHO assistance in 62 different countries, 18 center in India with an international staff of 38 professors, doctors, nurses, and technicians.

Police Dogs Fumble

GREENWICH, Conn., May 30 (AP). — Three police dogs slumbered undisturbed here the other day when a burglar walked past them and swiped their mistress' handbag and $90. When three detectives arrived, they barked their heads off.

TO ERASE RUST

Wheat Cells Maneuvered By Scientist

WINNIPEG, May 30 (AP). — Alberta-born Robert McGinnis has a way with chromosomes.

Working in a laboratory at the University of Manitoba, the bespectacled University of Alberta graduate is maeuvering the chromosomes of wheat cells to produce a variety that is completely rust resistant. Rust is the worst enemy of bread wheat.

The secret lies in the number of chromosomes in a cell. Wild wheat varieties that are highly rust-resistant have only seven but they are also of low commercial value Bob is busy crossing these with domestic varieties of high commercial value with 21 chromosomes but a low resistance to rust.

His first problem was the sterility of his first hybred wheat, the cross between a wild variety and the domestic Durham.

He solved this one by treating the sterile wheat with a drug called Colchicine which gave the sterile chromosomes fertility and allowed him to continue crossing the hybrid with other varieties. It was a high-priced remedy. Colchicine costs $9 a gram — seven times as much as gold.