

MEMORABLE OCCASION—Tom Girdler, chairman of the board of the then Consolidated Aircraft Corporation, speaks at the celebration of the first B-24 bomber to roll from the assembly line of the Fort Worth plant

on April 17, 1942, while in the other photo the first bomber starts to leave the runway on its maiden flight. The celebration was attended by top military and civic leaders.

Manufacturer's Whim Located Convair Plant at Lake Worth

If it hadn't been for the whim of an aircraft manufacturer, Convair's mile-long assembly plant would have been built on the shore of Eagle Mountain Lake instead of in its present location near Lake Worth.

The story of the plant's origin was recalled recently by Maj. Reuben H. Fleet, founder of the company who now lives in retire-

near Grand Prairie, offered by the Dallas Chamber of Commerce. But his requirements were exacting and he looked to Fort Worth for a better location. His option on the Mountain Creek Lake site was later relinquished to North American.

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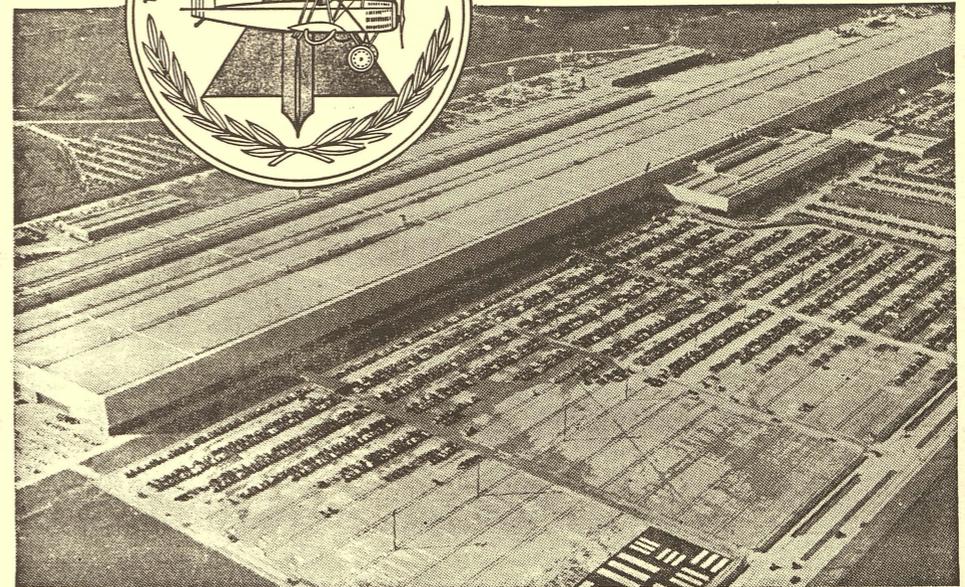
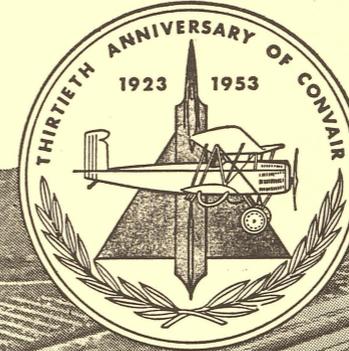
of charts and briefs citing labor, water and power resources, housing, and weather statistics. A comprehensive, book-size report was prepared by Harold Foster, then manager of the industrial department of the Fort Worth Chamber of Commerce, answering every question a prospective manufacturer could ask. Finally, in December 1940, the

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Fort Worth's initial bid for the aircraft plant went to Major Fleet from Amon Carter in the form of a telegram Aug. 12, 1939. It read:

"If you contemplate additional manufacturing facilities, Fort Worth offers unusual opportunities. This city will go far to cooperate with you."

Major Fleet had considered a site on Mountain Creek Lake

near Grand Prairie, offered by the Dallas Chamber of Commerce. But his requirements were exacting and he looked to Fort Worth for a better location. His option on the Mountain Creek Lake site was later relinquished to North American.

DIDN'T WANT IT.

"Fort Worth first offered me a site on Eagle Mountain Lake, but I didn't want it," Major Fleet recalled. "I had my eye on a beautiful tract near Lake Worth. Amon Carter and I went over the piece of ground I wanted. We laid out what we needed to have—about two sections of land—and we got it. It was a cracker-jack."

Before the site was actually acquired, however, months of man hours went into the preparation

of charts and briefs citing labor, water and power resources, housing, and weather statistics. A comprehensive, book-size report was prepared by Harold Foster, then manager of the industrial department of the Fort Worth Chamber of Commerce, answering every question a prospective manufacturer could ask.

Finally, in December 1940, the government authorized Consolidated to build an inland plant of 1,600,000 square feet to employ 15,000 workers. And on Jan. 3, 1941, the War Department approved the Lake Worth site.

BONDS VOTED.

A bond issue was passed to acquire the needed acreage and to construct multiple-lane access roads and a five-mile spur railroad track. On April 18, 1941, actual construction was signaled by a ground-breaking ceremony attended by the nation's military and aviation leaders.

Just one day short of a year later the first Fort Worth-assembled B-24 Liberator bomber was rolled from the final assembly line and, as thousands of workers looked on, soared on its maiden flight. It was 100 days ahead of schedule.

When production began—in April 1942—there were orders for 600 B-24s on the books, a \$158,250,000 backlog.

Plane deliveries, payrolls and employment skyrocketed. By the end of the first production year, nearly 14,000 workers were on the job. Fort Worth had acquired an industry of major proportions and the groundwork had been laid for what was to become the nation's greatest inland manufacturing center of aircraft.

Production and payrolls mounted apace. At the peak of wartime activity, in January 1944, the rate of B-24 production reached 200 a month. The total of B-24s with the "Built-in-Fort Worth" label soared to 3,000 before production was converted

to B-32 bombers late in the war.

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6,400 LOW MARK.

Employment at the Fort Worth plant, which had reached an all-time peak of 30,609 for war operations in November 1943, leveled off at approximately 22,000 in 1944 and remained there until V-E Day, May 4, 1945. Then began a slump in the entire aircraft industry which took employment at the Fort Worth plant down to a postwar low of 6,400, in December 1945.

But the next year brought the XB-36 into being. The great plane, heralded as the first truly intercontinental bomber, took to the air for the first time on Aug. 6, 1946. That date marked the beginning of a new era in strategic warfare.

The first production model of the B-36 was flown a year later, on Aug. 28, 1947. And on March 26, 1949, a B-36 equipped with four jet engines in addition to its six piston engines, was test flown for the first time. The B-36 advanced through a series of improvements leading to the current production-line model—the 44,000 horsepower B-36H.

Meanwhile, as the B-36 bomber fleet grew into a sizable armada of the Strategic Air Command, a development contract was signed for the nation's first atomic-powered airplane, a preliminary design contract was awarded Convair for a supersonic bomber, a long-range B-36 modernization and repair program was inaugurated, and dozens of research and development projects were placed in motion.

In 12 years, the plant which had been thrown up in record time to build B-24s, was now an industrial city containing the major deterrents to another world war.

Leonard's Congratulates Consolidated-Vultee Upon Its 30th Anniversary...

To more than 20,000 Consolidated-Vultee men and women in Fort Worth we offer our congratulations. We salute a job well done. Many are the accomplishments of Consolidated-Vultee both in peace and war, which have contributed heavily to the progress and security of our nation.

We extend to you, the many employees, our congratulations upon your individual share in your great firm's progress. It is a pleasure to know and



"I see you liked my story—you gave it four stars."

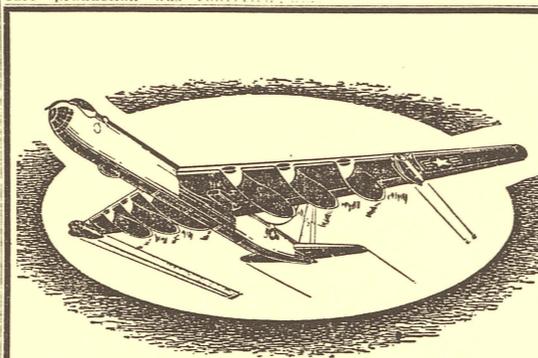
German Army Expert Aids U.S. in Study of Red Tactics

FRANKFORT, May 30 (NANA). — Serving as an adviser to the U. S. Army on "How to Fight the Russians" is Col. Gen. Franz Halder. Halder is Hitler's old chief of staff and at the end of World War II he wrote a comprehensive report—as seen through German eyes—of military tactics. His report was specially ordered by the Americans and now Hitler's faithful servant has been asked to "help out" again.

He is to produce "studies" of Russian tactics and capabilities.

Though his reports are not yet written, Halder is known to believe that the overwhelming Red military edge over the West is beginning to wane. This year, he says, may be Russia's last chance of invading Europe with any hope of success.

Halder is not alone in his post. Several onetime high-ranking Wehrmacht officers are being asked by the Americans to evaluate — on the basis of personal experience — U. S. intelligence reports on Red military activities.



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