

---Since You Went Away---

(This is a digest of the news at Boeing-Wichita, gleaned from the files of PLANE TALK. Because it was late in 1942 before men began leaving in large numbers to join the Armed Forces, the year 1942 is condensed; the last two years are taken month by month.)

1942 With Pearl Harbor still fresh in our minds, Plant I sets a terrific pace by building primary trainers faster than ever, at one time rolling them out the doors at the rate of nearly one per hour. . . . During the first half of the year, Plant II grows from a skeleton of steel framework to a finished building, one of the largest in the nation. . . . While outboard wings and control surfaces for the B-17 are being built in the east part of the plant, the new west sections are the scene of feverish activity in tooling-up and installation of equipment and machinery.

The floor of Plant II slowly but surely becomes literally a forest of B-29 jigs—huge jigs that are a source of wonderment to old hands, of amazement to new employees. . . . Men and women who have never seen a factory before are hired by the thousands.

In the early summer, along comes an emergency request from the Army that we help build cargo gliders—build them in a hurry—and the north end of Plant II and the ramps outside become an improvised assembly line. . . . The Boeing Bombers win the national semi-pro baseball tournament. . . . With Plant I setting production records daily and Plant II tooling-up for the B-29 and assembling gliders, Boeing is awarded its first Army-Navy "E" for excellence in production.

Over 14,000 employees jam the amphitheater at Boeing Park for the "E" presentation. . . . The first B-29's are taking shape on the factory floor—and people still can't believe their eyes. . . . Employees pledge \$90,000 to the Wichita Community-War Chest. . . . Test blackout is made. . . . New employment office is opened up downtown. . . . Planeview nears completion. . . . Mamma cat in rivet stockroom comes up with her fourth litter—gets "E" printed on her crib for excellence in production. . . . Christmas is first holiday of year for employees.

1943 **JANUARY**—Plant Protection guards sworn in as Auxiliary Military Police. . . . Lt. Don Blue, formerly of Plant I and now a fighting Marine in the Pacific, writes: "We have the men; just give us and keep giving us the weapons." . . . Bus terminal west bridge, ramp and stairs over MacArthur Road completed. . . . First assessment of new 5% Victory tax deducted from pay checks. . . . First Boeing families move into Planeview. . . . Boeing-Wichita has 2,597 former employees in Armed Forces.

FEBRUARY—Eddie Allen, Boeing's ace flight test engineer and aerodynamicist, killed in bomber crash at Seattle (it was not revealed officially until months later that this crash involved one of the experimental B-29's). . . . Payroll is staggered to make every day a pay day for hourly employees. . . . Ray G. Harris, original AAF representative at Boeing, promoted from colonel to rank of brigadier general.

MARCH—Employee Red Cross pledges total \$68,246. . . . Blitz on candy vending machines results in restrictions on hours they may be used. . . . Shirts or blouses

in solid colors approved for women in production areas. . . . New traffic signal light installed at Warehouse crossing on MacArthur Road. . . . Boeing Chorus gives public presentation of "The Messiah." . . . Advent of meat rationing increases plant food service problems. . . . War Department OK's improvement program for roads leading to plants.

APRIL—Rapid progress made on new concrete parking apron on airport across Oliver from Plant I. . . . Canyons golf course leased by Employees Association. . . . Application for increased pay rates pending before War Labor Board. . . . Plant I delivers 7,000th equivalent primary trainer to Armed Forces. . . . Employees win second Army-Navy "E" Award. . . . Planeview housing area dedicated.

MAY—Lt. Gen. William S. Knudsen visits both plants, says it is easy to see why we have won two "E" awards. . . . New individual "E" pins made available to employees. . . . Plant II opened to Boeing employees, their wives and husbands for Sunday tour.

JUNE—A red letter month in which our first B-29 Superfortress makes initial test flight before thousands of thrilled employees. . . . Free movies start in Boeing Park. . . . Otto Plagens noses out Bob Clark for Employees Association presidency. . . . Planeview announces organization of school system with five buildings to be erected.

JULY—Ernest M. Allison, veteran of 12,500 hours in pilot's seat, becomes chief test pilot for Boeing-Wichita B-29's. . . . Plant I accorded top national ranking for primary trainer production. . . . National Labor Relations Board holds election in plants to determine which union, if any, to represent employees as bargaining agent. International Association of Machinists (A. F. of L.) is the winner. . . . All three shifts work on Monday, July 5, recognized as Independence Day holiday. . . . Complete counselor service for all employees announced.

AUGUST—Thousands of employees turn out to greet Boeing B-17 Flying Fortress "Memphis Belle" and crew upon return from completing 25 missions over Europe. . . . Chest X-rays of employees are made as a health measure. . . . Glenn Bostwick wins Association golf title. . . . Planemakers donate over 30,000 books and magazines in one-day drive to furnish reading material for soldiers at Camp Phillips. . . . Civic Bowl in West Wichita leased for use of employees. . . . W. G. (Bill) Power, General Motors' dynamic speaker, talks to supervisory personnel and indelibly impresses the importance of "all out" war production effort.

SEPTEMBER—Labor day is a regular work day at Boeing-Wichita. . . . War Dads form chapter at Boeing. . . . For first time since Pearl Harbor, Plant I holds open house for employees, wives and husbands. . . . Association contracts for four-day rodeo in Lawrence Stadium.

OCTOBER—Secrecy on our new super-bomber partly lifted when General Harris

These Gold Star Men Have Been Honored

To each of the 57 former Boeing employees who has given his life in the service of his country a Boeing B-29 has been dedicated. When the fateful news is received, a large picture of the war hero is placed on the outside of a Superfortress cabin in Primary Assembly. The memorial remains on the ship through the final stages of production. Men thus honored:

JAMES E. LIVENGOOD
FRANK W. GRIFFITH
ALBERT DALTON
GRAYSON CARLYLE NADEN
EDWARD ODELL
ROBERT HELPHINGSTINE
ARNOLD V. CARLSON
ROY E. COLLINS
DEAN E. WHITESIDE
GEORGE KENDALL
GILBERT WIDICK
ROSCOE V. BLACK, JR.
EMMETT MAYBERRY
LLOYD E. MATHES
MILFORD D. BIRCH
RICHARD W. DEEVER
LEIGHTON METZKER
O. RAYMOND FRENCH
HAROLD ALBRIGHT
GEORGE E. CUSTER
EDWIN S. NESBITT
P. HOWARD GATEWOOD
JOHN CURTIS PHELAN
DARRELL EDWARD BLISS
J. ROBERT HARTMAN
ROY E. PRUITT
LEWIS DWAIN STILES
JACK RENNER
K. MERLE HAM

GAIL F. BRUNER
LUTHER E. MASSEY
CHARLES W. JUDD
HARVEY L. SHAFFER
HUGH W. MONAGHAN
FRANK LINK
HAROLD L. GILLENWATERS
OTT S. CIRCLE
DEMPSEY WILLARD SPIRES
MAURICE WAYNE WILSON
LARRY B. RANSOM
BERNARD KNIGHT FORSTON
JOHN H. CRISS
ROY ARTHUR HUNT
CODY HUBERT JOHNSON
PAUL E. MADDOX
DALE SMITH
HOWARD W. HOLMES
EDWIN M. HELTON
FORREST ELROY FREEMAN
ARTHUR DAVID PRICE
LAWRENCE KOON
ROBERT C. McILVAIN
ORVILLE GATEWOOD
EDEN C. JONES
HAROLD PAUL SCOTT
LEO A. BETZEN
ALBERT C. JOLLEY

announces Army counts on it "to put over the knockout punch of the war." . . . Bomber schedules are boosted. . . . First checks issued under new shop wage scale. . . . Plant War Bond sales pass million dollar mark. . . . Boeing opens four-state drive for new employees. . . . General Knudsen, visiting plants, urges all-out effort in war against Japan.

NOVEMBER—Army reveals new superfortress, designed and built by Boeing, to be known as the B-29. . . . "Wee Willy" Hobein sets season bowling record with a 653. . . . Art Lokensgard, former USO director, assumes head of plant recreation department. . . . Employee gifts to Wichita Community-War Chest hit \$135,200. . . . Full work schedule announced for Thanksgiving; 16,000 servings of cake and ice cream and 150 gallons of cranberry sauce go to employees with Thanksgiving greetings from the Company. . . . Tiny loose screw, dropped and carelessly ignored by some workman, jams in landing gear switch, results in a B-29 belly landing at Municipal Airport; no one hurt, plane later repaired and flown again.

DECEMBER—To meet accelerated B-29 delivery schedules, plants abandon three shift operation and go on two extended overtime shifts of 10 hours each; transportation schedules revised to meet new work plan; downtown stores cooperate by remaining open an extra night each week. . . . General Knudsen visits plants to discuss new schedules. . . . Employees work Sunday to make up for Christmas holiday. . . . Plant I sets perfect safety record for month. . . . Boeing Victory bell, lent to employees by Wichita church, is erected in Plant II to herald delivery of B-29's to

Army. . . . Employees battle severe blizzard to reach work and keep up B-29 production.

1944 **JANUARY**—Plant tours set up for visiting members of Armed Forces. . . . Planeview community center opens. . . . Starting time of both shifts moved forward 45 minutes, first starting at 6 a.m., second at 4:45 p.m. This means first shifters get up at 4:30 a.m., second shifters get home 24 hours later. . . . General Arnold visits plants, asks all employees to redouble efforts. . . . Arnold inscribes name on Superfortress nose section, terms it "my airplane" (same ship to later become famous as the Boeing B-29 "Gen. H. H. Arnold Special"). . . . B-29's now being delivered minus camouflage paint. . . . Wounded in African invasion, Leo Rutter, formerly of Shop 82, returns to work in Plant II.

FEBRUARY—Employees top million in War Bond purchases. . . . Eighteen gold stars placed on plant honor rolls. . . . 4,377 former employees now serving in Armed Forces. . . . "Gen. H. H. Arnold Special" flown away by Army. . . . Boeing enters 10 teams in city basketball tourney. . . . Knudsen again visits plants; announces first accelerated scheduled quota fulfilled, calls for even greater efforts.

MARCH—Planeview gets branch bank. . . . Boeing Bombers, City league basketball champions, bow out of national tournament after two victories. . . . 500 Boeing mechanics and technicians go to four Army air bases to assist in modification program. . . . Association stages big ice show at Forum. . . . Employee gifts to

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Boeing Keeps Count of Its Servicemen and Honors Its War Dead



SERVING AS A DAILY REMINDER to every employee, two strategically located service boards like this one opposite Plant I tell the number of former Boeing-Wichita employees who have entered the Armed Forces since the war began. The two boards carry small gold stars in memory of employees who have lost their lives in the present conflict. The boards are electrically lighted and are placed across from Plant I and on the overpass above MacArthur road where everyone entering and leaving the plants may see them

WITH SIMPLE DIGNITY AND REVERENCE, the badge and picture of each Boeing-Wichita employee who loses his life in the service of his country is superimposed on a gold star and mounted in a special memorial case. Beneath each star is the name of the serviceman. The large star at the top records the total number of employees who have joined the Armed Forces. Thousands of employees and visitors to the plants have seen the simple and impressive memorial which now commemorates 57 men who gave their lives