



FACT SHEET

Fort Worth & World War II

The Dallas-Fort Worth area played a vital role in World War II. Planes were mass-produced at Fort Worth's assembly line and citizens from all over the area pitched in to help get them built and fly-ready for pilots. Soldiers had a strong presence in the area, and women played a key role in riveting plans and working jobs traditionally held by men.

WW II represented a watershed event in the history of the United States and affected political, economic, and social systems at all levels. In particular, the war unleashed forces that caused rapid industrialization, immigration, and urbanization in two regions – the South and the West, significantly altering the City of Fort Worth.

Prior to the war, Fort Worth's economy revolved around cattle, food-processing, and oil, industries that depended largely on an unskilled labor force. The Fort Worth Stockyards laid claim to the single largest workforce in the city, while manufacturing lagged far behind.

After an aggressive campaign waged by city civic and business leaders, Fort Worth acquired a Consolidated Aircraft Corporation assembly plant in early 1941. The presence of that facility initiated an economic transformation that resulted in a major shift away from agriculture and toward manufacturing, particularly the aviation industry.

The Consolidated plant sparked industrial development, triggered an influx of newcomers, trained a skilled workforce, and stimulated an economic recovery that lifted the city out of the Depression-era doldrums. When hostilities ended and the United States entered the Cold War period, Consolidated and the adjacent airfield, designated as Carswell Air Force Base in 1948, provided the framework for Fort Worth's postwar industrial expansion and economic prosperity.

Fort Worth emerged from WW II as one of the nation's premier aviation production centers and as a linchpin of America's defensive strategy. In the process, it became what historian Roger Lotchin has labeled a "martial metropolis."

Ties developed during the war between the city and the military extended into the postwar period and beyond as Fort Worth became part of the growing military/industrial complex. From stockyards to defense plants, the war transformed Fort Worth from agriculture and mavericks to manufacturing and the military.

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