

Our times

through the eyes
of The Times-Picayune

ONE OF WORLD WAR II'S ICONIC AIRCRAFT, THE PBV CATALINA, was made primarily in New Orleans for the last 29 months of the war at a hurriedly built plant on Lake Pontchartrain. From its opening in May 1943, employment at the Consolidated-Vultee Aircraft fac-

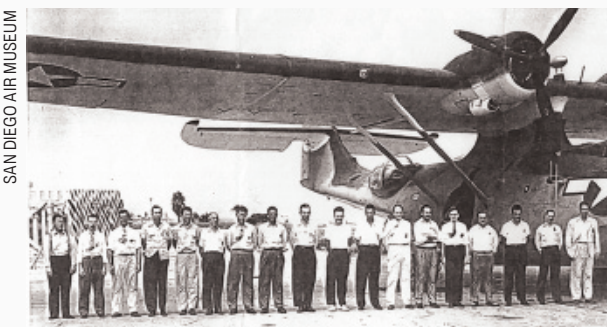


tory quickly zoomed to 6,200, creating an insatiable demand for workers in wartime New Orleans. Two models of the gull-winged amphibian, 235 aircraft in all, were made on Franklin Avenue. But two days after V-J Day, Catalina production was canceled. Talk of building post-war civilian planes for the renamed Convair went nowhere, and the plant was closed.



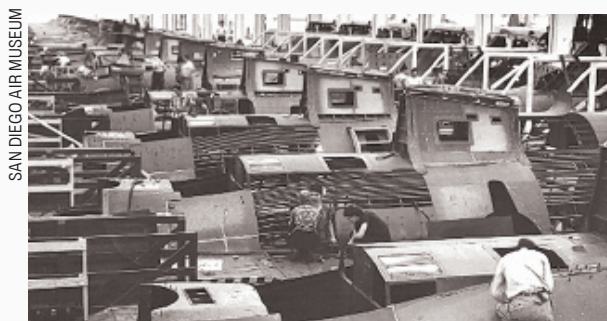
NOPL

MILITARY COMPLEX: The plant, at top just above Pontchartrain Beach, was part of a vast complex of military facilities built on newly reclaimed land, including a Naval Air Station, foreground.



SAN DIEGO AIR MUSEUM

END OF THE LINE: The last plane, a PBV-6A, was completed in September 1945. About a dozen New Orleans-made Catalinas are still airworthy.



SAN DIEGO AIR MUSEUM

ROSIE THE RIVETER: Many women worked alongside men, but the government had to prod the company into letting black men work in skilled jobs, unlike nearby Higgins Industries, which had an integrated work force.

REMAINS: Motorists can still see the plant across from UNO Lakefront Arena, which was the site of a German POW camp. The plant once served as an American Standard plumbing fixtures factory and now houses the Orleans Levee Board. The Naval Air Station was moved to Belle Chasse in 1953. The smokestack at the airfield remains, on the campus of UNO.



GOOGLE

WORKERS WANTED:

Consolidated arrived at a time when tens of thousands were already at work making landing craft, artillery shells and cargo ships. Help wanted ads ran constantly in *The Picayune* and the company transferred experienced Catalina builders from San Diego.

HELP WANTED—MALE
Mechanical

CONSOLIDATED VULTEE AIRCRAFT CORP.

Has Unusual Opportunity for Skilled Workers to Help Build the New P4Y-1
Called One of the Fastest Flying Boats in America

WANTED AT ONCE
TOOL DESIGNERS
TOOL MAKERS
MILLING MACHINE OPERATORS
SHAPER OPERATORS
BENCH MACHINISTS
MECHANICAL DRAFTSMEN

Good Pay
Good Working Conditions
Good Chance for Promotion

7020 FRANKLIN AVE.
OFFICE HOURS
8 A. M. TO 4:30 P. M.
MONDAY THRU SATURDAY

U. S. CANCELS VULTEE, HIGGINS CONTRACTS



ABOUT FACE: Less than a year after the Pentagon

worried how to ramp up employment at Consolidated and Higgins by 18,000, the end of the war meant the end of Consolidated in New Orleans. More than 5,000 people were laid off.