

Introduction (and a Quick Tour of the Factory)

After World War II the employment at Chance Vought Division of United Aircraft dropped to 3,600 from a peak of 13,516 during the war. It was soon evident that the postwar world was not going to be peaceful and, as the cold war started, activity at Vought increased. In the early 1950's salaried employees, entering the main aisle of the factory before 8:00 a.m. on their way to the offices from the west parking lot, were greeted by a chorus of rivet guns operated by the first factory shift which started at 7:30 a.m.. On the left of the main aisle was the F4U Corsair assembly line. To the right of the main aisle was the F7U Cutlass assembly line. To the right of the Cutlass assembly line and just inside the west high bay door was a walled off area: the experimental shop. Here aircraft were instrumented for flight tests, and the Regulus I missiles were assembled. To the south of the high bay factory area was a large two-story area, first floor and mezzanine, containing the machine shops and metal-forming shops where detail parts and subassemblies were fabricated. South of this area was another large traffic aisle and a solid firewall, but on the other side of the firewall was still more space including an area for chemical vats used in surface protection treatment of metal parts. There was also a large area for receiving incoming parts and materials from the loading dock, which at one end accommodated trucks and at the other end accommodated railroad cars. During most of the 1950's all of these areas were bustling with activity. The increase in activity required additional facilities, and the following buildings, with corresponding building numbers, were added in the 1950's:



- Manufacturing and Shipping 93
- Structures Test Lab 94
- Missile Hangar 97
- Engine Test Cells 103
- Paint Strip Building 104
- Paint Hangar 105
- Engine Assembly Building 106
- Low-Speed Wind Tunnel 107
- High-Speed Wind Tunnel 302

A Quick Tour of the Offices

The salaried people walking down the aisle on their way to work turned left through a split in the Corsair line, halfway down the high bay factory area, and entered the office building, which was really two buildings joined to appear as one from both the inside and outside. On the first floor of the west building were the copy center, the photography laboratory, and the electronics laboratories. The Purchasing, Personnel, and Medical departments occupied the first floor of the east building. Also tucked into a corner of the first floor was a modest amount of space for the U.S. Navy Bureau of Aeronautics Representative office, the customer. This was in contrast to later years when much of the first floor was occupied by government accountants. The electronics design section was on the second floor of the west building. The executive offices, "mahogany row", including that of General Manager Fred O. Detweiler, were on the second floor of the east office building. The third floor of both buildings was occupied by the Engineering department and contained hundreds of drafting tables. The entire facility had three million square feet of manufacturing and office space.

Management Team

The management team from 1949 through 1953 included the following:

Frederick O. Detweiler, General Manager

- J.D. Hodapp & A.W. DeShong, Assistants to GM
- J.J. Gaffney, Administrative Assistant
- N.V. Turney, Division Controller
- Paul S. Baker, Engineering Manager
- Fred N. Dickerman, Chief Engineer
- B.D. Taliaferro, Factory Manager
- J. J. Hospers, Sales Manager