

# Local Douglas Plant Becomes Major Industry Within 4 Years

## World-Record Holding Jets Produced Here

Only four years ago the Torrance location of Douglas Aircraft's El Segundo Division was a collection of abandoned buildings, vacated after World War II by the Aluminum Company of America. Today it is a permanent arsenal of defense, producing such modern aircraft as the supersonic F4D Skyray and the AD Skyraider for the United States Navy.

AD-7, entered production this year.

**Extensive Operation**  
The facility at Torrance is the key to a production operation that extends over the entire southwestern part of the nation. Over 4000 small manufacturers, some of whom are in the city of Torrance, supply parts for the production lines. Others are as far as 500 miles away.

It is an integral part of the El Segundo Division under the direction of T. E. Springer, vice president-general manager, a pioneer in the aircraft industry. J. D. Thomas is the factory superintendent.

This facility is in quantity production of the F4D Skyray which will join the fleet this year.

Its production lines have provided fabricated parts and major sub-assemblies for hundreds of the famed AD Skyraiders, often called the world's most versatile airplane.

Such is the versatility and usefulness of the AD's that over 3000 have been built. After 11 straight years a new model, the

The intervening years since 1952 have been years of unique accomplishment. Perhaps this is best illustrated by the fact that the location entered production only 38 days after the property was acquired under the Naval Industrial Aircraft Reserve Program.

This would have been impossible if new buildings had been constructed. By converting the aluminum plant, production was



WIRE ASSEMBLERS

Torrance wire assemblers. There are many jobs at the Torrance location of Douglas Aircraft company which women can perform more efficiently than men. In the electrical groups, where wire bundles are assembled on jig boards, this is particularly true. A few of the Torrance women who work in these groups include: (from left) Vonnie Vincent, 2459 Torrance boulevard; Alice Grigsby, 50100 Deelane street; Gwen Denham, 1532 West 222nd street; Annie La Fond, 18108 Faysmith avenue; Jo Ann Kelley, 22703 Marjorie avenue; Mary Reimers, 1900 W. 174th street; Gaudalupa Reyes, 1034 West 209th street; Mary Prosch, 18102 Faysmith avenue; Frances Marino, 1146 West 209th street; and Mary Almanza, 1034 West 209th street.

possible 12-14 month sooner at a great saving in costs.

There were only 250 people on the first payroll and their activities were confined to 90,000 square feet of floor space while the remainder of the old buildings were being rehabilitated. Today there are over 8000 employees actively engaged in two-shift operation.

The conversion was of such magnitude that there are now more than 1,676,000 square feet of floor space for production work. Only last year the Navy Bureau of Aeronautics authorized a ten per cent increase in space to meet increased production requirements of the 4FD Skyray.

**World Records**

When the F4D joins Navy and Marine squadrons this year, it will be one of the most modern all-weather interceptors ever built. It still holds two traditional world speed records for the three kilometer and the 100 kilometer courses, plus a time-to-climb record from a standing start. In October 1953, the Skyray averaged 752.9 mph over the three kilometer course. Later that month it attained a speed of 728.11 mph for the 100 kilometer closed circuit course. In February 1955, it established a time-to-climb record by reaching 10,000 feet in just 56 seconds, cutting 15 seconds from the old records.

Outstanding plant facilities

have been provided by the Navy. Machines of the latest design, some of which are found in no other comparable manufacturing facility, are in daily use. To list a few is sufficient to emphasize the importance of the Douglas facility: the longest line of drop hammers in the West; one of the most modern machine shops in the industry; the world's longest spar cap mill extending for 308 feet; and the industry's longest conveyorized paint system.

The lack of an adjacent airport has been no problem. Completed airframes are taken by trucks to hanger facilities at International Airport. At the Douglas hangers the engine and electronic equipment are installed to prepare the aircraft for flight testing by Douglas and Navy pilots.

Many new processes have been developed by the skilled men and women of Douglas which have improved manufacturing techniques throughout the industry.

**Employment Trends**

The Douglas location at Torrance has opened up new opportunities for employment of men and women from Torrance and surrounding communities. This trend is expected to continue in the years ahead. There are constant demands for skilled machine tool designers, master layout men, tool and die makers, and qualified machine shop men.

All is not work for employees at Douglas. Softball, basketball, golf, bowling, archery, and fencing are enjoyed by those who wish to participate in the numerous teams supervised by the recreation director.

In many ways, the facility is a city within a city for there are five dispensaries staffed by physicians and nurses, ambulance service, a plant police force, and a complete fire department on duty 24 hours a day.

**Benefits**

Workers at Douglas are covered by a company paid insurance plan, as well as health and welfare plans which can be extended to cover all in the immediate family at a small monthly charge to the employee. Just recently the company instituted a pension plan for employees.

## Plant Converts Wet Earth To Foamy White Wool

From a material resembling wet earth to a foamy white mineral wool, used for building insulation, is the story of the operation at American Rock Wool's Torrance plant.

Slag tailings left over from the production of 20 Mule Team Borax find their way through a series of complicated processes and end up as rock wool.

The bulk of production of the Torrance plant is sold in the Los Angeles area, although the local division is set up to service the West Coast.

**Buy's Plant**

The story of mineral wool in Torrance dates back some years to Coast Insulating Corp., whose plant was acquired in 1946 by American. Coast was

producing granulated wool white wool rolls and white batts.

Then one building took care of the processing, selling, and office staffs. Immediately after the purchase of the concern by American, a second plant was erected, office buildings went up, and during the following year, in 1948 the old plant was dismantled.

Today the sprawling facilities

on Arlington Ave., across from Columbia Steel contain three production lines, and various supplemental buildings to the main operation of combining minerals with chemicals to produce mineral wool. Space is also available, and utilized, for a large mineral stockpile.

**Mixing Process**

Preliminary mixing of the materials which go to make up mineral wool is done by a bulldozer, a tractor loader, and three standard dump trucks. Machinery is used because the basic minerals are received from the borax company in a state resembling wet earth, and are about as hard to handle.

From the mixing pile, the blended minerals move to a reverberatory furnace by overhead crane. The furnace is fed by hand, and under intense, reflected heat, bakes the wet minerals into the finished product.

Steam generated by the waste heat boilers through which exhaust gases pass is piped back for use in the manufacturing process. Natural gas, plus burning oils, is used as fuel.

**Plant Added**

In March, 1950, an addition in the shape of a resin manufacturing plant was erected, to produce as much of the sticky

product as required by the Torrance plant.

Construction has also started on a 10,000 square ft. new warehouse addition which is scheduled for completion within 60 days.

From the mineral wool, a wide range of products, including loose granulated house batts and industrial felt, is manufactured. Other products are white wool rolls, resilient sheets, duct wrap ping, and insulating and acoustical quilts.

The normal operating force consists of 100 plant and about 15 supervisory and administrative personnel. In charge of the overall supervision of the concern is John A. Ebbinghouse, 4334 Ranchview rd., Rolling Hills, Palos Verdes Estates, who joined American as a production employee at Wabash, Ill., in 1938.

Oldest insects yet discovered have been brought to Berkeley by two University of California scientists. Preserved in amber for more than 60 million years, the specimens are expected to contribute to man's knowledge of insect evolution.

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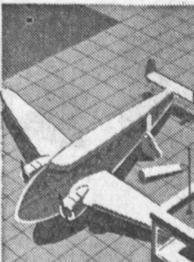
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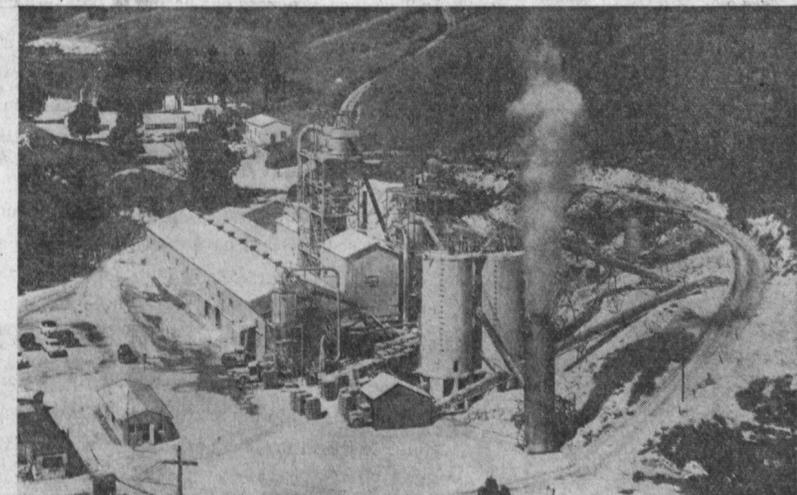
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