



When War Came

Defense plants fueled Garland's growth



Garland Landmark Society Archives

Guiberson Diesel/Continental Motors plant on Forest Lane made tank engines from 1942-1946 during World War II; in 1948, the facility was sold to Kraft Foods Co., which continues to occupy the site.

In September, 1941, the U.S. Defense Plant Corporation announced in Washington that it would immediately build a \$2,400,000 plant in Garland for the manufacture of tank engines by the Guiberson Diesel Engine Co.

The announcement climaxed long months of work by Garland civic leaders to obtain a part of

the growing defense industry for the city of 2,500 as the U. S. prepared for the eventuality of entering a second world war that already involved Europe and much of Asia.

It was the second great success for the city, which a few months earlier had lured Southern
(See HUGE on Page 2)

Landmark Society
Garland

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Huge plant would manufacture diesel engines for light tanks

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Aircraft Corporation to locate its big new plant just north of downtown on what is now Glenbrook Drive near Walnut. That deal had included the city's offer of more than 100 acres of land purchased with more than \$5,000 in donations from businessmen and citizens.

But the Guiberson plant was a huge prize. The DPC would spend \$892,840 on land and construction of the 150,000 square foot plant (on the site now occupied by Kraft Foods on Forest Lane at Shiloh Road), and more than \$1,500,000 for machinery and equipment. It would be owned by the

government, but leased to Guiberson.

The company, which already was manufacturing a successful aircraft engine, would make a diesel version of it to power the Army's M-3 Model light tanks.

The plant was built in about eight months on a priority building plan, finished after the U.S. had entered World War II following the Japanese surprise attack on Pearl Harbor in

December, 1941. By April, 1942, Guiberson was turning out the first of its tank engines. The engines originally were designed for early versions of the M3 Stuart tank, first supplied to the Britain under lend-lease agreements before America entered World War II.

A few months after production had begun, the U.S. War Department cancelled orders for the Guiberson diesel because of failures in field performance, and converted production to gasoline engines.

(Continued on opposite page)



Dallas Morning News story, Sept. 24, 1941

Continental takes over

(Continued from Page 2)

In August, 1942, Continental Motors Corporation took over the Guiberson plant and expanded production of 450-horsepower gasoline engines to power M-3 and M-4 medium tanks. As the plant was converted, Continental planned to hike employment from about 1,000 to 2,500 persons.

When the war ended, the plant was closed in February 1946 and put up for sale by the U.S. War Assets Administration. Its sale was approved that same year to Seiberling Rubber Company, which announced it would produce tires there, but plans were abandoned because of rising costs and strikes at Seiberling. Subsequently, other bids were offered by Dallas Cotton Mills and Luscombe Aircraft Corporation, but came to nothing.

In August, 1948, Kraft Foods' bid of \$611,000 for the plant was accepted by WAA, and the deed to the property was turned over to the company in the next month. Kraft later moved production of many products from its Denison plant to Garland, and began production there early in 1949 with about 500 workers. The plant continues to be operated by Kraft today.

Though Guiberson and Southern Aircraft were the biggest prizes in Garland's industrial growth in the years just preceding and during World War II, those plants spun off smaller defense production facilities, and after the war, guided further growth in manufacturing.

In the late 1930s, the city had brought Byer-Rolnick Company to Garland. The maker of widely advertised Resistol hats, the company continued to grow through the 1970s, and still turns out hats in the same location, though in smaller volume and under new ownership.

In December, 1945, a *Dallas Morning News* story reported that Garland's "major enterprises are expanding plant facilities and personnel. Southern Aircraft soon will be in production of its new twin-engine executive-type plane. Luscombe Aircraft Corporation expects to have 800 people on its payrolls by July, 1946. Craddock Manufacturing Company will increase its plant capacity by adding two new buildings. Ferris Watson Seed Company, which doubled its production of hybrid seed corn in 1945, will double it again in 1946."

The city's population had jumped from around 2,500 in 1940 to an estimated 7,500 by 1946.

The future was bright.

The Museum

200 Museum Plaza
Downtown Garland

The Depot Museum, the Rail Car, and the nearby Lyles House are operated by the Garland Landmark Society, a non-profit and volunteer organization.

Hours of Operation: First and third Saturdays of each month, 10 a.m. until 2 p.m.

Off-hour tours available on request.

**Museum Phone: 972-205-2996
(or) Joann Nelson, 972-564-1054**

Admission: Free

Donations are encouraged



Membership

Memberships are available at these rates:

Individual	\$15
Couple	\$20
Corporate	\$100

To join or renew, enclose payment with this information and mail to:

**Garland Landmark Society
P. O. Box 462232
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S.A. Guiberson Jr., president of Guiberson Diesel Engine Co., standing at right, speaks to crowd at opening of company's new plant in Garland in April, 1942. Tank engines to be produced there are displayed in foreground.

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