

1942

War Production Began

Car production in the United States came to a halt when America entered World War II. Ford Motor Company began building B-24 bombers and other war armaments on their assembly lines. While Ford built B24 bombers, Chrysler produced M4 Sherman Tanks and other war materials. Short on tank engines, Chrysler began putting five car motors on a common shaft to power 7,600 tanks. Chrysler produced these tanks in the midst of expanding its plant and sold \$41million in tank parts to other tank-building contractors.

This massive production increase meant more jobs and more southern African American migrants came to Detroit in search of them. Women were utilized to maintain the production needs of the war by providing manpower in areas where men were no longer available.

¹ B-24 Bomber Engine

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² B-24 Bombers

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³ Sherman Tanks

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Credits:

Cabadas, Joseph P. *River Rouge: Ford's Industrial Colossus*. St. Paul: Motorbooks International, 2004. Print.

Kidder, Warren Benjamin, *Willow Run, Colossus of American Industry*. Michigan: KFT, 1995. Print.

Keywords/Topics:

Work/Jobs

Questions:

1. Why were auto companies able to produce war materials?
2. Why did Chrysler power Sherman tanks with car motors?
3. Why did more African Americans come to Detroit during this time?
4. Why were more women working in the plant?

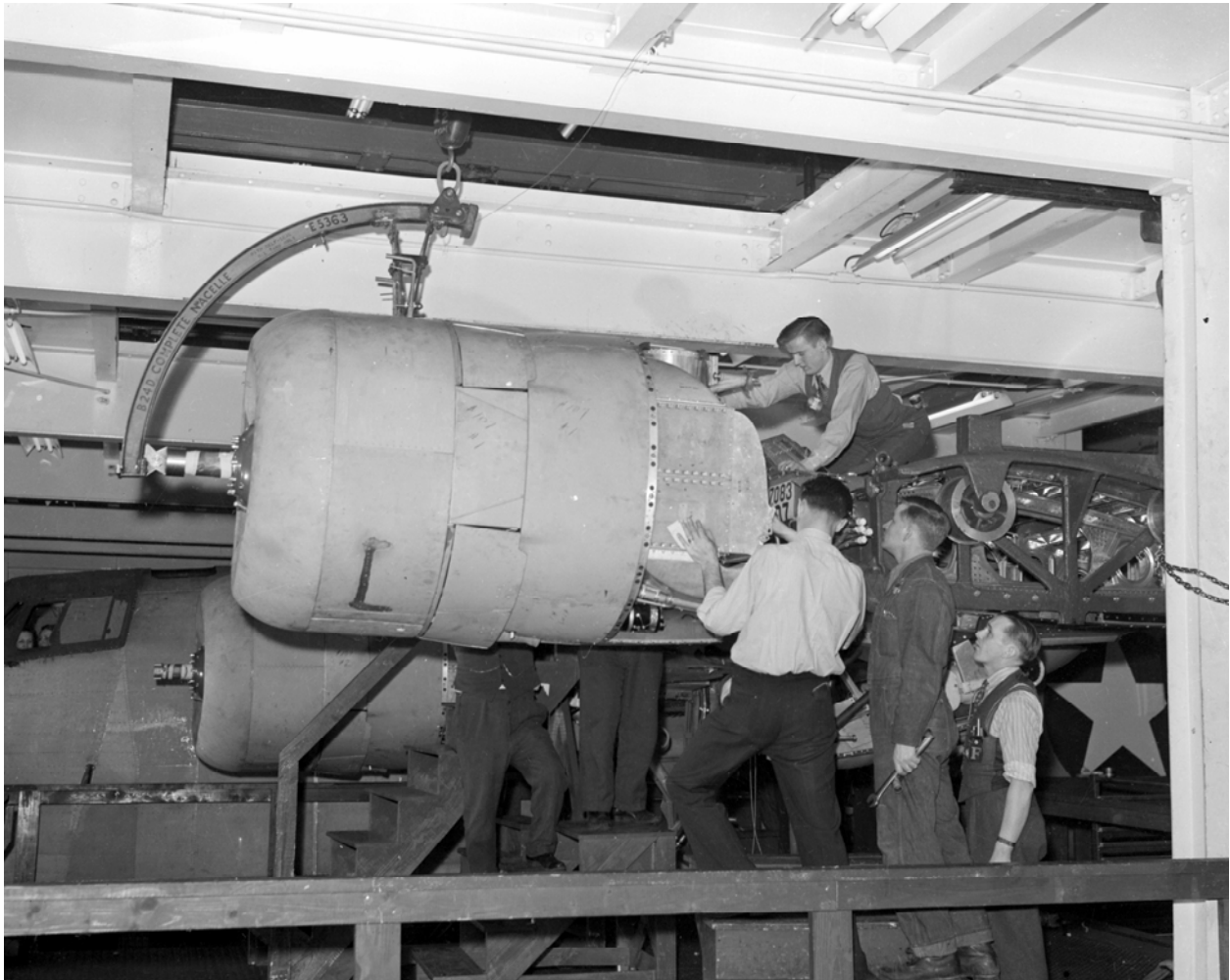
Links to Internet Websites:

<http://eh.net/encyclopedia/article/tassava.WWII>

<http://apps.detnews.com/apps/history/index.php?id=73>

<http://www.imperialclub.com/Yr/1945/46Tanks/Cover.htm>

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Four plant workers are assembling a B-24 engine. The processes of war production were very intricate and thus required a larger work force. This meant more jobs for more people and sparked another migration to Detroit.

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In the Michigan's Willow Run plant, B-24 Liberator Bombers were under construction. The Willow Run Plant was constructed for the sole purpose of war production. Thousands of workers traveled to Ann Arbor and Ypsilanti in search of work only to find slow production and housing shortages. Similar to the Rouge Plant, in Dearborn, Michigan, the Willow Run Plant suffered from overestimating production and employment.

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In the image above, a parade of M-4 Sherman tanks and M-3 Grant tanks are conducting training maneuvers at Ft. Knox, Kentucky. Many of these tanks were constructed at Chrysler War plants.