



1942: The U.S. and British landed in North Africa, the Marines in Guadalcanal — and on the home front, mobilization was everybody's number one mission. Left photo: flight simulators, Altus Air Force Base. Below: left, Lubbock Army Flying School (now Reese Air Force Base); right, construction at Tinker Air Force Base. Tulsa District employees such as Capt. James Lee Hogue, Jr. (top right photo), Appraisal Branch chief, reported for duty in uniform.



Photo courtesy Reese AFB History Office



Photo courtesy Tinker AFB Department of History

bookkeeping, accounting, and procurement. Major construction contracts such as Tinker and the Oklahoma City bomber plant were awarded on a “cost-plus fixed-fee” basis, allowing the contractor to begin construction while negotiations continued.⁸

Maj. Jerra Wilcox and then Capt. James Lee Hogue, Jr., headed a real estate operation organized in August 1942. In their view, delay in acquiring land for a war project was not acceptable. They were aided by the Second War Powers Act, which authorized blanket condemnation action to obtain immediate possession. Where the appraisal price was acceptable to an owner, he could complete the sale and have his tract withdrawn from the condemnation procedure. Many counties and cities, seizing the opportunity for a perhaps-permanent boost to their economies, donated land to the government for installations.

In some cases, priority procurement requests were overridden, without explanation, by requests from the Manhattan Engineer District in Los Alamos, New Mexico. The mission of the super-secret special Manhattan Corps District — named after the Corps office in New York — is now well known, having been especially created in August 1942 as part of the project to build the atomic bomb. But it wasn't until that first A-bomb was dropped on Hiroshima, Japan, in August 1945 that the Southwestern Division learned why its priorities had been overridden.⁹