



The fires

OF WORLD WAR II FADED

into the coldness of a postwar world. The United States was preoccupied with rebuilding a peacetime economy. In fact, the guns-versus-butter ratio going into 1950 at the Tulsa District was a typical 1:17. That meant that \$1 million was being spent on military construction compared to every \$17 million for civil works.²

One project, construction of the Veterans Administration Hospital at Bonham, Texas, was well underway when, on June 25, 1950, North Korean troops crossed the 28th parallel in a surprise invasion of South Korea. President Truman lost no time in committing U.S. troops to the defense of South Korea.

The U.S., however, was not prepared to wage a conventional war in Korea, and the sudden onset of the conflict there produced stark changes in the Corps. The military workload in the Tulsa District once again climbed in response to the nation's buildup for still another war.

By the time of the outbreak, most of the District military installations had been deactivated or disposed of. Two major facilities remained: Fort Sill, an artillery school in southwestern Oklahoma, and Tinker Field, the huge Midwest City Air Force materiel and maintenance depot and the largest industrial employer in Oklahoma since World War II.

When the renewed military action forced reactivation, Tulsa workers first were required to make expansions and improvements at Fort Sill and Tinker. In addition, the District reactivated Altus, Amarillo, Ardmore, and Vance Air Force Bases; Camp Gruber; Sheppard and Perrin Fields; and Lone Star, Longhorn, Red River, and Pantex Arsenals. It also built aircraft warning and control stations in eastern and central Oklahoma.

Constructing a military base is like building a specialized city. Thus, the construction work included living quarters, medical facilities, chapels, roads, warehouses — and airport runways, taxiways, aprons, and underground shelters.

By 1950 the District's military work had dropped to about \$1 million a year; by 1954 it had climbed back to more than \$20 million. Between 1950 and 1954, the District awarded construction contracts for almost \$150 million — about \$100 million of that military and \$50 million in civil works. Between 1950 and 1959, the Tulsa District had been responsible for \$235 million in construction.³

***The business of barracks,
buildings, paving, pouring
continued in the post-war
world of the Tulsa District.***

