

HISTORIAN'S CORNER –
July 2004 – 1st Edition of MARTIN STAR
by Matt Grogan

To commemorate Memorial Day 2004, I thought an appropriate piece of Lockheed Martin history might be the first edition of the MARTIN STAR (Vol 1, No. 1, dated February 1942). My thanks to Frank Gessaman, who worked at GLM/Baltimore and Martin Marietta/Denver from 1940 to 1982, for providing this edition. It gave me insight into what must have been an uncertain time at best, and probably a frightening experience for many Americans. We had just declared war against the Axis powers and things looked bleak in the light of the enemy's early successes in both the European and Pacific theaters.

The tone of this first MARTIN STAR publication was sober. The cover showed a soldier with a rifle and a Navy Petty Officer, in uniform, on either side of a man dressed in Martin coveralls, standing beside the tail of a B-26. This sober tone was further emphasized on page 2 in the first sentence of "A Message from the Chief," Glenn L. Martin: "It is unfortunate that this prideful magazine, conceived in days of peace, has to be born under the dark clouds of war." He went on to say, "America must have air power – second to none. Nothing is more important, not only to our own country, but to world civilization. To us and a few companies like us, America and the world's free people look for that might." He finished with: "Ours is a responsibility equal to that of the soldier at the front, the sailor on the seas, and the combat pilot above the clouds." These words seem as true today as 62 years ago.

Under the masthead on the third page, the editor (Avery McBee) wrote: "It is essential that we preserve our personal ties. It is necessary that we know what is going on. It is important that we understand the common aims so that our individual contributions, large or small may be given full effect. It is to this end THE MARTIN STAR is dedicated, and so it will be directed in future months and years." He concluded with: "We are asked, through the Payroll Allotment Plan, to pledge every cent we can spare through purchase of Defense Savings Bonds. We are not giving anything, we are lending to the best creditor in the world at good interest. We can only lose if we lose our freedom first."

A following article entitled "Now We Have Reached Our Full Growth," tells of the steps taken by GLM to increase the production of the B-26 Marauder medium bomber, the Maryland 167F bombers for the French and British, the PBM-1 flying

boats for the Navy, and the Martin power operated gun turrets, even before the national emergency was declared by President Roosevelt. It points out that all of this effort required trained people and craftsmen, who were in short supply, how tooling had to be simplified, an in-plant training system developed, an adequate system of roads serving the plants prepared, low-cost housing built (see my [July, 2004] article), and all the loose ends tied together. The article ends with: "Each day sees new bombers emerge from the big final assembly doors of both Middle River Plants. The rate will increase rapidly from now on. Martin is rolling."

On the lighter side, a short paragraph reported that "three girls in Engineering have launched a new vogue" by giving up silk stockings and now come to work "... wearing fancy cotton lisle hosiery." Another paragraph entitled "Cherchez La Femme!" stated that masculine personal appearance in the factory had suddenly brightened. "Must be the women," says one [of the foremen]. "Ever since girls started working in the factories the men dress better, shave oftener, and resort to sulfurous language less frequently."

The final article in this first MARTIN STAR, titled "Guardians of Our Safety" written by E. A. Schurman, Chief of Plant Protection, contains a sentence that also captured the seriousness of the moment: "...we at Martin are vital to the nation's welfare, now as never before. We must maintain constant vigil for hazards to personnel or equipment which might be caused by a traitor among us; for the loss of any man-power or production facilities during our National Emergency would reflect against us all."

Anyone who would like to read the original Vol. 1, No. 1, please give me a call.

[Editor's Note (2022): Current web link to PDF copy:
https://b26.com/page/the_martin_star.htm*]*