

Aircraft Production During World War II: Boeing Aircraft of Canada

John G. Nellist

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As a teenager, Jack Nellist was given the opportunity to help build two World War II aircraft, an experience he will never forget. In 1941, a new plant was completed on Sea Island in Vancouver, B.C., for the production of the Consolidated Catalina PBY-5 flying boat. Boeing Aircraft of Canada had received a contract from Consolidated Aircraft Co. of San Diego, designers of the plane, to build the plane in Canada. The first Catalina built by Boeing Canada rolled out of the factory on July 27, 1942. The aircraft was christened Athlone in a colorful ceremony on the tarmac. The Catalina rolled down the ramp into the Fraser River amid the cheers of seven thousand workers. Jack had been building model airplanes since the age of ten. In 1944, after completing an Aeronautical Drafting course, he decided to apply for a job at Boeing Aircraft. He was only sixteen years old, with no previous experience as a draftsman. After an interview, he was told to report for work the next day at the Sea Island plant. In Aircraft Production During World War II, he shares a firsthand account of the craft of building the airplanes that were so critical to success during World War II.



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