

Stolen Designs Were for New Army Bomber

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Plans for World's Largest Warplane Guarded After Recovery on West Coast

WASHINGTON, Jan. 14 (AP).—The Army airplane plans which recently were stolen, but recovered, were for a new bomber which will be the world's largest, it was learned authoritatively tonight.

The plane itself, a craft of more than seventy tons, believed capable of a round trip, non-stop Atlantic flight, is nearing completion at the Santa Monica, Calif., plant of the Douglas Aircraft Company, and will be given its first tests next summer.

The fact that plans for an Army plane had been stolen but recovered by Federal Bureau of Investigation agents was disclosed last week with publication of testimony by J. Edgar Hoover, chief of the bureau, to a Congressional committee.

Mr. Hoover did not identify the plane, but authoritative sources said it was this huge experimental bomber, on which Air Corps and commercial engineers have been working for eighteen months. At least one foreign government was said to be interested in obtaining the stolen designs.

200-Foot Wing Spread

Details of the experimental craft are still guarded, but aviation men understand it has a wing spread of more than 200 feet, and is equipped with new model high-powered motors which promise a range of 6,000 or possibly 7,000 miles.

Its reported weight of more than seventy tons compared with 41½ tons for the Atlantic Clipper, which can carry forty-five passengers. Its wing spread compares with 138 feet for the Douglas DC-4, huge air liner first tried out last summer and capable of carrying forty-two passengers and a crew of five.

Any Army plane now in service would be dwarfed by the new ship. The Air Corps' largest regular service craft weighs seventeen tons, although it has a single thirty-two-ton plane, the B-15, in service on an experimental basis.

Mr. Hoover's disclosure of the stolen plans was in support of the Administration's emergency defense funds, which included provision for extra F. B. I. operatives. He said proper safeguards had not been taken to prevent their theft.

Cites Inadequate Protection

As one instance of the lack of "adequate" plant protection measures where military material is being produced, Mr. Hoover told a House appropriations subcommittee that "in one of the great airplane factories on the west coast, plans for one of the Army bombers were stolen."

"We were successful in locating the man who stole them and in having the plans returned," he added.

"The procedure under which those plans were given out each day was indicative of the lack of a proper protection program in that factory. In the morning the draftsmen would secure plans from the foreman. No inquiry was made as to their issuance and no record was kept of the plans given out. There were no checks as to who had the plans or where they were. We have taken steps to have that sort of thing corrected."

Draftsman Sentenced

Edward William McDonough, a draftsman in the Douglas aircraft plant, pleaded *nole contendere* on Dec. 3 before Federal Judge Harry A. Holzner in Los Angeles to a charge of stealing secret airplane plans, and was sentenced to six months in prison. McDonough said he prepared the drawings himself and because he was proud of them took them with him when he lost his job because of domestic difficulties. Judge Holzner termed the defendant "merely foolhardy," but said his actions might have led to national injury.

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