

C O P Y

CONSOLIDATED VULTEE AIRCRAFT CORPORATION

October 21, 1946

Subject: XA-44 (XB-53) Airplane
Contract W33-038 ac-7674
Armament Installation

To: Commanding General
Air Materiel Command
Wright Field
Dayton, Ohio

Attention: Engineering Division
Bombardment Branch
TSEOA-2

1. This letter will confirm conference this date between Colonel H. E. Warden, Mr. K. N. Scholes of AMC and R. C. Sebold, E. H. Watts and O. H. Snyder of Consolidated Vultee Aircraft Corporation.

2. In brief review, the subject contract was initiated for the procurement of three (3) XB-46 airplanes. During the progress of the contract, our Fort Worth Division prepared a preliminary design study of the XA-44 airplane. The preliminary design study was submitted to AMC for their comments and it was found that the airplane represented an advance type configuration with excellent performance characteristics and appeared to be a very potential weapon. The AMC decided in October 1945 to cancel procurement of the SB-46 airplane and to substitute therefor the procurement of XA-44 model airplanes. Subsequent discussions led to the cancellation of two XB-46 airplanes and the substitution therefor of two XA-44 airplanes. As development of the XA-44 design progressed, the AMC decided to convert this type of airplane to a light bomber. At approximately this same period, a circular proposal was issued requesting bids on a light bombardment aircraft to meet published military characteristics. The XA-44 design, re-designated the XB-53, was submitted in response to the circular proposal, however, since this Corporation could not at that time convert the model to meet all military characteristics, especially defensive armament features, no award was made to us on the light bomber competition. Shortly after an award was made on the light bomber competition, we were requested to submit a quotation covering the modification of the XA-44 design to comply fully with the light bomber military characteristics.

3. This Corporation has exhausted every effort in the design of defensive armament which will meet the military characteristics and will perform satisfactorily on the XB-53 airplane. It has been concluded by this Corporation in agreement with AMC's Engineering Division, that the present development of defensive armament has not kept pace with the development of high performance airplanes reaching a Mach number of .9, and that any

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defensive armament installation developed to date or which can be developed within the foreseeable future will completely destroy the aerodynamic advancement which has been accomplished in this design. It is therefore our recommendation that the development of this aircraft proceed without the installation of defensive armament.

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O. H. Snyder
Dayton Representative

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