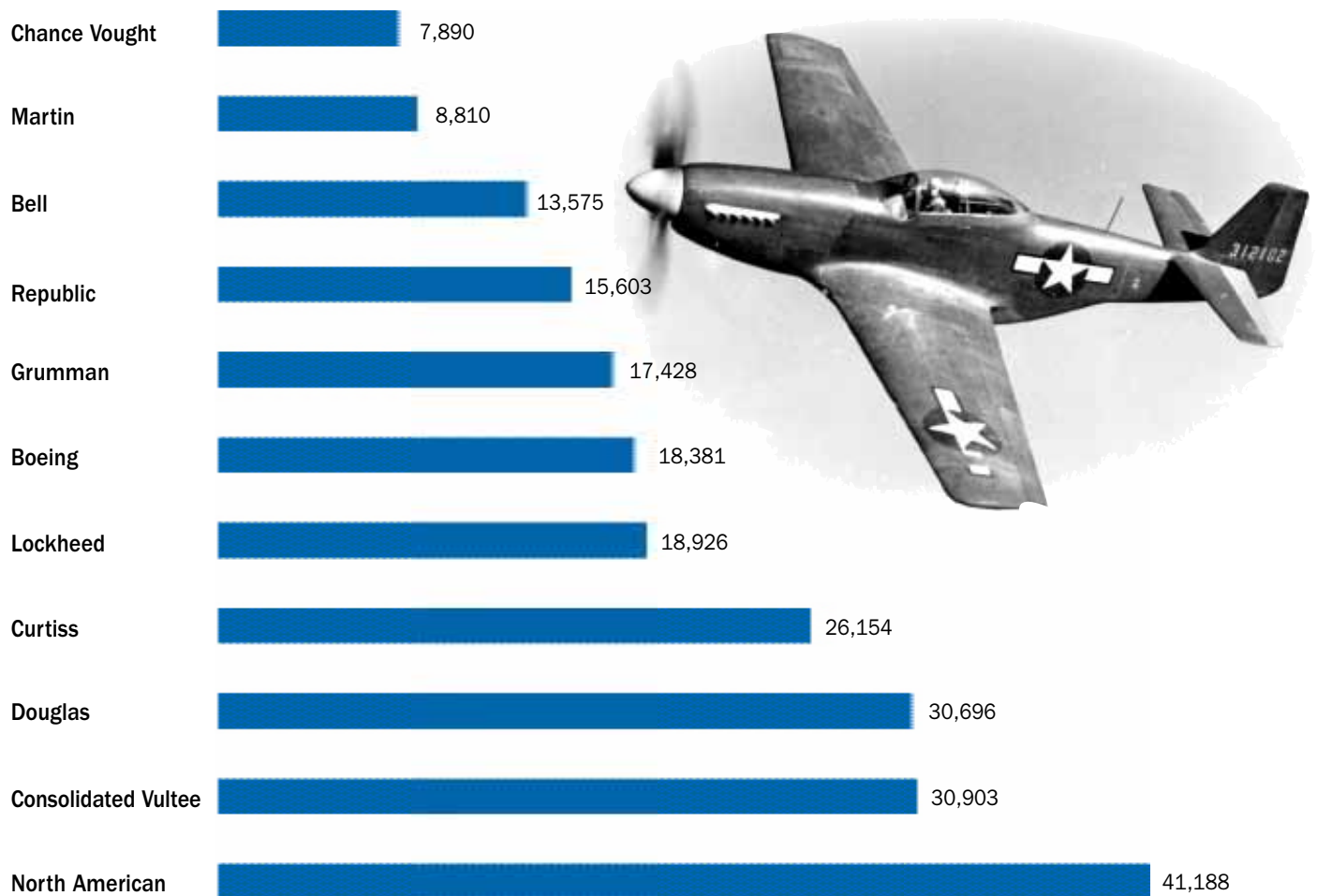# Who Built the Airplanes?

In World War II, US plants churned out nearly 300,000 military airplanes, at a cost of $45 billion. More than half—158,880—went to the Army Air Forces. The rest went to the Navy, Marine Corps, and Allies. Who built all of these aircraft? In popular imaginings, US automakers and other civilian industries converted to war production and led the way. In reality, the burden was carried by aircraft houses established in the prewar period. The top 11 such airframers (see chart) built a huge 77 percent of all airplanes. The existence of this large aircraft base was the reason US air forces could expand rapidly.

Eleven Prodigious World War II Aircraft Companies

Company	Aircraft Built
Chance Vought	7,890
Martin	8,810
Bell	13,575
Republic	15,603
Grumman	17,428
Boeing	18,381
Lockheed	18,926
Curtiss	26,154
Douglas	30,696
Consolidated Vultee	30,903
North American	41,188

Source: *A History of the United States Air Force 1907-1957,* by Alfred Goldberg, ed., p. 91.