

# Ryan Aeronautical



## Intro

The Teledyne-Ryan facility played an important role in San Diego aviation history. Established by T. Claude Ryan in 1935 on a 10-acre site on the south central part of the airport along North Harbor Drive, the facility has a long aviation history, beginning as a flight school and evolving into an aircraft manufacturing facility containing offices, aircraft hangars and engineering buildings. At this site, many different kinds of aircraft were manufactured during the company's period of operations. Initially, the aircraft were made by hand, but as technologies improved, the assembly-line was used to build airplanes during World War II. The company made important contributions to the nation's war efforts during World War II, through the Korean War and into the Cold War.

The Ryan Aeronautical District contains 47 buildings, of which 17 are considered historically significant resources for their contribution to aircraft manufacturing from 1939 to 1969 at Lindbergh Field, and are also considered important for their industrial architecture during the period.

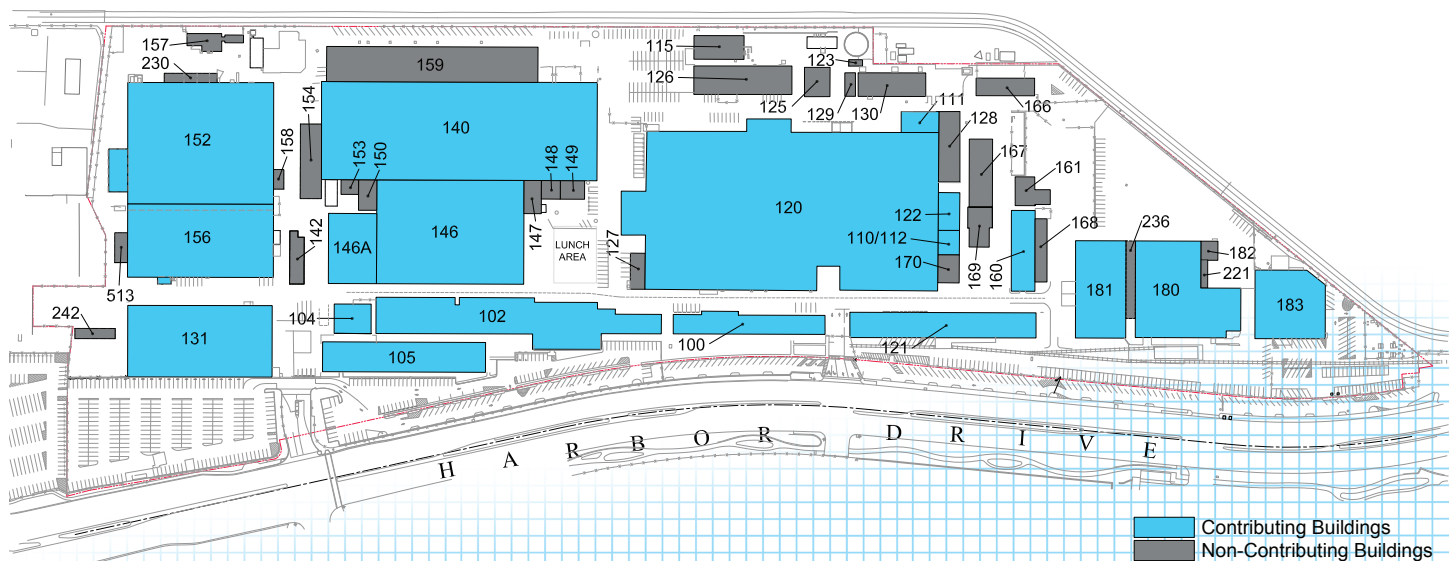


*Historic photograph of the Ryan Aeronautical Hangar at its former location c. 1936.*

From URS Corporation. 2009. Appendix B. Cultural Resources Assessment Report. 2701 North Harbor Drive Demolition Project Draft EIR (UPD #83356-EIR-713). April

## Site Map of Ryan Aeronautical Historic District

The sitemap below shows the historic Ryan Aeronautical site. The buildings that contribute to the historic district are depicted in blue.



## Historical Overview

T. Claude Ryan established the Ryan Flying Company in the early years of the twentieth century in San Diego. The Ryan Flying Company changed its name to Ryan Airlines, Inc. when it was reorganized in 1924 to begin operating the first year-round, scheduled airline service in the United States from Dutch Flats Airfield (URS Corporation, 2009). Around the same time, in the mid-1920s, Ryan entered the aircraft manufacturing business with partner Frank Mahoney and created the Ryan M-1 Monoplane, which became one of the best-known air mail carriers in the country. A modified Ryan Monoplane became the Spirit of St. Louis, the plane Charles Lindbergh flew from New York to Paris in May 1927 on the first solo flight across the Atlantic Ocean. Ryan sold the company to Mahoney in 1926 and established the Ryan Aeronautical Corporation for the sale and manufacture of aircraft engines. The company changed its name to the Ryan Aeronautical Company in 1934.



*Ryan Navion planes, manufactured for the US Air Force, rolling off the final assembly line.*

Ryan Aeronautical Company Annual Report, 1949.

Ryan Aeronautical Company signed a 50-year lease, starting in 1939, on land at the southeastern edge of Lindbergh Field along North Harbor Drive. Three buildings from the site of the previous company were relocated to this new location. The Ryan plant was one of several aircraft manufacturers located at Lindbergh Field that contributed to the nation's war effort in the 1940s. At peak wartime production, the Ryan plant had 8,500 employees and annual production exceeded \$55 million. Following the war, workforce was reduced to 1,200 and annual production to \$8 million (URS Corporation, 2009).



*A Ryan Q-2C target missile being launched from a ground station with rocket assist.*

Ryan Aeronautical Company Annual Report, 1960.

During the Korean conflict, Ryan Aeronautical played an important role by providing aircraft navigation and positioning equipment, including helicopter hovering devices, altimeters, and remote sensors (URS Corporation, 2009).

The company continued its longstanding relationship with the United States military when, in 1947, it was awarded a contract by the Navy to research the feasibility of reaction controls for jet aircraft. With jet engines and reaction controls handled by remote control, a Ryan vertical test rig lifted itself off the ground for the first time in 1950. In 1953, the Air Force awarded Ryan a contract to design and build two manned vertical takeoff jet research planes, and, two years later, the Ryan X-13 Vertijet was constructed. In the 1960s, Ryan continued target drone and electronic systems production and vertical takeoff and landing research (URS Corporation, 2009).

In 1969, the company was sold for \$128 million to Teledyne Inc. and became known as Teledyne-Ryan Aeronautical Company (TDY Industries). T. Claude Ryan remained with the company as chairman until his death in 1982. In 1996, TDY Industries merged with Allegheny Ludlum Corporation, and then later became a subsidiary of that company. In 1999, Northrop Grumman Corporation acquired TDY Industries from Allegheny and relocated the plant to a site in Rancho Bernardo, California, leaving the former plant site vacant.

## T. Claude Ryan

T. Claude Ryan was born in Parsons, Kansas in 1898 but moved with his family to Orange, California in 1912. Ryan began a lifelong relationship with the aviation industry when, around the age of 19, he enrolled at the American School of Aviation in Los Angeles. In 1919 Ryan began studying mechanical engineering at Oregon State College. While in school, he applied to the Army for aviation cadet training and was accepted, but left the Army by January 1922 in hopes of flying as a civilian (National Aviation Hall of Fame, 2009). Ryan moved to San Diego, where he began giving airplane rides and flying instructions. He soon established the Ryan Flying Company at the Dutch Flats Airfield in San Diego, which later became Ryan Airport.



*T. Claude Ryan*

Ryan Aeronautical Company Annual Report, 1951.

Ryan soon expanded his aeronautical enterprises to include flying school, flying service, and an airport manufacturing company. He was also instrumental in the development of the aviation industry in San Diego. In 1928, he helped to establish Lindbergh Field, San Diego's nascent municipal airport. In

1939, Ryan established a manufacturing site on airport grounds, which became the headquarters for Ryan Aeronautical Company.

## For More Information

This brochure was prepared by the Port of San Diego to commemorate the Ryan Aeronautical facility contribution to San Diego's aviation history. Ryan Aeronautical operated on State Tidelands from the 1930's to 1990's. For more information and photos, please visit [www.portofsandiego.org/ryanaero](http://www.portofsandiego.org/ryanaero). For more information on the Port of San Diego's Teledyne Ryan (TDY) site demolition project, please visit

[www.portofsandiego.org/tdy-site-demolition.html](http://www.portofsandiego.org/tdy-site-demolition.html)