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**The Spruce Goose - Part I**

**Lead: Of all the problems the Allies faced in the summer of 1942, none was more threatening than unrestrained submarine warfare. German U-boats were sinking transport ships faster than they could be built.**

**Tag: *A Moment in Time* with Dan Roberts.**

**Content: Fresh challenges seemed to inspire Howard Robard Hughes, Jr.. At the age of 17 he took control of the Hughes Tool Company upon the death of his father. This provided the financial base for Howard's other interests. In 1926 he migrated to**

**Hollywood where over the years he produced numerous motion pictures and premiered actors such as Jean Harlow and Jane Russell. Hughes eventually owned and later sold RKO Pictures.**

**His greatest love, however, was flying, and until 1960 when forced by federal anti-trust regulators to sell it, he owned 78% of Trans World Airlines. Part of his work at Hughes Aircraft Company was the construction of experimental airplanes and in 1942 he tackled the Allies' problem of shipping on oceans bristling with deadly German submarines. His solution was a gigantic flying boat.**

**The idea originated with Henry J. Kaiser, the Oakland, California-based industrialist, many of whose ships were being sent to the bottom. He convinced a reluctant Congress that a fleet of flying transports could supplement if not take the place of surface transportation. Kaiser persuaded Hughes to take up the challenge and, after some hesitation, Howard and his associates began design work. For some time he had been trying to convince the Army he could build a bomber using Duramold, a process by which the airplane's parts would be constructed out of plywood saturated with synthetic glue to make it strong and waterproof. By the fall of 1942, Hughes had designed a wooden transport aircraft that could carry a**

**fully-loaded Sherman Tank. The Spruce Goose was born. Next time: Howard Hughes' folly.**

**At the University of Richmond, this is Dan Roberts.**

**Resources**

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**Drosnin, Michael. *Citizen Hughes*. New York, NY: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1985.**

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