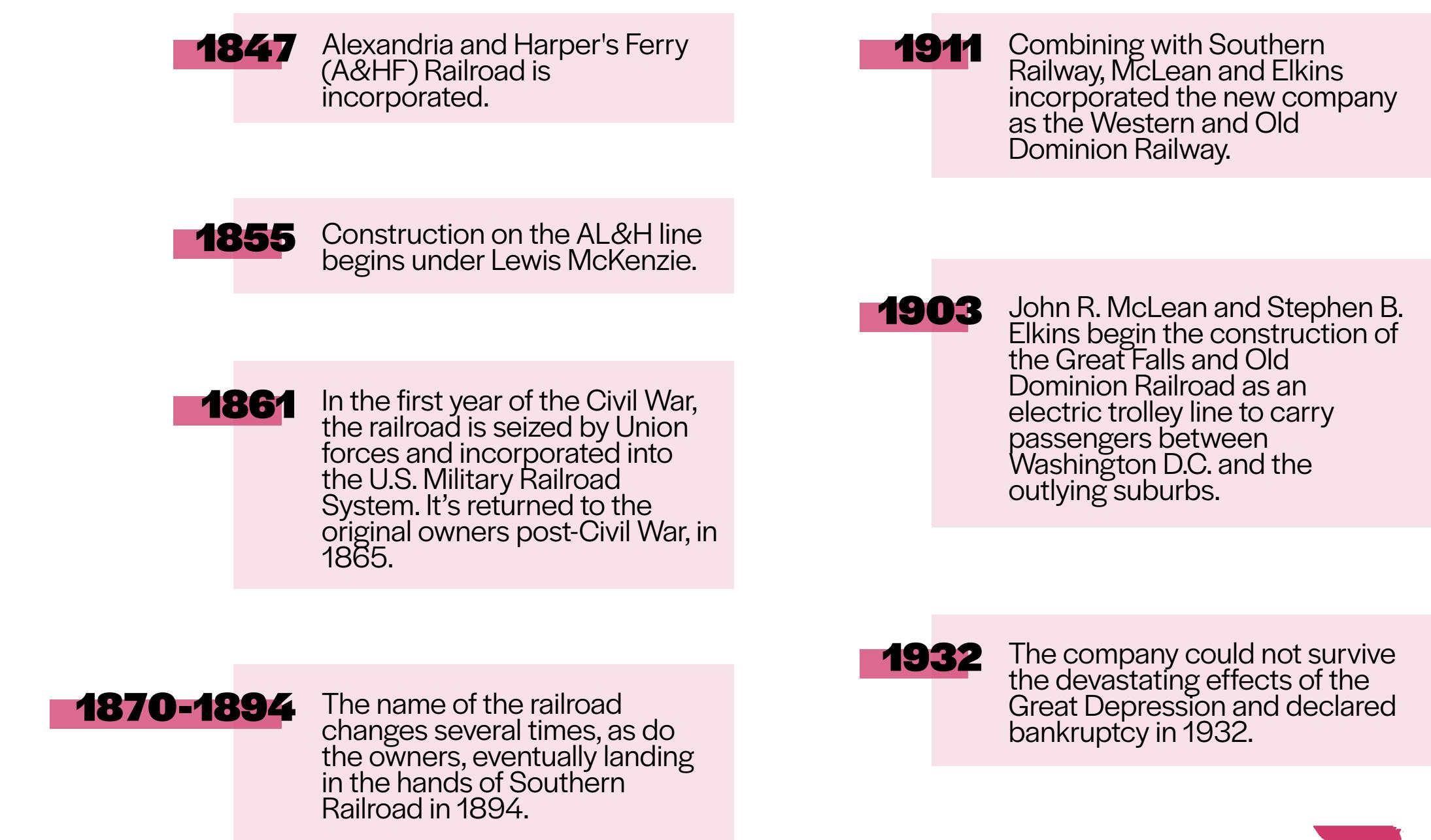
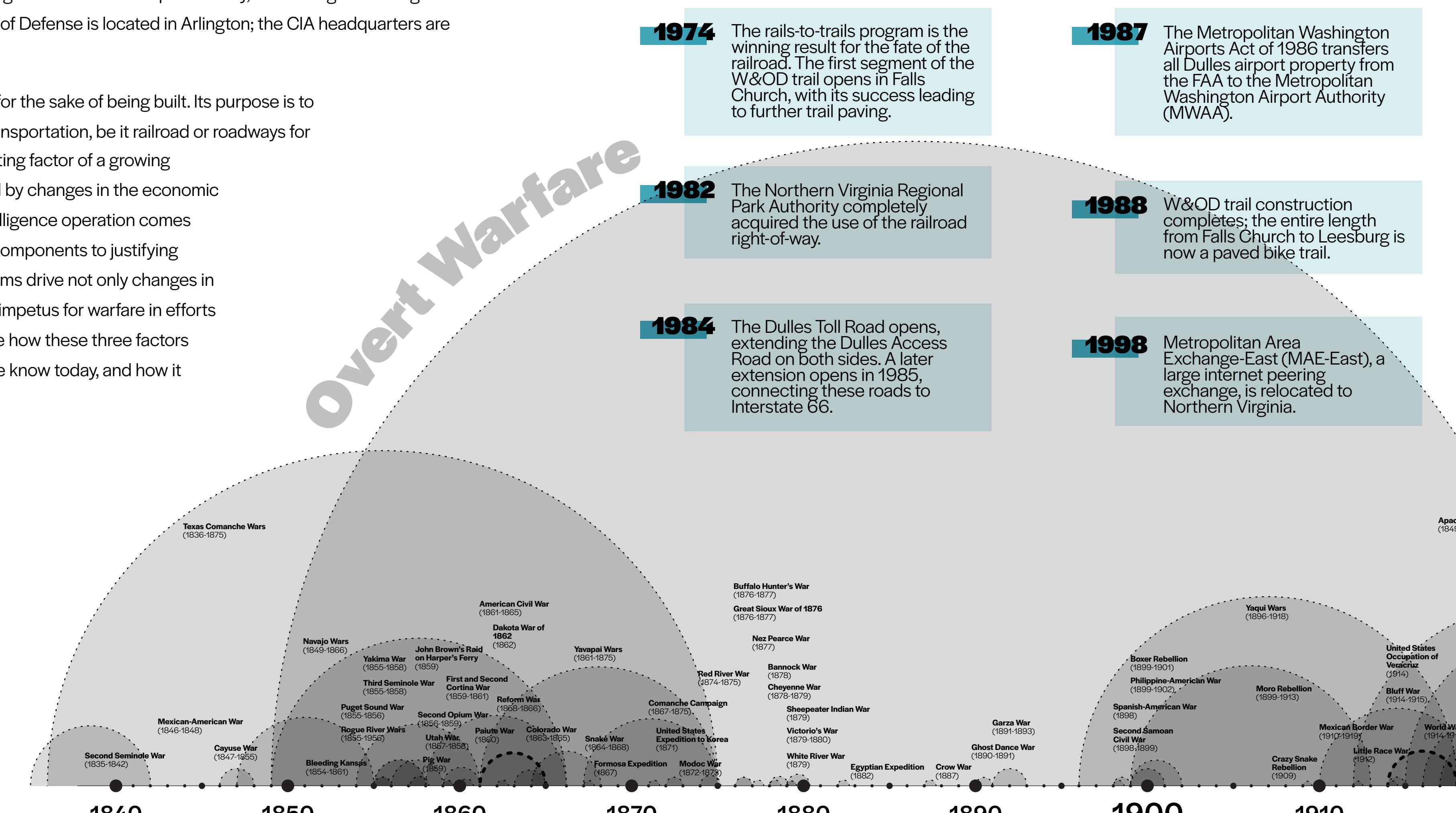


# **Powering Up in Northern Virginia: Transportation, Military, and Energy**

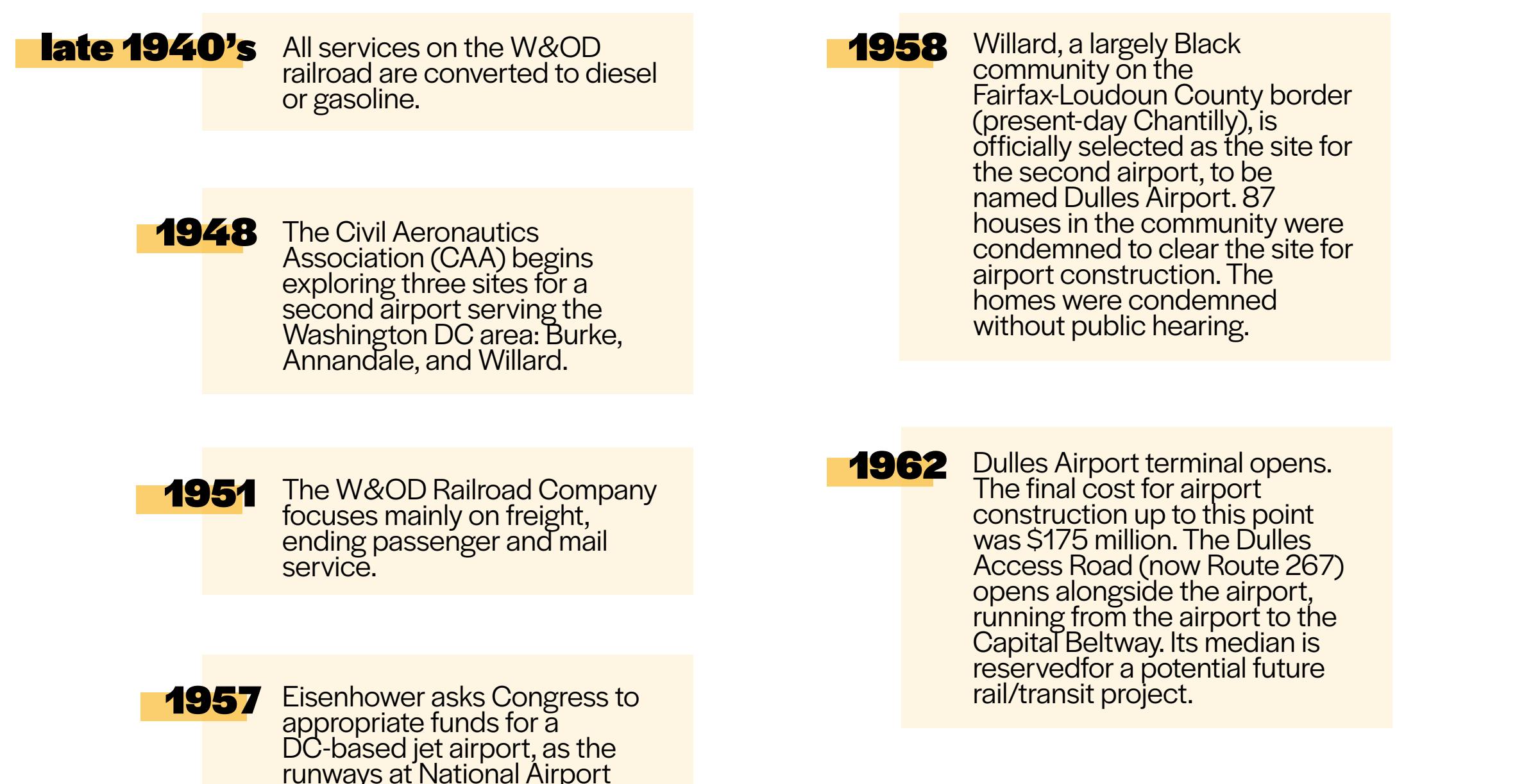
# Ryan Denker, Miranda Lao, Yimin Wu

This timeline explores the connections between the the buildup of United States military and intelligence capacity and transportation infrastructure development in Northern Virginia from 1840 to the present day, with the backdrop of changes in energy regimes. Northern Virginia is notable for its proximity to Washington DC, the seat of federal power while simultaneously being outside of it. In the present day, the Pentagon building that serves as the headquarters of the Department of Defense is located in Arlington; the CIA headquarters are located in the suburbs of Mclean.

Transportation infrastructure is rarely built just for the sake of being built. Its purpose connect people to places. Adding modes of transportation, be it railroad or roadways automobiles, is expensive, requiring the motivating factor of a growing population base, a factor that itself is motivated by changes in the economic opportunities of a region. With each war or intelligence operation comes additional funding and staffing, the two major components to justifying infrastructure buildout. Shifts in energy paradigms drive not only changes in transportation infrastructure, but also serve as impetus for warfare in efforts to secure cheap access for the country. We see how these three factors come together to build the Northern Virginia we know today, and how it might shape the Northern Virginia of tomorrow.



**In the 19th century**, coal was the dominant energy source. In the United States, much of the coal was produced domestically, primarily in Pennsylvania and the broader Appalachian region. At this time, many railroads began as transportation systems for coal mining companies to transport the energy source from mine to city. As coal output grew, so too did the railroad, mining, and steel production industries. Energy and production were not the only things expanding. The latter part of the 19th century saw a great deal of warfare between American settlers and indigenous peoples in efforts to secure sovereignty over the land. Fueled by gold and silver rushes, many Americans rushed westward, and in doing so expanded the edges of US empire.



**Several events in the first part of the the 20th century** reconfigured industry and infrastructure in the United States. World War II at the end of 1941 galvanized the American economy, which was ripe for restructuring following the Great Depression. Government spending reached 67% of U.S. capital investment. This was a tremendous expansion of various industries for the sake of the military, including that of the automobile industry. The Ford Motor Company received massive contracts for military vehicles. Around the same time, the utility of a road system for moving military vehicles became apparent. The election of Franklin D. Roosevelt as president, and a promise of individual exploration and freedom captured the imaginations of the everyday citizen. Massive government spending on infrastructure, with militarization of infrastructure and economy, all bolstered by technological developments. The invention and deployment of the nuclear bomb in 1945 heralded an era of struggle for global hegemony between US-led capitalist order and Soviet Union-led communist order.

