

Frank Moonert is not on the Ryan staff, but nonetheless he certainly rates as a member of the Ryan company family because of his close association with everyone of us in his position as Air Corps Representative here.

When Frank T. Moonert was born in Cincinnati, (1902) his dad decided it would be mighty fine to have a son to carry on in the Moonert disinfectant manufacturing business. However, as time has proved, he for got to anticipate the advent of the airplane and the affect it was going to have on his promising son Frank. Since this lad was the only son in the family, this was very unfortunate. From his high school years through two years of Junior College, the younger Moonert expressed an intense interest in airplanes, to the exclusion of all else. The family lived in Dayton when F.T. finished his college career, and it was only natural that he should proceed to get himself a job with the Air Corps at McCook's Field in Dayton, Ohio.

The Air Corps didn't think he had enough experience to start as a mechanic so they made him a messenger boy. But, like Horatio Alger, he surmounted this humble start to become a mechanic's helper after eight months on Uncle Sam's payroll. In another short year he had risen in the ranks to crew chief. The next step was to the status of instrument repair man and flight test observer. He lived through several years of going up with all the nice new untried airplanes that the Army could find to flight test. Although a number of mishaps and forced landings took place during this period, Frank says that his longevity is due entirely to a profound faith in airplanes. He says that a motor knows whether or not you believe in it. However, several years before this he and Harvey Bowlus (the same Bowlus who manufactures gliders now and years ago was with the Ryan organization) built themselves a glider. F.T. made a bad landing in this and broke an arm. After all, he says, it didn't have a motor for him to have faith in.

In 1926 Moonert took on the limited responsibilities of assistant traffic manager for the newly formed Florida Airways, Inc. They were flying Ford "Tin Goose" airplanes and all went reasonably well until the big wind came in '26. After the storm they hurried out to the airport to look after the welfare of the ships but it wasn't necessary. The "Tin Geese", all three, looked like someone had played shinny with them. Thus ended the Florida Airways and brother Moonert went back to his Air Corps.

In 1929 he was transferred to the Procurement Section as an Air Corps Inspector and stationed at the Curtiss Airplane Company in Buffalo, Here, he also did the Army inspecting on Consolidated airplanes (at that time made in Buffalo), In 1929 Henry Ford decided to warm up the public to aviation with his now famous good-will tours.

Preparatory to this, Army Lieutenant Hutchinson, Eddie Stinson, Ben Jacobson (now in the office of Production Management, Moonert and Ford's publicity man Leroy Pallatier, started out on a route making tour. They were flying an Army D.H. and Stinson's Junkers. They left St. Joseph for Kansas City after making preliminary arrangements to have the Kansas City field lighted with a smudge pot at each of its four corners. It seems that everyone in Kansas City decided to burn their trash that night. After using up all of their gas trying to decide which smudges marked the airport they finally picked out four likely looking ones and landed but not on the airport. Frank swears that the field they came down on was actually a better one than the airport.

In 1935, Moonert was transferred to the new Consolidated plant, here in San Diego. He carried on the grief-laden duties of an Army Inspector there until 1937 when he was transferred to the North American plant at Inglewood, CA. When Ryan started building

airplanes in a big way, the Army sent F.T. down to us to perform the seldom appreciated, but highly beneficent, rites of Air Corps Representative. Editorially, we'll add that Frank is certainly appreciated around here and has helped us out of some spots.

1937

CONSOLIDATED will lose a loyal friend and North American Aviation will gain one when, Francis T. (Frank) Moonert, Army Representative, leaves our ranks on or about May 17, to become assistant to Major Hurd, Army Representative of the latter company. Frank (who considers "Francis" a fighting word) was born in Cincinnati, Ohio, where he received his early schooling. In 1919, he graduated from the University of Dayton, as a Structural Engineer. Having always been interested in flying, he attempted to enter the aviation division at McCook Field in an engineering capacity, but his efforts were in vain. Nothing daunted, he obtained the job of messenger boy in the service and began a steady upward climb. He studied aeronautical engineering as applied to engine and airplane design and, in succession, became Assistant Mechanic, Mechanic, Crew Chief and Flight Test Observer. Finally, in 1929, he was appointed Army Inspector and sent to Consolidated Aircraft Corporation at Buffalo, where he supervised the O-19 airplanes. At the conclusion of this assignment, he was transferred to the Curtiss Aeroplane & Motor Corporation, serving there until 1934.

1939

WELCOME BACK

We welcome back to Consolidated, Francis T. Moonert, Principal Inspector of the Army Procurement Division. Frank Moonert, as he is known to his many friends at Consolidated, was a senior inspector here for the Army until early in 1937 when he was transferred to North American Aviation as assistant to Major Hurd, Army representative of the latter company. Moonert was born in Cincinnati, Ohio, and in 1919 graduated from the Univ. of Dayton as a structural engineer. His early association with Consolidated was in 1929 when he supervised the O-19 airplanes. At the conclusion of this contract he was assigned to the Curtiss Airplanes and Motor Corp., serving there until 1934. Then he was again assigned for inspection work at Consolidated during the production of the P-30s, which later were designated as PB2s. In following thru on this work he came to California with Consolidated in 1935. During his recent absence from Consolidated, Moonert was advanced from Senior to Principal Inspector, the position he now holds. His duties in San Diego this time are much enlarged as he will not only oversee the procurement inspection phases of our own Army contract work, but will be in charge of inspection of Army procurements from Solar Aircraft and Ryan Aeronautical as well. Congratulations on your advancement, Moonert, and welcome back to Consolidated for a long stay!