



Jerome C. Hunsaker, Captain, USNR

Jerome Clarke Hunsaker was born in Creston, Iowa, on August 26, 1866, son of Walter J. and Alma Clarke Hunsaker. He entered the Naval Academy from Saginaw, Michigan, on July 5, 1904, and was graduated, first in his class, on June 5, 1908. He was appointed Assistant Naval Constructor #4, in the rank of Lieutenant (jg), on April 1, 1910, and subsequently attained the rank of Commander (Naval Constructor), on December 31, 1921. He resigned his commission in the U. S. Navy on November 2, 1926, and on September 6, 1927, was appointed Lieutenant Commander in the Volunteer Naval Reserve. Commissioned Captain, USNR, on July 1, 1940 he was transferred to the Retired List on October 1, 1947.

Upon graduation from the Naval Academy in 1908, he joined the USS *North Carolina* for transportation to the USS *California*, then operating in the Pacific. He remained aboard the latter battleship for a year and then was ordered to the Boston Navy Yard preliminary to entering the Massachusetts Institute of Technology from which he was graduated in 1912 with a Master of Science degree.

During 1912 he translated from the French and published the second edition of Gustav Eiffel's The Resistance of Air and Aviation. In response to a request from the President of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, the Secretary of the Navy, in June 1913, ordered Hunsaker to MIT to undertake a course of lectures and experiments on the design of aeroplanes and dirigibles and for research in that field. Before beginning this duty, he toured laboratories and aircraft factories in England, France and Germany in order to obtain details of the latest developments in aeronautical research. Upon reporting to MIT he developed the first graduate course in the United States devoted to aerodynamics and airplane design. This included construction of a wing tunnel and the conduct of original research by a group of students who

were being trained as aeronautical engineers. He received his Doctor of Science degree in 1916,

From 1910 to 1921 he was in Charge of the Aircraft Division (HTA and LTA) of the Bureau of Construction and Repair, Navy Department, Washington, D. C. Charged with all aircraft construction for the Navy during World War I, he had additional duty, while attached to that Bureau, as a member of the Joint Technical Board on Aircraft, except Zeppelins. In July 1918 he was assigned further additional duty at the Naval Aircraft Factory, Philadelphia, and in England, France and Italy, in connection with aircraft design, and that year he was attached briefly to the Inter-Allied Naval Armistice Commission. In 1920 he delivered the Wilbur Wright Lecture before the Royal Aeronautical Society, being early recognized as an authority on aerodynamics, both in America and abroad.

He supervised the design of every plane the Navy developed from 1916 through 1923, including the first modern non-rigid airship produced in the United States, the SHENANDOAH (ZR-1) commissioned in 1923, and with Gilmore, Westervelt and Richardson, designed the NC flying boats which made the first trans-Atlantic flight in 1919.

He was transferred in September 1921 from the Bureau of Construction and Repair to the Bureau of Aeronautics, Navy Department, to serve as Chief of the Design Division until November 1923. During that time, he also served as a member of the Commission for Adjustment of Foreign Claims, U. S. War Department, and as the Navy Representative on the National Advisory Committee for Aeronautics. On September 24, 1923, he was sent to St. Louis, Missouri, for temporary additional duty in connection with the International Air Races.

From December 1923 to August 1926, he served as Assistant Naval Attache, and Assistant Naval Attache for Air, at the American Embassy, London, England, with additional duty in the same capacity at the American Embassies, Paris, Rome, the Hague, and Berlin. Returning to the Navy Department on August 30, 1926, he had duty in the Office of Naval Intelligence until September 2, 1926. His resignation became effective two months later.

For two years following his resignation from the Navy, Dr. Hunsaker was Assistant Vice President, and Research Engineer of the Bell Telephone Laboratories, New York, New York, and during that period standardized wire and radio services for airways. From 1928 to 1933 he was Vice President of the Goodyear-Zeppelin Corporation, Akron, Ohio. Appointed Head of the Department of Mechanical Engineering at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, he headed that Department and the Department of Aeronautical Engineering until 1951 and was Professor emeritus. Awarded the Daniel Guggenheim Medal in 1933, he was designated professor in charge of the Guggenheim Aeronautical Laboratory.

In July 1941 he was appointed Chairman of the newly

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established Naval Research and Development Board, composed of representatives of the Chief of Naval Operations, and the Bureaus of Ships, Ordnance, Aeronautics, and Yards and Docks, Navy Department, Washington, D. C. At the same time he was designated Navy Member of the Council of the Office of Scientific Research and Development, established by White House Executive Order of June 18, 1941, and was made Chairman of the National Advisory Committee for Aeronautics (until 1946). Returning to MIT in December 1941, he accepted appointment to the War-time Committee on Science Reserve Personnel of the War Manpower Commission in March 1943,

He was a member of the Naval Research Advisory Council from 1953 until 1959,

Dr. Hunsaker was Director of McGraw-Hill Publishing Company, Shell Oil Co., Goodyear Tire and Rubber Company and Tracer-Lab Inc.; a member of the Advisory Board of the Sperry Rand Corporation and of the Scientific Advisory Council of Chrysler Corporation; a Trustee of the Boston Museum of Science and a Regent of the Smithsonian Institution. He was also Fellow of the American Physical Society, the American Academy of Arts and Sciences, and Honorary Fellow of the Institute of Aeronautical Sciences (now American Institute of Aeronautics and Astronautics), the Royal Aeronautical Society of Britain and the Imperial College of Science (London); an Honorary Member of the American Society of Mechanical Engineers and the Institute of Mechanical Engineers (London); and a member off the American Society of Automotive Engineers, the American Society of Naval Architects and Marine Engineers, the National Academy of Sciences, the American Philosophical Society, and the Delta Kappa Epsilon and Sigma Xi fraternities.

During the period of his career in the Navy, Dr. Hunsaker was awarded the Navy Cross for "exceptionally meritorious service in a duty of great responsibility in charge of the Aircraft Division of the Bureau of Construction and Repair, in which position he showed ability unsurpassed in the United States as an aircraft designer..." He has also been awarded the Medal of Merit by the President of the United States, the Daniel Guggenheim Medal (1933); and the Franklin Medal (1942), Legion of Honor (France), Wright Brothers Medal; Godfrey L. Cabot Trophy, 1950; Langley Medal, 1955; Gold Medal of Royal Aeronautical Society (Great Britain), 1957; Navy Award for distinguished public service 1958.

He was editor of the Journal of the Institute of Aeronautical Sciences and a contributor to other professional Journals. He held honorary degrees from William College - Doctor of Science, 1943; and Northwestern University - Doctor of Engineering, 1946.

Married in 1911 to Miss Alice Porter Avery, Dr. Hunsaker had four children; Mrs. Sarah Porter Swope; Jerome Clarke, and Jams Peter Hunsaker, and Mrs. T. A. Birt.