39,000 AIRCRAFT WORKERS

By DON FRYE

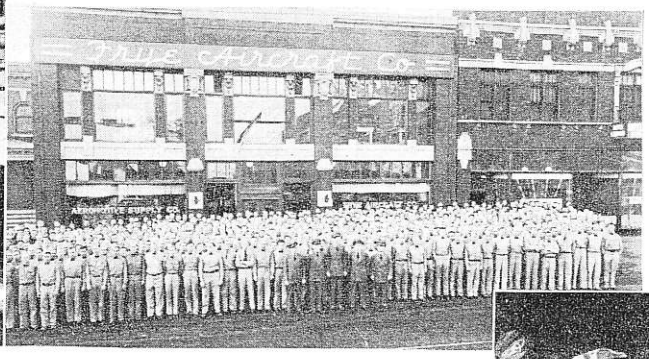
Originator of the Frye System of Schools.

In Circle: The author, originator of the Frye System of Schools, Don Frye.

Left: Actual factory working conditions are simulated in these aviation schools.

Below: The student body of the Omaha school gathers in front of the building.

Below right: The six weeks' course covers all essentials of aircraft manufacture.



DURING the last two or three years in which I served as Personnel Director with Consolidated Aircraft Corporation, it became increasingly clear to us in that department that the pre-employment training available to men planning to enter the aircraft industry was woefully inadequate to cope with the changed modern production methods being placed in effect throughout the nation.

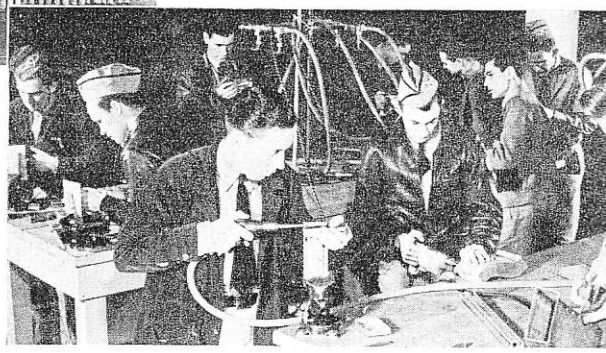
The majority of schools, both public and private, were still using the prescribed training as set forth by the Civil Aeronautics Authorities, drawn up and approved to meet the needs of the industry during a period several years earlier. In the meantime production methods had undergone radical changes; new methods had been brought into use; tooling was constantly being improved; jobs or trades were specialized.

Early in 1939 we attempted to induce several of the leading public and private aviation schools to revise their systems of training to fit current needs of the aircraft industry. In discussing the proposed changes in their training systems we made the discovery that very few operators of schools had ever had actual factory experience. Most of the instructors had come from airlines, knew little of factory procedure, therefore were forced to rely upon theory in the business of training men to be desirable workmen as well as able mechanics.

Based upon these observations, and upon sixteen years spent in nearly all phases of the aircraft industry, ten of them devoted to the training and handling of personnel for the Douglas and Consolidated Companies, the decision was reached to work out a new system of training which we believed would more adequately meet the needs of both the aircraft industry and the men entering it; to conclusively test and prove the system and then establish the Frye System of Schools.

Upon completion of a tentative outline of the proposed Frye System of training, classes were begun in the San Diego Vocational School, a public school in which no tuition was charged; also in the Missouri Aviation Institute, a private school charging tuition for instruction. Working in close cooperation with Mr. Walter Thatcher of the San Diego Vocation School and Mr. Homer Bredouw of the Missouri Aviation Institute, numerous changes and improvements were made in the system of training as well as in the selection of adaptable student material and technique of instruction. After the system had been thoroughly checked and proved it was rewritten and copyrighted.

During this period of testing and proving it was brought home to us forcefully, time after time, that the student trained in the private school rounded into a greatly superior employee when contrasted with the public school product. We were able to assign just two reasons to this repeated-



ly demonstrated fact. In the first place the training systems of the public schools were bound by the unavoidable red tape and regulations under which such institutions must of necessity labor; they were unable to introduce improvements and make changes so necessary to keep pace with a rapidly progressing industry. More important still was the fact that the student in the public school paid no tuition charge, had nothing at stake and valued the opportunity accordingly, while the student in the private school paid hard money for his instruction and did so to master a trade in which he felt a consuming interest. With money invested in his tuition, the private student brings a different degree of earnestness to his task, is more faithful in attendance and naturally absorbs a much higher percentage of the knowledge necessary to make him a satisfactory mechanic.

The first Frye School was established in Kansas City in 1939 and since that time other schools have been opened in Omaha, Nebraska; St. Louis, Missouri; Dallas, Texas; Long Beach, California; Salt Lake City, Utah; with the newest school recently opened in Denver, Colorado. (Continued on page 30)

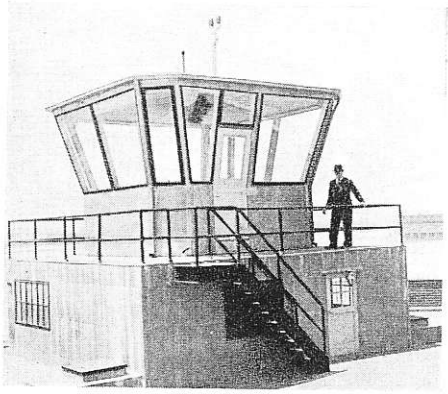
RAWLINS PERFECTS CONTROL TOWER

Capt. Louis M. Rawlins

On the day the Baltimore Municipal Airport opened, November 16th, 1941, Captain Louis M. Rawlins celebrated the tenth anniversary of his appointment as Manager-Engineer of the field. Bit by bit he had watched and aided in its development as it emerged from the waters of the harbor into an airport capable of receiving both land and sea planes with equal ease.

During those years Captain Rawlins made frequent visits to airports all over the country to observe the latest developments in airfield construction and design. He learned many things which contributed to the success of the Baltimore Airport, and reaped for it the benefit of the costly experience of other more hastily built fields. His chief interest was the nerve center of the modern airport, the control tower.

Control towers were virtually unknown in 1931 when Captain Rawlins



The Rawlins Control Tower

first started his job. In his observation at other fields he found defects of which the control tower operators complained —glare, bad visibility, etc. which cut down their efficiency. Through practical and theoretical research, Captain Rawlins finally evolved a control tower with windows which slant out from the bottom to the top giving perfect visibility, free of reflection both by day and night. This design has been so successful that the government has adopted it as their standard and many new airports under construction today have copied it.

Captain Rawlins is being called back into active service with the Air Corps Ferry Command of the U. S. Air Corps, a division of which is now operating at the Baltimore Airport under Major Robert H. Baker.

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Only schools under the Frye name are permitted to use the exclusive Frye System of Training. The training in use in these schools is commonly referred to as Sheet Metal Training and the average student is ordinarily able to complete the course of training in six weeks. There are fifty-eight separate basic projects embraced in the course and the student must master each in its turn before being allowed to proceed to the next project.

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39,000 AIRCRAFT WORKERS

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Before entering the school each prospective student must file an application for enrollment, undergo a rigid physical examination, measure up to certain standards of education or have a suitable mechanical background, present proof of his American Citizenship, just as he would do when applying for employment in the major aircraft factories.

In building the Frye organization, extreme care has been exercised in the selection of a staff of competent instructors, men with backgrounds of actual factory experience and possessed of personalities adapted to intelligent cooperation with the students. These instructors without exception, must be capable of measuring up to the most rigid standards.

The training given will qualify the average employee in approximately 80% of the jobs in the modern aircraft manufacturing plant.

All students in the Frye Schools are subject to the strictest discipline and each moment of the day is laid out for them with the object of readying men for the tremendous task which confronts the nation, in the shortest possible time. To do this it is imperative that strict order be observed and every hour made to count. Our students attend school nine hours a day, six days a week.

Sufficient instructors are always with each class to insure adequate supervision and instruction in the finer points of the projects under way. Shop rules in all our schools are kept constantly up to date so that when our graduates go to work in an aircraft factory they are familiar with conditions under which they will work.

Each school acts as a service and placement bureau for all the schools in the system. Improvements in training methods worked out and proved by any one school are immediately adopted by all of the schools. In effect we have the advantages of a research laboratory multiplied by the number of schools in the entire system. To date we have trained and placed over six thousand men and women and have a current enrollment of approximately 1,500 students. At the present time all schools are operating one shift daily. On a three shift basis, with the students supplied by some government agency, we could train 39,000 men and women annually, which would greatly alleviate the present shortage of properly trained personnel in the aircraft industry.

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