

Memories of Uncle Ed (E.M. Smith of EMSCO) By Pat Kearns

Images and format- Larry Latimer

Article from the Aerospace Legacy Foundation newsletter, the Downey Aviator (2014)

It was a warm summer morning in the early 1940s in Downey, California. The kids we played with every day: Johnny Rodriguez, Kenny and Donna Ganser, Buddy Hayman, Ray Cabrera, Mory Guarrero, Ward Dawson, my brother Mike and I were busy with a game of “work-up” softball in the middle of Davis street when a 1939 Grey Plymouth business coupe turned on to Davis from Downey Avenue. The driver saw us and promptly pulled over to the right and parked off the road next to our 9-foot tall solid fir tree fence. As he got out we all recognized him as “**Uncle Ed**”. He waved with a big smile on his face and dug into his right pants pocket for a handful of bright shiny \$1.00 coins as we all ran over to greet him. He had a treasure coin for each of us. After a handshake, small talk and a hand tousled hair touch he was off to our house to visit with my Mom, his favorite, niece. After a visit with her he would walk across Downey Avenue to visit with Mrs. Edna Fether, she was Don’s wife and Aunt Mimmie’s daughter-in-law. A little while later he would come back to the car and wave goodbye. He was just a great guy! Uncle Ed, **E.M. Smith**, worked his way from Charleroi, PA., near Pittsburgh across the USA to San Francisco, arriving in the city near the end of the 19th century. He was 18-years old and found work in the various manufacturing businesses in this fastest growing city in the west. He was very skilled mechanically but found his real niche in sales. By the time of the big San Francisco Earthquake he was a top salesman for Diamond Rubber Company selling drive belts for mechanical equipment. After the quake in April 1906, he was sent by the company to Los Angeles to supply the very fast-growing business community of the “southland”. He was a very personable and, with his mechanical ability, a very helpful supplier of mechanical drive belts and equipment. He really got to know, not only the movers and shakers, but also what their future needs would be. By 1911, with the help of his father, my great grandfather, Henry John Smith, and his brothers, Walter and Joseph, (He had sent for all of them from the Pittsburg area as he became more and more established and successful.) he established the E. M. Smith Co. His first major line of products revolved around reinforced rubber belts and belt drive mechanical equipment. He was not afraid to partner with others and expand his product line to meet the needs of a growing Los Angeles. The oil industry was in its infancy as were the auto and truck industries, engines, transmissions, brakes, oil towers, modern concrete construction, and even the banking industry, each needed aggressive and competent leadership and Uncle Ed knew and was a part of that leadership. By 1924, his ownership included: The E.M. Smith Co., West Coast Asbestos and Brake Lining Co., Emsco Derrick and Equipment Co., Western Forge Co., Peerless Pump Co., Los Angeles Pump Supply Co., Emsco Piston and Brake Co. and Pacific National Bank of Los Angeles. In 1928, with the massive construction going on in downtown LA, Emsco Concrete Cutting Co. was formed to provide services to demolish and dispose of old buildings and roadway surfaces and to prepare sites for new construction.

Uncle Ed never let a dream slip by. In 1928, he put together a team to design and construct private aircraft. They were to be used for sport, business and commercial aircraft travel. In 1929, he had established and built EMSCO Aircraft in Downey which one day would become the “Home of Apollo” and the Space Shuttle. During WWII, Uncle Ed’s companies were devoted to the war effort and after the war he established Globe Oil Tool Co. and designed and built the first mobile starting gate for harness

aces. (photo right) As we grew up we knew Uncle Ed was rich, but he was a friendly uncle that shared time with us and had encouraging words and smiled as he told us stories. We visited his office at work and his homes. We even went to his Arizona ranch to watch the cowboy's roundup his cattle and brand the new little calves with his Bar-Heart brand. I remember a number of trips to his Lido Isle home in Newport Beach and swimming in the bay at the beach club, and him taking us for a ride in his rowboat that he rowed. He and Aunt Mimmie (Marian Fether Smith) were married in 1919, they built a big house in Berkeley Square west of downtown Los Angeles in 1923. They were out of that house in the early 1940s selling it to a doctor. I was never in that house, and Caltrans condemned it under eminent domain proceedings in the 1960s for the Santa Monica freeway. I would visit their Downey hide-away home that was next door to us on Downey Avenue. When Uncle Ed and Aunt Mimmie wanted to get away for some quiet time they would come with their maid, Maddy, for a few days. Maddy made cookies for us and would call us over to get them. Aunt Mimmie had two matching big Dalmatians who were very quiet and not too scary even for 5 and 7-year-olds. Aunt Mimmie just left the scene in 1940, the next thing we kids knew Uncle was married to a very nice Aunt Catherine. They had a beautiful home in the hills just above downtown Whittier. We would visit that home and the new home they built on Lido Isle. Uncle Ed moved his office from South Alameda St. in Los Angeles to Globe Oil Tools off Los Nietos Rd. in Santa Fe Springs, CA. to be closer to home. Aunt Catherine died in a terrible auto accident in Whittier in 1948. Uncle Ed was heartbroken and never really recovered. He did build a church hall in her honor at St Mary's Catholic Church in Whittier. It was dedicated on the day of his death, March 17, 1950. He died of natural causes, a broken heart, at the age of 69.

Memories of Uncle Ed (E.M. Smith of EMSCO) By Pat Kearns

THE FOUNDER
AND HEAD
OF THE
MIGHTY
CHAIN
OF
EMSCO
CORPORATIONS



F. M. SMITH



EMSCO AIRCRAFT CORPORATION
DOWNEY, CALIFORNIA

EMSCO AIRCRAFT CORPORATION



The EMSCO AIRCRAFT CORPORATION is not a typical aircraft company. It is a company that has developed a new type of aircraft, the EMSCO Challenger, which is designed for both land and sea operations. It is a complete, self-contained unit, and is capable of being operated in any weather conditions.



EMSCO AIRCRAFT CORPORATION

AIRCRAFT CORPORATION



THE efficiency of the EMSCO Challenger is apparent in the front view of the plane. Drag is reduced to a minimum by perfect streamlining, even to the landing wheels. N. A. C. A. cowling on the nose motor is standard. The vision from the cockpit is unimpaired. Maximum safety for both takeoff and landing is assured by the landing gear trail of fourteen feet, eight inches, almost one-third of the wing span. Because of its low initial cost and maintenance the field of usefulness for the Challenger is large.

ANOTHER view of the interior of the cabin, looking forward to the cockpit, accentuates the comfort and convenience of the seating arrangement.



AIRCRAFT • FOR • LAND • AND • SEA

6

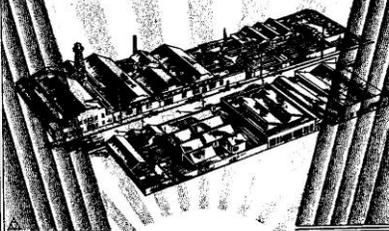
★ **ACHIEVEMENT**

In 1911 the first EMSCO trade mark was introduced by the E. M. SMITH COMPANY, parent plant of all the EMSCO organizations. The entire plant is devoted to manufacture of Transmission Belting, Rubber Products and Hydraulic Brake Linings.

No. 2—of a series on the history and development of the giant chain of EMSCO organizations.

The most recent addition to this chain is the EMSCO AIRCRAFT CORPORATION, completely organized and financed to manufacture a COMPLETE LINE OF AIRCRAFT to meet ALL REQUIREMENTS — LAND and SEA.

EMSCO



**EMSCO AIRCRAFT CORPORATION
DOWNEY, CALIFORNIA**

***ACHIEVEMENT (Noun)** A noteworthy and successful action or a distinguished feat. (Herakley)
An achievement.

This series of seven advertisements appeared in: Western Flying, Aero Digest, Aviation, and Oil Weekly—months of May, June, July and August, 1937.

