Dutch Kindelberger turned his frustrating experiences as a steel mill apprentice into the impetus for his education and accomplishments. He was desperate to get out of a job that, as Kindelberger put it, consisted of “throwing pig iron around from seven in the morning till five-thirty at night.” The sixteen-year-old high school dropout took correspondence courses for two years until he qualified for a position with the Army Air Corps as a civilian draftsmen and inspector. He would later work 20 hours a day, studying to pass his high school equivalency exam and gain entrance into Pittsburgh’s Carnegie Institute of Technology.

- As chief designer with the Douglas Aircraft, in 1924, he designed the DC series.
- Joined the North American Aviation and became president in 1935. He designed and produced the BT-9 and AT-6 trainer, the B-25 medium bomber and the classic P-51 Mustang.
- After World War II, North America diversified their product line to include missiles, atomic devices, rocket engines and the Apollo spacecraft destined to reach the moon.

Biography

James Howard Kindelberger, better known as “Dutch” to all who truly knew him, was born in Wheeling, West Virginia in 1895. He grew up along the Ohio River with the bite of steel mill smoke in his lungs, and with a strict German discipline in his blood. Kindelberger learned early in his life the value of honest hard work. After attending high school for only a year, Dutch quit to become a steel mill apprentice. Handling tons of pig iron day after day quickly clarified his thinking and soon he was learning drafting through a correspondence school. Two years later Dutch became a draftsman with the Army Corps of Engineers.
In 1913, when the great aerial exhibitionist Lincoln Beachey put on an unforgettable performance above the Wheeling fairgrounds, that the aviation bug first bit Dutch. But not until he had completed his first year at Carnegie Institute of Technology and America had entered the war to “make the world safe for democracy”, that he finally enlisted in the Aviation Section. He had completed his Ground School at Ohio State and earned his wings at Park Field near Memphis, but the war ended before he had a chance to go overseas.

After the war, Dutch joined the infant Glenn L. Martin Company in Cleveland as a designer, but the bottom fell out of the airplane business. By an incredible coincidence, four of the industry’s most illustrious names happened to be working together at that moment. These were four pocket-poor, imagination-rich aeronautical geniuses named Glenn Martin, Donald Douglas, Larry Bell and Dutch Kindelberger. But adversity seemed to be the necessary testing ground for these young men of aviation and through their astonishing dedication and perseverance, each went on in the years ahead to found their own organizations.

Dutch stayed with Glenn Martin for a half-dozen years and gained valuable experience while he helped to develop the famed Martin bombers used by Billy Mitchell in the famed Battleship Bombing Tests. Finally, in 1925 he joined the Douglas Aircraft Company and by 1928 had risen to become Vice President of Engineering. His genius for design was much in evidence at Douglas, for during this period he turned out 71 separate models for the Air Corps, Navy and civilian use. Perhaps his greatest was the series that became the nearest thing to everlasting, the DC series. The DC-3 was the most popular, and more than 10,000 were built for civil and military use.

By 1934, the original nine-man engineering group at Douglas had grown to 400, and J. Lee Atwood was one of the 400. He had this to say of his friend: “From the first moment that I met Dutch, I knew that he was destined for even greater things in aviation. My own subsequent success was greatly influenced by my association with him. Aside from all considerations of friendship, and I valued Dutch Kindelberger’s friendship more than any man’s I can truthfully and sincerely say that my respect and admiration for his ability increased with each of the nearly 30 years that we worked together. We who worked with Dutch learned to have a high regard for his quickness in detecting important, though minute details that always seemed to be the determining factor between success and failure, and when you are in the air, – that is all important!”

For more information on James Kindelberger, you may want to visit these websites:

All Star Network
Boeing North American History
Aerospace Legacy

Source- https://www.nationalaviation.org/our-enshrinees/kindelberger-james/