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I WAS THERE!

Charles S. Adams

In WW II, those of us on the "home front" had our hands full too. As an Electrical Engineer and Assistant Process Engineer at Delco Products, I was responsible for plant layout, machine tool processing, and all welding engineering, both resistance and arc welding and fabrication. In order to train operators for certification for both Navy and Air Force welding, and to help Product Engineering, I was sent to Lincoln Electric for hands-on welding operator training and for certification in Navy and Air Force welding. At that time, Delco Products' major war products were auxiliary Navy generators and aircraft landing struts.

Working with Airco, Lincoln Electric, Delco Tool Design, Delco Tool Room and Delco Products Engineering, I was responsible for setting up the heavy plate, steel, torch-cutting equipment; hydraulic bull-dozer round forming machines; special arc welding positioning and flame cutting machines; assembly and tack-welding fixtures; roller automation lines; and assembly inspection gages. This was done in Price Brothers' warehouse, on Monument Avenue, to fabricate frames for 30 KW to 100 KW generators. One of my responsibilities was to prepare the welding operators for certification and witness the Navy Inspectors' certification of all welders. It was also my job to help engineering change their practice of marking weld joints on drawings from "weld to suit" to actually designing weld joints and using American Welding Society symbols. Upon hearing of troubles with our 100 KW generator, we sent an observer to Florida. He saw

two sailors carry a household washing machine on board a ship. Using our generator, an ingenious sailor had figured out a connection to get 110 volts a.c. from our field wiring. The problem? This overloaded our field circuitry and burned out the generator!

We also made aircraft landing struts for B-24, B-25, B-26, A-26, P-51 and other war planes. As with the Navy, this required Air Force welder certification. Old-hand maintenance welders were not about to take instruction from a young engineer; but after failing certification and retesting, they finally asked me for help. I assisted Product Engineering in setting up weld specifications on prints, including weld designs to meet strength requirements. Specs had to be tight, because an extra pound reduced the bomb load that could be carried. I also helped Tool Design with weld future designs, and helped to set up preheat equipment, fixturing and positioning equipment, magnetic particle inspection, x-ray inspection, and proof-test loading fixtures. On the "third shift," when time was available on production welding stations, I trained new welding operators. Occasionally, I took new models of brake flange, and axle and cylinder weldments to Wright Field for drop testing.

In addition, there were trips with Purchasing personnel to subcontractors to check weldments, certification and time schedules. All this made a full trip throughout WW II, and—I was there.