

Frederick B. Rentschler

**President - United Aircraft and
Transport Corp.**

1928 to 1954

At the end of World War I, Mr. Rentschler was principally responsible for the founding of Wright Aeronautical Corporation, of which he was the first general manager and shortly became president. During his administration Wright developed several outstanding engines of the time. Among its developments was that of taking over the Lawrence air-cooled engine, from which the successful whirlwind type was developed that powered Charles A. Lindbergh's 'Spirit of St. Louis,' Clarence Chamberlin's Bellanca, and other airplanes which were to make international history.

Mr. Rentschler resigned from Wright in 1924 and in the following year he founded Pratt & Whitney Aircraft in Hartford, Connecticut, with the late George Mead, an outstanding aircraft powerplant engineer. With a small group of engineers and mechanics they started work and, by December 1925, the first "Wasp," a nine-cylinder air-cooled, radial engine, developing more than 400-horsepower, was running. The engines were shipped to the Navy in 1926 and, in the following year, made their appearance in the first passenger and mail planes to operate between San Francisco and Chicago.



By 1929, the "Wasp" and the later engine, the "Hornet," were powering the nation's first airliners and their use in the aircraft of the growing Navy and Army air services were credited with being a prime factor in bringing the nation's military aviation to a position of world leadership.

In 1928 Mr. Rentschler organized and became the first president of United Aircraft and Transport Corporation, which a few years later (1934) became United Aircraft Corporation with four operating divisions – Chance Vought Aircraft, Pratt & Whitney Aircraft, Hamilton Standard and Sikorsky Aircraft. (Chance Vought was separated from United in 1954 and became a separate corporation.)



In World War II Approximately 50-percent of the engines used by the combined air forces of the United States were built by Pratt & Whitney Aircraft and its licensees. Hamilton Standard and its licensees built 75-percent of the propellers used by the combined air forces. Chance Vought was a major builder of Navy fighters and observation aircraft and Sikorsky was responsible for all helicopters that saw service with the Allies.

Mr. Rentschler was the chief officer throughout this period of outstanding performance and he remained active as the corporation head in the postwar period. He pioneered the vitally important program of licensing other American industries, notably the automotive industry in the case of aviation, to build the critically needed weapons of war.

In 1951 Mr. Rentschler was made an Officer of the Legion of Honor “for his contribution to the progress of aeronautical science.”

In 1958 the United States Air Force presented him with the Civilian Service Award for Exceptional Service as a pioneer in the development, research and manufacture of aircraft engines.

Frederick B. Rentschler, 68-year old chairman and founder of United Aircraft Corporation, died April 25, 1956 at his winter home in Boca Raton, Florida.