

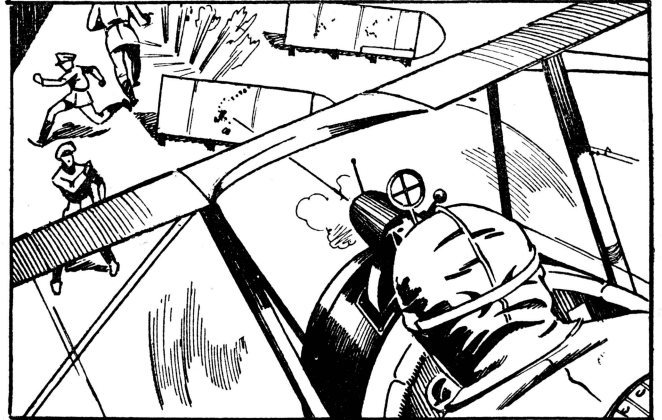
They Had What It Takes

XXXIX—TONY FOKKER—THE “FLYING DUTCHMAN”

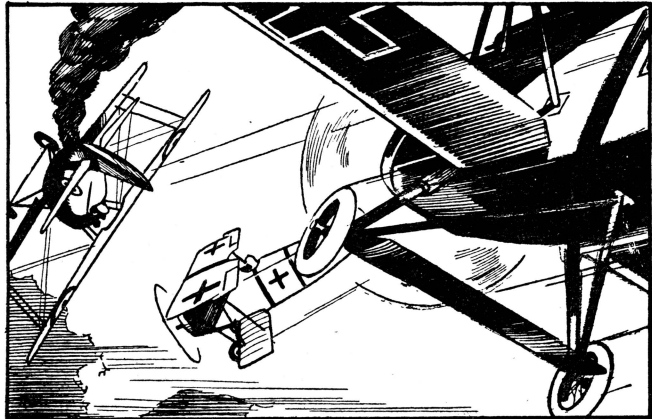
By ALDEN McWILLIAMS



1—Born in Kediri, Java, on April 6, 1890, Anthony H. G. Fokker did not wear shoes until he was six years old, when the family moved to Holland. In the very early days of his boyhood, Tony showed signs of the mechanical ingenuity which marked his later life. He built spring-operated toy railroads, steamboats, and internal combustion engines.



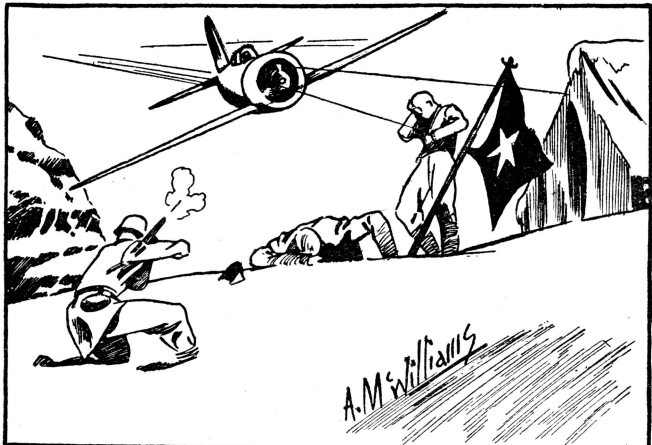
2—Fokker began designing aircraft and prior to the war offered his services to Britain, which made the error of refusing him. So he then built war jobs for the Kaiser. He also devised the gun synchronization gear, making it possible to fire through the prop arc. And while first demonstrating it, he shot up wing panels on the ground, sent officials scurrying.



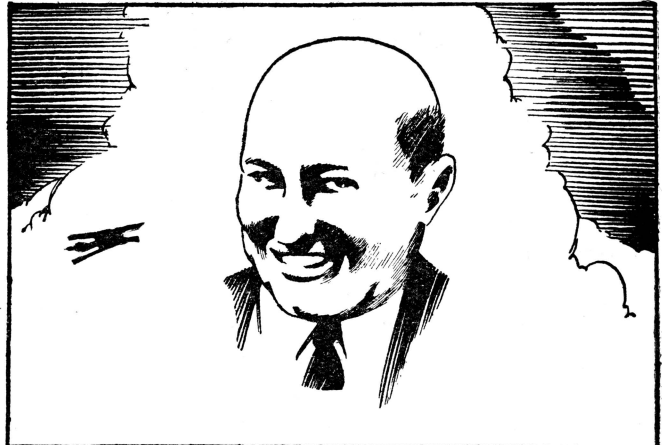
3—Under orders, but against his will, Fokker personally tested his gun gear over the front lines. He was then allowed to return to plane making. Of the more than 40 types of ships he constructed during the war, his most famous was the D-7. After the Armistice, he smuggled ships, engines, and designs into Holland to keep the Allies from getting them.



4—Coming to America, Tony Fokker then built Kingsford-Smith's famed Pacific-spanning *Southern Cross*. The "Flying Dutchman's" three-engined transports were then adopted for the early airline between San Francisco and Los Angeles. He also turned out Byrd's Atlantic-hopping plane, *America*, and his Army T-2 made the first transcontinental non-stop flight.



5—Fokker's Holland plant turned out the planes with which he pioneered the 9,000-mile Amsterdam-Netherlands East Indies airway. In 1924, he suggested the "glider train," and he also made the first long motorless flight with a passenger. Finland is now using a number of Fokker D-21 single-place pursuits in its northland war against the Russians.



6—Aero genius in war! Aero genius in peace! That was Tony Fokker. Unceasingly, he worked for the progress of aviation through the years, always intent on making each new plane better than the last. Then his action-packed career ended on December 23, 1939. For on that day Fokker passed away. But though he is gone, his name will never be forgotten.