

TIMELINE (#7)
2 JOB CHANGES (DOUGLAS TO SOLAR & SOLAR TO CONVAIR)

INTRODUCTION

This is my Tale of 2 Job Changes that took place about 1 year apart:

- A. Quitting Douglas Aircraft and going to work for Solar (a subsidiary of International Harvester Corp.) in late 1965
 - B. Quitting Solar and going to work for General Dynamics Corp./Convair Division in late 1966
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A. DOUGLAS TO SOLAR

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

1. Because of their receding fortunes in nuclear reactors for space applications, North American Aviation/Atomics International Division (A.I.) in Canoga Park placed me on loan to Douglas Aircraft in Long Beach, California, in late 1964.
2. Along with personnel from many other aerospace companies as well as numerous job shoppers, I was assigned to work on the Douglas proposal for the C-5 cargo airplane.
3. Several months later, after Douglas lost the C-5 contract to Lockheed, I was reassigned to work on structural modifications to the Douglas DC-8 commercial airplanes.
4. I was on loan to Douglas for a total of 10 months. My salary was \$1,000/month, plus travel mileage compensation for the 55 mile trip (each way).
5. My intent was to stay on loan a little longer and then return to Atomics International. However, when I called my A.I. supervisor, John Susnir, he told me that there was little or no hope for me to ever return to any job there. He opined that there probably would not be any demand for our product (SNAP, Systems for Nuclear Auxiliary Power) for a long time, if ever.
6. In anticipation of a job change, Barbara and I reconnoitered San Diego during the summer of 1965. We were enchanted by the city and were determined to move there when I changed jobs.

STORY

I applied to 5 aerospace companies in San Diego and received 3 job offers. Convair and Ryan both made offers equal to or slightly better than my current salary of \$1,000/month. However, I decided to accept Solar's significantly lower offer of \$900/month. The primary reason for this decision was their claim that they had never had an engineering layoff (which was true at the time). I was looking for job stability after my experiences at Chrysler Missile, North American/Columbus and Atomics International.

I should have had a clue to Solar's cheapness when I was dealing with their employment representative, Bill Over. He told me that whenever I wanted information from him, I should call him person-to-person. His secretary would tell the operator that Mr. Over was not available. Then I would dash back to my drafting board where he would call me. Solar apparently saved telephone costs using this trickery.

I accepted the Solar job in the fall of 1965 and moved into a rented house on Palmyra Ave. Barbara (age 27), David (5) and Bob (2) moved from Chatsworth to San Diego on Thanksgiving Day. Glen was born at Sharp Hospital less than a month later (12/16/65).

B. SOLAR TO CONVAIR

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

1. I did engineering design work for Solar for exactly 1 year. The job and working conditions were good.
2. I didn't like working there because of their "cheap" policies. As it turned out, their cheapness was pervasive not only in their salaries but in all their employee benefits (vacations, stock plan, sick leave, etc).
3. I was so anxious to leave that I checked the company policy to determine if I have to work 52 weeks before earning my 2-week vacation or if the 2 weeks were included and I only had to work 50 weeks to earn it. (52 weeks were required.)

STORY

Well before my 1 year of employment with Solar was over, I applied for jobs at the usual aerospace companies in San Diego. I received an offer of \$1,000/month from Convair to work on the structural design of the Centaur space vehicle. It was a very appealing job, so I accepted their offer and agreed to start work on a particular Monday in late 1966.

The usual practice upon leaving a company was to give them 2 weeks' advance notice. However, knowing Solar, I was concerned that if I gave them 2 weeks' notice, they would tell me to leave in 1 week. So I decided to give them only 1 week's notice. On a Monday morning (exactly 1 week before my start date at Convair), I told my supervisor, George Hermannson, that I would be leaving that Friday (4 days hence). He said that before I finalized my decision, he would like to talk to his supervisor, George Kress, and get back to me. I agreed.

The engineering department at Solar was very compact. The supervisors had small, window-enclosed offices adjacent to the drawing room floor (the bullpen) where I worked. For the next several hours there was a flurry

of activity between Mr. Hermansson, Mr. Kress and Mr. Over (the employment representative). I was certain that all this activity was related to me, and so it was. Early that Monday afternoon, Mr. Hermansson called me back into his office. Without ever mentioning my desire to quit and to move on to Convair, he launched into my annual review. At the end of the review, he offered me a salary increase of \$50/month, which would bring my salary to \$950/month. This offer was \$50 less than the Convair offer but would allow me to retain my present position. After thinking about it briefly, I rejected it and told him that I would be leaving for Convair that Friday as planned.

Immediately after I left his office there was another flurry of activity between the same 3 men, plus several others who I did not recognize. A short time later (still Monday afternoon), Mr. Hermansson called me into his office again. He said that Solar could not match Convair's offer and that I was free to move on. However, he stipulated that I had to leave on Wednesday (2 days later) instead of Friday. His meaning was crystal clear: "We don't want you to be a rabble-rouser and disturb the rest of the troops about your new job." I thought I had outsmarted Solar by not giving them 2 weeks notice but they outsmarted me and gave me only 2 days notice! My last day at Solar was that Wednesday. I thought "I'll have a relaxing 2-day vacation before I start my exciting new job working on the Centaur space vehicle."

The very next day (Thursday), I received a disturbing phone call from the Convair employment representative who I had been dealing with. He informed me that the Centaur Program had lost some funding and was reducing their engineering personnel. He hurriedly told me not to worry because there was still a job opening for me - although not on the Centaur Program. Convair had recently received a subcontract from Lockheed to design and fabricate the C-5 cargo airplane empennage (tail assembly). So instead of working on the Centaur at the Kearny Mesa facility, I would be assigned to the C-5 structural design group at the Lindbergh Field facility. I reminded him that when I interviewed with Convair, I made it clear that I didn't want to work on the design of another "aluminum airplane" (which the C-5 was, albeit jumbo size). I asked him what my options were and he said, in essence, "C-5 or stay at Solar." I informed him that the previous day was my last day at Solar. Had I known of this revolting development earlier, I might not have quit my job there. He sympathized with me but said that there were no alternatives. I decided to take the C-5 job.

The next Monday (Fall, 1966), I started work at General Dynamics Corp./Convair Division. I remained there until June, 1994, when both the Lindbergh Facility and the Kearny Mesa Facility were bulldozed down to the ground after the end of The Cold War.
