

27<sup>th</sup> July 1985

GUERNSEY, Channel Islands (AP) — Sir Oliver Edwin Simmonds, international businessman and one of the designers of the airplanes that led to development of Britain's World War II Spitfire fighter, died Friday at Princess Elizabeth Hospital in Guernsey, a hospital spokeswoman said. He was 88.

No cause of death was announced.

In 1924, Simmonds joined Supermarine Aviation Works and was responsible with the late R.J. Mitchell for designing Supermarines S4, S5 and S6, from which the Spitfire was subsequently developed.

He formed Simmonds Aircraft Ltd. in 1928 which produced Spartan landplanes and seaplanes. He also invented and patented interchangeable wings for the Simmonds Spartan biplane and the electronic fuel gauge Pacitron.

Simmonds developed an early interest in aviation and after earning a civil engineering degree at Cambridge University. Between 1922 and 1935, he gave more than 1,000 lectures on the future of civil aviation. He also jointly authored the first British research report on supersonic flight.

A member of Parliament from 1931 to 1945, he headed the government's Committee on Brick Industry during World War II.

In 1944, he was knighted by King George VI for his services to aviation.

Simmonds founded other aviation-related companies in Britain, France, the United States, Australia and Canada including Simmonds Aerocessories Inc. of New York, now Simmonds Precision Inc.

In the period from 1936 to 1948, he built Simmonds Aerocessories into a multi-national company with facilities in Britain, France, Poland, Canada, Australia and the United States.

The American company, Simmonds Precision Products Inc., was founded in 1936. Under the direction of Geoffrey R. Simmonds, the founder's only son, Simmonds Precision became a leading manufacturer of fuel measurement, engine and flight control systems for the aerospace industry. The company was acquired by Hercules Inc. in 1983.

In 1948 Sir Oliver moved to the Bahamas, where he started a construction company, built homes and a hotel and became involved in starting various businesses and agricultural endeavors. He remained there until the 1977 death of his first wife, Gladys Hewitt Simmonds.

He is survived by his second wife, the former Sheila Grace Kingham, nee Trevor Roper; a son Geoffrey R. Simmonds, of Greenwich, Conn., chairman of the executive

committee of Hercules Aerospace Co.; two daughters, Doreen Kay of Herefordshire, and Janette Gailey of Montview, Idaho; nine grandchildren and six great-grandchildren.