

Herman Krefting was born in Oslo on 22 September 1907.

Herman Krefting's father was the owner of one of the larger steel companies in Norway. He was successful and enterprising and put a lot of effort into the company. After the First World War the well-managed company was taken over by a venture capitalist and it was not long before the whole company was in bankruptcy. The event came to play a central part in Herman Krefting's life and later influenced his decisions to safeguard his own company and its continuance.

Herman Krefting's father wanted to leave Norway, bought a manor house with a small industry in the Swedish province Dalsland and the family moved to Sweden. Little did they know about the suffering that this new address should cause Herman, at that time only twelve years. It became more and more clear that he was becoming allergic to the dry and dusty inland air conditions. His lungs and bronchus did not stand the change from the humidity in the air at the Oslo fjord. He was stricken by a severe asthma.

Fifteen years old, Herman Krefting moved to Trollhättan, The climate was better for his health and 1923 he began to work with the Ford business. Ford gave him the much longed-for opportunity to move back to Norway. In Oslo he started to sell spare parts to the popular T-Ford.

At one of his visits to the parents in Sweden, Herman Krefting met his wife to be, Greta, and they settled down. In his leisure time he drove a motor bike and competed for a local club. After a while he got the opportunity to start a workshop of his own for repairing motor bikes in Oslo. It was hard times in Europe and no spare parts to buy. "One had to learn to manufacture everything oneself".

On 9 April 1940 Norway was involved in the First World War. Herman Krefting, who was exempted from military service due to his asthma, went to work as usual on that morning. When the German attack with air bombs came he went straight home. By car he and his wife and children immediately fled to Sweden. "We went away in a rush. We just could not stay in a Norway being occupied by the Nazis."

At first in Sweden he continued with motor renovations. **But presently there was a sales district for Scania trucks available and this suited Herman Krefting perfect.** In Vänersborg he became a successful sales manager with his own special customer philosophy. "One has to be friends with the customers. If you build confident relationships with customers, the salesman as well as the company will be esteemed. The result is a good reputation – the best asset a company can have. And the best publicity is satisfied customers".

When working with truck sales Herman Krefting learnt a lot about the different type of vehicles and conditions that a coupling product was facing. The couplings at that time were out of date and not adapted to the Nordic demands. Many breakdowns took place due to the low standard of the Swedish road network but also to the fact that the couplings between the truck and the trailer were too poor, above all for heavy timber transportations.

Through his interest in road safety matters and design solutions, Herman Krefting got the idea of how a highly reliable trailer coupling should be designed to be able to stand up to the strains it was exposed to.

On 3 January 1951, Herman Krefting registered the company “Vänersborgskopplingen” and started the business in cellar premises in Vänersborg.

His first manual trailer coupling was launched on the Swedish market 1951 and the coupling concept was patented in eight separate countries.

The coupling was to be reliable and durable. That was the main thing. Next in line came service. To renovate or to change a coupling should be easy and quickly done anywhere in the country. The idea was to have the coupling serviced at the same time as the truck was in for service.

The first automatic coupling called “Automatic” was introduced in 1955. This robust coupling was to form the basis of the brand VBG and its strong development. The coupling later called “VBG 200” remained more or less the same till well into the nineteen-nineties.

The business and the brand VBG expanded in the nineteen-sixties and -seventies. Subsidiaries were founded in the Nordic countries and new products, such as tow bars for passenger cars and fifth wheels for trailers, were incorporated in the VBG product range.

Periodically, Herman Krefting was deeply troubled by his asthma. When visiting the Sahlgrenska Hospital in Gothenburg he received great help but was also recommended stays in the more southern regions of Europe. He therefore bought a house in Spain and spent more and more time there.

In 1972 Herman Krefting left the direct responsibility of the company and withdrew to take care of himself and improve his health. In an interview published in the local newspaper ELA on 28 December 1974 he announced that he had decided to take certain measures to safeguard the future of the company.

Herman Krefting founded three foundations, to which he transferred a large number of shares. The Foundation VBG-SLK, the Foundation SLK-employees and the Herman Krefting Foundation for Allergy and Asthma Research.

In 1987 the first grant from the Herman Krefting Foundation for Allergy and Asthma Research was awarded Nalle Lindholm, a docent in asthma and allergy care and for some twenty years the Head of the Allergy Department at the Sahlgrenska Hospital. The grant amounted to SEK 100 000.

1995 was the International Asthma and Allergy Year. In her capacity as its Patron, H.M. the Queen - on the occasion of a Royal visit to Vänersborg - presented the Foundation’s grant of SEK 648 000 to a group of six researchers at the Sahlgrenska Hospital.

By 2009 the Foundation has made payments totalling some MSEK 56 for Allergy and Asthma Research.

In 2008 the Foundation concluded an agreement with the Sahlgrenska Academy at the University of Gothenburg on annual donations for a long-term support of clinical and patient-close research to a new centre - **Krefting Research Centre.**

Herman Krefting died on 13 August 1993. Through the foundations that he established, the memory of an appreciated leader and well respected owner lives on.