MEDALIST FOR 1939

For outstanding contributions to the design and construction of transport airplanes.



DONALD WILLS DOUGLAS

The name of Donald Wills Douglas has become synonymous with the massive transport of men and goods through the air at ever-increasing speeds, and the beginnings of the age of spaceexploration.

Born in Brooklyn, New York, on April 6, 1892, he entered the United States Naval Academy in 1909, and in that year saw Orville Wright demonstrate the Wright flying machine to the United States Army at Ft. Myer, Virginia. Better to follow his growing interest in aviation, he resigned after three years at the Acad-emy to enter the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, where he was graduated in 1914.

From mid-1914 to mid-1915 he was assistant to Dr. Jerome C. Hunsaker at MIT, in the graduate course in aerodynamics. A few months later he joined the Glenn L. Martin Company as Chief Engineer. In the following year he went to Washington as Chief Civilian Engineer of the United States Signal Corps.

In 1920 he moved his family to California to start his own airplane manufacturing venture. Not yet 30, his assets totalled \$600. His first contract was to build an airplane for a Los Angeles sportsman who wanted to cross the North American continent non-stop by air. With six former associates at the Martin Company, he produced a two-place wood and fabric biplane called the Cloudster. It was the first U.S. airplane ever to get off the ground with a useful load equal to its own weight.

World recognition first came to Douglas in 1924, when U.S. Army pilots, flying Douglas World Cruisers, made an historic round-the-world flight covering 27,553 miles in 15 days, 11 hours and seven minutes of flying time. In 1935 Douglas developed the famous DC-3, a twin-engine airliner

For information, contact Daniel Guggenheim Board of Award, c/o AIAA, 1801 Alexander Bell Drive #500, Reston, VA 20190, 703-264-7623 that became the most widely-used in the world. The basic DC-3 design was adapted during World War II to the C-47 military transport, used in every theatre of war and by all Allied powers.

Next came the B-19 bomber, until 1948 the largest land-based aircraft ever built. The B-19 paved the way for the new generation of super-bombers of World War II. A notable series of airliners and military transports followed, including the DC-4, the C-54, the DC-6, and the DC-7. Douglas' DC-8 Jet transport first went into airline service September 18, 1959.

The company has also produced guided missiles for the Army, Navy and Air Force since 1940. In the large rocket field it had airframe development responsibility for Thor, the Air Force intermediate range ballistic missile.

During World War II Douglas served as President of the National Aircraft War Production Council, and subsequently was President of its successor, the Aircraft Industry Association. For his outstanding contributions to the Allied victory he was awarded the Certificate of Merit by President Truman.