

MEDALIST FOR 1947

For outstanding achievement in advancing aeronautics, particularly for his conception and organization of the Institute of the Aeronautical Sciences.



LESTER DURAND GARDNER

The contribution of Lester Durand Gardner to the advancement of the age of flight was unique: the creation of the Institute of the Aeronautical Sciences, later the Institute of the Aerospace Sciences (IAS), which continues its force into the space age as one of the two progenitors of the American Institute of Aeronautics (AIAA), the other being the American Rocket Society (ARS).

Born in New York City on August 7, 1876, Gardner was graduated from Massachusetts Institute of Technology as Bachelor of Science in 1898. After a year of graduate study in Administrative Law at Columbia University, he was employed successively on the editorial staffs of the New York Times, New York Tribune, New York Sun, Collier's Magazine and other publications.

In the early days of radio broadcasting, he gave weekly talks on the progress of aviation. He rebroadcast observations made from an airplane during an eclipse of the sun, and arranged for the first demonstration of ship-to-shore radio telephone with David Samoff, later head of the Radio Corporation of America, as radio operator. In 1915, with the encouragement of Glenn L. Martin, Grover Loening and Jerome C. Hunsaker, he organized the Gardner Publishing Company, which started *Aviation*, *Who's Who in American Aeronautics*, and *The Rubber Age*.

When the United States entered World War I, Gardner became, in 1917, a Lieutenant in the Aviation Section of the Signal Corps. He was soon promoted to a captaincy in the regular Army, and while on duty at Kelly Field, Texas, organized 89 aero squadrons for overseas service. Ordered to Washington to serve on the Control Board of the U.S. Air Service, he was promoted to Major. Taking flying instruction at Bolling Field, he was on flying status when discharged from the Army in 1918.

Daniel Guggenheim Medal

It was in 1932 that Gardner and several friends who were leaders in American aviation organized the Institute of the Aeronautical Sciences. He was its executive officer for fourteen years.

From a modest beginning, the Institute of the Aeronautical Sciences grew rapidly. Gardner started publication of the Journal of the Aeronautical Sciences and The Aeronautical Engineering Review for the Institute. Various contributions of funds amounting to over \$2,000,000, and valuable historical treasures came to the Institute as a result of his efforts. In 1942 the Daniel Guggenheim estate on Long Island was given to the IAS by Mrs. Florence Guggenheim. In 1945 the Institute purchased the residence of E. J. Berwind at the corner of Fifth Avenue and 64th Street, New York, which it remodeled and occupied as its headquarters. Other buildings in Los Angeles and San Diego were built for the Institute from endowments.

Gardner retired as Chairman of the Council of the Institute in 1946, but continued his interest in the organization until his death on November 23, 1956, in New York City.