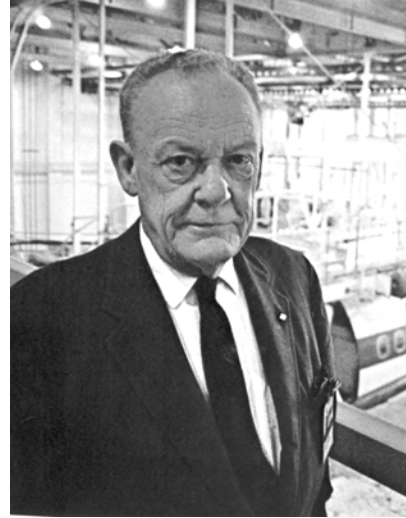


Daniel Guggenheim Medal

MEDALIST FOR 1972 (Posthumous)

For manifold accomplishments in airline engineering, maintenance and economic disciplines, which accomplishments contributed significantly to the achievement of today's civil air transportation systems.



WILLIAM C. MENTZER

Bill Mentzer started out to be a newspaperman and wound up as an aviation giant. He had earned a journalism degree at the University of Nebraska in 1929 and while waiting around for a newspaper job to open up, he went to work as a mechanics' helper in the Cheyenne, Wyoming shops of Boeing Air Transport—predecessor of United Air Lines (UAL).

Mentzer never went back to a writing profession, but he wrote his name in aviation's history books. Fascinated by the “nuts and bolts” side of the airline industry, he took postgraduate work in aeronautical engineering at Massachusetts Institute of Technology and rose swiftly up the ranks of United's hierarchy to eventually become senior vice president-engineering and maintenance.

But his work went far beyond the confines of his long tenure at United. Mentzer pioneered many of the techniques used in the maintenance and overhaul of aircraft. He helped design the famed Douglas DC-4, first of America's four-engine airliners, drawing up the original specifications for the plane and working closely with Douglas throughout the design, testing and production phases. When UAL ordered its first jets, Mentzer headed the company's Turbine Aircraft Coordinating Committee, integrating activities of the entire airline in preparation for the dawn of the jet age.

He was a close friend of his counterpart at American, Bill Littlewood (1958 Medalist). Mentzer also served as chairman of the Airline SST Committee, formed in 1965 to aid the Federal Aviation Agency in its supersonic transport program—a post which he held until his death in Palo Alto, California on December 23, 1971, several months after selection as a Guggenheim Medalist.