

### MEDALIST FOR 1958

*For leadership and continuous personal participation over a quarter of a century in developing the equipment and operating techniques of air transport.*



**WILLIAM LITTLEWOOD**

The British magazine *Aeroplane* once said of William Littlewood: “The industry has his genius to thank for much of the efficiency built into the aircraft that really put the air transport business on the map.”

Born in New York City on October 21, 1898, he was graduated from Cornell University with a degree in mechanical engineering in 1920. Following positions with the Niles-Bement-Pond Company and Ingersoll-Rand Company he became production manager of the Fairchild-Camenez Engine Corporation in 1927. In the following year he became General Manager of the Fairchild Engine Company.

In June 1930 he moved to American Airways, Inc., which had been organized by the Aviation Corporation, and three years later became Chief Engineer. American Airlines succeeded American Airways in 1934, and in 1937 Littlewood became Vice President in Charge of Engineering. In addition to broad technical supervision of company matters, he was in charge of the specification and procurement of all new flying equipment used by American Airlines.

In 1934 American Airlines had introduced “sleeper planes” on transcontinental flights, using Condor biplanes. These were followed by improved all-metal airplanes, but the industry needed still larger, faster, more efficient transports. Littlewood prepared a set of specifications which were translated by Douglas engineers into the DC-3, the aircraft destined to transform the struggling young airline business into a profitable industry. American Airlines placed the first quantity order, and in July 1936 became the first DC-3 airline operator.

## Daniel Guggenheim Medal

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Littlewood made similar contributions to successive models of the Douglas DC series and the Consolidated Vultee Convair series, and was active in the development of all American turboprop and jet transports.

During World War II, he served as chairman of a committee of Air Force, Navy and civilian personnel charged with the standardization of air transport aircraft, an activity which greatly influenced post-war developments. He was for 10 years a member of the Executive Committee of the National Advisory Committee for Aeronautics, now the National Aeronautics and Space Administration. He was Chairman of the Advisory Panel on Aeronautics of the Office of the Assistant Secretary of Defense (Research and Engineering), and served on the Executive Committee of the Defense Science Board.

He was President of the Society of Automotive Engineers and of the Institute of the Aerospace Sciences (now AIAA), which elected him an Honorary Fellow in 1957, and the only person to be President of both societies. He was permanent Vice Chairman of the Industry Advisory Committee of the Flight Safety Foundation, an Honorary Fellow of the Royal Aeronautical Society and a Fellow of the Canadian Aero Space Institute. He wrote many technical articles and papers, and was the AIAA Wright Brothers Lecturer in 1952. Littlewood died December 4, 1967.