

27 AUG 2011



## HISTORY OF

# DELTA GOLDEN WINGS, INC

DELTA GOLDEN WINGS IS A FRATERNAL  
ORGANIZATION OF ACTIVE AND RETIRED PILOTS OF  
DELTA AIR LINES, INC. FOUNDED IN NEW ORLEANS  
ON NOVEMBER 16, 1968

### 1968 – 1969

I WAS IN VRF 32, NAS NORTH ISLAND, SAN DIEGO  
IN 1966. I FERRIED A TWIN BEECH (SNB) TO  
MACON, GA FOR OVERHAUL, I DROVE TO ATLANTA  
AND INTERVIEWED WITH AN "ART" DAVIS, DELTA'S  
LONG TIME DIRECTOR OF HIRING. I WAS THIRTY ONE.  
I HAD A REGULAR COMMISSION AND THE DEPARTMENT  
OF THE NAVY WOULD NOT ACCEPT MY RESIGNATION.

Originally written by:

Captain Frederick W. Miller, Jr. DGW Historian (2006)

Revision and Corrections by:

Captain Rollin A. Jackson, JR., DGW Historian (2009)

I GOT A CALL FROM MR. DAVIS IN LATE 1967, STATING THAT  
HE COULDN'T POSTPONE MY CLASS DATE ANY LONGER.  
DELTA'S AGE LIMIT WAS 31. I WAS RELEASED FROM DUTY  
BY THE NAVY, AND INTERVIEWED WITH WESTERN  
WHOSE AGE LIMIT WAS 32. MY HIRE DATE IS 15 JAN 68.  
I TURNED 33 IN FEB. WESTERN MERGED INTO DELTA IN 87.

# THE DELTA GOLDEN WINGS, INC.

## A History

Frederick W. Miller, Jr.  
Historian 1993 - 2003

The Delta Golden Wings was established on November 16<sup>th</sup>., 1968, as a fraternal organization whose membership was to consist of Retired Pilots of Delta Air Lines and senior active pilots, age 50 to 60. The organizational meetings were held in New Orleans on November 14<sup>th</sup>, 15<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> with the final meeting terminating at 4:00 PM after which the meeting room doors were unlocked allowing the attendees to rejoin their wives, and the party began.

Those in attendance at the first meeting in which the by-laws were formally adopted were:

> Captain William J. Fry  
> Captain Charles F. Ball  
> Captain Noble Buice  
> Captain Harrison E. Croft  
> Captain Thomas S. Bridges  
> Captain L. Rowe Davidson  
> Captain Ralph P. Eames  
> Captain Robert J. Werth  
> Captain John E. Maynard  
> Captain Ralph J. Budd

Thus it was on November 16, 1968, that the DELTA GOLDEN WINGS was born, for Retired Delta Pilots and those active pilots over 50 years of age (excerpt from the first Delta Golden Wings newsletter, Vol, 1, No.1, dated February 1969)

In 1968 Captain William J. Fry accepted his appointment as the first President of the Golden Wings along with his staff that consisted of Captain Noble "Tex" Buice, Vice President, Captain Gene Croft, Treasurer, and Captain L. Rowe Davidson, Secretary. In addition, Captain S. W. Hopkins was appointed to the position of, Director at Large.

Captain Thomas S. Bridges assumed the responsibility of Director of Public Relations, and Captain Al Lohrke became Director - Active Pilots while Captain Bud Carmicheal was appointed as Historian with an Assistant Historian, Mrs. Dodie Croft.

The Field Directors at each pilot domicile were:

Captain Norman Topsyhe - Atlanta  
Captain William Temm - Chicago  
Captain Gene Barton - Dallas/Ft. Worth  
Captain Bob Brenner - Houston  
Captain Cecil Gibson - Miami  
Captain Vic Johnson - New Orleans

Mr. Charles H. Dolson, Chairman of the Board of Delta Air Lines, was elected unanimously as the first Honorary Life Members.

It was also determined at this time that dues would be assessed at \$10.00 per year for pilots including their wives. *We expect them (wives) to play a big part in our annual reunions, contributing to its*



success as they have in our lives. As a matter of fact, we may ask them to provide some food for us.  
(Excerpt, Golden Wings Newsletter, Vol. 1, No. 1 February 1969)

All of the credit for the initial "spade work" goes to Captain Tommy Bridges (deceased) who had the idea, took the time and effort to do the mailing, make the survey, set up the first gathering, as well as treating the group to a great reception and cocktail parties at the Hilton. (Excerpt, Delta Golden Wings Newsletter, Vol. 1, No. 1 February 1969)

On Tuesday, January 21<sup>st</sup>, initial talks were held with Mr. Charlie Dolson, Mr. Dave Garrett, Mr. Wharton and Mr. Miller concerning the concept of the organization and support from Delta in the area of publishing and mailing a newsletter, to which they warmly agreed. However, the establishment of a logo pin for the pilots and their wives seems to have several obstacles to overcome.



The member roster of January 21, 1969 consisted of the following pilots and their wives:

- |   |   |  |
|---|---|--|
| > | 1. L. D. "Hap" Anderson and Erna  | 24. V. O. "Nick" Johnson and Flava Lee                   |
| > | 2. Gene Barton and Iris   | 25. M. Reed Knight and Ruth                              |
| > | 3. M. J. Benedict and Edna JIM  | 26. Fred G. Kramer and Ruth                              |
| > | 4. Elmer F. Bennett and Phyllis DAD IN ELMER'S RET. ARTICLE AIRLINE PILOT | 27. John E. Maynard and Teenie                           |
| > | 5. Stanley Bagnall and Fern   | 28. George F. Metts and Frances                          |
| > | 6. Nobel "Tex" Buice and Virginia   | 29. Charlie H. Mossman and Annett                        |
| > | 7. Ralfe Budd and Phyllis   | 30. George Mongold and Nell                              |
| > | 8. Tommy Bridges and Rose   | > 31. L. Rowe Davidson and Bobbie                        |
| > | 9. J. H. Bondurant and Sarah  | 32. Ralph Eames and Mary                                 |
| > | 10. Ben Catlin and Dorothy  | > 33. William J. Fry and Phil BILL                       |
| > | 11. O. G. "Bud" Carmicheal and Barbara                                    | 34. J. D. "Curly" Phillips and Jerry                     |
| > | 12. H. E. "Gene" Croft and Dodie  | 35. Delton G. Ray and Charlotte                          |
| > | 13. Fred Ball and Billie  | 36. Edward F. Smith and Augusta                          |
| > | 14. J. T. "Terry" Carroll and Mary Ann                                    | 37. A. J. "Slim" Stauber and Billy Jane                  |
| > | 15. Lloyd R. Damron and Rose  | > 38. P. A. Storm and Madge                              |
| > | 16. James G. DeLoach and Catherine  | 39. Phil F. Mingle                                       |
| > | 17. Fred W. Davis and Madeline  | > 40. Lowell E. "Jack" McKee and Irene CHIEF PILOT, N.D. |
| > | 18. B. C. Dickerson and Betty CHARLEY                                     | 41. Norman Topsishe and Josephine I MET 1969             |
| > | 19. H. D. "Pat" Gossett and Margaret                                      | 42. J. A. R. "Bob" Werth and Betty                       |
| > | 20. V. L. "Vic" Hoganson and Lena   | 43. M. P. "Mike" Winike and Betty                        |
| > | 21. Stuart W. Hopkins and Elanore STU                                     | 44. R. J. "Bob" Nelson and Bobbye                        |
| > | 22. F. F. Hoyt and Dorothy  | 45. Ernest F. Deacon and Mary                            |
| > | 23. P. R. "Percy" Johnson and Sylvia                                      | 46. Robert O. Brenner and Opal                           |

By mid-July, the DGW roster had increased with the addition of the following:

- |                                       |                                   |
|---------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| 1. Roy L. Robinson and El Vera        | 13. Cecil A. Gibson and Betty     |
| 2. L. C. "Les" Atkins and Alice       | 14. Jess L. Small and Selma       |
| 3. G. O. "Ormel" Wright and Frankie   | 15. Fred Dykes and Alice          |
| 4. Floyd H. Wheat and Ava             | 16. G. T. Wood and Martha         |
| 5. Ernest Laich and Elnora            | 17. Truman R. Outland and Imogene |
| 6. D. K. "Don" Franklyn and Katherine | 18. William Temm and Jean         |
| 7. H. F. "Doc" Spurlock and Sylvia    | 19. Clayton Kregor and Gail       |
| 8. Jack H. Sargent and Virginia       | 20. George Wells and Libby        |
| 9. M. J. Ernst and Yvonne             | 21. Donald B. McNamee and Sadie   |
| 10. Jack A. Adams and Camille         | 22. J. B. Parker                  |
| 11. Claude Nanney and Marion          | 23. R. S. Nelson and Ruth         |
| 12. Alden L. Lohrke and Jamie Azilee  | 24. R. L. "Bob" McKee and Nellie  |

On November 13-15, 1969, the first annual convention/reunion of the Delta Golden Wings was held at Miami Springs Villa, Miami Springs, Florida. With lots of enthusiasm registration began at a slow pace on opening

> DAD'S FRIENDS - ONES I MET, AND NAMES I'M FAMILIAR WITH GROWING UP

morning with the real festivities beginning that evening.

The first order of business was an impromptu mini-cocktail party just prior to the scheduled cocktail party and banquet honoring four captains that were retiring from Council #71 in Miami. Captain Truman Outland, the first DGW member to retire, and Captains Doolittle, Haas and Harwell were the guests of honor. The banquet was a joint affair of members of Council #71 and the Delta Golden Wings members and wives. The guest speaker was Captain "Pre" Ball, representing the Company. There was much fine food, excellent speeches, splendid dance music and certainly no deficiency of excitable conversation. As a matter of fact there were nearly two-hundred happy-as-clams attendees.

The last day of the reunion began for the DGW with the business meeting held in the Shag Days Room at the Villas, attended by all members and wives. The minutes and routine reports were read, followed by a few comments by President Bill Fry welcoming all to the reunion, especially our newest members. Notable in these comments was the rapid growth of the membership from ten couples at the organizational meeting in New Orleans one year ago to almost ninety couples at this time. The attendance of 42% of the membership at the reunion was most gratifying.

It was at this time that Captain Bud Carmicheal resigned as Historian and was replaced by Captain Fritz Schwaemmle.

The matter of Associate Membership was discussed at some length resulting in a change in the bylaws, as follows: ARTICLE III, Section 2, Associate Members: Strike out the words, "Dues Free."

Three new Associate Members were accepted: Mrs. Whittaker, Mrs. Holliman and Mrs. Young.

Emblem and Insignia Committee - Mike Winicki, as chairman of the committee, just did not have enough time to do justice to such an important item and has agreed to continue working until a suitable emblem/insignia is selected. All should be grateful to Mike and his committee for the job required in arriving at an appropriate design. The committee has all the plans and ideas submitted to date.

Al Bonner called from Atlanta to say that Tom Beebe had authorized Tommy Bridges to announce that Delta Air Lines retired pilots and their wives would, in the near future, be afforded reduced rate transportation on some international and domestic carriers. This was received with a big round of applause. Trans World Airlines will be the first international carrier to offer this with several others coming on line at a later date. The membership passed a resolution directing that a letter be sent to Mr. Dolson expressing our appreciation and thanks for this opportunity being granted and to also thank many others who made this benefit possible.

Thursday afternoon was devoted to playing golf, basking in the sun by the pool or taking one of several trips arranged by the wives. The tours to Parrot Jungle, Seaquarium or Viscaya Gardens were most enjoyable and/or interesting. The gracious hostesses for the delightful tours were Mrs. Buice, Mrs. Eames and Mrs. Doolittle.

Excitement and enthusiasm began to rise as the hour approached for the DGW cocktail party held in the Shag Days Room at the Villas. This was another real spark of the reunion, followed by a no-host Smorgasbord dinner at the Airways Inn just three blocks from the Villas. It was an excellent meal and all ate their fill. A rain storm came up during and after dinner, bringing into action our great "shuttle" service. This service was very popular and continued for the remainder of the reunion. Many thanks to Captains Buice, Doolittle, Eames and Outland, Mrs. Whittaker and Mrs. Holliman for the deluxe "shuttle" service.

Neither the hour of the evening nor the dampness of the night crimped the enthusiasm of the DGW reunion members but rather they seemed to inspire many to continue the revelry and fun throughout the entire night until the dawn. The first order of events Saturday morning was getting properties and possessions paired up with their rightful owners.



There was a brief Board of Directors meeting Saturday morning followed by the election of officers for President and Vice-President. Captains Bill Fry and Tex Buice were re-elected to serve for the forthcoming year. This re-election was accepted with appreciation and gratitude and with the tact understanding that neither will be available for nomination or election to an office for the year 1971.

Immediately following the election of officers, Delta Golden wings was again hose for a fine brunch at the general dining room in the Villas. This served as a sort of farewell function as it was the last official act of the reunion.

During the numerous meetings of the Executive Board on November 18-22, 1969, the following resolution was adopted:

BE IT RESOLVED; that Association policy be formulated by the Executive Committee and presented to the next Executive Board for action, and,

BE IT RESOLVED; that the Air Line Pilot magazine shall be sent to all retired pilots effective immediately.

Also from the published minutes of a later meeting of the Executive Committee held on December 16, 1969: Services to be provided retired members.

*The Executive Committee reviewed the action of the Executive Board at its November 1969 meeting directing that policy be formulated by the Executive Committee on this subject for presentation to the Executive Board for action. Determining that the subject matter required more study and investigation than could be developed by the Executive Committee in session, the following resolution was unanimously adopted on a motion by Goss and was seconded by Ciancetta.*

*RESOLVED; that subcommittee of the Executive Committee comprised of the Vice-President of the Regions IV and V and the Secretary-Treasurer of the Association be hereby appointed to study and make recommendations to the Executive Committee concerning services to be furnished retired pilots for its review and submission to the Executive Board (excerpt, Delta Golden Wings Newsletter, Vol. 1, No. 5, April 1970)*

By July 1970 the membership had increased to a total of 87 including the following members:

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| 1. Glen F. Doolittle and Billie         | 9. Harry W. King and Jessie               |
| 2. W. F. "Fenn" Shillito and Patricia   | 10. Alfred O. King and Marion             |
| 3. J. R. "Jack" Reeves and June         | 11. F. J. "Fritz" Schwaemmle and Florence |
| 4. A. C. "Andy" Gibson and Inez         | 12. R. P. Gadbois and Doris               |
| 5. H. M. "Ole" Olson and Ann            | 13. Wayne Akers and Kay                   |
| 6. H. W. "Hal" Harbican and Ann El Nora | 14. R. S. Nelson and Ruth                 |
| 7. George L. Phillips and Barbara       | 15. Carter Haas and Jo                    |
| 8. Robert O. Lewis and Francis          | 16. T. P. "Pre" Ball and Teresa           |

KEPT ME WHEN BETTY  
WAS BORN, N.D. 1940

As the new President of Delta Air Lines, William Thomas Beebe was conferred as the second Lifetime Honorary Member of the Delta Golden Wings under the provisions of Article III, Section 2.