



## **Mile High Flight 18**

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20 Mar 2009

From: Flight Captain, Order of Daedalians, 18th Flight Mile High

To: LT GEN BRETT M. DULA

National Commander and Chairman, Board of Directors

Order of Daedalians

Post Office Box 249

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Subj: Order of Daedalian Bylaws: TENETS and OBJECTIVES

Encl: (1) Recommendation Regarding the TENETS

(2) Recommendation Regarding the OBJECTIVES

This letter is to urge the Board of Directors to reconsider the changes to the Order's Bylaws that were approved 1 January 2004. These changes pertained to Tenets and Objectives.

The officers and members of 18th Flight Mile High have thoroughly reviewed the 2004 Bylaws changes and have concluded that, with two exceptions, the Bylaws should be returned to their pre-2004 form. The enclosed Recommendations include specific comments and rationale for our strongly held position. The Recommendation Regarding the OBJECTIVES also addresses the aforementioned exceptions; it endorses the new Objective "Recognize exceptional performance by military pilots," and includes proposed replacement language for the pre-2004 Objective relating to membership.

We in Denver are particularly sensitive to the attrition-driven challenges faced by the Order of Daedalians and other veterans' organizations. We believe these challenges place paramount importance on perpetuating the majority of the concepts and prescriptions for action conveyed in the pre-2004 Objectives. In our experience, they are crucial to the continued viability of our fraternity. We further believe the changes approved in 2004 weaken rather than strengthen our collective expression of these concepts and prescriptions.

Thank you, Sir, for your assistance in bringing our concerns to the attention of the Board.

DONALD O. NEARY  
COL, USAF (Ret)

## RECOMMENDATION REGARDING THE TENETS

THAT as soon as possible but no later than December 31, 2009, the National Board of Directors publish a change to the Bylaws of the Order of Daedalians approved 1 January 2004 as follows:

Correct Article II, TENETS AND OBJECTIVES, 2.01 TENETS, which, as currently published, misstates the Order's SECOND Tenet.

Incorrect language: To be worthy of the trust and confidence of a fellow Daedalian.

Correct language: To be worthy of the trust and confidence of fellow Daedalians.

### BACKGROUND AND RATIONALE.

1. The authoritative source for the correct rendering of the Tenets is the Promise of a Daedalian, around which the Order was formed at Maxwell Field on the evening of March 26, 1934. The attachment is a first-hand account of that event by LTG Harold George, the first to recite it. The underlined text conveys the significance of the Promise at the very moment of the Order's creation and throughout its history.
2. The Tenets of the Order are historically significant, constitute the bedrock of the organization and should not be subject to change.
3. The revised SECOND TENET language was not incorporated in the 2004 Flight Manual, which accurately quotes the Tenets on its first page and within the Promise of a Daedalian delineated in Appendix B, INDUCTION.
4. Nor has the revised SECOND TENET language been integrated into the on-line Application for Named Membership, which correctly requires that applicants promise to "forever abide by the Tenets of the Order of Daedalians: First, to place Nation above self; second, to be worthy of the trust and confidence of fellow Daedalians."
5. The phrase "a fellow Daedalian" is more ambiguous than is the traditional phrase "fellow Daedalians," the precise meaning of which is made clear to prospective members when the SECOND TENET is defined by the administering officer during the Induction ceremony: "Your conduct in your relations with other members of this order shall be irreproachable."
6. Because neither the Induction script nor the Membership application were changed to reflect the revised SECOND TENET language, applicants and inductees relying on these published documents have continued to sign and recite the Promise and its included Tenets in their traditional form -- as if the January 1, 2004 change to the Bylaws had not occurred.
7. The SECOND TENET as it appears in the current Bylaws should be returned to its original form.

ATTACHMENT: Origins of the Order of Daedalians

## Origins of The Order of Daedalians

Lieutenant General Harold L. George, USAF (Ret)

**I HAVE** participated in many of the key events in U.S. Air Force history, including the bombing tests that led to the sinking of the German battleship *Ostfriesland* by Army Air Service bombers on 21 July 1921. These tests were designed to settle a debate between the U.S. Navy and the nation's fledgling air arm over whether an aircraft could sink battleships.

The feat was accomplished under the leadership of General William "Billy" Mitchell. To carry out the test, Mitchell created the First Provisional Air Brigade at Langley Field, Virginia. I was one of the 125 officers (most of them first lieutenants) in this unit, which brought together at Langley the entire bombardment strength of the Air Service: two Handley Page and eighteen Martin bombers. Many of us in the brigade had earned our wings during World War I and had flown in that war.

Naturally, we were all elated at our success in sinking the *Ostfriesland*. So was General Mitchell; and before leaving for Washington the next day, he congratulated us for the wonderful job we had done and stated that he was proud of us. Then he said we must follow the example of the officers of the Continental Army who (six years after they had defeated General Cornwallis at Yorktown) assembled in New York and created the Society of the Cincinnati. This organization took its name from the legendary Roman farmer Cincinnatus who left his plow when Rome was in danger, armed himself, and fought bravely in defense of his country until Rome defeated her enemy; then he returned to his plow. The Society of the Cincinnati elected General George Washington as its first president. Today, the Society of the Cincinnati is the most exclusive military organization in our country. General Mitchell said that we who were the first Americans to fly our country's airplanes in time of war should create a similar organization that would cause our achievements to be remembered forever.

During the next week, we all returned to our various stations. We tried to establish a system of communications but doing so was difficult. We exchanged letters, but there was no location to serve as a focal point about which an organization might coalesce. Then, in 1931, the Air Corps Tactical School was moved from Langley to Maxwell Field, Alabama, and the number of students in the school was increased significantly. Many of the students who passed through the school during the 1930s had been commissioned pilots during World War I.

In the fall of 1933, eleven of us World War I veterans organized an ad hoc committee at Maxwell and pledged that we would draw up a constitution and establish a framework for the kind of organization we had been dreaming of since Billy Mitchell had mentioned the Society of the Cincinnati in 1921. This ad hoc committee held eleven meetings in my quarters because I was the senior instructor in air tactics and strategy, while the other ten were students.

One of our problems was to select a suitable name. One member of the committee had an uncle who was an instructor of history at a large eastern college. He called him via phone and told him of our efforts to select a name for our organization. We thought that somewhere in history there would be a legend about flying that would suggest an appropriate name. His uncle considered the matter a challenge and said that he would discuss it with his colleagues. A week later he called back and described the ancient Greek legend of Daedalus who supposedly was the first man to fly. He and his colleagues suggested the "Order of Daedalians." The name satisfied the ad hoc committee completely. In the meantime, we had drafted the preamble and almost completed the constitution for the organization.

There was no problem in determining the basic requirement for membership. It was "those officers who first flew their country's airplanes in time of war." However, when had World War I ended? With the armistice of 11 November 1918? With the signing of the peace treaty? Or with the ratification of the treaty by the Senate?

There was only one date when World War I ended insofar as the ad hoc committee was concerned, and that was when the shooting ceased--the eleventh hour of the eleventh day of the eleventh month in 1918. Four years had elapsed between the armistice and the ratification of the peace treaty by the U.S. Senate. During those four years, many officers had transferred into the Air Service from other branches of the Army. And many ground officers who had been assigned to the Air Service during the war were given pilot training after the armistice. None of these officers had flown their country's airplanes in time of war. After much discussion, the armistice date was accepted as part of the criteria for membership in the organization we were creating.

Thus, the ad hoc committee unanimously agreed on the name, the Order of Daedalians: that the war had ended on Armistice Day, 1918; and that eligibility for membership required a rating of heavier-than-air pilot and a commission in the regular Army not later than 11 November 1918. Having decided on these precepts, the ad hoc committee voted to invite all officers at Maxwell Field who met the eligibility requirements to gather in the forum of the Air Corps Tactical School to finalize plans for an Order of Daedalians.

The meeting took place at 7:00 in the evening on 26 March 1934. Thirty-five officers were present, including the ad hoc committee members. As the chairman of the ad hoc committee and the Director of the Department of Tactics and Strategy, I chaired the meeting.

I began by reviewing the eleven meetings that had been held at my quarters. I also recalled for them the sinking of the *Ostfriesland* and told of General Mitchell's strong recommendation that we create an organization of fliers patterned after the Society of the Cincinnati. Then I told them how we had chosen the name "Order of Daedalians" and most particularly what we had decided with regard to the end of World War I.

I went over everything in detail so that all thirty-five of us present would understand what we were trying to do. I then said: "If anyone here in this room does not wish to become a Daedalian, he is privileged to leave." I waited a full minute but no one left.

Then Lieutenant Roland Birn, the secretary of the ad hoc committee, said: "Captain George, hold up your right hand." He then had me recite the promise of a Daedalian. Then I asked the remaining thirty-four officers to stand and raise their right hand, and I administered the promise of a Daedalian to them en masse. This ceremony was followed by the election of officers. They were: Captain Harold L. George (Wing Commander), Captain Odas Moon (Vice Wing Commander), Captain Charles Y. Banfill (Secretary), and Captain Charles T. Skow (Treasurer).

Thus, the Order of Daedalians was formally organized at that meeting at Maxwell Field in the spring of 1934. It had been thirteen years since General Mitchell had earnestly recommended that we follow the example of the officers of the Continental Army and organize a society of those officers who "first flew their country's airplanes in time of war." The criteria established for membership made the Daedalians a very exclusive organization, for at the time of its creation there were only 346 heavier than-air pilots who had received their pilot rating not later than the Armistice of 1918. Two years after the founding of the order, all except two of these pilots had become members.

That was the situation until after the end of World War II when General Ira C. Eaker, General Claude A. Duncan, and I were named to make recommendations concerning changes in the constitution that would prevent the order from becoming a last-member organization. We recommended that eligibility for membership be changed so as to open the Daedalian society to anyone with a commission in any of the military forces of the United States who held a rating of heavier-than-air pilot. Further, membership was opened to those officers who had received their commissions and pilot ratings before the World War I armistice but who had never become officers in the regular Army.

While these new membership criteria modified the original concept of the order, they made possible an increase in the membership from less than 400 to its present size of 14,000. Thus we now have a national fraternity of commissioned military pilots.

*Laguna Hills, California*

This memoir is based on my own recollection, information obtained from the Report of Chief of Air Service for 1921, certain documents and other reports relating to the bombing exercises furnished by the Chief of Staff, USAF, and the minutes of the order of Daedalians.

H.L.G

## RECOMMENDATION REGARDING THE OBJECTIVES

THAT as soon as possible but no later than December 31, 2009, the National Board of Directors publish a change to the Bylaws of the Order of Daedalians approved 1 January 2004 as follows:

Restore Article II, TENETS AND OBJECTIVES, 2.02 OBJECTIVES to the form in which they existed prior to the 1 January 2004 change, with the following two exceptions:

1. Reword the membership Objective to read: "To actively recruit qualified new members to perpetuate the traditions and prestige of the Order, accomplish its stated Objectives and carry on the legacy of our Founding Members and all who have flown in defense of our nation."
2. Retain the current Objective: "Recognize exceptional performance by military pilots."

RATIONALE. Generally, the OBJECTIVES that existed prior to 1 January 2004 were more visionary and enduring than their successors, which tend to be vague, transitory slogans. New Objective number 6 is a welcome exception. Specific comments pertaining to each revision appear in the attached comparison of the OBJECTIVES before and after the 1 January 2004 Bylaws change.

ATTACHMENT: Comparison of and comments on the Objectives of the Order of Daedalians before and after January 1, 2004.

COMPARISON OF AND COMMENTS ON

**The Objectives of  
the Order of Daedalians**  
BEFORE/AFTER JANUARY 1, 2004

BEFORE: To encourage military aerospace activities to ensure that the United States of America maintains its freedom and status among nations of the world;

AFTER: Promote Air & Space Power in support of National Defense.

*Comment: Grand scope and vision of BEFORE version reduced to a euphemistic slogan.*

BEFORE: To assist in the education of deserving persons in the fields of aerospace engineering and flight;

AFTER: Educate Americans to the advantages of Air & Space Power.

*Comment: Change suggests that awarding scholarships is no longer a Daedalian Objective. Further, "educate Americans" does not measure up to education assistance.*

BEFORE: To encourage young people who receive valuable aerospace training to make the military their career;

AFTER: Promote the rewards of a career in military aviation to young Americans.

*Comment: "Military aviation" too narrowly defines the purpose of this Objective, while "young Americans" too broadly defines its target population.*

BEFORE: To encourage and stimulate the younger generations in developing those attributes that are the basis of the Tenets of the Order;

AFTER: Honor the legacy of our Founder Members and all who have flown in defense of our nation.

*Comment: "Honor the legacy of Founder Members" is too vague and diminishes the higher aspiration of encouraging development of patriotism, integrity and character.*

BEFORE: To encourage and support activities that will improve methods of flight and flight safety;

AFTER: Encourage and recognize improvements in Flight Safety, Weapons development, Combat Support and the overall effectiveness of Air & Space Power.

*Comment: New language diverts the intended focus of this Objective away from flight safety; recall that the first award given by the Order was the Foulois Memorial flight safety award. This revision also ignores the Civilian Pilot/Aircrew award given in concert with the FAA.*

BEFORE: To increase the membership of the Order (to near the maximum of those eligible) so that the weight of its membership and the prestige of the Order will ensure perpetuity and augment the capabilities of the Order to effect its Objectives.

AFTER: Eliminated.

*Comment: The goal of actively seeking new members remains an indispensable activity of the Order and each of its flights. We recommend the following new language: "To actively recruit qualified new members to perpetuate the traditions and prestige of the Order, accomplish its stated Objectives and carry on the legacy of our Founding Members and all who have flown in defense of our nation."*

ADDED 1 JAN 2004: Recognize exceptional performance by military pilots.

*Comment: Excellent addition.*