



# *Dirigo Flyer*

Newsletter of the Maine Aviation Historical Society  
PO Box 2641, Bangor, Maine 04402 • 207-941-6757 • 1-877-280-MAHS (in state)  
[www.maineairmuseum.org](http://www.maineairmuseum.org) [mam@maineairmuseum.org](mailto:mam@maineairmuseum.org)

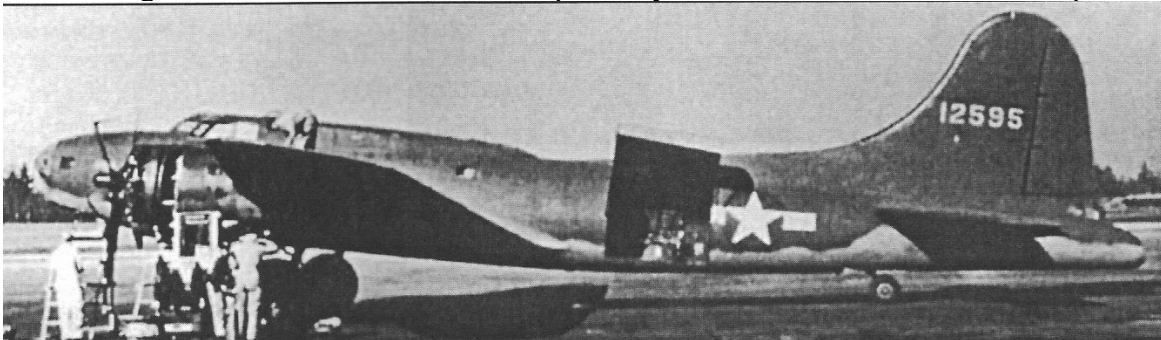
Volume XIV No. 5

September - October 2006

Welcome to the fifth issue of 2006 for our now bimonthly newsletter. We are running an aircraft article that previously ran in the Old LaGrange publication in 2005 along with some odds and ends that were submitted some time ago.. This publication is produced by Moosehead Communications of Greenville and is used with their permission.

## **Rare Old Bomber Found in LaGrange**

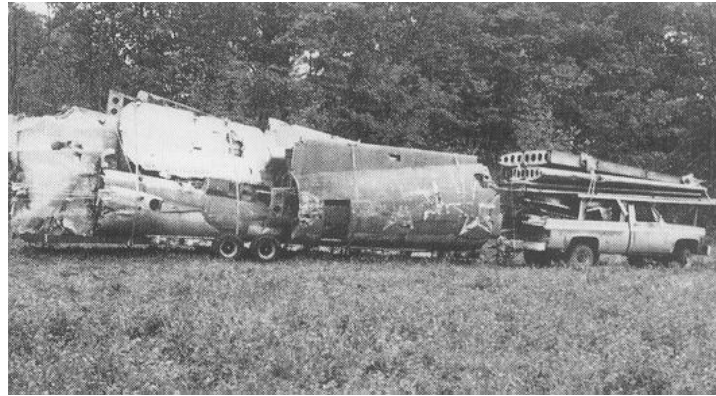
This is about a World War II B-17 Flying Fortress bomber (B-17E Serial No. 41-2595). The aircraft was purchased at Dow Field in Bangor for salvage after the war was over. The owner was none other than Earl Bishop Sr. of LaGrange. The “kids” mentioned were probably Earl Jr., John and Albert Bishop.



This story is of the rare B-17E located in Illinois. Its rarity may have been its salvation. As the F and G models were being phased into use during the war, the older E models were pressed into other services. On August 17, 1943, serial number 41-2595 was taken to Patterson Field in Ohio to be converted from the standard E model to a cargo carrier as part of the C-108 program. The 41-2595 was the second B-17 selected for the program to become an XC-108A. Modifications included stripping armor and armament, taking out the bomb racks, sealing the bomb bay doors and putting a floor over them. Other changes included moving the radioman and navigator behind the pilot and copilot in the area where the top turret had previously been located, opening up the bulkhead door in the rear of the bomb bay leading to the former radio room. Hardware was added for litters, cargo, or troops. The most obvious external change was the addition of a large hinged door that lifted upwards where the left waist gunner previously fought. The conversion was finished and was ready to enter

back int service March 2, 1944. In late March, 41-2595 was sent to India. It returned to the U.S. via the North Atlantic ferry route in October 1944 to Dow Field at Bangor, Maine. After service at Dow Field, it was authorized for salvage. For most WWII aircraft this would have been the end of the story. For 41-2595, however, it was just the start of a long dormant stage.

The owner of an auto junkyard near Dow Field was the successful bidder for salvaging the B-17, as well as a B-25, a C-47, and an O-47. His kids went at the B-25 and cut it up into small pieces. Presumably the C-47 and the O-47 met the same fate as there is no evidence of their existence after this time. The B-17 started down the same path, but for some inexplicable reason, the effort was abandoned. It is not known whether this was due to the heavy construction of the B-17 or the XC-108A modifications. It remained in the state, forgotten for over 35 years. In 1985 a vintage airplane buff moved the pieces of the XC-108A to Galt Airport in Illinois. As of 2002 the aircraft was under restoration. Pictures of the restoration effort can be located on the web.



41-2595 packed up for transport to Illinois

---

## PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Dirigo Flyer is published bi-monthly by the Maine Aviation Historical Society, a non-profit (501c3) corp. PO Box 2641, Bangor, ME 04402-2641.  
[www.maineairmuseum.org](http://www.maineairmuseum.org)  
[mam@maineairmuseum.org](mailto:mam@maineairmuseum.org)  
 1-877-280-MAHS (Maine)  
 207-941-6757

### ASSOCIATION OFFICERS

**President**  
 Les Shaw  
 Brewer, Maine 04413  
[les\\_shaw@umit.maine.edu](mailto:les_shaw@umit.maine.edu)

**Vice President**  
 Norm Houle  
 PO Box 563  
 Barrington, NH 03825-0563  
[Livefreeandfly@aol.com](mailto:Livefreeandfly@aol.com)

**Recording Secretary**  
 William Townsend  
 12 Spring St.  
 Bar Harbor, ME 04609  
[townsend10@verizon.net](mailto:townsend10@verizon.net)

**Treasurer**  
 Joe Quinn  
 Levant, Maine 04456  
[jwquinn@adelphia.net](mailto:jwquinn@adelphia.net)

### DIRECTORS

Dan See  
 Dick Johnson  
 Stan Smith  
 Leo Boyle  
 Al Cormier  
 Jim Nelligan  
 Michael Cornett  
 Scott Grant

This has been a good year for the Museum. On October 14th we closed for the winter and had a nice picnic. I am proud to announce that this year we have made enough money to cover all the basic costs for the Museum. We had budgeted a moderate growth from last year that was predicting a loss of \$1,000 but we have done even better than expected. I have to publicly thank those who work so hard to make the Society and Museum a success. In particular, Jim Nelligan, Hank Marois, and Mike Cornett who worked almost every weekend this past year to keep us open.

We are planning the November Members Meeting on Saturday November 11, 2006 at 10:00 AM. If it is extremely cold we may move to the General Aviation Building.

It is election time again and we need to vote for the President, Vice President, Secretary, Treasurer, and three Board positions. Please send any nominations to us before the first of November. We will close nominations and announce the slate of officers at the November Meeting and vote in December. You may throw your hat in the ring or nominate someone else who you feel would be a good choice.

At the last Board meeting we voted to attempt the heat the Museum again this winter. We will top off the fuel tanks and set the temperature at 40 degrees. Last winter, we lost some photographs due to the moisture from condensation. We are hoping this basic heat will keep that from happening again. We will be closing and winterizing the building at the end of October.

---

## ELECTIONS

Positions to be voted on are President, Vice-President, Secretary, and Treasurer. There are three board of directors positions that expire this year and must be filled. Current officers are President – Les Shaw, Vice-president Norm Houle, Secretary –Bill Townsend, Treasurer-Joe Quinn. The three board members whose terms expire in 2006 are Leo Boyle, Bill Townsend, and Richard Johnson.

---

**Memoirs: *With an Angel By My Side*** by member Alfred Cormier.

His flying life as told by Al and available exclusively from the Maine Air Museum.  
 \$16 at the museum, \$20.00 via mail order. To order, visit, call, or email the museum.

*The United States Air Force in Maine, Progeny of the Cold War* by John Garbinski.

Another exclusive book from the Maine Aviation Historical Society. Softbound, 134 pages, 151 illustrations. \$20.00 (plus \$3.00 postage and handling). To order, call or email the museum.

---

## Buy a Brick and Support the Maine Air Museum

The Maine Air Museum is proud to announce the new Memorial Pathway Program. To successfully carry out and reach the museum vision, and to help refurbish Building 98, the Maine Air Museum needs the financial support of businesses and public community leaders and individual private citizens. To this end, the museum board has established a means for receiving your monetary donation and recognizing your gift permanently in the museum pathway and wall of honor. These donations are fully deductible.

Details available on our web site: [www.maineairmuseum.org](http://www.maineairmuseum.org) or from the museum by request.

---

### STATUS OF GRANT APPLICATIONS

Grant Director Hank Marois reports that as of October there have been 49 grant applications. Sixteen have been denied, seven were returned by the Post Office as undeliverable, one has requested more information, five have taken us under consideration, and twenty are still pending an answer.

---

### Personality.....Ann Wood



Ann Watson Wood, flying a Piper J-3 on floats, broke the male stranglehold at Bowdoin College. Perhaps without knowing its implication, she became the first woman to earn academic credit at the institution since it founding in 1794. It became possible only upon President Franklin Roosevelt's establishment of the Civil Pilot Training Program on December 27, 1938, to encourage growth in the pilot pool as war clouds loomed. She had graduated from D'Youville College in Buffalo, New York with a degree in English, followed by completion of CPT pilot Ground School in Augusta in 1939 and '40. Her mother, being a frugal type, it was said, and knowing a good thing when she saw it, suggested that Ann attempt to follow her brother, who had just been accepted into the Bowdoin CPT Program while still a Notre Dame student.

Ann submitted her application to Bowdoin, and waited.

The college sat on her application for two weeks while attempting to attract another male. An advertisement in the Brunswick newspaper, offering the free pilot training CPT provided, failed to bear fruit – nobody showed. The Bowdoin dilemma related to require class size. Desired size was 15 students with a minimum of 12

required for the government contract. As the deadline approached, Bowdoin's President Kenneth Sills, perhaps panicking, approved her application. As reported in the spring 2000 edition of the *Bowdoin Orient*, Ann remembers him saying. "We can't wait. She'll be down there by the water, and nobody will know she's there."

She was there, of course, and she did attract attention. A brother and a sibling admitted as the last students to a flight class of 12 was, of itself, cause for notice in those days, but raising eyebrows was that the sibling was a female at Bowdoin. Although widely accepted by her fellow students and the college as a whole, another quote from the *Bowdoin Orient* called her attendance, "an encroachment upon tradition."

Actually, Miss Ann Wood, as she was invariably referred to, had the best of it all. Since she had completed the pilot ground school earlier, driving three nights a week from her home in Waldoboro to Augusta, she had a “leg-up” on the other students. While they pounded the ground-school books for 72 hours, she spent time becoming acquainted with the airplanes, and flying, down by the New Meadows River. The aircraft used was the 65 horsepower Piper J-3 on floats, enabling Bowdoin to brag it was the only CPT program in New England using seaplanes. It was, probably, one of the very few in the country.



Student pilot George and Ann Wood in the Civil Pilot Training Program, At Bowdoin College, Brunswick, Maine, July 1940. Photo Courtesy of Bowdoin College Archives.

The chief flight instructor, Frank Simpson, resident of Bath and a veteran pilot, told a reporter for the *Lewiston Journal*, in July, 1940, during the early days of her training, that Ann Wood was on her way to becoming “a crack flyer.” She completed the CPT flight program and obtained her Private Pilot License that summer. She continued her flying and flight training, some of which was in Waterville, earning her Commercial and Instructor Pilot Certificates, and returned to Bowdoin in the summer of 1941, this time as a flight instructor.

It was during this period that Jacqueline Cochran was formulating a plan to enlist and provide women pilots to the British Air Transport Auxiliary, relieving the shortage of pilot in England. Reacting to a suggestion from General Hap Arnold, she contacted 300 female pilots with 350, or more, flight hours, requesting an expression of interest. Ann Wood applied for inclusion, but was originally ignored. Her total flight hours barely met the minimum, as compared with the much higher flight times of many of the applicants. They, however, tended to be older, married, and with families. Considering this, 40 candidates were selected, including the then 23 year old Ann Wood. After an interview in New York, she went to Montreal, with the last group of five, undergoing Royal Canadian Air Force training and a check-out by a British pilot, where their numbers were whittled town to 24. The successful members shipped out to Liverpool, holding an eighteen month contract.

At Luton Airfield, under Jacqueline Cochran’s direction, they underwent a three month training period on five basic aircraft types, intended to prepare them for the numerous aircraft models they would deliver to operating bases in England and, eventually, mainland Europe. From Luton, Ann Wood was assigned to Ratcliffe Airfield in Leicester, where she ferried Spitfires form the factory to operating bases. IN 1944, after two years of delivering Spitfires, Mosquitoes, Hurricanes, Lancasters, B-17s, B-24s, and about 75 other types around England, she started crossing the channel, making deliveries in France. Of the 700 members of the British Air Transport Auxiliary, 173 lost their lives, 14 of these were women. Overall, Ann made more than 900 aircraft deliveries. After VE-day she finished up flying champagne to officers’ messes throughout Europe.

She remained in England after the war, working as assistant to American’s first civil air attaché in London, but after six months returned to Boston, where she married A. Jackson Kelly, in 1949. They returned to London, where he was European Regional Director for Pan American Airways.

Four years later, Ann joined Northeast Airline in Boston, first as Director of Public Relations, and later as Special Assistant to the Chairman, where she played a key role in Washington for Northeast in its request and award of the New York/Florida route. After 12 years with Northeast, she became part of Pan American’s Boston management team, working as manager of media relations, and liaison with business, government and community leaders. In 1978, she moved with Pan Am to New York, becoming that company’s first female Staff Vice President, responsible for government relations, corporate planning on public issues, and international airport charges.

In Pan Am’s failing days Ann retuned to Boston as Assistant to the President of Air New England, responsible for all public affairs, community, and government relations until 1987, when that company ceased operations. She continued her activity in aviation, as a consultant, and service on the FAA’s Woman’s Advisory Committee on Aviation, to which she had been appointed by President Johnson, the International World Conference of the Federation Aeronautiqa Internationale, National Aeronautics Association, the Aero club of New England, and numerous other organizations.

In 1946, in recognition of her service to the British Air Transport Auxiliary, she was awarded the King's Medal by King George the IV, presented by the British Ambassador in Washington.

One of her later projects was to assemble her diaries, memorabilia, and wartime correspondence, that were sent to the Hoover Institute for War and Peace at Stanford University, with copies to the Texas Woman's University.

She continued to fly as long as she could. On March 31, 2005, she flew her Piper Arrow from Beverly, Mass, to Martha's Vineyard with her son and two friends for lunch, in celebration of her 87th birthday.

As so tersely and coldly stated in *Guardian Unlimited Obituaries* of June 19, 2006:

“Ann Wood, aviator, born march 31, 1918, died May 14, 2006”

Story by James McCarthy © 2006

---

**FACTOID:** (Editor's note: In spite of the use of this term instead of "trivia" it has now become accepted usage so accept it!!)

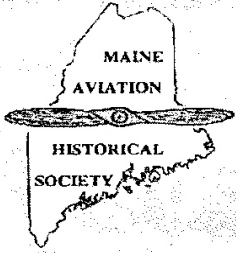
Lewiston native Frances Auclair, 55, became Maine's first woman general when she was promoted to Brigadier General and appointed ME Air National Guard Chief of Staff. Her military service began in 1972 as a navy hospital corpsman. As a University of Southern Maine graduate, she became the first US Air National Guard non-rated vice wing commander in the nation in 2000.

---



2003 Great State of Maine Air Show





Maine Aviation Historical Society  
Maine Air Museum \* Membership Form

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City, State, Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Special Interests: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Dues are for one year,  
and membership will  
expire in the month you  
joined.

Annual membership  
includes six newsletters!

Mail payment to:  
Maine Aviation  
Historical Society  
PO Box 2641  
Bangor, ME 04402-  
2641

Membership	Dues	Benefits
Regular	\$25 annual	Newsletter, Decal, Museum Admission
Family	\$35 annual	Newsletter, Decal, Museum Admission
Corporate	\$100 annual	Newsletter, Decal, Museum Admission
Supporting	\$100 annual	Newsletter, Decal, Museum Admission, 4 free passes
Lifetime	\$500*	Newsletter, Decal, Lifetime Membership Number, Museum Admission, 10 free passes

We need volunteers-docents, mechanics, maintenance, librarians and exhibit specialists, etc.

\_\_\_ Please call me. I want to be active in the organization.

\_\_\_ I cannot join now, but would like to help. I am enclosing a check for \$\_\_\_\_\_.

Contributions over \$20 are tax deductible within the limits of the law.

\_\_\_ I wish to support and obtain membership by purchasing a memorial brick.

**DIRIGO FLYER**  
**MAINE AVIATION HISTORICAL SOCIETY**  
**PO BOX 2641**  
**BANGOR, MAINE 04402-2641**

**FIRST CLASS MAIL**