

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 mam@maineairmuseum.org

Volume XVI No. 3

May - June 2008

This is the busy time of the year for the Maine Aviation Historical Society. The Maine Air Museum is open, visitors are impressed by our collection and the word is getting out that it is a place to visit when in the Bangor area. Our monthly meetings are well attended and donated items for the museum are coming in at an increasing rate.

This newsletter is running a bit late, as usual, mostly due to the pace of summer work which keeps the editor busier than usual. At the invitation of the Navy the editor just spent a week at the U.S. Navy Air Missile Test Range Outlying Field on San Nicolas Island, the outermost of California's Channel Islands. This is a Navy controlled island, an outlying field for China Lake and was once a base for drone aircraft. Aviation relics abounded, wrecked F9Fs, various engines (F4Fs, B-24s, etc.) scattered across the sand dunes, and various mothballed helos and F4 Phantoms waiting to be used as targets. We were treated to the launch of a Titan rocket from Vandenberg AFB which passed directly overhead on its way to orbit and accompanied by a nice sonic boom and a good view of first stage separation.

Maine Aviators

...by James E. McCarthy © 2007

ROBERT A. RUSHWORTH – Maine Astronaut

Robert Aitken Rushworth was born in Madison, Maine on October 9, 1924. He graduated from Madison Memorial High School in 1942 and Hebron Academy the following year. In 1943 he enlisted in the Army Air Corp, where he completed flight training and was commissioned a 2nd Lieutenant in 1944. In 1945 he was assigned to the Combat Cargo Squadron in China-Burma-India, where he flew C-47s and C-45s across the Himalayas.

After release from active duty in 1946, he became a member of the Reserves and entered the University of Maine, graduating in 1951, with a degree in Mechanical Engineering. That year he was recalled to active duty as a F-80 pilot with the 49th Fighter-Interceptor Squadron at Dow Air Force Base in Bangor.

In 1954 he earned a degree in Aeronautical Engineering from the Air Force Institute of Technology at Wright-Patterson Air Force Base, followed by attendance at the Air Force Experimental Test Flight School at Edwards Air Force Base.

While at Edwards, Rushworth test flew Voodoos, TF-102 Delta Daggers, F-104s, Starfighters, other jet aircraft, and then the X-15, the first manned re-entry vehicle, predating the Space Shuttle. He flew the X-15, for years the world's fastest winged aircraft, a record 34 times, exceeding Mach 6 (4,000 mph), reaching an altitude of 285,000 feet, exceeding 50 miles, for which he was awarded the astronaut rating, only the second pilot so honored. The X-15, half airplane, half rocket was launched from beneath the wing of a B-52.

Rushworth served in World War II, Korea, and Vietnam. In Vietnam, as deputy commander of the 12th Tactical Fighter Wing, he flew 189 combat missions. As reported in the Aerospace Walk of Honor:

He later served as the director of the AGM-65 maverick missile program, as commander of the 4950th Test Wing, Inspector General of the AF Systems Command, Commander of the AF Test and Evaluation Center and Vice-Commander of Aeronautical Systems Division.

He was rated as command pilot astronaut, with more than 6,500 flight hours in more than 50 different aircraft types. His military decorations and awards included the Legion of Merit with oak leaf cluster, Distinguished Flying Cross with two oak leaf clusters, Meritorious Service Medal, Air Medal with 10 oak leaf clusters and Air Force Commendation Medal. Robert Rushworth advanced through the ranks until he was promoted to major general in August of 1975. He retired in 1981 as Vice-Commander of the Aeronautical Systems Division at Wright-Patterson AFB in Ohio. He was inducted into the National Aviation Hall of Fame, the International Space Hall of Fame and the Aerospace Walk of Honor.

This illustrious American and son of Maine died, at home, on March 17, 1993.



PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

I would like to thank those of you that have faithfully renewed your membership, the majority of which come due early to mid-year annually. Your officers and board members are dedicated to advancing MAHS's stature as the prominent Maine aviation heritage resource, and as a valued asset to communities and at aviation events throughout the state. This is primarily possible because of the support of our individual members since MAHS and MAM has limited alternative means of generating funds for operating expenses and other financial obligations. As such, any growth of the organization and /or expansion in the case of the museum becomes secondary but nevertheless remains important objectives. So we all need to add to our ranks and for organization.

Further, we encourage our membership remains

I also want to highlight in of several months during 60 years ago was the Air Guard. In that post



states to be selected for deployment of the new Lockheed F-80 Shooting Star. The other Guard Units were California & Nebraska, and in Maine's case the F-80's would replace the F-47(P-47)'s then in use, and would compliment the jets being deployed to the regular Air Force Squadrons at Dow & Limestone against the perceived escalation of the Cold War threat.

anyone not current now to please renew so strong and active.

this issue a historical period over the course 1948. The significance of that point in time introduction of the "Jet Age" to the Maine WWII era, Maine was one of only three

As you might expect those mostly war seasoned Mainers took the transition in stride, but this was a technological leap of grand proportions, substantially more complex than going from one prop driven aircraft to another as was the case with the introduction of previous aircraft of the period. All elements and logistic support had to change in a hurry to support this new turbine powered model with a max speed of 580 mph and range of 1,380 miles. You can find out more about this event by visiting the museum and checking out the original 1948 newspaper spread by the *Portland Sunday Telegram* reporting on the planes, key personnel and units affected. It could bring back some memories, or you may recognize someone in the several photos included with the article, which will remain on display throughout this season. Maybe someone would like to expand on this story and submit it to our Editor for an upcoming issue of the Dirigo Flyer.

2008 Museum Wish List

It has been a couple of years since MAM has produced a "Wish List" of items that would make this season a success and beyond. Please help us out with your donation or your assistance in obtaining:

- Mannequins and/or Dress Makers Forms (many items on hand cannot be displayed at present).
 - Old style gravity feed Aviation Gas Pump.
 - General Aviation Cockpit or partial for interactive children's display.
 - Hollow Core Doors (no lock set hole) for use as display panels.
 - Paint Supplies: New or clean brushes, roller covers, paint trays, masking tape, etc.
 - Hard Board/Poster Board for use in making new transportable (road show) displays.
 - Display cases (plexiglas face/top).
-

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 or from the museum by request.

Now available:

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.

\$16.00 at the museum, \$20.00 via mail. To order, call or email the museum.

"...a great story by a member of the Greatest Generation. Exceptionally good reading, riveting to the end." Bill Townsend
Teacher-in-Space, STS51.

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.

Letters:

Enclosed are some pictures for possible use in the Dirigo Flyer. The picture of the pilot with the helmet is Captain Kenneth E. Ingalls...the photo with Kenneth in the F-80 was probably taken at Dow Air Force Base in 1951 or 1952,

when he was transitioning from being a B-17 pilot to a jet fighter pilot. Kenneth was on his 7th B-17 mission when he was shot down over Germany in WWII.

The Lt. Colonel in the other plane is Harold Hersey of Dover-Foxcroft, who was commanding officer of the 132 Fighter Interceptor Squadron of the Maine Air National Guard. Harold was a P-47 pilot. He was shot down over the English Channel and rescued by the English. The second time he was shot down over France, where he received an injury to an ankle as was taken prisoner by the Germans. Not being a very large man, he escaped through a box car hole that a berserk prisoner had kicked out. Through the underground, he managed to get back to England.

.....Richard Johnson
Dover-Foxcroft



Fighter Pilot by Capt. Al Cormier

I never wanted to be a fighter pilot. During basic pilot training, when we were asked to select the type of plane we wished to fly, I opted for multi-engined aircraft. Accordingly, I graduated in class 44-C at George Field, Illinois, with advanced training in the AT-10, a twin engine, plywood aircraft manufactured by Beech.

We were all granted a ten day leave but mine was cut short by a telegram from my commanding officer advising me to return immediately to base as I had orders for a new assignment. It turned out to be an order sending me and one other classmate directly overseas where I ended up in a troop carrier squadron in China flying C-47s, on the job training if you will.

Returning to the States after 551 combat hours, I was assigned to Bolling AFB in Washington, DC, flying VIP in C-47s and C-45s all over the country until the end of the war when I was discharged. Back to the Univ. of Maine and assigned to the Reserves in Bangor the only aircraft available was an AT-6. Then I heard that the Air National Guard was starting up and looking for pilots and they had a C-47. It didn't take me long to get over to the other side of Dow Air Force Base and sign up. They were only looking for fighter pilots and I had to agree to train as such.



The aircraft was a Republic P-47N, a seven-ton monster powered by an eighteen cylinder, two thousand horsepower engine swinging a four bladed propeller. I spent the next few weeks reading the instruction manual and taking the test. Next was sitting in the cockpit and learning where all the gauges and switches were located so that they could be found blindfolded. Came the day when I was allowed to crank the monster up and take it for my first spin. Set the controls, turn on the switch and hit the starter. At first the prop turned slowly a few times then, with a tremendous roar the engine came to life. Following the control towers instructions, I taxied to the West runway and prepared for takeoff. With my heart pounding I pushed forward on the throttle, remembering to push on the rudder pedal enough to counteract the tremendous thrust of the prop. In no time I was airborne, had the wheels up and was climbing into the blue. That baby could really climb and in no time I reached five thousand feet where I could try a few stalls and get accustomed to whatever quirks this plane might have –very few. After an hour flight I came in for a landing. With it's wide landing gear that plane touched ground nicely and didn't wander. A beautiful plane to fly. What I enjoyed most was the ability to make a tactical approach when coming in for a landing. Fly over the end of the runway, make a 180 degree turn while lowering the gear and flaps and set that baby down.

In the next few months I racked up twenty or more hours enjoying the power and speed of this new toy. It was when the time came to train with other members of the squadron that I began to realize my shortcomings in this realm. Practicing formation flying, something I hadn't done since flying school, brought out my shortcomings. Oh, I was

cautious enough and could stick to the leaders wing but I sensed the unease in other members of the flight when we maneuvered around. I finally decided that the role of fighter pilot was not my destiny and asked to be reassigned. I spent the rest of my tour in the Air National Guard as an Air Installations Officer and when the Guard was re-called for the Korean Conflict I spent most of my time in Michigan at Grenier AFB in the same capacity. But, in the meantime, I was made instructor pilot for the C-47 and I practically owned it. For the rest of my stay in the Guard I made myself available for any cross country flight that was required. The C-47, to my mind, was the best aircraft ever built and I enjoyed every hour I flew.

Hanger Project before Planning Board

Auburn – Plans for a new \$2 million hangar that will be twice the size of any existing hangar at Auburn-Lewiston Municipal airport will come before the Planning Board July 8.

The hanger is intended to be the home of a historic 1950s-era German aircraft initially, then available for other commercial operations once the restoration of the Super Constellation Starliner is finished.

The pad is poured and developer George Schott is just waiting for Planning Board site plan approval before he can begin building the 27,000 square foot hangar for the Starliner aircraft –Germany’s equivalent of Air Force One. Only 44 of the aircraft were ever made. Two of them belonged to an Auburn resident who lived next to the airport and sold them to Lufthansa airline in December.

Lufthansa said it intends to restore one and use the other for parts. Engineers and mechanics from Germany have been at the airport for the past few weeks taking x-rays, scanning and conducting other research before they can actually begin the restoration work. The project is expected to take three to five years.

Pictures

A few of the pictures from the Dirigo Flyer file to round out this issue of the newsletter.



The *Dirigo Flyer* is published bimonthly by the Maine Aviation Historical Society, a non-profit (501c3)corporation. P.O. Box 2641, Bangor, Maine 04402-2641.

Web site: www.maineairmuseum.org email: mam@maineairmuseum.org
1-877-280-MAHS toll free in Maine. 207-941-6757

Association Officers

President: Robert Umberger, Jr. Rockport, ME 04856 rumberge@maine.rr.com

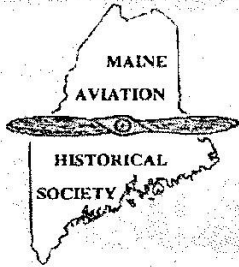
Vice President: John Miller, Newburgh, ME 04444 vintagewings@cs.com

Secretary: William Townsend, Bar Harbor, ME 04609-1330 townsend10@verizon.net

Treasurer: Joe Quinn, Levant, ME 04456, jwquinn@midmaine.com

The Maine Air Museum is located at the 98 Maine Avenue adjacent to the Bangor International Airport.

44° 48' 2.10" North 68° 48' 36.02" West



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, Museum Admission
Family	\$35 annual	Newsletter, Museum Admission
Corporate	\$100 annual	Newsletter, Museum Admission
Supporting	\$100 annual	Newsletter, Museum Admission, .
Lifetime	\$500*	Newsletter, Lifetime Membership Number, Museum Admission,
	* 2 annual \$250 payments	

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, ME 04402-2641