



# *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 XVI No. 5**

**September – October 2008**

This issue of the Flyer will include a few of the shorter submissions that have been recently received. We currently have a few short stories waiting. We are in need of some longer articles concerning Maine aviation history but we can always use some personal stories by and about Maine aviators and associated people about their experiences not necessarily occurring in the State of Maine itself. WWII stories would have priority as these sources are, unfortunately, rapidly fading away. We have a couple of Vietnam tales involving Maine people waiting in the wings but nothing from the Korean Conflict. However if members and readers only prefer articles and stories restricted to Maine only please let us know.

## **Red Pine Grove Airfield (ME21) T11R16 WELS (Dickey), Maine**

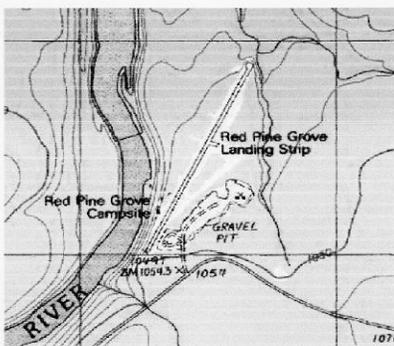
This article was submitted via email and is adapted from the web site *Abandoned & Little-Known Airfields: Northern Maine* by Paul Freeman and updated to 30 Sep 2008.

This little known and apparently abandoned airfield is located in northwestern Maine, only 11 miles from the Canadian border at approximately 46.6 North x 69.79 West.

The Red Pine Grove Airfield was evidently constructed at some point between 1965-1966 as it does not show up on the 1965 Aroostook Sectional Chart. The earliest depiction of the field was on the 1966 Aroostook Sectional Chart and it depicted as “Red Pine Grove” and as a private airfield with a 1,500 ft. unpaved runway.

According to Charles Beam, “Red Pine was originally built by a large paper company.

The 1966 AOPA Airport Directory described Red Pine Grove as having a single 1,500 ft. packed gravel Runway 9/27. It was said to be unattended, private, and closed to the public. The 1970 AOPA Airport Directory described the field in the same manner but added that it was for emergency use only (...David Brooks).



According to Jeremy Williams, “I can offer this about Red Pine Grove: I remember the field was paved sometime in the 1970s as a result of the spruce bud worm epidemic and used as a base for aerial application. There were stories of TBMs and other WW2 aircraft going down in the North Maine Woods not only during WW2 but as result of old aircraft being used in the spraying project.”

Joseph Shovlin reported in 2007, “ I was up at a commercial campground on Ross Lake. One of the employees of the site told me that Red Pines was expanded some 30 years ago for DC-3s which were being used to spray the forest for some sort of wood disease. He said

that it hadn't been used since that time and that the locals would bring their various and sundry autos out and see if they can get them up to 60 mph on the asphalt."

Red Pine Grove apparently gained a paved runway at some point between 1970-1986 as the 1986 USGS topo map depicted the "Red Pine Grove Landing Strip" as having a single 3,000 ft. paved runway. There did not appear to be any buildings associated with the airfield although the "Red Pine Grove Campsite" had one small building depicted on the west side of the runway.

According to an accident report on 5/28/90 a Piper PA-22 was on final approach to Red Pine "at 20' AGL and about midfield of a 3,200' runway, when a go-around was attempted. He determined that he would not be able to clear the trees and elected to land at the end of the runway and roll into the trees."

The airfield was labeled simply as "landing strip" on the 1993 USGS topo map. As of 1998 a tax document the "Red Pine Grove Landing Area" was listed with an airfield code of ME21. The last depiction which has been located of Red Pine as an active airfield was on the 2004 Montreal Sectional Chart. It depicted "Red Pine" as a private airfield having a single 3,200' paved runway.

The Red Pine airfield apparently was abandoned (for reasons unknown) at some point between 2004-05 as it was no longer depicted on the 2005 Sectional Chart or listed among active airfields in the FAA Airport/Facility Directory.

Jonathan Ludlow reported in 2005, "I have just completed a canoe trip down the St. John river in Maine. On the trip I encountered an apparently abandoned strip. The location was about one mile down river from Moody Bridge on the river in T11R16. From the location you will note that this is in Maine's "Unorganized" townships about 80 miles from the nearest paved road. The nearest inhabited location is Daaqam in Quebec. The main runway is north-northeast. The runway is X'ed (marked with closed-runway symbols) at both ends and in the middle. It is in pretty good condition (blacktopped) with only a few frost cracks. The other arm of the V is aligned northeast and is mostly dirt with some evidence of very old blacktop. There is a dirt track to the logging company road at the southwest end of the V. There are several North Maine Woods camping places on the West side of the main runway. These are designated fireplace sites consisting of a fire ring and a picnic table and a lovely North Maine Woods outhouse. As to activity there were several tire marks at the southwest end. I did not inspect the northeast end. On the whole, the setup looked perfect for fly-in hunters, fishermen, or canoe trippers. I very much doubt however if the strip which must have cost many dollars to build was installed for their benefit. It looks too substantial for logging operation support –the logging companies are very good at building stuff that is (only just) good enough – look at their bridges!"

Jeremy Williams reported in 2006, "I have landed at Red Pine many times and find the field still quite usable." Charles Beam reported in 2005, "Several years ago the land was transferred to an environmental outfit. I believe they decided to ban noisy aircraft from their land. Initially they placed boulders at each end. I think the lawyers, fearing a lawsuit should an aircraft make an emergency landing, had the rocks removed and put a white X at each end and in the middle. I flew by there in August and the X's are now yellow. The asphalt looked to be in good shape.

Editor's note: On the current Delorme Atlas, Map 60 simply shows a campsite symbol at the location of Red Pine.

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## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

The October meeting was well attended; in addition to routine business Peter Noddin gave a thorough and interesting presentation about the WWII era C-54 Skymaster crash incident and site located on Fort Mountain, northwest of Mt. Katahdin. The aircraft was one of approximately 1200 C-54's built during the war period. Even now, more than sixty years later mountain and can be reached only by a capped by passing a round an artifact to the museum after having been 40 years. It will now be added to crash site. The meeting was concluded conjunction with closing down the



most of the aircraft remains on the rugged hike. The presentation was from the C-54 which was recently given stored away in the back of a garage for MAM's existing display board for this with a tasty potluck cookout, in museum until next spring.

In order to further control operating costs, the Board agreed with an earlier suggestion that an electric space heater be used to heat the utility area and protect the water pipes instead of using the propane fired furnace. The furnace will still be operational if needed or as a backup

By the time you receive this issue winter will be bearing down on us, and once again it is time to post a slate of candidates to guide the organization and museum through another year. Nominees will have been reviewed and confirmed at the November meeting and are listed in the enclosed ballot. Write-ins are also accepted, as long as you have verified the person you nominate is willing to serve. In the recent past there haven't been many new faces willing to help out as an officer or director, so I encourage other members to come forward and assist in shaping the future of this organization and fulfilling its important mission. You all have talents and ideas to contribute in a capacity beyond that of the general membership, so it's not too late to hear from some more of you.

Finally, the off season meetings will again take place around the state. In November we will gather at Pratt & Whitney's advanced tech production facility in N. Berwick, followed by December's meeting at a Bangor location not yet confirmed. Please check the MAM website for meeting locations and other details throughout the winter months. Remember, all are welcome to attend; these meetings have been interesting, and are a chance to hear other presenters, plus afford you the opportunity to inform the rest of us about your area of the state.

Happy Thanksgiving to all.....Bob Umberger

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## 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.

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### 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, STS-51.

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*The United States Air Force  
in Maine*



*Progeny of the Cold War*  
John C. Garbinski

*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.

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## MUSEUM NEWS

**Museum Exhibits Expanding.** Our volunteers are at it again and in the near future we can expect to see a new display from the Maine Air National Guard 101st Air Refueling Wing. Some members of the wing are working on a display which will depict the refueling areas in the northeast U.S. and southeast Canada which are under the operational control of the wing here in Bangor. We plan to unveil the display by the end of next August. In conjunction with this, our long range plans are to have a life size KC-135 refueling boom on display. We are going to have to build our own but it will look like the real thing. The

boom will be lowered in the “Observation Position” and visitors will be able to experience what it looks like to a pilot from an aircraft about to be refueled in flight. Anyone out there interested in helping us build our own boom?

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### **S/Sgt Joseph P. Tracy. MAHS’s Search for info about S/SGT Tracy produces results**



MAHS member John Miller recently purchased four 20” x 30” cartoon panels which he donated to the Maine Air Museum. The pen and ink drawing are caricature cartoons depicting events at Dow Air Force Base around 1949 to 1950. they are very well done and are now the latest exhibit at the museum. We launched a nation wide search for this very talented gentleman. This exhibit was featured on the WLBZ TV and centered on the museum’s attempt to locate the talented S/Sgt. Results of the search for Tracy will be reported in an upcoming issue.

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### **World War I bomb.**

A rare, hand-dropped bomb from World War I was recently donated to the museum.



Left, a similar bomb in action.



### **Flight Uniform**

Col. John D’Errico of the Maine Air National Guard has donated an OD flight uniform to the museum.

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### **Archives**

The Museum archives have been named for Leo Boyle, founder of the Maine Aviation Historical Society. Leo’s extensive collection of Maine related aviation papers, photos, and books are now housed at the museum. Volunteers are currently cataloging the collection, a massive task.



## Recently Seen

Several units of the BVS (Bharatiya Vayu Sena – Indian Air Force) were recently seen parked on the tarmac behind the Museum. These Sukhoi-30MKI fighters, known to NATO as Flankers, are a Russian design that has been licensed to be built in India. Recognized by the SB prefix in their tail numbers, they were accompanied by support aircraft and were returning from US-Indian exercises in the western U.S. Photos by John Miller.



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## Northeast Airlines Stewardess passes.

We have learned of the passing of Margaret Coffin Aubrey. Margaret was one of the early stewardesses, now of course, known as Cabin Attendants, for Northeast Airlines. She passed away on September 9, 2008 at Jupiter, Florida. Born May 14, 1928 she was predeceased by her husband and one son. She is survived by her son Michael, four grandchildren, two sisters, and nieces. Services were held at Orono.

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## Artifacts

Not all artifacts received at the Museum are large, shiny, or fly. Below are a couple of simple matchbooks but they are rare artifacts of Maine Aviation history.



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Web site: [www.maineairmuseum.org](http://www.maineairmuseum.org) email: [mam@maineairmuseum.org](mailto:mam@maineairmuseum.org)  
1-877-280-MAHS toll free in Maine. 207-941-6757

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### Association Officers

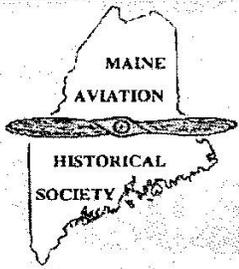
President: Robert Umberger, Jr. Biddeford, ME 04856 [rumberge@maine.rr.com](mailto:rumberge@maine.rr.com)  
Vice President: John Miller, Newburgh, ME 04444 [vintagewings@cs.com](mailto:vintagewings@cs.com)  
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Treasurer: Joe Quinn, Levant, ME 04456, [jwquinn@midmaine.com](mailto:jwquinn@midmaine.com)

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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

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**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**