

Dirigo Flyer

Newsletter of the Maine Aviation Historical Society
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NOVEMBER - DECEMBER 2010

This last issue of 2010 brings us up-to-date with the Society elections and will continue with a few of the short articles we have received. As usual, the editor is requesting more submissions, particularly of historical events in Maine. We also have a few short stories of aviation events of some of our members lives and even if they didn't occur in Maine, we will use them off-and-on in upcoming issues.

MIRACLE AT AUGUSTA

By Neal Strange

On August 20, 1938, the final performance on the program for the second day of the Maine Aero Rendezvous air show at the Augusta State Airport had ended and a capacity crowd of nearly twenty thousand was beginning to depart. After watching four hours of spectacular aerobatics by professional stunt pilots in 80 degree heat, a few if any noticed or were concerned to see another airplane, rotating rapidly, heading for the ground.

The widely advertised air show, sponsored by the Aero Club of Maine, attracted pilots from all around New England. Some participated in events where qualified; others carried paying passengers before and after scheduled programs. Air shows were also popular with pilots wishing to sell their aircraft and one was displayed at this event.

While waiting for the crowd to disperse, I walked to a row of transient planes and paused to admire a sporty, open cockpit, monoplane displaying a "For Sale" sign on the propeller. I could over-hear the owner extolling the plane's merits to a prospective customer who claimed to be an experienced pilot; producing a log book and an Airman's Certificate for verification.

With negotiations agreed upon, the prospect expressed his desire to test-fly the plane before making a final commitment to buy. The owner, apparently satisfied with the prospect's credentials, and anxious to make a sale, consented to the request.

Similar to other sport planes of the era, it was a single place thereby lacking room for the owner to check his prospects flying ability. Donning a borrowed helmet and goggles, the confident pilot climbed into the small open cockpit, checked the controls and signaled the owner to crank-start the engine.

After brief warm up he slowly taxied to the runway where other aircraft were waiting to depart and when clear, applied power and performed a normal take-off. The air, over and around the airport, was congested with planes carrying passengers or leaving for their home base so it was difficult to distinguish one from another. But I glanced up several minutes later to see the little monoplane execute several tight, vertical turns that subsequently developed into a full scale tailspin.

It continued to spin until out of sight below the horizon about two miles north of the airport.

When it did not appear in a few seconds, I was certain it must be down. None of the departing spectators appeared to be aware of the incident other than the plane's owner who was understandably shocked.

I ran to the judge's stand, where I had planned to meet my father after the show, and informed him that I had just seen a plane "spin in". As it so happened the State Police Chief was also on the stand and at my father's request, alerted emergency authorities.

Pilot survival, in an aircraft impacting the ground in a fully developed tailspin was highly unlikely, then as it is now, and we feared for the worst. We did not learn the pilot's fate or other details until the morning paper arrived with the headlines: "Pilot miraculously survives plane crash!"

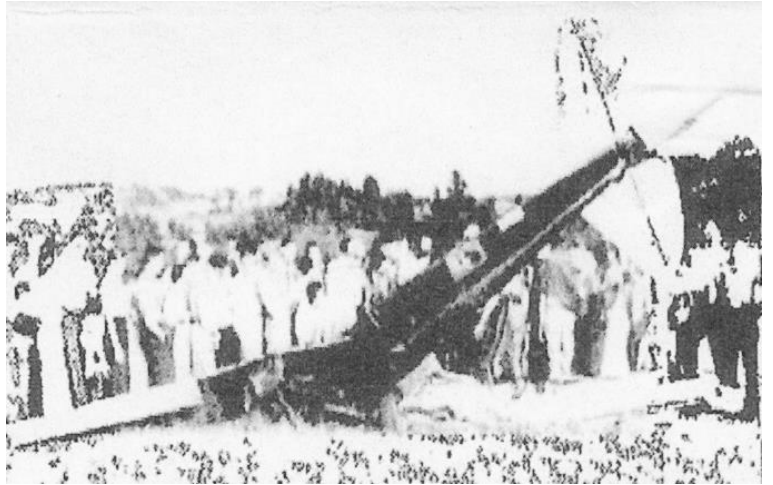
The report, published in the *Lewiston Daily Sun* –August 20, 1938 identified the pilot as "Harry Oliver, 25, Augusta resident who suffered a concussion and possible internal injuries but was listed in favorable condition. The wrecked plane, A Bhul Pup, was owned by Elmer H. Kimball of Swampscott, Mass."

"Roland Maheux of Lewiston, a well known Maine pilot, witnessed the accident from the air, made a quick landing in a hazardous field and was first to reach the scene. He pulled Mr. Oliver from the wreckage and assisted in his removal to the hospital.

The accident was the only serious blemish in the safety record of the three day aerial exhibition, a commendable feat in itself considering the number of aircraft participating and limited air to ground communications. It was a time when only a small percentage of private aircraft were equipped with 2-way radios.

Mr. Kimball's asking price for his airplane it was later learned, was \$350 a seemly bargain but considering that it sold new in 1931 for \$1250, was a reasonable figure.

The fate of Mr. Oliver and Mr. Kimball in the past 72 years is unknown, but their brief acquaintance and the nearly catastrophic event they shared deserve recognition in Maine's aviation history.



PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

With 2010 having come to a close it is time for me to step down. First, let me say it has been a privilege to serve as your President for the past three years. We concluded the year of 2010 with a couple more great outings, the first (November) being a second visit to Lufthansa's Super Starliner restoration project at their hangar on the Lewiston-Auburn Airport, and second (December) the visit to Maine Aviation Sales' operations & hangar at the Portland Jetport. Our hosts were Michael Austermeier, LH Operations Manager, and Ron Caruso, President of Maine Aviation Sales, respectively. Both gentlemen were great hosts to our group and all in attendance enjoyed getting close up to the very different but interesting aircraft. As I reflect on many events and happenings during the past three years a few stand out, like the generous and voluntary donation that came to us from Kip Keener of Washington State. MAHS members Mike Cornett & Pete Noddin unselfishly assisted Kip during his visit here with long sought after information and the geographic location of his father's WWII aircraft fatality in Bangor (1944). Also, the several air shows and fly-ins where the MAHS/MAM organization was a significant participant, plus the various visitor groups to the museum hosted by our members, and individual member presentations to select groups and their guests. We all should take pride in the fact the organization continued to evolve to where it is today, now an important repository for related materials and artifacts, and is looked upon as the predominant historical resource for all that is "Maine aviation, recent or from the distant past."

For those readers and members that are wondering what will be going on with the organization during the remainder of the winter and transition to spring, the Board members in attendance at the December meeting voted unanimously to forego the February & March meetings due to past low attendance and possible inclement weather affecting travel around the state. April will bring us back to the museum for the first time in the New Year and we will resume having monthly meetings on the second Saturday unless modified for involvement

with off-site events as in the past. Our website is the best source to keep abreast of meetings and other important announcements.

I conclude my post by extending a special thanks to a handful of members that worked very closely with me to keep us moving forward. Finally, on behalf of MAHS I wish to dedicate this issue of the *Dirigo Flyer* with gratitude to those outside our organization that provided financial or in-kind support with meeting spots and access to their operations, with interesting venues for us to enjoy, and others for including MAHS /MAM in their aviation events around the state.

Bob Umberger

MAINE AVIATION HISTORICAL SOCIETY 2011 ELECTION RESULTS

President: *VACANT*

Vice President: John Miller, Newburgh, ME

Recording Secretary: Les Shaw

Treasurer: Joe Quinn, Levant, ME

Board of Directors: Norm Houle, Les Shaw, Bob Umberger

2010 Aircraft Model Raffle

Congratulations to Jason Baker of Newburgh, Maine whose name was drawn at the annual Aircraft Model raffle at the museum. The drawing was held on the last day of operation of the museum for the 2010 season.

MAINE'S CONNECTION TO THE RUSLAN An-124-100

Luke P. Uhlman, Maine Aviation Museum

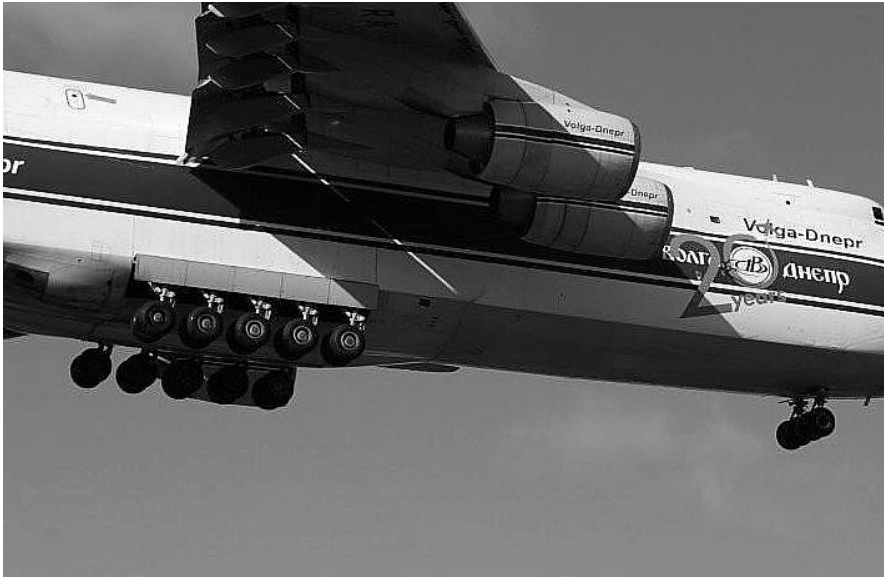
A frequent visitor to Maine airspace and Bangor International Airport (KBGR) is the Ruslan Antonov An-124-100 transport aircraft. Specializing in transporting oversized cargo, the An-124-100 is the second largest overall aircraft in the world behind the massive An-225 Mriya which also visits KBGR on occasion. Manufactured in 1982 by the Antonov Design Bureau (ADB), based in Kiev, Ukraine, 55 An-124-100s have been built. Originally produced for the Russian Military An-124-100s are now also flown by several commercial users including Volga-Dnepr, Polet and Antonov Airlines, who all visit KBGR for fuel and cargo.

The geographical location, large runway and airport facilities make KBGR important for connecting domestic and foreign AN-124-100 flights. Some domestic flight origins and destinations include; Florida, Texas, California, Pennsylvania and Hawaii. Some international flight origins and destinations include; Germany, Italy, Russia, Iceland, and Jordan. To put the size of this aircraft into perspective, an An-124-100 requires two pilots, two navigators, two flight engineers and a communications officer to fly. It can accommodate 88 passengers and carry up to 330,000 lbs of cargo. There are 34 functioning computers aboard the aircraft and all of the avionic systems are quadruple redundant. The cockpit and passenger cabin are pressurized and the cargo hold is not. Some of the more unique cargo manifests include a railway locomotive, USN EP-3E Aires II aircraft (from the Hainan Island incident), yachts, elephants, and even a whale! Cargo doors at both ends of the aircraft as well as an onboard crane and winches make loading and unloading self-sufficient.



The An-124-100 is powered by four Lotarev D-18T turboprop engines, each providing 50,000 lbs of thrust. Requiring 468,000 lbs of fuel (about 69,000 gallons) and considering jet fuel averages \$4.46 a gallon a KBGR it would cost about \$307,000 to fuel up! Carrying no cargo, an An-124-100 can ferry 8,000 nm without

refueling but fully loaded only 2,300 nm. It is interesting to note that the Antonov 225 Mriya uses the same Lotarev D-18T turbofan engine, except six instead of four.



Some other comparable large cargo aircraft are the Boeing 747-400F (295,000 lbs payload) and Lockheed USAF C5 Galaxy (270,000 lbs payload). Anyone wishing to watch an An-124-100 land or takeoff at KBGR can find out when one is arriving or departing by using the aviation website, **flightaware.com**. Using this site you can register for a free account which enables you to create 'Flight Alerts', which will email or text whenever an An-124-100 flight plan has been filed to or from KBGR and details the arrival or departure times. In most cases you will have several hours advance notice when

one is arriving or departing. Flightaware.com also allows you to track the progress of the flight on a map and get the altitude, speed and position of the aircraft at all times.

There are several local vantage points in which to watch an An-124-100 land or take off, the first obviously being the Maine Air Museum grounds (if open for the season). Another great location is at Bangor Municipal Golf Course. Park your car at the end of Webster Avenue and take a ten minute walk to the 15th tee that overlooks the interstate and airport. If you go there during the golf season please be sure to use common sense and yield to any golfers!

In most cases landings and takeoffs are on runway 33, which is the interstate 95 end of the airport so you are guaranteed to see a spectacular show! If the museum is closed or you do not have the time for a walk then the Tom Horton's parking lot on the Odlin Road is another vantage spot to catch a landing.

Currently ADB is producing the AN-124-100M-150, a large model and it is expected that 80 of these aircraft will be produced by 2020. So I'm sure it will not be long until these big birds will be coming to Maine as well.

Happy Antonov watching!

Sources:

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Antonov_An-124

<http://www.airforce-technology.com/projects/an124/>

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lotarev_D-18T

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cargo_aircraft

<http://flightaware.com>

All photos by Luke Uhlman



Snow removal at KBGR the An-124-100 way

E-MAIL ADDRESSES

If you have a current email address, please notify the Maine Air Museum as soon as possible. It is hoped that a significant number of the newsletters can be delivered electronically. The museum address and phone number is on the title banner at the start of this newsletter.

ADVICE

Stick to some basic flying rules: Try to stay in the middle of the air. Do not go near the edges of it. The edges of the air can be recognized by the appearance of ground, buildings, sea, trees and interstellar space. It is much more difficult to fly there.

AIRPORT FOR SALE

With permission of Andrew Neff, Bangor Daily News staff

If you have a spare \$400,000 and you've always wanted to own your own airstrip, the Brewer Airport is on the market. The 75-acre tract of land, featuring an office building, two airplane hangers, a storage structure and two runways that abut neighboring Pine Hill Golf Club and the Brewer Armory in South Brewer is being listed through a real estate agency in Bangor.

The airport, originally called Doan Field after being built in the late 1930s by George and Gordon Doan, officially opened to the public in December 1944. The Doans maintained ownership until the early 1950s.

It is presently owned by Wesley Leighton Sr. and Sara Leighton who reside in Punta Gorda, FL. Wesley is a former United Airlines pilot and has owned the field since the mid 1970s.

Brewer's City Assessing Department has listed an assessment of \$147,300 on the property with an exemption of \$38,700 for the airstrip. The airport is located at 56 Airport Road.

Any different use of the property "that's appropriate and meets the rules, regulations and requirements of the city would be great whether it's industrial or a nice residential subdivision or a business park of its own," said Brewer's deputy economic development director. "Also, if it remains an airport, it would still be an asset to the city."

The listed asking price on the real estate agency website is \$400,000.

The two runways measure 1,730 feet by 30 feet, and the facility which accommodates six aircraft, five single engine and one ultralight has been operated by the Brewer Airport Association, an organization composed of local flying enthusiasts since 1995.

The runway was paved in the mid-1970s and field lights were maintained as late as the 1980s but no longer are. The runways reverted back from paved to turf surfaces in 1995.

Upcoming

No meetings are scheduled for February and March. Check our website for any information and/or get-togethers that don't make this or the next newsletter. Be sure we have your email address so we can notify of any unscheduled events.

Web site: www.maineairmuseum.org email: mam@maineairmuseum.org

1-877-280-MAHS toll free in Maine. 207-941-6757

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.

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