

Dirigo Flyer

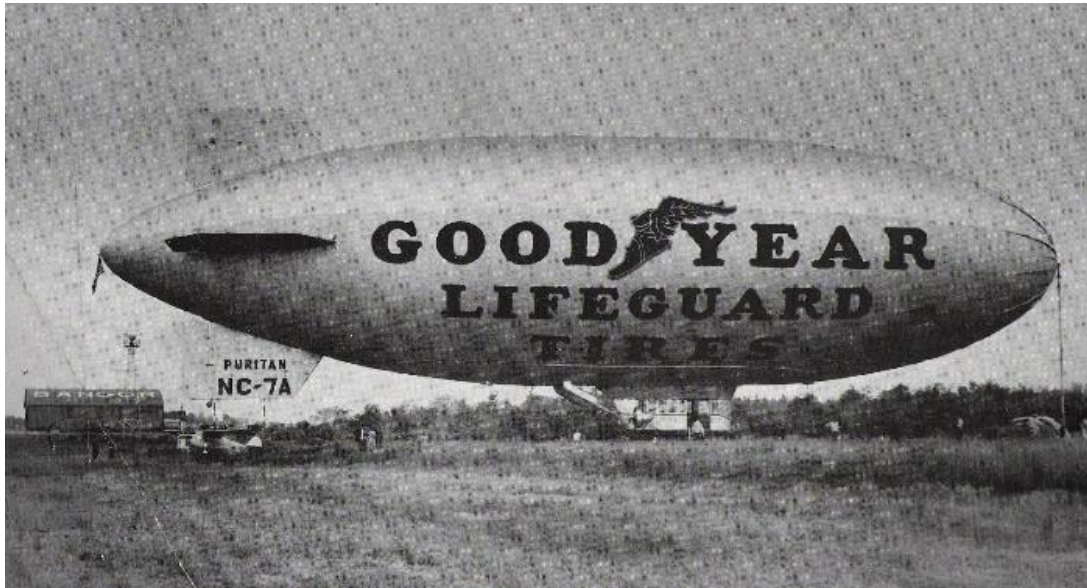
Newsletter of the Maine Aviation Historical Society
PO Box 2641, Bangor, Maine 04402 • 207-941-6757 • 1-877-280-MAHS (in state)
www.maineairmuseum.org mam@maineairmuseum.org

Volume XIX No. 2

March - April 2011

Welcome to our second issue of 2011. The editor apologizes for it being a little bit late but his seasonal summer job took up a bit more time than usual. By the time you get this issue we should be at the start of our warm summer season so sit back, relax, and enjoy reading the *Flyer*.

The following lead article is from the 1988 *Paper Talks* magazine and is used with the permission of the magazine editor and the author.



This July 27, 1938 photo was taken at Godfrey Field in Bangor and features the famous Goodyear Blimp, the "Puritan".

THE GOODYEAR BLIMP "PURITAN" **By Richard Glueck**

The term "blimp" is a contraction of the words "Balloon" and "limp". Blimps are differentiated from dirigibles in that they incorporate no rigid skeletal framework for the support of an operator's gondola, passenger quarters, or containment of the gas enclosing cells.

After experimenting with rubberized gas balloons, beginning in 1911, the Goodyear Company of Akron, Ohio constructed a small blimp called the *Pony*, in 1919. This experimental airship was used on the west coast to spot schools of fish and whales for commercial enterprises. In 1925, a larger, 51,000 cubic foot blimp was built by the company as an “air yacht”. This was the *Pilgrim*, powered by a single gasoline engine built by the Wright Company of Dayton, Ohio. *Pilgrim’s* tours of the country were such an enormous success that the craft would become part of the Smithsonian Institution’s collection on its retirement in 1932.

Recognizing *Pilgrim’s* popularity, Goodyear expanded it’s stable of blimps and balloons in 1928, with the construction of the *Puritan*. At 96,000 cu.ft.of gas capacity, *Puritan* was nearly twice the size of *Pilgrim*. *Puritan* was powered by two Ryan-Siemans gasoline engines, built by the company which had constructed Charles Lindbergh’s famous *Spirit of St. Louis* in the previous year. The dual Ryan engines allowed *Puritan* a normal cruising speed of 55 mph with four passengers aboard. Another improvement was the use of duraluminum beams to integrate the operator’s gondola to the gas envelope itself. The earlier *Pilgrim’s* gondola had been suspended below the gas bag merely by cables. Duraluminum beams were polished aluminum girders with large circular pieces removed from them in such a manner as to save on weight, but also to give them remarkable resistance to shear, stress, and fatigue.

Launched with a bottle of “liquid air” by the daughter of company president Paul Litchfield, the *Puritan* toured the nation promoting tires and the Goodyear-Zepplin Corporation, which as actively constructing massive dirigibles for the U.S. Navy, including the *Shenandoah*, the *Akron*, and the *Macon*. It is interesting to note that the smallest of these rigid airships was 73 times larger than the *Puritan*, while the famous *Hindenburg* surpassed the little blimp by 96 times its size!

Beginning in 1929, the *Puritan* was joined by the *Mayflower*, *Volunteer*, *Vigilant*, *Defender*, *Reliance*, *Resolute*, *Rainbow*, *Ranger*, and *Enterprise*; most being named for traditional yachts which had defended the America’s Cup.

Puritan toured New England during the summer of 1938, arriving in Bangor from Waterville at 6:00 p.m. on July 27th. Airship Fleet Commander Jack Boettner accompanied the blimp and a bus with a thirteen man support crew of mechanics and meteorologists preceded the arrival. At the invitation of Maine Highway Commissioner L.C. Atwood, members of the crew demonstrated Goodyear Lifeguard Brand tires by driving over a tack covered road at 80 mph, simultaneously blowing out all four tires without injuring the vehicle’s operator.

On September 23, after eleven years of service, the little *Puritan* was caught in the famous 1938 hurricane and damaged beyond repair, necessitating its retirement.

During its active lifetime *Puritan* carried 95,000 passengers over 600,000 miles. On one occasion *Puritan* set a world airship speed record by traveling from Akron, Ohio to Langley Field, Virginia, a distance of 425 miles, in 5 hours; averaging better than 80 miles per hour.

Though small by comparison to its successors, the *Puritan* tested a variety of airship innovations which would prove invaluable aboard World War II convoy blimps in the next decade.

The Goodyear Company has referred to its airships as “Aerial Ambassadors”, and currently (1988) operates a fleet of four blimps, often seen above sporting events and public exhibitions around the nation. The current Goodyear blimp fleet includes the *America*, *Columbia*, and the *Enterprise* which operate in the United States. A fourth blimp, the *Europa*, operated in Rome, Italy. A fifth blimp is being constructed for U.S. operation in 1988.

...editor’s note: In 2011 Goodyear operates a fleet of four blimps, *Spirit of Goodyear* in Akron, *Spirit of American* in Carson, Calif., *Spirit of Innovation* in Pompano Beach, Florida, and *Ling Hang Zhe* in China.

Now available:

The United States Air Force
in Maine



Progeny of the Cold War
John C. Gorbinski

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.”

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 \$4.00 postage and handling). To order, call or email the museum.

Wings of the Past Buhl "Bull Pup" A.T.C. 405

The Buhl Aircraft Co. of Marysville, Mich. Enjoyed nearly a decade of prosperity in the late 1920's and early 30's with the production and sales of their "Airsedan", a high quality, 5 place, cabin aircraft. But as the national depression gained momentum, the market for the costly (\$10,000) "Airsedan" dwindled rapidly, forcing Buhl Aircraft and other manufacturers to produce an alternate model in order to remain in business.

In spite of a dismal economy, interest in aviation continued to progress particularly among sportsman pilots and those who could afford such luxuries. A careful study of the marketing trend by Buhl's engineers finally led to the development of a small, single engine monoplane called the "Buhl Pup", later nicknamed the "Flying Bull Pup".



The "Pup" became an immediate success in the aircraft market due, primarily, to its unique mid-wing design and ease of control but most of all to the delivered price of \$1250. Nearly 200 were manufactured and sold during 1930 and 1932 which greatly relieved the financial woes of Buhl Aircraft.

Differing from competitive light planes of the era, the single pilot sat shoulder to wing in a small open cockpit. Wing panels

on each side of the cockpit were covered, both top and bottom, with transparent material to provide ground visibility.

Powered by a 3 cylinder "Scekely" pronounced (zeekay) engine of 45 hp, the Pup cruised at 80 mph and stalled at 35.

But like a host of other aircraft manufacturers of the period, Buhl Aircraft eventually succumbed to the pressures of competition and a failing economy. However, the little "Buhl Pup" has its place in history. Several have been restored to flying condition and are fondly cherished by their owners.

At least one "Pup" ventured briefly in the sky over Maine. Unfortunately, for reasons unknown, it was demolished during a demonstration flight at the Augusta State Airport on August 20, 1938

From the *Lewiston Daily Sun* 8/21/38:

Augusta, Aug. 21 AP-The second annual Maine aero rendezvous closed its three-day program today with a crowd estimated at between 35,000 and 50,000.

The program of daredevil stunts produced no casualties, the only accident occurring Saturday when Henry Oliver, Augusta gas station employee, borrowed a light plane and took a nose dive into a hay field.

He suffered a brain concussion and possible internal injuries and was reported tonight to be in "favorable condition".

Material provided by Neal Strange of Windham, Maine.

UPCOMING:

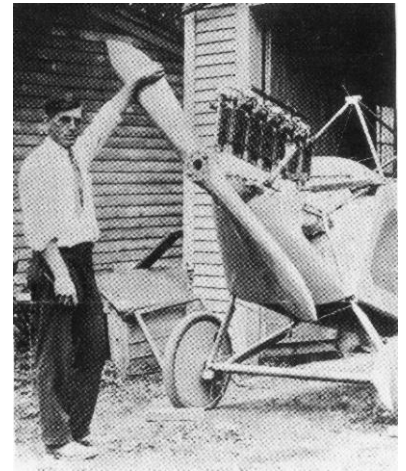
The June meeting will be held on June 11th at 10:00 AM. The location will be the Museum as we prepare to open for the 2011 season. We will be in the Memorial Day Parade on May 28th and then back to the Museum to open for the season. We do need help in staffing the Museum and would appreciate it if you could work even a single day this summer.

- Portland Jetport Open House 6/11-12
- Portsmouth Airshow with the USAF Thunderbirds 8/13-14
- Great State of Maine Airshow (the last one) with the Blue Angels 8/26-28
- Greenville Seaplane Fly-in 9/8-11

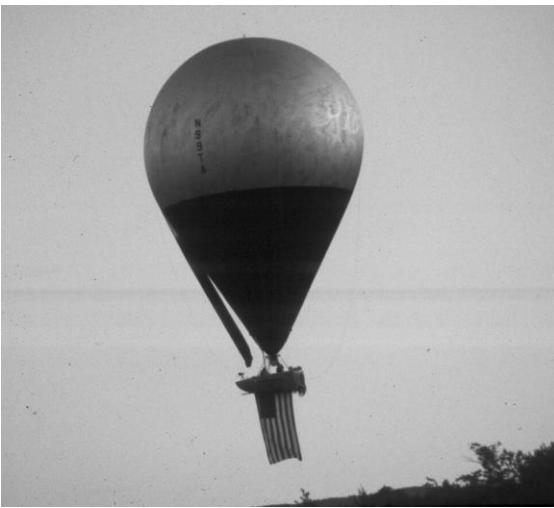


Left: Boston Maine Airways Captain Hazen Bean on a stop over at the Portland Airport just off US Route 1 in Scarborough, Maine (now the Scarborough Industrial Park). Captain Bean was hired by Boston Maine Airways in August 1933 and flew until his retirement at age 60 in 1969. (Boston Maine Airways changed its name to Northeast Airline on November 16, 1940). At the time he was hired Boston Maine Airways was flying Stinson Tri-motor SM6000 aircraft. The sidearm he is wearing was a Post Office requirement for pilots flying the US Mail at the time. If the spats the Captain is wearing was also a Post Office requirement is not known. (*Maine Air Museum file photo*)

Right: Mt. James Hobbs with his home-built Parasol Airplane in 1927 at Maple Street in Bangor, Maine. Mr. Hobbs sold the aircraft to an unknown buyer in the Bangor area. What is not known is if the aircraft was ever completed and flown. (*Hobbs family photo*)



PHOTOS:



Left: The Double Eagle takes off from Bar Harbor on the 1977 attempt to cross the Atlantic. It ditched in the ocean off Iceland 65 hours later. Right: One of the Sanford Constellations as seen during a 1997 Maine Air Museum field trip.



A sight no longer seen. A B-52 coming in to the Bangor International Airport in 1992.

The Memorial Pathway Program. Buy a Brick and Support the Maine Air Museum.

The Maine Air Museum is proud to announce the memorial Pathway Program. Here's how it works: To successfully carry out and reach the museum vision, and to refurbish Building 98, the Maine Air Museum needs the financial support of business and public community leaders and individual private citizens. Your interest in the rich Maine aviation history will require funding presently not available to the museum effort. To this end, the museum board has established the following contribution plan for receiving your monetary donation and recognizing your gift permanently in the museum pathway and wall of honor. Remember: your donation is fully tax deductible.

Stratocumulus Member - \$100 Donation. Entitles the gift giver to a one-year membership, an MAHS patch and a benefactor's engraved 4" x 8" x 2.5" red clay brick with up to two lines (14 characters/line, 0.65" high) of commemorative text in the name of the gift giver or his/her memorial to others. Brick to be installed on the museum grounds, walkway or building facade.

Altostratus Member - \$150 Donation. Entitles the gift giver to a two-year membership, an MAHS patch, a copy of "The United States Air Force in Maine" and a benefactor's engraved 4" x 8" x 2.5" red clay brick with two lines (14 characters/line, 0.65" high) of commemorative text in the name of the gift giver and his/her memorial to others. Brick to be installed on the museum grounds, walkway or building facade.'

'Altostratus Member - \$250 Donation. Entitles the gift giver to a five-year membership, an MAHS patch and a benefactor's engraved 4" x 8" x 2.5" pearl gray marble brick with up to two lines (14 characters/line, 0.65" high) of commemorative text in the name of the gift giver and his/her memorial to others. Brick to be installed on the museum grounds, walkway or building facade.

Cirrus Member - \$2500 Donation. Entitles the gift giver to life membership status, an MAHS patch and a benefactor's engraved three foot white marble sitting bench with one line (27 characters/line, 2" high) of commemorative text in the name of the gift giver and his/her memorial to others. Bench to be installed in the museum building or on the museum grounds.



A 1987 photo of an A-7D which spent an evening at Bangor International, and a stern-on view of an A-10, also at Bangor in 1995.

Association Officers

President: open
Vice President: John Miller, Newburgh, ME vintagewings@cs.com
Recording Secretary: Les Shaw Les_Shaw@umit.maine.edu
Corresponding Secretary: Al Cormier acormier3@roadrunner.com
Treasurer: Joe Quinn, Levant, ME, 1966corvair@gmail.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

NEEDED: Volunteers are always needed. Contact Les Shaw les@maine.edu or via the museum address.

Newsletter articles and photos. The editor has nearly expended all new material for the newsletter. Email material to wtownsend@roadrunner.com or mail to the museum attention: Dirigo Flyer



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