



# *Dirigo Flyer*

Newsletter of the Maine Aviation Historical Society  
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**Volume XIX No. 4**

**July - Aug 2011**

This issue of the Dirigo Flyer covers the summer season but comes to you about a month after the seasonal closing of the museum. Members have been busy during the summer, visitation was up, projects were worked on and finished, and time was spent going to various airshows, traveling and general recreation. The editor received a few short stories and articles over the summer season but as we get down to the more regular schedule of work this fall it is hoped that a few more submissions will be received.

## **Museum Acquires Famous Piece of History**

### **Parts of First Aircraft to Cross Atlantic Given to Museum**

On May 5<sup>th</sup> 1919, John G. Lyman was on temporary duty at the Naval Air Station at Rockaway, Long Island from the Naval Aircraft Factory in Philadelphia to help assemble the four Navy Curtiss (NC) flying boats, NC-1, NC-2, NC-3, NC-4 that were about to take on the Atlantic challenge and be the first aircraft to cross the "pond".

During the refueling of one of the aircraft a fire broke out that destroyed most of one plane and had caused damage to the lower horizontal stabilizer and elevator of the adjacent aircraft, the NC-4. Lyman immediately went to work removing the damaged parts and replacing them with new material. On May 8<sup>th</sup>, 1919, the NC-4, along with two other aircraft, resumed their mission to Trepassey Bay, Newfoundland. Within a few weeks these aircraft were to attempt to fly across the Atlantic Ocean, the NC-4 being the only one to actually succeed.

The job completed, Lyman took the damaged parts with him when he returned to the Philadelphia Naval Aircraft factory. They went into his locker where they remained until late last year when Mary Rowe, Lyman's granddaughter, going through her deceased grandfathers belongings in Norridgewock, Maine discovered the parts.



Mary mentioned the discovery to Eugene MacKay and he immediately recognized the importance of the discovery and contacted Maine Air Museum volunteer Hank Marois, an old schoolmate from Massachusetts, at his present home in St. Petersburg, Florida. Gene asked Hank if the museum might be interested in the artifact. Hank's immediate reply was Yes!

The Maine Air Museum had a major display entitled "The Atlantic Challenge" in which three famous attempts at cross the "pond" including Lucky Lindy, the White Bird, and the Yellow Bird, are depicted. The NC-4 relic would be a natural for the display. Contact was then made with the officers of the museum and permission was given to proceed with the project. The culmination came about on Friday August 13 when Mary dedicated the exhibit of the NC-4 relics to all those who accepted the Atlantic challenge. Ninety-three years after the original incident, the parts Lyman retrieved were now on display for the public to see. Visit the museum and view these historic artifacts.

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## 1924 Flight Around the World: Another American First....continued from the previous issue

Leonard Harlow

An intriguing element of history is that there is rarely an event or an era that is not related to other events or other eras. No wonder we were reminded by Santayana in his "Life of Reason" in 1906 that "Those who cannot remember the past are condemned to repeat it." No wonder the historiography of our culture that justifies historians, readers of history, and historical organizations such as the Maine Historical Society and many thousands of similar collegial collections of historically oriented cohorts and comrades exist.

Evidence of the ongoing and unbroken flow of aviation history are such latter events as the Atlantic crossing of Lindbergh in 1927, the disappearance of Amelia Earhart and her navigator ten years later in her attempt to be the first lady to make a circumnavigational flight of the globe in 1937. Amelia Earhart had disappeared enroute to Howland Island in the Pacific 2,556 miles from the Hawaiian Islands. Earhart was declared dead *in absentia* on January 5, 1939 after prolonged but unsuccessful searching by ships and planes.

Nine years after the 1924 circumventional flight, Wiley Post was the first person to fly solo around the world. It took him seven days and 19 hours to accomplish that feat. His plane, the Winnie Mae, however was well equipped with equipment not available to the crews of the flight of 1924. That was in 1933 and is remembered by those of us honed in the Great Depression and hardened by World War II. Two years later, unfortunately, Wiley Post is more remembered because he and the then famous humorist Will Rogers lost their lives when Post's plane crashed near Point Barrow, Alaska.

This article was based on numerous Internet resources by a number of authors and writing teams. There may be Maine Aviation Historical Society members living in the Brunswick area who may know of information about the Mere Point visit.



*Left: Last view of the Boston in the North Atlantic*

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## Prentiss Godfrey

Prentiss Godfrey, 95, former aviator and son of Maine aviation pioneer Edward R. Godfrey, died March 16, 2011 in Bangor. He was born on December 12, 1915 in Bangor, son of Edward R. and Emma (Eastman) Godfrey.

Mr. Godfrey's father, the late Edward Godfrey started the Bangor Airport, what is now the Bangor International Airport, in the mid-1920s having purchased several farms in the area which were then developed into an airport, then known as Godfrey Field. It was here that Prentiss learned to fly, soloing in a Kinner-powered American Eagle biplane in 1930. The airplane was owned by airport operator Crymble Aircraft, and his flight instructor was Percy Billings. Over the years, Godfrey Field developed from a hayfield to a pioneer airport with two runways and regularly scheduled air service provided briefly by Pan American, and later

Boston-Maine Airways which became Northeast Airlines. In 1940, Godfrey's father sold the field to the government for the creation of an Army Air Force base, later to transform into Dow AFB, and now, Bangor International Airport. The access road running from Union Street to the airline terminal at BIA is named Godfrey Boulevard in memory of Mt. Godfrey's father. Prentiss Godfrey maintained a keen interest in aviation throughout his life and was a regular visitor at the airport over the years on his afternoon walks.

Prentiss Godfrey grew up in Bangor and attended Somerset School in Bangor and graduated from Wassokey School, Dexter, Maine in 1934. In 1938 he graduated from Harvard College and in 1941 from the University of Michigan Law School. He obtained his commercial license and instructor's rating, with a 225hp power rating, in Waterville through the Civilian Pilot Training Program, and during the summer and fall of 1942, Prentiss volunteered with the Civil Air Patrol, flying submarine patrol missions from Coastal Patrol Base 19 in Portland. Later he was a civilian tow pilot and instructor at an Army Air Force glider school in Mobile, Alabama, flying Vultee BT-13s. After the glider training program was terminated, he became a Naval Aviator and flight instructor at NAS Olathe (Kansas), flying Stearman N2Ss, until that program was terminated toward the end of the war. After the war he returned to Bangor and entered the practice of law which he carried on for many years and was the director of several area banks. Mr. Godfrey was a person of strong character and devotion to his family and will be greatly missed by those who know him.

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### Now available:

*The United States Air Force  
in Maine*



*Progeny of the Cold War*  
John C. Garbinski

***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.

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### ***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.

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## **Wrong Way Corrigan and the Maine Connection**

Norm Houle

Way back in 1948 I was working at Doane's Airport in South Brewer, Maine (the name of the airport and city has now been changed to Brewer Airport, Brewer, Maine). It was there that I met Mr. Ed Arbo; we talked some about airplanes and Maine airplane stories. One story Ed talked about was the Prairie Airport his parents owned in a Township (45 degrees 25 min – 69 degrees 08 min., just north of Brownville Junction, Maine). He mentioned that the famous aviator Douglas Corrigan had landed there in 1937. I could not think of a reason why Douglas Corrigan would come to central Maine, so I dismissed this as just another story.

Back in June of 2010 I was working as a volunteer at the Maine Air Museum in Bangor, Maine. I was working in the archives sorting out items we had received from the public when I came across a large brown envelope from Priscilla Arbo, Ed Arbo's sister. As I went through the many pages I came across a photo copy of the Airport Log and there was an entry: **D. Corrigan, Aug. 21- 37. Curtis Robin 9243, Calais Me to New York city – Los Angeles.** Ed did not get my attention back



in 1948 but the envelope from his sister Priscilla sure did. Was the signature really that of D. Corrigan? How could I check to make sure



this was not a hoax? Back home I have a copy of Douglas Corrigan's book "*That's My Story*" (printed in 1938 by E.P. Dutton & Co., Inc. New York). I took the envelope Priscilla had donated and all its contents home and hoped to find his autograph so I could compare with the Prairie Airport Log. Sure enough on page two was a full page picture of Douglas Corrigan with his autograph that to me was a perfect match. Unable to find an airport at Calais he landed in a field and was informed by natives that there was talk about building an airport years back but nothing came of it. From Calais he flew on to the Prairie Airport where he signed the Airport Log (this was August 21, 1937). I think had Calais or the Prairie Airport had a runway of sufficient length Douglas Corrigan would have taken off from Maine to Ireland in August 1937, not from Floyd Bennett Field, New York on July 17, 1938.

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## **2011 MAM Achievements**

- The main display room was reorganized and we gained space for many new exhibits.

- Float planes in Maine exhibit was expanded in the newly "found" space in the main room.

- "The Atlantic Challenge" exhibit was expanded and reorganized. NC4 display with aircraft artifacts added to the display. The parts from the historic aircraft were donated to the museum by Mary Rowe of Waterville. Her friend, Eugene McKay, built a museum quality display case for the artifacts. Dedication of the new exhibit was covered by local TV, radio, and newspaper. New items were also added to the "White Bird" and "Yellow Bird" displays.

- "Old Orchard Beach" exhibit was reorganized and expanded.

- "Venturi Meter Demonstration" was designed, constructed and donated by Bob Littlefield and added to the collection. It will be used in STEM (Science Technology Engineering Mathematics) programs after the museum is closed for the winter when it will be made available to local school systems.

- "Bernoulli's 3-Ring Circus" display added to the museum. The generosity of Time Warner made possible the purchase of the air compressor which is the key to the exhibit. The three "Rings" of the display were donated to MAM by the Museum of Science and Industry (MOSI), Tampa, Florida. The exhibit will be used in STEM education programs after the museum is closed for the winter.

- The "Leo Boyle Archives" are continuously being developed, expanded and organized. Two years ago the museum acquired 54 boxes of aviation material from the estate of Leo Boyle. These boxes have now been sorted out. We now have 98 files on airports in Maine, 79 files on individuals connected with Maine aviation, 80 files on aviation events in Maine and over 150 aviation book and VHS tapes have been organized and cataloged.

- New computer and large screen added to lobby to display "Flight Aware" information. The equipment was donated by our friends at Computer Essentials.

- The museum and its exhibits will be part of the new Youth Education Program instituted by the Bangor International Airport marketing Department which will take off early in 2012.

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## **Thanks**

We would like to thank Catherine Smith for forwarding to the Maine Aviation Historical Society her husband, Eugene "Smitty" Smith's collection of photos he had accumulated over his thirty plus years as an Air Traffic Controller and Administrator. He started his aviation career as an agent for Boston-Maine Airways, later known as Northeast Airlines, in Caribou, Maine. Mr. Smith passed away on January 18, 2011.

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## New Members

Better late than never...the editor finally has found the list of new members submitted some months ago.

515 Jay Rowe, Winthrop, ME  
516 Wade Maddox, Hampden, ME  
517 Finn Grant, Goffstown, NH  
518 Luke Uhlman, Bangor, ME  
519 Hayden Goulet, Hollis, ME  
520 Leonard Harlow, Carmel, ME  
521 Robert Hall, Venice FL  
522 John O'Dea, Augusta, ME  
523 Moosehead Historical Society, Greenville, ME  
524 Mort & Eloise Eckhouse, Gulf Breeze, FL  
525 Don Finnegan, Bangor, ME

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## UPCOMING EVENTS

8 October.....Monthly meeting of the Maine Aviation Historical Society. 10 a.m. at the Maine Air Museum.  
29 October....Annual Flea Market at the Owls Head Transportation Museum  
30 October....Fund-raising auction at the Owls Head Transportation Museum

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## Maine Air Museum staffing

As always, volunteers are needed. Can you spare a few hours to help us out? If so, drop me a note via email [mam@maineairmuseum.org](mailto:mam@maineairmuseum.org) or call the museum and leave a message. We do need your help.

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## Association Officers

President: open  
Vice President: John Miller, Newburgh, ME [vintagewings@cs.com](mailto:vintagewings@cs.com)  
Recording Secretary: Les Shaw [les989@yahoo.com](mailto:les989@yahoo.com)  
Corresponding Secretary: Al Cormier [acormier3@roadrunner.com](mailto:acormier3@roadrunner.com)  
Treasurer: Joe Quinn, Levant, ME, [1966corvair@gmail.com](mailto:1966corvair@gmail.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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## NEEDED

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

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*Bob Littlefield and the Venturi display*



*Matt Watkins working on display set-up.*



## 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**  
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