

Dirigo Flyer

Newsletter of the Maine Aviation Historical Society

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Fall 2012

For those of you who keep track of such things this issue of the flyer will combine the last of volume 20. The last print issue was Vol. XX No. 3. We experimented with a digital edition in late summer 2012 but nothing further followed in that respect. This will be an expanded issue as we play catch-up after a brief period of changing editors and editorial styles. It was generally felt that the older format was still workable so after a delay of several months we are getting back on track. A newsletter is often the thread that holds the membership together so it deemed that it was important to reestablish communications with all the membership so here we are with the next issue of the *Dirigo Flyer*.

The Cuban Missile Crises at Loring Air Force Base

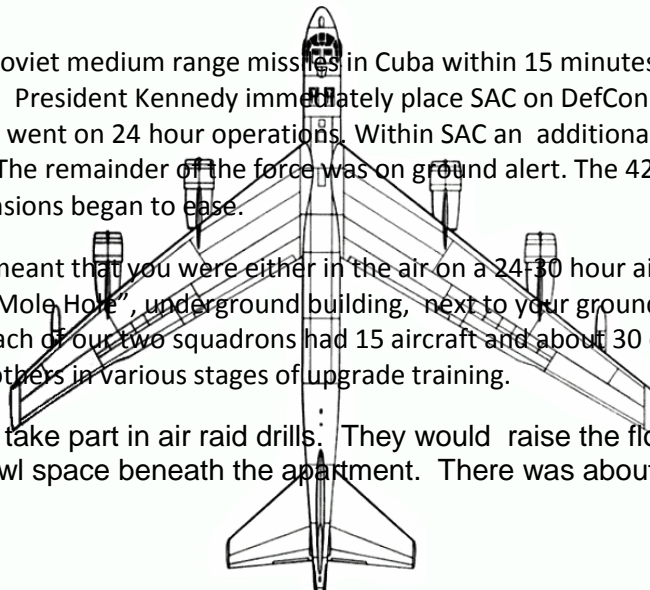
By Hank Marois

Many of the events that took place during this critical time in our history seem to me as if they were only yesterday. Starting in January, 1962, the 42BW launched two fully armed B-52's every 24 hours. The Strategic Air Command (SAC) during most of the Cold war kept 12 fully armed B-52 aircraft in the air on around the clock airborne alert missions orbiting around the periphery of the USSR, the code names for these missions were "Chrome Dome" and "Hard Head VI".

On October 15, 1962, with the discovery of Soviet medium range missiles in Cuba within 15 minutes range of most of the B-52 bases in the continental United States, President Kennedy immediately place SAC on DefCon 3. All personnel leaves were cancelled and all Wing Battle Staffs went on 24 hour operations. Within SAC an additional 54 B-52 aircraft were placed in the air on airborne alert status. The remainder of the force was on ground alert. The 42BW kept four B-52's on airborne alert until November when tensions began to ease.

For those of us on B-52 crews at Loring this meant that you were either in the air on a 24-30 hour airborne alert non-stop mission or you were on ground alert in a "Mole Hole", underground building, next to your ground alert "Cocked" B-52. You might fly three missions each month. Each of our two squadrons had 15 aircraft and about 30 crews. Most of the B-52 crews were "Combat Ready" and the others in various stages of upgrade training.

At Loring, Mary and our four boys had to take part in air raid drills. They would raise the floor panel in the front hall closet and climb down into the crawl space beneath the apartment. There was about 5 feet of crawl



space and we covered the dirt with cardboard and essentials were stored in case of an emergency. Our sons thought that this was great sport but the adults appreciated the seriousness of the situation.

The 42BW would have four fully armed B-52G's orbiting just outside Soviet airspace at all times. The non-stop missions went for 24-30 hours and each flight would be relieved by "fresh" aircraft after a fixed number of hours in orbit. The 42BW exhibit in the Maine Air Museum shows a typical mission orbiting over the general area of Malta over the Mediterranean Sea. We also had missions orbiting over Thule, Greenland and just outside the Island of Novaya Zemla in the Barents Sea. Four crews would be on Crew Rest, four crews flying and four crews had just landed. It took twelve crews to keep four on airborne alert.

The mission would actually start two days prior when the B-52 crew would spend the day at the Training and Briefing Building. There was intense route and target study for the entire crew. Each crew had to be certified on the particular routing and targets for the assigned mission. Each mission had its own specific weapons load. If your crew had been previously "certified" for the mission you were assigned, the study time was reduced.

The latest intelligence reports on the dispersal of the Soviet air defenses was of utmost interest to the crew but of particular interest to the defensive team: the Electronic Warfare Officer and the Gunner. The Navigator and Radar Navigator needed to know the weather conditions en route and in the target areas – in winter, ice and snow create very different radar returns than what occurs during the summer months. I would "fly" the combat part of my mission in an electronic warfare simulator to prepare me for the mission. We knew the capabilities of the Russian Early Warning (EW) and Ground Control Interceptor (GCI) radars and where we could expect our "reception committee" in the event that we would be sent to war.

The combat crew of a B-52 had six crew members. On these missions only one crew substitute could be made and the substitute crew member had to be "Combat Ready". An extra pilot could be assigned to a crew when one was available. These were usually staff officers, who had earned the Combat Ready designation.

On the day of the mission we would go to the Training and Briefing Building and sign a receipt for the "TOP SECRET" Combat Mission Folder that contained the strike portion of the mission. This was actually an aluminum foot locker with an elaborate locking mechanism. This could only be opened in flight if two officers had each independently received and verified the strike orders.

Our Crew Bus would pull up to the aircraft, the Crew Chief, the Non Commissioned Officer, NCO, in charge of the maintenance of the aircraft, would get on the bus with the AF Form 781 for the aircraft. This book listed all of the malfunctions from the previous mission and the corrective actions that were accomplished. I had a lot of "black boxes" to check. We then loaded all of our equipment into the aircraft. Each crew position had technical orders (T.O.'s) for his equipment.

Each of us then took our check lists out and performed our pre-flight checks.

We took great care performing this inspection of our aircraft- our lives depended on it!

The first time I entered the forward bomb bay and saw those four hydrogen bombs ready for us to deliver I was struck by the seriousness of the situation. There was more explosive power than had been loosened by an entire armada of WW II bombers. Under each wing was a "Hound Dog" cruise missile, each with its own astro tracking and inertial navigation systems and of course, a nuclear warhead. In the aft bomb bay were four "Quail" decoy missiles. Each decoy had radar reflectivity of a B-52 bomber and dispensed chaff. I would check the under wing chaff dispensers and the infrared flares under the horizontal stabilizer. I would also carefully check about a dozen jamming scimitar transmitting antennas under the "47" section of the fuselage to be sure that an inadvertent paint splash had not grounded out the Teflon insulation at the tip of each antenna.

The Gunner's job was to get the in-flight meals we had each ordered. There were small electric ovens at various crew positions. Our crew brought an actual coffee urn and fastened on the upper deck. We were loaded!

Shortly after take-off we would connect with a KC-135 tanker and would top-off our fuel. A great circle route was flown to Europe and we would coast-in on the northern Iberian Peninsula. More tankers and we would head for our orbit station. Always trouble when Rome Air Route Traffic Control handed us over to Malta ARTC.

During the entire mission at least two officers would be monitoring HF radio for the coded transmissions every 20 minutes. If a spare pilot was on board one of the front end crew could be sleeping. Since I had soloed an aircraft although I was not an Air Force pilot, I would occupy the co-pilot position and fly the bird with the auto-pilot, while he took the Aircraft Commander's seat and the Aircraft Commander would doze off in the top deck aisle on a thin foam mattress. When it was time to in-flight refuel, we would all occupy our regular crew positions and all go on 100% oxygen

On one mission when our Aircraft Commander was away on Temporary Duty (TDY) we were assigned a substitute pilot to the Aircraft Commander position. After we were airborne and had refueled, he produced a box of Dutch Masters cigars, tore the cover from the box and placed it on the auto-pilot control between the two pilots and then chain smoked his cigars for the remaining 20 hours of the mission (except when we were in-flight refueling).. My flying gear never lost the aroma of those cigars. We saw him at the unit reunion in Dayton, Ohio in September, 2012.

The aircraft were pressurized and heated. In theory, you could fly in your shirtsleeves as you do on a commercial airliner. You were breathing oxygen or had the mask hanging by your face during the entire mission. Everyone went on 100% oxygen during the critical phases of the mission i.e. take off, in-flight refueling and landings. Our crew kept the cabin at a temperature of about 50 degrees. In case of an in-flight emergency there would never be time to allow a crew member to don heavy clothing prior to ejecting so we wore our heavy gear at all times. My "typical" attire would start with my L.L. Bean cotton quilted long-johns. Then came the heavy AF issue quilted underwear and then I wore a cotton light weight flying suit. It was all topped off with the heavy winter flying jacket. I had extra gloves in the leg pockets of my flying suit and I wore silk glove liners, leather gloves and heavy mittens over all of it.

I 'smuggled' a small mechanics tool bag containing several lengths of coaxial cable with connectors on each end and pliers, paper clips and nuts and bolts. This was in case the remote controls for some of my electronic equipment failed, I could by-pass the defective parts and still be "combat ready". The electronic maintenance people were never "thrilled" when I flew on their aircraft.

Once launched on our war time mission to the USSR, the cabin would be placed on "Combat pressurization". You were on 100% oxygen and the cabin pressure would be greatly reduced so as to negate the possibility of an explosion if we were hit by a missile or cannon shell.

On some missions, Soviet Early warning radars could be detected. I would note the frequencies and preset the appropriate jammer frequencies to them. We could "see" them but they could not detect us.

It was a long boring mission with several in-flight refueling and a lot of radio traffic between our crew and various air traffic control centers. We had to monitor designated HF Single Side band radio transmissions every twenty minutes during the entire mission. The messages were transmitted in the clear by single side band from four different locations around the world. A typical message would be broadcast in the "clear" as follows: "Skyking, Skyking this is Outweight, Do Not Answer, Do Not Answer, then would follow a series of letters. The message would end with: The Time is 2140. Out" Two pairs of officers would copy and then decode the message. It was a relief when the message would be: "Fly safe" and not orders to head for our designated targets in the USSR.

The Soviets knew pretty well where each of these 66 B-52's were orbiting. They were all around the periphery of the U.S.S.R. and they knew that they could never stop all of them once they headed for their targets contour flying 50' above the terrain.

The runway lights at Loring sure looked good after one of these missions. We felt relieved that we returned home and were not sent on the deadly mission we were trained to accomplish.

Once after I got home from a mission I remember falling asleep in the shower. Into the bed and then to be awakened the next morning by one of my sons bouncing on my bed asking me to help him with his Pine Wood Derby race car model, a reminder from Mary to go by for our dry cleaning and that we had a PTA meeting that evening. Oh yes, one of the snow tires on the car is making a "funny" sound. Typical Strategic Air Command family life.

We were highly trained combat aircrew members and took great pride in our professionalism in upholding the Strategic Air Command motto, "Peace is Our Profession".

Post Script: The flying jacket I wore on these B-52G missions from Loring has been on display at the Mighty Eighth Air Force Museum in Savannah, Georgia. For several months it was on a body mannequin of me displayed back to back to a mannequin of a Russian MIG-21 fighter pilot. I wonder after the lights went down if those two former enemies ever turned around shook hands?

2012 WAS A GREAT YEAR AT THE MUSEUM

Another great year at the old airplane patch. We added everything from small to large and scientific to mind boggling to our collection of exhibits and displays.

Attendance Was Up: Thanks to a major event next door to the museum and five stories in the Bangor daily News, we were up 74% over the previous year!

Lease Renewal with City of Bangor: Negotiations have been very favorable and our future appears to be in good hands.

Video Viewing Booth: This was the largest addition, 8' x 8' to be exact. Here visitors can select from a menu of short videos about aviation. Several local companies helped with this project including Computer Essentials, Franck Acoustics, Home Depot(Ellsworth), Time Warner Cable, the Curtain Shop, Staples (Airport Mall) and Will Brown Electric. Bring your own popcorn!

Typical Maine Fly-in Fish Camp: This diorama was the smallest addition this year. Eugene McKay designed, constructed and donated this outstanding example of artistry and craftsmanship to the museum. The diorama depicts a fly-in fishing camp with two float planes tied up to the dock in front of a camp. There is even a fisherman reeling in a big one.



Bernoulli in Space: Bob Littlefield came up with this science teacher's dream. This another of the museum's Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics, STEM, demonstrations. How does that little ball stay suspended in space? You will have to ask your father, mother, teacher, Bob or Daniel Bernoulli how it is done! Yes, this is one of the demonstrations available for loan to schools and libraries and can be seen at the Challenger Learning Center a short way from the museum.

Wind Tunnel: Yes, it our newest STEM demonstration and is in operation. Key elements of this display started out several years ago as an exhibit at the Museum of Science and Industry, MOSI, in Tampa Florida. The parts were given to MAM and Al Cormier, Bob Littlefield and Hank Marois redesigned and reconstructed it with the results we now have on display. Great demonstration of Bernoulli's Theory of Fluid Dynamics or, to put it simpler, what keeps planes up there! This is one of the four Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics, STEM, demonstrations the museum makes available to schools and libraries during the Winter months when the museum is closed. It is at the Challenger learning Center for the winter.

STEM Display Loan Program: Our four Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics, STEM, demonstrations are now available for loan to schools and libraries during the winter months when the museum is closed to the public. The demonstrations can be seen at the Challenger Learning Center on the airport property. This program was publicized in the Bangor Daily News, our web site and state wide by the Maine Science Teachers Association on their web site. Contact the Challenger learning Center to see and borrow them for your class.

Bangor's Aviation History: Matt Watkins has assembled a gallery of photos depicting Bangor's aviation history starting out in a park and ending at what is now Bangor International Airport. Any of your relatives in those photos?

Boy Scouts of America Aviation Merit Badge Program: One of our volunteers has become a Merit Badge Counselor with the Katahdin Area Council and has recently guided two Scouts in completing the program. We thank "Maine Coastal Flight Center, Inc." for their cooperation.

Publicity: Articles about the museum have appeared four times this summer in the Bangor Daily News. Hank Marois and Scott Carpenter plan to expand the program next year.

President's Message

We had a great 2012 season at MAM and we look forward to an even better 2013. Many projects are in the works at the museum and we will need more people to help us out.

We are also working with the City of Bangor to come up with ways to help pay the roof loan. Matt Watkins and myself are working with the city on this. We are looking at possible fundraisers, and suggestions are welcome.

If you or anyone are looking for a gift idea we have many possibilities for our readers. From Diecast models to outstanding books written by our members. A membership to the MAM is another great gift.

If anyone wishes to contact me, email me at targete2007@yahoo.com. I would like to hear from you to see what you can do to help.

I would like to wish each of you a very Happy and Safe Holiday and a Happy New Year.

Scott Grant, President Maine Aviation Historical Society.

Maine Air Museum Community Partners

The Maine Air Museum wishes to recognize the following companies for their support of the museum this past year. They will each be receiving a certificate of appreciation. With sincere thanks to:

Bangor Savings Bank

**Museum of Science and Technology of Tampa,
Florida**

Time Warner Cable

Maine Air National Guard

Vintage Wings

**Bangor International Airport – Marketing
Department**

Staples –Airport Mall

Home Depot – Ellsworth

Lowes of Brewer

42nd Bomb Wing Association

The Curtain Shop – Bangor

Computer Essentials

Foster Professional Imaging

Cole Land Transportation Museum

Franck Acoustics

Will Brown Electric

Olde Penmakers

A Classic Beauty from the Past

One morning in September while I was enjoying my second cup of coffee at my camp in Trenton our next door neighbor came rushing over pointing to an aircraft on the base leg for the Bar Harbor airport. I ran out and there was a C-47 about to land. We immediately drove to the airport, parked and ran out to the ramp to see the gracefully aged beauty.

The aircraft had been abandoned at the Covington Municipal Airport in Georgia for many years. The new owner, James Lyle, who “rescued” it, had to battle a myriad of legal proceedings from liens on the aircraft from now non-existent

banks. Once cleared, the aircraft was made airworthy and was in the air in seven weeks. The engines had to be replaced but amazingly the fabric covered control surfaces were still airworthy

I learned a lot that morning about this type of aircraft that I had never known.

First was that the aft fuselage and the tail assembly, empennage, were made in Fort Worth, Texas and shipped to the Douglas plant in Santa Monica, California. The C-47 has a seam around the fuselage between the aft cargo door and the horizontal stabilizer where the sections were joined. The DC-3 fuselage is in one piece.

Second: The very last foot of the fuselage of the C-47 was cut off to accommodate a hook for towing gliders.

Third and last was that the floor of the C-47 was parallel to the ground for about ten feet to make it easier to load cargo. The DC-3 slopes all of the way.

One thing bothered me. It seemed that the radio compartment was several feet wider in the RC-47 I flew in as a crew member in Korea. Maybe it was because I was thinner back in 1954! Quick answer: the aft bulkhead of the compartment had been moved forward three feet to make more room for passenger seats.

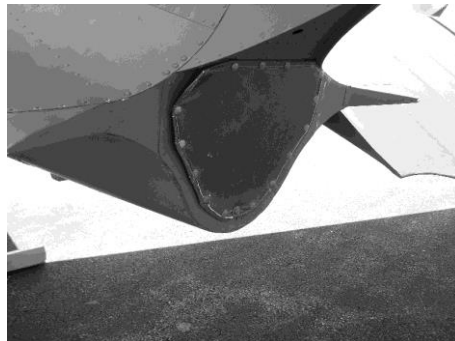
The new owner and an Instructor pilot flew to Maine where the owner was getting checked out in the "bird". They were in the area for a week.

The C-47 will be based in southern Connecticut and will be hangered at Westover, outside of Springfield, Massachusetts, for the winter months. We wish Jim Lyle many happy landings in his classic beauty from the past.

.....Hank Marois



Passing over Bar Harbor (photos by W. Townsend)



(l) C-47 Cockpit (m) The glider hook position (r) Owner and instructor pilot (photos by H. Marois)

A Little Mystery

About a year ago a man came into my shop at the Biddeford Maine Airport (B-19) with just that. In his hand he held a bronze disc about 8 inches in diameter, on it was a sculpture of a high wing Mono Plane flying over waves with seagulls above. He had found it while cleaning up his deceased father's garage. He wanted to know what it was and where it came from. So who doesn't love a mystery? I agreed to try to answer these questions.

Whenever I have questions about aviation history my first call is to Norm Houle – good choice. The very next day Norm showed up at B-19 camera in hand, and like a

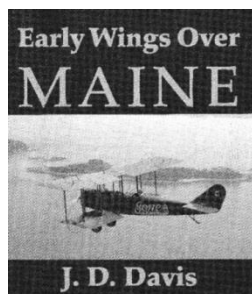


detective in a novel, he went to work. We quickly recognized the plane on the plaque looked a lot like "The Spirit of St. Louis". This led us to the Old Orchard Beach, Maine (OOB) town library. The information we obtained at this source led us to the OOB Historical Society. Norm was told of an old monument in the town park which was dedicated to Harry Jones in honor of the many attempts to fly the North Atlantic to Europe. Sadly the center piece of the bronze tablet had gone missing almost 50 years ago. The bronze disc we now had in hand was clearly that missing centerpiece. We contacted the OOB Historical Society regarding this plaque. We returned the plaque to Mr. Dan Blaney of the OOB Historical Society.

The plan is to restore the old monument and hold a red-dedication. I have asked that the Maine Aviation Historical Society be part of this celebration.

...Loren Harmon

MAHS member #459



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Also available through the museum:

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Another exclusive book from the Maine Aviation Historical Society. Softbound, 134 pages, 151 illustrations.

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New Service for Members

Would you like to receive your newsletter faster and save the museum a lot of money on postage? Here is how you can do this: simply email your email address to mam@maineairmuseum.org and your next edition will be e-mailed to you at the speed of light and you will help us save \$\$\$\$\$\$.

The January meeting is scheduled for 1/12/2013 at the General Aviation Terminal Conference room at Bangor International Airport.

Association Officers

President: Scott Grant targete2007@yahoo.com

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

Recording Secretary: Les Shaw les989@yahoo.com

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



Maine Aviation Historical Society Maine Air Museum * Membership Form

Name: _____

Address: _____

City, State, Zip: _____

Special Interests: _____

Phone: _____ Email: _____

**All dues expire on
June 30th of each year.
If joining mid-year,
pay \$2.00 for each
remaining month**

Annual membership
includes six newsletters!

Mail payment to:
Maine Aviation
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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* * 2 annual \$250 payments	Newsletter, Lifetime Membership Number, Museum Admission,

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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