



Dirigo Flyer

Newsletter of the Maine Aviation Historical Society
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Welcome to the third issue of 2006 for our now bimonthly newsletter. We have had so many requests via the web page for some of the history of Dow Air Force Base, now Bangor International Airport, that it was decided to run an article covering some of the history of this well known and important facility. This particular version was provided by John Miller.

History of Dow AFB, Maine

The origin of Dow Air Force Base dates back to August 19, 1923, when General “Billy” Mitchell landed his flight of 26 airplanes, Martin bombers and DeHaviland scout planes, on the F.F. Rich farm, the present location of Dow. This was about two weeks before the famous bombing tests off the Virginia Capes, during which Mitchell’s bi-planes sank an obsolete ship in his effort to get more planes.

General Mitchell told Bangor Rotarians that he saw a “great futures for Bangor as an airdrome.” With what was believed to be the entire strategic air force available at the time, the men of his command set up temporary headquarters (tents) at the present Dow location later taking off on 22 August. Officers told local reporters that the Cooper Road Field (now Dow AFB location) was a superior field to the Boston Airport.

It wasn’t until 1940, however, that actual construction began on a large scale. But the vision of Bangor as an air center was foreseen, and in January of 1942, Dow AFB was officially named in honor of Second Lieutenant James F. Dow of the State of Maine, who was killed in a routine training flight when the bomber in which he was flying collided with another plane over New York State.

The base was intended to serve as a forward airdrome for active defense against enemy attacks from Europe and was built to house a heavy bombardment group.

In 1946, the 14th Fighter Wing arrived at Dow. During the time they were at Dow they were accredited with “ironing out the bugs” in the first F-84 Thunderjets. These jets were used extensively in the Korean Conflict.

When the 14th FW left Dow in October of 1948 the Maine Air National Guard began using the base as a training camp. Early 1951 saw the 101st FIW (Fighter Interceptor Wing) of the Maine Air National Guard called to active duty. At this time the base was under the Air Defense Command.

In April 1951, the 132nd Fighter Wing of the Nebraska-Iowa National Guard was called to duty at Dow. This move also brought a change of command from ADC to the Strategic Air Command. In January 1952, however, the base changed hands again, this time to the Tactical Air Command.

During June 1952, the 132nd transferred to Alexandria AFB, Louisiana and on July 1, Dow was again place under SAC as the 506th Strategic Fighter Wing moved in.

On January 15, 1954, the 506th became the first operational organization to receive the F-84 Thunderstreak, marking the second time a Dow unit was checked out first with an aircraft product of the Republic Aviation Company.



During the course of World War II, nearly 100,000 combat crew members passed through Dow with their aircraft, either returning from or enroute to the various war theaters. The strength of the base varied from 1,200 to 7,000 personnel.

Dow was established as a permanent base in November of 1954. Just six months later, the mission changed as the Strategic Air Command activated its original air refueling unit at Dow, the 4060th Air Refueling Wing, on March 8, 1955.

The 4060th was like a newborn child out in the snow as it went about its job without any firm policies or operating procedures, this being how it is for being “an original.” The mission was carried out on a “trial and error” basis and soon proved that “experience is the best teacher.”

In December of 1955 Operation “Saint Nick” sent the newly activated ARS to Thule AB, Greenland on TDY. It was the general feeling that this was to serve as a test of the squadron’s capabilities as missions “White Oak” and “Tinker Bell” were thrown at them in the bitter north lands. But they proved themselves and turned it into a successful operation.

In the next two years, the 4060th went to the top of SAC’s Flying Safety Totem Pole and took the USAF Semi-Annual Flying Safety Award. It marked the first time that an air refueling unit had won the USAF award.

March of 1957 saw another successful TDY to Thule for the 71st and an equally successful TDY to Harmon AB, Newfoundland for the 341st.

In early 1958, Dow again climbed to the top of the SAC Safety Totem as the Wing continued to fly accident-free. It was in April of the same year that SAC placed the 4060th in the SAC hall of fame for two years of safe flying.

Later that year the 4060th received the second USAF Semi-Annual Flying Safety Award. Now confirmed as one of the most safety-minded bases in the command, Dow took the top spot on the SAC Totem in early 1959.

On this same date the first F-101B Voodoo and most of the personnel of the 75th Fighter Interceptor Squadron arrived as an operational unit from Presque Isle AFB, Maine to Dow. A direct descendent of the famous “Flying Tigers,” the 75th, holder of the Presidential Unit Citation, is a member of the Air Defense Command.



In July 1961, the 75th, received the Air Defense Command’s coveted “A” Award for outstanding performance.

On February 1, 1960, the 4060th Air Refueling Wing was inactivated and the 4038th Strategic Wing activated as part of SAC's dispersal concept. The two KC-97 tanker squadrons remained at Dow and the 341st Bombardment Squadron was added.

It was late May 1960 that the 4038th Strategic Wing became the ninth unit to be equipped with the B-52G missile platform bomber and in late 1960 and early 1961, the wing began to receive its first Hound Dog air-to-surface missiles and Quail diversionary missiles. These two missiles are carried by the B-52G bomber.



The 341st Bombardment Squadron became a combat-ready outfit on December 1960.

On February 1, 1963, the curtain was lowered on the proud history of the 4038th Strategic Wing as the unit was deactivated and the 397th Bombardment Group (Medium) was reactivated as the 397th Bombardment Wing (Heavy).

This move was in keeping with SAC policy of retaining in the active force the designations of units which have distinguished themselves in combat. With this transition, the 19th Air

Refueling Squadron, which was based at Otis AFB, Massachusetts, as part of the wing's dispersal plan, was placed under another wing.

Most of Dow's units adopted the 397th title. However, the 341st Bombardment Squadron changed to the 596th Bombardment squadron. ...(to be continued)

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

We are having a good summer at the Museum but we have one thing that is missing. Interest in the Museum and the Society seems to be getting worse. We have been open a month and I need to thank Hank Marois, Jim Nelligan, Mike Cornett, Scott Grant, Al Cormier, and Norm Houle. Different combinations of these six people have worked every weekend so far. Unfortunately, these are the same people who are building displays, keeping the grass mowed and all the other stuff required.

We need your help to keep this place going!!! I am not looking for people to work every weekend but one day a year would help. Check out the attached articles on the Museum and you will see that it is not dead but actually growing. Can't you help us to make it grow with volunteers.

We had a nice display for the Memorial Day and Fourth of July Parades in Bangor. People are beginning to learn we are here and are dropping by. In June we had 94 visitors and took in \$257.00.

A lot has changed at the Museum over the last year so stop by and check us out and help us with a shift if possible.

Les

MEETING NOTICES

Museum meetings are held the second Saturday of the month. The August meeting will be at the Museum on 8/12 at 10:00 AM at the Museum. The September meeting will be held on 9/9 at the Museum.

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Check out the web page www.maineairmuseum.org to learn more about meetings and what is happening at the Museum.

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, STS51.

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

We are in need of help to keep the Museum open. Can you spare a few hours to help us out? We are open on Saturdays from 10:00 AM until 4:00 PM and on Sundays from 12:00 Noon until 4:00 PM. If you can help please send me an email at Les@maine.edu or call the Museum at 1-877-820-6247 or 207-941-6757. We look forward to seeing you again and showing you the changes made since last year.

MUSEUM VISITORS

We were visited by 24 people from the ACE Camp this summer. ACE (Aviation Career Exploration) brings young people from around the State to Bangor to learn more about Aviation and opportunities. Twenty youth and four adults came to the Museum again this year as part of their scheduled program and everyone seemed to enjoy the displays.

Also, we have a Boy Scout, Eric Broom, who is working on his Eagle Scout Award and has adopted the Museum as a project. He is presently painting the benches and picnic tables at the Museum but is interested in working on a display as well. This has been a great help to us and a good project for him.



A few of the museum displays.

Museum Activities

There are a lot of items being worked on at the Museum. Below is a short list of things we are working on. A lot has changed at the Museum so drop by and check us out.

A new display had been done that represents the Brunswick Naval Air Station.

A new display is being worked on that represents General Aviation in Maine.

We have acquired two new display cases.

We are working on the mount for the Ranger Engine and should have that completed shortly.
We have received a new aircraft engine, a Continental 0470-11, which needs to be assembled.
Hank is working on a full scale model of a KC-135 refueling boom.
Hank is also working on the Bangor Approach Plate display.
We may get two glass doors from the Loring Museum.
We also have chance to get a Hydraulic Bomb Lift from a farmer in Limestone.
We have a chance to get a Radial R-1830 engine from the DC-3 in Greenville.

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.

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 the following plan for receiving your monetary donation and recognizing your gift permanently in the museum pathway and wall of honor. These donations are fully deductible.

Cirrus Member - \$2500 Donation

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

Altocumulus Member - \$250 Donation

Entitles the gift giver to a five year membership and five-year museum pass and a benefactors engraved pearl gray marble brick with up to two lines of commemorative text (14 characters per line, 0.65 " high). Brick to be installed on the museum grounds, walkway, or building façade.

Altostratus Member - \$150 Donation

Entitles the gift giver to a two year membership and three-year museum pass, a copy of The United Air Force in Maine and a benefactors engraved red brick with up to two lines of commemorative text (14 characters per line, 0.65" high). Brick to be installed on the museum grounds, walkway, or building façade.

Stratocumulus Member - \$100 Donation

Entitles the gift giver to a one year membership and a two-year museum pass and a benefactors red brick with up to two lines of commemorative text (14 characters per line, -.65" high). Brick to be installed on the museum grounds, walkway, or building façade.

ORDER FORM FOR MEMORIAL BRICKS

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Donation level:

_____ Cirrus (\$2500) _____ Altocumulus (\$250) _____ Altostratus (\$150) _____ Stratocumulus (\$100)

I am interested in a ___ grant or _____ matching grant contribution of \$ _____

Please submit this information with your tax-deductible 501(c)3 contribution to"

MAM Memorial Brick Fund

Maine Air Museum

PO Box 2641

Bangor, ME 04402-2641

You will be mailed an acknowledgment and a copy of the engraving text proof.



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, Decal, Museum Admission
Family	\$35 annual	Newsletter, Decal, Museum Admission
Corporate	\$100 annual	Newsletter, Decal, Museum Admission
Supporting	\$100 annual	Newsletter, Decal, Museum Admission, 4 free passes
Lifetime	\$500*	Newsletter, Decal, Lifetime Membership
	* 2 annual \$250 payments	Number, Museum Admission, 10 free passes

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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