

# DIRIGO FLYER

Vol. II, No. 4 May 1994

## April Meeting Notes

The April 9th meeting was held at the Barnstormer Restaurant at Pease AFB in New Hampshire. The meeting was most interesting and we are looking forward to making it an annual event.

Attending from Maine were Lou Furnas, Leo Boyle, T.K. Dudley, Harvey and Elaine Warren, Norm and Kay Houle and their guests, Paul and Rachel Strout, Ruth Owen Jones, Rob Rohr, Ed and Earlene Goldman, John and Sofia Byrne and Brian Wood. Twenty-six members of the Massachusetts AHS attended also. Thanks to arrangements made by Linwood Dall through Sgt. Gene Lavoie of the NHANG, Col. Charles Brown met the group with a bus and then gave us a brief summary of the history of the NHANG and the 159th Squadron. A video was then shown of an actual F-4 refueling mission. We then boarded the bus again for a short drive to the flight line. Here we were treated to an outside and an interior tour of one of their latest re-engined KC-135R's.

Our enlisted guides did a great job of pointing out all the features and competently answered our many questions. By 4 p.m. we were back at the Barnstormer. Paul Larcom of Beverly, MA, ably assisted by Bill Deane, gave us a great slide show on Boston & Maine and Northeast Airlines aircraft in their many and varied markings, plus some of old Boston Airport and some military ones. Then T.K. Dudley from Brunswick showed another great selection of BNAS aircraft plus various air shows in the last few years. After a short break, we ordered dinner and the meeting adjourned a little after 8 p.m. The best thing of all was in meeting lots of new people interested in the same things we are. We look forward to meeting with them again soon.

The May meeting will be held in the conference room at the Portland Jetport at 9 a.m. on Saturday, May 14th. Lots of good things are happening, and we need to plan our summer activities, so come and see where all the fun is going to be. The parking garage is closed, so you'll have to find somewhere else to park.

Don't forget July 2nd and 3rd at the Owls Head Transportation Museum. We will have a table and display there and we need volunteers to help man the table and answer questions. It was great fun last year as well as a fine show. Parker Dunton of the Museum tells me that they will have a B-17, a C-47, Dan McCue's L-23, Sofie Byrne's L-17 and, military budgets

permitting, an ANG UH-1, a C-130 and A-10, Chinook and Dampshire helicopters and fly-overs by an F-15 and a C-5A. This will be an event you won't want to miss. More information will follow in next month's newsletter.

## Hiking Notes

- The April 2nd hike to the DC-3 crash site on Mt. Success has been rescheduled for Saturday, May 7.
- The Fort Mountain hike to the C-54 crash site is scheduled for May 19-21st. Brian has reserved a campsite in Baxter State Park with room for six. Call Brian Wood at (207) 985-6479 if you're interested. If he's not there, leave a message (if you dare).
- On Sunday, June 12th, Rob Rohr and Jim Chichetto are leading a group from the Cumberland Squadron of the CAP on a hike to the F-101 crash site. Contact Rob at (207) 729-4226 or Jim at (207) 269-3281 to participate in this hike.

## New Member News

Another new member to be welcomed to MAHS:

67. Larry Ross, The Lindbergh Crate  
RFD 2, Box 5130 • Canaan, ME 04924 • 207-474-9841

## A Crate Celebration!

The Second Annual Lindbergh Crate Celebration will be held at Canaan on Saturday, May 21st. There will be military and civilian fly-overs. If you want to participate, meet at the Pittsfield, ME Airport. Call Larry Ross for time. Camping is available at the airport and transportation to the event. Dinner at the Grange will feature Col. Vincent McGovern who piloted the first helicopter across the Atlantic and John Race who recreated Lindbergh's 48 State Tour in his 1940 Waco. We had a great time last year and look forward to seeing you all again this year.

And on your way home from the Crate, drop in and see Norm Houle and many others at the Aviation Flea Market in Hampton, NH, May 21-22nd. What a great weekend!

The latest (constantly changing) information on the WWII aircraft going to Europe for the D-Day Celebration is not good. Apparently the fighters are all being shipped by boat, and only six or seven bombers are flying across. They are due to stage through Bangor in late May, but we understand that no access will be allowed to see the aircraft close-up. If you need to know more, call Jim Chichetto at (207) 269-3281 as he works at the field and will know more about it.

• • •

On April 20th, Brian Wood arranged for Clay Carkin to interview Neal Strange about the early history of the Portland Airport (Stroudwater Field). This was filmed by South Portland Television at Southern Maine Technical College. Brian is going to splice in still photos at appropriate places during the interview. When he's finished, we should have a great 30 minute tape which South Portland Television will show, and we hope to send it to Channel 10 for their consideration. If you know of any other people worth interviewing, please let us know before it's too late. Let's save these firsthand memories forever.

• • •

Leo Boyle is meeting with the Children's Museum in Portland this week about a "Flight" exhibit at the Museum.

• • •

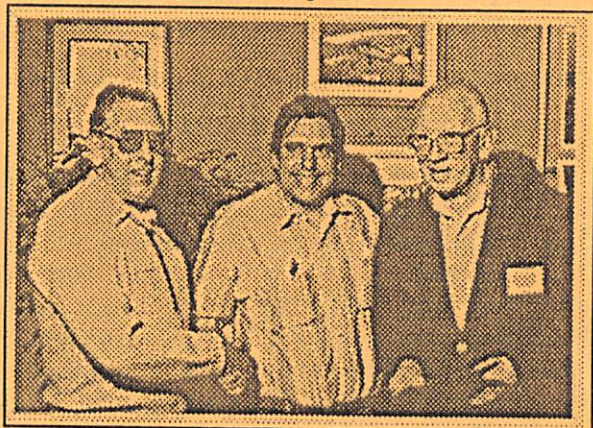
The Maine Council for Aviation Education is also holding their second meeting on May 2nd at 10:30 a.m. at the Portland Jetport, and any member who wants to attend is welcome.

• • •

Clay Carkin of the Freeport Middle School now has a Martin-Baker Ejection Seat. He needs information on how it operates, particularly a manual. If you can help him on this, call him at (207) 729-5976.

• • •

The Brunswick Naval Air Station's T-34 can be partly yours! They are offering shares for \$300.00 — call Rob Rohr at (207) 729-4226 to buy a piece of the plane.



At the Barnstormer Restaurant, Pease AFB, NH, April 9, 1994.  
l to r: Stuart Downing, out-going President and Harvey Kreutzman, in-coming President of the Massachusetts AHS.; Leo Boyle, President of the Maine AHS.

Tom Leamon Photo

## George Gray

by Leo Boyle

Born in Blue Hill, Maine on September 13, 1882, George A. Gray was the first Maine-born aviator. In 1911, he learned to fly at the Wright School of Aviation in Dayton, Ohio. In 1912, he became the first one to fly over Lake Champlain and the Adirondack Mountains, and in that same year, he returned to his home state. When Old Orchard Beach was unable to book Harry Atwood, George Gray was engaged to fly from there for the Labor Day weekend. His contract called for him to be in the air at least 30 minutes each afternoon.

Flying a Burgess-Wright Model B biplane called *Velvet*, he took off on Saturday, August 31, for a sensational 56-minute flight. Proceeding down the beach as far as Camp Ellis and back to Pine Point several times, he raced a Maine Central locomotive from Pine Point to Old Orchard and pulled away from it. He did the same with an automobile on Grand Avenue, and then did dips, spirals and "Ocean" and "Dutch" rolls for the huge crowd gathered near the pier. Although he had more than fulfilled his 30-minute contract, he then took H.L. Hildreth Jr. of Boston, treasurer of the well-known Velvet candy manufacturers, for a 10-minute ride. "The greatest sensation ever experienced," said Mr. Hildreth upon landing.

On September 4th, he made another exciting flight over Saco and Biddeford, rising to 3000 feet in the air and remaining aloft 22 minutes. He took up three passengers on other flights that day, one of whom was Gertrude Merrill of Dorchester, MA, and another was Gerald J. Culhane, *Express-Advertiser* correspondent. All in all, about a dozen people had their first airplane rides with George Gray during his stay on the beach. On Saturday, September 7th, Gray pulled a big surprise. Shortly after noon and unannounced, George Gray appeared over Portland, becoming the first aviator to fly over Maine's largest city, for Atwood had flown only over the harbor earlier.

Leaving Old Orchard Beach at 12:40 p.m. with his mechanic, A. Chauncey Redding, he arrived over Portland at 12:55. Confining their flying to the Western Promenade area, they first dropped two letters wrapped in Hildreth's Velvet kisses in the vicinity of Railway Square on St. John Street. One was to D.W. Hogg, city editor of the *Express-Advertiser*, and one to Mayor Oakley C. Curtis, inviting him for a flight the next day. As it happened, Mayor Curtis was out of town and did not make the flight. While over the city they were hit by a sudden heavy shower, and only the quick actions of Mr. Redding prevented a disaster. Removing his cap, Mr. Redding quickly placed it over the magneto before it was too wet, allowing the flight to continue. They arrived back at Old Orchard at 1:17, having been in the air 37 minutes and thrilling thousands of Portlanders.

He did not fly on Sunday, disappointing some 30,000 visitors. Apparently, the street railway companies had agreed

*Continued on Back Page*

## Upcoming MAHS Meetings

May 14	9 a.m.	Conference Room, Portland Jetport.
June 11	TBA	Sanford Airport, Sanford. Visit Lou Furnas' Field in Berwick after tour of tower.
July 2, 3	9 a.m.	Military Air Show, Owls Head Transportation Museum. We will have a table and display there.
August 13	TBA	Bangor Airport, Bangor
Sept. 10, 11	9 a.m.	Greenville Fly-In, Greenville. (Jim, host) We hope to have a table and display there.
October 15	9 a.m.	Oxford Aviation, Oxford. (Rob & Lloyd, hosts) Tour of Oxford Aviation.
November 12	9 a.m.	Lewiston/Auburn Airport. Possible tour of 1649s.
December 10	9 a.m.	Conference Room, Portland Jetport

## Calendar of Events

May 21	Lindbergh Crate Fly-In and Celebration, Canaan, ME
May 21, 22	Aviation Flea Market, Hampton Air Field, Hampton, NH
May 29	Ford Meet and Air Show, Owls Head Transportation Museum
June 19	Transportation and Technology Auction, Owls Head Transportation Museum
June 2, 3	Military Aviation and Aerobatic Show, Owls Head Transportation Museum
June 11, 12	NAS, So. Weymouth, MA - Thunderbirds
July 10	50s and 60s Meet and Air Show, Owls Head Transportation Museum
July 23, 24	Truck and Tractor Meet and Air Show, Owls Head Transportation Museum
July 28-Aug. 3	Oshkosh, Wisconsin
Aug. 6, 7	Annual Rally and Aerobatic Show, Owls Head Transportation Museum
Aug. 19-21	Batavia, NY - Year of the "Cat"
August 21	Antique, Classic Auto Auction, Owls Head Transportation Museum
Aug. 27, 28	Westover AFB Snowbirds
Sept. 4	Motorcycle Meet and Air Show, Owls Head Transportation Museum
Sept. 10, 11	Seaplane Fly-In, Greenville, Maine
Sept. 11	Convertible Meet and Air Show, Owls Head Transportation Museum
Sept. 24, 25	New England Escadrille Air Show, Pease AFB, New Hampshire
October 2	Foreign Festival and Fall Flying Finale, Owls Head Transportation Museum
October 7, 8, 9	30th Northeast Aero Historians meeting, New England Air Museum, Bradley Field, CT
October 23	Great Fall Auction, Owls Head Transportation Museum

---

## MAINE AVIATION HISTORICAL SOCIETY MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City, State, Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Special Interests \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_

1994 Membership Dues are \$20.00.

Please mail payment to: **Maine Aviation Historical Society**  
101 Monroe Avenue  
Westbrook, ME 04092-4020

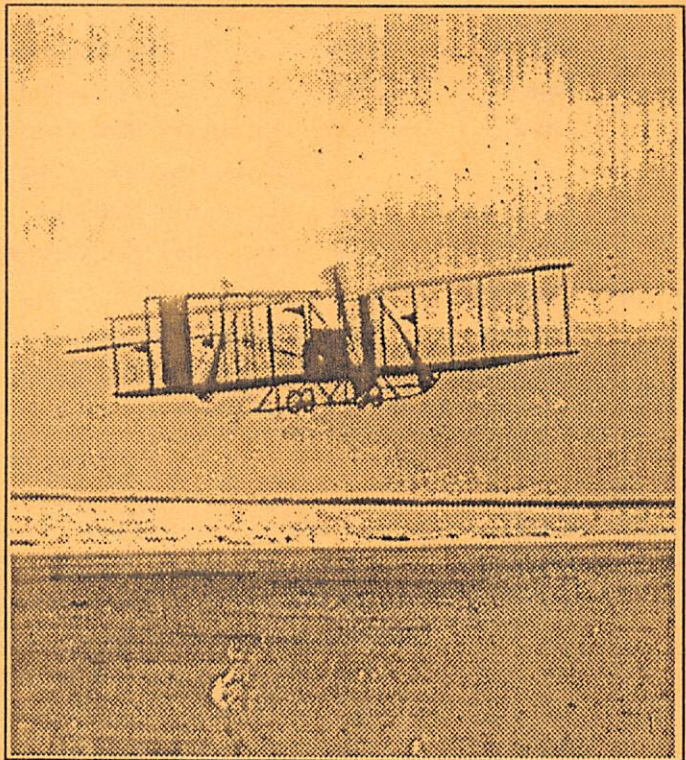
- New  
 Renewal

For more information, call 207-854-9972.

(Continued from page 2)

to pay him for the extra flights that day, but he did not receive the money from them and would not fly. On Monday, he towed his plane to Portland and put it on the Grand Trunk train for South Paris. There he put on another fine exhibition for three days at the Oxford County Fair before leaving for Montreal.

George Gray continued his career as a barnstormer until America entered the war in 1917. During World War I, he served in the U.S. Army Air Service in France as an inspector, rising to the rank of captain. He remained in the Army Air Service until 1920. He was married to the well-known aviatrix "Jack" Stearns Gray. She wrote a book, *Up*, in 1931 telling of George's experiences as a barnstormer, and he lived until 1967. His mechanic, Chauncey Redding, was not to be as lucky. He learned to fly in 1913 and with two partners designed a tailless tractor biplane that winter at M.I.T. After a few test flights, it crashed and the pilot, N. Roy Waite, escaped serious injury. Later, in 1914, Redding borrowed Waite's Burgess-Wright, but he crashed, killing his passenger, Phil Bulman, and himself.



*George Gray flying in his Burgess-Wright  
at Old Orchard Beach, September 4, 1912.*

C.E. Moody Photo

Courtesy of Robert Philgate, MacArthur Library, Biddeford

Maine Aviation Historical Society  
101 Monroe Avenue  
Westbrook, ME 04092-4020

**NEXT MEETING:**  
Saturday, May 14, 1994  
Conference Room  
Portland Jetport