

DIRIGO FLYER

Vol. III, No. 10 November 1995

Newsletter of the Maine Aviation Historical Society • 101 Monroe Avenue, Westbrook, Maine 04092 • 207-854-9972

Air Shows and Meetings

Things started off this fall with a bang on Labor Day weekend with the Maine Pilot's Association '95 Air Show at the Sanford Airport. Those of you who attended know that we were blessed with great weather and a really fine air show for both days of the show.

Regrettably, due to the late announcement of the show and the resultant lack of publicity over Labor Day, not enough people attended the show. It was a shame because it was a close-up better air show and really a joy to observe. We were lucky for a large number of our members from Southern Maine were there, as well as meeting lots of new friends. Jack Denison, Scott Grant, Lloyd Gates and your editor manned the booth and had a fine time.

Scott Grady did double duty by going to the Biddeford Airport Fly-In two weeks after the Sanford Show and setting up a table for us by himself. This 1st Annual Fly-In and Flea Market was sponsored by the new FBO and Airport Manager, and it is planned to make it an annual event. Scott gave out many newsletters and sold some T-shirts. Great job, Scott.

In between Sanford and Biddeford we took our annual trek to Greenville. You meet so many great people there that it has to go down as one of the spectacular events of every year. We have to thank Max Folsom for the fine hangar space, and member Frank Woodworth made it all possible. Now we just have to see whom we can enlist to help them out with the weather. The rain started to drizzle down about noon on Saturday and continued through the afternoon. Sunday morning, bright sunshine woke me up, and I was sure the bad weather jinx was broken. Then I looked out of the cabin window, with its spectacular view of Mt. Kineo—and saw the whitecaps! The wind blew and blew and by eleven o'clock most of the flying events had to be canceled. The hangar flying was great, however, with help from Houle, Jack Denison, Jim and James Chichetto and many others. We also want to thank Dana Ellis and Dragon Products for our table.

Raffle Results

At high noon on Sunday in Greenville, member Don Strout of Orono reached into the shoe box and pulled out the name of member Wayne Briggs of Scarborough as the winner of the framed and autographed George Guzzi print we raffled off. My 9-year-old grandson, Shea Ellis, insisted on pulling another ticket and came up with the name of Wayne Briggs! The raffle raised about \$150 for the Society. Thank you, George Guzzi.

31st Northeast Aero Historians

Over the Columbus Day weekend, Jack Denison and Leo Boyle drove out to Ottawa, Canada for the 31st Annual Northeast Aero Historians meeting. We say many old friends: Bart Gould, Bill Deane, Bob Woods from Massachusetts, Harvey Lippincott from Connecticut, George Fuller and Ross Richardson from Canada, and made many new friends and contacts from all over the Northeast. A wonderful group of speakers, both engineers and pilots, brought us up to date on the latest research projects and test flying—really amazing and often unbelievable! On Sunday morning, we visited the beautiful National Aviation Museum at Rockcliffe. Guided tours, not only of the museum itself but including the storage and restoration areas, gave us a full picture of this fine museum. Be sure and put this exhibit on your must list. Here you will be guaranteed seeing very different aircraft than in most other museums. From the *Silver Dart*, a German WWI gotha bomber, a large number of Canadian bush planes (a Junkers, a Fairchild, a Stearman, Fox Moth, Puss Moth, Beaver and more), to many British WWII aircraft up to recent jets, it's a joy and an education. Next year's meeting will be held in Philadelphia, probably on the Columbus Day weekend, so make plans now to attend. If enough people wish to attend, we can probably arrange a bus trip there.

MAHS October Meeting Notes

The October meeting was held on the 14th at member John Miller's Airfield in Newburgh. Houle and Jack Denison picked your editor up in Portland in Norm's Warrior for the flight to Newburgh. Norm and Jack navigated perfectly and we landed right at 9 a.m. After coffee and breakfast in the snack bar and a tour of the gift shop, we proceeded across the field to John's office for the meeting. Discussions were held as to nominations and volunteers for the various offices. Talk then centered on the possibility of an expedition to Big Spruce Mountain in search of the *White Bird* with a reporter and photographer from the *Boston Globe*. (Last month's *Dirigo Flyer* tells the story of this trip.) John and Maria then took us on a tour of their field with its three '30s-style hangars. Three more are to be built and the dipsy-doodle runway is to be filled in. We saw all the aircraft based there and met many of the people who "live" there. All in all it was a most enjoyable morning and we'll be back next year to see John and Maria. After take-off, Norm made a low pass over the field, buzzed Carlton Willey's strip and flew us down the runway of the old Winterport Airport before returning to Portland and Rochester.

MAHS November Meeting

After the trip to the mountain on the 29th, the November meeting was held at the Augusta Airport on November 11th. Thanks to Ron Roy, we used one side of the main terminal and enjoyed coffee made by one of the women working there. Norm Houle, Jack Denison, Leo Boyle, Frank Trask, Clay Carkin, Scott Grant and his father, and Jim and James Chichetto were all there. Cliff Haines and Frank Powers from Augusta were delayed by the strong winds, I guess, but soon arrived. Again, much discussion was held on the nominations for officers for 1996 and their various duties. Jim Chichetto spoke briefly of the Big Spruce Mountain trip and passed around pictures of same. Jack Denison told of the trip to the Northeast Aero Historians meeting, with pictures.

Important December Meeting!

Mark your calendar now for the December meeting, which will be held in the Conference Room of the Portland International Jetport on Saturday, December 9th at 9 a.m. Results of the election should be coming in and you can bring your ballot to the meeting. Things to be discussed will include the upcoming change of officers, the spring Big Spruce Mountain expedition, a 1997 calendar, and ideas for improving the newsletter. T.K. Dudley, who was photographer for the *Windsock*, will present a slide show on all the 1995 air shows he attended. He's a great photographer and this way you can see all the shows you didn't get to this year.

1996 Flying Down East Calendar

There will not be a 1996 *Flying Down East* calendar this year. Production delays and delays in getting all information needed, lack of time to put into it, and too much risk for our investment all led to Leo Boyle and Brian Wood regretfully postponing this year's calendar. With 90% of the work done and the balance in sight, it was too late to get into the stores, which accounted for over half of our sales. It is our belief that this project should be one for the Society. With only the dates having to be changed for 1997, the calendar is ready. With all work paid for to date, plus \$500 each from Leo and Brian, the need exists for about \$1500 more to produce 1000 copies and do a limited amount of advertising. This calendar could be ready by June and reap the benefit of tourist sales and shelf space in the stores. No guarantee could be made as to your investment return, but Leo would be glad to talk to anyone interested about past results.

In the meantime, the Massachusetts Aviation Historical Society has published their 1996 *Flying Yankee* calendar (see their ad elsewhere in this issue). This is an excellent calendar, very similar in format to our *Flying Down East* calendar. I will try to bring a copy to the December meeting for anyone interested to see.

Changes Ahead for the Dirigo Flyer?

There has been talk of making the monthly newsletter just that, with news of meetings, air shows, new members, etc. only. A quarterly or an annual journal would be produced in a larger magazine or paperback format solely devoted to interesting articles on Maine's aviation history and appropriate photo-

graphs and drawings. This could entail more work, but with the help of the new president and vice president, and contributions of articles and pictures from members, it is possible. With the increasing cost of paper, printing and postage, it might be possible to sell this in selected retail outlets to help recoup some of these costs. I hope we can discuss these ideas more thoroughly at the December meeting — if you can't be there, call or write me with your thoughts.

Dues Are Due

Dues are due January 1 for the calendar year 1996. Several of you have already paid, and you should have a 1996 membership card. If you have any questions, let Leo know. Dues are vital to our lifeblood, and as you shall see in the next month's issue, the treasurer's report shows that the majority of your dues goes to the production and mailing of the newsletter. (And don't forget, the writing, the articles, the compilation and the labels are all free.)

Renew now (dues are still \$20 annually) and for \$2.00 more to cover postage costs, receive a free copy of both our 1994 and 1995 *Flying Down East* calendars. Or, best of all, what a great gift — where else can you get two free calendars to give, plus twelve issues of the *Dirigo Flyer* (they'll think of you every month of the year) for only \$22.00!! Help us grow and double our membership in 1996!!

Many Thanks

Thanks to Florida member Bill Wincapaw for his help in trying to locate Joe Slovak for Norm Houle. And thanks to Doug Freeman of Farmington for the loan of the Harry Atwood photos in this issue. And thanks to Norm Houle for more labels, and for everyone else who contributed and helped throughout the year, my heartfelt "thanks."

Election of Officers 1996

The call for volunteers, plus the recommendations of the nominating committee have resulted in the list of candidates shown on the ballot on page 5 of this issue. Space is provided for write-in candidates or volunteers, and yes, you can nominate and vote for yourself. Please complete and mail in your ballot (or bring to the December meeting) as the deadline for receipt of votes in December 23, 1995. The number beside each candidate's name is their membership number.

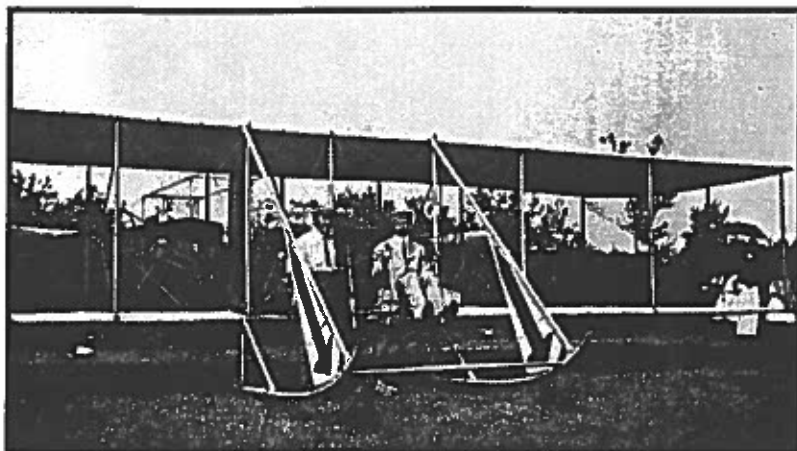
Governor Proclaims Clay Carkin Day

Member Clay Carkin, a sixth grade teacher in Freeport, was honored by the governor on Friday, September 22, for his work with the NASA Summer Space Camp program. Carkin has taken groups of students to the camp in Huntsville, Alabama, for six years. This year Ruth Porter, the mother of one of those students, wrote to Gov. Angus King commending Carkin and the program. King responded with a proclamation declaring September 22 Clay Carkin Day.

Welcome, Mr. McCusker

122. Joseph McCusker (*Maine Aviation History*)
390 West End Avenue, Apt. 7C
New York, NY 10025

A Peek Inside the Harry N. Atwood Scrapbook



Above: Harry N. Atwood and his mechanic Frank Lawson (standing, left), his Burgess-Wright F in 1912.

Right: Harry N. Atwood in his Burgess-Wright F in 1912.



*Doug Freeman of Farmington sent these photos.
Does anyone know where they were taken and exactly when?*

Aviation Wrecks

An aviation wreck is any aircraft that has been crashed, ditched, damaged, stranded, or abandoned. The wreck may be intact or scattered, may be on land or in water, may be—in National Register terms—a structure or a site. A structure remains relatively intact, while a wreck “site” lacks the basic structural elements of the aircraft. In the case of the Will Rogers-Wiley Post crash site near Barrow, Alaska, the wreckage was removed years ago, but the site is listed in the National Register because of the association of the site with the crash that killed two very famous Americans.

The preservation of cultural resources and professional standards in cultural resource management require special attention to aviation wrecks, like shipwrecks. A wreck may involve the sensitive issue of human remains, the presence of ordnance or other hazardous substances, potential environmental disturbance if recovery is attempted, actual environmental degradation of the aircraft, fragile instruments or historically interesting instrument readings, and the existence of historical artifacts associated with the aircraft and its mission or crew.

Compliance with Federal, State, and local laws is a prerequisite to protecting cultural resources. By national (and international) law, for example, government aircraft remain government property regardless of location and condition, or age, unless government title to the aircraft is officially sold, transferred, or abandoned. Property rights and laws apply to both public and private wrecks and to both public and private lands.

Salvage laws and the law of the sea may apply to certain aviation wrecks (but not to government wrecks). Possession—also buying, selling, and exchanging—of archeological materials (including historical artifacts taken from a wreck site) is *illegal* if the materials were not removed from the site in full accordance with all applicable laws.

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Civil Air Patrol Parachutists of Maine Wing in World War II

By SSGT Max C. Calderwood, CAP

The late 1930s saw the parachute developed not just as an aerial life saver, but as a military tool for delivering men and supplies rapidly and decisively into an area.

In the fall of 1931 the Russian Army had formed a test parachute unit from volunteers of the 11th Rifle Division at the Leningrad Military District. By 1935 battalion-sized units had been formed and were conducting mass jump training exercises.

In May of 1940 Germany shocked the world with its lightning airborne assault on Holland and Belgium. In reaction to this, the U.S. Army rushed into the development of its parachute and glider forces throughout 1940 and 1941. By mid-January 1941 the bulk of the Army's first airborne organization, the 501st Parachute Infantry Battalion, had become jump qualified. It was becoming obvious that the parachute would be a major factor in the coming conflict.

As part of the buildup of the national defense effort at this time, the Office of Civilian Defense officially created the Civil Air Patrol on 1 December 1941 to utilize the large number of light civilian aircraft in home defense. Its missions would be varied and would include coastal patrol, forest patrol, courier duties, tow-target tracking, search and rescue as well as a host of other home front activities.

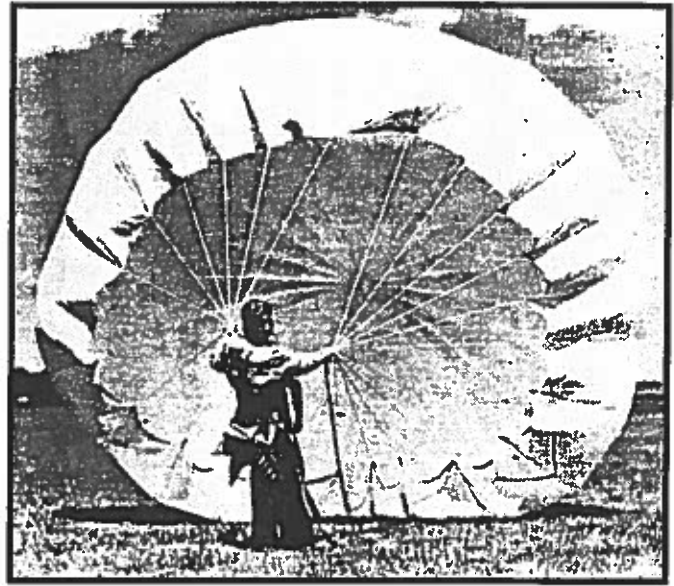
At this time civilian parachute clubs were small and scattered with the sport still regarded as a barnstorming stunt for dare-devils only. Equipment was primitive by today's standards and freefall technique unknown. Nevertheless, with the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor, civilian jumpers flocked to the newly formed Civil Air Patrol, hoping to use their unique skills in the defense effort.

The formation of the Maine Wing's parachute unit can be credited almost totally to Harold R. Brown, equipment and supplies officer for CAP Wing Headquarters. Involved with parachuting since 1926, Brown was a former test jumper for the Switlick Parachute Company and had jumped and instructed all over the United States.

A licensed rigger and owner of the Maine Parachute Service, he was a regular performer at the Maine Aero Rendezvous airshow in the years immediately prior to WW2. Brown would thrill airshow audiences by performing a dangerous break-away jump in which he would cut away from a deployed canopy, free-fall to lower altitude, and deploy a second canopy under which he would land. This stunt required the wearing of three separate parachutes. At the time he began working on the formation of the CAP parachute unit, he had accumulated over 2,500 jumps.

Even before the end of December 1941, Brown was laying plans for a Civil Air Patrol "parachute squad." His plans called for at least one jumper and one rigger in each county in the state.

"Besides its three professional jumpers, the state has six or eight student jumpers who have had six jumps apiece, and this



can be a nucleus for building up CAP's parachute squad," he was quoted as saying in the *Portland Press Herald* of December 31. He went on to say "Jumpers can get down practically anywhere there's trouble. If a plane crashes in some roadless area, and is then spotted from the air, jumpers can be dropped out where planes couldn't think of landing, and take proper rescue gear with them for first aid measures, also food enough to keep alive until a ground party would work in to them." He also stated that jumpers could assist the local Army, police and game wardens as well as acting as "smoke jumpers" in fighting forest fires. It was also hoped that many women could be trained in the roles of parachute packers and riggers, not just for service within the CAP, but to render additional help to Army and Navy packers.

At least one woman would be an active jumper in the group. Juliet Poulin of Auburn had made four jumps by the end of December. She would be one of the first qualified jumpers available to the organization.

Soon Brown was swamped with applications from those wanting to be jumpers or riggers. With the coming of spring, training began in earnest. On the weekend of March 7-8, 1942, training exercises were held at the Augusta State Airport. Frank Schell of South Portland parachuted as part of his training to organize a group of chutists in the Portland area. Paul R. Dwinal of Lewiston was also among those jumping. Herbert Beatty of Augusta served as pilot for the jump airplane. Classes in parachute packing were also offered, and Harold Robinson, aircraft flight instructor, and Richard Bucklan, aviation supervisor at the Quoddy NYA school, were among those receiving instruction. Harold Brown organized the training and was there to offer his expertise in all classes.

One of the first documented actions by CAP parachutists would come in helping to train the Maine State Guard, a home guard authorized under the National Defense Act when the Haine National Guard was called into federal service. It was a reflection that the war was not necessarily progressing in favor

of the Allied cause during those dark days of early 1942, that training for the state guard would concentrate on guerilla warfare and defense against airborne raiders.

On Saturday, July 11, and Sunday, July 12, 1942 a large training maneuver for the Maine State Guard was held at the Auburn rifle range. CAP planes dive bombed the guardsmen of the First Battalion with bags of flour to simulate air attack.

Student officers were divided into platoons on Sunday morning with the idea of intercepting an "enemy" parachutist and preventing him from reaching an equipment bundle dropped separately.

Paul R. Dwinal of Auburn, a member of Flight One of the Civil Air Patrol, as well as Co. B of the Lewiston unit of the state guard, was the major contributor to the defense exercise by playing the part of the enemy.

At 9:00 a.m. a Waco biplane, piloted by Rex Waite, made a first pass over the range and dropped the "weapons" bundle despite a low ceiling of clouds. On the second pass, Dwinal, making his 20th jump, left the Waco at about 2,000 feet. Opening in clouds, he was unable to spot the bundle in time to steer toward it. He landed more than 200 yards away from the equipment with thick woods intervening.

Even though they had been held back until the parachutist landed, the platoons of student guardsmen were able to capture the air-dropped "weapons" and sweep down on the parachutist. The weather had favored the defenders and the decision went to the state guardsmen.

After this exercise there is little mention of the CAP parachutists in the press. With a change in the war situation most fanned out into the armed forces, and industry, hoping to find more direct involvement in the global struggle. Paul R. Dwinal would leave the area to work in the shipyards of Portland.

Later in 1942, Harold Brown would become a parachute

mechanic for the U.S. Navy at Quonset Point Naval Air Station in Rhode Island. The following year would see him become head of the parachute loft there, a post he would hold until 1957. Most of the other members probably went on to similar pursuits.

The Maine Wing jumpers devised no special unit or qualification insignia. Their equipment was of standard civilian type that might be found at any 1940s jump club. Most of their expenses probably came out of their own pockets. At top strength the unit was probably never over 11 or 12 people.

Still, even though this group existed for only a very short time they provided a unique service to their state and nation at a very critical period. The training undoubtedly helped many succeed in the service as well as convincing the local military and civilian populations of the usefulness and versatility of the parachute.

Wartime Civil Air Patrol regulations clearly provided for the formation of parachutists as a "special unit" within a squadron, but such unique groups were quite rare during World War II with only Maine, Michigan and Washington being documented as having used them. This makes the story of Maine's CAP parachutists all the more significant.

After World War II there would continue to be some Civil Air Patrol jumping for rescue and sport. Michigan Wing would continue training parachutists into the 1948-49 period. During this same era, the New Rochelle Squadron in New York state would train cadet jumpers until it would evolve into a civilian parachute club. Later, CAP regulations would prohibit parachuting by cadets. And there would be other efforts to organize rescue parachutists in Maine in the early 1970s, but this group would have no direct connection to CAP.

The growth of the highly trained USAF Air Rescue Service and the common use of helicopters in search and rescue would help to make the rescue parachutist a thing of the past.

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**B
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T**

Here is your official ballot for MAHS officers for 1996. Please mark your choices and mail to: MAHS, 101 Monroe Ave., Westbrook, ME 04092-4020. Deadline is 12/23/95.

Vote for One Candidate per Office

President: James Chichetto (5)

.....

Vice President: Clay Carkin (17)

.....

Sec./Editor: Leo Boyle (2)

.....

Treasurer: John Miller (54)

.....

Vote for Three for Board of Directors

Jack Denison (32)

Norman Houle (1)

Scott F. Grant (70)

Frank Powers (102)

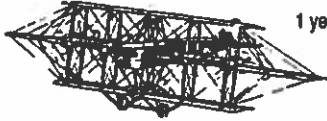
O. William Robertson (80)

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 9 a.m.