



# DIRIGO FLYER

Vol. III, No. 6 June 1995

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

## Great Planes and People at Hampton Fly-In and Flea Market

Thanks go to Mike Hart and company for arranging a super event on May 20 and 21. Also, thanks to Norm and Kay Houle who found space on their table for our newsletters and calendars and a base of operations. Regrettably, we could not be there on Sunday, and so we missed seeing many members who could not be there Saturday. The number of airplanes was fantastic, and the variety was something to behold. Cessnas, Lakes, Beechs and Pipers of all kinds and varieties were present, plus many others. Among those to behold were Sophie Byrne's L-17 Navion, a PT-19, a new Standard Bi-plane, a Cessna 195, more than one Waco, and a fantastic Pieterpol Air Camper. The brass was so shiny you hated to have them start the engine.

The air camper was parked in front of the tent with the beginnings of the New Hampton Air Museum. This was presided over by Earl Harding, who has spent a good part of his life right there and did some flying at the old Portland Airport in Scarborough. Literally hundreds of photos of the Hampton Airport, the planes and the people were arranged for viewing, not to mention the soloist's shirt tails. This is only going to grow, so take a flight or drive to Hampton to see this worthwhile display.



Walter C. O'Connor of Agawam, MA and Leo Boyle at the Hampton Fly-In and Flea Market. O'Connor was a mechanic with Ludington Airlines, then joined National Airways in 1933 when they began flying as Boston & Maine Airways. He was based at the Portland Airport until the spring of 1934 when they moved to Boston (and a heated hangar!). O'Connor is active with seaplanes at Agawam and rebuilding Warner engines. (Norm Houle Photo)



A congenial group after dinner at the Barnstormer, 5/20/95. l to r: Billie Downing, Bill Deane, Stu Downing, Kay Houle, Leo Boyle, Ray & Monica Crane, Eleanor Willey, Paul Larcom and Carlton Willey. (Norm Houle Photo)

It was wonderful to see so many members, including some we rarely see, like Lin Dall from Shapleigh, John Craig from Bangor, and Andy Stinson from Enfield. And we met so many other Maine people, including Grady Sharpe from Chelsea and Carlton Willey from Hampden Highlands. We saw several of our friends from the New Hampshire Aviation Historical Society and the Massachusetts Aviation Historical Society.

Late Saturday afternoon, several of us adjourned to the Barnstormer Restaurant at the former Pease AFB in Newington. Parker Ryan was a gracious host, and the food was fantastic. Make sure to stop in if you're in the area, see the great aviation posters, photos and models that decorate the restaurant and enjoy great food.

### CATCH THE MAHS EXCITEMENT!

Please let us know what we can do to help you, or things you would like us to plan. We are your society, and we need your ideas. For further information, please contact:

**Maine Aviation Historical Society**  
101 Monroe Avenue  
Westbrook, ME 04092-4020  
or call (207) 854-9972

If you are not yet a member, join today and help preserve Maine's aviation heritage. And receive the *Dirigo Flyer*!

## Mystery Photo Identified

Lots of wrong answers to the mystery airport photo in the May issue! The correct answer is:

*The Portland Airport at Stroudwater in the early 1930s.*

### Mark Your Calendars

Date	Event
TBA	Big Spruce Mountain Expedition
June 10	Belfast Airport. First Annual Maine Pilots Association Fly-In. Hopefully, the DC-3 in Northeast colors will be there.
July 1-2	Owls Head Transportation Museum. Military Air Show. Always a great event, lots of great airplanes and a MAHS table.
July 22-23	Brunswick Naval Air Station, Great State O' Maine Air Show. Thunderbirds, Patty Wagstaff and more, plus a MAHS table.

### Welcome New Members

107. Air Tech, Inc. (*Aviation Maintenance Education*)  
Access Road, Sanford Airport  
Sanford, ME 04073  
207-324-8404
108. Dana L. Smith (*Antiques and Restoration*)  
RR 1, Box 170, 16 Central Avenue  
Limerick, ME 04048  
207-793-8020
109. Patricia B. Smith  
RR 1, Box 170, 16 Central Avenue  
Limerick, ME 04048  
207-793-8020

*Correction:* Address for William H. Wincapaw III (#13) is *Davie*, not *Danie*, FL. Telephone: 305-424-8866.

### MAHS T-Shirts Now Available

At last . . . the Maine Aviation Historical Society T-Shirts are now available. These are handsome white shirts with our logo in green and tan.

Sizes L and XL .....	\$12.00
Postage .....	2.00
TOTAL .....	\$14.00
(Maine residents add .72 sales tax)	

*Please make checks payable to:*  
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207-854-9972

And don't forget — they make great gifts!  
All profits go to help the society.

## Ready, Set . . . Hold on the Big Spruce Mountain Expedition

The Big Spruce Mountain expedition is on temporary hold. This is due to the lateness of the snow cover, the inclement weekend weather, and holiday and other commitments. Hopefully, early in June we will be able to bring everything together and get up there to at least find out if it's worth further expeditions. As soon as we have a positive on this, you will be notified. The meeting place will be the same as in the *May Dirigo Flyer*. The weekends of June 3, 10 and 17 are the best and probably last possibilities before postponement until Fall.

### More Mysteries . . .

In related developments, the pair of binoculars found in Newfoundland have been definitely identified as of French manufacture in the first part of World War I. They are of a type used by French officers, and could have been Coli's. What were they doing in the wilds of Newfoundland? Also in Newfoundland, pieces have been found that could have come from the Sikorsky amphibian "Dawn." The "Dawn" tried unsuccessfully in October 1927 to fly to Denmark from Old Orchard Beach. On Christmas Eve, they left Roosevelt Field in New York and were never positively sighted thereafter. The excitement continues!

### Special Thanks

Special thanks to David Godin of Levant, ME whom we met at Hampton. Dave sent us photos and newspaper clippings of the last Northeast Airlines (DC-3) flight from Waterville on April 12, 1962. His father, Robert Godin, was NEA agent there. We will have a story and picture in a future issue.

Special thanks also to Dave Hill of the Maine Instrument Flight School in Augusta who loaned some great photos which are now being copied and will appear in future issues of the *Dirigo Flyer* and/or the *Flying Down East* calendar.

Sample Issues  
\$4.00 each

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### WWI AERO (1900-1919) AND SKYWAYS (1920-1940)

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# Beryl Markham: Solo from East to West

by Leo Boyle

By 1936, most of the various ways to fly the Atlantic had been successfully made. In the nine years since Charles Lindbergh had made his solo flight from New York to Paris in the "Spirit of St. Louis," many had made a name for themselves with successful flights to various destinations, west to east, and to a lesser extent, east to west. In those nine years, approximately ninety-five attempts had been made to cross the Atlantic. Of these ventures, only thirty-one had been safely achieved from west to east, and only twelve from east to west (against the prevailing winds). One of these flights each way consisted of twenty-four Savoia-Marchetti S.M.55X seaplanes under the command of General Italo Balbo. They flew from Italy to Chicago to visit the World's Fair, and returned to Italy in the summer of 1933. (One plane was lost in the Azores on the return flight.) In addition, the dirigible R.100 flew from England to Montreal, Canada in 1930. The German dirigible L.Z.127 "Graf Zeppelin" made over one hundred crossings of the North and South Atlantic during these years, being joined in 1936 by the ill-fated L.Z. "Hindenburg."

Only a handful of female pilots had flown across the Atlantic before 1936. The first woman to cross by air was Amelia Earhart on June 17, 1928. Flying in the Fokker F.VII-3M "Friendship" with pilot Wilmer Stultz and mechanic Louis Gordon, they landed in Wales after a long flight from Trepassey Bay, Newfoundland.

She was acclaimed as the first woman to fly the Atlantic Ocean, although only a passenger, and no one knew this better than Amelia Earhart. In the following years, she improved her piloting and navigation skills, married George Palmer Putnam, and made several American record-breaking flights. By 1932, she was ready and acquired a Lockheed Vega. On May 20, 1932, she took off alone from Harbour Grace, Newfoundland, and thirteen hours and fifteen minutes later make landfall at Donegal, Ireland. After the fastest crossing to date, she landed on a farm at Culmore, later proceeding to London. Thus, four years later, she had accomplished her goal of being the first woman to pilot a plane over the vast Atlantic.

But by 1936, one major flight had not yet been made: no woman had flown the Atlantic solo from east to west. This prize was finally to be claimed by Mrs. Beryl Markham, an Englishwoman who had spent much of her life in Kenya, Africa. Flying a standard production light blue Percival Vega Gull, powered by a 200 hp DeHavilland Gipsy Six engine and named "The Messenger," she took off from the RAF base at Abingdon, England on September 4, 1936. Without radio and slowed by headwinds, she ran low on fuel shortly after making her landfall on this continent after twenty-two and a half hours



of flying. The nice landing field she picked on Cape Breton Island turned out to be a bog, and after forty feet, "The Messenger" went up on its nose. This ended all hope of continuing her flight to New York City, and in addition, she received a nasty bang on her forehead when she hit the windscreen.

Taken to Louisburg, Nova Scotia, her head wound was treated and bandaged. Harry Bruno, her American manager, chartered a staggerwing Beech 17 to fly to Halifax and bring her to New York. Most newspapermen and photographers had flown to St. John, expecting her to go there rather than Halifax. The Beech made a swift flight from Halifax, not to New York City but to Portland, Maine. The Portland stop was necessary for United States Customs and Immigration personnel to admit her formally to this country. News travels fast and several hundred enthusiastic greeters were on hand to meet the charming and attractive 33 year old Mrs. Markham. Exchanging pleasant greetings with her well-wishers, she signed countless autographs on any piece of paper available. After a short stay in Portland, she flew off for New York City. Although her flight landed at North Beach Airport by mistake, it soon flew on to Floyd Bennett Field where some five thousand had turned out to greet the blonde English heroine. But Portland, Maine had seen her first!

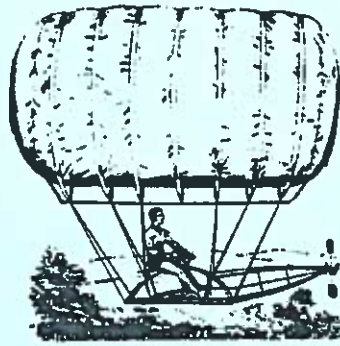
## Charles Francis Ritchell

by Leo Boyle

The first human controlled and directed aircraft flight in America took place in Hartford, Connecticut in 1878. It was made in a man-powered airship designed and built by Charles F. Ritchell, who was born in Maine about 1851. A prolific inventor, with over 200 patents to his name, Professor Ritchell, then of Bridgeport, CT, constructed a brass airship frame with the pilot sitting about the center of the airship. This frame was suspended beneath a cylindrical gas-bag, filled with hydrogen, and about 25 feet long and 13 feet in diameter. Seven bands of webbing held the bag in shape and connected to the frame. The lifting power of the hydrogen supported the weight of the bag and structure.

Powered by hand-cranking through gears, a propeller under the operator gave vertical movement. Another propeller in the nose of the airframe gave forward or reverse thrust. Two foot pedals controlled the gearing. Pushing on the left foot brought the forward propeller into gear. If the operator changed the direction of his cranking, he got reverse thrust. Toe pressure on the right pedal turned the nose propeller to the left, and heel pressure to the right.

Since Professor Ritchell was too heavy, he employed lightweight people to demonstrate his machine, the first time being indoors at the Centennial Exposition Concert Hall in Philadelphia in May 1878. Then, on June 12, 1878, piloted by a 96-pound jockey, Mark Quinlan, the airship took off from a meadow in Hartford, CT, rose 200 feet, flew over the Colt Factory and halfway across the Connecticut River. Deteriorating weather conditions forced an early return and landing. The next day, Quinlan made a longer flight to Newington, coming down for a glass of water in Hartford. Late in June 1878,



Quinlan flew 44 miles from Boston Common to Grafton, Massachusetts. He had to make emergency repairs to the gearing mechanism while the gas bag rose to 1200 feet altitude and was in danger of bursting.

Ritchell built a few more airships, one of which was a featured performer with the W.F. Coup Circus. He never could see beyond his own airship, stating that successful aerial navigation depended upon its being enclosed by four walls. Later in life (in 1905) he averred that human muscle would not be replaced by mechanical engines.

In 1992-93, the sixth grade class of the Asa C. Adams School in Orono, Maine built a full-size reproduction of Ritchell's airship. Using PVC pipe, Rip-Stop Nylon and helium gas, a successful flight was made in the University of Maine Field House. With an upward push from teachers Richard Glueck and Chris Chilelli to overcome a leaking gas cell, pilot Braxton Bullion lifted off. Without the pilot, the airship rose to the ceiling of the Field House.

*Source: Thanks to the late Bob Stepanek, and to Jack Ramsay, Library Director of the New England Air Museum for the information on Ritchell. Thanks to World War I Aero for the story on the reproduction.*

## BOOK REVIEW



by Jim Chichetto

*The First Line*, by Bill Green, Wonderhouse Publications, is a 480-page source of information for anyone interested in the early jet age over New England. This book traces the squadron histories of the 27th, 37th, 49th, 57th, 74th, 75th, 76th, 82nd, 132nd, 134th, 318th and the 465th. While some of these squadrons played only a brief note in this bit of New England history, others, like the 132nd, are still with us today.

The actual bases themselves are covered with details of their early use and the on-going improvements. Housing, runways, equipment, lighting and many other details and pictures are included. The radar sites and their links are discussed and the entire ADC plan is explained. Maps and photographs are used to give an overall view of operations during this time frame.

Aircraft are covered starting with the surplus F-51s, F-47s, B-25s, C-47s, T-6s, etc. Then the early F-80s, T-33s, F-84s,

F-86s, F-94s and F-89s are discussed. The strong and weak points of each type are explained as well as the upgrades made to each type over the years. Short stories about the good and bad points of each aircraft bring the real life and death nature of this type of flying to the reader. During the later 1950s, as the F-102s and F-101s came into service, they are also discussed. The guns, cannons and missile types are also discussed, as are the types of radar used on the aircraft. What passed for state-of-the-art back then wasn't very good by today's standards.

This book is mainly a story about people; the pilots and crewmen who came together and built the ADC units that were planned and needed by our country. They had fun while doing a job which was serious, and for the most part make the best of it. Many former pilots and aircrew gave interviews and photos to Mr. Green to help him out on this book. It is these personal memories which make this a great "history" book. Read it if you have a chance, or buy a copy for your own library, it's well worth the price.

*This book can be ordered from:*

Betts Bookstore  
26 Main Street, Bangor, ME 04401  
207-947-7052

### Upcoming MAHS Meetings

June 10	9 a.m.	TBA
July 1, 2	9 a.m.	Military Air Show, Owls Head Transportation Museum *
July 22, 23	9 a.m.	Great State o' Maine Air Show, Brunswick Naval Air Station *
August 12	9 a.m.	TBA
September 9, 10	9 a.m.	Greenville Seaplane Fly-In, Greenville, Maine *
October 19	9 a.m.	TBA
November 11	9 a.m.	TBA
December 9	9 a.m.	TBA

\* Indicates that we will have a table and display at these events.

All these upcoming Maine Aviation Historical Society meetings are tentative and subject to change. The definite ones are July 1 & 2 at Owls Head, July 22 & 23 at Brunswick, and September 9 & 10 at Greenville.

### Calendar of Events

June 3-4		Mid-Atlantic Air Museum WWII Weekend, Gabreski and Morgan
June 4	10 a.m.	Air Show, Convertible and Custom Show, Owls Head
June 10		1st MPA Fly-In, Belfast Airport
June 10-11		Hanscom AFB Open House, Thunderbirds, Bedford, MA
June 17-18	10 a.m.	Maine State Soap Box Derby, Owls Head
July 1-2	10 a.m.	Military Air Show, Owls Head
July 9	10 a.m.	Air Show and 50s-60s, Owls Head
July 22-23	9 a.m.	Great State o' Maine Air Show, Brunswick Naval Air Station, Thunderbirds
July 22-23	10 a.m.	Air Show and Truck and Tractor Meet, Owls Head
July 27-Aug. 2		EAA Fly-In Convention, Oshkosh, WI
August 5-6	10 a.m.	Aerobatic Show and Transportation Rally, Owls Head
August 10-13		Sentimental Journey, Lock Haven, PA
August 12		Waterville, N.S. Fly-In
August 18-20		Great Falls Balloon Festival, Lewiston-Auburn, ME
August 18-20		Wings of Eagles Air Show, Batavia, NY
September 9-10		Greenville, ME Seaplane Fly-In
October 8		Fall Flying Finale, Owls Head
October 13-15		31st Northeast Aero Historians Convention, Ottawa, Ontario, Canada
October 22		Great Fall Auction, Owls Head

As we get dates, other events will be added. Let us know what you know.



The DC-3 done in Northeast Airlines colors at Sanford Airport on May 19, 1995 for the rededication of runway 14-32. Plane is owned by Mike Farrey of New Hampshire. (Norm Houle Photo)

## Calling All Maine Forest Service Pilots!

(present and retired)



I am looking for historical aviation items from the Maine Forest Service. I'm interested in photos, log books, patches or stories relating to what you did during your tenure with the Forest Service. Any information from the first flight of the service to the present would be greatly appreciated!

This information will be put into the Maine Aviation Historical Society's Library for public viewing.

If you feel that you could help, please write to:

**Scott Grant**  
225 York Street  
Portland, Maine 04102

## LAST CHANCE!! Flight Training Records Available

Would you be interested in reading what your Naval Air Training Command flight instructors had to say about your flying skills? Complete the information below, or as much as you can remember, and the U.S. Navy will return your original flight training records. All years back to the 1940s are in storage but will soon be destroyed. They bring back good (and bad) memories. There is no charge, just mail in the information below to:

*Ms. Marge Bordelon, CODE N-3212*

*Chief of Naval Air Training, NAS Corpus Christi, TX 78419*

Dear Ms. Bordelon,

I understand that I may receive my Navy Flight Training Record file.

The following information concerning my training is submitted:

Name, Naval Aviator # (V-XXXX), Social Security #, Birthdate,

Pre-Flight Class, USMC/USN Service Number, Designated a Naval

Aviator at NAS \_\_\_\_\_ on (date)\_\_\_\_\_.

Please forward by flight training jacket to: Name, Address, Phone.

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### MAINE AVIATION HISTORICAL SOCIETY MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

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Maine Aviation Historical Society  
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**Spruce Mtn. - TBA**  
**Military Air Show**  
July 1-2  
Owls Head Trans. Museum  
Owls Head, Maine