



DIRIGO FLYER

Vol. IV, No. 2 February 1996

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

How About Another Mystery?

by Oscar F. J. Blue

Polar explorer and naval aviator Richard E. Byrd had a summer home on Tunk Lake in Sullivan, Maine. His camp was a large elaborate log cabin built during the Roaring '20s. It seems that the admiral obtained it after the 1929 stock market crash at a very reasonable price. The log cabin was called the Wickieup and it was on the National Register of Historic Places because several of Byrd's expeditions were planned there.

Admiral Byrd's son Dickie had a very interesting collection of antique automobiles in buildings around the log cabin. These cars were undoubtedly obtained during or after World War II when they had little or no value on the used car market. Among these cars were a 1922 Willys Knight sedan, a 1924 Essex 2-door, a 1924 Buick sedan, a 1927 Hupmobile sedan, a 1928 Chevrolet 2-door, and a 1931 Cadillac V-12 limousine. He also had several Cadillacs and Packards of the 1950s and an English Ford Prefect.

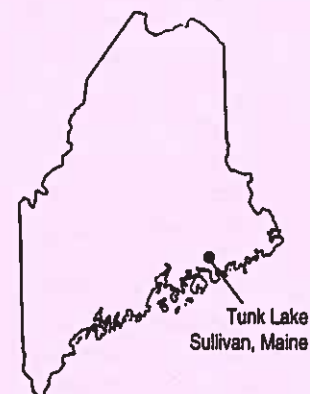
About ten years ago, Admiral Byrd's caretaker arranged for me to meet Dickie and have him show me his cars. I met him at the appointed time and drove Dickie to the log cabin in my Model A Ford. Dickie, somewhat eccentric but extremely knowledgeable about automotive history, gave me a great tour of all of his automobiles. He then showed me around the log house, telling me about many of the interesting things that happened there and about all the interesting and famous people who visited Wickieup during the heyday of Richard Byrd's fame.

One of the more interesting stories was the one about when Chief of Naval Operations Admiral King came to Wickieup for rest and recuperation (R&R) during World War II. Admiral King had earlier learned to fly at Pensacola when he was put in command of a fleet that included aircraft carriers. He said he wanted to know what flying was like for the naval aviators whom he would have to order into combat.

Admiral King flew in to Tunk Lake in a seaplane, apparently a U.S. Navy plane, and upon landing, proceeded to strike the only underwater obstruction in the area. Dickie Byrd and his sister rowed out into the lake and rescued CNO Admiral King, whose U.S. Navy seaplane was sinking into Tunk Lake up in Maine.

Footnote: The Wickieup burned to the ground in the late 1980s under suspicious circumstances. Dickie Byrd was found dead in a warehouse on the road to Washington, D.C., also under suspicious circumstances. Dickie always referred to his father as "The Admiral" and Dickie's favorite old cars were the 1915-22 twin-six Packards, on which he was an expert.

Lots of questions — Does anyone know what caused Wickieup to burn down? How Dickie Byrd died? When did Admiral King's accident happen? What kind of a plane was he flying? Is there any record of this accident? Is the plane still there in the lake? Let us know what you know!



Information, Please!

For Norm Houle
P.O. Box 563, Barrington, NH 03825

John Butler Ayer was born in Bangor, Maine on September 21, 1912 and was killed in action flying for Eagle Squadron 71 — English Channel — on April 17, 1942.

His parents were Fred R. Ayer of Bangor and Francis E. Butler of Milwaukee, Wisconsin. They were divorced when he was a young boy, after which John moved to Milwaukee with his mother.

The British list of American volunteers in the RAFVR who did not survive includes J.B. Ayer, #83802, hometown Milwaukee, Wisconsin, USA. Date of enlistment, August 8, 1940.

This is all the information I have. I would like to know where John Ayer went to school, where he learned to fly, whether he was married, his occupation, etc. Any information on John Butler Ayer (9/12/21-8/8/40) would be appreciated.

February Meeting Notes

The February meeting was held on Saturday, February 10, at the Portland International Jetport. A large group attended, ranging from Bangor to Rochester, NH. Everyone had a story to contribute and some questions were answered, but many more were brought up. There's plenty of work for all of us to do. We need to get the myths dispelled and the facts cleared up.

Next on the agenda was our guest speaker, Tom Casagrande. Tom spent nine-plus years in the U.S. Army and 20 years in the National Security Agency at Lakehurst, New Jersey. For close to two hours, Tom held us all spellbound with his tales and his slides. Basically, it was "My Life," and what a life he's led.

Learning to fly unofficially from his father, he joined the Army to learn to fly helicopters. Ten days after graduation, he was in Vietnam flying combat missions. At the end of his helicopter tour, he flew fixed-wing missions. All of these actions were illustrated with slides of the action and the aircraft he flew. His impressions of the many types he's flown, ranging from the P-51 to, most recently, the MIG 15, were very revealing and exciting. Everyone enjoyed Tom's presentation immensely, and if you ever get a chance to hear him again, don't miss it. Thank you, Tom Casagrande.

T.K. Dudley, Secretary of the Maine Pilot's Association, brought us up to date as to what's going on there. They had a Board meeting on Monday, February 12, and T.K. had a petition to sign for those interested in seeing Clay Carkin reinstated as editor of the magazine format *Windssock*, which he was.

Following the regular meeting, a short Board of Directors meeting followed. Renewal memberships are coming in at a steady pace, and plans were made to follow up on those who have not renewed. The non-profit application has been submitted to the IRS and we are now a non-profit organization.

The following classes of membership were proposed and approved by the Board:

Membership	Dues	Benefits
Regular	\$20 annual	Newsletter
Corporate	\$50 annual	Newsletter, Calendar
Supporting	\$100 annual	Newsletter, Calendar, Journal
Lifetime	\$1000 (once)	Newsletter, Calendar, Journal Lifetime Membership Number

Dues will be for the calendar year, and those joining later in the year will receive all newsletters retroactive to January of that year. All renewal of dues shall be due on January 1st.

WE'LL HELP GET YOUR WORD OUT!

Ad space is now available in the *Dirigo Flyer*. Rates are \$5.00 for three issues per column inch, or \$18.00 per year. A full page (2 columns, 8 inches) is \$80.00 for three issues. Call Leo Boyle at 207-854-9972 for annual rates.

Picture ID

More information has surfaced on the picture in the last two *Dirigo Flyers* of the Waco and the Cub at the Lewiston-Auburn Airport. The Waco was blue in color, and Butch Beaver tells us that the Cub NC-20276 is still alive in the Milbridge area. Can someone check this out and confirm it?

1996 Dues

Renewals of membership are coming in at a great rate, so let's go for 100%. If there is a red X on your address label, it means we have not received your 1996 dues and this is the last issue of the *Dirigo Flyer* you will receive, so send in your contribution. If there is a mistake, let Leo know right away.

March Meeting Plans

The March meeting will be held at the General Aviation Terminal at the Bangor Airport at 9 a.m. on Saturday, March 9. We hope to see all you members from the eastern and northern part of the state and any guests. Bring your photos, books, info and airplanes for all to share. Member Don Strout will entertain us from his lifetime of aviation experiences. See you there!

"N" Numbers

Norm Houle has thoughtfully provided us with the address and telephone number for those of you who wish to obtain information on an "N" number. For information about aircraft, send the airplane registration number or "N" number to:

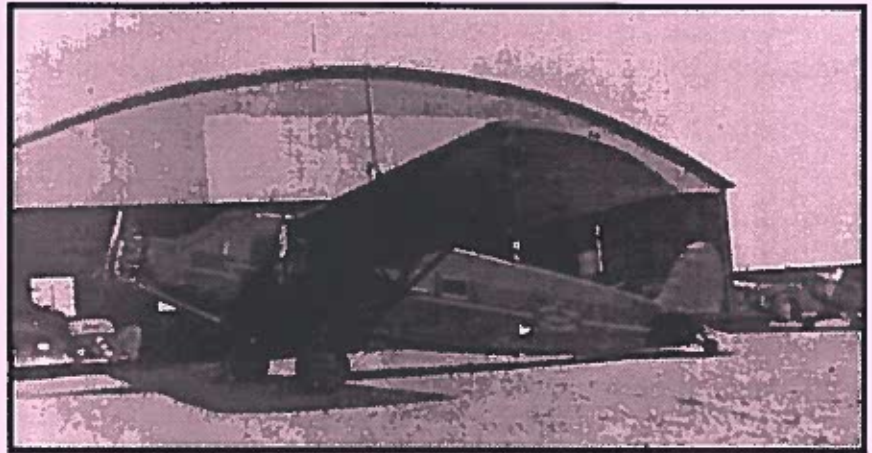
Aircraft Registration Branch, AVN-450
Federal Aviation Administration
P.O. Box 25504
Oklahoma City, OK 73125-4942
Phone: (405) 954-3116 FAX: (405) 954-8068

★ SUPPORT THE MECAA ★

MECAA, Maine Education Council for Aviation and Aerospace, is a two-year-old non-profit organization whose mission is to promote aviation education to the youth of Maine. We also provide numerous services and resources to teachers in all schools and organizations. One of our many projects is ACE Camp. ACE (Aviation Career Education) is an FAA-sponsored camp for students ages 13-17. Last year, ACE Camp was held at the Brunswick NAS and was very successful. We are proud to announce the Air National Guard's 101st Air Refueling Wing at Bangor will sponsor ACE Camp '96. For more information on MECAA or ACE Camps, contact Alice Gommoll (207-878-2931) or Malcolm Brydon (207-947-3349). Dues are only \$10.00 annually. MECAA, P.O. Box 66857, Falmouth, Maine 04105.



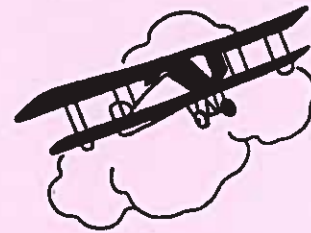
Member Walt Humphrey (l) and Ashley Smith (r) at Minot, Maine in 1942 in CAP uniforms. Plane is Piper J5A Cub Cruiser NC28130 with 75 HP Continental.



Boston & Maine/Central Vermont Airways Stinson SM-6000-B NC-429Y tri-motor at Bangor, Maine Airport, late 1930s.

Welcome, New Members!

- 136. Bill Kostis (Military Aviation)**
P.O. Box 924, 11 North Street
Sanford, Maine 04073
207-324-0754 Bus: 207-324-6755
- 137. Greg Kostis**
Same as above.
- 138. Jeff Kostis**
Same as above.
- 139. MECAA (Promote Aviation)**
(Maine Education Council for Aviation & Aerospace)
P.O. Box 66857
Falmouth, Maine 04105
207-878-2931
- 140. Paul G. Davis**
17696 S.E. 17th Lane
Silver Springs, Florida
904-625-3555



CATCH THE MAHS EXCITEMENT!

Need help? Have ideas? Want to get involved?

Maine Aviation Historical Society

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or call (207) 854-9972

If you are not yet a member, join today
and help preserve Maine's aviation heritage.

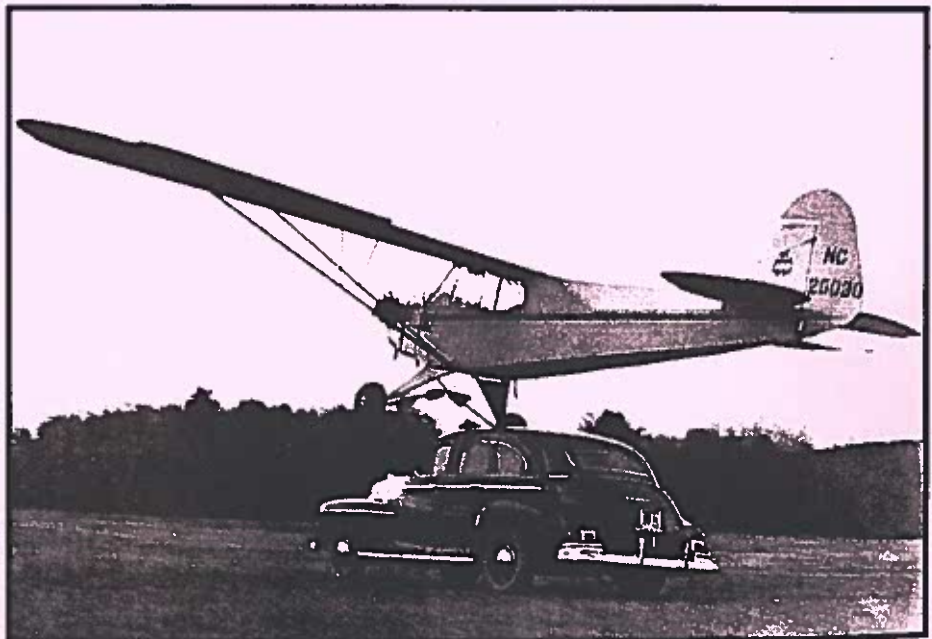
Enjoy the *Dirigo Flyer!*

Upcoming MAHS Meetings and Calendar of Events

March 9	9 a.m.	Pilot's Lounge, General Aviation Terminal, Bangor Airport
April 13	9 a.m.	Lewiston Area
April 14-20		22nd Sun 'n Fun EAA Fly-In, Lakeland Airport, Florida (944-644-2431)
April 26-28	4 p.m.	Western Front Association, "A Weekend with WWI at Sea and in the Air." U.S. Merchant Marine Academy, Kings Point, L.I., New York (516-773-5162)
April 27-28	early a.m.	Smithsonian, Washington, D.C. Tour. \$185. New England Air Museum (203-623-3305)
May 11	9 a.m.	Rochester, NH Area
May 18-19	early a.m.	Hampton, NH 20th Aviation Flea Market (603-964-6749)
May 26	10 a.m.	Ford vs. Chevy Meet and Air Show, Owls Head Transportation Museum
June 8	9 a.m.	Brunswick Area
June 9	10 a.m.	Cruising Motorcycles and WWI Air Show, Owls Head Transportation Museum
June 23	10 a.m.	'70s Auto and Air Show, Owls Head Transportation Museum
July 6-7	10 a.m.	Military Air Show, Owls Head Transportation Museum
July 14	10 a.m.	'50s and '60s Auto and Air Show, Owls Head Transportation Museum
July 19-21	10 a.m.	Brunswick Naval Air Station Air Show
July 27-28	10 a.m.	Truck/Tractor and Air Show, Owls Head Transportation Museum
August 1-7		Oshkosh '96 EAA Fly-In and Convention, Wisconsin (414-426-4800)
August 10	9 a.m.	Sanford Area
August 11	10 a.m.	Transportation Spectacular and Aerobatic Air Show, Owls Head Transportation Museum
September 14	9 a.m.	Miller Field, Newburgh, Maine
September 15	10 a.m.	Annual Transportation Flea Market, Owls Head Transportation Museum
October 6	10 a.m.	Foreign Auto and Air Show, Owls Head Transportation Museum
October 12	9 a.m.	Biddeford Municipal Airport
October 27	10 a.m.	Great Fall Auction
November 9	9 a.m.	Open
December 14	9 a.m.	Conference Room, Portland International Jetport Terminal

Hikes to be announced will include Big Spruce Mountain (*White Bird*), F-101 crash site, Elephant Mountain (B-52) and others.

The meeting sites can be flexible. We are looking for suggestions on locations for many of these meetings. Call Leo or Jim if you can help. The same goes for suggestions on the weekend hikes — let us know. We are also looking for guest speakers, slide shows, etc. Scott Grant has volunteered to handle the scheduling of our meetings and arranging for speakers and slide shows., etc. Please contact him at 207-774-4438 (207-761-9288 business) or 225 York Street, #3, Portland, ME 04102 if you have any ideas or can be of help.



Member Roland Maheu lands his Piper J-3 Cub on a car in 1939. He would land on it, stay for the length of the runway, and then take off again.

Northrop F-89 Scorpion
Gerald Balzer and Mike Dario
Aerofax, Inc. Datagraph 8, 1993

BOOK REVIEWS

Martin Aircraft, 1909-1960
John Breihan, Stan Piet, Roger Mason
Narkiewicz/Thompson,
Santa Ana, CA, 1995, \$29.95

This comprehensive volume tells you all you will ever want to know, and more, about one of America's long-serving jet-powered fighters. Beginning with the original 1945 design proposals and competition, Balzer and Dario trace the ever-changing evolution of the design to the first flight of the XF-89 on August 16, 1948. The perils of exploring the unknown are well-documented in the book.

Problems with the aircraft once it is off the drawing board and out of the wind tunnel bring many changes. Some of these fixes solve existing problems, only to create others more difficult to fix. Compound these with changing world conditions and the vacillations of the U.S. Air Force as to the mission the aircraft was to perform and you sometimes wonder how the F-89 ever reached first-line squadron service.

And then, suddenly, in 1952, six crashes from structural failure of the wing set the program back. Strengthening of the wing solved the problem and the F-89 remained in service until 1969. The F-89C, F-89D and F-89H all served with the 57th, 74th, 75th, 76th, 82nd and 318th Fighter Interceptor Squadrons at Presque Isle AFB from 1952 to 1959. In addition, the 132nd Fighter Interceptor Squadron of the Maine Air National Guard had F-89Js as equipment from 1960 to 1969 at Dow Field in Bangor until they received F-101s. In fact, the last operational F-89 was F-89J-40 52-1896 of this squadron.

Reading Gerry Balzer's fine book as a prelude to, or in conjunction with, Bill Green's *First Line* (reviewed here in an earlier issue) will give you a truly complete picture. *First Line* takes you out in the field and you get the feelings and thoughts of the operational crews of the F-89s. And you can see ME ANG F-89J-40 0-21856 on display at the entrance to Waterville's Lafleur Field (see photo).

This book is available from the author, complete with an 11-page bibliography, for \$18.50 post paid, or contact Leo Boyle. Gerald H. Balzer, 15912 Dundalk Lane, Huntington Beach, CA 92647.



Northrop F-89J Scorpion operated by the Maine Air National Guard's 132nd Fighter Interceptor Squadron from 1960 to 1969. This example, 0-21856, is on display at the entrance to Lafleur Airport, Waterville, Maine. 2/94 Photo

U.S. Army Air Service 96th
 Squadron, 2nd bomb group
 Martin MB-2 bomber at
 Old Orchard Aviation Meet,
 August 24, 1923.

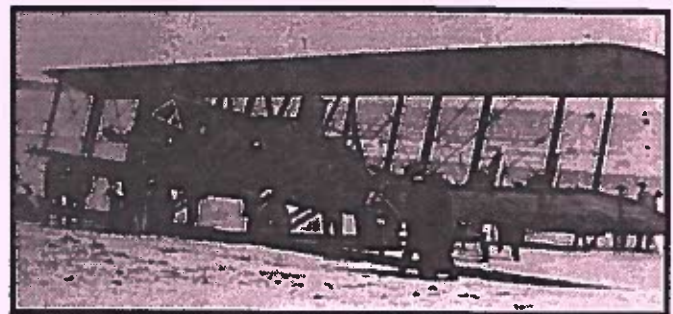
The authors, all connected with the Glenn L. Martin Aircraft Museum, have compiled an excellent history of the Martin Company and Martin Aircraft from the beginning to 1960. Memories of the *China Clipper* blazing the route across the Pacific for Pan American Airways, and the sight of B-26 Marauder bombers roaring across the Ruhr Valley to bomb Germany immediately come to mind when Martin is mentioned. Flying boats and bombers were their stock in trade, and they built some great ones.

Martin MB-2s were frequent visitors to Maine (see photo). The first of these was in July 1919 when a flight was made around the rim of America, with a stop in Augusta. Later, in 1924, the bomber force flew from Langley Field, VA to Bangor, ME. On their return they dispersed to various cities and beaches to show the citizens the value of these bombers. Two landed at Old Orchard Beach for the American Legion Air Show there, and one landed at York Beach where General "Billy" Mitchell's fiancé summered.

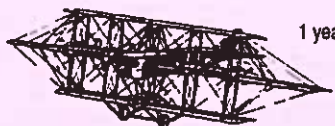
A succession of scout, torpedo and dive bombers established Martin as a primary supplier to the U.S. Navy. And then, in 1930, came the PM-1, the first of their patrol bomber flying boats. In early 1932 the XB-907 Army bomber appeared, the first of the B-10, B-12 series. The *China Clipper* first flew in December 1934, predecessor to the PBM series which served the Navy through World War II and was in production until 1947. (See *Flying Lobster* story in *Dirigo Flyer*, Vol. III, No. 11.)

Martin Marylands and Baltimores succeeded the B-10s and B-12s and served mostly with the British, French and Dutch air forces during the early days of World War II. The B-26 Marauder bomber filled the production lines during the war, and many were flown to Europe, staging through Presque Isle AFB (see the story of the B-26C crash there in *Dirigo Flyer*, Vol. IV, No. 1). A complete and readable text with excellent photos and three views bring us to the post-war period.

Did you ever wonder why Martin was out of the aircraft design and production business by 1960? Fascinating reading is the Martin story from the 202/303/404 airliners through the Mauler, Mercator, XB-48, XB-51, the P5M Marlin series, and the Canberras to the P6M Seamaster. As in the Northrop F-89 story, designing high performance aircraft today is a dicey business, with many more chances to lose than to win. Fascinating reading and a comprehensive reference book all in one is a combination hard to beat.



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Next Meeting:

**Bangor Airport
General Aviation Terminal
March 9, 1996**

9 a.m.