

DIRIGO FLYER

Vol. IX, No. 12 December 2001

Newsletter of the Maine Aviation Historical Society
P.O. Box 2641, Bangor, Maine 04402 • 207-941-6757 • 1-877-280-MAHS (in state)
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The MAHS KC-97G Hike

By Mike Cornett

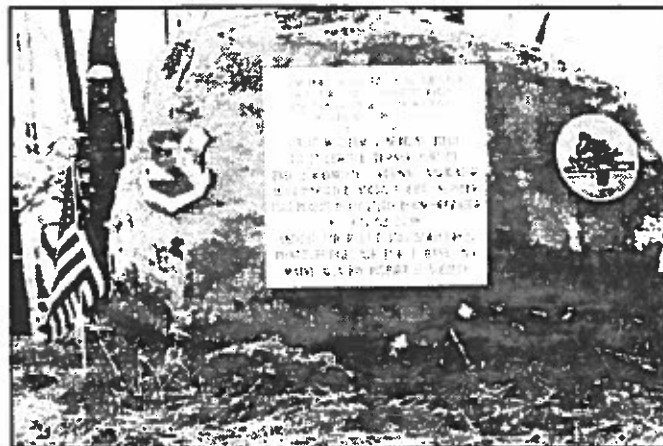
On October 20, 2001 a group from the MAHS, led by Peter Noddin and Scott Grant, met at the quonset hut at the Bethel airport. They were joined by a few others who had heard about the event plus Alison Aloisio, reporter for the *Bethel Citizen*. After a briefing by Peter Noddin on the background to and the causes of the crash, he explained where they might find parts of the aircraft. The group then convoyed about fifteen minutes to the land of Warren and Bernard Powers, and met Warren's son Tim, and Larry Powers who had bulldozed the snowmobile road to the site where the memorial was to be placed. They had placed a large boulder by the side of the trail for us to mount the granite plaque on.

After the longest half mile hike he's ever been on, according to one member, the group arrived at the memorial site, where Peter again explained the significance of the crash and the names of the crewmen who were killed in the crash. The group split up to move out from there and find and view some of the wreckage that was remaining. They found the major debris site, a depression 20' deep in the granite mountain where the fuselage and one wing hit the ground. Debris was scattered for hundreds of feet in all directions. (See the November issue of the *Dirigo Flyer* for the story of the crash itself.)



(left to right) Peter Noddin, MAHS Vice President; Scott Grant, MAHS; Tim and Larry Powers, owners of the land where the crash occurred.
(Mike Cornett Photo)

After viewing much of the debris field, they all returned to the site of the dedication ceremony where the granite plaque had been mounted on the boulder, along with the SAC Insignia and the Squadron Insignia. Pete recited the names of the men who were lost, told how they had not died in vain fighting the Cold War and recited a brief prayer. We conveyed our sincere thanks to Tim and Larry Powers for all the help they had given us in preparing the site, and for preserving the crash site as a memorial.



The granite plaque erected on the KC-97G crash site. (Mike Cornett Photo)

More Photos and
Crash Information
on pages 4-5

Dirigo Flyer is published monthly by the Maine Aviation Historical Society, a non-profit (501c3) corp. P.O. Box 2641, Bangor, ME 04402
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Monthly meetings
 are held at 10 a.m.
 on the second Saturday
 of each month
 at various locations.

See calendar for details.

Maine Aviation Historical Society Monthly Membership Meeting President's Report for November 2001

November has been a month of ups and downs for both our society and the museum. We received approval for the new roof by the city of Bangor, and we acquired a very nice addition to our museum in the form of an experimental Scorpion helicopter. On the negative side, we were turned down on our first two grant applications, and our own Carl Sederquist was severely injured in a motorcycle accident. We wish Carl a speedy recovery. The work on the museum roof should begin within the next two weeks. Next we will start work on the heating system. If all goes according to plan and with some luck, we will be able to start renovations to the main display area and the Hall of Fame Room / Library this winter.

Our society will be undergoing a change in leadership this coming new year. I am asking each member to vote for a candidate for President to complete the remainder of my two-year term. We also need some additional members for our Board of Directors. I urge you to consider serving in this capacity.

We need ideas and people to help turn those ideas into action. This past year we have taken great steps in bringing our museum idea into the public spotlight. We must continue to pursue additional avenues of both public and private support for this endeavor. A late spring 2002 opening for our museum is within the possibilities of this organization. It will require some hard work, a great deal of dedication, and some financial support. But it can happen. The new roof and the heating system were the two greatest obstacles to this possibility. Now with those two obstacles all but eliminated, we are poised to begin the final steps toward opening our museum on a limited scale to the public in 2002.

— John C. Garbinski
 President, MAHS

Meeting Notes

The November meeting of the Maine Aviation Historical Society was held at the Maine Air Museum on Saturday, November 10th. After the opening remarks by President John Garbinski, Treasurer Charles Brantner presented the financial picture. We're not rich, but we are solvent and things are hopefully looking better for the coming year. Leo Boyle gave the Membership Report and it shows that the membership is relatively stable. We need to recruit new members, and since for many of us our membership expires on December 31, 2001, please send in your dues (which have remained the same) as soon as possible, preferably with your ballot, to the address shown on the ballot.

Les Shaw gave the Museum Report. He is setting up the computer to catalog all the things we have and will be working with Bill Cook and others on the right way to do this. He is also getting all the membership information on the computer and things will run more smoothly when that is accomplished. Al Cormier and Mike Cornett gave the Building Report, mostly concerning the roof repair and the heating plant. Peter Noddin told of the hike to the KC-97 crash site in Newry and John Garbinski spoke on the acquisition of the Scorpion helicopter.

Nominations were opened to the floor on candidates for the Presidency and Board seats — see your ballot for the results. After that, Rick Alexander of Blue Hill gave another of his inimitable slide shows of earlier military and naval jets and aircraft that are currently being used in the war on terrorism. As usual, the slides were fantastic, and the commentary by Rick was even better.

The December meeting will be held on Saturday, December 8, 2001 and hopefully we will have a new roof by that time, and a lot of interesting programs and volunteers for the winter projects. If you can volunteer, please try to come to this meeting.

**Join the MAHS Today and
 Save Maine's Aviation History for Tomorrow**

Fun Time

Things are looking up! With the new roof and the advent of hear, we're in business year 'round, and fun times can begin. Now is the time when you can put your special skills to work doing the things you like to do. We need volunteers for a variety of winter projects.

Please call Les Shaw or Mike Cornett at the museum or Jim Chichetto at 207-269-3218 (e-mail: jimF84F@aol.com) for more information on how you can help.

Here are some work projects the Museum hopes to work on and complete prior to the opening in the spring. These are in addition to the display cases and exhibits which we are planning. What we need are a few people to take on these projects and to work on that one single project and see it through.

Project List

1) To clean and check the F-101 B Training Boards and bring them on line. One board is electrical, with hundreds of lights, fuses and wires which need to be visually checked, cleaned and repaired as needed. This board lights up and shows working systems using colored pathways and lights to add detail to the display. The second board is all hardware and needs to be cleaned and painted. It also needs casters placed on it so it can be moved around with ease. We want both boards ready for April. About 90% of the electrical board is in excellent working condition.

2) To work refurbishing the two-seat helicopter we just received. This work is mostly sanding and painting along with general light repairs and clean up. This work will be undertaken during the winter in a heated bay. We want this aircraft ready for the spring display season.

3) To design and build a cradle to display our Ranger V-12 aircraft engine. Currently the engine is resting in a frame upside down. We want to turn it in the manner it was used on aircraft (inverted air cooled V-12) and have it to display in that position. The frame must include caster wheels and a display board will be built to explain the engine and its WWII uses.

4) To start the cleaning and general overhaul of the Stinson aircraft. We plan on making this into an open sided display. One side will be skinned and painted in the WWII CAP colors. The other side will be an exposed airframe to show all the controls and how they work. This is a long term project and one that will take a lot of time and work, but it is a WWII veteran and deserves to be brought back to its glory days. This aircraft flew out of Otis during WWII.

We will also be doing wall painting, repair and other work during the winter. We expect to move much faster as soon as the roof is repaired and we are leak free. Any time you can spend working with us will help us move these and other projects further down the road to completion.

Elections and Renewals

This year, our annual election features voting for our President and three Board members. President John Garbinski is resigning as of 12/31/01 because of an impending job-related move out of state. Les Shaw of Brewer has been nominated to run for the one year remaining on John's term of office. Les works for the University of Maine, has been a tireless volunteer at the Museum, and is setting up our computer system.

The terms of directors Ed Armstrong, Jim McCurdy and Carl Sederquist all expire on 12/31/01. Jim McCurdy has decided not to run for re-election for personal reasons, as has Carl Sederquist. As you may know, Carl had a serious accident on his motorcycle in November. He is recuperating slowly, and he has been the spark plug that kept us moving ahead. We wish him the best of luck in his recovery and his recuperation — may they be speedy.

Ed Armstrong of Hampden, chairman of the board, has labored hard to make sure the museum succeeds and has been instrumental in getting the city of Bangor to replace our roof and in getting our heating plant installed and running. Ed has volunteered to serve another term. Jim Chichetto of Etna, one of our founders and a past president, having recuperated enough from his recent illness, has been nominated and has volunteered to serve. Bill Cook of Ellsworth has also volunteered to serve. Bill works for the Bangor Public Library, is active in the military uniform field, has museum experience and wrote our Museum Plan, and now that his new home is almost completed can give us some of his valuable time. Joe Quinn of Levant has been active as a volunteer at the museum and firmly believes in its future and desires to help more.

We thus have four candidates for three vacancies on the Board, so be sure to only vote for three. As always, there is space for write-ins on the ballot and write-ins are encouraged. Please send your ballots to arrive by 12/31/01 to the address shown, and since many of you have renewals due at the same time, why not save the postage and send your renewal in with your ballot?!



The MAHS/MAM Bangor Veterans Day Parade contingent ready for a cold ride: (left to right) Bill Townsend in his NASA space flight suit, Mike Cornett and John Garbinski. (Bill Townsend Photo)

The MAHS KC-97G Hike . . .

**Maine Aviation Historical Society
Crash Site / Memorial Dedication**

**Saturday, October 20, 2001
Newry, Maine**

**KC-97 52-2728
June 27, 1960
Jonathan Smith Mountain
Newry, Maine**

**380th Air Refueling Squadron
380th Bomb Wing
USAF Strategic Air Command (SAC)
Plattsburgh Air Force Base, New York**

THE CREW: T-51

Lieutenant William Burgess of Indian Lake, New York	Aircraft Commander
Lieutenant Lewis Turner of Spokane, Washington	Co-Pilot
Lieutenant Raymond Kisonas of Waterbury, Connecticut	Navigator
Master Sergeant Harold Young of Selma, Alabama	Flight Engineer
Tech Sergeant Robert Costello of Springfield, Illinois	Boom Operator



Peter Noddin, Don Martin and Mike Shaw contemplate a piece of wreckage. *(Mike Cornett Photo)*



Peter Noddin stands near a section of the fuselage. *(Mike Cornett Photo)*



The crater from the KC-97G crash with part of the fuselage with the letter "E" showing. *(Mike Cornett Photo)*

... More Photos and Crash Information

THE AIRCRAFT: KC-97G

The KC-97G was the air refueling tanker version of the Boeing C-97 cargo transport, which in turn was the "big belly" design based on the WWII B-29. The KC-97 was the Strategic Air Command's mainstay air refueling aircraft throughout the 1950s. The G model was the most common, with 592 being built. Their mission was to refuel SAC bomb-laden strike aircraft like the B-47, B-58, and the B-52. Tankers were also needed along the strike route to refuel the medium bombers like the B-47, to give them enough range to complete their mission and return to safety. Just one of the problems with refueling jet bombers with piston engine KCs was the KCs had to dive at top speed and the jets traveling at just short of stalling making for trouble if the KC lost an engine. With all the trouble with the combination, the Air Force started replacing the 97s with the Boeing KC-135 version of the civil jet 707. Many tanker squadrons still fly the KC-135 including Maine's Air Guard.

THE ACCIDENT:

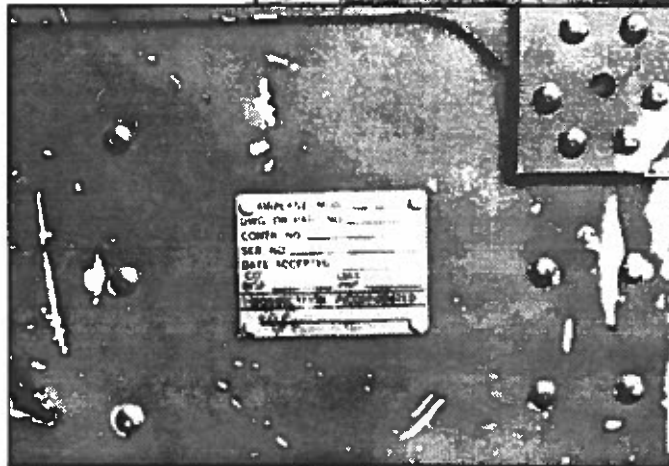
The aircraft was one of many participating in a SAC Operational Readiness Inspection (ORI) of the 380th bomb wing. An ORI consisted of every aspect of each unit operating under simulated warime conditions. This mission was to refuel a B-47 on the "fighting fox" refueling area, a racetrack-shaped area over Maine. As the B-47 moved into position for boom contact at 15,000' a long flame shot out of the KC-97's number one engine, the furthest on the left wing. The engine burst into flames enveloping the wing. As the B-47 and an overhead backup KC-97 watched, the wing failed and broke off. This happened so fast that the crew was unable to bail out, not being equipped with ejection seats. The plane entered a spiral that kept getting tighter and tighter until it struck the mountain in a ball of fire. Over 300 people witnessed the crash while watching a movie at the Rumford Drive-In. The broken off wing landed in Howard Pond three miles away. The cause from the official USAF inquiry concluded that the fire was the result of a catastrophic failure of the supercharger impeller in the number one engine, lack of oil to it was the main reason it broke.



A piece of the engine nestles in the trees.
(Mike Cornett Photo)



(left to right) Joe Quinn, Larry Powers, Tim Powers,
Peter Noddin, Scott Grant, Mike Cornett,
Madelyn Linscott, Jeanette Beaton,
Roberta Meserve, and Allen Williams.
(Mike Cornett Photo)



The KC-97G data plate.
(Mike Cornett Photo)

In Memoriam

It is with deep regret that we say goodbye to member Don Strout. His wit, his smile, his charm, his knowledge and stories will all be missed greatly.

He was born in 1917 in Brownville, was a graduate of UMO, and was a teacher and principal before WWII.

In 1942 he enlisted in the Army Air Corps and was stationed at Randolph Field in San Antonio, Texas. It was here that he married Mildred E. Foulkes of Brownville.

He was a command pilot with the Air Force until his retirement on June 1, 1966. He was one of the original site commanders for the first operational Titan II Missile Wing in Tuscan, Arizona. His work included being production supervisor of the Burtonwood Air Depot in England and the chief of maintenance of the 18th Tactical Wing in Okinawa. Prior to going to Okinawa, he was the chief of maintenance of the 506th Tactical Fighter Wing in Oklahoma; this was formerly the SAC Fighter Wing, which was stationed at Dow Air Force Base in Bangor.

Don had temporary assignments in Alaska and was in charge of the logistics portion of a fighter aircraft route survey, which took him to Labrador, Germany, Spain, Africa, Bermuda and the Azores.

He was an American representative and commander of the U.S. Air Force portion of a NATO project involving the

restoration of aircraft in which England and the Netherlands also took part.

He was a member of the European Military Rehabilitation Team, which worked with young military personnel who got into trouble while overseas.

Don joined the Continuing Education Division of the University of Maine on August 1, 1966. Three years later he began teaching at Fifth Street Junior High School in Bangor and was there for 10 years.

He was a flight instructor for 60 years and taught "Pilot Ground School" in the Adult Education Program in Orono for 20 years. He was one of the youngest pilots of the OX-5 and belonged to the Antique Aircraft Association, the Experimental Aircraft Association and the Maine Aviation Historical Society, was president of "Via Wings Inc." at Lime Ridge Airport in New York, a senior instructor pilot for several military aero clubs and instructed in G.I. Flight Schools.

In 1991, Don was presented an FAA award for his work with physically handicapped people, teaching them to fly. He was a FAA Safety Counselor for many years and worked with the Civil Air Patrol as a flying safety advisor.

He is survived by his wife, Mildred, a daughter, Dawn, and nephew Larry Strout and his wife, Juanita.

Credit: Bangor Daily News

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Upcoming MAHS Meetings

✈ ✈ ✈ 2001 — 2001 — 2001 — 2001 — 2001 ✈ ✈ ✈

December 8 10 a.m. MAHS Meeting, Maine Air Museum, Bangor, Maine.

"The Waco Story" Continues

Member Ed Maliar of Bohemia, NY, author of "The Waco Story" in the November *Dirigo Flyer*, sent us a note with an addition and a correction. He tells us that two or three Waco ASOs operated for several years on floats on Long and Sebago Lakes around Naples and Casco giving sightseeing rides. He also wanted to correct the designation of his Waco pictured on Page 5 of that issue. His plane was a Waco EGC-8 and it was powered by a supercharged Wright R-760-E2 engine of 330 hp.

Member Lin Lawrence of Florida, whose story of WWII training in Wacos in the October issue prompted Ed to write his story, also sent the following note:

Dear Leo,

Thanks to Ed Maliar for his story, the compilation of the many models of Wacos produced. This is a keeper!

Enclosed is a snapshot of the Waco UPF-7 on home-made skis that was used to train Navy cadets (1942-43) in Worcester, MA. I sure would like to have an aerial shot of us doing slow rolls with those skis that seemed to be 20' long.

Two trips to Maine this summer, both on weekends. As I drove by the museum, the Luscombe brought back memories of bucking rivets for Don Luscombe in Trenton, NJ in 1938-39. I have some snaps, maybe I could put together a story.

Best Regards, Lin Lawrence

Ed. Note: Please *do* put that story together for us, Lin — and that goes for anyone else with aviation-related memoirs. Call Editor Leo Boyle at 207-854-9972 or e-mail at pshaw@maine.rr.com if you'd like to get your story published in the *Dirigo Flyer*. C'mon, MAHS-ers, spin those yarns!

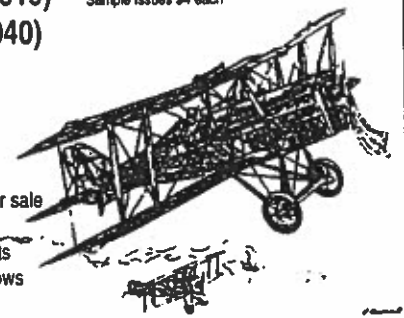
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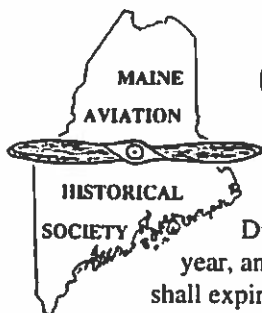
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Maine Aviation Historical Society
P.O. Box 2641
Bangor, ME 04402

December Meeting

Saturday, December 8, 2001
10 a.m.
Maine Air Museum
Bangor, Maine