

DIRIGO FLYER

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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 New Arctic, Part 2

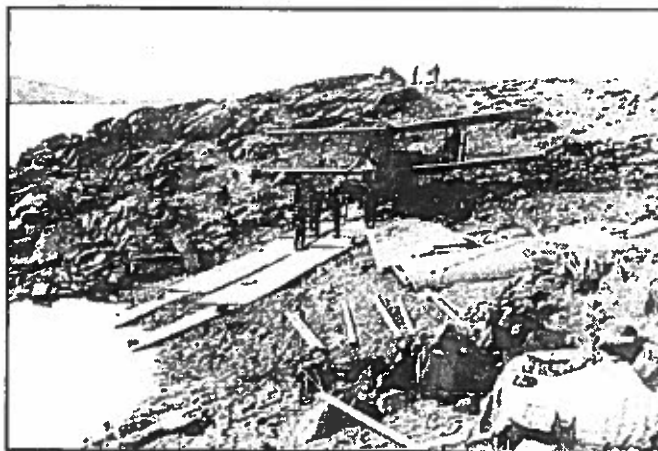
By James E. McCarthy

Through very difficult fog and ice conditions in treacherous Bafin (sic) Bay and in the Melville Bay ice pack they reached Etah, in a snowstorm, on August 1st, three hours ahead of MacMillan's planned arrival. On the following morning, August 2nd, the crew of the *Bowdoin* and the *Peary*, 39 strong, assisted by a few Inuits, started unloading and assembling the aircraft under unexpectedly difficult conditions. The wide beach they had anticipated for assembly and later service area turned out to be a small rocky cove.

Improvisation was the order of the day. Using the sides of the crates the wings had been shipped in, they constructed a ramp up which the fuselages were manhandled. The wings were carried to each aircraft by hand, once put ashore. Late on the third day they were ready for the first test flight.

On the morning of August 3rd, Loening aircraft NA-2 took to the sky with Schur at the controls and MacMillan as observer, the first Americans to fly in the far north and the first men to look down on the Greenland ice cap. On the following day, aircraft NA-1 and aircraft NA-3 were test flown by Byrd and Floyd Bennett in one and Nold and Sorensen in the other. It was observed, even on these short hops, that landings on the ice floes, as was originally planned, did not appear practical because of the height and frequency of pressure ridges. Further complicating aircraft use was the meager extent of open water in the sea outside of Foulke Fjord, where Etah nestled.

The ice and water conditions forecast by the test flights proved accurate. Later flights over the next few days for radio checks, attempts to determine magnetic compass variation and aircraft weight carrying capacity confirmed the earlier observations that places to establish bases where landings could be made for exploration purposes were few and far between. Prevailing weather did not permit aerial exploration until the 11th of August, when an overflight found Beistad Fjord, about 75 miles into Ellsmere Island, clear of ice. That night the three airplanes departed Etah with the intention of establishing a sub-base in that location. One aircraft returned to Etah with engine trouble, but the other two continued over the fjord only to encounter severe cross winds, precluding landing in the small area free of ice. Complicated by more engine problems (three were replaced), damage to an aircraft by floating ice floes,



The first Navy plane to be assembled on the narrow, rocky beach at Etah. (Photos reproduced from "Flying Over the Arctic" by Richard Byrd in the November 1925 National Geographic Magazine.)

extreme winds and temperatures attempts to establish forward bases were delayed. In spite of these difficulties, bases were later established at Flagler Fjord and Sawyer Bay. By August 16th, gasoline, oil, camping gear, and additional survival equipment were cached at one location; gasoline, oil and pemmican at the other but never used. MacMillan had begun to fear that a forced landing at Eureka Sound or Cannon Fjord, the next planned steps out to the unexplored area west of the North Pole, as originally planned would very likely result in the aircraft "freezing in," delaying the entire expedition's return south until the following year.

Based on the rapidly degenerating weather conditions, the Inuit opinion that this was the coldest year in memory, and the fact that Etah Fjord froze over during the night of the 17th, MacMillan ordered a departure at the earliest possible moment. There was great disappointment that the mission would not continue for a few more days, but much of that intended had been accomplished. More than 6,000 miles of observation and picture taking of hitherto unseen territory had been recorded for cartographic purposes, although aircraft weight restrictions prevented some of the photographic work planned.

"Arctic," continued on page 4

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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 Maine Air Museum

Portland Air Show · September 18-19, 2004

By Mike Cornett

I went to the Portland Air Show on Saturday, September 18. We left Bangor at 7 a.m., arriving at the Jetport around 9:30 a.m. traveling in the rain all the way down and as far as Gardiner on the way back. Scott Grant and Bob Umburger were showing the flag at the hangar there and had a very good looking set up with items from the MAHS and some of their personal items, also.

Inside the hangar, along with Bob and Scott, were the Portland Civil Air Patrol members with Captain Don Godfrey outside showing their aircraft, a Cessna 172. The Maine National Guard based in South Portland and the staff members from the Jetport were selling items (T-shirts, etc.) to buy and a raffle selling diecast planes and other items.

As I said earlier, the rain was falling so no air show but the static display aircraft were as follows: WW2 — B-17, B-24, C-47, C-54 (F44-5N Corsair) from the Berlin Airlift Association with a great display inside.

More modern types — P-3C Orion from VP-10 at NAS Brunswick, A-1 "Warthog" from the Connecticut Air Guard; Yak 52, T-28, L-17 Navion and Albatross, the CAP aircraft, Independence Air's bombardier RJ and a DHL cargo DC-9.

Scott Grant and Bob Umberger did a great job manning the table, and with an estimated 15,000 people in attendance, we had great public exposure despite Saturday being a wash-out. Greg Hughes says they are planning on doing the show again next year, possibly for three days.

Membership Meeting · September 18, 2004

There was a fairly short business meeting. Meeting called to order at 10:00 a.m. by Vice President Les Shaw.

1. Treasurer's Report. Joe passed out the Treasurer's Report. There was a question on the \$468 gift shop expense which was for hats.

2. Physical Plant Report. Al reported that he had taken measurements to have the duct work completed to the main bay and library and had given them to the company for a price. He was still waiting on the price.

3. Museum Report. The General Aviation Display is finished and looks good. BayOne is done and there is a motion light on the Yellow Bird display (very impressive). By the way, Mrs. Gerry came by on Saturday and saw the display. I met the family and took them to the display and then was called away. When I came back, they were talking about other items that they could donate. They were fairly pleased with what had been done.

4. Program Update. Rick reported that today we would see Westover Slides. Someone from Bangor International Airport would do a presentation in October. The speaker wasn't determined yet. In November, we are meeting in Augusta at the Augusta Military Museum. In December, we will have a speaker from the Maine Army Guard who served in Kuwait and Iraq. He also is working on a speaker for next June. He would welcome any ideas that others have.

Continued on next page ... →

Autumn Excitement



With the changing seasons comes excitement — not only the great planes coming and going but great new exhibits to enhance the museum for our visitors. There's something for everyone, so sign up now to volunteer. Come join us and catch the excitement!

We Remember ...

Kathy Kay Hodgkins

Although born in Iowa, Kathy Kay Hodgkins spent her aviation career in Maine. After graduating in 1979 from college, she moved to Maine and worked as a flight instructor. In 1983, she married Timothy Hodgkins. She went on to fly for Bar Harbor Airlines, Continental Express and Continental Airlines, flying Boeing 737s and 757s.

In 1988, she and her husband founded their business, KT Aviation, in Glenburn. She died in the crash of her Cessna 172 float plane on Big Houston Mountain near Brownville on August 12, 2004 on her way to Lobster Lake to pick up passengers. A talented and generous person, she will be long remembered as a true Maine aviation pioneer and bush pilot.



Kathy Hodgkins and her dog Chocolate Moose in 2003.
(Photo via Tim Hodgkins)

We Remember ...

Donald Maurice Morin

Donald Maurice Morin, 80, of Fairview Drive, Fryeburg, died September 20, 2004 at Central Maine Medical Center.

He started his career as a machinist and manager for Bean & Conquest.

Because of his love of flying, he received his pilot's license at an early age and has been associated with flying ever since.

Donald lived in the Bangor area for years and worked for the Federal Aviation Administration and flew for the Maine Forest Service.

He was a flight instructor for many years and, while living in Scarborough, he owned the All Weather Flight School in Portland.

He moved to Fryeburg in 1979 and was manager of Fryeburg Aviation. He most recently worked for Dearborn Precision Company.



Membership Meeting Minutes, from page 2

5. "Jet Engine." I mentioned that the "jet engine" was scheduled to depart on Monday and it did! We have been offered an F104 cockpit from Steve Alex in Liberty, Maine. Rick and Hank made a comment that the F104 was never stationed in Maine and therefore it should not be accepted as a donation unless we could sell it. John Miller said he knew the gentleman and wanted to go along if we decided to get it. We will discuss it more on Thursday at the Board meeting.

6. **Military Aircraft Web-Sightings.** Rick said that he is reporting military aircraft to a web site, so if anyone sees any different aircraft to get the type and any markings and the day and time and report them to him and he will pass it on.

7. **Bay One.** Hank reported that he is ready to move his display into Bay One and planned to do so after the regular meeting. He also wants to build a wall where the rear door of Bay One is and put in an emergency exit and has pricing. He and I have talked about this and my concerns are access to Bay One for large items such as the jet engine if he does this. It will be brought up at the Board meeting on Thursday. He also was upset that we (the Board) had not gotten a list of aircraft that

we wanted to Helen Watson at the Navy Museum in Pensacola. When he had spoken with her a few weeks ago, he asked what we needed to do to get aircraft and she told him to send a list of what we wanted. Another Board issued. Hank also needs help to do the audio conversion from his reel tape to a CD format. If anyone can help, let him know.

8. **Display Case.** Jim Nelligan reports that we can use another display case, so keep your eyes open and let us know if you find one.

9. **Flyers in the Libraries.** Jim McCarthy made the comment that he went to the Bangor Library and asked to see old issues of the *Dirigo Flyer* and was told they didn't have them. He suggests that we send them to every library in the state for exposure. I reported that Leo does send the *Flyer* to many places (though I wasn't sure exactly where) and I knew the Bangor Library and the University of Maine Library received them.

10. **Slide Show.** Rick did a slide show presentation on the Westover Air Show and some other slides he had.

Submitted by Les Shaw

"Arctic," continued from page 1

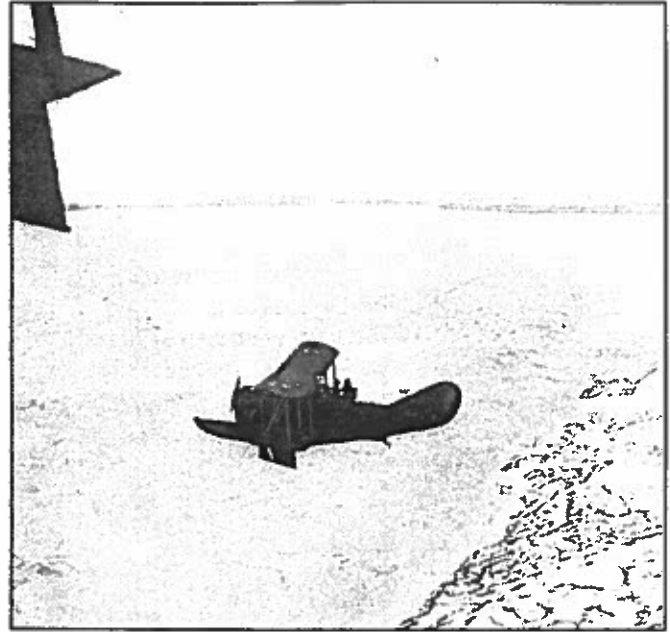
Short-wave radio was proven far superior to the cumbersome long-wave radio that had been the Navy standard for communications with the fleet. Aircraft had become an accepted tool of explorers of the far north, and later the south. Equally important, perhaps, was the public awareness and stimulation of interest in the north. All this accomplished with virtually unproven aircraft and engines, in open cockpits, in the most hostile environment possible without losing a man. Much of this was due to MacMillan's inherent caution and knowledge, some of which had developed from his days with Peary's march to the Pole. After 26 trips north in the *Bowdoin*, it was this modest man's major boast that he had not lost a man in a lifetime of arctic activity.

On August 22nd, the *Bowdoin* weighed anchor off Etah and headed south. The *Peary* continued to load the aircraft and equipment, except for one aircraft that made one long, final flight over the ice cap to join the *Peary* and *Bowdoin* at Igloodahouny, about 50 miles south of Etah. They confirmed on that flight that the Greenland ice cap rose gradually from sea level to over 10,000 ft. toward the center of the island.

The return home started shockingly when the *Bowdoin* ran heavily aground: "high and dry," as Macmillan described it, on uncharted shoals enroute to Igloodahouny and one of the aircraft expected to be the second aircraft on that final flight over the ice cap, suffered complete engine failure (it threw a connecting rod) just a half mile out of Etah. It was towed back to the *Peary* for loading.

Most of the trip south didn't get much easier. Even while in port in Greenland locations they were assailed by vicious gales that required reloading the aircraft wings, stored on the *Peary*, to reduce wind affect. Later in the voyage, the numerous drums of gasoline on the decks of both the *Bowdoin* and the *Peary* had to be disposed of to maintain flotation equilibrium. Crossing Davis Strait, Greenland to Labrador, the September hurricane season was still in bloom, making for an extremely perilous crossing.

It was not until October 9th that both expedition vessels anchored at Monhegan Island, Maine, the *Peary* in the inner harbor and the *Bowdoin* in Dead Man's Cove in the outer harbor. Even then, the *Bowdoin* was not safe. Early the next morning, the *Bowdoin* crew was awakened by a howling wind. It was the start of a continuing gale. The next afternoon, in the midst of a broiling sea, the *Bowdoin* worked her way into the inner harbor to join the *Peary*. The blow continued through the next day, Saturday, and into Sunday. Monday morning, the 12th of October, both vessels set sail for the mainland and threaded their way up the Sheepscot River to Wiscasset to be greeted by



Sister planes flying over ice-bound Smith Sound en route for Ellesmere Island.

a cheering crowd. As on departure, Governor Brewster was there with many other state dignitaries and numerous Navy representatives.

This triumphant return marked the end of the 1925 MacMillan Arctic Expedition but, more importantly, it was the start of a new era of exploration of the Arctic and Antarctic, a future to be facilitated by use of short-wave radio and aircraft, pioneered by that small group of hardy men led by MacMillan.

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Program and registration forms will be available
by September. For more information, call
the Saratoga Museum at 401-831-8696.

fax: 401-831-8707 e-mail: savesara@aol.com

Greenville Seaplane Fly-In

Mike Cornett and Les Shaw manned our table at the Greenville Seaplane Fly-In. Once again, they were blessed with fine weather and the show was another grand success. If you are a seaplane enthusiast, this is the place to be and you won't be disappointed. We look forward to participating in the 2005 Fly-In.

Seaplane Calendar Now Available



Member John Craig Jr. of Glenburn had the 2nd edition of his Seaplane Calendar, the 2005 edition, and all in color. Graced with thirteen great color seaplane photos, this calendar makes a handsome decoration for your wall. The price is \$12 plus \$3 shipping. You can order copies from:

John Craig Jr. • Seaplane Aeronautica
61 Pine Hill Drive, Glenburn, Maine 04401 • 207-942-3801

Indian Chiefs Induct Stratosphere Flyers into Sioux Nation

In cowboy hats and chaps, Capt. Albert W. Stevens (now Lt. Col., USA, ret., of Belfast, ME) and Capt. Orvil A. Anderson (now Brig. Gen., USA, with Eighth Air Force in England) received the warriors at their camp near Rapid City, South Dakota, in November 1935. Capt. Stevens, left, received the title of Chief Fly Against the Clouds; Capt. Anderson, Chief Swift Eagle.

Here, in a flight sponsored jointly by the National Geographic Society and the U.S. Army Air Corps, the officers ascended in their balloon, *Explorer II*, to the world altitude record of 72,395 feet. With them in the gondola (background) they took aloft nearly a ton of scientific instruments, with which extraordinary results were obtained.

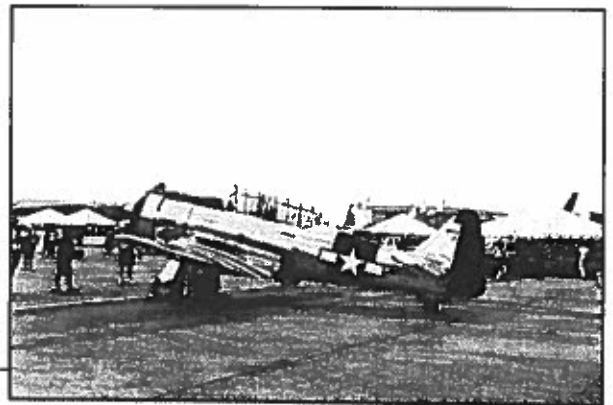


Seeing the Sights in Bangor ...



Israeli Boeing 707 cargo plane (above). Israeli F-15 (below).
(Photos by Mike Cornett)

... and Westover



North American SNJ Texan (above). Grumman TBF Avenger (below). (Photos by Mike Cornett)

A Selection of Photos from the Portland Show September 18-19, 2004



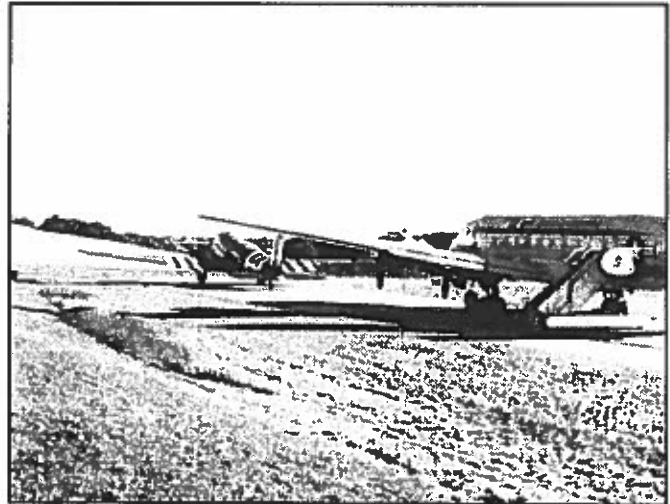
North American L-17. (Bob Umberger Photos)



One of Brunswick NAS Lockheed P-3C Orions at Portland.



Rich and Gina Wilson of Cape Elizabeth in World War II garb as they attended the Portland show.



A Douglas C-47 Skytrain and a Berlin Airlift Douglas C-54 Skymaster at the Portland Air Show, September 19, 2004.

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Join the MAHS Today and Catch the Excitement !!

Upcoming MAHS Meetings and Events

✈ ✈ ✈ 2004 — 2004 — 2004 — 2004 — 2004 ✈ ✈ ✈

- October 9 10 a.m. MAHS Meeting, Maine Air Museum, Bangor, Maine.
- October 22-24 All Day Northeast Aero Historians Meeting, USS Saratoga Museum, North Kingstown, RI.
- Nov. 13 10 a.m. MAHS Meeting, Maine Military Museum, Augusta, Maine.
- Dec. 11 10 a.m. MAHS Meeting, Maine Air Museum, Bangor, Maine.*
* Speaker from Maine National Guard who served in Kuwait and Iraq.

Welcome New Members

- 469. **Donnie Thibodeau**
406 Fish Street
Fryeburg, ME 04037
- 470L. **Rodney Folsom**
P.O. Box 512
Greenville, ME 04441 207-695-3766
- 471. **Earl W. Bishop**
26 West Road
Enfield, ME 04493 207-732-3018
- 472. **Cameo Dunton**
PO. Box 481 cameoooooo@hotmail.com
Hampden, ME 04444 207-223-0053

We Still Need Volunteers

We still need volunteers to work in the museum!

We need people to work on our engine displays, touch up and production of historical displays, office work, computer filing, and, of course, yard work. We also need a serious model builder to assist in repairing, cleaning and constructing models, dioramas and other displays.

To volunteer, call 1-877-280-MAHS. To check the dates on which we need help, link to:

MaineAirMuseumvolunteerschedule.org

✈ ✈ ✈ **COME JOIN US and CATCH THE EXCITEMENT** ✈ ✈ ✈
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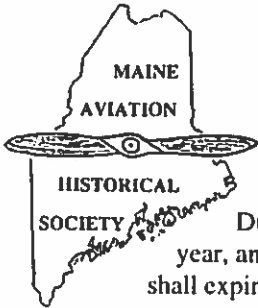
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Maine Aviation Historical Society
P.O. Box 2641
Bangor, ME 04402



James McCarthy # 394
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Holden, ME 04429

October Meeting

October 9, 2004
10 a.m.

Maine Air Museum
Bangor, Maine