

# DIRIGO FLYER

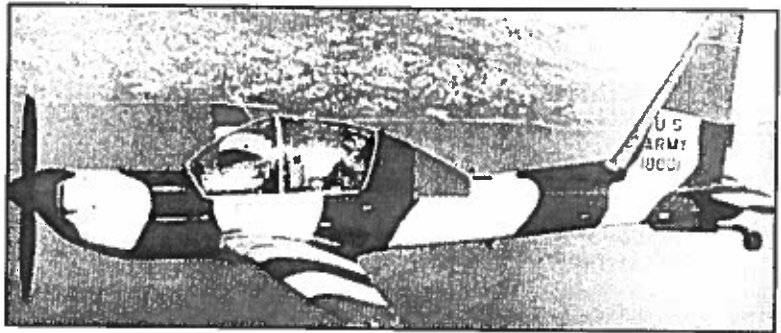
Vol. XII, No. 11 November 2004

Newsletter of the Maine Aviation Historical Society  
P.O. Box 2641, Bangor, Maine 04402 • 207-941-6757 • 1-877-280-MAHS (in state)  
We're on the Internet! Visit our new web site at [www.maineairmuseum.org](http://www.maineairmuseum.org)

## One Unique Aircraft

By Les Shaw

When I was stationed in Vietnam, I saw a unique aircraft that I had never heard of. What I saw was an Army Lockheed YO-3A Quiet Star. This aircraft was developed by Lockheed to fill a need for a quiet night surveillance aircraft to use in supportive outlying Vietnamese outposts in areas dominated by the Viet Cong. Helicopters had proven to be too noisy.



Lockheed YO-3A as heard by Les Shaw in Vietnam in 1971-72. (Lockheed Photo)

Starting with a Schneitzer sailplane, Lockheed went through several design modifications before coming up with the YO-3A configuration. I was working on the flight line one night when one flew directly over my head at an altitude no more than 100 feet off the runway and there was absolutely no engine noise. The only sound was the quiet "woof-woof-woof" as the propeller chopped through the night air. It was a truly amazing event to be that close to an aircraft that was flying by and climbing, unseen and almost completely silent. Only eleven were built and at least four crashed.

The YO-3A had a 57 foot wingspan and carried two people under a large clear canopy, an observer in front and pilot in the rear. It had a night vision system with the viewing scope in the observer's cockpit. Powered by a well-muffled 210 horsepower Continental engine driving a large, constant-speed propeller, it was amazingly quiet. It had a six hour endurance at a cruising speed of 70-110 mph.

It was a sight I never saw, but only heard.

*Excerpts from a related article written by Ronald R. Gilliam, submitted by Les Shaw*

Night in Vietnam mostly belonged to the Viet Cong. The United States had 222 aircraft in Vietnam (in 1962), including 149 helicopters, but they proved to be of little help in night operations because their noise always warned the guerillas. In frustration, the U.S. Department of Defense turned to its scientific and technical arm, the Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency. DARPA handed the problem to Lockheed.

Lockheed decided that what was needed was audio stealth — a quiet airplane. The engine would have to be small, well muffled, and slow running, with a large, multibladed propeller. The airframe would consequently have to be light with long wings for plenty of low-speed lift. A powered sailplane was the solution.

Lockheed reconfigured the Schweizer airframe into a surprisingly smart-looking production aircraft. With low-mounted wings, nose-mounted engine (which eliminated the ungainly propeller shaft extension over the pilot's head), and conventional retractable landing gear, the YO-3A resembled a small, prop-driven fighter plane. Other improvements included a trailing-edge extension over the inner half of the 57-foot wingspan, adding 25 square feet of lifting surface to the original 180 square feet, and a large, one-piece canopy-windshield for better visibility. The payload carried by the YO-3A consisted of the night vision system, a horizon-stabilized image-intensified unit with a wide angle objective lens mounted in a turret in the bottom of the fuselage.

To learn more about this aircraft, check the web site at <http://www.YO-3A.com>.

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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 Membership Meeting · October 9, 2004

The October meeting had 14 members and three guests present. The speaker was Rebecca Huff, Director of Bangor International Airport. She gave a fine speech touching on the past, present and future. We wish to thank her for this enlightening talk on the future of our home, Bangor International Airport, a future we hope to share with the airport.

### MAHS Meeting · November 13, 2004 Maine Military Museum · Augusta, Maine

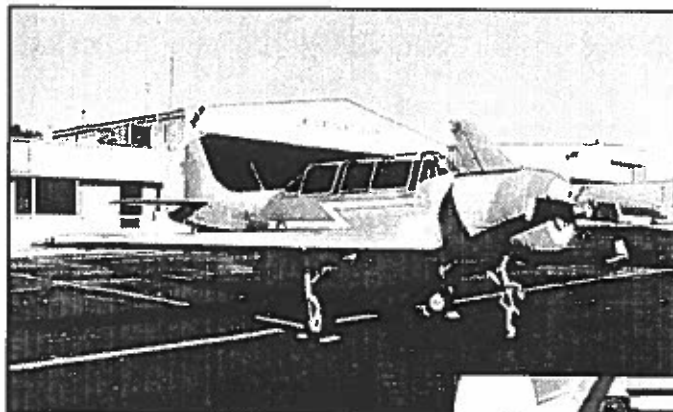
The November meeting will be held at the Maine Military Museum adjacent to the Augusta Airport. We plan to have a good speaker and an interesting tour of the museum.

**Directions:** From the south, take the first Augusta exit on I-95, turn right and proceed past the Armory to the airport entrance road. Go to the terminal on your left and turn right. The Maine Military Museum is a short distance on your right. From the north, take the second Augusta exit on I-95, turn left and proceed as above after crossing I-95.

#### Elections for Board of Directors

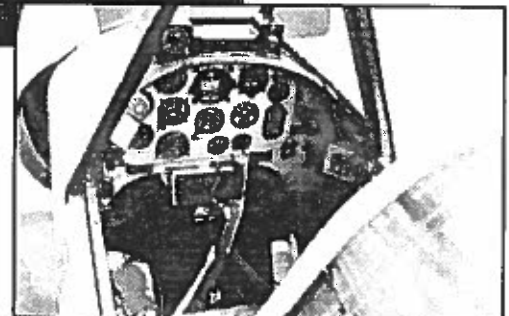
Due to expiration of terms and resignations for personal reasons, we currently have four (4) openings on the Board of Directors. Please vote before 12/31/04 by paper mailed to: Maine Air Museum, P.O. Box 2641, Bangor, Maine 04402-2641 or by e-mail to [mam@maineairmuseum.org](mailto:mam@maineairmuseum.org) marked "board of directors ballot."

- |                          |               |        |                  |
|--------------------------|---------------|--------|------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Daniel See    | (#320) | Bucksport, Maine |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Stanley Smith | (#427) | Bucksport, Maine |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | _____         |        | (write-in)       |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | _____         |        | (write-in)       |



**It's the  
 Only  
 One  
 in  
 Maine**

Meet the only YAK 52 in the state of Maine, pictured here at the Portland Show last month. Ex-Romanian Air Force, it was manufactured in 1985 and is owned by Mark Haskell, a controller at the Portland Jetport. (Bob Umberger Photos)



**Maine Aviation Historical Society  
Maine Air Museum  
Board of Directors Meeting · September 23, 2004**

The Board of Directors meeting was called to order by Vice President Shaw at 1814 hours at the office of the Maine Air Museum, Bangor, Maine. Present: Armstrong, Cormier, Gopan, Cornett, Quinn, Sederquist, Shaw, and Townsend. Absent: Boyle, Noddin, and Johnson.

**F-104.** Les will look into the cockpit before we make a decision to turn down this offer.

**Emergency Door.** There was a discussion about replacing one of the folding doors with a smaller emergency door. Hank Marois suggested this. Moved: "that we table this." Seconded. Passed.

**Aircraft Acquisition.** Watson at Pensacola has asked us to submit a list of aircraft that we want. Gopan expressed concern that we have displeased the Navy with our handling of the jet engine. Moved: "that we use Leo's list of aircraft." Seconded. Passed.

**Floor Plan.** Gopan took copies of the museum floor plan to look them over in terms of future exhibit placement.

**Huey.** We are still not sure of the actual ownership of the

UH-1. Paperwork that is in our possession does not indicate the exact ownership.

**Election of Officers.** We need a slate of officers. Needed: President, Vice President, four members of the Board of Directors. We must have a slate by the next meeting in order to have it included in the next newsletter for voting by the membership.

**Newsletter Editor.** Leo is getting nervous. We will submit articles to Ed Armstrong who has offered to set up and publish the newsletter. Armstrong will not guarantee that he can produce the newsletter if material does not come in.

**Brochures and Donation Forms.** Up to 250 donation forms will be reprinted. There was extensive discussion about what color sheets of the donation forms goes to who when they are filled out.

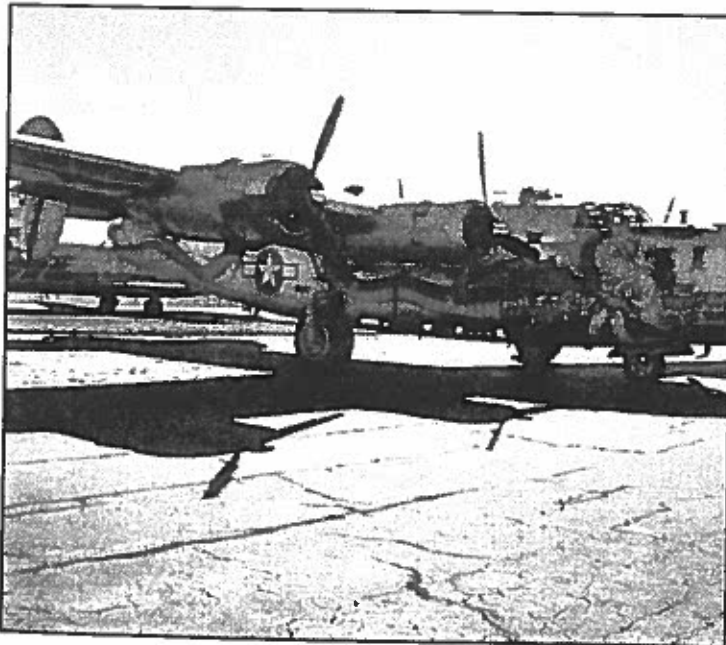
**Budget.** Quinn passed out copies of the year-to-date expenses for consideration. Recent income includes admissions, \$606; donations, \$755, and gifts, \$307.

**Belfast Historical Society.** Cornett read a letter from the Belfast Historical Society thanking us for the segment of the balloon.

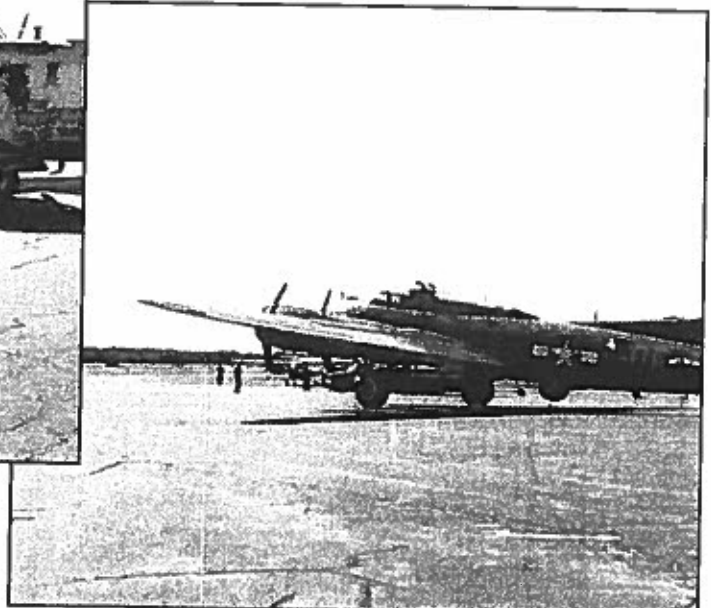
The meeting was adjourned at 2000 hours.

*Bill Townsend, Secretary*

**A Couple More Scenes from the PWM Static Air Show in September**



Consolidated Vultee B-24 Liberator at Portland. *(Bob Umberger Photo)*



Boeing B-17 Flying Fortress at Portland. *(Bob Umberger Photo)*

## On High

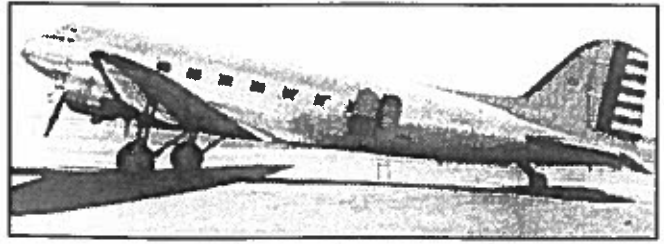
By James E. McCarthy

It was 1944. We were at 10,000 feet in a Douglas C-49, flying from the Reno Army Air Base, now Reno Stead Airport, in northwest Nevada to Medford, Oregon. There were only four of us on board, a Chief Warrant Officer, or non-commissioned Service Pilot as they were known at the time, as the aircraft commander, a Second Lieutenant in the right seat, a joy-riding Chaplain, and me. I was there as Crew Chief/Flight Mechanic. We were all members of the 3rd Operational Training Unit, Air Transport Command. The Lieutenant was undergoing familiarization and checkout on the DC series aircraft, in preparation for his shipment to India to fly the "Hump," as the CBI, the China-Burma-India area, was commonly identified. The Chaplain was along just for the ride, for the experience of it. He hadn't banked on the experience he would soon get.

The C-49 was only one in the series of DC-3s that Douglas had produced and were available in Reno. Others were the C-47, the best known of the group, the C-48, the C-51, and the C-53. The C-49 was equipped with Curtiss-Wright G-102 engines, rather than the Pratt and Whitney 1830s on most of the others, and was otherwise distinguished by lack of a cargo door. This particular C-49, as I remember it, was an aircraft that the military had taken over from American Airlines and put to military use when the war emergency began.

Although Reno's main business was the checkout of pilots on the Curtiss-Wright C-46 (we had 100 of them, starting with the number two production aircraft) there were other assorted transport aircraft on the base, used for the same and other transport purposes. They consisted of the various Douglas series, including a DC-2, a DC-2 1/2 (C-39, in military jargon), several DC-3s, as previously mentioned, plus a DST (a sleeper version taken over from American Airlines, also), a couple of Boeing 240-Ds, a C-87 (B-24 in transport dress), and even a few Cessna UC-78s, seemingly intended as playthings for otherwise unoccupied senior flight personnel.

The flight described was a "round-robin"—there and back. It was winter and it was cold at flight altitude, but we were all comfy, warm and serene, passing the time in occasional idle conversation and looking down on the Sierra Nevada range on a beautiful, cloudless night. Dramatically, this reverie was



Douglas C-49, the type of aircraft that Jim McCarthy flew in with the chaplain. (Peter Bowers Photo)

broken by an ominous sound, a low pitched explosion somewhere on the aircraft, followed immediately by an obscuring acrid fog that seemed to fill the cabin and cockpit in just seconds. We all thought of smoke, but no fire was apparent. There was momentary frenzy, each person locating his parachute, except me. Mine wasn't where I had stowed it. The Chaplain, who had neglected to bring his own, had found it and strapped it on.

About this time, the enveloping fog had started to dissipate, and it became noticeably colder. Considering those two developments, I began to realize what had happened. The steam radiator, part of the original Douglas heating system, located under the floor just aft of the cabin's front bulkhead, that also included a steam boiler wrapped around the right engine exhaust, had ruptured, spewing steam into the cabin and cockpit heat vents and into the cabin.

With great relief, but shaky, we proceeded on to Medford, landed, verified our suspicions and luxuriated for some time in the warmth of the flight line shack. The return to Reno was made in the cold at minimum enroute altitudes, whatever they were, to conserve as much warmth as possible. The main subject of conversation most of the way back was the embarrassing action of the Chaplain in appropriating my parachute, in those few frantic moments. Somebody, not me, referred to him as "His Holiness" and commented on his obvious communc and direction from a higher authority.

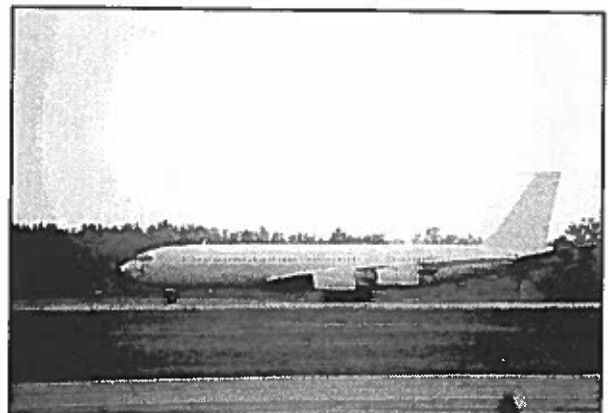
He was saved from further ribbing about the incident in the days ahead by his almost immediate departure for the CBI, where he would, undoubtedly, administer to the troops at much higher levels — in the Himalayas.

### On Runway ...



Lockheed AC-130 at Bangor. (Mike Cornett Photo)

### ... At Bangor



Israeli Boeing 707 Tanker at Bangor. (Mike Cornett Photo)

## Another Look

By James E. McCarthy

It was early in the Spring of 1951. We were flying north along the east side and slightly above the Knife Edge of Mt. Katahdin, heading for Baxter Peak. I was concentrating on the outside, looking for the approximate location where about eleven years earlier, but in the early Fall, Winfield Soucy and I had spent the night, caught by a sudden ice storm. Our plan had been to reach the peak via the Knife Edge, descend to Chimney Pond for the night, then walk out to the road and bum a ride back to our starting point and our car. It didn't work out that way. I have long forgotten the names of the trails and camping places of our plans, and those of our actual hike.

The outside concentration directed from the airplane suddenly evolved into inside concern. A great silence enveloped us, as the engine seemed to have shut down. A glance at the tachometer confirmed that it continued to turn over at idle RPM, but there are few things as dramatic as the sudden, unaccounted drop in noise level from cruise RPM to what seems a deadly silence by comparison. My glance had included the throttle, which had obviously been fully retarded. I opened it slowly with my left hand. A reassuring increase in decibel level asserted itself as the RPM climbed back to cruise. I realized that as I had leaned forward to look down and forward my

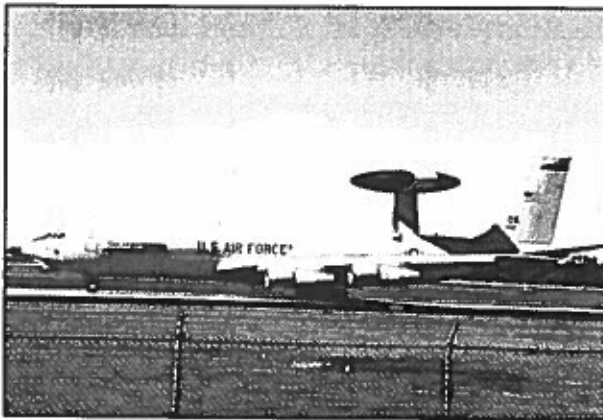
passenger, in the rear seat, had done the same, then as she sat back her elbow nudged the throttle knob, moving it to the idle position.

Such was enough for a short panic over Katahdin, and such was the way romance might have started. Late that year, my passenger, Carol Cunningham, and I were married in Seattle.

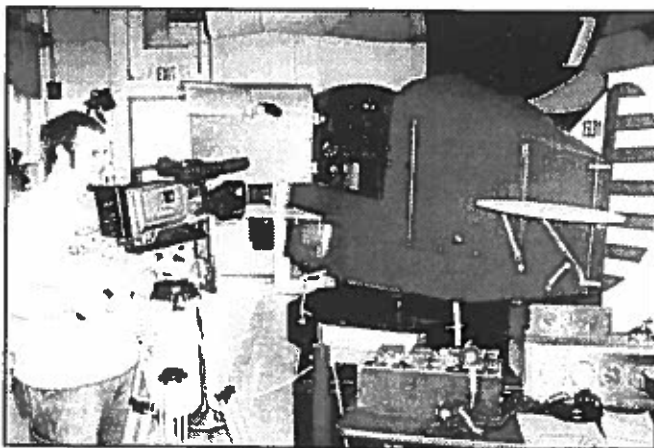
My earlier acquaintance with the Knife Edge was much less comfortable, if conventional. That day in 1940, when visibility shut down and the rocky footing became treacherous, Winfield and I reluctantly decided the better part of valor was to submit to the elements. We selected a space among the rocks to hunker down, covering ourselves with the single poncho we carried; to await the storm's passing. It continued into the night, so we spent the cramped hours waiting for dawn. It came, clear and sunny, with the ice turning to slush. Before we started out, we could see a group of people on ascent, just leaving the timberline. We later learned that a Boy Scout troop was climbing that day and had been asked to keep an eye out for us. The Ranger knew we were on the mountain and had not reported back down.

That second look, in 1951, was so much easier.

### More Sights in Bangor ...

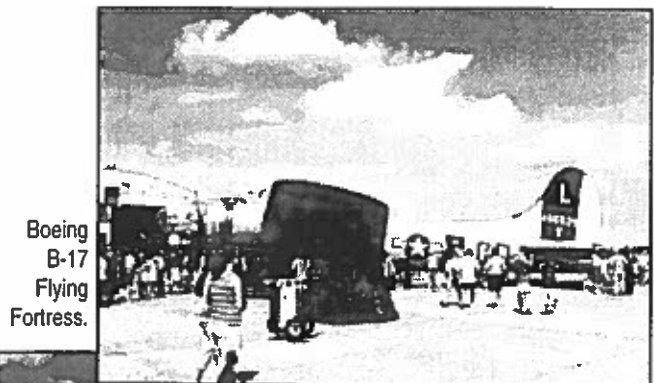


Boeing AWACs at Bangor. (Mike Cornett Photo)

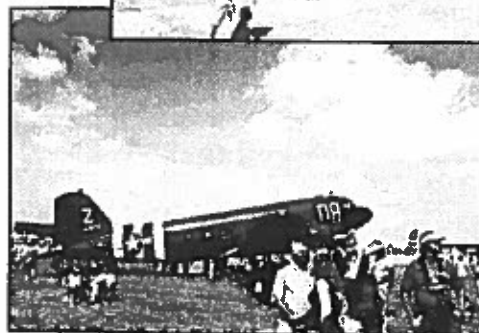


Mr. Sam, a student at New England School of Communication Video, spent about two hours at the Maine Aviation Museum working on a school project on Sunday, Sept. 26, 2004. (Norm Houle Photo)

### ... and Westover



Boeing  
B-17  
Flying  
Fortress.



(left) Douglas C-47  
Skytrain at Westover,  
later at Portland.  
(below) Boeing  
B-52N. (Mike Cornett  
Photos)



## Buy a Brick and Support the Maine Air Museum

*The Maine Air Museum is proud to announce the new Memorial Pathway Program. Here's how it works:*

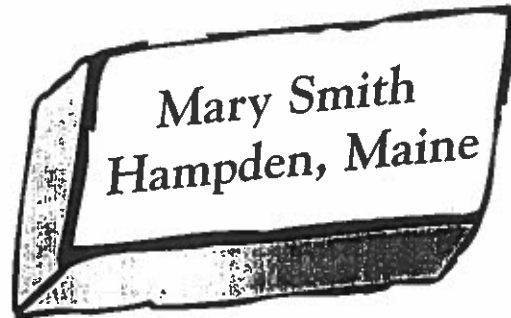
To successfully carry out and reach the museum vision, and to refurbish building 98, the Maine Air Museum needs the financial support of business and public community leaders and individual private citizens. Your interest in preserving the rich Maine aviation history will require funding presently not available to the museum effort. To this end, the museum board has established the following contribution plan for receiving your monetary donation and recognizing your gift permanently in the museum pathway and wall of honor. Remember: your donation is fully deductible.

### ★ Stratocumulus Member (Sc) — \$100 Donation

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### ★ Altostratus Member (As) — \$150 Donation

Entitles the gift giver to a two-year membership and three-year museum pass, copy of The United States Air Force in Maine, and a benefactor's engraved 4"x8"x2.5" red clay brick with up to two lines (14 characters/line, .65" high) of commemorative text in the name of the gift giver or his/her memorial to others. Brick to be installed on the museum grounds, walkway or building facade.



*See Order Form on Page 7*

### ★ Altocumulus Member (Ac) — \$250 Donation

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## Upcoming MAHS Meetings and Events



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.

### Got Ideas?

MAHS meeting sites are flexible and we're always looking for guest speakers and new program ideas. If you have any ideas or if you can be of help, call us.

### Got Friends?

The best advertising is always word of mouth, so if you've got friends, tell them about the Maine Aviation Historical Society and all the happenings at the Maine Air Museum. Invite them to come join us ... the more the merrier!

**The Maine Aviation Historical Society and Maine Air Museum Needs YOU!**

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](http://MaineAirMuseumvolunteerschedule.org)

**-NEW-BOOK-NOW-AVAILABLE-AT-THE-MUSEUM-**  
**Memoirs: With An Angel By My Side**  
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*His flying life as told by Al, member of MAHS/MAM and member of the Board of Directors.*  
 \$16.00 at the museum                      \$20.00 by mail

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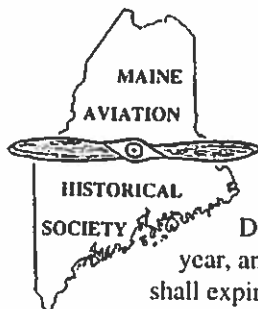
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Corporate	\$100 annual	Newsletter, Decal, Museum Admission
Supporting	\$100 annual	Newsletter, Decal, Museum Admission, 4 Free Passes
Lifetime	\$500*	Newsletter, Decal, Lifetime Membership Number, Museum Admission, 10 Free Passes
* (2 annual \$250 payments)		

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

### November Meeting

November 13, 2004

10 a.m.

Maine Military Museum  
Augusta, Maine