



DIRIGO FLYER

Newsletter of the Maine Aviation Historical Society

Volume XXIII No. 1

January - March 2015

MAM PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Members, we need your help with happenings at the museum this year:

- We need help painting the outside of the museum. We are only ¼ done now
- We need some new ideas on how to raise money for the museum
- We need to get new members. Ask your family, friends, etc., to join the museum
- Next season, we need help on Saturdays and Sundays, giving tours, tending the cash register, doing general repair and clean up

If you have ideas or are willing to help, give me a call at 941-412-4750 or email me at chuck104@myfairpoint.net.

Chuck Byrum, MAM President

Loring Air Force Base during the Cuban Missile Crisis

Maine Air Museum's board of director member, Hank Marois, wrote the following account of his experience at Loring AFB, Maine during the Cuban Missile Crisis:

It started as a typical day in the Marois home in government housing on Duncan Court at Loring Air Force Base one October morning in 1962. Mary was busy fixing breakfast for the boys who would be off to school in an hour, and at nine o'clock the appliance repair man from Sears in Presque Isle would be here to fix our washing machine. I had my uniform on and was heading off to report to the 69th Bomb Squadron for a routine ground training session. I had already carried the car battery out from our apartment and installed it in our red VW "Bug." This was a normal precaution since it had been -30 degrees that night.

The telephone rang and a short terse message was given to me, "We are in DEFCON 2 and you are to report to the Training and Briefing Building at 0900 hrs." Things had drastically changed on the international front and we were now participating in what would be later called "The Cuban Missile Crisis." All normal training activity would be

cancelled, as were military leaves, the base would be operating on a seven day week, and everyone would work 12 hour shifts. All staff pilots who had non-flying duties and who were B-52 "Combat Ready" were assigned as third pilots on missions.

We had been trained for this eventuality. Fully armed B-52's would be launched as part of the airborne alert force orbiting around the perimeter of the Soviet Union. The ground alert force would be expanded, and the remaining crews would be prepared to become the "follow-on" force.

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Address: PO Box 2641, Bangor, Maine 04402
207-941-6757, 1-877-280-MAHS
(6247) in state

Web site www.maineairmuseum.com
Email mam@maineairmuseum.com

Association Officers

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Chuck Byrum
Charles_byrum9@msn.com

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vintagewings@cs.com

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The Maine Air Museum is located at
98 Maine Avenue adjacent to
Bangor International Airport

69th Bomb Squadron, including my crew, S-02, would spend the morning doing target study for our airborne alert "HEAD START" mission's targets assigned to our specific mission number. Other crews would be there, and meteorologists would give us a thorough briefing on the weather patterns over the North Atlantic, our Mediterranean Sea orbit area, and our target areas in Russia as well as the recovery bases. After the weather briefing, the Combat Intelligence Officer would give us the latest updates on the disposition of Russian fighter forces and missile defenses. As an Electronic Warfare Officer, I was particularly attentive to the latest deployment and status of Russian fighter defenses.

Crews would then split up, and do target study for their specific missions. As an Electronic Warfare Officer, I went to the simulator that would give me a workout with my black boxes. First the long range early warning radars, then the Ground Control Interceptor (GCI) radars, then Russian fighter radars, then the target defense surface to air SA-2 missiles which were deployed to defend each of our targets.

The simulator was equipped with the same "equipment" as would be our actual aircraft for this mission. Our aircraft would be loaded with three types of "chaff": aluminum foil cut to the ¼ wave length of the enemy radar signal, a dozen different electronic jammers, and infra-red decoys. Needless to say, it was

a busy session for me, and I always came out wringing wet from perspiration.

The other crew members were also “flying” the mission in their respective simulators. It was tricky for the Radar Bombardier and Navigator because radar returns enroute and in the target areas vary greatly with the seasons.

Since Crew S-02 had been previously certified for this particular mission, we simply had to be updated, were recertified for our particular mission, and sent home to get some sleep. We would be airborne the next day on a “HEAD START” mission orbiting over the central Mediterranean Sea, and be gone for close to 30 hours.

The Gunner ordered our flight lunches from the In-Flight Kitchen - we would be airborne for between 24 and 30 hours, and that can require a lot of TV dinners and roast beef sandwiches. It was the Gunner’s responsibility to order the food, pick it up at the in-flight kitchen, and bring it to the B-52 the next day.

By now it was late in the afternoon, and we each headed for home. Mary was a Cub Scout Den Mother, and the kids were in our living room. I quietly went upstairs, and was soon fast asleep. No sooner had I fallen asleep, than the alarm went off signaling the start of a very long day for me. Our crew kept the cabin temperature at about 50 degrees, so we could wear our heavy flying gear for the entire mission. I wore my L.L. Bean “waffle” underwear with my G.I. winter quilted underwear over that, and a flying suit. We wore insulated flying boots and a heavy wool and fur cap. A winter flying jacket topped off the ensemble.

We met at the 69th Bomb Squadron where the crew bus was awaiting us. We had all sorts of gear to load, food to store, and lists to check. There were more check points with guards and the ensuing I.D. checks. When we pulled up to our aircraft, the bus door was opened, and the aircraft’s Crew Chief came aboard the bus with the log showing the maintenance record for the “bird,” AF Form 781. The book was handed around from crew member to crew member in a specific order- this was Strategic Air Command where nothing is left to chance. Even at 03:00 a.m., the sight of six nuclear weapons in the forward bomb bay, four Quail decoy missiles in the aft bomb bay, and a Hound Dog cruise missile under each wing was impressive.

Everyone pitched in loading all of the gear. The TOP SECRET sealed “Combat Mission” box was the first up the ladder, and it was quickly attached to the floor of the lower deck. It would only be opened if we received the “Go Code” during the mission. Each crewmember carried a .38 cal. pistol. We had a coffee pot that was bolted to the upper deck behind the co-pilot’s station. Our Aircraft Commander’s first act once he was strapped in his seat, was to tear the cover off of a carton of Chesterfield cigarettes and place it near the engine throttles. He would smoke the entire carton during the mission. My dad smoked the same brand, and I recognized the aroma. This time we weren’t going to the beach on a Sunday afternoon!

I was now a part of the follow-up force. After two days, our crew would report to the Training and Briefing Building and undergo certification for our next mission. The next seven days we would be in the underground crew alert facility, the “Mole Hole,” or in Building 1000 as a part of the Ground Alert Force. When the seven days were up, we would once again be a part of the airborne alert “Head Start” operation, and the cycle would be repeated.

The “Cuban Missile Crisis” went on for 40 days. During this time frame, the 42nd Bomb Wing, of which the 69th and 70th Bomb Squadrons were a part, flew 214 airborne alert missions. The 42nd Air Refueling Squadron flew 214 KC-135 refueling missions, transferring a total of 23,757,000 pounds of jet fuel to B-52’s.

This same routine was repeated by every other crew member stationed at Loring, plus crews at over 20 other B-52 bases in our country. It came off without a hitch because of the training we had received. During the 40 days, two B-52’s were lost due to mechanical failures, one over the polar region and one off the coast of Spain.

In these perilous times our excellent training and the high standards set for aircrew members by the Strategic Air Command were apparent, and we proudly wore the SAC insignia proclaiming, “Peace is Our Profession.”



Courtesy of NASA/Robert Markowitz

Introducing Maine’s Newest Astronaut, Jessica Meir

If you did not catch Kathryn Olmstead’s column in the Bangor Daily News on February 13, 2015, you should click on the hyperlink at the end of this story to read the details about this amazing young woman’s life accomplishments. And those are only a preamble to what she will surely achieve as a full-fledged astronaut. Meir, a native of Caribou, Maine, is 37 years old. She dreamed of being an astronaut since she was 5 years old, and she has worked hard since then to make her dreams come true.

Meir graduated valedictorian of her Caribou High School class, and went on to Brown University from which she graduated in 1999 with her BA in biology, then on to the International Space University in France for a master of science degree in space studies, and then on to Scripps Institution of Oceanography at UC San Diego for her doctorate in marine biology in 2009. In between her masters and doctorate studies, she worked for Lockheed Martin's Human Research Facility and NASA on research projects. She was working as assistant professor of anesthesia at Harvard Medical School when she received the call from NASA that she was to be one of eight members (out of a group of 6,100 applicants) of the 21st NASA astronaut class. She spent the last year and a half training at the two-year Astronaut Candidate Training Center at the Johnson Space Center in Houston, Texas. According to Olmstead, Meir describes her experience there as "exciting," "incredible," and "amazing."

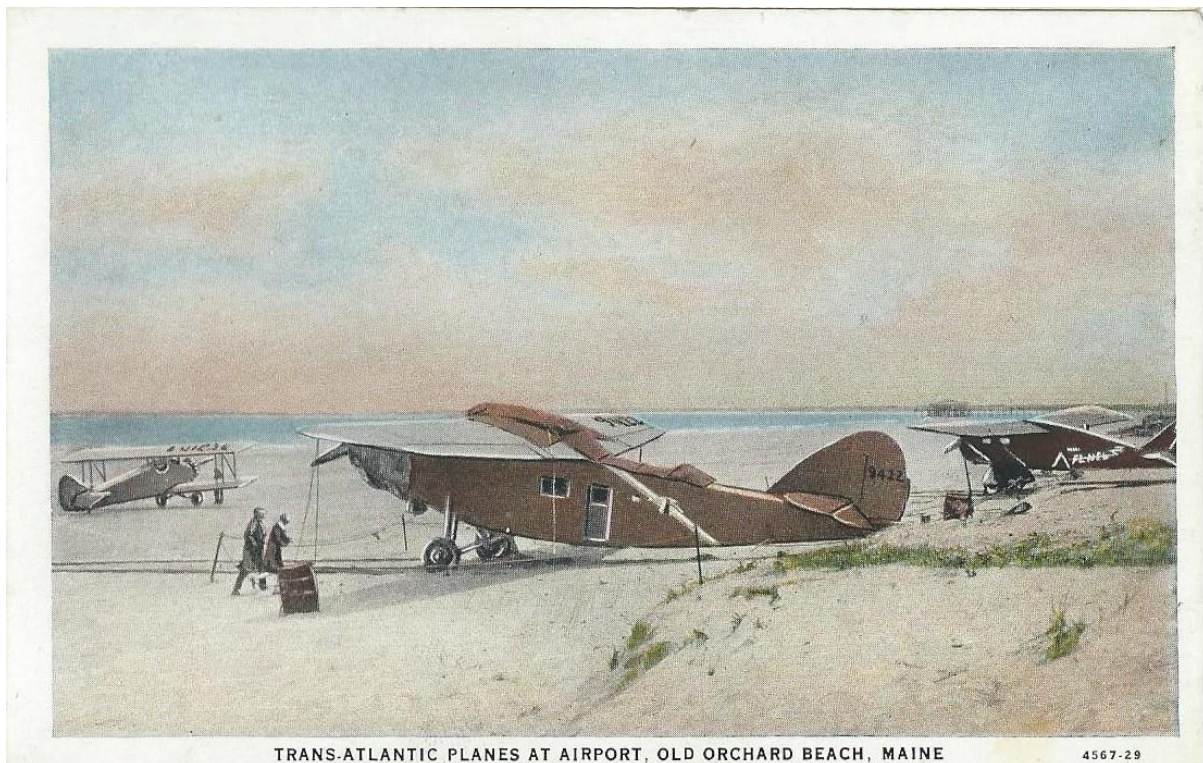
For more information, be sure to check out Kathryn Olmstead's article at:

<http://bangordailynews.com/2015/02/12/living/blogs-and-columns-living/caribou-native-readying-for-space-as-member-of-21st-astronaut-class/>

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POSTCARDS FROM THE PAST

MAM member, Norm Houle, provided the editor with a number of aviation-related postcards from years gone-by. We will share some of these with you in this, and future, editions of the Dirigo Flyer.



Trans-Atlantic!???



The postmark on the back of this card reveals a mailing date of July 5, 1926. The card was sent by J. Garbose to Mr. Everett Sayer in Athol, Mass. The message reads "Hello Everett! It's not very bad up here."

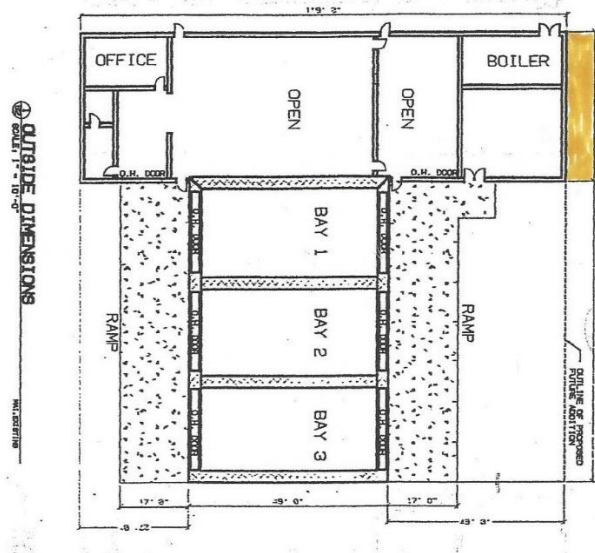


VIEWING PLATFORM IN MUSEUM'S FUTURE?

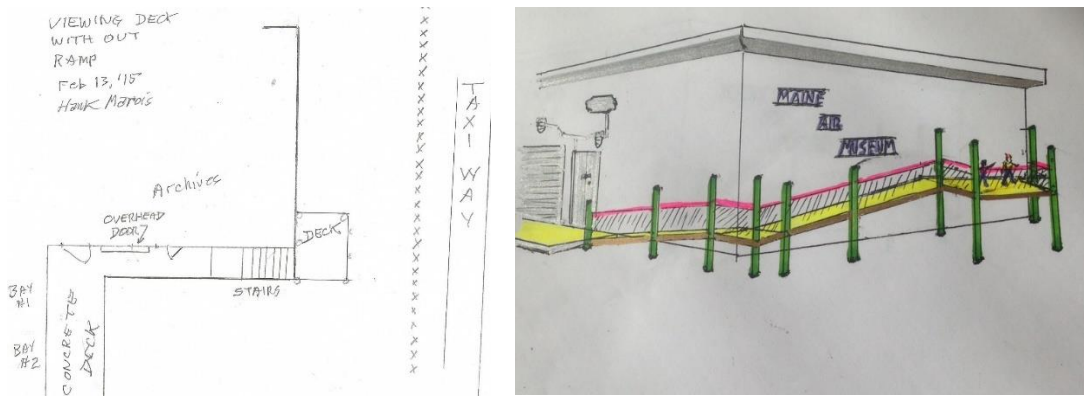
If you have visited the Maine Air Museum, you know that it is located adjacent to the Bangor International Airport runway. The view of the runway from land behind the museum is unobstructed, except by the cyclone fence enclosing the property. For over a year now, MAM directors and officers have been discussing the feasibility and possible design of a viewing platform built on museum grounds to allow visitors to photograph aircraft on the runway without having the cyclone fence in the way.

Last year, options were explored for purchasing or constructing a set of bleachers for this purpose. By the end of the year, concerns about safety and accessibility, as well as high cost made bleachers an unattractive alternative. So, thoughts have turned to building a platform tied into the back wall of the museum for stability, accessible either by a long ramp wrapping around the corner of the building, or by a set of steps. Ultimately, the design will be influenced by code enforcement, and whether the platform must be handicap accessible.

To give you an idea of where the platform may be located with respect to the museum building, take a look at the highlighted area along the rear walls of the boiler and archive/meeting rooms on this scale drawing of the museum (prepared in 2000 by Arrowhead Images for other reasons).



Below are two proposed designs for the platform.



Of course, the final plan submitted to the city will have to be designed and prepared by an engineering firm.

Key to either design, are the 24 or more telephone poles procured by member, Tony DelMonaco, as a donation from Emera Maine (formerly Bangor Hydro). The museum will be seeking additional donations of building materials and labor to complete the project. Volunteers would be greatly appreciated.

The Bangor Back Yard Tourists Home School group - pictured on the following page – are among the visitors who might enjoy the proposed platform. This group of eight parents and 18 students visited the museum on September 16, 2014, and watched aircraft take off and land at BIA while sitting at picnic tables at the rear of the building. Perhaps they will have an enhanced view from the platform on a future visit...



If visitors to the platform are fortunate, they might get a glimpse of this aircraft photographed at BIA on December 16, 2014.





Maine Air

Museum

COMMUNITY PARTNER AWARDS

The Maine Air Museum thanks the following individuals, corporations and organizations for their support:

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Invisible Intelligence**



Maine Aviation Historical Society Maine Air Museum * Membership Form

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Address: _____

City, State, Zip: _____

Special Interests: _____

Phone: _____ Email: _____

**All dues expire on
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If joining mid-year,
pay \$2.00 for each
remaining month**

Annual membership
includes six newsletters!

Mail payment to:
Maine Aviation
Historical Society
PO Box 2641
Bangor, ME 04402-
2641

Membership	Dues	Benefits
Regular	\$25 annual	Newsletter, Museum Admission
Family	\$35 annual	Newsletter, Museum Admission
Corporate	\$100 annual	Newsletter, Museum Admission
Supporting	\$100 annual	Newsletter, Museum Admission,
Lifetime	\$500*	Newsletter, Lifetime Membership Number,
	* 2 annual \$250 payments	Museum Admission,

We need volunteers-docents, mechanics, maintenance, librarians and exhibit specialists, etc.

- Please call me. I want to be active in the organization.
- I cannot join now, but would like to help. I am enclosing a check for \$_____.
- Contributions over \$20 are tax deductible within the limits of the law.
- I wish to support and obtain membership by purchasing a memorial brick.

DIRIGO FLYER
MAINE AVIATION HISTORICAL SOCIETY
PO BOX 2641
BANGOR, ME 04402-2641