



# DIRIGO FLYER

Newsletter of the Maine Aviation Historical Society

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## Introducing: The Hank Marois Viewing Platform

As those of you who have visited the Maine Air Museum in Bangor know, the museum is ideally situated on land adjacent to the runway at Bangor International Airport. That location makes the area behind the museum almost perfect for viewing and photographing activity on the runway. To take advantage of this feature, we have placed picnic tables behind the museum where visitors can have a snack and enjoy plane spotting. Why is the view only “almost” perfect? The problem is the six-foot high chain-link fence separating the museum grounds from the runway.

For lo these many years, Director Hank Marois has annually submitted plans to build a viewing stand high enough to overlook the fence, to be located on the runway side of the Maine Air Museum building. Finally this fall ... Hank’s efforts have come to fruition; the platform has been built. The Board of Directors recently voted to dedicate the completed viewing platform to Hank Marois. The platform, pictured here, will give visitors an unobstructed view of planes landing and taking off from the Bangor International Airport runway.



*The Hank Marois Viewing Platform is enjoyed by Christ's Home School students on a recent visit.*

Special thanks go to MAM member Tony DelMonaco and Director Matt Watkins for their project oversight and financial contributions, which helped make the long-awaited platform a reality.



*Dirigo Flyer*

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**WHEN DID MAHS BEGIN?**

According to member Norm Houle, Leo Boyle started the Maine Aviation Historical Society sometime in the '60s when he and his aviation-minded friends met in the back room of Leo's bookstore on Congress Street in Portland. This went on for a few years, before it slowed down and eventually just ceased to operate.



*Member #2, Leo Boyle*

In the late '80s, Brian Wood (interested in New England aviation history) introduced Norm Houle to Leo Boyle. After a time, Leo said to Norm that they should restart the MAHS. Norm replied "GOOD IDEA!" and put his \$20.00 on the table, declaring himself Member #1. Leo followed suit – becoming Member #2.

The first Dirigo Flyer, the MAHS newsletter, was published in March of 1993 with Leo Boyle as the editor. Leo continued as editor for more than 10 years. Leo Boyle passed away on September 14, 2007. Founding member Norm Houle continues to contribute to our MAM/MAHS newsletter.

To learn more of the very interesting history of your Maine Aviation Historical Society and the Maine Air Museum, you can go to the MAM website ([www.maineairmuseum.com](http://www.maineairmuseum.com)), click on the News and Events tab, and select Newsletter Archive. There you will find links to every Dirigo Flyer published since March, 1993. We are in the process of making the archived editions searchable using the new "search button" on the bottom left of the main page or by doing a Google search. Many of the editions are already searchable, give it a try!

## **President's Report**

Main Street in Searsport, Maine between Water Street and Steamboat Avenue, was the site of a spectacular airplane crash on October 20, 1947. Major Kenneth G. Smith was on a mission to lead a flight of P-47 Thunderbolts on an aerobatics training sortie from Dow Field over the local flying area. Major Smith's plane developed engine difficulties, and when he realized it would crash, he deliberately piloted the plane into Mill Stream between two residential streets, avoiding the catastrophe of local deaths – but losing his life.

On October 18, 2015 at 1400 hours, MAM Director Deanna Byrum and I attended the Union Hall, Searsport, Maine commemoration of Major Kenneth G. Smith's life and death. The event, sponsored by the Town of Searsport and the Historic Preservation Committee, marked the 68<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Major Smith's heroic death. As representatives of the Maine Air Museum, we had been invited to participate, along with State and local legislators, local veterans, and witnesses of the event.

When we arrived, they gave us a picture pin of Major Smith, a program for the event, and a brochure titled A HERO'S LIFE AND DEATH. The program consisted of music by the RSU 20 school band directed by Ethan Edmondson; a Call to Order by Selectman Jack Merrithew; Presentation of Colors by Jerry Dobbins of the American Legion Post 157; a welcome remark by Marie Underwood, Chair of the Searsport Historic Preservation Committee; opening remarks by James Gillway, Town Manager and Maine State Representative of District 98.

I was escorted to the stage by Jack Merrithew, and introduced as the President of the Maine Air Museum. I gave a talk about the MAM and what it had to offer; featuring the newly- built viewing platform where one can take pictures of airplanes landing, taking off, and taxiing by the back of the museum. I presented them with a scrap book I had made about Major Smith, which contained a picture of the brick I had made for our Memorial Garden Pathway, all of the Bangor Daily News articles, and a copy of the January – February, 2010 Dirigo Flyer with an article about Major Smith titled "Death of an Ace." I also gave them a package of our MAM pamphlets to hand out to the audience.

Following my talk, there were remarks about the plane crash by Selectman Merrithew and Town Historian Charlene Knox Farris. Local witnesses to the crash were introduced, including: Hazel J. Pendleton, Jackie Hamilton Knowles, Dick Jackson, Carolyn Clark, Avis Rairigh, Gerald Rumney, Judith Staples, Nancy Cole Card, Frank Whiting, Robert Clark, Ross Carrol, and David O'Donnel. The witnesses gave accounts of what they had observed at the plane crash.

A Memorial Plaque honoring Major Kenneth Smith's heroism was unveiled by Ms. Farris and Mr. Merrithew. General John D'Errico, USAF, and Lt. Colonel James Trudell, USAF, presented a wreath honoring Major Smith. We were all invited to sing the U.S. Air Force song Wild Blue Yonder accompanied by the RSU 20 band.

*Off we go into the wild blue yonder, Climbing high, into the sun; Here they come zooming to meet our thunder, At'em boys, Give'er the gun! (Give'er the gun now) Down we dive, spouting our flame from under, Off with one heckuva roar! We live in fame or go down in flame. Hey! Nothing'll stop the U.S. Air Force!*

Closing remarks were made by Selectman Merrithew, with Retiring of Colors by American Legion Post 157. Refreshments followed. The Event Committee members were Mary Brann, Lin Calista, Karen Kelly, Charlene Knox Farriss, Marie Underwood, and Jack Merrithew.

On October 19, 2015, I received an email from Marie Underwood, Chair of the Searsport Historic Preservation Committee, thanking us for coming and for all our help with their program. She thanked me for making the scrap book, and said it was wonderful of me to compile it and give it to them. She advised that it will be referred to by them many times, and she is looking forward to visiting the MAM next summer.

*[Editor's note: The Dirigo Flyer article included in President Byrum's scrap book, written by MAM member Peter Noddin for the January-February, 2010 edition, states Major Kenneth Smith "was an Ace, credited with downing six German aircraft." At the time of the crash, he was Commander of the 37<sup>th</sup> Fighter Squadron at the Dow Army Air Field in Bangor, Maine. You can read the complete article by going to the Newsletter Archive section of the museum's website.]*





## Post-Season Tours of the Museum

The museum typically closes its doors to visitors at the end of September, but post-season tours are available upon request. Two such tours – which unexpectedly turned profitable – are reported below:

### October 8, 2015 Christ's Home School tour

Hank Marois and Bob Littlefield opened the museum and gave a guided tour to a small group of students being home-schooled in Ellsworth. Shown here, the students are fascinated by the Sea-plane fly-in diorama donated by member Eugene McKay. See also, the photo on page 1. The school gave the museum a generous donation in appreciation for the tour.



Maine Air Museum,

Back in September of 2012 some of the surviving members the 75<sup>th</sup> Fighter Interceptor Squadron gathered in Maine for a reunion. We had a wonderful time together at the Lucerne Inn swapping stories about a time back in the early 60s when we flew F-101B Voodoos at Dow AFB.

One of the highlights of that reunion was our visit to the Maine Air Museum. The Air Museum had, in fact, closed for the season, but at the request of one of our members, volunteered to reopen just for us and provide guided tours of your exhibits.

When our reunion was over we ended up with a small surplus of cash in the reunion fund. Our reunion staff elected to donate that excess to the Maine Air Museum as a thank you for your efforts on our behalf. We did appreciate what you did for us and we also support your efforts to maintain the history of aviation in Maine.

I was the treasurer for that reunion and while clearing out some old paperwork came across my folder of expenditures for that event. To my dismay, I realized that I never sent the check that our members opted to donate to you. Please accept my apologies for that unforgiveable oversight.

On behalf of all the members of the 75<sup>th</sup> FIS Please accept this donation in support of your commendable efforts. We wish you continued success in your endeavors.

Gratefully,

Chuck Korus on behalf of all the members of the 75<sup>th</sup> FIS

### September, 2012 75<sup>th</sup> FIS tour

On October 4, 2015, while Chuck and Deanna Byrum were at the Museum, a gentleman approached them and told them he had overlooked a check for \$350 he had meant to send to the museum some time back. Once again, it was in gratitude for a post-season tour.

## Wings of Freedom Tour

From September 23 through September 25, 2015, the Collings Foundation's Wings of Freedom Tour, showcasing fully-restored World War II aircraft, visited the Auburn-Lewiston Municipal Airport. The Collings Foundation is a non-profit, educational foundation located in Stow, Massachusetts. According to the foundation's website, "the 'Wings of Freedom Tour' has two goals: to honor the sacrifices made by our veterans that allow us to enjoy our freedom; and to educate the visitors, especially younger Americans, about our national history and heritage." Pictured below are several of the aircraft on display in Auburn this fall.



*B-17G Flying Fortress "Nine-O-Nine"*



*B-25*



*B-24J Liberator – one of over 19,000 produced for WWII and one of only 2 still airworthy and flying*



*P-51C Mustang "Betty Jane" - featuring a full set of dual controls for flight training*

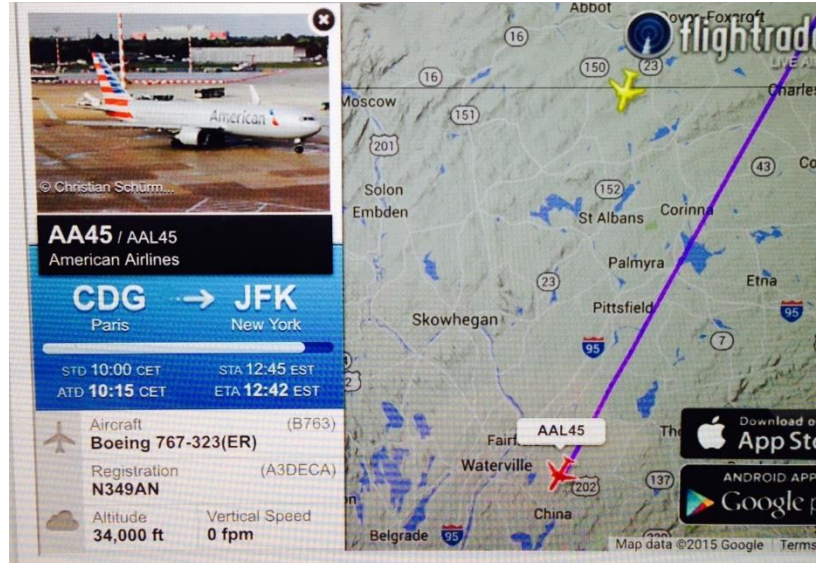


*Members Mike Cornett and Bob Umberger (pictured) took flights on the B-24J during previous Wings of Freedom Tour visits to the area*



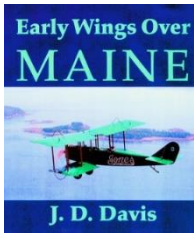
## Website Attractions

When is the last time you visited [www.MaineAirMuseum.com](http://www.MaineAirMuseum.com)? There are many interesting and educational features you may not be aware of. For example, the Newsletter Archive accessed from the NEWS AND EVENTS tab, mentioned on page 2 above. Another example is the Aviation Resources page accessed from the ABOUT tab. There you will find links to such internet resources as [www.Flightaware.com](http://www.Flightaware.com) which provides you with live flight tracking of commercial and private aircraft; [www.Airliners.net](http://www.Airliners.net) featuring thousands of photos, news and information about planes from around the world; and [www.Flightradar24.com](http://www.Flightradar24.com) which allows you to see - in real-time - the location and destination of aircraft in the air over Maine (and the rest of the world). The Aviation Resources page includes an active Flightradar24 window so you can track flights without leaving the website! And yes, there is an APP for that.



*Want to identify the red plane flying over Waterville, Maine on Sunday 11/29/15? Just click on the plane and the identifying information appears on the left of the screen.*

## BOOKS FOR SALE



**Early wings over Maine by John Davis**  
**Price \$24.95 (includes sales tax)**  
**Shipping \$4.00**  
**In stock and ready for delivery**

**Send check payable to MAHS to**  
**MAHS**  
**P.O. Box 2641**  
**Bangor, ME 04402-2641**

Also available through the museum:

***Memoirs: With an Angel By My Side*** by member Alfred Cormier.

His flying life as told by Al and available exclusively from the Maine Air Museum.

\$16.00 at the museum, \$20.00 via mail. To order, call or email the museum.

*"...a great story by a member of the Greatest Generation."*

***The United States Air Force in Maine, Progeny of the Cold War***

by John Garbinski.

Another exclusive book from the Maine Aviation Historical Society. Softbound, 134 pages, 151 illustrations.

\$20.00 (plus \$4.00 postage and handling). To order, call or email the museum.



**All dues expire on June 30th of each year. 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

## Maine Aviation Historical Society

### Maine Air Museum \* Membership Form

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City, State, Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Special Interests: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_

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* * 2 annual \$250 payments	Newsletter, Lifetime Membership Number, 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.

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