



DIRIGO FLYER

Newsletter of the Maine Aviation Historical Society

Volume XXIV No. 1


January - March 2016

GARY IVAN GORDON – A MAINE HERO

Gary Ivan Gordon, a native of Lincoln, Maine was one of two 1st Special Forces Operational Detachment-Delta, or Delta Force, operators to posthumously receive the Medal of Honor. Bestowed by President Clinton on May 23, 1994, to their widows, these were the first Medals of Honor conferred since the Vietnam war.

In an October, 1993, confrontation in Mogadishu, Somalia, surrounded by enemy combatants, the gallantry and self-sacrifice of Gary Gordon and his sniper teammate, Randall Shughart, helped save the life of the pilot of a downed Black Hawk helicopter.

The movie, *Black Hawk Down*, memorializes the actions of this Maine hero on that day. For a brief description of the battle, please read the official Medal of Honor Citation reprinted on page 3.

Gary Ivan Gordon	
	
Gordon as a Sergeant First Class	
Nickname(s)	"Gordy"
Born	August 30, 1960 Lincoln, Maine
Died	October 3, 1993 (aged 33) Mogadishu, Somalia
Place of burial	Lincoln Cemetery, Penobscot County, Maine

Courtesy of Wikipedia

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Dirigo Flyer

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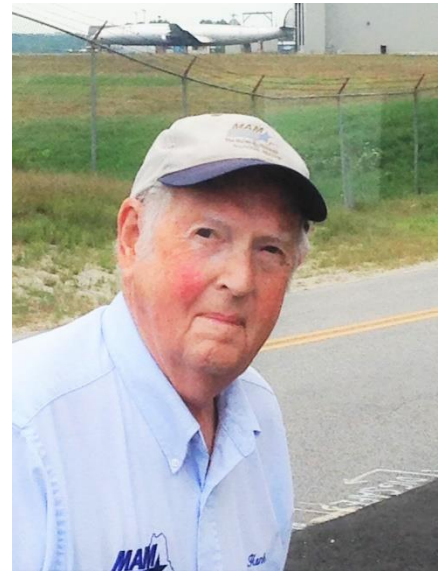
The Maine Air Museum is located at
98 Maine Avenue adjacent to
Bangor International Airport

The Twilight Zone: It's here in Maine on I-95!

A VISIT TO THE STAR CONNIE

This past summer Bob Littlefield and Hank Marois thought that it might be a good idea to have a story in our museum newsletter, The Dirigo Flyer, about the alleged restoration of the Star Constellation supposedly taking place at the Lewiston-Auburn Airport. It would be interesting reading for our members as well as providing some publicity for the supposed project. Your intrepid news hawks made the trip to the airport and located the hangar where the restoration was to be taking place. We never bothered to contact the project's attorneys in Tysons Corner, Virginia for permission. Who would refuse admission to view the project to two avid aviation enthusiasts from the Maine Air Museum? That question was shortly answered by the guard at the hangar gate. No, you cannot go in the hangar! Can we talk to someone who could give us permission to get in? No! Who do we have to talk to? "Don't know" was the reply. By then it was approaching noon and Bob and I decided to partake in lunch. Here are two gents seeking information about an

American built aircraft being restored by a German airline in Maine - where do we go for lunch? There is obviously one logical answer: Wei-Li Chinese Restaurant. After lunch we returned to the hangar to give it our best shot, only to be politely rejected once more. My theory is that the aircraft restoration story is simply a cover for what is actually going on in the heavily guarded facility. Theory #1: The place is a secret training camp for the Boston Bruins NHL team. Theory #2: It is a training camp for the World Wide Wrestling



Hank Marois, News Hawk, at Lewiston-Auburn Airport

Experience where they train and rehearse for future bouts. Theory #3: Old Town canoes are actually built there, not in Old Town, Maine. If you have a better idea - keep it to yourself or folks will think that you are as nutty as me!

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The President of the United States of America, authorized by an Act of Congress, March 3, 1994, has awarded, in the name of Congress, the Medal of Honor to

MASTER SERGEANT GARY IVAN GORDON

UNITED STATES ARMY

Master Sergeant Gordon, United States Army, distinguished himself by actions above and beyond the call of duty on 3 October 1993, while serving as Sniper Team Leader, United States Army Special Operations Command with Task Force Ranger in Mogadishu, Somalia. Master Sergeant Gordon's sniper team provided precision fire from the lead helicopter during an assault and at two helicopter crash sites, while subjected to intense automatic weapons and rocket propelled grenade fires. When Master Sergeant Gordon learned that ground forces were not immediately available to secure the second crash site, he and another sniper unhesitatingly volunteered to be inserted to protect the four critically wounded personnel, despite being well aware of the growing number of enemy personnel closing in on the site. After his third request to be inserted, Master Sergeant Gordon received permission to perform his volunteer mission. When debris and enemy ground fires at the site caused them to abort the first attempt, Master Sergeant Gordon was inserted one hundred meters south of the crash site. Equipped with only his sniper rifle and a pistol, Master Sergeant Gordon and his fellow sniper, while under intense small arms fire from the enemy, fought their way through a dense maze of shanties and shacks to reach the critically injured crew members. Master Sergeant Gordon immediately pulled the pilot and the other crew members from the aircraft, establishing a perimeter which placed him and his fellow sniper in the most vulnerable position. Master Sergeant Gordon used his long range rifle and side arm to kill an undetermined number of attackers until he depleted his ammunition. Master Sergeant Gordon then went back to the wreckage, recovering some of the crew's weapons and ammunition. Despite the fact that he was critically low on ammunition, he provided some of it to the dazed pilot and then radioed for help. Master Sergeant Gordon continued to travel the perimeter, protecting the downed crew. After his team member was fatally wounded and his own rifle ammunition exhausted, Master Sergeant Gordon returned to the wreckage, recovering a rifle with the last five rounds of ammunition and gave it to the pilot with the words, "good luck." Then, armed only with his pistol, Master Sergeant Gordon continued to fight until he was fatally wounded. His actions saved the pilot's life. In total 50 Somalian bodies were found at the location. Master Sergeant Gordon's extraordinary heroism and devotion to duty were in keeping with the highest standards of military service and reflect great credit upon him, his unit and the United States Army.

Gary Ivan Gordon left behind two children and a widow, Carmen, seen to the left accepting the Medal of Honor from President Clinton.



The Greater Lincoln (Maine) Area Marine Corps League, Detachment 976, are mounting an effort to raise \$120,000 to erect a bronze statue of the "Black Hawk Down" soldier, Gary I. Gordon in Lincoln. Involved are League members Gary Bies and Richard Tolman. Anyone interested in contributing to, or assisting in, the fundraising can email Gary D. Bies at gbusmc@gmail.com.

“FLYING BOATS” in MAINE?

On January 22, 2016, the Bangor Daily News reported tentative plans had been announced by Minnesota-based MVP Aero, Inc. to build a prototype of its amphibious, folding-wing plane in Maine, at Brunswick Landing, the former Brunswick Navy Air Base. The MVP, billed as the “world’s Most Versatile Plane,” is a two-seater, personal aircraft designed to fly into remote, inaccessible fishing locations, and then convert effortlessly into a fishing boat. The photos to the right were supplied by MVP Aero.

A search of the Dirigo Flyer archives, revealed the following history of flying boats in Maine.

While MVP Aero may hold the key to the future of flying boats in Maine, the past belongs to Igor Sikorsky and the Sikorsky Manufacturing Corporation with its Sikorsky S-38 and S-41 Flying Boats. In the early years of flight in Maine, airfields were scarce. With Maine’s abundant lakes and long coastline, flying boats provided air access to locations lacking airfields. Pan American and North American Airlines, by means of the Sikorsky flying boats, brought passenger service to many Maine locations that would otherwise not have had access to air transportation in the 1930s and beyond.



Replica S-38. By Linmhall at English Wikipedia, CC BY 3.0, <https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=106998>

In 1930, Rockland had one of the few airports in Maine, a Curtiss-Wright Flying Service airfield, which also ran a seaplane service using the Sikorsky S-38 flying boat. Very little information is available regarding this service. Thanks goes to former member Norm Houle for providing the postcard to the right and the notes below.

CURTISS-WRIGHT FLYING SERVICE
SIKORSKY S-38 FLYING BOAT AT
THE ROCKLAND, ME. YACHT CLUB
PIER in MAY, 1930. CURTISS-WRIGHT
RAN A WEEK-END AIRLINE FROM
NEW YORK AND BOSTON TO ROCKLAND
AND BAR HARBOR FOR THE
SUMMER RESIDENTS THERE.
NORM HOULE (POSTCARD)

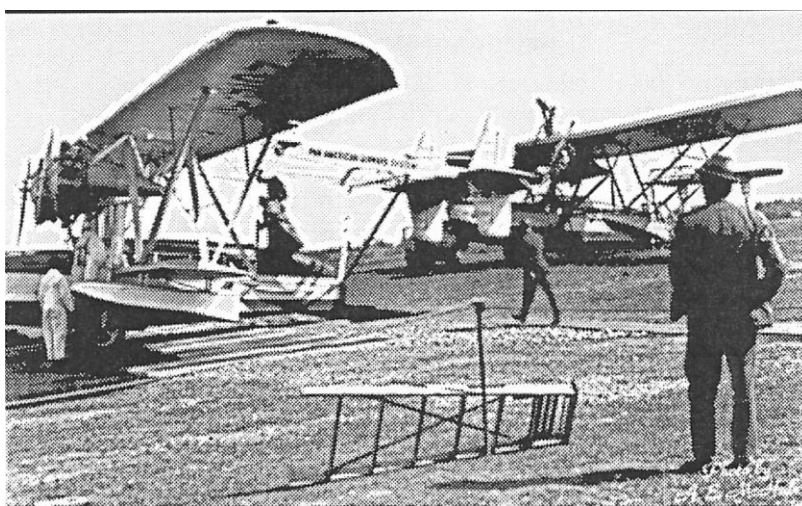


Postcard courtesy of Norm Houle



Courtesy of St. Croix Historical Society

For a brief period in 1931, Rockland and Calais, Maine were regularly scheduled stops on Pan American's Boston to Halifax route. Pictured - middle right - is one of two Sikorsky S-41-B aircraft (larger than the S-38, this flying boat was able to carry 12 passengers) landing on the St. Croix River at Barbour's Beach. The Boston-Halifax route was abandoned in September, 1931, just two months after it started, subsequent to the loss of one of the S-41-B flying boats in a crash off Marblehead, Mass. The photo and caption to the right, depicting a time after the crash and before termination of the route, appeared in the August, 1994, *Dirigo Flyer*.

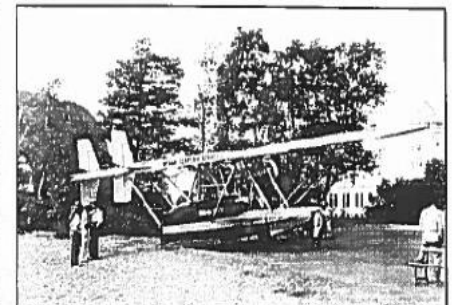
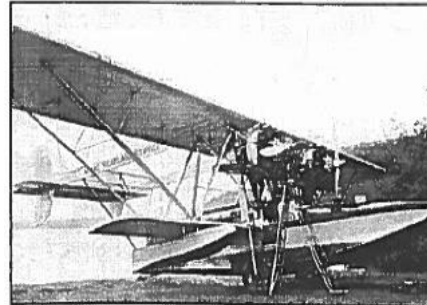
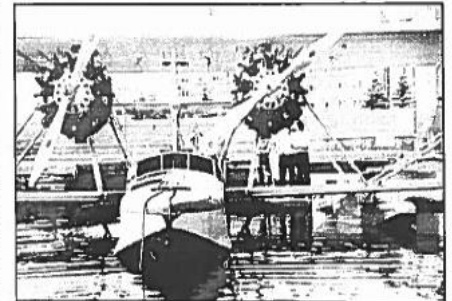
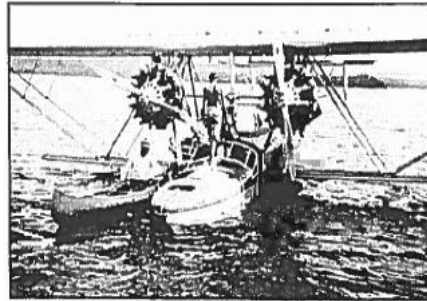
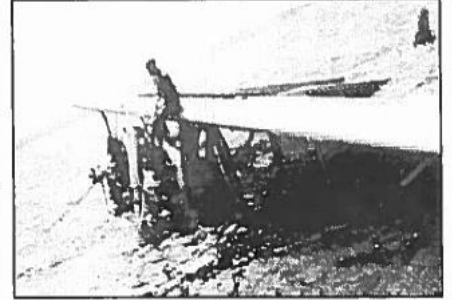
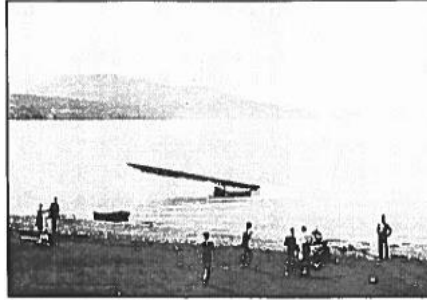


A rare photograph taken at Bangor, Maine in September 1931. In the foreground is Pan-Am Sikorsky S-38B NC-9107, serial # 114-6 which replaces Sikorsky S-41 NC-41V, serial #1100X which crashed in Mass. Bay on 8/27/31. In the rear is Sikorsky S-41 NC784Y, serial #1105. The two planes are crossing on the Boston-Halifax route which Pan-Am flew from July until September 1931.

Flying boat services were not limited to the Maine coastline. In 1939, a North American Airways Sikorsky S-38 hit an object in the water and sank on take-off in the waters of Moosehead Lake, located inland near Greenville, Maine. The pilot and all five passengers aboard survived. First published in the April, 2003 *Dirigo Flyer*, the New Hampshire Aviation Historical Society provided this pictorial documentation of the recovery of that flying boat.

The inventor/designer of the Sikorsky flying boats (as well as helicopters and multi-engine airplanes) was Russian-born immigrant Igor I. Sikorsky. His grandson, Igor Sikorsky, III, now lives in Maine, dividing his time between Kittery and Bradford Camps on Munsungun Lake in northern Maine. According to our records, Igor Sikorsky, III, is a MAHS member.

If you wish to learn more about the Sikorsky flying boats, a good spot to visit would be the aviation library at Bradford Camps, or simply head to the camp's website at www.bradfordcamps.com/sikorsky-weekend.html. You can also visit the MAM website at www.maineairmuseum.com to search the *Dirigo Flyer* archive for prior articles on the subject. A Google search on a relevant term will also bring you to the archived *Dirigo Flyer*.



Now Here's an Interesting Weekend!
TWO NIGHT SEMINAR on the THREE CAREERS of
IGOR I. SIKORSKY
 Helicopter, Large Amphibian, and World's First Multi-Engined Aircraft.
 Lecture, Slide Show, Library, Videos, Artifacts — August 18-20 at
The Bradford Camps
 Munsungan Lake, North Maine Woods, T-8, R-10, Maine
 Enjoy the anecdotal history of a leading man of vision by his son and grandson
 and enjoy some great fishing, wildlife and sporting camp hospitality.
 Contact: I.I. Sikorsky winter: 207-439-6364 summer: 207-746-7777
 maine@bradfordcamps.com 100 LL available for float plane pilots

Ad taken from the June 2003 Dirigo Flyer, Vol. XI, No. 6. This year's seminar, on the topic of helicopters, runs July 15, 16, and 17.



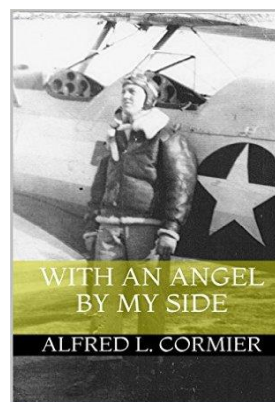
WEAR OUR LOGO

A few years ago we had our logo digitized by Paradise Embroidery. The logo can be embroidered on hats, shirts uniforms, or aprons (as pictured at the left). Visit Paradise Embroidery's web site at: www.paradisecustomembroidery.com and place your order directly with them. Their e-mail address is: paradisecustomemb@tampabay.rr.com. Phone: (727) 735-3753.

Now available on Amazon.com:

WITH AN ANGEL BY MY SIDE

In this revised edition, MAM member, Alfred Cormier, recounts a life of flying by a member of the Greatest Generation. It starts with a boyhood plane ride with Amelia Earhart, recalls 88 combat missions over China, and tells so much more. Available in Kindle or paperback versions at amazon.com, the book has a new format and lower price.



Bill Zoidis

December 14, 1930 – January 16, 2016

Famed restaurateur and honored guest at the August 2, 2014, Maine Air Museum - sponsored reunion for the employees of Pilots Grill in Bangor, Bill Zoidis passed away January 16, 2016. Zoidis-family-owned Pilots Grill was a favorite hangout for troops at Dow Air Force Base, and Bill, known for his charm, knew every customer in the house. The Maine Air Museum features a Pilots Grill exhibit, with three aviation paintings that once hung in that dining establishment, as well as an original menu, and replicas of the place settings. Bill served in the Maine Air National Guard. He was predeceased by his wife, Sally, and survived by three children and numerous grandchildren and great-grandchildren.



All dues expire on June 30th of each year. If joining mid-year, pay \$2.00 for each remaining month

Annual membership includes quarterly newsletters

Mail payment to:

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Bangor, ME 04402-2641

**Maine Aviation Historical Society
Maine Air Museum * Membership Form**

Name: _____

Address: _____

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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*	Newsletter, Lifetime Membership
	*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 enclose 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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