



Dirigo Flyer

Newsletter of the Maine Aviation Historical Society

Volume XXV, No. 4

October - December, 2017

Aviation Enthusiast Extraordinaire by **Dave Bergquist**

Many call themselves "aviation enthusiasts." Few, though, make good on their passion by bringing about or participating in an event that shares their enthusiasm with others. Charles Walker III, or Chase, is one of these individuals; he is extraordinary. But what makes him so special is that he is only 16 years old!

The beach fly-in at Old Orchard Beach this past October 1st, to commemorate the 90th anniversary of Charles Lindbergh's landing there was the inspiration and the result of Chase's passion for aviation. Fourteen private aircraft of different types took part in this historic event. Each aircraft landed on the beach at three-minute intervals that Sunday afternoon under the guidance of a retired air traffic controller who directed the aircraft from their take-off point at the nearby Biddeford Municipal Airport. Interestingly, the first aircraft to land was a restored 1927 biplane, the same year Lindbergh landed here.



Charles (Chase) Walker III at Old Orchard Beach

Chase along with another volunteer acted as air marshals and directed each aircraft to a designated parking spot on the beach. An FAA Investigator was on site to oversee the day's activities. Once all the aircraft were safely parked, five thousand on-lookers had the chance to get up close to look at the planes, talk with the pilots, and have their pictures taken, some within the cockpit itself. Chase and a committee of volunteers secured sponsorships from local businesses. The money raised totaled \$14,000, which went to benefit the Maine chapter of the Make-A-Wish Foundation. Chase called this event "Wings 4 Wishes."

Chase is a sophomore at Old Orchard Beach High School and is president of his class. His interest in giving back to his community began as an eighth grader when he was selected to attend a leadership camp at Camp Kieve in Nobleboro. There, along with 20 others, Chase participated in team building and leadership activities, and began to think of ways he could give back to his community.

Dirigo Flyer

Published quarterly by the
Maine Aviation Historical Society,
a non-profit (501c3) corporation
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

President

Chuck Byrum
charles_byrum9@msn.com

Vice President

Position Open

Treasurer

Joe Quinn
jwquinn@twc.com

Secretary

Deanna Byrum
draw317@aol.com

Directors

Deanna Byrum
draw317@aol.com

Don Finnegan
sparbuoy@myfairpoint.net

Robert Littlefield
rhlittlefield@roadrunner.com

John Miller
vintagewings@cs.com

Pauline Sodermark
pauline32726@gmail.com

Robert Umberger
rusu@maine.rr.com

Matt Watkins
matt.watkins@bangor.com

David Bergquist (Historical Advisor)

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

Since a little lad, Chase always loved things "aviation," and he knew that his hometown had a rich aviation history during the early part of the twentieth century. And he liked the work of the Make-A-Wish Foundation that benefits children with life threatening medical conditions. So, putting an event together that built on his passion while giving back to others came easily to Chase. But having an idea, and a good one at that, is sometimes the easy part. Working to make it happen, many times is another, completely different story!

Chase did have some help along the way. He shared his idea with his eighth grade English teacher, and she liked it. She suggested that Chase talk to her sister, Sharri MacDonald, President of OOB365, a volunteer community group that organizes about 20 events and festivals for the town during the year. Sharri liked Chase's idea but told him to come up with five planes and then "...we would talk." But where do you find at least five pilots who would want to participate? Here Chase began to use some of the leadership skills learned at Camp Kieve. He knew he had to be clear and persuasive in what he wanted to do. He also knew that while he needed to be assertive, he "...couldn't be a tyrant." Using the FFA directory for York County Maine, Chase wrote a letter, made 150 copies, and inserted each one into a hand-written envelope that he sent to area pilots explaining his idea and inviting them to take part.

Initially, responses to Chase's invitation slowly dribbled in, first one, then four; suddenly he was up to 37 pilots who wanted to "fly-in"! Now he could go to Sharri MacDonald with substantial proof of interest. Chase soon learned, though, that while this challenge was behind him, others would soon present themselves. Here again, Chase employed the leadership skills he acquired only one year earlier. He knew he had to be a team player, to work with the local authorities, and to abide by "red tape" regulations to make his fly-in happen. While Sharri shepherded him along the way, Chase had to do some of the tough parts himself. The authorities told him that he could not have more than a limited number of participating aircraft. So, Chase had to winnow down the number of participating aircraft from 37 to 15. He randomly selected the required number, and personally called the remaining pilots to give them the bad news-not an easy task for a then 15-year-old!

The town of Old Orchard Beach, in August, 2017, gave their official approval for the September fly-in. Now Chase was finally ready to go, but one big challenge remained: Maine's weather.

The fly-in was scheduled for Saturday, September 30th. However, the morning dawned cool with temperatures in the low 50s, low clouds, light rain, and a NE wind of over 9 mph; it was less than an ideal flying day! Chase moved the event to the "rain day" of Sunday afternoon, which fortunately was sunny with light westerly winds and temperatures in the mid '60s. When Chase and his volunteers arrived on the beach that Sunday morning in preparation for the day's activities, however, he found another challenge. The beach was littered with quahogs that had washed up on shore on the



designated runway and which could prove to be a nuisance to pilots. Many thought this phenomenon was due to an active hurricane season. Nevertheless, Chase had to think quickly and to find a way to remove the shellfish from the beach. He was able, with learned persuasive powers, to secure the help of the town's DPW personnel and equipment. Chase and other volunteers then pitched the quahogs into the bucket of a front loader until it was full and carted away. Now they were ready for the 90th commemorative Lindbergh fly-in.



When I asked Chase about what advice he could share with others as a result of his fly-in experience, he simply responded: "No matter how busy you are, you can always find time to benefit others by doing something you are passionate about." Now Chase has his sights on a 2018 fly-in to benefit "Honor Flight of Maine." And beyond that, this determined young man aims to become an airline pilot. No doubt he will achieve that! Within ten short years, Chase may be at the controls of a Delta Air Lines 747 that you are in as it wings its way across the Atlantic on your next European vacation!

Over There

Part One of a Three-Part Series Commemorating the Maine WWI Aviator One Hundred Years Ago

Dave Bergquist and Bob Umberger

After days of rain, Wednesday, April 4, 1917, dawned bright, clear, and brisk. It was a perfect day for a parade to make its way through downtown Bangor. Many thousands of men and women from civic, fraternal, and military contingents marched, while many thousands more lined the streets of the Queen City and cheered the participants on. Dubbed "Patriotic Day" by its organizers, this massive event sought to engage citizens in the major happening of the day, The Great War. Cities and towns across the state held similar events, all in response to heightening hostilities between the United States and the German Empire, particularly over the issue of unrestricted submarine warfare. Mainers, with their rich maritime history, readily identified with the rights of ships to sail freely on the world's seas without opposition or restriction.

President Woodrow Wilson in his speech to Congress two days earlier, had called for war against Germany, and pledged to make the world "...safe for democracy." Orators and newspapers of the day elevated the role of the United States to one of sacred obligation to bring justice, equality, and freedom to a war-torn Europe under siege by the autocratic oppression of the empires of Germany and Austria-Hungary. In reality, though, the Great War had been orchestrated through entangling alliances by monarchies related to one another; each sought to increase their country's power, economic and military, over the peoples of Europe. Extreme nationalism and blatant militarism on all sides bolstered the march toward war.

The assassination of Austrian Archduke Franz Ferdinand kicked off the August 1914 war. Citizens within each of the participating capital cities cheered and sang their troops on to a quick and sure victory. Like other previous, old-style European wars, they thought that the battles would be decisive, limited engagements and over by that Christmas.

But the opposing armies soon bogged down on what became known as the Western Front. There, millions of young men on all sides were slaughtered by weapons made perfect by the industrial age. It is into this stalemated melee that the United States entered, naive and ill-prepared after two and one-half years watching the carnage entirely from the sidelines. Congress declared war on the German Empire, April 6, 1917.

Mainers responded quickly and enthusiastically to the call for troops. Many of the more than 35,000 men and woman who went off to war formed National Guard units that became part of the "Yankee Division," commanded by Major General C.R. Edwards. This was the first complete Army division to reach France in September 1917. Others enlisted in the Navy, while a select few sought entrance into the air arm of either of the two military services.



New York Times headline about US entry into WWI



A Curtiss JN-3 during the Mexican Expedition, 1916

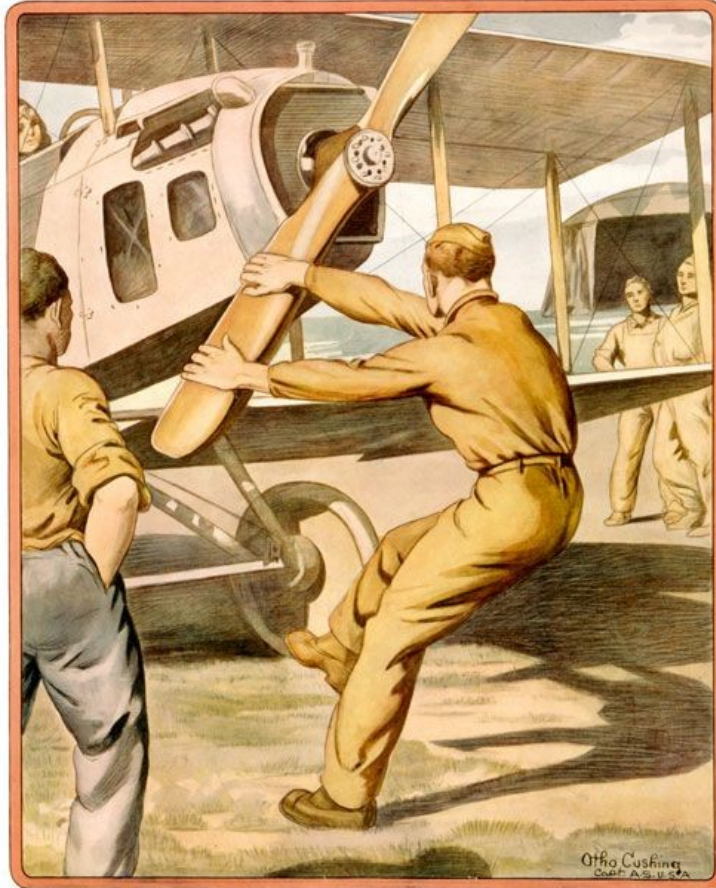
The aircraft, only in existence for 10 years, was a very new invention which was quickly seized on by foreign military planners who now saw it as a potent military weapon. Only mankind could take a new machine intended to expand man's horizons, and adapt it to war. Little was known about the environment of the skies, but they soon learned about the challenges of this dimension of the planet. France invested heavily, followed by Great Britain and then Germany, to unleash the power of aircraft in warfare. The United States, where the motorized aircraft had its origin, lagged behind significantly. Indeed, the War Department was cool to the use of

aircraft in warfare; the employment of a squadron of eight Curtiss JN-3s (the Jenny) during the Mexican Expedition of 1916 only confirmed its suspicions. These aircraft were beset with mechanical problems, and added little value to the Army's search for Pancho Villa. (They never did find him!) When war broke out in April, in 1917, General Pershing summarized the country's military aviation preparedness as "...every American ought to feel mortified ...We could not have put a single squadron in the field." Indeed, early American aviators, once in the battle zones, wrote home to family requesting that they send warm clothing, gloves, and scarfs to help them deal with frigid elements in the air. It took some time for the American supply chain to meet the fighting and protective needs of American flyers.

A number of Maine men wanted to fly in combat. By and large they were adventurous, daring, courageous, and inured to the inherent dangers of flying primitive machines constructed of wood and canvas and sporting unreliable radial or rotary engines. Safety equipment of any sort was unheard of; like buckaroos of the Wild West, they mounted their craft, became airborne, and sought battle. They were invigorated by the idealistic challenge of the hunt, the aerial duel, and the kill. But actual experience over the skies of France showed them that war in the air was gritty and deadly business. Still, they joined others from around the country to comprise the Army's Air Service and the Navy's Flying Corps. They would make their mark in the skies over war-torn Europe.

Part Two, in an upcoming Dirigo Flyer, will tell the story of these early Maine aviators, how they were trained to fly, the combat aircraft they flew, and the battle fronts over which they engaged the enemy.

FOR ACTION



ENLIST IN THE AIR SERVICE

WWI Army Air Service Recruitment Poster, 1917

Points of Interest

It is important to recount some of the key events and facts from this period to get a better perspective of the military build up to the Great War (World War I). As already noted, the United States, where the first motorized aircraft took flight, seriously lagged behind in advancements in airplane design compared to its European counterparts. There, adversaries were quick to embrace the aircraft as a lethal war machine and advancements reached a fevered pace as the continent marched toward certain war. The following points of interest highlight some of the benchmarks on the national and international scene:

- 1909 - French War Ministry orders the Wright Flyer as its backbone for their own domestic designs (1910 - 30 aircraft, 52 pilots)
- 1911 - Great Britain forms its Army Air Battalion with five aircraft
- 1911 - U. S. Army's fleet consists of three aircraft (two Wrights, one Curtiss)
- 1913 - First U.S. tactical unit organized, The 1st Provisional Aero Squadron
- 1914 - Army Signal Corps creates its Aviation Section, with Congressional approval (60 officers/students, 260 enlisted personnel, and six aircraft)
- 1915 - U. S. Navy opens its first "flying school"



MAINE AIR MUSEUM

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

Maine Army National Guard – Bangor

Vintage Wings – Newburg

Snowman Printing – Hamden

Cole Land Transportation Museum – Bangor

Roof Systems of Maine – Bangor

Larson's Locksmithing – Brewer

RainWise INC. Weather Station – Ellsworth

American Name Plate Engraving – Bangor

The Maine Air Museum also thanks the following for their donations:

Ace Camp Bangor

EAA – Biddeford

Greenscape INC. – Landscape for brick pathway

Mary Marois

Roger Chasse

Mike Cornett

Carl Sederquist

John Treworgy

Loretta Krupke

Chuck and Deanna Byrum

Bob Umberger

Don Finnegan

Pauline Sodermark

Bob Littlefield

Matt Watkins



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:

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*	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

DIRIGO FLYER

MAINE AVIATION HISTORICAL SOCIETY

PO BOX 2641

BANGOR, ME 04402-2641