

# *Dirigo Flyer*

Newsletter of the Maine Aviation Historical Society  
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**Volume XVIII No. 3**

**MAY-JUNE 2010**

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In this issue we will try to catch up with a few articles that have been waiting in the wings for some time. It is a busy season, but also a relaxed one, for many of us, busy for the editor, relaxed for many of our members. Summer work, summer visitors, summer vacations, all of these occupy our time during the warm months. We also had a number of photos submitted and the editor will try to fit a number of these into this issue. Sit back and enjoy the following as part of your summer reading.

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## **Bangor International Airport.**

*This article came from the archives of the Maine Air Museum and is part of an address given by James Wallace, the City Manager of Bangor on Nov. 5, 1940. It is interesting to look at the history at a point in time much earlier than what is currently being discussed. Keep in mind the political climate at the time this was presented.*

“Within one short year we have seen one by one, Poland, Finland, Belgium, Holland, Denmark, Norway, and France crushed beneath, or bowed down to an invader’s might. Suddenly this past summer, with the almost unbelievable tragic fall of France, America began to wake up and to realize her own delicate position and to take stock in her own weak defenses and her own incredible unpreparedness.

As a result of this country-wide internal inspection, Bangor with its natural geographical military strategic location began to develop overnight into one of the largest and foremost defense aviation projects in the country today.

The War Department had designated Bangor to be a large Class 4 air base; to be fully equipped with both heavy bombardment and fast pursuit air squadrons and to be the northeastern heavy bombardment air outpost in the United States.

Already, plans are underway by the War Department for the construction at one side of the Bangor airport of a regular little city in itself; barracks, each housing over 200 men, will be shortly erected, also machine shops, hangars, garages, houses, hospitals, commissaries, bake shops, etc. Already contracts are being formulated for a large Federal Housing project comprising 150 units to be constructed by the government on land near the Airport and to be used by some of the married personnel to be stationed at the Airport.

**HISTORY.** The history of the Bangor airport reads like a storybook and is surrounded by an atmosphere of romance but at the same time has run the gamut of pathos – heartaches-disappointments-hard work-hopes-expectations. The romance period being in the late twenties at the time when the airport boom hit Bangor. Stocks were floated and sold for a large intercontinental airport to be located in the neighborhood of the present one with Bangor being the port of call for South America, United States, Canada, Europe, and so on until the bubble burst.

1923. The first real impetus toward a flying field in Bangor occurred in the summer of 1923 when Gen. William Mitchell with an air fleet of 30 ships came to Bangor for air maneuvers. This was the greatest number of planes ever parked at any one time on the Godfrey field and this was before there was any airport there, just a hayfield.

1925. In the fall of 1925 Robert H.W. Lowell of Lincoln, Maine formed the Maine Aerial Service Inc. in which considerable stock was sold on a lease he had just obtained on what was later called Godfrey Field, from E.R. Godfrey. However the Maine Aerial Service didn't flourish long, but soon folded up and faded away.

1930. John Lawrence and others started the New England Air Terminals, Inc. to control 24 airports ranging from Springfield, Mass to Bar Harbor, Maine. They bought 300 acres in Bangor constituting what is now the eastern half of the present Bangor Military Municipal Airport (*remember, this report is written in 1940*). This made quite a splurge but after the summer months sped by and the fall rains came, this outfit also disappeared into the night. The assets of the New England Air Terminals were taken over by the Bangor Airport Trust who after holding them for 10 years sold them to E. R. Godfrey and in turn were taken over by the City of Bangor early this fall (1940) as part of its new military airport.

1931. This year Pan-American Airways came to Bangor. For a few months they furnished magnificent service between Boston and Halifax with Bangor as a port of call but when the government refused to renew their mail contracts they also ceased to function.

1932. As a relief work measure, Cooper Rd. was constructed, as it is today, to furnish a decent roadway into the airport summer or winter.

1933. In August Amelia Earhart inaugurated the start of what is now the present Boston & Maine Airways service from Boston to Bangor and Bangor once again became an air transportation stop.

1934-1935. In 1934 considerable work was done upon the Bangor Airport by the City of Bangor with the aid of the CWA. A large amount of gravel was hauled onto the ten so-called runways with work continuing into 1935.

1936. This year a general agitation was started for a modern airport in Bangor. The City Council appropriated \$30,000 to be used with a \$68,000 Federal Government grant towards the building of such an airport. On May 25<sup>th</sup> work was started on rebuilding two existing runways to a 500-ft width with a 100 ft. blacktop lane in the center and a length of 3,000 ft. for one and 1,950 ft. for the other. This work continued until stopped in the fall of 1937.

Also, a contract for a 51 ft. beacon tower with a revolving flashing beacon, a control building, an illuminated wind indicator, runway range lights, runway boundary lights, obstruction lights, etc. were let that year by the City.

**RADIO BEAM STATION.** To facilitate the landing of planes in foggy weather or in the night, a location for a Radio Beam Station was secured on Outer Union St. near the Hermon-Bangor line in a direct line with the center line of the north and south runway approximately two and 3/4<sup>th</sup> miles from the airport and a half mile from Union St. Work was started clearing a 600-ft. square site which was heavily wooded and erecting four 125-ft. steel radio towers with concrete bases and a brick control house automatically operated by a telephone circuit from the Bangor Municipal Airport. It was placed in operation in May 1937 and has been operated continuously under the direction of a full-time government paid official.

**1940 AGREEMENT.** Engineering work was started in July of this year to develop a large commercial and military airport with the understanding that the City would supply the necessary land and the government would supply the balance of money needed with completion of the whole airport by June 1941.

**PROPOSED AIRPORT:** It will be necessary to have at least three runways, each 4,500 ft. long and that the hard surface will be increased from 100 to 150 ft. The north-south runway shall be extended another 1,500 ft. the east-west runway, one-half mile, and a new third runway extending from the corner of Cooper Rd. and Hammond St. to Fuller Rd. at least 4,500 ft. in length with the City condemning 700 acres of land. This will require 344,000 cubic yards of material equal to a freight train 91 miles long; the laying of 5 1/2 miles of tile pipe, installing a mile of large culverts to enclose the brooks that run under the runways; the installation of 232,000 square yards of black top equal to 13 miles of city streets 30 ft. wide.

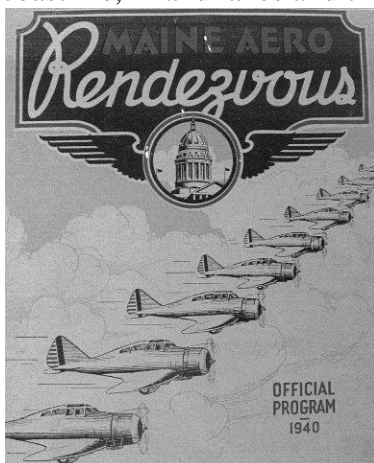
**FACTS.** 1. There will be a payroll of over 1 and 1/2 million dollars spent annually in Bangor by the airport personnel.

2. Buildings for the airport will have concrete foundations.

3. All buildings are good for a minimum life of at least 25 years. Buildings will be built by the government on a contract basis with a 60-day construction limit.
  4. Roads and sidewalks will be on concrete.
  5. Grounds around the buildings will be laid out. Lawns, trees, shrubbery, will be kept scrupulously clean.
  6. At least one steel hangar with a 200-ft. width door will be built, capable of holding at least six big bombers at a time.
  7. Bombers will be parked outdoors.
  8. Parking area for planes will be of concrete with rings imbedded therein to which the planes will be tied down when not in use. In keeping with the lessons learned by Great Britain during the present war, not more than two or three planes will be parked together.
  9. Bangor will have the only heavy bombardment advanced outpost in the northeast. Manchester, NH will have a light bombardment airport.
  10. This makes it better for Bangor as there will be less noise due to the fact that no training ships are scheduled to be stationed here. All pilots assigned to heavy bombardment duty are experienced pilots and only go up on duty. Therefore there will be no planes just flying around. As one of the duties for these bombing planes, all Maine will be photographed from the air.
  11. With a big military airport now a reality, now more than ever does the City of Bangor need a two-way police radio hooking up Old Town, Orono, Brewer, etc. Sabotage can stop telephones, electric power, temporarily but a two way police radio will continue in action.
  12. No student flying, or airships without two-way radios will be allowed at this airport.
  13. A big bombing range is to be located on the airline, a few minutes from the Bangor Airport, as an aerial practice field for the big bombers to be stationed here.
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#### **PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE**

Most of you are aware there was no June Member Meeting so that we could again participate in the Portland Jetport's "Aviation Exposition" for 2010. This year's event was better yet again compared to previous years and has become a major annual aviation attraction. Our hangar display looked top notch and during this two day event we sold well over \$550 worth of donated and gift shop items which greatly helps offset our operating expenses. Without a doubt, the highlight of this year's show was two low altitude - low speed passes by a USAF B-2 Bomber, for sure an infrequent sight for most Mainers! As one might expect, through the years summers in Maine has held many an aviation venue in addition to attracting the seasonal tourist with activities along the coastline, inland lakes and the mountains. Back in 1940, in addition to the activities contained in this issue's



feature story a spectacular event was organized and run by the Maine Aero Rendezvous at the Augusta State Airport. Drawing upon an original "official program" pulled from our museum archives I quote the honorable Fredrick Payne, Augusta's then current Mayor: "It is with real heartfelt enthusiasm we welcome you all to the 4<sup>th</sup> Annual Maine Aero Rendezvous. We are naturally very happy to be credited with having the nation's third largest Aviation Event." This gala three day event attracted a celebrity MC from California's Hollywood Air Aces, daredevil & acrobatic flying performers, ballooning acts and more from the New England States, New York, Kentucky and Ohio, complimented by a few of Maine's own aviation notables. Home State crowd pleasers included Roland Maheux, "mid-air trick flier" from Auburn, Harold Brown, Parachute Champion from Augusta, to name just a couple. The program is filled with advertisers supporting this event, both aviation related and local businesses

hoping for some piece of the action. Some of the aircraft highlighted include a WACO F-2; a newly designed Warner powered clipped-wing Dart able to achieve 250 mph during maneuvers and a 47 foot span gull wing sailplane. Related activities included an aerial parade over the city, concert, a banquet at the Belgrade Inn, clam bake and dance at Island Park on Cobbosseecontee Lake, the latter indicated as a favorite for returning Rendezvous participants. Maine's Piper dealers, located in Bangor, Bath and Waterville had a full page ad for prospective buyers in the market for a new airplane. For only \$616.00 down you could fly home in a new Piper

Coupe, with all the accessories included at “No extra charge”. The accessory list included: brakes and tail wheel, wheel pants, navigation lights and battery, compass, cabin heater, engine muffler, door locks and parking brake...all the creature comforts of the day. Total purchase price of a new Cub in 1940 ..... \$1848.00. Back to the future. Very shortly it will be time to think about heading toward Greenville for the 37<sup>th</sup> Annual International Seaplane Fly-In, another gala aviation event which draws aviators and enthusiasts from all over the country and a few from international locations. In the meantime, there are several more weekends where you can help out at the museum on a Saturday or Sunday and give the same three or four members that have been keeping the doors open a much needed day off. It’s an enjoyable few hours. Please pitch in if you can. In closing, while relaxing during the remaining warm summer days, if you are looking for an easy read about international intrigue and the space program, try MAHS member and author, John D. Davis’ new book, The Kalinvar Tapes. John is also working on a book that will cover early aviation in Maine. You can contact him at [jdavis34@maine.rr.com](mailto:jdavis34@maine.rr.com) regarding how/where to purchase one of his books.

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## Portland Aviation Exposition



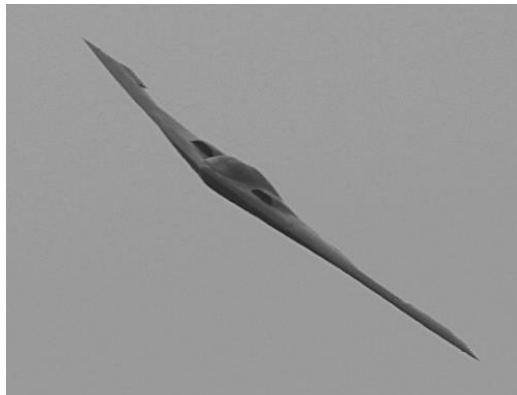
The crew at the MAM-MAHS booth



C-47



An F/A-18A of VFA-204 the River Rattlers out of New Orleans



B-2 making a pass over the show

## Now available:

***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. Exceptionally good reading, riveting to the end." Bill Townsend Teacher-in-Space, STS-51.

*The United States Air Force  
in Maine*



*Progeny of the Cold War  
John C. Garbinski*

### ***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.

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## **Buy a Brick and Support the Maine Air Museum**

The Maine Air Museum is proud to announce the new Memorial Pathway Program. To successfully carry out and reach the museum vision, and to help refurbish Building 98, the Maine Air Museum needs the financial support of businesses and public community leaders and individual private citizens. To this end, the museum board has established a means for receiving your monetary donation and recognizing your gift permanently in the museum pathway and wall of honor. These donations are fully deductible.

Details available on our web site: [www.maineairmuseum.org](http://www.maineairmuseum.org) or from the museum by request.

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## **PASSING**

Another of the finest generation has passed on. Roy Jacobs, 88, of Cotuit, Mass. and Sebastian, Fl. Passed away on 7 July. Born in Calais, Maine in 1922, his father was a well-known customs officer in the border. Roy joined the Army Air Corps and became a pilot during WWII and continued flying in the reserves in Europe, Asia, and the Korean War. He was selected to fly in the presidential pool for President Eisenhower. He flew the first Lockheed Constellation into Otis AF Base and eventually retired at Otis in 1964.

Upon his return to civilian life, Roy became a pilot for Northeast Airlines and Delta Airlines where he retired in 1982. Along with flying he and his wife Kathleen cruised from the Bahamas to Maine on their boat "Layover". He leaves his wife, a son and daughter, and a sister.

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## **Seen:**



**Here is the Maine Air Museum float at the Memorial Day parade in Bangor.**



One of Boeings Dreamlifter aircraft appeared at Bangor International Airport early in July. Only four of these modified 747s were built. It can haul more cargo by volume of any aircraft in the world. It is designed to transport major assemblies of the Boeing 787 Dreamliner from various suppliers around the world to the final assembly plant in Everett, Washington. Weighing in at 803,000 lbs it carries 65,000 cubic feet of cargo at Mach 0.82.



Another "record" aircraft was also at Bangor recently. This Star Alliance airliner is part of the world's largest airline. Founded in 1997 the name represents the five founding airlines, Air Canada, Lufthansa, Scandinavian, Thai International, and United. Today the airline encompasses 28 member airlines and is headquartered in Frankfurt am Main Germany.

The *Dirigo Flyer* is published bimonthly by the Maine Aviation Historical Society, a non-profit (501c3) corporation. P.O. Box 2641, Bangor, Maine 04402-2641.

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#### Association Officers

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Vice President: John Miller, Newburgh, ME [vintagewings@cs.com](mailto:vintagewings@cs.com)

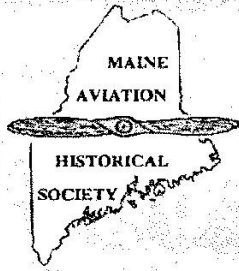
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Treasurer: Joe Quinn, Levant, ME, [jwquinn@midmaine.com](mailto:jwquinn@midmaine.com)

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

44° 48' 2.10" North 68° 48' 36.02" West



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

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

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

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

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

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

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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, Museum Admission,
* 2 annual \$250 payments		

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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