

DIRIGO FLYER

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Newsletter of the Maine Aviation Historical Society
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Wings of the Past: The Curtiss MF Flying Boat

by Neal Strange

In less than a decade after the Wright brothers' historic milestone at Kitty Hawk, the armed services cautiously and with much skepticism pondered the feasibility of "flying machines" as instruments of warfare. After months of controversy and specific criteria demands relating to performance and cost, the Army finally purchased its first aircraft. Designed and constructed by the Wrights and designated "Signal Corps Airplane No. 1," it was delivered to the Army in August 1909.

The Navy Department, equally hesitant to recognize the potential of this new technology but not wishing to be upstaged by the Army, approved moderate funding to explore the value of aircraft as a supplement to naval operations. A contract for the design and manufacture of a "Practical Flying Machine" was granted to the Curtiss Aeroplane and Motor Co., founded by pioneer pilot and designer Glenn Curtiss.

Curtiss delivered the Navy its first aircraft, a seaplane designated A-1, in November 1911. Designed without wheels or landing gear, the A-1 was called a "Flying Boat."

Following acquisition of the A-1, naval aviation slowly began to expand creating a need for additional aircraft suitable for pilot training. (Most of the original Navy pilots were taught at Curtiss flying schools.)

BUY IT FROM THE NAVY



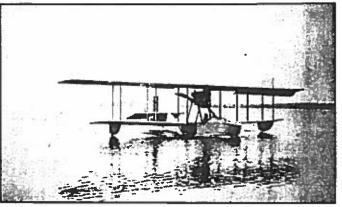
CONTISS IN F FLYING BOAT

The model M F FLYING BOAT is a pusher biplane, built by the Curties Engineering Corporation, Carden City, L. I., N. Y. This best is equipped with a Curties 100-horse power engine and is an improved and modified model F flying best but is the same as far as controls, accommodations, etc., are conserved. For instance, the alterness out the model M F FLYING BOAT are langued to the upper wings instead of being pivoted halfway between the planes as in the model

These boats have sever been removed from the original packing crates and are in excellent condition. The boats may be inspected at the Naval Aircraft Factory, Navy Yard, Philadelphia, Pa.

APPROXIMATE COST OF M F BOAT \$10,000.

SALE PRICE \$2,000.



An MF-Boat as it approached Sebago Lake Station in the mid-1920s. (Standish Historical Society Photo)

Curtiss offered several variations of the A-1 as a training plane but lacking in performance by naval standards, the prototypes were rejected. An improved design identified as the "F" series was later produced by Curtiss. This model, in compliance with Navy specifications, was designated the MF-Boat, "M" standing for "Modernized."

The MF-Boat was accepted and became the mainstay of Navy primary flight training prior to and during World War I. Powered by a Curtiss OXX-3 100 hp V8 motor, the single hull open cockpit biplane seated two in side-by-side configuration. Due to an extensive wing span of 49 ft. 9 in. and hull length of 28 ft. 10 in., the top speed was just 72 mph.

About 145 MF-Boats were procured by the Navy before the Armistice ceased production and, like their Army counterpart, the immortal Curtiss "Jenny," many were declared surplus or obsolete and offered to the general public at bargain prices.

Unlike land planes, a flying boat required considerable and costly maintenance and, being confined to water operation only, it lacked popularity in the civilian market. However, in states endowed with an abundance of lakes and waterways, a few of the phased-out MFs found new homes.

"Flying Boat," continued on page 4

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Monthly meetings are held at 10 a.m. on the second Saturday of each month at various locations.

See calendar for details.

Maine Aviation Historical Society

Monthly Meeting • Saturday, February 8, 2003

MAM Board of Directors February Meeting

The Board of Directors meeting was called to order at 0925 at the Conference Room of the Millinocket Municipal Airport, Peter Noddin presiding. Present were Jim Chichetto, Peter Noddin, Carl Sederquist, Les Shaw, and William Townsend. All doors are now legal relative to opening the museum in the Spring, although there still needs to be some work done.

Museum: The 2003 opening will have a Flag Day theme. Possibilities discussed were a passing of the flag with about ten people dressed in various uniforms representing different military periods.

Aviation Hall of Fame: The Board will nominate a slate of inductees and the membership will vote on four of them for the first selection to the Hall.

Displays and Upgrades: The 42nd Bomb Wing display will not be ready in time for the museum opening. Other displays are to be condensed and refurbished. We will try to feature some of the Pilot's Grill pictures.

Office: Files in the office need to be organized and stored properly.

The Board of Directors meeting was adjourned at 0954 hours.

February Membership Meeting Notes

The February meeting of the Maine Aviation Historical Society was called to order at 1022 hours at the Conference Room of the Millinocket Municipal Airport by President Peter Noddin. There were nine members and guests present. Leo Boyle was not present but reported 164 members current.

Minutes of the January meeting were read and accepted. The web page had 8508 hits in December. There were no figures available for January 2003.

Museum Report. We will open on Flag Day, June 14, 2003. Ceremonies are being planned. A passing of the colors ceremony and the first induction to the Maine Aviation Hall of Fame are being considered. There was a general discussion about the nominating procedure for the Hall of Fame. The 42nd Bomb Wing display panel will not be ready for the opening but should be ready during the summer season.

Volunteer work will be especially important this year. A solid schedule is critical. Thanks were given to Les Shaw for plowing the yard. Thanks were extended to Ed Armstrong for paying for fuel. (It was noted that fuel needs to be ordered again.) Brick sales have been going slowly. Some small donations have come in and memberships, both new and renewed, have also been received.

There will be a hike on April 19th to place a memorial (Lt. Herbert Hawes) on the Chick Hill site of the first F-84B crash in Maine.

The meeting was adjourned at 1112 hours.

William Townsend, Recording Secretary

March Meeting

The March MAHS meeting will be held at the Maine Air Museum in Bangor. The Board of Directors will meet at 9 a.m. The membership meeting will begin at 10 a.m.

The speaker will be John Hatch, a former Air Force Air Traffic Controller at Dow.

He will present a video on the history of Dow AFB and all aircraft flown by the MEANG.

Called to Order

Vice President Les Shaw and new President Peter Noddin call the meeting to order. (Mike Cornett Photo)



MAH5 President's Message, February 2003

This month we are the guests of Tony Cesare and West Branch Aviation LLC at the Millinocket Municipal Airport. I am very thankful to the Cesares for their hospitality in spite of the fact that they are facing the economic crisis that currently grips the Katahdin region.

The decision to move some membership meetings to locations other than the Maine Air Museum this year is part of a strategy to get MAHS back to its roots — preserving and increasing public awareness about our aviation heritage. The intent is to increase membership and participation by seeing more historic locations and hearing more oral histories around our state.

Millinocket Airport is just one of hundreds of such locations in Maine. Born out of the federal government's efforts to increase civil aviation and air commerce around the US. Millinocket Airport has played a role in many "unsung" notes in Maine aviation history. It was to be the fourth Army Air Field in Maine in the pre-WWII planning, but due to budget cuts, was relegated to the status of an upgraded field for emergency and auxiliary use before the US entered the war. Its location in respect to the British Commonwealth Air Training Plan bases in Moncton, Greenwood, Penfield Ridge, New Brunswick and those in Quebec made Millinocket a frequent "safe haven" for aircrews off course or experiencing mechanical problems. The lakes in the area often experienced similar unplanned "visits" from RCAF/RCN float planes and flying boats. Later in the war, Millinocket served as a refueling turnaround point for attack aircraft crews out of Bagotville, Quebec after completing their simulated night low level attacks of dams, logging camps and other "targets" in the north woods. The safe haven tradition continued after the war with frequent emergency landings by military and civilian aircraft.

Millinocket has served as a base of military and Civil Air Patrol operations for many famous air searches in Maine history, including that for Lt. Mervin Hare, who disappeared in June 1950.

A current research project by MAHS members promises to tell the story of float plane pilots trained by flight instructors in this region for intelligence agencies, the possibility of declassification of their missions now just becoming possible.

I cannot talk about the closest airport to my home without sneaking in some aviation archaeology. Lest we ever forget, Millinocket was the location of the first successful double ejection from a Northrup F-89 Scorpion.

As the area struggles for a new economic identity, the airport and the area's aviation heritage are seen as keys to unlocking its economic potential.

As the Maine Aviation Historical Society also struggles with its future identity, we need to stay focused on our main purpose: preservation of history.

The upcoming 2003 opening of the museum, on Flag Day, is our key objective. Many tasks need to be completed to be sure that we are ready. Modest upgrades need to be made to displays. New displays need development and building. Our Volunteer Coordinator needs lots of help filling the schedule so that we can avoid the heroic but exhausting efforts of a few dedicated members in 2002. The physical plant manager has numerous projects that must or should be completed to ensure success.

Our plan is to have a well-publicized opening ceremony with several events related to the American flag and its relationship to American air power, civil aviation, and space exploration. We also intend to induct the first four members into Past-President John Garbinski's dream of a "Maine Aviation Hall of Fame" (see proposed guidelines outlined on page 5) and unveil a single display on military aviation accidents in Maine that includes a "Roll of Honor" containing the names of all military aircrew lost in Maine between 1911 and 1989.

The tragic events of the past month will no doubt increase interest in a Challenger Center in Bangor. I see this as a tremendous opportunity for the museum. Young people will be able to learn about a space program that they are somewhat familiar with and then learn about aviation history that their generation has probably never heard of. Maine's role in WW II, something called the "Cold War," and the fact that yes, there were astronauts from Maine!

In the meantime, we also need to strive to keep interesting articles flowing to Leo for the newsletter, diverse guest speakers at our meetings, and individual research/writing projects by our members. We hope to have the first draft of the "significant eras/events in Maine aviation history" list at next month's meeting, and plan to hold our first hike and crash site memorial dedication in late April.

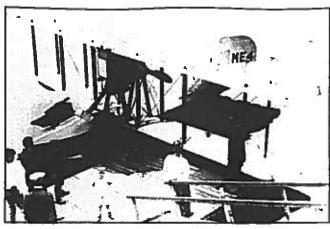
And just in case anyone missed it at last month's meeting, or in the newsletter, this is a hobby and supposed to be fun!

Peter Noddin President "Flying Boat," continued from page 1

Robert A. Lovett, former Lieutenant Commander and Naval aviator during World War I, was a summer resident in Cape Elizabeth, Maine. During the mid-1920s he acquired a surplus MF-Boat which soon became a familiar sight over and around Portland Harbor.

Lovett's friend and associate William (Bill) Alexander, a World War I flight instructor who taught several early "Jenny" pilots to fly at the Stroudwater Flying Field, flew the MF on local barnstorming missions to the islands and beaches in Casco Bay. Alexander was also a frequent summer visitor to Sebago Lake Station on the lower end of Sebago Lake where he would bring the Flying Boat to entice the more adventuresome on a flight "Around the Lake" for \$5.00 a person.

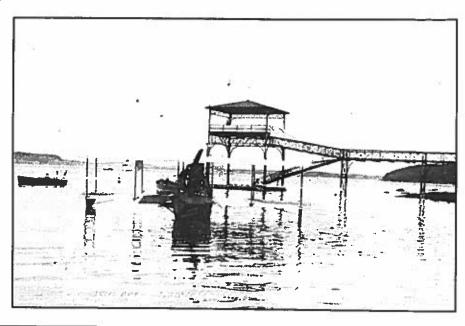
Constructed almost entirely of wood and fabric and constantly exposed to a watery environment, few "Flying Boats" survived beyond the 1930s. However, at least one completely restored MF-Boat remains, preserved for history in the Naval Aviation Museum at Pensacola, Florida.

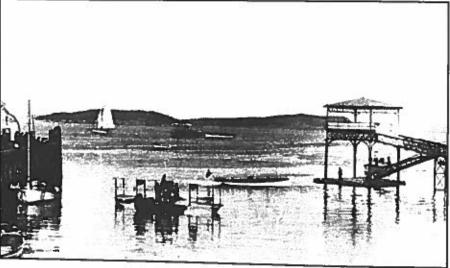


A Curtiss MF Seagull Flying Boat owned by Fred Williams, and flown by him and Harry Jones at Mill Creek Landing, South Portland, in the early 1920s. (Photo via Leo Boyle)

Note: Robert A. Lovett served as Deputy Secretary of Defense under General Marshall during World War II and was later appointed to Secretary of Defense by President Truman. He was awarded the Distinguished Service Medal by the president in September 1945.

Two Views
of a Curtiss MF-2
"Flying Boat"
at the Bar Harbor
Yacht Club
in the early 1920s





Above: A Curtiss F "Flying Boat."
This photo was probably taken about 1926. (Photo: Maine Historic Preservation Commission)

Left: A Curtiss MF-2 "Flying Boat" at Bar Harbor in the early 1920s. (Photo: Bar Harbor Historical Society)

We Welcome. Gerald Adler, Esq.



by Peter Noddin

We are honored to have Gerald Adler Esq. among our newest members. I met Mr. Adler at the 40th Anniversary Memorial Ride at the Greenville B-52 crash site in January. The following Monday, he and his family toured the museum building before flying out to California.

Mr. Adler entered the Air Force immediately after college in 1953. He trained as a navigator and served in KC-97s before being assigned to B-52s. He served with the 42nd BW at Loring until the breakup of the "big wings" in SAC's dispersal program. He moved on to the 99th BW at Westover AFB MA and rose to become a member of one of SAC's elite standardization crews.

On January 24, 1963 he was aboard the B-52C call sign "Frosh 10" practicing low level penetration techniques when a structural failure brought the plane down. He ejected from the EWO position while the plane was in an uncontrollable bank and tumbled through the treetops and snow without separating from his ejection seat.

Stunned and unable to remove his survival kit from the bent seat, he survived the minus-30 degree night wrapped up in his parachute. Frostbite, gangrene and the subsequent amputation of a lower leg resulted in his medical retirement from the Air Force.

He later attended law school and has since lead a successful career in law and city government.

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Media Mentions

- Just out on video, the movie Sweet Home, Alabama features a yellow DeHavilland Beaver floatplane. Although the flying took place in Alabama and Georgia, we have just learned that the pilot of that plane was none other than Max Folsom of Folsom's Flying Service in Greenville, Maine, hired for his familiarity with the Beaver and his reknown as a bush pilot. See the video and see Max fly!
- Another rave review for John Garbinski's The United States Air Force in Maine in the first quarter 2003 American Aviation Historical Society newsletter. Among the reviewer's comments:

"The work is about how that State of Maine was affected during the Cold War from an aviation standpoint. I'll wager here and now that the lads and lassies who served in Maine during the Cold War days will eat it up."

"The author has researched well. His writing flows along. which is an accomplishment in a detail ridden effort. I was pleased to read how Dow and Loring were named. Often, important information such as this is not included."

"John Garbinski's book is one to read."

Guidelines for the MAM Hall of Fame

by Peter Noddin

I propose the following guidelines for the Hall of Fame:

- Individuals shall either be from Maine and contributed significantly to aviation history, or from elsewhere and contributed significantly to Maine's aviation history.
- 2. We will induct four individuals per year. The first four will be inducted at our opening day, June 14, 2003.
- 3. We will have four categories to keep a broad representation of our aviation heritage: Military Aviation; Civil Aviation (commercial and general); Civic Aviation (police, MFS, IFW, CAP); and Aviation Pioneers (all categories of aviation groundbreaking work).
- 4. We will generate a membership ballot with 3-4 choices in each category. Ballots will go out with April newsletter for vote in May.
- 5. Hall of Fame honors will include a portrait with adjacent narrative on museum wall and a plaque for the individual or next of kin. (We should consider an honorary or lifetime membership in MAHS. This may require a bylaw change.)

The Maine Aviation Historical Society's First Book by Member

JOHN C. GARBINSKI

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

8 1/2 x 11 softbound, 134 pages, 151 illustrations Published by the Maine Aviation Historical Society \$20.00 (plus \$3.00 postage and handling)

MAHS Book Order Dept. 101 Monroe Ave., Westbrook, ME 04092-4020

Buy a Brick and Support the Maine Air Museum

The Maine Air Museum is proud to announce the new Memorial Pathway Program. Here's how it works:

To successfully carry out and reach the museum vision, and to refurbish building 98, the Maine Air Museum needs the financial support of business and public community leaders and individual private citizens. Your interest in preserving the rich Maine aviation history will require funding presently not available to the museum effort. To this end, the museum board has established the following contribution plan for receiving your monetary donation and recognizing your gift permanently in the museum pathway and wall of honor. Remember: your donation is fully deductible.

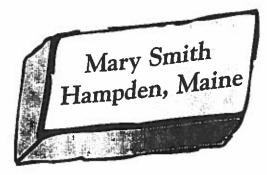
★ Stratocumulus Member — \$100 Donation

Entitles the gift giver to a one-year membership and two-year museum pass and a benefactor's engraved 4"x8"x2.5" red clay brick with up to two lines (14 characters/line, .65" high) of commemorative text in the name of the gift giver or his/her memorial to others. Brick to be installed on the museum grounds, walkway or building facade.

★ Altostratus Member — \$150 Donation

Entitles the gift giver to a two-year membership and three-year museum pass, copy of <u>The United States Air Force in Maine</u>, and a benefactor's engraved 4"x8"x2.5" red clay brick with up to two lines (14 characters/line, .65" high) of commemorative text in the name of the gift giver or his/her memorial to others. Brick to be installed on the museum grounds, walkway or building facade.





See Order Form on Page 7

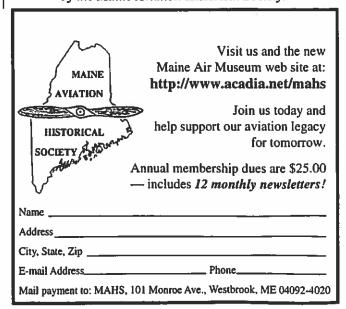
★ Altocumulus Member — \$250 Donation

Entitles the gift giver to a five-year membership and five-year museum pass and a benefactor's engraved 4"x8"x2.5" pearl gray marble brick with up to two lines (14 characters/line, .65" high) of commemorative text in the name of the gift giver or his/her memorial to others. Brick to be installed on the museum grounds, walkway ot building facade.

★ Cirrus Member — \$2500 Donation

Entitles the gift giver to life membership status and a benefactor's engraved three foot white marble setting bench with one line (27 characters/line, 2" high) of commemorative text in the name of the gift giver or his/her memorial to others. Bench to be installed in the museum building or on the museum grounds.

The Maine Air Museum is wholly owned and operated by the Maine Aviation Historical Society.



Upcoming MAHS Meetings

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March 2						
March 8 10 a.m MAHS Meeting, Maine Air Museum, Bangor, Maine. Board Meeting at 9 a.m.						
March 20 1:30 p.m Lecture on Flying Boats by Ian Marshall Chapel, Unitarian Universalist Church, 121 Bucksport Road, Ellsworth, Maine						
April 12 10 a.m MAHS Meeting, TBA						
May 10 10 a.m MAHS Meeting, TBA						
May 25 10 a.m Antique Aeroplane Show, Owls Head Transportation Museum, Owls Head, Maine						
June 8 10 a.m Antique Aeroplane Show, Owls Head Transportation Museum, Owls Head, Maine						
June 14 9 a.m MAHS Meeting, Maine Air Museum, Bangor, Maine						
June 14GRAND OPENING, Maine Air Museum, Bangor, Maine						
July 5-6 10 a.m Antique Aeroplane Show, Owls Head Transportation Museum, Owls Head, Maine						
July 12 10 a.m MAHS Meeting, TBA						
MAHS meeting sites and programs are flexible. Call Les Shaw at 1-877-280-MAHS if you have any ideas or if you can help.						
	Welcome, Ne					
437.	Anthony Cesare P.O. Box 719 Millinocket, ME tcesare@midmaine.co	m 207	722 0401	40 Seavey	Lynne Campbell 's Landing Road igh, ME 04074	207-883-9480
438.	Jerry Adler 1226 Bucknell Drive Davis, CA 95616	ry Adler 26 Bucknell Drive		Send us your e-mail address if you want it listed in the <i>Dirigo</i> Flyer. It's a great way to keep in touch, share information quickly and stay current on aviation issues and happenings.		
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Newsletter, Decal, Museum Admission, 4 Free Passes Newsletter, Decal, Lifetime Membership Number,

Museum Admission, 10 Free Passes

Maine Aviation Historical Society P.O. Box 2641 Bangor, ME 04402

March Meeting

March 8, 2003 10 a.m. Board Meeting 9 a.m. Maine Air Museum Bangor, Maine