



Dirigo Flyer

Newsletter of the Maine Aviation Historical Society



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RARE AND LONG FORGOTTEN PLANE VISITED MAINE

This feature is just one example of the “one-off” stories and material that are hidden away in our museum archives, just waiting to be found and told.

The aircraft in the photo to the right is a “Potez 840,” a three-man crew, French built, four-engine, turboprop monoplane for 18 executive passengers, with a range of 1,865 miles. The date was November 20, 1963, when the plane made a stopover at the Augusta Airport. The aircraft pictured here was the second prototype, which was equipped with more powerful 600 shp Turbomecca powerplants compared to ship number 001 at 440 shp each. The first prototype’s inaugural flight took place during April, 1961.



The stop in Maine was in connection with Potez’s North American demonstration and sales tour, which included their most prospective customer, Turbo Flight, Inc. of Chicago, where they envisioned the sale of 25 aircraft. It’s now unclear and lost to history whether the visit to Maine was also for marketing purposes, or merely a convenient stopover on its USA tour after the hop across the Atlantic.

It is quite obvious that Potez planes are not part of our modern day aircraft lexicon, even though Henry Potez founded his airplane business back in 1919 starting with the refurbishment of WWI war surplus aircraft, moving on to manufacturing a variety of small passenger planes, military reconnaissance aircraft, plus his own line of engines until operations were disrupted by WWII. In postwar years, the company was re-established but never returned to prominence. In fact, the Potez 840 series was the company’s last design, with only eight built, one being for static testing, five designated the 840 model, and finally two 841’s which had newer and more powerful Pratt & Whitney PT6 turboprops.

In summary, Potez failed to attract any European or International buyers, and was forced to shut down in 1967, with company assets acquired by the French firm Sud-Aviation. One can speculate about the many factors that could have spelled doom for this plane, one being market timing, *i.e.*, nearing the end of the still viable and less expensive yet capable piston powered planes in a competitive field, along with several new turbo-jets starting to arrive on the scene. Alas, there is only one remaining Potez 840, which is on display at the air museum in Paris.

Just as a historical side note, the Potez aircraft photo also clearly shows the old Augusta Airport terminal building as well as the former Maine Instrument Flight hangar, both eventual victims of progress. The wooden terminal building was constructed by the WPA during the depression years, actively serving airport passengers until 1967 when the new (current) terminal commenced operations. By the late 1980’s the old terminal was deemed too costly to maintain or preserve, and was subsequently demolished.

In similar fashion, Maine Instrument Flight’s hangar, also a long standing landmark at the airport, came down by the spring of 1998 to make way for a new, more modern building on the same site to accommodate MIF’s flight operations, offices, and hangar space. Several of our membership will recall that we have used MIF’s facility as a central meeting place for winter gatherings in past years. It is also noteworthy that MIF is helping secure Maine’s aviation future by offering, in cooperation with the University of Maine – Augusta, a joint path to a B.S. in Applied Science for graduates of MIF’s Flight Training School. We are thankful to MIF for its generosity and cooperation with MAHS & MAM.

By: Bob Umberger

Sources: MAM archives & Wikipedia

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

The University of Maine-Augusta Awards Its First B.S. Degree in Aviation

On May 14, 2016, the University of Maine at Augusta held its commencement services at the Civic Center in Augusta. Of special note - 22 year-old Mt. Ararat High graduate, Ben Rogers of Topsham, had the distinction of being the FIRST to earn a Bachelor of Science degree in aviation from UMA. Indeed, this may be the first degree of its type from a Maine establishment of higher education, and is thanks to the private-public partnership of UMA with Maine Instrument Flight (MIF), an Augusta flight school, noted by Bob Umberger in the story on page 1 of this edition of the *Flyer*.

During his time in the program, Rogers received FAA certification in private pilot, instrument rating, and commercial pilot, as well as flight instructor certification. He was able to finish first, in just three years, a year ahead of the others entering the inaugural class of the four-year program in the fall of 2013, because he had a year of college credit from Norwich University in Vermont where he had studied mechanical engineering.

Rogers plans to enroll in the Marine Corps' Officer Candidate School this fall, with hopes of flying C-130 tankers or fighter jets.

Below are photos of the Maine Instrument Flight School hangar at the Augusta State Airport as it appeared in 1983 (left), and as it appears in 2016 (right) after the old hangar was demolished and replaced.



SAVE THE DATE!

With the closing of the Brunswick Naval Air Station 5 years ago, a group is putting on a reunion, "BNAS Air Reunion, Saluting 68 years of Aviation Excellence." The date is July 15 - 17, 2016. Donations are being accepted and a commemorative patch will be available for \$10. For events & more info: www.bnasreunion.org

Editor's Note: A truly historic story is worth retelling! The following article was written by Steve Morrison for the Dirigo Flyer nearly twenty years ago, but likely will be new to many of our readers. Here is the story – reprinted in full – from Volume V, No. 12, December 1997.

Rockland's Adopted Air Hero – Stanley Boynton

By Steve Morrison

It was November 9, 1930, and it would have been a typical quiet Sunday afternoon except there was an air of excitement and anticipation which had been building for the past several days. Something was about to happen that would put Rockland, Maine on the map. It was 2:00 p.m. in the afternoon and a large crowd had gathered at the Curtiss-Wright Air Field. By today's standards it was not much of an airport, but in 1930 it was considered one of the best airports in Maine carrying several hundreds of passengers a year to the islands in Penobscot Bay and daily flights to Portland. There was just one runway that ran East/West. On the North side of the runway was a recently constructed hangar.

Flying was still considered somewhat of a novelty but crowds of that size didn't gather on a chilly fall afternoon just to watch airplanes land and take off. They were waiting to celebrate the return of Stanley Boynton from his record breaking trans-continental flight to Los Angeles. Boynton was scheduled to arrive at 2:00 p.m. and he was overdue. It was a little after two when the airport manager Capt. Bill Wincapaw came out of his office and announced that Boynton had been delayed in Rutland, Vermont because of bad weather. His new time of arrival in Rockland was 4:00 p.m. Capt. Wincapaw had talked with Boynton on the telephone and advised him that the weather in Rockland was good and that if he flew directly up the coast he could find his way. But it was up to him whether or not he wanted to take the chance. The announcement caused an exodus and some of the organizers feared there would not be enough people for an adequate reception for such an important occasion. As the afternoon wore on the people dwindled back. By four o'clock an even bigger crowd, estimated to be about 5,000, had gathered. Dusk comes early in November and the race was on. Who would arrive first: Stanley Boynton or darkness? Finally someone shouted and pointed towards the western skies. Off in the distance was the dim, tiny form of an airplane. A roar went up. All eyes were strained toward the Cessna single engine plane as it circled the airport, turned onto final, and touched down in about the same spot it had taken off from six days before. But what a difference a few days can make. With dawn barely breaking only a few people were at the airport to see him off, including his aunt Mrs. Edward Spear, a Rockland resident whom Boynton stayed with when he was in



Rockland. Boynton's mother was a Rockland native but the family now lived in Lexington, Mass. Less than a week ago hardly anyone knew who he was. Now his name was known coast to coast. The media tracked his mishaps and triumphs from the time he took off until he landed back in Rockland.

The field had been roped off and inside of the line were permitted only his relatives, local officials and members of the press. When Boynton climbed out of his plane Capt. Bill Wincapaw, the Airport Manager, presented him with a magnificent bouquet of chrysanthemums. He

expected neither the flowers nor the crowd. He was even more startled when a couple of the local pilots hoisted him onto their shoulders and carried him into the hangar. The crowd, which had been model throughout the informal reception, made way for their returning air hero. Once inside the hangar Boynton was deluged with congratulations. Someone suggested that Boynton should say a few words to the crowd but as soon as he appeared at the door another roar went up. It was difficult for most of the people to see him much less hear him so he climbed a ladder in the hangar and told everyone how happy he was to be back in Rockland.

When the airport reception was over he was whisked away in Capt. Wincapaw's car to the local newspaper where he gave a complete account of his air journey. He arrived in Los Angeles at 4:40 p.m. on Saturday, November 1, 1930. From Rockland, Maine, it had taken him 24 hours, 2 minutes. When word of his flying to Los Angeles in record time reached home the telegrams started pouring in. He later commented that he thought nearly every commercial business in Rockland had sent him their "Best Wishes."

Later he would graphically relate the story of his trip, how he flew blindly for two hours through fog. How he missed the Los Angeles Airport and instead landed at Dyer Airport just outside of L.A. And on his departure from Dyer Airport his engine quit and how he had to struggle with the controls while restarting his engine.

On his return trip leaving from Los Angeles he made Yuma, Arizona in 1 hour and 55 minutes. The flight took him over the San Bernardino Mountains. The scenery impressed him. "I would have given a \$1,000 for the camera" he declared. From Yuma he followed the Imperial Valley. His destination was Phoenix, but he encountered two thunder and lightning storms which threw him off course and he lost his way. He spotted

some railroad tracks below and realized he missed Phoenix and was approaching Tucson. It was getting dark and he needed to set the plane down somewhere. His first approach was a field but it was too narrow. The wings would not clear the trees. Holding a flashlight out of the window and controlling the throttle with the other hand he set the Cessna down in a rough field. Much to his surprise he learned the next morning that he had brought his plane to a stop within 200 feet of a 60 foot drop-off into a gravel pit.

Next day he flew to Mesa, Arizona, where he spent the night with a friend from Lexington who was attending a ranch school. The other students there treated him like a hero. Airports were few and far between in those days. He had to tie his plane down between two cactus plants.

Tuesday, 11/4/30. "I am here with my friend Phil Tower and will stay until I get a good fair wind," he wrote in a night letter to Capt. Wincapaw. "Landing in the dark last night did not hurt the ship as it happened to be a good field. I have the ship tied down near the school and will wire you when I am ready to start East. My total time from Los Angeles was 3 hours 30 minutes." Next day he flew to Phoenix to get some window glass for his plane. He returned that afternoon to Mesa where he spent the night.

Thursday, 11/6/30. He awoke and took stock of his surroundings. It was pretty country all right, but for the first time he was just a bit uneasy. Mountains seemed to be everywhere. One thing was for sure. He would never make the mistake of flying a single engine plane into this area again. He checked the weather and plotted a course for Albuquerque, New Mexico. He would land in St. John just long enough to gas his plane up and then on to Albuquerque. It was an 8 hour and 11 minute trip." I have learned one thing," he later told a friend, "navigation is the key to winning. It's not the fastest plane, but the one that flies the straightest."

Friday, 11/7/30. From the time he left Los Angeles he had been bucking strong headwinds. His average speed was 100 mph but on Friday, when he reached Wichita, he was challenged even more by severe gales. But much to the delight of an important spectator who happened to be at the airport, Boynton made a perfect stalled landing. He stepped out of the Cessna monoplane and was greeted by Clyde M. Cessna, manufacturer of the plane he was flying. Meeting Clyde Cessna wasn't the only fortunate thing that happened to Boynton that day. The wind took a turn for the better. From Wichita to Chicago he had a 55 mph wind in his back and was able to attain speeds of up to 205 mph.

Saturday, 11/8/30. He left Chicago at 11:30 a.m. for Detroit. The 205 mile trip would take him 1 hour and 25 minutes. Topping his tanks off, his next stop would be Rochester, New York, 1 hour and 38 minutes later.

Sunday, 11/9/30. He spent the night in Rochester, leaving the next morning at 11:25 am. "I couldn't see a thing," he would later relate. "It was so murky. All I could see up ahead was mountains which looked so black and fearsome."

Someone suggested to him that he could cut 1 1/2 hours off his trip by ending it in New York, but he insisted on ending the journey where it began and he took off again, heading South for Canajoharie. He was on the ground 55 minutes, just long enough to take on gasoline. The weather was closing in but he wanted to complete his record making journey that day if possible. He set down in Rutland, Vermont on a rough landing strip. After taking on more gasoline he took off again flying West of Ossipee. The weather had worsened and he was navigating now strictly by compass. "It became so bumpy that I thought the plane was coming apart." Again he found himself headed directly into a mountain. He changed his course and followed the valley finally sighting Ossipee Lake and then Sebago Lake. As he turned East he knew he was on his final lap and he began to feel better. As he neared the coast the weather was lifting and he could see ahead for several miles. His spirits soared when he spotted two clouds of smoke dead ahead. They were the smokestacks at the Thomaston Cement Plant, sometimes referred to by local pilots as the poor man's omni. He knew he was within just a few miles of his goal. "Those old stacks looked like the gates of Paradise," he would later say.

He had carried with him four pounds of chocolates and two gallons of water. This was in the event that he was forced down in a remote area. There were no navigational aids like there are on today's airplanes, not even a two-way radio. His actual time in the air on his coast-to-coast trip was 47 hours, bringing his total flying time to 187 hours, just 13 hours short of the coveted transport license.

At a dinner in his honor Boynton was toasted and praised by the Mayor of Rockland. "We are gathered here on a very joyous occasion," he said. "To honor a young man, a hero of the air. Stanley Boynton, through his wonderful achievement in breaking the flight records from ocean to ocean, from East to West and from West to East, has won him the admiration of all people of America, and we here in Rockland feel justly proud of him. His parents belong to an old and highly respected family and he is loved by all of the citizens of this community -and for another reason. He is the product of our own Curtiss-Wright flying field." When the Mayor finally introduced him there was a standing ovation that lasted for nearly five minutes. At the conclusion of the dinner he was presented with a gold watch. Boynton thanked everyone and said he would always wear the watch wherever he flew.

Stanley Boynton had put Rockland, Maine on the map by beating the old trans-continental record by more than three hours. Many of the longtime residents around Rockland still remember the young aviator. As one of the local folks quipped, "Not a bad job for a teenager." Stanley Boynton was 18 years old when he made his record setting journey.

	East to West		West to East	
	Hrs	Min	Hrs	Min
Stanley Boynton	23	56	20	29
Robert Buck	27	40	23	53

A message from the desk of the MAHS President, 2016

The museum will be open from the first weekend in June, 2016 and will close on the last weekend in September, 2016. We have a lot of exciting things going on at the museum this year. We have the new viewing platform, great for taking pictures of aircraft taking off and landing at BIA, so please bring your cameras. The back yard of the museum has picnic tables with tablecloths, so bring a lunch and enjoy the view, and see our weather station. I encourage all members to come to our monthly meetings at the MAM at 10 a.m. on the second Saturday of the month from May to October, and please bring your friends and neighbors to the meeting. You also need to encourage your friends and neighbors to join the MAHS as members to increase our funding for different museum projects and expenses. The MAHS dues are coming due on 06/30/2016, and we hope all would please pay them promptly when they come due. The museum can always use volunteers for working weekends, painting, cleaning up, and sharing any other talents you might have. Please call me at 207-942-4394. We can use information and stories for our newsletter. Please share your ideas, memories, and photos. I wish that you all have a great summer and come see us at the museum. Thank you for taking the time to read your newsletter.

Chuck Byrum, MAHS President

DON'T RAIN ON MY PARADE

By Hank Marois

This story is a minor footnote in Maine's colorful aviation history and it starts half way around the world in 1958 at Yokota Air Base near Tokyo, Japan. 1st Lt Virgil "Scotty" Connor of the 6091 Strategic Reconnaissance Wing had received orders reassigning him to the 70th Bomb Squadron at Loring A.F.B., Maine. A half mile down the Yokota flight line, 1st Lt Henry "Hank" Marois of the 11th Tactical Reconnaissance Squadron received his orders to the 69th Bomb Squadron, also at Loring A.F.B. Both were Electronic Warfare Officers who had completed tours of duty flying electronic reconnaissance in the Far East.

After each had arrived at Loring and completed Combat Crew Training at Castle A.F.B., they were assigned to B-52 crews. Shortly thereafter, their pasts from Yokota caught up with them. Each had been awarded medals for "meritorious achievement while participating in aerial flights". These events for Scotty and me occurred on highly classified missions, and no specifics could be cited.

The Wing Commander made the decision to schedule a formal parade and awards ceremony in the huge "Arch Hangar." Arrangements were made, and the Base Flight C-123 flew in an Army marching band. Several other award

recipients were rounded up who were to receive awards, but Scotty and Hank were the co-stars of the event. On the day of the parade, Hank Marois and his crew, S-02, were on Ground Alert duty in the "Mole Hole." Strategic Air Command regulations only permitted one substitute on an alert crew and the Aircraft Commander, Clifford McCathron, was away at "Squadron Officers School" and was substituted for on the crew. Hank Marois could not be relieved, and would miss the parade! Desperate calls were made up the chain of command and the Chief of Staff of Eighth Air Force gave permission for Marois to be relieved from Alert Duty for 24 hours to attend the parade.

Mary's family had all come up from Bar Harbor to attend the events and a wonderful time was had by all. The aftermath of the event was that Scotty and I were bombarded with questions about the missions but could never discuss any of it with our fellow B-52 crew members.

One of the medals I was awarded is framed and is on display in our camp in Trenton. An ironic twist to this story is that my old RB-66 reconnaissance crew was lost on the very next "routine training mission" they flew out of Yokota A.B. after my departure to Loring.

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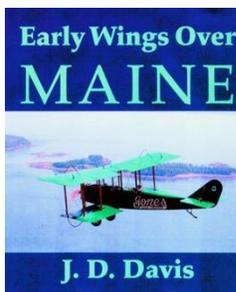
WITH AN ANGEL BY MY SIDE



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.

Also available in the Museum gift shop for \$16.00. If ordering by mail, please add \$4.00 for shipping and send check, payable to MAHS, to MAHS, PO Box 2641, Bangor, ME 04402-2641.

CORRECTION CORNER: The spoof on page 2 of the January – March, 2016 edition of the *Dirigo Flyer* poked fun at the secrecy surrounding the restoration of the Super Star Constellation at the Auburn-Lewiston Airport, and even questioned whether what was going on behind the security fence and closed hangar doors was indeed a restoration, or something more nefarious. Since then, those suspicions have been laid to rest by an article in the Lewiston-Auburn Sun Journal with a headline reading “Super Star Coming Together in Auburn.” According to the article, progress is being made, but no specific completion date is given. The article states that since the plane will be used commercially, the plane must contain modern avionics and safety measures. In case of emergency, passengers would be evacuated down inflatable slides instead of using rope like in the old days. The cockpit will look nothing like it did in the original aircraft. Computer screens and modern flight controls will replace dials and switches. Below is a photo depicting the Lockheed L-1649A as it looked when it was built for TWA.



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Maine Air Museum

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DIRIGO FLYER

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