



Dirigo Flyer

Newsletter of the Maine Aviation Historical Society



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A Lone Visitor

by David Bergquist

A long lone silvery aircraft with a wing span of nearly a football field lumbered over the city on its approach to Dow Field. Bangoreans were used to seeing multiple bombers flying to and fro over their city during the war years. But the war was over now, although only by a few months, and the local skies had quieted down. This plane, however, was different than any they had seen before; it was a Boeing B-29 Superfortress.



The Lone Visitor at Dow Field, December 8-10, 1945

Major David Adams, Airplane Commander, was at the controls of the monstrous aircraft as it touched down. Major Adams grew up on South Main Street in Brewer, and was a veteran of the 19th Bombardment Group and the 43rd Bombardment Group, the latter stationed at Dow Field in the fall of 1941. After Pearl Harbor, the 43rd Group shipped to the South Pacific. Now, Saturday, December 8th, 1945, Major Adams returned home as part of a Dow Field open house to show the public the most technically advanced and latest American bomber, and to give a demonstration of its flying capability.

Most "Mainers" knew about the B-29 as they followed stories in the local media about the bombing raids of the Japanese mainland. They especially knew that it was this type of aircraft that had dropped the atomic bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki, a fact which helped to bring the Second World War to a resounding close. Little did they know that two winters before, several B-29s had flown high over Bangor and Brewer on their way eastward to their destination in India and later to China. President Roosevelt, anxious to commence bombing Japanese-held territory in the far east, spurred on these early flights; a westward route over

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

HAPPENING AT THE MUSEUM

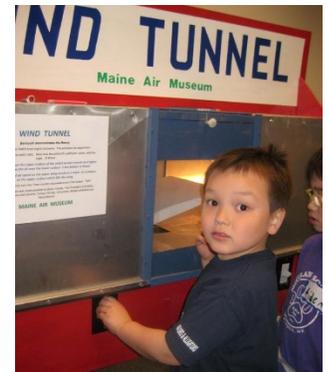


Thanks to Bob Umberger, the museum has beautifully restored lettering that can be seen from the runway

Bob Littlefield created a new, inviting sign to entice visitors to the Museum



Teddy Bear sports a new B-52 pilot's helmet (1960 vintage)



Children using Museum's STEM demonstration on loan to the Challenger Center for the winter

(continued from page 1)

the Pacific was still not possible, as crucial island stopping points over the vast reaches of the Pacific Ocean were still under Japanese control. FDR also had other reasons to get the B-29 into the war. At the Cairo Conference, he promised America's Chinese ally that the US would actively attack Japanese-held installations in Southeast Asia. The development of the B-29 was also the most costly governmental defense program of the war, outspending the Manhattan Project by one-half billion dollars. It was time to put the B-29 to work!



The B-29 Greenhouse

The B-29 was a modern marvel. The long tubular-like fuselage was capped by a greenhouse that gave the air warriors inside the flight deck unparalleled vision. The aircraft incorporated many technological advances: the crew areas were pressurized; a computerized gun control system centrally directed defensive firepower; the latest radar systems helped to accurately locate targets; a huge instrument panel under the constant monitoring by a flight engineer gathered together numerous sophisticated electrical gauges and mechanical controls crucial to maintaining flight; and, four massive radial engines that each eked out one horsepower per pound of engine weight. All these advances sought to achieve mission success and crew safety. Still, World War II was dangerous business and too many of these behemoth craft were lost in the skies over Imperial Japan or over the almost interminable open water to and from the enemy's home islands.

Several thousand area residents braved the raw and rainy weather that Saturday afternoon to view this celebrated aircraft. On Sunday, the war decorated Major Adams demonstrated the craft's flying ability as he zoomed about Dow Field; he thrilled the crowd of onlookers as he appeared to skim the roof tops of downtown buildings at speeds in excess of 300 miles per hour. For Edgar and Bertha Keith of Norway Road, Bangor, this viewing must have been bittersweet. While proud of their country's WWII military victory in a global war against two hardened enemies, the Keiths also knew somewhat of the B-29 from what their only son, Austin, told them in censored wartime letters; he was a B-29 Airplane Commander, an AAF moniker for pilot. Austin and his crew were killed the previous February as they made their way toward Tokyo on a bombing mission. The Keiths were among hundreds of area families who lost a loved-one in World War II; their lives were forever altered by their patriotic and personal sacrifice.

Major Adams and 10 other crew members made their way back to MacDill Field in Florida on Monday. No doubt their visit was talked about among locals for many days thereafter.



1st Lt. Ethel Jameson, Chief Nurse at Dow Field inside the cockpit



Flight Crew and Dow Field Personnel. Major Adams (wearing his parachute) is the fifth person front row from the left.

In Memory of Curtis Goodwin (Lt., USNR)

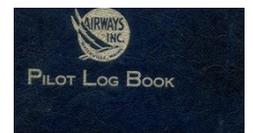
By Bob Umberger

The story of former Maine aviator Curtis Goodwin comes to us from the Goodwin family by way of his daughter, Elaine Goodwin Baker, and son, Robert Goodwin, with accounts of their Dad's early civil aircraft and then WWII period experiences. It started in Rockland which, by the way, had a notable flurry of airplane activity in and around the city in the 1930's, with Curtiss - Wright Flying Service having operations at the airfield close to downtown including brief periods of commercial passenger service during the summer months, plus occasional newsworthy flights like that of a Lindbergh rival Clarence Chamberlin with his twin-engine 12 - 15 passenger Curtiss Condor in 1936. Also, Rockland's Yacht Club dock was a frequent spot for a variety of seaplane arrivals and departures.



We can only surmise that all of this early airplane activity may have planted the seed in a young Curtis, for not long thereafter he apparently got the desire to become a pilot. More precisely, in his own words from a transcript preserved by the family, Curtis described the event as follows: "He worked for the Rockland Division of the Cushman Baking Company (headquartered in Portland) with his territory covering the coast from Damariscotta up to Blue Hill. Because of the pressures of the job he found himself working seven days a week and at times putting in sixteen hour days." When he did get a break away from his high-pressure position he was looking for a relaxing "get away," and by July 1940 he chose to try his hand at flying. By chance, Curtis became acquainted with Charles Treat who, according to Curtis, was a WWI era aircraft mechanic who went on to hold a commercial pilot's license (with the distinction of holding the No. 3 certificate issued by the State of Maine). Curtis logged his first flight in a Taylor Cub; six months later he made his first solo flight in a J-3 Cub. Around that time Charles Treat was a little low on funds and didn't have an airplane, so another fellow by the name of Junior Brown and Curtis were in agreement that each would be able to obtain a private pilot's license if they financed an airplane for Charles. They figured by the time they had their licenses, they would become the owners of the airplane. "Junior and I bought a J-3 Cub with a 55 horsepower Franklin engine, for \$1000 in Waterville. Shortly thereafter, Junior and I both received our private pilot's licenses and then turned over the ownership of the airplane to Charles. I must say this for Charles Treat, he was one of the best instructors that anyone could ask for, and many of the people he taught to fly later went on to fly in WWII." Another man by the name of Hugo Letterman, also from Rockland, got to be a very good friend according to Curtis, and they flew to many places together, barnstorming or hopping from place to place giving rides to passengers. According to family, Curtis also made flights to pick up or deliver lobsters for the Rockland based McLoon Lobster Co., and on occasion, he would fly duck hunters to some island locations around Penobscot Bay.

Curtis's Flight Log Book provides us first hand insight into his activities as an accomplished private pilot with flying experience after 1941, in a variety of popular civil aircraft including:



Aeronca, Fleet, Piper J3 and J5 Cubs, as well as a Porterfield 35 Flyabout. Of interest, other family documents show Curtis in fact owned the Flyabout, a well-built two-place plane manufactured in Kansas, but rare in numbers with only 250 produced. *(The company was a victim of the WWII ban on light aircraft production for civilian sales or use and never received any military contracts to sustain itself through the war).*



We'll come back to the Porterfield Flyabout . . .

With the USA then fully engaged in WWII, Curtis entered the U.S. Navy's Civilian Pilot Training Program (CPT) in 1942 and was sent to Bloomsburg State College, PA, where after 6 months he received the necessary training to qualify as a naval pilot, logging time in Fleet and Waco aircraft. Additional training took him to Dallas for advanced instruction, then on to New Orleans where he received his "wings" and was assigned to NAS Grosse Isle, MI. Within six months, it was back to Dallas for advanced training on heavy aircraft, followed by a transfer to Jacksonville as a test pilot and officer in the Structures Division which was responsible for planes either crash landed or ones severely worn out, thereby needing extensive repairs before they could return to action.

After about a year and perhaps to his surprise, Curtis was assigned to NAS Brunswick, where he became a "Station Pilot." In his words, "Anybody that wanted to go anywhere was assigned a Station Pilot to take them." Curtis, as well as his young family, remained at Brunswick until April 1946, when he was placed on inactive duty status. In all, his Naval service involved becoming fully qualified with, and conducting flights in, a wide variety of USN aircraft; those listed in his log include: primary and advanced trainers, N2S, N3N, SNJ, SNV2, Fleet's, Waco's, Grumman amphibians, J4F2, JRB-4, and the Douglas C-47 transport.

Like so many other veterans at the war's end, Curtis turned his attention to home and getting his civilian career back on track. Concentrating on family and developing his own retail business left no room for the pastime of flying or owning another plane. Even though the last flight he logged occurred in May 1947, his aviation experiences remained with him throughout his life. Besides frequenting the nearby airports in Sanford and Rochester, NH, he especially enjoyed the airshows held at NAS Brunswick after being based there until he got out of the service.

For family and his close friends, his stories were a joy to listen to and almost as good as being by his side when they occurred. Here are a couple examples:

Curtis liked to make bets he could "fly backwards." After taking off in a strong head-wind he would throttle back the plane's engine and allow the plane to drift backwards down the airfield, something that would be frowned on in today's more restrictive environment.

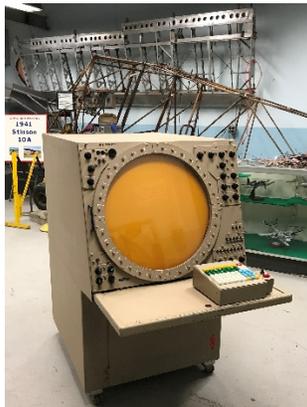
From his Navy experience, he would tell of introducing a requirement that a mechanic had to go with the pilot after performing maintenance on the aircraft. This came about after an incident with a faulty repair that allowed oil to leak into the magnetos, resulting in the engine misfiring. Fortunately, he limped back to BNAS, not happy and, as one can imagine, immediately demanded the procedural change.

Curtis passed away in 2008. We are pleased to be able to share his story with our readership. His aviation experiences are cherished memories for the Goodwin family, and all should be proud of his contributions to Maine's Aviation Heritage. Thanks to the family for the preservation of so many details. Much of Curtis's memorabilia now resides in the personal collection of MAHS vice president and director, John Miller, Vintage Wings.

Footnote: Oh, and about Curtis's Porterfield Flyabout, - in June, 1944, while stationed in Michigan at NAS Grosse Isle, Curtis received a letter and offer to sell the plane which had been sitting idle back in Maine. The letter was from Mary Gallant, Secretary of the Maine Aeronautics Commission, whereby she informed Curtis that four men that worked in the Presque Isle Airport Control Tower were interested in buying the plane, and were willing to pay \$350.00 cash (equivalent to \$4,856.00 in today's dollars). During war, and for a number of reasons we can all understand, the deal was made and the Flyabout moved to a new home, but still in Maine. It's future or eventual fate beyond that date is not known. As noted earlier, the Porterfield was quite rare in its day, and is even more so today.

Just arrived at the Museum

What is it? (See next newsletter)



Another “Flying Boat” Company Coming to Maine



The Finnish Company, Atol, has just announced they have chosen Brunswick Landing (former NAS base) as the site for building and distribution of their high-performance aircraft (source BDN / CBS News).

As you may recall, about a year ago the Minnesota company, MVP Aero,¹ also announced they would be coming to Brunswick for the development and testing of their Amphibious Aircraft. If they haven’t backed out, these two companies will be on the same field, both offering similar aircraft with folding wings and other distinctive features.

Bob Umberger

COMING SOON!

Airing July 9, 2017, on the History Channel: A special on the disappearance of Amelia Earhart!

As you may recall, the Museum has an Amelia Earhart exhibit commemorating her 1934, three-day visit to Maine where she and another pilot provided brief hops to 600 local Maine women in Bangor, Waterville, and Augusta.

¹ See *Dirigo Flyer*, Volume XXIV, No. 1 (January – March 2016)

BOOKS AVAILABLE AT THE MUSEUM AND BY MAIL

Did you know that the museum gift shop has four great books written by MAHS members? We would love to have you come to the museum and browse through the books before buying – OR – you can purchase the books by sending your check to MAHS, PO Box 2641, Bangor, ME 04402. Prices quoted include state sales tax.

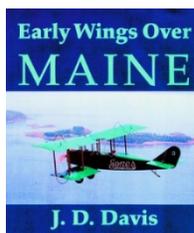
Now also available on Amazon.com:

WITH AN ANGEL BY MY SIDE



In this revised edition, MAM member, Alfred Cormier, recounts a lifetime 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.

Available through the museum for \$16.00. (plus \$4.00 postage and handling).



Early wings over Maine by John Davis

Price \$24.95

Shipping \$4.00

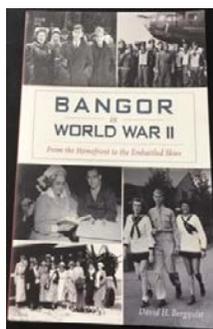
In stock and ready for delivery

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.

\$5.00 (plus \$4.00 postage and handling).



David Bergquist has written an historic novel describing the strategic importance of the Bangor, Maine area as the nation braced for entry into World War II.

\$18.00 (plus \$4.00 postage and handling).



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

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

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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
	*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

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