

Following ten years of procrastination and apathy, the Town of Framingham, in October, saw plans being finalized which could lead to establishment of a first rate municipal airport with help assured from the Federal Government. The newly formed Airport Development Committee, comprised of various members of the Town Airport Committee, Chamber of Commerce Aviation Committee and other town and airport officials were, for the first time, taking decisive steps toward their long-anticipated goal. Incorporated in the plans were proposed methods for procurement of land from the adjoining State Reformatory, plus relocation of Western Avenue in order that runways might be extended to lengths of 3500 feet. Captain E. Fletcher Ingals, representing the CAA, suggested that land be made available for Class 3 or 3500 foot runways but that for the time being, Class 2 or 2500 foot runways be constructed. The Selectmen received a prompt reply to their request for a W.P.A. survey team to be stationed at the field for design of the required airport and a group under Leroy Henderson were soon at work.

Two Army Air Corps planes, a Northrop A-17 and a North American BT-9 on October 7th gathered a crown at the airport as they circled in formation prior to landing. Flying the ships were Lieutenants John Mullen, son of Mr. and Mrs. John Mullen of Barber Road, W.H. Sandell and J.A. Crehan, officers in the 1st Bombing Squadron at Mitchel Field, Long Island.

The first CPTP Class had, by November neared graduation, the ten original candidates all having soloed successfully. A second group was chosen to start its training, however certain amendments had been made to the rules - one of the modifications being the requirement of a pledge from the student that he would enter military service on the completion of the training period. The program continued through 1941 at an accelerated pace.

Two Framingham young men escaped with injuries when their plane, a Taylor Cub, crashed on December 26th while the pair was attempting to return to Framingham Airport from Albany, New York where they had visited over the holidays. Ralph Furbush, who was piloting the plane owned by Ray Brooks, received minor injuries, however Brooks, nephew of Arthur Raymond Brooks, sustained serious ones. Fog, which had reduced visibility, made a forced landing on the Green Hill Golf Course in Worcester necessary, resulting in the crash.

1941 went into the record books for Bay State Flying Service as rather successful considering that effects of the long depression were still being felt in many quarters. In an attempt to earn a living doing what he knew best, Captain Ray Loomis was, in September, barnstorming the area in a 12 year old Ford tri-motor. An ad in the News stated that it was possible to fly with the Captain for only 35 cents. Of course the flight had to be made between 2:00 and 2:20 P.M. on Saturday or Monday, but even the highest fare on Loomis' escalating scale was but 75 cents on these days and \$1.00 on Sunday. Loomis was a former air mail pilot, a graduate of the U.S. Army College of Military Aeronautics at San Antonio, Texas and had been flying since 1922. At the conclusion of his barnstorming tour he was scheduled to report to Fort Benning, Georgia, both the Captain and his plane which bore a sign proclaiming "U.S. Government says this plane and pilot O.K.", having been leased for the purpose of training paratroopers.

December 7th, 1941 altered the course of Framingham aviation as drastically as it affected the rest of the world. Put aside were the development plans and pleasure flying was a thing of the past. Located, for some obscure reason, at the airport was the Framingham Observation Post, headed by Chief Observer Clarence R. Halloran, which was on duty 24 hours a day spotting planes for the Army Interceptor Command. Manned at the outset by members of James J. McGrath Post of the American Legion, Halloran and Deputy Chief Observer, Raymond W. Flood soon called for volunteers to augment the group.

Five days following the Pearl Harbor attack, Airport Manager LaCroix received emergency rules laid down by the Civil Aeronautics Authority from State Director of Aeronautics, John W. Lasell. These directives required strict adherence to orders by the 1st Interceptor Command and, transmitted by the State Police, were posted on Framingham Airport's bulletin board. They read as follows: "In conjunction with the Civil Aeronautics Authority all local flying must be confined to a ten mile radius of the base of operation which must be an established landing area. Aircraft owners are responsible for constantly maintaining exact conformity with this limitation regardless of the measure necessary for strict compliance. All cross country flights must conform to a flight plan which has been approved by airway traffic control and the 1st Interceptor Command prior to takeoff. This means cross country flights need not be asked for unless for urgent reasons. Flight plans shall be submitted through CAA communication stations or by telephone direct to any airway traffic control center. On all cross country flights, designated civil airways must be followed wherever possible. If the points of departure or arrival are on airways, flights must proceed directly on such airways. If points of departure or arrival are not on airways, flights must proceed on shortest line to the closest airway or from such airways". And so the squeeze on civilian flying began, a squeeze which tightened more and more until August, 1942 when a coastal flying ban was put into effect which stopped all operations of any civilian airport located within 25 miles from the seacoast. Unfortunately this included Framingham Airport and its neighbor, Marlboro. Co-inciding with the coastal flying ban was the termination of Bay State Flying Service operations.

During the summer of 1944 plans for the post-war period were being formulated by many, due to the growing tide toward victory by the Allies. In Framingham, Chairman William Byrnes of the Chamber of Commerce Aviation Committee said that Framingham would share in the Civil Aeronautics Authority recommendation of \$30,000,000 for building 36 new airports and improving 10 in Massachusetts. Shortly after this announcement, All American Aviation, Inc., applied for a franchise to provide direct air service to Framingham as an intermediate stop on its proposed New York to Boston route. Although this plan never materialized, the airline in question prospered and became well known as Allegheny Airlines.

In September, 1944, the flying ban strip was narrowed, enabling many of the closed airports to re-open, including Framingham. Once again the Jennings Brothers set up business at the field, student instruction being the approved activity. Managing the operation was Bob Carlson. Instructors included Morris Polen, Mort Brown, Buzzy Bussell and Stan Krupinski. Mechanical work was handled by Don Howard. Jennings Brothers attained the distinction of being the last operators of Framingham Airport, their tenure continuing until the early months of 1946. At that time Teddy Gould closed a deal with General Motors Corporation for the land on which the airport was located and by May Construction had been started on the assembly plant which now occupies the spot. Gone was the sound of airplane engines, the sigh of wires as the ships made their approaches to the field. Gone was an era which would have departed even though the airport hadn't, for the day of the distinctive open cockpit was over, to be revived only on a limited basis years later as a sport flying hobby. One link with the past however stands today just off Aaron Street in the town. Moved approximately 1/8 of a mile from its original location, the Gould Farmhouse, now shingled in place of the white clapboards, serves as an apartment house.

There have been numerous efforts aimed at re-establishing an airport in Framingham since 1946 however all such attempts have met with failure. The latest proposal in 1966 was for enlargement and regionalizing of the present Marlboro Airport but all discussion concerning the subject ended many moons ago.

In conclusion the writer wishes to thank those who helped in any way with this compilation and our special thanks to: The Framingham News (now South Middlesex News), Ray Callahan, Charles Ayers, Ray Desmarais, John DeMarie, Don LaCouture, Clarence Chamberlin, Herbert G. Fales, Ira Ward, Thomas Cuddy II, Everett and Lew Kimball, Stan Orzeck, Harvey Balcom, Ray Pariseau, Joan Rousseau and last but certainly not least, Ken Fletcher who was active at Framingham Airport from 1931 until he went into the service in 1942 and, after the war, became director of public relations for Trans World Airlines in New York.

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