

EARLY LANGLEY FIELD AIRCRAFT

The story of Langley Field, Virginia was published in the JOURNAL, Vol 10, No 1, covering its history from 1917 through 1945. This history saw the U. S. Army begin active operations at Langley in the late spring of 1917, but unfortunately there was not then, and there is not now, a great deal of information in existence on the aircraft and happenings at the field during the years of World War I. However, in the time that has passed since publication, the author, MSgt Merle Olmsted, USAF (Ret), has unearthed some photos that give a broader view into the activities occurring during those years. Seven of these photos are reproduced on the following two pages.

A main point of interest stemming from these photos concerns the degree of experimentation that went on at Langley in the 1917-1919 era. All of the histories of the field state that Langley was to be built as the national experimental aviation station, but they go on to say that because of the slowness of construction both the Army and Navy went elsewhere to carry on experimental

work. The photos here, though, indicate that a considerable amount of experimental work was done at Langley Field.

The first photo, top of the page opposite, shows one of two Albree Scouts (serial numbers 116 and 117) on the line at Langley in August of 1917. Of interest in the background is the little-known Heinrich Victor Scout. The next two photos show the first of four Curtiss S-3 Triplanes and the crash of one Triplane at Langley Field in April of 1918. The photo at the bottom of the page shows one of a number of foreign-built aircraft in national markings that were at Langley--the base supply building is visible in the background of this photo. The following page shows a Voisin and a Macchi Seaplane at Langley, in 1917 and November 1917 respectively. The final photo shows the rare and mammoth Johns Multiplane at Langley Field in 1919. As far as is known, it never flew.

(Editor's Note: Sincerest thanks go to Merle Olmsted for making this photo coverage available.)



Albee Scout

National Archives 111-SC-1311



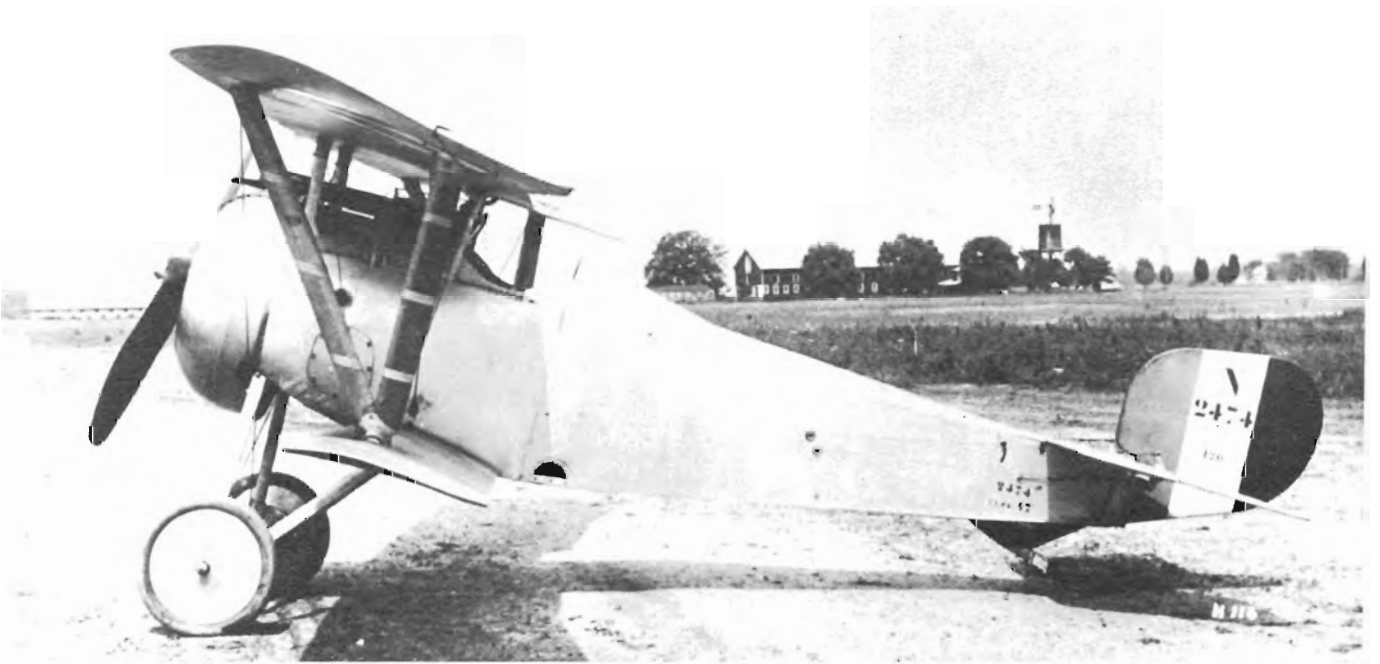
Curtiss S-3

National Archives 111-SC-3332



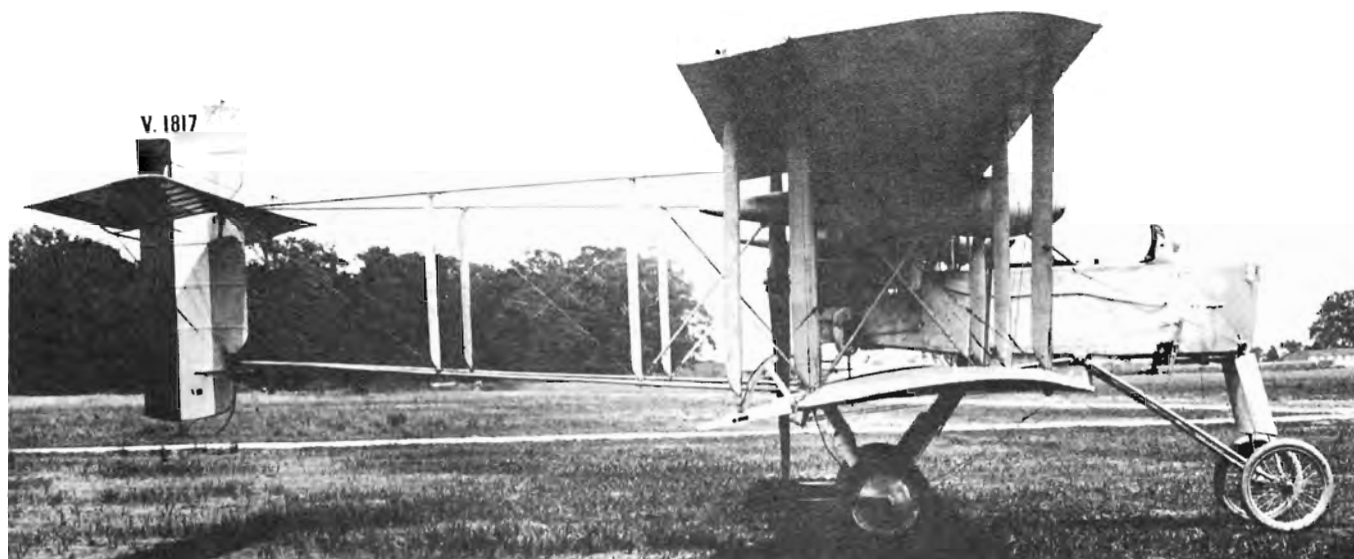
Curtiss S-3

National Archives 111-SC-54215



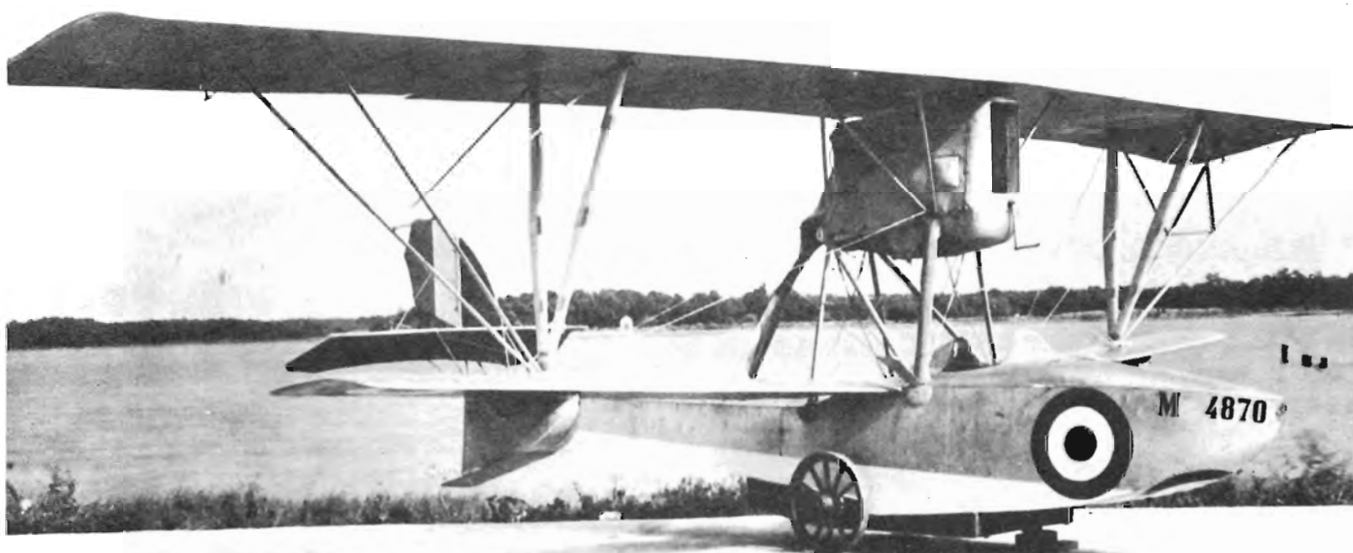
Nieuport 17

National Archives 111-SC-3288



Voisin

National Archives 111-SC-3288



Above--Macchi Seaplane

National Archives 111-SC-1278

Below--Johns Multiplane

Robert Cavanagh

