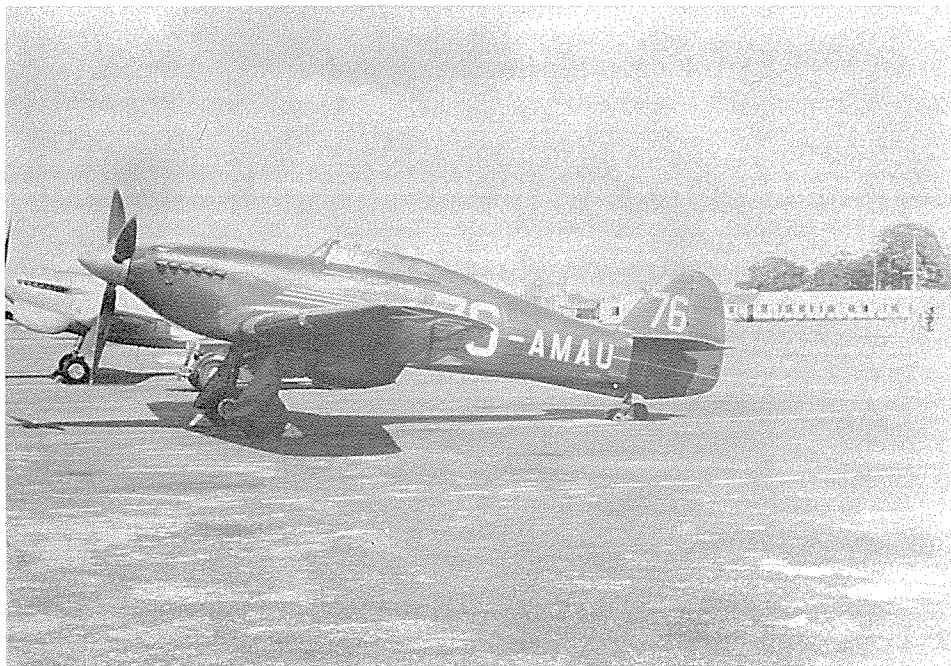


BATTLE OF BRITAIN MEMENTOS

By ROGER F. BESECKER



Twenty years ago a mere handful of men and their magnificent aircraft stood between England and defeat. All can be grateful that these heroic men and their machines were there at that crucial time. Most reports indicate there were a little over 600 fighters available in this darkest of hours.

Today there are less than 60 "Spitfires" remaining in England, and only a half dozen or so "Hurricanes" are left. Official apathy even now threatens to make this number much less. The number of air-worthy relics must be less than six and most of the

warriors are set up as permanent memorials. Two of these are at famous Biggin Hill Air Station. There they rest, surrounded by flowers, in front of the Chapel. Others are set up by the main gates of other R.A.F. bases while still others are desecrated by being used for training fire fighters, a sad fate indeed for a superlative airplane. Strangely enough, the Mk. XVI "Spitfire" is most common. This was the version of the Mark IX powered by American-built Packard engines.

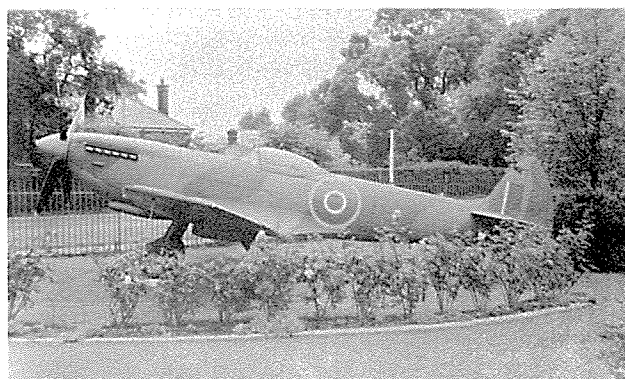
NOTE: It is also known that one (1) "Spitfire Mk. I" (K 9942) and three (3) "Spitfire Mk. II's" (P 7350, P 9444 and R 6915) are still in existence. R 6915 downed five enemy aircraft and is now in the Imperial War Museum.

ABOVE LEFT - Hawker "Hurricane IIC", PZ 865. Registered in Great Britain as G-AMAU. It was the last of the "Hurricanes" built, and now owned by the Hawker Group, it is still airworthy. Painted along the cockpit is the appropriate legend, "THE LAST OF THE MANY". Reasonably authentic camouflage.

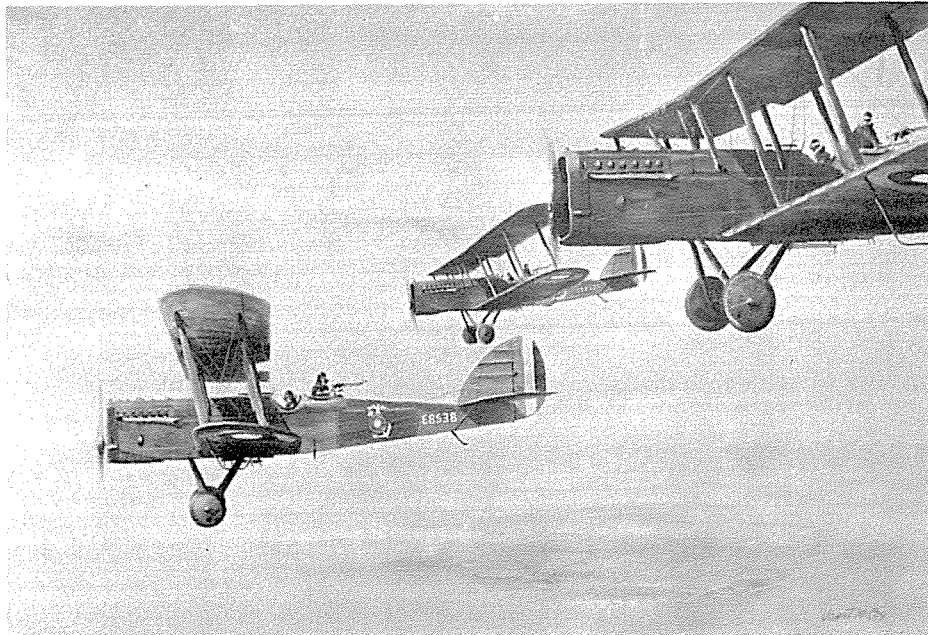


"Hurricane II", 5405M. The "M" serial indicates that, after its operational use it was turned over to the training groups for instructional purposes. It is one of the two WWII memorial fighters at Biggin Hill. Original serial number unknown.

ABOVE RIGHT - Hawker "Hurricane I", P 2617. Chances are that this "Hurricane" actually did take part in the Battle of Britain. It has been seen at most of the major exhibits in the British Isles. It was photographed at Durham, as shown here, on 21 May 1960. Credit both above photographs to R.A. Watt.



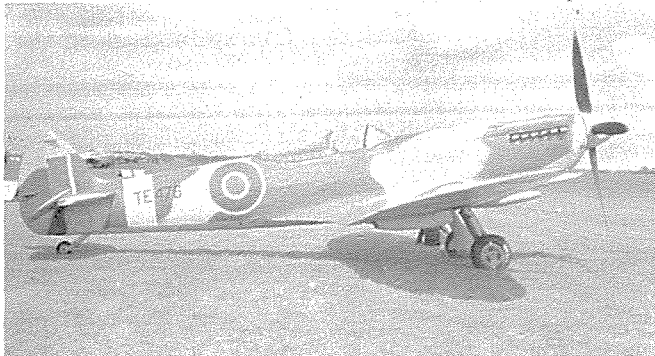
"Spitfire" LF.16e, SL 674. The other WWII memorial airplane at Biggin Hill Chapel. The Mark XVI's service did not end with the War and consequently the most of the remaining "Spitfires" are of this variety. Credit both photos to Arthur Percy.



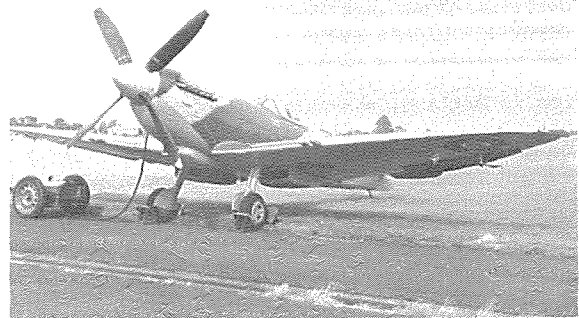
AUTHENTICITY & ART IN AVIATION A painting by John T. McCoy

U.S. Marines fly D.H.9's in Northern Bombing Group.

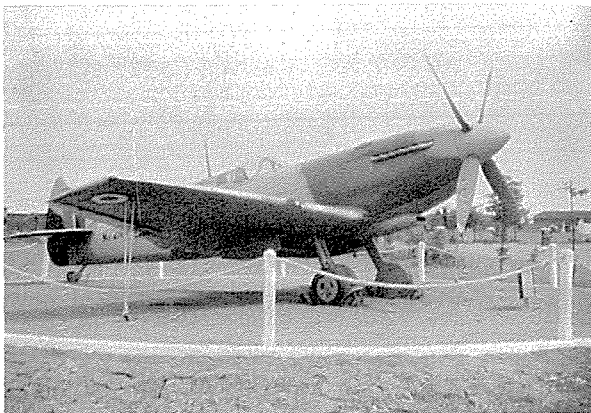
MEMENTOS (Continued from previous page.)



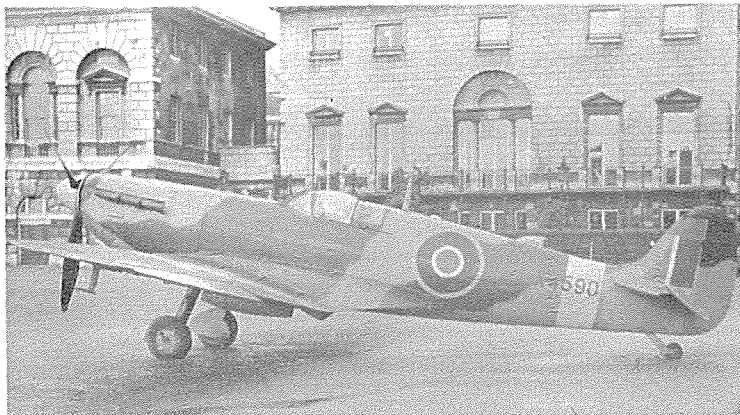
"Spitfire" LF.16e, TE 476. Seen here at Coventry in July, 1958. Present whereabouts unknown. Photo by R.A. Watt.



"Spitfire" F.16, SL 574. This is the comparatively rare full-span version of the Mark XVI. For several years it led the annual fly past over London. In 1959 it forced landed in a cricket pitch. Seen here at Biggin Hill. Photo by L. Bachelor.



"Spitfire" LF.16e, TB 382. Now marked M 7244. It stands guard at the gate at RAF Station Middleton-St. George, along with "Tempest V" SN 219. It is a normal short-span Mk. XVI. Photo by Frank Yoeman.



"Spitfire IIA", X 4590. Delivered from Supermarine Works in September 1940, X 4590 entered operational service on 8 October 1940 and thereby just made the tail end of the Battle of Britain. Photo by unknown.