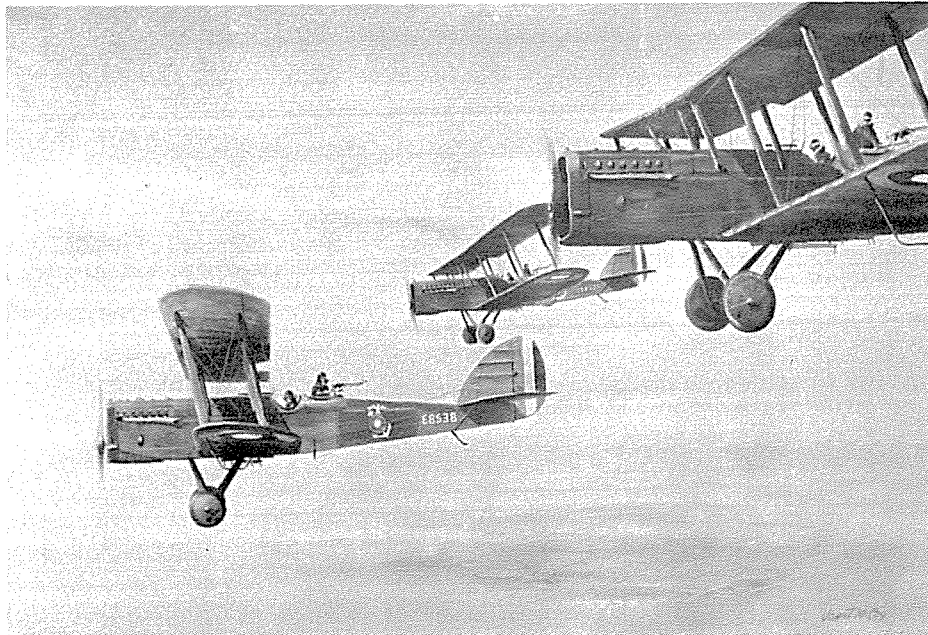
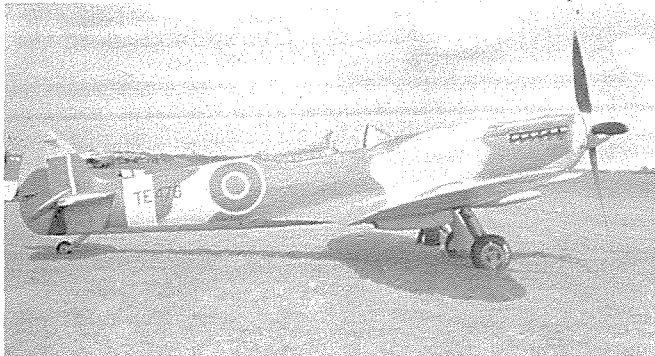




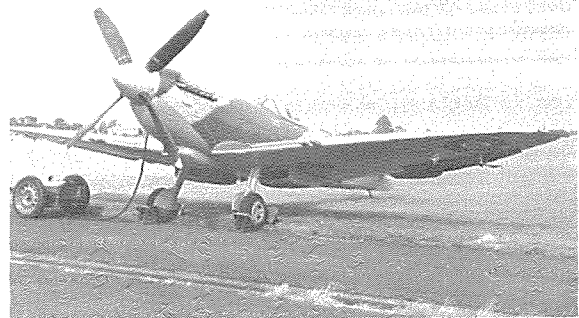
AUTHENTICITY & ART IN AVIATION A painting by John T. McCoy

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

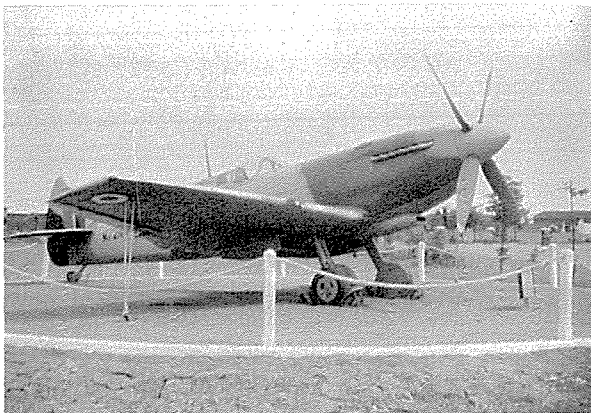
MEMENTOS (Continued from previous page.)



"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.

ART and AUTHENTICITY

IN AVIATION

It could be said that anybody could be an artist.....Just take a canvas, a brush and some colors----- Well, of course, you know the rest of that thought. It took the genius of a Michelangelo to find the figures hidden within great blocks of stone that are among the world's priceless treasures in sculpture. It is not our purpose to compare the paintings of today's artists to those of the past or the present, nor to the impressions one obtains from looking at them. We do wish to make this point, that it takes talent and artistry to put on canvas that proper combination of line and color which will portray a true scene of action. And essentially, aviation, in all its facets, is an expression of action. But also, it takes more than a little research by the artist in order to make a truly accurate portrayal.

This is the first of a series of presentations of paintings by Members of this Society who are artists, whether by vocation or avocation. We wish to bring such work before all Members to stimulate additional efforts in this field. In selecting the work of John McCoy, we merely used the first to come to hand. All other Members are encouraged to forward to the Editor samples of their own artistry. We would, of course, wish to present them in color, but the budget has not yet grown to that extent. Also, we will studiously avoid any discussion of artistry in photography, of which a great deal has already been shown in these pages, but will leave that to the day when proper judgement of it can be organized. EDITOR.

Throughout history the artist has been called upon to render into visual pictures the events witnessed by man. In the days before the camera these picturizations were the results of individuals who worked in stone, plaster, paint, woodcarving, or other media to recreate the especial happenings according to eye-witness reports. Even after the camera came, however, it was not always there to catch the critical moment, and even the best of the world's photographers cannot always capture the true atmosphere of an historic event. Sometimes it is only the artist who can put it into visual form.

John T. McCoy has earned wide recognition for painstaking authenticity as well as beauty in his paintings of aviation subjects. His work has been seen by millions in the pictorial essays he has been commissioned to do for LIFE Magazine. These include such pieces as "An Essay on Naval Aviation" and "Struts to Jets".

Some fifteen paintings by this artist and historian are now on permanent exhibit in the Wings Club, at the Hotel Biltmore in New York City. Others of his exhibits have been shown at the National Air Museum, the Air Force Academy and many leading New York art galleries. A large picture of British-built DH-9's (with American "Liberty" engines) as shown here now hangs in the Museum in Quantico, Va. It depicts a raid of the Northern Bombing Group in WWI, manned by Marines. A fair number of McCoy's paintings are in private collections.

As an aviation enthusiast from the time he was a small boy, McCoy frequented air fields and rubbed elbows with aviation's famous pioneers. He had his first ride in an airplane at what is now the site of the Pentagon Building in Washington. In 1926, while still in high school, he learned to fly on a Curtiss "Jenny" with the Curtiss Flying School on Long Island. By this time "Jennies" were getting scarce, at least these in good condition with usable engines. The price had gone up from a postwar low of \$50 and in 1927 the Curtiss School bought four, brand new in the crate, at \$1400 apiece. McCoy went on to get a commercial license with flight instructor's rating and, during WWII became a rated military pilot.

During WWII McCoy was among the first group of officers assigned to the Historical Office of the Army Air Forces. As a combat artist he flew many missions with the 8th and 9th Air Forces in the European Theatre of Operations.

Though he had written some articles for Model Airplane News in the early 1930's, McCoy's first published magazine illustrations were in KEN of 9 February 1939. A booklet of airplane drawings was published in 1935 but failed to sell in the large quantities required by such outlets as dime stores. Small wonder - in those depression days everyone was trying hard to eat. Some of these drawings are among those in the Wings Club.

His first commission from LIFE Magazine came in 1940 when the Naval Aviation "Essay" was published in the 28 October issue. There followed "Learning to Fly" in 5 May 1941; "War Gliders" in 7 September 1942; "Struts to Jets" in 4 February 1952; "The Day That Man First Flew" in 7 December 1953 and "Soviet Air Force Threat" in the 6 June 1955 issue.

His "War Gliders" article had an interesting aftermath. His original painting showed some of the gliders smashed on the ground, as would be expected during a large scale paratroop action. However, the Air Forces were then, in 1942, trying to "sell" glider piloting to its recruits, and so the wreckage was carefully scrubbed out of the painting. Later, while a Major with the 8th Air Force in France, McCoy accompanied a squadron on one of its low-level dropping missions. His painting used to illustrate the "Story of the 446th Bomb Group", a war history of this outfit, nearly duplicates his original recruiting work and shows the large scale parachute and glider action at the crossing of the Rhine River at Wessel on 24 March 1945.

McCoy's search for authenticity took him to Kill Devil Hill in 1953. There were never any great amount of landmarks in the area, and some of the accounts written by the Wright Brothers indicated that their take-off track was (so many) feet from the "new building". He had, in his files, many drawings that showed the small building nearest to the track. Paul Garber, of the National Air Museum, was suspicious of this arrangement and had discussed it with McCoy. After studying the photographs taken by the Wright Brothers, and checking at the actual site, McCoy determined that the new, larger, building was nearest to the track in 1903. This perspective is properly recorded in his painting, "The Day That Man First Flew".

In search of fact, McCoy makes tape recordings