

NEWS RELEASE

National Gallery of Art,  
Washington, D. C.

FOR RELEASE: Sunday Papers of Oct.15, 1944

WASHINGTON, October 14.: A graphic collection of war-time paintings, showing the flyers, planes and world-wide combat operations of the Army Air Forces, will be placed on exhibition tomorrow at the National Gallery of Art, it was announced today by David E. Finley, Director.

Snow-capped mountains, leaden skies, tossing palms, mosques and volcanoes in eruption, form the backgrounds of more than a hundred pictures painted or sketched in the field, as part of the historical record of the Army Air Forces. Represented in the exhibition are seven professional artists, now in the AAF, who executed these pictures in the course of regular Army assignments in various war theaters.

A special feature of the exhibition is a group of more than sixty Air Force portraits of aces, combat heroes, commanding generals of different outfits and outstanding ground-crew personalities. There are also operational pictures of Air Force activities, scenes at air bases at home and abroad, and studies of combat planes in flight.

Among the pictures on exhibit are scenes painted in England during invasion week by Major Charles Baskerville, including a view of invasion forces leaving Plymouth harbor. Another by the same artist is a portrait of Lt. Gen. Ira Eaker, painted at night in Italy by the light of a single electric bulb.

In this same group is a portrait of Don Gentile, famous ace, and a picture of a Chippewa Indian from Minnesota, now a crew chief for fighter-bombers, shown sitting in a gold palace chair in Italy.

The gallery of Air Force personalities painted by Major Baskerville includes portraits of many famous commanding officers, such as Lt. Gen. Carl Spaatz, head of the Army Air Forces in Europe, who allowed the artist scarcely more than an hour to paint his picture, Maj. Gen. Claire Chennault of the "Flying Tigers", and Lt. Gen. James H. Doolittle, whose flying feats include the famous Tokio raid in 1942. Other pictures show combat pilots, bombardiers, gunners and ground crewmen.

The exhibition also will present pictures by former Captain Ogden Pleissner of air operations in the Aleutians. Vividly depicted in this series are the combat conditions of the Alaskan campaign. Pfc. Anne Poor, an Air WAC and daughter of the well-known artist Henry Varnum Poor, is represented in the exhibit with scenes of air training operations at Carlsbad Army Air Field, New Mexico.

Water colors by Major John LaValle, done in Africa, Sicily and Italy, provide a graphic and moving record of the first great invasion movement by the Army Air Forces. They show dive-bombings, night patrols, an air-sea rescue, destruction of enemy fighters, strafing of motor transport, attacks on bridges, anti-aircraft fire and other phases of air warfare. Notable in these pictures are scenes of the rugged terrain where air fields were located for the desert campaign, and Air Force operations against the background of Moorish architecture.

Major John T. McCoy, Jr., has paintings of planes in flight, made from his experiences as a pilot and his observations of Air Force life in the United States. Sergeant James Grisham and Corporal Jerry Cominsky, attached to Headquarters Army Air Forces, also are represented in this exhibition, which will continue from October 15 to November 10.

#