



Using childhood memories and his Instamatic photographs, Steve Cox created this painting of the FG-1D running full tilt as it tested out windows and other products at the Cupples facility in St. Louis.

Steve Cox ©ASAA



CUPPLES CORSAIR

CHILDHOOD MEMORIES HELP TO CREATE A PAINTING OF A GOODYEAR FG-1D NOW UNDER RESTORATION TO FLY

BY STEVE COX AND BEN MARSH

PAINTING BY STEVE COX

Sometimes, memories come flooding back. This past June, I was in St. Louis for a family visit. I had just attended the annual forum and exhibition of the American Society of Aviation Artists (ASAA), of which I have been a long-time member. It was held at the Patuxent Naval Air Museum in Maryland. We have monthly “challenges” for our artist members and the newest was to paint a fighter aircraft — any fighter. Now, here is where things get interesting. I grew up in St. Louis and on this trip we were staying in a hotel about a mile from the corner of Hanley Road and Manchester Boulevard.

Why is this specific site of any interest to an *Air Classics* reader you might ask? It was the former location of Cupples Products — a company that manufactured windows and siding for buildings and

houses. Long-time readers will recall that Cupples had something that would set the heart of any aviation enthusiast beating a bit faster. They had a Corsair. Or, at least most of a Corsair.

The rear fuselage of the Corsair was missing along with the outer wing panels but rest of the plane was mounted in flight attitude. When the company wanted to test their products to see if they would stand up to the windstorms that passed through the Midwest, they would fire up that R-2800 and let it rip. Thus, Cupples was able to create its own controlled windstorm. Company products would be mounted in fixtures behind the ex-WWII fighter and the ensuing wind blast would prove (or disprove) their worthiness.

I have this strong, but not necessarily accurate, memory of driving past Cupples

with my dad in the family 1959 Oldsmobile and hearing and seeing that R-2800 roaring away. On a couple trips, I even took my little Instamatic camera and managed to record a few photographs for posterity as dad stopped the Olds so I could snap away.

At the start of the Warbird Movement, *Air Classics*, which was on the forefront of such things, ran several shots of what became known as the “Cupples Corsair.” By the standards of the early 1970s, it was pretty far gone. Complete restorations of things like Corsairs had not yet really started. If one wanted a Corsair, it seemed there were always one or two on the market that were in marginally flyable condition. Remember, a Corsair during that time period brought less money than a comparable Mustang. Also, one could

The former Cupples Corsair seen in the Sanders Aeronautics hangar at Lone, California. The entire center section of the Goodyear-built FG-1D had to be re-engineered because of damage and corrosion. (Ben Marsh)