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Flights of Passage

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Present issues have recent antecedents. The military reader would be well advised to stock his library with some historical material so as to obtain perspective without having to relive past experience. *Washington Goes to War* could certainly be a valuable addition to this library.

AL BOTTOMS
The George Washington University

Hynes, Samuel. *Flights of Passage*. Annapolis, Md.: Naval Institute Press, 1988. 270pp. \$16.95

"Every generation is a secret society. The secret that my generation—the one that came of age during the Second World War—shared was simply the war itself. We grew up on active duty."

Samuel Hynes was eighteen when he became a naval aviation cadet in 1943; by the time he was twenty-one, he had flown a hundred combat missions as a Marine TBM pilot. Now a professor of literature at Princeton University, he has given us a remarkably engaging memoir of his secret society.

His is the classic story of a young man's passage from the gentle world of the upper Midwest in the 1930's through the masculine bonding of flight training and life in a training squadron and then to the grinding reality of air combat. Hynes grew up in a comfortable and secure world where teenage boys hung around the local airport absorbing the romance of aviation. Joining the Marines, he

joyfully discovered and reveled in the pleasures of flying, drinking and chasing girls. With the boundless energy of a young pilot, he pursued all three without favor or discrimination. Squadron life in California was a long fraternity party, with flying as an added benefit.

The war in the Pacific was another matter: enormously boring and dangerous. Hynes quickly became a careful and cagey pilot, a survivor who grew up fast. He had a typical war, earning a couple of medals, losing some friends, having some close scrapes and discovering that war is not all that it is advertised to be. There was neither glory nor bonhomie in the war.

Hynes' descriptions of flying capture that special sense of oneness that can exist between a pilot and his aircraft. After all, a high performance aircraft is the best toy that can be given to a young man of spirit. Read his account of being aloft with a buddy in a pair of F6F's on a glorious Pacific day with nothing to do but play at inverted formation flying.

Hynes tells his story with the immediacy and perspective of a young man sharing a grand adventure while growing up. He seems to have been a genuine Willie Keith.

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Durch, William J. *The ABM Treaty and Western Security*. Cambridge,