



Michel Coiffard

by David Méchin

With some thirty victories within just four months, Michel Coiffard was the ace of the Great War who had the most meteoric career. Having taken command of Escadrille SPA 154, which he made the French specialist in Drachen hunting, he died in combat a few days before the armistice, at the end of a permanent quest for medals and glory.

A Professional Soldier

Michel Joseph Calixte Marie Coiffard was born at his mother's home, No.5 Haute Grande rue de Nantes. When Madame Joséphine Thérèse Coiffard (born Laurent), a 31-year-old housewife, gave birth to him on 16 July 1892, her husband Jean, a 34-year-old railroad employee, did not even bother to go to the registry office and the child was registered by the midwife. The couple quickly divorced at an undetermined date, and his mother remarried an M. Hacques and then settled with her son and new husband at 18 rue de la Chapelle, Paris, in a working-class district of the 18th arrondissement, where he grew up with his half-brother Léon and half-sister Yvonne, born before the family moved to 52 rue Philippe de Girard, still in the 18th arrondissement and not far from the birthplace of the future ace Charles Nungesser. It seems that the young Michel Coiffard completely ignored his biological father because he stated during the war that he had only his mother in the world, whereas his father was still alive according to the documents in his military file. One can imagine



Above: Michel Coiffard's decorations, left to right: the Legion d'Honneur, the Medaille Militaire, the Croix de Guerre, with 16 palms
Left: Coiffard, as simple soldier in the 51th artillery regiment in France, in the first half of year 1911.