

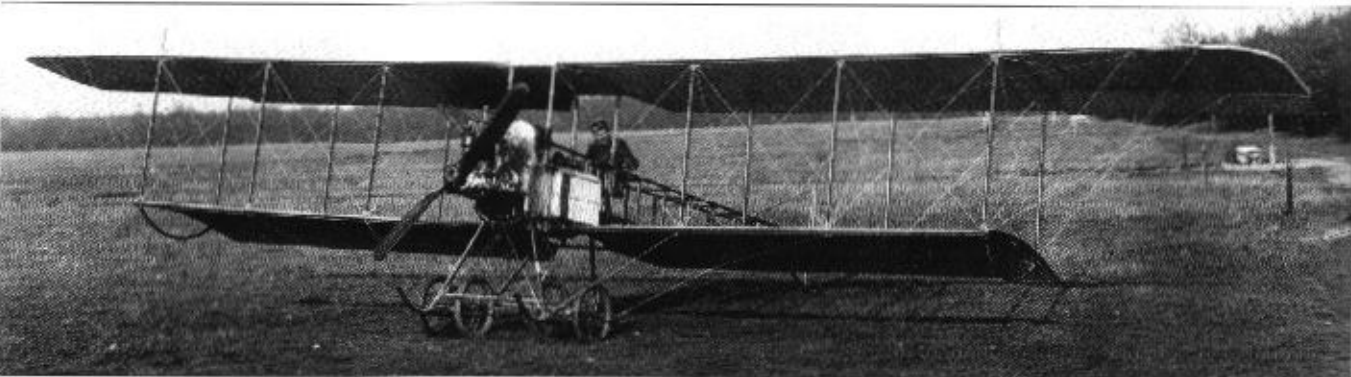
AVIATIK B-TYPES

By P M Grosz



WINDSOCK DATAFILE 102

HISTORY



The German *Fliegertruppe* went into battle in August 1914 equipped with a dependable triumvirate of general-purpose and bombing biplanes built by Aviatik, Albatros and LVG.¹ Fine-tuned by a succession of pre-war record-breaking flights, the Aviatik B-type biplanes, esteemed for their rugged construction, weight-carrying and long-range capability, constituted an important component of the German air service well into late 1915.²

Aviatik is founded

The *Automobil und Aviatik AG* came into being on 10 December 1909 when Georges Châtel merged his *Fahrrad und Automobilfabrik*, a bicycle and automotive chassis builder, with *Aviatik GmbH*, a company jointly owned by Châtel and Henri Jeannin, a director of the *Argus Motoren Werke* in Reinickendorf, Berlin.³ Very much a French-speaking Alsatian

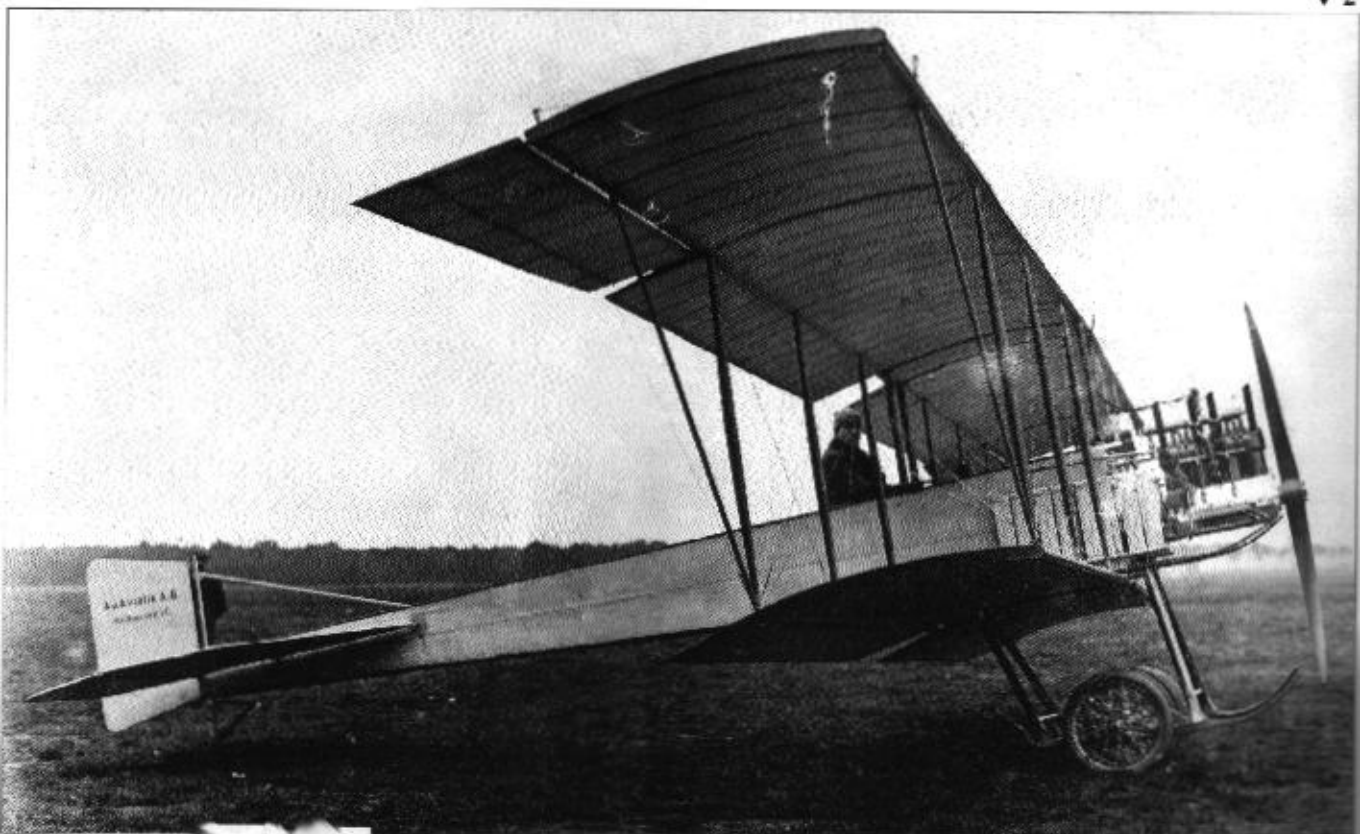
enterprise, the Aviatik factory, located in Mühlhausen (now Mulhouse, Alsace), began by building French Farman and Hanriot aircraft under licence for sport and competition purposes and for the Aviatik flight school based at the nearby Habsheim airfield.⁴ The company's involvement with the *Fliegertruppe* began on 15 December 1910 when the first Aviatik-Farman pusher biplane was delivered; however, military business remained sparse in the years 1911 and 1912 as Aviatik only booked orders for 12 modified Farman pusher biplanes and two Hanriot monoplanes.

To break the dependence on foreign designs and avoid having to pay license fees, Aviatik chief engineer *Diplom-Ingenieur* Robert Wild, a Swiss citizen, designed a large, powerful biplane which became the prototype of the B-type machines discussed in this monograph. A successful design from the start, the

Aviatik *Doppeldecker Type Militär* (type P 13) signified the beginning of a brilliant engineering career by Wild that brought fame and fortune to Aviatik.⁵ There is no doubt that Wild's biplane design reflected the renowned Swiss reputation for solid craftsmanship, durability and integrity – attributes appealing to German airmen as well.

Aviatik B - Type P 13

The public first learned of the P 13 in May 1912 when it was reported that the newest Aviatik *DD Type Militär* with *Chefpilot* Alincourt at the controls had demonstrated 'very nice test flights' and 'made extended overland flights with passengers aboard.'⁶ The Aviatik P 13 was a large aircraft fitted either with 3½-bay (15 metre span) or 4-bay (16 metre span) wings. Exposure at pre-war aeronautical competitions throughout Germany and at military establishments by Aviatik's



skilled pilots, namely Paul Viktor Stoeffler (later *Chefpilot*), Emile (Emil) Jeannin, Charles (Karl) Ingold and Ernst Schlegel, served to publicise the company and its admirable biplanes.

Aviatik B - Type P 14

Wild's next design, the smaller Aviatik P 14, had a $2\frac{1}{2}$ -bay wing cellule (14.5 metre span), structural refinements and improved streamlining. The stable flight

1). The Aviatik P 13 prototype, designed by Robert Wild, was assembled in April-May 1912 to check wing and rigging alignments. Aviatik pilot Charles Ingold poses in the rear pilot's seat. The broad, three-bay upper wing was additionally supported by two kingposts fitted over the outer front wing struts. Power was supplied by a four-cylinder 100-hp Argus engine.

2). The same Aviatik P 13 prototype, now fully covered but without engine cowling installed. The outer wing cable bracing has been replaced by diagonal wing struts. The four-wheeled undercarriage and skid assembly was intended as protection from the rough airfields that were often unavoidable.

3). Aviatik B.21/13 (P 13) was among the machines that Aviatik delivered with varying degrees of sweepback, stagger and, as shown here, accentuated lower wing dihedral for service testing. In the background can be seen the enormous Pforzheim crowd that flocked to see the new-fangled flying machines in action. The second aircraft is a Rumpler Taube A.32/12 named 'Stahlbecker' in honour of the Becker steel works that donated the aircraft to the *Fliegertruppe*. The third aircraft in the distance is an Otto pusher.

4). Aviatik B.62/13 (P 13) of *Feld-Flieger Abteilung 5*, powered by a 100-hp Argus As.I engine, at a military exercise in 1914. The $3\frac{1}{2}$ -bay wing cellule and the four-wheeled undercarriage was typical of the pre-war Aviatik B-types that were flown operationally in the early months of the war. The awkward *Stossfahrgerstell*, intended to prevent nose-overs, were only partially effective.

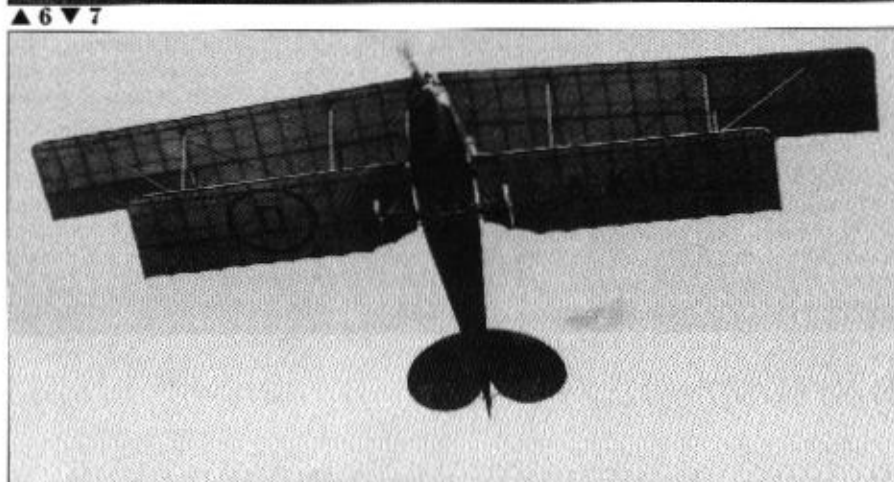
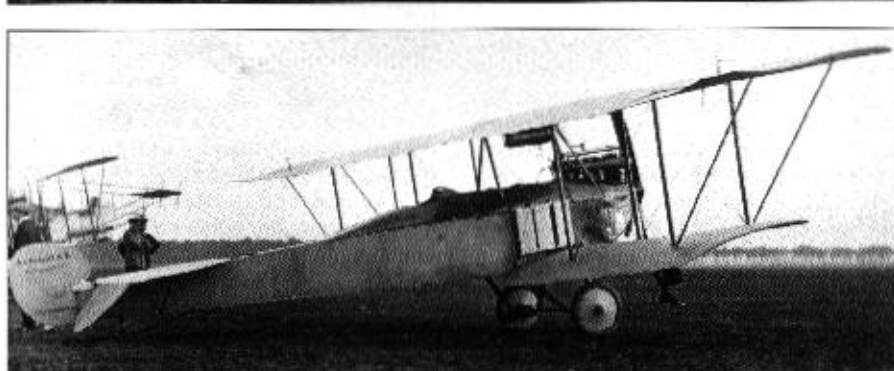
5). Having seen better days, this pre-war and patched-up Aviatik B (P 13, w/a 151) powered by a four-cylinder 85-hp Argus engine, was still active as a basic trainer at the Aviatik-Bork flying school in 1917.

6). The clean and elegant lines conceived by Robert Wild for the Aviatik P14 prototype are readily apparent. From references in the aviation press, it is evident that the Aviatik P 14 made its debut in mid-1913. Power was supplied by a six-cylinder 100-hp Mercedes engine. On the tail is printed 'A. & Aviatik A.G. Muhlhausen i. F.' (i.e. in Elsass-Alsace).

7). A pre-war Aviatik P 14 in flight showing the national civil aircraft identification, a circled 'D' (for Deutschland) and the Aviatik company identification 'A.K.' followed by the aircraft number '15'.

ON THE COVER:

Balmy days... Aviatik B (P14) No.15 operated with the company's own school at Leipzig-Mockau during late 1916. It saw extensive training use and was repaired and repainted more than once!



characteristics and load capacity impressed *Fliegertruppe* authorities and military purchases followed in due course. In 1913 a total of 101 B-type tractor biplanes based on types P 13 and P 14 fitted with wing cellulose of varying wing span were ordered. In terms of numbers, more B-type aircraft were purchased from Aviatik in 1913 than from any other manufacturer.⁸

Aviatik B - Type P 15

Arriving on the scene in 1913 at about the same time as the P 14, the elegant Aviatik P 15 was the ultimate expression of Wild's design creativity. The type featured two-bay wings, a tail fin and a more compact fuselage. To increase the bomb-load capacity, type P 15 was also built with large span, 3-bay wings. Power was supplied by either a 100-hp Argus or Mercedes engine. It is clear from the military orders that manufacture of the types P 14 and P 15 ran in parallel through 1914 and into early 1915. As will be discussed later, the *Fliegertruppe* acknowledged the existence of the Aviatik P 15a and P 15b models whose exact description remains to be discovered.

Aviatik takes the prize

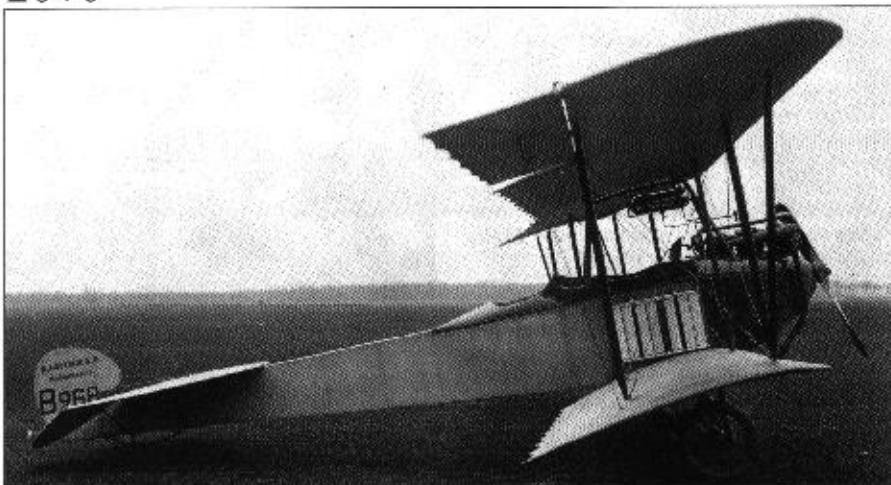
In keeping with the times, Aviatik established a flying school at Habsheim primarily to profit from the substantial fees paid by the German army for training pilots, an important source of pre-war revenue for most German aircraft firms. Competing for *National Flugspende* prizes, Stoeffler and Ingold established several distance and duration records that gave the Aviatik biplanes a solid reputation for reliability and performance.⁹ The culmination of Aviatik's rise to prominence came on 13 December 1913, when the *National Flugspende* awarded chief pilot Stoeffler the munificent first prize of 100,000 marks for his achievements in 1913 (the award was shared with the company). It is no exaggeration to say that the Wild-inspired designs were responsible for Aviatik's rapid growth as a military supplier. At the international Vienna *Flugwoche* in June 1914, French airmen in their delicate and speedy aircraft encountered the lumbering Aviatiks whose bulk they smirkingly disparaged as 'those flying mansions.' But when war began, it was the Aviatik 'mansions' (and those of Albatros and LVG) that possessed the range, stability and bomb capacity to harass the French troops far beyond the feeble ineffectiveness of the hapless *Taube* monoplanes.

Aviatik abroad

The publicity resulting from an impressive array of long-distance and duration flights brought the name Aviatik to the attention of manufacturers in other countries. After Viktor Stoeffler and Arthur Faller won second prize in the Italian military aviation competition in April 1913, a manufacturing licence was obtained by the Officine Moncenisio and

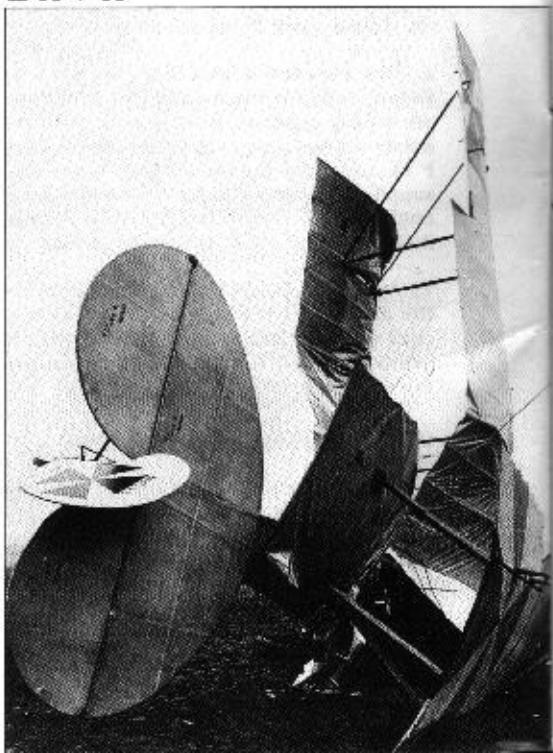


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Stablimenti Farina. Known as the SAML-Aviatik, these biplanes participated in the war on the Allied side.¹⁰ Aviatik also sold biplanes to Belgium, Bulgaria and Russia, eventually signing a licence agreement with Anatra in Odessa who produced several variants throughout the war.¹¹ In April 1914, the nascent Swiss air service purchased a single Aviatik P 14 for a run-off competition with four aircraft built by Ponnier, Bleriot, LVG and Lohner. According to a Swiss aero history, six LVG biplanes were purchased because they had been designed by the Swiss citizen Franz Schnelder. Evidently 'the [purchasing] commission was unaware at the time that the Aviatik biplane was designed by the Swiss *Genie-Leutnant* Robert Wild.'¹² With war imminent in July 1914, Weiser & Sohn in Vienna joined forces with Aviatik to manufacture biplanes for the *Luftfahrtruppe* in Austria-



Hungary. While Weiser tooled up to produce the licenced type in Vienna, the German Aviatik factory delivered a total of 25 biplanes to the hard-pressed Austro-Hungarian ally.¹²

Aviatik moves out of danger

In light of the growing tensions between France and Germany, the German military command had planned for the immediate evacuation of critical industries located in border areas likely to be near the fighting. On the afternoon of general mobilisation on 1 August 1914, in a lightning action, the unfinished Aviatik airframes, machine tools and factory inventory were loaded and whisked away on 50 railway trucks across the Rhine to Freiburg in an overnight transport, leaving a stripped factory to welcome the invading French troops.¹⁴ Production output barely skipped a beat. But Freiburg soon came within range of French day and

8). In the pre-war years Aviatik operated a flying school at Habsheim on the outskirts of Mulhouse where this Aviatik P 14 powered by a 120-hp Argus engine awaits clearance for take-off.

9). Aviatik B.268/13 (P 14) was among a batch of 13 machines, numbered B.260-272/13, ordered by the *Fliegertruppe* in late 1913. The ample sweepback and lower wing dihedral coupled with broad fuselage sides provided sufficient stability to dispense with the tailfin. A 100-hp Mercedes engine supplied the power.

10). Aviatik B.268/13 (P 14) with Willy Trüch, a former Aviatik mechanic, who volunteered to become a pilot and accompany an Aviatik biplane to German South West Africa with the backing of the *National Flug Spende*. The structural simplicity and clean finish throughout are impressive. The rear of the gravity tank has a glass, fuel-level gauge.

11). Finito Aviatik B.268/13! The undated wartime photograph provides an opportunity to study the early war markings consisting of 1) a straight-edged cross on the upper wing and rudder, 2) aircraft identification 'Aviatik B.268/13' stencilled on tailplane and elevators, 3) 'Aviatik' and 'B.268/13' stencilled above and below the rudder cross.

12). The peripatetic Aviatik B.109/14 (P 14), named *Karlsruhe*, was vividly decorated with massive iron crosses and proudly displays the names of battle areas and towns over which it had flown. It was powered by a 100-hp Argus As.I engine.

13). Aviatik B (P 14) in an oft-repeated scenario with curious bystanders giving inane advice as the pilot wonders what happened to his undercarriage.

14). This Aviatik B.120/14 (P 14), captured intact, was the first victory in which the noted French ace Jean Navarre participated when observer *Lieutenant Robert* shot it down on 1 April 1915.

15). While a tyro pilot trainee burns the guts out of his engine, a mix of Aviatik and Albatros B-type trainers stand in stoic silence. In the foreground is Albatros B.I 816/14, followed by Aviatik B.333/14 (P 14) and Aviatik B.512/15 (P 15).



▲ 12 ▼ 13



▲ 14 ▼ 15



night bombers, including Aviatik, at *Idflieg's* behest, to relocate to Leipzig-Heiterblick where manufacture began in a large new factory in June 1916. In mid-1914, Aviatik employed about 200 workers in Mühlhausen, increased to 700 workers in Freiburg and with the move to Leipzig-Heiterblick reached a maximum of 1600 employees in 1918.

The Aviatik flying school, relocated from Freiburg to Leipzig-Mockau (*Fabrik-Fliegerschule Leipzig-Mockau*), was destroyed by fire at the end of 1916. Subsequently Aviatik purchased the Grade flying school facilities at Bork (near Berlin) and moved there in June 1917. Grade had been a popular pre-war venue for flight instruction at its private flying school. During the war, Grade repaired aircraft and when Aviatik purchased the property the labour force stood at about 100 workers. At Bork, flight training was performed with a variety of combat-weary Aviatik B-types which were repaired there as well.

The Aviatik B-types in service

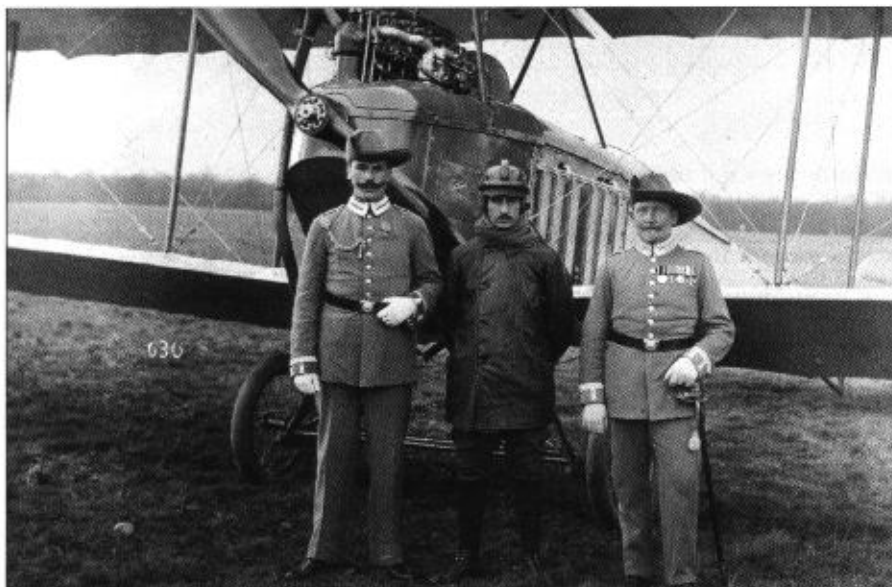
In early 1914, *Oberst von Eberhardt*, the then *Inspekteur der Fliegertruppen* in a staff appreciation had this to say about the Aviatik biplane:

'The Aviatik was a good, safe aircraft. Mediocre rate of climb (800 m in 11-12 min). Ability to take-off and land most anywhere. Very good load carrying capacity. Observation [from aircraft] similar to LVG [ie, could be improved]. Assembly easy. Well suited for [ground] transportation. Unconditionally combat useable.'

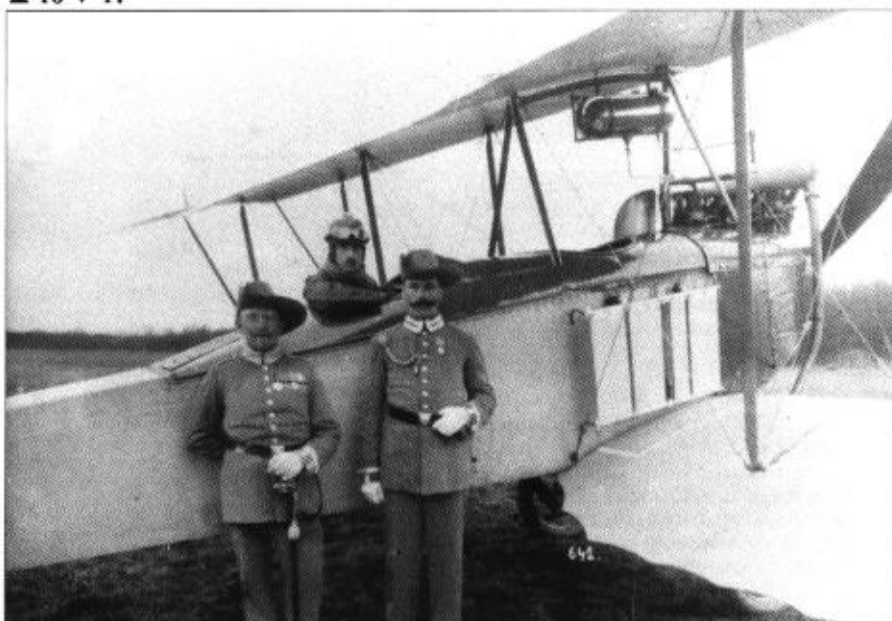
Generally these credentials paralleled those employed for Albatros and LVG biplanes. These were the biplanes with which the *Fliegertruppe* went to war. So sharing the spotlight with Albatros and LVG, the Aviatik biplanes particularly were valued for their ability to carry heavy loads and were often flown on long-range bombing sorties under primitive field conditions. This was precisely the reason why they formed the complement of the first bombing units, code named *Brieftauben Abteilung Ostend* (established 27 November 1914) and *Brieftauben Abteilung Metz* (established 17 August 1915).

The unarmed Aviatik B.114/14 (P 14, w/n 281) has the distinction of being the first German aircraft downed in air-to-air combat - over Muizon by French *sergent aviateur* Joseph Frantz and gunner Louis Quénauld flying a Voisin (V 89) pusher on 5 October 1914.

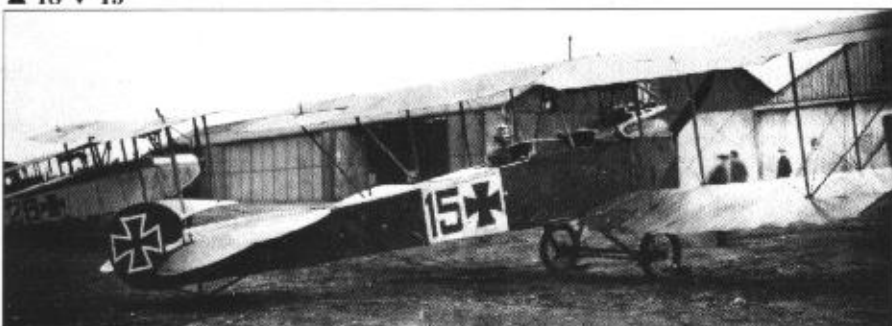
Another distinction befalls Aviatik. According to historian Alex Imrie, Aviatik B.192a/13 was 'the first German aircraft to be armed with a machine gun for offensive purposes.'¹⁵ On 28 April 1915, *Hauptmann* Hugo Geyer and *Oberleutnant* Egbert Kühn of *Feld-Flieger Abteilung 48* attacked a French formation of three Voisin pushers, shooting one down near Altkirch.



▲ 16 ▼ 17



▲ 18 ▼ 19



16 and 17). Flanked by two colonial veterans in dress uniform, Aviatik pilot Willy Trück poses on the Habsheim airfield with the Aviatik P 14, powered by a 100-hp Argus engine, that he would take to Africa. For providing mechanic Trück's flight training, Aviatik received 8000 marks from the *National Flug Spende*. For sending Trück, a mechanic and one aircraft to Africa for tropical trials over a period of three months, a total of 15,000 marks was provided by the German colonial office. Trück's Aviatik P 14 arrived in South West Africa on 19 May 1914 and was stationed in Karibib. Active during hostilities but hamstrung by lack of parts, tropical weather, mishaps and minor crashes, *Leutnant* Alexander von Scheele and Trück performed sporadic bombing, reconnaissance and leaflet dropping raids until the surrender of German troops on 9 July 1915. The remains of the Aviatik P 14, along with other weapons, were dumped into the Otjikoto Lake near Tsumeb.

18). Aviatik B (P 14) '15' was photographed at the Aviatik school at Leipzig-Mockau in October 1916. It retains its original configuration except that the military serial number has been removed which strongly suggests the machine was re-purchased by Aviatik from the *Fliegertruppe* when it became a company-owned trainer.

19). The same aircraft as above but repaired several times, durable Aviatik B (P 14) '15' was flown by pilot trainees at the Aviatik school in Bork in November 1917. The worn, patched appearance and suppressed wing crosses are clearly in evidence. As with many Bork trainers, the rear cockpit turtledeck has been removed and modified. In the distance an Aviatik C.I that has been converted to training service.

20). An Aviatik B (P 14) trainer with a group of young *Fliegertruppe* trainees. Notable are the oversized gravity tank, the re-covered wing with light coloured rib tapes and the puny four cylinder Argus engine. The venue is the Aviatik flight school at Bork.

21). An Argus-engined Aviatik B (P 14) provides a photo opportunity for a student pilot who sits with his arm draped around the large control wheel. The polished gravity tank shines in direct contrast to the dirty fuselage smudged by oily exhaust fumes.

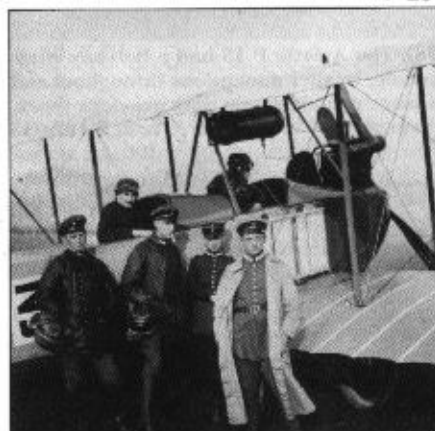
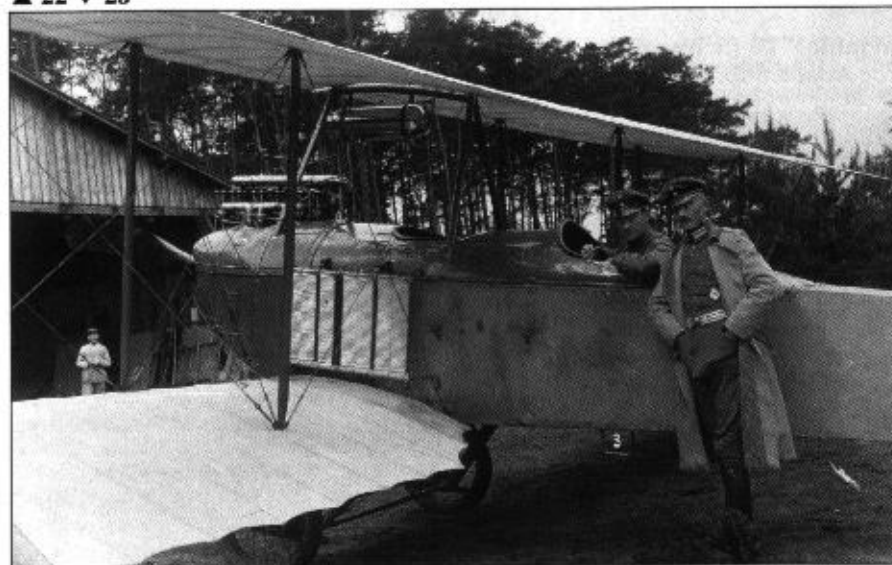
22 and 23). *Hauptmann* Seber (the string bean) with his pilot and valued mechanics pose in front of an Aviatik B (P 14) powered by a 120-hp Argus As.II engine that literally sparkles.



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Aviatik B.I and B.II - A question of identification

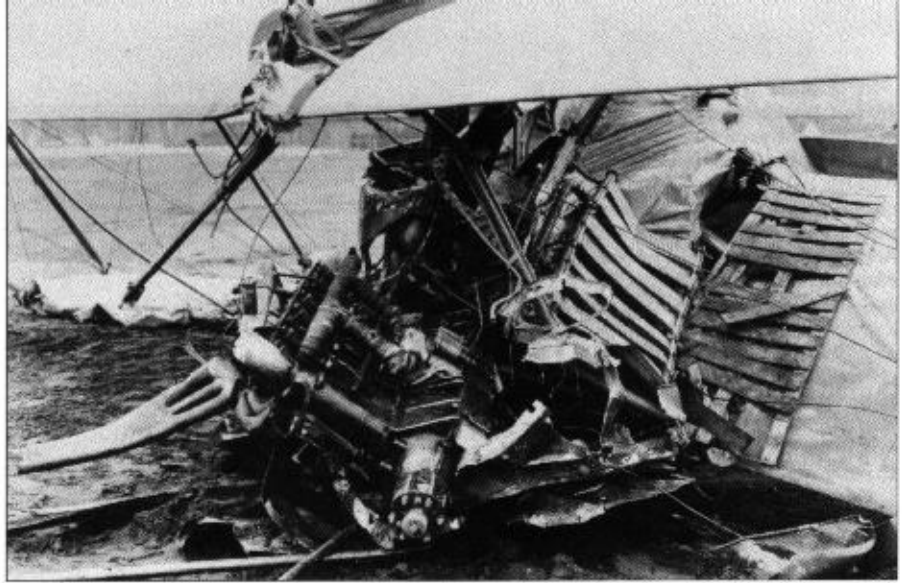
When *Idflieg* promulgated the expanded designation scheme on 8 August 1915, the 'Aviatik P 15b: biplane without MG-installation for 100-hp' was designated Aviatik B.I and the 'Aviatik P 15a: biplane without MG-installation for 120-hp' became the B.II. Unfortunately, extant *Idflieg* and Aviatik documents fail to explain the difference between the factory designations P 15a and P 15b; consequently it is impossible to accurately identify the many Aviatik B-type P 15 variants seen in photographs. Indeed, among the several hundred Aviatik B-type pictures in the author's collection only one Aviatik biplane shows a visible 'B.I' designation - found on a totally destroyed aircraft that defies exact identification. To further confuse the issue, documents show that Aviatik B.213/13 (P 14) was retroactively assigned the B.I designation as well. Hence it appears a reasonable assumption that to simplify record-keeping, *Idflieg* had placed all Aviatik B-types powered by a 100-hp engine under the B.I designation - irrespective whether the aircraft were type P 13, P 14, P 15 or fitted with 2-, 2½- and 3-bay wings. But lacking concrete proof, the above must be mere supposition.

We know from photographic evidence that aircraft in the series B.1320-1355/15 were two-bay Aviatik B.II biplanes powered by a 120-hp Mercedes D.II engine. Since the three-bay Aviatik B-types (B.663-707/14) were also powered by a Mercedes D.II engine, the question is raised whether all 120-hp engined Aviatik B-types were retroactively assigned the B.II designation as well?

It is interesting to note that the machine-gun armed Aviatik C.I, developed directly from the successful P 15, had already reached operational service at the time when the first unarmed Aviatik B.II biplanes arrived at the Front in June 1915. These B.II biplanes were flown as dedicated bombing machines. After reaching a maximum of 38 aircraft at the front in October 1915, the B.II was essentially phased out by February 1916.

Aviatik P 20 (Schwade)

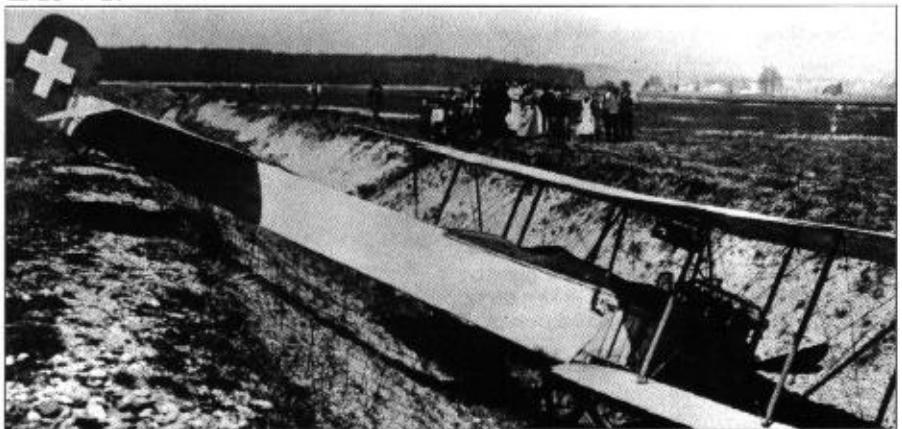
The Aviatik P 20 'light cavalry' biplane,
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24). An Aviatik B (P 14) sporting an extended exhaust pipe under the fuselage to draw the fumes and noise away from the pilot.

25). An Aviatik B (P 14) trainer that has seen better days. The engine is a four-cylinder Argus - now junk. The makeshift wooden lath grating to provide footing over the wing is the most interesting and unusual feature of this photograph.

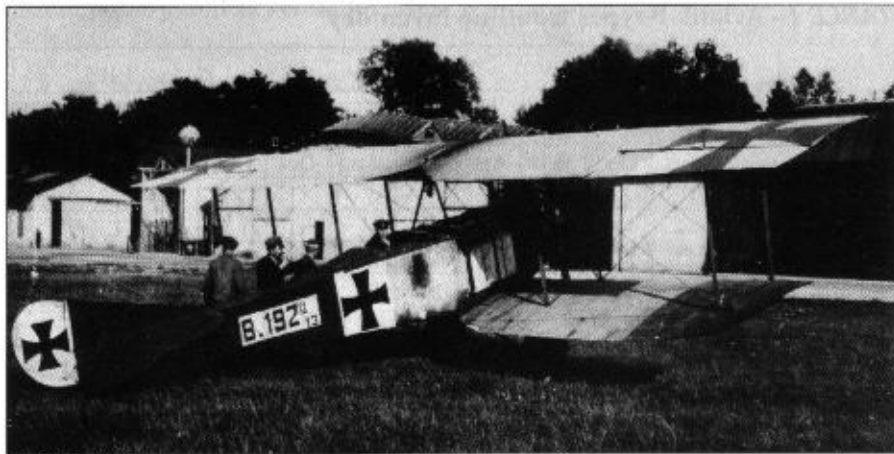
26). *Leutnant* Oskar Bider, the chief pilot and chief instructor of the Swiss air service, with the Aviatik P 14 No.26, powered by a 100-hp Mercedes engine. This machine competed in the aircraft competition in Bern in April 1914 and was subsequently purchased by the Swiss. The photograph is dated 4 June 1915.

27). The Swiss Aviatik P 14 No.26 taking a

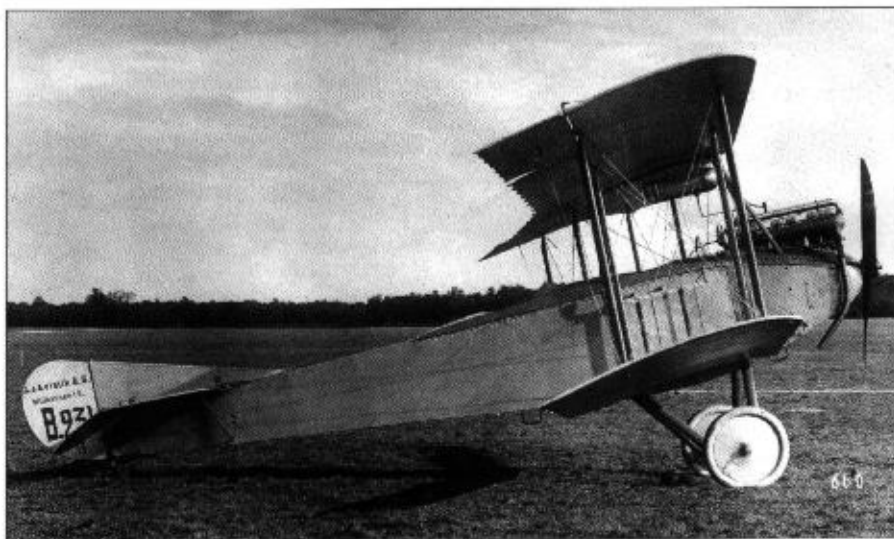
perfunctory *Sitzbad* while the curious on-lookers also are prevented from going further by another steep drainage ditch.

28). The Aviatik P 15 had a two-bay wing cellule, smaller dimensions throughout and a more refined shape than previous types. As explained in the text, Aviatik B.192a/13 was 'the first German aircraft to be armed with a machine gun for offensive purposes.' The 'a' in the designation probably signifies a replacement or repaired aircraft. For a while this aircraft, now fitted with dual controls, was retained at the Front as a trainer.

29, 30 and 31). Factory photographs of Aviatik B.231/13 (P 15) reveal an aircraft of fine lines and pleasant proportion imparting an air of uncluttered efficiency. The engine is a 100-hp Mercedes. The square wingtip shape was an Aviatik identification feature.



▲ 28 ▼ 29



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powered by a 100-hp Oberursel rotary engine, was flown by Stoeffler in the *Prinz Heinrich Flug* in May 1914 but was damaged in an emergency landing after a fuel line ruptured. In early June 1914, the P 20 was placed at the disposal of the *Fliegertruppe* in Darmstadt for evaluation. While it is doubtful that the Aviatik P 20 was purchased by the *Fliegertruppe*, it may have been impressed for service at mobilisation, but confirmation is lacking.

The Aviatik P 20 biplane, however, did serve in another capacity as the prototype for the trainer manufactured by Otto Schwade & Co. of Erfurt. The Aviatik 'light cavalry' design powered by the 100-hp Schwade *Stahlherz* rotary engine was deemed an ideal training combination. After signing a manufacturing licence, Schwade-built some eight or ten Aviatik P 20 trainers in late 1914-1915 for the Schwade-operated *Fabrik-Fliegerschule Erfurt*. The licence-built P 20 trainers were not army property but were Schwade-owned and operated to train military pilots under a war office contract.

Aviatik B-types at the front

As can be seen from the front-line inventory (Table 1), the Aviatik B-types remained operational through the end of 1915, when, with the arrival of armed C-class aircraft, they were gradually withdrawn from active service. The *Fliegertruppe* inventory of December 1917 showed that 17 Aviatik B.I and eight B.II biplanes were on hand but this total probably did not include the Aviatik-owned trainers at the flying school at Bork. The Aviatik repair shops kept the patched-up but surprisingly durable assembly of veterans in operating condition to provide basic flight training through 1918.

Of the 101 Aviatik B-type biplanes ordered in 1913, many were still operational at mobilisation to which must be added some 75 Aviatik B-types built in 1914-1915, plus a handful of civil aircraft that were requisitioned when the war began. An analysis of Aviatik work numbers leads to the estimate that, all-told, some 360 Aviatik B-types were built and delivered to the German and Austro-Hungarian air services from 1913 through 1915. The 1914 and 1915 B-type serial numbers for the Aviatik machines have only been partially recovered because the pertinent German records for these years are missing.

In the January 1920 report to the Inter-Allied Aeronautical Control Commission, the German *Luftfahrt-Friedenskommission* (aviation peace commission) reported that 13 Aviatik P 15 biplanes (12 in flying condition and one less engine) were stored at a factory location which was certainly Bork.

Acknowledgements

I am in debt to Reinhard Zankl for his critical reading and cogent suggestions regarding the manuscript. I greatly

benefited from Roy Meyers' encyclopedic knowledge of cockpit interiors. Thank you to Reinard Kastner and J rg M ckler for the use of several photographs. All other photographs are from my collection. Thank you to my dear wife Lillian who so patiently has corrected my grammar and spelling over all these years. The opinions expressed and any errors herein are mine alone. I wish to refrain from expressing any opinion regarding aircraft markings or camouflage colours since this is the responsibility of series editor Ray Rimell.

Notes:

1). The reader is directed to the Albatros DATAFILES on the LVG B.I, Albatros B.I, and B.II written by the same author.

2). In the pre-war *Fliegertruppe* only two categories of aircraft existed: the A-class was the designation used for unarmed monoplanes and the B-class for unarmed biplanes. For example, pre-war aircraft were simply designated A.66/13 and B.43/14.

3). Henri Jeannin's brother, Emil, gained extensive competition experience with Aviatik aircraft before forming his own aircraft company, the Emil Jeannin Flugzeugbau in Johannisthal in 1912.

4). The original Mulhouse office building and attached workshops are still standing and in use. It was certainly a franco-phone business. In a letter dated 24 January 1912, we learn that Bruno B chner left Aviatik's employ on account of not feeling well there because everyone spoke French, a language of which he and his wife had no command.

5). Robert Wild had to return to Switzerland when the war began in 1914. He designed the derivative Wild WT biplane for the Swiss air service (September 1915) but lacking support, Wild sought employment in the Italian aircraft industry. Erich Tilgenkamp, *Schweizer Luftfahrt*, Bd.II, Aero Verlag, Zurich, 1941, p.291.

6). *Flugsport*, 8 May 1912, p.400.

7). It should be noted that the company designations P 13, P 14, P 15, etc., referred to the Aviatik model number and not the year of appearance. The significance of the letter P is not known, but may refer to a French word.

8). The other B-type aircraft orders signed in 1913 were: LVG 88 aircraft, Albatros 48, Euler 24, DFW 18 and AEG 2.

9). The *National Flugspende* was a national aviation fund established in 1912 to distribute publicly-subscribed monies to flight schools and flying competitions for the purpose of raising aeronautical awareness and military readiness.

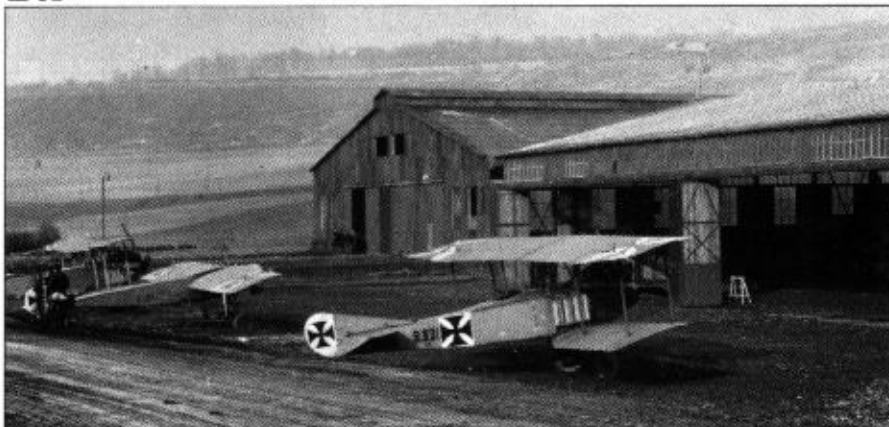
10). As evidence of durability it should be noted that at least 47 SAML-Aviatik biplanes remained on the 1926 Italian civil

TABLE 1 - Aviatik B-types frontline inventory

TYPE	1914			1915						1916		
	31 Aug	31 Oct	31 Dec	28 Feb	30 Apr	30 Jun	31 Aug	31 Oct	31 Dec	28 Feb	30 Apr	30 Jun
B/12	1											
B/13	34	24	13	4	4	2	1	1			1	1
B.I	12	43	51	45	76	48	35	20	11	2	5	
B.II						1	29	38	32	18	7	2



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aircraft registry. Bureau Veritas Archive, Paris.

11). It was reported that 12 Aviatik biplanes were ordered by Bulgaria but there is no record of delivery. *Der Motorwagen*, 20 June 1914.

12). The competition Aviatik was assigned Swiss air service No.26. After Wild returned to Switzerland in 1914, he designed a smaller version of which six were built. Further development was hampered by a tight-fisted fiscal policy. Erich Tilgenkamp, *Schweizer Luftfahrt*, Vol.II, Aero Verlag, Zürich, 1941, p.287, 291.

13). For details see Peter M Grosz, G Haddow, P Schiemer, *Austro-Hungarian Army Aircraft of World War One*. FMP, 2nd Ed., Boulder, 2002.

14). The evacuation came none too soon; during the first battle of Mülhausen director Châtel and his wife were killed in their home which was hit by a French artillery shell on 12 August 1914. Georg P Neumann, *In der Luft unbesiegt*, Lehmann, München, 1923, p.14.

15). Alex Imrie, *Pictorial History of the German Army Air Service 1914-1918*, Ian Allan, London, 1971. □

32). An Aviatik company pilot in the cockpit of B.231/13 (P 15) with his hand on the large control wheel. The gravity tank hangs in the centre-section with the fuel feed line running through the water pipe above the Mercedes engine in order to pre-heat the fuel. Behind the pilot is a covered storage bin.

33). A gathering representing three years of German military aviation progress. Dominating the scene stands Aviatik B.231/13 (P 15) now in full military rig. Next in line is the Fokker A.103/14 (M 8) followed by an LVG B.II 780/15 biplane.

34). Aviatik company pilot Arthur Faller in the rear seat and observer *Leutnant Meyer* in the front enliven the image of this Aviatik B.342/14 (P 15) biplane fitted with three-bay wings. The instrument suspended from the centre-section struts is an altimeter. The engine is a 120-hp Mercedes D.II.

35). In the foreground a two-bay Aviatik B (P 15) biplane prepares to start, while in the distance a three-bay Aviatik B (P 15) awaits its turn. Cruising above is a three-bay Aviatik B.553/15 (P 15).

36). This three-bay Aviatik B (P 15) was powered by a 120-hp Mercedes engine. An Albatros B.I stands in the background.

37). *Oberleutnant von Osteroth's* three-bay Aviatik B.136/14 (P 15) after being pulled from a hangar which was destroyed by a well-placed Russian bomb. The unit was *Briefstauben Abteilung Ostende* on the Eastern Front.

38). An unprepared, soft landing ground, the nemesis of all WWI aircraft. Here a three-bay Aviatik B.696/14 (P 15) suffered a banged up undercarriage and wing tip. The rear fuselage shows signs of having been over-painted, leaving the serial number untouched.



▲ 35 ▼ 36



▲ 37 ▼ 38



Colours and markings by Ray Rimell

The Aviatiks described in these pages bore relatively simple markings over largely natural finishes. Plain clear-doped linen covering is evident on the vast majority of examples with metal areas painted a glossy dark colour - most likely grey or possibly grey/green - the exact shades cannot be established. Study of the photos in this *DATAFILE* reveal a number of Aviatiks bore a dark uppersurface finish but what this colour was thus far remains another mystery.

National markings in various styles were applied liberally to the wing surfaces and the upper wing *Eiserne Kreuze* were painted right out to the wing tips on both surfaces. Stencils were applied to struts and all major components in black characters.

KEY TO COLOUR PLATES:

1). Aviatik B.268/13 (P.14).

Overall clear-doped with dark-painted nose panels, cockpit decking and struts, B.268/13, bears the serial and company details on its comma-shaped rudder.

Sources: photos 9 and 10 on page 2.

2). Aviatik B.268/3 (P.14).

Here's the same machine as *Plate 1* shown, later in the war with an early form of *Eiserne Kreuze* on the comma-shaped rudder.

Source: photo 11 on page 2.

3). Aviatik P.14, No.26.

This Aviatik was purchased by the Swiss in 1914/15 and seen here wearing that country's national markings. Clear-doped it has dark-painted metal areas, probably grey as shown.

Sources: photos 26 and 27 on page 6.

Colour art © 2003 Bob Pearson and Albatros Productions, Ltd.

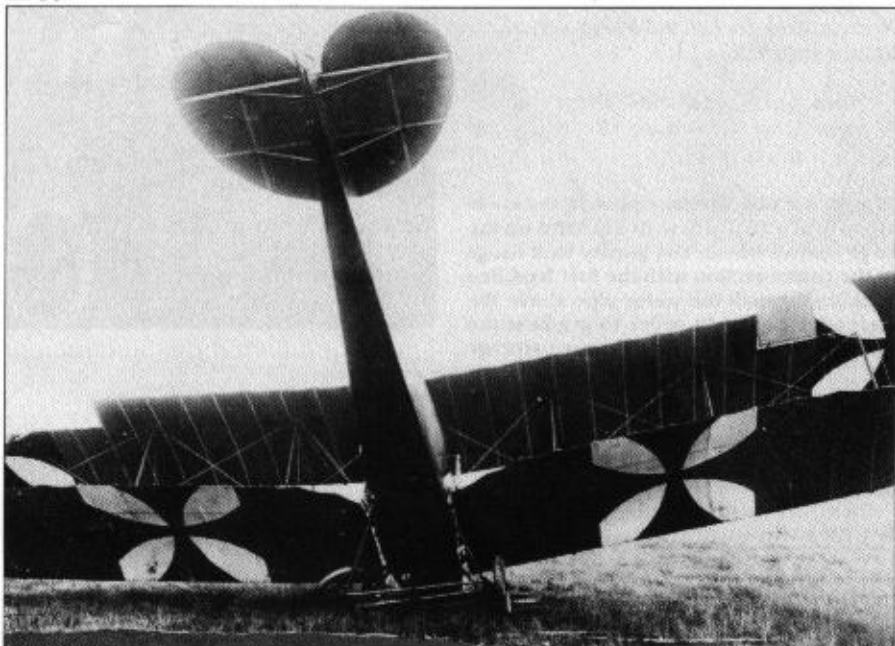
39). Sitting behind the Mercedes engine are *Freiherr* von Guvenberg and pilot *Leutnant* Paul Fischer of *Feld-Flieger Abteilung* 34. It appears that most, if not all, three-bay Aviatik B-types (P 15) were powered by the 120-hp Mercedes engine.

40). A three-bay Aviatik B (P 15) showing the rigging, insignia application, tail assembly and a foursome of impressive crosses.

41). *Leutnant* Max Eglau (with fur collar) and pilot with a three-bay Aviatik B (P 15) while attached to *Feld-Flieger Abteilung* 67. Barely visible is the claw brake mounted on the undercarriage strut.



▲ 39



▲ 40 ▼ 41

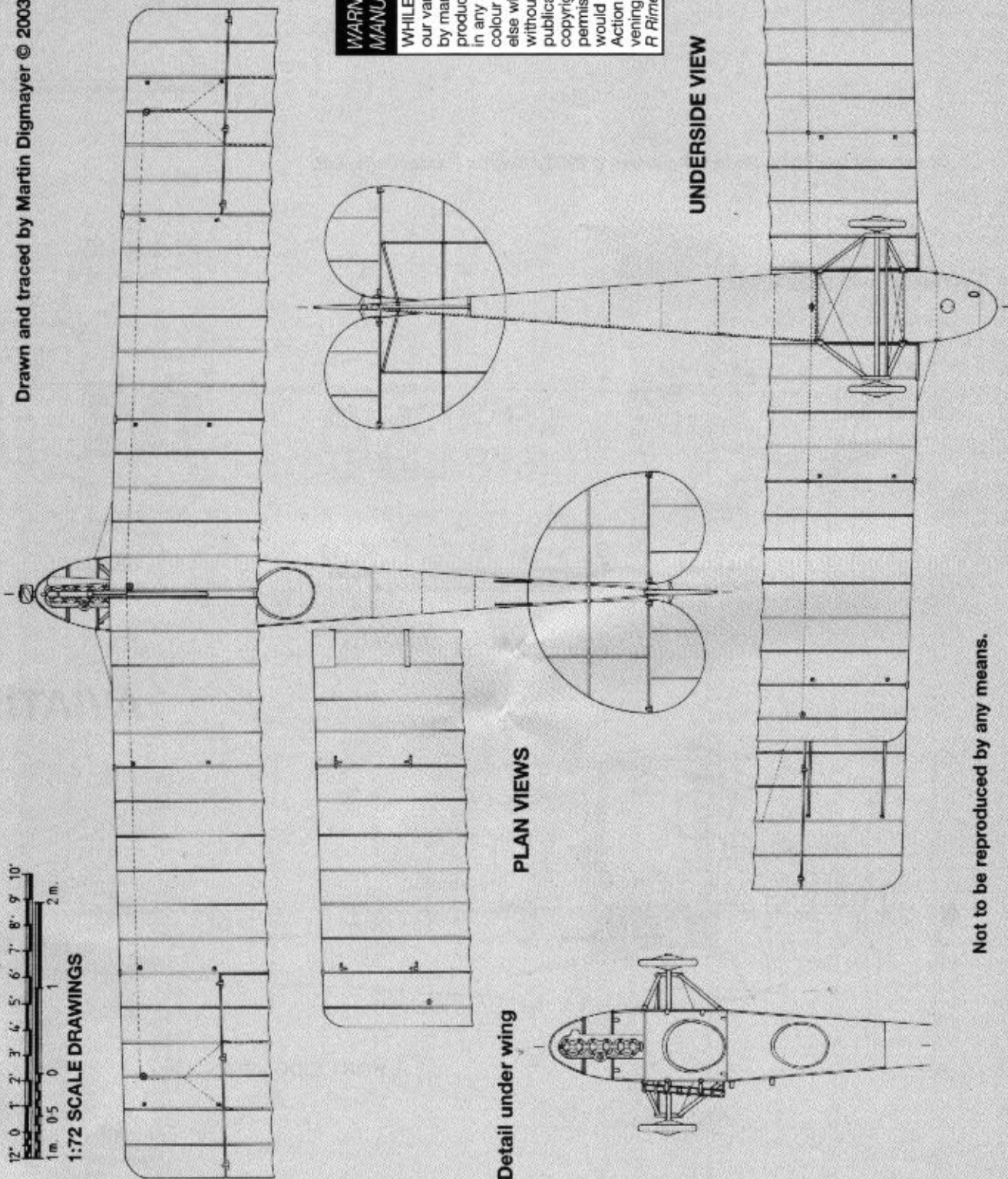


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1:72 SCALE DRAWINGS

AVIATIK B.I (P14/1913)



PLAN VIEWS

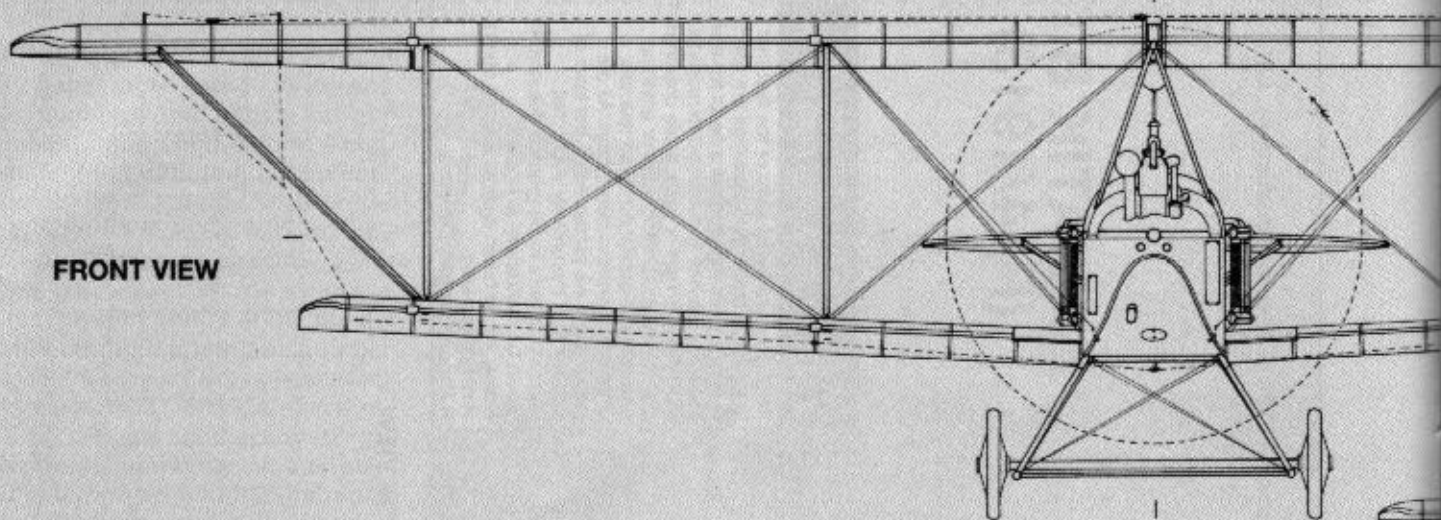
Detail under wing

UNDERSIDE VIEW

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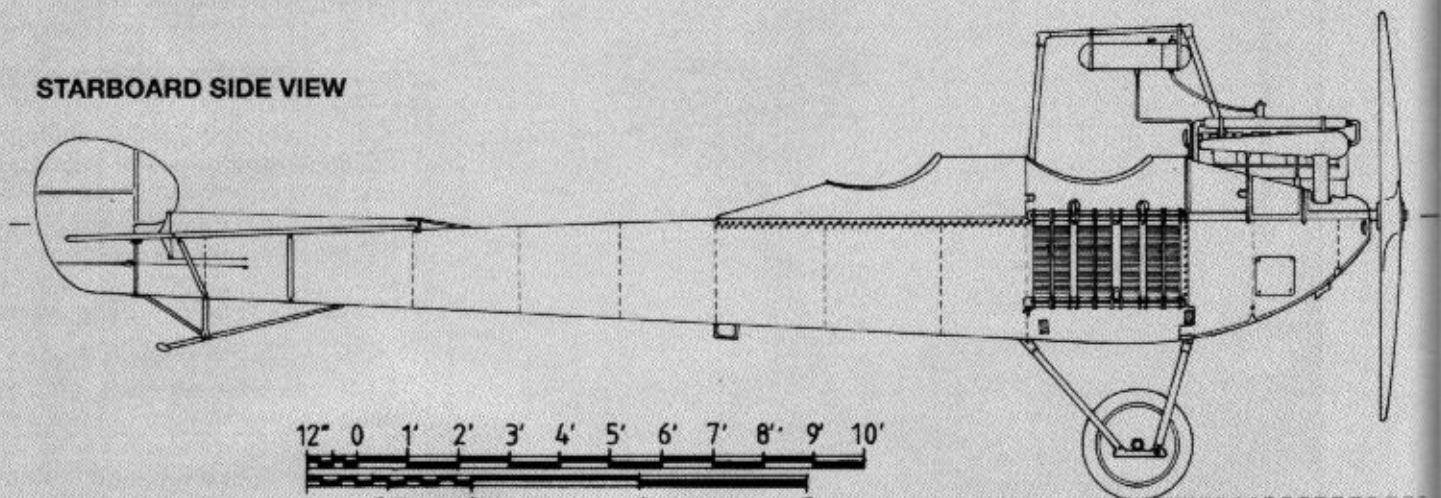
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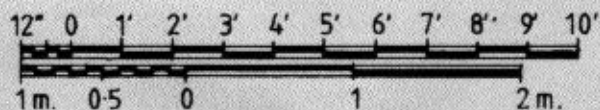


FRONT VIEW

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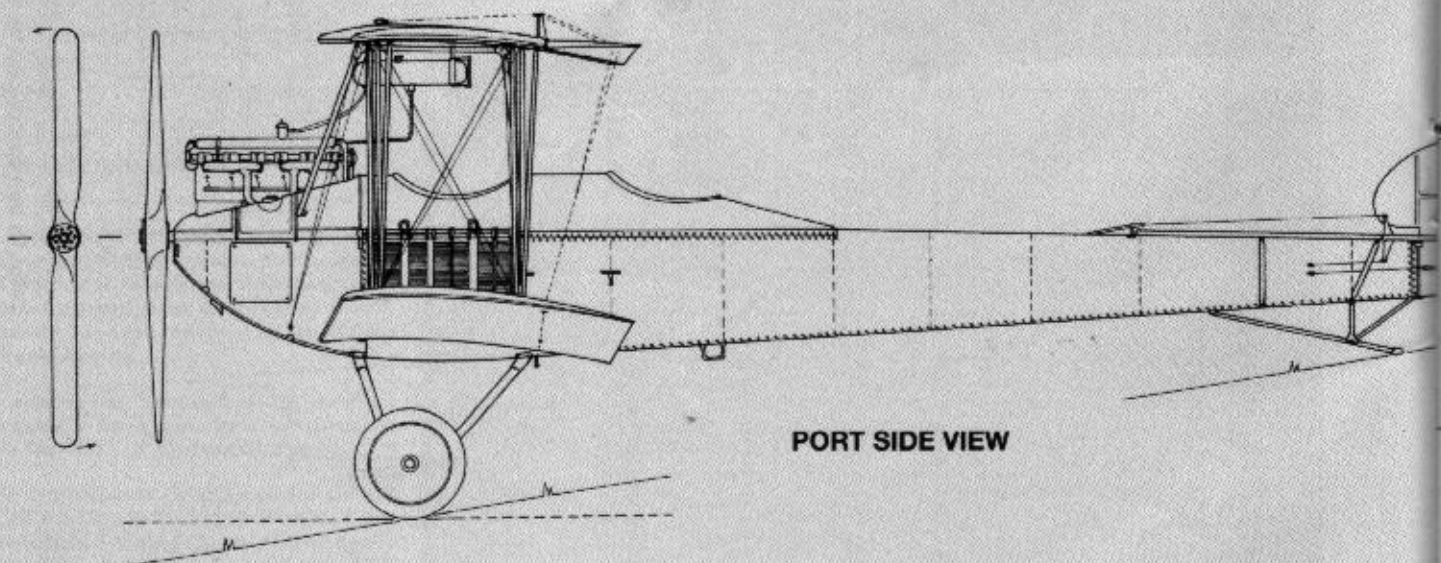


STARBOARD SIDE VIEW



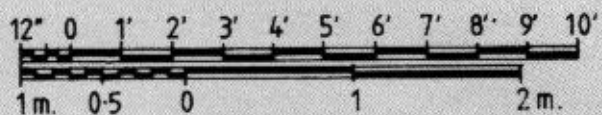
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AVIATIK B.I

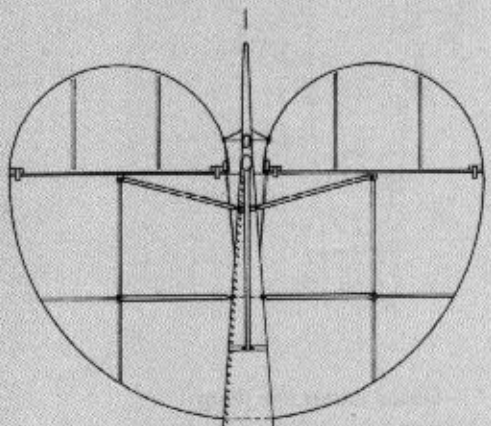
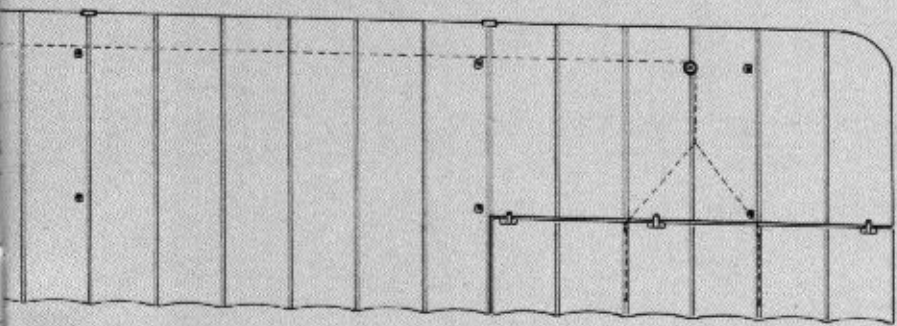


PORT SIDE VIEW

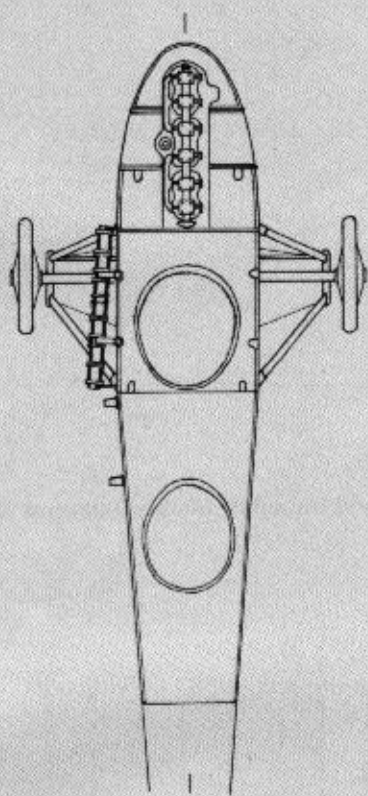
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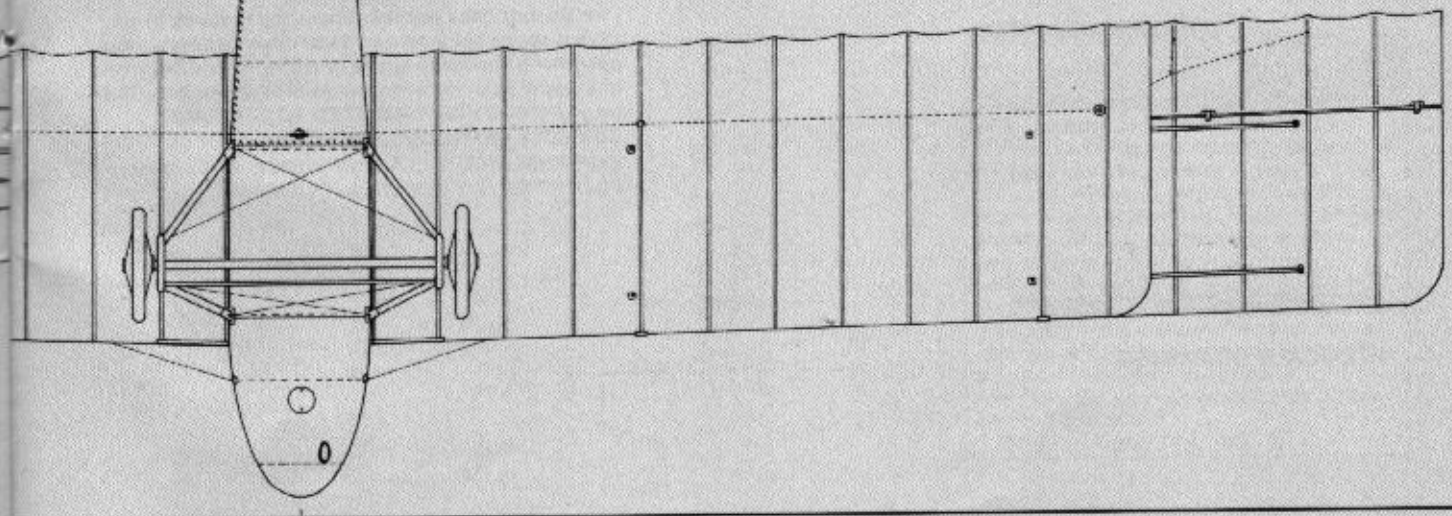


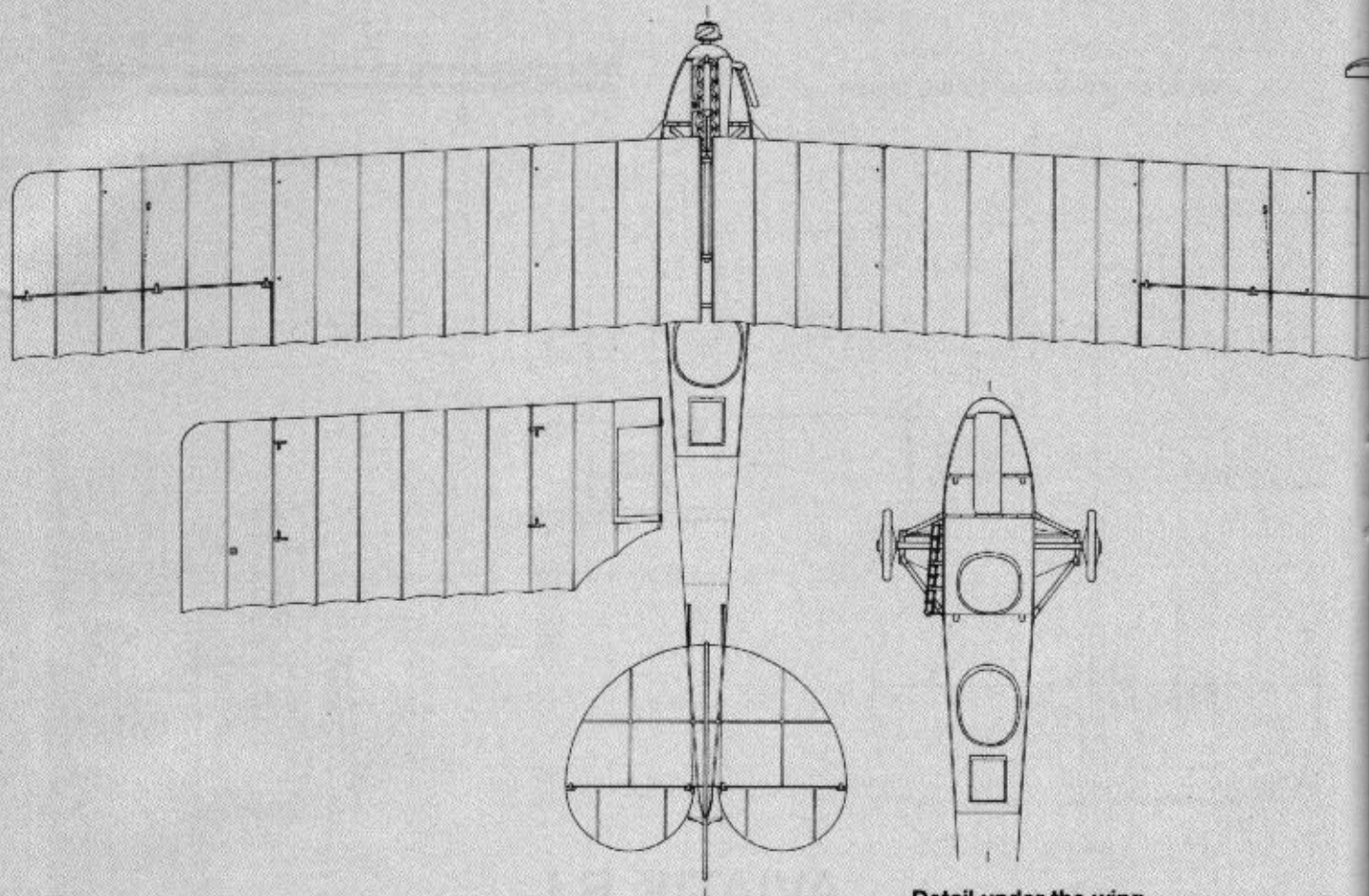
AVIATIK B.I (P14/1913)



UNDERSIDE VIEW

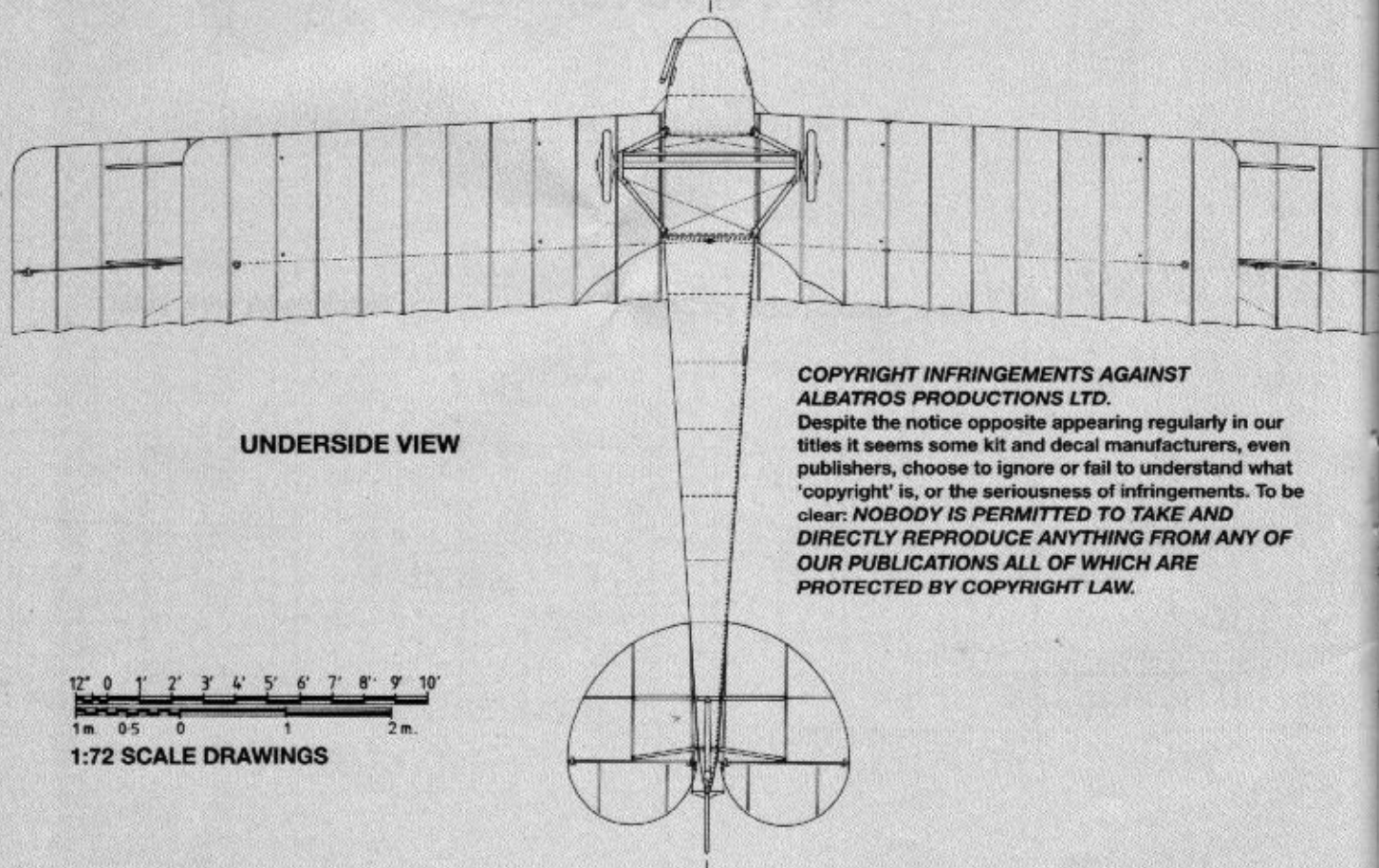
Detail under wing (late)





Detail under the wing.

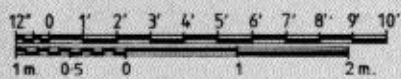
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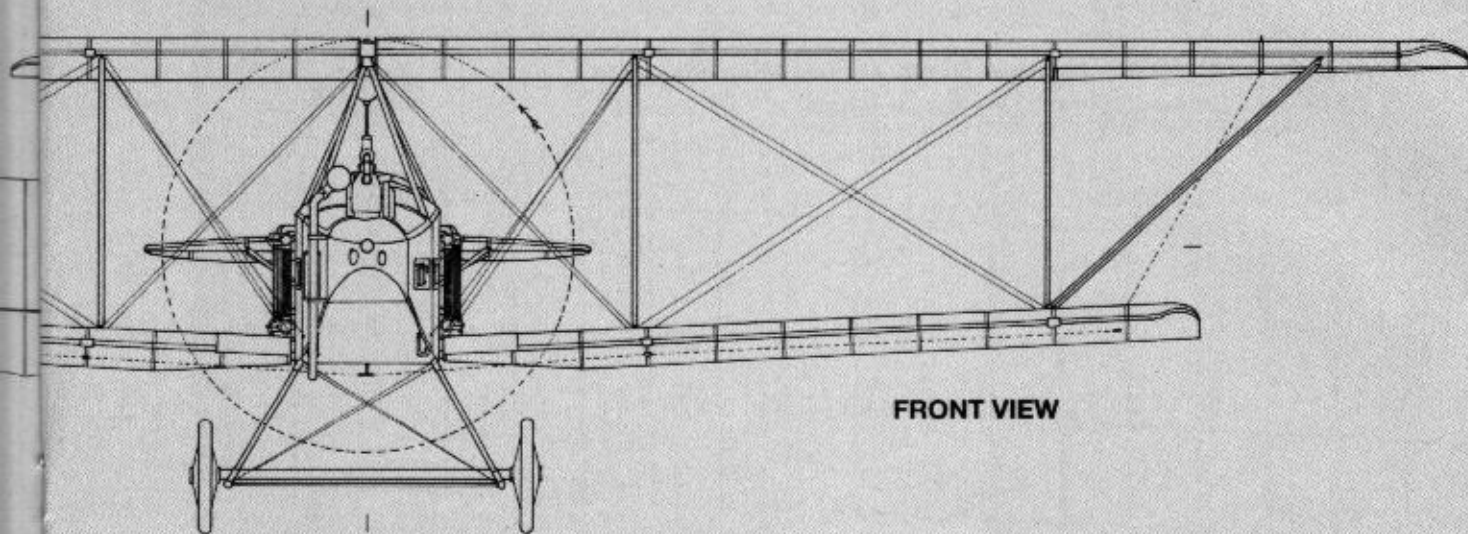
UNDERSIDE VIEW

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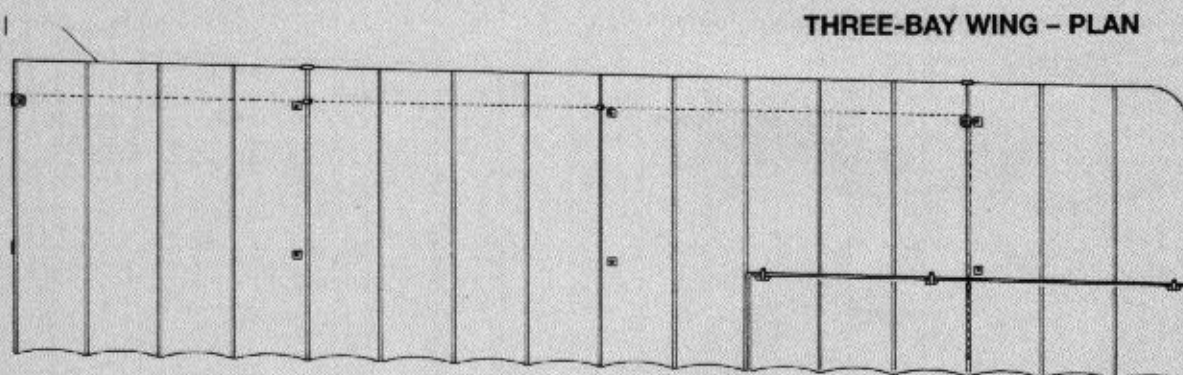
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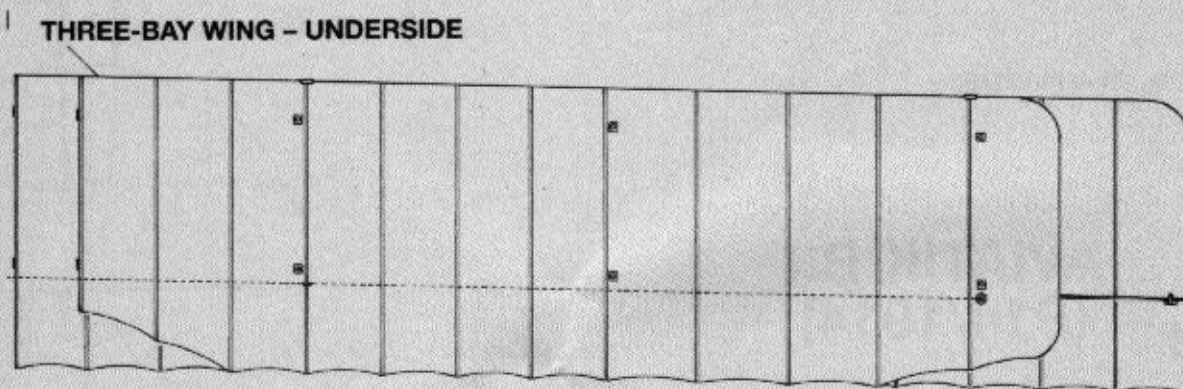
1:72 SCALE DRAWINGS



FRONT VIEW

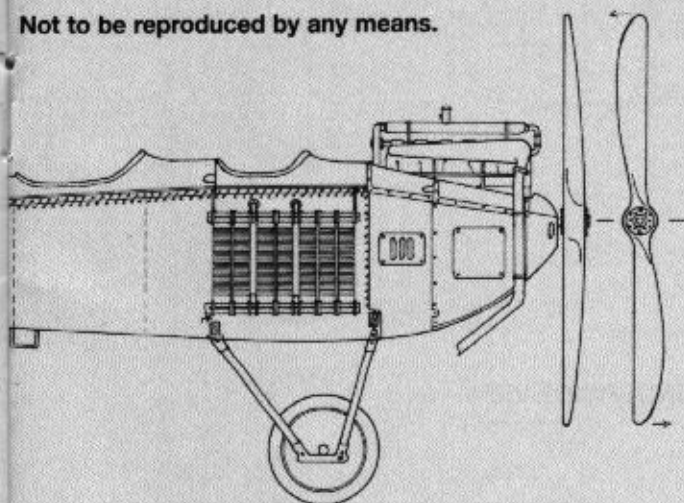


THREE-BAY WING - PLAN



THREE-BAY WING - UNDERSIDE

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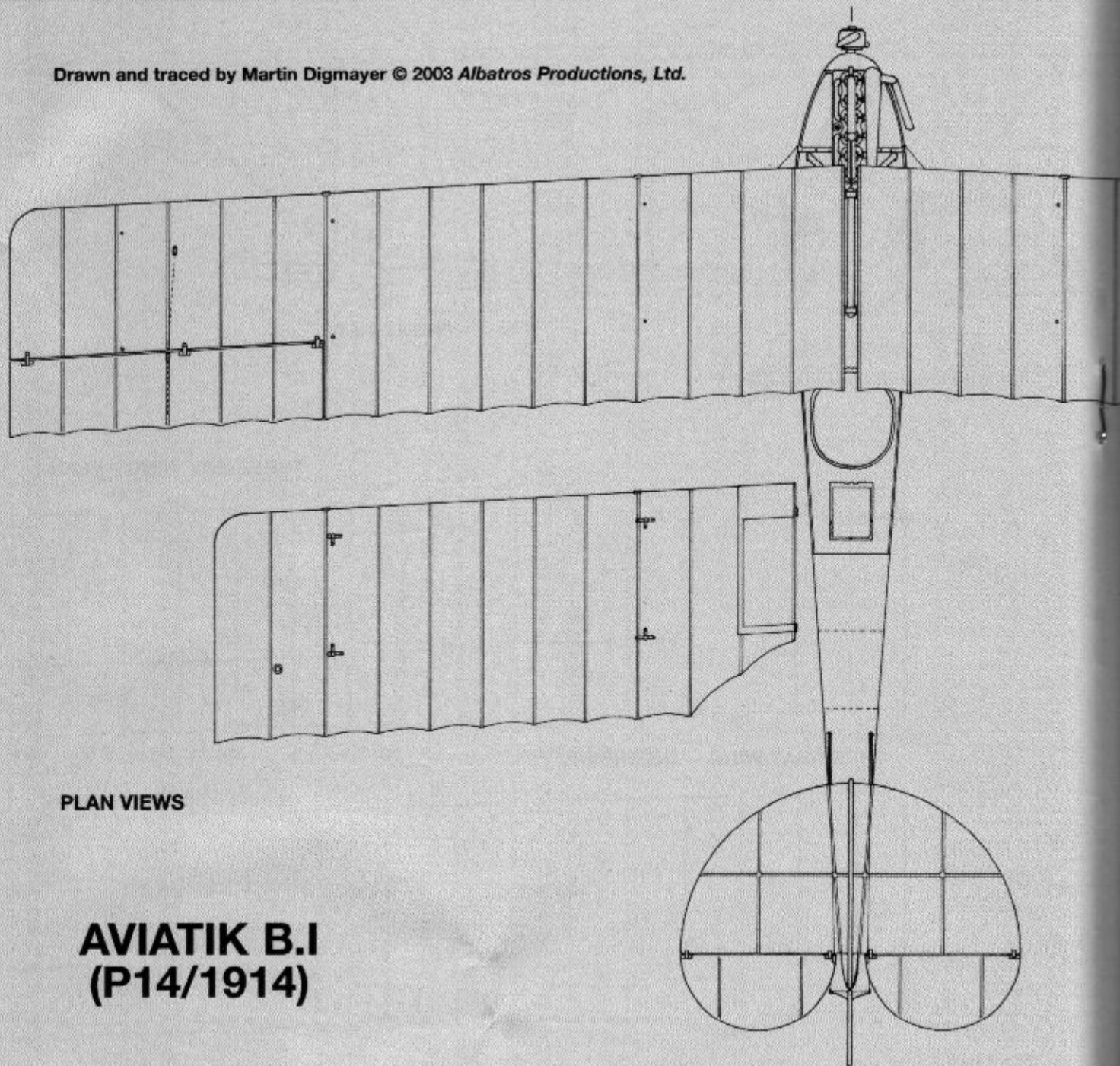


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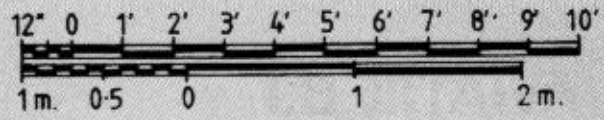
PLAN VIEWS

AVIATIK B.I (P14/1914)

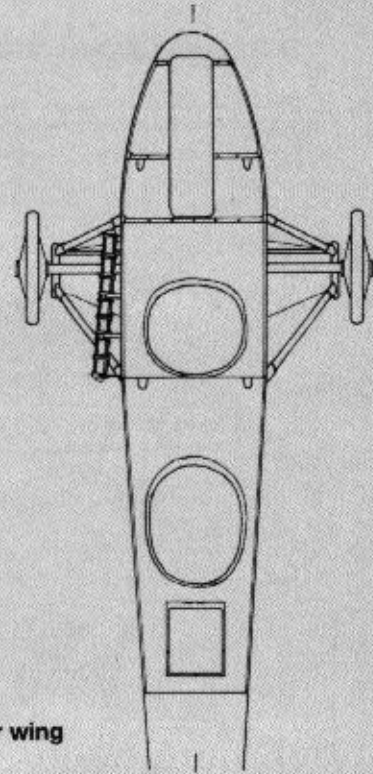
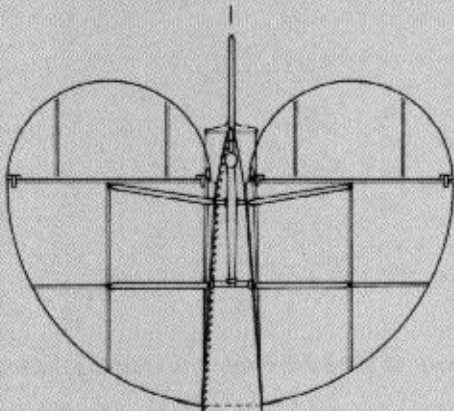
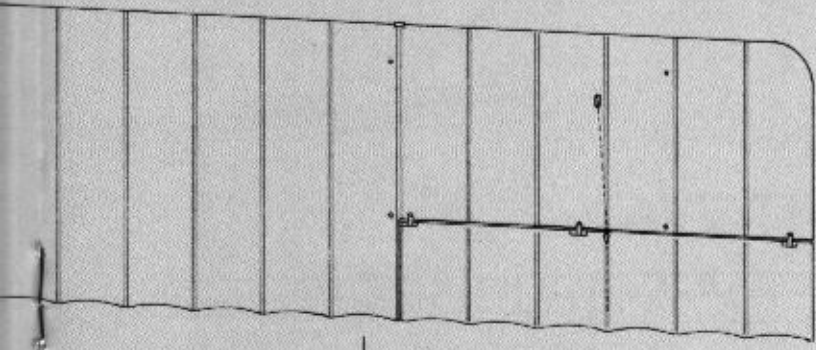
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UNDERSIDE VIEW

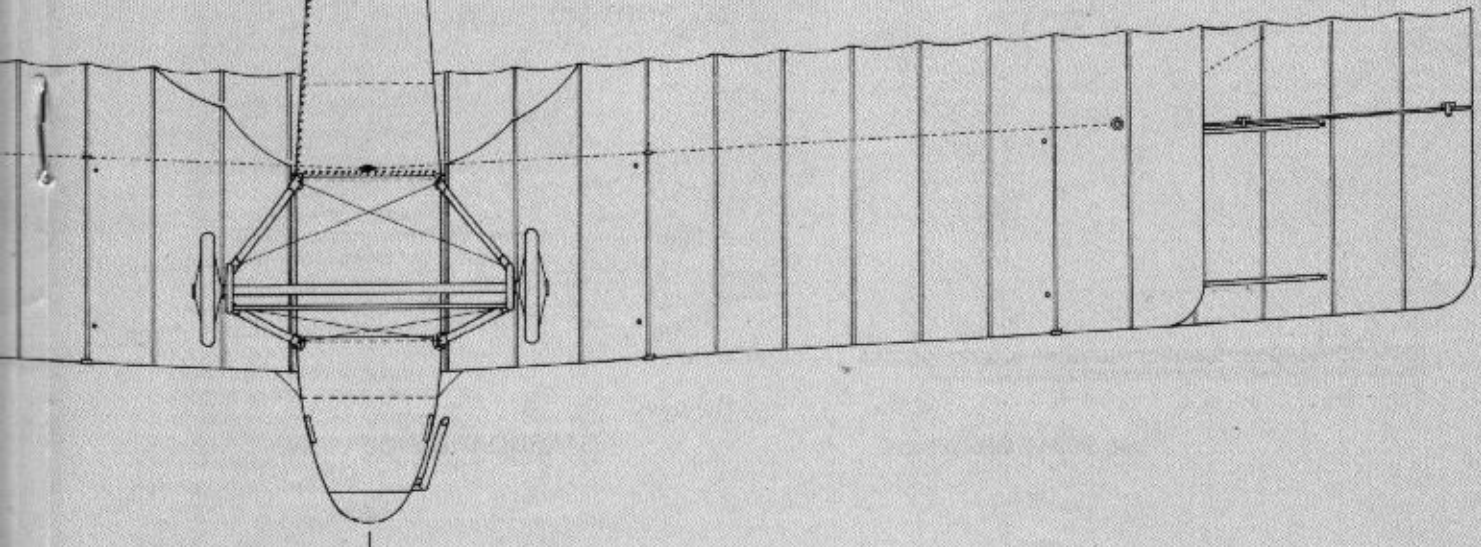


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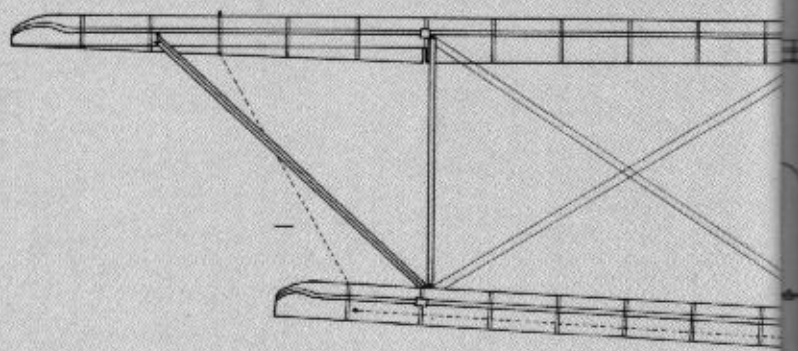


Detail under wing

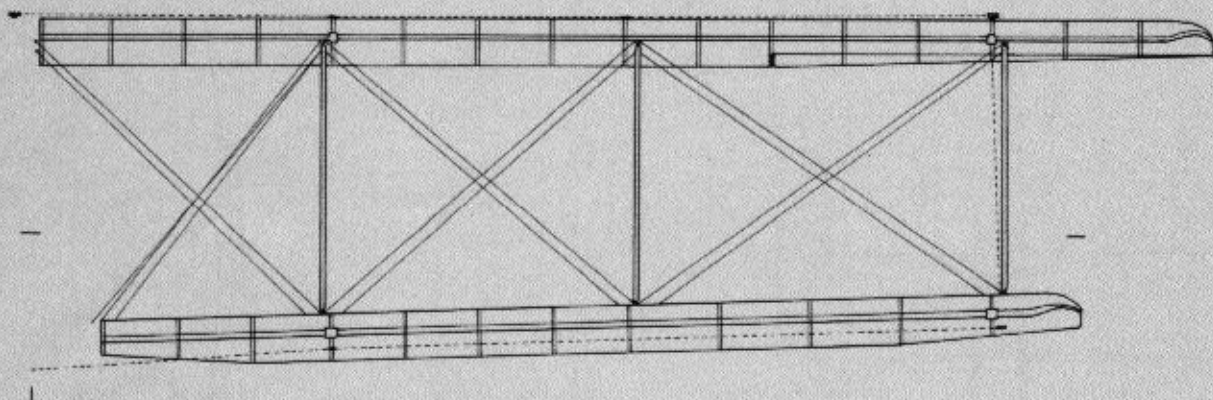
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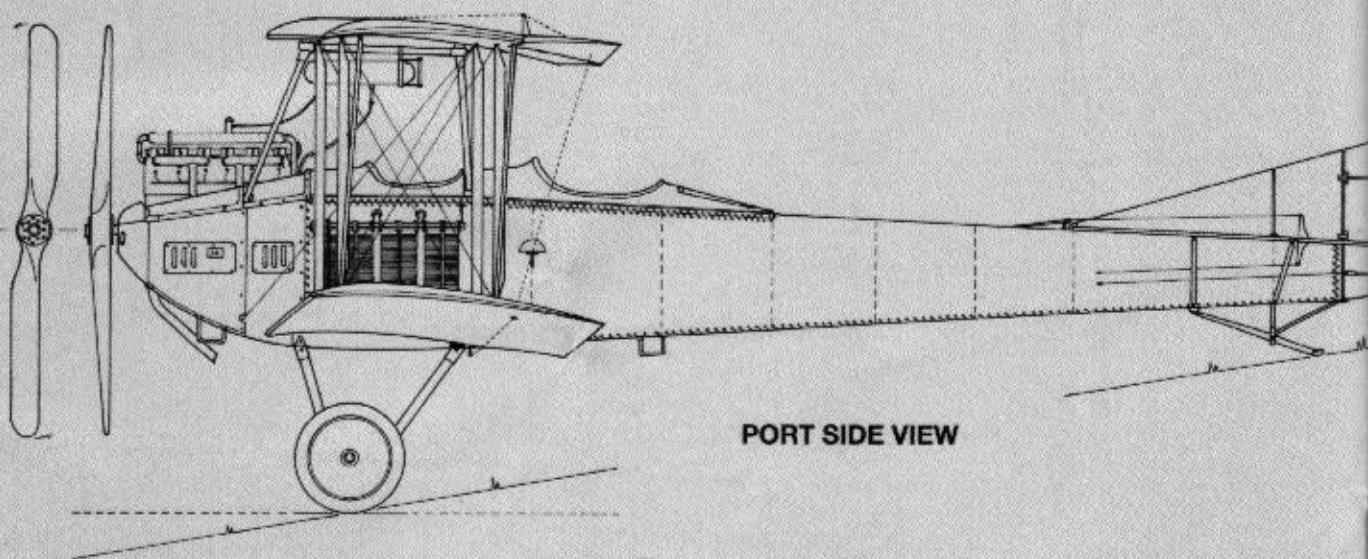
AVIATIK B.I (P14/1914)



THREE-BAY WING - FRONT



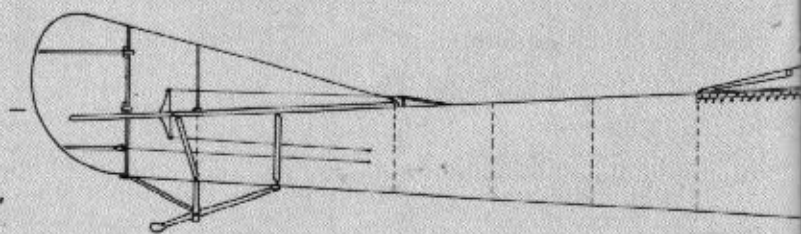
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PORT SIDE VIEW



1:48 SCALE DRAWINGS



STARBOARD SIDE VIEW



FRONT VIEW

AVIATIK B.I (P14/1914)

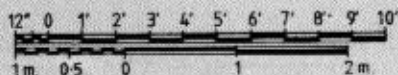


PORT SIDE VIEW



STARBOARD SIDE VIEW

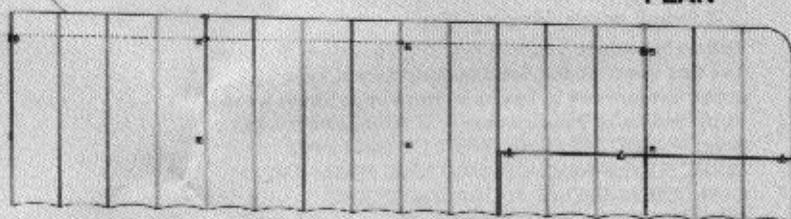
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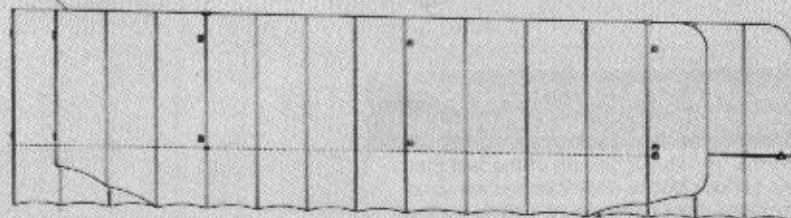
1:72 SCALE DRAWINGS

▼ THREE-BAY WINGS

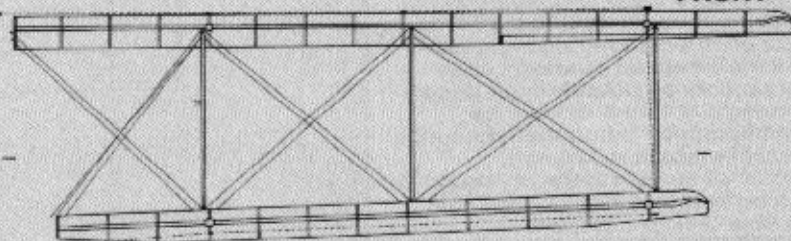
PLAN



UNDERSIDE

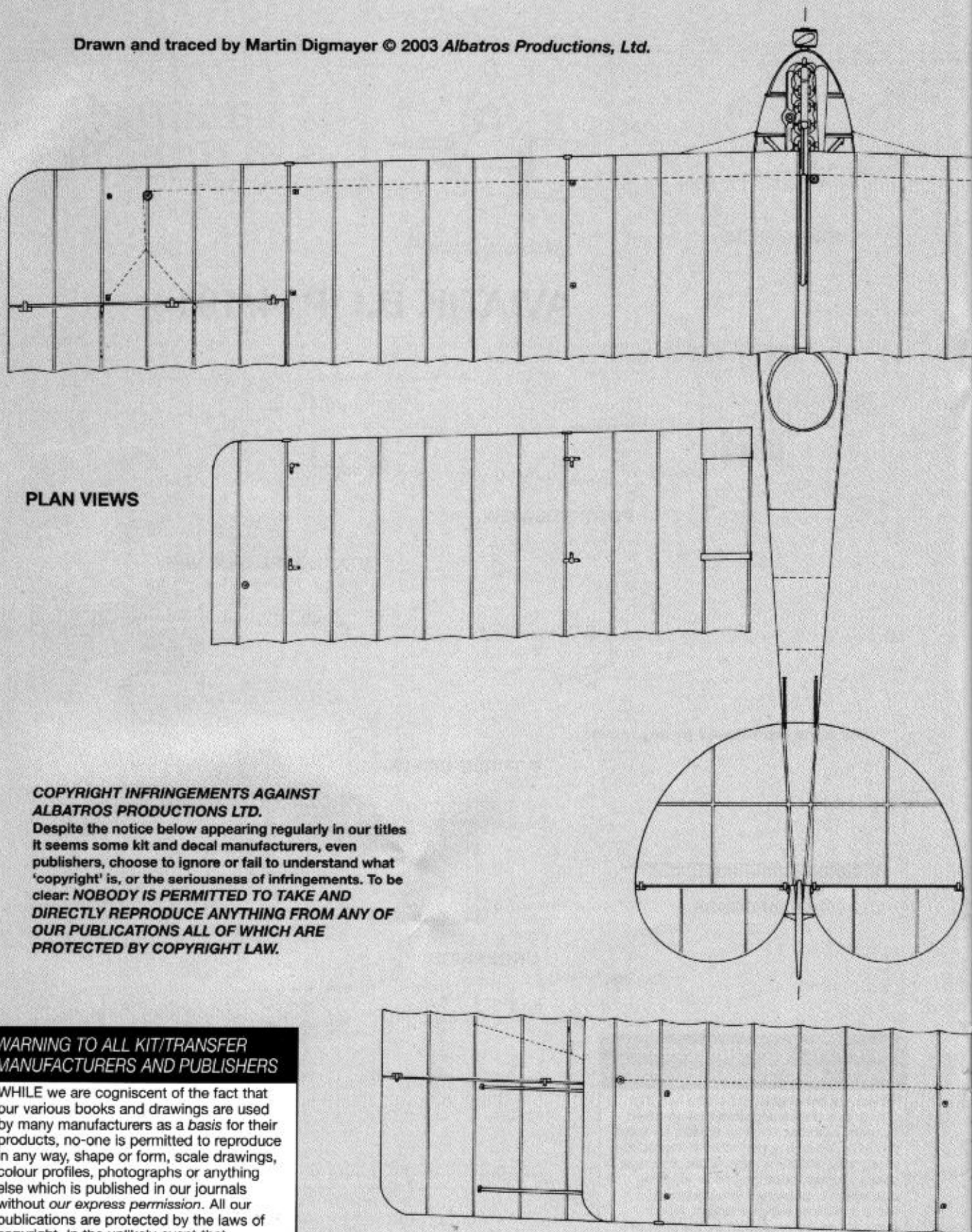


FRONT



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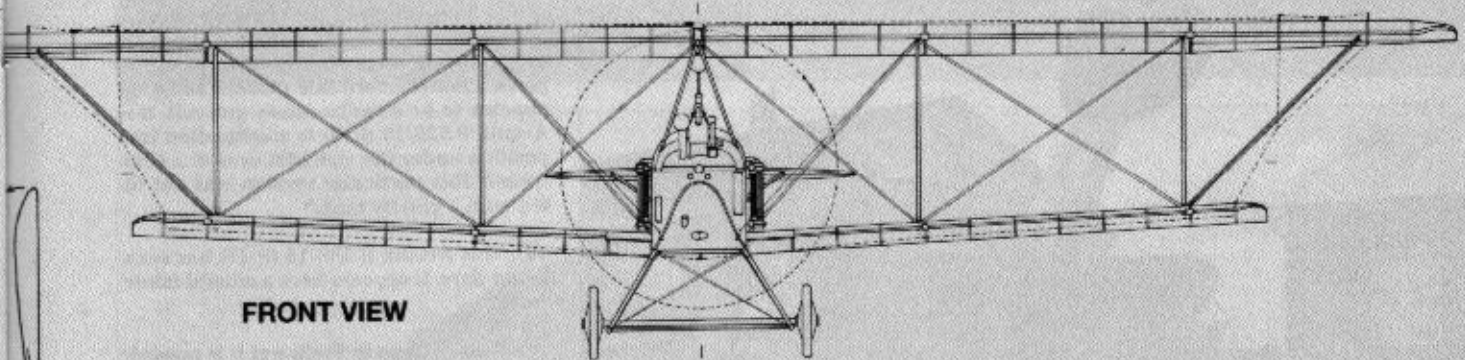
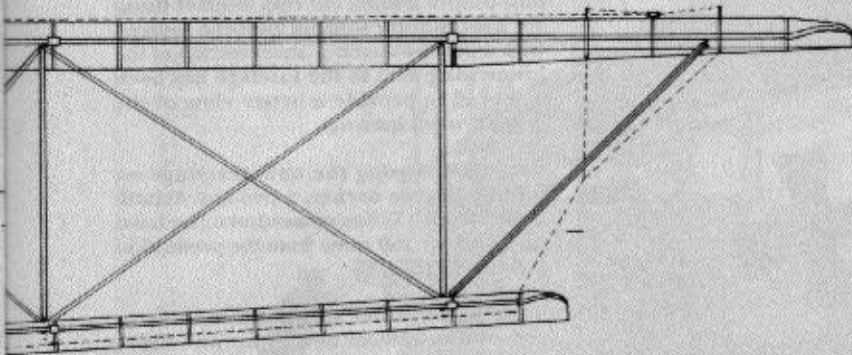
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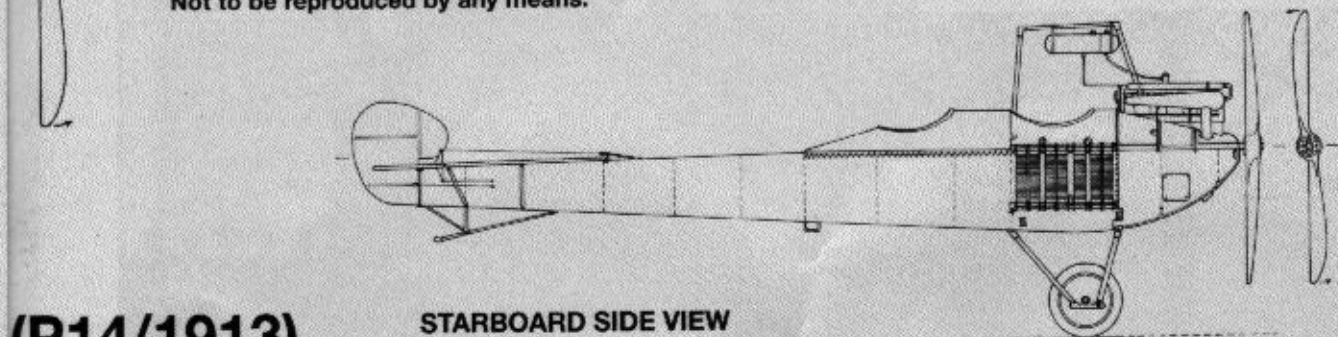
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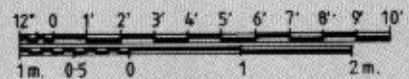
FRONT VIEW

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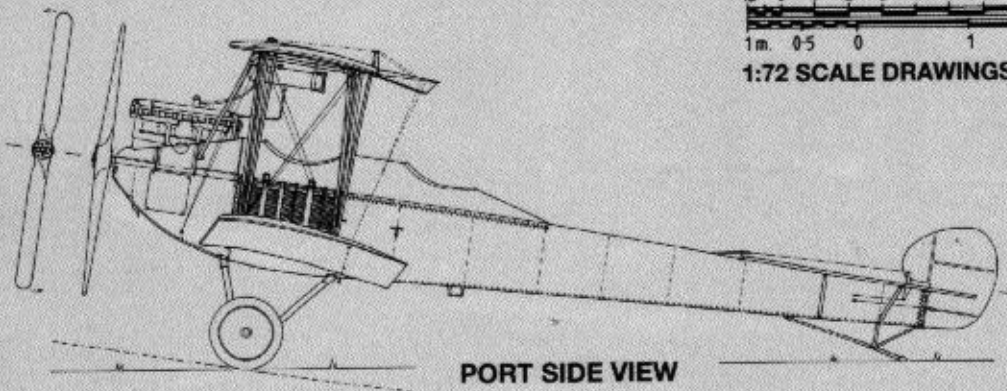


STARBOARD SIDE VIEW

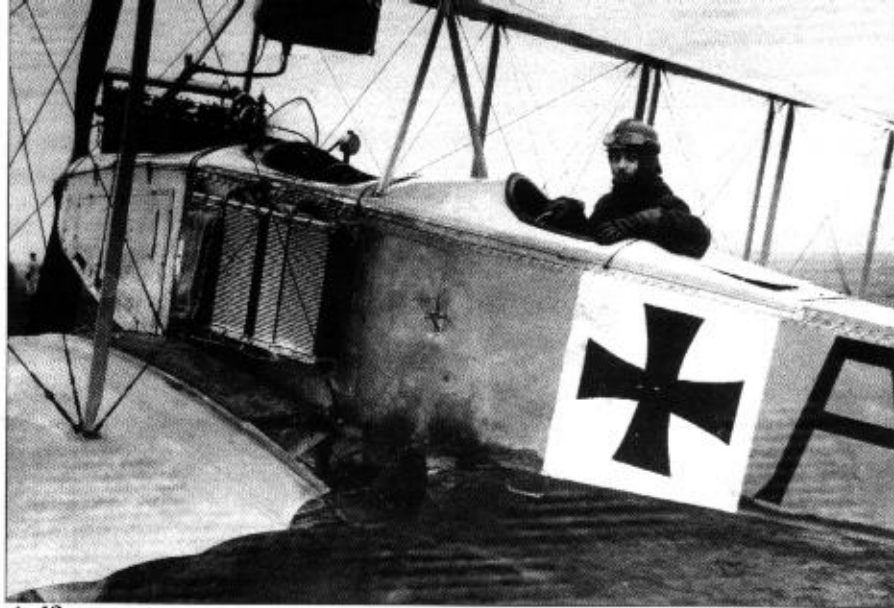
(P14/1913)



1:72 SCALE DRAWINGS



PORT SIDE VIEW



▲ 42

42). Looking somewhat the worse for wear, a three-bay Aviatik B (P 15) converted as a dual-control trainer. For cold weather flying the front radiator segment has been covered with a padded cover. A small section of the lower wing next to the fuselage has been removed to provide a better view of the ground when landing.



▲ 43 ▼ 44

43). After erasing the undercarriage on hitting a house corner, a two-bay Aviatik B.495/15 (P 15) has come down the hard way. This aircraft came from the production batch B.483-562/15.

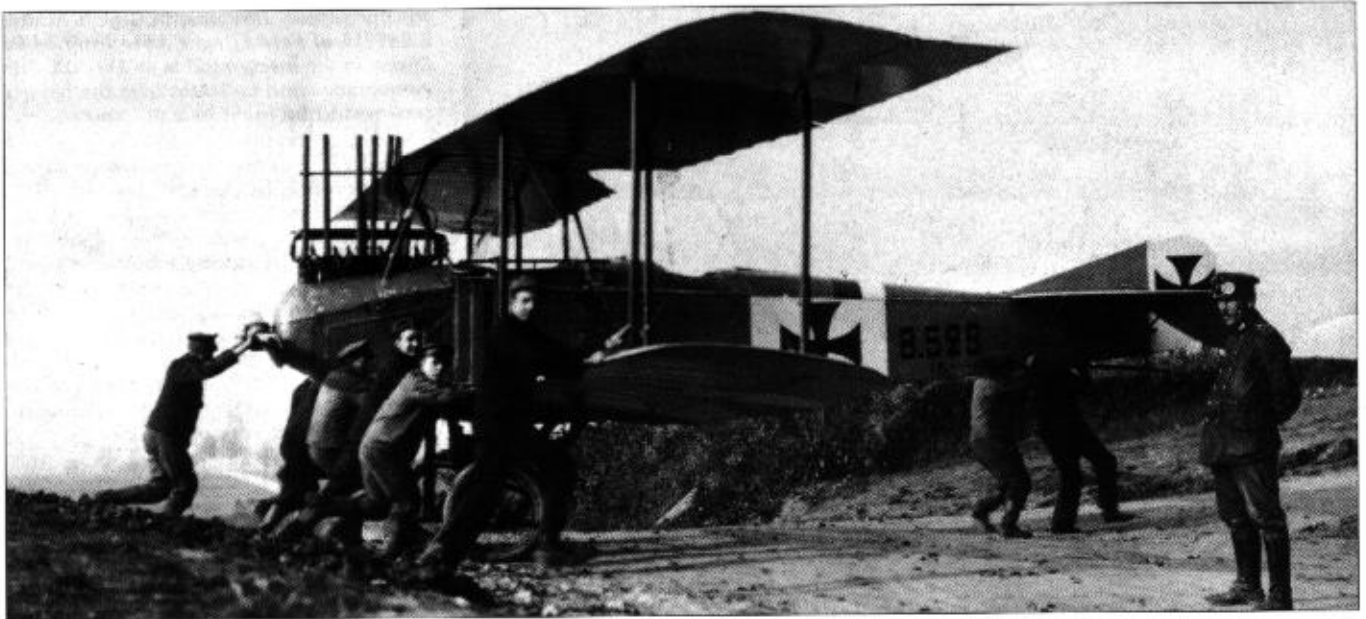
44). Feeling rather silly but also lucky to come down without injury on a solo flight, the smiling pilot poses with a brand-new Aviatik B.522/15 (P 15) that was attached to *Flieger Ersatz Abteilung 2* in Schneldemühl. If it had been a veteran trainer, the oily effluence from the elongated exhaust stack would have smudged the top wing fabric.

45). Sporting a wonderful array of organ pipes, a non-standard side radiator and what appears to be a rudimentary gun-rail, this Aviatik B.529/15 (P15) is manhandled into position under the watchful eyes of a *Feldwebel*. This particular version was not fitted with a gravity tank.

46). This Aviatik B.536/15 (P 15) has seen better days. It appears have a natural fabric finish.

47). Festive times in Freiburg! It is possible to count 17 brand-new Aviatik B-types, composed of two- and three-bay Aviatik B (P 15) biplanes. The second and third in line are the three-bay Aviatik B.664/14 and B.32/14.

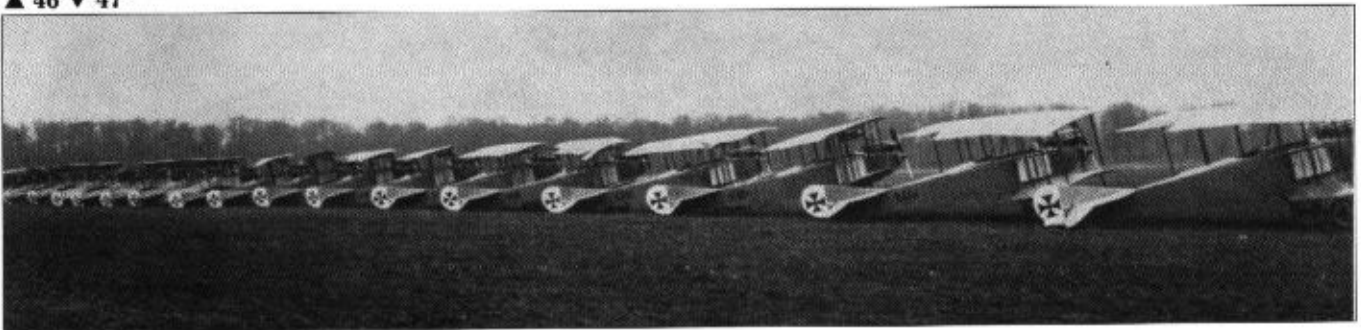




▲ 45



▲ 46 ▼ 47





48). Purportedly *Hauptmann Geyer's* Aviatik B.549/15 of *Feld-Flieger Abteilung 34* in *Cunel*. In the foreground is an *LVG B.I*. The monoplane wind indicator over the hangar roof would be ideal in a diorama.

49 and 50). Captured in pristine condition by the French in early September 1915, Aviatik B.558/15, powered by a 120-hp Mercedes D.II engine, represents the final design phase including a button-shaped rudder and a triangular gravity tank under the centre-section.

51). Aviatik B (P 15), possibly attached to *Feld-Flieger Abteilung 51*, showing the elongated exhaust stack, nose ventilation holes and massive *Reschke* airscrew.

Page 26:
52). Aviatik B.576/15 (P 15) in a common predicament. This version does not have a gravity tank or button rudder.

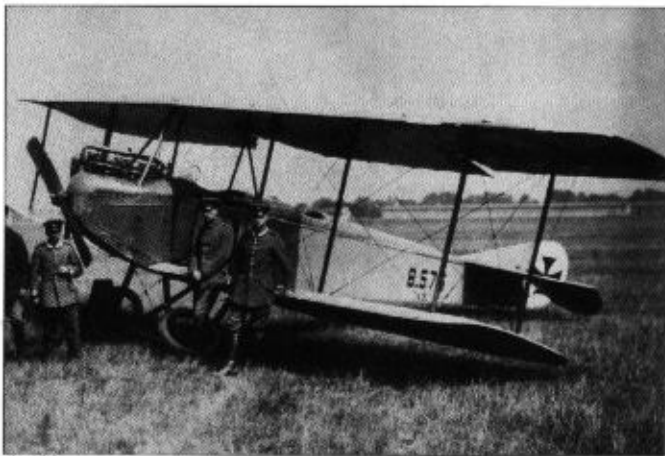
▲ 48



▲ 49 ▼ 50







▲ 52



▲ 56



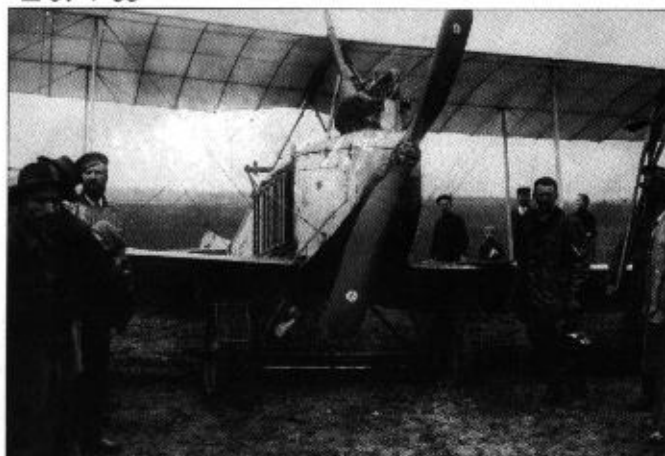
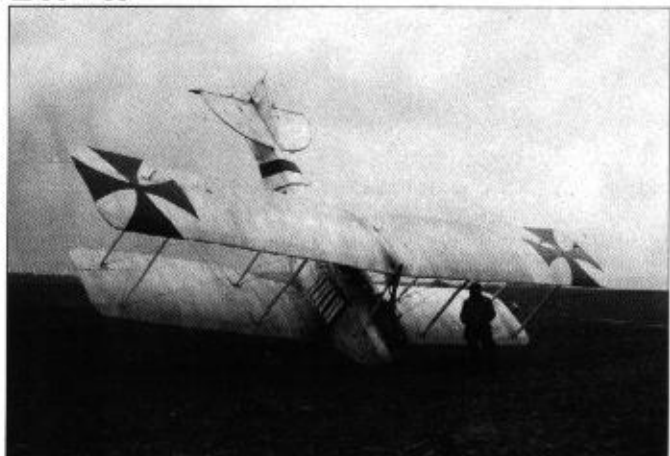
▲ 53

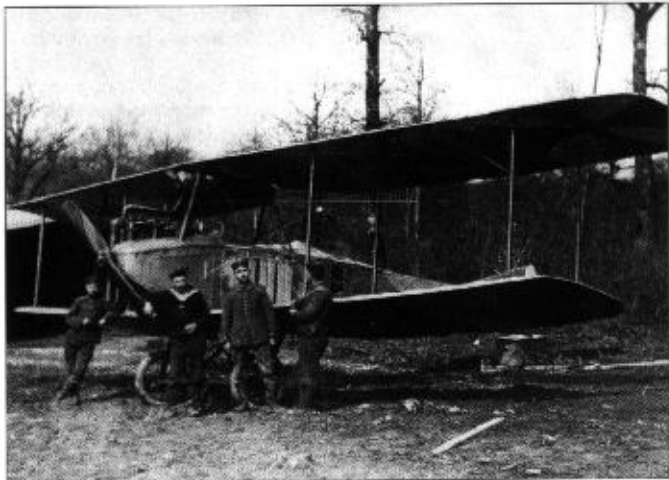


▲ 54 ▼ 55



▲ 57 ▼ 58





▲ 59 ▼ 60



▲ 61



53). Among the few identifiable Aviatik B.II photographs is this one marked 'Av B.II 1329/15' on its way out of the hangar.

54). Aviatik B (P 15). It must have taken skill and discipline to fire the gun forward within the proximity of the propeller arc, especially since wire prevention guides were not fitted. Under the propeller are two ventilation holes that could be closed if desired.

55). Labelled 'Kopfstand in Schönaich, 7 März 1916' (head stand) it is evident that the pilot made an emergency landing in a farmer's soggy field. This Aviatik B (P 15) trainer still carries the markings of an operational unit.

56). Definitely an Aviatik B.II 1328/15 from

the batch B.1320-1355/15 showing the rarely used B.II marking. It was exhibited at Döberitz on the occasion of a Reichstag member visit on 7 April 1916.

57). While the observer lugs a hand-held camera, and the pilot deftly obscures the serial number, Aviatik B (P 15) is prepared for take-off. A gun rail is mounted athwartship between the cockpits. The light picnic chair used for cockpit access is a modeller's dream - go to town, you master craftsmen!

58). Back on its feet, the crestfallen pilot and his Aviatik B (P 15) await help. One farmer stands by with pick, shovel and hay fork to do his best. The Aviatik B (P 15) trainer has

been fitted with mudguards and a machine gun rail.

59). Aviatik B (P 15) fitted with a propeller-driven wireless generator mounted ahead of the gravity tank.

60). Aviatik B (P 15) at a *Flieger Ersatz Abteilung*. The leather-clad person on the right is *Leutnant Max Borchers* who later commanded *Riesenflugzeug Abteilung 500*. The soldier on the left is an Austro-Hungarian non-commissioned officer seconded to a German flight school for training.

61). Aviatik B (P 15) showing the customary wear and tear of veteran training machines.



▲ 62



▲ 63 ▼ 64

62). Subject of a well-circulated Sanke card, this Aviatik B (P 15) lacks a gravity tank.

63). A soft landing field claims another victim. Judging by the bent windshields, the aircrew suffered monster headaches. This Aviatik B (P 15) shows the 120-hp Mercedes D.II engine, the characteristic shape of the engine panelling, the extended exhaust stack and the rectangular Aviatik nameplate.

64). Aviatik company pilot Charles (Karl) Ingold in front of an Aviatik B (P15). Behind his head, the rectangular Aviatik nameplate. For cold weather flying, the engine cowling has a sole ventilation louvre. Difficult to see but present on many Aviatik aircraft were the wing stacking bumps, one of which can be seen on the lower wing to the left of the inner strut.

65). *Hauptmann* Heinrich Sielken in front of an Aviatik B (P 15).

66). Photograph of a pre-war Aviatik B (P 14 or P 15) powered by a Mercedes engine. The machine was attached to *Feld-Flieger Abteilung* 6 in 1914.

67). A few Aviatik B-type trainers were delivered in 1913-1914 with a *Stossfahrgestell* (shock landing gear) fitted with a wheel to prevent nose-overs which obviously did not work in this case.

68). Nor in this instance! Photographs of an Aviatik B-type with a nose wheel assembly such as this P 15 are rare indeed.

69). A pre-war requirement was that army aircraft be transportable by land to accompany the advancing troops, ready for assembly when needed. Here are what appear to be Aviatik biplane wings on a trailer hitched to an appropriate tow truck.

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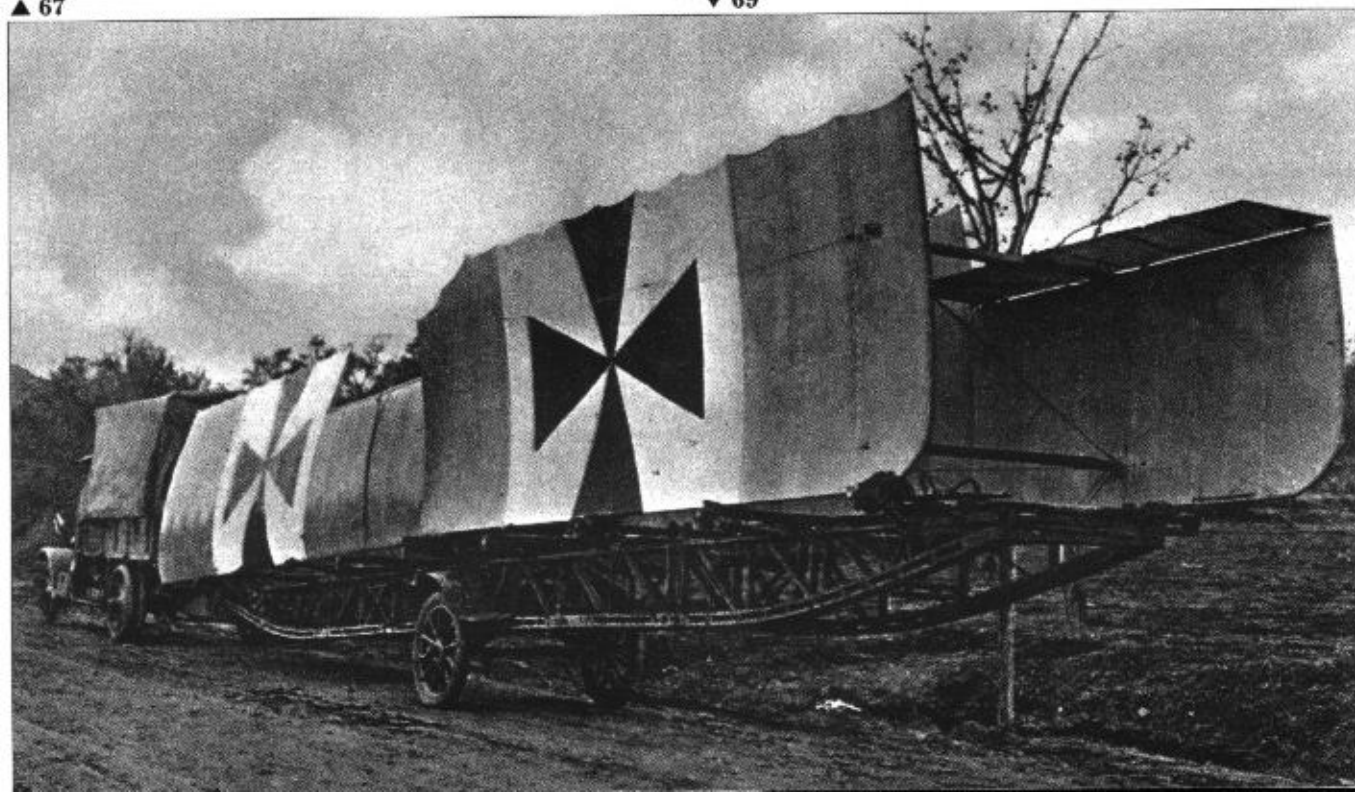
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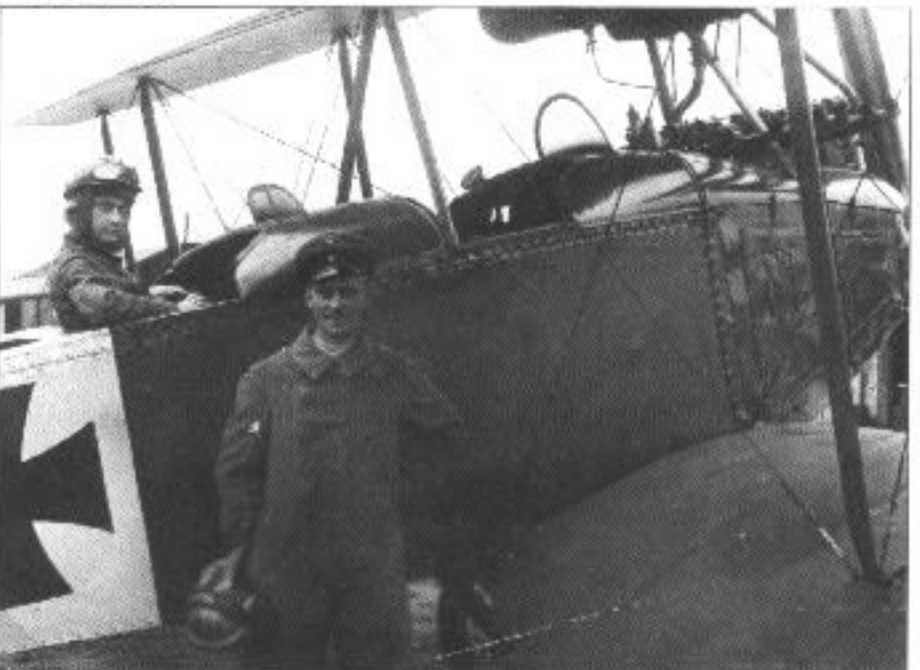
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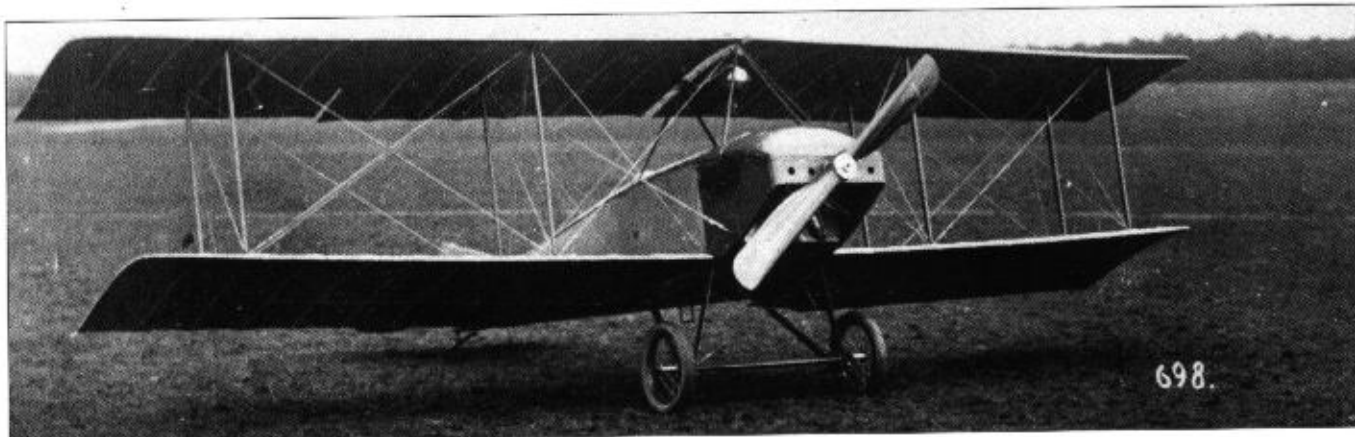


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70). When the Aviatik B-types were retired from operational service, some were modified for dual training purposes and often re-engined as here with a four-cylinder Argus engine. In the cockpit is Kurt H Weil (later Professor of Engineering at the Stevens Institute of Technology) at the start of his first solo flight on 10 August 1916 at the Aviatik flying school in Leipzig-Mockau.

71). Aviatik B (P 15) at the Aviatik flying school in Bork on 11 September 1917 with trainee pilot *Gefreiter* P Müller aboard. The side radiators have been replaced by a *Scheitelkühler* (brow radiator) mounted above the Mercedes engine. These tough aircraft served as trainers into 1918.

72). Another ex-operational Aviatik B-type (P 15) doing yeoman duty to train pilots and act as a backdrop for flight student Alfred Gutte at Bork in August 1917. It is entirely possible that these machines were repurchased from the *Fliegertruppe* for use by the privately-operated Aviatik flying school.

73). Aviatik B (P 15) trainer at Bork. The Aviatik trainers were modified and rebuilt, repainted and patched, again and again. The

engine appears to be a 120-hp Mercedes D.II.

74). Aviatik B (P 15) trainer of the Aviatik flying school at Bork. The instrument hung from the centre-section is an altimeter. A tachometer for the 120-hp Mercedes D.II engine is mounted outboard of the front cockpit. The large exhaust pipe and wind screen and the white tipped airscrew are noteworthy.

75). The same aircraft with the popular chief flight instructor Henri Kunkler, a Swiss citizen who as a civilian trained German pilots throughout the war at the Aviatik flight schools at Freiburg, Leipzig-Mockau and Bork.

76). Pilot trainee Erich Strehlow in November 1917 at Bork in front of an Aviatik B (P 14 or P 15) sporting an oversized exhaust header. It is interesting to notice the great variety of propellers used. The robust undercarriage struts are cross-braced by a rectangular tube structure. The wheel axle is suspended by shock cords between the undercarriage struts.

77). The Aviatik P 20 prototype with a round, separate engine cowling and button rudder

on the Habsheim airfield. It was powered by a 100-hp Oberursel rotary engine. In the distance, an Aviatik P 14 biplane.

78). Aviatik P 20 (second version) had a simpler, integrated engine cowling. This speedy machine competed in the *Prinz Heinrich Flug* of 1914 but was damaged in an emergency landing. The P 20 was evaluated by the German *Fliegertruppe* in June 1914.

79). The Aviatik B (Schwade) No.502 trainer was among the eight or ten examples built under licence by the Schwade company for their factory flying school. Power was supplied by a 100-hp Schwade *Stahlherz* rotary engine. The photograph is dated May-June 1915. These rare images were only recently found and are published here for the first time.

80). Close-up of an Aviatik B (Schwade) trainer showing the windscreen details and the wing-mounted gravity tank.

81). Four Aviatik B (Schwade) trainers, including Nos.501 and 502 in front of the factory hangar at Erfurt in May 1915.

APPENDICES

Aviatik B (P 14) Specifications

Engine:	85/100-hp Argus, Benz or Merc	
Wing:	Span Upper	14.5 m
	Span Lower	10.8 m
	Chord	1.85 m
	Gap	1.85 m
Area	45 sq m	
	General: Length 8.0 m	
	Empty Weight	760 kg
Loaded Weight	1090 kg	
Maximum		
Speed:	105 kmh	
Climb:	1200m	15 min

Aviatik B.I (P 15 two-bay) 1913 Specifications

Engine:	100-hp Mercedes D.I	
Wing:	Span Upper	12 m
	Area	38 sqm
	General: Length	7.5 m
Empty Weight	650 kg	
Loaded Weight	980 kg	
Maximum		
Speed:	115 kmh	
Climb:	1200m	15 min

Aviatik B.I (P 15 two-bay) 1915 Specifications

Engine:	100-hp Mercedes D.I	
Wing:	Span Upper	12.40 m
	Span Lower	10.70 m
	Chord Upper	1.88 m
	Chord Lower	1.88 m
General: Length	8.05 m	

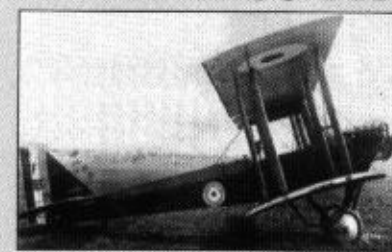
Aviatik B.II Specifications

Engine:	120-hp Mercedes D.II	
Wing:	Span Upper	12.40 m
	Span Lower	10.70 m
	Chord Upper	1.88 m
	Chord Lower	1.88 m
	Dihedral Upper	1.3 deg
	Dihedral Lower	1.3 deg
	Sweepback Upper	1 deg
	Sweepback Lower	1 deg
	Gap	1.90 m
	Stagger	none
General:	Length	8.05 m
	Area	41.7 sqm
	Empty Weight	670 kg
	Loaded Weight	1040 kg

Aviatik B (Schwade) P 20 Specifications.

Engine:	100-hp Schwade Stahlherz	
Wing:	Span Upper	10.5 m
	Area	33 sqm
General:	Length	7.2 m
	Empty Weight	410 kg
	Loaded Weight	740 kg
Maximum		
Speed:	120 kmh	
Climb:	1000m	15 min

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Aviatik B and C-type trainer names

Many Aviatik B and C-types upon being relegated to the training role were given colourful names by the various *Flieger Ersatz Abteilungen*, especially FEA 9. Those that have been found in flight logs and photograph albums are listed below:

NAME	SERIAL	COMMENT
Aeneas	B.361/14	FEA 9, January 1917
Aliae	B	
Amalie	B	FEA 9, January 1917
Arras	B	
Auster	B.341/14	
Braut	B.486/15	FEA 9, March 1917
Brummer	B.487/15	
Brüssel	B	
Bulle	B	
Cäsar	B.545/15	
Cassel	B.II 1348/15	FEA 9, May 1917
Ceres	B.II 1333/15	
Chameleon	B.II 1350/15	FEA 9, May 1917
Champagne	B.543/15	FEA 9, May 1917
Cottbus	B.561/15	
Crokodil	B.	FEA 9
Eule I	B.	FEA 9, May 1917
Eule II	B.338/14	FEA 9, June 1917

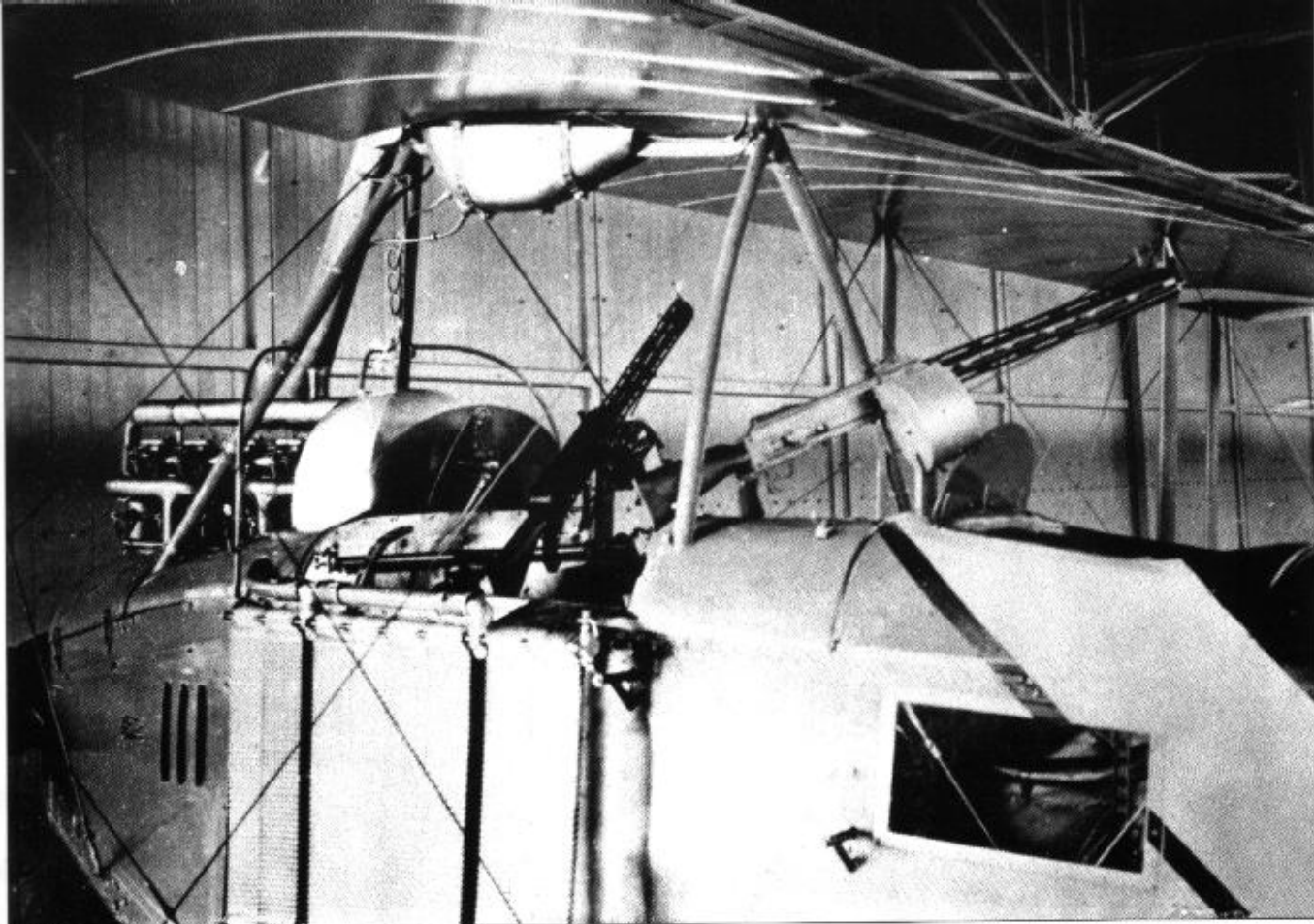
NAME	SERIAL	COMMENT
Irene	B	
Kalif	B	
Karlsruhe	B.109/14	
Kismet	B.	
Koblenz	B.659/14	
Ludwigsburg	B	
Marie	B	
Tallsman	B.202/14	FEA 9, January 1917
Tarnopol	B.119/13	
Trampel	B	
Trottell	B.119/14	
Trottell	B.267/14	FEA 9, February 1917
Adonis	C.I 820/15	FEA 9, May 1917
Bzura	C.I(Han) 611/16	
Grafenwöhr	C.I 4258/17	
Karola	C.I	
Kurland	C.I 1446/15	FEA 9, May 1917
Leda	C.I(Han) 3383/16	
Lene	C.I(Han) 3379/16	
Lorbas	C.I(Han) 3368/16	FEA 9, May 1917
Lulu	C.I 228/16	
Pilica	C.I	

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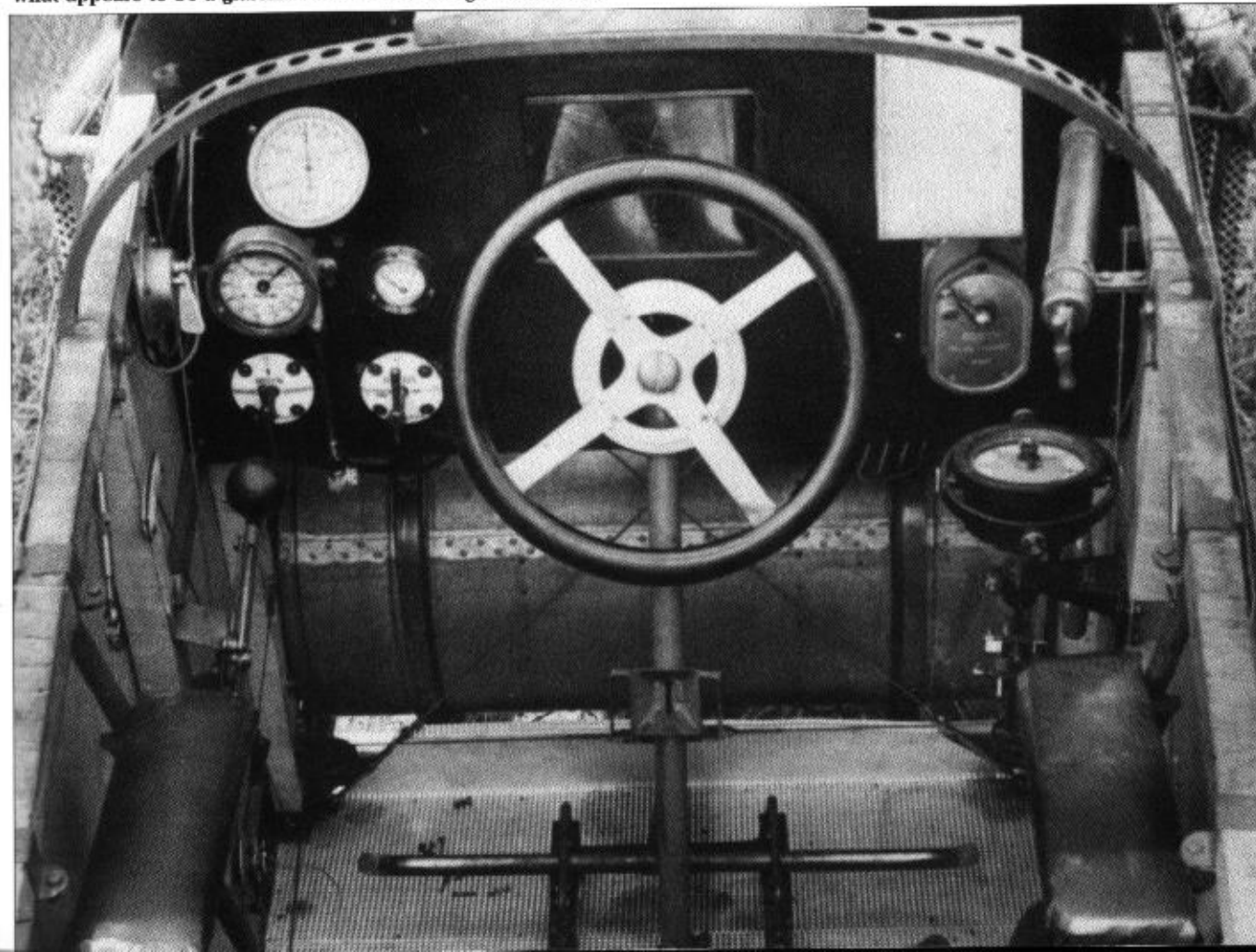
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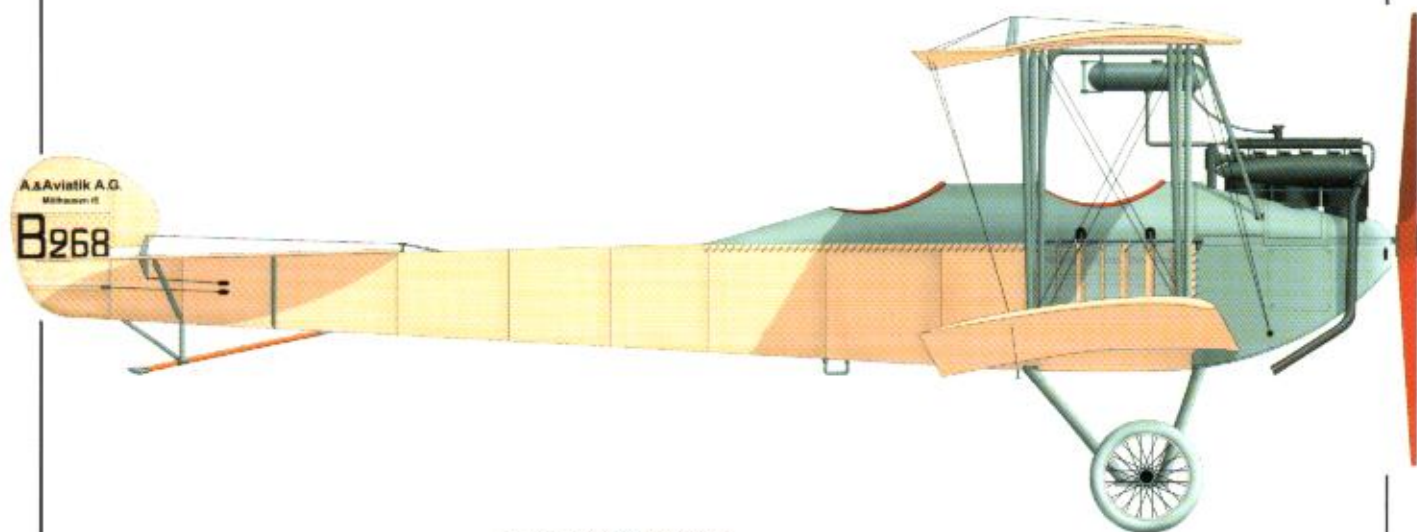


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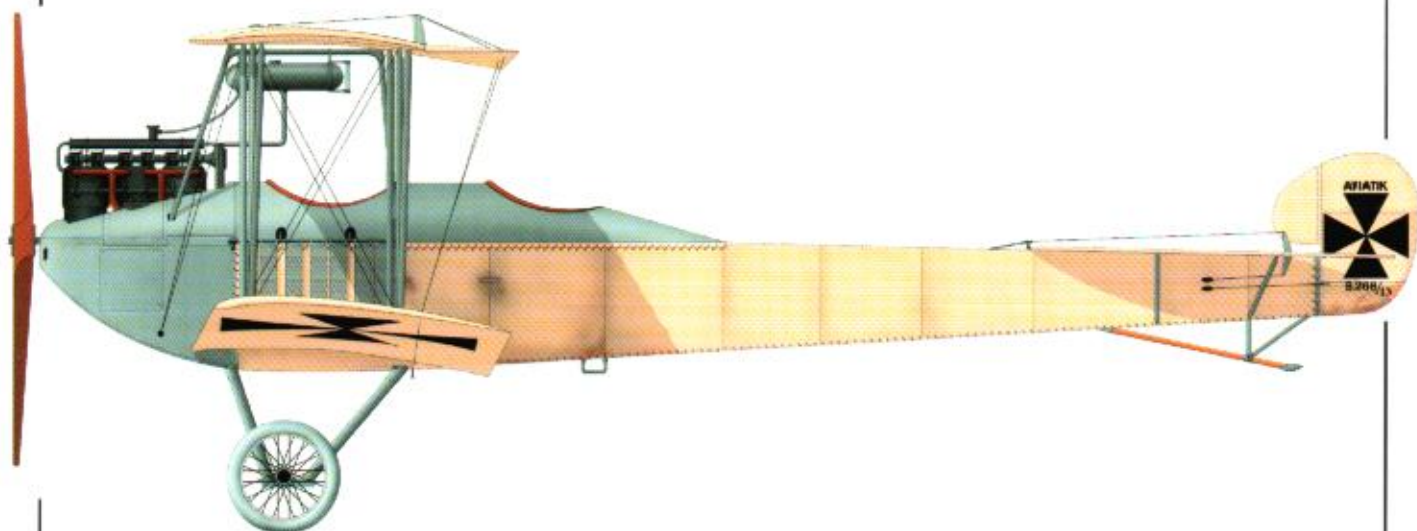
82). As the war in the air became deadlier, many units modified their unarmed aircraft to carry machine guns into combat. Here, an Aviatik B-type fitted with a brace of Parabellum LMG 14 machine guns mounted on sliding pivots. Wire guides affixed to the forward, centre-section struts prevented the gunner from hitting the propeller. The *Cellon* window provided light for the interior of the pilot's cockpit. The gravity tank is of different shape than most.

83). Aviatik B cockpit interior. Starting at the bottom left 1) arm rest, 2) throttle handle with ball grip, 3) magneto switch on fuselage side, 4) fuel tank at bottom of instrument board. Above fuel tank on left side: bottom left 5) air pressure source selector; bottom right 6) fuel tank selector; middle left 7) fuel quantity gauge; middle right 8) air pressure gauge; top 9) tachometer. On right side bottom 10) arm rest; 11) gimballed compass; 12) hand air pump; 13) starting magneto. Also seen on the floor is the rudder bar, the steering wheel and what appears to be a glassine window in the engine bulkhead. ▼ 83

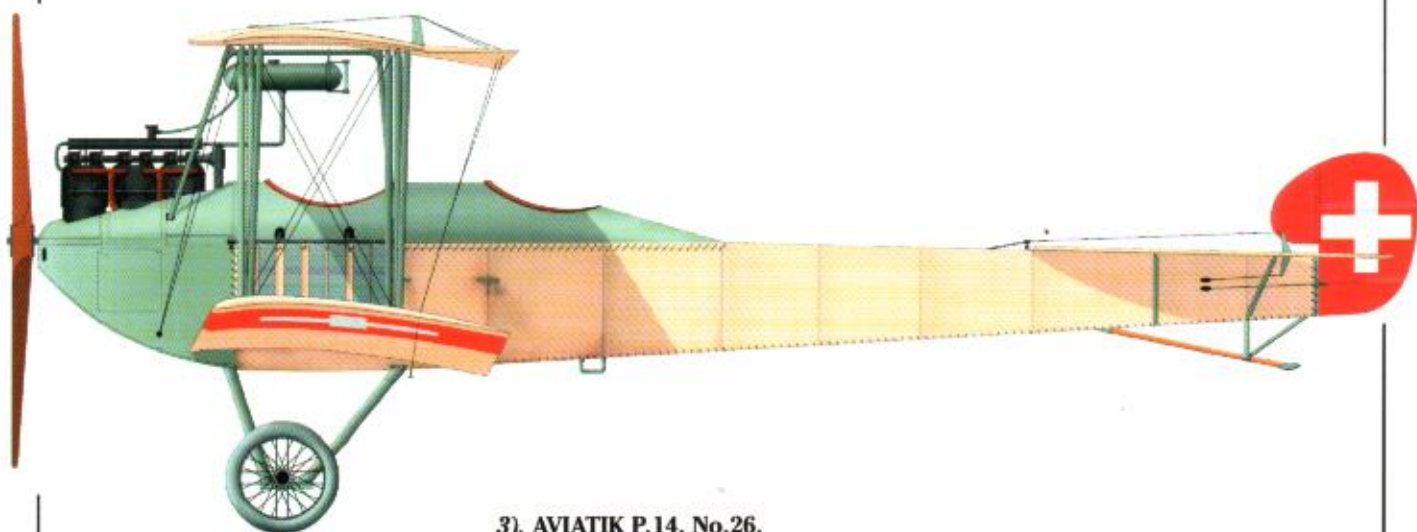




1). AVIATIK B.268/13.



2). AVIATIK B.268/13.



3). AVIATIK P.14, No.26.

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