

Jagdstaffel 5

By G K Merrill



Volume One

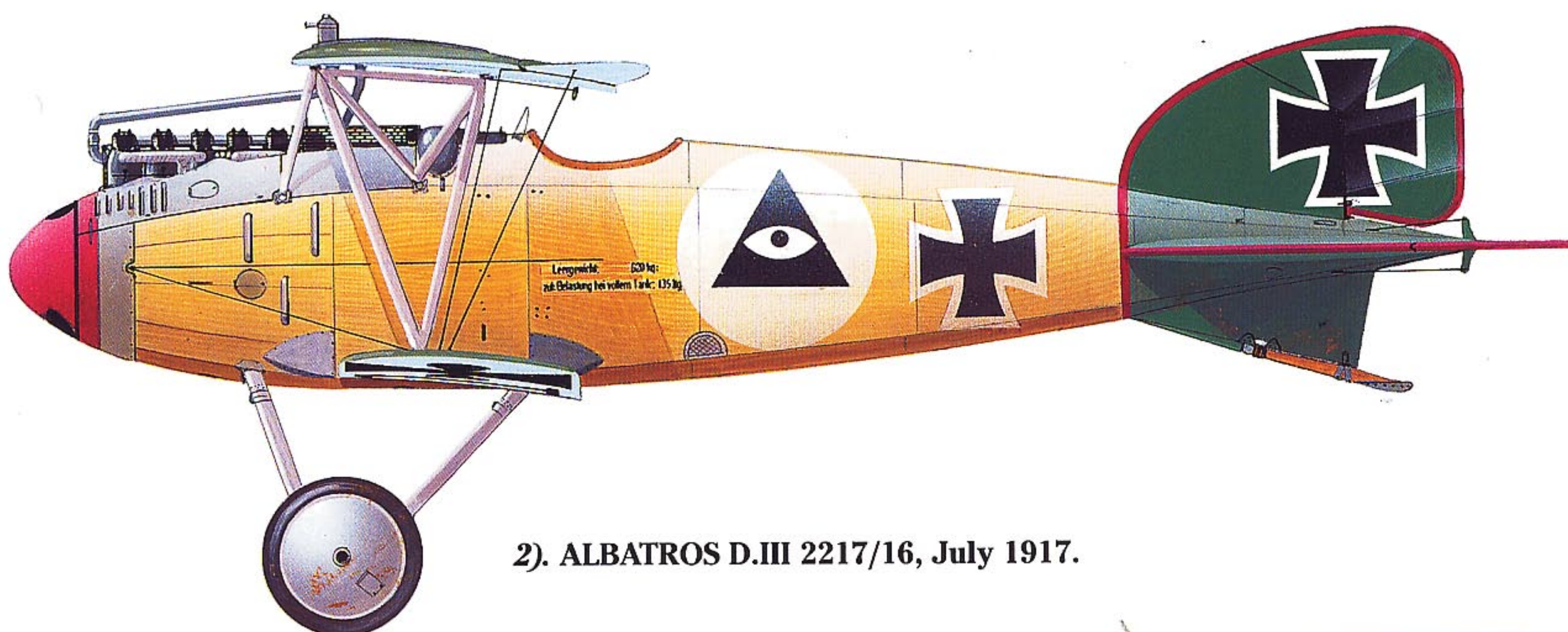
Robert Karr
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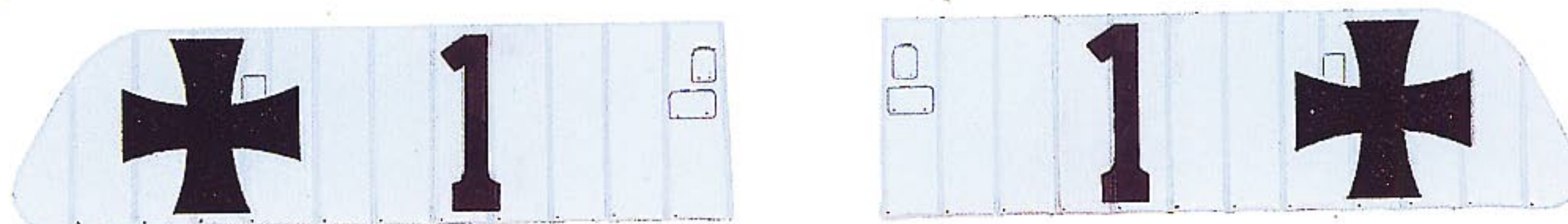
1). ALBATROS D.V, July 1917.



1A). LOWER WING DETAIL.



2). ALBATROS D.III 2217/16, July 1917.



2A). LOWER WING DETAIL.



3). ALBATROS D.V, July 1917.

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Introduction

Our fascination with German fighter squadrons (*Jagdstaffeln*, *Jastas* for short) stems from several sources. Certainly, the almost Wagnerian quality of their efforts played a role. These young teutonic knights setting off on their chargers to do epic and noble battle against a superior foe stirs the soul and tends to obscure the fact that most of them met horrible, often flaming, death in ways that were far from heroic. The successes of the German air forces (*Luftstreitkräfte*) were legendary, however, and included nearly total domination over their British opponents during 'Bloody April' 1917 during which 40% of British air assets were lost. They also had huge successes during 'Black September' 1918, when numbers of the redoubtable Fokker D.VII fighter had increased so that most *Jastas* had them, the pilots to man them, the fuel to propel them, and the ammunition to arm them. During this month the *Luftstreitkräfte* destroyed more enemy aircraft than in any month of the war, yet the numbers of their opponents actually increased during the month. The overwhelming superiority in numbers and greatly increased quality of their opposition, along with shortages in all things needed to wage an air war, led the German air forces along the road to *Götterdämmerung*, an inevitable and total defeat in fact, if not in spirit.

Within the rise and fall of the *Luftstreitkräfte* there were certain *Jastas* that particularly exemplified the passage of events, the triumphs, the losses and the ultimate defeat. Most of these were the *Kanonenstaffeln*, the squadrons of *Kanone* or aces. Well illustrating many of the aspects of German First World War fighter operations was *Königliche Preußische Jagdstaffel 5*, *Jasta 5*, truly an ace squadron. Sources will always differ on the exact number of victories 'scored' by a particular unit; *Jasta 5* is credited with 253 by one source, 263 by another, a third says 'over 300'. *Jasta 5* was the third highest scoring German unit as it followed *Jastas 11* and *2* (*Boelcke*) in its victory total. Within these stellar units were stellar pilots, the top ones Oswald Boelcke, Manfred von Richthofen and Werner Voss, would achieve the status of demi-gods during their lifetimes and whose adoration would

▼ 1

continue after their deaths. *Jasta 5* followed only *Jastas 2* and *11* in the number of recipients of the *Orden Pour le Mérite* or 'Blue Max', Prussia's highest decoration for valour. Pilots with the *Pour le Mérite* who served at one time or another in *Jasta 5* included (alphabetically): Bäumer, Berr, Göring, Gontermann, Könnecke, Loerzer, Rumey, and Voss. The biographies of these aces make fascinating studies in their own right.

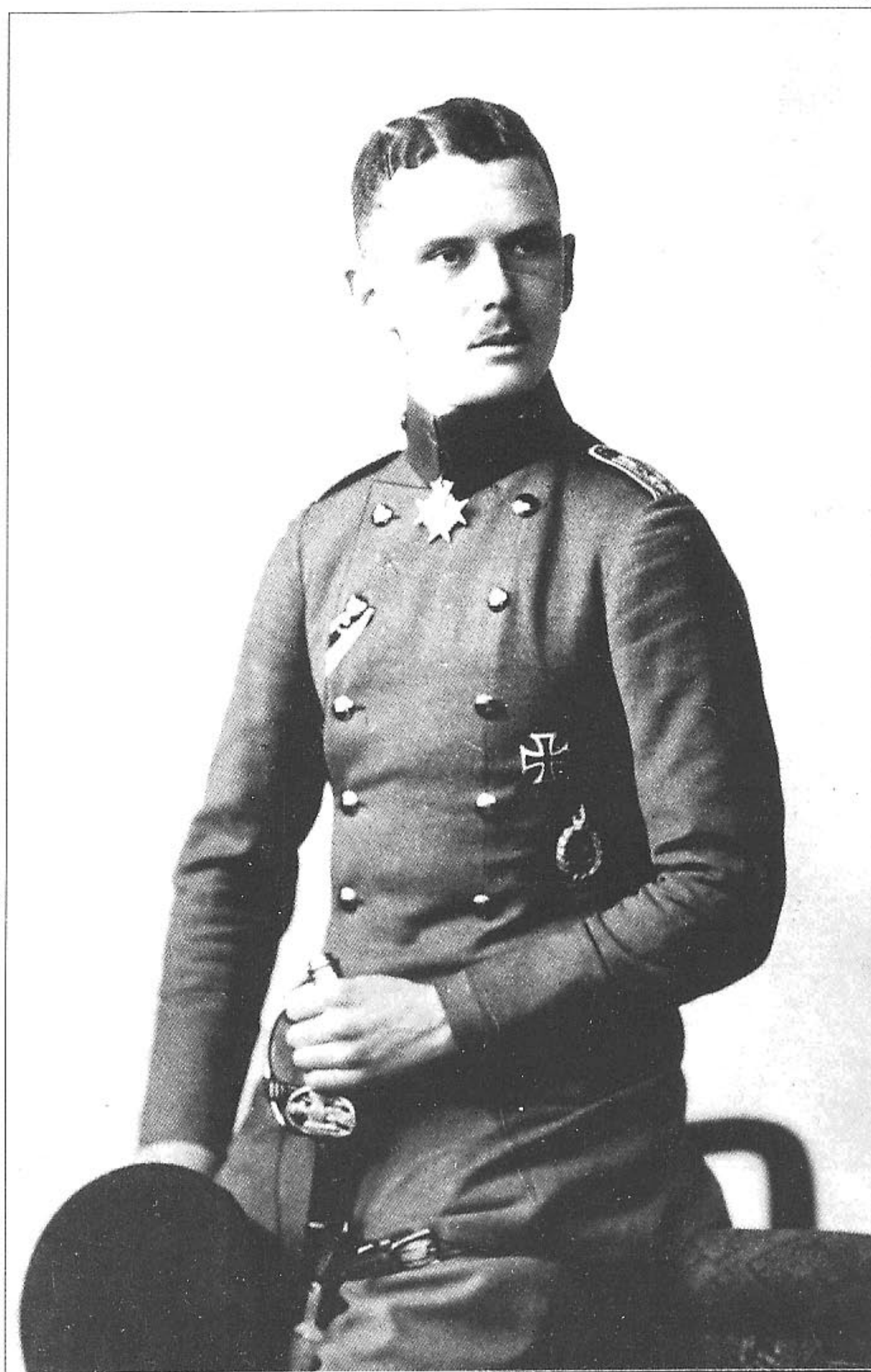
German fighter units of World War I are often referred to as 'flying circuses'. The 'official' explanation for that nickname is their extreme mobility; a *Jagdstaffel* could be engaged in combat in a sector one day, disassemble their aircraft and tent hangers, load the entire unit on railway cars, travel overnight, set up and be in action the following day in an entirely new sector many kilometres away. In addition to that, the decorations borne by so many German fighter aircraft must certainly have added to the carnival-like atmosphere of a group of these machines in the air or on the ground. In the adornment of their aircraft, *Jasta 5* had no peer. To be sure, there was tremendous competition for flamboyant markings from other *Jastas*, but taken over time for so many aircraft, no unit used as much paint in as many creative ways as did *Jasta 5*. Most *Jastas* had a '*Staffelmaler*', literally a squadron painter, who would decorate a particular aircraft to suit the whim of its pilot and many of these were excellent artists. For sheer execution of elaborate markings the *Jasta 5* painter (probably with lots of assistance) was without compare and we must thank this anonymous artist for so enriching the lore of aviation history. In this connection we also owe thanks to the individuals who photographed the many and varied aircraft and their markings preserving them for posterity. Most of all, the fact that two of the pilots from *Jasta 5* lived for many years after the war and were willing to share their remembrances with interviewers has helped immensely, especially in the matters of colours and the pilots who flew particular machines. These two, Hans von Hippel and Josef Mai, along with the persons who interviewed them and recorded the results, have seen to it that the lore of *Jasta 5* has been kept alive and that the story of that unit can now be told in a level of detail not previously possible. We can never know *all* that there was to know about the units, the aircraft, and most of the pilots who perished over 80 years ago, but few, if any, are as well known today as *Jasta 5*, and few are ever likely to be.

Oberleutnant Hans Berr and the origin of *Jasta 5*

Like several of the other low-numbered *Jagdstaffeln*, *Jasta 5* was an outgrowth of an earlier *Kampfeinsatz Kommando*, in this case *KEK Avillers* (*KEK A* or *KEK Ost* because of its easterly location along the German line) based at Avillers St. Croix about 30 kilometres east of Verdun. As *Jasta 5* the unit was organised with its first base at Béchamp east of Étain and slightly further east of Verdun than Avillers. These assemblies of 'combat single-seaters' into a unified command, instead of parcelling out the Fokker and Pfalz monoplanes in ones and twos to *Feld Flieger-Abteilungen* for escort duties, were intended to combat the dense concentrations of enemy aircraft along particular sectors of the front, as was certainly the case near Verdun almost throughout 1916. Command of this *KEK* was given to *Oberleutnant* Hans Berr.

Hans Berr was the descendant of French Huguenots. His ancestor Charles Berre de Varennes fled France eastward into Germany with what small amount of jewellery he could carry, changed his name to Karl Berr, and founded a private postal service much like the parcel services of today. It was successful and the family prospered. Hans Berr's maternal line included Gotthold Ephraim Lessing, the great German classicist. Hans Berr was born in Potsdam 20 May 1890. He grew into a handsome young man, later described by his sister-in-law as 'tall, slim, blue eyes, medium brown hair - a very cheerful young man, a great ladies man, young women went wild over him'. Before the war Berr became a regular officer in *Magdeburgisches Jäger-Bataillon Nr.4*, joining this unit in 1908. As adjutant of this rifle

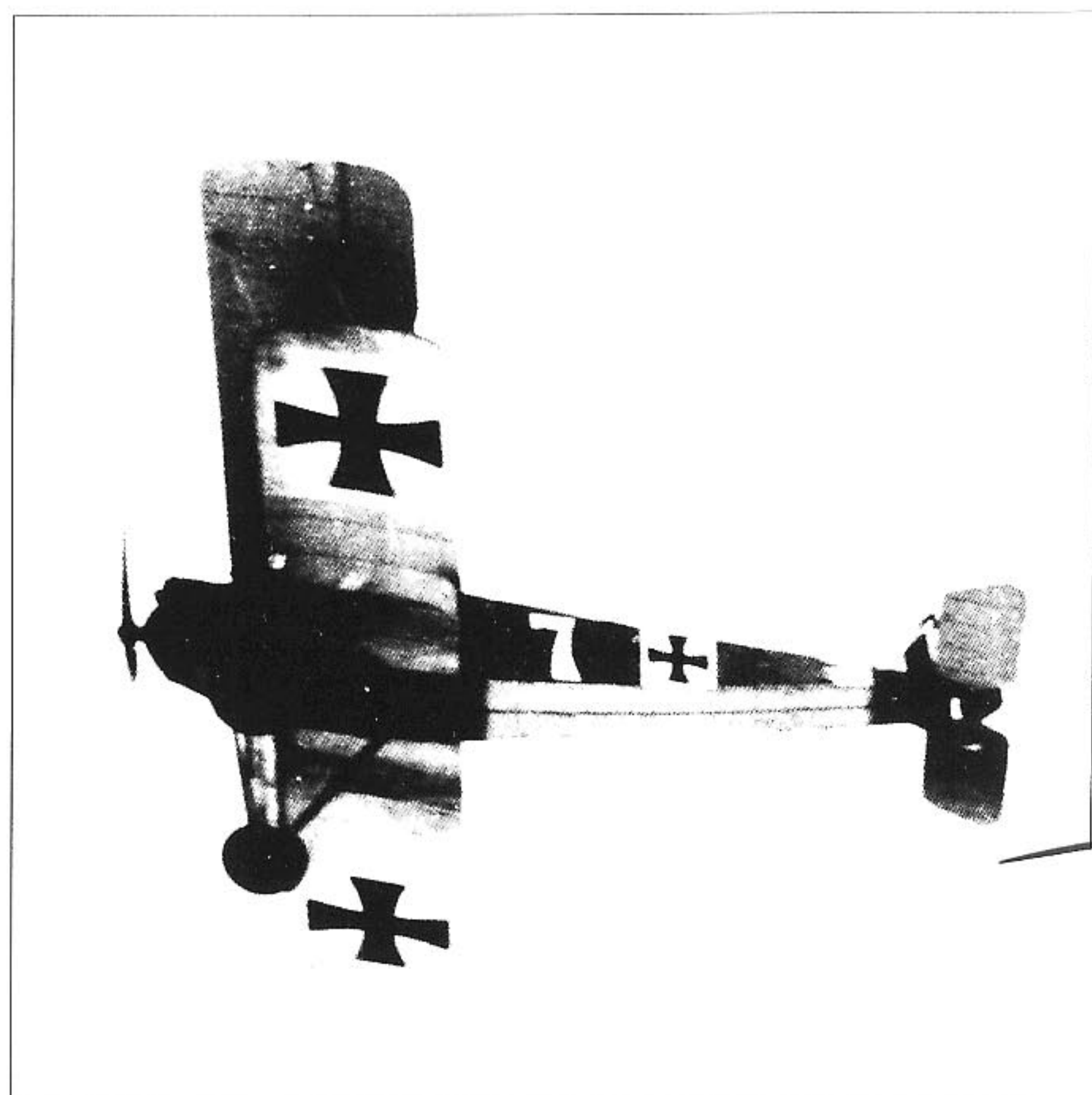
1. *Oberleutnant* Hans Berr, first leader of *Jasta 5*. This photo was probably taken in December 1916 immediately after the award of his *Pour le Mérite*.



battalion, young *Leutnant* Berr was involved in the initial drive on Paris and the subsequent retreat from the Marne. He was seriously wounded in the shoulder on 26 September 1914 during this retreat. During recuperation Berr received several decorations, including some rather uncommonly awarded, and was promoted to *Oberleutnant*. After recovery, like so many others, Berr volunteered for aviation duty and underwent observer training at Grossenhain. Successfully completing that course in May 1915 he was assigned to FFA 60 on the Western Front where he taught himself to fly the unit's Fokker *Eindecker*. The attraction to be a fighter pilot, although the very concept of the fighter pilot was only beginning to emerge in mid-1915, was too strong and Berr applied for pilot training. His aptitude was so great in this role that he passed out of pilot's school at Metz a full four months ahead of schedule. Although not yet 26 years old Berr was a regular officer and already an *Oberleutnant*. These qualifications plus his several decorations inevitably made him eligible for command. Thus he came to *KEK Avillers*. The unit was equipped with a mixture of types and apparently shared the airfield with FFA 203 because a photo shows Albatros B.III 1524/15, said to belong to them, with Fokker monoplanes of the *KEK*. Aircraft operated by the unit during this period in 1916 included at least one Fokker E.II, 71/15, flown by Berr and in which he probably scored his first two victories in March 1916 and probably crashed by him (see *WINDSOCK* Vol.14, No.1, page 32). There were several Fokker E.III's, one of which, 315/16, was flown by Berr and had the undercarriage collapse in landing, at least one Fokker E.IV 163/16 (*WINDSOCK MINI DATAFILE* No.7, page 5), and perhaps another (161/16) plus one or more Pfalz monoplanes, probably an E.IV. One very interesting photograph shows a Fokker *Eindecker* and a Pfalz *Eindecker* more or less side by side in the distance and both on higher ground than the photographer. The wings of both are translucent and show ribs and spars except for the essentially opaque cross fields. Taken in conjunction with other photos, the translucency of both, coupled with the grey tone of the Fokker and the stark white of the Pfalz, suggests strongly that these Pfalz monoplanes were not painted, but had clear-doped bleached fabric in contrast to the more common clear-doped unbleached fabric of other manufacturers.

Berr's early victories brought him several more decorations including the Iron Cross First Class, still a fairly prestigious award at this time. His abilities to teach while leading became widely recognised and the high command took him away from his command several times to give presentations, lectures and to temporarily lead the *Jastaschule I* at Valenciennes. Valuable as this service was, it no doubt reduced his victory total. In this connection it is worthwhile to draw comparisons between Hans

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▲ 2

Berr and Oswald Boelcke. Both were held in high esteem by the air service and used in a variety of tasks for the development of fighter aviation. Both were excellent air fighters, but more importantly, both were natural leaders who got the most from their men and developed them into leaders and teachers as well. Boelcke had his 'cubs', von Richthofen, Böhme, and Max Müller. Berr had his pupils also: Gontermann, Schneider, Theiller, and Hans Müller. To a lesser extent because of a shorter time, Berr probably also had a positive influence on Edmund Nathanael and Josef Mai. The careers of Boelcke and Berr were so remarkably similar that it even extended to the manner of their deaths; each would die as a result of a mid-air collision with one of his pupils.

Jasta 5 was officially formed on 21 August 1916 and Berr led it superbly when not engaged in 'other duties' at fighter schools

2. Halberstadt '7' in flight, Autumn-Winter 1916-17.

3. Gonnellieu, winter 1916-17 while *Jasta 5* was entirely equipped with Halberstadt fighters, Hans Berr's white '1' in the background. Facing the camera are (1) *Vzflmstr.* Winklemann and *Vzfw.* Büssing.

4. Halberstadt '8'. Crashed by Klein on 4 February 1917.



and the like and during this time in late 1916 his score mounted. He had two victories on 7 October, one on 20 October, another on 22 October, two more on 26 October, and singles on 1 and 2 November, bringing his total to ten. On 10 November 1916 Hans Berr received his 'Hohenzollern', or more fully, the *Ritterkreuz des Königlich Hohenzollern Hausordens mit Schweren* (Knight's Cross of the Royal Hohenzollern House Order with Swords). This was Prussia's second highest decoration and a normal prelude to the *Pour le Mérite*. One can argue that the rapid pace of his scoring kept Berr from getting the award at a lower victory total and that he was eligible earlier. In any case, without any additional victories Berr received his *Pour le Mérite* on 4 December 1916. Presumably the standard of eight victories was still in effect, but Berr's scoring pace had, once again, been too rapid for normal protocols to be followed. Berr was the 12th aviation recipient of the 'Blue Max', the highest possible award for valour a German airman could receive. The 13th would be Manfred von Richthofen. Berr joined the select company of the early *Pour le Mérite* recipients, for whom eight victories proved sufficient. Von Richthofen was forced to wait until he had doubled his score to 16 before he received the award. The bar was in the process of being raised to the magical 20 victories that would remain until late in the war when it crept upward toward 30. The reasoning of *Luftstreitkräfte* High Command was simple and plain. In 1915 and early 1916 air combats remained relatively infrequent. Moreover, Fokker and Pfalz monoplanes, although having the huge advantage of a synchronised machine gun, had performances so poor that many of the unarmed two-seater biplanes they stalked as prey were superior, including sufficient speed to simply fly away. By later 1916 the pressure applied by the Allies, especially the British, genuinely took the air war to Germany and the skies became, in today's parlance, a 'target-rich environment' for German pilots. Of great importance also was the fact that more modern biplane fighters from Halberstadt and Roland were now available and twin-gunned Albatros fighters were coming on line. These gave a huge performance edge to German pilots. Thus the qualifying score for the *Pour le Mérite* had to be increased. One can make a case that improved aviation technology was raising the bar again near war's end as the scores obtained on the Fokker D.VII began to skyrocket.

Nine pilots joined Hans Berr as 'charter members' of *Jasta 5* and of these Hans Müller is generally credited with the unit's first victory on 26 August. According to Franks, *et al*, this may have been a Caudron from *Escadrille C53*, *Sgt. Mars* and *S/Lt. Humbert* MIA, apparently killed. This claim for the first victory is commonly cited, but apparently incorrect. The nine pilots who joined Berr were *Leutnante* Oskar Lang who had scored his one

and only victory in *KEK Avillers*, Kurt Schneider, Renatus Theiller, *Vizefeldwebeln* Heinrich Büssing, Paul Hoppe, Hans Müller, Albin Schütz, *Vizeflugmeister* Max Winkelmann, and *Gefreiter* Damke (or Demke?), first name not known. Missing from this list is *Vizefeldwebel* Paul Piechl who had already served in *KEK Avillers* for some time and would score a victory on 25 August 1916, a day ahead of Müller's claim and probably should be credited to *Jasta 5* as their very first. Why he is not shown as a member on the day of formation could simply be a clerical error or perhaps he was on leave, but a founding member of *Jasta 5* he certainly was. He would also be the unit's first casualty.

Jasta 5's first airfield was just Northeast of Béchamps, a small village about 7.5 km east of Étain, still in the Verdun sector, the airfield most likely being just Northeast of the village. Equipment at the time of formation (or shortly afterwards) consisted of an assortment of Fokker monoplanes and biplanes. The latter all appear to have been D.IIs, but the one known photo (poor) does not show any serials. From a couple of lines of evidence it appears that *Jasta 5* did not remain a Fokker *Staffel* for long, and by early October they began to reequip with Halberstadt single-seaters. The unit was active during these early days, and (now) *Offizierstellvertreter* (acting officer) Hans Müller scored his third (fourth?) victory and the unit's second on 26 August as already mentioned. Müller was born 19 July 1892 in Torgau, and enlisted for the duration at the beginning of the war. He was sent to *FEA 2* where he earned his pilot's badge on 31 December 1914, after which he was posted to *FFA 13* serving there from 3 January 1915 until 1 May 1915 when he went to Grossenhain as an instructor. He then served as a pilot in *Kagohl II/12* from 11 February 1916 until posted to *KEK Avillers* on 28 June 1916. He supposedly scored a victory while with *Kagohl II* on 26 May, and one that is probably not counted in many tabulations if, indeed, it was confirmed. He shot down a balloon on 9 July 1916, and a Nieuport on 3 August, so that his victories on 26 August (Voisin) and 31 August (another balloon at 'Maasbogen', literally the 'Bend in the Meuse', and not much of a location) after the formation of *Jasta 5* may have made him an 'ace' before the beginning of September. If that fifth victory is counted he was not only an 'ace' then, but he was *Jasta 5*'s very first because Berr would not gain his fifth victory until 20 October. He would beat his *Staffelführer* into the Pantheon of Acedom in any case because Müller scored another victory on 16 October. Joining *Jasta 5* on 1 September, was *Ltn.* Hans Gutermann from *Jasta 6* and later in the month (September 20), by *Ltn.* Fritz Ludwig Dornheim as Special Duty Officer (*Offizier für besonderen Verwendung* or *OfbV*, most nearly equivalent in function to adjutant).

On 25/26 September 1916, *Jasta 5* moved about 9 km North-

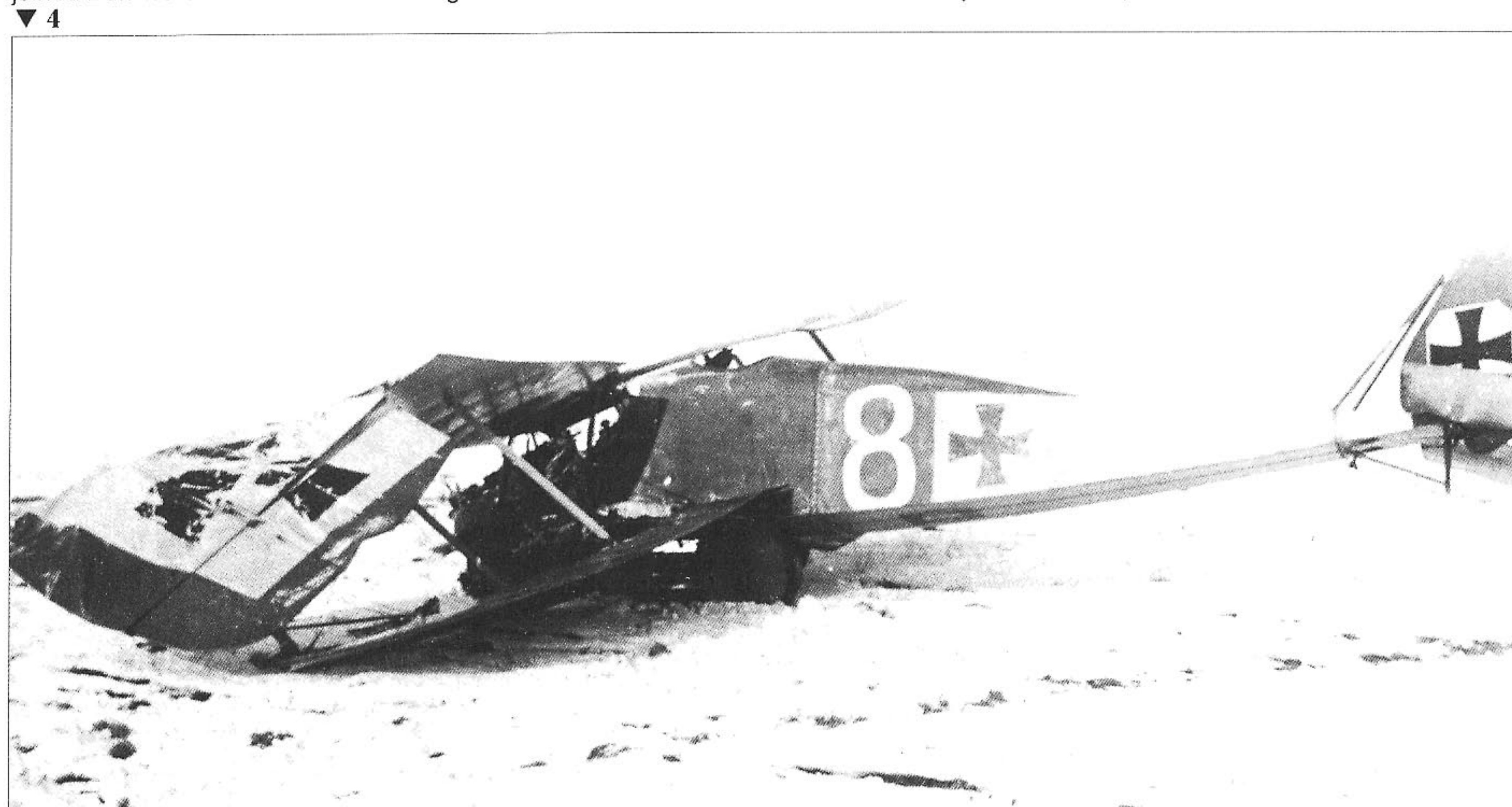
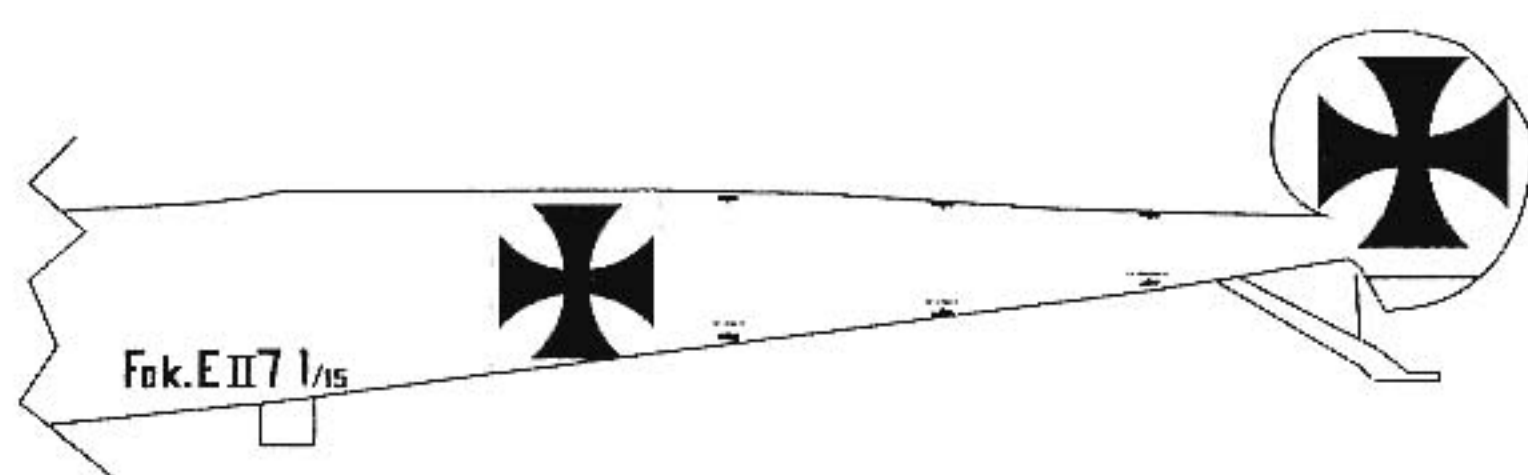
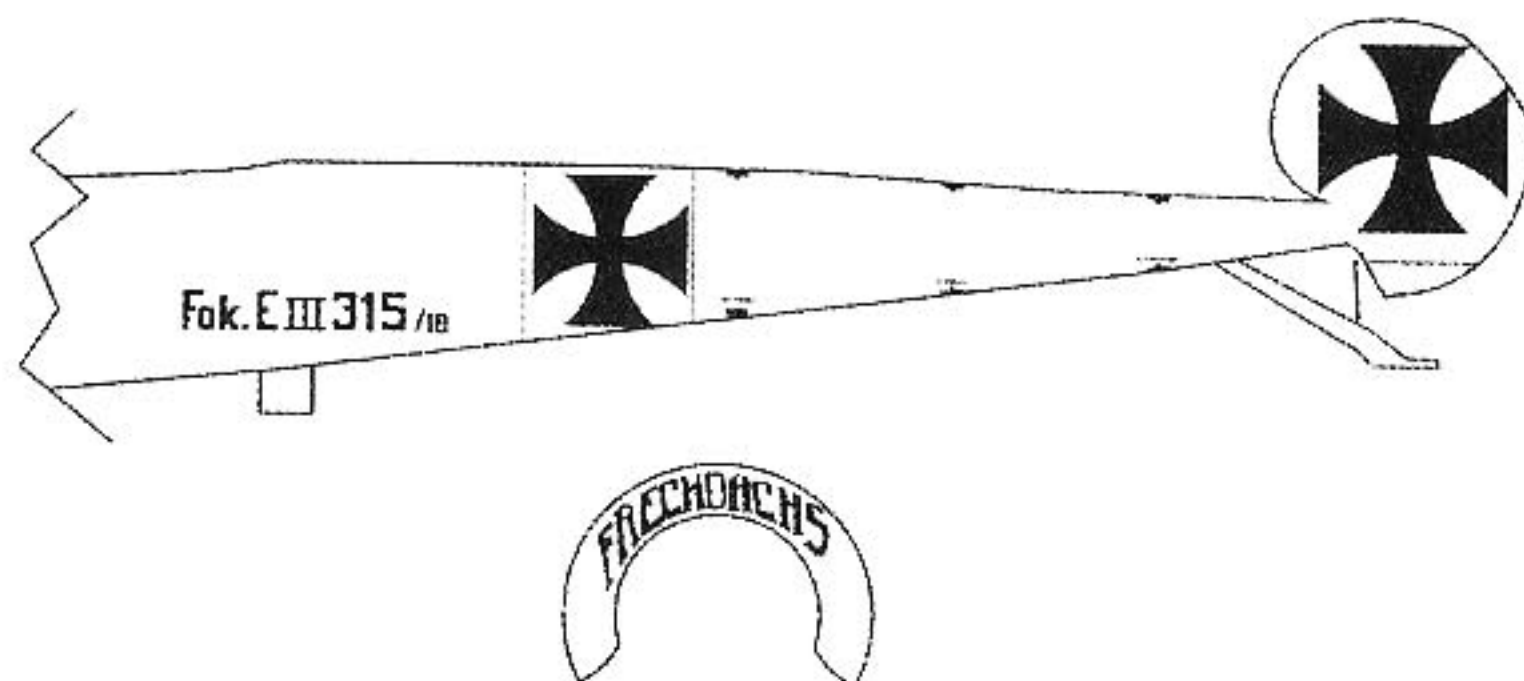


Figure A.- Non-Albatros aircraft, ex-works or with black and white markings of *Jasta 5*.

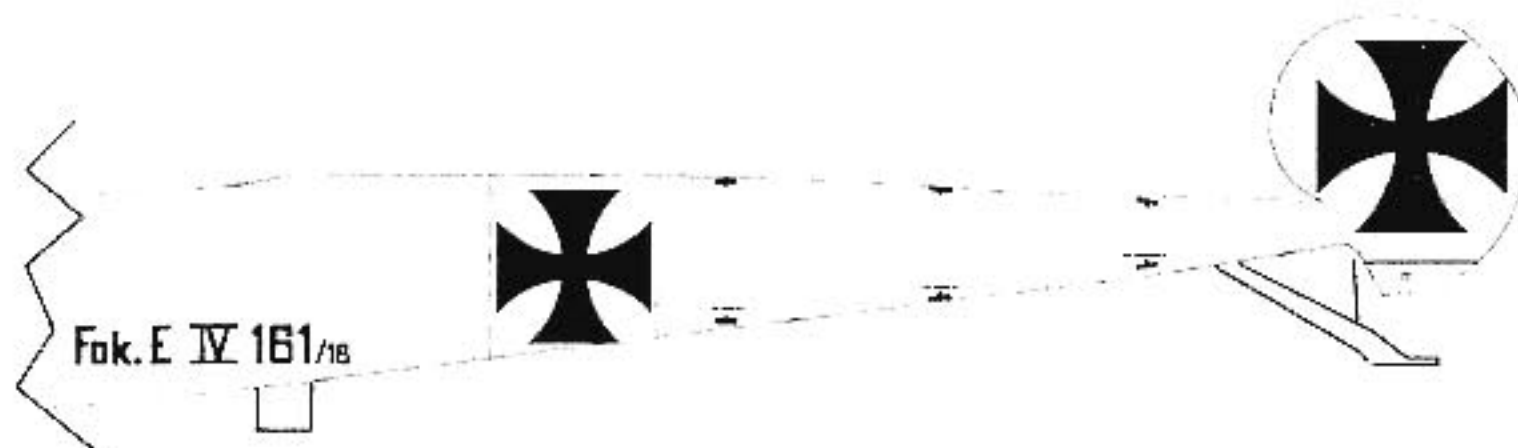


A. - Fokker E.II 71/15? This machine was flown by Hans Berr during the summer of 1916 at Avilliers. Its serial appears to be 71/15, but the second digit is over the step on the port side and has been largely removed by scuffing of the pilot's boot when mounting the aircraft. It could have been 79/15.

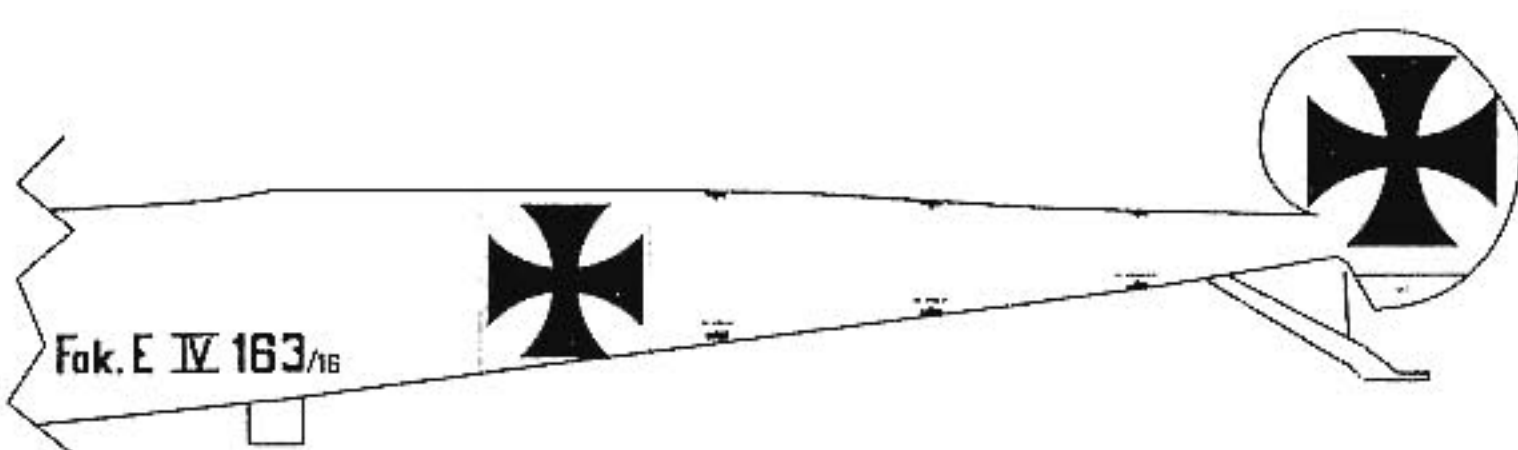


B. - Fokker E.III 315/16. Hans Berr also flew this machine during that summer and crashed it after an encounter with a Nieuport, wiping out the undercarriage, the wheels of which were halved black and white.

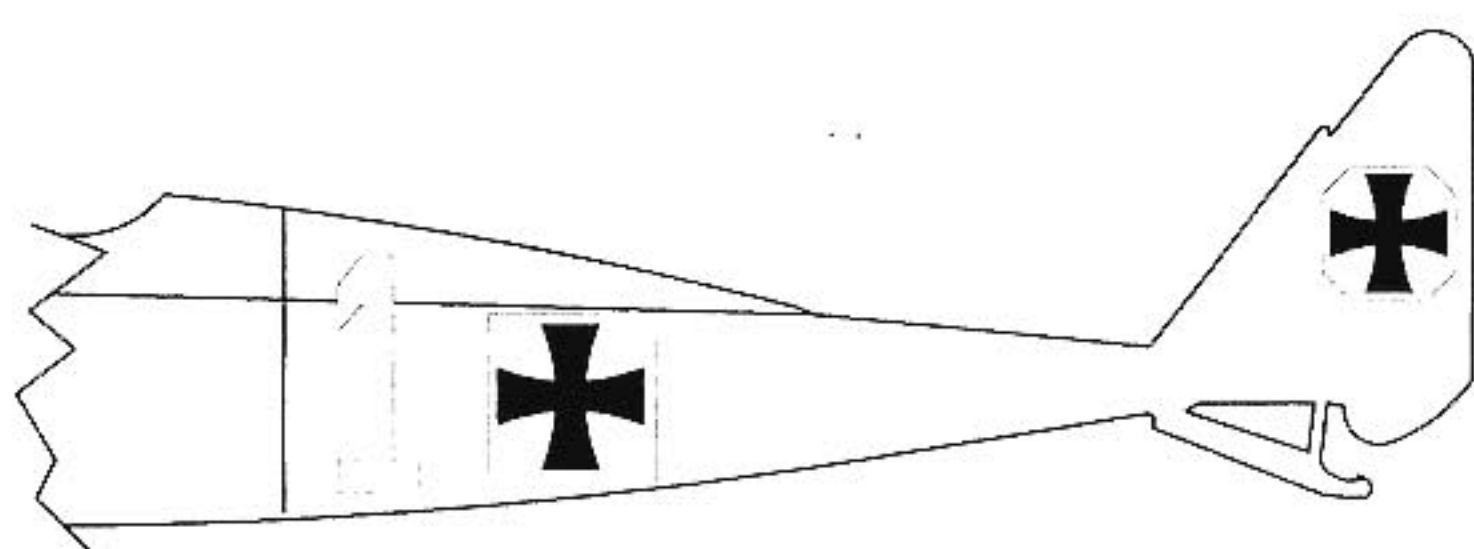
C. - Cowl of a Fokker E.III (serial unknown). Flown by Hans Karl Müller in the same approximate time frame. The legend 'Frechdachs' is literally 'Cheeky Badger', but more likely means 'Cheeky Badger Dog', an allusion to the feisty little Dachshunds bred to roust badgers from their burrows. The propeller was an Integral.



D. - Fokker E.IV 161/16. This machine was seen in pristine condition with a cluster of notables and its lovely Garuda propeller at KEK Avilliers. No pilot can be assigned.

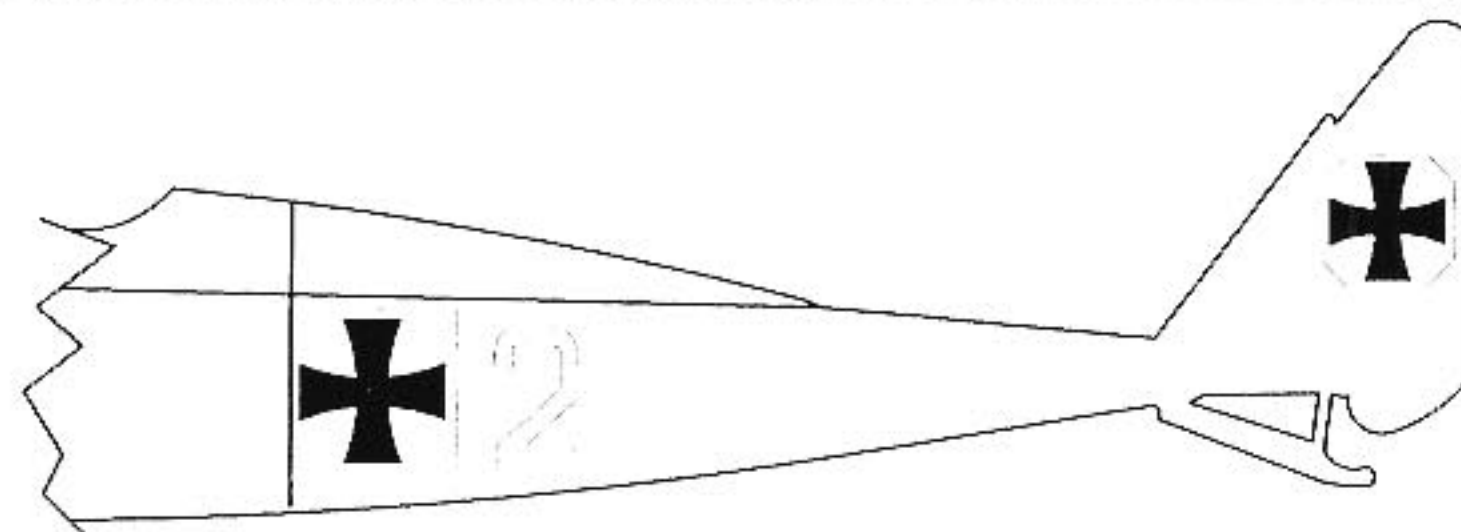


E. - Fokker E.IV 163/16. In contrast this machine is heavily used, badly worn, and extensively weathered when posed with a pilot identified as Hans Karl Müller, again at Avilliers. Outside wheel covers were painted, probably green, possibly at the factory. The propeller, like so many *Eindeckers*, was a Garuda.

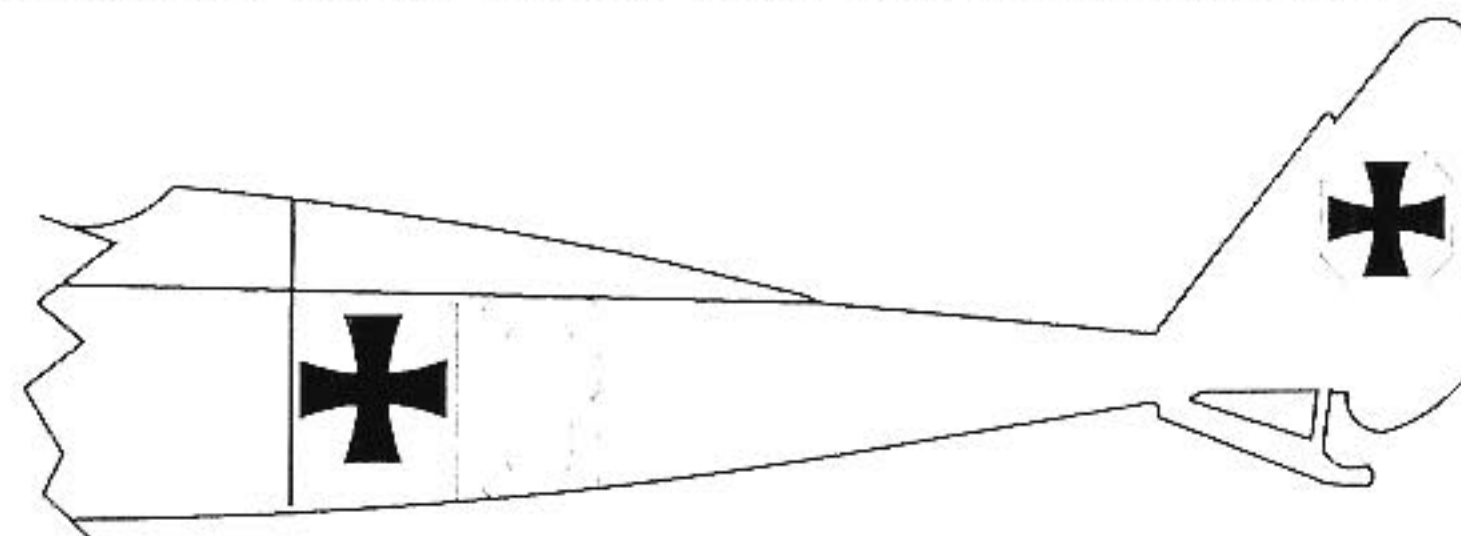


F. Halberstadt D.II? serial unknown. This camouflaged machine was marked with a white '1' on each side of the fuselage in front of the cross field and was certainly flown by Hans Berr in the Autumn of 1916.

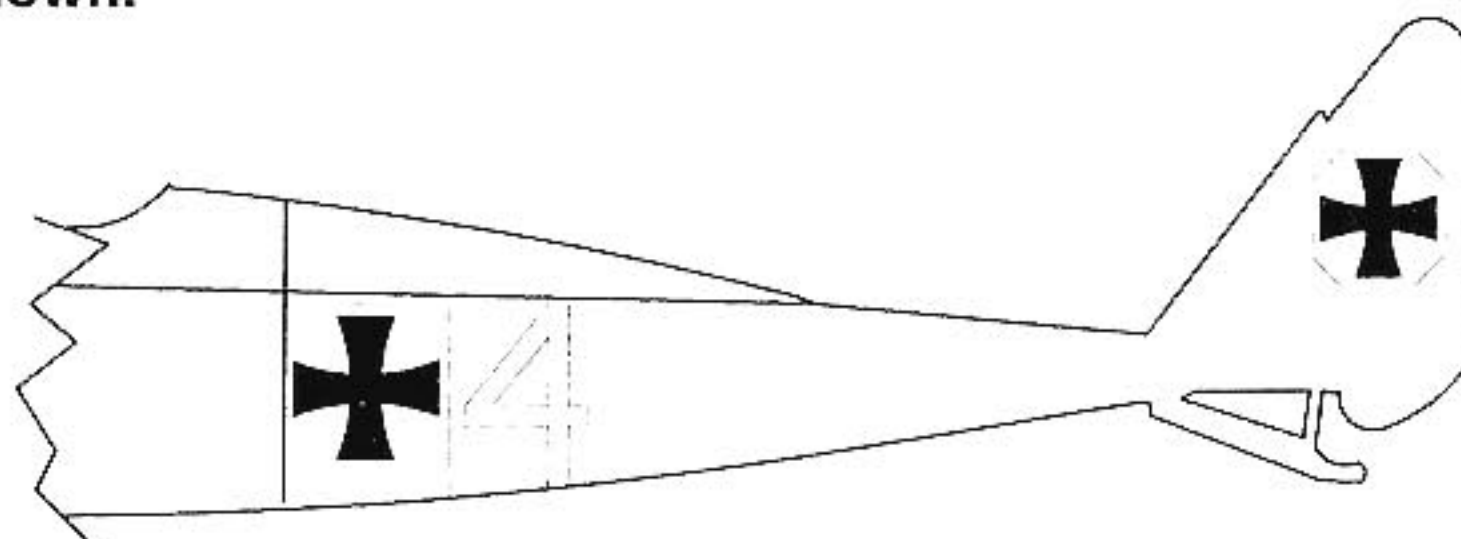
Drawings by the author



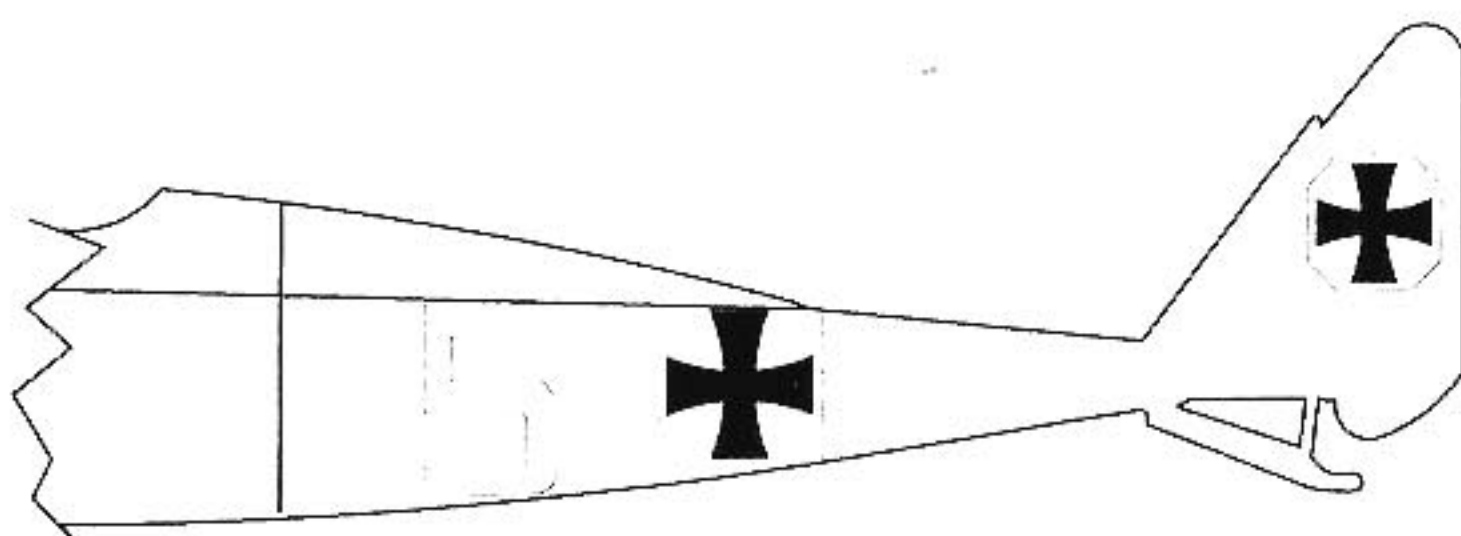
G. - Halberstadt D.V serial unknown. This machine was also camouflaged and bore a white '2' in similar locations to the preceding, but note that the placement of the fuselage cross field was different on this aircraft and the number was therefore behind the cross field rather than in front of it. Pilot unknown.



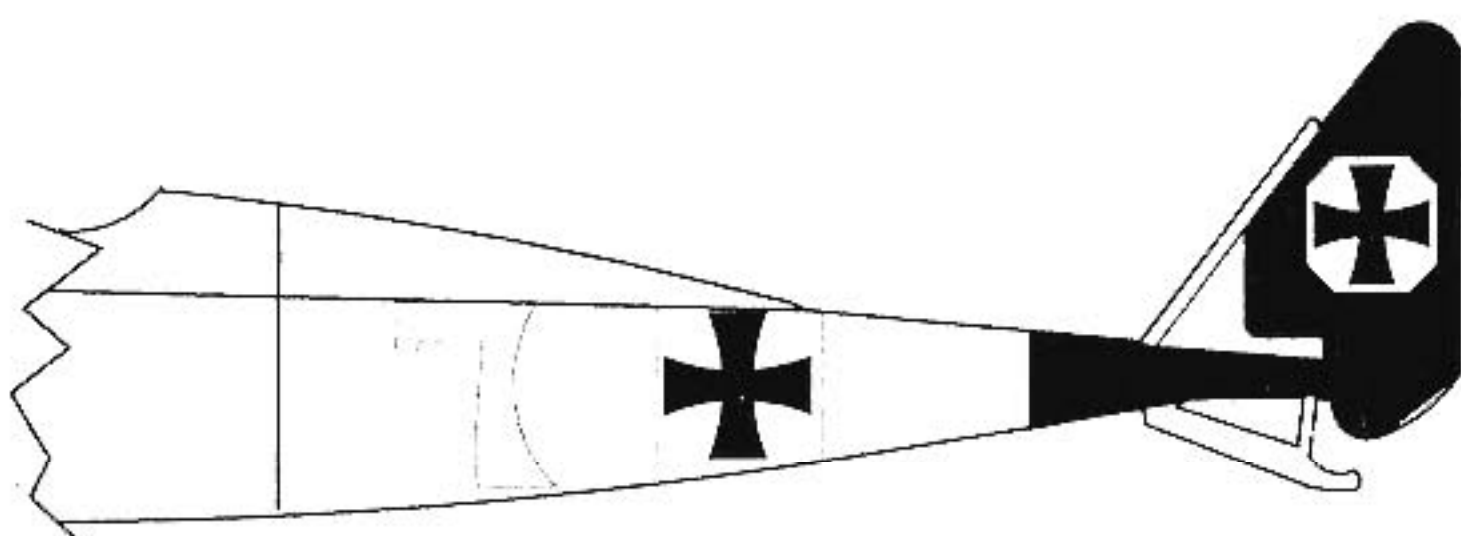
H. - Halberstadt D.II? serial unknown. This and the following machine had similar camouflage and cross field placement as the preceding, but the following numbers, white '3' and white '4' were larger. Pilots unknown.



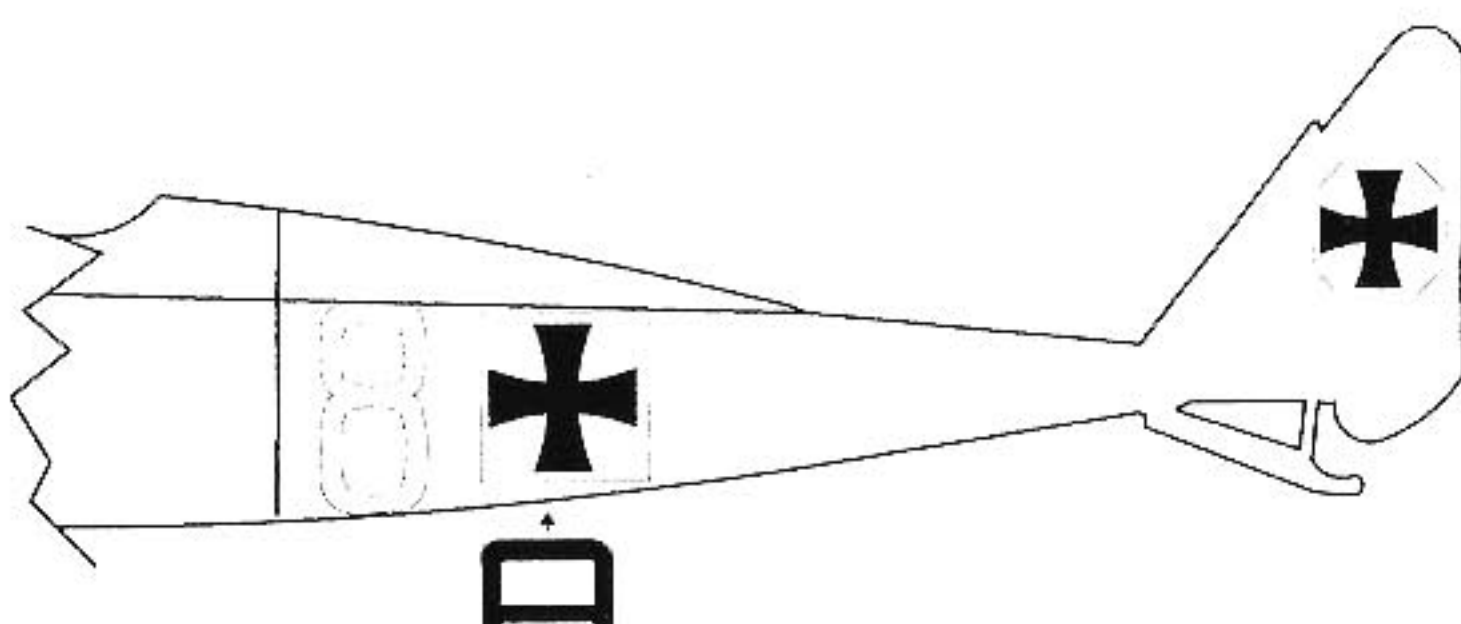
I. - Halberstadt D.II? as above.



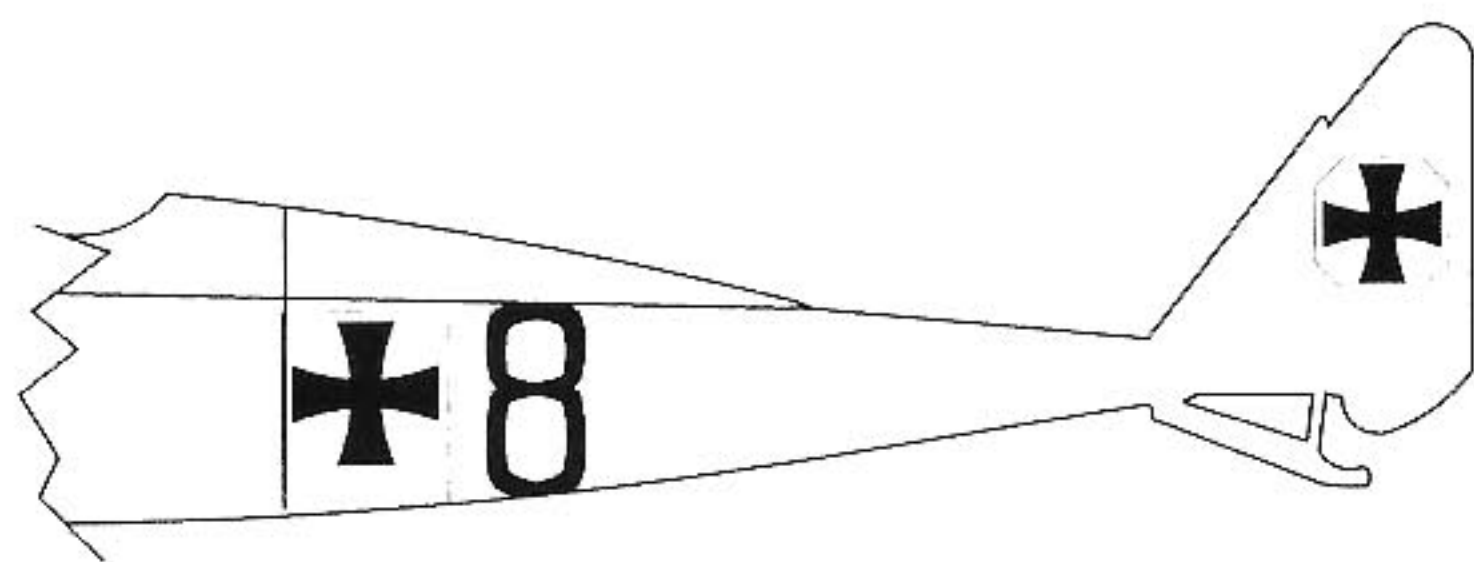
J. - Halberstadt D.II? serial unknown. This was also a camouflaged machine with a very rearward position of the fuselage cross field and a forward white '5' on each side of the fuselage. Again, the pilot is unknown. It had a Behrend and Rüggebrecht propeller.



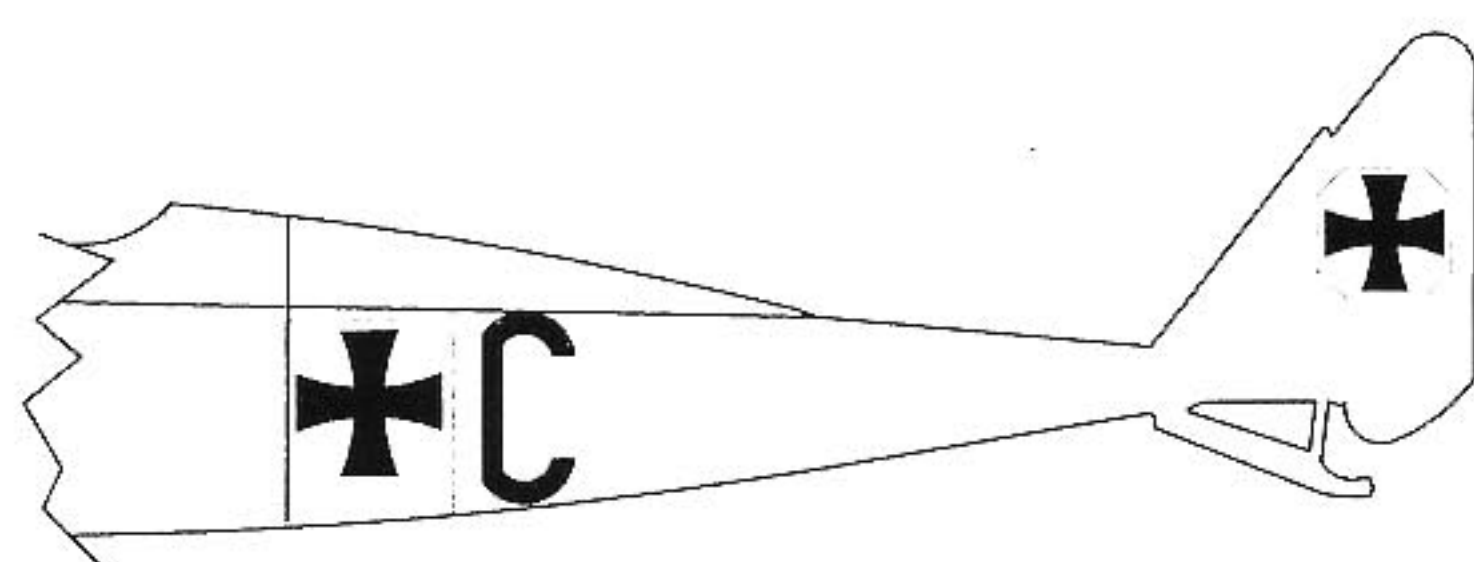
K. - Halberstadt D.II? serial unknown. Camouflaged and originally marked like the preceding, it bore a large white '7' on each side of the fuselage and had its rear fuselage and tail painted black. Pilot unknown.



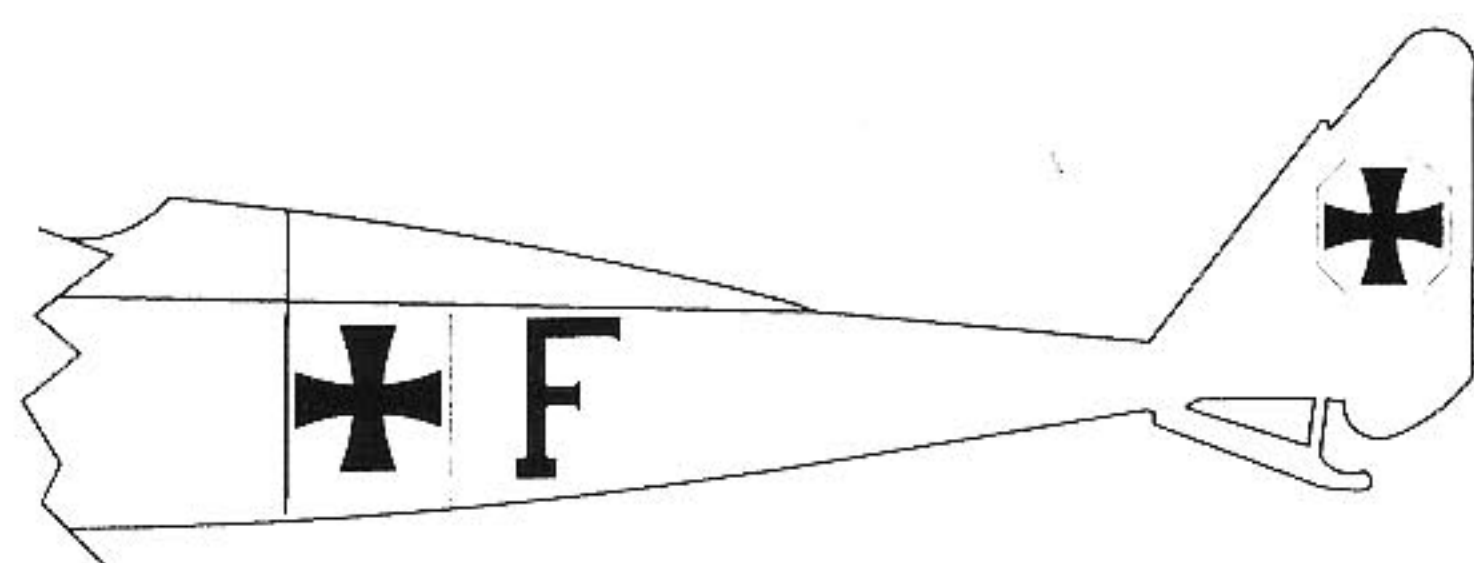
L. - Halberstadt D.II serial unknown. Marked with a white '8' on each side of the fuselage and a black 'D' underneath it. It was crashed by Offst. Klein 4 February 1917. Another crashed Halberstadt bore a white '10', '11', or '0', but the number is too masked to be sure.



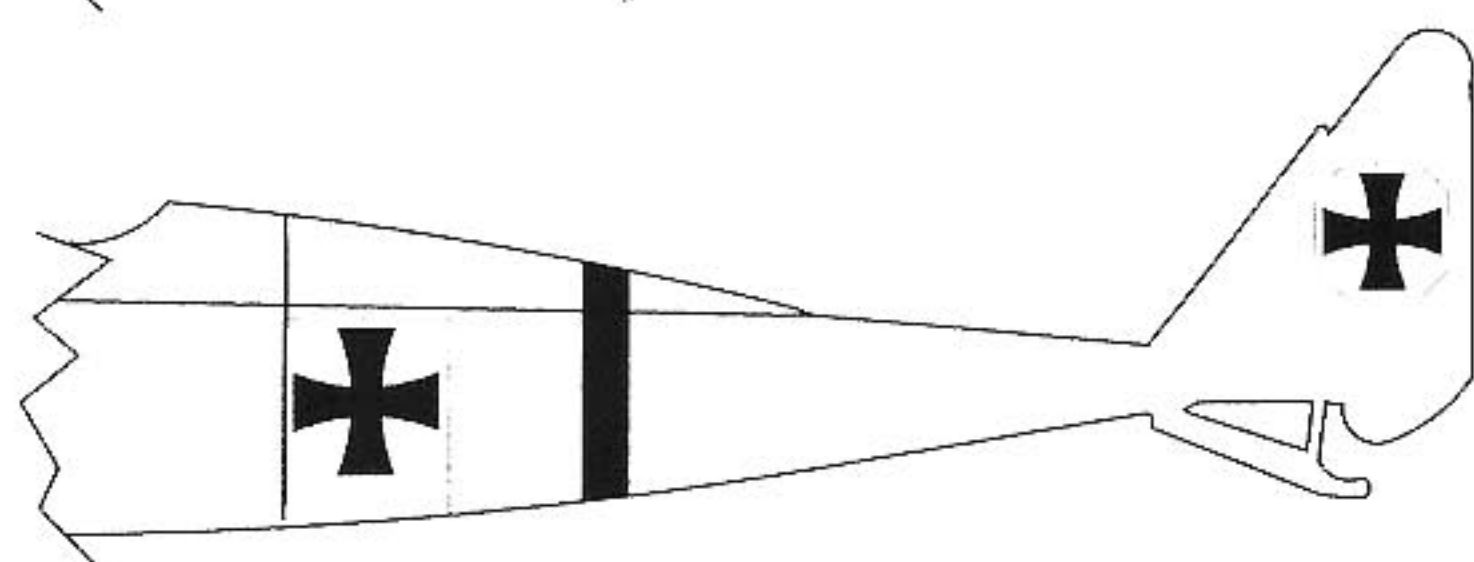
M. - Halberstadt D.II? serial unknown. This was a 'sky camouflaged' machine and consequently bore black markings instead of white, a black '8' otherwise similar to the preceding on each side of the fuselage in a more aft placement. There is a suggestion that Rudolf Nebel was already using '8' as his number and that he flew and crashed this machine.



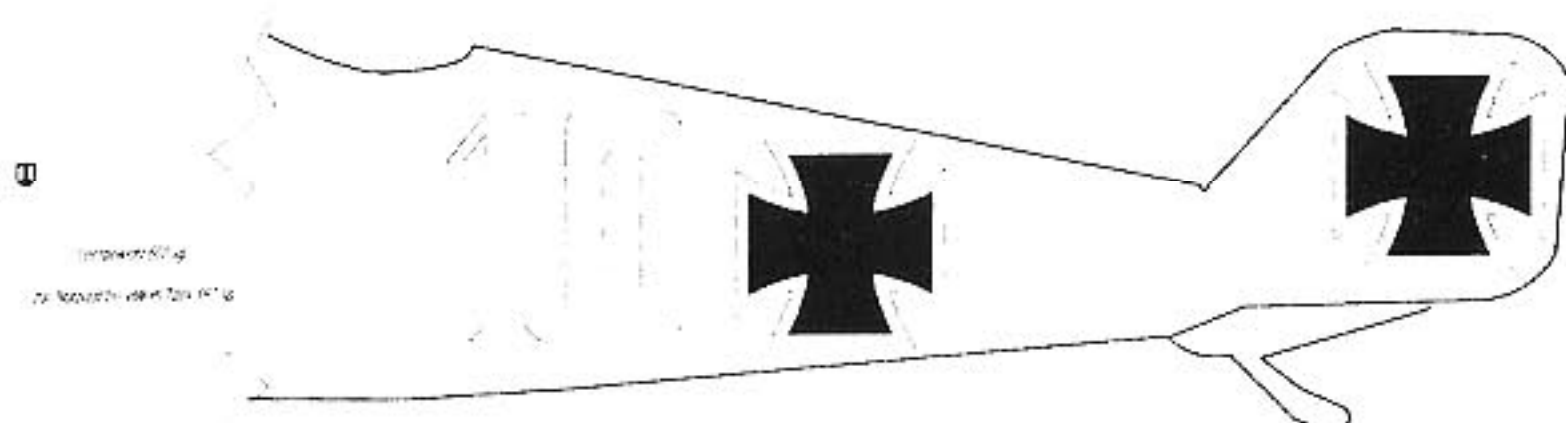
N. - Halberstadt D.II? serial unknown. This machine was also painted light greyish blue and bore a black 'C' behind the more forward placed cross field along each side of the fuselage. Pilot unknown.



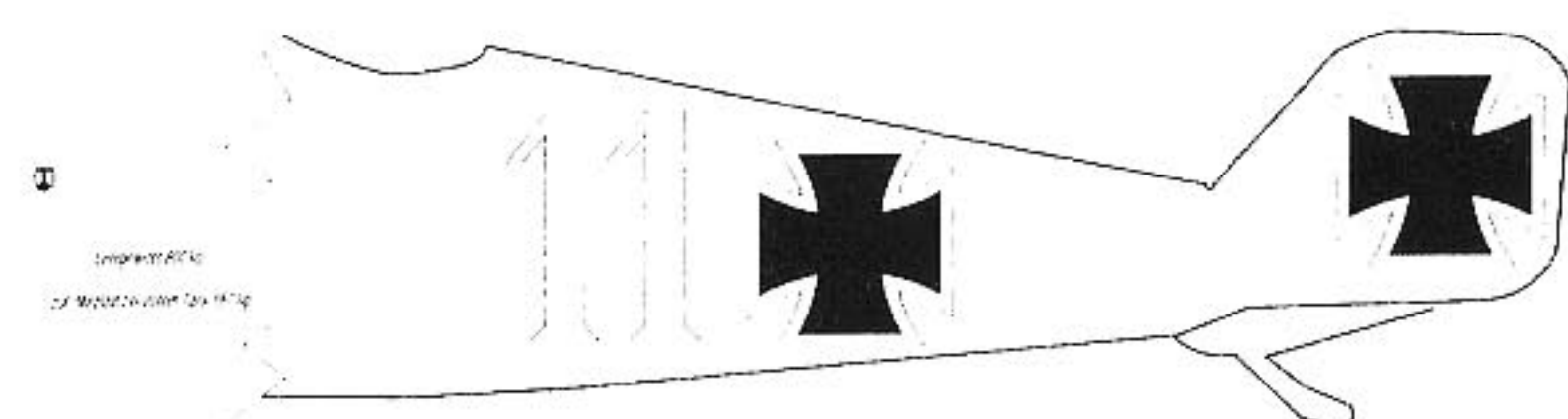
O. - Halberstadt D.II? serial unknown. Like the above, but marked with a black 'F' on each side of the fuselage. Pilot again unknown.



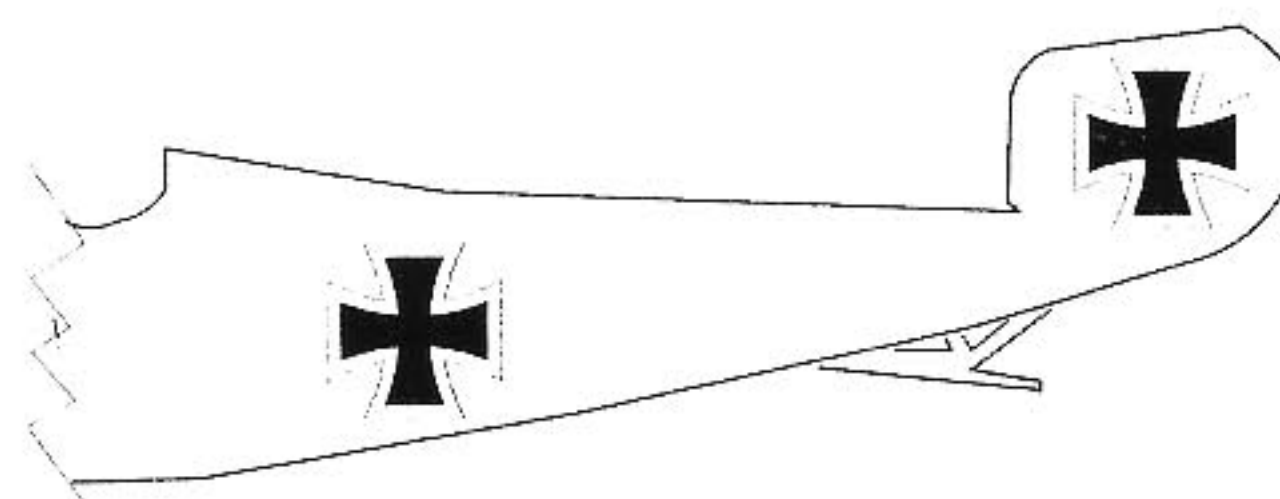
P. - Halberstadt D.II? serial unknown. In a departure from the simple letters or numbers this one bore a black band around the fuselage of the 'sky camouflaged' machine. The fact that Albatros fighters bore a similar band suggests it was a rank or position marking, perhaps designating the machine of the *OzbV*.



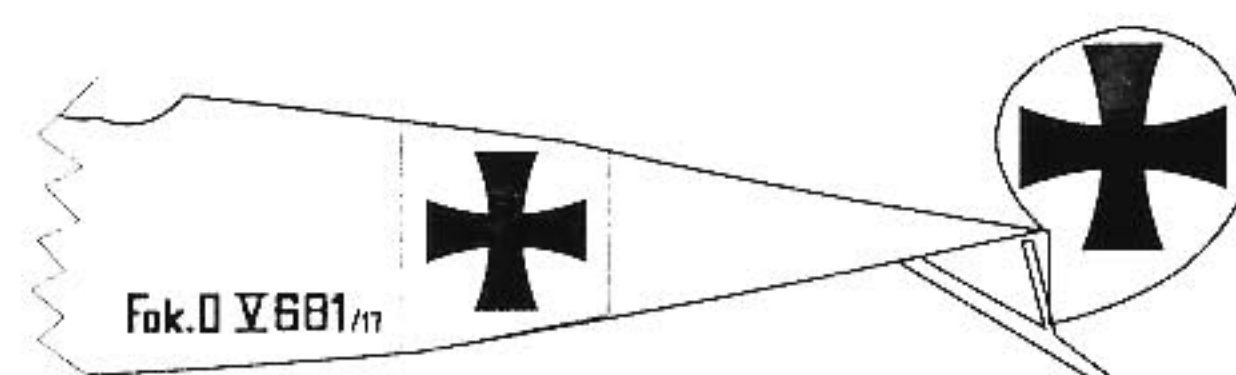
Q. - Roland D.II serial unknown. This was one of at least a pair of Rolands that *Jasta 5* had on strength during the winter 1916-17. They were in standard factory camouflage with white numerals painted on the fuselage. That the numbers were '10' and '11' indicated that they were considered supernumerary aircraft not within the usual *Kette* structure of the *Jasta*. Both had Axial propellers. This one was supposedly crashed by Nebel and if another crash is correctly dated, he wiped out two aircraft in two days.



R. - Roland D.II serial unknown. This one was marked with a white '11' on each side of the fuselage in contrast with the preceding '10'.



S. - SSW D.I 3761/16. To say that the SSW D.I was inspired by the French Nieuports would be a mild understatement. The direct copying often led even to marking similarities, many of the D.Is having crosses under the upper wing. That was not the case here, this machine had crosses in the usual eight positions found on most German aircraft along with a 'standard' camouflage scheme of green and brown (possibly mauve) above and blue below. Small serial stencils are visible on close-up photos, but no large serial shows. This machine had a Marx propeller. Hünnerbein was killed in this machine.



T. - Fokker D.V 681/17. Unlike all the other machines shown in this series that were used in 1916 or early 1917, this machine was not used until well into 1918. As *Jastas* formerly equipped with stationary engines were re-equipped with Fokker triplanes, they often received D.Vs with their rotary engines for practice to aid the transition. This machine was the one used by *Jasta 5* ca. April or May 1918 for that purpose. It was completely ex-works and pretty well used by the time they received it.

west to Bellevue Ferme near Senon where their airfield was probably just east of the modern highway *N18*. This proved a very brief stay because air activity in the Verdun sector was declining as it increased elsewhere along the front. Therefore on 29 September the unit began a move northward to the Cambrai sector and their new airfield at Gonnelleu. The village is located about 14 kilometres SSW of Cambrai, two kilometres east of Gouzeaucourt and almost surrounded by large relatively flat fields suitable as landing grounds: it is not certain which was used. The very best field appears to be to the Northeast, but good ones are also present to the North, Northwest, and Southwest. Only the South and Southeast regions look unlikely. This location was close to the active front and an excellent if slightly precarious position for the unit to see extensive combat, as the Cambrai sector was part of the greater Somme battlefield and remained very active through the First Battle of the Somme and later. *Leutnant* Oskar Lang was transferred to *FFA 9* at this time.

Halberstädterstaffel

It appears that the unit was entirely equipped with Halberstadt D.II, D.III, and D.V fighters during the Autumn of 1916 about the same time they moved to Gonnelleu. They certainly had the aircraft by mid-October and it is likely Berr was flying a Halberstadt when he opened the unit's tally from their new airfield, scoring a double on 7 October. These two, a BE2 and a Caudron downed at Combles, brought his score to four. The former was 6564 from No.21 Squadron, Lt. J A Stewart wounded. Renatus Theiller shot down a 'Vickers' over Longueval on 10 October, but it was not confirmed. Dornheim downed a Caudron on 15 October for his first victory, Hans Müller another South of Flers on the 16th for his sixth victory. Dornheim may have shot down another South of Le Forêt the same day. This location is uncertain. It may reflect some place called 'Le Forêt de...' or, more likely, Forest-en-Cambrésis. Theiller destroyed a 'Vickers' on the 17th North of Maurepas, this one being confirmed as his second victory. His first had been when he was in *FFA 44* on 23 March 1916. The identification of 'Caudrons' and 'Vickers' is, at best, question-

able. Both are likely to have been FE2s because their principal opponents on this front would have been British. It is possible that DH2s could account for some of the 'Vickers' claims, however. On 20 October, *Jasta 5* was involved in intense air action in the morning. Paul Piechl failed to return from an early morning patrol. No official trace of him was ever found and he was declared KIA on 9 April 1921. He probably fell to the gun of Lt. H A Wood of No.24 Squadron flying a DH2 who claimed a 'white scout' between Martinpuich and High Wood (Bois des Fourcaux) at about the right time. Piechl had been flying since the beginning of the war and was a highly-decorated NCO pilot (he was an *Offizierstellvertreter* when he was killed). Indeed, had his career not come to such an abrupt end, his list of decorations might have rivalled those of Max Müller who was Germany's most highly decorated NCO pilot.

Later that morning both Kurt Schneider and Heinrich Büssing claimed FEs north of Longueval, neither was confirmed. That afternoon Hans Berr shot down an FE2 Southeast of Le Transloy from a group of 20. Entering *Jasta 5* this day were two pilots who would later gain fame and infamy; *Leutnant* Hermann Göring and Bruno Loerzer. Both had previously been with *FFA 25* and their simultaneous transfers were no coincidence. They were transferred from unit to unit together because of Göring's severe and potentially recurrent rheumatoid arthritis. Loerzer made sure he stayed close to assist his friend with mundane tasks like getting into and out of a cockpit should Göring's disease have a severe recurrence.

With Piechl's death some comment about the aircraft of *Jasta 5* at this time is appropriate. He was flying Halberstadt D.III 393/16 also reported as *Werknummer* 206. That it was reported as a 'white scout' indicated that it had 'sky camouflage' rather than 'earth camouflage'. *Jasta 5* operated a mixture of Halberstadt types and the camouflage styles seem equally divided between earth and sky for each type. There are several photos showing both styles being operated simultaneously. The sky camouflage was probably pale greyish-blue and led to reports like Wood's of 'white scouts.' It is possible, however, that some of these machines were clear-doped, but none of the (few) pictures where translucency of the flying surfaces would be apparent show this.

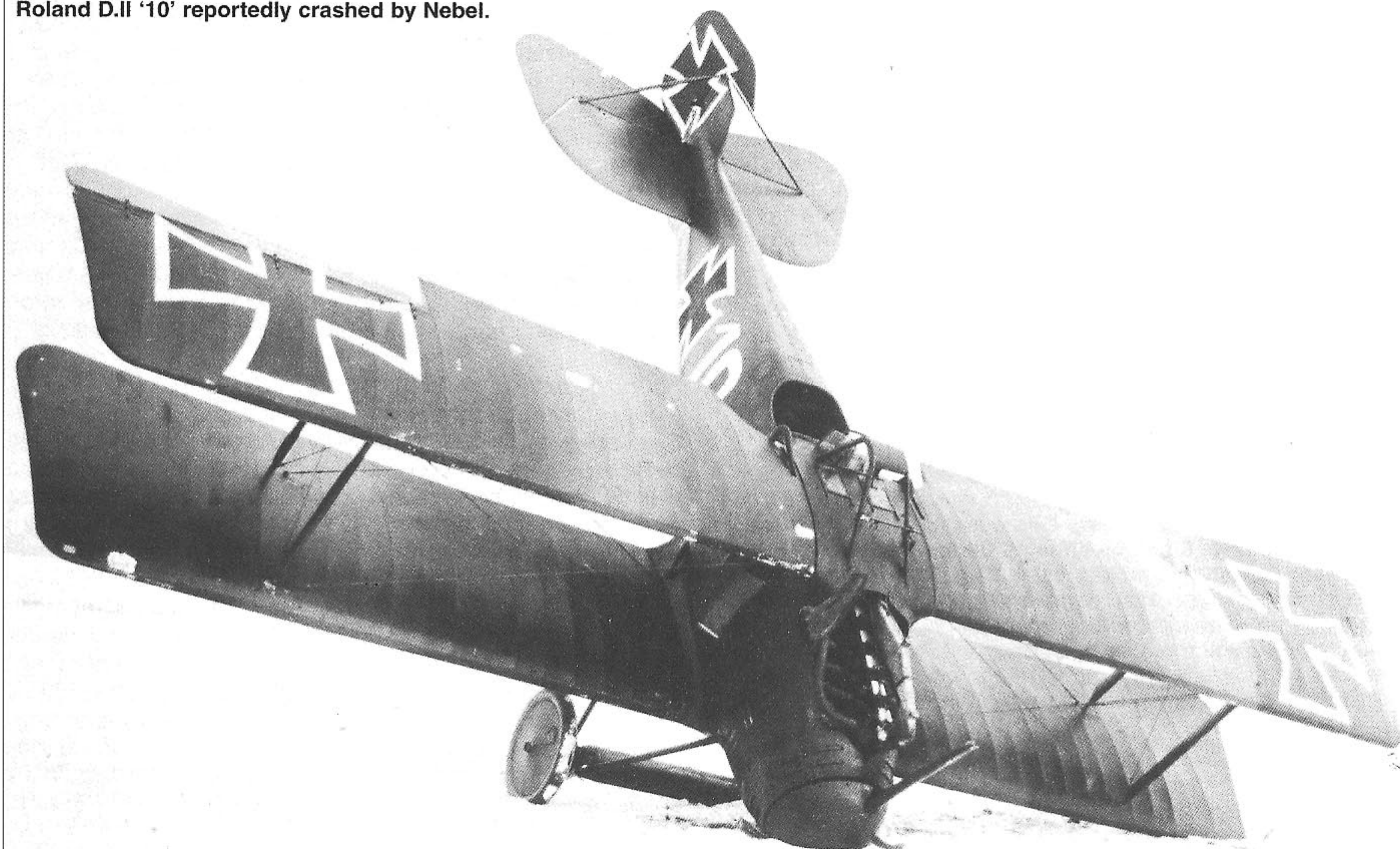
▼ 5

The ones with 'earth' camouflage presumably have lower surfaces in 'sky' and the upper and side surfaces in patches of dark olive green and reddish-brown. No serial numbers are visible on any of these and, indeed, that is a Halberstadt characteristic except for machines built under licence by Hannover, none of which are believed to have been assigned to *Jasta 5*. The relative anonymity of these Halberstadt fighters even extends to which mark a given machine may be. If photographed at an inconvenient angle it may not be possible to distinguish a D.II from a D.III or from a D.V.

Sometime in the autumn of 1916 Berr decided that the aircraft of his unit should carry recognition markings enabling pilots to distinguish each other. Similar things were happening at other *Staffeln*. For example, *Jasta 2* was using pilots' initials and *Jasta 6* had gone to a simple numbering system. Berr generally followed the latter practice, but for simplicity used only single digit numbers 1-0. Supernumerary aircraft would arrive later in the form of Roland D.IIs and early Albatros types and they would receive numbers 10, 11, and 12 as appropriate. Because there were not enough numbers with single digits to cover all the aircraft in the unit, letters were used beyond 0. These were not initials of the pilots, but letters as far into the alphabet as 'F' then, and 'H' later, are difficult to explain. These were marked on the fuselage sides in front of or behind the fuselage cross field, depending on its location, as tall as possible. On 'sky' camouflaged aircraft they were black and on 'earth' camouflaged aircraft they were white. On all examples seen the number or letter was not repeated on the turtledeck nor under the wings or bottom of the fuselage. Sadly, except for Hans Berr's inevitable '1', no aircraft seen in these markings can be positively assigned to a pilot. One possible exception may have been 'black 8,' the likely mount of *Ltn.* Rudolf Nebel who seems to have retained this number for some time in contrast to normal *Staffel* practice with numbers frequently reassigned to different pilots.

Two days after the huge air battles of the 20th, the sky over the Somme battlefield was very active again and *Jasta 5* would add to its tally. Hans Müller scored a double over Bapaume, both listed as FE2s at 1200 and 1800 hours, respectively. One may have been a No.29 Squadron DH2, 5952, 2/Lt. J N Holton killed. Hans Berr downed a Morane LA from No.3 Squadron RFC over

Roland D.II '10' reportedly crashed by Nebel.



Sailly (presumably Sailly-lez-Cambrai) at 1300 hrs. German account, or 1000 hrs. British account. It is not likely two Moranes were lost the same day in the same area and the time difference is probably a minor glitch in record-keeping. This was A247, 2/Lts. F G W Marchant and C C Hann. Both died of wounds. At 1500hrs. Renatus Theiller shot down another FE2, this one in flames, but amazingly this was not confirmed either! Admittedly, there is no known corresponding loss in British records but that is true for Müller's double as well.

Hans Müller shot down a BE2 at 0950 hrs. on 25 October for his 9th victory and the unit's 12th. This No.21 Squadron aircraft was actually (or additionally?) credited to *Ltn.* Manfred von Richthofen. It is worth noting that Müller, had he been an officer, would have been eligible for the *Pour le Mérite* and would have been since 22 October. He certainly would have been eligible for Prussia's highest award to enlisted men, the *Militär-Verdienstkreuz in Gold*, but did not receive it. It would, in fact, be almost a year before an airman would receive this award and Müller 'only' received iron crosses first and second class.

Berr scored another double the next day during an evening patrol. One, an FE from No.18 Squadron at Le Transloy at 1650 hrs., the crew of 2/Lts. P F Heppell and H B O Mitchell PoW, was confirmed quickly, but the second, aircraft type unidentified, was actually his last victory to be confirmed. Once again, there is no obvious corresponding loss, but it could have been a balloon South of Maurepas. *Leutnant* Theiller closed out the month's scoring with a Caudron on the 29th. It would appear he was overcoming the jinx of unconfirmed victories because this was his third. On the last day of the month *Ltn.* Alexander Kutscher joined *Jasta* 5 from *FFA* 32.

The pace did not slacken in early November for Theiller achieved another confirmed victory at 1530 on 1 November over a Nieuport at Combles (or Le Transloy). This might have been French for no British ones were lost that day. An hour later Berr shot down a Caudron between Martinpuich and Courcellette (South of Courcellette). The next day there was another big fight in the same area and Berr downed a BE2 for what would be his last actual victory. *Vizeflugmeister* Winklemann claimed another BE in the same action, but it was not confirmed. No.7 Squadron

RFC lost a BE that day that may correspond to one of these claims. On this day *Ltn.* Hermann Göring was seriously wounded in the right hip during a fight against six Nieuports and forced to leave the unit, Bruno Loerzer following him as always on the 11th. On 3 November, Theiller got his 5th victory to become the *Jasta*'s third 'ace' when he flamed an FE 2 at 1445 hrs. West of Le Mesnil. This aircraft was from No.22 Squadron and was also claimed by a two-seater crew from *FFA* 22. *Ltn.* Hans Gutermuth claimed another FE over Bapaume a little less than an hour later for his second, his first having been scored while he was in *FFA* 44. One of the future 'stars' of German fighter aviation, *Ltn.* Heinrich Gontermann, joined *Jasta* 5 on 9 November, the day before Berr received his *Hohenzollern*. He came from *FFA* 25 and would waste little time establishing himself as a proficient fighter pilot, making his first 'kill', an FE2 at Morval, at 1630 hrs. on 14 November 1916. *Ltn.* Max Böhme joined the unit on 15 November, and *Uffz.* Hans Mittermayr left for *Jasta* 19 on the 27th. He had only been there since 8 October, coming from *FFA* 11.

One of the more interesting characters of German WWI aviation joined *Jasta* 5 on 30 November 1916 in the person of *Ltn.* Rudolf Nebel from *FFA* 103. Nebel may be unique among WWI aviators in having a weapon named after him. It was in the later period when *Jasta* 5 was equipped with Halberstadt fighters that Nebel, probably impressed with use of Le Prieur rockets by the Allies against German observation balloons, conceived of using rockets in air-to-air combat. Nebel obtained some large signal rockets and had his Halberstadt rigged with a stovepipe below each lower wing and electrical circuitry installed so that a rocket in each pipe could be fired by tripping a switch in the cockpit. Nebel claims to have fired this arrangement at a British aircraft and the crew was frightened into landing and surrendering.

6. Berr's *Pour le Mérite* party, December 1916. Standing left to right: ?, Nathanael, ?, Hoppe, ?, Gutermuth, Nebel, Dornheim, and Schneider. Sitting, left to right: Kutscher, Müller, Berr, and von Althaus. On floor: Büssing and Winklemann. Berr always had a serious and unsmiling demeanour, but perhaps somewhat more here than usual, suggesting disapproval of the antics of those around him - he may be the only one in the picture without a glass in his hand!

▼ 6



He also claimed to have fired a second rocket salvo that knocked the propeller off another British aircraft for a second victory. There are problems with these claims. Nebel is only credited with one confirmed victory while with *Jasta 5* and that was in late April 1917, long after *Jasta 5* had become totally Albatros-equipped. The time-frame for his supposed rocket victories would have had to be in the December 1916 to early February 1917 range with January being the most likely month. Given that his accounts of the combats should have led to easy confirmations makes his version somewhat suspect. According to his story he had his first Albatros fitted the same way and after an unsuccessful firing and the lower wing fabric of the Albatros catching fire, Berr ordered him to remove the installation. Thus passed into aviation history one of the more enterprising and novel efforts to expand the killing capacity of the single-seat fighter aircraft. Into history, but not forgotten. During a later war the term '*Nebelwerfer*' was coined by the Germans - and found its way into other languages as well - as a code name for a rocket launcher. Freely translated the word means 'smoke projector' and, according to one version was selected by Hermann Göring himself in 'honour' of Rudolf Nebel who was still living. One might also wonder if there could have been some allusion to Nebel's unconfirmed rocket victories, because *Nebelwerfer* could also be translated as 'fog thrower'!

A mixed bag

Aerial warfare was significantly reduced as winter tightened its grip on northern France. No claims were made and few combat flights executed in December until a spell of clearer weather settled in about a week before Christmas. Not all was inactivity, however, because Berr received his *Pour le Mérite* on 4 December and this was an excuse for a somewhat riotous party judging from photographs of some rather inebriated young pilots and a *Staffelführer* who looks decidedly embarrassed by it all. There are many surviving photographs of German fighter pilots (and two-seat units as well) having parties featuring significant quantities of alcohol. Given the precarious futures most of these young men faced that is certainly understandable, but *Jasta 5* either had more of these 'wet' nights or else someone who loved to photograph his comrades enjoying themselves, sometimes to excess.

It was during this interval that *Jasta 5* apparently received 'one-offs' of several types. It is known that they had at least two LFG (Roland) D.IIs and that Nebel stood one of them on its nose with little damage. A variety of factors might explain this accident, but the Roland was notoriously difficult to land because of high sink rate coupled with poor downward visibility. Both of these aircraft were in the camouflage of the day, reddish-brown and dark green upper and side surfaces with pale blue undersurfaces. Both appear to have had Axial propellers with the later style logo. It's possible that *Jasta 5* also received a single Albatros D.I for evaluation around this time. Nowarra (*Eisernes Kreuz und Balkenkreuz*) published a photo of Albatros D.I 435/16 and said it was flown by *Ltn.* Karl Spitzhof in *Jasta 5*. Most of the semi-official unit histories of the unit do not list either *Ltn.* Spitzhof or any Albatros D.I on unit strength, but Franks, *et al.*, do list him, saying he served in *Jasta 5* from February to August 1917. There are two well-known photos of 435/16. The first shows it in what appears to be an unusual ex-works livery camouflaged on all upper and side surfaces with reddish-brown and probably the two shades of green. Undersurfaces were light blue to include the bottom of the fuselage - an unusual paint scheme for an Albatros-built fighter of this period. This is topped off by having the serial applied in white on the camouflaged fin. This colouration is logical for a practical field camouflage, but the painted fuselage was not characteristic of (Johannisthal) products at this time. It had an Axial propeller with the first style of logo. The second photograph shows this machine at a later time when a lovely black and white three-pointed star had been added to the fuselage sides and the entire tail unit painted white with the exception of a small box of the original camouflage colour (reddish-brown?) surrounding the still white serial. The venue for this photograph is tough to judge, but we suspect that it may have been with a training unit by this time, whether it ever served in *Jasta 5* or not.



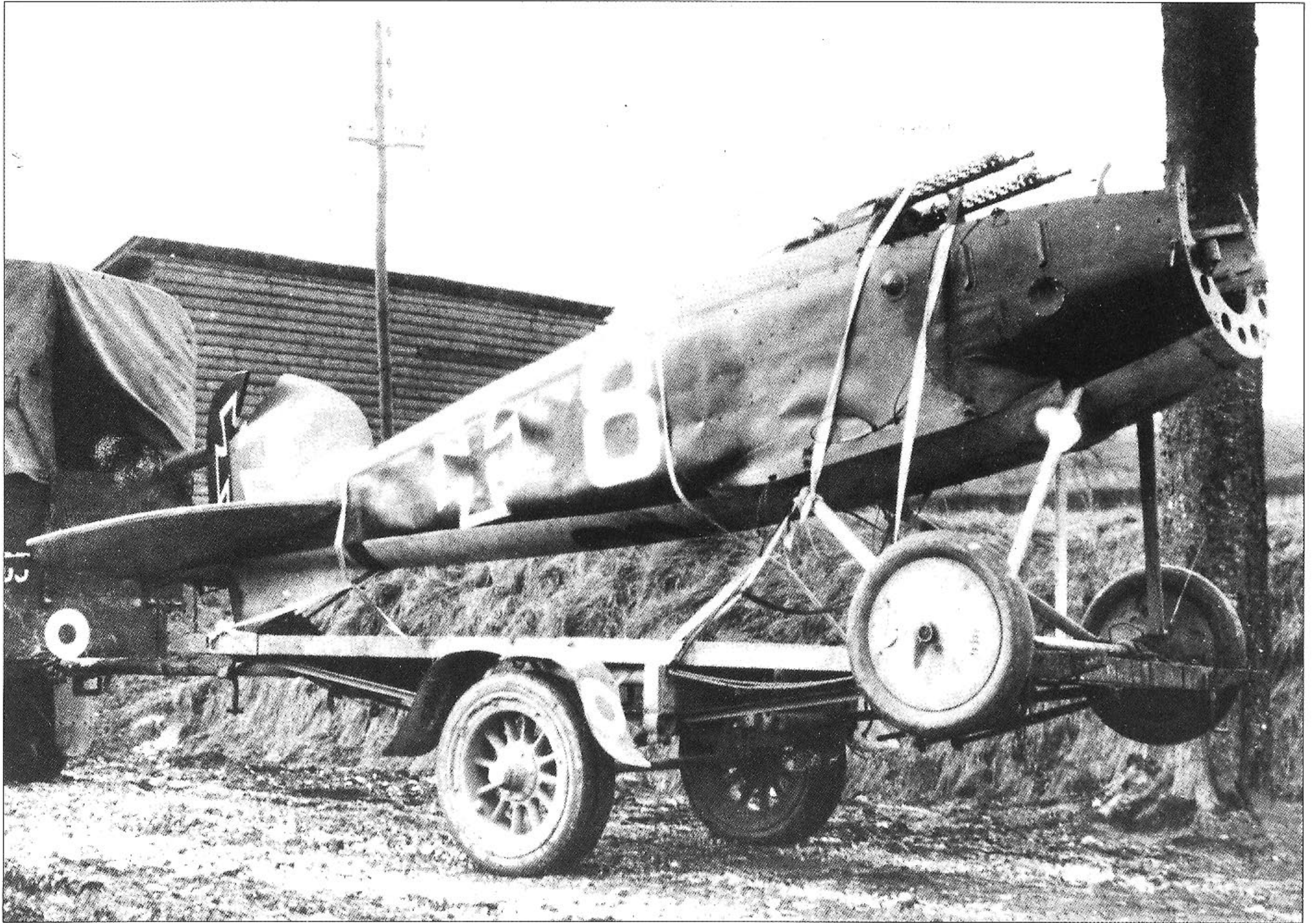
▲ 7
7, 8 and 9. Three of many views taken of Max Böhme's captured Albatros D.II (OAW) 910/16, downed on 3 March 1917. Worth noting are the serial on the wheel disc, the scratched out '4' beneath the '8', the black '8' on the fuselage belly, and the dark band encircling the fuselage just forward of the tail unit.

It is also possible that the unit identification may have been off by one and that this aircraft actually served in *Jasta 6* - see *WINDSOCK DATAFILE* No.100.

Somewhat later in the spring of 1917 the unit would receive a single Siemens-Schuckert D.I for evaluation, 3761/16. This machine had similar camouflage to the Rolands and Albatros D.I 435/16, reddish-brown and dark green, with pale blue undersurfaces. Unlike some SSW D.Is, this aircraft did not have crosses under the upper wing in the fashion of French Nieuports from which the design was closely copied. It had white-outlined *Eiserne Kreuze* in all eight positions and a Marx propeller. It was flown on occasion by Schneider and would later have a profound effect on the unit's history. In spite of these examples, the unit remained primarily equipped with Halberstadts.

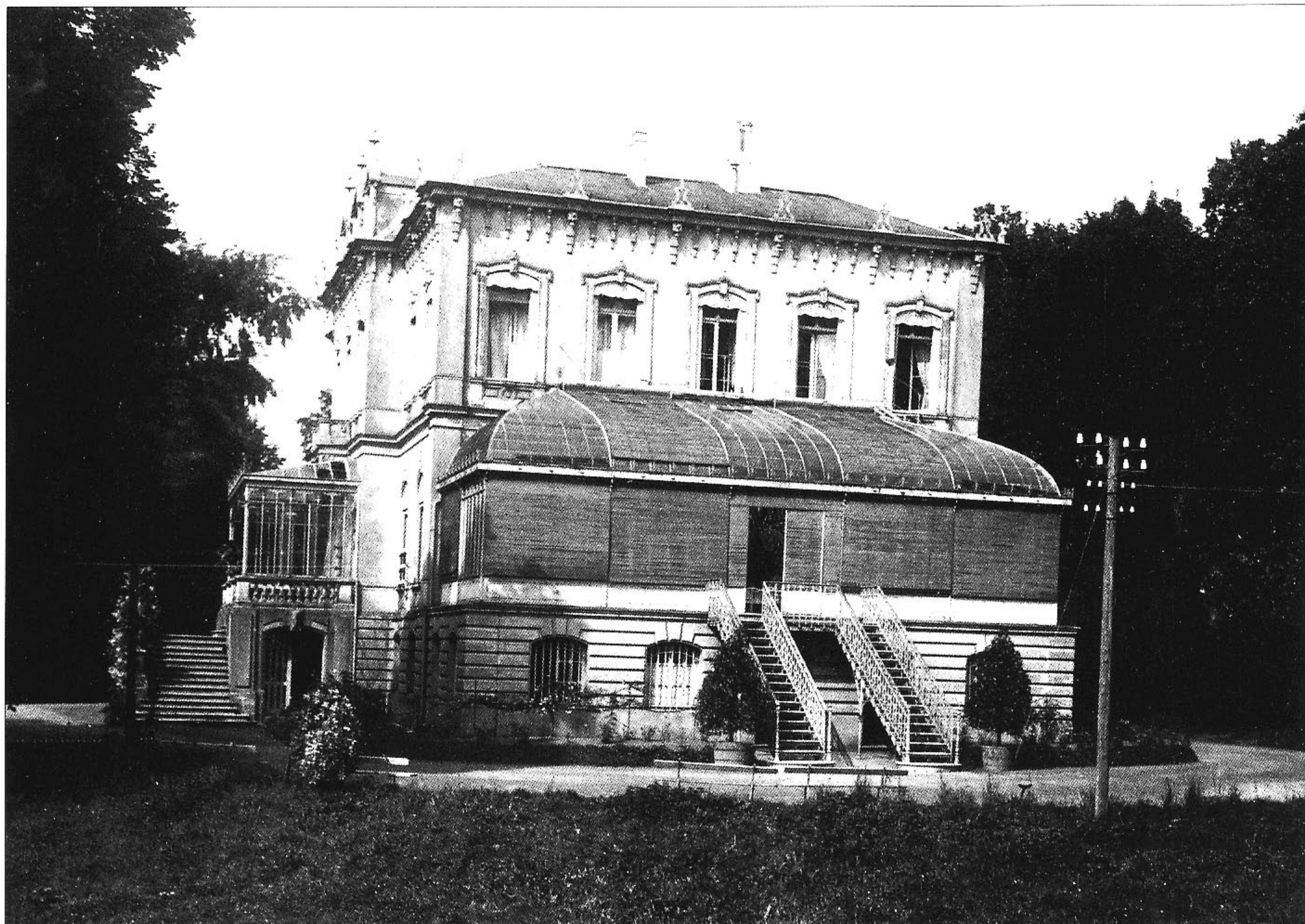
Unteroffizier Walter Hoffmann joined *Jasta 5* either in September 1916 (Franks, *et al.*) or the same day Berr received his *Pour le Mérite* according to unit records. As stated above, this was an inactive period and *Jasta 5* would not claim another victory until 20 December, when Hans Müller claimed a double between Combles and Courcellete within 15 minutes. One of these would not be confirmed, but the other would bring his official total to ten equalling his *Staffelführer* and making him the unit's second 'double ace'. In recognition of the general quiet along the front, *Oblt.* Hans Berr was posted away for temporary duty as commander of *Jastaschule* Valenciennes. In his absence *Ltn.* Dornheim was acting *Staffelführer*. There are no records that show when Berr returned to *Jasta 5*, merely that it was before 1 April 1917. It seems likely he was away all of January and returned about 1 February.

Boxing Day 1916 was another big day for *Jasta 5* as they claimed no fewer than four BE2s. The British lost four that day, some match quoted times and places, but Trevor Henshaw suggests their victors were from *Jastas 1* and 2. Hans Gutermuth's claim at 1045 hrs. over Mouruscourt (probably misspelled, no such village can be located) was not allowed, but Renatus Theiller received confirmation for a 'Vickers' West of Sailly (probably Sailly-au-Bois in this case, but maybe Sailly-lez-Cambrai) at 1055 hrs. in the same fight. His victims were Capt. H L H Owen and Lt. R Mayberry, both of whom survived. Hans Müller, now an *Offizierstellvertreter*, achieved another double on an early afternoon patrol in the Combles and Le Sars area that were confirmed in reverse order, but were his 11th and 12th victories. He was seriously wounded in the abdomen and never returned to combat, spending most of the remainder of the war as a test pilot for Siemens-Schuckert. Franks, *et al.*, only credit Müller with nine victories and, as a result, his name does not appear on the list of big scorers they present. If, however, his higher score of 12 is accepted, then he would rank very high indeed for the time.



▲ 8 ▼ 9





▲ 10

Leaving combat as he did essentially at the end of 1916 we can place him among the list of aces from 1 January 1917 as Franks, *et al*, do. On the basis of 12 victories he would trail only Boelcke with 40, Wintgens with 19, Immelmann with 15, Frankl with 15, Manfred von Richthofen with 15, and tied with Buddecke and Höhndorf. All the pilots listed were officers and all had (or would have) the *Pour le Mérite*. Hans-Karl Müller was in select company indeed, and his loss was a severe blow.

Leutnant Ludwig Fritz Dornheim closed out *Jasta 5*'s scoring for 1916 with a BE2 at 1145 hrs. on 27 December. No corresponding British loss is apparent, but it was confirmed as his third victory and the unit's 26th.

Although a new year dawned on the Cambrai-Somme front, not a great deal changed. Weather continued to reduce flying and successes were few. *Jasta 5* made claims for three victories during January 1917, but all were disallowed; claims by *Uffz.* Hoffmann on the 4th at Cléry-sur-Somme and 24th at Harbonnières, and by *Ltn.* Gontermann on the 10th. On the 26th *Jasta 5* had another casualty when *Vizeflugmeister* Winklemann was shot down by anti-aircraft fire and made PoW within British lines. He was flying a Halberstadt D.-type at the time and if it was the same one with which he was photographed, it was sky-camouflaged and had, like many or most of *Jasta 5*'s *Halberstädter*, a Niendorf propeller. His machine was not assigned a British 'G' number, perhaps because it was too badly damaged. There was extensive evaluation of another Halberstadt brought down a few days later that indicates an ongoing British interest in the type.

February opened on a more successful note with Hans Gutermuth obtaining his third victory at 1530 hrs. on 2 February at Gommecourt. This is well documented and was DH2 A2570 flown by Lt. H Blyth of No.32 Squadron RFC who was wounded, taken prisoner, and died of his wounds. On 5 February *Ltn.* Dornheim was posted away as *Staffelführer* of *Jasta 29*. Obviously his record acting in Berr's absence and other factors had been noted by the authorities and marked him for command in the expanding fighter arm. This is probably also a pretty good indication

that Hans Berr had returned or would very soon. On the same day *Ltn.* Theiller claimed an FE 2 at 1615 over Thiepval that was not allowed.

Albatrosstaffel

Exactly when *Jasta 5* received their Albatros D.II aircraft is not known, but there is a photograph taken at Gonnellieu that shows eight brand-new D.II aircraft lined up, totally without unit or individual markings and supposedly taken in February 1917. Three of these machines were OAW-built, the remainder Albatros. The OAW-built machines had outlined crosses, the Albatros ones were 'boxed'. Given that Berr had considerable 'clout', and that *Jastaschule* Valenciennes was flying Halberstädter while he was there, coupled with the total re-equipment obvious in photographs, leads to reasonable speculation that he had the unit's 'old' Halberstadt fighters sent to the school and *Jasta 5* simultaneously entirely re-equipped with Albatros D.IIs. One possible glitch in this scenario is that Albatros D.II D.1799/16 was seen at a gathering of fighter pilots in the Cambrai sector in December 1916. Knowing that this machine wound up in *Jasta 5* does not preclude that it served elsewhere until the unit ceased to be Halberstadt-equipped. The letter it carried may not have been a *Jasta 5* innovation and that it was re-marked at least part of the time with the unit does not conflict with ex-works machines seen at Gonnellieu in early February 1917. Nevertheless, this line-up of unmarked machines was certainly rare and one that cannot have endured for long. Indeed, one suspects that the photo was taken the same day the machines were received because Hans Berr was a stickler for plain, simple, conspicuous markings being applied to *Jasta 5* aircraft. The system begun with the *Halberstädter* was continued and expanded with the unit's Albatros fighters. The most common markings were black numbers or letters painted in simple, bold style on both sides of the fuselage behind the cockpit and repeated on the turtledeck, not seen on any Halberstadt. Additionally the number or letter was applied in black under both lower wings extending nearly full chord. There were minor modifications on this theme. Some

aircraft received some sort of field camouflage and their fuselage markings were commonly white rather than black to render them more visible. The markings under the wings remained the same. The factory camouflage scheme on at least one OAW-built machine included brown and green sides and top with a blue belly. This machine received white numbers on sides and top of the fuselage, but a black number under the fuselage in lieu of markings under the wings. These markings were far from flamboyant, but were certainly dramatic and distinctive. There is little doubt that they were also effective for air-to-air recognition.

Winter flying was an off and on business and there would be no claims until the middle of February when Hans Gutermuth got his fourth victory at 1100 hrs. on 14 February near Gueudecourt. This was a Morane parasol, serial A6652, of No.3 Squadron RFC crewed by Lts. Young and de Ross. The aircraft burned and then broke up, both occupants being killed. The following day was a busy one with Vzfw. Emil Schaepe coming to the unit from

10. 'Schloß Boistrancourt' as the pilots referred to it, a lovely *château* that *Jasta 5* occupied for more than a year, seen in summer 1917.

11. Oblique aerial view of Boistrancourt, also summer 1917 looking generally East, slightly Southeast. Evident is that the *château* is surrounded by beautiful trees and elegant grounds. These premises are enclosed by a wall that includes probable servant quarters in the lower left corner and the observation tower that figured so prominently in the unit's photographic history in the upper right. The road in the foreground is modern D115, leading to the right to Cattenières. The larger road running diagonally top to bottom (and with some sort of vehicle travelling along it!) is modern N43 leading away to Beauvois-en-Cambrésis and back toward Cambrai. To the right of the estate is a cultivated field, almost certainly sugar beets. Behind the *château* wall is the sugar factory with its dominating chimney. To its right is a low wall and beyond that the hangers of *Jasta 5*, emphasising that no two of them were alike. Heavy traffic rolling aircraft in and out of the hangers has left worn spots in the grass, especially in front of the nearer hangers, suggesting the unit might not have been at full strength when this photo was taken. Finally, in front of the hangers and staggered between them are the seven wooden structures Hans Berr had built as a stand-off between the hangers and the landing ground in front of them.

Schusta 8. At 1045 hrs. over Miraumont Vzfw. Heinrich Büssing shot down DH2 7932 of No.32 Squadron RFC flown by Lt. C H March who was wounded, but survived. At almost the same time Renatus Theiller claimed another DH2 and there are suggestions that this was a dual claim for the same victim. However, records show that the pilot, Capt. H W G Jones, was shot down wounded in British lines in DH2 A2535 so these are apparently separate victories. Confirmation was given to both pilots as Büssing's second and Theiller's seventh. There may have been a claim by Büssing four days earlier, but details are lacking.

The following day *Jasta 5* suffered a grievous loss when one of its promising younger pilots was killed in combat. Hans Gutermuth was involved in a fight over Gommecourt-Hébuterne and was shot down from 4500 feet by Sgt. Smith and Lt. W J Aldrell of No.5 Squadron RFC in a Morane. Uffz. Walter Hoffmann was posted to *Jasta 36* on 22 February, and Uffz. Ernst Dahlmann came into *Jasta 5* from FFA 221 the following day.

March began auspiciously enough with Renatus Theiller flaming a balloon west of Frise at 1810 hrs. for his 8th confirmed victory. The same day Emil Schaepe's brief stay at *Jasta 5* was ended when he was posted away to *Jasta 33*. On 4 March the irrepressible Renatus Theiller claimed a triple, but his record of bad luck obtaining confirmations continued and he was not credited with the morning's victory, an FE2 at 1000 hrs. over Cléry-sur-Somme. Admittedly, no corresponding British loss can be identified, but Theiller's difficulty in obtaining confirmations seems unusually severe. In the afternoon he would have better success, as his claim at 1630 hrs. for a 'BE', actually one of the early victories over an RE8 (A4163) at Combles/Monchy-aux-Bois was confirmed. The occupants, 2/Lts. B W Hill and W Harms of No.59 Squadron RFC were both killed. Some 45 minutes later he would claim an FE2 (A5441) crewed by 2/Lt. Beal and 2AM Davin who were able to extinguish a fire that broke out after the aircraft was hit, and successfully crash-land the aircraft at Bouchavesnes-Bergen, both escaping unhurt. It was Theiller's second confirmed victory of the day. Earlier at noon, Heinrich Büssing claimed an FE2 over Gueudecourt. It was his second, but would be confirmed ahead of his of 15 February as his first

▼ 11

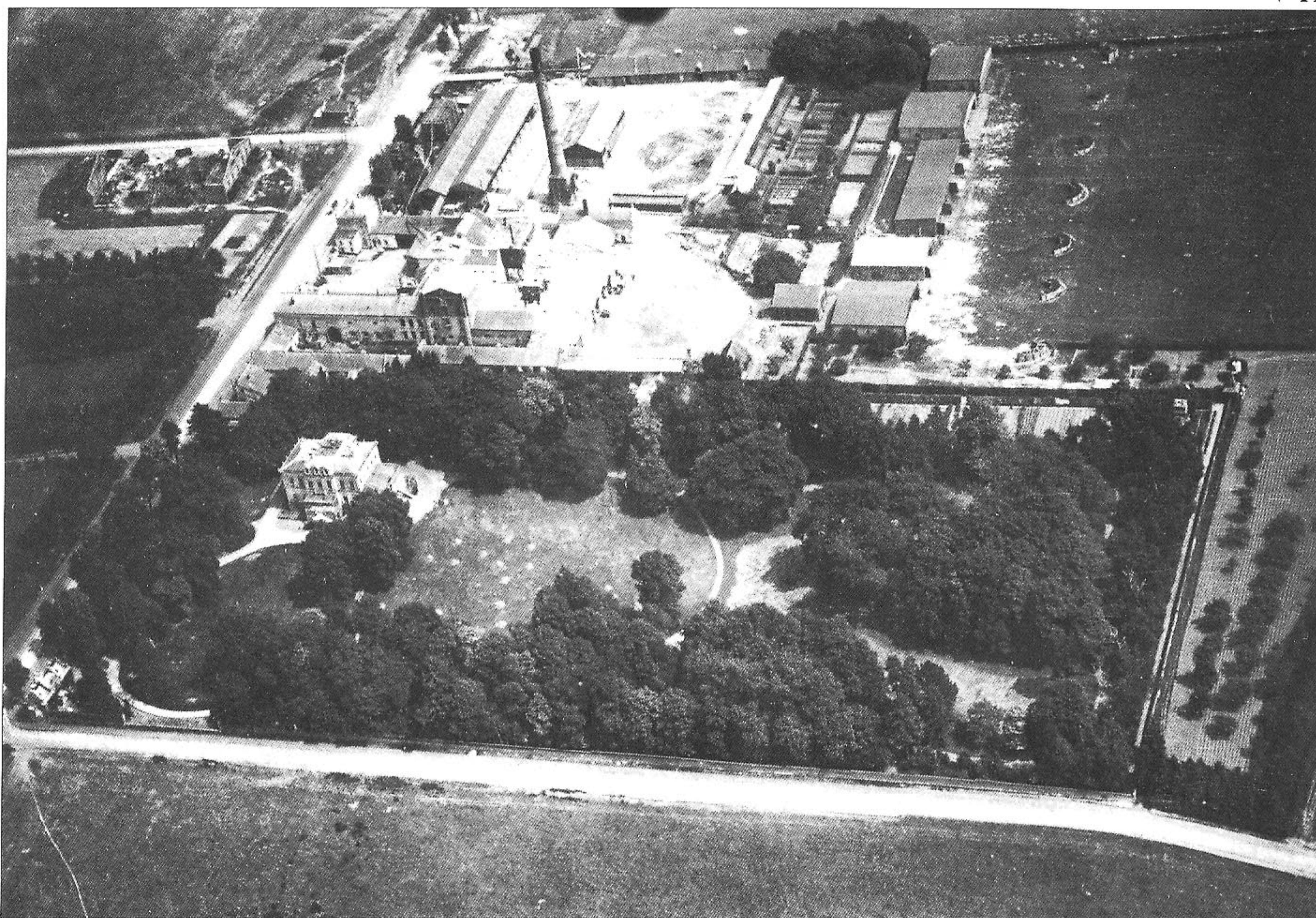
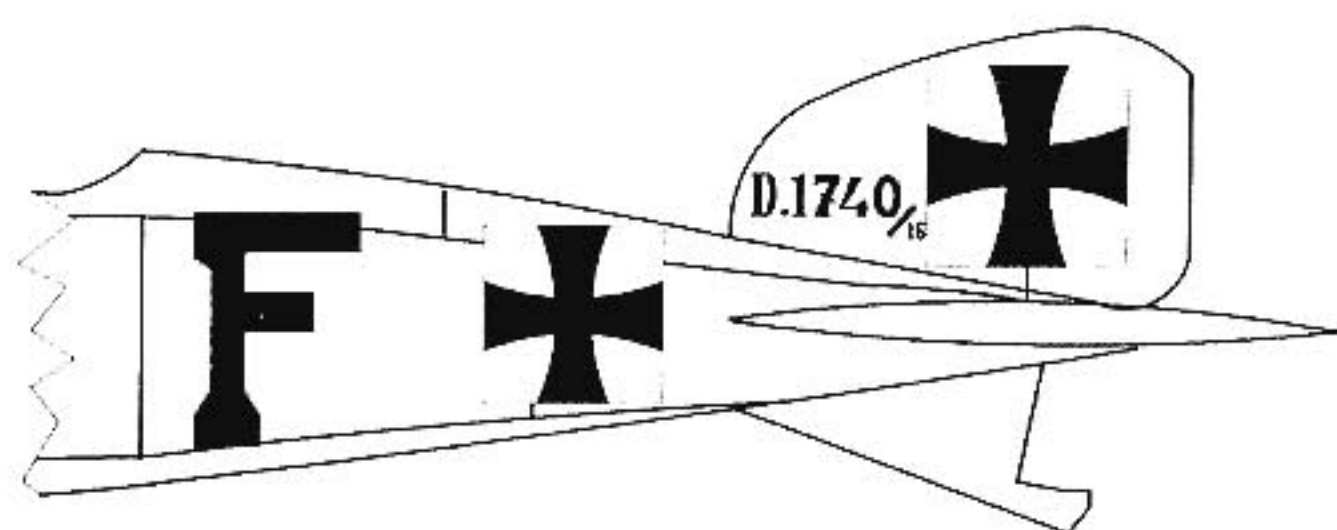
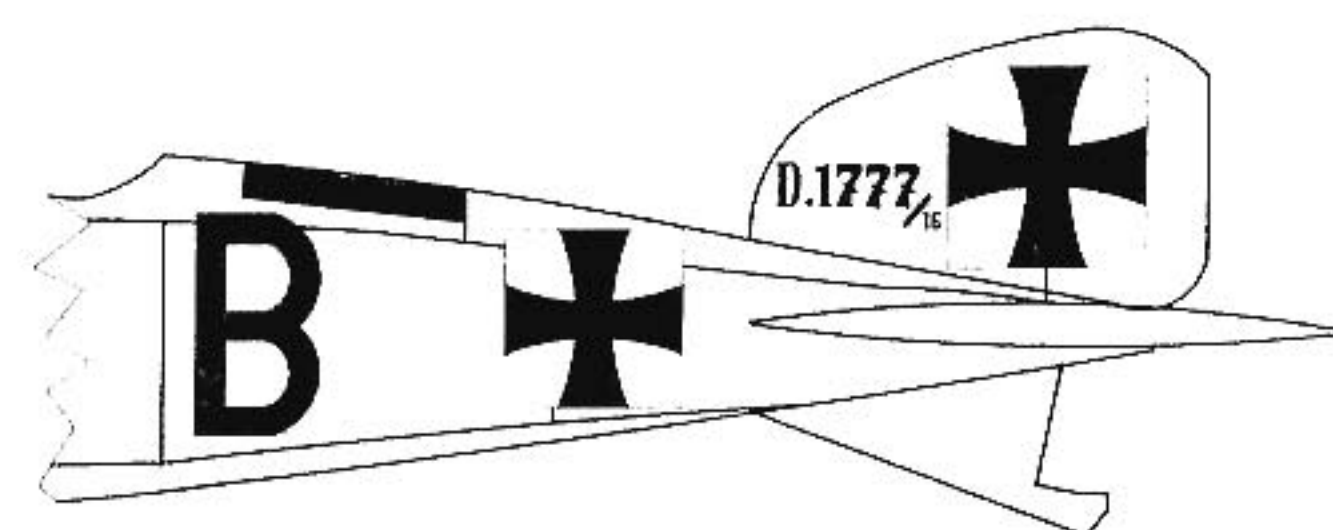


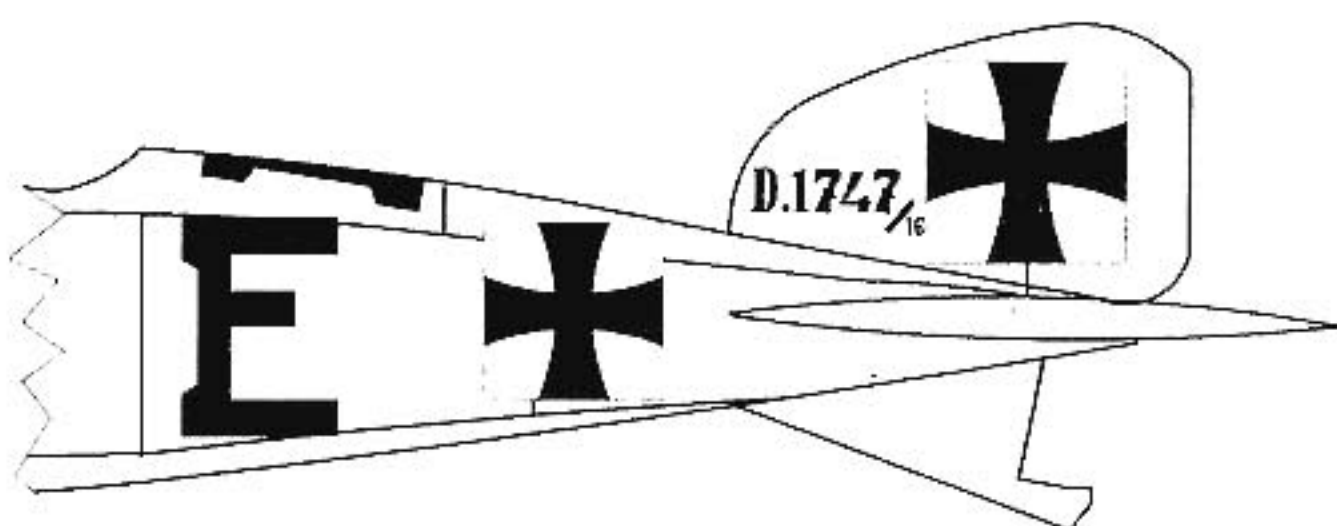
Figure B. - Albatros D.IIs of *Jasta 5*



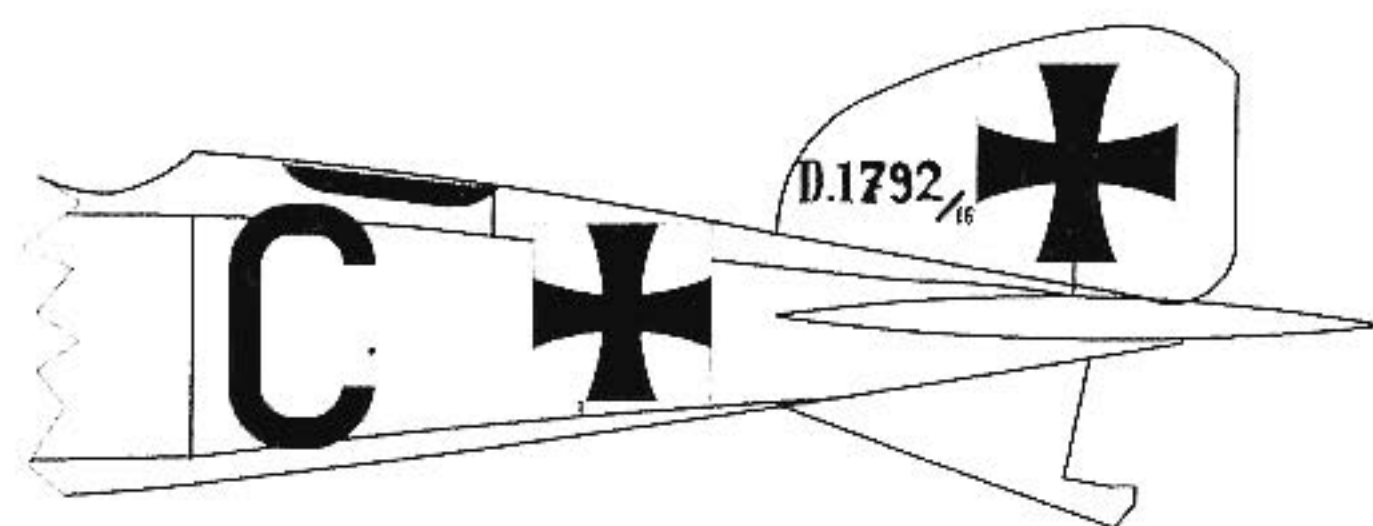
A. - D.1740/16 'F'. This machine appears in the line-up photographs taken in March or early April 1917. For a time it was flown by *Ltn.* Hermann Kleymann (also seen spelled as 'Kleemann'). Kleymann was *OzbV.* for *Jasta 5* and was there from February 1917 until, as an *Oberleutnant*, he followed Gontermann to become *OzbV.* for *Jasta 15*. In his capacity it is not likely he flew this machine regularly.



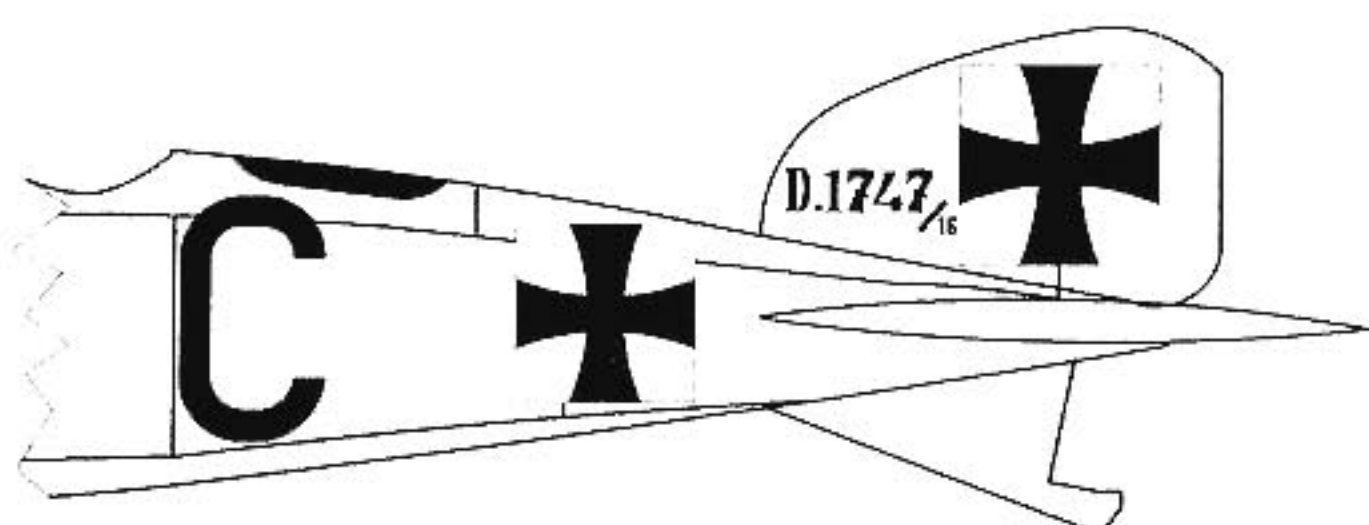
G. - D.1777/16 'B'. This machine is well shown in the photos and was flown by *Ltn.* Vorländer who was only with the unit from March 1917 until 6 May 1917 going to *Jasta 15* with Gontermann.



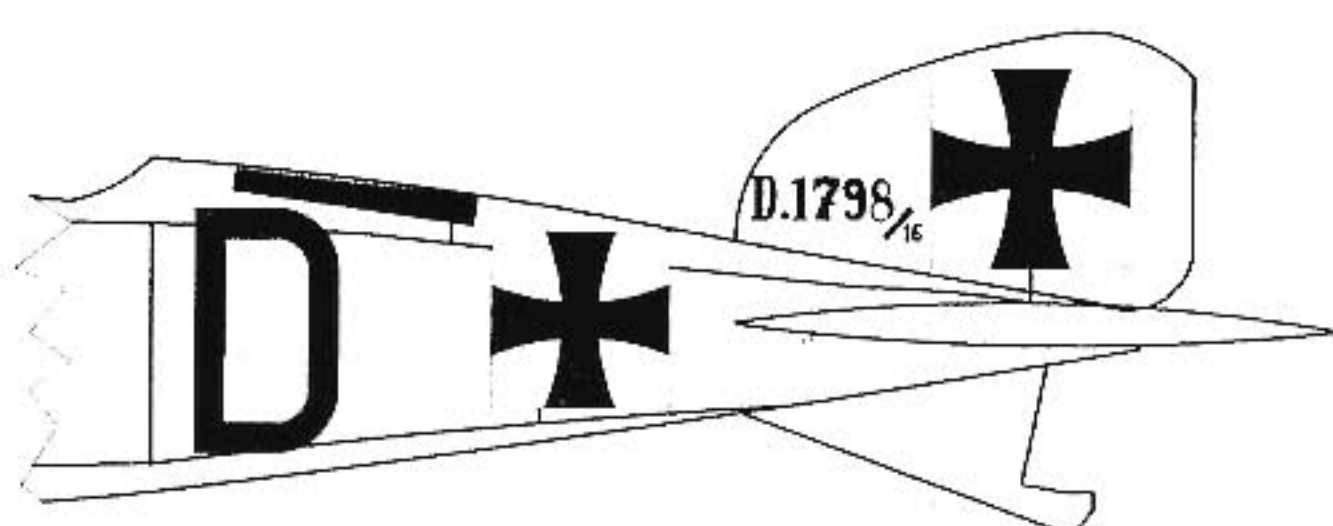
B. - D.1747/16 'E'. We also see this aircraft in the same line-up photos as A. It is also known that *Vzfw.* Alfred Sturm flew an Albatros lettered 'E' and he was with the unit from 1 March through 31 December 1917, so it could have been his as well. One victory.



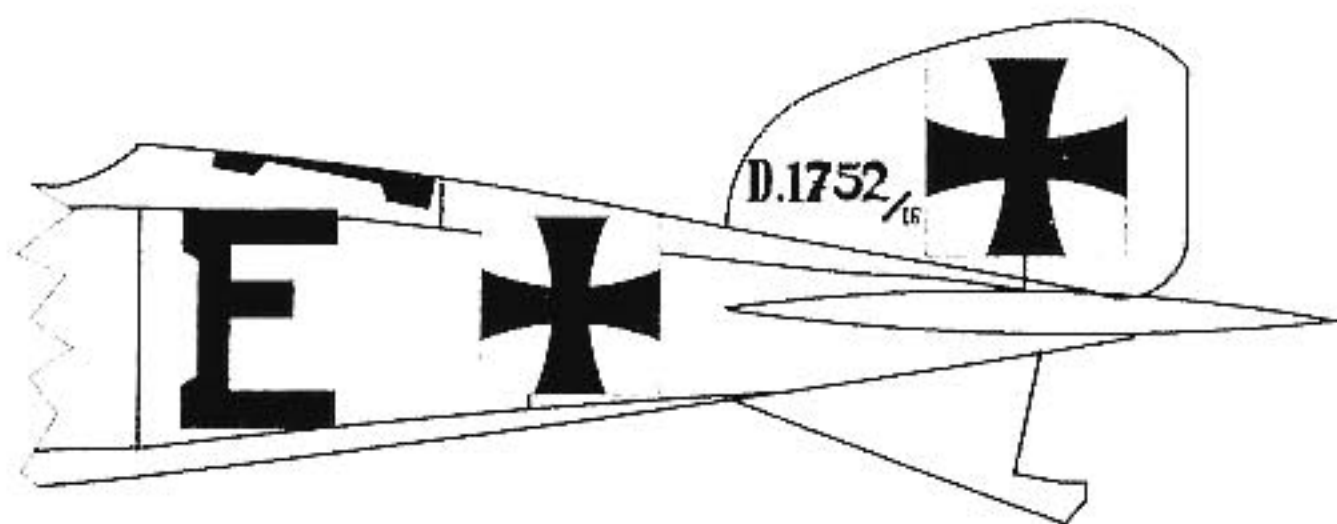
H. - D.1792/16 'C'. This machine was flown by *Ltn.* Renatus Theiller, one of the early 'stars' of *Jasta 5*, having been a 'founding member' and serving until he was killed in action 24 March 1917, probably in this machine. If these assumptions are correct, then photographs were taken in March rather than April. His victory total was at least 11 confirmed victories with at least five unconfirmed, his last victory being the day before his death.



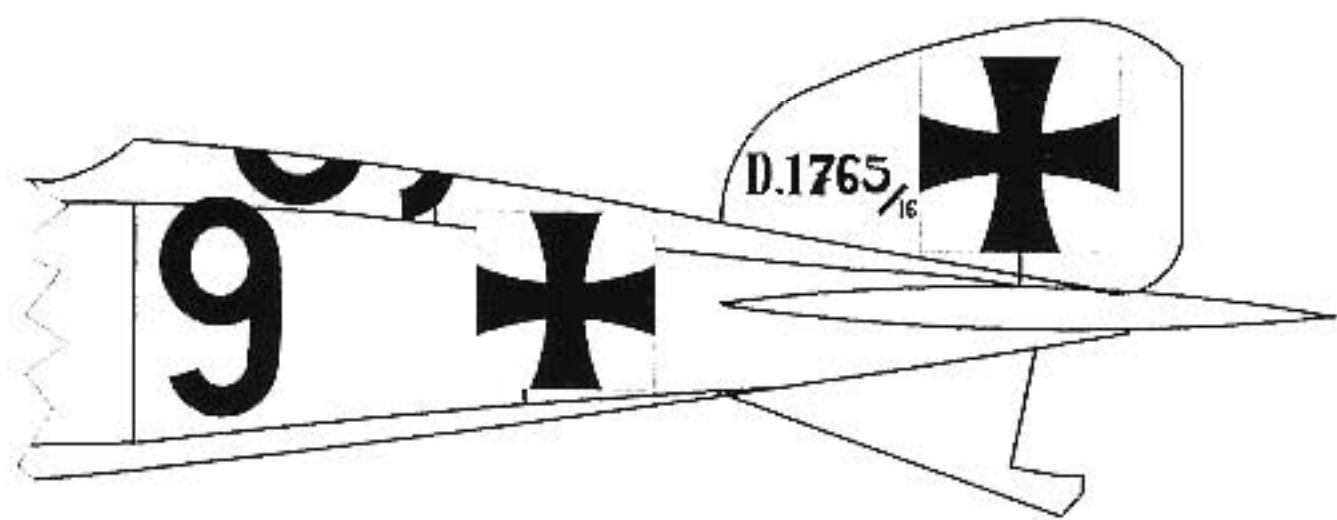
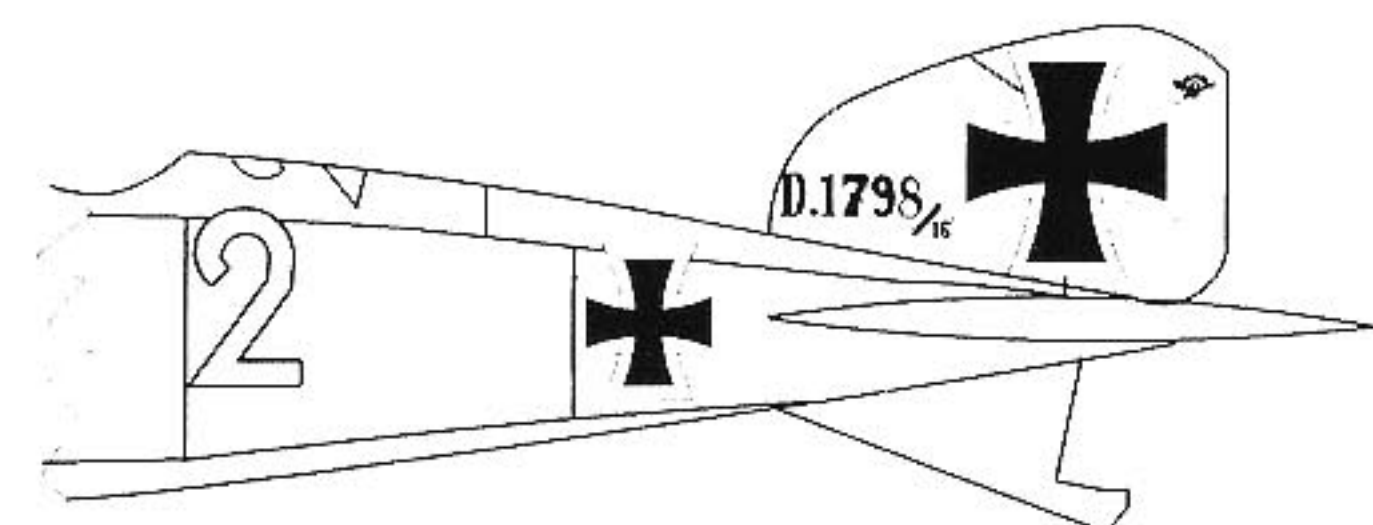
C. - D. 1747/16 'C'. This machine was flown for a time by *Ltn.* Rudolf Nebel who was with the unit from 30 December 1916 through 31 June 1917 with one confirmed and one unconfirmed victory.



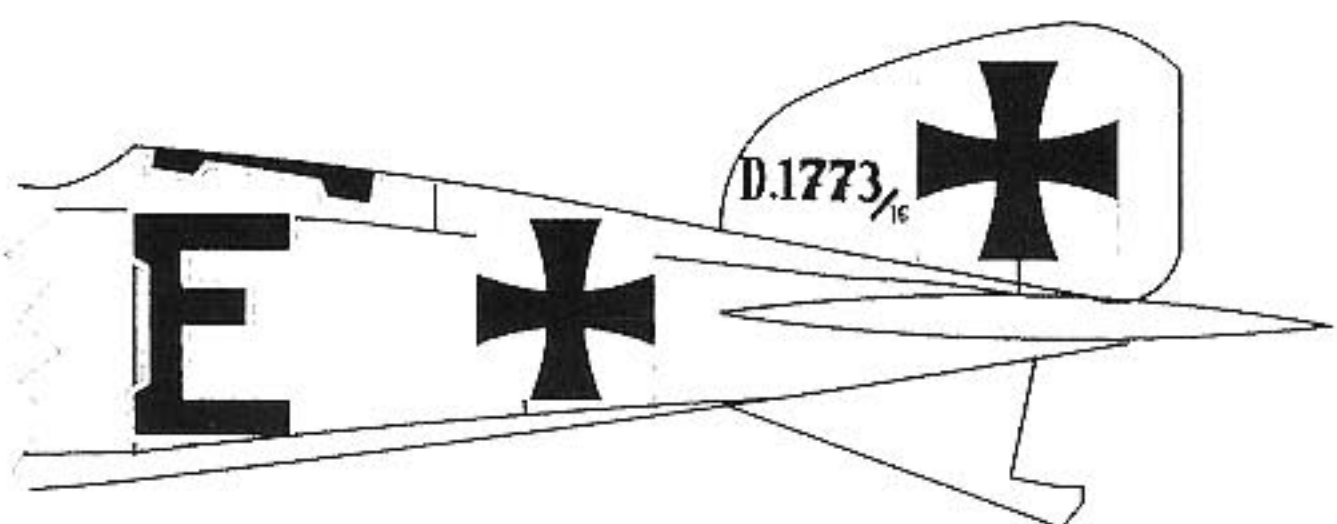
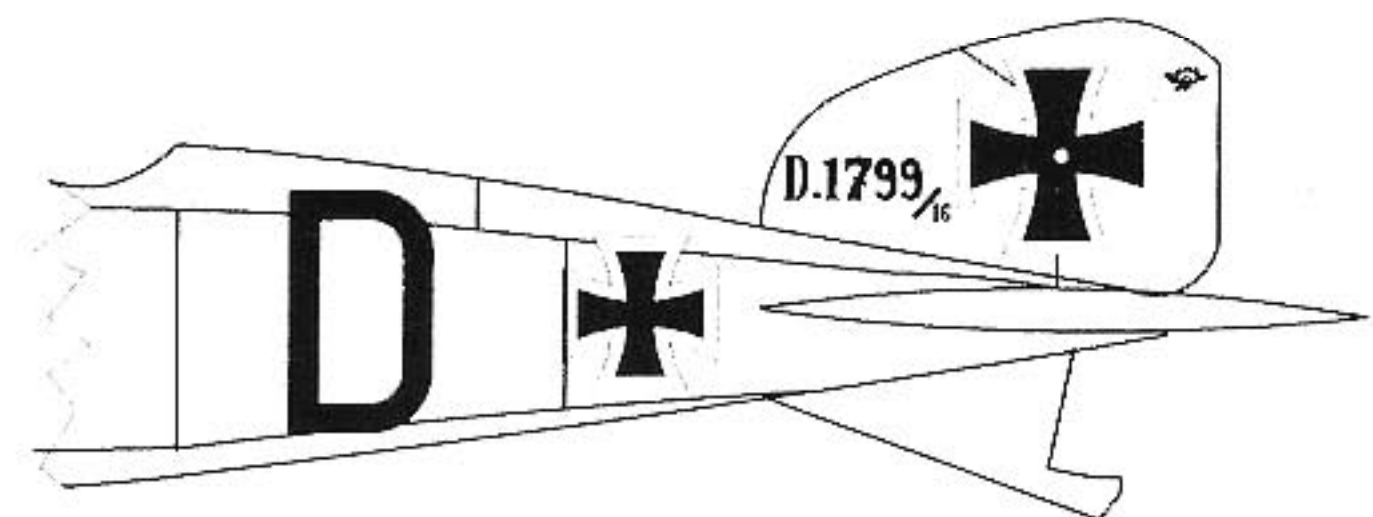
I. - J. - D.1798/16 'D' and '2'. In its earlier guise with the 'D' this machine was reputedly flown by Hans Berr himself. It passed from him, still as 'D' to *Vzfw.* (later *Offstr.*) Hans Löwensen who was with the unit March-May 1917. Later, at least it's assumed it was later, it was marked with the '2'. Axial propeller. The pilot at this time is unknown, but Nebel flew it on occasion.



D. - D.1752/16 'E'. This is the machine that we know that Sturm flew, although we have not seen a photograph of it.

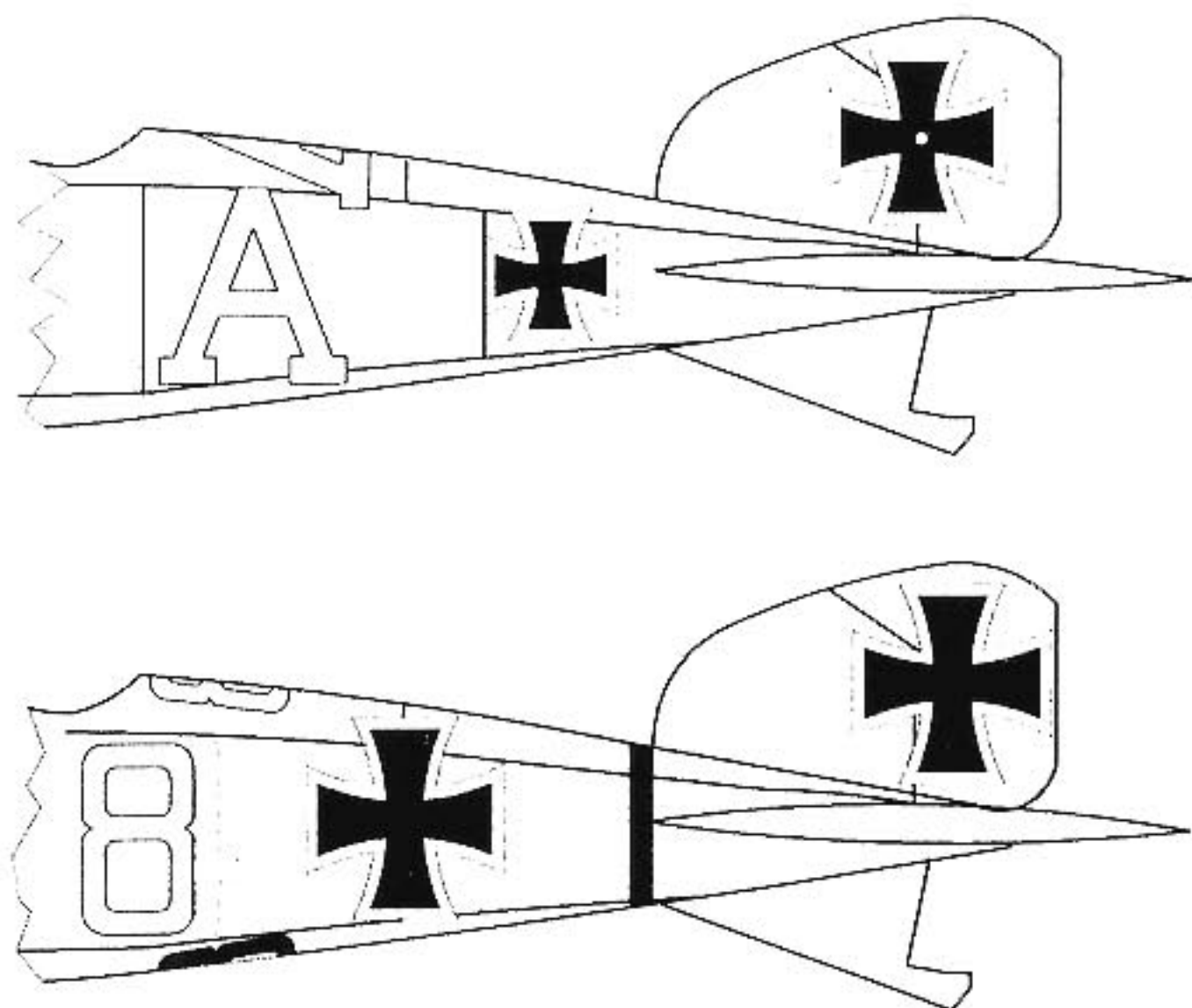


E. - D.1765/16 '9'. This machine does show in the photos and was flown by the newly-arrived (21 March 1917) *Offstr.* Josef Mai.

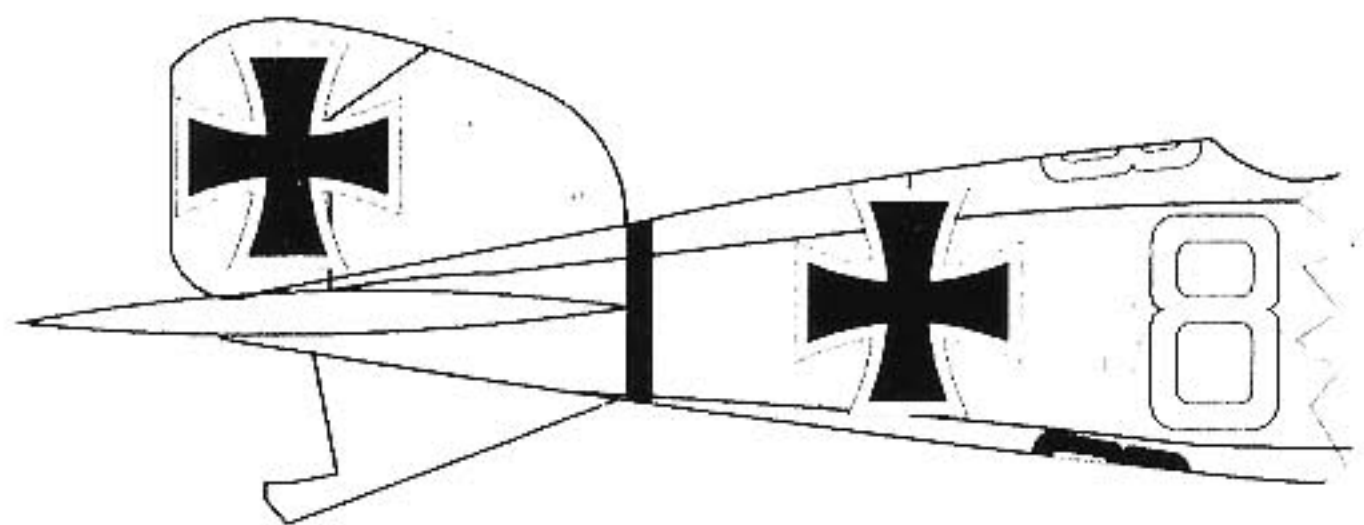


F. - D.1773/16 'E'. Still a third machine marked with the letter 'E'. The pilot, once again, is uncertain, but might have been Sturm, although letters and numbers were switched more frequently in *Jasta 5* than in some other units.

K. - L. D.1799/16 'D' and 'A'. This machine is first seen at a 'fly-in' for fighter pilots in the Cambrai sector that took place in December 1916. At this time it already had a bullet-hole patch in the centre of the rudder cross. It is reported that Hans Berr flew this machine, possibly confusing the 'D' of D.1798/16 with the 'D' of D.1799/16. Given the setting this was likely Berr's mount at the time. He later went on to more modern machines and this one was passed down first to *Ltn.* Neisen who was another March to May 1917 pilot also going to *Jasta 15* with Gontermann. By the time Neisen got it the letter had been changed to a white 'A' and camouflage smeared over the upper and side surfaces. The crosses under the lower wings had white outlines and it had a Garuda propeller. Later the machine was flown by Nathanael.



M. - N. - D.II (OAW) 910/16 '8'. This is one of a few OAW-built D.IIs flown by *Jasta 5*. This is one of their most famous ones because on 4 March 1917 *Ltn.* Max Böhme was forced to land behind British lines and he and the machine were captured. The wings, tailplane, upper and side surfaces of the fuselage were spray painted in stripes of olive green, dark green, and rust brown. Undersurfaces, plus struts and wheels, were light blue. The only place where the serial is visible on photographs are small stencils '910' on the wheel covers. As evidence of the *Jasta 5* policy to frequently remark their aircraft during this period, an earlier '4' had been scraped away on the fuselage sides and replaced with an '8'. Like most of the other machines of the unit, this has the number repeated on the turtle deck, but unlike most it also has it in black under the fuselage rather than under the wings. The dark stripe around the rear fuselage was probably black also. It is noteworthy that OAW had already begun their practice of placing the fuselage cross in a more forward position, permitting the same size of cross as on the tailplane. Another one of the unit's OAW-built machines was 914/16 flown by *Vzfw.* Sturm, unfortunately not seen in a photograph and whose letter or number is unknown.



official one. *Jasta 5* lost one of their pilots, however, for *Ltn.* Max Böhme was shot down by *Lts.* Graham and Boddy of No.11 Squadron at Tilloy-lez-Cambrai. Böhme became PoW and his aircraft, Albatros D.II (OAW) 910/16 '8', the focus of a good deal of British attention. Numerous photographs taken of this machine show both the OAW style of camouflage and markings in effect at this time as well as the style and evolution of the individual markings developed in *Jasta 5* during Berr's tenure.

On 6 March, Heinrich Gontermann obtained his 2nd victory and began a phenomenal scoring streak that would give him 15 victories in seven weeks. His confirmed claim was over an FE2 (A1948) from No.57 Squadron RFC crewed by 2/*Lts.* Hills and Ryale both made PoW. This victory achieved in a large fight over Mory and Ervillers at 1315 hrs. In the same combat No.57 Squadron lost two additional FE2s and Gontermann made a claim for a second that was not allowed, credit being given to *Ltn.* Schulte of *Jasta 12* and *Oblt.* Kummert of *Jasta 1*. A mere half hour later *Jasta 5* was mixed up in another large scrap over Gueudecourt where *Offstv.* Edmund Nathanael was credited with a victory over a 'Morane 1', single-seater Morane-Saulnier parasol A268. Other sources say this was a two-seater and the crew consisted of *Lts.* Short and Fraser, the former dying of wounds and the latter wounded, but survived. Both *Vzfw.* Büssing and *Vzfw.* Dahlmann claimed FE2s in the same fight south of Arras. Büssing's was not confirmed, but Dahlmann's was, although no corresponding British loss can be identified at that time near that place. These claims are the first record we have of Nathanael being with *Jasta 5* so we can't be sure exactly when he joined the unit. He would also have a meteoric career with 13 victories before his death a few months later. With Dahlmann's confirmation

Jasta 5 was now credited with 37 victories in about five and a half months of existence. It was clear that the unit, already having produced three 'double-aces' was one of the most promising on the Western Front. It had top-of-the line equipment in its Albatros fighters (some D.IIs were probably beginning to arrive about now), it had a *cadre* of excellent young, aggressive pilots who were both skilled and extremely well trained and, perhaps most important of all, in Hans Berr *Jasta 5* had as good a leader as any fighter unit in the *Luftstreitkräfte*. With the general superiority of German fighter units now established, the future for *Jasta 5* looked very bright indeed.

Boistrancourt - your home away from home.

On 11 March 1917, *Jasta 5* made a momentous move. Leaving Gonnelleu was not a matter of choice, but of necessity. The German High Command, in an effort to shorten both the lines they had to defend and the supply lines to the front, undertook strategic withdrawal under the code name 'Alberich'. This was to the prepared *Siegfried-Stellung* (Siegfried Position) and ranged from as few as about 15 kilometres to as many as 50. The Allies would erroneously refer to this new position as the 'Hindenburg Line' for the remainder of the war and beyond. From the strategic point of view the withdrawal was a great success because it caused the Nivelle offensive to be launched against a much tougher defensive position than the French had originally planned for with almost inevitably more severe casualties. The result was the devastation of morale in the French army and resulted in mutinies that nearly led to the fall of France. As Banks (1975, p. 168) points out, by 4 June 1917 there were only two reliable French divisions standing between the Germans and Paris. British attacks further north near Arras and Ypres took the pressure off the French to a great degree for the remainder of 1917, albeit at terrible cost. On the local level Gonnelleu, about 14 km SSW of Cambrai, was now behind British lines and the move to Boistrancourt, about 8.5 km ESE of Cambrai put *Jasta 5* in a position of safety, but with ready access to the front. It would be an association of almost record-breaking endurance, because *Jasta 5* would be at Boistrancourt for one year and ten days. There are a few units that basically stayed at one location for the entire war, but that was by far the exception and, for a 'flying circus' with its mobility, almost unheard of in the *Luftstreitkräfte*. The association would not only be a long and productive one, but it would be formative as well, adding much to the character and nature of *Jasta 5* for the rest of its service. Appearing on period and modern maps as 'Boistrancourt Sucerie' or 'Boistrancourt Ferme' it was both a sugar factory and a farm. To begin with there was the château with its substantial grounds. There are common perceptions that fighter units, especially German, were always quartered in palatial mansions. In fact the majority were in far more modest lodgings, commonly prefabricated metal Nissen huts or even tents. Nevertheless, in the case of *Jasta 5* at Boistrancourt the perception is absolutely factual, the château was sumptuous and this is shown in numerous photographs of parties and celebrations in the grand dining room as well as more casual shots in other parts of the château including some taken of the rooms of individual pilots. In addition, the rather extensive and heretofore well cared for grounds served for formal tea parties for visiting nurses and spacious enough to provide athletic facilities in the summer of 1917 (the 'Boistrancourt Olympics'). The accommodations could hardly have been better. The sugar factory, with its tall (ca. 50 m) chimney was enclosed within a stone wall behind (to the East of) the château. That chimney must have served both as a rallying point for returning pilots and a significant hazard under conditions of low visibility. The various buildings in the factory complex provided housing for the 'other ranks' as well as machine shops, armoury, and other necessary facilities for squadron life. Snuggled up against the Southern wall surrounding the factory *Jasta 5* placed their hangers. These were theoretically portable, wooden hangers, and there is a suggestion that they may have been experimental because no two were alike. That being said the two on each end were more alike than the pair on the other end and the middle drastically different from the two pairs flanking it on either end. Even this apparently minor difference would play a role in unit



▲ 12



▲ 13 ▼ 14



history and markings. The hangers were numbered from left to right (facing open hangers, or from West to East) 1-5, so hanger number 3 was the one differing most drastically. Hangers 1, 2, 4 and 5 were capable of holding three staggered Albatros fighters whether they were headed or backed in. Each of these hangers was therefore deeper than it was wide. Hanger number 3 was wide and shallow, only a little deeper than the length of an Albatros fighter. The width was sufficient for four separate 'stalls' to be created, each to house a single aircraft. So for this hanger, order was relatively fixed whereas it is likely that the three aircraft were pushed into the other four in whatever order happened to prevail, such as return from a mission. The doors of all hangers were generally similar in that they consisted of a rectangular wooden frame as high as the hanger opening, but not as wide. This rectangular frame was not attached to the hanger, but could be raised to block most of the opening. When this was done, hinged side doors could be swung inward to close off the remainder of the opening and to hold the rectangular frame in place. For Hanger 3 there were four smaller rectangular frames and four sets of hinged side doors, for the other four hangers a single large frame and pair of hinged doors was provided. When the hangers were open (and we have not seen more than one of them closed in any photo) the rectangular pieces simply lay on the ground and the aircraft rolled over them. In that connection it appears that the thin boards of the frame were held together by being nailed to heavier perpendicular and diagonal pieces and that these thicker pieces of timber were on the inside of the frame or 'up' in operation, meaning the aircraft had to be rolled over them. It doesn't seem to have occurred to anyone that turning the frames *over* would have made passage easier. During the time *Jasta 5* occupied Boistrancourt these hangers underwent modification. Numbers were painted on them as already indicated and Hanger 3 received an electrical light in its centre, presumably early on in the occupation. The others seem to have received them as well. Each of the 'deep' hangers had a pair of windows along each long wall that were original. During the winter of 1917-18 groundcrew installed stoves in each hanger for warmth with the inevitable addition of pipes through the roofs.

Hans Berr was probably very pleased with the accommodation for both men and machines at Boistrancourt. The special hangers may well have been a source of pride. In any case he set about protecting them. Realising fighter pilots, given their head, will taxi at nearly full speed, coming to a halt just at the mouth of hangers, often misjudging the distance and velocity in aircraft that lacked brakes, and potentially destroying both aircraft and hanger in the process, Berr decided to prevent this. He did so by building a series of structures, apparently of timbers resembling railway ties, and filled them with earth. Some of these carried a name and number such as *Stand 4*, so they would logically be called, collectively, *Stände*, literally 'positions' or 'stations'. We note, however, that there is the dialect *Stande* meaning a 'butt' and suspect that is more likely the meaning. There were a total of seven of these arranged so that the first was just outside the pathway leading to Hanger 1, the second aligned between Hangers 1 and 2, and the remainder similarly arranged with number seven being just outside the pathway leading to Hanger 5. That their primary role was in hanger protection is clear in spite of the fact that previous writers have attributed alternative functions to them, but they did have other uses. They did not seem to attain air defence importance and the only war-like use we can see was the occasional mounting of a Lewis gun during an inspection by General von Hoepfner. *Stand 2* had a

meteorological station on it much of the time to supplement the weather vane on Hanger 2. *Stand 3* had a megaphone (that we erroneously thought was a windsock previously) a bench and tripod-mounted binoculars, at least on occasions. During the summer of 1917 groundcrew cultivated some sort of plants in several *Stände*, probably tomatoes.

The hangers faced outward on to a large field that had probably grown sugar beets before the war. The field was smooth with little relief and made an excellent landing ground. It extended Southward from the hangers for hundreds of metres and had an effective East-West dimension of approximately 175 m, bounded on the East by a road with a ditch and on the West by a hedge-row with trees behind. Because landing was generally from Southeast to Northwest, predominantly East to West, due to prevailing wind direction, the trees were normally not a consideration. Berr had an observation tower constructed in the trees at the West end of the field. It was about 25 m tall, offered an unsurpassed view, and would figure prominently in the photographic record of the unit.

Jasta 5 wasted no time in adapting to their new environment. On the very day of their move Heinrich Gontermann shot down an FE2b at 1245 hrs. South of Bapaume for his 3rd victory. This was 7713 crewed by 2/Lts. C A R Shum and F C Coops of No.23 Squadron, both made PoW. No.23 Squadron lost three aircraft on this date. Edmund Nathanael claimed a second FE2, possibly A5475 of No.18 Squadron that went down in flames near Bapaume killing both of its crew members, Sgt. H P Burgess and 2/Lt. H M Headley. It was Nathanael's sixth victory. Franks, *et al.*, reverse victors and victims. Paul Hoppe was given credit for a third FE (possibly DH2?) victory, his first, at about the same time as Gontermann's between Bapaume and Gueudecourt, but all the other RFC losses in this action seem to be accounted for and it may be that credit was given to more than one pilot for the same victory. The Germans were careful to avoid this sort of 'double scoring', but it inevitably happened. Later that day Rudolf Nebel claimed a BE2 over Beugny, but it was disallowed.

After a period of bad weather in which there was very little aerial activity, conditions on 17 March had *Jasta 5* back in action. Gontermann, Theiller, and Schneider all claimed FE2s over Bois St. Pierre Vaast at 1430 hrs. Once more, Theiller's claim was not confirmed, but the others were for Gontermann's fourth and Schneider's first at long last. He would have what was destined to be a spectacular career over the next several months. Gontermann's probable victim was FE2b 4900 from No.22 Squadron crewed by 2/Lt. F R Hudson and 2AM W Richman both wounded in action. No attribution for Schneider's victim can be confirmed.

Two days later Schneider would score again at 1010 hrs. at Homblières east of St. Quentin. His victim was 2/Lt. S S B Purves of No.19 Squadron in Spad VII A6633 who became a PoW, but later escaped. This was the first Spad lost by the RFC. On 22 March, Theiller claimed a BE2 over Nurlu. It was not confirmed, although there is the outside chance that this was BE2e 6750 of No.9 Squadron that was badly shot up this day, the crew escaping injury. The following day it was Theiller again at the same place at 0930 hrs. claiming BE2g A3149 of No.52 Squadron, crewed by 2/Lt. C M White (wounded in action) and 2/Lt. D M McLeay (KIA). This one came down in German lines and confirmed after a long string of mostly unconfirmed claims. It was his 11th confirmation, making him the highest scoring ace active in *Jasta 5*. Thus it appeared that Theiller's luck might finally be changing for the better, but it was not to be.

Heavy activity continued the following day on 24 March, when *Jasta 5* in full strength clashed with five aircraft from No.70 Squadron RFC flying the now-obsolete Sopwith 1½ Strutters. The orders for No.70 Squadron called for them to probe deeply into the area vacated by the German withdrawal as an aid in establishing the new front line. They did so, but at a terrible price. *Jasta 5* pounced on them over Oisy-le-Verger just before 0900 hrs., Heinrich Gontermann bringing down the first at 0855. His victim was A1907 crewed by Capt. W H Costello and Lt. H S Whiteside, both made PoW. This was Gontermann's 5th victory giving *Jasta 5* yet another ace. Edmund Nathanael was in pursuit of the 'Strutters' and shot down A957 at 0900 hrs. over Ecoust St. Mein. The crew, Capt. A M Lowery and Lt. G W W Swann

12. Line-up, March or early April 1917: D.II 1777/16 'B', D.II 1773/16 'E', D.III serial overpainted 'A', D.II 1740/16 'F', D.III 2225/16 'O', D.III 2223/16 '6', D.III 2213/16 'H', rest not identifiable.

13. Opposite end of the same line-up, taken from the tower on apparently the same day: D.III, serial unknown, but one of Hans Berr's aircraft marked with a '1', D.III, serial unknown marked with a dark (black?) band, next masked, then '3', '2', '5', '4', '8', 'H', 6, and '0', all D.III's and tying together with the caption for photo 12.

14. A cluster of aircraft in front of hangers 3 and 4 taken about the same time as the preceding two photos: D.III 'F' tail unit overpainted, 'O' of Strobel, 'A' as seen below, '8' of Nebel, D.III 2213/16, 'H', 'A', and Schneider's '5', almost certainly 2244/16.

landed, but both died of their wounds. During this fight Renatus Theiller was severely wounded in the thigh, the bullet apparently severing the femoral artery. Theiller made a rapid forced landing between Goeulzin and Férin, but his wound was so grievous that he bled to death before he could receive medical attention. Müller had been the unit's leading ace and he was wounded never to return, now Theiller had become the top scorer only to be killed. Once again, Berr was the highest scoring ace in *Jasta* 5. The aftermath of this fight was severe for No.70 Squadron. In spite of two claims and two confirmations, they actually lost three aircraft that day and the other two returned so badly shot up that they were struck off charge or out of action for a considerable time.

Jasta 5 would avenge Theiller's death and quickly. The very next day they tangled, in strength, with No.70 Squadron once again. The results were devastating for the British flyers; they lost five more aircraft in a few minutes. As the previous day, *Jasta* 5 got fewer confirmations than the British losses, a total of four. Chronologically these went to Nathanael at 0920 hrs. over Velu and Hoppe at the same time West of Beugny, Nathanael a second at 0925 hrs. East of Beugny, and Gontermann one at 0925 hrs. over Haplincourt. These seem to be valid, but is it not possible to match victors and victims. These two days of combat and the loss of 10 aircraft had effectively taken No.70 out of action until they could replace their losses. Gontermann's was the last victory for *Jasta* 5 during the month of March, bringing their total to 50, and placing them second only to *Jasta Boelcke* in number of victories. It had not been without cost, and the losses of pilots like Müller and Theiller had been especially grievous. Nevertheless, the balance sheet for *Jasta* 5 was positive with great promise for the future. During the month of March the unit had been largely re-equipped with Albatros D.III fighters, so by 1 April the ratio of D.III's to D.II's was in the order of 2:1. Moreover, the unit was receiving fresh personnel to offset losses and transfers, Vzfw. Alfred Sturm joined the *Jasta* on 1 March, and Offstv. Josef Mai on 21 March. Coming into the unit at various unrecorded dates during the month were also Vzfw. Hans Löwensen, Ltn. Neisen, Ltn. Vorländer, and Uffz. Jakob Weiss.

The order of battle of *Jasta* 5 at the dawn of 'Bloody April'

A remarkable document survives that gives tremendous detail about aircraft and their pilots, but even more insight into the organisational abilities of Hans Berr who issued it. Although undated, it outlines the exact order of battle and formation to be employed on 1 April 1917 surely the intended date, although perhaps written a day or two previously. This document is sufficiently significant to be translated in full and will be with the following conventions. Words underlined in the original are underlined in the translation. Some words will remain deliberately untranslated, usually for comment, and these will be in italics. Certain passages and words that require comment will be foot-noted, these clearly not being present in the original. Spellings of rank abbreviations are as in the original, some not conforming to more standard practice.

'Jagdstaffel 5.

Flight Organisation, Seventh (Army?) Sector's Activity Report

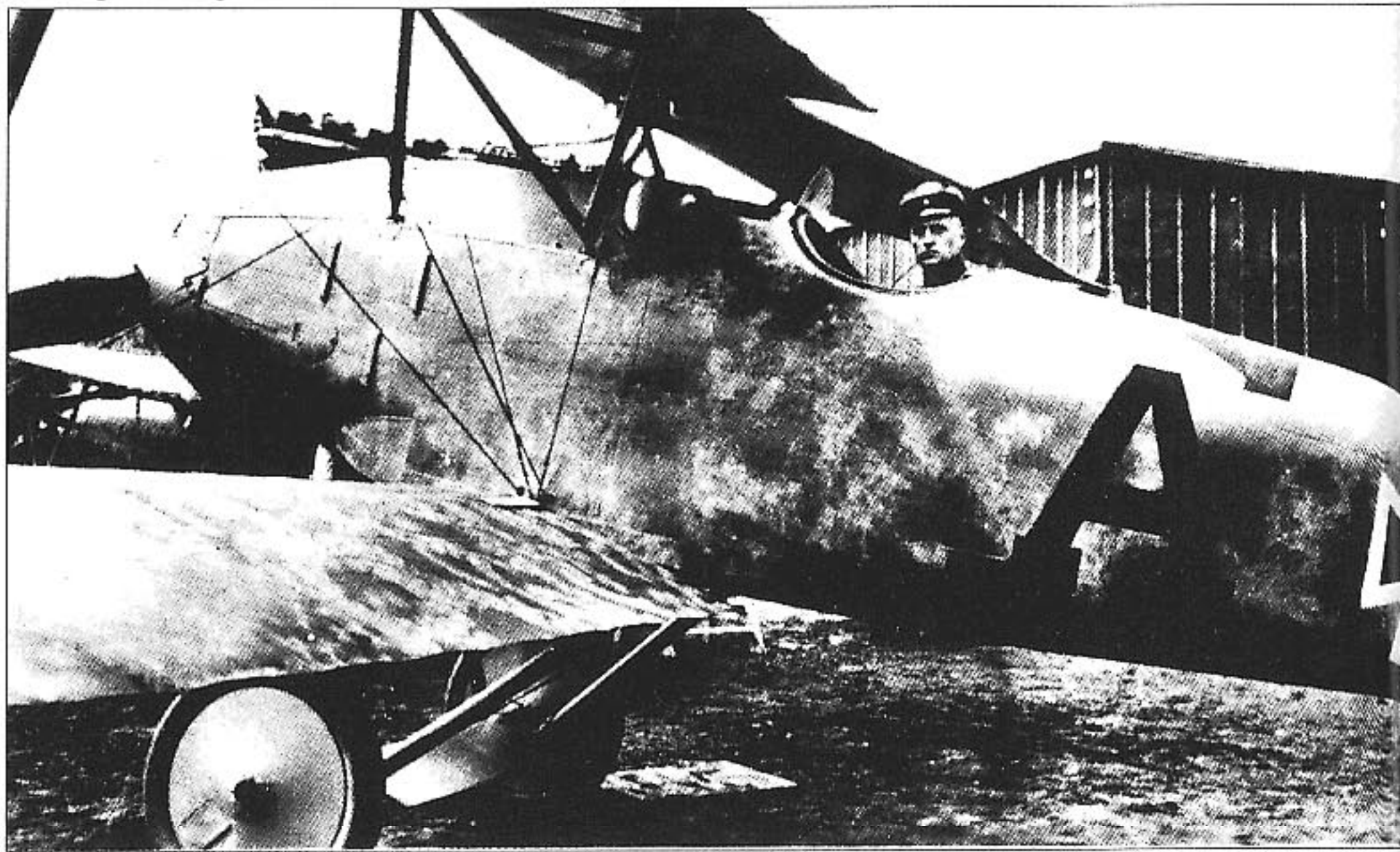
<i>Oblt.</i> Berr	Albatros D III No. 2256
aeroplane identity marking 1.	
<i>Ltn.</i> Gontermann <i>Gruppe</i> 1 (leader)	Albatros D III 2249
aeroplane identity marking 2.	
<i>Offzstellv.</i> Nathanael <i>Gruppe</i> 1	Albatros D III 2247
aeroplane identity marking 3.	
<i>Vzfldw.</i> Büssing <i>Gruppe</i> 1	Albatros D III 2243
aeroplane identity marking 4.	
<i>Ltn.</i> Schneider <i>Gruppe</i> 2. (leader)	Albatros D III 2244
aeroplane identity marking 5.	
<i>Vzfldw.</i> Hoppe <i>Gruppe</i> 2.	Albatros D III 2241
aeroplane identity marking 6.	
<i>Vzfldw.</i> Dahlmann <i>Gruppe</i> 2.	Albatros D III 2229
aeroplane identity marking 7.	

<i>Ltn.</i> Nebel <i>Gruppe</i> 3. (leader)	Albatros D III 2231
aeroplane identity marking 8.	
<i>Offzstellv.</i> Mai <i>Gruppe</i> 3.	Albatros D II 1765
aeroplane identity marking 9.	
<i>Uffz.</i> Weiß <i>Gruppe</i> 3.	Albatros D III 2225
aeroplane identity marking 0.	
<i>Ltn.</i> Neisen <i>Gruppe</i> 4. (leader)	Albatros D II 1799
aeroplane identity marking A.	
<i>Ltn.</i> Vorländer <i>Gruppe</i> 4.	Albatros D II 1777
aeroplane identity marking B.	
<i>Offzstellv.</i> Löwensen <i>Gruppe</i> 4.	Albatros D II 1798
aeroplane identity marking D.	
<i>Offzstellv.</i> Sturm <i>Gruppe</i> 4.	Albatros D II 1752
aeroplane identity marking E.	

The machine identity markings are to be affixed immediately.² In size and colour they will be positioned as previously done. Moreover, they will also be painted under the right lower wing.³ Those who are on orders to depart at 0800 will commence activity at 0700.



▲ 15 ▼ 16

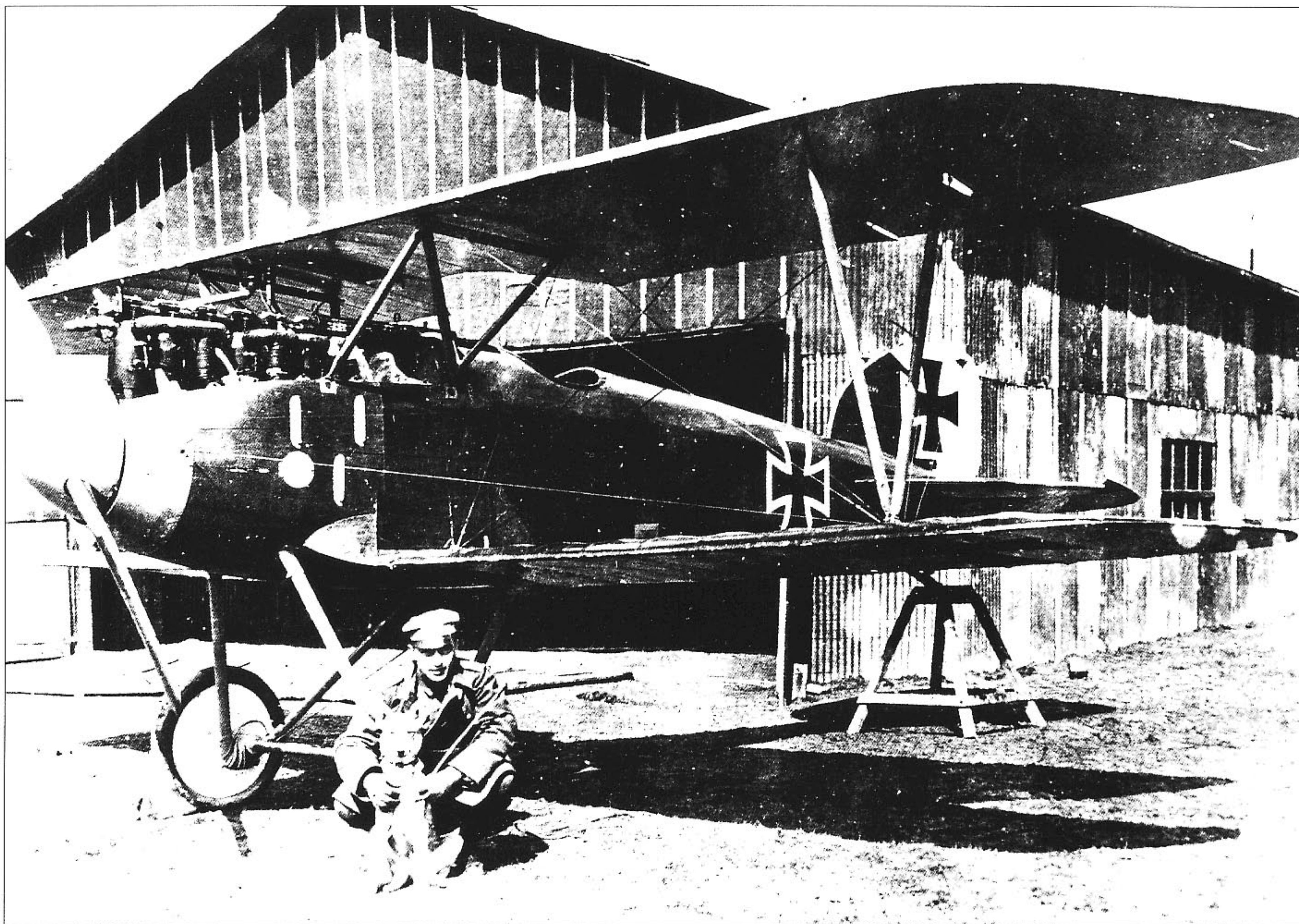


15. Albatros D.II, all upper and side surfaces field camouflaged (brown and green?), white 'A's on fuselage sides and top, black ones under the wings. This machine appears in the line-ups in *photos* 12 and 13. Noteworthy are the early style of Garuda propeller and the outlines to the crosses under the wings. Figure in the centre is thought to be *Ltn.* Neisen.

16. Albatros D.III with smeared camouflage in a similar fashion to the preceding aircraft, but black 'A's instead of white. It is definitely Neisen in the cockpit here.

17. Kurt Schneider and friend pose in front of Albatros D.III 2244/16, newly arrived and not yet marked with his '5's. On the original print the factory-applied serial is quite distinct on the fin with the same chalked above it. The Axial propeller is evident.

18. Another of the stars of *Jasta* 5, Edmund Nathanael, poses in front of his Albatros D.III 2234/16 marked with '3's in the usual places and fitted with an Axial propeller. The outer wheel discs appear to have been painted white.

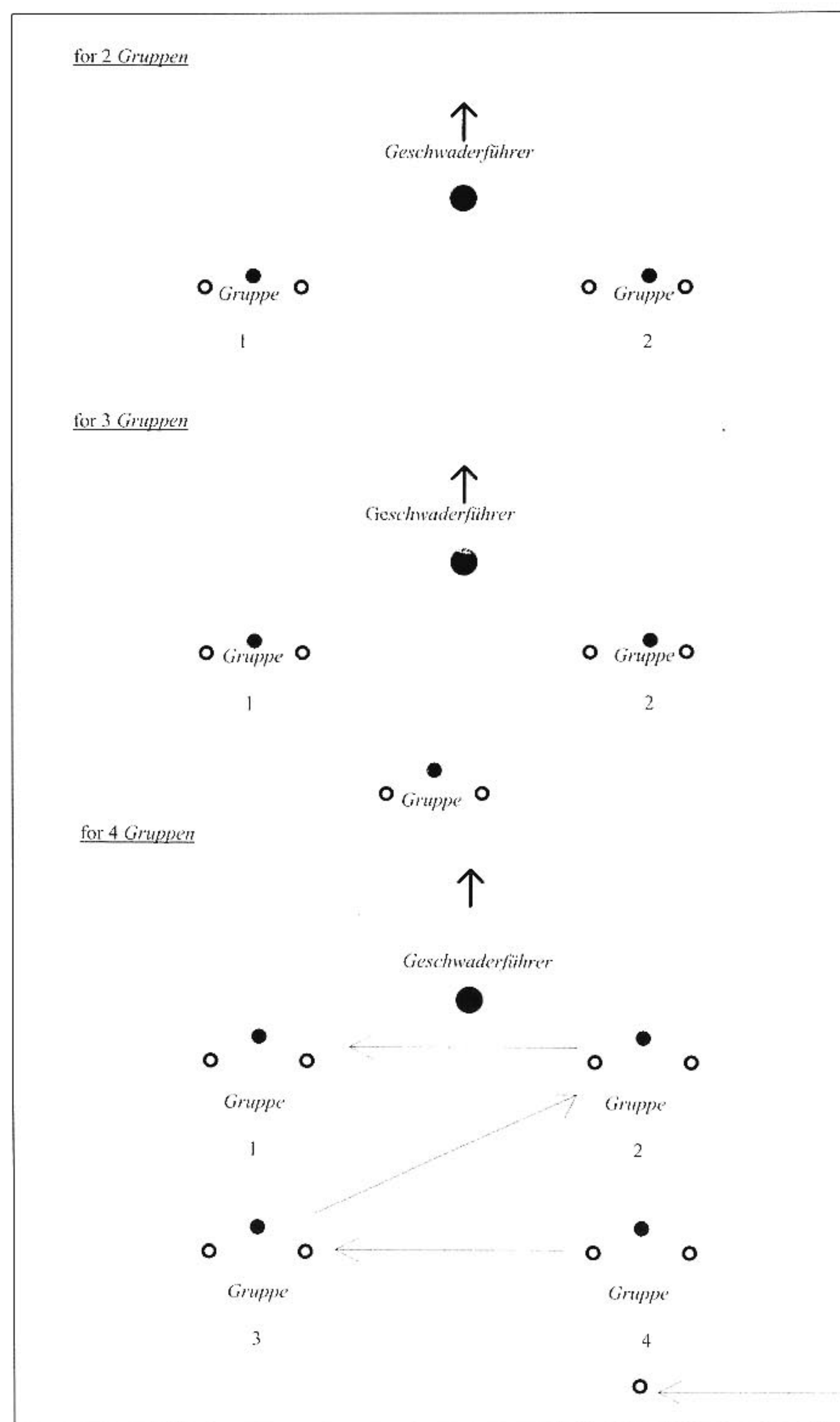


▲ 17 ▼ 18



From now on it will be the rule that in good weather the rule will be that we will fly only in a large Geschwader.⁴
Geschwaderführer. Oblt. Berr (2 streamers).
 Acting Geschwaderführer. Ltn. Schneider ⁵ (1 streamer).
 Smaller Geschwader and patrols will be ordered on a case by case basis. Every pilot already has at his aircraft position two red streamers whenever the occasion causes him to be made a Geschwader- or patrol leader as needed.
 Daily a 'Patrol will be placed at the disposal of the Gruppe' ⁶.
 These patrols do not depart with the main Geschwader, but will only be employed at the request of the Fliegergruppe ⁷ - and then withdrawn if the probability exists that they will be no longer needed by the Gruppe, for example, because of rapidly approaching darkness, approaching bad weather, etc., etc.

The main Geschwader in all cases will utilise the following air formations:



(If a fourth machine flies with a Gruppe, it will fly in the space (behind the Gruppenführer). Gruppen that have fallen out of formation will organise themselves from right to left and rear to front (see directions of arrows).

The Geschwaderführer flies as low as possible.
 The Gruppenführer fly lower than the pilots of their Gruppen.
Minimum distances (between aircraft) 50 to 100 m; both in height and breadth. (so that individuals can be recognised).
 The Gruppenführer order the positions within their Gruppen.
 The Gruppenführer carry a half-length red streamer on the upper ends of their left struts.⁸
 I will make specially detailed directions to the formations for special duties.

I have reasons to point the following out:

That during a Geschwader attack a united dive of the Geschwader into the enemy Geschwader occurs. A single machine on alert, waiting above or to the side, in order to ascertain which opposing machines have not been attacked, and then only attacks is completely wrongheaded - it weakens the force of the attack and endangers the first-attacking machines.

I expressly forbid such behaviour. Take from this, if it involves only a single attacking enemy patrol - fewer than 4 machines - then they will be attacked only by the first approaching Gruppe - all the others wait above (no more than 500 m above) or to the side and attack only in the case that, in one or another form the necessity arises.

:That after a battle a new assembly and reorganisation occurs over the point where the battle began, arranging themselves in the same way as at the takeoff.

:That a flying under the forward aircraft under all circumstances is forbidden.

:That in Geschwader formation the Geschwaderführer's speed is maintained through the flight not by circling and turning, but by use of the throttle.

These are the new signals from the Geschwaderführer for the unit and their meanings:

White star signal: Attack

Red star signal: Do not attack. (All remain with the Geschwader! Even solo opponents will not be attacked!)

Green star signal: Geschwader formation ceases and the Gruppen are free to fly individually.

Red-green star signal: (combined with wing movement toward home) The Geschwaderführer must abort the mission - the acting Geschwaderführer (1 middle streamer) takes over leadership.

(Signed) Staffelführer Berr.

Notes:

¹). These would be called, informally, Kette and use of Gruppe for them is the generic German word only slightly more formal.

²). In point of fact, Jasta 5 had been using simple number and letter designations for some time and this would probably restate the existing policy, although some renumbering of individual machines may have been required to conform to this very rigorously ordered scheme.

³). These were already carried under both lower wings on most of their aircraft.

⁴). Consistently referring to his Staffel as a Geschwader and himself as a Geschwaderführer seems like something of an aggrandisement and also somewhat prescient in anticipation of the larger groupings later in 1917. Perhaps if he lived Berr might actually have been one of the first to become a Geschwaderkommandeur.

⁵). Schneider was a well-qualified officer to take over command in such a situation. Nevertheless, it is surprising he did not designate Gontermann who had more experience, more victories, and the leader of Gruppe 1.

⁶). In this use Gruppe is more formal as it implies the 7th Army air group.

⁷). As is spelled out here.

⁸). Clearly the left interplane strut. It's likely the advent of the 'vee struts' on the Albatros D.III moved these streamers to the top rather the bottom of the strut.

Berr was a highly organised individual and tried to ensure that this level of organisation extended down to rank numbering of the aircraft in each Gruppe. It is noteworthy that he was issuing a series of rules similar to 'Die Dicta von Boelcke' how pilots should conduct themselves in the air and that much of this came from unsafe and unwise tactics he had observed in aerial combat. There is a sense that the recent high scoring was causing some members of Jasta 5 to be foolhardy in pursuit of the enemy and Berr was trying to rein in his young pilots for their own safety. Given the circumstances a few days later, this is especially ironic. Finally, it is noteworthy that he put his 'top guns', especially Gontermann and Schneider, but also Nathanael and Büssing, in positions where they would be most likely to have a chance to score a 'kill', and that his seasoned pilots flew the best and most modern aircraft whereas newcomers like Mai received an 'old' D.II and the last Gruppe, Gruppe 4 were newcomers and entirely D.II-equipped.

This tactical formation was probably not really new and its continuation led to further successes. Despite bad weather on 2 April, Nathanael scored over an FE2b, 6953 of No.22 Squadron, shooting it down in flames Northeast of Gouzeaucourt and killing both crewmen, 2/Lt. P A Russell and Lt. H Loveland. This was Nathanael's 5th victory adding yet another ace to Jasta 5's

growing inventory. The bad weather continued on the 3rd, but *Jasta 5* still saw action late in the afternoon as British aircraft came over the German lines for reconnaissance and photography. Once again most of these tasks fell to the FE2s, but in this case they had some fighter protection; DH2s from No.32 Squadron. An FE was lost by No.23 Squadron and once more, it was Nathanael who pounced on a DH2, A2536, flown by Lt. E L Heyworth who went down wounded in German lines East of Lagnicourt-Marcel to become a PoW. A pilot from *Jasta 3* claimed another DH2 from No.32 in the same action. The miserable weather continued on 4 and 5 April, and even included some snow. There was limited action near Cambrai, but there is no evidence that *Jasta 5* was able to engage and, for the most part these two days were a washout.

The death of Hans Berr

Unlike the preceding several days Friday, 6 April 1917 dawned clear, bright and sunny. It was Good Friday. The improved weather did much to lift the spirits of the pilots of *Jasta 5*. Indeed, an ebullient Hans Berr was overheard to exclaim, '*It is a day to fly to heaven*'. So it proved.

The better weather encouraged sorties in large numbers from both sides of the lines. Early in the morning No.57 Squadron launched 6 FE2s on an offensive patrol in the Cambrai sector. Leaving at 0700 hrs. one had to withdraw because of engine trouble. The other five pressed on and attacked a formation of German two-seaters south of Denain. They were in turn attacked by several aircraft from *Jasta Boelcke*, Adolf von Tutschek claiming one of the FE2s. They were then successively attacked by aircraft from *Jasta 12* who claimed a second and a third aircraft and by *Jasta 5* - probably flying as the '*große Geschwader*' Hans Berr had ordered in fair weather. In quick succession Gontermann shot down A'4, serial A1959 at Neuville-sur-Escout, his victims being Lt. T F Burrill and 2AM F Smith and Nathanael downed A'6, serial A6388, about two kilometres away over Douchy-les-Mines Southwest of Valenciennes and South of Denain, his victims being 2/Lt. H D Hamilton and Pvt. E. Snelling. The results were identical; both pilots were wounded and they and their gunners made PoW. During this combat, Paul Hoppe was closing in on an FE over Noyelles-sur-Selle. Presumably he was still flying in *Gruppe 2* and probably the port aircraft of the vic. From his left another aircraft converged on the intended victim and there was a sickening collision as Hoppe's aircraft and

that of his *Staffelführer*, collapsed into each other. This was not the light brush that was thought to have occurred in mid-air when Erwin Böhme's undercarriage contacted Oswald Boelcke's upper wing. This was a strong and immediately obviously fatal crash and as the two more or less entangled aircraft fell away the members of *Jasta 5* who witnessed it knew immediately that they had lost their leader as well as another comrade.

It would be futile to try to establish blame for such an accident.



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19. Still another of the great aces of *Jasta 5*, Heinrich Gontermann, poses with ground crew and the ubiquitous canine companion in front of his Albatros D.III 2249/16 '2' with field-applied camouflage, probably green and brown once again, including the wheels. Axial propeller.

20. Wreckage of Hans Berr's and/or Paul Hoppe's fatal crash. A rather macabre aspect is the officer's cap, presumably Berr's, amidst the wreckage. It is unlikely that it came to rest there naturally, and was probably placed for the photographer. Whether it was Berr's or Hoppe's machine really can't be deduced for certain and a serial is tantalisingly almost legible on the fin in the middle of the wreckage.





▲ 21

It was not the first time that two pilots would concentrate so hard on an intended victim that they failed to see each other until too late, nor would it be the last. What is clear, and quite ironic, is that Hans Berr had foreseen the possibility of just such incidents and done what he could to prevent them by establishing a tightly controlled formation and stipulating minimum distances between aircraft. In the final analysis, however, it would appear that it was Hoppe who was flying more or less straight ahead after a victim and that it was Berr who deviated from his flight path. Whatever the details, one of Germany's premier fighter pilots had fallen. His loss was a terrible blow not only to his unit, but to the entire organisation of the *Luftstreitkräfte*. It would be very difficult to replace him and the nature of his replacement was critical to the proper functioning of *Jasta 5*. Clearly someone with maturity and leadership must be chosen because the unit remained second in victories only to *Jasta Boelcke* (soon to be outpaced by Manfred von Richthofen and his *Jasta 11*, however).

A month of Hans von Hünnerbein

After Berr's death Gontermann immediately took over as acting commander, probably with instructions from above. His acting role would be brief, however, for the High Command lost no time in naming a new *Jastaführer* for *Jasta 5*. Although their wish to do so quickly is both commendable and completely understandable, their selection remains something of a puzzle. *Hauptmann* Hans von Hünnerbein was 38 years old, essentially twice the age of his pilots. He certainly brought maturity to the command, but his experience at *Jagdstaffel* level was minor. He had only recently qualified as a pilot in Spring 1917 and posted to *Jasta 8*. There on 7 April there were two momentous events. He scored a victory early in the day, his first and only one, and later in the day was notified that he would take command of *Jasta 5*. Whatever his other attributes may have been, one can question the ability of someone of this age to handle high-performance fighter aircraft.

On that same day, Heinrich Gontermann, presumably leading *Jasta 5*, if perhaps a reduced flight because of the tragedy of the

21. Group on the north steps of *Château Boistrancourt*, April 1917. Back row, left to right:?, Mai, Nathanael, Dahlmann, Sturm, and Löwensen. Front row, left to right: von Hünnerbein, Gontermann, Schneider, Neisen, Vorländer, and Nebel and canine friend.

22. The second leader of *Jasta 5*, *Hauptmann* Hans von Hünnerbein, posing in front of *Vzfw.* Büssing's Albatros D.III 2243/16 '4' with its Axial propeller.

23. Death in a beautiful package - Siemens-Schuckert D.I 3761/16 in which von Hünnerbein was killed.

24. *Oberleutnant* Richard Flashar, fourth leader of *Jasta 5*, sporting his newly-awarded 'Hohenzollern' as well as both classes of the Iron Cross on, or soon after, 17 February 1918.

previous day, flamed a balloon West of St. Quentin. There are not many details about it except that it was confirmed as his eighth victory and his first, of many, over balloons.

It is not certain when von Hünnerbein actually arrived at *Jasta 5*, but it was likely Easter Sunday 8 April 1917. What does appear to be fairly certain is that he was wise enough to let much of the organisation that Hans Berr had put into place remain. This included allowing Heinrich Gontermann to continue to lead, at times at least, in the air. We know that because of another remarkable document, part of the diary of *Ltn.* Rudolf Nebel (provided by Peter Grosz). Nebel recorded the order of battle for *Jasta 5* on 12 April as he had on 1 April, thereby confirming Berr's order of about that date. Inevitably, the losses and newly arrived personnel alter this pretty dramatically, but there are some important changes in markings for the aircraft as well. Once more this will be rendered with footnotes:

Pilot	Aircraft serial	Identification number
Gontermann	2249 D.III	2
<i>Gruppe 1</i>		
Nathanael (F)	2256 D.III	3 ¹
Löwensen	2241 D.III	Z ²
Büssing	2243 D.III	4

<i>Gruppe 2</i>		
Schneider (F)	D.III 2244	5
Hermann	D.II 1740	F
Dahlmann	D.III 2229	7
Strobel	D.II 1798	D

<i>Gruppe 3</i>		
Nebel (F)	D.III 2231	8
Neisen	D.II 1799	A
Vorländer	D.II 1777	B
Sturm	D.II(OAW) 914	6 ³

No *Gruppe 4* listed.¹

Notes:

¹ This was previously Hans Berr's machine so it is obvious that he was flying a different machine on 6 April when he was killed.

² This was previously Paul Hoppe's machine so neither pilot was flying his regular mount when he was killed. Whether because of superstition or not, both machines received new numbers.

³ This machine is not listed earlier and may have been considered a supernumerary. It is only the second OAW-built Albatros D.II known to have been assigned to *Jasta 5*, the other being Max Böhme's 910/16.

There are several noteworthy aspects to this list in addition to the fact that both Berr's and Hoppe's principal mounts survived as re-marked aircraft. First is that the tactical groupings Berr ordered remained mostly unchanged. The fundamental philosophy was still there although the absolutely regular numbering designations had become somewhat scrambled. That no fourth *Gruppe* was designated probably means that only three were employed this particular day. Not listed and probably available on this date were Kleymann, Mai and Weiß shown on the 1 April order of battle as well as *Ltn.* Gerhard Hermann Bassenge who

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had just joined the unit. *Vizefeldwebel* Richard Dilcher would join *Jasta 5* during April, but the exact date is not recorded and another source suggests he joined as early as February although he is not shown in any earlier listing.

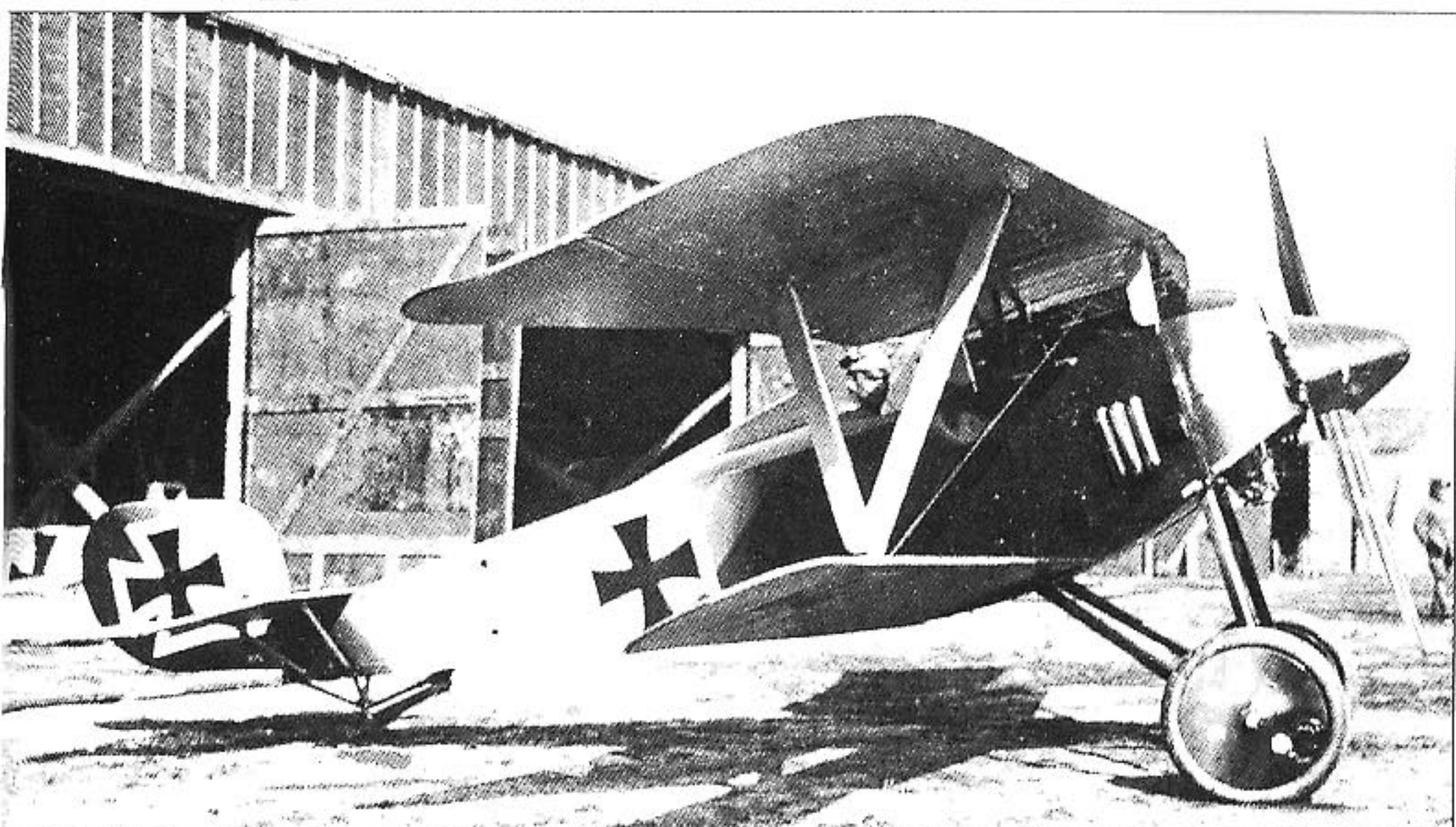
This tactical arrangement continued to be productive and on the day indicated, 12 April, a day of snow squalls, Schneider shot down RE8 A104 from No.34 Squadron from 5000 feet at 1100 hrs. Captain F L J Shirley was seriously wounded in the stomach but Lt. L T Smith was unhurt. The combat took place at Ascension Farm near Herbécourt and the British crew managed to land within their own lines. According to reports Schneider was flying an all-black Albatros D.III with streamers. The latter according to *Jasta 5* practice, or more likely the single streamer as on 1 April, but the all-black Albatros is probably erroneous. Schneider was flying 2244/16. There are photographs of it taken before any markings were applied and others showing it with a black '5' on each side of the fuselage and turtledeck and under both wings, but no evidence that it was ever 'all-black'. This was Schneider's third victory.

The following day saw much better weather with a dramatic increase in aerial activity. Friday the 13th would not be a good day for the British during a month that was especially bad for them. *Jasta 5* pounced on four FE2ds from No.57 Squadron and Kurt Schneider claimed two at 0900 over Gavrelle and between Gavrelle and Oppy. He was credited with both although it appears he actually brought down A1950, 2/Lt. G W Gillespie and Pvt. R Sibley, both killed. Heinrich Gontermann, not to be outdone, shot down a second, A5150, killing both of its occupants Capt. L S Platt and 2/Lt. T Margerison at Vitry-en-Artois. The other two FE2s escaped, one flying very low and this may be the source for Schneider's second, and apparently erroneous, claim. Whatever, this confirmation made Schneider an ace and gave *Jasta*

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▼ 23





▲ 25

25. Richard Dilcher with his Albatros D.V, serial unknown. The white fuselage bar with black edges is supplemented with black '3's under the wings and the fuselage has stippled camouflage. It was fitted with a prominent rear view mirror. Once again this machine had an Axial propeller.

26. Josef Mai coming in to land Hans Berr's old mount, Albatros D.III 2217/16 ('1's under the wings), early summer 1917. Whether by Mai or by an earlier pilot, this machine had a light blue tail unit with black stripes, and an 'all-seeing' eye in a white disc on the fuselage sides.

5 an especially formidable triumverate of aces; Gontermann, Schneider, and Nathanael. They would collaborate to be a major factor in 'Bloody April' and as each would greatly increase his score during the month. *Jasta 5*'s 'bag' for the day was not over, however, because Gontermann led an evening balloon shoot. Nathanael flamed one west of St. Quentin for his eighth victory at 1935 hrs. and Gontermann another south of St. Quentin at 1940 hrs. making him a 'double' ace. Schneider's balloon was British and Gontermann's French.

The next day saw more of the same. During a morning patrol Gontermann shot down BE2c 7241, from No.52 Squadron killing 2 /Lts. C T L Donaldson and S R Carter. This combat took place over Metz-en-Couture 4.5 km West of Gouzeaucourt and the BE crashed in British lines.

On 16 April *Jasta 5* saw action without success until a Gontermann evening balloon shoot that was becoming something of a tradition. He flamed one British balloon over Manancourt at 1650 hrs. and claimed another in the same area at 1700 hrs. The second did not burn, but Gontermann was convinced he had damaged it sufficiently that it was out of action and effectively destroyed. He had chased it nearly to the ground firing at it almost continuously in spite of ground fire. He was credited with both as his 12th and 13th victories. The following days were filled with rain and low clouds - conditions that ranged from impossible to at best marginal and the inclement weather prevented *Jasta 5* from having any significant action on 17,18,19,20, and 21 April.

The 22nd had better weather (albeit cloudy) and both sides decided it was an excellent day to attack the other's balloon lines. Gontermann was as usual at the forefront and he burned one at 0935 hrs. over Arras for his 14th victory. Schneider responded during a later patrol flaming two at 1130 hrs. over Eperhy and at 1145 hrs. over Essigny-le-Grand, these locations being 28 km apart. Continuing the onslaught in the afternoon Nathanael

flamed a balloon at 1410 hrs. over Bus. During the evening patrol *Jasta 5* along with *Jasta 12* tangled with No.23 Squadron Spads protecting No.18 Squadron FEs. Although the Spads were successful in diverting attention away from the vulnerable pushers they paid a price, losing three aircraft, two to *Jasta 12* and one to Nathanael of *Jasta 5* at 2005 hrs. over Ribécourt-la-Tour. His victim was apparently A6695 piloted by 2/Lt. K R Furniss who was captured and died of his wounds. Five minutes later Vzfw. Dahlmann would claim another Spad over their old airfield at Gonnelieu, but it was not allowed. Other reports say that No.23 Squadron lost only two Spads that day and Nathanael's victim was Lt. F C Craig in A6682 '4'; a photo of the machine in a *Jasta 5* album supports this view.

The following day, 23 April, was another highly successful one for *Jasta 5*. Once again it was No.22 Squadron FE2s escorted by DH2s from No.24 and Schneider downed an FE2 at 0815 hrs. over Bellenglise as the first of his 'triple' for the day. This apparently was 7681 flown by 2/Lts. J A Rossi and P H West and, although this machine spiralled down in flames, both crewmen survived in spite of being badly burned. Löwensen's claim at the same time and place was not allowed. During the afternoon as luck would have it, the same units tangled again over the same area. It was Schneider again who pressed the attack at 1725 hrs and was victorious. Trying to evade his attack two British aircraft collided; FE2b 6929 with Lt. E A Barltrop and 2/Lt. F O Sullivan and DH2 7909 with 2/Lt. M A White fell to the ground killing all three occupants. As was common practice the pilot attacking in such a situation was given credit for both, bringing Schneider's total to 10 and giving *Jasta 5* three 'double aces' up front. The combat was not over, however, for a few minutes later at 1925 hrs. *Jasta 5* happened across an RE8 from No.34 Squadron, A88 crewed by 2/Lt. H O W Hill and Lt. H P Illsley. Gontermann shot it down Southeast of Arras killing both crewmen for his 16th victory.

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GUIDE TO VOLUME 1 COLOUR IMAGES

FRONT COVER:

Summer at Boistrancourt

Vizelfeldweibel Fritz Rumey flies over the Jasta 5 airfield in his dramatically-marked Albatros; see *photo 54* and caption on page 48 for colour notes. Mai referred to the fuselage marking as a 'Negergeschichte'. This is perfectly good German and translates, literally, as 'N*g*o's face'. In today's charged climate this looks too much like the 'N' word to use, but that was how it was originally defined. In another place Mai did say 'demon'...

(Painting by Robert Karr)

INSIDE FRONT COVER:

1). Albatros D.V, serial unknown, flown by Paul Baumer, July 1917. The white *Edelweiss* with green leaves and stalk, yellow stamens and grey highlights was painted over a panel darker than the surrounding red colour.

2). Albatros D.III 2217/16 flown by Hans Berr and Josef Mai; subsequently flown by Walter Reichenbach in July 1917. NB: a scratched out '1' may have been visible on the turtledeck.

3). Albatros D.V, serial and pilot unknown, July 1917, with large, stylised shield and trefoil in unit colours.

PAGE 25:

4). Albatros D.V, serial and pilot unknown, July 1917. Red shield with rearing white horse having grey highlights.

5). Albatros D.V 2065/17 flown by Richard Flashar, July 1917. Flashar's markings consisted of a red dragon with white eye, nostrils, teeth, and claws, the latter two edged in black, the first with black pupil, breathing yellow fire, also edged in black. The tail actually continues on fin and rudder as an unoutlined red multiple branching tail, each branch ending in a barb. We think there were 13 branches as shown, but this could be off by one or two...

6). Albatros D.V, serial unknown, flown by Rudolf Matthaai, July 1917.

PAGE 26:

7). Albatros D.V, serial unknown, flown by Alfred Sturm, July 1917. Fuselage markings of a white shield, black (?) outlined and black phoenix rising from yellow (?) flames - note the flat bottom to the shield, whilst bird faces left on *both* sides of the fuselage. Lower wing monograms are provisional.

8). Albatros D.V, serial unknown, flown by *Ltn.* Wolf, July 1917. One of the most spectacularly-painted Albatros fighters yet recorded, markings consisted of a grey fuselage band with a narrow (25mm) yellow(?) edge. On this band on both sides of the fuselage, the 1835 arms of Bayern, quartered, 1st: sable, a lion rampant or, armed gules, 2nd: barry of six gules over argent, 3rd: bendy sinister of six argent and gules, surtout a pale or, 4th: argent, a lion rampant azure, armed gules, surtout an inescutcheon of the small arms of Bayern, lozengy of six in bend sinister, argent and azure. Supporter on the port side: a lion rampant, regardant or, crowned or, armed and crown details, gules. Supporter on the star-board side: a wolf rampant or, teeth and eyes argent, details sable, armed gules. (Of course, 'or' would be rendered as yellow and 'argent' as white.) Lower wing monograms are provisional.

PAGE 27:

9). Albatros D.V, serial unknown, flown by *Ltn.* Neisen in May(?) 1917 and in this guise in July. Markings consisted of a black bar with white edges, the white outline carried as a band around the fuselage, its forward edge scalloped in a pattern similar to that embracing the bar. On a grey fuselage band a white shield, outlined yellow?, the shield bears crossed black mining hammers. The hammers on the starboard side are more elaborate than those on the port. This is almost certainly the same aircraft seen coming in to land in *photo 36* on page 38 and elsewhere where it has erroneously been attributed to Shlömer. It would have served 'pre-Green Tails' and been fairly extensively worked over, the length of the bar on the turtledeck being considerable reduced. It was probably Neisen flying it then, but it's guesswork whether or not he was around when lower wing initials were introduced. Those shown in 9A are provisional.

10). Albatros D.III 2225/16, July 1917, flown by a number of pilots as described in the narrative. Markings consist of a scratched out 'O' on each side of the fuselage partially covered by a diagonal blue/white/blue sash. Fin and rudder in blue/white diamonds with a thin blue surround to their edges.

11). Albatros D.V, serial unknown, flown by Otto Kōnnecke, July 1917. Liberally painted in *Jasta* green, fuselage markings were a black/white/red-outlined chessboard that partially extended over the blue-painted undersides.

PAGE 28:

12). Albatros D.V, serial unknown, flown by Richard Dilcher, July 1917 - the star is natural ply - not painted yellow as often portrayed. 12A). No

initials were present under the wings when photographed, but *may* have been added later as provisionally shown here.

13). Albatros D.III 2244/18, probably still flown by Heinrich Büssing in July 1917. The fuselage band is shown red but it may have been black. Note: bullet hole patches as British roundels on fuselage and under wing.

14). Albatros D.III, serial and pilot unknown, flown from an unknown date in 1917 until January or February 1918.

PAGE 29:

15). Albatros D.Va (OAW), serial unknown, thought to have been flown by Martin Klein, January-February 1918.

16). Albatros D.V, serial and pilot unknown, May 1918. The black/white/black/white/black diagonal band portrays the ribbon of the *EK II*, using the cockpit as the 'buttonhole'.

17). Albatros D.V, serial unknown, flown by Fritz Rumey, May or June 1917. Fuselage markings consist of a white disc with a narrow black edge containing wood-coloured (?) crossed airscrews with black and white details. Fore and aft red(?) stripes were painted on both sides of the horizontal tailplane.

PAGE 30:

18). Albatros D.V (or D.Va), serial unknown (but present); pilot also unknown, January-February 1918.

19). Albatros D.III, serial unknown, flown by Werner Voss at *Jasta B* and subsequently *Jasta 5* in spring-early summer 1917. Red hearts with white outlines on fuselage sides and turtledeck, aft of which is a green wreath with blue bow surrounding a white, black-bordered, swastika. *Jasta B* tailplane and rear fuselage in that unit's black and white colours.

20). Albatros D.Va, serial unknown, flown by Josef Mai, February 1918. Fuselage markings consist of a white bone with black details - all struts are darkly-painted, probably in the unit red as shown.

PAGE 31:

21). Albatros D.V, serial unknown, flown by Fritz Oppenhorst, date uncertain. Fuselage marking was a large yellow heart outlined in red.

22). Albatros D.Va, serial unknown, flown by Wilhelm Gürke, February-March 1918. Red-painted fuselage carries a white pentagram. Five-colour printed fabric covered the wings.

23). Albatros D.V, serial probably 2068/17, flown by Hans von Hippel, December 1917 - January 1918 - a plain white band encircled the grey-painted fuselage. Hippel would later fly even more flamboyantly-marked *Albatrosse* as shown in Volume 2 of this study...

PAGE 32:

24). Albatros D.V, serial and pilot unknown, March 1918.

25). Albatros D.V, serial and pilot unknown, January-February 1918 - dark fuselage band interpreted as red.

26). Albatros D.Va, serial unknown, belonging to *JG I* and supposedly flown by Manfred von Richthofen in March 1918. This D.Va is usually interpreted as a *Jasta 10* machine with the *Rittmeister* at the controls, yet the familiar photo (*No.78* on page 19 in Volume 2) was taken at Boistrancourt and both spinner and tail look exactly correct for *Jasta 5*.

INSIDE BACK COVER:

27). Albatros D.Va, serial and pilot unknown, spring 1918. Markings appear to have been two dark bands around the nose (red?); the space in between them *may* have been green - pattern seems to end after the two dark bands as shown in this provisional reconstruction.

28). Albatros D.V, serial unknown, flown by *Ltn.* Rath, May-June 1918. The lower wing markings are as depicted but the wreath remains provisional since clear details are lacking.

29). Albatros D.V, serial unknown, flown by Wilhelm Lehmann, March-May 1918. Fuselage markings consist of a complex *Edelweiss* on both sides, that on the starboard having a prominent bullet hole patch painted as a British roundel.

OUTSIDE BACK COVER:

30). Albatros D.V, serial unknown, flown by Fritz Rumey, February and April/May 1918. This black/white striped machine carries a grey bone on the fuselage with black details. Port wheel covers are white both sides, starboard are black both sides, whilst all struts are counter-coloured in black/white.

31). Albatros D.V (D.Va?), serial unknown, flown by Fritz Rumey, March 1918. Wheel covers and struts counter-coloured as *plate 30* above.

32). Albatros D.V, serial unknown, flown by Fritz Rumey at least by March 1918. Wheel covers and struts counter-coloured as *plates 30* and *31*.

32A). Upperwing wing tips in white, with white tailplane bands that do not extend over the red bordering.

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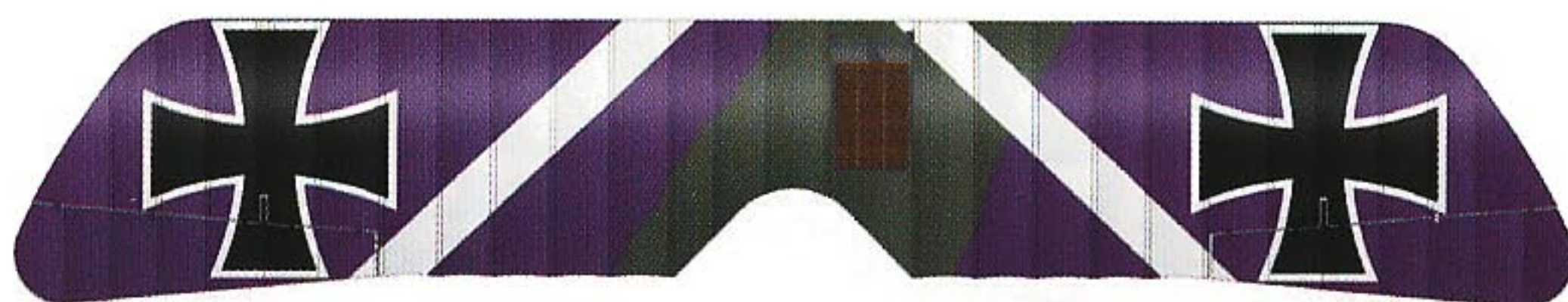


4). ALBATROS D.V, July 1917.



5A). UPPER AND LOWER WING DETAILS.

5). ALBATROS D.V 2065/17, July 1917.



6A). UPPER AND LOWER WING DETAILS.

6). ALBATROS D.V, July 1917.



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7). ALBATROS D.V, July 1917.

7A). LOWER WING DETAIL. ➡



8). ALBATROS D.V, July 1917.

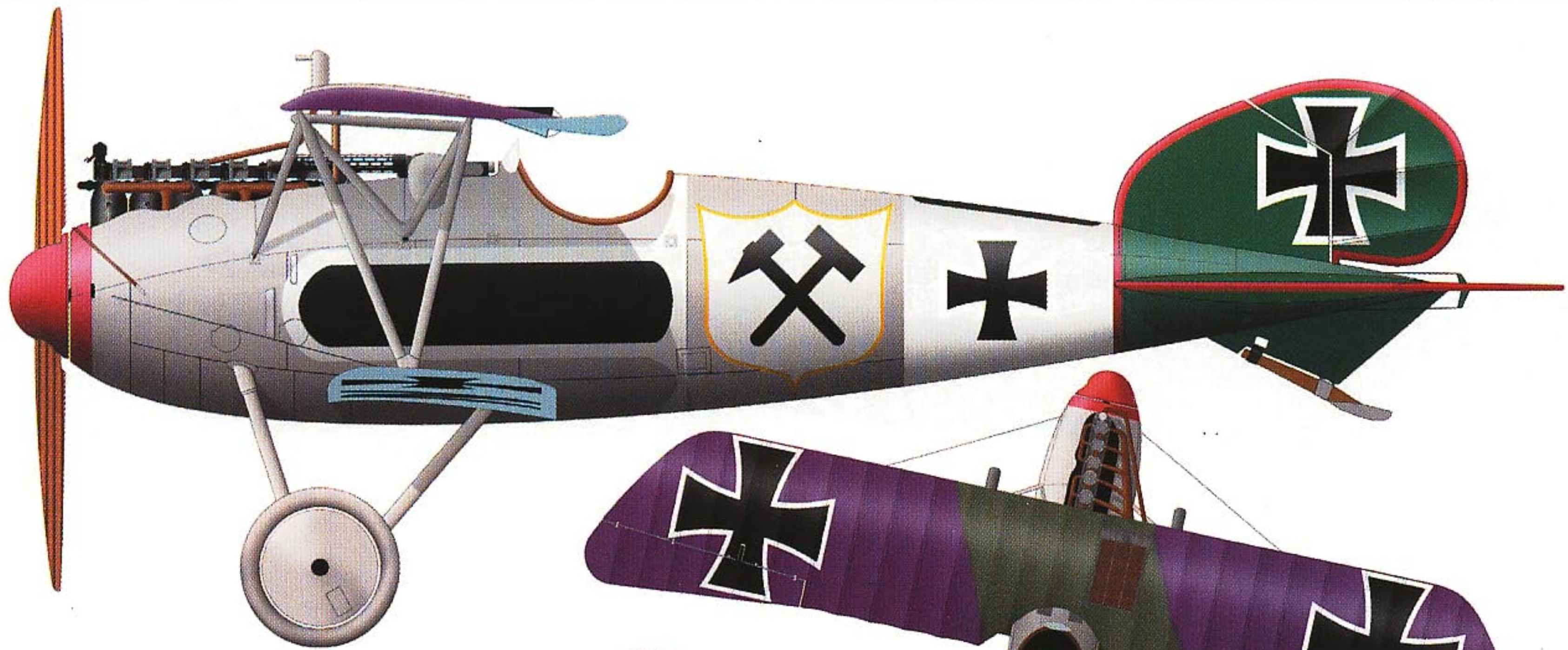
PORT SIDE INSIGNIA DETAIL ➡



8A). LOWER WING DETAIL.



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9). ALBATROS D.V, July 1917.

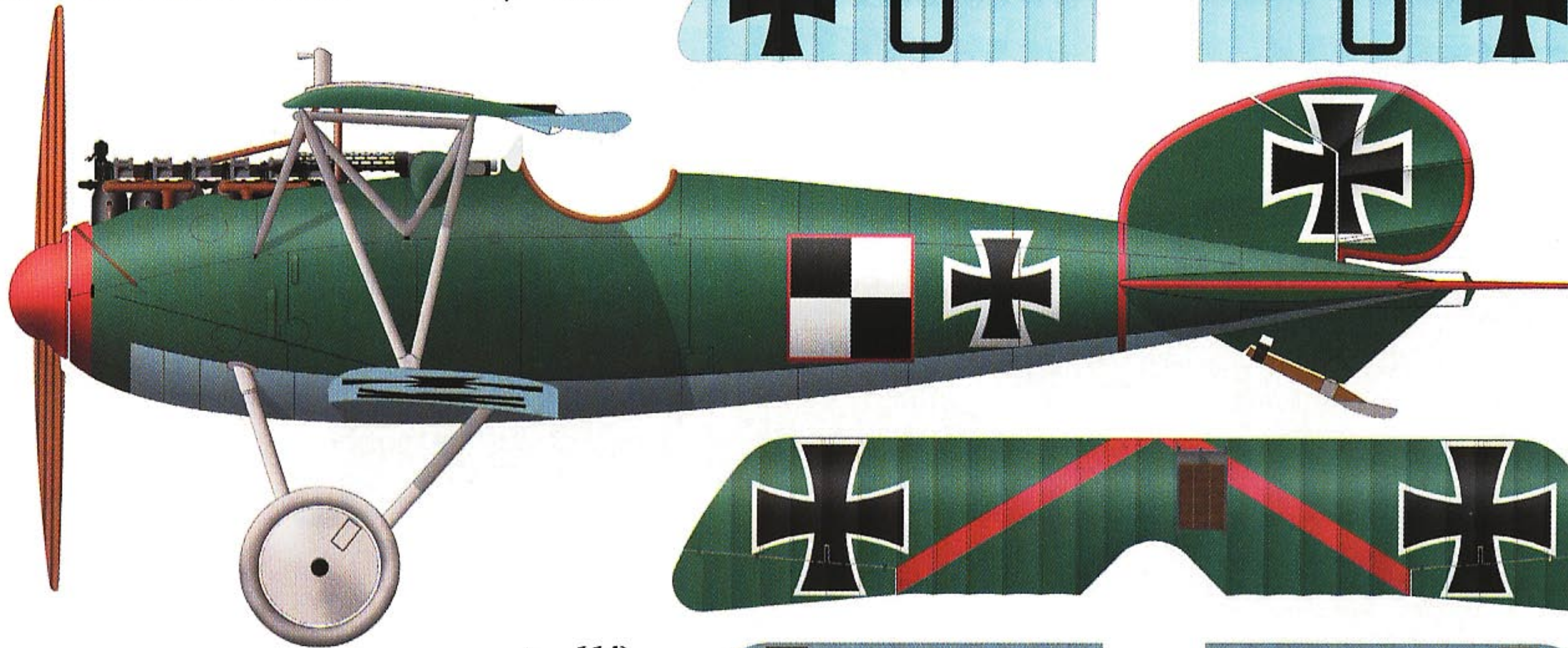
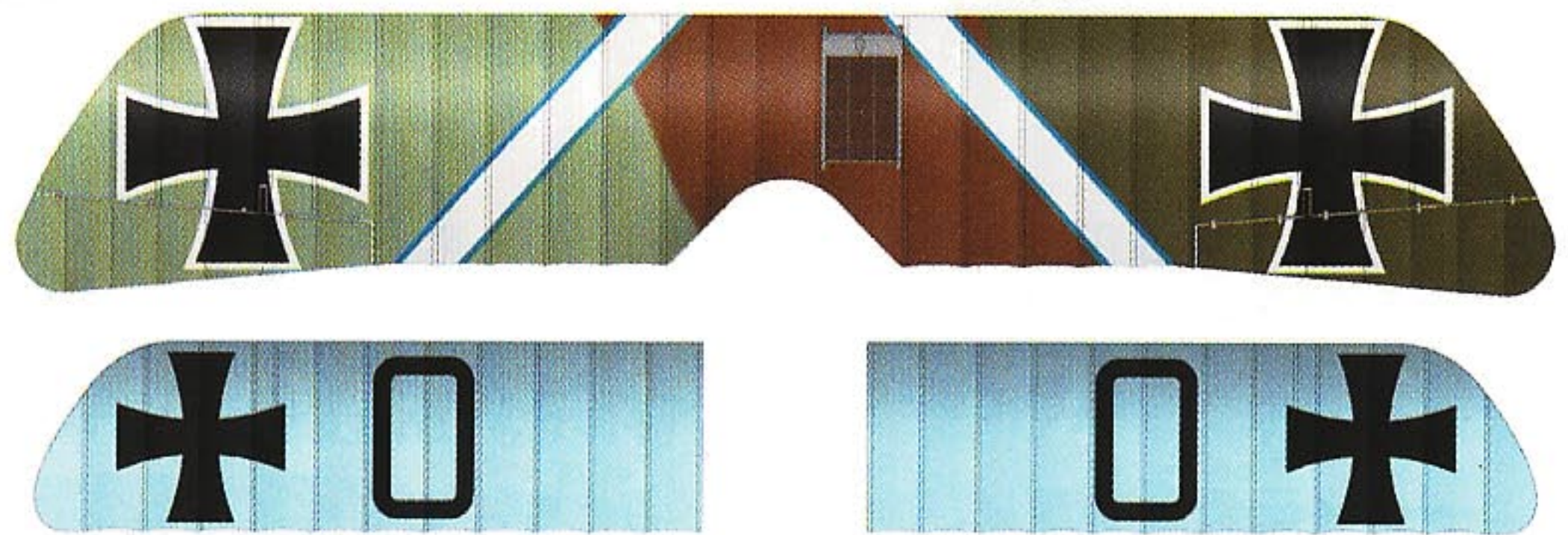


9A). UPPERSURFACE & LOWER WING DETAIL.



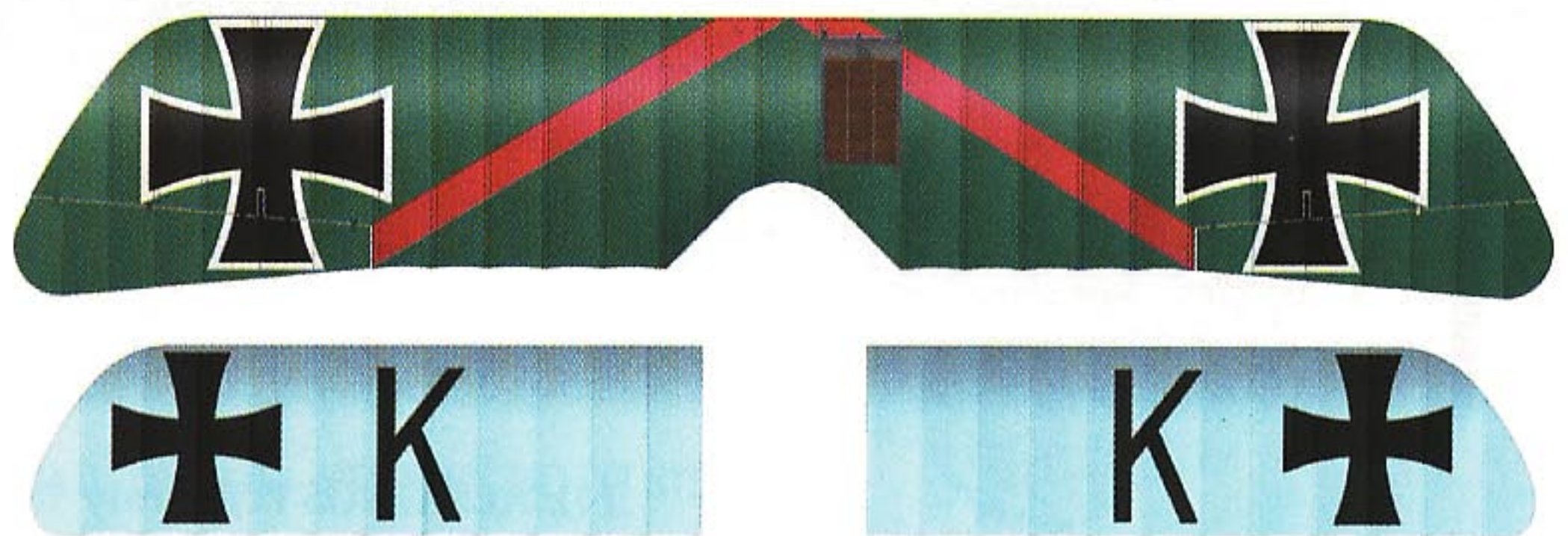
10). ALBATROS D.III 2225/16

⇒ 10A).



⇒ 11A).

11). ALBATROS D.V, July 1917.



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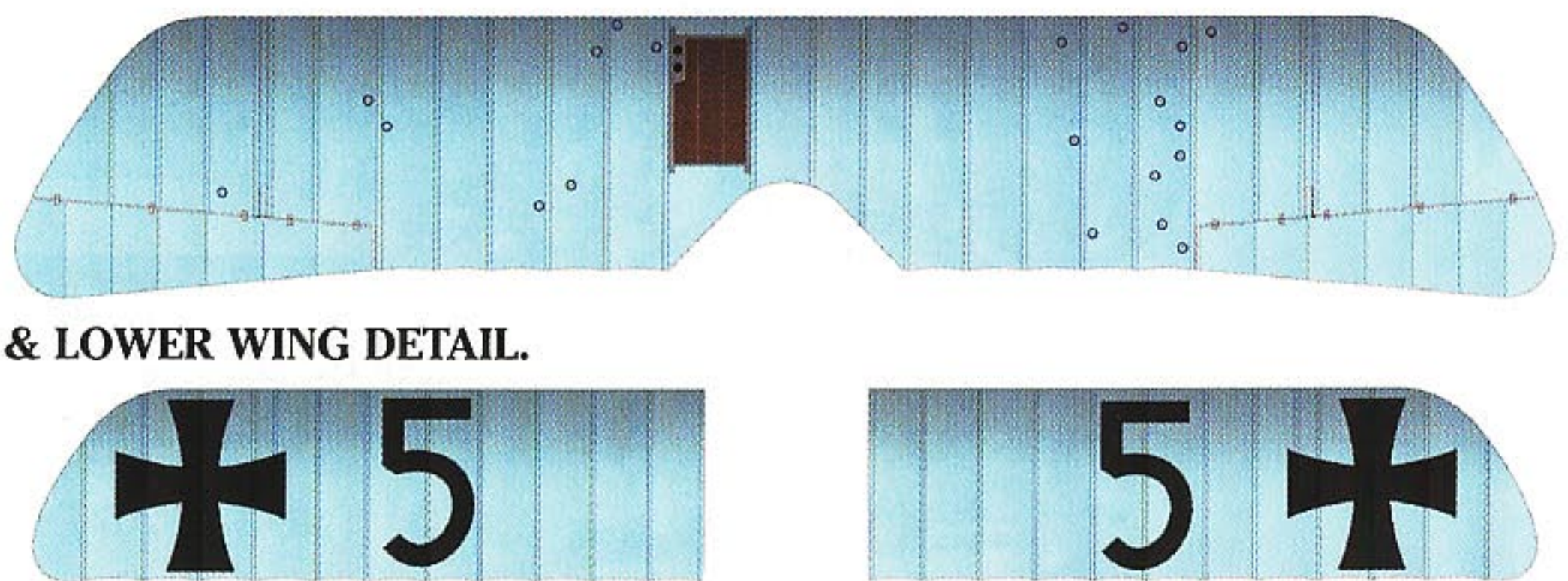
12). ALBATROS D.V, July 1917.

12A). LOWER WING DETAIL.



13). ALBATROS D.III 2244/16, July 1917.

13A). UPPER & LOWER WING DETAIL.

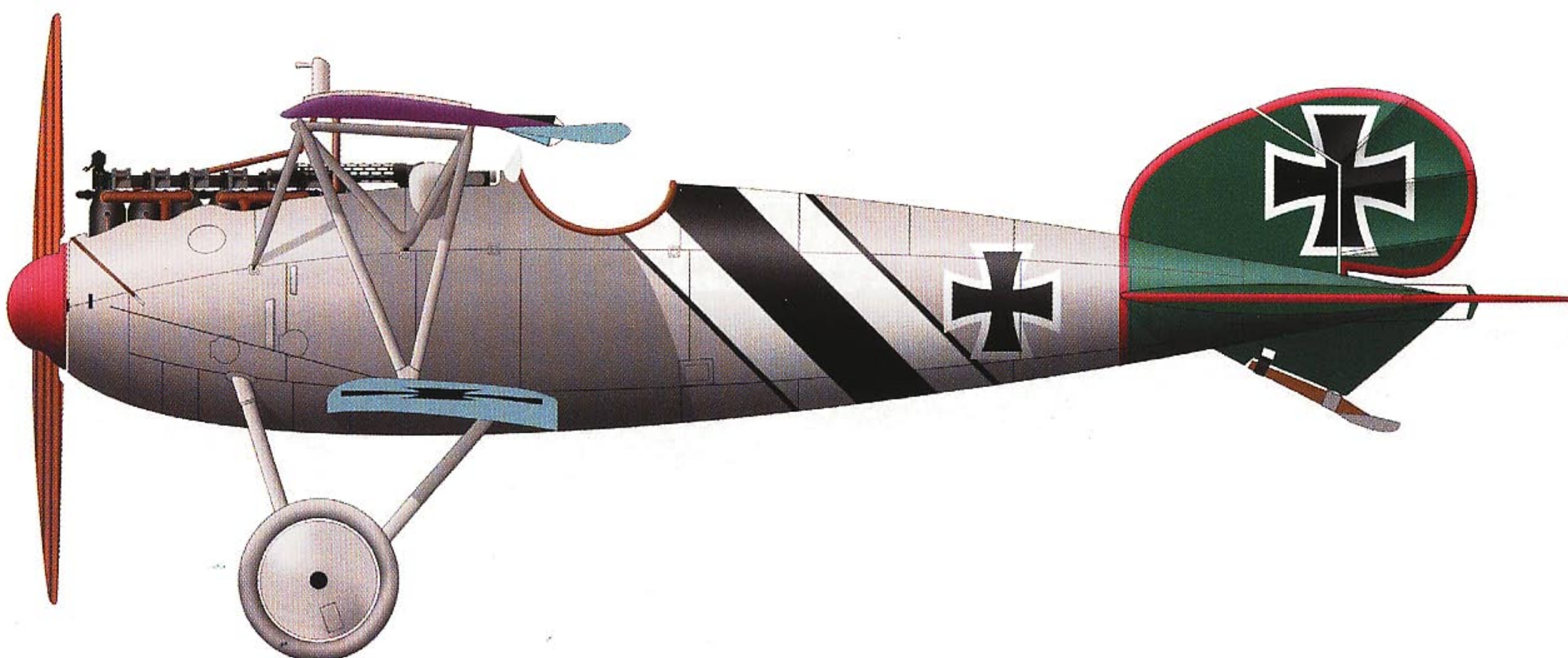


14). ALBATROS D.III, July 1917.

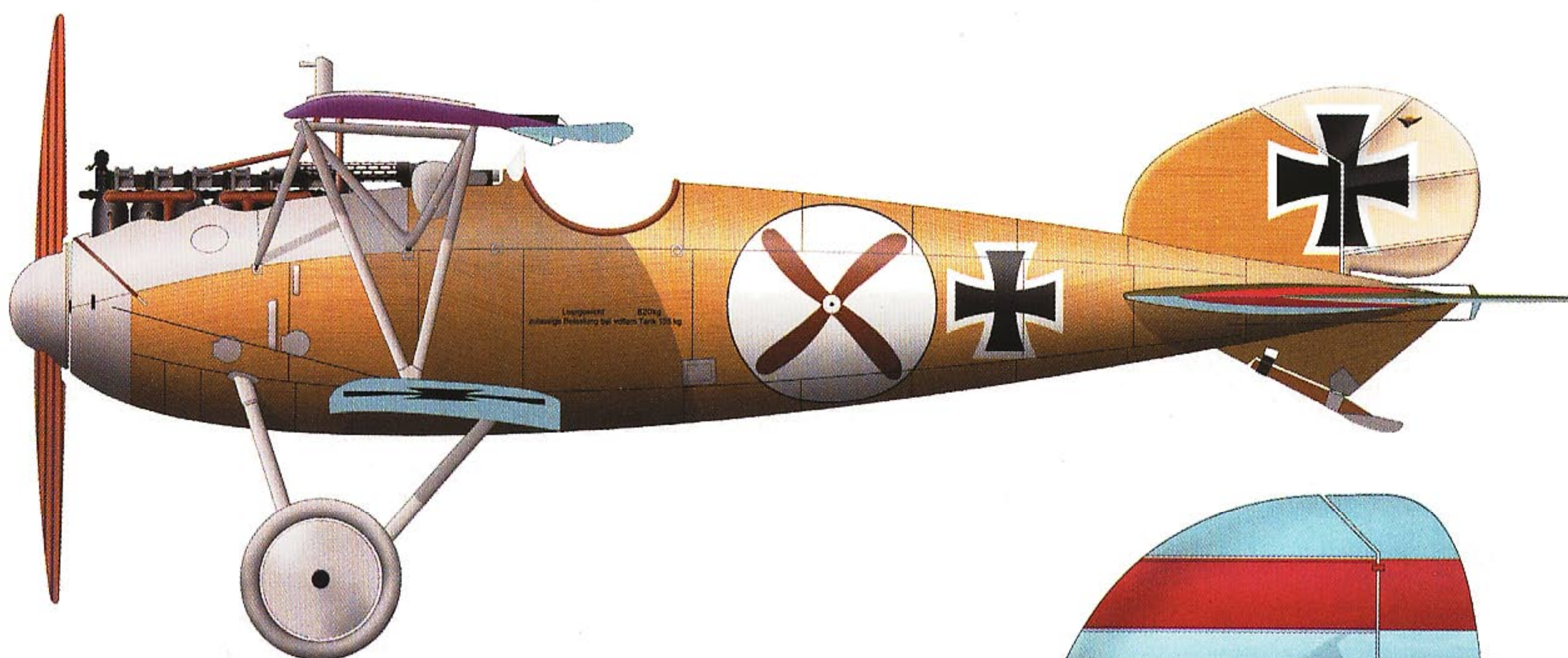
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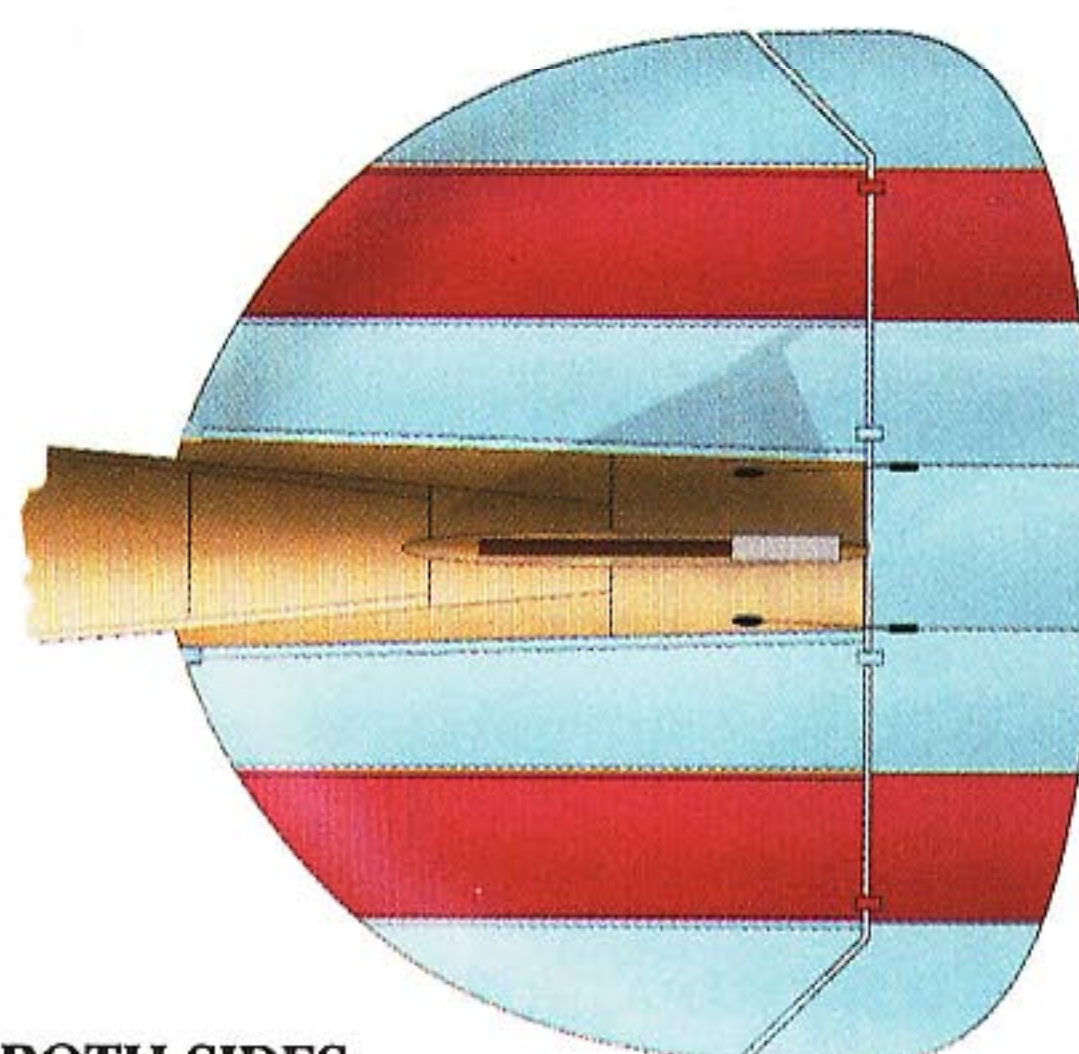
15). ALBATROS D.Va (OAW), Jan' - Feb' 1918.



16). ALBATROS D.V, May 1918.

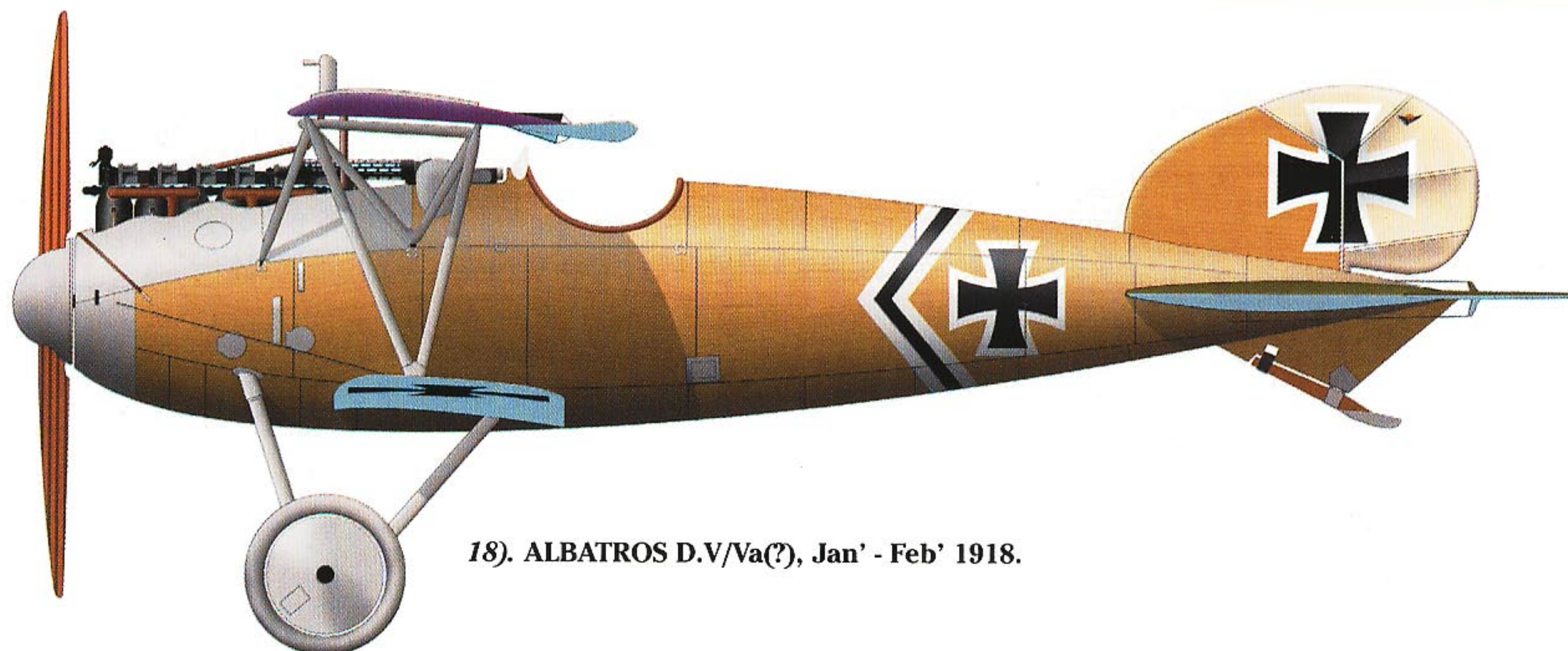


17). ALBATROS D.V, May/June 1917.

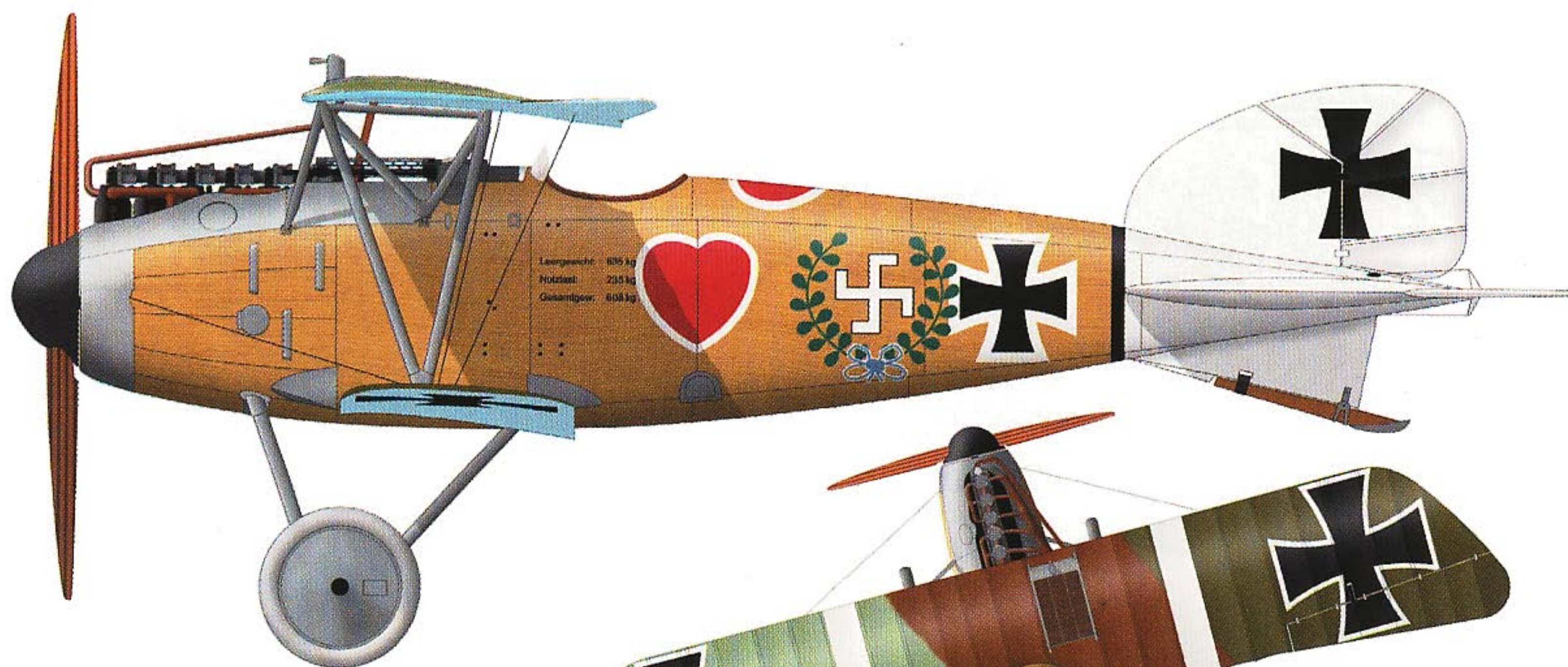


17A). TAIL DETAIL - STRIPES BOTH SIDES.

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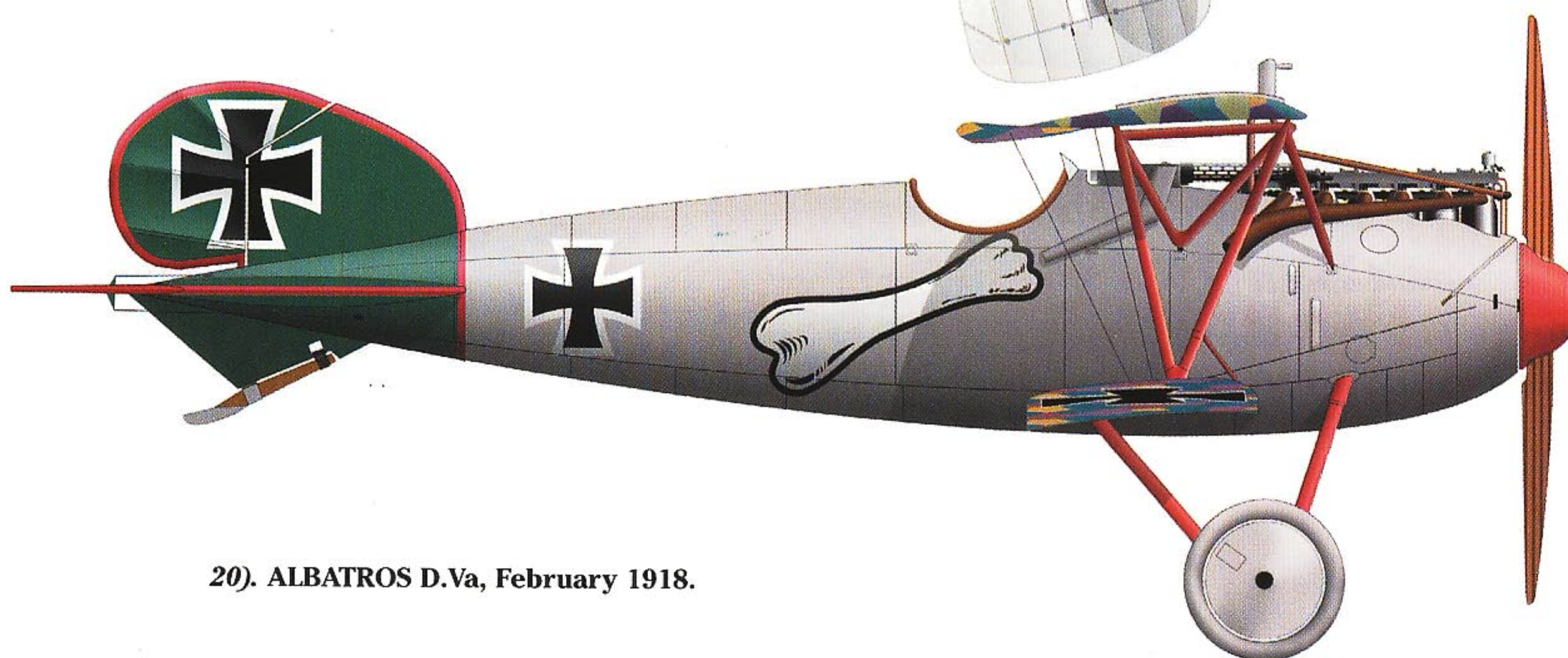
18). ALBATROS D.V/Va(?), Jan' - Feb' 1918.



19). ALBATROS D.III, Summer 1918.



19A). UPPERSURFACE DETAIL.



20). ALBATROS D.Va, February 1918.

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21). ALBATROS D.V.

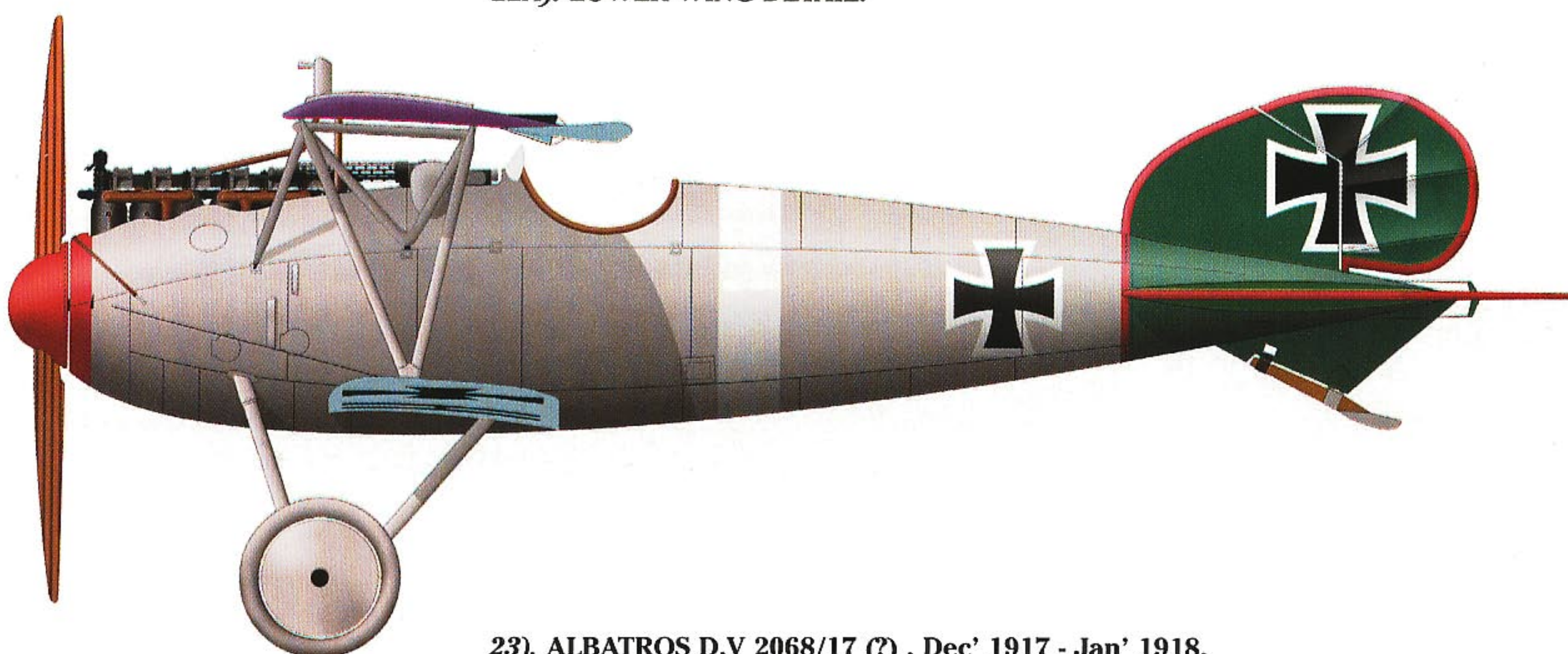
21A). LOWER WING DETAIL.



22). ALBATROS D.Va, Feb' - March 1918.



22A). LOWER WING DETAIL.

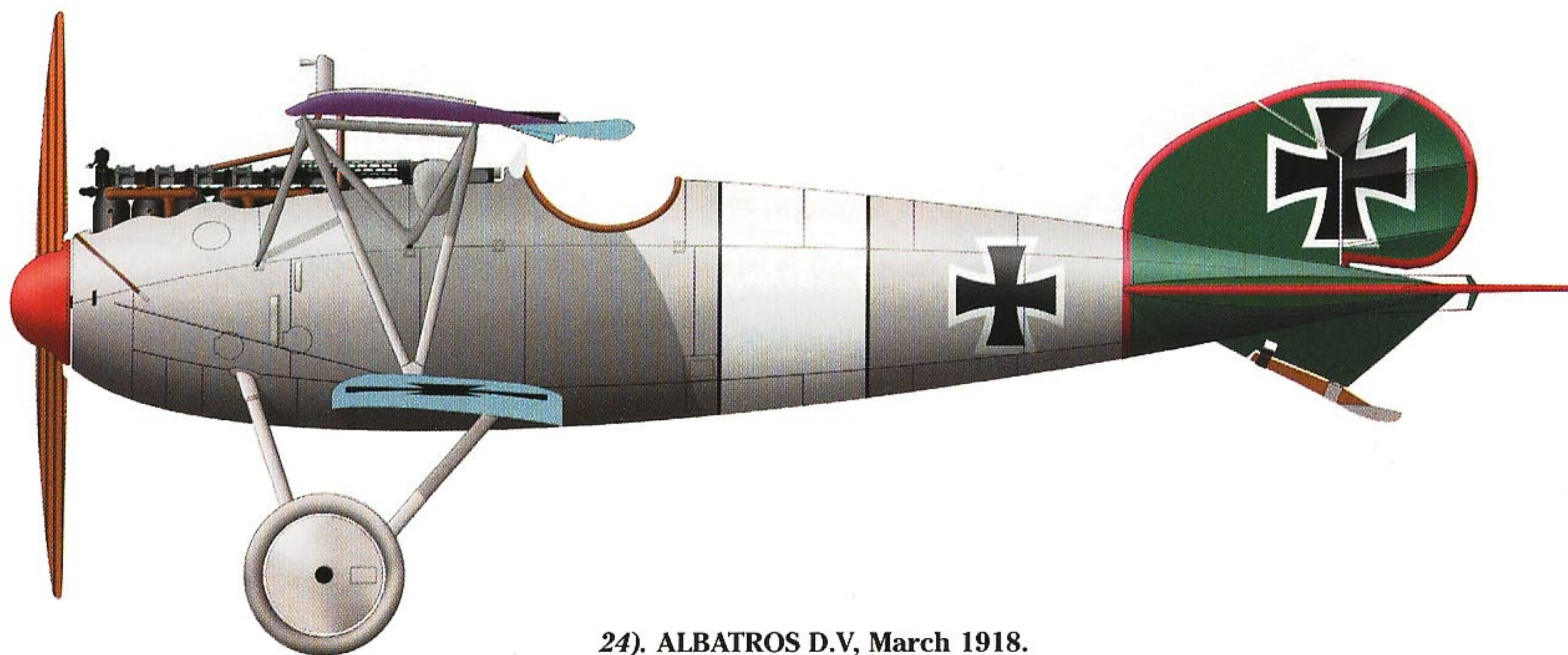


23). ALBATROS D.V 2068/17 (?), Dec' 1917 - Jan' 1918.

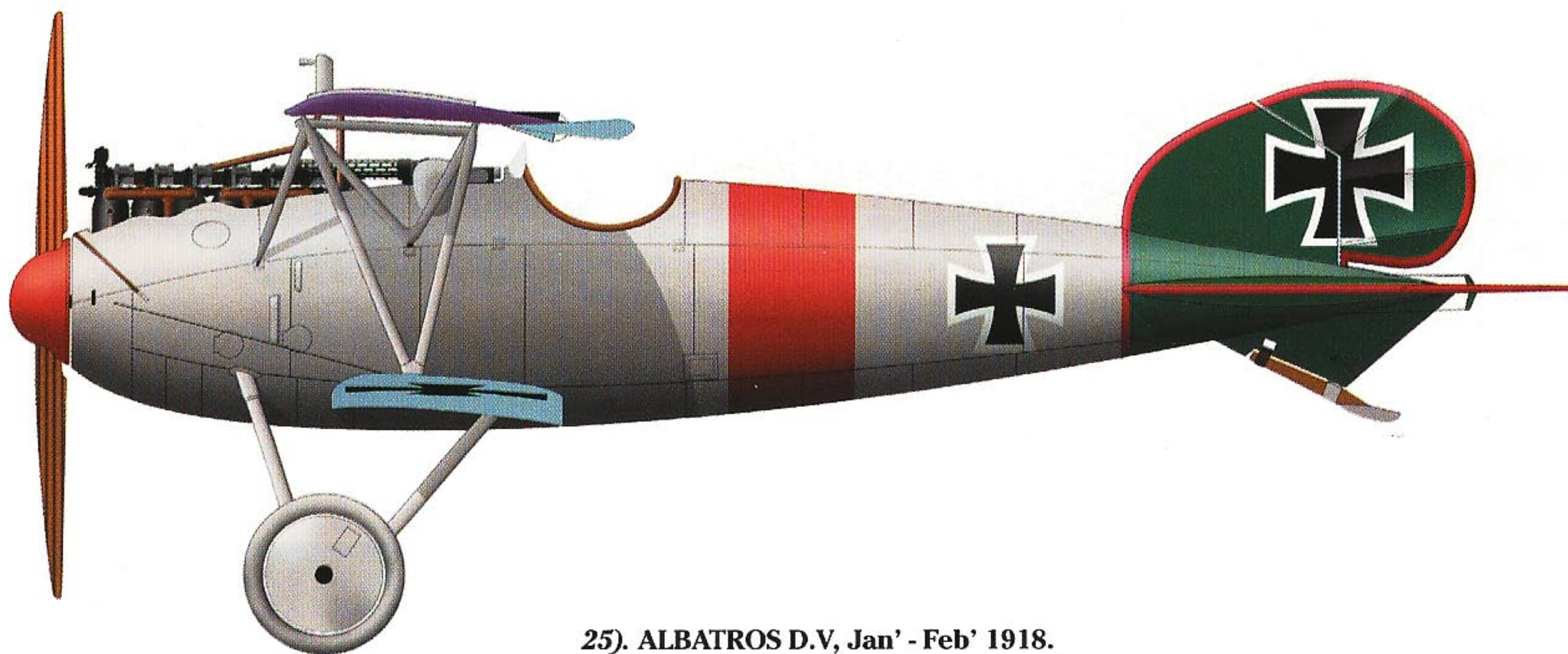


23A). LOWER WING DETAIL.

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24). ALBATROS D.V, March 1918.



25). ALBATROS D.V, Jan' - Feb' 1918.



26). ALBATROS D.Va, March 1918.

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The following day Gontermann downed another that would eventually be confirmed as his 17th victory (due to delays in confirmation he actually stood with 15 at this time). It was a Sopwith Triplane from Naval 8, N5467, flown by FSLt. E B J Walter who was killed. This victory was scored at 0900 hrs. over Bailleul-Sir-Berthoult. The next day, 25 April, saw no action, but an important event occurred nevertheless. *Jasta 5* received an SSW D.I, 3761/16, for evaluation.

Weather continued poor for most of the 26th, but cleared enough in the evening for massive action. Individual combats took place earlier, however, when Gontermann flamed a balloon at 1150 hrs. over Arras and Schneider another at 1600 hrs. at Seraucourt. As was his style, Gontermann pressed his attack almost to ground level before his target burned. The evening large-scale action brought *Jasta 5* up against their long-time opponents, No.22 Squadron. The British did not seem to run out of either aircraft or crews so *Jasta 5* continued to score. This time

it was two of the lower-scoring pilots who made 'kills', *Offstv.* Alfred Sturm, a future *Luftwaffe* general, shot down FE2b 4883 'B1' over Brancourt-le-Grand at 2000 hrs. Both crewmen, Capt. H R Hawkins and 2/Lt. G O McEntee made PoW. This was Sturm's first, and only, victory. Rudolf Nebel achieved a victory, his first, about 15 minutes later over No.22 Squadron's A825 at Joncourt. As usual, another source (album photo captions) reverses victors and victims. This crew were also made PoW; 2/Lts. G M Hopkins and J D M Stewart. Bad weather kept *Jasta 5* on the ground on the 27th. In spite of the lack of activity, this was an important day for *Jasta 5* because of the arrival of a new pilot, *Vizefeldwebel* Otto Könnecke, who would quickly become one of the 'stars' of the unit.

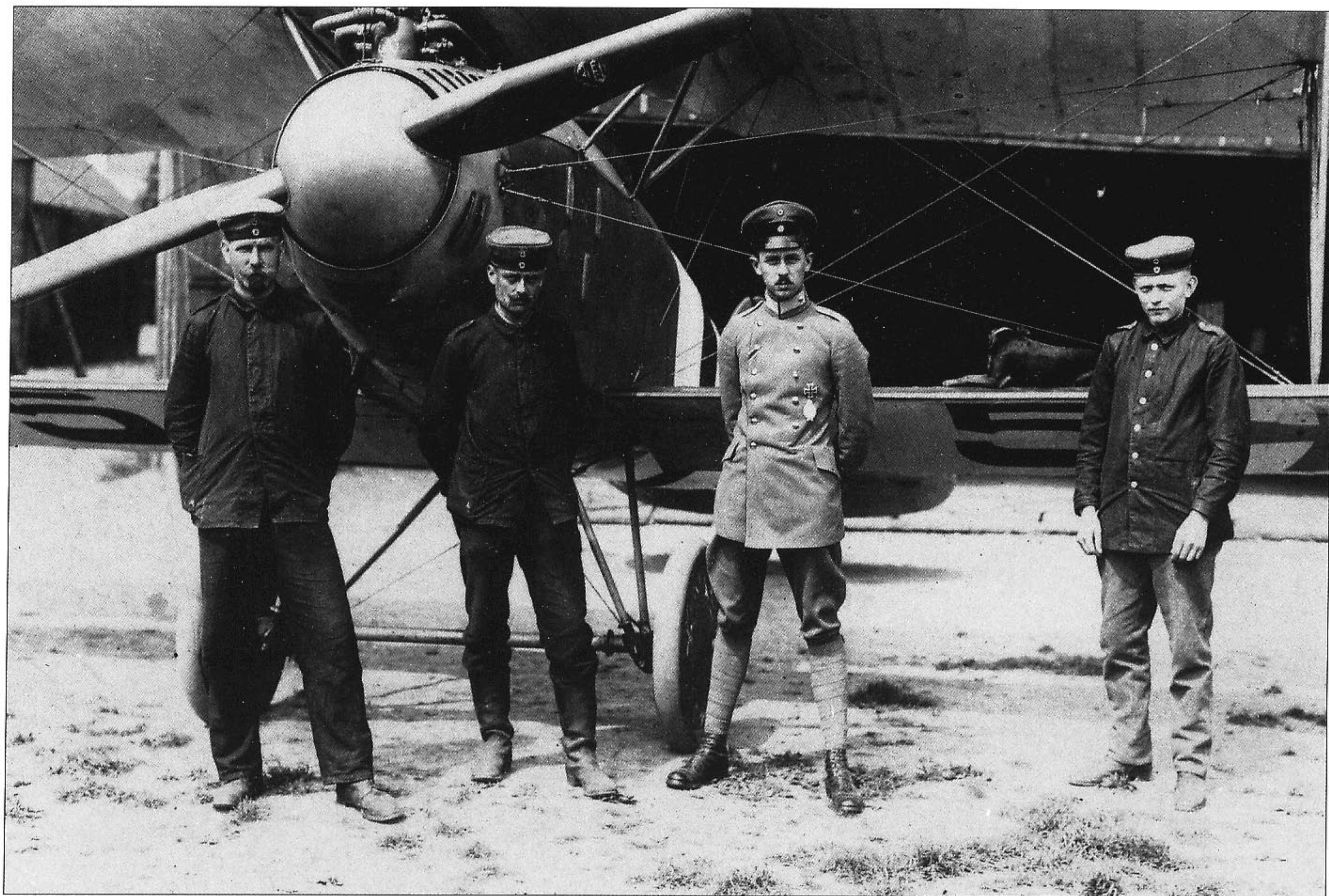
Weather continued poor on the 28th, but *Jasta 5* was in the air and scored one victory. This went to Nathanael, Sopwith 1½ Strutter A9934 of No.43 Squadron at 1515 hrs. over Gouzeaucourt or la Vacquerie. The crew, 2/Lt. C M Reece and 2AM A Moulton were made PoW, the latter being wounded. The 29th was similar with Schneider downing a Sopwith Pup, A6160, from Naval 3 at 1130 hrs. over Elincourt. Its pilot F.SLt. S L Bennett was killed. Nathanael claimed a 'Spad' at 2100 hrs. between Beaumont and Douai which was confirmed. Franks, *et al.*, list the victory as being at la Vacquerie, but that is 14 km East and 31 km South of Beaumont. It could not have been a Spad because the three British Spads lost that day were those by No.19 Squadron to the



27. Otto Könnecke with an Albatros D.V, serial unknown, early summer 1917. Although overpainted in a similar manner, this is thought to be a different machine than the one seen in the July line-up. Unlike that machine's Eta, this one had a conspicuous Axial propeller.

28. Newly-minted *Leutnant* Heinrich Büssing poses with his ground-crew in front of Albatros D.III 2244/16, Kurt Schneider's old machine (Schneider's '5's are clearly visible under the wings), June 1917. The white rear fuselage and dark band were still borne after application of *Jasta* colours in July. Evident are some of the many bullet hole patches, one directly over the shorter mechanic's head. Also noteworthy, the front of the engine bears the company's famous 'dreispitziger Stern' emblem, so well-known today, but not seen elsewhere on their WWI engines.

▲ 27 ▼ 28



29, 30, 31 and 32. Four views of the *Jasta 5* line-up at Boistrancourt, late July 1917, as described fully in the text.



▲ 29 ▼ 30





▲ 31 ▼ 32



guns of *Jasta 11*, Manfred von Richthofen and his *Staffel* wiping out a patrol led by Major Harvey-Kelly. It seems likely that Nathanael's victim was actually Nieuport 17 A6745, from No.40 Squadron flown by Capt. F L Barwell who was killed. On the last day of the month *Jasta 5* would put in a claim that was not confirmed (but was listed in the *Nachrichtenblatt* as a victory). This was a claim by Nathanael at 1005 hrs. for a Sopwith Pup East of 'Fresnoy,' probably Fresnoy-le-Grand. This was not confirmed, but was, in fact, a victory. As was so often the case in the heat of combat, the aircraft type was misidentified. It was actually SE5 A4866 from No.56 Squadron flown by Lt. M A Kay who was killed. The SE was a new type at the front and the misidentification understandable.

Thus *Jasta 5* closed out their scoring during 'Bloody April'. Although they had not experienced the spectacular success of *Jasta 11* with 93 kills during the month, thanks largely to Manfred von Richthofen's incredible string of victories, the 32 during the month had made *Jasta 5* the second highest scoring unit for the period. This was at the loss of two pilots and these due to accident rather than enemy action. It was a tremendous achievement and in spite of the grievous loss of their first and beloved leader, *Jasta 5* had overcome obstacles to achieve a tremendous success. The prospects for the coming months seemed to be especially bright.

May began with a loss, but not a tragic one, because the acting

leadership Gontermann had displayed clearly qualified him for genuine command. This he was given on 2 May 1917 when he was appointed *Staffelführer* of *Jasta 15*. Just as *Jasta 2* had proved itself the cradle of future *Staffel* leaders (like von Richthofen), the hard work and exceptional leadership Hans Berr had performed with *Jasta 5* ensured the high command's attention when looking for leaders of new or reorganised formations. The day following Gontermann's transfer, *Oblt.* Kleymann was lightly wounded in combat, but remained with the unit.

Jasta 5's changed fortunes in May took an even worse turn. The SSW D.I assigned to the unit had undoubtedly been flown by several pilots - we know that Kurt Schneider flew it on occasion and posed with it. On 4 May, Hans von Hünenbein decided he should take the Siemens for a test flight. Whether he had flown it before is unknown, but it seems doubtful. Although of a 'sesquiplane' layout (not entirely unlike the Albatros D.IIIs) the SSW was powered by a rotary engine like the Nieuport from which it was copied. It clearly was a more agile and manoeuvrable machine than von Hünenbein was used to, and there is some question of just how much flying he had been doing since taking command of *Jasta 5*. With Gontermann's departure, however, it seems fairly certain that von Hünenbein concluded he needed to lead by example and wanted to try this new machine. Whether because of malfunction or misjudgement, the aircraft went out of control over the aerodrome, crashed and burned. Von



33. Waldemar Christiansen's OAW-built Albatros D.III, time and place uncertain. Nearly everything is overpainted and the wings were covered with lozenge fabric. It is likely he either flew this machine at a school or possibly at *Jasta 46* after he left *Jasta 5*.

34. A mortally-wounded Kurt Schneider is carried to a stretcher from his Albatros D.V 1066/17 '2', 14 July 1917.

35. Richard Dilcher with his star-marked Albatros D.V described in the text. The Wolff propeller shows to good advantage and there were no initials under the wings at this time. Close scrutiny of this and another view with Dilcher in the cockpit discloses that the yellow star on the fuselage was produced by using no paint - it was the varnished plywood left unpainted. There was a bullet hole patch in the starboard upper wing seen within the vee of the 'vee-strut'. The machine in hanger number 1 appears to be the trefoil-marked one in the July line-up and it is in the correct hanger.

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Hünerbein was probably killed on impact, but in any case, *Jasta* 5 had lost its second commander in less than a month.

No activity is recorded for 5 May, but on the 6th *Oblt.* Kleymann and *Ltn.* Vorländer were assigned to *Jasta* 15 to follow Gontermann. *Leutnant* Kurt Schneider was appointed acting *Jastaführer* now that Gontermann was no longer available to assume that role. He responded by shooting down Nieuport 17 B1597 'C6' from No.60 Squadron (at 1900 hrs. north of Écourt-St. Quentin) piloted by 2/Lt. G D Hunter who was wounded, but survived as a PoW. Amazingly, this victory was not confirmed in spite of the downed aircraft in German lines and its pilot in captivity. In the same combat Nathanael had bested a Nieuport 23 from the same unit, B1514. The claim was north of Bourlon Wood and the pilot, 2/Lt. C W McKissock also made PoW. To balance out Schneider's failure for confirmation, *Vzfw.* Dahlmann claimed still another Nieuport Northwest of Cambrai confirmed as his second victory in spite of the lack of a corresponding British loss.

On the seventh *Ltn.* Neisen claimed FE2b A5487, at 1145 hrs. between Inchy-en-Artois and Pronville. The crew from No.18 Squadron, 2/Lt. M M Kaizer and Sgt. F Russell, became PoWs. *Vizefeldwebel* Dilcher claimed a Nieuport supposedly over Lens 15 minutes later, but it was disallowed and there is no corresponding British loss. Lens is very far from *Jasta* 5's normal patrol area. There remains the possibility that it was French, of course. Dilcher was more successful two days later when he obtained his first confirmed victory at 1500 hrs. over Sopwith 1½ Strutter A994 'B4' from No.70 Squadron. This combat took place over St. Hillaire-lès-Cambrai and both British crewmen, 2/Lt. W J Gayner and 2AM G D Breakfield, were killed. The next day, (10 May) Schneider shot down DH2 A2581 from No.24 Squadron killing pilot, Lt. H C Cutler. This action took place at 1545 hrs. over Villers-Guislain. Once again, however, a seemingly obvious victory would go unconfirmed because of the rigorous German demands for witnesses to the opponent's fall.

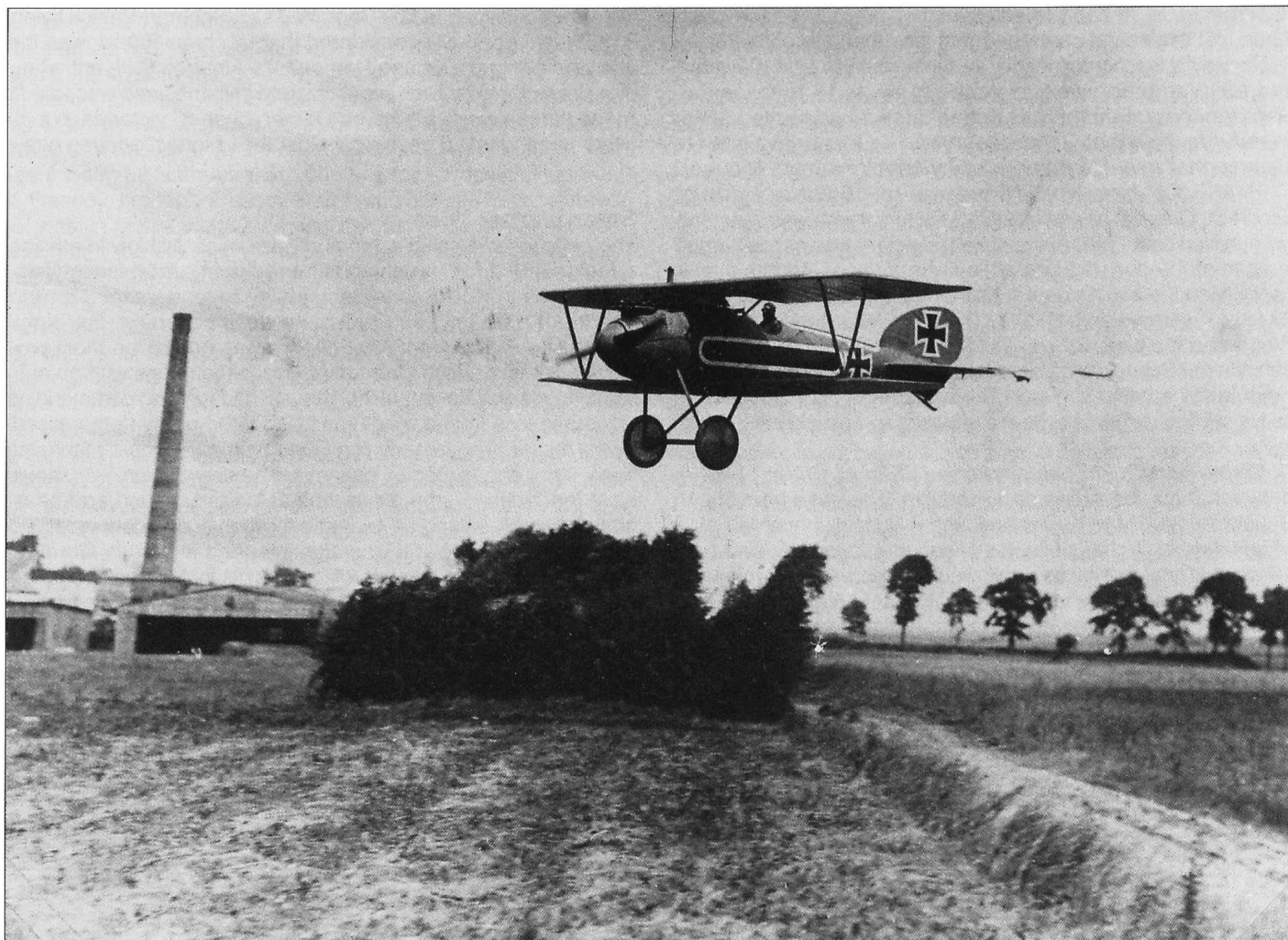
The following day tragedy struck *Jasta* 5. They tangled late in the evening (2115 hrs.) with Spad VIIIs from No.23 Squadron

over Bourlon Wood led by Capt. W J C K Cochran-Patrick flying B1580. It is generally considered that Cochran-Patrick was the one who shot up Edmund Nathanael's Albatros D.III, but whoever the victor was, Nathanael crashed in flames and was killed. At the time of his death he had either 13 or 15 victories, but in either case, *Jasta* 5 once again lost their highest-scoring ace.

Enter Werner Voss

The *Luftstreitkräfte* high command was unusually slow in naming a replacement for Hans von Hünerbein. In part this signifies confidence in Kurt Schneider's ability to lead *Jasta* 5 for the interim. It probably also reflects a desire to make the 'right' choice at a critical time. After all, this was one of the most productive fighter units at Germany's disposal and one with an outstanding record. Nevertheless, the unit had lost two commanding officers in less than a month and had to be pretty demoralised by the losses. The fatherly von Hünerbein had been a stabilising force, if not one to lead by example. The new *Jastaführer* should have leadership in the air as well as on the ground and be a proven scorer, setting an example for the young pilots to follow. At this time in the war it was also intended that *Jastaführer* be regular, rather than reserve, officers, a distinction that would be lost later under the exigencies of war. It is probable that attention was paid to the presently most successful fighter unit in the *Luftstreitkräfte*, *Jasta* 11. Manfred von Richthofen had built a tremendously effective *cadre* of pilots including his brother Lothar (16 victories at this time), Karl Allmenröder (10 victories at this time), Karl Emil Schäfer (25 victories at this time) and Kurt Wolff (29 victories at this time), it is also likely he could resist transfer of any of these highly successful pilots in the short term to competing *Jastas*. Later both Schäfer and Wolff would become *Jastaführer*, but that would not be directly on the heels of the phenomenal record established by *Jasta* 11 during 'Bloody April.' Whether he was the first choice or not, *Leutnant* Werner Voss of *Jasta* Boelcke was available for such a posting. Certainly in part it was a measure of his accomplishments at the time. He





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was a 28-victory ace holding the *Pour le Mérite*. On paper these were top-notch qualifications. There were underlying reasons for his availability, however, that were somewhat less glorious. *Jasta Boelcke* had been under the command of *Hauptmann* Franz Josef Walz since 29 November 1916. Walz was a pre-war flyer who had participated in the air war from the beginning. He had served in two-seaters in 1914, through 1915 and until July of 1916 when he was wounded in the foot. By this time he had amassed an incredible six victories in two-seaters and had been promoted to *Oberleutnant*. After his wounding he was awarded the *Hohenzollern* and after a brief return to two-seaters was made *Jastaführer* of *Jasta 19* for a few days in early November before given command of *Jasta Boelcke*. It can be argued that this gallant airman, however well he had served the Fatherland, was a two-seat pilot at heart without the dash necessary to be a fighter pilot. At least that is what Voss and some of his contemporaries thought. Voss and another pilot, *Ltn.* Rolf von Lersner, had gone over Walz's head in an effort to get him replaced. Not only were they unsuccessful, but in the highly disciplined German army such insubordination could not go unpunished. Von Lersner was banned from fighter aviation entirely and was shipped off to a *Kampfgeschwader* (literally: battle wing, equipped with multiplace aircraft such as AEG G.-types or Gotha G-types) where he was killed in combat in August 1917. Voss's punishment would not be as severe because of his victory total and 'Blue Max'; he would be transferred, as commander, to another *Jasta*, in the event, *Jasta 5*. Considering the state of *Jasta 5* at the time, it is difficult to distinguish exactly who was being punished here, Voss or his new command.

As a footnote, the insubordination was not without effect and ironically, shortly after he scored his one and only victory as a fighter pilot, Walz was transferred as *Jastaführer* of a higher-numbered *Jasta* (34) where he displayed no improvement as a fighter leader and was transferred as leader of German aviation, mostly two-seaters as it turned out, to Palestine. There he did such an outstanding job under terribly difficult conditions that

his long, honourable, and mostly effective, service earned him the coveted *Pour le Mérite*. Moreover, unlike the conspirators who tried to have him ousted, he survived the war and had a distinguished post-war career.

On 20 May 1917, *Ltn.* Werner Voss was appointed *Jastaführer* of *Jasta 5*, but only in an acting capacity according to most accounts. It is almost certain he brought with him his famous Albatros D.III from *Jasta Boelcke*. This was an early 1917 production machine with a serial probably in the 7XX/17 range that had an original central radiator, but had been fitted with a replacement upper wing and offset radiator. Although many have wondered why this machine did not have *Jasta 5* decor and indeed, have tried to make at least part of the markings conform to *Jasta 5* practice, it was in fact, a pretty representative *Jasta Boelcke* machine and received all, or nearly all, of its markings at Proville with *Jasta Boelcke* and not at Boistrancourt. As a result the entire tail unit and rear fuselage was overpainted white and set off with a narrow black band encircling the fuselage. The spinner was similarly black. The famous white-outlined red hearts and wreaths were added initially to the fuselage sides at *Jasta Boelcke* and the heart on the turtledeck (in different proportions and larger than those on the fuselage sides) added later, but still probably before joining *Jasta 5*. It appears the two white stripes on the upper wing were added around this time, but may have been added at *Jasta 5* signifying his role as leader. It also appears that the swastika was originally plain white, but had a narrow dark (black?) edge added later. That Voss brought his groundcrew with him in this and the subsequent moves is well known, and that this aircraft made the move too is supported by evidence that he flew it home to Krefeld to attend the funeral of Karl Emil Schäfer in early June.

It has been said by others that Voss was a great pilot, a tremendous air fighter, but that he was temperamentally unsuited for command. The evidence supports these assertions. It should be remembered, however, that as much as it was a young man's war, Voss was being thrust into command one month after his

36. An Albatros D.V comes into land at Boistrancourt in the early summer of 1917 with leader's streamers billowing in its propwash. The fuselage markings are obviously black and white and the pilot may have been *Ltn. Neisen*. The familiar green and red tail decor would not be applied until July 1917.

37. *Ltn. Oppenhorst* in his Albatros D.V marked with a large yellow heart outlined in the unit red. Clearly the ply-covered fuselage in this instance has been left in the original varnish and not over-painted.

38. Another, somewhat indistinct, photo of another Oppenhorst Albatros reveals large initials of the pilot emblazoned on the lower wing undersurfaces.

20th birthday. That he could fly and score was beyond question, he certainly set a great example of aggressiveness and skill in the air. Although at this distance in time it is difficult to prove, it is likely he lacked Berr's attention to his men and their safety and welfare. The fact that he was flying alone when he was killed and had done so frequently, suggests he was more comfortable as a lone hunter than at the head of a large formation. Voss can hardly be blamed for this. Some men are natural leaders, others learn the skills required, still others can't or won't. There is no evidence to indicate that Werner Voss ever made any real progress in that direction.

But there can be no question about Voss's ability as a fighter pilot. Arguably he was the best that Germany produced, or if not, certainly among the top three or four. Number of victories is only one measure of success. Arguments that 'If he had lived...' are pointless, especially so in view of the fact that personal decisions, such as flying alone, had major influences as to whether or not a pilot survived to increase his score. Von Richthofen followed sound tactics and lived long enough to raise his score to a lofty height before he also erred and it cost him his life. Voss erred relatively sooner and more clearly fatally, although the outcome was not qualitatively so very different. Probably arriving at *Jasta 5* on 21 May, by 23 May Voss was back at work adding to his



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score. At 1455 hrs. he shot down FE2b A5502 of No.18 Squadron North of Havrincourt, killing both crewmen; Lt. W F MacDonald and Lt F C Shackill. It was Voss's 29th victory. Two of No.18 Squadron's other FE2s were shot up in this engagement and two crewmen were wounded.

On 26 May Voss shot down a Sopwith Pup Southwest of Gouzeaucourt or West of Gonnellieu at 1545 hrs. His victim was 2/Lt. M B Cole from No.54 Squadron in A6168 who was wounded. *Vizfeldwebel* Dilcher made a claim for an FE2 over Villers Plouich and was credited with his second confirmed victory although there is no corresponding British loss.

On the next day, 27 May, Kurt Schneider obtained his 13th victory, FE2b A5474 from No.18 Squadron. There is a significant first about this. He is reported to have been flying an Albatros D.V, the first record that any of these fighters had reached *Jasta 5* although the evidence suggests they had been coming into the unit through the month. Whether or not this was 1066/17 is not known. His victim, was forced down at 0840 hrs. in flames at Quéant, although the crew, 2/Lt. E West-White and Sgt. J R Cumberland, survived.

28 May was a big day for *Jasta 5*. In the early afternoon the unit tangled once again with the FE2s of No.25 Squadron with the all too predictable result - The British lost three aircraft within

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a couple of minutes of 1350 hrs. The exact sequence is unknown and there is some uncertainty as to who shot down who, but Schneider is usually credited with A6378 (Capt. A de Selincourt and Lt. H Cotton both wounded and PoW), Voss with A32 (2/Lt. E H Evans PoW, died of wounds and Lcpl. C Sturrock PoW wounded) K  nnecke his second victory, first with *Jasta 5*, over A6410 (Lts. T N Southorn and V Smith) both PoW, the latter wounded). Some sources switch the victims of Voss and K  nnecke. These went down, respectively, at Montigny-en-Ostrevent, Southeast of Douai, and Beaumont. At the same time Schuhmann claimed Nieuport 23 B1624 from No.60 Squadron north of Lens. The pilot, Lt. R U Phalen had apparently come to the aid of the No.25 Squadron FE2s and paid with his life. It was the first victory for *Ltn.* Kurt Reinhold Schuhmann who had joined *Jasta 5* at an unknown date in May. If all these locations are recorded correctly, this was a 'running gun battle' that covered more than 25 km of airspace. Joining the unit on this day was a *Ltn.* Strobel, another pilot whose first name seems to have been lost with the passage of time, especially unfortunate because of his association with a well-known aircraft of the unit.

The era of Albatros autonomy

The end of May 1917 is a convenient place to reflect on the nature of the aircraft being operated by *Jasta 5* in late May and June and their markings. Under Berr, and continued under von H  nerbein, markings had been simple black and/or white numbers and letters. The only exceptions to this seem to have been Albatros D.III 2225/16 that had its vertical tail surfaces painted in blue and white diamonds in the manner of the Bavarian coat of arms (*Wappenschild*). The arrival of Werner Voss may have seen some changes in leadership both qualitatively and quantitatively, but loosening of control, along with the example set by Voss's colourfully-painted D.III, led to more flamboyant markings for *Jasta 5*. Having said that, we know that Schneider had his Albatros D.V (1066/17) painted with simple, presumably black, number '2's on the fuselage sides and turtledeck, and almost certainly under the wings in a style identical to that done during Berr's tenure. Schneider had clearly assumed the role of 'number 2' to the *Staffelf  hrer*, Werner Voss, taking that mantle after the departure of Gontermann and the loss of Nathanael (outranking Nathanael, he would have been number 2 in any

case). Other pilots might have been experimenting with more distinctive and colourful markings during the same period, but Schneider stayed with the traditions of the unit. From photographic evidence we know that K  nnecke had his Albatros D.V adorned with a chessboard or observer's badge. How early this was done is uncertain, but it was photographed before full *Jasta* markings were applied and this marking could have been significantly earlier. This machine had an Axial propeller and the similarly-marked one in the July line-up had an Eta. Under normal German practice, engine and propeller manufacturers shipped their products to the aircraft factories. In the case of Albatros fighters, there would be assembly of airframe, engine, propeller, and spinner. Different manufacturers' propellers had different cross-sections, requiring spinners to fit. (The NASM Albatros was cobbled together from parts of several machines and thus came to them with a Garuda propeller and a Propulsor spinner.) After test running and balancing the spinner and propeller, they were disassembled, the spinner was labelled with aircraft serial, propeller type and serial, and a third number that was quite likely the engine serial. The propeller was generally stamped with similar information facilitating reassembly at the acceptance parks. Thus, although replacement of an Axial by an Eta propeller in the field was certainly possible, it would not have been the simplest of undertakings. That, coupled with different lines of colour demarcation, suggests that these were two different machines. The fuselage of this earlier Albatros was overpainted green because no serial or weight table shows. The bottom of the fuselage was lighter than as would be the case of the one photographed in July. Theoretically this could have been *Silbergrau* or grey, but was almost certainly undersurface blue. It was not natural wood because it covers part of the white cross outline. In a still further puzzle about 'chessboard' machines there is a surviving photo of an Albatros D.III (OAW) that was heavily overpainted, and it bears the same marking that K  nnecke used, but the caption says it was flown by *Ltn.* Waldemar Christiansen. Christiansen did not join *Jasta 5* until 19 April 1918, and there is little likelihood this machine could still have been with the unit at that time. Perhaps this was an earlier K  nnecke machine or possibly Christiansen flew it at a training unit, but the near identity in markings is striking.

There is a series of photographs of a crashed D.V that fell victim to one of Hans Berr's devices placed to protect the hangers.

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In this case the 'Stand' certainly did its job. The remarkable thing is that the machine is overall very light in colour. There is no camouflage on the wings, no wood grain shows on the fuselage, no serial number on the fin, no weight table on the fuselage, and there are no white surrounds to any crosses. It is difficult to attribute this colouration to field modification and one may be forced to accept the suggestion of the late A E Ferko that this, and perhaps other, early Albatros D.Vs furnished to *Jasta 5* were doped aluminium overall. Thus this Albatros would have been finished almost exactly like a Pfalz D.III, except that those aircraft had black stencils with appropriate information and this machine shows absolutely nothing except the plain crosses. If it was not aluminium, it could only have been white or very pale blue. In spite of Ferko's claim, these are the only photographs from *Jasta 5* that support his theory.

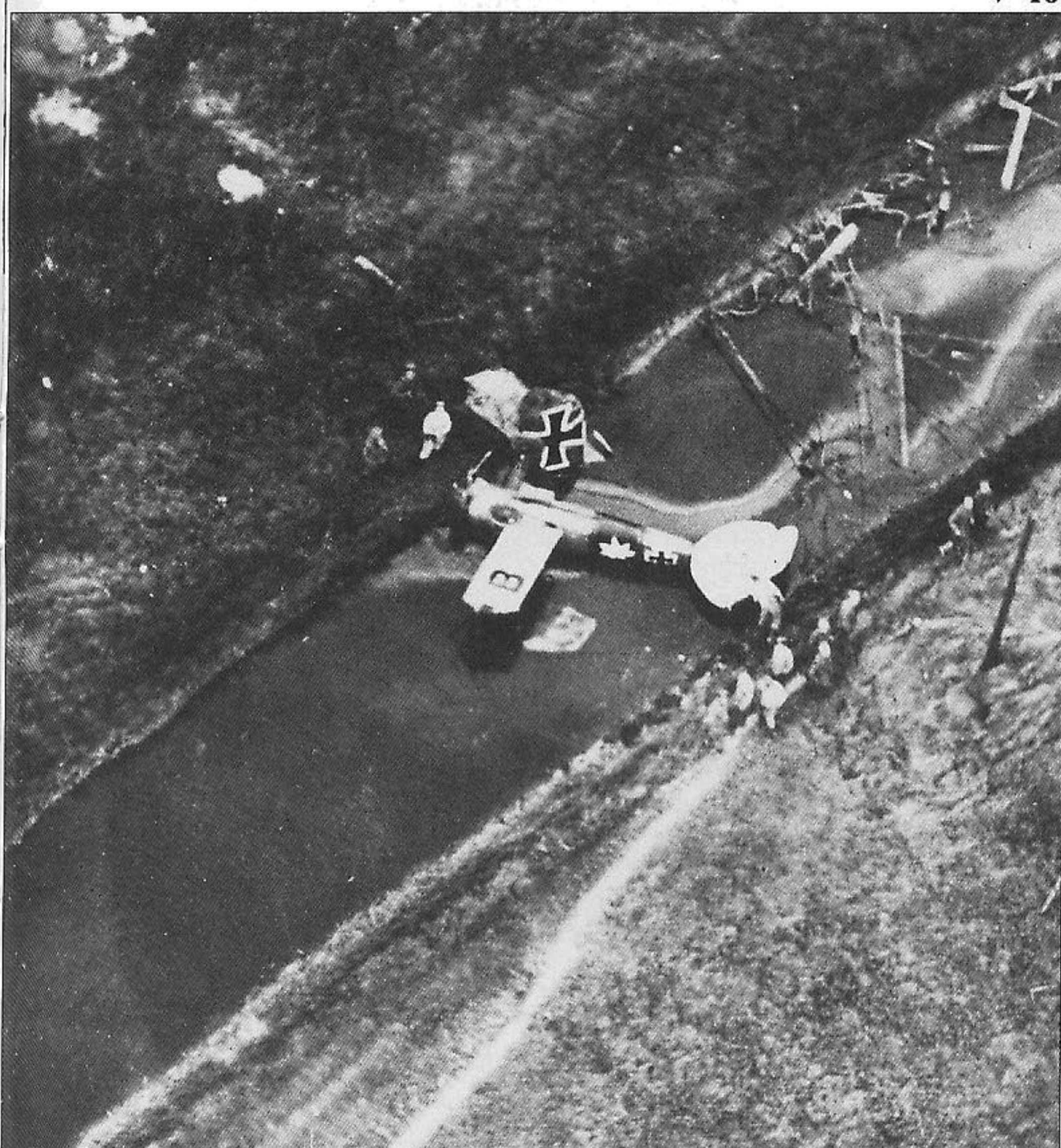
There is a photograph of another OAW-built Albatros D.III that appears to belong to this period. We also know, however, that OAW-built D.IIIs were introduced later as well, apparently well into the 'Green tail' era and long after the first D.Vs had come to the unit. One such aircraft had its turtledeck painted a solid dark colour with another darker colour daubed on the surface in splotches. The colours were probably green and mauve or green and reddish brown. This aircraft also had a 15 cm white band around the fuselage just forward of the tail unit. The pilot is unknown and it may have been a visitor.

Three aircraft that had been 'recycled', and probably passed on to new owners, were ones flown later by Mai (Berr's old machine D.III 2217/16) who had the number '1' replaced on the fuselage sides with his 'all-seeing eye', the '1' removed from the turtledeck, retaining the '1's under the wings. He also had the tailplane and rear fuselage painted undersurface blue with black stripes. At least we assume that Mai had these markings applied. It is entirely possible a more senior pilot actually had them applied and then 'passed down' the aircraft to Mai. A second was flown by Büssing (Schneider's former D.III '5' 2244/16) and a third by Dilcher ('3' possibly one of the D.Vs flown earlier by Nathanael). When Schneider moved on to a D.V his D.III passed to Büssing who had the rear fuselage from the middle of the cockpit aft to the tail painted white with a wide dark band behind the cockpit. We have interpreted this as red, but others have suggested it was black. It still bore '5' under each lower wing and would survive into the 'Green Tail' era to receive the unit markings.

39. Paul Bäumer running up his *Edelweiss*-marked Albatros D.V, as described in the text.

40. The spectacular demise of *Vzfw.* Paul Baumer's first *Edelweiss*-marked D.V flown by *Ltn.* Wilhelm Lehmann who crashed it into a canal. This unusual angle shows the somewhat reduced size of the former owner's initials on the lower wing surface.

▼ 40



Perhaps the most amazing 'decoration' this aircraft received was a large number of bullethole patches on the undersurface of the upper wing. The close spacing of a 'cluster' of them in the port upper wing indicated that they represent one very accurate burst at close range that fortunately for the pilot was a couple of metres wide of the cockpit. The densest of these clusters is in the port upper wing where we can confirm 11 (!) patches covering what were almost certainly 'exit wounds' in two inter-rib bays of the wing. Another nine can be counted in other parts of the upper wing both starboard and port as well as one in the forward fuselage. A corresponding number of 'wound' patches should have been present slightly further aft on the upper surface of the wing covering 'entry' wounds unless these were made by ground fire. Whether these were received when the aircraft was flown by Schneider or by Büssing is not known.

Vizefeldwebel Fritz Rumey didn't join *Jasta 5* until 10 June 1917, becoming the last of the 'Golden Triumvirate' of NCO pilots who would become stars over the next several months. *Offizierstellvertreter* Josef Mai had been there for some time, but had yet to score a victory of his eventual total of 30. *Vizefeldwebel* Otto Könnecke had been there for considerably less time, but scored two victories already bring his total to three on his way to a total of 35. *Vizefeldwebel* Fritz Rumey would score a total of 45 before he was killed in late 1918. Thus these three pilots would have a total of 110 enemy aircraft between them. All three would be commissioned. A fact that is seldom mentioned along with comments about the 'Golden Triumvirate' is that over 25% of their victory total was amassed after they were commissioned. Additionally all but Mai would win the *Pour le Mérite* and only the end of the war prevented him from receiving it because he clearly qualified and the paperwork for it was being processed. Apparently soon after he joined *Jasta 5* Rumey flew and crashed an interestingly-marked Albatros D.V. The late Neal O'Connor in Volume 5 of his awards series (p. 225) reproduced this photograph and captioned it as being an earlier, non-fatal crash of Hans Berr. That is not possible because, terribly smashed as the aircraft is, both halves of the upper wing show and they bore the aileron shrouds of an Albatros D.V. Berr was dead more than a month before the first D.Vs probably arrived at *Jasta 5*. Thus Ferko's identification of the pilot who crashed this machine as Rumey is reasonable, if not proved. Whoever flew it, he was terribly lucky; very little of the machine survived and the markings are somewhat speculative as a result. It had crossed propellers for an emblem in a black-edged white disc on the fuselage and tail bands. The colour of these tail bands is speculative, but do not appear to be black. Perhaps they were red or dark blue! Rumey did such an efficient job of wrecking this machine that any reconstruction of its markings is, at least, somewhat problematic.

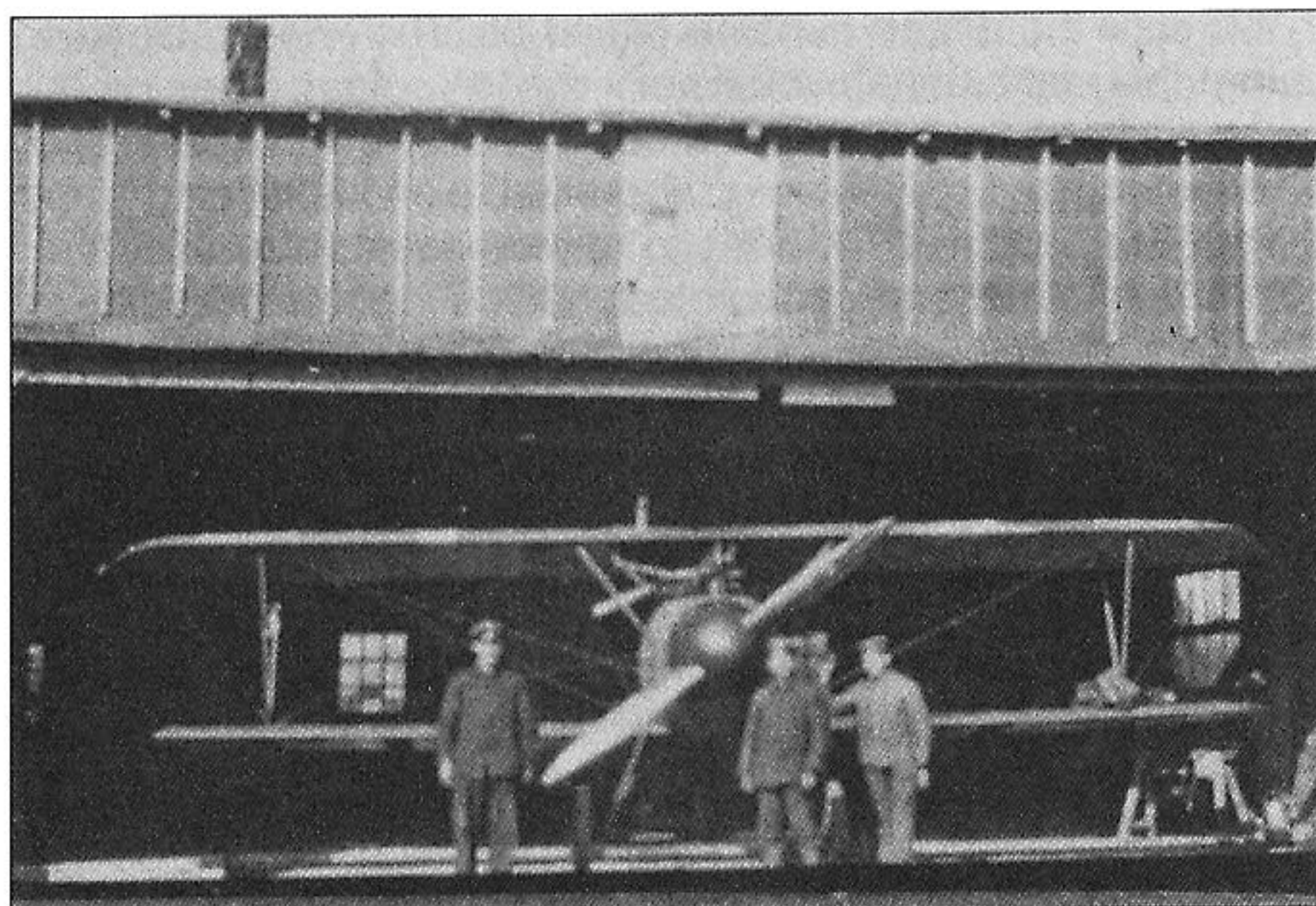
Another aircraft and pilot from this period involved the Albatros D.V flown by *Ltn.* Horst Hollinger who joined *Jasta 5* sometime in June 1917 (as will be shown shortly) and was only there for a brief time before being killed in action. The wreckage of his machine fell in British lines and its markings described as being black and light blue squares covering the rear fuselage and tailplane (in one source) and as being black and light blue diamonds about eight inches high, in another. No photograph of the wreckage is known and based on these somewhat conflicting reports there are wide range of possible interpretations of this aircraft's appearance.

Richard Dilcher was photographed with an Albatros D.V that had its fuselage overpainted and daubed, probably brown over green once again. The fuselage was decorated with a white bar with squarish ends and black edges, compromising the attempt at fuselage camouflage pretty effectively. It had an Axial propeller. Under the lower wings were squarish black '3's. By this time Nathanael was dead and his number within his *Kette* had been passed on to Dilcher.

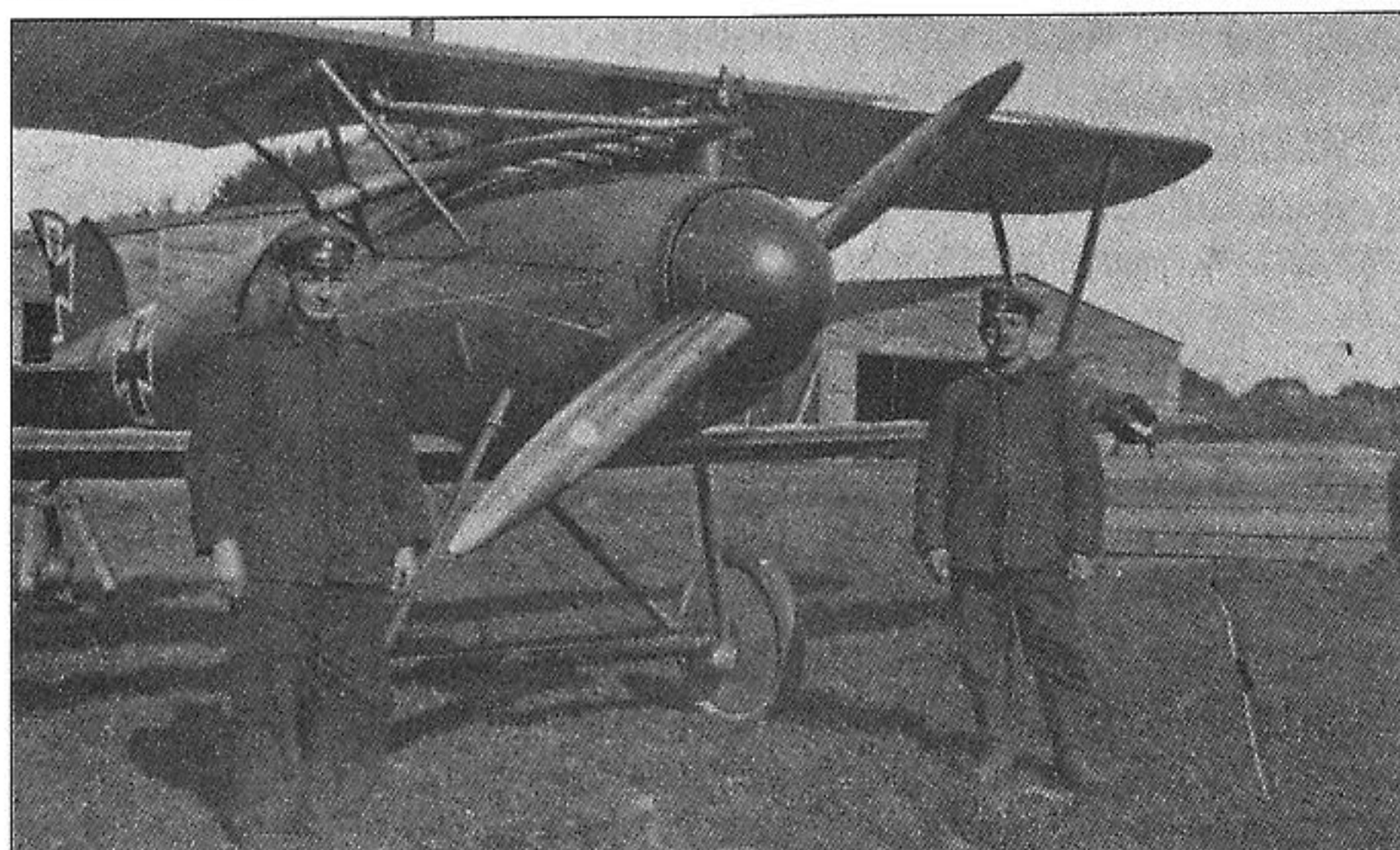
Another bar-marked machine was present during this period. To analyze this marking completely, it is necessary to develop the story of a pair of incorrectly-captioned photographs and get there through a different, later machine entirely. Cowin (*German and Austrian Aviation of World War I*, p.54) captioned a photograph of an Albatros D.Va with lozenge wings, grey fuselage, red spinner and 10 cm nose band, Eta propeller, green tail with red

edging, a black, squarish fuselage bar with white edges (essentially the reverse of Dilcher's), and black 'M's under the lower wings as follows (comments and corrections in parentheses): 'Lt. Schlomer (Schlömer) poses nonchalantly beside his Albatros D.Va (correct, *Jasta 5* did not receive D.Vas until late 1917, perhaps as late as late November) in late summer of 1917 (there are no leaves on the trees, Schlömer is wearing a heavy greatcoat, and there is snow on the ground!). Schlomer (Schlömer) had become leader of *Jasta 5*, following the death of *Oblt.* Berr (Schlömer was never leader of *Jasta 5*, even in an acting capacity) at Noyelles on 8 April 1917 (6 April 1917, Schlömer did not join *Jasta 5* until September 1917 according to one source, November according to another). Schlomer (Schlömer) himself was to be killed just over a year and a month later on 31 May 1918'. In point of fact this machine had been the mount of Rudolf Matthaei before he left the unit at Christmas 1917 when Schlömer inherited it, hence the 'M's under the wings. The photo could have been taken in very late December, but was probably taken in January or February 1918 and shows in the airfield cluster photograph taken during that general time period. Nevertheless, this does establish that Schlömer did fly an aircraft marked with a black bar.

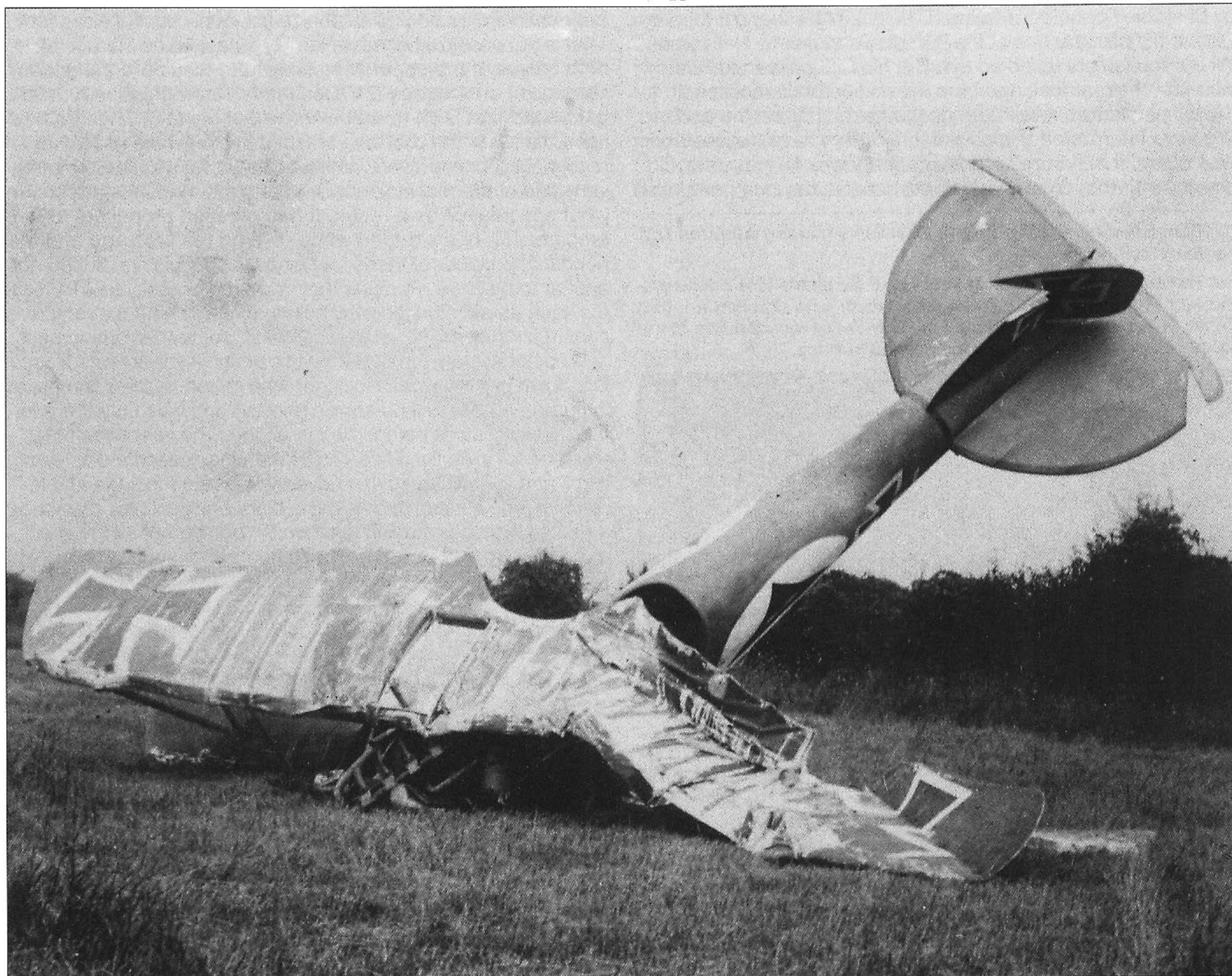
The other incorrect caption goes all the way back to the late Peter Gray in the Albatros D.V. *Profile Publication*. On page 6 he displayed an extremely cropped photograph of a D.V coming in to land at Boistrancourt. His caption says, 'Albatros D.V of Lt. Schlömer, *Jasta 5*, fuselage motif black with white border'. The machine in question is mostly ex-works except for black bars with rounded ends and white outlines on the fuselage sides and turtledeck. Gray probably, indeed almost certainly, based the pilot identification on his interviews with Hans von Hippel who stated that Schlömer flew an aircraft with such markings. He *did* fly such a machine, but it was the one discussed in the last paragraph and not this one. Seen fully (on page 38) the photo



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▼ 43



shows, not only was the pilot lightly dressed, but the trees were in full leaf when the photograph was taken. The date was early summer 1917, before the green tails were introduced and well before Schlömer joined the unit. A good print shows an illegible serial on the fin, leader's streamers, and rounded-looking black characters under the lower wings. We are convinced that this machine survived long enough to have its markings evolve into those seen in July as Aircraft Number 10 in the famous line-up, but the question that demands attention is, *who* was flying this machine in June?

Leader's streamers help to narrow things down, but we should be reminded, with considerable caution, of Berr's edict that anyone in the unit should be prepared to put on streamers and take a leader's position. Nevertheless, it is likely that the pilot was leader of a *Kette* and the only ones not accounted for at this approximate time would be Schuhmann, Neisen and Nebel. We do not know that Schuhmann ever led a *Kette*, but his rank would suggest it. Mai identified the machine in the July line-up as belonging to Neisen and the fact that this machine is the same would seem to clinch it, but we are uncertain for a couple of reasons. First, Neisen left *Jasta* 5 sometime in May 1917, barely giving him the chance to have flown a D.V. there. It's possible that Mai's identification indicated Neisen flying it when marked with bars before his departure and not who was flying it in July, whereas his interviewer associated the later markings with Neisen. Also, the markings under the wings look rounded and could easily have been the '8's seen on several other Nebel aircraft, but do not look like the 'A's that decorated Neisen's aircraft earlier. Add to this the possibility that Neisen's *Kette* might have changed their lettering/numbering scheme between April and May and the situation is confused. On balance, it was prob-

ably Neisen flying this machine during this time period.

In Nebel's album there is a photograph of an Albatros D.V with an overpainted fuselage, apparent red spinner and nose band. The tail may or may not have been in *Jasta* colours, there are a pair of white bands on the upper wing. Nebel identifies the pilot as Schneider, but based on similarity of markings and door position in hanger number 3, we strongly suspect that this was Matthaei's machine (Aircraft No. 7 in the July line-up). Undoubtedly other photographs of Albatros fighters with distinctive markings before the advent of the green tails will come to light, but this small sample does illustrate that creative minds had begun to decorate these aircraft before squadron markings were introduced.

June began badly for *Jasta* 5, *Vzfw.* Ernst Dahlmann being shot down and killed between Cambrai and Gouzeaucourt. There are few details of the loss of this promising young pilot with two victories. On the fourth of the month there was a double victory or at least it was so credited. Voss shot down a Sopwith Pup from No.54 Squadron at 0710 hrs. near Aubenscheul-aux-Bois and le Catelet. His victim was Capt. R G H. Pixley, killed in B2151. Otto Könnecke was credited with an FE2 on the same day south of Vendhuile, but this must be an error. The Royal Flying Corps only lost one FE2 and technically that was the following day at 0025 hrs. This night-flying FE was from No.100 Squadron and was lost when the pom-pom gun it was carrying blew up (presumably when firing a round at a ground target). The pilot, one 2/Lt. Chaplin survived, uninjured, what must have been a terrifying experience. This clearly was not the aircraft Könnecke was credited with, and once again there is no corresponding loss.

The fifth was another day of victories and losses, as *Jasta* 5 tangled once again with their old foes from No.22 Squadron. *Vizefeldwebel* Dilcher claimed a victory over one of their FE2s at 0837 hrs. south of a line between Crèvecœur-sur-l'Escaut and Masnières, but it was not allowed. It was probably the same victim that fell to Werner Voss and an example of double claiming. Voss shot down FE2b A857 (B1) crewed by Capt. F P Don and 2/Lt. H Harris at Vaucelles, wounding both who became PoW. The aircraft was not seriously damaged and became the subject of numerous photos. The sad news of the day was the severe thigh wound received by Kurt Schneider. According to some sources, including some highly respected ones, he recovered from this wound and returned to the unit 15 July 1917, only to be killed in combat (successfully landing 1066/17 in the process) on 21 July. Other sources say that he died of his wound of 5 June

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41 and 42. Two views of Rudolf Matthaei's Albatros D.V in front of hanger 3.

43. Walter Reichenbach's non-fatal crash of Albatros D.III 2217/16 on 25 July 1917.

44. *Jasta* 5 maintained an 'advanced' (at least a 'supplementary') landing field near St. Quentin during the summer of 1917 and here is a cluster of people and aircraft taken there about the same time as the line-up shots at Boistrancourt. Flashar is evident in the foreground, but others are hard to identify. Aircraft, from left to right were: Rumey's 'demon', Sturm's *Phönix*, ex-Neisen's 'bars', Flashar's dragon, Könnecke's 'chessboard', and Mai/Reichenbach's 'all-seeing' eye.





▲ 45

without ever leaving hospital, the result of a massive, uncontrollable infection, the all-too frequent 'blood poisoning' so common in the days before sulpha or antibiotics. Support for this latter position is accorded by a photograph of his grave marker. Its three lines read:

'Geb. 4.10.88
Verw. 5.6.17
Gest. 14.7.17'

That it says *Gestorben* rather than *Gefallen*, strongly suggests death from earlier wounds rather than death in combat. Moreover, unless these dates are wrong he could not have fallen on 21 July. Additional suggestion is given by the lack of unit markings on 1066/17 in the well-known photograph of him being removed from the cockpit. They probably would have been there by 21 July. Whatever the correct details, *Jasta 5* lost one of its founding members, the next to last of them still with the unit, and one of their very best pilots with 15 victories. His victors were Capt. C M Clement and 2/Lt. L G Davies in FE2b A5461 demonstrating once again that these aircraft could be formidable opponents if properly crewed. On this day *Vzfw.* Heinrich Büssing was promoted to *Leutnant der Reserve*.

On the following day, 6 June, *Jasta 5* came up against some tougher opponents. First they tangled with Nieuport 17s from No.6 (Naval) Squadron at 1300 hrs. West of Graincourt-lès-Havrincourt. Werner Voss shot down N3204 that broke up in the air killing Fl.Lt. F P Reeves. Voss was grazed by a bullet in this action. Five and ten minutes later claims were made by two *Jasta 5* pilots over Sopwith Pups above Inchy-en-Artois and Moeuvres. These were from No.54 Squadron and Albatros fighters from *Jasta 12* were also involved in the fight. Strobel was given credit for one at 1315 hrs. but *Ltn.* Schuhmann's claim for one at 1320 hrs. was not allowed. It is true that No.54 Squadron lost two Pups in this action, but most sources given credit to pilots from *Jasta 12* for both. Clearly someone thought enough of

Strobel's claim that he received credit for it and, indeed, he really may have shot down one of them.

Exit Werner Voss, enter Richard Flashar

On 10 June, *Ltn.* Werner Voss was posted away as acting commander of *Jasta 29* for a few days as another part of his trail of penance, then to *Jasta 14* in the same capacity. He might have been shuffled from one temporary job to another had not Manfred von Richthofen interceded on his behalf and expressed a willingness to take him on board in the newly-formed *Jagdgeschwader I*. There are two plausible reasons why von Richthofen might have done this other than pity, a commodity in relatively short supply in the *Luftstreitkräfte*. First as *Geschwaderkommandeur*, he would be in a position to 'keep an eye' on Voss to make sure he did not further misbehave and, team player or not, did nothing to hurt the unit. Second, there was no denying Voss's talent and von Richthofen knew that he could be a highly productive member if properly handled. There is no evidence that von Richthofen ever regretted his decision. Some have suggested that the move to *JG I* permitted von Richthofen to discourage his nearest scoring rival. Nothing known about von Richthofen would suggest such a motive. Indeed, he clearly knew his role as a commander well. With the *Pour le Mérite* in hand, it was unlikely he would win any higher award for bravery (he would be nominated for Oak Leaves to his *Pour le Mérite* in 1918, but they were denied on the justification that he had not 'won a battle', 'defended a fortress', or similar as a commander). He might, however, receive additional tributes based on the performance of his unit and we have to think that

45. Paul Bäumer visits his old NCO mates at Boistrancourt, Autumn 1917. Left to right: Cremer, Rumey, Bäumer, Mai, Könnecke, and Dilcher. In the background is the Albatros D.Va that Bäumer flew over from *Jasta B* in their colours with five-colour lozenge on top of the wings, blue paint below and a camouflaged fuselage top similar to several seen in *Jasta 5*..

its performance was of greater importance to him than his personal victory total. With enough victories from men like Werner Voss, the Oak Leaves to the *Pour le Mérite* might actually have been awarded to von Richthofen had he lived long enough.

In keeping with his transfer out of *Jasta 5*, Voss' service record needed to be updated and this remarkable document survives. One of the neater things about it is the unit stamp; a circle inside a circle with 'Königl. Preuss. Jagdstaffel 5' and a star between the circles and a somewhat crudely-rendered crowned eagle, armed with a sword inside the inner circle. It appears these were standard items of issue and most *Jagdstaffeln* had them. No mention is made that Voss's position in *Jasta 5* was in an acting, or in command capacity whatsoever, merely that he was ordered there on 20 May 1917. It further says that he received confirmation for a victory on 24 May, but as we have seen that is incorrect and the victory was 23 May. It goes on to say that *Kogenluft* acknowledges a further five victories whose confirmations are still pending. Given that the fifth victory cited was not scored until 6 June and he left on 10 June there can only be a narrow window during which this document could have been modified. Even more telling perhaps, from the position of both time and reasoning is the almost certainty that the commanding officer of a unit could not 'sign off' on his own service record and must have another officer perform that function. The signature is 'Büssing, Leutnant.' Heinrich Büssing was not commissioned until 6 June, also confirming the time frame. It is interesting to speculate why Voss chose Büssing to sign his document. It may have been a matter of circumstance, of course, Büssing was at the right place at the right time. There may, however, have been a minor note of defiance of the 'system' in having the most junior officer in the unit sign his papers.

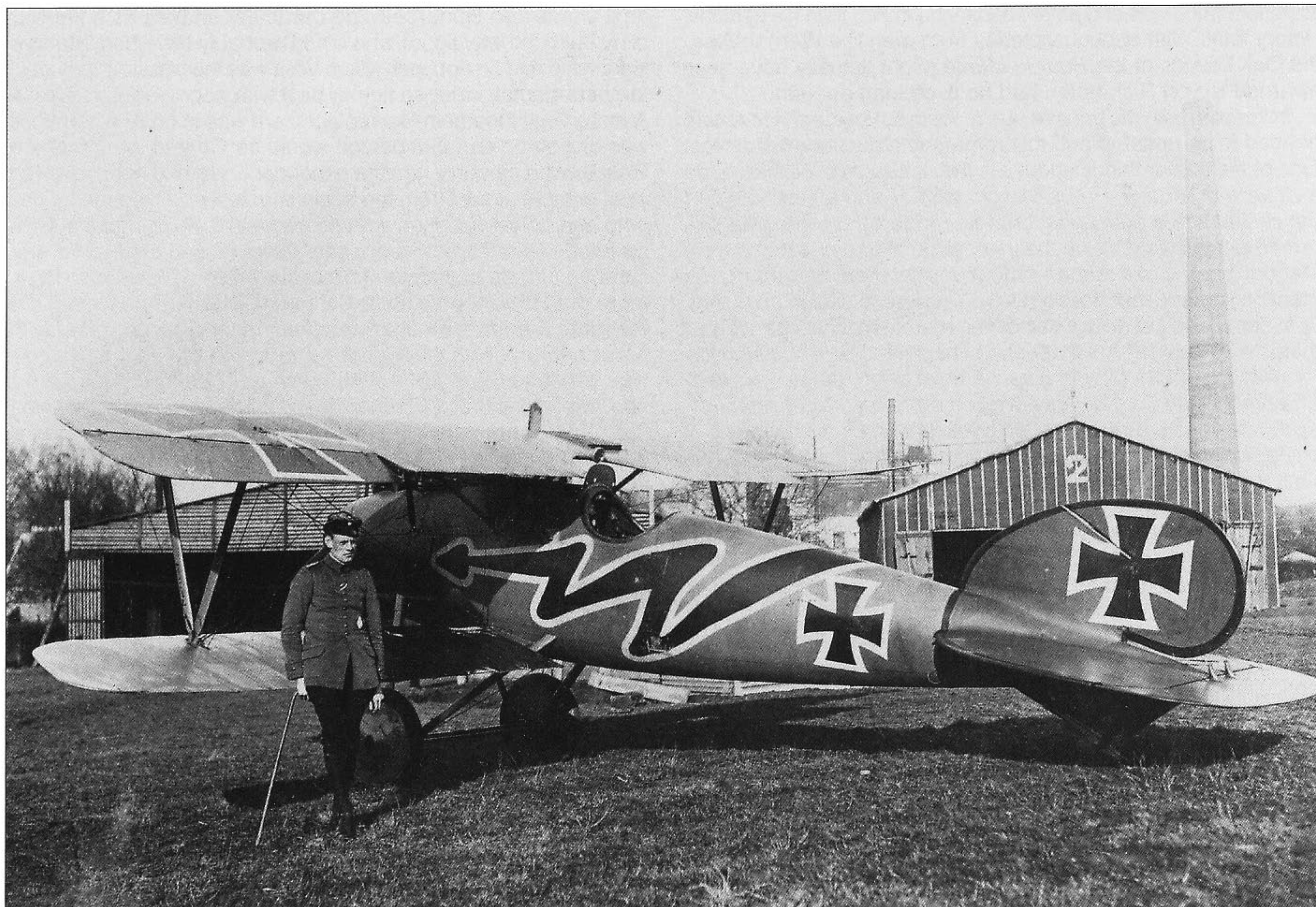
Replacement of Voss at *Jasta 5* had clearly been in the works since he arrived if not before. After the brilliant and efficient Hans Berr who was also a top scorer with the *Pour le Mérite*, they

next chose von Hünenbein, no particular shakes as a fighter pilot, but a fatherly figure who could probably have had effective leadership had he not been killed. Voss was the classic impetuous, temperamental, virtuoso fighter pilot with poor leadership skills. A more von Hünenbein-like replacement was in order when Voss was moved on and that person would be *Oberleutnant* Richard Flashar who certainly had the experience. He had been involved in air combat almost from the beginning. Indeed, although he had only one aerial victory, it was scored in 1914! To make it even sweeter, Flashar's victory appears to have been the first for any German airman or aircrew. This occurred on 5 November 1914, more than five months ahead of the next confirmed victory. On that date *Leutnant* Flashar was flying a long-range patrol with his observer, one *Oberleutnant* Demuth. At this time Flashar was serving in *FFA 33*. As the crew returned from their patrol, nearing their airfield, Flashar heard a cracking noise that was repeated twice. Fearing a structural or mechanical problems with his machine, Flashar examined the engine instruments and forward part of the aircraft, but found nothing out of the ordinary. Looking back to check the rudder he discovered a French parasol, almost certainly a Morane-Saulnier, on their tail and the observer firing on them with a rifle. Flashar swerved the aircraft to avoid the fire and this alerted Demuth to danger. The French aircraft closed in, but by now Demuth had, 'grabbed his rapid fire rifle and let off a string of shots'. Flashar used the term '*Schnelladegewehr*', literally 'fast-loading rifle', or probably better 'autoloading', what we less correctly usually refer to as '*semi-automatic*'. When Flashar looked again the French machine was gone. Upon landing they found that it had crashed about three kilometres

46. Jupp Cremer posing with his Albatros D.III (OAW) in *Jasta 5* colours, autumn 1917. Wheel discs are very dark for green and may have been red. The beautiful Heine airscrew sets off this elegant machine.

▼ 46





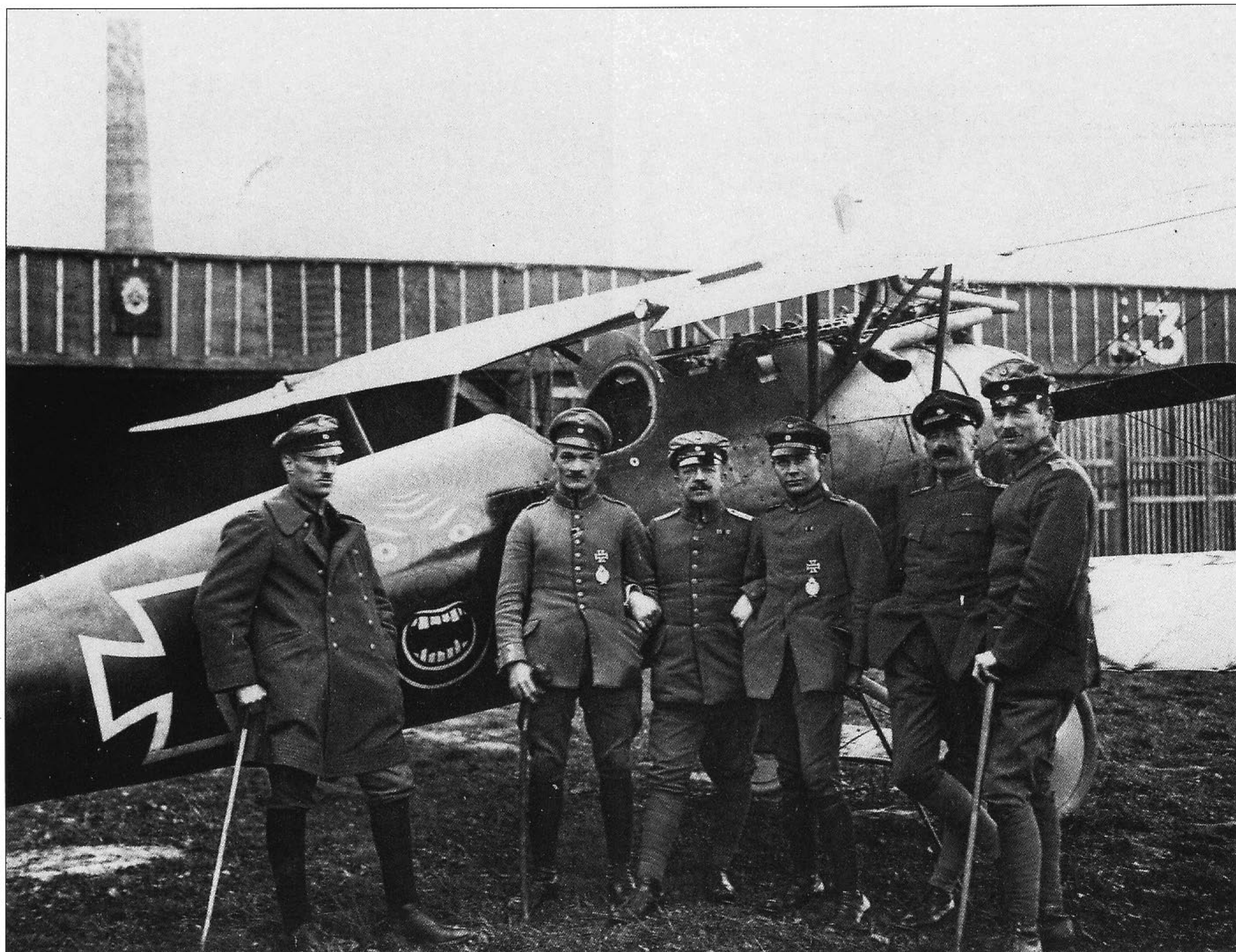
▲ 47

47, 48, 49, 50, 51, 52 and 53. Hans von Hippel with his first *Blitz*, Albatros D.Va 5639/17, most of the serial being visible on the port interplane strut. Noteworthy are the painted wings, except for the five-colour lozenge on the bottom of the upper wing (excluding the painted ailerons) - unusually with blue, or possibly clear-doped,

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rib tapes. The significance of the white crosses that were displayed above and below the starboard wing near the tip is unknown. Most of the many photographs of this machine were probably taken in December 1917 and/or January 1918, shortly after von Hippel joined *Jasta 5* and received this first aircraft. It had an Eta propeller.





▲ 54

from their airfield well behind German lines. The victory was confirmed in the 1st Army daily report two days later.

There are two follow-ups. First, it is commonly assumed that aircraft armament at this stage of the war was an *ad hoc* affair: a motley assortment of military and hunting rifles, shotguns and pistols. As a matter of fact the Germans had addressed the question of aircraft armament before the war started under the assumption, quite correct as it turned out, that there would be combat between aircraft in flight. Because of their speed, it was obvious that automatic weapons would be preferred to maximise the number of rounds fired at an enemy during the brief opportunities to engage. At that time, however, the weight of the available machine guns and the rather feeble power of the aircraft made carrying such armament impractical. Failing to put automatic weapons on aircraft, the next best solution was to put semiautomatic weapons on them. At the beginning of the war Germany purchased Mexican-designed, Swiss-manufactured, Mondragon rifles to issue to aircrew. Soon after, no fewer than three designs from Mauser were added. With the appropriate manufacturer's name, each of these was officially designated, 'Flieger-Selbstladegewehr', or 'aircraft auto-loading rifle'. It is highly likely that Demuth used one of these, probably a Mondragon that, with its 30-round magazine, would genuinely have permitted him to fire a 'string of shots'. Ironically, German front-line troops would not be routinely issued semiautomatic rifles during that war or the next. The other aside to the Flashar-Demuth victory was that its novelty did not lead to instant rewards as would be the case later. It well preceded awarding of the 'Ehrenbecher', the 'honour goblet', awarded to airmen on the occasion of their first victories. But their success was not forgotten, for at Christmas 1916 Richard Flashar received a gold watch, inscribed 'Dem Oberleutnant Flashar, Flugzeugführer des ersten, am 5 November 1914, siegreichen deutschen Flugzeuges. Die Inspektion der Fliegertruppe' - 'To senior Lieutenant Flashar, pilot of the first

victorious German aircraft on 5 November 1914. The Inspectorate of Aviation'.

Flashar took command of *Jasta 5* on 10 June 1917 and that same day another transfer occurred that would have long-term significance, Vzfw. Fritz Rumey was assigned there from *Jastaschule I*. Flashar's assumption of command came at a good time for the unit. The question naturally follows, 'What sort of man was Richard Flashar?' Many years later Josef Mai would say of him (my translation), 'Oblt. Flashar was a typical Prussian regular officer with whom we non-commissioned officers (Könnecke, Rumey, Dilcher, and I) did not have a good relation-

54. Vizefeldwebel Fritz Rumey shows off his demon-marked machine to a pair of visitors at Boistrancourt, late summer or autumn 1917 while Bey, Dilcher and Mai look on... Although the colours of the chequers are technically unknown, the lighter colour is as seen on many aircraft in the July 1917 line-up and these machines are known to have been grey. The darker colour is fairly certain to have been the other colour widely used for fuselages in *Jasta 5*, their almost ubiquitous green. Indeed, with his mischievous sense of humour, one can imagine the unit artist asking him, 'Herr Vizefeldwebel, would you like the background colour of your fuselage to be grey or green?' To which Rumey would have answered, 'Both'. In July the chequers were confined to the area behind the cockpit as shown in the cover painting. By the time the photograph was taken, they had been extended forward to cover all of the wooden parts of the fuselage. The monogram 'R' under the wings is probable, but not confirmed photographically. Rumey's 'demon' identity plaque hangs over the door of the hangar in the background.

55. Christmas 1917 and a formal portrait of the 'other ranks' Christmas party complete with tree, keg and the commanding officer doing the honours of drawing beers for his men. The label on the front of the keg says 'Fröhliche Weihnachten! 1917.'

ship'. 'Typical', 'regular' and 'Prussian' were clearly not intended as complimentary terms. How much credence to give Mai's comment is another matter. First Mai's views were coloured by 60 years of increasing democratisation in Germany during which the Prussian 'Officer Class' had featured prominently in the loss of two world wars. The old standards were no longer in effect and were now examined with 20-20 hindsight. It is likely that Flashar was enough of the 'old school' to have a distance separating officer - and enlisted-pilots. This may have been a wider gap than Mai was accustomed to, but there is a fair amount of evidence to indicate Flashar was not the martinet Mai may have later thought him. It's clear that Flashar had a high respect for his men and paid attention to their welfare. The festivities for which *Jasta 5* was already well known went on unabated. In photographs taken during these parties there seems to be no greater separation between officer- and enlisted pilots than was normal in other units; pilots tend to associate most with others of similar rank and that is evident here as elsewhere. Finally there is a wonderful photo of Flashar drawing beers for members of his command at the 'other ranks' Christmas party, 1917. Flashar doesn't look especially relaxed and as always a bit formal (ditto for the men), but it is also obvious that he considered such actions a part of his duty and there is a possibility that he purchased the keg himself. The final impression that one gathers of Flashar's character is that he was an officer dedicated to the accomplishment of his mission and the welfare of his men. That he was somewhat stiff in his manner does not detract from the fact that he created an environment in which his non-commissioned pilots could prosper, that he introduced morale-building factors such as colourful unit and individual markings, and that his excellent organisational abilities would take an already stellar unit to increasingly loftier heights.

Ironically, whether the change in command was a factor or not, *Jasta 5* would score no more in June. The change probably was a factor because Flashar only occasionally led his men in the air and those who had done so routinely such as Kurt Schneider were dead or transferred. A need existed for new air leaders and they would evolve, but that would take time. Also arriving at *Jasta 5* during June were *Uffz.* Walter Reichenbach (from *Schusta 16*) and *Leutnant* Wolf (not as frequently spelled

'Wolff') whose first name is sadly lost, and Horst Hellinger from *Jasta 15*.

On the last day of June came another stellar pilot to the unit. *Uffz.* Paul Bäumer had a long flying career behind him already, being a pre-war pilot who was forced to enlist in the infantry. At that time Germany, like most of the belligerents, thought it would be a brief war with a limited need for pilots and other aircrew. After being wounded Bäumer transferred to aviation, but only as a dental assistant, the profession he followed prior to a hostilities. He undertook pilot training and his skills, already largely formed when he enlisted, were of such an order that he was made an instructor. In March 1917 he went to *FFA 7* and was promoted *Unteroffizier*. After undergoing fighter pilot training he was posted to *Jasta Boelcke* on 28 June 1918. A mere two days later he was transferred to *Jasta 5*. Why? We may never know, but two theories have been advanced. It's possible that he was just too 'green' as a fighter pilot for such a first rate unit. *Jasta 5* was nearly as elite and that explanation seems a little weak. It has also been suggested that, on his first patrol with *Jasta Boelcke*, Bäumer claimed a victim also claimed by one of the officer pilots. When he wouldn't withdraw, Bäumer was shipped off to another unit to learn some 'manners'. Bäumer's personality was such that this story could be true, but whatever the reason for his 'exile' it is obvious that it was intended to be a temporary posting at *Jasta 5* all along, although it's doubtful Bäumer knew that. 15 August 1917, would see his return to *Jasta B* and the great start he gained at *Jasta 5* would continue through to the end of the war with him a *Leutnant* with the *Pour le Mérite* and one of Germany's highest scoring aces with 43 victories.

It is difficult to discuss Paul Bäumer and his career, especially in terms of his time at *Jasta 5*, without discussing his best friend, *Leutnant* Hans von Hippel. Bäumer and von Hippel met in a *Flugpark* at Famars and flew together many times with Bäumer as the pilot and von Hippel as observer, forming an almost perfect *Flieger Ehe*, or 'flier's marriage'. They had many interesting, and a few dangerous, adventures together as von Hippel was qualifying for his observer's badge. In January 1917 von Hippel was posted away as a qualified observer and Bäumer was posted away to *FFA 7* a couple of months after. Later Bäumer would attend *Jastaschule* and do the rapid *Jasta Boelcke* to *Jasta 5*

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shuffle already mentioned. After he had returned to *Jasta Boelcke* von Hippel went to flight school, *Jastaschule* and was posted to *Jasta 5* himself. Thus the two were to meet again on New Year's Eve 1917 when Bäumer came to Boistrancourt. At the party that night the nobleman officer von Hippel and the commoner enlisted man Bäumer pledged '*Brüderschaft*', apparently with the old Teutonic formality of nicking their arms with the point of a knife and mingling their blood. Although at a New Year's Eve party such as this, one can imagine fluids other than blood may have been involved in the ritual, there is no doubt about the closeness and depth of their bond. They had been, and would continue to be, in close communication for the remainder of the war and beyond.

July 1917 started as a quest for balloon kills and that led to the first casualty for *Jasta 5* for the month when, on 2 July, *Ltn.* Horst Hellinger was shot down and killed behind British lines as he was attacking a balloon near Hendicourt-lès-Cagnicourt, the victim of *Flak*. The black and blue markings of this aircraft have already been discussed and the absence of any evidence of green unit markings suggests that Flashar had probably not yet implemented them.

It would be Fritz Rumey who would get the unit's first July claim, a balloon on the sixth near Ytres for his first victory. On 10 July, *Ltn.* Rudolf Matthaei would enter the unit, coming from *Jasta 21*, becoming one of the new air leaders. Mai recorded that on his first combat flight with *Jasta 5* Paul Bäumer showed a particular interest in captive balloons. Afterward Mai took him aside and explained both the dangers and possibilities of balloon attacks. Bäumer, being Bäumer, went ahead and enjoyed victories over balloons on back-to-back days, 2200 hrs. on 12 July at Nurlu and on 13 July at 1658 hrs. over Marteville. His victory on 12 July was also the unit's 100th. Two days later he achieved his third victory, another balloon, this one at 1840 hrs. over Trefcon.

Two 'fatal' crashes that weren't

The next diary entry, at least the next one after mentioning Kurt Schneider's death (in hospital), says that *Uffz.* Walter Reichenbach was seriously injured in a crash after air combat on 25 July at Busigny and died the same night. We always wondered about that citation, especially after seeing a photograph of his aircraft. He made a *Kopfstand* of it, but the machine was not badly damaged. If he was thrown from the cockpit as we suspect, he certainly could have sustained serious, and even possibly fatal, injuries, but even that outcome was far from certain. Now it is known that Reichenbach recovered and joined *Jasta Boelcke* where he was killed in combat on 8 October 1917. Just how such erroneous citations of fatalities come about may vary, but one way that we have seen is the comment commonly added to the albums of former aircrew in the form of a cross under, beside or on a photograph. Its meaning is actually 'he is dead now', or 'he was killed in the war', and not necessarily 'killed in this crash'. That may have been the source of confusion here. What is noteworthy is that this machine came to him from Mai, who had it from someone else, and that it had originally been Hans Berr's machine. It is seen in the famous line-up and was marked with the unit's green tail, so we can date the photograph prior to 25 July, and the implementation of the green tails as probably between 2 and 25 July.

The other crash erroneously identified as fatal was that of *Ltn.* Reinhold Schuhmann against the *Stand* at Boistrancourt in the machine that may have been aluminium-doped. That has been considered a fatal crash and, although serious, looks potentially survivable. The death date for him says 20 August, and we wondered why there was no green tail showing in the photograph. Then we found that his place of death was listed as Escarpelle-Douai, not Boistancourt where the crash clearly occurred. Finally we found a photograph in the Ferko collection that is labelled as his fatal crash on the date given, and it occurred in what appeared to be a swampy area and about all that remains is the green tail. This was clearly a fatal smash and, if correctly identified, shows that at the time listed Schuhmann was flying an Albatros bearing the classic unit markings. Too little remains of the aircraft to tell if it bore any individual markings.



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56. Paul Bäumer visiting Boistrancourt, New Year 1918. Behind Bäumer is a Fokker D.V belonging to *Jasta B* for rotary engine familiarisation as they began the transition from stationary-engined Albatros fighters to Fokker triplanes. At this late date it still bears a Garuda propeller with the early style logo. Behind that is von Hippel's back-up (?) Albatros D.V with white band and black 'H's under the wings. His 5639/17 had suffered damage during a '*Kopfstand*' the day before and he flew 2068/17 on 1 January, almost certainly this machine.

57. Hans Schlömer with his, formerly Matthaei's, Albatros D.Va described more fully in text. Another photo of this machine with von Hippel posing beside it shows that it had an Eta propeller.

One fine day at Boistrancourt - The green-tailed era begins

Sometime in July 1917 Flashar had the Albatros fighters of *Jasta 5* painted in unit markings. The reason for doing it may never be known, but we suspect that somewhere in his military background he had served in a unit whose marking included green patches, tabs, or loops with red piping. We do know that he served previously with the 164th Regiment, that did not have such markings. In any case these are the colours he chose for *Jasta 5*: tail units, generally both horizontal and vertical, top and bottom, as well as the rear of the fuselage aft of the forward edge of the fin would be painted green with a narrow, ca. 25 mm, red edging to the fin/rudder and horizontal tailplane, this continuing as a band encircling the rear fuselage. There were minor variations, but it was remarkably consistent. The spinners were painted red and it was common practice to have a 10 cm red band encircling the nose panels immediately behind. In some cases wheels and struts were painted red or green, but that was a more or less individual matter and not consistent enough to be considered a unit marking. It was also common, but not universal, practice to paint chevrons, usually white, on the upper wings of the aircraft of leaders and aces. In many, though not all, cases the pilot's initial was painted under the lower wings of his aircraft. On the blue-painted wings these initials were black, later when lozenge fabric was introduced they were painted white. *Jasta 5* had a history of painting numbers and letters under wings, so the switch to initials was a minor transition.

In addition to these markings it is obvious that Flashar encouraged the application of individual markings. These ranged from obscure (or possibly non-existent whether the aircraft was awaiting their application or not) to the incredibly elaborate and detailed. As already stated, the unit was blessed with a talented artist in their midst. Mai later described this unknown person as '*ein sehr talentierter Künstler*' and he was clearly correct. Apparently he went around to each pilot and asked him what he would like to have painted on his aircraft. Additionally, many of the fuselages were coloured, although some were left largely in their ex-works varnished plywood. The favoured hue for fuselage painting was light grey, but others were green and a few more



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complex than that.

Some personal colours clearly pre-dated unit markings as already discussed likely for Otto Könnecke's machine. Nevertheless, in the absence of photographic evidence it is difficult to estimate how much pre-dated and how much was concurrent with the application of individual markings. It seems remarkable that all of this painting could have been done in about three weeks or less, but that may have been close to the truth with the exception of some personal markings already applied. Whatever, the aircraft in their unit and individual markings, were carefully lined up in front of the hangars at Boistrancourt for the official photographer to take pictures of them in their finery. Whether the photography session was cause or effect in relation to the paint jobs is difficult to tell. The session may have been scheduled for some time so Flashar could take the impending visit as an excuse to decorate his aircraft. Alternately, upon completion, Flashar might have used this as the impetus to call up headquarters and propose a visit to record how his unit had developed morale-boosting unit and personal markings. Either way, the photographer came to call on a sunny day in July 1917. Four photographs survive, although there could have been others, and are reproduced on pages 34 and 35. In no particular order these were: a photograph taken from the tower and looking at the starboard front perspectives of the aircraft beginning in front of hanger number 1. All 16 aircraft are visible, although some are quite distant. The second photo was taken from the roof of hanger number 1. It shows the starboard rear perspectives of the aircraft and misses some aircraft in front of hanger number 1. The third is taken from ground level more or less in front of hanger number 5 and shows the port front perspectives on the aircraft. It shows only the nose of the last aircraft in the line-up in front of hanger number 5. It also shows the unit cow. The fourth photograph was taken from some elevation that was probably the roof of hanger number 5, although it seems a trifle low for that. Thus it shows the port rear perspective of the aircraft and includes just the tail of the last aircraft in the line-up. As a result that last machine is only seen more or less completely and with its individual marking unobstructed in the most distant photograph from the tower. That is a pity because the aircraft was around for a very long time, possibly the longest serving *Jasta 5* Albatros.

No series of photographs of WWI German fighters has developed as much interest as this group. Because of that and because a good deal of information is available now that wasn't previously, it is appropriate to describe each of the machines in the line-up. To do this, it is worthwhile to describe how the machines of *Jasta 5* were normally hangered. No two hangers at Boistrancourt were exactly alike, but 1 and 2 and 4 and 5 were generally similar. Each of these would accommodate three aircraft that would have to be staggered to make them fit. Photos show some headed in and others backed in so there seems to have been no consistent rule. Hanger number 3 was the odd one out in that it had four separate doors, each of which led to a space to store a single aircraft. This may sound unimportant, but it is not. Individual stalls for their mounts in hanger number 3 were assigned to the individual pilots in the *Staffel* and the pilots kept these stalls as they went from aircraft to aircraft. There may have been exceptions to that rule, but it seems to have held pretty well and Josef Mai kept his at least from sometime in the summer of 1917 into January or February 1918, and likely did until March. Indeed, he may have had it his entire time with the unit. The stalls were labelled as we shall see, so that ground crew could replace the aircraft in their correct places after a flight. Exact order was not maintained when the machines were so carefully aligned for the photos. One can only guess why that would be true, but it's possible that finishing touches to paint jobs may have kept some machines hangered a little longer. It is certain that aligning the aircraft in this manner was a huge undertaking. A long rope had to have been stretched along the flight line, making sure it was parallel to the general line of the hangers. Then each aircraft was rolled forward until some part, most likely the wheels, touched or lined up with the rope. This had to be done keeping the wing tips of each newly-aligned machine the same distance from the previously-aligned one that it had from its predecessor in turn. After all this the rope (or more likely ropes) had to be removed. It is no wonder that some machines were slightly out of hanger order in this involved process. For purposes of description the 16 aircraft will simply be numbered 1 through 16 and proceed in the same direction as the numbering of hangers, so that aircraft 1 through 3 would be expected to have been hangered in hanger number 1, etc.

Aircraft No. 1, Albatros D.V, serial unknown, pilot Vzfw. Paul Bäumer. (Plate 1)

This is the first of two similarly-marked D.V machines that flew with *Jasta 5*. Each carried an *Edelweiß* on both sides of the fuselage and the machines differed slightly. This machine is the more famous. Recently an electronic publication stated 'new research' disclosed that the rear fuselage of Bäumer's aircraft was painted black and not red as generally shown. This is incorrect, the fuselage was definitely red. There are three lines of evidence that, together, remove all doubt. First is the photographic evidence. The colour of the rear fuselage blends imperceptibly into the red of the edging on the fin and is distinctly lighter than the shade of the fuselage cross. The other two are eye-witness and contemporary accounts. Hans von Hippel was Bäumer's best friend and told the British researcher Peter Gray that it was red. He repeated this to some American researchers as well. Although it's true that von Hippel and Bäumer served in *Jasta 5* at different times, it is difficult to imagine that they didn't communicate about their machines and activities on a fairly regular basis. In the 1960s the German researcher Bruno Schmähling prepared a manuscript entitled '*Colors of the Iron Eagle*' (ie, Bäumer) that was intended for publication in *Cross and Cockade*, the now defunct US journal. It was never published, but copies appeared in several places. In spite of appearances, only the title is in English and the rest is in German, the difficulty, or at least the bother, of getting it translated probably explains why it was not published. It portrays Bäumer's aircraft in *Jasta 5* and five he flew later in *Jasta Boelcke*. We know of more today, but Schmähling's interpretations remain basically accurate. Among his sources for this manuscript Schmähling interviewed Josef Mai who had seen this machine every day of its existence and he clearly told Schmähling the fuselage was red. Indeed, he said (my translation) 'Our squadron painter (a very talented artist) went to him and asked him what personal emblem he wished to have on his aircraft and Bäumer decided in favour of an *Edelweiß* on a red background.' Thus Schmähling wrote (also my translation): 'Personal Marking: A white *Edelweiß* on both sides of the fuselage. Fuselage from the middle of the cockpit to the tail red. Spinner red, wheels green (*sic!*). On the underside of both lower wings a black 'B' next to the Iron Cross'. Perhaps those advocating a black fuselage were confused by a D.V Bäumer flew later in *Jasta Boelcke*, 4409/17, that carried a more stylised *Edelweiß* on a black fuselage band. Actually the red ended just behind the cockpit and the wheels were ex-works. These are points probably confused with a similar aircraft flown later by Lehmann.

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The spinner and 10 cm band were red.

A more difficult colour question involves the dark area under the *Edelweiß*. We formerly thought that it might have been an overpainted fuselage band, but the shape does not agree. It could be still another colour, possibly even black, but the 'fit' of the *Edelweiß* to this dark area is not good and the interpretation that something there had been overpainted is far more likely. Because it is distinctly darker than the red on the fuselage adjacent to it, one is tempted to speculate that a dark, probably circular or oval, area was overpainted and then the *Edelweiß* was added in part to further cover it. That is certainly a possibility, something like red painted over black. There is another possibility that suggests itself and leads to a theory. Rather than a dark circle, it's possible that it was actually a *light* circle and, because of poor covering properties of the red paint, a second coat was applied. This could have led to a final darker appearance. At the time there was only one device in the unit that featured a *light* or white circle as a part and that was Mai's, now Reichenbach's, 'all-seeing eye'. It is possible that this machine had been decorated in a similar fashion to the D.III or at least a beginning had been made in that direction when Mai changed his mind and his marking. We know that his first-assigned D.V was 2082/17 and that he flew it as his regular mount from 20 July until 29 November 1917. That could not have been this machine and the timing, if this theory is correct, demands he never flew it. Thus the machine would have been passed down the line, figuratively and literally, to one of the newer pilots and its placement next to the D.III that Mai had given up may be more than coincidence. It's likely newcomers to the unit found their mounts at one or the other end of the flight line. It had what appears to have been a Heine propeller.

Aircraft No. 2, Albatros D.III 2217/16, pilot: Vzfw. Walter Reichenbach. (Plate 2)

It is this machine that dates the photographs as having been taken before 25 July 1917 because Reichenbach crashed that day and it was written off. It was an old machine having at one time been Hans Berr's mount explaining the '1' under each lower wing. It probably had other owners before Josef Mai received it, according to his flight log he flew it from 6 June until 20 July 1917. If that is correct, then the photographs in question were probably taken between 20 and 25 July 1917. During the time Mai flew it, it had the blue and black tail markings and the 'all-seeing eye' - maybe he initiated these markings or a previous



owner did. We think he did as also explained for the last aircraft. The 'all-seeing eye' marking also hung above door number three of hanger number 3, showing the normal location for Mai's machine(s). That this aircraft had been moved to hanger number 1 is an indication that he was no longer in 'possession' of it. *Jasta* 5 markings covered the tail and spinner and apparently the nose band. The fuselage was varnished plywood and probably reflects a philosophy that the older D.IIs would not receive quite as elaborate treatment as the newer D.Vs. The '1' that had decorated each side of the fuselage was covered by the circle, triangle and eye, and that that had been on the turtle-deck was probably simply scraped away. The propeller may have been a Garuda.

Aircraft No. 3, Albatros D.V serial unknown, pilot: unknown (at this time). (Plate 3)

First on the matter of pilots, it has been claimed that this marking was at least originated by *Vzfw./Offstv.* Hans Löwensen. This is based on the fact that he flew an almost identically-marked Albatros later in *Jasta* 37 supported by Mai's recollection. The problem with that interpretation is that Löwensen came into *Jasta* 5 sometime during March 1917, claimed a victory on 23 April (unconfirmed), and was transferred to *Jasta* 37 sometime in May. Thus it was just barely possible that he was at *Jasta* 5 after the first D.Vs arrived. If, indeed, he had the trefoil marking applied it would be another example of a personal marking pre-dating the introduction of green tails, but being retained after they were added. Of course it is also possible he had the marking on a D.III before he left and this aircraft was taken over by another pilot who liked it and had it applied to a later D.V. Von Hippel said that this aircraft was flown by an *Uffz.* Vogt. He did not join *Jasta* 5 until December 1917, but some of these machines had long service lives such as this one and that may well have been the case. Whoever flew the machine at these other times, we have no idea who flew the aircraft in July. The fuselage was grey with *Jasta* tail, red spinner and 10 cm nose band. The marking was a white shield with green and white pierced trefoil, all parts edged in red, probably a city coat of arms. It had an Axial propeller.

Aircraft No. 4, Albatros D.V, serial unknown, pilot: unknown. (Plate 4)

This machine bore another regional coat of arms, the rearing stallion of *Braunschweig*: *Rot, ein steigendes silbernes Roß*. The heraldic silver was nearly always rendered as white, and there was no doubt it was here. The fuselage was grey with *Jasta* tail, red spinner and 10 cm nose band, the red shield with a white rearing stallion, detailed in a slightly darker colour, probably grey. The propeller appears to have been an Eta.

Aircraft No. 5, Albatros D.V 2065/17, pilot: Oblt. Richard Flashar. (Plate 5)

There is a supreme irony connected with this machine. It is probably the most famous D.V of them all and certainly the most frequently illustrated. The irony is that it has never been correctly, or at least completely, illustrated until now. The dragon had a tail, and what a tail it was! No wimpy little pointed tail, nor one ending in an arrowhead, nor a simple bifid one, this dragon's tail was an elaborate, bifurcating, arborescent tail with little barbs on the ends that covered most of the fin and even parts of the

rudder. This extravagant caudal termination causes Flashar's dragon to change character completely; it becomes less the fire-breathing monster of St. Georgian myth and becomes far more *Puffesque* in demeanour. The machine had an Eta propeller, red spinner and ten-centimetre nose ring, grey fuselage, normal *Jasta* tail, and the red dragon, spitting yellow fire; teeth, claws and eye white, the latter with a black pupil. The body of the dragon and its fire were outlined in black, but its tail on the fin was almost certainly unoutlined so that the tail would also be a continuation of the red edging on the fin and stabiliser. Flashar's initials were in black under the lower wings inboard of the crosses. At some point it apparently had a white chevron painted on the top of the upper wing to indicate ownership by the *Jastaführer*. It survived until 18 February 1918 when it was a quite aged aircraft and became *Ltn.* von Hippel's back-up machine.

Aircraft No. 6, Albatros D.V, serial unknown, pilot: Vzfw. Fritz Rumey. (Front cover)

This is another machine whose markings have become clearer with access to high-quality photographic prints. At the time of the line-up, this machine had its fuselage behind the cockpit painted in chequers. As illustrated on the cover we have interpreted these to have been grey and green, the two most common colours used for fuselages in the unit. The tops of the wings were also painted in this manner. At a later date the fuselage markings were extended forward to cover the entire fuselage. The propeller appears to be another Eta - they were very common on this production run of Albatros D.Vs - and the spinner and nose ring were red. The demon's head (or African mask) was prominent on both sides of the fuselage behind the cockpit. Although no photograph shows it, with a paint scheme this elaborate it would be a great surprise if there wasn't a black capital 'R' painted under each lower wing inboard of the crosses. Moreover, a copy of the fuselage marking appears over door number one of hanger number three, indicating its normal 'home'.

Aircraft No. 7, Albatros D.V, serial unknown, Ltn. Rudolf Matthaei. (Plate 6)

This machine has the *Jasta* markings and what appears to be a green fuselage without any distinctive personal device. *Ltn.* Rudolf Matthaei is known to have flown a D.V that had no personal device on the fuselage, but white fore-aft bands on the upper wing, 'M's under the lower wings and a Garuda propeller. The wing markings were appropriate because he was already an 'ace' when he joined *Jasta* 5. At least he had four confirmed victories and some others that were unconfirmed and that seems to have been enough for the *Staffel* to consider him one. It is therefore almost certain that this is his machine so decorated. Another possibility should be mentioned, however, and that is that this machine might be in the transition of being decorated for its pilot, but is not yet complete. Based on door position and line-up, this machine should have belonged in door number two, hanger number 3 and there is no apparent device hanging over that door - or perhaps there is a solid green placard there? On balance, however, the evidence overwhelmingly supports this having been Matthaei's mount.

Aircraft No. 8, Albatros D.V, serial unknown, pilot: Offst. Sturm. (Plate 7)

Although Mai identified this marking as a 'Prussian Eagle', we remain confident in our earlier interpretation that it actually was a phoenix. Indeed, in the later and better photos the flames are clearly visible. Logically, this should be a black phoenix and yellow flames, but we cannot rule out red. This machine was probably normally housed in hanger number two. The monograms under the wings are not confirmed photographically.

Aircraft No. 9, Albatros D.V, serial unknown, pilot Ltn. Wolf. (Plate 8)

This is another tribute to the information that can be gleaned from high-quality photographic prints. Peter Gray showed the fuselage device as a lion rampant on a shield, possibly the former white and the latter green. We can now state that this interpretation was based upon examination of a good photograph of the port

58. A remarkable cluster of *Jasta* 5 Albatros fighters seen in January or February 1918. The machine nearest the tower is largely masked by trees, then from left to right is Lehmann's *Edelweiss* (wheels look ex-works at this time), Flashar's dragon, and then a machine with *Jasta* tail, grey fuselage, red spinner and 10 cm nose band, but no individual marking, another machine, but with more red (or red and green?) on the nose, then the *Phoenix* machine per the July line-up, then facing the hangers Könnecke's chessboard, another similar to the fourth machine, a machine that looks ex-works except for a white-black-white chevron on the rear fuselage, a D.III (?) with a dark bar (?) on the rear fuselage (Schlömer?), a trefoil-marked machine per the July line-up, a *Blitz* machine (probably von Hippel's second); the pair in front of hanger No. 5 are a D.III (No. 16 in the July line-up) and a D.V/Va with *Jasta* tail only visible. Facing the camera in the far distance are four aircraft (one cropped), three Albatros fighters and a Pfalz D.III/IIIa.



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side of the fuselage in the line-up. A much better print discloses that this was actually the 1835 Bavarian coat of arms with one lion supporter, rampant, *régardant* as normal, placed aft of the escutcheon. When Mai was interviewed by Schmaling, he stated that the lion (possibly already interpreted by Gray) was wrong and that the figure was that of the pilot's namesake, a wolf. Actually, *both* were correct. On the starboard side of the fuselage the supporter of the coat was indeed a wolf. These devices were displayed on a grey fuselage band, the remainder of the wooden part of the fuselage was covered with blue and white diamonds of the *kleinen bayerischen Wappenschild*. The spinner and 10 cm nose band were red and the machine had the normal *Jasta* tail painting. We do not know if there were 'W's painted under the wings, but guess there were. A placard with this marking (lion supporter) hung over door number four of hanger number 3.

Aircraft No. 10, Albatros D.V, serial unknown, pilot: Ltn. Neisen? (Plate 9)

Josef Mai identified the pilot of this machine as Ltn. Neisen, but he left *Jasta* 5 in May. As we have already stated, whoever the pilot was he was likely to have come from *Sachsen* with this display of crossed mining hammers (*schräggekreuzten Berghämmern*) because there are several towns in this mineral-rich area, such as Glashütte and Falkenstein, whose coats of arms consist of these hammers alone. There are several others that incorporate such hammers as a part of the coat and admittedly, there are some towns and villages other than in Saxony, such as Schwarzenbach am Wald in Bavaria that use hammers as well. Odds favour a Saxon origin nevertheless. The shield was white, the hammers probably black, at least they were a single, dark colour to all appearances with some lighter highlights. Those on the port side of the fuselage were simpler and possibly incomplete. The shield was outlined with an intermediate colour, we suggest yellow. The black bar had rounded ends and included a small one on the rear turtledeck over the fuselage cross. The fuselage rear was largely white from just forward of the cross to the red aft ring and this was extended forward on the turtledeck to provide a white outline to the black bar that appears to have been reduced in length from its pre Green-tail configuration. It is unclear if the forward fuselage and that aft to surround the shield was painted grey, but we think it was. There is a revolving white band around the fuselage beginning just aft of the cockpit that continued forward as an outline to the black bar on the side of the fuselage. Originally we thought that there were additional bars parallel to the ones shown and that error was supported

by the engrafted nature of the revolving white band, giving it a repeated shape similar to the area forming a surround to the bar. Closer inspection reveals no black bars fitting within these curved portions. Perhaps there was an intention of painting them, but they had not been done when the aircraft was photographed. The differing nature of the hammers on the port and starboard sides suggests aircraft painting in transition. In addition there was the unit tail and spinner and 10 cm nose ring. This is almost certainly the same aircraft seen coming in to land in the photo on page 38, and elsewhere where it has erroneously been attributed to Schlömer. It would therefore have served 'pre-Green Tails' and been fairly extensively worked over, the length of the bar on the turtledeck being considerably reduced. There were some sort of monogram or number under the wings, but the 'N' is mostly *guesswork* based on supposed pilot assignment. This machine was probably housed in hanger number four.

(Not shown) No. 11, Albatros D.V 2093/17, pilot: unknown.

This machine was entirely ex-works when the photos were taken and it is entertaining to speculate what marking it assumed later.

Aircraft No. 12, Albatros D.III 2225/16, pilot: Ltn. Strobel. (Plate 10)

Another famous machine and one frequently and incompletely rendered in terms of markings. It was supposed to initially have been aircraft number '6', but there is no photographic evidence that it was ever so marked. Its number was then changed to '0' and there are photographs that show it with zeros on the fuselage sides and turtledeck, zeros under both lower wings and an ex-works tail with legible serial. At this time it was flown by Uffz. Weiss. After this Strobel, another ardent Bavarian nationalist, took it over in April 1917 and had the vertical tail surfaces painted in blue and white Bavarian diamonds. Probably this inspired Wolf to a similar, but fuller treatment of his D.V later. Strobel flew it for a time with just the tail marking and the zeros elsewhere, but when markings proliferated under Flashar he had the zeros scraped off the fuselage and the blue and white diagonal bands added, parts of the zeros still being visible. There is no reasonable doubt that the zeros under the wings were retained. The blue and white chevron on top of the upper wing seems anomalous because Strobel was not an ace (no victories at all as far as we can tell). Perhaps he was senior enough to lead a *Kette* and this might explain it. The rear fuselage and horizontal tailplane were in unit markings as was the spinner. It had an Axial propeller.

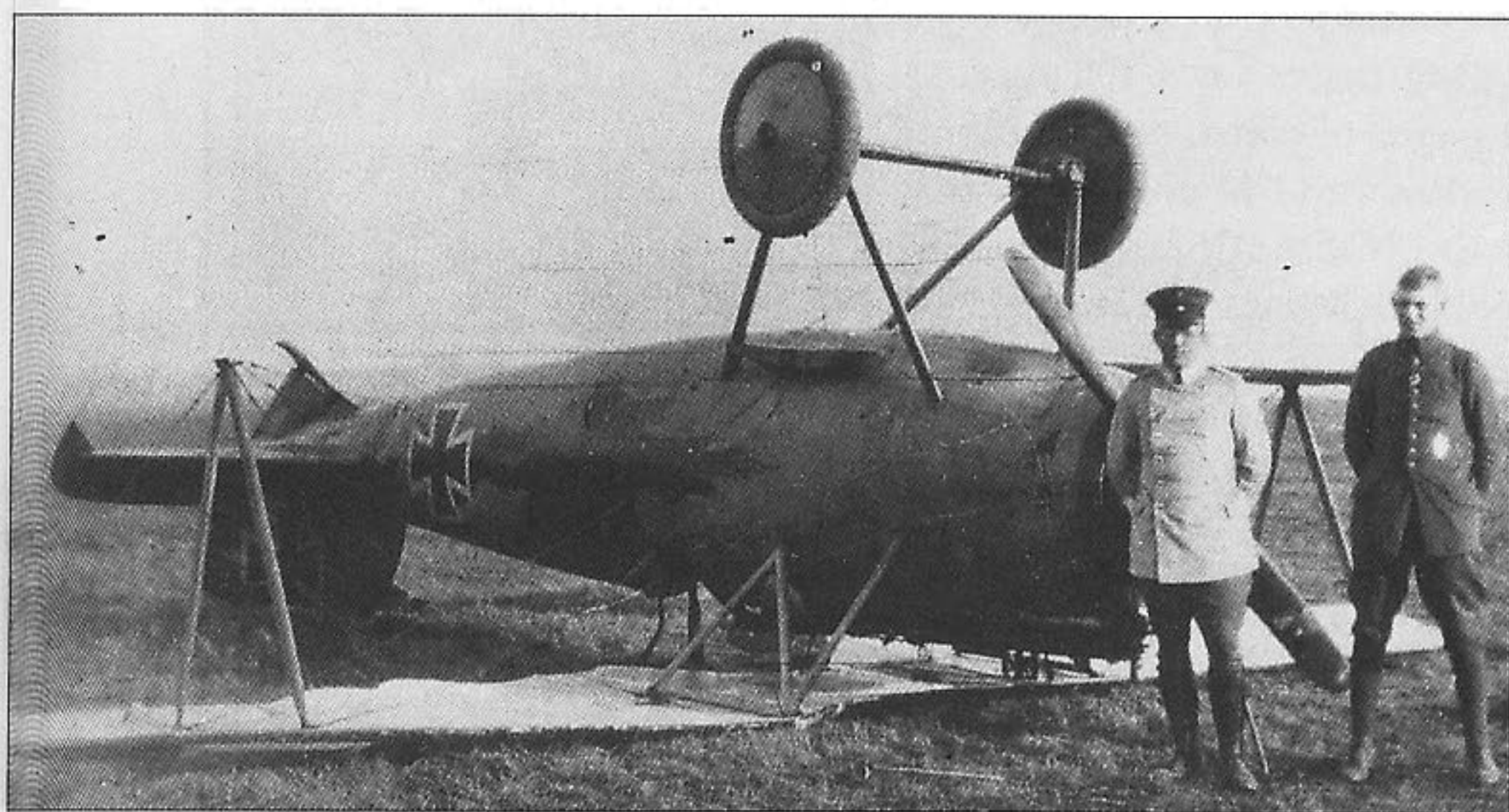
Aircraft No. 13, Albatros D.V, pilot: Vzfw. Otto Könnecke. (Plate 11).

This is a well-known aircraft with a fairly simple marking. The chessboard motif was a common one and sometimes used to signify former status as an observer, but in other cases it was merely the *Schachbrett* as here. The unit markings were added, the fuselage was painted green and we suspect the upper-surfaces of both wings were too. The bottom of the fuselage was a light colour. It is commonly depicted as varnished plywood, but it was, in fact *painted*, because it partially covers the outline of the fuselage cross. Although the grey in use as a unit colour is possible, regular undersurface blue is more likely. When posed with his mechanics and a similar machine, the line of demarcation was vertically positioned at the leading edge of the stabiliser. That in the line-up photos had differed as shown. A dark chevron, probably red, but possibly black, was added to the upper wing. Könnecke had claimed five victories, the fifth on 4 June 1917, although he was officially only credited with four at this time. The chevron suggests he and the unit were crediting him with that 5th victory. It appears that this, or an identically-marked machine, survived into early 1918. This machine had an Eta propeller.

Aircraft No. 14, Albatros D.V, serial unknown, pilot: Vzfw. Richard Dilcher. (Plate 12).

Dilcher served with *Jasta 5* from April 1917 until April 1918 and flew several aircraft. This one was confirmed as his by Josef Mai and is one we thought we knew very well, but photos from Dilcher's album held a surprise. Supposedly it had the unit tail and nose to include the 10 cm red nose band, a grey fuselage with a green band bearing a yellow eight-pointed star. We now know how they got that yellow star; it was the varnished plywood

59, 60 and 61. The dragon machine of Oblt. Flashar with Hans von Hippel and his sister Erna, detail of the dragon, both taken at Boistrancourt during the winter of 1917-18, and the ensuing crash on 18 February 1918 after von Hippel lost his port lower wing in combat.



▲ 60 ▼ 61



of the ex-works fuselage! No yellow paint there. One would guess that there were 'D's under the lower wings at some point and it had a Wolff propeller.

Aircraft No. 15, Albatros D.III 2244/16, pilot: Ltn. Heinrich Büssing. (Plate 13).

As stated previously, this was an old machine, having been given up as number '5' by Schneider when he got his D.V. Büssing is seen posing with it and his mechanics. We have already commented on the tremendous number of bullet holes in the upper wing. It had unit markings when photographed in Büssing's possession, to include the 10 cm nose band. It retained the black '5's under the lower wings and was painted white from the middle of the cockpit aft. Behind the cockpit was a broad dark band that we have interpreted as red, although others have it black. The machine had an Axial propeller.

Aircraft No. 16, Albatros D.III, serial unknown, pilot: unknown. (Plate 14).

This machine only shows completely in two photographs taken from the tower and hence great distance. That is unfortunate because this machine probably had the longest service life of any aircraft that served with *Jasta 5*. Its serial was undoubtedly in the 22XX/16 range, may have been delivered as early as March 1917 and initially carried a letter or number. It shows up as an already old machine in the tower photo taken in late July 1917. It shows again in one taken from there in January or early February 1918 when it had been with the unit almost a year. Its markings carried from July onward consisted of sloping and revolving white bands with dark edges in an unusual pattern. We have interpreted these as having been black and that does seem most likely. Unit markings included the 10 cm nose band and the propeller was an Eta.

The only pilots known to have been serving with *Jasta 5* at this time who are generally unaccounted for are Schuhmann and Nebel. Because we can identify 12 or 13 of the pilots of aircraft in the line-up, it seems likely that there were either more pilots than known (probable) or that *Jasta 5* had more aircraft than pilots or both. The burning question in all of this is, where was Josef Mai's machine? We can identify all the others hangered in hanger number 3, but none for him. We know he was flying 2082/17 at this time and the serial could well have been over-painted (almost certainly sooner or later), but he did not identify a marking for himself at this time. From his flight log it is obvious he was not on leave, his new machine was assigned and he was flying it. We suspect that his machine was not available for display and 2093/17 was pushed into the place it would logically have occupied. Reasons for such unavailability could have been mechanical, but it is also true that he had acquired it so recently that the decoration of it might not have completed, so this partially painted machine was 'hidden' and the ex-works 2093 substituted.

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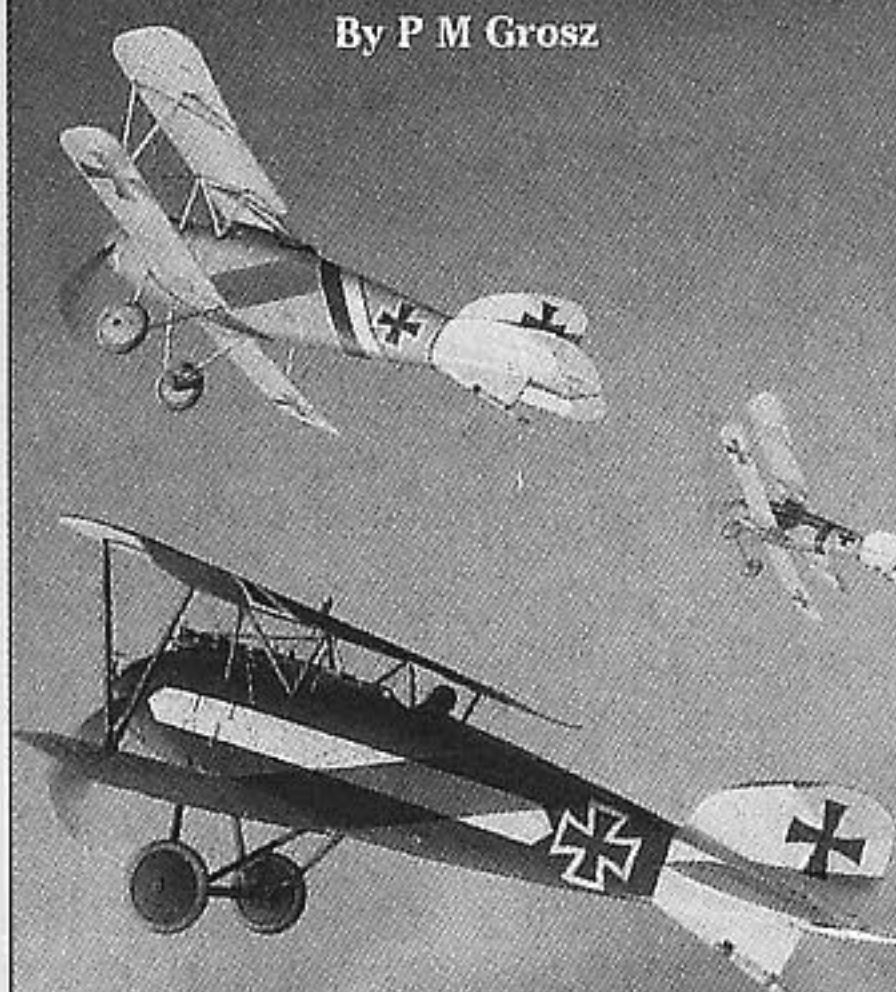
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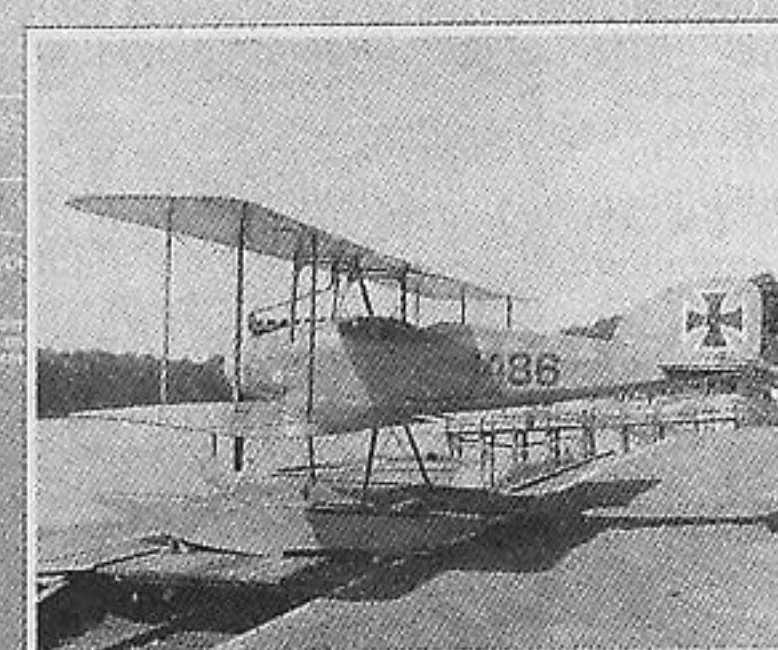


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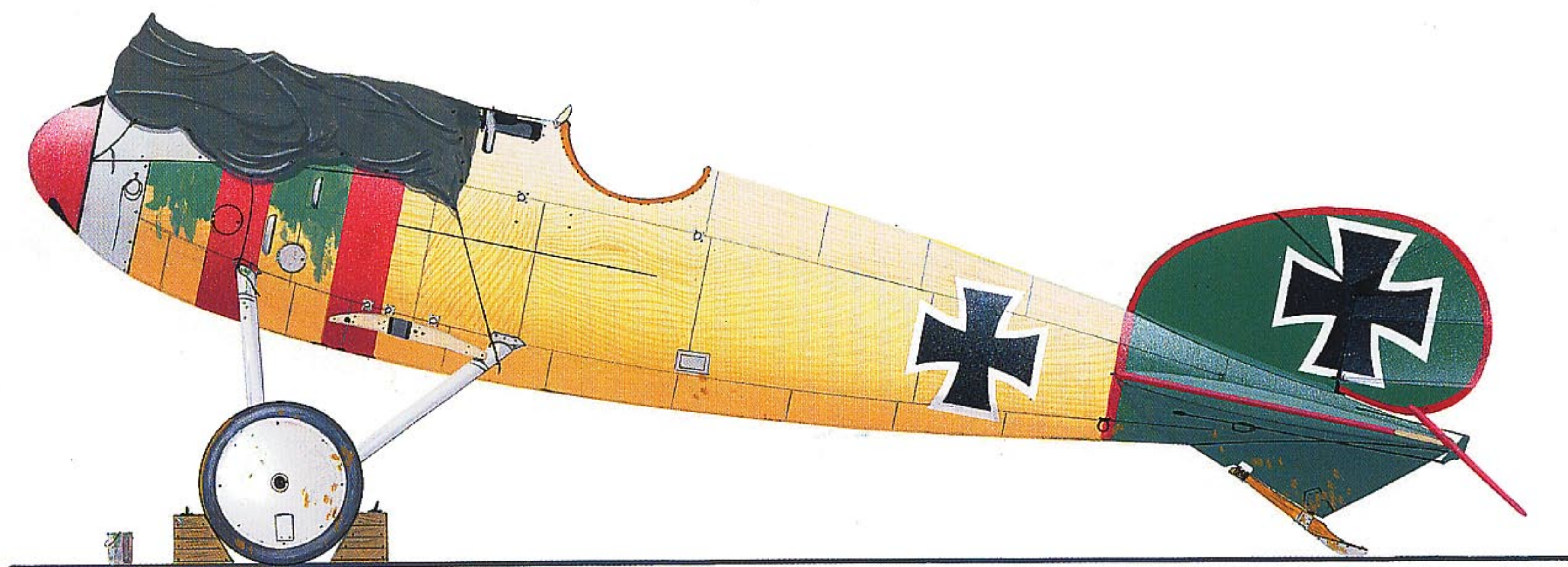
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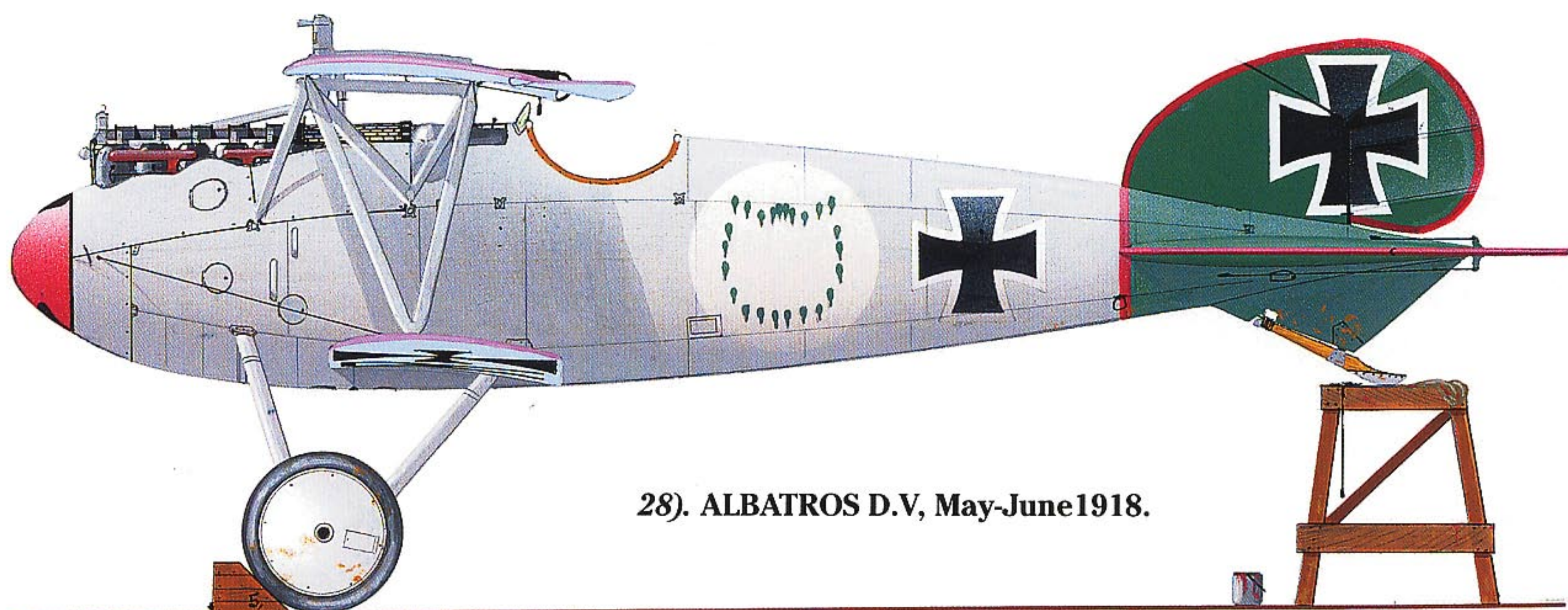
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27). ALBATROS D.Va, Spring 1918.

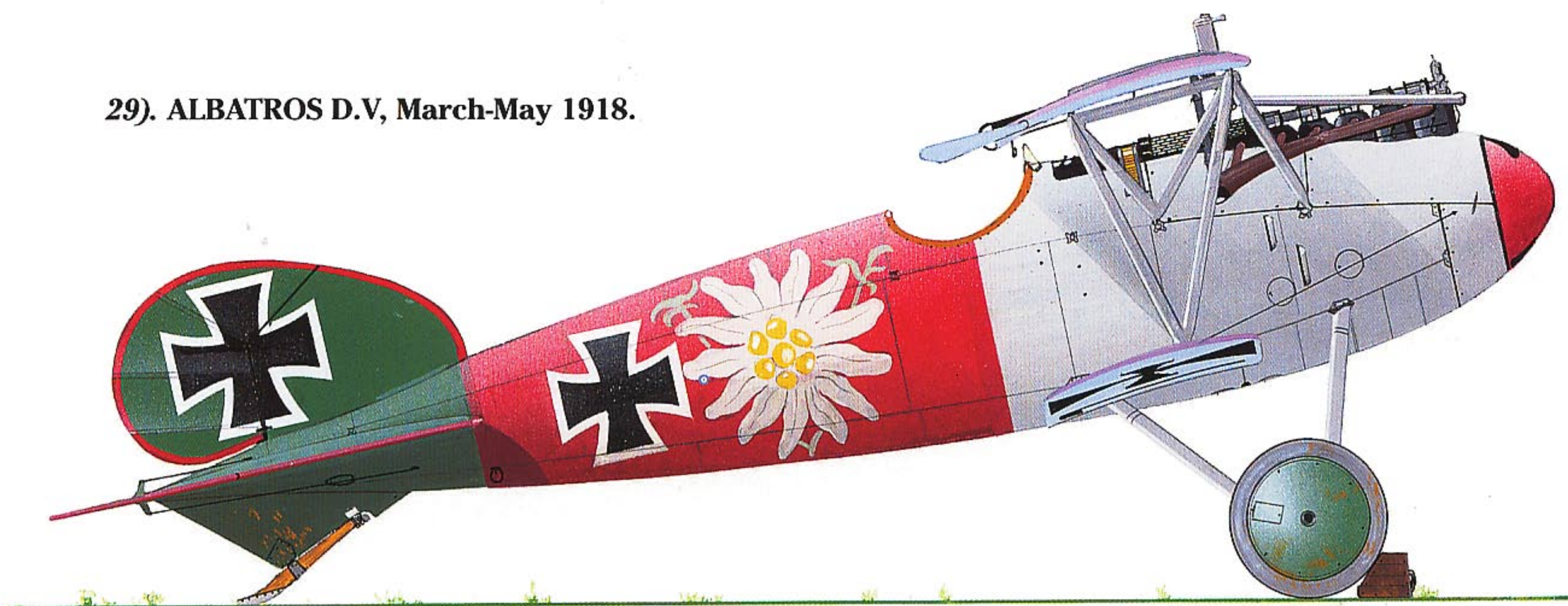


28). ALBATROS D.V, May-June 1918.



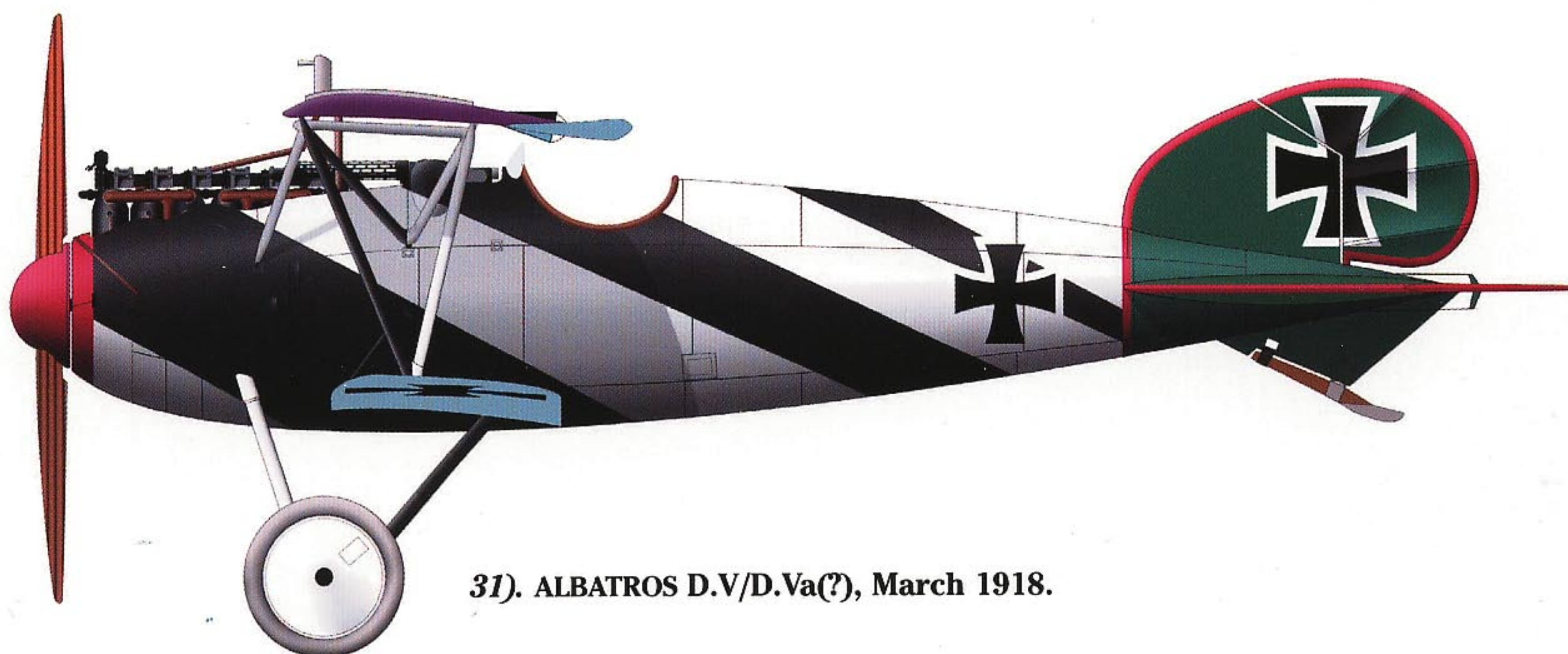
▲ 28A). LOWER WING DETAIL

29). ALBATROS D.V, March-May 1918.

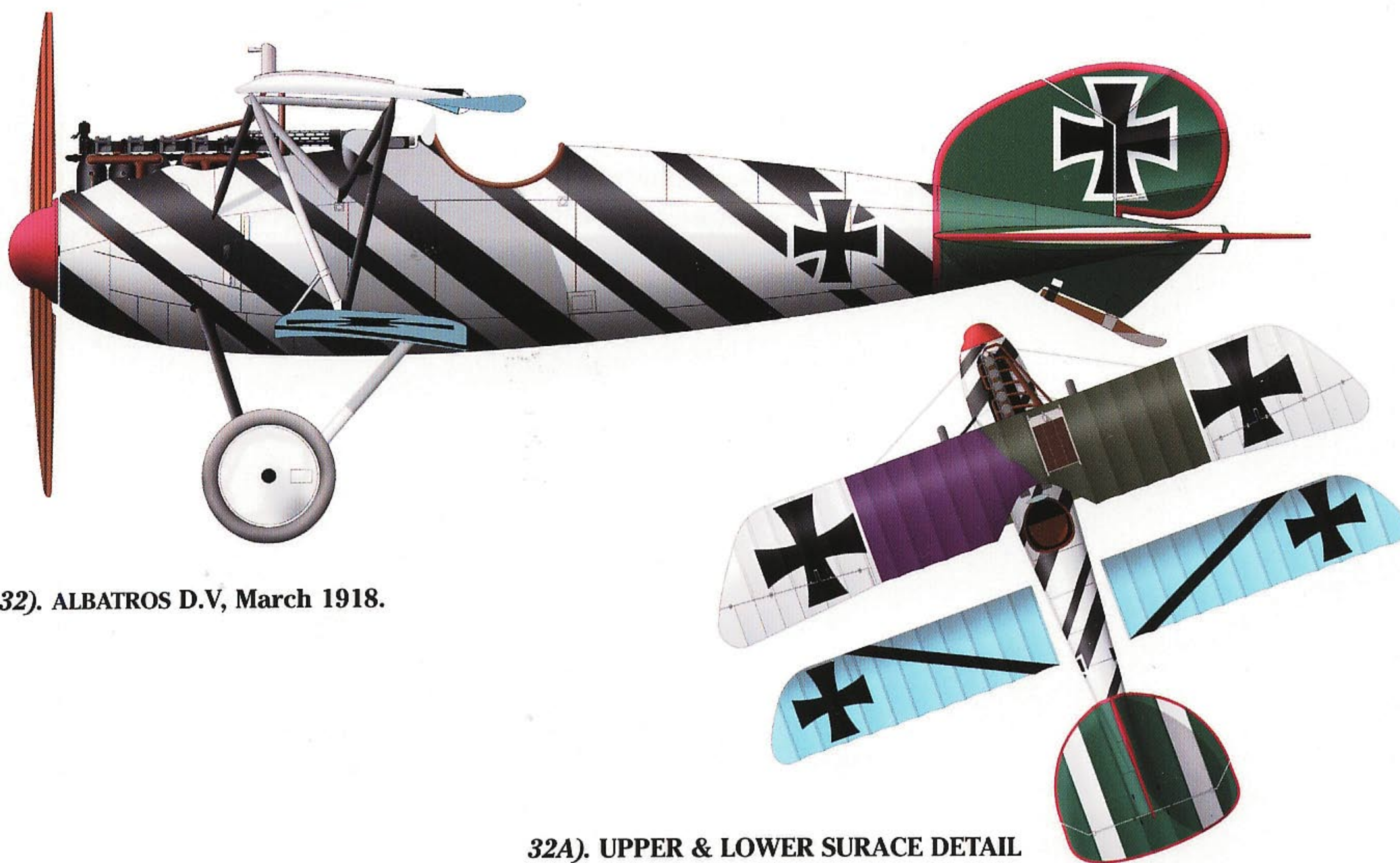




30). ALBATROS D.V, April - May 1918.



31). ALBATROS D.V/D.Va(?), March 1918.



32). ALBATROS D.V, March 1918.

32A). UPPER & LOWER SURFACE DETAIL

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