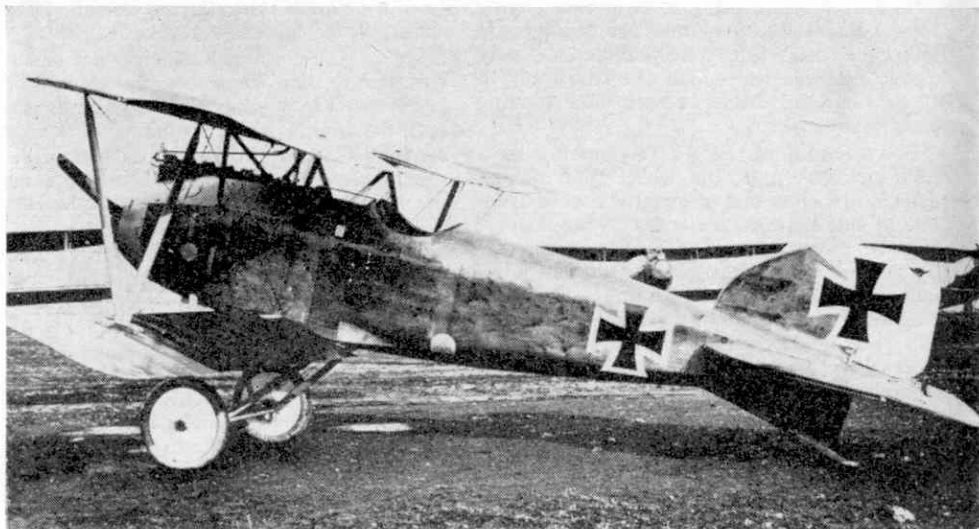


The Shapely Albatros



The Albatros D.III was a progressive development of the D.I and D.II which had regained aerial supremacy for the Germans during the latter half of 1916.

The shapely plywood covered fuselage was almost identical with the earlier machines but in place of their equal chord wings, the D.III had a lower wing of much narrower chord. It is generally believed that the Neuport, which had always impressed the German authorities, influenced the choice of this arrangement. However, if the D.III acquired the Neuport's virtues, it also inherited its defects, for the wings proved to be the weak point on both machines. A number of pilots were killed by the collapse of the lower wing and von Richthofen himself had a narrow escape with a cracked wing but managed to land safely.

In spite of this defect, the D.III was most successful, and during 1917 it was extensively used on the Western Front, in Macedonia and Palestine. It was also built in Austria by the Oeffag company. These machines differed in having fully cowled engines with stub exhausts and the guns fitted inside the fuselage, firing through extension tubes on each side of the engine. The Oeffag 253 series had a rounded snub nose and no spinner.

Standard factory colour scheme

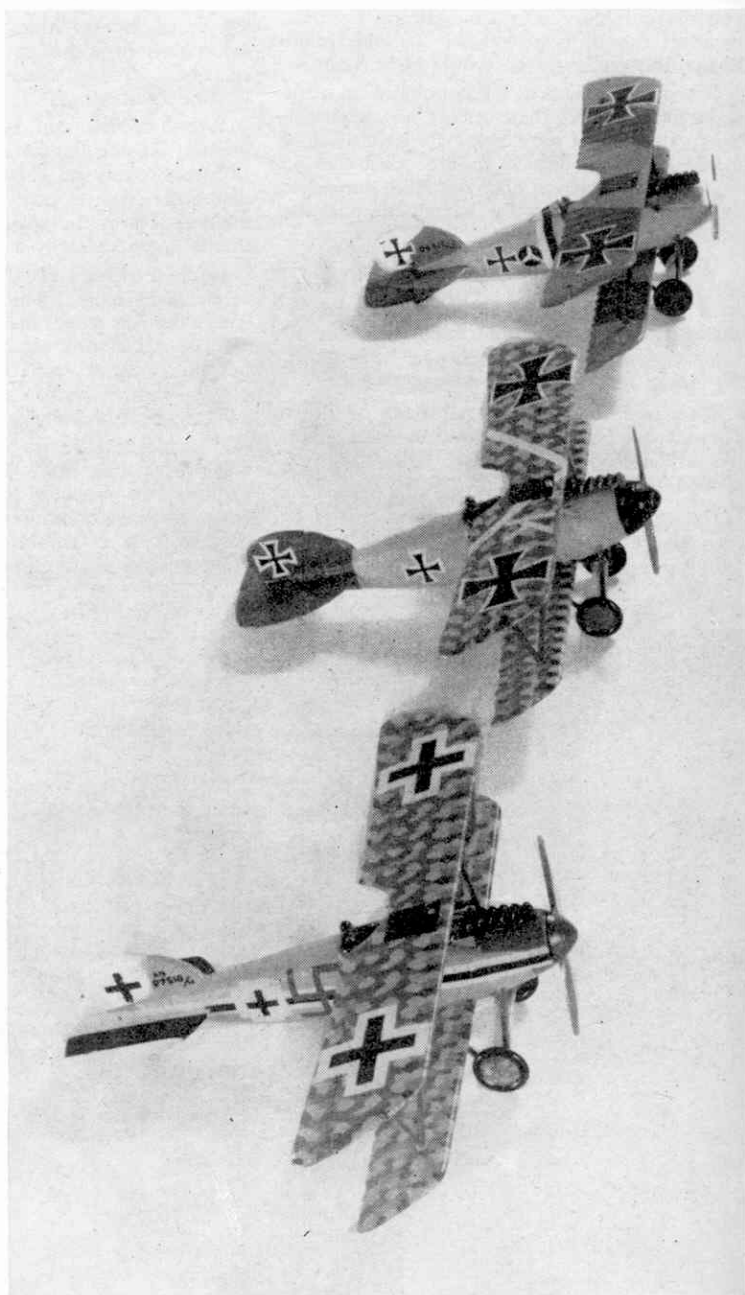
Fuselage and fin—varnished birch plywood. Wings and tailplane—undersides light blue, top surfaces—dark green and purple camouflage. (Some later aircraft had the standard irregular hexagonal camouflage consisting of green, cobalt, terra cotta and pink 'lozenges'.) Spinner and engine cowling—light grey. Struts and undercarriage—light grey or dark green.

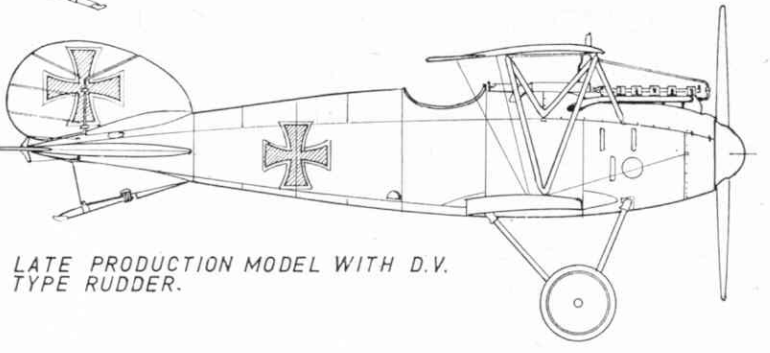
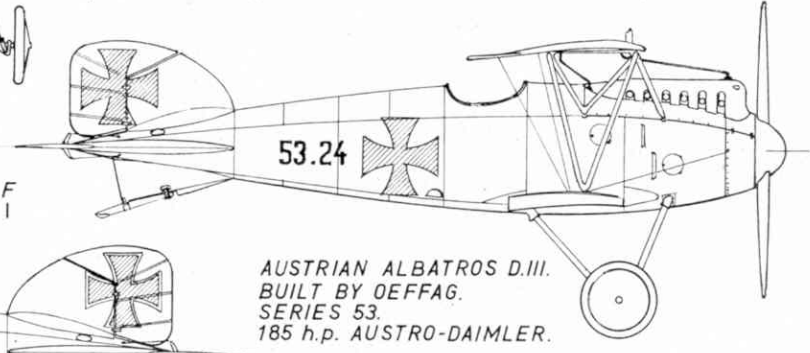
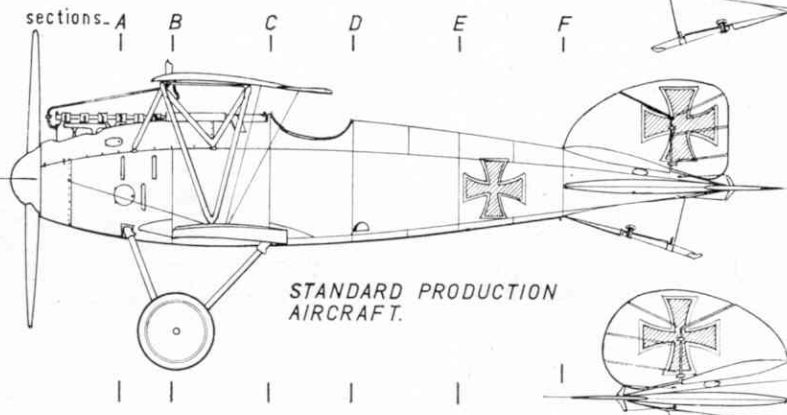
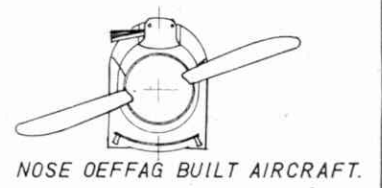
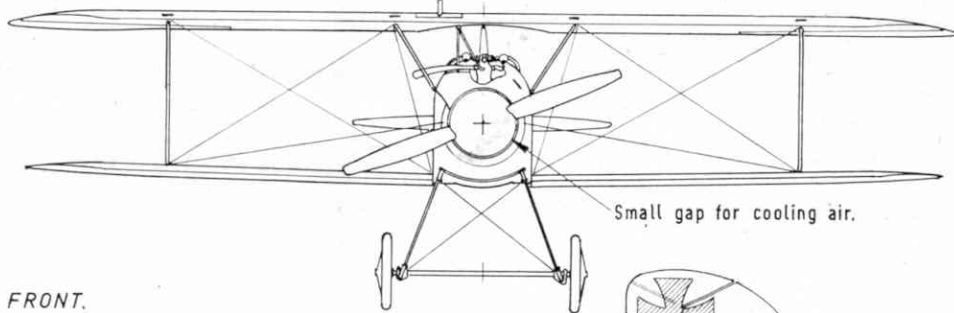
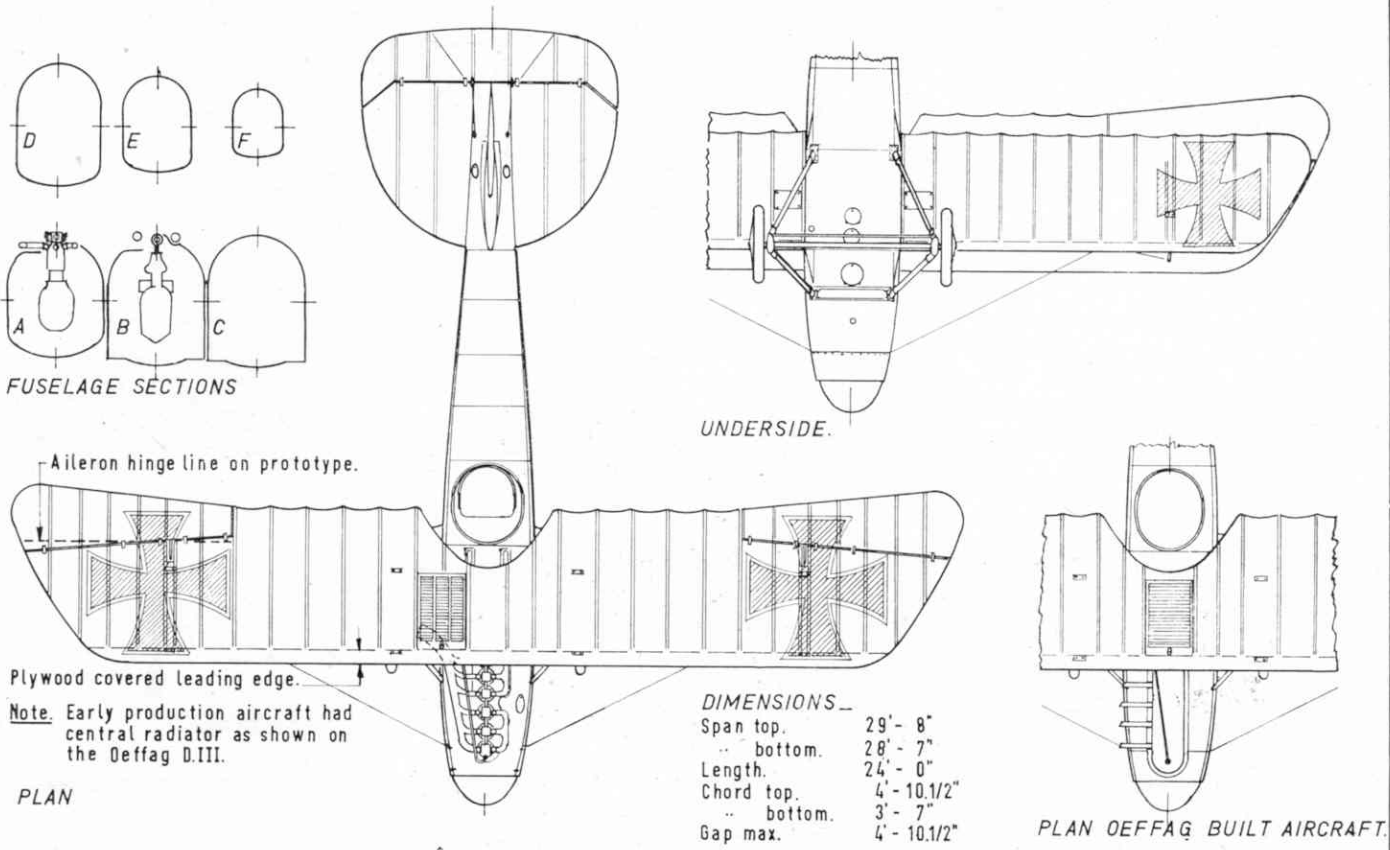
In service the machines were often painted in bright colours.

Here are three Albatros D.V. models built from the Airfix kit. The D.V. differed from the D.III mainly in respect of the more rounded fuselage section and rudder outline. However, the fuselage of the Airfix kit is not quite as 'full' as it should be and can quite easily pass for the earlier model. The wing colouring of the far model is the simplest to reproduce—irregular green and purple bands as described in the text, whilst the two other models are painted to represent the printed fabric more widely used. The pattern of this fabric consisted of a regularly repeated "lozenge" design of

variously coloured irregular hexagonal shapes. This type of covering is one of the interesting features of the German aircraft seen in the new 20th Century Fox Cinemascope film "The Blue Max" and, although the hues are not all accurate, this is a really fine film that all aviation enthusiasts will rave over; the air combat scenes are certainly the finest ever filmed.

There is also a 1/72nd 'Revell' kit for the Albatros D.III at 2s 6d and 'Aurora' will shortly re-introduce their 1/48th scale version at 10s 6d.





ALBATROS D.III. 1917
160h.p Mercedes.

