Fokker D.VII (Alb)

1/72 SCALE PLASTIC KIT

#70134

ProfiPACK edition



INTRO

The Fokker name is very prominent when it comes to the the first air war in our history. With the E.I the real air combat started, with Dr.I intensified, while with D.VII it all got to the intense an immense scuffle. Anthony Fokker, the "Flying Dutchman" made some of the most important airplanes of the time and his Fokker D.VII is regarded as the best German fighter of Great War and one of the best of its time. During the second half of 1917, the Germans were gradually loosing their air superiority over the Western front. The once mighty Albatros D.III or new Fokker Dr.I had been overshadowed by the new Allied arrivals Sopwith Camel, S.E.5a or SPAD XIII. To get the Deutsche Luftstreitkräfte (German Air Forces) back to the shape, the IdFlieg (Inspektion der Fliegertruppen - Inspectorate of the Flying Units) invited manufacturers to the first fighter competition to be held at Adlershof during January 1918. To participate, Fokker ordered his experimental workshop in Schwerin, led by Reinhold Platz, to design and build a biplane prototype in September 1917. Originally, it was to be powered by rotary engine, but thanks to the termination of Albatros D.V production, the Mercedes in-line six cylinder D.III a 160 hp (120 kW) engine became available. Platz had taken all the best features of his earlier designs, added some novelties and mixed them into new, sturdy prototype with designation V 11 (Versuchsmachine no. 11; Experimental aircraft No. 11), which was entered for the competition and posite seven other Fokker prototypes.

Last-minute intervention

The design of V 11 used welded steel tube fuselage which saved the man-hours during production and also provided pilot with a good protection in case of crash. The rear fuselage was retained from the Dr.I Dreidecker, as well as the philosophy of the cantilever wing, now in form of sesquiplane (one-and-a-half winger). The upper wing design was so sturdy, that there was no need for bracing wires and it would be possible to fly the aircraft even without the outer V struts. But Anthony Fokker himself found the first version of the V 11 hard to fly just prior to the start of the competition. The plane lacked stability, so Fokker decided to lengthen the fuselage by 16 inches (40 cm) and enlarge the vertical fin for added stability. It was a last-minute decision, which kept the Fokker workshop busy over a weekend. But the modification was successful. The protype turned out as not only stable and easy to fly, but very maneuverable as well with reasonable speed and good rate of climb. Thanks to its well balanced flying characteristics the modified V 11 was declared a winner and redesignated as D.VII. Because the IdFlieg asked for production numbers far beyond the capabilities of the Fokker in Schwerin, Albatros Flugzeugwerke was also tasked with production. Finally, three factories were producing the D.VII: Fokker in Schwerin, Albatros in Johannisthal and his subsidiary OAW (Ostdeutsche Albatros Werke) in Schneidemühl (Polish town Pila today). Albatros and OAW were obliged to pay five percent of the price of every aircraft produced to Fokker as the licensing fee.

Factory differences

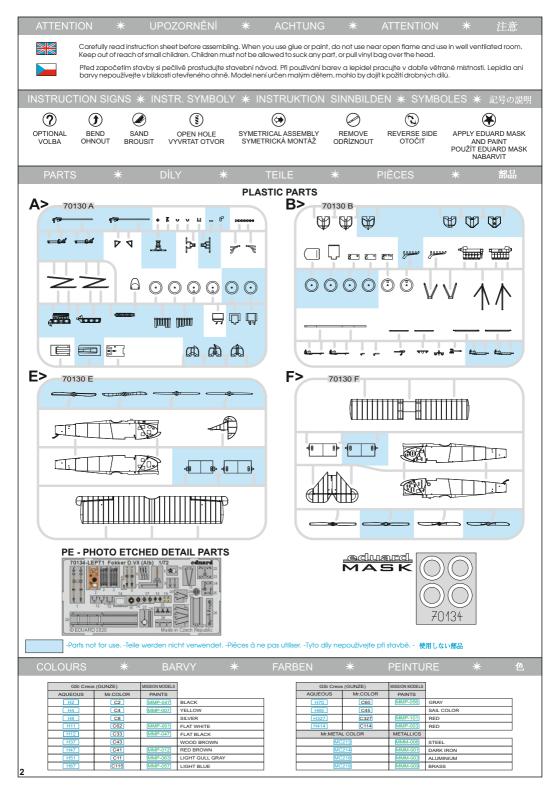
Three factories meant three different versions, as Albatros and OAW did not receive any manufacturing documentation. It was all sorted out with the pattern example of D.VII supplied by Fokker, so several versions were produced with changes made due to the manufacturing habits of the factories or due to the findings gained during production. Most of the differences between the factories comprise of number, size and location of inspection doors and cooling vents in the engine panels. For example: Early Fokker build examples had the magneto and water pump access door at the upper rear of the side panel. Albatros and OAW retained it well into production, while Fokker abandoned that feature at the early stage. The OAW also improved the design of the landing gear axle wing by splitting it into two halves in order to allow its easy removal for the suspension servicing.

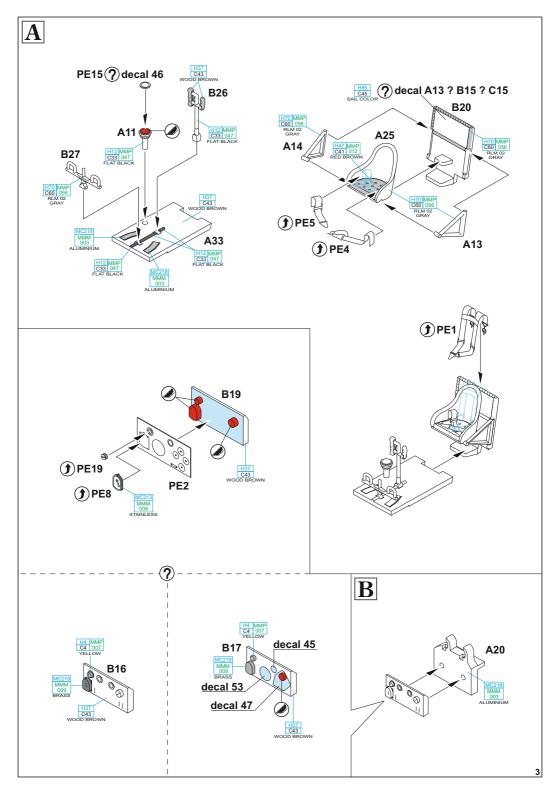
Sweeping the skies

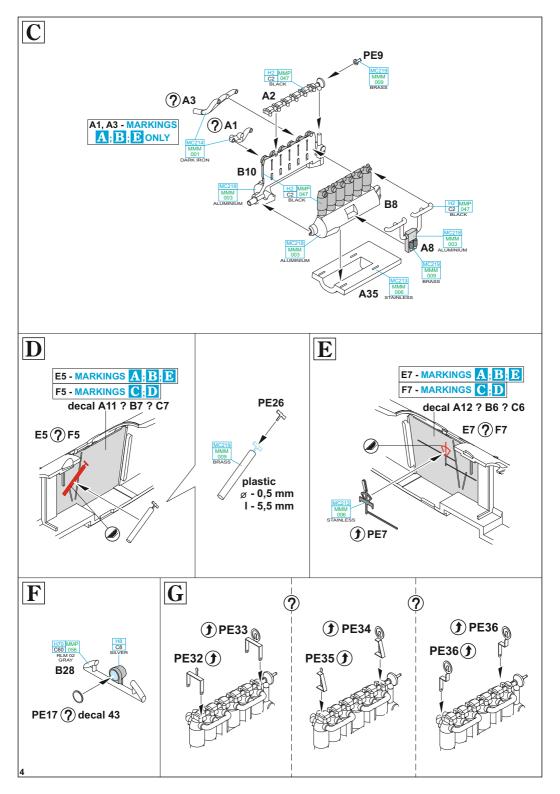
The D.VII entered service in April 1918 and first to receive them was the famous Richthofen's flying circus, the Jagdgeschwader (JG) 1 and the qualities of the new fighter were regarded highly by the pilots. They loved the ability of D.VII to literally hang on its propeller, allowing the pilot to assault enemies from below on very high angle of attack. The only weakness to the S.E.5a or SPAD XIII, was maximum speed at high altitude. But early into production the more powerful Mercedes D.III.aü was available. It developed 180 hp (134 kW) and things went even better with the introduction of the BMW IIIa engine with 185 hp (138 kW). At low altitudes, the BMW engine was capable of producing 240 hp (178 kW) for a brief time with the top speed well beyond 108 kt (200 km/h) mark. The D.VII with BMW engine got suffix F. Late in 1918, the Austro-Hungarian company MÅG (Magyar Általános Gépgár - Hungarian General Machinery Company) started production of the D.VII powered by Austro-Daimler 225 hp engine. Armament of D.VIIs consisted of a pair of the LMG 08/15 machine guns of 7.92 mm calibre with 500 rounds per gun, the MÅG Fokkers were fitted with Schwarzlose MG machine guns.

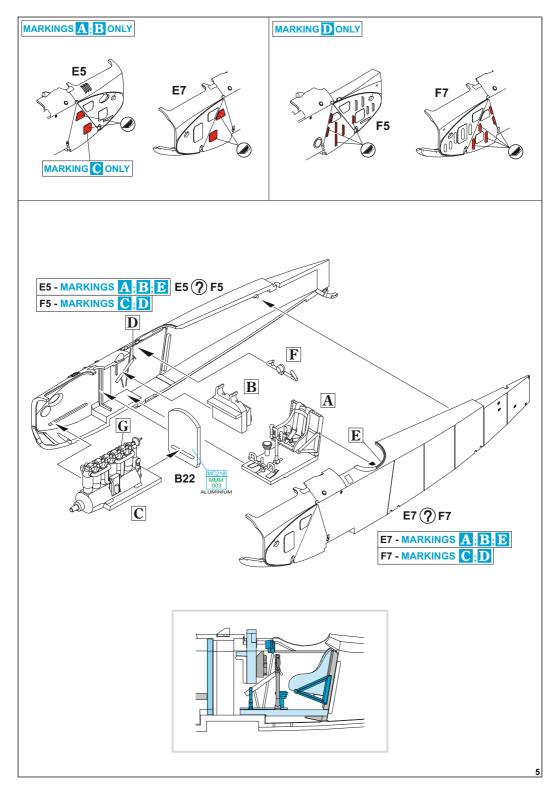
Post War service

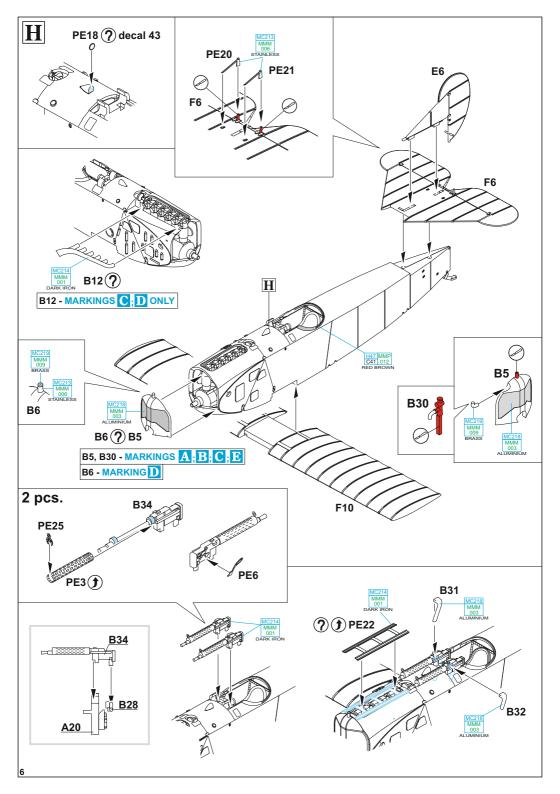
After the Armistice, the Fokker D.VII was the only aircraft to be mentioned in the Terms of Armistice document. Chapter four specified that "1,700 aeroplanes (fighters, bombers - firstly all D.7s and night-bombing machines)" were to be surrendered in good condition. But not all of them really were. Fokker managed to cart off six trains of spare parts and raw material, 400 engines and some 120 D.VIIs in crates and transport it to the Netherlands, where he restarted the production. Not only the Netherlands, but many other countries flew the D.VIIs for post war years, also Germany used them after 1930. The precise number of D.VIIs built is unknown, war production is estimated at 2000, together with post war production there were some 3,300 D.VIIs built.

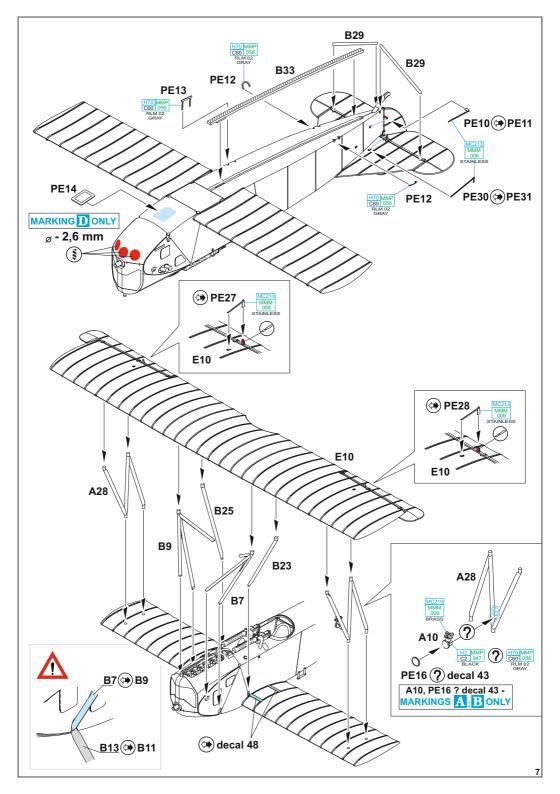


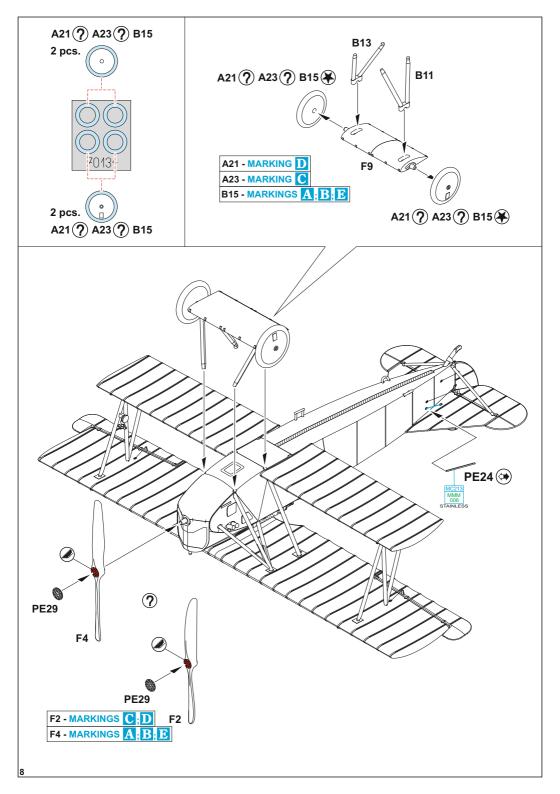


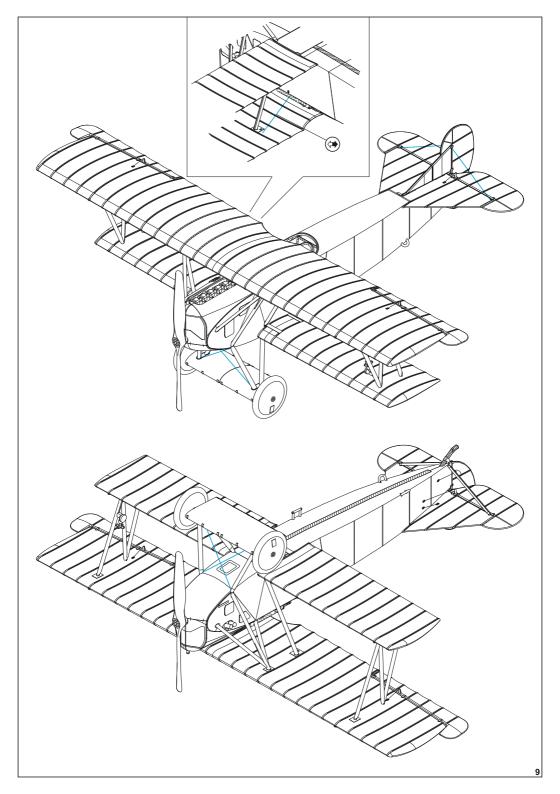






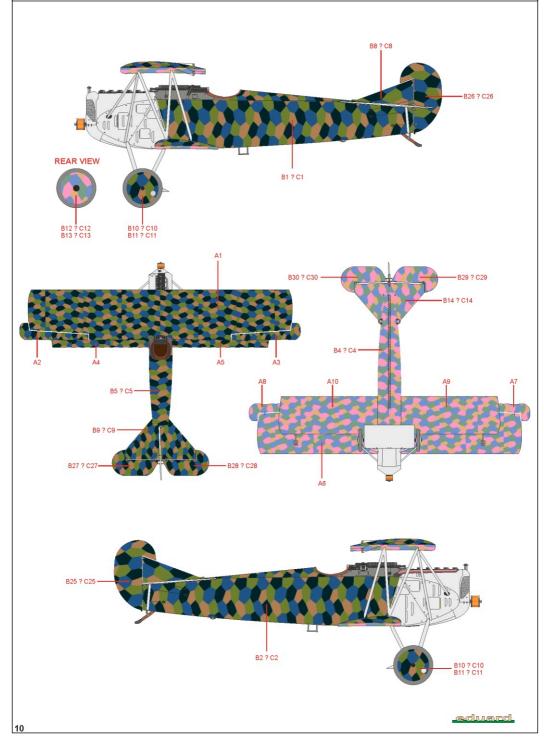


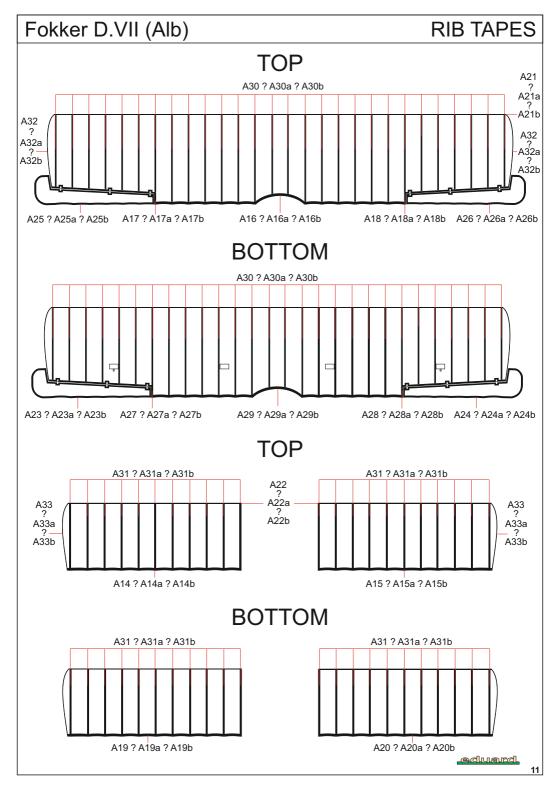




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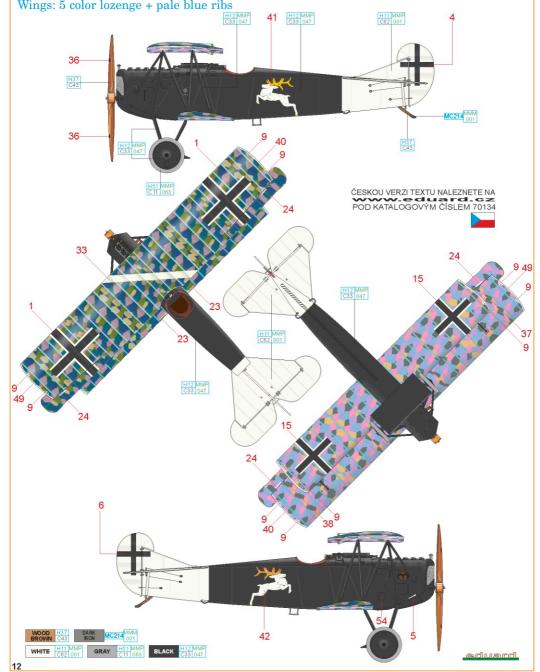
LOZENGE





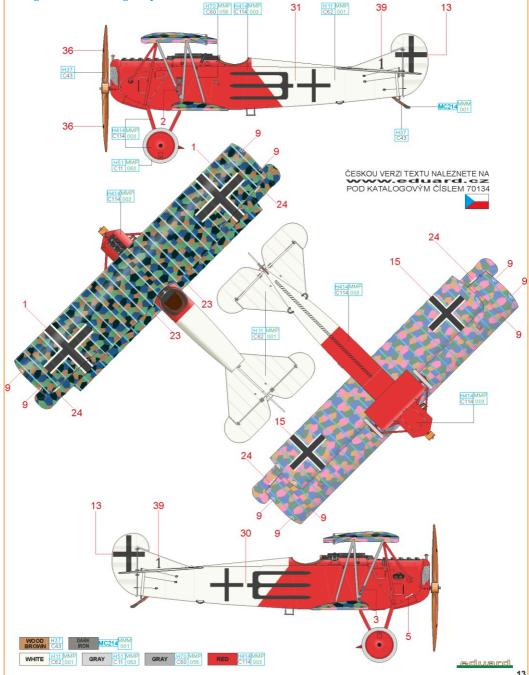
A flown by Ltn. Carl Degelow, Jasta 40, Lille, France, August 1918

Jasta 40s pilots achieved 54 victories during World War One. Most of them were claimed by Carl Degelow, the Jasta commander. He reached 26 victories as a Jasta member, among his total of 30. Degelow worked in the chemical industry in the USA before World War One. With the start of the war, he had returned to military service in Germany as an infantryman. After serving on both the Eastern and Western Fronts, he joined the Air force. He achieved his first victory as a pilot of an Albatros C.V, in May 1917. After a short service stint with Jasta 36, he achieved his next three victories with Jasta 7. In July 1918, he was nominated for command of the Royal Saxon Jasta 40s. Carl Degelow received the highest Prussian award, the Pour le Merité, on November 9th, 1918, as the last soldier to get this award.



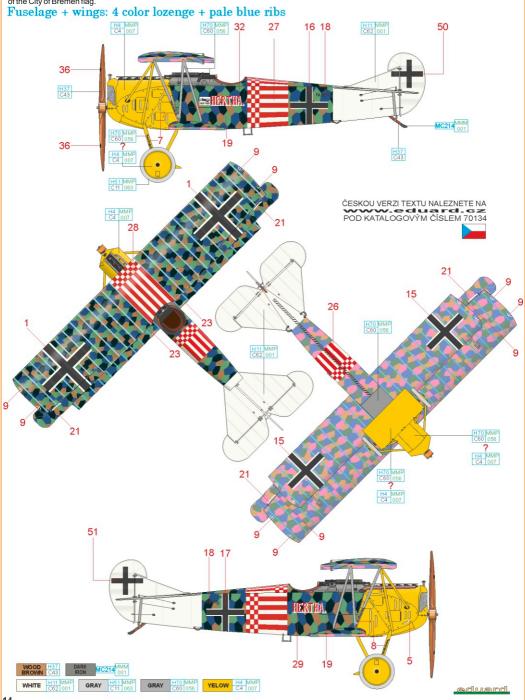
B flown by Ltn. Josef Raesch, Jasta 43, Santes, France, June/ July 1918

After brief service with FA7, Josef Raesch joined Jasta 43 in early June 1918. His first victim, an SE.5a, was shot down on June 27th. A month later, the roles were reversed, and he became the hunted. With his face burned, he saved his life with the use of his parachute. From late September, after which he was released from hospital, he added four subsequent victories to his previous three. Two of these were No. 29 Squadron RAF aces. It is interesting to note that Raesch's parachute was repaired and used again, saving the life of another pilot, Robert Schmitt. Wings: 4 color lozenge + pale blue ribs



C 5278/18, Jasta 27, Mons, Belgium, October 1918

This Fokker D.VII was built under license at Albatros Flugzeugwerke in Johannisthal. It was named Hertha, and served with Jasta 27. Consequently, the Jasta 27 identifier consisting of a yellow nose was carried by the aircraft. The red and white colouring on the fuselage came out of the City of Bremen flag.



1 817/18, flown by Offstv. Fritz Blumenthal, Jasta 53, Vivaise, France, August 1918

After landing on August 12th, 1918, Captain F.R.G. McCall of No. 41 Squadron, RAF, announced the downing of a Fokker D.VII north of Bayonvillers. His victim that day was Offizierstellvertreter Fritz Blumenthal of Jasta 53, who, due to a damaged rudder, was able to set his aircraft, named Nickchen IV, down in an area under British control, who took him prisoner. The white nose of the aircraft was the Jasta 53 unit identifier, while the white band and tail surfaces were the pilot's personal markings. Fuselage + lower wings: 4 color lozenge + pale blue ribs Upper wings: 5 color lozenge + pale blue ribs H70 MMP 10 25 16 22 52 36 chem MC214 MMM 36 ČESKOU VERZI TEXTU NALEZNETE NA du - cd POD KATALOGOVÝM ČÍSLEM 70134 20 15 H11 MMF C62 001 20 15 20 52 17 12 WHITE H 11 MM GRAY GRAY

E Ltn. Ludwig Beckmann, Jasta 56, Rumbeke, Belgium, Summer 1918

Ludwig "Lutz" Beckmann was, after short stints with Jastas 6 and 48, attached to Jasta 56 on March 11th, 1918. He got his first victory by March 13th, flaming an RE.8. His score gradually increased, and he achieved his last victory on September 5th, by then with the rank of Staffelführer. Among his victims were the Camels of two No. 210 Squadron RAF aces, H. T. Mellings (15 kills) and H. A. Patey (11 kills). He was back in the air force at the beginning of World War Two, when he commanded the transport units IV./TG 1 and KGr zbV 500.

