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# WINDSOCK

Vol. 15, No. 5, September/October 1999

INTERNATIONAL



**BUILDING THE 1:72  
TOKO PFALZ DXII**

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Canberra reproduction decal



◀ FIG. C ▶

Decal found on authenticated fabric

**PFALZ FACTORY LOGO**  
*PHOTOS: CHARLES GOSSE*



◀ ▼ FIG. F

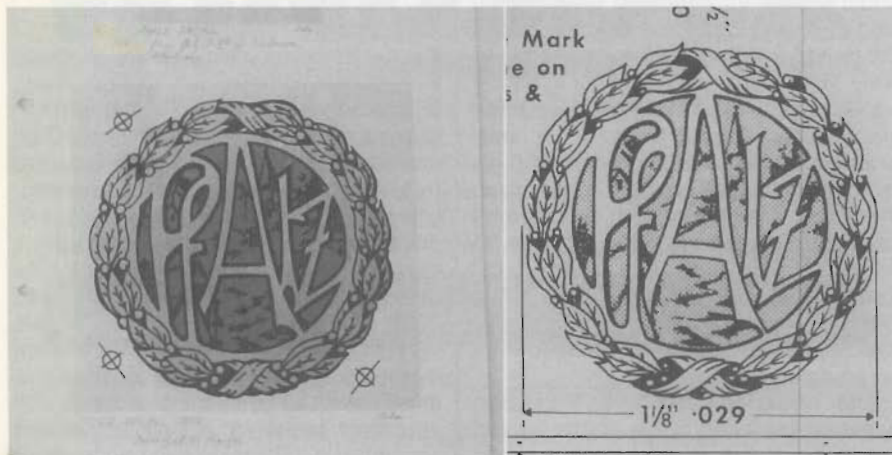


▲ ▲ FIG. D





# FABRIC



▲  
◀ FIG. A

## CHARLES GOSSE of Virginia, USA describes his Pfalz D.XII rudder fabric find

I recently acquired a piece of First World War German aircraft fabric with a Pfalz works decal attached. Dan Abbott and Peter Grosz have concluded that it is authentic; Peter suggested I let you know as you may want to publish it. I will brief you as best I can.

The commonly accepted but flawed version of the Pfalz decal is a reproduction apparently done by someone looking at a very small and possibly quite damaged 35mm decal attached to Pfalz D.XII No. 2600/18 in Canberra before that aircraft was restored. Colin Owers sent me a copy and Rick Ivansek sent me the very same one and I found it, as well, on the rear cover of the *WIND-SOCK DATAFILE* on the Pfalz D.IIIa. Peter explained to me that he gave you the decal which you printed there and, though you may not have known this at the time, it was a copy given to him by a repro builder in Texas named Roy Rehm. **Fig. A** (reproduced above, *Ed.*) shows the several forms that the Canberra reproduction has taken. They are all very similar and you can see Rehm's signature on the lower right hand corner of one of the decals.

Colin adds that 'I never saw the original 2600/18 decals. I can remember the late Neville Hewitt saying they thought the decal showed a river and the town where Pfalz had its factory. If your decal matches in part it could be a misinterpretation on the part of the Canberra team - which seems likely; or a different decal which seems highly unlikely. Pity no advertisements for Pfalz seem to have survived'.

However, a couple of advertisements did, indeed, survive and are in Peter's

collection. One is from the German magazine *Motor* and is identical in every way to my decal; see **Fig. B**. This begs the question whether any printed advertisement exists which supports the Canberra reproduction? The answer seems to be no, there isn't.

**Fig. C** shows the Canberra reproduction on the left and my decal on the right. Both are enlarged and made the same size for ease of comparison. In the Canberra reproduction, you can see a building with a sloped roof (blue circle) next to a stream (green circle), while in the same locations on my decal there is a cliff (blue circle) next to a stream (green circle) and the outlines of both match. In other words, as Colin hypothesized, the Canberra team misinterpreted what they saw and, when you compare image to image, this becomes all that much clearer; Dan Abbott spotted the misinterpretation and to him I owe much credit.

Of course, my decal is attached to a piece of fabric and the legitimacy of the fabric is critical to the legitimacy of the decal. The people from whom I acquired the fabric purchased it from someone who found it recently in a fleamarket in Germany. **Fig. D** shows the front and back of the piece.

As you can see, it bears a black cross and a Pfalz factory decal placed about where it should be if the fabric is from the starboard side of the D.XII rudder. The fabric is plain, not lozenge. I know that some people believe that the D.XII rudder was lozenge originally and then over-painted in white, but the evidence is many photos in strong sunlight, often from behind the rudder, show no trace of

lozenge. There are rust stains on the back side of the fabric about 12" apart and that is approximately the distance between the top and middle tube of the three horizontal tubes of the D.XII rudder. There are threads coming through the back where the fabric would have been tied onto the tubes; on the front they are covered by strips of horizontal fabric identical to the large piece. There is a pencil mark on the reverse with the numbers 912 in a stylized hand which is possibly the last three digits of the four-digit work number or aircraft serial number, in which case perhaps this fabric is from Pfalz D.XII 2912/18 though this is idle speculation. I hope to find a photo of Pfalz D.XII 2912/18 at some point.

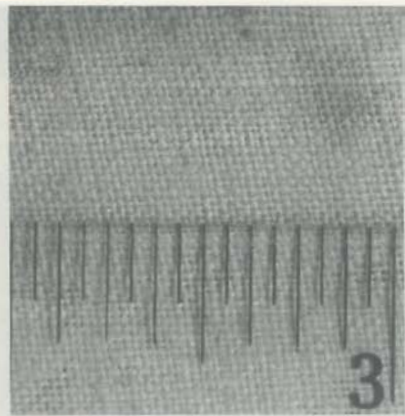
The thread count is 50 yarns to the inch in either direction. This is readily seen in the right hand photograph of **Fig. E** which is an extreme close-up of the fabric alongside a ruler photographed through a photographer's loop and backlit with a photographer's light-box. The left hand photograph of **Fig. E** shows the back-lit fabric at one end of the cross. You can see that the cross was painted twice, possibly once onto unpainted fabric and then again when the fabric was painted white. **Fig. F** shows the decal alongside a ruler at actual size and more samples of thread counts from the fabric; the colour rendition on this scan of the decal is the most accurate, by the way.

Having received the same photographs which I am now sharing with you, Dan Abbott authenticated the fabric and decal. He subsequently also mentioned to me that he checked the 'rib spacing' and it was correct and noted that the bluish tint to the black cross in the left hand photo of **Fig. E** is 'prussian blue with lamp black' mixed together; it

▼ FIG. B







▲ FIG. F

does not appear bluish in daylight, only under the intense light of the digital scan.

I sent Alan Toelle a photo of the overall piece and he wrote back that 'it looks authentic to me, I would like to examine a small piece, not 1-inch square but say 1/8-inch x 1/2-inch. I would like to make a cross section for the microscope. I am interested in the aluminium paint from the Pfalz. I have examined one other and am interested to know if this one has similar paint.' We had an ever-so-brief phone conversation a few weeks after he received my sample and photos and said that he was 'confident' that the fabric is authentic, but also added that he would not get around to really studying it for a while.

Peter initially had some concerns, such as the cross not being painted exactly straight, but he also noted that the films of the Pfalz works show free-hand painting of insignia. I have a copy of one of these films and the arms of the rudder cross appear slightly different lengths. I also analysed the rudder crosses in photos from the Pfalz D.XII *DATAFILE* and several appear slightly different in length and not precisely straight. He was also concerned that, from my high-resolution photos, such as a 300% enlarged version, the decal

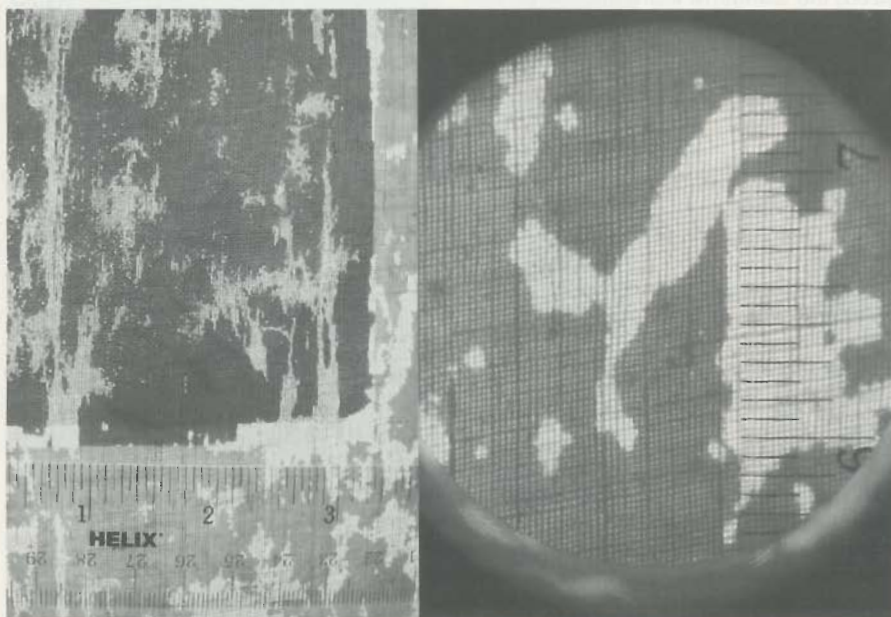
appeared to be printed *paper*, indeed, you can see an edge in the upper left hand corner. At very high resolution under strong light, the end of the emulsion of a decal will have an edge, but to the naked eye the decal is very thin and filmy, like an emulsion, and not at all like paper. In the Pfalz work films you can see a worker actually applying the decal to a rudder. He holds it in place with his left hand and uses his right hand to rub the decal, from left to right, and then he peels off its covering. You can see all along the right hand side of the decal that the edge has slightly separated from the body of the decal, likely from when it was applied and the worker rubbed from left to right.

After reviewing Dan's letter, Peter also became convinced of the authenticity of the fabric and decal and I assume that Alan Toelle's confidence will be borne out when he gets around to his own analysis.

I am planning to digitally restore the decal and if that is of interest to you, I would be happy to send you a copy. I plan to make it available as a decal emulsion to those museums which actually have original D.XIIs - the Smithsonian's National Air and Space Museum, The Australian War Memorial, The Champlin Fighter Museum and Musee de l'Air et de l'Espace - at 60mm, the size of my decal, as well as two additional sizes which Dan recommends, 50mm and 35mm, so that they can make their restorations that much more accurate.

On another subject, I thought I would mention that I have a small collection of First World War aeronautica, largely German. Mostly the odd sort of thing, the rudder bar from an Aviatik 'Berg' D.I, control stick grip from an early Fokker, bits and pieces of an Albatros D.Va., spar and fabric from an Fdh G.III, and so forth, about two dozen items in all. They are displayed on my web site at, <http://charlesgosse.home.mindspring.com>

FIG. E ▼



## CONTACT

if readers are interested. □

Is it my imagination or are all these photo-etched detail part sets beginning to take over our hobby? Not that I'm in any way decrying those worthies who produce such useful accessories - far from it, but I wonder just how many modellers make full use of them. This was driven home recently when reviewing a new range of 1:72 frets from Poland (see page 30), in particular one for the **Toko Pfalz D.XII** which also features in this very issue. Whilst I'm in full admiration for the designer of such accessories - he must have the eyesight of a hawk - in practical terms a 44-piece shutter assembly in 1:72 makes me go weak at the knees. Maybe the Polish pattern designer has shares in an opticians, I don't know, but I can't help feeling this is taking the accessory market to a level most of us are unlikely ever to reach, or want to for that matter. In the good old days I hacked a 1:72 Pfalz out of balsa wood using Revell D.VII parts as spares. If I remember I made the radiator shell by scoring parallel lines on a scrap of 5 thou plastic card and adding external detail from HSP. Carefully painted and dry-brushed it looked reasonably OK - to me at any rate - and the technique worked for a number of other types too. I also recall making control horns from plastic strip, seat straps from painted adhesive tape and pitot heads from fuse wire.

Given the choice I'd probably still use some of these well worn techniques now, but perhaps not entirely for there are many etched parts I *would* want to incorporate. Really difficult ones to reproduce in a small scale such as wicker seats, Spandau jackets, spoked wheels and gunsights; these I personally regard as important items that make all the difference to a finished model. But is it really necessary to offer etched pieces so tiny that the majority of us wouldn't even use them - surely one of the attractions of modelling is devising and producing the smaller details oneself or have I *completely* missed the point?

## DESPATCHES

### Web photos

**MartinPhotos** is a new service distributing sets of photographs of vintage aircraft, with a difference. Rather than supplying traditional prints, these photo sets are delivered via e-mail. Each picture is an electronic image file which may be viewed on practically any modern PC and is supplied in a high-resolution magnified state which allows fine detail to be observed easily. Copies may be printed out on any modern PC printer, although the best results will come from the latest photo-quality printers. Each photo set