



The Austro-Hungarian Monarchy was the third most populous country of Europe. As far as its area is concerned, it was in second place as a major power in Europe. Since 1879, it was striving to achieve a close alliance with Germany, which was essential for the latitude in foreign policy of the empire that was composed of numerous nationalities. After the murder of the heir presumptive to the Austro-Hungarian throne, Archduke Franz Ferdinand of Austria-Este, by a Serb assassin in Sarajevo on 28 June 1914, the monarchy declared war on Serbia on 28 July 1914.

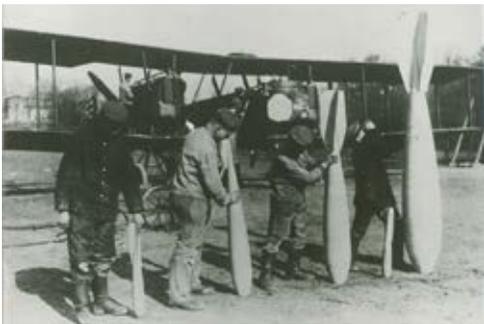
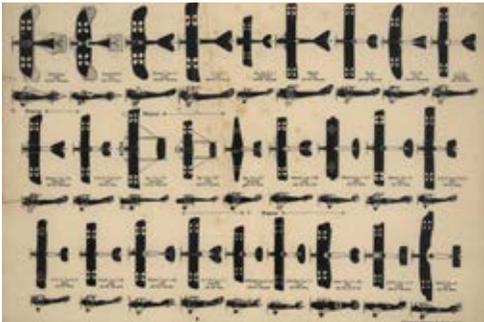
As the other nations of Europe, the Hungarians also were enthusiastic when learning of the outbreak of war. However, the hopes were dashed soon. As early as summer 1914, the monarchy was forced to fight a two-front war (against Serbia and Russia), which turned into a three-front war when Italy entered the war in 1915.

At home, the money lost its value; foodstuffs such as bread and flour were only sold against ration stamps. Owing to this and the high losses suffered on the front, the war enthusiasm of the people faded, which found its expression in a series of strikes.

After the death of Emperor Franz Joseph I on 21 November 1916, Charles I (or Charles IV of Hungary) ascended to the throne. The young Emperor started careful consultations for a peace with the Entente Powers in 1917. In the last year of the war, 1918, the cost of living was eight times as high as at the beginning of the war in Hungary. When the armistice was signed on 3 November 1918, there already was a revolutionary atmosphere. Hungary mourned a total of 600,000 fallen soldiers. The number of wounded and prisoners of war amounted to almost 1.5 million.

- 1 Care of wounded soldiers at a well-equipped first-aid station behind the front line.
- 2 Collection of money by aid organizations for soldiers Christmas 1915.
- 3 Ethnic map of the Austro-Hungarian monarchy.
- 4 Coronation of Charles IV of Hungary in Budapest, 30 December 1916
- 5 The sovereign is talking to soldiers who were honored for their bravery on the battlefield.
- 6 Some of the 3,620,000 war casualties of the monarchy.

Hungary during World War I



From Reconnaissance asset to weapon system – Military aviation during World War I

The conquest of the airspace by the military started with unarmed reconnaissance by airship men and pilots. But not for long, then deliberate destruction of the enemy made its entry also into the third dimension. Right from the beginning of World War I the first pilots and observers started to carry pistols, carbines and hand grenades during their operational flights. The reaction to this followed shortly afterwards in the form of the fighter aircraft which was equipped with machine guns.

During the war specialization in the air went on. Combat aircraft of different sizes and flying ranges carried bombs far into the enemy territory. Artillery air observers directed the hail of grenades on the fronts which were frozen in trench warfare. Infantry planes provided air support to attacking infantry forces. In the war of machines material resources and superior technology outweighed classical military virtues as personal courage and bravery. However, also automatic killing was not able to do without the latter. During World War I modern industrial nations were fighting each other using the whole potential of their populations and economies.

Industrialized warfare gave a decisive impetus to the technical development of the aircraft. Outstanding examples on the German side were the fighter aircraft Fokker E.III (1915) and Fokker D.VII (1918). Groundbreaking were the first all-metal constructions as the Junkers D I (J 9) with its groundbreaking corrugated duralumin fuselage. Between 1914 and 1918 the foundation was laid for the aviation industry of the German Reich in the 1920s and 1930s.

- 1 Aircraft construction during the First World War**
In the very beginning there was not a big difference between aircraft production in the First World War and aircraft production during the age of peaceful aviation pioneers, which mainly was done by hand.
Bundeswehr Museum of Military History – Berlin-Gatow Airfield
- 2 Aircraft production during the First World War**
During the First World War factory production of military aircraft developed.
Bundeswehr Museum of Military History – Berlin-Gatow Airfield
- 3 Wide variety of aircraft types in the First World War**
While the flight attempts of Otto Lillienthal served surely peaceful purposes aircraft technology developed into a lucrative business for entrepreneurs and engineers due to military reasons. The diversity of aircraft types is evidence of the enormous boom in aircraft production.
Bundeswehr Museum of Military History – Berlin-Gatow Airfield
- 4 Support of ground forces**
First World War: a German aircraft attacks an English tank. Serving pure reconnaissance purposes at the beginning of the war, aircraft increasingly took over active combat missions at a later stage.
Bundeswehr Museum of Military History Dresden
- 5 Aircraft Bombs in the First World War**
The photo shows German bombs, which were dropped from aircraft on enemy territory.
Bundeswehr Museum of Military History – Berlin-Gatow Airfield

Showcase:

- 1 Fokker Dr. I, 1917**
Bundeswehr Museum of Military History – Berlin-Gatow Airfield
- 2 Brandenburg KD (DI), 1917**
Bundeswehr Museum of Military History – Berlin-Gatow Airfield
- 3 Albatros D III, 1916**
Bundeswehr Museum of Military History – Berlin-Gatow Airfield



At the beginning of the war, the Imperial and Royal Aviation Troops were composed of twelve balloon companies (Ballonkompanien) and 16 flying companies (Fliegerkompanien). Their task was reconnaissance, whose volume increased significantly with the freezing of battle lines in the trench war. The flying companies, which were deployed against Serbia, used unarmed reconnaissance aircraft of the Lohner and Etrich Taube types. The technically unreliable and outdated aircraft caused much worry to the pilots. The majority of casualties at that time mostly were caused by technical faults.

From spring 1915 on, the activities of the pilots were extended to also include the fire control of the field artillery batteries. Air-to-air engagements also took place more frequently now. When the Romanian Army crossed the border to Hungary on 27 August 1916, the Air Force of the Monarchy had just some training companies at its disposal on the new front. While it was possible to defeat the enemy, the outdated trainer aircraft were replaced by modern types within a few months.

In the eastern theaters of war, the Austro-Hungarian Air Force enjoyed firm air superiority. On the Italian front, opened in May 1915, they, however, faced a strong enemy, which involved heavy losses. The first major bombing raid of the Imperial and Royal Aviation Troops was directed against the city of Milan on 14 February 1916. The companies, which were equipped with reconnaissance and fighter aircraft, were subordinate to the individual armies. When the air superiority of the Entente became massive in 1917, the first independent fighter squadrons were established. Most flying aces of the Monarchy emanated from these squadrons.

- 1 Happy moment on the airfield between two sorties.
- 2 Reconnaissance report of 19 April 1916 from the airfield Tarnopol.
- 3 József Kiss Ittebei, the most successful Hungarian fighter pilot.
- 4 Daring maneuver on the Aviation Arsenal's airfield Fishamend.
- 5 On the airfield Colomea of the 49th Flight regiment (Flik).
- 6 Aircrafts of the 55th Fighter Squadron at Pergine Airfield in 1918
- 7 Bombs ready to drop at the Eastern Front.

The Air Force of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy



The industrial aircraft production in Hungary began only a few months before the outbreak of World War I. A total of five factories were set up; the first one was the Hungarian Aircraft Manufacturer Ungarische Flugzeugfabrik AG (UFAG), founded in 1913. The company, which was based in Albertfalva, became the largest aircraft manufacturer of the Monarchy in 1915 and employed more than 3000 workers. The German-type reconnaissance and fighter aircraft Hansa-Brandenburg as well as UC I and UC II as indigenous designs formed the basis of the production.

In 1914, the Hungarian Lloyd Aircraft and Motor Company was established in Aszód. Here, aircraft of the Aviatik-Berg and Phoenix types were manufactured in addition to the indigenously designed aircraft type Lloyd, and aircraft whose component parts were delivered from Germany were assembled. From 1916 on, the General Hungarian Machine Factory Corp. MÁG in Mátyásföld produced aircraft of the manufacturers Fokker and Aviatik. Additionally, it produced Daimler aircraft engines designed by Ferdinand Porsche. The Hungarian Automobile Joint-stock Company MARTA in Arad assembled engines of Mercedes, while the Ganz-Fiat aircraft engine manufacturing plant produced the Hiero engines designed by Otto Hieronimus.

During World War I, the factories based in Hungary produced 2,029 airframes and 1,146 aircraft engines. The Aviation Arsenal (Fliegerarsenal, FLARS), which was headed by the Hungarian Captain and future Colonel István Petróczy, monitored and coordinated the production, development, storage and distribution of the aircraft to the troops on the territory of the Monarchy.

- 1 Workers make final adjustments on the completed Hansa-Brandenburg C I aircraft before shipping them to the front
- 2 Wings with linen covered in the aircraft factory at Wiener Neustadt.
- 3 Metal processing machines in Wiener Neustadt.
- 4 Repair of fuselages in the maintenance station in Szeged. The work required great precision and skills as a carpenter.
- 5 Assembly and testing of aircraft engines. In the background propellers are leaning against the wall, which will be added afterwards.
- 6 Test of propellers in front of the Aviation Arsenal Commission.

The Aircraft Manufacturers on the Territory of the Kingdom of Hungary