

Atlas deutscher und ausländischer Seeflugzeuge.

THE LUFT-FAHRZEUG-GESELLSCHAFT (LFG) SEAPLANES

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LUFT-FAHRZEUG-GESELLSCHAFT, also known as simply LFG, was formed on 30 April 1908 from the assets of *MotorluftschiffStudiengesellschaft*, an experimental airship engine manufacturing company, with additional funding being provided by Krupp and *Allgemeine Elektrizitäts-Gesellschaft [AEG]*. The company had offices in Berlin and a factory at Adlershof. When the *Flugmaschine Wright GmbH* (also located at Adlershof) was liquidated in 1912, LFG absorbed its assets. At this time the company registered the name 'Roland' as its trademark in order to avoid confusion with *Luft-Verkehrs Gesellschaft [LVG]*.

The company's first project was an airship designed by the German airship designer August von Parseval that, as the PL.11, entered German military service in 1910. In all LVG built a total of 25 PL type airships for various customers including the British Navy. Following a fire (said to have been started by the British Intelligence service) that destroyed the Adlershof factory, manufacture was transferred to Charlottenburg. The Chief Engineer at this time was Dipl-Ing Hans Gustav Tantzen.

LFG Roland is best known for its innovative series of land planes, particularly its two-seat C.II *Walfish* (Whale) reconnaissance aeroplane and its later D.Va/Vb single seat scout. LFG designs pioneered the use of semi-monocoque fuselages, the shell of which was built up on plywood formers and longerons. On these was laid a covering of narrow strips of thin three-plywood wound spirally around the resulting frame to which it was pinned and glued. This was then covered with linen fabric and doped. Upper and lower wings of conventional wood and fabric construction were attached

to fairings that were integral with the fuselage structure. The result was a series of sleek looking aeroplanes well ahead of their time.

LFG also built a small number of original seaplane types as well as acting as subcontractors for the manufacture of other companies (ie Friedrichshafen and Sablatnig) designs.

With one exception (the LFG V19 *Putbus*) these were built at the Bitterfeld factory and did not carry the Roland trademark. None of their original seaplane designs gained production orders or saw any military service. After the end of the war *Luft-Fahrzeug-Gesellschaft* continued to produce seaplane designs and built prototypes but, other than the V.19, I have few details of these or of any success that they may have had.

LFG W

LFG built a number of C.Ia aircraft under license from Albatros and the company's type W was essentially that machine modified by the replacement of its wheeled undercarriage with a twin-float version.

Following the Albatros design, the type W had a flat-sided wooden framed fuselage covered in plywood. Its wings were of parallel chord and unequal span with ailerons fitted to the upper wings only. They were of wooden construction with tensioned wire trailing edges and fabric covered.

The tail assembly was of the familiar Albatros triangular shape and constructed of steel tube and fabric covered. Wing and undercarriage struts were all of tubular steel. The 'W' was powered by a 150hp Benz Bz.III engine. It had compact ear type radiators fitted to either sides of the forward fuselage and

The LFG type W seaplanes was essentially an Albatros C.Ia mounted on floats. The floats were of surprisingly clean design for 1915/16 and were attached to both the fuselage and the lower mainplanes. The attachment points of the floats to the mainplanes were re-enforced by struts from the upper fuselage longerons. It was quite a large machine and the occupant of the rear cockpit lends scale in this photograph of the sole example of the type, which received the marine number 509 in January 1916.

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