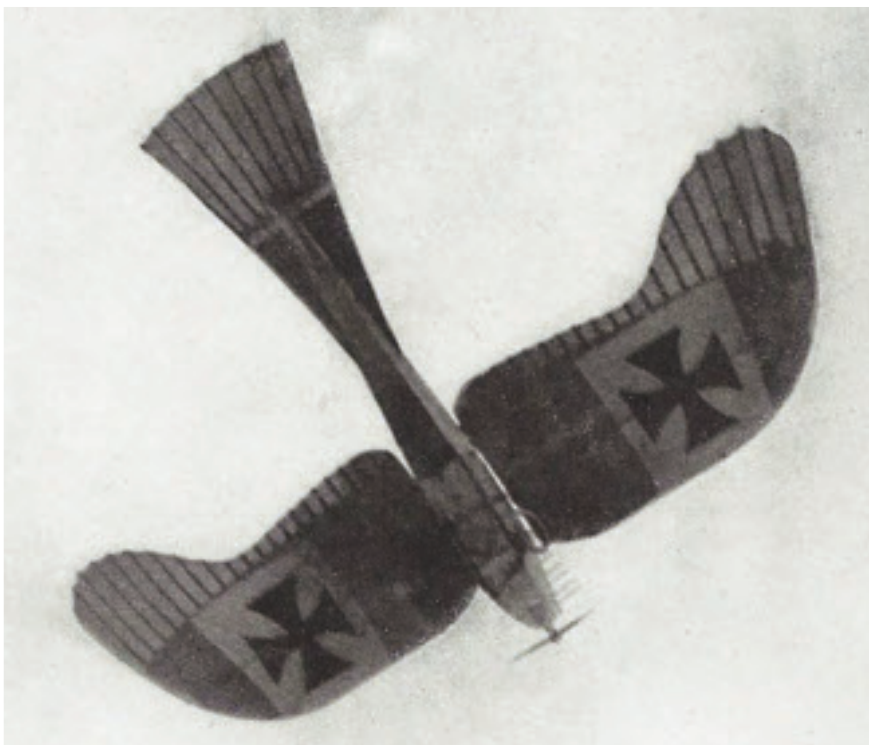


Dove of War



It had a unique, highly memorable design. It was the first airplane to engage in an act of war. It was Germany's first mass-produced military aircraft. All of these describe the "Taube," German for "dove," a pre-World War I monoplane. The Taube was conceived by Austrian designer Igo Etrich in 1910. He licensed it to Edmund Rumpler in Germany, but Rumpler reneged on royalties and Etrich abandoned the patent, generating broad production. Italy became a big user. In 1911, the pilot of an Italian Taube dropped the first bomb—grenades—in

anger. The Taube was flown by the Austro-Hungarian and Ottoman empires. It was most prominent in Germany, which used it as fighter, bomber, spotter, and trainer. In the first months of the Great War, German Taubes dropped bomblets on Paris, dispensed propaganda leaflets, and tracked Russian movements at the Battle of Tannenberg. However, the slow-turning Taube proved vulnerable to more-agile Allied aircraft and it was relegated to the trainer role. Many future German aces learned to fly on the graceful Rumpler Taube.

Images, clockwise from top left: Parisians in 1915 gawk at a captured Taube in Les Invalides complex; designer Igo Etrich; German manufacturer Edmund Rumpler; and a German Taube in flight.