

**RARE WW1 FOUR COLOUR AIRCRAFT FABRIC BALKAN CROSS FROM  
A FOKKER D7 CIRCA 1918**



Fabric measuring 74cm at the horizontal x 69cm at the vertical.

The cross itself has been cut off the fuselage at the seam at the top of the fuselage and a few mm after the tips of both ends of the horizontal, so that the cross is almost complete; all three arms measuring 29cm. The lower vertical has been cut short by 4cm and this was done to give the fabric a pretty much square shape. The reason for this is the shape of the fuselage tapers back and the lower left corner shows a notch in the fabric in the position of where the lifting handle would have been. This would be the maximum depth of the fabric at this point; this can be seen by setting a ruler across plans.

On the reverse of the fabric can be seen staining where part of the framing was. This is very useful as crosses were painted at specific points by specific manufacturers. This and the shape of the fabric, which also tapers back slightly right to left at the top, tells us this is from the starboard side of a DVII. The positioning of the frame staining (which can just be seen on the obverse also) in relation to the cross, tells us this is a Fokker or AOW built machine.

This very cross is featured on pages 14- 19 of Feldzug 18 by Michael Baldwin and was in the late author's collection. Scans of these pages are sold with the fabric. In the book Michael says he can identify this as specifically a Fokker built machine due to the orientation of the fabric itself, as well as the paint types used on the cross. I'm not convinced about this as I believe although there was a general orientation of how fabric was laid by these two manufacturers, there does seem to have been exceptions.



Condition wise, the fabric is in excellent condition and is still pretty supple. The dope is not peeling off at all and the white paint shows only a little loss at the extreme vertical tips. The black paint has suffered more loss as the paint used did not wear as well, this is the same on most surviving DVII crosses.

Jager Medals Militaria



Four-colour lozenge camouflage fabric:  
Fokker D.VII starboard fuselage Balkan cross



FELDZUG 1918 – VOLUME 6

As the air war evolved with new technological advances in airframe construction, engines and weaponry, so too did attempts to create more effective camouflages. After much experimentation with paint finishes, a great leap forward was made at the end of 1916. This was printing bolts of linen featuring small, different coloured, conjoined lozenges. The patterns created were repeated throughout the bolt, which saved time, money and valuable cellulose dope.

Of the various types used, the most common were four-colour and five-colour patterns. Both of these were produced in a darker spectrum of colours for upper surfaces, mostly applied to the top and sides of the aircraft. A lighter lower surface range of colour fabric was also produced for covering the undersides of the aircraft; again in both patterns.

By mid-1917 many airframe manufacturers were using printed lozenges to a large degree, especially on wings. Patterns of aircraft lozenge, including the naval designs, were generally termed by the Germans 'Buntfabenaufdruck'.

As a means of camouflage it now seems quite pointless, as over distance the various colours would be seen to merge into one – and this would be more apparent with sky (light) forming a background. White and black national insignia also stood out, thus reducing the effect further.

It seems quite feasible that both lozenge aircraft camouflage and the July 1918 steel helmet pattern may have been inspired – subconsciously, if not directly – by the cubist art movement. With earth, mud and rubble as a background, the similar style

A superb and rare WW1 cross from one of the most iconic and studied aircraft of WW1