

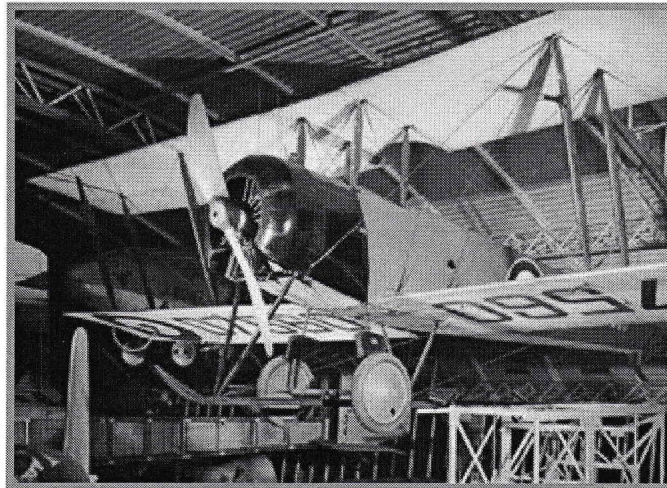
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ICONS OF INVENTION: Avro 504K biplane, 1918



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During the First World War more Avro 504 aircraft were produced than any other British plane. They took part in one of the earliest bombing raids in the war - the attack on the Zeppelin airship works at Friedrichshafen - and were also used in Britain for anti-Zeppelin patrols. The Avro 504 was a robust and safe design that was relatively easy to fly and, as it became outclassed in performance for combat, it was adopted for pilot instruction. Following the First World War it continued for many years as the standard training machine for the Royal Air Force.

Good flying qualities also made the Avro 504 popular for 'joyride' and 'flying circus' operators in the postwar era. Aviation had acquired a tremendous glamour as a result of newspaper reports of air battles, 'dogfights' and the exploits of the 'knights of the air'. Former war pilots could buy a government surplus *aircraft* with spares for its rotary engine cheaply and would then tour the country, giving displays of aerobatic stunts and taking up passengers. For most people in the 1920s this would have been their first chance to actually see, or perhaps fly in, an aeroplane.

The Avro 504 series was fitted with a variety of rotary engines - particularly Gnoms and Le Rhones. This aeroplane has the most

powerful engine - the 130-hp (97.5-kW) Clerget - and could achieve speeds of about 95 mph (153 km/h). It is one of the most original of the First World War aircraft still in existence today.

Inv. 1920-52

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