

# A Unique Flying Museum Project

By Achim Sven Engels

**FOR** some reason have always fascinated me. Regardless whether they are modern jets or vintage "tissue planes," I always had to look and see whenever they appeared.

To conquer the skies was a dream I can remember I've dreamed for all my life. A television series called "Die Grashüpfer" or "The Grasshoppers" (The original english title was "Where The Skies Begin") fed that dream.

I recall having watched it every Thursday evening and nothing could keep me away from it. At that time I did not know, but today I am aware, of course, that the planes were those of Jean Salis and that most of the filming was done of his flying exhibitions of early airplanes.

It was this series that lit the love for early birds in my young heart and it was this series that first told me the stories of these early pioneers. Otto Lilienthal and his gliders, Clement Ader and his "Eole," Ferdinand Zeppelin, the Voisin Brothers, Louis Blériot, early contests for speed and height, the fight with the elements and eventually the battles in the skies over the trenches with the Albatros fighters the Fokker triplanes and those Nieuports caught me forever.

Over the past years this interest developed into a true obsession - and not one of those obsessions that you want to get rid of as soon as possible. Rather it's that kind of obsession that forces you to continue working in this field and trying to learn as much as possible about it.

I still have a long way to go, but the more I learn about early aircraft making techniques, the more I am fascinated by the skills the workers had and how the engineers designed those planes to accommodate the skills and materials at hand at that time.

The more I learned about these early planes and their making the more I realised how wrong my initial impression of these planes was. Most of this can be attributed to the low level of knowledge spread about such things today.

There must be a way to show all this to those interested in it, I thought to myself.

Thinking about this over the past few years I developed a idea for a unique aviation museum.

There are two dreams I want to see materialize in my life. One is the formentioned museum, the other one is building a full size airworthy Me 109E from scratch. When I talk about dreams, I mean dreams in the purest sence. They actually never have to come true. My wish is to be kept busy by them until I meet my end.

To continually work on these is more important to me than to to have it finally done realized. I really hope they keep me busy for a very long time. Since I was asked to write down this article about my museum dream for all to share, let me give you some background information.

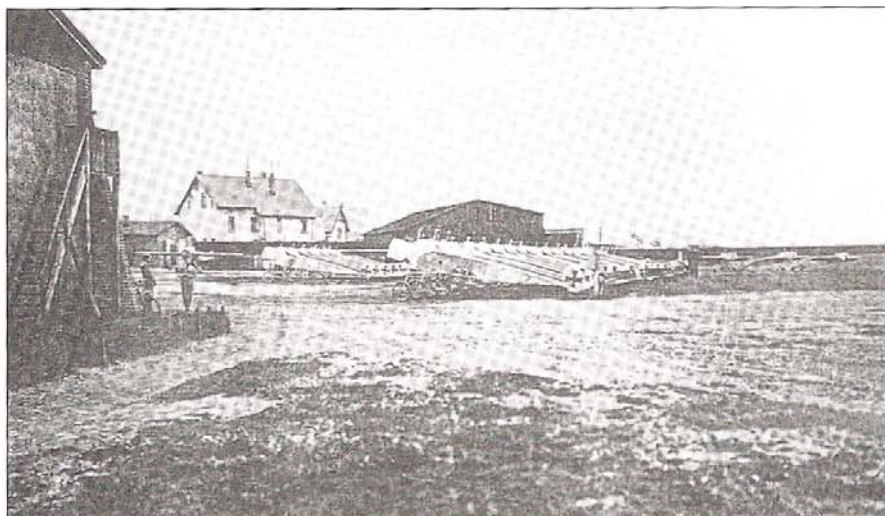
The main propose of the museum is not just to show aircraft, but to spread much more knowledge about the way they were designed and actually built.

To share with others the skills the workers had at that time while handling the materials that were common and in use at that time, employing the tools they had is the intention of the museum.

The idea is to re-erect the Fokker factory as it existed in Schwerin in the years between 1912 and 1918 - or to be more precise, to re-erect that part of the company that was located at the airfield of Schwerin Görries.



Flugfeld Schwerin Görries - 1915



Flugfeld Schwerin Görries - 1915

The entire area, including all the buildings, have to be recreated according to the original construction drawings, which are now in my archive. But this environment will not just house reproductions of the aircraft flown there, but rather it will be shown how they were built there.

All of the equipment that was used to construct the planes, ranging from tools and machines, even down to typewriters used in the offices, will be used to make those planes again.

Visitors will be encouraged to participate under professional guidance. This way the audience will become part of the exhibition. To show those who are interested how the aircraft were built, to teach them, is the main propose of this museum.

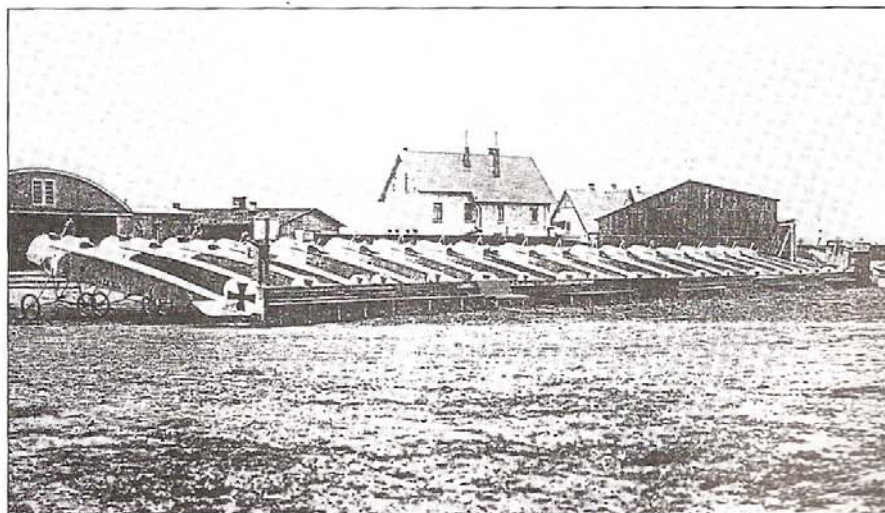
developed and built almost 60 prototypes in the years of 1912 to 1918. Only a few of these made it into serial production and are therefore known by a large audience. Each and every plane of these 60 prototypes are to be part of the museum. Each and every plane of these 60 prototypes are to be part of the exhibition and in an airworthy condition.

Since an airfield was part of the factory area at Schwerin Görries, there will be an airfield to be used for showing the aircraft in flight. But not only will they be shown in flight, they will be flown by the audience.

There is no reason why a visitor who is an experienced aircraft driver cannot be allowed to jump in whatever airplane he wants to try and take it aloft. There is also no reason why a less experienced pilot cannot take lessons in how to handle such a vintage plane, just like it was done back then.

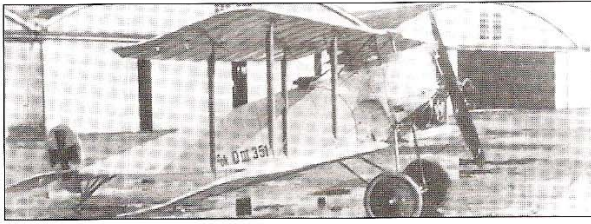
When showing people how to build these planes and how they did it back then, why should we not give pilots the opportunity to fly the planes like they flew back then. Let them experience the handling of the aircraft as it really was back then.

When dreaming, let me dream big. There is no reason to use modern engines for any of the planes that are part of the museum.



Fokker E.III's in production, Fokker factory, Schwerin Görries - 1915





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Fokker D.III, Flugfeld Schwerin Görries - 1916

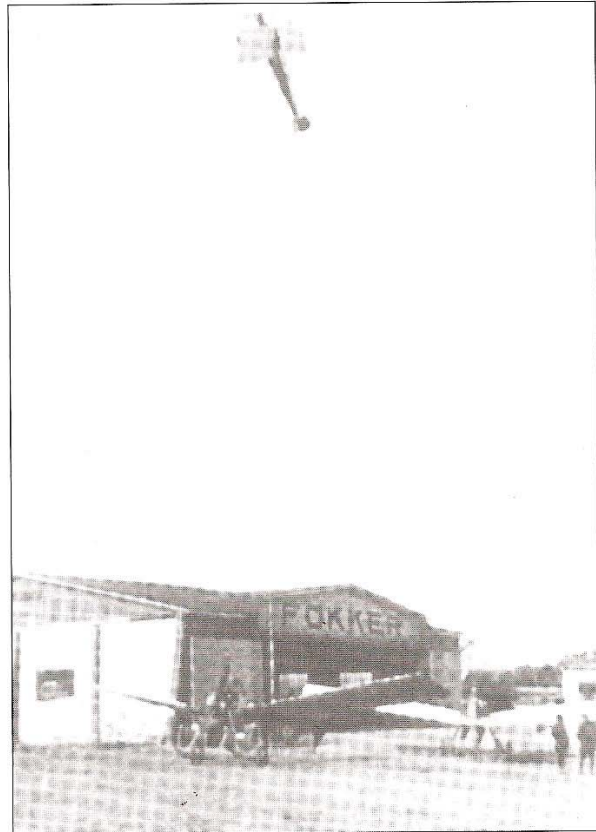
Many will say this is not possible, due to technical problems, availability of the engines, reliability of the engines, insurance difficulties and so forth.

I agree. There many reasons can be found to talk this project into impossibility. I am well aware of all these problems.

But this is not my business. Mine is to have my dream and find solutions to the problems. Compromise is not my thing and that approach would make the museum not even half so interesting.

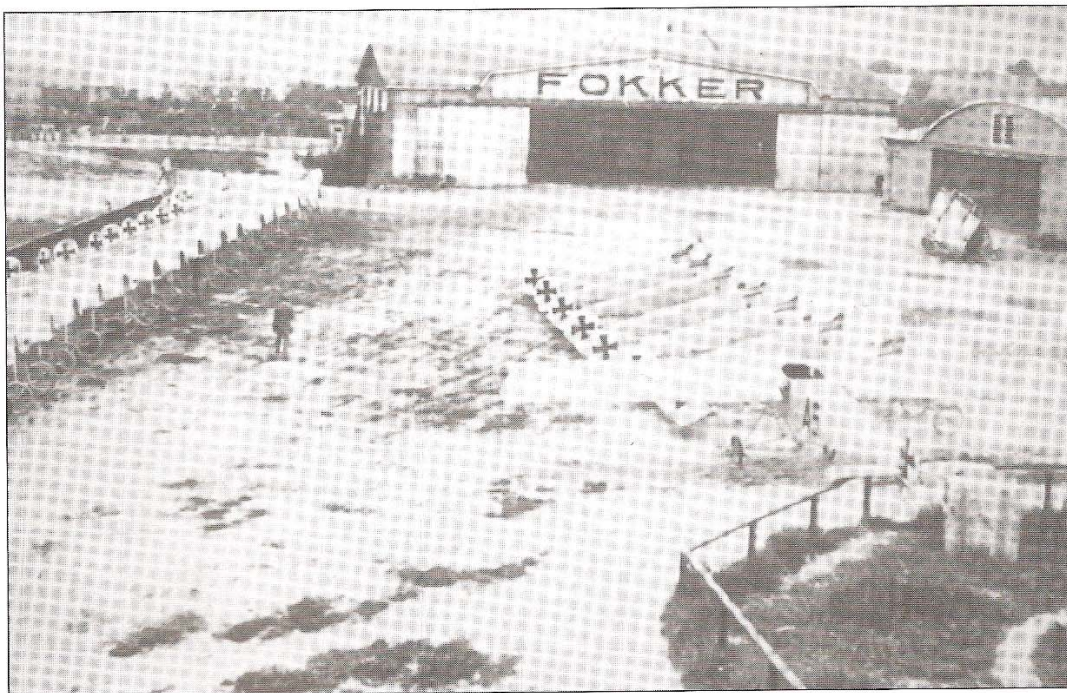
The only thing that is of importance is to recognize the problems and to focus on the solution for each and every one of these that may arise.

These are practical difficulties that will have to find a solution when it comes down to it. 



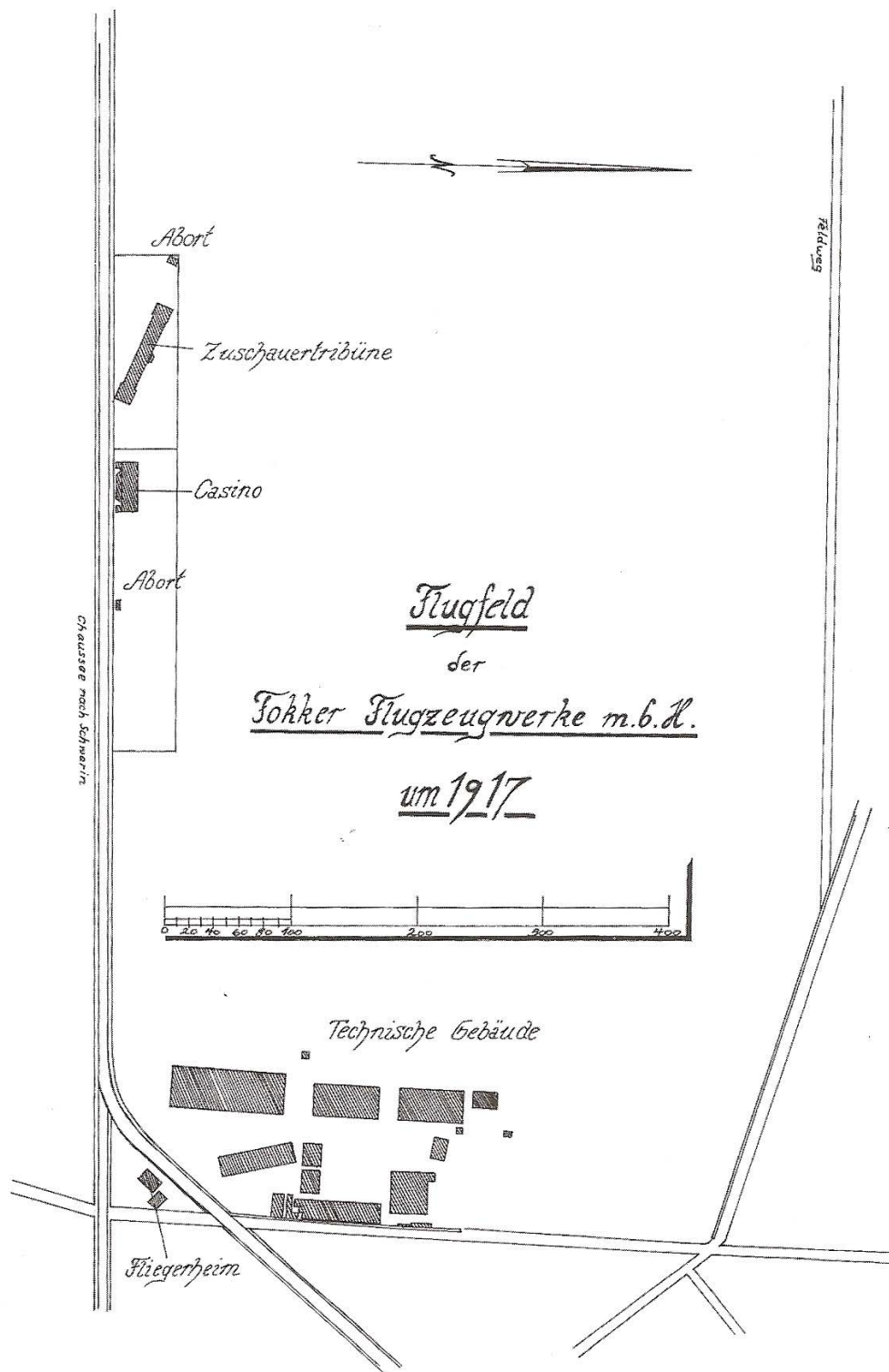
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Fokker factory, Schwerin Görries - 1914



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Fokker factory, Flugfeld Schwerin Görries - 1915

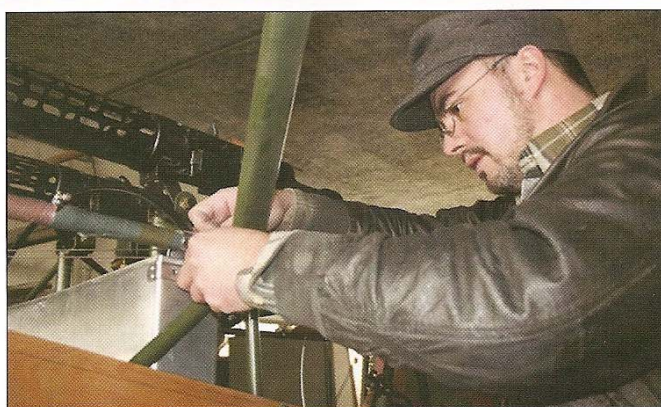
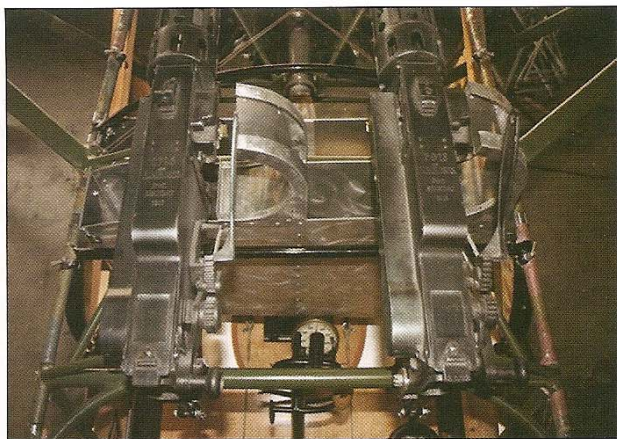


A. Engels im Nov. 1915

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Achim Engels' map of the Fokker factory and flying field, ca. 1917





Achim and Alexandra Engels hard at work. Fokker-Team-Schorndorf, Germany. All photographs © Achim Engels