

*Twenty-third of the Second Series*

# FRIEND or FOE?

*Two Very Similar Floatplanes :  
Fokker T8W and He 115*

**T**HIS week's selected pair, the Fokker T8W and the Heinkel He 115, are very similar aircraft in general appearance and happen to be types which are not so commonly encountered as many others. For these two reasons the likelihood of confusion is all the greater. But if one or two small but clearly distinguishable differences in their tail units are memorised, it should be comparatively easy to identify them.

Our Dutch allies operate a number of Fokker float-planes, while the Germans still venture forth in the North Sea area now and then in the Heinkel He 115; two examples of this float-plane were encountered and "shot up" by a patrolling Liberator quite recently, in fact.

The most obvious difference in their respective tail groups lies in the vertical surfaces. In plan, their tailplanes are approximately of the same type and will need closer scrutiny in order to differentiate between them.

Speaking in general terms, the Fokker fin and rudder has rounded extremities, whereas those of the Heinkel are severely angular. The Dutch machine has a good slope to the straight leading-edge, a nicely rounded apex, a slight slope to the trailing-edge of the rudder, and a rounded heel where the base of the rudder blends into the baseline of the fuselage. It will also be noticed from the side view that the tailplane is set nearly halfway up the fin, but that of the Heinkel is mounted only slightly above the base of the fin.

The He 115's fin also has a straight slope to its leading-edge, but it is a much more abrupt one. Its apex is flat and fairly broad, and it makes a definite right angle with the straight, vertical trailing-edge of the rudder. The heel of the rudder is also severely square — in fact, the rudder itself is virtually a plain rectangle.

To deal now with the tailplane plan, both have a straight, or almost straight, trailing-edge and a backswept leading-edge. But because the Fokker

tailplane is of higher aspect-ratio than that of the German machine, this backsweep is less acute. It will also be noticed that the "bite," where the elevators are cut away to allow rudder clearance, is nicely rounded off in the case of the Fokker, but is a sharp-cornered affair on the Heinkel.

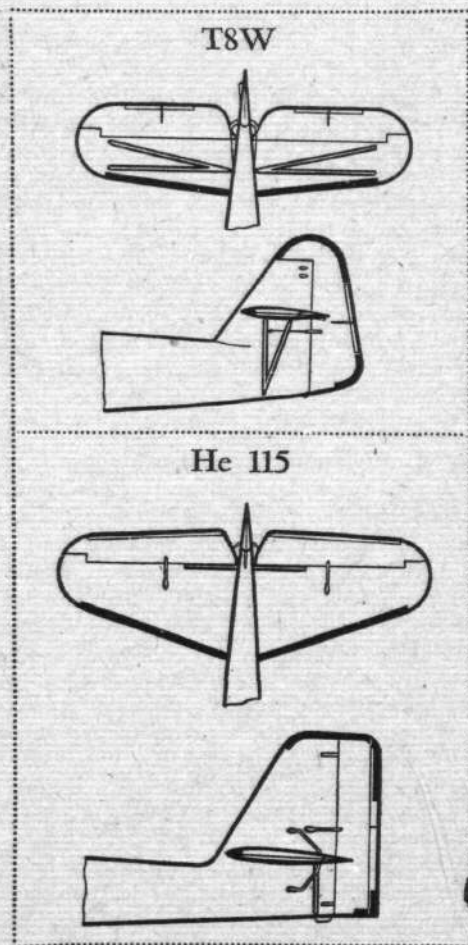
Both tailplanes are braced by external struts, but here there is a very obvious difference which will be most helpful to the spotter: the Fokker has a V-shaped double strut (the "V" being the right way up), whereas the Heinkel's tailplane is supported by single struts. The latter machine also has fairly prominent mass balances to both elevators and rudder, which should be visible from a rear view when the aircraft is reasonably close and conditions of visibility are good.

Incidentally, the Fokker was designed from the start as a torpedo-bomber and reconnaissance seaplane for the Netherlands Naval Air Service, and several operated with Coastal Command R.A.F. after the German invasion of Holland. The He 115, however, was developed from an earlier civil version.

*Next week:  
The Blackburn Roc seaplane and  
Avado Ar 196.*



**FOKKER:** High set tailplane with V struts, rounded tips and slight leading-edge backsweep. Straight-edged taper to fin and rudder with small round apex.



**HEINKEL:** Tailplane set near base of fin and braced by single struts: pronounced backsweep to leading-edge. Large angular fin and rudder with flat apex and vertical trailing-edge.

