

Deutsche Luft-Reederei Gesellschaft mit beschränkter Haftung - DLR (1917-1923)

For: www.europeanairlines.no

By: Rob Mulder

In 2009 we can celebrate the fact that air transport started up **90 years ago**, when Deutsche Luft-Reederei and Aircraft Transport & Travel Ltd started up air transport in Europe. In a series of articles we look at the history of these airlines. We start the series with the German airline company Deutsche Luft-Reederei GmbH.

One of the main airline companies in Germany after the Great War is the Deutsche Luft-Reederei Gesellschaft mit beschränkter Haftung - DLR (German Air Company Ltd.). Together with the two airline companies *Junkers Flugzeugwerke AG - Jfa* formed (Junkers Werke AG, Abt. Luftverkehr and Junkers Luftverkehr AG, the company has meant so much for the development of civil aviation in both Germany and Europe, that it will be interesting to read its history. This history will without doubt have shortcomings, as new facts are found while this is printed. But a lot of the information available here include for many new facts and figures. The biggest problem of the history of the DLR is the fleet. The aircraft used by the company have been registered in two official registers (LFR-A and LFR-B) in addition to the unofficial list DLR formed. To start with *all* aircraft carried the letters DLR on their fuselage, followed by a number or the combination of a letter and a number. Looking at the fleet list in this book one will notice that probably many aircraft will be listed twice. But the real connection between the DLR-register, the LFR-A and LFR-B Register can not be found anymore. Remaining correspondence in archives show a variety of aircraft owned, sold or thought to be sold by the DLR to other airline companies in Germany and abroad. When the *Inter-Allied Aeronautical Commission of Control - IAACC* started its hunt on ex-military aircraft, the fleet of DLR was of course one of the first to be examined. Many aircraft were destroyed in the beginning of the twenties, while others could continue to fly. It will therefore be impossible to give a complete picture of the fleet of the DLR, but at least the type of aircraft can be described.

DLR and its successor Deutscher Aero Lloyd AG - DAL participated in the formation of many airline companies in both Germany and abroad. The people that formed DLR were foresighted and contributed to a better understanding between the different countries, right after the Great War. Of course, before the Treaty of Versailles was signed, the German thought they could continue doing business as usual, but once the Treaty was signed, the co-operation with foreign airline companies got more difficult. In order to solve this DLR participated in the foundation of the *International Air Traffic Association - IATA* in August 1919 in Den Haag, the Netherlands. In that way the Germans could secure their planned air routes.

Beacon of German civil aviation and of the Deutsche Luft Hansa AG is without doubt the Deutsche Luft-Reederei GmbH - DLR. The company was formed in Berlin on December 13, 1917 following recommendations made by Walter Mackenthun on behalf of his boss Walter Rathenau, the president of the *AEG*-company, in November 1917 to the Board of Directors of *AEG* as a re-organisation of the *Gummiwerke Oberspree GmbH*, an affiliated of the electricity company *Allgemeine Elektrizitäts-Gesellschaft - AEG*. The stock-capital was Mk 2,500,000. Until the end of the Great War the company prepared the start of civil aviation under the management of Egon von Rieben, appointed managing director of DLR and assisted by Walter Mackenthun. In the spring of 1918 (28 May), the company was registered in the Trade Register of Berlin. The capital for the company came from the *AEG* and the *Deutsche Bank*, one of Germany's main banks. As early as 1910 the *AEG*-company had formed a *Flugtechnische Abteilung* under supervision of Paul Stumpf and later

Georg König. Latter designed a number of aircraft during the Great War. Among these were reconnaissance aircraft, fighters and aircraft in the G-series, used for bombardments. Post-war aircraft included the AEG K and the modified AEG J II.

In an early stage DLR took up contact with the Zeppelin Werke AG (for the start of air services with Zeppelin air ships) and later also with the *Hamburg-Amerikanische Paketfabrt AG - HAPAG*. Both companies later joined the DLR financially. Already during the Great War talks with among others the Swedish Government were held to see if a air route to neutral Sweden could be opened as soon as the war ended. Due to the Revolution there was lack of a clear ruling body within the German Government right after the Armistice and the talks with Sweden were postponed until later.

Of course it was not possible for DLR to start up air service during the Great War, but once the Armistice was signed (11 November 1918) the company could put its plan into effect. The new German provisional Government had decided to move the National Assembly temporary from Berlin to the rural city of Weimar. Between 6 February and 28 July 1919 the National Assembly had its seat at this city. It was therefore obvious that DLR should start up an air route between these two cities. Beside DLR, also *Junkers Werke AG & Co - Jco* and the military started up an air service for mail over this route.

Passenger, civil, regular, national and sustained

But DLR applied for a permit first and on 8 January 1919 it was awarded Germany's Air Traffic Permit No. 1. It gave the company the right to fly '*...from Berlin (Johannisthal) and return without a landing back to Berlin...*', i.e. no flights between two different cities. But after the application for the specific route Berlin - Weimar was handed over, the company soon received an indefinitely permit to fly in Germany.

First of all we would like to repeat some of [the qualification that John Stroud mentioned in his article](#) and which were used in our article as well. John Stroud wrote: "The establishment of first in air transport represents us with the same need for qualifications. In this case six are required to establish the beginning of regular, daily, scheduled, international passenger-carrying commercial air services: passenger, civil, regular, international and sustained. (Even the term daily needs qualification because it was frequently used to denote Monday to Saturday inclusive.)

The first scheduled passenger air service, opened on 1 January 1914 between St Petersburg and Tampa by St Petersburg-Tampa Airboat Line, met four of the qualifications but was neither international nor sustained. The Austro-Hungarian air mail service between Vienna and Kiev, begun on 20 March 1918, was not operated daily, did not carry passengers and was, at least in part, a military operation – but it was the first regular scheduled international air mail service. On 15 May 1918, the United States Post Office began New York – Washington and Washington – New York mail services. These met four of the qualifications but were not international and did not carry passengers. When Deutsche Luft-Reederei began its Berlin – Weimar service on 5 February 1919, it met all the qualifications except international. Lignes Aériennes Farman began Paris – Brussels service on 22 March 1919, but these were weekly and so failed to meet the qualification daily. Finally, on 25 August 1919, the British airline Aircraft Transport & Travel met all six qualifications when it inaugurated a regular, sustained, civil, daily (Monday to Saturday) passenger service between London and Paris".

With a flying permit approved the Deutsche Luft-Reederei GmbH could start to operate the air services it wanted. DLR subsequently opened on **5 February 1919 with the AEG J II, DLR 13** (later in the LFR-A Register D.61) the 250km long air route Berlin - Weimar. The company

inaugurated with this air service and met the next criteria: **passenger, civil, regular and sustained**, but not international. It was a national air service.



The AEG J II was diverted from the fighter J I and was powered by a 200 hp Benz Bz IV. This biplane was used in huge numbers, together with the LVG C V and C VI. According to John Stroud as many as 71 aircraft were in use, supplemented by AEG G V and Friedrichshafen FF 45 (former G IIIa, twin-engined aircraft). All DLR-aircraft prior to the introduction of the LFR-A (March 1919 and in use until 22 May 1920) carried an individual fleet number. They carried the letters DLR on their fuselage, often followed by the fleet number with in between the German *Reichsflag* (the German postal flag). The DLR-fleet-list is far from complete, but so far some 50 numbers have been traced, of which thirty-eight between 2 and 97 inclusive, plus six W-prefixed numbers, and seven 500-series numbers. The W-prefixed numbers were used for seaplanes, while the 500-series was used for twin-engine aircraft. The multi-engine aircraft (like the Staaken R.XIVa, DLR 70 with five engines) felt under the 2 to 97-series. Between March and April 1920 the aircraft received their national identity D completed with a number from the LFR-A Register. But already in January 1920 most of the smaller DLR-aircraft (among them a great number of LVG C V and C VI) were cancelled from the register, sold to other German airline companies, or exported abroad (Denmark, Sweden, Belgium and other countries). But the aircraft used by DLR were all ex-military aircraft, converted into civil airliners, most of them carrying an enclosed cockpit as the passenger's cabin. The pilot always sat in the open air in order to be able to feel the wind. The converted AEG J II were known as AEG K (K for *Kabine* - cabin) with accommodation for two passengers. The biplanes LVG C V and C VI were during the Great War used for reconnaissance work and in 1919 the cabin-version was known as the P I. DLR used at least ten LVG C V and fifty-one LVG C VI, but most certainly more than these figures. Of the AEG J II thirteen are known and addition to one AEG K-aircraft. In the early years DLR had in addition to the above-mentioned aeroplanes at least eight Friedrichshafen FF 49, seven FF 45, one AEG N I, three Staaken R.XIVas, two Rumpler-aircraft and three Fokker D VIIs. Other types in use were the Albatros L 58a, the Hansa-Brandenburg W 29 (DLR 15, see picture of scale model by Tracy Hancock), the Dornier Komet II and the Fokker-Grulich F.II and F.III.



The Berlin - Weimar route was flown under great pressure and in competition with the German Air Force. Some statistics on the first month (6 – 28 February) were published: nineteen passengers were carried. Eighteen departures had to be cancelled due to the weather, while three flights ended with an extra-ordinary landing. But 82.5% of the flights was performed according to schedule.

Further expansion

The Berlin - Weimar route was not the only route the company managed to operate. On 1 March 1919 DLR started to fly over Berlin - Hamburg (Fuhlsbüttel) route, followed on 15 April by the air services Berlin - Warnemünde (220km, flown with the AEG N I and with connection to and from the ferry to Denmark) Berlin - Brunswick - Hannover - Gelsenkirchen (490km; this service was flown with the LVG C VI). As flying across the occupied Rhineland (the area west of the river Rhine) was prohibited, DLR provided mail transport service by motorcycles to cities in the Ruhr-area.

The next area to operate was for DLR the area along the holiday resorts in Northern Germany (the North Sea and Baltic Sea holiday resorts). These services turned out to be money making. They were flown throughout many years by many airlines in Germany. Not only the DLR and Deutscher Aero Lloyd AG - DAL, but also regional airlines operated these services. On 5 July DLR opened the Berlin - Swinemünde (175km) and prolonged the Berlin - Hamburg service to Westerland (190km). Joy ride flights were offered along the coast, using seaplanes of the type Friedrichshafen FF 49. Latter was a little biplane on floats of which DLR had at least six in service: DLR W1, DLR W3, DLR W5, DLR W6, DLR W7 and DLR W8. One aircraft, DLR W1, was chartered in October and November to the Swedish airline company Svensk Lufttrafikk AB - SLA. The aircraft (Swedish registration S-AAI) returned in November to DLR.

The German Government allowed DLR to charter in 1919 a number of aircraft to the Ukraine Government for the transportation of new money for the young state. The country was at that stage at war (among other with Rumania) and wanted to start up its economy by introducing a new currency. First of all some of the DLR-aircraft were secretly transferred from Germany to the Ukraine and in addition the Ukraine Government chartered the three five-engine Staaken R.XIVa-aircraft. DLR had three of these aircraft. One of the aircraft with the constructor's number R70 had the fleet number DLR 70 and the registration D.130, while the two other aeroplanes had the LFR-A registration D.129 (c/n R69) and D.131 (c/n R71). All three were lost in duty. The first one, D.130, was on 29 July confiscated by French troops on behalf of the *LAACC* at the airport of Wien, Aspern. The second aircraft crashed and burned on 4 August in Oberschlesien. The last Staaken R.XIVa, commanded by Captain Count Hans Wolf von Harah and with the pilots Heinrich Smiltz and Henrig Tretken, was forced down due to fuel problems on 19 September on its way to Kamenets-Podolski. Upon the landing the crew was captured by two soldiers of the Rumanian 37th Infantry Regiment, who happened to be nearby. On board the Rumanians found 303 million *griverns* (Ukraine roubles), issued 5, 6 and 24 October 1918. The Ukraine passengers were sent to Ukraine controlled area on the other side of the river Dnestr, while the Germans were imprisoned. The aircraft was repaired by Rumanian aeronautical engineers and flown by Petre Macavei (Technical 1st Lieutenant) and other crewmembers to the capital of Rumania, Bucharest. On its way the engine caused more trouble, but in the end the aircraft managed to arrive save and sound. It never flew again, but was stationed at the airport for several years before it was dismantled. Its wooden propellers went to the military museum in Bucharest. Without aircraft, the DLR had to supply new aircraft and offered for the Ukraine operations the Friedrichshafen G IIIa (known as the FF 45).

Recognition from abroad was achieved when the English airline company Aircraft Transport & Travel - AT&T took up contact through the Danish airline company DDL to ask the German company to join the founders of the *International Air Traffic Association - IATA* on 28 August 1919 in Den Haag, the Netherlands. This would lead to the opening of the first pool service ever in 1920.

But at the end of the year DLR could look back on a successful year. The shortage of fuel caused most of the interruptions during the 1919-season. At the end of the year 651,698km had been flown. The fleet had carried 2,921 passengers, and 93,150kg mail. The best month was July with 727 passengers. The regularity was 91.7% and although 235 flights were interrupted, nobody was killed or hurt.

The second year – new challenges

It was impossible for DLR to find work for all its aeroplanes and in the first months of 1920 a huge number of aircraft were sold or taken out of service. In January the following aircraft were cancelled from the LFR-A Register: two AEG J II, thirty LVG C VI, four LVG C V and four Friedrichshafen FF 45s. DLR sold a number of aircraft to Schäfer, who purchased aircraft for the

Deutsche Luft-Lloyd. On 30 March these were two LVG (c/n 3159 and 15932), 16 April two LVG C VI (D.58, c/n 5076 and 117), on 8 May one Fokker D VII (D.179, c/n 7609), on 12 May two Albatros B II and on 15 May two LVG C Vs (D.485, c/n 591 and D.483, c/n 14470). Export of one Friedrichshafen FF 220 and 3 LVG-aircraft was stopped by the *LAACC*. In April at least two Friedrichshafen FF 49s (LFR-A registration D.380 and D.381) were sold to Denmark, while on 4 May two aircraft (one unknown type with the registration D.588 and one Fokker Dr I registered D.600) were taken over by the Dutch Internationale Lucht Vervoer Onderneming - ILVO.

To add to the confusing, many of the LVG-aircraft returned to DLR. On 6 May the *LAACC* wrote to the Germany's Foreign Office that because of lack of proper civil aircraft DLR was allowed to keep thirty-two LVG C Vs and C VIs, thirteen AEG J IIs, three Fokker D VIIs, three Friedrichshafen FF 45s and eleven Friedrichshafen FF 49s.

Some known lost aircraft in 1920 are the Friedrichshafen FF 49 (D.42) on 16 August near Öresund in Sweden (three persons injured), while one LVG (registration D.16) and one AEG (D.25) were repaired in the autumn of 1920 and taken in use again by November of that year.

In April/May 1920 the *LAACC* cancelled all aircraft registered in the LFR-A and opened a new register, known as LFR-B. All aircraft were to be registered again, now under supervision of the *LAACC*. If the aircraft and its engine complied with the rules implemented by the *LAACC* it received a star on the fuselage and a new D-registration. Many of the DLR-aeroplanes were re-registered in the LFR-B.

Until May, DLR tried to operate its extensive fleet and network without any subsidy, but had to start talks with the *Reichsluftamt* (Reich's Air Council) to ask to replace the lost stock-capital, which had been used for the operation of the company. On 25 May 1920 DLR was transferred 3.5 million Marks as subsidy for the year 1920. The condition was that DLR was obliged to carry out regular air transport and that it would transport all mail free of charge. In exchange, DLR was awarded a subsidy of 10 Mark for routes up to 300km and 11 Marks for routes longer than 300km.

The network underwent some considerable changes. DLR operated the air services Berlin - Warnemünde, Berlin - Hamburg - Westerland, Berlin - Leipzig (during the annual *Leipziger Messe*), Berlin - Leipzig - Weimar - Frankfurt am Main and Berlin - Braunschweig - Dortmund - Gelsenkirchen. The network had a total length of 2,240km.

But also internationally, the first successes were made. The *LATA*-partners KLM (the Netherlands), DDL (Denmark), SLA (Sweden) and DLR signed the first pool agreement in the world for the air service Amsterdam (in the Netherlands) - Bremen - Hamburg - København (in Denmark), later extended with the air route København - Malmö (Sweden) - Warnemünde air service. Due to lack of aircraft at the Dutch and Danish side, the Germans supplied the companies with aircraft and operated from 1 September 1920 the service *officially* for KLM and DDL and known as the *Europa-Nord-West-Flug*. The type of aircraft used were: LVG C VI, AEG K, Sablatnig P III, LVG C V, Rumpler C IV, Friedrichshafen FF 45 and Sablatnig N I. Some of the aircraft came from the Lloyd Luftverkehr Sablatnig. Pilots were Mr Schwarz, Mr Polte, Mr Max Kahlow, Mr Steindorf, Mr Antonius Raab, Mr Petersen and Mr Eerthold.



The air service between Germany (Warnemünde) and Denmark (København), was opened in co-operation with DDL. The Swedish IATA-partner SLA was to join as well, but did not have serviceable aircraft at hand. The Danish airline company DDL opened on 7 August 1920 with its Friedrichshafen FF 49C, T-DABA, the service København - Malmö - Warnemünde (see picture). The aircraft was chartered from DLR. Later that month DLR joined with its FF 49s, followed at the end of August by SLA with its Junkers F

13W, D.8. This aircraft made some sporadic flights and was shortly afterwards taken out of service. The first trial flight to the Baltic States in the east followed in October 1920. Already on 27 October 1919 DLR had formed an affiliated airline in the Free City of Danzig, called Danziger Luft-Reederei

GmbH - DzLR. This company received a number of aircraft from DLR. But in 1920 it was time to think about extending the air services from Germany to the Baltic States to secure German interests. German airline companies were not allowed to fly abroad and therefore affiliated airline companies were formed. By the end of the summer season the preparations of a new service were finalised and on 18 October (some sources say 20th) the Friedrichshafen FF.49, D.43 departed Warnemünde for a trial flight to Königsberg, Memel and Riga. The Lithuanian Government returned Lithuanian mail to Germany with the aircraft. It seems that more flights were made or scheduled in October 1920. A service to the Baltic states could be opened in 1921, but then by the DLR-affiliated airline company Danziger Luft-Reederei GmbH - DzLR .

The results for 1920 were really bad, despite the fact that DLR flew extra flights during the numerous strikes in at the German Railways and despite the huge number of special and joy ride flights (increase from 1,389 in 1920 to 2,141 flights in 1920). The number of regular flight declined from 2,167 in 1919 to 757, well one-third of the 1919-result! The aircraft flew 374,345km on 2,898 flights and carried 2,665 passengers and 6,914kg airmail. In addition came the passengers on joy ride and special flights: 2,173. The load factor sank from 35% (1919) to a miserable 19.7% in 1920. Regularity went up to 93.5%.

1921 – Re-organisation

In 1921 the fleet saw further reduction due to seizure of aircraft by the *LAACC* and through accidents. The Fokker Dr I, D.39 was taken by the *LAACC* and destroyed, while on 10 January the LVG C V, D.33 crashed at Gardelegen (Germany) injuring the four occupants. January saw the cancellation of the registration D.141, belonging to the Albatros C III and in April the AEG J II D.21 (ex DLR 15) was taken out of service, but entered the register as D.82 in September. The LVG C VI, D.53 (LFR-A) was in August sold to the Belgian operator Syndicat National pour l'Etude des Transports Aériens - SNETA (the predecessor of the SABENA) and registered O-BAFC. Finally the AEG J II, D.82 was taken out of service by September 1921.

On 10 January the LVG C V, D.33 crashed, followed by the LVG C VI, D.18 on 26 June. In August DLR also lost the AEG J II, D.22 (ex DLR 14), followed by the AEG J II, D.23 (ex DLR 36).

A regular published review over the aircraft operated in Germany showed that DLR by 8 September 1921 was the biggest airline company in Germany with 47 aircraft. Its fleet consisted out of six LVG C V, twenty LVG C VI, eight AEG J II and K, one AEG N I, three Friedrichshafen FF 45 and nine Friedrichshafen FF 49 and FF 71.

But more important for the company was the first major re-organisation of German aviation. In 1919 the Lloyd Ostflug GmbH was formed by the Lloyd Luftdienst GmbH, Bremen; *Albatros Gesellschaft für Flugzeugunternehmungen mbH*, Berlin; the *Junkers Flugzeugwerk AG*, Dessau; and *Ostdeutsche Landwerkstätten GmbH*, Seerappen. The *Norddeutsche Lloyd* stood for the marketing of the company and was in additional sales agent for other airline companies in Germany, like the Lloyd Sablatnig GmbH and the Rumpler Luftverkehr. *Norddeutscher Lloyd's* competitor in Hamburg was the *Hamburg-Amerikanische Paketfahrt AG - HAPAG*, who was also interested in obtaining more influence in the aviation business. Since Lloyd Ostflug GmbH was working together with *Norddeutsche Lloyd*, the *HAPAG* turned to AEG and DLR to see if they were interested. The parties found each other and signed on 7 April 1921 a ten years valid Consortium Agreement. The parties would form the *Aero Union Aktien Gesellschaft*, which stock-capital was divided over:

<i>Allgemeine Elektrizitäts-Gesellschaft - AEG</i>	40 %
<i>Hamburg-Amerikanische Paketfahrt AG-HAPAG</i>	40 %
<i>Luftschiffbau Zeppelin GmbH</i>	20 %

The co-operation was retrospective from 1 January 1921. The parties joined together to co-ordinate airline business with aircraft and aircraft manufacturing, aerial photography and aerial survey. The seat of the company was in Berlin and the stock-capital was 12.5 million Mark, divided over:

- *AEG* with 5,000,000 Mark;
- *HAPAG* with 4,998,000 Mark;
- Two no-names with each 1,000 Mark; and
- *Zeppelin* with 2,500,000 Mark.

The Metallbank AG, Frankfurt and the Metallurgische Gesellschaft AG, Frankfurt also provided money. *AEG* took the value of the aircraft of DLR and use it as its payment to the *Aero Union AG*. *Luftschiffbau Zeppelin GmbH* (which formed on 20 June 1922 the *Dornier Metallbauten GmbH* together with *HAPAG*, *AEG* and the *Metallbank AG*) had until 31 December 1922 the possibility to increase its part of the stock-capital to one-third (5,000,000 Mark). The *Aero-Union A.G.* took over the assets of DLR, but not the buildings and offices. DLR would stand for the technical preparation and operate air services with aircraft (not with rigid air ships). The *Aero-Union AG* was not meant as a dominating force. DLR could still continue as before, and could start new airline companies in Germany and abroad. Furthermore, DLR was to use as much as possible flying material from the *Luftschiffbau Zeppelin GmbH* for its air services. The company was also obliged to give the *Luftschiffbau Zeppelin GmbH* feedback on its product.

The Board of Directors of the *Aero-Union AG* would consist out of two representatives of *AEG*, *HAPAG* and *Luftschiffbau Zeppelin GmbH*. The post of President was given to the *HAPAG*. DLR was re-organised as well and was given two directors (Dr Egon von Rieben and Walter Mackenthun), while the Board of Directors consisted out of four members with a President from the *AEG*. Other operating members within the *Aero-Union AG* were fellow IATA-member *Danziger Luft-Reederei GmbH* and later also the *Deutsch-Russische Luftverkehrsgesellschaft mbH* - *Deruluft*. Together they formed an impressive alliance, which had decisive influence in German aviation.

One of the first results of this agreement was a complete refurbishing of the fleet. DLR was in bad need of new and more economical aeroplanes had started to take in use the first Fokker-aircraft, type F.II. The Fokker F.III was added soon, but as they were overpowered, the first aeroplanes were registered in Danzig at DzLR. The Fokker F.II, D.57 (c/n 1500) was taken in use as early as 1920 and used by DLR on a limited scale.

The network of DLR in 1921 included Berlin - Dresden, Travemünde - Warnemünde - Sassnitz - Swinemünde, Hamburg - Westerland and Berlin - Braunschweig - Dortmund. The international air service consisted out of Hamburg - Bremen - Amsterdam (not flown in co-operation with KLM). The services were flown between 1 April and 31 October and were due to the bad results during the winter of 1920-21 not operated during the winter season anymore. The results were satisfying again: 806,498 km flown (of which 594,922km on regular flights) on 5,328 flights and carrying 8,391 passengers (of which 2,848 passengers on the network) and 29,092kg mail. The load factor increased to 41.6%, regularity to 96.4%. In the period 1919-1922 the line Hamburg - Westerland was one of the most lucrative air services: In 1921 652 passengers and 16,008kg mail was carried. DLR has published some smaller statistics, showing the use of petrol. In March 1921 the forty-seven aeroplanes used 41,735 litres petrol, i.e. 888 litre per aircraft and 0.83 litre per flown kilometre. The company had a flying staff of 13-19 pilots.

1922 – The final year

The year 1922 marked the end of the production-prohibition. This meant that new type of aircraft could be delivered to DLR. The company had talks with *Junkers Flugzeugwerke AG* - *Jfa* about a possible order for the Junkers F 13, but it never came to an agreement. The Albatros L.58a looked promising, but did not go into production until 1923. But most interesting was one of the product

from the affiliated aircraft manufacturer *Dornier Metallbauten GmbH* produced the Dornier Do C III, later known as the Komet I. It was a high-wing single-engine all-metal landplane with a 185 hp BMW IIIa- or 180 hp BMW III-engine. After tests the aircraft's engine was replaced with the 250 hp BMW IV-engine and re-designated Komet II. The cabin could take four passengers. The type made its first flight on 9 October 1922 and was now ready. It seemed that DLR had at least two Dornier Komet IIs in service, before the company ceased to exist in favour of DAL. At least the Dornier Komet IIs, D.223 and D.248 had been delivered at the end of 1922. DLR had signed a contract with the English authorities including the clause that the Germans were allowed to open an air service on London, if they managed to get a by the *LAACC* approved aircraft to the United Kingdom before 1 January 1923. Therefore on the last day of 1922, the pilot Max Kahlow took off with the new Dornier Komet II, D.223 for the first flight after the Great War of a civil German aircraft to the United Kingdom. On board were three directors of the DLR: Martin Wronsky, Otto Merkel and Walter Mackenthun. Bad weather forced the aircraft to abandon the flight in Lymph in the county of Kent. Croydon could not be reached until the next day. But this flight marked the beginning of the air service between Germany and the United Kingdom, although it was DAL that opened the line in May 1923.



DLRs last full year of exploitation was re-opened on 1 April 1922 with the Air Service No 2: Hamburg - Berlin and Air Service No 1: Berlin - Dresden, prolonged on June 21 from Hamburg to Westerland. The service to Amsterdam was not re-opened by DLR in 1922, but DZLR and DLR flew the air service Danzig - Königsberg - Memel - Riga. In Danzig the passenger had connection on the train to and from Berlin. In Riga there was a connection by A-S Aeronaut to Tallinn. From 1 May Danzig - Königsberg connected on Derulufts air service to Moskva. The reduction in the number of air service was done to obtain a best possible load factor. This was achieved. DLR flew 300,524km on just 547 regular flights. The number of passengers carried here declined to 2,629. Freight transported in 1922 ended on 37,000kg and mail on 32,000kg. In addition DLR flew 903,156km on charter and joy ride flights. The number of passengers here increased to 7,733.

Some remarkable changes in the fleet were the extra-ordinary landing of the AEG J II, D.26 on 7 March and the LVG C VI, D.14 on 8 May (near Hamburg). Both aircraft could be repaired and taken in use again. A worse possible fate affected the AEG J II, D.25, which burnt out on April 13 at Lanz near Witttemberg. This accident was followed by the loss of aeroplanes in July: the LVG C VI, D.148 and the AEG J II, D.150. Both were destroyed beyond repair. The *LAACC* took also in 1922 at least two of DLRs aircraft. They were Friedrichshafen FF 45s, the D.27 and the D.72 and destroyed in November. Before the foundation of its successor, the [Deutscher Aero Lloyd AG - DAL](#), DLR took delivery of at least one Albatros L.58a, with the registration D.244.

DLR stopped its operation upon the foundation of the [Deutscher Aero Lloyd AG - DAL](#) in February 1923.

Pictures: Archive European Airlines
Rob Mulder, Dornier GmbH and the
scale model was made by Tracy
Hancock, who asked us to mention that
the flag pole should not be on the
fuselage.