

NAME THAT PLANE

Nieuport 11

The Nieuport 11 was basically a smaller, neater version of the Nieuport 10 - designed specifically as a single-seat fighter. Like the "10" the "11" was a sesquiplane, a biplane with a full-sized top wing with two spars, and a lower wing of much narrower chord and just one spar, and allegedly intended to have been made to function as the ailerons for the design, by pivoting around the single spar.

This small, lightly loaded sesquiplane outclassed the Fokker Eindecker in practically every respect. Among other features it had ailerons for lateral control rather than the obsolete wing warping of the Fokker - and its elevator was attached to a conventional tail plane as opposed to balanced "Morane type" elevators, making it much easier to fly accurately. The Fokker's success had largely been due to its synchronized machine gun which fired forward through the arc of its propeller. At the time, the Allies did not possess a similar system, and the Nieuport 11's Lewis or Hotchkiss machine gun, both designs having open bolt firing cycles unsuitable for synchronization, was mounted on the top wing to fire over the propeller, achieving similar results. There were however problems with clearing gun jams and replacing ammunition drums in flight, which were eventually solved in British service with the invention of the Foster mounting, and in French service by the adoption of the Alkan synchronization gear, which was applied to Nieuport fighters from the Nieuport 17 onwards.

During the course of the Battle of Verdun in February 1916, the Nieuport 11 inflicted heavy losses on the enemy, forcing a radical change in German tactics. Some Nieuport 11s were modified in service to fire Le Prieur rockets from the struts. These weapons were intended for attacks on observation balloons and airships.

General characteristics

- * Crew: one, pilot
- * Length: 19 ft 0 in
- * Wingspan: 24 ft 9 in
- * Height: 7 ft 10.5 in
- * Wing area: 140 ft²
- * Empty weight: 759 lb
- * Loaded weight: 1,058 lb
- * Max takeoff weight: 1,213 lb
- * Powerplant: 1 × Gnome Lambda seven-cylinder, or Le Rhone 9C nine-cylinder air-cooled rotary engine, (80 hp)

Performance

- * Maximum speed: 97 mph
- * Range: 205 miles
- * Service ceiling: 15,090 ft
- * Rate of climb: 15 mins to 9,840 ft
- * Power/mass: 0.09 hp/lb

Armament

- * 1 × Hotchkiss or Lewis machine gun



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