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# Contents

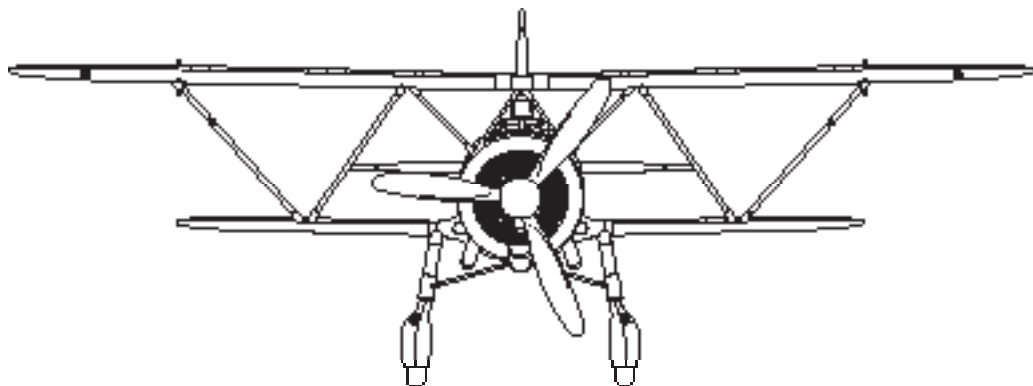
History and Development .....	3
Versions.....	9
CR.42AS .....	9
CR.42 Egeo .....	11
CR.42EC .....	11
CR.42CN .....	11
CR.42LW .....	12
CR.42B.....	12
“Falco” Reconnaissance Aircraft .....	14
ICR.42/CR.42Idro .....	14
CR.42DB .....	15
The Swedish modification of the “Falco” .....	15
The Hungarian modification of the “Falco”.....	16
Fiat CR.42 Production for the Regia Aeronautica .....	17
Fiat CR.42 Export .....	17
Combat History.....	20
The Regia Aeronautica.....	20
France 1940 .....	20
Air battles over Britain.....	23
Fiats over Malta.....	26
Fighting in the Balkans.....	30
North Africa 1940-1943 .....	35
East Africa 1940-1941.....	40
The Iraqi episode .....	43
The Night Falco.....	44
The last scene .....	46
Training Fiats .....	46
Belgian Fiat CR.42 (by Peter Taghon) .....	47
The CR 42 in Hungary (by Csaba Becze).....	66
Svenska Flygvapnet .....	74
The “Falco” in Allied Hands.....	78
The Luftwaffe.....	79
Colour photos.....	81
Colour profiles .....	126

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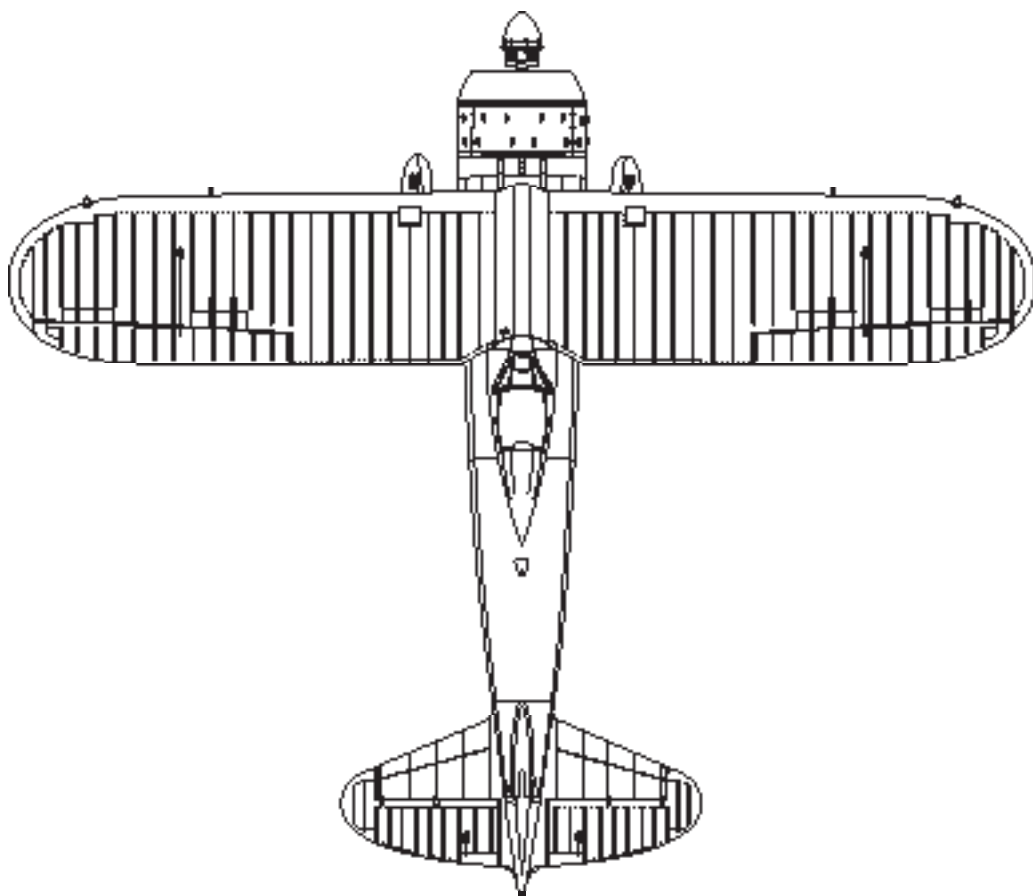
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## On the title page:

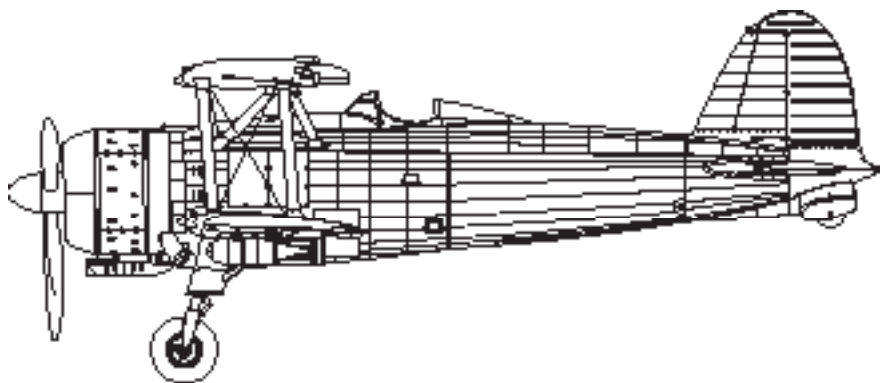
*Nice picture of R.6 at Nivelles in the spring of 1940. At the rear is a Fairey Firefly.  
(M.Michotte)*



*Fiat CR.42 1/72 scale plans*



Fiat CR.42AS.  
1/72 scale.



Fiat CR.42 AS with the wheel fairings removed and with the 100kg bombs under the wings.

G. Apostolo.



1940) and under-wing bomb racks for bombs of 50 and 100 kg. These aircraft also had a slightly different, longer, propeller spinner.

The Fiat CR.42EC.

G. Apostolo.

In 1941, two CR.42s numbered M.M.4443 and 5697 were tested with an under-fuselage rack for 250 kg bombs. Despite promising test results, mass-production of this aircraft did not occur. According to some sources, a number





*The Fiat CR.42 (M.M.5701) of the 95 Squadriglia, crashed in Britain on 29.10.1940 by Sergante Pietro Salvadori after fight against Hurricanes of No 257 Squadron RAF. This CR.42 is displayed at RAF Museum, Hendon.*

*R. Gretzyngier.*

*This picture from 1940 was probably taken after the French campaign. In front are the Fiat CR.42s of the 367<sup>a</sup> Squadriglia (157<sup>o</sup> Gruppo).*

*G. Apostolo*



# The Belgian Fiat CR.42

In December 1938 a consortium of Italian aircraft constructors invited a Belgian mission to take a close look at their products. Among the planes presented was the prototype of the Fiat CR.42. The results of the presentation were not encouraging. General Paul Hiernaux wrote in his report: *“The Italian products are not evolving. They are oriented to use simple and cheap materials”*<sup>35</sup>

In the second half of 1939 it became clear that the threat of a new war was serious, and Belgium, like several other European countries, hurried to re-equip its airforce. French and British constructors could hardly fulfil the needs of their own governments, and so the Belgian authorities were forced to turn to Italy. A Belgian mission concluded the purchase of 40 Fiat CR.42s. At this time the biplane fighter had just begun test flights. Finally, in December 1939 Order Number 39/581 was signed; 40 planes were bought for a total price of 40 million francs. The Fiat CR.42s were to be delivered in parts and assembled by the *Etablissements AŽronautiques*.

On March 6th 1940 the first Fiat CR.42s arrived at the *Etablissements AŽronautiques* in Evere/Haren. The planes were supplied in cases, painted in Italian camouflage colours, and were quickly assembled. An important delegation of pilots from the 2nd Fighter Group, accompanied by their CO Major Lamarche, Captain de Callata and Lt. de Mérode, visited Evere to get a first glimpse of the Fiats. From March 8th on, the pilots of the 2nd Fighter Group at Nivelles tested the first CR.42. One of the first to do so, 1/Sgt. Jean Maes, wrote in his diary: *“Today I have made my first flight on the Fiat CR.42 in Evere. An Italian mechanic explained to us the control of the aircraft propeller and the machine guns. Lt. Oger and S/Lt. Moreau, both pilots from my squadron, accompanied me to Evere and were also able to make their first flight on our newest acquisition”*.<sup>36</sup> Sgt. Marcel Michotte, who was part of a following group, received even less instruction: *“We took the relay plane to Evere. Then I was told “This is a Fiat” A Italian specialist showed me the gas handle and told me there was nothing special on a Fiat CR.42, except for the propeller that could turn on half and full speed. I was shown the lower speed, and had to pull the handle to go to full power. After that I could take off. The plane was easy to fly and everything went well”*.<sup>37</sup> However, not all the flights were without accidents - CR.42 R.10 was badly damaged by Captain Pierre Arend during a landing accident. The plane ended up in the mud and the landing gear broke away. R.10 was returned to the *Etablissements AŽronautiques*, but was never repaired.

After assembly the Fiat CR.42s were transferred to Nivelles. Jean Maes wrote: *“On March 26th we go to Evere to get our Fiat CR.42. I receive R.26, exactly the same number as my Firefly. We return in platoon to Nivelles. The landing was a bit tricky; the Fiat lands at 180 km/h and the airstrip at Nivelles is a bit too short”*<sup>38</sup>. As soon as the Fiats arrived on the base, a thorough training scheme was organised for the pilots. In April 1940 the CR.42s took part in an air-firing exercise on the Belgian coast near Ostend. During the exercises the



1/Sgt. Jean Maes, pilot of the wrecked R.26.

J. Maes

35 *Une Mission belge en Italie*, in « L'Echo des Ailes » from December 1938

36 Jean Maes, carnet de notes, archive J. Maes

37 Interview by P. Taghon with Marcel Michotte on 5.06.1998.

38 Jean Maes, carnet de notes, archive J. Maes

# The CR 42 in Hungary

by Csaba Becze

After their good experiences with the CR.32, the first foreign customer for the CR.42 was the Royal Hungarian Air Force.

The first order was placed in 1938, when the type was still in its testing period. At first, Hungary ordered 18 planes, and these CR.42s arrived in Hungary between 16 June and 20 November, 1939. The High Command wanted to use the plane at first for defence of the capital, so first unit to re-equip from the CR.32 to the CR.42 was the I/II. fighter group, stationed at Budapest-Mátyásföld. Soon, the type become one of the best loved Hungarian fighters.

The 1/3. Squadron received the CR.42 first, and this unit suffered the first loss as well: on 4 October, 1939, V.207 crashed due to pilot error, with Senior Corporal Béla Simon at the controls. The pilot was killed, and the plane totally destroyed. In November 1939 Hungary ordered an additional 50 CR.42s from Italy, and these planes arrived between 10 February and 30 June, 1940.

Hungary used the type for the first time in combat during the Yugoslav campaign in April 1941, but during this period they only flew a few patrols, mostly in their own airspace and used their guns only once, when the 1/3. Squadron strafed a retreating Yugoslav military column. They did not meet Yugoslav planes in the air, and suffered few losses, only in landing and emergency landing accidents.

When Hungary went to war against the Soviet Union in June, 1941, the CR.42s had a significant role from the first months of the war. On the very first combat mission by the Hungarians, on 27 June 1941, when the CR.42s of the 2/3. Squadron escorted Hungarian bombers against Stanislaw, the first combat loss occurred. Ensign László Kázár's V.217 was shot down by Soviet anti-aircraft fire while strafing, the pilot force-landing behind enemy lines unharmed. Avoiding capture, he returned home more than two weeks later. On the same day, the CR.42s claimed their first victory as well, as Kázár's colleague Sergeant Árpád Kertész claimed a Soviet reconnaissance plane.

The 2/3. Squadron had a very busy period until the middle of July, as they flew numerous sorties, mostly escort and strafing missions, and claimed six additional air victories. They lost one plane on 12 July, 1941, when 2nd Lieutenant Győző Vámos collided in a dogfight with an I-16 (the injured Hungarian pilot bailed out and survived).



*Above and below: Crashed CR.42 (V-215) of the 1/3 "Kor Asz" Vadászszazad, Matyasföld airfield, 1940. C. Becze.*



# Svenska Flygvapnet

*59 Svenska Flygvapnet paid the Finnish compensation for taking over the aircraft. So one can say the Swedes paid twice for the first batch of their Fiats.*

*Swedish Fiat CR.42 during a patrol flight.*

*Mikael Forslund.*

The first CR.42s found their way to Sweden somewhat by accident and in a roundabout way. In the Winter War, which started in the autumn of 1939, a number of Swedish volunteers fought on the Finnish side. Their F19 unit was equipped with the Gloster Gladiator and the Hawker Hart. However, since these aeroplanes were not state-of-the-art technology, efforts were made at the beginning of 1940 to purchase new machines. Negotiations were held with aircraft manufacturers in a number of countries, including Italy. Finally, the Fiat CR.42 biplane was selected, mainly due to its short delivery time. On 15th February 1940, a contract was signed for the delivery of five aircraft, then another one on 24th February for a further seven machines. In order to facilitate the transaction, Sweden was supposed to be the official purchaser of the aircraft. Interestingly, the funds for their purchase were received from a charity collection organised in Sweden.

The plans were that the new aircraft would enter service in April 1940. In the meantime, however, the Winter War was ended. The Finnish were no longer interested in the Italian biplanes. However, the official buyer of the aircraft, Sweden, expressed a desire to take over the machines<sup>59</sup>. This was due to the fact that Svenska Flygvapnet was having difficulties with the acquisition of military equipment. This problem was caused by an embargo imposed after the outbreak of war by the USA, the main supplier to Sweden (out of 264 fighter planes ordered by the Swedish, the Americans delivered only sixty).





# General View



*Above: Front view of the Fiat CR.42 preserved at Flygvapenmuseum (Swedish Air Force Museum) at Linköping. This aircraft as J11 no. 2543 (c/n 921) served with Kungliga Gsta Flyglottilj F9 at SŠve in 1941-42. P. Skulski*

*Below: Port side of the Fiat CR.42 preserved at the Royal Air Force Museum, Hendon, UK. This Fiat, serial MM5701, force landed on the beach at Orfordness on 11 November 1940. Stratus coll.*



# Cockpit



*Above: The Swedish CR. 42 cockpit. Note that cockpit is still in original colours.*



*Left: Another view of the cockpit of the Swedish Falco. The control column and rudder pedals are visible. Note also the left side panel with engine control levers.*

*P. Skulski.*

*Fiat CR.42, MM.5701, flown by Sergente Pietro Salradori of 95° Squadriglia (18° Gruppo, 56° Stormo C.T.), Orfordness, UK, 29 October 1940. Aircraft in standard three-tone camouflage with Green (Verde Mimetico 3) and Brown (Marrone Mimetico 2) mottling over a Sand (Giallo Mimetico 3) base, and Light Grey (Grigio Mimetico) undersurfaces. See also page 144. After an epic dogfight against Hurricanes of 257 Squadron RAF, Salradori lost his way and ran out of fuel, force landing on the English beach.*





*Fiat CR-42 of 370<sup>a</sup> Squadriglia, 24<sup>o</sup> Gruppo Autonomo C.T., Elnas, Sardinia, September 1942. Aircraft in standard three-tone camouflage with Green (Verde Mimetico 3) and Brown (Marrone Mimetico 2) mottling over a Sand (Giallo Mimetico 3) base, and Light Grey (Grigio Mimetico) undersurfaces. Wing national insignia without white background.*



*Fiat CR-42 of 387<sup>a</sup> Squadriglia, 158<sup>o</sup> Gruppo, 50<sup>o</sup> Stormo d'Assalto (Ground-Attack), Abu Nimeir, Egypt, August 1942. Aircraft in a new camouflage scheme, factory applied from the second half of 1941, usually called 'green lizard' and consisting of large Light Hazelnut-Brown (Nocciola Chiaro 4) blotches on a Dark Olive Green (Verde Oliva Scuro 2) background, with Light Blue-Grey (Grigio-Azzurro Chiaro 1) undersurfaces. Black wing insignia without white background, and even wing struts are camouflaged.*



*Li Albert Seres flew CR.42 (V.202) with 1/3. "Kör Asz" (Ace of Hearts) Vadászszázad (Fighter Squadron), MKHL (Royal Hungarian Air Force) during the summer of 1942. Aircraft in green upper-surfaces with blue-grey undersurfaces.*



*Fiat CR.42, V.231 of 2/4. Vadászszázad, (Fighter Squadron), 'Nyíl', (Arrow), April 1941. Aircraft in standard Italian camouflage with yellow markings used during campaign in Yugoslavia*