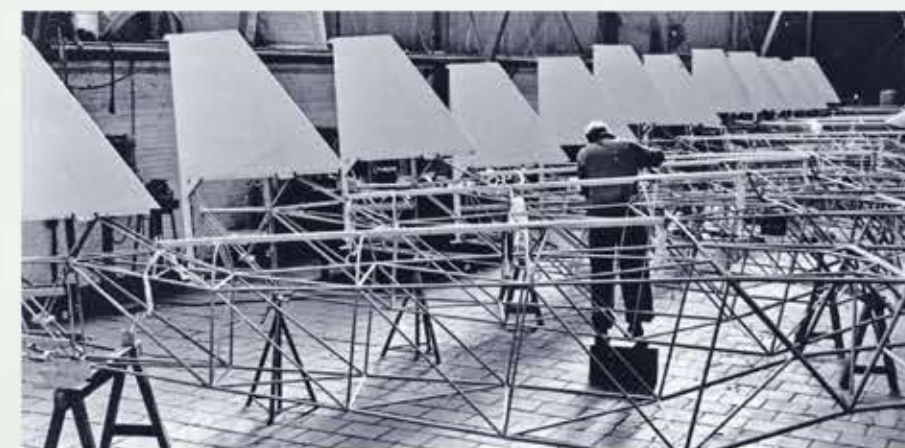


THE FOKKER FOUR

AT AGE 75, THIS DUTCH MILITARY TRAINER IS STILL GOING STRONG
BY SVEN VAN ROIJ-REICHGELT

Shortly after the end of the Second World War, Dutch aircraft manufacturer Fokker began the development of a new generation of training aircraft. Fokker chose a tail wheel design, an extra challenge for the pilot trainee during takeoffs and landings. The original wooden wing design was dropped and it was decided to build the aircraft, designated S.11, with linen-covered steel tube fuselage and an all-metal wing. Initially conceived as a three-seater, this was dropped in favor of a two-seater in which student and instructor would sit side-by-side. The space for the third seat was filled with a luggage bag. Power was provided by a Lycoming O-435A six-cylinder, air-cooled opposed engine of 190-hp.

After the war, the Elementary Flying Training (EVO) at Woensdrecht Air Base had been using some 56 ex-RAF de Havilland Tiger Moths. When the Royal Netherlands East Indies Army (KNIL) also stated they needed a new trainer, the



The Dutch aircraft industry was destroyed during WWII and the instructor was an attempt to get the industry up and going once again. These are instructor fuselage under construction.

Dutch government saw potential in the Fokker S.11 and ordered two prototypes in 1946. In addition, it was decided the Air Forces (LSK) — later Royal Netherlands Air Force (RNLAf) — would actively participate in the development of the type.

In early October 1946, Frits Diepen ordered 100 Instructors, as the type had been named. The contract was placed by his company Avio-Diepen. Frits was a sales partner of Fokker and closely involved in the reconstruction of the post-war Dutch aviation industry.

He saw the potential to sell the S.11 to the Dutch military, the State Aviation Administration, and the international market.

The first S.11 prototype — registration PH-NBE — did its engine test runs at the Fokker factory at Papaverweg in Amsterdam-North. It was then transported by barge to Schiphol Airport for its maiden flight. At Schiphol, Fokker test pilot Gerben Sonderman (who flew a Fokker G.1 against the Nazi invasion and then became a member of the resistance) took it aloft for a 28-minute test flight on 18 December 1947. There were no problems and two more flights were made that day.

A month later, the official testing



An instructor in a climbing bank toward the camera plane.

The Fokker Four out for a practice flight in their instructors.