

POLIKARPOV'S RECORD SETTER

The years following the surrender of Germany were a terrible time not only for the Germans but pretty much all of Europe. It was a time of continuing death and destruction, but there was also rebirth as the American government struggled to create a German democratic state. However, the area was divided between France, Britain, the USA, and the Soviet Union and that is where many problems originated since the Soviets were convinced that their chunk of Germany should be utilized as a prison state and a source of slave labor.

Only now, nearly 80 years later, high-quality, factual documentaries are being made and released utilizing documents and film that had been hidden away for decades and these efforts that show the horror of the *Deutsche Demokratische Republic* (German Democratic

Republic/GDR — what we in

America called East



This detail view of the Po 2's cockpit area shows a design that would not have been out of place during the Great War.

Germany for decades). With the collapse of communism during the Reagan administration, it seemed that everything changed overnight. Suddenly, the millions of Germans that had been imprisoned in East Germany were free and the immense task of incorporating these individuals fell to the *Bundesrepublik Deutschland* (West Germany).



ALTHOUGH EXACT NUMBERS ARE NOT KNOWN, IT IS ESTIMATED THAT APPROXIMATELY 30,000 POLIKARPOV Po 2s HAVE BEEN BUILT — MAKING IT THE WORLD'S MOST PRODUCED BIPLANE

BY STEFAN DEGRAEF

The aircraft was restored to appear as it was when operated in East Germany. As with the majority of communist aircraft, markings were very simple and there was no room for creative expressionism in any form of personal decoration. The aircraft carries its original East German registration on the sides of the fuselage in large letters while the current registration is painted under the horizontal stabilizer.