



HANDLEY PAGE V/1500 Colin A. Owers. Windsock Datafile No.164, 32 pages plus covers, illustrated. Published by Albatros Productions Ltd. 10 Long View, Chiltern Park Estate, Berkhamsted, Herts., HP4 1BY, U.K. and available from the publisher at £11.80 plus P&H.

For their second Datafile of 2014, the First World War centenary, publishers Albatros Productions Limited have moved from the early war to the very late war. The Handley Page V/15000, Britain's biggest aircraft of that conflict, let alone bomber, was completed and ready just too late to see active service in the conflict, with two bombed and ready aircraft being forestalled from raiding Berlin by the 11 November Armistice. Nevertheless, the Handley Page V/1500 is a fascinating and, until now, not very well-researched aircraft type.

Author Colin Owers has done a great job of putting together the story of this giant aircraft, including not only the difficulties of its design, but its subsequent use within both civilian and military roles immediately post-war, and its one and only operational deployment, when a solitary aircraft bombed the Afghan capital Kabul, during the third Afghan War in 1919. The latter is a fascinating story in itself, and the author has done well to present this aircraft and its crews' trails, both on their trip out to this far frontier from England, and in getting the subsequent raid successfully carried out.

Beginning with the excellent front cover artwork by Roberto Zanella, which depicts Handley Page V/1500 serial J1936 over a smoking Kabul, the issue is as always brimming with colourful profiles and other artwork. Both inner and the rear outer cover contain Ronny Bar's side profiles of six different aircraft, including B9463, the prototype, and J1936, the Kabul bomber, and some contemporary Air Board diagrams thoughtfully included by the author. Martin Digmayer has again provided the seven pages of excellent line drawings, showing both prototype and later versions in the finest detail. The drawings this time are only in 1/72 scale due to the enormous size of this aircraft in any larger scale. Photographs are well represented too, with no fewer than 61 archive images, many showing fine detail such as cockpit layouts and engine configurations. These photographs are the best and most varied that this reviewer has seen in one publication. – **Peter Chapman**