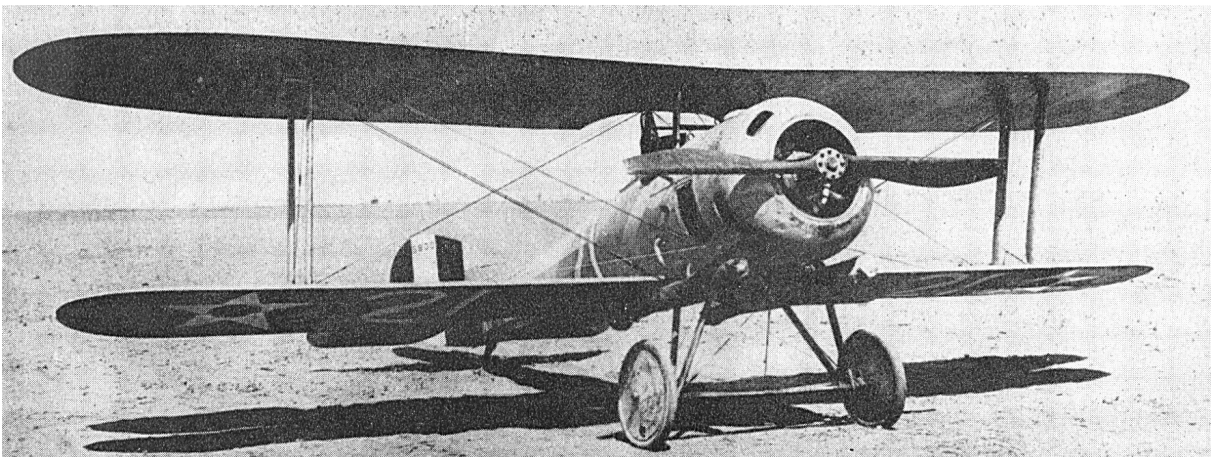


Nieuport 28

History: The Nieuport 28 was the final stage in the development of Nieuport fighters that had begun with the Nieuport 11 in the early days of World War I. All Nieuport fighters prior to the 28 were sesquiplanes in which the bottom wing had a single spar while the upper wing had two spars so the bottom wing was about half the size of the upper one. This basic wing design continued through a series of developments, most famously the Nieuport 17, that gradually saw the evolution of Nieuport fighters with larger tails and a more streamlined fuselage. The sesquiplane design, combined with a light engine gave Nieuport fighters great manoeuvrability and climb but, by 1917, speed and therefore engine power had become equally important. (The engine of the Nieuport 11 had only half the power of the Nieuport 28 engine.) To carry the greater weight of this more powerful engine Nieuport, designers were finally forced to abandon their favoured wing design and they adopted the more familiar two spar lower wing that gave the fighter the lift capacity needed for the heavier engine. The prototype Nieuport 28 flew in June 1917 but the newly emerging SPAD fighters were considered better and so the Nieuport 28 did not enter French service.

Despite this rejection the entry of the United States into the war gave this fighter a fame that exceeded its performance. With all SPAD production allocated to French forces the Americans were forced to take whatever was available and that was the Nieuport 28. As a result 297 were supplied to the Americans so it became the first aeroplane in which Americans saw action. Four squadrons were equipped with the fighter at the end of February 1918 and they flew their first operational patrol on 15 March. However the squadrons had no machine guns for their fighters so the patrol was flown more as a morale booster. The first armed patrols occurred on 14 April 1918 but made no contact with the enemy. The same day the Americans scored their first two aerial victories using Nieuport 28s.



The Americans were keen to replace their Nieuports as soon as they could because of their unreliable engines, their general inferiority to newly emerging German fighters such as the Fokker D.VII and their tendency to shed upper wing fabric in long dives. SPAD XIIIIs became available in July 1918 and the Americans happily retired their Nieuports to training duties. After the war about fifty Nieuports were transported back to the United States. They continued to be used by the US Army as trainers for a while and twelve were transferred to the US Navy where they were used in trials, taking off from platforms mounted on the forward turrets of battleships, some fitted with hydrovanes and flotation devices, others not. This experience soon led to the development of aircraft carriers. After all Nieuport had been taken out of service a few went into

private ownership and many ended up in Hollywood movies such as 'Dawn Patrol' made in 1931 and in the 1957 'Spirit of St Louis'.

Data: single-seat fighter. *Engines* one Gnome 9N rotary piston engine of 119kW (160hp). *Wing span* 8m (26ft 3in). *Length* 6.20m (20ft 4in). *Maximum take-off weight* 740kg (1,172lbs). *Maximum speed* 195km/h (121mph). *Range* 400km (248miles). *Armament* two fixed forward-firing 7.7mm (0.303in) Vickers machine guns.

The kit: Revell 1:72

This kit will be older than most of the people who build it, if they can find it. I made my first one around 1966 and I picked up this one at a swap-and-sell for a pittance. As a kit it lacks many of the refinements expected from more modern offerings, but it is a nice little kit that goes together without much pain. This kit offers three versions, one for the first American fighter to shoot down anything, another for a fighter of the 27th Aero Squadron and a third for a rather colourful trainer version.

As with all biplanes the most difficult part of the entire construction process is getting the top wing on and lined up nicely with the lower wing and the fuselage. The struts in this kit are nicely delicate so the process is quite fiddly and took me a couple of attempts to get right. The undercarriage is also quite fiddly but is a whole lot easier to attach. The kit provides an oddly shaped lump of plastic that pretends to be a windscreen and is best replaced by a little bit of celluloid scrounged from somewhere or other. If you are really keen you could rig this model and it would probably come up looking very nicely. I decided not to because I couldn't find sufficient information to guide me in the rigging and I wanted to get the model completed before the end of the decade.

Since the kit is somewhat fragile I was not looking forward to painting it. The Americans flew their Nieuports using a four colour scheme that would have to hand painted. The trainer would have been much more difficult with its red and white striped fuselage. While reading up on this type, however, I came across information on the colours of the Nieuports that went back to the United States and the green of the ones in US Army service of the grey of the US Navy promised to make life a whole lot simpler. This also took care of the one thing I really didn't like about the armed versions, the chunky machine gun mountings. By choosing a US Navy version I only had to trim off the unsightly blobs and the conversion was almost complete. I might have made the flotation devices fitted to some but I preferred to leave them off since I wasn't quite sure about how they should look.

Finally came the business of markings. The two photos of US Navy Nieuports I found were for one with the number 21 in four positions, apparently in black and white. The other one was for one with the number 2 which may have been in blue, red or black. A side view colour drawing I came across suggested red but it also shows the wing struts clear varnished while the photograph showed they were painted. So much for reliable references. Rummaging around in my spare decals box I came across some red number 2s that look reasonably accurate, if my memory is right they came from an old Bandia 1/48 Tiger tank kit. The end result might not be entirely accurate but it still looks very pleasing indeed.

1/72 Scale **Collector's Choice**
MAKES ONE OF THREE VERSIONS. Optional decals included to build any of 3 planes.

Photos of Painted Revell Model



Build a Nieuport trainer of No. 213 Squadron, American Expeditionary Forces ...



... Lt. Douglas Campbell's plane of the 94th Aero Squadron ...



... or a Nieuport 28 of the 27th Aero Squadron.

Revell **NIEUPORT 28**