

SECRET

A.I.1.(k) Report No. 398/1941.

THE FOLLOWING INFORMATION HAS BEEN OBTAINED FROM P/W. AS THE STATEMENTS MADE HAVE NOT AS YET BEEN VERIFIED, NO MENTION OF THEM SHOULD BE MADE IN INTELLIGENCE SUMMARIES OF COMMANDS OR LOWER FORMATIONS, NOR SHOULD THEY BE ACCEPTED AS FACTS UNTIL COMMENTED ON IN AIR MINISTRY INTELLIGENCE SUMMARIES OR SPECIAL COMMUNICATION.

Report on the Me.109F, of Sta. I/J.G.26, brought down on the South Coast on 10.7.41.

1. The pilot of this aircraft, a Hauptmann born on 1.10.1913, first starting flying in 1935 on old Fokker aircraft at the A/B School at Kitzingen.
  2. He was commissioned on 1.7.1938, and at the end of 1938 went to the first specialist Fighter School, which had just been started at Schleissheim and which had hitherto been a B School.
  3. He took part in the Spanish War, and was in Spain a full year. For the first nine months he was flying with Major LUTZOW, the present Kommandeur of J.G.3. and during the last three months he acted as Liaison Officer with the Italian Air Force.
  4. He was promoted to Hauptmann on 1.4.40 and shortly afterwards succeeded MOLDERS for a short time as Gruppen Kommandeur of I/J.G.26, the famous "Ace of Spades" Geschwader.
  5. About twelve months ago he was transferred to become Gruppen Kommandeur of I/J.G.26.
  6. This man was a very good type of Officer, whose influence for the good of every Unit which he has commanded, has been considerably greater than might be suggested by the number of victories he claims, for 22 is by German standards comparatively commonplace.
  7. There is nothing to add to the Preliminary Report regarding the last flight. It is, however, worthy of note that the aircraft was captured intact, owing to the prompt action of an Army detachment; the pilot, having got out of his aircraft, was about to set fire to it when he was deterred by a burst of M.G. fire just above his head.
- BASES.
8. During April and May J.G.26 were entrusted with the defence of the Brest area, Gruppe I being based at Brest-Nord.
  9. On June 8th they were relieved by I/J.G.2 and moved to St. Omer Clairmarais (St. Bernard) which is considered to be the perfect Fighter Aerodrome. The Gruppe was still operating from there on 10.7.41.
  10. The other two Gruppen of J.G.26 were transferred to Northern France about the middle of June.
- FIGHTER STRENGTH
11. Only two Geschwader, J.G.26 and J.G.2. were stationed in the Pas-de-Calais area on 10.7.41, and some aircraft of J.G.2. are still near Cherbourg. The operational strength of a Fighter Staffel is twelve aircraft and pilots. The Fighter strength in Northern France has been reinforced by turning elements of the Ergänzungs Staffeln into independent operational units.
  12. J.G.2. has now been re-equipped throughout with Me.109F but so far only I/J.G.26 has been re-equipped, and even this Gruppe only completed its re-equipment very recently. The aircraft which was shot down had only been flown two days.
  13. The other two Gruppen of J.G.26 are still flying the old Me.109E
  14. J.G.51, the crack MOLDERS' Geschwader, had been re-equipped by February.
  15. The defence of the Le Havre area is entrusted to an Ergänzungs Staffel, although only the fully qualified pilots are used, and flights are usually led by an experienced officer.
- DAYLIGHT RAIDS.
16. This P/W was very pleased that the English have at last decided to go over France. This reverses the position of last September, and the Germans are able to save a large number of their pilots.

17. He maintained that the British losses during the three weeks preceding 10.7.41 had been nearly 100, and the German losses in pilots between one fifth and one third of that amount.
18. He also maintained that the British claims for this period (25 German aircraft) must be incorrect, because this would represent the wiping out of half the available fighter strength, and they could not possibly have replaced this number.
19. During the three weeks period, 1/V.G.26 had lost eight pilots, killed, and claimed to have brought down no fewer than 60 English aircraft.
20. The figures of British losses published in our communiques are popularly thought to be completely inaccurate, since we "do not count losses" of Czech or Polish pilots.
21. The opinion was expressed that it would be a mistake for the Germans to reinforce their fighter strength on the Western Front. The comparatively weak opposition at the moment is a temptation for the British to come over, and thus lose pilots.
22. In this way R.A.F. will be weakened ready for the final German offensive, which will follow the successful conclusion of the Soviet War.
23. The bombs dropped during these raids, though damage was admitted, did not seriously worry the Germans. The operations had, however, one most valuable result in that they were a source of very great satisfaction to the Fmnh.
- ME.109F.
24. This pilot personally believes the Me.109F to be superior in every respect to the Spitfire, except that the new Spitfire might, when handled by an equally good pilot, still be superior to the Me.109F in steep turns at high speed. This difference, however, can be more than counter balanced if the German pilot is better.
25. The re-designed wing of the Me.109F considerably improves the handling of the aircraft, and the slots open more gradually, so that turns are very much easier to execute.
26. The controls are, however, still fairly stiff at high speed, and particularly as the cockpit is fairly cramped, fighter pilots are at advantage in powerfully built.
27. The outstanding disadvantage of the Me.109F is that the wings are not so stable as they might be. At least two pilots, including the redoubtable Hauptmann BALTHASAR, Kommandore of the Richthofen Geschwader, have been killed within the last three weeks by tearing the wings off their Me.109's when trying to follow Spitfires in a snaking dive. After a fast dive, pilots have to pull out fairly gradually.
28. The Rated Altitude of the Me.109F is probably in the neighbourhood of 20,000 feet, and the speed at this height is said to be 620 k.p.h. (384 m.p.h.)
29. The Combat Ceiling is 34,000 ft., and the all-out ceiling 39,600 ft. The manoeuvrability between the Rated Altitude and the Combat Ceiling falls away equally with that of the Spitfire, therefore the comparative handling of the two aircraft will be similar at all heights.
30. The endurance, as expressed by the range on which sorties are based, is 60/65 minutes. So far, the Me.109F's have not been fitted with extra tanks, but this is a future development which is to be expected.
31. The 2 cm. M.G.151 with which this particular aircraft was armed was fitted at the pilot's own request, because it has the same high muzzle velocity as the standard M.G.151, and the damage caused by the 2 cm. shell would be greater.
32. The standard M.G.151 is well liked, once the pilot has learned to aim high. A big advantage with this gun is that jams can be cleared from the cockpit.
33. The new arrangement of the guns in the nose of the Me.109F enables pilots to fire very accurately while in a turn, and to open fire at a greater range. This pilot, however, usually opened fire at about 100 yds. closing to 50 yds. There have been absolutely no unfavourable comments on the reduction in the armament; the present arrangement is regarded as ideal.
34. The Me.109F does not appear yet to have been fitted with any gadgets for simulating damage, although this is a development about which there has been considerable talk, particularly as a Spitfire which made a belly

landing in France two weeks ago was rumoured to have been fitted with an apparatus for producing white smoke.  
 36. The black smoke sometimes seen to issue from the Me.109F is probably due to full boost, and the white smoke, if this is not condensation, is quite possibly due to a hit in the radiator.  
CAMOUFLAGE.

37. Orders were recently sent out by the High Command that only the under surface of the Me.109 nose was to be painted yellow.  
 38. The camouflage of all German aircraft is officially standard, and any variations are to be accounted for by variations in the taste or skill of the painters.  
Me.109.

39. A great deal is expected from the F.W.190, but at present there are still difficulties in production, and this aircraft is not expected to arrive at operational units this year.  
 40. The cooling system of the double-row radial engine is still giving trouble.

#### HA-11A BOOST.

41. This pilot was quite genuinely contemptuous of the famous Ha-11a process, and would refuse to have anything to do with it. He confirmed the name of the gas as "G.M.1".  
GERMAN FIGHTER TACTICS.

42. Owing to the fact that German Fighter pilots are having to re-orientate themselves from offensive to defensive warfare, German Fighter tactics are at the moment still in a state of re-adjustment.  
 43. One of the main changes which has taken place is that Fighter aircraft are now controlled from the ground.

44. This was at first a source of some discontent to the Fighter pilots, who were accustomed to act much more on their own initiative, but it has been found that the ground control is working quite efficiently, and usually gets the Fighters to their prey in time.

45. The British Reporting Service is, however, considered to be superior. It is even stated that if the ground control do not know where their own aircraft are, they tune in to the British R/T to find out. This probably refers to British defensive operations.

46. The efficiency and devotion to duty of the British close escort was very highly praised, and unfavourable comparisons were drawn between the English and the German Fighter pilots in this respect.

47. The ground control is very insistent that only the British Bombers shall be attacked, and for this reason this pilot, when leading the Gruppe, has on at least ten occasions during the last three weeks refrained from attacking Fighters, even though at a tactical advantage.

48. Of late, the British close escort has become so efficient that the only way to get at the Bombers is to approach from behind and above, and dive through the formation at full throttle.

49. When attacked by a single Spitfire, this pilot's usual evasive action was to do a half-roll and dive away. This is possibly a fairly well-known part of evasive action. The dive, though steep, would not be vertical, possibly because of the danger of straining the wings.

50. After pulling out of the dive, it was claimed that the Me.109F could in the hands of a good pilot, do four complete rolls on the climb before having to level off.

51. Actually, this pilot was of the opinion that Fighter tactics should continually be changing, and I/J.G.28 always try to work a continual succession of new ideas.

52. The Stirling is considered a formidable opponent even for a Fighter, as it is well able to look after itself. It was described as pouring cannon fire from every orifice.  
BRITISH TACTICS.

53. The more open formations recently adopted by British Fighters were regarded as being obviously superior to their previous tactics, because each pilot has a better vision, and thus a better chance to defend himself and the others.

54. Individual British Fighter pilots were highly and sincerely praised. Even the new pilots seemed to have learned a lot very quickly.

55. The original Spitfire carrying eight M.G.'s was unpleasant enough but the new Spitfire V really impressed this man when he saw a Me.109 burst into pieces in mid air over St. Omer after a single short burst of fire.

58. One of the most worrying features of British tactics was the continual changing of the height and direction of approach, so that the defence never knew where to expect the next attack.

59. The present R/T sets used in German fighters have an efficient range of 10 miles.

60. This is a mixed blessing, because young pilots can only be made to keep radio silence with great difficulty. In this respect they are nearly as notorious as the Polish pilots.

61. In Fighter Units, at least, the Gruppen Kommandeur is allowed considerable latitude in granting leave, and can on his own authority give up to 48 hours' leave at any time, should he consider that a pilot needs a rest.

62. REPLACEMENTS.  
J.G.26 the OALLAND Geschwader, is said to be very satisfied with the quality of the new Officers which are being sent to them as replacements. The quality of the O.R. replacements, however, is not so satisfactory.

63. OFFICERS OF J.G.26.  
Oberstleutnant GALLAND still leads the Geschwader, and has the full confidence of his subordinates, who regard him firstly as an organising genius, and secondly as a brilliant airman.

64. His claim to 72 victories is sincerely believed but his habit of chain-smoking cigars is deplored.

65. BRITISH P/W.  
Wing Commander Kayll, who was missing about a month ago, made a successful belly landing in France. He was uninjured, and threatened all and sundry with his revolver.

66. He was, however, disarmed but, because it was considered dangerous he was not invited to be the Guest at the Mess at St. Omer.

67. About a week after Wing Commander Kayll had been brought down, a Sergeant Pilot was taken P/W. He was unwounded and spoke perfect Spanish, having lived for 14 years in South America.

68. A Hurricane shot down during the recent fighting had as crew two ceremonial figures arising sinister to a Swastika. The pilot of this aircraft was an old Estonian.

69. During his interrogation at St. Omer Aerodrome he was asked: "Well what do you think of Churchill?" "Mister Churchill to you" was the frigid reply.

70. POLISH P/W.  
The current belief was mentioned earlier in this Report that British communiqués concerning figures of losses do not mention losses of Poles or Czechs.

71. It was grudgingly admitted that Polish airmen fought with equal valour, and it appears that those who are captured receive similar treatment to the British.

72. INTERROGATION.  
It has been possible to obtain a fairly accurate picture of German interrogation methods, although full details could not be obtained, because even an Officer with the standing of Gruppen Kommandeur (Wing Commander) is not fully in the know.

73. Any unwounded prisoner is taken immediately he is captured to an aerodrome where he becomes the guest of selected members of the Mess. Sometimes an Army Officer, but more usually A.G.A.F. Intelligence Officer in the uniform of the flying personnel, arrives and joins the party which is being held in honour of the prisoner. He usually joins the party after it has been going some time and champagne and conversation are flowing.

74. The choice of this officer is made by the 1<sup>st</sup> (Intelligence Officer) of the Fliegerkorps, and it is he who attends to the interrogation, requirements, escort and movement of the prisoner.

75. This treatment may be continued for as much as two days before this man is sent elsewhere.

76. RUSSIA.  
In spite of high morale and confidence in eventual victory, this pilot did not believe that the war would be over in less than three years, and he is fairly convinced that the German civilian casualties have steadily mounted, so that they are now on a par with the British figures.

74. Although he, in common with many other P/W is confident of a speedy end to the Russian campaign - reinforcements and communications being the only serious problems - he believes that the very earliest invasion date is Spring 1942.

75. In his view, the Russian War was dictated by the threat of a stab in the back, which kept 50% of the German Army on the Eastern Frontier when they should have been working on urgent war production.

76. Once Russia has been subdued, at least 50% of the second line troops can be released for production. The most serious labour shortage at present is of skilled instrument makers, and this shortage more or less nullifies the ample supplies of aircraft, engines and personnel.

RUSSIAN LOSSES.

77. In addition to the loss on the Western Front of Hauptmann BALTHASAR, the German Air Force has suffered considerably during the fighting against Russia. It is said that two Geschwader Kommodore and four or five Gruppen Kommandeure have been either killed or taken prisoner.

78. One of the Gruppen Kommandeur to be killed was Hauptmann BREITNUTZ Kommandeur of I/J.G.53. The latest known total of his victories was 31, which had been scored by May 19th this year. He was awarded the Ritter Kreuz on 5.11.1940, when he claimed 20 victories.

79. Another of the Gruppen Kommandeure to be lost is probably Oberleutnant KELLER, Kommandeur of I/J.G.3.

80. It is said that all these men were shot down during low flying attacks on tanks.

81. German Fighter aircraft, and in particular MOLDERS' Geschwader, J.G.51 have been extensively used in combating the Russian tanks, firing special armour-piercing shells in their cannon.

82. During one attack, the MOLDERS' Geschwader claimed to have destroyed between 30 and 50 Russian tanks, the great man himself having claimed no fewer than eight.

A.I.1.(k)  
20.7.41.

300 their ene in view. keep the enemy off getting out of Commander has 100 enemy aircraft, and



Points on which information is required  
from P.W.

It would be appreciated if information could be supplied as a result of interrogating prisoners of war on the following points:-

ME.109F

1. Why has the wing been re-designed in shape?
2. Why has the armament been reduced?
3. What is the rate of its ~~climbing~~ *climbing? 4000 ft?*
4. Are the wings capable of taking more guns?
5. Are ME.109E being fitted with ME.109F type wings to make them look like ME.109F?
6. Is "HAHA" boost fitted to 109F or is it only fitted to 109E?
7. Exactly what extra performance is given by the "HAHA" boost?
8. Understood that "HAHA" boost produces white smoke, what produces black smoke? is it damage, throttle opening, or a black smoke producer to cause a combat to be broken off?
9. General performance details. Does motor cut in a steep dive (Presumably this can also from AI10)

GENERAL

1. German tactics and formations. What are considered best forms of attack on (1) Bombers (2) Escort? Is 'half roll and dive' now taught as standard evasive action?
2. What is the German opinion of our new open fighter formations?
3. What is the state of morale and experience of pilots now defending Northern France? Why do enemy aircraft sometimes refuse to fight?
4. What are the hours of duty of their fighter pilots, states of readiness, leave etc.?
5. Enemy R.D.F. and Y service in meeting our attacks, methods of control, standing patrols etc.
6. What length of warning of impending raids?
7. Replacements of pilots and aircraft, are they sufficient, has fighter strength in Northern France been ~~restored~~ *increased* recently?

P.T.O.



SECRET

8. Reasons for use of present varied and weird camouflage schemes.
9. Assessment of pilots victories, how made? German losses on recent fighter operations in comparison with our figures for their losses.
10. Enemy single engine night fighters. Are these specialized units?
11. Our own pilots captured during recent circus operations, how many and names if known. How do they treat captured Polish pilots?

*Smith*  
W/Cdr.  
Tactics

14th July, 1941