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The tube is of ample size to accommodate three men in their hammocks. During their trip, they lie horizontally face up, and are upright during descent. Ventilation is provided by small airscoops. The men are strapped into the hammocks by webbing belts around their waists, shoulders, and thighs, and this arrangement is secured to a new type of release, which unfastens all the straps simultaneously.

Parachutes : Although size and shape of the four parachutes used have not yet been confirmed, the material appears to be a silk and nylon combination, camouflaged mottled green, brown and beige. The chutes are composed of large panels whose seams do not coincide with the shroud lines. Spacing of the lines at the bottom around the circumference is irregular, varying from about four to five and a half feet. The lower circumference is approximately 96 feet, the length of the shroud line being 17 feet, 6 inches.

Method : It has not yet been determined whether or not the would-be saboteurs are in telephonic communication with the pilot during the flight. If not, their only means of knowing that they have been released from the plane would be the receding sound of the engine. Cylinders are probably released at 1,200 feet altitude, the entire descent being a matter of perhaps 14 seconds. On landing, the agents let themselves out through the empty parachute compartment by cutting or unlacing its canvas end wall, which is just at their heads.

G A F Pilots Compare Own and Allied Equipment

THE PRISONERS whose reports formed the basis for the article on fighter tactics (*pages* 5-11) have provided their opinions, based on their own experience, of a number of US and RAF aircraft, and have made some interesting comparisons of their own and Allied armament, flying skill and combat habits.

Allied Fighter Aircraft : In general, the greater proportion of German fighter pilots have had too little combat experience against Allied fighters to form considered opinions, but several of those questioned recently are flyers of some years' standing, having flown against Allied aircraft since the early months of this war. For the most part, these prisoners as well as the younger ones exhibit an attitude of admiration for Allied fighters, although they are usually quite firm in their belief that German aircraft are equal to ours in all-round combat performance at altitudes up to 20,000 feet.

In the following notes on Allied planes, it must be borne in mind that the German pilots are not referring to the very latest sub-types now operating from the U.K., since these prisoners had little or no contact with them. The statements, moreover, refer almost entirely to combats and conditions below 20,000 feet, where most fighter engagements in the West take place.

P-51 is regarded as the best US fighter. It can outdistance and outdive German types at all altitudes and only the most experienced Me-109 pilots will attempt to outturn it. It is regarded by the Germans as rather vulnerable to cannon fire, however.

P-47 : The best features of the P-47 are said to be its great diving speed and its ability to absorb many hits and still fly on. It climbs too slowly and while it turns well under 20,000 feet it loses a good deal of speed in so doing.

P-38 : The Lightning was known only by reputation to the experienced pilots interrogated, though some of the newer ones had seen it over the Western Front. It was regarded as very vulnerable to machine-gun and cannon fire and as extremely fast in climbing.

Tempest : One prisoner had flown against the Tempest on several missions over Holland and in the Rheime area. He believed that the Me-109G could out-curve the Tempest, but that the latter had superior speed and climbing ability which made it extremely formidable. The apparently excellent field of vision afforded the Tempest pilot made it very hard to surprise.

Spitfire : This plane is considered by all German pilots through reputation or experience as the most formidable fighter aircraft below 20,000 feet. Its abilities to climb rapidly and to curve tightly are its two best features. A pilot of I/JG 27 shot down on 1 March said that when his unit was patrolling over Holland and heard by radio that Spitfires were in the vicinity, a detour was made to avoid contacting them.

German Fighter Aircraft : The Me-109G-14 and FW-190A-8, the standard German fighters, are regarded by experienced enemy pilots as entirely adequate for operations under 20,000 feet, where their principal opponents are fighter-bombers, but all pilots are aware of the superior performance of Allied types at higher altitudes. The Me-109 can turn and dive better than the FW-190, while the FW-190 is a faster climber.

The FW-190D-9 with Jumo 213 inline engine is said by pilots who have flown it to be considerably faster than the FW-190A-8 with BMW 801 radial engine. They assert further that at altitudes below 20,000 feet it is faster than the Thunderbolt or

Mustang in a climbing turn, but it turns less tightly than any other fighter, German or Allied. Above 20,000 feet it responds more readily to the controls than does the FW-190A-8, according to the prisoners.

German and Allied Armament : German pilots are almost unanimous in considering their MG 151 (20 mm.) and MK 108 (30 mm.) to be better than the .50 caliber armament of US fighters and the 20 mm. cannon of RAF fighter Command aircraft. They call attention especially to the powerful effect of their 30 mm. HE and incendiary ammunition. German pilots, they say, have little fear of bodily injury from .50 caliber ammunition, feeling that their armor gives them adequate protection.

One fighter pilot of great experience, the CO of JG 6, differed, however, and said that USAAF .50 caliber armament was ideal for its main purpose, which, he judged, was bringing down German fighters. The greater number of weapons and rounds carried more than compensated for the lower penetrative and explosive power of each round, and he had found that our AP ammunition could pierce German fighter armor.

Allied Fighter Pilots : Experienced German pilots regarded Allied fighter and fighter-bomber pilots as well trained and apparently confident of their ability to handle their aircraft. Especially admired was the persistence of wing men in following their lead men through violent dog-fighting. German pilots noted, however, that every Allied formation had its share of evidently inexperienced pilots who straggle or who break the wrong way when attacked.

German Fighter Pilots : The four most able enemy fighter pilots interrogated, one Geschwader Kommodore, two Gruppenkommandeure and one Staffelkapitän, expressed themselves as "satisfied" with the new pilots they received in the late months of 1944. All revealed at the same time an awareness of the shortcomings of present-day German fighter pilot training discussed in SUMMARY No. 67 (*page* 16) and of the generally inferior combat abilities which result.

One of the Gruppenkommandeure stated : "If I can put my men into a good, advantageous position to attack, they will attack as well as I could ask, but when we are jumped instead, their lack of training and battle experience causes trouble."

Bailing Out Methods : German fighter pilots have a standard method of bailing out which they claim is safe and sure ; a surprisingly large proportion of pilots using the method have come down unharmed.

Instructions are that the safety belt is first to be released and the cockpit cover jettisoned. The control column is then quickly pushed hard forward, and the pilot flies out, propelled by the rush of air from the cockpit and the inertia of his own forward motion, which tends to keep him moving horizontally as the aircraft noses down suddenly. Thanks to the downward motion of the aircraft the pilot clears the tail in almost every case.

Pilots were critical of the RAF and USAAF methods of rolling over before baling out, maintaining that the time lost in rolling may be fatal, especially when flying at a low altitude.

Me-109K : Latest sub-type of the Me-109 to go into service is the Me-109K, which made one of its first appearances during the New Year's Day airfield operation. A report by AI2 (g), Air Minitry, sets forth the known data on the aircraft, of which two sub-series, K-2 and K-4 have, been identified.

Airframe of the Me-109K is described as generally similar to that of the G-14 (SUMMARY No. 59, *page* 5). It has two types of tail unit, one being of wooden construction—a feature also reported in connection with the G-14 and other sub-types. The wooden unit is the heavier of the two.

A document on the Me-109K-2 specifies that it has no pressure cabin. It is suggested by AI2 (g) that possibly the odd-numbered sub-types, such as K-1 and K-3, may be fitted with one.

The retractable tail wheel of the K-series is reported to have longer oleo strut than in other series.

Armament : The document on the K-2 includes mention of alternative armaments. One version consists of mounting the usual two MG 131s plus one MK 108 cannon, while the other substitutes and MG 151 (20-mm) gun for the 108. Another optional arming for the wing mounts substitutes two MK 108s for the 131s.

Power Plant : The Me-109K is powered with a DB 605 engine, of series D. This engine is similar to the DB 605A used in the Me-109G-14, except that it is meant to operate on C3 fuel, rated at 96 octane. This permits higher boost pressure for takeoff, and also increases the rated altitude by 2,000 feet to 21,000.

Official German performance figures are reported for the DB 605D, but they do not take into account any methanol injection or other added boost device, and they omit consideration of "ram" effect. It should also be borne in mind that they are bench-test figures, which are normally considerably lower than performance achieved in actual flight.

At maximum cruising speed at 20,200 feet, the engine has a boost of 1.7 pounds per square inch, or 3.5" Hg, developing 1,050 h.p. at 2,300 r.p.m. For climb and combat, the engine will pull 7.7" Hg at 21,000 feet, with 2,600 r.p.m., developing 1,250 h.p. Takeoff boost is in the neighborhood of 13.7" Hg, putting out 1,550 h.p. at 2,800 r.p.m.

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Cmd + Gen Staff ...

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