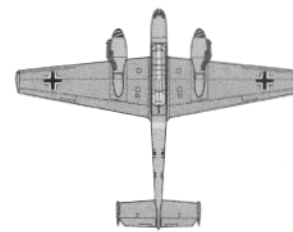


# Experten of the Luftwaffe

## Part I

By Chris Robinson



One of the enjoyable aspects of *RISE OF THE LUFTWAFFE* and *EIGHTH AIR FORCE* is using pilot counters to give missions historical color. To many players, defeating a named ace is an event worth celebrating. However, while some of the pilots included in the games are familiar to anyone with a passing interest in World War II (e.g. Bader, Galland, Yeager), most are much less known. This is the first in a series of articles by myself and other authors which provide background information on the pilots of the *Down in Flames* series. I will be focusing here exclusively on the *experten* ("experts"-the usual definition of an "ace" was not recognized by the Germans) of the Luftwaffe. As a caveat, some of the counters (primarily the unskilled pilots) were created by the games' designer and developers as "generic" pilots, and were not modeled on historic individuals. Thus, while there may have been actual pilots with those names, in most cases I have not attempted to document them. Further, where I have made recommendations to change the skills, aircraft or campaigns of a particular pilot, it is intended for historical accuracy only, as changing the mix of pilot counters may unbalance a competitive campaign. A forthcoming article, "Experten of the Luftwaffe, Part II," will add more German pilots to the game and provide balanced historical pilot counter mixes for all campaigns.

NOTE: The German tally system for recording aerial victories is considered to be one of the most thorough. Only one pilot could claim a particular victim, and witnesses had to observe the shoot-down. Therefore, the following victory totals are thought of as accurate.

### Galland, Adolph

(Bf.109: P, H, Bu, A; Me.262: A, CV, P, Bu)  
One of the most famous of all the Luftwaffe pilots, Adolph Galland was a product of the "secret" Luftwaffe of the 1930's, flying his first combat missions over Spain in 1937 and 1938. He started flying up to four sorties a day in WW II in an antiquated Hs.123 ground support aircraft during the invasion of Poland, earning the Iron Cross, Second Class. Without a victory at the end of the campaign, he used trickery and a sympathetic doctor to get himself back into fighters. Joining *Jagdgeschwader* (JG) 27, he saw little action until the invasion of the West, recording his first three kills, all Hurricanes, on May 12, 1940. The following month he was transferred to JG 26 (aka "The Abbeville Boys"), where he commanded 3 Gruppe during the conclusion of the French campaign and the start of the Battle of Britain. By September 1940, he had racked up 40 victories and been promoted to Major. In November he was promoted again to Lieutenant Colonel and given command of JG 26 as part of an overall restructuring of the Luftwaffe, with younger combat officers replacing older ones in many units.

Upon the death of Werner Molders in November 1941, Galland was made General of the Fighter Arm, which greatly cut down on his flying combat missions. However, he still flew whenever he could, eventually achieving 97 kills in the Bf.109 by the end of 1944, all on the Western Front. His new role led him to become entangled increasingly in Luftwaffe politics and in almost constant conflict with Hitler and Goring. Where Galland wanted to produce more fighters, Hitler

wanted more bombers; where Galland wanted to create a central fighter defense for protecting Germany from Allied bombers, Goring wanted a peripheral one. Towards the end of the war Galland would repeatedly con- serve his meager fighter forces for telling blows upon the Allies, only to have Hitler order them into premature and ineffective offensives. Galland also had to defend the pilots under his command from repeated defama- tion at the hands of Hitler, Goring and the German propaganda machine.

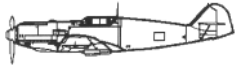
All of this plus a disagreement over the deployment of the Me.262 jet resulted in Galland's dismissal as General of the Fighter Arm in January 1945. Still a Lieutenant-General, he was then given command of a Me.262 *staffel* (squadron), the famous JV 44 or "Squadron of Experts", to prove his contentions about the jet. Galland led JV 44 until he was wounded in late April, 1945, scoring seven more kills for a final tally of 104, including four heavy bombers. His sorties per kill ratio of 4.09 was comparable to Erich Hartmann's 4.05. By the conclusion of the war, he had received the Knight's Cross with Oak Leaves, Swords and Diamonds, one of ten members of the Luftwaffe to do so.

In the air, Galland was a good pilot, marksman and tactician; within the Luftwaffe he was considered to be an "aerial hunter" to Molders' theoretician. However, it was Galland who coordinated the air cover which frustrated the RAF over the "Channel Dash" of the *Scharnhorst*, *Gneisenau* and *Prinz Eugen*, and he displayed other organizational talents during his

## Experten: DOWN IN FLAMES Aces

tenure as General of the Fighters. He always had the daring-do of a stereotypical fighter pilot, having a special holder installed in his fighter so he wouldn't lose a good cigar during a scramble. [DiF:

Galland could have been found in any day campaign or operation on the Western Front from May 1940 to 1945, albeit with much less frequency during the period 1942 to 1944.]



### Priller, Josef "Pips"

(Bf.109: P, Bu)

A popular pilot whose small stature was almost custom-made for the cramped cockpits of the Bf.109's in which he would spend the war. "Pips" Priller flew entirely on the Western Front. A *staffel* leader in JG 51 at the start of the war, he was transferred to JG 26 in November 1940, eventually becoming its Kommodore in early 1943. To combat the daylight bomber streams, in August of that year the unit was brought back to Holland and the lower Rhine area from its bases on the English Channel. Priller left JG 26 in January 1945 to become Inspector of Day Fighters West, effectively ending his career as a combat pilot. In 307 sorties he registered 101 kills, eleven of which were heavy bombers. A Colonel at war's end, he had received the Knight's Cross with Oak Leaves and Swords. [DiE Priller fought in all of the Western Front daylight campaigns currently in the *Down in Flames* series.]

### Marseille, Hans-Joachim

(Bf.109: A, Bu, D)

Known by many colorful nick names, "The Star of Africa" being the most common, Hans-Joachim Marseille actually made his combat debut during the Battle of Britain with JG 52. Despite a number of victories during that battle, his informal nature combined with lone-wolf flying habits earned him the label "unreliable" and a transfer to JG 27, which embarked for North Africa in the spring of 1941. Flying his famous "Yellow 14" Bf.109 he racked up

kills at a prodigious rate until felled by combat fatigue in June 1942. Returning to action in mid August, on September 1 Marseille shot down 17 American and British aircraft (P-40's and Spitfires) during the Battle of Alam El Halfa. At the time of his death in a flying accident 29 days later, he had tallied 158 victories, including more British victims than any other Luftwaffe pilot. He had been decorated with the Knight's Cross with Oak Leaves, Swords and Diamonds, as well as the Italian Gold Medal for Bravery. Held back by his reputation, he had received just recently his promotion to Captain.

Marseille was legendary for his shooting eye and acrobatic piloting, often firing in the midst of a maneuver. These talents resulted in a remarkable frugality with his ammunition, reportedly he required an average of just 15 bullets per kill. While generally aggressive in combat, he was also willing to fight at minimal power and speed. As a consequence of his aggressive style, Marseille had the habit of bringing back a badly damaged Bf.109-during the Battle of Britain alone he was forced to bail out six times. [DiF:

Marseille would have fought in the Battle of Britain and North Sea campaigns in the *Down in Flames* series; the "Last Stand in North Africa" campaign is borderline, so he could be included in it as well.]

### Mayer, Egon

(Bf.109: D)

Flying exclusively with JG 2 (the "Richtofen JG"), Egon Mayer became known to the RAF as "The Man with the White Scarf" for his combat attire and the frequency with which he was seen shooting down RAF aircraft. He arrived on the Western Front in December 1939 and started slowly; however he was to become the first Luftwaffe pilot to achieve 100 kills on the Western Front. Mayer and Georg-Peter Eder developed a head-on approach to exploit a weakness in the armament of American heavy bombers, which contributed to his final score of 102 victories including 25 four-engined aircraft. A

career high was downing three B 17s in 19 minutes on September 6, 1943. This specialization often resulted in heavy damage to his aircraft; he took to his parachute four times and often landed with a damaged plane. He was shot down and killed in March 1944 by escorting P-47's, having received the Knight's Cross with Oak Leaves and Swords. [DiF: Mayer could have flown in any of the daylight campaigns on the Western Front from 1940 to early 1944.]

### Molders, Werner

(Bf.109: P, H, A)

"Daddy" Molders was an *experte* long before WW II started, having scored 14 victories in Spain. In September 1939 he was stationed in the "Four Borders" region of the Western Front with JG 53, scoring his first victory of the new conflict on the 21st day of the month. By June 1940 he had 25 kills when he was captured by the French, resulting in two weeks of captivity. After his release he was given command of JG 51 (subsequently known as "Geschwader Molders") for the Battle of Britain. In 1941, JG 51 was transferred east for the invasion of the Soviet Union, where he added another 33 kills to his 68 Western Front and 14 Spanish Civil War victories before ordered to stop flying. He then commanded a battle group of Stuka's, fighters and ground attack planes, occasionally man aging to get into the air as a forward air controller. After promotion to General of the Fighter Arm, he was flying to Berlin on November 22, 1941 to attend Ernst Udet's funeral and to request more support for his unit. The plane in which he was a passenger crashed in bad weather. The first to exceed Manfred von Richtofen's 80 kills of WW I and the first to score 100 kills total, Molders' decorations included the Knight's Cross with Oak Leaves, Swords and Diamonds.

A quiet, serious man, in addition to his talents as a pilot Molders was exceptional at command, organization, tactics and instruction. He personally desired to be considered the "Boelcke of the

Luftwaffe," a reference to the legendary German aerial tactician of WW I. Molders is credited with developing the "Finger Four" formation, the *Rote* system of leader and wingman, and emphasizing loose rather than tight combat formations. [*DiF*: He would have appeared in any daylight campaign on the Western Front from 1939 to very early 1941, and the invasion of Russia in the summer of 1941.]

### Muller, Friedrich-Karl "Tutti"

(Fw.190: D)  
Friedrich-Karl Muller flew with JG's 53 and 3, racking up 140 kills, including 50 in one month, before his death May 29, 1944. A major at the time, he had been awarded the Knight's Cross with Oak Leaves. [*DiF*: Muller participated in the Battles of France and Britain, the war in Russia from 1941 to 1943, and was back on the Western Front in 1944 until his death.]

### Claus, Georg

(Bf.109: D)  
A friend of Werner Molders, First Lieutenant Georg Claus flew in JG 51 during the Invasion of the West and the Battle of Britain, totalling 18 victories before becoming a prisoner of war November 11, 1940, when his Bf.109 was shot down into the English Channel.

Wick, **Helmut** (Fw.190: P)  
Helmut Wick started the war in Berlin as part of a home defense *staffel* in JG 2. His first victories were over France in May, 1940, and he scored 40 quick kills. Wick was actually leading Werner Molders with 56 victories when his plane was seriously damaged in a dogfight during the late stages of the Battle of Britain on November 28, 1940. Forced to take to his parachute over the English Channel, his body was never found. He had been awarded the Knight's Cross with Oak Leaves. [*DiF*: It should be noted that Wick never flew the Fw.190, only the Bf.109; additionally, given his performance in a limited time span and his reputation amongst his colleagues, I believe the Burst skill should be added to his counter (a counter with these changes will be appearing in a forthcoming C3i). He can be considered to have flown in The Invasion

of the West, North Sea, and Battle of Britain campaigns.]



### Nowotny, Walter

(Me.262: A, D)  
An Austrian by birth, "Nowi" Nowotny flew his first combat sortie in February of 1941; however it would be 5 months before he scored his first victory, and by then he was flying over the Soviet Union. He claimed two other kills that day, and despite once spending three days on a raft in Riga Bay, added 252 more in the next 28 months, all on the Eastern Front. Nowotny repeatedly achieved more than 40 victories in a month, and twice scored 10 in a day. During this time he flew the Bf.109 (both the F and G variants) and the FW-190A. After becoming the first pilot to score 250+ kills, he was ordered back to Germany in November, 1943 for morale boosting tours and to instruct other pilots. In July of 1944 "Kommando Nowotny" was formed to test the Me.262 jet, becoming operational as part of JV 7, which Nowotny also commanded, in October. By this time a Major, he quickly claimed three more victims (B-17's) in the jet to bring his total to 258, fifth on the all-time list. However, on November 8, 1944, after an attack on US bombers, his damaged Me.262 was followed home by P-51 Mustangs, which were probably responsible for his destruction within sight of the airfield. Nowotny had received the Knight's Cross with Oak Leaves, Swords and Diamonds. [*DiF*: He can

be considered to have flown in the Soviet Union from June 1941 to November 1943, most notably over Leningrad in 1942, and in the daylight defense of Germany in the fall of 1944.]

### Rossmann, Edmund "Paule"

(Bf.109: A, Bu)  
(I believe this counter is meant to be Rossmann, not Roseman, and the resource options of the Daylight 1943 campaign seem to support this.)

## GMT 10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary

### Down in Flames Contest Winners

As a fan of *Down in Flames* since I started playing the series, I have attempted to do what I can to introduce new players to the game. One way I have been able to do this is by running tournaments at some of the local "cons" in my area.

I normally schedule a number of rounds consisting of the normal six-turn dogfight. This encourages new players to try the game and not be overwhelmed with learning a new game. Afterwards, I am always willing to introduce interested players to the campaign game which is where the *DiF* series really shines.

I have always received a positive response to the game. The next games in this series—with a new theatre (the Pacific), along with the nicer card graphics—will only further enhance the enjoyment of this series.

—Charles Ryder

It was the most bizarre game of *Down in Flames* I ever played. Looking back, describing it, I suppose it sounds faintly ridiculous. Still, such an event was completely feasible historically. Let me elaborate.

The campaign was the 1940 Malta under Siege variant from C3i Nr. 3, with me as the British and my opponent the Italians. It was the penultimate mission of a finely balanced campaign: A dogfight, Gladiators against C.R 42's.

I started High and he opted for Low. We perused our hands and each nonchalantly decided to discard and draw on the first round. We chuckled as we repeated the exercise for the second. And the third...

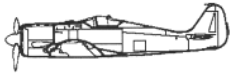
Yes, you've guessed it. Fear of giving the enemy the first shot without a good hand of our own kept us wary of the risk of defeat. We spent the entire mission at our respective altitudes, with not a shot fired. Now that's what I call a dogfight! Discretion is the Better Part of Valor.

—Toby Pilling

## Experten: DOWN IN FLAMES Aces

Edmund Rossmann was an experienced Master Sergeant flying in JG 52 in the late summer of 1942 when a young Erich Hartmann joined the unit. Considered one of the best

*Schwarmfuhrers* (Flight Leaders) on the Eastern Front, Rossmann often took young pilots, including Hartmann, up as his wingman. Eventually promoted to Lieutenant and earning the Knight's Cross, Rossmann scored 93 kills before becoming a POW on July 9, 1943. [DiF: Besides any campaigns in the Soviet Union from June 1941 until his capture, he also flew in the Battle of Britain.]



### Weiss, Robert

(Fw.190: H)

First seeing action on the Western Front in 1941 with JG 26, Robert Weiss was later transferred to JG 54 and the Eastern Front. Ninety of his 121 kills were to occur there, where he was a noted pilot of the Fw.190D. He was killed in combat near Lingen, December 29, 1944. A Captain at the time, he had been awarded the Knight's Cross with Oak Leaves.

### Buchner, Hermann

(Fw.190: H, CV)

An ex-tank buster on the Eastern Front with StG 1 and 2, Sergeant Hermann Buchner moved on to fighters and JG 4, but his greatest exploits came near the end of the war in the Me.262. While he totalled "only" 58 aerial kills, twelve of these were four-engine bombers downed with the jet. These twelve victories, his only kills in an Me.262, were scored with JV 7 and left him tied for third on the Luftwaffe's list of jet

*experten*. Buchner survived the war, having received the Knight's Cross. [DiF: As a Fw.190 pilot, he can be found in any campaign over the Eastern Front. A future C3i will provide a supplemental counter for his career in the

### Philipp, Hans

(Fw.190: D, P)

A "hunter" who preferred dueling enemy fighters, Hans Philipp debuted in the Invasion of Poland with JG 76, scoring his first kill there. He was then transferred to JG 54 and the Western Front for the subsequent Battles of France and Britain. Philipp went east with that unit for the invasion of the Soviet Union, where he would achieve 177 of his 206 kills with the "Green Heart Wing." He was transferred west on April 1, 1943, to command JG 1 in Holland. The following October he was shot down and killed by a P-47. His final rank was Lieutenant Colonel, and he had been awarded the Knight's Cross with Oak Leaves and Swords. [DiF: He took part in the invasions of Poland and the West, the Battle of Britain, campaigns in the east until April 1943, and the daylight campaign in the west in 1943.]

### Hartmann, Erich

(Bf.109: H, Bu, CV, A)

The highest-scoring fighter pilot in history, Erich "Bubi" Hartmann got off to an ignominious start by earning a three-day assignment to the maintenance section after his third mission in the air. He flew his first combat mission October 1942, claimed his first victim, an 11-2, a month later, and proceeded to be credited with 351 more over the next two and a half years. By 1943, he was flying four or more missions a day; his career total of 1425 sorties (he had a ratio of 4.05 sorties per kill) included 800 involving combat. Despite the large number of missions flown, he never lost a wingman or received a wound. He was, however, forced down 16 times, at least half the result of his combat style of shooting from as close to the enemy as possible.

All of Hartmann's 352 kills were on the Eastern Front; the total includes 261 single-engine, 90 twin-engine and one four-engine aircraft. Seven of the single engine victories were American flown P-51 Mustangs shot down over Romania and Czechoslovakia in the closing months of the war. Eventually reaching the rank

of Major, he commanded both *staffels* and *gruppen* in JG 52 but finished the war with JG 53. Flying on the last day of the war, Hartmann was captured by the Soviets and spent over ten years in various jails before being released into West Germany, where he later served in the new German air force. He had been awarded the Knight's Cross with Oak Leaves, Swords and Diamonds.

[DiF: Hartmann's sole aircraft during WW II was the Bf.109, primarily the G and K variants. Any campaign on the Eastern Front from late 1942 onward may have included Hartmann. For now, I would suggest he be replaced in the Daylight 1944 campaign by Galland in the Bf.109.1

### Hackl, Anton

Anton Hackl was one of the leading destroyers of Allied heavy bombers, shooting down at least 32 of them, fourth on the Luftwaffe's list. Stationed opposite France in 1939, he participated in the Battles of France and Britain with JG 77 before heading east. His total of 192 victories included 87 on the Western Front (including all of his heavy bomber kills), and 105 on the Eastern Front. Fighting from the beginning to end, he flew over 1000 sorties, ending the war a Major with the Knight's Cross with Oak Leaves and Swords. [DiF:

He can be included in the Invasion of the West and Battle of Britain *Down in Flames* campaigns, plus any mid-war campaigns occurring on the Eastern Front and late war daylight campaigns on the Western Front. Hackl was a noted pilot of the Fw.190, and a subsequent issue of C3i will contain a new counter for him with the Burst and Performance skills.]

### Rudel, Hans-Ulrich

(Ju.87: Bm, S, A, G)

Hans-Ulrich Rudel was the greatest of the Stuka pilots, flying 2,530 sorties from the invasion of the U.S.S.R. to the end of the war. He first saw action in Poland as an observer in a reconnaissance plane and subsequently served a short stint in Greece, but did not see action over Crete. His unit was then transferred east for the attack on Russia, where he was stationed for the remainder of the

war. While still a First Lieutenant, he was credited with the final and decisive bomb hit on the 23,600 ton Soviet battleship *Marat*, on September 23, 1941. Besides the battleship, Rudel's final tally included a cruiser, eleven aircraft, innumerable ground targets and 519 Soviet tanks. The latter were primarily destroyed with the anti tank gun armed Ju.87G, which he helped develop. The eleven aerial victories were achieved in approximately 400 sorties flown in a Fw.190 over Hungary. Forced or shot down over 30 times, after the last of these Rudel had to have a leg amputated in February 1945, but returned to flying with an artificial leg within a few weeks.

Ending the war a Colonel, he had received the Knight's Cross with Golden Oak Leaves, Swords and Diamonds; he was the only recipient of the Golden Oak Leaves, the award being created for him. [DiF: Rudel can be incorporated

in all Russian campaigns, including the Stalingrad operation and the Kuban Bridgehead campaign.]

### **Schnauffer, Heinz-Wolfgang**

(Bf.110: H, A, G)

Heinz-Wolfgang Schnauffer was the premier night-fighting ace of the Luftwaffe, known variously to the British as "The Night Ghost of St. Trond" or "The Spook of St. Trond." While he trained initially as a daytime Bf.110 pilot, he was transferred to night-fighting units before becoming operational with NJG 1. Taught by the number two night-fighting *experte* Helmut Lent (see below), he flew his first sorties in early 1942 as part of the night-time coverage of the "Channel Dash," but only scored his first victory, a Halifax, in June of that year. Schnauffer's regular crew consisted of radio-operator Fritz Rumpelhardt and gunner Wilhelm Gaensler. Their specialty was hunting down a bomber raid's "Master of Ceremonies," the pathfinder aircraft with the bombing force's commander aboard. Schnauffer regularly scored multiple victories in a single evening, later using a Bf.110 with "Jazz Music"-four 20mm cannons mounted behind

the pilot and aimed forward and upwards. Highlights from his career include shooting down five Lancasters in 14 minutes, and in February 1945, shooting down two Lancasters in the early morning and seven in the next evening before midnight, for a total of nine heavy bombers in one day. His final tally was 121 victories in 164 sorties-all at night, all on the Western Front, and almost all were four-engined planes. He finished the war as a Major in command on NJG 4, with the Knight's Cross with Oak Leaves, Swords and Diamonds.

[DiF: While Schnauffer did fly the Bf.110 exclusively, he did not participate in any daylight actions, so the Schnauffer counter should be considered to be more representative of another skilled Bf.110 pilot. As a night-fighter, he can be considered to have participated in all Western Front campaigns from 1942 to 1945; I have begun to consider a system to allow for aces in night campaigns.]

### **Lent, Helmut**

Another Bf.110 pilot whose main claim to fame was at night, Helmut Lent also had a brief but notable career as a daytime *Zerstorer* ace. He started his training in single-engine fighters, but was transferred to the Bf.110 before the outbreak of WW II. He scored his first kill, a Polish P.11c, on the second day of the war. Three months later he played a significant role in the "Battle of the German Bight" (aka Heligoland), downing two Wellingtons in a five minute span and finishing off a third. His final five daytime successes were Norwegian Gladiators during the invasion of that country. He and the only radio operator/gunner to serve with him, Walter Kubisch, took part in the dramatic capture of the vital Olso-Fornebu airfield by 1/ZG-76 on the first day of the campaign. After Norway, Lent was transferred to the relatively new night-fighting units, where upon he took command of a squadron in NJG 1. In the next four and a half years he flew over 300 night combat sorties, rising to *gruppe* and later *geschwader* commands. When Bf.110's were

brought back to daytime duties in desperation to contend with the American bomber streams, the German high command forbade Lent to participate for fear of losing him. Wounded three times, he was killed during a flying accident October 5, 1944. He had scored 102 night victories (second only to Schnauffer) to go with his eight daytime kills. A Lieutenant Colonel at the time of his death, he had received the Knight's Cross with Oak Leaves, Swords and Diamonds-the first night fighter to win the Diamonds.

[DiF: As a daytime fighter pilot, Lent participated in the Polish campaign, as well as early bomber defense in the West and the invasion of Norway. A new counter for him, in the Bf.110 with the Burst and Ace Pilot skills, will appear in a future C3i. He was also a premier night-fighter, flying as such in the West from 1940 to 1944, and he should appear as an skilled pilot in any system for night aces. Besides the night-fighting Bf.110, he may also have flown in a radar-equipped Ju.88 briefly.]

### **Streib, Werner**

(Bf.110: P, Bu)

Werner Streib debuted as a daytime Bf.110 pilot over France in 1940 with ZG 1, scoring his first victory in that campaign. However, by July 1940 he was the first of Germany's night-fighting pilots to score a victory (an RAF Whitley bomber). His victory total steadily mounted despite the early limitations of night-fighting. Eventually he became known as "The Father of Night Fighting." A proponent of the ill-fated He.219 night-fighter, Streib was the first to fly it in combat, scoring five kills in its first use on June 11, 1943. Streib spent the entire war on the Western Front, and was made Inspector of the Night Fighters in March, 1944. His final score of 66 kills included 14 shared with his gunner/radio operator Kurt Bundrock. A Colonel at the end of the war, he had received the Knight's Cross with Oak Leaves and Swords. [DiF:

As a daytime Bf.110 pilot, he participated in the Battle of France. As a night fighter, he participated in all campaigns from 1940 to 1945.1