

**Modellismo - Aereo disegno - Messerschmitt Bf. 109E - Aircarft described
No. 142**



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AIRCRAFT DESCRIBED No. 142

MESSERSCHMITT Bf 109E

Drawn by J. D. CARRICK

Described by C. W. CAIN

CREATING A CLASSIC FIGHTER—Even if there had not been a German Air Ministry specification issued in 1934 (a year after Hitler came to power) it is highly probable that Professor Dipl. Ing. Willy Messerschmitt would have gone ahead and evolved the classic Bf 109. But the Germans knew that Britain was designing the Hurricane and the Spitfire . . . and round the world designers were in trend towards the monoplane single-seater with retractable undercarriage and seeking speeds a 100 m.p.h. faster than the contemporary biplane interceptors.

Willy Messerschmitt set out to create the smallest practical airframe round the most powerful aero-engines which were then in the development stage. He settled for a slim fuselage, tiny cockpit and compact, blunt wings of minimal area. The tail, too, was diminutive and the tailplane was strut-braced and adjustable for take-off and landing. To further assist low-speed handling he incorporated Lachmann leading-edge wing slats and fully-slotted flaps and drooping ailerons. The powerplant, unusually, was given upthrust (see g.a. drawings). The fully retracting main undercarriage was long, to assist take-off—but meant landings had to be more tail down than most pilots of the time would have preferred. As with the Hurricane and Spitfire, the Bf 109 underwent progressive development, exchanging fixed-pitch wooden propeller for early 2-blade variable pitch (U.S. Hamilton licence-built) and ultimately 3-blade v.p. VDM propellers. Armament was too light to begin with and was increased to approximate to that of its chief adversaries, especially after the Bf 109 was "blooded" in Spain during the Civil War (1937-39) and groomed for the big battles to come.

From the first prototype of 1935 to the last of the infinite variety of Bf 109s, the German war industry turned out the fantastic quantity of some 33,000 of these tough little warplanes. They served on every front and with Germany's European allies. But it is the Battle of Britain one-o-nine, the Bf 109E for "Emil" which is perhaps best remembered. Although the Hurricane was more manoeuvrable in turns, the Bf 109E could outclimb and outdive. So while the Hurricanes sought to down the He 111s, the Do 17s, the Ju 87s and Ju 88s they had to be protected from the "Emils" by the faster Spitfires. Yet it is proof both of the bravery of the opposing pilots and the magic of the Bf 109 that quite recently, 25 years after, veterans of the Battle of Britain might have been altered! As it was, to protect the Luftwaffe day bombing raids with adequate "cover" the "Emils" could not stay to "mix it" for fear of running out of fuel before reaching the safety of advance bases in Northern France. Perhaps, far above the skies of Kent, there still echoes the urgent warnings of "Bandits! Angels-one-five" and "Achtung! Spitfeuer!" and the battle cries of "Tally-



Above left, factory photograph with "Swastika" deleted shows a preserved 109E AJ-YH with splinter camouflage and dappled sides. Note early hood. Above, Bf 109V14 (D-1RTT), first prototype of the E series with DB601A engine, two fuselage guns and two wing cannons, first flown in summer, 1938. Note unusual colour line under centre. (Messerschmitt A.G. photo.)

ho!" and their counterpart "Horrido!"

From V for Versuchs to E for "Emil"—Ironically, the very first Bf 109, the V1 (Versuchs—experimental) was powered by a British aero-engine, a 695 h.p. Rolls-Royce Kestrel V liquid-cooled 12-cyl. Vee. The Bf 109V1 was first flown in September 1935 and won the German Air Ministry competition in the following month at Travemünde. Its rivals were two Kestrel-powered prototypes, the He 112V of Ernst Heinkel, the Arado Ar 80V and the Kurt Tank designed Fw 159 which was powered by the still experimental Junkers Jumo 210A-0 of 610 h.p. The He 112 was put into limited production and fought in the Spanish Civil War.

Messerschmitt lost no time in forcing the Bf 109 into large-scale production and in the remarkably short time which elapsed got the fighter into squadron service with JG.2 "Richthofen" Gruppe early 1937. Almost immediately Bf 109Bs with Jumo 210A engines joined the Condor Legion (Staffeln 1 & 2 of J. 88). These were joined by Bf 109Cs in 1938 to replace the He 51 biplanes of 3 Staffel of J. 88. When the war ended in March '38 the Luftwaffe pilots returned, leaving various equipment. (See later "Deutsche Museum Bf 109E".)

Just prior to the outbreak of World War 2 the



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Descrizione

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Disegno e descrizione dei dettagli in inglese

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