

is the possibility that another burst adversely affected the plane on the left side.

The right hand burst killed the co-pilot, mortally wounded or killed the top turret gunner and severely wounded the pilot. The bombardier was also hit in the legs, but whether it was the right hand burst or another that did it remains a question. In any event, the nose gunner was not aware of it at the time.

The aircraft immediately fell off of formation in a dive to the left, making me and my turret the highest point of the fuselage. Yes, it was worrisome! Later, I estimated that we lost considerable altitude, but the Major gained control and pulled us out. Of course, we lost the formation. Joe MacNamara stated that a call was made to the P-38's for assistance in our defense, but I don't think that contact was made via the inter-com. I heard the Major tell someone to, "get him out of there!" I believe that the dead co-pilot was then removed from his seat and the navigator, (who was a washed-out pilot), took his place. At the same time, the first engineer went forward and took over the top turret, after Al Marchi was removed by unlatching the Martin turret seat. I don't know if the pilot asked Gernasio to take over that position, but he was certainly sharp enough to go where he felt he was most needed. This left the radioman alone in the waist, but if he was wounded at that time, I'm sure that the engineer would not have left him.

About this time, before the top turret was in action, we were hit by one or more enemy fighter planes. The one(s) I saw were Me210, or the later version Me 410. This was a twin engine fighter with a group of 7.9 mm machine guns and 20 mm cannons in the nose. It

also contained machine gun barbettes on each side of the fuselage behind the wing trailing edge, that fired aft; up and down. If they were utilized, a rear cockpit gunner was required.

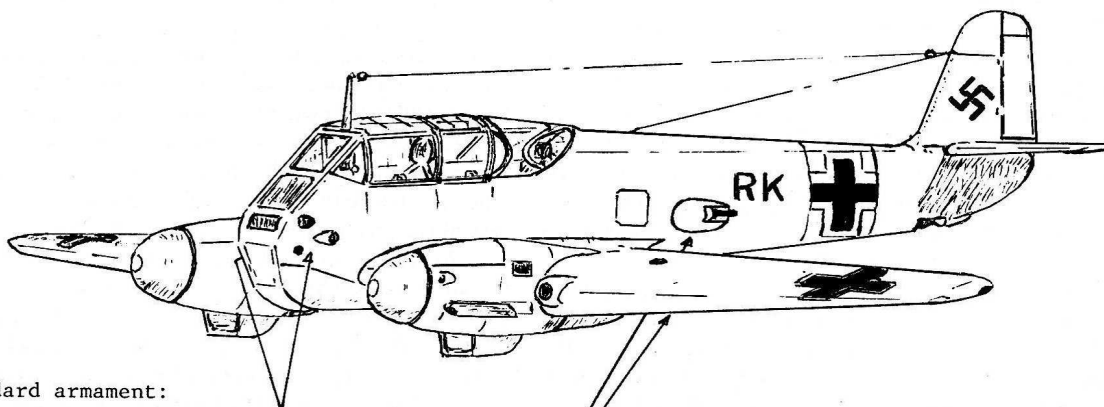
The first fighter attack came from the front, along our right side, obliquely toward me and passing the tail and down. My first inkling of this pass was when all of the fabric was blown off the moveable portion of the right rudder. This did alert me enough that I got a quick burst off as he crossed and I could have hit the Me 210/410 fuselage just aft of the wing. I don't believe that anyone else got a shot off. There is a good chance that the waist gunner/radioman was badly wounded at this time.

The next voice I recognized over the inter-com was the first engineer who had taken over the upper turret. I could "talk" to him and he could hear me, but there was no response from any other station. However, I felt that others could hear me as the circuit had been working earlier. Of course, the pilots could have been trying to raise the P-38's and this would blank me out and I wouldn't chance switching over at that point.

Comparing notes with the nose gunner and bombardier much later, they felt that there were two enemy fighters involved; perhaps a wingman was joining in on the attack. In any event, the next attack came right at me from dead aft. The top gunner yelled that there was an enemy fighter coming in at us. I will always remember that I replied, "I see the bastard" and we both fired at him! We must have been hitting, because he peeled off before fully closing. Unfortunately, he hit my right hand machine gun which jumped in its mount and ceased firing. Two or three 7.9 slugs also starred up the turret's bullet

**See Torretta Flyer No# 15 Winter 87/88 for beginning of this story by Joe McNamara**

MESSERSCHMITT Me210 or Me410. "Hornet" general appearance



Standard armament:

- in the nose firing forward:  
two (2) 7.9mm, (30 caliber), machine guns.  
four (4) 20mm cannons.
- in "barbettes" firing in an up and down arc;  
rearward. One on each side of the rear fuselage  
controlled by a rear seat gunner.  
two (2) 13mm, (50 caliber), machine guns.

Bill Hoisinger  
8-12-94  
(NOT FROM MEMORY)