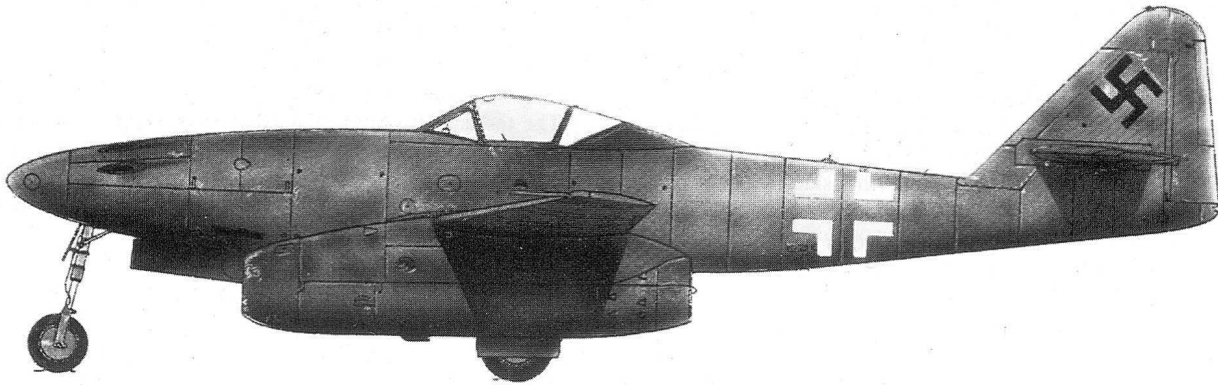


Air to Air Tactics Piston Aircraft Used In Attacking Jet Fighters

American P-51s and P-47s take on the Me 262



Editor's Notes

The Me-262 was the first jet powered fighter plane to enter in combat. It happened during the latter half of World War Two in 1944 by German invention. It was hoped that this new fast aircraft would eradicate the ever darkening skies over Europe of increasing Allied aircraft raids. As you can see from the accompanying combat reports and from our own experience, the skies remained firmly in Allied control. Why did this come about?

The airframe was designed to accommodate two jet engines of low power of under a thousand pounds of thrust. This was the concept back in the late thirties, a smaller engine would use less strategic materials that were already in short supply because the war started too soon before stockpiles of essential war material were filled. Also a small engine would be easier to develop and handle. Jet engine development had been going on since 1937, and in 1939 the first jet powered aircraft actually flew in Germany. Among top German leaders it was thought it would only be a matter of time before jet turbine engines would be dependable enough to put into mass production. If the truth were known, as good as the engines were in design and construction the jet turbine engines of WWII were never

reliable enough for final production. The time frame from concept to finish was just too short even for an advanced industrial nation such as Germany.

The airframe of which much has been written was of conventional design with innovations to accommodate the new requirements of jet engine power such as the variable horizontal stabilizer. Using aluminum sheets riveted to formers and stringers the method of construction was much like any other aircraft of the period.. Lighter construction materials known as composites used in modern jet aircraft were yet to be invented.

In mid 1944 when Germany should have been sending out peace feelers they were faced with war now on all fronts, east, west, in the Atlantic, and in the air. With assaults on their homeland from the air, movement of goods and men on the ground was becoming increasingly difficult. The development of the jet engine went on in full fury. Some in Hitler's camp began to believe that superweapons could turn the war around even while the land was being gobbled up by the invading armies. These leaders were seemingly beginning to lose their sense of reality. The quickest way they thought to undo the calamity of total occupation by the victorious Allies was to depend more on the Superweapon. The Jet fighter in a sense was a superweapon. At first it was