

away from us. These two jet aircraft pilots appeared to be experienced which was evidenced by their tactics in this encounter. They used power after we were observed in the area.”

Lt. Earl R. Lane, 100th Fighter Squadron, 332nd Fighter Group: “I was flying number three position in a flight of four aircraft covering B-17s of the 5th Bomb Wing. I was at 29,000 feet at the time. At about 1210 hours I noticed four aircraft, apparently enemy, in string passing from three o’clock to nine o’clock under the bombers. They were completely out of range. I did not notice any damage to the bombers. After seeing these aircraft I began looking around. We “s ed” across the bombers and made a turn back to the right when I saw an Me-262. The Me-262 was in a thirty degree dive, coming across the bomber formation. He appeared as if he was peeling for an attack on the bombers. I came in for a thirty degree deflection shot from 21,000 feet. He did not quite fill my gun sight. I fired three short bursts and saw the plane emitting smoke.

A piece of the plane, either the canopy or one of the jet orifices, flew off. I then pulled up and circled over the spot where he went down. I saw a crash and a puff of black smoke. Two seconds later, I saw another piece hit close to the first piece. I was at 17,000 feet when I broke off the encounter. The jet was a steel blue-grey camouflage.

After this encounter I teamed up with another friendly aircraft and headed for home. Before leaving the area, a black P-51 with German markings approached me at 22,000 ft. at five o’clock. The friendly pilot I was with yelled “break right”. I did so and the enemy aircraft broke off and flew north. The jets I saw were not using power. They were unaggressive to fighters and dived and climbed but seldom turned. In attacking bombers the jets came out of the sun and flew across the middle of the bombers from five to ten o’clock or came up low and behind the last one of the bombers.

There is a need for fast speed in areas where jets are expected. Also it is essential to weave close to the bombers when affording cover because the low attack on the bombers by jets cannot be observed easily from a distance.”

On 24 March 1945, when B-17s of the Fifteenth Air Force attacked Berlin from Italian bases, approximately 30 to 40 Me-262s plus a few Me-163s opposed our formations from 50 miles south of target to Berlin. Bombers claimed 6 Me-262s destroyed and 6 probably destroyed, with losses of 2 B-17s to jet aircraft. Fighters claimed 7 Me 262s destroyed, 2 Me-262s and 1 Me-163 probably destroyed., and 5 Me-262s damaged, with loss of 1 P-51 jet aircraft.

The following are some selected first hand accounts by pilots of their encounters. Colonel William A. Daniel, 308th Fighter Squadron, 31st Fighter Group. “On 24 March 1945. I was leading a formation of P-51s providing close escort on penetration, target and withdrawal cover over Berlin, Germany for the bombers of the 5th Wing. At 1225 hours, from 28,000 feet, just south of the target, I observed 2 Me-262s headed towards the bombers from 11 o’clock. The bombers were headed north, the enemy aircraft were headed east and I was headed west, putting me 90 degrees from the enemy aircraft and 90 degrees from the bombers. As I saw the 2 enemy aircraft turn into the bombers from the stream about 7 o’clock, I turned in and started to close in and fire, but observed 4 more enemy aircraft turning in. I waited for the six enemy aircraft to turn, then closed in on him from about 4:30 o’clock, at 28,000 feet, to 500 yards and fired. No strikes were observed although the enemy aircraft made a snap roll and went into a spin. I observed a para-

chute and 4 blobs of smoke. Lts. Doherty and Wilder later confirmed the observation of the parachute.

These enemy aircraft were of a blue-gray color. No contrails or belly tanks observed. The enemy was only moderately aggressive and made evasive moves, My indicated speed was approximately 400 miles per hour while the Me-262s was about 450 miles per hour.”

F/O Thurston L. Gaines, Jr 99th Fighter Squadron, 332nd Fighter Group on 24 March 1945, I was flying number four (4) position in yellow flight furnishing penetration cover for B- 17s of the 5th Bomb Wing. At approximately 1210 hours we were escorting B-17s at an altitude of 27,000 feet about thirty (30) miles southwest of the target, when three (3) Me-262s were seen diving on the bomber formation from about thirty thousand (30,000) feet. The Me-262s were in string and made their attack from five o’clock high at the rear section of the bombers. The first jet missed his bomber apparently and continued his flight under the bomber formation without altering his course. The second jet made his attack in a glide and after firing a burst from his guns applied power to his engine. This was evidenced by the fact that a puff of dark smoke was emitted from the jet nacelles. This jet continued his attack under the bomber formation and started a turn to the right. Immediately after observing the puff of smoke from the jets, a B-17 was seen to do an abrupt high wing over to the right and started to spin in the same direction. The second Me-262 to make a pass at the bomber fired from approximately 1500 feet. By the time I had released my wing tanks the jet aircraft had made his pass and as I gave pursuit, soon discovered that his rate of speed was too fast for me to close in on him.

Consequently, I started a climbing turn to the right at approximately 20,000 feet when I observed an Me-262 in a steep right turn about one o’clock slightly high. I pulled the nose of my aircraft up and started firing from about 200 feet with thirty-five degree deflection head on and closed to approximately 8 feet, with seventy degree deflection. No strikes were observed nor did the enemy aircraft attempt to take evasive action. It appeared that the jet pilot did not see me because he made no attempt to bear his guns on my aircraft but instead continued in his steep right turn. The rate was not exceptionally fast for an almost head-on approach, and I would estimate that I fired a good three second burst at a climbing deflection shot. All of the Me-262s that I observed in the area appeared to be black with blue-gray under surface. No markings, belly tanks, or rockets were observed and I did not observe contrails during the encounter.

Lt. Robert W Williams, and Samuel W Watts Jr. 100th Fighter Squadron, 332nd Fighter Group “At about 1215 hours, while escorting B-17s of the 5th Bomb Wing, Lt. Brown, the flight leader, called in enemy aircraft attacking our bombers. They were higher than the enemy aircraft and had the advantage, so we thought. When I saw the first enemy aircraft they were in somewhat of a line abreast formation making very shallow turns. They must have been cruising at least 450 MPH because I had an indicated 380 MPH after my dive with everything full forward. The jets continued almost straight and in a slight dive disappearing in the distance. At 1220 hours my wingman called to me that we were being attacked by two Me-262s from five o’clock high. They came in a close formation and fired at my wingman. I was about 500 feet above them so I rolled over into a steep wing over and developed a high speed stall from which I recov-