



**CONTACT
AND MEMBERSHIP
DETAILS**



**KURSK
LUFTWAFFE FORCES
IN THE BATTLE**



**SIG UPDATES
SMW AND DRIFFIELD
DISPLAY**



**RIAT 2018
LUFTWAFFE IN THE
STATIC DISPLAY**



The Eagle

THE GERMAN MILITARY AVIATION SPECIAL INTEREST GROUP



Editorial

I would like to take this opportunity to welcome you to the first issue of **The Eagle**. I've been asked on several occasions at shows "what happened to the newsletter?" So here it is. I've actually never seen one of the old ones so what follows may be completely different from what went before.

By way of an introduction, here is a potted history of the current incarnation of the SIG.

The IPMS (UK) Luftwaffe SIG has been around in various guises for many decades now. The current leader of the SIG is Nathan Robinson who took over the SIG in August of 2107 to prevent the SIG from closing. The Scale Model World 2017 display was somewhat embryonic in structure but as we reach the second half of 2018 the SIG has bedded in with a group of SIG members putting models on display at a few shows in the north of England.

We will see the SIG have quite a healthy display calendar for 2019 with the geographical radius of the SIG expanding a little further south into the Midlands.

By way of a second introduction, I feel I should introduce myself. I've been building models since the mid 80's with a bit of a break from the late 90's until around 2005. I've always had an interest in German aviation. My current favourites are the modern Luftwaffe and the Luftwaffe of the late thirties. In running this SIG I take a very broad brush approach to 'what counts' with the aim of being as inclusive as possible. Military aviation in Germany has a somewhat fractured and divergent timeline. It is this complex story that I wanted to tell with the SIG. World War Two is still, by a healthy margin, the majority of what this SIG covers but I think the display can only be enriched by the addition of the occasional Fokker, Mig-21 or Eurofighter.

With Luftwaffe translating into English from the Luft 'air' + Waffe 'weapon' I feel that we are, to a greater extent sticking to the script by building German military aircraft. We will feature models from the dawn of flight, both world wars, both sides of the *Berliner Mauer* and right up to the present day.

Now that the SIG is fully up and running I would like to take this opportunity to welcome new members to the SIG. Please get in touch using the contact details at the end of this newsletter.

By way of a third introduction, I would like to introduce the first edition of **The Eagle**. This newsletter will be produced a couple of times a year, provisionally during the school holidays (when time away from works gives me the time to write the newsletter). Please feel free to share the newsletter as widely as possible.

In this issue, the main article concerns the Battle of Kursk, the point that the war turned against Hitler and his armies. It was a quite a challenge to compile a definitive list of aircraft involved in Operation Citadel.

The second feature could hardly be more different, the Luftwaffe at RIAT. This article is but a hint of what is available online. The SIG has a growing collection of walkarounds, to which the RIAT 2018 aircraft will be added.

I hope you enjoy the first issue of **The Eagle** and I look forward to seeing you at a model show soon.

Prost!



Nathan Robinson

Luftwaffe SIG Leader

The Battle of Kursk

In the spring of 1943, the German armies on the eastern front were stretched along a front that extended from the Barents Sea through Leningrad to the sea of Azov. The front was stable in most places. The major problem for the German military in the east was how to control the vast spaces of the USSR. By mid-1943 a number of factors were beginning to turn against Germany's ability to control the eastern front and mount offensive operations. Losses of skilled troops, particularly in the battle of Leningrad and deficiencies in manufacturing production left the German military with limited attacking objectives and a switch to defensive operations. Operation Citadel was Hitler attempt to deny the Red Army the upper hand on the eastern front.

In the Central Black Earth Region, the Soviet forces held a large salient (about half the size of England) in the front line in an area between the boundary of Germany's army group south and centre. The Soviet army activities concentrated on a curve that ran from Belgorod to an area south-east of Orel which enclosed the Kursk sector. This salient denied the German forces of a communication route behind the front and it also left German force particularly vulnerable to an attack from Kharkov.

Operation Citadel had five objectives:

1. Shorten the line around Kursk.
2. Reestablish the rail route between Army Group Center and Kharkov.
3. Cut off and annihilate Soviet forces.
4. Protect the flanks of Army Group Center and Army Group South.
5. Destroy soviet army reserves.

Hitler required that "all preparations must be made with...the best units, the best weapons...Every commander and every man must be filled with the decisive meaning of this attack. The victory of Kursk must have the effect of a beacon for the entire world." It is true that Kursk was a beacon for the entire world, but one for the destruction of fascism. For many Kursk represents the turning point of the war against the German armed forces and the ultimate destruction of Hitler and his 1000 year reich.

The plan to encircle Russian forces in Kursk was to begin on the 5th of July 1943. Reichmarschall Göring ordered the Fourth Air Fleet and Sixth Air Fleet to support the attacks by ground forces.

The Battle of Kursk actually began late in the afternoon of 4 July 1943 with German forces making small incursions by ground-based forces. Meanwhile, the last of the Luftwaffe units earmarked for participation arrived at their assigned airfields. At 0300 on 5 July the Fourth Panzer Army initiated a massive artillery barrage. Units of the 1st Air Division (Colonel-General Robert Ritter von Greim's 6th Air Fleet) took off at 03:30 hours.

Show Calendar

The SIG has a couple of shows booked for the remainder of 2018.

- East Riding of Yorkshire Model Show 2018 2nd September
- IPMS Keithley 23rd September
- SMW Telford 10th and 11th November

Contact or Join the SIG

There are several ways to get in touch with the SIG:

www.luftwaffesig.uk

www.facebook.com/luftwaffesig/

www.facebook.com/groups/luftwaffesig/

luftwaffesig@gmail.com

www.instagram.com/luftwaffesiguk/

If you are looking to join the SIG and perhaps add your model to one of our displays then please join our facebook group.

If you prefer to stay away from social media then please send the SIG leader an email using the gmail address above. We are an IPMS SIG but membership is open to everyone.



Whilst units of the VIII Air Corps (General Otto Deßloch's 4th Air Fleet) were taking off German radar picked up Soviet air forces approaching from Kharkov. The Soviet spy network 'Lucy' and Great Britain's Bletchley Park had provided advance warning of Germany's plans.

Messerschmitt 109's that were originally assigned to bomber escort, instead intercepted the Soviet air forces and the attacks on Luftwaffe airfields were repelled. The Luftwaffe was able to maintain air superiority for the next few weeks as the Russians were reluctant to engage in aggressive air activity. In the 1st Air Division areas, engagements with Russian aircraft occurred later in the afternoon with a similar victory for the Luftwaffe.

Air Liaison officers attached to ground division co-ordinated 'close air support' operations for the next few days with Luftwaffe units flying around half-a-dozen mission each day.

The Fourth and Sixth Air Fleets controlled over 1800 aircraft (over 70% of Luftwaffe aircraft on the eastern front).

On the 17th of July, Hitler effectively ended the Battle of Kursk by ordering some of the ground forces to Italy following the allies landing on Sicily (Operation Husky) on the 9th of July.

When the Ninth Army and the Second Panzer Army retreated from the Orel salient. By the 5th August, all action was complete and Orel had been lost to the Soviets following many sorties from the 6th Air Fleet who protected important rail and communication routes.

During the battle of Kursk, the Luftwaffe flew nearly 26,000 sorties. The peaked at around 3,000 sorties in a day.

Messerschmitt Bf 109

Geschwader	Gruppen / Staffel	Variant
Jagdgeschwader 3 "Udet"	II./JG3	G-4/ G-6
	III./JG3	G-4/ G-6
Jagdgeschwader 52	Stabstaffel /JG-52	G-6
	I./JG52	G-6
	II./JG52	G-4/ G-6
	III./JG52	G-4/ G-6
Nahaufklärungsgruppe 4	NAGr4	G-2/G-4/G-6
Nahaufklärungsgruppe 6	NAGr6	G

Messerschmitt Bf 110

Geschwader	Gruppen / Staffel	Variant
Nahaufklärungsgruppe 4	NAGr4	G
Nahaufklärungsgruppe 6	NAGr6	G
Zerstörergeschwader 1	I./ZG1	E/ F-2/ G-2
Sturzkampfgeschwader 1	Stabstaffel /STG1	E,F

Fw 190

Geschwader	Gruppen / Staffel	Variant
Jagdgeschwader 51 Moelders	Stabstaffel /JG 5	A-3/ A-5/ A-6
	I./JG51	A-4/ A-5/ A-6
	III./JG51	A-4/ A-5/ A-6
	IV./JG51	A-4/ A-5
Jagdgeschwader 54	I./JG54	A-4/ A-5/ A-6
	II./JG54	A-4/ A-5
Schlachtgeschwader 1	I./SchG1	A-5, F-3
	II./SchG1	A-5, F-3, (G-3?)

HS 129 B-1 / -2

Geschwader	Staffel/ Gruppen
Panzerjaeger-Kommando	4.(Pz)/ Sch.G 1
	8. (Pz)/ Sch.G 1
	4. (Pz)/ Sch.G 2
	8/(Pz.)/Sch.G.2
	Pz.Jä.St./JG 51

Participant Aircraft

Exactly which Luftwaffe units and aircraft types participated in the battle against Soviet forces?

Where possible I've used two separate sources but this is no guarantee that what is presented here is 100% accurate. For anyone looking to do a bit more digging, I have provided a bibliography of the most useful references at the end of the article.

Rudel's Battle

The Soviet armour was heavily defended by anti-aircraft artillery. However, on his first sortie Rudel destroyed four enemy tanks, and by the end of the same day, he had destroyed twelve. He wouldn't always finish a mission without damage to his aircraft though.

"Large-scale tank battles raged beneath us during these operations...the tank formations stood opposed to each other in the open terrain. "Gradually I learned all of the details. One often learns through misfortune. After some time the Russians succeeded in adapting themselves quite well to anti-tank attacks from the air....soviet tanks were also issued smoke cartridges with which to protect themselves by smoke screens or with which to simulate fires, so that the attacking plane would cease its attack on the assumption that the tank was on fire."

Rudel would operate at very low levels, perhaps as low as 15 feet and the ground attack aircraft were incredibly vulnerable to ground fire and even damage from the results of their own attacks. "Within the first few days, when I suddenly found myself flying through a wall of flame...I got through entirely unscathed, even though the green camouflage of my aircraft is scorched and splinters from the exploding tank have riddled it with holes."

Luftwaffe Aerial Reconnaissance

In the first five days of the battle, Luftlotte 6 and VIII Fliegerkorps flew 1,152 reconnaissance missions in support of ground forces. Long range reconnaissance squadrons provided a broader surveillance of roads and railways in the Soviet rear. Opposite the second Panzer Army north of Orel reconnaissance observed the build-up of artillery and movement of armour which eventually would play a part in Germany's defeat.

During Operation Citadel, German fighter aircraft fitted with low-level cameras also provided tactical level information on Soviet front line positions.

Ju 87

Geschwader	Gruppen / Staffel	Variant
Sturzkampfgeschwader 1	Stabstaffel / StG 1	D-3
	I./StG1	D-1/ D-3/ D-5
	II./StG1	D-1/ D-3/ D-5
Sturzkampfgeschwader 2	III./StG1	D-1/ D-3/ D-5
	I./StG2	D-3/G-1
	II./StG2	D-1/ D-3/D-5/G-1
Sturzkampfgeschwader 77	III./StG2	D-3, D-5
	I./StG2	D-1/D-3/D-5
	II./StG2	D-1/D-3/D-5
V erbindungskommando (S) 4	III./StG2	D-1/D-3/D-5
	4. Storkampfstaffel	B, R



Junkers Ju 87 Stuka dive bombers returning to their base fly low over an advancing German column of Panzer III tanks and softskin vehicles on the Orel front, July 1943.

© IWM (HU 40710)

He 111

Geschwader	Gruppen / Staffel	Variant
Kampfgeschwader 4 "General Weder"	II./KG4	H-6/ H-11/ H-14/ H-16
	III./KG4	H-6/ H-11/ H-16
Kampfgeschwader 27 "Boelcke"	I./KG27	H-6
	II./KG27	H-16
	III./KG27	H-6/16
Kampfgeschwader 53 "Legion Condor"	I./ KG53	H-16
	II./KG53	H-16
	III./KG53	H-16
Kampfgeschwader 55	II./KG55	H-6/ H-11/H-16
	III./KG55	H-6/ H-11/H-16
Kampfgeschwader 100	I or II./KG100	H-6, H-11.H-16
Verbindungskommando (S) 4		H-6 / 11
Verbindungskommando (S) 5		
Fernaufklärungsgruppe 4	1.(F)/ Nacht	H-6
Fernaufklärungsgruppe 2	2.(F)/ Nacht	H-11/ H-16

Fw 190 Sorties

8./JG.51 was the first to score victories over the Soviet just before 4 am on the 5th of July followed shortly afterwards by 2./JG.54. Fw 190 operation continued through the day until the final victory at 19:20. One pilot claimed 15 aircraft in four sorties. Of 360 Soviet aircraft claimed on the first day, 159 were destroyed by Fw 190s. JG.51 lost nine aircraft, JG.54 just three. Sch.G 1 lost nine aircraft on the southern flank of the salient.

On Tuesday the 6th Fw 190s claimed 126 (of 205 Luftwaffe victories). On the 7th of July JG.51 claimed 35 victories and JG.54 claimed 33, By the 8th of July the Soviets had begun to change their tactics but JG 51 claimed 48 victories to JG.54's 10. On the southern front, Fw190 concentrated on attacking ground targets (infantry columns and anti-aircraft installations).

Victories on the 9th of July totalled 66 for Fw 190s. By the 10th of July ground forces in the

north had ground to a halt after gaining only 9 miles of ground. In the air, the Luftwaffe just like ground-based forces began to face increasing opposition and logistical difficulties with the supply of fuel. This handed Soviet air superiority over the battlefield. By the 12th 50% of German armour had been lost. Fw 190s continued to engage in air combat but the operations had switched to defensive intercepts. Soviets mounted 2,174 sorties against which the Luftwaffe mounted 1,784 sorties.

Over the coming days, there was an important change in the victories claimed by Fw 190. To the detriment of ground forces, Fw 190s were claiming fewer victories against bombers. Because of the number of Soviet fighter JG.51 and JG.54 would rarely get through to the bomber formations. On the 15th of July, only 25 victories were claimed and only six were Il-2 bombers.

The cancellation of Operation Zitadelle did nothing to reduce the number of sorties for the

Fw190 but sorties were entirely defensive as the Russians attempted to capture Orel. As time progressed modest Luftwaffe losses began to mount. Two weeks after the launch of Operation Zitadelle IV./JG.51 had lost one third of its pilots and all its aircraft. Because of a shortage in supply of Fw 190s it re-equipped with BF 109s. By the end of July over 50% of Fw 190s were lost.

German Failure

In the battle of Kursk, the Soviets had overwhelming advantages in mass of force, espionage and effectiveness of command. The Soviet air force was a match for Luftwaffe forces and they would eventually assert air superiority over the Luftwaffe.

Numerically too weak to carry out its mission, the Luftwaffe had become inferior in strength to its Soviet opponents. German industrial output could not keep pace with the normal attrition of war. Furthermore, German leadership had neglected to invest in strategic bombing in order to dent Soviet industrial output.

Local successes were due to the high quality of the Luftwaffe's personnel but with the small number of units available to it whilst having to fight on various fronts. The Luftwaffe was no longer able to meet all of the demands made upon it. It was thus inevitable that it gradually became weaker and the seeds of the Luftwaffe's destruction were sown.

Bletchley Park

Ultra and British Signal Intelligence could read a number of Luftwaffe cyphers from the Enigma code machines. One such machine codenamed 'hedgehog' served as ground-air coordination in Luftlotte IV's sector. First cracked on the 21st of February 1943. Hedgehog allowed British

Fw189 A

Geschwader	Gruppen / Staffel
Nahaufklärungsgruppe 6	1NAGr6
Nahaufklärungsgruppe 10	NAGr10
Nahaufklärungsgruppe 15	NAGr13
V erbindungskommando (S) 4	2. Storkampfstaffel

Hs 126B

Geschwader	Gruppen / Staffel
Nahaufklärungsgruppe 6	NAGr6
Nahaufklärungsgruppe 10	NAGr10
Verbindungskommando (S) 5	
V erbindungskommando (S) 4	1. Storkampfstaffel
	5. Storkampfstaffel

Fi156

Unit
Flugbereitschaft Lfl.6
San.Flugberichtschaft 3
San.Flugberichtschaft 4

Do 17

Geschwader	Gruppen / Staffel
Verbindungskommando (S) 5	
V erbindungskommando (S) 4	1. Storkampfstaffel

He 46

Geschwader	Gruppen / Staffel
Storkampfgruppe Lfl. 6	1. Storkampfstaffel
V erbindungskommando (S) 4	1. Storkampfstaffel
	5. Storkampfstaffel

Go 145

Geschwader	Gruppen / Staffel
Storkampfgruppe Lfl. 6	2. Storkampfstaffel
V erbindungskommando (S) 4	3. Storkampfstaffel
	6. Storkampfstaffel

Intelligence to read communications between Army group south and its supporting air fleet. The British were well informed about early planning for Operation Citadel. On the 22nd of March, ultra intercepts noted Germany's objective of eliminating the salient.

By mid-April decrypted Luftwaffe signals indicated the build-up of strengths in the region and they revealed the codename of the operation 'Zitadelle'. It was on the 30th of April that British Intelligence passed information to the Soviets that warned of a planned German attack.

In the late spring, the intelligence picture was becoming confused. However, British Prime Minister, Winston Churchill wrote to General Secretary of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union Joseph Stalin. "Our information about German intentions is conflicting. On the balance, I think Hitler will attack you again, probably in the Kursk salient."

The 'Lucy' Spy Ring

The 'Lucy' ring was part of a Soviet spy ring in Switzerland. It was composed of a group of agents under the direction of 'Dora' Alexander Rado. 'Lucy' had contacts with key German intelligence sources, including an agent who had access to the German high command, designated as "Werther." The Lucy ring would also contribute to giving the Soviet Union a picture of German military planning during the build-up to the Battle of Kursk.

Modelling the Battle

During the summer of 1943 RLM 74/75/76 was the standard camouflage scheme for fighters and destroyers. Mottling on the side of the fuselage might be RLM 02 or RLM 70.

The Fw 190s of JG54 are the most interesting schemes but they present a problem: the greens and browns applied to the aircraft are not known. It is probable that RLM 70 and RLM 71 were used for the greens. The brown presents further puzzlement. RLM 79 (desert camouflage colour) might have been available from Germany. Another possibility is captured Soviet paint. What is perhaps most likely is that the paint shop mixed the brown in the field from RLM 23, 25 and 04.



Alan Turing OBE FRS

image via <http://www.turingarchive.org>

Spinner marking varied greatly. The theatre marking was a yellow band around the rear of the fuselage with yellow applied to the underside of the wing tips. Bombers and reconnaissance aircraft carried 70/71/65.

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Ju 88

Geschwader	Gruppen / Staffel	Variant
Kampfgeschwader 1	III./KG1	A-4/ A-14/ C-6
	9. (Eis)/KG1	C-6
Kampfgeschwader 3 "Blitz"	I./KG3	A-4
	II./KG3	A-4/ A-14
Kampfgeschwader 51 "Edelweiss"	II./KG51	A-4/ A-14
	III./KG51	A-4/ A-14
	7.(Eis)/KG51	A-4/ A-14/ C-6
Fernaufklärungsgruppe 2	4.(F)/11	?
	4.(F)/14	D-1
	1.(F)/100	A-4/ D-1/ D-5
	4.(F)/121	D-1/ D-5
	2.(F)/ Nacht	C-6/ D-1
Fernaufklärungsgruppe 4	2.(F)/22	D-1/ D-5
	2.(F)/100	D-1/ D-5
	2.(F)/11	D-1
	3.(F)/121	?
	Wekusta 76	D-1
Nachtjagdgeschwader 5	I./N.J.G 100	C-6

Do 217

Geschwader	Gruppen / Staffel	Variant
Fernaufklärungsgruppe 2	2.(F)/Nacht	E/K-1
Fernaufklärungsgruppe 4	1.(F)/Nacht	M-1
Nachtjagdgeschwader 5	12/NJG5	J/ N

Ju 52

Geschwader	Gruppen / Staffel
Transportgeschwader 3	L/TG 3 & II./TG3
Transportgeschwader 4	II./TG4
San.Flugberichtschaft 3	
San.Flugberichtschaft 4	

SIG Announcements

EAST RIDING OF YORKSHIRE MODEL SHOW 2018 RAF 100 COMPETITION TROPHY.



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In addition to the regular normal competition classes, The RAF 100 trophy will be open to all members of all clubs who attend this years show. All attendee's are invited to bring along a model that fits within the scope of the competition. The basis of the competition is any Aircraft, Ship, Vehicle, Figure, etc. that was part of the RAF from its inception to the present day.

It does not matter what scale, or type of media the subject is from, just that it relates to the RAF at during its last 100 years.

The competition will be judged by guest external judges, the model deemed to be winner by the Judges will receive the one-off RAF 100 Trophy, which will be kept by the winner of the trophy.

We will allocate a small section of our display to RAF aircraft for any member who wished to display one of their RAF builds.

SCALE MODEL WORLD DISPLAY

This year's special display is transport. Members are being asked to bring along any transport themed aircraft. We will also have a non themed general theme so please bring along any build too.



RIAT 2018

The German Military was well represented in the green zone of the static display with:

- two different variants of the Tornado (one in the Norm 95 scheme, the other in overall 'blue grey');
- Eurofighter Typhoon;
- Airbus A400M;
- Transall C-160 in Norm 83 camouflage;
- Eurocopter EC 135P2+ (civilian operated training aircraft);
- preserved OV-10B Bronco.

Walkarounds for all the aircraft have been added to the SIG website.

