

COLORS OF WAR

WAR

FURTHER SELECTION OF WORLD WAR TWO ALLIED AND AXIS AIRCRAFT PHOTOGRAPHS FROM THE CHALLENGE FILES
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Advancing American troops inspect a *Luftwaffe* Messerschmitt Me 262A-1a jet fighter following Germany's surrender. Coded 9K+FH, the jet had last flown with 1.KG51. The aircraft, WNr 111685, had been hidden away in a forest bordering the Munich Salzburg Autobahn to prevent detection by strafing Allied fighters. It appears the airframe was covered with branches from the nearby trees for further protection. To render the aircraft non-airworthy, Germans placed explosive charges in both Junkers turbojet engines. The plane was judged too damaged to send to the USA for evaluation so it eventually wound up in a junkyard of *Luftwaffe* aircraft.



Pilot of a Messerschmitt Bf 109G-6/R3 exits the cockpit of his fighter at Borkheide airfield. Aircraft was assigned to JG 300. Note the 80 gallon belly fuselage tank. On the extreme right are the start of the *Reich* defense bands, which, in this case, are blue and red. The bands, which could be just black, red/yellow, blue/red or several other combinations, indicated aircraft that had been assigned to the defense of the homeland.



Depletion of *Luftwaffe* fighter forces was huge. As an example, on 7 April 1945 only 15 out of 183 Fw 190s and Bf 109s that were covered by a large force of Me 262s returned to base from a major interception sortie. The Germans reported the loss of 133 fighters while claiming 50 USAAF B-17s and B-24s. USAAF records indicate that eight American four-engine bombers were shot down. This abandoned Fw 190F was photographed after being captured by American forces. The fighter displays the bright yellow/red *Reich* defense bands on the rear fuselage, which have been applied in gloss paint.