

COST OF WAR

MESSERSCHMITT BF 109 FIGHTERS FROM THE FIRST DAYS OF THE
SECOND WORLD WAR UP TO THE DESTRUCTIVE CONCLUSION
BY JAMES THOMPSON

A pilot could find a perfectly flat field for an emergency landing only to have it interrupted by a drainage ditch. That is what happened to Siegfried Henning flying this Messerschmitt Bf 109G-14 assigned to III./JG 3 that came to a very sudden stop as it skidded into a ditch near Affeltrangen, Switzerland. WNr. 462818 came to grief on 17 December 1944 after it had been attacked by USAAF Mustangs and Henning became lost in bad weather. The Swiss repaired the fighter and put it back into service with the serial J-714 and operated it until being withdrawn on 28 May 1948.



Bf 109E-6 WNr 4943 was an unusual tactical reconnaissance variant flown by 2.Staffel/Aufklarungsgruppe 33 on long-range missions. The wing cannons were removed and replaced by camera equipment in the fuselage. This Messerschmitt has had a protective cover added over the engine and cockpit while camouflage netting has been draped on the aircraft as it sits parked at a Russian airfield. In the foreground is a damaged Polikarpov I-16 that had been left behind by the retreating Soviets. A Luftwaffe Bucker Jungmann is on the right.



Abandoned late-production Bf 109K-4/R3 WNr 332884 of 9./JG 3 at an overrun German airfield during May 1945. Aircraft carries the name *Gabi* under the cockpit and had been flown by Oscar Zimmermann.



An early Bf 109D-1 carrying the fuselage codes KB+VC fell victim to a ground loop on a snow-covered airfield in Germany. The two-blade propeller is shown to advantage.