

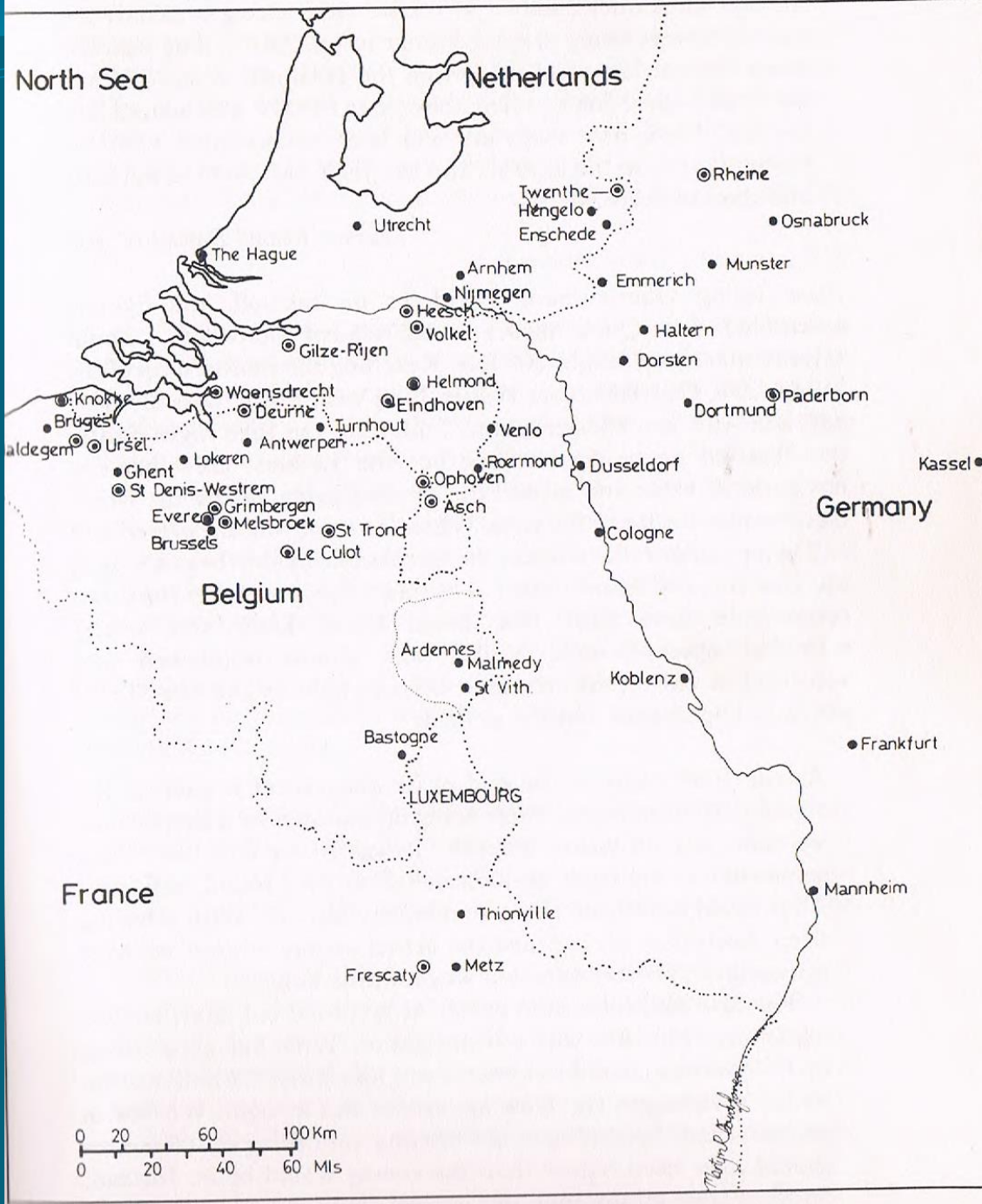
The background of the entire slide is a military camouflage pattern in shades of green, brown, and tan. At the top, the word "MILITARY" is written in large, 3D, weathered metal letters with visible rivets. This word is flanked by two horizontal bars: a brown one above and a green one below. Below these bars, the word "HISTORY" is written in large, bold, black, sans-serif capital letters with a white outline.

MILITARY

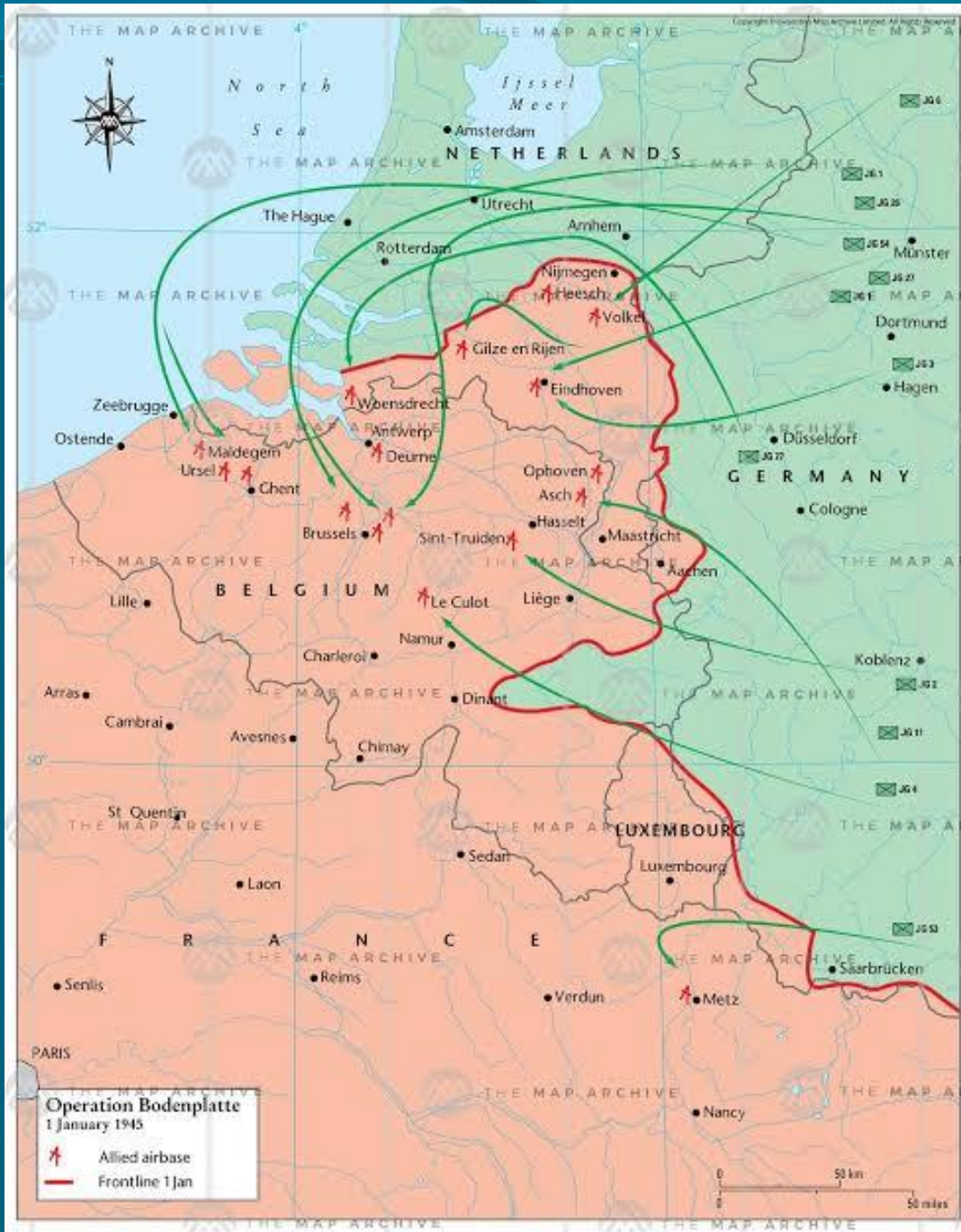
HISTORY

Unternehmen Bodenplatte

The Battle of the Airfields







The Airfields

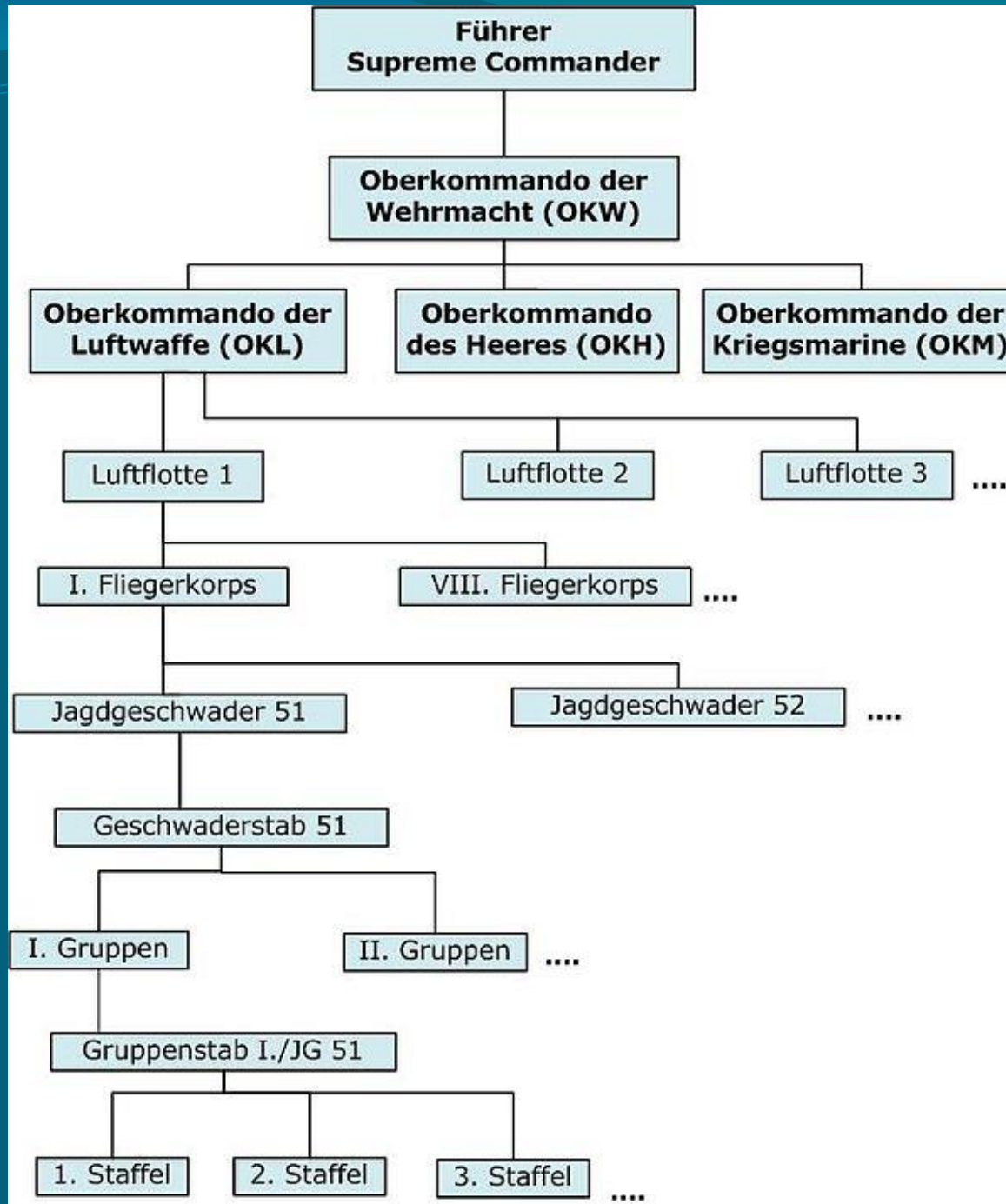
- B56 – Brussels – Evere
- B58 – Brussels – Melsbroek
- B60 – Grimbergen
- B61 – St Denis Westrem
- B65 – Maldegem
- B67 – Ursel
- B70 – Antwerpe – Deurne
- B77 – Gilze Reijen
- B78 – Eindhoven
- B79 – Woensdrecht
- B80 – Volkel
- B83 – Knokke
- B88 – Heesch
- A89 – Culot
- A92 – St Trond
- Y29 – Asch
- Y32 – Ophoven
- Y34 – Metz-Frescaty

Allied Intelligence

- Allied intelligence failed to detect the German intention. In Ultra transcripts, there are only a few indications of what was happening on the other side of the front.
- On 4 December 1944, II Jagdkorps had ordered stockpiling for navigational aids, such as "golden-rain" flares and smoke bombs. Allied intelligence made no written observations of this communication.
- They also disregarded communications to Junkers Ju 88 groups regarding the use of flares when leading formations.
- Intelligence concluded that these instructions were designed for a ground support mission rather than an interception operation. This was reasonable, but no indications of possible ground targets were given.

Codenames

- **Varus:** Indicating that the operation was "a go" and that it would take place within 24 hours of the Varus order being given.
- **Teutonicus:** Authority to brief the pilots and to arrange for the aircraft to be armed and ready at the edge of the airfield.
- **Auftrag Hermann 1.1 1945 Zeit 9.20 Uhr:** Giving the exact date and time of the attack.
- **Dorothea:** Indicating a delay in the attack.
- **Spätlese:** Cancelling of the attack after formations are airborne.



II Jagdkorps (Dietrich Peltz)

3rd Jagddivision (3rd Fighter Division) (Walter Grabmann) at Wiedenbrück

Parent Unit	Geschwader Base	Unit (Gruppe/Staffel)	Aircraft Type	Commanding Officer
Jagdgeschwader 1	Twenthe/Drope/Rheine	Stab and I./II./III. Gruppe	Fw 190 and Bf 109	Herbert Ihlefeld
Jagdgeschwader 3	Sennelager/Paderborn/Bad Lippspringe/Gutersloh	Stab./I./II./III./IV. Gruppe	Fw 190 and Bf 109	Heinrich Bär
Jagdgeschwader 6	Quackenbruck/Delmenhorst/Vechta/Bissel	Stab./I./II./III.	Fw 190 and Bf 109	Johann Kogler
Jagdgeschwader 26	Furstenau/Furstenau/Nordhorn/Plantlunne	Stab./I./II./III.	Fw 190 and Bf 109	Josef Priller
Jagdgeschwader 27	Rheine/Rheine/Hopsten/Hesepe/Achmer	Stab./I./II./III./IV.	Bf 109	N/A - only III and IV Gruppe took part.
Jagdgeschwader 54	Furstenau/Vorden	III./IV.	Fw 190 and Bf 109	Siegfried Freytag
Jagdgeschwader 77	Dortmund/Dortmund/Bonninghardt/Düsseldorf	Stab./I./II./III.	Bf 109	

Jagdabschnittsführer Mittelrhein (Fighter Sector Leader Middle Rhine)

Parent Unit	Geschwader Base	Unit (Gruppe/Staffel)	Aircraft Type	Commanding Officer
Jagdgeschwader 2	Nidda/Merzhausen/ Nidda/Altenstadt	Stab./I./II./III.	Fw 190 and Bf 109	Kurt Bühligen
Jagdgeschwader 4	Rhein- Main/Darmstadt- Griesheim/Rhein- Main	Stab./I./II./III./ IV.		Gerhard Michalski
Jagdgeschwader 11	Biblis/Biblis/Zellhau- sen/Gross-Ostheim	Stab./I./II./III.	Fw 190 and Bf 109	Günther Specht
Schlachtgeschwader 4	Bonn- Hangelar/Bonn- Hangelar/Koln- Butzweilerhod/Koln- Wahn	Stab./I./II./III.	Fw 190	Alfred Druschel

5th Jagddivision (5th Fighter Division) (Karl Hentschell) at Karlsruhe

Parent Unit	Geschwader Base	Unit (Gruppe/Staffel)	Aircraft Type	Commanding Officer
Jagdgeschwader 53	Stuttgart-Echterdingen/Malmsheim/Kirrlach/Stuttgart-Echterdingen	Stab./II./III./I V	Bf 109	Helmut Bennemann

3rd Fliegerdivision (3rd Air Division)

Parent Unit	Geschwader Base	Unit (Gruppe/Staffel)	Aircraft Type	Commanding Officer
Kampfgeschwader 51	Rheine/Hopsten/Hesepe/Munster-Handorf	Stab./II./III./I V	Me 262	Wolfgang Schenck

Bf 109G and K series Fighters



FW 190 A series Fighter



FW 190 D series Fighter



Me 262 series Jet Fighter/Bomber



Ju 88 and 188 series Bomber/Night fighter



8.8cm Flak



2,0cm Flakvierling 38



Allied order of battle

RAF No. 83 Group

Wing Number	Squadron Numbers	Aircraft Type	Airfield
121	174/175/184	Typhoon	Volkel
122	3/56/80/274/486	Tempest	Volkel
124	137/181/182/247	Typhoon	Eindhoven
126	401/402/411/412/442	Spitfire	Ophoven
127	403/416	Spitfire	Evre
143	168/438/439/440	Typhoon	Eindhoven
39 Recce Wing	400/414/430	Spitfire	Gilze-Rijen

RAF No. 84 Group

Wing Number	Squadron Numbers	Aircraft Type	Airfield
131	302/308/317	Spitfire	St. Denis Westrem
132	66/127/322/331/332	Spitfire	Woensdrecht
135	349/485	Spitfire	Maldegem
145	341/74/329/345	Spitfire	Deurne
146	193/197/257/263/266	Typhoon	Deurne
35 Recce Wing	2/4/268	P-51 Mustang/Spitfire	Gilze-Rijen

RAF No. 2 Group

Wing Number	Squadron Numbers	Aircraft Type	Airfield
139	98/180/320	B-25 Mitchell	Melsbroek
34 Recce Wing	16/69/140	Spitfire/Vickers Wellington/de Havilland Mosquito	Melsbroek

Spitfire Various Marks



Typhoon



Tempest



MOTIONRC
www.motionrc.com

Mustang P51 Mk1



Bofors 40mm Autocannon



American Tactical Air Forces

Ninth Air Force

Fighter Group	Squadrons	Aircraft Type	Commanding Officer
366	389/390/391	P-47 Thunderbolt	Colonel Norman Holt
352	486/487/328	P-51 Mustang	Colonel James Mayden
48	492/493/494	P-47 Thunderbolt	Colonel James Johnson
36	22/23/53	P-47 Thunderbolt	Lt Colonel Van H. Slayden
363	33	F-5 Lightning	Colonel James Smelley
373	410/411/412	P-47 Thunderbolt	Colonel James McGehee
365	386/387/388	P-47 Thunderbolt	Colonel Ray Stecker
362	377/378/379	P-51 Mustang	Colonel Joseph Laughlin
50	10/81/313	P-47 Thunderbolt	Colonel Harvey Case
358	365/366/367	P-47 Thunderbolt	Colonel James Tipton Laughlin

Mustang P51D



MustangsMustangs

Thunderbolt P47 Series



Lightning P38



Maldegem, Ursel and St. Denijs Westrem



FW190 III/JG1

Maldegem, Ursel and St. Denijs Westrem

- Units I, II, III./JG 1
- Aircraft 71
- Aircraft lost 29 = 41%
- Damaged unknown
- Pilots killed or captured 25 = 35%

Sint-Truiden



Low Level High Speed Attack

Sint-Truiden

- Units I, II, III./JG 2 and SG 4
- Aircraft 144
- Aircraft lost 46 = 32%
- Damaged 12
- Pilots killed or captured 23 = 16%

Volkel and Heesch



Volkel and Heesch

- Units I, II, III./JG 6
- Aircraft 78
- Aircraft lost 27 = 35%
- Damaged 5
- Pilots killed or captured 23 = 30%

Antwerp-Deurne and Woensdrecht



Antwerp-Deurne and Woensdrecht

- Units I, II, III./JG 77
- Aircraft 59
- Aircraft lost 11 = **19%**
- Damaged –
- Pilots killed or captured 11 + **19%**

Metz-Frescaty



Metz-Frescaty

- Units Stab., II., III., IV./JG 53
- Aircraft 80
- Aircraft lost 30 = 38%
- Damaged 8
- Pilots killed or captured 17 = 21%

Le Culot and Ophoven



Le Culot and Ophoven

- Units I, II, III./JG 4
- Aircraft 55-75
- Aircraft lost 25-26 = **46 to 35%**
- Damaged ~ 6
- Pilots killed or captured 17 = **31 to 23%**

Asch



Asch (Y29)

- Units Stab. I, II, III./JG 11
- Aircraft 61
- Aircraft lost 28 = 46%
- Damaged unknown
- Pilots killed or captured 24 = 39%

Brussels-Evere/Grimbergen



Lt Theo Nibel cops a Partridge right up his Annular Radiator

Brussels-Evere/Grimbergen

- Units Stab., I, II, III./JG 26 and III./JG 54
- Aircraft 127
- Aircraft lost 40 = 32%
- Damaged unknown
- Pilots killed or captured 30 = 24%

Brussels-Melsbroek



Brussels-Melsbroek

- Units I, II, III./JG 27 and IV./JG 54
- Aircraft 43
- Aircraft lost 21 = 49%
- Damaged 1
- Pilots killed or captured 17 = 40%

Gilze-Rijen and Eindhoven

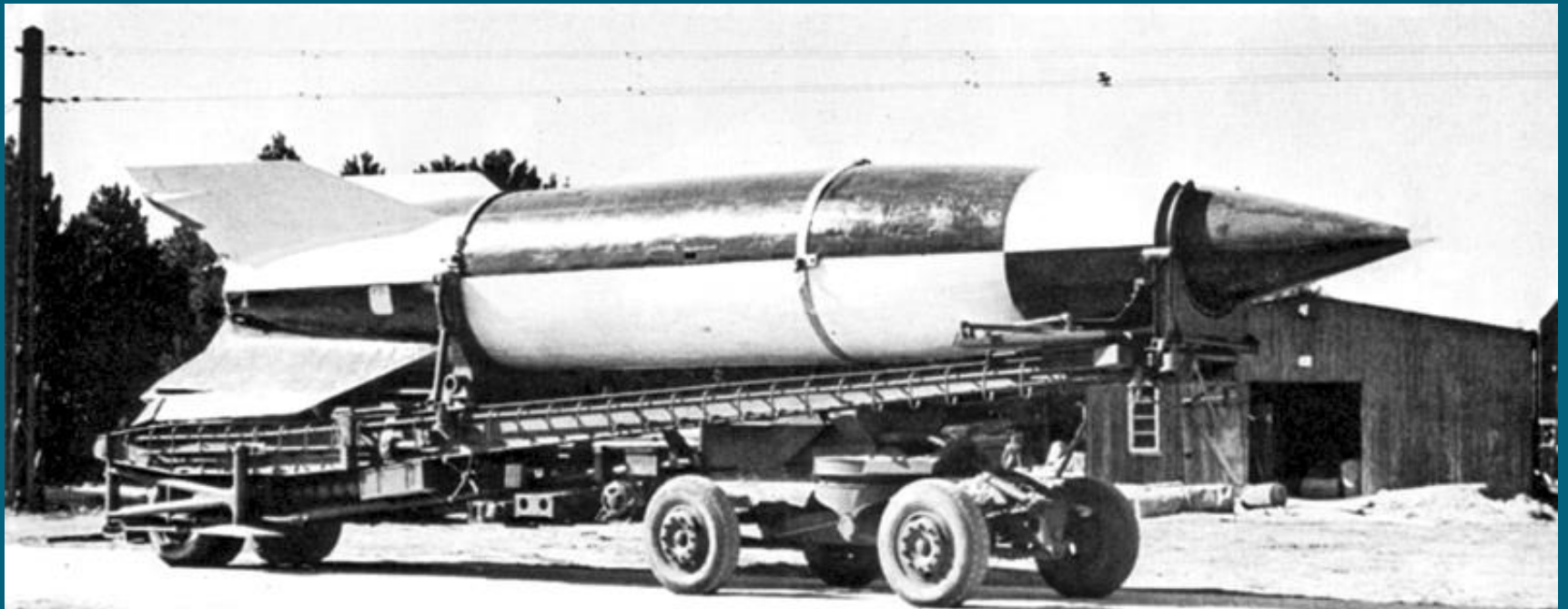


Bombed Up Me 262

Gilze-Rijen and Eindhoven

- Units Stab. I., III., IV./JG 3 and KG 51
- Aircraft 81
- Aircraft lost 15–16 = 20%
- Damaged Unknown
- Pilots killed or captured 15–16 = 20%

Possible V-2 Missile Launch Attempts



Results of raid

- The results of the raid are difficult to judge given the confusion over loss records. It is likely more aircraft were destroyed than listed.
- The Americans failed to keep a proper record of their losses and it appears the U.S. 8th Air Force losses were not included in loss totals. I
- It is likely that the correct figures are 232 destroyed (143 single-engine, 74 twin-engine and 15 four-engine) and 156 damaged (139 single-engine, 12 twin-engine and five four-engine).
- Researching individual squadron records confirms the destruction of even more USAAF aircraft. This suggests at least a further 16 B-17s, 14 B-24s, eight P-51s, and at least two P-47s were destroyed on top of that total.
- A total of 290 destroyed and 180 damaged seems a more realistic summation than the conservative figures given by the USAAF, RAF, and RCAF. Including the 15 Allied aircraft shot down and 10 damaged in aerial combat, 305 destroyed and 190 damaged is the sum total of the attack.

Effect on the Luftwaffe

- The operation achieved tactical surprise, but it was undone by poor execution due to low pilot skill resulting from poor training.
- The operation failed to achieve its aim and that failure was very costly to German air power. Some of the units of the RAF, RCAF and USAAF on the receiving end of Bodenplatte had been badly hit, others not so badly, but most had sustained some losses.
- The Germans, however, launched Bodenplatte under a set of conditions, such as poor planning and low pilot skill, which clearly indicated any advantage gained would be outweighed by possible losses.
- Bodenplatte weakened the Jagdwaffe past any hope of rebuilding. General der Jagdflieger Adolf Galland said, "We sacrificed our last substance".

- The Luftwaffe lost 143 pilots killed and missing, while 70 were captured and 21 wounded including three Geschwaderkommodore, five Gruppenkommandeure, and 14 Staffelkapitäne—the largest single-day loss for the Luftwaffe.
- Many of the formation leaders lost were experienced veterans, which placed even more pressure on those who were left.
- Thus, Bodenplatte was a very short-term success but a long-term failure. Allied losses were soon made up, while lost Luftwaffe aircraft and especially pilots were irreplaceable.
- German historian Gerhard Weinberg wrote that it left the Germans "weaker than ever and incapable of mounting any major attack again".

- In the remaining 17 weeks of war the Jagdwaffe struggled to recover sufficiently from the 1 January operation to remain an effective force.
- In strategic terms, German historian Werner Girbig wrote, "Operation Bodenplatte amounted to a total defeat".
- The exhausted German units were no longer able to mount an effective defence of German air space during Operation Plunder and Operation Varsity, the Allied crossing of the Rhine River, or the overall Western Allied invasion of Germany.
- Subsequent operations were insignificant as a whole, and could not challenge Allied air supremacy. The only service in the Luftwaffe capable of profitable sorties was the night fighter force.
- In the last six weeks of the war the Luftwaffe was to lose another 200 pilots killed. Girbig wrote, "it was not until the autumn of 1944 that the German fighter forces set foot down the sacrificial path; and it was the controversial Operation Bodenplatte that dealt this force a mortal blow and sealed its fate. What happened from then on was no more than a dying flicker".

Das Ende