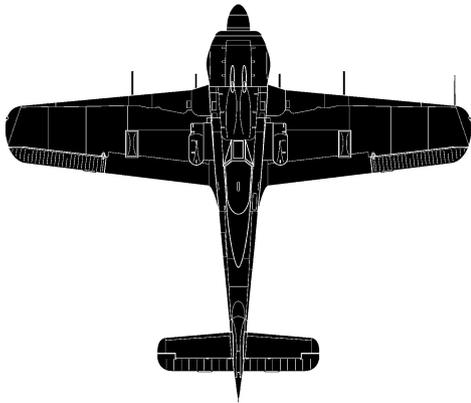


Airpower Classics

Artwork by Zaur Eylanbekov

Fw 190 Würger



Germany's Fw 190 Würger ("Shrike") was designed as a backup for the Messerschmitt Bf 109, the handsome Focke-Wulf-designed fighter proved superior to its stablemate in most respects. True, a few top aces to the end preferred the Bf 109 because of its high-altitude capabilities, yet the Fw 190 was generally a far better weapon for the general run of German pilots. It is widely regarded as the Luftwaffe's best World War II fighter.

Designer Kurt Tank was forced by circumstances to use BMW's 801 radial power plant, a round engine with relatively high drag. Tank overcame this weakness by close attention to aerodynamic detail. The Fw 190's wide-track landing gear was a great advantage, too; landing the airplane was far safer than bringing down the accident-prone Bf 109. These and other factors soon were paying

dividends. Entering combat in 1941, the Fw 190 quickly mastered the RAF's Spitfire, until then the top air superiority fighter in the war. It was fast and had a tremendous rate of roll. On the Western Front, the Fw 190 gave Germany local air superiority. It did well against the Allies' August 1942 Dieppe raid and was useful in "tip-and-run" raids on Britain. On the Russian front, thousands of specially designed attack versions with improved armor and armament were effective in close air support.

The so-called "Butcher Bird" was shown to be a versatile classic, capable of dogfighting, reconnaissance, torpedo-dropping, and more. The Würger, especially the long-nosed "190D" version, remained a dangerous opponent until the last day of the war.

—Walter J. Boyne

This aircraft: Fw 190 A-5, flown by Walter Nowotny, as it looked in October 1943 when deployed to the Eastern Front. Nowotny scored his 250th victory while piloting this aircraft.



This captured Fw 190G-3 was photographed during a USAAF flight test.

In Brief

Designed by Focke-Wulf ★ built by Focke-Wulf, AGO, Arado, Fieseler, Mimetall, Norddeutsche Dornier, others ★ first flight June 1, 1939 ★ crew of one ★ number built 20,051 ★ **Specific to Fw 190 A-8:** one BMW 801 radial piston engine ★ armament (typical) two 13 mm machine guns, four 20 mm cannons, range of bombs, rockets ★ max speed 408 mph ★ cruise speed 298 mph ★ max range 500 mi ★ weight (loaded) 10,800 lb ★ span 34 ft 5 in ★ length 29 ft 1 in ★ height 13 ft.

Famous Fliers

Notable Aces: Heinz Baer, Kurt Buhligen, Walther Dahl, Adolf Galland, Hermann Graf, Hans Hahn, Hajo Herrmann, Otto Kittel, Heinz Lange, Egon Mayer, Wilhelm Moritz, Joachim Muncheberg, Gerhard Schopf, Walter Nowotny, Walter Oesau, Josef Priller, Hans-Ulrich Rudel, Erich Rudorffer.

Interesting Facts

Designed to have liquid-cooled engine ★ almost canceled as result of technical problems ★ mistakenly landed by German pilot on RAF airfield ★ built in nine major models ★ covered German battleships in 1942 "Channel Dash" ★ used by Germany, Turkey, Romania, Hungary during the war, France and Soviet Union after the war ★ nicknamed Cavalry Horse, Butcher Bird, Dora, Kangaroo.