

HISTORY

BLACK EAGLES

6 x 52' (ENG)

This is the story of the men and machines of the Nazi and Fascist air forces. Six great German inventions that changed the course of aviation history.

The aircraft was the ultimate machine in the Nazi and Fascist ideologies. Flying represented the purest heroism; machines of steel speeding through the sky symbolised the authoritarian ethos. The regimes spent vast sums to build the best and test the limits, racing forward with advanced aerodynamics and advanced engines that were ahead of their time. This is the story of how the six finest Axis fighters came to life. Great engineers such as Willy Messerschmitt, Ernst Heinkel, Kurt Tank and Mario Castoldi, Giuseppe Gabrielli pushed themselves and their engineering teams to extremes to provide Nazi and Fascist leaders with their dream machines - the fastest high-performance fighters the world had ever seen. They were up against the greatest industrial nations - the United States and the United Kingdom, and yet they managed to provide their evil masters with technology that held the balance. In the latter years of the war, the prototypes they developed powered the United States' and the Soviet Union's race towards even better, faster and higher-flying fighters. They were the geniuses of the war and their planes were the best. The performance of these aircrafts compensated against the overwhelming industrial might of the Allies, right until the end.



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Partners:	SPIEGEL Geschichte

1. Messerschmitt BF109 (The Most Loved)

The fastest, the lightest and the first all-metal monoplane fighter to grace the skies of Germany. With 33,000 built, it was the ubiquitous and most loved fighter of WWII.

2. Focke-Wulf 190 (The High Flyer)

A stroke of engineering genius with speed, firepower and reliability that struck terror in the hearts of Allied fighters.

3. Messerschmitt ME262 (The First Jet Fighter)

Arguably the best fighter of World War II, the ME262 revolutionised aviation with the first use of mass-produced jet engines that made it faster than any other plane in the world.

4. Messerschmitt ME163 (The Rocket Fighter)

Two German engineering pioneers, Willy Messerschmitt and Alexander Lippisch, joined forces to build the first rocket-powered fighter. Dangerous for the Allies, but also for German pilots.

5. Heinkel HE162 (The People's Fighter)

Designed in four days in the dying throes of the Nazi regime, Ernst Heinkel offered the Reich a wild wooden wonder with a jet engine bolted to its back. A rare bird.

6. Fiat G.55 (Ferrari of the Skies)

Described as the finest fighter by Hermann Goering, the G.55 came too late and in too few of numbers to ever be used effectively by the Nazis or Fascists. It is, however, the only plane to have fought for both the Allies and the Axis powers in the Second World War.