ATI and Operation Lusty

Part I

by Norman Malayney

Group photo showing men involved with the retrieval of prop aircraft and nonflyable jet and rocket aircraft. L to R, front row: unknown, S/Sgt. Edmund Namowicz, Jack Woolams, C-47 pilot and C-47 copilot. Back row: German mechanic, Edwin Maxfield, unknown, unknown, Capt. John Ordway (engineering officer, 61st Fighter Squadron, 56th Fighter Group), Hauptman, Heinz Braun (Ju290 pilot). (Fred McIntosh Photo)

GREAT BRITAIN, AT WAR SINCE SEPTEMBER 1939, HAD already developed an Intelligence capability skilled in acquiring and evaluating strategic information, an expertise the U.S. Army Air Corps (USAAC) was lacking. The Air Attache at the U.S. London Embassy, part of a Special Observer Group (SOG), transmitted to the USA what available Intelligence information was forthcoming. British foreign policy was indisposed to release classified information to neutral nations, including the then-neutral USA.

The Lend-Lease Act of 11 March 1941 provided U.S. material aid to England and increased the need for exchanging technical information between the two countries.

Shortly after the U.S. declared war against Japan on 7 December 1941, the Assistant Chief of Air Staff (Intelligence) of the British Air Ministry, Air Vice Marshal Medhurst, visited Washington, D.C., to explore the Intelligence requirement of the USAAC. When Germany declared war on the USA, cooperation in Intelligence activities between the two powers escalated dramatically.

The SOG function was eventually absorbed by HQ, European Theater of Operations (ETO), USAAC, in June 1942. On 10 July 1942, the Air Technical Section was established within the command and continued SOG duties.

The U.S. involvement in the ETO brought requirements for Intelligence information. Rather than duplicate efforts already accomplished by the Air Ministry, the USAAC relied on existing agencies of British Intelligence for information, guidance and training in this function. The British Intelligence effort served as a role model until the USAAC could eventually define, formulate and develop their separate and independent Intelligence community.

In April 1942, the first group of USAAC officers went to England for training by the RAF. Initially attached to the 8th Air Force Command, they were placed with RAF units to gain experience and further training.

Air Technical Intelligence (ATI) was one of a handful of Intelligence areas originally British in origin. The British Air Ministry [A.I.2 (g)] handled Technical Intelligence in conjunction with the Royal Aircraft Establishment (RAE) Farnborough; the USAAC equivalent was located at Wright Field, Dayton, Ohio.

Following the British model, the USAAC established an Intelligence school located in Harrisburg, Pennsylvania, and a Technical Intelligence school at Wright Field. Graduates were transferred to the European, Mediterranean or Pacific war zones.

Axis aircraft and equipment obtained in the European and Mediterranean war zones were sent to USA or England for evaluation accompanied with sufficient spare parts and components. The Wright Field facilities were overburdened with USAAC work; therefore, numerous Axis aircraft were contracted to civilian companies for refurbishment to flyable condition.

In January 1944, the U.S. Strategic Air Force (USSAF) was established in the ETO. Effort was made to form an Intelligence community, totally under U.S. control, managed and coordinated by a Director of Intelligence. The ATI component came under this jurisdiction.

In preparation for the European invasion from England, an "Exploitation Division" of Intelligence was established. "The best technical talent at Wright Field compiled a 'Black List' of enemy equipment needed to ensure tactical superiority of Army Air Force (AAF) equipment. These 'Black Lists' were issued to ATI 'crash' teams to collect equipment which upon examination/investigation might disclose new ideas, new application of existing ideas, simplification in the interest of manufacture and/or operation, and substitution of less strategic material

without loss of efficiency.'' Only by implementing this policy could the AAF keep abreast with enemy technical developments.

Wright Field graduated ''crash'' teams of two or three men with Jeep and trailer, fully equipped for independent, field function. They would follow the ground armies and make on-the-spot field examinations of crashed or captured enemy aircraft, equipment and documents. They were issued SHAEF passes allowing complete authority to commandeer any equipment or assistance required in meeting their ATI goals and objectives.

Several teams were attached to each Army Command under control of an A-2 Liaison officer. When reports reached HQ of an enemy plane crash or aircraft located on captured airfields, the reports were coordinated with the A-2 officer who requested an armed guard placed on the aircraft until ATI ''crash'' teams could investigate. He then sent messages to the nearest ATI team billeted at strategic locations throughout the area, directing them to the scene. Upon arrival, the ATI team investigated everything of an Intelligence nature and shipped back interesting items for further laboratory evaluation. Team members then prepared reports on their findings.[1]

On 21 August 1944, the USSAF formed the Combined Intelligence Objectives Subcommittee (CIOS) comprised of members from British and U.S. diplomatic, Naval, air and scientific Intelligence organizations (some 32 Intelligence groups), responsible for ''pooling all Intelligence of political or military significance which became available as Allied Forces advanced into Germany.'' The CIOS mission was to coordinate the activities of all agencies involved in post-hostilities investigations.[2] But innate competition that exists among Intelligence agencies led to a very disordered situation.

''Task forces under SHAEF were to seize certain Intelligence objectives and guard them until the arrival of the particular agency having priority in each case. But survey teams often found that one or another Intelligence agency had beaten them to the spot, sequestered the available records (or persons), and shipped them back to London or some other point.''[3]

With the movement of the ground war into Germany proper, the Allies established a Post-Hostilities Intelligence Sub-Section (PHISS) for the exploitation of Intelligence targets. This required assessor teams to visit and evaluate various targets to determine whether they contained technical and scientific information or material worth exploiting.

The successful Allied campaign brought the war to a speedy conclusion, decreasing the Tactical Intelligence needs of the USSAF, while increasing Exploitation needs dramatically. Also, with the advance into Germany both Technical and Post-Hostilities Intelligence objectives began to overlap; the USSAF needs were now pure ''exploitation.''

Therefore, on 22 April 1945, USSAF combined both these areas of responsibility into the Exploitation Division, coordinating the 30 or so organizations exploiting captured German scientific advances and technology, under the code name **LUSTY**, an acronym for **LU**ftwaffe **S**ecret **T**echnolog**Y**.[4]

The major thrust of Operation LUSTY was to gain access to technical and scientific reports, and research facilities relating to aircraft and weapons development, while a smaller segment involved retrieval of aircraft and weapon examples for further test and evaluation in the USA.

The following will attempt to provide a brief overview, listing events in chronological order as they occurred leading up to, during and after Operation LUSTY, as compiled from personal interviews, official ATI documents and verified published information:

Garland Horne was at Hickam Field on 7 December 1941 when Japan attacked Pearl Harbor. He later attended the AAF Intelligence School at Harrisburg, Pennsylvania, and then a Technical Intelligence course at Wright Field. Here, instructions, lectures and demonstrations relating to technical design and modifications were given involving engines, electronics, radio, armaments, etc., on both USSAF and Axis aircraft, i.e., Zero, Fw190, Bf109, Ju88, etc.

He was assigned to 9th Air Force (AF) in England, on detached service to A.I.2(g) of British Technical Intelligence. Each AAF officer worked under an RAF Intelligence officer, receiving on-the-job training and lectures from pilots and engineering staff at Royal Aircraft Establishment (RAE), Farnborough, relating to enemy aircraft. Training exercises also involved visiting aircraft crash sites to dig in craters for engine and fuselage wreckage to identify the aircraft from these remains. The latest Intelligence derived from reconnaissance mission photos over enemy territory provided them with a broader perspective on German V-1, V-2 and jet aircraft development. This cadre of AAF officers trained by the RAF formed the nucleus of AAF Air Technical Intelligence (ATI).

A week after D-Day, 6 June 1944, ATI placed several men ashore with the majority arriving D + 28 totaling 12 officers. They joined a 9th AF unit building airstrips at the beachhead. Horne teamed with associate Bob Dunbar, equipped with Jeep and trailer-carrying rations, tenting equipment, cameras, film and tools, and followed the advancing Army.

The division air officer provided the latest downed enemy aircraft locations obtained from friendly fighter/antiaircraft units. Initially information was sparse, but after the invading Allies surged from the beachhead and communications improved, data was forthcoming.

The war zone was divided between RAF and AAF Intelligence units operating in separate sectors. The British RAE, Farnborough, received all recovered materials of Intelligence

(L-R): Major John Gette and Lt. Garland Horne, ATI. Note camera carried by Horne used to photograph enemy aircraft examined. Taken in Luxembourg. (Robert Dunbar Photo)

value for evaluation, and data was shared among the Allies.

ATI teams operating at the front lines suffered casualties. Their Jeeps had 'ATI' stenciled on the front and rear bumper. Military police at a road block thought ATI meant 'anti-tank infantry', allowing an ATI team to pass forward to the German lines where they were killed in an ambush.

The first enemy aircraft examined by Horne/Dunbar was a pranged Bf109 in good condition. They removed the MK108 cannon having four rounds of 30mm ammunition and dispatched these to Farnborough. Ammunition was desperately required to evaluate the weapon and was placed on a 'hot list'.

The first airfield scoured by Horne/Dunbar was at Lorient where aircraft hulks stripped of parts, weapons and engines were found. Often retreating Luftwaffe units blew up abandoned fighter and bomber aircraft. It was not until ATI reached Germany that intact aircraft examples were found.

Horne: "We located several He177s at Chateaudun. The U.S. Army advanced so quickly our team was instructed to proceed and leave the aircraft for the French forces.

"As the advancing infantry captured airfields and factories with aviation material, military Intelligence reported locations and left a detachment on guard. It listed what was located where, and were given to ATI teams to investigate.

"The Intelligence task was to recover equipment named on a Black List compiled by experts at Wright Field. This list was later combined with one compiled by British Intelligence to eliminate duplication of efforts. Black List items has highest priority followed by Red and White Lists in importance.

"We were informed a large repair depot for Bf109s was located below the Loire River. A Luftwaffe unit was isolated and stranded in a pocket. They had no fuel and the Forces Francaises de l'Interigar (FFI), also known as the 'Maquis', surrounded them. After crossing the Loire River, the FFI greeted and escorted us in convoy to the area. Dunbar and I loaded our trailer with 30mm ammunition for shipment to Farnborough."

Horne/Dunbar followed Patton's 3rd Army until Paris was liberated. ATI HQ was established here and ATI units began working from this location.

At this juncture, Horne/Dunbar were joined by FFI officer Rene J. Merigeault, a mining engineer by vocation who previously worked eight years in Birmingham, Alabama. He spoke good English with a Southern accent, greeting the men with a Southern "Hi, y'all."

Horne: "The retreating Luftwaffe operated from open fields and when forced to vacate, quickly abandoned loads of material—ammunition, parts stores, components and vehicles. Enormous quantities of equipment were left behind primarily because they lacked fuel for motor transport and were forced to employ horse and wagons to haul material in retreat. When Allied forces occupied permanent or temporary Luftwaffe airfields, ATI teams immediately investigated.

"We followed the U.S. Army into northern France and Luxembourg and covered central France east of Parisa to Luxembourg. We were performing follow-up work at locations manufacturing and assembly work on V-1 and V-2 parts. These were located in limestone quarries and mines to avoid Allied bombing. One team located a plant manufacturing turbine blades for the Jumo 004 engine. U.S. companies sent engineers on field trips to inspect this advance technology.

"Former V-1 launch sites on the channel coast yielded only the odd building and scorched areas of earth; the launch equipment previously had been removed.

"By December 1944, we were operating in the Huertgen Forest of Germany prior to the Battle of the Bulge. We received word of a Bf109 shot down in the 1st Army area. Rene and I checked with 1st Army HQ for the aircraft location. We found the BF109 with .50-cal. bullet holes coming up through the wing. I removed all airframe and engine identity plates then took aircraft photos. We followed the invading forces into Germany where more advanced technology and aircraft were found.

"It was during a visit to a crash site located near Aachen, Germany, involving an Fw190 with an in-line engine that 1st Lt. Joseph Becker ran over a German land mine. He awakened five days later in a hospital with a fractured skull, thus ending his active career as a crash Intelligence officer.

"Shortly after we crossed the Rhur River, an Ar234 bombing pontoon bridge was shot down on 22 February 1945, near Selgersdorf, Germany, and belly-landed between the lines. We showed the Army our SHAEF passes and instructed them on the importance of retrieving the aircraft. The Army moved the forward lines a half mile beyond the aircraft and we gained access to the jet.

"It was located in a mine field, so a path had to be cleared to and around the aircraft. Both engine nacelles suffered .50-cal. hits and the bottom fuselage was slightly damaged when landing.

"Darkness was quickly approaching and we feared the Germans would attempt to destroy the aircraft. They tried this the previous night and three German soldiers were killed. One had a can of gasoline and grenades.

"We hastily dismantled the Arado, cutting electrical cables and hydraulic lines to detach the wing and engines from the fuselage. We brought in a flatbed trailer, loaded the dismantled airframe and quickly removed it to safety. I accompanied the Arado to Liege, France, where it was placed on a barge and eventually taken to Farnborough.

"We followed the advancing infantry to an airfield near Bonn where we took refuge behind a hangar to escape enemy fire. The only intact aircraft found was a badly shot-up Ju87. The hangars were empty except for a scrap pile of junked aircraft. We removed all available tags from the airframes and equipment.[5]

"We crossed the Ludendorff Bridge at Remagen on 8 March 1945, the day after it was secured. The Luftwaffe attempted to bomb the bridge and several aircraft were shot down.

"By 23 March, the Army captured Bonn where ATI teams located a tailless aircraft factory at Minden and several variations of this type of aircraft were found. I returned to Paris for a rest and to complete my reports, then headed to our new sector, the Merseburg/Leipzig area, at the end of March 1945.

"Merseburg had a field with many experimental configuration aircraft. It is here I saw the *Mistel* (a Ju88 with an Fw190 on top) and a Ju388. Among the many aircraft, there was one complete Me163 located in a hangar, having landed here after a combat engagement when it ran out of fuel.

"It was also here that Colonel Schilling arrived in a B-26 and informed us he would provide pilots and crews to assist in our work. Also, we were told about the formation of the Air Disarmament organization. It was here I eventually met Capts. McIntosh and Maxfield and Colonel Watson and became involved with these airmen."

Colonel Harold Watson was seconded to the USSAF at the end of 1944 after serving at Wright Field. He was assigned to Europe with ATI, and later as Director of Maintenance in the 1st Tactical Air Force (Prov.).

His first major involvement with ATI related to the capture of a complete He177 A-5, Wk. 550255, at Toulouse-Blagnac in September 1944. It was French property, signed over to the USSAF on 20 November 1944. Colonel Watson ferried the He177 to Villacoublay on 28 November 1944 for evaluation.

Watson: "The war was not over, so a P-47 escort followed me about halfway to Villacoublay when we ran into a low overcast. I decided to fly under it with about 800 feet clearance and found the airfield ahead without too much trouble.

"With the runway in sight, I asked Sgt. Callichio (the flight engineer) to lower the landing gear and get ready to stand by for the flaps. We received a green light on the two main gears but the tail wheel still showed a red light. Callichio went to the emergency hydraulic pump and began pumping like mad—with me yelling considerable encouragement.

"I asked for the flaps. We then discovered the hydraulic systems apparantly had failed and now had neither flaps nor tail wheel.

"Being committed, and with the low overcast, we had to continue the approach and fortunately landed without incident —without flaps or tail wheel—but with sufficient brake pressure to allow the bomber to tome to rest within 100 feet of the end of the runway."[6]

Several flights were performed in this airplane at Villacoublay collecting performance data, etc., and this information was eventually forwarded to Wright Field.

Plans were formulated to ferry the bomber across the Atlantic to USA and Lt. Col. Robert Koster from Wright Field was assigned this task. On 18 January 1945, he ferried the He177 from Farnborough to Bovingdon.[7] He performed one test flight, and on 9 February 1945 ferried the bomber to Orly Field, Paris, in preparation for the transatlantic flight to Wright Field.

Koster: "We received mechanical assistance and checked the aircraft for the planned flight to the U.S. Spare parts were obtained from Toulouse where the French were said to have operated the Luftwaffe repair facility. We employed a French mechanic, who previously worked on the motors for the Germans, to assist in replacing one of the engines."

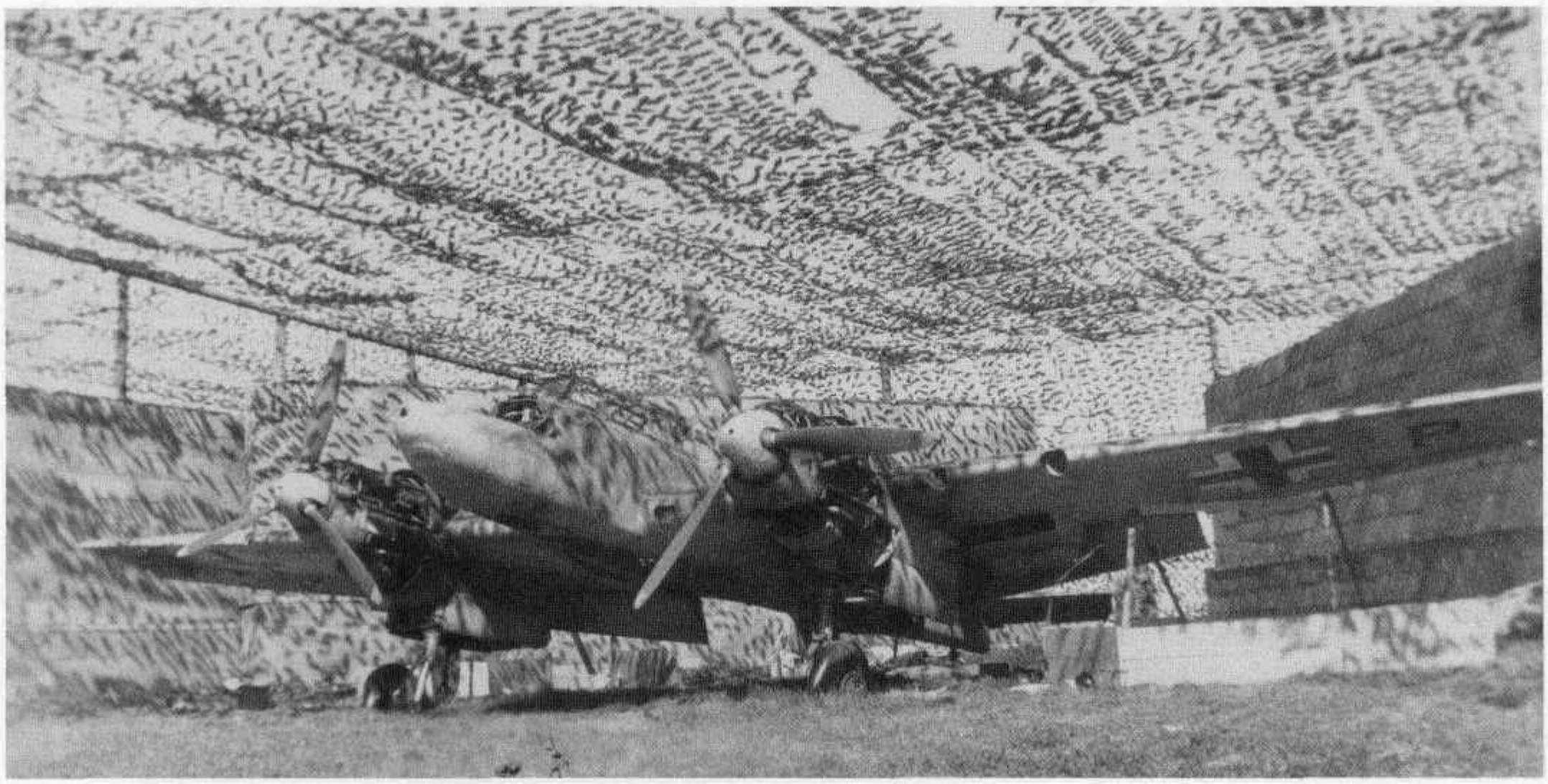
A crew was assigned for this flight: Lt. Col. Robert Koster, pilot; Lt. Col. Charles F. Maas, navigator; MSgt. Joseph Callichio, flight engineer; and T/Sgt. Arthur B. Anderson, radio operator.

The bomber sat parked on the tarmac, having all systems checked and rechecked for the flight.

On 28 February 1945, at 1428 hours, the He177 was cleared to taxi out for takeoff on runway 09. At 1430 hours, Lt. Col. Koster advanced the throttles and roared down the runway for takeoff. The aircraft raised so much dust the tower operator could not see what really happened next.

(L-R): Robert Dunbar, Major John Gette, Lt. Peter Beckler in France.
(Robert Dunbar Photo)

May 1945, Bf110 found in revetment by ATI in Germany.
(Blanton Haskell Photo)



Garland Horne with ax in hand examining downed Fw190 during ATI work. (Robert Dunbar Photo)

May 1945, Ju86 Stuka bomber, found in revetment in Germany by ATI. (Blanton Haskell Photo)

During the run, the right tire of the dual-tire assembly on the right landing gear blew out. There was small clearance between the tires of the dual-wheel assembly; the destroyed tire tangled with the other wheel resulting in loss of directional control causing the aircraft to swerve off the runway.

Lt. Col. Koster immediately cut the engines. The aircraft left the runway at approximately 2,500 feet from the starting point, hit a shed housing the GCI installation, a defense trench and came to rest heading west after completing a 180-degree ground loop. The fuselage broke completely before and aft of the wing and at the tail section. Only the navigator sustained injuries, a deep laceration to his leg.[8]

Koster: "We did not know at the time but the aircraft should have been moved frequently so the tires would not remain on the same spot over a period of time. The synthetic rubber tires had deteriorated at their resting point on the ground. We did not move the aircraft for the two weeks or so, while an engine was found and mounted on the aircraft. Thus, during the attempted takeoff the tire blew as previously described."

On 31 March, Messerschmitt factory pilot Hans Fay took off and flew to Rhine/Maine Airport, Frankfurt, surrendering himself and his Me 262 to Major John Gette of ATI. He had not been able to lock the wheels up after takeoff. Major Gette suggested the jet be ferried to England to obtain early flight trials.

Also located at the airfield was an Me262 in a hangar on jacks without engines. Orders were received for ATI to dismantle both aircraft for shipment to the USA. By 6 April both were dismantled and transported to Chienville airfield for crating.

The first crated Me262 departed Cherbourg on 3 May in the Liberty ship USS *Madawasea.* The second jet was shipped from Rouen, France, in the USS *Manawska Victory* on 8 May.[9]

It was at Merseburg that Horne joined Colonel Watson and his officers, Capts. Fred McIntosh and Edwin Maxfield. The following are their recollections.

McIntosh: "I previously served one year as flight instructor in P-38s at Williams AFB, Arizona. I went overseas as a pool of some 400 pilots transferred from training command to support the invasion of Europe. We arrived at Boxted located outside Colchester on 5 June 1944. When I reported to the 62nd Squadron, 56th Fighter Group, I met Capt. Edwin Maxfield, squadron engineering officer, and Capt. Dave Schilling, the squadron commander. I flew 25 missions as Schilling's wing man in P-51s when he was deputy commander. I also served as engineering officer for the squadron and became good friends with Maxfield.

"Col. Schilling, who took over from Col. Zemke as group commander, was later assigned to AAF HQ. As the war drew to a close, he wanted to fly German jet equipment and managed to have himself assigned by Col. Watson on the continent. He took Capt. Maxfield with him. Ed Namowicz from 62 Squadron, an expert mechanic who spoke eight languages, also joined the operations.

"Schilling was inundated with work. Maxfield suggested that someone with flying experience was required as operations officer. He agreed and Maxfield nominated me. I was waiting shipment home when I received temporary-duty orders for 90 days assigning me to the project.

"Colonel Schilling was operating under Colonel Peebles at SHAEF HQ in Paris who issued my orders. I flew to Paris in a B-26 and reported to Colonel Peebles. I then obtained transportation via Air Service Command to Merseburg, Germany.

"When Schilling and Maxfield arrived at Merseburg there was already a detachment of ATI personnel here who had recently arrived. I now joined this group.

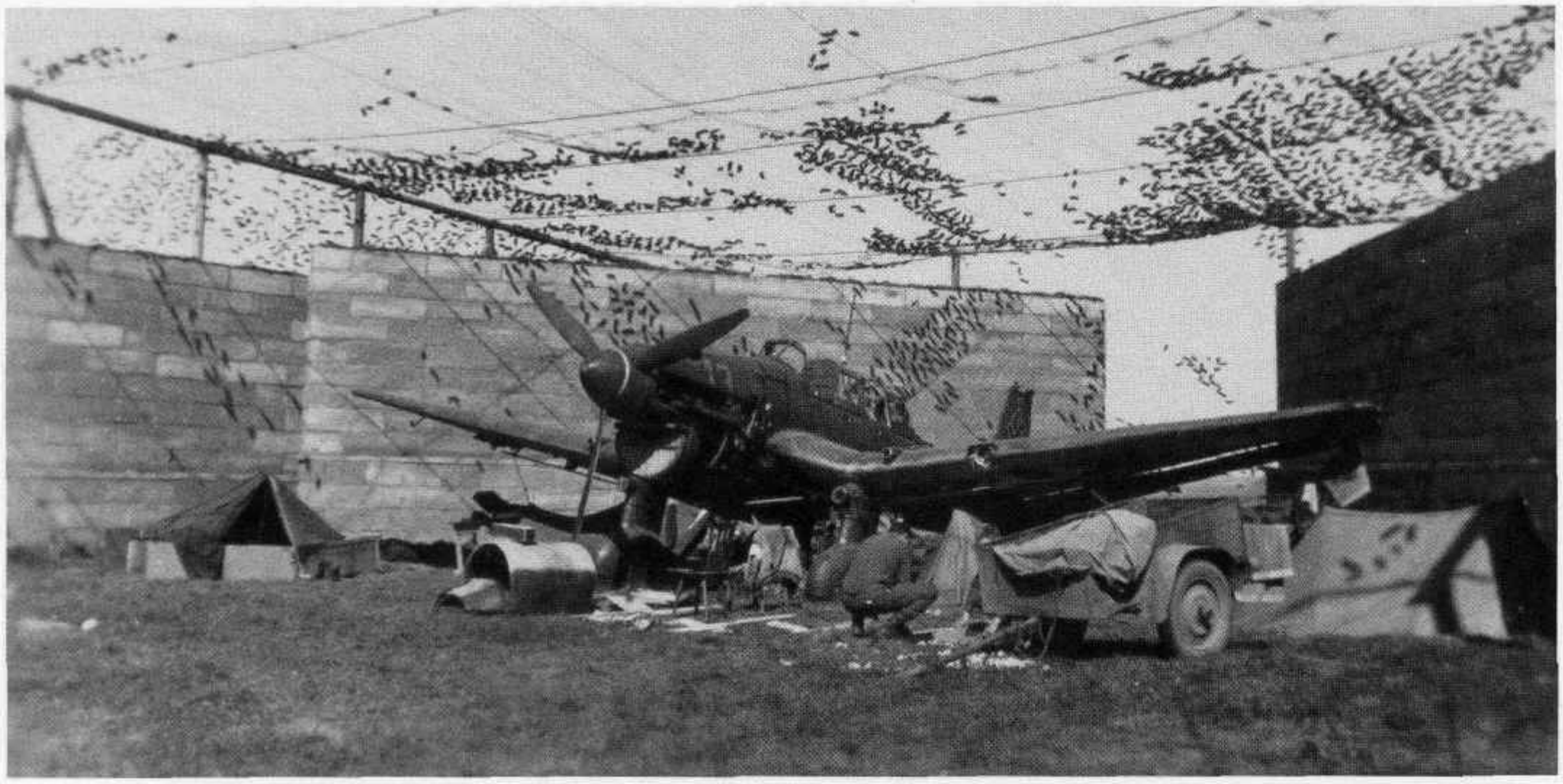
"Our mission was to evaluate and collect flyable Luftwaffe propeller aircraft and any material applicable to aviation including entire factories, engineers and scientists. We had a fairly broad mandate and operated as we pleased.

"When we received Intelligence records, teams of two or three men with a Jeep and trailer were sent to investigate. They visited various places: factories making gun sights, radios, electronic equipment, navigational aids. We searched airfields for model types, numbers and flyable examples of various aircraft. Much later, we took to the air in a C-47 to visit numerous aerodromes in Denmark and throughout Europe.

"Air Materiel Command at Wright Field issued a list of flyable aircraft they required. As an example, they were interested in the later model Bf109 with cannon-synchronization arrangement and method of crankshaft development having the cannon fire through the prop hub. They were also interested in a version having a methanol-augmented system for high-altitude flying. These are typical items we had on our want lists.

"Merseburg was a central point from which we radiated out from. Maxfield, Namowicz and myself traveled together quite extensively. We traveled to Halle and Weimar and Nuremberg. We went to Dresden and towards Berlin, while the Russians were still fighting there, to search for a German scientist who had designed a jet engine. We found his house but did not locate him. We later learned he had been taken to the USA.

"We started out at 0500 hours and worked until 2200 hours if not later; and in between we were performing field work. We visited the Zeiss factory at Jena, searched for a heavy water laboratory, looked for laboratories experimenting with cryogenics; neither of us knew we were searching for materials



used in manufacturing an atomic bomb. We put in some long, long days.

"When away from base we dropped into any military mess for food and nourishment. Any problems relating to mechanical operation of our Jeep would be repaired by the motor pool where we happened to be or, in some cases, we traded it for another Jeep. We didn't sleep out—we slept at whatever military camp we happened to be located, or if possible returned to our base. We received very good cooperation from the German populace and American units.

"There were so many teams, representing various government agencies searching all liberated areas of Germany and Europe for new technologies, that we bumped into each other often. And it was competitive as to who could find important material first.

"For example, we traveled to Linz, Austria, to investigate a research facility constructing a twin-spool jet engine. It was located on a large estate. Maxfield, Namowicz and I walked in and the only person there that could deal with us was a grandmother. We obtained her permission to search the premises which we did. Later, a Navy team arrived, raised hell and took the facility away from us.

"At that point in time, we were playing hide-and-seek with another investigative agency. Sometimes we got there first and sometimes they did.

"Besides the Jeep and trailer, we had a Stinson L-5 liaison aircraft with a pilot (Lt. Campbell) providing our only means of rapid movement. Captain Horne located several Fieseler *Storch* aircraft at a training base near Halle. Two new *Storch*es were obtained here and two were turned over to Horne by a U.S. Army artillery unit; also a dual-control trainer *Storch* was located. The five aircraft were ferried to Merseburg and employed by us for transportation. A pilot, 1st Lt. Blanton W. Haskell from Georgia, joined ATI in Normandy. Horne and Haskell formed the 'Horne-Haskell Airlines' using the five *Storch*es.

"At this time we obtained a Bucker Bu181 for a few delightful weeks and I had a personal airplane. One of the men flew it under a power line south of Munich and nearly decapitated the tail. That was the end of it. We often utilized an Me108 found at Merseburg in our work.

"One of our pilots flew a glider against my orders and was involved in an accident. He suffered back injuries and we moved him to a hospital. Another pilot crashed into a bomb crater destroying a *Storch*. I set up a system with Campbell to check out each pilot in the L-5 before allowing anyone to fly the *Storch*. Horne knew how to fly and had a private pilot's license but no military wings. Major Gette gave authorization for Horne to fly the *Storch*es and I checked him out on the aircraft. He flew it whenever and wherever he wished in his ATI work.

"Eventually our operations were consolidated at Merseburg. Nearby were located oil refineries that received major bombing during the war. The Merseburg airfield had an excellent grass runway and the hangars were essentially undamaged. The airfield was utilized by the Allies for screening released Allied POWs. A small tent city was located in the middle of the airport manned by medical personnel. The POWs were brought in and screened, and once or twice a week the sky was darkened by aircraft when there was a mammoth airlift of C-47 aircraft to transport the men to hospitals in other areas, depending on illness or injury.

"The officers from the repatriation camp quartered with us in Merseburg at a small, family-run hotel called the Alte Deshauer. The lady who operated the establishment had a husband who was a POW in the French zone.

"The Fieseler *Storch*es were high-wing, high-lift aircraft used for observation and air rescue. The doctors worried about the morale of the POWs waiting repatriation. Captain Horne set up a lottery system and those who won were given a flight in the *Storch*es. When our operations were completed for the day, and if there was still some light left during the early evening, the POWs were taken on a flight. We used two or three *Storch*es for a short 20-minute flight around the area so they could see the damaged oil refinery. Captain Horne flew one aircraft while I

Lt. Robert Dunbar leaning against Fw190, examining armorplating on this model aircraft. (Robert Dunbar Photo)

He162 VolksJager at Stuttgart, Germany Wkr. 220006 being examined. Note missing engine and gutted cockpit and canopy. (Robert Dunbar Photo)

Rows of Focke-Wulf Fw 190s awaiting an uncertain fate somewhere in Germany. (Author's Collection)

flew the other. The flights were very much appreciated by the doctors and the POWs.

"We found a Ju388L on jacks in a hangar at Merseburg. We named it 'Old Venereal' because of its pencil shape and bulbous nose. It was essentially brand new and in good condition. The ATI interest in the Ju-388 related to the aircraft's pressurization, ejection seat, propeller, boosting capability on the engines, the whole high-altitude design environment and so forth.

"We set up a production acceptance scheme. When the military accepted an aircraft from the manufacturer, it was put through a basic inspection and augmented preflight check. We insisted that no aircraft be released for flight until that occurred. Secondly, no one else flew them; this had to be carried out in the name of safety until I test flew the aircraft. Our inspection, among other things, involved placing the aircraft on jacks, actuating all the controls, landing gear, tail wheel and through all the checks to ensure the aircraft was in good physical condition.

"We proceeded to give it a thorough inspection and a number of ground run-ups, learning as much as we could. At the time we did not have a German pilot or mechanic.

"The German flight instruments were in metric measurement. If you wanted to make a turn at 112 mph, you had better not try it at 120 kilometers—it would not work. It was Maxfield's idea to convert these metric figures to parameters we understood. He painted different color arcs on the instrument dial face to delineate safe and unsafe areas. If you were busy flying on one engine or making an emergency on the last turn to final, even though you had the numbers written down on a card or on the palm of your hand, all you had to do was fly in the green or orange, but stay out of the red marked area. This method of coping with the metric instruments became common practice in many of the German aircraft we flew.

"Then one afternoon we performed a high-speed taxi run. Maxfield was with me in the cockpit and we taxied up and down the field two or three times, checking stick pressure and the controls, determining the best position for the trim tabs and a few standard flight test procedures. I told Maxfield a 'little white lie' and said I didn't like the way the rudder reacted and wanted to make another run before we quit. I knew Colonel Watson left orders that no one was to fly the Ju388 until he did.

"We started down the field for the last high-speed taxi run. It handled like a feather. I kept the power on. Maxfield was looking out the front of the aircraft and suddenly realized how fast we were going. He looked over his shoulder and waved his fist at me as we lifted off the ground.

"We flew around for 30 minutes and did the usual flight checks and investigated the stall capabilities, i.e., the manner and speed at which it stalled. It was a very docile, good flying airplane. All the instruments were in metric measurement. We did not have a flight book with us so we experimented to find out for ourselves the parameters on the metric instruments. We came around and made one pass to judge the handling capabilities and touchdown angle, then came around again and landed. It was all very routine.

"A few days later, Colonel Watson showed up, inquiring about the condition of the Ju388 and if we thought it was ready and safe to fly. He could tell from the expressions on our faces that we thought it was. He looked at me and said, 'How does it fly?' and I responded, 'Like a bird.' Needless to say we became very good friends."

Maxfield: "Watson and McIntosh ferried the Ju388 to the 10th Air Depot Group, Kassel, on 17 May for a more thorough inspection. Then McIntosh and myself ferried the aircraft to Villacoublay. We were able, through our test and ferry flights, to become quite confident in the aircraft.

"On 24 May, we proposed in a letter to SHAEF that the Ju388 could easily be ferried across the ocean with American radio equipment. The flight route would be via Scotland, Iceland, Greenland to Gander and to the USA. On two test flights it was determined the engines at economical settings consumed 100 gallons per hour and provided a duration of 10 hours' flying time (nine hours plus one hour reserve) and a distance of 1,920 miles. ATI HQ took this proposal under advisement.

"By 15 May an ATI team reported locating over 600 V-1s found in a factory at Dannenberg, including three dual-cockpit type V-1s and 204 single-cockpit type. On 21 May, a piloted V-1 'for ramming' was salvaged and shipped from Dannenberg to Kassel for crating.[10]

"Then on 23 May, other ATI members discovered at Nabern, 15 miles southeast of Stuttgart, a factory manufacturing Bachen Ba349 'Natter' rocket aircraft. Maxfield helped construct a

composite example assembled from several located there and sent this to Cherbourg on 23 May.

"Also at this time, a Ju88G-6 with radar equipment was ferried to RAE, Farnborough, by Lt. Col. Gifford.

"ATI teams uncovered a Hirth jet engine and several wind tunnel models at Dremstadt and these were returned to Farnborough by plane. Nine complete V-2 rockets were located; two for the British and seven were to be returned by fast boat to Aberdeen, Maryland. Two complete units were to be sent to Wright Field."[12]

McIntosh: "There was an airport having an entire squadron of newer model Fw190s. This was where we learned a very valuable lesson. Maintaining our preflight rules, arrangements were made to place the first aircraft we planned to fly out, up on jacks. When we activated the landing gear for retraction tests, there was an explosion and one wing came loose from the fuselage and fell off. The aircraft had been booby-trapped.

"We performed a friendly interrogation and discovered the Germans had foreseen this possibility and placed explosive packets through the wheelwell into the wing near the primary structure joining the fuselage. When the pilot exited the aircraft, he slid his hand up the back of the seat where there was a simple, bare-wire switch like a safety pin. He simply bent the wire over and that armed the charge. If and when the aircraft took off and the pilot retracted the landing gear, this triggered the explosion.

"We followed this inspection protocol in all aircraft considered for flying, including a Stuka. It still had bombs hanging on the shackles but something did not look right: there were too many wires. We performed the same procedure from a distance and the subsequent explosion destroyed the aircraft."

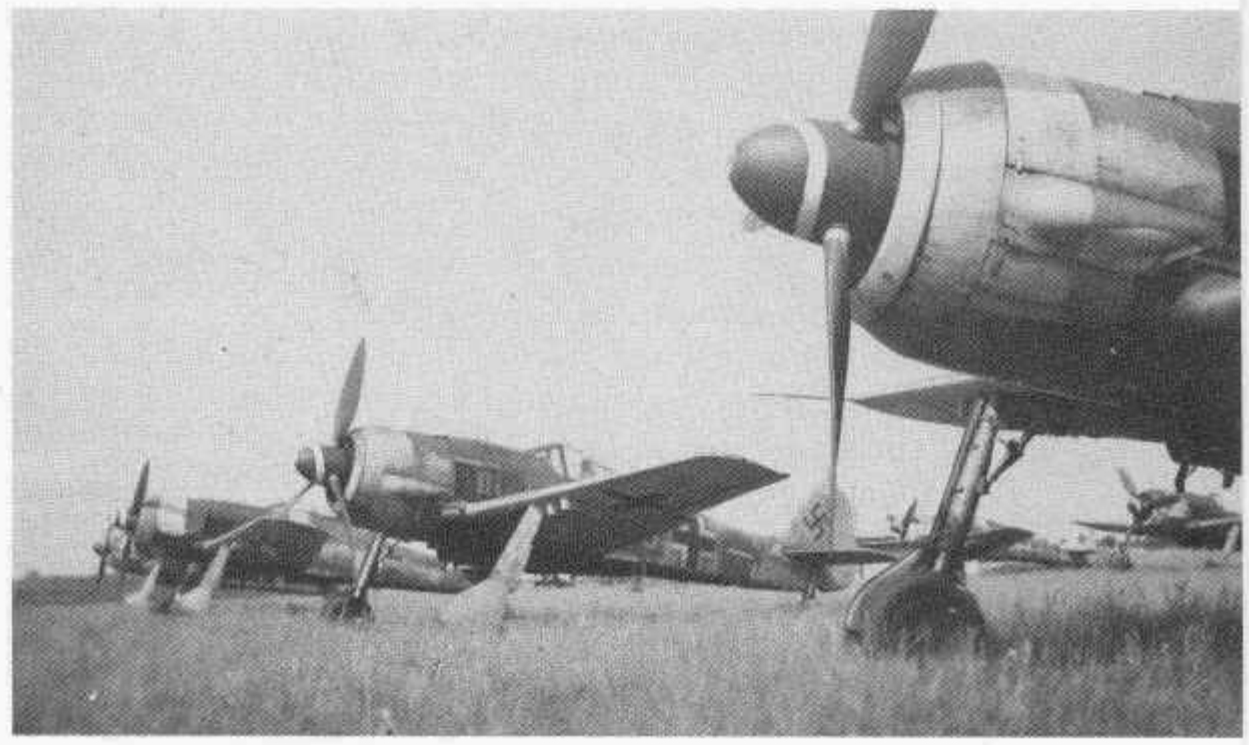
Horne: "Haskell and I went to pick up a Siebel Si204 and ferry it back to Merseburg. We had fuel in the tanks and were going to start the engines. We had a German technician check the switches and landing gear. He sabotaged the aircraft. He flipped the switch for extending the landing gear, and set it for gear-up. When we started the left engine that had the hydraulic pumps, the left landing gear folded and smashed the prop. We were extremely angry and never did find that SOB who quickly disappeared."

At this juncture Hauptman Heinz Braun, a Luftwaffe test pilot from KG200, who spoke broken English, joined the McIntosh team.

Braun: "On 8 May 1945, I flew at noon with approximately 70 women, children and wounded from Koniggratz to Munich-Riem. My original assignment (30 April) before the war's end was to fly a certain group of persons, probably of French nationality, to Barcelona, Spain. Because of this assignment we could spare a Ju290 from destruction by the demolition squad of the German Army in Koniggratz. However, because this special group never showed up, we decided to transport German women, children and wounded in order to save them from Russian captivity.

"On the German-Czech border, we were intercepted by two P-51 Mustangs in extremely bad weather while flying low. By rocking the wings and lowering the landing gear, we were able to avoid an attack and subsequently flew unhindered to Munich-Riem where we were able to land on a narrowly marked-out runway free of bomb craters.

"The American personnel at the airport were very surprised that out of the airplane came women, children and wounded. We soldiers were disarmed. I exited through the roof after an



American lieutenant called for the captain. After a relatively short time, a major appeared. I believe it was Major Marcus from ATI Section. He asked me where we came from. He was very courteous and told me that he was familiar with this type of aircraft operating in the Atlantic area. I answered that I had also flown missions in this type of airplane over the Atlantic. Thereupon, he offered me a cigarette and gave the following instructions:

"All the civilians who did not live in the Munich area were brought to a camp, as absolutely no means of transportation existed on 8 May. The wounded were taken by field ambulance to a hospital. The flying crew was transported away separately, receiving room and board in nearby lodgings.

"While all this was going on, I was asked, I believe, by Major Marcus, what I would prefer—to go into a prison camp or to fly on assignment for them. As it was an unconditional surrender, any activity in an airplane was to me essentially preferable to sitting in a prison camp.

"On the following day, I believe, I met with Colonel Watson. On 10 May, I flew with Watson as copilot in the Ju290 from Munich to Roth near Nuremberg where Captain McIntosh's team was located. I believe that I had first personal contact with Captains McIntosh and Maxfield here."

Also on 8 May at 1500 hours, a He111 arrived unexpectedly at Roth Airfield. The aircraft carried eight personnel including the crew along with a small wooden chest filled with German currency and documents. The crew fled Dresden from the advancing Soviet Army, taking with them the military payroll of 1Kampfgeschwader, 4 'General Wever' (Bomber Unit). The aircraft was immediately surrounded by armed troops and the Germans taken into custody by Colonel Watson, who was in charge of the field. The He111 was handed over to ATI.[13]

Braun flew an ATI-commandeered Ju52M3 (4V+KV, USAF) from 12 to 15 May assisting with transport of men and material during ATI operations.

Intelligence assessor teams followed the advancing Allied Army into Germany seeking and evaluating targets having technological material of value for potential exploitation. The team of Capt. B.E. Vollprecht and F/Lt. S.J. Reason filed a report not recommending the exploitation of the former Luftwaffe facility at Lechfeld.

The airfield with hangars and buildings on the western perimeter was located 12 miles due south of Augsburg on the eastern side of the Augsburg-Landsberg highway. The airfield sustained bomb damage. The administration and technical

buildings were heavily damaged by bombing and thoroughly looted by both the retreating German military and the advancing American Army. A search of the premises revealed no documents of air Intelligence value or regards to research and development. The officers summarized a list of aircraft and engines located there and suggested the damaged examples of the Me262 could be salvaged by scavenging.[14]

ATI did not accept the assessors' non-recommendation for exploitation. Efforts were initiated to secure flyable examples of Me262 aircraft located at Lechfeld.

The following chronology of events at Lechfeld was garnered from the faded memories of 50 years ago of those airmen involved with ATI, official ATI documents, and from Mrs. Isolde Baur, who has kindly allowed me access to her late husband's logbook to obtain references from his copyright flight entries. Karl Baur was Chief Test Pilot of Experimental Aircraft for the Messerschmitt Aircraft Company.

SSgt. Eugene Freiburger was assigned to the 54th Air Disarmament Squadron (ADS), 2nd Air Disarmament Wing (Prov.) charged with the responsibility of completely liquidating all Luftwaffe weapons systems including bombs, ammunition, antiaircraft guns and aircraft. In the process they were obliged to assist ATI in collecting, retrieving and shipping Intelligence material to the USA for further evaluation.

When Augsburg fell, a military government was established by the U.S. Army on 29 April, and the 54th ADS moved in by 1 May. The Messerschmitt Aircraft Company office building located downtown was slightly damaged by Allied bombing. The squadron located an intact and sturdy section for billeting.

The ADS received orders to gather and make flyable 15 Me262 jet aircraft. The military government assisted in locating 25 Messerschmitt factory members and three test pilots: Karl Baur, Ludwig Hofmann and Gerhard Caroli; all three spoke some English.

The Messerschmitt workers were loaded on trucks and driven south to the Luftwaffe base at Lechfeld. Many hangars were in ruin, suffering bomb damage except for one structure that was fairly intact. This hangar was utilized by the ADS. The ADS was tasked with gathering the best examples of Me262s located in revetments around the field, hauling these into the hangar, and by cannibalizing other wrecked aircraft have the German workers reconstruct 15 jet aircraft. Due to severe damage inflicted on the jets by the advancing U.S. Army, the men could barely put eight aircraft together.

At this stage of the war, the Battle for Berlin was in progress. The Soviets were about to overrun an airfield located near Berlin. To escape the onslaught, a Luftwaffe pilot took off in his jet and flew to Lechfeld. Avoiding the crater-marked runway, he landed the Me262 on the grass. When he shut down the jet engines, Freiburger and his men came out from the hangar. "The pilot was fully armed," he recalls, "and had enough weapons that could have easily wiped us out. We arrested and turned him over to the military government."

The jet brought to Lechfeld two days prior to VE Day had numerous victories painted on the fuselage side: 42 Soviet, five B-17s, a P-47 and P-51 shot down. The aircraft had a dark green and brown camouflage scheme. Freiberger later named this jet after his son Dennis. Karl Baur test flew "Dennis" on 12 May for a 20-minute flight.

The German workers were transported to and from Augsburg each day and were paid for a 48-hour work week. Freiburger visited the nearby forest daily and shot deer to provide their

Lechfeld Airfield, Germany, early June 1945. Hangar in center utilized for *overhauling* Me262 aircraft. Note numerous Me262 aircraft parked to the left and right of this structure. The taxiway curving to far right leads to main runway. This is the taxiway the nine Me262s lined up prior to ferry flight for Melun, France. (Roy Brown Photo)

families with fresh meat.

The first Me262 brought into the hangar for refurbishment was a two-seat trainer. Work progressed making the aircraft flyable and Hofmann test flew the jet around 14/15 May. He took off, performed a checkout and landed. Captain Ward, the operations officer, was taken for a flight by Hofmann, the first American to fly in an Me262.

Baur and Hofmann test flew each jet as it emerged from the hangar after rebuild. The ADS men wanted to apply U.S. insignias to the Me262s but according to Freiburger, Hofmann insisted they remain in Luftwaffe markings.

The two-seat trainer was named after Freiburger's sister-in-law, "Vera." The Me262 having a 50mm cannon was the second aircraft to emerge and Freiburger named it "Wilma Jean" after his wife and Baur test flew the jet on 14 May. Sgt. H.L. Preston of Philadelphia named an Me262 for his wife, "Connie, the Sharp Article." The men painted "Feudin 54th" on the right side while personal names were located on the left side of the nose.

Baur ferried an Me 262 from Rhine/Maine Airport, Frankfurt, to Lechfield on 16 May. The jet was found completely airworthy by ATI among the remnants of a Luftwaffe jet squadron stationed there. The jet was named "Beverly Ann."

Locating jet fuel for the Me262 was a problem. The ADS men went with Hofmann visiting various German aerodromes to scrounge for jet fuel.

On 7 May, ATI received information from Dr. Stinmann of Saudal Aircraft Works at Kahla, where Jumo 004 engines were manufactured, stating that a month previously 50 engineers and scientists together with drawings and plans and two complete Me262s were dispatched from Kiel to Japan in 10 submarines.

The Japanese Intelligence Section/SHAEF was immediately notified and dispatches were sent to all commands in every theater of the war. All Allied vessels in port and at sea were notified and one of the largest sea searches ever undertaken during the war for submarines was initiated. It is reported that so extensive was the search that "six of the 10 submarines were eventually apprehended by the Allied nations, some a relatively short distance away from their bases, others perilously close to Japan."[15]

This information lent urgency to retrieve and expedite technical information and equipment relating to jet aircraft to Wright Field for immediate evaluation to assist in prosecuting the war against Japan.

Initial plans called for dismantling captured Luftwaffe aircraft for shipment to Wright Field. It soon became apparent disassembly and reassembly of flyable aircraft in the U.S. after normal shipment would result in damage to the aircraft and loss of components. It therefore became necessary to ship these aircraft intact.

Plans were formulated to ferry the jet aircraft across the English Channel to Speke near Liverpool, England, in preparation for shipment by aircraft carrier or tanker to the U.S.

It was determined 300 miles was a safe ferry distance and now a route to the Channel with refueling points at intermediate airfields had to be determined. Tentative stopover points along the ferry route would be St. Dizier, Melun, Woodbridge, England, and hence to Speke Airport. The entire operation would take approximately three weeks to accomplish. An all American crew of pilots and mechanics would be required to accomplish this task.[16]

Investigation was initiated relating to utilizing port facilities in France as an alternate embarkation point. The transportation of German war material to the USA by sea was designated "Operation Seahorse."

By 21 May, eight flyable Me262s were at hand and two more were awaiting installation of engines and would be ready within 10 days.

On 30 May, Baur took Col. Harold Watson on a 16-minute familiariztion flight in the Me262 trainer. □

Continued in the next *Journal*

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COMBINED INTELLIGENCE OBJECTIVES SUBCOMMITTEE REPORT ON LECHFELD AIRFIELD, REPORT 39

The following aircraft and engines were found on Lechfeld Airfield and dispersal sites.

Aircraft			Engines		
Me262	19	6*	D.B. 603	3	
He177	5		D.B. 605	2	
He219		3*	B.M.W. 801	8	
Me109	3	5*	Jumo 211	6	
Me210	2		Jumo 004	26	10*
Fw190		1*			
Ju88	1	1*			
He111	1	1*			
Me410	1				

Aircraft and engines marked with an asterisk (*) were in fairly good shape and could be made serviceable by "scavenging." Above Me262 aircraft included one Me262A2 with a 50mm cannon.

MESSERSCHMITT FACTORY WORKERS EMPLOYED BY ATI AT LECHFELD, GERMANY, MAY TO JULY 1945

Baur, Carl	Chief Pilot
Baur, Joseph	Technical Inspector
Bayer, Karl	Armament Engineer
Brandt, Hans	Technical Inspector
Caroli, Gerhard	Chief Engineer, Director's Assistant, Pilot
Ebner, Hans	Foreman
Durrwanger, Fritz	Mechanic
Hindelang, Fritz	Mechanic
Huber, Richard	Mechanic
Hofmann, Ludwig	Test Pilot
Kapusczik, Alfred	Mechanic
Kleinmaier, Ludwig	Mechanic
Kohl, Max	Mechanic
Kersting, Hermann	Test Pilot
Lechler, Heinz	Crew Chief
Marutschke, Reinhold	Mechanic
Mann, Wilhelm	Mechanic
Nabholz, Franz	Mechanic
Schwenk, Karl	Crew Chief
Sebald, Andreas	Technical Inspector
Reiger, Joseph	Mechanic
Thwringer, Konrad	Crew Chief
Wiedemann, Wilhelm	Mechanic
Witte, Ernst	Hydraulic Engineer
Stierle, Karl	Hangar Foreman
Schillinger, Alfred	Foreman
Fauser, Georg	Crew Chief

ATI and Operation Lusty

by Norman Malayney

Part II

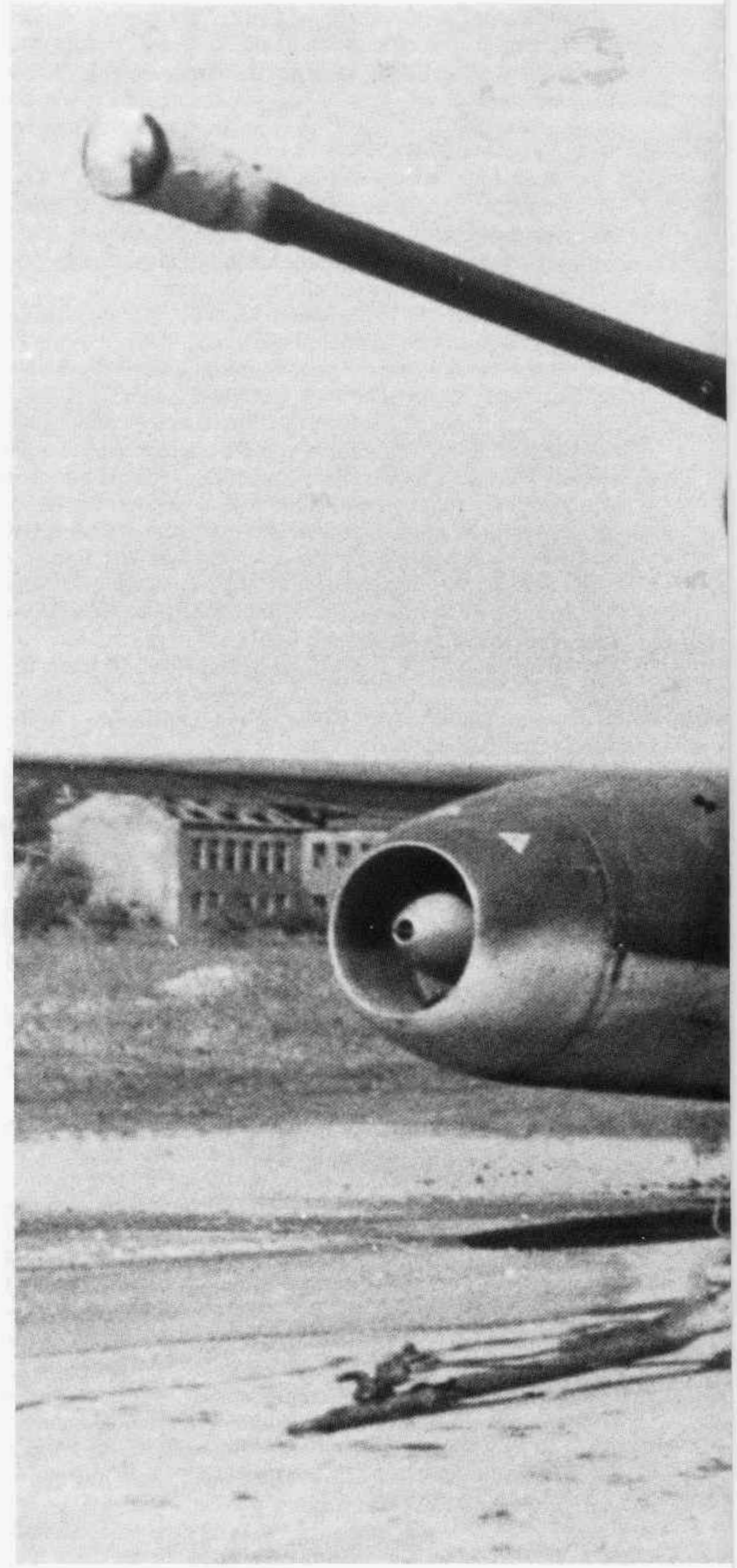
TO RECAP EVENTS: DURING AND AFTER WWII THE Exploitation Division (ATI) previously assigned Col. Harold Watson the important mission to retrieve German aircraft. His group had two sections: one concerned with acquisition of jet aircraft; and a second under Capt. Fred McIntosh, operating from Merseburg, assigned to collect piston-engined aircraft and nonflyable jet/rocket aircraft.

The officers selected to support Col. Watson in recovering jet aircraft were all experienced fighter pilots from the 9th AF. Many had engineering backgrounds and/or were rated flight instructors. The list of personnel involved with the Me 262s included Capts. Kenneth E. Dahlstrom, Henry A. Nolte and Fred L. Hillis; 1st Lts. Robert J. Anspach, William V. Haynes, Horace D. McCord, Roy W. Brown, James K. Holt and Robert C. Strobell. Due to administrative problems, McCord and Nolte were delayed in joining the group and did not take active part in the operation.

The list also included Technical Sergeants Noel D. Moon, Edward J. Thompson, and Ernest C. Parker; Staff Sergeants John G. Gilson, Donald J. Wilcoxen, Archie E. Bloomer, Everet T. Box, Charles L. Taylor, Robert H. Moore, and Charles A. Barr.

A number of Messerschmitt personnel were already at Lechfeld including test pilots Karl Baur, Ludwig "Willie" Hofmann, Hermann Kersting and engineering superintendent

Lechfeld, Germany, 10 June 1945. Me262 with 50mm cannon, the last jet in a lineup ready for the ferry flight to Melun, France. Front, L to R: Ken Holt, examining nose, next is Ken Dahlstrom with Bob Anspach on right. In dark uniform is Fred Hillis. (Roy Brown Photo, NASM 78-17901-17)



Lechfeld, Germany, 10 June 1945. Last jet in lineup prior to ferry flight to Melun, France. In foreground, L to R: Ken Dahlstrom at nose with back to camera; next is Ken Holt with Bob Anspach at engine nacelle. Standing on wing, peering into cockpit in dark uniform is Fred Hillis.
(Roy Brown Photo, NASM 78-17901-18)

Lechfeld, Germany, 10 June 1945. Ludwig "Willie" Hofmann entering cockpit of Me262 trainer for ferry flight to Melun, France.
(Roy Brown Photo, NASM 78-17901-20)

Schleswig, Germany, circa 18 June 1945. Making plans with maps at hand on Jeep hood for ferry flight to Melun, France. Front, L to R: Leaning on hood with back to camera is Bob Strobell; next in front of Jeep, checkered shirt, is Willie Hofmann and his famous hole-punched hat. Behind Jeep on left is Ken Holt, with Col. Harold Watson pointing towards Ken Dahlstrom. Me262 "What Was It?" in background that Hofmann ferried to Melun.
(Roy Brown Photo, NASM 78-17903-3)

Schleswig, Germany, circa 18 June 1945. Willie Hofmann on wing above engine. Colonel Watson in front of engine nacelle, pointing towards camera. Me262 trainer ready for ferry flight to Melun, France.
(Roy Brown Photo, NASM 78-17903-4)

Gerhard Caroli. Lt. Strobell was in charge of the Me 262 refurbishment and recovery, while Capt. Hillis was the unit operations officer.

Roy W. Brown and Ken Holt had flown P-47s with the 526th and 527th Squadrons respectively, 87th FG, 12th AAF, part of the 1st Tactical Air Force. They both arrived at Lechfeld on 3 June 1945. Bob Anspach arrived from the 365th Fighter Squadron, 356th FG, flying P-47D aircraft. Both Anspach and Fred Hillis (who came from the 366th Squadron in the same fighter group) had among the greatest number of flying hours in their units and were both ex-flying instructors. Kenneth Dahlstrom came from the 314th Squadron, 324th Fighter Group, and the last to arrive was William Haynes from the 522nd Squadron, 27th Fighter Group.

Anspach and Hillis, when told of this special assignment, volunteered, were interviewed and then selected from among the men of their unit. Ken Holt and Roy Brown were told of this special duty and were similarly selected. S. Sgt. John Gilson was one of numerous enlisted men who volunteered from his unit.

A draw was made from a hat and two slips of paper, with his name and that of Everett Box, were pulled for this assignment.

1st Lt. Strobell was on staff with Col. Watson at 1st Tactical AF (Prov.) HQ at Vitille, France. He had been a P-47 pilot with the 353rd Fighter Group, 351st Fighter Squadron. Col. Watson came in one day, laid down a stack of papers on Strobell's desk and instructed him to read the material because "you're going to Germany to learn how to fly the Me 262," and then left. He was assigned to ATI on 20 May and arrived at Lechfeld on 27 May to take charge of the Me 262 Project.

His orders were to prepare as many Me 262s as possible for ferrying to Cherbourg; to train USAAF pilots to fly them; to train crew chiefs to maintain them; and finally, to ferry the aircraft to Cherbourg. He was in charge of six USAAF pilots, 10 crew chiefs, and 28 Messerschmitt mechanics and test pilots.

Lechfeld was littered with craters when Strobell arrived. Army engineers, located on the far side of the aerodrome, were making an effort to fill the craters. The enlisted men of Watson's group were billeted in a damaged hangar while the officers lived in tents.

Brown: "Some aircraft were nosed down. We were told a unit from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers had taken over the field first, and attempted to tow the Me 262 by connecting a tow bar to the nose wheel strut. The nose gear wasn't designed for a direct pulling force and consequently collapsed when towing was attempted. The aircraft required a special tow bar. This connected to the nose strut to guide the wheel and a cable was attached to each main wheel strut to perform the actual towing."

Anspach: "There were many German aircraft of many different types deployed in revetments around Lechfeld. Many looked fresh off the assembly line. Some of these revetments were several miles from the runway. Many of these were on side roads leading to a highway which was used as a runway. Removable trees were placed in holes in the middle of the side roads ostensibly to camouflage its use. The trees were removed and the holes covered over when used as a taxiway to the highway."

A training program was established, instructing the Americans on the Me 262 systems and their function. Each mechanic was assigned a specific duty relating to operation of the jet. A damaged Me 262 airframe located near the hangar was utilized as a training aid to instruct with engine operations, hydraulics, electrical systems, instrumentation, airframe, etc. Lectures were provided by Messerschmitt engineers and factory workers through an interpreter. Hofmann, Baur and Kersting spoke sufficient technical English to instruct.

The Americans were taught starting procedures and engine operations, practicing on the damaged Me 262. Instructions

were provided in dismantling an engine to basic component parts, with inspection, then reconstruction of the unit, followed by engine installation to an airframe.

On completion of instruction, each Me 262 previously prepared by the 54th ADS was taken back into the hangar, dismantled and underwent a thorough overhaul providing on-the-job training for the U.S. mechanics under German supervision, and to ensure proper system function, and detection of structural flaws or sabotage.

The first aircraft overhauled to emerge from the hangar was a single-seat fighter. Baur took off in the jet for a test flight. On landing, Strobell immediately took over, had the aircraft refueled, taxied out and took off. Two observers of this event were pilots Anspach and Holt. Strobell then landed and taxied to the hangar. Upon exiting the cockpit he was approached by Anspach and Holt, who both proceeded to remove the propeller blades from Strobell's collar insignia, stating he no longer had need for these props. The other pilots later followed this example and removed the props from their insignia.

On 2 June, ATI sent two members, Maj. John McAuliffe and Capt. Charles Evans, in a C-47 with a Jeep as cargo, to A-23 near Cherbourg. Ports available for deep draft ships were at a premium considering many harbors were blocked with sunken obstacles and others undamaged by the war were urgently utilized by the Allies. Cherbourg offered potential with an airfield and harbor accommodations for *Project Seahorse*—the shipment of exploited enemy research and war material to the USA.

A survey of runway and field facilities were found adequate to land the Luftwaffe aircraft. The field had a 4,600-foot strip with 4,450 feet of pierced-plank runway, located near the harbor.

A dock located near the airfield was used by oil tankers. But the roads leading to the dock were very narrow and were thought inadequate for the towing of aircraft.

A survey was made of roads leading from the strip to the port facilities. Problems were encountered with clearances between concrete and/or steel telegraph poles of only 32 feet. A roadblock on Rue de la Abbaye, the main route to the city, had only 29 feet five inch clearance. Another obstacle to hauling aircraft from the airfield through the streets to the dock was the very heavy traffic on the four-mile road. This traffic would have to be rerouted or stopped while aircraft were being towed. This would entail a great deal of time and planning, and the expense of a great many men and much equipment.

The Port Commander would provide numerous "Rhinos" (powered barges 100 feet by 30 feet) to move the aircraft from the dock to aircraft carrier. A 100-ton-capacity crane to hoist the aircraft from the Rhino to dock and from dock to flat top was also provided by the Port Commander. All aircraft were required to have fittings and slings for lifting by the crane.

Adequate storage facilities were available in the hangars for crated engines and other material to be carried in the hold of the aircraft carrier and the material could be trucked to the dock and taken over by barge. No facilities for a four-engine aircraft were available at the field and suggestion was made to ferry it to the USA rather than transport by boat.

By 7 June, plans were finally formulated. It was decided to load the aircraft on the Rhinos from a ramp at the southeast end of the field for sea transportation to the Normandy Quay where they would be parked until loaded on board the HMS *Reaper*. Before being towed to the Rhino, they were first sprayed with a layer of cosmoline for protection from the salty ocean spray. To facilitate hoisting the aircraft by crane, slings and fittings were fabricated to suspend the aircraft from proper jack points that were marked on the airframes prior to their arrival at Cherbourg.

Hangar space for storage of arriving aircraft was given top priority. Guards were posted around the hangars and immediate area to prevent unauthorized personnel access to the

project material. Arrangements were made with the control tower authorities for handling arriving aircraft not having radio communications, with signal flares and light signals.

Delivery of all captured enemy aircraft (rocket/jet or prop) and equipment to Cherbourg would begin on Monday, 11 June. Lt. Col. Malcomb Seashore was assigned the task of accepting and loading the captured material for shipment to the USA.[17]

Plans were formulated to ferry the Me 262 aircraft at Lechfeld to Villaroche, Melun, France. Col. Watson had to deliver an Me 262 (3332) to the French government. He test flew the jet on 3 June and made the delivery flight to Villaroche on 4 June with an emergency refueling stop made at St. Dizier.[18] The route and facilities available were evaluated during the ferry flight.

On 7 June, Col. Watson notified Lt. Col. Seashore of plans for the impending transfer of jet aircraft from Lechfeld via St. Dizier to Melun, France, on 10 June. Fuel storage facilities for 6,000 gallons of diesel fuel and equipment to refuel the aircraft would be available at St. Dizier. Watson requested a large hangar at Melun with adequate working area for maintenance and to accommodate nine jet aircraft; also billeting and mess facilities for the American and German crews. Three truckloads of crated spare parts would follow on 11 or 12 June.

While overhaul work at Lechfeld continued on the Me 262s, efforts were made to locate all essential parts and components to maintain this fleet of flyable aircraft. Teams of men traveled the countryside to various areas of Germany seeking Jumo 004 engines, and the two-cycle, 20-hp Riedel starting motors for these engines. Once stockpiled, this material was crated and sent to Cherbourg.

The Luftwaffe had previously destroyed all airframe and engine manuals and these were unavailable. Crew chief Bob Moore had to construct a new Jumo 004 T.O. (Technical Order) using photos of disassembled engine parts, detailing instructions on reassemble, installation and engine operations from data provided by the Messerschmitt workers.

Unexpected visitors arrived at Lechfeld. One day, a B-24 landed with Charles Lindbergh. According to Gilson, Lindbergh came to visit Hofmann whom he knew from previous visits to Germany before the war.[19]

Hofmann was very friendly and congenial, always volunteering to help, while the men considered Baur to be more reserved, quiet and assisting only when requested to do so. According to S. Sgt. John Gilson, he started calling Hofmann the nickname 'Willie' and the others followed. Hofmann's residence was next to the aerodrome, so he was easily and quickly accessible when required by Col. Watson.

Brown: "Willie Hofmann said he had test flown the 'Natter'. This was a rocket-powered plane designed to take off vertically on a track, climb to altitude of the incoming enemy bombers and then level off. When within range the pilot would fire the nose rockets, eject the nose and bail out. On the test flight Willie said he bailed out safely but when the parachute opened, a metal ring on the chute shroud lines hit him on the back of his head, momentarily stunning him. Fortunately he came to in time to land normally."

After completing ground instruction on the airframe and engine systems, followed with a cockpit check, each pilot was taken for a brief flight in the Me 262 trainer 'Vera'. This consisted of one wide circuit of the field and a landing for a brief seven-minute flight. Strobell, Hillis, Anspach, Dahlstrom, Holt and Brown, in this order, were all given checkout flights by Karl Baur in the Me 262 on 9 June.

Brown: "It was stable and easy to land. We were warned to land under slight power, i.e., with the engines running at a speed above idling. If power was required on the final approach to reach the runway, it would be available quickly. If at idling speed, advancing the throttle would not furnish immediate thrust as with a prop-driven aircraft; instead, it took several seconds for the engine to come up to speed."

On Sunday, 10 June, plans previously formulated to ferry the Me 262s to Melun were implemented. Each pilot had fresh in his memory the experience of a flight in this jet the previous day.

Nine jet aircraft were lined up behind each other along a taxiway. Hofmann would pilot the first aircraft and departed at 0925 in the two-seat trainer (Vera). Having less fuel capacity because of the second seat, he flew to Stuttgart for refueling, then departed at 1125 hours for St. Dizier arriving at approximately 1220 hours.

Dizier, France, 10 June 1945. Airmen sitting on ground, L to R: Ken Holt, Ken Dahlstrom, Bob Anspach and Bob Strobell.
(Roy Brown Photo, NASM 78-17901-22)

Melun, France, circa 20-26 June 1945. Lt. William Haynes joined the project at this time. Willie Hofmann in front seat with Haynes in rear, going for a checkout ride in "What Was It?" No. 101.
(Roy Brown Photo, NASM 78-17902-6)

The next jet left Lechfeld for the direct 40-minute flight to St. Dizier at 0930 with other aircraft following at 15-minute intervals. Crash and fire personnel were on hand at St. Dizier to handle any emergency.

During the ferry flight, Nancy was used as a check point for the pilots to determine their remaining fuel reserves. If less than 900 liters of fuel remained at Nancy, then a straight-in approach to St. Dizier was used. If the supply was greater than 900 liters of fuel, then the pilot would plan the approach allowing visual inspection, ensuring the runways were clear and then make a lefthand orbit prior to landing.

At both St. Dizier and Melun, the first pilot to land would provide the control tower with information to assist the arrival of the remaining aircraft. He would signal using a green flare to indicate the active runway for landing and that the field was clear of other traffic, both air and ground.

The final jet landing at St. Dizier was followed later by a C-47 with the ground crew members. Major effort was directed to the Jumo engines and starter units to receive servicing in preparation for the next flight to Melun. Meanwhile, the pilots had lunch while the aircraft were refueled and checked.

At 1430 hours, the first Me 262 would take off for Melun, followed by the others at 15-minute intervals, but in reverse order of their arrival due to restricted ground movement at St. Dizier.

At Melun the approach procedure was to inspect the field for clearance, make a lefthand orbit and land. Strobell recalls that all the pilots made a straight-in landing without making an orbit of the airfield.

Should any emergency arise, auxiliary fields en route were assigned: Haguena, Duneville, Toule de Ley. Three C-47s attached to the program would arrive two hours after the last Me 262 arrived at St. Dizier and 45 minutes after the last Me 262 landed at Melun.[20]

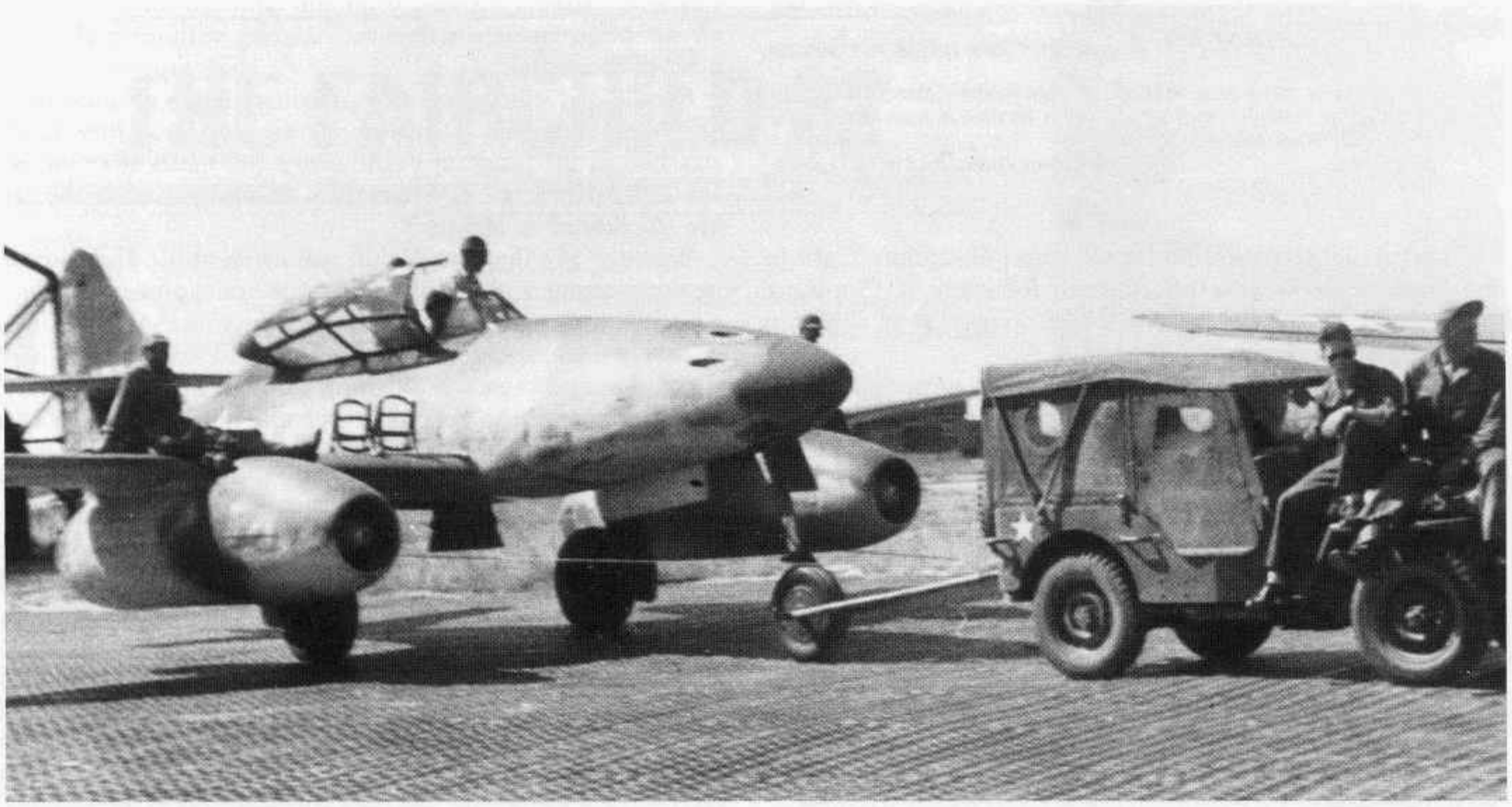
Brown: "My flight to Melun was uneventful. The controls were responsive and the plane was easy and a pleasure to fly—especially compared with the relatively sluggish P-47. The flight was quiet and vibration-free. Another difference was its high speed. I found myself busy going through my maps quickly, one after another, to keep pace with the distance covered over the ground because of the high speed.

"I glanced at the engines periodically. The engine tail pipe had a movable cone, reducing the cross-sectional area of the exhaust gases when the engine was advanced to full power. The cone automatically moved rearwards as the rpm increased and would be extended to full power.

"Another feature was the movable leading edge of the wing. This moved forward automatically when the air speed dropped below a set speed forming a slot through which the air could flow to the top of the wing. This helped maintain improved air flow over the wing, reducing stall and landing speeds. After takeoff the leading edge slid back automatically as the air speed increased.

"The weather was good that day and the field at Melun was easily visible."

The ferry flight to Melun was completed without incident, with the last aircraft landing at 1915 hours. Later, five 2½-ton truckloads of spare parts, maintenance tools, special purpose maintenance equipment, including spare Jumo 004 engines, arrived.



Melun, France, circa 20-26 June 1945. Me262 trainer No. 101 being towed with cables and steering bar. Willie Hofmann standing beside cockpit. William Haynes with sunglasses sitting second from right on Jeep fender, next to Everet Box. (Roy Brown Photo, NASM 78-17902-3)

According to Walt Boyne in *Me-262: Arrow to the Future,* the ferry flight was nonstop, direct from Lechfeld to Melun. Both Bob Strobell and Roy Brown do not recall stopping at St. Dizier but neither man still retains any official flight records. Col. Watson and Robert Anspach's flight records and entries in Karl Baur's logbook all indicate they landed at St. Dizier en route to Melun. Roy Brown took a group photo of the pilots at St. Dizier but cannot recall the exact date or circumstances surrounding the photo. According to Anspach, it was taken during their stopover at St. Dizier: the men ate lunch and after refueling proceeded to Melun.

It was at Melun the pilots applied new names to each Me 262, and it was here the Whizzer numbers 000 to 999 were issued to identify each jet for administrative control.

Col. Watson was a good friend of Larry Bell, director of Bell Aircraft Company, from association with test-flying the P-59 at Wright Field. The Bell Company was developing a rocket-powered aircraft (X-1) and sought access to German development of the Me 163. They sent test pilot Jack Woolams to Europe tasked with gathering technical data available to assist the Bell project.

On 7 June, Woolams proposed in a letter to ATI, flight testing the Me 163 at Lechfeld. He requested the assistance of Dr. Alexander Lippisch along with Willie Elias, German civilian ground crew foreman, "who could locate a trained, experienced ground crew and also aid in locating fuel. Once the hangar at Lechfeld has been stocked with German ground crew, a German test pilot, two Me 163 aircraft and whatever spare parts that can be located, it is proposed that Dr. Lippisch and his colleague, Mr. Alex Latscher, be placed in charge of the German crew which will assemble and prepare the airplane for check flights by the German test pilot prior to any flights by American personnel."[21]

Due to difficulties obtaining and handling the required hydrazine fuel and time restraints, Col. Watson vetoed this request and recommended testing be conducted in the USA where better facilities, technical support and fuel supplies were available. Col. Watson allowed Woolams to later join his ATI program.

On 11 June, Hauptman Braun checked out Woolams in a Fi156 at Nurenberg-Roth: "I have especially fond memories of Jack Woolams with whom I made instructional flights in a Fiesler Storch, because in my opinion he was an utterly outstanding pilot."

Maxfield: "The He 162s were located near Halle on several fields, being assembled with engines built at Dessau and aircraft fuselages at Halle. They were dismantled and delivered by truck to Cherbourg. We sent numerous crated He 162s to Col. Seashore's group to choose the best examples for shipment to the USA."

McIntosh: "At the time we were under pressure to retrieve aircraft, personnel, manufacture and research material located in the zone of Germany to be turned over to the Soviets under the Potsdam Conference agreement. Merseburg was to come under Soviet control. We devoted all effort to move people and equipment from the zone before it was turned over to the Soviets. We had written authorization to requisition trucks, military police and any necessary item required to accomplish this particular task. St. Dizier was utilized as a collection point; material was removed, stockpiled here and later we reviewed it."

Maxfield: "We were ordered on 30 May to leave Merseburg and transfer our operations to the Munich area. There was excellent tasting beer at Merseburg. I had the mechanics load a 6x6

truck with barrels of beer and transported these to Munich. Unfortunately, they loaded so many large kegs on the truck that we suffered a series of flat tires from the over-weight. We successfully reached our new base of operations with the beer, and from then on enjoyed many a pleasant evening consuming it all."

The McIntosh team moved their base of operations south to Munich from Merseburg.

McIntosh: "We used Neubiberg located five miles south of Munich as our headquarters. We lived in military barracks guarded by Hungarian soldiers.

"I had previously been injured flying combat with the 56th FG. My aircraft was hit by exploding German flak; plexiglass splinters from the canopy penetrated the back of my head while the concussion opened up both eardrums and loosened every tooth in my head. As a result, half my teeth required extraction. I now had to return to Boxted, England, to obtain my new false teeth. After collecting these I returned to Nuremberg on 8 June, my birthday.

"By this time, Maxfield and 'Pappy' Horne moved from Merseburg to Neubiberg during my absence. I walked into the barracks at 10 o'clock at night and found both them and the other men well along in their libations. They had brought with them an entire truckload of beer. I asked the reason for the party and they laughed replying, 'Who needs a reason?'

"I said, 'I'll give you one. Today is my birthday and I have my new teeth.' Everyone said that was a good reason and we all laughed. So, I joined Maxfield and the men.

"A few hours later, unannounced, walks in Col. Watson who was supposed to be in Paris. With him is Col. Don Putt who was on the general's list for promotion. Here, Watson finds his officers 'sloggered to the eyeballs.' Needless to say, the next morning Watson 'chewed' us out. I remember this well because General Putt and I talked about the incident later during the Korean War.

"The short-nosed Fw 190s were found on a field at Neubiberg. ATI teams managed to reach the field before the American Army arrived. There were many different variants of these fully armed fighters located here. We selected the best examples of four different versions and gave them a thorough inspection before ferrying them to Nuremberg.

"This same field had a number of Bf 109s of which we selected three. We flew them locally. But because they were crafty aircraft to land and had short range, they were dismantled and trucked to Cherbourg. We then moved to Nuremberg.

"Nuremberg was a grass field. The runway was marked out with painted petrol drums. I mention this because the first Fw 190 I flew from this field was a newer model. Upon taking off it was found, like many propeller-driven aircraft, that there was an oil leak in the propeller-pitch mechanism. This resulted in oil spraying back over the windscreen making visibility very difficult. As I approached to land, I slid back the canopy and looked out the left side of the aircraft, lining myself up with the oil drums. The only problem was I moved too far to the right and at touchdown found myself on the opposite side of the row of drums. The tail section smashed into the oil drums. To this day, no one can understand why I didn't either cartwheel or flip over on my back, because one-half the horizontal stabilizer and part of the rudder were completely separated from the aircraft. So much for that aircraft.

"It was at this airport Col. Watson showed up with Jack Woolams, chief test pilot for the Bell Aircraft Company. Woolams was to be checked out and permitted to fly any aircraft then available. I checked him out very carefully, even though I knew he was a qualified test pilot. At one time I was accused of treating him like a cadet or new second lieutenant. We could not afford any mistakes and he took this very gracefully. He then took off in an Fw 190.

"The next thing I knew, here came Woolams in the Focke Wulf, flying low about 20 feet over the grass field at full throttle. He then pulled the aircraft almost straight up and rolled it about three times, leveled off, came around, dropped the landing gear in typical fighter approach and landed.

"Well, I had other pilots to keep in line. I was presented with the rather difficult task of knowing what Woolams was doing, and he was a professional while the other pilots like myself were fairly limited in experience. So, I took him aside, explained the situation regarding the project and the other pilots, stressing the importance of safety. I laid down the law. Jack was a good trooper—he understood. We made arrangements for him to fly the aircraft to other parts of the sky and perform his test flying unseen by our members.

"I read some of his many reports on the performance characteristics of various Luftwaffe aircraft he flew. They contained the type of data a test pilot would be interested in. He performed all testing from the bases we were located at the time.

"We had three Fw 190s ready for ferrying to Cherbourg: Woolams, Braun and myself would pilot them. I would lead the flight. Woolams asked for a set of navigation maps. He had never flown in Germany or France and if he became lost, obviously wanted to know where to go. He was slightly taken aback when the only maps I offered him were those I was using—French Automobile Club road maps. We were flying VFR and these were the only maps I could obtain that were of any practical use. I well remember Woolams looking at me in disbelief, then saying, 'If you think you are going to lose me, you have got another thought coming.' I might add, I didn't lose him.

"We took off from Nuremberg-Roth on 13 June (at 1120 hours) and made a refueling stop at St. Dizier. We then took off for the next refueling stop with our three aircraft flying in a loose V formation. We had no American radios on board and preplanned everything.

"I landed at Villacoublay with Braun following behind. It was late in the afternoon with a setting sun on the horizon. The aerodrome was new to Braun, and with a traffic pattern filled with aircraft, he became overwhelmed by the events.

"Braun, after two routine landing approaches with the carriage down, was signaled each time not to land. He was already very nervous on the third attempt, landing in a direction facing a low-lying sun, so that he could not see the landing gear indicator showing the gear was still retracted. He accidentally belly-landed and skidded along the grass strip before coming to a halt (at 1742 hours). The emergency equipment and MPs were quickly on the scene.

"Braun hastily exited the cockpit of the aircraft, still painted in full Luftwaffe markings. He was immediately questioned by the MPs. In the excitement of the moment, Braun was so upset he forgot how to speak English and was immediately arrested and detained by the MPs. He feared being charged with premeditated sabotage.

"Meanwhile, Woolams circled the traffic pattern trailing numerous inquisitive aircraft until the Focke Wulf could be

Melun, France, 27 June 1945. TSgt. Ernest C. Parker lifting breech cover of 50mm cannon. (Roy Brown Photo, NASM 78-17898)

cleared from the active runway.

"Both Woolams and I continued on to Cherbourg to deliver our Fw 190 aircraft to Col. Seashore.

"Col. Watson made arrangements with Air Transport Command to provide us with a C-47 and crew members at Cherbourg. I took charge of the C-47 along with the crew of two pilots, a mechanic and radio operator. They worked for us, along with other German mechanics obtained from the stockade in Nuremberg until we left for the USA.

"We returned to Villacoublay and obtained the release of Hauptman Braun who was kept in detention by the MPs. We outfitted him with an American G.I. uniform—he was wearing an American flight suit when he crash-landed."

Previously in April 1945, General Hap Arnold initiated a program to preserve captured enemy aeronautical equipment. Air Technical Service Command (ATSC) was relegated the duty of 'procuring, reconditioning and preservation of at least one of every type of item used by the enemy air forces.' This mandate was later expanded to include USAAF aircraft for future museum purposes. Wright Field lacked space to accommodate and shelter such large quantities of equipment. Freeman Field was selected to serve as holding area for this material while evaluation was carried out at Wright Field. In preparation for receiving large quantities of captured material from Europe, Freeman Field was reactivated on 15 June 1945.

At times, cooperation between the Allies exploiting German technology became aggressive. In early June, an intact Do 355 was discovered at Mengen ready for flight. Before test flights could be undertaken, the aircraft was disassembled by the French and shipped to France. French units guarding the field would not allow ATI members near the aircraft. At Umendorf, three Do 355s and two Do 355A aircraft were uncovered, but again French units guarding the area would not allow close inspection of the aircraft.[22]

On 16 June, ATI sent Col. Watson a message authorizing him access to aircraft and airfields in Denmark and the British zone of Germany. Aircraft allotted to USAAF control were: four Me 262s at Schleswig, three Ar 234s and three He 219s at Grove, one Ta 152 at Aalborg, four long-nosed Fw 190s at Flensburg, four Me 410s at Westerland, and two Do 217Ms at Beldringe. Retrieval of these aircraft meant more work for both of Watson's teams.

The Do 335: Two examples were located at the Dornier factory at Oberpfaffenhofen. Woolams took special interest in this aircraft and visited the factory. Both Do 335s were ferried to Neubiberg by two factory pilots. Here they were checked over by German mechanics and ferried by Dornier pilots to Cherbourg. One aircraft was ferried by Herr Hans Padel, chief test pilot for Dornier.

McIntosh: "I went ahead in the C-47 to Cherbourg on 17 June, waiting for the Do 335s to arrive so I could give the German pilots a ride back. I made previous arrangements for a local P-51 unit at Nuremberg to escort the Do 335 on the flight. I was standing at Cherbourg when the aircraft arrived 20 minutes ahead of the escort. The P-51s either became lost or possibly it was a difference in performance. The *Mustang* escort flew low over the field with their external tanks attached, circled and returned to their base.

"After landing, the German pilot stepped out of the Do 335 wearing *Lederhosen,* the German short-shamy pants with suspenders, bare-legged, and so forth. It was all very theatrical to be sure, but he would have been in one hell of a predicament had there been a fire on board. He was quite an interesting gentleman and helped us a great deal. Next day I returned both pilots to Nuremberg."

At this time, several German helicopters were ferried by Focke, Achgelis Company factory members to Cherbourg. The following details briefly recollections by H.H. Gerstenhauser, factory pilot of the Fa 223E-V14 after arrival at Cherbourg:

"We are sent off to eat with a sergeant. In the mess, which is run by German POWs, they try to get news of home from us. However, we have to disappoint them as we ourselves have had no contact with the people at home since May. Returning to the airfield . . . for the night we are taken to an old coastal fort in which the Negro soldiers are quartered. There we get a dungeon-like, poorly lit room, which is otherwise clean as is also the toilet and bathroom, which can be reached through dark corridors. This type of 'safeguarding of our persons' (there is a drawbridge and armed guard!) goes somewhat against the grain. Expecting only the one night we make the best of it.

"17 June: On getting up, we go as quickly as possible into the fresh air, and then with the sergeant to breakfast, during which more conversation with the POWs, who are now also hoping for their imminent release. We know too little to give them comfort.

"At the airfield we catch the major and ask if any decisions have been made about us. Today nothing will come of it, as it is Sunday. We tell him that we do not want to spend another night in the fort. After some hither and thither we are directed to two aeroplane transport crates and a corrugated iron hut on the edge of the airfield where, after settling in, we feel more comfortable. After supper there is a visitor from Germany. A pilot, Padell, lands in a Do 335, a new fighter plane with the unusual combination of a tractor and pusher propeller at the nose and tail. He spends the night in my 'tin hut' and gives interesting accounts of events in the flying world and the 'new life' at home.

"In the morning more captured planes arrive, which are being prepared for transport overseas."[23]

McIntosh: "The C-47, fully loaded, carried all our equipment: Jeep and trailer packed with supplies, tents, both types of hydraulic fluid—the German fluid base was different from what we used; both types of engine oil, spare tires for the C-47

and also for the various German aircraft; a complete set of metric and English Standard tools.

"The airfields we operated from were in poor shape. In many cases the hangars and ground-support facilities were bombed out. We operated from where we could. There were times when no facilities were available, so we slept under the wings of the C-47. We had occasion to stand guard and the German prisoners working with us took their turn to perform the security role along with everyone else. As I recall this occurred at Flensburg and other places but not at Grove.

"The war was over and we could fly anywhere we wanted. Obtaining fuel was not difficult. We handled it out of drums quite often and were very careful to filter it thoroughly. At Grove we had typical British fuel bowsers."

Several mechanics from Watson's jet aircraft team were involved with the retrieval of prop aircraft.

Gilson: "We were sitting in our tent one day when Col. Watson came in and said to me, 'Get your friend Everet Box. We're taking off for Flensburg, Germany, in the morning. I'll have the men load up a Jeep for you in the C-47. I've been up there and they have 150 acres of airplanes. They are all demobilized. I want you to pick out the best long-nose FW 190s you find so we can fly them to Cherbourg.'

"Next day we arrived at Flensburg and unloaded the Jeep. We were assigned 25 Luftwaffe mechanics to assist with the project. We picked the best aircraft and hauled them to the flight line. All the Fw 190Ds were missing their propellers, rudders and right ailerons. These parts were all numbered for each individual aircraft they came from and were neatly stacked in a hangar.

"The first Fw 190D we chose was nearly brand new. Box was at the tail section and asked me to unlock the tail wheel so we could connect the aircraft to the Jeep for towing. I climbed on the wing, reached into the cockpit and started flipping switches to unlock the wheel. I hit the wrong switch and blew off the canopy. The blast nearly knocked me down. The canopy flew 30 feet into the air, tumbled down and landed near the tail where Box was standing. He shouted, 'What are you trying to do, kill me?' We left this aircraft and went on to others located nearby.

"We hauled several Fw 190Ds to the flight line. We had a young fellow who acted as interpreter. He had the German mechanics obtain the correct propellers, rudders and ailerons and attach these to the proper aircraft. We thoroughly checked out the airplanes. Later a C-47 arrived and returned us to Melun. Col. Watson said he would send pilots to ferry the aircraft to Cherbourg."

McIntosh: "We attempted to make what we called a 'flyaway kit' for all aircraft deemed flyable. We were not too successful finding spare parts; many of them were scattered at different facilities and subcontractors spread across Germany. Maxfield arranged to cannibalize aircraft for major components and parts. We cannibalized and built a spare parts inventory for all aircraft ferried to Cherbourg. These parts were shipped back in wooden boxes to support the operation in the USA."

By this time, a policy memorandum was issued stating all ATI-recovered material be equally divided between U.S. and British except in the case of single first specimens which were automatically allocated to the U.K. Other ATI teams successfully located a jet-propelled helicopter and its inventor at Zell-am-See.

McIntosh: "We flew in the C-47 to Grove, located 45 miles south of Aalborg, Denmark. The Luftwaffe were in charge operating as though it was still their own base with the Danish underground monitoring the activities. Luftwaffe guards were fully armed and secured the base. The Germans were very cooperative in assisting us with our work.

Lechfeld, Germany, circa 8 June 1945. Fred Hillis in driver's seat with passenger Bob Anspach. Note ATI on rear bumper and shovel/ax attached to side. (Roy Brown Photo, NASM 78-17902-12)

"The field at Grove was in excellent condition. On one side was an establishment providing us with temporary billeting accommodations. We previously had been fairly busy. Eating out of tin cans, bathing in the German canals and sleeping under the wings was rough living. We now found ourselves in luxurious quarters and were delighted. It later became an officers' club after we left.

"There was a large pond nearby with ducks. We were constantly alerted by the British not to shoot the ducks because they wanted them. We promised not to. Jack Woolams had located a small calibre rifle. Unknown to us, he went shooting ducks in the early morning when we were out working. He shot two or three a day for several days.

"Then one day, Col. Watson was to arrive and the men doing the cooking promised a sumptuous dinner; we would be spared from eating out of cans. Low and behold, three British officers arrived complaining about the alleged poaching of ducks. I told them we were working long hours, our hospitality was wearing thin and I was a little tired of their complaints. Since they arrived at our cocktail hour, I invited them to join us and took them on an inspection tour of our facility to ensure them there are no ducks here. The few drinks soften them up.

"After they left, one of the cooks came to me and said I scared them to death. I had taken the British officers into the bathroom to get a couple cans of beer out of the bathtub not knowing the ducks were hidden there. The cooks had wrapped the ducks in newspaper and concealed them in the water tank of the toilet reservoir. When we looked inside, sure enough there were eight or nine ducks stuck in there.

"Col. Watson arrived the next day and we had duck for dinner. As you might guess, the ducks were harder than shoe leather. We thought it was a grand show and laughed at ourselves.

"The Focke Wulf Ta 152 we obtained from the British was located here. The aircraft seemed to be in good mechanical condition other than the engine. Since German engines were

fairly simple to change, Maxfield decided to truck in an engine from Flensburg. As I recall the Ta 152 was one of a kind so there was no choice as to what aircraft we could pick out.

"From a fighter pilot's point of view, there is nothing like the Ta 152. It had high-aspect-ratio wings, very rapid role rate and lots of power. It had a laminated wooden propeller which amazed me.

"We obtained a long-nosed Fw 190D that Woolams flew. In a mock dogfight with Woolams, although I had the experience of wartime combat and he was a professional test pilot, it was relatively easy to outmaneuver Woolams. On a couple of occasions, I was fortunate to engage in dogfights with local P-51 pilots and without exception they all wanted to know how it was possible for the Ta 152 to move and turn like it did. I had no oxygen and our maneuvering was done below 12,000 feet.

"I had known from combat experience that the basic Fw 190 had a bad stall characteristic in high-speed turns. If you could tighten the turn far enough, the Fw 190 following you would go into a high-speed stall and snap over the top. We used this as an escape maneuver several times, and very successfully. But that was not true of the Ta 152. It would easily turn inside. It is very fortunate I did not meet a Ta 152 in actual combat.

"Woolams in the Fw 190D and myself in the Ta 152 flew together during the ferry flight to Cherbourg. At each stop en route we waited for Maxfield in the C-47 to catch up, should emergency repairs, etc., be required."

Roy Brown flew a P-47 to Schleswig on 16 June to investigate four Me 262 aircraft located there. Two examples were selected: one a two-seat trainer and the other a two-seat, night-fighter version with radar. Brown contacted Col. Watson at Melun notifying him the aircraft were available. Brown then flew to Grove to inspect several Ar 234 jets and reported this information to Melun.

Soon the C-47 arrived at Schleswig. Bob Strobell and Willie Hofmann were dropped off. Later, the C-47 with Col. Watson, Baur, Hillis, Anspach and other crew members would proceed to Grove, Denmark.

Willie Hofmann was assigned to ferry the trainer Me 262. The jet carried less fuel, thus requiring a refueling stop in Holland and Belgium before proceeding to Melun. Hofmann ferried the trainer to Melun on 19 June.

The RAF prepared the night-fighter Me 262 for the ferry flight and Strobell took off for Holland. Upon landing at a Dutch base, Twente Ehschede, the aircraft suddenly swerved violently to one side but Strobell managed to maintain control. The jet continued to track at an angle down the runway and Strobell brought the aircraft to a safe stop. An inspection revealed the right wheel hit an unseen mound of dirt on the runway at touchdown and the force of impact twisted the right landing gear inward. Another landing-gear leg was flown in from Lechfeld via C-47, and after repairs Strobell resumed the flight to Le Culot, Belgium, and Melun the next day (21 June).

Lt. Haynes arrived at Melun to join Watson's group. Hofmann took Haynes for a checkout ride in the trainer Me 262 (No. 101) that recently arrived from Schleswig.

By 20 June, the following list of aircraft had been collected at various points including Cherbourg: Me 262 (11), Do 335 (2), long-nose Fw 190 (6), Ta 152 (1), Ju 388 (1), He 219 (3), short-nose Fw 190 (6), Ar 234 (2), Ju 88 night-fighter USA No. 21 at Grove (1), He 162 in crates (15), Me 163 in crates (10), Bf 109

Melun, France, 27 June 1945. TSgt. Ernest C. Parker, crew chief, answers questions from General Spaatz. Behind Spaatz (middle of picture) is Col. Harold Watson. (Roy Brown Photo)

Melun, France, 27 June 1945. After the Spaatz review, a cigarette break. L to R: Bob Anspach, Fred Hillis and Ken Dahlstrom with back to camera. (Roy Brown Photo)

(3), twin-seat Fw 190 at Copenhagen (1).

Anspach: "Plans were made to retrieve the Ar 234 aircraft at Grove (Karsturp). Several of us were transported to Grove as a backup crew. While there we searched for aircraft parts needed for the jets at Melun. We located a hangar filled with German weapons—there was a fortune in Lugers piled high in a huge mound (5,000+)! It was under British control, but I managed to talk them out of one as a souvenir. We slept in the German barracks and ate at the British mess."

Karl Baur performed brief test flights in an Ar 234 aircraft on 20 and 23 June.

The Ar 234s were being prepared for flight. That night at 0200 hours in one of the hangars, Anspach copied the starting procedure for the bomber from a British report. Someone held a flashlight while he typed the procedures.

The next day, 24 June, Col. Watson took off first in USA 5, W.No. 140489, followed by Baur.

A refueling stop was made at Le Culot, Belgium, before proceeding to Melun. During the flight, the canopy hatch of Baur's aircraft flew off and the slipstream sucked out his papers and other loose objects, but he continued on and safely landed the Arado at Melun.[24]

The expected date of departure for HMS *Reaper* was set at 11 July. On 26 June, Col. Seashore requested Naval Air Station Quonset Point, Rhode Island, as an unloading port because the jet aircraft required 6,000 feet of runway. Newark, N.J., was chosen instead.

McIntosh: "The Luftwaffe had a night-fighter control center at Grove. The He 219s with nose-mounted radar were located here. We picked three aircraft that were essentially complete and in excellent working order requiring minimal maintenance to make them flyable. They were turned over to us by the Luftwaffe.

"Melun was used as a refueling stop during the ferry flight to Cherbourg. I ferried two He 219s to Cherbourg with Maxfield, and one was flown by Braun on 27 June."

On 27 June, a military review was held at Melun for General Carl Spaatz, commander of the USSAF. At 0600 hours, the jet aircraft were towed to the runway where the review was to be held. Positions for each aircraft were already predetermined by plans formulated for this occasion. The review had previously been postponed numerous times. A flying display by three Me 262s was included. The jets taking part in the flying exhibit were preflighted once in reviewing positions.

At 1000 hours a C-45 with visitors arrived. General Spaatz and his entourage, escorted by Col. Watson and Col. Adrial Williams (base commander), were provided with a closeup inspection of the Me 262s and the two Ar 234s. Each Me 262 was assigned a pilot and crew chief at attention. Spaatz spoke with T. Sgt. Parker about the 50mm cannon on the aircraft he crewed. Parker provided General McDonald with a complete inspection of the firing mechanism.

After inspection, three jets were towed to the end of the active runway for the air demonstration; two other jets were on standby should mechanical problems occur. After observing the starting procedures, the reviewing party was driven to a location near the middle of the runway, accompanied by Col. Watson and Capt. Dahlstrom to answer any questions.

The flying display was performed by Lt. Holt (No. 888), Lt. Strobell (No. 111), and Capt. Hillis (No. 666). Lt. Anspach (No. 222) and Lt. Brown (No. 444) were on standby with their spare aircraft.

Three jets took off shortly after a sporadic rainfall, leaving behind a trail of spray blasted from the jet exhaust. They provided an aerial display exhibiting the flying qualities of the Me 262 with high-speed, low-level passes directly over the runway and at various climbing attitudes. During the performance, the jet flown by Hillis experienced mechanical problems when one landing gear deployed, but the air show continued to a successful conclusion.[25]

On 28 June, Braun test flew a Ju 88G-6 at Grove prior to McIntosh ferrying the aircraft to Cherbourg.

A few days after 27 June, transfer of jet aircraft from Melun to Cherbourg was initiated. Hofmann took off in the 50mm cannon-armed Me 262 for Cherbourg. According to Bob Strobell, during the flight an engine disintegrated, throwing out turbine blades. Hofmann experienced difficulty controlling the aircraft. The explosion and resulting vibrations caused the trim setting to become jammed, placing the aircraft in a nose-down attitude. Already traveling at a high speed, the jet lost height rapidly.

The situation became uncontrollable during the dive, so Hofmann elected to bail out. He released the canopy, rolled the aircraft on its back, and as the jet pitched upward, he dropped

from the aircraft. His parachute opened at very low altitude just prior to touching ground. The Me 262 was destroyed in the crash.

Strobell visited Hofmann in the hospital and was told of the above events leading to the crash. Hofmann was sore all over and attributed his survival to the U.S. parachute he wore that withstood deployment at 500 mph.

ATI officials were furious over the loss of the aircraft. Threats of possible court-martial charges were directed at Strobell for allowing Hofmann to ferry the jet. Questions were raised about possible sabotage. Was Hofmann telling the truth?

T. Sgt. Ernest Parker, crew chief on this jet, was asked if he could help. His solution was simple: the left engine had the electrical generator. If the jet crashed inverted as Hofmann claimed, then the wreckage should show the generator on the right side of the crash wreckage. Members of the board of inquiry visited the crash site. The examination of wreckage and engine confirmed Hofmann's story and no charges were brought against Strobell.

An important function performed by the mechanics involved inspecting the Jumo 004 turbine blades prior to and after each engine use. A long goose-neck lamp was extended into the rear engine exhaust pipe and each turbine blade was given visual inspection for discoloration, cracks and other flaws. Due to the Allied bombing campaign Germany lacked strategic materials to develop metals to withstand high operating temperatures—especially turbine blades. Metal fatigue contributed to the relatively short life span of the Jumo engine of 20 to 25 hours between overhauls. The Messerschmitt workers overstressed the importance of this visual inspection.

Some 48 years later, John Gilson acknowledged that his actions may have contributed to the above crash. Prior to the ill-fated flight, he was to inspect the turbine blades but did not carry out this duty.

ATI assigned Lt. Col. Gifford as project officer responsible for installing a 50mm cannon in another Me 262. Further information about this project is unknown.

The ferry flights to Cherbourg from Melun continued.

Brown: "The day I took off, there was an overcast. We had been instructed that jet engines were very inefficient at low altitudes and so I flew above the clouds, letting down shortly before reaching Cherbourg. The jets had German radios but there were no ground stations at their frequencies, so we did not use them. After this ferry flight I returned to Melun and waited here for the aircraft to be prepared (with cosmoline covering) for the ocean voyage and loaded on the British carrier deck. I later took photos of loading the aircraft and their storage on deck."

Anspach: "I departed Melun at 0930 hours on 30 June 1945 in an Me 262 (No. 333), with intended destination Cherbourg. Weather en route was low broken to scattered clouds with a

Melun, France, 27 June 1945. Front row, L to R: 1st Lt. William V. Haynes, Capt. Ken E. Dahlstrom, 1st Lt. Robert C. Strobell. Back row, L to R: 1st Lt. James K. Holt, 1st Lt. Robert J. Anspach, Col. Harold N. Watson, Capt. Fred L. Hillis, 1st Lt. Roy W. Brown, Jr. Identical photo appears at Me262 display at NASM, but for unknown reasons *is not* captioned to identify the above airmen. For unknown reasons no group photo was taken of the crew chiefs.

Melun, France, 27 June 1945. Bob Strobell stands at attention in a blustering wind. (Roy Brown Photo)

Melun, France, 27 June 1945. Me262 lands after giving aerial display to General Spaatz.

visibility of 10 miles or better. Because I had no air-to-ground communications, the flight was intended to be made under the cloud deck. About 30 minutes out I decided to top the cloud deck which was very thin . . . with the intent of dropping down through it in 10 minutes. This should have brought me down east of Cherbourg. However, when I descended I found myself over water with no land in sight.

"I made a turn to a heading of 90 degrees knowing this would return me to land in approximately three to five minutes, and the coast should appear. Upon checking my fuel gauge it indicated that I could make shore but with little to spare.

"At this time an island came into view (Isle of Jersey). I could see a landing field; it was a very short grass strip. Being low on fuel I made the decision to land. I made a lefthand approach turn, and on final, I reduced speed to just above stalling with gear and flaps to full-down position.

"There was a church steeple at the approach to the runway. Witnesses stated that as I came over the church, the steeple tip went between my landing gear. I touched down within the first 200 feet of the runway and immediately started gentle application of the brakes. I experienced very little difficulty getting the plane stopped before reaching the end. I attributed this to the grass runway slowing me down. Had it been paved, I would have gone off the end where there was a considerable drop. Later, I was told the runway was 3,800 feet in length with a sheer drop at the departure end of 250 feet down to the sea.

"Looking back in retrospect, I feel I could not duplicate the landing on that length of airstrip if I was to try again.

"It took about 24 hours for my present whereabouts to be known. Messages were communicated from the island to London (fighter operations) and then to Melun to Col. Watson. Once my location was known, a C-47 with several maintenance crew was dispatched to ascertain what had to be done. A decision had to be made on whether to fly the jet out or have it dismantled and barged to Cherbourg. If we did the latter it was then questionable if we could meet the *Reaper* departure schedule.

"The length of runway was of great concern particularly with the sheer drop at the end. I made the decision to fly the aircraft out. Barrels of jet fuel had been brought in on the C-47 in anticipation of this event. We had sufficient fuel to make the flight to Cherbourg with little to spare.

"The jet was towed to a position allowing for maximum takeoff run. It was refueled and I started both engines. Before I had time for second thoughts about the present situation, I was moving rapidly down the strip. The takeoff was routine and amazingly I did not have to use all the runway. The drop-off at the end caused no problems.

"I climbed to 5,000 feet and proceeded to Cherbourg where the landing was uneventful.

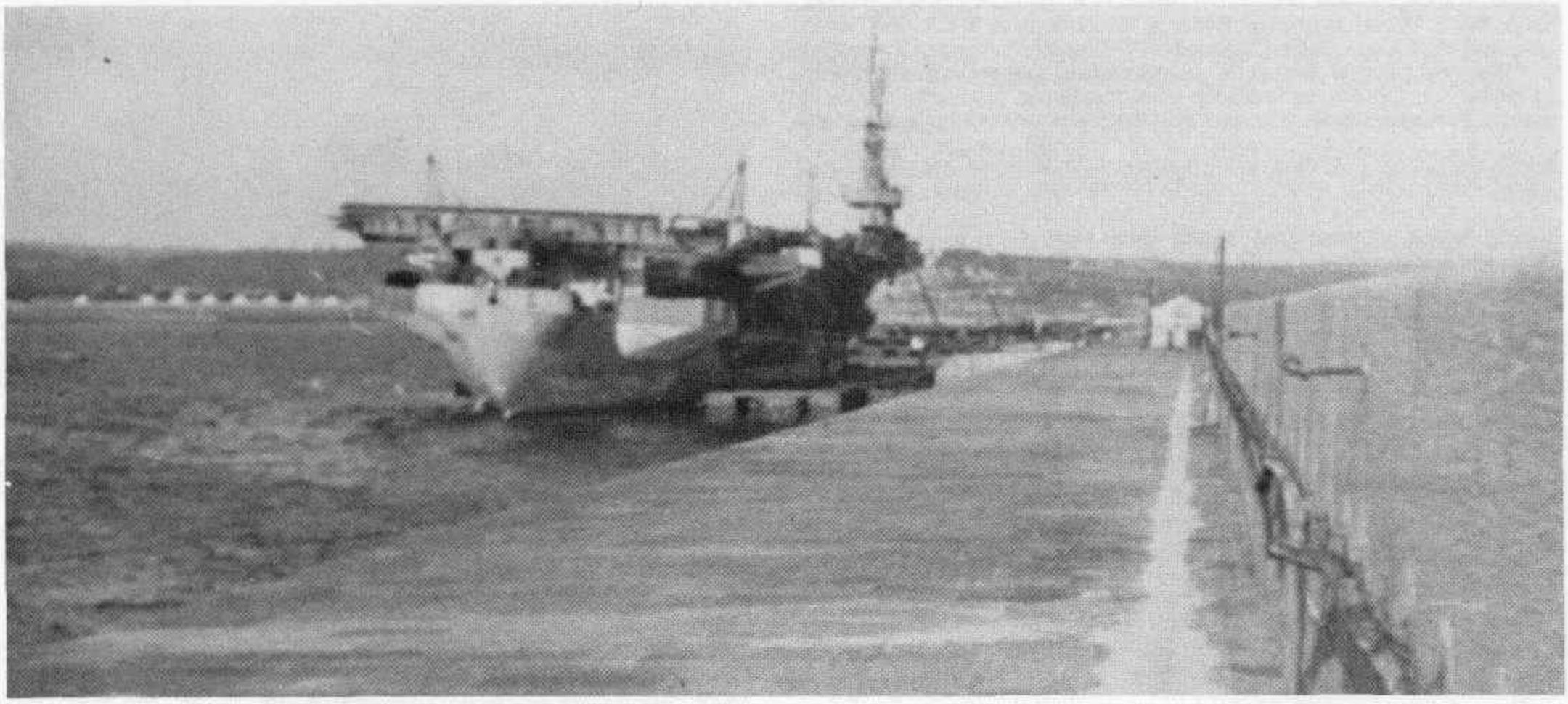
"Both Willie Hofmann and Karl Baur, the German test pilots with the team, were astonished that an Me 262 could land and be flown out from a runway of that length, especially a grass strip."

On 29 June, Col. Watson flew an Ar 234 (No. 202) from Melun to Cherbourg while Baur ferried the other aircraft.

Gilson: "Col. Watson came to our quarters one night and said, 'John, get your friend [Ev Box]. We're going to Norway to pick up a couple of Arado reconnaissance aircraft.'

"We flew in a C-47 to Oslo, Norway. We had flown all day long and I went up to the cockpit and asked the colonel, 'Where are we?' It was cloudy. A tall American was sitting in the copilot's seat. The colonel said that we should be over a peninsula near Oslo, Norway. About this time we broke out of the clouds, and sure enough we were exactly on course.

"We spent the night in Oslo and toured the city. The next



morning we took off and flew to Sola, Norway. When we arrived, there were two (?) Ar 234 aircraft sitting in a hangar and they were not ready to go. We spent a couple of days working on the aircraft (W.Nos. 140311 and 140312). Baur test flew an Ar 234 on 2 July.

"Then Col. Watson said the jets will be ready for takeoff at 6 A.M. the next day. The Luftwaffe officer in charge said it was impossible. Watson told him it will be 'possible' and that work will proceed on the aircraft all night if necessary.

"Later, Col. Watson called me over and asked, 'How are you getting along?' I told him this one Luftwaffe officer did not even know the war was over yet. He had on shiny boots, pressed uniform and neatly dressed but he was giving us trouble.

"Watson called on the Luftwaffe officer and said sternly, 'Do you recognize the colonel emblem on my shoulders? The war is over now and I want you to do everything this fellow tells you to. I'm going to check with him in the morning.'

"Well, I gave this fellow the most difficult job I could find, inspecting the turbine blades. We worked on the aircraft all night and had them ready by morning."

On 3 July, Baur test flew an Arado on a 12-minute flight and landed at 1414 hours. The ferry plans were then implemented that day.

Watson: "Three (?) Ar 234Bs were prepared for flight by my mix of American and German crews. We were constantly concerned about sabotage of aircraft that U.S. pilots and crews would be flying. The German crews we took were quite reliable as they had been with us for some time and we had promised them everything—including a trip to the United States.

"Once the Ar 234s were prepared for flight I decided at the last minute which airplane would be flown by me and which would be flown by Capt. Hillis—leaving the other one to the German Messerschmitt test pilot, Baur.

"My plan was to lead the flight of three aircraft with Hillis and myself having navigation charts. I didn't want the Messerschmitt pilot Baur wandering off somewhere to some other field so I thought it best he not have a chart. He would have to stick with us.

"Shortly after takeoff, I circled and Baur assembled in the number three position. I waited for Capt. Hillis but he apparently experienced difficulties. There was no time to wait, so I continued on with Baur on my wing."[26]

Meanwhile, McIntosh and Maxfield with their crew were at Grove, Denmark (?), retrieving German aircraft.

McIntosh: "We had a radio in the C-47 and a call sign. There were certain hours the radio operator would monitor specific frequencies so we could communicate with SHAEF. We received a message from Watson ordering us to have kerosene and food available at the end of the runway between certain hours on a certain date. The men had all this material waiting and no idea what was going to happen.

"Out of the blue came two smoky airplanes that circled, then landed and taxied to the end of the runway. Watson and Woolams (?) had brought in two Ar 234 jet bombers from Norway. As soon as they shut down the engines the fuel tanks were filled, and after having food to eat they climbed back in. We had a ground starting unit provide power to run up their engines, and down the runway went the jets and took off. They were on the ground less than an hour. They ferried the jets to Le Culot, Belgium, for a refueling stop, then to Melun."

Question: How many Arado 234 jets were ferried from Norway and by whom? Crew chiefs Gilson and Barr recall two jets being made ready in a hangar they worked in. According to Col. Watson there were three jets and Baur, Hillis and himself were to ferry the aircraft. McIntosh and Maxfield recall being at Grove (?) when two Ar 234s landed, and both are adamant that Jack Woolams arrived with Watson in the jets? Watson recalls landing at Grove (?) for a refueling stop, but with Baur, not Woolams?

According to Karl Baur's logbook, he took off from Sola, Norway, on 3 July at 1454 hours and landed at Schleswig, Germany, at 1605 hours for refueling (not Grove). He left Schleswig at 1825 hours for Le Culot, Belgium, and later flew to Melun, landing at 2145 hours. On 5 July he ferried an Arado 234 to Cherbourg.

According to Col. Watson, three (?) Ar 234s eventually arrived at Melun and his flight log shows he ferried an Ar 234 on 5 July to Cherbourg.

HMS *Reaper*, RN aircraft carrier at Cherbourg, France, during loading of aircraft and equipment for shipment to the USA. (Charles A. Barr Photo)

Melun, France. Me262 No. 666, Cookie VII. (Charles A. Barr Photo)

Lechfeld, Germany, 10 June 1945. Lineup of Me262 jets ready for ferry flight to Melun, France. Tall building in background is hangar used for overhaul of the jets. To the right of this structure is a line of damaged hangars. (Charles A. Barr Photo)

Question: Who went to Norway with Watson and Baur? Was it Hillis or Woolams? Or were only Watson and Baur involved in this ferry flight? And how many Ar 234s were retrieved, two or three?[27]

On 4 July, Robert Strobell flying a P-47 experienced an in-flight flash fire after takeoff from Mannheim. He bailed out from the P-47 which crashed with his records of the Me 262 project, logbooks and 25 rolls of film. He was hospitalized with third degree burns to his hands and face and left the project at this juncture.

Anspach was again involved in another ferry adventure:

"On 6 July 1945, I departed Melun at 1000 hours to ferry a two-seat Me 262 trainer (No. 555) to Cherbourg. The trip was uneventful until the landing approach was initiated. Upon lowering the landing gear, I received indication of the main gear extending but no panel light that the nose gear was down. I activated the emergency gear-down switch, which was a compressed air cylinder, but still did not receive a gear-down indication.

"I had earlier received a green light from the tower to land so I continued on the approach expecting a red light if the nose gear was not fully extended. I thought the gear was extended and that the down indicator was unreliable. Inasmuch as I received no red light from the tower I continued my approach, and touched down normally on the main gear, holding the nose off the ground as long as possible. After rolling approximately one-third the length of the runway, I slowly lowered the nose and found I did not have gear extension.

"The aircraft slid for 800 to 1,000 feet straight ahead on the nose section, engine nacelles and main gear before stopping. I was surprised to find very little damage had been inflicted to the aircraft.

"All that was required to make it flyable was to replace the nose section and the front portion of each engine nacelle. I took several mechanics and flew to Lechfeld in a C-47. We removed the needed components from another Me 262 and the damaged aircraft was made flyable in a day's time."

Also on 6 July, Braun ferried a Ta 154 from Flensburg via Eidhoven and Amiens to Cherbourg. □

DEPARTURE SEQUENCE FROM LECHFELD, GERMANY, TO MELUN, FRANCE, 10 JUNE 1945

ME 262	Pilot	Takeoff Time
Vera	L. Hofmann	0925
Joanne	Capt. F. Hillis	0930
Pauline	Lt. R. Anspach	0945
Julie	Lt. K. Holt	1000
Doris	Capt. K. Dahlstrom	1015
Connie	Lt. R. Brown	1030
Marge	P. Baur	1045
Beverly Ann	Lt. R. Strobell	1100
Wilma Jeanne	Col. H. Watson	1115

Reference: Harold Watson, personal papers, NASM, previously cited in Walt Boyne, *Me 262: Arrow to the Future.*

Concluded in next Journal

REFERENCES

17. Harold Watson, NASM, *op. cit.*
18. John Paul Andrews, One Man's Gang, *Air News*, Dec. 1945, pp. 67, 68.
19. TSgt. Parker recalls that Lindbergh visited Melun to see Hofmann who was recuperating from bailing out of an Me262.
20. *Op. cit.*, reel A5729.
21. Harold Watson, NASM, *op. cit.*
22. Air Disarmament History, Folder 540.00-12.
23. H.H. Gerstenhauer, "The Adventurous Journey of Focke Fa223E, Helicopter V14 from Germany to England."
24. Possibly this occurred during the ferry flight from Grove to Melun, rather than from Norway to Melun.
25. Harold Watson, NASM, *op. cit.*
26. Harold Watson presentation 1981, *op. cit.*

ATI and Operation Lusty

by Norman Malayney

Part III

PART II CONCLUDED ON 6 JULY 1945 WHEN 1ST LT. BOB Anspach landed a two-seat Me 262 trainer (No. 555) at Cherbourg without nose gear extension. Damage to the aircraft was minimal. The needed components were removed from another Me 262 and the aircraft was flyable in a day's time.

Also on 6 July, Braun ferried a Ta 154 from Flensburg via Eidhoven and Amiens to Cherbourg.

McIntosh: "We were working in Denmark in early June when a radio message was received from Col. Watson ordering us to return to Nuremberg. We flew back in a C-47 arriving in the early evening. Several trucks and Jeeps were parked on the field with headlights illuminated to mark out the runway.

"While circling to land, I heard Maxfield, who was looking out the window behind my head, mutter, 'No! No! I won't go. No way, I'm not going.'

"I had no idea what he was talking about and asked what he meant. He told me to look. When I gazed down on the field and spotted this large, four-engine airplane sitting there, I realized what he was talking about. He had read Col. Watson's mind.

"When we landed, Col. Watson's comment to us was, 'What do you think of her?'

"Maxfield continued with his remonstrations. 'I won't fly it. I want no part of it.'

"Watson jested and said, 'Wouldn't that be the way to go home . . . to land at Wright Field in our own airplane, and we don't have to worry about sea travel.'

"Mechanics were required to refurbish the Ju 290 transport for flight. We went with Braun to a German POW detention camp located near the airport. He interviewed prisoners and selected those willing to assist in maintaining the Ju 290.

Paris, France, Orly Airport. Ju290, USA 022, with fuel Bowser in front of aircraft. (Roy Brown Photo)

Patterson Field, Ohio, 31 July 1945. Crew of the Ju290 on the ferry flight to the USA. Standing (L-R): Lt. G.A. Brock, Capt. Fred B. McIntosh, Col. H.E. Watson (the pilot), TSgt. Fred Joncas, Capt. E.D. Maxfield, TSgt. Walter Friske, TSgt. Francis Dressler. Kneeling (L-R): TSgt. G.D. Brock, Sgt. Jesse Stover and TSgt. Holm. Missing: PFC. Schnaps, mascot. (NASM 81-3096)

He located a mechanic and electrician who spoke some English. It was a simple agreement with a handshake.

"It was decided to ferry the Ju 290 to the USA and therefore I took the Ju 388 to Cherbourg. At the time, for some reason I had to return to St. Dizier for an important assignment. There was no other transportation available so I flew the Ju 388. I blew a tire at St. Dizier and eventually was able to have it repaired, then returned the aircraft to Cherbourg for shipment to the USA.

"From Nuremberg-Roth we flew with Braun in the Ju 290 to a repair depot at Le Culot, Belgium, to have American radio and navigation equipment plus survival supplies for 10 men installed. The aircraft was then ferried in late July to Orly Airport, Paris.

"Garland Horne approached Col. Watson and requested a Fieseler Storch be dismantled and loaded into the Ju 290 for transport to the USA. Horne wanted to bring back an example for his personal use but Col. Watson vetoed this request.

"A July 12 report stated, 'During the previous four weeks the Ju 290 underwent a complete thorough inspection by an American crew (with assistance from the Luftwaffe crew) familiar with four-engine, bomber-type aircraft. Two engines were replaced, American grade oil was used instead, and the aircraft test flown. Results indicate that when flown at 10,000 feet at 185 mph, the bomber has an endurance of 16 to 18 hours or range of 3,000 miles. Endurance is increased by two hours providing one engine is feathered after one-third the original fuel is consumed.' "[28]

McIntosh: "Our crew chose the name for the Ju 290. During that period, every time you met a German the first comment they made was 'everything is kaput' or 'Alles Kaput'. It was such a popular expression that we decided to paint it on the side of the Ju 290.

"During a test flight from Orly on 19 July, we lost an engine and immediately feathered the prop. After landing at Maxfield we gave the aircraft a good inspection. When the affected engine oil screen was checked, metal particles were discovered. Hauptman Braun advised us where we could find spare engines at a depot south of Munich. Maxfield and Braun flew there in a C-47 and were able to locate and obtain several completely refurbished engines that were on manufacturing dollies. The engines were too large and would not fit in the C-47. Maxfield commandeered a military truck and transported them to Orly in just under 24 hours. It took two hours for the engine change and we were again flying three days (21 July) after the engine failure.

"We made one flight on 26 July to test the aircraft and swing the compasses. There is a rather straight and long section of railway line that ran from Paris to the southwest. We calibrated our navigation equipment by flying up and down that particular straight stretch of railroad. We made this a general shakedown flight prior to our departure.

"We landed and placed the aircraft under 24-hour guard.

"Our actual day and time of departure was kept secret.

Freeman Field, September 1945. Ju290A with mottled camouflage scheme, and Luftwaffe markings reapplied. (H.G. Martin Photo from Robert J. Pickett Collection via Kansas Aeronautical Historical Society)

Freeman Field, September 1945. Ju290A from another perspective; note mottled camouflage scheme. (H.G. Martin Photo from Robert J. Pickett Collection via Kansas Aeronautical Historical Society)

Wright Field, Ohio, circa 1946. Ju290A stripped of armaments and upper turret sits idle waiting to be scrapped. (Warren Bodie Collection)

Paris, France, Orly Airport. Nose view of Ju290, B-26, in rear. (Roy Brown Photo)

Watson relayed the impression to Braun and the German mechanics that they would be taken with us. This was mainly for safety reasons to ensure that sabotage would not be attempted. The Luftwaffe personnel were not sure which one, if any or all were going to fly to the USA with us.

"Before we left Orly, Hauptman Braun was asked to write in German the history of the Ju 290 and its essential performance and operation statistics. We also obtained the service of an Air Transport Command (ATC) navigator, 1st Lt. G.A. Brock, to assist in the transatlantic flight.

"On the day we departed, all plans were secretly implemented. We said thank you to everyone and turned the three Luftwaffe personnel over to the military police with suitable letters of appreciation, detailing their help in the project and asking this be taken into consideration for their early release.

"We took off from Orly on 28 July and flew to Santa Maria in the Azores. Santa Maria is a small island with an extinct volcano dome and was typically sheathed in clouds. We made an instrument letdown on the downward side of the island and, after coming in under the clouds, homed-in by low-frequency D/F and landed at the airport.

"Later that evening, Harry Truman's C-54 landed at Lajes. General Arnold was traveling without the president, returning from the Potsdam Conference.[29] The base commander gave a party that night for the dignitaries. Next morning, General Arnold and his aides came on board the Ju 290 to inspect and take photos of the aircraft.

"We were traveling under classified orders. On the morning we took off, the bulletin board at the operations room had a clipping from the *New York Times* newspaper, detailing our departure from Orly, France, with the names of the crew members, etc. So much for classified orders. This island was the main stopping point for the ATC and Ferry Command in moving aircraft and cargo/personnel across the Atlantic. Someone brought the clipping (or newspaper) from the USA.

"The Ju 290 had a 1,000-gallon tank in the passenger compartment connected with a hand-operated, fuel-transfer pump that provided the long range for the Luftwaffe aircraft to reach Norway from the south of France. We may have taken some fuel with us in that tank when leaving Orly. The aircraft had synthetic rubber tires, so we attempted to keep our load down as much as possible.

"There was an emergency dump valve for the extra fuel tank. A rope was tied from the dump valve to a hand grip located on the middle of the windscreen in the cockpit. The hand grip helped steady yourself as you climbed in and out of the flight seat. The rope had a red flag attached and was tied to that grip.

"On takeoff, our cockpit procedure would make most flying safety engineers think we were crazy. We carefully rehearsed this procedure. Colonel Watson would push the throttles forward to takeoff power. I would then take over the throttles, calling out airspeed while he had both hands on the control wheel. Maxfield sat at the flight engineer's position and actuated the landing gear on the request of Col. Watson, and his other hand was on the dump valve rope. That rope was not to be pulled except by direct orders from Col. Watson. We made an excellent crew for we knew exactly what was involved. I do not recall carrying any fuel in that cell except for the long flight from Santa Maria to Bermuda.

"The C-54 took off for Bermuda on 30 July and we followed shortly behind. We started out in beautiful weather. The flight was some 12 hours 15 minutes in duration and we were flying at 8,000–12,000 feet.

"Our radio operator was a T.Sgt., Fred Joncas, a tall strapping man of over six feet, who was from the ATC. He had flown hundreds of trips across the Atlantic and knew all the radio procedures. The main Atlantic control point was located at Gander, Newfoundland, and at predetermined check points we reported by radio our current position.

"We were halfway to Bermuda when Maxfield came forward and tapped me on the shoulder, motioning for me to return to the rear of the Junkers. The aircraft had a movable circular platform some two feet high and three feet wide; it could be moved into position so a navigator could stand on it to use the sextant to obtain lines of position or altitude of the sun, moon, or stars for navigational purposes.

"Our radio operator had moved the platform to his radio compartment. There was Joncas with the radio equipment in parts: coils, capacitors and other components were spread out on top of the circular platform. He was working on the equipment with a soldering iron and maintenance kit. He was very unhappy with its performance, so he dismantled it to repair the fault. He had used this equipment many times before and knew the circuits by memory and said he could repair the radio.

"We had not been in contact with Gander for some time. The weather was not too bad and we seemed to be doing all right. Our navigator was doing quite well.

"About this time a C-54 came along flying in the opposite direction. Our VHS was working so we called to ask his position which he gave us. We were not lost.

"He asked on the radio, 'Are you the weird airplane we just

NAS Patuxent, circa 1946. Do335 parked on the field. Note missing spinner cone at rear prop. Right side view. (Warren M. Bodie Collection)

NAS Patuxent, circa 1945/46. Do335 from left side tethered on parking apron. Note Arado 234 in background with deflated tires. (H.G. Martin Photo from Robert J. Pickett Collection via Kansas Aeronautical Historical Society)

Wright Field, Ohio, August 1945. T2-711 after being reassembled upon arrival in the USA by boat. Jet was test flown by Capt. Rus Schleeh on 29 August 1945 unescorted. Jet crashed on 20 August 1946 after inflight fire, while flown by Maj. Walter J. McAuley. (Kenneth O. Chilstrom Photo, SI Negative No. 85-13047)

passed?' We said, 'Yes.' He asked who we were and I told him to look on the bulletin board at Operations when he landed at Santa Maria.

"It was not too long after when Joncas, the radio operator, came up forward and flipped my communication control to another position and pointed to the headset. Soon I heard Gander calling us loud and clear, wanting to know where we had been. Joncas explained we were having trouble with the radio equipment. The radio worked perfectly all the way into Bermuda.

"We landed in Bermuda one hour ahead of the president's C-54. Joncas insisted that the radio equipment be replaced and this was done.

"The weather was beautiful and we spent the night there. For the officers, our quarters were located near the end of an active runway. Air operations continued all night long and we obtained very little or no sleep. We tried playing cards, but eventually Col. Watson said, 'Let's go,' and it was not too long before we took off. The radio equipment worked uneventfully all the way to Patterson Field near Dayton, Ohio.

"The worst weather we encountered on this segment of the trip was in the central part of the USA. Here we were back in the land of low-frequency beacons. Only Col. Watson had experience flying this type of radio environment so he found Patterson Field for us. We landed on 31 July at what is known as Area B or Patterson Field.

"The next day, 1 August 1945, we ferried the Ju 290 from Patterson Field to Freeman Field. Later, Col. Watson and Maxfield flew it to Wright Field for an air show.

"When the Ju 290 was being scrapped at Wright Field, workers located an explosive charge in the wing. From the time the aircraft landed at Munich, Luftwaffe mechanics went along with the aircraft at all times. All explosives require a detonator to be effective. It was a rare occasion that we removed an inspection plate since we wanted to have the aircraft ready for the flight to the USA. The charge could have been there as part of their surrender mechanism. Until it was properly armed, by whatever method of detonation, it could ride out there all day and not cause any problems. The Ju 290 instrument panel is in the museum at Wright-Patterson AFB."

Lieutenants Garland Horne and Harry James were assigned courier duty to accompany a shipment of exploited material to the USA. The Liberty ship, USS *Richard J. Gatling*, loaded with aviation equipment, engines, crated Me 262 and Ta 154 aircraft, departed Cherbourg on 12 July. After a brief stop at Le Havre to load Army personnel, it proceeded to Norfolk, Vir-

ginia.[30] Upon arrival, the crates were unloaded and placed in boxcars for rail transport to Freeman Field. Five days later, James accompanied the shipment to Freeman Field guarded by security personnel. Horne took leave to visit his family and later was assigned duty with T-2 (ATI) at Wright Field.

Meanwhile, back in Europe, Jack Woolams and Larry Bell of Bell Aircraft were taken for a helicopter demonstration flight in the Fa 232 at Les Loges, France, on 14 July by the German pilot Herr Gerstenhauer. On 17 July, he received permission to test fly and evaluate the Me 262 and He 162 at RAE Farnborough, England. On 26 July, Woolams ferried a P-63 from Casa Blanca to France, providing an aerial demonstration to French officials for potential sale of this type.

HMS *Reaper* departed Cherbourg on 19 July 1945 carrying its cargo of aircraft to the USA. A few days (28 July) prior to arriving at New York, news was received that a B-25 crashed into the Empire State Building. In the meantime, while the officers were relaxing, "throwing empty bottles overboard," Gilson and Box won several thousand dollars each playing poker with the British seamen. When the *Reaper* docked at New York (31 July), several pilots took the winnings ashore, bypassing military authorities, to exchange this large sum of money for the men.

Roy Brown accumulated sufficient points to obtain his AAF discharge and left the project on arrival at New York.

The aircraft were lifted by crane from the carrier deck onto barges, then towed along a canal that bordered the Newark Army Airfield. A large crane lifted each aircraft to a taxiway and they were towed to nearby hangars. Here waited several ground crews from Freeman Field. Watson's crew chiefs acted as supervisors, instructing the men on removal of the cosmoline from the airframes and how to refurbish the aircraft for flight.

Anspach recalls meeting USMC test pilot Lt. Col. Marion E. Carl at Newark. Carl was there to inspect and familiarize himself with the Me 262s, several of which were to be delivered to the U.S. Navy. During their discussion, Anspach and the other pilots provided Carl with flight data, operating procedures and personal experiences flying the Me 262. Holt and Dahlstrom were known to have each ferried an Me 262 to Patuxent NAS.

Lt.(JG) Najeeb Halaby, USN, also ferried one of the jets to Patuxent NAS. "After a day and a half of going over the aircraft, Halaby was ready. Almost immediately after liftoff, trouble came quickly as the climb kept getting steeper. The aircraft refused to respond to his efforts to level off. Halaby reacted by continuing to press the electrically controlled stabilizer trim lever forward to lower the nose while simultaneously pushing the stick forward with his knee and all his strength, still with no luck. The Me 262 began to shake—the first warning of an imminent stall—and according to Halaby, the craft was practically standing on its tail over downtown Newark. In a sudden flash of insight, the test pilot guessed that the trim lever wires were reversed. As he then pressed the lever back, the nose began to lower. Having established control over the screaming jet, Halaby performed an intentional stall test later in the flight to ensure a safe landing at Patuxent to conclude the most memorable flight of his career."[31]

Either Woolams or McIntosh were to ferry the Do 335 to Freeman Field. They both matched coins to see who would fly the fighter. McIntosh won the toss and chose not to fly the aircraft. McIntosh assisted Woolams with the cockpit checkout.

McIntosh: "Normal procedure had the rear engine startup delayed until clearance was given for takeoff due to the lack of airflow across the engine to cool it. Woolams' takeoff was delayed after he had power-checked the engine. As he started down the runway, you could see steaming glycol start issuing from a safety valve in the rear engine. Just about the time he reached rotation speed, the wheels did not come up. He very tactfully shut down and feathered the rear engine. So, here he is flying a strange aircraft, a new configuration and is already in an

emergency situation. He made a very low, widowmaker-type turn and came around to the nearest runway.

"As he approached the runway with one wing low, over the fence the wings kicked level and he touched the ground with the fire trucks chasing him. Glycol and steam were pouring out from the rear of the aircraft. He opened the canopy as the aircraft slowed down and got out on the wing."

Jack Woolams recalled the following: "The most exciting experience I had while flying these [Luftwaffe] aircraft occurred at Newark, when I made the only flight by an American in the Dornier Do 335. This is a peculiar looking German airplane with an engine in the front and one in the rear, and a propeller in the front and one in the rear.

"As soon as the airplane had left the ground on takeoff, it was apparent that the cooling system of the rear engine was defective. The temperature rose until the needles went clear off the gauges before I had gone 100 feet in the air. In addition, the hydraulic system was inoperative, so the landing gear would not retract. Having heard that the airplane could sustain flight on either engine alone, and not wanting to ruin the rear engine by overheating, I feathered the rear propeller and attempted to circle the field on the front engine alone. It soon became apparent, however, that the airplane with the wheels down could not maintain altitude, even though full power was used on the front engine.

"I frantically set to work to get the rear engine started again as I began settling slowly over a swamp on the outskirts of Newark Airport. I just managed to get the motor going in time to obtain enough power to come in between two buildings and make a crosswind landing in a cloud of smoke and steam and oil pouring out from the now badly overheated rear engine."

Anspach: It was later determined there was a malfunction in the linkage of the air screens for both engines. As I recall the screens were interconnected and worked in oppositions (i.e., when the front engine screen was closed the aft engine screen would be open). On this flight the screens closed on both engines and locked. Woolams maintained flight speed and kept it in the air until he landed. Subsequent to this event it was decided the Do 335 should be shipped overland."

McIntosh: "I have often thought about that particular day whether or not I would have been able to handle the situation as skillfully as Woolams. The lower rear stabilizer and prop were attached by explosive bolts. If a pilot had to abandon or make a forced landing, he could jettison the stabilizer and prop rather than land with the keel down. I think someone accidentally blew a prop off at Newark playing around with the electrical switches."

Gilson recalls an engineering officer from Wright Field entered the cockpit of a Do 335 and accidentally flipped a switch and blew off the rear propeller that was attached by explosive bolts. The damaged Dornier was dismantled and taken by road to Freeman Field.

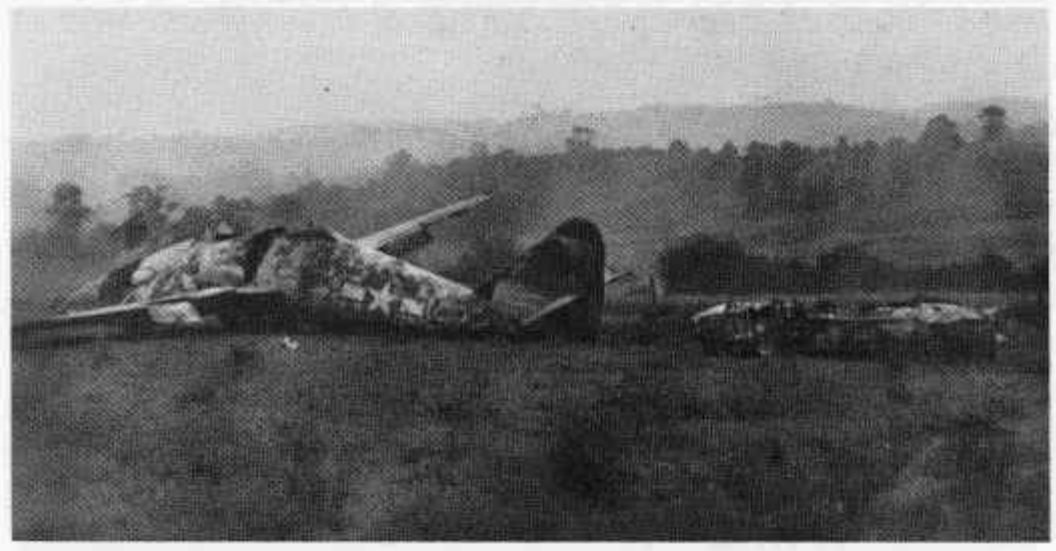
The identity of the Do 335 involved in the flying accident is unknown. A Wright Field report states Do 335 (FE-1012) was awaiting its engines from overhaul and was in a dismantled state. It is presumed the flight Woolams made was in FE-1012 and the engines sustained damage requiring overhaul. The intact Dornier was delivered to Patuxent NAS.

Gilson recalls that one Ar 234 was ferried to Wright Field, but hydraulic problems were encountered with the second aircraft that could not be repaired. Colonel Watson decided it was less expensive and more expedient to dismantle the aircraft for shipment by truck to Freeman Field than to bring technicians from Germany to rectify the problems.

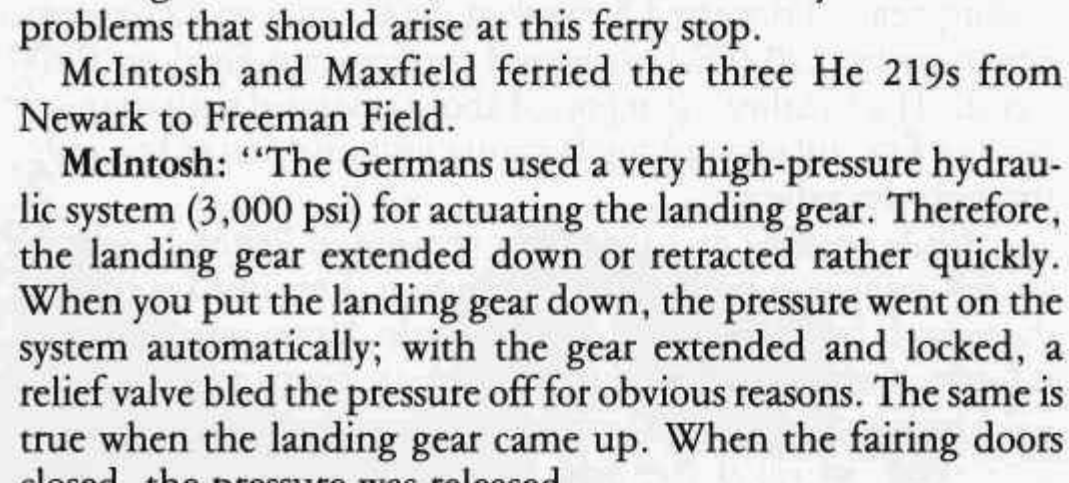
Ar 234 FE-1010 was ferried to Pittsburgh (Coropolis) where it experienced mechanical problems. Once this was rectified, Karl Baur ferried the jet on 11 August from Pittsburgh to Wright Field.

Here it underwent a series of flight tests by Major Fred Ascani, Capt. James M. Little and Lt. Charles J. Clemence.

Freeman Field, September 1945. Me262-1a with 888 on tail and HMS *Reaper* number 29. Currently on display at the NASM, Washington, D.C.
(H.G. Martin Photo from Robert J. Pickett Collection via Kansas Aeronautical Historical Society)



Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, 19 August 1945. Cookie VII after crash landing by Lt. James K. Holt. Note dropoff from elevated runway. Note also Luftwaffe number 27 on nose, whereas in above photo this had been painted over.
(Robert F. Craver Photo)



Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, 19 August 1945. Another view of crash scene of No. 666, Cookie VII, with Jumo 004 engine behind aircraft. There was minimal fire damage.
(Robert F. Craver Photo)

Once testing and evaluation was completed, the jet was ferried to Orchard Place, Park Ridge, Chicago, by Major Ascani (later commander of Edwards AFB test center). The dismantled Arado (FE-1011) was utilized for spare parts to keep FE-1010 flying.

On 19 August, S.Sgt. Willcoxen prepared Me 262 No. 666 (W.Nr. 500098) for a ferry flight to Freeman via Pittsburgh. Ken Holt was to fly this aircraft accompanied by Col. Watson in No. 444. They left Newark at 1502 hours for a refueling stop at the Greater Pittsburgh Airport en route to Freeman Field.

The flight arrived over the Pittsburgh Airport at approximately 1555 hours. The tower had previously been notified both aircraft were not radio-equipped and would communicate with the jets using light-gun signals. The two aircraft circled the field twice, losing speed and altitude in the process.

Colonel Watson in the lead aircraft landed first at 1606 hours and after a short roll, smoke was observed coming from the front wheel. The control tower immediately notified the crash equipment to proceed to the Me 262. Watson turned right, off the active runway onto the grass and cut across to a nearby taxi strip.

At the time, Holt was turning on final approach. This approach was observed to be normal except for his high rate of speed. When he was approximately 20 feet over and one-third down the runway he was given a red light to go around again. When the aircraft touched down just south of the main intersection, the control tower operator advised the crash equipment on the field to proceed after the second Me 262. Holt was observed to roll a short distance, then went to the right and off the runway onto the grass, and continued to the end, paralleling the runway. The aircraft went off the end into a bank and observed to burst into flames. Other crash equipment and the field ambulance standing by on the ramp immediately proceeded to the scene.

Holt: "I came in to land and used up about 500 feet of runway before I touched down. When I applied the brakes several times there were none. If I had brakes there would have been no problem. When no braking action occurred, I immediately looked out ahead. It appeared the runway sloped upwards from its end into a cornfield. This was the first time I had been in this aerodrome. I did not know there was a 30-foot drop off the end until I finally reached the end of that runway. Luckily I had enough speed to hurtle over and hold the aircraft steady.

"When I hit the upward-sloping field, the impact tore off the landing gear and both engines, and broke the fuselage just behind the cockpit before the aircraft slid to a halt. I immediately exited, with my parachute attached, until some 30 or 40 yards from the aircraft. When I looked back, it was a pall of smoke and dust. My shoes were wet with fuel. The billowing clouds hid me from the fire trucks and they thought for sure I had not survived."

The time of the accident was 1607 hours. The wreckage was stripped of components and the remains abandoned in a deep gully behind the airport fire station. Many years later, along with other aircraft wreckages, it was covered and buried.

After this crash, S.Sgts. Moore and Taylor were posted to Pittsburgh to check out, refuel and handle any maintenance problems that should arise at this ferry stop.

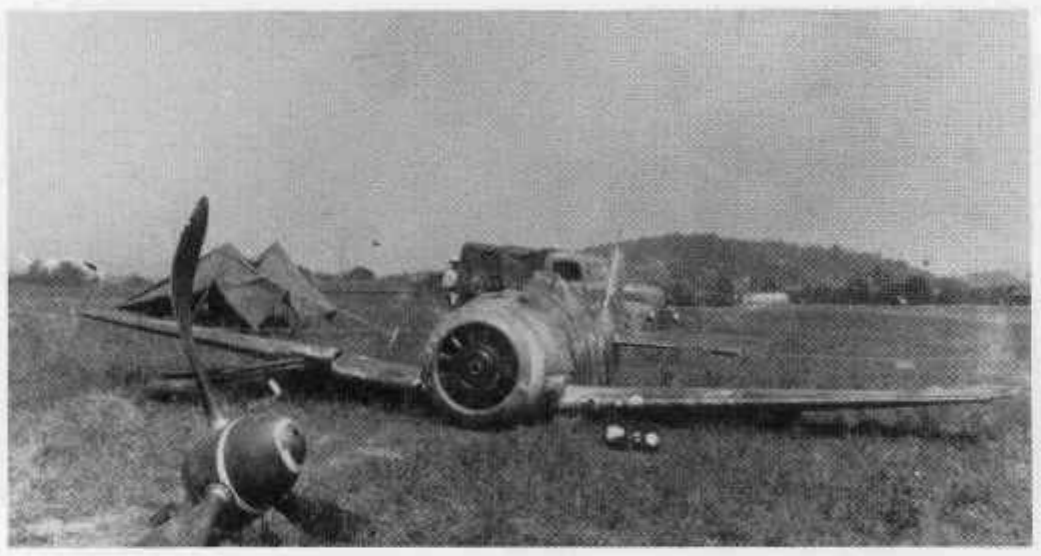
McIntosh and Maxfield ferried the three He 219s from Newark to Freeman Field.

McIntosh: "The Germans used a very high-pressure hydraulic system (3,000 psi) for actuating the landing gear. Therefore, the landing gear extended down or retracted rather quickly. When you put the landing gear down, the pressure went on the system automatically; with the gear extended and locked, a relief valve bled the pressure off for obvious reasons. The same is true when the landing gear came up. When the fairing doors closed, the pressure was released.

"On one ferry trip we encountered problems during the nonstop flight to Freeman Field. En route, the nose wheel door would not close. There is a pressure valve release when the door closes that takes the 3,000 psi or so off the hydraulic system. Maxfield bored a hole through the cockpit floor, rigged an eight-inch-long cable down through the bottom and sat there with a piece of shovel handle to use as a lever. Periodically, he pulled back on the cable and bled the system off as we flew all the way to Freeman. If this system were to rupture, we would have been unable to lower the landing gear. We eventually landed safely.

"An Me 108 was found at Merseburg. It was a good aircraft, accommodating four passengers and had a reliable engine. McIntosh, Maxfield and Watson thought the Me 108 would make a good private aircraft in the USA. It was placed aboard the HMS *Reaper.* Licensing the aircraft in the USA proved too

Hollidaysburg, Pennsylvania, 12 September 1945. FE-113 crash-landed by Robert Anspach on ferry flight from Newark, N.J., to Pittsburgh. Aircraft had yellow band painted around nose. (Fred McIntosh Photo)



Hollidaysburg, Pennsylvania, 12 September 1945. Another view of FE-113 crash-landed by Robert Anspach. (Fred McIntosh Photo)

Freeman Field, September 1945. Flettner F1282, FE-4613, without props. Helicopter later test flown by Prewitt Aircraft at Benedict Airport, Booth Corners, Pa. (H.G. Martin Photo from Robert J. Pickett Collection via Kansas Aeronautical Historical Society)

expensive and created problems. So they let the USAAF keep the aircraft. Anspach ferried it to Freeman Field on 23 August. It eventually went to Fairchild Aircraft Company at Hagerstown for study.

"Again the project was not without mishaps."

Anspach: "I departed Newark at 0900 hours on 12 September in an Fw 190 (FE-113) bound for Freeman Field via Pittsburgh. The weather was reported above marginal with scattered areas of fog and ground fog lowering visibility one to five miles through the valleys.

"While cruising at 7,000 feet over central Pennsylvania the aircraft went into a full nose-up position. I regained control of the aircraft by fully retarding the throttle. Upon reapplying the throttle, the aircraft immediately did an abrupt pitch-up.

"I was sure the electric trim had malfunctioned to a full nose-up setting, which it had and jammed. It could not be overridden nor was there a standby manual trim control system. I decided to stay with the airplane and get it on the ground as soon as possible. With the throttle on, throttle off procedure I could control the aircraft enough to land.

"I spotted an emergency strip (Duncansville Airport at 1115 hours) about five miles away and established a gear-down approach for landing. The runway was very short (2,500 feet) and not paved. The only approach possible was to come in over a low line of brush. As I crossed the trees I spotted a makeshift fence in front of me. I was committed (to landing) and had no choice but to haul back on the stick so as to drop in over the fence. This worked well but I lost all lift and the aircraft dropped in from about 10 or 15 feet. I hit with such force, the landing gear gave way and the aircraft continued sliding down the runway on its belly. I was uninjured but the aircraft was damaged beyond repair.

"Upon evaluation of the accident it was determined that the electrical trim did malfunction and jam in the full, nose-up position. The landing was made at Hollidaysburg, Pennsylvania.

"An Army crash truck arrived a few days later and took the Fw 190 to the Middletown Air Depot. The damaged propeller was given to a local flying club."

McIntosh ferried three Fw 190Ds and the Ta 152 to Freeman, while 1st. Lt. William V. Haynes ferried the fourth Fw 190D. Landings were made at Pittsburgh for refueling. Watson obtained a C-64 *Norseman* for commuting between Newark and Freeman Field, and later a P-47 was acquired for similar use. It took nearly two months to move all the aircraft and equipment to Freeman Field.

McIntosh: "An air show was held on 22 September 1945 at Freeman Field for the Institute of Aeronautical Science, aviation writers, dignitaries and the aviation industry. This was during the period following the end of WWII when there were tremendous cuts in the defense budget, practically amounting to disarmament. It was a political question: the embryo air force to be (USAF) wanted to demonstrate to the congressional delegation and others the importance of maintaining our technology.

"We moved our flying and maintenance teams to Freeman Field. Important veterans such as Col. Francis S. Gabreski from the 61st Fighter Squadron, 56th Fighter Group, took part, talking with congressmen and press.

"I was in charge of flying the conventional aircraft and flew the Ju 388 that particular day. Lt. William Haynes, from Watson's jet group, was to fly an Fw 190D. We had a set of specific and strict orders on altitude, speed and what type of maneuvers were to be flown. Everyone was admonished to do exactly what they were told. Especially since this show would receive international coverage plus the congressional dignitaries, armed services committee from both houses, and so forth, attending. It was no time for any accident or incident.

"Haynes took off in an Fw 190D (FE-119) at 1400 hours, climbed and performed a chandel, then made a steep climb to altitude and leveled off. He then performed a normal lefthand pattern about the field. At the end of the base leg, the aircraft performed a maneuver commonly known as a wingover. The altitude was insufficient to perform this maneuver and he came out of the wingover in a very steep dive with power on. He attempted to pull out of the dive, the tail 'mushing' against the pullout and pancaked tail first into the ground at a speed estimated between 250 to 350 mph. The impact tore off both wings in a shower of gasoline, while the fuselage bounced into the air, hurtled across a road and crashed to the field, throwing Haynes clear of the wreckage. The aircraft was totally destroyed and the pilot killed."

On 28 September, Col. Watson, Jack Woolams and Bob Anspach ferried three Me 262 aircraft from Newark via Pittsburgh to Freeman Field. They flew in loose V formation with Col. Watson on the point in clear weather.

Watson's altimeter malfunctioned and instead of flying at 10,000 feet he was actually at 16,000 feet without oxygen. Woolams attempted to draw the attention of Watson with hand signals. It was after landing at Pittsburgh that Woolams told Watson why he kept signaling him to descend. The flight to Freeman Field continued uneventfully at 8,000 feet.[32]

On 29 September 1945, there was a repeat air show with flying display of German aircraft at Freeman Field for civil and government dignitaries.

Once all aircraft arrived safely, S.Sgts. Moore and Taylor were picked up at Pittsburgh and transported to Freeman Field. Moore was asked to establish a training program instructing personnel on the mechanical and operating procedures of the Jumo 004 engine. After several attempts to carry out this effort, with either poor attendance or no one appearing for class, Moore requested the program be canceled and for his discharge from the service. The base commander agreed to both.

Garland Horne traveled from Wright Field to Freeman Field on official duties. He recalls one day stepping out of a building to observe a Flettner F1 282 test flight. The helicopter rose several feet off the ground, began to vibrate badly, then tilted over to one side. The counter-rotating, interlocking rotor blades hit the ground, causing the craft to flip over. The American pilot was not injured.

Eventually, most members of Watson's group were demobilized and returned to civil life—all except for Ken Holt. He remained at Freeman Field as part of a test program. Holt was the only person at Freeman allowed to fly the Me 262 (the Ar 234s were at Wright Field). Wright Field sent teletype orders to Freeman Field for certain tests to be performed with the Me 262. Holt flew the jets at certain altitudes, speeds, etc., as requested. Upon completion of the flight, all performance data was teletyped to Wright Field for evaluation. He and Capt. Raymond White, another pilot assigned to Freeman Field, flew the He 219, Ju 388, Fw 190 and other aircraft on various tests.

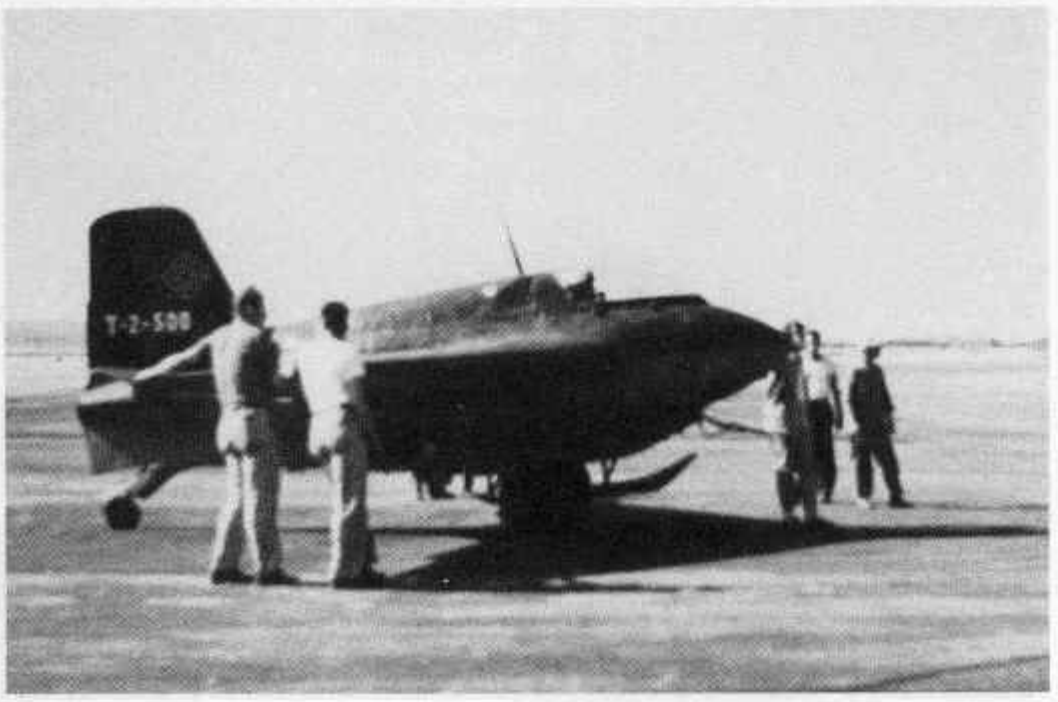
Initially, Holt had four Me 262s at his disposal and flew them all at various times. After engine changes or major airframe maintenance, he flew the jets to ensure they were ready for further test flights, accumulating over 200 flying hours in the Me 262. Later, he ferried an Me 262 to Wright Field for use by Flight Test Division for further flight evaluations.

Mishaps occurred flying the Me 262. On one occasion when landing at Freeman, the right brake failed providing no braking action. Holt held the aircraft straight down the center of the runway using rudder and elevators for control. When the airspeed dropped below a point where these were ineffective in controlling the jet, he was committed to using the brakes. A large ditch was located at the end of the runway creating an obstacle. In an effort to avoid overshooting the end, he applied the brakes. Only the left brake functioned and the jet swerved off the side onto the grass field. It had previously rained and the ground was soaked with water. The aircraft groundlooped, skidding around in the muddy soil before coming to a safe stop. Minor damage was sustained to one landing leg but the aircraft was repaired and flown on later tests.

In March 1946, Col. Watson was involved in a near fatal test

Freeman Field, Indiana, September 1945. Me262B-1a/U1 night fighter variant, FE-610, at Freeman Field. Note radar antenna and external fuel tanks. (H.G. Martin Photo from Robert J. Pickett Collection via Kansas Aeronautical Historical Society)

One of the Messerschmitt Me 163 *Komets* (FE-500) was flight tested at Muroc FTB in mid-1946. It was towed aloft by a B-29 piloted by Major Robert Cardenas and piloted by Major Gustov Lundquist. Flight tests were non-powered only due to the extreme danger of explosions experienced by the Germans with the exotic fuels. (Author's Collection)



FE-610 again, with antenna and equipment removed and a new paint scheme at Freeman Field. (H.G. Martin Photo from Robert J. Pickett Collection via Kansas Aeronautical Historical Society)

flight from Freeman Field when after takeoff he discovered the elevator trim of his Me 262 (FE-110?) was rigged backwards. Through skillful handling he managed to safely return and land the jet and avert a major disaster.[33]

By May 1946, plans were formulated to close down Freeman Field and transfer all USAAF, German, Italian and Japanese aircraft to other storage facilities. Fighter aircraft were to be stored at the 803 Special Depot, Orchard Place Airport, Park Ridge, Illinois, while larger aircraft were to be flown to Davis Monthan Field, Tucson, Arizona.

Meanwhile, the military formed a mobile ground display to appear at various air shows and public events comprising examples of an Me 262 (FE-110), Fw 190, V-1, V-2 and Japanese aircraft. The 4140 AAF Base Unit (Research and Development Exhibition) was formed to operate this endeavor.

When not flying tests, Holt performed demonstration flights at various air shows. He flew the two-seat Me 262 (FE-610) to an air pageant in Omaha, Nebraska, on 14 July 1946, with refueling stops at Scott Field, Illinois, and Sadaiia, Missouri, flying at low speed to obtain maximum range. The ground exhibition arrived on 43 truck and trailers and included an Me 262 from the mobile aircraft display.

During a demonstration flight on the final day, his jet began losing turbine blades out the exhaust of an engine. He shut the Jumo down and landed. The jet was left at Omaha while he returned to Freeman Field to carry on his duties. Once the engine was replaced, he returned to Omaha and ferried the Me 262 back to Freeman.

The Air Force searched for parts to maintain the flight status of the Me 262 fleet. USAAF officials traveled to New Scotland, Canada, to visit the Cameron Logan farm. Logan had purchased some 200 surplus RCAF aircraft, including an engineless Me 262. (The RCAF removed the Jumo 004 motors for cold weather testing at Churchill, Manitoba, by a company called Power Jets. This concern previously brought a Whittle engine to Canada in late 1943 for cold weather evaluation at Winnipeg, Manitoba—the first jet engine tested in Canada.) The required parts could not be had from the airframe which was subsequently scrapped by Logan. The second Me 262 shipped to Canada was utilized by the military for fire-fighting practice, along with an Me 163 at RCAF Station Aylmer, Ontario.

According to Interim Report No. F-IM-112A-ND, the Me 163s arrived at Freeman Field on 10 August 1945. Plans were implemented on 31 October to test fly an example and FE-500 was prepared for the task. Numerous problems relating to workmanship were experienced in making the aircraft fully operational for the program and work progressed slowly.

By 21 March 1946, the aircraft was fully refurbished and

ready for shipment to Muroc Flight Test Base (FTB), California. A request was issued for a B-17 towing aircraft for the glide-test portion of the evaluation program.

On or before 4 April 1946, the program was designed as a fully instrumented test by Flight Test Division, Wright Field, but was amended to cover only the pilot's observation because of instrumentation difficulties. After a conference it was decided Flight Test Division would carry out the initial phase of the program and a contract for further testing would be negotiated by AAF contractors.

One and a half tons of hydrazine hydrate were obtained from the Navy for the powered portion of the test program.

On 12 April 1946, the Me 163 was shipped to Muroc FTB inside a C-82, and on 1 May, Dr. A. Lippisch, designer of the rocket plane and his test pilot, L. Vogel who spoke English, joined the group of personnel involved with the test program. Lippisch, a guest of the U.S. Government, was under protective custody and he felt his status was more that of a prisoner than a scientist. He discouraged powered flight tests as being too dangerous, citing explosions experienced with the exotic fuels.

After inspection, the Me 163 was found to be in poor condition and two days were required to make necessary repairs. Pilot for the test flights was Major Gustav Lundquist. A B-29, piloted by Major Robert Cardenas, was commissioned to tow the Me 163 to altitude for the tests. On 3 May, a takeoff was attempted but the tow rope accidentally released due to improper locking of the release mechanism. The Me 163 and dolly had sufficient momentum to continue traveling over the dry lake bed for two miles before eventually stopping. The next day mechanical difficulties were experienced making proper adjustments to allow the transport dolly safe release from the rocket plane on takeoff. Testing was discontinued until replacement parts became available.

According to Lundquist, cited in "Test Flying at Old Wright Field," the flights made in the Me 163 were the "scariest experience" he ever encountered in his flying career. During takeoff the turbulence created by the B-29 tow aircraft made "control of the Me 163 virtually impossible." Only after he was able to fly above the B-29's violent wake was manageable flight obtained. The rocket plane was towed to 30,000 feet and released. Lundquist found the Me 163 an excellent glider and made several of these non-powered test flights.

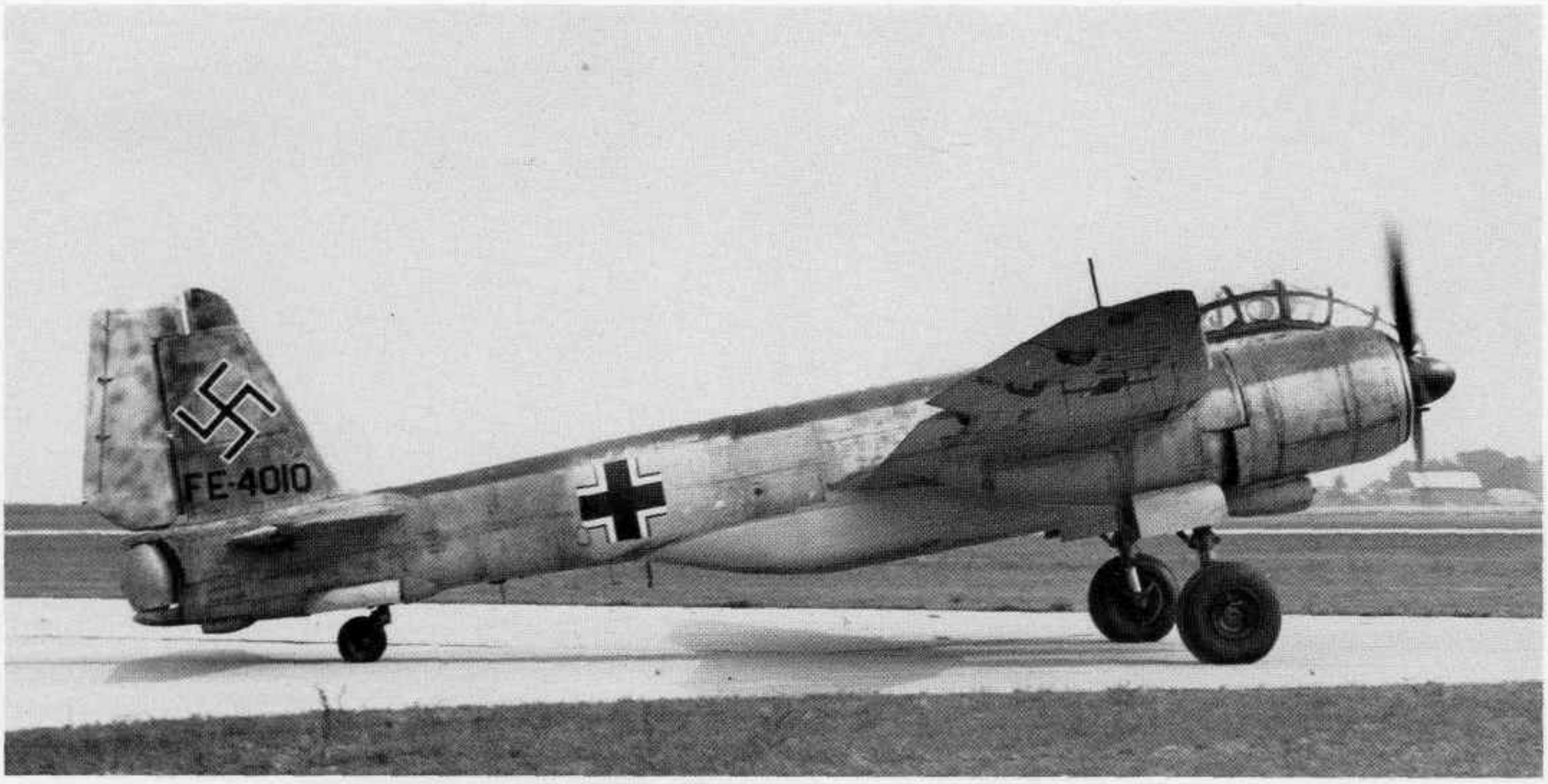
The violent buffeting from turbulence on takeoff and poor quality glues used in those wing structures made of wood caused de-lamination, making the aircraft unsafe. The test program was terminated.

The He 162 was also dismantled and transported from Freeman Field to Muroc FTB. Only one flight was reported made in the jet by test pilot Capt. Robert Hoover. The jet was found to stall at 200 mph and had to land at this speed requiring 10,000 feet of runway. The poor performance resulted in the test program being terminated.

Ken Holt always wanted to fly the He 162 but the authorities would not allow him. Holt contends the aircraft was improperly rigged for the test flight. Jack Woolams test flew an example at Farnborough and was impressed with his flight in the He 162.

When the activities at Freeman were eventually phased out, Holt ferried a He 219, Ju 388 and Fw 190 to Orchard Place (O'Hare Airport), Chicago, for storage. He also ferried an Me 262 to Bolling Field, Washington, D.C., and two Me 262s to Wright Field.

The aircraft ferry flights to Arizona for desert storage were not without mishaps. On 24 July 1946, a C-45 piloted by Capt. George R. Burden and a Hs 129, FE-4600, piloted by 22-year-old Lt. Kenneth P. Allmond, cleared Freeman Field at 1215 hours for Berry Field, Nashville, Tennessee, en route to Tucson,



Freeman Field, September 1945. Captain Fred McIntosh taxis Ju388L out for takeoff during air show for the Institute of Aeronautical Science. (H.G. Martin Photo from Robert J. Pickett Collection via Kansas Aeronautical Historical Society)

Wright Field, Ohio, circa 1945. Shows Maj. Walter J. McAuley. He bailed out of T2-711 after experiencing an engine fire. (Kenneth O. Chilstrom Photo)

Freeman Field, circa September 22, 1945. "Old Venereal" or Ju388L, FE4010. (H.G. Martin Photo from Robert J. Pickett Collection via Kansas Aeronautical Historical Society)

Freeman Field, 1946. Me262A-1a/U3 has photo-reconnaissance nose replaced with nose section from FE-111, for use in high-speed tests with P-80. (Edgar Deigan Photo)

Arizona. The escorting C-45 carried a mechanic to help start the He 129's engines at each refueling stop.

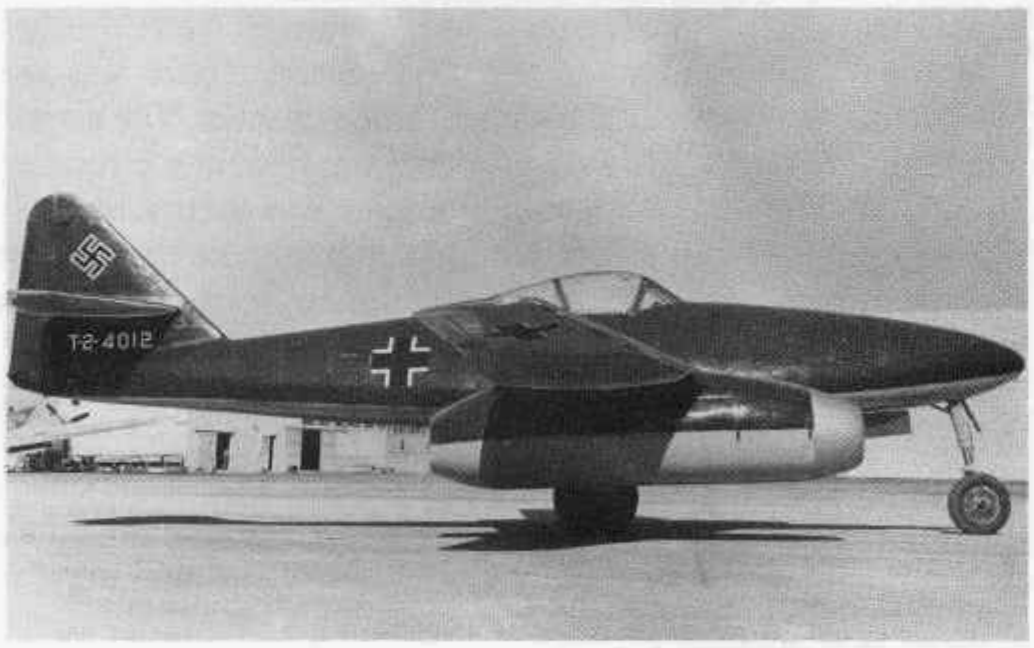
The fuel tanks developed a leak after passing Bowling Green, Kentucky. Allmond found he had insufficient fuel to reach the auxiliary field at Gallatin and selected a large farm field owned by Mrs. W.L. Allen for an emergency landing. On final approach both engines quit due to fuel exhaustion and a dead-stick landing was made at 1235 CDT. The field had a very rolling contour and rough. The right wheel hit a surface depression, collapsing the landing gear with major damage to the right wing, outboard panel, right aileron, tire, wheel and strut.

What transpired with the aircraft at Chicago and Arizona, their eventual disposition, or shipment to Silver Hill, Maryland, is another lengthy story.

Upon arrival at Patterson Field, the Me 262 (T2-711) surrendered by Hans Fay was reassembled and flight tested. On 29 August 1945, Capt. Russ Schleeh made the first of two flights in the jet without escort aircraft. Major Walter J. McAuley made further test flights accompanied by P-38 chase planes. The Me 262 eventually was flown by many pilots for familiarization work on jet aircraft at Flight Test Division, Wright Field.

On 20 August 1946, Maj. McAuley in No. 711 accompanied by Maj. Richard L. Johnson piloting a P-80 (44-85121) took off from Patterson Field on a comparative formation performance test flight. Both jets climbed to 20,000 feet in formation and successfully completed a formation speed run.

Johnson left formation on completing his part of the mission and returned to base while McAuley continued a speed run with full power. After completion of this test, the Me 262 suffered



right engine failure. The motor was immediately shut down and McAuley headed for Patterson Field.

He then observed grey smoke trailing from the left engine. Glancing at his instruments, the left engine tailpipe temperature gauge was at zero, indicating instrument failure. He immediately shut down the left engine and began a glide without any power. He notified Patterson Field of the emergency situation and received a heading for base.

An attempt was made to restart the right engine. A start was obtained but the engine continued to torch and run at 2,500 rpm with flames extending two to three feet behind the tail cone.

Hearing the distress call, Maj. Johnson returned to formate his P-80 with the Me 262 at 12,000 feet and noticed a long trail of smoke streaming from No. 711. McAuley advised Johnson the right engine was operating rough and doubted he could reach base. He descended to 7,500 feet before deciding to bail out, leaving over the right side with the aircraft speed at 150 indicated. At 1247 hours ET, Johnson notified Patterson Field that McAuley bailed out and his parachute had opened.

The abandoned jet started a left turn and spiraled until it struck the ground a few feet from a road, leaving a large crater, a half mile south of Xenia.

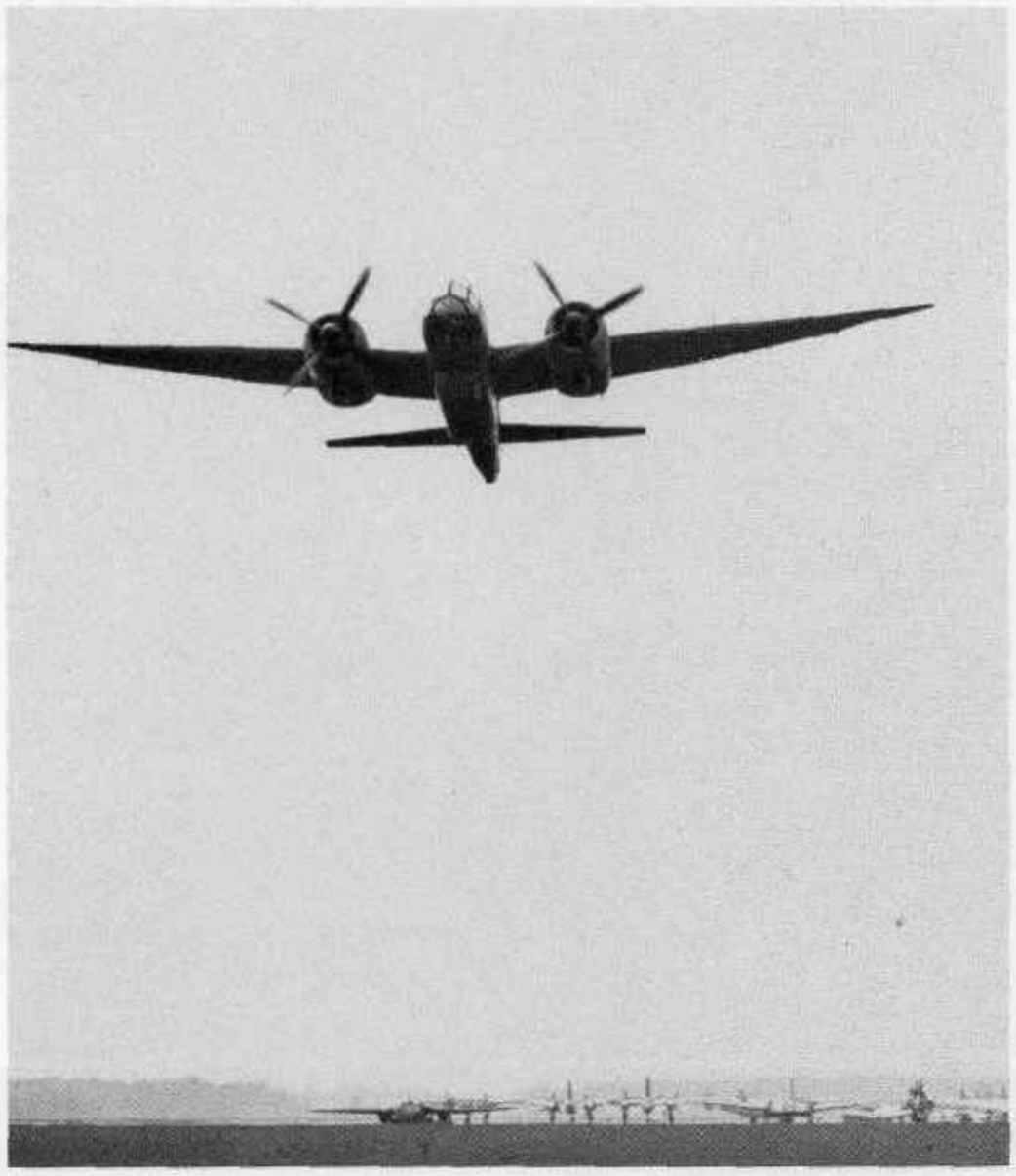
McAuley's parachute deployed successfully but he received a chin cut from the parachute chest buckle. He landed three-quarters of a mile from the crashed aircraft and limped towards the wreckage. He then made efforts to locate a telephone to notify Patterson Field.[34]

The last remaining Me 262 flown by Flight Test at Wright Field was eventually transferred to the Hughes Aircraft Corporation but not before modifications were made. The reconnaissance nose section of T-2-4012 was removed and the fighter-type nose from FE-111 installed.[35] When this switch occurred is not known. Comparison tests of the Me 262 with the P-80 were being conducted at Wright Field. T-2-4012 was given the fighter nose and cleaned aerodynamically to reduce drag for this project.[36]

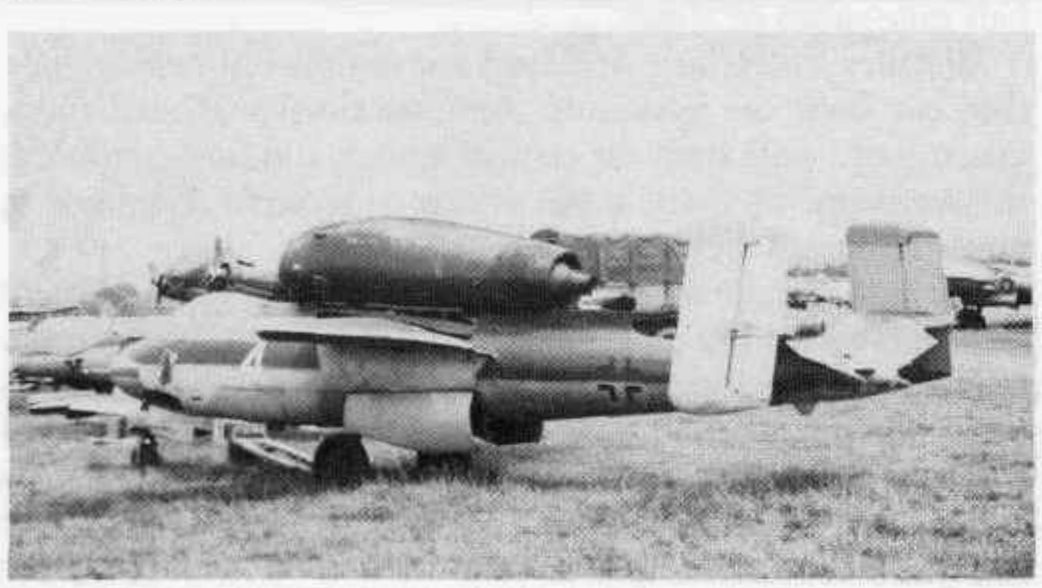
The U.S. Navy at Patuxent River NAS received all their allotment of German jets by 1 October 1945. Both Ar 234 aircraft for the U.S. Navy were ferried to Patuxent NAS: one by a USAAF pilot and the other by Navy pilot, Lt.(jg) Najeeb Halaby in BuNo 121445.[37]

After five Me 262 and two Ar 234 jets arrived at Patuxent, three Me 262 aircraft (121442, 121443 and 121444) and one Ar 234 (121445) were assigned to Flight Test for evaluation while the remaining aircraft went to the Armament Test Group. The German radios in the Me 262s were replaced with U.S. Navy communication equipment.

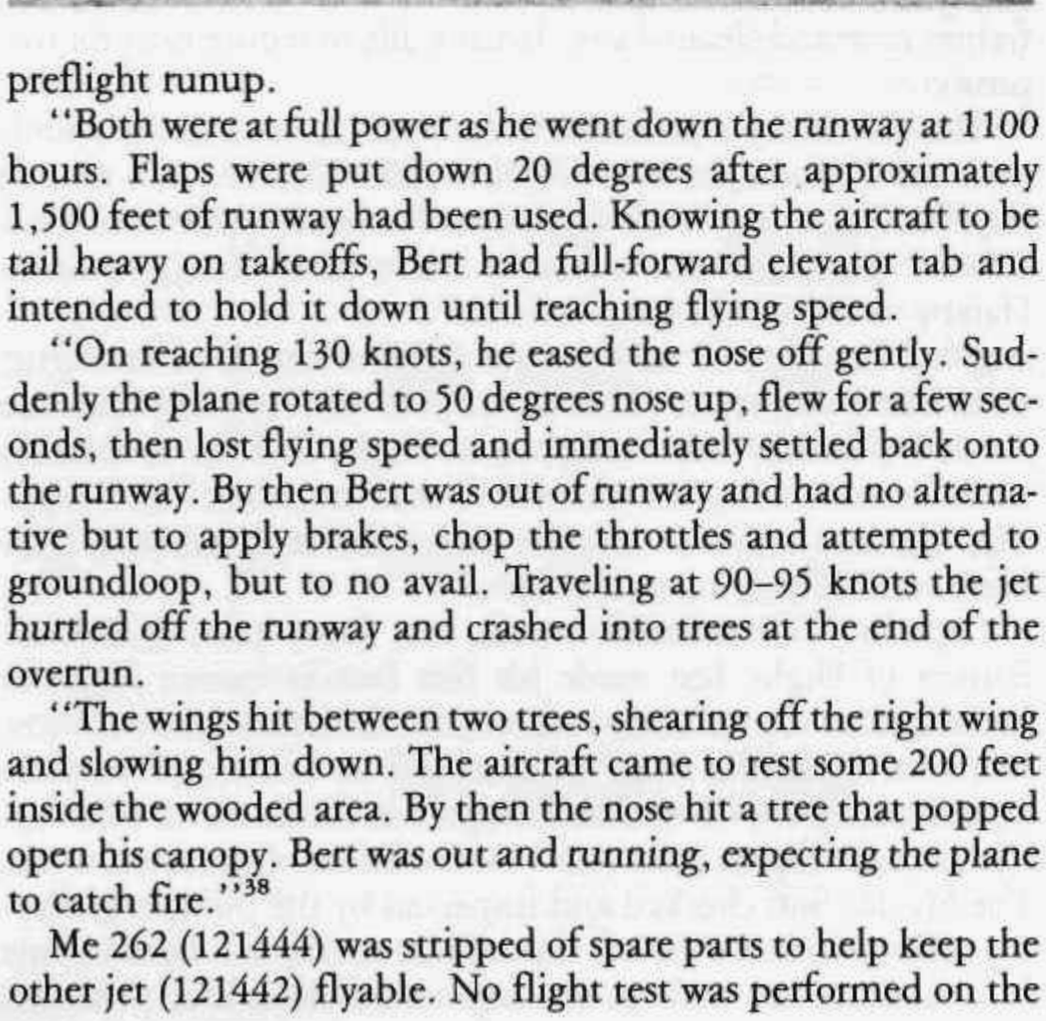
Captain J.E. Lacouture recalls that Navy pilot Albert K. Earnest of Flight Test made his first familiarization flight in Me 262 (121443) on 7 November 1945. Earnest was one of three survivors remaining from 48 men and 21 aircraft of Torpedo Squadron Eight (VT-8) that took part in the Battle of Midway. "Prior to his flight, the aircraft received a lot of structural work. The Me 262 was checked and inspected by the pilot, engineering officers and crew before takeoff was attempted. Instruments indicated normal readings and engines developed full power on



Freeman Field, 22 September 1945. Capt. Fred McIntosh makes a low-level run over the field during air show for the Institute of Aeronautical Science in a Ju388L. (H.G. Martin Photo from Robert J. Pickett Collection via Kansas Aeronautical Historical Society)



Freeman Field, circa 1946. He162 sits parked next to another He162. P-38 and Ju188 in background. (John Campbell Collection)



Freeman Field, September 1945. Hs129B-1/R2 parked at Freeman Field. (H.G. Martin Photo from Robert J. Pickett Collection via Kansas Aeronautical Historical Society)

preflight runup.

"Both were at full power as he went down the runway at 1100 hours. Flaps were put down 20 degrees after approximately 1,500 feet of runway had been used. Knowing the aircraft to be tail heavy on takeoffs, Bert had full-forward elevator tab and intended to hold it down until reaching flying speed.

"On reaching 130 knots, he eased the nose off gently. Suddenly the plane rotated to 50 degrees nose up, flew for a few seconds, then lost flying speed and immediately settled back onto the runway. By then Bert was out of runway and had no alternative but to apply brakes, chop the throttles and attempted to groundloop, but to no avail. Traveling at 90–95 knots the jet hurtled off the runway and crashed into trees at the end of the overrun.

"The wings hit between two trees, shearing off the right wing and slowing him down. The aircraft came to rest some 200 feet inside the wooded area. By then the nose hit a tree that popped open his canopy. Bert was out and running, expecting the plane to catch fire."[38]

Me 262 (121444) was stripped of spare parts to help keep the other jet (121442) flyable. No flight test was performed on the Arado due to unsafe tires and poor condition of the airframe.

After 10.2 hours of flight testing the Me 262 and only one hour ferry time on the Ar 234 (121445), the German jet evaluation program was terminated. Because of difficulty with maintenance, poor quality and lack of spare parts, the project was canceled on 18 March 1946.[39]

During 1948/49, the runways at Patuxent NAS were lengthened, and many surplus American, German and Japanese aircraft were buried in a landfill. The tail section of an Me 262 can still be seen jutting out from the ground and substantial remains of two Ar 234 aircraft are partially buried in the landfill.

Garland Horne made the USAF a career. In 1951 he was posted to Aberdeen Proving Grounds, Maryland, as design development officer on a weapons project known as the *Optimum Caliber* program. This involved firing various caliber ammunition to determine damage effectiveness on various airframes including U.S., German and Japanese aircraft.

Horne: "We had several Me 262s there. There was one Me 262 that we worked on for about three months. The aircraft was firmly secured while a single round was fired at the running jet engine. The remote-controlled engine was then shut down allowing engineers to inspect and photograph the damage. In the meantime, we would perform similar tests on another aircraft.

"We fired one round, then inspected the damage. I recall firing a round at the rear turbine of the Jumo 004 and 'all hell broke out.' The engine vibrated so severely with turbine blades flying loose, we thought it would explode, and immediately shut it down. The damaged engine was replaced and another unit installed to shoot at.

"Single rounds were fired at various airframe structures. To gain access for visual inspection, we used an ax to slash open the Me 262 fuselage opposite the point of entry to determine the damage inflicted. Photographs were taken and then reports written.

"There were exciting moments. We shot a round into the wing of a B-29. Fuel had previously been drained from the wing tanks. Unknown to us, some leaked into the wing structure and the round ignited the fumes causing an explosion. The outer wing blew off and 'scared us to death.'

"Eventually the target airframes were totally tested to destruction. These aircraft were then hauled to a junk pile where each was scrapped and stripped by separating the different metals into piles of aluminum, copper, brass, steel, etc. These were sold by the pound and hauled away in barges by scrap metal dealers."

In Conclusion—The above article was researched and compiled for a chapter in a book titled *War Prizes* by Phil Butler. This research intended to document personal accounts by airmen and veterans involved with **Operation LUSTY.** The British author declined this chronology, preferring a detailed history of each individual aircraft in dictionary format.

The above chronology is a brief overview of ATI involvement in **Operation LUSTY.** It is my attempt to provide the serious researcher with a broader perspective and best-case scenario of what actually transpired. Roy Brown's photos have previously been published out of context in various magazine articles and books. To correct this travesty, they appear in this article to illustrate the chronology of events, giving date, location, identifying individuals and circumstances surrounding each picture.

I welcome a peer review and assistance from AAHS readers who may have corrections, references, and additional knowledge relating to **Operation LUSTY** or the serial numbers and final dispositions of these aircraft. □

AIRCRAFT TAKEN BY AIRCRAFT CARRIER HMS *REAPER* FROM CHERBOURG, FRANCE, TO NEWARK, NEW JERSEY

Me 262	(10)	Ar 234B	(4)
He 219	(3)	Me 108	(1)
Do 335	(2)	Ju 88G	(1)
Fw 190D	(4)	Ju 388L	(1)
Fw 190F	(5)	282 Flettner	(2)
Me 109G	(3)	P-51 Photo Recon.	(1)
Ta 152H	(1)	Bu 181	(2)
342 Dublhoff (jet helicopter)	(1)		

Reference: Reel A5729, Maxwell AFB; Phil Butler, *War Prizes.* There may have been more aircraft on the HMS *Reaper* than shown in the official documents.

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37. Robert J. Esposito, *op. cit.*
38. J.E. LaCouture, TAC Test at Pax, *Foundation,* Naval Air Museum, Vol. 9, No. 1, Fall 1987, p. 51.
39. Final Report on Project TED No. PTR 1120, Evaluation of German Aircraft, Flight Test Div., U.S. Naval Air Test Center, Patuxent River, Md.

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