



# Jagdverband 44: Squadron of Experten (Aviation Elite Units)

Robert Forsyth

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Jagdverband 44 was formed in February 1945 on Hitler's orders, to fly the Me 262 "Stormbird", the world's first operational jet fighter, and demonstrate its superiority. The unit was led by the legendary Adolf Galland, who recruited some of Germany's leading aces into it, to the extent that it was said that the Knight's Cross was its unofficial badge. JV 44 engaged the US Ninth Army Air Force over Bavaria and, with its significant speed advantage and powerful armament of cannon and rockets, the Me 262 proved a formidable interceptor in the hands of its expert pilots. In its brief operational existence, never able to get more than six jets in the air at any one time, this small unit achieved approximately 50 kills in less than a month. Unfortunately for the German defensive effort (though Galland himself was glad not to have prolonged the war) there were not enough Me 262s to have any overall effect on the Allied air campaign.

This book is a dramatic record of a highly individual unit and an exciting early chapter in the history of the jet fighter. Four of the world's ten surviving Me 262s are major attractions at flight museums in the USA and recently constructed replicas will soon be a feature of air shows around the nation and the "experten" aces of the Luftwaffe have an enduring fascination.



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