sult: our fighter forces which was already sickening under a shortage of experienced pilots, obstinately pressed home its attacks from the rear and were equally obstinately shot down. It was dreadful to see; they approached from the rear, flying in closest formation, and doing a slightly greater speed than the enemy and 50, 60, 70% or even greater percentage of them were shot down.

To the existing dilemma there was added, at the end of 1943 or beginning of 1944, the Allied fighter escort, the American long distance fighter, the Thunderbolt and then the Mustang. The first time the Thunderbolts escorted them as far as the RHINE everyone was horrified and utterly confounded - what ever next? Then they got auxiliary tanks and flew as far as HANOVER. The troops reported this but they were laughed at and were told they were seeing things; "It's impossible for a fighter to fly that far," said our GOC Fighters and said the REICHSMARSCHALL - nobody dared tell the FUHRER that that it was possible for enemy fighters to fly so far into REICH territory. The GOC fighter himself took off with his inspector in order to have a look and see how his fighters pressed home their attack. He was fortunate enough to meet four Mustangs and the Mustangs took him in charge and chased him all the way to BERLIN, so then he knew how far the things could fly and believed it; but despite that no one dared report the air situation to the FUHRER. Orders to our fighter pilots remained the same, to avoid air battles with enemy fighters and go solely for the bombers. I should like to add here that by the beginning of 1944 no one was attacking from the rear anymore, despite the 'Reichsmarschall's' orders and despite the fact that this order is still in force today; it was just impossible. I have several times requested, even in writing, that that order be rescinded, but it was in vain. That order which I mentioned earlier, to attack only the four-engined bombers, is, of course, understandable insofar as it was only the bombers which were a nuisance to us, because it was they that dropped the bombs. The order was, however, psychologically wrong. When talking with one of the REICHMARSCHALL's staff officers in January or February of 1944, I said: "It's absolutely essential that one day in one of those penetrations we attack only the fighters, to take them down a peg, make them lose their feeling of superiority and make them suffer losses for a change." This desire on the part of the men, which wasn't only my own wish, was passed on; it went up to the 'Division' the 'Korps' and to the GOC Fighters; it was turned down with the remark: "We must shoot down the bombers, those are the ones we don't like, the ones which are dangerous to us." What was the result of that? The flight of an American fighter over Germany was the safest flying in existence. Not a soul attacked him. The pilot had no need to look around to see whether there was anything coming up from behind which would try to shoot him down. It never happened, he merely had to look ahead -"What is down there ahead of me that I can shoot down without endangering myself?" There again we felt the effect of this factor. To start with, the Americans were rather apprehensive and attacked very unwillingly. But once they noticed that nothing happened to them they grew increasingly cockier and more daredevelish. Then they had sucesses and got a taste of how wonderful it is to be able to shoot down an aircraft; until finally it got to the stage when our fighter formations were no longer able to reach their bomber formations because they were shot down first by the fighters, which always had the advantage of coming from a higher altitude. The moral effect of that on us was that all our pilots, whether rightly or wrongly, I'll leave open, felt inferior to those enemy aircraft, and the collapse of our fighters' moral dates from then. The inferior aircraft at those heights was the Fw 190 which, although it had shown excellent performances at low level, was inferior to the enemy aircraft at altitudes of 8000 m. Equal to the Mustang and superior the the Thunderbolt was our '109'. In addition to all that, on account of the losses suffered in those air battles, the ground control made the greatest effort to direct their own fighter formations so as to avoid the enemy fighters and bring them on to a bomber formation which had no fighter escort or only a small one. As a result, this feeling of inferiority increased still more, and you ran into fighters again any way, for it's impossible to get such a clear air picture as to be able to say: "There are fighters there, there are no fighters there." In the end they were all over the place. This difficult situation for us was complicated still further in the spring of 1944 by the attacks of the enemy air force on our fighter industry, AUGSBURG, and the large aircraft factory at WIENER-NEUSTADT which produced 600 fighters a month was destroyed. Also destroyed were the engine factories at MAGDEBURG, the engine factories at CASSEL, the aircraft factories at POSNAN, at SORAU in SILESIA, everywhere and it was really remarkable with what spirit and energy the industry and our workers succeeded in the shortest possible time - at AUGSBURG for example, from that completely ruined and oft-bombed factory they reached not only the equal production figure but an even higher one within fourteen days; they hadn't a roof over their heads, either. You met with the same picture practically everywhere. Despite that however, we were faced with the necessity of splitting up and dispersing the whole aircraft industry. Small workshops were set up in villages, engines were mounted there; one workshop produced the rudder, the second produced the elevator, the third the fuselage end, etc., etc., and in the fifth or sixth the whole thing was essembled. It was a Sisyphen task, which had now become necessary. When the enemy air forces realized that they couldn't completely destroy the aircraft industry, they switched over to smashing our fuel industry. We have learned in the meantime, with what success.

We flyers had one ray of hope in that situation and that was the new jet fighter the Me 262. The Me 262, armed with four cannon 108, calibre 3 cm, is the first combustion turbine aircraft to be used operationally. First an explanation of the superficial details; a low-decker with extremely thin wing profile, with a wonderful aerodynamic rounded shape and a so-called tricycle undercarriage. The two wheels, just like in ordinary aircraft, fold inwards, but the third wheel, which is about at the nose is drawn backwards into the fuselage. Now, as far as I'm able, just a short description of the combustion turbine. The principle is as follows: air is sucked in in front through the revolution of the turbine, which is first started up with a small two-stroke (?) engine. This sucked-in air then passes into a combustion chamber after it has been compressed before induction by compressors and there it is mixed with a substance similar to Diesel oil - it can also be crude oil - and this mixture is then ignited and explodes and it then propels the turbine, which is at the back, and the exhaust comes out at the back. With the high rpm attained by the turbine - over 6000 rpm - the thing works out as follows: air is sucked in in front, the aircraft literally sucks its way forward. In other words a suction and pressure effect with the pressure effect considerably greater than the suction effect, of course. The normal cruising speed of this type of aircraft is over 800 kph. When one thinks that the highest speed of the most modern fighters is 600 kph one can realize how superior this aircraft is, as regards speed to all other aircraft so far used operationally. The disadvantage of this aircraft firstly, it is difficult to move on the ground and for this reason has to be towed by tractors or MC tractors or similar things which are capable of pulling the aircraft. It weighs about six tons. For just taxiing once around the airfield one uses about half the amount of petrol which in flight is sufficient for one and half to two hours of flying time, according to the height. The aircraft is simply wonderful from the point of view of flying. Of course with that speed, the takeoff presents difficulties, as does the landing, because it needs a very long run. So we put all our hopes on this type of aircraft and kept hoping that when it went into operation it would finally turn the scales of the air war again. As luck would have it,