



## International Messages

Our Website has been drawing interest from Europe as well as from the USA. For this issue International mail and E-Mail are grouped together in this special section.

Czech Republic  
Bud Markel, Esq.

Dear Mr. Markel:

Thank you for your letter dated March 20, 1999. The attached sheet has been very interesting - the picture with tails of B-17s is very good for me. I didn't know that 97th BG had the Red and Silver rudder checks on the tail. I knew a variant with the diagonal red stripes on the lead ship only. Therefore I am glad to know it. One piece of sheet metal of the downed B-17 on 21st July 1944 had the red color and now I know why.

German jet fighters Messerschmitt Me-262 were in Czechoslovakia from the fall 1944. There were KG/J units with Me-262 "Sturmvoegel" in the middle Bohemia. The letters EG meant Kampfgeschwader, it is a unit with light bombers and letter J meant Jagger, a fighter plane. KG/J units were in Prague-Kbely/Stab and I./KG/J 6/, in Prague-Klecany /II./KG/J 6/ and in Prague-Ruzyně /III./KG/J 6. The other units were in west Bohemia town Pilsen/Plzen/. They were training units I.Erg./KG/J.

Another unit came to Prague-Ruzyně in April 1945. I./KG/J 54 and the unit JG 7 Hindenburg came soon after this. The I./KG/J 51 came to Prague on April 26. Units KG/J had Me-262A-2a Sturmvoegel, it was the fighter-bomber and the units JG had Me-262A-1a Schwalbe, it was a true fighter. The unit JG 7 was there from 15th April 1945 in the airdrome's Prague-Ruzyně Cheb /Eger/Zatec /Saatz/.

German Me-262 fought American Mustangs, Thunderbolts and attacked B-24 and B-17 American bombers from 10th April 1945. But jet fuel type J2 for jet engines wasn't in the airdromes at Kbely, Cheb, Zatec, and Ruzyně. 34M3 fuel was available only on 22nd April 1945. Until on 26th April 1945 much fuel was transported to the airdromes.

The Czech revolution started in Prague on 5th May 1945 and units ROA for German Russian units from former Russian POWs joined in the revolution and they attacked Ruzyně airdrome. Therefore the last twenty Me-262 flew to the airdrome at Zatec, 70 km far away from Prague, to the northwest.

On 8th May 1945 a small group of Me-262 took off just from Zatec/Saatz/ so as to attack against Russian tanks which came to Czech borderland. Five of the jet fighters landed then on Fassberg

where they became British POWs. The Soviet-tanks came to Most-Brux about 12 o' clock and to other towns near of Czech border around 4 o' clock.

German pilot Oblt. Fritz Stehle, the Staffelpilote I./JG 7 took off with Me-262A-1a Schwalbe and in two of minutes he was from Zatec over Czech border mountains Krusne-Hory-Erzgebirge. He wanted to attack the Red tanks maybe but he saw the Russian fighter with red stars on fuselage. After his attack the Soviet plane was shot down and crashed in mountains near the village of Klíny. The pilot Stehle then notified authorities of the shot down Soviet fighter from Jak-9.

At 4 O' clock on 8th, May 1945, and again on 9, May 1945 Russian tanks came to Prague and Russian German tank battle took place on 11, May 1945. It ended at the village of Milín near the middle Bohemia town of Píbram. The Czech Communist historical group looked for the wreckage of the Russian Jak-9 but they found only parts from American P-39.

It was in 1987, the pilot's personal weapon was found and it was found out that pilot's name was Stepanov and he served in the Russian Guardian unit. In 1988 one Russian woman came to visit the Czech Republic, she was a member of the P-39 ground crew during the WW 11.

The best Russian fighter aces flew on Bell P-39 Airacobra. A.I. Pokryskín had 55 victories, N.D. Gulajev had 57 victories, G.A. Reckalov had 56 victories, A.F. Klubov had 50 victories and so on. Bell P-39 and P-63 Kingcobras were made mainly for Red army in the end of WW 11.

I do not have the book "Operation Pinball, I m afraid, but I do know that the P-63 serviced as flying target, and your letter confirmed this.

It is difficult to purchase foreign literature in my country. I must buy books in Germany or England but it is not possible to travel all of the time, I can buy the books in Gzech Republic but there are no books about 15th AF or 8th AF, on wartime operations of the USAAF during WW11. There are many books about Czech airmen in Great Britain in WW II and now books about German fliers from WW11 in Czech Republic.

I am sending a copy from Czech aviation magazine showing a couple pictures of the P-63. It was one of the aircraft used in gunnery practice in the USA during WW 11 and now it is in the collection of the British Museum at Duxford. I saw a P-63 fly on