

Foreign Users

Chapter

12

Bulgaria

Bulgaria took delivery of a total of 19 Bf 109Es, with 10 E-4s being delivered in June 1940 and another 9 E-7 models being received in 1941. The aircraft, which received the nickname ‘Strela’ (arrow) in service, served as fighters with the 3/6 Orlyak and saw service against American bomber raids in 1943. *Poruchyk* Stoyan Stoyanov, the leading Bulgarian ace of WWII with 4 individual victories, opened his score on 1 August 1943 when he shot down a B-24 Liberator which fell near the village of Kokartzi. His usual mount at that time was a Bf 109E-4 coded ‘white 4’, with the Bulgarian air force serial 4/7047. Other identified Bulgarian Emils are listed in the table below.

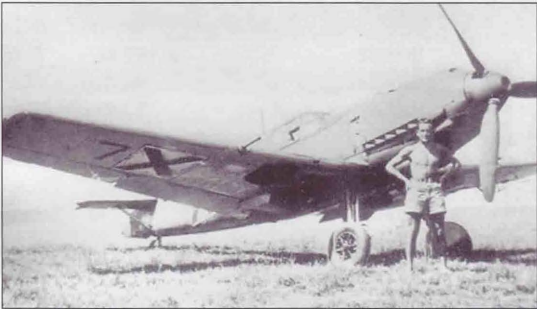


Croatia

Following the German invasion of Yugoslavia on 6 April 1941, a pro-German Independent State of Croatia (*Nezavisna Država Hrvatska*, abbreviated as ‘NDH’) was established on 14 April, led by Ante Pavelić. This state was divided into two zones of influence; the Italians controlled areas in the south, while the Germans oversaw activities in the north. The 4th Fighter Group, composed of the 10th and 11th fighter squadrons, was established in July 1941 and their crews sent to *Jagdfliegerschule* 4 at Fürth for training on the Bf 109. After conversion training was complete, the 11 Bf 109Es of the 10th squadron were subordinated to 3./JG 52 at Poltava in late September, being incorporated as 15.(kroat.)/JG 52, and flew their first combat missions on 10 October. In December, the 11th squadron joined the unit at Taganrog, and the 4th Fighter Group was disbanded the following month. In its place, the 10th Reinforced Wing was established with the 7 remaining Emils from the 10th squadron. The *Jagdgruppe* continued to utilize their increasingly worn Emils through July, when the first Bf 109G-2s began to arrive at Mariupol

Romania

Romania had placed an order for fifty Bf 109E-3s in December 1939, with the first 11 being delivered in the spring of 1940, and they were delivered to the 57th Fighter Squadron, 7th Fighter Group at Pipera, near Bucharest. In the fall of 1940, Hitler successfully brought Romania into the Axis fold, which brought about a marking change; instead of a red/yellow/blue roundel, the national marking now became a yellow cross



thinly outlined in blue, whose outer arm ends formed an ‘M’ in tribute to Prince Michael, the country’s de facto leader. The previous roundel was reduced to a small circular device in the midst of the cross. The remaining Emils were delivered on 18 February 1941, and the 56th and 58th Fighter Squadrons were added to the 7th Fighter Group at this time.

With the beginning of Operation *Barbarossa* on 22 June 1941, the 7th Fighter Group was heavily committed to the battle and scored their first aerial victories on 23 June, destroying 6 Soviet fighters from a group of 25 without suffering any losses. The first loss for the ARR was suffered on 5 July, when *adj.stg.av.* Illie Vatamanu was downed by Soviet anti-aircraft fire. The following two days saw an additional three kills over Soviet I-16s credited to the group. Losses for the 7th Fighter Group continued to mount, although many of

The Emils sent to Bulgaria were well used, as evidenced by the wear visible on this E-4 coded ‘White 7’. The aircraft carried their identification numbers repeated below the wings in black, just outboard of the national insignia

Stoyan Stoyanov was the leading Bulgarian ace of WWII, and he is seen on the right next to his Bf 109E-4 coded ‘white 4’. Note the relatively sharp demarcation line between the RLM 71 and RLM 02 on the fuselage side

Bulgaria

The following is a list of positively identified Bf 109Es which served with 15.(kroat.)/JG 52, including fates of identified Croatian Emils in other units.

Type	Code	Bulg. AF serial
Bf 109E-4	White 1	Unknown
Bf 109E-4	White 2	Unknown
Bf 109E-4	White 3	Unknown
Bf 109E-4	White 4	4/7047 Usual mount of por. Stoyan Stoyanov
Bf 109E-4	White 5	Unknown
Bf 109E-4	White 6	6/7047
Bf 109E-4	White 7	Unknown
Bf 109E-4	White 8	Unknown
Bf 109E-4	White 9	Unknown
Bf 109E-4	White 10	Unknown
Bf 109E-4	Red 11	Unknown Possibly renumbered earlier aircraft?
Bf 109 ‘E-3’	White 12	12/7047 Earlier, rounded canopy; possible replacement aircraft?
Bf 109E-7	White 7	7/7047
Bf 109E-7	White 9	9/7047
Bf 109E-7	White 13	Unknown
Bf 109E-7	White 16	Unknown
Bf 109E-7	White 17	Unknown
Bf 109E-7	White 18	Unknown
Bf 109E-7	White 19	Unknown
Bf 109E-7	Unknown	Unknown
Bf 109E-7	Unknown	Unknown
Bf 109E-7	Unknown	Unknown

With the introduction of large numbers of the more capable Bf 109G, the remaining E-7s were withdrawn from service in 1944.

Croatia

The following is a list of positively identified Bf 109Es which served with 15.(kroat.)/JG 52, including fates of identified Croatian Emils in other units.

Type	W.Nr.	Pilot	Unit	Codes	Date	Circumstance	Location	% Damage
Bf 109E-7	950	Lasta „J.	15./JG52		24.3.42	Victory over I-16	unknown	
Bf 109E-7	950	Seidel, Ogefr. Willi	I./NAG 102		12.5.44	Injured in crash due to engine trouble.	Klettendorf	15%
Bf 109E-3	1285		Erg.St./JG 51		9.1.41	Engine trouble.	Fl.Pl. Marquise	30%
Bf 109E-4	1285	Galić, C.	15./JG52		2.3.42	Victory over R-10	unknown	n/a
Bf 109E-4	1285	Vučina, N.	15./JG52		20.3.42	Victory over I-16	unknown	n/a
Bf 109E-4	1285	Galić, C.	15./JG52		7.4.42	Victory over I-16	unknown	n/a
Bf 109E-4	1285		15./JG52		28.4.42	Landing accident due to engine trouble.	near Uspenskaja	20%
Bf 109E-4	1285		15./JG52		17.5.42	Crash landing due to tire damage.	Mariupol-West	65%
Bf 109E	1411	Supek, Hptm. B.	15./JG52	green 4 +	27.4.42	Defected to the Soviets.	(Taganrog)	100%
Bf 109E-7	1431		15./JG52	(Stkz DB+WH)	1.10.41	Pilot error.	Fl.Pl. Lemburg	45%
Bf 109E-7	1438	Čulinović, M.	15./JG52		9.2.42	Victory over I-16	unknown	n/a
Bf 109E-7	1438	Čulinović, M.	15./JG52		9.2.42	Victory over I-16	unknown	n/a
Bf 109E-7	1438	Galić, C.	15./JG52		5.3.42	Victory over I-16	Lisonogorskaja	n/a
Bf 109E-7	1438	Galić, C.	15./JG52		5.3.42	Victory over I-16	Lisonogorskaja	n/a
Bf 109E-7	1438	Džal, F.	15./JG52		20.3.42	Victory over MiG-3	unknown	n/a
Bf 109E-7	1438	Džal, F.	15./JG52		29.3.42	Victory over I-153	unknown	n/a
Bf 109E-7	1438		15./JG52	(Stkz DB+WO)	15.7.42	crash landing due to pilot error.	Taganrog-West	35%
Bf 109E-4	1479	Jergović, I.	15./JG52		8.3.42	Victory over enemy aircraft	unknown	
Bf 109E-4	1483		15./JG52		1.6.42	Rammed by Bf 109E-4 WNr 3779 (taking off)	Mariupol	60%
Bf 109E	1506	Vucina, Oblt. Nikola	15./JG52	green 9 +	4.5.42	Defected to Soviets.	unknown	100%
Bf 109E-4	1618		15./JG52		13.6.42	Taxiing accident.	Mariupol-West	50%
Bf 109E	1932		15./JG52	(Stkz GH+NG)	29.4.42	Flak.	Taganrog	30%
Bf 109E-1	2680		15./JG52		1.6.42	Tire damage.	Mariupol	35%
Bf 109E-4	3238		15./JG52		10.6.42	Undercarriage damage.	Mariupol-West	40%
Bf 109E-4	3324		15./JG52		12.12.41	Taxiing accident.	Fl.Pl. Taganrog	60%
Bf 109E	3333		15./JG52		28.3.42	Take-off accident.	Fl.Pl. Lemberg	25%
Bf 109E-7	3498		15./JG52		1.1.42	Taxiing accident.	Fl.Pl. Mariupol	40%
Bf 109E	3664		15./JG52		3.5.42	Undercarriage damage.	Sarabus	65%
Bf 109E-4	3779		15./JG52		1.6.42	Rammed Bf 109E-4 WNr 1483 while taking off.	Mariupol	10%
Bf 109E	3792		15./JG52		21.4.42	Crash landing.	Taganrog	30%
Bf 109E-1	3864	Radić, S.	15./JG52		24.3.42	Victory over MiG-?	unknown	n/a
Bf 109E	3864	Ferencina, Hptm.	15./JG52		23.4.42	Crash landing due to engine trouble.	Mariupol	30%
Bf 109E-7	4217		15./JG52		12.5.42	Crash landing.	Eupatoria	70%
Bf 109E-4	4864		JGr.West		27.4.43	Emergency landing due to technical failure.	Fl.Pl. Mont de Marsan	70%
Bf 109E	5057		15./JG52		9.6.42	Crash landing.	Mariupol	40%
Bf 109E-7	5058		15./JG52		13.5.42	Destroyed in bombing raid	Sarabus	100%
Bf 109E-4	6034	Lasta, J.	15./JG52		5.3.42	Victory over I-16	Lisonogorskaja	n/a
Bf 109E-4	6034	Lasta, J.	15./JG52		5.3.42	Victory over I-16	Lisonogorskaja	n/a
Bf 109E-4	6034	Kunold, Lt. Wolfram	2./Sch.G. 1	^ + R (black)	4.7.42	MIA due to enemy fighters.	near Stari-Nikolskoje	100%
Bf 109E-7	6087	Miković, V.	15./JG52		20.3.42	Victory over I-16	unknown	n/a
Bf 109E-7	6087	Miković, V.	15./JG52		20.3.42	Victory over I-16	unknown	n/a
Bf 109E-7	6087	Miković, V.	15./JG52		7.4.42	Victory over MiG-3 , 28th victory of squadron	unknown	n/a
Bf 109E-7	6087		15./JG52		24.4.42	Destroyed in bombing raid	Mariupol	100%
Bf 109E-7	6124		15./JG52		28.3.42	Undercarriage failure.	Fl.Pl. Mariupol	15%
Bf 109E-7	6354	Martinašević, S.	15./JG52		8.3.42	Victory over enemy aircraft	unknown	n/a
Bf 109E-7	6354	John, Gefr. Heinz	Erg./JG 51		9.4.41	Injured in crash landing due to pilot error.	Gelnhausen	80%
Bf 109E	6393		15./JG52		30.4.42	Take-off accident.	Stalino	15%
Bf 109E-7	7672	Boskic, Lt. Stamkoma	15./JG52		10.2.42	Pilot injured in belly landing – technical failure	Mariupol	80%

One of the first 11 Bf 109E-3s received by the ARR in the spring of 1940 displays the Romanian roundel in red/yellow/blue; this was soon replaced with 'Michaels Cross' when Romania was pressured into joining the Axis



the aircraft were able to make it back to their own lines after being damaged by Soviet ground fire. By the last week of July, the entire Group was down to only 26 serviceable aircraft. Escort missions continued into August, and victories mounted for the ARR pilots, but the loss of the 7th Fighter Group commander on 21st August, *lt. cdor. av. Alexandru Popisteanu*, was a significant blow to the morale of the group.

Another four victories were achieved by the ARR pilots through September, but attrition had reduced the number of serviceable Emils down to a mere four machines by the beginning of October. When the group rotated back to Bucharest, they had achieved a total of 62 confirmed victories against only six losses. Fifteen new Bf 109E-7s were received in the spring, and the group remained at Pripera field until being sent to Tuzov, in the Stalingrad sector, in September 1942. Here, the 7th Fighter Group was primarily tasked with bomber escort, and moved from Tuzow to Karpovka in October. A month later, however, a Soviet winter counteroffensive caught the unit by surprise, and in the course of an emergency evacuation to Tachinskaya, seven unserviceable Emils were left behind, with an additional five aircraft being written off. By the time the survivors of the winter battles were rotated back to Romania in January 1943, the 7th Fighter Group had a total of three Emils remaining out of the original group of 37 that they had brought to the Stalingrad area. During the rest and refit