

Messerschmitt Me 410

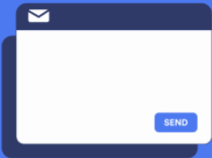
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The Me 410 was a significant improvement on the earlier aircraft. It was faster than the Bf 110G, capable of reaching 388mph, an increase of nearly 40mph. The Me 410 was faster than just about every other heavy fighter available to the Luftwaffe in 1944. Only the He 219 UHU was faster, and that aircraft was produced in very small numbers. Maximum range was much longer, at close to 1,500 miles. This allowed the Luftwaffe to mount some high speed long range raids over southern England, as well as giving the Me 410 the endurance needed in battles against the American heavy bombers.

Combat Record

The Baby Blitz



[Messerschmitt Me 410A-3 from from the back-right](#)

The Me 410 had the range and speed to reach England with some chance of survival. As such it played a part in the “Baby Blitz” that saw German bombers appear over Britain in late 1943 and early 1944. In one raid on 2 April 1944, a group of Me 410s followed American bombers back after a raid, and attacked them soon after they had landed! Part of the reason for the success of the Me 410 as a night bomber was that the RAF had not been expected the attacks and had been concentrating on operations over Germany and occupied Europe.

Defence of the Reich

The Me 410 was reasonably successful against the American heavy bombers. It had the endurance to fight a long battle as the bombers ranged over Germany, and the firepower to shoot them down. When Me 410s encountered unescorted bombers, they were able to inflict heavy losses. However, the Me 410 soon found itself coming up against the [P-47 Thunderbolt](#) and [P-51 Mustang](#). In battles with those single engined fighters, the Me 410 could not compete. In July 1944 the main Me 410 equipped *Zerstörer* units were disbanded, and their job taken over by single engined fighters, more capable of surviving in the increasingly hostile skies over Germany. Production of the Me 410 was phased out from September 1944, when the emergency fighter program gave priority to the single engined fighters.

Variants

A-1



[SC 50 German HE bomb](#)

The A-1 was the first production version of the aircraft. It was armed with two MG 17s and two 20 mm MG 151 cannon in the nose, and one MG 131 in each of the rear firing barbettes.

The Me 410 had a dedicated bomb bay (or weapons bay) close to the front of the aircraft. In the A-1 it was used to carry either one SD 1000 bomb (1000kg/ 2,200lb) or eight SC 50 bombs (50kg/110lb) bombs in the bomb bay with four more under the wings.

This bomb bay was the key to the aircraft’s versatility. Many later versions used it to carry extra guns.

A-1/U1

The A-1/U1 was a reconnaissance version. The two nose mounted MG 17s were removed and a camera (either the Rb 20/30, Rb 50/30 or Rb 75/30) placed in the bomb bay.

A-1/U2

The Me 410 was equipped with a wide variety of different guns. Different weapon kits could be placed in the bomb bay. The A-1/U2 *Zerstörer* had two 20mm MG 151/20 cannon mounted in a *Waffen Behälter 151A* (Weapons Carrier or Container 151) mounted in the bomb bay.

A-1/U4

A bomber killer armed with the very heavy 50mm BK 5 cannon mounted in the bomb bay. Only 21 rounds could be carried for this gun, so although the first prototype of this model had all other guns removed, the production version carried the same guns as the standard A-1.

A-2

This was the second main production series. The basic A-2 was built as a *Zerstörer*. The forward firing MG 17s were removed from the nose and two 30mm MK 103 cannon were mounted in the bomb bay.

A-2/U1

A reconnaissance version, similar to the A-1/U1

A-2/U2

This was a night fighter variant, with radar aerials mounted on the nose.

A-2/U4

A bomber killer similar to the A-1/U4, based around the same BK 5 cannon.

A-3



[Messerschmitt Me 410A-3 from below](#)

The A-3 was a dedicated reconnaissance aircraft. The bomb bay was adapted to take a pair of Rb 20/30, Rb 50/30 or Rb 75/30 cameras.

B-1

The B series appeared in early 1944. The most significant change was the use of the DB 603G engine, giving 1,900 hp. The B-1 was a fast bomber similar to the A-1. It had strengthened landing gear to cope with the heavier engine, and could take two 300 litre/ 79.25 gallon drop tanks under the wings. The nose mounted MG 17s were replaced by two 13 mm MG 131s. The maximum bomb load was the same as the A-1 at 2204lbs/ 1000 kg.

B-1/U2

This was a *Zerstörer*, with the same standard guns as the B-1 and two 20 mm MG 151 cannon mounted in a WB 151A weapons container.

B-1/U4

Another *Zerstörer* variant. Here the forward mounted guns were all replaced by a 50mm BK 5 cannon, supported by two 20 mm MG 151 cannon mounted in a WB 151A weapons container.

B-2

The B-2 was a *Zerstörer* that appeared with a bewildering array of different combinations of guns. Sources suggest the following main versions of the B-2/U-1 and U-2.

B-2/U-1

This version had the standard armaments and two 20 mm MG 151 cannon mounted behind the bomb bay.

B-2/U-2

This had the MG 17s removed from the nose, and replaced by one of three weapons packs in the bomb bay:

- B-2/U-2/R-2: Two 30mm Mk 108 cannon
- B-2/U-2/R-3: Two 30mm Mk 103 cannon
- B-2/U-3/R-5: Four 20mm MG 151 cannon

B-2/U-3



[Messerschmitt Me 410A3 from the front](#)

Rather more straightforward was this anti-shipping version. It was armed with one torpedo under the fuselage and a pair of 30mm cannon in the weapons bay. The two forward firing MG 131s were removed to make room for the FuG 200 *Hohentwiel* search radar.

B-2/U4

Similar to the A-1/U4 and A-2/U4, this version had a 50mm Mk 5 cannon installed, as well as a pair of 30mm cannon in the weapons bay.

B-3

This was a reconnaissance variant, carrying a pair of either the Rb 20/30, Rb 50/30 or Rb 75/30 cameras. The forward guns were reduced to the two MG 151s.

B-5

The B-5 was a torpedo bomber. It was armed with a BT-Körper (bomb-torpedo missile) mounted on the port side of the fuselage and FuG 200 *Hohentwiel* search radar. The B-5 was also used to test out a variety of experimental weapons systems.

B-6

An anit-shipping reconnaissance aircraft, with FuG 200 search radar, and two 30mm Mk 103 cannons mounted under the fuselage.

B-7 and B-8

The B-7 and B-8 were proposed day and night reconnaissance versions. Neither reached production, and nor did any of the later versions.

C

This was a proposed series based on one of the DB 603JZ, BMW 801TJ or Jumo 213 E/JZ engines. No prototypes were ever completed.

D

The D series would have been a night fighter, equipped with Lichtenstein radar. Parts of the wing would have been made from wood, one of the few materials not in short supply in Germany towards the end of the war.

H

This version would have been based on the DB 603G engine and given extended wings. Work had started on the first prototype but was incomplete at the end of the war.

Stats

Different sources give different production figures for the Me 410. However, a general consensus appears to put production at around 300 aircraft in 1943 and as many as 600 or 700 in 1944. Not all of these aircraft ever reached the Luftwaffe. Perhaps as many as 300 Me 410s were destroyed by allied bombing before ever entering combat.

	Me 410A-1
Engines	Two DB 603A twelve cylinder liquid cooled engines
Horsepower	1,750
Weight (empty)	13559 lb
Speed	388 mph
Crew	2
Range	1450 miles
Span	53 feet 7.25 inches
Length	40 feet 11.33 inches

The Me 410 evolved out of the Me 210. A visual comparison of the two aircraft would suggest that there were very few differences between the two aircraft, and this was indeed the case. The basis of the Me 410 was the same as the 210, but with all of the improvements implemented to that aircraft during its troubled history (a longer fuselage and wing slats being the most significant). The most significant difference between the two aircraft was that the Me 410 used the DB 603A engine with 1750 hp. The name change was due as much to the poor reputation of the Me 210 as to any significant

difference between the aircraft. The first prototypes of the Me 410 flew towards the end of 1942, and production of the Me 410A-1 began in January 1943.



[German Weapons of World War II, Stephen Hart](#). Covers a wide range of the weapons used by the Third Reich during the Second World War, from the pistol up to the battleship *Tirpitz*, and including a wide range of tanks, armoured vehicles, aircraft, artillery etc. All supported by a mix of full colour illustrations and contemporary photographs, giving an idea of vast range of weapons produced by the Germans during the war ([Read Full Review](#)).



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