Hitler's armies and air force, the famous Luftwaffe, began their conquest of western Europe on April 9, 1940, following their victory over Poland in 1939. Conquering Norway, Belgium, Holland, Luxemburg and France in less than eighty-five days, the Nazi war machine rolled west toward the Atlantic Ocean and England. Hitler's new style of fighting, the Blitzkrieg (lightning war), staggered the Allied defenses. When France surrendered on June 22, 1940 only Britain was left to face Nazi Germany.

The Me-109 was the best known and most produced German fighter of World War II. It was the backbone of the German fighter command and ruled the skies over Europe from 1939 to 1941, as Hitler spread his empire over the continent. The Me-109s earned the respect of Germany's enemies in every theater of conflict and were greatly feared by Allied bomber crews during the later half of the war. Designed by Professor Willy Messerschmitt in 1934, the Bf. 109 was first flown in September 1935. This prototype was powered by a Rolls-Royce Kestrel in-line engine because the engine that the Bf. 109 was designed for, the Junkers Jumo 210, was not yet available. In July 1938, the firm that initiated the design (Bayerische Flugzeugwerke AG), was redesignated Messerschmitt AG, so later Messerschmitt designs often carried the prefix “Me” instead of “Bf”.

The Me-109 was a formidable opponent for the early marks of Spitfire; its low speed handling qualities were excellent and its rate of climb matched the Spitfire. Moreover, it had a higher service ceiling and it had one other major advantage - fuel injection. This allowed the Me-109's powerplant to run flawlessly regardless of the aircraft's attitude, unlike the Rolls-Royce engines of early Spitfires, which cut out at the slightest suggestion of negative G. The Messerschmitt had its vices, too: the cockpit was very small, the heavily framed canopy restricted the pilot's field of view and the plane's narrow undercarriage made it extremely prone to ground accidents. Many of the 33,000 Me-109s produced were lost in ground accidents.

[illegible] machine guns
[illegible] WEIGHT
[illegible] BY
[illegible] AIRCRAFT BUILT
[illegible] Museum, Addison Airport (KADS), Dallas, Texas
[illegible] NUMBER