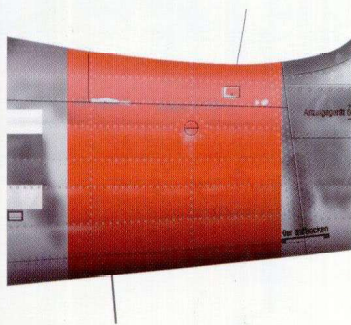


Geschwader Identification Bands

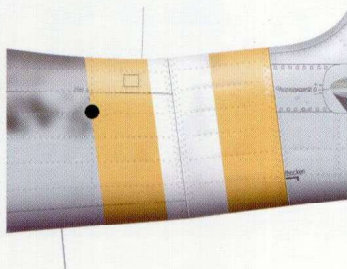
One of the difficulties encountered by German pilots operating against US bomber formations was that they became scattered after each attack and valuable time was wasted in reforming on formation leaders for a repeat attack. Therefore, in order to make the aircraft flown by the *Staffelkapitän* or *Gruppenkommandeur* more easily recognisable from a distance, the rudders or whole vertical tail

surfaces on their machines were painted white. This arrangement seems to have worked well enough until larger numbers of fighters from several units were employed simultaneously, and to meet this eventuality, in the spring of 1943, JG 1 began painting black and white stripes on the engine cowlings of its Fw 190s and in the summer, parts of JG 1 began painting the engine cowlings of their aircraft with a black and white chequered pattern.

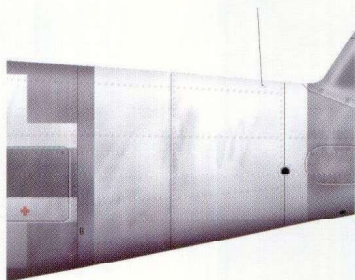
At the same time, as the requirement arose for additional units to distinguish their aircraft from those of others, some home defence units began painting coloured bands around the rear fuselages of their machines. One of the first units to adopt the coloured fuselage band was JG 11 which, in mid-1943, used a narrow white band. The aircraft of JG 1 flew with a red fuselage band in addition to their striped or chequered cowlings, and in the autumn, the dedicated anti-bomber unit *Sturmstaffel 1* began using a wide black/white/black band narrowly edged each side in white. At about the same time, JG 11 seems to have changed its bands to yellow, possibly because their thin white band was too easily confused at any distance with the white in the bands used by *Sturmstaffel 1*. The use of this system was obviously effective because, also in the autumn of 1943, JG 1 dispensed with the cowlings markings in favour of a wide red band around the rear fuselage. By early 1944, the



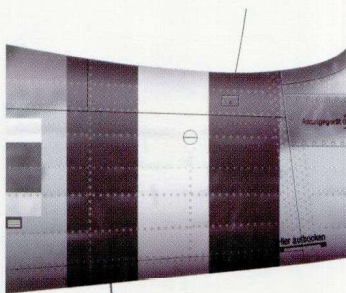
JG 1



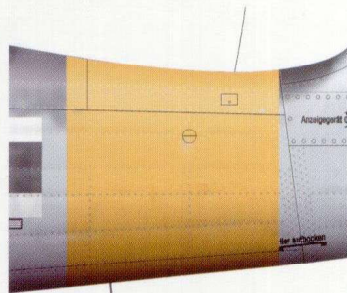
JG 2



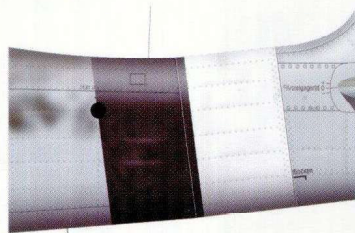
JG 3



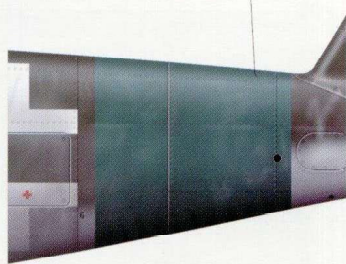
JG 4



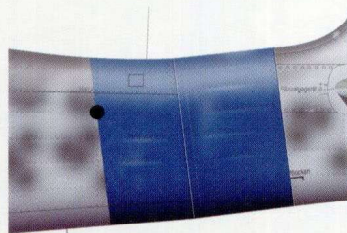
JG 11



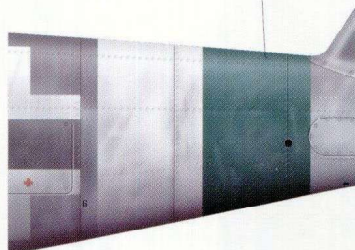
JG 26



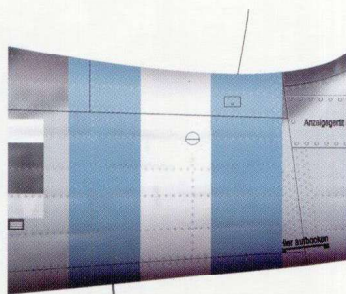
JG 27



JG 54



JG 77



JG 300