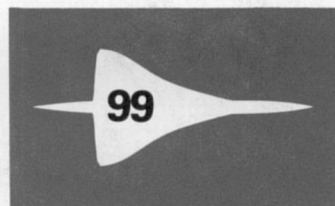
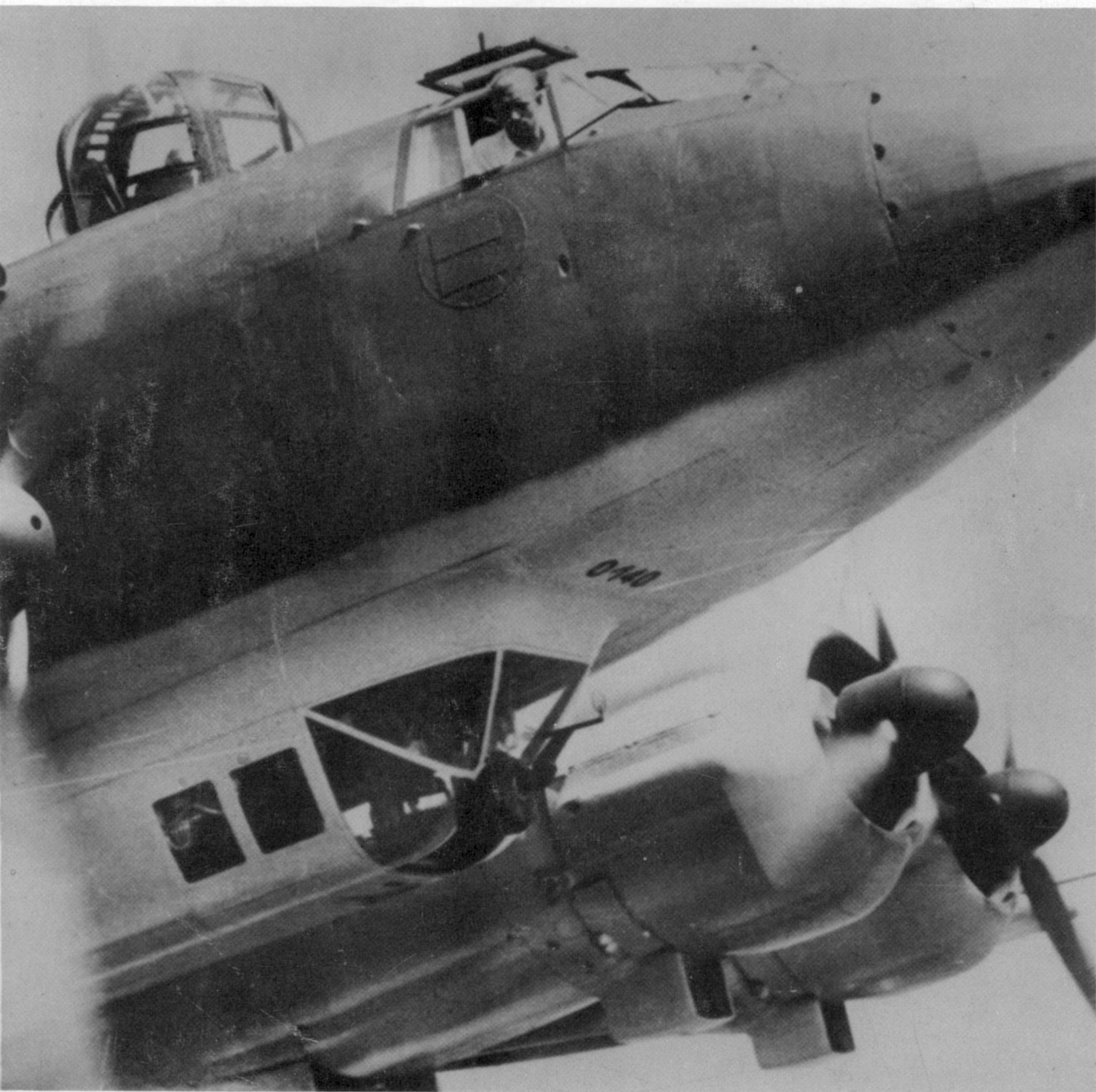


PROFILE Aircraft



Focke-Wulf Fw 200



The Focke-Wulf Fw 200



by J. Richard Smith

An Fw 200C-2 in flight over the North Sea. This machine was flown by the Staffelkapitän of 1st Staffel, KG 40; it was lost during a mission over the British Isles on July 20th 1940.
(Photo: via Hans Obert)

"To the U-boat scourge was now added air attack far out on the oceans by long-range aircraft. Of these, the Focke Wulf 200, known as the Condor was the most formidable". So wrote Sir Winston Churchill in his *History of the Second World War* when describing the part played in the Battle of the Atlantic by the Focke Wulf Condor.

The Condor was designed in the spring of 1936 purely as a commercial airliner for use by *Deutsche Lufthansa* whose Ju 52/3m was losing ground to the American Douglas DC-3. The Condor, like the famous Fw 190 of later years, was designed by Dipl.Ing. Kurt Tank, Technical Director of the Focke Wulf Flugzeugbau G.m.b.H. The aircraft was to be a twenty-six seat low wing monoplane powered by four 720 h.p. B.M.W. 132 G-1 nine cylinder radial engines and possessing a retractable undercarriage. The R.L.M., at Tank's instigation, allocated the machine the "8" series number "200" (a much higher number than had previously been used) as it was felt that this designation would be easily remembered.

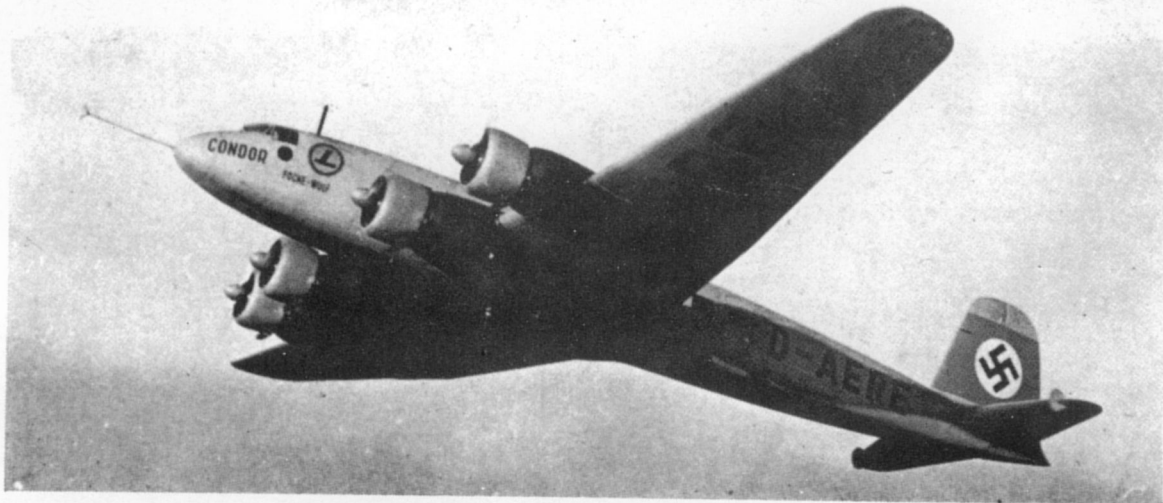
The first prototype, the Fw 200 V1, later registered D-ACON and named "Brandenburg", made its initial flight in July 1937 with Kurt Tank himself at the controls. This was exactly twelve months and eleven days after the initial contract had been placed, but those eleven days were to lose Tank a bet, as he had promised delivery of the first machine within a year! Following minor re-design to the tail fin and rudder, D-ACON and the V2 (D-AERE "Saarland") embarked on a series of long distance flights. The first of these was made on 27th July 1938 when the Fw 200 V2, piloted by Kurt Tank, flew from Berlin to Cairo via Salonica. On 10th August 1938, the Fw 200 V1 piloted by Herren Henke and von Moreau, took off from Berlin to fly non-stop to New York, a distance of 4,075 miles. Exactly 24 hours and 55 minutes later, D-ACON touched down at Floyd-

Bennett aerodrome, New York, having covered the distance at an average speed of 164 m.p.h., and against strong headwinds. The return journey was made in 19 hours 47 minutes; an average speed of 205 m.p.h.

Perhaps the most notable long-distance flight of the Condor was made by the Fw 200 V1 on 28th November 1938. Piloted by the same crew that flew her on the trans-Atlantic flight, D-ACON took off from Berlin-Tempelhof to fly to Tokyo. The route, which was to avoid crossing Russian territory, was to include three re-fuelling points at Berne, Karachi and Hanoi. The flight was made in less than 48 hours including stops for fuel, and the landing was accompanied by scenes of wild enthusiasm. The return flight was not so successful however. Two engines failed as the aircraft was approaching Manila, and owing to incorrect action taken by the pilot, the machine had to be ditched in the sea.

Following the success of these demonstration flights, Finnish and Danish Air Lines and the Brazilian *Sindicato Condor Limitada* placed orders for the aircraft. The two aircraft for Danish Air Lines (D.D.L.) were registered OY-DAM and OY-DEM and were of the Fw 200A production series. The two machines for the Condor Syndicate were of the Fw 200B series and were delivered in August 1939.

The Fw 200 V3, initially registered D.2600 and named "Immelmann III" was built as a personal transport for use by Adolf Hitler. The machine, which was later camouflaged and registered 26+00, was fitted with a special armoured seat with escape hatch and parachute pack. The Fw 200 V4 was also delivered to the R.L.M. and was modified for use by Hitler's personal staff. Five further Fw 200A machines were delivered to D.L.H., these also bearing *Versuchs* (experimental) numbers; they were D-AETA "Westfalen", D-ACUH "Grenzmark",



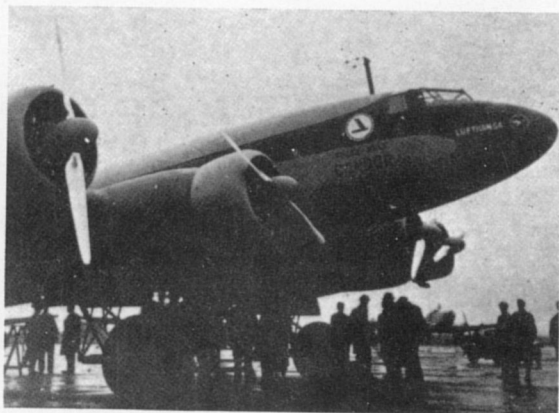
"Saarland", the Fw 200V-2, registration D-AERE.

(Photo: H. J. Nowarra)

D-AMHC "Nordmark", D-AXFO "Pommern" and D-ARHW "Friesland".

The Focke Wulf Fw 200B was a more powerful production series, the first of which, the B-1, was powered by four 850 h.p. B.M.W.132 Dc radials. The Fw 200B-2 was similar but was powered by four 830 h.p. B.M.W. 132 H. radials. As previously mentioned, the Japanese were very impressed with the capabilities of the Condor following the Tokyo flight, and placed an order for five Fw 200B's. These were never in fact delivered but it was the Japanese interest in the possible use of the machine as a long-range reconnaissance-bomber that resulted in the Fw 200C production series.

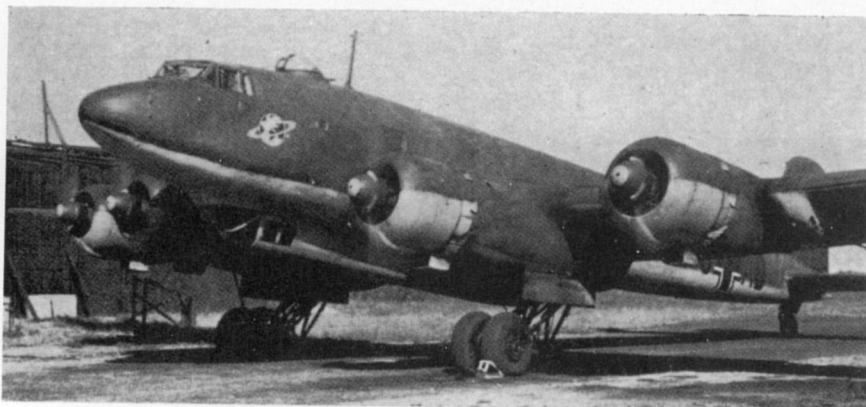
Early in 1939, Kurt Tank began work on a maritime reconnaissance-bomber version of the Fw 200B to meet Japanese requirements. The Fw 200C was essentially similar to the Fw 200B-2, but carried an armament of three 7.9 mm. MG 15 machine guns, one in a dorsal turret, the other two at either end of a short ventral gondola. The machine had increased fuel tankage and two vertically-mounted cameras were installed in the fuselage floor. The only prototype for the series was the Fw 200 V10 (W.Nr.0001) which was followed shortly afterwards by ten Fw 200C-0



The Fw 200V-1 D-ACON "Brandenburg" at Templehof airfield in 1938.

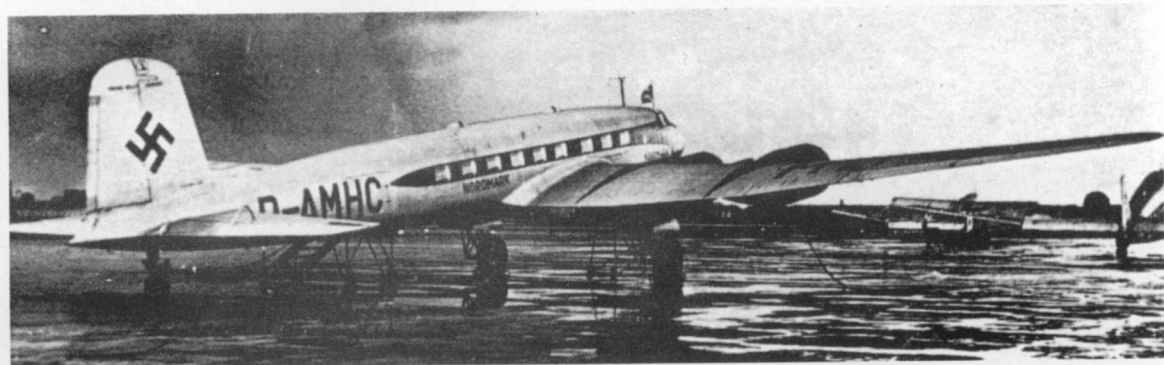
(Photo: H. J. Nowarra)

pre-production machines. These differed in having two separate dorsal positions, each housing a 7.9 mm. MG 15 gun, but the ventral gondola (which was to house a third MG 15, a 550 lb. bomb and a bomb-aimer) was not fitted to most C-0's owing to the urgent need for the aircraft by the *Luftwaffe*.



Fine study of an Fw 200 of KG 40 running-up for take-off.

Photo: R. C. Seeley Collection)



The V-series Condor "Nordmark" in the livery of Deutsche Lufthansa.

(Photos: H. J. Nowarra)

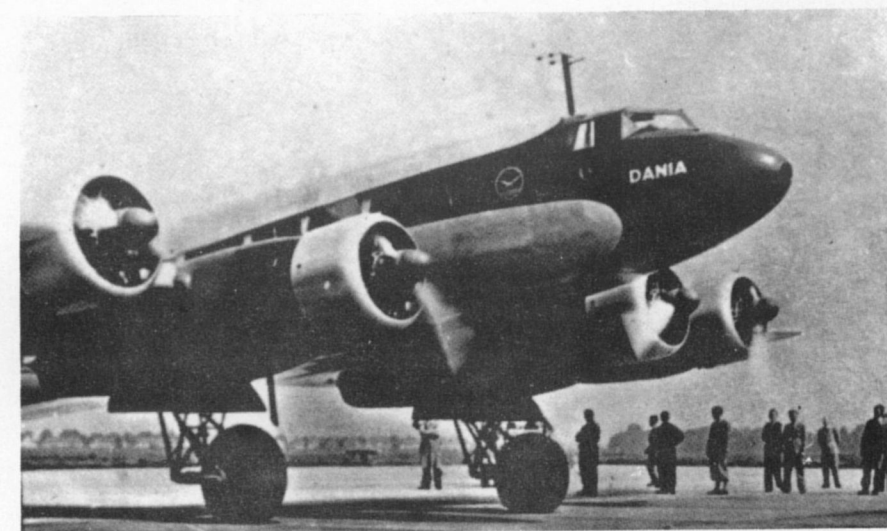


THE CONDOR JOINS THE EAGLES

With the declaration of war in September 1939, the *Luftwaffe* realised that it was without a long-range reconnaissance aircraft. It had been calculated that Britain would not enter the war until at least 1942, and by then the *Luftwaffe* would have received the He 177 heavy bomber which was then in its development stage. Therefore, at the suggestion of Major Petersen (the navigation officer with the *Stab of X Fliegerkorps*) development of the Fw 200C was rapidly advanced for use with the *Luftwaffe*. In

November 1939, a unit was established to take on hand six of the ten Fw 200 C-0's then being built. This unit, designated *Fernaufklärungstaffel*, was put under the command of Maj. Petersen and immediately became operational.

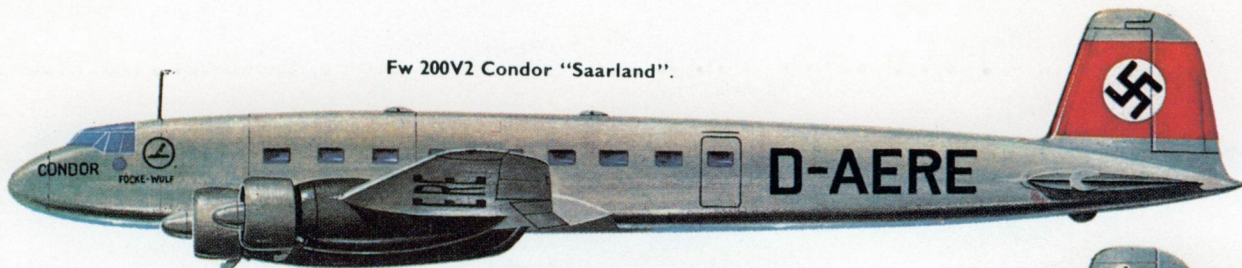
On the day preceding the German attack on Norway and Denmark, the *Fernaufklärungstaffel*, in company with the He 115's of *Küsten Flieger Gruppe 506*, kept a tight reconnaissance on the North Sea up to 63° N. This was to watch for any increased activity on the part of the Royal Navy which might prejudice the forthcoming invasion. On 18th April



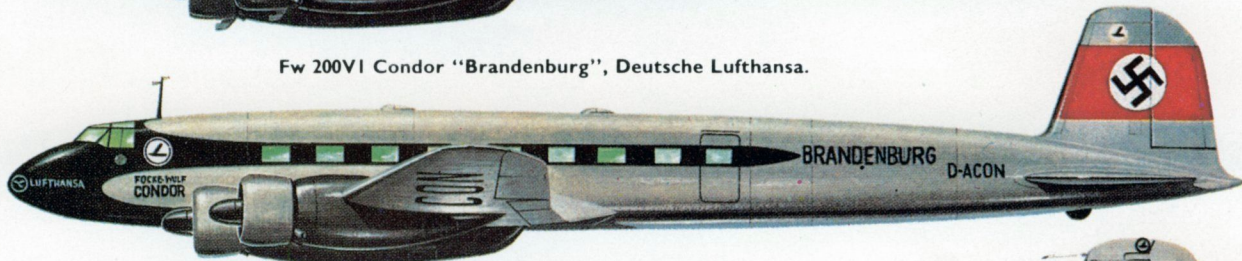
The Danish Fw 200A "Dania", registration OY-DAM, running up before a flight.

(Photo: H. J. Nowarra)

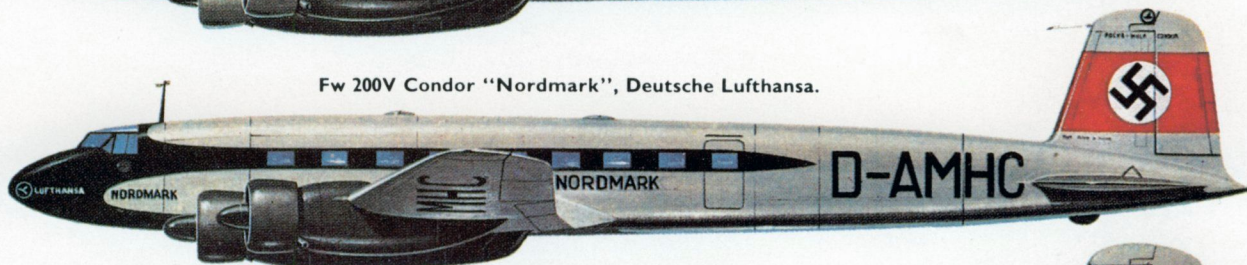
Fw 200V2 Condor "Saarland".



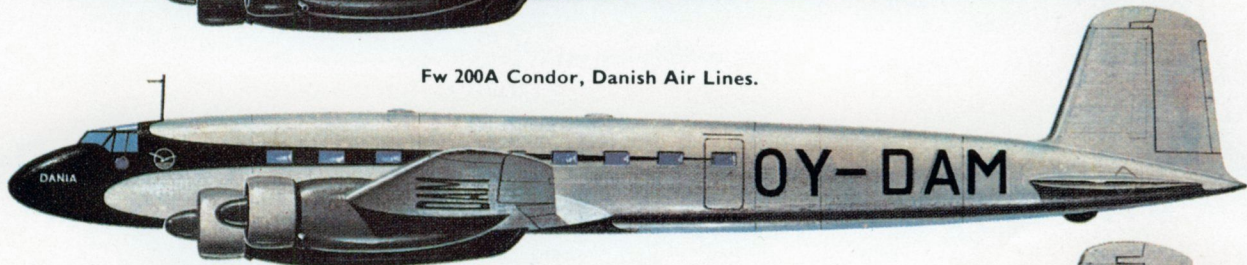
Fw 200VI Condor "Brandenburg", Deutsche Lufthansa.



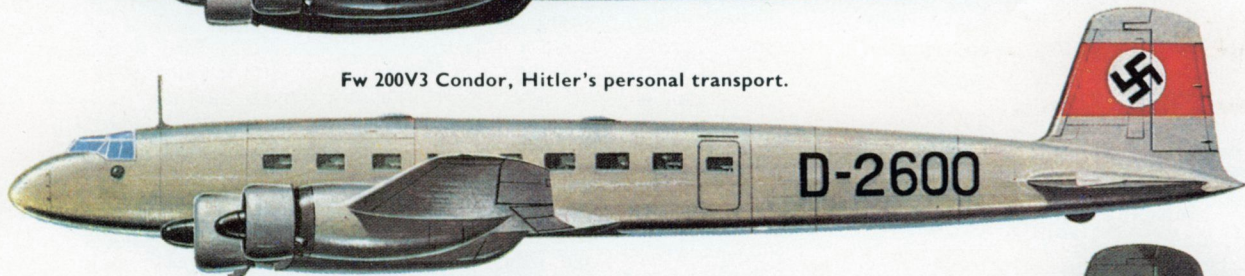
Fw 200V Condor "Nordmark", Deutsche Lufthansa.



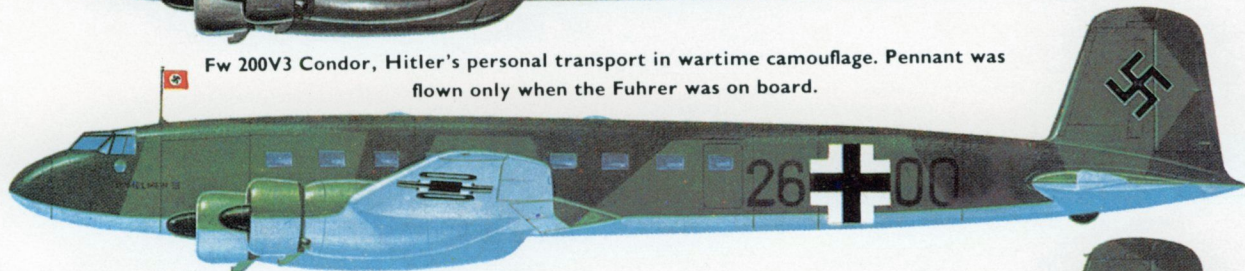
Fw 200A Condor, Danish Air Lines.



Fw 200V3 Condor, Hitler's personal transport.

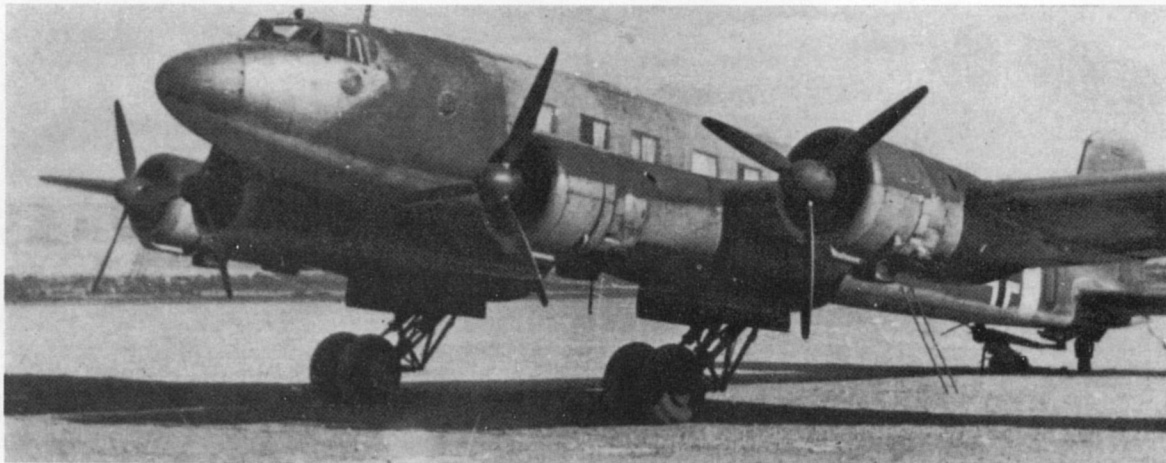


Fw 200V3 Condor, Hitler's personal transport in wartime camouflage. Pennant was flown only when the Fuhrer was on board.



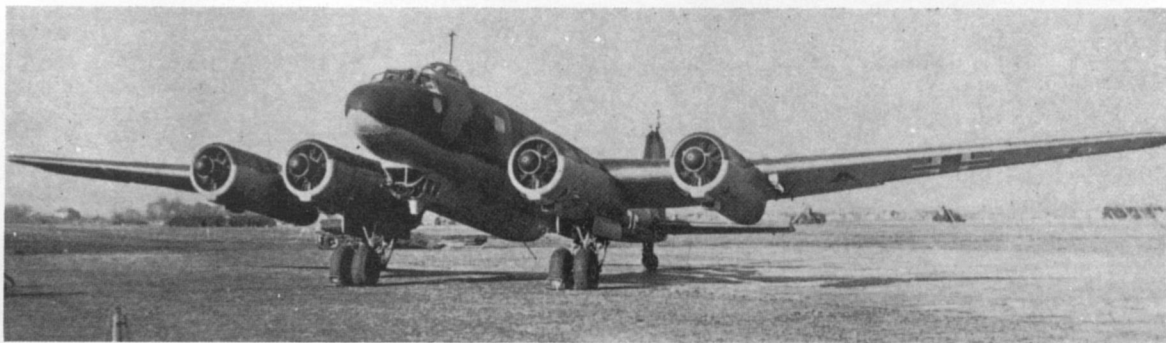
Fw 200B Condor transport aircraft, Norway, April-May 1940.





One of the Fw 200B transports hastily put into service during the Norwegian campaign in April 1940.

(Photo: H. J. Nowarra)



An Fw 200C-1, probably photographed at Cottbus.

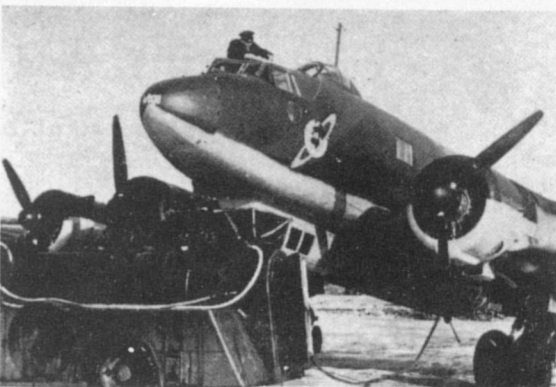
(Photo: H. J. Nowarra)

1940, the *Staffel*, now re-designated as I./KG 40, attacked British shipping in the Harstad-Namsos area and on following day was transferred to Aalborg in Denmark. On 26th April, I./KG 40 was again transferred, this time to Copenhagen, where it participated in attacks on British shipping and also supplied the beleaguered German garrison at Narvik. Several Fw 200B's were also used in Norway on transport operations.

The first large-scale production variant of the Condor was the Fw 200C-1. This was a five-seat reconnaissance-bomber with an armament of one 7.9 mm. MG 15 machine gun in the forward dorsal position, an MG 15 in the rear dorsal position, a 20 mm. MG FF cannon in the nose of the ventral gondola and an MG 15 in the rear of same. Offensive armament could comprise up to five 550 lb. bombs; one carried under each outboard engine nacelle, one on each bomb rack under the outer wing panels and one inside the ventral gondola. These could be

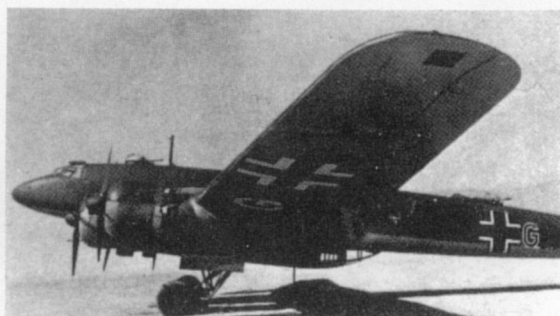
The nose of an Fw 200C-1 emblazoned with the now-famous "World-in-a-Ring" badge of Kampfgeschwader 40. Note refuelling truck in foreground, and the early-style dorsal gun position.

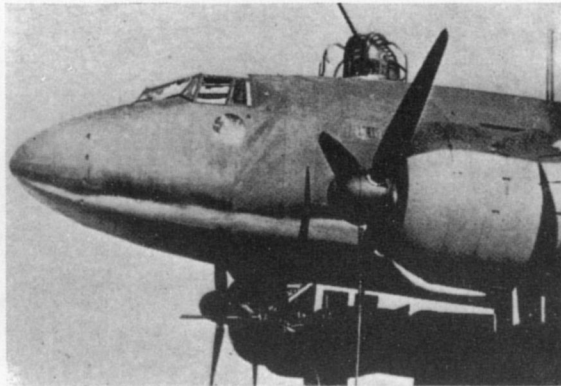
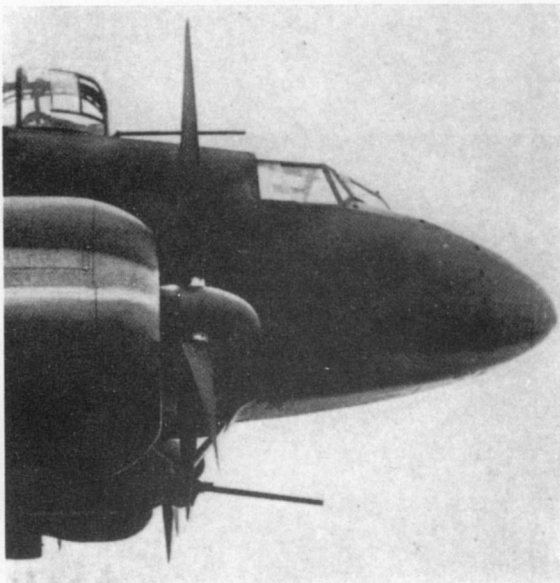
(Photo: H. J. Nowarra)



An Fw 200 C-3 of Kampfgeschwader 40's 1st Staffel, coded F8 + GH.

(Photo: H. J. Nowarra)





Nose close-ups of the Fw 200C-3/U1, showing the 15 mm. MG 151 cannon in the dorsal turret and the 20 mm. MG 151/20 cannon in the forward ventral position.

(Photo: H. J. Nowarra)

exchanged for 66 Imp.gallon auxiliary tanks to further increase range. The crew comprised a pilot, co-pilot, navigator/radio operator/gunner, engineer/gunner and rear dorsal gunner.

In late June 1940, *I Staffel* KG 40 was withdrawn for rest and re-equipment with the Fw 200C-1 Condor. On 12th June 1940, the unit, which had been increased to *Gruppe* strength, became operational under *Luftflotte 2* to support the forthcoming assault on the British Isles. *I./KG 40* was placed under the direct control of *Marine Gruppe West* at Lorient, its main task being to support the activities of German U-boats. When on operations, the unit flew from Bordeaux-Mérignac, over the Bay of Biscay, then in a wide arc to the west of Ireland landing at Stavanger-Sola or Trondheim-Værnes in Norway. Later in the month, a Ju 88-equipped *Geschwader Stab* was established, and during the last four days of August 1940 *I./KG 40* departed from its normal activities in order to take part in the night bombing of the Liverpool-Birkenhead area. Also taking part in this attack, which caused widespread damage, were the Do 17's of KGr 606, the Ju 88's of KG 51, LG 1 and KGr. 806 and the He 111's of KG 27, KG 55 and KGr 100. During August and September 1940, *I./KG 40* sank 90,000 tons of Allied shipping and on 26th October, Oblt. Bernhard Jope sank the 42,000 ton

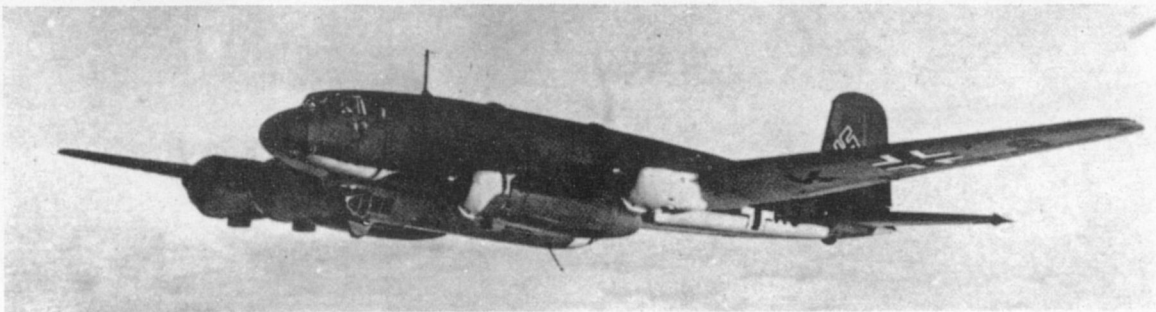
liner *Empress of Britain* off the north-west coast of Ireland.

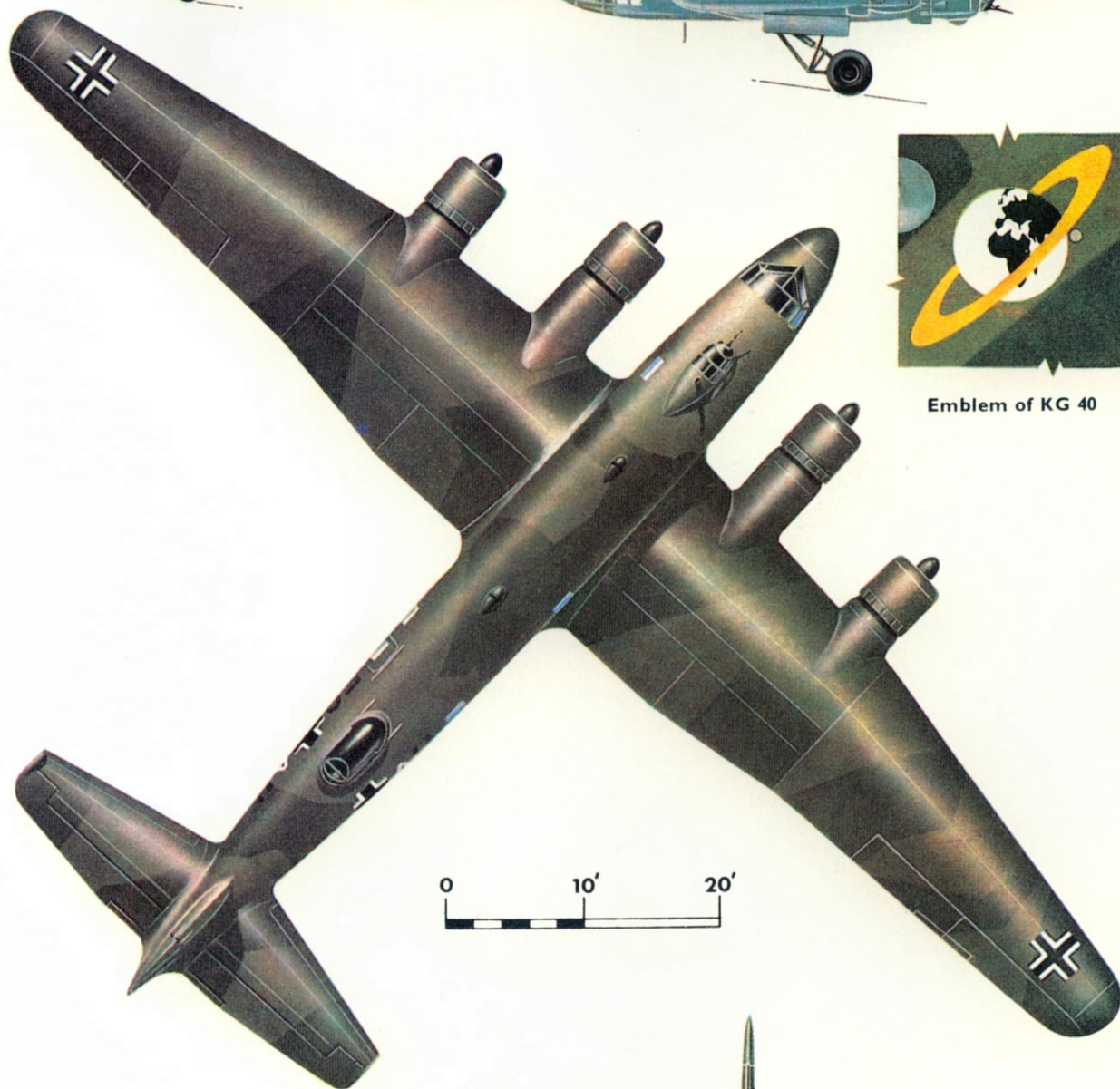
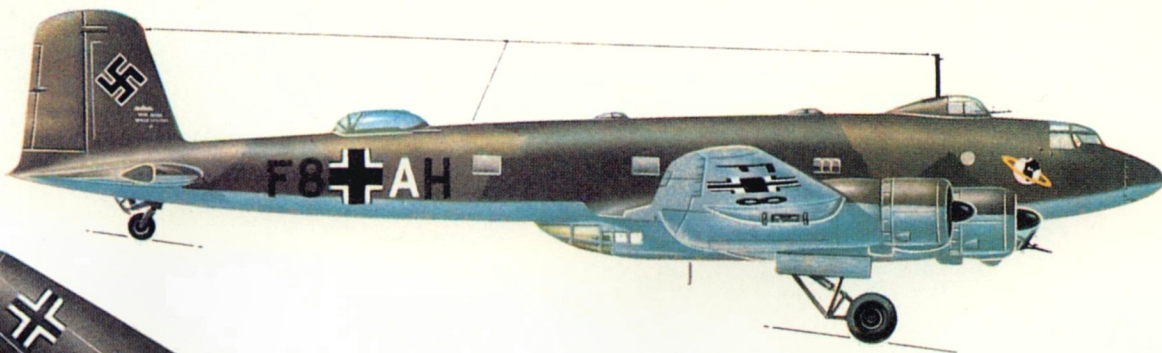
Because of slow deliveries of the Focke Wulf 200 during the winter of 1940/41, *I./KG 40* took on hand a number of He 111's to supplement its Condors. The Condor never appeared in great numbers, production being so slow that as each machine came off the production line, a crew from KG 40 was sent especially to collect it. In January 1941, fifteen ships totalling 63,000 tons were sunk by *I./KG 40* and the following month saw this total increased to twenty-two ships totalling 84,500 tons. During the period from 1st August 1940 to 9th February 1941, no less than 85 ships totalling 363,000 tons were sunk. One notable individual achievement during this period was on 16th January 1941, when Hptm. Verlohr, *Staffelkapitän* of *I./KG 40* sank two ships totalling 10,857 tons.

Late in January 1941, a He 111-equipped *III./KG 40* was established, although the unit was intended to be equipped with the Condor as soon as the machine became available in quantity. In early February, Hptm. Fritz Fliegel, *Staffelkapitän* of *2./KG 40* led an attack on Iceland, and in March 1941 a command to co-ordinate all *Luftwaffe* anti-shipping operations was set up at Lorient. This command was designated

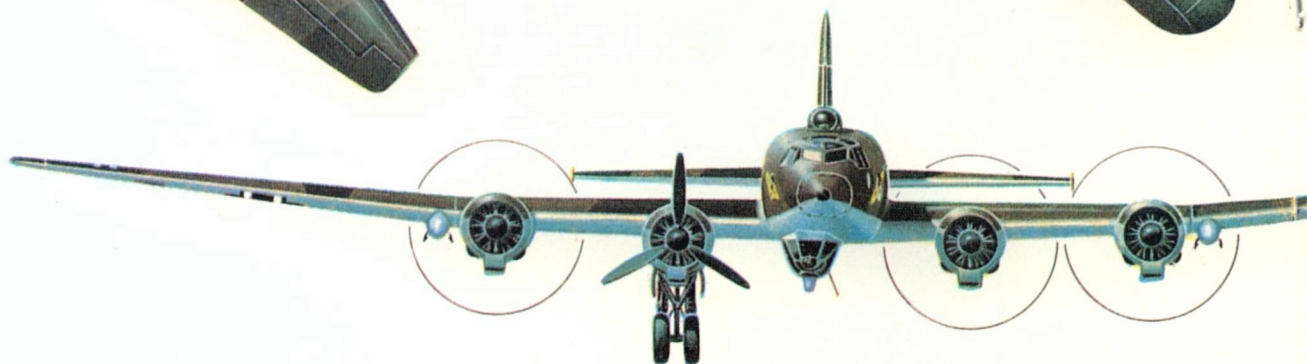
Interesting as one of the relatively few flying views of Condors still surviving, this photo was retouched by German security services to blank out the dorsal gun position and underwing bomb racks.

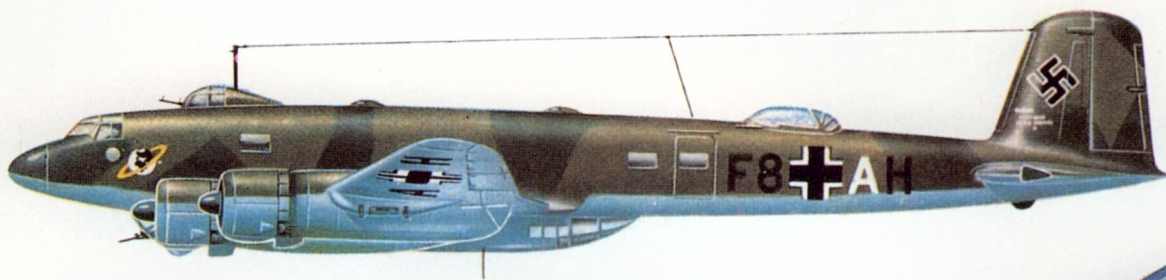
(Photo: H. J. Nowarra)



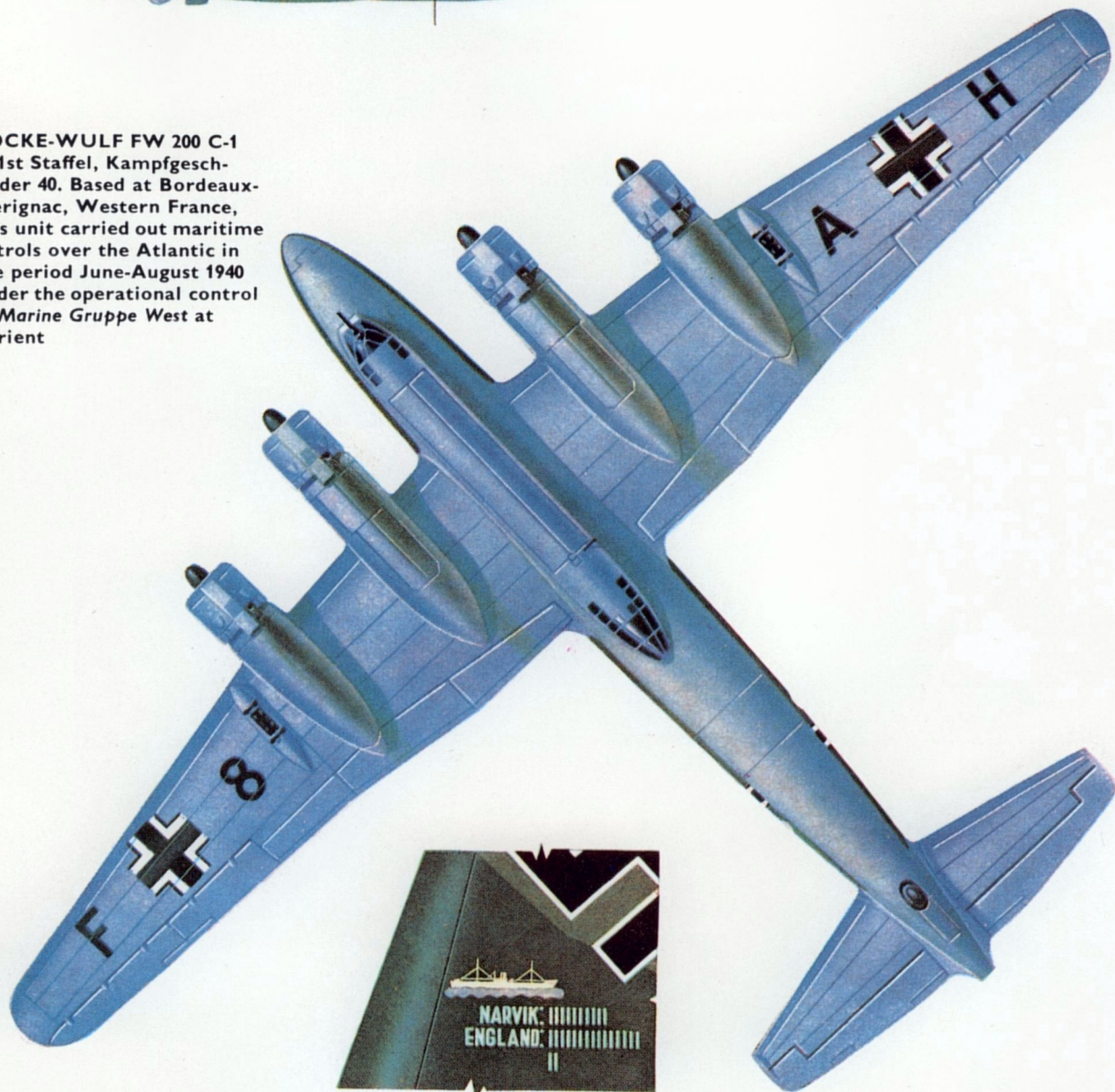


Emblem of KG 40





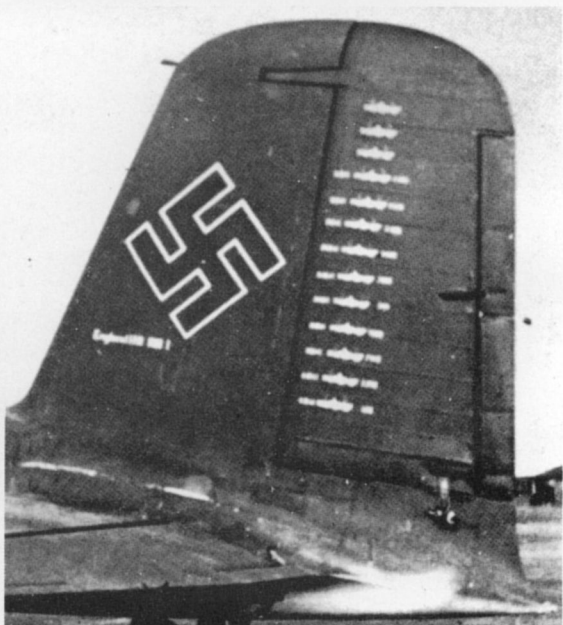
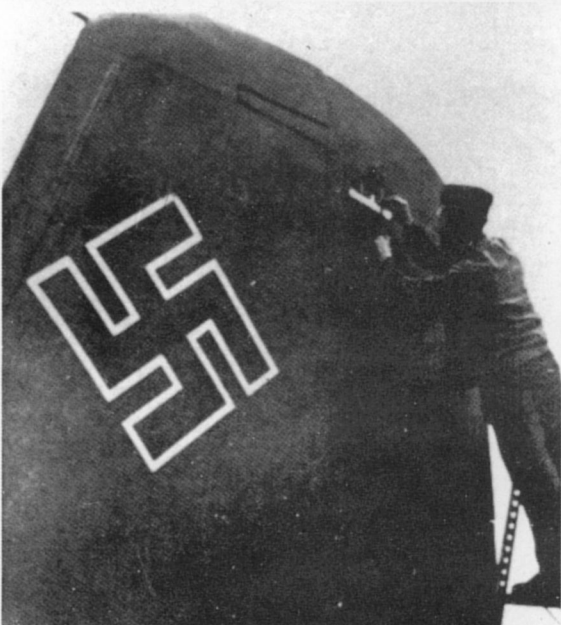
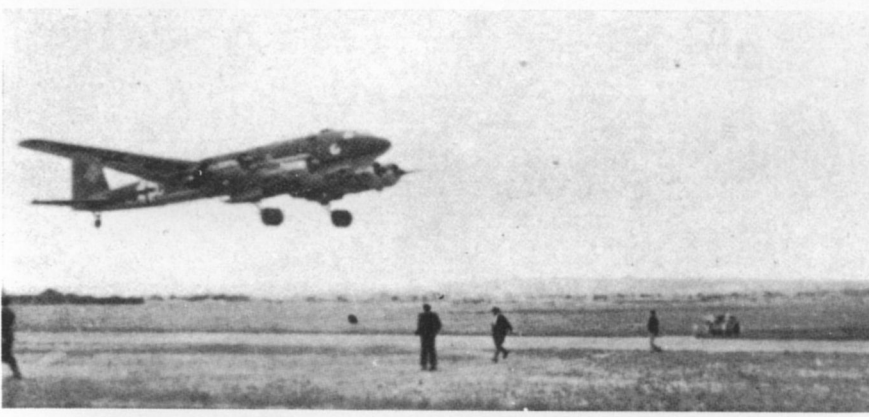
FOCKE-WULF FW 200 C-1
of 1st Staffel, Kampfgeschwader 40. Based at Bordeaux-Merignac, Western France, this unit carried out maritime patrols over the Atlantic in the period June-August 1940 under the operational control of *Marine Gruppe West* at Lorient



Mission tally detail

Various views of the Fw 200C-3 in service with KG 40 at Bordeaux-Merignac. Note that in two photographs the emblem appears without a "ring" round the "world"; and also that the left-hand view of the first ship tally being applied to a Condor's rudder, the swastika appears as a white outline painted over the camouflage green finish.

(All photos by courtesy Hans Obert)





A line-up of Fw 200C-3/U1 Condors.

(Photo: H. J. Nowarra)

Fliegerführer Atlantik and was put under the command of Obstdt. Martin Harlinghausen, ex-chief of staff of *X Fliegerkorps*. By July 1941, *Fliegerführer Atlantik*'s forces comprised 29 Fw 200's of I./KG 40, 31 He 111's of III./KG 40, 45 Ju 88's of KGr 106 and 506, 18 He 115's of Kü.Fl.Gr 906, 20 Do 217's of II./KG 40 and 12 Bf 110's and Ju 88's of 3.(F)/123.

About this time, offensive operations by the Condor had to be curtailed for several reasons. Allied merchant ships were increasingly being equipped with anti-aircraft guns, and in the summer of 1941, the catapult merchant ships of the Royal Navy were introduced. This was a scheme whereby a Hurricane fighter was catapulted from the deck of merchant ship when an enemy aircraft was sighted. The one drawback was that a machine had to be ditched in the sea and the pilot picked up by escort vessels. The first success by a C.A.M. ship was on 3rd August 1941, when Lt. Everett of No. 804 Squadron from *H.M.S. Maplin* shot down a Fw 200 from I./KG 40. Losses of the Condor began to increase alarmingly, and by the autumn of 1941, the machine was restricted to shadowing Allied convoys, radioing U-boats to make the interception and attack.

NEW SUB-TYPES

In 1941, the Fw 200C-2 followed the C-1 on the production line. This differed from the earlier model in having faired bomb racks, new outboard engine nacelles and several internal modifications. The Condor had of course been designed as a commercial

airliner, and was not intended for continuous operational flying sometimes accompanied by violent manoeuvres. Servicing of I./KG 40 was rarely more than 6 to 8 aircraft out of an operational strength of 25 to 30. The most frequent causes of unservicability were failure of the rear spar and breaking of the fuselage just aft of the wing trailing edge. The Fw 200C-3, which was introduced during the summer of 1941, was specially strengthened as an attempt to cure the structural failures, but although reduced, these still occurred.

The Fw 200C-3 was powered by four 1,200 h.p. Bramo 323 R-2 nine cylinder air-cooled radial engines, these being introduced to compensate for the increased structural weight. Bomb load was increased to 4,620 lbs. comprising two 1,100 lb., two 550 lb. and twelve 110 lb. bombs. The forward dorsal gunner's position was abandoned in favour of a Fw 19 low drag turret containing a 7.9 mm. MG 15 machine gun. Two further MG 15's were carried on either side of the fuselage in beam positions. The Fw 200C-3/U1 was similar but employed a large hydraulically-operated forward dorsal turret with a 15 mm. MG 151 cannon, and the 20 mm. MG FF cannon in the nose of the ventral gondola was replaced by a MG 151/20 of similar calibre. The Fw 200C-3/U2 was very similar to the C-3 except that the MG FF cannon was deleted in favour of an MG 15 and a Lotfe 7D bomb sight. The Fw 200C-3/U3 employed an electrically-operated EDL 131 turret with 13 mm. MG 131 machine gun in place of the Fw 19 position. The C-3/U4 again reverted to the Fw 19 turret, but could carry two more gunners each operating a 13 mm. MG 131 gun in the beam positions.

An Fw 200C-4 of KG 40, with Rostock radar array.

(Photo: H. J. Nowarra)

