Potential DVI issues pertaining to Luftwaffe interception units toward the end of WWII

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In this issue of the journal we have described scene examination and the process of assessment of a fragment of skeletal material taken from a WWII fighter plane crash site [1]. It is of interest that at that late stage in the war with significantly reduced Luftwaffe numbers, three German Sturmjäger units, IV.(Sturm)/JG 3, II.(Sturm)/JG 300 and II.(Sturm) JG 4 had orders to ram any bombers as a last resort if they could not be shot down [2]. The pilots who volunteered to be part of these special units had to sign a contract/oath to this effect and the papers with their signatures were kept locked away.

Hans Götze's commandant, Hauptmann Wilhelm Moritz, however, decided against his men carrying out these ramming missions and apparently tore up all signatures and told his pilots that, although they were expected to engage the enemy, they should only take them down in a conventional engagement [2]. Most of these pilots would have been Götze's age.

We have tried to identify who shot down Götze's aircraft. We know from eyewitness reports that he was pursued in a dive and low-level flight—a maneuver only few fighter pilots would have attempted. We researched a list of American pilots who were reported to have taken down enemy planes on 23rd August 1944 and briefly had contact with one of the surviving American pilots. We were able to

rule him out as Hans Götze's adversary on that day. There are reports of pilots who were more likely to have attempted a dangerous low-level pursuit and we believe whoever the pilot was showed particular bravery and determination to follow Götze's plane so close to the ground. According to our research only two or three of the pilots who were in the air that day would fit this description, but all of these were either killed before the end of the war or are still recorded as missing in action.

It is likely that aircraft and personnel in other units who followed the "ramming mission" orders would be severely damaged and scattered following mid-air impacts/explosions, and that subsequent recovery of any identifiable remains would be far less likely than in single aircraft impacts.

References

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