



## LUFTWAFFE EXPERTEN 1939-1945



### Heinkel He-219

Potentially one of the Luftwaffe's most effective night-fighters, the Heinkel He 219 Uhu (Owl) was another aircraft which suffered from misjudgments by senior members of the government and the Luftwaffe high command (principally, in this case, Generalfeldmarschall Erhard Milch, Inspector General of the Luftwaffe). Although the aircraft had proved itself a match for British bombers, including the de Havilland Mosquito, Milch succeeded in having the programme abandoned in favour of the Junkers Ju 388J and the Focke-Wulf Ta 154. Despite this, some aircraft were produced after the official cessation and production totaled 288 including prototypes.



The Reichsluftfahrtministerium had been lukewarm about the project from the beginning, Heinkel's private venture P.1060 fighter-bomber proposal receiving little encouragement until 1941 when it was seen to have potential as a night-fighter. The all-metal shoulder-wing monoplane that finally emerged incorporated a number of noteworthy features. The pilot and navigator, seated back-to-back, enjoyed excellent visibility from the cockpit in the extreme nose, well forward of the guns so that the pilot's eyes were not affected by their flashes. The crew was also provided with ejector seats, the He 219 being the worlds first operational aircraft to be so equipped, and it was also the first aircraft with tricycle landing gear to achieve operational status with the Luftwaffe.

The first prototype was flown on 15 November 1942, powered by two 1,750 hp (1305 kW) Daimler-Benz DB 603A engines, and in December armament trials were undertaken at Peenemunde. Armed originally with two 20 mm MG 151 cannon in a ventral tray and a trainable 13 mm (0.51 in) MG 131 machine gun in the rear cockpit, in February 1943 the aircraft was fitted with four 30-mm MK 108 cannon in place of the MG 151s. The second prototype, flown in December 1942 and carrying four MG 151s in the ventral tray with a similar weapon in each wing root, acquitted itself well against a Ju 188S and a Dornier 217 so that the 'off the drawing board' order for 100 aircraft, placed in August 1942, was increased to 300. Further prototypes (including the fourth, which carried FuG 220 Lichtenstein SN-2 radar) were flown in the development programme while production got under way at Rostock, Vienna-Schwechat and the Polish factories at Mielec and Buczyn.



From April 1943 a small number of He 219A-0 pre-production aircraft flew with 1./NJG 11 at Venlo in the Netherlands, and on the night of 11 June 1943 Major Werner Streib shot down five Avro Lancasters in a single sortie. The first six operational sorties flown by the unit resulted in claims for 20 RAF aircraft, including six Mosquitoes. Despite the cancellation of the project in May 1944, production deliveries of a number of versions were made, principally to 1./NJG 1 and NJGrIO.

The He 219A-1 reconnaissance bomber having been abandoned at the project stage, the first production version was the He 219A-2/RI night-fighter, armed as standard with two MK 108 cannon in the ventral tray and two MG 151/20s in the wing roots. A Schrage Musik installation of two MK 108 cannon behind the cockpit, firing obliquely upward and forward, was introduced retrospectively to this version. However, the first major production version was the He 219A-5 series, the initial He 219A-5/RI being similar to the He 219A-2/RI, but with an 86 Imp gal (390 litre) fuel tank added at the rear of each engine nacelle to provide a 400 mile (645 km) increase in range.



Other sub-variants included the He 219A-5/R2 with 1,800 hp (1342 kW) DB 603E engines, the He 219A-5/R3 with 1,800 hp (1342 kW) DB 603Aa engines, and the more altered DB 603E-powered He 219A-5/R4 which accommodated a third crew member and had a stepped cockpit, with a 13 mm (0.51 in) MG 131 machine-gun on a trainable mounting. The need to find a counter to the RAFs Mosquitoes brought development of the He 219A-6 which was introduced in 1944, this being basically a stripped-down conversion of the He 219A-2/R1, powered by 1,750 hp (1305 kW) DB 603L engines and armed with four 20 mm MG 151/20 cannon; a generally similar variant armed with only two MG 151 cannon was built later under the designation He 219B-2.

Final production version was the He 219A-7 series which introduced larger, improved supercharger intakes for its DB 603G engines; otherwise similar to the He 219A-5, the sub-variants all carried the then-standard Schrage Musik installation of two MK 108 cannon plus, in the He 219A-7/R1, two more MK 108s in the wing-roots and two MG 151s and two MK 103s in the ventral tray. The He 219A-7/R2 had MK 108s in place of the ventral MK 103s; the He 219A-7/R3 had wing-root MK 108s replaced by MG 151s; and the He 219A-7/R4, which was equipped with tail warning radar, carried only four MG 151s. Six He 219A-7/R5 aircraft were powered by 1,900 hp (1417 kW) Junkers Jumo 213E engines, but were otherwise similar to the He 219A-7/R3. A single He 219A-7/R6 was powered by two 2,500 hp (1864 kW) Jumo 222A/B engines, and the single three crew He 219B-1 which had been intended to use the same powerplant was, in fact, flown with DB 603Aa engines.



The He 219A-1 reconnaissance bomber having been abandoned at the project stage, the He 219A-2/R1 night-fighter was the first production version; armed with two 30 mm MK 108 cannon in a ventral tray and two 20 mm MG 151/20s in the wing roots; the schrage Musik installation of two MK 108 cannon behind the cockpit, firing obliquely upwards and forwards, was a retrospective installation.

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The first major production version was the He219A-5R1, generally similar to He 219A-1; the He 219A-5/R1 had 1342-kW (1,800 hp) DB 603A engines and increased fuel capacity; and the He 219A-5/R4, which differed by carrying a third crew member, had a stepped cockpit with a pivoted 13 mm (0.51 in) machine gun. A stripped down version of the He 219A-2/R1 with 1305 kW (1,750 hp) DB 603L engines and four MG 151/20s, which was developed specifically to combat RAF Mosquitoes.-7



Similar to the He 219A-5 but with improved supercharger intakes for its DB 603G engines; in addition to the standard schrage Musik installation, the He 219A-7/R1 had two wing root-mounted MK 108s, and two MG 151s and two 30 mm MK 103s in the ventral tray; the He 219A-7/R2 had MK 108s in place of the ventral MK 103s, and the He 219A-7/R3 had the wing root MK 108s replaced by MG 151s and the ventral tray of the He 219A-7/R2; the He 219A-7/R4 had tail warning radar and just four MG 151s; six He 219A-7/R5 night fighters were effectively He 219A-7/R3s with 1417 kW (1,900 hp) Junkers Jumo 213E engines and a water-methanol injection system; the single He 219A-7/R6 had two 1864 kW (2,500 hp) Jumo 222A/B engines.

*Illustrations from Warplanes of the Luftwaffe, edited by David Donald. Text from contributor.*

