

Phillipe Bauduin, **Hitler's Spyplane Over Normandy 1944 – The World First Jet**, Pen and Sword - Aviation, 2013, 2014, 179 pg. (translated by Heather Williams)

Phillipe Bauduin began his early career as a Photograph Interpretation Officer in the French Air Force. He has now since retired. His interest in German aviation though, stemmed from a posting at Lahr, a city in western Baden-Württemberg, Germany. It was here where Bauduin began his research first into British aerial reconnaissance of the Normandy invasion, thence the German effort.

This book documents Bauduin's efforts in researching, finding and retrieving long lost aerial photographic evidence of Germany's intelligence efforts. This photographic documentation was crucial to determining the extent of the Allied invasion and dispositions facing the Germans in Normandy. That aerial reconnaissance was carried out principally by Horst Götz and Erich Sommer, amongst others, in what was the first jet dedicated to the task, the Arado 234.

The details and evolution of the Arado 234 are well documented in this book, as well as, aerial photographs taken by Götz and Sommer, in the early stages of the Allied invasion of Normandy. The photographs are well supplemented by personal archives and photographs from Götz and Sommer who assisted Bauduin in his research.

Do not let the paucity of pages fool you. Although this book is only 179 pages in length and, is an easy read, Bauduin does not waste time or verbiage on extraneous or unnecessary detail. He gets to the heart of the matter clearly and concisely, that maintains the reader's interest throughout, in what is a truly compelling story. His use of interpretative and other photographs, operational reports, personal accounts, are strategically inserted and interspersed through out, which provides flow and continuity within his textual account. This flow then was translated and maintained in the English text, and is a credit to the skills and efforts of Heather Williams (2014 copy).

The true value of the work, especially to any person with an interest in the Normandy invasion, are the actual German aerial photographs used by their intelligence system to interpret what transpired on the ground. These pictures portrayed a true account of the Allies dispositions and German actions taken to counter them. It was not in the scope of this book to determine the success or failure of their tactical or strategic actions. But it is interesting to observe that they had a true and clear picture in depth of what they faced!

Apart from being an excellent account of the service of Horst Götz, Erich Summer, and others in the application of the Arado 234, the photographs alone in Philippe Bauduin's, **Hitler's Spyplane Over Normandy 1994** are worth its addition to one's personal library.

It is also recommended that this book be read in conjunction with Erich Sommer, **Luftwaffe Eagle – A WWII German Airman's Story**, Grub Street, London 2018.

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