

## THE EXPERTEN

A guide to the Experte counters. *Second edition*

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### DOUGLAS BADER DSO\* DFC\*

Royal Air Force, 22 victories

Appears in *Wing Leader: Victories 1940-1942*

A notoriously difficult man, Douglas Robert Stuart Bader overcame the loss of his legs in a flying accident to become a hard-fighting squadron leader. In the Battle of Britain he turned around the failing 242 Squadron, a Canadian unit that was suffering from bad morale. A keen proponent of the offensive, he was most famous for promoting wing operations, with varying levels of success. After being shot down in August 1941, he spent the remainder of the war trying to escape from various prison camps.



### 'SCREWBALL' BEURLING DSO DFC DFM\*

Royal Air Force and Royal Canadian Air Force, 31 victories

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A true original, the Canadian pilot George Frederick Beurling was a skilful pilot with exceptional eyesight. Through obsessive study and practice Beurling became a first-class shot. However, he was something of a loner on the ground and in the air, prone to disciplinary problems when away from the action. Towards the end of the war he transferred to the RCAF, where he acquired the nickname 'Buzz'. His stunting and poor attitude towards officers were to get him grounded. He survived the war, only to die in a flying accident when flying with the Israeli Air Force.



### 'JOHNNIE' JOHNSON DSO\*\* DFC\*

Royal Air Force, 38 victories

Appears in *Wing Leader: Supremacy 1943-1945*

The greatest of the RAF's fighter leaders, Johnson initially missed the Battles of France and Britain due to injury. He returned to flying in 1941, and forged a reputation as a squadron leader, then a wing leader, in the Circus sweeps over France. Eventually, he was given command of a Canadian wing and led them to France after D-Day, providing air cover for the Allied advance to the Rhine, and onward until the German capitulation.



### 'PAT' PATTLE DFC\*

Royal Air Force, 40+ victories

Appears in *Wing Leader: Victories 1940-1942*

Sometimes referred to as the highest-scoring Commonwealth ace, Marmaduke Thomas St. John Pattle was a South African-born pilot. He opened his scoring account in 1940 in North Africa, before racking up an extraordinary number of claims against the Italians and Germans over Greece. He was finally killed over Piraeus Harbour in April 1941 (see scenario V16, *Nemesis*), possibly by Franco Lucchini (see below). He has been provisionally credited with 50 victories, though historians can only be certain of 40 or so.



### ADOLF GALLAND

Luftwaffe, 104 victories

Appears in *Wing Leader: Victories 1940-1942*

Adolf Joseph Ferdinand Galland was a larger-than-life figure who fought in Spain and played a major part in developing Luftwaffe fighter doctrine. After fighting over France and Britain in 1940 and 41, he rose to command the Luftwaffe fighter arm as *General der Jagdflieger*. In this role he was a fierce advocate for his fighter pilots but also made poor decisions regarding the training and leadership of his command. Eventually, he fell out with Göring and returned to combat, flying jets in the final months of the war.



### WERNER MÖLDERS

Luftwaffe, 115 victories

Appears in *C3i Magazine #29*

Werner Mölders had his first combat experience with the Condor Legion in Spain, scoring a total of 14 victories. He was to revolutionize air combat tactics by replacing the 'vic' tactical formation, then in use with the Luftwaffe, with the far more powerful and effective four-ship *Schwarm*. After scoring 115 kills in the West and East, Mölders was removed from flying and promoted to *General der Jagdflieger*, inspector all of Germany's fighter units. However, he was to die in an air accident aboard a transport in 1941. His replacement as *General der Jagdflieger* was Galland.



### HANS-JOACHIM MARSEILLE

Luftwaffe, 157 victories

Appears in *Wing Leader: Victories 1940-1942*

Hans-Joachim Marseille was to make his name with JG 27 in North Africa, where the press dubbed him the 'Star of Africa' for scoring most of his kills against the Desert Air Force. A precise shooter, his unit became highly reliant on him for scoring kills, often at the expense of other pilots who had to sit back and watch him take victories. Marseille was to die in September 1942 when his Bf 109 caught fire and his parachute failed to open. Without the maestro, there was no one in JG 27 of the stature or experience to replace him.



### WALTER NOWOTNY

Luftwaffe, 258 victories

Appears in *Wing Leader: Supremacy 1943-1945*

The Austrian-born Nowotny spent most of his career on the Eastern Front with JG 54. His first kills were scored over the Gulf of Riga when he was shot down and spent three days in a life raft. After that, each time he flew he wore the same trousers—his 'victory trousers'—that he'd worn in that first fight. In 1943 Nowotny began scoring at a prodigious rate, forming a flight known as the *Teufelskette* with three other aces and becoming the first pilot to reach 250 victories. Late in the war a much-decorated 23 year-old Nowotny was assigned to lead an Me 262 unit and shake out the bugs of the new jet in combat. However, he lacked the leadership and technical knowledge for the job and his *Kommando Nowotny* was a failure. He was to claim three victories in the Me 262 before being shot down and killed by the Americans.



## **ERICH 'BUBI' HARTMANN**

**Luftwaffe, 352 victories**

*Appears in Wing Leader: Supremacy 1943-1945*

Erich Alfred Hartmann is the most successful fighter ace in history, racking up an incredible number of victories—all but seven of them against the Soviets. It took many missions before Hartmann achieved his first scores, but when he began to roll, the victories kept coming. Hartmann was a master of stalking and ambushing aircraft. He was no marksman like Marseille. Instead, he flew as close as possible to targets before letting fly with his guns and found this technique worked reliably. He was also cautious enough to disengage after each kill before deciding whether to attack again. Towards the end of the war, Hartmann refused a transfer to a jet unit, preferring to stay with JG 52, which he would eventually surrender to the Americans, who then handed him into Soviet custody. After a ten year internment with the Soviets, Hartmann returned to West Germany and a career with the post-war Luftwaffe.



## **'BUDDY' ARCHER**

**United States Army Air Forces, 4.5 victories**

*Appears in Wing Leader: Supremacy 1943-1945*

Lee Andrew Archer Jr. flew 169 combat missions in the European Theatre in a variety of fighters. However, his first kill was in a red-tailed P-51C of the 332nd Fighter Group, and Archer was to make his name in a series of dogfights over Hungary, where he shot down three enemy fighters at ten-minute intervals. Archer was to survive the war and fly missions over Korea.



## **JOHN THACH**

**United States Navy, 6 victories**

*Appears in Wing Leader: Victories 1940-1942*

Originator of the 'Thach Weave', John Thach was a U.S. Navy pilot on the outbreak of World War 2. Faced with the more manoeuvrable Zero fighter, Thach devised a tactic whereby pairs of fighters would weave to cover each other. This teamwork allowed them to shoot down a more nimble foe, turning a disadvantage to an advantage. Thach used his manoeuvre during the Battle of Midway to down three aircraft. Following the battle he was assigned to instruct new naval aviators in this tactic, and he went on to survive the war with 6 aerial victories to his credit.



## **'SWEDE' VEJTASA**

**United States Navy, 10 victories**

*Appears in C3i Magazine #29*

Originally a dive-bomber pilot for the U.S. Navy, Stanley 'Swede' Vejtasa is credited with downing 3 enemy fighters in his Dauntless during the battle of the Coral Sea, as well as scoring a bomb hit on the carrier *Shoho*. He then transferred to fighters and served during the Guadalcanal campaign, where he downed 7 aircraft in one action, making ace status in one day. Vejtasa later returned to the U.S. and served the rest of the war as an instructor and test pilot.



## **'TEX' HILL**

**American Volunteer Group and US Army Air Forces, 18.25 victories**

*Appears in Wing Leader: Victories 1940-1942*

Already a U.S. Naval aviator when the war broke out, David Lee 'Tex' Hill resigned his commission to join the American Volunteer Group, the famous 'Flying Tigers', which were then forming in China. He flew as a squadron leader with the Tigers, scoring 12.25 victories against the Japanese. When the AVG was deactivated, Hill, now a double-ace, then joined the United States Army Air Force, remaining in the China theatre to command the 23rd Fighter Group. 'Tex' Hill eventually took command of the first American jet fighter group and would later serve in Korea.



## **'GABBY' GABRESKI**

**United States Army Air Forces, 34.5 victories**

*Appears in Wing Leader: Supremacy 1943-1945*

Francis Stanley Gabreski was the top American fighter ace of the war, but his first experience of combat was with the Royal Air Force while serving as a liaison with the Polish-manned 315 (Deblin) Squadron. The Poles' experience rubbed off on Gabreski, who on returning to the USAAF began to rack up kills in the European Theatre, tying with Johnnie Johnson before he was shot down over Germany. He spent the rest of the war as a prisoner before being liberated by the Soviet Army.



## **ISAMU KASHIIDE**

**Imperial Japanese Army, 9 victories**

*Appears in Wing Leader: Supremacy 1943-1945*

Isamu Kashiide's long career encompassed the Battles of Khalkin Gol in Mongolia, where he opened his account against the Soviets, as well as the defence of the Home Islands. After participating in the invasion of the Philippines, he flew mainly in home defence and began to specialise in attacks on B-29 Superfortress raids. He was to end the war with claims of 26 B-29s and 7 Soviet fighters, though this has since been revised down to 7 B-29s and 2 Soviet I-16s.



## **SABURO SAKAI**

**Imperial Japanese Navy, 28 victories**

*Appears in Wing Leader: Victories 1940-1942*

A pilot with the Imperial Japanese Naval Air Force, Saburo Sakai was one of the leading aces of the Pacific War, starting his flying career in China before transferring to the Solomon Islands and New Guinea theatres. While on a mission over Guadalcanal, Sakai sustained a loss of vision to one eye, leading to his posting as a flight instructor back in Japan. With the war going badly, Sakai eventually persuaded his superiors to let him return to combat. In the final months of the war he flew escort for Kamikaze missions against the Allies. Sakai survived the war credited with approximately 28 aerial victories, though post-war authors have attributed as many as 64 to him.



## SADAAKI AKAMATSU

**Imperial Japanese Navy, 30 victories**

*Appears in C3i Magazine #29*

Considered a maverick in the strict Imperial Japanese Naval Air Force, Sadaaki Akamatsu fought in China before flying in the Philippines and Dutch East Indies theatres at the outbreak of the Pacific War. Posted back to Japan, Akamatsu flew numerous missions against Allied air attacks on the home islands. Rising and falling in rank due to his notorious lack of discipline—he was said to have flown many missions while drunk—Akamatsu was considered a skilled dogfighter by his contemporaries. He survived the war with approximately 30 aerial victories, but in peacetime eventually succumbed to alcoholism.



## TERESIO MARTINOLI

**Regia Aeronautica and Aeronautica Co-Belligerente, 22 victories**

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Earning decorations with both the Axis and Allies during World War 2, Martinoli began flying for the Regia Aeronautica in the North African and Malta theatres. With the war going against Italy, Martinoli was posted to the defence of Sicily and the Italian mainland, where he was credited with shooting down a P-38 and a B-17. When the Italian Armistice was announced, Martinoli joined the Co-Belligerent air force on the side of the Allies. Martinoli was killed in a flying accident whilst converting from the Italian MC.205 fighter to the American P-39.



## HIROYOSHI NISHIZAWA

**Imperial Japanese Navy, 36 victories**

*Appears in Wing Leader: Victories 1940-1942*

Known to his friend Saburo Sakai as 'The Devil', Hiroyoshi Nishizawa was one of the Imperial Japanese Navy's leading aces, seeing action over New Guinea and Guadalcanal. A reserved loner, Nishizawa fought on despite attacks of malaria and was famed as an aerobatic pilot. After Guadalcanal, Nishizawa served as a pilot instructor before returning to combat in the Philippines to escort the Navy's first organized aerial Kamikaze mission at Mabalacat in 1944. The next day, Nishizawa was killed when the transport plane he was a passenger in was shot down.



## LIDYA LITVYAK

**Soviet Air Defence Forces, 12 victories**

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Named the 'White Rose of Stalingrad' by Soviet propagandists, Lidya Vladimirovna Litvyak was a member of the 586th Fighter Regiment of the Air Defence Forces. However, she fought mostly in men's regiments, eventually being appointed a flight commander in the 73rd Guards Fighter Regiment. Operating in the Stalingrad, Orel and Kursk theatres, Litvyak built her scores until she failed to return from a mission one day in 1943. Her remains were not discovered until the 1970s and she was awarded the Hero of the Soviet Union posthumously.



## ADRIANO VISCONTI

**Regia Aeronautica and Aeronautica Nazionale Repubblicana, 10 victories**

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Beginning his career as a ground attack pilot with a reputation for indiscipline, Adriano Visconti di Lampugnano demonstrated such heroism that he was able to switch to fighters and was active in the Mediterranean theatre flying for the Regia Aeronautica. After the Italian Armistice, Visconti defected to the Fascist Social Republic. With the military collapse of Italy, Visconti surrendered to and was shot by communist partisans. Though he never claimed more than 10 victories, later sources would credit him with 26.



## MIKHAIL BARANOV

**Soviet Frontal Aviation, 24 victories**

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Mikhail Dmitriyevich Baranov was the leading Soviet ace of 1942. Flying for Frontal Aviation in the Stalingrad area, he claimed several victories before being shot down. He evaded capture with a wounded leg for two weeks before returning to his unit. On another mission, in August 1942, Baranov shot down 3 aircraft and then, when out of ammunition, rammed and destroyed a fourth. Now a Hero of the Soviet Union, Baranov was feted by the press and performed various publicity tours. Returning to combat duty with the all-ace unit, the 9th Guards Fighter Regiment, Baranov was killed in January 1943 when performing aerobatics over his aerodrome.



## FRANCO LUCCHINI

**Regia Aeronautica, 21 victories**

*Appears in C3i Magazine #29*

Already a veteran flier after claiming 5 victories during the Spanish Civil War, Franco Lucchini flew for the Regia Aeronautica over Malta and in the North African theatre, where he is credited with downing, though not killing, the British ace Marmaduke 'Pat' Pattle. Later on, after returning from convalescence after being wounded, Lucchini took part in the defence of Sicily. On 5th July 1943 he was shot down and killed over Catania by defensive fire from a B-17. The *Medaglia d'Oro al Valor Militare* was awarded posthumously, after the war.



## IVAN SYTOV

**Soviet Frontal Aviation, 26 victories**

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Serving in the Stalingrad and Kursk areas of Russia for the Soviet Air Force, Ivan Nikitovich Sytov flew with the 788th Fighter Regiment, scoring several victories. Later, when flying with the 5th Guards Fighter Regiment, Sytov scored the majority of his 26 credited aerial victories before being shot down and killed in October 1943.



## ALEXANDER POKRYSHKIN

**Soviet Frontal Aviation, 59 victories**

*Appears in Wing Leader: Supremacy 1943-1945*



Alexander Ivanovich Pokryshkin was the great tactician of the Soviet Air Forces. Having survived the early battles of the German invasion, Pokryshkin began to critique Soviet tactics and advocate for new doctrine. This resulted in him being grounded and court-martialed. However, he was soon vindicated and returned to duty in time for the battles over the Kuban. As a high-scoring ace and keen analyst of air combat, he was able to guide the development of new tactics during the Kuban battles. His principles for fighting were simple and derivative, but were founded on hard-earned combat experience. The new doctrine helped the Soviets to an air victory over the Luftwaffe. As the war continued Pokryshkin gave up a safe desk job to continue flying, and when ordered not to fly he frequently disobeyed (see scenario S12, *The Return of the Guards*). After the war he fell out of favour, in part because of his plain speaking as well as his liking for American aircraft like the P-39 fighter. Though he eventually became a Marshal of the Air Force he never rose above middling rank.

## IVAN KOZHEDUB

**Soviet Frontal Aviation, 66 victories**

*Appears in Wing Leader: Supremacy 1943-1945*



The top-scoring Allied ace of the war, Ivan Kozhedub spent 1941-42 serving as an instructor pilot before he could wrangle a transfer to the front. Possessing a rare skill for deflection shooting, his first kill came during the Kursk battles, and from there his score accumulated. He was most associated with Lavochkin aircraft, such as the La-5 and La-7. After the war he led a jet fighter division in Korea against some of his former American allies.