



"Narrow Escape"

by Heinz Krebs



An individually numbered limited edition of 350 fine art prints

PREVIEW



Heavy stock, acid-free paper. Overall size: 27" wide x 26,5" high. Image size: 23,6" wide x 21,2" high. Each print in this edition is individually numbered, signed by the artist, and issued with a certificate of authenticity.

Countersigned by five highly decorated German WWII Luftwaffe pilots, all of them recipients of Germany's highest military award, the Knight's Cross. They are Me109 aces Hugo Dahmer and Otto Schultz plus He111 pilots Hajo Herrmann, Heinrich Suedel and Hans Kirn. \$ 195.00

It is the late summer of 1940, and the Battle of Britain is at its height. Racing for the coast, following a bombing mission over southern England, a straggling He111 of KG55 has been attacked by a Spitfire of RAF Fighter Command. The bomber is badly damaged, but in the nick of time a pair of Me109s of JG26 have come to the rescue. If they are lucky the Heinkel crew may still make it back to their base in France.

On 7 September 1940, the first raid on London was launched, attacking docks in the East End of the city. During these massive raids on London the RAF airfields in Southern England remained largely undis-

turbed. This break from bombing the fighter bases gave the RAF critical breathing space. It was the turning point in the Battle of Britain.

For the Luftwaffe, the most damaging aspect of the switch to London was the longer range. The Me 109 escorts had a limited fuel capacity, and this left many raids completely undefended by fighter escorts while being exposed to further attacks from additional RAF fighters based north of London.

As in Heinz Krebs' painting, the return from the bombing missions back to their bases across the English Channel often meant running the gauntlet for the



"Narrow Escape" (detail)



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German bomber crews. This crew obviously welcomes their rescuers from a desperate situation with distinct feelings of elation.

The Battle of Britain culminated on September 15, 1940 with two massive waves of German attacks that were decisively repulsed by the RAF. The German defeat caused Hitler to order the postponement of preparations for the invasion of Britain two days later. Henceforth, in the face of mounting losses in men, aircraft and the lack of adequate replacements, the Luftwaffe switched from daylight bombing raids to night-time attacks instead. The threat of invasion was essentially over although the German night blitz on London and other British cities continued into 1941.

✚ The signatories



Hugo Dahmer

* May 7th, 1918 in Koblenz, Germany

Dahmer initially served with 4./JG 26. His first victory was a French Morane 406 on 16 May 1940. Dahmer performed well during the Battle of Britain with a score of 9 kills by the end of September 1940. On 1 February 1941, he was transferred to 1./JG 77 based in Norway, claiming 11 victories in the first 3 weeks of the Russian campaign. Dahmer was awarded the Knight's Cross on 30 July for 22 victories. Following a brief spell as a fighter pilot instructor, Dahmer rejoined JG 26 in December 1942 but transferred to JG 2 a few weeks later, and was appointed Staffelkapitän of 1./JG 2 on 17 August 1943. On 11 September, he was badly wounded in combat with RAF Spitfires near Rouen and spent the rest of the war instructing at fighter schools. 307 combat missions, 57 victories. Decorations include: Knight's Cross, German Cross, Cup of Honour, and Operational Flying Clasp (fighter pilot) in Bronze, Silver, and Gold, Iron Cross 1st and 2nd class.

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Otto Schultz

* May 31st, 1920 in Dannenberg, Germany

One of the proverbial German "Experten" who managed to survive five years of air combat by his skill and experience. Joined 4./JG51 stationed near the English Channel in the autumn of 1940. 40th victory in Tunisia during the Africa campaign on December 4th, 1942. Awarded the Knight's Cross after his 53rd aerial victory. Shot down and seriously injured by P-51 near Sofia, Bulgaria on June 28th, 1944. Rejoined II./JG51 as this unit's leader on December 24th, 1944 and won five more victories before the war ended. More than 800 combat missions, 73 aerial victories. Decorations include: Knight's Cross (March 14th, 1943 as Master Sergeant), German Cross (November 1st, 1942), and Cup of Honour (November 3rd, 1941).

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Hajo Herrmann

* August 1st, 1913 in Kiel, Germany

One of the Luftwaffe's most innovative air tacticians during WWII, and a close confidant of Herrmann Göring. Joined the newly formed Luftwaffe in 1935. Bomber pilot in the Condor Legion in 1936 and 1937. Joined KG-4, and wrote several well received tactical reports. When WWII began, he flew Heinkel He-111's in Poland and Norway. By 1940 Herrmann was Commander of the 7th Staffel of KG-4, and led many attacks on England during the Battle of Britain. Posted to Sicily in February 1941, flying

against Malta and Greece. In one such attack, he dropped a single bomb on an ammunition ship. The resulting explosion sank 11 ships and made the Greek port of Piraeus unusable for many months. In early 1942 he was Commander of III/KG30, attacking arctic convoys from Norway, including the infamous attacks on PQ-17. At the end of war he was captured by the Russians, spending long years in captivity. 370 combat missions. Decorations include: Knight's Cross with Oak Leaves and Swords, German Cross, Cup of Honour, Spanish Cross in Gold with Swords, Operational Flying Clasp (bomber pilot) in Bronze, Silver, and Gold, Pilot Badge with Diamonds (only 27 awarded), Iron Cross 1st and 2nd class.



Hans Kirn

* August 8th, 1920 in Lindau, Germany

Joined the National Socialist Flying Corps NSFK on April 1st, 1939. Kirn started his basic military and flight training on October 14th, 1939 and graduated from pilot school on September 30th, 1940. Posted to Prague Rusin, then on to Blindflugschule (instrument flight training school) Strassburg until December 1941. Flew combat missions in Lehrgeschwader 1 from January 1942 through October 1944. Then joined Kampfgeschwader 6 (KG 6) from November of 1944 until hostilities ended in May

1945. Flew the following aircraft types: Me 109, Me 262, Ju 86, Ju 52, He 111, Do 17, Ju 88, and Ju 188. More than 210 combat missions. Decorations include: Knight's Cross (February 29th, 1944 as Oberfeldwebel), German Cross, Cup of Honour, Operational Flying Clasp (bomber pilot) in Bronze, Silver, and Gold, Iron Cross 1st and 2nd class, decorated for service in the Krim campaign.



Heinrich Suedel

* April 23rd, 1920 in Wellspang, Germany

Flew in France during the early period of WWII. Took part in the entire Battle of Britain as a pilot in Kampfgeschwader 55 (KG 55) until the spring of 1941. Then posted to the Eastern Front, where he spent nearly all of his remaining flying time in WWII including many missions over Russia. Took part in the Stalingrad and Caucasus campaigns. 408 combat missions, nearly all of them in the Heinkel He 111. Conversion training to the Me 262 jet near the end of the war. Decorations include: Knight's Cross

(April 7th, 1945 as Oberleutnant), German Cross, Cup of Honour, Operational Flying Clasp (bomber pilot) in Bronze, Silver, and Gold (with "400" missions bar), Iron Cross 1st and 2nd class.