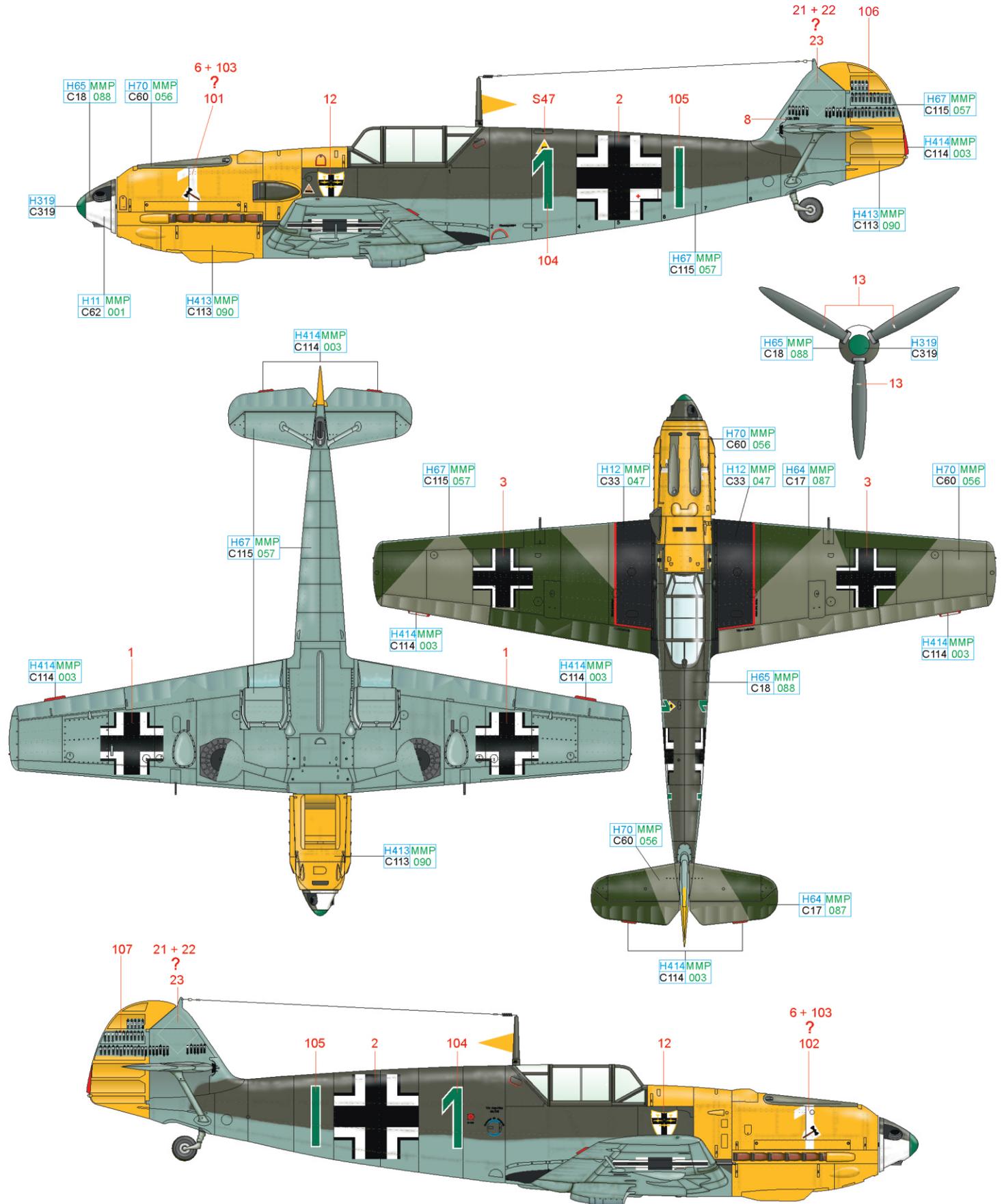


A W. Nr. 1559, flown by Hptm. Wilhelm Balthasar, CO of III./JG 3, Desvres, France, November 1940

Hptm. Balthasar was promoted to command III. Gruppe JG 3 on September 1st, 1940, position he did not hold for too long. Three days after his promotion he was wounded in combat with RAF No. 222 Squadron Spitfires over Canterbury. The injury was fairly light, within 14 day he returned to fly sorties. The following injury, much more serious this time, prevented him from operational flying until the middle of February 1941, when he was promoted to command Jagdgeschwader 2. The camouflage of the Balthasar's aircraft is showing several modifications in comparison to June of the same year. The cowling and weapons covers and the rudder were painted yellow, the middle and rear fuselage sections received the coat of RLM 70 color. In addition, "white 1" received the new III./JG 3 insignia introduced by Balthasar. The number of arrows painted on the rudder indicating the kill score increased as well.



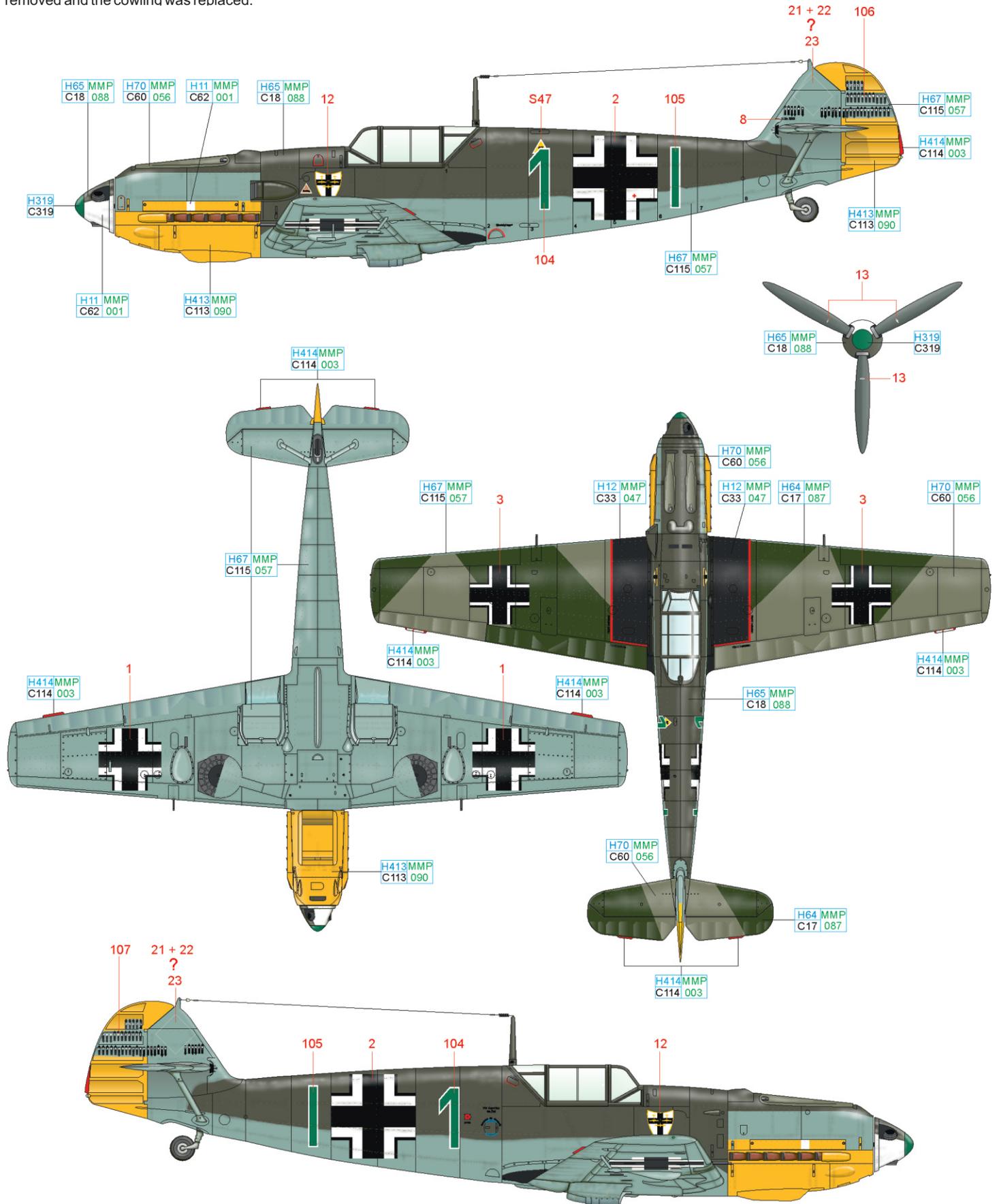
RLM 70 H65 MMP C18 088 RLM 25 H319 C319

RLM 02 H70 MMP C60 056 RLM 71 H64 MMP C17 087 RLM 65 H67 MMP C115 057 WHITE H11 MMP C62 001 RLM 23 H414MMP C114 003 RLM 04 H413MMP C113 090 BLACK H12 MMP C33 047

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B W. Nr. 1559, flown by Hptm. Walter Oesau, CO of III./JG 3, Desvres, France, beginning of 1941

After Balthasar's injury which took him out of the combat flying, his successor to lead III./JG 3 became Hptm. Walter "Gulle" Oesau who was promoted to command the unit on November 11th, 1941. The fighter ace with 39 kills to his credit, The Knight's Cross recipient (awarded on August 20th, 1940) was more than equal successor to Wilhelm Balthasar. In the spring of 1941, III./JG 3 was re-assigned from the Chanel La Manche area of operation to Germany where the re-equipment to the more modern "Friedrichs" awaited. Simultaneously with taking over the command Walter Oesau "inherited" the Balthasar's aircraft. During the period he was flying it further changes in its appearance occurred, the pennant on the antenna mast indicating the Gruppe commander's plane was removed and the cowling was replaced.



RLM 70 H65 MMP C18 088 RLM 25 H319 C319

RLM 02 H70 MMP C60 056 RLM 71 H64 MMP C17 087 RLM 65 H67 MMP C115 057 WHITE H11 MMP C62 001 RLM 23 H414 MMP C114 003 RLM 04 H413 MMP C113 090 BLACK H12 MMP C33 047

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