



ME-262 TWO SEAT TRAINER

This German ME-262 was captured in 1945 and sent to the US for evaluation. Eventually it was given to the Willow Grove, Pennsylvania Naval Air Station where it sat for many years as a display at the entrance to the base. In 1972, I visited this facility as a Naval Sea Cadet and they allowed us to sit inside this aircraft. Since we were at the facility for over a week, I was part of a work detail that also cleaned up the jet engines, which were sitting in a hanger on the runway. The Naval Aviation Museum restoration staff did an excellent job restoring this rare example of an ME-262.



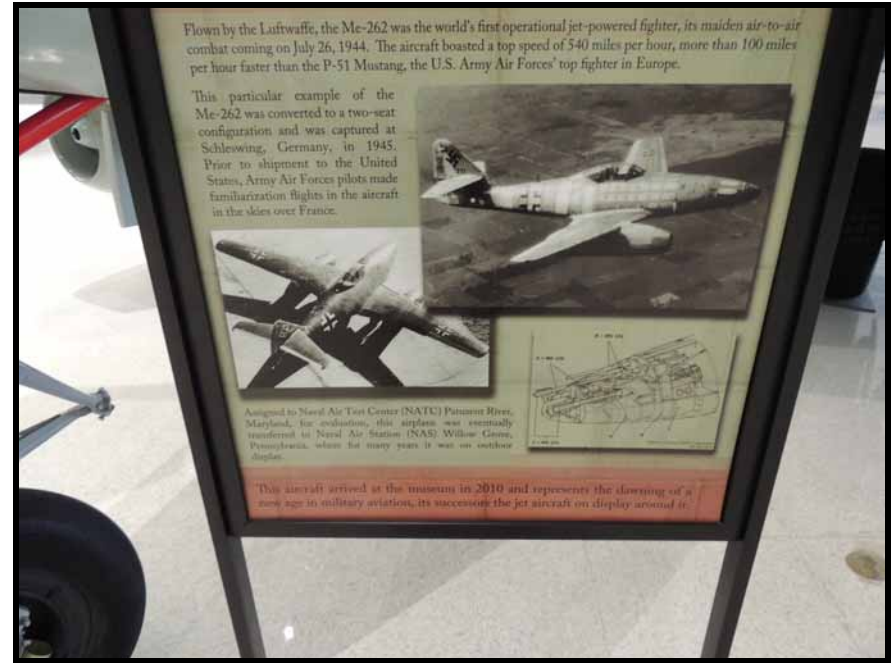












Flown by the Luftwaffe, the Me-262 was the world's first operational jet-powered fighter, its maiden air-to-air combat coming on July 26, 1944. The aircraft boasted a top speed of 540 miles per hour, more than 100 miles per hour faster than the P-51 Mustang, the U.S. Army Air Forces' top fighter in Europe.

This particular example of the Me-262 was converted to a two-seat configuration and was captured at Schleswing, Germany, in 1945. Prior to shipment to the United States, Army Air Forces pilots made familiarization flights in the aircraft in the skies over France.



Assigned to Naval Air Test Center (NATC) Patuxent River, Maryland, for evaluation, this airplane was eventually transferred to Naval Air Station (NAS) Willow Grove, Pennsylvania, where for many years it was on outdoor display.

This aircraft arrived at the museum in 2010 and represents the dawn of a new age in military aviation, its successor the jet aircraft on display around it.