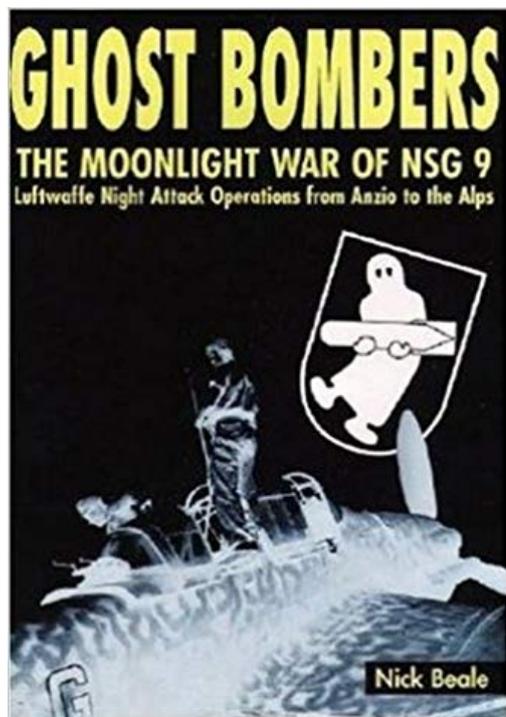


# Ghost Bombers- The Moonlight War of NSG 9 Luftwaffe Night Attack Operations from Anzio to the Alps *by* Nick Beale



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For the first time, author Nick Beale, tells the story of a Luftwaffe ground attack unit - NSG 9 - and its hazardous, pin-point bombing missions in Italy during the Second World War. NSG 9 was formed in late 1943 from veteran pilots drawn from the Eastern Front. Intended to use captured Italian aircraft for fighting partisans, it was rushed into action against the Anzio beachhead with just a handful of Fiat biplanes. Reequipped with the famous Ju 87 Stuka - and later the Fw 190 - the unit was heavily committed against the Anglo-American breakout in May 1944 and then operated over Rome and the Appenine Mountains during the summer of that year. It was the first German night attack unit to encounter modern Allied fighter defenses and suffered heavy losses, mainly at the hands of RAF Beaufighters. Ghost Bombers is based on interviews and correspondence with many former veterans of NSG 9. Much is told in the words of the men who fought on both sides in the night skies over Italy. Nick Beale is co-author of the widely acclaimed Air War Italy 1944-45: The Axis Air Forces from the Liberation of Rome to the Surrender. He was one of the first authors to use ULTRA material - deciphered German signals - in reconstructing the Luftwaffe's activities.



## Reviews of the **Ghost Bombers- The Moonlight War of NSG 9 Luftwaffe Night Attack Operations from Anzio to the Alps** by Nick Beale

Bukelv

A VERY in depth book covering a little known specialist unit in the German Luftwaffe during WW 2. Serving in Italy, this tiny night harassment squadron started off flying German and Italian trainers, then Fiat biplanes on their missions. Eventually they switched to the ubiquitous Junkers Ju-87, the Stuka. Flying low and slow over Allied lines, they used mainly anti-personnel bombs to attack nighttime convoys and deny British and American soldiers sleep. They were just beginning to convert to the Fw-190 as the war ended. The final chapter on what happened to the squadron members you learned of in the book was especially interesting. A little over 200 pages with lots of photos and about 10 full color aircraft profiles, I felt it was a very worth while read.

Cerekelv

HB-w DJ///9" x 12"///208 glossy pages///231 BW photos///14 full page color profiles///6 maps///4 drawings///4 pages of charts. Night bomber group--cant go wrong. Hope this helps,,,cap

Liarienen

Very interesting read so far, have not finished it yet but they do lag on about the boring stuff, there is no filler in it. Excellent detail so far.

Aloo

Though vitally important to Germany's war effort, ground attack units rarely received the historical recognition they deserved. From 1944 to war's end, Nachtschlachtgruppe 9 - NSGr 9 - carried out nocturnal ground attack missions against Allied forces in Italy. British author Nick Bale recounts the unit's history in GHOST BOMBERS, THE MOONLIGHT WAR OF NSG 9; LUFTWAFFE NIGHT ATTACK OPERATIONS FROM ANZIO TO THE ALPS, a 2001 Classic Publications release.

Created in late 1943, NSGr 9 crews initially flew anti-partisan and night ground attack missions against the Anzio beach head using Caproni 314 light bombers and Fiat CR 42 biplanes. In April 1944 the unit converted to Junker 87s, which became its main mount although FW 190s were introduced in 1945. The unit's Stukas carried out attacks on Allied truck convoys, bases, etc. and furnished air support for German forces. From mid-1944 on, NSGr 9 was the sole Luftwaffe offensive force in Italy. Despite an a/c strength of only 30-40 a/c and steadily dwindling fuel stocks, the unit soldiered on till war's end, logging some successful night strikes but also suffering steady losses to flak and Allied Beaufighter nightfighters.

First off, Beale's research is absolutely top-notch. His mix of official German and British documents including ULTRA intercepts, combat reports and reminiscences from NSG 9 vets makes for a comprehensive and authoritative narrative.

The illustrations are, likewise, superb. The book features hundreds of pix of NSGr 9 a/c and crews, squadron-life shots, Allied nightfighters and other a/c, crash scenes, etc. along with maps, illustrations and diagrams and 14 gorgeous color profiles of NSGr 9 Fiats, Capronis, Arados, Junkers and FWs along with Allied Beaus, Spits and P-51s. Visually, the book is a delight.

In short, GHOST BOMBERS is military aviation history at its best. Beale's book will stand as THE definitive history of this valiant if unheralded unit. Highly recommended.

ladushka

This is a unit given a mission: night harassment, and trying to adapt an airplane to the task. Unlike the Eastern front, where the chance of meeting a night fighter was low, over Italy, a pilot might find a Beaufighter spitting lead. So, first, it had to be maneuverable, with good endurance, and allow good visibility. The Caproni bomber was available, but not safe. Fiat CR.42s were maneuverable, but hard to land.

As the Allies moved up the boot, even landing at Anzio, it became important to Gen Von Richthofen to have a unit overhead at night. Six pilots began operations with NSG 9- carrying 100kg bombs. Soon, Ju 87s were added, able to carry 750kg bombs, but they were less maneuverable. This could not have worked well in overcast weather; the higher speed allowed less time to choose targets or avoid sudden obstacles. For some reason Fw 190s were issued to NSG 9 in late war. Pictures show the airfield conditions, planes used and wrecks. There are reproductions of propoganda leaflets, newspapers and even some maps showing the area of operations. Sidebars contain wartime experiences of many unit personnel.

NSG 9 had to land before dawn; the Allied fighter bombers hunted for any sign of planes or troops, daylight belonged with them.

Appendices contain Identification codes, paintwork, Allied victory claims against NSG 9, actual unit losses, aircraft assigned and strength.

Simple

Nick Beale's book tells us about the birth and fully-combat history of the NSG 9. Based on the extensive bulk of sources, this title provides all the unknown peripetias of the unit. NSG 9 saw active service in the Eastern Front, where it was formed. Created under the influence of the Soviet tactics of disturbing bombardment of German positions, the unit then operated in Italy, and quite sucessfully. The Italian Front was the some sort of test site for pilots and technicians. Then retreat to Austria and finally the surrender. Extremely interesting title from Ian Allan's imprint, the Classic Publications.

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