

# *Fighting the Bf109K-4*

## *by sick*

The Bf109K-4 is probably the oddest bird in the sky. Really odd. Not just your normal run of the mill odd but a mixture of flight characteristics that would make a circus freak show cringe. The huge, amazingly powerful engine gives her magnificent acceleration, especially at altitude. The old Bf109 airframe gives her a climb rate an Atlas rocket would envy, especially combined with the raw power of that in-line engine. She's very fast, again especially at high altitude, and that 30mm cannon can shred a B-17G like Oliver North. But once you've got that head of steam that she can generate so easily, you'll discover you can no longer turn. You can't pull up. You can't dive. Your rudder doesn't work. Handling is so bad at speed, you'd be better off strapped to a brick. Come to think of it, handling at any speed is miserable. And that 30mm, while great at first, has very little ammunition, and its rate of fire is more like a field howitzer than a machine cannon.

A crafty Koenig driver, however, will ruin your day. Pilots like '-mo-' and 'vigl' are accurate enough with that 30mm to pull off four and five kill sorties regularly. And as long as she's under 300 kias, she has excellent vertical maneuvering, and climbs and accelerates so well, she can do repeat hammerheads and actually *gain* altitude each time.

As a Pony driver, remember your advantages. You are faster, you turn better, you can hold your own in the vertical, and you can maneuver handily at the 350+ kias speeds that lock up the Koenig. But don't lose airspeed and expect to get it back. The 109K accelerates and climbs much better than you, which means your opponent has better energy income, even though they have worse energy retention. This means that a hard turning angles fight with a K will leave you very vulnerable to the K's best attack: a sudden pure vertical pull up that ends in a hammerhead diving down with 30mm blaring on your stalled out airplane. Don't follow the K in a zoom, or even in a sustained climb unless you have an obvious energy advantage. Instead, extend and take advantage of your energy retention to come around with a full head of steam. If the K tries any hard maneuvering of the non-sudden zoom variety, stick with them. Your E retention and better turning will gain you angles and energy at the same time. Go ahead and drop a notch of flaps if you have to, as long as your bandit doesn't have friends around. But if you get down to a co-E situation, beware of the pure vertical pull up, which is always the K's ace in the hole.

The Bf109K-4 was built as a bomber interceptor and it shows. The Pony was built to kill bomber interceptors and that shows, too. But don't lose your head and your E along with it, because the crafty Koenig pusher will invariably hammerhead suddenly and leave you riding silk.