

# YAK-3

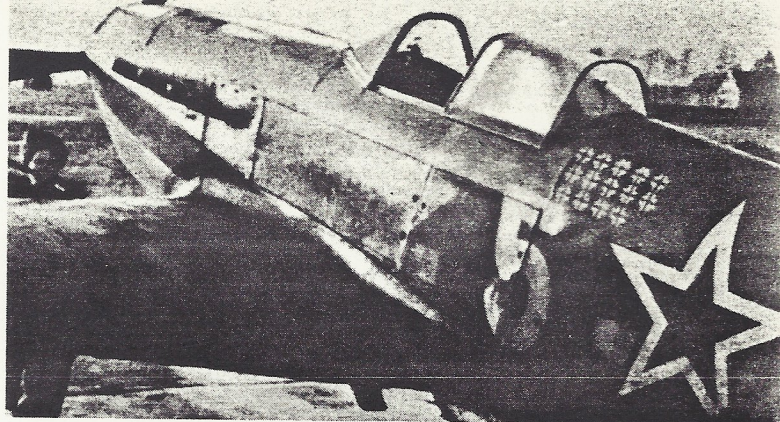
## WORLD WAR TWO FIGHTER

Produced in greater quantity than any other YAK design during World War II this YAK-3 was one of the most successful Russian fighter planes. It was developed from the earlier YAK-1 of 1939 for which Alexander Sergeivich Yakovlev won a prize of 100,000 rubles (and an elegant automobile) in a Soviet design competition. The craft was a simple, lightweight, fast-climbing fighter with high performance at low altitudes where it was intended to maintain aerial superiority directly over the battlefield.

The YAK-3 had a loaded weight of only 5864-lbs which is less than half of some of the American and British fighters of that period. It could climb to 16,000-ft in four minutes and had a range of 560 miles at 193-mph. The Klimov M-105 PA twelve cylinder, liquid cooled, 1210-hp engine was fitted with a 20-mm cannon which fired through the propeller shaft. Two 12.7-mm machine guns were installed in the cowling with cocking levers extending into the cockpit. Top speed was 404 miles per hour and the craft is said to have compared favorably with the British Spitfire.

Among the famous fighter units on the Eastern Front which flew the YAK-3 was the Normandie-Niemen Regiment. This group of Free French volunteers composed of four Escadrilles which arrived in Russia late in 1942 from North Africa proved very successful and destroyed 273 German aircraft in two years of action. Yet the Normandie-Niemen Regiment never consisted of more (See pg. 48)

BY WALTER A. MUSCIANO



These photos show the YAK-3 which was flown by World War Two Ace Roger Sauvage on the Russian Front. Note tricolor spinner and lightning arrow.

