



# American Raiders: The Race to Capture the Luftwaffe's Secrets

*Wolfgang W. E. Samuel*

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At the close of World War II, Allied forces faced frightening new German secret weapons--buzz bombs, V-2's, and the first jet fighters. When Hitler's war machine began to collapse, the race was on to snatch these secrets before the Soviet Red Army found them.

The last battle of World War II, then, was not for military victory but for the technology of the Third Reich. In *American Raiders: The Race to Capture the Luftwaffe's Secrets*, Wolfgang W. E. Samuel assembles from official Air Force records and survivors' interviews the largely untold stories of the disarmament of the once mighty Luftwaffe and of Operation Lusty--the hunt for Nazi technologies.

In April 1945 American armies were on the brink of winning their greatest military victory, yet America's technological backwardness was shocking when measured against that of the retreating enemy. Senior officers, including the Commanding General of the Army Air Forces Henry Harley "Hap" Arnold, knew all too well the seemingly overwhelming victory was less than it appeared. There was just too much luck involved in its outcome.

Two intrepid American Army Air Forces colonels set out to regain America's technological edge. One, Harold E. Watson, went after the German jets; the other, Donald L. Putt, went after the Nazis' intellectual capital--their world-class scientists.

With the help of German and American pilots, Watson brought the jets to America; Putt persevered as well and succeeded in bringing the German scientists to the Army Air Forces' aircraft test and evaluation center at Wright Field. A young P-38 fighter pilot, Lloyd Wenzel, a Texan of German descent, then turned these enemy aliens into productive American citizens--men who built the rockets that took America to the moon, conquered the sound barrier, and laid the foundation for America's civil and military aviation of the future.

*American Raiders: The Race to Capture the Luftwaffe's Secrets* details the contest won, a triumph that shaped America's victories in the Cold War.

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