



This very important Focke-Wulf document of November 1944 shows with great clarity the intended colours that were to be painted on production Ta 152s. Numbered 8-152.000-4500, it is crucial to understanding the colours intended for the Ta 152 production aircraft, because it stated clearly and without contradiction that the colours to be used on these aircraft were RLM 81 and RLM 82 for the upper surfaces. There is no mention whatsoever of the green RLM 83 which is sometimes quoted for these aircraft in published sources, without any documented evidence to back up this claim. Issued originally in March 1944, it illustrates the camouflage pattern and colours intended for the Ta 152 series. The scheme shown on this drawing was the familiar No.5 pattern used virtually continuously for standard Fw 190 fighters. The colours originally prescribed were the established mid-war greys of RLM 74 and RLM 75 for the upper surfaces, and RLM 76 for the undersides. However, in November 1944 this drawing was amended, with the colours 74 and 75 removed, and the late-war RLM 81 and RLM 82 substituted. These colours had already been introduced in RLM documentation some weeks previously and Focke-Wulf was following official policy in amending its documentation accordingly. It is also interesting to note that in its November 1944 form there is a recommendation on this document that the lower surfaces of the aircraft should be left unpainted, up to a line faintly visible on the original copy on the lower fuselage sides. Otherwise the underside colour RLM 76 was to be used.

incremental differences between the pattern used on the Ta 152H-0 pre-production aircraft and that employed on the Ta 152H-1, or those that are believed to have equated to the Ta 152H-1 layout. Another variation concerned the entire front fuselage. As related elsewhere in this book, the engine and front-end of the late war Focke-Wulfs was sub-contracted and produced as a complete unit, ready for mating to the forward part of the fuselage. This also included the painting of this front end, and so it was noticeable in the Fw 190D-9 series and the Ta 152 that the upper cowling was often painted in one colour only by the sub-contractor, despite the official RLM-prescribed pattern drawings.

A major change took place in the colours applied to Luftwaffe day fighters in 1944, and the shades introduced during that year were those that were duly applied to many of the prototype/development, and certainly to the production Ta 152 series aircraft. Although the underside colour of RLM 76 was retained, three upper surface shades were introduced which were a major departure from the mid-war greys. These three new colours were a reddish-brown, a light green and a darker green. Unfortunately, it is these colours which have been the source of much debate and argument in recent years. The reddish-brown shade is known to have been RLM 81, sometimes called Dunkelbraun (dark brown) or Olivbraun (olive-brown) but referred to in at least one official document as Braun-violett (violet-brown). The two green shades were RLM 82 and RLM 83. These two shades of green have caused most problems in identification, and it is possible that the exact nature of these shades will continue to be the source of indefinite argument. For many years it has been believed that RLM 82 was a dark green, with RLM 83 being a much lighter grass-like green. However, it now appears more likely that RLM 83 was in fact the darker of the two greens. The shades RLM 81 and RLM 82 in fact could well be similar to the pre-war RLM 61 Dunkelbraun (dark brown) and RLM 62 Grün (green), as used in the three-colour upper surface splinter pattern employed on several Luft-

waffe aircraft types prior to the start of World War Two, with RLM 83 equating to a pre-war green shade called RLM 64.

The first significant mention of these new late-war colours was made in an RLM directive of 1 July 1944 named 'Sammelmitteilung'. This was a collected set of instructions which brought together several threads relating to the new camouflage colours that were in the course of being developed and introduced. It ended the use of the early war upper surface colours of RLM 70 Schwarzgrün (black-green) and RLM 71 Dunkelgrün (dark green) which were by then in any case superseded by the mid-war greys RLM 74 and RLM 75, and replaced them by RLM 81 and RLM 82. Unfortunately, sample colour cards for these new shades were not immediately made available. However, in 'Sammelmitteilung Nr. 2' of 15 August 1944, RLM 74 was to be replaced by one of the new late-war shades, and RLM 83 was introduced in documentary form for the first time. Gradually the three new shades of RLM 81, 82 and 83 were brought into employment, while the older mid-war RLM 75 grey also stayed in use for some time in combinations of these colours.

However, despite many widespread claims in some published sources, that 83 was extensively used, there is little documented evidence for this. Although permutations of RLM 81 with RLM 82, and/or RLM 83 or RLM 75, or indeed just RLM 82 with RLM 83, were possible, it is very difficult to say for certain from many of the surviving contemporary black & white photographs which combinations were used on which aircraft, unless there is surviving documentary evidence which points to specific colour combinations for specific aircraft types.

With regard to Focke-Wulf, it is most likely that the pre-production and production Ta 152 aircraft were finished in some of these late-war colours, with the undersides remaining in the existing established RLM 76 light blue-grey. Indeed, Focke-Wulf was known to have had a policy when possible of re-painting re-built or modified prototype or development aircraft, and so it appears likely that some if not all of