**Press Kit Questions**

**Q1. Why did you write your book?**

A1. I’ve always had an interest in aviation and hold a personal connection to WWII.

**Q2. Your story, *Stealth*, is also about two men, the Horten brothers. Who are they?**

A2. Actually, there were three brothers. Wolfram, Walter, and Reimar. All three men were Luftwaffe pilots during the second world war. Wolfram was shot down over the English Channel early in the war. Walter and Reimar were best known as aircraft designers.

**Q3. That’s interesting. Pilots for the Luftwaffe as well as designers. What was their claim to fame?**

A3. The two brothers had worked on gliders for many years. This led to a new delta-wing design, a “Nurflügel” (one wing). It was revolutionary to say the least.

**Q4. A one-wing design? Please explain.**

A4. A standard airplane design at the time had a prominent cockpit, fuselage, or empennage, wings and a tail component. For example, the American P-38 Lightning even had a twin tail boom. But the Horten brothers envisioned an aircraft with no tail at all.

**Q5. Hmm, that went against traditional thinking. So, did it make it past the design stage?**

A5. It did indeed. They developed several designs, initially with gliders and followed up with a full-scale prototype utilizing two piston-powered motors in the aft portion of the wing. It wasn’t until 1943 when Herman Göring, head of the Luftwaffe, called for all designers to come up with new ideas/concepts. That is when the Hortens introduced their revolutionary design, amidst skepticism from well-established designers like Messerschmitt and Heinkel. Göring, though himself skeptical at first, was dully impressed and authorized the Hortens to commence building a jet engine powered prototype.

**Q6. Were they successful? It seems like they encountered opposition from the start. I mean, every new design is wrought with all sorts of inherent problems and supply issues.**

A6. That’s very true. They encountered some issues, like securing the favoured type of jet engine that would fit into the existing inlets. Still, they were able to overcome many obstacles and began conducting test flights in late 1944.

**Q7. What sort of results can you share with us?**

A7. Well, The Ho 229 V2 (prototype), as it was known, was capable of reaching the then unattainable speed of 1000 km/hr. That’s 620 mph! The latest version of the American P-51 Mustang came far short of that. Its top speed was @700 km/hr, or 430 mph, and that apparently was in a dive. A reciprocating engine airplane was no match for a turbine-powered jet. The British were developing a jet fighter, but it didn’t factor into the war.

**Q8. Do you have other details about its design?**

A8. Of course. There’s much more. Did you know that the aircraft consisted of a steel-tubing inner shell overlaid with plywood panels? That’s right, plywood constructed from layers of spruce. Many have heard of Howard Hughes, the philanthropist, and his all-wooden designed amphibious plane, dubbed the Spruce Goose. Although Hughes test flew his airplane in 1947, the Horten brothers had beaten him to it by several years.

**Q9. I heard of rumours that the Horten airplane had stealth capabilities. Is that really true, or was it something dreamt up by the notorious German propaganda machine?**

A9. It’s not propaganda. Many years after Germany had lost the war, Reimar Horten related that his team of designers had delved into what we today would refer to as stealth technology. Reimar stated that he and Walter experimented with mixing charcoal dust and other compounds, together with glue used in cementing the wood panels. Reimar speculated that this would allow the wood surfaces—specifically the wings—to absorb a segment of electromagnetic waves (as opposed to bouncing off), thus minimizing the aircraft’s radar signature to Allied radar. Anyway you look at it, you have to admit that the Germans—in this case the Hortens—were far ahead of proven designers, German or American.

**Q10. Earlier you mentioned a personal connection. Can you explain?**

A10. Sure. My father, John Stermscheg, was conscripted into the Yugoslav army prior to WWII. A select few candidates were chosen to train as pilots in their Air Force contingent. My father was accepted and began training, logging several hours in the French made Potez 25 trainer. Unfortunately, his training was cut short with the advent of imminent hostilities with Germany. Along with many other hopefuls, he was reassigned to the army. Months later, in the spring of 1941, his entire company –many men on horseback—was captured by an advancing German Panzer division. As a result, he, along with his company, was confined to a German Stalag for over a year. Many years later, having heard my father’s war-time experiences (over and over), prompted me to collaborate with him and write his biography, *POW #74324*.