

*Profile provided by Warbird Alley, with permission of Buck Wyndham*

## **PROFILE: Republic P-47 Thunderbolt**

Variants/Other Names: See *History* below

### **HISTORY:**

The Thunderbolt was the most famous of all the Republic aircraft in WWII. First flown on 6 May 1941, the P-47 was designed as a (then) large, high-performance fighter/bomber, utilizing the large Pratt and Whitney R-2800 Double Wasp engine to give it excellent performance and a large load-carrying capability. The first deliveries of the P-47 took place in June 1942, when the US Army Air Corps began flying it in the European Theater.

Though it was an excellent airplane, several improvements were made as production continued, with each improvement adding power, maneuverability and range. As the war progressed, the Thunderbolt, or "Jug," as it was affectionately called, gained a reputation as a reliable and extremely tough airplane, able to take incredible amounts of damage and still return its pilot home safely. P-47s logged almost 2 million flight hours during the war, during which they were responsible for the destruction of over 7,000 enemy aircraft in the air and on the ground in the European Theater alone.

Later in the war, Jugs served as escort fighters for B-29 bombers in the Pacific. Mostly, though, they excelled in the ground-attack role, strafing and bombing their way across the battlefields of Europe. Early versions, up through the **P-47C**, had "razorback" fuselages, but the popular **P-47D** featured a bubble canopy which gave the pilot increased rearward visibility.

P-47s were also used during the war by the air forces of Brazil, England, France, Mexico and the Soviet Union. Following the war, the Jug served for nine more years in the US, flown by the Air National Guard. It continued to serve for many additional years with the air forces of over 15 nations around the world.

### **NICKNAMES:**

*Jug; T-Bolt*

### **SPECIFICATIONS (P-47D):**

Engine: 2535hp Pratt & Whitney R-2800-59W Double Wasp radial piston engine

Weight: Empty 9,950 lbs., Maximum Takeoff 17,500 lbs.

Wing Span: 40ft. 9.25in.

Length: 36ft. 1.75in.

Height: 14ft. 8in.

Performance:

Maximum Speed: 433 mph

Ceiling: 41,000 ft.

Range: 1900 miles with drop tanks

Armament:

Eight 12.7mm (0.5 in.) wing-mounted machine guns

Up to 2500 lbs. of externally-mounted bombs, rockets, or other free-fall ordnance

**NUMBER BUILT:** 15,677

**NUMBER STILL AIRWORTHY:** 9