

## The Republic P-47 Thunderbolt



2<sup>nd</sup> Lt. Harrison moved up from biplanes to fly AT-6's and P-40's but ultimately spent most of his time in P-47's.

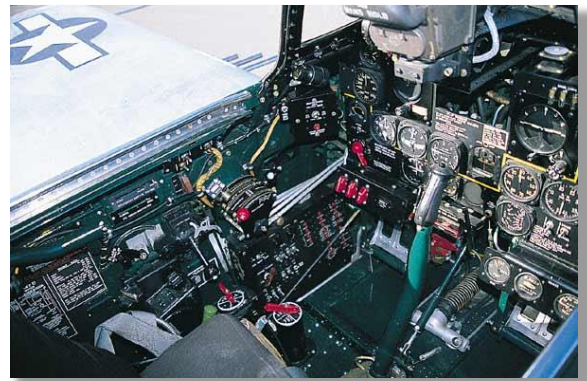
The P-47 is one of the largest and heaviest fighter aircraft in history to be powered by a single 4 stroke internal combustion engine. It was built from 1941-1945. It was heavily armed with eight .50-caliber machine guns, four per wing. When fully loaded, the P-47 weighed up to eight tons, and in the fighter-bomber ground-attack roles could carry five-inch rockets or a significant bomb load of 2,500 pounds; it could carry more than half the payload of the B-17 bomber on long-range missions (although the B-17 had a far greater range). The P-47 was designed around the powerful Pratt & Whitney R-2800 Double Wasp engine—the same engine used by two very successful U.S. Navy fighters, the Grumman F6F Hellcat and Vought F4U Corsair, the latter aircraft itself the first to fly with Double Wasp power in late May 1940—and was to be very effective as a short-to-medium range escort fighter in high-altitude air-to-air combat. When deployed as a fighter-bomber with its usual "double quartet" of heavy-caliber M2 Browning machine guns, it proved especially adept at ground attack in both the World War II European and Pacific Theaters.



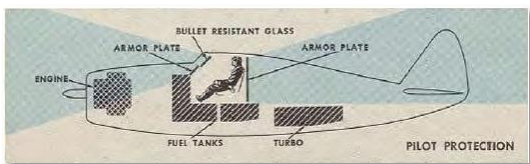
*Wing stripes were added to the P-47's for the Normandy Invasion*

The P-47 was one of the main United States Army Air Forces (USAAF) fighters of World War II, and served with other Allied air forces, notably those of France, Britain, and Russia. Mexican and Brazilian squadrons fighting alongside the U.S. were equipped with the P-47.

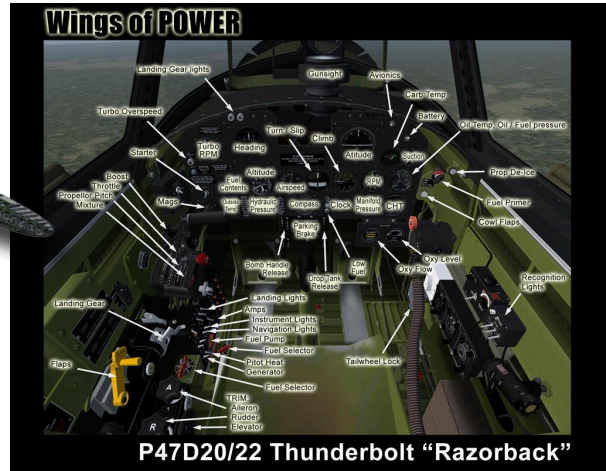
The P-47 was a popular plane with pilots. Not only was it capable of absorbing staggering amounts of punishment, the cockpit was roomy and comfortable. Some fliers likened the aircraft's seat to a lounge chair. Plus, the bubble canopy, which



was added to D-model variants, afforded aviators enhanced visibility.



Republic Aviation factories in Long Island, New York and in Evansville, Indiana, along with a Curtiss plant in Buffalo, assembled 15,688 Thunderbolts between 1942 and 1945 — that’s an average of 360 a month for three and a half years. The P-47 was the second-most produced American fighter aircraft and seventh-most produced aircraft overall for the Allied and Axis forces combined. Each plane cost \$85,000 (about \$1.1 million in 2015). All told, the War Department spent \$1.2 billion on P-47 Thunderbolts before VJ Day. That’s roughly equal to \$15.5 billion today.



American factories pumped out one P-47 Thunderbolt every two hours for the duration of World War Two.

While on average 170 American planes were lost every day, the P-47’s safety record was nothing short of astounding – the planes would fly more than half a million sorties in Europe and the Pacific and only 0.7 percent (110) of all 15,688 Thunderbolts built were lost in action. The losses of those brave men and their aircraft would claim nearly 4,000 enemy aircraft, 9,000 trains, 86,000 trucks and 6,000 armored vehicles.