

AIRCAM AVIATION SERIES

№ 5

NORTH AMERICAN P-51B/C MUSTANG

IN USAAF SERVICE





"Peg O'my Heart" a P-51B of the 354th Fighter Group, 355th Fighter Squadron, 9th Air Force, taxiing out to the runway prior to taking off on a strating mission.

NORTH AMERICAN P-51B/C MUSTANG

Under the contract terms agreed to by the United States and British Governments as well as North American Aviation the fifth (S/N 41-038) and tenth (S/N 41-039) production Mustangs were delivered to the AAF at Wright Field for a flight test and evaluation program. The USAAF designated these two aircraft as XP-51s. Testing revealed that while they lacked the desired high altitude performance then deemed necessary for fighters their extremely high speed and excellent handling characteristics at low altitude made them superior to anything then flying in the AAF inventory.

The war in Europe had already demonstrated the value of the dive bomber and pointed up the need for suitable tactical reconnaissance aircraft. The P-51 was ideally suited for either role with little or no modification work needed. The USAAF, therefore, ordered 150 P-51s and followed this initial contract up quickly with another calling for 310 P-51As.

The tactical recon version, the F-6A, had two K-24 cameras mounted in the fuselage aft of the cockpit, and carried the standard P-51 armament of four 20 mm. or four .50 calibre machine guns depending on the model. The British had already battle tested this configuration and found it to be well suited to the role. Powered with the Allison V-1710-39 rated at 1,150 hp it developed a top speed of 380 mph. The type saw service in most theaters of war, 57 were procured.

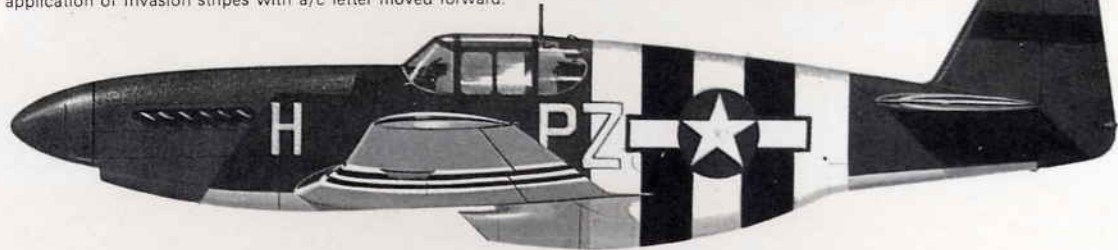
The dive bomber or attack version, the A-36A, was powered by the Allison V-1710-87 producing 1,325 hp and developing a top speed of 356 mph. Dive brakes and wing racks to carry two 500 pound bombs were fitted. During testing the dive brakes proved to be unnecessary and they were wired shut and not used in combat. Testing also revealed that as a dive bomber the A-36A was marginal. One lost both wings trying to recover from a dive. Best results were obtained by using a diving angle of 70 degrees or less, an air speed of 450, and releasing the bombs at 4,000 feet. If the angle was steeper than 70 degrees speed built up too fast. As a minimum altitude attack bomber and low altitude fighter it was rated as excellent. Armament consisted of six .50 calibre machine guns. Service ceiling was rated as 25,000 feet and rate of climb was 2,500 fpm. An unusual item was that two guns were carried in each wing and two

were mounted on the underside of the nose rather than on top of the nose. The Air Force named the A-36 the *Invader*, however, the name never became widely known and many people still refer to the A-36 as the *Apache*, which was the original name selected by the British for the series of P-51s. A total of 500 of the type was delivered to the USAAF between June of 1942 and the end of the production run in March of 1943. Serials ran from 42-83663 to 42-84162. North Americans designation was NA-97. Two groups operated the plane in the Mediterranean Area. While their career was not spectacular it laid the ground work for the fighter bomber which proved so successful later in the war.

The A-36A was the first version of the Mustang series to be flown in combat by the USAAF. Had the development of the series been halted at this point or even if it had been continued using the Allison engines it is very doubtful that the Mustang would be any more well known today than the P-39 or the other lesser known fighters of the war.

At about this time, however, various people were beginning to wonder just how much the design could be improved by using the Rolls Royce Merlin to give it the high altitude capability needed for a first rate fighter. Major Tommy Hitchcock, the U.S. Air Attache in London, forwarded a suggestion to Washington suggesting that this be tried. Four Mustangs were made available to the Rolls Royce Company and these were converted in six weeks time. The flight tests were so encouraging that North American acted on the data and converted two more to accept the Packard built Merlin V-1650-3 with a two stage supercharger. A four bladed propeller to absorb the added power replaced the standard three bladed one and the carburetor intake was located just below the prop hub altering the appearance slightly. The new model was designated the P-51B by the AAF. It developed 441 mph at 29,800 feet which was 54 mph faster than the standard P-51A. Other performances were also increased. Cruising speed, range and rate of climb were all impressively increased, so was the service ceiling which was the most important one. Addition of the Malcomb hood later improved pilot vision and again slightly altered the profile of the ship. In all 1,988 production models of the P-51B-NA were turned out,

P-51B, 352nd Fighter Group, 486th Fighter Squadron, 8th Air Force, ETO, Bodney, Norfolk, UK. Note early application of Invasion stripes with a/c letter moved forward.



P-51B, 361st Fighter Group, 376th Fighter Squadron, 8th Air Force, ETO, Little Walden, Essex, UK.



P-51B, 359th Fighter Group, 368th Fighter Squadron, 8th Air Force, ETO, East Wretham, Norfolk, UK.



P-51C, 52nd Fighter Group, 5th Fighter Squadron, 15th Air Force, Italy.



P-51C, 23rd Fighter Squadron, 10th Air Force, CBI, Luliang, China, Sept. 1944.



Front Cover - top to bottom

P-51B, 363rd Fighter Group, 382nd Fighter Squadron, 9th Air Force.

P-51B, 361st Fighter Group, 374th Fighter Squadron, 8th Air Force.

P-51B, 4th Fighter Group, 336th Fighter Squadron, 8th Air Force. Flown by Capt. Don S. Gentile.

P-51B, 20th Fighter Group, 79th Fighter Squadron, 8th Air Force.

P-51C, 31st Fighter Group, 307th Fighter Squadron, 15th Air Force, Italy.

these were produced by the N.A. plant at Inglewood, California, while 1,750 more were made in the Dallas, Texas plant, these being designated as the P-51C and sporting a top speed 3 mph faster than the B model. Both models carried four .50 calibre machine guns mounted in the wings with 1,260 rounds of ammo, 350 rounds per gun for the inboard mounted guns and only 280 rounds per gun for the outboard.

Combat history of the Series

The first version to see combat action, as mentioned earlier, was the A36A. Two groups equipped with the Invader operated in the Mediterranean Theater of Operations.

The 86th Fighter Group had trained on the A-36 in the States and went into combat with the Invader as its standard equipment. First mission was flown in July of 1943 in North Africa. While the 86th was the first group to enter combat after being trained on the A36, it was preceded by the 27th Fighter Group. The 27th had originally been an A-20 group but had traded them in for the Invaders at Fes, French Morocco, checked out in the A-36 and flew their first mission in June of '43.

The 27th participated in the reduction of Lampedusa and Pantelleria, and then supported the ground forces on Sicily. They next covered the Salerno landings and beachhead. The Group received its DUC at Salerno when it stopped three German armored divisions from reaching the front by shooting up their columns, bombing their armor, and playing havoc with their support columns. This action occurred on 10 September 1943. They continued to support the 5th Army during its drive on Rome. Next important role was the invasion of Southern France and the 27th played its role well in this short campaign. A second DUC was awarded the 27th while it was covering the 7th Army's advance up the Rhone Valley. On 4 September 1944 they shot up the retreating Germans and turned what had been an orderly withdrawal into a rout. The odd part of this was that the 27th had traded their A-36s for P-40s in January of 1944 and in turn had exchanged these for P-47s in June, still they continued flying their missions almost without an interruption.

The 86th Group used their A-36s to hit supply columns, bridges, vehicles of every sort, railroads, convoys, ammo dumps, aerodromes, troop concentrations, shipping and any other likely looking target they could find. Two of their pilots attacked and sank a large Italian Navy Transport while it was riding at anchor in the harbor at Bagnara. Even larger targets like the marshalling yards at Littorio, Italy, were hit by pilots of the 86th. Lt.-Col. Rathburn even shot down a Focke-Wulf 190. The 86th had joined the 27th in softening up Sicily, supported the 7th Army's invasion forces, and later flew cover at Salerno, then like the 27th, it too converted first to P-40s, and then to the P-47s with which it finished the war. Both of

these Groups were assigned to the Twelfth Air Force.

The successes of these two groups and the tactics they developed help to lay the ground work for the widespread use of the fighter-bombers later in the war.

The F6A was equally successful but its combat record is relatively difficult to pin-point, as is any recon outfit's record, simply because these groups or squadrons did not receive the same amount of attention or publicity as other types did. Then too, they often flew a mixture of aircraft and exploits in a particular airplane would be those of a single pilot, or perhaps at most, a half dozen pilots. This sort of mix-match was especially true of the recon-weather groups in the POA.

The 8th Recon Group, as an example, flew four different types of airplanes, the F-5, F-6, F-7, and P-40s, all at the same time. Operating out of India they flew visual-recon patrols, photo recon, and photographic mapping missions. The data gathered was used to produce maps, mosaics, target charts and terrain models, and they covered vital areas in Burma, China, Indo-China and Thailand.

In Europe the 9th Air Force's 10th Recon Group played a similar role. It, too, used a variety of aircraft to get the job done. They photographed airfields, ports, coastal defenses, took bomb damage assessment photos. They played a vital role in the pre-invasion of Normandy and received a DUC for low level photo recon missions from Blankenberghe to Dunkirk and from Le Touquet to St. Vaast-la-Hougue from May 6th through May 20th, 1944. They flew both day and night missions after the invasion to photograph enemy activity and targets. Not only did they use the F-6 but had some F-3s, F-15s, L-1s, L-4s and L-5s as well.

The 363rd Tactical Recon Group used their F-5s and F-6s to fly photo recon missions to support both air and ground operations. They directed fighter-bombers to railway, highway and waterway traffic, gun positions, troop convoys, bridges and other worthwhile targets. They also took photos to assess Allied bombardment operations, and assess artillery fire. The Group received two Belgian Citations for their part in the assault on the Siegfried Line and the Battle of the Bulge.

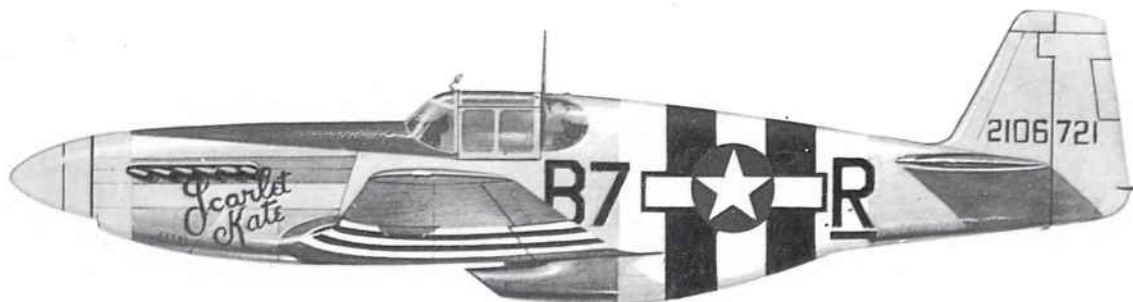
The 67th Tactical Recon Group added weather recon missions to those types mentioned in the preceding paragraphs, and they got their DUC for operations along the French coast by flying through intense flak to get photos for use in planning the invasion of Europe. This duty kept them visiting and re-visiting the same general areas from 15 February to 20 March, 1944.

The 68th Recon Group performed many of the same duties for the 15th Air Force, using both F-6s and a few A-36As. Someday, perhaps, the entire story of aerial reconnaissance will be the subject for a book and the entire story of these activities will be told as it is a fascinating one.

The P-51B itself now comes into focus. The combat history of the Mustang began on December 1st, 1943,

A-36A in standard OD and grey camouflage, white 71 on nose and tail. (USAF).





P-51B, 361st Fighter Group, 374th Fighter Squadron, 8th Air Force, ETO. Little Walden, Essex, UK. 'Scarlet Kate.'

NORTH AMERICAN P-51B/C MUSTANG

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Illustrated & compiled by
Richard Ward

Text by
Ernest R. McDowell

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This book on the P-51B/C Mustang in USAAF service completes with AIRCAM No. 1, the P-51D, the pictorial survey of the series of Mustang fighters operational during World War II. Publication has only been made possible with the assistance of many friends whose names are arranged below in alphabetical order. . . my thanks to all;

Peter M. Bowers, Ray E. Bowers, R. C. Jones, George J. Letzter, E. R. McDowell, D. Morris, E. Munday, Merle T. Olmstead, S. P. Peltz, Frank F. Smith and the United States Air Force.



P-51C, 31st Fighter Group, 308th Fighter Squadron, 15th Air Force, Italy.

Published by : Osprey Publications Limited, England

Editorial Office: P.O. Box 5, Canterbury, Kent, England

Subscription & Business Office: P.O. Box 25, 707 Oxford Road, Reading, Berkshire, England

when the 9th Air Force's 354th Fighter Group took off in their brand new P-51Bs from the base at Boxted, England, on a fighter sweep across north-western France. A second mission was flown on 5 December, 1943, an escort mission to Amiens. It was a sort of prelude to the one flown on 13 December which marked a milestone in fighter operations. The Group flew escort to bombers attacking Kiel, Germany. The trip covered about 500 miles and was the longest of the war up to that date. The 354th later received a DUC for its pioneering work in developing and executing long-range escort missions.

During this same period Major James H. Howard single handedly waded into a gaggle of 40 German fighters attacking a bomber formation. He shot down three and had three more credited as probables. For this action the former Flying Tiger ace was awarded the Congressional Medal of Honor. The P-51 had really arrived in the skies over Europe and the future was bright for it.

In the first 55 days of combat flying the P-51B had a kill ratio of 13.1 enemy aircraft destroyed per 100 sorties. Contrasted with 2.7 for the P-47 and 4.3 for the P-38 it was a remarkable achievement.

The 357th Group took the colors of the 8th Air Force into the skies in Mustangs on a fighter sweep over Rouen, France, on 11 February, 1944. Less than two weeks later they were ready and took their place in the all-out attacks on the Luftwaffe and its industrial support facilities during Big Week (20-25 February, 1944). Their part in Big Week earned them a DUC when they beat off heavy fighter attacks on the bomber formations, on two separate missions.

The next 8th AF Group to get the bird, the 4th Fighter Group, was destined to become the most famous Mustang group of them all. Col. Don Blakeslee, their CO, had promised that if he got them his group would fly a mission the very next day and, true to his word, his boys roared aloft for a sweep from their base at Debden the following day. Four days later they were orbiting over Berlin, marking the first time a single-engine fighter had made the escort trip to the German capital. The following day they escorted some B-24s almost to the Spanish border and then went back to Berlin the following day and blasted 17 German fighters out of the sky.

In their first month of operations with their new toys, the 4th put up a new kill record, getting 156 planes. They shattered their own record the next month, piling up a total of 207.

General Eisenhower was so impressed with the Mustang that he flew over the Normandy beach-head in a specially modified P-51 piloted by Major General Elwood "Pete" Quesada. That aircraft carried probably more stars than any other single-engine fighter had ever done before.

The Fourth had its share of great pilots and aces. Don Gentile, John Godfrey, Ralph "Kid" Hofer, Pierce McKennon, Jim Goodson, Duane Beeson, Glover, Kinnard, Megura, and many others scored in the double figures.

Other Mustang groups in the 8th included the 67th, 78th, 355th, 361st, 479th, 352nd, 359th and the 339th.

The 355th won a DUC for strafing and bombing a German aerodrome on 5 April, 1944, just a short time after getting their P-51Bs. While strafing an airfield was more or less routine at the time, they did it during a snow squall when visibility was almost zero, but pressed home their attacks with determination and success.

The 12th Air Force had only one Mustang group, the 52nd, and the 15th Air Force had only three, the 31st—the 325th and the 332nd. Like several others the 31st won its DUC shortly after converting to the Mustang. They got the award for escorting heavy bombers to targets in Roumania when the other group in the escort failed to make the rendezvous due to badly deteriorating weather conditions.

The 52nd was given a DUC for escort work on a raid into Germany on 9 June, 1944, when they had to fight off many German fighters all the way in and out. They had received their P-51Bs in April and May.

The famous Checkertail Clan converted to the P-51B while still flying their regular missions in their P-47s with-



P-51A in natural metal and OD anti-glare panel. (Peter M. Bowers)



A-36A in standard OD and grey scheme. (Peter M. Bowers).



XP-51, note dive brakes. (P. M. Bowers).

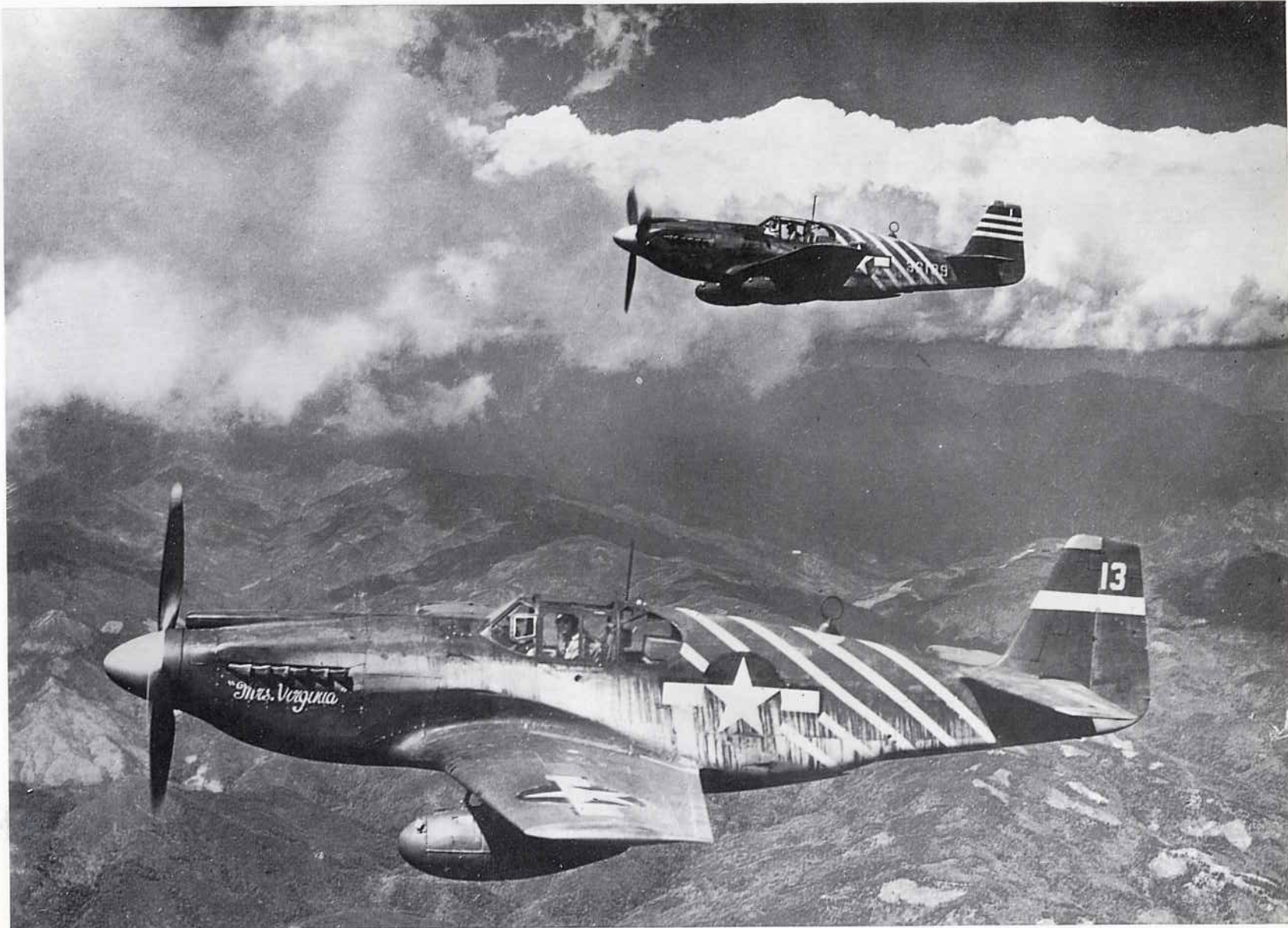


Early P-51, note yellow surround to insignia and US flag on fin and rudder.

out missing a mission. The 325th was the first fighter group to fly an escort shuttle raid to Russia. Led by Col. Chester L. Sluder in his P-51B "Shimmy III," they made the trip, flew a mission from the Russian base, and then flew back to Italy. The 332nd Group was the USAAF's only all Negro Fighter Group of WW II. Led by Col. Benjamin O. Davis, Jr. (now Lt. General), they were cast strictly in a tactical role and performed it very well.

Four other groups in the ETO flew Mustangs but at this time it has not been determined if they flew the P-51B in Group strength. These included the 55th, 353rd, 356th and 364th. The same holds true for the 9th Air Force's 370th Group. Photos show that B models were flown in these groups' markings but these could have been war wearies, or older types regulated to a check out or squadron hack role.

On the other side of the world the B did not serve in anywhere close to the numbers it did in Europe. Most



Magnificent shot of P-51's of the 1st Air Commando Group over the Chin Hills of Burma. Aircraft 1 flown by the Group Commander Col. Phil Cochrane. The Group operated in support of Wingate's Chindits. (USAF).



P-51 modified for photo recon duties with camera aft of cockpit in experimental camouflage scheme. See colour illustration. (photos USAF).



groups didn't get their Mustangs until relatively late in the war, hence, most of them were D models.

The 23rd Group, the successors to the AVG's Flying Tigers, did get a number of B models or C models, as did the 51st Group. Both operated in the CBI theater, while the 311th, another group, spent most of its service time in Burma. During June of 1945 the 348th Fighter Group of the 5th Air Force, based in the Philippines, shot down 231 Japanese aircraft while losing only one of their Mustangs, and the pilot of that one was able to bale out and was rescued. Some of these planes are believed to have been B's or C's but not many.

The 51st Group supported the Chinese troops in their critical drive along the Salween River. The 311th had an odd career, originally they were a bomb group but were in turn redesignated as a dive-bomber group, a fighter-bomber group and finally a fighter group. They, also, had a few A-36s in their complement of airplanes. As a member of the 10th Air Force, based in India, they flew tactical support missions to aid the Allied ground operations in Northern Burma. Escorting bombers raiding Rangoon, dive-bombing and strafing enemy airfields and

troop concentrations were all in a day's work. Moved up to Burma in July of '44 they provided tactical air power for Merrill's Marauders. In August they moved on to China and joined the 14th Air Force, flying a variety of missions until the end of the war.

The Mustang was not a comfortable plane to fly on long missions, the cockpit was noisy, it was cold at extreme altitudes, and the long hours in the seat sitting on top of a parachute and dinghy let its pilot know that he had had a long, long day after an eight hour mission was finished. Still very few would have exchanged it for any other type except perhaps a newer mark of the P-51.

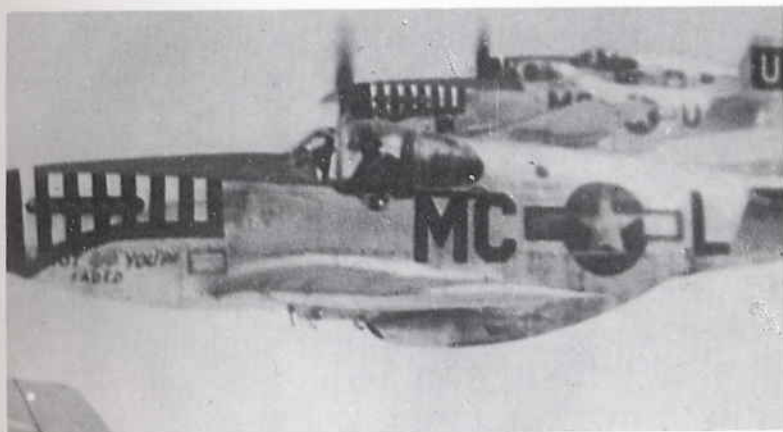
One of the few criticisms, if you can call it that, was that it was too good. As a result a lot of young hot shot charlies, fully aware that they were flying the best there was, found themselves in impossible situations that this over-confidence had got them into; if they were any good as a pilot at all, more often than not it got them out.

When the war ended a few were flown for air racing and a few other P-51Bs found their way into museums or other permanent collections, but their numbers were very few and today only a handful still survive.

Early Mustang in OD and grey scheme, serial 137321. (via G. J. Letzter).



Dispersal area of the 20th FG, 55th FS at Kingscliffe, Northants, all aircraft with early style nose markings. (via G. J. Letzter).

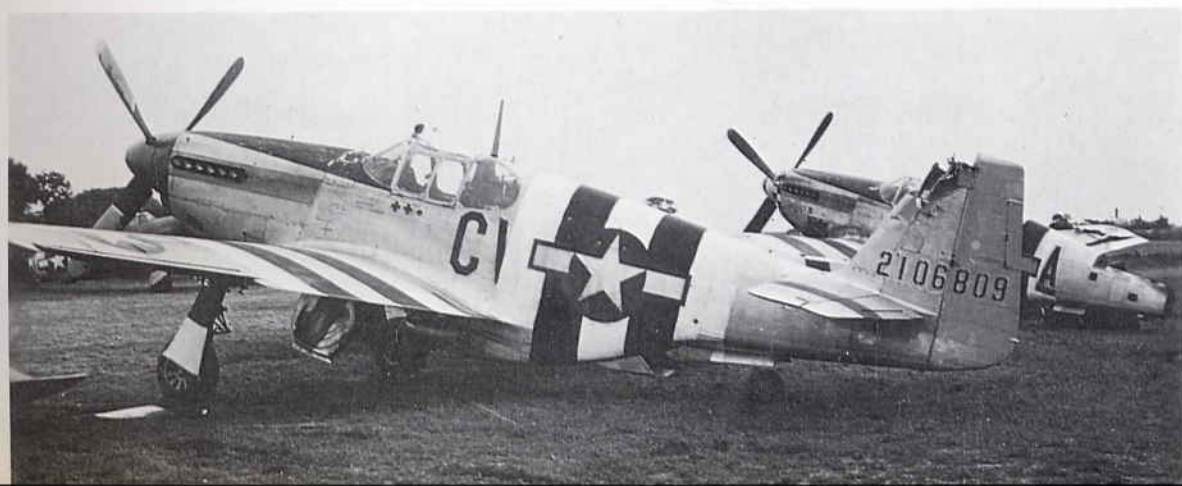


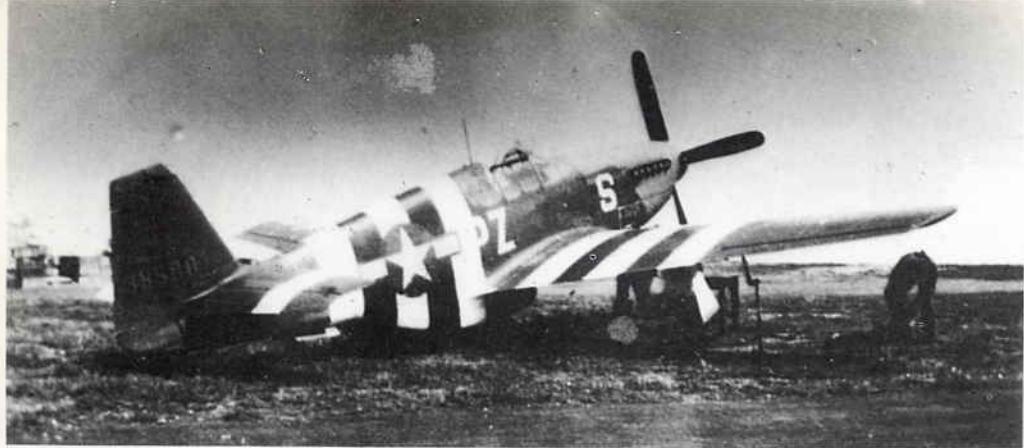
Mixed formation of 20th FG, 79th FS, 8th AF, see colour illustration. (via D. Morris).

Right: P-51B, 359th Fighter Group, 368th Fighter Squadron, 8th AF, in standard bare metal scheme, flak damaged in hanger at Manston. (Ray E. Bowers).



Below: P-51B, 359th FG, 368th FS, after forced landing at Manston due to flak damage. (Ray E. Bowers).





Above: P-51B, 352nd FG, 486th FS, 8th AF, on dispersal area at Bodney, Norfolk. Note early position of a/c letter after application of Invasion stripes. Serial number 36500.



Above: PZ-S, 36500 at a later date with crudely painted a/c letter in normal position, note also crude S on fin. Invasion stripes removed from all upper surfaces. (Ray E. Bowers).

Below: P-51B, 352nd FG, 487th FS, 8th AF, on dispersal area at Bodney. Note underlined M indicating second a/c with letter M on squadron. (via D. Morris).



Below: HO-Z run out of runway. Wing upper surface appears to have been sprayed silver. (Ray E. Bowers).



P-51B, 4th Fighter Group, 335th Fighter Squadron, 8th Air Force, crash landed at Manston, Kent. Standard OD and grey scheme with red spinner and nose, serial 36718. (Ray E. Bowers).

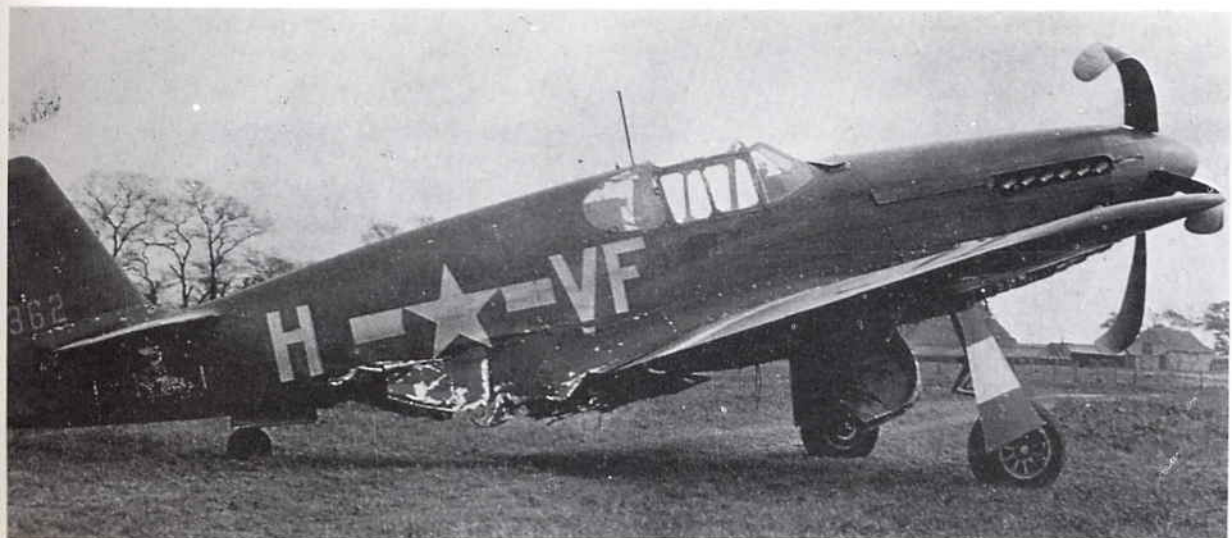


P-51B, 4th Fighter Group, 334th Fighter Squadron, 8th Air Force. Red spinner and nose and D-day Invasion stripes on under surfaces only. Crash landed in Dorsetshire potato patch. Home-base Dabden, Essex. (Ray E. Bowers).

Right: Same aircraft as above, code QP-Y. (Ray E. Bowers).

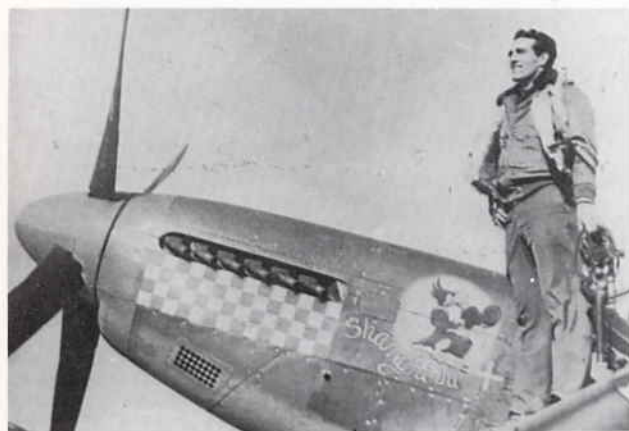


Below: P-51B, 4th FG, 336th FS, 8th AF, in standard OD and grey scheme with red spinner and nose, white wing and tail stripes. (Ray E. Bowers).





Above: P-51B, 4th FG, 336th FS, 8th AF, flown by Captain Don Gentile revving up on dispersal area at Debden. White spinner subsequently painted red to conform with group colour. (IWM).



Above: Insignia details of Gentile's 'Shangri-La', see front cover illustration. (via D. Morris).



Right & below: 'Shangri-La' completely written off, note the complete score detail under cockpit. (Ray E. Bowers).





Above, right & below: P-51B, 4th Fighter Group, 336th Fighter Squadron, 8th Air Force, neatly forced landed in dispersal area at Debden. Serial 36840, standard OD and grey scheme, red spinner and nose. (Photos Ray E. Bowers).



Below: P-51B, 4th FG, 336th FS, in natural metal finish with red spinner and nose after heavy landing at Debden. Note undercarriage somewhat bent. a/c letter V. (Ray E. Bowers).

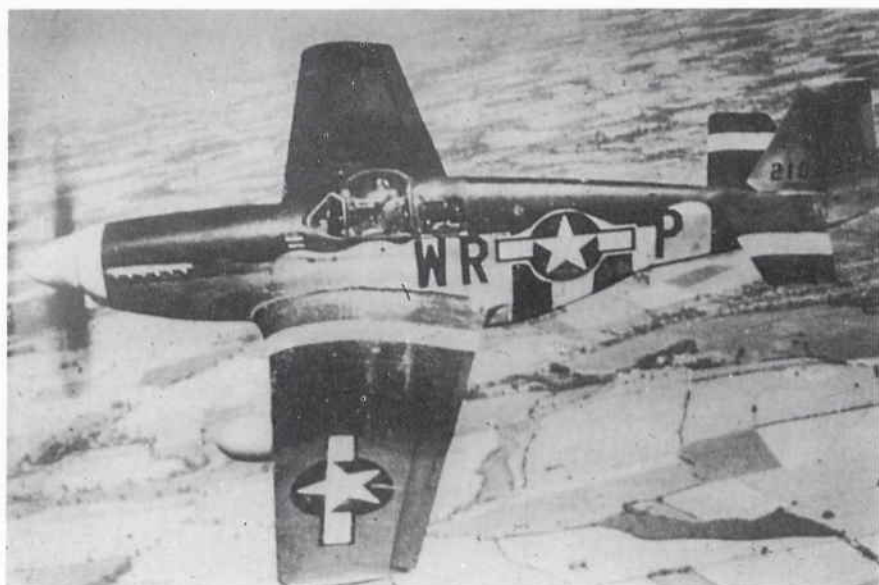
Below: P-51B, of the 336th FS, 4th FG, after forced landing at Manston, Kent. Serial unknown. (Ray E. Bowers).





Above: P-51B, 355th Fighter Group, 354th Fighter Squadron, 8th Air Force, Steeple Morden, Cambs. See colour illustration. (via D. Morris).

Right: P-51B, 355th Fighter Group, 354th Fighter Squadron, 8th Air Force, in OD and natural metal finish, serial 2106950. (USAF).



Above: P-51B, 355th Fighter Group, 357th Fighter Squadron, 8th AF, well and truly written off at Manston, Kent, bad weather and emergency airfield. (Ray E. Bowers).

Below: Rare photograph of a P-51B of the 479th Fighter Group, 436th Fighter Squadron, 8th Air Force, involved in a slight taxiing accident. See colour illustration. (Ray E. Bowers).



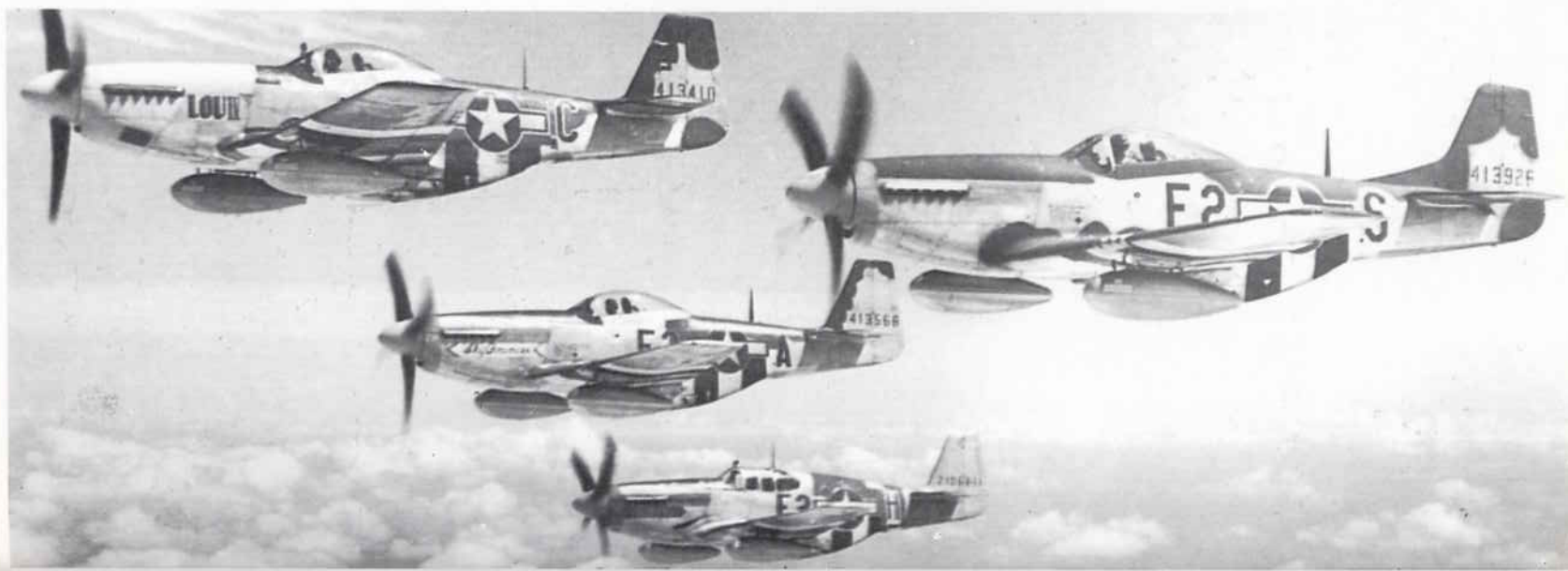
Mixed formation of P-51Bs and D's of the 361st Fighter Group, 374th Fighter Squadron, 8th Air Force, over France. Nearest aircraft is 'Bald Eagle'. See colour illustration. (USAF).





Above: Mixed formation of yellow-nosed Mustangs of the 361st Fighter Group, to the left 375th Fighter Squadron, to the right 374th Fighter Squadron. (USAF).

Below: Close-up of the above formation of the 375th Fighter Squadron. Medium blue upper surface camouflage on natural metal, all upper surface Invasion stripes over-painted. (USAF).



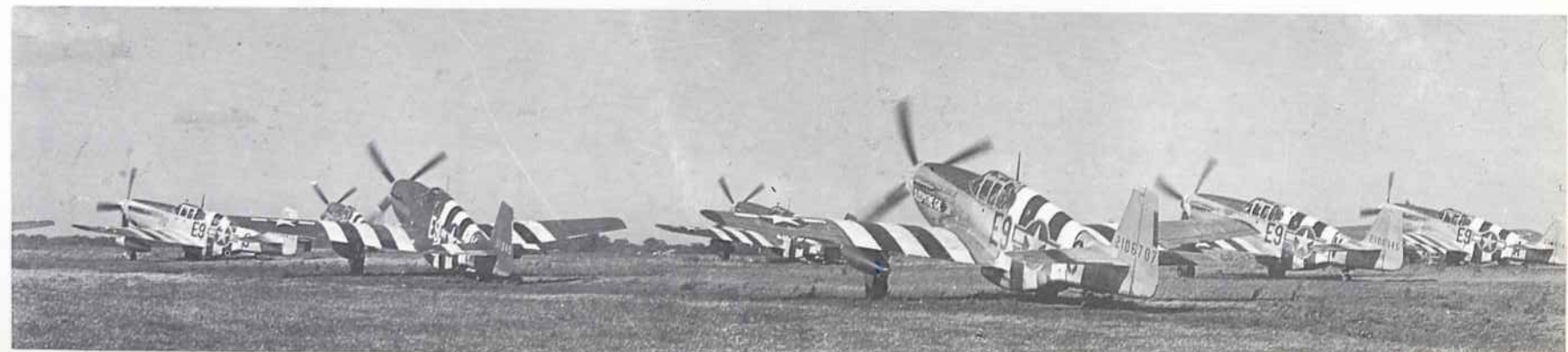


Above: A long line of P-51B's taxiing from dispersal area to runway each with a ground-crewman on the wing pointing the way. 361st FG, 374th FS, 8th AF. (USAF).

Below: The airfield officer flagging off a flight of yellow nosed P-51B's of the 361st FG, 374th FS, for a late afternoon take-off on D Day. (USAF).



Below: P-51B's of the 376th Fighter Squadron revving up prior to take-off on a long range bomber escort mission. Nearest a/c 'Sleepytime Gal'. (USAF).





Above: Close-up of 'Bald Eagle' of the 374th Fighter Group. (USAF)

Below: Yellow-nosed P-51C, of the 361st FG, 374th FS, forced landed at Little Walden, Essex. Serial 2103362. (Ray E. Bowers).



Below: Yellow-nosed P-51B of the 361st Fighter Group coming in to land at its home base, Little Walden, Essex. (USAF).

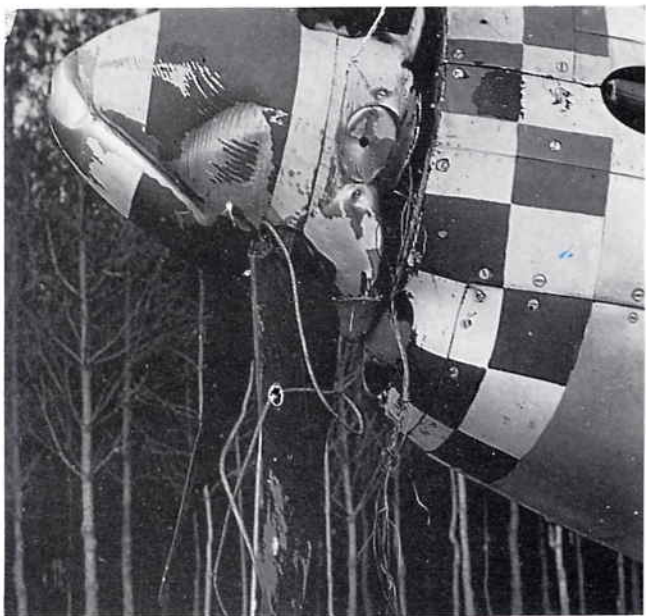


Below: Yellow-nosed 361st Fighter Group Mustang on an Italian airfield in 1944. (USAF).



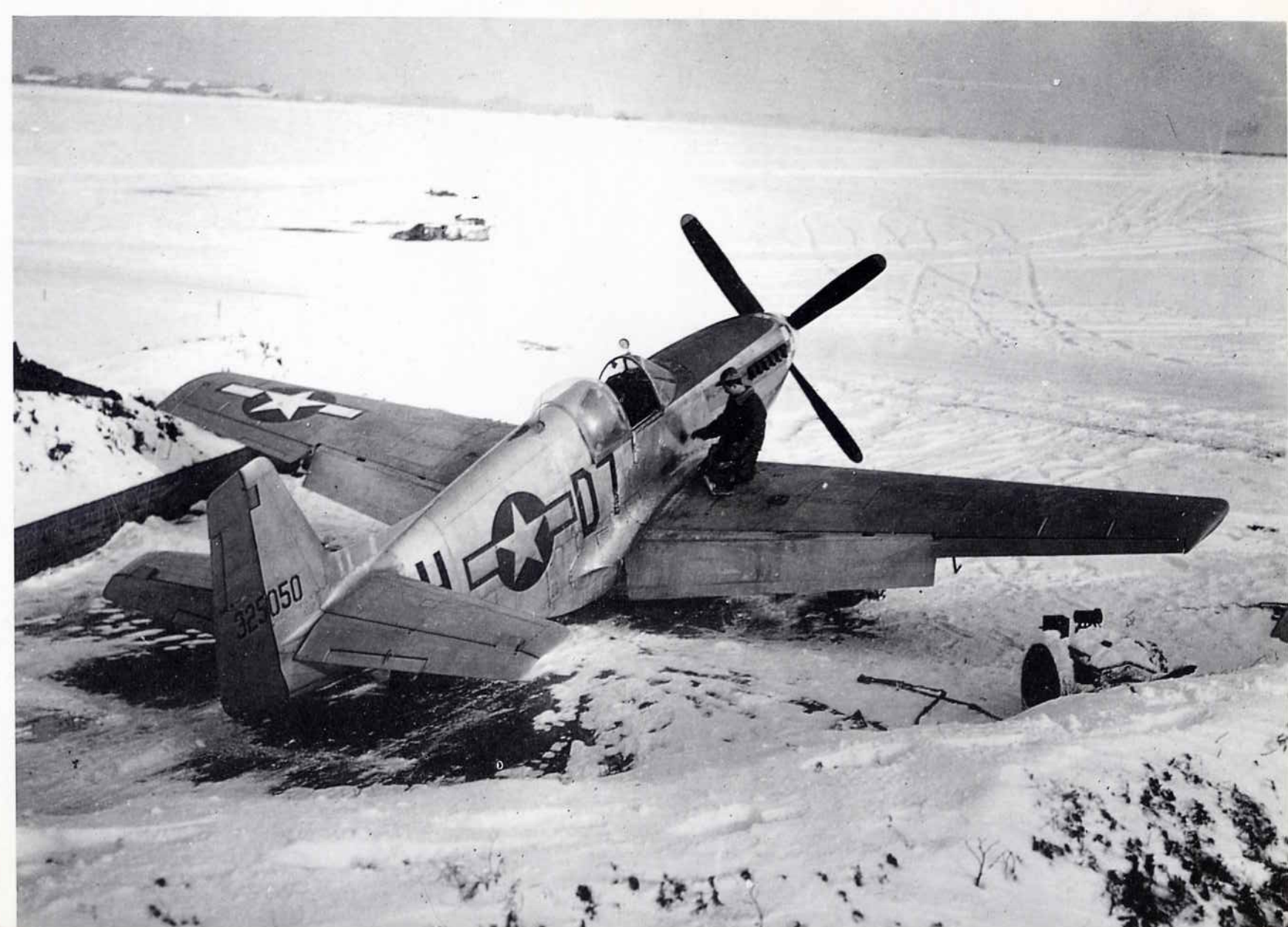


Above: P-51B of the 339th Fighter Group, 503rd Fighter Squadron, 8th AF, crash landed at Fowlmere, Cambs. Serial 2106882. (Ray E. Bowers).



Right & below, P-51B, 'Sally' of the 339th Fighter Group safely back at its home base after flying through cables during a low level strafing run over France. Note cables dangling from spinner. (photos Ray E. Bowers).





Nice shot of P-51C of the 339th Fighter Group, 503rd Fighter Squadron, on dispersal area at its home base at Fowlmere, Cambs. See colour illustration. (USAF)

Right: P-51B of the 339th FG, 503rd FS, after emergency landing at Manston. Note underlined A and complete Invasion stripes. Coastal Command Hudson in background. (Ray E. Bowers).



Below: P-51B 'Butch' of the 339th FG, 505th FS, forced landed at Manston after sustaining flak damage over Europe. (Ray E. Bowers).



Above: P-51B of the 339th FG, 505th FS. Note crudely painted fuselage Invasion stripes and flak damage to fin and rudder. RAF Hudson in background, Manston, Kent. (Ray E. Bowers).

Below: P-51C of the 339th FG, 505th FS in dispersal area at Fowlmere. Note winged B on fin and name 'Blackie II' under cockpit. (Ray E. Bowers).





P-51B of the 339th Fighter Group, 504th Fighter Squadron, 8th Air Force, nicely balanced on its prop blades at Manston. Note the upper surface Invasion stripes have been overpainted, standard Invasion stripe presentation on under surfaces, standard red and white group markings on nose. Serial 2106662. (Ray E. Bowers).





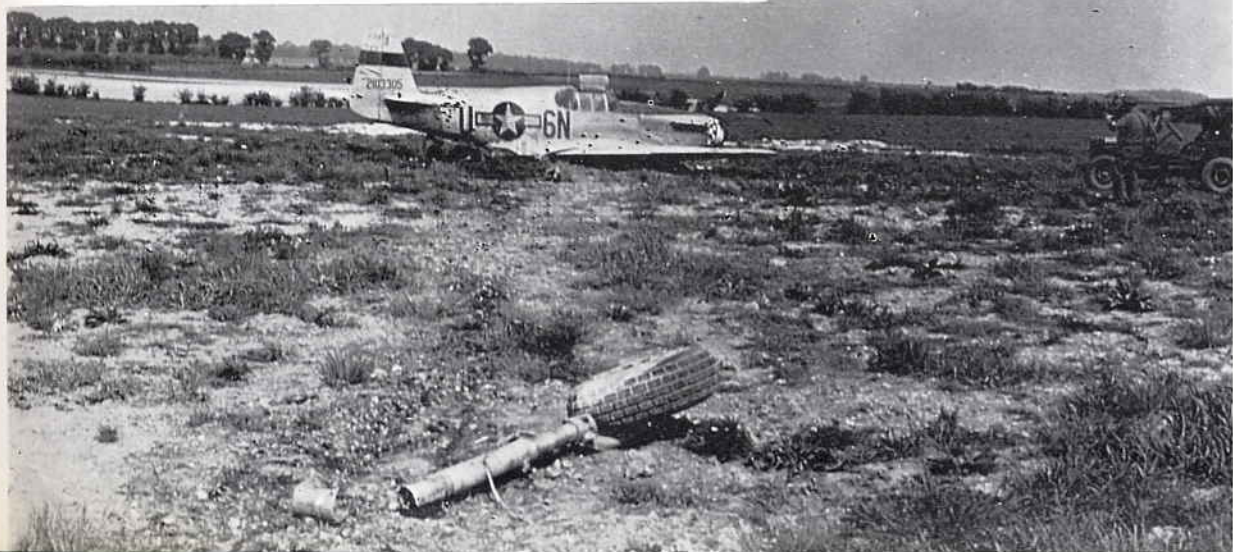
Above: P-51B of the 339th Fighter Group, 504th Fighter Squadron, 8th Air Force, after a 'wheels up' landing at its home base, something 'brier rabbitish' about the prop blades. (Ray E. Bowers).

Right: Badly damaged P-51B of the 504th Fighter Squadron in maintenance hanger at Manston. (Ray E. Bowers).



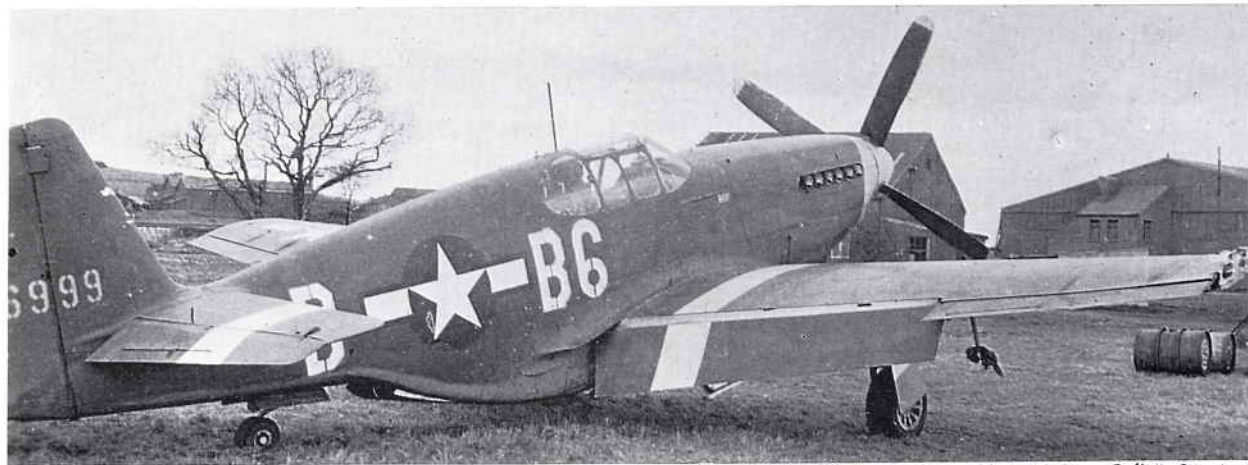
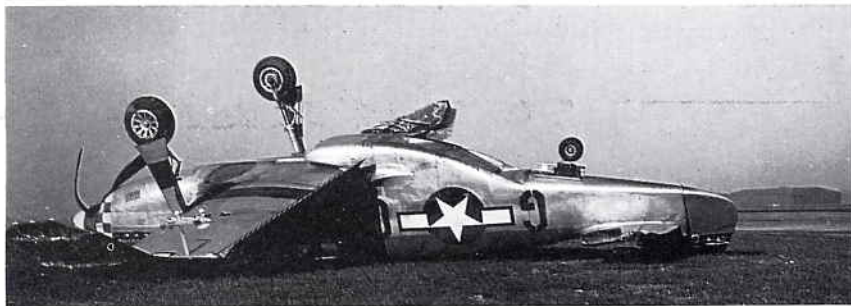
Left: Result of taxiing accident to 504th Fighter Squadron Mustang at Manston, note small maintenance hanger in background. (Ray E. Bowers).

Below: P-51C down in the rough having failed to make it back to Manston. Note u/c leg in foreground, Serial 2103305, 505th FS. (Ray E. Bowers).





Above & right: G4-G of the 357th Fighter Group, 362nd Fighter Squadron, 8th Air Force, well and truly inverted after forced landing at Manston, Kent. OD top decking and standard wing and tail black bands. (Ray E. Bowers).



Above & below: P-51B of the 357th FG, 363rd FS, after taxiing accident at Leiston, Suffolk. Standard OD and grey scheme, white spinner and nose. (Ray E. Bowers).



Right: P-51B, 357th FG, 363rd FS, after emergency landing at Manston under repair.



Below: subsequently written off after mid-air collision with Miles Magister, '7 up High'. See colour illustration. (Ray E. Bowers).



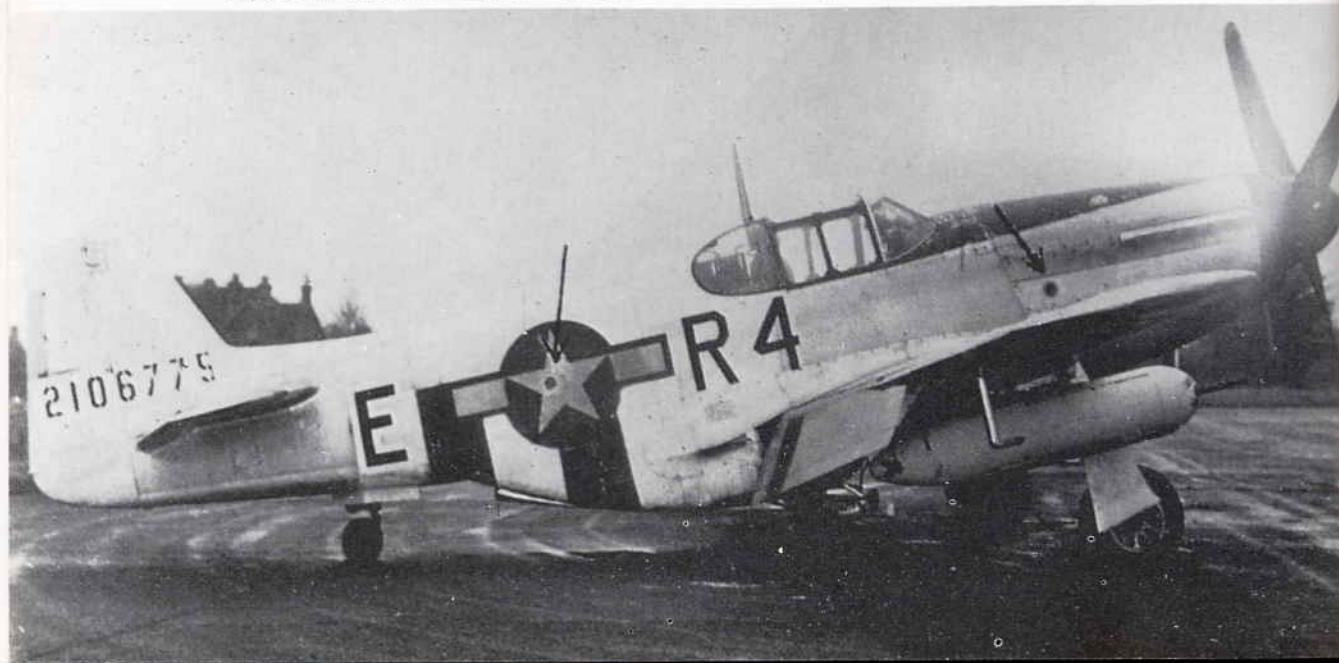
Above & below: P-51B, 357th FG, 364th FS, not quite making it back to Manston after being damaged in combat over Europe. Code C5-M, serial 2103849. (Ray E. Bowers).



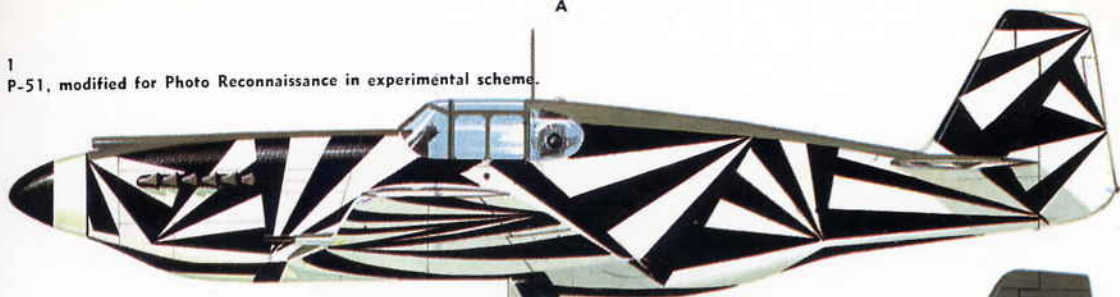


Above: Hack P-51B of the 78th Fighter Group, 84th Fighter Squadron, 8th Air Force, in a somewhat embarrassing position. Note War Weary on fin. See colour illustration. (Ray E. Bowers).

Below: P-51B with night formation lights (see arrows) used during night missions to organise formations of Mustangs of the 78th Fighter Group based at Duxford. Note what appears to be a .5in. machine gun in the pod under the wing. (USAF).



1
P-51, modified for Photo Reconnaissance in experimental scheme.



2
F-6B, 67th Tac Recon Group, 107th Tac Recon Squadron, 9th Air Force, ETO, 1944.



3
A-36A Invader, 27th Fighter Bomber Group, 12th Air Force, Italy.



4
A-36A Invader, 86th Fighter Bomber Group, 12th Air Force, Italy.



5
P-51A, 1st Air Commando Group, India/Burma 1944, 10th Air Force, CBI. Flown by OC Group, Col. Philip G. Cochran.



6
P-51A, 1st Air Commando Group, India/Burma 1944, 10th Air Force. 'Mrs. Virginia'.



1
P-51B, 20th Fighter Group, 55th Fighter Squadron, 8th Air Force, ETO. Kingscliffe, Northants, UK.



2
P-51B, 20th Fighter Group, 55th Fighter Squadron, 8th Air Force, ETO. Kingscliffe, Northants, UK.



3
P-51B, 20th Fighter Group, 79th Fighter Squadron, 8th Air Force, ETO. Kingscliffe, Northants, UK.
'Shoot You're Faded'.



4
P-51B, 359th Fighter Group, 368th Fighter Squadron, 8th Air Force, ETO. East Wretham, Norfolk, UK.



5
P-51B, 359th Fighter Group, 368th Fighter Squadron, 8th Air Force, ETO. East Wretham, Norfolk, UK.



6
P-51B, 359th Fighter Group, 370th Fighter Squadron, 8th Air Force, ETO. East Wretham, Norfolk, UK.



1
P-51B, 364th Fighter Group, 384th Fighter Squadron, 8th Air Force, ETO. Honington, Suffolk, UK. Note 'WW' War Weary on fin.



2
P-51B, 352nd Fighter Group, 328th Fighter Squadron, 8th Air Force, ETO. Bodney, Norfolk, UK.



3
P51B, 352nd Fighter Group, 486th Fighter Squadron, 8th Air Force, ETO. Bodney, Norfolk, UK. Note early application of Invasion stripes with a/c letter moved forward.



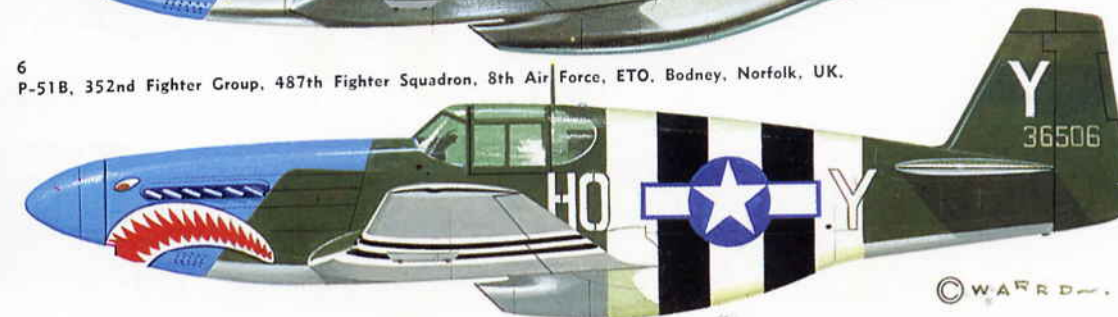
4
P-51B, 352nd Fighter Group, 486th Fighter Squadron, 8th Air Force, ETO. Same a/c as above, 43-6500, at a later date with a/c letter in normal position and upper surface stripes deleted.



5
P-51B, 352nd Fighter Group, 487th Fighter Squadron, 8th Air Force, ETO. Bodney, Norfolk, UK.



6
P-51B, 352nd Fighter Group, 487th Fighter Squadron, 8th Air Force, ETO. Bodney, Norfolk, UK.



1
P-51B, 4th Fighter Group, 334th Fighter Squadron, 8th Air Force, ETO. Debden, Essex, UK.



2
P-51B, 4th Fighter Group, 335th Fighter Squadron, 8th Air Force, ETO. Debden, Essex, UK.



3
P-51B, 4th Fighter Group, 336th Fighter Squadron, 8th Air Force, ETO. Debden, Essex, UK.



4
P-51B, 355th Fighter Group, 354th Fighter Squadron, 8th Air Force, ETO. Steeple Morden, Cambs., UK.
The Hun Hunter



5
P-51B, 355th Fighter Group, 354th Fighter Squadron, 8th Air Force, ETO. Steeple Morden, Cambs., UK.



6
P-51B, 355th Fighter Group, 357th Fighter Squadron, 8th Air Force, ETO. Steeple Morden, Cambs., UK.



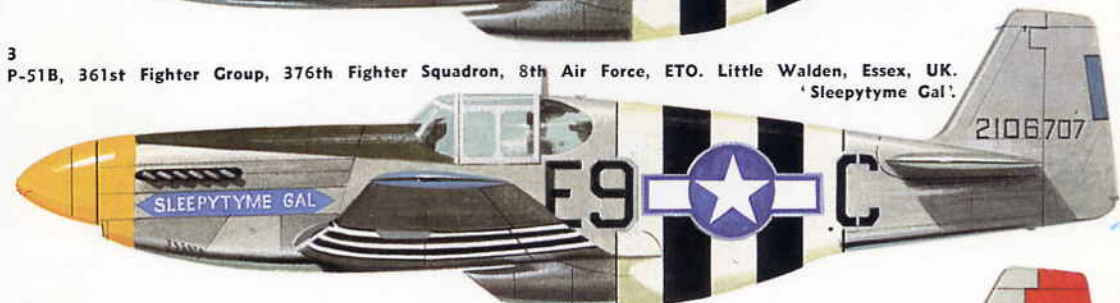
1 P-51B, 361st Fighter Group, 374th Fighter Squadron, 8th Air Force, ETO. Little Walden, Essex, UK. 'Bald Eagle'.



2 P-51B, 361st Fighter Group, 375th Fighter Squadron, 8th Air Force, ETO. Little Walden, Essex, UK.



3 P-51B, 361st Fighter Group, 376th Fighter Squadron, 8th Air Force, ETO. Little Walden, Essex, UK. 'Sleepytime Gal'.



4 P-51B, 339th Fighter Group, 503rd Fighter Squadron, 8th Air Force, ETO. Fowlmere, Cambs., UK.



5 P-51B, 339th Fighter Group, 504th Fighter Squadron, 8th Air Force, ETO. Fowlmere, Cambs., UK.



6 P-51C, 339th Fighter Group, 505th Fighter Squadron, 8th Air Force, ETO. Fowlmere, Cambs., UK.



1

P-51B, 357th Fighter Group, 362nd Fighter Squadron, 8th Air Force, ETO. Leiston, Suffolk, UK. 'Joan'.



2

P-51B, 357th Fighter Group, 363rd Fighter Squadron, 8th Air Force, ETO. Leiston, Suffolk, UK. '7 up High'.



3

P-51C, 357th Fighter Group, 364th Fighter Squadron, 8th Air Force, ETO. Leiston, Suffolk, UK.



4

P-51B, 479th Fighter Group, 436th Fighter Squadron, 8th Air Force, ETO. Wattisham, Suffolk, UK.



5

P-51B, 78th Fighter Group, 84th Fighter Squadron, 8th Air Force, ETO. Duxford, Cambs., UK.



6

P-51B, 354th Fighter Group, 355th Fighter Squadron, 9th Air Force, ETO. 'Peg O' My Heart'.



1
P-51B, 31st Fighter Group, 307th Fighter Squadron, 15th Air Force, Italy.



2
P-51B, 325th Fighter Group, flown by OC Group, Lt.-Col. C. L. Cluder, 12th Air Force, Italy, 'Shimmy III'.



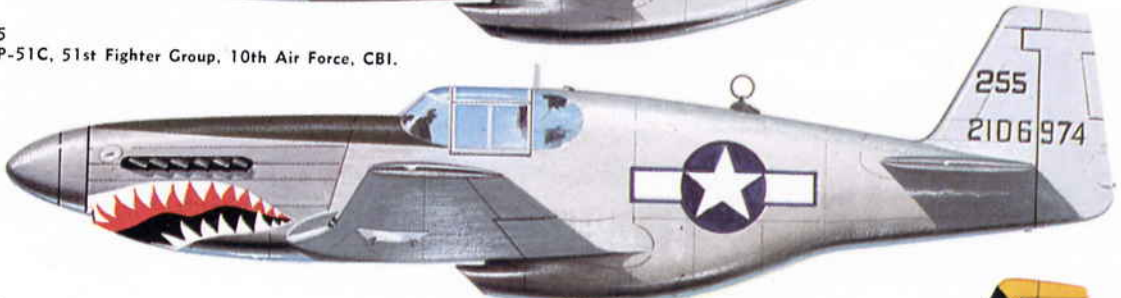
3
P-51B, 325th Fighter Group, 319th Fighter Squadron, 15th Air Force, Italy, 'Lady Jean'.



4
P-51C, 52nd Fighter Group, 5th Fighter Squadron, 15th Air Force, Italy.



5
P-51C, 51st Fighter Group, 10th Air Force, CBI.



6
P-51C, 311th Fighter Group, 530th Fighter Squadron, 10th Air Force, CBI.





Top: P-51B, 354th FG, 353rd FS, 9th AF, 'Shellelagh'. See colour illustration. (USAF).

Above: P-51B, 354th Fighter Group, 353rd Fighter Squadron, 9th Air Force, after emergency landing at Manston. Note oil streaks under aft fuselage. (Ray E. Bowers).

Right & below: P-51B's, of the 354th Fighter Group, 355th Fighter Squadron, 9th Air Force, in very early plain OD and grey scheme. See colour illustration for 'Peg O'my Heart'.



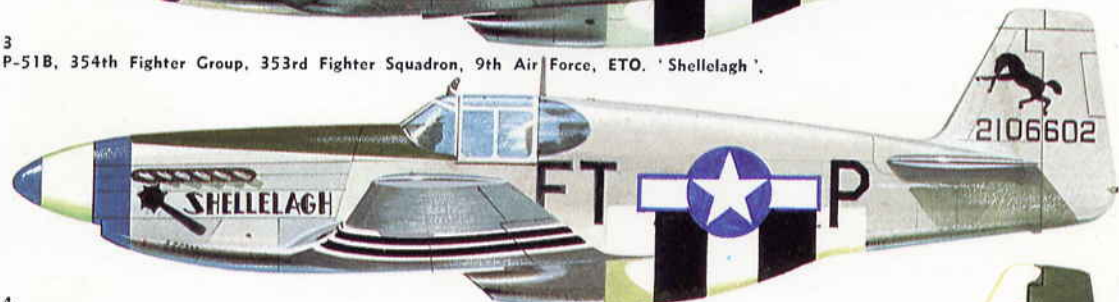
1
P-51B, 363rd Fighter Group, 382nd Fighter Squadron, 9th Air Force, ETO.



2
P-51B, 363rd Fighter Group, 382nd Fighter Squadron, 9th Air Force, ETO. 'Big Mac Junior'.



3
P-51B, 354th Fighter Group, 353rd Fighter Squadron, 9th Air Force, ETO. 'Shellelagh'.



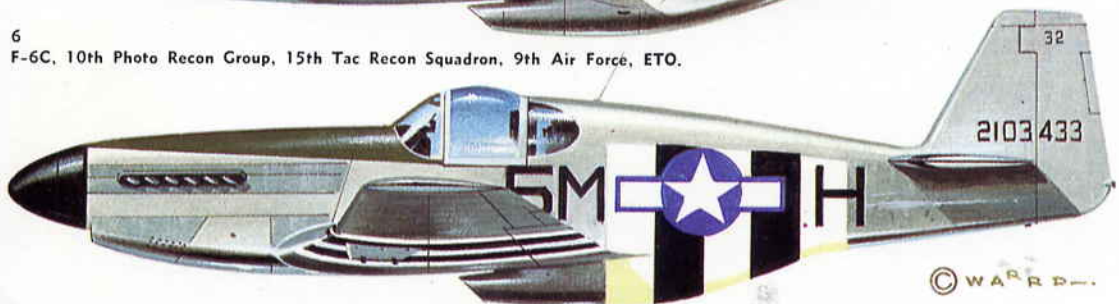
4
F-6C, 10th Photo Recon Group, 12th Tac Recon Squadron, 9th Air Force, ETO. 'Hun Flusher'.



5
F-6C, 10th Photo Recon Group, 12th Tac Recon Squadron, 9th Air Force, ETO.



6
F-6C, 10th Photo Recon Group, 15th Tac Recon Squadron, 9th Air Force, ETO.





Above: P-51B, 354th FG, 355th FS, 9th Air Force. Standard OD and Grey camouflage with white spinner and nose. (USAF).



Above: P-51B, 354th FG, 355th FS, 9th Air Force, being re-armed on dispersal area at home base in England.

Below: P-51B, 354th FG, 356th FS, 9th AF, 'Cisco' very low over the sea. (S. P. Peltz).





Above: P-51B, 354th FG 356th FS, 9th AF, in standard OD and Grey scheme with white spinner and nose. Serial 312216. (USAF)



Above: 'Friskie' P-51C of the 381st Fighter Squadron, 363rd Fighter Group, taxiing out to runway for take-off on mission during summer of 1944.

Right: P-51B of the 363rd FG, 382nd FS, 9th AF, on dispersal area at home base in England, note Malcolm Hood. (via D. Morris).



Below: 'Green Hornet' of the 363rd FG, 382nd FS, being guided by ground-crewman seated on wing-tip out of dispersal area. Standard OD and grey scheme. (USAF).





P-51B, 'Big Mac Junior' of the 363rd FG, 382nd FS, 9th AF, flown by Maj. J. R. Brown, Jr. See colour illustration.

F-6B, 67th Tac Recon Group, 107th Tac Recon Squadron, 9th Air Force. See colour illustration. (Merle T. Olmstead).



F-6C, 10th Photo Recon Group, 15th Tac Recon Squadron, 9th Air Force. Serial 2103368. (via G. J. Letzter).

Right: F-6C, 10th Photo Recon Group, 12th Tac Recon Squadron, 9th Air Force, 'Hun Flusher'. (Peter M. Bowers).



Below: F-6C, 'Phyllis' probably of the 12th Tac Recon Squadron in France during 1944. (USAF).

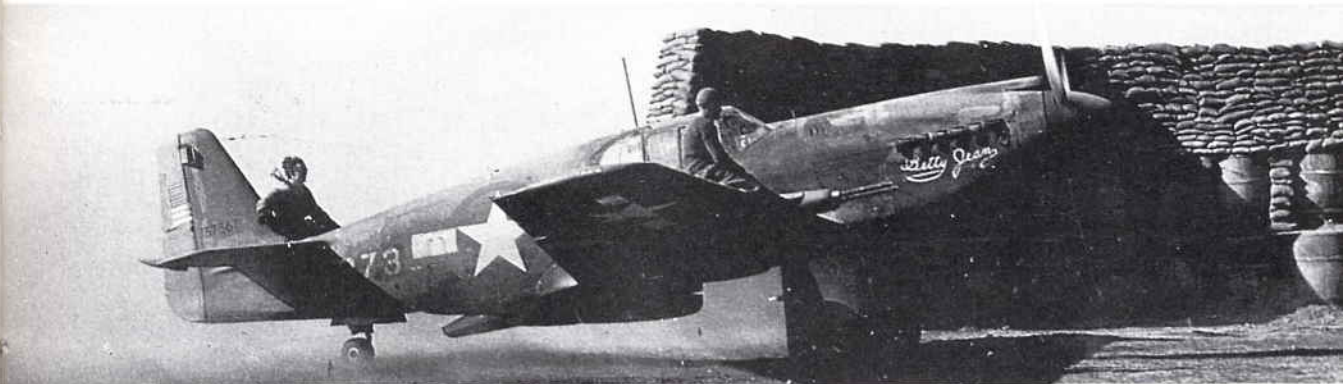




A-36A, 86th Fighter Bomber Group, 12th Air Force, flying past the crater of Mount Vesuvius, Italy. (USAF).



A-36A of the 27th Fighter Bomber Group with 150 combat missions indicated on the nose, 12th Air Force. (USAF).



Above: P-51 of an unknown unit taxiing into its dispersal area on an airfield in the Anzio beach-head. Name on nose 'Betty Jean'. (USAF).

Below: P-51C 'Val Gal II' the first allied fighter aircraft to land in the South of France, during the invasion. Unit unknown. (USAF).



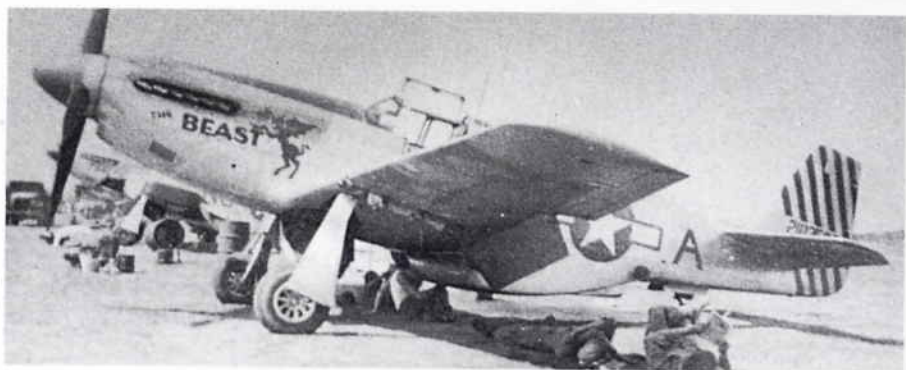


Left: P-51's of the 111th Tac Recon Squadron, 64th Fighter Wing, 12th Air Force, Sicily/Italy 1943. Note Recon missions indicated with eyes under cockpit. All aircraft modified for reconnaissance duties with camera behind cockpit.

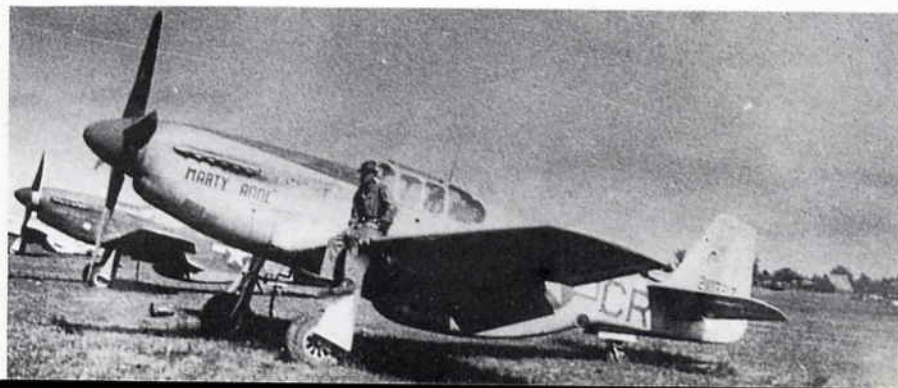


Above: P-51 of the 111th Tac Recon Squadron showing unit insignia on nose, standard OD and grey scheme, serials unknown.

Right: Close-up of unit insignia, 111th TRS. (All photos H. Stockton via R. C. Jones).



Right: F-6C probably of the 111th Tac Recon Squadron, 9th Air Force. Photo taken at Dijon, Southern France. 'The Beast', (via R. C. Jones).



Left: F-6C of the 111th Tac Recon Squadron, 9th Air Force, at Dijon, Southern France 10.10.44, 'Marty Anne', Serial 2103217. (via R. C. Jones).



Above: neat formation of F-6C's of the 111th Tac Recon Squadron, 64th Fighter Wing, 12th Air Force. Nearest aircraft 'Ol Bum Noz', code CP, serial 2111396 with 18 above on fin and smaller P-32 below 18. Line up of same aircraft below. The letter C appears to be the code letter and the second letter the aircraft identification letter. Photos taken in Italy. (USAF).





Above: P-51C's of the 31st Fighter Group, 307th Fighter Squadron, taxiing out from dispersal area on an Italian airfield. Note the early group identification marking of one diagonal red stripe on fin and rudder, this marking was only used for a very brief period of time. See illustration on title page.

Below: P-51C's of the 31st Fighter Group, 308th Fighter Squadron, taxiing back to dispersal area after strafing mission over Northern Italy. Note later group identification marking on fin and rudder. Typical background scenery found on many Allied constructed airfields in Italy. (Both photos USAF).





Above: Nice photo of a P-51C of the 31st Fighter Group, 308th Fighter Squadron, 15th Air Force, on an Italian airfield. OD and Grey scheme with red spinner, red diagonal stripes on tail unit and yellow wing bands. See colour illustration. (Fred C. Dickey, Jr.).

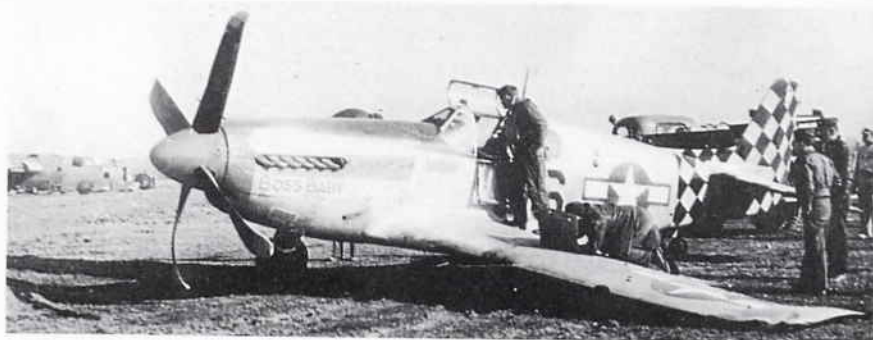
Below: Colonel Charles M. McCorkle of San Antonio, Texas, Commanding Officer of the 31st Fighter Group, 15th Air Force, in Italy discussing tactics with other members of the group. They are, from left to right: 2nd Lt. Robert H. Little, 1st Lt. Walter J. Gochausen, Capt. Leland P. Molland, Colonel McCorkle, Capt. Murray D. McLaughlin, 2nd Lt. John J. Voll. (See No. 1 P-51D for details of one of Voll's later aircraft.) Note 11 swastikas under cockpit, and Colonel McCorkle's initials as his aircraft identification letters, 'Betty Jane' in script on nose with CM repeated on nose just ahead of exhaust ports. (USAF).





P-51C of the 52nd Fighter Group, 5th Fighter Squadron, 15th Air Force, on an airfield in Italy. See colour illustration. (via G. J. Letzter).

P-51C of the 325th 'Checkertails' Fighter Group with collapsed undercart after a hard landing. 'Boss Baby'. (via E. R. McDowell).



'Lady Jean' with half its rudder shot away, probably by flak, made it back to Lesina safely. 325th Fighter Group, 15th Air Force, Italy. (via E. R. McDowell).

Major Herschel H. Green, OC of the 317th Fighter Squadron, 325th Fighter Group, about to climb aboard his Mustang. Aircraft number 11 ahead of the national insignia. (via E. R. McDowell).

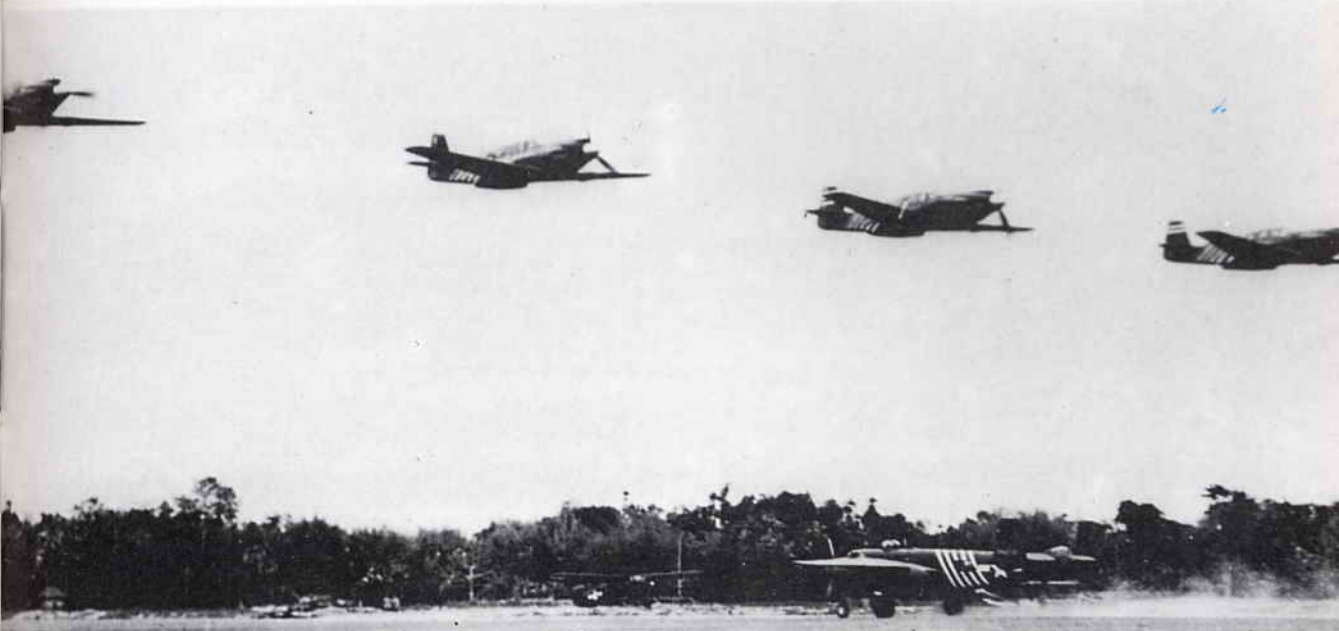


P-51C of the 332nd Fighter Group, probably 99th Fighter Squadron, 15th Air Force, Italy. Red spinner and nose and tail, 'Stinky'. (via E. Munday)



Above: P-51's of the 1st Air Commando Group escorting B-25's on a raid against Jap positions in Burma. Aircraft flying over the Chin Hills, no place to have an engine failure. (USAF).

Below: Low level pass by Mustangs of the 1st Air Commando Group, note B-25 taxiing along runway. (IWM).

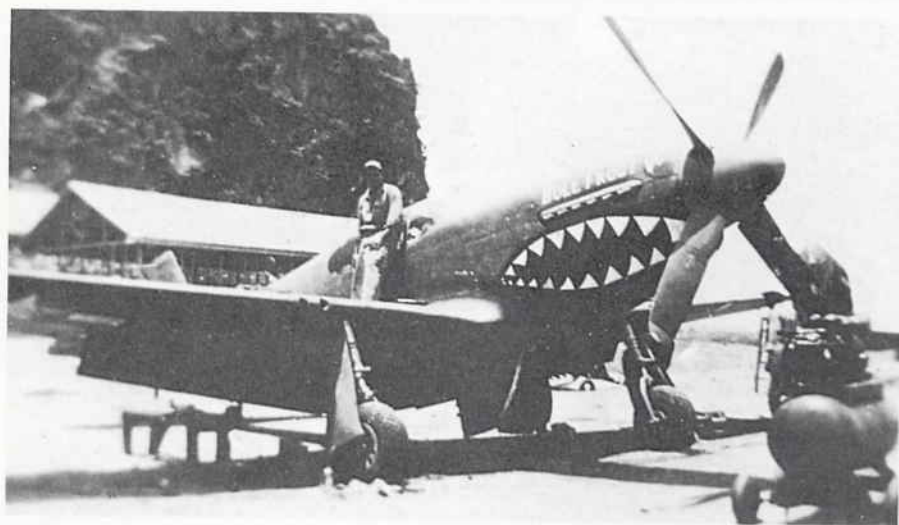


Below: Mustang bombed up and armed with Bazooka tubes on an Indian airfield. (USAF).



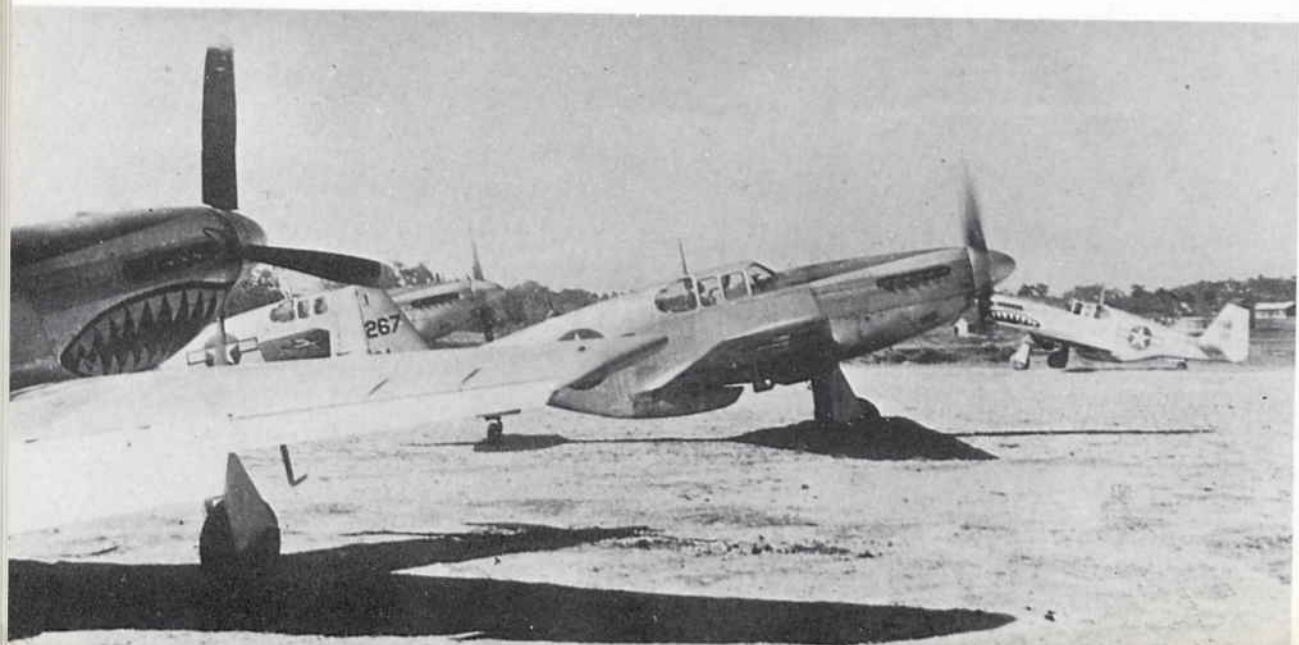


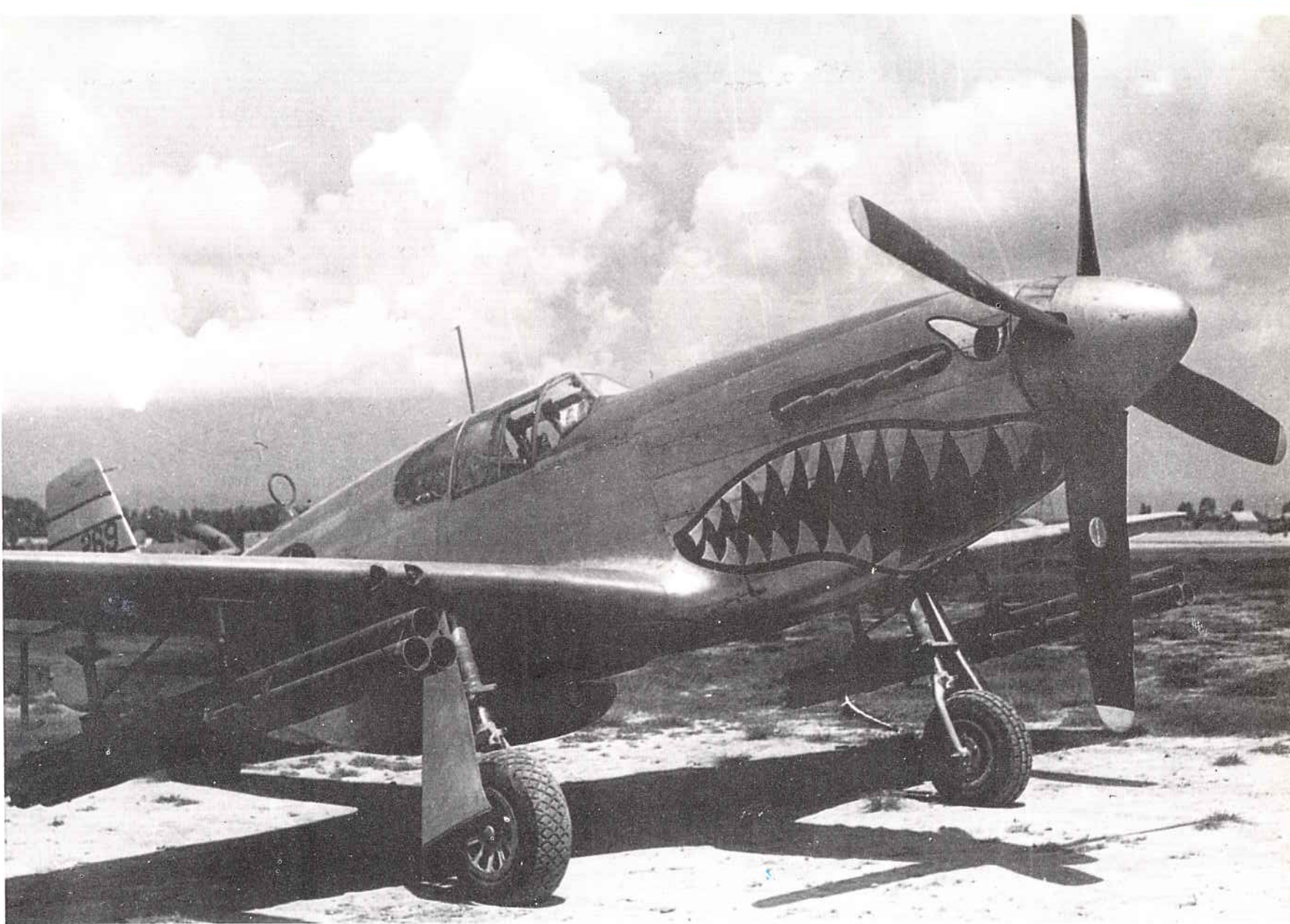
Above: P-51C probably of the 23rd Fighter Group on a Chinese airfield, note white wing tips and two white bands on fin and rudder, 261 in white, also two diagonal white bands on upper surfaces of both tailplanes. (USAF).



Left: 'Bull Frog' also probably of the 23rd Fighter Group on a Chinese airfield. (via E. R. McDowell).

Below: P-51C Mustangs of the 51st Fighter Group, 16th and 26th Fighter Squadrons (16th with Sharkmouth), warming up for take-off on Nanning airfield, China, November 1944. (USAF).





Nice close up of a P-51C of the 51st Fighter Group, 19th Fighter Squadron, 14th Air Force, on a Chinese airfield in July 1944. Note Bazooka tubes. (USAF)



P-51C 'Princess' of the 311th Fighter Group, 530th Fighter Squadron, 14th Air Force, flying over terraced mountains in China. (USAF).

Bare Metal

Grey

Olive Drab

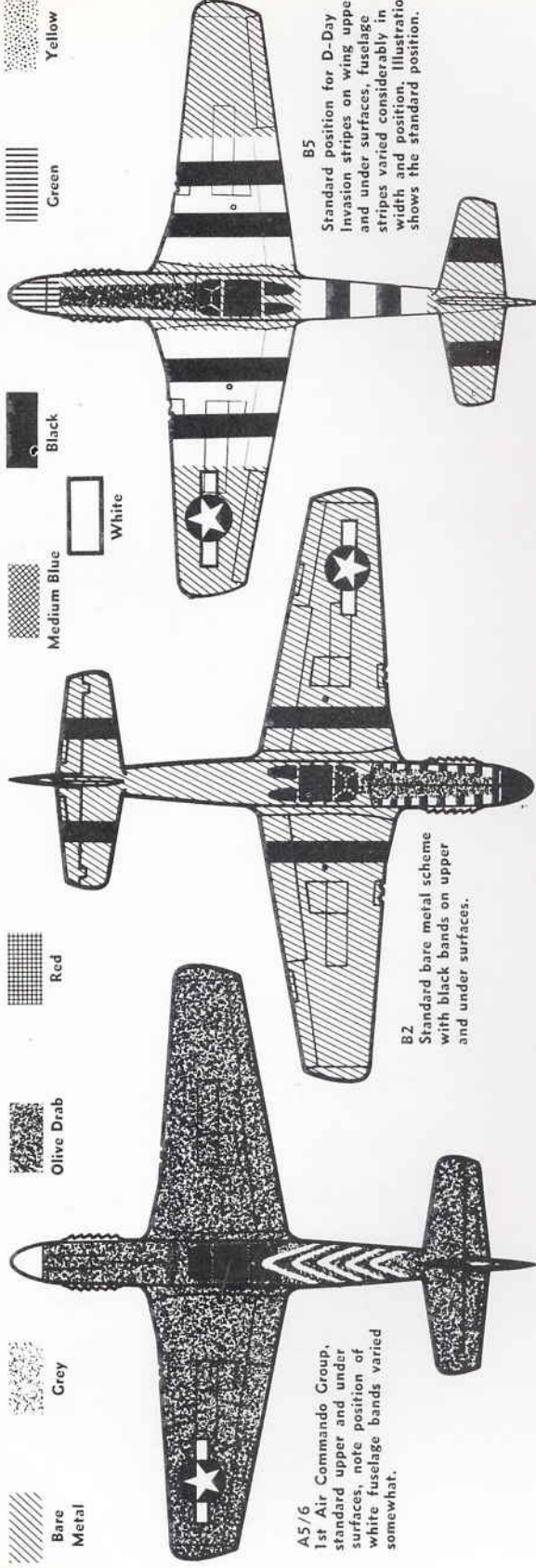
Red

Medium Blue

Black

Green

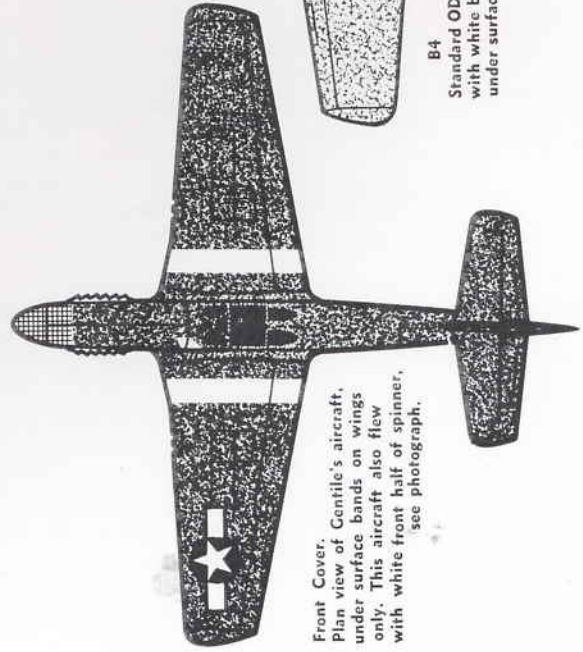
Yellow



A5/6
1st Air Commando Group, standard upper and under surfaces, note position of white fuselage bands varied somewhat.

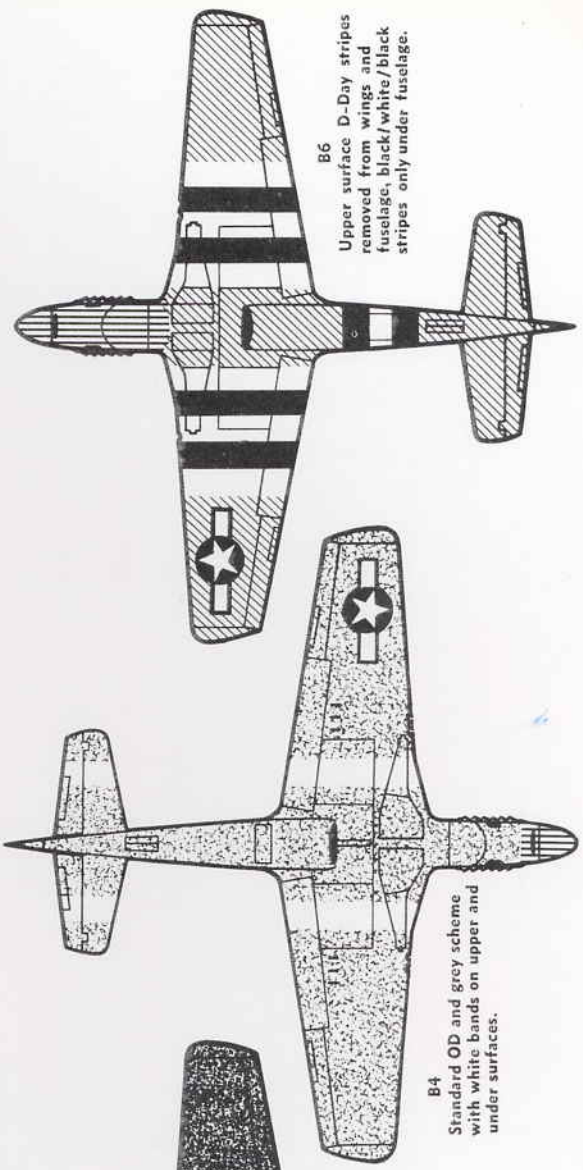
B5
Standard position for D-Day Invasion stripes on wing upper and under surfaces, fuselage stripes varied considerably in width and position. Illustration shows the standard position.

B2
Standard bare metal scheme with black bands on upper and under surfaces.



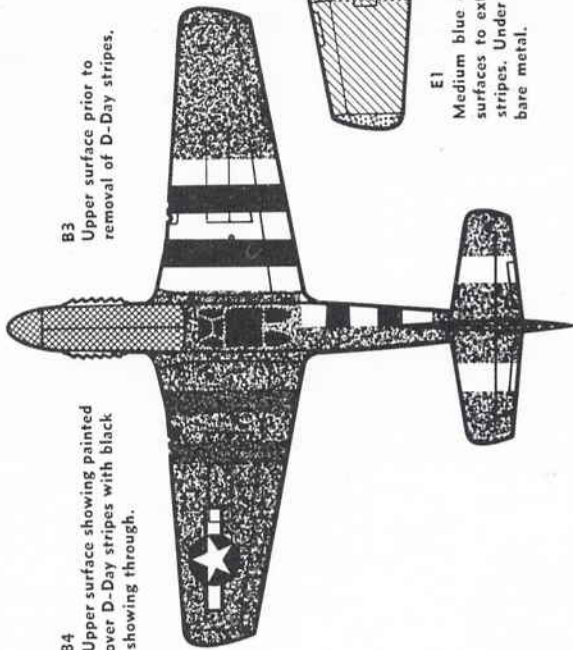
Front Cover.
Plan view of Gentile's aircraft, under surface bands on wings only. This aircraft also flew with white front half of spinner, see photograph.

B4
Standard OD and grey scheme with white bands on upper and under surfaces.

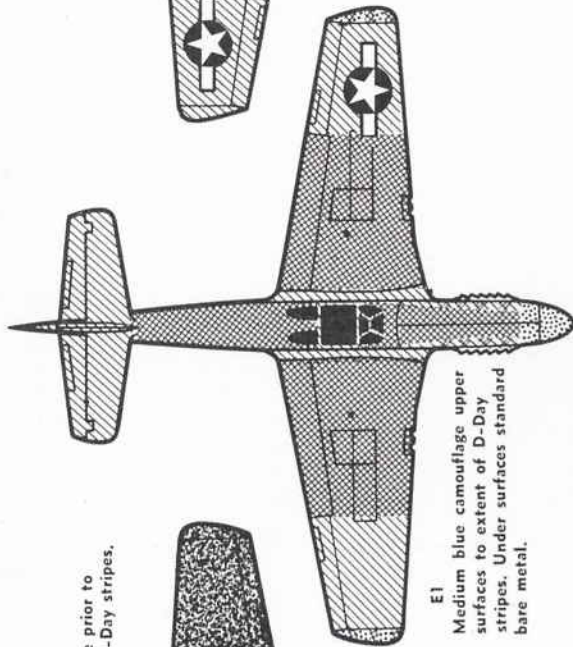


B6
Upper surface D-Day stripes removed from wings and fuselage, black/white/black stripes only under fuselage.

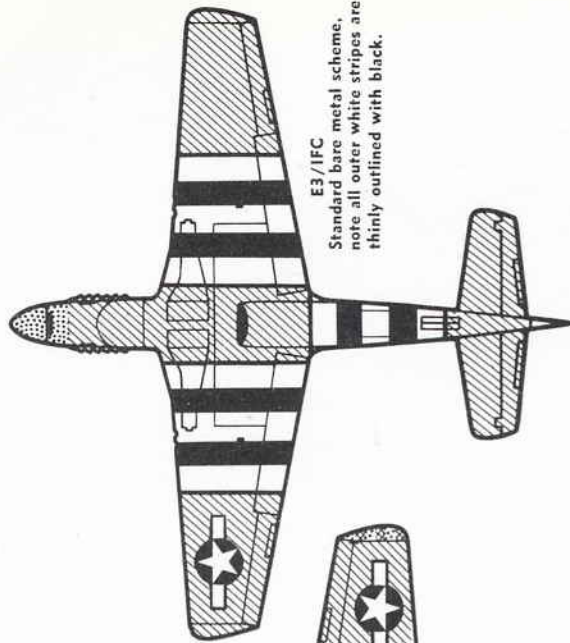
B4 Upper surface showing painted over D-Day stripes with black showing through.



B3 Upper surface prior to removal of D-Day stripes.

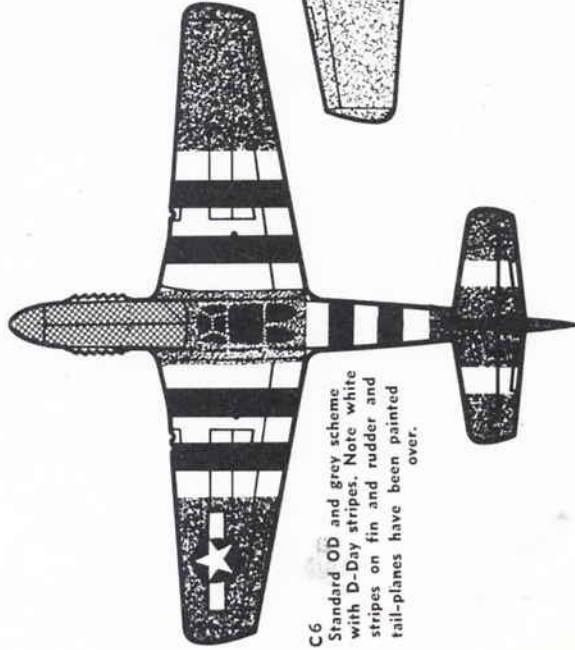


E1 Medium blue camouflage upper surfaces to extent of D-Day stripes. Under surfaces standard bare metal.

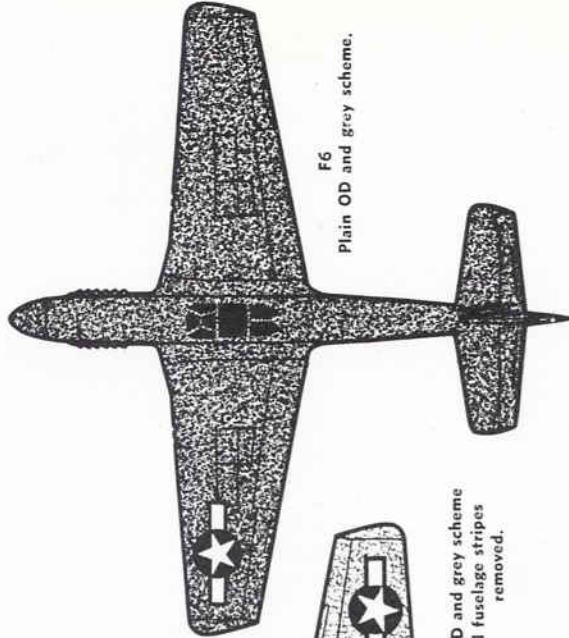


E3/1FC Standard bare metal scheme, note all outer white stripes are thinly outlined with black.

C6 Standard OD and grey scheme with D-Day stripes. Note white stripes on fin and rudder and tail-planes have been painted over.

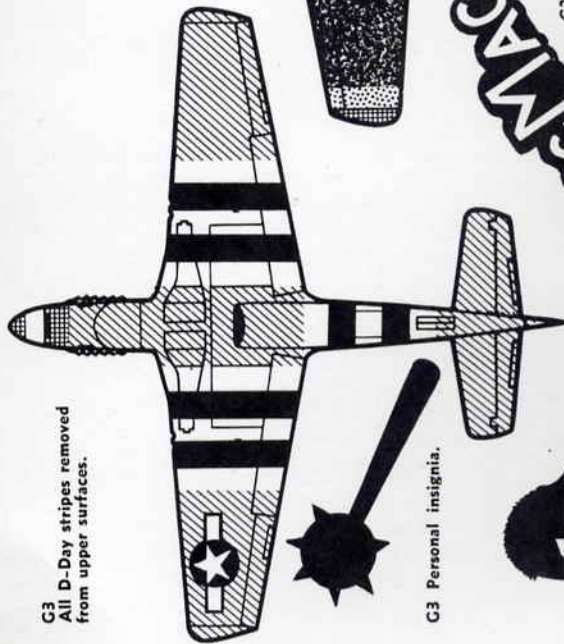


D4 Standard OD and grey scheme but with all fuselage stripes removed.



F6 Plain OD and grey scheme.

G3 All D-Day stripes removed from upper surfaces.



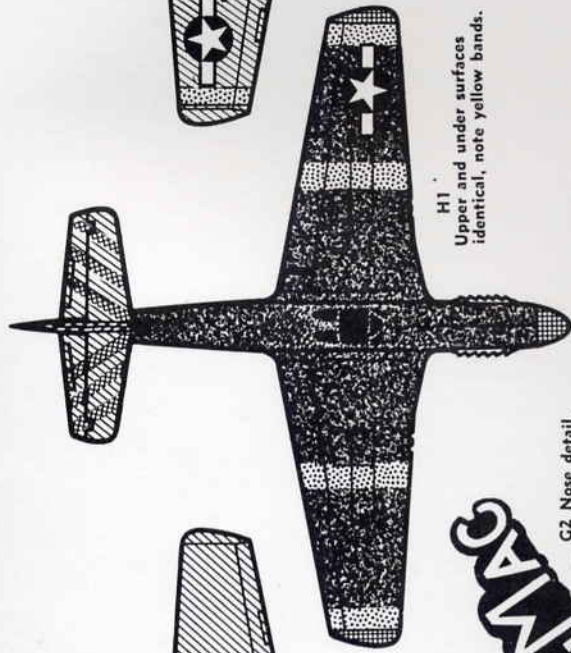
G3 Personal insignia.



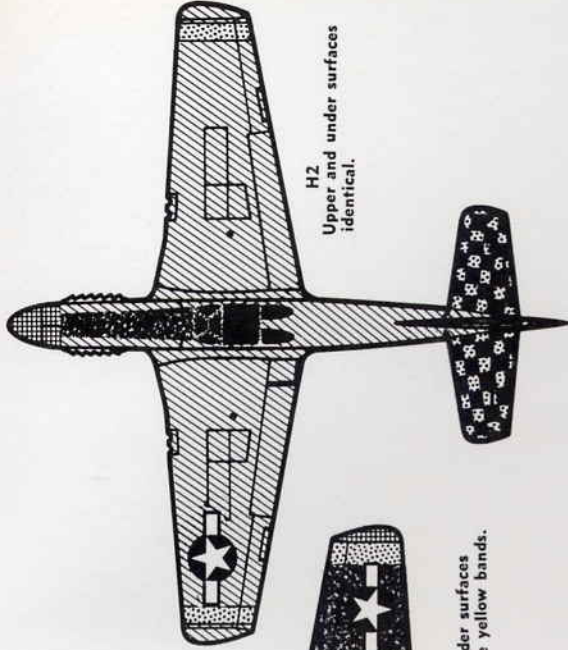
G3 Personal insignia.

BIGMAC
Junior

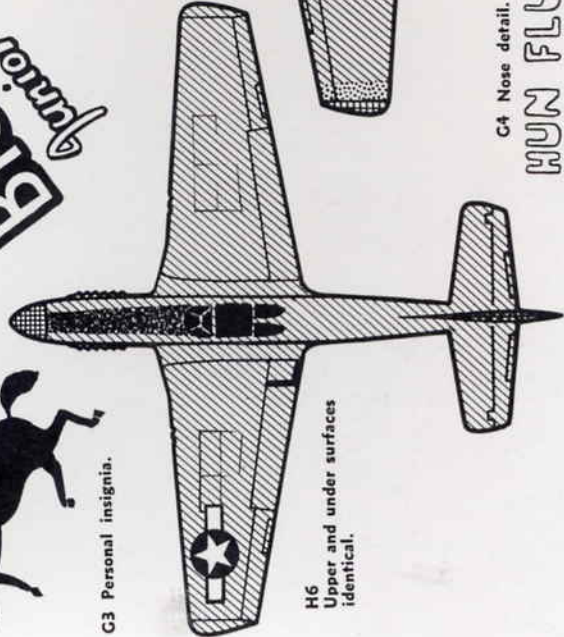
G2 Nose detail.



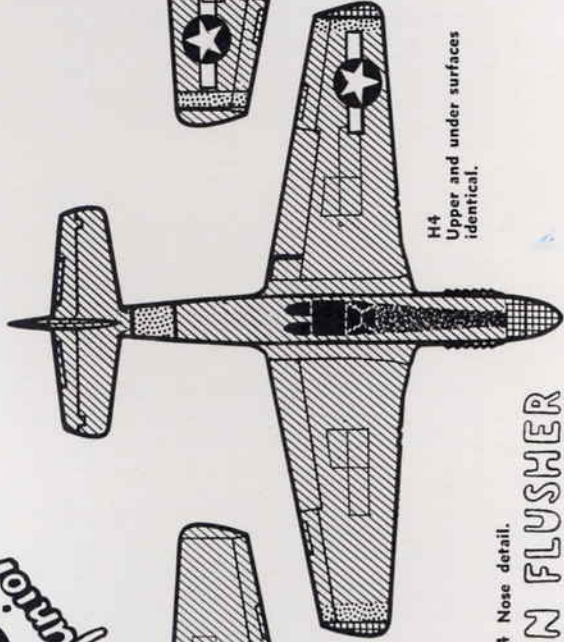
H1 Upper and under surfaces identical, note yellow bands.



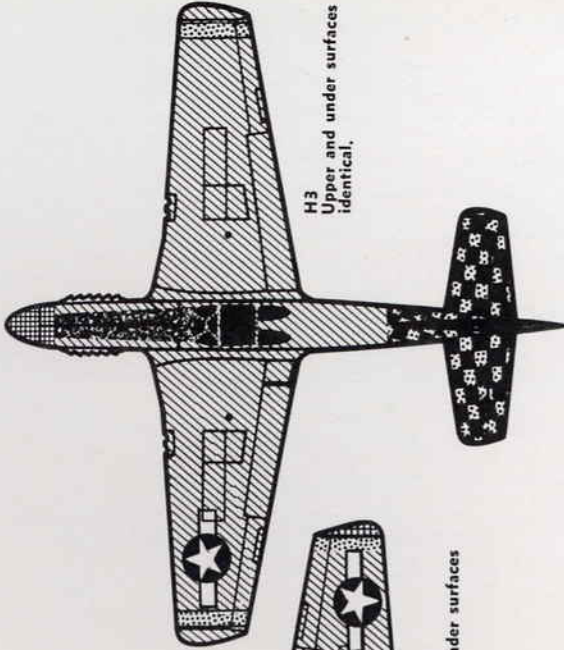
H2 Upper and under surfaces identical.



H6 Upper and under surfaces identical.



H4 Upper and under surfaces identical.



H3 Upper and under surfaces identical.

G4 Nose detail.

HUN FLUSHER

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No. 1 Battle of Britain

The Supermarine Spitfire, Hawker Hurricane and Messerschmitt Bf.109E. Sixteen pages of Colour. Publication date 31st January, 1969

No. 2 Finnish Air Force

A complete history of the Finnish Air Force from formation to the present day. Publication date 28th November, 1969

SPECIFICATION P-51B/C MUSTANG

Type	A-36A	P-51	P-51A	P-51B/C
Span	37 ft. 0 $\frac{1}{2}$ in.	37 ft. 0 $\frac{1}{2}$ in.	37 ft. 0 $\frac{1}{2}$ in.	37 ft. 0 $\frac{1}{2}$ in.
Length	32 ft. 3 $\frac{1}{2}$ in.	32 ft. 3 $\frac{1}{2}$ in.	32 ft. 3 $\frac{1}{2}$ in.	32 ft. 3 $\frac{1}{2}$ in.
Height	13 ft. 8 in.	13 ft. 8 in.	13 ft. 8 in.	13 ft. 8 in.
Wing area	233.19 sq. ft.	233.19 sq. ft.	233.19 sq. ft.	233.19 sq. ft.
Weight empty	6,610 lb.	6,550 lb.	6,433 lb.	6,985 lb.
Weight loaded	8,370 lb.	7,850 lb.	8,600 lb.	9,800 lb.
Max. speed	310 m.p.h. at 5,000 ft.	387 m.p.h. at 15,000 ft.	390 m.p.h. at 20,000 ft.	440 m.p.h. at 30,000 ft.
Ceiling	25,100 ft.	31,350 ft.	31,350 ft.	41,800 ft.
Power unit	Allison V-1710-87 1325 h.p.	Allison V-1710-39 1150 h.p.	Allison V-1710-81 1200 h.p.	Packard Merlin V-1650-3 1595 h.p.
Armament	4 x .30 in. 2 x .50 in.	4 x 20 mm.	4 x .50 in.	4 x .50 in.