

DEC/JAN

Dakota Territory Air Museum's P-47 Update by Chuck Cravens









Update

The sound of rivet guns hammering away was more constant this month than usual because a large number of skin panels were riveted on permanently. The cockpit enclosure's first trial fitting was a real milestone as shown in our cover photo.

Parts





The rear male canopy jettison titting is a part the will soon be used in the cockpit enclosure.



Another angle shows the intricacy of this one small part.















Fuselage

One of the unusual features of 42-27609, is that is was equipped with a 5th Air Force modification called a Christmas tree tank. The name of the tank was derived from the shape, of course, and the capacity was 42 gallons. This tank was an attempt to extend the range of the Thunderbolt for long range Pacific Theater operations.









The Christmas tree tank installation occupied the space where the supercharger oil tank was originally placed. Consequently, the supercharger oil tank was moved to a location just behind the new fuel tank. The oil filler connection line between the access pan also interfered with the new Christmas tree tank installation, so it was completely removed. Access to the supercharger oil tank in the new configuration was through the large door at station 197; visible to the left of the access pan.























































































Preparations for Wing Assembly

As the work on the fuselage gets nearer and nearer to completion, the guys have been making preparations for the work to begin on the wings.













Thunderbolt History, Part 3

The numbers connected to the Thunderbolt's wartime production and service are staggering. The combined P-47 production of 9,087 from Farmingdale, 6,242 from Evansville, and 354 from Curtiss factories, made the total production run of 15,683 P-47s the largest ever for an American built fighter.¹



From 1943 through August of 1945, Thunderbolts flew 545,575 sorties, 1,352,810 combat flying hours and consumed 200,504,000 gallons of fuel doing so.

They dropped 132,482 tons of bombs, expended 59,567 rockets, and fired 134,899,415 .50 caliber rounds according to Republic Aviation Corporation and the P-47 Thunderbolt Pilots Association.

P-47 combat losses totaled 824, only .07% of the Thunderbolts didn't return from a combat mission, the lowest total of any Allied fighter.²

¹ Roger Freeman, Thunderbolt, a Documentary History of the Republic P-47, (New York, Charles Scribner's Sons, 1978), 141.

² Cory Graff, P-47 Thunderbolt at War, (St.Paul,Minnesota, Zenith Press, 2007, p 125.







Though not conclusive, our best evidence so far points toward this squadron as the one 42-27609 flew with in 1944. Anyone having information on the 40th FS, or other knowledge pertaining to the squadron service of this P-47 is encouraged to contact us at AirCorps Aviation.