

# COLORS OF WAR

VARIETY OF AMERICAN-BUILT AIRCRAFT IN ACTION  
DURING THE SECOND WORLD WAR

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Late in the day on 7 August 1944, Flight Officer (F/O) William Gorman of the 405th Fighter Squadron, 371st Fighter Group, took off from Advanced Landing Ground A-6 near Saint-Mere-Eglise, Normandy, France. This mission was an armed recon over the St. Nazaire area still occupied by the Germans and subject to heavy fighting. The 405th had been flying these missions every two hours and the pilots were exhausted. Gorman took off in *Yellow 4* with element leader 1st Lt. Francis T. Evans Jr. in *Yellow 3*. After the mission, Evans entered the following report: "At approximately 1940, we were flying south straight and level at 7500-ft over the bay, south of St. Nazaire, when heavy *flak* burst to our right and on our level. We immediately began taking evasive action. I started a climbing turn to the left but made the climb straight ahead when I found that I was getting too close to *Yellow Leader*. Gorman was close to my wing when *flak* burst between us. He started to turn towards me and then rolled away, doing a diving turn to the right. I followed him and he was soon going straight down. I yelled for him to pull up but his plane continued on in its dive, hitting the water vertically. I saw no sign of him attempting to bail out." Gorman and his Thunderbolt remain missing today — just one of the thousands of aircraft that simply disappeared in combat over Europe. As can be seen, the hard-worked Thunderbolt is filthy with oil from constant missions. The crew chief, following orders, had taken time to paint out the top surface invasion identification stripes. The name *Mumblin Joe* had been applied immediately behind the cowl.



Hard and grueling work of keeping a combat aircraft up and operational is well represented in this view of P-47D-15-RA 42-75719/44 assigned to the 65th Fighter Squadron, 57th Fighter Group, 12th Air Force. Photographed at Alto, Corsica, during the summer of 1944, Capt. James C. "Wabbit" Hare was the pilot of the well-worn Thunderbolt. As can be seen, the upper Olive Drab

finish is faded and shows extensive overpainting. Note the yellow in-theater identification bands of the vertical tail, wings, and cowl. The large cowl insignia depicts the squadron insignia while a cartoon rabbit carrying a gun is under the windscreen. The name *Verna Mae* was added behind the canopy by crew chief S.Sgt. V.M. Coe. Armorer for the P-47 was S/Sgt. A. Moore.