

COST OF WAR

THE PHOTOGRAPHIC ARCHIVES OF CHALLENGE PUBLICATIONS YIELDS ANOTHER TROVE OF WORLD WAR TWO AIRCRAFT IN VARYING STAGES OF DISTRESS. THESE PHOTOS ILLUSTRATE JUST A FRACTION OF THE TREMENDOUS LOSSES SUFFERED DURING WWII

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The aerial combat portion of Operation *Barbarossa* was extremely intense and the Soviet Air Force suffered huge losses as the *Luftwaffe* blasted them out of the sky. As the German *blitz* moved east, the plains of Russia were littered with downed aircraft. This stubby Polikarpov I-16 is being examined by German troops. On the first day of the German invasion, the Russians lost over 2000 aircraft.



Republic P-47D Thunderbolt USAAF 43-25572/YJ*N *Smoocher* of the 351st Fighter Squadron, 353rd Fighter Group, was damaged on a raid into Germany but made it back to its base at RAF Raydon for a crash-landing on 13 August 1944. Wearing a weathered Olive Drab and Neutral Gray camouflage scheme, it appears a darker OD or green was used to overpaint the D-Day recognition stripes on the Thunderbolt's upper surfaces. This overpainting of the top stripes was basically completed by early August 1944 but, of course, there were many exceptions. Since newer bubble-canopy Thunderbolts were arriving in the

UK, *Smoocher* was probably hauled off to be used for parts. The newer Thunderbolts were left unpainted and this is noted in the P-47 Erection and Maintenance manual: "Starting with P-47D-20 AC 42-25274, camouflage paint will no longer be applied to the P-47 at the factory. There is one exception to this and that is the top portion of the primary cowl, secondary cowl, and fuselage directly in front of the windscreen. These surfaces will be painted with Olive Drab No. 613 anti-glare paint. The width of this painted area will line up approximately with the canopy rails."