

COST OF WAR

IN THIS INSTALLMENT, WE EXAMINE UNITED STATES ARMY AIR FORCE, JAPANESE, BRITISH, AND GERMAN AIRCRAFT THAT WERE WRITTEN OFF DURING THE SECOND WORLD WAR

BY MICHAEL O'LEARY



P-40N USAAF 43-23304 of the 90th Fighter Squadron, 80th FG, after coming to grief while landing on a pierced steel planking (PSP) airstrip. It appears that *White 64* either ground-looped or had the left main gear leg fold. Either way, there was considerable damage. Note that the centerline belly fuel tank was still attached and fortunately this did not ignite. This view shows the ADF loop atop the fuselage as well as the long exhaust streak, indicating that the Allison had been run hard. The V-1710 was an ideal powerplant for the primitive areas from which the Burma Banshees had to operate. The V-12 was rugged and, if cared for correctly, had a long time between overhauls.



The Warhawks of the 89th Fighter Squadron were some of the most colorful of the CBI. The same applied to their flight jacket insignia.

Curtiss Warhawk *White 42* of the 89th Fighter Squadron, 80th Fighter Group "Burma Banshees," is examined to determine the extent of damage following a gear-up landing at Nagaghuli, Assam, India. In the CBI (as can be seen in Part Two of Steve Blake's excellent "China Blitzers!"), conditions were extremely harsh and accidents were just a part of daily life. Whether this P-40 was repaired is difficult to ascertain. Some airfields had the capability to undertake extensive airframe repairs but, more than likely, the Warhawk was "converted to parts" that could be then reused to keep lesser damaged Warhawks operational. As can be seen, the propeller and reduction gearbox from the Allison V-1710 were ripped out and did more airframe damage on departure.



Sometimes combat aircraft were written off in unusual ways. Squadron Commander Bill Harrel's 89th Fighter Squadron P-40N Warhawk was photographed being consumed in a fire, which no one was attempting to stop. It appears that *White 50* was tied down on the PSP ramp when a fire started and it was soon out of control. This was most definitely a write-off.