

HR P47c/d VF\*T of Don Gentile 336thFS 4thFG at Debden in 1943.

This is based on Chompy's brilliant HR Razorback, so enormous thanks go to him.

The skin has been made from my original profile images and uses noseart images made by the ORIGINAL artist from all those years ago, S/sgt Don Allen, a ground crewman from Debden at the time.

After researching these pilots and their AC for this series, I have now been led to making a series of P51D Mustangs as a direct continuation of what the 4th FG flew, look out for them soon. DeanH OPB

#### Dominic 'Don' Salvatore Gentile

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In September of 42, Don Gentile transferred into the United States Army (from the RAF) and received orders to the 336th Fighter Squadron, Fourth Fighter Group, of the Eighth Air Force in Europe. This unit destroyed over one thousand German aircraft by the war's close. Several Eagles such as Gentile, Don Blakeslee, Jim Goodson, and Duane Beeson, became some of the war's most famous fighter aces while flying with this group. Two of them, Gentile and Beeson, engaged in a die-hard struggle for the record of highest number of German planes shot down. So intense was this competition that both pilots turned down their leave time in order to fight. On April 5th, 1944, at age 23, Gentile claimed victory with 27 enemy planes destroyed, though seven of those planes were in contention because they were hit on the ground rather than in the air. However, the assessment board approved his claims because the Eighth Air Force did indeed give credit for grounded kills. And so it happened that Don Gentile broke the record set by World War One ace Captain Eddie Rickenbacker of 26 enemy aircraft downed in combat. Three days later, on April 8th, Gentile bagged three more planes, raising his total to 30 enemy planes destroyed.

It was in the Fourth Fighter Group that Gentile met Captain John T. Godfrey, another American pilot who had been transferred from the RAF. Once they got P51B's and with Godfrey as Gentile's wingman, the two formed a lethal combat team whose impressive teamwork destroyed more enemy planes than any other partnership of American fighter pilots. In June 1944, the two men returned to the United States, to temporarily participate in a war bond tour. Eventually they were separated after Gentile's assignment to Wright Field in Dayton, Ohio.

At Wright Field, Don Gentile worked as a test pilot testing conventional fighters and F-80s. He remained there until April 1946, when he received an honorable discharge. He was recalled to active duty in December of that same year as a Plans and Training Officer in the Fighter Gunnery Program until September 1948. He then became a student officer at the Air Tactical School until April 1949. Two months later, in order to make up for the college education he had missed in his youth, he enrolled at the University of Maryland for undergraduate study in June 1949, where he studied military science until the date of his death in January 1951.

In 1951, shortly before a scheduled transfer from Andrews AFB in Maryland to a new base in Michigan, Don S. Gentile made his last flight. He was piloting a two-seat, T-33 trainer which crashed, killing both Gentile and a passenger. He was honored with a posthumous promotion to Major. He was survived by his wife Isabella and their three sons, Don S. Jr., Joseph and Pasquale (Pat). In his short but accomplished life, he had been called "a one-man Air Force," "Captain Courageous," and "the Ace of Aces."

#### Victories

(includes only those while in the 4th FG)

Date	Enemy	A/C	Air/Ground	Place	Number
12/16/43	Ju-88	Air	unk		0.33
1/5/44	FW-190	Air	15 mi west of Tours, Fr.		1
1/14/44	FW-190	Air	unk		2
2/25/44	FW-190	Air	20 mi s/e of Luxembourg, Lux.		1
3/3/44	FW-190	Air	Wittenburg area, Ger.		2
3/8/44	Me-109	Air	Berlin suburbs, Ger.		3.5
3/18/44	FW-190	Air	Augsburg area, Ger.		1
3/23/44	Me-109	Air	Munster area, Ger.		2
3/27/44	Me-110	Ground	Cazaux A/D, Fr.		2
3/29/44	FW-190	Air	Brunswick area, Ger.		2
3/29/44	Me-109	Air	n/e of Brunswick area, Ger.		1
4/1/44	Me-109	Air	Unk		1
4/5/44	Ju-88	Ground	Stendal A/D, Ger.		4
4/8/44	FW-190	Air	near Ruhrburg, Ger.		3

#### TOTAL VICTORIES 4TH FG

Air	Ground	Total
21.8	6	27.8



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#### Career Highlights/Lowlights

350 combat hours in WW2

September 28, 1942, joined 4th FG

September 26, 1943, "B" Flight CO

April 1944, on U.S. leave. Did not return

January 28, 1951, Killed in flying accident at Forestville, Maryland in T-33 jet trainer