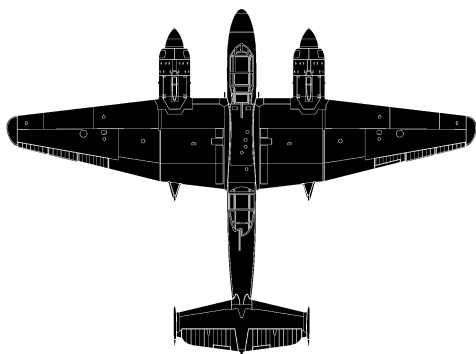


Airpower Classics

Artwork by Zaur Eylanbekov

Tu-2 Bat



An exceptionally clean midwing monoplane, the Tu-2's radial engines were tightly enclosed in streamlined nacelles. Noted for its rugged construction, the Tu-2 was designed for use in multiple roles such as level and dive bombing, reconnaissance, dropping torpedoes, attacking enemy armor, escorting bombers, crew training, and, when stripped down, as a freighter. Built in many variants during the war, the Tu-2 served principally as a level bomber. Its large bomb bay could accommodate a 2,200-pound bomb load, and some reports indicate that up to an additional 6,600 pounds in bombs could be mounted externally. The Tu-2's rear defense was

formidable, for three of its crew members could man rear-firing 12.7 mm UBT guns.

Despite it being a very sophisticated aircraft, Moscow rushed its development. Performance of the prototypes was so good that the aircraft was ordered into mass production well before testing was finished. The favorable progress of the war allowed some Tu-2s to be used in experimental roles, including testing radar systems and ejection seats and serving as a test bed for jet engines. After the war, modified Tu-2s served as tanker aircraft using a trailing hose system.

—Walter J. Boyne

This aircraft: Soviet Air Force Tu-2 bort 32 White—*Moskva*—as it looked in summer 1944 when assigned to the 6th Bombardment Air Regiment in Russia.



In Brief

Designed, built by Tupolev ★ first flight Jan. 29, 1941 ★ crew of four (pilot, navigator/bombardier, radio operator, gunner) ★ number built 3,200 ★ two ASh-82FN radial engines ★ **Specific to Tu-2S:** armament, two ShVAK 20 mm cannons; three 12.7 mm UBT machine guns ★ bomb load up to 8,800 lb ★ max speed 350 mph ★ cruise speed 260 mph ★ max range 870 mi ★ weight (loaded) 25,050 lb ★ span 61 ft 11 in ★ length 45 ft 3 in ★ height 14 ft 11 in.

Famous Fliers

Mikhail Nyukhtikov, M. P. Vasyakin, V. Tyreshchyenko, A. D. Pereiyot, I. P. Skok.

Interesting Facts

Designed by an in-prison design team headed by Andrei Tupolev ★ appeared in some 20 variants ★ performed service in nine air forces ★ flown by Chinese Air Force in the Korean War and in Tibet ★ fitted with 75 mm cannon in special "Shturmovik" version ★ modified as "Paravan" version with steel cables to cut barrage balloon cables ★ used to bomb ice dams on Chinese rivers ★ led to Tu-77 jet version.



The Tu-2 was a rugged machine.