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# Grumman F6F-5 Hellcat

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Few aircraft in the history of aerial warfare can boast the impact and combat credentials of the Grumman F6F Hellcat, one of the finest fighting machines ever to take to the skies. A product of the already successful Grumman 'Ironworks', the company's design philosophy was only to produce aircraft which were easy to manufacture and maintain, and must be reliable in a combat situation. Importantly, it must be an excellent fighting machine and able to be mastered by the average wartime pilot following a standard conversion period. This no nonsense approach ensured that the Hellcat was ready to fight and available in some numbers when they eventually reached US Navy units in 1943.

Despite its combat introduction taking place relatively late in the war, the Hellcat would prove to be the 'mount of aces' and unquestionably ruled the skies of the Pacific Theatre. Posting some quite astonishing combat statistics, it has been reported that almost 75% of all aerial victories claimed by US Navy pilots were attributed to the Hellcat, which earned an impressive combat kill ratio of 19 to 1 in the Pacific Theatre. Although combat claims can be notoriously difficult to corroborate, this meant that an average, nineteen enemy aircraft were destroyed for the loss of a single Hellcat, a statistic which could not be bettered by any other combat aircraft in WWII. Perhaps the most impressive combat statistic earned by the Grumman Hellcat was that it made 'Aces' of no fewer than 305 US airman, each one claiming five victories or more.

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## **Box art Artists**

**Artist on Box Type 16:** Adam Tooby

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