

# NORTHROP P-61 BLACK WIDOW

## P-61 SERVICE

*Manufacturer:* Northrop Aircraft Inc., Hawthorne, California, USA  
*Model:* NS-8A  
*Designations:* P-61; F-15, F-61, F2T, R-15  
*Names:* Black Widow; Reporter (F-15)

*First official flight:* XP-61 26 May 1942  
*Factory production period:* 1942 – 1947  
*Primary service period:* 1943 – 1949  
*Last official flight:* RF-61C 1952

## P-61 VARIANTS

1942	<b>Model NS-8A</b>	<b>XP-61</b>	2	
1943	<b>Model NS-8A</b>	<b>YP-61</b>	13	<b>Total: 015</b>
1943	<b>Model NS-8A</b>	<b>P-61A</b>	200	
1944	<b>Model NS-8A</b>	<b>P-61B</b>	450	
1945	<b>Model NS-8A</b>	<b>P-61C</b>	41	<b>Total: 691</b>
1946	<b>Model NS-8A</b>	<b>F-15A</b>	36	<b>Total: 036</b>
				<b><u>Total: 742</u></b>

## P-61 PRODUCTION

### **XP-61**

*Prototype twin-engined, twin boom night-fighter.*

*produced 1942*

Northrop Hawthorne, California (NO)

41-19509, 41-19510 - 2 **Total: 002**

### **YP-61**

*As XP-61, service test aircraft, engine upgrade.*

*produced 1943*

Northrop Hawthorne, California (NO)

41-18876 / 41-18888 - 13 **Total: 013**

### **P-61A**

*As YP-61, revised canopy, last 155 with engine upgrade, last 163 without top turret, combat mods. Redesignated as **F-61A** in 1948.*

*produced 1943 – 1944*

Northrop Hawthorne, California (NO)

42-5485 / 42-5634 -  
42-39348 / 42-39397 - 200 **Total: 200**

## P-61B

As P-61A, longer nose – radar upgrade,  
top turret re-installed on later airframes.  
Redesignated as **F-61B** in 1948.

produced 1944 – 1945

Northrop Hawthorne, California (NO)

42-39398 / 42-39757 -

43-8231 / 43-8320 -

450 **Total: 450**

## P-61C

As P-61B, engine / prop upgrade, air-  
brakes. Redesignated as **F-61C** in 1948.

produced 1945

Northrop Hawthorne, California (NO)

43-8321 / 43-8361 -

41 **Total: 041**

551 additional airframes cancelled.

## F-15A Reporter

As XF-15A, photo reconn. version, redesigned  
nose section for cameras, unarmed. Later  
redesignated **R-15A**, then **RF-61C** in 1948.

produced 1946 – 1947

Northrop Hawthorne, California (NO)

45-59300 / 45-59335 3201 / 3236

36 **Total: 036**

139 additional airframes cancelled.

**Total: 742**

## P-61 CONVERSIONS & TRANSFERS

### USAAF

XP-61D	2	P-61A (42-5559, 42-5587), 1944-1946, major engine upgrade. Original designation was XP-61C. Conversions by Goodyear Aircraft Corp., Ohio.
XP-61E	2	P-61B (42-39549, 42-39557), 1944-1945, major redesign of center section and cockpit (bubble canopy), armament altered for day-fighter tests.
(XF-15)	1	XP-61E (42-39549), 1944-1948, conversion with 6 cameras in modified nose.
XP-61F	-	Proposed conversion similar to XP-61E, cancelled.
P-61G	16	P-61B, 1945, weather reconnaissance conversions, unarmed. Conversions by Douglas Aircraft Co., Oklahoma.
XP-61H	-	Proposed long-range conversion with fuel tank in place of gun turret. Many P-61s field converted to this standard with the same designation.
ZF-61A	1+	F-61A, redesignation as "obsolete."
EF-61C	1	F-61C (43-8357), 1949-1951, conversion as electronics test aircraft.
XF-15A	1	P-61C (43-8335), 1945-1947, prototype conversion with XF-15 fuselage.

### US Navy

F2T-1N	12	P-61A, 1945-1947, crew trainers in service with the USMC. Assigned BuNo. 52750 / 52761.
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## **CIVILIAN SERVICE**

- Some P-61 Black Widows sold on the civil market post WW2 as fire-bombers, private executive transports and circuit racers.