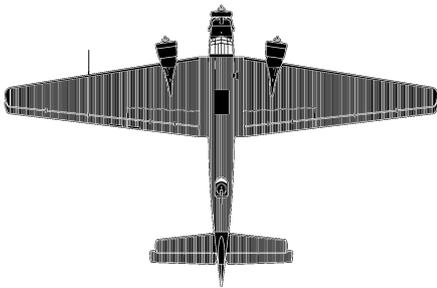


Airpower Classics

Artwork by Zaur Eylanbekov

Ju 52



The German Luftwaffe Ju 52 was one of World War II's most prominent combat aircraft. It served with Axis military forces on every major front and in many different roles, flying mostly as a transport but also, briefly, as a medium bomber. Before and after the war, this Junkers airplane also was in wide commercial use, flown by many airlines. The Ju 52 is indelibly associated with Adolf Hitler. He used one for transport in his 1932 campaign and, after election as German Chancellor, as his personal aircraft.

The Ju 52 design sprang from the Junkers J.1 of 1915. It had a rugged, easy-to-maintain-and-repair corrugated aluminum structure and one engine. The single-engine type was underpowered, however, and lasted for seven models. Junkers switched to a three-engine design. In the trimotor configuration, the two wing engines were angled to provide

more control effectiveness if an engine were shut down. It combined flaps and ailerons to create a virtual "second wing" along the trailing edge. Over the years, it was outfitted with wheel, ski, and pontoon landing gear.

The Ju 52 was in combat before the September 1939 outbreak of World War II. In the early and mid-1930s, it flew in two wars in Latin America, ferried Francoist troops from North Africa to Spain, and participated in the notorious bombing of Guernica. In World War II, Ju 52s participated in the invasion of Poland, bombed Warsaw, and dropped parachute troops into Denmark, Norway, Holland, and Crete. It was highly vulnerable to Allied fighters and flak, however, and suffered horrendous losses over North Africa, the Mediterranean, and Soviet Union.

—Walter J. Boyne

This aircraft: German Luftwaffe Ju 52/3M—Serial #1Z+LL—as it looked in spring 1941 when assigned to Unit 3./KGzBV 1 and operated from several Balkan countries.



In Brief

Designed by Junkers ★ built by Junkers in Germany and by others in Spain, France ★ first flight Oct. 13, 1930 (single engine) and March 7, 1932 (three engines) ★ number built 4,845 ★ crew of two or three (one to two pilots, plus radio operator). **Specific to Ju 52/3M:** three BMW nine-cylinder radial engines ★ armament up to five machine guns ★ load 1,000 lbs of bombs or 17 passengers ★ max speed 178 mph ★ cruise speed 130 mph ★ max range 683 mi ★ weight (loaded) 24,500 lb ★ span 95 ft 11 in ★ length 62 ft ★ height 18 ft.

Famous Fliers

Notables: Hans Bauer, Carl August Gablenz, Ulrich Grauert, Robert Ritter von Greim, Albert Kesselring, Erhard Milch, Erwin Rommel, Ernst Udet, Kurt Student. **Dictators:** Francisco Franco, Adolf Hitler, Benito Mussolini.

Interesting Facts

Logged 13,000 hours for Condor Legion in Spanish Civil War ★ transported 10,000 Moorish troops from Morocco to fight for Franco in Spain ★ nicknamed "Iron Annie" and "Auntie Ju" by Germans and "Turkey" by Spanish ★ used in 1932 in support of Colombia in war with Peru ★ flown in Bolivia's Gran Chaco War, 1932-35 ★ deployed by Lufthansa on Berlin-Rome and Berlin-London routes ★ used by a total of 29 airlines for commercial flights ★ fitted with wide variety of cargo doors suited to specific missions ★ flew with French forces in Vietnam 1949-50 ★ carried mail in China ★ hauled lumber in remote parts of Canada.

Photo via Deutsches Bundesarchiv



A Luftwaffe Ju 52 being serviced in Crete in 1943.