



Two general views of the P.47. The four-bladed airscrew of 12-ft. diameter gives a reasonable ground clearance with short undercarriage legs. The cockpit cover slides straight back. *"Flight" photographs.*

stated to have been anything from 700 miles upwards. What actually happened is this: One 1st/Lt. Compstock, an Army Air Force pilot, was told to take a Thunderbolt up to 36,000ft., and practise aerobatics. During these manœuvres Lt. Compstock went into a dive during which the A.S.I. went right "off the clock," and the instrument broke before he pulled out at 19,000ft. By taking a similar instrument and calibrating it for the height and meteorological conditions obtaining at the time, it was found that the airspeed at which the instrument broke was probably 728 m.p.h.

Faster than Sound

How much in excess of this figure the P.47 dived will never be known. It is interesting to note that at 27,500ft.—a midway position in the dive—the speed of sound is 685 m.p.h. This being so, terrific pressure waves must have been set up, and it is remarkable that the tail did not come off, as it did on some of the earlier models when diving tests were carried out. The Thunderbolt has been designed as a high-altitude, fast fighter. It is said to be capable of operating at 40,000ft.

Whether this refers to a pressure-cabin model or whether the pilot wears a pressure suit at this height is not stated. It is evident that 40,000ft. is beyond the height at which ordinary oxygen masks are effective.

A 2,000 h.p. Pratt and Whitney R. 2800 Double-Wasp engine with turbo supercharger drives a 12ft. four-

