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The Japanese attack on the American base at Pearl Harbor in Hawaii on December 7, 1941, is one of the decisive milestones of the Second World War and of the entire twentieth century. It was the catharsis of a long-standing crisis in Japanese-American relations and brought the United States into the World War 2. United States as a global economic and military power had until then kept aloof from the war in Europe, even they were preparing for it and supporting their future allies.

War between Japan and the United States was a threat that both countries had been preparing for since the 1920s. Japan had viewed the expansion of American spheres of influence in the Pacific since the 1890s with concern. In the First World War, Japan sided with the Allied Powers, and it was also one of the reasons why Germany lost its colonies in Asia. However, the Japanese government itself saw the path to international power in colonial expansion, which it saw as unacceptable in other states.

Causes leading to the attack

Tensions between Japan and the U.S. escalated in 1931 after the Japanese invasion of Manchuria and increased during the war in China in the following decade. In 1940, Japan seized French Indochina in an attempt to impose an embargo on all imports into China, including war supplies heading from the US. This move prompted the United States to impose a retaliatory embargo on Japan's oil exports, leading the Japanese to estimate that its supplies would last less than two years. For some time, Japan had been planning the conquest of the "Southern Resource Area" in order to join the "Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere" that Japan wanted to create.

The strategic target of the attack was the Philippines, which was an U.S. protectorate at the time. Part of the plan was a preemptive attack on Pearl Harbor that would neutralize the US naval forces in the Pacific.



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Planning an attack

Preparations for the attack on Pearl Harbor began by Admiral Isoroku Yamamoto in early 1941. As a former military attaché in Washington, he had reservations about war with the US, but when preparations for the attack were about to begin, he took them personally. He eventually won the approval of the Navy High Command by, among other things, threatening to resign. From the summer of 1941, the attack was codenamed Operation Z, but had other names too.

During 1941, the Japanese gathered intelligence in Hawaii using their own network and Abwehr agents. Although the U.S. closed the Hawaiian consulates belonging to Italy and Germany during the summer, the Japanese consulate was not closed for fear of increasing tensions with Tokyo. The latter was a key source for tracking the movements of vessels and US troops in planning the attack.

Yamamoto had studied the British raid on the Taranto base and even sent a research team to Italy for this purpose. Yamamoto, together with Rear Admiral Kusaka and Commander Minoru Genda, planned the attack using aircraft carriers whose planes were to strike with a surprise attack in the early morning hours. Because of the shallow waters in the harbor, the Japanese were forced to adjust the torpedoes and practice dropping them under these specific conditions. The Navy used Kagoshima Harbor with its mountain range surroundings as a training area similar to Hawaii.

The landing and occupation of the Hawaiian Islands was also considered, but this idea was abandoned by the Japanese because of the current involvement of Army units in China, the planned deployment in the Philippines and other areas in the southwest direction.

The attack on Pearl Harbor was approved in the summer of 1941 at the Imperial Conference. The authorization for the attack was given at a second Imperial Conference provided a satisfactory outcome for Japan was not achieved in diplomatic negotiations with the United States. Following the so-called Hull Note, the order to attack was given on December 1, 1941. However, Emperor Hirohito hesitated until the last moment to issue it.

Japanese naval aviators

The crews of Aichi D3A bombers, Nakajima B5N bombers and A6M2 fighter pilots understood that they were preparing for a major military encounter during the training of attacks on the port target. However, they estimated the target differently. Many of them assumed it would be an attack on a Russian base, as tensions between Japan and Russia over fishing issues were rising at the time. Others expected an attack on American bases in the Aleutians. Some, however, correctly guessed Pearl Harbor. The crews of the B5N bombers were a little uncomfortable with the dark paint on the upper surfaces of their machines before the attack. Others found it ominous when they saw training torpedoes with red paint on their warheads being swapped for combat torpedoes with black paint before the formation sailed. After the crews had been told the target of the attack, the officers on some ships had to assure their subordinates that the plan was in accord with the position of the naval command. This was to prevent rumors that might have spread in connection with several coup attempts that Japan had suffered in the past decade. And it was also necessary to emphasize that the plan was prepared in concert between the Army and Navy leadership, whose rivalry was well known.

Individual naval aviators took different approaches to the attack on the US. Some welcomed the attack with enthusiasm, others saw it as an obligation. There were also airmen who were seriously concerned about a war against the US or expressed resentment that the enemy would be attacked unexpectedly and that a conventional naval battle would not occur. Most airmen considered Pearl Harbor a heavily defended target and assumed they would not return from the raid.

The Striking Force is setting sail

The core of the Striking Force, which was to attack Pearl Harbor, were six aircraft carriers divided into three divisions: 1. Kōkū Sentai with Akagi and Kaga, 2. Kōkū Sentai with Soryū and Hiryū and 5. Kōkū Sentai with Shókaku and Zuikaku. They belonged to the so-called Kidō Butai (Mobile Force) commanded by Vice-Admiral Chūichi Nagumo. At the same time, he was the commander of the 1st Kōkū Kantai (Air Fleet), under which the air units aboard a total of six aircraft carriers fell organizationally.

Such a large carrier group has never been deployed in combat in the history of naval operations. Two of the ships, Shōkaku and Zuikaku, were completed just a few months ago. The battleships Hiei and Kirishima and the heavy cruisers Tone and Chikuma were part of the group. The cruiser Abukuma cruiser, with nine modern destroyers, provided escort for the Striking Force. Seven tankers provided fuel and the submarines I-19, I-21, and I-23 sailed in the vanguard to Hawaii.

The aircraft of the 1st and 2nd Kōkū Sentai were divided into four specializations: fighter escort, torpedo attack, dive bombing, and horizontal flight bombing. The crews of the 5th Kōkū Sentai were ordered to prepare for only the first three tasks. If no enemy aircraft were in the air, the escort fighters were to engage in strafing ground targets, preferably attacking as low as possible over the terrain.

The leader of the air attack was Commander Mitsuo Fuchida, who simultaneously commanded the first attack wave. The fighter escort during the first wave was led by Lt. Shigeru Itaya, who had participated in the development of the Zero for the Navy in the late 1930s. In the second wave, Lt. Saburō Shindō, who led Zer pilots into the first successful combat in China in 1940. All three officers served aboard the Akagi. The commander of the second attack wave was another veteran of fighting in China, Lieutenant Commander Shigekazu Shimazaki.

Vessels began to depart their ports gradually starting on November 16 and gathered in Hitokappu Bay on the remote island of Etorofu in the South Kurils. Toward its destination in Hawaii, the Striking Force sailed in the evening of November 26. The Japanese decided to attack the target in two waves and were prepared to send a third. The reason for dividing the air units into several waves was primarily the long time required for logistics and launching all the machines from the decks. Nagumo received a coded message on December 2, "Niitaka-yama nobore 1208" (Climb Mount Niitaka 1208), meaning that the date of the attack was confirmed for December 8 of Japanese time.

After refueling northerly of Midway Atoll on December 4, the convoy headed southeast. The voyage was conducted at constant risk of discovery of the Striking Force. If detection occurred within two days before the attack, Nagumo would return to Japan. On the eve of the attack, Japanese naval command



On photograph taken in Washington, D.C. in February 1927 are seated from the left: new Naval Attaché, Capt. Isoroku Yamamoto, U.S. Secretary of the Navy Curtis D. Wilbur, former Naval Attaché Capt. Kiyashi Hasegawa, and Chief of Naval Operations Admiral Edward Walter Eberle. Thanks to Eberle, completion of the aircraft carriers USS Lexington and Saratoga was hurried. He also contributed to the retention of aviation units within the LLS Nava offer World War. I



The Imperial Japanese Navy aircraft carriers Zuikaku (in front), Kaga (on the right) and Akagi are heading for Pearl Harbor in November 1941 before the official declaration of war with American forces.



Mitsubishi A6M2 "Zero" fighters on the aircraft carrier Akagi during the Pearl Harbor attack mission. "Al-101" in the background was flown during second attack wave by PO1c Tadao Kimura. The ship in foreground is "Al-105" flown by PO1c Kikue Otokuni. Both airmen survived the war.



Burned U.S. Army Air Forces Boeing B-17C Flying Fortress (s/n 40-2074) rests near Hangar 5, Hickam Field, Oahu, It was flown to Hickam by Captain Raymond T. Swenson from California and arrived when the attack was under way. On its final approach, the aircraft's magnezium flare box was hit by Japanese strafing and ignited. The burning plane separated upon landing. The crew survived the crash, but a passenger was killed by strafing when running from the burning week.

Photo: U.S. Navy National Museum of Naval Aviatio

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Photograph taken from a Japanese plane during the torpedo attack on ships moored on both sides of Ford Island shortly after the beginning of the Pearl Harbor attack. Photo taken in eastern direction approximately, with the supply depot, submarine base and fuel tank farm in the right center. A torpedo has just hit USS West Virginia on the far side of Ford Island (center). Other battleships moored nearby are (from left): Nevada, Arizona, Tennessee (inboard of West Virginia), Oklahoma (torpedoed and tilting) alongside Maryland, and California. On the left are light cruisers Detroit and Raleigh, target and training ship Utah and seaplane tender Tangier. Raleigh and Utah have been torpedoed and Utah is tilting sharply to port. Japanese planes are in the right center (over Ford Island) and over the Navy Yard at right. U.S. Navy planes on the seaplane ramp are on fire.

received word from agents in Hawaii of vessels in port, but no American aircraft carriers were present. Nevertheless, excitement about the coming action prevailed among the crews of the Kidō Butai. After another refueling about six hundred miles north of Oahu, only the combat vessels made their way to the target. On the mast of the Akagi flew the historic flag used by Admiral Tōgō at the Battle of Tsushima. The heavy cruisers Tone and Chikuma sent reconnaissance float planes to the area of Hawaii, and crews upon their return, confirmed previous information about enemy ships in the harbor.

The Attack

At 1 hour 30 minutes (Japanese Standard Time) the order was given to start the engines. The first to take to the air from each ship were 43 Zero fighters, needing the shortest run-up to take off. They were followed by 140 Nakajima B5N bombers and Aichi D3A dive bombers. Mitsuo Fuchida assisted his navigation to the target by tuning in an American radio from Hawaii, which, in addition to jazz music for a relaxing Sunday morning, provided an accurate report of the weather over the target, including cloud height and wind strength and direction. As a result, Fuchida changed his direction of attack. At three o'clock, the Japanese crews spotted Kahuku Point on northern part of Oahu. After ten minutes, Fuchida gave the order to attack with one flare, but the fighter escort did not notice the signal. Fuchida then fired a second flare, but this caused a misunderstanding among the bomber crews. The two flares were a signal that the formation was under attack. As a result, the leader of the dive bombers, Lt. Cdr. Kakuichi Takahashi understood that he should attack first, but the leader of the torpedo bomber formation Lt. Cdr. Shigeharu Murata believed that he was the one to launch the raid according to the original plan. At 3 hours 17 minutes Fuchida, after visual contact with the target, sent the signal "to, to, to, to", which meant that the aircraft were launching the attack in full force. After another three minutes, he sent the signal "tora, tora, tora" (tora = tiger), confirming that the enemy had been surprised. The message was immediately relayed by Nagumo to Tokyo.

Dive bombers due to a misunderstanding launched a raid on the ships in the harbor first, which forced the commander of the torpedo bombers to attack under a different course and faster than planned. Some of the bombers attacked Ford Island, Hickam Field, and Wheeler, Ewa, and Kaneohe airfields. Mitsuo Fuchida's B5N bomber formation dropped bombs on targets in Oahu from an altitude of 3,000 m. Only a few American fighters tried to intervene against the attackers and were quickly shot down. The American personnel recovered from the sheer shock and fought back with all available means. Japanese veterans of the first attack wave recalled after the war being surprised at how quickly the Americans were able to open fire. The Japanese airmen quickly became desperate, in some cases having to change course at the last minute to reduce the risk of being hit before the torpedoes were dropped. Fuchida gave the order to return at four o'clock, but he stayed over the target, as he was the main commander of the raid. By this time a second attack wave was already approaching, led by Lt. Cdr. Shimazaki, who at the same time commanded 54 B5N bombers, a formation of 78 D3A dive bombers was led by Lt. Cdr. Takashige Egusa, and escorting them were 36 Zeros under the command of Lt. Shindō. Shimazaki gave the order to attack at 4 hours 25 minutes, but by that time his aircraft were already the target of heavy anti-aircraft fire. The targets were shrouded in a smoke screen, or they were heavily burning. The bombers had to significantly lower their attack altitude, but this put them at greater risk of hits from anti-aircraft artillery. Japanese airmen had difficulty identifying targets, so they began attacking the hot spots of defense fire.

Nagumo and his staff considered sending a third wave, but eventually abandoned it, mainly because of the heavy anti-aircraft fire and the fact that the sinking of the American ships had succeeded in achieving the objectives of the operation. They sent 350 machines into action out of the 414 available. In the first wave were lost three Zeros, one D3A and five B5N bombers. In the second wave, six Zeros and fourteen D3As were lost. Fifty-five pilots were killed, none were captured, except for the ironic situation of fighter pilot PO1c Nishikaichi. A total of 74 aircraft returned with damage. Nine midget submarine crews also lost their lives and one was captured. Of the 79 fighter pilots who took part in both attack waves, only 17 lived to see the end of the war. The airstrike killed 2,335 members of the US armed forces and injured 1,143. 68 civilians also lost their lives and 35 others sustained injuries. In addition to the

sunken and damaged ships, nearly 350 aircraft were destroyed or damaged. Three civilian machines were also shot down.

American aircraft carriers

The main target of the Japanese attack, the American carriers, were not found and their location was unknown to Japanese. The USS Saratoga was in San Diego, embarking her air group and USMC fighters. She was ordered to Pearl Harbor, where she arrived on December 15 and proceeded to Wake Island. USS Lexington sailed in Task Force 12 to Midway Atoll to transport Marine Corps bombers. After the announcement of the attack on Pearl Harbor, TF 12 was ordered to begin a search for the Japanese carriers. Her aircraft conducted intensive patrol activity until December 13, when the USS Lexington returned to Pearl Harbor.

The USS Enterprise sent eighteen SBD bombers under the command of commander of Carrier Air Group Lt. Cdr. Howard L. "Brigham" Young. At the end of the patrol, they arrived at Pearl Harbor but came under fire from both Japanese airmen and their own gunners. Seven Dauntlesses were shot down, eight airmen were killed and two suffered injuries.

At 17.00, the USS Enterprise, based on wrong information, sent a formation of 18 Devastator bombers, six Dauntlesses and six Wildcats against the Japanese alliance in the wrong direction. After an unsuccessful search, the bombers returned aboard the mothership, but the Wildcats were sent to Pearl Harbor and approached for a landing in the dark. Through a tragic misunderstanding in radio communications, four of them were shot down and three pilots were killed.

The Zero-Sen

The Japanese aircraft industry in the 1920s and early 1930s was oriented towards the production of aircraft built under foreign licenses. However, the armed forces, especially the Navy, with regard to the specifics of the Chinese and Pacific battlefields, came up with requirements that foreign aircraft designs did not offer.

Due to these circumstances, Mitsubishi Heavy Industries created the Type % naval fighter aircraft, better known as the A5M "Claude". It was a purely Japanese design. The head of the design team was a young Japanese engineer, Jirō Horikoshi. With an engine that did not have much power, he managed to design a light and fast fighter with a fixed landing gear, which at the time of its creation had no comparison in the speed achieved.

In October 1937, Mitsubishi and Nakajima were approached to begin development of Prototype 12-shi Carrier-based Fighter. The requirements for the parameters of this machine were at first sight so extreme and sometimes contradictory that the two design teams investigated whether they could be relaxed. Nakajima eventually withdrew from the project, and the parameters of the prototype were even tightened based on experience on the Chinese battlefield. The only significant part of the aircraft whose design relied on foreign license was the retractable landing gear.

In the end, Horikoshi's team managed to meet the technical specifications, not only thanks to the aerodynamic design and a new type of light alloy for the aircraft's skin, but also thanks to the Sakae 11 engine from Nakajima. During the flight tests, the wing surface suffered cracking during overload and aileron control during high-speed maneuvers had to be addressed. The new fighter plane had a powerful armament of two guns and two machine guns, extremely long range (over 1800 kilometers) and excellent maneuverability. Its top speed was 533 km/h at an altitude of 4,550 m. However, it lacked armour and was not allowed to fly at speeds greater than 600 km/h due to structural stability.

The machine was inducted into the armament in 1940 and received the official designation Rei shiki Kanjō sentōki (Type 0 carrier fighter), with the "zero" being derived from the imperial year 2600 (1940). Japanese pilots usually abbreviated it as "Rei-Sen". This is also the origin of the name "Zero" often used by Allied pilots instead of the official code name, derived from the male name "Zeke". As part of the Navy's aircraft designation system, the new machine was given the type designation A6M, where A6 meant that it was the sixth type of carrier fighter to enter service, and M stood for the Mitsubishi company name.

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Zeros, specifically the A6M2 Model 11, had been successfully deployed on the Chinese battlefield since the summer of 1940, but their existence eluded Western intelligence because no one wanted to believe reports from China that suggested the Japanese had a world-class fighter.

Further modifications were made during 1941, the main one being folding wing tips to enable easier handling on aircraft carriers. With the A6M2 Model 21 fighter modified in this way, Japan entered the war with the US and other Western nations. Mitsubishi needed to produce other aircraft in addition to the Zero, so the Nakajima company also began licensed production in late 1941.

Zeros from the attack on Pearl Harbor

The colors of Japanese aircraft from the Second World War, and especially Zero fighters, has been the subject of long and complex research both in Japan and abroad. Our main guide to the selection of decal colors and recommended modeling paint shades is Nicholas Millman's publication "Painting the Early Zero-Sen, A Primer for Modellers & Artists". We highly recommend everyone to read it. For example, it is a great guide to explaining the use of the J3 Ameiro paint that Zera was painted with, as well as understanding its appearance in quite different shades.

For the shade of the hinomaru we chose a lighter variant of red than is usual among kit manufacturers. The color did darken over time, but the Zeros attacking Pearl Harbor were relatively new machines. We based this on Millman's publication and also on the shade of red on parts of the B5N bomber in the

It is believed that the Zeroes involved in the attack on Pearl Harbor came only from Mitsubishi production. The Nakajima company did not produce its first licensed Zeros until November 1941, and the company's machines did not reach combat units until the spring of 1942. Therefore, the colour details are based on the specifics of the Mitsubishi Zeros as explained by N. Millman. Nevertheless, we recommend that photographs of specific machines are also used, for example with regard to the design of the warning stripes on the main landing gear covers. According to the photographs of several machines involved in the Pearl Harbor raid (Al-156, All-159 and All-168), it cannot be ruled out that the inner surface of the main landing gear cover was painted with Aotake paint, not the grey paint typical of Mitsubishi machines.

At the time of the attack on Pearl Harbor, Zero fighters were marked with color stripes on the fuselage and code markings on the vertical tail surfaces. The letter in the code identified the order of the respective Kōkū Sentai, while the Roman numeral indicated the order of the aircraft carrier within that Kōkū Sentai

Aircraft of the 1st Kökü Sentai

Akagi: one red stripe on the fuselage, red Al code Kaga: two red stripes on the fuselage, red code All

Soryu: one blue stripe on the fuselage, code red BI Hiryū: two blue stripes on the fuselage, red code BII

Aircraft 5. Kökü Sentai

Shōkaku: one white stripe on fuselage, red El code Zuikaku: two white stripes on fuselage, red code Ell

For all Zeros of aircraft carrier Shōkaku, it is likely that the white stripe on the fuselage and the command stripes on the tail surfaces were outlined in red. Some photographs taken from a distance are not sharp enough to show the outlines clearly. The images are often from newsreels.

The command stripes on the tail surfaces depicted this functional classification:

Three stripes - the Hikōtaichō, the Group Leader of the Air Group on the aircraft carrier, under whom all squadrons with different types on board could fall. Organizationally, he commanded all aviation personnel. In combat action, he led the formation of the various types of aircraft of the respective Kökü Sentai. However, at the time of the attack on Pearl Harbor, for example, the Akagi had its own Hikōtaichō for each of its three squadrons.

Two stripes - the Buntaichō, the Division Officer leading formation of six to nine aircraft (Chútai). Larger aircraft carriers usually had two officers with the Buntaichō function for one type of aircraft, senior and junior.

One stripe - Shōtaichō, leader of the three-plane formation.

Conclusion

During the two waves of the Japanese raid on Pearl Harbor, 21 US Navy ships were sunk or damaged, but 18 were recovered or repaired and returned to service. For example, the badly damaged battleship USS Nevada was combat deployed in October 1942.

The USS Enterprise, as one of the carriers that escaped the raid on Pearl Harbor, fought in the Battle of Midway six months later and participated in the sinking of four of the six carriers that participated in the attack on Pearl Harbor.

In the early months of the war in the Pacific, the Americans and their allies realized how much they had underestimated their Japanese adversaries. One of the main symbols of this sobering realization was the Zero fighter, which had developed a reputation as a nearly invincible adversary early in the war. Although many in the US feared that war with Japan might occur in late 1941, the attack on Pearl Harbor was a surprise. As a result, the majority of the population came to support U.S. involvement in the war, and American soldiers fighting in the Pacific heard the words "Remember Pearl Harbor" many times in the years to come.



The forward magazines of USS Arizona (BB-39) are exploding just after she was hit by a lapanese bomb: 1.177 Naval



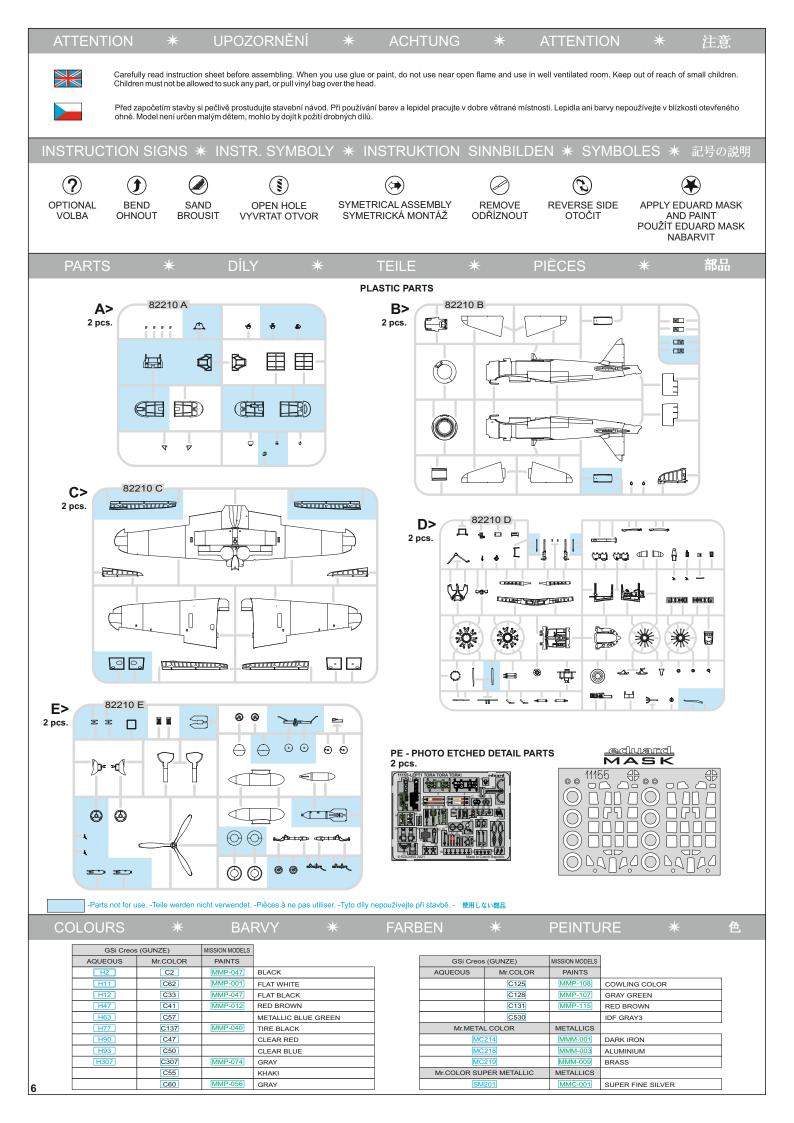
The wreckage of the aircraft "Al-154" from the Akagi Fighter Sauadron piloted by PO1c Takeshi Hirano. With his unit he first strafed John Rodgers Field (Honolulu Airport), then attacked the B-17 manned by Capt. Swenson. He was finally hit by ground fire from Hickam Field and from the destroyer USS Helm (DD-388). The defenders were under impression that Hirano was attempting an emergency landing on the street, but he hit palm trees and crashed into a building at Fort Kamehameha. He perished, but killed were also American soldiers hiding behind the building: Cpl. Claude L. Bryant, Pvt. Eugene Bubb, Pvt. Donat George Duquette, Jr. and Pfc. Oreste DeTorre.

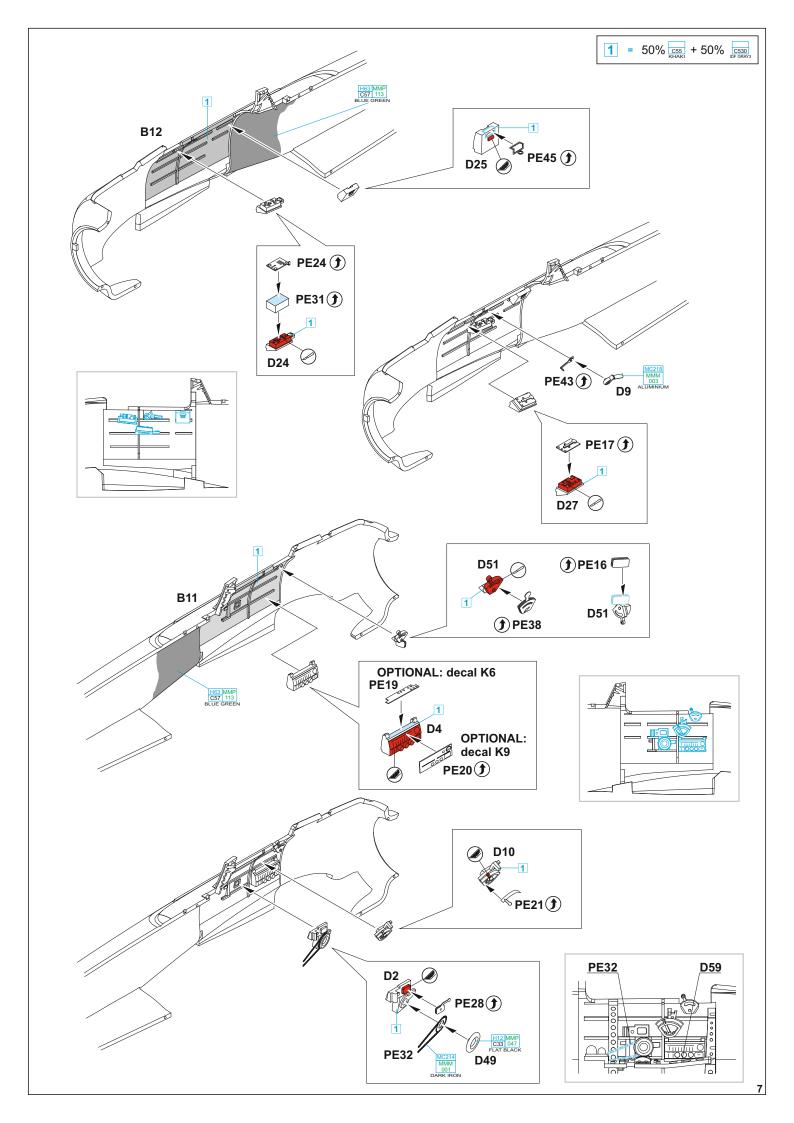


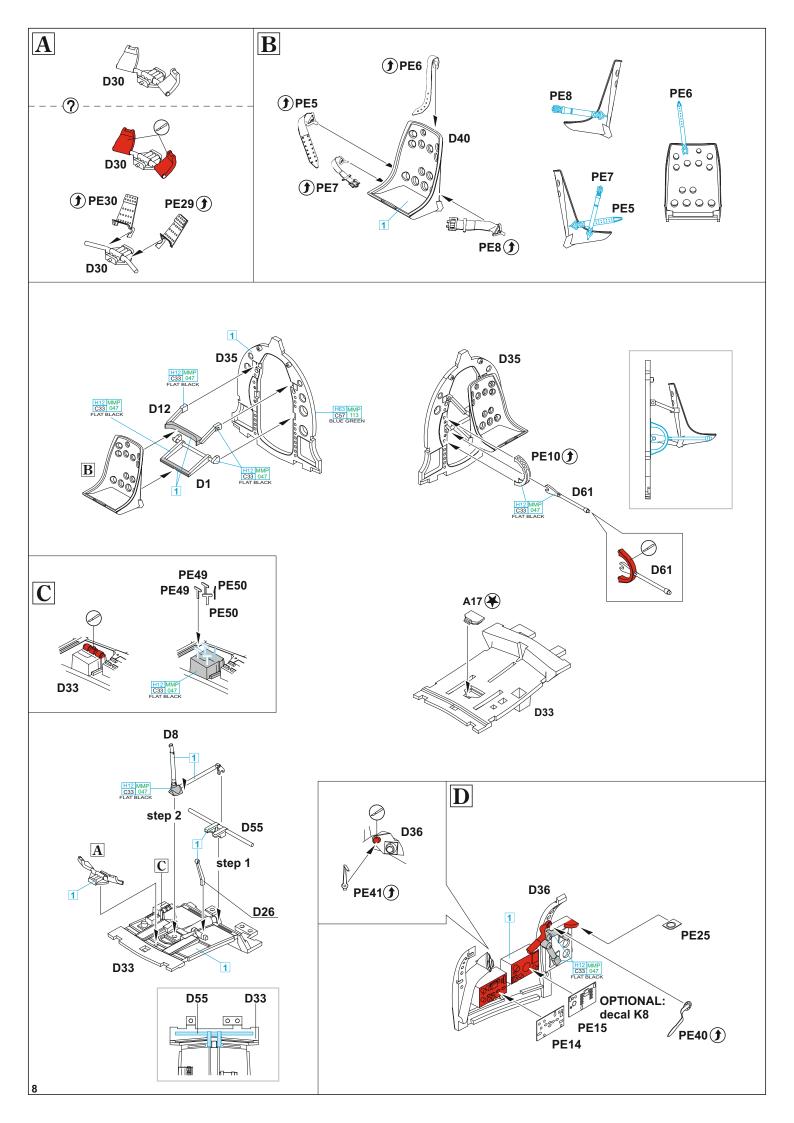
Wreck of dive bomber D.3A "Val" from aicraft carrier Kaaa, Anti-aircraft defense blew off the rear of the fuselage and dive bomber crashed next to the destroyer USS Montgomery.

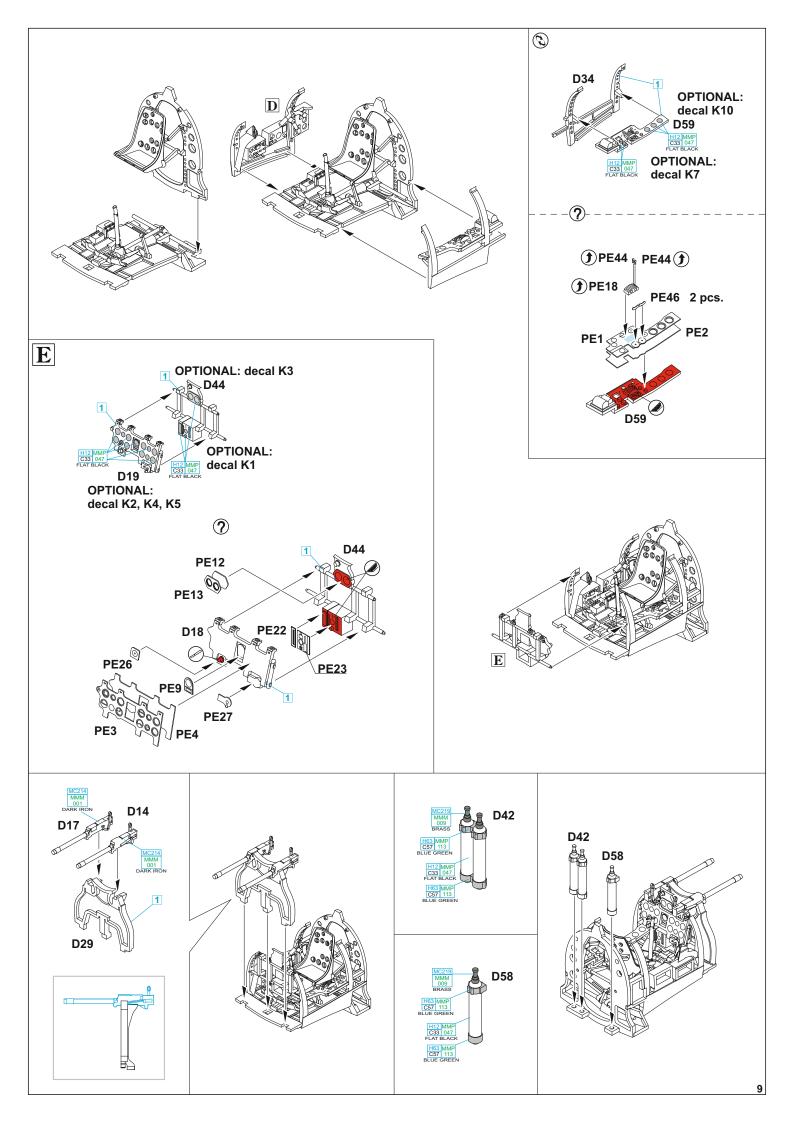


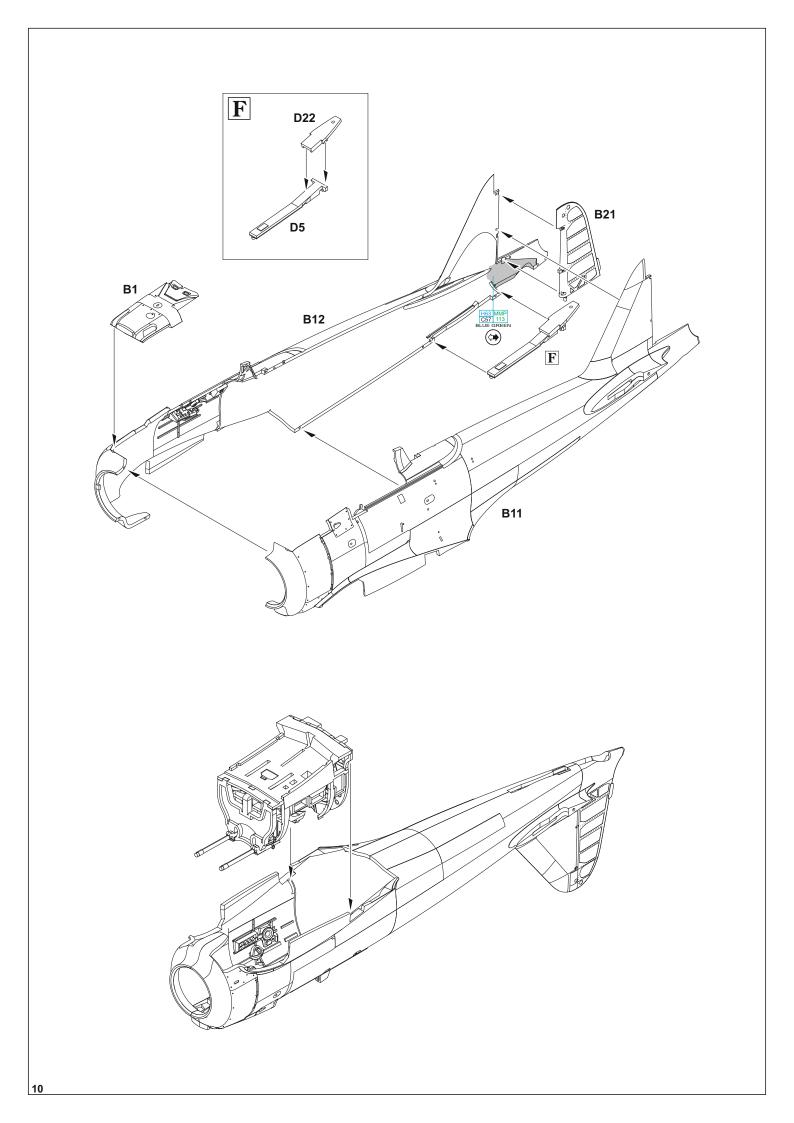
A heavily damaged U.S. Army Air Forces Curtiss P-40 from the 44th Pursuit Squadron at Bellows Field.

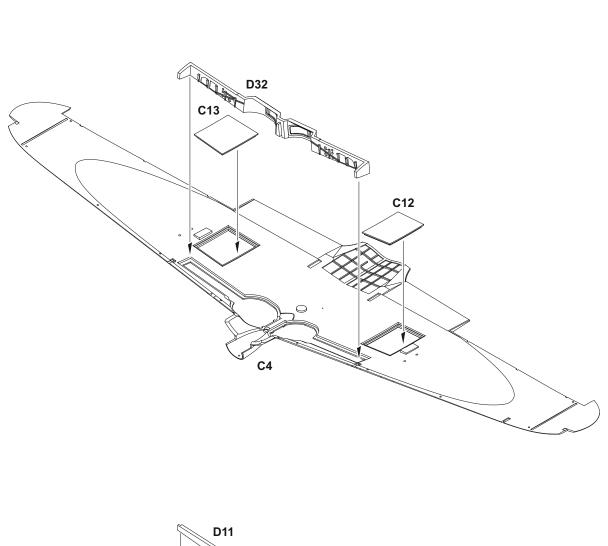


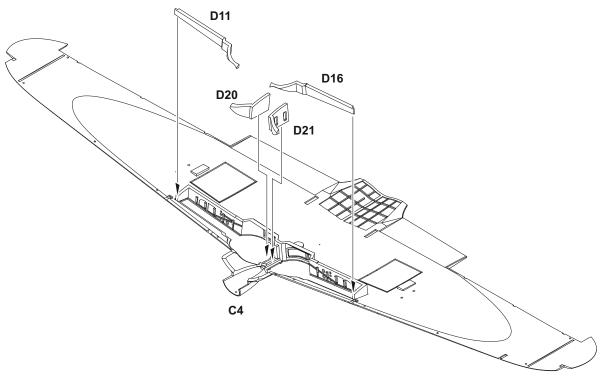


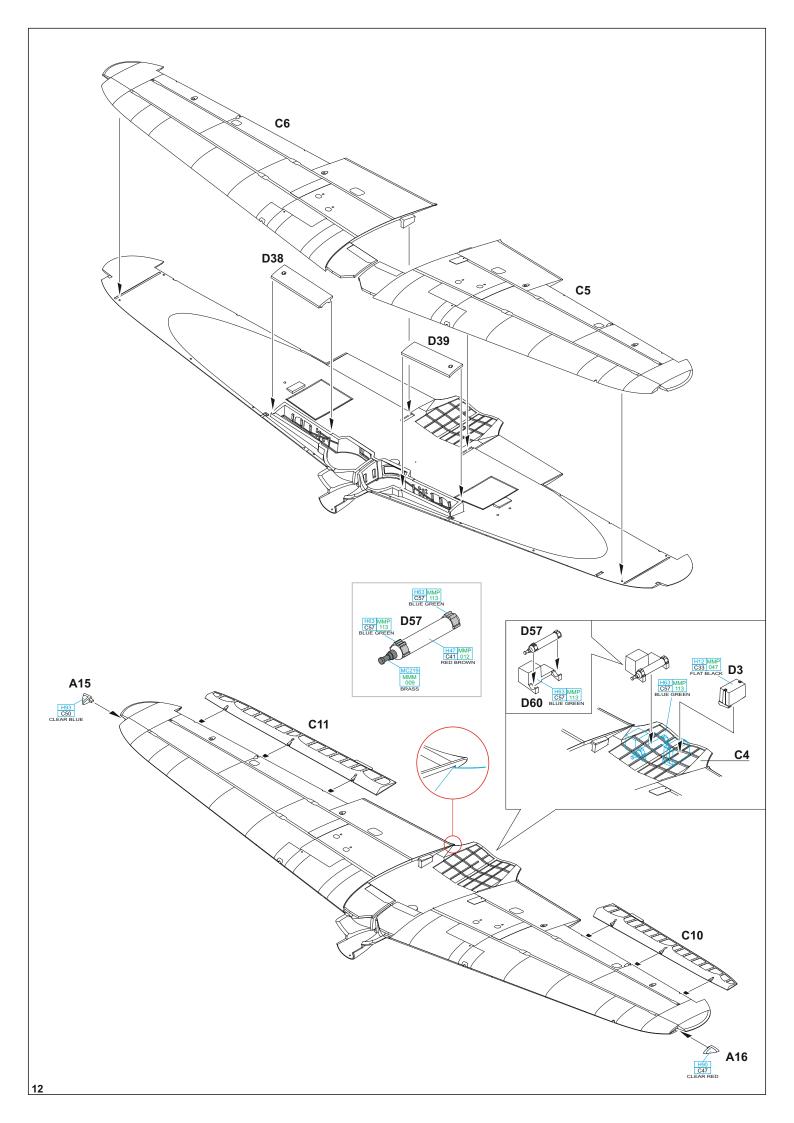


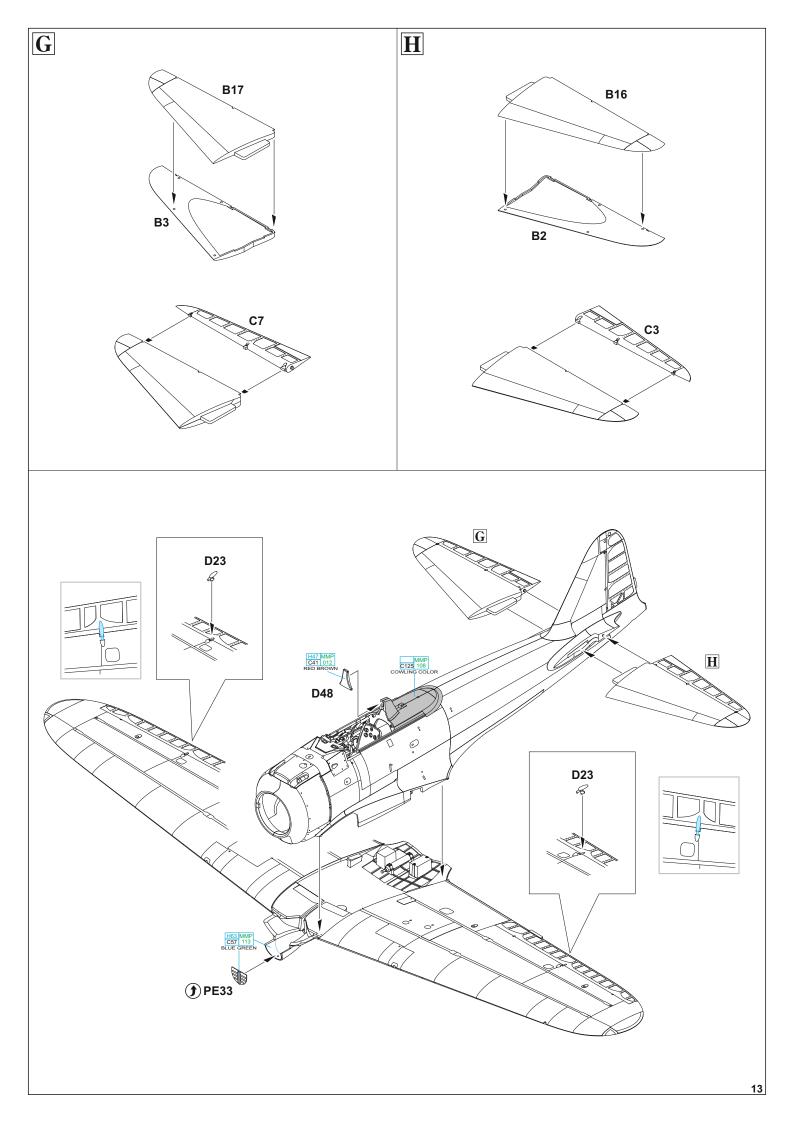


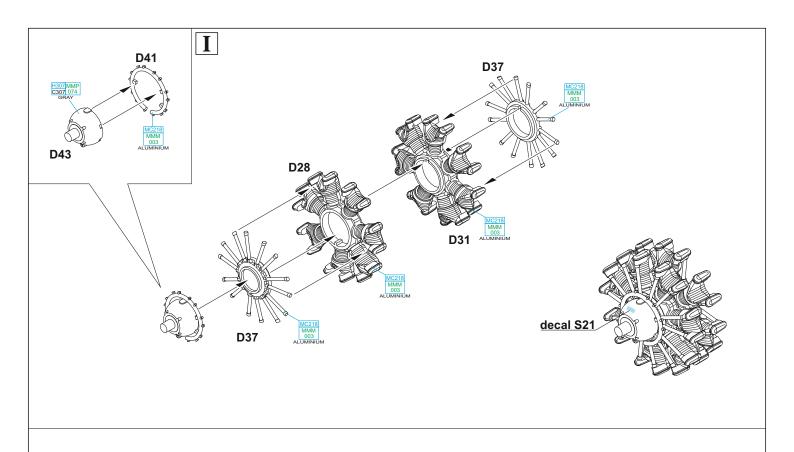


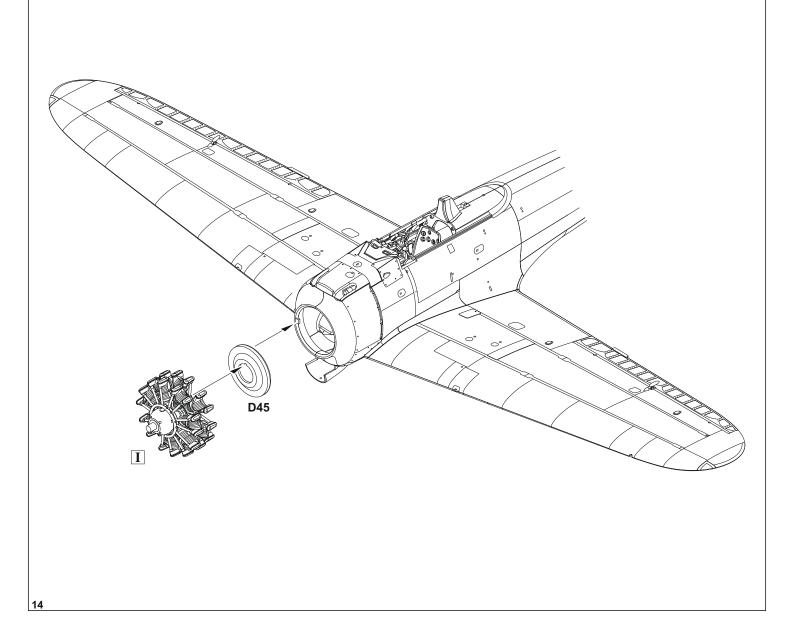


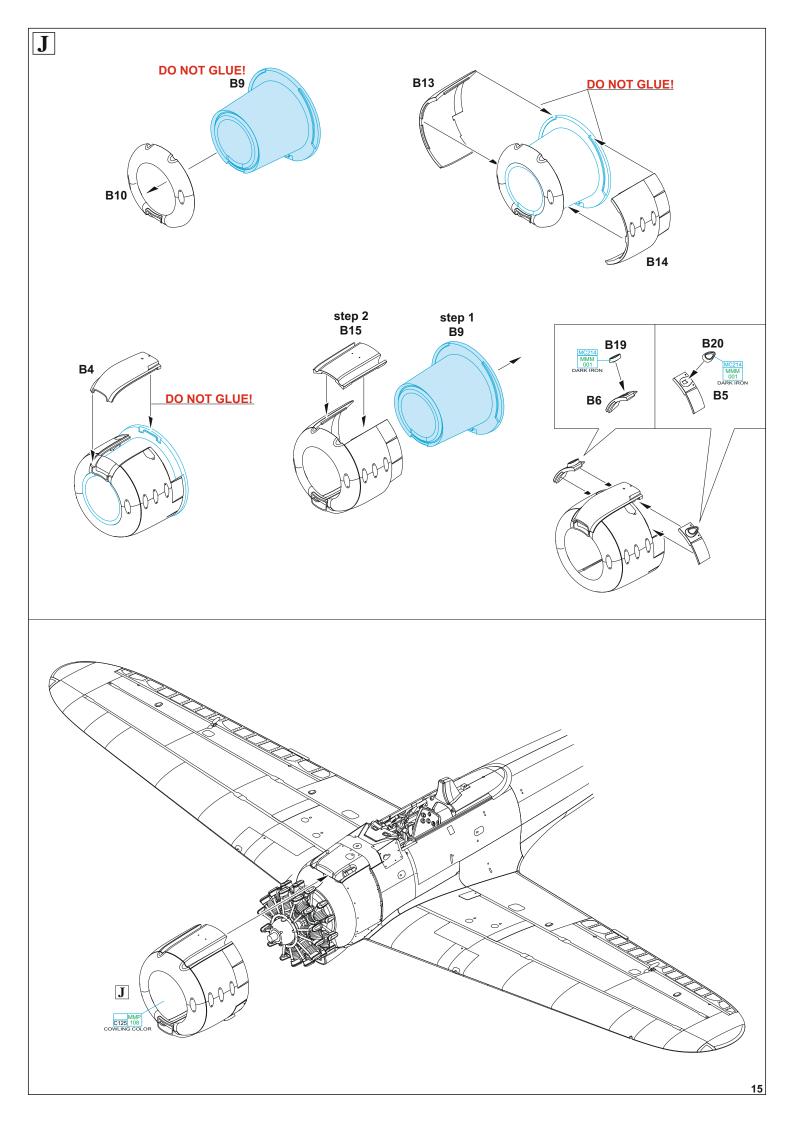


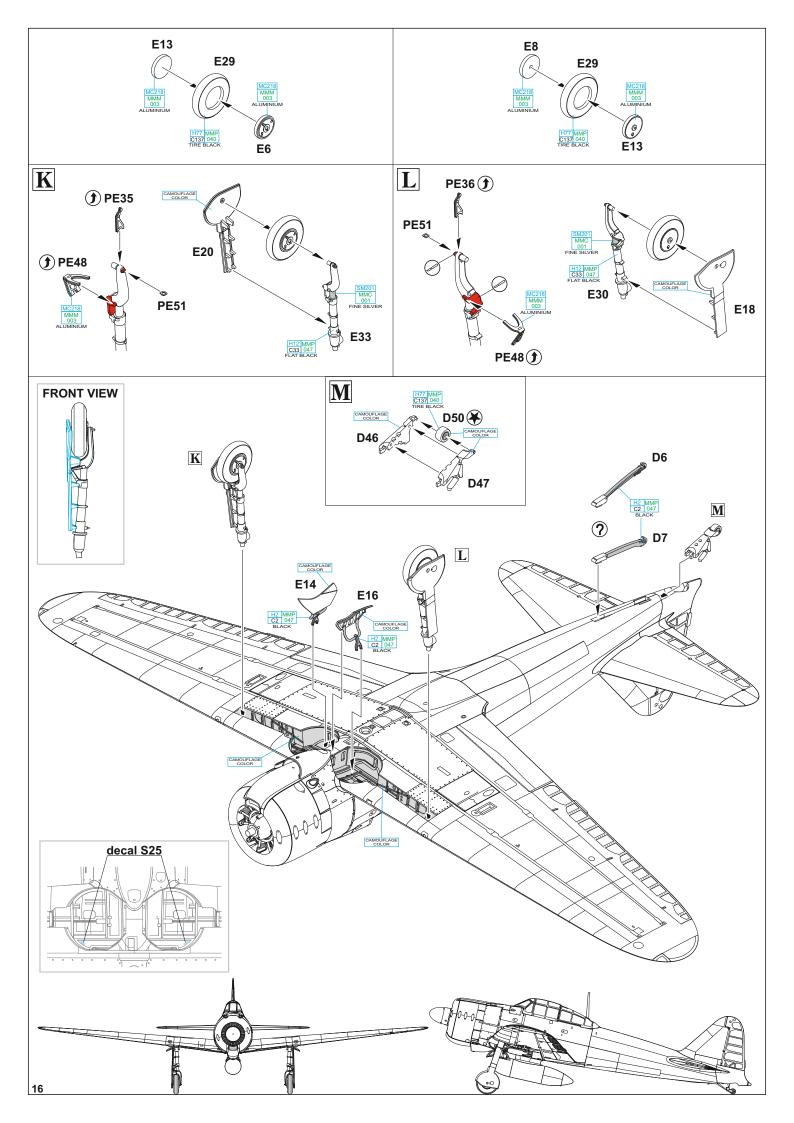


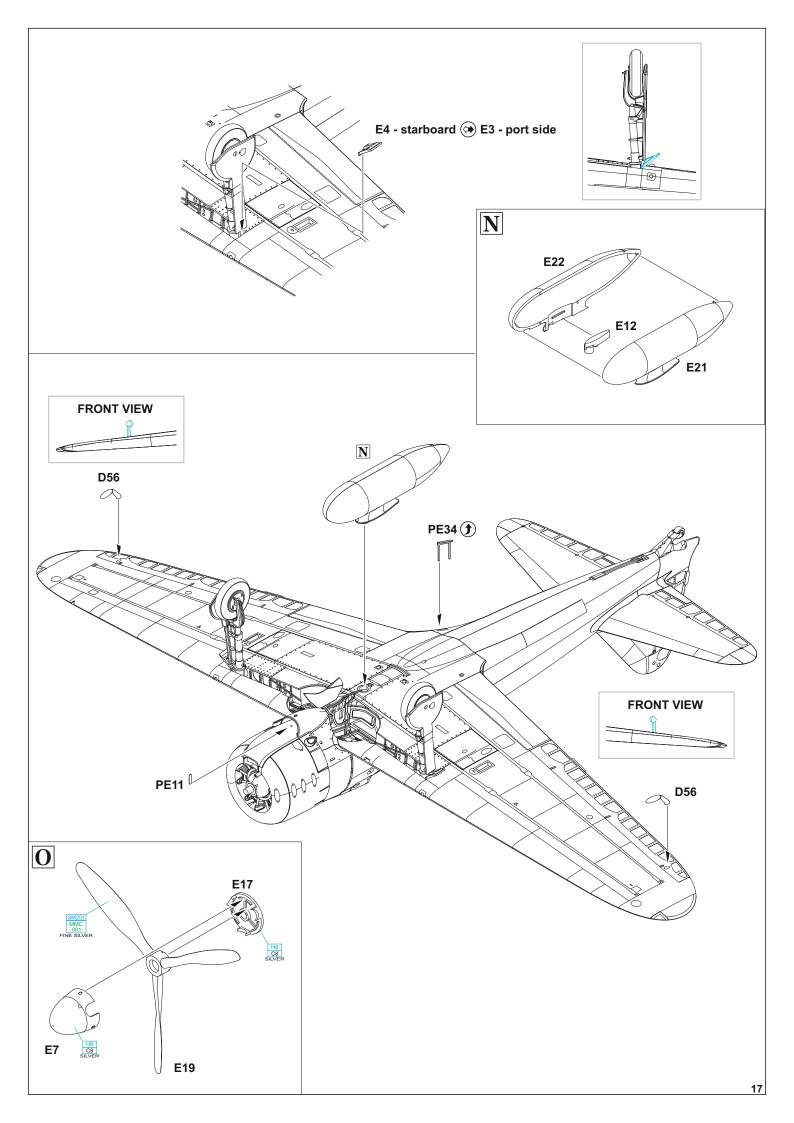


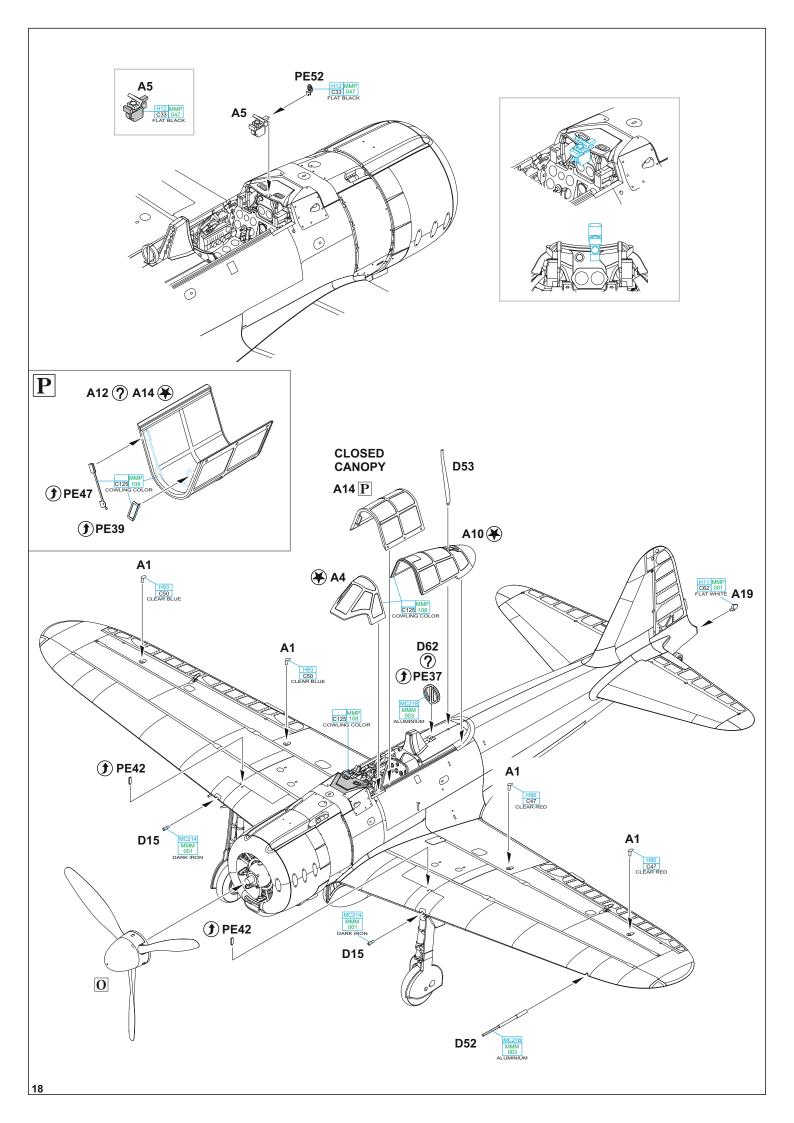


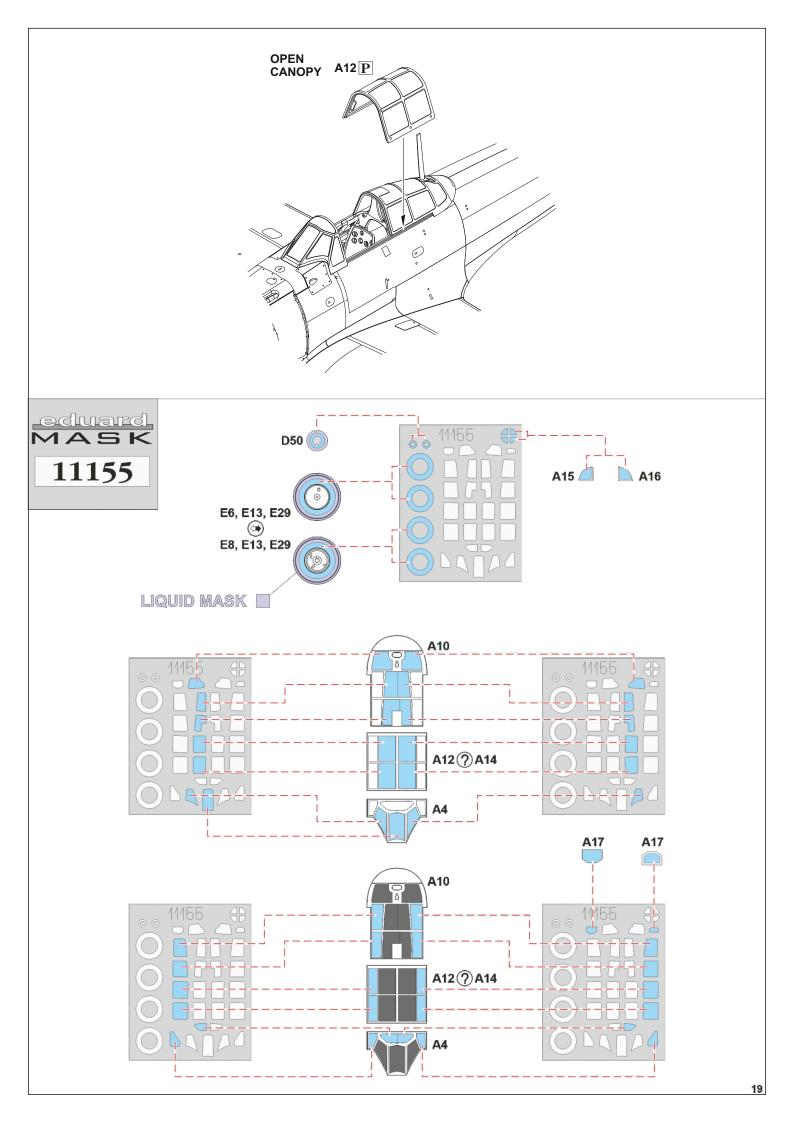






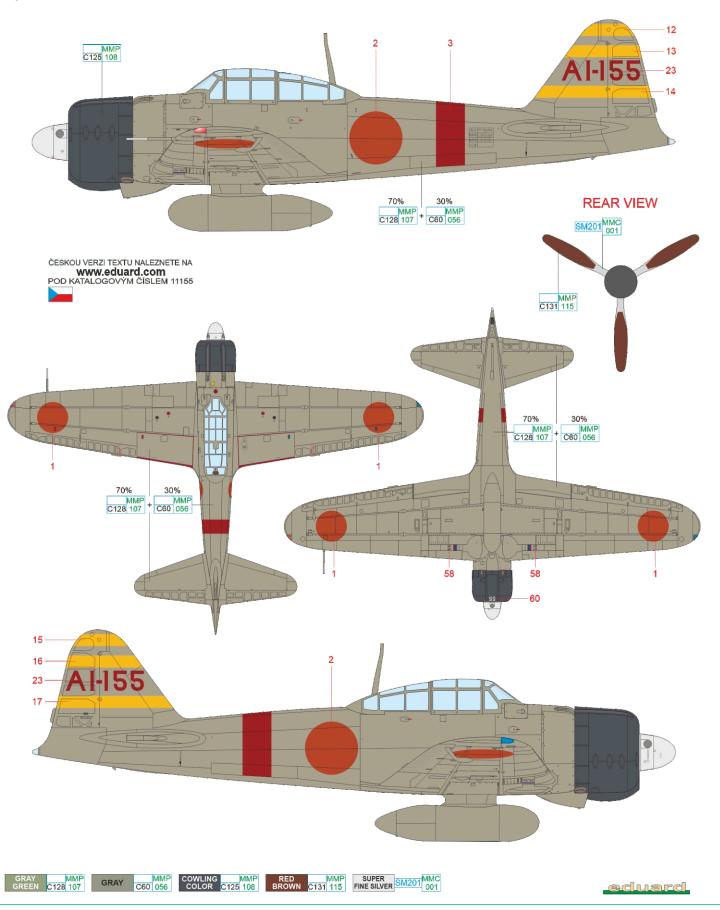






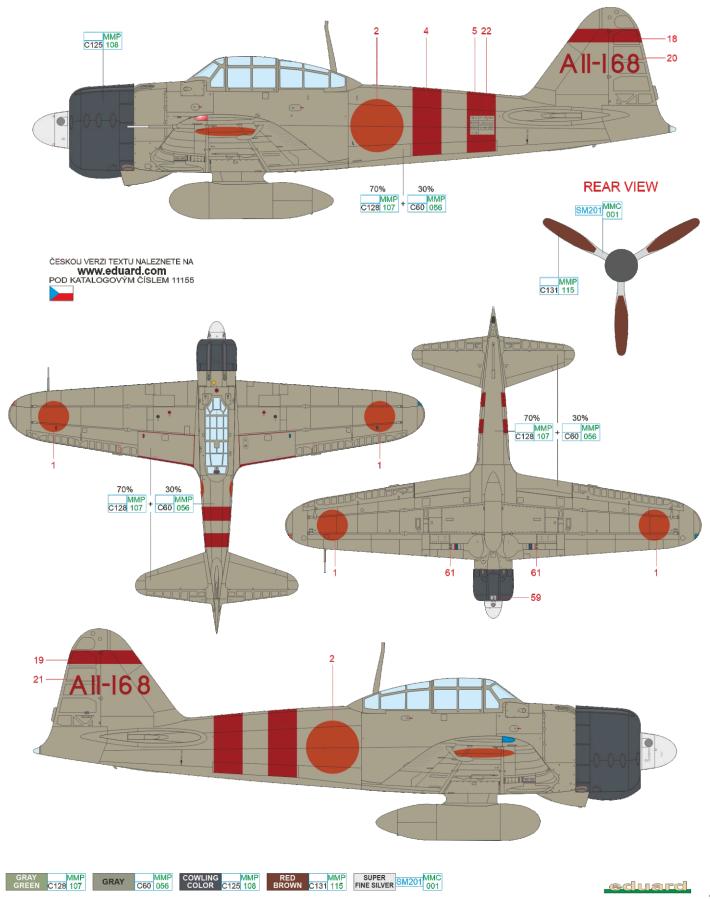
🛕 Lt. Cdr. Shigeru Itaya, Akagi Fighter Squadron, first attack wave

During the first wave Itaya led 43 Zero fighters, including 9 from Akagi. Itaya's own Akagi formation shot down one sightseeing and three training aircraft. Then, at Hickam and Ewa bases, they destroyed about 25 aircraft and also attacked incoming B-17s. It aya's wingmen damaged and set fire to a B-17C from 7^{th} BG of Capt. Swenson's crew with one passenger who did not survive the attack. It ay a's wingman, PO1c Hirano, was hit by anti-aircraft over Fort Kamehameha and the survive the attack. It also be a survive the attack attack attack attack attack. It also be a survive the attack attack attack attack attack attack attack. It also be a survive the attack attack attack attack attack attack attack attack attack attack. It also be a survive the attack attack attack attack attack attack attack attack attack. It also be a survive the attack attahit an obstacle while flying low over the ground, killing himself and four American soldiers. Itaya was born in 1909 and graduated from the Naval Academy in 1929. From November 1936, he was the Buntaichō of the Ryūjo Fighter Squadron for one year. He then served with the 15th and 12th Kökūtai and from January 1940 he was Buntaichō of the Hiryū Fighter Squadron. In November 1940 he took over this position on the aircraft carrier Akagi, in April 1941 he was appointed Hikōtaichō and remained in this position until the Battle of Midway. He was killed on July 24, 1944 in the Kuril Islands, at that time serving as a member of the staff of the Naval 51^{st} KōkūSentai. He was flying aboard a G3M bomber towards Paramushir and was accidentally shot down by a Ki-43 fighter.



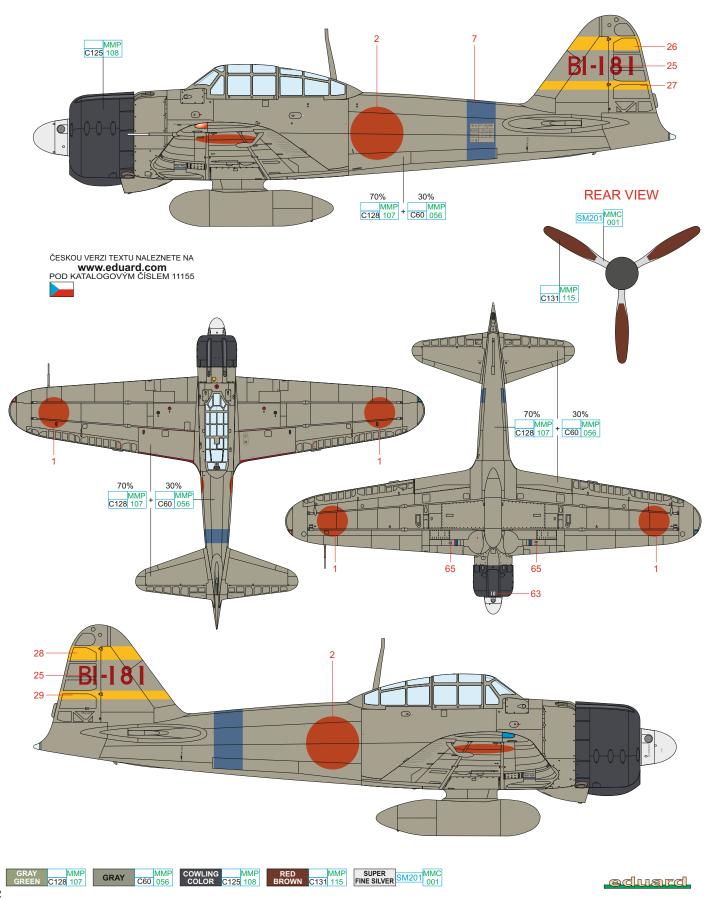
c/n probably 2236, PO2c Akira Yamamoto, Kaga Fighter Squadron, first attack wave

Kaga sent nine Zeros in the first wave of the attack on Pearl Harbor under command of Lt. Yoshio Shiga. His formation destroyed 21 aircraft at Hickam. Six of them were credited to PO2c Yamamoto, who had previously shot down a yellow-painted civilian Piper J-3 on a sighseeing flight. The two men on board were killed. Lt. Shiga lowered Yamamoto's rank one notch and called him an idiot bastard. Yamamoto had served as a fighter pilot since 1934 and had seen combat in China with the aircraft carrier Hōshō and 12th Kōkūtai. During the Battle of Midway, he shot down five bombers. After Kaga was hit, Yamamoto landed aboard Hiryū and while escorting bomber he claimed four fighters including F4F flown by "Jimmy" Thatch, commander of VF-3. In the fall of 1942 he served on the carrier Zuihō and was promoted to the rank of Warrant Officer. In May 1944, he was transferred to the Yokosuka Kōkūtai and participated in the defense of Iwo Jima. He was killed in the defense of Japan on November 24, 1944. After his aircraft was hit by a B-29 gunner, Yamamoto bailed out, but his parachute did not open. He achieved 13 aerial victories and the rank of Lieutenant junior grade.



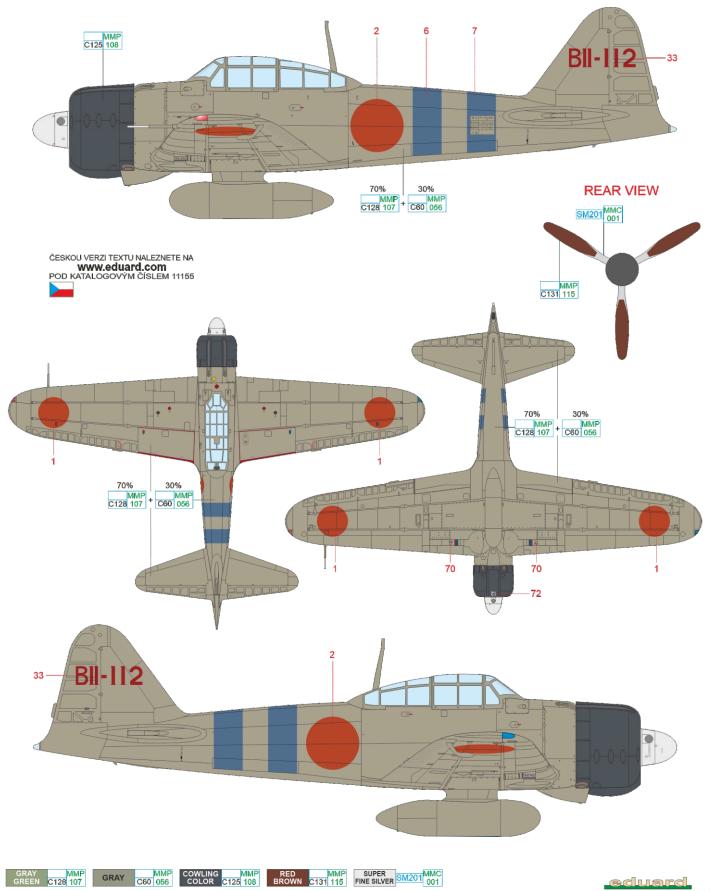
C Lt. Masaji Suganami, Sõryū Fighter Squadron, first attack wave

In the first wave, eight Zeros from Sōryū, led by Suganami, attacked Wheeler and Ewa airfields. They destroyed 27 aircraft on the ground and shot down five planes in combat. Suganami then lost orientation, so he decided to return over the target and sacrifice himself. However, he encountered other planes and returned to the carrier. After graduating Naval Academy in 1933, he served in 13th and Tsukuba Kōkūtais. He led fighters on the carrier Ryūjō till November 1941, after that Sōryū fighters until June 1942. At the Battle of Midway, in the first attack wave, his formation shot down six American fighters. From July 1942 he served as Hikōtaichō of fighters at Genzan Kōkūtai (later Kōkūtai 252). Suganami went missing on November 14, 1942 while escorting Rear Admiral Tanaka's destroyers off Guadalcanal. Six Zeros under his command provided the 4th CAP. They first attempted to attack a "beautiful formation" of B-17s. After that attack on ten F4Fs from VF-10 brought them four victories. On return Suganami, over the protests of his subordinates, separated from the formation and headed southwesterly. He apparently joined the attack on SBDs from VB-10 and later, before running out of fuel, shot down Lt. Col. "Joe" Bauer, commander of VMF-212 and Medal of Honor recipient.



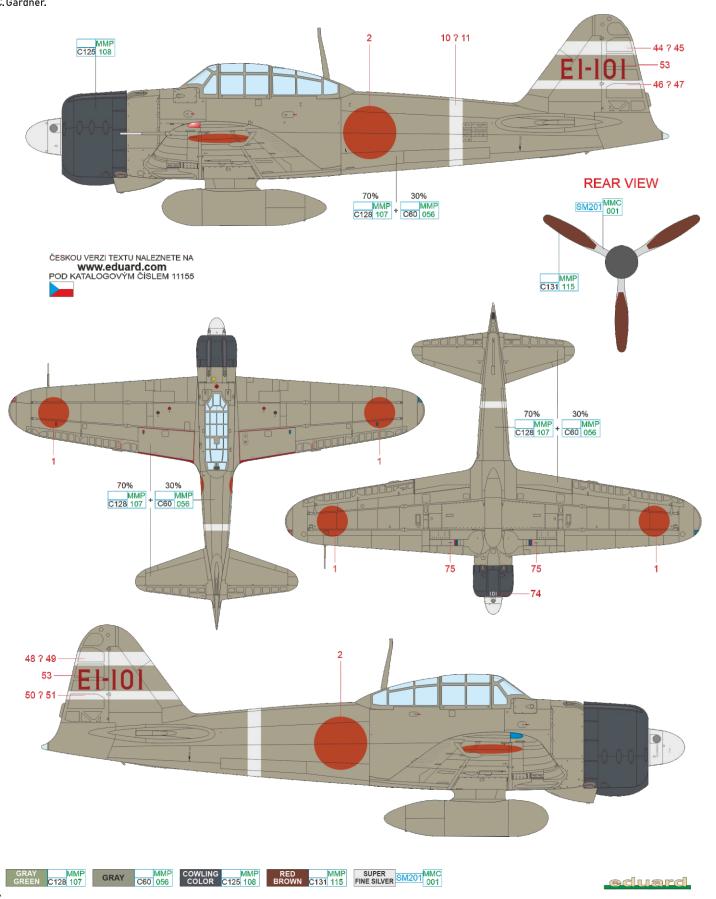
P01c Kazuo Muranaka, Hiryū Fighter Squadron, first attack wave

Hiryū sent in the first wave of the attack on Pearl Harbor six Zeros under command of Lt. Okajima. They set 27 aircraft on fire at Ewa Field. Okajima's first wingman was PO1c Muranaka. He completed his training in August 1938 and after serving with Saeki, Óita and Ómura Kōkútai, he was transferred to the 14th Kōkútai in August 1939 in China. During December 27, he participated in the unit's first two victories. In August 1941, he was transferred to Suzuka Kōkūtai and in November of that year was assigned aboard Hiryū. During the Battle of Midway, he was sole pilot to escort Hiryū bombers throughout the action. After return he took off on a combat air patrol and shot down three planes. His Zero was hit and he was rescued by destroyer Nowaki. After recovering, Muranaka served on the aircraft carriers Shōkaku and Jun'yō. He fought over Guadalcanal and took part in the Battle of Santa Cruz. In 1944 he served as an instructor in Japan with the Tokushima Kōkūtai and in Singapore with the 11th Kōkūtai. In 1945 he served as Ensign on N1K2-J fighters at Hikōtai 701 as part of the elite Kōkūtai 343. He achieved six certain and three probable victories. After the war he joined the JSDF and attained the rank of Major.



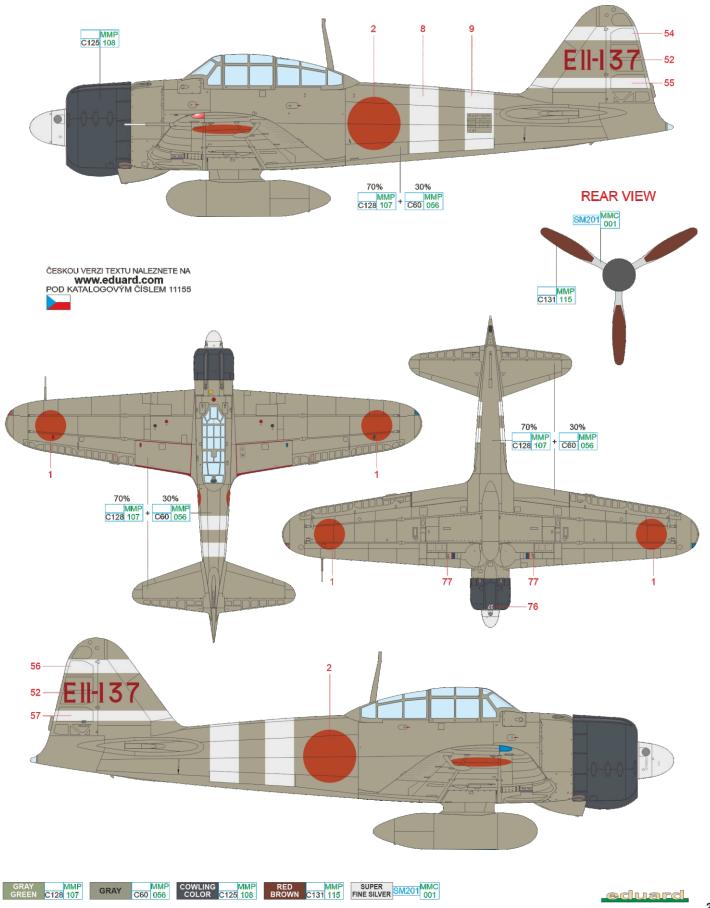
Lt. Tadashi Kaneko, Shōkaku Fighter Squadron, first attack wave

The Shōkaku sent in first wave five Zeros under command of Lt. Kaneko. They destroyed 35 aircraft at Kaneohe airfield and hit three others at Bellows. During the 2^{nd} attack wave, fighters from Shōkaku patrolled over the carriers. Kaneko had commanded the fighter Shótai aboard the aircraft carrier Ryūjo since 1937. He became well known in the Japanese press after his successful attack on the Chinese fighters near Shanghai on August 22, 1937. In the following years he served with the 15^{th} and 12^{th} Kōkūtai, and later with the Ómura and Mihoro Kōkūtai. In September 1941 he became Buntaichō of the fighters on the Shōkaku. He shot down three Hurricanes during the attack on Trincomalee on April 9, 1942. In May 1942 he was appointed Hikōtaichō of the 6^{th} Kōkūtai, which was to be based at Midway Atoll. During the Battle of Midway, Kaneko and his men were aboard Akagi and engaged in a battle on his own initiative, shootling down two torpedo planes. From October 1942 he fought over Guadalcanal as Hikōtaichō of the aircraft carrier Hiyō's fighters. In early November he was promoted to the rank of Lieutenant Commander. During a patrol on November 11, he shot down three F4Fs from VMF-121. In total he claimed at least eight victories. Kaneko was killed on November 14 in combat with SBDs from VB-10, his Zero was set on fire by gunner ACRM Gordon C. Gardner.



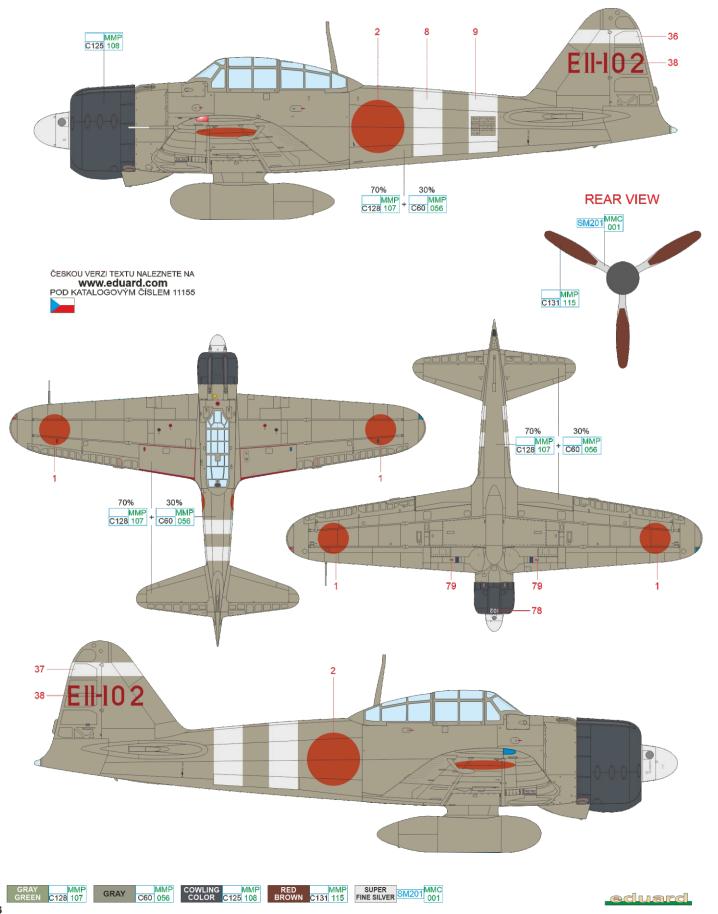
Lt. Masao Satō, Zuikaku Fighter Squadron, first attack wave

The aircraft carrier Zuikaku sent in the first wave five Zeros under the command of Lt. Satō. He escorted the bombers in the raid on Kaneohe Naval Air Station. As they met no resistance in the air, his fighter pilots destroyed over 32 aircraft on the ground. During the 2^{nd} attack wave, Zuikaku fighters patrolled the carriers. Satō was a veteran of 12th Kōkūtai in China and served on the board of Akagi. From September 1941 to January 1942, as the so-called Buntaichō, he commanded fighters aboard the Zuikaku, and in May he began serving in that capacity on the aircraft carrier Kaga until her sinking at the Battle of Midway. From June 1942 he took over fighters as Hikōtaichō on the carrier Zuihō. He participated in the Battle of Santa Cruz, and in the 2^{nd} phase Satō's formation shot down four aircraft. In April 1943, Zuihó participated in Operation "I"-go in the New Guinea and Solomon Islands area. Satō was killed during Operation "Ro"-go on November 11, 1943 in aerial combat over Bougainville.



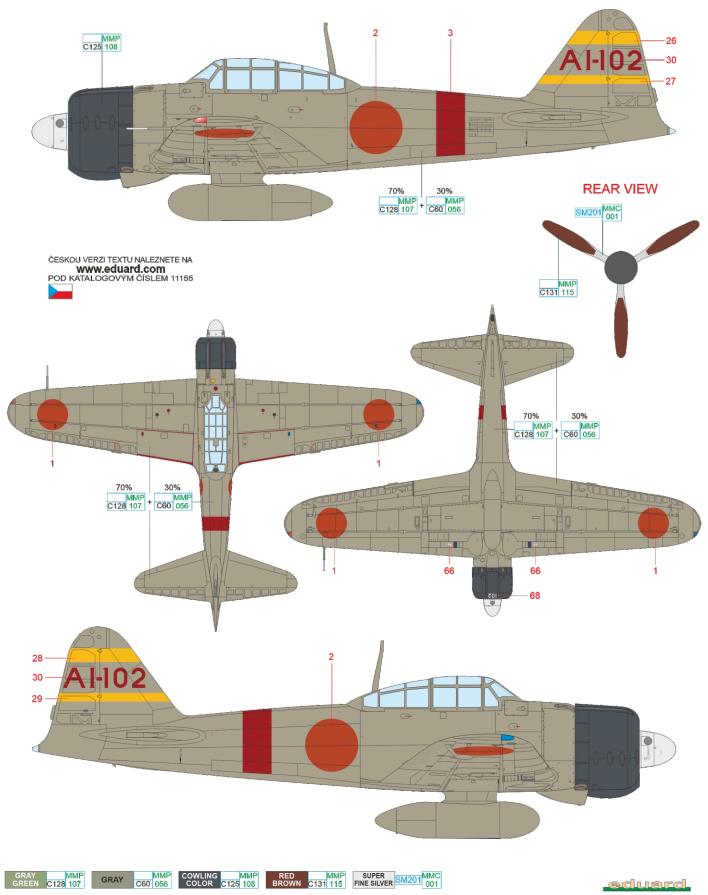
🗲 P01c Tetsuzō Iwamoto, Zuikaku Fighter Squadron, patrol during the first attack wave

During the first wave of the attack on Pearl Harbor Zuikaku launched six Zeros to patrol the vicinity of the carriers. P01c Iwamoto led the 2^{nd} shōtai during this mission. At the time, he was the most successful naval fighter ace with 14 victories from combats over China with 12th Kōkūtai. In 1942, he took part in battles in the Indian Ocean and Coral Sea with his plane No. 102. From the summer of 1942 he served as an instructor in Japan. From March 1943, he participated in patrolling in the Kuril Islands with Kōkūtai 281. In November he was transferred to Rabaul to Kōkūtai 204 and later to Kōkūtai 253. In February 1944 he participated from Truk Atoll in the interceptions of B-24 bombers. In June 1944 he was transferred to Japan and from the autumn $of that year as member of K\bar{o}k\bar{u}tai 252 he he took part in battles from bases in Taiwan and the Philippines. By the end of the war, he was serving with K\bar{o}k\bar{u}tai 203 he he took part in battles from bases in Taiwan and the Philippines. By the end of the war, he was serving with K\bar{o}k\bar{u}tai 203 he he took part in battles from bases in Taiwan and the Philippines. By the end of the war, he was serving with K\bar{o}k\bar{u}tai 203 he he took part in battles from bases in Taiwan and the Philippines. By the end of the war, he was serving with K\bar{o}k\bar{u}tai 203 he he took part in battles from bases in Taiwan and the Philippines. By the end of the war, he was serving with K\bar{o}k\bar{u}tai 203 he he took part in battles from bases in Taiwan and the Philippines. By the end of the war, he was serving with K\bar{o}k\bar{u}tai 203 he he took part in battles from bases in Taiwan and the Philippines. By the end of the war, he was serving with K\bar{o}k\bar{u}tai 203 he he took part in battles from bases in Taiwan and the Philippines he he took part in battles from bases in Taiwan and the Philippines he he took part in battles from battles from$ and participated in the battle for Okinawa. He achieved rank Lieutenant (junior grade) and passed away in 1955. Iwamoto is credited with 80 victories, but in his war diary, there were 202 successful attacks on enemy aircraft recorded by him.



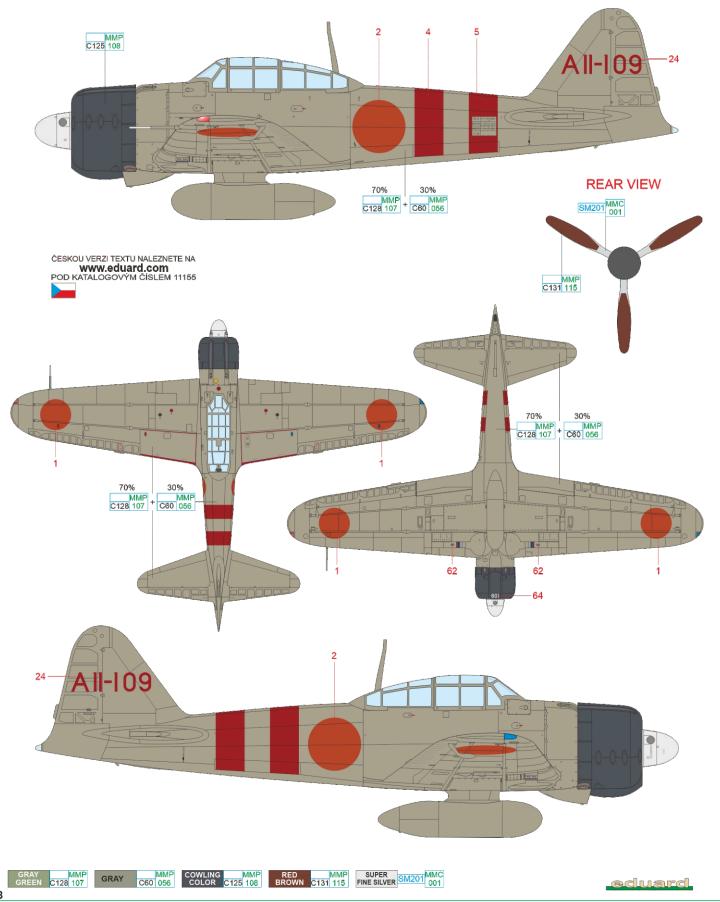
Lt. Saburō Shindō, Akagi Fighter Squadron, second attack wave

During the second wave, fighter escort of thirty-six Zeros was led by Lt. Shindo. Nine Akagi Zeros met no resistance in the air and destroyed two aircraft at Hickam. Shindo was born in 1911 and graduated from the Naval Academy in 1929. He was assigned to the Omura Kōkūtai in 1935 and a year later went to the aircraft carrier Kaga. In 1940, he served in China with the 12th Kōkūtai during combat trials of the A6M2 fighter. Under his command, the first combat engagement occurred on September 13, resulting in 27 victories without loss. In November 1940, Shindō was transferred to the 14th Kōkūtai in Hanoi. From Aprilto December 1941 he was the Buntaichō of the Akagi fighters, but had to be hospitalized after the attack on Pearl Harbor. After recovering, he was appointed commander of Tokushima Kōkūtai in April 1942. From November 1942, as Hikōtaichō at Kōkūtai 582, he was involved in the fighting over Guadalcanal. From July 1943, he was Hikōtaichō with the Kōkūtai 204 in the same area. In late 1943 and early 1944, he led fighters of the aircraft carrier Ryūhō and later served with Kōkūtai 653 and 203 in the defense of Taiwan, the Philippines, and Japan. At the end of the war, he was Hikōtaichō at Tsukuba Kōkūtai. Shindó passed away in 2000.



P01c Yoshikazu Nagahama, Kaga Fighter Squadron, second attack wave

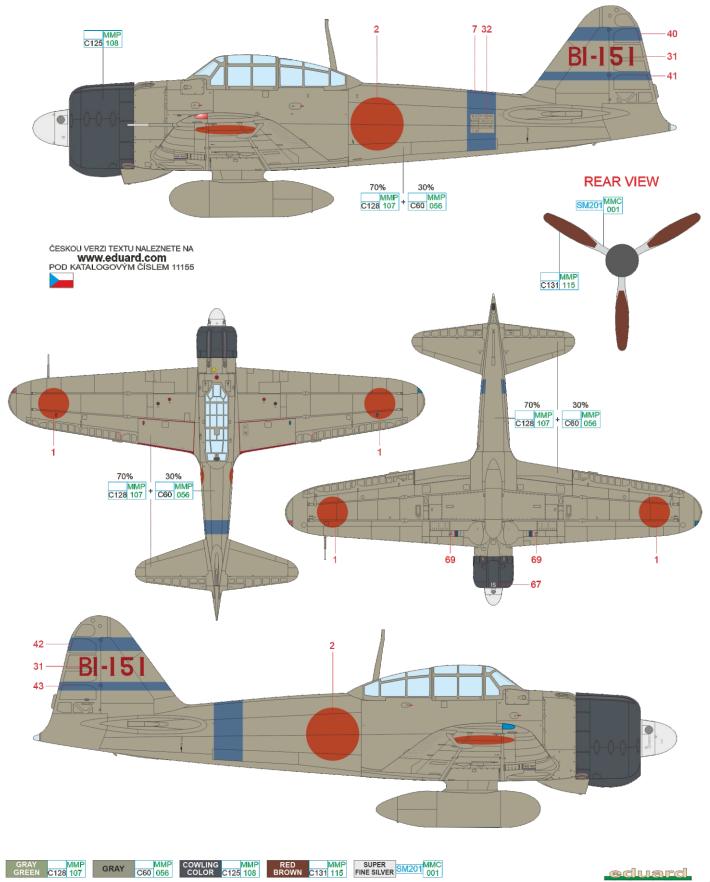
The nine Zeros of the aircraft carrier Kaga were led in the second wave by Lt. Yasushi Nikaidō and destroyed six and ten aircraft respectively at Hickam and Wheeler field. PO1c Nagahama, who had served on Kaga since 1939, took part in the attack. During the raid on Darwin on February 19, 1942 he scored five victories in one combat sortie. As first he shot down a Catalina from Patrol Wing 10. Unable to find his formation, he attacked five P-40s from the 33rd PS alone, shooting down four of them and then setting another flying boat afloat on fire. Other Kaga fighters apparently attacked the same P-40s. During the Battle of Midway, Nagahama took part in the first attack wave, and after his return, he participated in the destruction of the Devastators from the USS Hornet. He took part in the Battle of the Eastern Solomons while aboard Zuikaku. During a patrol on August 26 he shared destruction of Catalina from VP-14 (damaged as well on December 7, 1941). During the Battle of Santa Cruz on October 26 he shared several victories over F4Fs, including Lt. (jg) Paul Landry of VF-72. Nagahama was killed in an accident on September 6, 1943 in Japan while on duty at Tsuiki Kōkūtai. He is credited with 10 (or 13) victories and achieved the rank of Chief Petty Officer.



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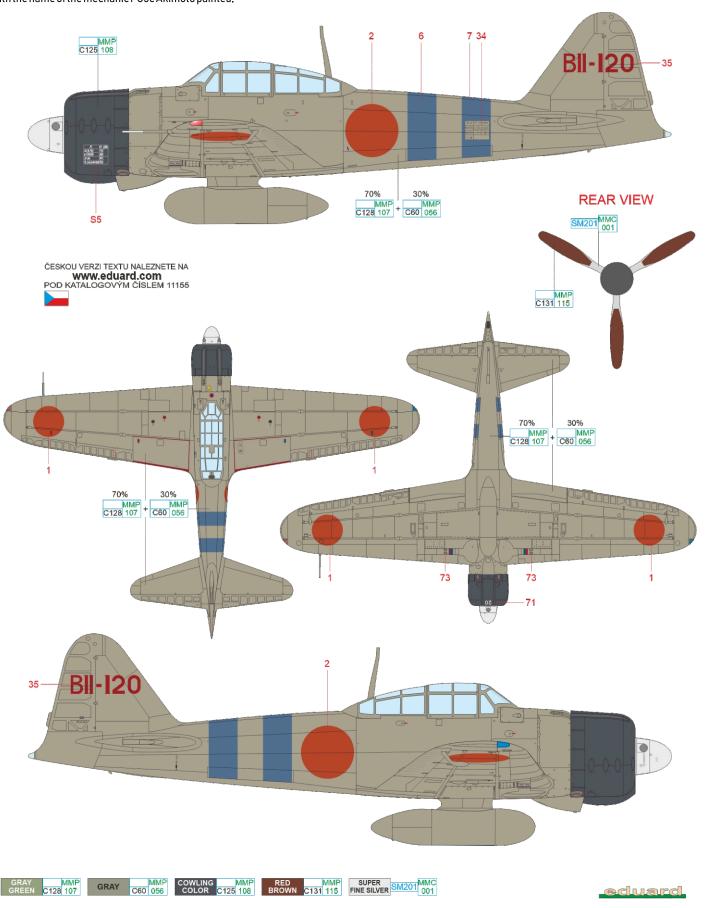
c/n 3277, Lt. Fusata lida, Sōryū Fighter Squadron, second attack wave

In the second attack wave, $S\bar{o}ry\bar{u}$ sent nine Zeros under the command of Lt. Fusata Iida against Kaneohe airfield and destroyed six flying boats. On return flight Iida signaled that he was running out of fuel Because of that he returned and decided to crash his aircraft into a hangar at Kaneohe, but missed the target. Iida's flight hood was returned to his relatives in 1999 by the daughter of Mr. Sam Chun, who took it off from Iida's head after the crash. His body was buried with military honors and he was posthumously promoted two grades. There is also testimony that Iida did not believe in the success of the war against the US and his Zero was not low on fuel. There is now a memorial at the site of the crash. Due to the ground fire and attacks of P-36 pilots from the 45^{th} FS, Iida's formation lost two more Zeros and one suffered serious damage. Two P-36s were shot down. Iida was born on December 2, 1913. He first served as an instructor with the Kasumigaura Kōkūtai, and in September 1940 he was assigned to the 12^{th} Kōkūtai in China, which tested Zero fighters in combat. In a raid on Chengdu on October 26, his formation claimed ten aircraft without loss. Nevertheless, Iida expressed his disapproval of the way the war against China was being conducted. From September 1941, he served as Buntaichō of the aircraft carrier Sōryū's fighters until December 7, 1941.



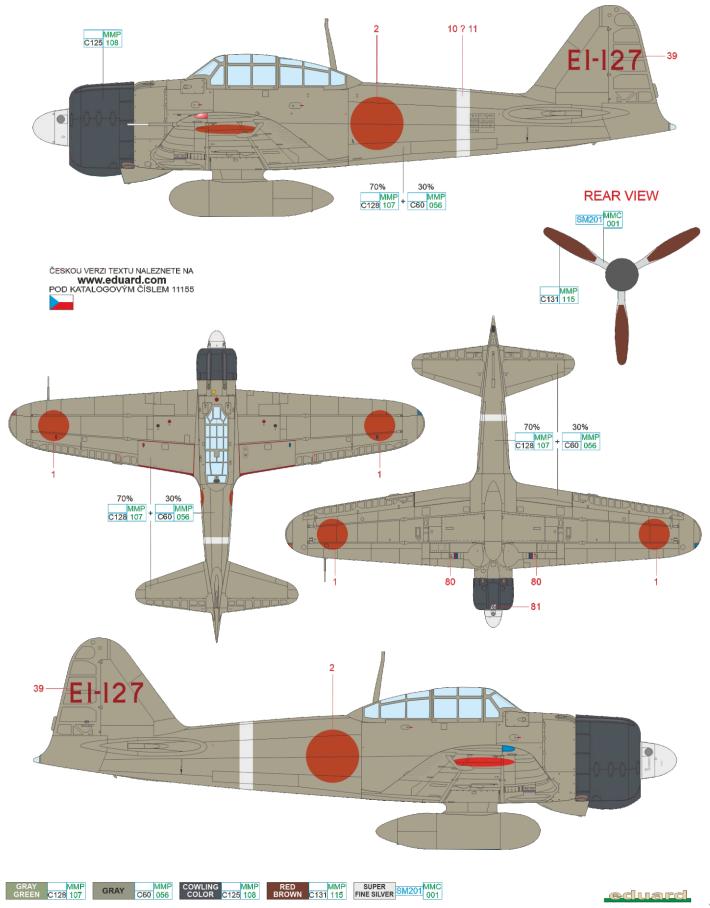
c/n 2266, P01c Shigenori Nishikaichi, Hiryū Fighter Squadron, second attack wave

Hiryū sent nine Zeros under the command of Lt. Sumio Nōno. His pilots attacked Kaneohe and Bellows bases, claiming two destroyed aircraft and one car. Zero of PO1c Nishikaichi was running low on fuel and he was looking for a rescue submarine off Niihau Island without success. After belly landing he was captured by a Hawaiian native who took his papers and weapon. The pilot persuaded several residents of Japanese descent to cooperate and managed to get free. He dismantled machine gun from the aircraft, set the machine on fire and threatened to kill the natives to force the return of the secret documents. During the December 13, he and a helper captured Mr. Benjamin Kanahele and his wife. A scuffle ensued during which Kanahele was shot three times by the pilot, but became so enraged that he killed him against a wall. The pilot's helper, Mr. Harada, committed suicide. It is known as the Niihau Incident. Mr. Kanahele received the Purple Heart and the Medal of Merit from the President of the United States. Nishikaichi, whose fate was unknown to the Japanese side, was posthumously promoted two grades. Parts of Zero are on display at the Pacific Aviation Museum Pearl Harbor. On the engine cover there was a service plate with the name of the mechanic PO3c Akimoto painted.



<u>P01c Yukuo Hanzaw</u>a, Shōkaku Fighter Squadron, patrol during the second attack wave

Fighters from Shōkaku did not participate in the second attack wave on Pearl Harbor, Instead, 12 aircraft from Shōkaku patrolled successively over the carrier group under the command of Lt. Masao lizuka. PO1c Hanzawa led the 1st shōtai on patrol. At that time, he had nearly three years of operational service under his belt, including a tour of duty with the 12th Kōkūtai in China. Hanzawa gained fame on May 8, 1942 during the Battle of the Coral Sea when he landed on the smoke-covered deck of a damaged carrier without help of arresting wire. He was killed in action at the Battle of Santa Cruz on October 26, 1942 in a duel with Lt. "Ken" Bliss, the Blue 29 section leader of VF-72, USS Hornet. Hanzawa attacked Bliss from behind, severely damaging his Wildcat. Apparently believing that Bliss was bailing out, he pulled up in front of him, but the American shot him down at that moment. Bliss ditched and survived. Hanzawa held the rank of Warrant Officer at that time.



A6M2 Type 21

STENCILING POSITIONS

