

A6M2 ZERO TYPE 21

Few weapons have ever debuted with such a shock as the A6M2 Type 21, also known as the "Zero" (taken from the last digit in the Japanese calendar year 2600, or 1940, the year the plane was accepted by the Japanese Navy). It was the first carrier fighter superior to all its land-based contemporaries. For the first six months of the War in the Pacific, the Zero struck fear into the hearts of Allied aviators; it was fast, agile, and packed a significant punch in its two 7.7mm machine guns and two 20mm wing-mounted cannon. It wasn't until the autumn of 1942 that new Allied tactics and equipment began to turn the tables on the Zero.

In its first combat, 12 A6M2s destroyed 20 of 27 Chinese fighters without a loss. Although the Chinese fighter force tried to avoid the new plane, the Zero continued to decimate its opposition in China, destroying 99 planes in the air without any air-to-air losses. American and British intelligence attributed this largely to the ineffectiveness of the aircraft the Chinese were using, but this assumption was shattered when Zeroes appeared over Pearl Harbor on Dec. 7, 1941 and swept the sky of American and British opposition over the Philippines, Singapore and Malaya.

Powered by a 940-horsepower Sakae 12 engine, the Zero had a top speed of 331 mph. Designer Jiro Horikoshi employed every weight-saving measure he could, reasoning that every pound he saved would translate into increased maneuverability and a greater chance for triumph in the air. The Zero had an extremely light airframe, with things like armor for the pilot and self-sealing tanks left off to boost its maneuverability and emphasize its abilities as a dogfighter. It also gave the Zero another advantage: great range. Through fuel management, Zeroes of the Third and Hainan Kokutai flew from Formosa to surprise American aircraft at Clark Field in the Philippines on Dec. 8, 1941, a round-trip of 934 miles.

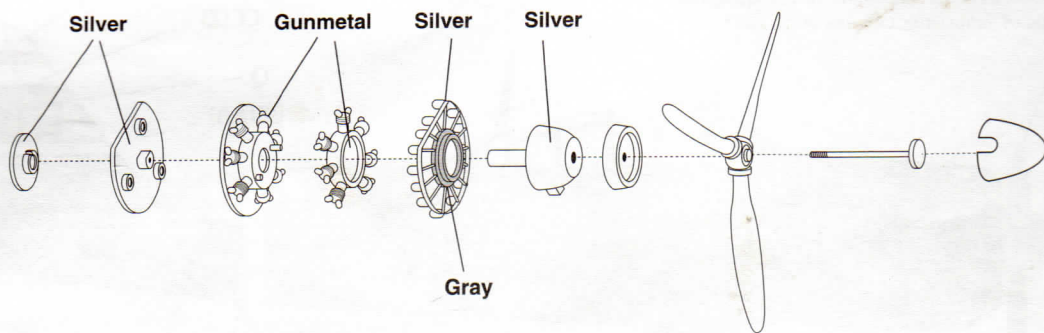
This came the day after 125 Zeroes escorted the Japanese strike on Pearl Harbor. Following this devastating opening stroke, the Zero rampaged over Wake Island, Darwin, Ceylon, New Guinea and the Netherlands East Indies, totally outclassing the outnumbered Allied aircraft it was pitted against.

At the Battle of the Coral Sea, the Zero came out on top in most engagements, and at Midway Zeroes butchered American torpedo planes, destroying 37 of the 41 TBD Devastators to attack the Japanese fleet. But while the Zeroes shot down the TBDs, SBD Dauntless dive bombers struck three of the four Japanese carriers, turning the tide of the war.

Versions of the Zero continued in production for the duration of the war, with 10,449 built before Japan's final collapse.

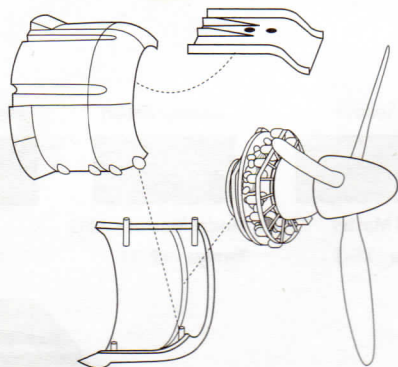
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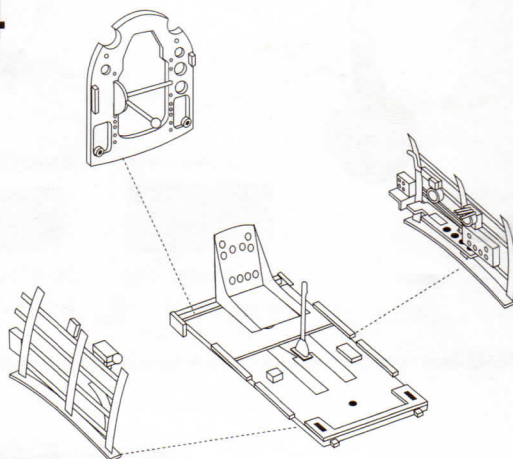


2

Attach duct to upper cowl before installing engine

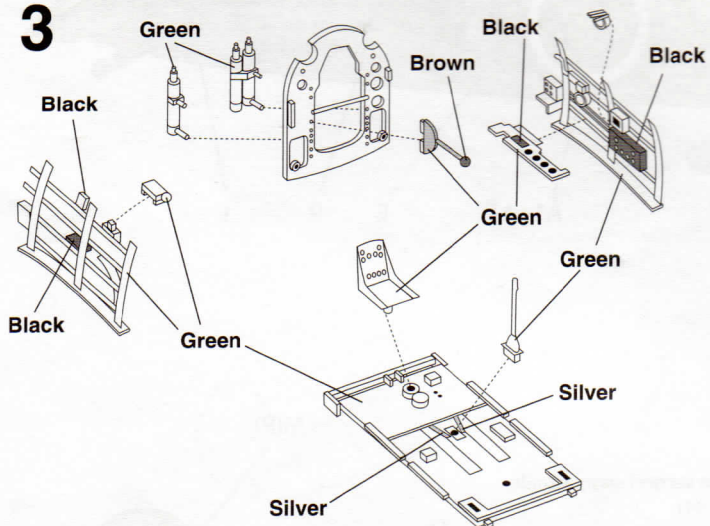


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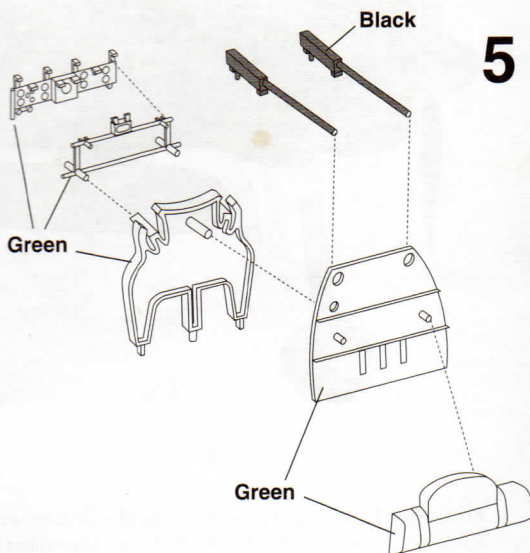


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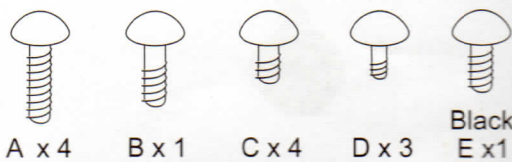
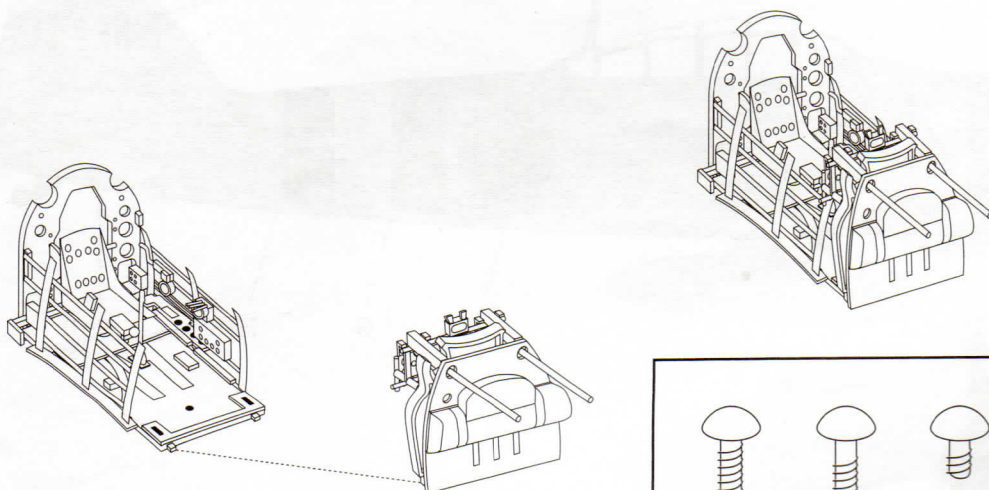
Tank pieces install to rear of bulkhead



5



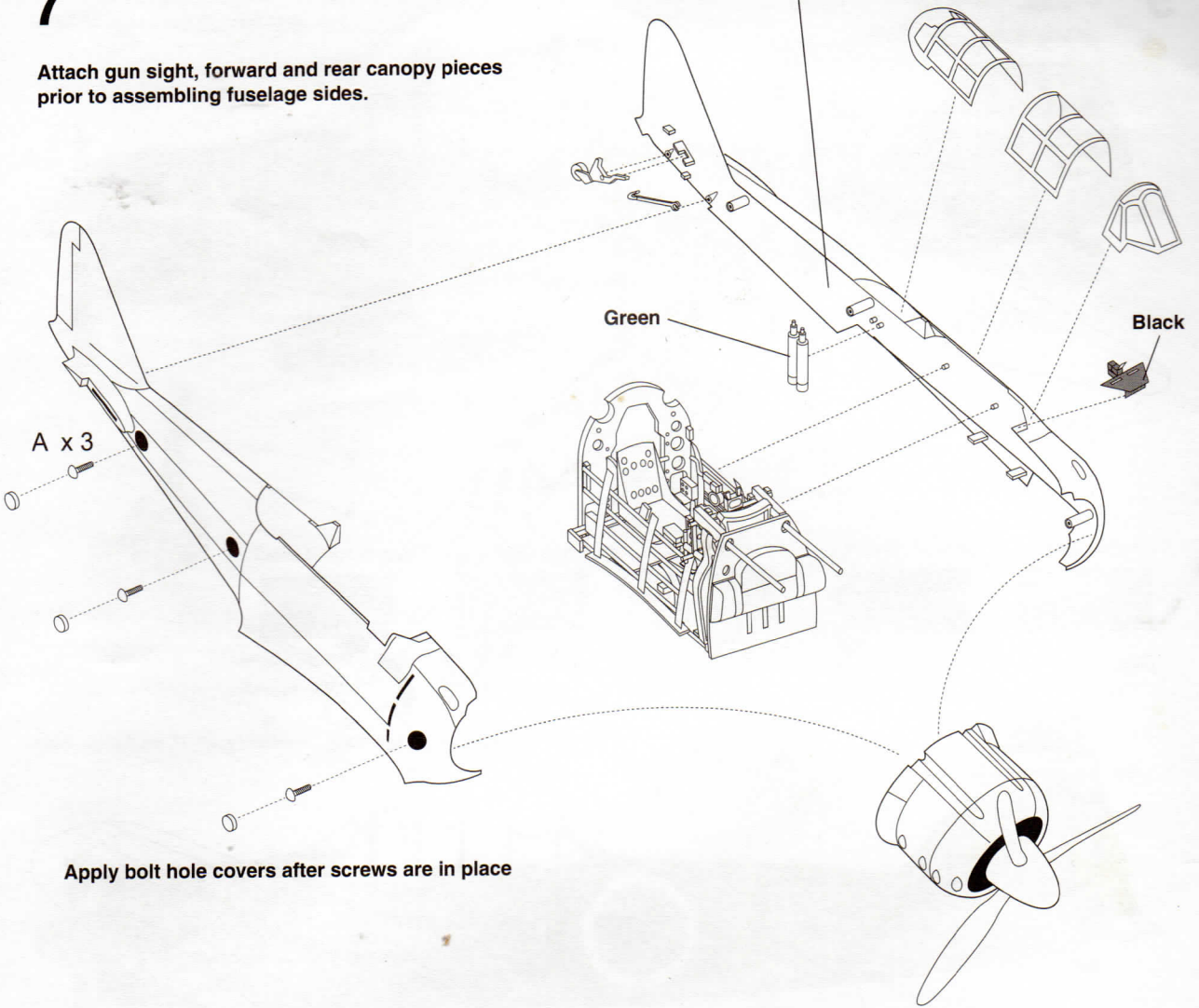
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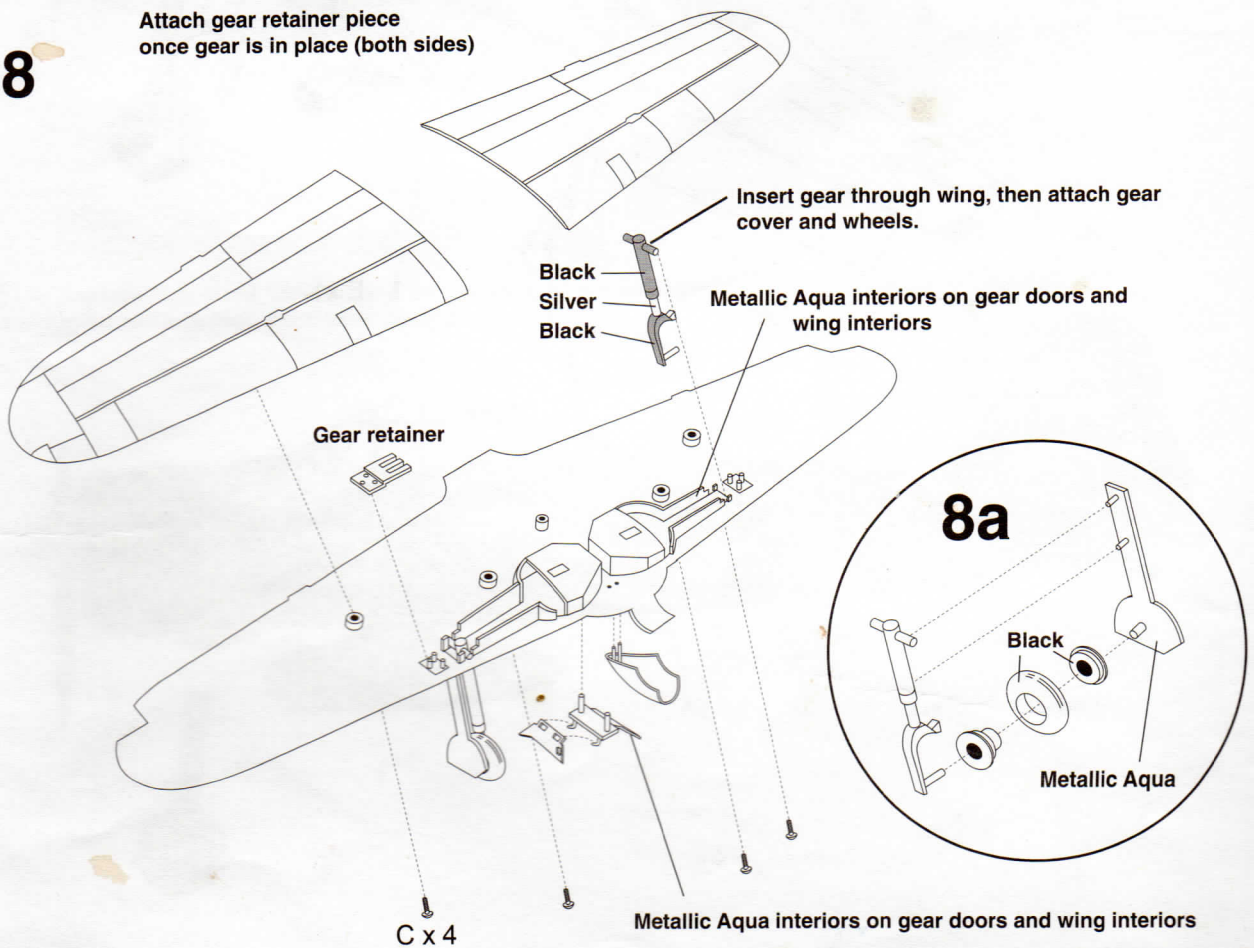
Attach gun sight, forward and rear canopy pieces prior to assembling fuselage sides.

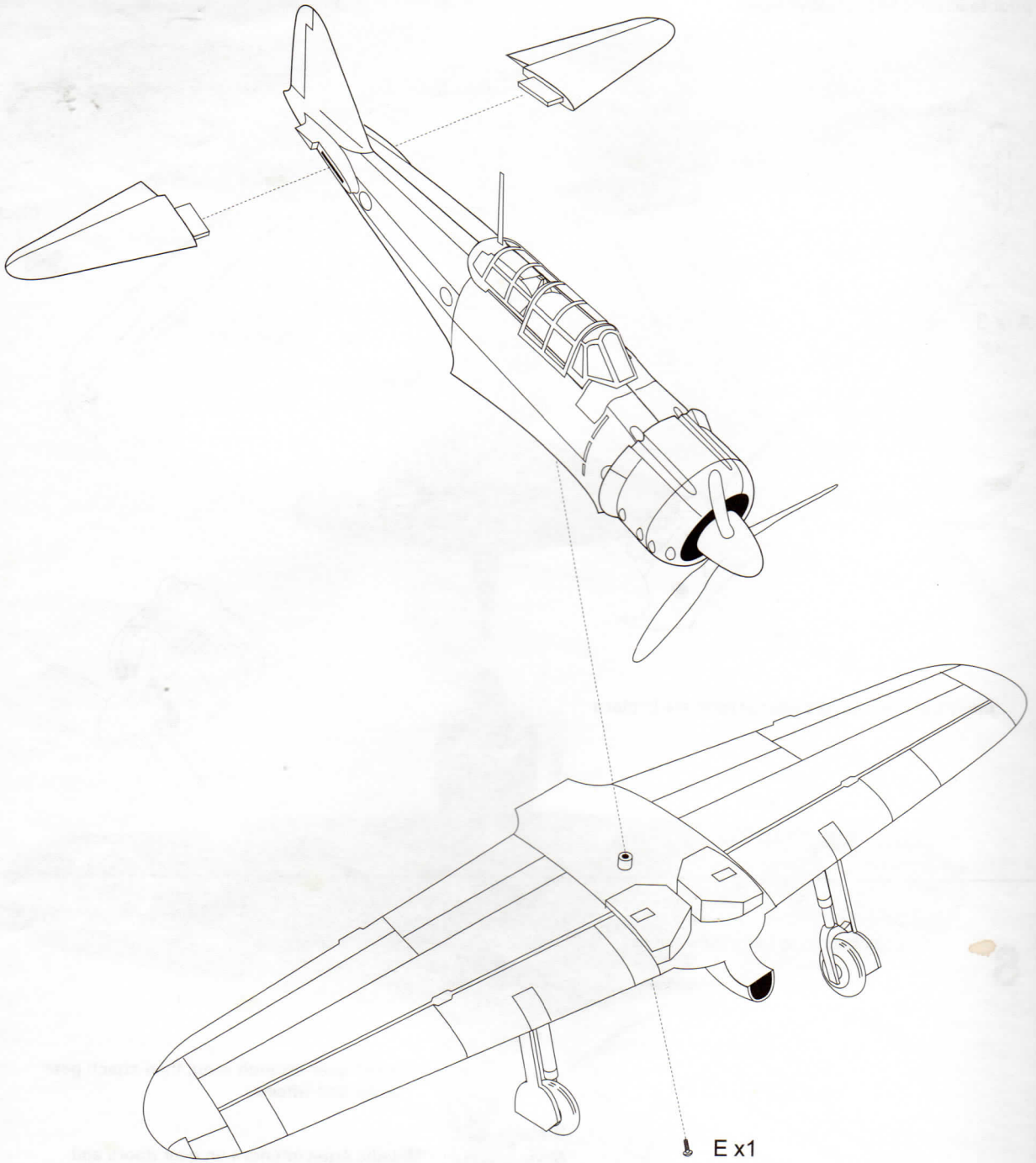
Metallic Aqua fuselage interiors



8

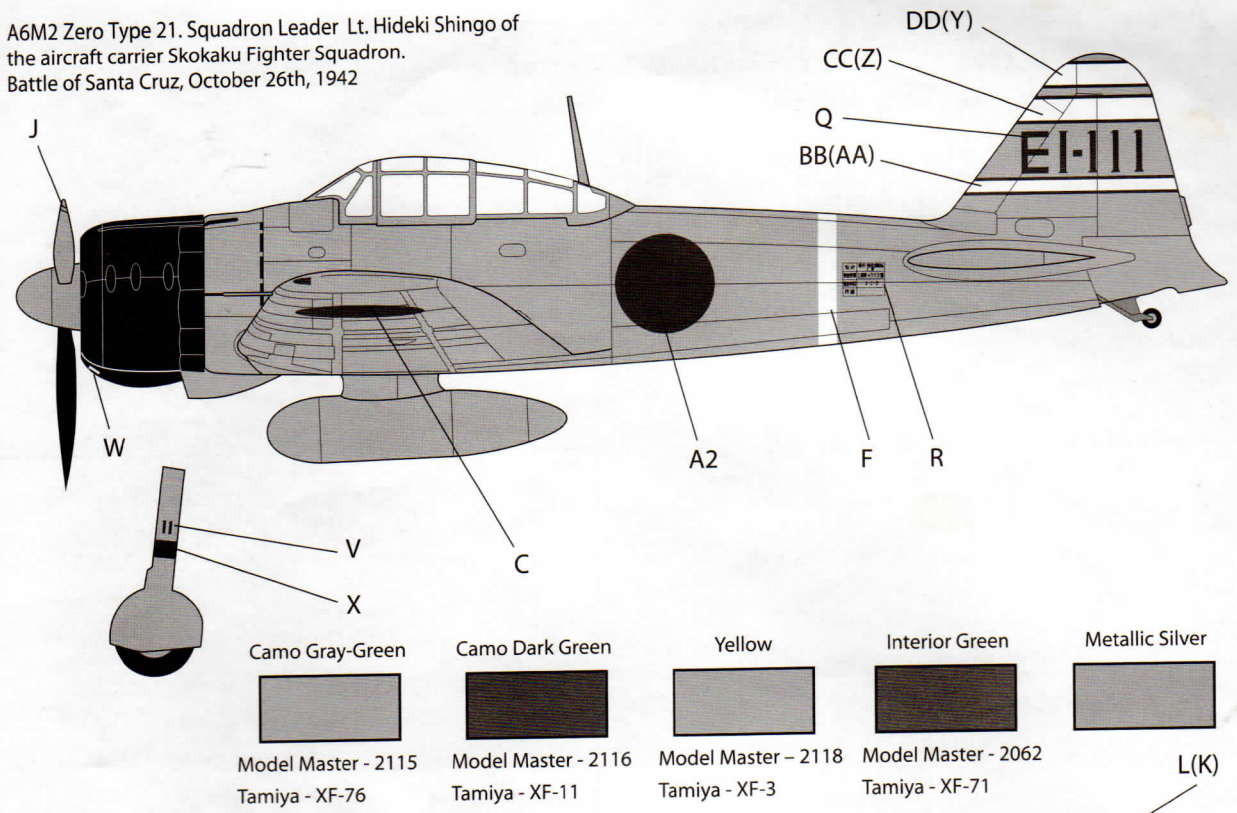
Attach gear retainer piece once gear is in place (both sides)



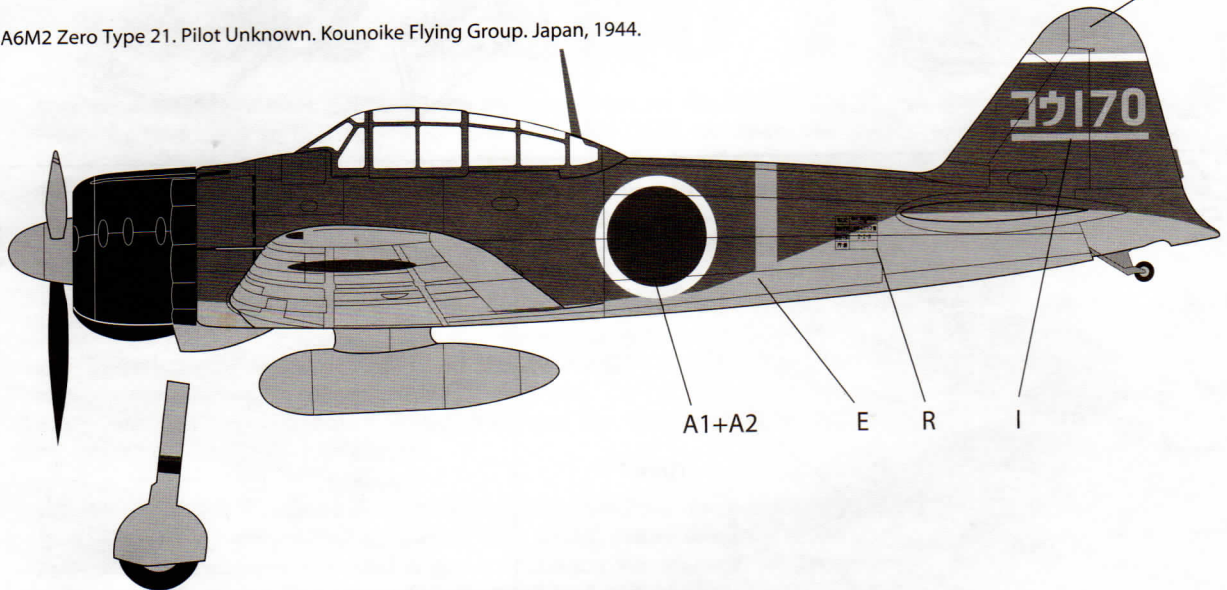


Ex1

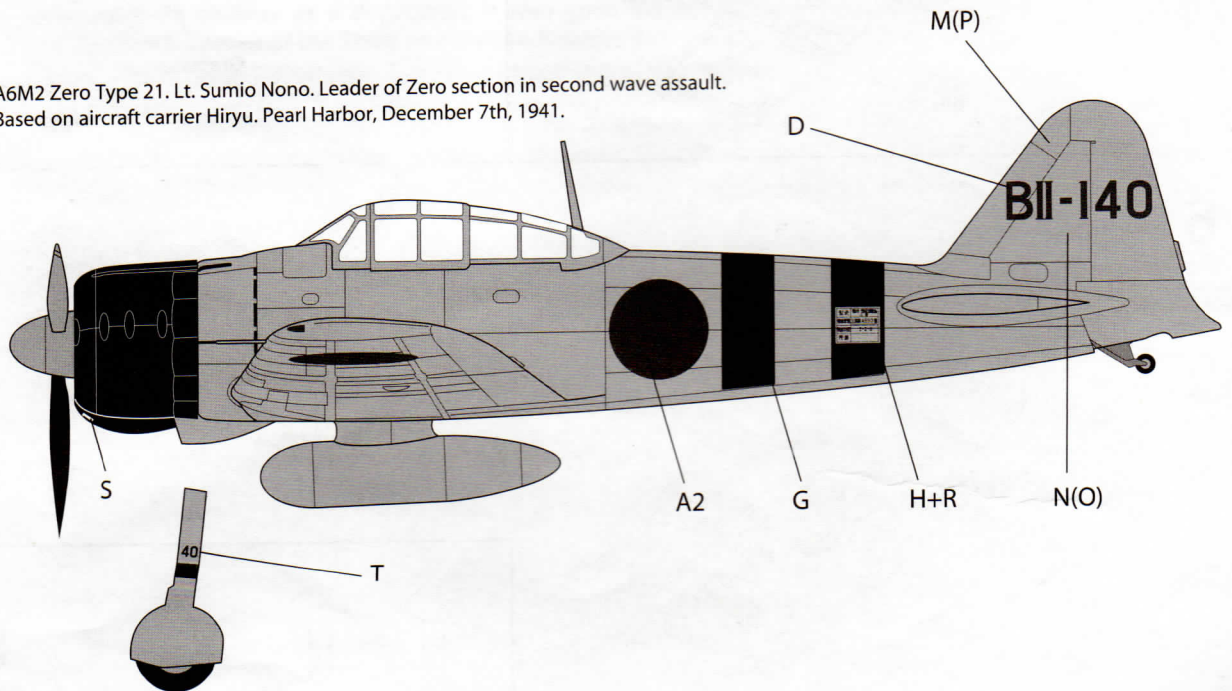
A6M2 Zero Type 21. Squadron Leader Lt. Hideki Shingo of the aircraft carrier Skokaku Fighter Squadron. Battle of Santa Cruz, October 26th, 1942

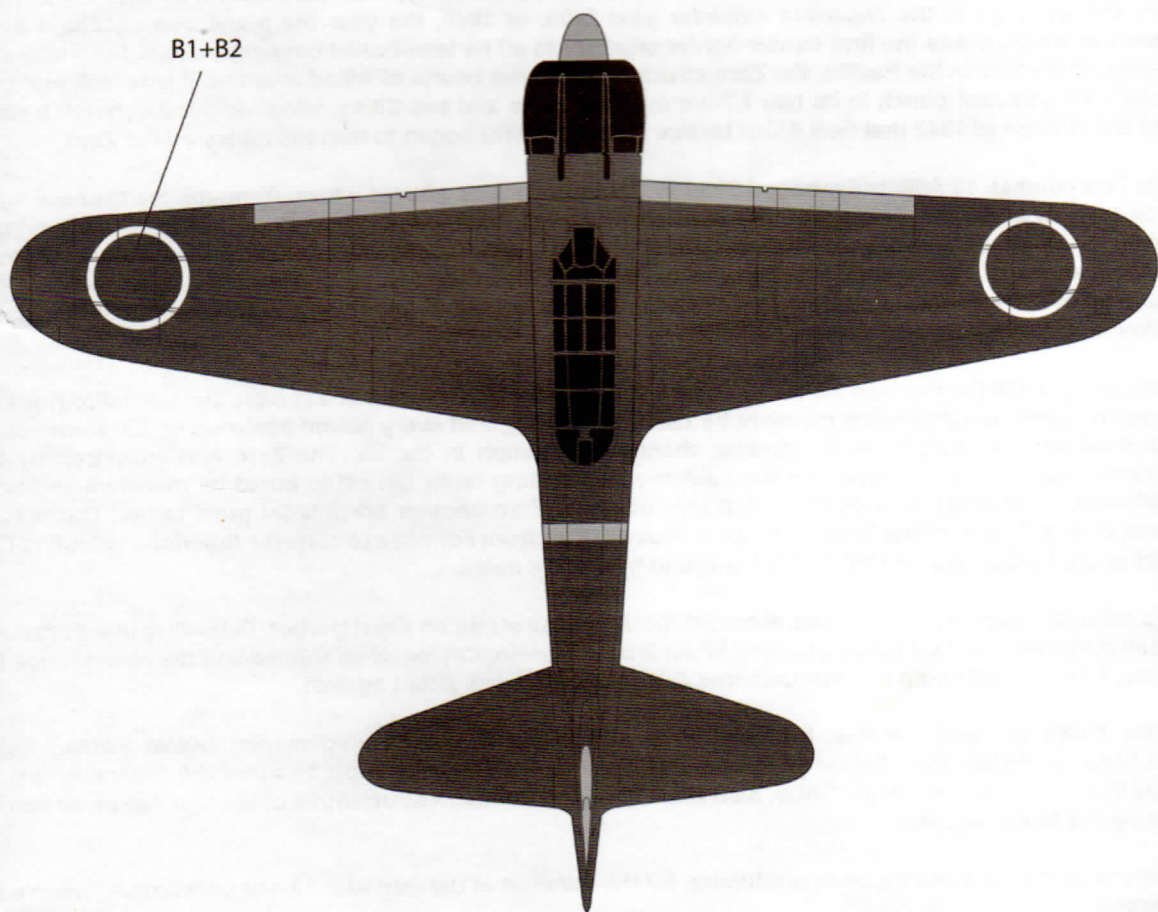
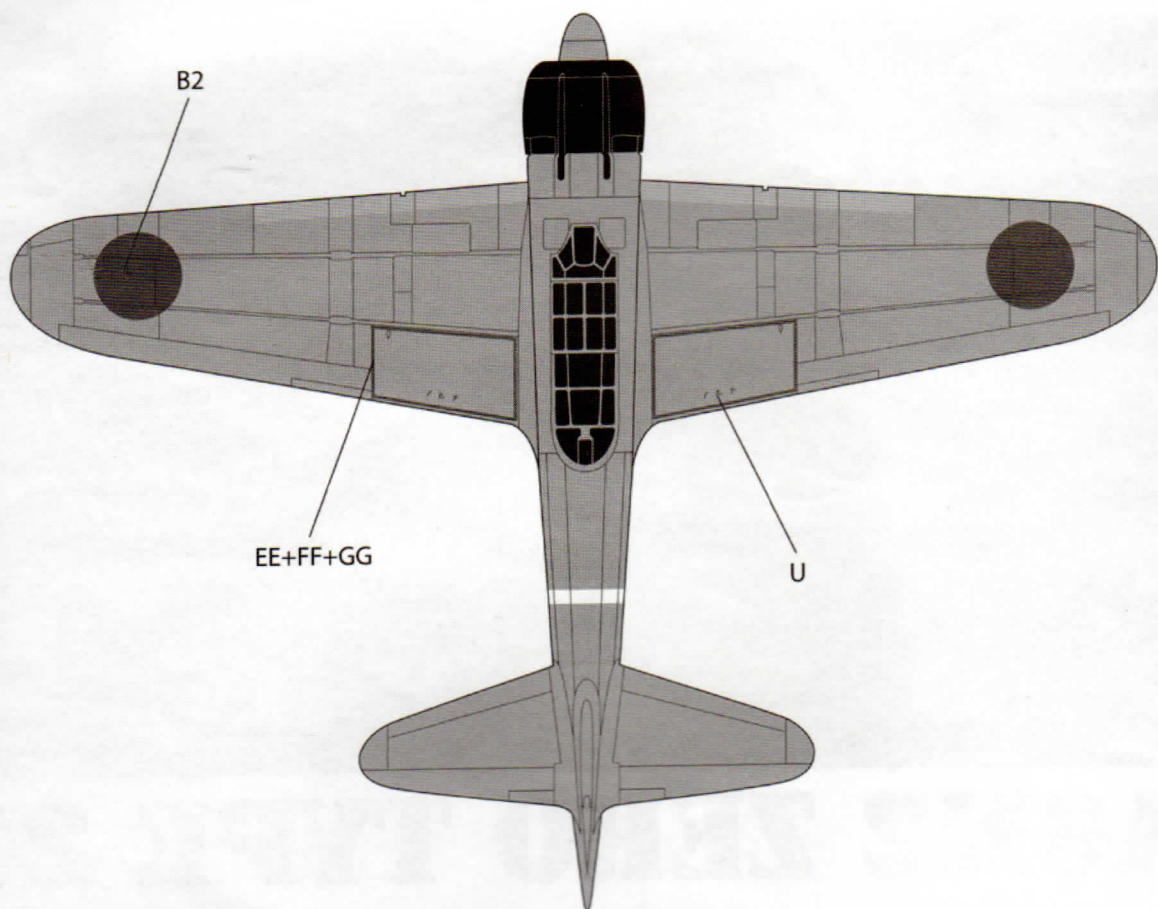


A6M2 Zero Type 21. Pilot Unknown. Kounoike Flying Group. Japan, 1944.



A6M2 Zero Type 21. Lt. Sumio Nono. Leader of Zero section in second wave assault. Based on aircraft carrier Hiryu. Pearl Harbor, December 7th, 1941.





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