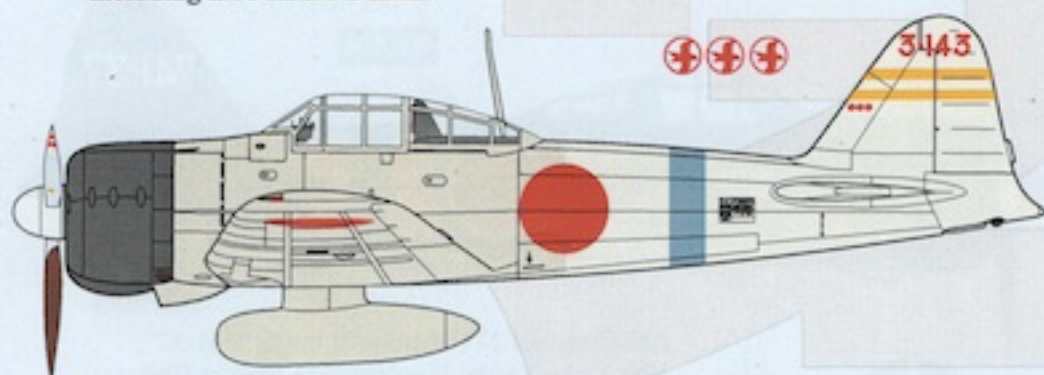
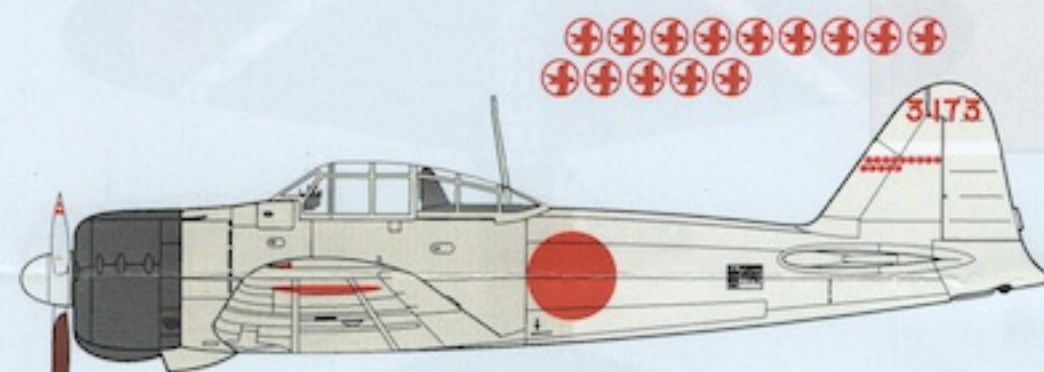


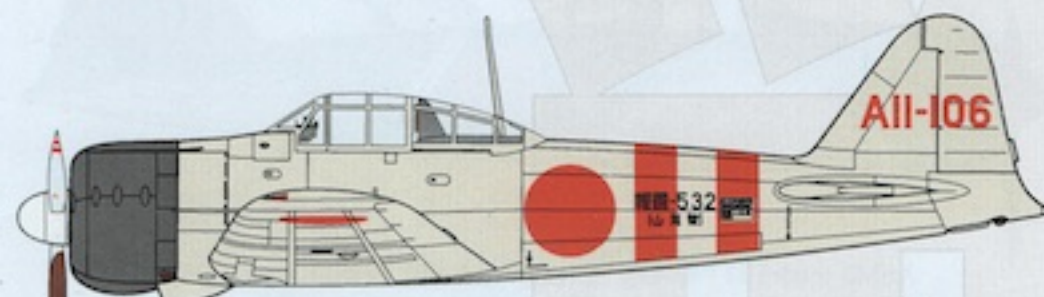
A6M2 early model 11 s/n 807, „3-112” 12th Kokutai, Hankow, China, 1941. Scoreboard of 28 victories was accumulated by the various 12th Kokutai pilots, including Lt. Minoru Suzuki.



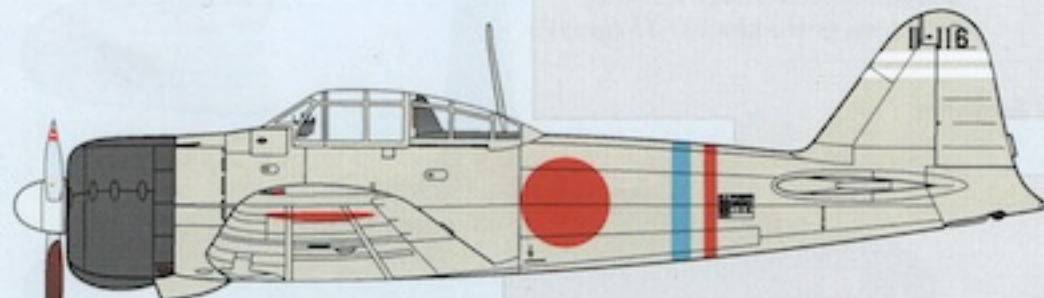
A6M2 late model 11 „3-143” 12th Kokutai, Hankow, China, May 1941. Aircraft flown by 18 victory ace PO3c Masayuki Nakase. During a mission against Nanning on 26 May 1941 Nakase shot down in this Zero three enemy aircraft. Nakase credited in total 9 victories in China as a member of 12th Kokutai. He was killed on 9 February 1942, when strafed enemy armored cars (he served at this time in 3rd Kokutai).



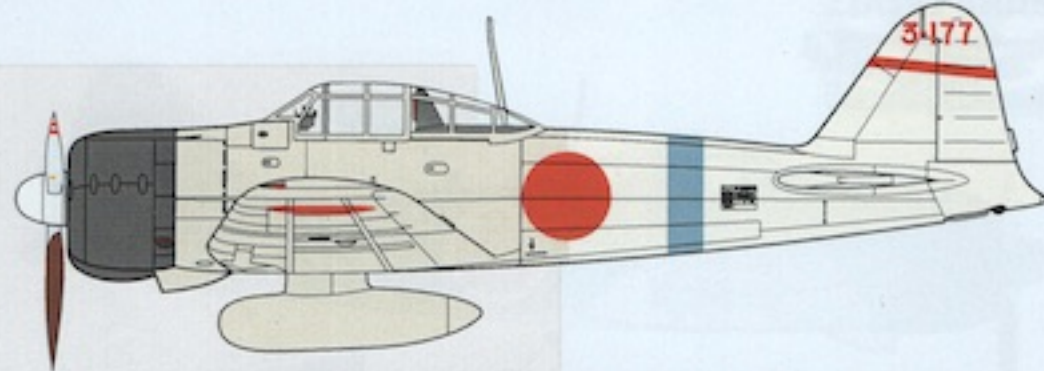
A6M2 early model 11 „3-173” 12th Kokutai, Hankow, China, March 1941. PO2c Hideo Oishi added two victory symbols on this aircraft after his successful mission over Chengtu, 14 March 1943. Oishi was killed in action over Cebu on 12. September 1944 when he served as a member of 201st Kokutai. He credited 6 victories to his dead.



A6M2 model 21 „AI-106”, Aircraft carrier Kaga, Oppama airbase, Kisarazu pref., April 1942. Houkoku no. 532 on the fuselage.



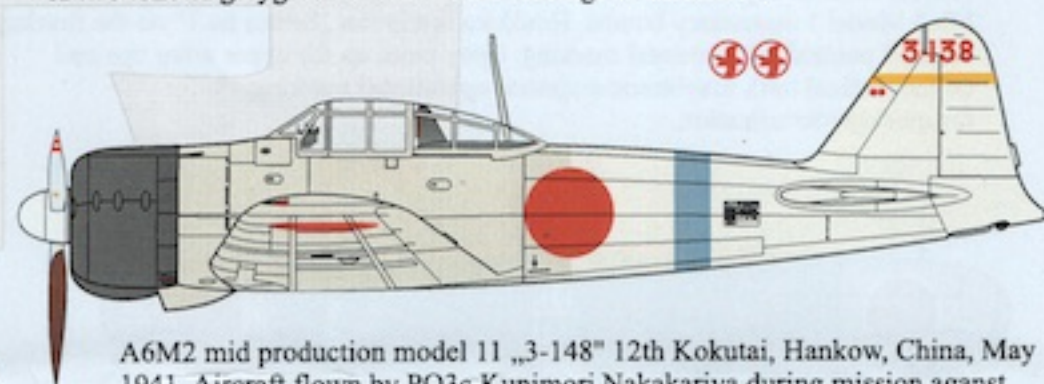
A6M2 model 21 „II-116”, 22nd Koku Sentai Shireibu Fuzoku Sentokitai, Soc Trang, French Indochina, December 1941. The command markings may indicate, that this aircraft was flown by one of two butaichos (either Lt. Kiku-ichi Inano or Lt. Tadatsune Tokaji). This unit was formed to provide escorts to IJNAF bombers participating in the Malaya and Dutch East Indies operations. The personnel of this unit was formed by members of the 3rd and Tainan Kokutai.



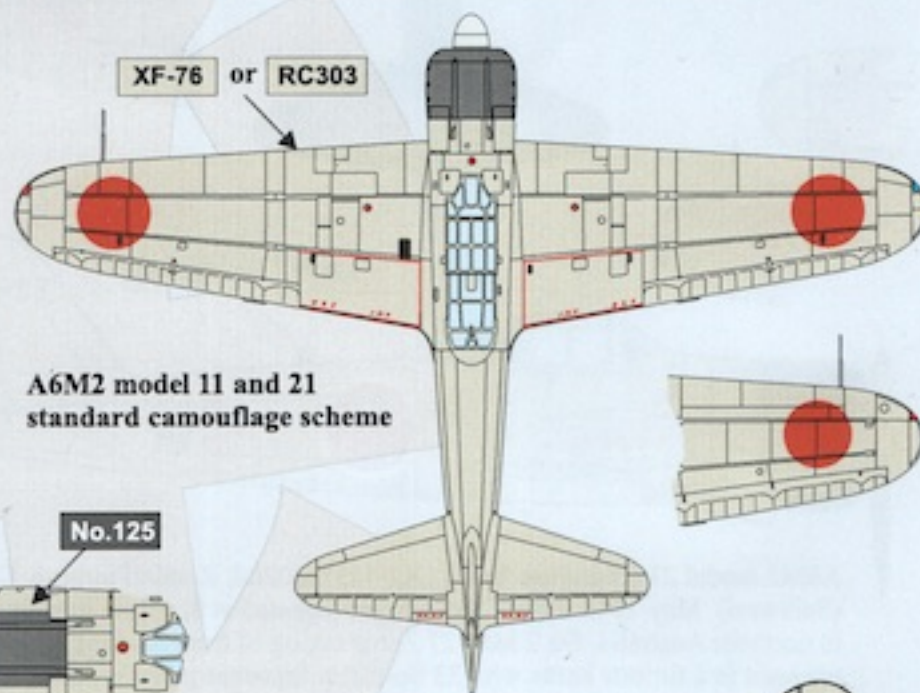
A6M2 early model 11 „3-177” 12th Kokutai, Hankow, China, 1940. One of the first Zero arrived to China in July 1940.



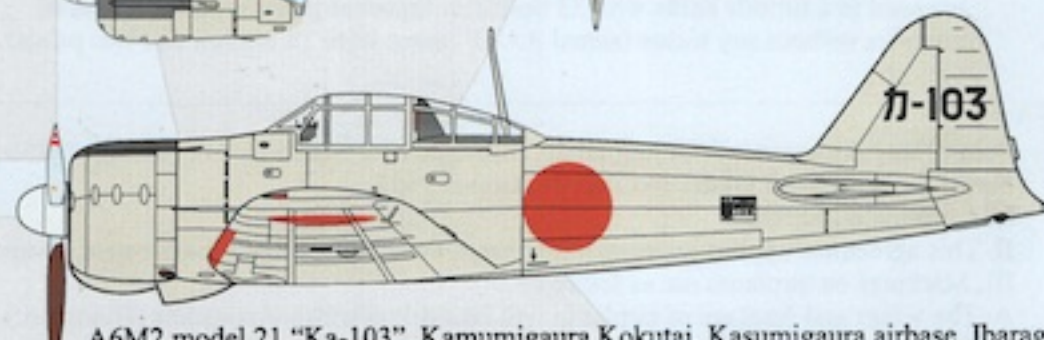
A6M2 late model 11 „3-141” 12th Kokutai, Hankow, China, May 1941. Aircraft flown by Lt. Minoru Suzuki during mission against Nanning on 26 May 1941. Some sources mentioned, that 12th Kokutai used only blue fuselage bands on the fuselage. Other mentioned also red bands. The reason of two tone of greygreen colour on the fuselage is unknown.



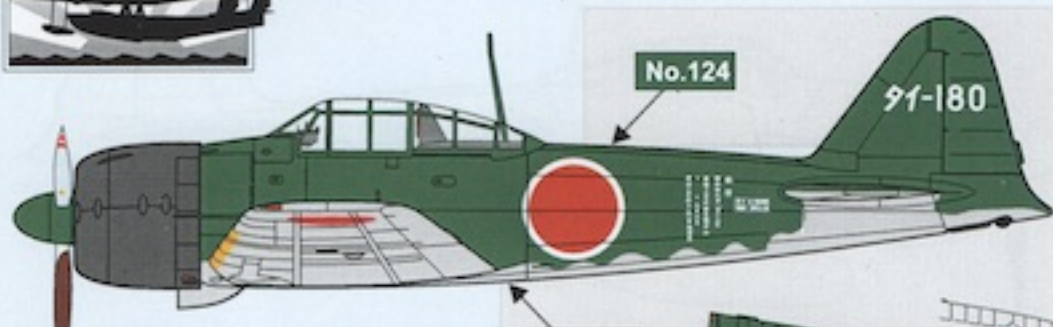
A6M2 mid production model 11 „3-148” 12th Kokutai, Hankow, China, May 1941. Aircraft flown by PO3c Kunimori Nakakariya during mission against Nanning on 26 May 1941. Nakakariya shot down during this mission two enemy aircraft. To the end of the war he credited in total 16 victories. A mid production model 11 has revised exhaust positions from 4th to 5th cowl flaps but still has long greenhouse glass panels behind the radio mast.



A6M2 model 11 and 21 standard camouflage scheme



A6M2 model 21 „Ka-103”, Kamumigaura Kokutai, Kasumigaura airbase, Ibaragi pref. This very early model 21 features the trim on the ailerons, rectangular opening for the wing 20mm cannon and larger cockpit air intake on the wing leading edge. Despite being used by the land based unit the aircraft is equipped with the arrestor hook. The aircraft also features a rather non-standard anti-glare black stripe in front of the windshield instead of typical overall black cowling. The leading edge seems to be painted red. Even though being rather atypical painting feature it fully complies with Naval General Staff Order No.162, from 21 August 1942.

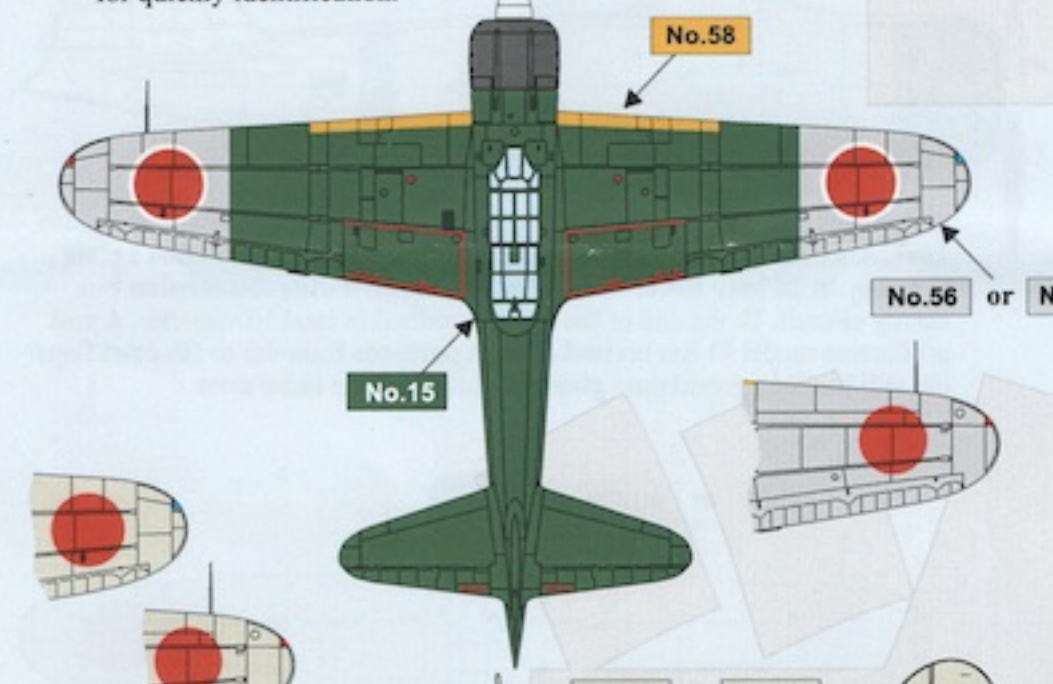


A6M3 model 32 „Tai-180”, Tainan Kokutai (II), Tainan airbase, Formosa (Taiwan), September 1944. Aircraft flown by 18 ace WO Takeo Tanimizu.

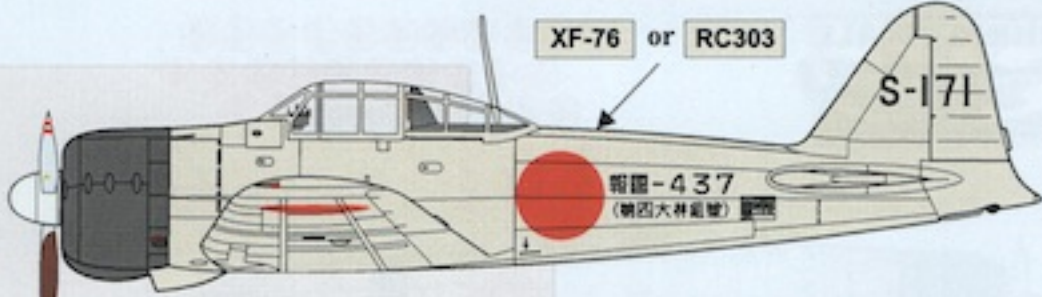
Inscription on the fuselage describes Tanimizu's victories:
 „Fight history,
 19th year of Emperor Showa 31st August for participation on aerial combat,
 19th year of Emperor Showa 3rd September for single handely destroying a B-24.”



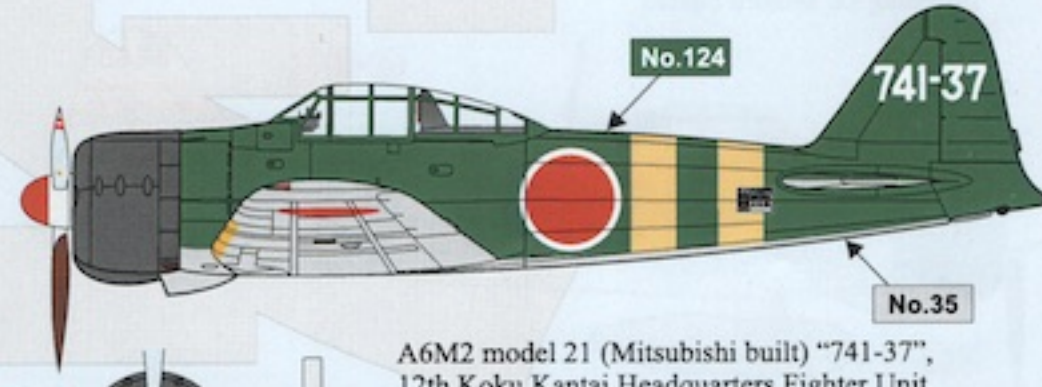
A6M2 model 21 (Nakajima built) „81-1183”, 381st Kokutai, Sorong airbase, Jefman Island, May 1944. This aircraft was photographed with two type 99 No.3 Mk.3 Model 1 incendiary bombs. Houkoku insription „Seram no.1” on the fuselage. Aircraft painted with unusual marking (grey paint on the upper wing tips and on the vertical tail), maybe some special operational marking for quickly identification.



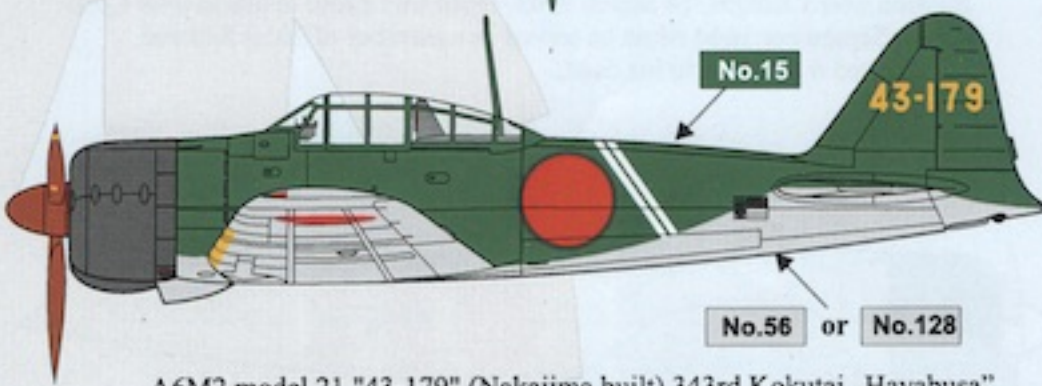
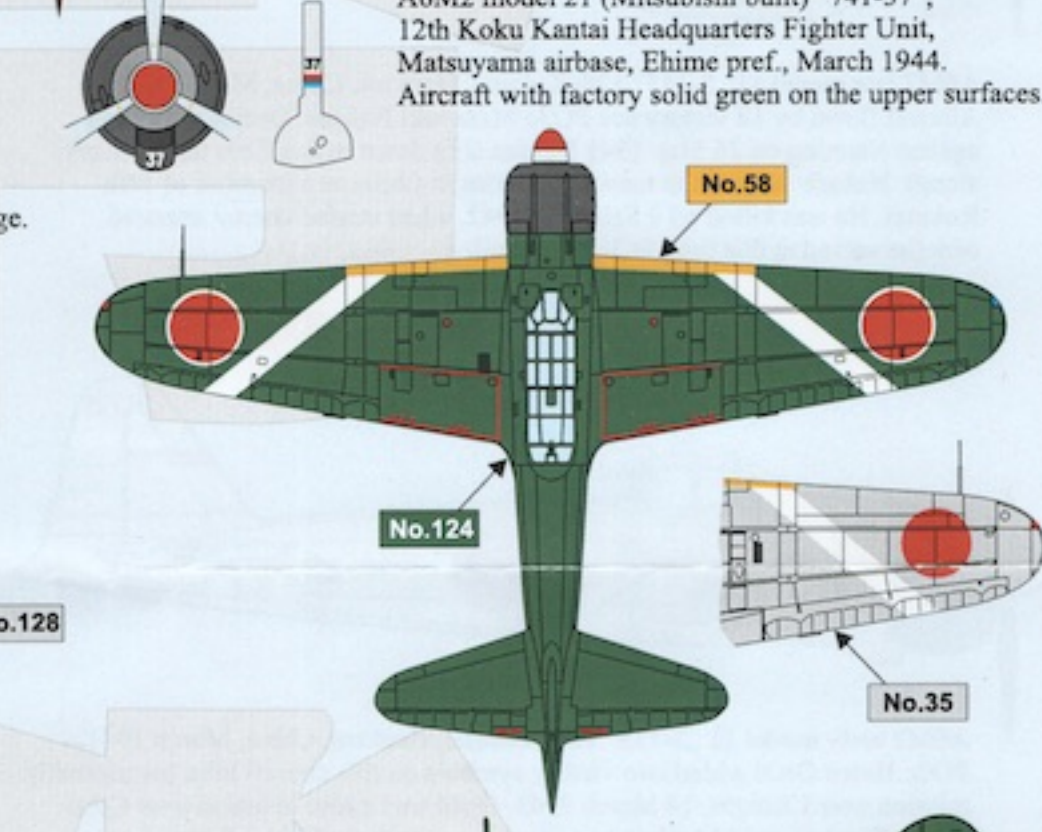
A6M2 model 21 (Nakajima built) „X2-113”, 202nd, Kendari airbase, Celebes island (Sulawesi) May 1943. 202nd Kokutai participated at this time in raids agains Darwin in northern Australia. On 2 May 27 Zeros taking of from Kupang, Timor island, engaged in a furious battle with 33 Spitfires. Japanese pilots reported 21 aerial victories without any losses (actual RAAF losses were 13 aircraft and two pilots).



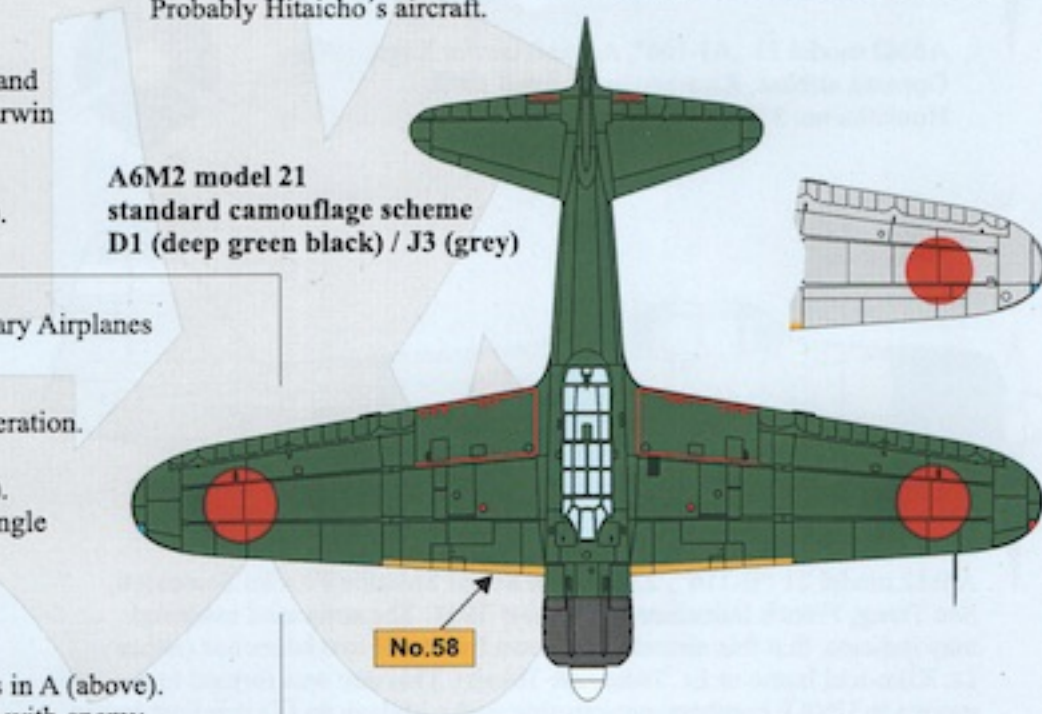
A6M2 Model 21 „S-171”, Chitose Kokutai, Wake Island, April 1942. Aircraft flown by PO3 Hideo Watanabe during moving the detachment of Chitose Kokutai from Wake to Rabaul. Watanabe was seriously injured during combat on 26 August 1943 and returned back to Japan. He was credited with 16 victories. Zero with Houkoku no. 437 on the fuselage.



A6M2 model 21 (Mitsubishi built) “741-37”, 12th Koku Kantai Headquarters Fighter Unit, Matsuyama airbase, Ehime pref., March 1944. Aircraft with factory solid green on the upper surfaces.



A6M2 model 21 "43-179" (Nakajima built) 343rd Kokutai „Hayabusa” (Peregrine falcon), Tinian Island, Northern Mariana Islands, April 1944. Probably Hitaicho's aircraft.



A6M2 model 21 standard camouflage scheme D1 (deep green black) / J3 (grey)

**Army-Navy Agreement With Regard To Distinguishing Markings For Friendly Military Airplanes
 Naval General Staff Order No.162, 21 August 1942**

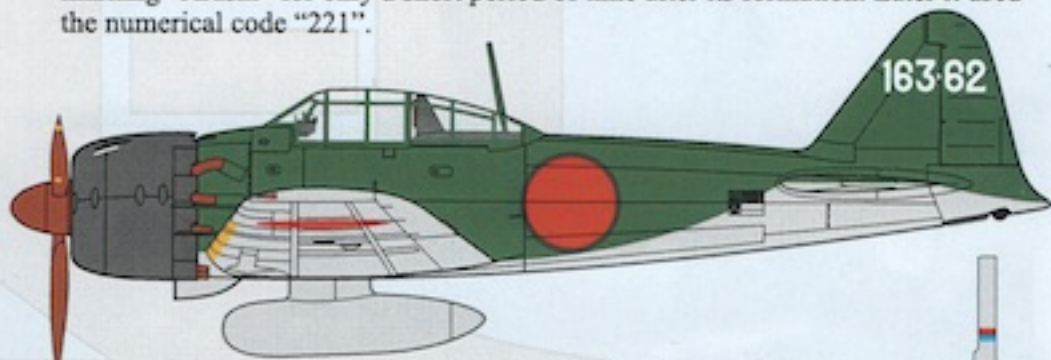
- I. Distribution (omitted)
- II. This agreement applies in Japan, Manchuria, occupied territory and theaters of operation.
- III. Markings on airplanes are as follows:
 - A. The wings and fuselage of airplanes will be marked with red roundels (Hinomaru).
 - B. The red roundels on the fuselage of camouflaged airplanes will have a white rectangle or roundel as background.
 - C. The inner half of the leading edges of wings will be painted as follows:
 - 1. Yellow for camouflaged airplanes.
 - 2. Red or yellow for airplanes which are not camouflaged.
 - D. Trainers and experimental airplanes will be painted yellow with the red roundel as in A (above).
 - E. In addition to the markings mentioned above, markings which cannot be confused with enemy markings will be painted on the tail and other parts of the airplane to distinguish the different air units.”



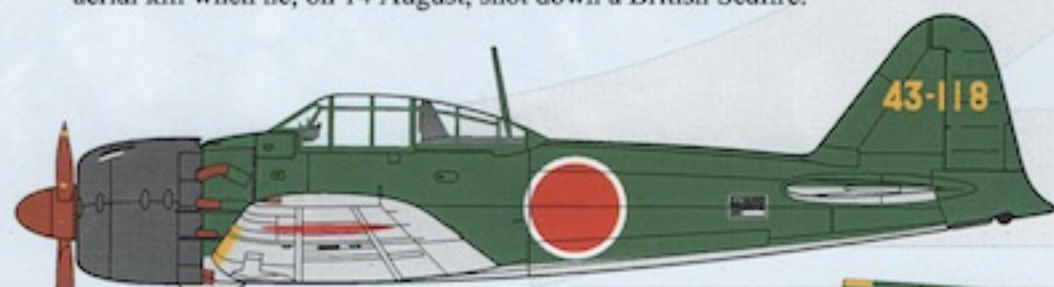
A6M5c model 52c (Nakajima built) "252-166", 252nd Kokutai, 304th Hikotai, Koriyama airbase, Fukushima pref., August 1945. In this aircraft, usually flown by Lt. Yutaka Morioka, Lt. Saburo Abe may have recorder the very last IJNAF aerial kill when he, on 14 August, shot down a British Seafire.



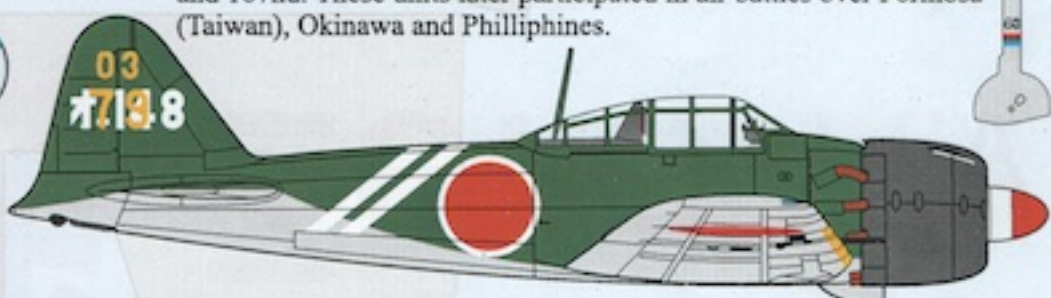
A6M5b model 52b (Nakajima built) „Arashi-37”, 221st Kokutai „Arashi” (Storm), Kananohara airbase, Kagoshima pref., around January 1944. The unit used the kanji marking “Arashi” for only a short period of time after its formation. Later it used the numerical code “221”.



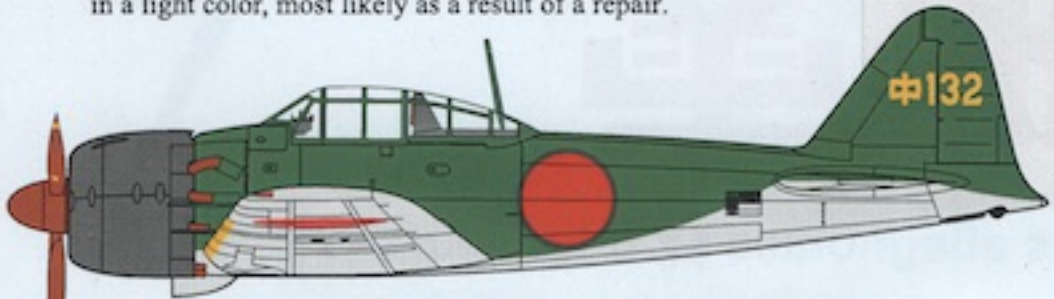
A6M5 Model 52 (Nakajima built) „163-62”, 634th Kokutai, 163rd Hikotai, Tokushima airbase, Tokushima pref., September 1944. Previously board aircraft unit (equipped with D4Y Suisei and E16A Paul) was reorganized to land based unit and enlarged by two fighter hikotai - 163th and 167nd. These units later participated in air battles over Formosa (Taiwan), Okinawa and Phillipines.



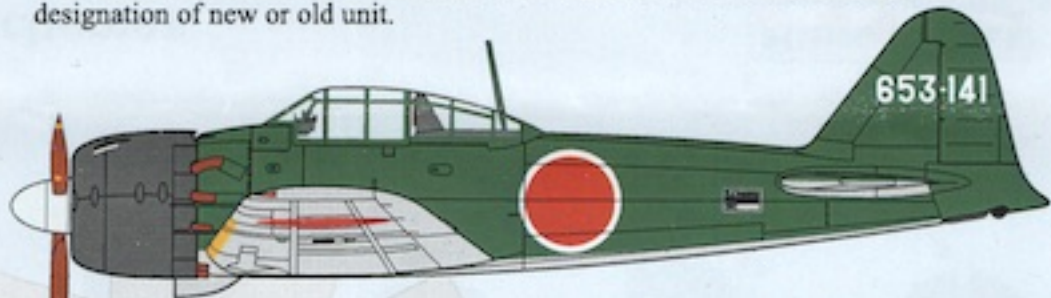
A6M5a Model 52a s/n 4685 (Mitsubishi built) „43-118”, 343rd Kokutai „Hayabusa” (Peregrine falcon), Guam, Mariana Islands, June 1945. This Zero sports a starboard wingtip (port one is not recognizable in the photographs) in a light color, most likely as a result of a repair.



A6M5c Model 52c (Nakajima built) „03-79”, 203rd Kokutai, Omura airbase, Nagasaki pref., August 1945. Previous (but still clear visible) code „O-148” denoted previous user Omura Kokutai. It is unclear, that two diagonal bands on the fuselage is designation of new or old unit.



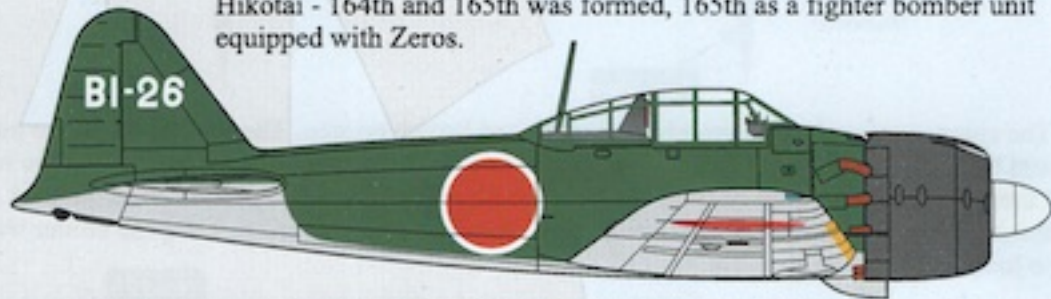
A6M5b model 52b (Nakajima built) “Chu-132”, Chushi Kokutai, Longhua airbase, Shanghai, China, January 1945. After the war there was a variety of the aircraft equipment found at Longhua base belonging to this less-known unit including several Zeros of various versions. The majority of the aircraft were photographed (including the one depicted here) with hinomaru overpainted with the surrender green crosses.



A6M5a Model 52a (Mitsubishi built) „653-141” 653rd Kokutai, 165th Hikotai, Oita airbase, Oita pref., October 1944. After the Battle of Marianas carrier aircraft unit 653rd Kokutai returned to homeland to reorganization. Two new Hikotai - 164th and 165th was formed, 165th as a fighter bomber unit equipped with Zeros.

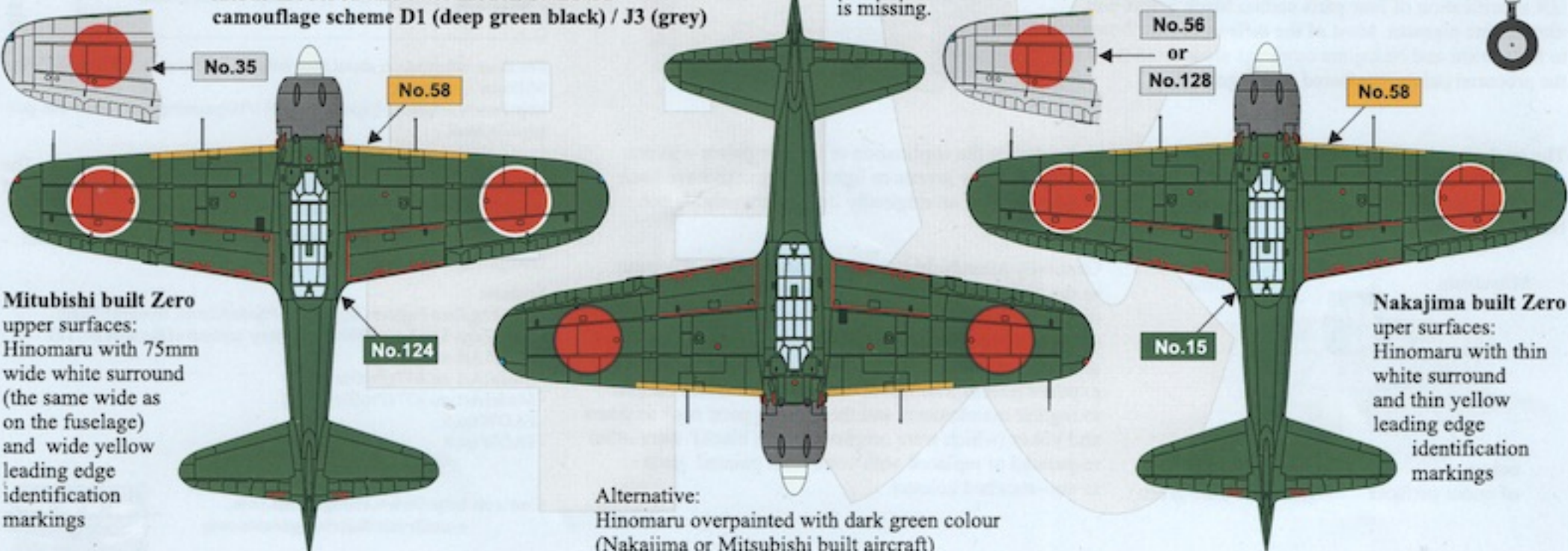


A6M5 model 52 (Nakajima built), 361st Kokutai „Akira” (Radiant), 407th Hikotai, Kagoshima airbase, Kagoshima pref., April 1944. Only kanji „Akira” is visible on the vertical tail surface, lacking the standard numerical code. Although the Kokutai was scheduled to be equipped with Shidens, training started immediately on Zeros. Since Shidens were still unavailable after four months the unit was disbanded.



A6M5 model 52 „BI-26”, 381st Kokutai, Singapore, August 1945. This Zero features non-standard demarcation of the upper and lower camouflage colors. Also the bottom part of the landing gear leg cover is missing.

A6M5 model 52 and later models standard camouflage scheme D1 (deep green black) / J3 (grey)



Mitsubishi built Zero
upper surfaces:
Hinomaru with 75mm wide white surround (the same wide as on the fuselage) and wide yellow leading edge identification markings

Nakajima built Zero
upper surfaces:
Hinomaru with thin white surround and thin yellow leading edge identification markings

Alternative:
Hinomaru overpainted with dark green colour (Nakajima or Mitsubishi built aircraft)