



Marines at Pearl Harbor

Accurate Miniatures Special Limited Release 0251

ACCURATE
MINIATURES



A Douglas SBD-1 Dauntless from VMSB 232 flies in tight formation with an SB2U-3 Vindicator from VMSB-231 over the calm water of Pearl Harbor in early December 1941. The calm blue water would be stained with oil and blood on the morning of December 7, when the attacking Japanese Navy would lay waste the harbor and surrounding air fields.

“I believe that I interpret the will of the Congress and of the people when I assert that we will not only defend ourselves to the uttermost, but will make it very certain that this form of treachery shall never again endanger us.

Hostilities exist. There is no blinking at the fact that our people, our territory, and our interests are in grave danger.”

President Franklin D. Roosevelt, 8 December 1941

Marines at Pearl Harbor: 7 December, 1941

Lieutenant Commander Shigeru Itaya led nine Type 21 Zero Fighters from the Japanese aircraft carrier *Akagi* over the Waianae Range at about 0745. Lieutenant Yoshio Shiga was along side leading another division of nine Zeros from the carrier *Kaga*. The eighteen fighters had broken off from the larger first wave of attack aircraft moments earlier and headed toward Marine Corps Air Station Ewa.

They found the aircraft lined up neatly on the northwest apron and, roaring across the airstrip at 25 feet, they concentrated their attack with short bursts of 7.7mm machine gun and 20-millimeter cannon fire. At the end of the run, Itaya's group flew on to attack Wheeler Field, but Shiga's group reversed their course, and repeated their attacks from the opposite direction leaving most of Marine Air Group-21's planes ablaze. The SBD-1s and -2s of VMSB-232 were either on fire or destroyed by gunfire, and the seven spare SB2U-3s, which had been left behind by VMSB-231 when they embarked on the *Lexington* only two days before, were all completely destroyed. The remaining F4F-3s of VMF-211, which had been left behind when the squadron deployed to Wake over a week before, were also left in ruin.

Shortly after the attack of the *Akagi* and *Kaga* Air Groups had ended, a division of fighters from *Soryu*, along with another from *Hiryu* swept over the field, having just concluded their attack on Wheeler Field. Lieutenant Kiyokuma Okajima led his six fighters down through the rolling smoke further strafing the Marines. When his wingman, Petty Officer 1st Class Kazuo Muranaka was damaged by ground fire, Okajima began to assemble his unit and retreat toward the rendezvous area some 10 miles west of Kaena Point.

The first wave headed back toward their rendezvous point at about 0825. In just over 30 minutes Japanese fighter pilots turned MCAS Ewa into a smoldering junkyard of burning American aircraft. Japanese pilots claimed the destruction of 60 aircraft on the ground: *Akagi's* airmen accounted for 11, *Kaga's* pilots claimed 15, *Soryu's* 12, and pilots from *Hiryu* claimed 22. Their claims were reasonably accurate, as 47 aircraft of all types had been parked at the field at the beginning of the attack, 33 of which had been fully operational. 33 planes were completely demolished, with the remainder suffering major damage.

Marines at Pearl Harbor: 7 December, 1941

Lieutenant Commander Shigeru Itaya led nine Type 21 Zero Fighters from the Japanese aircraft carrier *Akagi* over the Waianae Range at about 0745. Lieutenant Yoshio Shiga was along side leading another division of nine Zeros from the carrier *Kaga*. The eighteen fighters had broken off from the larger first wave of attack aircraft moments earlier and headed toward Marine Corps Air Station Ewa.

They found the aircraft lined up neatly on the northwest apron and, roaring across the airstrip at 25 feet, they concentrated their attack with short bursts of 7.7mm machine gun and 20-millimeter cannon fire. At the end of the run, Itaya's group flew on to attack Wheeler Field, but Shiga's group reversed their course, and repeated their attacks from the opposite direction leaving most of Marine Air Group-21's planes ablaze. The SBD-1s and -2s of VMSB-232 were either on fire or destroyed by gunfire, and the seven spare SB2U-3s, which had been left behind by VMSB-231 when they embarked on the Lexington only two days before, were all completely destroyed. The remaining F4F-3s of VMF-211, which had been left behind when the squadron deployed to Wake over a week before, were also left in ruin.

Shortly after the attack of the *Akagi* and *Kaga* Air Groups had ended, a division of fighters from *Soryu*, along with another from *Hiryu* swept over the field, having just concluded their attack on Wheeler Field. Lieutenant Kiyokuma Okajima led his six fighters down through the rolling smoke further strafing the Marines. When his wingman, Petty Officer 1st Class Kazuo Muranaka was damaged by ground fire, Okajima began to assemble his unit and retreat toward the rendezvous area some 10 miles west of Kaena Point.

The first wave headed back toward their rendezvous point at about 0825. In just over 30 minutes Japanese fighter pilots turned MCAS Ewa into a smoldering junkyard of burning American aircraft. Japanese pilots claimed the destruction of 60 aircraft on the ground: *Akagi's* airmen accounted for 11, *Kaga's* pilots claimed 15, *Soryu's* 12, and pilots from *Hiryu* claimed 22. Their claims were reasonably accurate, as 47 aircraft of all types had been parked at the field at the beginning of the attack, 33 of which had been fully operational. 33 planes were completely demolished, with the remainder suffering major damage.



Ground crews struggle to push an SBD-1 out of the line of fire while the smoke of other burning aircraft fills the sky. (Joe Myers Collection)



A Vought SB2U-3 burns furiously at the height of the attack. VMSB-231 had deployed to reinforce Midway Island only two days before on the USS *Lexington*. When word of the attack was received, she immediately launched search planes to hunt for the Japanese fleet, and at midmorning headed south to rendezvous with *Indianapolis* and *Enterprise* task forces to conduct a search southwest of Oahu until returning to Pearl Harbor 13 December. (Joe Myers Collection)



All of Vought SB2U-3s were destroyed on the ground at Ewa, this rendered all of VMSB-231's spare aircraft destroyed. (Joe Myers Collection)



Eighteen light gray Vought SB2U-3 Vindicators from VMSB-231 sailed from Pearl Harbor aboard the USS *Lexington* (CV-2) on 5 December 1941 as part of Task Force 12. The squadron returned to Ewa from the *Lexington* on 10 December, but a week later flew back to Midway in what would be the longest over water flight by single engine aircraft on record at that time. The squadron would be split in two on 1 March 1942 when VMSB-241 was created. The two squadrons operated side by side, even flying the same aircraft. VMSB-231 was officially transferred back to MCAS Ewa shortly thereafter, but a majority of its personnel and all of its aircraft remained at Midway.



VMSB-232 had twenty-two SBD-1 and SBD-2 Dauntless dive bombers. During the attack, nine aircraft were lost, with ten others receiving major damage. VMSB-232 also had a detachment on Wake Island, which was attacked very shortly after Pearl Harbor. During the attack on Wake, twenty-five enlisted Marines were killed or captured in the defense of the doomed island. In August 1942, the squadron became part of the Cactus Air Force and flew from Henderson Field, Guadalcanal's 3,000 foot dirt runway. VMSB-231 became the first Marine dive bomber squadron to fly against the Japanese.



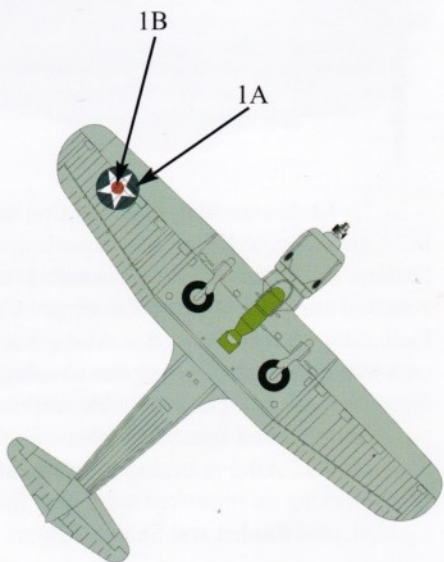
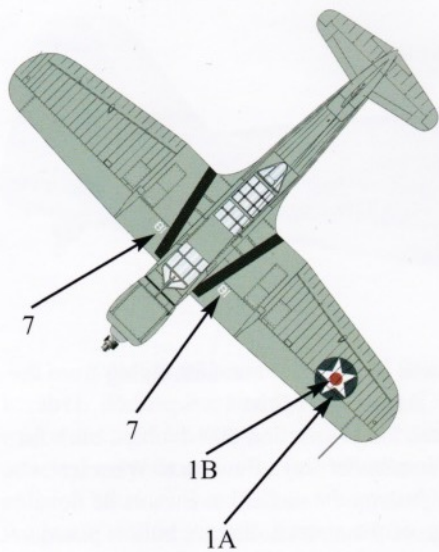
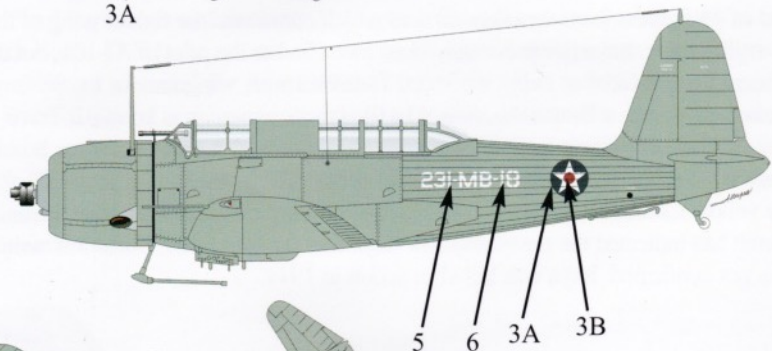
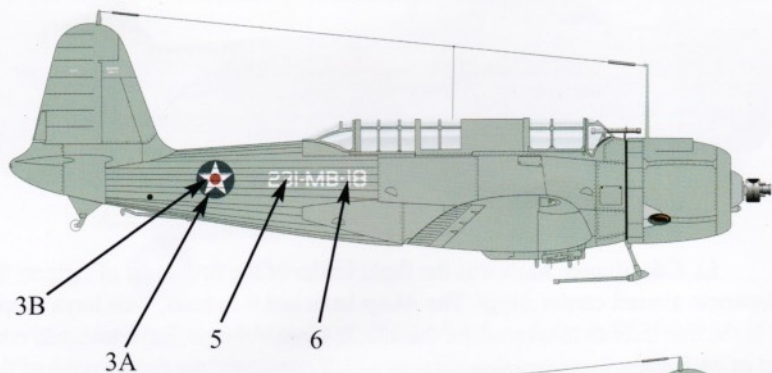
Lt. Cdr. Shigeru Itaya was the flight leader of the first wave of fighters from the Japanese aircraft carrier *Akagi*. The *Akagi* launched 9 fighters, with Itaya supposedly in the first aircraft to take off for the attack. Once airborne, Itaya assumed command of 43 fighters from the other carriers which constituted the fighter wing of the converging force. Itaya has previously been identified as the pilot of AI-101, but this has been demonstrated as being incorrect. Tadao Kimura, wingman for Lt. Saburo Shindo, second wave Buntaicho, flew AI-101. Itaya's wingman is known to have flown AI-154, which was lost to American anti-aircraft fire on that morning. It is therefore plausible that Itaya was at the controls of AI-155 during the attack. The three yellow Command stripes denote his position as the Zero Hikotaicho. Recent research has indicated the possibility that Itaya was flying AI-159, but at this writing, this is not confirmed. Itaya was killed in action in 1944.



Lt. Yoshio Shiga was the first wave Fighter Commander, flying from the IJN Carrier *Kaga*. He was the Squadron Commander of the 1st Squadron, 11th Section, flying the number 1 aircraft. It was Shiga's section that doubled back for a second pass on Ewa after Lieutenant Commander Itaya flew on to Wheeler Field. Shiga remembered that during one pass on the airfield at Ewa as he dove on a Marine standing among the wreckage of the aircraft. Shiga's bullets pitted the tarmac around him, and to his surprise, the Marine did not move, raised his pistol and returned fire. Shiga later called him "The bravest American I ever encountered." After returning to Japan, he was posted back at Yokosuka as a test pilot, working on improved models of the Zero. He also helped develop the sophisticated Raiden and Shiden fighters. He never flew in combat again.

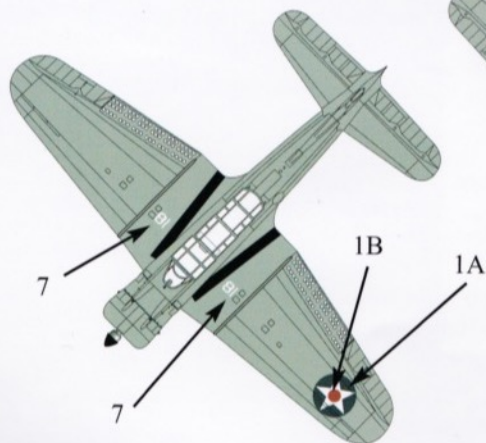
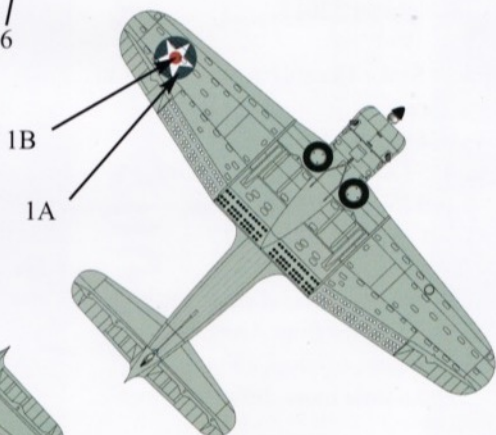
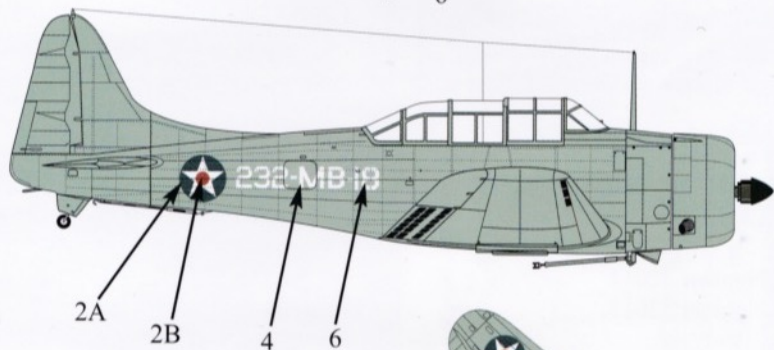
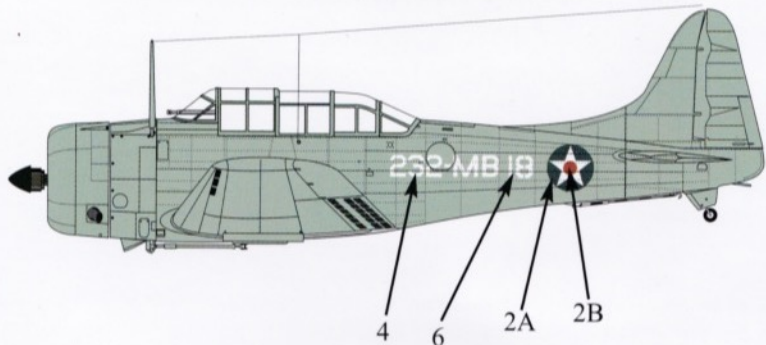
Decal Placement: SB2U-3 Vindicator

See instruction booklet for placement of maintenance stencils



Decal Placement: SBD-1 Dauntless

See instruction booklet for placement of maintenance stencils



References

Paint Guide:

Use this list to select the appropriate paint to finish your models

FS 36473 Medium Gray

Tamiya Acrylic.....#XF20
Model Master.....#1721
Humbrol.....#145
Vallejo Model Color...#989
Gunze.....#308

FS 37038 Flat Black

Tamiya Acrylic.....#XF-1
Model Master.....#1749
Humbrol.....#33
Vallejo Model Color...#950
Gunze.....#12

Aftermarket decal sheets are available for the Japanese strike force that attacked Pearl Harbor. These sets have complete painting and finishing information for each plane represented on the sheet:

Yellowhammer Decals offers two sheets for Tamiya's A6M2 in 1/32 scale:

Item Number 32014

Item Number 32015.

Eagle Strike Decals has four sheets in 1/48 scale:

48-034 (Hiryu Air Group)

48-035 (Akagi/Zuikaku Air Groups)

48-109 (Shokaku Air Group)

48-111 (Kaga Air Group)

There are also several sheets in 1/48 and 1/72 scales from Aeromaster, but these are out-of-production, so they will be a little more difficult to locate.

Ask your local hobby retailer for more information on these decals, as well as other Accurate Miniatures kits.

The following volumes were used as reference material in the preparation of this set:

Combat Colors Number 4:

Pearl Harbor and Beyond

H.C. Bridgewater and Peter Scott
Guideline Publications
ISBN 0-9539040-6-7

Infamous Day: Marines at Pearl Harbor

Robert J. Cressman and J. Michael Wenger
Marine Corps Historical Center
PCN 190 003116 00

(Article)

'If my plane was damaged, I would crash it into an American ship'

Hal Drake

Stars and Stripes Pacific Edition
Sunday, December 1, 1991

SBD Dauntless Units of World War 2

Barrett Tillman

Osprey Combat Aircraft Number 10
ISBN 1-85532-732-5

Accurate Miniatures is a Registered Trademark of

Collins-Habovick, LLC
4341 Triple Crown Drive
Concord, NC, 28027, USA

© 2007 Collins-Habovick, LLC