

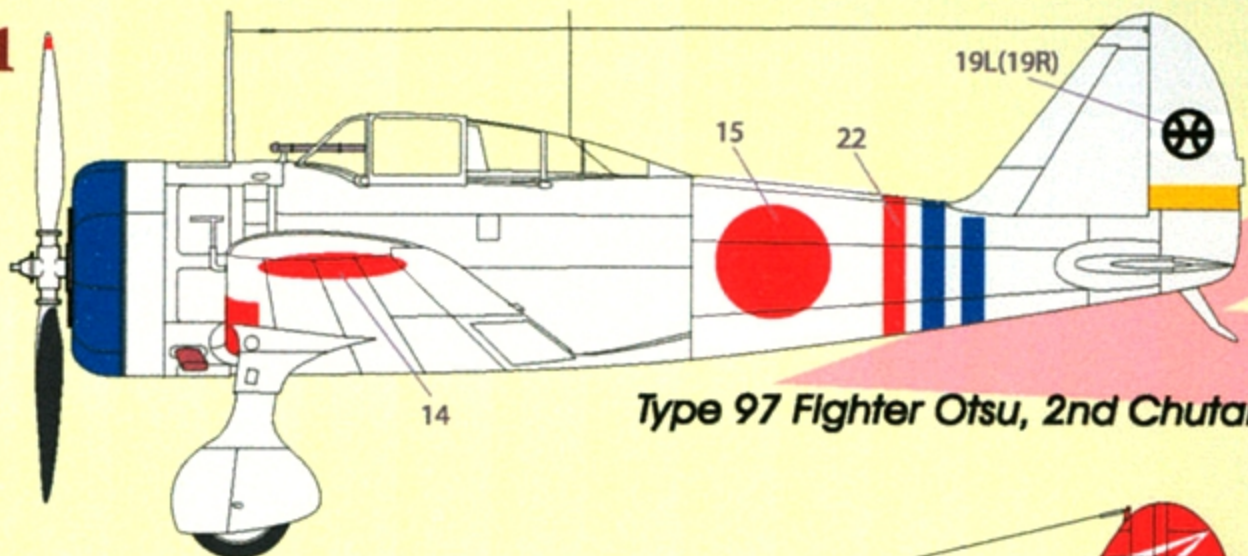
Lifelike Decals

48-004(R)

244th Sentai Part 2

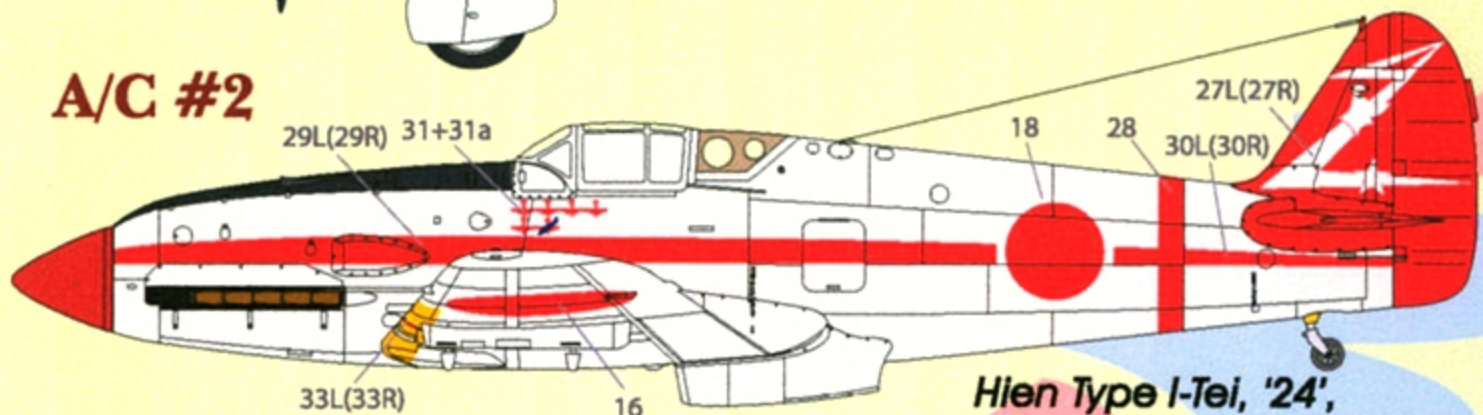
Limited Edition

A/C #1



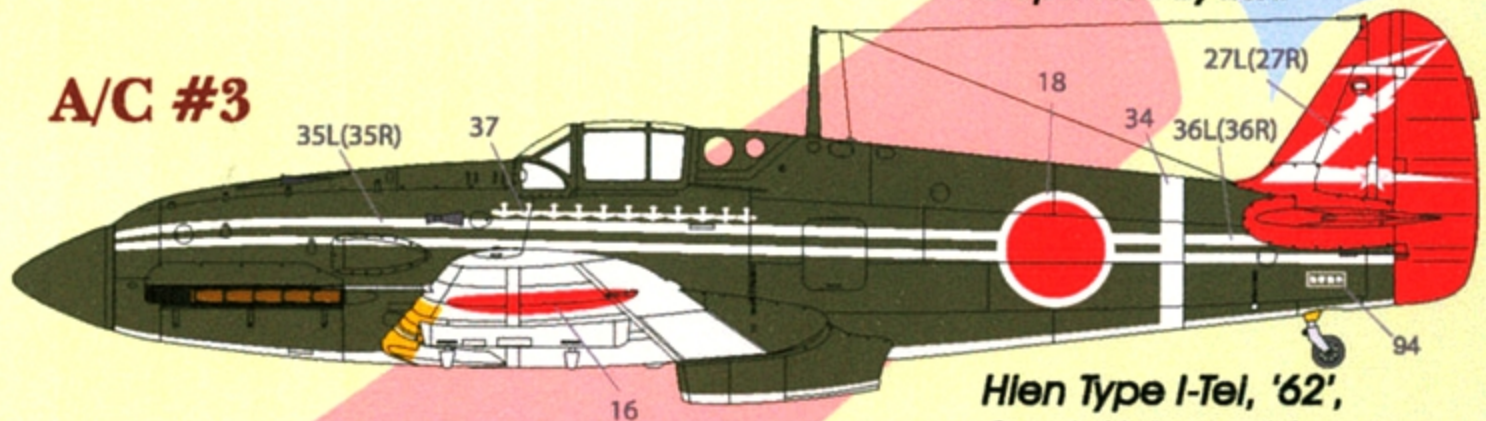
Type 97 Fighter Otsu, 2nd Chutai

A/C #2



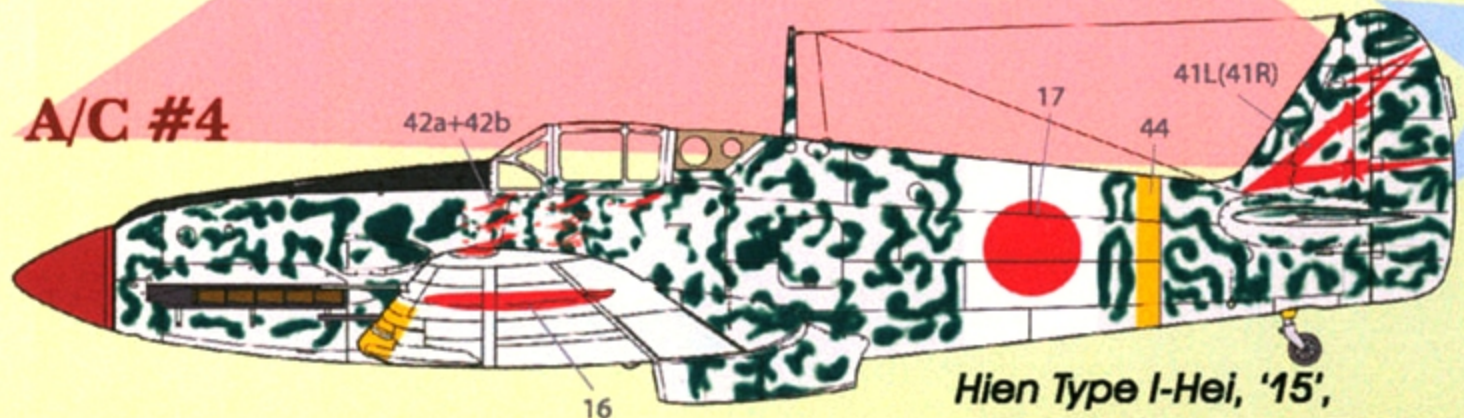
Hien Type I-Tei, '24',
Capt. Kobayashi

A/C #3



Hien Type I-Tei, '62',
Capt. Kobayashi

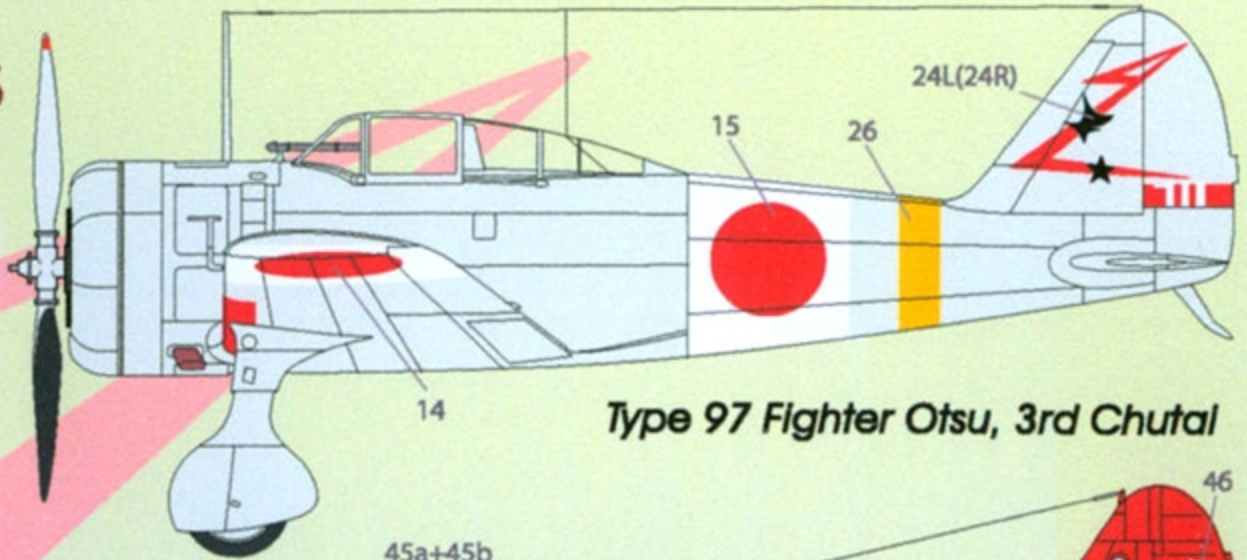
A/C #4



Hien Type I-Hei, '15',
Cpl. Suzuki

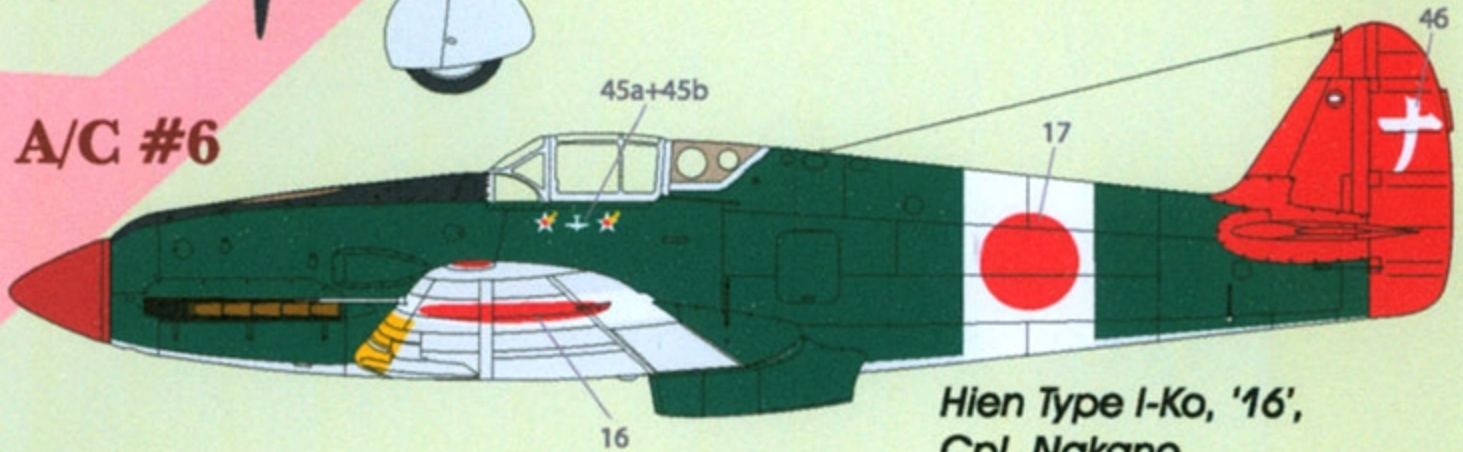
8 subject aircraft are featured herein!

A/C #5



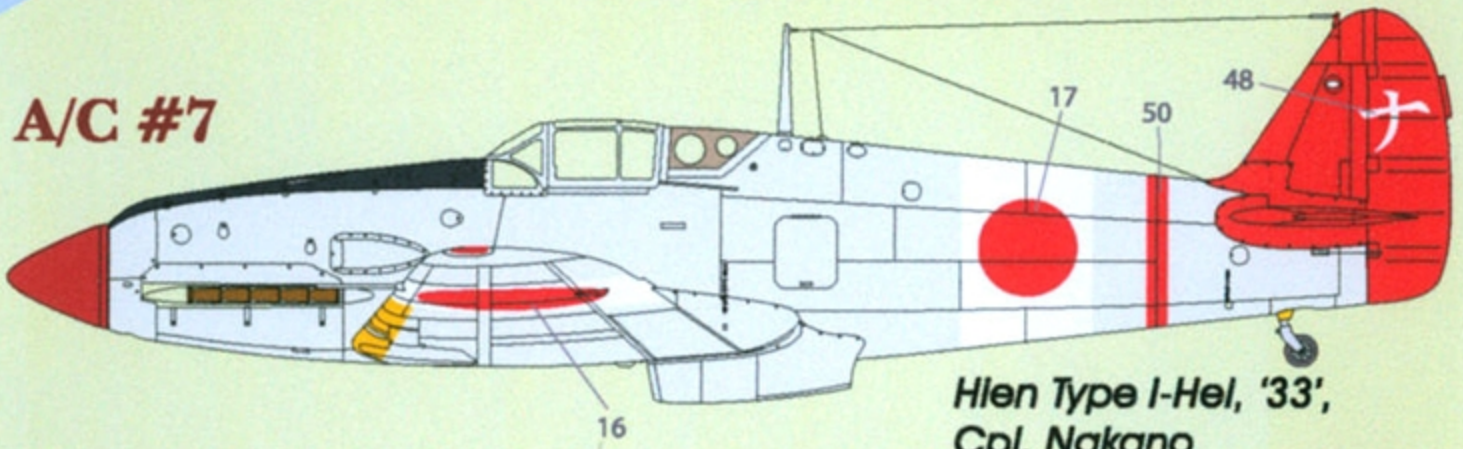
Type 97 Fighter Otsu, 3rd Chutai

A/C #6



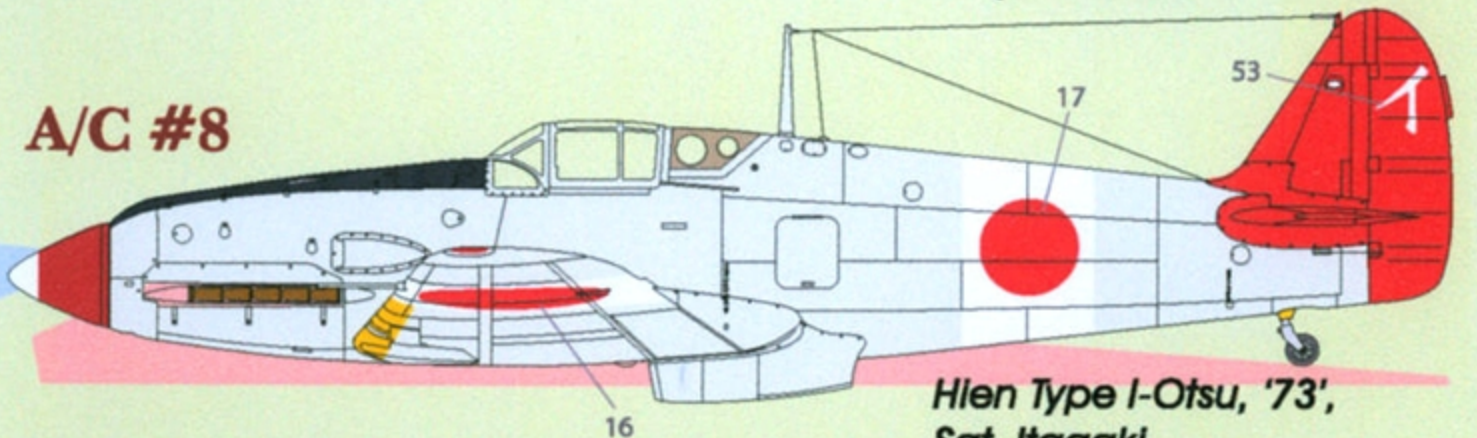
*Hien Type I-Ko, '16',
Cpl. Nakano*

A/C #7



*Hien Type I-Hei, '33',
Cpl. Nakano*

A/C #8



*Hien Type I-Otsu, '73',
Sgt. Itagaki*

Recommended kits: Hasegawa Nate, Hien each types
Tamiya Hien I-Tei

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Captions for the items of 48-004R

(A/C #1) Ki-27 Type 97 fighter type-Otsu, the 244th Sentai 2nd Chutai, Chofu AB, probably autumn 1942.

This is an example of a Type 97 fighter with the initial 244th Sentai emblem on the fin (ref. 1, see also ref. 2~4). It lasted until the unit transitioned to the Hien in August/September 1943. The A/C was overall light greenish gray with (most probably) a blue nose. White band around Hinomaru was applied on wings and fuselage. There were one red and two blue bands on the rear fuselage. Note that the last blue band stops at the root of vertical fin. The identification band on the wing leading edge is red as indicated by the red pole on the wing.

(A/C #2) Ki-61 Hien Type I-Tei, #4424, flown by Capt. Teruhiko Kobayashi, Commander of the 244th Sentai, Chofu AB, February 10, 1945.

This is the second known markings (photographically, at least) of Commander Kobayashi's Hien, #4424. Its photo (ref. 1, 5) was taken on February 10th 1945, when the 244th Sentai received a consolatory visit by Ms. Hamako Watanabe (a famous singer) and her entourage. Kill markings are shown in the close up photo (1, 3, 5, 9, 10). The dark green color was removed, and the fuselage band was changed to a colored one from the former white fuselage band (see decal 48-005, A/C#5). This fuselage band is often depicted in blue (ref. 7, 10, 11), but close scrutiny of the photo shows that the color of the kill marks, fuselage band and wing gun patch are the same color. Consistent with common practice at the time, the wing gun patch should have been red, not blue. Fuselage band is lighter than Hinomaru red in the same photo, but this is probably due to a difference in base coats. Similar difference in hue is seen between Hinomaru and red tail in the famous photo of Kobayashi's Hien #3295. The Hien silhouette on the kill mark is an intermediate tone between red (kill marks) and black (anti-glare), so we believe it to be cobalt blue. Wing guns are removed, and the openings are covered with red star-shaped patch and red band. It's a/C number (red 24 with bar) is discernible in the photo of its taxing (ref. 10, 11). Although the antenna was removed at this stage, it is wrong to assume that the radio itself was also removed! New type radio (type 4) should be installed instead of old radio (type 99).

(A/C #3) Ki-61 Hien type I-Tei, #5262, reserve A/C of the 244th Sentai Commander Teruhiko Kobayashi, Chofu AB, middle of April 1945.

The only photo of this A/C is shown in ref. 5, 7, 10~13. Since Commander Kobayashi could not fly due to a leg injury in the middle of April, it is not certain if he really flew this plane. However, this A/C was indeed flown by 2nd Lt. Itakura on March 19th, as indicated by the unique caution band on the propellers (see decal 48-005, A/C#3). As its s/n 5262 indicates, this is a late production type Tei, and should be painted in yellow green #7, and "迷彩塗料" should be applied beneath the stabilizer. As the 11 kill marks (achieved on April 12th) were not as elaborate as those on #4424, and the 2 F6F silhouettes - which were chronologically the 7th and 8th kill - are placed at the end, these kill marks should have been all applied at one time. Although the A/C number on the landing gear cover, as well as the vertical white fuselage band, is not shown in the photos, these should be the same as of March 19th when flown by 2nd Lt. Itakura. The A/C number is said to be cobalt blue. Regrettably the style of Sentai emblem on the fin is not confirmed by any photos, so we suggest the same emblem as A/C #2 above. Incidentally, the tallest girl student in front of the A/C in the photo is Commander Kobayashi's younger sister.

(A/C #4) Ki-61 Hien type I-Hei, #3015, flown by Corporal Seiichi Suzuki of the 244th Sentai, Chofu AB, January 29, 1945.

Corporal Suzuki joined the 244th Sentai in April 1943, and achieved his first shared kill of a B-29 (with Capt. Shirai) on Dec. 22nd 1944. He achieved two more shared kills on January 3rd 1945, a full victory on January 9th, a "damaged" on January 14th, two shared "damaged" on January 19th, and another shared kill on January 27th. He then moved to HQ Shotai, but was shot down and killed on February 16th over Ashikaga City on his fifth sortie of the day. He was only 20 years old. His total score is thus 1 confirmed kill, 4 shared kills, 1 damaged, and 2 shared damaged.

This package shows his A/C of the Mikazuki-tai adorned with the kill marks (ref. 1, 5, 9, 15). The photos were taken on January 29th 1945 just prior to his move to the HQ Shotai. Though the tail section is not shown, the Sentai emblem should be the normal "all red" one analogous to the other Hiens of this Chutai. Ref. 5 shows "white 15" as the A/C number, but it is definitely "yellow 15" from the photo where Cpl. Suzuki stands near the landing gear cover.

(A/C #5) Ki-27 Type 97 fighter type-Otsu, the 244th Sentai 3rd Chutai, Chofu AB, autumn 1943.

This is an example of a Type 97 fighter with the famous 244th Sentai emblem on its tail. Such example was first publicized in ref. 15, but another clearer photo is shown in ref. 4. Only the rear fuselage and tail section are shown in this photo. However, the remainder of the A/C should be the standard finish of overall light greenish gray with orange-yellow identification bands on the wing leading edges and white band around Hinomaru on wings and fuselage. The rear fuselage band is apparently yellow. This photo shows that the Sentai emblem consists of a stylized red "2" and a dark blue "4" and a "star". The pilot standing in front is Corporal Tsutomu Sakamoto, who was later killed in action.

(A/C #6) Ki-61 Hien Type I-Otsu, #16, flown by Corporal Matsumi Nakano of the 244th Sentai, Chofu AB, late February 1945.

Corporal Nakano was a member of Shinten Seiku-tai (aerial suicide attack squadron), and made a successful body attack against a B-29 on December 3rd, and safely returned to base. This A/C is the one he flew in late February 1945 (ref. 3, 5, 12). A close-up photo of its kill marks is shown on the 244th Sentai website (originally from Shashin-Shuhou). Another photo (ref. 15) taken after the war shows "ナ" (Na for Nakano) on the right side of its red rudder.

(A/C #7) Ki-61 Hien Type I-Hei, #33, flown by Corporal Matsumi Nakano of the 244th Sentai, Chofu AB, December 3, 1944.

This is the A/C in which Corporal Nakano knocked down a B-29 by allegedly "riding over" it, and safely returned to base with parachute. The damaged A/C was put on a publicity display at Nihonbashi Mitsukoshi Department Store from December 16th to the end of January 1945. There are several photos of this display published (ref. 12, 16, 17), but only photo showing its A/C number on the landing gear cover is in ref. 16. Note "ナ" on red tail is rather slim.

(A/C #8) Ki-61 Hien Type I-Otsu #73, flown by Sgt. Masao Itagaki of the 244th Sentai, Chofu AB, early 1945.

This is the A/C flown by Sgt. Itagaki, when he belonged to the Shinten Seiku-tai. Like Corporal Nakano, he was quite lucky to return safely from two body attacks on B-29s and survived the war. The only photo of this A/C (ref. 3, 7, 11) shows almost a full left side view of this A/C. As its tail is out of frame, the style of "イ" cannot be confirmed. Its style in this decal is our best guess from other known examples.

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16. Koku-Fan August 1972.
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Special note on Clover-marked Hien Tei photographed by Mr. Gallagher

This marking is very well known by both the Model Art and Osprey books as well as the Hasegawa kit. The original photo was taken by Mr. James Gallagher in September 1945, when he visited Chofu AB, and was published in his book, "Meatballs and Dead Birds" (also shown more recently in his book, "With the Fifth Army Air Force" (The John Hopkins University Press, 2001)). In this book he also included an illustration with 3 leaf clover and 12 kill marks together with some comments on the markings. Based on the number of kill marks this A/C is very often claimed as the mount of Capt. Ichikawa, but obviously this is not his mount (vide infra). We believe that this marking was not originally applied by the 244th Sentai members, but rather by some American personnel after the war. The reasons are as follows:

*According to the Sentai records, Capt. Ichikawa flew a Hien type-I Hei until April 15th, 1945. On the night of this day he attacked a B-29 formation. Therein, he shot down two, damaged one with gunfire, and knocked a third out of the sky by body attack. Injured, he abandoned his stricken Hien and parachuted to safety. On returning to active duty from hospitalization his mount became a Ki-100 which did not carry any kill marks. Thus there cannot be any Hien type Tei flown by him.

*The style and position of these kill marks are abnormal to the 244th Sentai practice. They were usually applied below the cockpit where the pilot or crew had no difficulty in applying them. But this Hien carries the kill markings on the nose, for which the painter would have had to use a ladder, quite improbable during the unit's busy time. Mr. Gallagher took this photo from the nose and slightly above, suggesting that there should have been the wing of another plane (or some similar structure) nearby to provide a suitable platform. With the same access others could have easily put these marks on its nose. In addition, the B-29 markings are applied pointing upward. This is also an anomaly! All known kill markings applied by Sentai members depicted the B-29 pointing downward symbolizing a "shot down". See the 244th Sentai home page for the typical style of kill marks of each Chutai/Shotai.

*The three-leaf clover is associated rather with the Christian notion (maybe the painter was an Irish American?) and quite foreign to Buddhism, so it is quite unlikely to be applied on A/C by the Japanese. From the original photo this mark looks to us more like a yellow bird motif with white beak.

Notes on the Colors and Markings of 244th Sentai A/C.

(1) Hinomaru Red: Despite frequent claim that the Hinomaru was much darker on dark green camouflage paint, examination of various color photos and movies of Japanese A/C (taken mostly by the Allied

forces at/near the end of the war) shows that this red is still bright. This color is close to FS2190.

(2) Upper surface Camouflage and Interior colors; Early production Hien is finished in NMF, and dark green color is applied on the upper surface in the supply depot or in the unit. Both of the dark green color chips in Model Art Extra #263 and #428 has slight brown tint, but are still different in brightness. LLD likes to take the color chip of #263, as this is based on the metal chip from fallen Hien that Mr. Ichiro Hasegawa possessed. This color is very dark color, and close to FS4050. All interiors are painted in "grey green" color, which, in spite of its name, is indeed light blue close to FS5550, but this color gradually becomes brownish to look like khaki tan or sand brown. Fabric parts are painted in silver dope (not grey green), and spinner/propeller were painted in red brown (close to FS0109). From August or September 1944 IJAAF ordered upper surfaces of all A/C from the production line (in case of Hien, type I Tei from #4646

or from #4844, type II and KI-100 fighter) should be painted in "yellow green #7", which, when fresh, is close to dark Olive Drab (FS4088) as applied on type 100 Fighter of RAF Museum, but gradually becomes oxidized to brownish tint to become khaki or brown. In contrast to the acetyl or benzyl cellulose color used on metal or fabric in early Hien, this "yellow Green #7" is nitrocellulose color, and easier to catch fire. To show this change of the paint, "yellow green #7" painted Hien or KI-100 showed "迷彩塗料" (camouflage paint) below stabilizer, as shown in the photo of a derelict Hien on LLD website (originally in Revi (Czech magazine) #27 (1999)), but its "yellow green #7" color is too much green as with other photos in this magazine). From this period all interior area, spinner and propeller were also painted in "yellow green #7".

(3) Other colors: * Anti-glare panel of Hien is always matt black.
* Friend identification band on leading edge was originally red, but on August 21, 1942 it was changed to yellow by official order.
* Drop tank is often said to be yellow or yellow green, but according to Mr. Sakurai (244th Sentai Association organizer) most of the 244th

Sentai crews assert that it was grey, and such example still exists today.

* Caution letter "フムナ" (no step) and trim line of flaps are not often seen on dark green camouflaged Hien. Its color was changed to red with introduction of yellow green #7.

(4) Fuselage band color: Although each Chutai/Shotai had their own designated colors, Mr. Sakurai's research reveals that they were not at all strictly adhered to in the days of Commander Kobayashi, probably due to the frequent A/C re-assignment between Chutai to cover combat losses and too much work for the ground crews who should

keep as many fighters flyable as possible to pay attention to such marking regulations. More probably the fuselage band color is used for the identification of each A/C along with the A/C number on the landing gear cover. Modelers should apply fuselage band that passes through the air intake before fixing the intake.

(5) Sentai emblem: The Sentai's new and most famous emblem was introduced, when the unit transitioned from Ki-27 to Hien around the summer of 1943. Basically it was all red, but some variations did exist

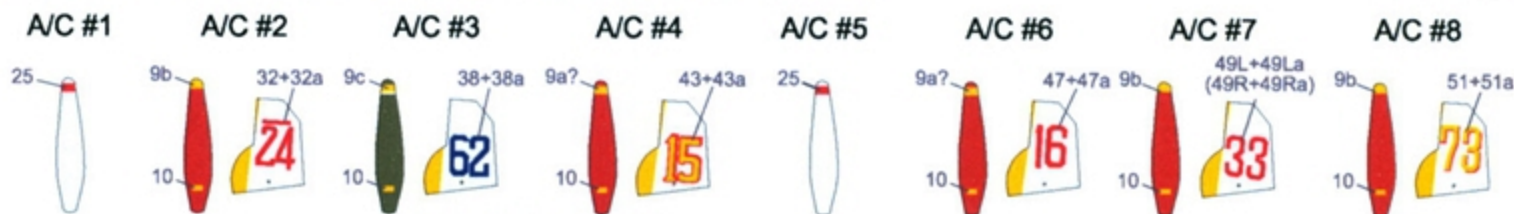
with the "4 and star" in blue, yellow or white. There was no rule to apply the emblem in Chutai colors, nor any special marking for the Commander, which is often alluded.

(6) Red color on tail: Originally the red color on tail was the symbol of "Shinten" (aerial suicide attack) Squadron, but Commander Kobayashi painted the tail of his HQ Shotai Hien in red to symbolize

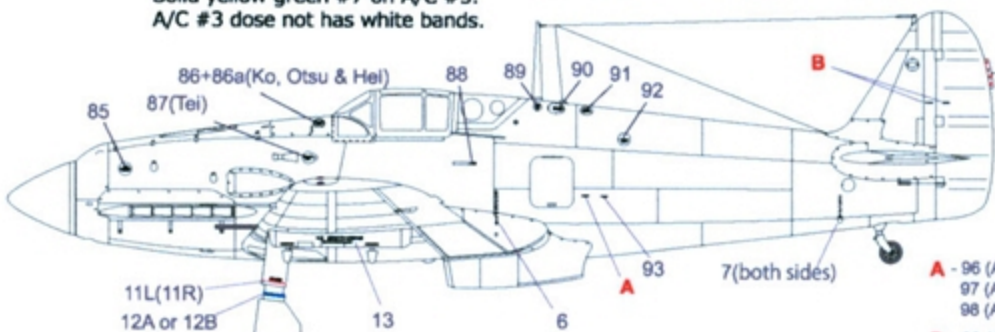
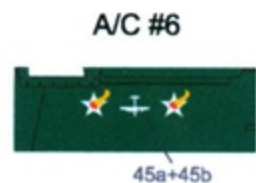
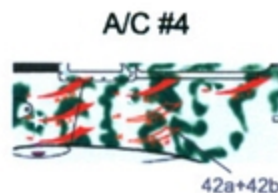
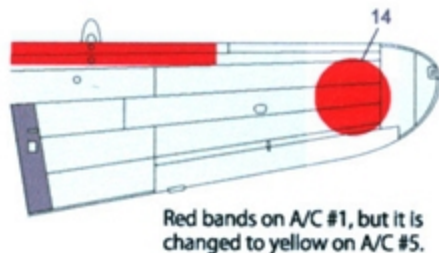
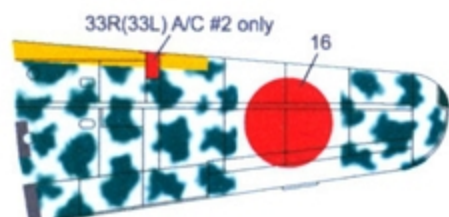
their determination and to boost the moral of his small Shotai (4 A/C) during the days of Empire Capital defense duty.

(7) Propellers and main u/c covers: Propellers and landing gear cover (Question mark of propeller indicates its caution band is not

confirmed. No A/C number on gear cover indicates its number is not confirmed.)



(8) Marking details



- A - 96 (A/C #2)
- 97 (A/C #3)
- 98 (A/C #4)
- B - 98 (A/C #4)

Special thanks to;
*Mr. Takashi Sakurai for giving us photos and information on the 244th Sentai fighters.