

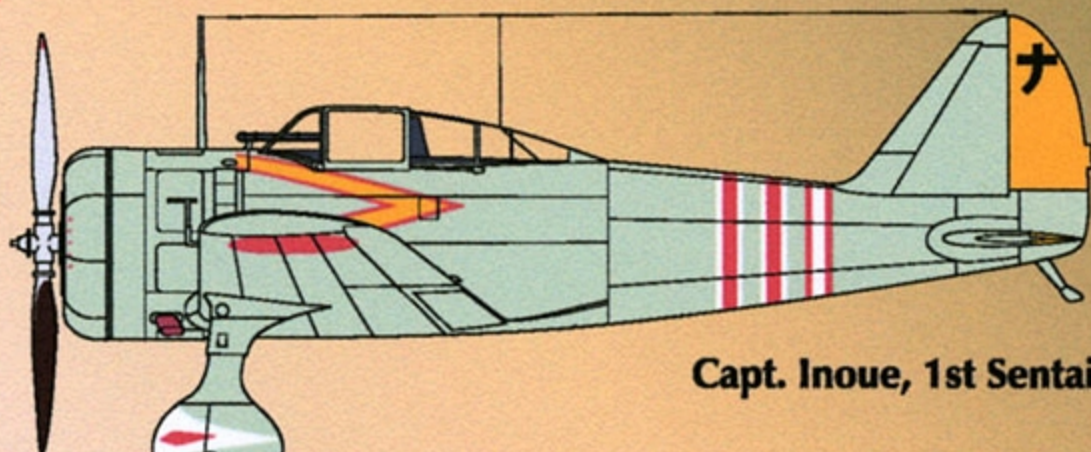
**Lifelike Decals**

*Limited Edition!*

48-057

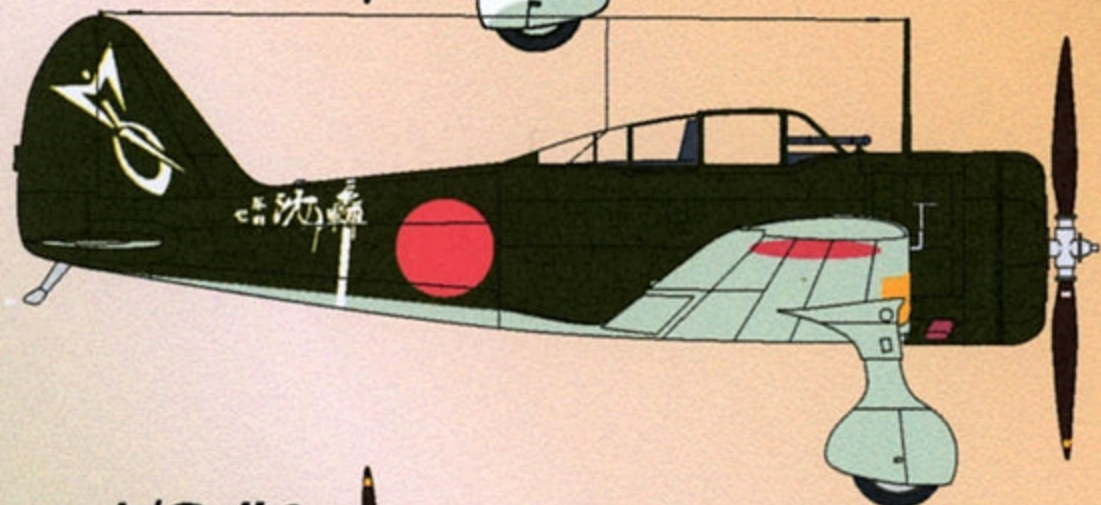
# Type 97 Fighters Part 5

**A/C #1**



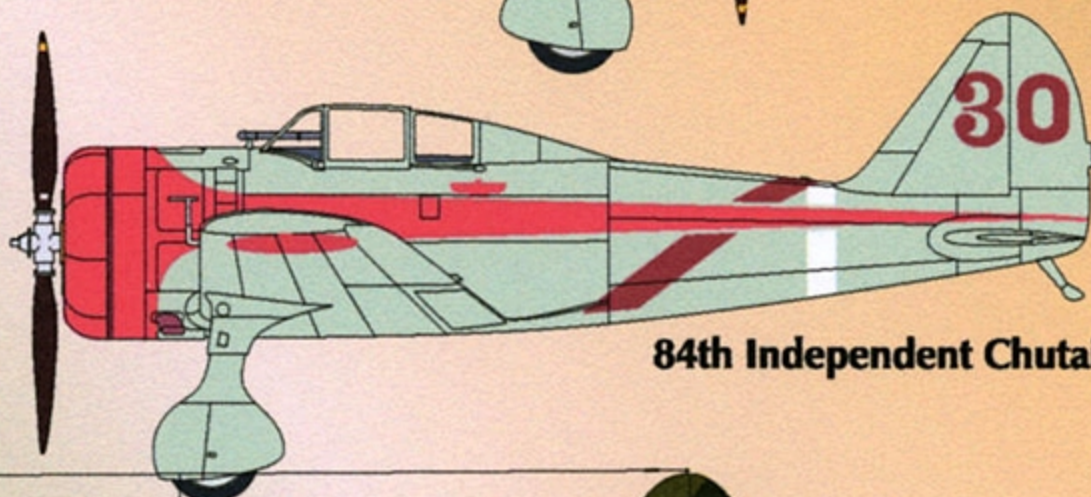
**Capt. Inoue, 1st Sentai**

**A/C #5**



**76th Shinbu-tai**

**A/C #6**



**84th Independent Chutai**

**A/C #7**



**Capt. Kuwabara,  
77th Sentai**

Recommended kit: Hasegawa Type 97 Fighter  
Lifelike Decals wants to hear from you and your input.

e-mail: [lifelike\\_d@kcn.jp](mailto:lifelike_d@kcn.jp)

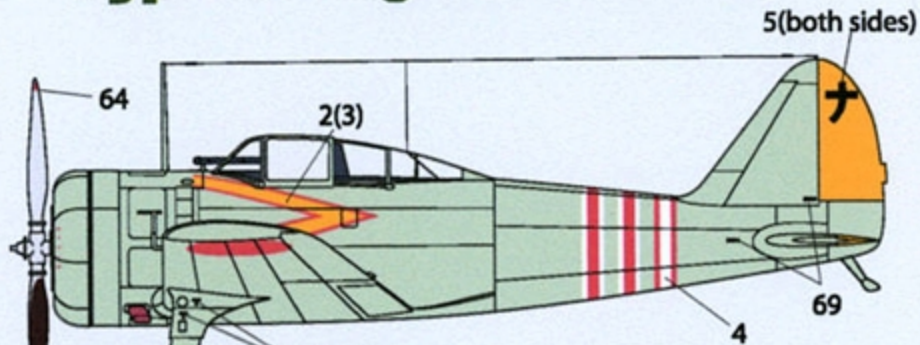
<http://lifelikedecals.sakura.ne.jp>

*(A total of 8 a/c are featured herein!)*

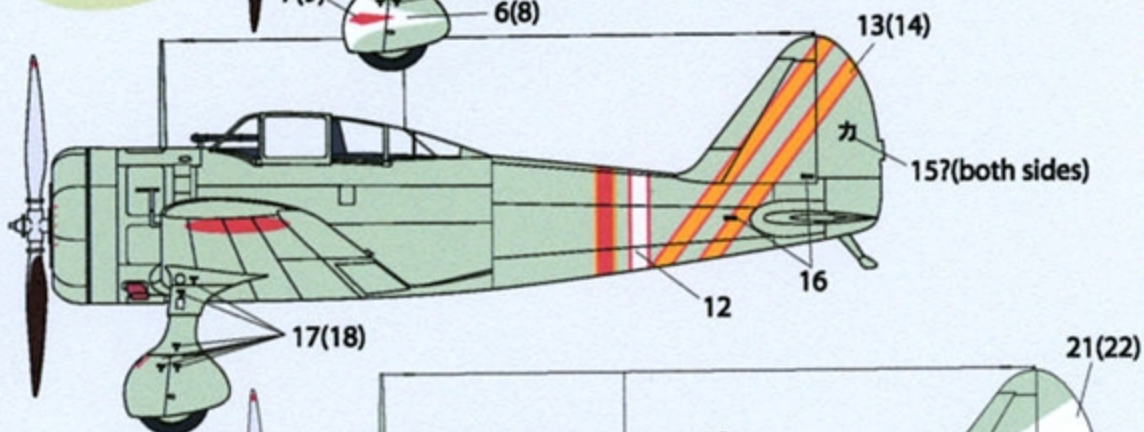


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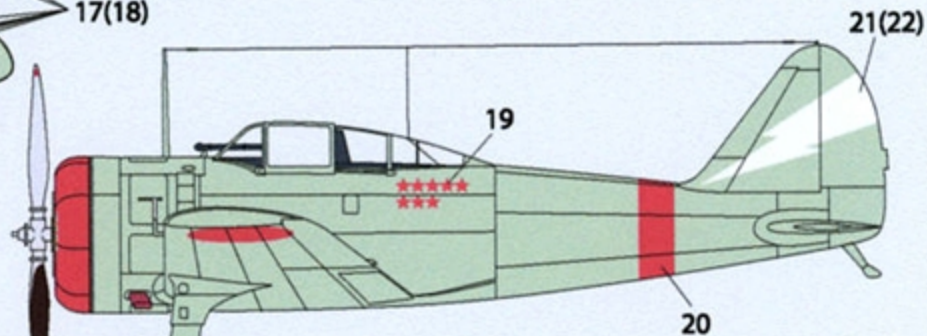
A/C #1



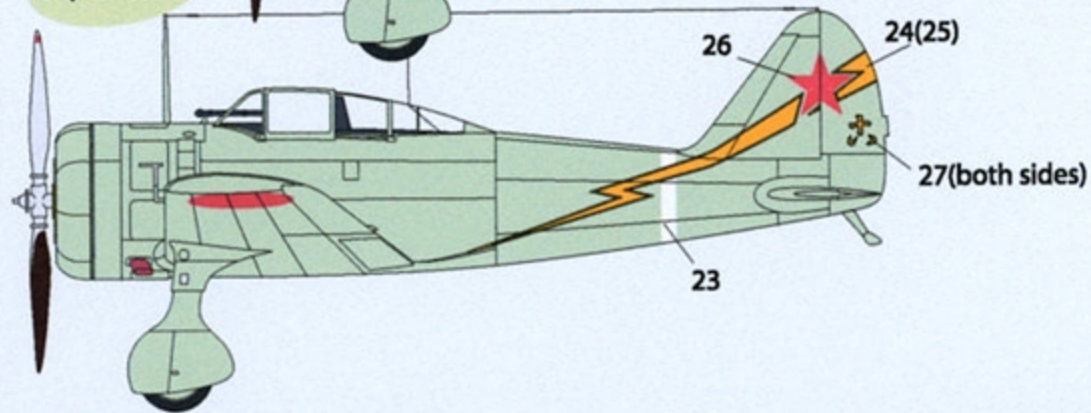
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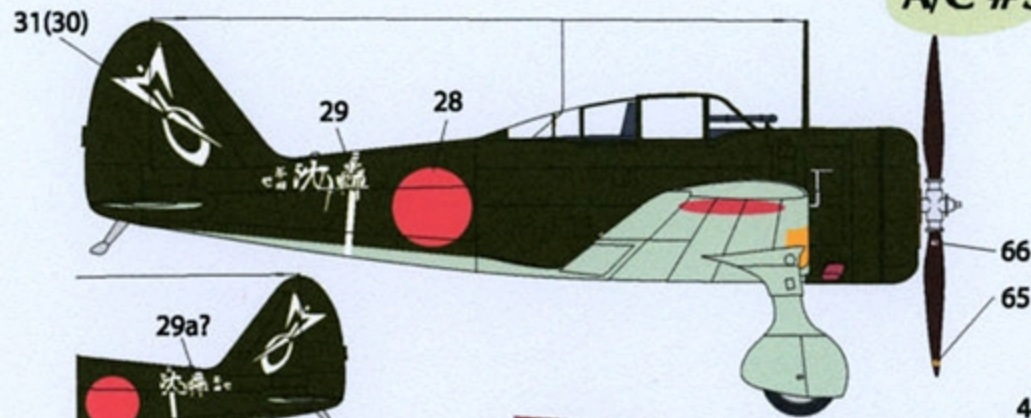
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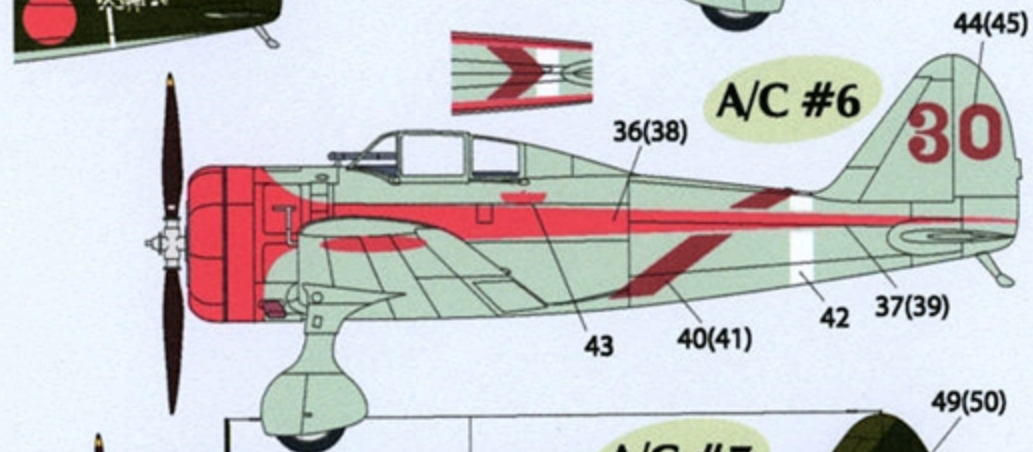
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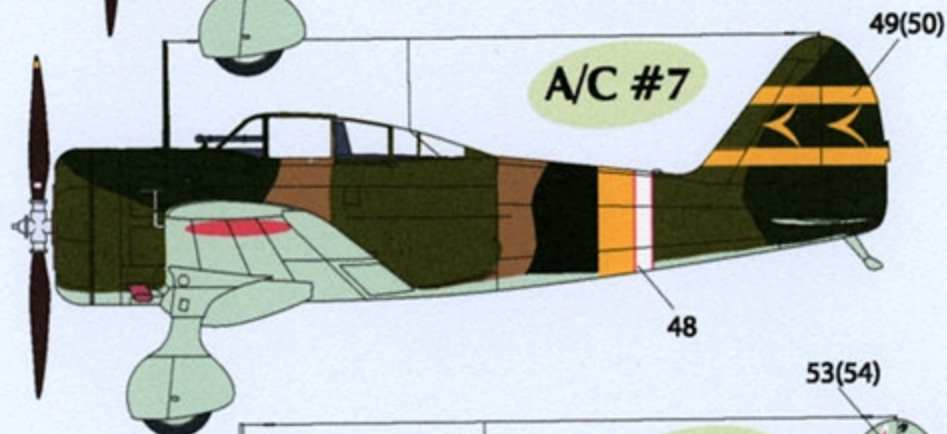
A/C #5



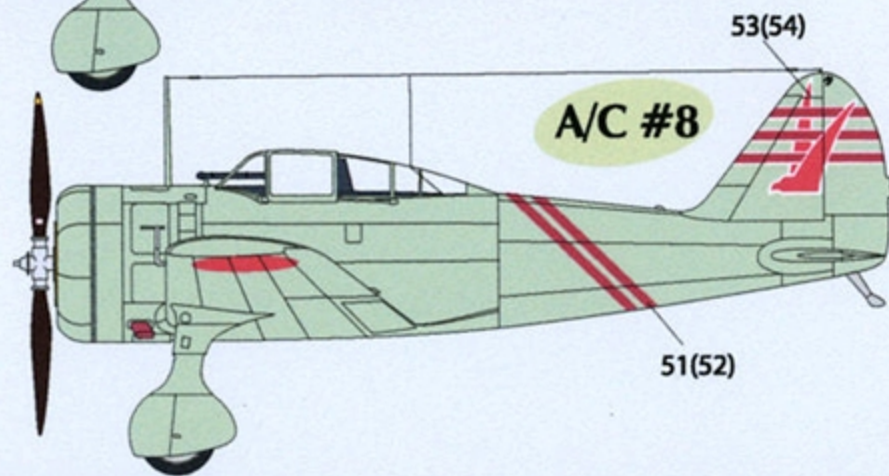
A/C #6



A/C #7

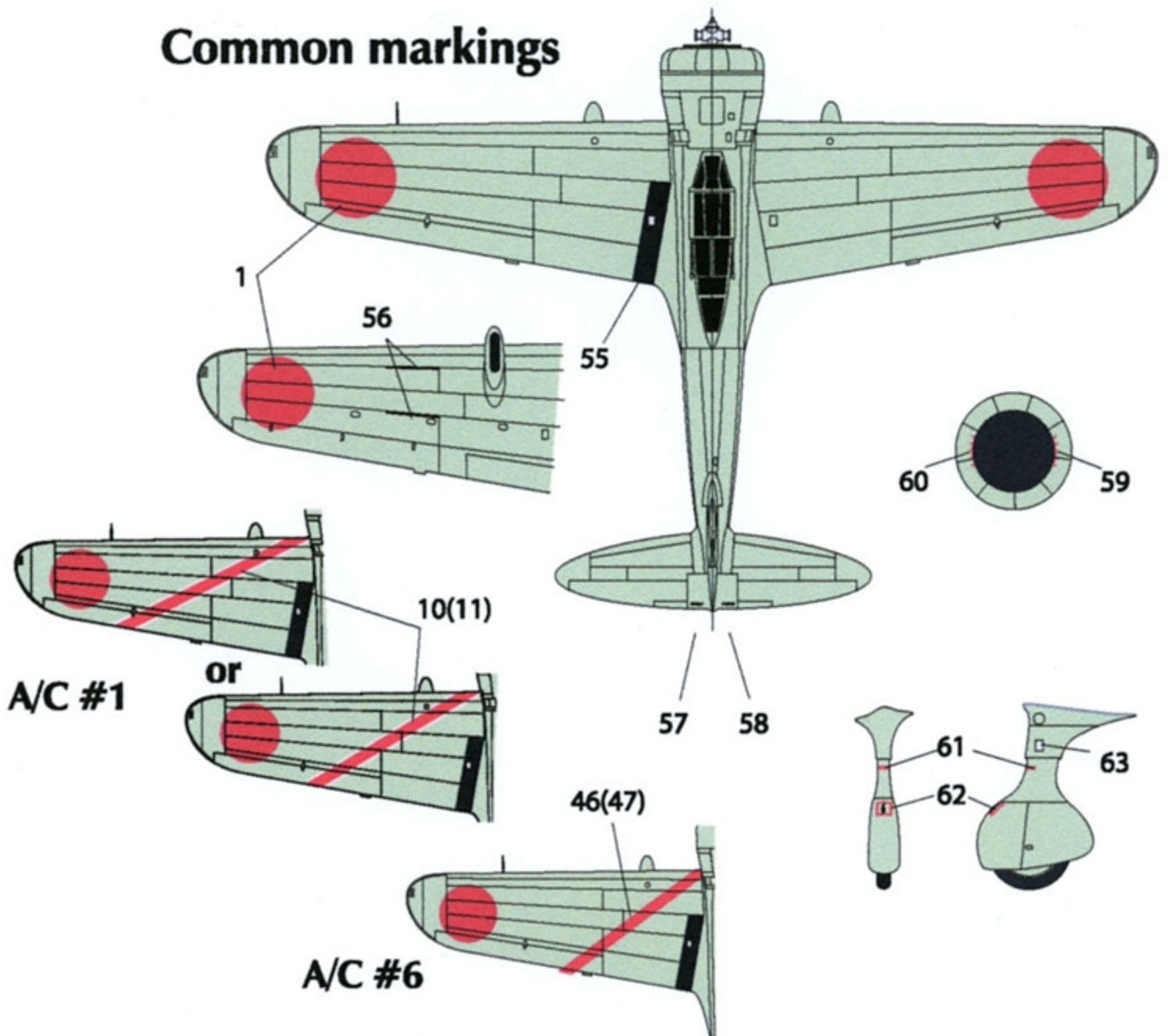


A/C #8





# Common markings



Special thanks to Mr. Nick Millman for the clearer photo of a/c #1 and Mr. Mark Smith for the check of English captions.

## References

- (1) [https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/5/59/Ki-49-I\\_letecka\\_skola\\_hamamacu\\_1chutai.jpg](https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/5/59/Ki-49-I_letecka_skola_hamamacu_1chutai.jpg) (original photo shown in Koku Fan, August 1997 issue.)
- (2) Koku Fan, February 1976 issue (Bunrindo)
- (3) Revi magazine #34 (Revi Publishing, 2000)
- (4) Famous Aircraft of the World, #29, Army Type 97 Fighter (Bunrindo, July 1991)
- (5) Japanese Army Air Force Fighter Units and Their Aces 1931~1945 (Hata, Izawa and Shores, Grub Street, 2002)/Japanese Army Fighter Aces 1931~45 (Stackpole Books, 2012)
- (6) Osprey Aircraft of the Aces #103, Ki-27 "Nate" Aces (N. Millman, Osprey Publishing, 2013)
- (7) <https://blog.goo.ne.jp/summer-ochibo> (all photos now removed, however)
- (8) Koku Jouhou magazine (Japan), June 1970.
- (9) Model Art Extra #329, Camouflage and Marking of Imperial Japanese Army Air Force (Model Art, 1989)
- (10) Koku-Fan Illustrated #42, Japanese Imperial Army & Navy Aircraft color and marking (Bunrindo, 1988)
- (11) Imperial Japanese Army Air Service Illustrated (fighter edition) (Y. Nishikawa, Shin-Kigensha/Japan, 2015).
- (12) Japanese Army Air Force Units 1st part (private publication by J. Fiser, 2003)
- (13) Aero Album vol. 14 (Aero Publishing, summer 1971)
- (14) Koku Fan magazine, May 2001 issue.
- (15) Model Art Extra #451, JAAF Special Attack Units (Model Art, 1995)
- (16) Maru magazine August 1982 issue.
- (17) Maru Mechanic No. 12 (Koujinsha, 1994).
- (18) Photo Collection of Japanese Army Aircraft (Delta Publishing, September 1994).
- (19) Photo Collection of Japanese Army Aircraft (Air World (Japanese magazine), August 1995).
- (20) Koku Joho (or Airview, Japanese magazine), June 1969 issue.
- (21) Pacific War series #52, Type 1 Fighter Hayabusa (Gakken Books, 2005).
- (22) Avions #220 (Editions Lela Press, November ~ December 2017)
- (23) Avions #191 (Editions Lela Press, January~February 2013)



All subject a/c are painted in "No. 1 gray green" color specified in Koku-Kikaku (IJA AF Aircraft Specification) #39, unless otherwise stated. Samples of this color shown currently on the internet indicate light gray color with little green tint, but the color photos (especially that of flying Ki-49 Donryu (Helen) belonging to Hamamatsu Flying School) taken by Mr. Shunkichi Kikuchi (official photographer of IJA AF) (ref. 1) and the various color photos of derelict IJA AF a/c taken by US forces (like ref. 2 and 3) show it is gray with distinct green tint, and is quite similar to German RLM 02

It is usual practice that marks 59 and 60, the fine degree markings (used to calibrate synchronization when the guns are fired through the propeller's arc) were very neatly masked over on the cowling's leading edge before the red or green was applied, preserving the original grey green background. Photographic evidence shows this practice was followed for a/c #6 and 7.

**A/C #1: Ki-27 Otsu flown by Capt. Shigetoshi Inoue, leader of 1st Sentai 1st Chutai, Nomonhan/China, September 1939.**

With a total of 6 photographs in ref. 4~7, marking on the right side of this a/c is fully established, and most probably same chevron marking is applied on the left side also, as chevron mark is applied on both sides on "フ" Go (flight leader's a/c) (ref. 4). In addition to three fuselage bands, diagonal bands (red with white outline) are applied on the upper wings to denote Chutai leader a/c, but the exact position of these diagonal bands is not clearly visible in the photo (ref. 4); a longer band is shown in the illustration of ref. 4, 8, 9 and 10, while a shorter one appears in the illustration of ref. 6. The longer type band is provided in this decal. If modelers want to choose shorter type band, please cut and trim decals 10 and 11. Yellow rudder denotes 1st Chutai, and "ナ" (na) was painted on it in black. Though all other references show a white chevron mark below cockpit, ref. 6 features Ronnie Olsthoorn's color illustration of this a/c with a yellow chevron mark, as the original photo provided by Dr. Izawa to author Mr. Millman shows a slightly darker shade for the chevron mark. We checked this point with Photoshop software, and by adjusting the b/w tone of fuselage side around chevron mark and rear fuselage to the same level we found the chevron mark is slightly darker than the white outline of fuselage band. This establishes a yellow chevron mark. As for the elevator of 1st Sentai Ki-27, here a modeler's choice is required. "な" Go (A/C #9 of 48-056) and Kawabata's a/c (48-022) had the Chutai color on the elevators, a common practice in 1st Sentai; but Koyanagi's a/c did not have them so marked. As the elevators of subject a/c (Inoue's) are not clearly visible, either option is possible. This a/c is said to be s/n 459 (ref. 8). Yellow identification band is not applied on the leading edge of the wings. Some slight cuts and trims will assist in helping marks 6 and 8 conform to the landing gear spats.

Capt. Inoue served as the leader of 1st Sentai 1st Chutai (August 1939~June 1940), 103rd Independent Chutai, 4th Sentai 2nd Chutai (April ~ June 1942), and then last Commander of 77th Sentai (April ~ August 1944), but his name is not found in the ace list of ref. 5.

**A/C #2 Ki-27 Otsu (s/n 5362) flown by M. Sgt. Totaro Ito, 5th Sentai 3rd Chutai, Kashiwa AB/Chiba Pref., end of 1940.**

This is a rather well-known a/c with a good illustration in ref. 5, 6 and 11, but the photo in ref. 4 (rear fuselage section only) is probably the only one known for it. It clearly shows the s/n, 2 fuselage and 2 tail bands with good contrast of colors. Nates of this Sentai usually carried Katakana character on the rudder,



and the color illustration in ref. 12 shows this as “力”, but we have not seen any photographic evidence to support it. At this time no fuselage Hinomaru or yellow identification band on the leading edge of the wings were applied.

M. Sgt. Ito was photographed standing by the tail of another Ki-27 “香取” (Katori) Go without tail diagonal band, and he is said to have applied “九頭竜” (Kuzuryu, nine head dragon) on his personal a/c, but the full markings of these a/c are not known.

M. Sgt. Ito continued to serve with 5th Sentai, and lived through the war, finishing with a total score of more than 13 victories (mostly heavy bombers).

**A/C #3 Ki-27 Otsu flown by Capt. Kenji Shimada, leader of 11th Sentai 1st Chutai, Nomonhan/China, May ~ June 1939.**

The photo of this a/c is shown in ref. 5 and 13, and its illustration appears in ref. 4, 6, 9, 10, 11 and 14. White lightning bolt on the tail denotes 1st Chutai, and a broad red fuselage band and (probably) red nose were applied. Eight kill marks show Capt. Shimada's final score in the 1st Nomonhan Incident, and in the 2nd Incident he added a further 19 victories. Yellow identification band is not applied on the leading edge of the wings, and some type of gun camera (probably similar to the one in the Hasegawa kit) is mounted on upper left wing.

A giant but agile pilot, Shimada's character was very gentle. In one episode, he once returned to the wreck of one of his victims, leaving a bunch of flowers with the dead pilot's body. He went missing in action on September 15, 1939 (the last day of the 2nd Nomonhan Incident).

**A/C #4 Ki-27 Otsu of 50th Sentai 3rd Chutai (Hoshi Hikoutai), Clark AB/Philippines, January 1942.**

The photo of this a/c which appeared in ref. 4 in 1991 astonished many modelers with its gaudy marking on the tail. The yellow lightning bolt (with black outline) denotes 3rd Chutai of 50th Sentai, and the stylized red star mark was designed to honor Colonel Komataro Hoshi (literally “star” in Japanese), Commander of 14th Army Air Division, to which this Chutai was attached at that time. This Chutai remained as a detachment in the Philippines when the main part of 50th Sentai moved to Burma in January 1942. This a/c carried the old style katakana “こ” (ko) on the rudder. In the photo no fuselage Hinomaru is applied, and probably there is no yellow identification band applied on the wing's leading edge.

The 3rd Chutai moved to Formosa in April 1942 after handing its Ki-27s over to 84th Independent Chutai, joined the main part of 50th Sentai there, and returned to the homeland, re-equipping with Hayabusa.

**A/C #5 Ki-27 Otsu (probably) of 76th Shinbu-tai, Chiran AB/Kagoshima, April 1945.**

The only photo of this a/c was once shown in ref. 7 (now all photos removed); it originally appeared in Asahi Graph magazine June 25th, 1945 issue. Upper surface of this a/c is painted in No. 21 green color. The photo shows only rear fuselage to tail section of its right side, and Shinbu-tai marking is visible on the tail. “轟沈” (gouchin, sinking ships with big explosion) and someone's name (probably ground crew, as this name 牟田 (Muta) is not found in the list of this Shinbu-tai's pilot) are hand-painted with soda lime suspension, which dripped in places after application. This name should be “牟田 ? 也”, but nothing is visible for “?” part. Probably “轟沈” mark is also applied on left side, but application of name is quite questionable. Provisionally two sets of marking are provided in this decal. If the modeler decides to use “轟沈” mark on the left side also, please cut appropriate portion of white fuselage band. Ref. 15 and 16 show a photo and illustration of



another Ki-27 of this Shinbu-tai with a white outline on Hinomaru, but this subject a/c has the outline painted over with green. Yellow identification band is probably applied on the leading edge of the wings.

76th Shinbu-tai was formed in April 1945, and made two special attacks (April 28th and May 11th) against US Forces off Okinawa, in which 9 pilots perished.

**A/C #6 Ki-27 Kou, #30 of 84th Independent Chutai, Kwantung/China, October 1939.**

The 84th Independent Chutai was formed by the members of 64th Sentai on July 1<sup>st</sup>, 1939, and was engaged in operations in southern China and Indonesia when 64th Sentai moved to Nomonhan. In October 1940 the unit moved to Hanoi/Vietnam, and was re-equipped with Ki-45. In October 1943 it was reorganized to become 21st Sentai. The red flash extending from nose to tail and red eagle mark (both sides) were inherited from 64th Sentai.

Three photos of this a/c are shown in ref. 4, 5, 6, 10, 11, 17, 18 and 19, and a color illustration appears in ref. 11 and 20. Several points are worth note: (1) the red diagonal band on fuselage overwraps about half of white vertical band when viewed from above; (2) wing diagonal band is clearly seen in the photo of ref. 18, which might indicate this a/c was the personal mount of Chutai or flight leader; (3) fuselage red flash extends almost to the fuselage end; (4) no antenna mast is fitted; (5) no yellow identification band is applied on the leading edge of the wings, and (6) a closer look of the in-flight photos (ref. 4, 5, 6, 10, 11, 17 and 19) shows fuselage diagonal band and "30" on tail are darker than fuselage flash, wing diagonal band, or the eagle mark. As IJAAF used two type of red (ref. 21), "No. 10 red" for Hinomaru and other bright markings and "No. 9 red" for less bright unit marking, we judged that "No. 9 red" is used for the fuselage diagonal band and "30", and the rest of the reds are "No. 10 red".

**A/C #7 Ki-27 Otsu flown by Capt. Yoshiro Kuwabara, 77th Sentai 3rd Chutai, Mingaladon AB/Burma, December 1941.**

Two photos of this a/c are shown in ref. 4 and 22, and illustrations found in ref. 4, 6, 11, 22 and 23. Captions of the photo and illustration in ref. 4 say it is camouflaged in dark green, green and brown, but a closer look at the photo shows a total of 4 colors used (the color of vertical tail is obscured by shade). Except for the darkest color just in front of the yellow fuselage band, the tonal difference of the other three colors matches well with dark green, green and brown as illustrated. What's puzzling is the color of the darkest area. Ref. 6, 22 and 23 assign cobalt color (an official IJAAF color) for this darkest color, but to us this is rather strange. This color is known to be used on Ki-45 Toryu and Ki-49 Donryu in late war period, but is not similarly documented on earlier a/c. As 77th Sentai did not make many sorties over the ocean, there is no reason to use a blue color. This darkest color is applied only on a limited area of fuselage. We think this darkest color is "fresh" dark green applied to highlight the yellow Chutai leader band. Please note that additional drop tanks are fitted on lower wings, and no yellow identification band is applied on the leading edge of the wings.

1st Lt. Kuwabara graduated Akeno Flying School in April 1941, becoming 77th Sentai 3rd Chutai leader in July. He shot down one Thai fighter on December 8th, 1941, and achieved a further 12 victories over Burma to become the top ace of 77th Sentai. In 1944 he was said to have shot down one P-47 over New Guinea on March 11th, but went missing on March 14th during a fight against P-38s. As all pilots of 77th Sentai died in New Guinea, no precise record remains, and his official score is listed by Hata and Izawa in ref. 5 as "more than 13".

**A/C #8 Ki-27 Otsu of 111th Fighter Training Group, Ryompo AB/Korea, March 1943.**

The only photo of this a/c is found in ref. 4, showing its rear fuselage and tail section with Sgt. Shigeyoshi Ando standing in front. This training unit was formed in March 1943 in Sendai/Miyagi Pref., and this photo was taken in Korea. The unit marking was three horizontal bands (signifying 111) passing between the wings of a seagull. On the rear fuselage are two red bands. Though color illustrations in ref. 4, 11 and 17 all show a single red color for the tail marking and fuselage bands, a closer look at the photo shows the sea gull marking is brighter than the red bands, so we judge that the sea gull was in "No. 10 red", and the tail/fuselage bands "No. 9 red". The small "夕" was probably black. Though not visible in the photo, all illustrations show no identification band on the leading edge of the wings.