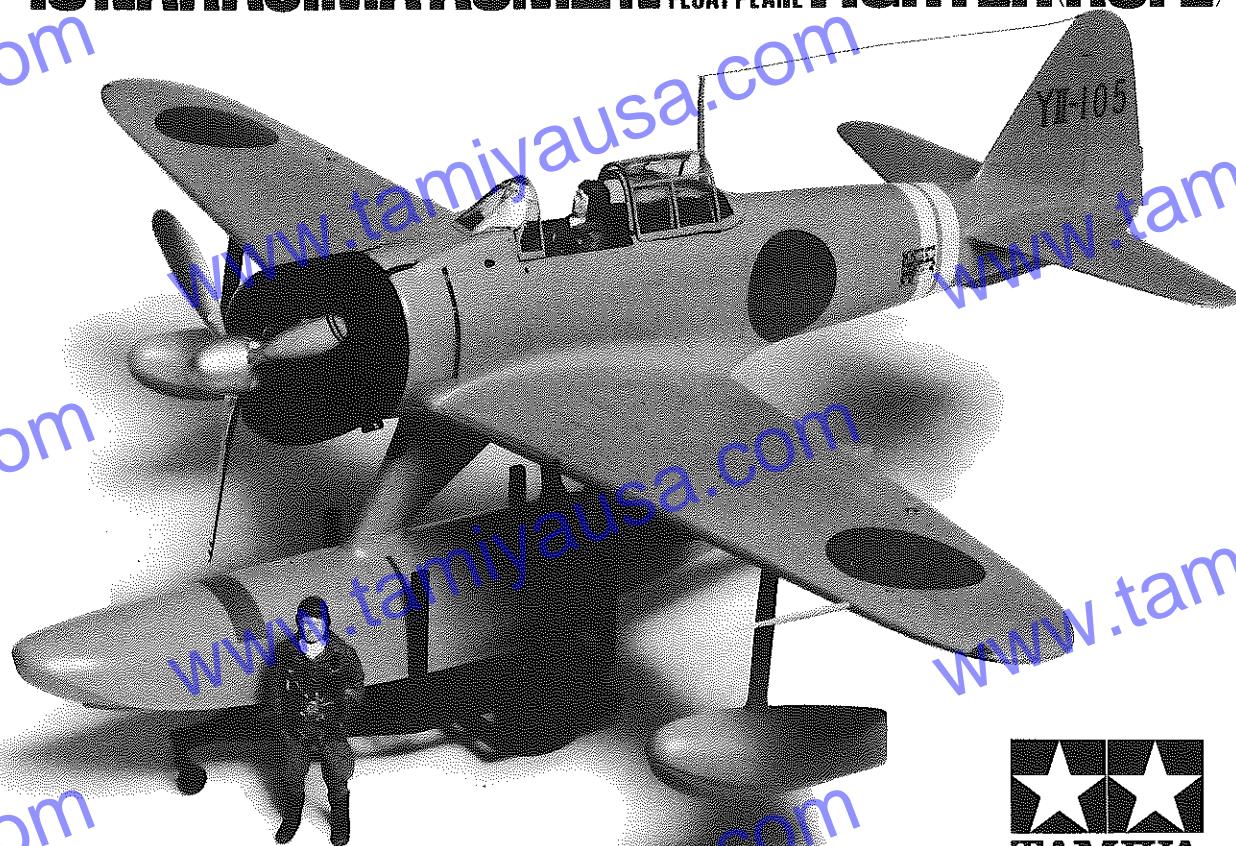


1/48 NAKAJIMA A6M2 N TYPE 2 FIGHTER (RUFÉ)

FLOAT PLANE



Completed photo

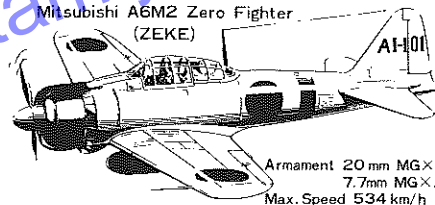


1/48 SCALE ITEM 61017

Birth of the Type 2 Floatplane Fighter
 In 1939, the Naval Aviation Headquarters conceived a plan of trial-manufacturing a floatplane fighter, a new type beyond all precedents in the world. On the assumption of landing and invading the Southern regions, the Japanese Navy intended in those days to station floatplanes in waterways and bays near the landing places until the completion of land air bases for the purpose of defending those under construction and occupied territories. Since the floatplanes might have to fight with enemy fighters in the air, they were required to be pure fighters comparing favourably with the enemy fighters in performance. The Navy firmly believed that sufficiently armed floatplanes would be able to fight on equal terms with fighters considering that Type 95 Scout Seaplanes shot down Chinese fighters as successfully as did land-based fighters at the early stage of the Sino-Japanese incident. In 1940, the Naval Aviation Headquarters decided to trial-manufacture floatplane fighters and ordered Kawanishi Aircraft, which was well experienced in manufacturing floatplanes, to trial-manufacture them under the name of 15-Shi Floatplane Fighter (later called Floatplane Fighter "Kyofu").

In the meantime, relations with the United States, Britain, etc. were gradually deteriorated and the possibility of rushing into war with them became larger day by day. Considering that war with the United States and Britain would be inevitable, the Department of Operations of the army mapped out a plan of campaign and requested the Aviation Headquarters to immediately develop and complete floatplane fighters which, in case of invading the Southern regions, were to take charge of air defence for advanced bases under construction and at the same time demanded that temporary floatplane fighters should be made available apart from the 15-Shi Floatplane Fighter which was then under order and was expected to be delivered to fighting units as late as 1943

(three years from then). The Naval Aviation Headquarters proposed remodelling the Type O Ship-Based Fighter Model 11 of Mitsubishi Aircraft, which exercised its power in the Chinese Continent and was recognized as an excellent plane, into floatplane fighter. This proposal was officially accepted at the beginning of 1941. The remodelling was to be conducted by Nakajima Aircraft which was also in charge of the mass production of the Zero Fighter. Like Kawanishi Aircraft, Nakajima was well experienced in the manufacture of floatplanes. Nakajima designers including Shinobu Mitsuoka, head of Designing Department, had already designed the Types 90 and 95 Scout Seaplanes of single-float type, the superiority of both having been fully recognized. Nakajima engaged in the remodelling work at Koizumi Plant night and day under the leadership of Shinobu Mitsuoka, then chief engineer, and Mitsubishi A6M2 Zero Fighter.



young designers including Atsushi Tajima. The remodelled version was tentatively named No.1 Suisen (A6M2-N). The remodelling work had to be made immediately, and three used Zero Fighters Model 11 were utilized and remodelled into the first experimental planes. Remodelled points were as in the following:

- ① The deck landing gear was removed. A main float and right and left auxiliary floats (single-float type) were fixed.
- ② A fin was fixed and rudder area was made larger to make up for directional stability and rudder efficiency affected by the floats.
- ③ A measure was employed to prevent the

main wings and fuselage from leaking and rusting.

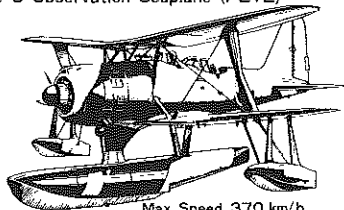
The shape of the main float was accepted after model tests repeated at the Naval Air Technical Institute. Only about one year after the start of the plan, the first flight was successfully made at an aquatic base in Kasumigaura on 8th December 1941, i.e. the very day when the Pacific War began. After utility tests were repeated by seaplane units of Yokosuka and Oppama, the remodelled plane was officially accepted for mass production under the name of Type 2 Floatplane Fighter on 6th July, 1942. It was slightly lowered in performance as compared with the original Zero Fighter Model 11, e.g. the maximum speed was decreased from 534 km/h to 436 km/h and the cruising range from 2,220 km (when carrying no auxiliary fuel tanks) to 1,778 km. This was because the large float increased plane weight and air resistance. The Type 2 Floatplane Fighter still inherited excellent manoeuvrability from the Zero Fighter and had good taking-off and landing ability and sea-kindness. The Type 2 Floatplane Fighter was a well-timed superior plane to be used for the purpose of defending isolated islands in the Pacific Ocean and air bases under construction until the completion of the 15-Shi Floatplane Fighter which was then being manufactured by Kawanishi. Powerfully armed with two 20 mm and two 7.7 mm machine guns, the Navy's hoped-for new Type 2 Floatplane Fighter came to be sent to isolated islands in the South Seas and small islands in the North Seas in mid 1942 when the Japanese were still making brilliant drives on the enemy. In spite of the handicap proper to a floatplane, it fought desperately with large bombers and fighters of the Allied Forces and rendered distinguished service. Even the Americans praised the Floatplane Fighter for its high performance on a level with the Zero Fighter. At the last stage of the war, most of floatplane fighter units on the front lost their planes

and pilots, meeting with a glorious end.

Battles over the Solomon Islands

The Allies initiated a counterattack against the Japanese in a battle for Guadalcanal Island located at the southeast end of the Solomon Islands in the South Seas. It was clear that, if the Japanese had occupied Guadalcanal, an important point on the communication line between the United

Type O Observation Seaplane (PETE)



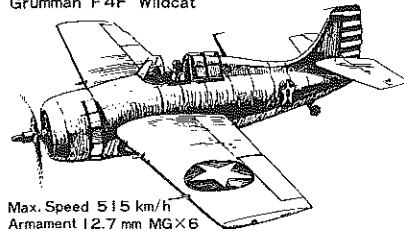
Max. Speed 370 km/h
Armament 7.7 mm MG×3

States and Australia, and completed air bases there, the Allies would have lost the command of the air from New Guinea to Australia and been brought into a critical situation. The Japanese Navy was constructing Lunga Field (the Americans called it Henderson Field) in Guadalcanal about 1,000 km southeast of Rabaul, the key Japanese base for invading Australia, and Buin Field in Bougainville lying halfway between them. For the air defence of Lunga Field, the Navy constructed an aquatic base at Tulagi of Florida Island near Lunga Field and in mid June of 1942 stationed there a part of the 4th Air Fleet equipped with twelve Type 2 Floatplane Fighters and some Type O Observation Seaplanes and Type O Three-Seater Scout Seaplanes. (The 4th Air Fleet was the first unit to use the Type 2 Floatplane Fighter). On 7th August when the airfields were nearly completed, the Americans attacked Guadalcanal and Tulagi of Florida and occupied them in two days. The twelve Type 2 Floatplane Fighters of the 4th Air Fleet which fought to repulse the enemy attack carried a No.3 bomb under each main wing. (The No.3 bomb is

a time bomb containing small balls of yellow phosphor. If dropped from above an enemy plane formation, it will explode in the air and scatter the balls to shoot down a number of planes at a time. The weight is 30 kg.) The Type 2 Floatplane Fighters dropped No.3 bombs against enemy planes flying in formation and used 20 mm and 7.7 mm machine guns against those flying separately or scattering, inflicting great losses on the Allies. The detachment of the 4th Air Fleet, however, lost all its men and was annihilated at the fighting of 7th August. The Japanese immediately sent army troops from Rabaul to Guadalcanal with a view to recapturing Guadalcanal. Navy planes escorted them and bombed airfields under enemy occupation. Because the distance from Rabaul to Guadalcanal was the very limit of the Zero Fighter's cruising range, however, the Zero Fighter could not make sufficient attack or escort. Thus the Navy constructed an aquatic base in Shortland Island lying 470 km southeast of Rabaul and organized the 11th Air Flotilla comprising planes of seven seaplane tenders including the Kamikawa Maru (19 Type 2 Floatplane Fighters, 54 Type O Observation Seaplanes and 13 Type O Scout Seaplanes). Using the beautiful shoal of Shortland as a runway, these planes took off to attack Allied planes from airfields which were

completed after being captured by the Americans and also to escort the army reinforcements moving to Guadalcanal in place of land-based planes of Rabaul. From 4th September to 9th November of 1942, they repeated fierce air battles day after day with bombers and fighters including the Grumman F4F over Kolombangara and Shortland Islands. By 7th November, they

Grumman F4F Wildcat



Max. Speed 515 km/h
Armament 12.7 mm MG×6

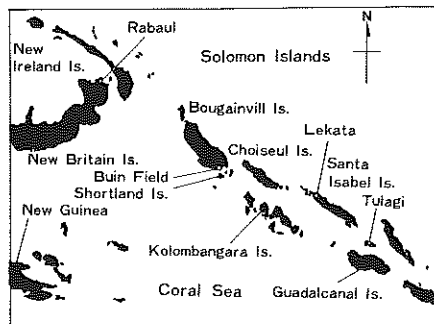
encountered more than 150 enemy planes and confirmed 17 shot down. On 10th October, Master Sergeants Kawai and Maruyama, each piloting a Type 2 Floatplane Fighter, engaged with 20 Grumman F4F's and were killed, but they fought desperately and shot down four, one of which by body crash. This fact eloquently speaks of the skill and morale of Floatplane Fighter pilots. The Type 2 Floatplane Fighter was also widely used in bombing of Guadalcanal, reconnaissance, etc. through the use of Lekata, Santa Isabel Island as an intermediate base.

(Specifications of the Type 2 Floatplane Fighter)

Engine : One Nakajima Sakae 12 fourteen-cylinder double row radial air-cooled engine. Take-off output of 940 hp.
Propeller : Sumitomo Hamilton 3D constant-speed all-metal 3-blader.

Span: 12.00m Length: 10.131m Height: 4.305m
Weight : Loaded, 2,460 kg (Empty, 1,921 kg)
Maximum speed : 436 km/h/4,300 m
Maximum cruising range : 1,778 km
Armament : Two 7.7 mm m.g. (fuselage); two 20 mm m.g. (main wings); two 30-60 kg bombs.

Production : 327

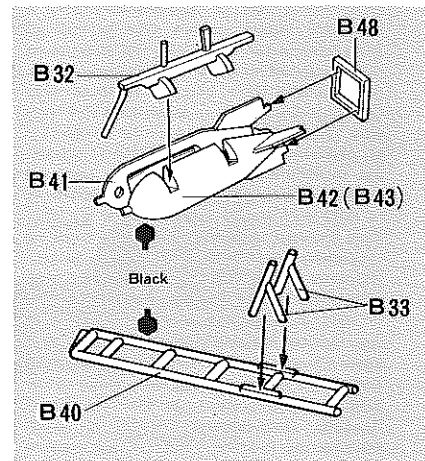
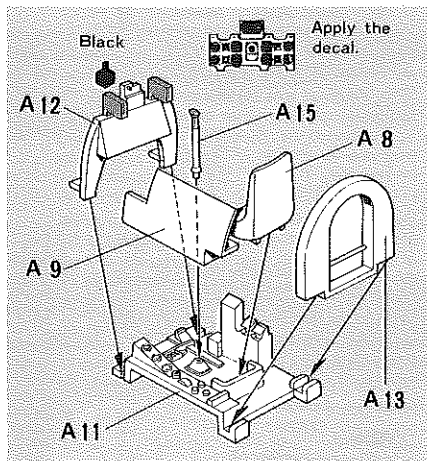


1 Construction of Seat, Bombs and Ladder

- Take care when removing parts from the plastic sprues. Use a hobby knife or a pair of nippers.
- Before applying glue, construct each part and section to ensure that you are fitting the parts correctly.
- After Fuselage has been painted, apply Decals with the transparent margin cut off.

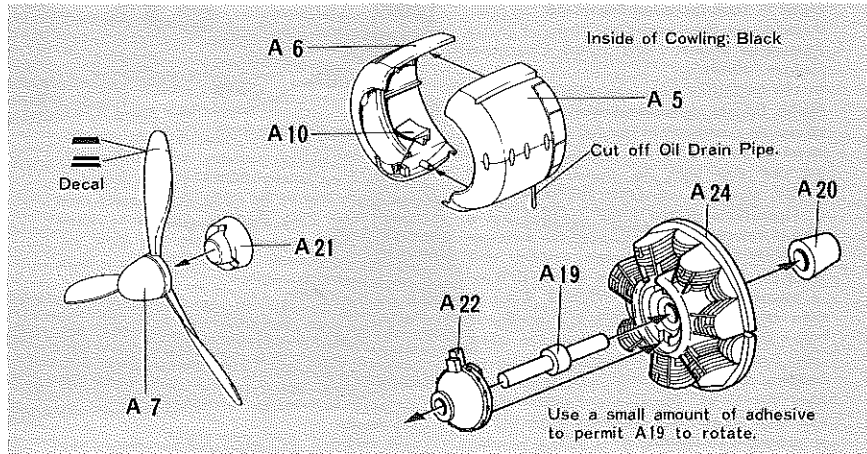
Painting of Seat

Control lever.....Silver Top.....Black
Seat.....Silver Belt.....Green
Wall.....Clear blue green
Undercoat.....Silver
Instrument Panel.....Blue-green
Gunstock.....Black



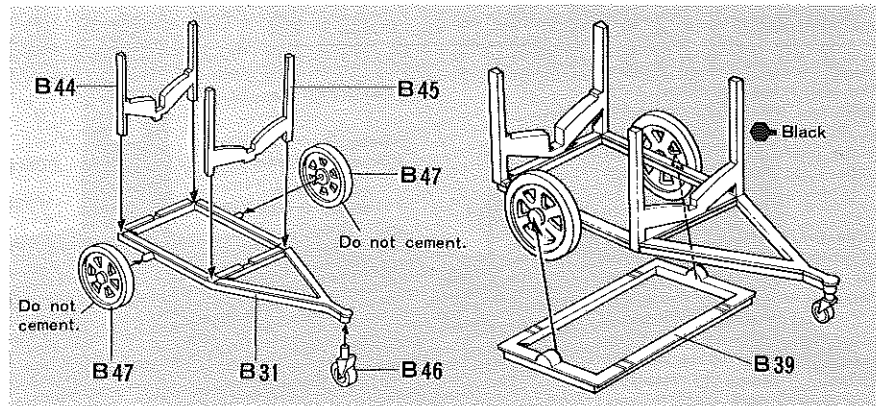
2 Construction of Propeller, Cowling and Engine

- Construct Propeller, Cowling and Engine. Carefully adjust seams with sand-paper or the like before applying paint.
- Propeller Shaft A19 is designed to rotate and must not be glued.
- Cut off Oil Drain Pipe of Cowling after Cowling has been constructed.
- For painting of Engine details, see the figure "Painting of Engine."



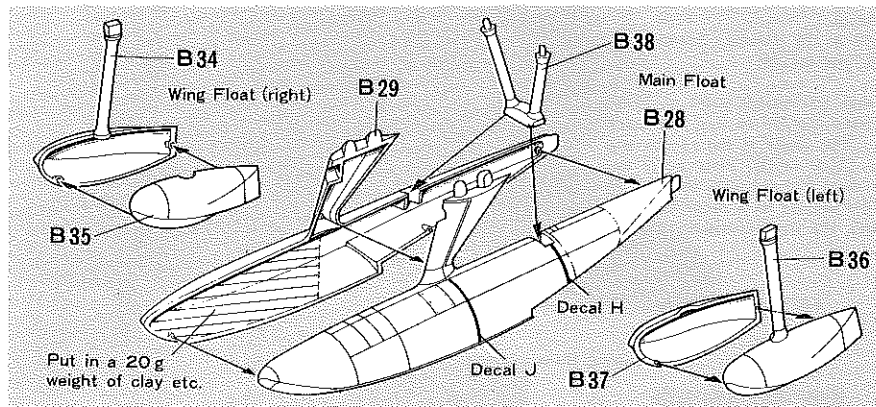
3 Construction of Truck

- Be sure to fix Float Supports B44 and B45 in position.
- Do not glue Wheels B47. They should be held in position with Frame B39.



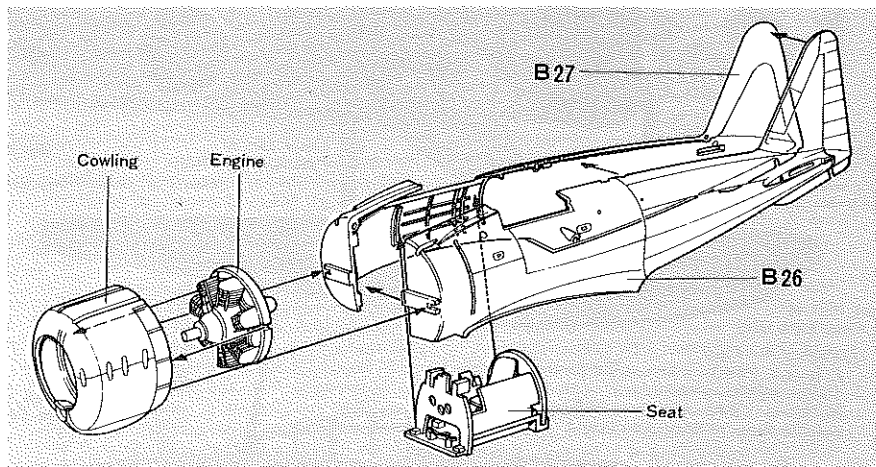
4 Construction of Floats

- Put a 20 g weight of clay etc. in the front part of Main Float to stabilize the plane. Use Stand (Transparent Part 5) when the weight is not put in.
- There are two Wing Floats, right and left. They should be fixed in such a way that they incline slightly outwards.



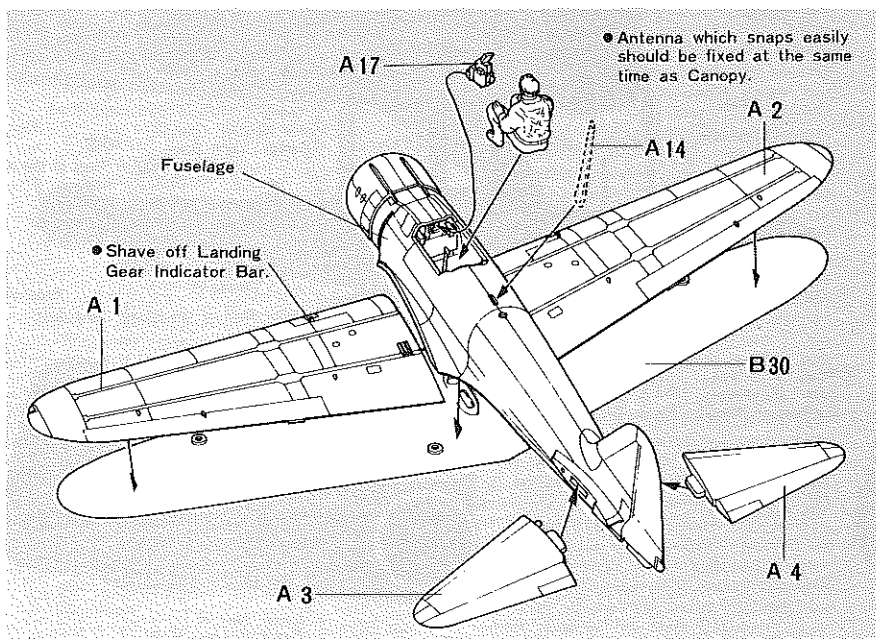
5 Construction of Fuselage

- Paint the inside before gluing Fuselage together.
- Install Seat after Fuselage has been glued together.
- Engine should be put into Cowling first and then fixed to Fuselage.



6 Construction of Wing

- Main Wings and Fuselage should be put together tentatively for adjusting joints before they are fixed together.
- Fixing of figure can be done in last stage.
- Fix the antenna A14 in last stage.



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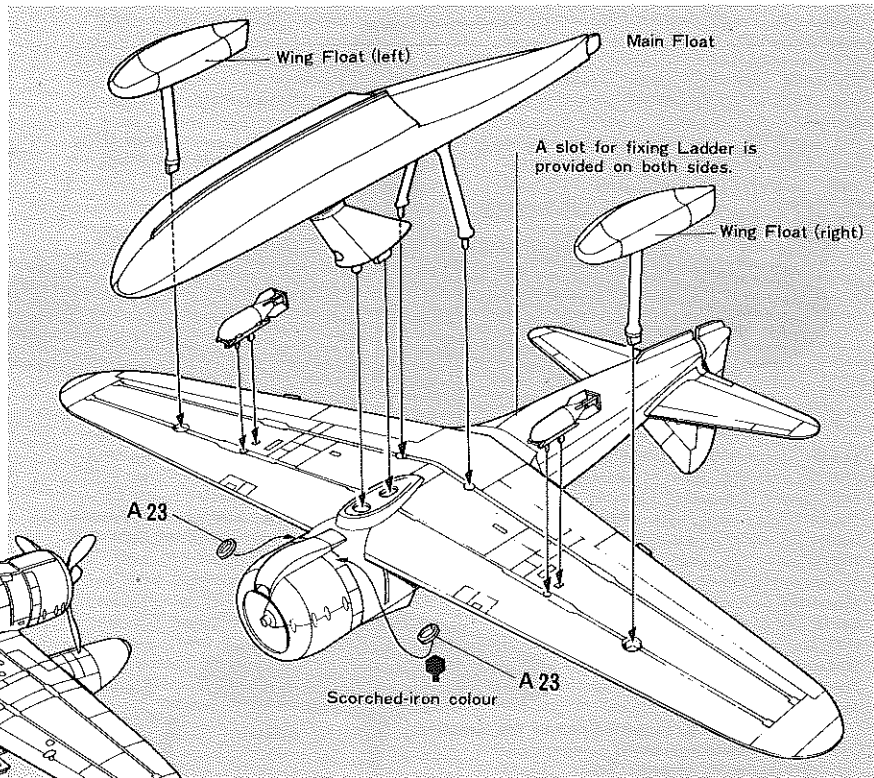
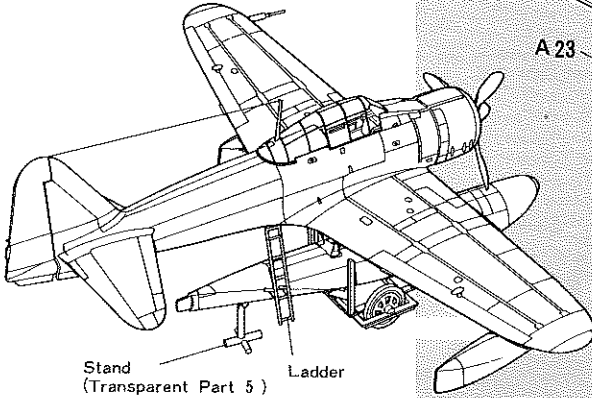
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7 Fixing of Floats

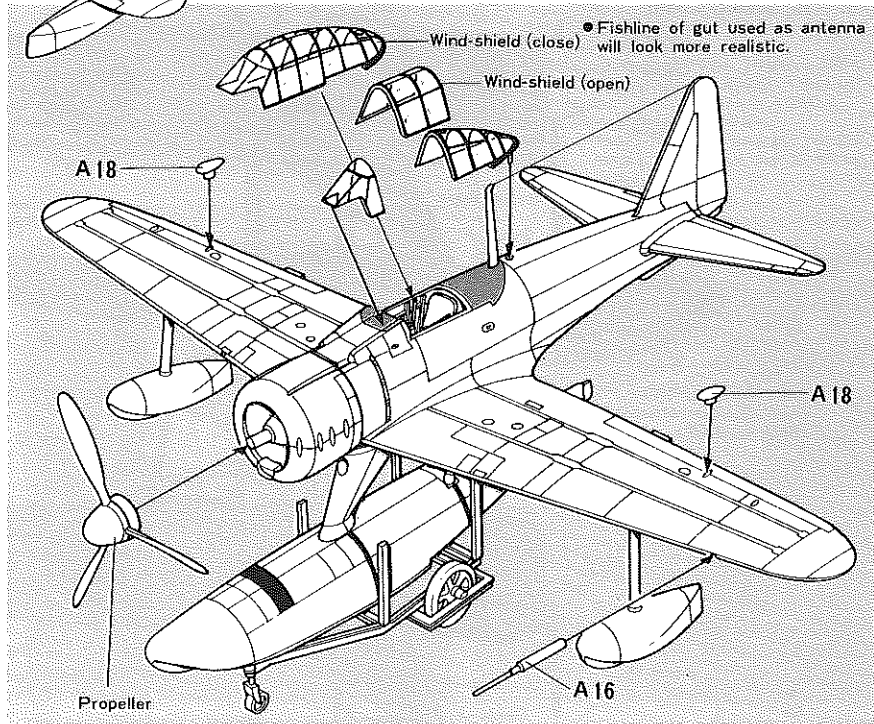
- Fix Main Float, Wing Floats and Bombs. Wing Floats should be fixed in such a way that they incline slightly outwards.

8 Fixing of Ladder and Stand

- Use Stand as shown in the figure when the weight is not put in Main Float.



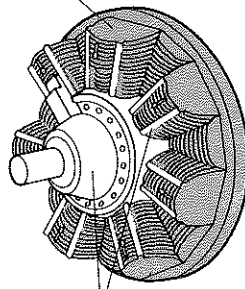
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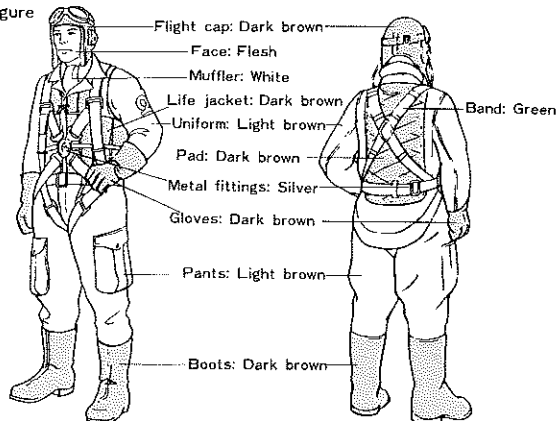
- Upper Wing (Left)
- Upper Wing (Right)
- Horizontal Stabilizer (Left)
- Horizontal Stabilizer (Right)
- Cowling (Left)
- Cowling (Right)
- Propeller
- Seat
- Side Instrument Panel
- Air-intake part
- Floor
- Instrument Panel
- Back Plate
- Antenna Support
- Control Lever
- Pitot Tube
- Sight Scope
- Hinge Cover
- Propeller Shaft
- Propeller Shaft Stopper
- Spinner (Rear)
- Gear Case
- Exhaust Pipe
- Engine
- Foot Plate for Figure
- Fuselage (Left)
- Fuselage (Right)
- Main Float (Left)
- Main Float (Right)
- Lower Surface of Main Wing
- Truck Frame A
- Bomb Mount
- Ladder Support
- Right Wing Float (Outside)
- Right Wing Float (Inside)
- Left Wing Float (Outside)
- Left Wing Float (Inside)
- V-brace
- Truck Frame B
- Ladder
- Bomb A
- Bomb B (Left)
- Bomb B (Right)
- Float Support (Rear)
- Float Support (Front)
- Front Wheel of Truck
- Truck Wheel
- Bomb C

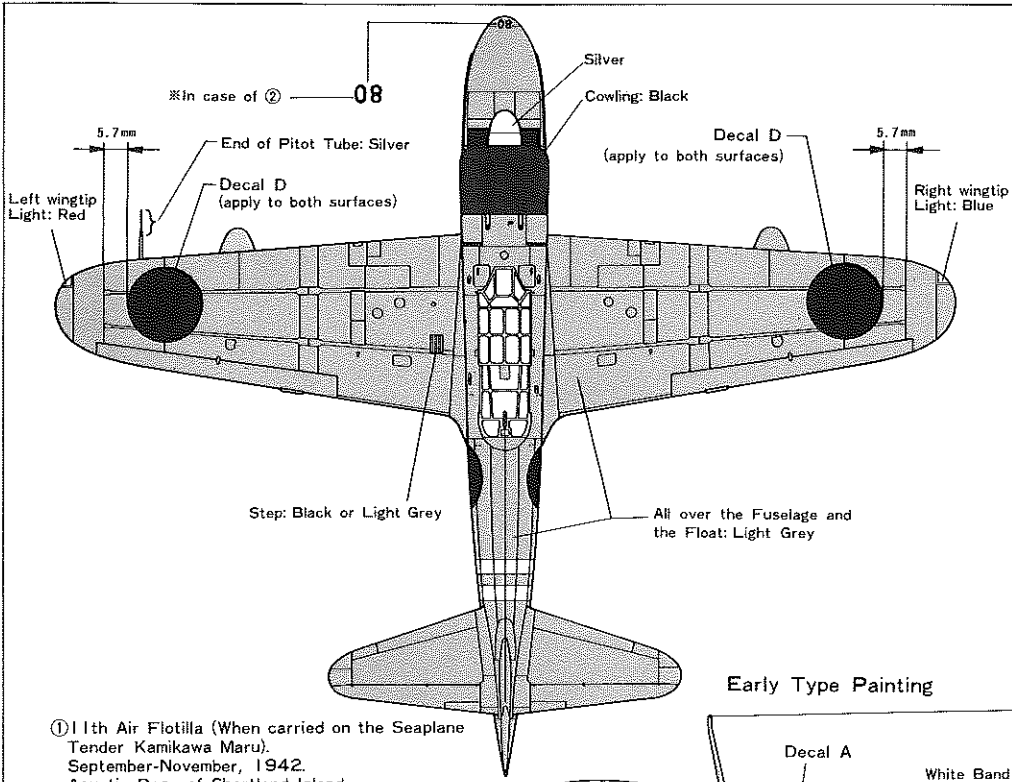
Painting of Engine

All of engine: Iron colour (Black + Silver)



Painting of Figure

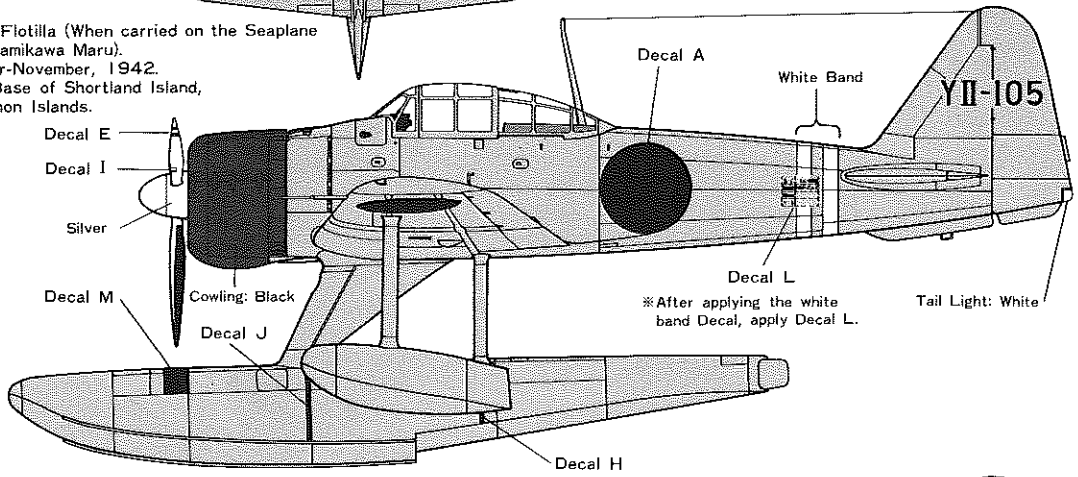




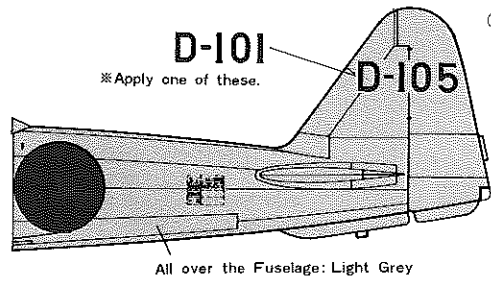
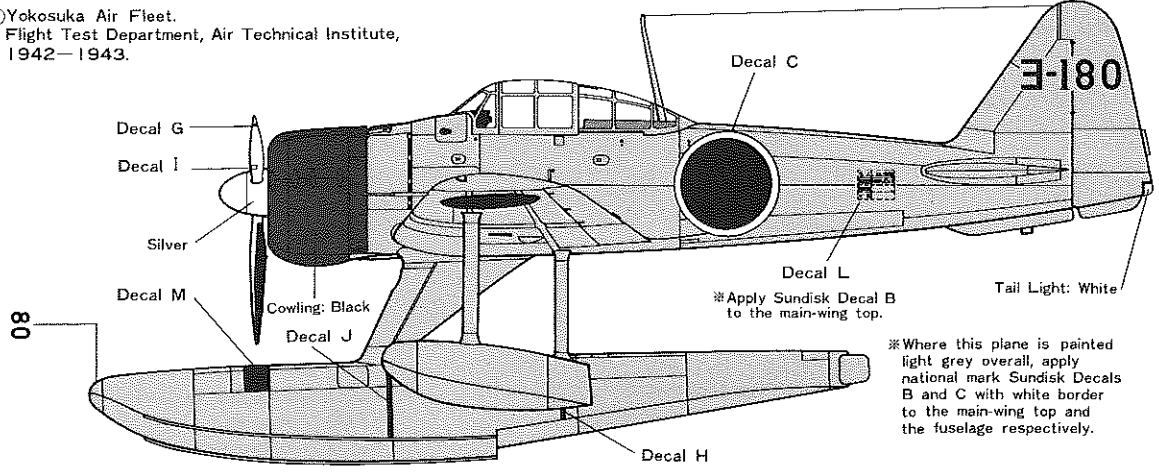
Painting and Marking of the Type
Painting in the Early Stage
 The engine cowling was painted by light grey. The front side of the silver. The rear side of the propeller. Each propeller blade had two red "Sundisk" was painted on both wings. This was the basic paint and used until around the end of Painting in the Late Stage
 As the battle lines extended and army was ordered on 3rd July 1942 of the main wings and of the float over the jungles on the southern side and not be easily spotted by the enemy from the air, an orange yellow belt on the main-wing front edges and each side and the main-wing top was issued in order. The plane top was of a make-shift but the orange was applied. (see painting illustration) It is also reported that some planes were painted lilac at the top and dark grey at the bottom.
Other Painting
 The interior of the body was painted green or, according to another report (yellowish green) used by the Americans painted with antireflection dark green in the late stage. The positions to fix the truck at and the landing sign. For the colours of sundisk. For the rest, see the colour figure.

Early Type Painting

① 11th Air Flotilla (When carried on the Seaplane Tender Kamikawa Maru).
 September-November, 1942.
 Aquatic Base of Shortland Island, the Solomon Islands.



② Yokosuka Air Fleet.
 Flight Test Department, Air Technical Institute,
 1942-1943.



③ 5th Air Fleet.
 August-November, 1942.
 Aquatic Base of Kiska Island, the Aleutian Islands.

★Painting★
 Early Type Painting
 It is reported that some planes were painted lilac at the top and dark grey at the bottom.

