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KAMIKAZE TOKKŌTAI
IJN SPECIAL ATTACK UNITS

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KAMIKAZE TOKKŌTAI

IJN SPECIAL ATTACK UNITS

by Jan Bobek & Martin Ferkl

Photo: US Naval Heritage Command



One of the most well-known words from the field of aviation, recognized even by those with no interest in the subject, is kamikaze. It is associated with the predominantly aerial campaign that began in October 1944 and lasted until the end of the war in the Pacific. During this period, hundreds of airmen sacrificed their lives in service of the Japanese Empire

In Western civilization, these attacks are often referred to as suicide attacks, but this term is actually a misnomer. The primary objective of these troops was not suicide but self-sacrifice for the benefit of the Japanese Empire. Therefore, the more accurate term is special attack unit (*tokubetsu kōgekital*, or *tokkōtai* for short), which better reflects the nature of these military operations.

Special attack units were organized within standard military formations. Various texts and sources published in Western countries often claim that Japanese airmen were forced to participate in these units. However, this is not true — they volunteered. In fact, especially during the first months of these units' existence, there were more volunteers than available seats in the planes designated for attacks. As a result, commanders had to be selective, prioritizing young, single men with no family commitments, often college students. However, from the outset, volunteers from elite naval families were also recruited into these units. The voluntary nature of participation is further evidenced by cases where airmen survived multiple special attack missions, either due to their planes being shot down or experiencing mechanical failures, and subsequently reapplied to join other units. Additionally, in multi-seat aircraft, all crew members were present, not just the pilot. A common misconception is the belief that airmen undertook these combat missions under the influence of drugs.

An airman was only considered a member of a special attack unit if he successfully carried out an attack on an enemy target with his aircraft. He did not become a member at the time of enlistment or even upon take off for an attack. Those who were unable to strike Allied ships, whether due to technical malfunctions

or being shot down, are not officially counted among the kamikazes. There are also documented cases where an aircraft en route to attack American vessels was shot down, resulting in the death of one crew member. After an emergency landing, the aircraft was repaired and took off again for its final attack, with the deceased airman still on board. Due to his "physical presence" in the aircraft, he was also listed as a member of the special attack unit.

On their final missions, special attack units flew with escort aircraft to ensure that the bomb-laden planes reached enemy ships and to assess the outcome of their attacks. It was not uncommon for escort pilots to refuse to return to base and instead join the attack themselves. The Japanese developed several escort tactics, with two being the most commonly used. In the first tactic, each special attack aircraft was assigned its own escort (or lead) aircraft, effectively serving as its wingman. Behind them, at a higher altitude, another group of escort fighters provided additional support. In the second tactic, the entire formation was led by a single reconnaissance aircraft. Behind it, at the same altitude, flew the first group of escort fighters, followed by special attack aircraft arranged in four-plane V formations. Behind them, at higher altitudes, two additional formations of escort fighters provided cover.

The Japanese Naval Air Force established these special attack units and ordered airmen to crash into enemy vessels under specific circumstances during the Allied invasion of the Philippines in October 1944. The concept of employing this tactic on a large scale had been advocated by some combat unit commanders since 1943. Such an order was unprecedented in the history of the modern

Japanese armed forces, and it faced opposition from figures including Emperor Hirohito, Prime Minister Tōjō, and Vice Admiral Takijirō Ōnishi — who was regarded as Admiral Yamamoto's successor in naval aviation strategy. However, the Japanese air forces struggled against the highly sophisticated defenses of American carrier task forces. This challenge became evident during the Battle of the Philippine Sea in June 1944, where Japanese forces suffered devastating losses at an approximate 6:1 ratio, managing to damage only a single battleship. This battle, along with previous combat missions, led many Japanese naval aviators to believe that their chances of returning from a combat flight were slim and that conventional bomber attacks had little likelihood of successfully hitting enemy targets.

Aircraft A6M2 and A6M5 from the Shikishima-tai unit, armed with bombs, are taking off with a fighter escort from Mabalacat airfield on October 25, 1944. Behind the Model 21 aircraft numbered 02-888, a Model 52 aircraft with the marking 02-112 is visible, likely piloted by Lt. Yukio Seki. The pilot with a cast on his leg standing at the front right is Cdr. Sakae Yamamoto, commander of Kōkūtai 201, who was involved in organizing the first Kamikaze pilot unit. He was injured on October 19 during an emergency landing as a passenger in the fuselage of a single-seat Zero, piloted by Lt. Cdr. Tadashi Nakajima, a former Hikōtaichō of the Tainan Kōkūtai.

Divine Wind in Leyte Gulf

American air raids on Formosa (Taiwan) and the Philippines in the fall of 1944 cost the Japanese Naval and Army Air Forces an additional 500 to 600 aircraft. In October, Vice Admiral Ōnishi was appointed commander of the 1st Air Fleet (1st Kōkū Kantai) in the Philippines. However, due to prior American strikes on Japanese bases, he had only about 100 aircraft of various types available on the eve of the Battle of Leyte Gulf and the anticipated Allied landing. Although Ōnishi initially opposed the idea of sacrificing airmen, he was ultimately forced to adopt this strategy. He asked command of Kōkūtai 201 — a unit stationed in the Philippines and equipped with Zeros, which had been training for months in “skip” bombing attacks against enemy vessels — to carry out these missions. Admiral Ōnishi, together with the command of Kōkūtai 201, invited pilots to volunteer for the special attack group but feared how they might react. However, a large number of unit members eagerly signed up for this type of combat mission, and disputes arose when someone was not selected. The unit was named Kamikaze (Divine Wind), inspired by the typhoon that had helped

Photo: Martin Beckl



The aircraft carrier USS Lexington (CV-16) is moored as a museum in Corpus Christi, Texas. Also on display are the remnants of a Mitsubishi Zero that was intended to strike the aircraft carrier USS Enterprise (CV-6) on May 14, 1945. The aircraft was piloted by Lt. Shunsuke Tomiyasu of Kōkūtai 721. On that day, Kōkūtai 721 dispatched the special attack unit Kenmu No. 11 (five Zeros) along with Tsukuba No. 6 (14 Zeros), to which Lt. Tomiyasu belonged. The Japanese aviator managed to crash through the flight deck at the bow of the Enterprise, triggering an explosion below. The blast sent parts of the forward elevator flying tens of meters into the air. Fourteen sailors were killed, and 68 were wounded. Eight crew members were blown overboard by the 500 kg bomb's detonation but were rescued from the water by a nearby destroyer. The attack left Enterprise severely damaged, rendering it inoperable for the remainder of the war.

destroy the Mongol naval forces during their attempted invasion of Japan in the 13th century. Officially, the group was designated Dai 1 Kamikaze Tokubetsu Kōgekikai, and within it, nine units were formed, each bearing battle names derived from Japanese historical and cultural traditions. (Note 1)

The most experienced pilot in Kōkūtai 201 was Lieutenant Naoshi Kanno, who had 25 aerial victories. At the time, he was in Japan preparing to transfer new aircraft to the Philippines. For months, Kanno had expressed a strong desire to organize and lead special attack missions. He even had a note attached to his personal bag stating that he was already dead, with his rank listed two steps higher, as

Photo: US Naval Heritage Command



Lt. Shunsuke Tomiyasu of Kōkūtai 721 with his Zero in the final phase of the attack on USS Enterprise on May 14, 1945.



Photo: US Naval Heritage Command

The damaged area in front of the USS Enterprise's forward elevator after Lt. Tomiyasu's attack.



Photo: US Naval Heritage Command

if he had been posthumously promoted. However, to his disappointment, he was instead assigned to lead the fighter escorts for the special attack units. The deployment tactics were developed by former bomber pilot Lieutenant Yukio Seki. The approach to the target was planned at two different flight levels, depending on cloud cover. Even when flying low over the water, the aircraft was instructed to gain altitude just before reaching the target, ideally drop a bomb, and then crash into the damaged section of the ship. This would compound the destruction with the additional impact of the aircraft and the explosion of its fuel. For attacks on aircraft carriers, the primary targets were forward or midship elevators. The Japanese did not expect to easily sink the carriers, but their goal was to disable them and render them inoperable in battle. In the case of battleships, cruisers, and destroyers, the designated target was the bridge.

If a pilot located the target early, the damage was amplified by more fuel ignited upon impact after the detonation of the aircraft's bomb. During the Philippine campaign, Zeros comprised the vast majority of aircraft used by the Japanese Naval Air Force's special attack units. From October 21, 1944, to January 9, 1945, Kōkūtai 201 deployed more than 200 Zeros in over 60 special attacks, with only a few failing to reach their targets due to unfavorable weather. Starting in late October, units in the Philippines were reinforced by Kōkūtai 221, which was equipped not only with Zeros but also with Tenzan and Suisei aircraft. This Kōkūtai also designated Zeros for special attack missions and integrated into its ranks pilots from sunken carriers in the Battle of Leyte Gulf, as well as pilots from carrier units previously assigned to land-based operations.



Photo: US Naval Heritage Command

A fire on the aircraft carrier USS Bunker Hill (CV-17) near the island structure after Ensign Kiyoshi Ogawa's attack on May 11, 1945. Among other damage, the bomb hit the ready room with VF-84 pilots, killing 22 of them.

Destroyer USS Laffey after the battle of special attack planes on April 16, 1945, north of Okinawa. Shown here is a starboard side view abreast of No. 3 5 inch gun mount. Landing craft LST 677 is alongside.

A Zero piloted by PO2c Setsuo Ishino in the final moments before crashing into the side of USS Missouri on April 11, 1945.

The Shikishima Tai is often considered the first special attack unit. Led by Lieutenant Yukio Seki, the unit took off to engage the enemy on October 25, 1944, from Mabalacat Airfield in the Philippines. Its members are credited with sinking the escort carrier USS St. Lo (CVE-63). Several other escort carriers were also damaged that day, including USS Santee (CVE-20), USS Suwanee (CVE-27), USS Kitkun Bay (CVE-71), USS White Plains (CVE-66), and USS Kalinin Bay (CVE-68). Most of the attacking aircraft were Zeros, as nearly all available aircraft assigned to special attack missions that day were of this type — except for two Suisei bombers. In total, 17 aircraft (15 Zeros and 2 Suisei), carrying 19 airmen, participated in the attack. On the American side, 182 sailors were killed, with at least 168 wounded. However, the number of additional casualties on the USS St. Lo remains unknown, meaning the true number of wounded was likely much higher. Despite its reputation, Shikishima Tai was not actually the first unit of this kind. Earlier, on October 21 and 23, 1944, two Zero pilots launched special attacks from Cebu Airfield. The first was Lieutenant Tōfu Kunō, and the second was Chief Petty Officer Satō. Like the members of Shikishima Tai, they were part of Kōkūtai 201, but their special attack unit was called Yamato Tai.

Battle for the Philippines

The Japanese Army Air Force engaged its special assault units in the defense of the Philippines to a lesser extent about two weeks later. Unlike their Navy Air Force counterparts, these units were composed largely of training personnel. Concurrently, both Japanese air forces continued to conduct conventional attacks on land and naval targets.

For the defenders aboard Allied vessels, this marked an extraordinary shift in enemy tactics, initially perceived by some commanders as desperate to the point of folly. However, the kamikaze attacks were immediately censored for the Allied press, and an objective assessment of the strategy soon emerged. The Allied command recognized that these were well-coordinated operations executed with clear intent to strike critical parts of ships. Furthermore, due to the one-way nature of the flights, the special attack aircraft had a greater operational range.



Photo: US Naval Heritage Command

During the campaign in the Philippines, the Japanese Navy deployed a total of 421 aircraft in kamikaze attacks, 43 of which returned for various reasons. Additionally, 239 fighter aircraft were assigned as escorts, with 102 lost in action. During these operations, naval aviators claimed to have sunk 37 ships, including five aircraft carriers, and were credited with damaging 68 other vessels, including nine aircraft carriers. However, actual losses inflicted by Japanese Army and Navy airmen in these special attack operations amounted to 20 Allied ships destroyed or scuttled, including two aircraft carriers and four destroyers. Another 87 ships sustained damage, including 22 aircraft carriers.

Battle of Iwo Jima and Operation Kikusui

During the raids on Formosa in January 1945 and the Iwo Jima landings, only a few special attacks were conducted. However, in preparation for the anticipated invasion of Okinawa, the Japanese Navy Air Force developed Operation Kikusui, which was launched in coordination with the Army Air Forces on April 6, 1945 – five days after the American landing.

To ensure and protect the landing, Allied forces, including the British Navy, deployed 18 battleships, 27 cruisers, 177 destroyers, 39 aircraft carriers, and hundreds of support vessels. Around the island, the Americans stationed destroyers at 15 pre-designated Picket Stations to assist in directing defensive fighter operations against Japanese attacks using their radar systems. Many Allied vessels had limited maneuverability during these attacks, as they were providing fire support to the invading forces, supplying troops, or evacuating the wounded in the immediate vicinity of the island. Unlike the fighting in the



Photo: US Naval Heritage Command

Philippines, Allied vessels were positioned at a considerable distance from Japanese bases on Formosa and Kyushu. In both cases, the approach route was approximately 1,000 km long. During special attacks, Japanese airmen gradually refined their tactics, optimizing flight paths based on changing weather conditions and using the islands around Okinawa as obstacles to American radar detection. The only naval fighter capable of escorting kamikaze aircraft all the way to their targets was the Zero. Shiden and Shiden-Kai aircraft participated in escort missions but only for part of the journey.

Ōka planes and Zero pilots

During the battle for Okinawa, the variety of naval aircraft used in special attack operations was more diverse compared to the Philippine campaign. Among the most well-known were Ōka aircraft, which were carried to their targets by G4M2e Betty bombers. These slow and highly vulnerable bombers were escorted by Zeros from the same unit, Kōkūtai 721. However, the Zeros were not just escorts – they were also used as special attack aircraft, armed with 500 kg bomb. Many of these were A6M5c models, modified to reduce weight by removing their 20mm wing-mounted cannons.

The formation of these units, named Tenmu, stemmed from the fact that a considerable number of pilots had been trained to fly Ōka aircraft but, due to a shortage of Betty bombers, had no way to carry out their final missions. In addition to several Tenmu units, in May these pilots were reassigned to other special attack units known as Shōwa, Shinken, and Shichisei, which had previously included pilots from the Yatabe, Genzan (II), and Omura Kōkūtai training units.

A member of Tenmu Unit No. 5, P02c Setsuo Ishino, received special military honors – albeit from the side he likely never expected. On April 11, 1945, he took off from Kanoya Base shortly after noon in a Zero Model 52c. His original target was the aircraft carrier USS Intrepid (CV-11), but accurate anti-aircraft fire forced him to change course and head for the battleship USS Missouri (BB-63) instead. He aimed his Zero at the starboard side of the ship, but the 500

kg bomb he was carrying failed to detonate. As a result, the battleship sustained only minimal damage, and no American sailors were killed. Ishino's remains were found aboard the ship. Despite objections from his crew, USS Missouri's captain, William M. Callahan, decided to bury the Japanese aviator at sea with full honors, including the use of a hastily made Japanese flag. (Note 2)

A month later, on May 11, 1945, two members of Shōwa Unit No. 7 successfully struck the aircraft carrier USS Bunker Hill (CV-17), causing severe damage. The attack is credited to Seizō Yasunori and Kiyoshi Ogawa, both members of Hikōtai 306, a fighter squadron assigned to Kōkūtai 721. They took off on their final mission at 06:40 from Kanoya Base in southern Kyūshū.

Their Zeros hit the Bunker Hill just after 10:00 AM, resulting in 396 sailors killed and 264 wounded – the highest number of U.S. casualties on a single vessel caused by this type of attack. The carrier was forced to return to the United States for repairs and did not return to combat. (Note 3)

NOTES

1 An interesting issue is the transcription of the term "divine wind," for which "kamikaze" has become the established term, particularly in reference to Japanese aviators, including in contemporary Japanese media. The name consists of two characters (神風), pronounced "kamikaze" in Japanese transcription and "shinpū" in Sino-Japanese transcription. Both variants are correct, but their usage depends on context. For example, the Japanese Navy had two classes of Kamikaze destroyers in the first half of the 20th century. Veterans of Kōkūtai 201, in a memoir published in 1958 in collaboration with American historians, stated that the term "Kamikaze" should be used exclusively for naval aviators in special attack units. This name was commonly used in the designation of many IJN special attack units. After the war, the word "kamikaze" took on a slightly pejorative connotation in Japan and was sometimes used to describe reckless or foolish actions. For instance, a taxi driver engaging in risky driving might be described as a "kamikaze taxi." Notably, in the Army Air Force special attack units, the term "divine wind" was never used. Instead, the Japanese 6th Air Army employed the term Shinbu-tai (振武隊) for special attack units during the defense of Okinawa. The term "shinbu" can be loosely translated as "military might," though it carries additional combat-related meanings. Occasionally, the terms shinpū and shinbu are mistakenly used interchangeably when referring to naval and army special attack units.

2 The identification of Ishino as the pilot of the Zero that struck the USS Missouri is not definitive. Another possible, though less likely, candidate is Petty Officer 2nd Class Kenkichi (Kanekichi) Ishii, who was a member of the same special attack unit as Ishino. However, Ishii is credited with an unsuccessful attack on the USS Wisconsin (BB-64).

3 Several sources list the Seizō/Ogawa pair as the pilots responsible for damaging the USS Bunker Hill. However, Dan King, author of a publication on Kōkūtai 721, attributes the damage to other pilots. He identifies Seizō as the pilot of the Zero that was shot down during the attack and places him in Tenmu Unit No. 10.

4 The "(II)" in Genzan (II) Kōkūtai indicates that it was the second unit with the same name in sequence. The first Genzan Kōkūtai was equipped with G3M Nell and G4M Betty bombers and saw combat during the early phase of the Pacific War. In November 1942, it was renamed Kōkūtai 755. It is also possible to encounter the designation "(2)" in the unit's name. In such cases, this indicates that two units with the same name existed simultaneously, with the numeral "2" used to distinguish them.

Zero trainers in Okinawa battle

The two-seat A6M2-K Zero was also used in special attack operations. These aircraft came from training units that also organized special attack units, including Tsukuba Kōkūtai, Yatabe Kōkūtai, Genzan (II) Kōkūtai, Ōmura Kōkūtai, and Kasumigaura Kōkūtai (Note 4). As these were based on the Zero Type 21, they were equipped with weaker engines and carried 250 kg bomb mounted under the fuselage.

Flight deck of USS Langley (CVL-27) under repair after being hit by a kamikaze, off Formosa, 21 January 1945.





Photo: US Naval Heritage Command

The A6M5 Type 52c aircraft taking off on a special attack mission. A 500kg bomb is mounted under the fuselage, and the cannons have been removed to reduce weight. Only two machine guns were left in the wings.



Photo: US Naval Heritage Command

The British aircraft carrier HMS Formidable in May 1945 after a kamikaze attack. The armored decks of British aircraft carriers withstood enemy attacks much better than the decks of American carriers.

Assessment of the special attacks at Okinawa

During the battle for Okinawa, from early April to late June 1945, the Japanese Naval and Army Air Forces deployed approximately 1,800 aircraft in special attack operations, resulting in the deaths of around 3,000 airmen. By the spring of 1945, some airmen were no longer volunteering for these missions and were instead forced into special attack operations, a practice that sparked protests within parts of the Japanese command. Some pilots even refused to carry out these missions, repeatedly returning to base from bombing flights.

In this operation, Zero aircraft piloted by kamikaze pilots were deployed not only by the previously mentioned Kōkūtai 721 and training units but also by Kōkūtai 601, 252, and 210. Fighter escort missions using Zero aircraft were provided by Kōkūtai 352 and 131, with the latter also conducting night flights against Allied night fighters along the route between Kyūshū and Okinawa.

Special attack units were not limited to aircraft, they also utilized boats, Kaiten manned torpedoes, and other combat assets. On the Allied side, an average of 1.5 vessels were struck daily off Okinawa, and the relentless attacks, combined with constant high-alert conditions, led to severe mental and moral exhaustion among many crew members.

During the campaign, approximately 40 Allied vessels were either sunk or damaged beyond repair, with three-quarters of them being destroyers patrolling the Picket Stations. Perhaps the most famous destroyer on this mission was the USS Laffey, which, on April 16, 1945, withstood an attack by approximately 50 (presumably Army) special attack aircraft. About half of these attackers were shot down by U.S. Navy and USMC fighters, while others were destroyed by the destroyer's anti-aircraft defenses. However, the vessel was struck by four bombs and rammed by eight Japanese aircraft.

During the battles off Okinawa, nearly 200 additional vessels were damaged by special attack units, including twelve U.S. aircraft carriers, among them the USS Enterprise. The British aircraft carrier HMS Illustrious was also damaged. Nearly 5,000 crew members aboard American ships were killed, with approximately the same number wounded, in Japanese attacks. Hundreds of casualties also occurred aboard British and Dutch vessels as a result of these attacks.

Between March 18 and June 22, 1945, U.S. forces engaged in intense aerial battles with Japanese airmen. U.S. Navy (USN) fighters claimed 1,594 aerial victories, while U.S. Marine Corps (USMC) pilots scored 631 kills, and U.S. Army Air Forces (USAAF) pilots shot down 101 enemy aircraft. A significant portion of these victories were achieved while defending Allied vessels from kamikaze raids.

The legacy of kamikaze pilots

The effectiveness of special attack operations has long been debated. While it is undeniable that these tactics did not prevent Japan's defeat, Japanese airmen nonetheless managed to strike, damage, or sink a significant number of American vessels, including aircraft carriers. The threat they posed was so severe that the Americans were forced to implement numerous defensive measures, such as deploying forward-positioned destroyers equipped with radar and establishing an air patrol system. The fear of these attacks during the planned invasion of Japan was one of the factors that contributed to the decision to drop the atomic bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki.

Shortly after Japan's surrender and the lifting of wartime censorship, the Japanese military command, particularly those responsible for the special attack units, became the target of criticism from religious leaders, intellectuals and scholars. Many former special attack unit pilots, if recognized in public, even faced insults and hostility.

Gradually, however, public opinion began to shift. Farewell letters from kamikaze pilots were published, surviving veterans shared their testimonies, and with the opening of the Chiran Peace Museum for Kamikaze Pilots, numerous other memorials dedicated to these pilots were established, including approximately 200 websites.

The names of 5,843 members of the special attack units are inscribed at Yasukuni Shrine, which honors those who gave their lives for their country — a distinction considered a great honor. The aforementioned Setsuo Ishino also referenced Yasukuni in his farewell letter to his mother, writing: "The day when we meet next will be under the splendid flowers at Yasukuni Shrine."



Photo: Martin Ferkl

The destroyer USS Kidd (DD-661) is currently stationed in Baton Rouge, serving as a museum. As part of its display, visitors can see the wreckage of a Japanese aircraft that crashed into the ship on April 11, 1945. The aircraft was believed to be a Mitsubishi Zero, piloted by Lt. Yaguchi of Kōkūtai 721. He engaged the enemy as a member of the special attack unit Tenmu No. 5 and sent a message to launch the attack at 2:10 p.m. His Zero struck the forward boiler room, but the 500 kg bomb passed through the fuselage and detonated in the water. Despite this, Yaguchi's attack resulted in 38 American sailors killed and 55 wounded. The USS Kidd sustained serious damage, requiring repairs in the United States, and never returned to combat.



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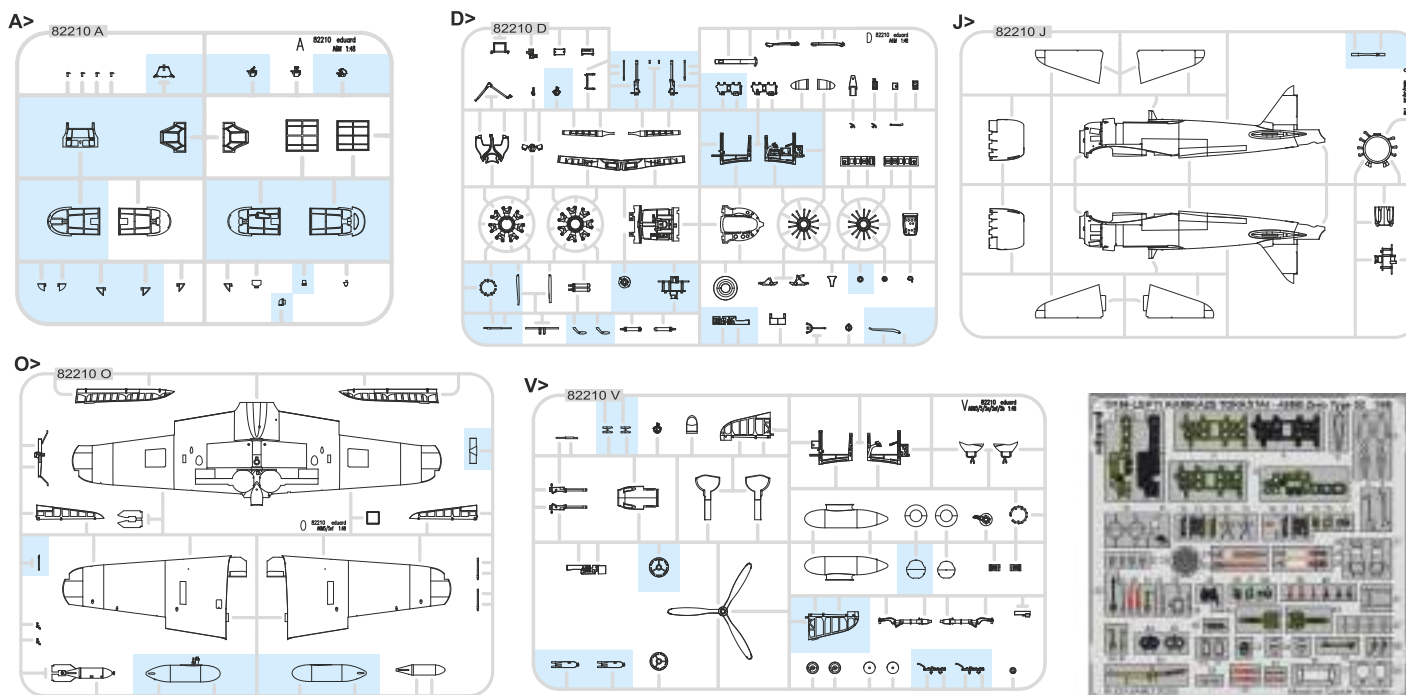
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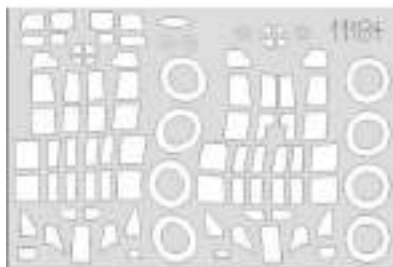
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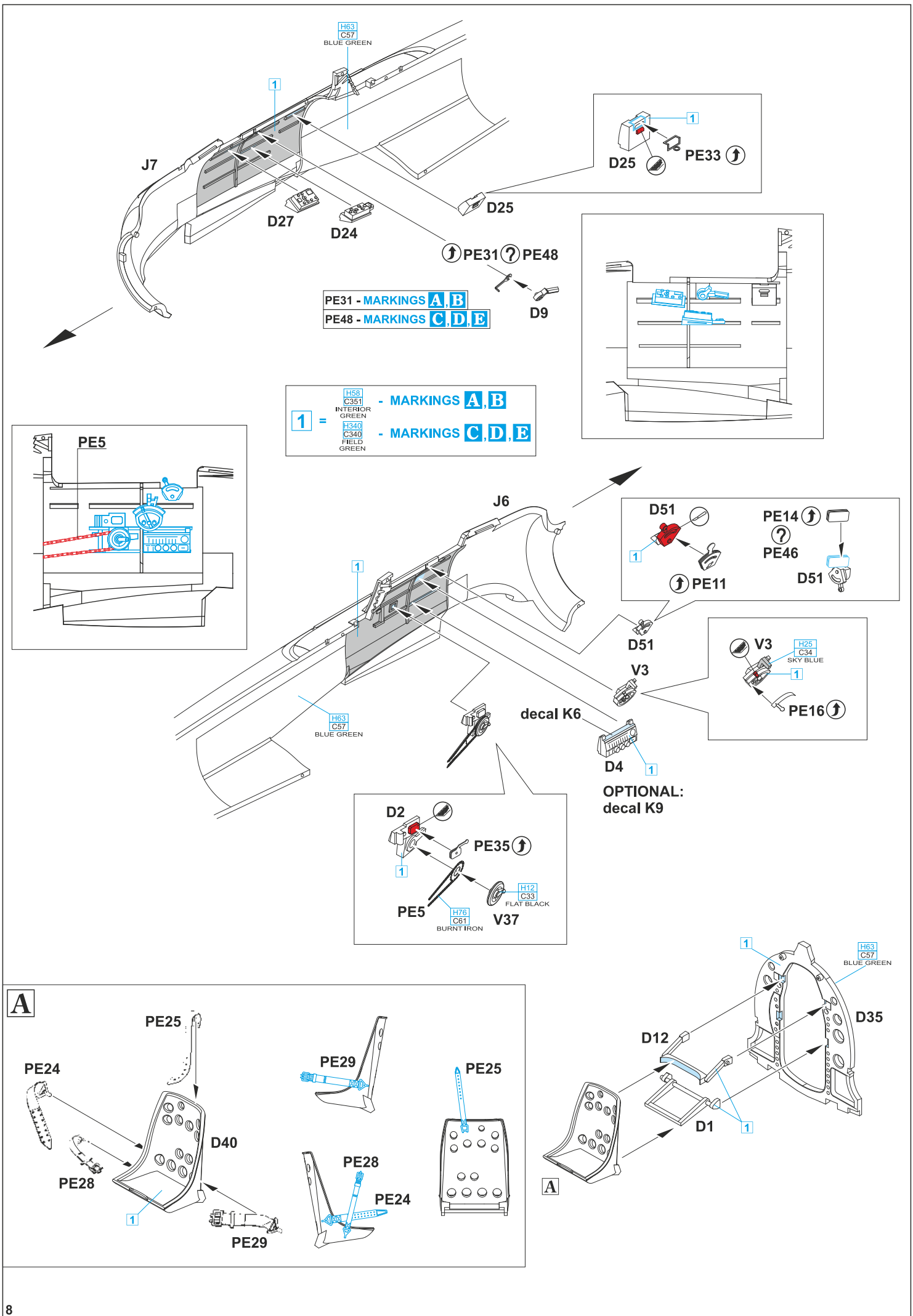
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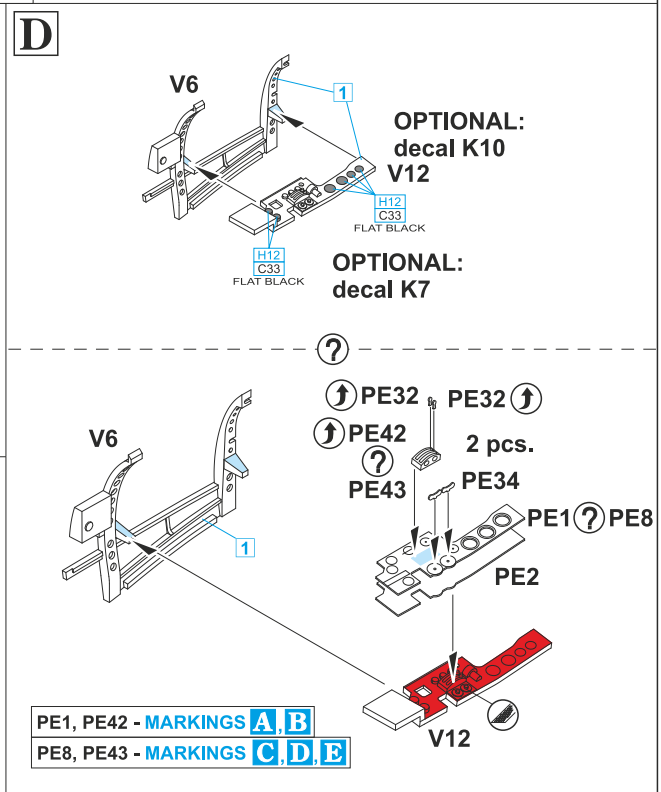
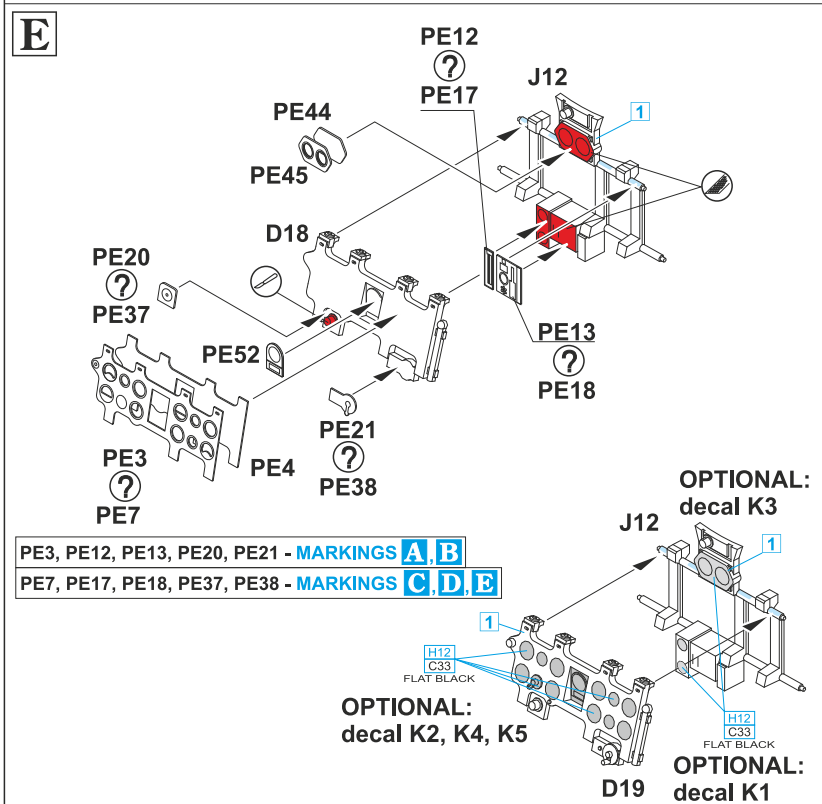
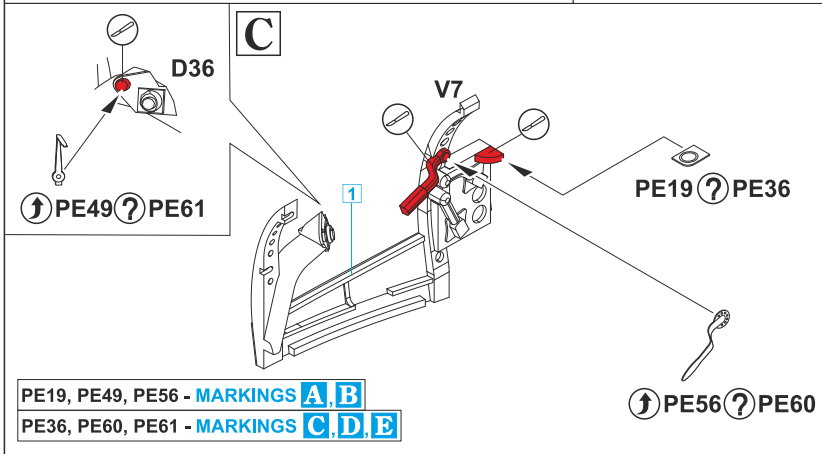
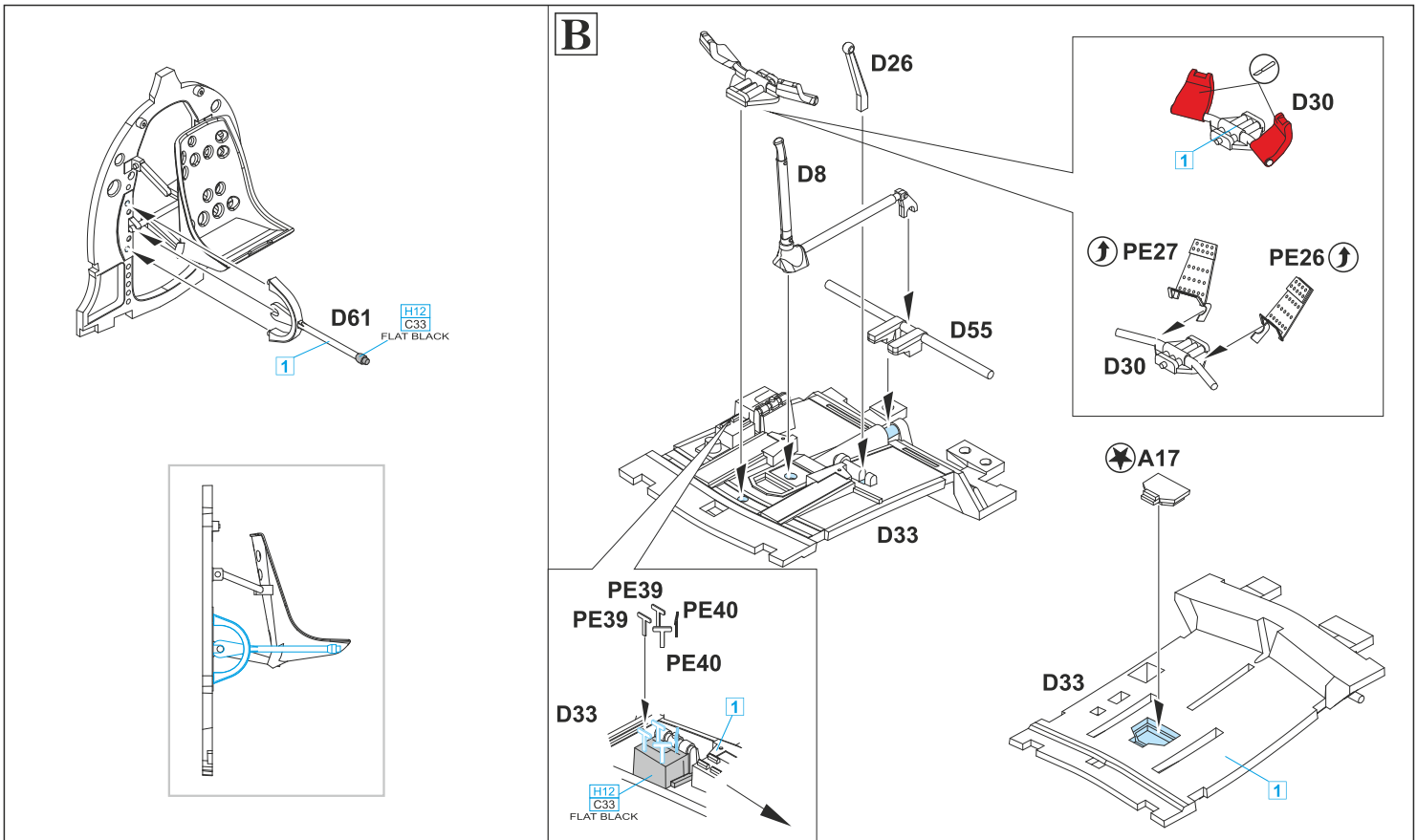
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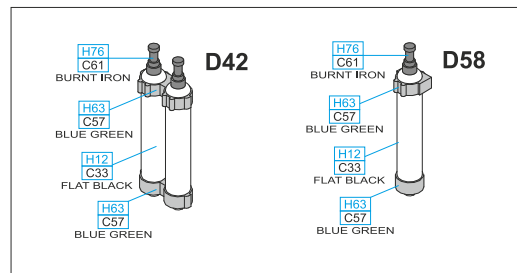
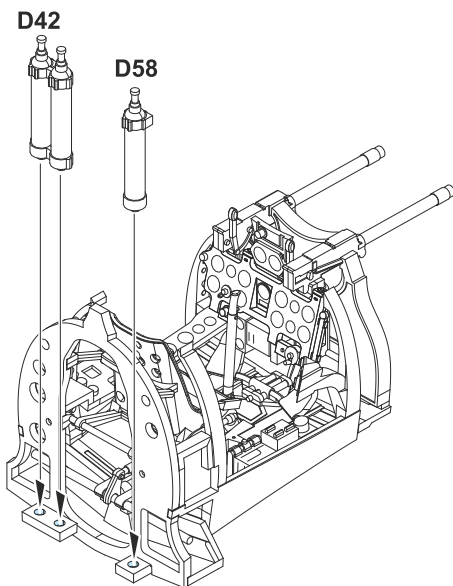
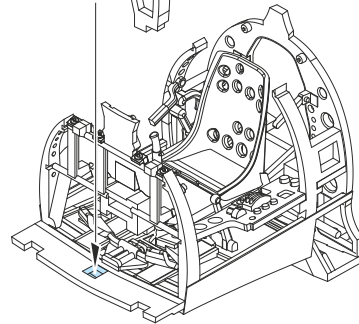
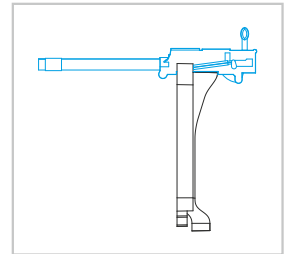
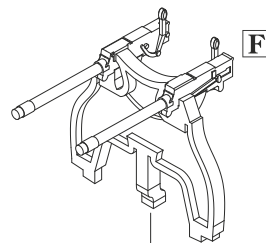
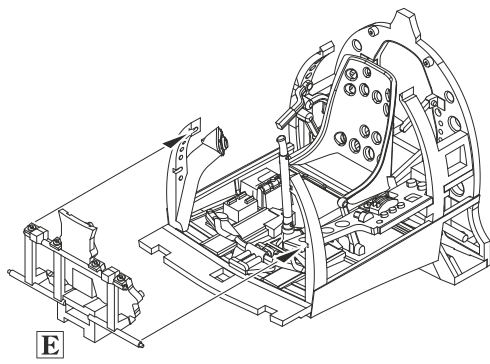
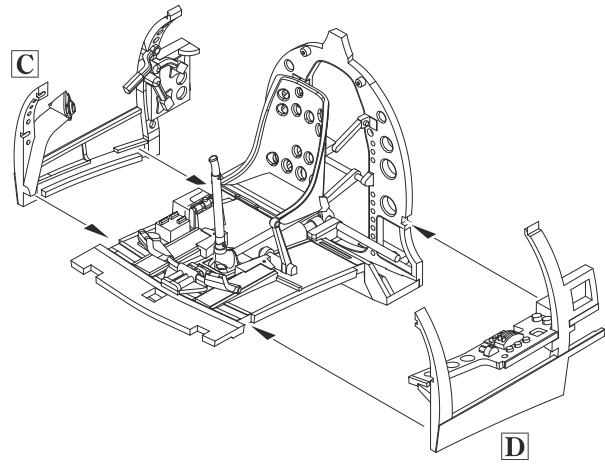
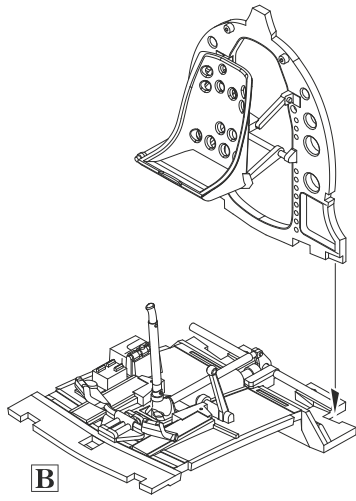
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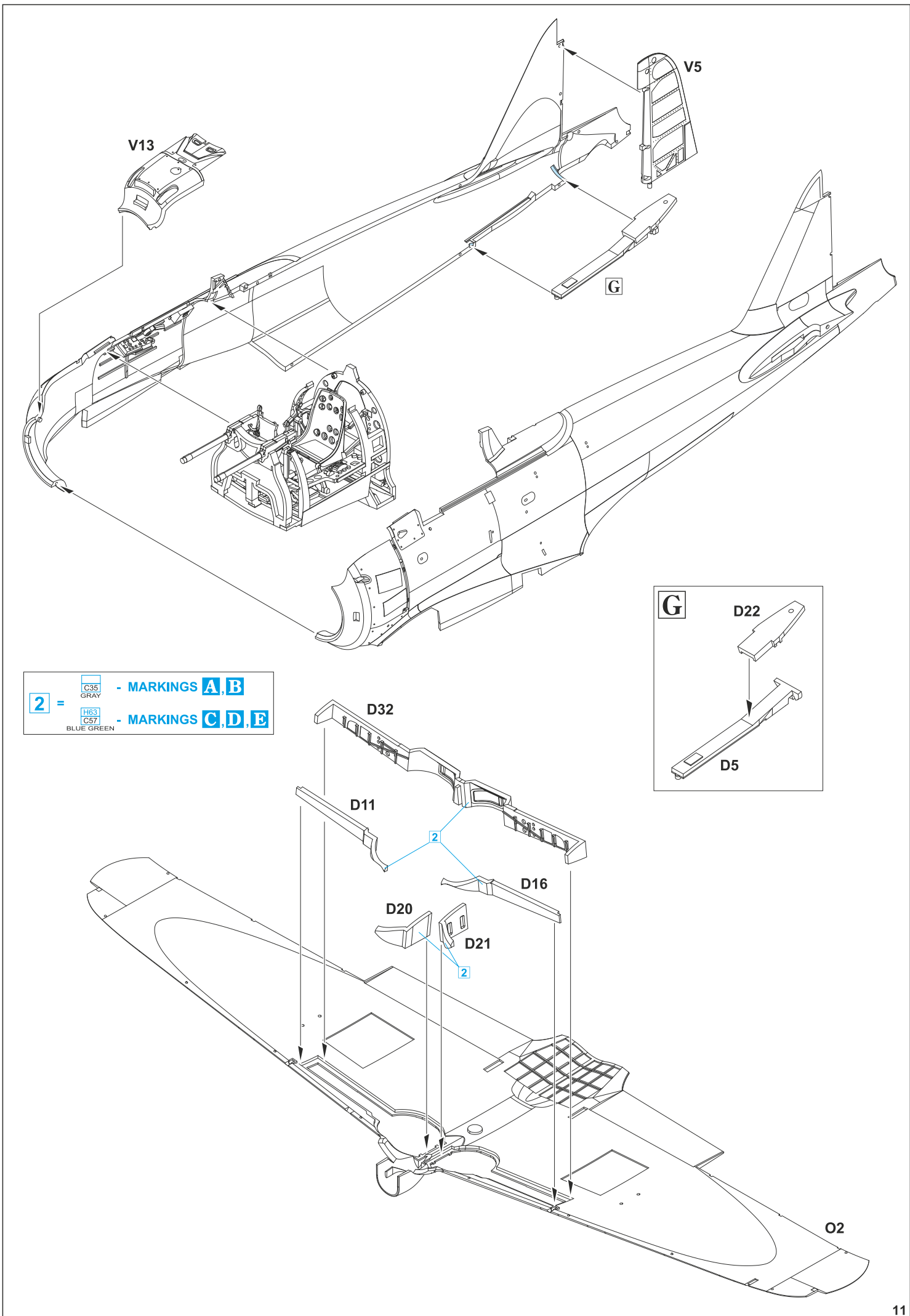
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H12	C33	FLAT BLACK
H24	C58	ORANGE YELLOW
H25	C34	SKY BLUE
H47	C41	RED BROWN
H58	C351	INTERIOR GREEN
H63	C57	METALLIC BLUE GREEN
H76	C61	BURNT IRON
H77	C137	TIRE BLACK
H90	C47	CLEAR RED
H93	C50	CLEAR BLUE

GSI Creos (GUNZE)		
AQUEOUS	Mr.COLOR	
H324	C324	LIGHT GRAY
H340	C340	FIELD GREEN
H417	C117	LIGHT BLUE
	C15	DARK GREEN
	C35	GRAY
	C56	IJN GRAY GREEN
	C124	DARK GREEN
	C125	COWLING COLOR
	C129	LIGHT GREEN
	C131	RED BROWN
Mr.COLOR SUPER METALLIC		
	SM201	SUPER FINE SILVER
	SM212	ALUMINIUM

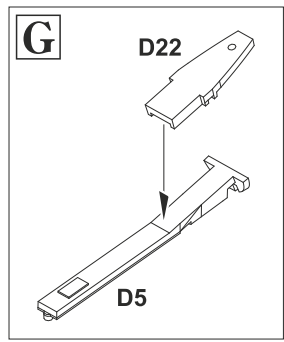


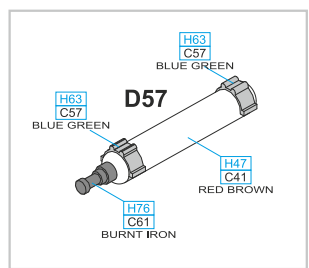
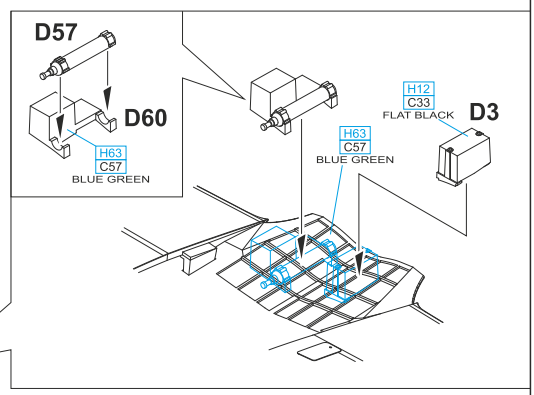
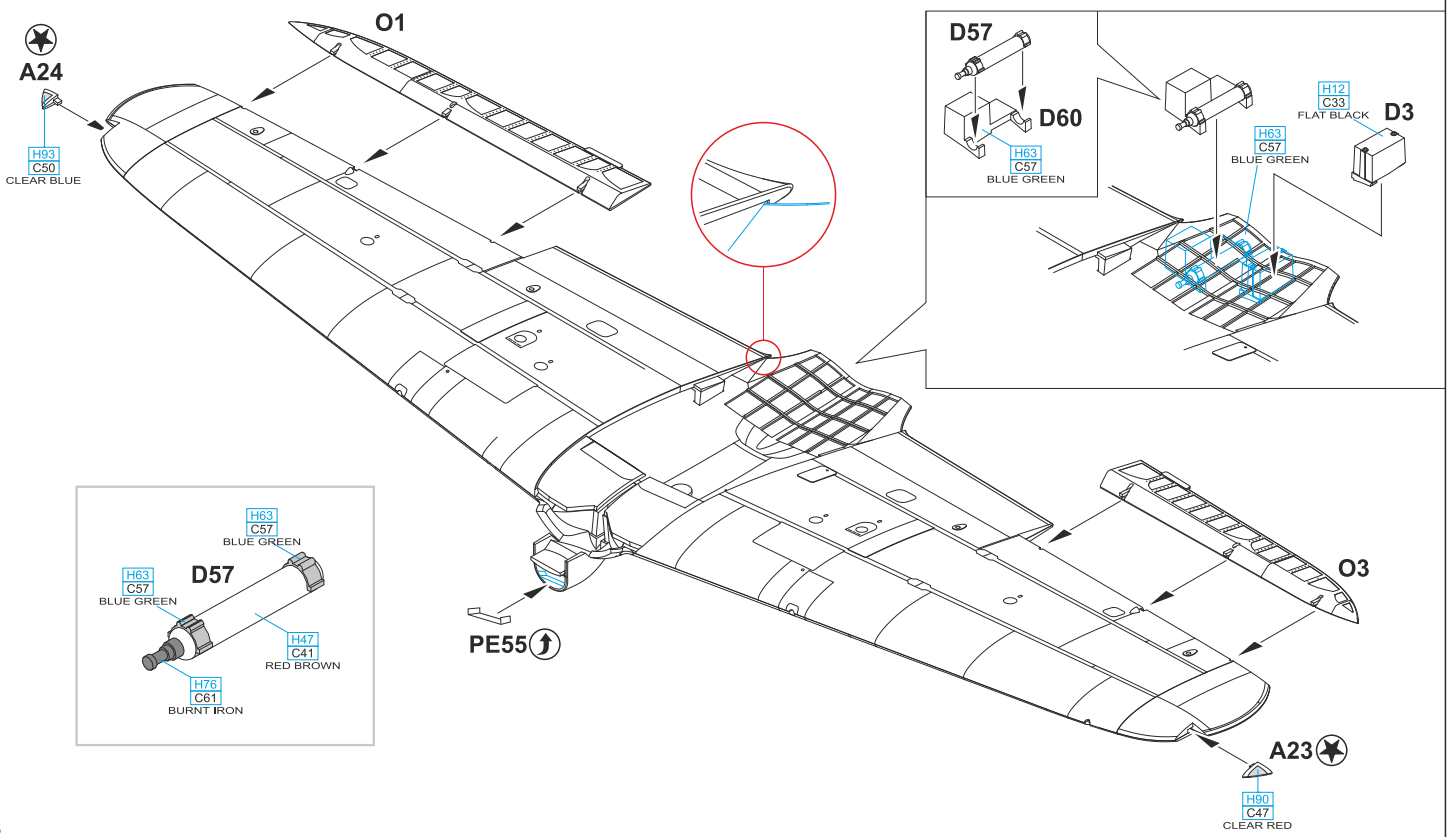
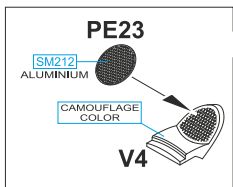
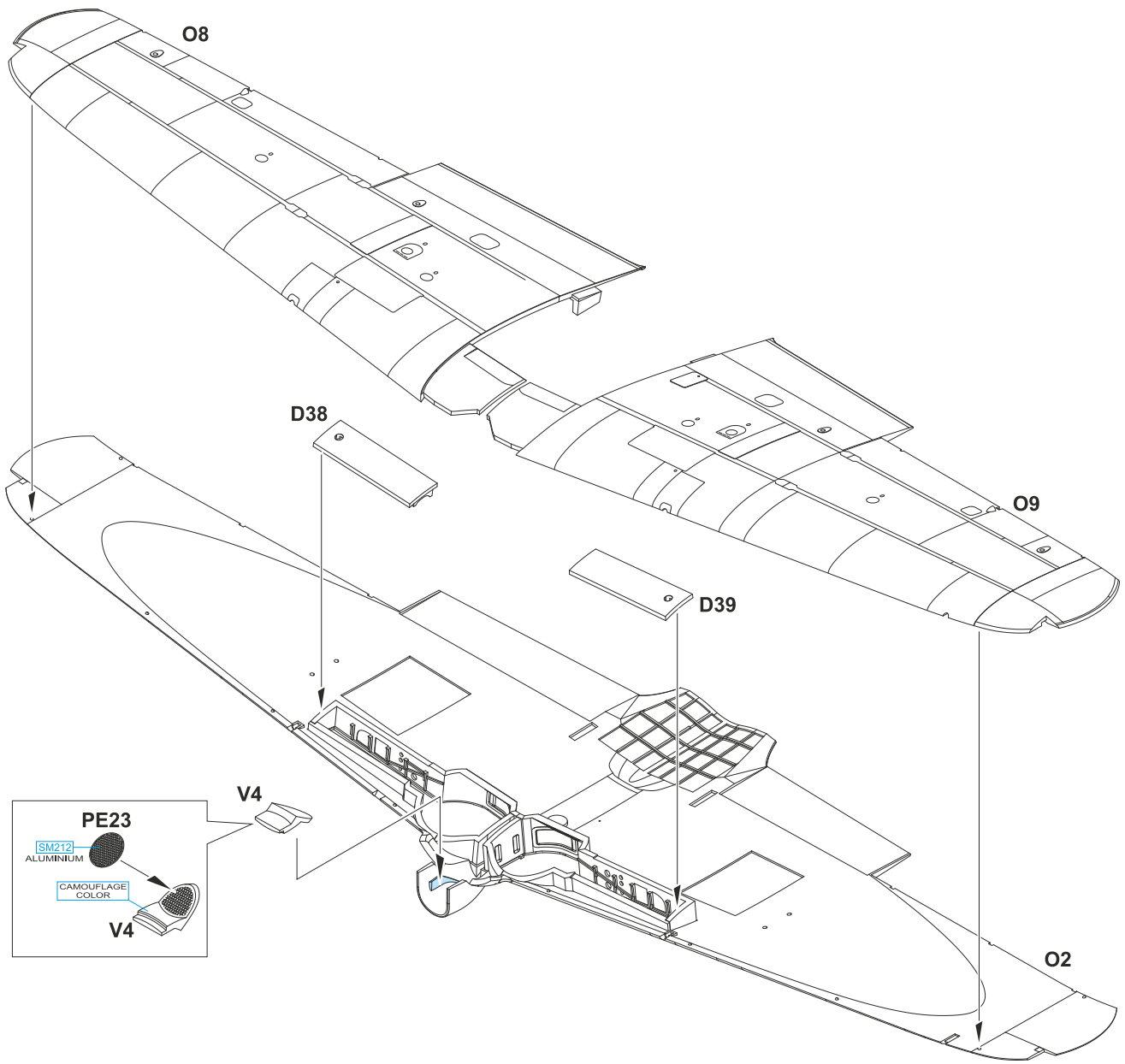


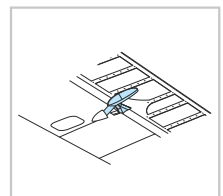
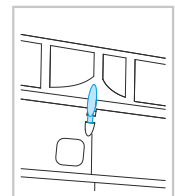
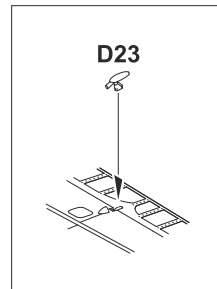
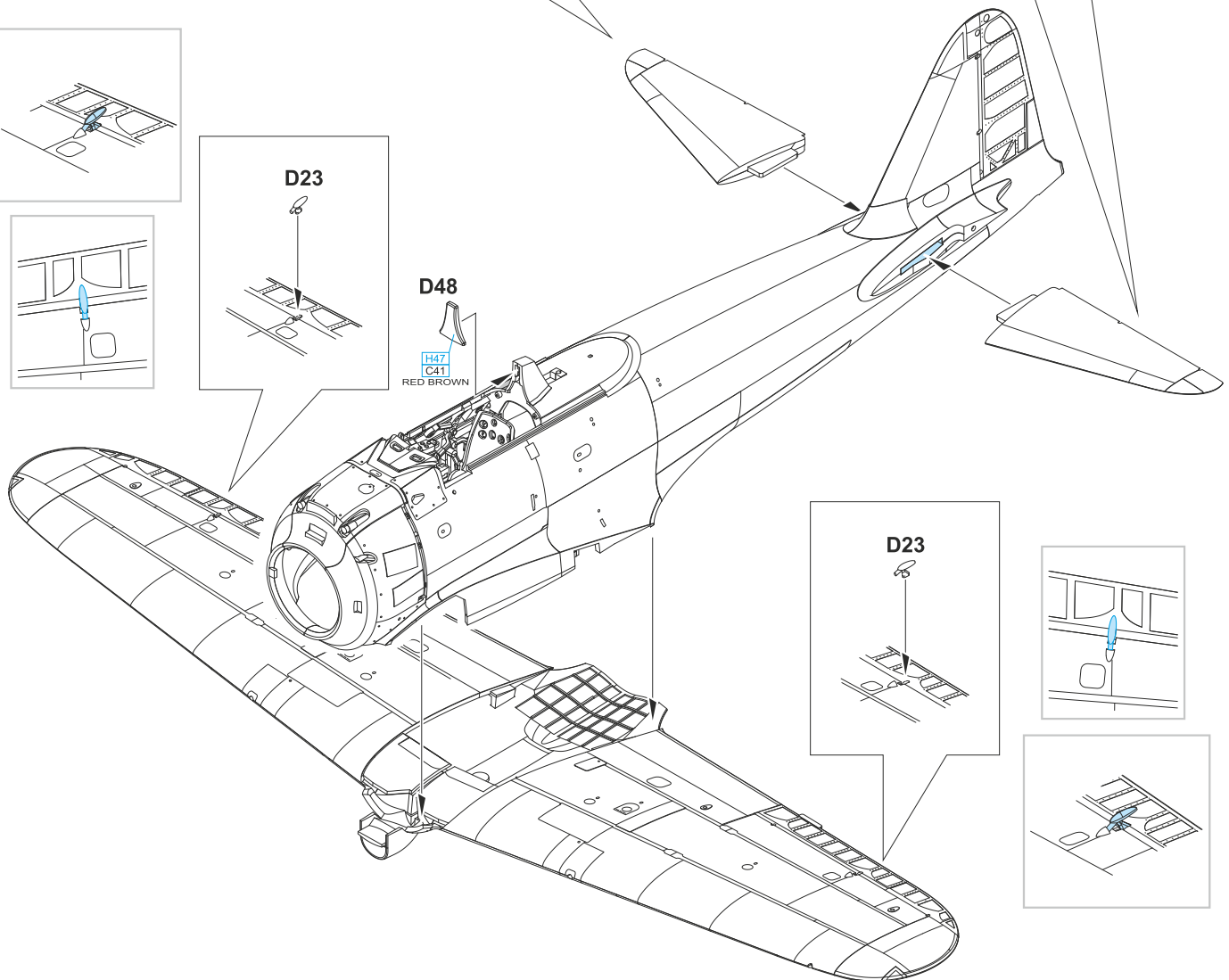
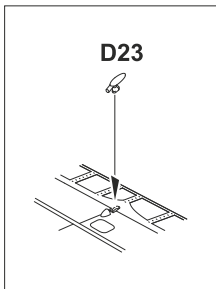
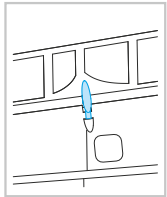
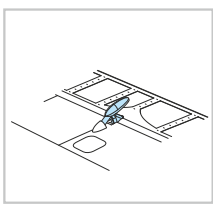
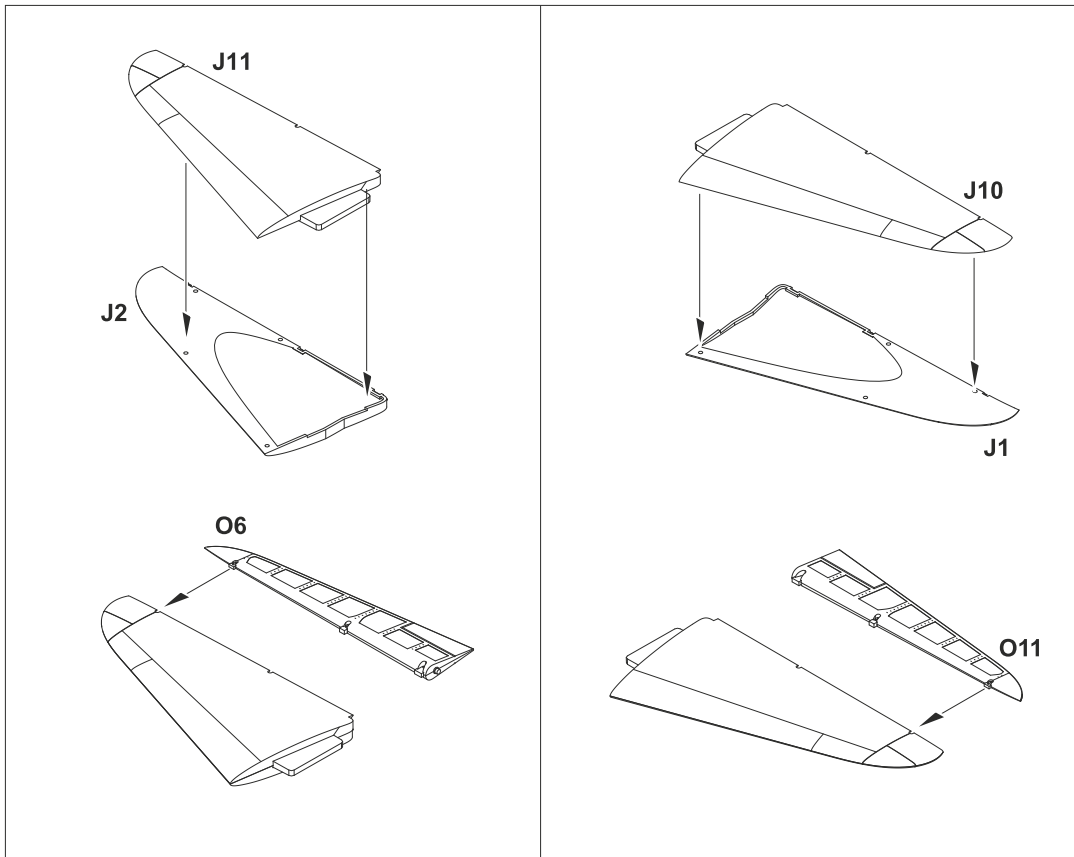




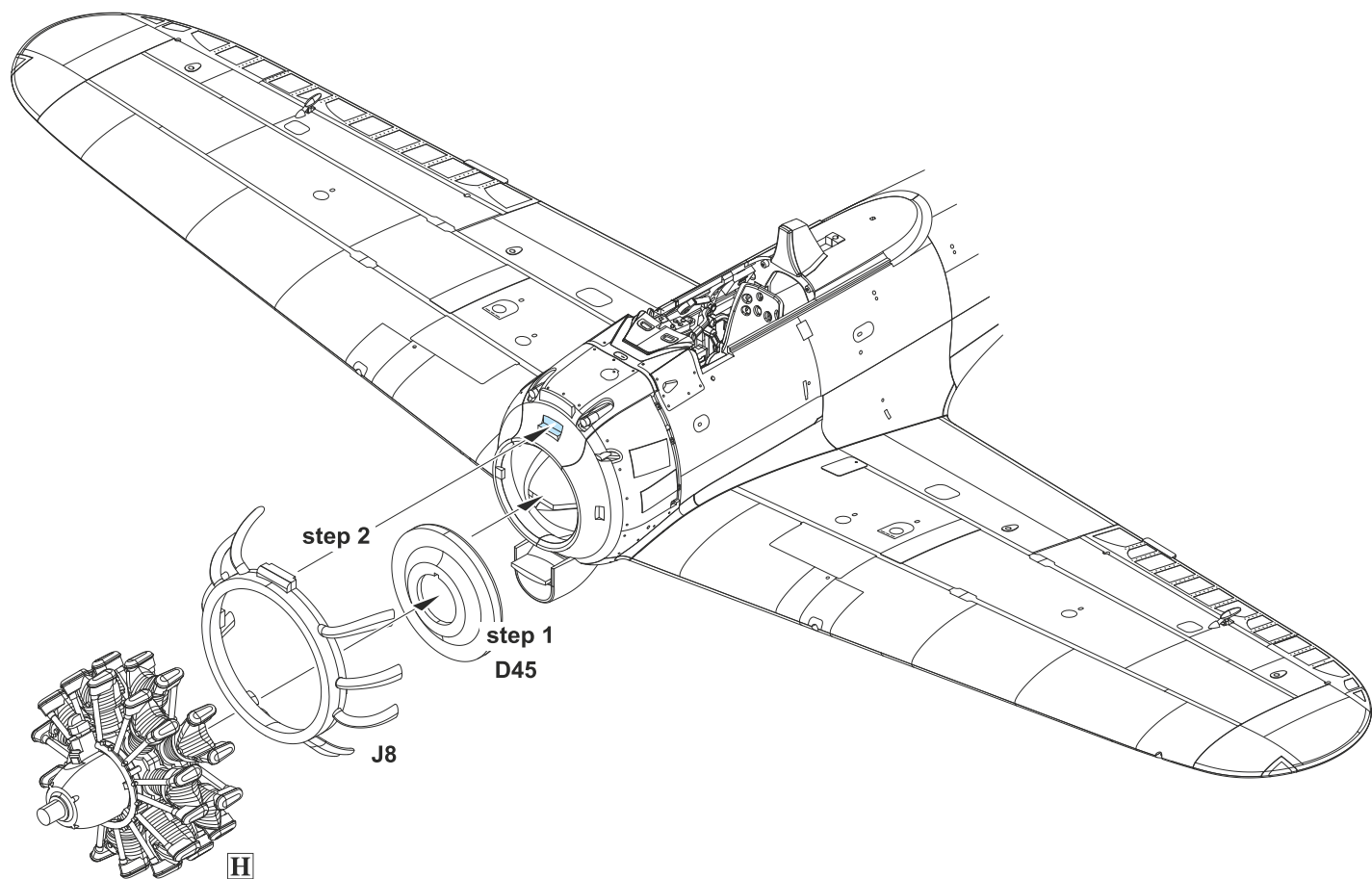
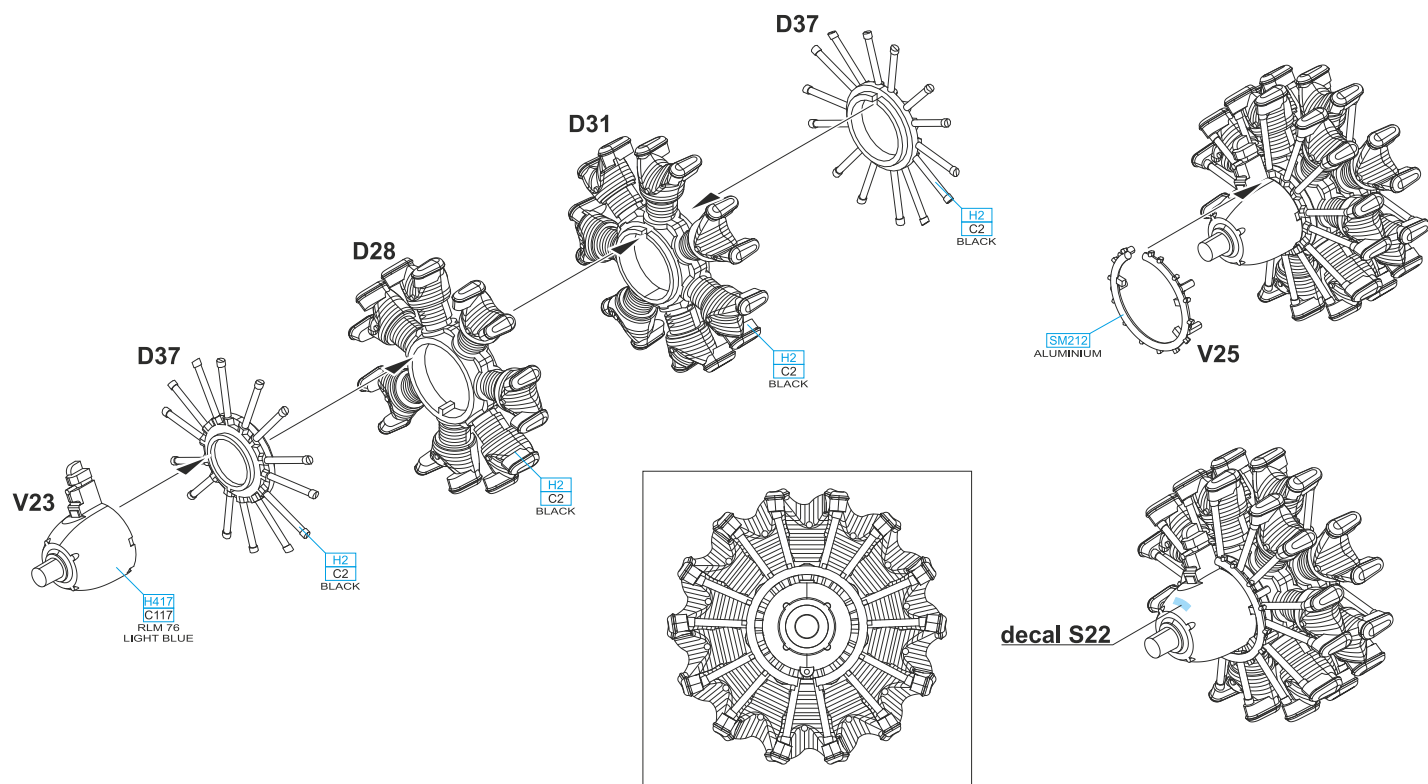
2 =
 - MARKINGS **A, B**
 - MARKINGS **C, D, E**
C35 GRAY
H63 C57 BLUE GREEN



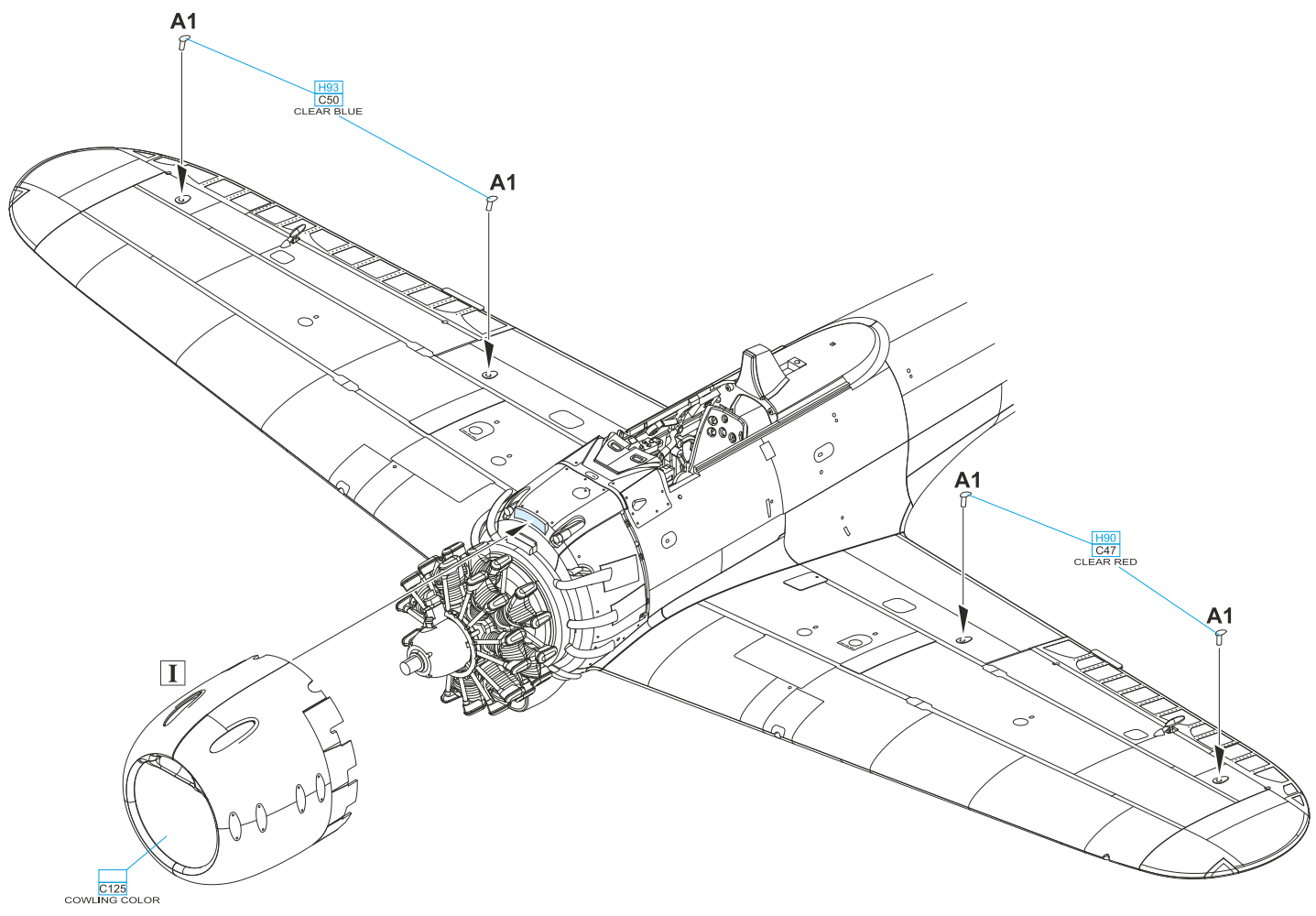
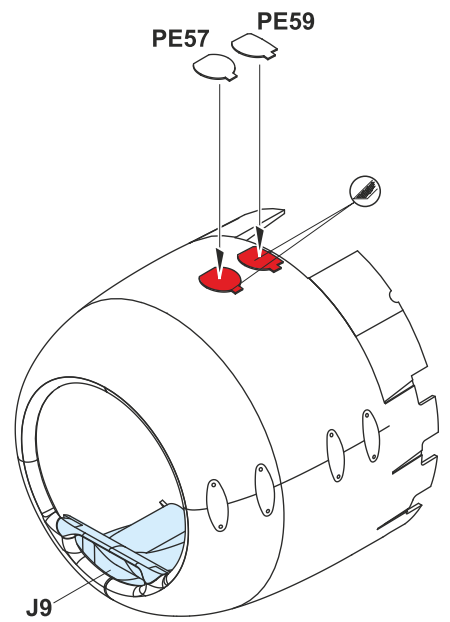
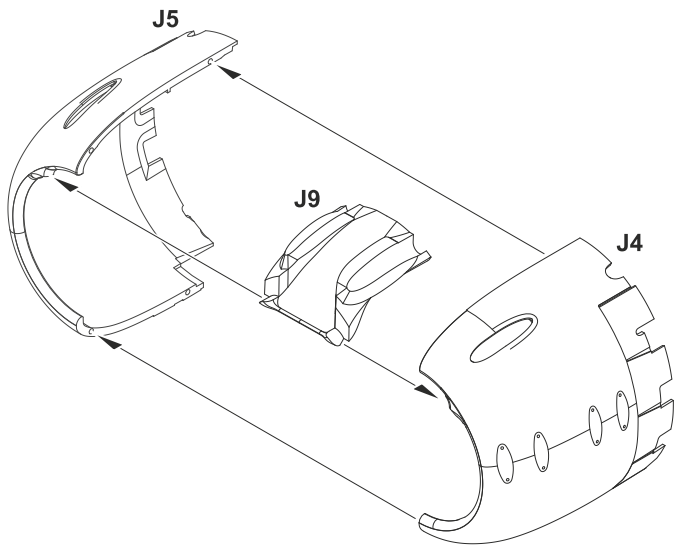




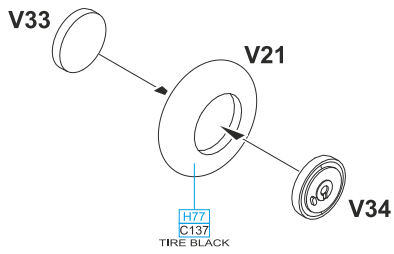
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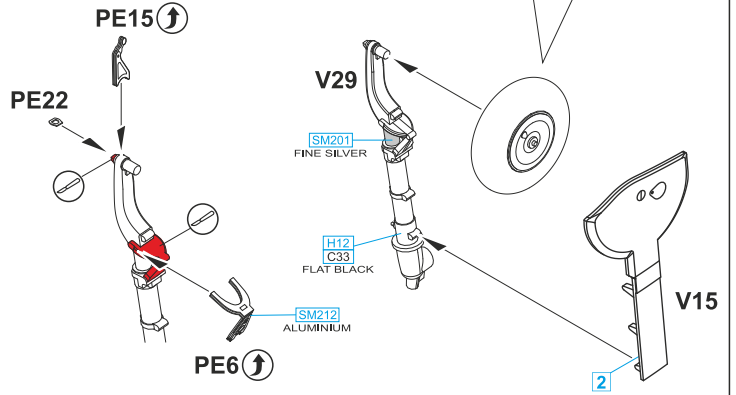
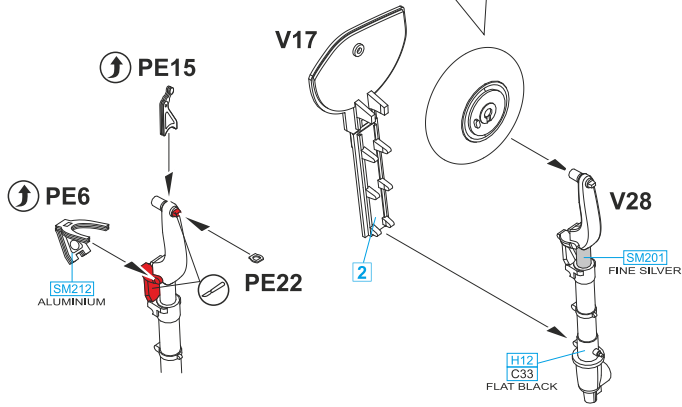
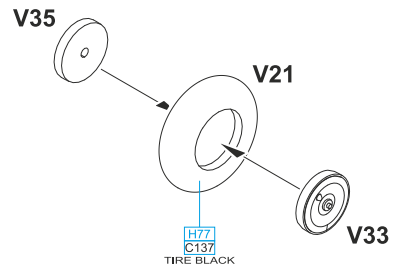
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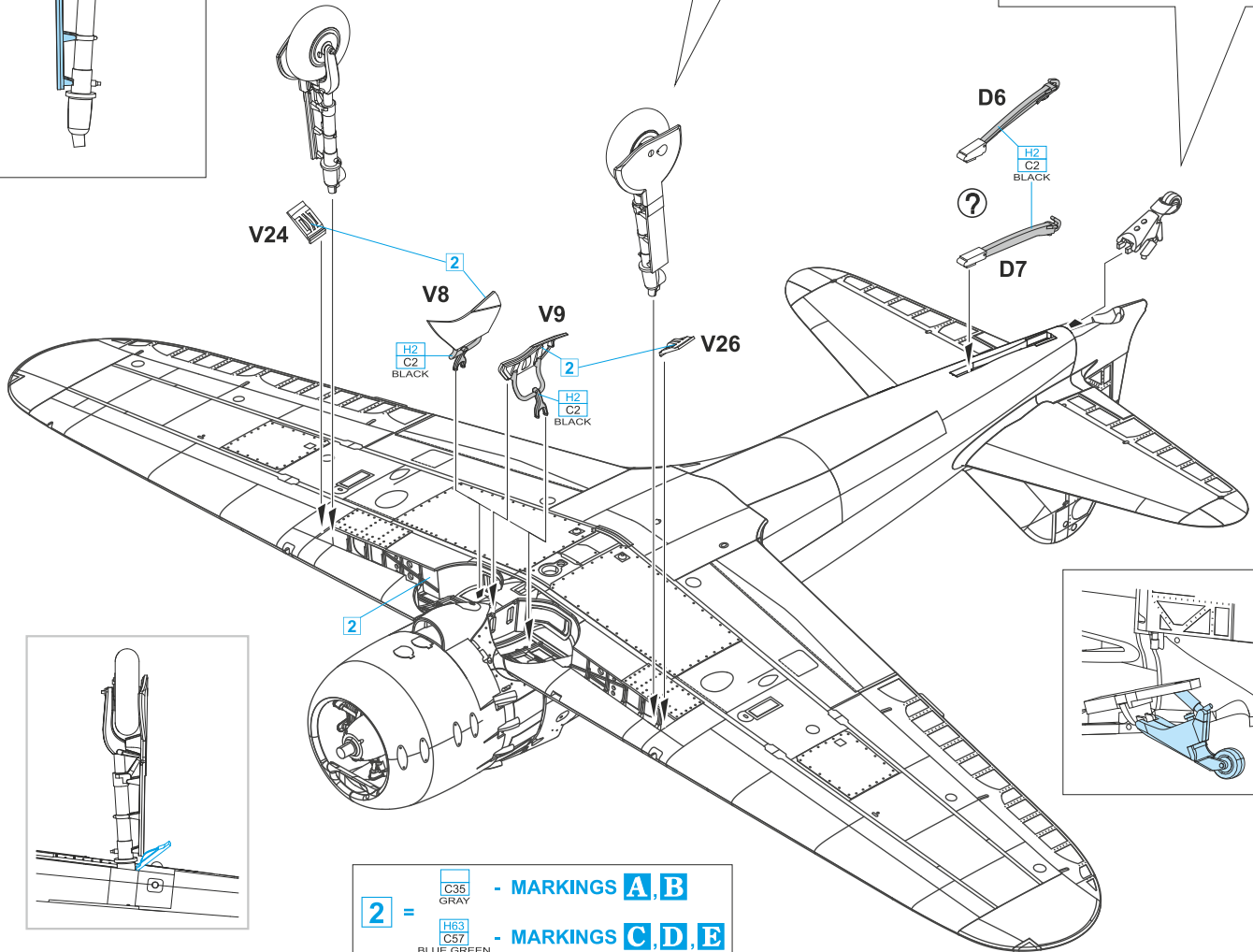
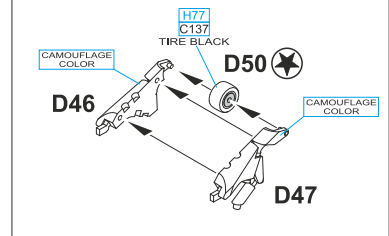
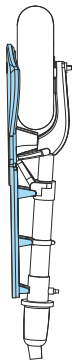
Portside



Starboard

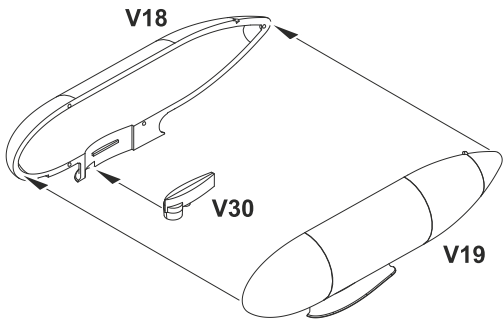


FRONT VIEW

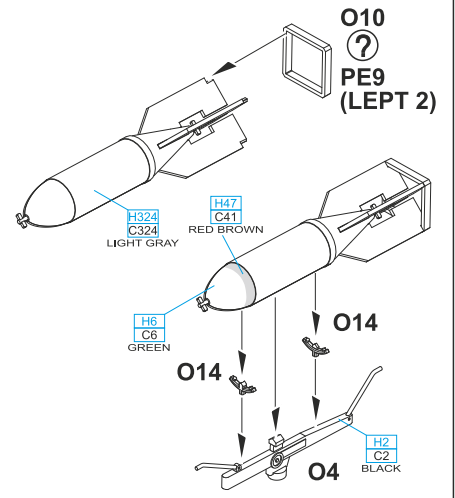
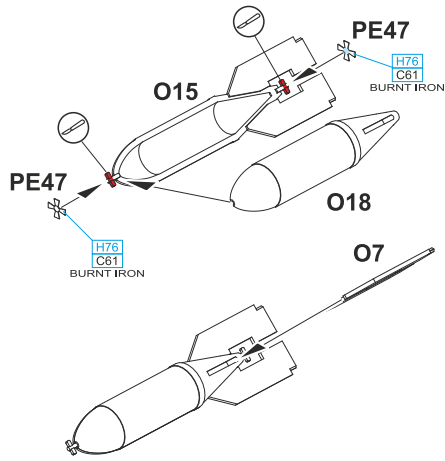


2 = C35 GRAY - MARKINGS **A, B**
H83 C57 BLUE GREEN - MARKINGS **C, D, E**

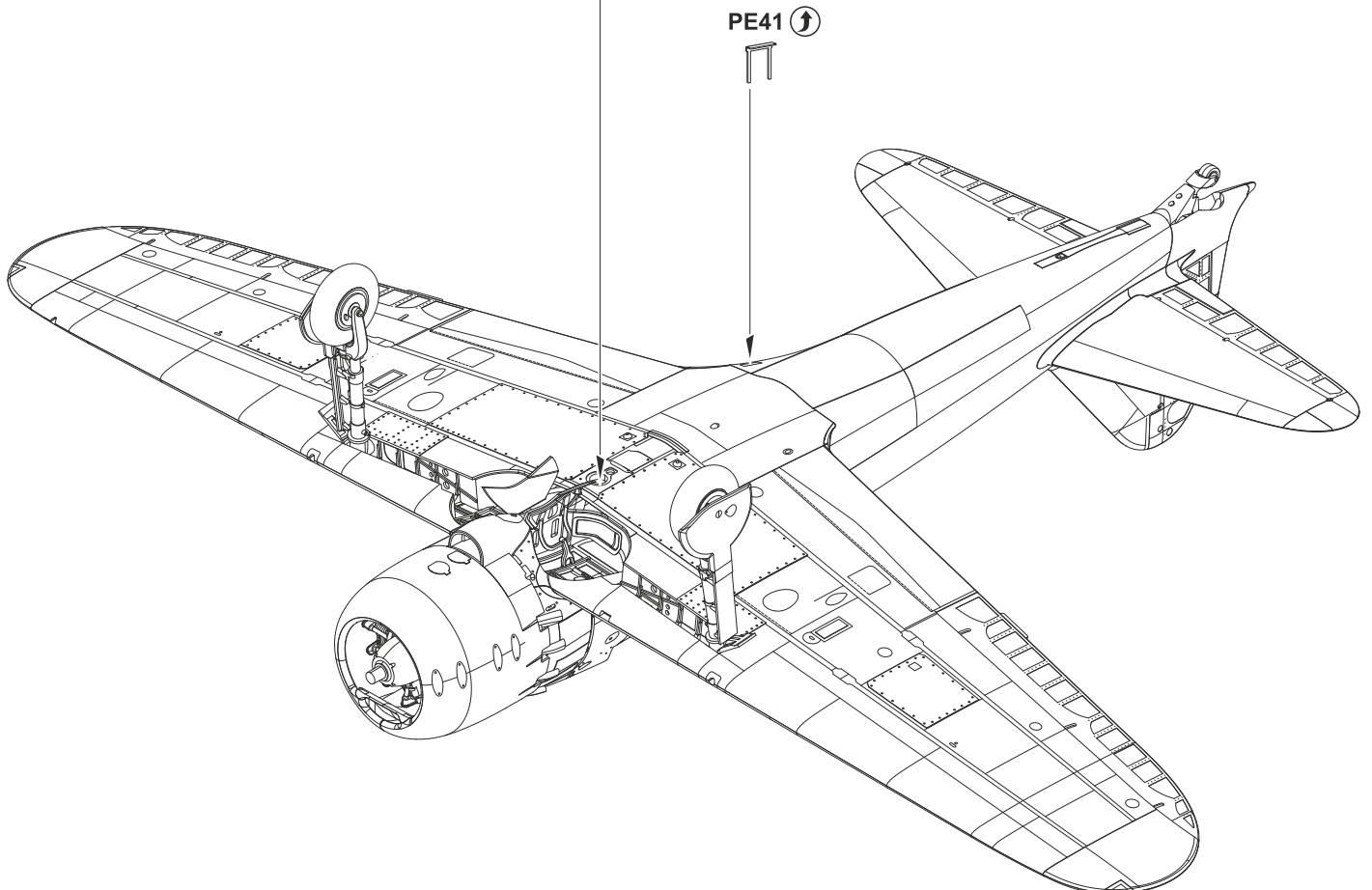
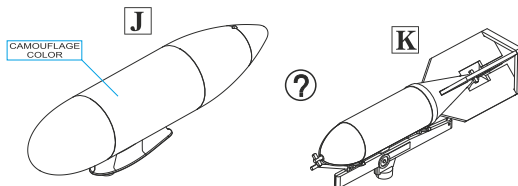
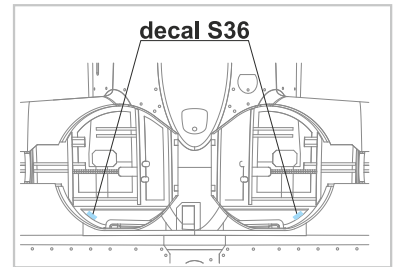
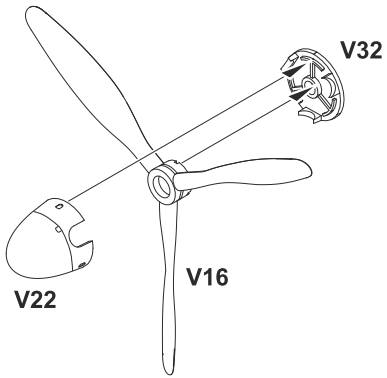
J MARKINGS **B, E** ONLY

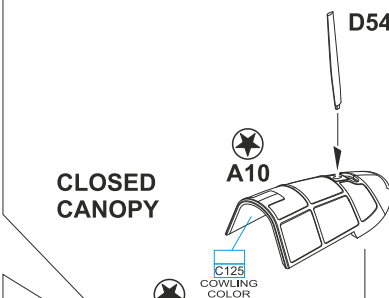
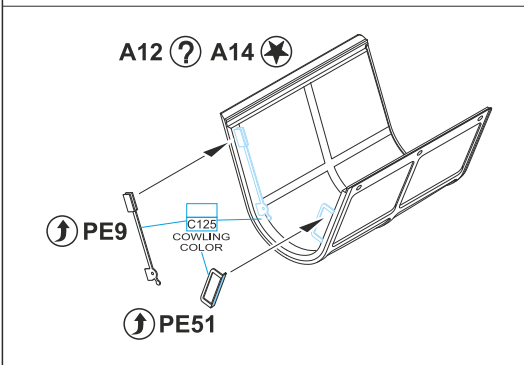
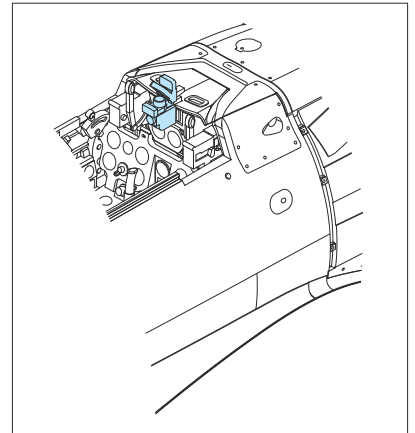
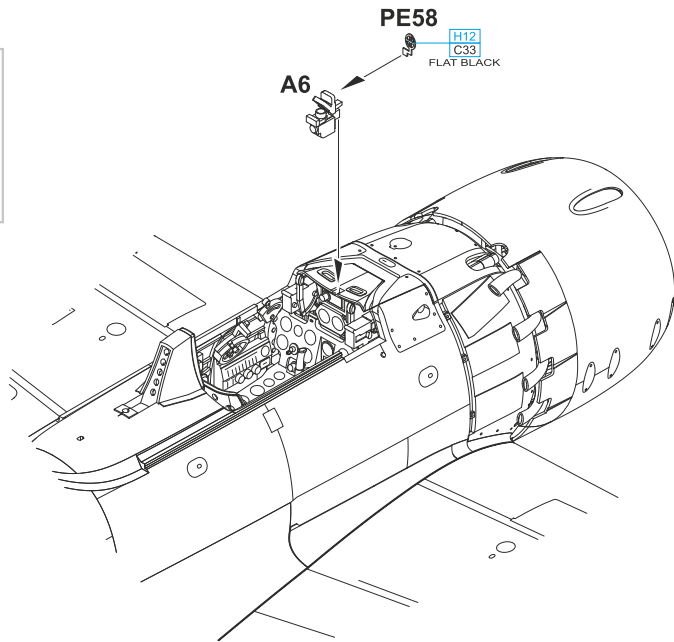
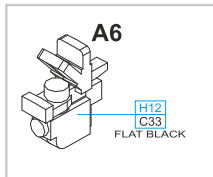


K MARKINGS **A, C, D** ONLY

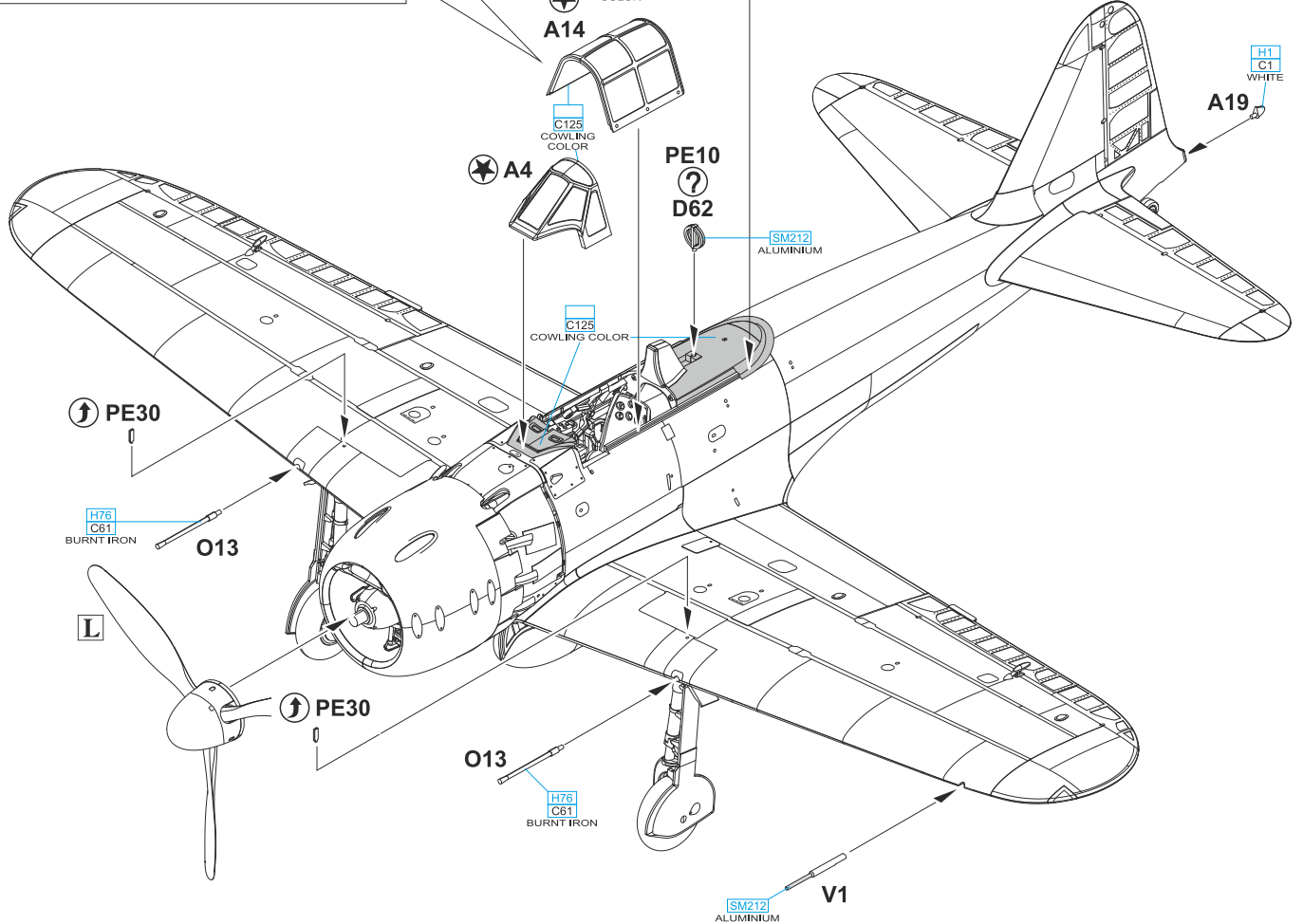


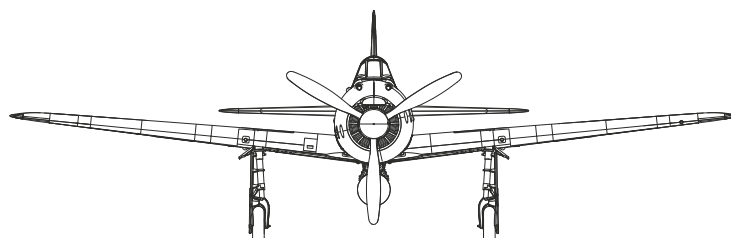
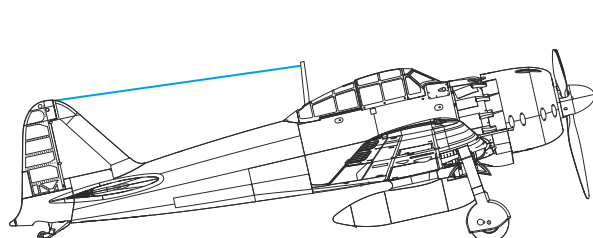
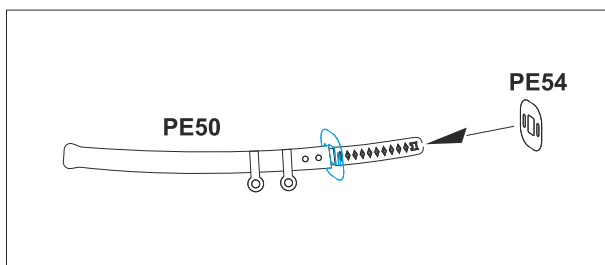
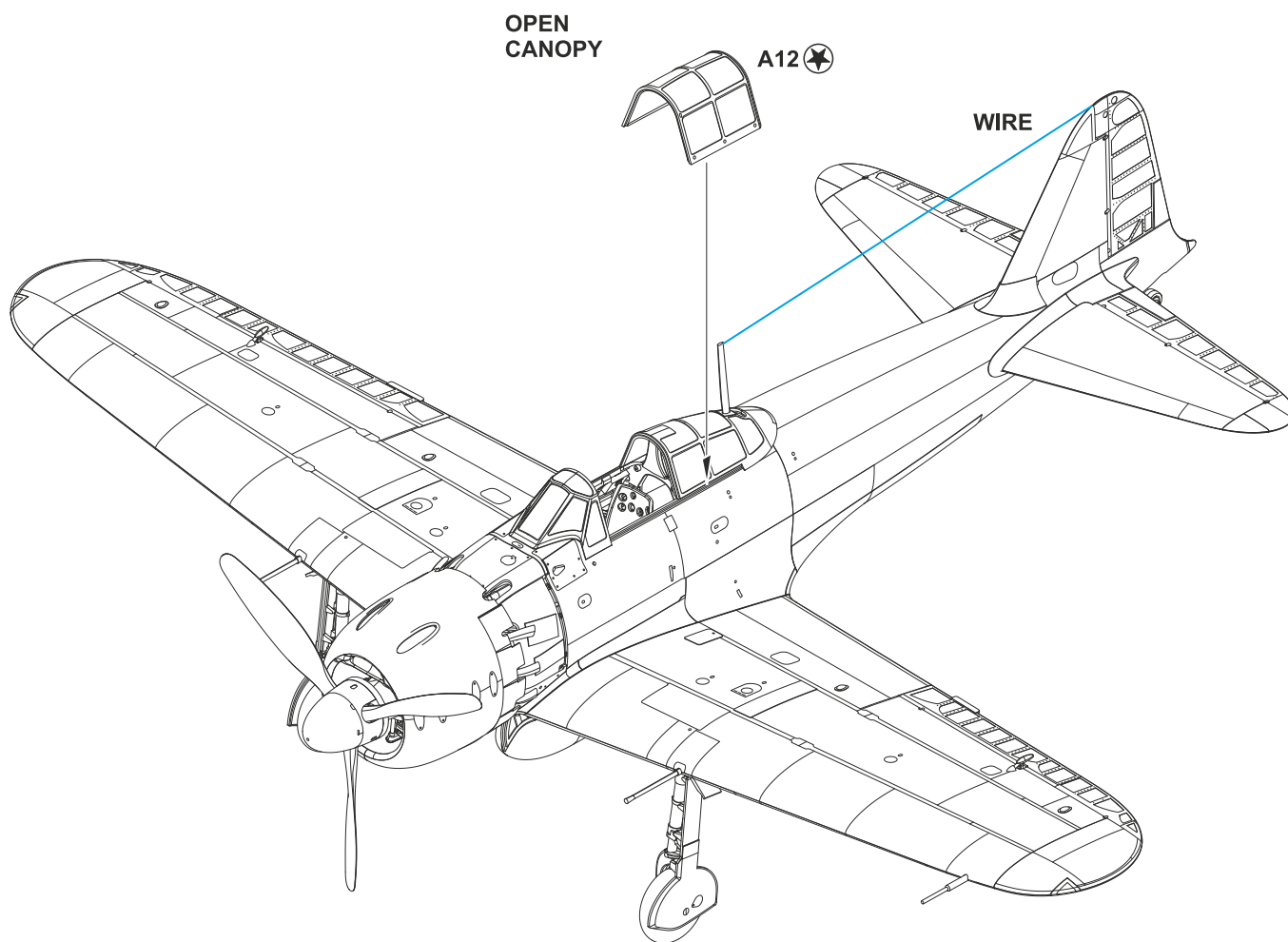
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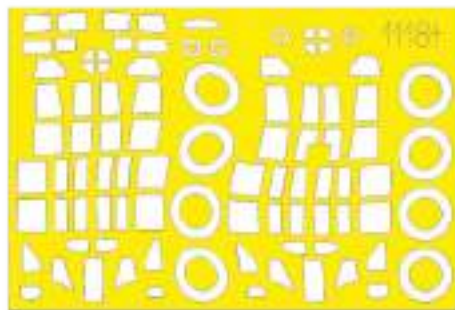




D62, PE10 - MARKINGS B, D ONLY







A23 A24



LIQUID MASK



D50

V21

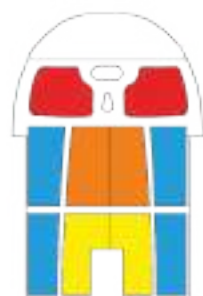


A17

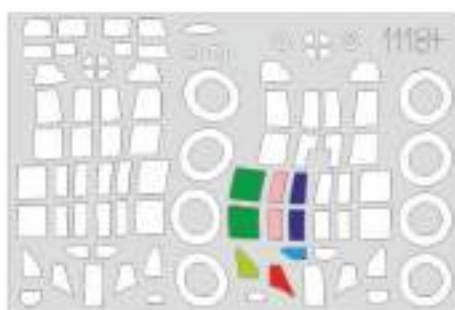
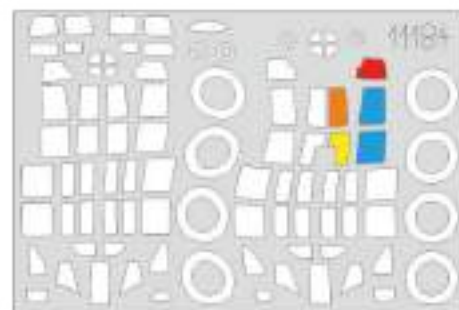


V21

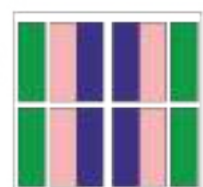
LIQUID MASK



A10



A12



A14



A4



ATTENTION



UPOZORNĚNÍ



ACHTUNG



ATTENTION



注意



Carefully read instruction sheet before assembling. When you use glue or paint, do not use near open flame and use in well ventilated room. Keep out of reach of small children. Children must not be allowed to suck any part, or pull vinyl bag over the head.



Před započítím stavby si pečlivě prostudujte stavební návod. Při používání barev a lepidel pracujte v dobře větrané místnosti. Lepidla ani barvy nepoužívejte v blízkosti otevřeného ohně. Model není určen malým dětem, mohlo by dojít k požití drobných dílů.

INSTRUCTION SIGNS * INSTR. SYMBOLS * INSTRUKTION SINNBILDEN * SYMBOLES * 記号の説明

OPTIONAL
VOLBABEND
OHNOUSAND
BROUSITOPEN HOLE
VYVRTAT OTVORSYMETRICAL ASSEMBLY
SYMETRICKÁ MONTÁŽREMOVE
ODRÍZNOUTREVERSE SIDE
OTOČITAPPLY EDUARD MASK
AND PAINT
POUŽIT EDUARD MASK
NABARVIT**PLEASE CHECK THE LATEST VERSION OF THE INSTRUCTIONS ON www.eduard.com**

PARTS



DÍLY



TEILE

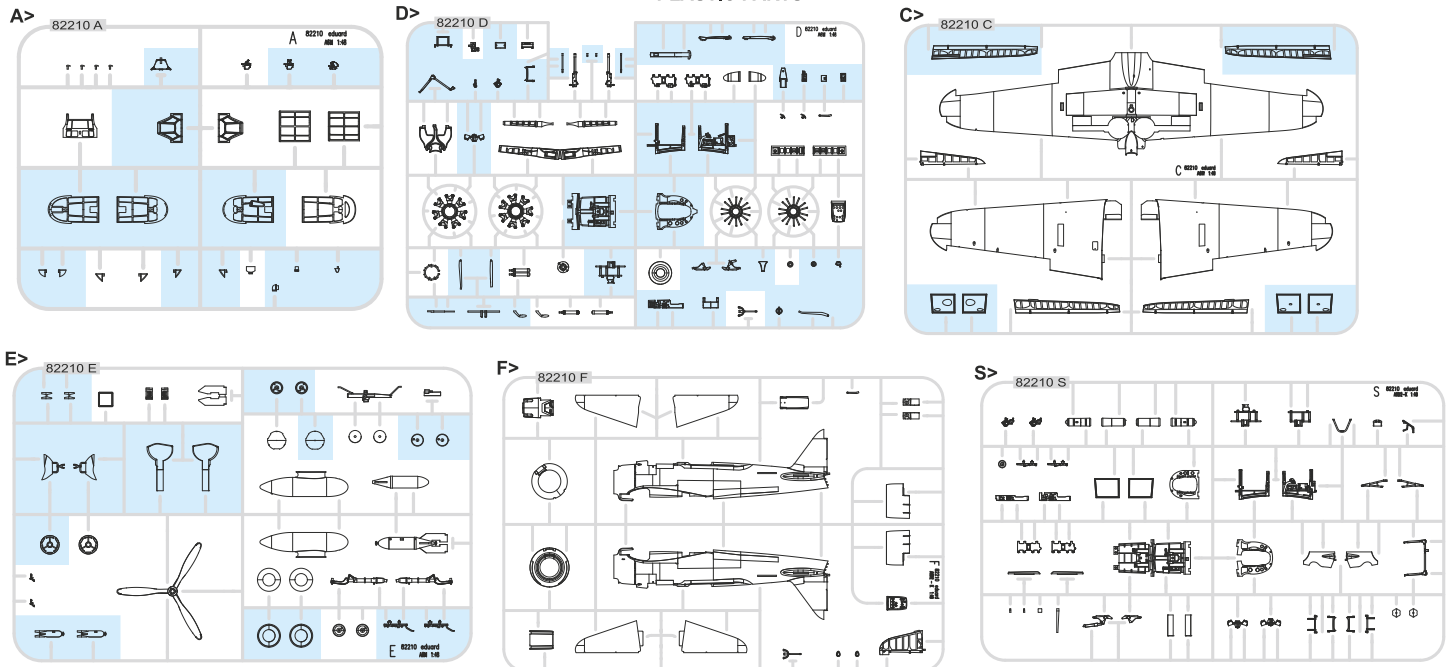


PIÈCES

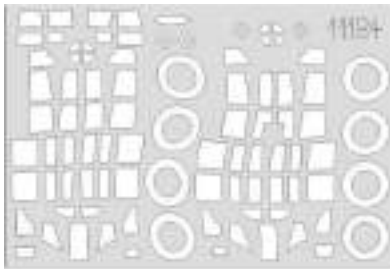


部品

PLASTIC PARTS



PE - PHOTO ETCHED DETAIL PARTS

eduard
MASK

A6M2-K



-Parts not for use. -Teile werden nicht verwendet. -Pièces à ne pas utiliser. -Tyto díly nepoužívejte při stavbě. - 使用しない部品

COLOURS



BARVY



FARBEN



PEINTURE

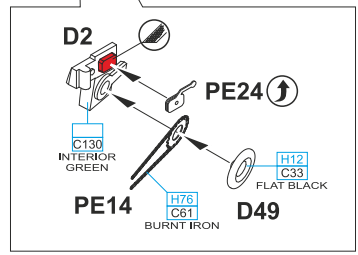
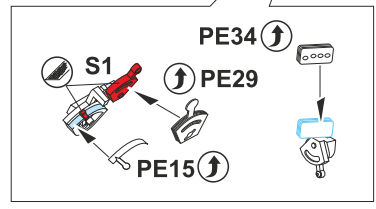
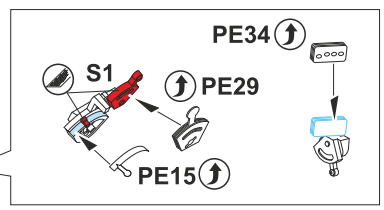
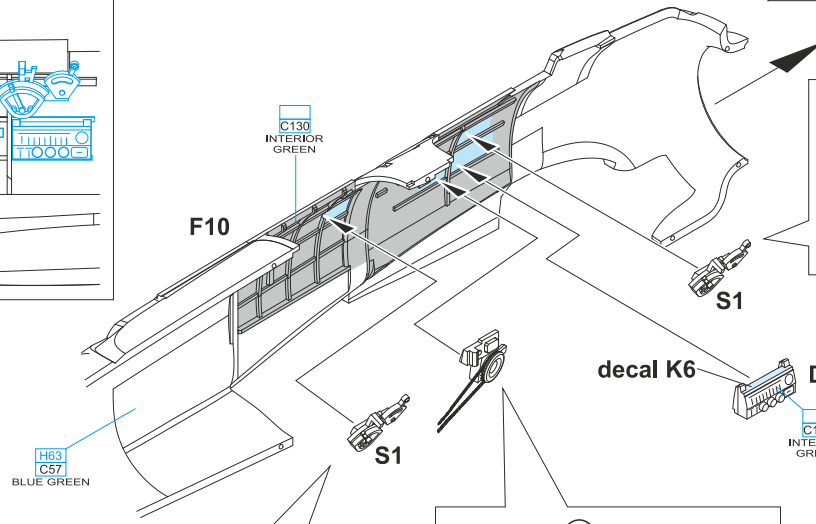
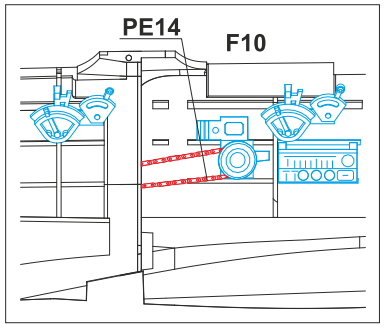
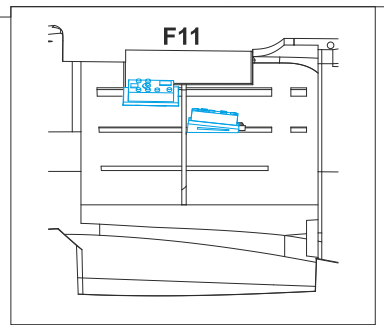
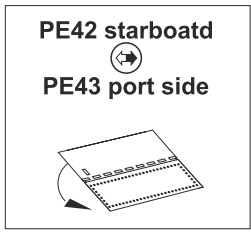
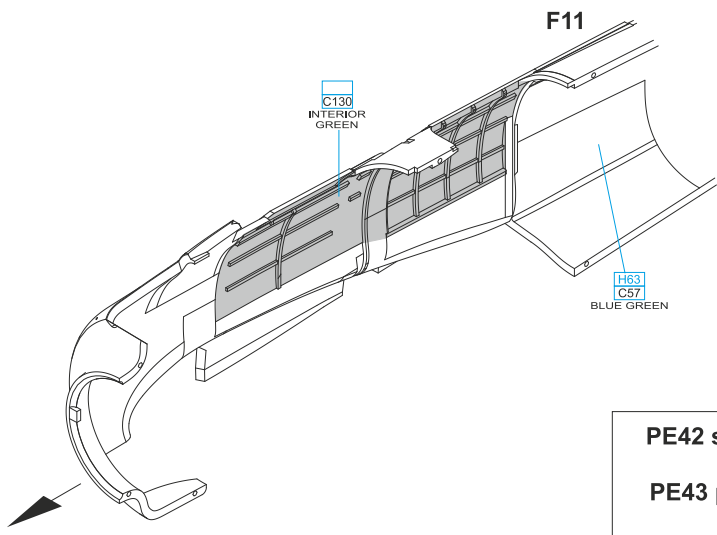
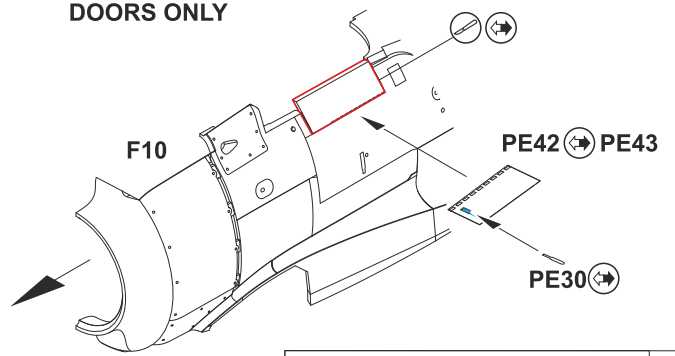


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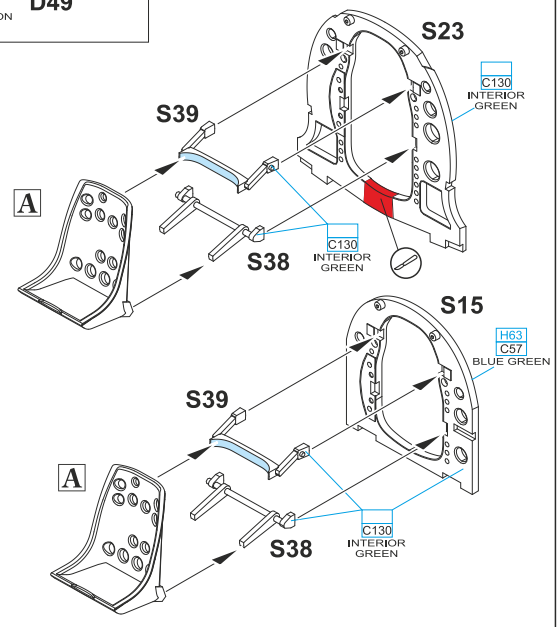
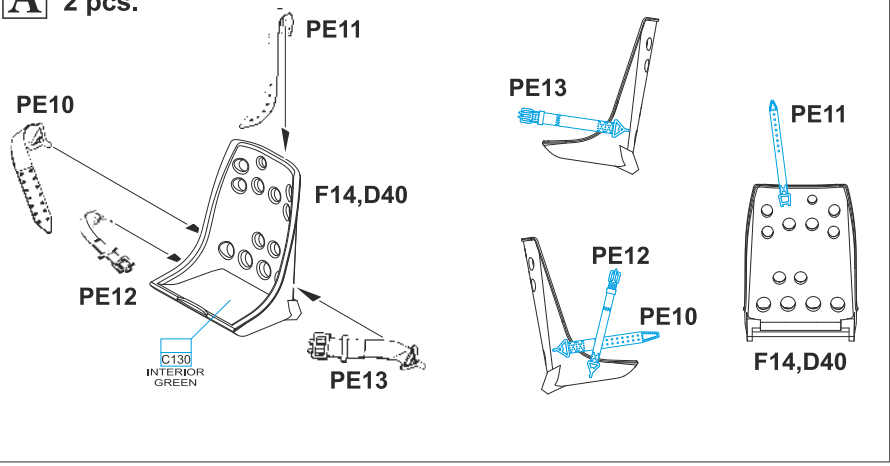
GSI Creos (GUNZE)		
AQUEOUS	Mr.COLOR	
H1	C1	WHITE
H2	C2	BLACK
H6	C6	GREEN
H8	C8	SILVER
H11	C62	FLAT WHITE
H12	C33	FLAT BLACK
H24	C58	ORANGE YELLOW
H63	C57	METALLIC BLUE GREEN
H76	C61	BURNT IRON
H77	C137	TIRE BLACK
H90	C47	CLEAR RED
H93	C50	CLEAR BLUE

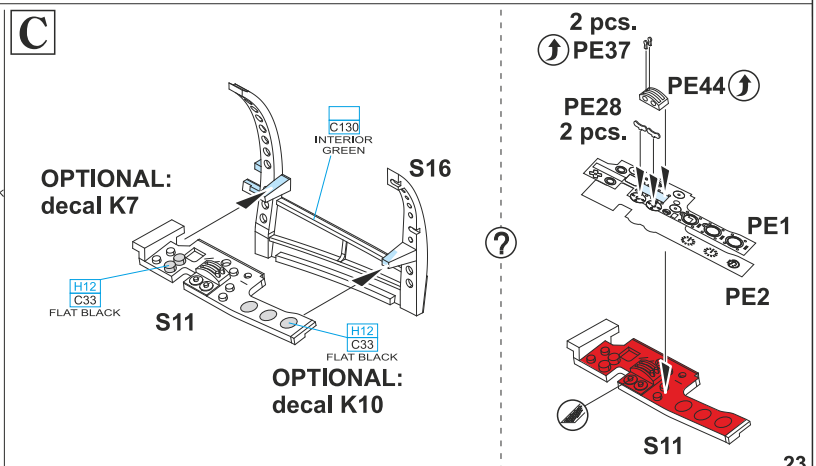
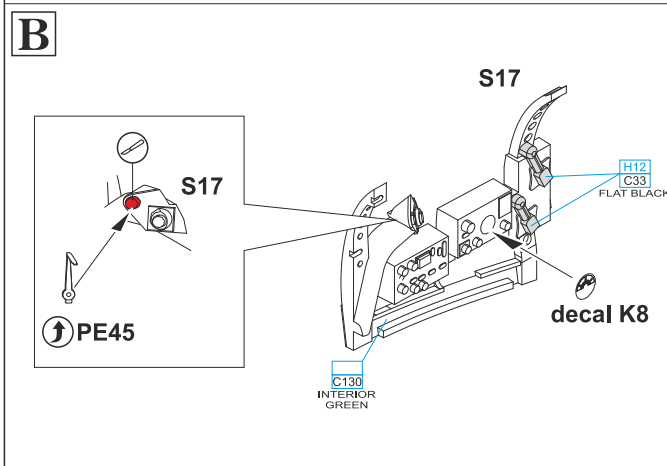
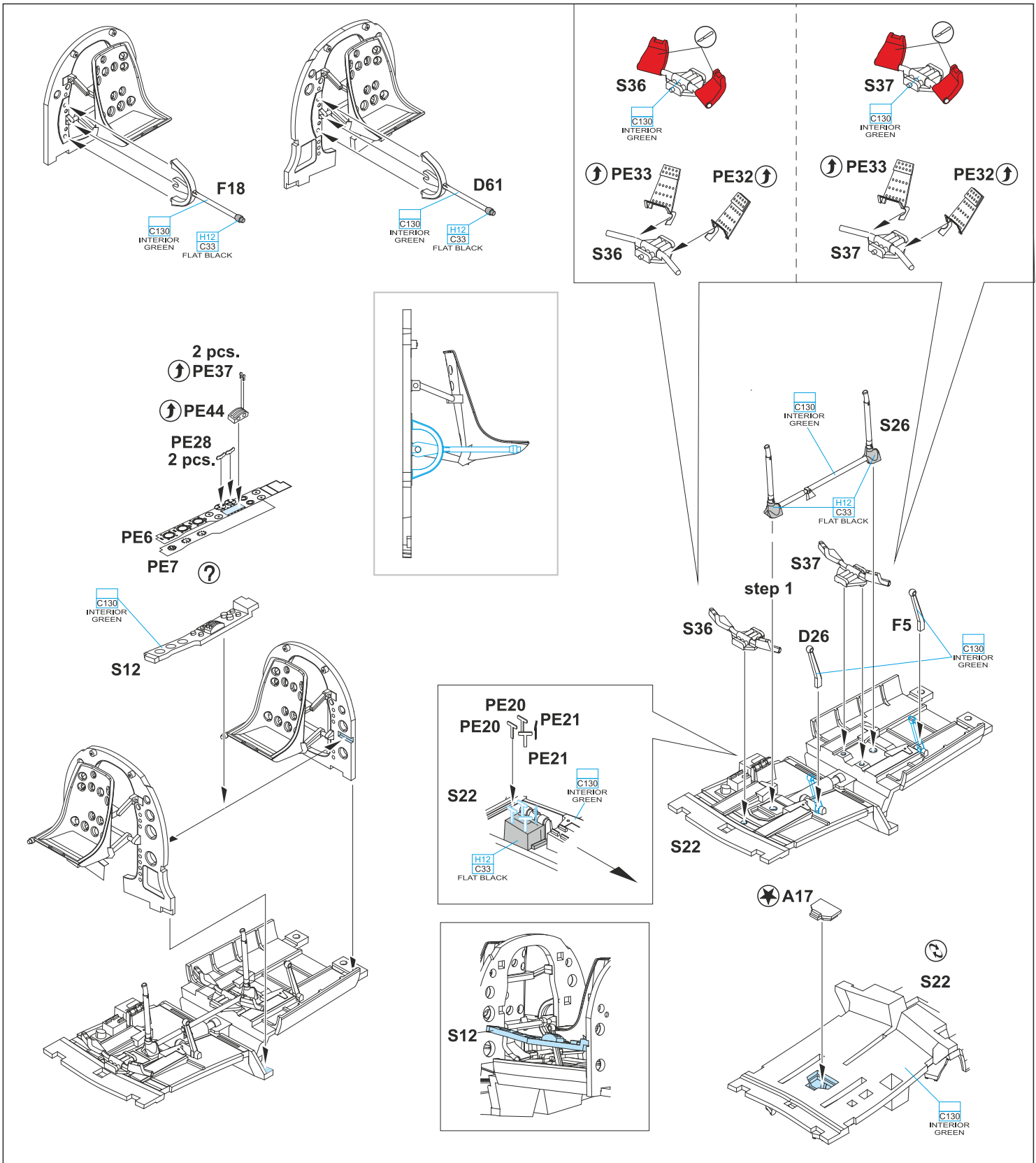
GSI Creos (GUNZE)		
AQUEOUS	Mr.COLOR	
H324	C324	LIGHT GRAY
H413	C113	RLM04 YELLOW
H417	C117	LIGHT BLUE
	C15	DARK GREEN
	C125	COWLING COLOR
	C130	INTERIOR GREEN
	C131	RED BROWN
Mr.COLOR SUPER METALLIC		
	SM201	SUPER FINE SILVER
	SM212	ALUMINIUM

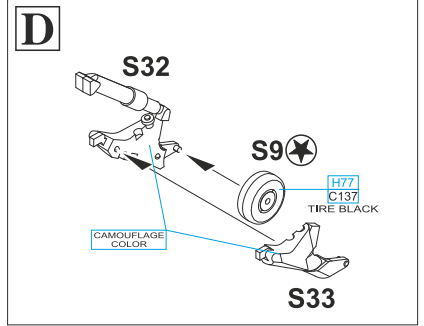
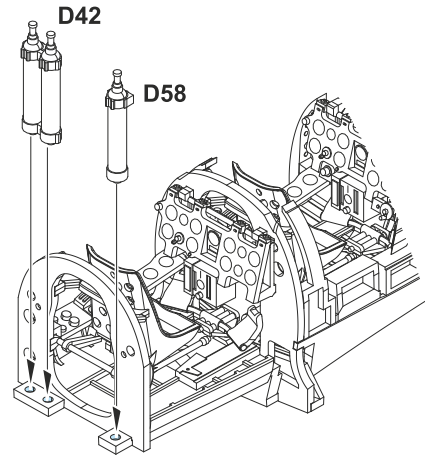
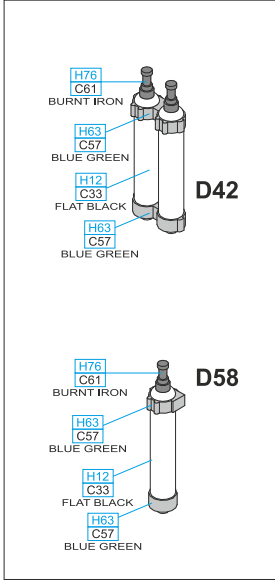
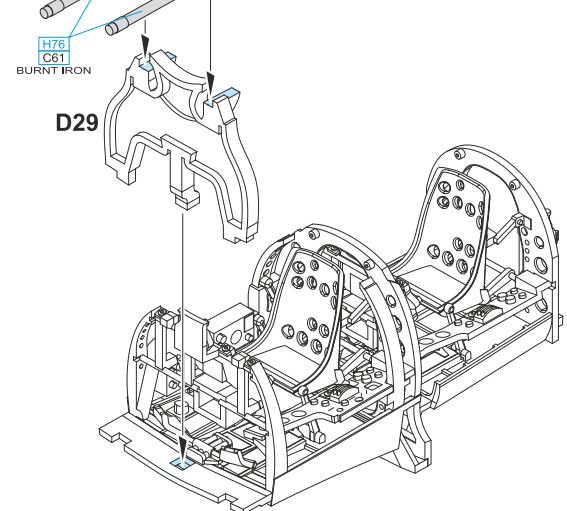
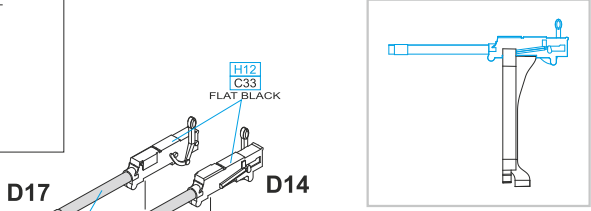
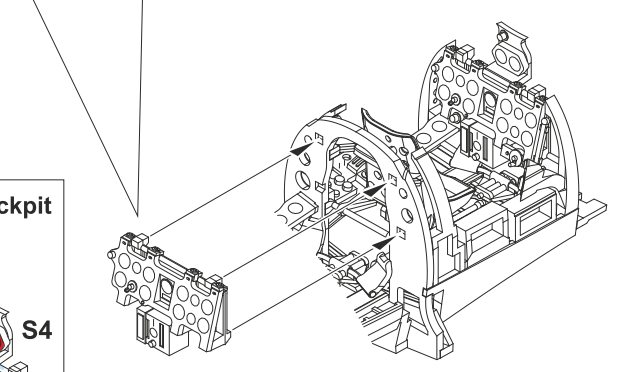
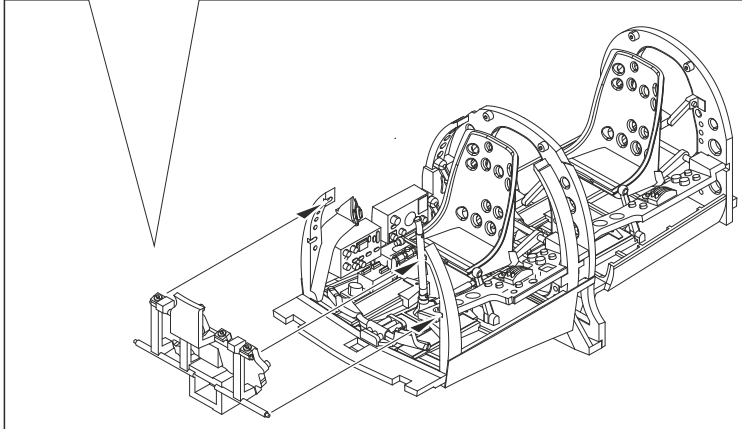
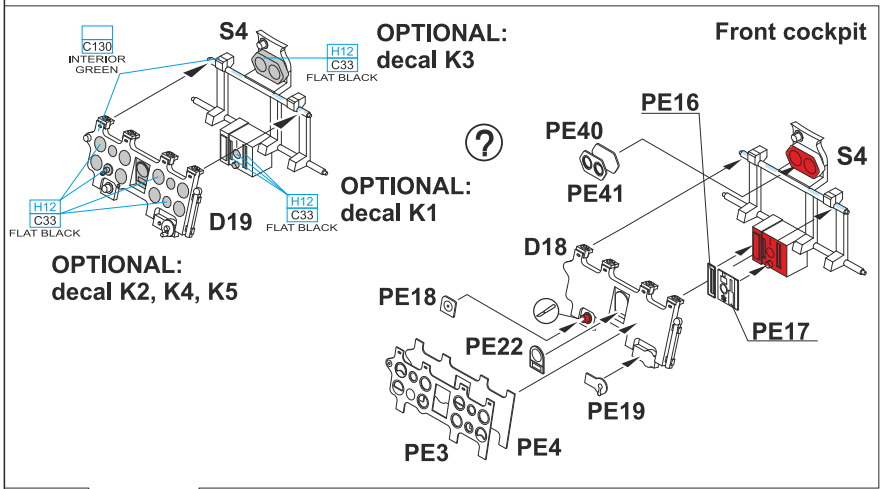
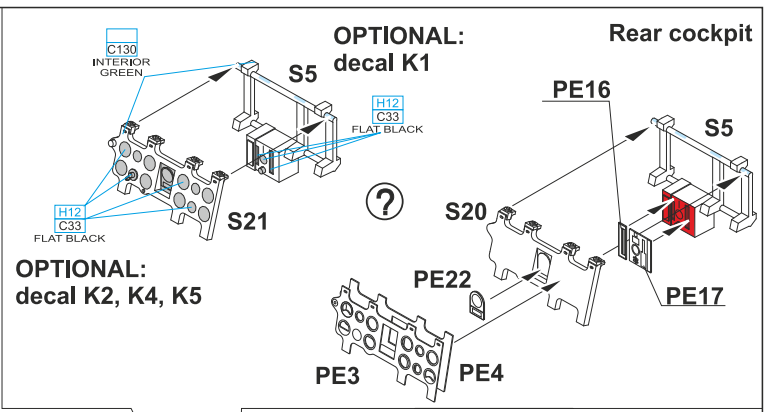
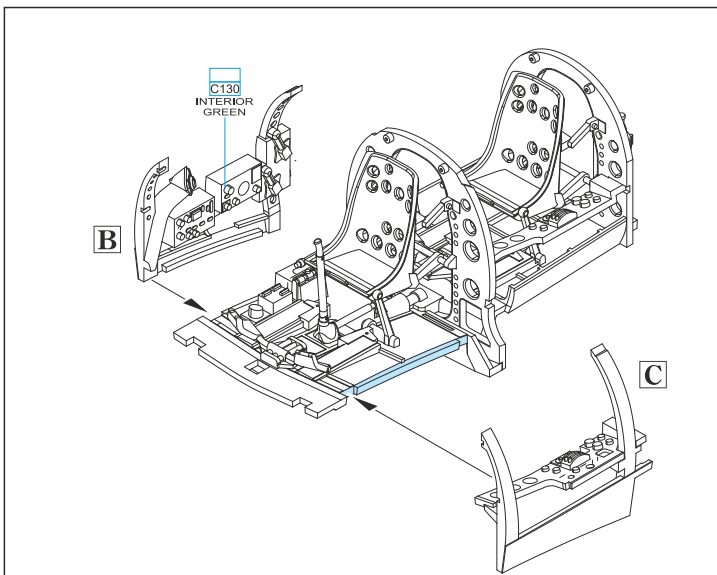
⑦ FOR OPEN DOORS ONLY

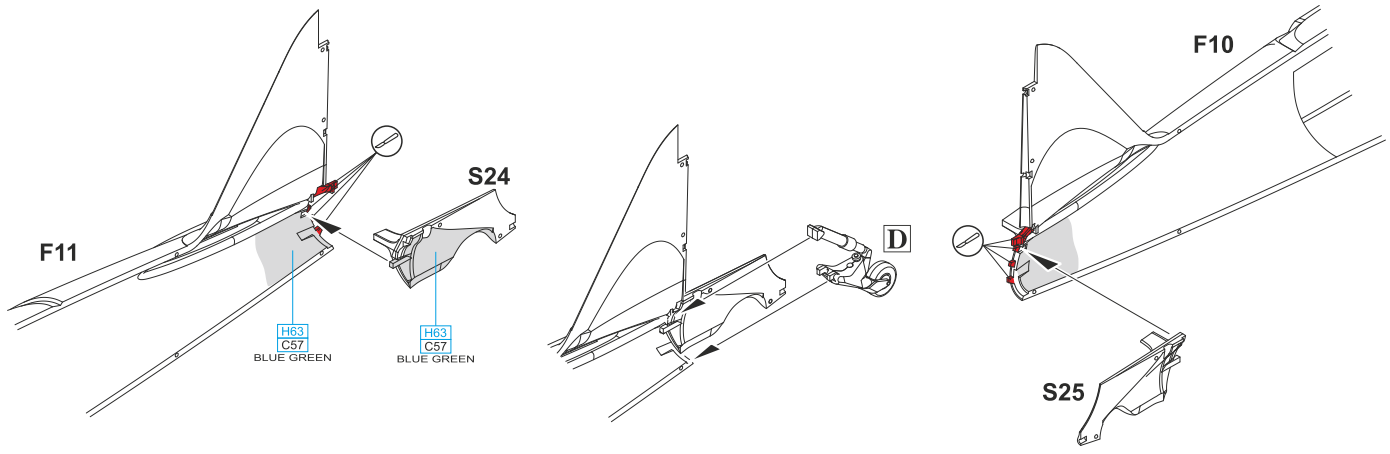


A 2 pcs.



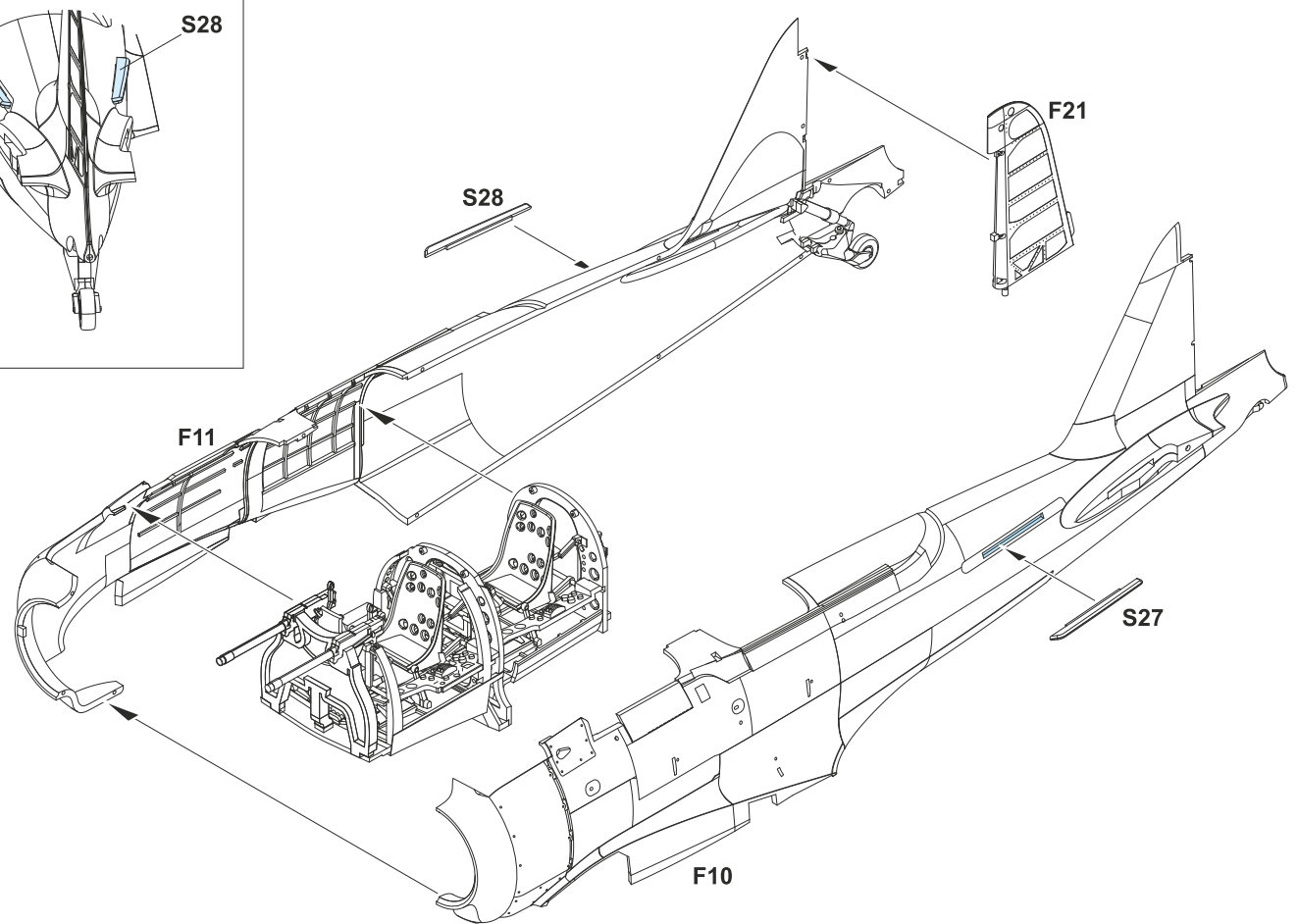
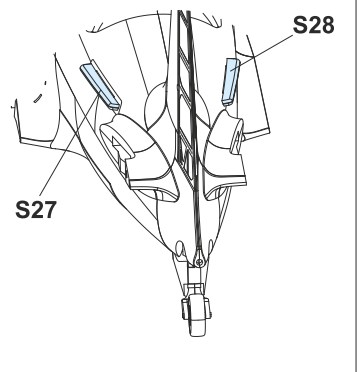
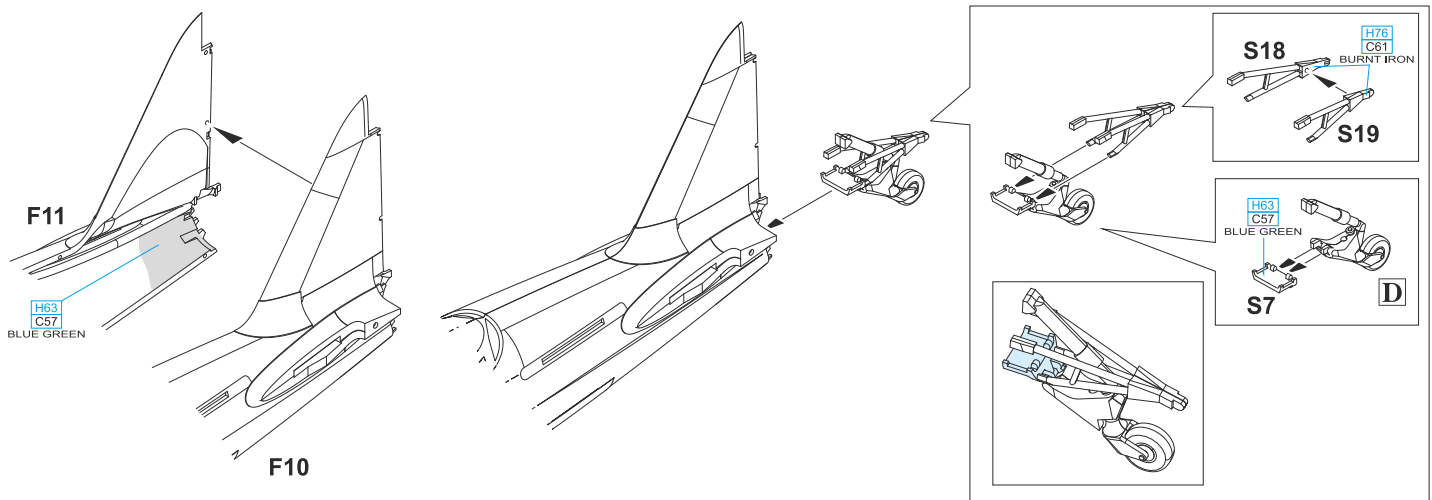


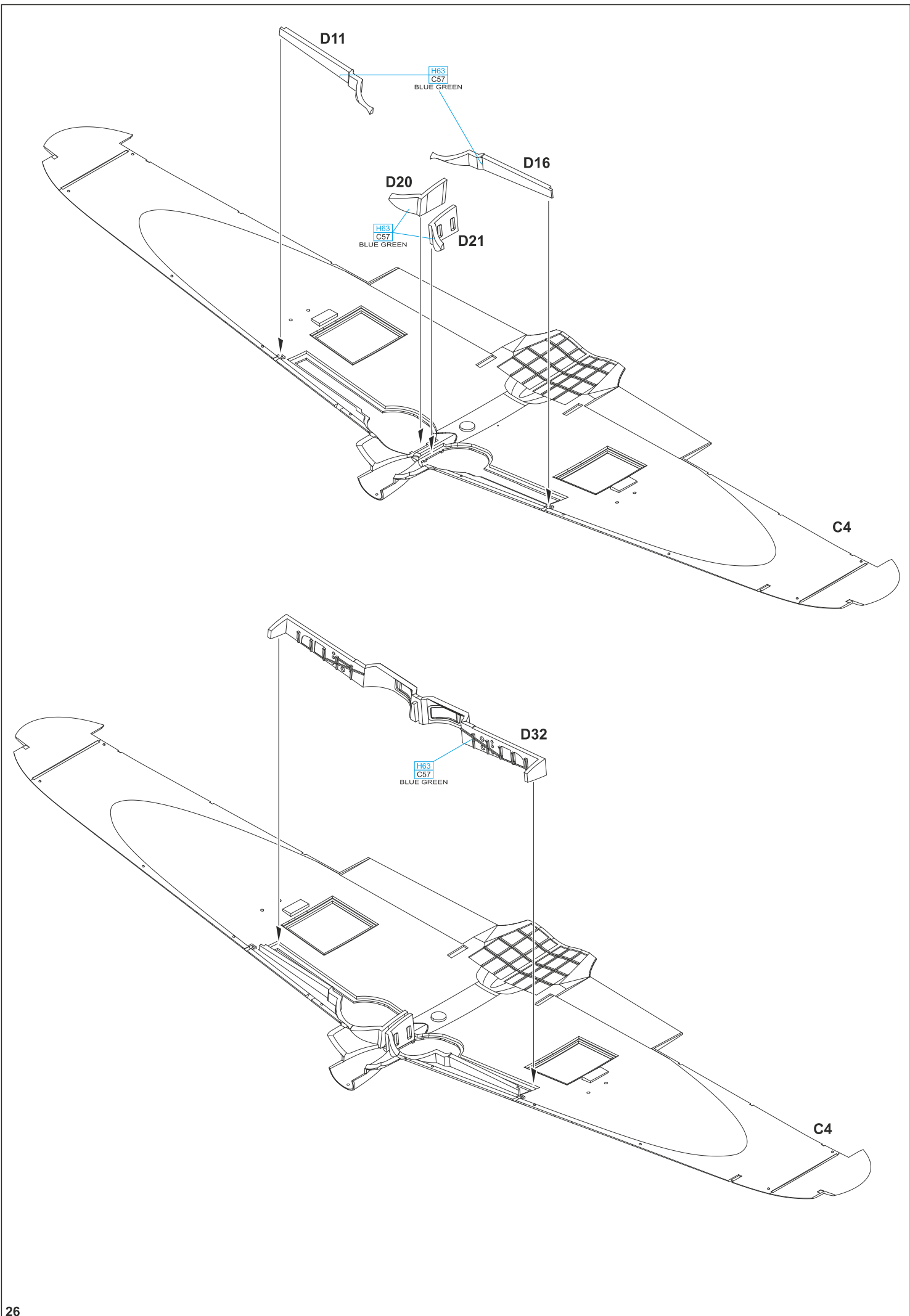


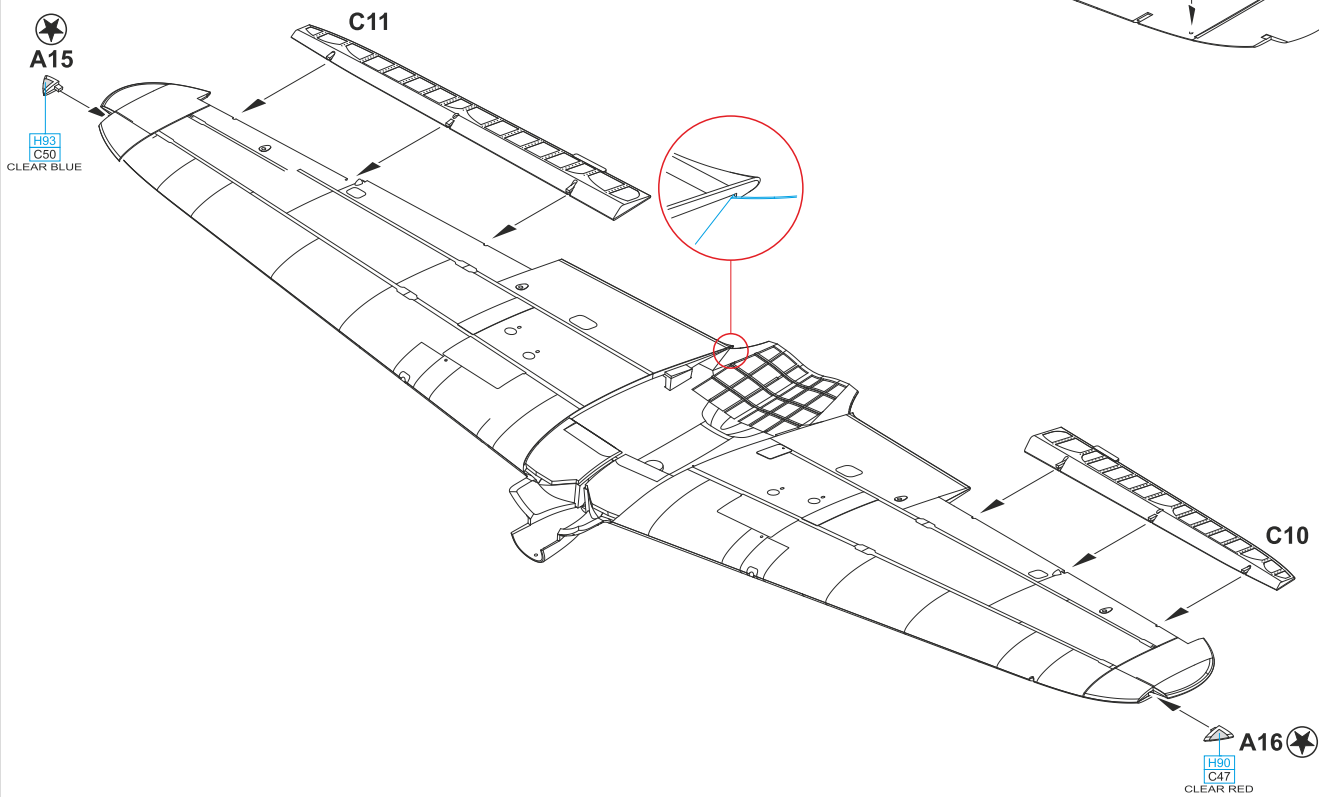
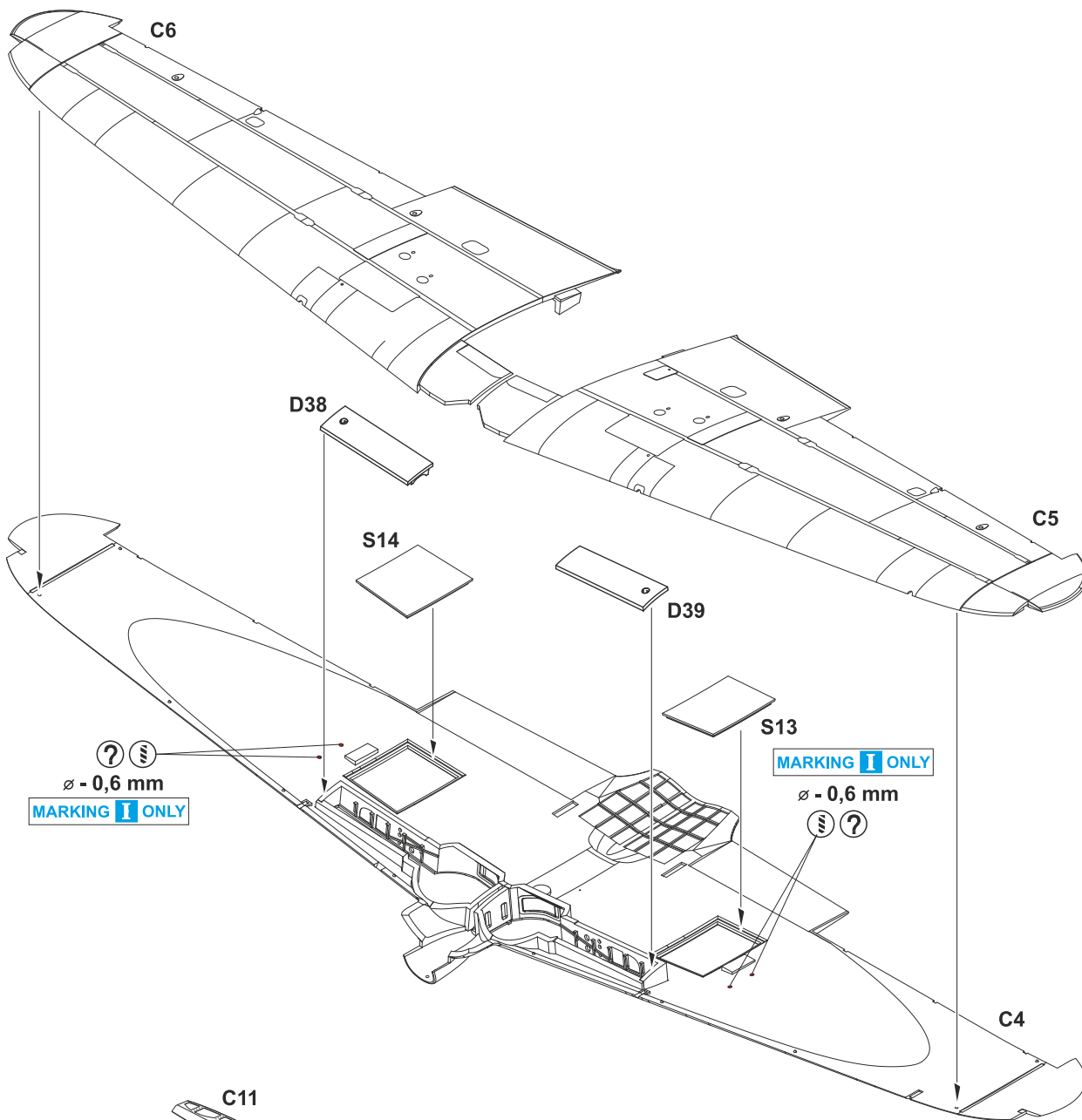


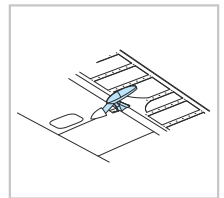
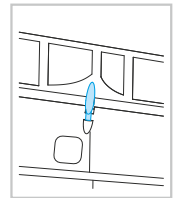
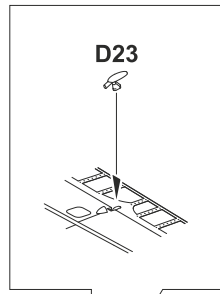
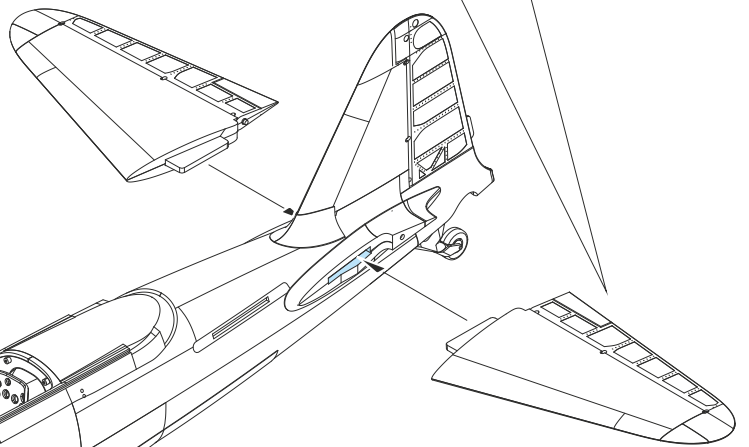
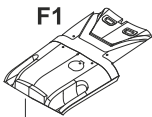
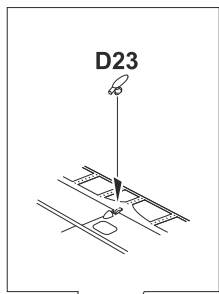
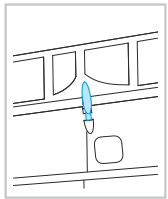
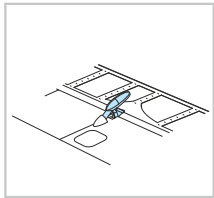
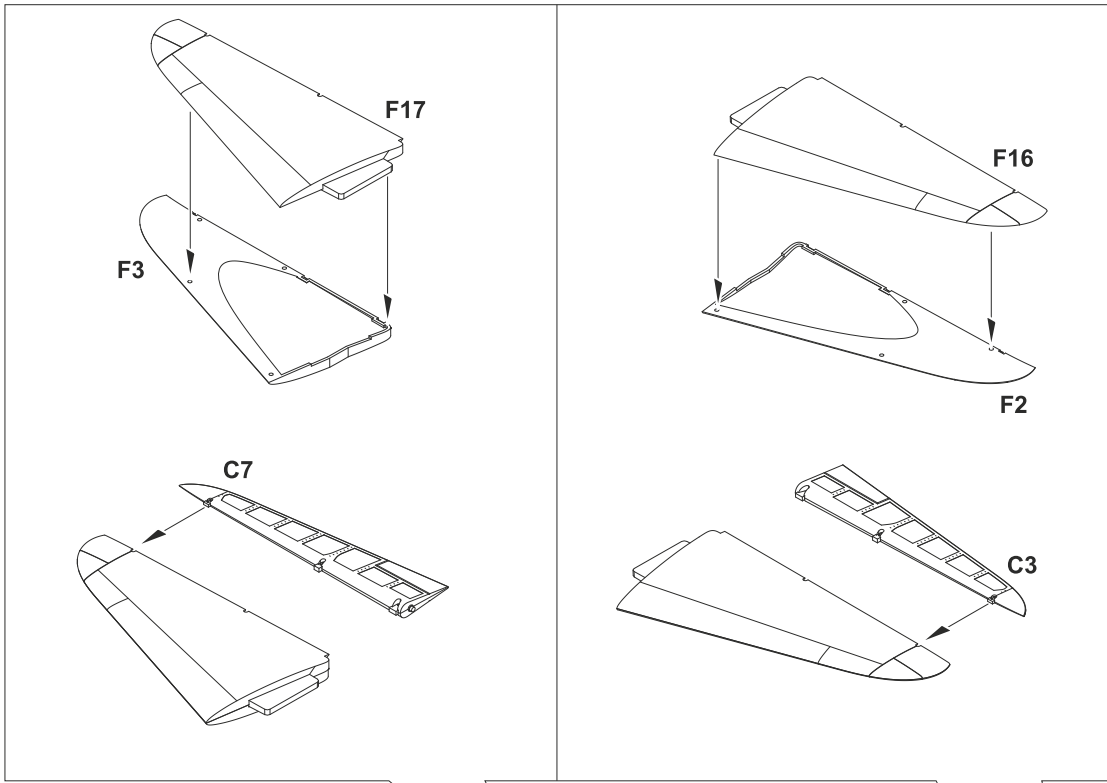
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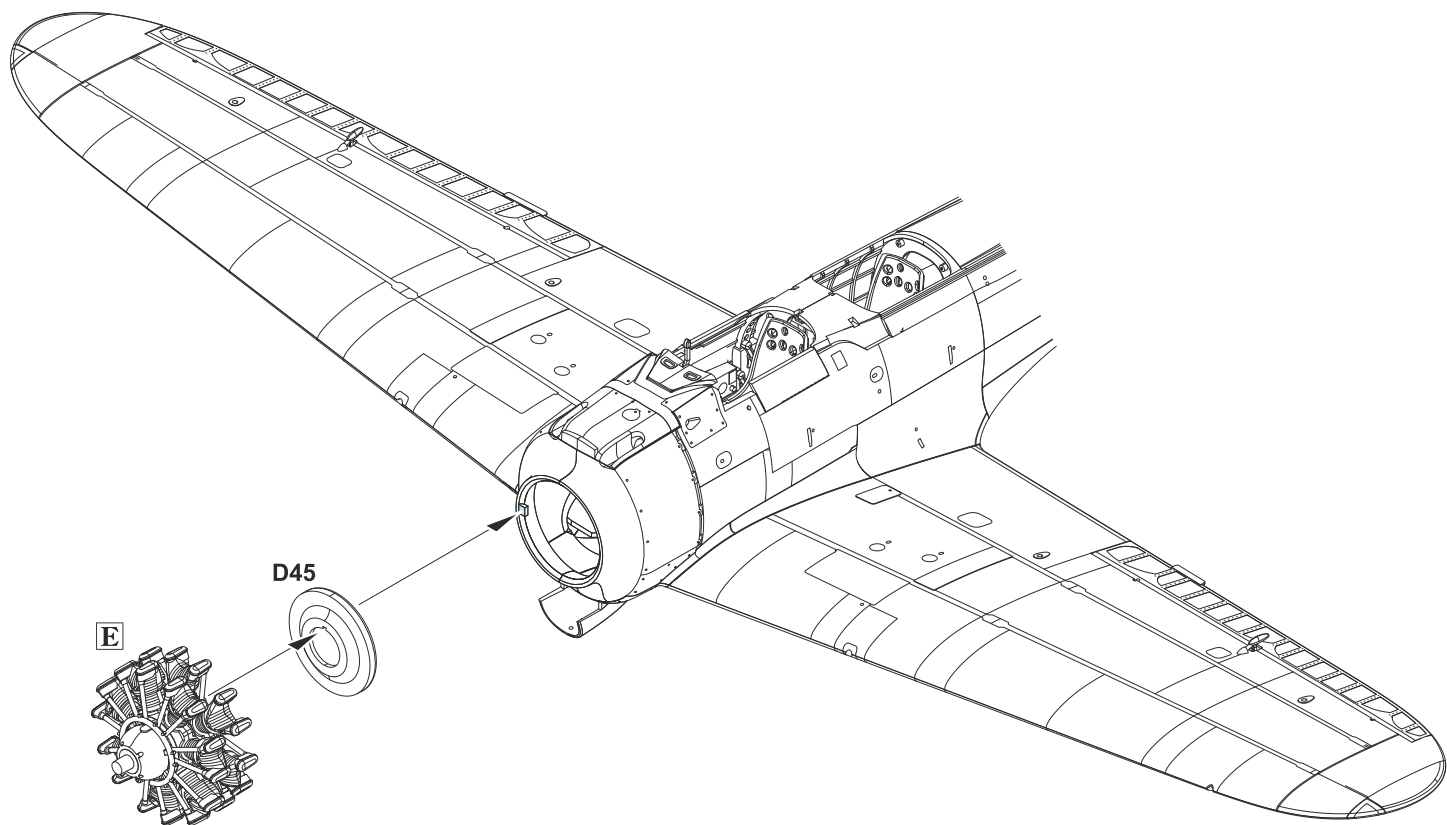
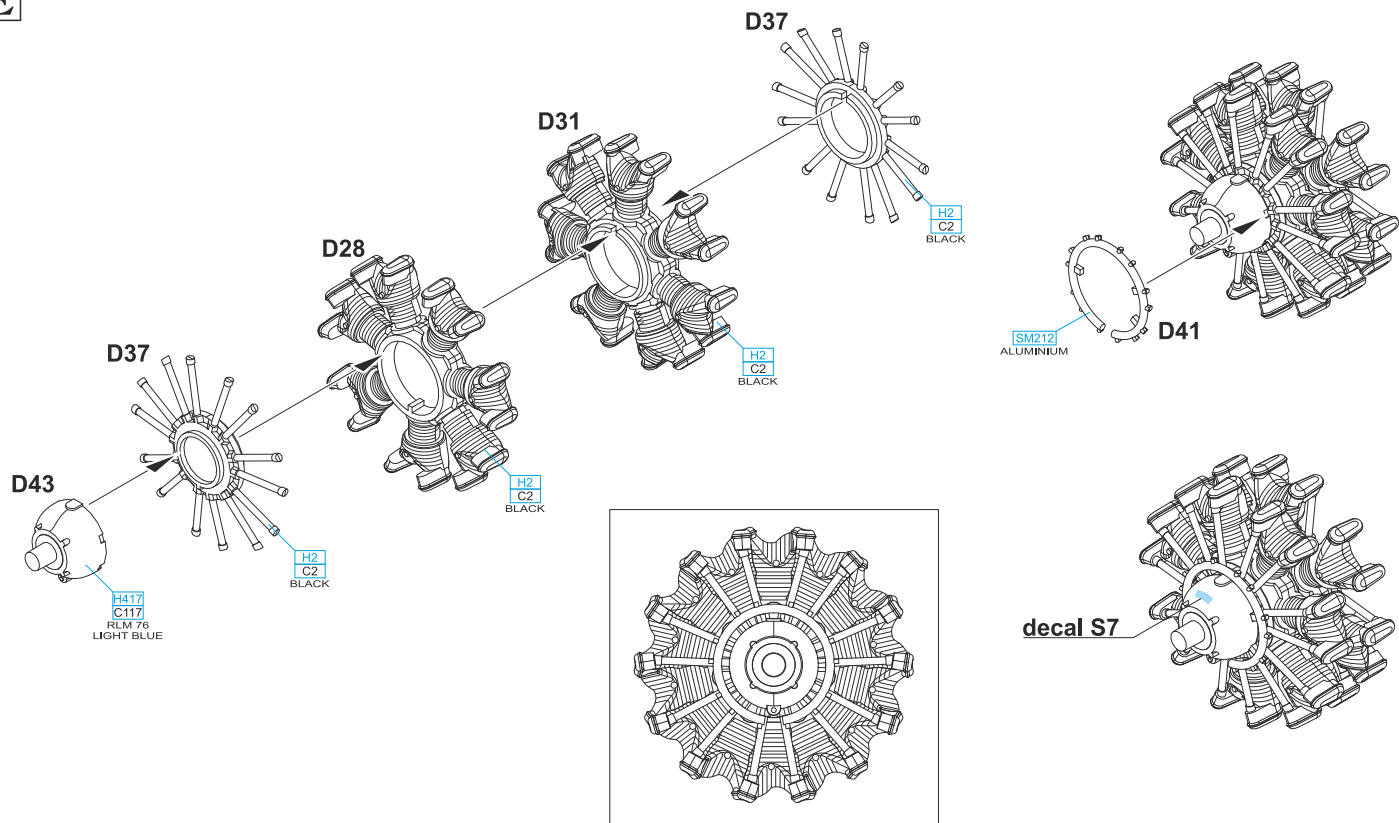






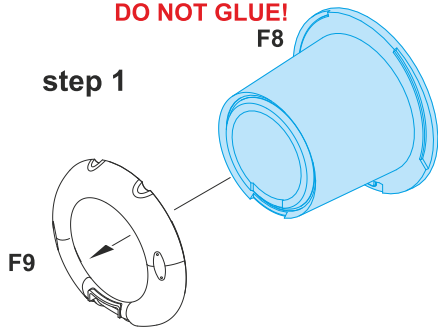
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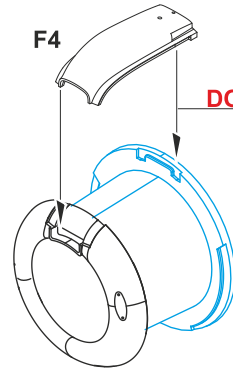


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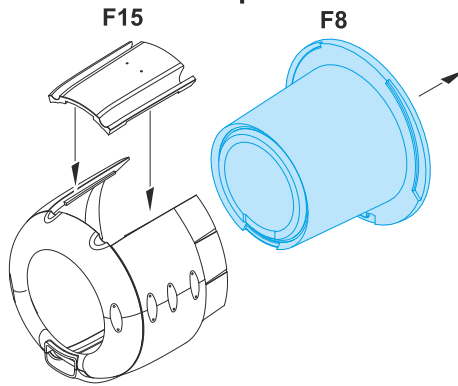
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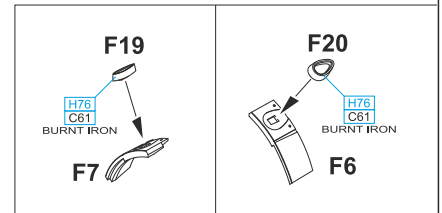
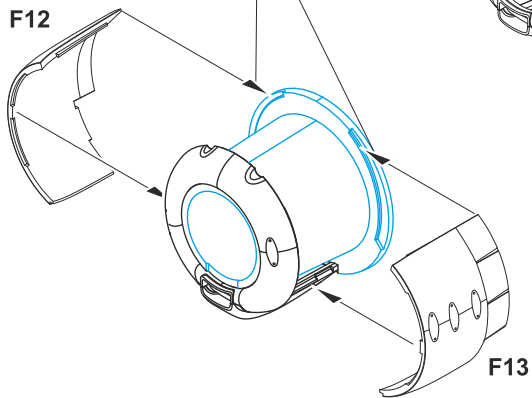
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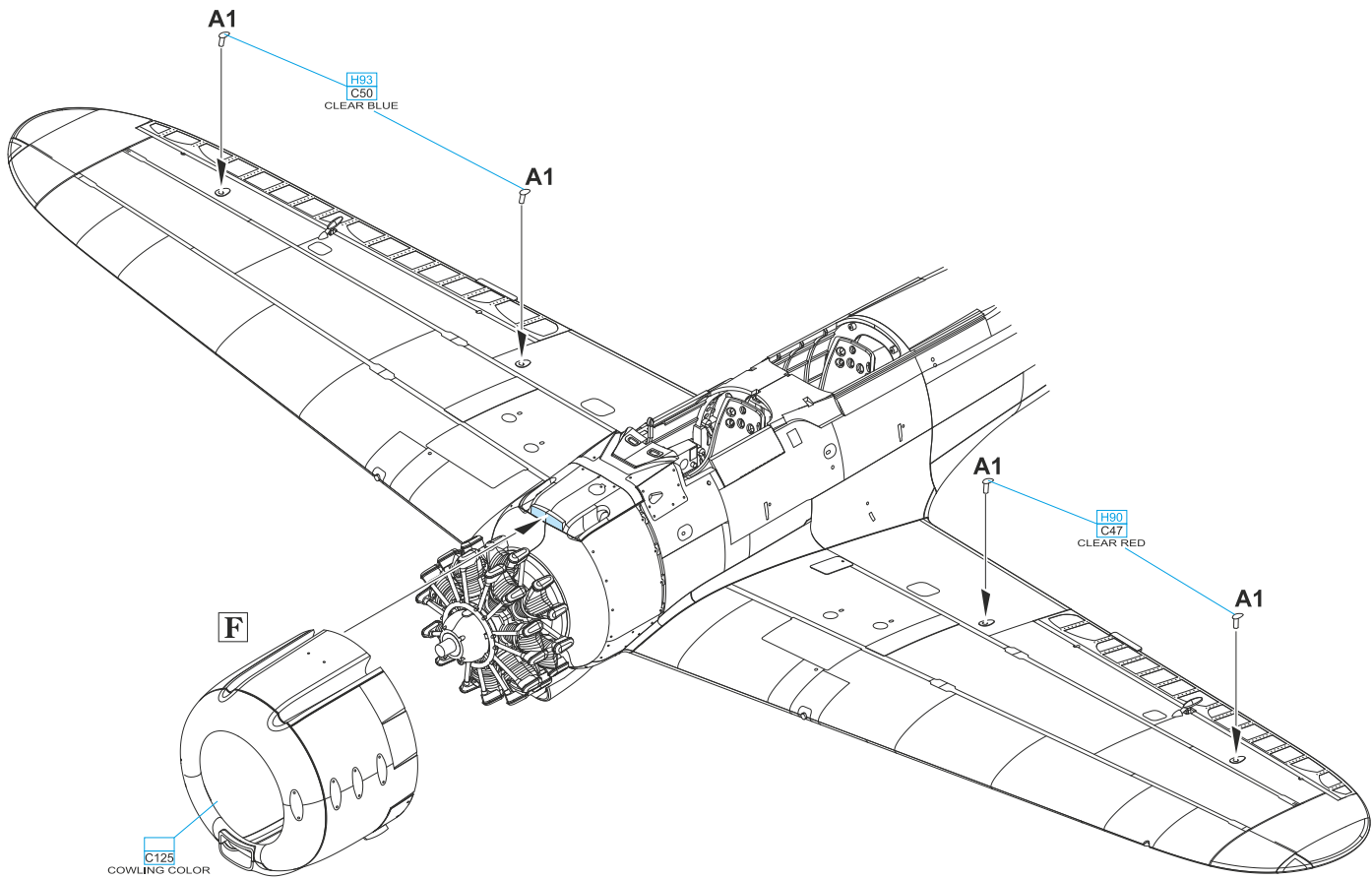
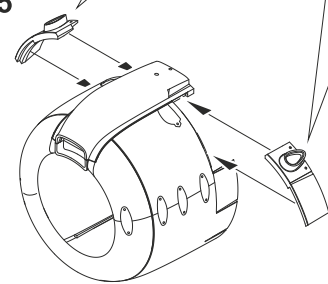
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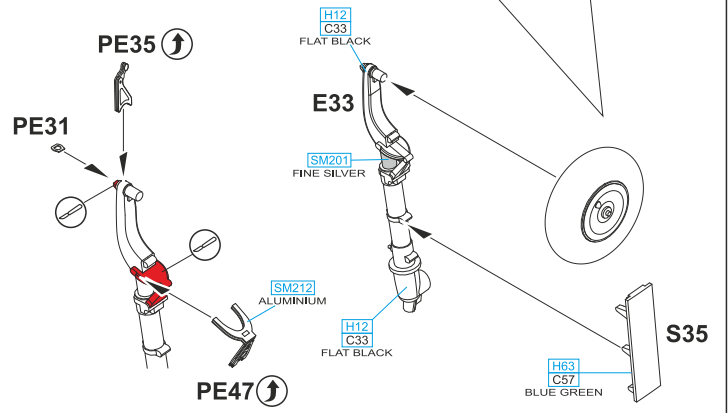
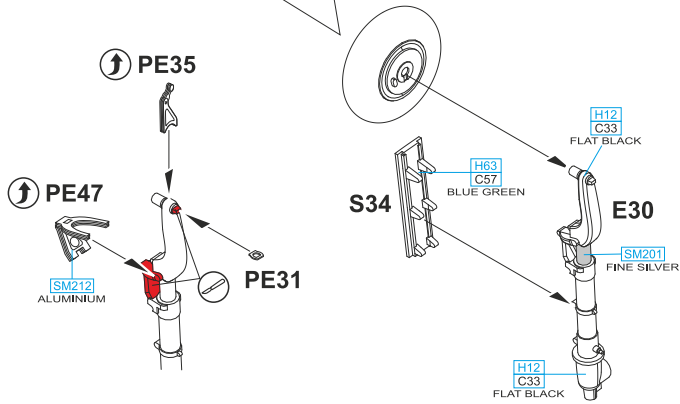
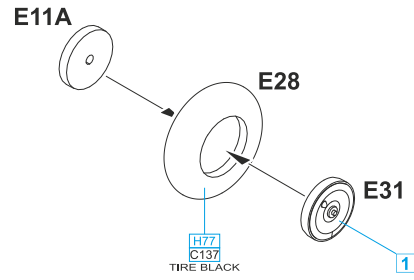
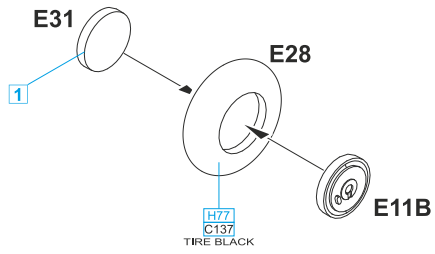
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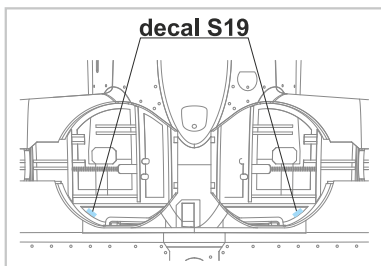
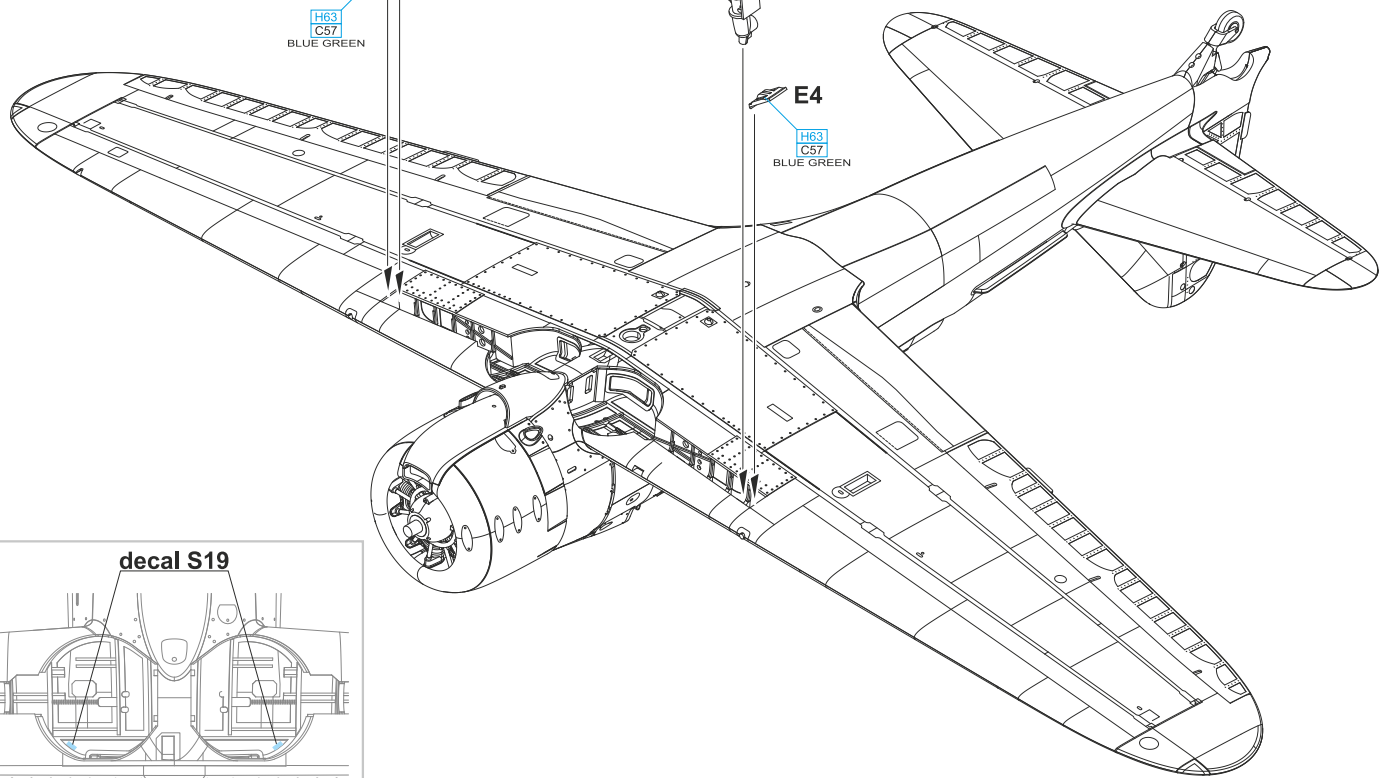
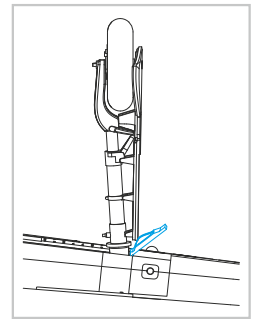
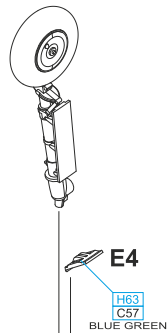
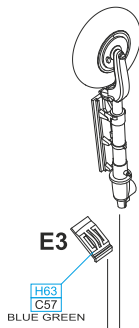
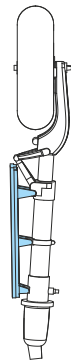
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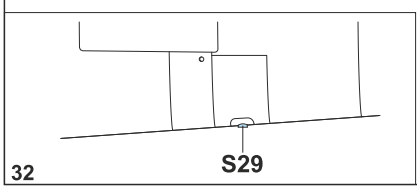
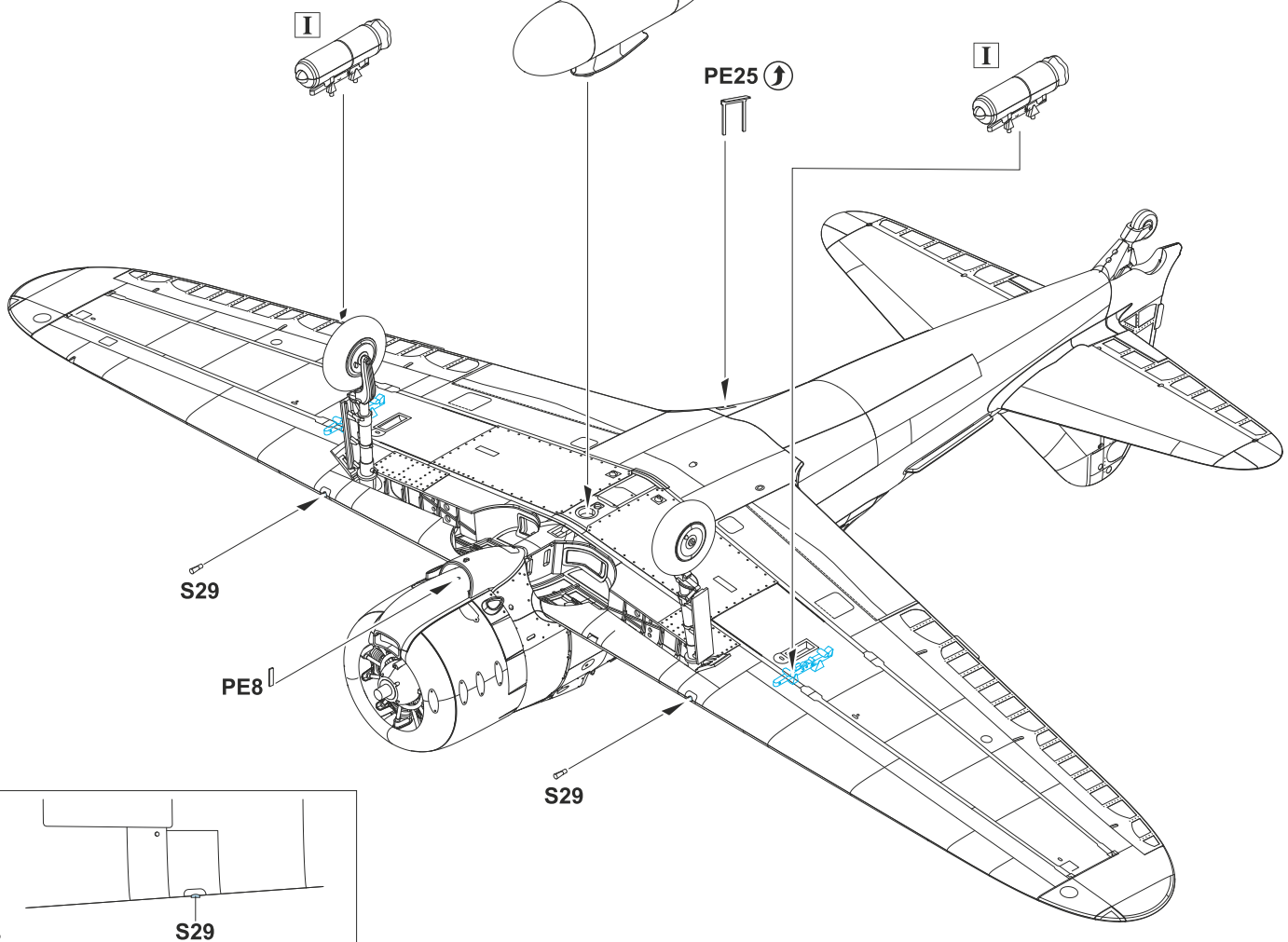
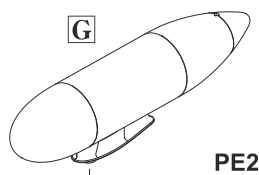
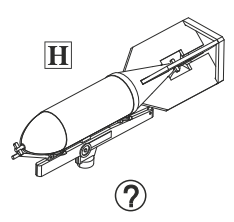
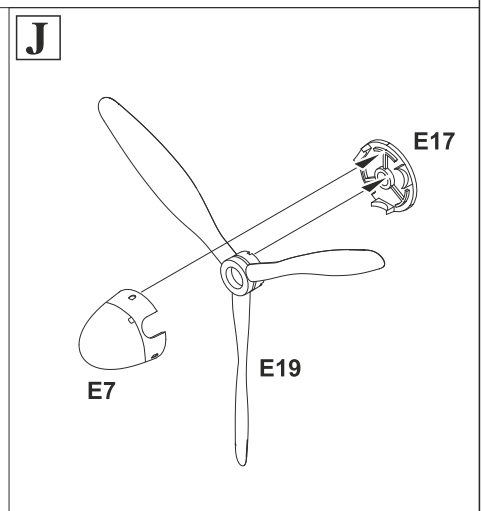
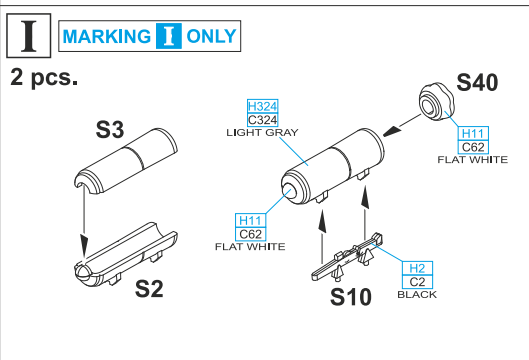
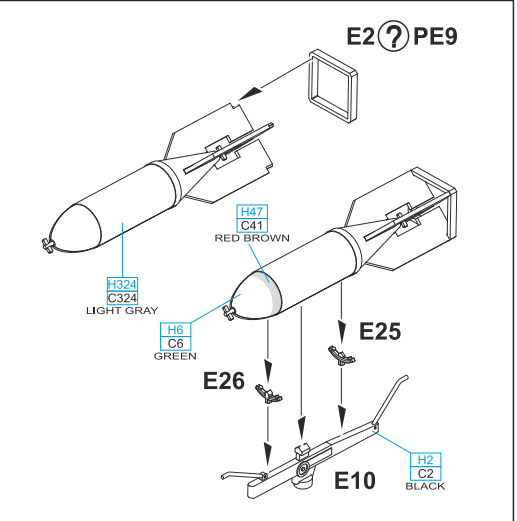
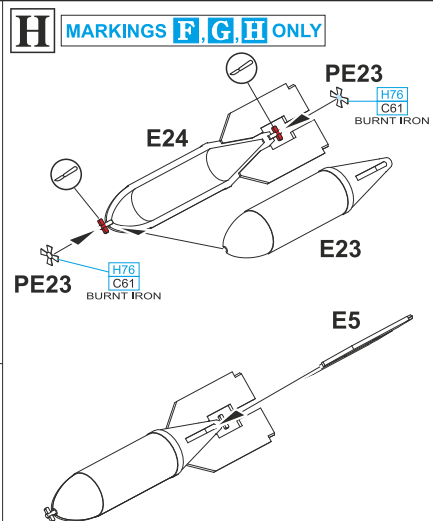
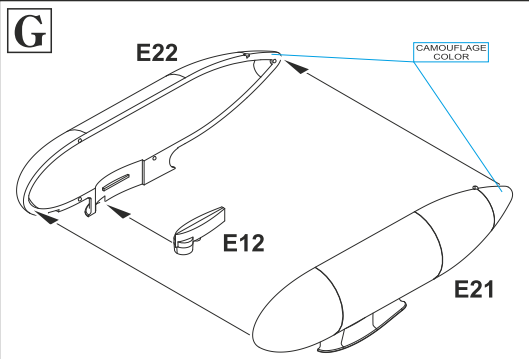


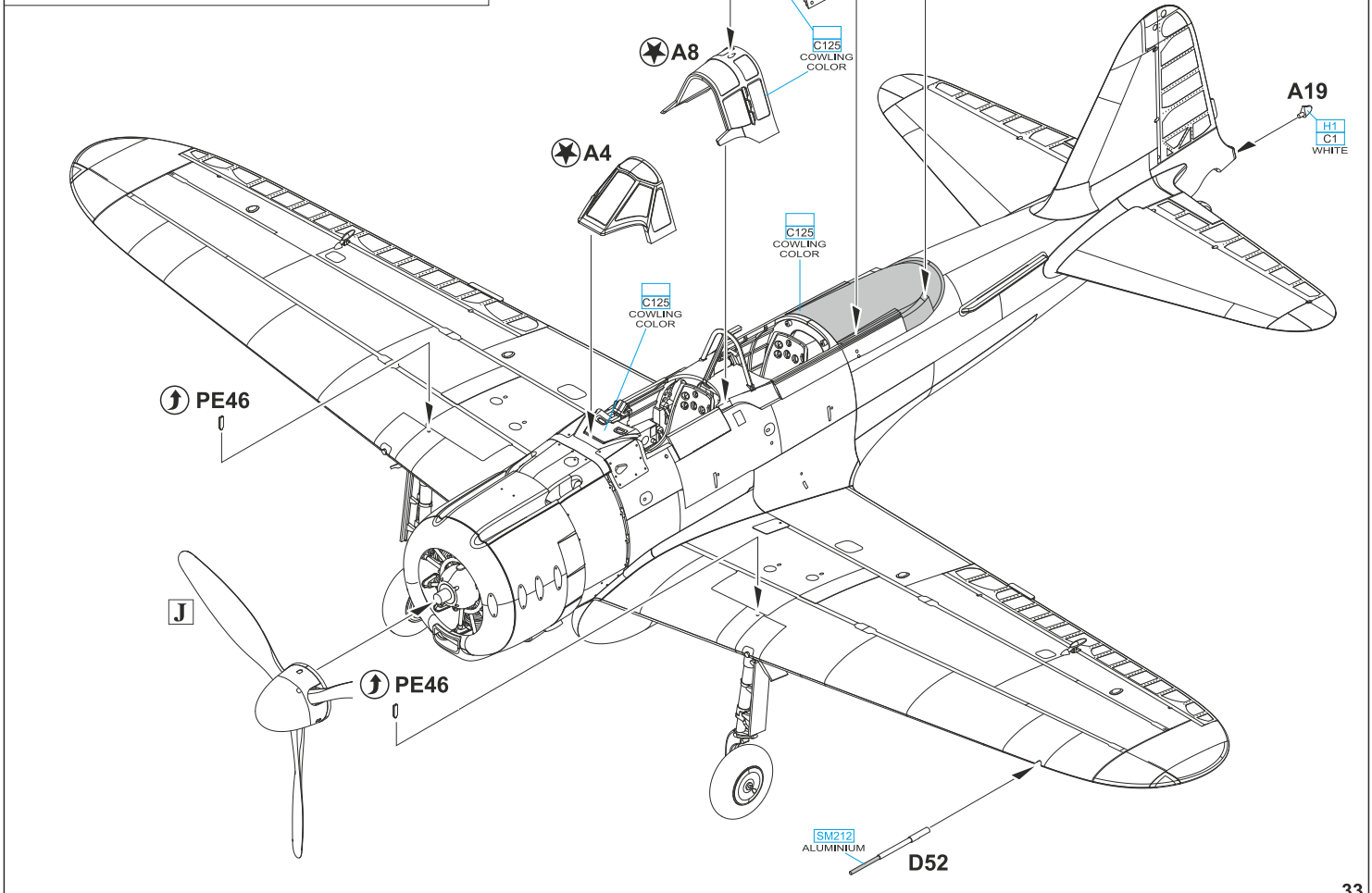
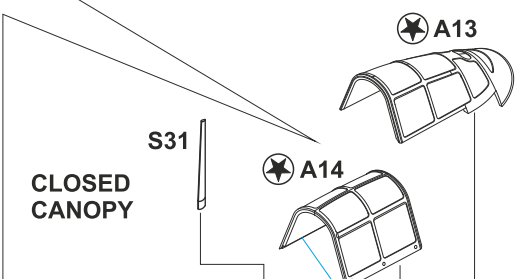
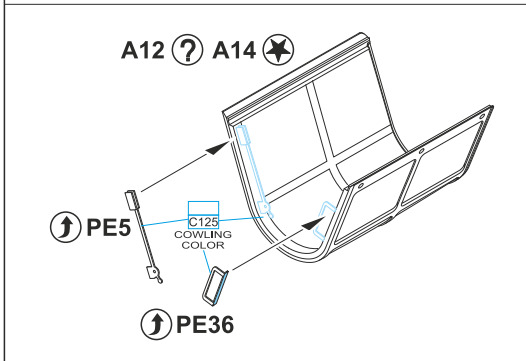
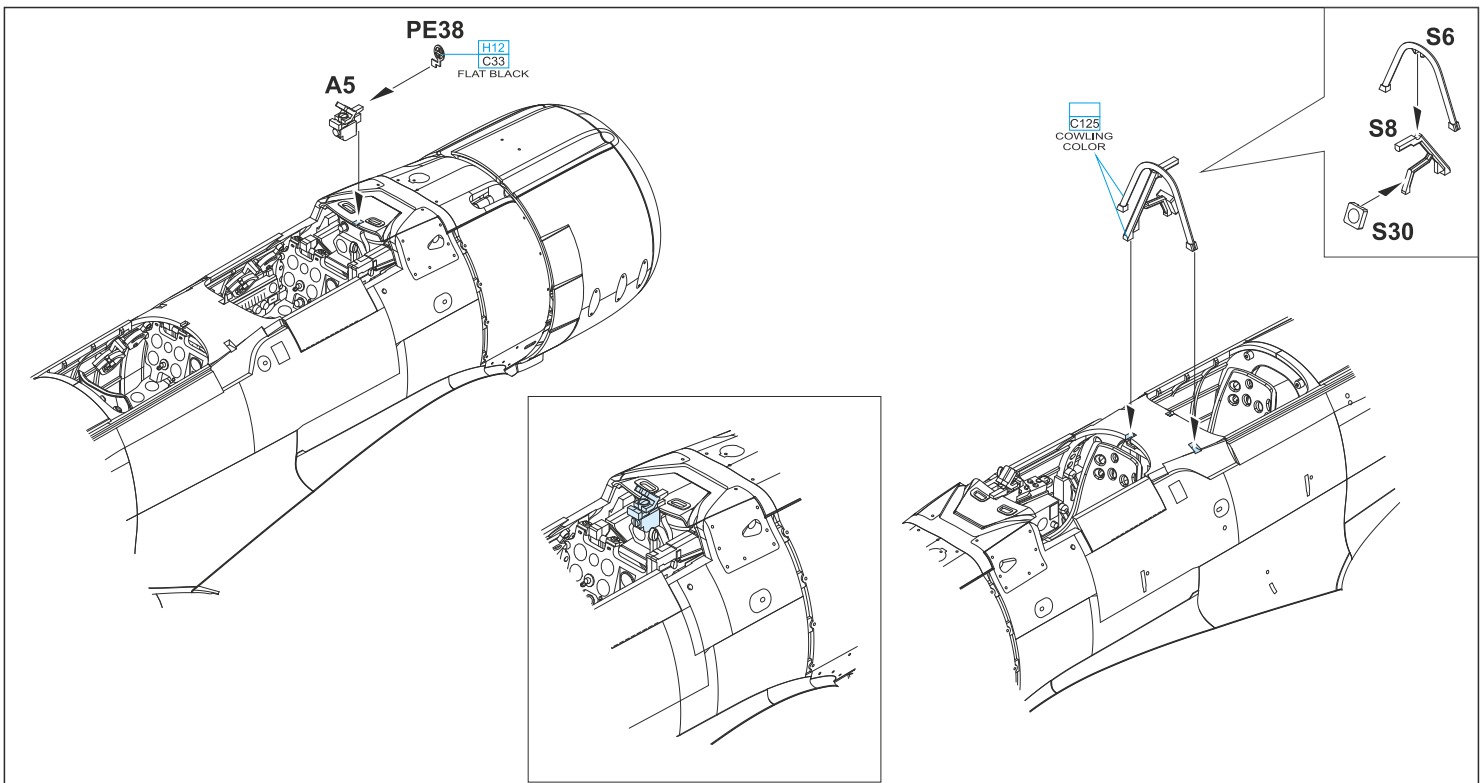
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SM212 - MARKINGS **I;J**
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FRONT VIEW



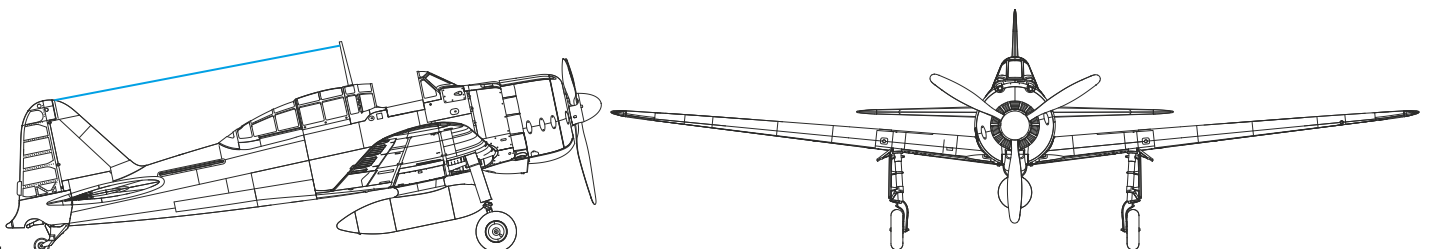
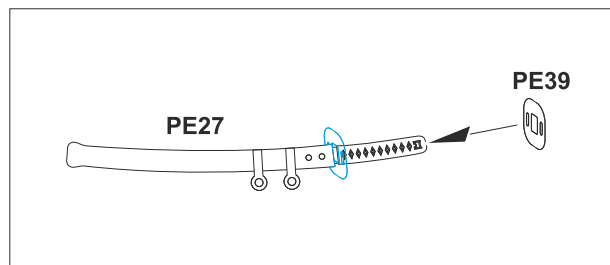
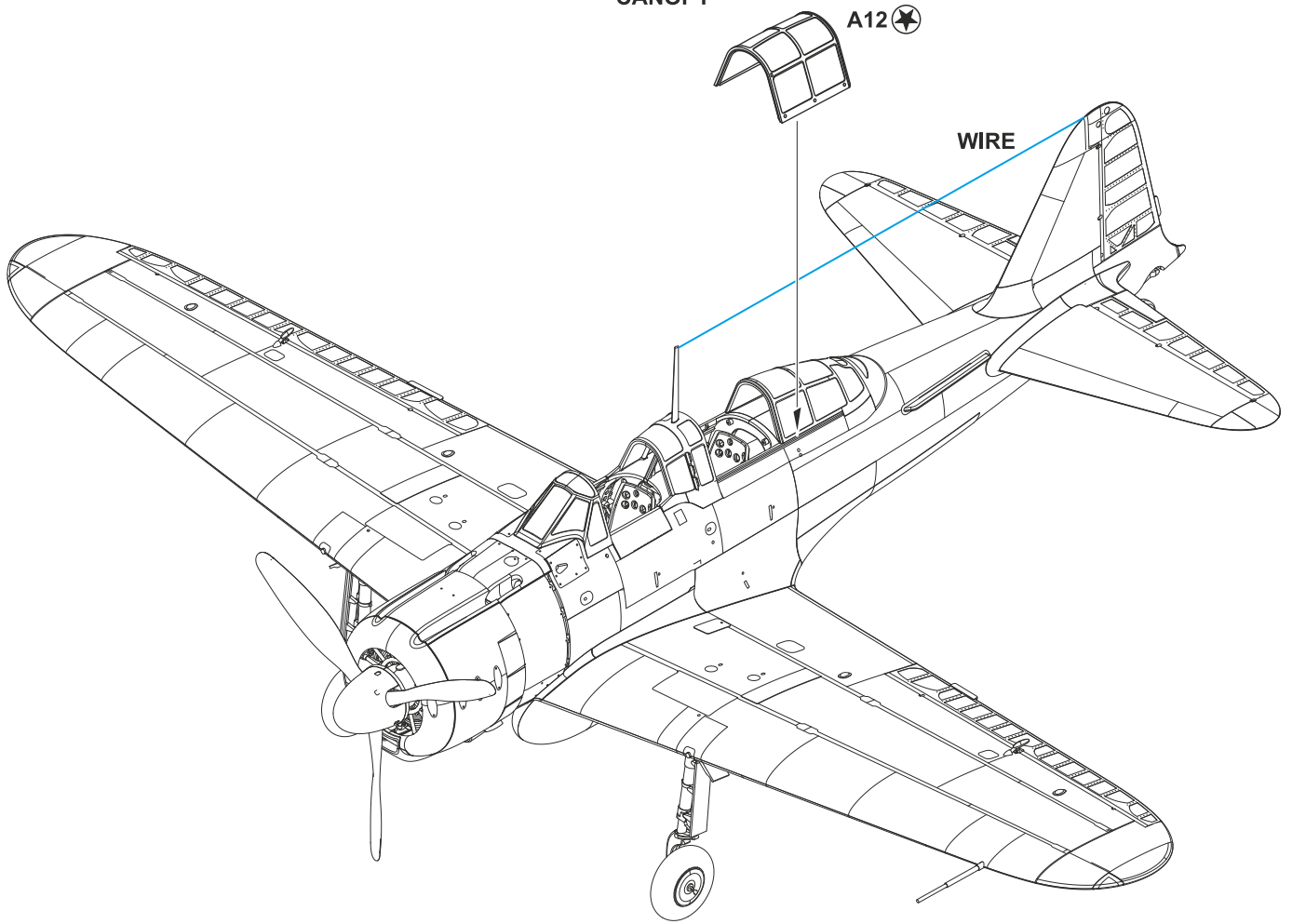




OPEN
CANOPY

A12 

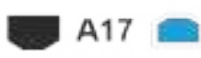
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A15 A16

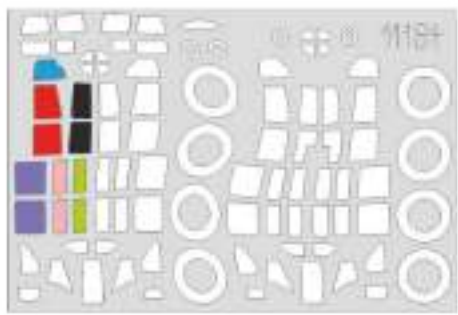


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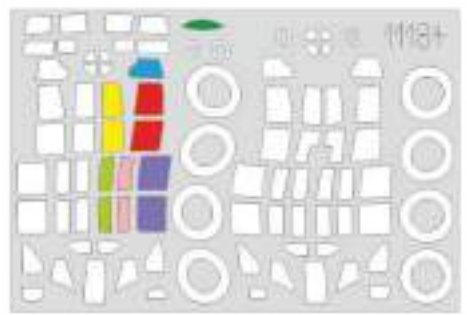


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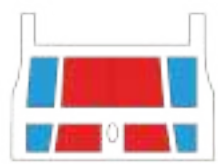
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A12



A14



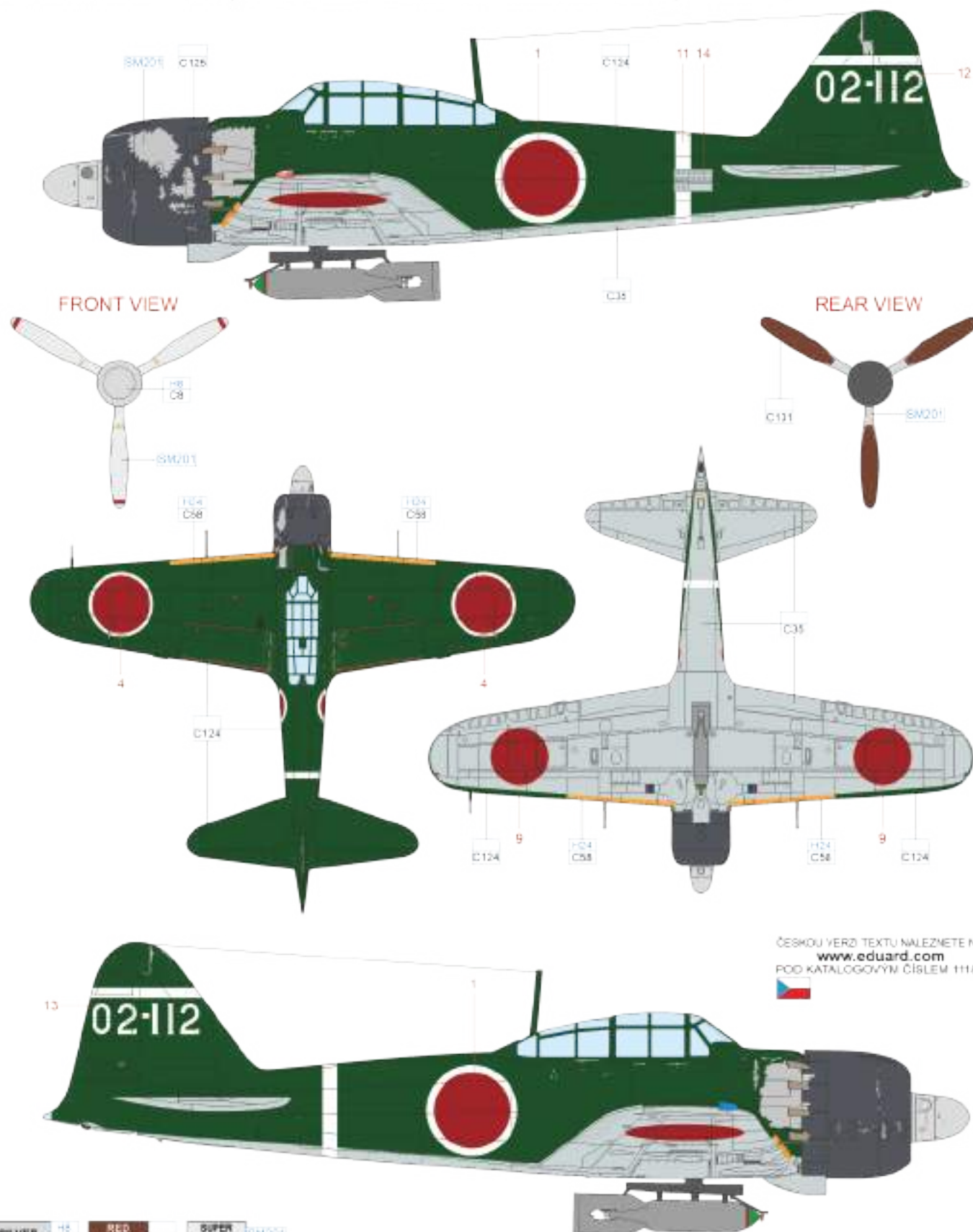
A8



A4

A A6M5 Zero Type 52, probably c/n 4271, Lt. Yukio Seki, 1st Kamikaze Tokubetsu Kōgekital, Shikishima-tai, Mabalacat airfield, Phillipines, October 1944

In October 1944, as part of the 1st Kamikaze Tokubetsu Kōgekital, the first nine groups of kamikaze pilots were organized, mostly from Kōkūtai 201, including the Shikishima unit. Its CO was Lieutenant Yukio Seki. He was born in 1921 (NA 70th class, 1941), he initially served on the battleship Fusō then experienced the Battle of Midway aboard the seaplane tender Chilose. In September 1944, he was assigned to Kōkūtai 201 in the Philippines, where he helped train pilots in skip bombing. After suffering heavy losses, the unit received replacement aircraft from other formations at Mabalacat, including Hikōtai 602 (Kōkūtai 381), from which aircraft 02-112 originated. On October 25, Seki led one of seven groups of Zero pilots in an attack on Taffy 3 during the Battle of Leyte Gulf, escorted by fighter ace Hiroyoshi Nishizawa from Kōkūtai 203. The aircraft, most likely piloted by Seki, struck the escort carrier USS St. Lo, which sank after 30 minutes. Of the 889 crew members, 113 were killed or went missing, while about thirty others later died from their injuries. One of the survivors, ACOM Earl F. Roberts, found a A6M5 Mitsubishi Co. tail data plate no. 2968 before abandoning the ship. From this, it is estimated that the aircraft's serial number was likely 4271 and that it was manufactured between late October and early November 1943.



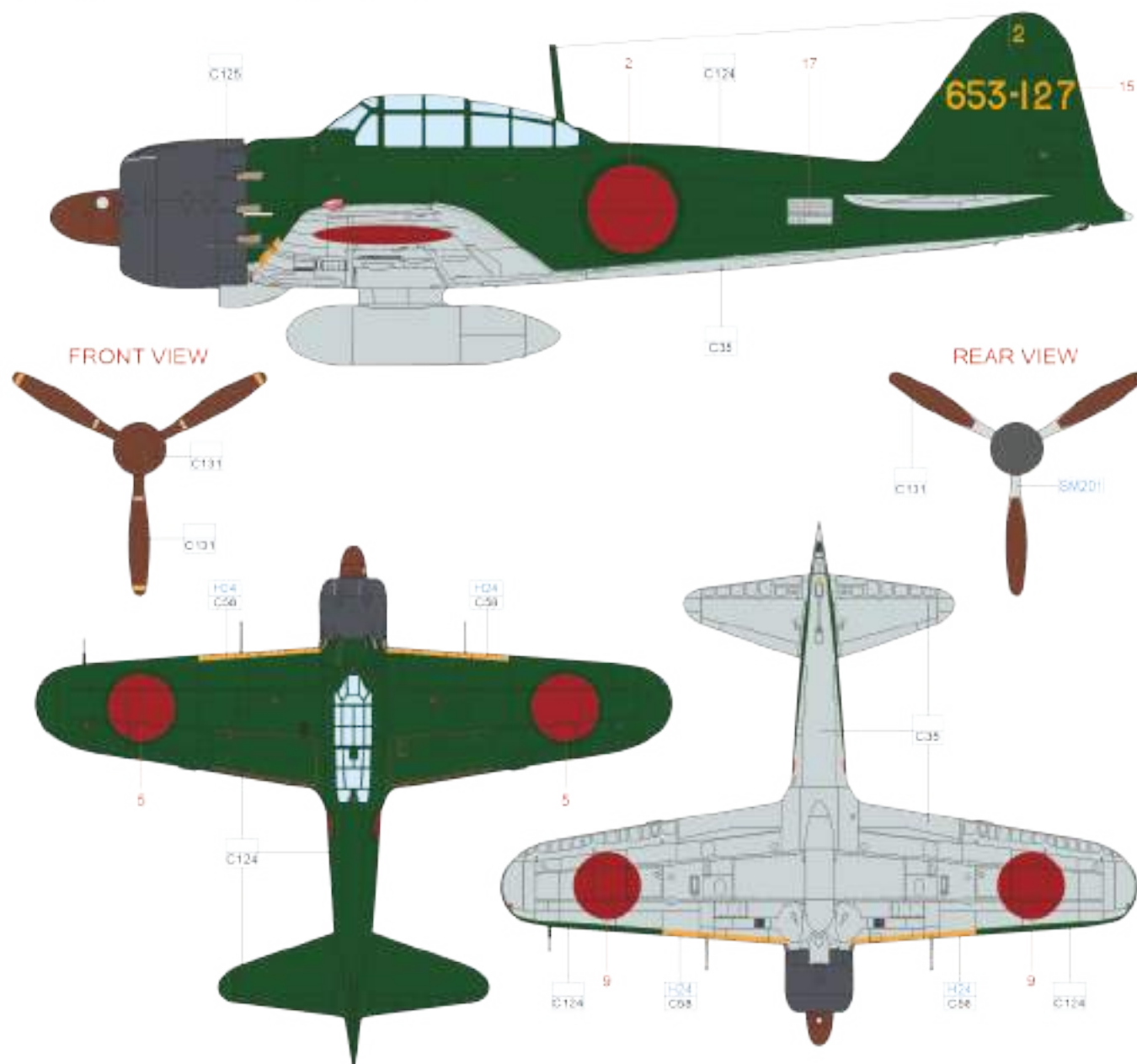
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SILVER	H8	RED	C131	SUPER FINE SILVER	SM201
DARK GREEN	C124	GRAY	C135	COWLING COLOR	C125
				ORANGE YELLOW	H04
					C58

B A6M5 Zero Type 52, Hikōtai 165, Kōkūtai 653, IJN Zuihō, Ōita base, Japan, September 1944

This Mitsubishi manufactured aircraft was assigned to Kōkūtai 653, which was established in February 1944. The division of colors on the fuselage is characteristic of aircraft produced by Mitsubishi. Kōkūtai 653 participated in the Battle of the Philippine Sea in June 1944 aboard the carriers Chitose, Chiyoda, and Zuihō. Most of its armament consisted of A6M2 Type 21 fighter-bombers. Out of the nine carrier squadron commanders, only one survived. After the battle, Kōkūtai 653 was reorganized into four Hikōtais. Lt. Kenji Nakagawa led Hikōtai 164 and 165 with 48 A6M5 fighters each. Lt. Tetsuo Endō led 48 A6M fighter-bombers of Hikōtai 166, while bombers were assigned to Hikōtai 263. In the fall of 1944, Kōkūtai 653 suffered 50% losses in the defense of Taiwan. During the defense of the Philippines, Hikōtai 164 operated from land bases. The aircraft of Hikōtai 165 were deployed aboard aircraft carriers during the Battle of Leyte Gulf, with numbers on upper part of the tail indicating their carrier: Zuikaku (1), Zuihō (2), Chitose (3), and Chiyoda (4). After the loss of all carriers, Kōkūtai 653 fought in the Philippines. Several of its pilots escorted Kamikaze missions as part of Reisen-tai on October 29 and November 6. Kōkūtai 653 was disbanded on November 15, 1944.



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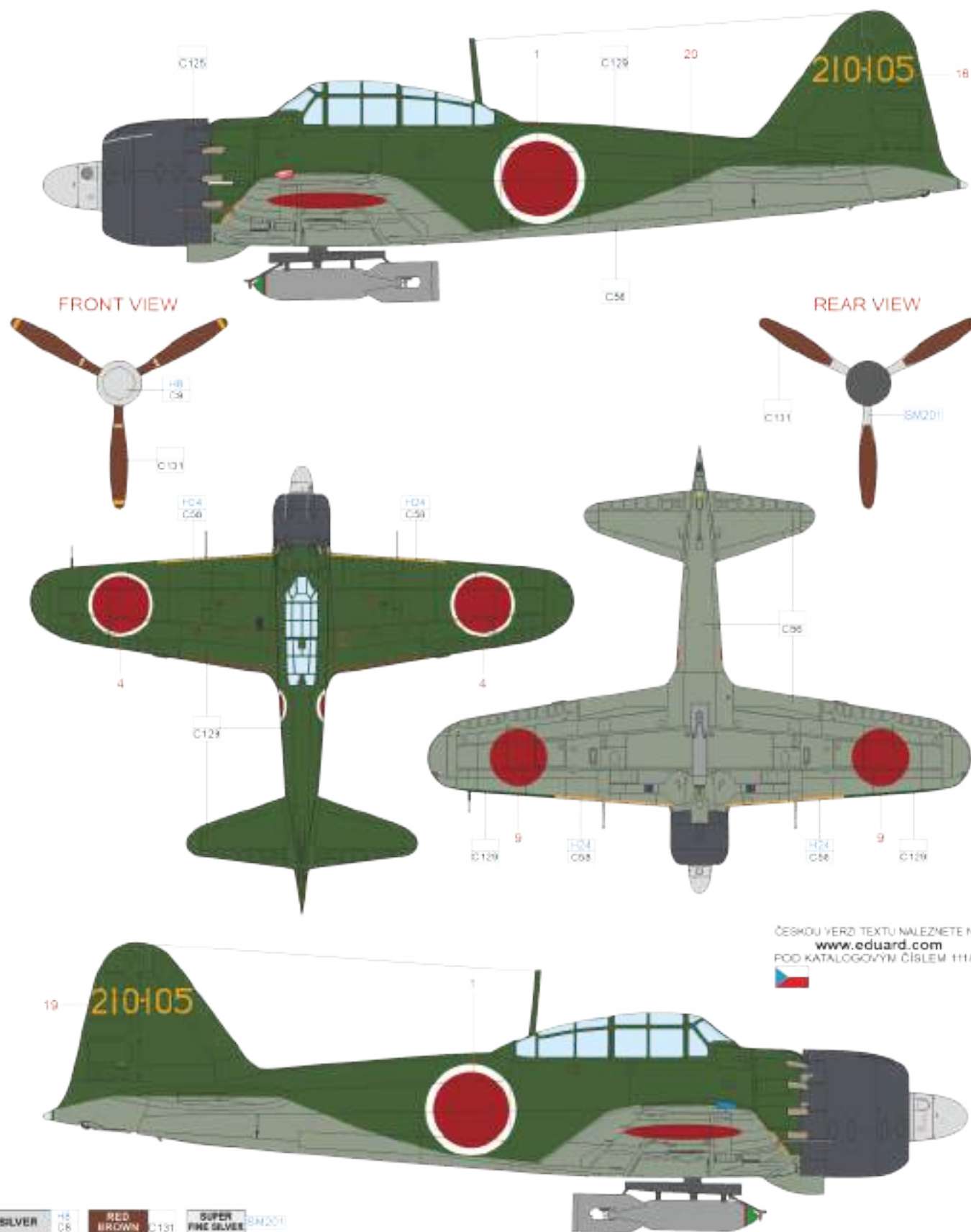


RED BROWN	C131	SUPER FINE SILVER	SM201
DARK GREEN	C124	GRAY	C35
COWLING COLOR	C126	ORANGE YELLOW	F04 C58

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C A6M5 Zero Type 52, Kōkūtai 210, Meiji Base, Japan, winter 1944–1945

This Nakajima manufactured aircraft featured a fuselage color scheme characteristic of this producer. Kōkūtai 210 was established in September 1944 at Meiji Base as an operational training unit equipped with A6M Zero and NIKI-J fighters, J1N night fighters, as well as bombers and reconnaissance aircraft. The Zero squadron, consisting of 40 aircraft, was commanded by Lt. Toshio Shiozuru. During U.S. carrier-based air raids on Japan on February 16–17, 1945, Kōkūtai 210 pilots claimed 14 confirmed and 4 probable victories while losing one aircraft. From late March, 32 A6Ms and 14 NIKI-Js were transferred to Kokubu No. 1 Base under Kōkūtai 601. From April 6, Kōkūtai 210 fighters engaged in battles over Okinawa, achieving 6 victories at the cost of 10 aircraft. During the Kikusui I special attack operation, Kōkūtai 210 formed several Kamikaze units, including Dai 210 Butai Reisen-tai, which was armed with Zeros. On April 6, the unit launched 12 Zeros with 10 escorting NIKI-Js against enemy forces 80 nautical miles from Tokunoshima. On April 11, three more Zeros with Kamikaze pilots were deployed against enemy carriers east of Okinawa. In mid-April, Kōkūtai 210 was reorganized as a pure fighter unit, and remained in reserve in case of an invasion of Japan.



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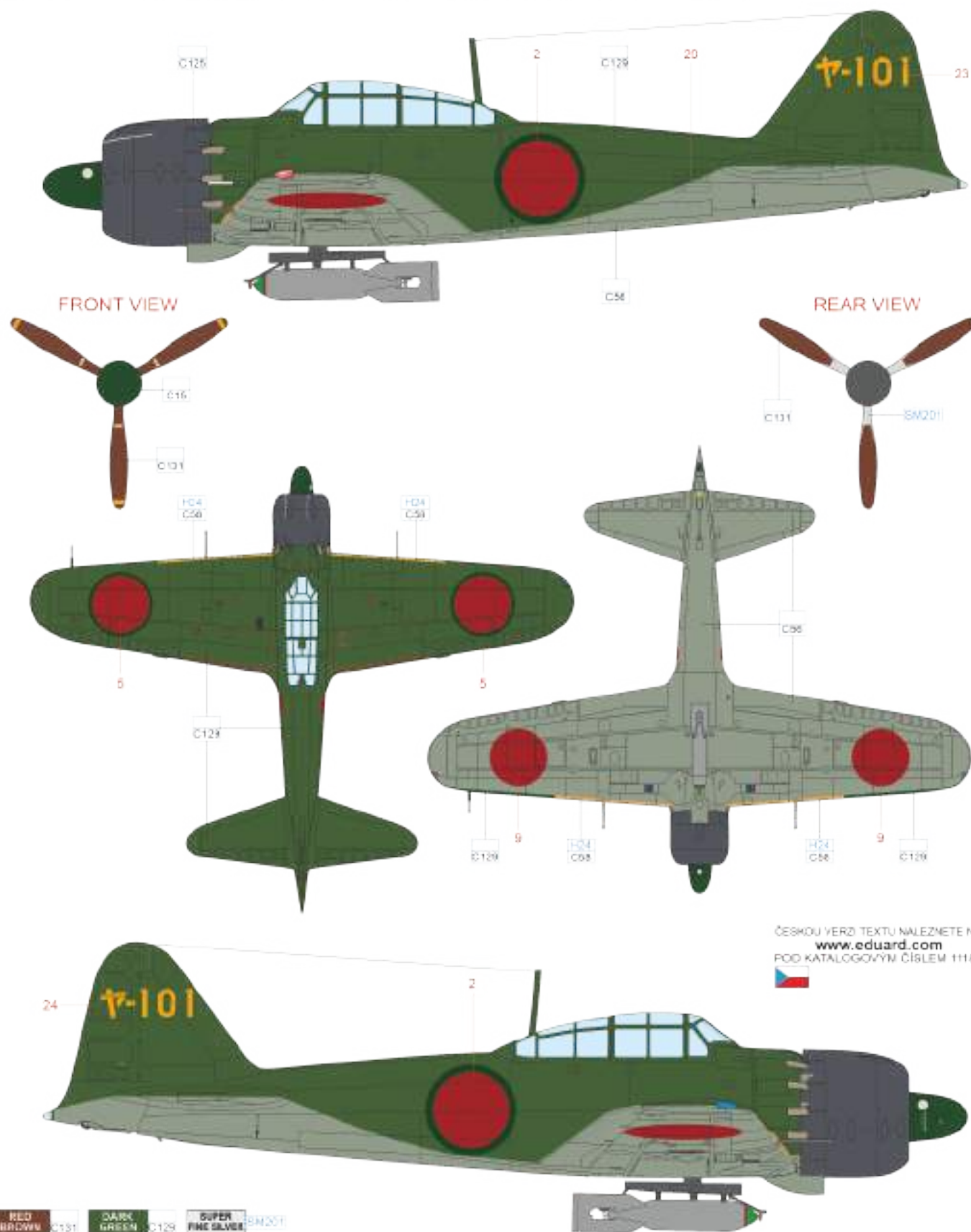


SILVER	H8 C8	RED BROWN	C131	SUPER FINE SILVER	SM201
LIGHT GREEN	C129	UNICRYST GREEN	C56	COWLING COLOR	C125
				ORANGE YELLOW	H4 C58

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D A6M5 Zero Type 52, Lt. (jg) Seizō Yasunori, Kamikaze Tokubetsu Kōgekūtai, Dai 7 Shōwa-tai, Kanoya Base, Japan, May 1945

Although this aircraft bears the Yatabe Kōkūtai designation and was assigned to Kamikaze Unit Shōwa No. 7, which was formed from Yatabe Kōkūtai, its pilot belonged to a different unit. He was Lt. (jg) Seizō Yasunori from Fighter Hikōtai 306, which operated under Kōkūtai 721 "Jinrai Butai" (Divine Thunder Corps), providing fighter escort for G4M Betty bombers modified to carry Yokosuka MXY-7 Ōka rocket planes. Seizō Yasunori had also trained for Ōka missions, but due to heavy losses of Betty bombers, he was reassigned to Kamikaze Unit Kanmu No. 10, one of over 20 Kamikaze units formed from Zero pilots of Kōkūtai 721. This unit launched over 200 Zero fighters in Kamikaze attacks – second only to Kōkūtai 201, which deployed the most Zero Kamikaze pilots during the defense of the Philippines. On May 11, 1945, Yasunori was one of the pilots who attacked the USS Bunker Hill. The ship was first hit by a bomb and then by the aircraft of his fellow pilot, Lt. (jg) Yoshiaki Shibata. Shortly after, Ensign Kyoshi Ogawa struck the flight deck with a bomb from his burning aircraft. Yasunori attempted to deliver the final blow to the aircraft carrier, but he was shot down by an anti-aircraft fire. The USS Bunker Hill suffered 393 crew members killed or missing and 264 wounded, making it the deadliest Kamikaze attack in history.



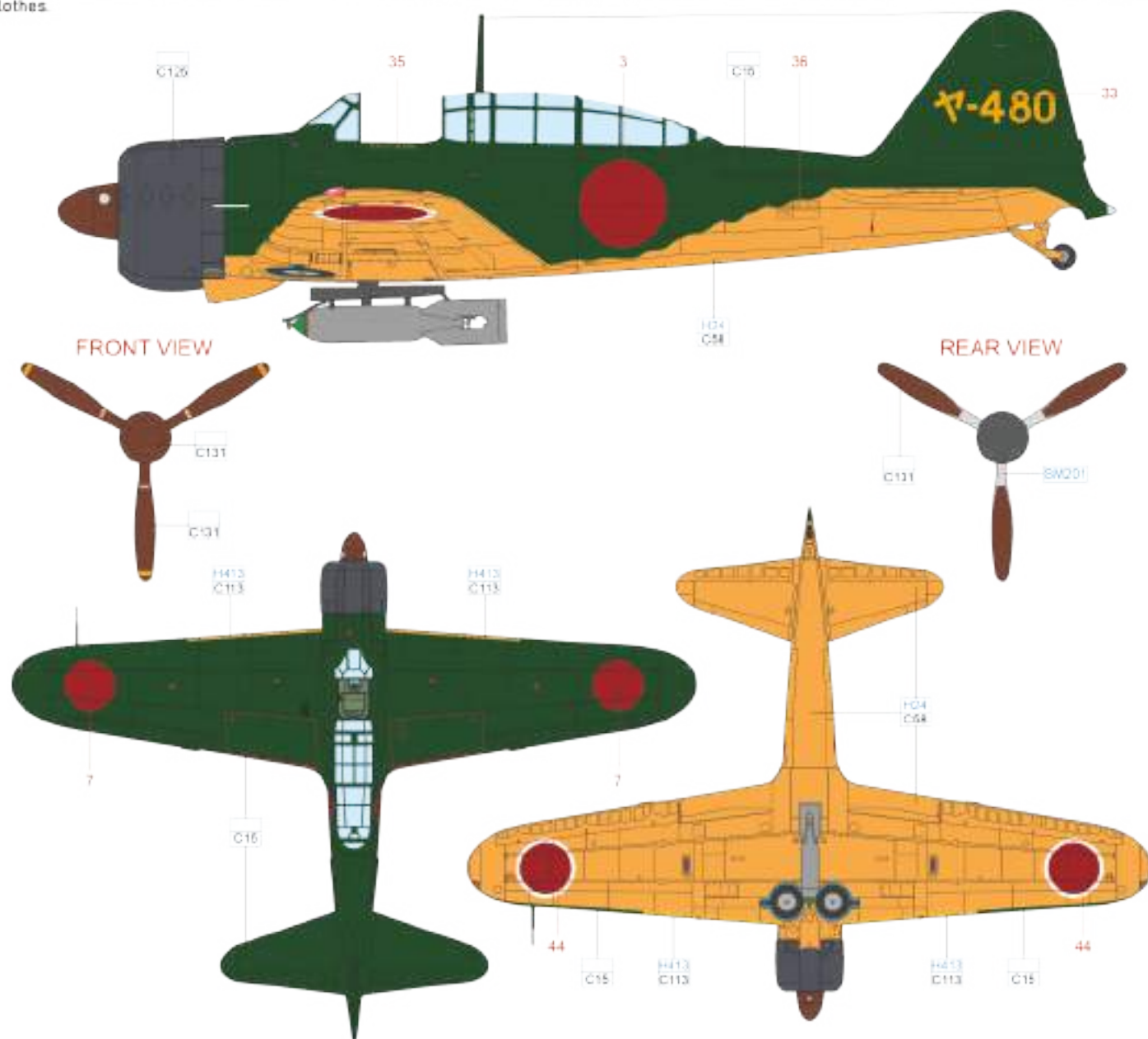
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RED BROWN	C131	DARK GREEN	C129	SUPER FINE SILVER	SM201
DARK GREEN	C15	UNIFORM GREEN	C54	COWLING COLOR	C125
				ORANGE YELLOW	H04 C58

F A6M2-K, Ensign Kōzō Koizumi, Kamikaze Tokubetsu Kōgekital, Dai 7 Shōwa-tai, Kanoya Base, Japan, April 1945

The aircraft bears the designation Ya, indicating its affiliation with the Yatabe Kōkūtai. This training unit was established in 1939 and, after being reorganized under this name in December 1944, continued to specialize exclusively in fighter training. It operated A6M Zero, N1K Shiden, J2M Raiden, and the two-seat A6M2-K aircraft. In total, the unit had 100 aircraft at its disposal. In early 1945, the Yatabe Kōkūtai participated in Japan's defensive battles. In April, it formed Kamikaze Shōwa Units Nos. 1 through 5 from a cadre of its instructors. One of its pilots, Kōzō Koizumi, took part in a Kamikaze attack on April 29, 1945, against Allied aircraft carriers east of Okinawa. This attack marked the final day of Operation Kikusui IV, which had been ongoing since April 21. During Operation Kikusui IV, Kamikaze attacks struck 18 vessels, sinking the minesweeper USS Swallow, Landing Craft Support (LCS-15), and the cargo ship Canada Victory, which was carrying 7,000 tons of explosives. On April 29 alone, the destroyers USS Haggard and USS Hazelwood were damaged, resulting in 57 deaths and 66 wounded. By this point, after nearly a month of relentless Japanese air offensive – combining conventional air raids with Kamikaze attacks – Allied crews were suffering from severe sleep deprivation due to constant alerts and were even unable to change their clothes.



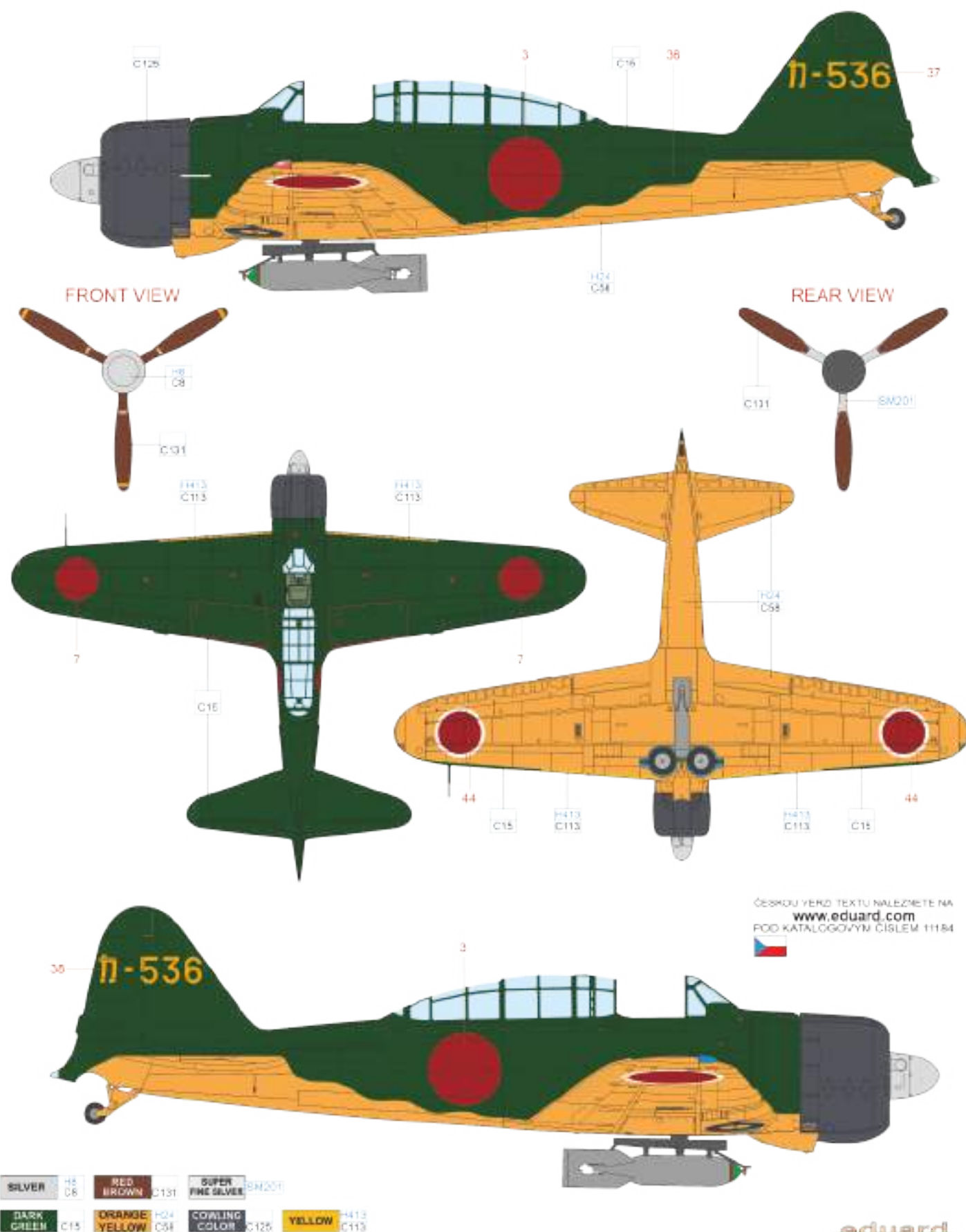
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YELLOW	H413 C113	RED BROWN	C131	SUPER FINE SILVER	SM201
DARK GREEN	C15	ORANGE YELLOW	H04 C04	COWLING COLOR	C126

G A6M2-K, Kasumigaura Kōkūtai, Sentōki Tokubetsu Kōgekūtai, Chitose Base, Japan, July 1945

Kasumigaura Kōkūtai was the third oldest aviation unit of the Imperial Japanese Navy. It was established in November 1922, and among its first aircraft types were the Avro 504 and Sparrowhawk. This unit played a key role in training cadres of the Japanese naval air force. Among the instructors who served in this unit were Akio Matsuba (18 victories) and Kunioshi Tanaka (17 victories). One of the pilots who underwent training at Kasumigaura Kōkūtai was Wataru Nakamichi, who achieved 15 victories and was one of the escort pilots for the missions with Yokosuka MXY-7 Ōka aircraft within the Kōkūtai 721. Towards the end of the war, Kasumigaura Kōkūtai allocated twenty A6M2-K training aircraft for Kamikaze missions, but the order for deployment was never issued before the war ended. The Japanese army and naval air force were conserving their reserves and replenishing aircraft of all categories for Kamikaze attacks against the anticipated Allied landing on the Japanese home islands. The Japanese planned to strike (though not necessarily sink) approximately 50% of enemy vessels due to the expected proximity of targets during the landing.

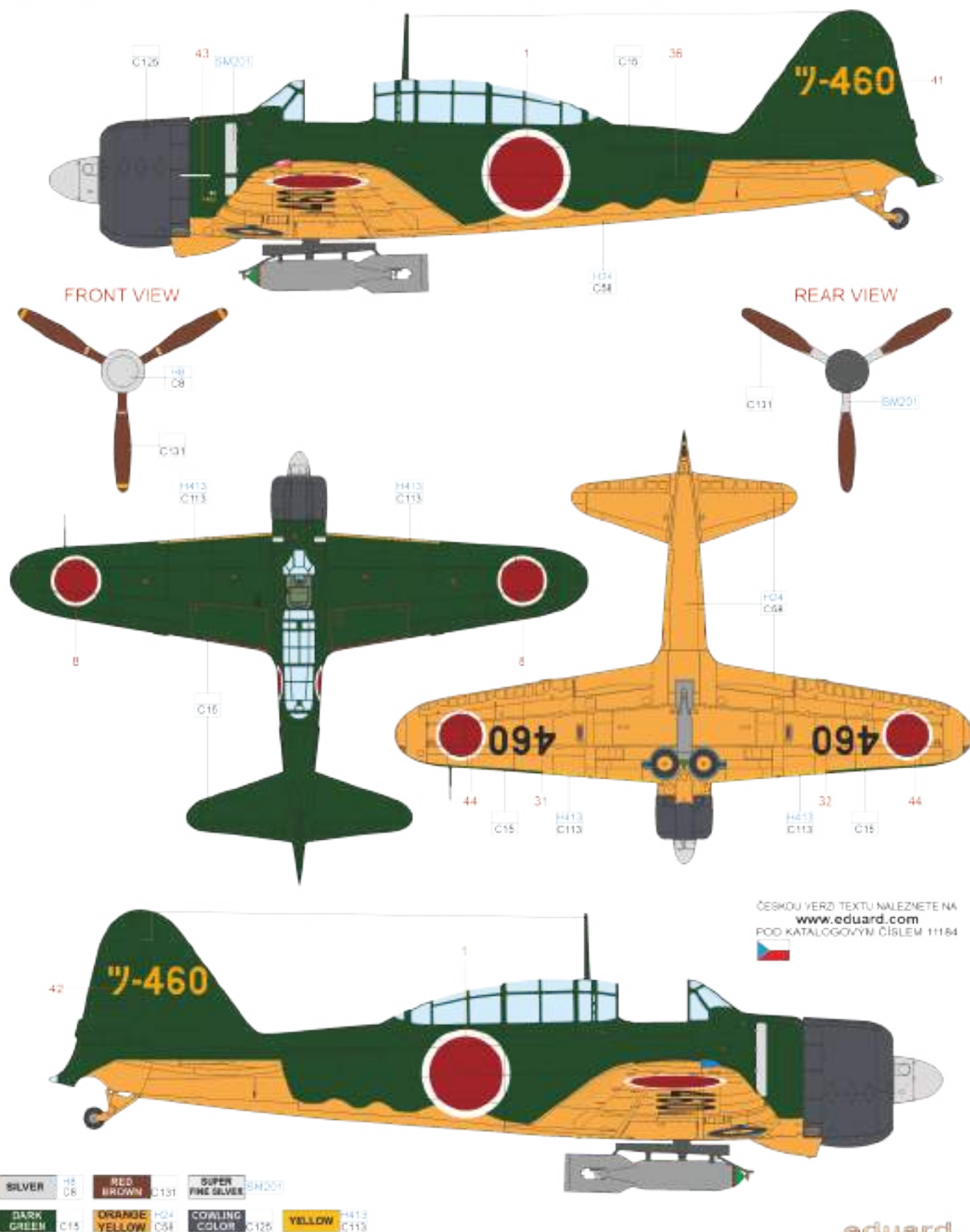


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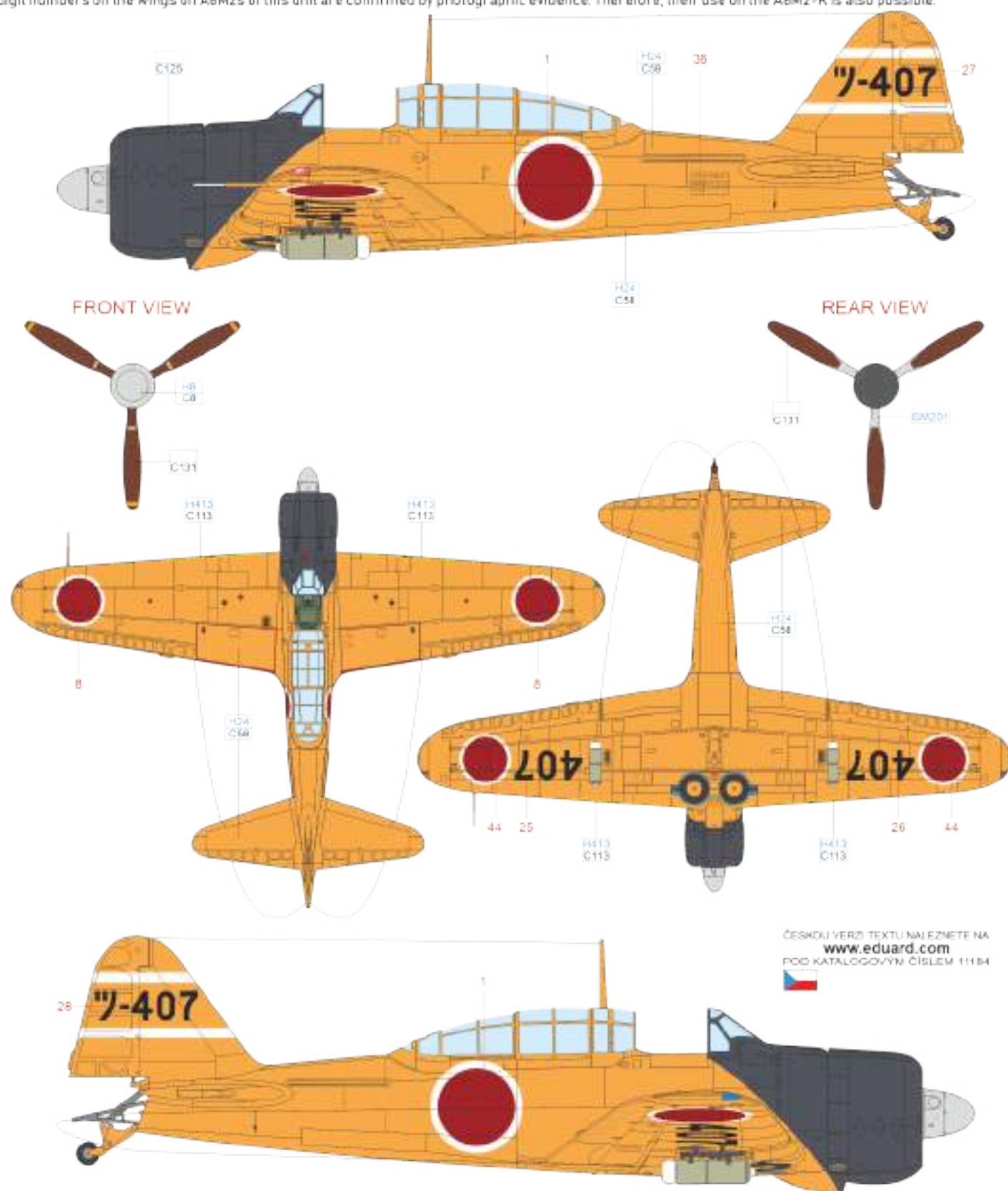
H A6M2-K, Lt. (jg) Tamotsu Kaneko, Kamikaze Tokubetsu Kōgekitai, Dai 1 Tsukuba-tai, Kanoya Base, Japan, April 1945

The Tsukuba Kōkūtai training unit was separated from Kasumigaura Kōkūtai in December 1938. Over time, the focus of training provided by the unit changed. In November 1944, Tsukuba Kōkūtai assigned experienced instructors to form a fighter squadron equipped with Zero and Shiden aircraft. This squadron engaged in combat with B-29 bombers and U.S. carrier-based aircraft as early as January and February 1945. At the end of March 1945, Tsukuba Kōkūtai was ordered to form its own Kamikaze units, designated Tsukuba-tai No. 1 to No. 6. However, the last two Kamikaze units were staffed by Zero pilots from Kōkūtai 721. On April 6, 1945, during the first day of Operation Kikusui I, Lt. (jg) Tamotsu Kaneko was deployed with aircraft Tsu-460. Along with 16 other pilots from his unit, he attacked convoys near Okinawa. On April 6, a total of 391 naval aircraft and 133 army aircraft were dispatched from bases in Taiwan and Japan to the Okinawa area. Among them, the Navy assigned 215 and the Army 82 aircraft for Kamikaze attacks. However, a relatively large number of aircraft had to return due to malfunctions or other issues. During the Kamikaze attacks, 20 American vessels were hit. The destroyers USS Bush, Colhoun, and Emmons were sunk, and the British aircraft carrier HMS Illustrious was also damaged.



A6M2-K, Tsukuba Kōkūtai, Tsukuba Base, Japan, 1944

The design of the two-seat training aircraft, which was based on the A6M2 Type 21 carrier-based fighter, was developed by 21st Naval Air Arsenal at the Ōmura base. The development started in 1942, with the prototype completed in November of that year. The aircraft was designated A6M2-K Type 11. To reduce weight, the cannons were removed from the wings. Some sources state that only the starboard machine gun was retained, while others mention armament consisting of two machine guns. The front cockpit for the student pilot was not equipped with canopy and had folding doors on the sides. Two fins were added to the rear fuselage to improve stability. Production of the A6M2-K at the 21st Naval Air Arsenal began in January 1943 using components from Mitsubishi and, primarily, Nakajima. A total of 218 units were produced there by July 1945. The A6M2-K was also manufactured by Hitachi, which delivered 279 units between May 1944 and July 1945. According to a painting regulation issued in September 1942, training aircraft were painted yellow-orange on all surfaces. Due to this, the national insignia on the underside was given a white border. The use of numbers on the undersides of A6M2-K aircraft in the Tsukuba Kōkūtai is not photographically confirmed due to the angle on which the available images were taken. However, three-digit numbers on the wings on A6M2s of this unit are confirmed by photographic evidence. Therefore, their use on the A6M2-K is also possible.



SILVER	H8 C8	RED BROWN	C131	SUPER FINE SILVER	SM201
YELLOW	H413 C113	ORANGE YELLOW	H04 C58	COWLING COLOR	C125

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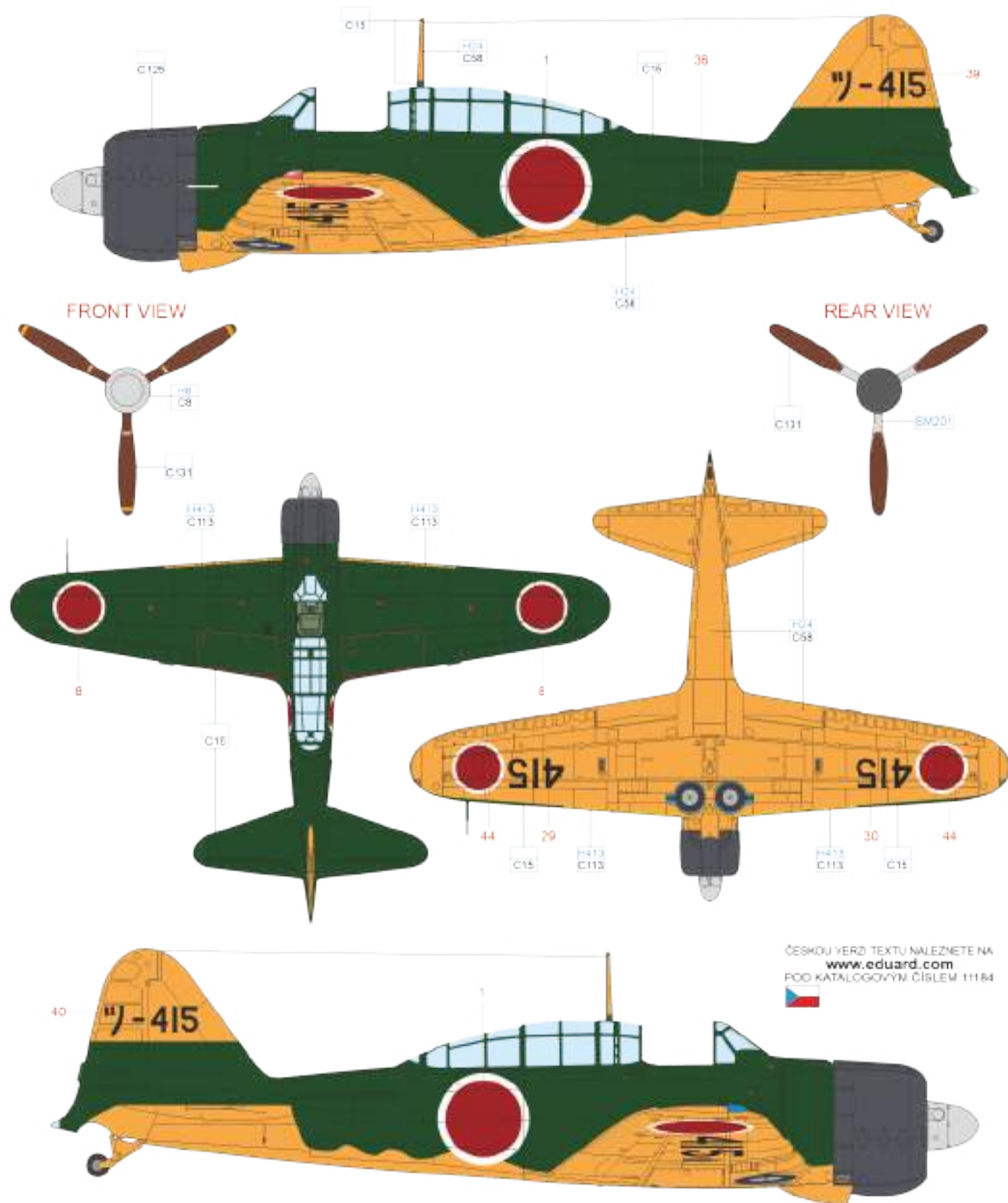
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J A6M2-K, Tsukuba Kōkūtai, Tsukuba Base, Japan, 1944

In July 1943, a regulation was issued that, among other things, mandated that training aircraft deployed in combat operations or based in areas where the enemy was active should be painted like combat aircraft. In practice, this led to the repainting of already-produced A6M2-K trainers. One such aircraft was Tsu-415, which is known from a photograph showing it with a yellow-orange coating on all surfaces. However, in a later photograph, it appears camouflaged with dark green paint on the upper surfaces, while the original paint and markings on the tail remained unchanged. A6M2-K aircraft were also used for target towing during training. In February 1945, Tsukuba Kōkūtai was ordered to form Kamikaze units. The training program for these pilots included the following requirements: at least eight pattern flights, a minimum of seven formation flights, at least ten instrument flights, a minimum of ten special attack training flights, at least six flights in darkness, five flights to a designated target, and a minimum of five navigation flights.



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SILVER	H8 C8	RED BROWN	C131	SUPER FINE SILVER	SM201
DARK GREEN	C15	ORANGE YELLOW	H04 C04	COWLING COLOR	C125
		YELLOW	H413 C113		

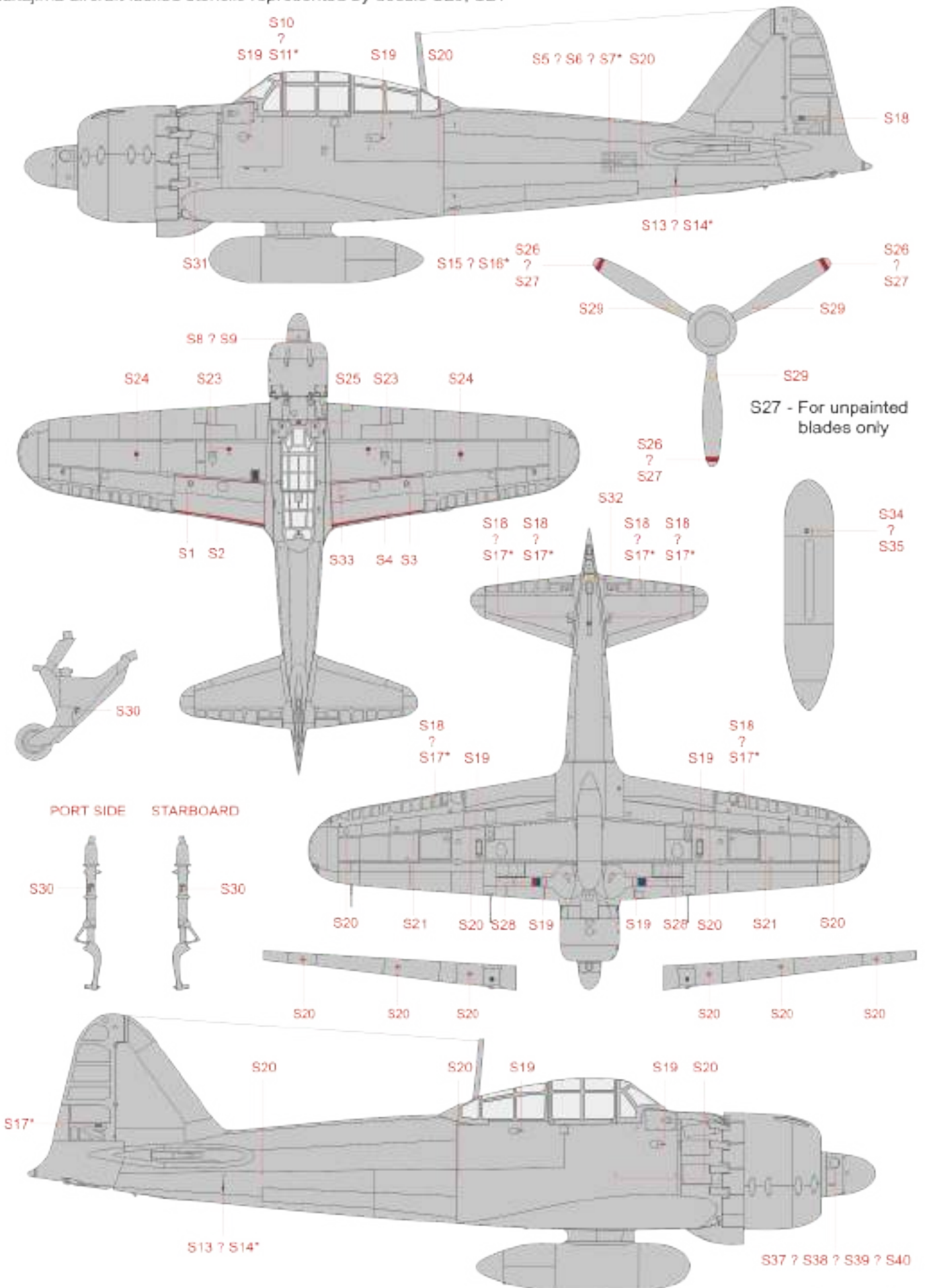
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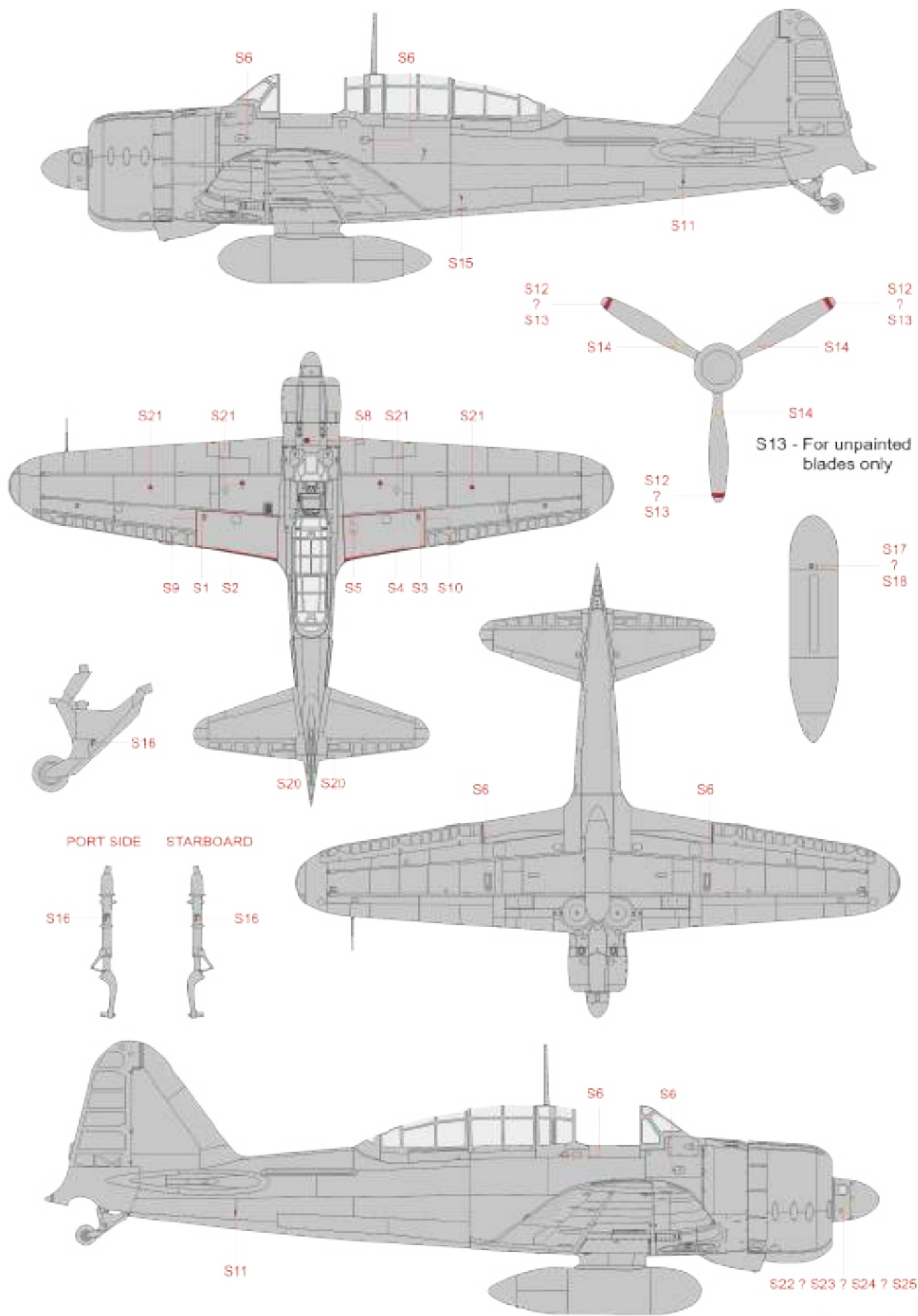
A6M5 Zero Type 52

STENCILING POSITIONS

* - STENCILS SIGNED WITH * ARE FOR MARKINGS C D E (NAKAJIMA BUILT AIRCRAFT)

Nakajima aircraft lacked stencils represented by decals S20, S21

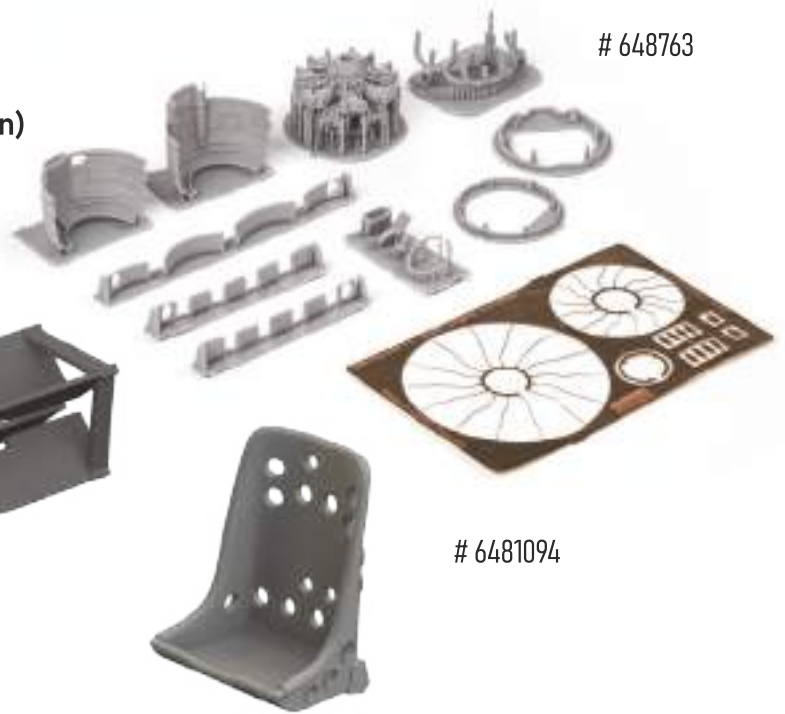




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- 648763 A6M2 engine complete PRINT (Brassin)
- 6481093 A6M5/7 500kg bomb PRINT (Brassin)
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- 3DL48219 A6M2-K SPACE (3D Decal Set)
- 3DL48220 A6M5 Zero SPACE (3D Decal Set)
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