

The Aero Historian



Volume 54 Number 6

Website: <http://www.aerohistorians.org>

June 2020



Hasegawa 1/48 Ki-61-I

by Mark L. Rossman

B-29 Hunter - 244th Sentai

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History:

Mitsubishi Ki-61 Hein was the only liquid cooled fighter the JAAF had in inventory during WWII. It was made by Kawasaki, the Hein ("Swallow") was thought to be a German or Italian made plane. However, it was an all

Japanese design except for the license-built version of the German Daimler Benz DB 601A engine. Between August of 1942 and August of 1945, four main versions of the aircraft totaling 3,078 units were built. The Ki-61 had continued problems with the engine and the production line.

The design began once the Daimler engine rights were secured in April 1940. Two

projects were initiated, the heavy Ki-60 fighter and the lighter Ki-61. Reports from Europe indicated that liquid-cooled engines were far superior than air-cooled engines, so the JAAF signed off on the project, with the Ki-61 the only one going forward. It had similar lines to the Bf.109 and the M.C.202, similar to better performance (368 m.p.h. at 15,948 ft), well protected and

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Secretary, Bob Maderich

Treasurer, Dennis Strand

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Newsletter Info

Article Submission Deadline: 22nd of each month

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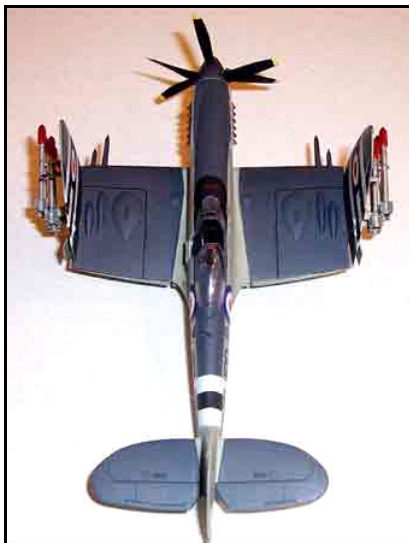
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Send Change of Address Notice to:
Dennis Strand

TCAH This Month

The monthly meeting will be held on line June 13 beginning at 1:00 pm. Come early.



President's Corner

by Steve Jantscher

Hello!

I hope this email finds all of you safe and healthy in these stressful times. If you're like me, you're spending as much time as you can at your workbench to relieve some of that stress.

Since we are still in the midst of a pandemic our club meeting will again be virtual via Zoom. I suspect it will be this way for a while. I'll open up the Zoom session at noon and the meeting will begin at 1:00. The invite with the link is below.

Feel free to forward this link. For our meeting on June 13 at 1:00 pm CDT:

Join Zoom Meeting

[https://us02web.zoom.us/j/5644702317?](https://us02web.zoom.us/j/5644702317?pwd=aUFTaW5PdW5tUUo3bUc4Z29vdjgwUT09)

[j/5644702317?](https://us02web.zoom.us/j/5644702317?pwd=aUFTaW5PdW5tUUo3bUc4Z29vdjgwUT09)

[pwd=aUFTaW5PdW5tUUo3bUc4Z29vdjgwUT09](https://us02web.zoom.us/j/5644702317?pwd=aUFTaW5PdW5tUUo3bUc4Z29vdjgwUT09)

(Link is all one string, no spaces)

Meeting ID: 564 470 2317

Password: 757218

One tap mobile

+13017158592,,5644702317#,,1

#,757218# US (Germantown)

+13126266799,,5644702317#,,1

#,757218# US (Chicago)

Dial by your location

+1 301 715 8592 US

(Germantown)

+1 312 626 6799 US

(Chicago)

+1 929 205 6099 US (New

York)

+1 253 215 8782 US

(Tacoma)

+1 346 248 7799 US

(Houston)

+1 669 900 6833 US (San

Jose)

Meeting ID: 564 470 2317

Password: 757218

Treasurer's Report

by Dennis Strand

This month we had a single membership renewal adding \$15.00 to our revenue. There were no expenses, giving us a total of \$5063.22 in the club account. Good luck and stay healthy.



armed with 4 machine guns. Tests in the summer of '42' against a Bf.109E, Ki-43-II, Ki-44-I and a captured P-40E proved the Ki-61 to be superior.

Units started receiving them in February 1943 and going operational in the Philippines in May. The "Tony" so named by the allies, proved more than a match for existing allied aircraft, particularly for its good protective armor, high speed in dives and heavy armament.

The KAIc deployed in January '44' had stronger structure and heavier armament. The so-called Achilles' heel, was the engine, a Kawasaki Ha-40 12-cylinder V liquid-cooled 1175h.p, as it was subject to constant breakdowns and was

difficult to tune. The best version was the Ki-61-II KAI, appearing in September of '44' powered by a 1500-h.p. engine.

The later stages of the war the JAAF desperately needed another high-performance fighter. The Ki-100 was derived directly from the Ki-61 Hein, so in November 1944, Ki-61-II KAI bodies were converted over to the Ki-100, a story for another article. A total of 3,078 Ki-61 versions were built.

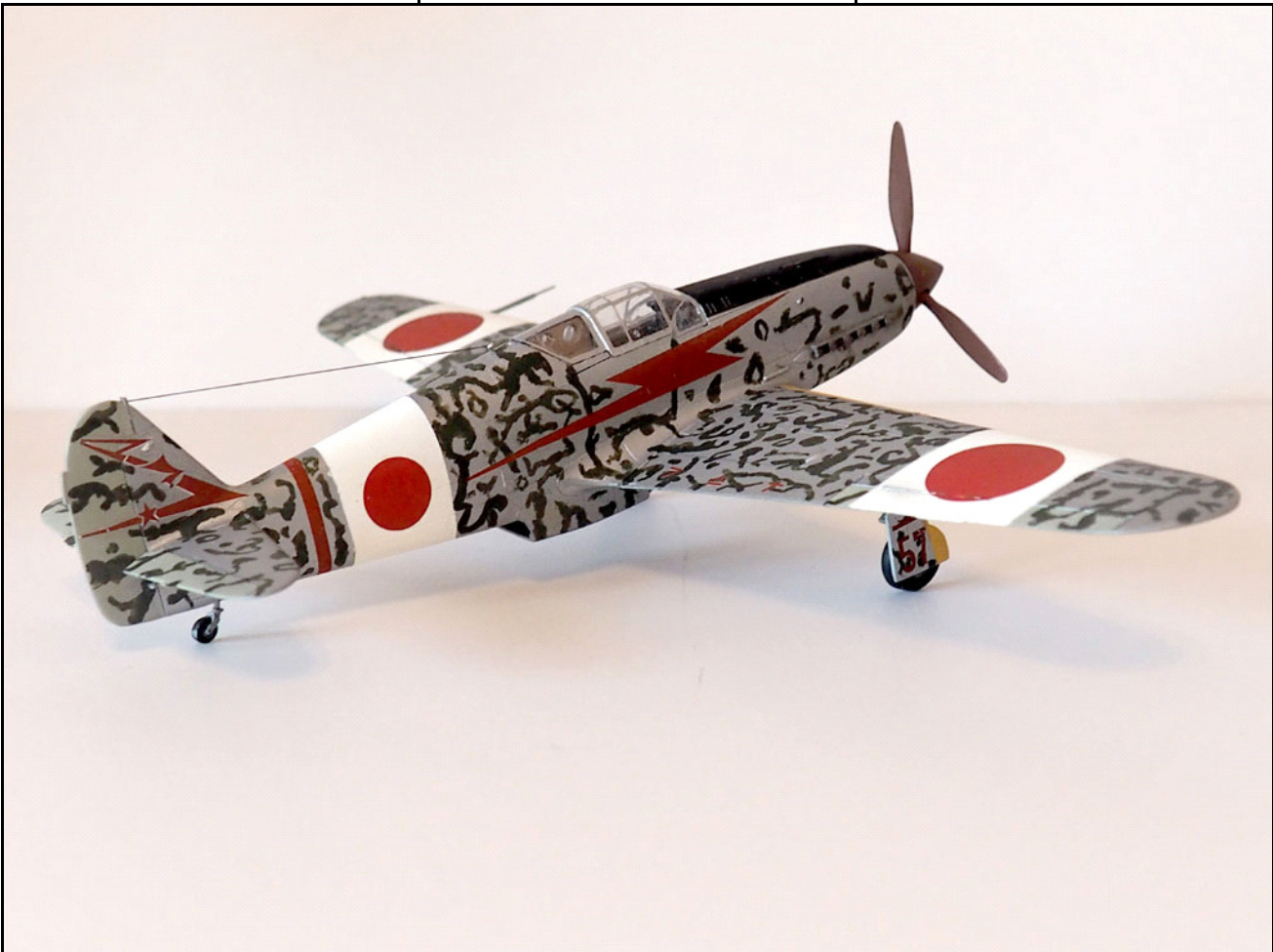
The 244th Sentai:

Sentai was the basic operational unit of the JAAF. Composed of 3 or more Chutais (Squadrons), comprising between 27 and 49 aircraft. Each Chutai had about 16 aircraft with pilots, plus maintenance and

repair personal. A Sentai would have about 400 officers and men.

244th was established in April of 1942, reorganized from the 144th Sentai. Aircraft flown by the group were the Ki-27, Ki-61 and Ki-100. They operated in Japan proper only, and were disbanded at the end of the war in Yokaichi, Shiga Prefecture. The unit had nine (9) Bukosho recipients including the youngest sentai commander, Maj. Teruhiko Kobayashi, at age 24. Upon his arrival he stated to his pilots, "Commanding a fighter unit should be done from the air. Follow me"! The 244th Sentai also had an air-to-air B-29 ramming unit, formed in October

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of 1944, called "Shinten Seiku Tai".

The famous emblem was introduced when the unit converted from the Ki-27 to the Ki-61, about the summer of 1943. Variations did occur with the "4 and star" in white, blue or yellow. No special markings for the commander or Chutai color. The red tail was the symbol of the "Shinten" squadron, Kobayashi painted his HQ Shotai Hein tail red to symbolize their

determination and to boost moral during the Empire Capital Defense duty.

This was the most famous home defense unit of the war, claiming 73 B-29's shot down and another 92 damaged. The exploits of this unit were published in daily newspapers, Kobayashi's fame continued to grow. Even to the point of disobeying direct flying orders by taking off to pursue F6F Hellcats, at this time unit was flying the Ki-100, instead of waiting for the

incoming B-29's. His court martial papers were drawn up, which had serious consequences. However, the newspapers touted the units' rout of the Hellcats 10 shot down! it was actually 2 for 2, the Emperor responded approvingly and the charges quietly disappeared. Post war Japanese historians credited him with 10 B-29's and two fighters, Japanese historian Takashi Sakurai extensive investigation shows he actually shot down 3 B-29's and 2 F6F

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Hellcats.

Kobayashi joined the Self-Defense Air Force after the war. June 4th, 1957, he ordered his subordinate to eject from a T-33 as it had developed technical problems and was flying in bad weather. He crashed short of the runway at Hamamatsu Air Base and was killed. He remained a Japanese hero to the end.

The pictures give you a

relative size of the "Tony" as compared to a "Mustang". This is a VII Fighter Command "Sundowner", #531 "NIP NOCKER" from the 457th FS/506th FG, Iwo Jima.

Model:

Kit: Hasegawa 1/48 Ki-61 Type 3.

Decals: AeroMaster 48-116 "Kawasaki Tony Ki-61-I Pt1".

Aircraft: This depicts aircraft #57 a Ki-61 I Tei of the 244th ACR, 2nd Chutai in 1945,

located at Chofu
airbase.

Paint:

A) Tamiya TS-17 Aluminum
spray

B) Testers Flat white spray
for the Hinomaru's areas.

C) Tamiya TS-29 Semi-
gloss black for glare panel.

D) Tamiya TS-47 Chrome
Yellow spray for the leading wing
edges.

E) Hand painted the
camouflage blotches using

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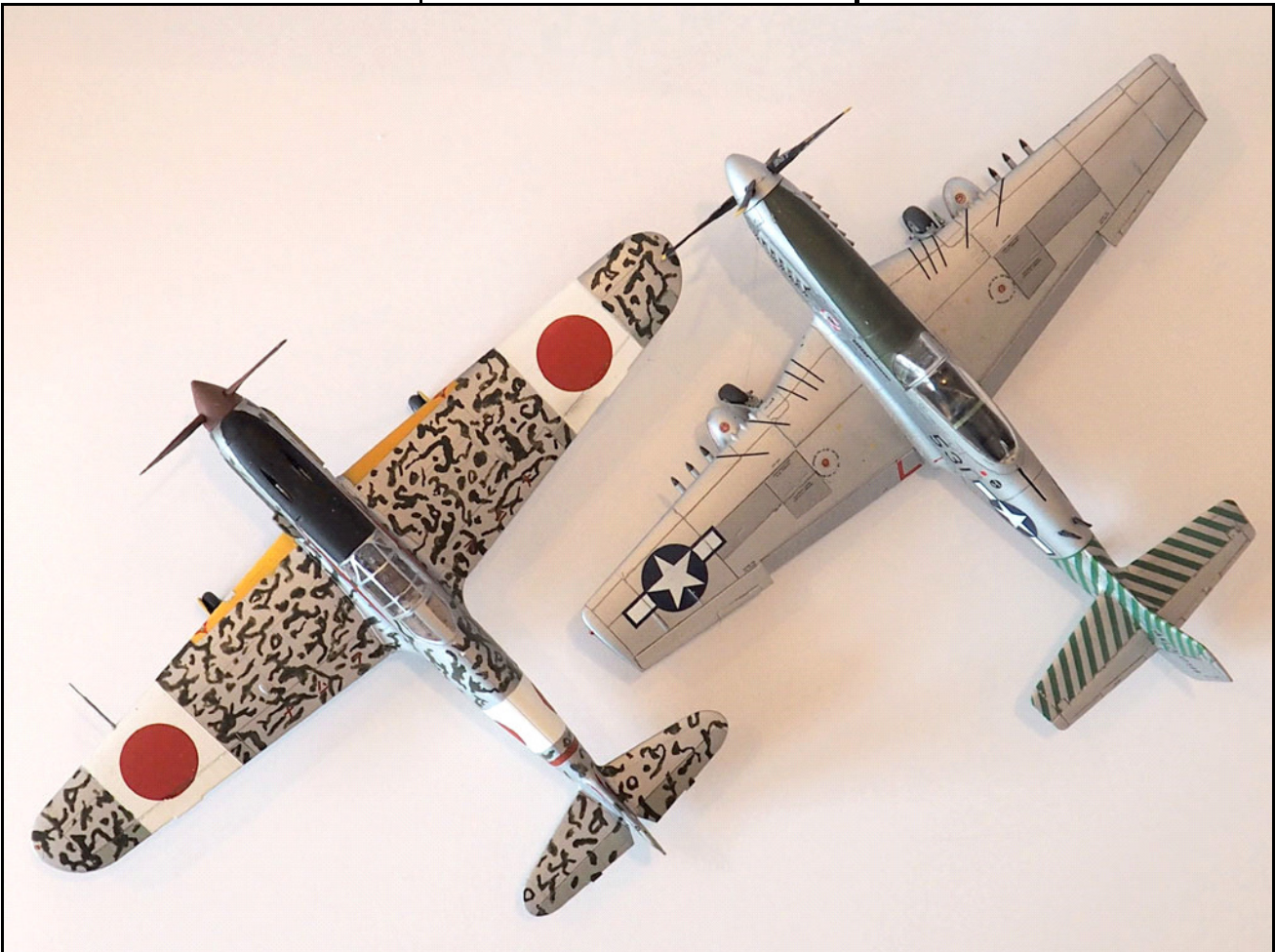
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Tamiya XF-13

F) Propeller is Model Color
70486 Mahogany Brown

References:

1. Osprey Aviation Elite – B-29 Hunters of the JAAF, by Koji Takaki and Henry Sakaida,
2. Osprey Japanese Army Air Force Aces 1937 – 1945, by Henry Sakaida,
3. Rand McNally World War II Airplanes Vol. 2 by Enzo Angelucci and Paolo Matricard.
4. Life Like decals #48-005, 244th Sentai Pt 3.
5. AeroMaster 48-116 “Kawasaki Tony Ki-61-I Pt1”.





Directions to the Club Meeting Location

Where: South St. Paul Municipal Airport, a.k.a. Fleming Field, located on the southern extremity of South St. Paul, south of 1-494, west of Concord Street and East of Highway 52.

If coming from the western Twin Cities going east on 494:

- Exit at the 7th and 5th Avenue exit (Exit No.65)
- Turn right (South) on 7th Ave and go approximately .6 miles to a 4-way Stop sign. This is South Street W. To your left there will be a McDonald's; to your right front there will be a Walgreen's.
- Turn left (East) at the 4-way Stop onto
- South Street W and go approximately .6 miles. Along the way you will encounter three more Stop signs—the third Stop sign (Henry Avenue) will be a "T" intersection. At the "T" intersection on your left will be homes and on your right softball fields.
- Turn right (south) onto Henry Ave. and go approximately .2

- miles toward the Fleming Field airport terminal building.

If coming from east Twin Cities on westbound 494:

- Exit at the 7th and 5th Avenue exit (Exit No.65)
- Turn left (South) on 7th Ave and go approximately .6 miles to a 4-way Stop sign. This is South Street W. To your left front there will be a small strip mall; to your right there will be an Amoco station.
- Turn left (East) at the 4-way Stop onto
- South Street W and go approximately .4 miles. Along the way you will encounter two more Stop signs—the third Stop sign (Henry Avenue) will be a "T" intersection. At the "T" intersection on your left will be homes and on your right softball fields.
- Turn right (south) onto Henry Ave. and go approximately .2 miles toward the Fleming Field airport terminal building

The terminal is on the right with parking available.



The Aero Historian is published monthly by the Twin City Aero Historians, Inc., a joint chapter of the American Aviation Historical Society and International Plastic Modelers Society/USA, for members and readers as part of their annual dues or fees.

The group is open to aviation enthusiasts from teenagers on up who are interested in aviation modeling, photography, collecting, art and writing.

The Twin Cities Aero Historians (TCAH) meet the second Saturday of every month at 1:00pm.

See above for the new meeting locations and directions.

Mail Newsletter material to the editor and address changes to the treasurer.