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Mitsubishi A6M Zero (Yellow Series)



Synopsis

The illustrated technical history of the most famous Japanese warplane of World War Two. The different versions of the plane, from the 1940 prototypes to the final aircraft of 1945 are described and illustrated; all the changes in specification, equipment and performance are recorded. Drawings and data from the original technical manuals, full dimensional details and photographs of surviving examples preserved in aviation museums illustrate all aspects of the airframe, inside and out. Wartime photographs and many pages of color illustrations complete the book's comprehensive coverage. More than 30 color profiles. Profusely illustrated with photos, including a comprehensive walk-around section showing all aspects of the airframe, and diagrams from official manuals. Includes 1/72nd and 1/48th scale plans, and color profiles showing many of the colorful schemes applied to the ZERO by its users.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

I have the new 2015 edition. The book is beautifully illustrated and contains photographs of almost every square inch of the aircraft. Aimed at the modeler and technical enthusiast, the design history of the aircraft is covered with a combination of narrative text and extensive photo captions. The book does not cover the operational history of the aircraft so look elsewhere if that is your interest. As a model and miniatures painter I was particularly interested in the research and color photos on the gray-green color of the aircraft during the early war years.

I've long been interested in the Mitsubishi Zero fighter. Numerous books have been written about the plane and said that this was the fighter plane used by Japan throughout the war. What I've wondered about was did the plane go through revisions to improve it as did American, British (24 different Marks of the Spitfire), and German planes. Was the 1945 plane identical to the 1941 plane? This book, as is usual with the books from MMP provided the answer. Yes, the Zero went through several versions. The biggest changes were to incorporate more powerful engines, which required changes to the front of the fuselage. Likewise the armament changed somewhat in a few of the various models. This included going to a 30mm cannon, removing the 7.7mm machine guns, more ammunition storage area, etc. Another question I had was why did only the wingtips fold on the Zero. Some versions had folding wingtips, some did not. American naval planes had folding wings so more could be stored in the same amount of area. On the Zero only the tips folded, and they were manually folded. This was to enable them to fit on the deck elevator of the Japanese carriers. As is usual with the MMP books, there are a lot of photographs from World War II, and even more detailed photos taken for the book, usually in color from Zeros on display in various museums around the world. Some of these are in flying condition.

Excellent

This is one of the first Mushroom Yellow Series titles (No 6103) dating from 2001 when Mushroom Model Publications decided to enter the book market. The Yellow Series had not found its winning format yet. This was still very much a "recognition manual" type of book. Unlike the previous two books on the Bf 109E and G this book seems to hold up rather well over the past decade or so. At least there doesn't appear to be better books that have appeared in the interim as is the case for the Bf 109. I'm not sure whether this is due to linguistics, fluency in German being much more common than fluency in Japanese amongst English language writers, or whether it is due to knowledge of the Zero, even down to the details, being much firmer. In any event the book is a 6-1/2" x 9-1/2", 96 page, square bound, card cover. The first 34 pages details the differences between the various Zero models via a mostly adequate but minimal text, nicely done line drawings and sketches, and black and white photos the best of which are of captured examples. The rest of the book consists mostly of close up color photographs of preserved examples (or in a few cases replicas) and color profiles. All seems well done with a few reservations. The statement in the introduction that "The best American fighter at that time, the F4F Wildcat, did not stand a chance against the Zero" is

excessive and almost immediately contradicted in a confusing comparison. Translation problems? In an armament list there is listed a 3 20mm and 2 7.7 mm armed A6M5 which is not subsequently detailed. All the color profile of the A6M2 Model 21 show the exhaust port coming through the fourth oil cooler flap whereas we were previously assured that the change to it coming through the fifth flap was made during the Model 11. The profile artist not getting the memo? Finally, I wish the museum where the various color photos were taken was pointed out on each photo. Despite these inconsistencies I rate this book four stars because detailed monographs on Japanese planes are not plentiful in English. I wouldn't lay out serious coin to get this book but if reasonably priced both the modeler and general enthusiast will find it worthwhile.

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