



**Tamiya 1/48 Scale P-47D**  
by Mark L. Rossmann

**B-29 Hunter - Ki-44-II-Otsu  
47<sup>th</sup> Sentai - 1/48 Hasegawa**  
by Mark L. Rossmann

History:

Nakajima Type 2 heavy fighter, the Ki-44 Shoki, was developed from the 1939 Air Headquarters (Koko Hombu) requirement for a different type of fighter. In all previous requirements; responsiveness, classic dog-fighting as in WWI, and agility were utmost, however, this requirement was for rate-of-climb, speed, and ability to withstand battle damage.

Initial trials against the Zero saw it totally fail, and only equaled the performance of the Ki-27 and Ki-43.

Many changes were made, including a set of Ki-43 like "butterfly" combat flaps fitted for improved maneuverability, aerodynamic changes especially to the engine housing, the aircraft was finally production ready, with only 40 Ki-44-I's built before the -II Otsu commenced production. The Otsu was the best of the series with top speed of 376

mph at 17,060 feet with ascent to 16,000 feet in 4 minutes 17 seconds, armed with 4 machine guns. The -III Hei only had a few built before suspension in late 1944 in order to build the Ki-84.

With high wing loading, this created fast speeds for landing and tricky handling, it was thought fighter pilots with over 1,000 hours of flight time in their log books should only fly it. This caution was found to be un-needed and by late

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## TCAH Officers

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## TCAH This Month

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

Zoom meeting details will be emailed to the membership, or posted on the club website, or just included in one of the columns.



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war it was decided relatively inexperienced pilots could handle it.

Pilot opinion was subjective, those that flew the nimble Ki-27 and Ki-43 disliked it intensely, as it lacked maneuverability and for its highspeed landing. However, it was respected for its outstanding dive characteristics, rapid roll rate and an excellent gun platform, consisting of a pair of 7.7 mm (.303 in) and a pair of 12.7 mm (.50 in) machine guns. Later, the "Ilc" had a single 20 mm cannon replacing the wing mounted machine gun, limited numbers of aircraft had devastating 40 mm mounts. Those willing to accept the planes characteristics and to exploit them were far and few between.

Limited success was partly due to only 1227 variants of this type being produced, which was 9% of the single engine JAAF aircraft produced during the war. It was deployed mostly in China, also in Burma, East Indies, and the Philippines. The Ki-44 (Ki for "kita" which is airframe type number) Shokai ("The Demon Queller", a Taoist temple deity traditionally regarded as a vanquisher of ghosts and evil beings), or named by the allies as "Tojo", is mostly known for its Homeland Defense deployment against the B-29.

[The 47<sup>th</sup> Chutai:](#)

Nine aircraft were received by an experimental unit, 47<sup>th</sup> Chutai "Kawasemi Bunta" ("Kingfisher Flight, 47<sup>th</sup> Squadron"), commanded by Major Toshio Sakagawa at Saigon Indochina in early September 1941. As a result of the "Doolittle Raid", having laid bare the lack of a Home Defense lead by the 244<sup>th</sup> with obsolete Ki-27's, the wake-up call ordered the 47<sup>th</sup> Chutai to return to Japan, on April 25<sup>th</sup> 1942 they did. The 47<sup>th</sup> was assigned to the 10<sup>th</sup> Air Division and rated as the "best" with many skilled pilots, even though the 244<sup>th</sup> gained most of the limelight.

In October 1943, the 47<sup>th</sup> worked its way into "Sentai" status at Choufu Air base. Its tail emblem was a stylized version of the number 47 with each Chutai(squadron) displaying in its own colors, for this model, yellow for the 3<sup>rd</sup> Chutai. 47<sup>th</sup> Sentai. It disbanded at the end of the war at Ozuki, Yamaguchi Prefecture then operating the Ki-84.

November 1, 1944 the 47<sup>th</sup> saw its first B-29 homeland action when a F-13 photo-recon, variant of the B-29, from the 3<sup>rd</sup> Photographic group came in at 32,000 ft to map the Kanto plain. At 1300 hours the 47<sup>th</sup> scrambled available Tojo's and began there long climb toward the bombers. Leading was Capt. Jun Shimizu, the 1<sup>st</sup> Chutai commander, as the formation reached 27,000 ft the planes began wallowing and started stalling, some pilots dropped

their nose to climb at a shallower angle. Shimizu and his wingman Lt. Matsuzaki got within 3000 ft of the plane, struggling to keep their planes controlled, fired short bursts with no hits.

The Ilc version were armed with heavy cannon, using caseless ammunition with a low muzzle velocity was affective in close attacks against B-29s Using the Ilc, t h e r e w a s a special *kamikaze* unit, (a company of four aircraft minimum) of the 47th Sentai, which specialized in bomber collision tactics, the *Shinten* unit ("*Shinten Seiku Tai*") (Sky Shadow) 47th *Sentai* (Air Regiment) based at Narimasu airfield), during the defense of Tokyo.

On Feb 10<sup>th</sup> 1945, a mission to Ota, the 47<sup>th</sup> Sentai intercepted. 1<sup>st</sup> Lt Heikichi Yoshizawa flew inverted straight at the formation, then rolled upright then flashing barely 30ft above the Superforts, he slammed into one of them and was instantly killed. That morning he had pinned a small doll to his flying suit for good luck, telling his wing man 2nd Lt. Ryozo Ban, "Follow me today!" Ban replied "Yes sir, Yes sir I will, I will follow you to heaven or hell!" Ban was hit by defensive fire and had to make an emergency landing at Shimodate airfield. Yoshizawa is recorded as the leading B-29 ace of the 47<sup>th</sup> with 4 B-29's destroyed. Not all his kills were in the Ki-44.

By March of 1945, P-51 "Sundowner" units were escorting the B-29's, JAAF units were ordered not to engage U.S. escorts, to go after the bombers and to save themselves for the final defense, this also saw the 47<sup>th</sup> transitioning to the Ki-84.

Ki-44 was used on the eve of WWII in Indochina, a heavily armed fighter suited for attacking the heavy bombers, something the Luftwaffe resurrected near the end of their "Defense of the Reich". The "Tojo" was never destined to become a great fighter, or the mount of great aces, those who did make there mark in this aircraft did so by ramming B-29's at high altitudes or stalking them at low altitudes with the deadly 40mm cannon. Not what was envisioned in the original "Koko Hombu" requirement.

Model:

Kit: Hasegawa 1/48 Ki44-II (JT37)

Decals: AeroMaster 48-170 "Tojo Collection PT. II".

Aircraft: This depicts aircraft #60, a Ki 44 Shoki II "Otsu" of the 47<sup>th</sup> Sentai, 3rd Chutai

in Oct 1944, based at Chobu airbase. Pilot; Capt. Hatano 3rd Chutai leader.

Only draw-back on the kit, it came with the scope site which protruded through the front windshield. Later built planes came with the optic site, which this particular

plane has. Used "Formula 560" canopy glue to fill in the hole, would have been nice if optional site and windshield were available in kit.

Paint:

A) T a m i y a T S - 1 7 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) Tamiya AS-29 Grey Green (IJN) for the fabric areas.

F) Propeller is Model Color 70486 Mahogany Brown

Final Note:

In reference #2, last page shows a picture of a Ki-44 on display at Wright-Patterson AFB. This last surviving "Tojo" was scrapped, there are no intact examples of this aircraft type left in the world. Another source says a wing center section is preserved at the Northwestern Polytechnical University Aviation Museum, at Xi'an China.

References:

1. Osprey Aviation Elite #5 – B-29 Hunters of the JAAF, by Koji Takaki and Henry Sakaida,

2. Osprey Aircraft of the Aces #100 – Ki-44 "Tojo" Aces of World War 2", by Nicholas Millman.

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3. Osprey Aircraft of the Aces #13 – Japanese Army Airforce Aces of World War 2”, by Henry Sakaida.

4. Rand McNally World War II Airplanes Vol. 2 by Enzo Angelucci and Paolo Matricard.

5. AeroMaster 48-170, “Tojo Collection PT. II”.

6. Hasegawa Instruction Sheet





## 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.