

*Mitsubishi Ki-51 (Sonia). 1/72 scale*

On August 6, 1945, the crew of a Ki-51 of the 73<sup>rd</sup> *Dokuritsu Chutai* reported contact with a submarine near the Lambok Strait, close to the island of Bali. The crew attacked the submarine twice. The submarine later turned out to be USS *Bullhead* (SS-332) which was, at that time, patrolling the area. It was the last American submarine that went missing during the Second World War.

During combat operations in the Far East, the Ki-51 received the Allied code name Sonia. After the Japanese capitulation, several surviving aircraft were taken over by the Indonesian Air Force. They were used against the Dutch colonists.



*Ki-51 of Hiko 44<sup>th</sup> Sentai (44<sup>th</sup> Air Regiment) in China, 1943.*

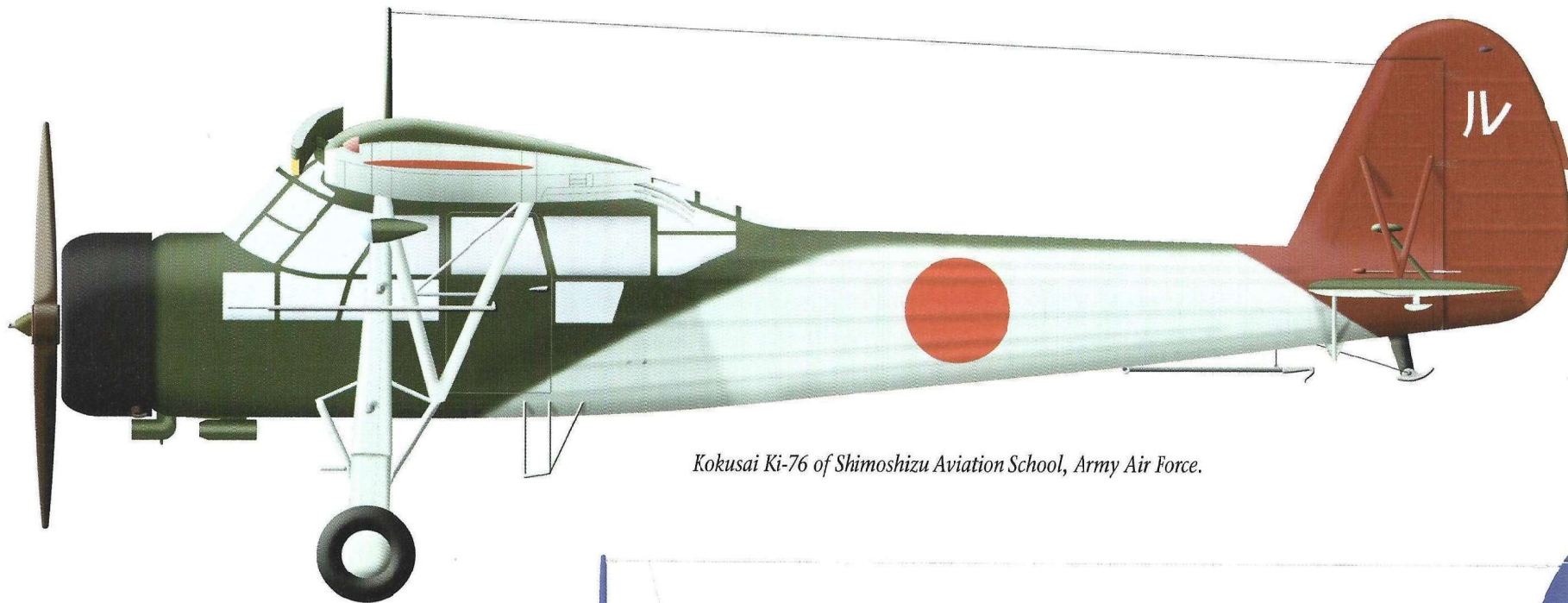
#### Technical data:

- **Description:** light single-engine attack, tactical reconnaissance and patrol aircraft. All metal structure with fabric-covered ailerons and control surfaces.
- **Crew:** pilot and observer/gunner in enclosed cockpit.
- **Power plant:** one 14-cylinder air-cooled radial Mitsubishi Ha-26-II, producing 940 hp (691 kW) at take-off and 950 hp (699 kW) at 2,300 m; three-blade metal propeller with variable pitch and 2.9 m diameter; fuel capacity 608 l.
- **Armament:**
  - Two fixed Type 89 7.7mm machine guns and one flexible Type 89 7.7 mm machine gun in observer's position (prototypes, pre-production and early production Ki-51 aircraft).
  - Two fixed Type 1 12.7 mm machine guns and one flexible Type 89 7.7 mm machine gun in observer's position (late production Ki-51).
- **Bomb load:** normal – 200 kg (4 x 50 kg or 12 x 15 kg) maximum – 250 kg.
- **External load:** two 68 l fuel tanks.

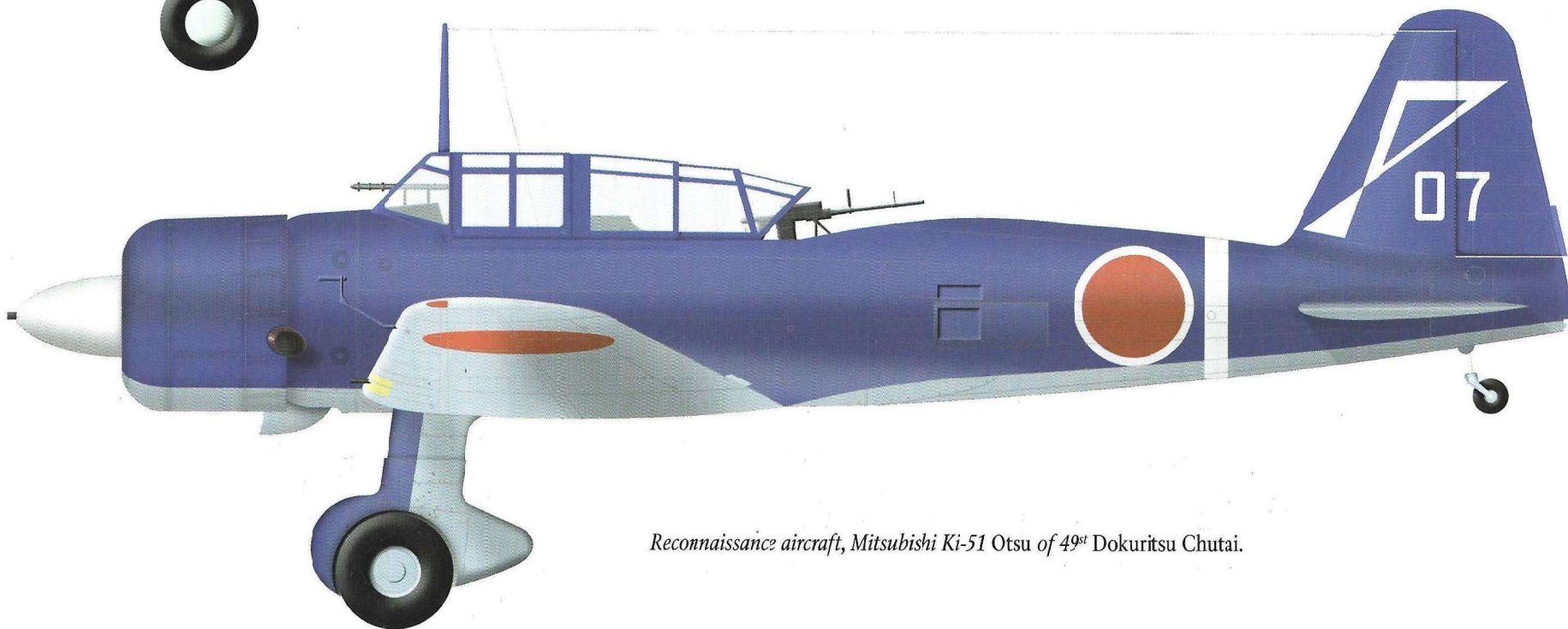
Type	Ki-51 Ko	Ki-51 Otsu
<b>Dimensions</b>		
Wing span [m]	12.1	12.1
Length [m]	9.21	9.21
Height [m]	2.73	2.73
Wing area [m <sup>2</sup> ]	24.02	24.02
<b>Weights</b>		
Empty [kg]	1,873	1842
Takeoff [kg]	2,798	2800
Maximum take-off [kg]	2,920	
Payload [kg]	925	958
Wing loading [kg/m <sup>2</sup> ]	116.49	116.57
Power loading [kg/ hp]	3.11	2.98
<b>Performance</b>		
Maximum speed at 3,000 m [km/h]	424	396
Cruising speed at 2,000 m [km/h]	344	
Landing speed [km/h]		
Climb to 5,000 m	9'55"	
Ceiling [m]	8,270	
Range [km]	1,060	

**Production:** a total of 2,385 Ki-51 aircraft were produced including:

Mitsubishi Jukogyo Kabushiki Gaisha in Nagoya	
Ki-51 prototypes – June – August 1939	2
Ki-51 pre-production aircraft – September – December 1939	11
Ki-51 production aircraft – June 1940 – March 1944	1,459
Dai-Ichi Rikugun Kokusho in Tachikawa	
Ki-51 production aircraft – July 1941 – July 1945	913
<b>Total</b>	<b>2,385</b>



*Kokusai Ki-76 of Shimoshizu Aviation School, Army Air Force.*



*Reconnaissance aircraft, Mitsubishi Ki-51 Otsu of 49<sup>st</sup> Dokuritsu Chutai.*