

KAMIKAWA MARU AIR UNIT

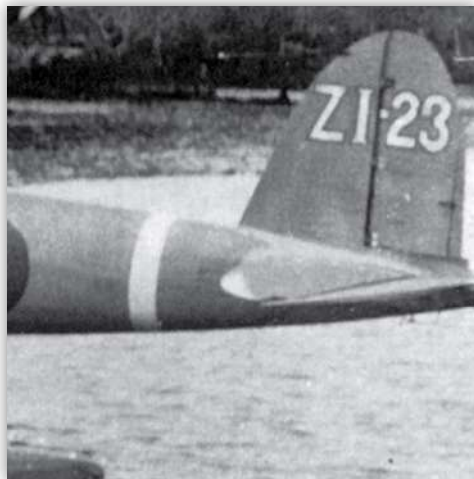
VF-72 Wildcats, a *Kamikawa Maru* Rufe was ditched southeast of Ballale Island due to battle damage, with its pilot rescued.

Just over a month later, on 7 November, Warrant Officer Kofuji Hisateru's Pete was lost at Rekata Bay. Due to further ongoing losses after combats with Flying Fortresses, the *Kamikawa Maru* was down to just one airworthy Rufe. This airframe along with two others under repair were then transferred to No. 802 *Ku*, thus closing the chapter on the *Kamikawa Maru* air detachment.

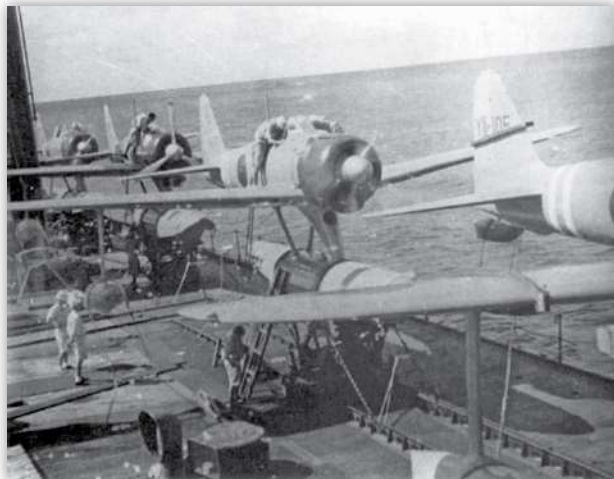
Markings

The floatplanes of the *Kamikawa Maru* air unit first operated in the South Pacific with ZI-XX tail codes (white with red piping). As explained above, these tail codes were changed to YII-XX in July 1942 (red for Rufes and red with white piping for Petes). Two white fuselage bands indicated assignment of the *Kamikawa Maru* as the No. 2 ship of the First Air Wing of the 11th Seaplane Tender Division.

After the seaplane tender *Chitose* was withdrawn for conversion to a light fleet carrier at the end of November 1942, the *Kamikawa Maru* assimilated the *Chitose's* floatplane inventory in mid-January 1943. Meanwhile within the First Air Wing of the 11th Seaplane Division, the *Kamikawa Maru* had been redesignated as the No. 1 ship supported by the *Kunikawa Maru* as the No. 2. When this occurred, the *Kamikawa Maru's* air detachment codes were again changed in November 1942 to L-1-XX (with a single fuselage stripe), with L-2-XX assigned to the *Kunikawa Maru*. The first examples of these codes appeared when replacement floatplanes arrived at Poporang in mid-January 1943.



The tail of Jake ZI-23 at Deboyne Island in early May 1942 during the Battle of the Coral Sea.



Rufe YII-105 having its engine warmed during the delivery cruise to the Shortlands from Japan in September 1942. Unit markings were applied in Japan prior to departure.