

Mitsubishi
A6M3 "ZERO" N712Z
Serial No. 3869
Tail No. X - 133

560 A6M3 model 22 's were built between December '42 and summer of '43. The A6M3 was built after the Battle of Midway with longer wings, folding wing tips (for carrier use), a more powerful engine and had the longest range of all the Zero's.

The first flight of the "Zero" fighter was April 1, 1939. Allied Intelligence applied the name Zeke to the A6M, but it was better known as the Zero, which was derived from its type designation. Mitsubishi and Nakajima built 10,449 "Zero" Fighters (more than any other type of Japanese aircraft). The single seat fighter has light weight all metal construction and fabric covered control surfaces. As the fighting on Guadalcanal raged, the Zero 22's were rushed to Buna in New Guinea and Buka in the Solomon Islands to provide cover over the supply route to Guadalcanal.

This Zero was delivered to the Imperial Japanese Navy Air Group #3. The aircraft was recovered from New Guinea in 1991, restored from several A6M3's in Russia. In 1998 the aircraft was re-registered and displayed at the Santa Monica Museum of Flying. Currently this aircraft has a Pratt & Whitney R1830 engine. Most recently it was used in the motion picture "Pearl Harbor". There are approximately 17 surviving Zero's.

There are three real Japanese Zero's still flying. This Zero is now owned by the Commemorative Air Force and maintained by the Southern California Wing. This aircraft is very popular at air shows and featured in dogfight flying with the F6F Hellcat.

