



九六式艦上戦闘機



A5M4 Claude tailcode S-153 was among the first batch to serve in the South Pacific at Roi where a total of 36 Chitose Ku Claudes were stationed. A dozen of these were later sent to Taroa indicating that at this early stage of the war twelve fighters were assigned per chutai. Extant photos show these aircraft being crated for shipment to Roi with tail codes S-153, S-158, and S-160. The IJN doctrine of deploying two thirds of a force to a forward base, and holding one third in reserve to protect the home base thus appears in play here. S-153 was a patriotic donation aircraft (hokoku) as designated by the stenciled fuselage inscription; 報國-373 (伊勢丹號) which translates as 'Patriotic Gift To The Nation-373 (Isetan)'. The cowling stencil was where service and ammunition data was chalked by service crew.