

Mitsubishi J8M1

The Mitsubishi J8M1 was a rocket fighter based loosely on the German Messerschmitt Me163. Design work began in August 1944 and it made its first and only flight in August 1945, an outstanding achievement.

In 1944 Japan bought the rights to manufacture the Messerschmitt Me 163 rocket fighter but an example sent by submarine never arrived and Japanese engineers had to redesign the entire aeroplane and rocket engine using only incomplete drawings. The aeroplane was relatively easy but the rocket motor was more difficult and so the J8M1 was not ready to fly until August 1945. It experienced a malfunction and crashed during that first flight but World War II had ended before there was time for any further test flying or for the aeroplane to be put into production and operation.

This model represents the prototype J8M1.

Data: *Engine* one 3500lb thrust Yokosuka Toku Ro2 bi-fuel liquid rocket motor. *Wing span* 9.5m. *Length* 6.05m. *Maximum take-off weight* 3,870kg. *Maximum speed* 900km. *Powered endurance* 3 minutes 6 seconds. *Armament* two 30mm Type 5 cannon. *Crew* one.

Hasegawa 1/72 kit. Completed in December 2001.



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