

= Japanese aircraft carrier Katsuragi =

Katsuragi (??) was the third and final Unryū class aircraft carrier of the Imperial Japanese Navy built during World War II . Named after Mount Katsuragi , in Nara Prefecture , and completed late in the war ; she never embarked her complement of aircraft and spent the war in Japanese waters . The ship was badly damaged in a July 1945 airstrike by American carrier aircraft on Kure Naval Base . Repaired after the end of the war , Katsuragi was then used as a repatriation transport for a number of months , bringing Japanese soldiers and civilians back to Japan from overseas locations . She was scrapped in Japan beginning in late 1946 .

= = Design and description = =

The last purpose built Japanese carrier construction during World War II was a group of vessels based on an improved Hiryū design , but with individual units differing in detail reflecting the changing circumstances as the conflict in the Pacific approached its conclusion . Katsuragi was ordered 25 June 1942 , under the provisional name of # 5003 , as part of the Kai Maru 5 Program of 1942 . This was a massive naval construction program intended to replace losses suffered at the Battle of Midway and focused on aircraft and aircraft carriers . The ship was one of 16 Unryū class aircraft carriers planned , although only three were completed before the end of the war .

Katsuragi had the same hull design as Hiryū . She had a length of 227 @. 35 meters (745 ft 11 in) overall . She had a beam of 22 meters (72 ft 2 in) and , at deep load , a draft of 7 @. 93 meters (26 ft 0 in) . She displaced 22 @, 535 tonnes (22 @, 179 long tons) at deep load . Her crew consisted of 1 @, 576 officers and men . When acting as a flagship she had a total of 1 @, 600 crewmembers .

A shortage of turbines and boilers led to machinery of the same type as that used in the Akizuki class destroyer being used in Katsuragi . These consisted of four geared steam turbine sets with a total of 104 @, 000 shaft horsepower (78 @, 000 kW) driving four shafts , each fitted with a 3 @. 75 @- meter (12 @. 3 ft) propeller . Steam was provided by eight Kampon Type B water @- tube boilers with a working pressure of 30 kg / cm² (2 @, 942 kPa ; 427 psi) at 350 ° C (662 ° F) . The ship had a designed speed of 32 knots (59 km / h ; 37 mph) , but during sea trials on 12 October 1944 , she reached 32 @. 71 knots (60 @. 58 km / h ; 37 @. 64 mph) at the light displacement of 18 @, 144 long tons (18 @, 435 t) . Katsuragi carried 3 @, 671 tonnes (3 @, 613 long tons) of fuel oil although no data on her range is known . She had two funnels on the starboard side , each angled below horizontal . They were fitted with a water @- cooling system to reduce the turbulence caused by hot exhaust gases .

= = = Flight deck arrangements = = =

Katsuragi 's flight deck was 216 @. 9 meters (711 ft 7 in) long and had a maximum width of 27 meters (88 ft 7 in) . A small island was mounted well forward on the starboard side and contained the ship 's bridge and air operations control center . It was fitted with a small tripod mast that mounted one of the ship 's radar antennas . The ship was designed with two superimposed hangars that were served by two aircraft elevators , each 14 by 14 meters (46 by 46 ft) ; the center elevator as used in Hiryū was deleted to simplify construction and reduce stress in the hull . The elevators had a maximum capacity of 7 @, 000 kilograms (15 @, 000 lb) and took 19 seconds to go from the lower hangar to the flight deck . Katsuragi was fitted with hydraulically operated Type 3 arresting gear with nine cables . She also mounted three Type 3 crash barricades . No aircraft catapult was fitted . The ship mounted a retractable crane on the starboard side of the flight deck , just aft of the rear elevator .

The ship 's air group was originally intended to consist of 12 Mitsubishi A6M Zero fighters , plus three in storage , 27 Aichi D3A Val dive bombers , plus three in reserve , and 18 Nakajima B5N " Kate " torpedo bombers (plus two in crates) . Katsuragi 's hangars could not accommodate so

many aircraft so eleven planes were planned to be permanently carried on the flight deck . In 1943 the air group was revised to consist of 18 Mitsubishi A7M " Sam " fighters (+ 2 in storage) , 27 Yokosuka D4Y " Judy " dive bombers and six Nakajima C6N " Myrt " reconnaissance aircraft . Of these , the C6Ns were intended to be carried on the flight deck . When the ship commissioned in 1944 , neither the A7M nor the C6Ns were yet in service , so the air group was reconfigured to consist of 27 Zeros , 12 D4Ys , three of which were to be the reconnaissance version , and nine Nakajima B6N " Jill " torpedo bombers . By this time , however , the shortage of carrier @-@ qualified aircrew was such that they were ordered to operate from shore bases and Katsuragi never embarked her air group . Katsuragi carried 397 @,@ 340 liters (87 @,@ 400 imp gal ; 104 @,@ 970 U.S. gal) of aviation gasoline for her aircraft .

= = = Armor , armament and sensors = = =

Katsuragi 's waterline armored belt was made from New Vickers Non @-@ Cemented armor 25 to 100 mm (1 @.@ 0 to 3 @.@ 9 in) thick . Her deck armor above the magazines that consisted of 56 mm (2 @.@ 2 in) of CNC1 armor . The ship 's machinery spaces and auxiliary machinery rooms had two layers of Ducol steel , each 25 mm thick , to protect them . Above engine and boiler rooms , the lower deck consisted of 25 mm of CNC2 armor . The deck over the rear auxiliary machinery space was 42 mm (1 @.@ 7 in) of CNC2 armor while the lower platform deck over the forward auxiliary machinery space consisted of 56 mm of CNC2 . The upper hangar deck served as the ship 's strength deck and it consisted of five layers of Ducol steel , a total 115 mm (4 @.@ 5 in) in thickness . Katsuragi 's aviation gasoline tanks were fore and aft of the auxiliary machinery spaces and were protected by 50 mm (2 @.@ 0 in) of Ducol steel in two layers while the deck above them consisted of 25 mm of CNC2 armor . The sides , bottom and top of the steering gear compartment consisted of 56 mm of CNC1 armor .

The ship 's primary armament consisted of a dozen 40 @-@ caliber 12 @.@ 7 cm Type 89 anti @-@ aircraft (AA) guns in twin mounts . Their sponsons were positioned to allow them some measure of cross @-@ deck fire . Katsuragi was also equipped with 22 triple 25 mm Type 96 and thirty single Type 96 AA gun mounts , most on sponsons along the sides of the hull . These guns were supplemented by six 28 @-@ round AA rocket launchers . For defense against submarines , the carrier was fitted with six depth charge throwers and carried between six and ten depth charges for them .

Two Type 94 high @-@ angle fire @-@ control directors , one on each side of the ship , were fitted to control the Type 89 guns . Each director mounted a 4 @.@ 5 @-@ meter (14 ft 9 in) rangefinder . Six Type 95 directors controlled the 25 mm guns and the 12 cm rocket launchers . Early warning was provided by two Type 2 , Mark 2 , Model 1 air search radars . One of these was mounted on the top of the island while the other retracted into the port side of the flight deck , between the two elevators . In addition , Katsuragi had two smaller Type 3 , Mark 1 , Model 3 air search radars , one mounted on the tripod mast on the island and the other on the aft starboard retractable radio mast . She also had two radar detectors : a metric Type E @-@ 27 and a centimetric Model 3 system . The ship had a Type 93 sonar and two Type 0 hydrophones with which to search for submarines . Before the end of the war , a Type 2 , Mark 2 , Model 4 surface fire @-@ control radar was installed . In addition , a Type 14 early warning radar , ordinarily land @-@ based , was mounted for trials aboard ship .

= = Service = =

Katsuragi 's keel was laid down by the Kure Naval Arsenal in Kure , Hiroshima , on 8 December 1942 . She was launched on 19 January 1944 and completed on 15 October 1944 . The ship was transferred among a number of ports on the Inland Sea until she arrived in Kure on 15 February 1945 and she was ordered to be camouflaged . Her flight deck was disguised with fake trees , houses and roads ; however , her anti @-@ aircraft batteries remained fully manned . Her intended air group , Air Group 601 , was committed to the Battle of Iwo Jima about that same time . On 19

March , the ship was attacked by aircraft from Task Force 58 and lightly damaged by several rocket hits ; one man was killed and three wounded in the attack . Five days later , the ship was semi - permanently moored at the island of Mitsukojima in Kure harbor and extensively camouflaged . On 20 April , Captain Toshio Miyazaki was appointed commanding officer of Katsuragi .

Aircraft from USN Task Force 38 attacked the ship on 24 July as part of a major raid on Kure and the Inland Sea , but she was only hit once . A 500 - pound (230 kg) bomb struck one of the ship 's anti - aircraft mounts on the port side . Thirteen men were killed and five wounded , but the bomb did little other damage . A second raid on 28 July did far more damage to the ship as a 2 , 000 - pound (910 kg) bomb penetrated the flight deck and detonated in the upper hangar , between the elevators . The explosion blew out a 20 - foot (6 . 1 m) section of the port hangar wall and the walls of the upper hangar deck were bulged and perforated multiple times . The flight deck between the elevators was bulged up and buckled ; one section of the flight deck out was blown out and flung over to starboard to land across the funnels . Only 13 men were killed (including her executive officer) and another 12 men were wounded during the attack .

Katsuragi survived the war without sustaining any further damage , and was designated as a Special Transfer Ship on 2 October and then assigned to repatriation duty on 13 October after the necessary repairs were made . Her crew at this time consisted only of 12 officers , one warrant officer , and 40 petty officers and crewmen , with Captain Miyazaki still in command . The damage from the July attack was only repaired enough to allow the hangar deck to house some 5 , 000 returning soldiers and civilians and the ship began her first voyage outside Japanese waters on 19 December . On this first voyage , she called upon Minamidaitojima , Rabaul and Australia . Upon her return , further repairs were necessary to make her rain - tight . These were completed by 15 January 1946 and she made a number of trips in early 1946 to bring back Japanese nationals. before being placed on standby in April . Katsuragi was stricken from the Navy List on 15 November and transferred to the Home Ministry for disposal five days later . Scrapping of the ship began on 22 December 1946 at the Hitachi Zosen facility in Osaka - Sakurajima and was completed on 30 November 1947 .