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# ASIAN AIR ARMS NEWSLETTER 26

## April/May 2021

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# MiG-27 in Sri Lanka



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# Editorial Page

Fellow Asian Air Arms Enthusiasts,

I very much hope this latest newsletter finds you and your families safe and well during the ongoing global COVID-19 pandemic. Our thoughts are with you all but, in particular, with our friends and colleagues on the Indian Sub-Continent at this most difficult time. As you may have noticed, the Editorial Team have worked hard to re-align the gap between our last newsletter and this one in an attempt to publish each edition at the midway point, so for example, we will aim to publish the August/September edition towards the end of August etc. I am, once again, indebted to Steve Komor for not only compiling this edition but also for his own editorial contributions. One of our brand new members, Jamie McIntyre from Australia, has also made an immediate impact with not one, but two, articles in this edition and, as always, we have been able to rely upon our esteemed former SIG Leader, Brian Griffin to produce another of his fascinating articles on one of the more esoteric Asian Air Arms. As you all know, I am very keen to see some unfamiliar names in print and was delighted to hear from other potential contributors after the publication of our last newsletter, so please keep the offers coming. In these difficult times, this newsletter is one of the most important methods of communication for all of us, given the lack of opportunity to host model club meetings or shows. If you want to contribute, please do get in touch; in order to help you plan a proposed article, we have included the provisional newsletter publication schedule for the next 12 months on Page 23. On the same page you will also see important information about one of the small changes that we are introducing for the SIG. As you will read, this is an experiment that does not significantly alter the overall ethos of the Asian Air Arm Research/SIG but may provide an alternative avenue of interest for some of our growing membership. We have also taken the opportunity to streamline some of the administrative aspects for running the SIG before I embark on a communications campaign over the summer months with some of our valued sponsors; more news to follow on this in a future edition. In closing, I must also pay tribute to both Ian and Greg for their respective contributions to the upkeep of our Facebook pages and the website. Greg has been making some small adjustments to the latter, in order to ease access and make it a little user friendly and both mediums remain important tools in our quest to spread the word about the fascinating subject of Asian Air Arms.

Mark Attrill, May 2021



Welcome to issue 26!

Mea culpa! In the last Newsletter, I forgot to include a link to the IndoChina Database, part of the former ACIG website, so here it is - [Indochina Database \(archive.is\)](#). Thanks to Tom Cooper for the link; there remains some very interesting and pertinent information there. Although it seems that the ACIG forum is no longer actively maintained, most of the contributors now write for Helion's five **@War** series of books.

Although the last year has been very difficult in many ways, it has provided many of us, myself included, with a good excuse to do more modelling than we might otherwise have accomplished. I was very lucky to complete the construction of my new workshop just before the onset of Covid-19, and so I have been able to spend much of the last year ensconced inside, happily whiling away the days with new projects. I'm sure we all have different approaches to our modelling; I like to do a little work on one model, then while the glue is setting or the paint drying, I'll move on to do a little bit on another model, and so on. It's not unusual for me to have as many as eight or nine projects on the go at the same time, in fact it's probably the norm!

Now, although the weather may not be exactly as we might hope for at this time of year, Summer IS upon us at last, and with it some easing of the lockdown restrictions, at least here in the UK, and hopefully where you are too. Besides giving us the opportunity to visit friends and loved ones that we may not have seen for many months, albeit outside only at the moment, it will also allow many of us to visit our local model shop (although my nearest 'local' model shop means a 50-mile round trip, and I'm sure that for many the distance is even greater!) to stock up on paints, glues, tools and maybe even a model or two. To help me keep track of my ever-growing stock of paint, I use a couple of very useful mobile apps. To my mind, the best of these is **iModelKit**, which, among its many uses, allows you to catalogue your paint stock. Unfortunately it is only available on Apple devices. Android users should take a look at **paintRack**, which will also catalogue various paint brands. Other apps worth looking at, and which have other useful functions, are **Model Paint 42**, **Paint Pot**, **ModelColors** and **ModelPaints** (all Apple apps), and **Hobby Color Converter**, **MiniPaints** and **My color library** (all for Android). For the PC, **Humbrol Paint Converter** is available from the Microsoft Store and, while you can't use it to catalogue your paint collection, it is a pretty handy utility for converting between brands. I certainly recommend having at least one or two of these in your mobile 'arsenal'.

Steve Komor, May 2021





# 1/48 Směr MiG-17F/Lim-6 bis in Afghan Air Force markings

by Jamie McIntyre

Back in April 2016, "TJ" posted this photo on his blog - <http://elhangardetj.blogspot.com/2016/04/mig-17-afganos-en-color.html>, taken from the window of a Boeing 707 in January 1960.

Wow, Afghan Fresco C's in early markings including rudder stripes, what's not to love? Only one aircraft, in the middle of the rear row, appears to have a serial, and by zooming in, squinting *and* balancing the current moon phase vs. my footy team's position on the ladder I guesstimated it to be 981 25. Decals were made and printed a few months later (Dr Decal & Mr Hyde Acrylic Waterslide Laser Decal Paper through a Fuji Xerox Docuprint CP225W colour laser printer, over-coated with Microscale Liquid Decal Film) but there the project languished as life got in the way.



Fast forward to 2019 and a few days off work with the 4 year old Daughter in vacation care meant it was back on, and only took 4 days from woe to go. I REALLY enjoyed it, have missed the smells of Revell Contacta glue and Tamiya acrylics immensely! It wasn't a breeze by any means, an old Eastern European kit with iffy fit and the vaguest of instructions, Gunze flat coat drying chalky (fixed with Future), broken radio altimeter "T" aerials (replaced by ones from a PF/PFU kit in the stash), a port pitot tube that snapped off innumerable times (they are butt-joined, for future builds of this kit I will drill them in), the usual list goes on, but still I had a blast, the whole point of it all!

Overall colour is Tamiya XF-16 Flat Aluminium, with Heller 56 Silver highlighting access panels, fuel filler caps etc. All brush painted, and overcoated with Future (my first but definitely NOT last time doing so!) after decaling. The decals look a tad small once on, particularly the nose serials and rudder stripes, but overall I'm pretty happy with how she turned out.

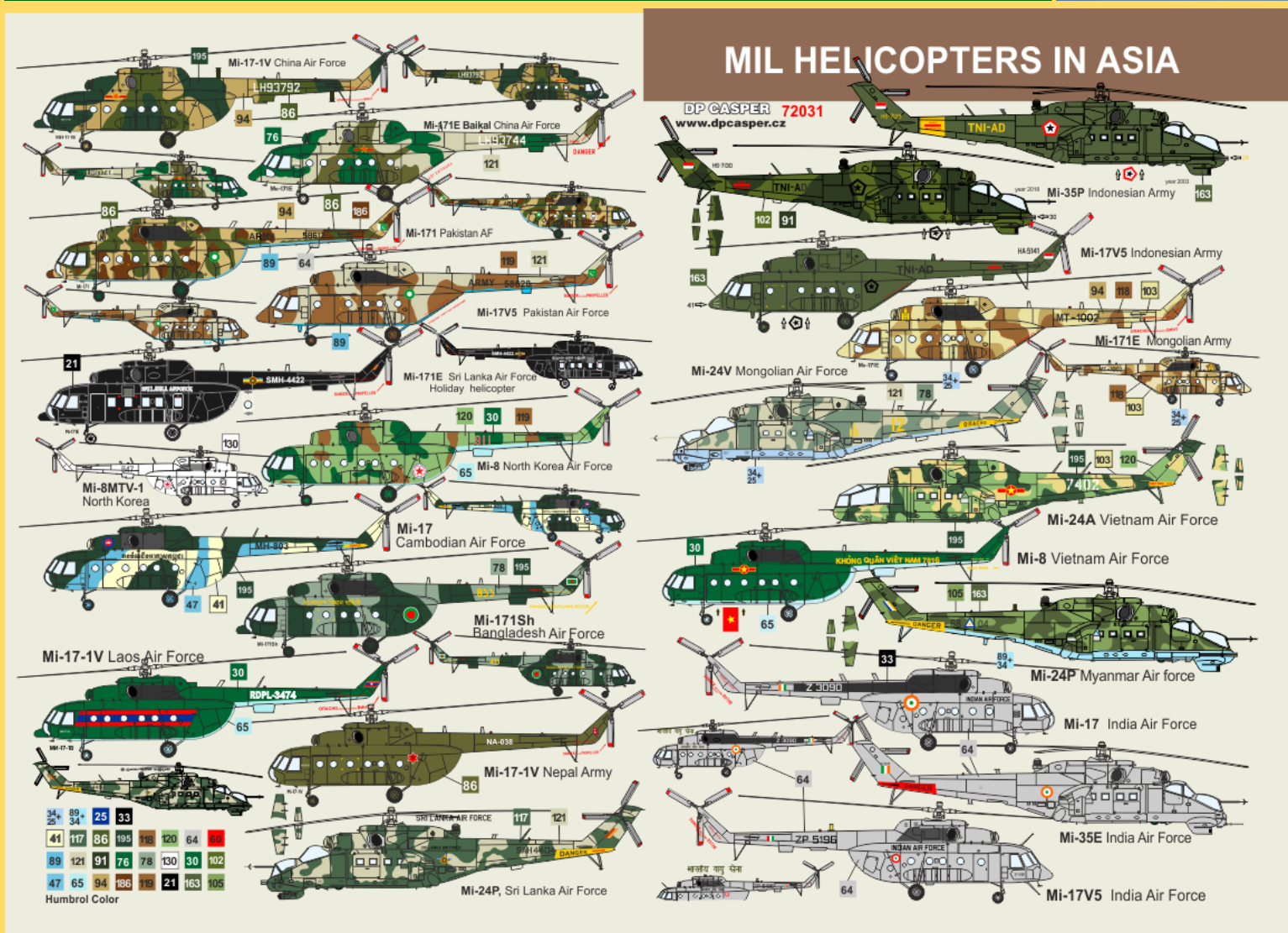


**Ed.** Regular readers will recall that I reviewed Jamie's Sri Lankan Air Force decals in the last Newsletter. I am delighted to announce that Jamie has now joined our SIG, and this is the first of two of his articles to appear in this Newsletter.

(This article was first published on the ARC website ([www.arcair.com](http://www.arcair.com)) in January 2019)



# DP Casper - "MIL Helicopters in Asia" decal sheet (DPD72-031), reviewed by Mark Attrill



We could be led to believe that DP Casper of the Czech Republic developed and released 'MIL Helicopters in Asia', one of their most recent 1:72 scale decal releases, exclusively for the Asian Air Arms SIG since every one of the twenty-three subjects covered with this extensive release falls within the scope of our interest! I also think it must be a coincidence that this decal sheet follows so closely on the heels of my recent series of articles on the Mil Mi-24/35 Hind and its derivatives that have been in service with the Asian Air Arms but the photographs and colour details will serve as a useful reference for those seeking to use this particular release from DP Casper, of which more later.

This release includes decals for no less than seven Mil Mi-24/35 Hind Attack helicopters, the vast majority of which have never featured in decal form before. These include both hi- and low-visibility Indonesian examples, a very colourful early Mi-24A operated by the Vietnamese Air Force and rarities from Mongolia and Myanmar. The remainder of the sheet covers the first generation Mi-8/17 Hip and some of the more recent Mi-17s with the 'straight' ramp. Once again, there are a nice selection of colour schemes and more rarities including machines operated by the Laotian Air Force, Nepalese Army Air Arm and the Peoples' Republic of North Korean Air Force. The very colourful A5-sized decal sheet is literally crammed with decals and as one would expect, includes all of the national markings, serial numbers and titling and quite a few of the special-to-type safety and warning markings. I believe the decals are printed by the BOA Agency so their quality is assured and they do seem to be all in perfect register with excellent colour saturation. My only reservation with this particular release is the quality of the Decal Placement Instructions (DPIs) which almost appear to be an after thought. At first, I imagined DP Casper had gone the way of several other manufacturers and in an effort to cut down on costs, had posted more detailed DPIs on their website for modellers to download at their leisure. This is sadly not the case, so the modeler is left with one A4 sized fold out sheet which, due to the sheer number of subjects, contains some rather small colour side profiles and on the internal 'centrefold' a nice selection of





photographs. Granted, the DPIs do include references to Humbrol paint shades but the modeler will have to do a fair bit of research to determine the nature of some of the colour schemes and, in particular, the accurate placement of some of the markings. To further complicate matters, and as I have already suggested, some of the subjects are not that extensively covered elsewhere although more and more imagery on the more esoteric subjects is now making an appearance on various websites including our own.

In spite of my misgivings about the DPIs, this is a wonderful decal sheet for fans of Russian helicopters operated by a wide variety of Asian Air Arms, particularly since it includes so many of the rarer or more unusual variants that have been operated over the years. The lack of detailed DPIs does take a little bit of a shine off the release, given that it is not the cheapest of decal sheets but, on balance, I would still highly recommend it to members of the SIG. I only hope that DP Casper can be encouraged to produce a 1:48 scale sheet for the Mil Mi-24 Hinds to compliment the new series of kits currently being released by Zvezda. One final note; DP Casper decals tend to sell out quite quickly so I would also suggest you get them while you can since I suspect production will be limited.

Review sample courtesy of my wallet !



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## Papua New Guinea Defence Force - Air Wing

### by Brian Griffin

Shortly before Papua New Guinea achieved independence in 1975, the new Papua New Guinea Defence Force (PNGDF) began creating an air arm. The Air Operations Wing was established with five (plus one as a training aid) C-47B Dakotas (the last P65-003/P2-003 was withdrawn in 1992), donated by the Australian government, which had recertified them to DC-3 standards. The role of the wing was, and is, to support army operations with transport, air re-supply and medical evacuation capabilities. The C-47s were bolstered in 1977 with an order for three GAF N22B Nomads, and later, three N22SB Nomad Searchmasters in 1982/84 (all Nomads sold or w/o by 1998). In spite of severe funding restrictions and pilot shortages (both of which have dogged the PNGDF to this day), flying operations were able to be conducted on a modest scale, with training and support from both Australia and New Zealand (and later the USA).

With the acquisition of three IAI Arava 201s in 1985 (no consensus on their withdrawal date, various reports state from 1989-2015), the Wing received an additional mandate to bolster border security and conduct maritime surveillance missions. The arrival of the Aravas allowed the squadron to be sub-divided into two flights – 'A' Flight operating the Arava and 'B' Flight operating the Nomad.

In 1989, four Bell UH-1H Iroquois were received from Australia under Project Wit Koki (followed by a fifth civilian example in 1992), and in 1990 were armed up (contravening the supply agreement with Australia) and used as gunships against secessionists in Bougainville. The same year saw the introduction of two CASA CN-235M-100, but these were shortly withdrawn due to lack of funding. It's reported, but unconfirmed, that in 1999 a single IPTN (MBB) Bo-105 was donated by the Indonesian government and operated until 2004. There are rumours that a sole Piper PA-23 Aztec also served, but no confirmation of such has been obtained.

This enlargement was all to no avail, for continual funding crises through the '90s resulted in a serious decline in aircraft maintenance and therefore availability, and in 2000 PNGDF air operations ceased for five years. By 2005, finance had been re-secured and in the following year single examples of CN-235, Arava and Iroquois were airborne again: these being followed in 2007 by one additional example of each.

About this time, the Air Operations Wing was re-named the Air Transport Wing and established with just one unit, the Air Transport Squadron, based at Jackson Field, Port Moresby. (The Aravas and Iroquois were retired in 2016.) Since 2012, the Australian government has facilitated the lease of two helicopters (Bell 121) from Hevilift PNG to provide a rotary wing capability which in 2016 was extended until 2019. In February 2016, a contract was signed with New Zealand company Pacific Aerospace for four PAC P-750 XSTOL aircraft for search and rescue and surveillance and two PAC CT/4 Airtrainer aircraft. By 2018 a single PAC P-750 had been supplied and was recently seen "hangar-bound" at Jackson Field. It's thought that no more P-750s will be supplied (nor of the ordered CT/4s) as payment has yet to be made to PAC.

There still sit, rotting, at Jackson Field, evidence of the remnants of the government's struggle to suppress a revolt on the island of Bougainville during 1996/97. Known as the Sandline Affair, it was a failed attempt (resourced by Executive Outcomes) to provide a mercenary force to re-take Bougainville from secessionists. Mercenary resources left behind include a CASA 212 (N461CA) and a Cessna 337 (N6291F).

Finally, a most interesting curiosity – in a hangar at Jackson's Field are remains of a Junkers W.33 "The Lady Letti". For the full story concerning this a/c see <https://pacificwrecks.com/aircraft/w33/VH-UIW.html>

#### REFERENCES

For the definitive, detailed history of all PNGDF a/c refer to <http://adf-serials.com.au/PNGDF.htm>

For on-line blog refer to <https://www.pprune.org/pacific-general-aviation-questions/634740-papua-new-guinea-defence-force-air-wing-2.html>

#### PNGDF – AIR WING SERIALS

PNG military aircraft carry three-digit or four-digit serial numbers, normally commencing with 0 (except UH-1s) and prefixed by the Papua New Guinea civil aircraft registration prefix, P2. The second digit of the serial indicates the aircraft type: 0 = C-47; 1 = Aztec/Nomad; 2 = Arava; 3 = Bo 105; 4 = UH-1H; 5 = CN-235. Examples include: **CN-235** P2-0502; **C-47/DC-3** P2-006; **Nomad** P2-013; **Arava** P2-022; **Bell UH-1H** P2-403. The **Bell 212s** being leased are civil registered, e.g. P2-DFW.



 **Guideline Publications**





## PNGDF AIR WING MARKINGS



Note that there are some slight variations in presentation of the roundels. The green background of the fin flash is omitted on camouflaged aircraft.

## PNGDF AIR WING AIRCRAFT

### CASA CN-235M



CN-235M PT-0501



CN-235M PT-0501 Fairbairn ACT 1992



CN-235M at Jackson's Field Sept 2002  
Photo: Wal Nelowkin



CN-235M



### BELL 212



Bell 212 P2-DFW, Cairns, 9/14

Photo: fnqskies.blogspot.com.au by GAFLIKS







## BELL UH-1H IROQUOIS



Bell UH-1H P2-0405 (photo, Greg Kozak)



Iroquois P2-401 Jackson's Field Jan 2016  
Photo James Hollinworth



## DOUGLAS C-47/DC-3



Overview of DC-3 fleet at Jackson's Field. Circa?



DC-3 P2-001 12/9/86 Ready to return to Moresby after  
overhaul in Cairns  
Photo: Justin Meadows



DC-3 P2-005  
Photo: D Tanner



DC-3 P2-001 Feb 1993 Geoff Goodall  
(via David Carter)





## GAF N-22 NOMAD



Nomad N-22SB Searchmaster P2-015



Nomad N-22B P2-011 March 1981  
Photo: Martin Hörnlmann via Werner Fischdick

## IAI ARAVA



ARDU Flight Trial c1985  
RAAF Photo via Wal Nelowkin



Note fin flash both sides



IAI Arava P2-021  
Photo: sky-high.co.il



Notice the open tail cone



IAI Arava P2-021  
Port Moresby July 2007  
Photo : Craig Campbell



IAI Arava P2-021

## PAC 750XL



PAC 750XL arriving at Port Moresby AP 5/18. As it hasn't been paid for, it's shown as still active on the NZ register.



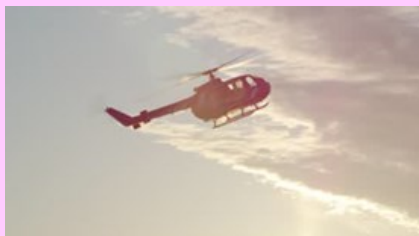
PNGDF PAC 750XL ZK-KDI  
Jackson Field, November 2018



Government Minister checking out cockpit on arrival.



## IPTN (MBB) Bo-105



Could this be the elusive PNGDF IPTN (MBB) Bo-105?  
Photo: Joshua Pondros

## Aircraft involved in the SANDLINE Affair



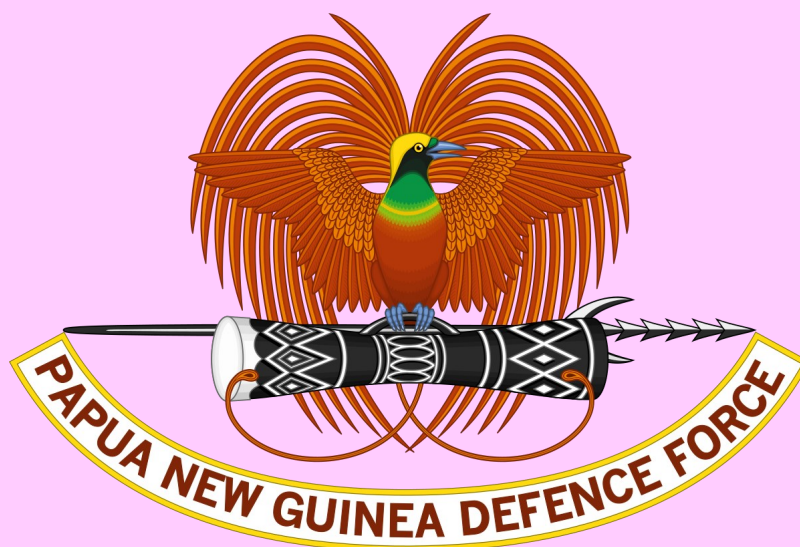
Jackson's Field, October 2018. Photo: Eric Aliawi . Note the SANDLINE aircraft.



CASA 212 (N461CA), Jackson's Field, November 2018.  
PNGDF hangar, Jackson's Field,  
Photos: James Hollinworth



Cessna C-337 Skymaster (N6291F),  
Jackson's Field, November 2018.  
Photo: James Hollinworth



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## The Mikoyan MiG-27M 'Flogger J' in Sri Lankan service, by Jamie McIntyre

In the late 1960's the Mikoyan-Gurevich Design Bureau developed a ground attack variant of their MiG-23S 'Flogger A' variable-geometry fighter, which was still undergoing protracted testing by the Ministry of Aircraft Industry and the VVS. The main changes with the new MiG-23B 'Flogger F' were a flattened "duckbill" nose, housing a PrNK Sokol-23 ground attack sight system in place of the radar. This system included an analogue computer, a laser rangefinder and a PBK-3 bomb sight. The navigation suite and autopilot were updated to increase bombing accuracy, and the pylons were strengthened to increase the maximum bomb payload to 3,000kg. To improve survivability, an electronic warfare (EW) suite was fitted, and an inert gas system was placed in the fuel tanks to prevent fires. The pilot's survivability and visibility (the latter already improved by the new nose design) was enhanced by raising the seat and armouring the cockpit windscreen. It retained the 23 mm Gryazev-Shipunov GSh-23L auto-cannon of the fighters in an integral underbelly fairing. Instead of the Tumansky R-29 engine of the fighters, the MiG-23B was fitted with the Lyulka AL-21 turbojet. However, the latter was required by the Sukhoi Su-17 and Su-24 programs, and was prohibited from export outside the Warsaw Pact, so only 3 prototypes and 24 production aircraft were produced in 1971-72.

This was therefore followed by the MiG-23BN 'Flogger H', with Edition-3 wings (which had a 20% increase in wing area, dogtooth and leading edge slats), the exportable and more readily available Tumansky R-29 turbojet engine of the fighter variants, and minor electrical and equipment upgrades. 624 MiG-23BNs were built from 1973 to 1985, but only a small number served in VVS units with the rest being exported, being confused with the MiG-27 by Western observers for decades after.



MiG-23BN 'Flogger H'

The MiG-23BN retained the variable intake ramps and afterburner nozzle of the fighters, not required for low-down ground attack and adding unnecessary weight and maintenance requirements. Thus, the MiG-23BM 'Flogger D' was developed, with a stronger undercarriage, fixed intakes without variable ramps and a shorter exhaust nozzle with two-position afterburner. The cockpit was now encased in armour sheeting, for full 360 degree protection from ground fire. It was also fitted with a 30mm Gryazev-Shipunov GSh-6-30M Gatling gun with 260 rounds, depressed at 2 degrees for ground attack firing, but this could still be changed out for the earlier GSh-23L or even a basic maintenance kit for rough & remote airstrip operations. This variant was quickly redesignated the MiG-27 upon entering service with the VVS, and all were later updated to MiG-27M 'Flogger J' standard with new PrNK-23K nav/attack system providing automatic flight control, gun firing, and weapons release, and an updated EW system.



MiG-23M 'Flogger J'



With the MiG-23BN already being widely exported outside the Warsaw Pact, along with the Sukhoi Su-22, the only export customer for the new variant was India, with 165 being assembled there from Soviet-supplied components from 1986 onwards and remaining in service until 2019. These had the simpler avionics of the 'Flogger D', and served the IAF well through numerous conflicts, despite their later years being plagued with accidents.

With the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991, the new countries that emerged inherited the majority of the former Soviet aircraft left on their territory, which in the case of the Ukraine included upgraded MiG-27M 'Flogger J's. These were operated for a few years before being stored.

Not far from India, at the dawn of the new millennium, the Sri Lankan government was being rocked by the successes (and barbarity) of the militant separatist group Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE), and embarked on a military spending spree. Prime on their list was a capable strike platform, able to find and hit LTTE forces hidden in thick jungle. They already had the IAI Kfir in service, and large numbers were mothballed in Israel (four were indeed later purchased as attrition replacements), but something more capable was needed. The answer ended up being cheaper and able to enter service more quickly – the ex-Ukrainian MiG-27s.



MiG-23M 'Flogger J' of the SLAF

Many positives were behind this purchase – a fully-loaded MiG-27 could take off in much less distance than the Kfir thanks to its variably-geometry wings, an important consideration with operations moving further north. The VG wings also gave a smooth ride down low, unlike the big delta of the Kfir, allowing for more accurate weapons delivery and evasion of the LTTE's increasing anti-air defences. The armour allowed the MiG-27 to brave intense small arms fire that would cripple many other types, and gave its pilots the confidence to do so. With the counter-insurgency (COIN) dedicated FMA IA 58 Pucará recently retired, the SLAF needed a replacement to get in close and place their load of dumb bombs right on top of LTTE forces, as they had no guided munitions.

Six aircraft were purchased in 2000, along with a single MiG-23UB 'Flogger C' two-seat trainer. They entered service with 5 Squadron at SLAF Katunayake, and were quickly into action, acting either as bomb trucks to deliver their loads on LTTE forces with unerring accuracy or as pathfinders, leading Kfirs to drop on their command. Their excellent nav-attack systems worked exactly as hoped, and India was quite offended (and let it be known!) that they were so much more capable than their own! Thanks in no small part to such excellent air support, honed over many years of vicious combat, the LTTE forces were finally comprehensively defeated in 2009, the only example I know of in 20th Century conflict that a recognised government has comprehensively defeated an organised, armed insurgency by force of arms alone, rather than by diplomacy and its inevitable concessions.

Operating such complex new (to the SLAF) aircraft in such harsh conditions at a high operational tempo was always going to be fraught with danger, and losses reflected this. In August 2000 one crashed near Katunayake, killing the Ukrainian pilot. In July 2001 one was destroyed and another damaged during an LTTE attack on the base. Another crashed into a lagoon shortly after take-off from the airbase at Negombo in June 2004, the pilot ejecting safely. Finally, one crashed on a routine training mission in February 2012 (three years after the end of the Civil War) near the Dummalasuriya area, the pilot again ejecting safely.

In 2007 the three remaining MiG-27M's were serviced and upgraded in the Ukraine, and an additional four were purchased and delivered to replace the losses. The latter purchase became mired in controversy, with a three-year investigation by the Sri Lankan Government Financial Crimes Investigation Division uncovering financial misappropriation and leading to arrests around the globe. In the same year, 12 Squadron was formed at Katunayake solely to operate the MiGs, until disbanded with their retirement in 2019.

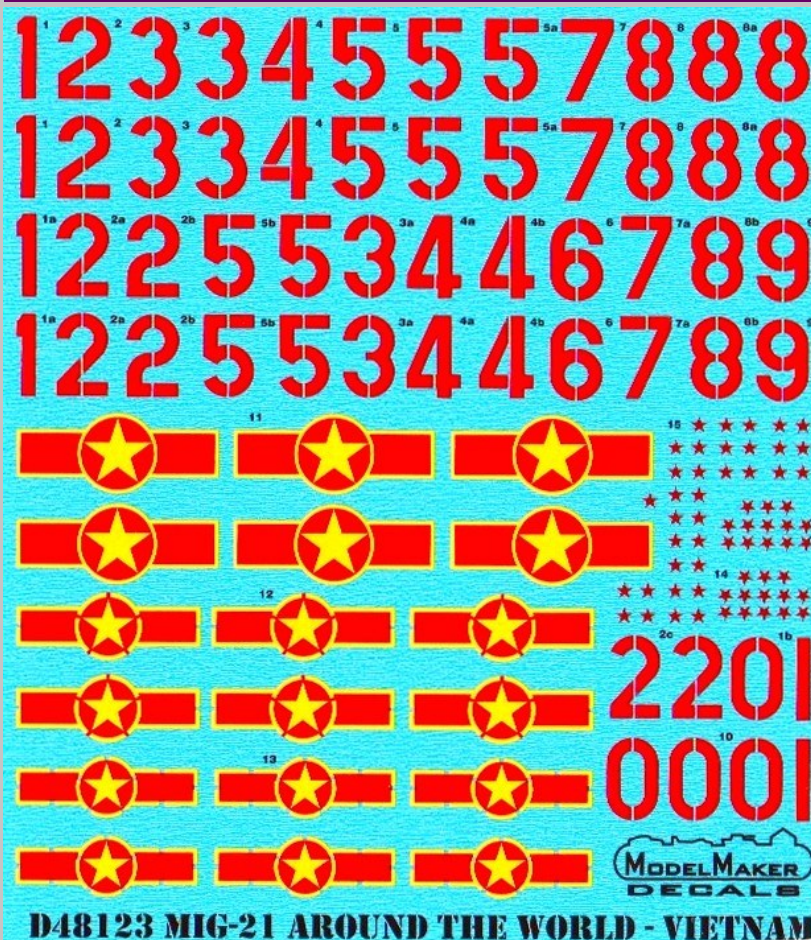
There has been much speculation and criticism of the SLAF MiG-27 purchase in the years hence, benefitting from the passage of time and hindsight, and assisted by the crimes outlined above, but in the searing hot crucible of combat, with success in no way guaranteed, and in fact seriously in danger, for the SLAF the MiG-27M was the easiest, simplest, fastest and most cost-effective option when it came to purchase the required strike platform.





# Model Maker Decals - "MiG-21 Around the World - Vietnam" decal sheet (D48-123)

reviewed by Mark Attrill

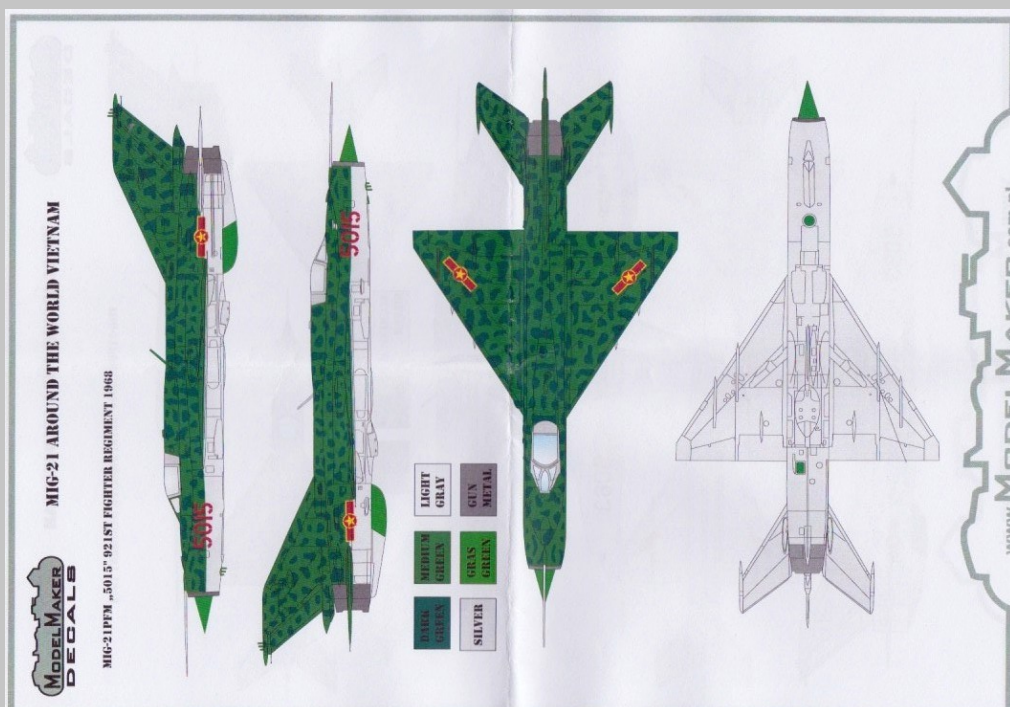


Judging from their back catalogue, Model Maker Decals of Poland are big fans of the Mikoyan MiG-21 'Fishbed', and are steadily working their way through a series of decal releases covering this legendary Soviet-era fighter that has seen service with Air Arms on practically every continent. One of their latest releases will be of interest to members of the SIG since it covers MiG-21 derivatives operated by the Vietnam War-era VPAAF and the post-war Vietnamese Air Force. Vietnam War-era MiG-21s have been well covered by other manufacturers but Model Maker have made a welcome departure and included marking options for not only the early MiG-21F-13s and -PFMs but also some of the more recent MiG-21bis and two-seat -UMs that entered service in the late 1970s. As a result, the modeler can reproduce some of the more garishly decorated aircraft, sporting the rather bright overall Light Grey/Blue scheme or the distinctive two-tone Blue scheme that was observed on some aircraft in the late 1990s.

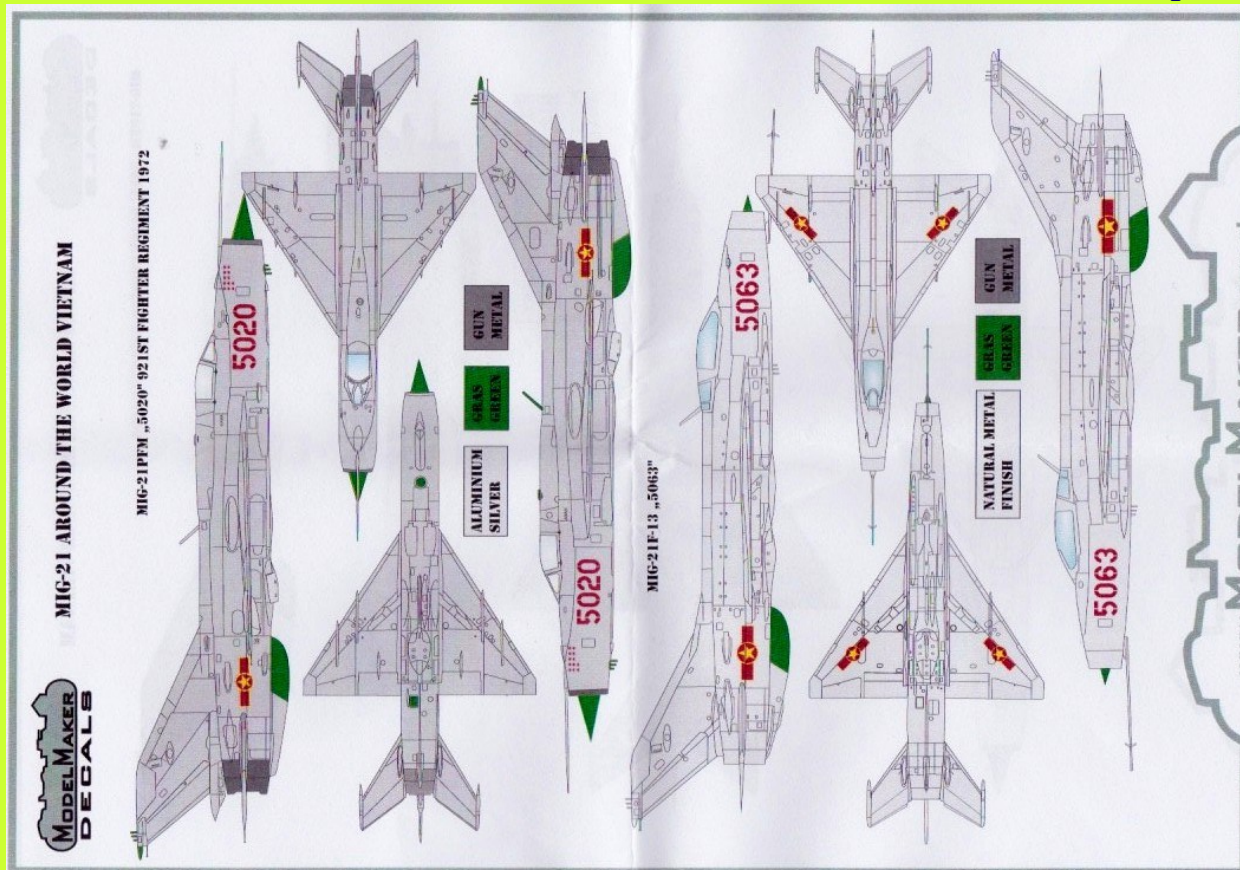
In fact the decal sheet is, apart from the inclusion of several styles of Vietnam War-era kill markings, generic in nature with a wide range of red Bort numbers and three different styles of the Vietnamese 'Star & Bars' markings. As the decal placement instructions (DPIs) clearly state, this actually allows the modeler to reproduce more than the nine aircraft featured in the colour side profiles, which are representative of the types and colour schemes sported by these aircraft over 30+ years of Service. There

are sufficient decals to produce at least three different models and possibly more, if a particular airframe sported national markings of differing sizes on the fuselage and flying surfaces. As with all of the Model Maker releases, the decals are nicely printed, possess good colour saturation and are very thin. I can attest to their good adherence qualities based on previous experience.

As with the DP Casper release featured elsewhere in this newsletter, my only reservation is with the rather sparse DPIs, which provide nice four-view drawings for the different colour scheme options but very little information on the camouflage colours in particular. The modeler will very definitely have to seek out other references in order to determine the best colour shades and paints with which to reproduce a particular scheme. Fortunately there are lots of references out there, although there has been some discussion and disparity over the exact shades, particularly for the more recent examples that have seen service with the Vietnamese Air Force. The other blessing with the lack of information on the DPIs is that quite a few Vietnamese MiGs appeared to be totally devoid of any stencil or maintenance markings during their service although modellers should always check their references for a particular airframes.







As before, the lack of detailed DPis does take a little bit of a shine off the release, given that it is not the cheapest of decal sheets but, on balance, I would still highly recommend it to members of the SIG and especially those interested in post Vietnam-War-era MiG 21s. I have discovered that Model Maker decals have a tendency to sell out quite quickly so I would also suggest you get them while you can.



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Review sample courtesy of my wallet !



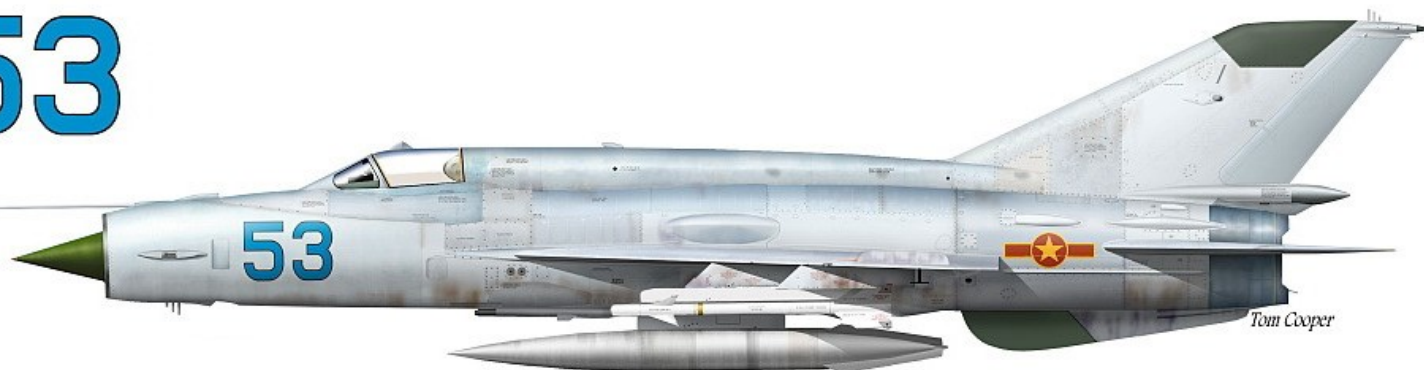


In addition to the aircraft featured in the decal sheet instructions, member and acclaimed author Tom Cooper has kindly agreed to let us use some of his colour side profiles to further illustrate the decal review. Shown below are three more Vietnamese MiG-21s.

Modellers should note that the sheet will not allow the top aircraft to be reproduced since it has, rather unusually, blue 'Bort' numbers.

**SRVAF MiG-21MF 53**

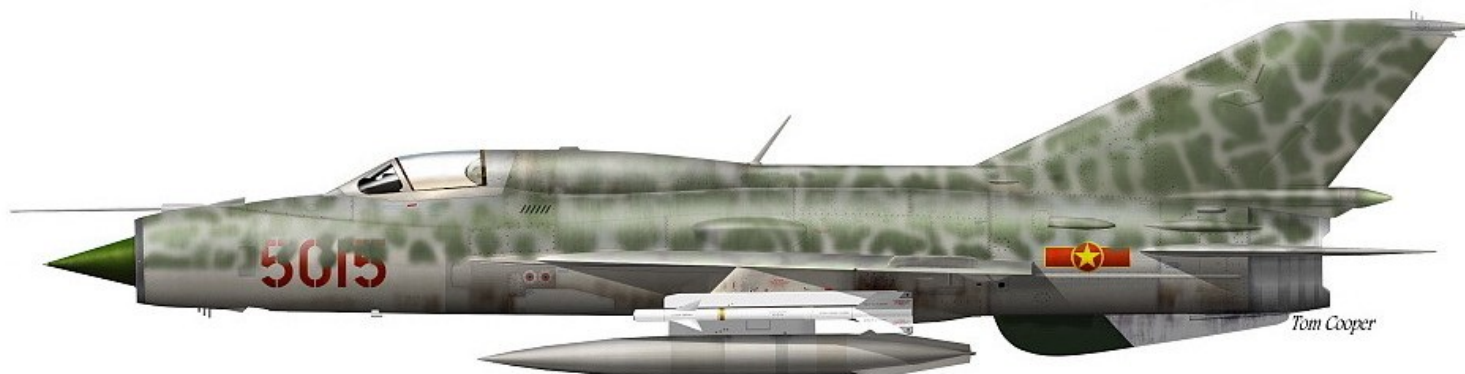
53



USAF air combat reports from May 1972 indicate that 'Blue 53' was, most likely, a Mikoyan MiG-21M or MF Fishbed-J. This aircraft was spotted in May 1972 and given it is wearing a Blue Soviet style two-digit Bort Number was most likely an aircraft that was supplied to North Vietnam at short notice as an attrition replacement.

**SRVAF MiG-21PF 4228**4228 —★—  
4228 5071

Mikoyan MiG-21PFL Fishbed-D 'Red 4228' operated by the 921<sup>st</sup> Fighter Regiment from Noi Bai Air Base. The vast majority of NVAF MiG-21PFLs sported four-digit red numbers in the 40-42\*\* range

**SRVAF MiG-21PFV 5015**

This Mikoyan MiG-21PFM 'Red 5015' Fishbed-F was one of approximately 110 fighters delivered to North Vietnam between 1968 -72. This particular example was often flown by ace Nguyen Van Coc with the 921<sup>st</sup> Fighter Regiment. Originally delivered in the standard natural metal colour scheme, some aircraft later received a variety of green mottled camouflage on the upper surfaces when the US started bombing NVAF Fighter bases. One of the major differences between the PFL and PFM was the broader chord fin on the latter which also incorporated a brake parachute housing at the base.

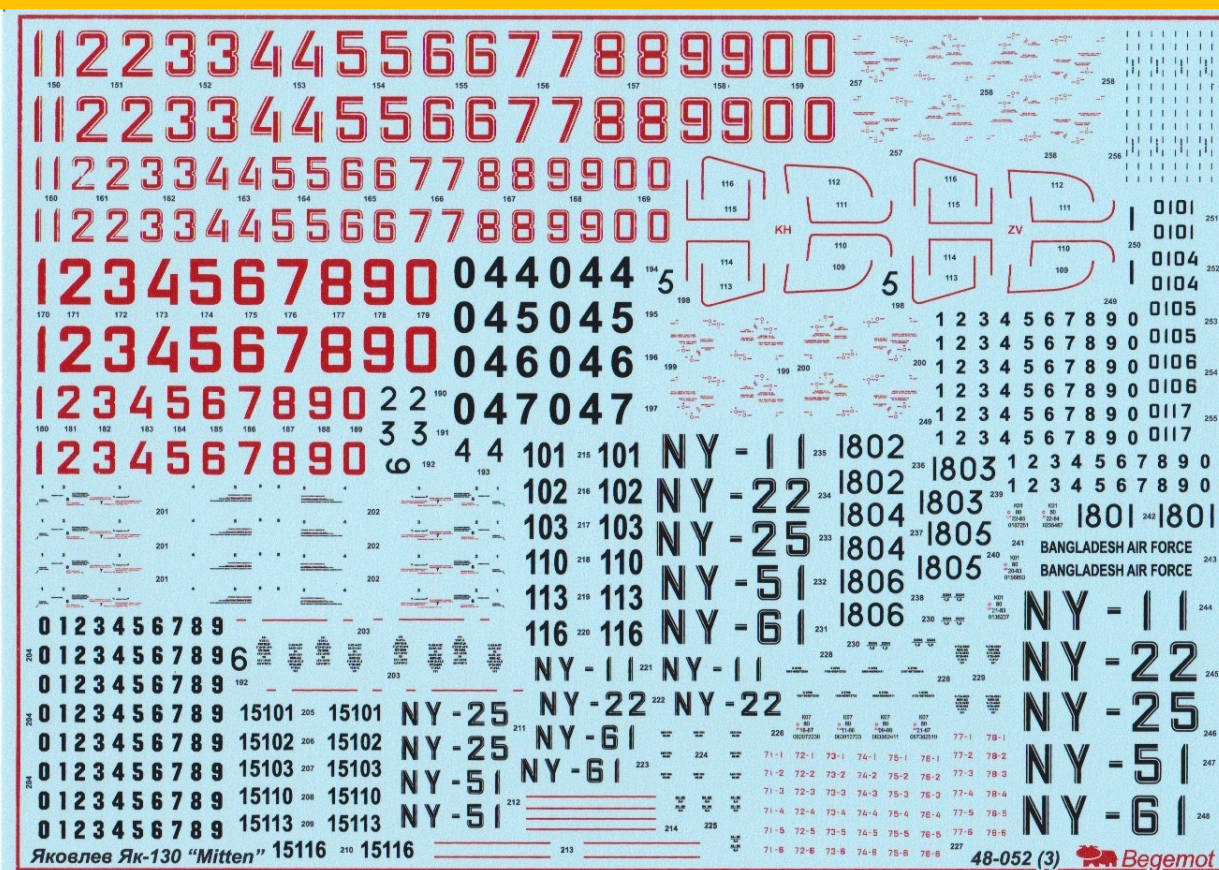




## Begemot Decals - "Yakovlev Yak-130 "Mitten" decal sheet (BD48-052)

reviewed by Mark Attrill

Begemot Decals are well known for their coverage of contemporary Russian or Soviet-era aircraft which is not surprising given their Russian origin. One of their most recent releases is for the Yakovlev Yak-130 (NATO Codename 'Mitten'), which is optimized as an Operational training aircraft or Light Strike Fighter, and the decal sheet has clearly been designed to compliment recently released kits from both Kitty Hawk Models and Zvezda. As with the majority of their previous issues, this is a very comprehensive decal sheet with no less than twenty-three options, which effectively chart the development and introduction to service of the aircraft with the Russian Air Force and an impressive number of export customers. As one can imagine, the majority of options are for Russian examples but there are three options that will be of interest to those wanting to model this attractive looking aircraft in an unusual colour scheme with Asian markings. The first, and my personal favourite, is for an example operated by the Bangladesh Air Force, which ordered sixteen of these aircraft in 2013. The Bangladeshi examples sport an attractive two-tone grey camouflage colour scheme with full colour national markings, which really shows off the purposeful lines of this aircraft. The second Asian option is for an aircraft belonging to the Laos People's Liberation Army Air Force, with a very different and quite unique four-colour camouflage scheme not normally observed on the Yak-130 family of aircraft. The third Asian option is for an aircraft operated by the Myanmar (Burma) Air Force. These aircraft sport a two-tone Light/Medium Blue colour scheme, which is still quite different from the 'standard' Russian colour scheme, again with full colour national markings and serial numbers etc.



As with all of the Company's releases, the decals are very comprehensively presented over no less than three and half sheets. As one would expect, full national markings, including three different styles for the Russian Air Force examples, are included, together with a huge variety of Bort numbers, serials and codes to cater for all of the different styles found on these aircraft including those unique to the three examples operated by Asian Air Arms. The release also includes the different styles of walkway markings, air intake 'Danger' symbols and even the MDC cords

for the extensive canopy glazing. There are literally hundreds of different stencil and maintenance markings spread across all four decal sheets so the modeler will not need to source anything from the kit decals or any other aftermarket decal sheet.

I have, over the years, procured quite a few of the Begemot decal sheets, and the vast majority have been presented in a very similar style but with a matt finish to the actual decals. What I have noticed with this release is a marked improvement in overall quality; the decals are noticeably thinner and have a gloss finish, which I personally prefer. I am not sure which company has actually printed the decals but the quality is equal to that found on similar sheets from the BOA Agency or Cartograf so their quality is assured. The decals are all in perfect register with excellent colour saturation, although care will need to be taken with the application of the larger decals since they are mounted on full film. Unlike some of the other decals I have recently reviewed, the quality of the decal placement instructions (DPIs) is also very high. Colour side profiles and, in many cases, three or four-view profiles, are provided for all of the decal options along with full information on the camouflage scheme with references to FS Numbers. The DPIs also include full directions for the placement of all of the various stencils and maintenance markings, so top marks to Begemot for maintaining their usual standards in this area.

This is another great and very topical release from Begemot, timed nicely to compliment the new kits referred to above, and will



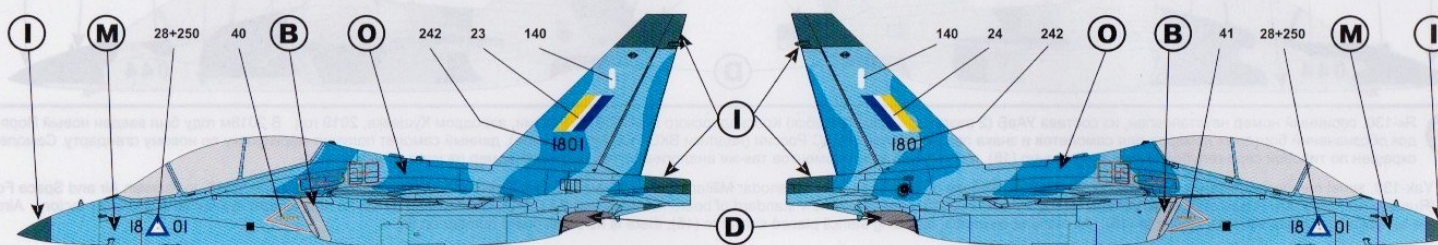
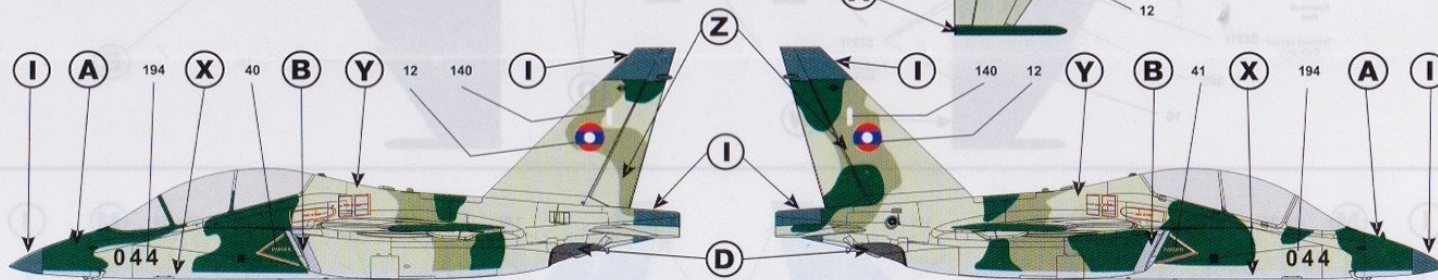
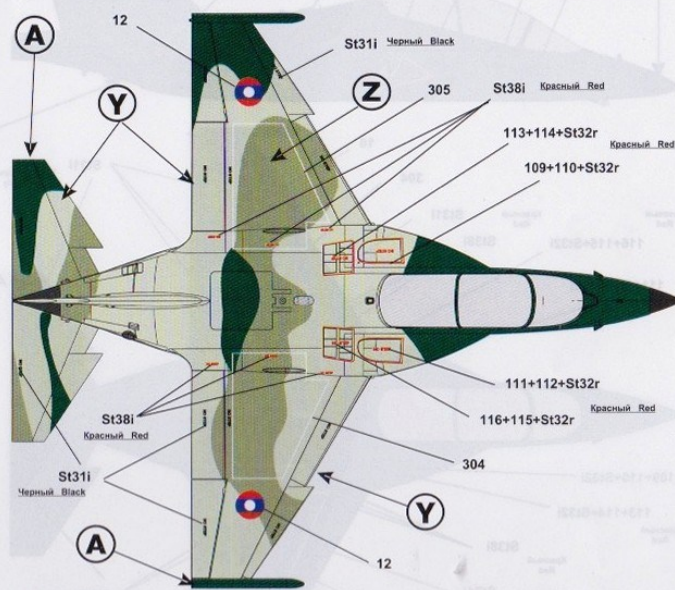






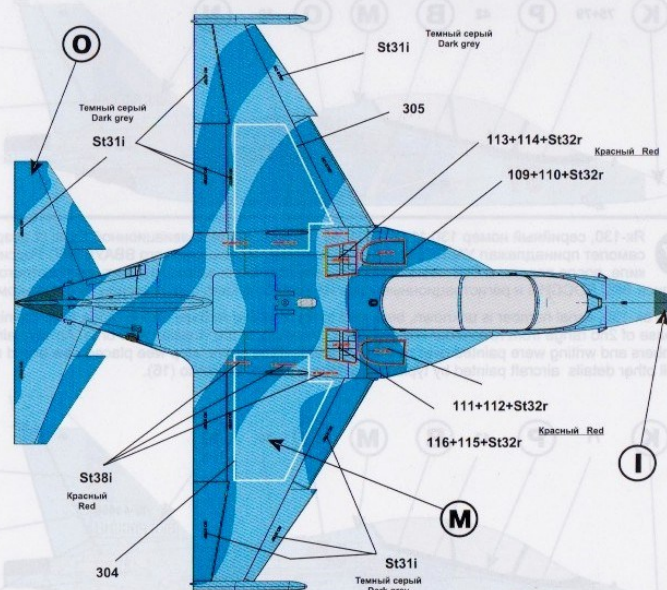
**25** Як-130, серийный номер не установлен, из состава ВВС Лаоса, аэродром Вьентян, начало 2019 г. года. В 2017м году между Россией и Лаосом был подписан контракт на поставку различной военной техники, в том числе и 10 самолетов Як-130. 4 самолета были доставлены в Лаос в конце 2018 года, собраны и облетаны и приняли участие в воздушной части парада в честь 70-и летия образования армии Лаоса 20 января 2019 года. Все Як-130, поставляемые в Лаос окрашены по одной типовой схеме - нижние поверхности окрашены в светлый серый цвет (Flat Light Green), на верхних поверхностях нанесены пятна камуфляжа светло-коричневого (Flat Light Biege), зеленого (Flat Light Green) и темно - зеленого (Flat Dark Green) цветов. Передние кромки воздухозаборников - алюминиевая эмаль, жаропрочные накладки за соплами в нижней части фюзеляжа - темный металл. Носовой конус, законцовка кия и хвостовая часть фюзеляжа окрашены в темный серый (Flat Dark Gull Grey) цвет. Разметка зоны, за которой запрещено ходить на верхней поверхности крыльев (элементы 304 и 305) - белая, надписи НЕ НАСТУПАТЬ на верхних поверхностях крыльев и стабилизаторов (элементы St 31i) - черного цвета, окантовки створок перепуска воздуха на верхних поверхностях фюзеляжа и надписи НЕ НАСТУПАТЬ внутри них, а также надписи НЕ НАСТУПАТЬ в корневых частях крыла - красного цвета. На начало 2019 года были поставлены самолеты с бортовыми номерами 044, 045, 046 и 047.

Yak-130, serial number is unknown, belonged to the Laos People's Liberation Army Air Force, Vientiane airbase, January 2019. In 2017 were signed contract between Russia and Laos government about sell various armament, including 10 Yak-130s. First 4 Yak-130s (with board number 044 - this aircraft, 045, 046 and 047) were delivered in the end of 2018, after final assembly took a part in parade, dedicated 70th anniversary of the Laos People's Liberation Army, January 20, 2019. All Yak-130s, which made for Laos painted by similar scheme - bottom surfaces were painted in Flat Light Grey, on upper and lateral surfaces placed camouflage patterns of Flat Light Biege, Flat Light Green and Flat Dark Green. Front part of air intakes - Aluminum enamel, heatproof casig plated in exhaust area on bottom surfaces of fuselage - Dark Metall. Nose RWR cone and rear cone of fuselage painted in Flat Dark Gull Grey. Walking zone area borders (decal elements 304 and 305) - white, NO STEP stencil on upper surfaces of stabilizers and wings (decal elements St 31i) - black, borders of all restart-up shutters, NO STEP stencil on front and rear air restart-up shutters and on wings basis (decal elements and St 38i) - red.



**23** Як-130, серийный номер 130.12.03.1001, из состава ВВС Мьянмы, 2017 год. Контракт на поставку Як-130 в Мьянму (Бирму) был подписан в 2015-м году, данный самолет стал первым самолетом, собранным для поставки в Мьянму, он совершил первый полет 17-го ноября 2016 года, до конца 2017 года было поставлено уже 6 самолетов. 18-го декабря 2017 года 6 Як-130 с номерами 18-01, 18-02, 18-03, 18-04, 18-05 и 18-06 были торжественно приняты в состав ВВС на аэродроме училища летчиков в Мейтихла (близ Мандаляя). Все Як-130, поставляемые в Мьянму окрашены по одной типовой схеме - самолет целиком окрашен в светлый серо-голубой цвет (Flat Light Grey/Blue), на верхних поверхностях нанесены пятна камуфляжа темного серо-голубого (Flat Dark Grey/Blue). Передние кромки воздухозаборников - алюминиевая эмаль, жаропрочные накладки за соплами в нижней части фюзеляжа - темный металл. Носовой конус, законцовка кия и хвостовая часть фюзеляжа окрашены в темный серый (Flat Dark Gull Grey) цвет. ОЗ ВВС Мьянмы нанесены только на фюзеляже и киле, на верхних и нижних поверхностях крыльев они отсутствуют. Разметка зоны, за которой запрещено ходить на верхней поверхности крыльев (элементы 304 и 305) - белого цвета, надписи НЕ НАСТУПАТЬ на верхних поверхностях крыльев и стабилизаторов (элементы St 31i) - темно-серого цвета, окантовки створок перепуска воздуха на верхних поверхностях фюзеляжа (элементы 109-116, надписи НЕ НАСТУПАТЬ (St32i) внутри них и надписи НЕ НАСТУПАТЬ (St38i) в корневых частях крыла - красного цвета.

Yak-130, serial number 130.12.03.1001, belonged to the Myanmar (Burma) Air Force, 2107. Contract about delivery to Myanmar Yak-130s were signed at 2015, this aircraft - first from Myanmar batch, first flight were made November, 17, 2016. Until end of 2017 were deployed 6 Yak-130s with board numbers 18-01, 18-02, 18-03, 18-04, 18-05 and 18-06, December 18, 2017 all this aircraft were donated to Myanmar Air Force during official ceremony at Flight University in Meitila, near Mandalay. All Yak-130s, which made for Myanmar painted by similar scheme - overall in Flat Light Grey/Blue with Flat Dark Grey/Blue camouflage patterns on upper surfaces. Front part of air intakes - Aluminum enamel, heat-proof casig plated in exhaust area on bottom surfaces of fuselage - Dark Metall. Nose RWR cone and rear cone of fuselage painted in Flat Dark Gull Grey. Walking zone area borders (decal elements 304 and 305) - white, NO STEP stencil on upper surfaces of stabilizers and wings (decal elements St 31i) - dark grey, borders of all restart-up shutters, NO STEP stencil on front and rear air restart-up shutters and on wings basis (decal elements and St 38i) - red.







# Asian Aerobatic Teams - Part 2, by Steve Komor

Continuing my look at the aerobatic teams of the Asian Air Arms, this time it's the turn of

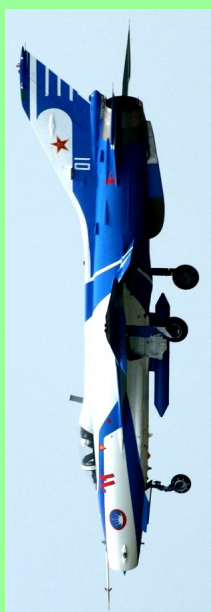
## China

which has no fewer than 4 aerobatic teams!

The **August 1st** or **Ba Yi** Aerobatics Team (Chinese: 八一飞行表演队) is the oldest aerobatic demonstration team of the People's Liberation Army Air Force (PLAAF). It was founded in 1962 and named after the date of founding of the People's Liberation Army (PLA), August 1, 1927. The team forms a part of the PLAAF Beijing Military Region and is based out of Yangcun Air Force Base (Meichong) near Tianjin, home to the 24th Fighter Division.



The team was initially equipped with JJ-5 fighter-trainer jets, a Chinese version of the MiG-17, painted in a striking red and white scheme. Later these were replaced by the Chengdu J-7EB. In 2001, these were in turn replaced by the newer J-7GB, which in 2008 were given a special livery for the Beijing Olympic Games. Each plane received a different colour inspired by the Olympic rings; blue for No.1, black for No.2, red for No.3, yellow for No.4 (as shown below) and green for No.5.



In May 2009, the team upgraded to the much more advanced Chengdu J-10 multirole fighter. There are 8 aircraft in the fleet, but only 6 fly in any one show. The August 1<sup>st</sup> team has over the years performed more than 500 times for delegations from 166 countries and regions. Its first show abroad took place in August 2013 during the Russian MAKS airshow.



### Red Falcon Air Demonstration Team

The Red Falcon Air Demonstration Team is another new aerobatic demonstration team of the People's Liberation Army Air Force.



The team was formed in 2011 and flies the jet-powered Nanchang JL-8 trainer. The Red Falcon (Hongying) is composed of eight aircraft and 18 instructor pilots of the 3rd Flying Academy based in Jinzhou-Xialoingzi in the Shenyang Military Region.

The aircraft are painted in an overall white with blue and red accents. They are equipped with smoke generators which can produce blue, white, yellow and red coloured smoke. The first public demonstration of the team was on 1st September 2011 at Aviation Open Day held in Changchun City in Jilin province.







The [Sky Wing Air Demonstration Team](#) is another recently-formed aerobatic demonstration team of the People's Liberation Army Air Force.

Started in 2011, the team uses the piston-engined Nanchang CJ-6 trainer. The Sky Wing (Tianzhiyi) is composed of eight aircraft, although only six fly at any one time, and 16 university instructor pilots from the

Chinese Air Force University at Changchun-Dafangshen in Jilin province.



The aircraft are painted in an overall blue colour scheme with red and white accents. They are equipped with smoke generators which can produce red, orange, white, yellow and violet smoke. The first public demonstration of the team was on 1st September 2011 at the Aviation Open Day held in Changchun City in Jilin province

The [Fenglei](#) (Wind and Thunder) team was founded by the aviation wing of the People's Liberation Army ground force on August 25th, 2017. It is the only helicopter aerobatic team in China, and it adds to the six professional helicopter teams in the



world, including the British Army Air Corps' Blue Eagles, Sarang of the Indian Air Force and the Patrulla Aspa of the Spanish Air Force. Members of the team must have more than 2,000 flight hours before they are allowed to join the elite group, and its first commander, Li Kuiyuan, has more than 7,000 flight hours. They also uses coloured smoke trails, a common sight with fixed-wing aircraft demonstration teams. The team primarily flies the WZ-10 helicopter, which was developed and produced by Changhe Aircraft Industries Group, a subsidiary of the country's leading aircraft manufacturer, Aviation Industry Corp China. It is the Chinese military's first specialized attack helicopter.





In addition to the WZ-10, the team is also equipped with WZ-9 and WZ-19 attack helicopters.



Click on the picture above to watch a short video of the Fenglei team performing at an international helicopter show in 2017





# Important Announcement

As many of you may have noticed from the last newsletter, we deviated slightly from our standard editorial content with some of Steve Komor's excellent references to Inter-War Asian Air Arms through his review of the Blue Rider decal range and his article on Afghan Air Force Insignia. I would like to declare up front that this does not signal any significant change to the enduring ethos of the Asian Air Arms Special Interest/Research Group; primacy will continue to be provided to the coverage of Asian Air Arms in the Post-War (World War II – 1945) period since it is our sense that the majority of our membership base their main interest in this period. That said, it has come to our attention that there appears to be some modest growth of interest in the World War I and Inter-War period in general, both for the aviation aficionado and for model hobbyists with the likes of newcomers Freedom Models and Wingsy Kits, and some of the more established manufacturers such as Special Hobby, releasing a number of high quality kits of American, British and Japanese aircraft with highly colourful markings for Asian Air Arms, supported by additional aftermarket decals and a number of new aviation titles.

As a result of these recent trends we have decided to begin running an occasional series of articles focusing on Asian aviation from circa 1910 to 1945, in order to include many of those interesting Air Forces that operated during this period and their wide variety of exotic and highly attractive colour schemes and markings. I must stress that these articles will only cover Asian Air Arms, so in spite of the involvement of the Imperial powers and the likes of Russia/The Soviet Union and the United States of America in various conflicts, we will not cover the western-orientated Allied Air Forces during World War II, and the US-dominated air campaigns in Korea and Vietnam, since all of these aspects of aerial conflict or operations in Asian skies are already amply covered by a wide range of Special Interest Groups and/or websites etc. What we will cover, for example, are the plethora of independent air forces in China, the main Asian protagonists during the Manchurian campaign in the 1930s, and the US-inspired Nationalist Chinese 'Flying Tigers' that fought the Japanese before The United States entered the War in 1941, to name but three topics.

This slight change of tack will be an experiment and very much dependent on the response and reaction that we receive from the membership and readership. We have always stressed that the AAA SIG is **by and for** the membership and this includes our editorial and website content. If we sense any risk of dilution in our main content then we will have to conduct a further review in due course, but we very much hope that the introduction of some unique material will enhance our reputation for turning the spotlight on more of the esoteric and unusual aspects of Asian Air Arms.

Mark Attrill, April 2021

## Provisional Future Publication Dates

Issue No	Edition	Copy Deadline	Provisional Publication Date
28	August-September 2021	30 July 2021	29-Aug-21
29	October-November 2021	30 September 2021	31-Oct-21
30	December 2021-January 2022	10 December 2021	02-Jan-22
31	February-March 2022	31 January 2022	27-Feb-22
32	April-May 2022	30 March 2022	30-Apr-22
33	June-July 2022	3 June 2022	03-Jul-22

## We welcome our 4 latest members

Teodoro Risino and Sergio de Mitri, both from Italy; Jamie McIntyre from Australia and Frans C. Nelis from the Netherlands

## We now have 484 members from the following 57 countries!

Algeria, Argentina, Australia, Austria, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Belgium, Bermuda, Cambodia, Canada, Chile, China (PRC), Croatia, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Guatemala, Honduras, Hong Kong, Hungary, India, Indonesia, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Japan, Korea (Republic of), Laos, Latvia, Malaysia, Malta, Myanmar, Namibia, The Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Pakistan, Panama, The Philippines, Poland, Portugal, Qatar, Russia, Singapore, Slovenia, Switzerland, Taiwan, Thailand, Ukraine, United Arab Emirates, United Kingdom, USA, Venezuela and Vietnam!





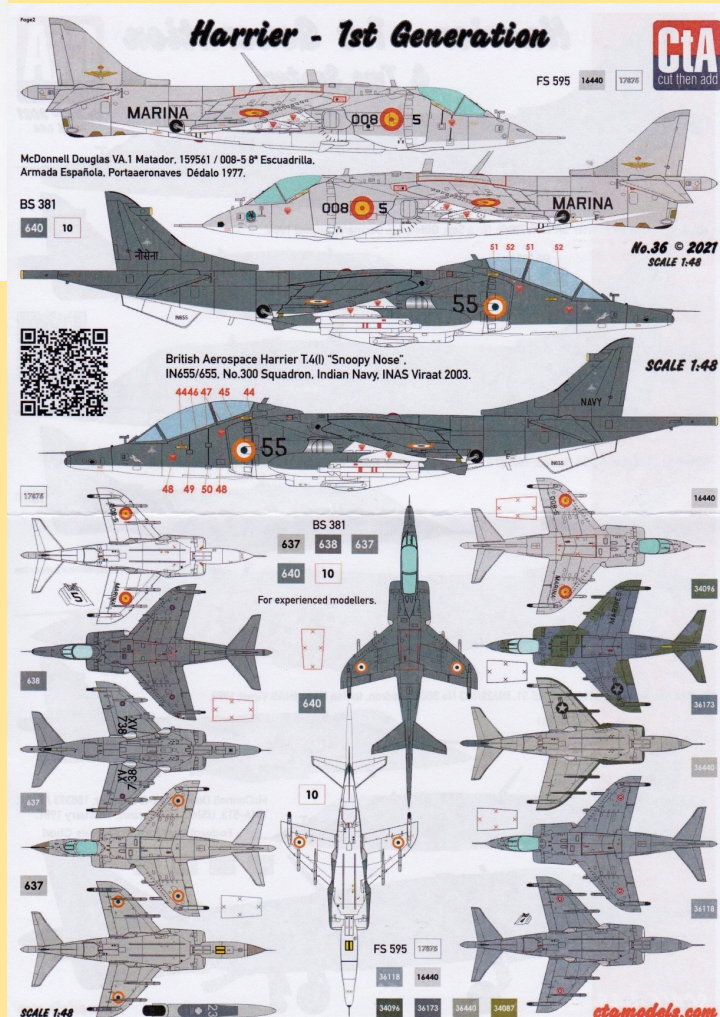
# Cut Then Add Decals "Harrier 1st Generation" decal sheet (CTA48-036)

reviewed by Mark Attrill



The most recent 1:48 scale release from curiously named Russian decal manufacturer, Cut Then Add, will be of interest to those wanting to model the ever popular Harrier 'Jump Jet' in markings from the two Asian Air Arms that have operated variants of the type over many years. The first subject is an ex-Spanish Armada McDonnell Douglas AV-8S Harrier, supplied to the Royal Thai Navy in 1998. At first the aircraft retained the original light grey and white colour scheme but this was later replaced by an overall dark grey (FS36118) colour scheme, with national markings reduced in size as featured on this decal sheet. The two other Asian options on the decal sheet are for Indian Navy examples. The first is a BAe Sea Harrier FRS.51, operated by 300 Squadron and, once again, this aircraft sports the later low-visibility colour scheme of overall Medium Sea Grey (BS381/627) with low visibility national markings, titling and codes. As a nice contrast, the decal sheet also offers markings for a BAe Harrier T.4(I) two-seat operational trainer, this time sporting the original two-tone Dark Sea Grey/White colour scheme see on all early generation Fleet Air Arm Sea Harriers, together with high-visibility national markings etc.

As with all of the company's releases, the decals are very comprehensively presented over two decal sheets and a



small supplementary addition to cater for the centres of the full-colour Indian roundels. As a result, the release includes full national markings for each option together with all of the unique titling, serials, codes and service/stencil markings. It is unlikely that the modeller will need to source any additional markings from other kits or aftermarket decal sheets. The decals have a matt finish but are thin and easy to apply. They are in perfect register and possess very good colour saturation. The unit insignia are, in some cases, quite intricate in nature but all look to be well printed and the inclusion of separate centres for the more complex roundels ensures that they are in register when applied to the model, which is a nice touch. This is especially critical with the complex Royal Thai Navy roundels, which are quite often notoriously difficult to get right.

The decal placement instructions (DPIs) are quite reasonable if not the most comprehensive that I have seen, so the modeler will need to source additional references. That said, the colour side profiles are of a decent size with enough clarity to help place most of the markings, and upper/lower views are also provided, together with colour references linked to FS or BS numbers as appropriate. The DPIs also include a separate sheet with a comprehensive placement





guide for the various stencils and maintenance markings applied to the early generation Harrier family.

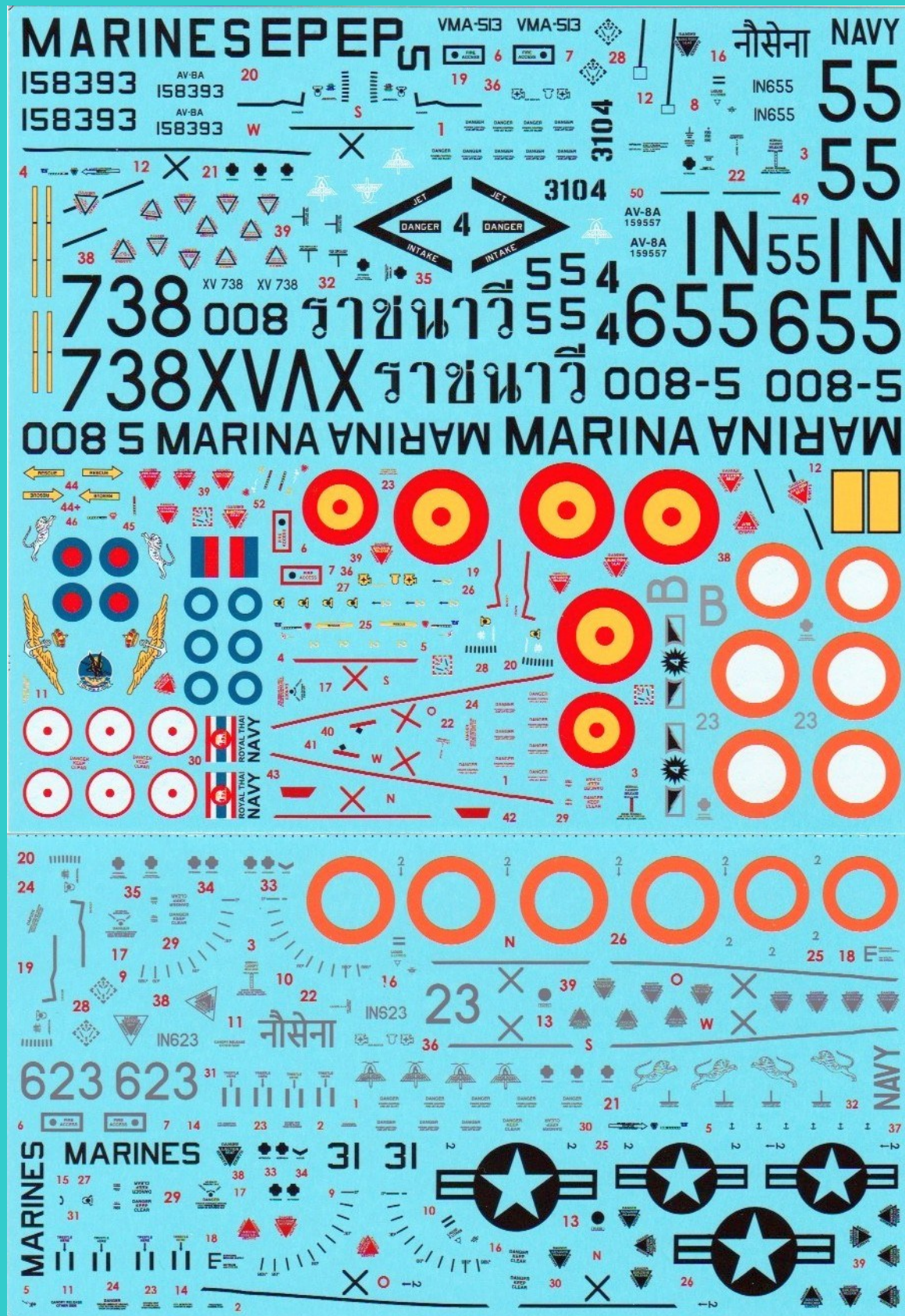
This is another great and very topical release from Cut Then Add Decals, timed nicely to compliment the brand-new McDonnell-Douglas AV-8A Harrier kit from Kinetic and their earlier releases of both the BAe Sea Harrier FRS.51 and Harrier T.2/4 two-seat trainer.

Thoroughly recommended to those wanting to model this hugely popular subject in some more esoteric and unusual Asian markings.

Review sample courtesy of my wallet!

Mark ATTRILL

May 2021



**10% discount**  
off all **Airmark**  
titles for  
members of  
Asian Air Arms!





# Samurai Phantoms - the McDonnell-Douglas F-4 Phantom II in Japanese Service

## Volume 2, F-4EJ Kai and RF-4E reconnaissance variants - Author: Andy Binks

Andy Binks' latest Japanese photo album recently dropped into my post box and its arrival is very timely given the imminent arrival in Europe of the eagerly-awaited Fine Molds 1:72 Scale F-4EJ Kai Phantom family and the first of Zoukei-Mura's bigger brethren in 1:48 Scale. This book follows on very neatly from the first volume, which covered the F-4EJ Phantom in Service with the Japanese Air Self Defence Force (JASDF) prior to the Kai modernisation programme. This volume charts the modified F-4EJ Kai Phantom and the more unusual RF-4E tactical reconnaissance and esoteric RF-4EJ variants through their respective careers with the JASDF, and features some of the more attractive colour and camouflage schemes applied to the Phantom during its twilight years of Service.

In keeping with the two previous volumes (the first on the F-104J/DJ Starfighter), this 70-page softback book provides a veritable feast of photographs, which should provide both the modern aviation enthusiast and modeller with plenty of inspiration and motivation to improve their photographic skills, or inspire a more unusual modelling project. Each page features at least one colour image with many actually including two or three photographs. The featured aircraft are arranged in aircraft serial number order, which further underlines the rich variety of colour schemes and special markings applied to these aircraft, as the reader 'bounces' between aircraft in the 'traditional' and original light grey/white, through the so-called Forest Camouflage and the more recent 'Sea Camouflage' scheme applied to the maritime-attack optimised aircraft of 8 Squadron, or the later four-colour scheme more akin to the USAF 'European One' scheme. Apart from the photographs, each page provides some detailed notes on the particular colour scheme or special markings, paint shades and other photographic or marking references, making this an ideal volume for those seeking even more detail on these unique aircraft. The comprehensive introduction provides yet more general colour notes and a handy reference to the special marking decal sheets available both in limited edition re-issues of mainstream kits or aftermarket decal specialists.

### Samurai Phantoms

The McDonnell Douglas F-4 Phantom II in Japanese service  
Volume 2 F-4EJ Kai and reconnaissance variants

Andy Binks



In collaboration with ASIAN AIR ARMS RESEARCH GROUP and 4Aviation



Photo by Andy Binks

This is another 501 Squadron RF-4EJ Kai captured whilst parked on the ramp during the Hyakuri Air Show on 26 September 2004.

It has been camouflaged using FS34097 Field Green, FS34108 Medium Green and FS36081 Dark Gunship Gray on the upper surfaces, with FS36375 Light Compass Ghost Gray on the undersides. Applied to both sides of the aircraft, the unusual white kanji character on the engine intake splitter plate is yu, meaning superiority.

Notice that the wings are folded and that the engine intake FOD covers are from another Phantom. The white markings, from top to bottom say 374, REMOVE BEFORE FLIGHT written vertically, and 5015Q.

The overall condition of the paintwork is very patchy, as is the well-worn red JASDF 50th anniversary badge on the side of the engine intake.

Page 11 in *50th Anniversary of JASDF* (Bunrindo, ISBN 4-89319-121-7) shows two images of this aircraft carrying a TACER reconnaissance pod, allowing comparison with the LOROP pod in the photo above.

Everyone who secures a copy of this book will have their own favourite images. For me, the 'Sea Camouflaged' examples operated by 8 Squadron will always be one of the most attractive and, as a result, the so-called 'Mitsubishi Special' featured on Page 15, which contrasts this scheme with light grey highlights after a major servicing, would make a very intriguing scheme for a model. I am also a fan of special markings although I do tend to prefer some of the more subtle variations so those applied to the 302 Squadron Commanders aircraft at the 2007 Senkyo, featured on Page 34 are another personal favourite, together with the more recent retirement markings applied to 501 Squadron RF-4Es to mark their final retirement in 2019 and featured on Page 56-57 and the cover.

If I have a minor reservation with this book, it is perhaps with the quality of some of the images. Granted, the author has looked to source never-before published or rare photographs of the aircraft, special markings or stores configurations portrayed, and this sometimes needs to be balanced and compromised with the availability of images. The irony in all of this is that those images featured in Volume 1,

many of which have had to be digitalised from original 35mm film stock, appear to be marginally superior when rendered on the page and compared to some of those that appear in Volume 2. This all needs to be taken in context though, and Volume 2 does remain an extremely good product. For the modeller, this book offers a wealth of new information on the colour schemes and markings sported by the JASDF F-4 Phantom variants during their more recent Service and provides some great inspiration for unusual and attractive subjects. We are also fortunate that many of the schemes featured in the book are available in plastic





model kits, mainly of Japanese origin and including Fine Molds, Fujimi, Hasegawa and Zoukei-Mura, or on aftermarket decal sheets from the likes of CAM Decals, Platz or the wonderfully named Double Excellent Models (DXM).

As many of you know, this book was produced in collaboration with the Asian Air Arms Research Group, and published by Andy Binks and Blurb.inc using their creative publishing service. As a result, it has been produced in very limited quantities but may still be available through the Aviation Bookshop of Tunbridge Wells (one of our Sponsors) or other specialised aviation bookshops, or you can order your copy direct from [Blurb.inc](#).



Photos by Seiki Takahashi

Pictured here at Naha AB, these markings were worn at the 1997 *senkyo*. Complementing those on pages 41 and 44, these images show details of another of the F-4EJ Kai Phantoms flown by 302 Squadron at the event. It wears the standard two shades of Compass Ghost Gray camouflage scheme.

Referring to the detail pictures, we can see that the shark's eye on this machine is predominantly pink, but that the shark mouth and eagle are identical to those shown on the aircraft on the two earlier pages. The profile drawing on page 122 of *1979-2000 Senkyo* (Green Arrow, ISBN 4-7663-3326-8) shows that there is artwork on the engine intake splitter plate on the right-hand side of the aircraft, as we have also seen on the squadron's other aircraft. Note that the TAC Meet call sign names seem to be missing, but that there are two stars added instead. Unfortunately, the correctness of the profile could not be confirmed by any photographic images found during our research.

The call signs ROKY and MRCY, plus two brown-shadowed yellow stars indicating the commander's aircraft, are written on the left-hand engine intake splitter plate and ramp. The crew chief's name, C/C NUMATA, is stencilled onto the air conditioning (A/C) intake mounted on the side of the nose. A small photograph of the port side of the nose is shown on page 83 of *The Collected Special Color Scheme of JASDF Aircraft* (Ikaros, ISBN 4-87149-678-3).

The aircraft is carrying a blue AAM-3 training missile on the shoulder station of the left-hand inboard underwing pylon.



Thoroughly recommended to anyone with an interest in the mighty McDonnell Douglas F-4 Phantom and/or the modern day Japanese Air Self Defence Force.

Mark Attrill, May 2021



Photo by Kenji Kikuzaki

RF-4EKai 57-6909 was another of the 501 Squadron aircraft that took part in the 1994 *senkyo* held at Komatsu AB. As seems to have been the case in this time period, it does not have the UHF/VHF radio equipment upgrade, and is seen here wearing the usual woodland camouflage colours.

The photo on page 6 of *JASDF All Aircraft, 40th Anniversary of JASDF* (Green Arrow, ISBN 4-7663-3171-0) shows the nose painting of the mythical vermilion bird Suzaku, which legend has it, rules over the southern heavens. This is more clearly shown in the photograph at the bottom of page 115 of the same book.

The characters and artwork are carried on both sides of the airframe. Above the two large kanji for *Suzaku* on the engine intake splitter plate are the somewhat smaller kanji (read from left to right) meaning southern god, but note that these appear in reverse order on the starboard side.

There are three sources for alternative close-up photos of the bird design: on page 111 of *1979-2000 Senkyo* (Green Arrow, ISBN 4-7663-3326-8); page 19 in *Senkyo, Koku-Fan Illustrated No. 78* (Bunrindo); and page 39 of the September 1994 issue of *Koku-Fan* magazine. As with the other reconnaissance Phantoms at the event, the artwork always faces forwards.

The lettering 909L is stencilled onto the port underwing fuel tank pylon. Just noticeable is that the first 9 is smaller than the other numbers. Presumably, 909R is on the opposite side, although this is not confirmed by any photographs.

Note the red-painted open doors of the photo-flash dispenser compartment, beneath the forward edge of the tailfin.

Thanks to Gary Markham for providing a link to this video of the ROKAF/JASDF Phantom Farewell. WATCH IT BY CLICKING ON THE IMAGE BELOW.







## The Indo-Pakistan war of 1971, Volume 1

### Indian Military Intervention in East Pakistan - Author: Ravi Rikhye

First, I must hold my hand up and say that, until I joined this Group and began reading the newsletters, I had never heard of Helion & Company! It came as a great surprise to me to discover that since their foundation in 1996, they have actually published a very large number of military history books, with many more in the pipeline. In fact, their catalogue is so extensive that it is exceedingly difficult to take a 'quick look' at their website, there is just so much, and it is laid out in an extremely attractive and easy-to-navigate fashion. Many of their publications are also available in digital format(s), and I find myself choosing this option whenever possible these days, as I am very quickly running out of space on my bookshelves!

Helion are in the process of publishing five @War series: Africa@War; Asia@War; Europe@War; Middle East@War and Latin America@War. The Series Editor for all of these is fellow member and highly respected author, Tom Cooper.

Of course, of these, it is the Asia@War series that will be of immediate interest to our Group, and this book, subtitled 'Indian Military Intervention in East Pakistan', is the first volume in a 3-part series covering the Indo-Pakistan war of 1971. It has been written by Ravi Rikhye, who studied international military affairs for 10-years before writing his first paper. Over the last 60 years he has authored and co-authored over 30 books, many of these for the Government of India. He is currently completing his **seventh(!)** master's degree (in Intelligence Management) and hoping to undertake his first doctorate. His pedigree therefore speaks for itself.

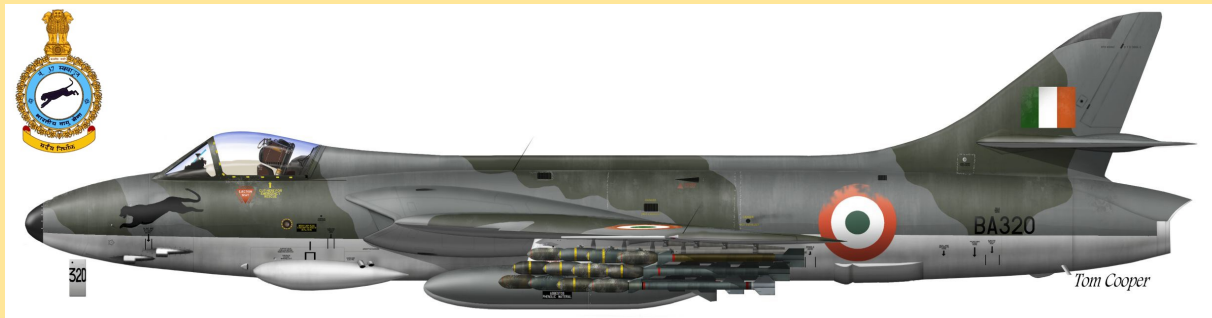
The author covers the aspects of the war in ten chapters. The early part covers the background to the conflict, which was sparked by the Bangladesh Liberation War, a conflict between the traditionally dominant West Pakistanis and the majority East Pakistanis. The political tensions between East Bengal and West Pakistan had their origin in the creation of Pakistan as a result of the partition of India by the United Kingdom in 1947. The trauma of partition had a massive impact on both countries in the following years, culminating in a short but brutal war in 1965. Increasing political unrest in East Pakistan and the subsequent tensions between East and West Pakistan helped to set the scene for later events. When President Ayub Khan resigned in late 1969, he invited army chief General Yahya Khan to take over the central government. The geographical distance between the eastern and western wings of Pakistan was over 1,600 kilometres (1,000 mi), which greatly hampered any attempt to integrate the Bengali and Pakistani cultures of the two disparate regions. Finally, in March 1971, East Pakistan seceded.



The Indo-Pakistani War, counted among the shortest wars in history, officially started after Pakistan launched pre-emptive aerial strikes on eleven Indian Air Force stations in North India on December 3, 1971, in an effort to prevent India from intervening in East Pakistan. In later years, however, India came to admit that the ground war in East Pakistan began on the night of 21/21 November 1971, and not on 3<sup>rd</sup> December. In fact, Indian troops had entered Bangladesh as early as April 1971 for reconnaissance, and to help the rebel forces, and by October 1971 several Indian formations were engaged in combat with Pakistani forces.

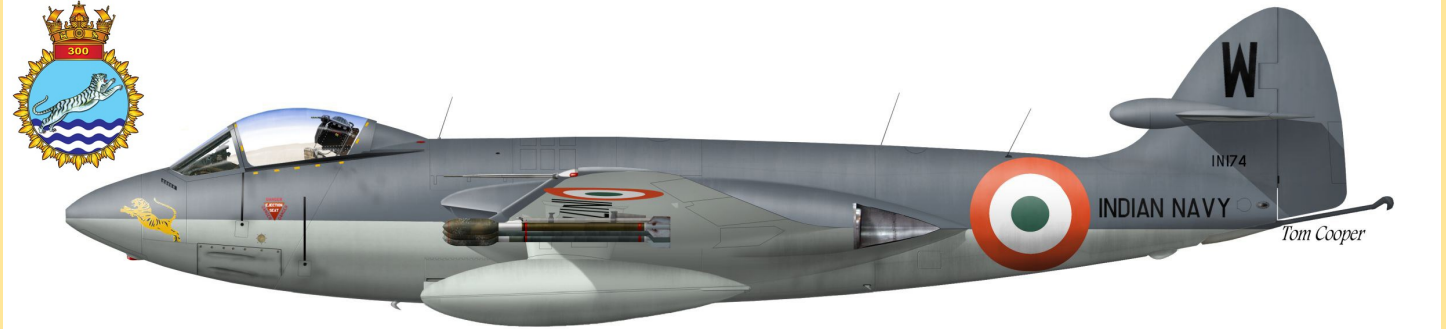






This marked the entry of India into the Bangladesh liberation war in support of the Bengali nationalist forces, and the beginning of the nation's hostilities with Pakistan. The allied forces of India and Bangladesh made a quick advance and the war ended on December 16, 1971 in Dhaka after the Instrument of Surrender was signed by the Eastern Command of the Pakistan military, resulting in the independence of East Pakistan and its emergence as a new nation called Bangladesh.

Although the majority of the book's 70 pages inevitably deal with the ground campaign, Chapter 5 is dedicated to the Naval and Air involvement in the conflict, including the important part played by India's Naval Air component, which was embarked aboard the carrier INS Vikrant. This consisted of twenty Hawker Sea Hawk fighter-bombers from Indian Navy Air Squadron (INAS) 300, at



least four Breguet BF.1050 Alizé anti-submarine aircraft of INAS 310 and two Aerospatiale SE.316B Alouette III helicopters of INAS 312. Details are given of the many sorties flown by the Sea Hawks in strikes against ports along the coast.

The overwhelming superiority of the Indian Air Force is highlighted using comparison tables, but mention is also given to the fact that both sides initially failed to prosecute the air war with any real co-ordination or enthusiasm. Within a matter of days, however, the IAF had begun conducting effective counter-air strikes against PAF airfields in East Pakistan, and eventually the IAF's strength in numbers enabled it to gain total air superiority to such a degree that what remained of the Pakistan Air Force's personnel in East Pakistan was forced to flee to Burma.

A



further section then deals with a tragic 'friendly fire' incident involving Indian Gnats firing on and destroying two gunboats of the newly formed Bangladesh Navy on 10 December 1971, killing several Bangladeshi sailors.

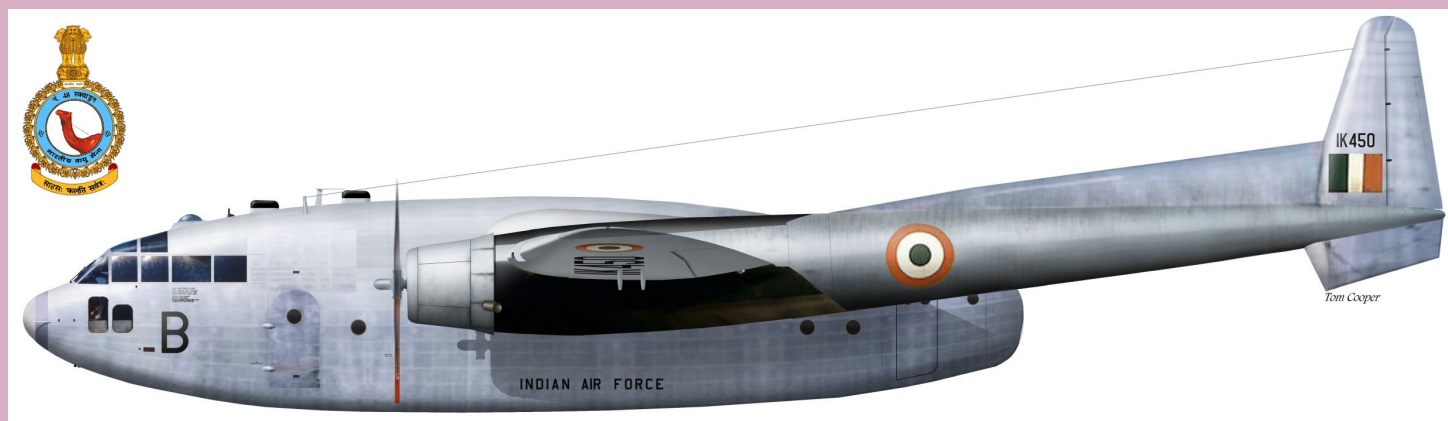






Subsequent chapters then deal with the four fronts which saw action during the war, namely the Western, North-Western, Northern and Eastern Fronts. On the Western front, the Battle of Boyra, which occurred during November, involved several actions between Pakistani F-86E Sabres and Indian Gnats and MiG-21s, which are described in some detail.

On the Northern front, the most notable air action was the Tangail Airdrop, for which the IAF provided



Antonov An-12Bs, Fairchild C-119s, C-47 Dakotas and DHC-4 Caribous to transport the 2<sup>nd</sup> parachute Battalion to Tangail, the location of the HQ of a powerful guerrilla group fighting with the Pakistani Army. The incident of the 'Hung-up Paratrooper' highlights the perils facing troops jumping from aircraft into combat, although thankfully in this case the soldier concerned survived to tell his tale.

The book is lavishly illustrated with some excellent contemporary black & white photographs as well as several maps and tables, and the middle of the book features an eight-page section of colour side profiles of some of the hardware used by both sides, including four pages of aircraft profiles. These latter are all by Tom Cooper, whose artwork needs no introduction to this group. Good use is also made of official records and recollections of participants involved in the conflict.



Prior to reading this book I was not aware of many of the details of the conflict, but I found the book provides a very interesting and informative overview of this short but very violent war, and is written in a very even-handed manner. The successes and failures of both sides are covered without bias, and the book concludes by examining the reasons for Pakistan's ultimate failure to prevent Bangladesh gaining independence.

This is a book I can highly recommend to all readers, and I look forward to reading the next two volumes in this series when they become available.

I am indebted to Tom Cooper for providing both the review copy of the book and copies of his original artwork which have been used to illustrate this article.



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