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ASIAN AIR ARMS NEWSLETTER 29

October/November 2021



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"Asian Air Arms SIG", a Special Interest Group of IPMS (UK)

Book Review -Chinese Air Power



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Editorial - Asian Air Arms in the News again!

Once again, I am enormously grateful to Steve Komor for putting together a bumper edition of the newsletter, which contains a broad range of articles which I hope will be of interest to the readership.

Following on from my commentary in the previous edition of the newsletter, I have continued to monitor the situation in Afghanistan with the 'Taliban Air Force' as it is now coined. As reported, there continues to be considerable speculation about the number of military aircraft that have fallen into the hands of the Taliban and what the new regime may do with these new assets. Immediately after the final US evacuation flight had departed from Afghan airspace, widespread footage of the military material abandoned, particularly at Kabul International Airport, seemed to indicate that the US and Allied forces were able to destroy or seriously disable the vast majority of former Afghan air assets left at KIA but what of those that may have been more hastily abandoned at the regional air bases? At least one UH-60 Black Hawk was observed flying over Kandahar during a Taliban victory parade in late August and images of seemingly complete and serviceable airframes at Mazar-i-Sharif have also emerged. Elsewhere it would appear that Afghan Air Force crews did also manage to disable some aircraft. For example, the previously reported abandonment of three serviceable helicopters in a stadium at the entrance to the Panjshir Valley was disproved as more recent, detailed footage, provides a different story. As we know the Taliban of the past have not been huge advocates of any form of air power but this may be about to change. Western observers had previously observed rusting, mainly ex-Soviet or Russian aircraft, abandoned on airfields around the country or parked up in an off-base 'graveyard'. Not this time. The Taliban have made strenuous efforts to assemble and neatly line up all of their newly acquired air assets at KIA with a view to salvaging as many serviceable aircraft as possible and this new approach has been well publicized via mainstream and social media. The Group have already 'recruited' former members of the Afghan Air Force to assist with ongoing efforts to rebuild some aircraft and I have little doubt that they will seek external help for the completion of more complex tasks. Some aircraft have already been demonstrated as fully operational including at least two Mil Mi-24 Hinds and a brace of Mil Mi-8 Hips. Only time will tell if they have the will to maintain this level of commitment towards acquiring a true air capability for their militia. In the meantime, I have compiled a table of all known military aircraft that have been abandoned by the former Afghan Air Force in Afghanistan, which appears in this newsletter. This will not become a regular feature and is a bit of a 'one-off' for current interest but I will continue to monitor the situation and if it warrants a significant update at some point in the future, we will consider this.

As Afghanistan started to disappear off our radar, we witnessed plenty of action elsewhere in Asia, as tensions between the People's Republic of China and Taiwan rose once again in October with numerous incursions into Taiwan's Air Defence Identification Zone (ADIZ) by elements of the People's Liberation Army Air Force. On several occasions during October, large numbers of J-16 Air Superiority Fighters, Su-30 Strike-Attack aircraft and H-6 nuclear-capable bombers were observed entering the ADIZ in a show of strength and perhaps signaling a renewed period of tension between the two countries as the PRC seeks to expand its area of interest and contest the potential battlespace in this region of the world.

Finally, an apology to those members of the SIG that have experienced difficulties in recent weeks with accessing our website. We have had some 'technical difficulties' with the website host, mainly associated with the prolonged handover of responsibilities between the SIG Leadership earlier in the year. I am hoping that this glitch is temporary and that normal service will be resumed shortly.

Until next time, happy reading and Stay Safe !

Mark Attrill, October 2021

A very warm welcome to the latest edition of our newsletter.

In this, our 29th edition, we welcome new contributor and prolific modeller James Robson, who has already posted several fine builds on the group's Facebook page and on the Airfix Tribute Forum, with not one but two very interesting articles featured here. There is also another excellent article by Jamie McIntyre, and Group Leader Mark Attrill has written several pieces including a fascinating look at the Taliban 'air force', as well as a look at a very interesting (*and hitherto unknown to me!*) series of photobooks by 'Duke Hawkins'. I shall definitely be adding one or two of these to my collection! David Thomas has contributed another of his superb in-depth book reviews, and, with their permission, we feature articles by Greg Kittinger and Meindert de Vreeze from their Internet blogs. We have more video treats from Gary Markham, as well as a brief look at the Indonesian Air Force's aerobatic team. There is also a little tip that I discovered entirely by accident which I hope one or two of you might find useful...

Also in this edition, we are trialling the inclusion of a section ([see P.10](#)) enabling members to exchange, buy or sell Asian Air Arm-related kits. It is hoped that this will enable group members to track down specific kits that they have not been able to find through other means. This is not intended to be a replacement for eBay or any of the other auction sites, and a strict set of rules will govern its use. These are:

- ◆ Only Asian Air Arm-related kits allowed.
- ◆ A maximum of three kits will be permitted in any one ad, no matter whether you are looking to buy, sell or exchange.
- ◆ No photos will be included. It will be assumed, hopefully correctly, that any kits advertised are complete and in at least a reasonable condition.
- ◆ Negotiations will be undertaken via email directly between parties.
- ◆ Disputes must be settled privately between said parties.
- ◆ All ads will have the same format and will contain **ONLY** the following information:
 - Kit manufacturer
 - Kit name
 - Scale
 - An indication as to whether you are looking to buy, sell or exchange
 - Fixed** price (if selling)
 - A contact email address

Ads must be sent to the Editor (stevekomor@gmail.com) who will format them according to the guidelines above, and they will appear once only, in the next available edition of the newsletter.

Steve Komor, October 2021



Re-use, recycle! - a FREE paint/superglue receptacle

I've been building models for almost 60 years, but it's only quite recently that I finally found the answer to something that has always eluded me. I often need to use just a few drops of superglue, or to mix very small quantities of paint for use on small parts such as wheel hubs, crew figures, cockpit details, etc. I have never been able to find a small enough receptacle to hold the tiny amounts of superglue or paint required, and so I found that I often wasted quite a lot of material using things like old eggcups, paint palettes and other containers. Then one day, a couple of years ago, I found a solution completely by accident!

As age creeps up on us slowly, it is inevitable that many of us will end up on some kind of medication or other. In fact, I take several different medications to treat various long-term ailments, including Type-2 diabetes. While sitting at the dining table one day, I picked up the blister pack from my diabetes pills and started casually fidgeting with it, with no particular aim in mind (my wife would tell you that I love to fidget at the table, whether with sweet wrappers, small pieces of paper or foil, or whatever else is to hand!). Anyway, within a few minutes, I had arrived at the solution to my quest. Here's how:

1. The first thing I did was to remove all the loose bits of foil from the back of the blister pack (image 1). This is completely optional, but I'm also a bit of a 'neat freak'! When I'd finished, it looked similar to the one in image (2).
2. Next, I turned it over (3), and casually started twisting my fingertip around the inside of each blister, using my nail to create an even circular depression with raised, clearly-defined sharp edges, as in image (4). The fingertip should remain in contact with the bottom of the depression all the while, so that the edges of the fingernail can create the 'lip' of the receptacle.
3. Repeat the process for each blister (5 and 6).
4. *Et voila!* A small, totally free, disposable mixing tray or superglue receptacle (7). I now have a lifetime's supply of these, in various sizes, and they are absolutely ideal for the purpose. They only hold a small amount of liquid, so there's not a lot of waste. A simple solution to an age-old problem, in a matter of minutes!

Steve Komor, September 2021





Aztec Decals 'Awqaq Urin 1' (Southern Warriors 1) – FMA IA-58 Pucara



Readers of my recent review of the Kinetic 1:48 Scale FMA IA-58 Pucara will recall that Two Bobs Decals of the United States were first off the mark with the release of their Pucara decal sheet to supplement those on offer in the kit, as previously reviewed. Not surprisingly, Aztec Decals of Mexico have also been quick to capitalize on providing alternative decals for the kit, given their hard earned reputation for specializing in the delivery of high quality decals for Latin and South American subjects. Their curiously named 'Awqaq Urin 1' decal sheet, which sounds more Arabic than Latin American but apparently translates as 'Southern Warriors', recently landed on my modelling desk, and I inevitably wanted to compare it with the Two Bobs release since it also provides decal options for Sri Lankan aircraft. In actual fact, it provides decals for all of the Pucarás operated by the Sri Lankan Air Force, which immediately puts it in contention to be my 'go to' choice. For those not familiar with the brand, Aztec Decals have a fine reputation for the production of excellent decals and very comprehensive and high quality decal placement instructions (DPIs) and those included in this release are no different. The DPIs focus on showcasing two of the aircraft operated by the SLAF in what appear to be two different schemes. The first aircraft (CA-604) is shown in the prototypical light grey and white scheme with the second (CA-605) appearing to sport Medium Blue (FS25187) upper surfaces. This second aircraft is portrayed as it appeared in the Sri Lankan Air Force Museum in 2008, so I am not sure if the medium blue upper surfaces were accurate for an operational aircraft or a 'bogus' scheme applied for display purposes only.

As one can expect from Aztec Decals, these are superb Cartograf-printed decals, with a comprehensive set of national markings and the plethora of safety, maintenance and stencil markings all included on the three decal sheets. The decals are all superbly printed, in excellent register and with superb colour density. Although the DPIs only cover two particular aircraft, as previously mentioned the serial numbers for all four aircraft operated by the

SLAF are present on the sheet. It should be noted that decals are also provided for CA-602 which was one of the first two aircraft delivered to the SLAF but was quickly re-numbered to CA-605 since the number 8 is deemed to bring bad luck in Sri Lanka. I was pretty confused (as was I - Ed.!) by this fact



myself until I ascertained that the Sri Lankans' paranoia with the number '8' goes as far as numbers that ADD up to eight (i.e. 6 + 2 = 8!). They insisted that the import authorities renumber the aircraft to CA-605 so the four aircraft operated



AWQAR URIN I (SOUTH WARRIORS I) PUCARÁ

48/72-070

This is the known destiny of some of the Pucarás that remained in the Falklands:

- A-502 was exploded at the end of 1982
- A-520 & A-556 were sent to a polygon in West Falkland Island (Isla Gran Malinca).
- A-523 & A-552 were sent to a polygon in East Falkland Island (Isla Solentin).
- A-529 was sent to Mount Pleasant Airport and restored to its original shape.

15 IA-58 Pucará **ZD485** **Royal Air Force**
Colors: FS 34084 for Green spots; FS 34084 for Orange spots; FS 30266 for Tan spots; Matt Aluminium for underside, fin stabilizers and fin's top.
Decals: Flag in two positions; Roundels in six positions (fuselage and over wings); Serial Number in two positions.
Notes: 1) We couldn't find clear info about the amount of roundels and serial numbers were for ZD485, we are making our suggestion according to what we saw in the UK F-4 Phantom deployed to Ascension Island (Aztec Decal 063), we have added more serial numbers in case your references show it using them on the wings.
2) All info suggest that the Pucarás restored by the RAF, kept a color scheme similar the ones they had during the Falklands War.
3) No info we could find confirms if ZD485 or ZD487 really wore RAF serial numbers and/or marks, so we leave the option open to you.

The Pucará in Sri Lanka

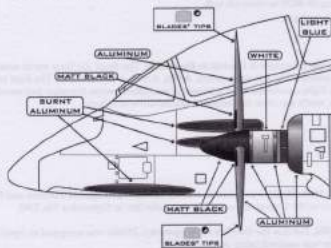
Sri Lanka was the third foreign user of the Pucará. In December 16th, 1992, the SLAF signed the buy of four Pucarás. The Fabrica Militar de Arones completed the built of four units, numbered A-600, A-601, A-602 & A-603. The first two, numbered as CA-601 and CA-602 (later renumbered as CA-605) arrived to Sri Lanka in January, 1993. The last two, numbered CA-603 and CA-604 arrived in March and May, 1993, being assigned to the No. 1 Flying Training Wing in Katunayake. The main use of the Pucará was in support of land forces against the military organization Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE, 5 May 1976 - 18 May 2009) in the zone of Jaffna.
-In July 14th, 1995, CA-601 was shot down by a SA-7 ground-to-air missile in Palaly, killing its pilot, Lt. Perera.
-At the end of 1995, the four remaining Pucarás were assigned to the No. 7 Squadron, with base in Vavuniya, where they continued their missions against the LTTE.
-In February 7th, 1997, one of the Pucarás shot down the ship MV Caribbean Queen, that was informed had weapons for the LTTE.
-In March 16th, 1997, CA-604 exploded due lack of maintenance and skipping the security procedures.
-In November 2nd, 1997, one of the Pucarás assisted two Mi-24 Hind and two C-130 Hercules in the destruction on a hostile ship at the coast of Mullaitivu.
Due the lack of spare parts and poor assistance after the Fabrica Militar de Arones was acquired by Lockheed Martin, the Pucarás were retired from service in 1998, and CA-605 was transferred to the Ratmalana Museum.

16 IA-58 Pucará **CA-604** **Sri Lanka Air Force**
Colors: FS 26373 overall; Aluminium for nose, wingfield frame, column panel, spine, motor's front cover and fuselage's tail; FS 27875 underside.
Decals: Flag in two positions; Coat of Arms in two positions; Roundels in two positions (fuselage and over wings); Serial Number in three positions (two on fin and one over left wing); Arabic Sri Lanka Air Force decal in one position (left door of front wheel); Sinhala Sri Lanka Air Force decal in one position (right door of front wheel).
Notes: Photographic evidence we found shows that the Sri Lanka's Pucará, during their operative life time, didn't have marks over the right wing or under both wings, but we have added a fourth serial number and two additional roundels in case you want to use them.

17 IA-58 Pucará **CA-605** **Sri Lanka Air Force**
Colors: FS 26373 overall; FS 27875 underside; FS 21350 for motor's front cover.
Decals: Flag in two positions; Coat of Arms in two positions; Roundels in two positions (fuselage and over wings); Serial Number in three positions (two on fin and one over left wing); Arabic Sri Lanka Air Force decal in one position (left door of front wheel); Sinhala Sri Lanka Air Force decal in one position (right door of front wheel).
Notes: We are making our suggestion of the wing's marks based in the scheme of CA-604 (ver. 14).

18 IA-58 Pucará **A-586** **Fuerza Aérea Argentina**
Colors: FS 34084 for Dark Green spots; FS 34106 for Medium Green spots; FS 34097 for Light Green spots; FS 35030 for underside; White for motor's low panel and fuselage's tail underside.
Decals: Black Flag in two positions.
Note: At the moment of its documentation, this A/C didn't have serial numbers nor roundels, we have found no info if those were added later, but we added a group of black roundels for it, in case you want to use them.

19 IA-58 Pucará **FAU-220** **Fuerza Aérea Uruguaya**
Colors: FS 36320 for Gray Spots; FS 34094 for Green Spots; FS 37925 for underside and stabilizer's underside.
Decals: Flag in two positions on fin; Roundels in two positions; Big Square Serial Number in two positions; Small Square Serial Number in two positions; FAU in two positions; A-58 in two positions; Fuerza Aérea Uruguaya in two positions.
Note: The position of 2E Badge is the same than in FAU-226 (ver. 12).



NOTES:
1) CHANGE THE LIGHT BLUE WITH THIS COLORS FOR THESE ADS:
MATT ALUMINUM: 10, 11, 13, 15, 16.
RUSTY: 14 (2001 & OPTIONAL 2002), ALSO FOR MOTOR'S FRONT COVER
2) INNER WHEELS'S DOORS IN ALUMINUM

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AWQAR URIN I PUCARÁ



48/72-070



APPROXIMATE COLORS FOR SLAF PUCARÁ			
FS 26373	Light Grey	Natural Aluminum	
FS 27875	White	FS 25187	Blue
FS 21350	Red	Check your references	

SLAF CA-404 was previously ex-FAA A-603. In March 16th, 1997, after taking off from Anuradhapura base, exploded over Hingurakgoda, the pilot could eject safely. Later investigations declared the cause was lack of maintenance and skipping the security procedures.

SLAF CA-405 was previously ex-FAA A-601. Originally it was CA-602, but as the addition of the numbers resulted in "8", a bad luck number in Sri Lanka, it was re-numbered as CA-605. In 1998, was transferred to the Sri Lanka Air Force Museum in Ratmalana.





Blue "Sonia" - Mitsubishi Ki-51

The Mitsubishi Ki-51 design originated in December 1937 with a specification issued to Mitsubishi for a ground attack aircraft based on the Ki-30 "Ann". The Japanese Army wanted a smaller aircraft capable of operating on short airstrips close to the front. Designated "Type 99 Assault Plan" by the army, the allies nicknamed it "Sonia".

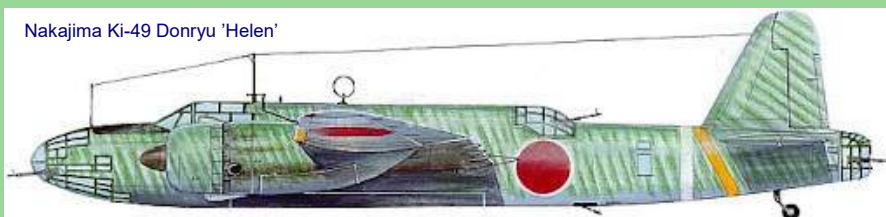
The cockpit was shortened compared to the Ki-30, and a limited set of instruments and controls was added to the rear cockpit. The aircraft was designed so that the rear cockpit instruments and controls could be replaced with camera equipment for photoreconnaissance. The bomb bay was eliminated, and the wings were lowered to permit a sturdier undercarriage. The prototype was completed in June 1939, with modifications to improve handling and the addition of 6 mm armor plating around the cockpit and engine. Initially deployed against Chinese forces, it proved to be too slow to hold up against the fighter aircraft of the other Allied powers. However, it performed a useful ground-attack role in the China-Burma-India theater.



Mitsubishi Ki-30 'Ann' for comparison

"Sonia" was a more successful design than "Helen", serving throughout the Pacific. It was unusually well protected for a Japanese design, was easily maintained, and was well-liked by its crews. It had a good rough-field capability. As the war drew to a close, the Japanese began using them in kamikaze attacks, making it one of the few Japanese aircraft to serve throughout the duration of the war. Total production was around 2,385 units.

Nakajima Ki-49 Donryu 'Helen'



In the post-war years, some captured aircraft were deployed in Indonesia, China and North Korea. The Indonesian aircraft saw service during its war with the Netherlands for independence. Chinese Ki-51's lasted in service until 1953, and the Soviet Union provided Sonias to North Korea to help bolster their air power.





I'm always on the lookout for interesting schemes for my builds, and when I saw this scheme for a Ki-51, I had to do it! Most WWII Japanese aircraft follow the limited green or light grey palette, so this stood out to me.

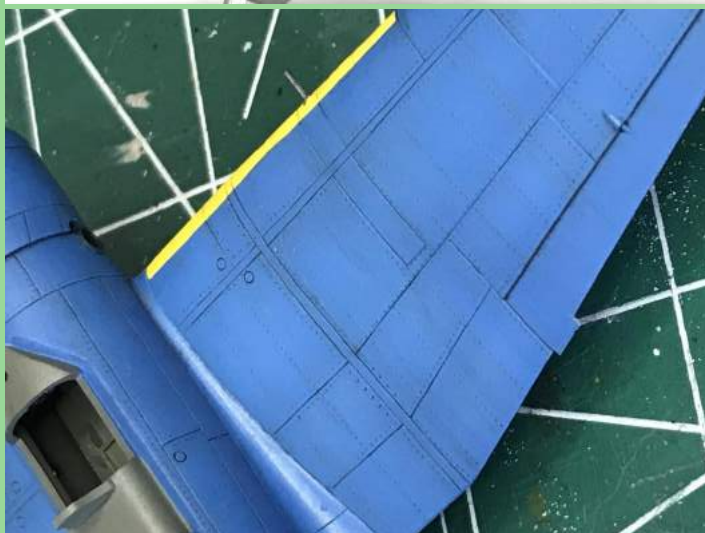
This is a fairly old 1/72 Hasegawa kit, but it had some nice engraved detail. I did add a few missing panel lines, and riveted the aircraft. My only other addition to what was in the box was the crew, and this did create a slight problem. The canopy didn't sit totally down once I got the crew installed. I test fitted frequently during construction, and cut down the rear seat especially to make proper room, but for some reason, once the crew were glued in, I didn't get the same fit. Disappointing, but with a bit of extra glue to fill the gap it's not too noticeable.



Since I didn't do any pre-shading or black basing, I did use two lighter colors of the custom-mixed blue to add some modulation to the finish. In fact, the other mistake I made was to not use the lightest shade on the canopy, which I painted off the aircraft because of the open gun port and gun sight. I meant to pull the blue-tac out of the canopy and check the shade against the aircraft before I took off the canopy masking, but forgot. Oh well – live and learn!

A shorter version of Greg Kittinger's article first appeared in his blog on the [iModeler](#) website.

(Ed: Is it just me, or is the 'Sonia' rather reminiscent of the SBD 'Dauntless', especially in this colour scheme?)





Xtradecal Reviews

1:48 Scale Mil Mi-24 Hind Collection (X48-218)

1:72 Scale Northrop F-5 Tiger II - Worldwide Collection Part 1 (X72-325)

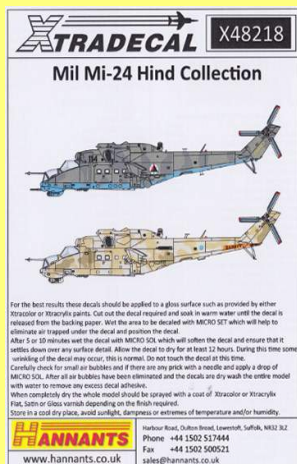
1:72 Scale Northrop F-5 Tiger II – Worldwide Collection Part 2 (X72-326)

1:72 Scale Jetstream Collection (X72-327)

1:72 Scale Lockheed C-130 Hercules Collection Part 2 (X72-330)

Hannants, the UK Mail Order specialist that produce a prolific range of decals under their Xtradecal trade name, have been particularly busy of late with the release of no less than five decal sheets which will be of interest to Asian Air Arms fans.

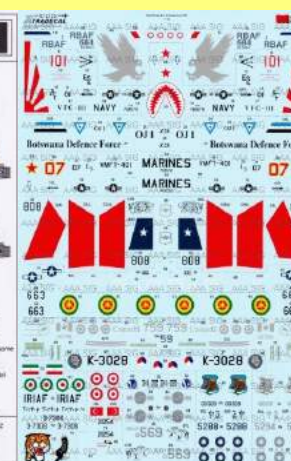
Editor's note - For space-saving reasons, only those portions of the Decal Placement Instructions (DPIs) that pertain to Asian subjects have been reproduced here. In most cases, the DPIs run to several pages.



The first sheet, in 1:48 scale, covers the Mil Mi-24/35 Hind, and is nicely timed to coincide with the recent release of two brand new Zvezda kits of this iconic attack helicopter. The subject has been well covered by other decal manufacturers in the past but this new release features several machines that have not previously featured in any kit or aftermarket decal sheets, so it is very welcome. There are three options that will be of interest to those seeking to add an Asian Hind to their model collection. The first is for a Mil Mi-24V of the Afghan Air Force in 2011 and features a faded light/



dark green camouflage scheme over light blue undersurfaces. The second option covers an Indian Air Force Mi-35 (export version of the Mi-24V) in an overall light grey colour scheme operated by the 104th Helicopter Squadron circa 2010, while the third option is for another Mi-24V belonging to the Mongolian Air Force and sporting a dark green/brown upper camouflage scheme over light blue undersurfaces. Modellers will need to check their references carefully, especially for the Indian Air Force aircraft, since it includes mission equipment that is, if I recall correctly, not included in the Zvezda kit, but may be available from aftermarket manufacturers.



The first of four new decal releases in 1:72 scale and the first of a two-part series on the F-5 Tiger II features three aircraft operated by Asian Air Arms. The first is for a KF-5E Tiger II operated by the 101st Fighter Squadron of the Republic of Korea Air Force (ROKAF) and sporting a two-tone grey low visibility colour scheme. The second and third AAA options on this sheet are for two F-5E Tiger IIs operated



by the 7th Group, 7th Wing of the Republic of China Air Force (ROCAF). Both aircraft feature the same two-tone low visibility grey camouflage scheme but differ in their presentation of national and unit markings with one featuring the older style full colour markings while the second presents these in the more recent low-visibility style. One note of caution for those that may be contemplating the purchase of this sheet for the completion of non-Asian Air Force F-5s; the title is a bit misleading since it suggests that all of the subjects are the later F-5E Tiger II and its derivatives. This is not the case, since there are also earlier F-5A Freedom Fighters, operated by Botswana, Canada, Ethiopia, the Netherlands and Turkey provided for and this is further confused by labeling them as F-5A Tiger IIs, which is a variant that has never existed, so again check your references.

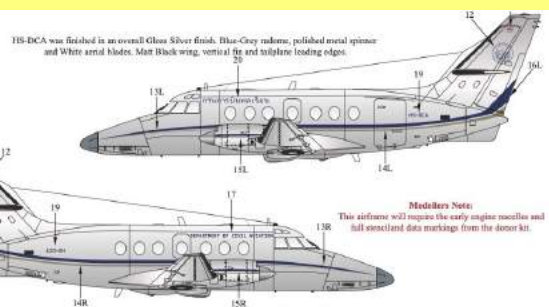


the second has full colour markings including an enlarged version of the unit insignia on the fin and red/yellow soviet-style 'Bort' numbers on the forward fuselage, which confirm this unit/ aircraft's primarily role as an adversary/aggressor squadron. The last two Asian subjects on this release are for aircraft operated by the Royal Thai Air Force. These are probably the most interesting to this reviewer since they feature different variants, camouflage styles and special markings. The first is a F-5E Tiger II of the 211th Interception Squadron in a two-tone low-visibility grey scheme with special 30th Anniversary tail markings and what appears to be a replacement forward fuselage, since the scheme matches that of the later colour scheme applied to RTAF F-5s. The second aircraft is from the same unit but features the later, modified, F-5T variant. This aircraft sports a different style of two-tone grey camouflage scheme and some attractive unit markings on the tail surfaces. Once again the same comments apply to the decal release titling, since there are at least two of the earlier CF/F-5A Freedom Fighters included in the decal options. I suspect Xtradecal are aiming these two releases at the new Dream Model 1:72 scale kit of the single-seat F-5E Tiger II, which is a simple yet excellent model kit and vastly superior to the older Italeri kit.



The third of the most recent Xtradecal 1:72 scale releases was one that presented me with a surprise!. I had assumed that the decal sheet for the Scottish Aviation (later British Aerospace) twin-engined Jetstream commuter liner/trainer would feature aircraft from the Royal Air Force and Royal Navy since they were, by far, the biggest military operators of the type. I was, therefore, pleasantly surprised to see an option for a very attractive British Aerospace Jetstream 32EP operated by the Department of Civil Aviation of Thailand. This aircraft sports an overall Gloss Silver colour scheme with attractive Dark Blue/Gold 'airliner style' trim and titles, together with a large

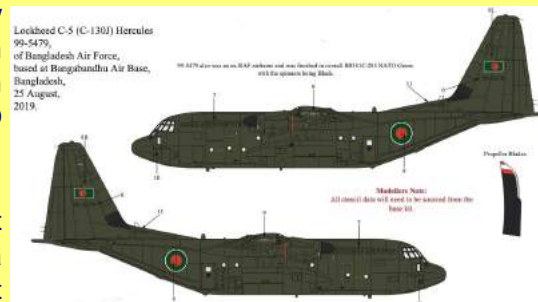
British Aerospace Jetstream 32EP, HS-DCA, of Thailand Department of Civil Aviation, based at Bangkok Don Muang International Airport, Thailand, 2016.



Departmental insignia on the fin surfaces. It is appreciated that this is not a military aircraft, although I believe it fits in with our founder's philosophy for including those aircraft operated by Police/Para-Military and Government Departments of the Asian nations within our Special Interest Group, and for that reason I have included it.



The last release returns to more traditional fare, and is clearly aimed at those wanting to add one of the new Zvezda Lockheed C-130 Hercules to their collection. Given the size of the original, this decal sheet only covers three options but one of these is for an ex-Royal Air Force Lockheed C-130J Hercules C-5 now operated by the Bangladesh Air Force and sporting an overall Semi-Gloss NATO Green colour scheme with full colour national markings. Modellers should note that Zvezda have yet to release a kit of the later C-130J variant





and when they do (later this year) it will be for the 'stretched' variant so cross-kitting with their earlier C-130E/H kit, utilizing the so-called 'short wheelbase' fuselage would be required. The alternative, of course, is to use the older Italeri/Testors kit.

As I have stated previously, Xtradecal have built up a very good reputation for the accuracy and quality of their decal sheets, which are the result of a long partnership with Microscale of the United States. My one reservation is with the rather sparse decal placement instruction sheets, which, on previous examples, have also carried some inaccuracies, and this holds true with at least some of these most recent releases. Care will need to be taken, particularly with the two F-5 Tiger sheets. The dedicated modeller will, of course, always conduct further research, and I suspect that Xtradecal work on this basis and could legitimately argue that this is their overall philosophy for keeping unit production costs down to a minimum.

I have little doubt that all of these recent releases will be hugely popular and I compliment Xtradecal on producing many interesting variations with which to complete more recent and older kit releases. The company remain one of the most proactive and prolific aftermarket decal manufacturers in the world today, and I look forward to seeing more Asian Air Arms subjects appearing on future releases in due course, including some more Lockheed C-130 Hercules.

Highly recommended

Mark ATTRILL

Members' Ads

WANTED - to buy-

Hasegawa F-15SG in 1/72 scale

Please contact: stevekomor@gmail.com





A trio of Asian F-5Cs by James Robson

F-5 '314 with late style cockpit armour - USAF Photo



Before starting to discuss the topic, I should give you a general overview of how I build my models, so that you can read this in the correct context. Generally, I build 1/72 aircraft, and rather quickly (as I write this in October, I'm past completing 70 models this year). I spend much more time on research than on the model, especially on lesser-known subjects, which generally results in a moderately historically-accurate model, but which won't win any prizes on the competition tables at Scale Model World because not enough time has been put in on the actual modelling skills. My models are normally brush painted using water-based acrylics, followed by a coat of gloss floor wax prior to decaling, and finally a rattle-can to coat the result in matt varnish if appropriate. My eyesight isn't too great, so seam lines etc. often escape me. With that in mind, please forgive the various build issues that you may notice – this article is intended to give you a better understanding of the F-5C, and what to consider, so that you have the information you need to build one yourself.

Background, Part 1 – The elusive Skoshi Tiger

The F-5C was the designation given to the modified F-5A's that were sent to Southeast Asia during the mid-60's for the Skoshi Tiger program, a combat evaluation of the F-5 in Vietnam. The name is a corruption of "Sukoshi Tiger" (Japanese for "Little Tiger"). The Skoshi Tiger Program was originally known as the Sparrow Hawk Program. It was the product of an evaluation which showed the F-5A to have interesting potential in the light attack role. Specifically produced for USAF Combat Evaluation purposes in Vietnam, it incorporated several upgrades compared to the standard F-5A and was produced by modifying twelve F-5A airframes. The first obvious difference was the addition of an in-flight refuelling probe on the port (left) side. Less obvious was the addition of armour. Armour plating was added externally, both under the cockpit area to protect the pilot, and in significantly vulnerable areas under the engine bays. The engine bay armour consisted of two separate well-spaced plates, both rectangular, effectively in a T-shape but with a large gap between them. This configuration was retained on all F-5Cs. The forward armour consisted of three separate plates. Photos seem to show two important points.



F-5 '314 illustrating the two panels of engine armour- USAF photo

First is that the original configuration was later modified. The early plates had a slight gap between them, and the forward plate was curved at the forward corner. Later plates closed the gap and had fully rectangular forward corners.



Original front armour panel – credit as per photo



Second is that at any point in an aircraft's service, one or more plates may be missing (fallen/shot off or lack of spares?). The remaining upgrades were jettisonable weapons pylons, which you most likely can't see from photos, and also inside the cockpit, which is obviously also hard to spot. The cockpit upgrade included a new Head-Up Display, to allow for the use of a wider range of weaponry, including widening of the options for use of the US Air-to-Ground inventory, as well improving options for air combat. This required some re-arrangement within the console. I have not been able to confirm this, but some sources state that the F-5C cockpit layout was the actually the one passed to Canada for the CF-116. So, if in doubt, and modelling at a scale that anyone might notice, I'd consider using that as a starting point.

Finally, the last point is that the aircraft data information on SOME aircraft was updated to reflect the fact the aircraft was an F-5C (at the time, the aircraft variant and batch number, along with serial etc., was painted as standard on the port side, just below the canopy).

I won't go into the operational history here. What you do need to know is that the aircraft were operated in Vietnam first by the 4503rd Tactical Fighter Squadron starting from October 1965 (12 aircraft), following which they were transferred to 10th Tactical Commando Squadron in April 1966 (17 aircraft), and then to the VNAF in June 1967 (all remaining aircraft). For operational reasons, the probes were generally removed during service with the 10th TCS, as they weren't required for the mission plan. However, on hand over to Vietnam, for political reasons, the fittings were totally removed, and the probes were not supplied. This is important to note, as we shall see later, as it makes it harder to identify an F-5C.

Now consider the dates and the numbers at the start of the last paragraph. Some sources state that no F-5C failed to return to base due to enemy fire, which may actually apply to 4503rd's operations. I've certainly heard it said that the F-5C was *THE* safest offensive aircraft to be flying on combat operations over Vietnam. Other sources state that 7 F-5C's were shot down, but again that may depend on the date range. Certainly, there was at least one airframe lost in an accident even before deployment from the United States. What this may imply is that either more than the initial 12 were modified, or that the units used F-5A's as well. I don't honestly know the answer, but let's look at some other F-5's in the area.

Background Part 2 – 1st generation F-5's in Vietnam



Iranian F-5As after arrival in Vietnam, note airbrakes locked in the UP position – USAF Photo

So, I have a theory. This is that with the initial success of Sparrow Hawk and Skoshi Tiger, ALL aircraft intended for use in Vietnam may have been at least partially upgraded to F-5C standard but did not receive the F-5C designation. Specifically, this relates to the armour, but may have included other aspects. Note that phase 3 of the Skoshi Tiger evaluation was to hopefully get the F-5C's into a combat situation versus MiGs (this never actually worked out). I find it hard to believe that the squadron would operate two significantly different variants on an evaluation. Remembering the alleged change in cockpit instrumentation, this would make no sense when an aircraft might have to be replaced by a reserve aircraft at little notice due to a maintenance issue. You could argue that a pilot specifically trained to fly the lower specification aircraft might be manning the reserve, but that would not be good for morale, and would not last long in a combat environment.



So, If I am right on that, let's assume that my theory works. That means that we have a bunch of aircraft supplied to Vietnam, all with armour, including aircraft directly supplied rather than via USAF. We can probably also assume that all F-5C's served in the USAF before handover. So, what we have not addressed is where did the aircraft with no armour come from?

The F-5A was being widely supplied at this point under the US Military Assistance Program (MAP). As a result, it was being delivered at little to no cost to anywhere the US felt were friendly, and in some cases that meant that they actually recalled or redelivered some of the aircraft, diverting them to Vietnam. These aircraft were not upgraded with the Vietnam/F-5C upgrades – i.e., they had no probes or armour – I can't speak for the cockpit layout or pylons. In some cases, there were very clear visual differences, specifically there were examples in all-over silver or in desert camouflage. This was a result of the aircraft being redeployed or diverted from a number of countries, including Iran, Jordan and Thailand. In some cases, these airframes were returned to the original country after replacement within Vietnam (in 1973 some were returned after replacement in Vietnam by F-5E's, but in few numbers than planned, due to corrosion damage on the F-5A's). In other cases, of course they were not returned due to combat, attrition losses or capture. However, one intriguing rumour that I have heard is that some of the remaining Iranian airframes were returned by Vietnam after both regimes had changed!

Background Part 3 - Thailand

An intriguing article caught my attention on the web recently inspiring and causing me to look more closely at photos of F-5s in Vietnam. Many F-5's flew to Thailand as South Vietnam fell. In some cases, the total personnel escaping was recorded as 5 (I believe this is true for the stories relating for F-5B's, but I seriously doubt it for an F-5A). Meanwhile, the US Navy sent USS Midway to pick up all F-5E's that had escaped. First generation F-5's were less interesting to the US, and were mostly left in Thailand (to be fair, this would have helped cover any deficit on the MPA Programme, and some aircraft were written off on arrival). So, with that background, we go back to the internet article that caught my attention. It is entitled "The only F-5C of Royal Thai Air Force" and asserts that 66-9129 was an F-5C. Other records do not support an F-5C with such a late serial (see the dates in Part 1). However, the photograph shows the aircraft fitted with armour (at least the central cockpit plate, the front and back are harder to confirm visually), but no probe. Equally, there is no evidence provided to show the data panel, which would show whether this was ever designated as an F-5C.

Historical Summary

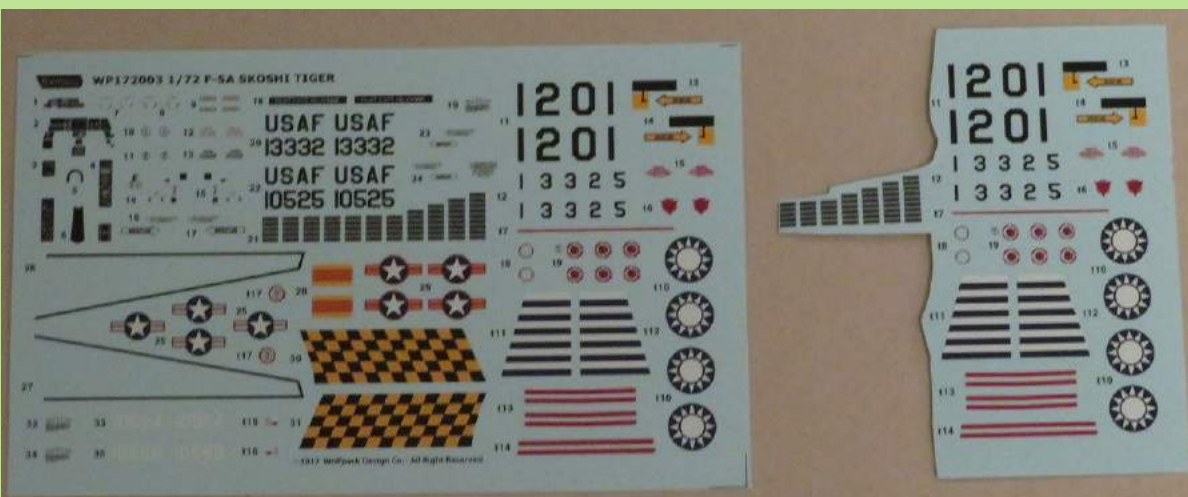
As you will see, I have opened up a lot of new questions while researching this. I'm sorry that I don't have all the answers. I've not seen any technical diagrams depicting the armour etc., so I haven't any measurements. Most of my conclusions are based upon secondary sources or my own observations based on photos I have found on the internet. Hopefully I've helped point you towards areas you might wish to research further.

My Model Choice

To my knowledge, there are no kits of the F-5C in ANY scale, because I've never seen a kit attempt all the required changes described in Part 1 above. I mostly model in 1/72, so that's what I chose to use. There are a number of 1/72 models out there to use as the base kit, including examples from Starfix (mis-titled F-5E), PM, Airfix, Hasegawa, etc. However, in my view the Eschi kit is *THE* best overall 1/72 F-5A. It has been re-released by other manufacturers several times, and includes nice features such as recessed panel lines, correct probes for port (F-5C) and starboard (CF-116 derivatives including the NF-5), tip-tanks or AIM-9s, airbrakes and separate positionable leading edge slats. It also includes the option for an RF-5A nose. Unfortunately, it can be hard to find this kit, no matter how many manufacturers have re-released it. There are a couple of important points worth considering here if you plan on using something else, but it will mean a bit of extra work. Firstly, almost every parked F-5 photo you ever look at, no matter which variant, will show the airbrakes down. This typically changes once the aircraft is manned, or if they are locked in the up position for display purposes (e.g., permanent exhibits). As such, if you build your models like I tend to, wheels down and no pilot, the option to lower the airbrakes is very important. Secondly, the outer underwing pylon on an F-5 is quite large, and the leading-edge slat drops down into it. Some kits represent this by putting a notch into the pylon, representing the area that the slat drops into. However, there is actually a spring-loaded mechanism in the slat, so it is only accurate if you drop the slats, or if you fill the triangular notch to represent the pylon with the spring-loaded mechanism raised. The Eschi kit, having a

notched outer pylon AND separate slats, means this problem is easily fixed. As a final point, pretty much all F-5s after the F-5C have their refuelling probe on the right (starboard side), including most F-5A's.

Based on all the above factors, for my builds, I selected the Wolfpack 1/72 F-5 Skoshi Tiger kit. These include the Eschi plastic, along with decals by Wolfpack. The decal options include two SEA-camouflaged USAF F-5s





based in Vietnam, one with a probe, and one without a probe but with approx. 300 mission markings. There are also options for two South Vietnamese AF examples, again both in standard SEA camouflage, and finally there is a bonus option for a silver ROCAF example. The decals include different stencilling for each nationality where needed. For me there was one disappointment on the decal sheet, which is that the mission markings for the second USAF option are made up from lots of horizontal black stripes. In fact, each of these stripes represents FIVE vertical bomb markings. It may be that this was not possible or too expensive to print, but it does mean that if you count the markings, you will be significantly out! This leaves you with a few options. You can use them as they are (I did....my eyesight is not good enough anymore to care); you can select another decal option from the kit; or you can try and correct it by either printing your own decals or with surgeon-like painting skills – I don't recommend the last! On a more minor note, the instructions don't correctly tell you which options are for F-5Cs, but if you inspect the decal for the data panel under the left side of the cockpit using a magnifying glass, you will find the correct answers!

My models

For my models, I elected to make three builds, representing a single F-5C in both USAF and later Vietnamese markings, and the third representing the Thai example as per the article. The kits were all built as per the instructions, with the exception of adding the armour plating. This was done using thin plastic card, and a certain amount of trial and error. The US example has the early-style armour.



Once I was happy with the plates, I added the other parts, dropping the leading edge slats into the gap on the outer pylons.





Following this, I continued with painted and decals. Painting required a little attention, as I needed to try and match some of the camouflage areas on the two models that represent the same airframe, as well as varying some of the greens between the kits to represent different levels of weathering. The kit decals were used for the US and Vietnamese examples, with some chopping of serial decals to get them to match. The Thai decals were sourced from the 1/72 F8F Bearcat sheet by Print-Scale, with generic US numbers from my spares box.



Finally, once the decals were sealed in, I added the weapons.



The canopies were added last (mainly because I usually finish off painting with a quick spray of flat varnish, and it saves masking if I leave the canopy until afterwards!

That brings me to the end of my article, thank you all for reading it. I'll leave you with a photo of each completed model.



Build #1. USAF F-5C early in the combat trials (note that I've used less than 100 mission marks)



Build #2. The same F-5C seen later in Vietnamese service.



Build #3. The alleged Thai F-5C

Useful References:

[The Northrop F-5 Enthusiast Page \(the-northrop-f-5-enthusiast-page.info\)](http://the-northrop-f-5-enthusiast-page.info)

[The only F-5C of Royal Thai Air Force](#) | [EasyTechGames#Fans](#) | [Amino \(aminoapps.com\)](#)



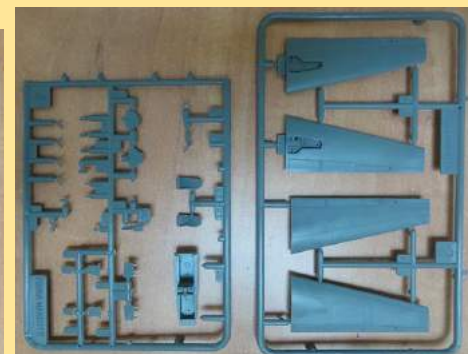
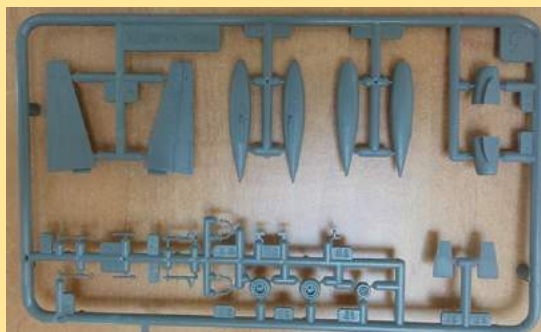
A brace of Magisters



Heller came out with a nice 1/72 scale Fouga Magister in 1980, which was released in various guises over the years.

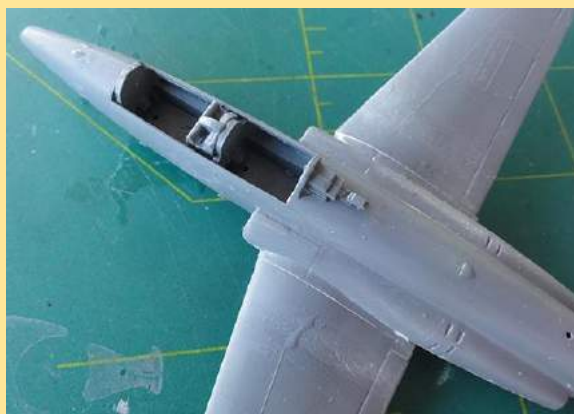


Heller kit #220 had decals for a Patrouille de France aircraft and 2 West-German Luftwaffe machines. Kit #80242 had instructions in German and a small set of Luftwaffe decals. Heller Magister #80220 again had decals for one aircraft of the Patrouille de France team in 1978 and two Luftwaffe aircraft based at Furstenfeldbruck in 1966.



The kit has about 55 parts, which are a little finer than in the old Airfix kit. There is a nose wheel bay, the intakes look good and the small landing gear is finely reproduced, with detail on the insides of the doors. The cockpit has separate seats. Both the small and larger wing tip tanks are provided, with nice, tiny, separate transparent anti-collision lights for the larger tip tanks. The canopy has thinner plastic though it is still one piece. Panel lines are raised but fine.

Kit assembly is quite straight forward. On the cockpit sidewalls, you have to remove the plastic injection pips. There are no jet pipes so these were made from a straw and set inside the mid fuselage. The fit is pretty good with only some sanding and a little filler needed. I used nail polish remover to remove the putty, to minimize sanding which would cause surface scratches. I took care to keep the raised panel lines as much as possible, having decided not to remove and inscribe all these on such small scale models. The butterfly tail is best fitted after any sanding is done, and any tiny gaps can be filled with white glue.



On both the models, a base grey coat of Revell Aqua 75 "Steingrau" was airbrushed before applying the colours, to check for any small errors after sanding. **Note:** Revell Aqua paints are very thick, so I always thin them with a mix of 25% IPA (iso propyl alcohol) and 75% distilled water, in a ratio of 1:1 thinner mix to paint. Corrections were then made where necessary.

It is often difficult to tell from photos of real Magisters whether the large or small wing tip fuel tank was used on a particular aircraft, so very careful examination is necessary.

Bangladesh

Formerly known as "East Pakistan", Bangladesh became completely independent in 1971 after a short but brutal war with West Pakistan. The Bangladesh air force "Bangladesh Biman Bahini" was soon established, flying a DC-3, Twin Otter and Alouette III. It appears that even a few abandoned ex-Pakistan F-86F Sabres were used. The Soviet Union donated 10 MiG-21MF fighters and 2



MiG-21UM trainers, as well as some Antonov transports and Mil-8 helicopters. At the end of the 1980s the MiGs were replaced by the first Chinese 'copy', the F-7. In the mid 1980s France delivered some Magisters and the USA a dozen T-37 "Tweeties". Pakistan supplied a few Shenyang F-6 aircraft as well. In 2000, 8 MiG-29 "Fulcrums" were delivered and based at Dhaka-Kurmitola. A few Chinese A-5 attack aircraft are also operated, as well as about 7 L-39 Albatros trainers. The Chengdu F-7 fighter fleet is regularly supplied with new Chinese ones like the F-7MG, F-7BGI with a total of around 3 dozen aircraft in the fleet. Apparently, 8 Sukhoi SU-30SME advanced fighters have been ordered.

The Bangladeshi Magister

First, I applied an overall coat of Gunze Sangyo 329 acrylic yellow, using the airbrush. There are two shades of dayglo on these Magisters: on the nose and the tip tanks, I used Revell Aqua 330 red after masking. On the wings and tail section, I used Gunze Sangyo 14 orange. The decals, including the rudder flags, are from MAX Decals set 7223. It appears the smaller wing tip tanks were used on these aircraft.



I had an aftermarket PAVLA vac canopy. This was used, but the canopies were to be set open, so some fine cutting with sharp scissor was needed. No mirrors are present inside these canopies but often a periscope is seen at the mid frames for the instructor. I also used two resin seats from PAVLA set S72058, but actually, the kit seat parts are OK when fitted with a few straps made from tape.



The nose grips were set in place, along with 2 nose pitots in front of the wind shield. There is also a long wire antenna below the fuselage, this was made from scrap. Also note the thin wire antenna on the spine, made from a piece of fishing line.

As usual, the model got a gloss varnish coat airbrushing Johnson Future/Pledge. This gives an even sheen and protects the decals. The canopy fixation rods, fashioned from tiny metal wire, were set in place. That completed the model.





Cambodia

Cambodia, sometimes also called Kampuchea, became independent in 1953. In previous centuries it was the kingdom of the Sihanouks, and in 1863 became part of a French protectorate. After the Second World War, with French support, an air force was established with M.S. Criquet aircraft, a DC-3 and MS.733 Alcyons. In the 1950s, US aircraft like Cessna L-19 Bird Dogs, Texans and Beavers were obtained. Alouette helicopters were acquired, and 4 Fouga CM.170 Magisters were in use from September 1961. They were used initially only for training purposes, but were later also used as light strike aircraft. It appears that Cambodian Magisters were very active in the first weeks of Lon Nol's government. The main base was at Phnom Penh. The USA supplied some 16 T-28 Trojans and 4 T-37B "Tweeties" for training.

A change in policy led to an approach to the Soviet Union in 1963. Several transports like IL-14, An-2 and a few Mil helicopters were supplied. The end of 1963 saw the first arrival of 3 MiG-17 fighters as well as a pair of MiG-15UTI trainers. Around 1965 a Chinese FT-2 (a MiG-15UTI copy) trainer was provided, as China began providing military support. Support also came from the West in the 60's, as French support came with Flamant transports and 4 second hand Douglas AD-1 Skyraider attack aircraft.

Regional tensions and the Vietnam war resulted in a military coup in 1970, and South Vietnam invaded Cambodia with US support. The Khmer Republic was established, but the air force was in poor shape. Additional aircraft like C-47 and C-123 transports and dozens of UH-1 helicopters were supplied from the USA. Internally, Communist guerrillas of the Khmer Rouge took over in 1975, and most aircraft were demolished, although a few crews escaped with their aircraft to Thailand. The country was now called "Kampuchea", and China supplied the left-wing regime with Shenyang F-6 fighters from 1977.

The terrible regime of Pol Pot and the Khmer Rouge killed at least 1 million, but very likely over 2 million, inhabitants of various ethnic groups with thousands of "killing fields". In 1978 the now 'united' Communist country of Vietnam invaded Cambodia and overthrew the Khmer Rouge, and establishing a new puppet regime in Phnom Penh. Internal struggles went on with counter-insurgency ops by the USA and Thailand. Meanwhile, in 1986 some 20 second-hand MiG-21bis were acquired along with a few MiG-21UM Mongol trainers, but these were only operational until 1992.

Under international U.N. pressure, after general elections in 1993 King Norodom Sihanouk was back. The air force became the "Royal Cambodian Air Force" and a new roundel was introduced. Some transport aircraft like Harbin Y-12 and Islanders were now operated and later on France also supplied helicopters. L-39 Albatros trainers were also acquired. It appears that IAI of Israel overhauled the MiG-21 fleet, but it is unclear what exactly was carried out. Probably only a few overhauled MiG-21's were made operational. Today, China regularly supplies mainly transport aircraft and Z-9 helicopters. The main air force base is near Phnom Penh but there are also bases at Siem Reap and Battambang.

The Cambodian Magister

Cambodia operated four Magisters from 1961. The scheme is overall metal, and I think these aircraft had the large wing tip tanks. The metal colour was airbrushed using Revell Aqua 99 Aluminium, which gives a bit of a duller look.



I obtained the Cambodian roundels from PrintScale decal set 72-008, for the MiG-17. Siam Scale also has Magister decals available. There are a couple of black lines denoting the crew steps on the port fuselage side. The aircraft numbers came from the spares box.



After decalling, the smaller bits such as the landing gear, doors and antennas were installed .

Two "7.62mm" machine gun barrels made from plastic rod were installed on the nose for the attack version . Two small antennas were added below the fuselage.

As usual, the model received a gloss varnish coat of airbrushed Future/Pledge. This gives an even sheen and protects the decals.



Additional details were added in the cockpit. The edges of the thick clear canopy parts were "hidden" a bit by scribing a dark black edge with a permanent marker. The frames were painted aluminium. Canopies were set in place and that completed the model.

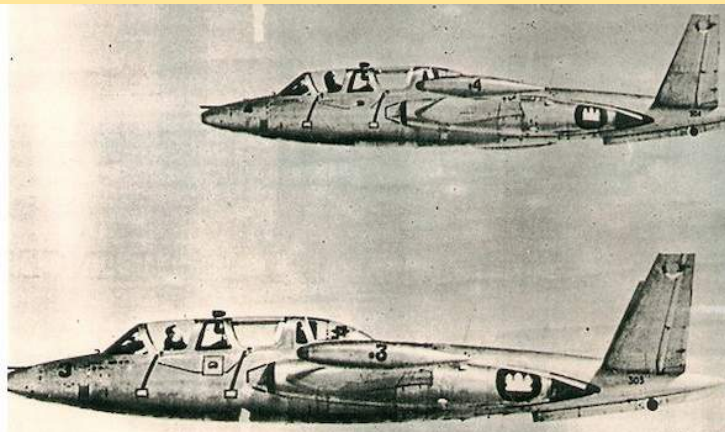




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As usual, the model got a coat of airbrushed Johnson Future/Pledge. This gives an even sheen and protects the decals. The cockpit got additional details. The edges of the thick clear canopy parts were "hidden" a bit by scribing a dark black edge with a permanent marker. The frames were painted aluminium. The canopies were set in place and that completed the model.



Article by Meindert de Vreeze, from his website [plastic scale aircraft](#)





The Taliban 'Air Force'

As part of my professional duties, I have been tasked at work with doing some academic work on the future make-up of any Taliban 'Air Force'. A 'by-product' of this research is the attached table which falls neatly into the "Research" part of our Group title, and is a little different from the modelling articles I normally produce. At the moment, I seem to be updating the table every day as new information emerges from my ongoing research, but I think it may be of interest to our readership.

Mark Attrill, September 2021

Type	Serial No	Location	OP/INOP	Notes
A-29B Super Tucano	YA-1401	Kabul	OP ?	Revetment
A-29B Super Tucano	YA-1404	Kabul	OP ?	Revetment
A-29B Super Tucano	YA-1509	Kabul	OP ?	Outside
A-29B Super Tucano	YA-1511	Kabul	OP ?	(In Hangar) + 4
A-29B Super Tucano	YA-1519	Kabul	OP ?	(In Hangar)
A-29B Super Tucano	YA-1520	Kabul	OP ?	(In Hangar)
A-29B Super Tucano	N/K	Kabul	OP ?	(In Hangar)
A-29B Super Tucano	N/K	Kabul	OP ?	(In Hangar)
A-29B Super Tucano	N/K	Kabul	OP ?	(In Hangar)
A-29B Super Tucano	N/K	Kabul	OP ?	(In Hangar)
A-29B Super Tucano	N/K	Kabul	OP ?	
A-29B Super Tucano	N/K	Kabul	OP ?	
A-29B Super Tucano	N/K	Maz-i-Sharif	N/K	
PC-12NG	N/K	Kabul	N/K	(In Hangar)
AC-208 Caravan	YA-85410	Kabul	INOP	Outside
AC-208 Caravan	YA-85436	Kabul	INOP	Outside
AC-208 Caravan	YA-85437	Kabul	INOP	Outside
AC-208 Caravan	YA-85438	Kabul	INOP	Outside
C-208 Caravan	YA-12295	Kabul	INOP	
C-208 Caravan	YA-12299	Kabul	INOP	
C-208 Caravan	YA-22357	Kabul	INOP	
C-208 Caravan	YA-22383	Kabul	INOP	
C-208 Caravan	YA-22389	Kabul	INOP	
C-208 Caravan	YA-22401	KABUL	INOP	
C-208 Caravan	YA-22404	Kabul	INOP	
C-208 Caravan	YA-22410	Kabul	INOP	
C-208 Caravan	YA-22414	Kabul	INOP	
C-208 Caravan	N/K	Kandahar	INOP	
C-130 Hercules	1677	Kabul	INOP	
C-130 Hercules	N/K	Kabul	OP ?	
Antonov An-24/32	N/K	Kabul	INOP	x 8 Pre-ISAF
Mil Mi-17	514	Kabul	INOP	
Mil Mi-17	572	Kabul	INOP	
Mil Mi-17	705	Kabul	INOP	
Mil Mi-17	711	Kabul	INOP	(In Hangar)
Mil Mi-17	713	Kabul	INOP	(In Hangar)
Mil Mi-17	717	Kabul	INOP	(In Hangar)
Mil Mi-17	730	Kabul	INOP	(In Hangar)
Mil Mi-17	733	Kabul	INOP	(In Hangar)
Mil Mi-17	740	Kabul	INOP	
Mil Mi-17	761	Kabul	OP ?	
Mil Mi-17	N/K	Kabul	INOP ?	
Mil Mi-17	N/K	Kabul	INOP ?	
Mil Mi-17	N/K	Kabul	INOP ?	
Mil Mi-17	N/K	Kabul	INOP ?	
Mil Mi-17	N/K	Herat	OP	x 2 ?
Mil Mi-17	575	Kandahar	INOP	+ 4 ?
Mil Mi-17	578	N/K	OP	
Mil Mi-17	N/K	Shindland	N/K	x 5 ?
Mil Mi-24	6	Kabul	INOP	Previously Retired
Mil Mi-24	117	Kabul	INOP	Previously Retired
Mil Mi-24/35	N/K	Kabul	INOP	X 8 Previously Retired
Mil Mi-24	123	Kandahar	INOP	
Mil Mi-24	124	Kabul	OP	
Mil Mi-24	125	Kabul	OP	



UH-60A	0-22595 ?	Kabul	INOP	
UH-60A	0-22607 ?	Kabul	INOP	
UH-60A	0-22609 ?	Kabul	INOP	(In Hangar)
UH-60A	0-22966	Kabul	INOP	
UH-60A	0-22986	Kabul	INOP	
UH-60A	0-22988	Kabul	INOP	(In Hangar)
UH-60A	0-23265 ?	Kabul	INOP	
UH-60A	0-23269	Kabul	INOP	
UH-60A	0-23283	Kabul	INOP	
UH-60A	0-23296	Kabul	INOP	
UH-60A	0-23370	Kabul	INOP	(In Hangar)
UH-60A	0-23435 ?	Kabul	INOP	
UH-60A	0-23457 ?	Kabul	INOP	
UH-60A	0-23824 ?	Kabul	OP ?	
UH-60A	N/A	Kabul	N/A	'Maintenance Trainer'
UH-60A	N/A	Kabul	N/A	'Maintenance Trainer'
UH-60A	N/K	Kandahar	OP	+ 1 ?
UH-60A	N/K	Ghazni	OP ?	+ 1 ?
UH-60A	N/K	Shorabak	N/K	x 2
UH-60A	0-23292 ?	Panshjir	INOP	Observed in Stadium + 1
MD-530F	213	Kabul	INOP	
MD-530F	217	Kabul	INOP	
MD-530F	221	Kabul	INOP	(In Hangar)
MD-530F	224	Kabul	INOP	(In Hangar)
MD-530F	257	Kabul	INOP	(In Hangar)
MD-530F	259	Kabul	INOP	(In Hangar)
MD-530F	260	Kabul	INOP	(In Hangar)
MF-530F	263 ?	Kabul	INOP	(In Hangar)
MD-530F	264	Maz-i-	OP	
MD-530F	265	Kabul	INOP	
MD-530F	266	Kabul	INOP	
MD-530F	277	Kabul	INOP	(In Hangar)
MD-530F	278	Kabul	INOP	(In Hangar)
MD-530F	279	Kabul	INOP	(In Hangar)
MD-530F	281	Kabul	OP	
MD-530F	289	Bolan	INOP	
MD-530F	290	Kabul	INOP	
MD-530F	293	Panshjir	INOP	Observed in Stadium
MD-530F	294	Helmand	OP	
MD-530F	296	Kabul	INOP	(In Hangar)
MD-530F	299	Kabul	INOP	(In Hangar)
MD-530F	300	Kandahar	INOP	
MD-530F	301	Kabul	OP	
MD-530F	302	Kabul	OP ?	
MD-530F	303	Kabul	INOP	(In Hangar)
MD-530F	327	Kabul	INOP	
MD-530F	328	Maz-i-	OP	+ 4 ?
MD-530F	330	Kabul	INOP	(In Hangar)
MD-530F	331	Kabul	INOP	(In Hangar)
MD-530F	N/K	Ghazni	INOP	
MD-530F	N/K	Shorabak	N/K	x 2
MD-530F	N/A	Kabul	N/A	'Maintenance Trainer'
Sud Alouette II	N/K	Kabul	INOP	Indian Air Force Origin ?

Termez, Uzbekistan

A-29B Super Tucano				6 x Observed (+ 1 Crashed)
Cessna C-208				5 x Observed (Could include AC-208)
Pilatus PC-12NG				11 x Observed (Operated by Special)
Mil Mi-17 Hip				19 x Observed
UH-60A Blackhawk				7 x Observed
				Total - 48



Vought F-8H Crusader in Philippine Air Force service



In September 1952 the US Navy put out a requirement for a new fighter, which was to have a top speed of Mach 1.2 at 30,000 ft (9,144.0 m), a climb rate of 25,000 ft/min (127.0 m/s), and a landing speed of no more than 100 mph (160 km/h).

Grumman put forward the F-11F Tiger, McDonnell a twin-engined F-3H Demon (which would eventually evolve into the magnificent McDonnell Douglas F-4 Phantom II down the track), North American the "Super Fury" (a F-100 Super Sabre hastily adapted to carrier use) and Vought the V-383, the Crusader.

The Crusader was a remarkable aircraft. Powered by the same Pratt & Whitney J-57 afterburning turbojet as the Air Force's F-100 Super Sabre, the V-383 was lighter, faster and by a lucky coincidence already incorporated the newly discovered area rule. In fact, the fuselage was so good aerodynamically that later on when a bulge was added on the starboard side to house the retractable air refuelling probe it actually had

the effect of reducing rather than increasing drag. There was a risk its long, thin fuselage could tail strike during rotation, especially on carriers, so a unique variable-incidence wing was fitted high on the fuselage, which could be raised 7 degrees, allowing the wing to achieve the required angle of attack while the fuselage remained level. This introduced the risk of overcomplicating the design and causing maintenance headaches, but in practice the system worked perfectly. The reduced landing impacts resulting meant that 500lb could be saved from the landing gear, the same weight required for the variable incidence equipment, so there was zero weight gain.



In May 1953, the Vought design was declared the winner and the company received an order for three XF8U-1 prototypes in June. The first prototype flew on 25 March 1955 piloted by John Konrad, exceeding the speed of sound during this flight. Development was so trouble-free that the second prototype, along with the first production F8U-1, flew on the same day, 30 September 1955, and the F8U-1 performed its first catapult launch from USS Forrestal on 4 April 1956. On 21 August 1956 Commander "Duke" Windsor departed China Lake in F8U-1 Crusader BuNo 141435 to set a new level-flight speed record of 1,015.428 mph (1,634.173 km/h), beating the previous record of 822 mph (1,323 km/h) set by a USAF F-100 Super Sabre.

The Crusader was armed with 4 internal Colt Mk12 20mm cannons with 125 rounds each, earning it the sobriquet, "Last of the Gunfighters". It could also carry four AIM-9 Sidewinder infra-red homing missiles or four pods each containing two Zuni 5-inch rockets on a unique "Y" pylon either side of the forward fuselage, and pylons under each wing could lift up to 4,000lbs each.





On 3 April 1965 F-8E Crusaders from VF-211 aboard USS Hancock were escorting Douglas A-4 Skyhawks of VA-212 and VA-216 attacking the Dong Phong Thuong Bridge near Ham Rong when six North Vietnamese MiG-17s of the 921st Fighter Regiment from Noi Bai, near Hanoi, intercepted them. Pham Ngoc Lan got off a burst at the Crusader of Lt Cdr Spence Thomas, and when his gun camera footage was reviewed after landing he was awarded the VPAF's first aerial kill. But although his Crusader (BuNo 150845) was badly damaged, Spence remained airborne and managed to make an emergency landing ashore at Da Nang.



Crusaders claimed 19 VPAF fighters over Vietnam, 16 MiG-17's and 3 MiG-21's. Despite their nickname, only 4 kills were achieved with guns, which tended to jam during high G manoeuvres, the rest being with Sidewinders. This gave the Crusader the best kill ratio of any American type in the Vietnam War, 19 to 3. They operated from the upgraded WW2-era Essex Class Carriers, which were too small to take the new McDonnell Douglas F-4 Phantom II, moving more to ground attack as the Phantom took over the fighter role.

US Marine Crusaders based ashore also became bomb trucks, using Zuni's and Mk-80 series dumb bombs to support troops in close contact in South Vietnam.

The last active-duty USN Crusader fighter variants were retired from VF-191 and VF-194 aboard Oriskany in 1976 after almost two decades of service, but the RF-8G photo-reconnaissance variant remained in service with Naval Reserve units until 29 March 1987.

The Crusader also served with the French Aeronavale aboard their new carriers Clemenceau and Foch as the F-8E(FN), as again the desired Phantom II was too large. They entered service in 1964, initially using the semi-active radar homing Matra R.530 missile as well as the Matra R.550 Magic infra-red homing missile. 17 were later upgraded to F-8P's, remaining in service until replaced by indigenous Dassault Rafale M's in 2000, a remarkable period of service that included operations over Djibouti, Lebanon, Libya, the Persian Gulf during the Iran-Iraq conflict, Yugoslavia and Kosovo.



In May 1976 the Republic of the Philippines requested information regarding the delivery of eleven Northrop F-5E Tiger II's to supplement and eventually replace their current fleet of earlier F-5A's, but this deal was not finalised and in late 1977, 35 second-hand U.S. Navy F-8H Crusaders stored at Davis-Monthan AFB in Arizona were bought instead, 25 being refurbished by Vought and 10 used for spare parts. As part of the deal, the US trained Philippine pilots using a TF-8A twin-seat trainer.

The Crusaders were operated by the 7th Tactical Fighter Squadron "Bulldogs" as part of the 5th Tactical Fighter Wing, based at Basa Air Base alongside the 6th Tactical Fighter Squadron still operating the F-5A's and twin-seat B's. Initially they were flown in the standard USN scheme of gloss Light Gull Gray FS36440 over Insignia White that they had been delivered in, with squadron logo on the tail, but this gave way to overall Light Gray FS 36622 before they finally received an attractive wrap-around



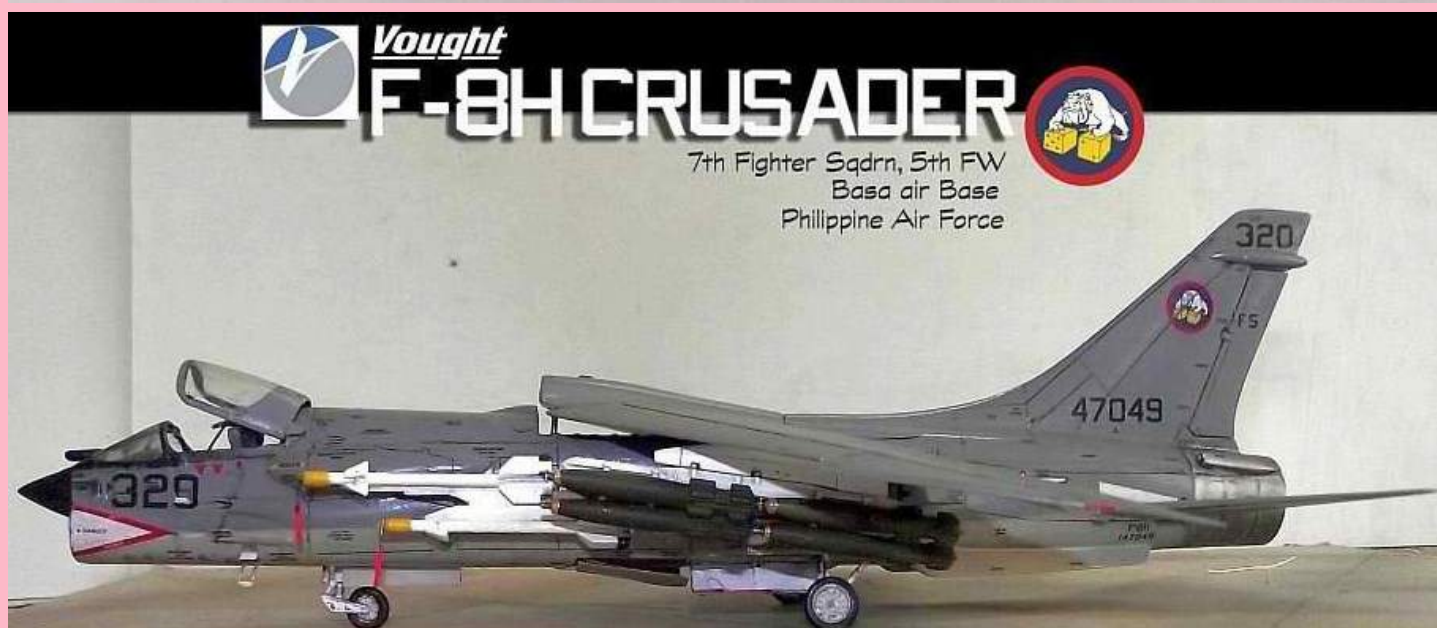
camouflage scheme of Light Gray FS 36622 and Medium Gray FS 36231 (this is also stated as Glossy Dark Gray FS15327 and Glossy Neutral Gray FS16320 by David Gebhardt in Squadron/Signal Publications Walk Around No.5538, and used as a reference by Printscales in 1/72), with toned-down markings. For modellers like us, Zatz does a lovely sheet, ALC48015 Legend of the Seas, which includes both later schemes, as well as an anniversary French F-8P, but this sheet is now quite rare.

The PAF Crusaders were mostly used for intercepting Soviet bombers, but due to lack of spares and rapid deterioration they were grounded in 1988 and left on an open grass field at Basa Air Base. They were finally withdrawn from service in 1991 after they were badly damaged by the Mount Pinatubo eruption, which also extensively damaged Basa AB and the F-5's as well.



Although the Crusader had served in Vietnam, it was predominantly from carriers at sea, in a different environment, and even the USMC units ashore rotated out regularly, so the PAF Crusaders were the only ones to be subjected to harsh tropical conditions for many years. This took its toll, with the F-5's they were nominally meant to supplement/replace remaining in service until 2005.

Jamie McIntyre, September 2021



*This superb model, based on the Italeri kit, of a heavily-laden F-8H is taken from Farouk Tan's blog on the iModeler website. I have written to request his permission to reproduce it here, but have so far not received a reply - **Editor**.*



Aerobatic Teams - Indonesia



The current Indonesian Air Force aerobatic team is called the 'Jupiter Aerobatic Team'. It takes its name from the call-sign of IAF instructors. The team currently flies six KT-1B Wongbee aircraft painted in red and white. The team is drawn from Skadik (Skadron Pendidikan / Training Squadron) 102, based at Adisucipto International Airport in Yogyakarta. The Jupiter team aircraft are equipped with white smoke generators. The pilots of the "Jupiter Aerobatic Team (JAT)" are all instructors.



History

In 1996, a new Indonesian Air Force aerobatic team was formed and equipped with eight BAE Hawk Mk. 53 planes from Skadik 103. This team was named "Jupiter" and they performed for the first time on September 23, 1997. In 2001, the team became "Jupiter Blue" after merging with the "Elang Biru" team, which was disbanded due to financial crisis in the late 1990s.



The "Jupiter Aerobatic Team" (JAT) was re-formed in 2008, using 4 Korean Aerospace Industries KT-1B Wongbee trainers. This new team's first public show was on July 4, 2008 in Yogyakarta and their second show was in Jakarta in November 2008.

In 2010, after two years of stagnation, JAT began a training program with help from Australian Roulettes display team. In September 2010, two JAT pilots were sent to Australia to observe and practice flying manoeuvres together with the Roulettes at their home base in East Sale, Victoria, Australia. On November 8, 2010, the Roulettes performed at Halim Air Force Base, Jakarta, at which event six JAT members each had the opportunity to fly in the back seat of the "Roulettes" PC-9s during their practice.

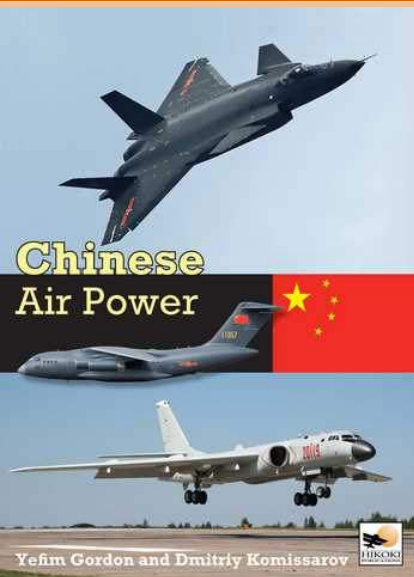
In 2011, the JAT increased to six aircraft in the formation and also received a new red-white livery similar to the colours of the Indonesian flag. The first demonstration with this new six-ship composition was on March 16, 2011, in Yogyakarta at the launching of the new livery ceremony by the Indonesian Air Force. Their second airshow was on April 9 in Jakarta at the TNI AU's 65th anniversary, and their third was on April 17, 2011, again in Yogyakarta.

Parts of this article were taken from Wikipedia.





Book review - Chinese Air Power

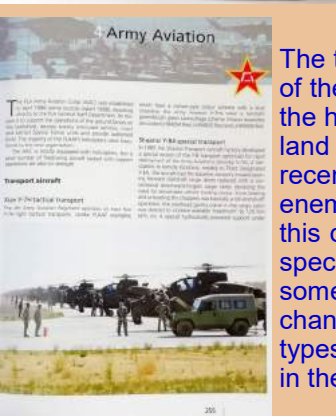


I'm sure that many of you will be familiar both with the authors and the publishers, Hikoki Publications, of this recently available book about the air arms of the People's Republic of China (PRC). This is the second volume with this title by Yefim Gordon and Dmitry Komissarov, the first having appeared in 2010, published by Midland Publishing in the UK. As with the first book the new one is a weighty volume, some 400 pages long, and like the first is filled with a great deal of both information and photographs, with many of the latter not having been seen previously.

The 2021 version follows the same format with eight chapters, each one a treasure trove of material for the reader. Chapter 1 sets the scene with a comprehensive overview of the background and current order of battle of the various air arms before moving on to look at each of them in turn, beginning with the largest, the Chinese Air Force (PLAAF). At 120 pages long the chapter is as long as some books on the subject and gives the reader of the background to, and development and deployment of, each of the aircraft currently in use by the PLAAF. Covering each group by type from fighters through attack and training machines to bombers, transport and specialist aircraft and helicopters. As well as written descriptions, the text is backed up by numerous clear photos on each page and there are several detailed side profiles of prototype, development and in-service machines. Modellers of Chinese aircraft will find these profiles to be very useful.



Chapter Three looks at the aircraft of the Naval Air Arm (NA) of the PLA in a similar manner and detail with again many illustrations, both photographic and side profiles, showing aircraft in use, many of these being broadly similar types to those used by the AF but with any necessary modifications to make them more appropriate to naval use. As well as the aircraft in use, there is a section devoted to the increasing use of aircraft carriers by the navy; examining both the development of the idea, from the time of China's earliest thoughts about the need for a "blue water" navy, and the types of vessel that would be needed if they were to go in that direction, before finally considering the design and building of a whole series of Chinese built carriers of various types and catering for a wide range of possible tasks.



The third air arm to be considered is that of the Army Air Corps (AAC), the youngest and currently smallest of the three major services. The AAC was formed as recently as the late 1980's, taking on charge most of the helicopters then operated by the AF. It is tasked with a range of missions, primarily those of supporting land based forces and providing transport for a number of force elements such as Special Forces, while in recent years as new equipment has been developed and deployed, the job of the destruction of an enemies armoured vehicles and providing battlefield ECM have been added. Perhaps unsurprisingly in this day and age, the majority of the AAC fleet is made up of a large number of helicopters developed for specific tasks and showing a wide variety of background influences; some Russian, some American and some European, although indigenous Chinese types are now reaching service reflecting to a degree the changing expectations placed on this form of air power projection. The AAC also uses a few fixed wing types and all of the types are both assessed and illustrated in a similar manner to those of the AF and NA in the earlier chapters.



Subsequent chapters follow the same format covering aircraft used by various paramilitary and law enforcement agencies. The largest of these is the People's Armed Police, now sometimes referred to as China Armed Police Force, and Chapter 5 provides an explanation of the origins and development of this air arm in recent years as well as looking at the equipment it uses. As is to be expected it makes wide-scale use of helicopters broadly similar to those in AAC service, but for me the most surprising thing was to learn of the use of two- and three-seat autogyros. While use of these machines is still in its infancy, one can see their usefulness in a range of police related tasks such as reconnaissance and transport of small groups of paramilitary troops charged with dealing with insurgents. Small and difficult to detect both by eye and radar it has clear advantages when employed in such roles.

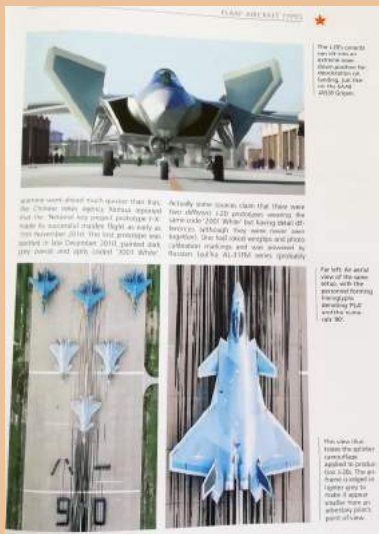
The second police organisation to operate aircraft is the regular police force, the Public Security Police who have been operating small numbers of helicopters since



the early 1990s. It has only been since 2003 that a centralised effort was made to establish the use of helicopters by the police on a nationwide basis and even that has been very slow in developing. It is estimated that by 2015 only some 50 police helicopters were in operation across the whole of China, and although reforms have been introduced to double this number by the early/mid 2020's, progress is thought to have been slow. Partly to off-set the lack of manned machines, police forces across the country now make widespread use of modern drones with several hundred now believed to be in operation. This chapter also covers firefighting machines as well as the aircraft of the Government Flying Service (GFS), a special unit set up to support the Government of Hong Kong.

Chapter Six covers the proliferation in the use of Unmanned Air Vehicles (UAVs/Drones) in the three major air arms. Because of the large numbers involved here the authors have deliberately chosen to examine only those in the medium to large category that were in use at the time of writing the book, but even so that leaves us with the fairly large total of about 40 different machines

No air arm is thought to be complete if at some point it is not able to make use of its probably extensive, and inevitably expensive machines on an enemy, and the air arms of the PRC are no different in this respect. Chapter 7 deals with the weapons the aircraft might carry if required, and this chapter looks at a broad range of AAMs, ASSMs, ATMs as well as various types of bomb and naval torpedoes. All are illustrated with good photos.



The final chapter examines recent development of types due to enter service with one or other of the air arms in the next few years, notably the future of the J-15, J-16 fighter family, the growth of the J-20 stealth fighter, including a possible carrier based version, and the evolution of the J-31 Gyrfalcon stealth fighter, sometimes called the Chinese F-35, which after some early delays following the appearance of the first prototype seems may have a future career as a naval fighter. The likely naval version, possibly to be named the J-35 Sea Eagle, has the advantage that being a smaller aircraft than the navalised J-20, the carriers will be able to carry more of

them. However, the disadvantage is that it will carry less ordnance over shorter distances than a larger machine. Time perhaps will tell. Finally on the subject of the J-31, the authors make an interesting comparison between it and the west's F35 on page 380 where they show photos of both machines taken from similar relative positions. Interesting! The chapter finishes by looking at other likely developments including the heavy stealth bomber, the H-20, and various transport and special mission aircraft.

So what about this book? Its big and contains a wealth of information, but is it worth buying? All I can say is that if you have a serious interest in the subject, whether as a student of modern aviation and the evolution of modern air forces, or as a modeller of the varied and interesting aircraft operated by the various air arms covered in this book, it is not just a useful addition to your library, it is an essential one. As I noted at the beginning of this review, this is the second volume on this subject by these authors, the first having appeared eleven years ago. Considering the rapid development of air power in the PRC in that period, I do wonder if they can wait a similar period before producing the next one?

David Thomas, October 2021





These beautiful models of PLAAF aircraft, in 1/48 scale, were all built by David Thomas.



Chengdu J-10



Chengdu J-7



Shenyang J-8



Xian JH-7



Xian JH-7



Shenyang J-11



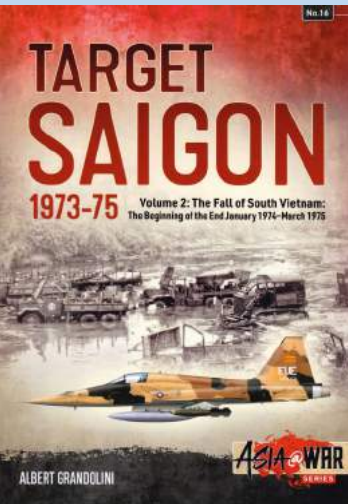
Shenyang J-8, Chengdu J-20 and Shenyang J-11



Book Reviews – TARGET SAIGON 1973-75

Volume 1: The Pretence of Peace and Volume 2: The Fall of South Vietnam

Our good friend Tom Cooper, of Helion & Company, has once again supplied me with a number of titles from the excellent **@War** series that are of *particular* interest to me. I have long had a fascination with Post World War II conflicts and, in particular those that occurred in the 1960s and 1970s, since I lived *with* some of them during a childhood largely spent in the Middle and Far East. By the mid-1970s, we found ourselves back in the Far East having been embroiled in the Cypriot crisis of 1974 and witnessed the final stages of the Vietnamese conflict including the Fall of Saigon in April 1975. But enough of the personal background.



These two books are the first in a series of three by Albert Grandolini charting the last period of the Vietnam War with the North pitted against the South, and following the withdrawal of the remaining American forces in Vietnam. It had seemed that peace would finally descend on the troubled region after 27 years of conflict and following the signing of a historic peace accord in Paris in early 1973, but all of this had fallen short of the avowed objectives of the North Vietnamese, the destruction of the Army of the Republic of Vietnam (ARVN) and the corrupt Saigon regime. Far from feeling committed by the agreement, the Hanoi leadership prepared the next round, the ultimate conquest of South Vietnam. The first volume sets the scene, by making an assessment of the situation on the ground, in both tactical and strategic perspectives. While understandably focussing on the rebuilding of the North Vietnamese army after the havoc wrought by the American aerial campaign of 1972, and the various divisional level land battles that ensued, the volume does also cover the further development of the VPAF as it sought to transition from a purely defence based air arm to one that could potentially support ground forces. For their part, the South Vietnamese placed great emphasis on developing their own air force in order to try to replace the withdrawal of American airpower, and these two elements will form the basis of interest for members of the SIG.

The second volume also focusses much on the land campaign, as the North Vietnamese sought to test South Vietnamese resolve and, perhaps more importantly, any external response particularly from the Americans. The North Vietnamese had planned for any new offensive to take 2 to 3 years but a last test was performed in order to assess the American intentions in case of an all-out North Vietnamese offensive against the South - if a South Vietnamese provincial capital, in this case Phuoc Long, was taken without American reaction, then Hanoi would begin the last campaign of the war. After the fall of Phuoc Long, the North Vietnamese decided to attack the strategic Central Highlands area where they hoped to destroy the greater part of an ARVN Corps where the battle of Ban Me Thuot, which became the pivotal event leading to the rapid collapse of South Vietnam, is well documented. As with so many other conflicts, decisions taken by political leaders without sound military advice further compounded the already dire situation for the South and, emboldened by their progress, the North Vietnamese headed for the ultimate prize of Saigon, the fall of which will be covered in a third volume due out later this year.

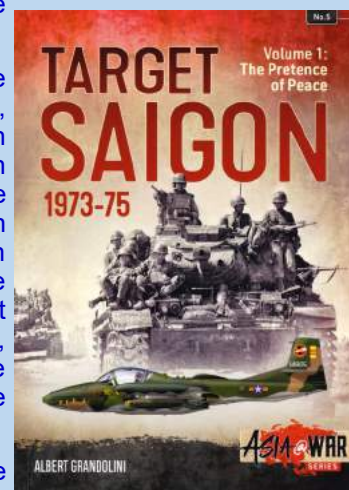
Drawing on a wide range of Vietnamese-language sources, the author, a renowned expert on the Vietnam War, presents a detailed account of this particular part of the long war in Vietnam, which has not been covered particularly well in the past, with most books focussing much of their effort on the earlier period and US involvement. The two volumes are enlivened by a large number of previously unpublished photographs, mainly of Land Forces or equipment, but with a fair number of images covering Vietnamese Air Power.

For the modeller in particular, these two books also offer an excellent selection of aircraft Colour Side Profiles (CSP) by Tom Cooper, covering the vast majority of types that served with the South Vietnamese Air Force between 1973 and its ultimate demise in 1975. One could be forgiven for assuming that VNAF F-5 Freedom Fighters operated in one or maybe two different 'South East Asian' camouflage schemes but the ten CSPs spread across the two volumes will soon dispel this notion; my particular favourites are the ex-Imperial Iranian Air Force aircraft in their original 'Asia Minor' camouflage scheme. In spite of the uniformity of the majority of colour schemes worn by VNAF combat aircraft, including the A-37 Dragonfly, these profiles do provide a great deal of inspiration for modellers since they do also highlight the plethora of individual Unit markings and insignia worn by the various aircraft. Other oddities include those aircraft seconded to the International Commission for Control and Supervision (ICCS) which also sported distinctive titles and markings to underline their 'neutral' status. Some may be surprised by the presence of only one profile (in Volume 2) covering the opposition, in this case a Shenyang J-6I of the PLANAF – the Chinese people's Liberation Army Naval Air Force, which participated in the Battle for the Paracel Islands in 1974 though it should be remembered that during this period VPAF activity was at a lull, no longer troubled by American Air Power or the VNAF, which was solely occupied with combating the North Vietnamese Army on its own territory.

These two volumes are extremely valuable additions to the Helion and Company **Asia@War** series and I look forward to reading the next volume in due course. Once again, Tom Cooper and Andy Miles, the **@War** Series Editors, have combined the written talents of a well informed author with a host of previously unpublished imagery sourced from personal collections and archives, and a very nice selection of colour side profiles, to produce two high quality reference books on an unusual and little publicised subject.

Thoroughly recommended to anyone with an interest in the Vietnam War and, in particular, the activities of the South Vietnamese Air Force during its last three years of existence.

Mark Attrill, October 2021





'Kate' duo, by James Robson

These are two of my latest builds, using the Airfix Club edition of the 1/72 Nakajima B5N2 Kate.



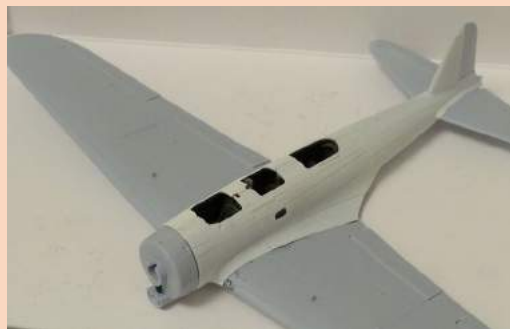
Interior colours were painted for Humbrol 149/150 callouts. 149 equates to Revell 361, so I used that (I think it was the main radio part). 150 looked close to Revell 241, so I used that for most of the interior.

Well, I started with a coat of Humbrol 241, changed my mind and went for 117, then assembled everything, and decided to use 226 for touching up! As a result, there are a few different shades showing through and bringing out some of the details. Anyhow, here we are so far.

Note that the square thing on the 3 gas cylinders is short shot on my kit (first club kit release)....my second club kit has now arrived and the square bit is much bigger and more clearly defined.



The next action was to paint around the apertures for the 3 small clear parts to aid in masking later on. Then I assembled the fuselage halves, and attached them to the wing. It took a little persuasion!

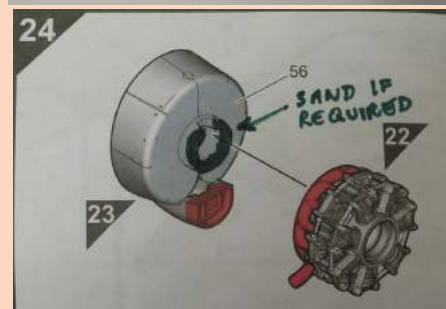
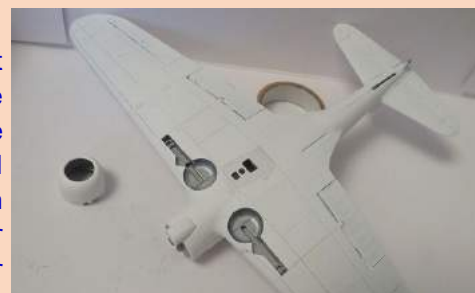


Once firmly set, I attached the nose part, and the remaining flying surfaces.

At this point I masked the cockpit and clear parts, then sprayed the whole model with Halfords White Plastic Primer. Then I painted the engine firewall and wheel bays silver.



Careful reading of various sources suggests that Japan typically used an interior green for the cockpit, and almost all other bare metal would be protected by a coat of Aotake paint, which could vary in colour even across individual areas. With that in mind I decided to simulate this by using clear green over the silver in the engine bay, and clear blue with a hint of green over the silver in the undercarriage bay. I did note that it was common for this to then be coated with a standard paint, but the blue gives a nice contrast to the white. The great thing is, unless someone has colour photos of your exact aircraft, it seems that no-one can definitively say your interpretation is wrong!



Next step was attaching the engine and cowlings....this was hard work! My initial attempts looked nothing like this, with a massive gap between the firewall and the cowlings flaps. I fiddled and fiddled, trying to figure out how to resolve this, and eventually the simple answer came to me. If you experience the same problem, you simply need to sand the locating ring a bit on the firewall until you get a good fit. However, I recommend a full test fit of the cowlings (step 26) before actually using glue for step 24.





Final steps were to add the undercarriage and aerials, then the decals. Looking at the only reference photo I've seen recently (see the first page of this article - Ed.), there is no hint of the original markings or stencils. There's also no cross on the fin, just what might be a number "1" on the rudder. So, I used 6 of the crosses from the decal sheet, and a couple of 1's from spares. These were allowed to settle with Decalsoft, and then everything was sprayed with a coat of Tamiya flat varnish. Meanwhile I did the canopy framing using a paint pen, tidied up with a cocktail stick.

And after that, all that remained was adding the canopy.



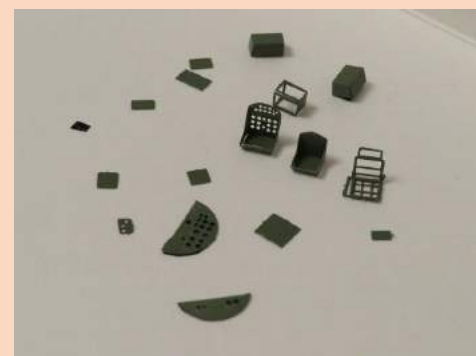
Careful scrutiny (I missed it completely! - Ed.) reveals that this photo does not show the same aircraft, as there is a '2' on the rudder and the fin appears to be painted a different colour



The second build is not strictly an Asian Air Arms example, as it is from the USAAF's Technical Air Intelligence Centre. The kit decals include all the required decals for a standard TAIC US scheme, but none of the Airfix boxings include the required H-6 surface search radar antennae. I've found two etch sets that cover this....the Marabu ones which I used, and Rising Decals which are long sold out. As for the markings, I deviated from the Club kit's star-and-bar decals to depict a temporary scheme that the aircraft was seen in, resulting in a rather unique national marking. As such, it's rather confusing as to which Air Arm it belongs to!



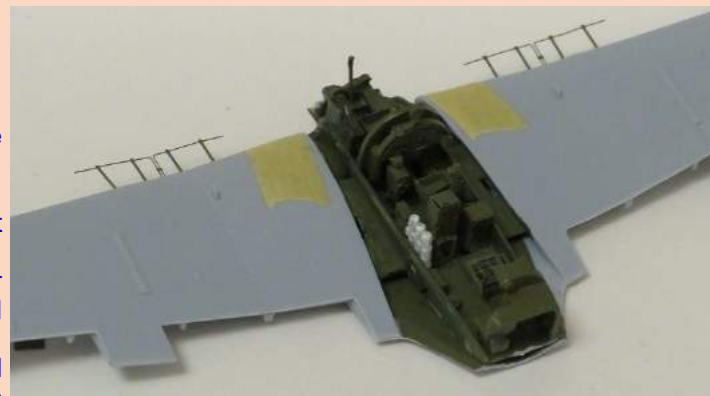
The etch hasn't arrived yet, but all the pre-painting on this one is now done, ready to make a start. I used Humbrol 117 under 226 this time for the interior green, and a thinned sea-blue/green mix for the Aotake. I'm quite pleased with the resulting colours on this. You can also see that I've painted silver on the external facing areas around the various clear parts. I won't be masking this one, just brush painting it, but the pre-painted areas will reduce the chances of my accidentally painting over the smaller windows.



When the delivery I'd been waiting on arrived, a quick spray of Army Painter green primer was followed by some folding. Knowing that anyone would be hard pushed to see most of the interior, I won't be using many of the smaller parts, but I thought I'd use some of the larger ones. (Even they will be hard for anyone to see!)

A few important notes:

1. I inserted the joystick (part D21 in step 10) BEFORE gluing the wings together (step 2)...this is MUCH easier and stops it snapping.
2. The etched rear seat includes parts for cushions or canvas...I omitted them because I liked the structure. As stated above, I doubt anyone will ever see it anyhow.
3. In front of the rear seat, I have substituted the radio (Part D05) for two etched structures. These are specific to the radar equipped version, and represent a different radio set, plus the actual radar set.
4. As mentioned previously, I've missed off a whole load of included etched stuff like seatbelts etc that I won't be able to see....for the same reason I've not bothered too much about getting boxes absolutely squared off etc, adopting a 'close enough is good enough' approach. A significant reason for my using much of this was actually to illustrate the changed arrangement for the radar set..



I could have added the aerials later, admittedly, but I figured it was easier to sandwich them between the wings.....I can try and straighten them out later if required...at least in the mean time they will follow the correct lines. Anyone used to drilling holes knows they rarely follow the intended line, even with a template. We'll see how that works out in the next stage. Note that the etch set includes templates with holes for the drilling, but I never intended to use them for the leading edge, only the fuselage, as the leading edge is not exactly flat. Also, there is a kink in it! Overall, I think I took the simplest option. On top of that, the template needs a 0.2mm drill bit - my standard set starts at 0.5mm, so rather than go out and buy one, I used the template to guide me and drilled freehand. Once the fuselage holes were - imperfectly - drilled, they were close, so that allowed me to close and fit the fuselage. The fit this time was much better than my previous build, and needed no clamps (did a replaced plastic part no longer bind when the etch was used instead? I don't know). Anyhow. I got the fuselage on, and added the engine while I was at it to help hold it together.



In adding the fuselage I DID knock the etch.....as a result the central seat fell out. Anyhow, all was fixed with more CA glue and tweezers.

Meanwhile, all flying surfaces were added, this time with dropped flaps (no, no crew planned, but in this case, accuracy can...I just want a more interesting looking build on this one). I've also got the basic factory finish on, though it looks disappointingly single coloured. Some more experimentation required!

I also have to add the undercarriage....the etch set includes main undercarriage doors, however I won't be using them as the thicker Airfix ones provide greater strength. For a





competition this would be the wrong choice, but for anyone who knows how I transport my models between shows and other locations, this is definitely the better choice!

Now for the really boring bit....the base coat is Revell Aqua Silver... overcoated with badly mixed Humbrol 11 Acrylic Silver in little 5mm circles to get the effect of the circular polisher. I need to do this on both wings, top and bottom....ZZZZZZZZ.

Hopefully it will survive the gloss in the next step

decals and national markings on. This didn't work as well as I'd hoped....a few years ago Printscales decals were notoriously thin, and showed everything underneath if you didn't use a white background. I'd relied on that for this build, but

unfortunately their decals are significantly better quality now, so the contrast in the red didn't work as well as I'd hoped.



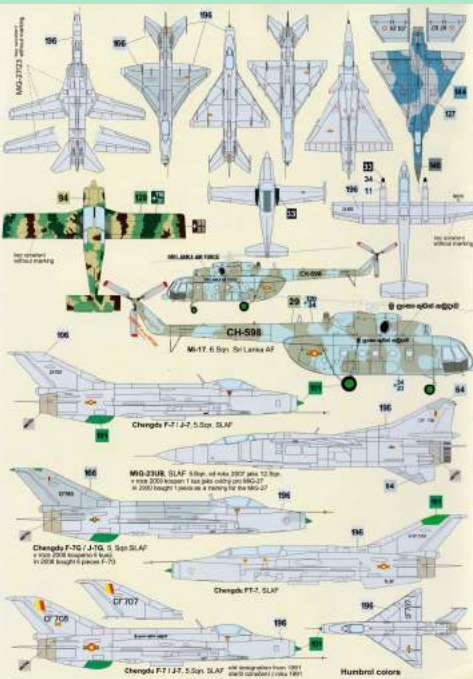
With the decals in place, I was ready for the side ailerons and canopy mast. There were just a couple of finishing touches, and it was done!



James Robson is a regular contributor on the Airfix Tribute Forum, and I am very grateful to him for allowing me to adapt and feature these builds which first appeared on that website. I look forward to more of James' builds appearing in future editions of this newsletter. - Editor.



DP Casper - "Against the Tamil Tigers - 1983-2008" Decal Sheet - (Product No. DPD72-043)



Another timely release from DP Casper of the Czech Republic, taking into account our coverage of some Sri Lankan subjects in recent newsletters. As the title suggests, the vast majority of this decal release is dedicated to covering the interesting array of aircraft that were operated by the Sri Lankan Air Force (SLAF) during the 25-year Civil War. Decals for no less than twelve different types operated by the SLAF are included together with two sets for aircraft that supported the opposing, separatist, force of the Tamil Tigers.

The SLAF subjects reflect the diverse number of sources that were tapped worldwide as Sri Lanka strove to build an effective Air Force with which to take on the separatist movement. As a result, we have both Western- and Soviet-influenced designs serving alongside more esoteric aircraft manufactured in Argentina and Israel. In the early years, the SLAF, hampered by financial restrictions, had to make do with the Siai-Marchetti SF-260TP basic trainer, re-configured for Counter-Insurgency (COIN) operations, and the Bell 212 helicopter, both of

which feature in this release. In the early 1990s, their combat capability was boosted with the arrival of licence-built Chengdu F-7/J-7 fighters, based on the MiG-21F-13, from China, and FMA IA-58 Pucarás from Argentina. As attrition took its toll during the lengthy Civil War, with some notable successes by the Tamil Tigers, more combat aircraft were sought, which included small batches of IAI Kfir C2s from Israel, and MiG-27M Floggers, together with Nanchang CJ-6 trainers (based on the Yak-18). During this time the SLAF also acquired several helicopters to enhance their attack and transport capabilities, including Mil Mi-24 Hinds and Mil Mi-17 Hips. In the latter stages of the war, SLAF combat capability was further enhanced or supplemented with the delivery of the more advanced Chengdu F-7G/J-7G fighter-bombers in 2008. All of these aircraft types are covered, together with two for the opposing side, an Indian Air Force Dassault Mirage 2000 which supported the Tamil Tigers in the mid-1980s, and a Zlin Z-143 basic trainer, one of five converted for bombing purposes by the so-called Sky Tigers and sporting a very elaborate locally applied camouflage scheme.

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. DP Casper's research has been quite thorough since they include the variations in the size and colours used for the national markings and fin flashes. 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. As always, my only reservation with this particular release is the quality of the Decal Placement Instructions (DPIs). 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. 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 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 the fixed-wing combat and training aircraft and helicopters operated by this small Asian Air Arm during a particularly challenging period in the country's history. 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. Potential buyers should note that DP Casper decal sheets do 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*

Mark ATTRILL, October 2021

* Some readers may wonder why I keep putting this information at the end of my reviews. It is not to somehow boast about my commitment to the SIG by indicating how much I pay out of my own pocket to do these reviews, but more to do with being truly independent in my assessment. If I pay for something myself, I feel that I have every right to be more subjective about my analysis of the product and whether it is good value for money or otherwise, etc. Simple as that!



For your viewing pleasure!



Both of these stunning models, made by member Tom Thounaojam, recently appeared on the Group's Facebook page.



Click on this picture to
watch a video of a
'Joyride' in a JASDF C-1
Transport



Click on this picture to
watch a video of a
'Joyride' in a JASDF C-2
Transport



Click on this picture to
watch a video of JASDF
Aggressor F-15s



Click on this picture to
watch a video of
JASDF F-2s in action

I am grateful, as always, to Gary Markham from South Korea for sending me these links. Gary tells me that a very unique thing you can do in Japan is book an experience flight with the JASDF on most of their transport types, and it's apparently very popular. Gary does a lot of air-to-air filming in Japan and Korea, and when filming in Japan, the camera ship is (I think!) the red/brown/grey F-15 depicted here. Regarding the F-2, Gary says, "These are quite impressive machines to play with, about 40% bigger than an F-16 and able to carry much more ordinance. I don't know the [difference in] engine specs between the two but the F-2 certainly kicks a**e! These have a range of colourful markings, some Hasegawa kits have these covered."



The 'Duke Hawkins' Photobook Series by HMH Publishing

I was recently looking for a reference for a modelling project when it occurred to me that I really should include a short review of a book series that I have enjoyed since its inception by HMH Publishing back in 2017. The books are actually produced under the author pseudonym 'Duke Hawkins' and really started by accident when one of the founders of the company was looking for a walk-around book on the SEPECAT Jaguar for his own modelling project, and could not find what he was looking for; what started out as a digitally printed self-published limited edition of 2 books (yes, you have read that correctly!) quickly grew after some very positive reactions from friends, colleagues and fellow aviation and modelling enthusiasts.



Following the publication of the first two titles, on the SEPECAT Jaguar and that perennial favourite, the F-16 Fighting Falcon, the series today boasts a total of 24 books, which includes two 'specials'. The books are aimed fairly and squarely at both aviation enthusiasts and modellers and, in the latter case, are somewhat similar to the very popular series of books produced by DACO Publications. The

main difference is in the balance of 'action' shots and the all-important walk around photos that are vital references for modellers. Whereas DACO have taken the approach of covering every square inch of the subject airframe from every conceivable angle, which is good if the modeller is seeking to reproduce an aircraft under maintenance, the Duke Hawkins books provide sufficient reference material to allow the modeller to understand what detail may be required for the cockpit, undercarriage, weapons etc but also offers a plethora of action shots to really inspire the modeller to tackle a particular subject. Another rather unique aspect of the Duke Hawkins series, and that I like, is their selection of subject matter. They have, quite understandably, concentrated on front-line combat aircraft for most of their titles so far, but have also taken the brave step to venture further with some titles dedicated to training and transport aircraft. In fact, the extensive C-130 Hercules book is one of my personal favourites and, through their unique presentational style, underlines that an aircraft does not need to be fast, sleek and loaded with weaponry to provide dramatic and stunning photographs.

As you may imagine, and taking into account the aircraft types covered so far, some of the titles do include imagery of those aircraft used by Asian Air Arms. In this respect, some provide better coverage than others; Their first title on the SEPECAT Jaguar has some nice shots of Indian Air Force examples, and other notable titles include those on the Mikoyan MiG-29 Fulcrum, the aforementioned Lockheed C-130 Hercules and one of their most recent titles on the mighty F-4 Phantom. This particular book, nicely timed



to commemorate the retirement of the F-4 Phantom from JASDF service, has some stunning photographs of all of the JASDF variants including a nice selection on the RF-4E, which does not normally seem to attract the same level of attention as its fighter cousins in the



Duke Hawkins 015



RF-4E J Phantom II

Left: This famous photo by Peter Andrews shows an RF-4E of 301 Squadron, taking off with a spectacular climbout. Notice how the landing gear is barely retracting. The aircraft based at Hyderabad Air Base, around flying the new Phantom in the fall of 1974 and has done so for some 45 years. On March 9, 2020 a Phantom flew for the last time carrying the famous 'Nasty Wasp' cockpit canopy. In the future, maintenance activities will be done by a dedicated RF-4E Global Hawk, flying out of Misawa Air Base.

Western press. Other titles offer a few images of Asian aircraft, but since the books published so far really only cover aircraft that remain in service, those titles such as that on the A-4 Skyhawk do not provide any imagery related to Asian Service.

The books are presented in softback format and printed on high quality

paper that provides for stunning imagery, so you will not be disappointed. For now the subject matter will remain with aircraft that are still in service somewhere in the world, and will shortly be expanded to include some of the more popular helicopters in service as well as a new series that will focus on Warbirds. At least one of the proprietors of HMH Publishing is a keen modeller, so you can expect to see a continuation of the style of book that has been produced so far with an emphasis on providing modellers with inspiration and vital reference material. I should also add that such is their passion for aviation that HMH Publishing also donate some of their profits to support restoration projects, including a Dassault Mirage 5BD in Belgium, F-104G Starfighter in The Netherlands and a DH Sea Vixen in the UK.



Duke Hawkins 019

Left: I received this photo from Dave Chung, a talented photographer with a keen eye for detail. It shows an A400M of the Malaysian Air Force at a local airshow. The country, which has quite an international fleet of aircraft, from Russian Su-30 Flankers to American F/A-18 Hornets, operates 4 A400Ms, all delivered between 2015 and 2017. They are based at Subang Air Base, near Kuala Lumpur.

Right: A-400M 54+26 is taking back to its parking spot, while 54+17 is taking off for another mission. The load-master has already lowered the cargo ramp. In this photo, the size of the vertical tail is apparent, giving the aircraft a height of 14.7 meter. Since the type's introduction, one A-400M was lost, during a first test-flight in 2015. The reason was a software wipe, resulting in 3 of the 4 engines to remain in idle during take off.



Photo: Dave Chung



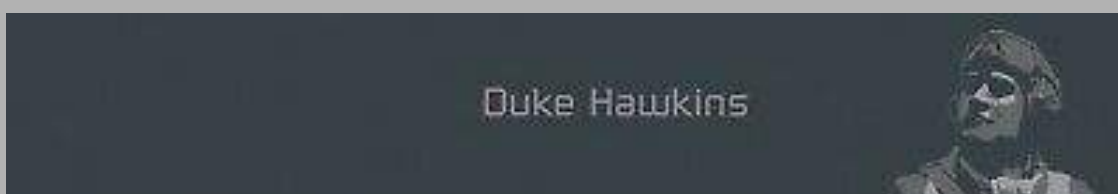
A400M Atlas Action

Above: Another dramatic photo of an A400M Atlas flying through the Mach Loop, offering us a good view of the details to be seen at the top of the fuselage. See the yellow rectangles in the middle of the fuselage, near the base of the wings? This is where the aircraft's life raft is stored. Notice the two escape hatches - one behind the cockpit, the other aft of the wings - and the APU exhaust on the starboard side of the aft fuselage. The starboard wing spoilers have been deployed during the dynamic manoeuvre. Look at the different fuselage-to-engine connection of the inner and outer nacelles.

Photo: Dave Chung

These books are thoroughly recommended to anyone contemplating a modelling project or wanting to better understand a particular aircraft type. Much of the detailed imagery is, of course, relevant to the aircraft type rather than any particular air arm, but if you want to combine all of these elements with decent coverage of the aircraft in Asian service, I would recommend you check out the book before you buy, since the coverage does vary from title to title.

Mark Attrill, October 2021



Duke Hawkins



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off all **Airmark**
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members of
Asian Air Arms!



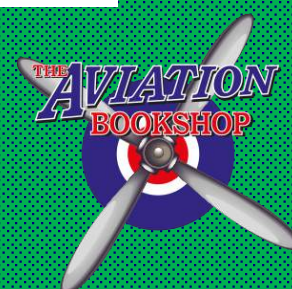
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