ASIAN AIR ARMS Newsletter

3rd Quarter, 2025

Serving Asian Air Arm enthusiasts and modellers in 60 countries

Building Airfix's Big Cat

In this issue:

Editorial/News Page

You may notice that this latest edition of the Asian Air Arms SIG Newsletter is a little 'thinner' than normal, but the lack of pages does not mean a drop off in quality, with Steve doing a great job, as always, to bring everything together and yet still manage to fit in one or two of his own articles and reviews. As I alluded to in my last e-mail, both Steve and I have been distracted with other priorities in recent weeks/months which has prevented us from dedicating as much time as normal to compiling editorial – sometimes life just gets in the way.

So, apart from the usual reviews and previews of Asian Air Arms themed kits and decals, this issue places a heavy emphasis on the Air Arms of Indonesia, thanks largely to our resident expert, Mick Burton, who provides a useful insight into the numbering conventions applied to Indonesian military aircraft and a fascinating piece of the rather esoteric Lockheed Jetstar executive jet in service with the Indonesian Air Force. Ronan Donohoe, one of our worthy prize winners from Scale Model World 2024, very kindly agreed to share his insights on building the Aoshima 1:144 scale kit of the attractive Kawasaki C-2 tactical transport aircraft. SIG Member, Rob Monfea, just back from his annual trip to the Royal International Air Tattoo at RAF Fairford, captured the sizeable Pakistan Air Force presence at the world's largest military air show, which included an Ilyushin IL-76M, C-130 Hercules and not one but two JF-17 'Thunder' fighters with two of the aircraft displaying some superb special markings.

Thanks are also due to our illustrious editor for his build article on the diminutive KP 1:72 scale kit of the SIAI S-211 trainer in Republic of Singapore Air Force markings and we can all look forward to a similar piece on the Chengdu F-7 from the same manufacturer that Steve also managed to review for this edition of the newsletter. Last but not least, I also managed to make a start in the early summer on the brand new 1:48 scale Airfix SEPECAT Jaguar GR.1/GR.1A that I reviewed in the last newsletter. You may recall that I raved about this kit and my build experience to date has mirrored that which I experienced with the Arma Hobby Hurricane IIC that I tackled last year. Thus far, the Airfix kit has also proved to be a dream to put together and I managed to make significant progress prior to my enforced absence from the modelling bench, which forms Part 1 of my two-part feature. All being well, I will return to the project later on this month with the aim of having the model ready for display at Telford in November for Scale Model World 2026.

Mark Attrill

Leader

Asian Air Arms Research/Special Interest Group

July 2025

Warm greetings once again to all our readers. I never cease to be amazed by how quickly these quarterly deadlines (for want of a better term) come around, yet here we are already more than half-way through the year!

I hope that, once again, you will find at least a couple of articles in this issue to be of interest. In his editorial, Mark has only mentioned his Jaguar build article but, despite the fact that he has been very busy with a house sale here in the UK, he has actually produced no fewer than four articles this time around. His review of the new Heller kit of the Grumman E-2C actually prompted me, during my recent holiday in France, to seek out this kit, and I can confirm that Mark's praise is well-deserved, it is an absolute beauty. While on that subject, I should mention a very good model shop in Caen that I have visited several times over the past seven to eight years. It is called 'Baron du Rail', and as the name suggests, has a lot of model railway stock. However, at least half of the premises is also given over to model kits, and it is a ***real*** model shop, with stock all the way to the (high) ceiling! If you ever find yourself in Caen, head to Place de la Republique, where there is underground parking, and you will find the shop off an open-air arcade through an archway on the south-east side of the square. A visit is highly recommended!

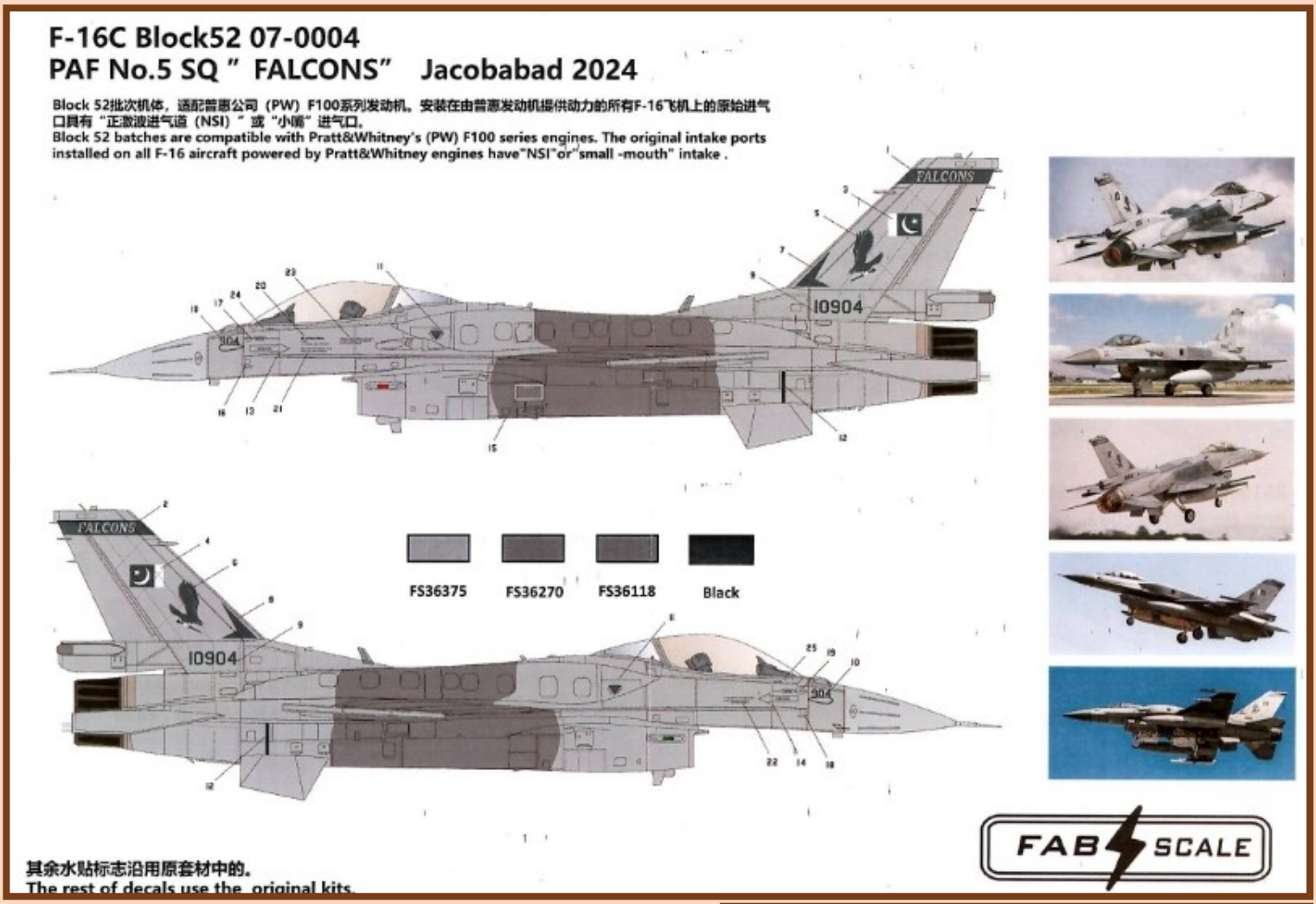
This month's extract from the annals of the Small Air Forces Observer focuses on the embryonic Indonesian Air Force, and ties in nicely with the two articles produced for this issue by Mick Burton. It has also caused something of a dilemma for me - I am now very much of a mind to build my Airfix Blenheim IV in the overall natural metal finish shown in Figure A in that article, with the red/white roundel in six positions and two Nakajima Sakae engines in place of the original power plants. This despite the fact that I have already purchased one of the Xtradecals sheet for the Blenheim! Maybe I will just have to buy another kit, along with two kits of the Nakajima Ki-43 'Oscar' for the engines, although I will first need to ascertain whether the original Bristol Mercury cowlings were used, or if they were replaced by the Nakajima cowlings. If anyone is able to shed any light on this, please contact me - stevekomor@gmail.com.

I hope that, wherever you are, the rest of the summer (or winter, in the Southern hemisphere!) is enjoyable and productive. Until next time, happy modelling!

Steve Komor,

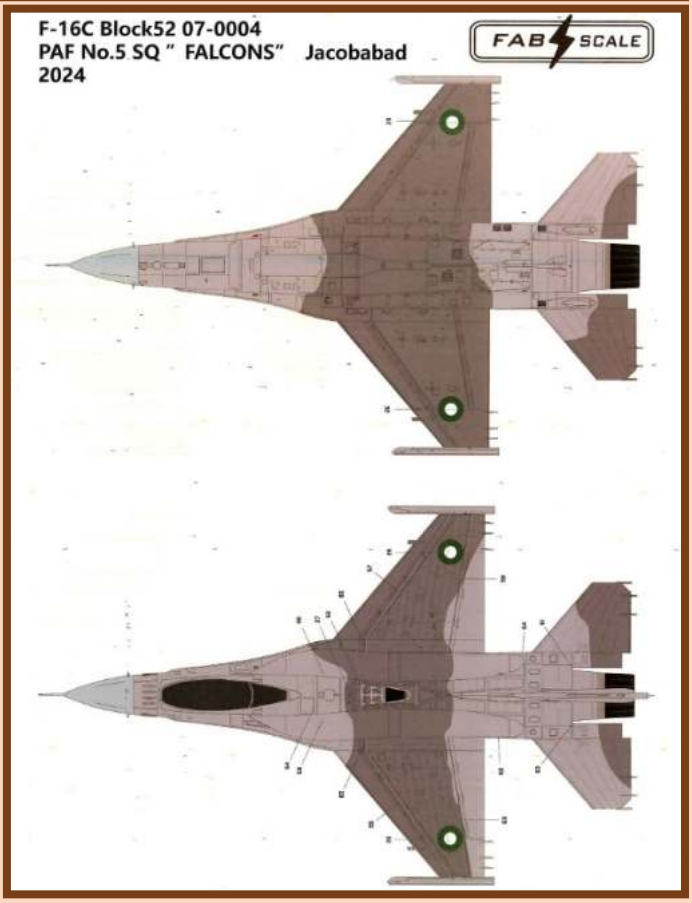
Editor

Fab Scale Decals – Asian Air Arms General Dynamics F-16 Fighting Falcons (FD48-043 & FD48-056)



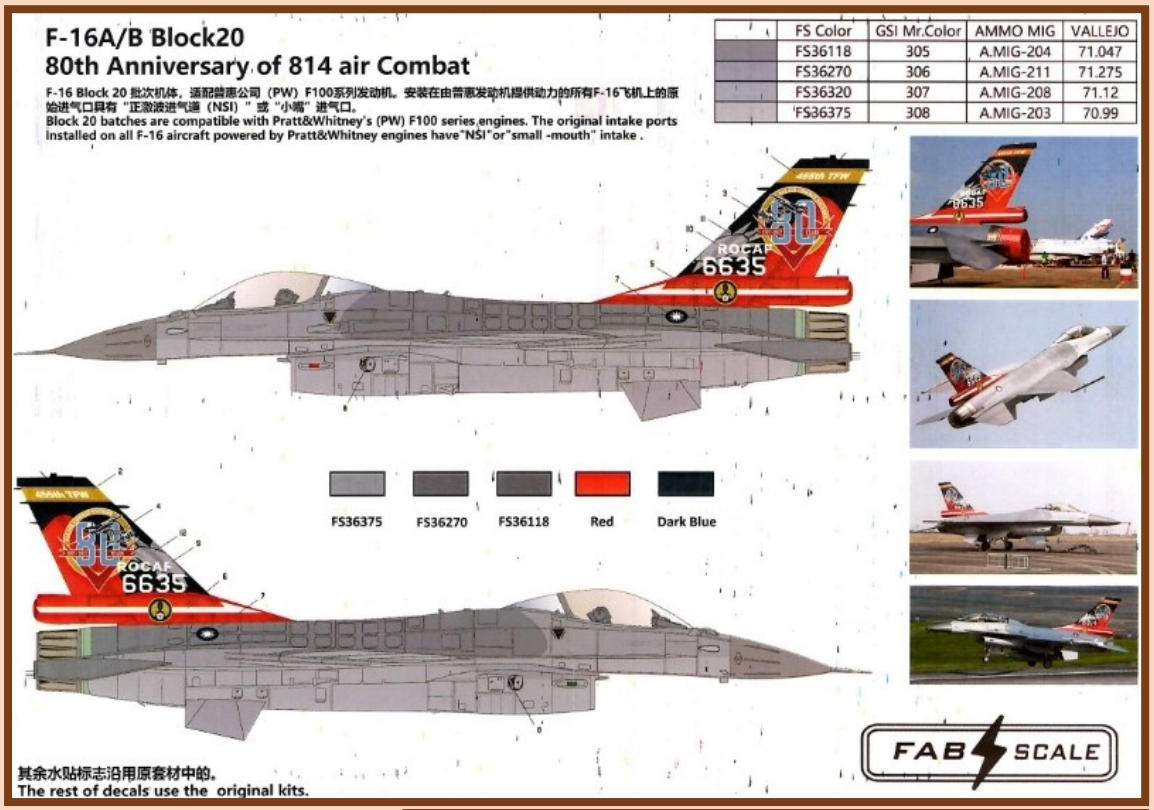
Two recent releases from Fab Scale Decals, a Chinese decal manufacturer that is new to me, have arrived and will, no doubt, be of interest to Asian Air Arms fans. The first (FD48-043) covers a F-16C Block 52 Fighting Falcon operated by Number 5 'Falcon' Squadron from Jacobabad AB in 2024. The two small decal sheets contain all the specialist markings required to make aircraft serial number 07-0004 including the national and unit markings; some of the minor stencilling and maintenance data will need to be sourced from the kit decal sheet. The decal instruction recommends the use of the recent Kinetic release of the Polish Air Force F-16C Block 52 since this kit includes the correct brake chute fairing and the conformal fuel tanks fitted to the upper fuselage of the Pakistani jet.

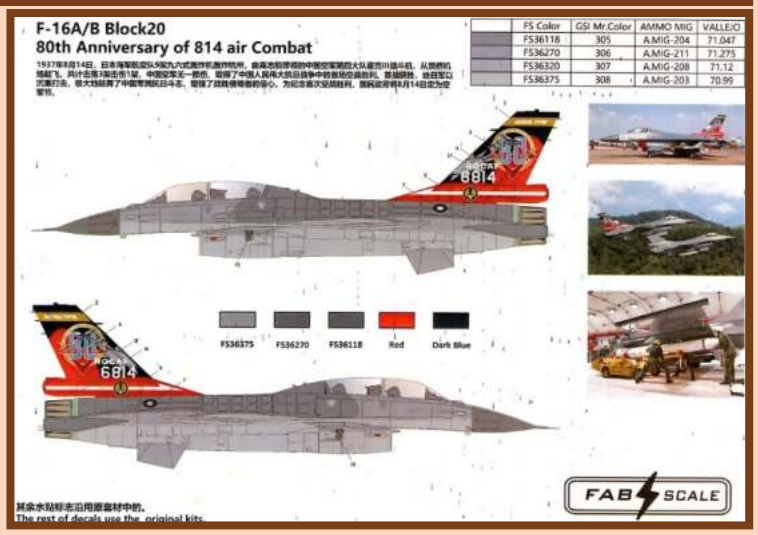
The second release (FD48-056) is for a pair of Republic of China Air Force GD G-16A/B Block 20 Fighting Falcons, operated by the 455th Tactical Fighter Wing, which sported special markings to commemorate the 80th Anniversary of the 814th Air Combat Victory in 2017. The small decal sheet includes all the special markings that need to be applied to the aircraft fins although it should be noted that the red and navy blue background colours need to be applied first. Both the single and twin-seat aircraft sported the same markings with their respective serial numbers, which are also supplied. Once again, most of the stencilling and maintenance data will need to be sourced from the kit decal sheet.



The decals are nicely printed, with good colour saturation and in register, although they possess a matt finish so I would recommend applying a liberal amount of gloss varnish to your model before application. The decal placement instructions (DPIs) are presented in colour and are comprehensive, providing excellent 4-view colour profiles and, where available, FS number callouts for the main camouflage colours. Both sets also include some nice colour

photographs of the respective schemes though these are a little small. Further reference will need to be made to images on the internet or elsewhere. In the case of the Pakistan Air Force aircraft, the decal sheet includes several decals that do not appear on the DPIs, including Indian Flag symbols, which are presumably some form of 'kill' marking though they do not appear to feature on this aircraft. The DPIs for the ROCAF F-16A/B decals do include more detailed paint references which refer to three of the more popular paint ranges, but the modeller is left to determine the precise shades of red and Navy blue for the fin so additional reference will be a must. There are no specific kit recommendations included with the DPIs although some reference is made to a specific Kinetic kit for the Pakistan Air Force F-16C Block 52, and the generic nature of all of these decals means that they can be used on any relevant kit of the F-16 variants portrayed.





Highly recommended to anyone interested in the General Dynamics F-16 Fighting Falcon in service with these two Asian Air Arms. Many thanks to my wallet and Hannants for the review samples.

Mark Attrill – June 2025

Air Power in the Sri Lankan Civil War

The Sri Lanka Air Force (SLAF) has operated a wide variety of aircraft for combat, reconnaissance, transport, and training. During the Sri Lankan Civil War (1983–2009), the SLAF relied on different types of aircraft to support military operations against the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE), fulfilling various roles such as ground attack, transport, reconnaissance, and maritime patrol. At one point, they were even forced to use Harbin Y-8 aircraft as makeshift light bombers!

By the mid-1980s, the LTTE had established strongholds in northern Sri Lanka, particularly in Jaffna. The Sri Lankan military had been largely confined to fortified bases, unable to exert control over LTTE-dominated areas. In early 1987, the government devised a plan to break out from these bases and reclaim territory through conventional warfare.

Vadamarachchi Operation

Vadamarachchi Operation, also known as Operation Liberation, was a major military offensive launched by the Sri Lankan Armed Forces in May-June 1987 during Eelam War I. It was the largest combined-services operation undertaken by Sri Lanka to that point, aimed at reclaiming the Vadamarachchi region in the Jaffna Peninsula from the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam.

The offensive began on May 26, 1987, with nearly 4,000 troops deployed, supported by ground-attack aircraft, helicopter gunships, and naval gunboats. The military aimed to encircle and eliminate LTTE forces, cutting off their escape routes. The Sri Lankan Army, Navy, and Air Force coordinated their efforts in a large-scale assault.

By May 31, 1987, the Vadamarachchi region was recaptured, marking a significant victory for the Sri Lankan government. The LTTE had suffered heavy losses, and key strongholds were dismantled.

Despite the military success, however, the operation was abruptly halted due to Indian intervention. On June 4, 1987, India launched Operation Poomalai, an air-drop mission delivering food supplies to Jaffna, signalling its opposition to Sri Lanka's military campaign. This led to diplomatic pressure, forcing Sri Lanka to accept the Indo-Sri Lanka Accord in July 1987, which promised greater autonomy for Tamil-majority regions, and resulted in the deployment of the Indian Peace Keeping Force (IPKF).

Operation Pawan

Operation Pawan was the codename for India's military intervention in Sri Lanka in 1987, aimed at enforcing the Accord and wresting control of the Jaffna Peninsula from the LTTE. This operation, carried out by the Indian Peace Keeping Force (IPKF), remains one of India's most complex and controversial military engagements.

The operation commenced in October 1987, with the IPKF deploying around 30,000 troops, as well as tanks, helicopter gunships, and heavy artillery to push back LTTE forces and take control of the Jaffna Peninsula. The mission quickly escalated into intense urban warfare, as the LTTE resisted fiercely. Indian forces faced significant challenges, including unfamiliar terrain, guerrilla tactics, and a lack of local support. Despite initial setbacks, the IPKF managed to capture Jaffna, but at a heavy cost - 214 Indian soldiers lost their lives, and over 700 were wounded. The LTTE suffered 2,000 casualties, yet continued its resistance.

Operation Pawan turned out to be a political and strategic blunder for India. The IPKF was caught in a prolonged conflict, facing hostility from both the LTTE **and** sections of the Sri Lankan population. The mission, originally intended as a peacekeeping effort, turned into a full-scale war. Additionally, India's involvement strained relations with Sri Lanka and led to domestic criticism. India withdrew its forces in 1990, following mounting casualties and political pressure. The operation failed to achieve its primary goal of disarming the LTTE, which continued its insurgency for years. The intervention also contributed to the assassination of Indian Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi in 1991 by LTTE operatives.

Operation Pawan remains a significant lesson in military strategy and foreign policy. It highlighted the complexities of intervention in internal conflicts and underscored the challenges of peacekeeping in hostile environments. The operation serves as a reminder of the risks involved in military diplomacy and the importance of understanding local dynamics before committing forces.

Operation Riviresa

Operation Riviresawas a major military offensive launched by the Sri Lankan Armed Forces in 1995 during the Third Eelam War. Its primary objective was to capture Jaffna, the stronghold of the LTTE, and reassert government control over the Jaffna Peninsula.

By the mid-1990s, the LTTE had established firm control over Jaffna, using it as a base for operations against the Sri Lankan government. The military had previously attempted offensives but had struggled to make significant territorial gains. In October

1995, the government launched Operation Riviresa, a large-scale assault aimed at reclaiming the region.

The offensive began on October 17, 1995, with 25,000 Sri Lankan troops advancing into LTTE-held territory, supported by the Air Force. The operation was led by Major General Rohan Daluwatte, with key commanders including Brigadier Janaka Perera and Brigadier Neil Dias. The Sri Lankan Army, Navy, and Air Force coordinated their efforts, employing artillery, air strikes, and naval bombardments to weaken LTTE defenses.

By December 5, 1995, the Sri Lankan forces had successfully captured Jaffna, marking one of their most significant victories in the war. The LTTE suffered heavy losses and was forced to retreat, abandoning its stronghold.

The operation resulted in over 500 Sri Lankan military casualties, with 650 wounded. The LTTE claimed 438 of its fighters were killed. The capture of Jaffna was a major strategic victory for the Sri Lankan government, but it also led to mass displacement of civilians, as thousands fled the conflict zone.

This operation demonstrated the Sri Lankan military's growing capability in large-scale warfare. However, despite the success, the LTTE regrouped and continued its insurgency, leading to further conflicts in the years that followed. The operation remains a pivotal moment in Sri Lanka's military history, showcasing both strategic success and humanitarian challenges.

Air power played a crucial role in Sri Lanka's victory over the LTTE during the civil war. The SLAF provided essential support to ground forces by conducting airstrikes, reconnaissance missions, and logistical operations. One key aspect was the use of jet fighters, helicopters, and transport aircraft to weaken LTTE positions before ground troops advanced. This strategy helped the Sri Lankan military gain an upper hand by disrupting enemy movements and supply lines. The psychological impact of air power also played a role, as LTTE fighters had to constantly contend with aerial attacks. Additionally, Sri Lanka learned from global military strategies, recognizing that air power was essential in counterinsurgency operations. The combination of air and ground forces ultimately led to the defeat of the LTTE in 2009.

The SLAF was forced to adapt its fleet to meet the evolving challenges of the war, particularly in counterinsurgency warfare. Even after the war ended in 2009, many of these aircraft remained in service, supporting national security and disaster response operations. The effective use of air power contributed significantly to the defeat of the LTTE in 2009, marking the end of the decades-long conflict. The war demonstrated how air superiority can be a decisive factor in modern counterinsurgency warfare.

Combat Aircraft

IAI Kfir (Israel)
Role: Multirole fighter/ground attack
Used for: Precision strikes against LTTE targets including command centres, supply routes, and camps.
Variants: Kfir C.2, C.7

Mikoyan-Gurevich MiG-27 (Soviet Union)
Role: Ground attack
Used for: Heavy bombing missions, close air support, and deep-strike capabilities.

F-7 Skybolt (China) – variant of MiG-21
Role: Interceptor/fighter
Used for: Air defence and limited ground attack missions.

Pucará (FMA IA 58) (Argentina)
Role: Counter-insurgency
Used for: Close air support, anti-guerrilla operations.

Attack Helicopters

Mil Mi-24 / Mi-35 Hind (Russia)
Role: Attack helicopter with troop transport capability
Used for: Close air support, helicopter gunship missions, troop insertion, and extraction.

Bell 212 & Bell 412 (USA/Canada)
Role: Utility/Transport and light attack (armed versions)
Used for: Troop transport, casualty evacuation, and occasionally armed escort missions.

Transport Aircraft

Antonov An-32 (Ukraine)
Role: Tactical transport
Used for: Airlift of troops and equipment, paratroop drops, supply missions.

C-130 Hercules (USA)
Role: Strategic airlift (used in limited capacity)

Used for: Long-range transport of logistics and personnel.

Harbin Y-12 (China)
Role: Light transport aircraft, light bomber!
Used for: Short-range transport missions

Reconnaissance and Surveillance

Beechcraft 200 (USA)
Role: Reconnaissance and electronic surveillance
Used for: Intelligence gathering and battlefield surveillance.

Unmanned Aerial Vehicles (UAVs)

Types: Various, including Israeli-made models.
Role: Reconnaissance and target acquisition.
Used for: Tracking LTTE movements, directing air strikes.

Maritime Patrol

Cessna Skymaster (USA)
Role: Maritime patrol and reconnaissance
Used for: Monitoring LTTE Sea Tiger operations and coastal activities.

Trainer Aircraft (also used in combat)

SIAI Marchetti SF.260 (Italy)
Role: Trainer/light attack
Used for: Training SLAF pilots, ground-attack missions in early phases of the war.

Nanchang CJ-6 (China)
Role: Basic trainer
Used for: Pilot training

Cessna 150 (USA)
Role: Basic trainer
Used for: Pilot instruction

This article has been adapted from one which first appeared in the June 1996 edition of the French aviation magazine 'Jets', from which the accompanying photographs have also been taken.

Hongdu JL-8/K-8 (China)

Role: Advanced jet trainer
Used for: Fighter pilot training.

Sri Lankan Air Force, April 1996

UNIT	BASE	TYPE
1st Flight Training Sqn	Anuradhapura	S.F.260W/TP Cessna 150 IA548A Pucara
2nd Transport Squadron	Ratmalana	Harbin Y-8 BAE 748 Antonov An-32
3rd Maritime Squadron	China Bay	Cessna 337 Skymaster (grounded)
4th Helicopter Squadron	Katunayake	Bell 212 Bell 412 Bell 2065th
5th Jet Squadron	China Bay, detached to Katunayake	Shenyang FT-5 Guizhou FT-7 Chengdu F-7B
6th Helicopter Squadron	Vayuniya	Mil Mi-17
7th Helicopter Squadron	Mineriya	Bell 212 Bell 206
8th Light Transport Sqn	Ratmalana	Harbin Y-12 Cessna 421 Beech 200
9th Attack Helicopter Sqn	Mineriya	Mil Mi-24
10th Fighter Squadron	Katunayake	IAI Kfir C.2 IAI Kfir TC.2

Heller - 1:72 Scale Grumman E-2C Hawkeye (Ref: HE82300)

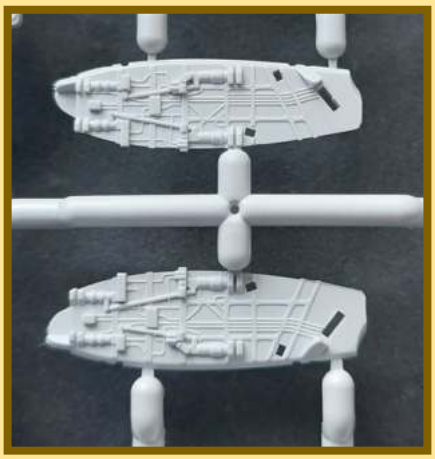
I have just received this long-awaited brand-new kit of a military subject from Heller of France, during what can only be described as a renaissance for this famous manufacturer, after coming close to near-extinction some years ago. Since then, the new Franco-German owners have sought to re-establish the company name in the hobby world with some fine examples of new -mould kits, mainly French civilian cars and vehicles to 1:24 scale. Until now they have been busy re-issuing some of their older 1:72 and 1:48 scale kits and blending these with re-boxed kits from other manufacturers, such as the 1:72 scale Douglas C-47 Skytrain (Airfix new mould) and 1:48 scale Kinetic Dassault Mirage IIIE and Lockheed F-104 Starfighter. The Grumman E-2C is, then, their first foray into producing a brand-new aircraft kit bearing the Heller name in over 30 years, and I can safely say it has been well worth the wait! I built many Heller kits during their heyday in the 1970/80s and the vast majority were a great experience, albeit with raised panel lines and some limitations in overall detail. In some ways the E-2C Hawkeye seemed an odd choice for the company's return to plastic aircraft design and manufacture, although the type is operated by the French Aeronavale; that said, I can think of several more obvious or attractive choices that they could have made, but I am not in the kit marketing business so I will end my commentary at that. Hasegawa have, of course, produced their own extensive range of E-2Cs and, as a relatively recent product, the kit has stood up to the test of time, so it was going to be interesting to compare the two kits. From an Asian Air Arms perspective, the kit was going to be interesting since Japan, the Republic of China (Taiwan) and Singapore operate, or have operated, the type for some years.

The modeller is presented with the now familiar yellow top-opening box with an attractive piece of box art that portrays a specially marked USN E-2C Hawkeye operated by VAW-115 'Liberty Bells', which is the single decal option provided with this initial release. Inside the box there are five medium grey sprues containing 179 parts with a further 20 parts presented on the clear sprue. There is a large silkscreen-printed Cartograf quality decal sheet containing the aforementioned decal markings for the VAW-115 aircraft, with a huge selection of stencils and maintenance markings and a comprehensive 20-page full colour set of assembly instructions, which includes a parts map and full colour 4-views together with paint references for the Heller range of acrylic paints. This neat package is completed with a rather humorous hotel-style 'Do Not Disturb' door sign to hang outside your hobby room.

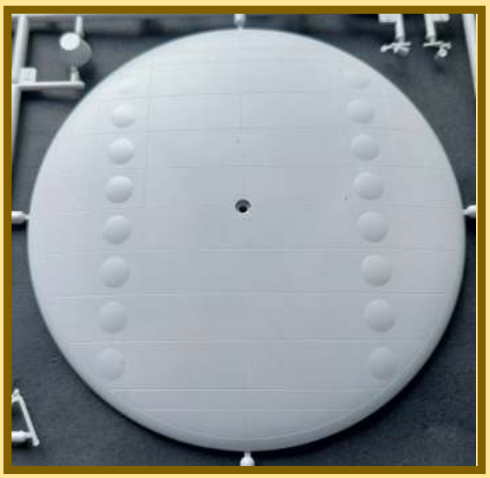
An initial inspection of the parts confirm that this kit bears nothing in common with any of the previous Heller kits that I have built. The quality of the parts is, quite simply, outstanding. The level of detail found on, for example, the main instrument panel, undercarriage bays and wing-fold mechanisms is breathtaking and would put many 1:48 and 1:32 kits to shame by comparison. The panel lines are also some of the finest examples of craftsmanship that I have ever seen in a plastic kit, which is something to behold given recent experiences with Airfix, Arma, Eduard and Wingsy Kit releases in the last year. I normally take a quick scan through the assembly instructions before studying them in more detail, and this exercise revealed one anomaly from the very start. There are several references to the E-2C, E-2C+ and E-2C-2000 sub-variants of the aircraft, with the inclusion of the appropriate parts, which suggests to me that the original plan was to include more than one colour scheme in this initial issue. I appreciate that the parts may have been included in preparation for a subsequent re-release but if this is the case, why would Heller make specific references to the sub-variants in the assembly instructions? As an example, the two main types of propellers are included in the kit AND detailed in the assembly instructions, yet the single aircraft featured on the decal sheet only utilises the later version with the rounded spinner and eight-bladed propeller unit. Anyway, I digress, and for those of you fortunate enough to have some of the previously-released aftermarket decal sheets for Asian E-2Cs, the kit does contain all of the parts necessary to complete one of the earlier variants with the original four-bladed broad propellers etc. I also feel sure that Xtradecal or one of the other more prolific aftermarket decal manufacturers will release some new decal sheets to cover this exciting new release from Heller.

As one would expect, construction starts with a combined cockpit and nose undercarriage bay assembly. The former features

some delicately rendered seats, centre console and control columns as well as the main instrument panel and side consoles; it's such a pity that it all gets hidden from view later on in the build. I also have some concerns regarding the fitting of the forward undercarriage so early in the build process, but it is unclear how easy it may be to fit this later on to avoid damage. The assembly sequence then switches quite abruptly to the flying control surfaces, with the tail section at Stages 3&4 and the central wingbox at Stage 5. It is at this early stage that one must decide on particular options since there is a choice of extended or folded wings (one option not included in the Hasegawa kit) and main flaps in the retracted or extended position. The end panels (parts C17/25) for the folded wings are some of the finest mouldings I have ever soon on a 1:72 scale kit and the detail will really pop with the application of a suitable wash.



Stages 6-8 focus on fuselage assembly, and this is where we see the first references to sub-variants, so care will need to be taken to avoid drilling unnecessary holes in the airframe. The kit offers the possibility to model the cockpit/cabin access door in the open position with a suitably detailed entrance bay (part C18) fitted to the inner surfaces of the port fuselage. The distinctive landing light fairing in the nose, that is a key feature of the E-2, is also nicely rendered. It should also be noted that the kit is designed in such a way as to fit the main cockpit glazing much later in the build, which aids the masking process considerably. Stages 9-17 bring the first few sub-assemblies together as the airframe begins to take shape and then the focus switches to the assembly of some very comprehensive engine nacelles, with fully detailed wheel wells and finely rendered main undercarriage legs and doors. The kit also offers standard or weighted tyres/wheels. Stages 18-20 concentrate on fitting the plethora of aerials and fairings that adorn the fuselage of the E-2C. Once again, care will need to be taken with the various options that are on offer, and you may wish to leave off some of the smaller items until much later in the build sequence to avoid breakage. Stages 21-25 focus on the assembly and fitting of the mainplane outer panels, providing options for these to be in the extended or folded position. As already mentioned, the endplate assemblies for the folded option are superbly moulded and, once again, will benefit from detailed painting and the application of a suitable wash. The large radar dish that is such a distinctive feature of this Airborne Early Warning aircraft is also very nicely detailed, with finely rendered panel lines. Nearing the end of the assembly sequence, the focus returns to the application of the extensive cockpit glazing and some more fuselage fittings, which even includes separately moulded windscreen wipers! The final stages, 32 and 33, concentrate on the assembly of the eight-bladed propellers and hubs that are applicable to the decal option but, rather confusingly, also highlight the older four-bladed propellor type found on earlier E-2Cs, which backs up my theory regarding a possible late change of decal options.



Although the decal option is unlikely to be of interest to many of our members, it would be an oversight not to mention it at all. A closer look at the paint scheme and decal placement instructions reveal that the decals were produced in close cooperation with Fightertown Decals of the USA, who are renowned for the quality of their own range of largely USN/USMC-orientated aftermarket decal sheets. The high gloss decal sheet has been produced by Cartograf, and therefore offers all the quality that is a hallmark of that company and further reinforces the view that this is probably now the best kit of the Grumman E-2C Hawkeye in any scale.

Hasegawa's 1:72 scale Grumman E-2C Hawkeye was first released in 2008 and while it remains a very good kit, it has been surpassed by this new offering from Heller. The new kit benefits from superior detailing throughout, especially within the cockpit and undercarriage bays although, curiously, the cockpit bulkhead is plain while that in the Hasegawa kit has some detail. The Heller kit also provides the wing-fold options, a first for an E-2 Hawkeye kit in this scale. I also prefer the presentation of the cockpit glazing, all of which can be omitted from the assembly sequence until the main paint scheme has been applied.

You will, by now, have ascertained that I have been very impressed with this kit, which bodes very well for the future of this iconic French manufacturer that was a dominant force in Europe during the 1970/80s. I feel sure that an enterprising aftermarket manufacturer will, in time, release a decal sheet that includes at least one Asian Air Arms marking option, with which you can complete a very attractive model of this important aircraft.

Very highly recommended

Mark Attrill – June 2025

Building a beast - KP's SIAI S-211

The SIAI-Marchetti S.211 is an Italian-designed turbofan-powered military trainer aircraft that has served air forces worldwide since its introduction in 1984. Originally developed by SIAI-Marchetti as a private venture in 1976, the aircraft was designed to provide a cost-effective yet capable training platform for pilots transitioning to jet-powered aircraft.

The S.211 first took flight on April 10, 1981, and quickly garnered interest from military operators. The Republic of Singapore Air Force became its first customer, ordering ten aircraft in 1983. The aircraft features a Pratt & Whitney Canada JT15D-4C turbofan engine, producing 2,500 lbs of thrust, allowing for a maximum speed of 360 KIAS and a service ceiling of 40,000 feet. Its two-seat configuration makes it ideal for training purposes, while its light attack capabilities add versatility to its role.

Approximately 60 units of the S.211 were produced between 1981 and 1994, serving in air forces such as the Philippine Air Force and the Haitian Air Force. The aircraft was later modernized into the S-211A, which competed in the United States Air Force's Joint Primary Aircraft Training System (JPATS) selection process, but ultimately lost to the Raytheon/Pilatus T-6 Texan II.

Following Aermacchi's acquisition of SIAI-Marchetti in 1997, the company continued to market the aircraft while developing an improved version, initially called the S-311 and later renamed the M-345. This modernized variant entered service in 2020, offering enhanced avionics and performance.

The SIAI-Marchetti S.211 remains a remarkable example of Italian aviation engineering, providing reliable training and light attack capabilities for decades. Its legacy continues through the M-345, ensuring that its design philosophy lives on in modern military aviation.

The SIAI-Marchetti S.211 in the Republic of Singapore Air Force

Singapore was the first country to place an order for the S.211, purchasing ten aircraft in 1983. Deliveries commenced in 1984, marking a crucial step in the air force's pilot training program. The RSAF used the S.211 primarily for advanced pilot training, helping cadets transition from propeller-driven aircraft to jet-powered platforms. The aircraft's Pratt & Whitney Canada JT15D-4C turbofan engine, producing 2,500 lbs of thrust, provided a balance of efficiency and performance, making it ideal for training purposes.The SIAI-Marchetti S.211 holds a significant place in the history of the Republic of Singapore Air Force (RSAF) as its first jet trainer aircraft.

The S.211 served the RSAF for several years, playing a vital role in shaping the skills of Singapore's military pilots. However, as aviation technology advanced, the RSAF sought a more modern training aircraft. Eventually, the Aermacchi M-346 Master replaced the S.211 in Singapore's fleet, offering enhanced avionics and performance capabilities.

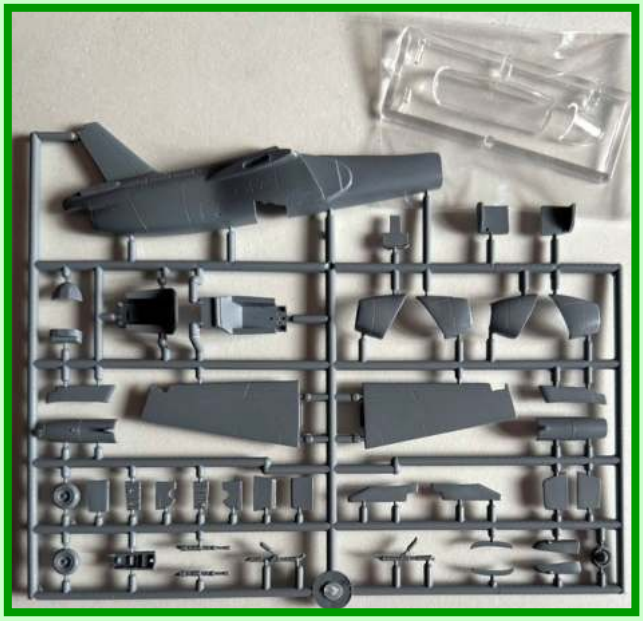
Despite its retirement, the S.211 remains an important part of Singapore's aviation history. It provided a cost-effective and reliable training solution, contributing to the RSAF's reputation for excellence in pilot development. Some of the retired aircraft have been preserved, including one displayed at the Republic of Singapore Air Force Museum.

The SIAI-Marchetti S.211's tenure in the RSAF highlights Singapore's commitment to maintaining a high standard of pilot training, ensuring that its air force remains among the most capable in the region.

The KP Kit

I picked this kit up during my visit to the Aviation Megastore in Amsterdam last year, being drawn to the very attractive orange/white colour scheme and, of course, the beautiful RSAF 'lion's head' roundels. Alternative markings are provided for a Haitian Air Force aircraft and a private US-based plane. There are a few other boxings of the kit offering alternative schemes, as well as the option to build an S-311, parts for which are included in this boxing, and which are highlighted in red on the sprue diagrams in the instructions.

First impressions on opening the box were quite favourable, although the sprues and parts scream 'SHORT-RUN KIT'. Panel lines are ragged and inconsistent, and, in places, resemble an old Matchbox kit. The small decal sheet offers markings for three options and colours appear correct and in-register. ***However***, closer inspection of the sprues revealed several issues not initially detected!



Many of the parts appear excessively thick, a case in point being the intake splitter plates, which resemble trapezoidal paving slabs, and there are mould seams on the undercarriage legs that will require removal. Also, as can clearly be seen in this photograph, the sprue gates overlap the mating surfaces of virtually every part, meaning that careful removal and extensive clean-up will be necessary at every stage. Evident in the photo is the thickness of every part, as well as the very rough texture on the mating surfaces.

Even worse, on my example, the port fuselage half, which incorporates the complete fin, had a large mass of excess plastic on the mating surface which required **VERY** extensive cleanup and removal, as shown below. Also evident, again, are the very rough mating surfaces. This kit definitely looks and feels like a short-run kit. Having also examined KP's Chengdu F-7 (see elsewhere in this issue), I find it hard to believe the two kits are from the same manufacturer.

I will not bore you with all the details of what was, in fact, a very difficult and not-very-enjoyable build, but I will just deal with a couple of the most difficult stages.

Stages 4 and 4 (there is **NO** stage 5!) deal with construction of the wheel well assembly, each comprising three parts. The parts here are so thick and lacking in definition, and the instructions so vague, that I basically had to guess at the layout and orientation of the parts. The completed wheel wells did fit into the fuselage, after a fashion, but this was definitely more by accident than by design. Worse, on my kit there was a gaping chasm between the main gear bays which necessitated a piece of plastic card and lots of filling and sanding.

Section 9 would have you assemble the two halves of the nose whilst inserting the nosewheel well between them. This proved extremely difficult and I could have done with two more hands to make the job a little easier! Worse still, the completed nose section did not in any way match up to the rest of the fuselage, there being a step of at least 1 - 2 millimetres almost all the way around, This required **very** extensive sanding, as well as the insertion of a thin plastic card shim on the port side, to achieve a smooth and straight nose contour. The intake splitter plates were not only too thick and too large, but are totally the wrong shape, and required extensive sanding and reshaping to achieve the correct thickness and contour.

Compared to the actual build, painting was a 'doddle'. The complete airframe was sprayed white, before masking and painting the red/orange areas. I found an old pot of Warhammer Blazing Orange (subsequently renamed Troll Slayer Orange) which appeared to be the shade required, and two coats were sufficient to give good coverage.

After a coat of 'Finish', the few decals were applied and the whole airframe then received a coat of Galeria Satin varnish. The 'beast' could finally be put to bed!

Given all the issues I experienced with this kit, I can only recommend it to the masochists out there who are determined to have one in their collection!

Steve Komor, July 2025

Building Aoshima's 1/144 Kawasaki C-2

Winning the Phil Camp Memorial Award for Best Asian Military Aircraft post-1945 at Scale Model World 2024 was the highlight of last year's Telford show for me. I was thrilled to receive the award and to get a great prize in the form of a 1/144 Il-62 kit in Ukrainian colours, a super result for me!

The Kawasaki C-2 model, is (according to Scalemates) a new tool kit from Aoshima, first released in 2020. It immediately appealed to me thanks to the colourful camouflage schemes seen on the real thing. I don't find many modern military aircraft visually appealing as there only so many grey schemes I can make before terminal boredom sets in! A good example would be US Navy aircraft, those from the "hi-vis" era look superb, but the current crop of "low-viz" schemes that predominate on today's Navy jets leaves me cold.

Thankfully, the JASDF like a bit of colour on many of their aircraft, including the C-2 which, although it has a lot of grey shades, also has some lovely blue tones too.

The Kawasaki C-2 is an interesting aircraft which has been tailor-made to suit the requirements of the JASDF. I'm sure it would have been a lot cheaper for the Japanese government to buy an "off the shelf" cargo jet, such as the C-17, but I think they clearly see the need to preserve their aircraft industry and at the same time produce a plane that meets their requirements more so than the larger C-17 would have.

To date, as far as I'm aware, no foreign orders for the C-2 have been placed. From a personal perspective, I think the Irish Government should buy a few of them for our "Air Force" as a lack of a military airlift capability is one of many deficiencies identified as part of a review of the military capabilities of the Irish armed forces. There are plans in place to greatly increase the air, sea and land capabilities of Ireland's military but of course, time will tell if they become a reality!

As one should expect from a recently tooled kit, the quality and fit of parts is great, for the most part. I did, however, have a lot of difficulty getting rid of the top fuselage seam between the tailplane and the main wings. After a lot of filling/sanding/priming and swearing (usually in that order!) I got to a point where I was happy with it. I think the problem had more to do with the shape of the plane, insofar as you have the large rear opening to contend with, which makes it easy to put stress on the upper fuselage joint when handling the model, and which I believe was the cause of the seam reappearing after I thought I had exorcised it! If you build the kit with the rear cargo door in the closed position, then I think this would not be an issue.

I decided to build the kit with the rear door open to showcase the lovely, detailed cargo deck, which is painted in an off-white/cream colour, with seat cushions in blue. Aoshima did a good job on the main cargo deck, making it well worth building the kit with everything open, despite the extra work involved in doing so. The flight deck is quite visible through the windscreen, and is pretty basic, but with careful painting, can be made to look quite interesting, and is worth doing.

The other part I had some issues with was the clear windscreen, which I felt could have been a better fit. Ultimately though, I managed to get it to sit correctly in place, which was nice!
I used my go-to primer (Mr Finishing Surfacer 1500 straight from the can, although I can't remember if I used black or grey, I think grey in this case) and once the final ghost seam check was done, I got on with painting it. For the interior, I used Premium German Cream (PL132) from SMS (which I think are terrific paints overall), and for the exterior, I used various shades of MRP. The demarcation of the exterior colours was done using thinly rolled lengths of blue tac.

Once the painting was complete, I used the kit decals (which were perfectly fine, no issues with them), and then after a final coat of semi matt clear, I added the wheels and removed the masks. For weathering, I generally use clay-based washes from Flory models, which I like as they give good results and are easily removed as necessary, unlike oil based washes (which I just do not get on with!).

In the end, I was very pleased at how this kit turned out, and it won a couple of medals in its class at the two Irish shows I entered it in (including my club's own show, the IPMS Ireland Nationals which is usually held about 6 weeks prior to Telford).

But, as I mentioned at the start of this piece, the highlight for me in 2024 was winning the special award from the Asian Air Arms SIG, especially at such a large and prestigious show such as Scale Model World. I plan to bring the model with me to SMW 2025 later this year and display it on the Asian Air Arms SIG table.

I do have an affinity to Japanese military aircraft, as well as those from other Asian nations, and I currently have plans to build many more Asian themed aircraft in the future, but not too many grey ones!

Ronan Donohoe, April 2025

Indonesian Air Force Serial Numbers explained

Serial numbers given to Indonesian Air Force (AURI, and since 1971, TNI-AU) have a logical sequence. Consisting of a letter and four numerals (but not always worn together in the past), there is a meaning behind them.

The first aircraft used a civilian style of recognition, for example, Anson RI-003 and C-47 RI-002.

Normally the numbers following the letter(s) advance sequentially, the first two denoting the type {e.g. 27 for Su-27, 30 for Su-30, 13 for Hercules, 27 being Friendship}, with the following pair the order of delivery. There were some out-of-sequence numbers as well, notably the VIP L.100-30 A-1314 and C-130H-30 A-1341, along with the solitary Boeing 707 A-7002. These numbers were chosen as their sum equalled nine, a lucky number in Indonesian culture. The three Jetstars received auspicious numbers to denote important dates in Air Force history.

Current and recently used designations:

TT – Tempur Taktis (tactical combat) {e.g. T-50 TT-5016, Hawk T.53 TT-5301, Mk.209 TT-0211, A-4E TT-0411, OV-10E TT-1011, EMB-314 TT-3107}

TS – Tempur Strategis (strategic combat) {ie Su-27 TS-2701, F-16C TS-1637, F-5E TS-0511, Su-30MKI TS-3010}, note that F-16B & D and F-5F two-seaters are also in the TS range.

TL – Tempur Latih (combat trainer) {e.g. Hawk Mk.109 TL-0101, TA-4J TL-0416}

A – Angkut (transport) (e.g. C-130H A-1332, C-295 A-2910, Boeing 737 A-7304, F.28 A-2804, C.212 A-2112, CN-235 A-2302}

H – Helikopter (helicopter) {e.g. AS.332L H-3206, Bell 47G H-4711, Hughes 500 H-5002, AW 101 H-1001}

HL – Helikopter Latih (training helicopter) {e.g. EC-120 HL-1203}

HR – rescue helicopter {e.g. AS.365N HR-3605, Bo 105 HR-1518, Bell 206 HR-2601}

HT – transport helicopter {e.g. SA.330 HT-3309}

LM – Latih Mula (primary trainer) {e.g. AS.202 Bravo LM-2039, T-41D LM-4188}

LD – Latih Dasar (basic and intermediate trainers) {e.g. KT-1 LD-0101, T-34C LD-3416, G.120 LD-1211}

LL – Latih Lanjut (advanced trainer) {e.g. Hawk T.53 LL-5305}

LK – Latih Khusus (special duty trainer, no longer is use) {e.g. SF.260D LK-2602}

L – Laith (trainer) {e.g. Cessna 172 L-1702, A-1 Husky L-0109, PA-32 L-3201}

Occasionally other letters were added to denote special roles, **I** for surveillance {e.g. Boeing 737 AI-7301, CN-235 AI-2317}, **X** for experimental {e.g. CN-235 AX-2336, AW 139 HX-1301, AS.355 HX-5506, H225M HX-2228}, **G** for glider (e.g. SGS-2 G-002, H-201 G-1003}.

Other letters used are **ST** (likely to be an agricultural abbreviation) {e.g. PC-6/B ST-0602, PZL-104 ST-1410}, **R** {e.g. J-3 Cub R-307, Auster R-70}, and **IN** {e.g. PZL-104 IN-033}.

The recently delivered Dassault Falcon 8X's wear A-0707 and A-0808, and the Presidential Boeing 737-800 is appropriately serialled A-001.

AURI designations were partly anglicised, and had both three and four digit numbers:

F – fighter {e.g. MiG-17F F-1112, MiG-21F F-2158, with the F carried on the rear fuselage, Sabre Mk.32 F-8614, MiG-19S F-1906, Il-10 F-373 (hardly a fighter!)}

T – transport {e.g. Skyvan T-702, which became A-0702, C-47 T-498, Constellation T-1042}

M – bomber {e.g. Tu-16KS M-1604, B-26B M-265, Il-28 M-821, with the M carried on the rear fuselage}

H – helicopter {e.g. Mi-6 H-272}

B – trainer {e.g. BT-13 B-633, T-34C B-404}

A – advanced trainer {e.g. T-33A A-3302 (confusingly becoming TS later!), L-29 A-2904}

J – jet trainer {e.g. Vampire T.55 J-701, MiG-15UTI J-754 (although J-1110 existed!), T-33A J-3333}

S – strike {e.g. OV-10E S-101}

PB – patrol bomber {e.g. PBY-5A PB-501, and HU-16B PB-524 later becoming IR, e.g. IR-0220}

P – unknown {NU-90 P-303}

The Mustangs and Mitchells operated early in AURI service used the letters **F** and **M** respectively depicting their roles, but the numerals were retained from the original Dutch identities.

A T-6G Texan was serialled I-028.

The pair of Polish TS-8 Bies that were obtained were STUPA 01 and 02, the meaning of this has eluded me…..!

And finally, their first Airbus A400 Grizzly has been rolled out, its serial (unsurprisingly!) is A-4001.

Should anyone be able to add to this narrative, please contact the editor or message me via Facebook.

Michael A. Burton, May 2025

The Lockheed Jetstar in Indonesia

The AURI/TNI-AU operated a total of three Lockheed Jetstars, the first arriving in 1962 as a gift to President Sukarno from US President John F Kennedy (along with a pair of VIP -equipped helicopters, S-58 and S-61A), and incorporated into 17 Skwadron.

The "T" denoted the transport function of the aircraft, with the serials as below and their derivation:

T-17845 "Irian" (17th August 1945, date of the founding of the Republic of Indonesia)

T-9446 "Sapta Marga" (9th April 1946, date of the inauguration of the AURI)

T-1645 "Pancaslia" (1st June 1945, date of the founding of State of Pancaslia)

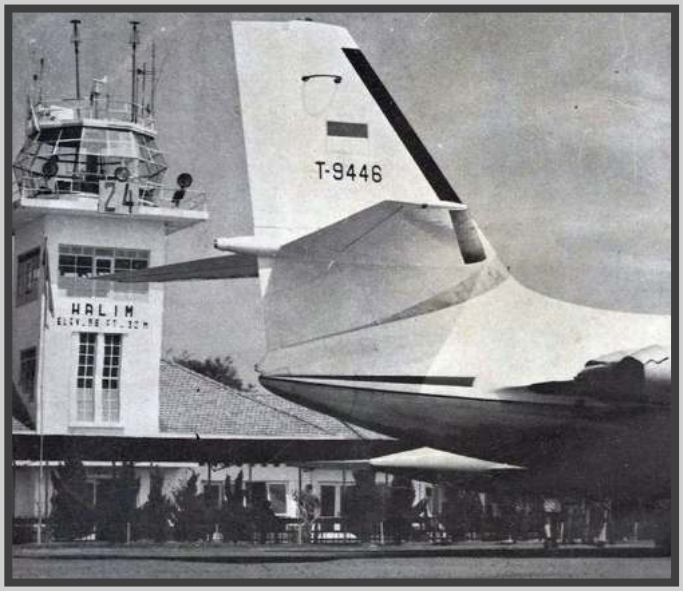
The aircraft were used for official government visits to neighbouring countries and as air command posts.

The AURI changed its name in 1971 to Tentara Nasional Indonesia-Angkatan Udara (TNI-AU), and the "T" was altered to "A" to denote Angkut. They appeared to have been operated until the early 1980's when replaced by Fokker F.28 Fellowships.

Two of the airframes remained in the country, A-9446 being donated to Garuda Indonesia (the state airline) in a non-flyable condition for crew training, and in 2000 it became a gate guardian at the airline's training centre. A-1645 was placed in the TNI-AU museum after being repainted as T-9446, but has since been reverted to its original markings.

The third aircraft was sold abroad during the 1970's, and was eventually scrapped in the USA.

All three aircraft shared the same colour scheme, basically a natural metal fuselage below the windows and white above, a double red flash and cheat line between, with wings and fuel tanks appearing to be in painted aluminium. The serial was carried on the fin above the tailplanes, air force titles above the forward windows in black, and their individual names in red just under the cockpit. National markings of the red and white pentagons were applied to the rear fuselage, both upper wings and the lower left, with AURI (later TNI-AU) in black under the right wing. A national flag adorned the fin above the serial number, and the presidential seal was applied to the access door on the left side.

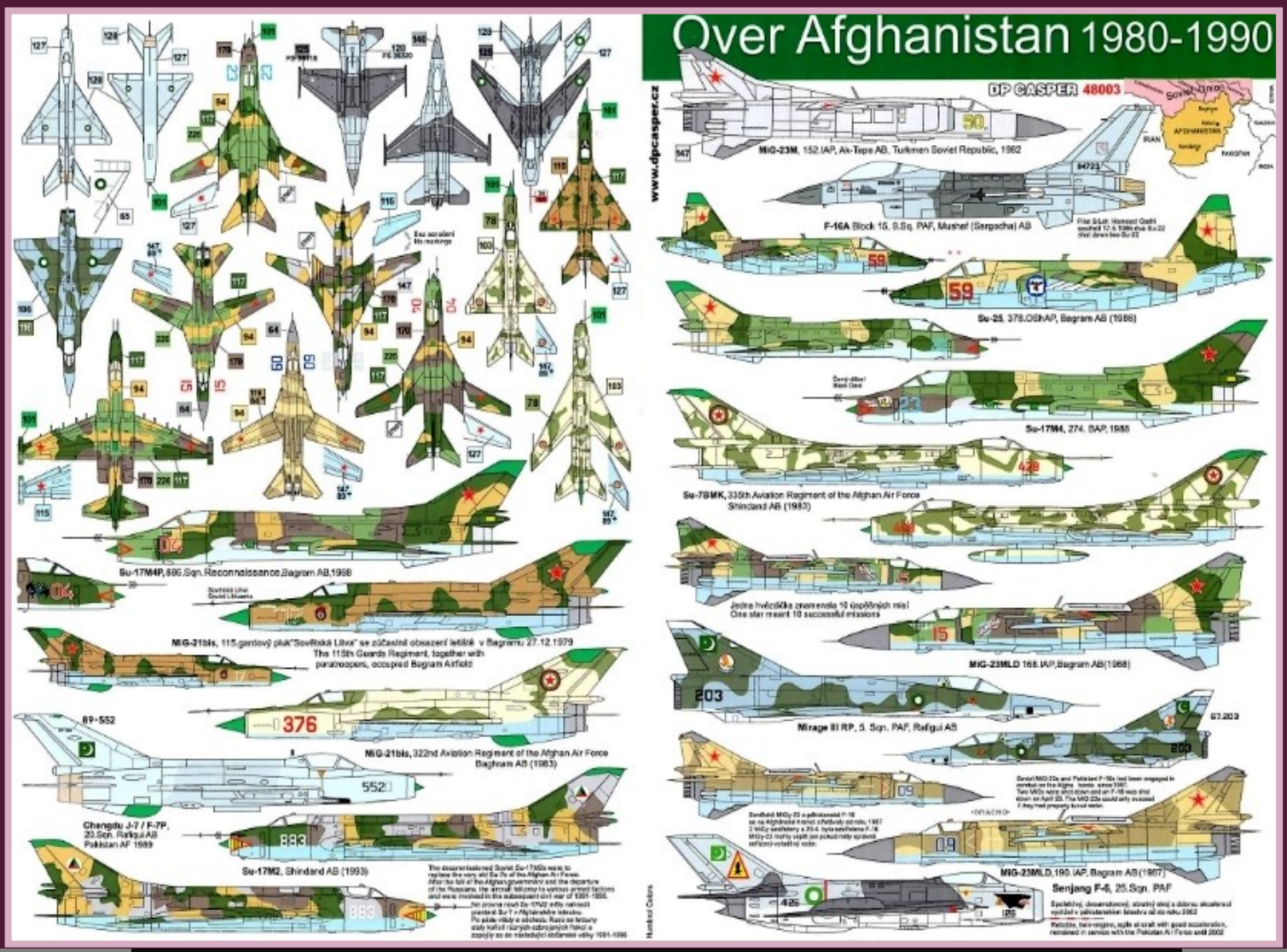


Michael A. Burton, May 2025

DP Casper – "Over Afghanistan 1980-1990" Decal Sheet (Product No. DPD48-003)

It would appear that DP Casper, a prolific 1:72 scale decal manufacturer from the Czech Republic, are reaching back into their product catalogue and re-issuing some of their previous subjects in 1:48 scale. Taking into account some of their previous subject matter, this would be a very welcome move for those of us who prefer to model in the larger scale. As one would expect from the title, this particular release includes a fair number of aircraft types operated by the Soviet Air Force during their occupation of Afghanistan for most of the 80s, but scattered in amongst the Sukhoi Su-17s, Su-25, Mikoyan MiG-21 and MiG-23s are a number of aircraft operated by Asian Air Arms, which makes the decal sheet one that will be of interest to us.

This release actually covers no less than fourteen aircraft, and this includes seven operated by Asian Air Arms. The 1980s was a busy time for the Pakistan Air Force, undertaking one of its primary roles in policing the extensive border with Afghanistan, and there were numerous periods of tension between the neighbours, further heightened by regular air incursions across the border. As a result, Pakistan Air Force types are well represented. A rather anonymous grey camouflaged GD F-16A Block 15 Fighting Falcon, operated by 9 Squadron features kill markings signifying the two Afghan Air Force Su-22s that were downed in May 1986. This contrasts nicely with the Chengdu J-7/F-7P (s/n 552), which also features two-tone grey camouflage, as operated by 20 Squadron. A rather more colourful Shenyang F-6 (Chinese licence-built Mikoyan MiG-19) operated by 25 Squadron features a three-tone grey camouflage scheme with full colour national and unit insignia. The final Pakistan Air Force option is an unusual Dassault Mirage IIIRP reconnaissance variant (s/n 203), operated by 5 Squadron and again with full colour national and unit insignia over the standard dark green/Ocean Grey/light blue camouflage scheme. We don't see many decals for the Dassault Mirage IIIRP so this is most welcome. Two aircraft operated by the Afghan Air Force in the early 1980s are also included; a Sukhoi Su-7BMK (Red 428) operated by the 335th Aviation Regiment at Shindland AB in a rather attractive medium green/sand over light blue camouflage scheme. The second aircraft featured is a Mikoyan MiG-21bis (Red 376), which also sports a medium green/sand camouflage scheme, though more typical of that found on MiG-21s supplied to Ethiopia. The markings are for an aircraft operated by the 332nd Aviation Regiment from Baghram AB in 1983. Last but not least is another interesting example of a former Soviet aircraft; A Sukhoi Su-17M2 (White 883) that was operated by one of the Afghan Air Force factions after the withdrawal of the Soviets in 1989. This particular aircraft sports a four-tone green/brown camouflage scheme over light blue undersurfaces and was reportedly flown from Shindland AB in 1992-93.



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 required for each aircraft. Individual stencils and maintenance markings will need to be sourced from the respective kit decal sheets. I believe the decals are printed by the BOA Agency so their quality is assured, with perfect registration and excellent colour saturation. As always with DP Casper decal releases, my only reservation is with the quality of the Decal Placement Instructions (DPIs). The modeller 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.

In spite of my misgivings about the DPIs, this is a great decal sheet for Asian Air Arms fans and, in particular, for those that are interested in aircraft that have been involved in combat operations. Some additional research into the colour schemes will be necessary but there are some excellent on-line references and I would also recommend the title 'Wings over the Hindu Kush – Air Forces, Aircraft and Air Warfare of Afghanistan 1989-2001' by Helion Publishing in their Asia@War series (and reviewed in a previous edition of the Asian Air Arms newsletter). Although this volume deals with a later period, there are a number of photographs and colour side profiles that could help with determining the more precise colours and markings applied to the Afghan subjects. Taking into account the rather spartan DPIs, this latest release from DP Casper is not the cheapest of decal sheets but, on balance, I would still highly recommend it to members of the SIG. Potential buyers should also 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.

Mark ATTRILL

May 2025

Build Article - Airfix 1:48 Scale SEPECAT Jaguar GR.1/GR.1A (Kit Reference AX11010) PART 1

Time and space in the previous edition of the newsletter precluded me from completing anything more than a quick look at the brand-new Airfix 1:48 scale kit of the SEPECAT Jaguar GR.1/GR.1A, but I already knew that this kit would leapfrog my ever-increasing 'Work in Progress' programme of kit builds and so here we are!

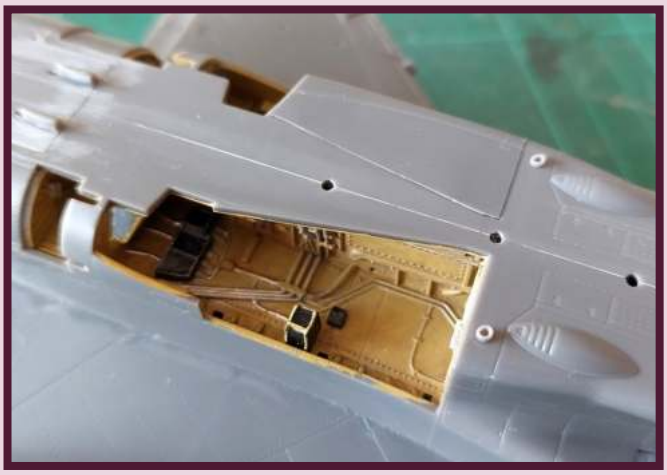
First, a little bit of background for context. The SEPECAT Jaguar is almost certainly #1 or #2 on my all-time favourite post-war combat aircraft list. I can still remember building the original Airfix 1:72 scale kit, first released back in 1970, which featured one of the pre-production examples with the short tail and other tell-tale features. Airfix subsequently produced an updated kit, which reflected the major changes to RAF production examples, including the characteristic 'chisel' nose and RWR fairing on an enlarged fin, in 1978, and I used this later kit as the basis for building an entire Squadron of RAF aircraft in all of the different Squadron markings, thanks to Modeldecal, one of the first aftermarket decal manufacturers to emerge in the UK.

When I joined the Royal Air Force in 1979, the Jaguar was at the apogee of its service with no less than eight front-line Squadrons and an Operational Conversion Unit equipped with the aircraft, including five Squadrons in what was then West Germany. My first tour of duty after training was to RAF St Athan in South Wales, which was at the time a major aircraft maintenance unit. I was initially disappointed with this prospect since, like most young officers and as an aircraft fan, I had wanted to go to an operational flying station. My disappointment was soon assuaged when I discovered that the base was, quite often, busier than some of our standard flying stations; at the time RAF St Athan conducted major servicing on five of the RAF's most significant front-line combat aircraft including the F-4 Phantom, BAC Canberra, Avro Vulcan, Harrier GR.3 and Handley-Page Victor, with frequent post-servicing air tests and arrivals and departures throughout each week. We also had a regular influx of other types utilising our excellent Visiting Aircraft Servicing Flight. Regrettably, RAF Jaguars were serviced at RAF Abingdon, another of our Maintenance Units, but in 1981 RAF St Athan was tasked with the receipt and temporary storage of the Jaguar fleet that had been initially loaned to the Indian Air Force, pending the arrival of their own aircraft in the early 1980s. This was at the height of the Cold War, and RAF Abingdon were unable to cope with any additional aircraft as they worked through the standard RAF maintenance programme. I can still remember the rather scruffy external appearance of the ex-Indian Air Force aircraft, that had clearly suffered from the harsh effects of the climatic conditions in which they operated, which contrasted sharply with those in Europe, and I vowed to reproduce one of these aircraft in the future.

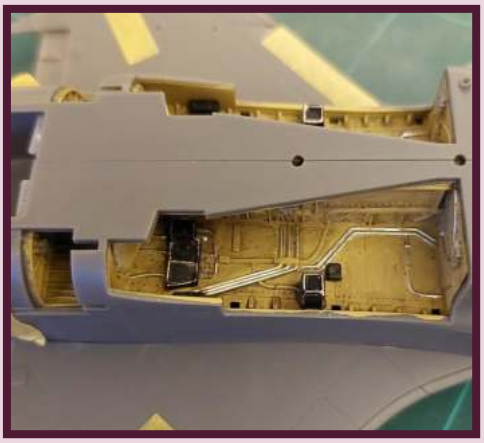
So, after a quick review of the kit's instructions, I started to look at what extras I might utilise in completing this build. For once, I have elected not to use too much in the way of aftermarket. The reason for this is two-fold. Firstly, since the kit is brand-new, there is not actually very much available on the market and secondly, in many cases, the level of detail offered in the kit does not warrant spending extra on what would be luxury items rather than improvements. That said, I will probably use an aftermarket Martin-Baker Mk.9 Ejection seat, and I have added some Indian-specific weapon sets too; the kit comes with a nice range of stores but these are largely limited to those carried by early RAF aircraft so I have elected to use an Eduard BRASSIN set of Matra R-550 Magic Air-to-Air Missiles for the overwing pylons and ResKit 1000lb free-fall bombs with the centreline pylon, together with the kit-supplied 1200L drop tanks.

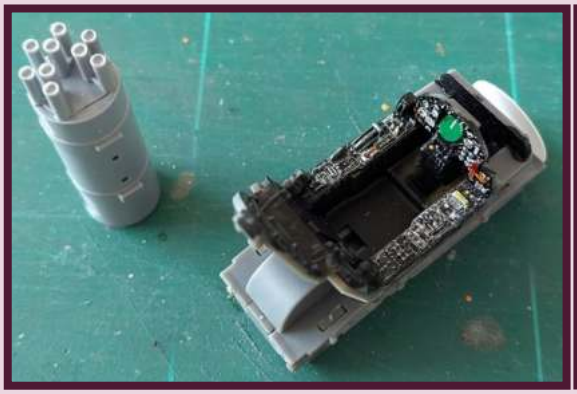
Now some quick comments on the quality of the parts contained in this kit, to reinforce what I said in the original preview of this kit. In the last few years, we have witnessed a step-change in the Airfix approach to kit manufacture, with all of their recent releases providing parts that are equal in quality to those that we find in Eduard, ICM and Tamiya kits, for example. The SEPECAT Jaguar kit appears to have raised the bar even further, with some early and very impressive tests revealing a superb fit. The surface detail is phenomenal with very subtle panel lines, rivets and, where appropriate, raised airframe detail. I am fortunate enough to have access to a real airframe in my local air museum and can attest to the attention to detail that the Airfix designers have introduced with this release. One area that **will** require some attention is the removal of some barely discernible seams associated with the slide-mould process that Airfix have adopted, mainly for the fuselage parts. I must stress that these seams really are difficult to spot and early on-line builds only revealed their presence under a layer of paint. One runs along the upper rear fuselage between the wing mount and as far as the brake parachute housing. A second one appears along the length of the lower fuselage from the rear of the forward undercarriage bay to the LRMTS fairing; A swipe with a grade 600/800 sanding sponge will quickly eradicate these seams. As previously stated, the check also confirmed that the kit could be used to build both the early Indian Air Force examples, originally on loan from the RAF, or the slightly later SEPECAT Jaguar International (IS). Externally, the only major difference between the two variants was the installation of over-wing rails for self-defence air-to-air missiles (AAMs) on the Jaguar IS. These items are included in the kit since the RAF retrofitted this facility prior to employment in the first Gulf War 1990/91.

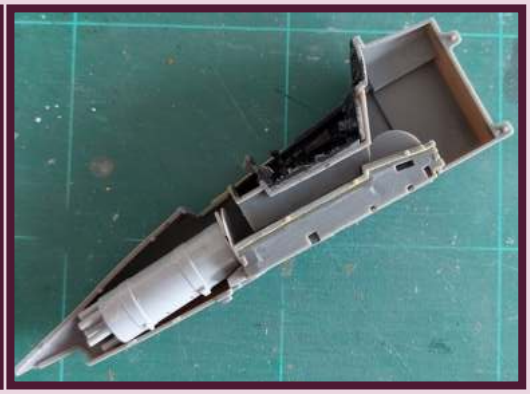
In a departure from my normal practice, I elected to begin with the main fuselage and the highly detailed main undercarriage bays, rather than the suggested build sequence which begins with the cockpit tub and forward fuselage, and I started at Stage 24. Each bay consists of four parts and these can be assembled prior to or after painting, together with the three-part air brake bays. I chose to assemble them first, and found the biggest challenge was determining the exact shade of Yellow Zinc Chromate applied to the undercarriage and air brake bays on the Jaguar. There are several proprietary brands readily available, but I found these to be too bright in colour. I spent several hours blending my favoured AMMO MiG ATOM



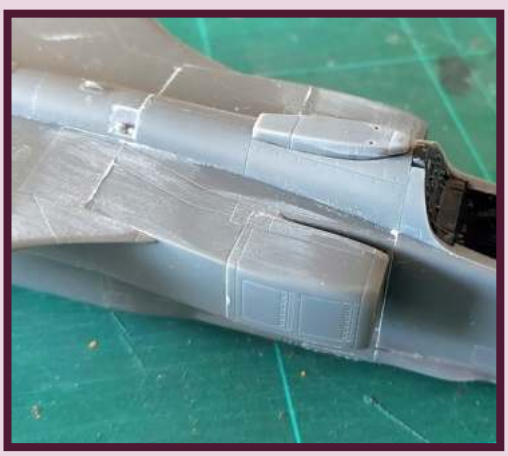
colours before I settled on a mix using Faded Yellow (ATOM20016) into which I introduced a few drops of Schokobraun (ATOM20062 (RAL8017) at a time. Do take your time and apply the latter to the Faded Yellow sparingly until the correct shade is achieved: I used approximately 12-15 drops of the dark brown shade to roughly 50% of the Faded Yellow (10ml). Don't forget to remove the injection moulding stubs from the rear faces of the undercarriage bay parts otherwise these will snag the final assembly of parts into the fuselage, and paint both sides of Parts D2/3 since these are visible if both the undercarriage doors and airbrakes are posed in the open position. I then spent several hours over two days completing the detailed painting of the bays. The highly detailed Airfix components include a lot of connection boxes and electrical and hydraulic lines, all of which need to be picked out in black, light grey or silver. Once this detail paintwork has been completed and left to dry, a final application of your favourite wash will really make all the detail pop. The bays include some neat 'tongue and groove' to help keep everything aligned when the fuselage halves are brought together. I also chose to paint the fuselage interior forward of the undercarriage bulkheads with matt black to avoid a 'see through' appearance since the kit does not include any intake trunking, not forgetting to insert the rear bulkhead (Part C17) at Stage 36. The lower rear fuselage (Part C5), a part that has been problematical on previous Jaguar builds, just pops into place with the bare minimum of sanding, which serves to illustrate the superb engineering that is prevalent throughout the construction of this kit. The leading edge of this part has two prominent fairings which are solid; a closer inspection of the real airframe revealed that these are hollow so I used a micro drill to improve the look on the model, and I would suggest performing this task before assembly.



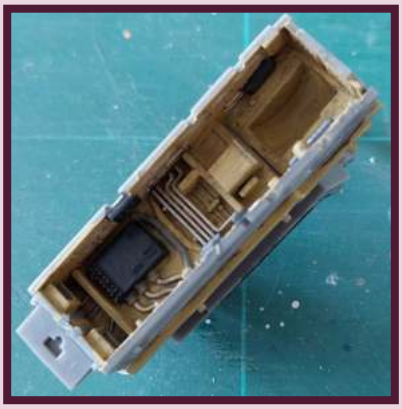


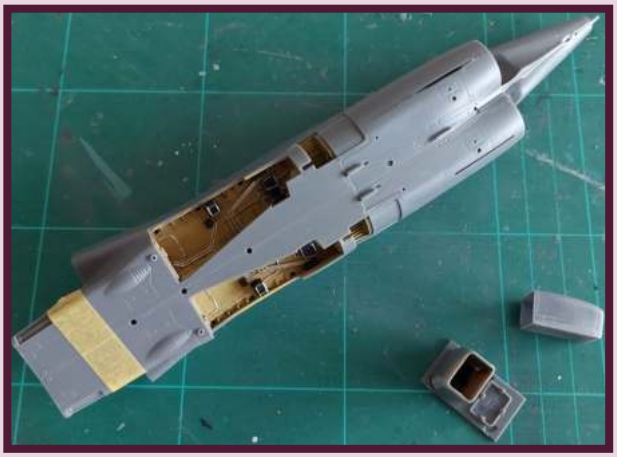


I then returned to Stage 1, to make a start on the cockpit tub, which consists of six finely detailed parts. The main instrument panel and side consoles have excellent raised detail that would respond well to detailed painting and dry brushing; To expedite this build, I elected to use the kit supplied decals. The decal for the instrument panel was excellent, but I found those supplied for the consoles contrasted too much with the overall black cockpit colour and needed to be toned down. I then used some dry brushing techniques, using light grey and polished metal to replicate the wear found in these cockpits. I also utilised the Zinc Chromate Yellow on the foot well to show the wear in this area, which is quite distinct. Unlike previous Airfix kits, the instructions make scant reference to the need for weight to be placed in the nose, with no weight recommendations; I elected to fill a Soviet rocket pod from my spares box with Deluxe Material 'Liquid Gravity' and cemented this in the space between the cockpit forward bulkhead and the LRMTS fairing window. The cockpit tub and forward undercarriage bay form one assembly (Stages 13-15), which fits neatly into the starboard fuselage half. It should be noted that the colour callouts for the forward undercarriage bay are wrong; it should be the same Zinc Chromate Yellow shade as

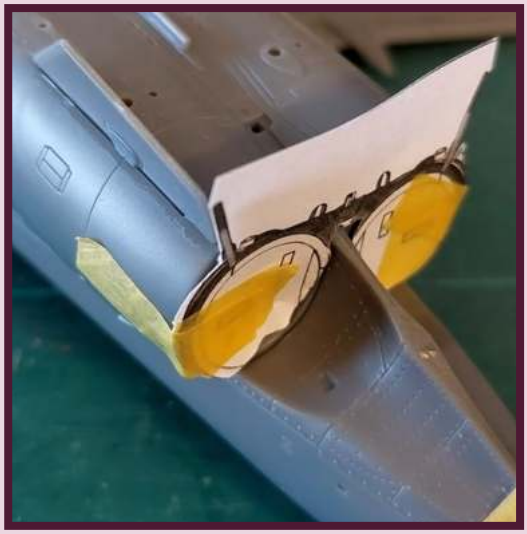


that for the main undercarriage bays. This bay is also superbly rendered and will really benefit from some detailed painting and weathering before assembly. I also decided to leave the Mk.9 ejection seat out at this stage since I was still sourcing a suitable pilot figure to occupy the cockpit. Frequent test fitting of the forward and main fuselage sections indicated that there could be the presence of a very small but noticeable step around the join; I ascertained that omitting the use of cement on the rear part of the forward fuselage section during final assembly (Stage 21b) would provide sufficient flex to avoid any step when it came to marrying the two major components at Stage 40 and this was indeed the case. I then assembled and fitted the two-part air intake fairings, having painted the interiors first, along with the fin. This is one of the few areas of the kit that could benefit from an aftermarket improvement set since the two prominent spring-loaded supplementary air intake doors on the outer surfaces of the intakes are moulded in the closed position but are often observed partially open when the engines are running (***Ed.*** - One manufacturer, Matters of Scale, has already produced a resin set for this - Matters Of Scale Aircraft detailing - MOS488503 | Hannants).





The main wing assembly was next up with Step 48 focussed on drilling out the holes for the wing pylons, so by this stage one has to have decided on the final stores/weapons fit for the chosen model. The three-piece main wing assembly is then fitted to the fuselage assembly and Airfix recommend the use of clamps or clothes pegs to hold the assembly in place while the adhesive sets. The fit is actually very good although I have noticed that the leading edge of the starboard wing has a tendency to spring up at the wing root; this would appear to be a universal, but very minor, issue since I have already encountered it on a second Jaguar build, so the recommendation for clamps is sound. If assembled carefully, one ends up using very little filler on a join that has proved troublesome on other Jaguar kits. There are a number of smaller components that are then fitted to the upper wing/fuselage structure (at Stages 53-57) and these may need a modicum of filler. The final custom-designed jig included in the kit is used to aid the assembly of the upper fuselage intake fairing and, in particular, the twin aerials that are mounted on this fairing. The design of the jig avoids potential damage as a result of drilling flashed over holes that may otherwise be too close to the edge of the plastic part (Part E13). I backtracked a little at this stage, to fit the rear fuselage strakes and the cannon exhaust fairings and troughs (Stages 41-43). These are two areas that have proved to be troublesome in my previous Jaguar kit builds. For the former, Airfix rather helpfully include a diagram at the bottom of Page 9 of their kit instructions showing the alignment of the strakes, and I found that reducing this to 90% on the photocopier provided me with a paper template that was just the right size to tape to the exhaust nozzle apertures to help with this process. The moulding of the separate cannon trough and associated exhaust gas ports look to be quite complex but, once again, any fears I had regarding their fit were unfounded and the same can be said for the two-part overwing pylons. I have to say that at this rather late stage in the build it was quite disconcerting not to have had to use much filler, such was the superb fit of parts, although care does need to be taken with some of the tolerances, which are very tight. I test fitted the horizontal stabilisers but, since they proved to be a push fit, left them off to aid with painting the main airframe. As I was reminded during my walkaround of the real jet, the lens that sits behind the LRMTS windows in the nose, is quite a prominent feature and I decided to experiment with replicating this, fitting a suitably shaped piece of plasticard in Part P7 (taking care not to fog the windows) and utilising a clear lens from a Little-Cars set I had in my spare box. These items are primarily designed for cars but suitably sized examples can be used in aircraft models; the 3.5mm item fitted perfectly and was secured with canopy glue.



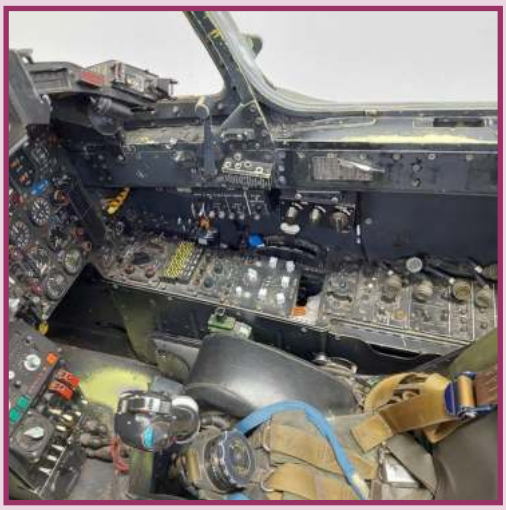
I took a short break from the main kit assembly to focus on some of the sub-assemblies that would be omitted from the kit until final assembly, including the exhaust nozzles, flying control surfaces and four-part drop tanks. The four-part exhaust nozzles feature some nice detail on the interior surfaces and benefit from some careful dry brushing, particularly on the inner petal assembly. It should be noted that the outer surfaces of the exhaust nozzles often differ in shade so one is left to decide, although a dull aluminium shade appears to be the most common. One curious omission is a lack of detail on the rear surfaces of the AN/ALE40 Flare dispensers (Parts H3/4) which are fitted to the rear fuselage area adjacent to the fuselage strakes. These should feature thirty shot flare dispensers but the kit parts are totally devoid of any detail so I will need to wait for suitable aftermarket replacements. The flying control surfaces are fairly complex assemblies, with each of the inner and outer flaps/ailerons requiring the fitting of two separate actuator housings. Apparently, the application and use of the separate parts avoids any issues with sink marks on single-piece mouldings. I then cemented the ailerons in place but left off the flap assemblies at this stage. Another departure from the kit assembly instructions now followed as I decided which parts should be assembled prior to the application of the main scheme. By now, I had decided to display the model with the undercarriage doors in the deployed position, to show off all of the lovely interior detail, so I used the alternative closed doors (Parts D17/18) to mask off the largest section of the main undercarriage bay, with bits of aftermarket packing foam to blank off the remaining parts of the nose and main undercarriage bays and the airbrake bays. I also fitted the inner wing and centreline stores pylons and the cockpit coaming and windscreen, before blanking off the cockpit area, with the airframe now ready to visit the paintshop.

In part 2, I will focus on the application of the paint scheme and decal markings, together with final assembly, which will include the addition of the rather complex undercarriage and doors, together with the exhaust nozzles, stores, weapons and airframe details for my first Indian Air Force example.

Mark Attrill – June 2025

Mark has very kindly sent a set of photos of a real Jaguar, highlighting areas covered in this first part of his article, which I am sure will be very useful to modellers.


CAUTION



S.A.F.O. Extract (January 1984)

The embryo Indonesian Air Force at

On August 17th, 1945, three days after Japan's unconditional surrender, the Nationalist movement in the former Netherlands East Indies proclaimed the Indonesian Republic. The Dutch government opposed this move, and so for four years the Indonesian Republic and the Netherlands were at war.

In order to defend their newly-proclaimed independence, the Indonesians formed the People's Security Corps, of which the Air Service Volunteer Corps (ASVC) was soon to become an important part. The first priority of this new air arm was to recover and repair as many ex-Japanese aircraft as possible from the airfields and dumps on the islands. These machines formed the first, and for a while the only equipment of the ASVC. It is probable that only about 50 aircraft were ever made airworthy in this fashion; however, a much larger number of machines received Indonesian markings even though they never took to the air.

Few Indonesians had any combat experience or even a rudimentary knowledge of flying. So, a flying school was started at Djakja under Colonel Adisutjipto who, as a former Netherlands East Indies pilot, had seen combat during the Japanese invasion.

By 1946, the poor equipment and lack of trained personnel, together with attacks by the Dutch forces, had reduced the small number of aircraft available to a mere handful. It was obvious that, if the air arm was to continue, a new source of equipment had to be found. The first 'new' aircraft was a C-47 purchased with funds provided by sympathetic friends in the USA. This was soon followed by a DC-3, Avro Anson, DH.86, Stinson L-5 and a PBY-5A Catalina. Training was now also undertaken in India, that country also providing aid in the form of advisors.

The superiority of the Dutch forces continued to take its toll and, by December 27th 1949m when Holland finally recognized the existence of the Republic of Indonesia, all of the original Japanese aircraft had been lost or grounded. However, the part they played in these early days was of the utmost importance to the embryo republic and is still venerated by the present-day Indonesian Air Force.

The following is as accurate and complete a list as possible of all the aircraft used by the ASVC:

1 Kawanishi H6K5
6 Kawasaki Ki-61
1 Mitsubishi Ki-21
8 Mitsubishi Ki-51
5 Nakajima Ki-43
2 Mansyu Ki-49
? Tachikawa Ki-55
20 Yokosuka Willow
1 Mitsubishi F1M2

Fig. A: **Bristol Blenheim IV**. This aircraft was one of those abandoned by the RAF in Java in 1942. It was made airworthy by fitting it with 950-HP Nakajima Sakae engines, and it made several flights from Jokacarata in 1946. It is natural metal overall. The rudder carries the standard Indonesian red upper- and white lower-sections. Wings and fuselage carry the modified red/white form of the Japanese Hinomara with a white lower half. This, the original Indonesian national marking, appears in six positions as shown in Fig. K. .

Fig. B: **Kawasaki Ki-48 'Lily'**. This machine was one of several aircraft used in Djakarta in January 1946. It is finished in mid-grey overall with an olive-green mottle on the upper surfaces. The propeller blades are red-brown. All markings as for Fig. A

Fig. C: **Mitsubishi F1M2 'Pete'**. This aircraft has dark green upper surfaces, but the paint has weathered to the extent that it appears to be mottled in natural metal. The undersides are grey. The letters and the band on the float are red, and the spinner is red-brown. The usual markings, described above, appear on this aircraft.

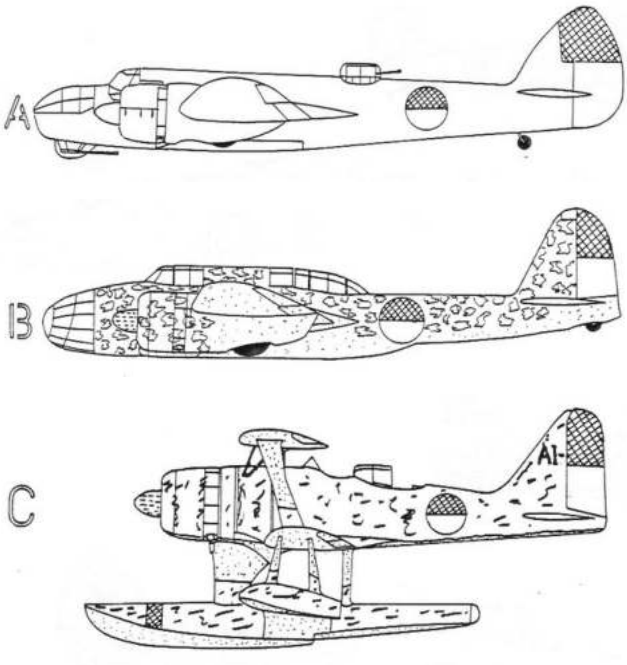


Fig. D: **Nakajima Ki-43 'Oscar'**. One of the machines salvaged from a dump at Djakarta in 1946. The markings of this particular aircraft suggest that it was made from the parts of at least two aircraft. The upper wing and front fuselage are in olive green over natural metal. The rear fuselage apparently comes from a different aircraft, and is dark green. Undersides are mid-grey. The codes are white and the spinner is red-brown. The anti-glare panel is matt dark blue. Standard markings are carried, Fig. K shows a plan-view of this aircraft.

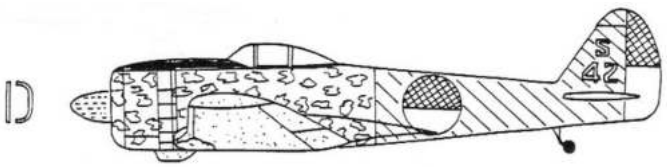


Fig. E: **Douglas C-47 'Dakota'**. This was the first aircraft bought by the ASVC. It was purchased in India with funds provided by friends in the USA. It first operated in the markings shown, but was later given to Indonesian Airways, where it was assigned the code RI-001. It is shown here finished in natural metal with a small red-white fin flash. Markings on the wings are as in Fig. L, and numbers are in black.

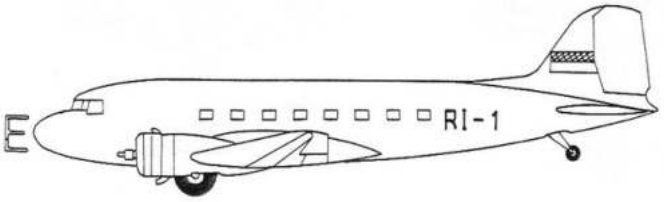


Fig. F: **Yokosuka Type 93 'Willow'**. One of the main types in use by the early air arm, serving as both a trainer and a light bomber. An example, on display in the Indonesian Air Force Museum, is finished in dark chocolate brown overall with white letters and numbers. The rectangular form of the national markings appear in all six positions, but there is no tail flash.

Fig. G: **Mitsubishi Ki-51 'Sonia'**. Another of the more numerous aircraft in ASVC service, it is finished in dark green on the upper surfaces and mid-grey below. The spinner is red-brown and lettering is white. The roundel form of the national marking is applied to all six positions.

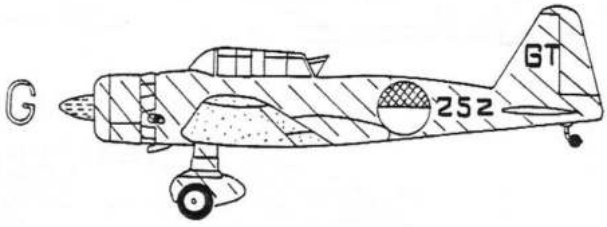


Fig. H: **Tachikawa Ki-55 'Ida'**. This machine force-landed at Kemajoran airfield on Batavia in April 1946. It is finished in mid-blue-grey on all surfaces, mottled with dark blue-green on the upper surfaces of the wings and fuselage. National markings are carried in six positions, and numbers are black.

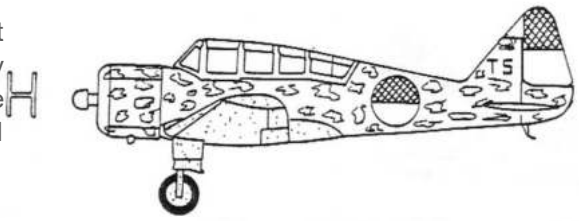
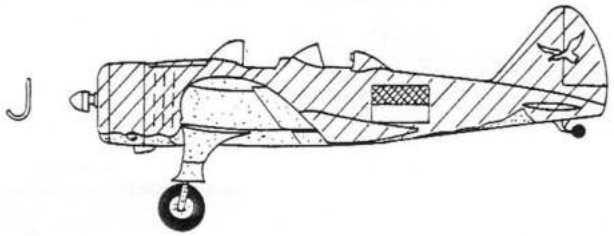
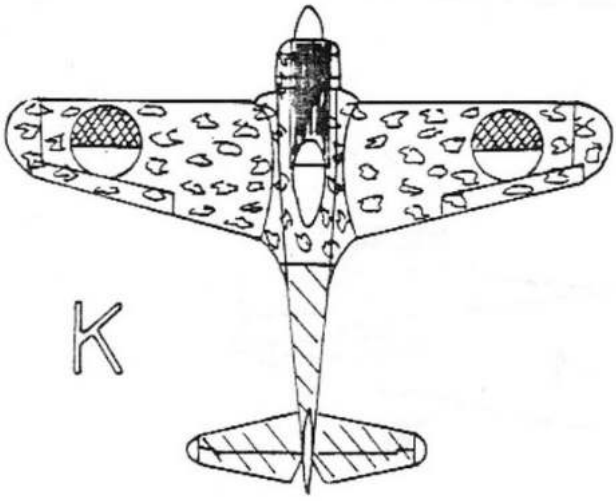
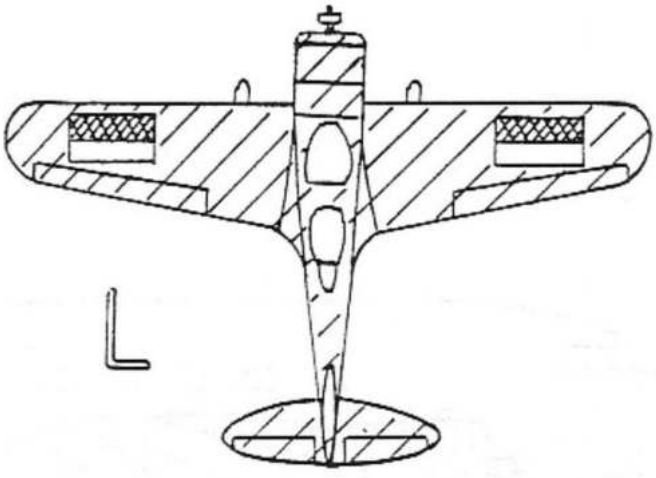


Fig. J: **Mansyu Ki-79**. This machine made the first official flight by an ASVC aircraft on October 10th, 1945, and it is now (January 1984) in the Air Force Museum in Jakarta. It is finished in chocolate brown upper surfaces with mid-grey undersides. The rectangular form of the national marking was applied to six positions. The bird on the tail is white. Fig. L shows a plan view of this aircraft.







Bob Massey,
Nottingham,
England,
January 1984

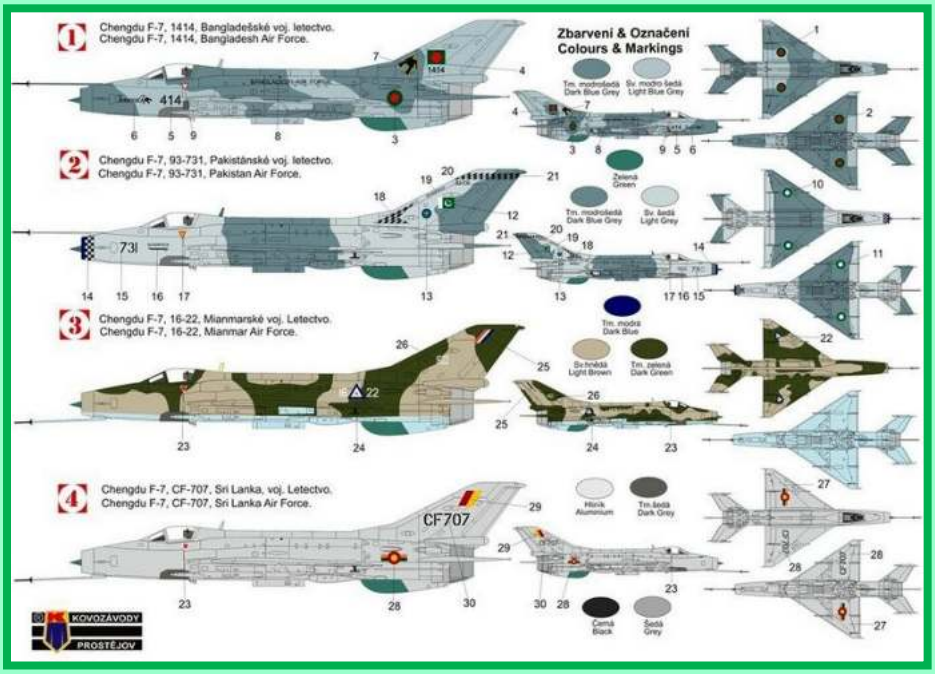
In-box review - KP's Chengdu F-7

A very pleasant surprise awaited me on my return from my recent holiday in France. Mark, our esteemed SIG leader, is currently deep in the throes of a house sale and move, and is consequently unable to devote as much time as he would wish to preparing copy for the Newsletter. This being so, he has forwarded this kit to me for a review, and a build (which will appear in a later issue). I was absolutely delighted, as I have long wanted to be able to add a Bangladeshi F-7 to my collection.

KP's usual end-opening box features a very evocative painting, by artist Carlos Alonso, of a pair of Bangladesh Air Force aircraft soaring skywards above a forest landscape. A small triangle in the bottom corner informs us that this is a new kit for 2025.

On opening the box, one is presented with two dark grey sprues, a separately-packed clear sprue with two alternative canopies (although only one is appropriate for an F-7), and a very nice decal sheet featuring markings to allow the modeller to build any one of four machines operated by different Asian air arms. These are as follows:

1. Chengdu F-7 1414 of the Bangladesh Air Force.
2. Chengdu F-7 93-731 of the Pakistan Air Force.
3. Chengdu F-7 16-22 of the Myanmar Air Force.
4. Chengdu F-7 CF-707 of the Sri Lankan Air Force.



The back of the box features 4-view painting and decal placement instructions for all four aircraft. Colours are given only by name, and do not reference any particular paint ranges. No FS numbers are given, so modellers will have to find alternative ways to identify the exact colours required for their chosen build.

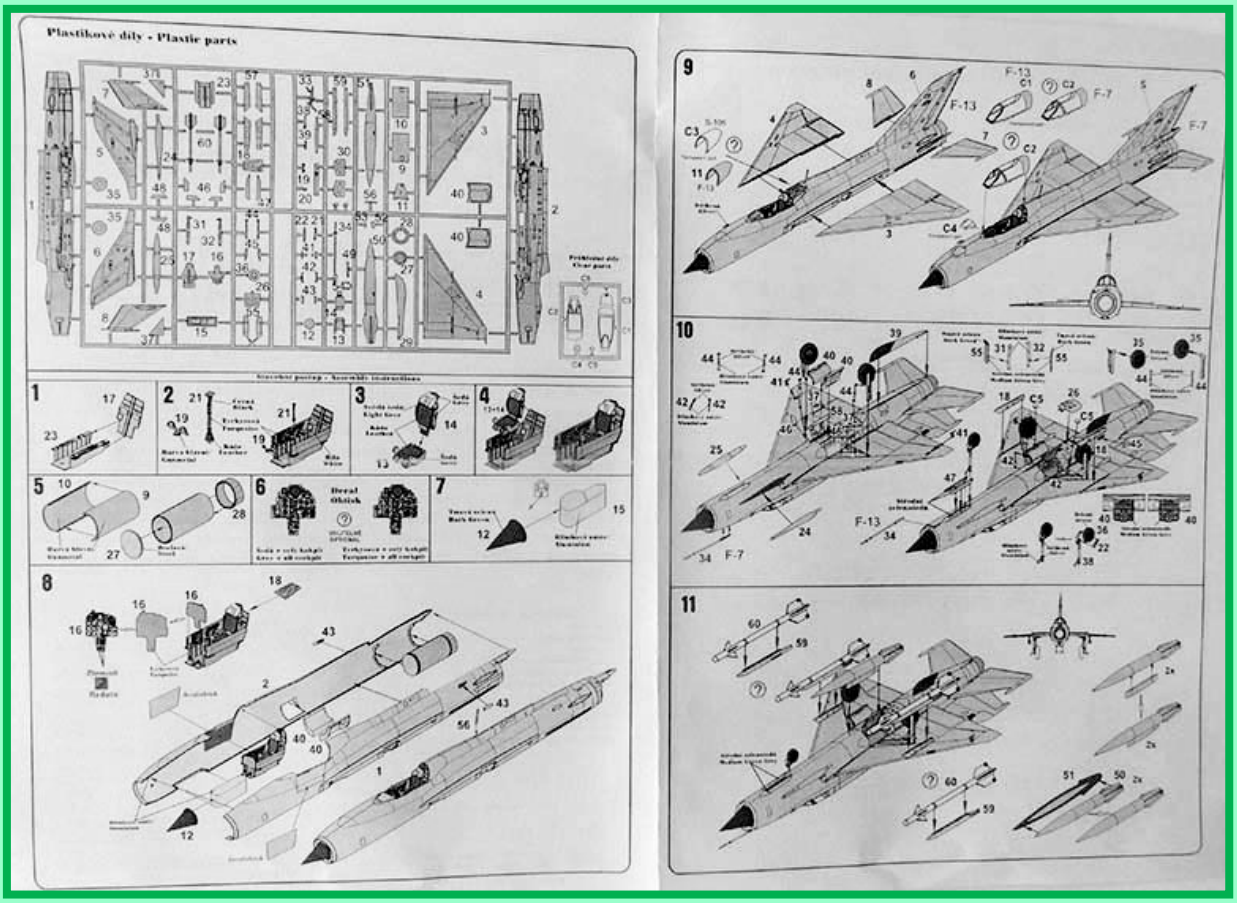
Elsewhere in this issue I reviewed KP's SIAI-211, and readers will recall that my review was very unfavourable. In sharp contrast with that kit, this one features exquisite surface detail, with very fine sharply-defined panel lines and riveting. The mould seams and poor surface finish which plagued that kit are nowhere to be found on this one. In fact, some of the detailing is so fine that the modeller will need to exercise great care not to remove any of it during sanding, although I suspect that the need for sanding may be minimal with this kit. The only thing which differentiates this kit from models by Airfix, Revell and other mainstream manufacturers is the lack of locating-pins and -tabs.

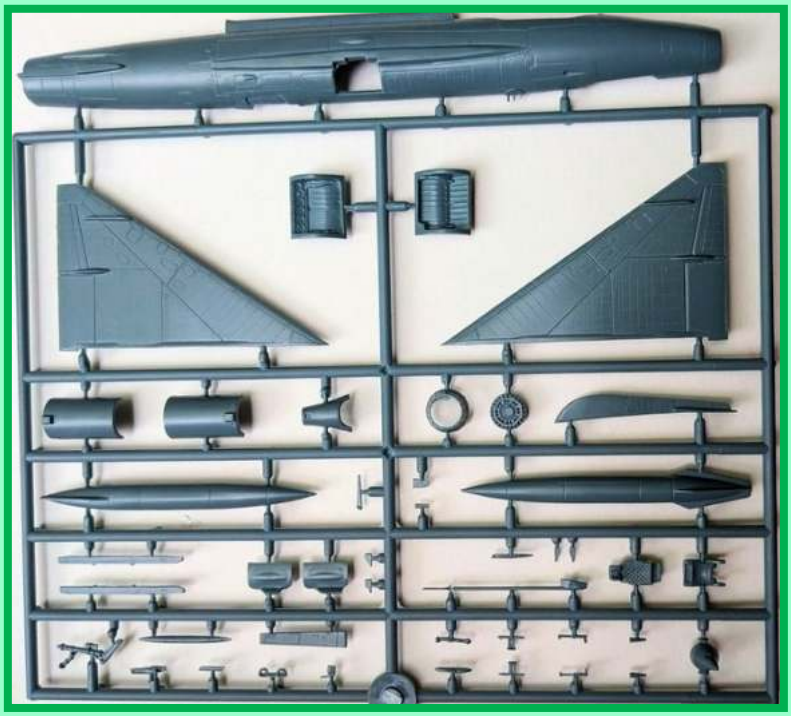
Interior detail, in the cockpit and wheel wells, is of an equally high standard, and the careful use of washes will really make it pop.

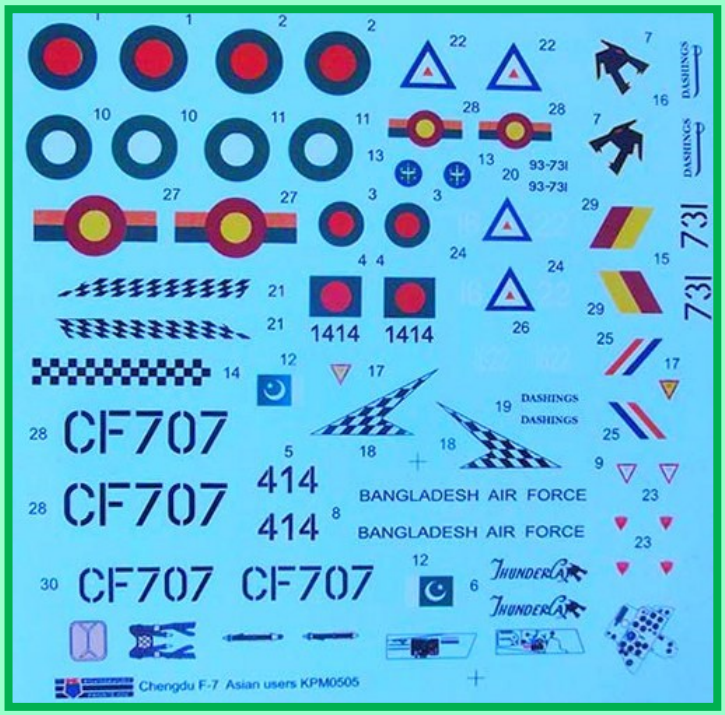
The instructions are broken down into 11 steps (no mis-numbering this time!), and are much clearer than those in the SIAI-211 kit. Only one armament option is provided, although it would seem that the F-7 seldom carried anything other than a combination of Vympel K-13 (a.k.a. R-3S, AA-2A) 'Atoll' missiles and large streamlined drop tanks to help overcome the aircraft's notoriously short range, which was about 850 km.

It is clear from these first impressions that this is going to be a much more enjoyable build than the SIAI-211, and I am looking forward to being able to clear my workbench and commence construction. As previously mentioned, I have already elected to build the Bangladeshi option, and am now in the process of searching for colour references in preparation for the build. If the build goes well, I might just treat myself to three more so that I can build all four options!

Highly recommended to all Asian Air Arm fans!







Steve Komor, July 2025

The Pakistani presence at RIAT

These photos, taken at RIAT 2025, are included with the kind permission of member Rob Monfea.


PAKISTAN AIR FORCE
R11-003


PAKISTAN AIR FORCE
003
R11-003


R11-003
PAKISTAN AIR FORCE
003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PAKISTAN AIR FORCE


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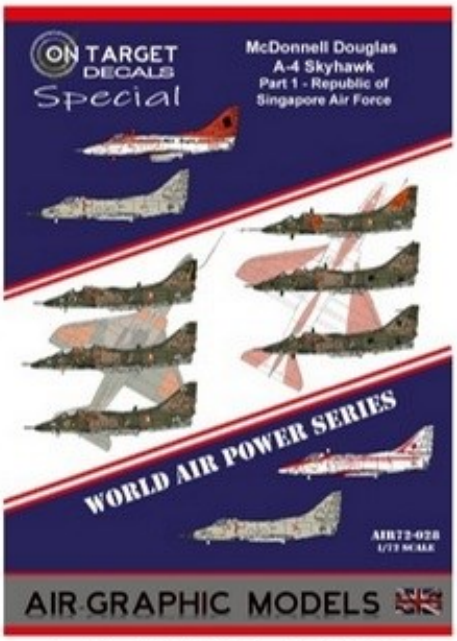
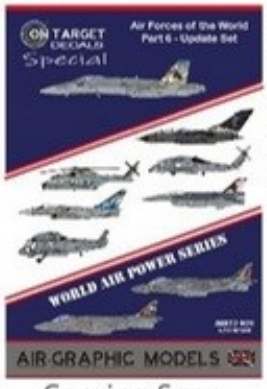


Part 2 - RNZAF & Part 3 RAN 2025



Decals Featuring Asian Air Forces:
AIR72-002 World Air Power Update Part 1
AIR72-004 Westland Lynx
AIR72-007 Westland Wasp & Scout
AIR72-011 World Air Power Update Part 3
AIR72-017 World Air Power Update Part 5
AIR72-019 BAE Hawk in Worldwide Service
AIR72-026 World Air Power Update Part 6

Coming Soon

Coming 2025:
CAC CA-27 Sabre Conversion
MDD TA-4U Skyhawk Conversion
SEPECAT Jaguar I DARIN II/III Conversion

Asian Air Arms SIG

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