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Mikoyan-Gurevitch MiG-21 Fishbed (1955-2010)



Synopsis

The MiG-21 originated with an official request from the Soviet authorities in 1954 for a light, high-performance (Mach 2 at 20 000 m) frontline fighter to protect military and production installations from potential raids by American bombers. Built for almost half a century in twenty or so different versions, in four successive generations, the "Fishbed" (its NATO codename) was not only the jet which was built in the largest numbers in the whole of aviation history, but also the aircraft which was built in greatest numbers since the end of the Second World War, all types and all countries included. Used by fifty or so air forces on four of the five continents, the MiG-21 took part in most of the major conflicts during the four last decades, from the Six-Day War in 1967 to the Balkans in 1999. At the present time more than a thousand examples of this fighter, of which a large number were built in China (Shenyang F-7 and J-7) are still in service, with their career continuing thanks to modernization programs for the surviving aircraft which have enabled them to pass cheerfully into the 21st Century.

Book Information

Paperback: 96 pages

Publisher: Casemate Publishers (February 19, 2010)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 2352501474

ISBN-13: 978-2352501473

Product Dimensions: 7.8 x 0.5 x 9.4 inches

Shipping Weight: 14.4 ounces (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.5 out of 5 stars 8 customer reviews

Best Sellers Rank: #869,436 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #163 in Books > Crafts, Hobbies & Home > Crafts & Hobbies > Toys & Models > Miniatures #409 in Books > Crafts, Hobbies & Home > Crafts & Hobbies > Toys & Models > Models #1756 in Books > History > Military > Aviation

Customer Reviews

"A wealth of information on the plane, from 1955 to present. (Model Retailer)

Gerard Paloque, former crew member of the Air Force, specializes in profiles of aerial fighters of all times and is the author of numerous books published by Histoire & Collections (Patrouilles aériennes, la 5th Air Force, F4 Phantom...).

The widely-used Russian fighter is tailor-made for this French series, and this time, the entire book is in color! The first 15 pages provide a technical history, including the Chinese-built versions, the trainers, and the various service-life-extension programs in use. This includes 4 specification tables, a color world map showing all the users, and a feature I particularly like, a 2-page spread showing small side views of every variant, with arrows denoting the changes in each version from its predecessors. The rest of the book covers all sixty of the countries that have flown Fishbeds (though in some cases, it was just to test captured birds), with a brief description of the MiG's service life with each air arm, and from 1 to 21 side views showing a variety of color schemes and markings. It is here that I have a problem with the book; the drawings for each country don't necessarily seem to be in either chronological order or in order by variant, and the dates given in quite a few entries seem suspect, especially where an air arm changed its insignia, as happened with many of the ex-Warsaw Pact air forces. But the side views are very well done, and there are also enough top and bottom views added to adequately depict quite a few subjects for modelers. Even with the quibbles, this is a nice, affordable book that pays homage to a great warplane, even if it has mostly been used by the "other side".

This is a very worthwhile guide to the MiG-21 Fishbed, shown in its colors as used by the many different countries, that employed this ubiquitous, second-half of the 20th century Soviet-designed fighter. The artwork is excellent and very colorful. The author has chosen the numerous and comprehensive aircraft versions and country depictions with great care. My only criticism is quite minor. In actuality, the dorsal spines of the MiG-21MF Fishbed J and the later MiG-21bis Fishbed L or N are different, but the author (and artist) shows them incorrectly to be identical. The latter's spine is thicker and extends further back on the vertical tail. The author also does a poor job showing the oversize dorsal spine on the MiG-21SMT Fishbed K; it looks little different than that on the MiG-21MF, but was vastly bigger. Further the probe under the nose on the MiG-21bis appears only on the Fishbed N not the L, a distinction the author doesn't make. All of the above are basically deminimus, but, just the same, for a handsome and useful book like this to rate 5 stars, it should in, my opinion, be accurate. After all, this is primarily a picture book. If you wish total accuracy, try the excellent but much more expensive definitive volume in the Famous Russian Aircraft series on the Mikoyan MiG-21 by Yefim Gordon and Keith Dexter (also available on .com). Still, it is an excellent value.

One of my standard model building references now. Covers all versions of the ubiquitous MiG fighter. Heavily illustrated with colour profiles of EVERY SINGLE MiG 21 operator. Top flight book from a reliable publisher!

This book provides great pictures as a modeling reference guide. Very comprehensive with excellent detail. This is a great addition to your reference library.

The illustrations are the strong point for this publication. The summaries of user nations are informative, but somewhat limited in depth.

The Book got here, quite fast the subject is near and dear to my heart. the profiles are great (happy I laid in a stock of Fujimi & Zvezda and Revell plus some Eduard 1/48 MIG-21's my love affair with this Russian beauty started on 6/april/1971 I was a BAC Lightning pilot. in the RAF and we had a Indian Air Force Pilot on exchange duty. due to this I was sent to India and flew one with number 1 Squadron and flew in the 1971 Dec war. I loved my MIG the same as My Dad loved his Spits (it was He who taught me how to fly.) I am so happy I bought this book my first kill in mine was a Pakistan F-104 C. I also ordered a Academy 1/48 MIG-21 MF and all my MIG-21 models are in Indian Air Force markings back to the book it is concise and the writing and photos are great. a Great Buy. hoping Gerard will do a SU-30 Book. this is my 2nd Book of his I have the Mirage book.

I like it

Again another excellent concise art work book from Histoire and Collections (mercifully published in English) covering the Mig 21 stable very similar to the work covering the Mirage III/5 series Great art work in covering almost all the 55 countries (except Guinea Bissau) which fly/flew the Mig-21 - India is well covered with almost 22 profiles - all in real a collector's item and art work collector's dream I suppose there will be a few errors concerning the usual suspects like SyAAF etc but a few new ones were interesting like the ones from Cuba in splinter green colours , and new ones from Serbia and Namibia. Many of the profiles look really great - in terms of a single volume covering all the variants and export countries is quite laudable Hope they do a similar one on the Mig 23/27 and Mirage 2000

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