

Trumpeter 1/48th Scale MiG-21F-13

by Gerry Nilles

The MiG-21F-13 first entered service in the late 1950s although initial design specifications, for this icon of Soviet airpower, actually go back to the time of the Korean War. Lessons learned from the use of the MiG-15 during combat in the Korean skies quickly translated into the need for a much more refined air superiority fighter. The result of this design effort of course was the MiG-21 that began pre-production and squadron evaluation deliveries around 1957. However, the first principal production version, the MiG-21F, a day-fighter (NATO code name Fishbed), and the subject of this Trumpeter kit, did not go into service until late 1959/early 1960.

As noted, the initial "F" series MiG-21 is primarily a day-fighter because of a number of limitations, the most prominent being only a basic radar system that restricted the aircraft not only to daylight operations but also only in fair weather. Secondly, and despite being designed to carry two cannons, because of weight considerations it only carried one while having the space for the other faired over. As a side-note in 1962, the Indian Air Force ordered a small evaluation batch of the "F" model that did include both cannons, disregarding any loss of performance. Regardless of these limitations, the "F" series saw service not only with the Soviet Air Force itself, but also with many of the other Soviet Bloc countries as well as a number of Middle Eastern and Asian nations.

The Trumpeter 1/48th scale MiG-21F-13 kit is sharply cast, well detailed, and without any visible flaws, or sink marks. The kit comes with a very nicely detailed cockpit, including a photo-etch fret with seat belts, separate control surfaces and rudder, rubber main gear tires, and a nice selection of under wing munitions. The decal sheet provides markings for six aircraft, and also includes stenciling data for the aircraft and the various weaponry.



Trumpeter, in many respects, seems to have taken a very similar design approach to this kit as Eduard did to their late model MiG-21 series. Obviously Trumpeter, like Eduard, has other MiG-21 variants in mind, verified by the fact that there are several unused parts included. As noted above, the kit comes with a variety of under wing weapons, including both the RS-2US and R-3S missiles, UB-16-rocket-pods, two 250KG bombs and a 490L centerline fuel tank. Accuracy wise, I would say that this kit looks to be on the mark.

Other features of note are a detailed electronics bay, located just forward of the cockpit, along with its separate access panel. Likewise, landing gear bay and the air brake area detail is excellent as are the individually cast cannon and cannon fairings. Finally, the assembly instructions are very well done and easy to understand and follow. In addition, this kit is not overly complicated, and as such should be a relatively easy build.

The kit includes two decal sheets with the larger of the two containing markings for six different aircraft, with all but one being natural metal in color. The first markings are for a Soviet MiG-21 based at Tushino

airbase circa 1961. Second is for a Chinese Fishbed, with the third being for a North Vietnamese Air Force bird. The fourth scheme is for a camouflaged (dark green and dark tan) East German MiG-21. The fifth is Czech Air Force, while the sixth is Finnish. With the exception of the Russian MiG-21, none of the other subject aircraft has the period of time they were operational or where their based listed. The second smaller decal sheet contains the stenciling common to all the aircraft and weapons. Finally a fully colored, two-sided markings and decal placement guide is also provided.

This is a well-done kit of a classic, and overlooked, at least in 1/48th scale, subject that is indeed an icon when it comes to the beginning of supersonic air superiority fighters. It looks to be a straightforward build with a choice of a half-dozen color schemes. The kit also comes with a good selection of weapons, along with some interesting details. My thanks to Stevens International for the review copy.

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