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▶ Volume 5, Issue 10

FlyBy



Back to normal. maybe not.

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Review of the month 1

Well it has seemed like an age since we have met, and in a way it is due to the quirks of the calendar. September's

second Sunday was the earliest it could be and October's is the latest it can be, and so the memory of last month may have faded. So it is my job to remind you.

First off a big thank you to all the members who have donated stuff to Ron Cole's dad who suffered tremendous damage to his home and modeling inventory and supplies in the flooding in Colorado a few weeks ago. I have heard that he is starting to recover, slowly, but some things are irreplaceable.

Next, for those of you who didn't attend the September meeting, you missed an excellent picnic at Chez Holmes with a great turnout. What is sad is that I forgot to take some photos of either the models on the table or the picnic itself. There was a good turnout on the contest table with the winners being Mark Maroscher with his Air-

fix 1/72 McDonnell Banshee and John Mitchell with his Panda 1/35 M-ATV.

Finally, and this is important. This is October and time for our annual auction. This is where we auction off people's old kits and anything else model related for amazing bargain prices and the club takes a small portion of the proceeds. So we encourage you to bring your unwanted stuff and see what you can get. Also bring your money as there have been some incredible bargains in the past. However, COME EARLY. The meeting this month will begin at 5pm. The auction often runs long so we need the extra time.

Not much else to write about this month, other than get down to your local hobby



As per usual at the September picnic, there was no business meeting so other than the news that we won the bid to host the 2015 Nationals, not much is going on.

shop as there are some great new kits out including :

Airfix 1/48 Gloster Javelin,
Tamiya 1/35 Gama Goat
Eduard 1/48 Mig-21 PFM
Meng 1/35 T-90A

And not forgetting, Project 279, a prototype Soviet tank that is being made by 3 different manufacturers! Must be a lot of pent up demand for that one.

For This Months Meeting, bring:

- Warm and Alert body
- Three Colour kit
- The current model you are working work on, as well as your tools to share your experiences.
- Anything new that you wish to share with the gang.

Kfir, Kfir, who wants to build a Kfir in 1/48

A trend that is taking traction in our hobby at the moment is that different manufacturers are releasing the same subject, a situation that lends itself to much confusion and angst for us, as to where to spend the money. Comparison reviews are therefore every helpful and this month we have one of a popular subject amongst modern aircraft modelers, the IAI Kfir.

Recently there has been a blitz on new kits of the IAI (Israeli Aircraft Industry) Kfir (Hebrew for Young Lion). Previously if one wanted to build the Kfir in 1/48 your options were limited for conversions of various Mirage kits or the old ESCI Kfir kit. Which some consider only a passing resemblance of the aircraft. That brings us to recent months with the release of four new kits of this aircraft with rumors of other variants on the way.

The Kfir was an indigenous project built as a follow up to the earlier Nesher. The Nesher was a stopgap replacement for Mirage V's which were embargoed by France in the late 60's. Using plans spirited away from Dassault in France, IAI was able to come up with the airframes to supplement their aging Mirage III fleet. While the Nesher held it's own, the IAF felt it needed a higher thrust engine rather than the Snecma Atar power plant used in the Nesher.

This led to the Kfir C1 which was to utilize the GE J-79 engine that was being used by the F-4's already in IAF service. After getting licensing agreements from the U.S. for the J-79 engine, the Kfir was on its way. The C1 was the first variant and was a modified Nesher with the new engine. This modification was extensive as the J-79 was shorter and had a slightly increased diameter. Add to this the increased cooling necessary for the J-79 and new CG (Center of Gravity) issues, you have the unique shapes you see on the Kfir. Later a number of Kfir C1's were leased to the U.S. Navy as aggressor aircraft and were designated as F-21's.

The next variant of the Kfir was the C2 which was the most produced variant. The C2 had numerous changes, such as adding a saw tooth to the wing and canards above the intakes. The C2 encompassed improved avionics which included HOTAS (Hands on Throttle and Stick) technology. Later versions and export variants also featured an upgraded ejection seat going from the MB Mk4 to the newer MB Mk10. Some export variants also have a single piece windscreen for improved visibility. There was also a two seat Kfir designated the TC2 which was necessary as a lead in for the export market. Foreign operators of the Kfir C2 include Sri Lanka, Columbia, and Ecuador.

The last variant of the Kfir was the C7, this variant has further avionics improvements and a revised threat warning system. In addition it has a precision weapons capability with the addition of a Pave Penny pod under the nose. A number of the export C2's were brought up to C7 standards to keep them current. Though no longer in IAF service, the Kfir has been a successful program for IAI due to its ability to provide improvements and upgrades, such as in flight refueling to keep it viable for their customers. Some of these aircraft were redesignated as C10 or C12 when they added, a state of the art radar and the ability to carry a pod such as a Sniper or Litening. This provides the smaller Latin air arms a precision weapons capability. Enough of the history on to the kits, so here are the options.

Kinetic, Israeli Air Force Kfir C2/C7, retail in the \$60 range

AMK, IAI Kfir C2/C7, retail in the \$40 range

Wing Man, IAI Kfir C10/C12 Latin America, retail in the \$80 range

Wing Man, IAI Kfir C2 /C7 Israeli Air Force, retail in the \$80 range



Building a Kfir in 1/48 cont'd

Let's start with the Kinetic kit. This kit features a detailed cockpit with optional panels for the C2 and C7 versions. There is also an option for the MB4 and MB10 seats. The HUD (Heads Up Display) is molded as a solid lump of clear sprue for the frame with a lens as a separate piece. The detail in this area is rather soft and has pin marks inside each sidewall, but after some painting it should be passable. The kit also provides full intake trunks with a turbine face that in no way resembles the J-79 in look or diameter. Being roughly inches down the intake this won't matter. A note here, be sure and drill the holes in the wings and fuselage as you will need them to properly place the various intakes and pylons used by the Kfir.

The wing features the saw tooth on the upper wing panel with clear parts for the navigation lights. The flaperons are separately molded and can be positioned as desired though the Kfir is not usually seen with these surfaces drooped on the ground. Wheel well detail is nice but the upper, lower wing fit is poor. There are also separate speed brakes that after clean up sort of fit and can be opened or closed though again these are rarely seen open on the ground. The 30mm Defa guns are weakly molded and could use more definition even in 1/48 scale.

There is a choice of two different noses with three optional lower panels for the C2 and C7 versions with the C7 featuring a Pave Penny pod with a clear nose cap. The major differences are subtle so, be sure and check the instructions for the correct nose. I know the advanced modelers creed is "instructions, I don't need no stinking instructions". The rear portion of the rear ventral fairing has the strike camera window molded solid which is a disappointment in this scale. The tailpipe has some detail but the sprue gate in the middle of the part will make cleanup a challenge. The flame holder is molded at the bottom of the exhaust tube and is adequate.

The largest amount of plastic in this kit seems to be the array of under wing stores. This is extensive collection of tanks and ordinance provides multiple options that could arm a number of models. You get four pairs of fuel tanks. Two pair are sub-sonic wing tanks with different fin configurations while another pair are centerline sub-sonic, while the last pair are supersonic tanks that can be carried on the wing or centerline. Seeing that when loaded with ordinance the Kfir is limited to sub-sonic speed limitations. One can make their own call.

Now the ordinance, air to air you have a pair of crisply molded Python IV missiles. These are appropriate of a later C7 Kfir, but the C2 would be better suited with a pair of Shafrir II's. There are two GBU 12 laser guides that go with the C7's Pave Penny configuration. As for mud moving there are six Mk 82 high drag Snake eyes and six CBU's (Cluster Bomb Units). There are also two MER's (Multiple Ejector Racks) and two IAI designed "Napgach" MER's for the centerline station. This unit is a combination MER and chaff/flare dispenser with an adapter for the Kfir centerline contours. The Kinetic example only has two dispensers. There are also two HARM anti-radar missiles which are not carried by the Kfir. The Kfir was used by the IAF as a swing fighter and could be seen either in a counter air or, ground attack role, the configuration is up to the modeler.

The canopy and wind screen are crisp and thinly molded with clean fit to the fuselage. There are two paint schemes provided, a C2 in a ghost grays scheme from the Valley Squadron, and C7 with a modern four color desert scheme from the Arava Guardians Squadron. There is a full color reference sheet depicting the decal placement for both schemes including the ordinance. The decals were designed by Isradecal and printed by Cartograph, so they are very high quality.

Overall the Kinetic kit is a decent kit though care must be taken to get a good fit, then again that is something most modelers are used to. I have never cared for plastic Kinetic uses, I find it a bit soft and easy to damage during the assembly process, but that is me. With a vast selection of ordinance and excellent decals it will produce an excellent rendition of the Kfir. With the addition of a few after market items it can be even better.

That brings me to the two Wingman kits. These are the Kinetic Kfir kit done ala the Eduard, Profi-pack presentation. You get an upgrade that improves on a number of the shortcomings of the Kinetic. You get an expansive decal sheet from Isradecal who provided the extras covering either the Latin American or Israeli Kfirs, depending on the boxing. Masks for the wheels and canopy are there in addition to a number of resin and brass parts applicable to each of the domestic and export aircraft.

For the Latin kits you get the upgrades in resin for the new radar nose, refueling probe, and rear chaff and flare dispensers. Unique to the IAF kit is a resin pair of GBU-12 laser guided bombs and improved strike camera fairing. Common improvements include a resin cockpit with choices in front panels, ejection seats, and photo-etch HUDs. As for other details there are resin wheels, afterburner assembly, cooling scoops, and brass pitot probe. This will fix or improve most of Kinetic kit's problems. One thing that was not covered is the one piece wind screen in use since the late 90s by Ecuador.

Building a Kfir in 1/48 cont'd

The final kit is the least expensive kit from AMK (AvantGard Model Kits) a new company from China. First item that caught my eye was the instruction sheet, or should I say booklet. The construction graphics are crisp black and white with color profiles which include readouts for the colors used with both FS and Gunze reference. The plastic is crisply molded and a fit that Kinetic could only hope for. When parts are cut cleanly from the sprue gates there is almost no need for any filler. Little details such as small fuselage intake vents have engraved hollows that part goes on top of to provide depth to the vent or air scoop.

AMK takes a different approach to the Kinetic Kfir kit in that it has molded the elevons integral with the lower wing. This makes for a clean fit with the two upper wing sections eliminating the nasty seam along the underside of the wings leading edge, that plagues the Kinetic wing. A common nose section is provided with instructions of the bumps not seen on earlier C2 variants. Once again you get two cockpit front panels as well as the two ejection seat options. The wheel wells are multi piece with decent detail, which is more than adequate in this scale. Landing gear and gear doors are thin and include hinge detail, the only molding fault in the kit are sink marks in the main doors. The after burner assembly has good detail with a separately molded flame holder at the base of the exhaust tube. Perhaps the most disappointing item in this kit is the internal intake detail where there is no intake trunk and leads to a blank panel.

As for stores you get ordinance for dumb bombs and a precision load out. Fuel tanks provided are two subsonic tanks with optional fin arrangements and one centerline supersonic tank. For the self protection capability there is a pair of Python missiles for the outer wing stations. As for iron bombs you get six Mk 82, 500 lb. bombs that can be mounted on two wing mounted TERs (Triple Ejector Rack) or as in the Kinetic kit the Napgach centerline mount which can hold all six bombs. As for the Napgach mount in this kit the molding is vastly improved and features all four chaff dispensers as separate bits. As for the precision weapons you get the choice of the GBU-12 500 lb. LGB or the indigenous Griffin 500 lb. LGB.

Markings included in the kit are for two Kfirs, one C2 in ghost grays and a C7 in the late desert colors seen on the IAF F-16's. The C2 scheme is for the grays aircraft from First Fighter and was the only Kfir to have a confirmed air to air kill while in IAF service. The second scheme is for Arava Guardians aircraft in camouflage with the Pave Penny pod from the late 80's. With the exception of the intake shortcoming the AMK kit is a solid kit. It is a good choice if you want an OOB Kfir, but if you want all the bells and whistles the Wingman kit would be a choice as you get a comprehensive amount of after market items in one box. So there you are, a number of options for an interesting airplane with a storied history. You are now informed to let the kit or your wallet make the decision, but most of all enjoy yourself that's what this hobby should be about.

References: IAI Kfir, by R, Kwas, AJ Press
Camouflage and Markings of the IAF, by Ray Bell, Scale Aircraft Monographs
IAI Kfir in Israeli Service, by Ramon Weiss, Isradecal Publishing

www.ipmscolumbus.com



Monthly meetings are held at the ODOT aviation building behind Beightler Armory off SR 161 on the north side of Don Scott field. Members and non-members alike are welcome. Anyone who has content for next month's Fly By, please forward in electronic format to: zed@columbus.rr.com or mabell@columbus.rr.com

Need to know anything about the club, please visit us on the web at:

www.IPMSColumbus.com

Secretary Minutes

Notes from the club secretary Graham Holmes about last month's meeting

Old Business

As I as not present, no minutes available.

Remember, this month we meet for the Picnic at:

1744 Weather Stone Lane

Columbus OH 43235

Stating at about 5pm. NO EARLIER

Upcoming Shows of Interest to Region 4 Club Members

9/14/2013 Dayton, OH
Dayton Area Plastic Modelers Society's Fall Invitational Contest and Meet

9/21/2013 Sharon, PA
Region 4 SVASCON 29
Shenango Valley Area Scale Modelers

9/21/2013 Carlisle, PA
Region 2 PENNCON 2013 MODEL SHOW AND CONTEST
CENTRAL PENNSYLVANIA IPMS

9/28/13 Zanesville, OH
Y-City Scale Modelers 15th Annual Model Contest
Muskingum County Fairgrounds

9/28/13 McKean, PA
IPMS Erie Scale Modelers Contest
St Frances Xavier Parish Center

10/12/2013 Cincinnati, OH
Region 4 Cincinnati Scale Modelers Annual October Contest/Swapmeet
Great Oaks Vocational School

A reminder to all members,

If there is something that you would like other members to know about, please let me know. I can do the research, just need to now what you would like me to feature.

Contributions

As you will have noticed, there are contributions from several people this month. Thank you to the effort put forth, include the photographers.

I encourage anyone and everyone to come up with anything model related that they would like to share, even if it is

just as simple as the first impressions that you have when you open a new kit for the first time, or an interesting old article that you may have.