

Revell's F-15D in 1/72nd Scale



by Dick Smith

The Israel Air Force has been called by many “the toughest and most secret military organization in the world.” Until a few years ago, photos were heavily retouched to eliminate any markings that would identify any individual aircraft or squadron.

Recently, some of the secrecy has been lifted and some squadrons have allowed their badges to be photographed and reproduced. Photos of individual aircraft flown by Israeli aces have been published but current aces’ names remain a mystery. The McDonnell-Douglas F-15 has played a leading role in Israel’s record of air supremacy in the Middle East. In action over Lebanon’s Bekaa Valley in 1982, Israeli F-15’s claimed a reported total of 40 Syrian jets with no losses.

Revell produces a “fair” representation of an F-15D in 1/72nd scale with the markings of 106 Squadron’s “Skyblazer.” (Because of Israeli security there is some question as to which squadron this aircraft belongs, 106 or 133 Squadron.) This is a simple kit with a fair amount of molding flash on most of the parts. Start construction with the cockpit by painting it medium gray, FS-35237. The kit Aces II ejection seats are not very detailed but a little creative painting will make them presentable. I painted the seat frames “interior black,” FS-37031, and the seat cushions dark tan, FS-30219. True Details, from Squadron, make resin versions of the ejection seats. The cockpit would benefit from these seats. The instrument panels are flat black with a dry brushing of light gray to bring out the details. The entire assembly is glued into one side of the forward portion of the fuselage. Epoxy a small “split shot” fishing sinker into the nose of the fuselage to keep the model from “tail sitting.” Cement the forward fuselage sides together and set aside to dry.

Fit the main wheel well piece into the rear fuselage section. Next glue the "ramps" into the jet intakes. Assemble the top and bottom wing sections and then glue the completed intakes to the fuselage. Paint the intake covers red and attach them in the final construction. Some filling and sanding of the seams is required where the intakes attach to the wings. Cement the rear fuselage section to the front portion.

There is a major gap where these pieces meet. You'll have to fill and sand several times to get a flawless joint. Attach the pylons and launching rails for the Sidewinder missiles to the underside of each wing. The next few parts will have to come from your cache of left over parts from other kits. You'll need two AIM-7F/M Sparrow missiles and a 600-gallon centerline fuel tank.



Assemble the fuel tank and add a small triangle-shaped plastic fin to the top rear section. Use the centerline pylon from the kit to mount the fuel tank. The Sparrows are painted white with dark gray fins. While you have the dark gray out, paint the bodies of the four kit-supplied AIM-9L Sidewinder missiles. The forward portions of the Sidewinders are gloss black.

The Israeli's nicknamed their F-15's, "Baz" or falcon. They are frequently tasked in the air superiority role and painted in the standard McDonnell-Douglas scheme of Light Ghost gray, FS-36375, overall and, Dark Ghost gray, FS-36320, in a disruptive pattern on the fuselage top and vertical tail.

After you have completed the fuselage painting, prepare the model for decaling by spraying a clear coat of gloss overall. The markings for "Skyblazer" (as well as several other aces' aircraft) can be found on Cutting Edge Decals, sheet # 72-005.

When you have completed the decal work, attach the Sidewinder and Sparrow missiles with superglue. Paint the jet exhaust nozzles a metallic gray and highlight with silver. The Revell kit has the "turkey feathers" molded on the jet exhaust. This is correct for Israeli aircraft. The canopy frames and the lower portion of the windscreen are painted copper while the rest of the framing is dark ghost gray.

Additional information on “Skyblazer” shown as an F-15A from 133 Squadron, can be found on page 181 of the Wings of Fame “Aerospace Encyclopedia of Air Warfare, Volume 2.” Another reference, Peter Mersky’s “Israeli Fighter Aces,” shows “Skyblazer” on pages 78 and 80, as an F-15D. The decal manufacturer, Meteor Productions, depicts “Skyblazer” as an F-15D assigned to 106 Squadron.

With a little detective work and some modification of the decals, you can reproduce either the single or the two-seat version of this aircraft.

